



British Veterinary Association and the Association of Veterinary Students

Survey results 2008

British Veterinary Association
Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

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BVA/ AVS Survey 2008

Introduction

It is the role of the Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) to represent the veterinary student body in all appropriate matters.

In order to represent its members fairly, AVS needs to be regularly updated on all student issues. One way that this is done is via the BVA/ AVS survey. The first survey was conducted in 1996, the second in 1999, the third in 2002 and the fourth in 2005. This is fifth survey to be conducted and is based on questionnaires circulated to students during the 2007/ 2008 academic year. In total, 1833 (45.4% of veterinary students) participated.

The survey is split into three main sections. Section A looks at the composition and background of the student population, Section B deals with financial information and Section C provides analysis of the structure of the undergraduate veterinary medicine course.

Student population

The veterinary student population continues to be overwhelmingly female dominated and does not appear to have yet stopped becoming even more so. 2008 saw the balance increase to 78.8% female and 21.2% male. This is the widest margin yet.

The number of overseas students studying at UK vet schools continues to grow. In 2008, 11.8% of veterinary medicine students were from overseas, up from 8.3% in 2005. This increase is particularly pronounced at the Scottish establishments. Between 2005 and 2008, the overseas student population at Edinburgh has increased from 12.8% to 23.8% and at Glasgow from 15.8% to 31.2%. The assumption is that this is a way to make up for the shortfall in income because Scottish students studying at Scottish universities do not have to pay tuition fees, but will there be consequences for the UK veterinary profession if these are recruited instead of UK students?

Student debt

The level of debt amongst UK veterinary medicine students again shows a marked increase. The average final year student debt is up from £17,395.53 in 2005 to £20,302.82 this year, a 16.7% rise. The survey is conducted with some months of the student year to run, and the expected debt on graduation for final year students is actually **£22,298.99**.

Furthermore, 2007/ 2008's second year students expected to graduate with £29,399.30 of debt, almost double the £15,216.30 estimated by 2004/ 2005's second year students. This is an important comparison because those estimating £15,216.30 in 2005 are the same group who in 2008 said that their current debt was £20,302.82 and expected final debt was £22,298.99. This increase in debt between these two groups again shows the impact of tuition fees on student debt as 2007/ 2008's second year students are paying approximately £3,000 per year in tuition fees whilst 2004/ 2005's second year students were paying approximately £1,000 per year. There is also historical evidence throughout the survey of students underestimating what their debt will be so it seems very likely that £30,000+ of debt will be the norm for final year students when it next takes place. All of this is without taking into account the increase in student fees that universities are said to be lobbying intensively for at the moment.

There is another component to student debt for veterinary medicine students, and that is the EMS requirements. Over two thirds of respondents (66.8%) feel unable to work to supplement their income, with EMS regularly cited as a major contributory factor for this. A frequent complaint is that compulsory EMS has a triple whammy affect on students when it comes to financial pressure:

- 1) Unable to get a job during their holidays.
- 2) Creates additional expenses for travel/ accommodation etc.
- 3) Is not taken into consideration by the SLC for loans.

With over 1 in 3 (35.3%) of respondents indicating that their financial problems are either difficult or severe and almost 1 in 4 (23.9%) stating that their debts will have a large affect on their choice of job after graduation, the profession might consider if this is the position it wants its new members to be in.

Mental health/ wellbeing

Responses to questions on mental health and wellbeing indicate that there are far higher incidences of mental health problems among veterinary medicine students than there are in society at large. In this survey, 29.4% indicated that they either suffer from or had previously suffered from anxiety and 21.6% from depression. Figures available at the Mind website (<http://www.mind.org.uk/information/factsheet/statistics/statistics+1.htm>) indicate that 9.2% of the general population suffer from mixed anxiety and depression, a further 2.8% from depression without anxiety and 17.3% from any neurotic disorder at all. A further 55.0% of students said that they either had or do suffer from stress and 7.2 % from an eating disorder.

Although 60.0% of respondents named the veterinary medicine course as the main reason for their mental health problems, it is also worth considering whether the profession attracts people with these character traits.

The high incidence of suicide in the veterinary profession is now well documented, but these survey results suggest that the background for problems to occur exists before veterinary medicine students have even graduated.

A positive finding is that recent years have seen a marked increase in the percentage of respondents who were aware of the prevalence of mental health/ wellbeing issues when they entered vet school – up from 33.3% among 5th year students to 72.2% among 1st years. However, even among 1st year students, less than a quarter (22.8%) actively considered this when deciding to apply for vet school. Also below a quarter is the 24.4% of 5th year students who believe that mental health and wellbeing has been included as a part of their veterinary medicine course. There is perhaps an opportunity for the schools and the profession at large to push for this to be changed.

Emma Sinclair – AVS President 2009-10

The AVS always welcomes your comments and views on matters such as those raised in this survey. Contact details for the current AVS representatives are available on the website www.avs-uk.org.uk.

Total number of responses

University		Number of responses	Number of home students	Number of overseas students
Bristol	Total	346	339	7
	Year 1	72	69	3
	Year 2	40	39	1
	Year 3	96	94	2
	Year 4	60	60	0
	Year 5	78	77	1
Cambridge	Total	161	156	5
	Year 1	35	34	1
	Year 2	12	10	2
	Year 3	29	28	1
	Year 4	30	30	0
	Year 5	34	33	1
	Year 6	21	21	0
Edinburgh	Total	285	199	86
	Year 1	41	34	7
	Year 2	101	69	32
	Year 3	66	36	30
	Year 4	53	39	14
	Year 5	24	21	3
Glasgow	Total	256	159	97
	Year 1	76	36	40
	Year 2	38	22	16
	Year 3	67	42	25
	Year 4	63	49	14
	Year 5	12	10	2
Liverpool	Total	256	249	7
	Year 1	32	30	2
	Year 2	27	23	4
	Year 3	75	75	0
	Year 4	72	71	1
	Year 5	50	50	0
London	Total	432	409	23
	Year 1	38	38	0
	Year 2	75	71	4
	Year 3	145	134	11
	Year 4	103	99	4
	Year 5	71	67	4
Nottingham	Total	97	92	5
	Year 1	49	47	2
	Year 2	48	45	3
Overall	Total	1833	1603	230

Undergraduate student numbers 2007/ 2008

Total number of students at each university (per RCVS Annual Report 2008).

	Male	Female	Total
Bristol	109	429	538
Cambridge	101	278	379
Edinburgh	115	512	627
Glasgow	168	416	584
Liverpool	123	422	545
London	202	947	1149
Nottingham	39	178	217
Total	857	3182	4039

The survey was completed and returned by 1,833 out of 4,039 students; a response rate of **45.4%**.

	UK students	Overseas students	Total
Bristol	527	11	538
Cambridge	370	9	379
Edinburgh	478	149	627
Glasgow	402	182	584
Liverpool	530	15	545
London	1048	101	1149
Nottingham	206	11	217
Total	3561	478	4039

The responses were made up by 1,603 of 3,561 UK students (**45.0%**) and 230 of 478 overseas students (**48.1%**).

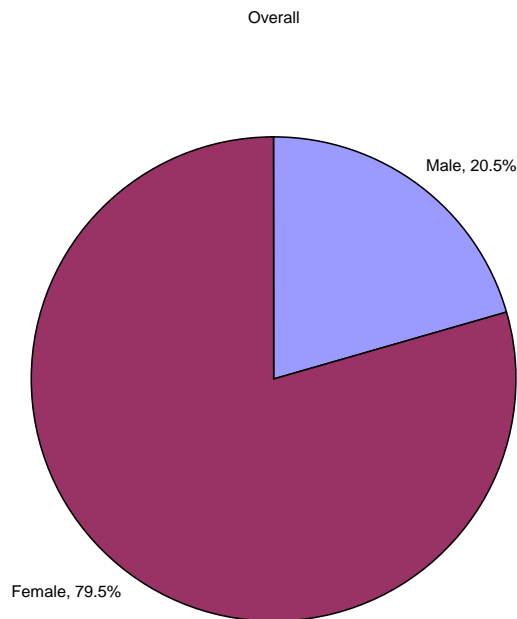
The RCVS figures show that the percentage UK vet school students who are female continues to rise. In 2005, **75.4%** of vet students were female. This year, it has increased to **78.8%**.

Similarly, the percentage of UK vet school students from overseas has increased further - **11.9%** of this year's students are from overseas compared with **8.3%** in 2005.

Section A – Personal

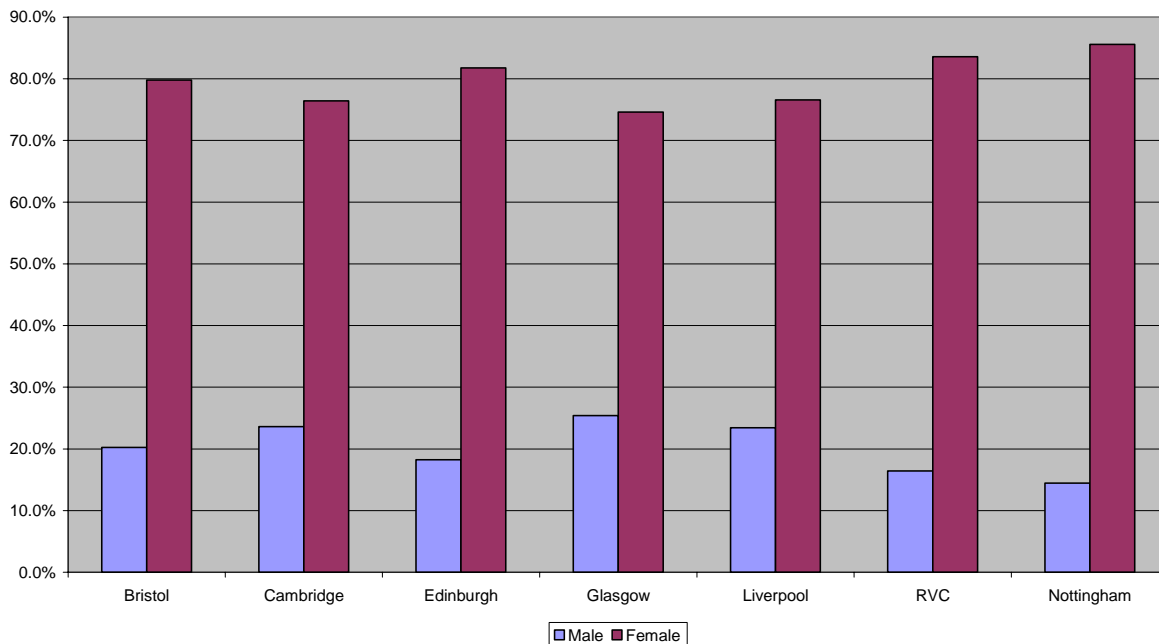
Question 1 & 2 ascertained the university and year of each respondent (see ‘Total number of responses’)

3) What is your gender?



The overall gender balance of the survey respondents remains heavily weighted towards females. The increase in the percentage of female respondents has been consistent over the life of the survey; from **69.0%** in 1999 up to **73.2%** in 2002, up to **76.0%** in 2005 before reaching today’s figure of **79.5%**. The closeness of our figure to the RCVS total (**78.8%**) is a reflection of how representative our survey sample is.

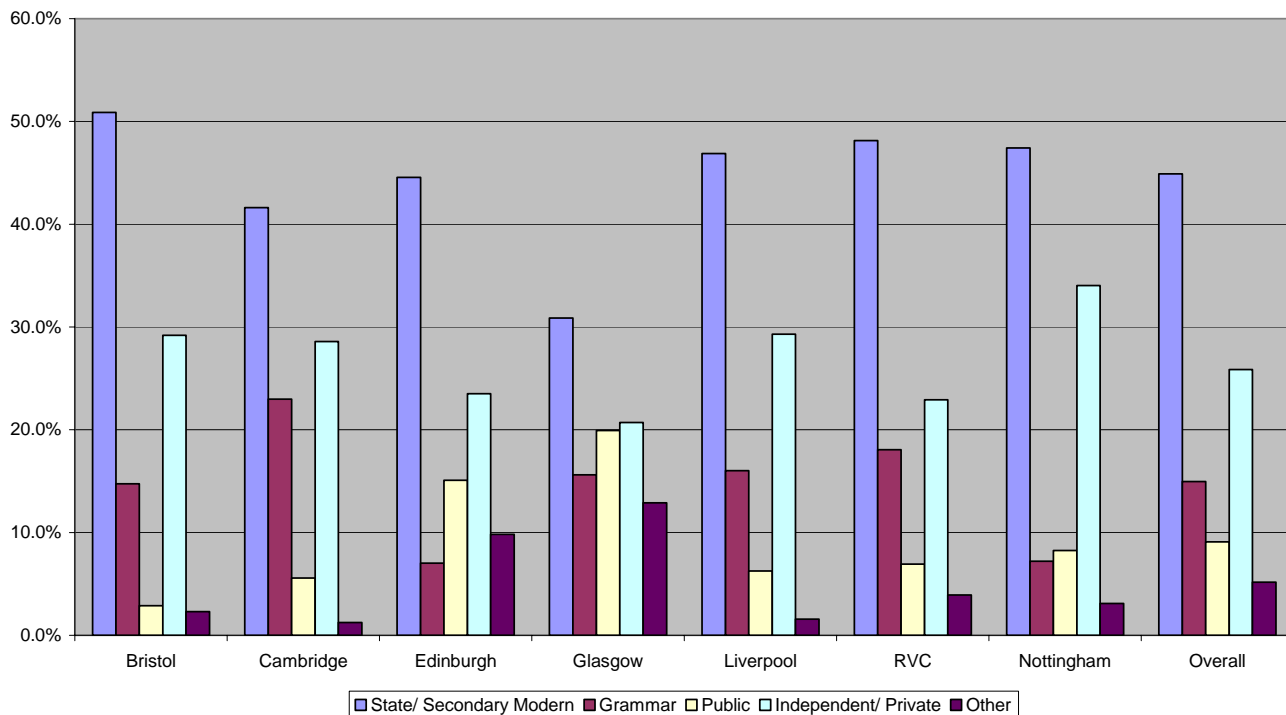
Breakdown by university



Some respondents to the last survey thought that Nottingham’s approach may lead to the gender balance being more equal. However, the results show that a higher percentage of Nottingham respondents were female than at any other vet school.

4) Secondary education (age 11 to GCSE/ Standard Grades)?

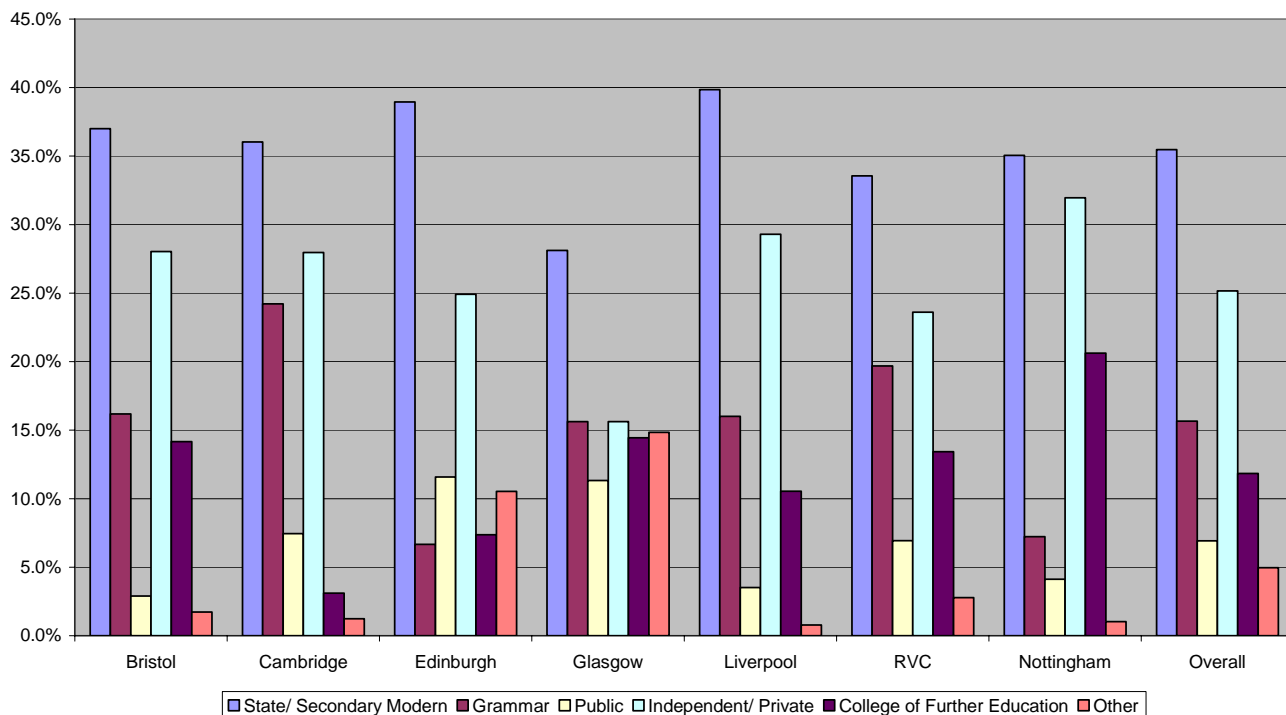
Breakdown by university



The breakdown of educational institutions attended up to the age of 16 is little different from in 2005. However, perhaps surprisingly the combined percentage of respondents coming from comprehensive/ secondary modern and grammar schools has dropped from **62.4%** in 2005 to **59.8%** in 2008 whilst the percentage coming from public and independent/ private schools has increased from **32.1%** in 2005 to **35.0%** in 2008.

5) Establishment attended for 'A' levels/ 'Highers' or equivalent?

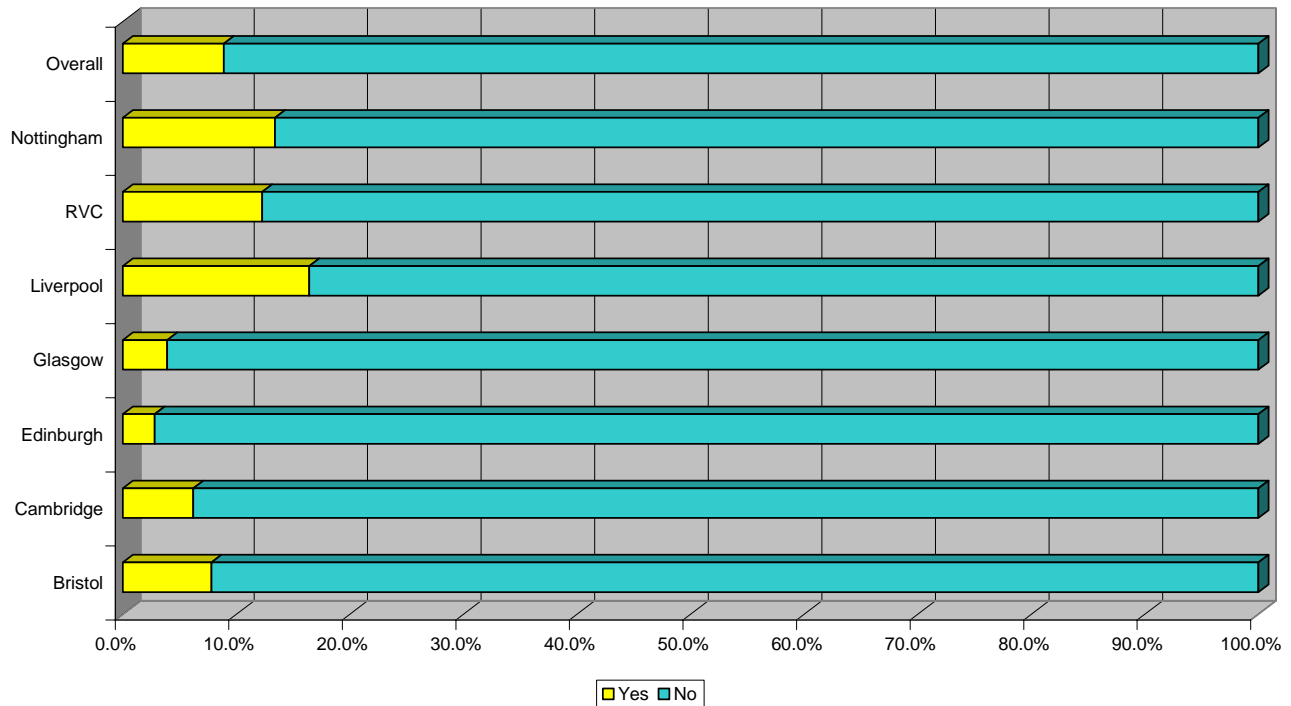
Breakdown by university



The percentage of respondents who attended state/ secondary modern or grammar schools for their post-16 education has increased from **46.9%** in 2005 to **51.2%** this time around. However, the figures for Glasgow buck this trend. In 2005 Glasgow clearly had the most students from a state/ secondary modern school background at **43.5%**. In just three years this has dropped dramatically to **28.1%** meaning it has fewer respondents from that background than any other UK vet school.

6) Did you take re-sits to enter veterinary school?

Breakdown by university



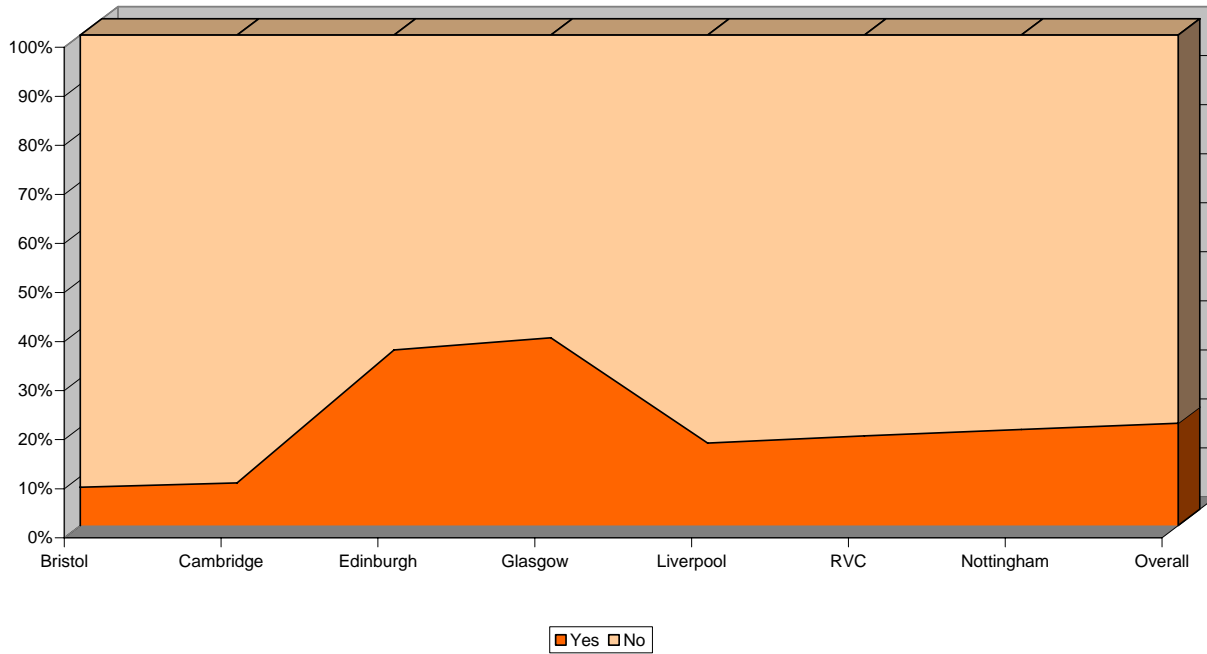
The percentage of respondents who have taken re-sits in order to get into vet school has been remarkably consistent throughout the lifetime of this survey. Having started off at **12.2%** in 1999, it has since been **8.9%** in 2002, **9.0%** in 2005 and **8.9%** again in 2008.

The Scottish universities and Cambridge have consistently been the establishments with the least percentage of students who took re-sits. This pattern is continued this year, with **2.8%** of Edinburgh students, **3.9%** of those at Glasgow and **6.2%** from Cambridge who took re-sits. Similarly Liverpool has always been at the other end of the scale, and this year is no exception with **16.4%** of respondents from there having retaken exams.

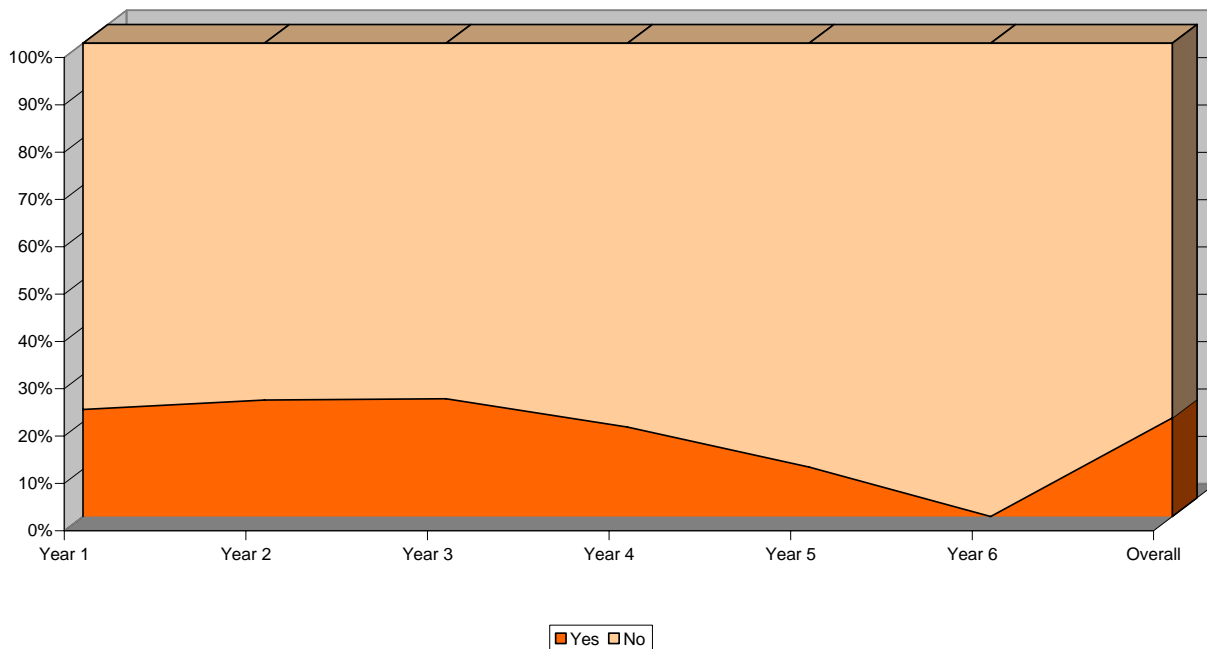
“I was advised not to re-take my A levels by the vet school. On entry, I discovered people who had re-taken and been accepted. Vet schools need to be consistent with their entry criteria.....If I'd re-taken my A levels, I could have saved myself £60.000 - £75.000” – Liverpool 5th year

7) Did you do another degree before entering vet school?

Breakdown by university



Breakdown by year of study

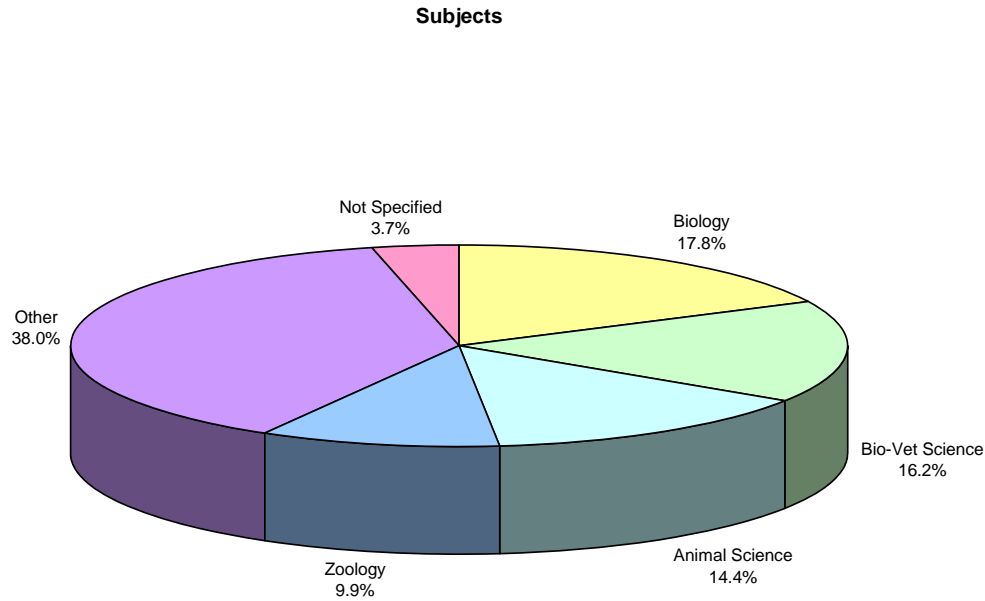


The percentage of respondents who have taken a degree prior to entering vet school has increased notably since 2005 from **15.8%** to **20.8%** in 2008. The previously established pattern of Glasgow and Edinburgh having a higher percentage of second-degree students than the other vet schools continues with **35.8%** of Edinburgh and **38.3%** of Glasgow students doing a prior degree.

The breakdown by year of study shows clearly the growth in the number of second-degree students at vet school in the last three years.

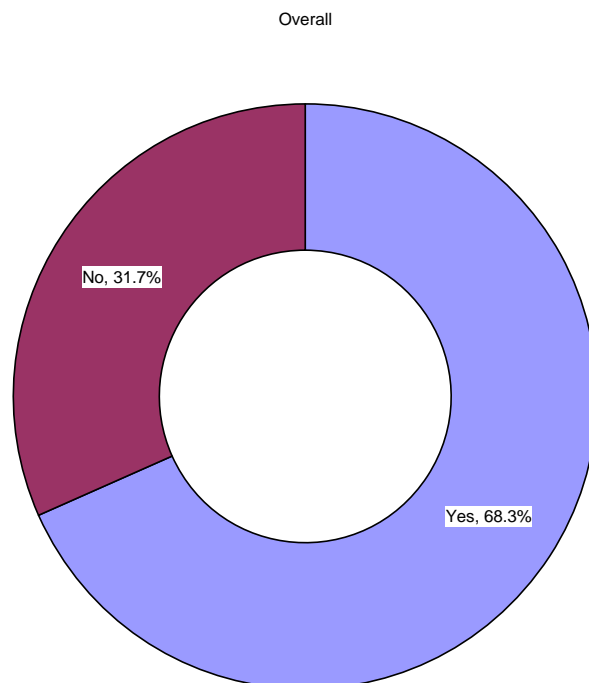
At a time of rising graduate debt, the increase in second-degree students at vet school will exacerbate the issue as second degrees are often unfunded meaning higher fees paid by the students.

7a) If the answer is 'Yes', what was the subject of your previous degree?



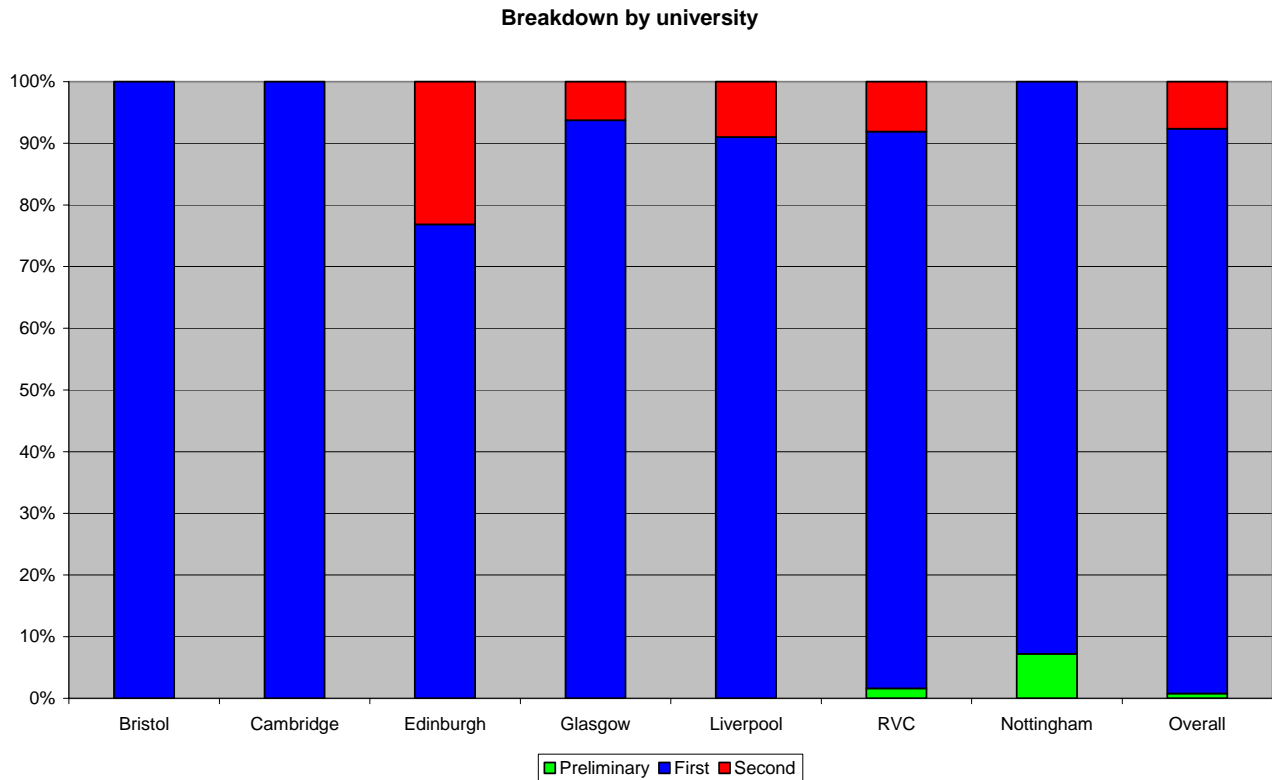
A new degree appears to have been introduced for the purpose of getting students on to the veterinary medicine course. In all previous years, the three most popular answers to this question have been Animal Science, Biology and Zoology. This year, the Bio-Vet Science degree has appeared as the second most popular choice behind Biology. It will be interesting to see if this goes on to dominate the responses to this question in future surveys. The 'Other' category continues to represent a large portion of the responses. This includes subjects ranging from Oceanography to Neuroscience and from German to Marketing.

7b) Was this taken with the intent of a subsequent veterinary degree?



The percentage planning a vet med degree to follow remains similar to 2005 (up from 67.2% to 68.3%).

8) What year of the veterinary course did you enter?



This question has been adapted in this year’s survey to record the introduction of the preliminary year for the veterinary medicine course at some UK vet schools. **1.6%** of London respondents and **7.2%** of those from Nottingham accessed the veterinary medicine course by starting in a preliminary year. No other vet school had any respondents taking this route so it is likely it is not yet an option at all schools.

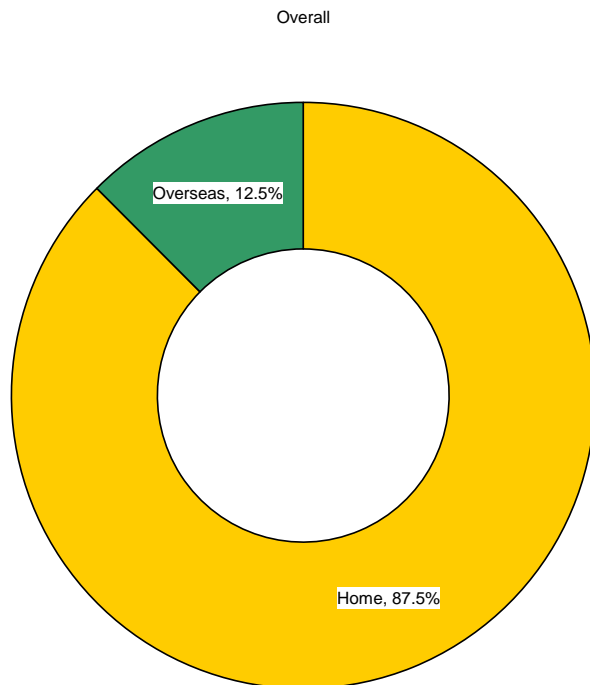
At the other end of the scale, this year has been reporting a steady increase in the percentage of respondents at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Liverpool who have been able to enter vet school in the second year of the course. The steady growth at Glasgow and Liverpool has continued but it has exploded at Edinburgh so that now almost 1 in 4 of the respondents (**23.2%**) started on the second year of the course.

It is fair to assume that the high percentage of students who have taken a second-degree at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool and London is not unrelated to the high percentage of students entering the vet course in year 2 at the same establishments.

The fees for home graduates are unbelievably high and I feel purposely misled about the amount that they would rise over the course. Already I am seriously worried I will not be able to afford to complete the course, adding further pressure to an already demanding degree – Edinburgh 1st year.

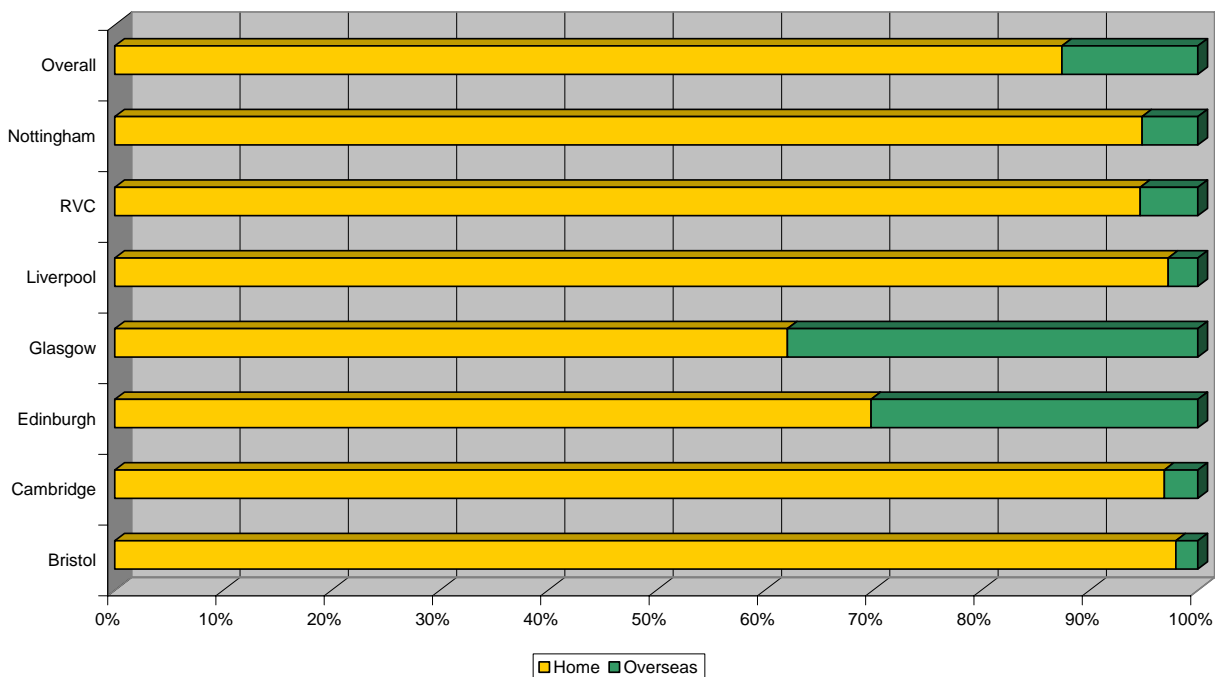
I am concerned about the increasing number of undergraduates entering the course. The universities are not providing adequate facilities (lecture space, study space, library books, practicals etc) to accommodate this fully. Resources are spread thinner every year. – Glasgow 5th year

9) Are you a home or overseas student?



This year sees a large jump in the percentage of respondents who are from overseas, up from **8.2%** in 1999, **7.3%** in 2002 and **7.9%** in 2005. The RCVS student population figures show an overseas student population of **11.8%** so our figures are again representative of the whole picture.

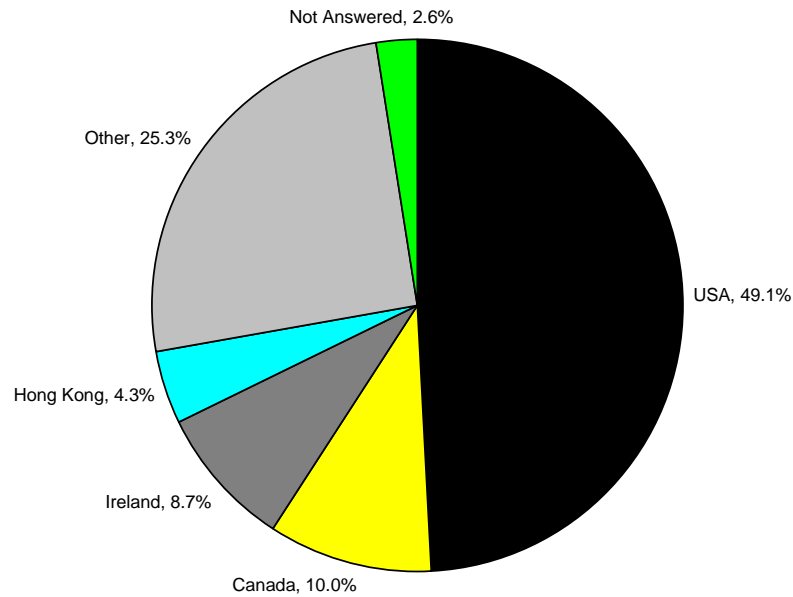
Breakdown by university



The high volume of overseas students at Edinburgh and Glasgow along with the same for second-degree students is possibly confirmation that these establishments have found an alternative means of raising income by having full-fee paying students to make up for the lack of tuition fees paid by first-degree Scottish students in Scotland. The range of the apparent student recruitment approach taken by different universities is huge from just **2.0%** overseas students at Bristol to **37.9%** at Glasgow. The increase in the number of overseas students at both Edinburgh and Glasgow in the last three years has seen both of their overseas student populations double.

9a) If you are an overseas student, which country are you from?

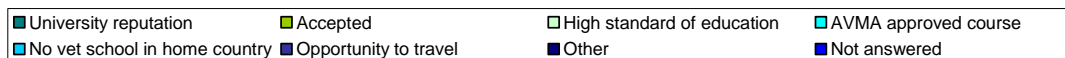
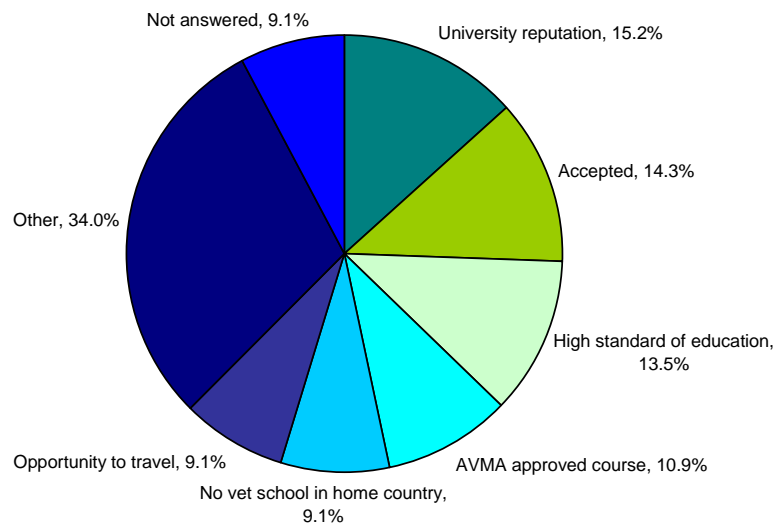
Country of origin for overseas students



Students from the USA continue to make up the largest percentage of overseas students in UK vet schools, although this year's reported figure of **49.1%** is a small drop from **53.1%** in 2005.

9b) Why did you choose to study veterinary medicine at a UK vet school?

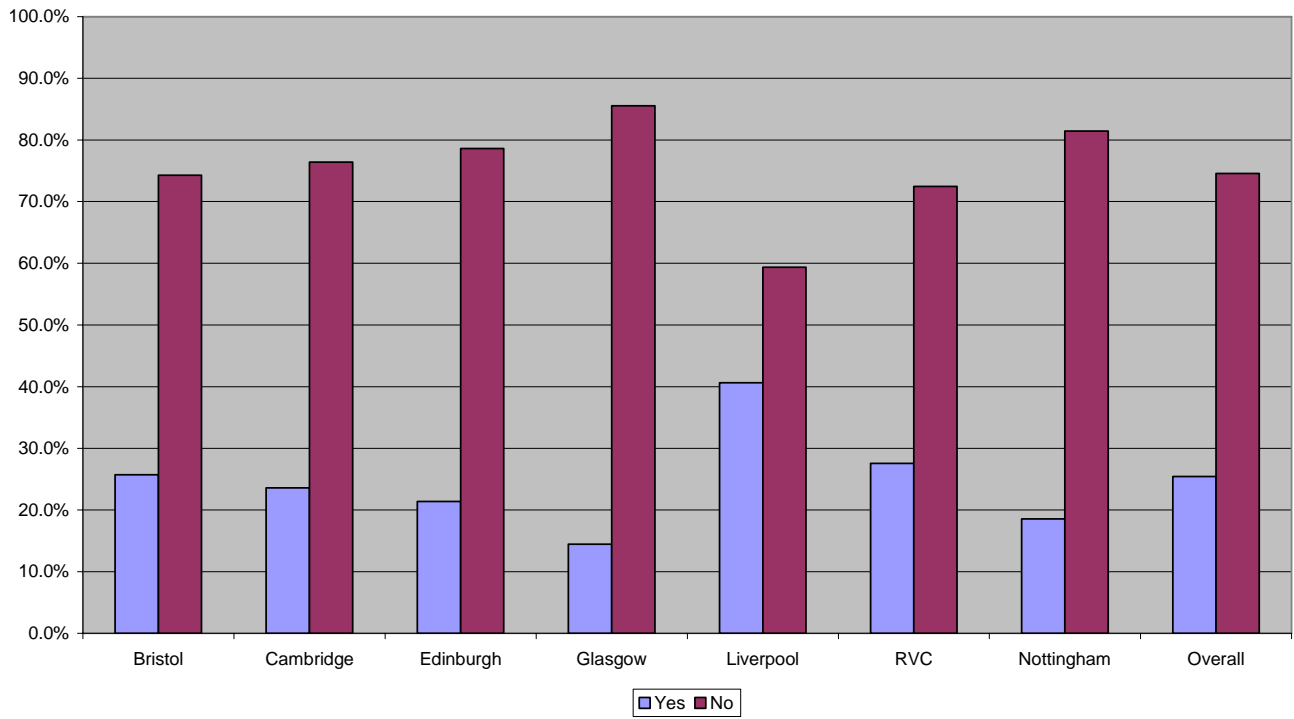
Overall



Answers were spread quite evenly across the possible reasons for studying in the UK.

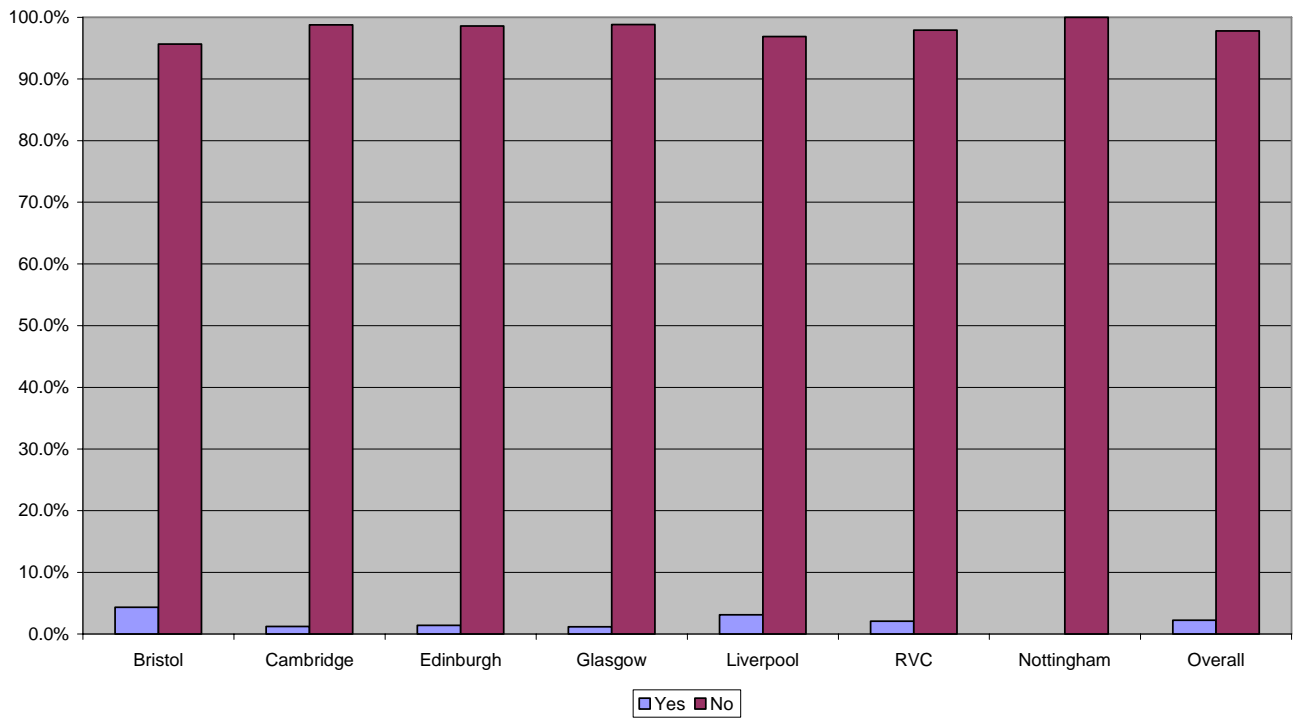
10a) Did you take a gap year before university?

Breakdown by university



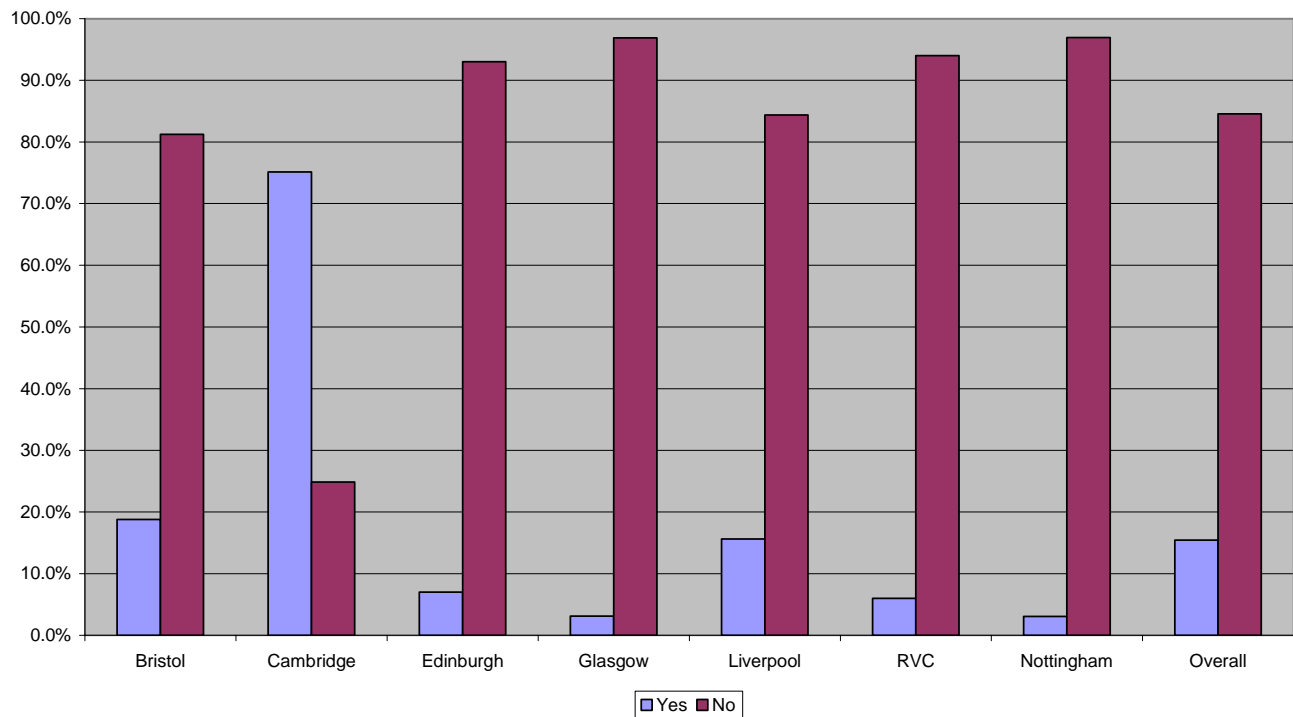
10b) Have you taken a gap year/ do you intend to take a gap year during the course?

Breakdown by university



10c) Have you intercalated/ do you intend to intercalate during the course?

Breakdown by university



A far higher percentage of respondents have already taken a gap year before they enter university than intend to take one during the course (**25.4%** compared with **2.2%**).

Cambridge students are by far and away the ones most likely to intercalate during their veterinary medicine course, with **75.2%** responding 'Yes' to this question, around 5 times above the overall likelihood of **15.4%**.

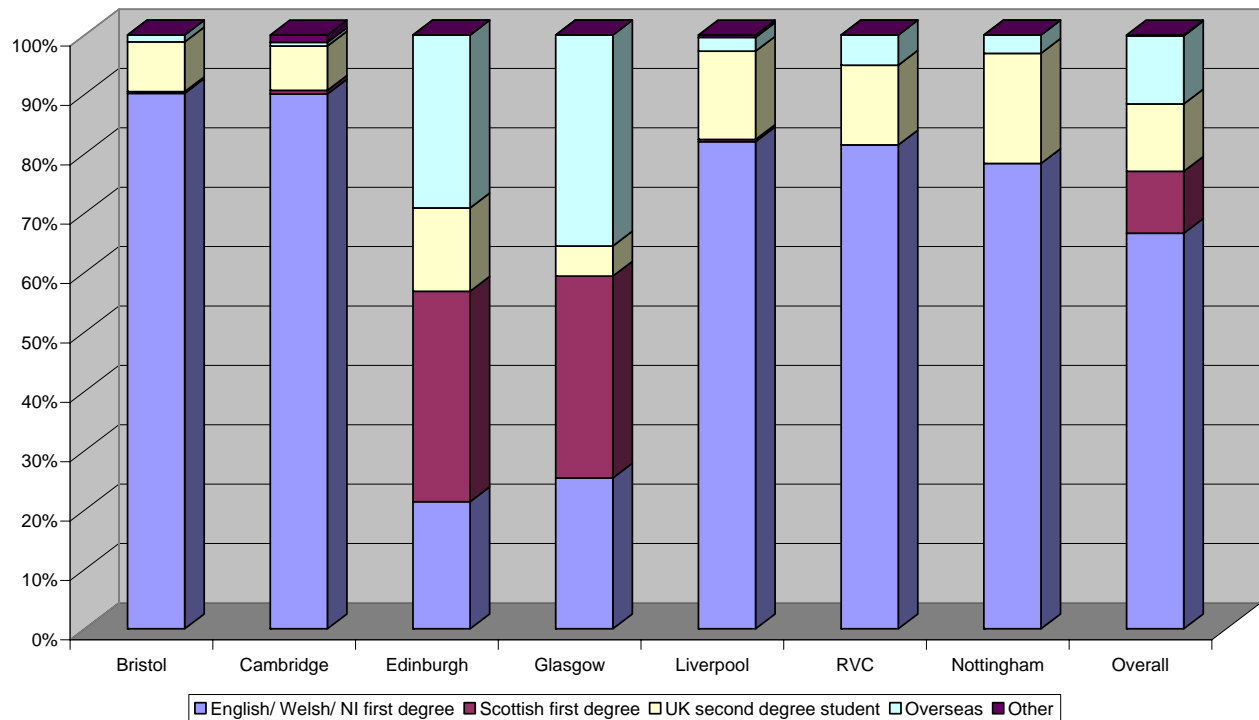
I would appreciate greater information regarding the opportunity to do an intercalation degree overseas – Bristol 3rd year

Sadly I think the increased costs of university means that many people will not do an intercalated year due to financial constraints. Seeing as the government is trying to encourage vets to go into research, this is counter-productive. The intercalated year is so frequently a students introduction to academic research and the opportunities it may hold – Cambridge 6th year

Section B – Financial

11) For funding purposes, which of the following applies to you?

Breakdown by university

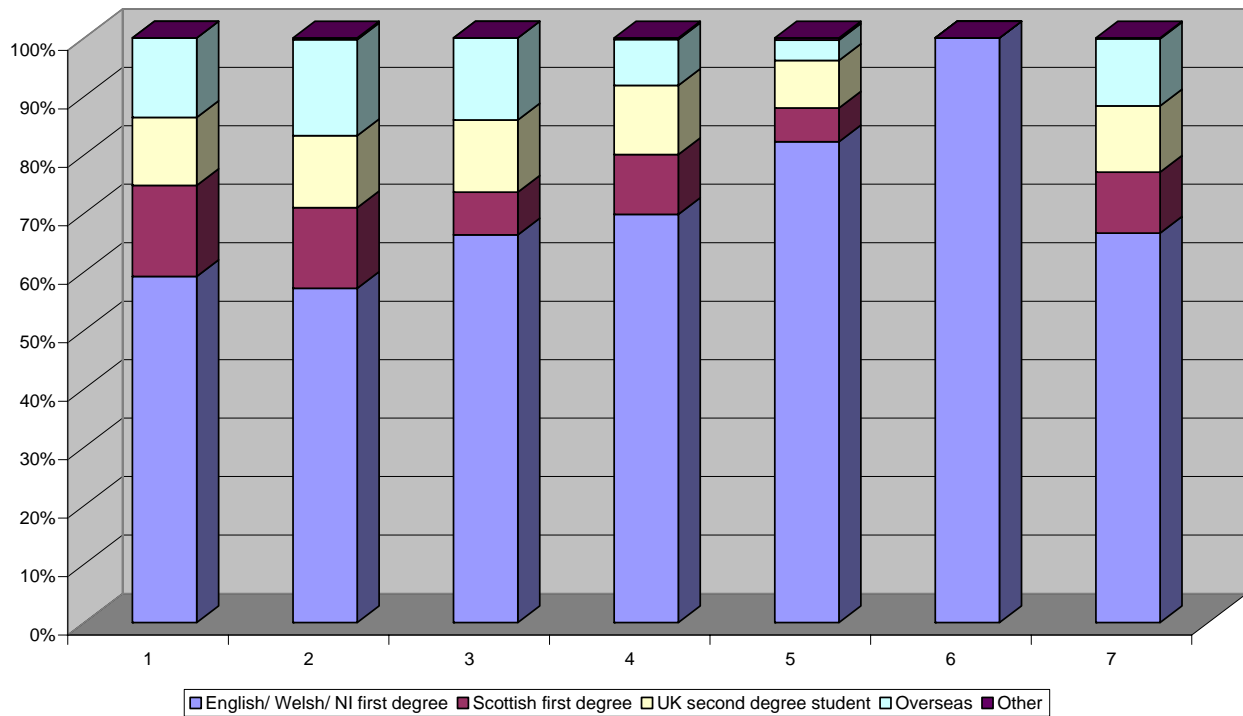


The difference in the make-up of the student population between Glasgow/ Edinburgh and the rest of the vet schools is marked. Obviously, the fact that first-degree Scottish students studying at Scottish establishments do not have to pay tuition fees means that there are far higher percentages of them at Edinburgh (**35.4%**) and Glasgow (**34.0%**) compared with a next highest of just **0.6%** at Cambridge. However, these figures are down from the **38.3%** at Edinburgh and **40.7%** at Glasgow reported in the 2005 survey. Also down are the percentages of English/ Welsh/ NI first degree students studying in Scotland (from **28.1%** and **30.4%** in 2005 to **21.4%** and **25.4%** at Edinburgh and Glasgow respectively). This supports the idea of a policy intended to take on increasing numbers of overseas and second degree students.

It is worth noting that the last three years seems to have seen a change in policy at RVC. In 2005, just **0.3%** of respondents were UK second-degree students. This has shot up to **13.4%** this time around.

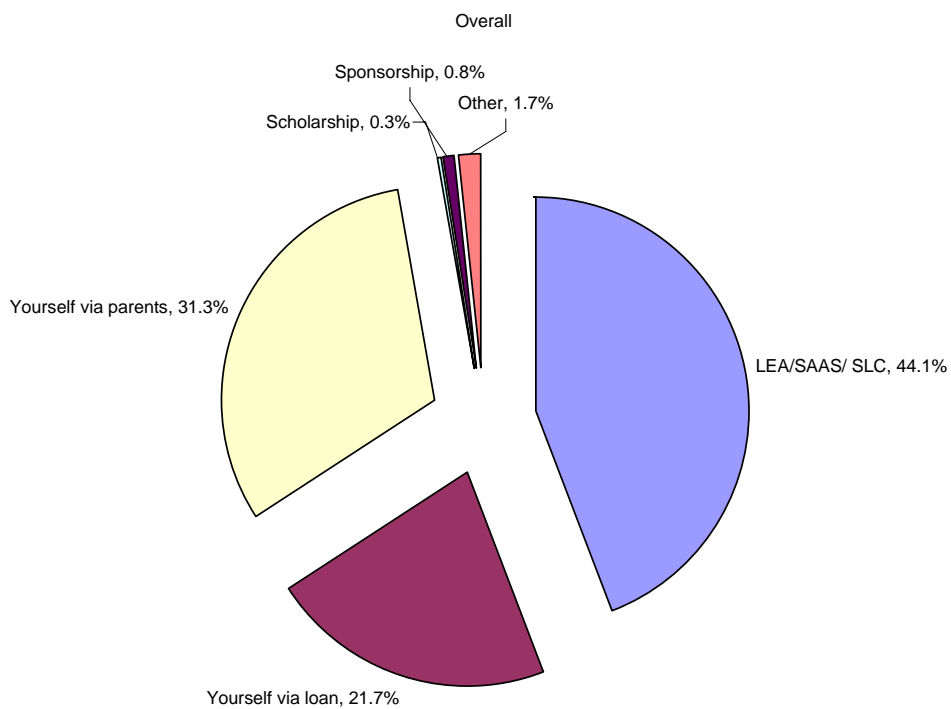
There should be lower second-degree student fees at Bristol University so that all fees are the same in all vet schools. – Bristol 1st year

Breakdown by year

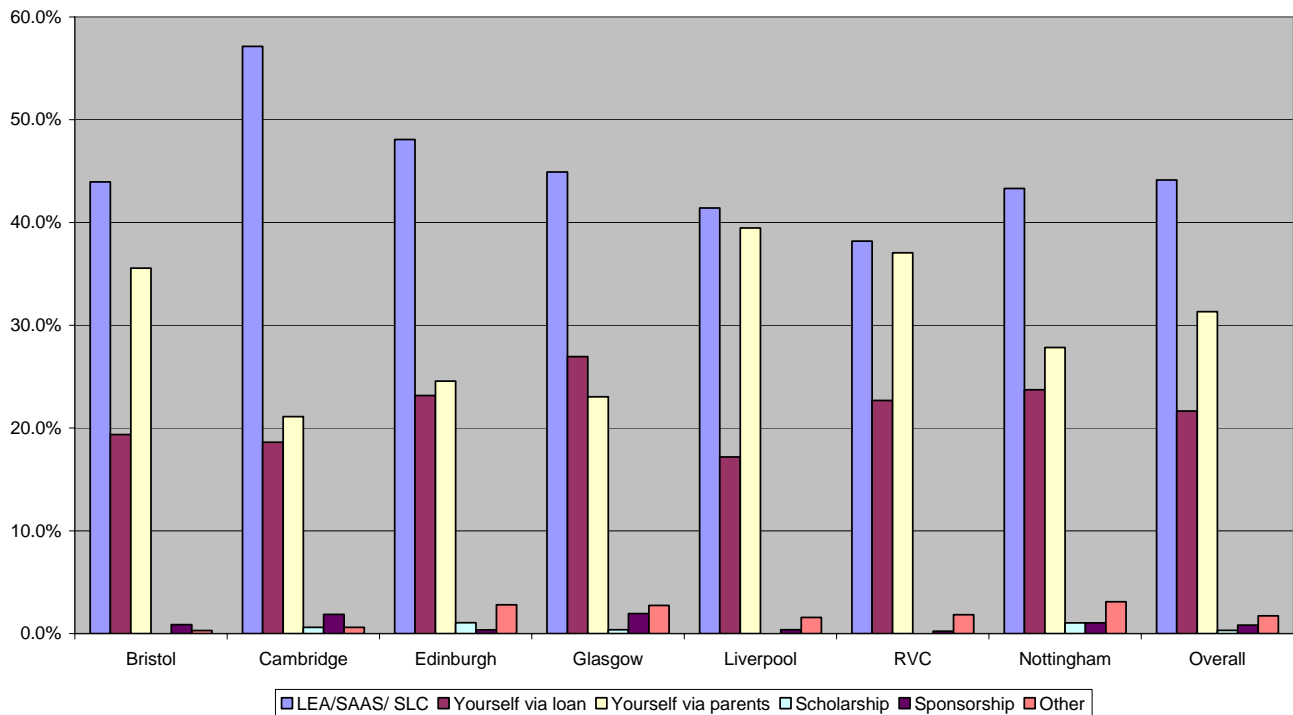


The breakdown by year confirms the recent increase in the percentage of overseas and second-degree students being taken on. This is on the back of reporting a similar increase when the survey was conducted in 2005. Combined, they constitute **11.6%** of 5th year, **19.7%** of 4th year, **26.3%** of 3rd year, **28.7%** of 2nd year and **25.2%** of 1st year students. The small drop in the percentage of 1st year students in these categories is likely to be a reflection of the increase in the number of students now beginning the course in Year 2.

12) Who funds the majority of your tuition fees?



Breakdown by university



The overwhelming majority of first and second year students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland no longer get LEA grants towards the cost of their tuition fees although the SAAS does still pay for first-degree Scottish students.

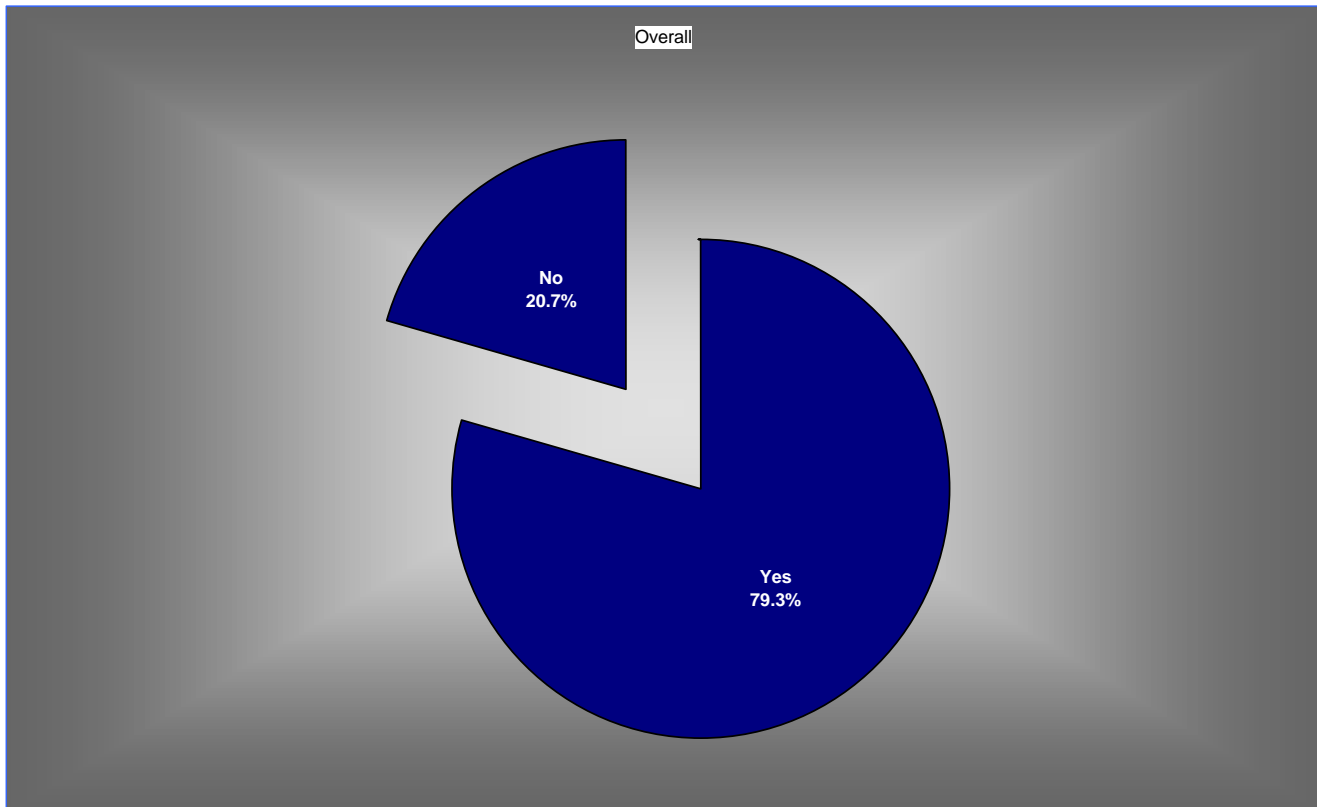
To get maximum benefit from this question in future versions of the survey, the answers offered will require further separation so that LEA/ SAAS, the SLC and alternative loan sources are clearly separated.

In this particular case, historical comparison is not possible because like with like is not being compared.

It is worth commenting that there is a completely different pattern at the English Universities than there is at the Scottish ones. All of the English ones have increased the percentage of respondents for whom the majority of their tuition fees are paid by their LEA/ SAAS/ SLC whilst the two Scottish ones have both decreased this proportion. This is probably to be expected as increasing percentages of students at the English establishments will apply to the SLC for tuition fee payments whilst the intake of more second-degree and overseas students at the Scottish ones will result in fewer being eligible for SAAS funding.

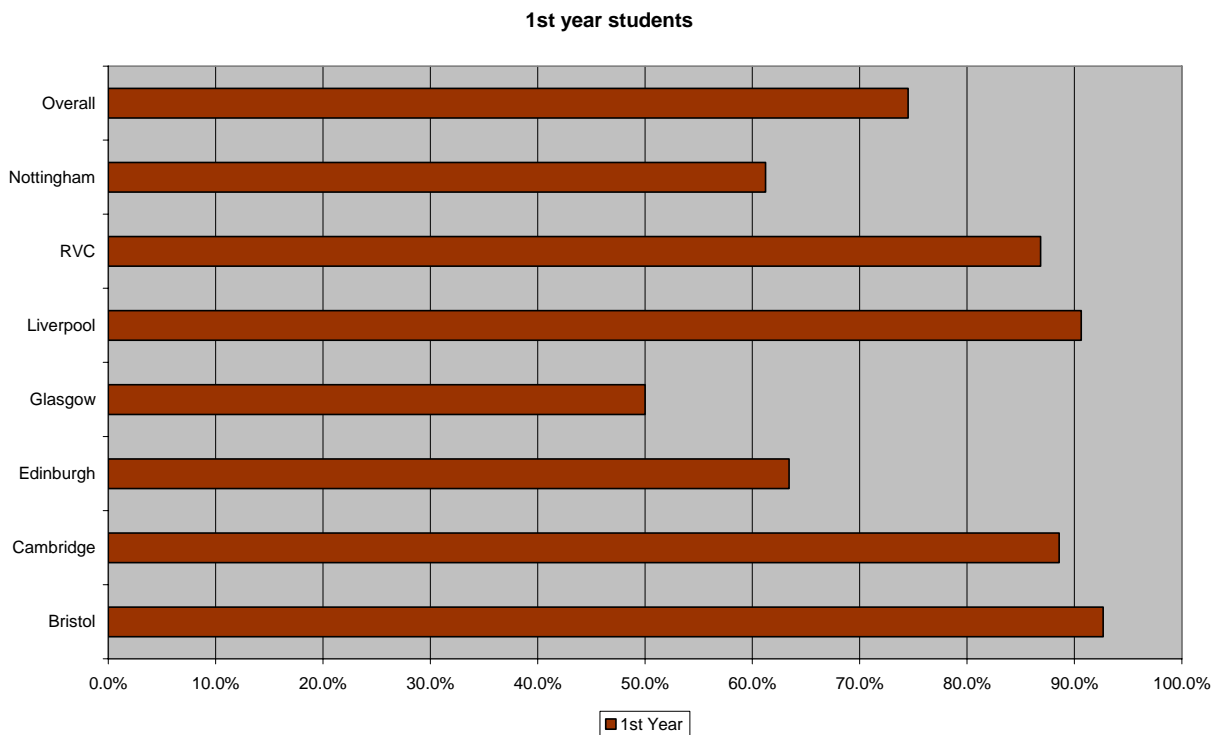
If universities must charge fees for post-graduate students, they should set up a loan system so you can pay once you have finished the course. Also, why should British students pay full fees and EU students only pay £3,000 per year? – Liverpool 1st year

13) Have you borrowed money from the Student Loans Company?



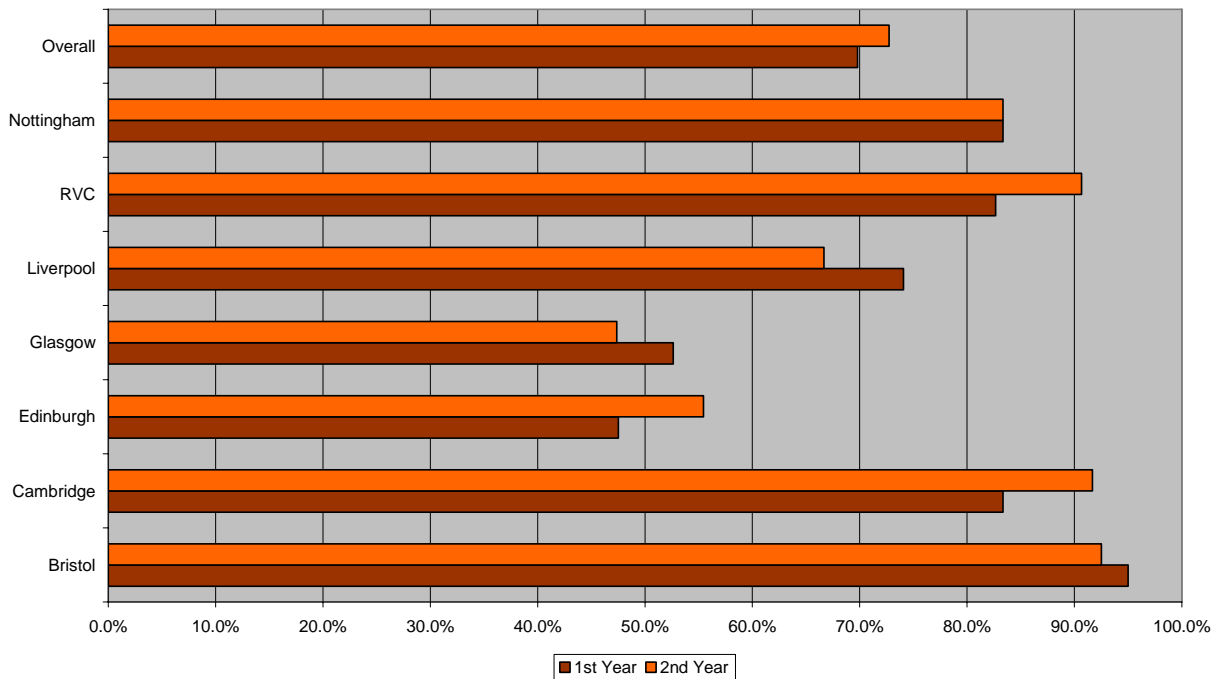
There has been a slight drop in the percentage of respondents who have borrowed money from the Student Loans Company from **83.9%** in 2005 to **79.3%** this year.

13a) If 'Yes', in which year(s) have you taken a student loan?



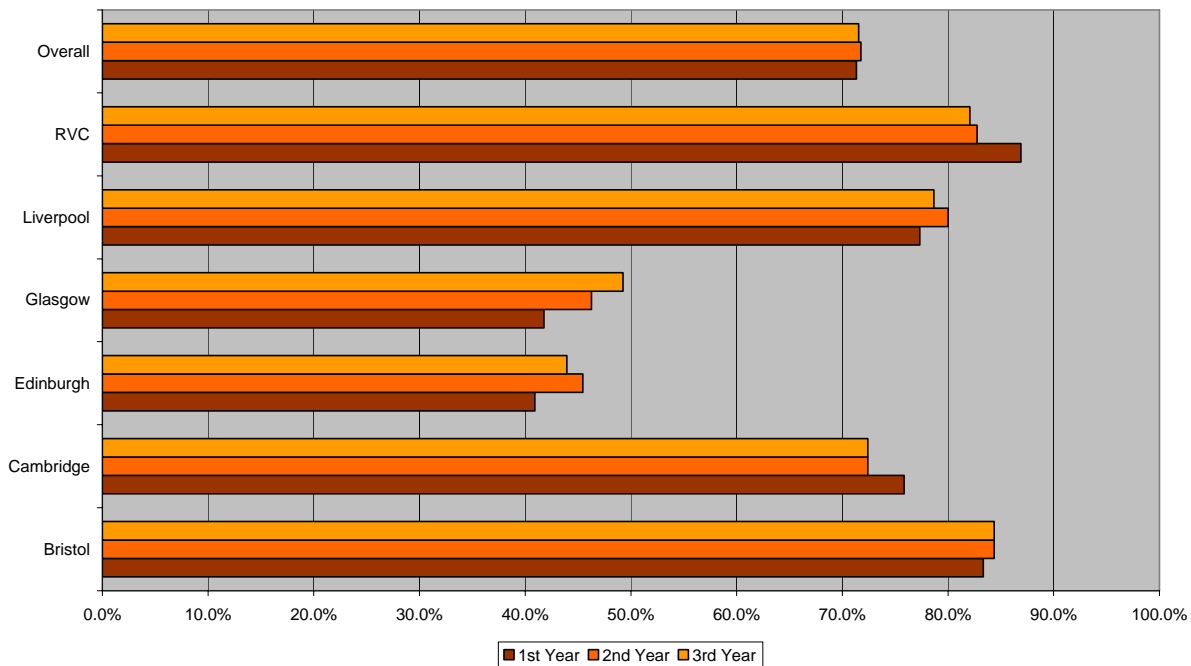
The number of respondents who have taken out a student loan in their first year varies greatly from **50.0%** at Glasgow to **92.7%** at Bristol. The overall figure of **74.5%** is a little down from 2005's **78.4%**.

2nd year students



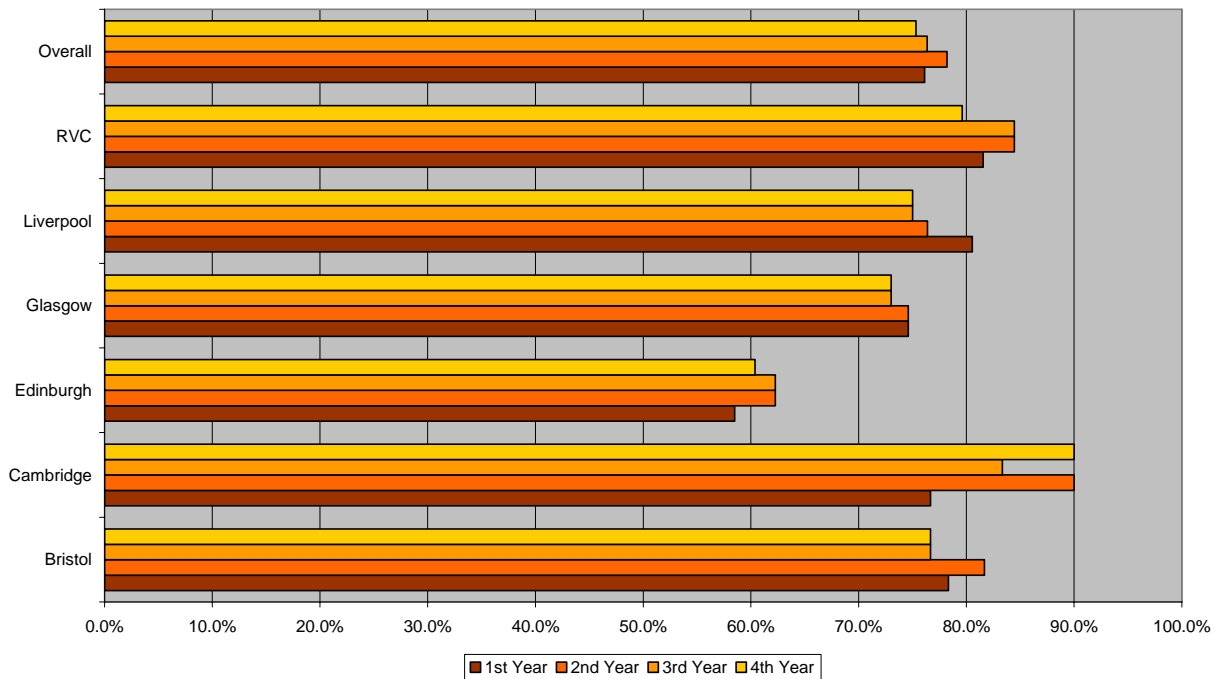
The difference between universities at opposite ends of the scale is even wider here with **47.5%** of Edinburgh 2nd year students taking an SLC loan in their 1st year compared with **95.0%** of Bristol 2nd years. When this survey was conducted in 2005 there was little change between the years; for example, the same percentage of students took out loans in their first two years at Glasgow, Cambridge and Bristol, with only a notable difference at Liverpool (**9.1%** variable). This year sees more frequent swings over the two years which may suggest that students are considering more carefully whether they wish to acquire the debt or that they have alternative sources of funding.

3rd year students



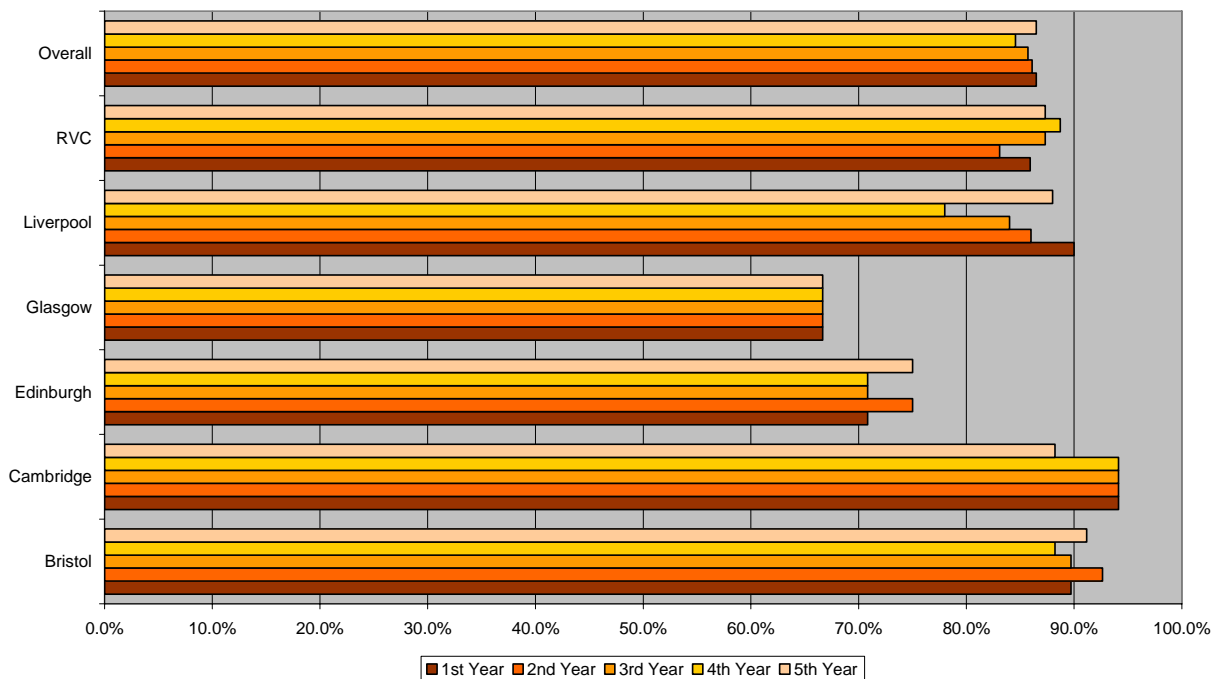
The overall percentage of 3rd year respondents who took out SLC loans in each year is remarkably similar per year – **71.3%** in their 1st year, **71.8%** in their 2nd year and **71.5%** in their 3rd year. This is roughly 10% down from when the survey was conducted in 2005 when the corresponding figures were **80.6%**, **81.8%** and **80.3%**

4th year students



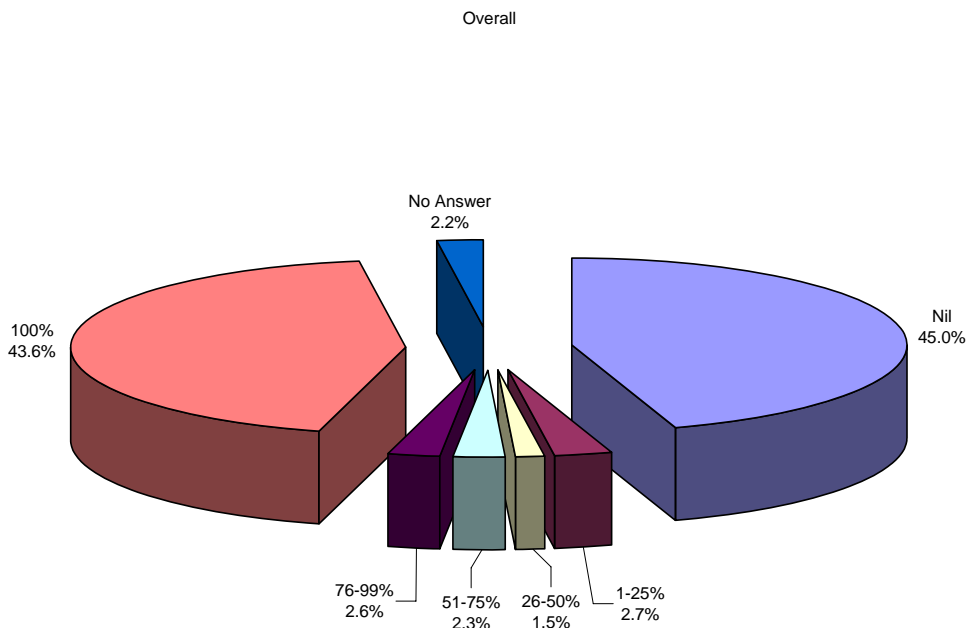
The above table helps to show when Glasgow University’s admissions policy changed. The percentage of 4th year respondents at Glasgow who have taken out student loans in this survey is similar to that in 2005 – **74.6%** in their 1st year, **74.6%** in their 2nd, **73.0%** in their 3rd and **73.0%** in their 4th compared with 2005’s **70.6%** in their 1st, **81.5%** in their 2nd, **81.5%** in their 3rd and **77.8%** in their 4th. It was in the figures for this year’s 3rd year students where the proportion borrowing money from the SLC suddenly dropped to less than 50%. It is worth noting that non-EU overseas students are not automatically eligible for SLC loans.

5th year students



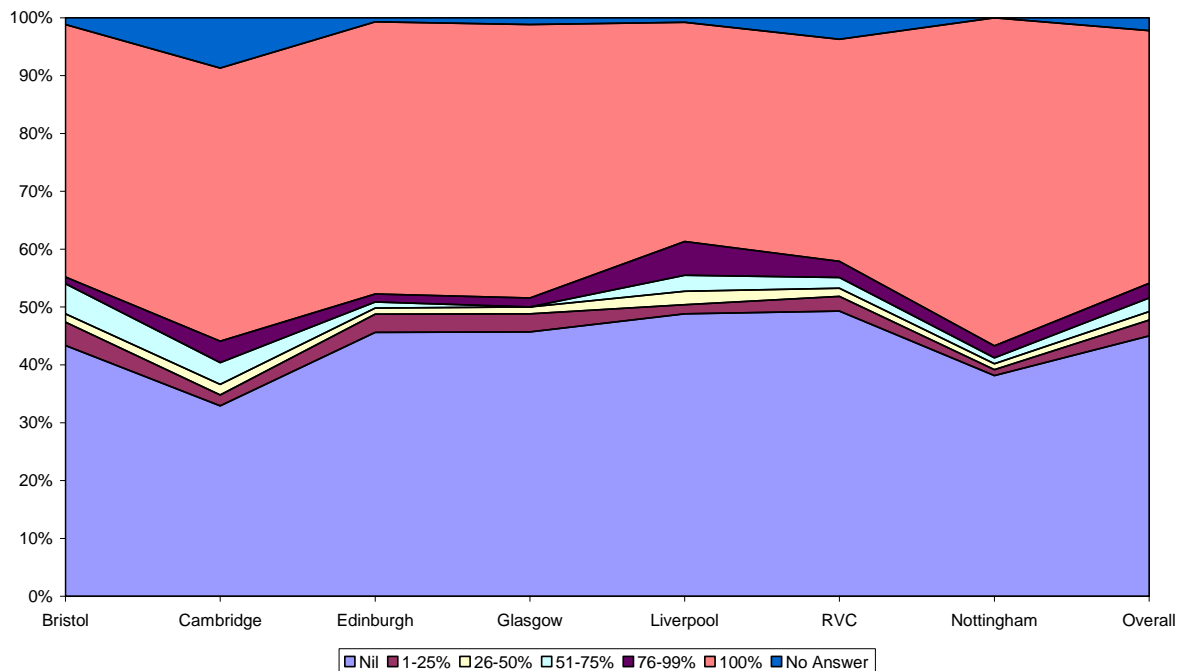
This year’s 5th year students were the 2nd year students in 2005’s survey. It is notable that there are fewer variations over the years between the proportions of students who took out SLC loans with Liverpool students showing the largest difference as was the case in 2005; a **9.1%** range then being a **12.0%** one now. No other universities displayed such patterns.

14) What percentage of your tuition fees are covered by the LEA/ SAAS tuition fee loan?



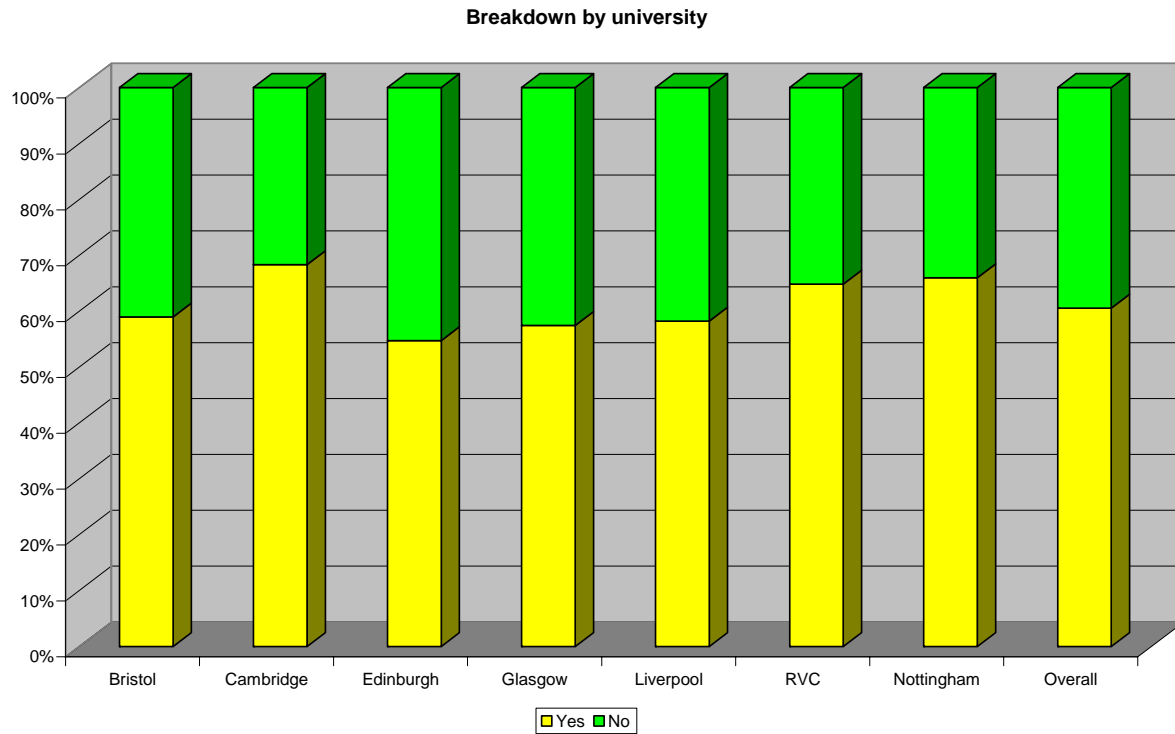
This question has changed slightly since previous versions of the survey so historical comparisons are not straightforward. However, the **43.6%** of respondents who receive a tuition fee loan to cover 100% of the actual tuition fee is similar to the **42.2%** of respondents whose parents were assessed and advised they had to make nil contribution towards the cost of tuition fees.

Breakdown by university



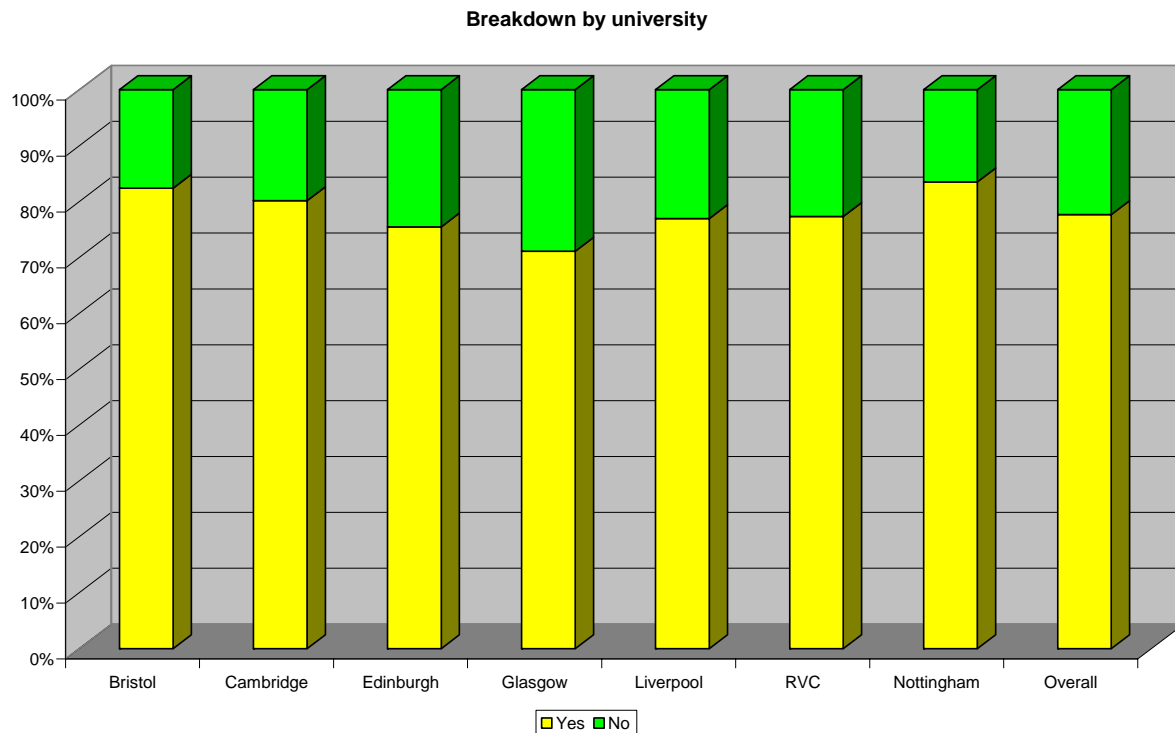
Between 10 and 20% more respondents from Nottingham received tuition fee loans that covered the whole of the fees when compared with the other universities. This may be a reflection of their stated intention to recruit vet students from different backgrounds. It will be interesting to see how this continues.

15a) Do you require additional finances than those received via the SLC?



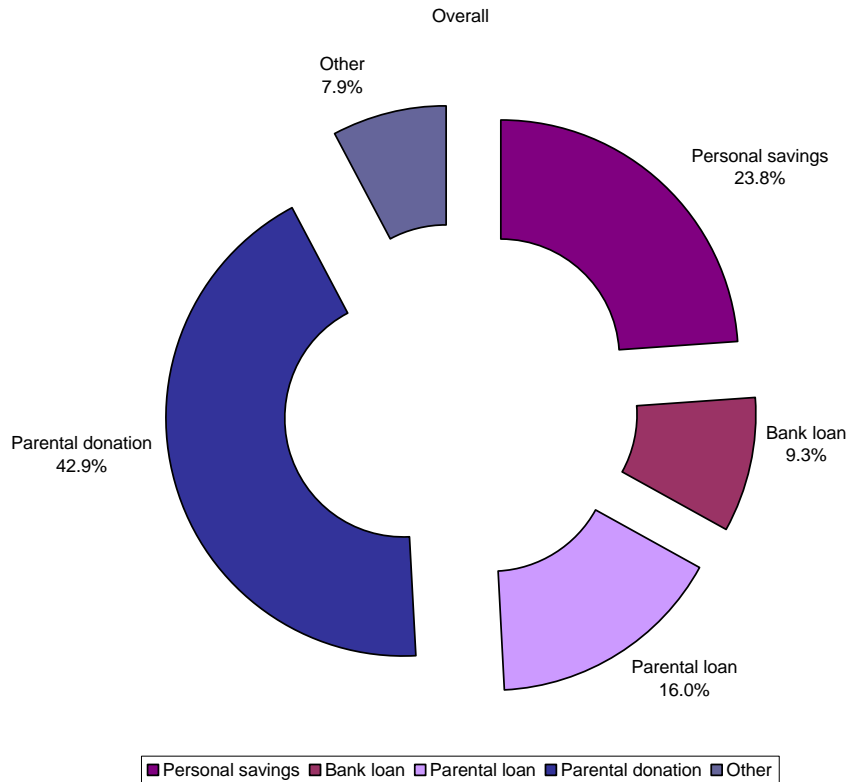
It might be considered a little surprising that only **60.6%** of respondents consider that they need additional finances to those available from the SLC. Less surprising is that Edinburgh (**54.7%**) and Glasgow (**57.4%**) are the establishments where the lowest percentages of participants said that they required additional finances.

15b) Do you receive any financial assistance from your parents?



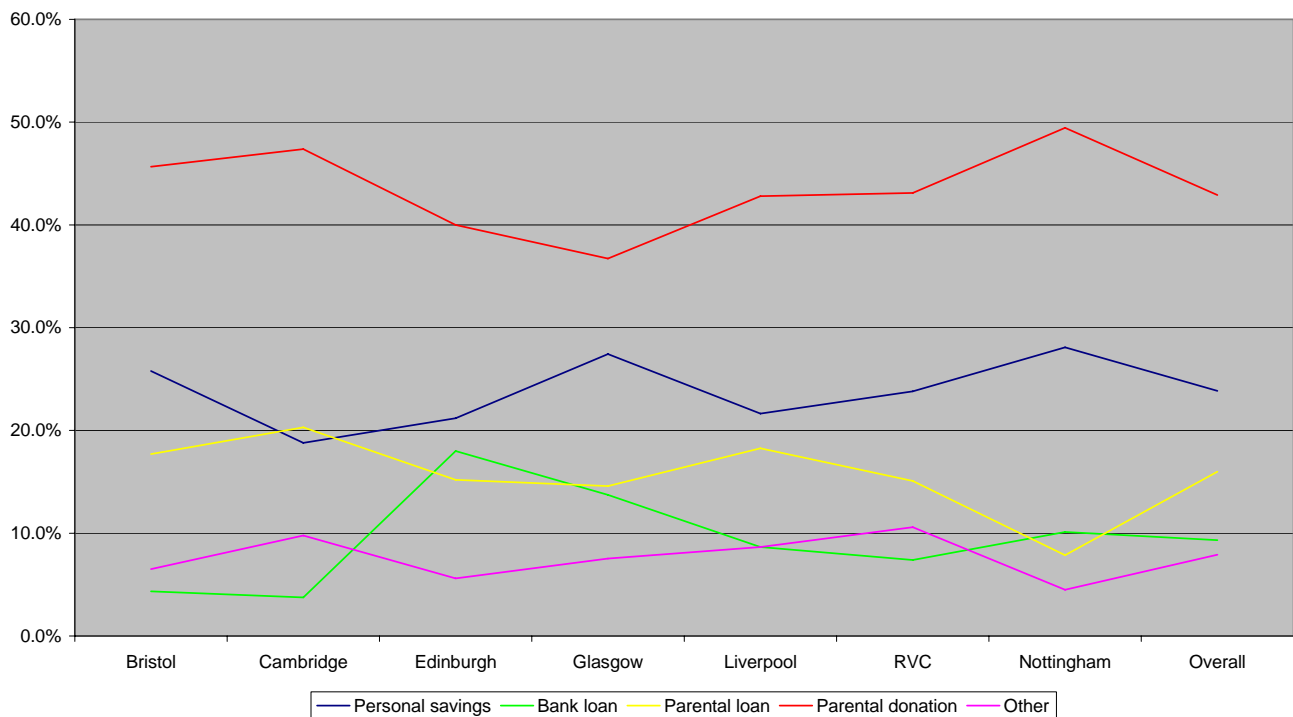
Overall, **77.6%** of respondents do receive financial assistance from their parents. There are not huge variations between the vet schools, although Glasgow students were least likely to receive parental assistance (**71.1%**) whilst those at Nottingham were most likely (**83.5%**).

15c) If you required additional finances, what has been your main source?



Encouragingly as far as future debt is concerned, a comfortable majority of additional required finances is covered by parental donation (42.9%) and personal savings (23.8%).

Breakdown by university



Perhaps most noticeable here is that Edinburgh and Glasgow students are a lot more likely to have a bank loan than any other students.

15d) How much were the SLC prepared to loan you per year?

	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
1st Year	£4,804.60	£3,599.00	£2,178.91	£4,130.57	£3,639.10	£5,133.40	£3,826.12	£4,096.67
2nd Year	£4,039.50	£3,644.09	£2,545.62	£4,505.43	£4,523.21	£5,626.89	£3,906.41	£4,200.03
3rd Year	£3,411.19	£3,718.60	£3,881.32	£4,524.79	£3,795.04	£5,029.81	-	£4,162.36
4th Year	£3,432.85	£3,481.19	£2,276.45	£2,963.17	£3,486.73	£5,127.54	-	£3,788.13
5th Year	£3,547.36	£3,482.14	£2,520.59	£2,017.05	£3,571.70	£4,801.88	-	£3,733.88
6th Year	-	£3,203.95	-	-	-	-	-	£3,203.95

Two different patterns appear to be displayed in response to this question.

The first is that there appears to be a significant increase in the amounts the SLC were prepared to loan to applicants at the time of the introduction of tuition fees up to £3,000 per annum. 2006 was the year that universities were allowed to levy top-up fees of £3,000. In this survey, students in their 3rd year would have started university in 2005/6 and those in their 2nd year are the class of 2006/7. This increase is particularly evident at Bristol, Liverpool and RVC.

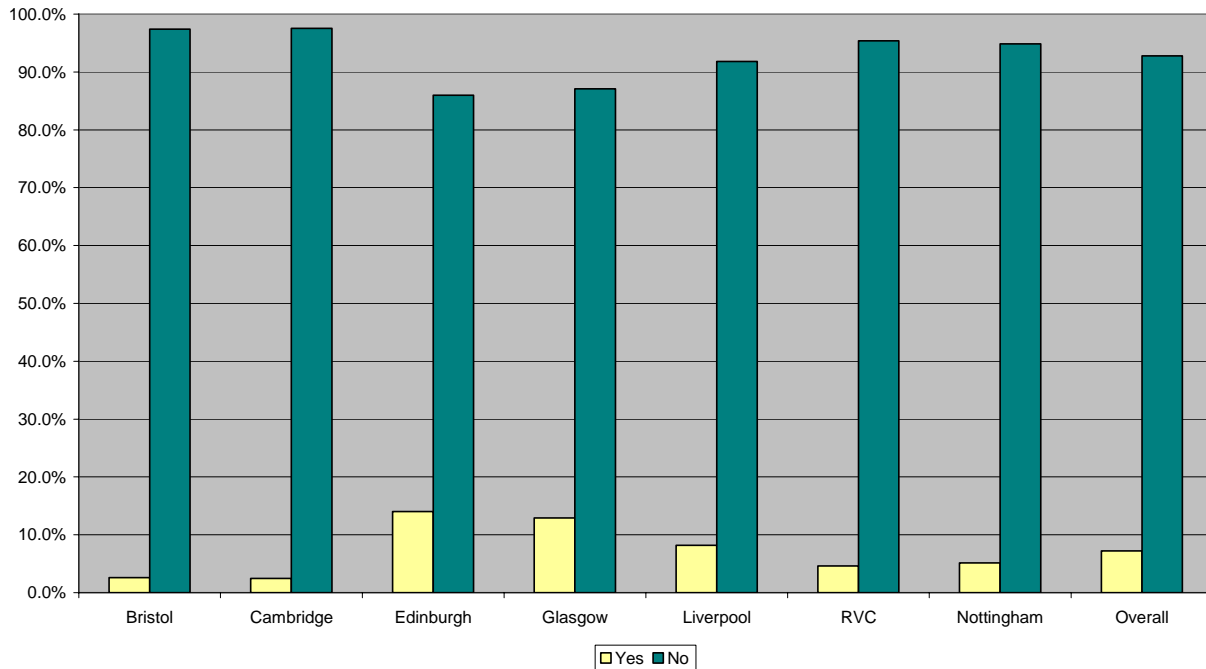
The second is that the amount loaned to students at Glasgow and Edinburgh saw a significant increase between 4th year and 3rd year students. This may be further evidence of the increased finances required by students there as far more of them are second-degree or overseas students. In fact, the availability of accelerated courses (4 years instead of 5) would mean that some students listed in the third year are actually only on their actual second year of learning so would be paying higher tuition fees anyway.

Also visible is the idea of London weighting with regards to the amount loaned by the SLC. The average amount loaned to students at London is higher than every other university in every single year of study. In fact, the amount loaned to 1st year RVC students is almost 2.5 times as much as that loaned to 1st year Edinburgh students.

I feel that the most pressing issue is that there is no allowance made by the SLC that we have to undertake EMS outside of term-time. I think this should be recognised and a higher loan should be made available to compensate for this – Glasgow 4th year

16) Do you have a Professional Studies Loan (i.e from a bank for the purpose of college?)

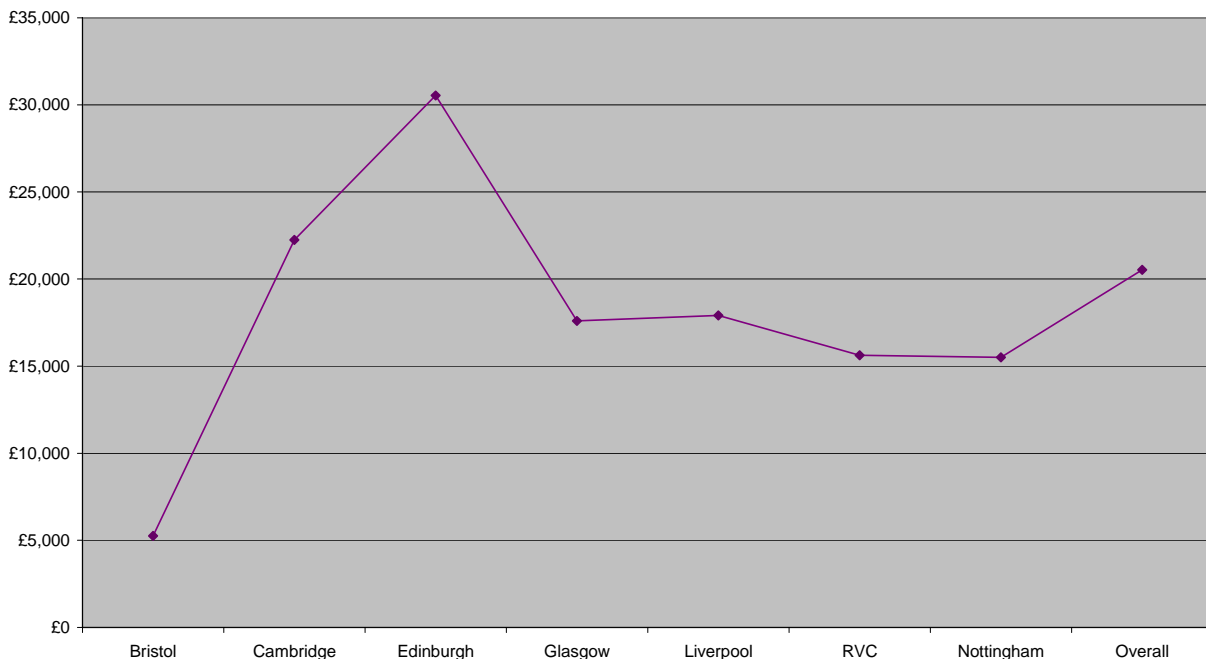
Breakdown by university



The overall percentage of students who have a professional studies loan has remained reasonably consistent over the lifespan of the survey – changing from **7.6%** in 1999 to **7.5%** in 2002 to **8.5%** in 2005 and to **7.2%** this year. As expected, the two universities with the lowest proportion of overseas and second degree students are the ones with the lowest proportion of student who have a professional studies loan (Bristol **2.6%** and Cambridge **2.5%**)

16a) If 'Yes', how much were you able to borrow and what was it for?

Breakdown by university



The average amount borrowed as professional studies loans is £20,534. Apart from at Bristol, where the average amount is £5,250 the large sums involved strongly suggest that a lot of these are borrowings by

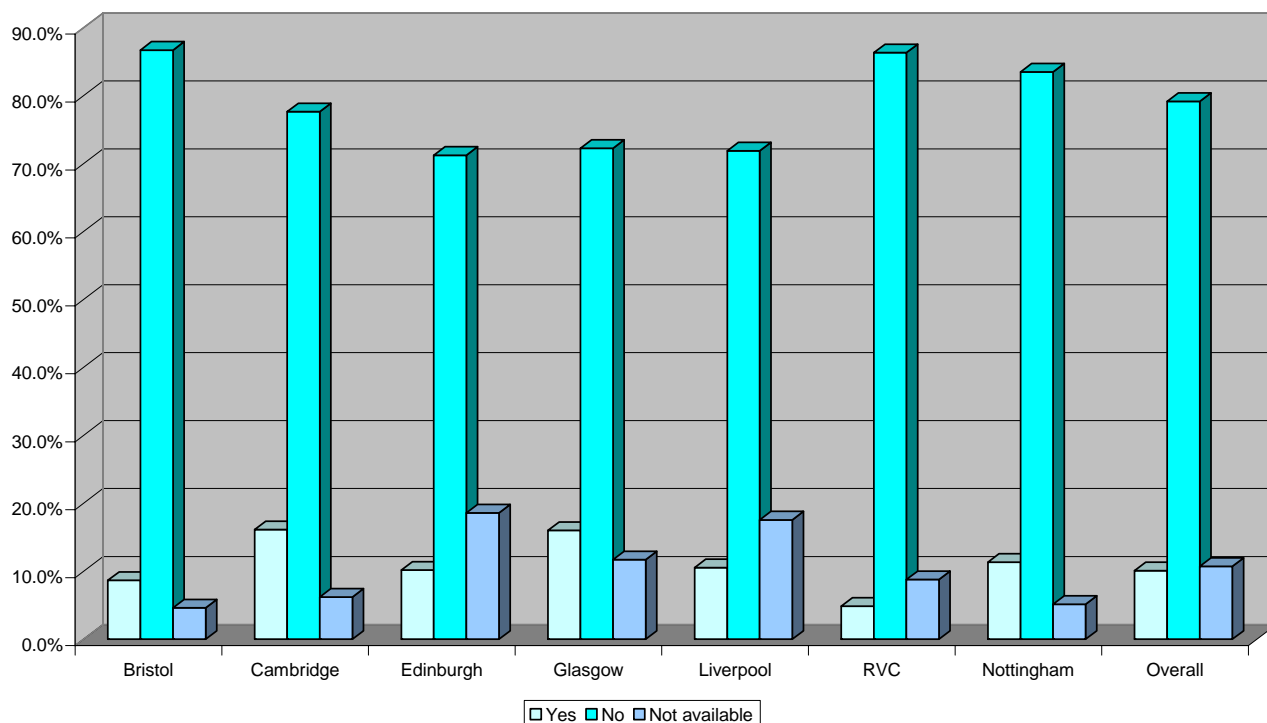
overseas and second degree students. The largest single amount loaned is £90,000 to a student at Edinburgh, although there are plenty of cases of £50,000 plus being borrowed. The average sum borrowed in this survey is actually very slightly down from the £20,679 recorded in 2005.

Living costs/ accommodation	24.3%
Debt	4.5%
Tuition fees	63.1%
Car/ travel	5.4%
EMS/ course expenses	2.7%
Total	100.0%

Almost two-thirds of the respondents who had a professional studies loan were using it for their tuition fees. However, there is a previously unreported incidence of them being taken out to pay off other debt.

17) Have you applied for a scholarship or similar award?

Breakdown by university



At **10.1%**, the overall percentage of respondents who have applied for a scholarship or similar award is similar to previous years (**9.6%** in 2005, **8.0%** in 2002 and **9.9%** in 1999). Also as in previous years, the university with the highest percentage of scholarship applicants was Cambridge (**16.1%**) although Glasgow at **16.0%** has gained considerable ground.

As you are putting so much effort into recruiting US students, more scholarships and grants need to be made available to them – Glasgow 1st year

Overseas students now make up approximately one third of every class so you should find some form of funding assistance too – Glasgow year 2

17a) If 'Yes', what was the sum received and the name of the scholarship in each case?

Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
£1,340	£1,279	£3,666	£1,395	£1,761	£1,524	£960	£1,656

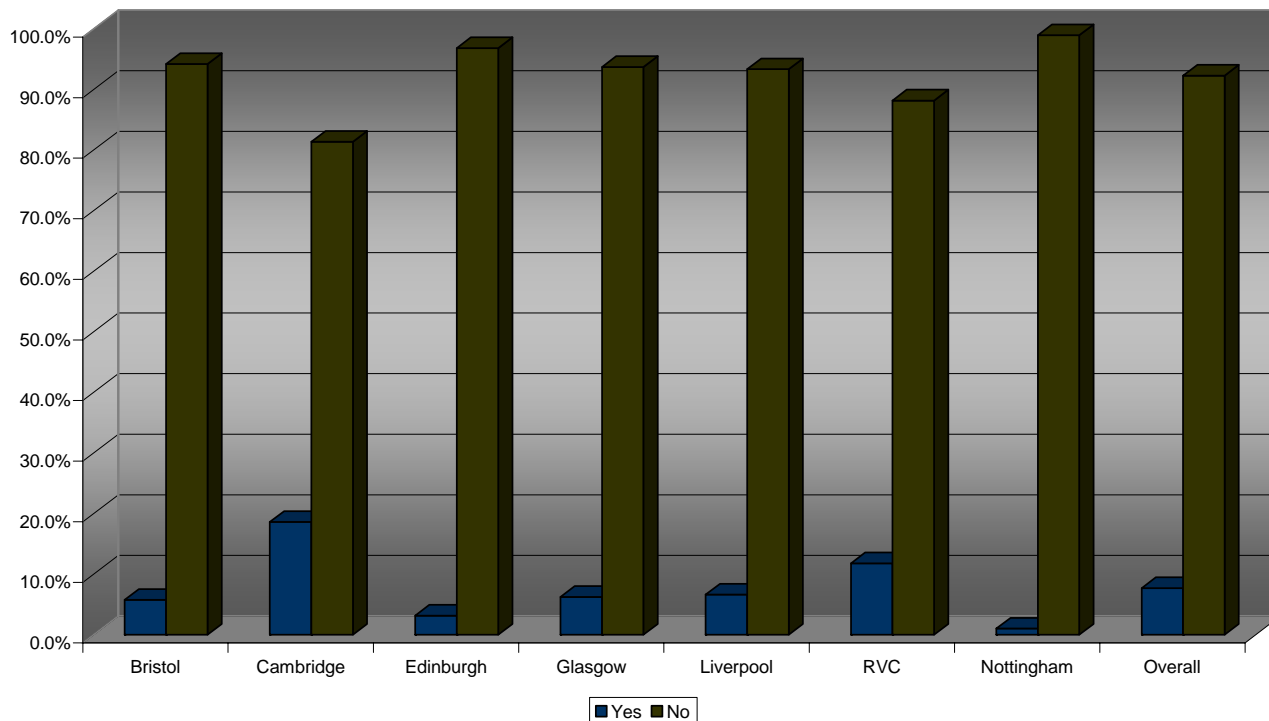
The average size of the scholarship (including applicants who received £0 in response) is shown in the above table. The overall average of **£1,656** is up from **£1,266** in 2005. Generally, the average size of scholarship awards at the universities seems to be quite similar. However, at the top end of the scale is Edinburgh with the average award being twice as high as anywhere else – this appears to be influenced by some substantial awards being made to overseas students studying there. At the other end of the range is Nottingham, being the only establishment to have an average award below £1,000. It is interesting to speculate on possible reasons for this – perhaps the university's status in relation to the RCVS has an effect or maybe the size of awards will increase once students enter the traditional clinical years. The next version of this survey should help to answer.

Not given	29.9%
Isaac Newton Trust	7.6%
Wellcome Trust	7.2%
RAVC	3.4%
Chadave Agricultural Trust	2.3%

Almost one third of students did not answer the question regarding the name of their scholarship. Perhaps there is defensiveness over the scholarship and they do not wish to share its name with other potential applicants. There were 62 different scholarships named, of which the above 4 were the most frequent.

18) Have you applied to the College Hardship Fund?

Breakdown by university



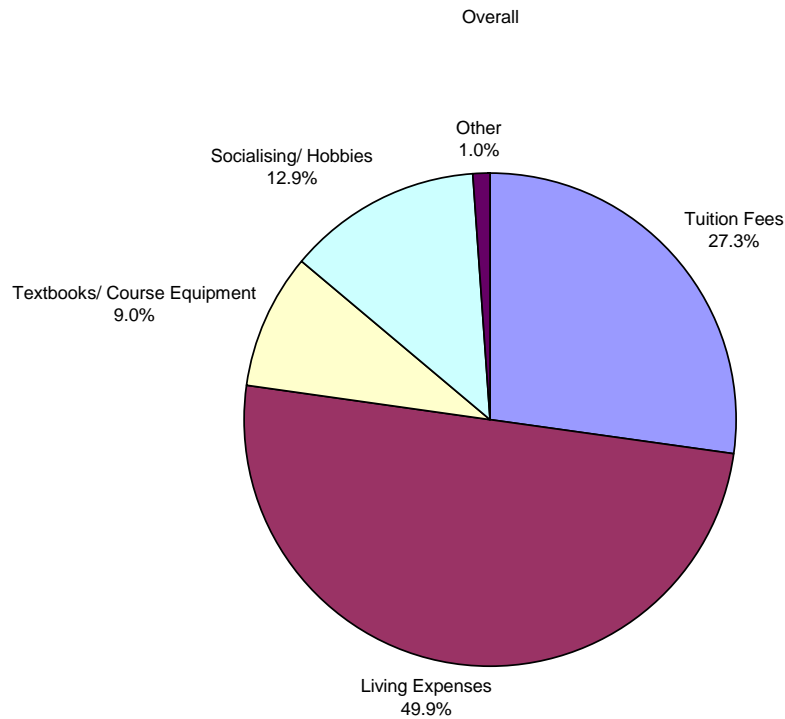
The percentage of respondents who have applied to the College Hardship Fund for assistance is **7.9%**. Although this figure has changed very little over the lifespan of this survey (from **7.8%** in 1999 to **7.3%** in 2002 to **8.1%** in 2005), **7.9%** of 4,039 veterinary medicine students would be 319 of them. This seems a high number to be in such a difficult financial position already.

18a) If 'Yes', what was the sum received?

Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
£550	£552	£740	£563	£292	£280	£800	£462

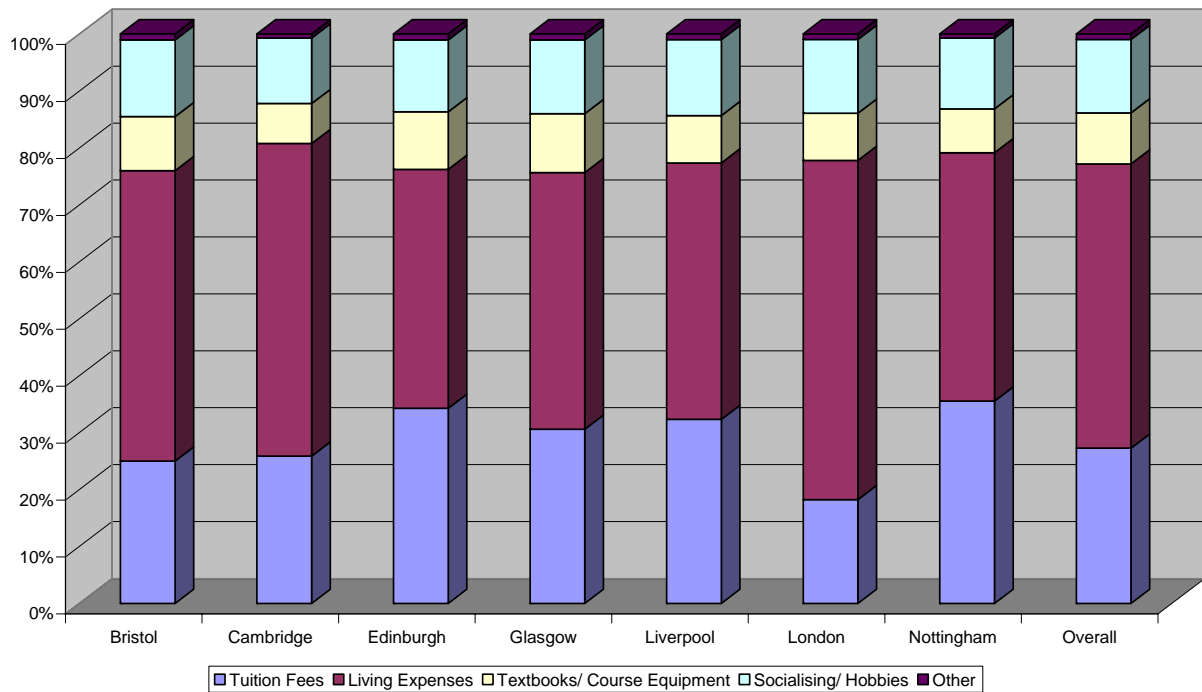
The average amount received via the College Hardship Fund is £462, varying from £280 at RVC to £800 at Nottingham. **30.3%** of applications to the College Hardship Fund were unsuccessful.

19) As a percentage, please try and allocate the division of your current expenditure over an academic year to the following categories:



The overall percentage of expenditure spent on tuition fees has increased to **27.3%** since this survey was last conducted in 2005 (**18.2%**). Expenditure on all other categories has reduced in order to accommodate this growth.

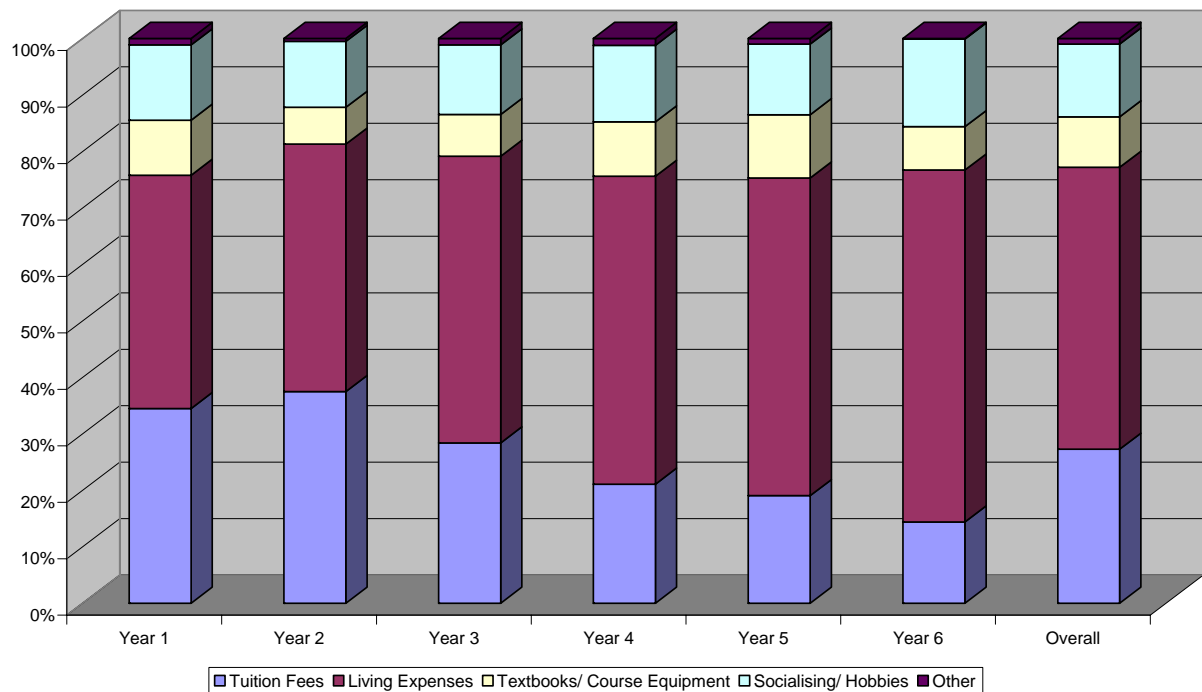
Breakdown by university



The percentage of expenditure covered by living expenses is higher at London (**59.6%**) than at any other vet school (overall average **49.9%**).

The impact of the high volume of overseas and second-degree students at Edinburgh and Glasgow is apparent. Both establishments will be the only ones who have significant numbers of students benefiting from no tuition fees and yet both are well above the overall average for the percentage of expenditure allocated to tuition fees (**34.2%** and **30.6%** respectively against an overall average of **27.3%**).

Breakdown by year



The impact of increased tuition fees could not be clearer demonstrated than it is in the above table. As a percentage of expenditure it has virtually doubled from **19.0%** for year 5 students to **37.5%** for year 2 students.

20) What is your current total debt?

UK students

2008

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£4,126.90	£3,996.18	£3,512.97	£1,668.83	£6,549.67	£11,113.42	£9,071.49	£5,659.64
Year 2	£10,716.92	£6,976.00	£9,819.09	£4,572.73	£9,647.83	£12,947.46	£11,271.93	£10,286.35
Year 3	£12,811.06	£9,034.17	£14,820.83	£13,026.19	£9,166.00	£13,418.22	-	£12,282.00
Year 4	£12,101.67	£13,898.28	£16,571.79	£16,482.45	£21,715.49	£18,149.49	-	£17,065.39
Year 5	£19,171.64	£18,606.06	£20,371.43	£14,050.00	£20,657.00	£22,917.16	-	£20,302.82
Year 6	-	£21,150.00	-	-	-	-	-	£21,150.00

2005

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£1,874.64	£2,017.51	£675.56	£486.90	£2,691.48	£2,962.75	-	£1,944.06
Year 2	£5,398.54	£4,770.50	£1,642.42	£2,385.23	£6,652.16	£6,454.96	-	£5,176.81
Year 3	£9,103.66	£0.00	£4,524.10	£4,164.06	£9,411.40	£12,302.98	-	£8,230.92
Year 4	£11,926.92	£13,178.85	£7,218.42	£8,109.52	£12,004.55	£16,151.32	-	£11,842.91
Year 5	£15,928.57	£16,428.44	£10,833.50	£10,833.33	£18,909.09	£18,828.40	-	£17,395.53
Year 6	-	£14,040.00	-	-	-	-	-	£14,040.00

2002

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£1,638.40	£1,380.65	£1,111.05	£920.87	£1,224.54	£1,828.82	-	£1,410.52
Year 2	£5,359.20	£4,488.38	£3,870.79	£4,987.13	£5,305.57	£5,760.29	-	£5,179.80
Year 3	£8,161.58	£8,200.00	£8,341.13	£7,583.50	£8,624.05	£9,317.02	-	£8,517.06
Year 4	£8,765.11	£7,996.00	£11,563.39	£7,986.49	£8,939.52	£12,723.53	-	£9,370.53
Year 5	£10,750.00	£7,443.59	£7,477.27	£5,297.50	£8,455.00	£14,828.57	-	£7,964.55
Year 6	-	£7,653.13	-	-	-	-	-	£7,653.13

1999

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£1,211.00	£1,578.00	£2,605.00	£1,591.00	£1,439.00	£2,695.00	-	£1,853.00
Year 2	£2,138.00	£1,704.00	£2,570.00	£4,743.00	£5,523.00	£2,986.00	-	£3,277.00
Year 3	£3,361.00	£0.00	£4,915.00	£3,784.00	£4,993.00	£4,917.00	-	£3,662.00
Year 4	£4,775.00	£3,337.00	£5,301.00	£7,918.00	£5,788.00	£8,000.00	-	£5,853.00
Year 5	£6,674.00	£6,694.00	£8,167.00	£3,150.00	£7,423.00	£9,622.00	-	£6,955.00

The pattern of increased debt for veterinary medicine students in the UK continues unchecked. The average debt of a final year student in 1999 was **£6,955.00** which is closer to the 2008 debt of a 1st year student (**£5,659.64**) than it is to any other. However, even just in the last 3 years, the average debt of a final year student has increased from **£17,359.53** to **£20,302.82** (17.0%).

This rise is before the impact of higher tuition fees can be properly assessed as it was in 2006/07 that they were increased to around £3,000 per year for even first degree students at the English universities. However, looking at the difference in the debt levels of students currently in the 1st and 2nd years in comparison with those who were in their 1st and 2nd year in 2005 gives a clear indication of where we are heading. In 2005 the average debt of a 1st year student was **£1,944.06** compared with **£5,659.64** today (a 191.1% increase!) whilst the figures for 2nd year students have changed from **£5,176.81** in 2005 to **£10,286.35** today (a 98.7% increase) respectively.

Overseas Students

2008

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£0.00	£0.00	£2,857.14	£18,737.50	-	-	£0.00	£13,990.91
Year 2	£0.00	£6,150.00	£24,062.50	£38,206.25	£4,925.00	£10,500.00	£11,400.00	£23,823.81
Year 3	£22,500.00	£0.00	£45,666.67	£45,840.00	-	£50,545.45	-	£45,173.91
Year 4	-	-	£45,428.57	£78,964.29	£0.00	£180,000.00	-	£74,590.91
Year 5	£25,000.00	£0.00	£83,333.33	£100,000.00	-	£40,500.00	-	£57,909.09
Year 6		-						

2005

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£5,913.67	£9,512.40	£16,412.48	£13,852.19	£24,000.00	£29,195.67		£16,841.46
Year 2	£54,423.08	£10,000.00	£21,028.57	£23,863.40	£29,750.00	£23,333.33		£27,127.60
Year 3	£36,666.67	£0.00	£36,008.70	£27,517.86	£29,600.00	£0.00		£30,551.32
Year 4	£31,444.44	£23,183.33	£56,000.00	£49,384.62	£40,390.48	£71,166.67		£44,605.80
Year 5	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£65,400.00	£78,000.00	£70,750.00	£67,325.00		£68,035.29
Year 6		£32,500.00						£32,500.00

2002

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£4,240.00	£7,666.67	£18,228.42	£23,714.29	£19,772.73	£11,081.54		£15,427.87
Year 2	£5,191.67	£13,416.67	£25,890.91	£17,069.23	£18,240.00	£29,857.14		£19,051.89
Year 3	£23,641.50	£0.00	£19,452.94	£31,541.67	£28,333.33	£42,372.22		£27,709.53
Year 4	£34,863.64	£18,375.00	£27,018.33	£31,884.62	£37,423.08	£0.00		£32,342.77
Year 5	£0.00	£4,666.67	£10,000.00	£37,000.00	£40,142.86	£138,500.00		£36,970.59
Year 6		£17,500.00						£17,500.00

1999

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£3,000.00	£0.00	£6,725.00	£15,933.00	£13,333.00	£35,013.00		£14,801.00
Year 2	£0.00	£3,000.00	£11,600.00	£15,200.00	£10,007.00	£37,500.00		£15,461.00
Year 3	£11,333.00	£0.00	£27,433.00	£36,500.00	£33,167.00	£35,833.00		£28,853.00
Year 4	£13,000.00	£0.00	£20,667.00	£16,667.00	£44,798.00	£40,850.00		£27,196.00
Year 5	£16,667.00	£10,000.00	£0.00	£47,500.00	£0.00	£0.00		£24,722.00

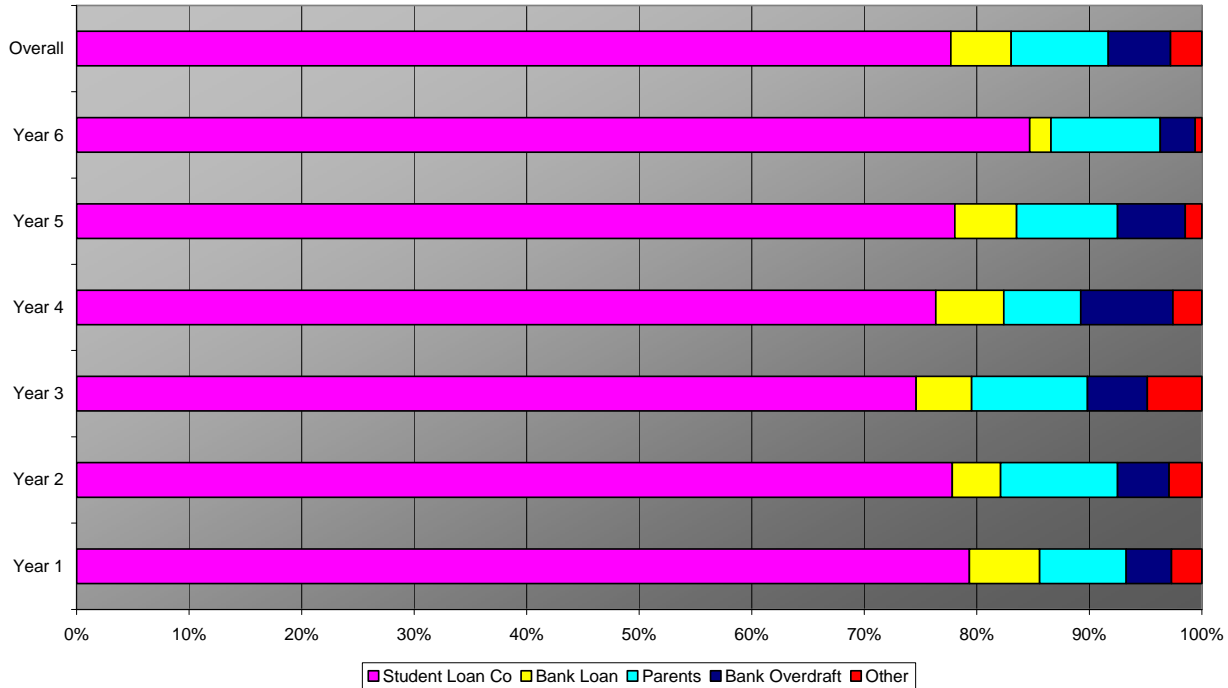
Clearly, since this survey was conducted in 1999, the average debt of overseas students has increased significantly.

Edinburgh and Glasgow are the only establishments with overseas students responding from every year of study.

It will be interesting to see how overseas student debt develops as the fees policies at different universities continue to diverge.

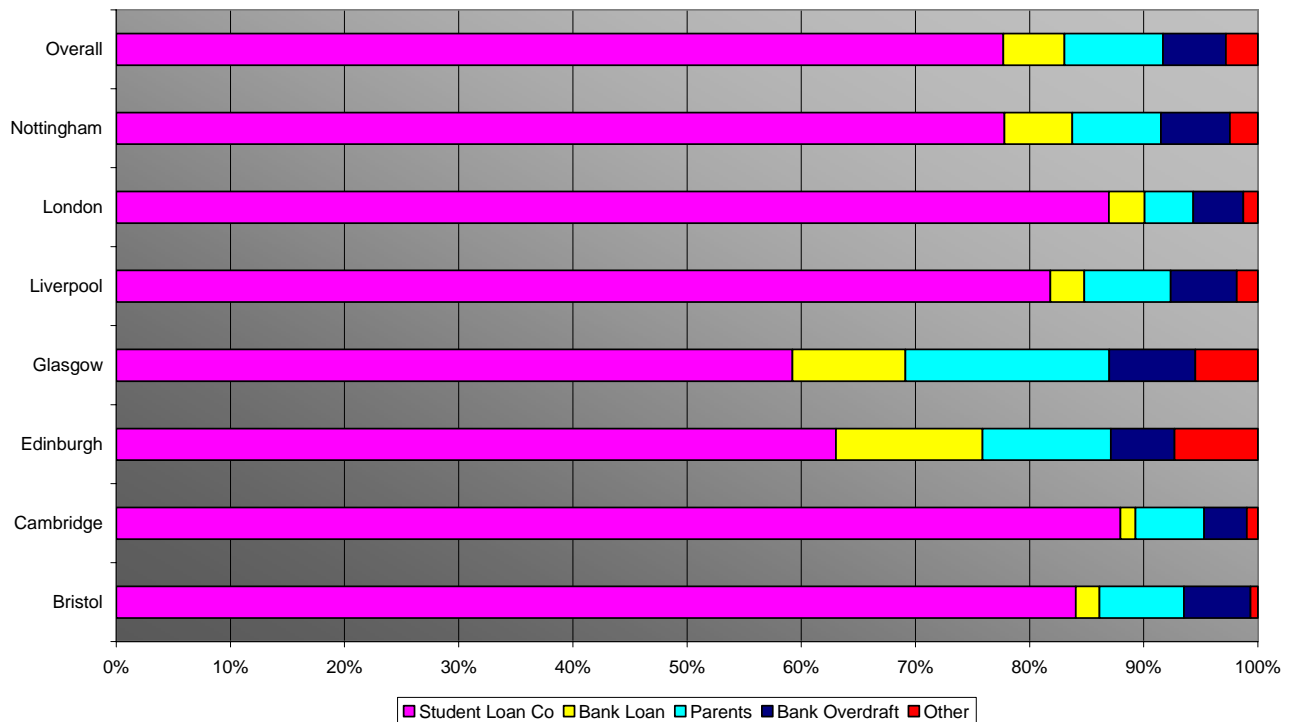
20a) Please try and allocate a percentage of your debt to each of the following categories:

Breakdown by year



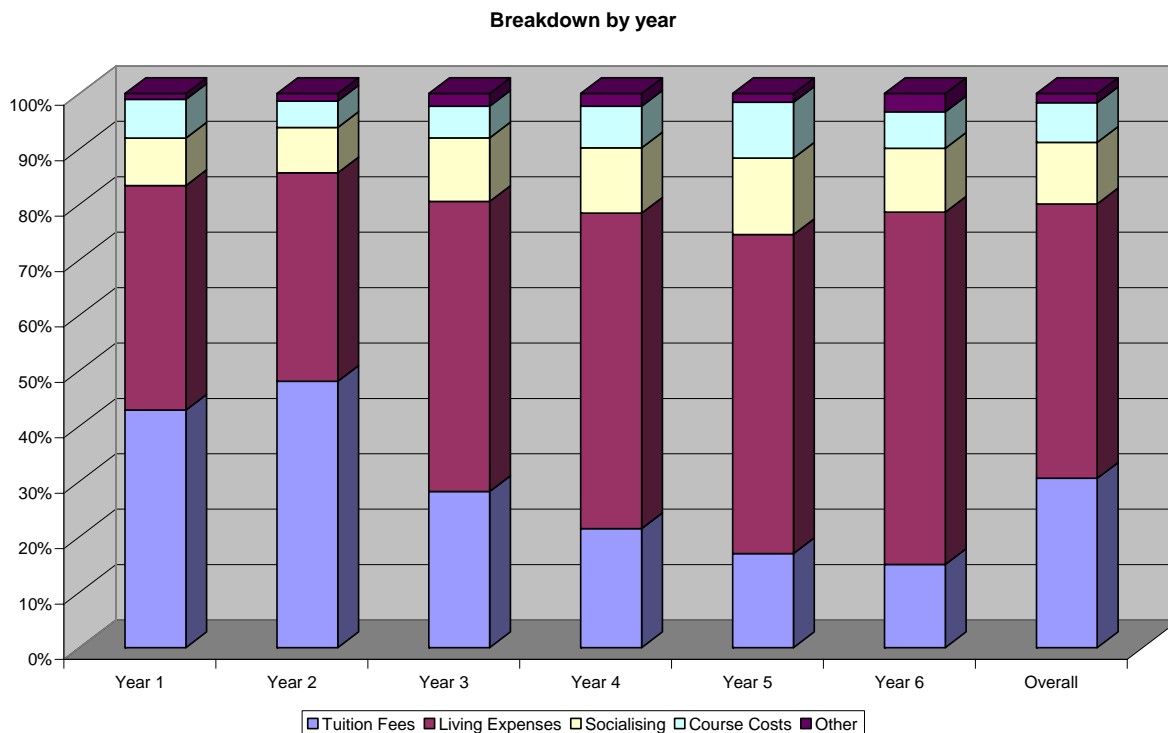
The percentage of debt allocated to the Student Loan Co remains remarkably consistent over the years of study (range **74.6%** for third year students to **79.3%** for first year); it is just the amount that percentage represents that is increasing appreciably.

Breakdown by university

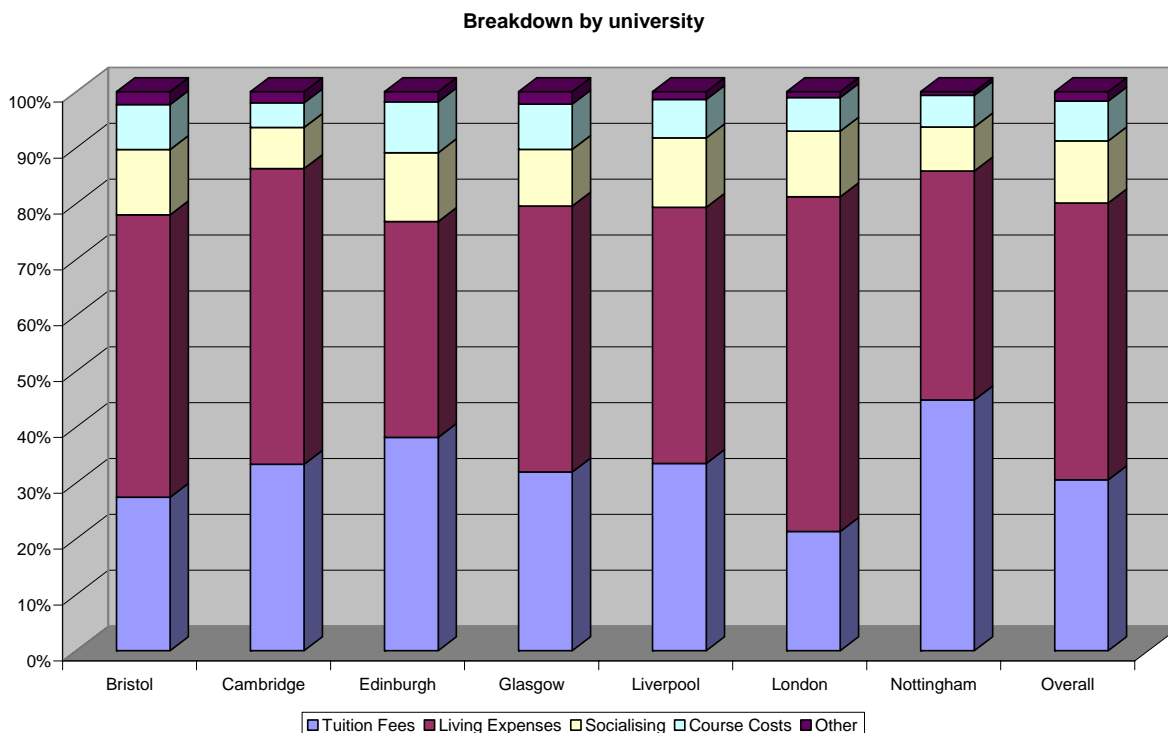


The difference in where debt resides for students at different universities is much more marked. Respondents at Glasgow report **59.2%** of debt with the SLC (compared with **67.0%** in 2005) whilst the figure is **88.0%** for Cambridge students (compared with **81.0%** in 2005).

20b) Again, as a percentage, how would you estimate this debt has arisen?



Clearly tuition fees are responsible for a far higher proportion of debt for 1st and 2nd year students (post 2006-7 tuition fee rise) than it is for all other years. In fact, whereas in previous years, the balance was a ratio of 2:1 or even 3:1 in favour of living expenses over tuition fees, the position is now such that tuition fees are responsible for a greater proportion of debt than any other category.



Tuition fees represent a higher proportion of debt for Nottingham students than any other university. This is explained by the fact that only 2 years into the course, all of its students are subject to the post-2006 higher tuition fees. The tuition fees charged to overseas students and second-degree students at Edinburgh explains its appearance as the university at which the next highest proportion of debt is allocated to this category.

21) What do you expect your debt to be on graduation?

UK Students

2008

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£26,789.24	£26,705.88	£15,338.24	£9,815.50	£33,166.67	£31,952.63	£29,562.23	£25,160.51
Year 2	£30,205.13	£22,500.00	£24,016.30	£17,159.09	£28,304.35	£40,088.45	£28,166.67	£29,399.30
Year 3	£23,955.85	£24,785.71	£24,861.11	£17,133.33	£21,137.33	£25,833.58	-	£23,490.10
Year 4	£16,120.00	£21,033.33	£25,742.31	£18,500.00	£29,270.42	£25,272.73	-	£23,243.82
Year 5	£20,022.39	£23,539.39	£24,547.62	£14,550.00	£22,170.00	£24,512.69	-	£22,298.99
Year 6		£21,650.00						£21,650.00

2005

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£12,400.00	£10,826.09	£5,100.00	£8,477.27	£10,929.63	£17,201.30	-	£12,011.16
Year 2	£15,486.84	£16,125.00	£4,924.24	£7,068.18	£15,935.48	£19,756.43	-	£15,216.30
Year 3	£17,308.64	£0.00	£8,512.82	£6,657.14	£17,463.41	£20,982.46	-	£14,821.64
Year 4	£16,378.43	£20,235.85	£9,171.05	£10,795.24	£14,600.00	£20,297.37	-	£15,982.86
Year 5	£19,607.14	£19,777.78	£12,333.50	£12,644.44	£21,181.82	£19,439.87	-	£19,359.67
Year 6		£16,000.00						£16,000.00

2002

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£16,390.32	£16,130.47	£11,621.62	£12,844.77	£15,369.86	£18,833.78	-	£15,868.07
Year 2	£17,403.17	£17,802.63	£13,638.10	£12,668.57	£18,842.86	£19,901.78	-	£17,405.80
Year 3	£17,248.28	£19,000.00	£15,146.03	£11,877.27	£17,501.79	£20,214.29	-	£17,003.86
Year 4	£12,831.91	£14,854.17	£15,614.02	£11,552.04	£13,880.21	£17,000.00	-	£13,818.02
Year 5	£9,500.00	£9,498.72	£8,043.48	£6,002.50	£8,825.00	£16,857.14	-	£8,919.12
Year 6		£7,323.53						£7,323.53

1999

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£14,107.00	£13,751.00	£12,024.00	£16,708.00	£11,196.00	£18,683.00	-	£14,412.00
Year 2	£6,926.00	£6,183.00	£13,332.00	£13,332.00	£9,972.00	£9,987.00	-	£9,467.00
Year 3	£6,824.00	£0.00	£7,024.00	£7,024.00	£11,995.00	£9,744.00	-	£7,520.00
Year 4	£6,375.00	£6,024.00	£10,780.00	£10,780.00	£7,998.00	£10,653.00	-	£8,337.00
Year 5	£7,335.00	£8,971.00	£3,462.00	£3,462.00	£8,338.00	£10,137.00	-	£7,874.00

Expected debt upon graduation for final year students has increased to **£22,298.99** from **£19,359.67** in 2005; some £1,144.16 more than if it had increased by assumed annual inflation rates of 3% over the same period.

The underestimating of expected debt continues. Students who are now in their final year were in their 2nd year when this survey was conducted in 2005. Then, they expected to graduate with debt of **£15,216.30** whereas now they expect that debt to be the previously mentioned **£22,298.99**, a difference of £7,082.69, or a 46.5% increase on what they expected.

Overseas Students

2008

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£16,666.67	£0.00	£20,714.29	£107,437.50	£0.00	-	£0.00	£84,764.15
Year 2	£0.00	£17,150.00	£82,359.38	£114,218.75	£25,000.00	£28,750.00	£26,666.67	£77,295.16
Year 3	£60,000.00	£0.00	£91,700.00	£88,000.00	-	£95,909.09	-	£88,782.61
Year 4	-	-	£78,571.43	£100,642.86	£0.00	£187,500.00	-	£98,757.58
Year 5	£25,000.00	£0.00	£83,333.33	£112,500.00	£76,500.00	£42,750.00	-	£61,000.00
Year 6		£0.00						

2005

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£40,000.00	£40,600.00	£70,344.83	£63,067.57	£45,000.00	£69,000.00		£64,183.33
Year 2	£86,090.91	£30,000.00	£52,904.76	£67,590.00	£80,500.00	£76,000.00		£67,936.27
Year 3	£68,666.67	£0.00	£58,413.04	£39,214.29	£48,705.88	£0.00		£48,440.79
Year 4	£39,444.44	£35,333.33	£68,794.12	£65,000.00	£50,071.43	£86,166.67		£56,398.55
Year 5	£40,000.00	£46,000.00	£66,600.00	£80,142.86	£76,500.00	£70,762.50		£71,123.53
Year 6		£33,500.00						£33,500.00

2002

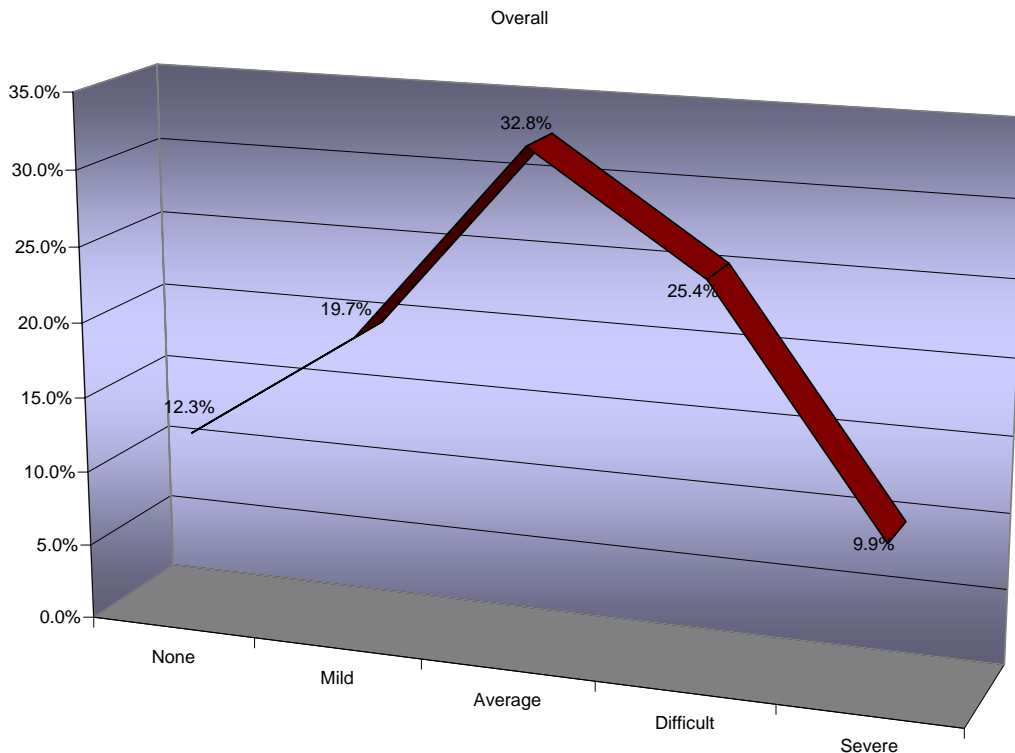
Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£40,000.00	£34,083.33	£66,342.11	£80,500.00	£96,818.18	£101,214.29		£77,333.33
Year 2	£23,333.33	£48,333.33	£65,903.85	£35,941.67	£59,805.56	£94,500.00		£55,052.83
Year 3	£45,678.62	£0.00	£38,058.82	£44,818.18	£59,631.58	£67,444.44		£50,345.25
Year 4	£43,681.82	£30,250.00	£28,850.00	£45,892.86	£50,153.85	£0.00		£42,815.32
Year 5	£0.00	£5,000.00	£10,000.00	£40,300.00	£43,642.86	£138,500.00		£39,411.18
Year 6		£21,000.00						£21,000.00

1999

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£5,000.00	£0.00	£32,500.00	£66,975.00	£60,000.00	£175,000.00		£67,895.00
Year 2	£0.00	£11,500.00	£25,800.00	£54,167.00	£60,757.00	£92,500.00		£48,945.00
Year 3	£18,667.00	£0.00	£49,583.00	£63,333.00	£69,383.00	£34,167.00		£47,027.00
Year 4	£16,000.00	£0.00	£26,250.00	£25,000.00	£65,111.00	£62,250.00		£38,922.00
Year 5	£16,667.00	£18,000.00	£0.00	£48,500.00	£0.00	£0.00		£27,722.00

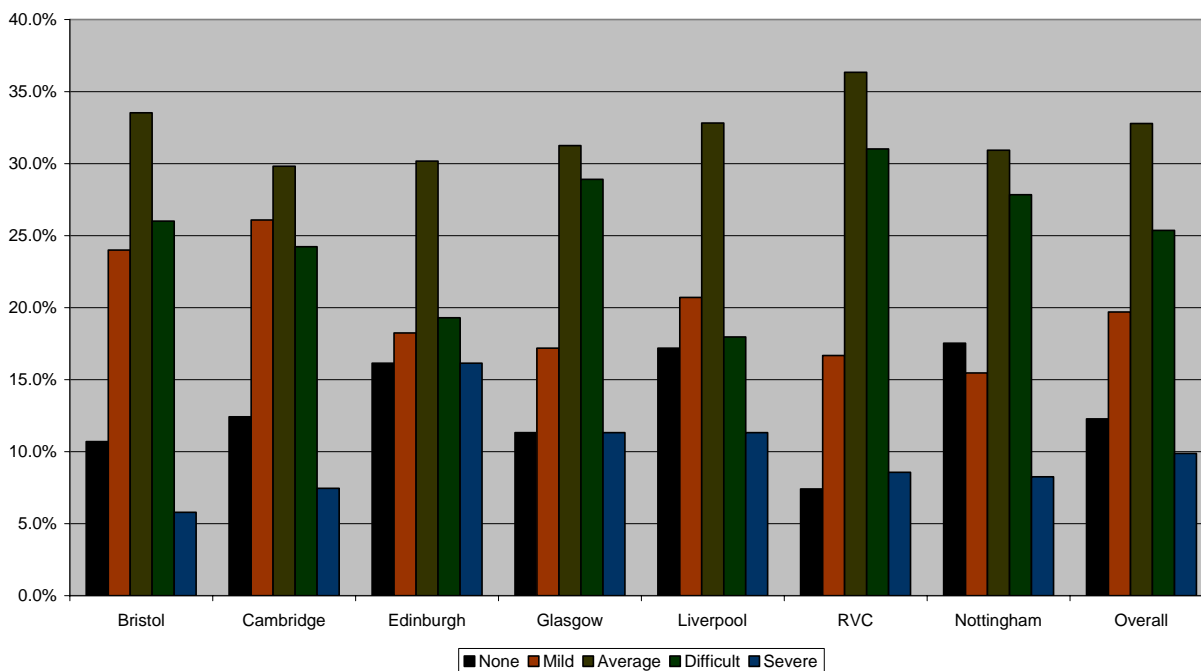
The expected debt upon graduation for overseas students is not as easily translated as that for UK students owing to factors such as lower reporting numbers and hugely different fees at different universities. However, it is clear that there has been a massive increase in the average debt of overseas students studying at UK vet schools between 1999 and 2008.

22) How would you rate the difficulty caused by your financial position?



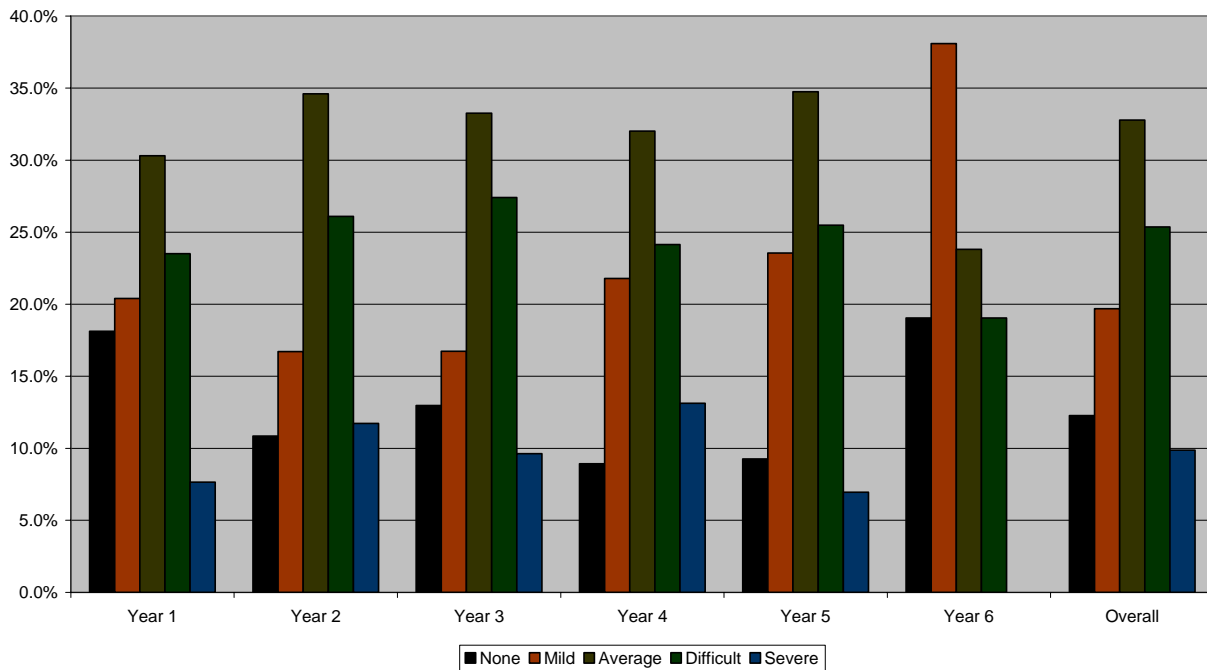
There is very little change across all categories since this survey was last conducted in 2005. The responses can be broken down into three relatively even groups – **32.0%** of them report no or mild financial difficulties, **32.8%** report average problems and **35.3%** report their financial problems as either difficult or severe. This last category is a small increase on the **34.3%** of respondents with worse than average financial difficulties in 2005.

Breakdown by university



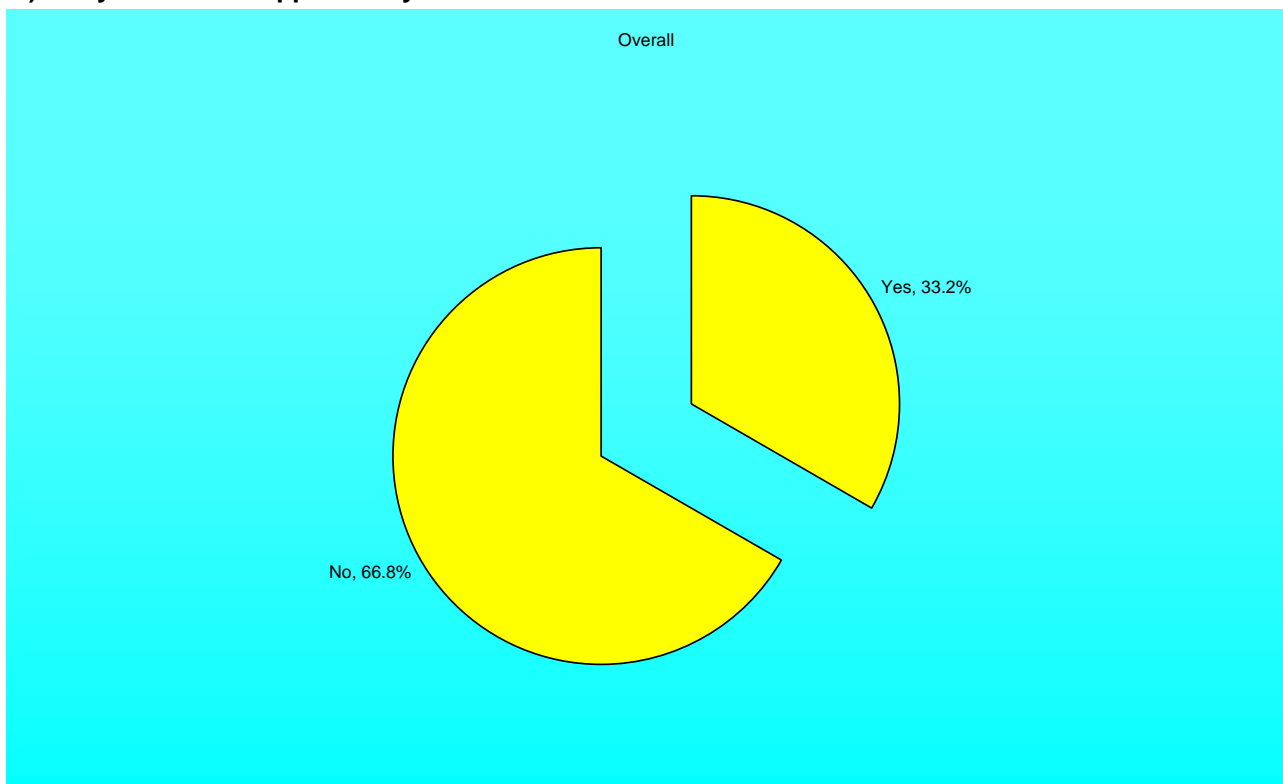
There is not a wide difference in the answers given by students at each of the different universities. Strangely, although Cambridge University had the highest percentage of students who reported applying to the College Hardship Fund in Q18, they have a below average percentage level of students reporting above average severity of financial difficulties (**31.7%**).

Breakdown by year

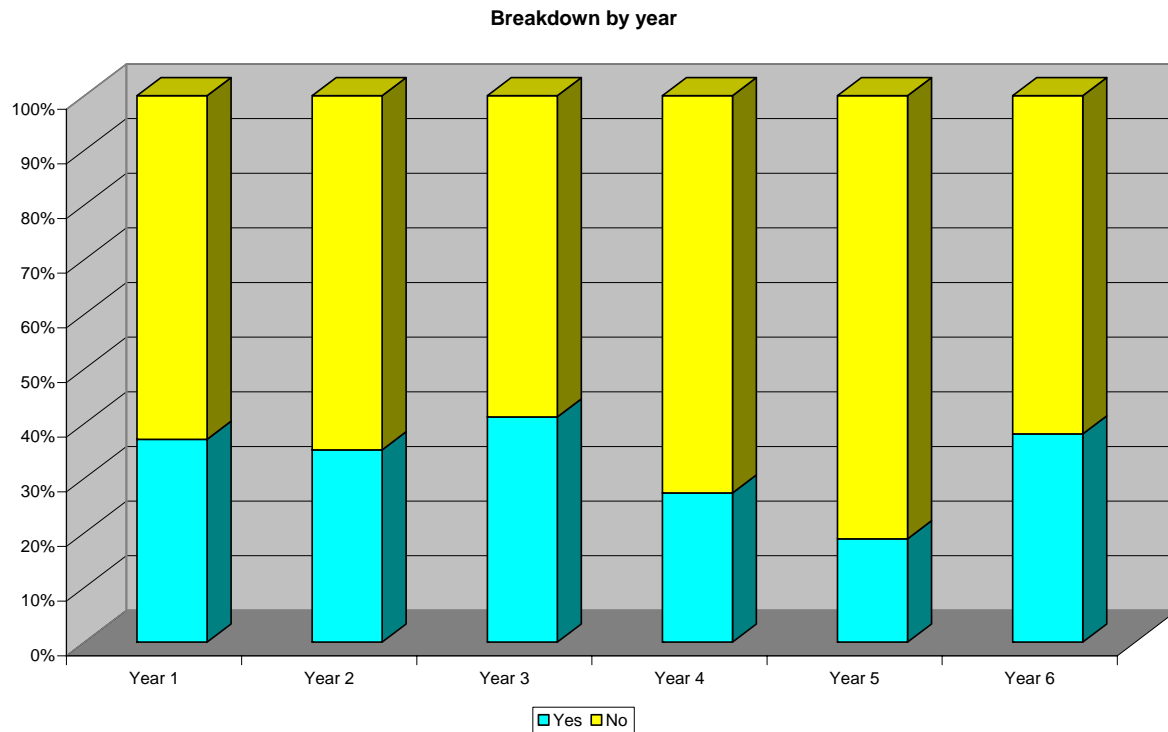


Higher tuition fees and their impact on the financial pressures felt by respondents can be seen in the breakdown by year. When this survey was conducted in 2005, **35.8%** of second year respondents stated that they felt no or mild financial difficulties. This has dropped to **27.6%** this time around. This suggests that the financial difficulties faced by veterinary medicine students are about to increase notably.

23) Are you able to supplement your income?

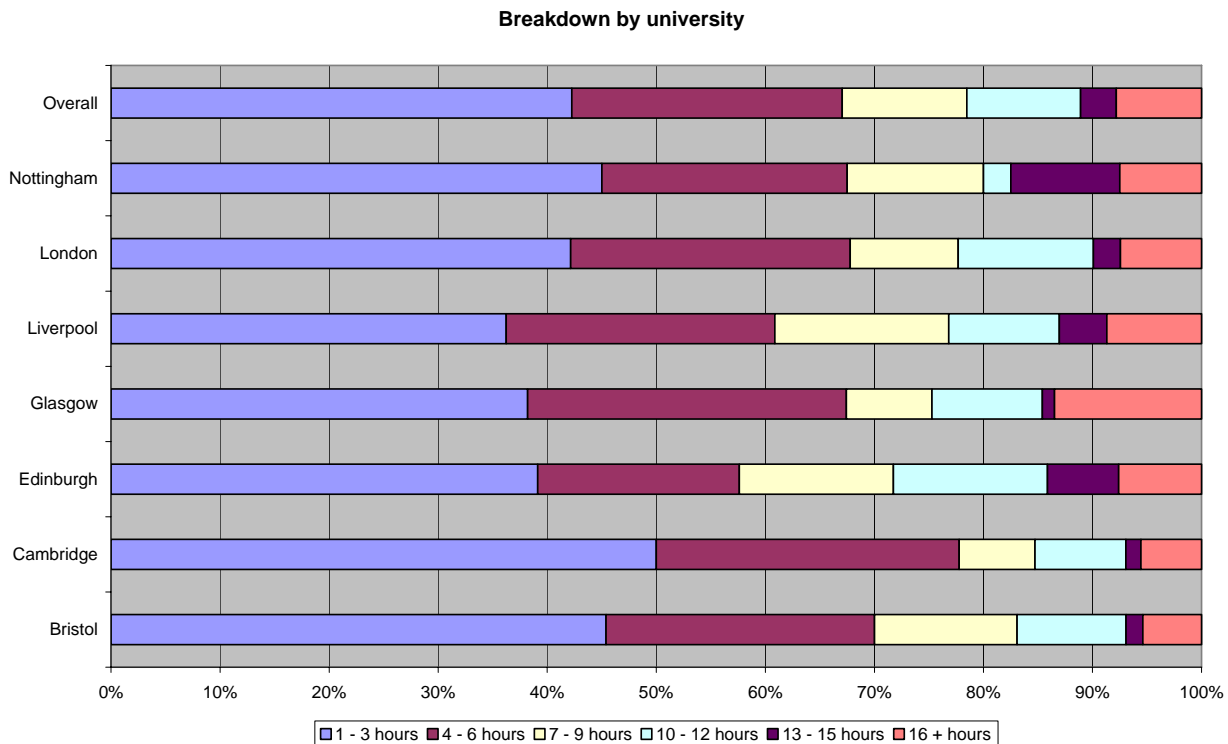


Over two-thirds of respondents (**66.8%**) stated that they felt unable to work to supplement their income. At a time that the cost of studying increases, this continues the steady rise in the percentage of vet students who feel this way – from **57.0%** in 1999, to **61.4%** in 2002, to **64.1%** in 2005.



Unsurprisingly the students in their fourth and fifth years are less likely to be able to supplement their income.

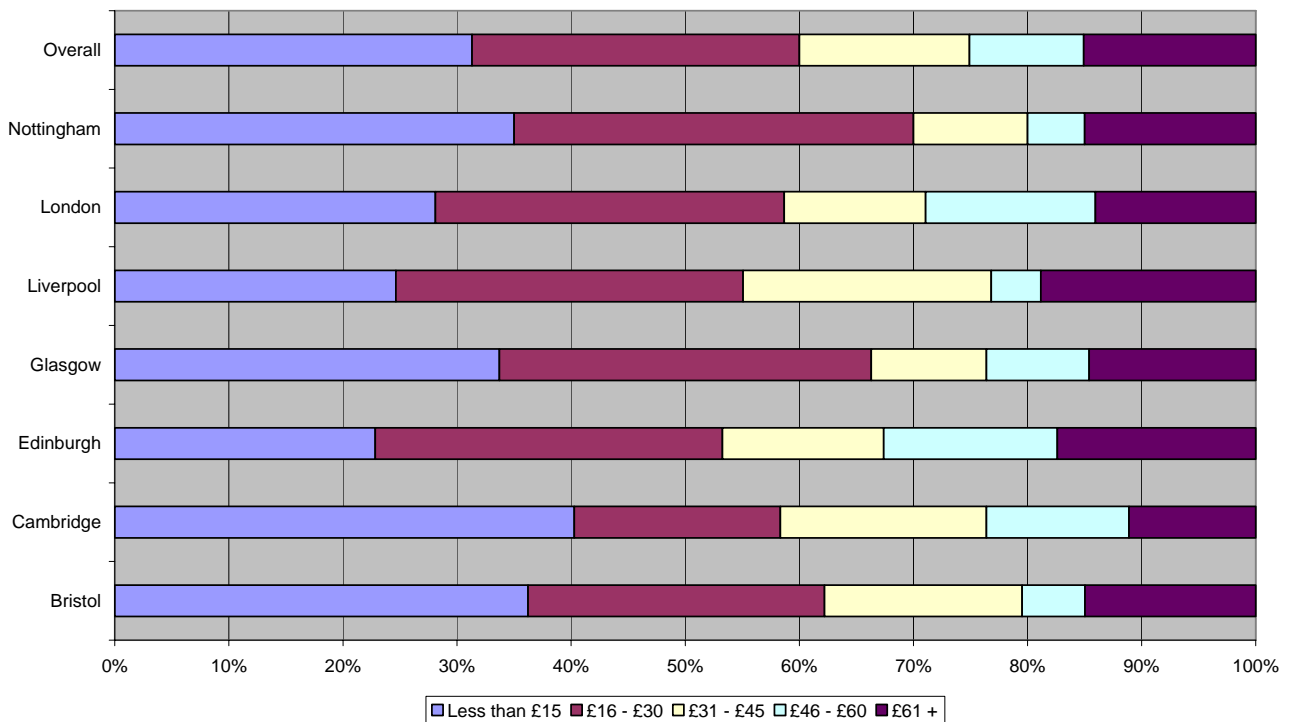
23a) If 'Yes', how many hours per week can you work (please express this as an average over the year)?



Of the **33.2%** of respondents who are able to work in order to supplement their income, **42.3%** only do so for an average of 1 – 3 hours per week. When compared with the 2005 survey, there is an increased percentage of those who do work doing so for 16 hours or more per week. Glasgow had the highest level of respondents in this category at **10.2%**; this has now risen to **13.5%**. Similarly, the overall percentage of respondents working 16 hours or more per week has risen from **6.2%** to **7.8%**.

23b) And per week, how much do you earn?

Breakdown by university



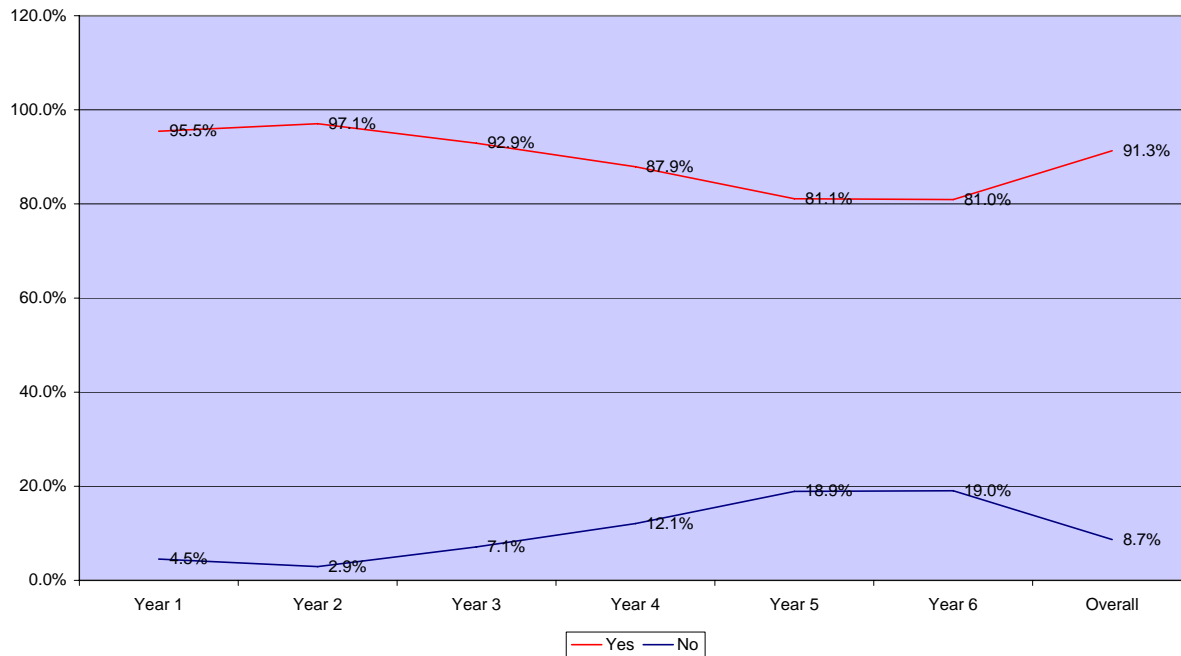
The average amount earned by those students who are working has definitely increased in the last three years. In 2005, **40.0%** of respondents earned less than £15 per week; this has dropped to **31.3%** in this survey. Appositely, the percentage of respondents earning £61 or more per week has risen from **10.4%** in 2005 to **51.1%** this year. Cambridge students earn less than those at other universities, having the highest percentage of students earning less than £15 per week (**40.3%**) and the lowest earning £61 or more (**11.1%**). This does tie in with the responses to 23a as it also had the highest number of respondents working 1 – 3 hours and the lowest working 16 hours or more per week.

“The main problem we face is loss of earnings in the holidays while still having to pay rent and having no loan to cover this throughout the summer.....I wouldn’t mind having a bigger loan if it allowed me to manage to live” – Glasgow 4th year.

“Compulsory EMS does not only restrict the ability to earn from paid employment, but incurs additional expenses for transport, accommodation etc. This puts a severe financial strain on many students and an AVS/ BVA push for financial support for this part of our education is essential” – Nottingham 2nd year.

24) Were you aware of the potential debts before entering vet school?

Breakdown by year



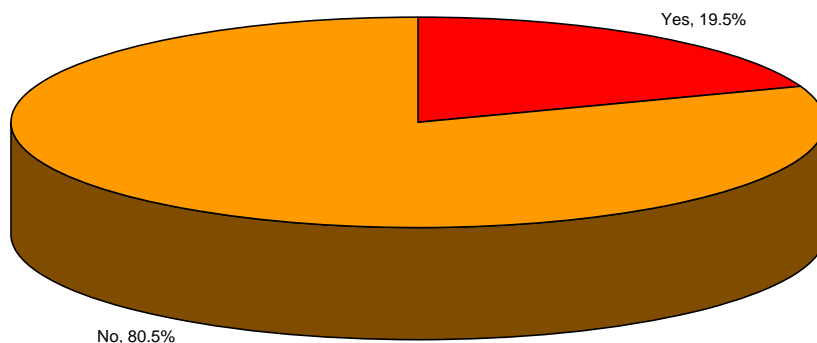
Overall **91.3%** of respondents thought that they were fully aware of the potential debts from entering vet school. The results even suggest that students entering vet school are getting even better informed about the potential debts as only **4.5%** of 1st year and **2.9%** of 2nd year respondents thought they were not aware of them. However, these results need to be considered alongside the previously reported underestimating of debt. In 2005 just **2.5%** of 1st year and **6.6%** of 2nd year students thought they were not aware of the potential debts. These same respondents are now in years 4 and 5 and the numbers have increased to **12.1%** and **18.9%** respectively. As the debts of respondents have increased, then awareness of just how in debt they would become has decreased.

We were aware of the 'possible debts' incurred, but we were not told that tuition fee hikes of £1,000+ per year would occur. This is hard to deal with when loans/ grants are fixed – Edinburgh 3rd year

For students undertaking the vet course as a second degree, the full implications should be highlighted prior to starting the course, not just the tuition fees. It should include, costs of text books, clothing, equipment, travel costs and the necessity of a car for EMS work, the lack of time for a part-time job and even the expected salary upon graduation – Liverpool 5th year

24a) If 'No', would this knowledge have prevented you from entering vet school?

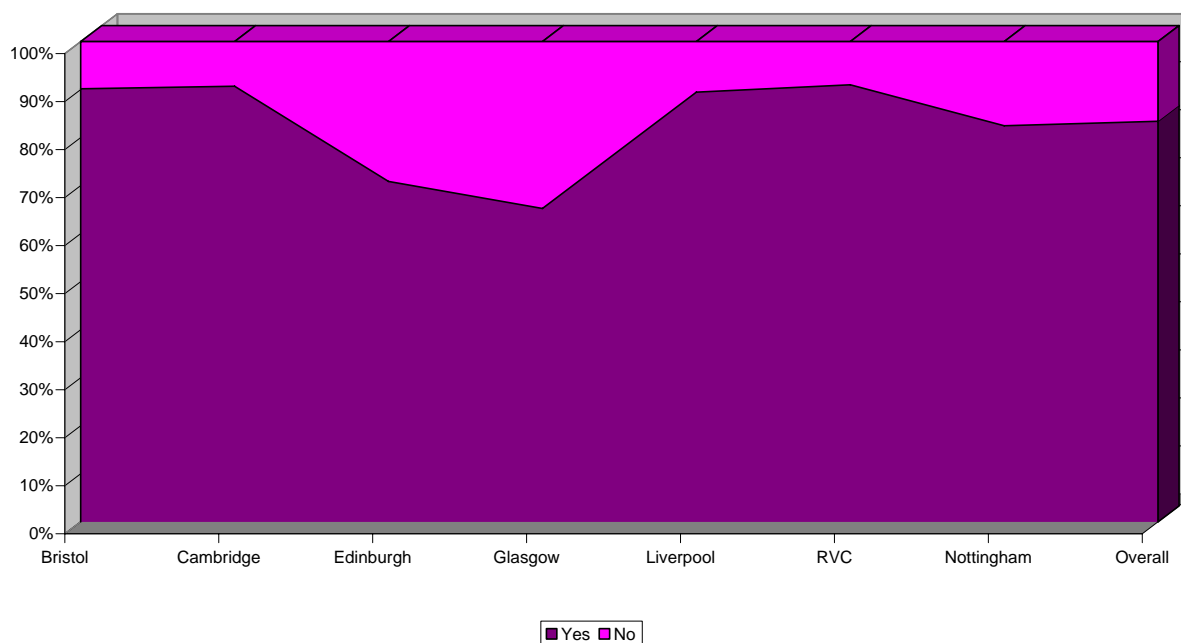
Overall



Almost one in five (**19.5%**) of the **8.7%** of respondents unaware of the potential debts they would incur would not have entered vet school if armed with this knowledge. This is just **1.7%** of the 1833 students who completed the survey. On the whole, students are aware of the debt and it is not stopping them from applying for the course.

25) Do you have an overdraft facility available through your bank/ building society?

Breakdown by university



The overall percentage of respondents who have an overdraft with their bank is **83.4%**. This is slightly down from the **86.9%** reported in 2005. As in 2005, students at Glasgow and Edinburgh are a lot less likely to have an overdraft than students at any other university. The numbers without an overdraft facility at these two establishments has also grown markedly since 2005 – now **34.8%** at Glasgow compared with **22.7%** in 2005 and now **29.1%** at Edinburgh compared with **16.2%** in 2005.

25a) If 'Yes', what is the limit of your overdraft?

Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£1,256.64	£1,183.33	£1,238.00	£783.33	£1,029.17	£1,493.94	£1,077.03	£1,174.25
Year 2	£1,346.77	£822.22	£1,072.41	£994.12	£1,258.33	£1,131.15	£1,214.86	£1,133.51
Year 3	£1,386.47	£1,083.33	£1,182.44	£1,074.32	£1,303.17	£1,228.23	-	£1,247.69
Year 4	£1,394.44	£1,523.08	£1,398.57	£1,629.46	£1,434.13	£1,440.76	-	£1,466.26
Year 5	£1,874.17	£2,040.63	£1,767.50	£1,261.11	£1,772.73	£1,753.68	-	£1,809.87
Year 6		£1,834.38						£1,834.38

25b) If 'Yes', how overdrawn are you currently?

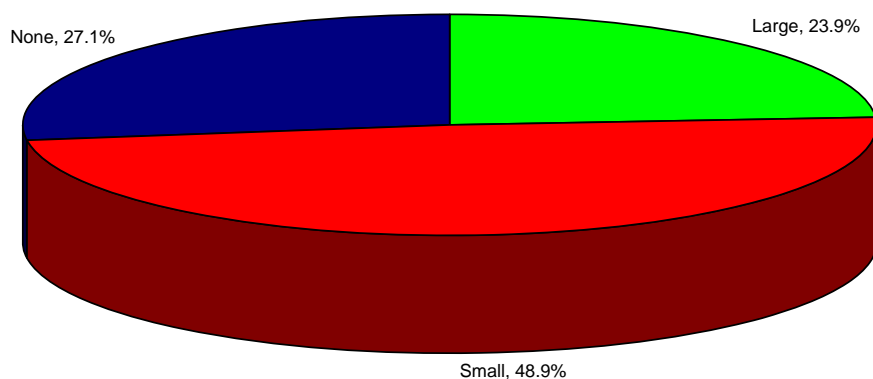
Year	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham	Overall
Year 1	£151.88	£160.00	£170.00	£40.71	£119.26	£268.18	£139.24	£151.37
Year 2	£313.38	£210.00	£444.56	£295.24	£502.94	£363.79	£542.82	£405.34
Year 3	£622.62	£160.87	£299.51	£548.29	£459.29	£406.60	-	£452.88
Year 4	£556.73	£684.00	£673.53	£885.96	£619.11	£574.50	-	£654.14
Year 5	£1,130.47	£832.26	£844.44	£655.56	£996.26	£830.78	-	£934.87
Year 6		£988.24						

The average overdraft available does appear to be increased as the students go through university, rising from £1,174.25 for 1st year students to £1,809.87 for 5th years.

All of the average uses of the overdraft amounts are well inside the sum that is available, which at least shows that most respondents have room for manoeuvre with regards to managing their finances.

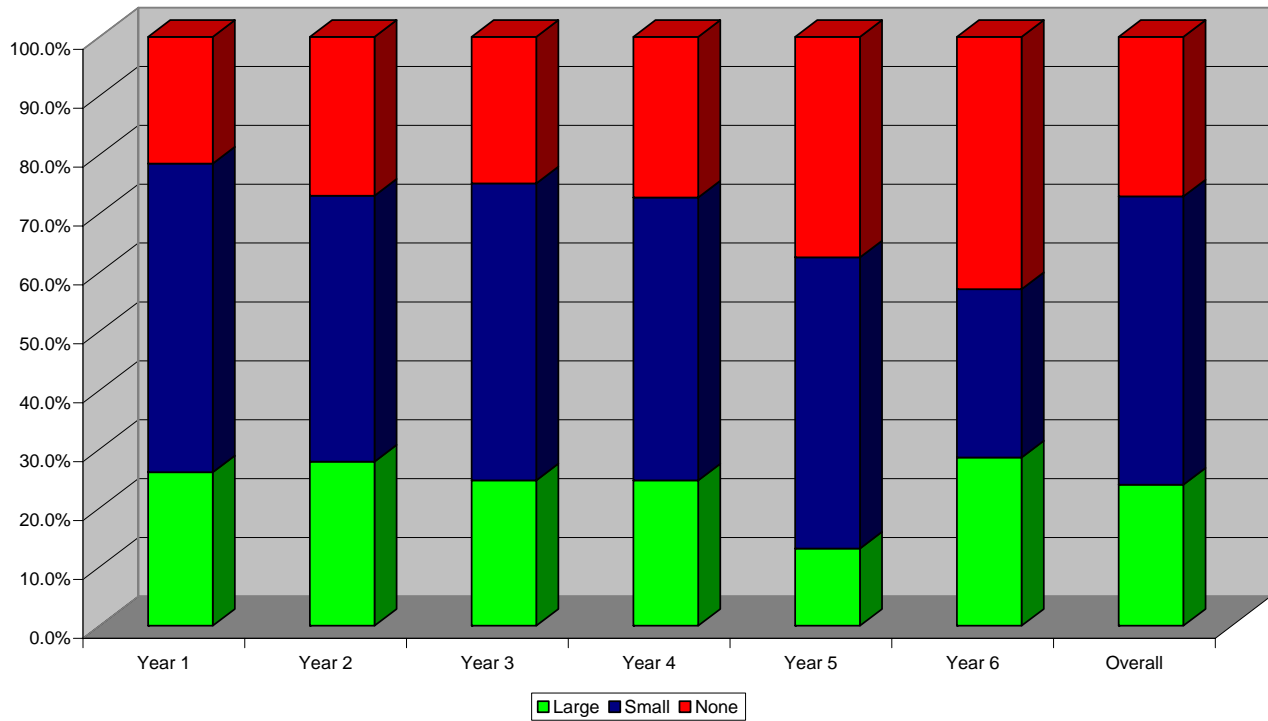
26) Please indicate to what extent you think your debts will affect your choice of job when you graduate.

Overall



There has been very little change in the responses to this question since the survey was last conducted in 2005, when the breakdown was **24.2%** large, **47.8%** small and **28.0%** none.

Breakdown by year

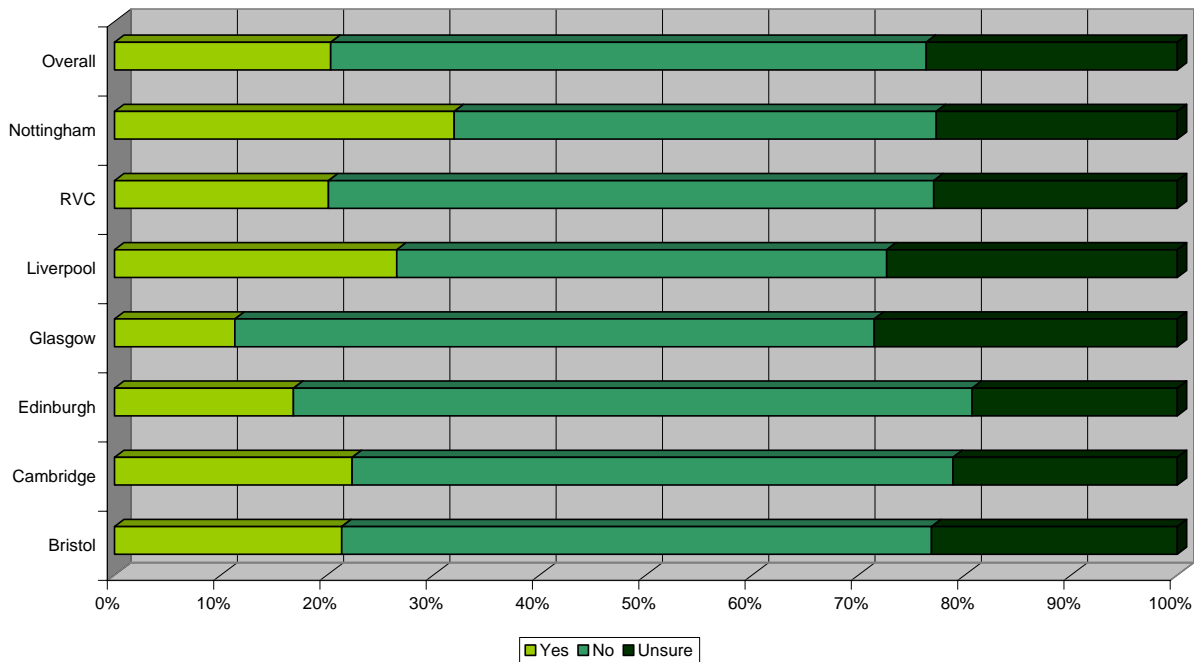


It is probably unsurprising that students in years 1 and 2 indicate that their debts are most likely to have a large impact on the job they choose as these are the ones facing higher tuition fees. When the previously reported underestimating of debt is taken into consideration, it will be interesting to see if this grows even higher when the survey is next conducted.

If I truly had full choice, I would spend a year or two in practice followed by an internship, residency & Phd and then consider either a clinical or research career. However, this avenue does not pay enough to justify it. My desire to be debt free and to enter the housing market before I have a family means that this is not a career choice I can make – Cambridge 6th year

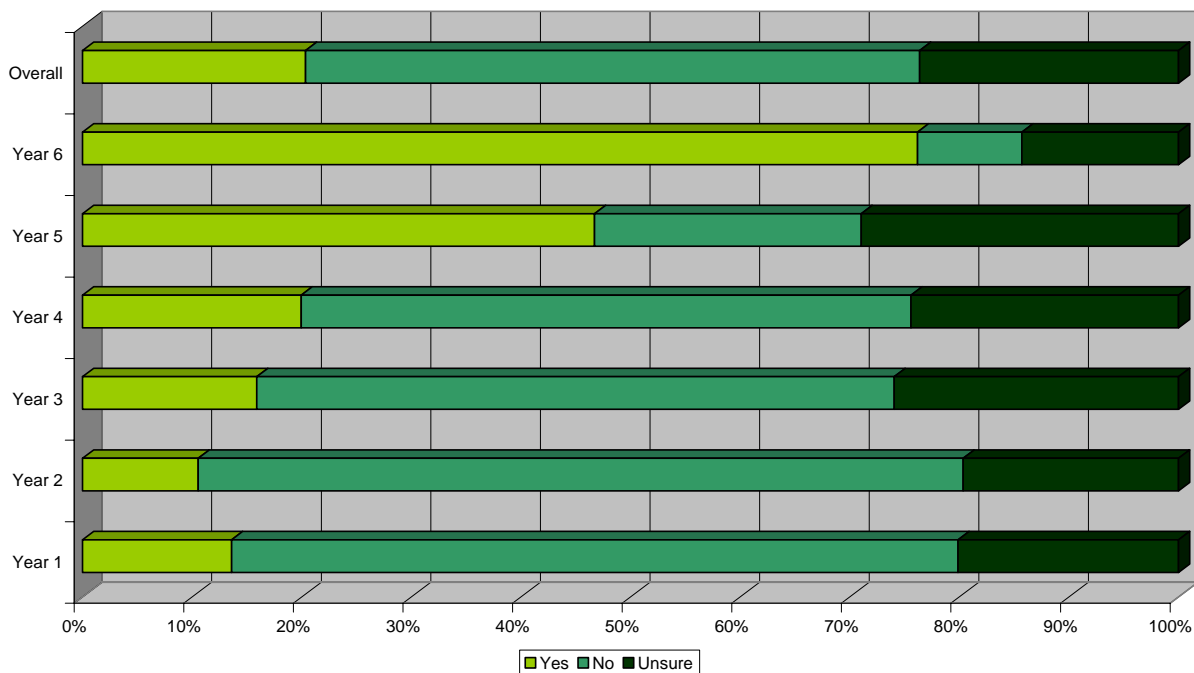
27) In 2006 the RCVS introduced PDP following graduation. Are you aware of what your first year in practice self assessment requirements will be?

Breakdown by university



It appears fair to say that respondents from Glasgow are less informed of their first year self-assessment requirements than respondents from the other universities (**11.3%** against an overall average of **20.3%**). Nottingham respondents are far more likely to be aware of them (**32.0%**).

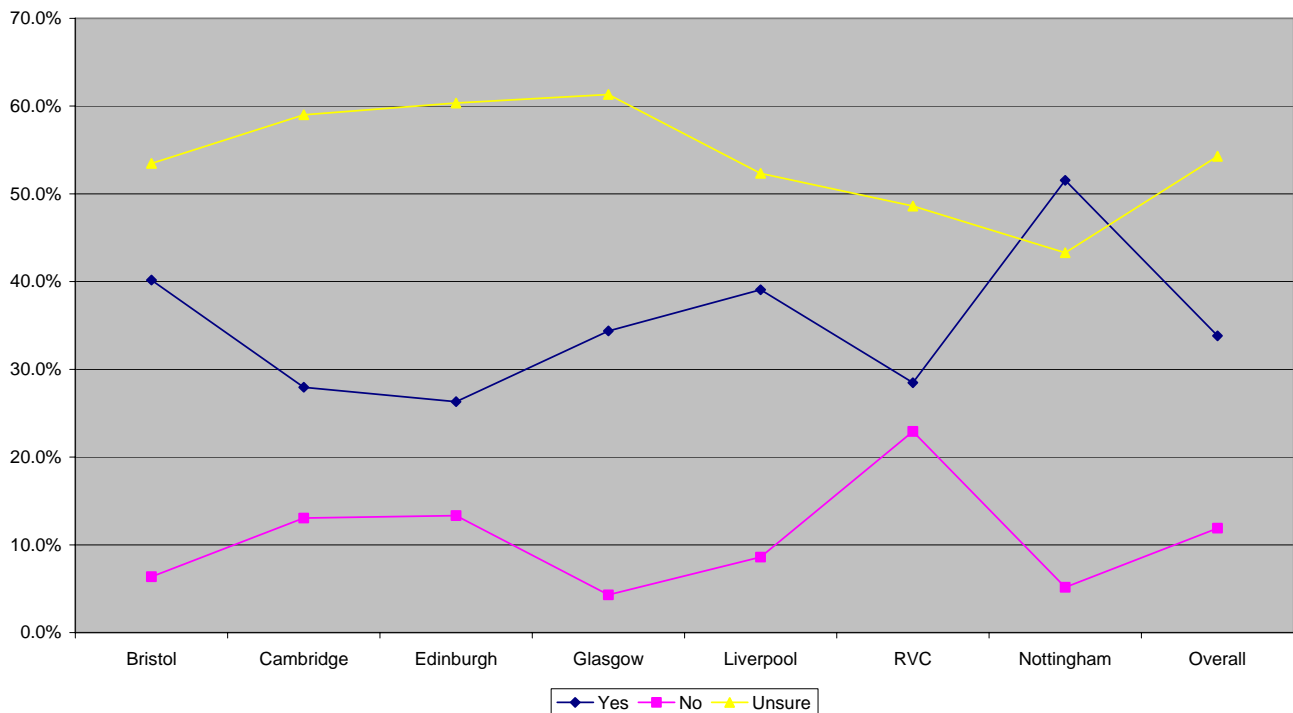
Breakdown by year



Awareness of PDP self-assessment requirements increases the closer students get to graduation. However, even for year 5 students, less than half of them (**46.7%**) are able to say that they are aware of them. It seems that the RCVS and the universities still need to do more to get the message out. The increasing awareness amongst later year students make Nottingham University's result all the more impressive as they only have year 1 and year 2 students.

28) Do you think that the introduction of PDP is a good thing for you?

Breakdown by university



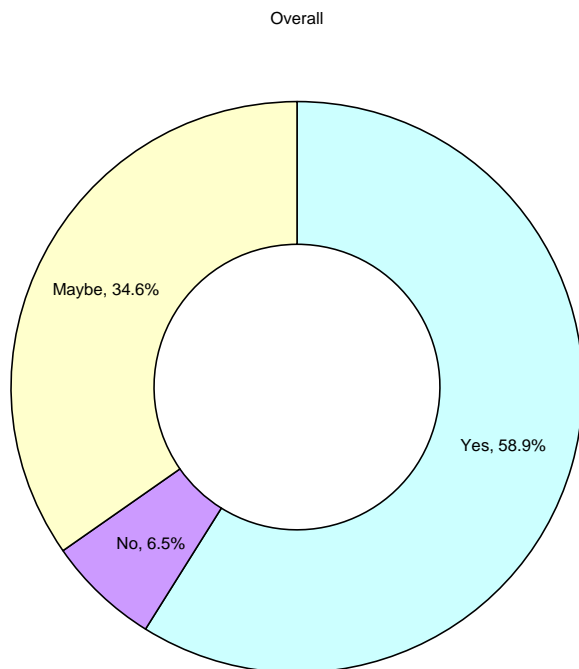
Responses to this question appear to reinforce the idea that the RCVS and the vet schools need to better educate students on PDP, its requirements and its ramifications. At every school apart from Nottingham and RVC more than half of respondents are unsure about whether PDP is a good thing or not. Respondents from RVC are twice as likely as those from other universities to think that PDP is not a good thing (**22.9%** against an overall average of **11.9%**). Conversely, Nottingham is the only university where more than half (**51.5%**) believe the introduction of PDP is a good thing for them.

“We need more information about PDP and its benefits. How about from new graduates who have completed it?” – Bristol 4th year

PDP needs to be properly explained to us so we at least have some idea on the details of what it’s about – Bristol 5th year.

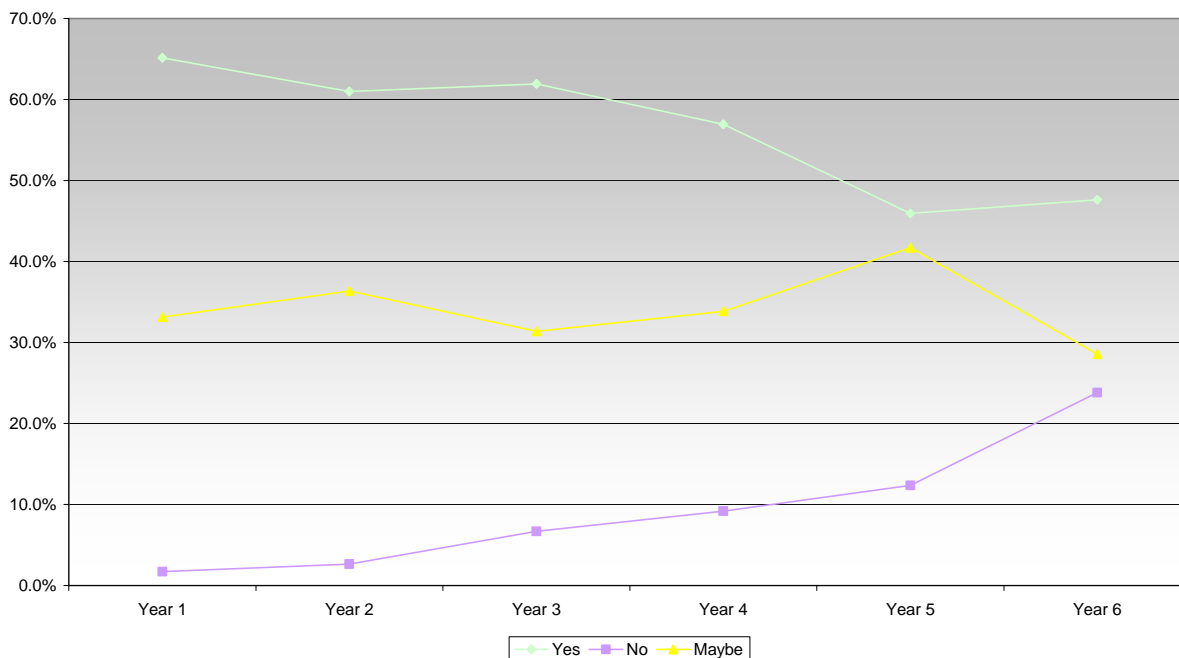
PDP should not be allowed to develop into a system to regulate vets in the future – Glasgow year 3

29) If it were possible to be sponsored by a practice in your clinical years, but to then be committed to that practice for a fixed period, would you consider this?



The percentage of respondents who would be prepared to consider sponsorship by a prospective employer has dropped from **66.5%** in 2005 to **58.9%** this time around. This is perhaps surprising against a backdrop of increasing levels of student debt.

Breakdown by year



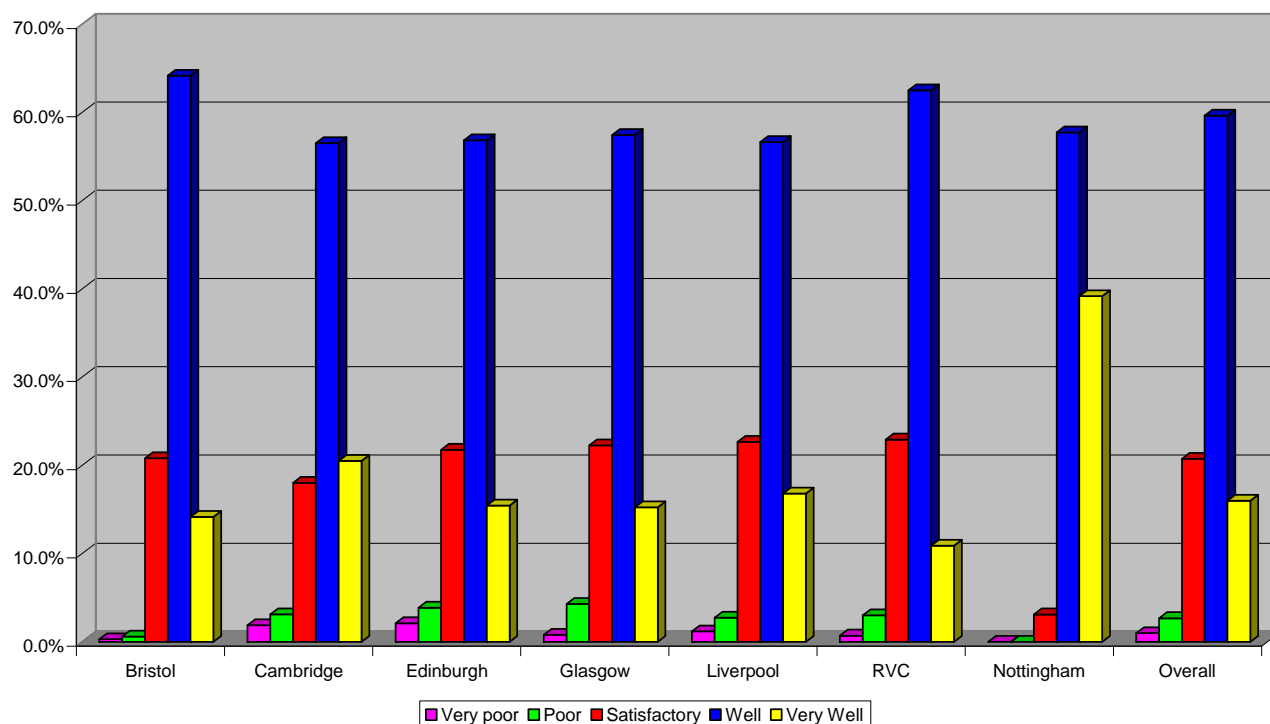
It seems that the closer to graduation respondents become, the less likely they are to favour the sponsorship option. In 2005, **72.5%** of 2nd year respondents said that they would consider sponsorship, now that they are in their 5th year, the same response has dropped to **45.9%**. It is probable that knowing you can manage to get through vet school financially and having the option of being able to choose jobs that you apply for combine to make this less attractive in students' later years.

Section C – The Undergraduate Course

30) Overall, have the subject areas been covered to your satisfaction?

Breakdown by university

“Clinical staff/ tutors think you have been taught certain topics in younger years and assume that you know information when you have never been taught it. More integration needed” – Liverpool 5th year



Respondents who rank the subject area coverage either 'Well' or 'Very Well' continues to climb since this survey's introduction – up to **75.6%** this year from **74.6%** in 2005, **67.7%** in 2002 and **68.6%** in 1999.

On the other side of the coin, there has been an increase from **2.3%** in 2005 to **3.7%** this year in the percentage of students who thought it either 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'. The figures remain overwhelmingly in favour of the vet schools' approach.

Bristol University is the highest ranked one that has students on every year of the course. It has the most respondents who believe the course coverage to be 'Well' or 'Very Well' (**78.3%**) and the least who think it Poor or Very Poor (**0.9%**).

Cambridge University is the one with students in every year that has the most respondents who think the course is covered 'Very Well' (**20.5%**).

Having seen a significant drop in student satisfaction in 2005 (from **79.6%** in 2002 to **67.9%**), Edinburgh University respondents regarding the course to be covered either 'Well' or 'Very Well' has risen back up to **72.3%**. However, it does have the most respondents (**6.0%**) who think it to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

Glasgow University also appears to be turning around how satisfied students are with the way the course is covered. Having dropped from **84.0%** in 1999 to **66.7%** in 2002 and then **62.3%** in 2005, the percentage of respondents who think the course is covered either 'Well' or 'Very Well' has risen to **72.7%** this year.

Having increased year on year from a low of **50.0%** in 1999 to a high of **76.8%** in 2005, the percentage of respondents at Liverpool University who thought the course was covered either 'Well' or 'Very Well' has dropped slightly to **73.4%** this year.

The figures suggest that RVC is the university that has made fewest changes to the way the veterinary medicine course is taught as the range who thought the course taught 'Well' or 'Very Well' from 1999 to 2008 has been from a low of **69.8%** in 2002 to a high of **73.4%** this year.

Nottingham University has overwhelmingly the most positive responses from its students, with 96.9% believing the course to be taught 'Well' or 'Very Well' and not a single respondent voicing a negative opinion. It will be very interesting to see if such a high approval rating continues once the University has a full quotient of students.

31) What subjects, if any, were particularly well covered?

Rank	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham
1	Anatomy	Anatomy	Anatomy	Anatomy	Anatomy	Reproduction	Endocrinology
2	Physiology	Pathology	Body Systems	Physiology	Pathology	Alimentary	Cardiovascular
3	Microbiology	Physiology	Pathology	Pathology	Parasitology	Anatomy	Muscoskeletal

32) What subjects, if any, weren't covered particularly well?

Rank	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham
1	Pharmacology	Pharmacology	VPH	Physiology	Pharmacology	Farm animal science	Reproduction
2	Embryology	Biochemistry	Animal husbandry	Biomolecular sciences	Anatomy	Equine medicine	Haemology & immunology
3	Ophthalmology	Animal behaviour	Neurology	Clinical	Genetics	Dentistry	Lymphoreticular

33) What subject areas, if any, were covered in too much detail or repeated?

Rank	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	RVC	Nottingham
1	Biochemistry	Biochemistry	Infection & immunity	Biomolecular sciences	VPH	MCDB	Microbiology
2	VPH	Pharmacology	Parasitology	Pigs & poultry medicine	Biochemistry	Digestion	Reproduction
3	Animal welfare	Parasitology	Farm animal science	Animal husbandry	Genetics	Biochemistry	N/A

Anatomy consistently appears in the list of subjects particularly well covered. The suspicion is that anatomy is a particularly interesting subject rather than each university having ways of covering it particularly well.

The subjects listed by Nottingham respondents to all three questions are perhaps indicative of the different approach being taken by that university as they are different from those at the other vet schools.

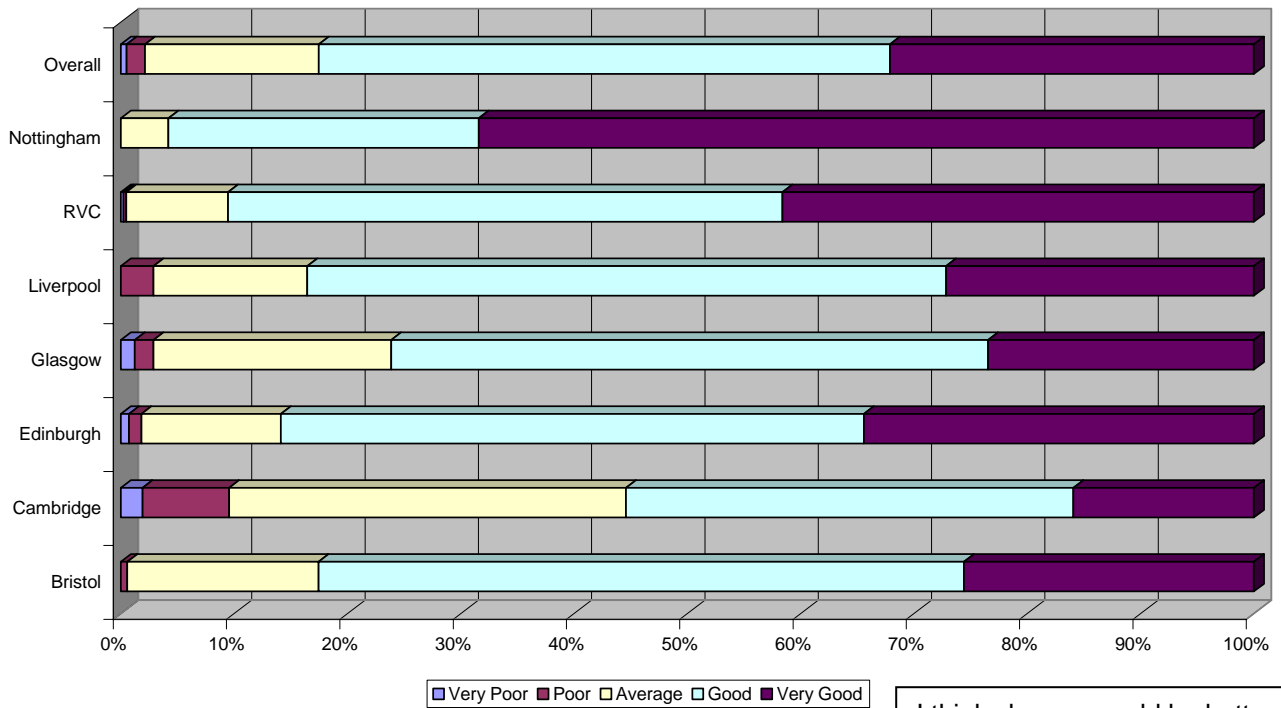
As in 2005, Anatomy appears in the list of subjects well covered and not well covered at Liverpool University. This shows that it is difficult for the universities to please all of their students all of the time.

"Too much time was devoted to biochemistry in the 1st year; given the clinical modules ran from Jan 07 – Nov 07, I felt I was hurriedly being taught to be a vet in 11 months. I worry that I severely lack preparation for my first days/ months in practice" – RVC 5th year

The standard of teaching at Cambridge is very high and I find it a very supportive environment. I very much enjoyed intercalating which I may not have chosen to do at another uni, but here it is compulsory – Cambridge 3rd year

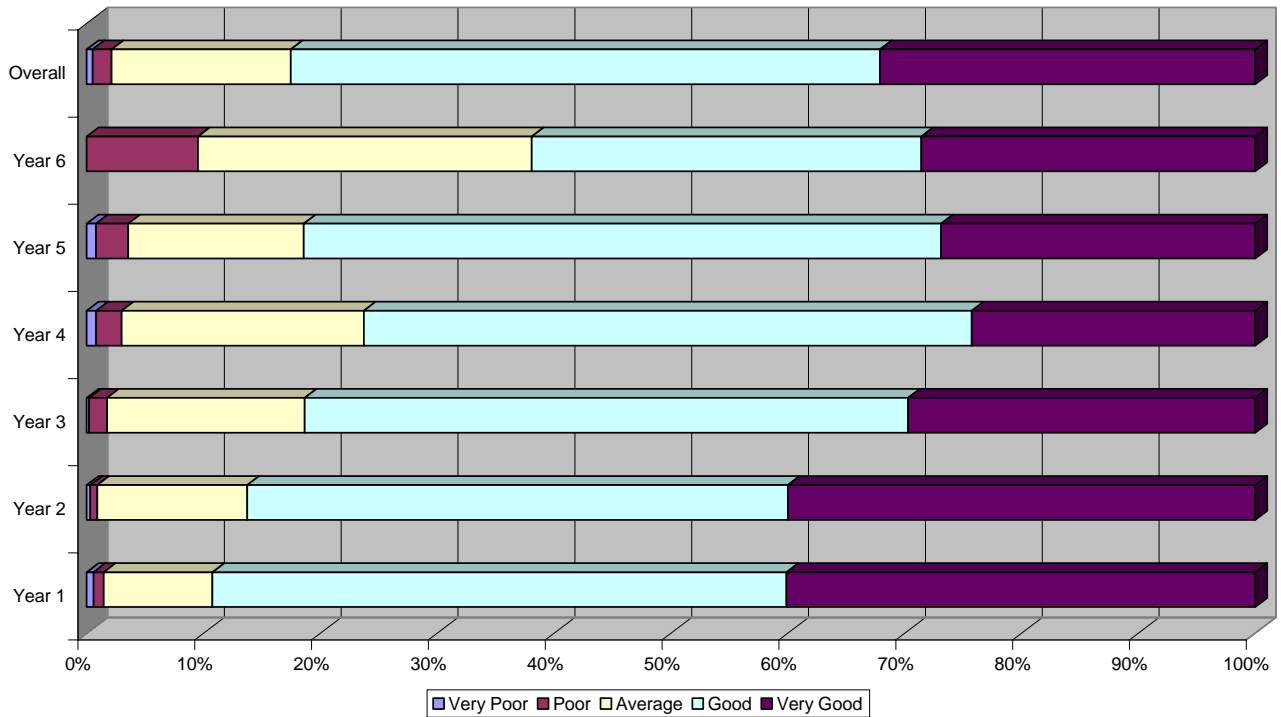
Question 34a – Please rate the relevance of the course.

Breakdown by university



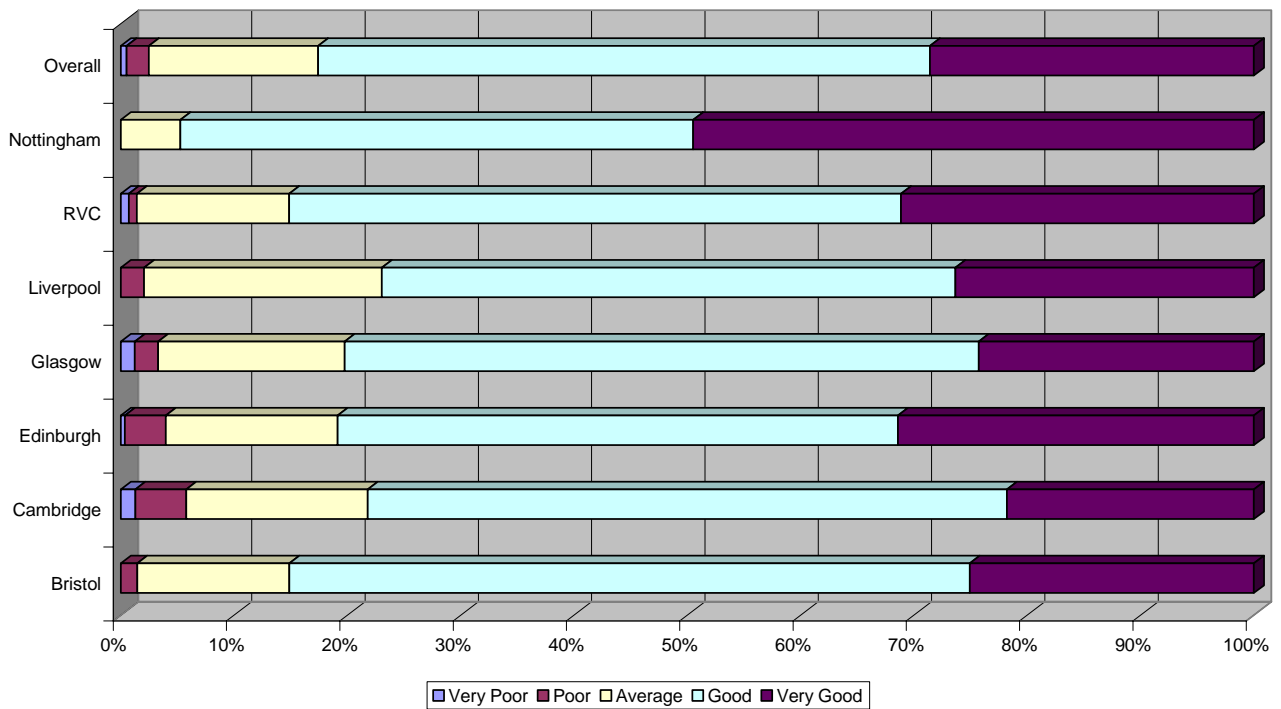
I think classes would be better if the subjects were more organised by similar teachings/ techniques rather than by species – Glasgow year 1

Breakdown by year

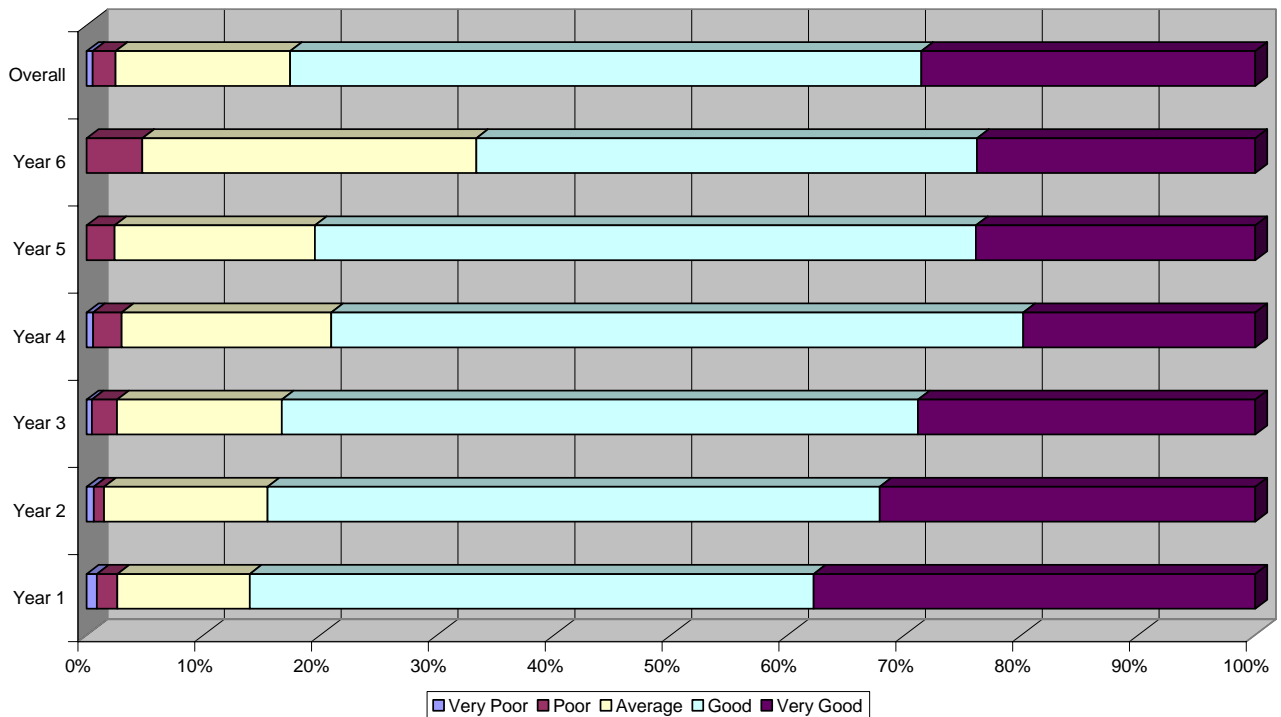


Question 34b – Please rate the interest of the course.

Breakdown by university

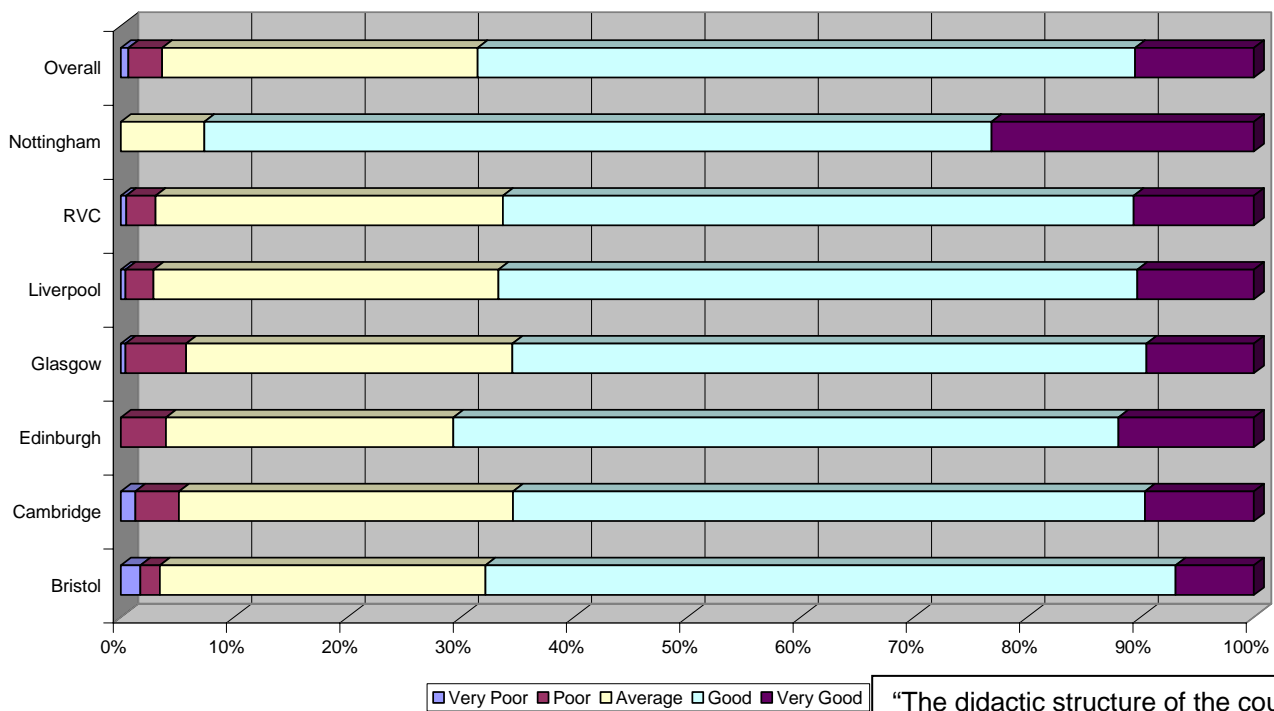


Breakdown by year



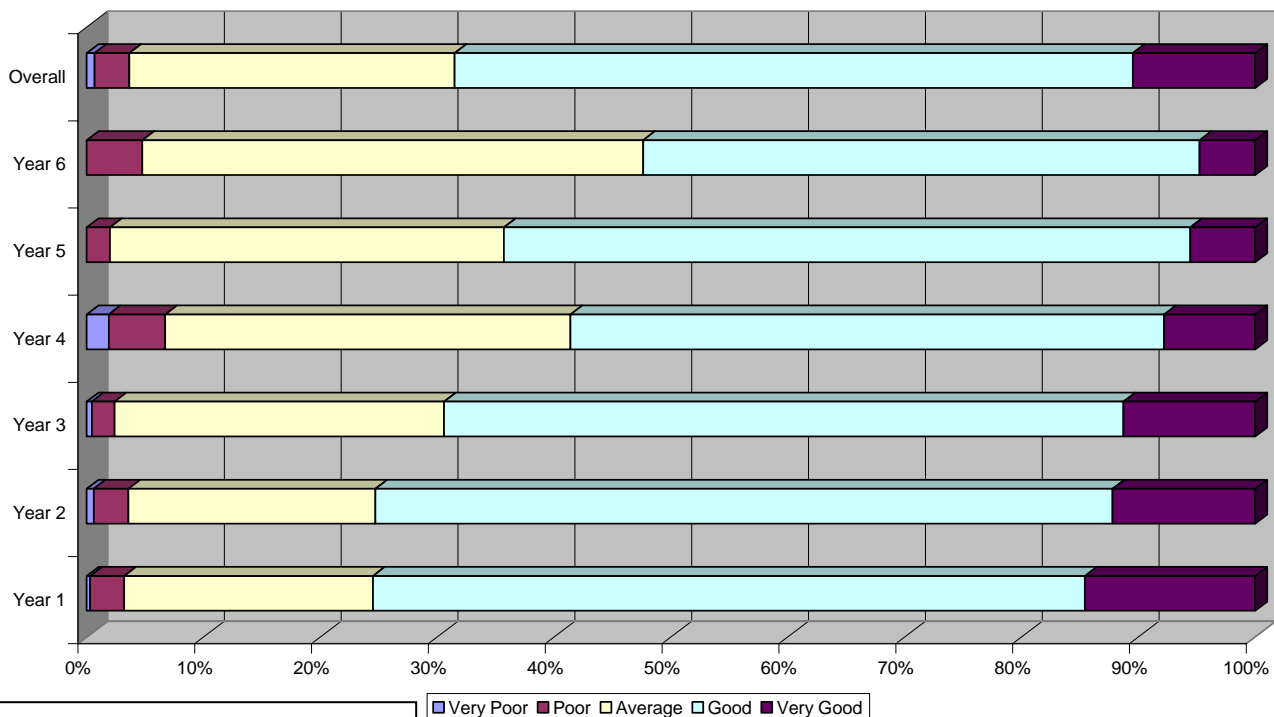
Question 34c – Please rate the quality of the lecturing.

Breakdown by university



“The didactic structure of the course stifles my intellectual curiosity. I have no opportunity to discuss interesting topics outside of the classroom and no one to go to with questions” – Edinburgh 3rd year

Breakdown by year

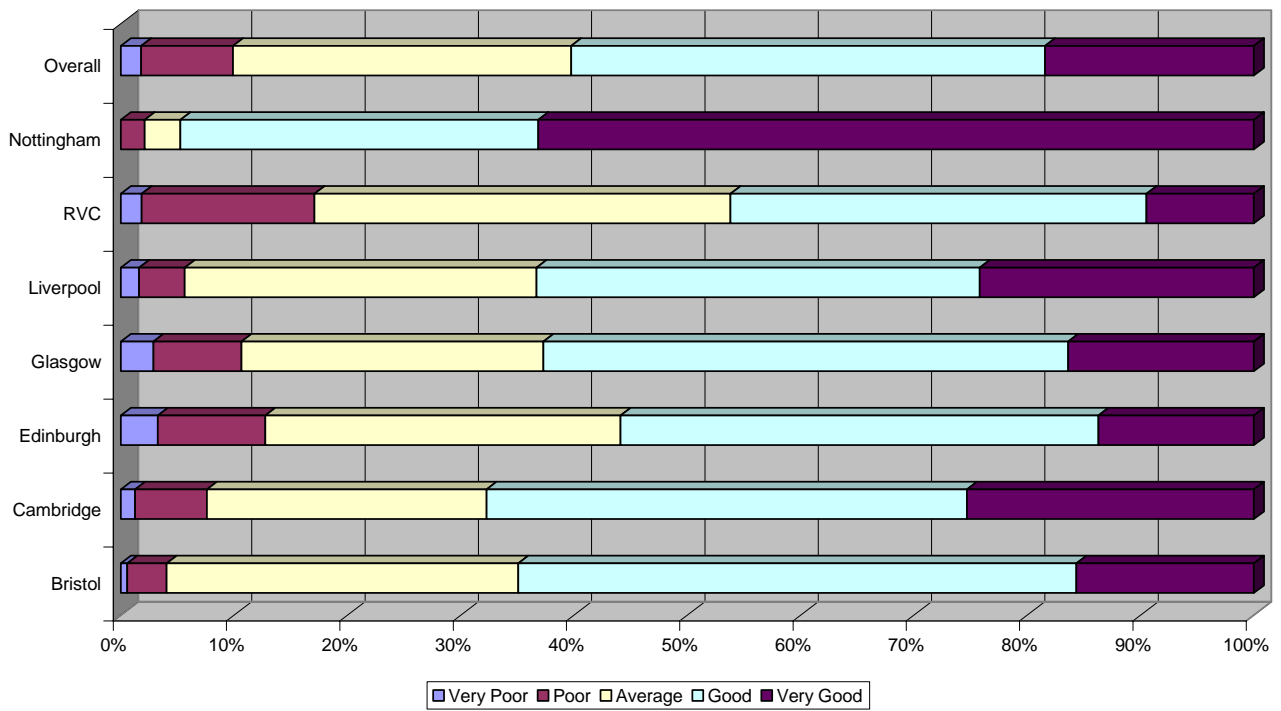


“The large intake at RVC has impaired lecturing quality, practicals even more so. Learning groups are too large and little feedback is provided” – RVC 5th year.

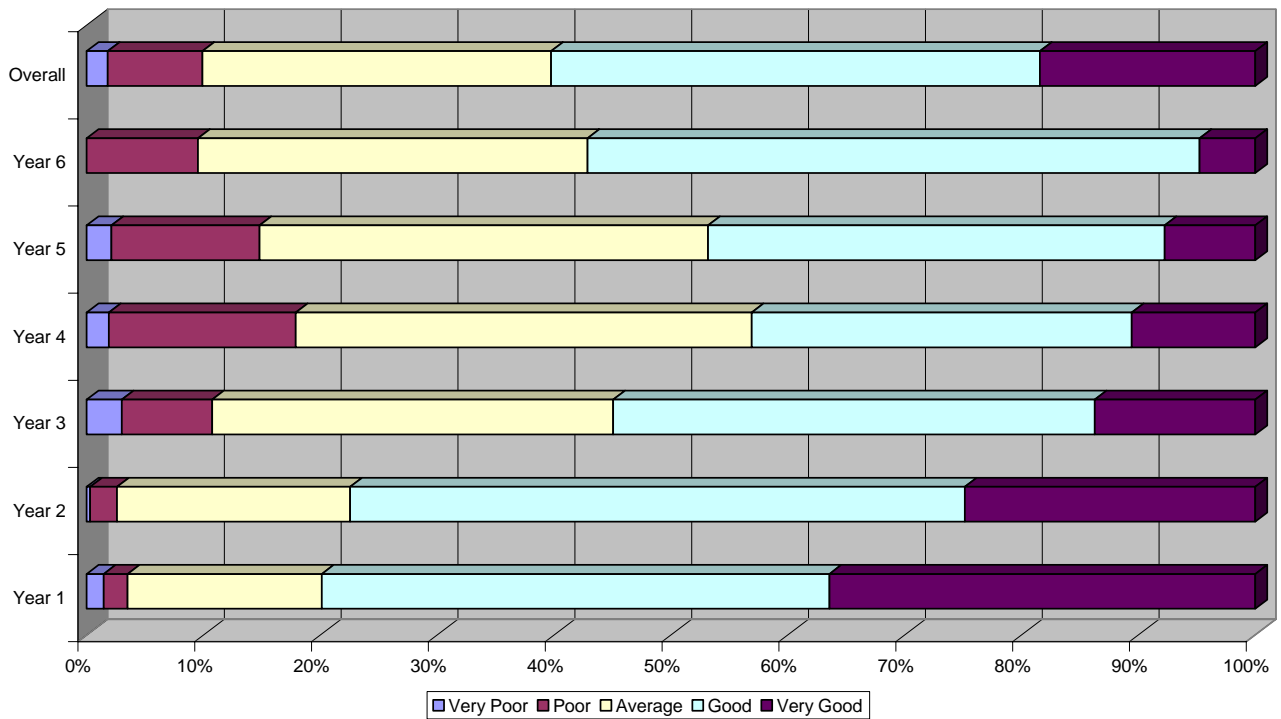
Very Poor Poor Average Good Very Good

Question 34d – Please the quality of practicals.

Breakdown by university

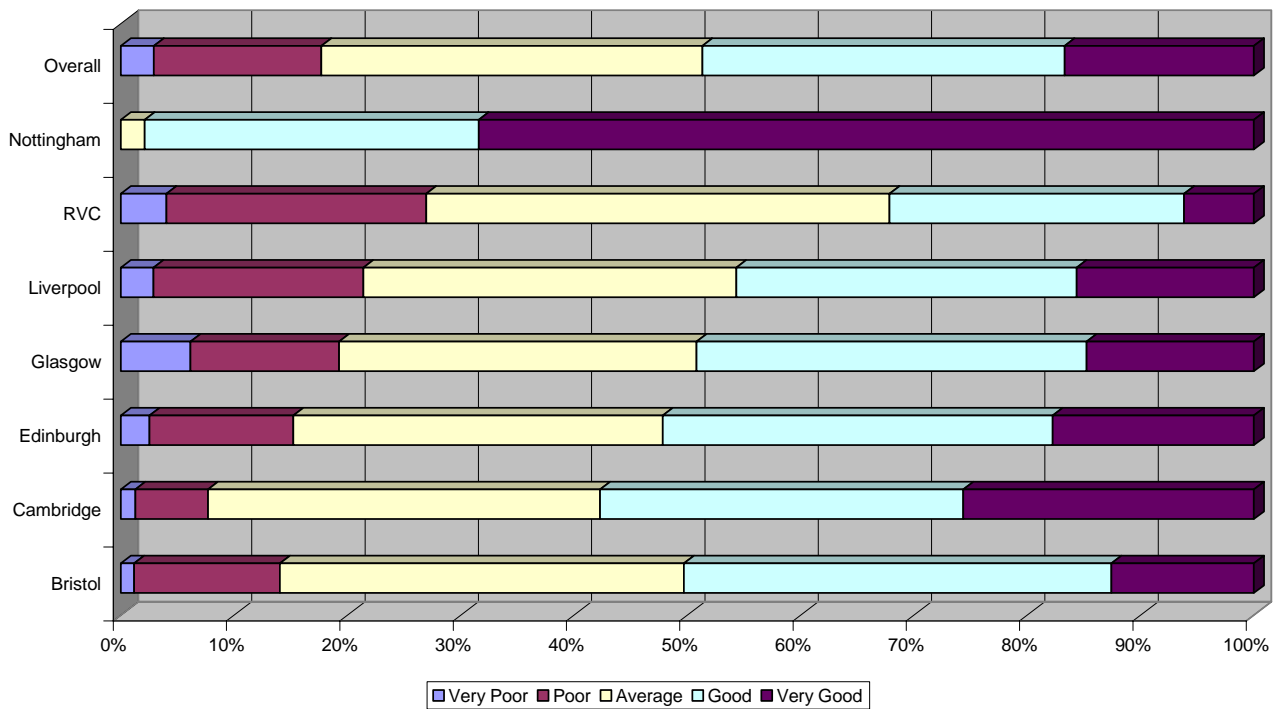


Breakdown by year

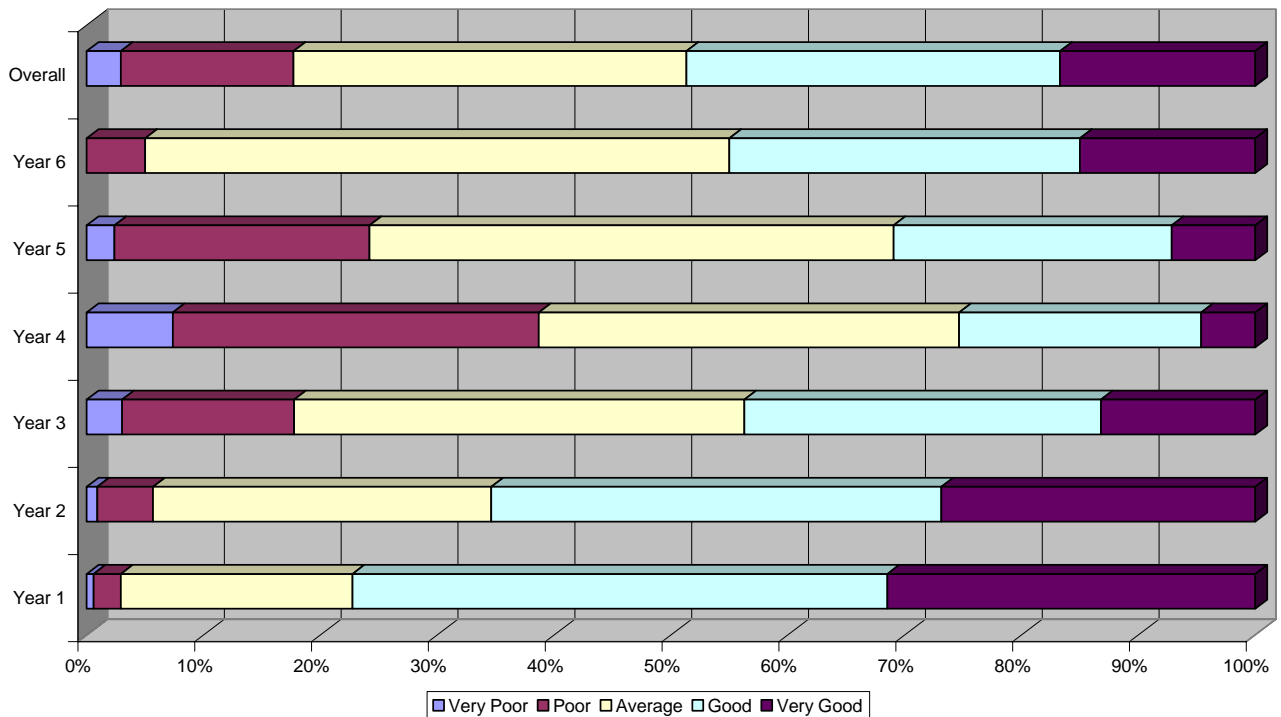


Question 34e – Please rate the balance between lectures and practicals.

Breakdown by university



Breakdown by year



Bristol

Bristol students think particularly well of the quality of their practicals.

- Just **4.1%** of respondents thought their practicals to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' against the overall average of **9.9%**.
- **85.1%** of respondents rated the interest of the course as either 'Good' or 'Very Good' against the overall average of **82.6%**.
- Just **0.6%** believed the course relevance to be either 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' compared with the overall average of **2.1%**.

Cambridge

Cambridge students are happiest about the balance between their lectures and their practicals.

- **57.7%** believe the balance between practicals and lectures to be either 'Good' or 'Very Good'. The overall average is **48.7%**.
- The relevance of the course is ranked particularly low by Cambridge students – just **55.4%** rate it 'Good' or 'Very Good' compared with an overall average of **82.5%**.
- More Cambridge students rate the interest of the course as either 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' than at any other vet school – **5.8%** against an overall average of **2.5%**.

Edinburgh

Edinburgh results are very much in line with the overall average across all questions.

- **85.9%** of respondents rated the course relevance as 'Good' or 'Very Good' compared with an overall average of **82.5%**.
- **70.7%** thought the quality of lecturing to be 'Good' or 'Very Good' against an overall average of **68.5%**.
- **15.2%** consider the balance between practicals and lectures to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' alongside the overall average of **17.7%**.

Glasgow

Glasgow respondents were the most critical of the quality of their lecturing.

- **5.7%** of Glasgow students rated the quality of their lecturing as 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' against an overall average of **3.7%**.
- Only the 6 year course at Cambridge was ranked lower in terms of relevance. **76.1%** of Glasgow students thought it 'Good' or 'Very Good' compared with an overall average of **82.5%**.
- The quality of the practicals at Glasgow is above the overall average – **62.7%** compared with **60.3%**.

Liverpool

As with Edinburgh, Liverpool's results across the board were in line with the overall averages.

- **83.5%** said the course relevance was 'Good' or 'Very Good' compared with the overall position of **82.5%**.
- **32.9%** of respondents said the split between practicals and lectures was average against an overall average of **33.6%**.
- **2.9%** said the quality of lecturing was either 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' compared with **3.7%** overall.

RVC

RVC students were the most critical about their practical experiences.

- **17.0%** of RVC students think their practicals to be either 'Poor' or 'Very Poor', well above the overall average of **9.9%**.
- **26.9%** of respondents said the balance between their lectures and practicals was 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' against an overall average of **17.7%**.
- RVC students were very positive about their course relevance – **90.5%** stating it to be 'Good' or 'Very Good' compared with an overall average of **82.5%**.

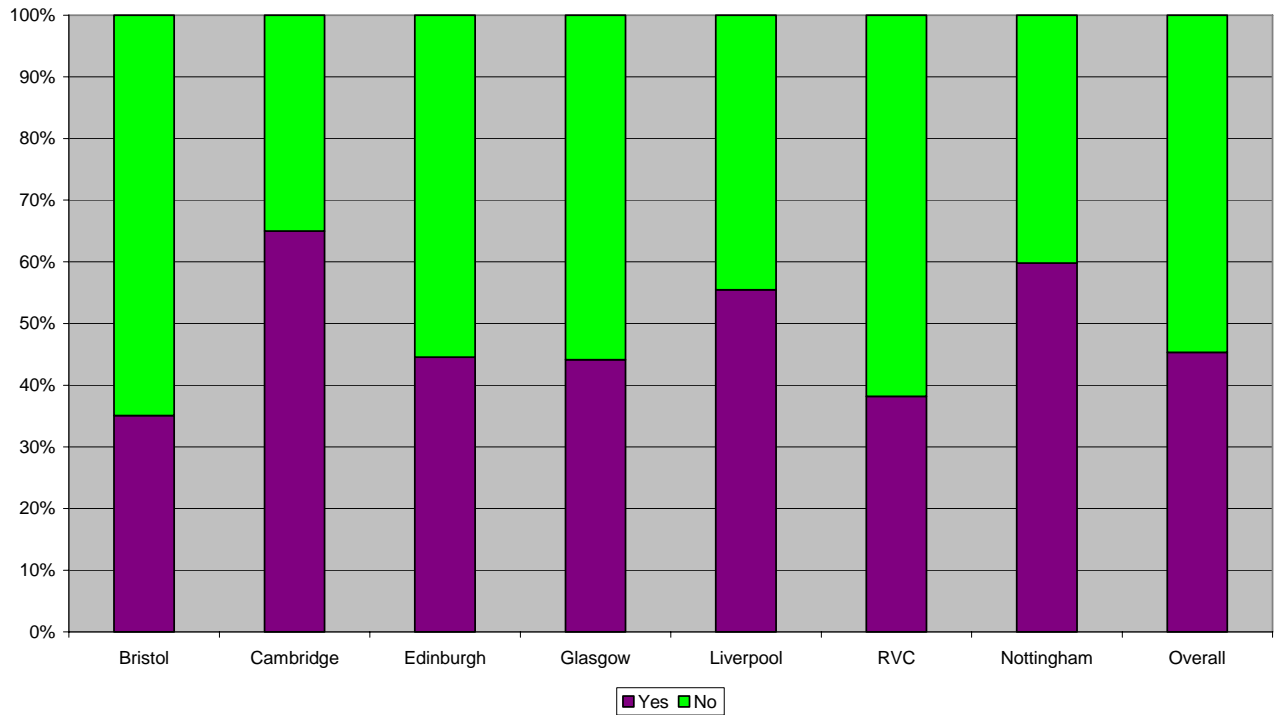
Nottingham

The two years of Nottingham students rated their course higher on every category than all other vet schools.

- **92.6%** of respondents considered the quality of their lecturing to be 'Good' or 'Very Good' against an overall average of **68.5%**.
- **97.9%** rated the lecture/ practical balance as 'Good' or 'Very Good' against the overall average, **48.7%**.

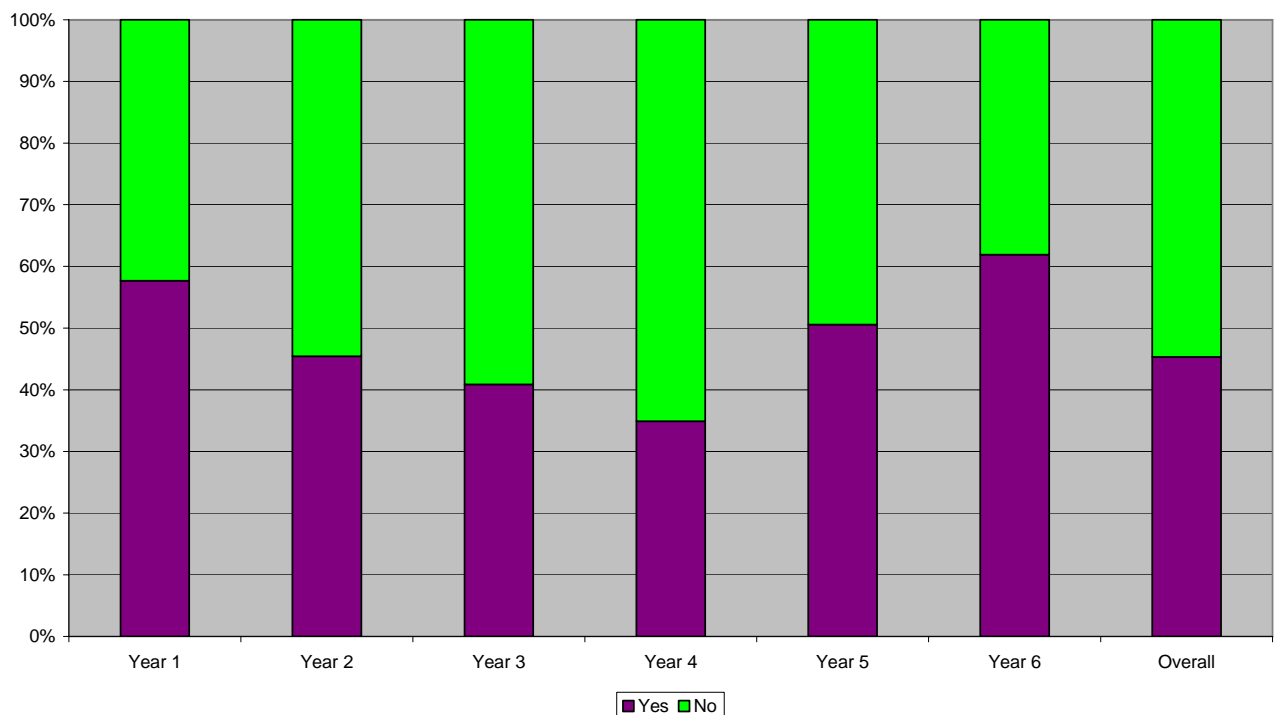
35) Do you feel the veterinary medicine course gives you adequate time to understand the subjects covered?

Breakdown by university



Overall, less than half (**45.3%**) of the respondents think that the course gives adequate time to understand the subjects covered. It is perhaps unsurprising that the 6 year course at Cambridge gains the highest approval rating of **65.0%**.

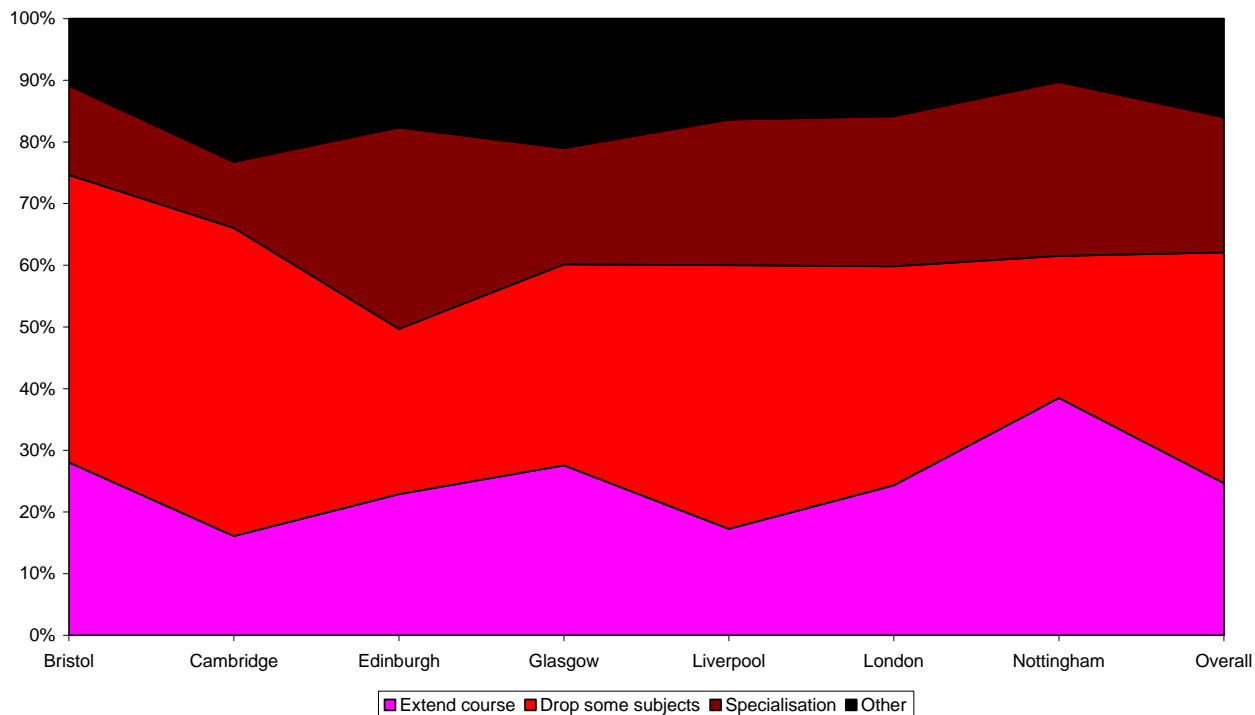
Breakdown by year



It appears that the middle years are the ones where students most feel there is inadequate time to understand the subjects covered. Once students see the finish line in their final years, they become more positive.

35a) If 'No', how would you resolve the issue?

Breakdown by university



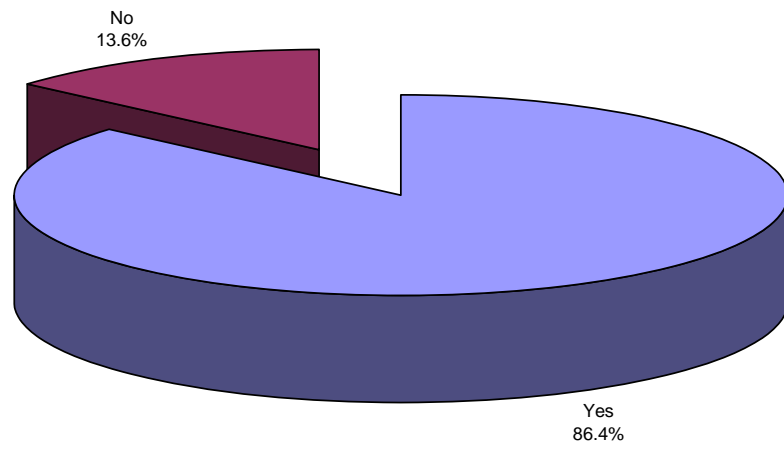
Of the **54.7%** who felt that they do not have adequate time to understand the subjects covered, most (**37.4%**) thought it would be better to drop some subjects from the course. However, responses were spread across all of the options and opinions varied from university to university. For example, **50.0%** of Cambridge respondents thought that some subjects should be dropped compared to **26.8%** of Edinburgh respondents.

I would gladly undergo a longer course to have fewer lectures per week so I can indulge in further study of areas that I'm particularly interested in...interview for entry pressures us to have extracurricular interests that we are then denied by course requirements once we start – Bristol 1st year

Changing the course layout halfway through the course – PMVPH, which is now apparently a closed book exam – after we half of the lectures for a coursework based case is unacceptable. I feel completely let down. We are asked to behave professionally but are not treated as such – Edinburgh 4th year

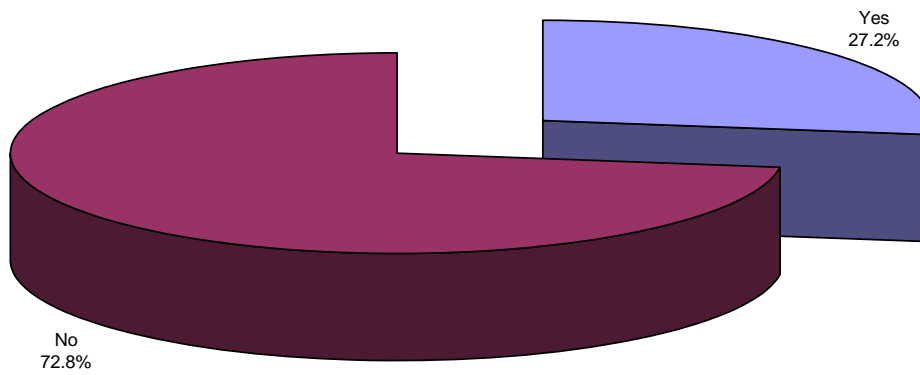
36a) Do you think that the undergraduate course prepares you for lifelong learning?

Overall



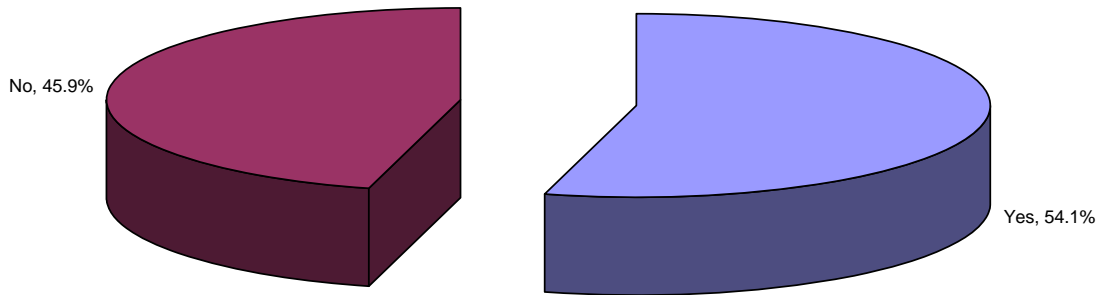
36b) Do you think that the undergraduate course gives you enough time to adequately relax and recuperate?

Overall



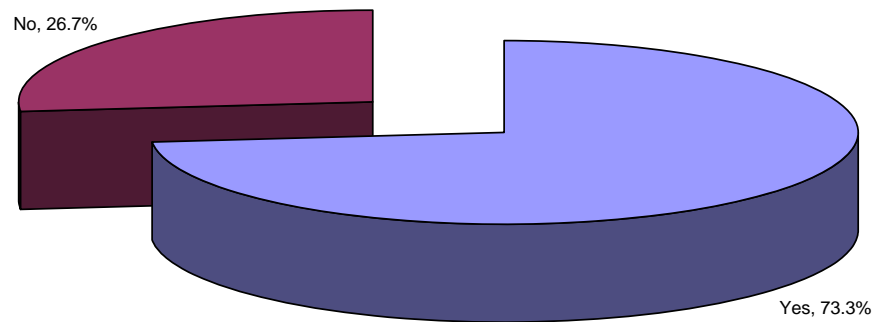
36c) Do you think that the undergraduate course equips you to create a healthy work/ life balance on graduation?

Overall



36d) Do you think that the undergraduate course prepares you for the professional life you will face on graduation?

Overall



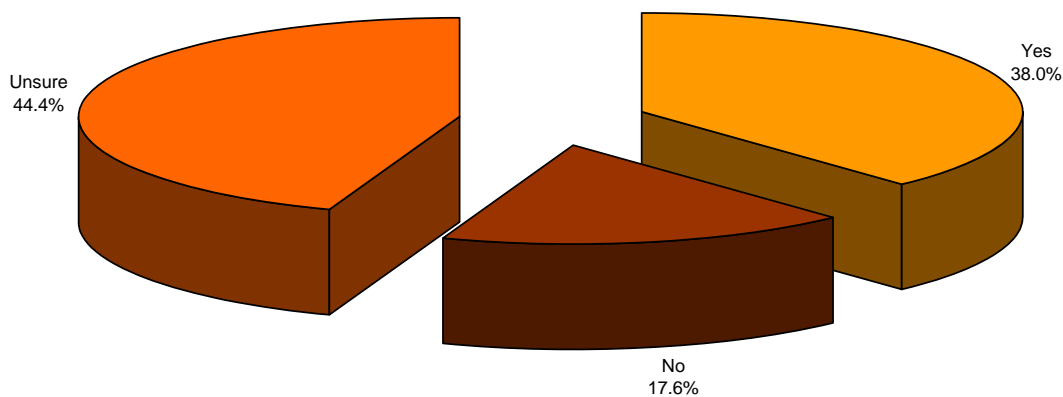
Respondents were positive about how the veterinary medicine course prepares them for lifelong learning and CPD on qualification (**86.4%** saying yes in answer to this question). At the other end of the scale, **72.8%** of respondents felt that the course does not provide enough time to adequately relax and recuperate.

In fact, when the results of parts c) and d) are considered too, the message seems to be that the veterinary medicine course is very good at preparing students for the professional side of life after graduation, but not on managing the personal side.

"I have had a fantastic five years at Liverpool and will miss it hugely when I leave.....The course has prepared me well for going into practice and I can't wait to get a job and be a vet" – Liverpool 5th year

37) Is there sufficient supervision/ teaching by practices during EMS?

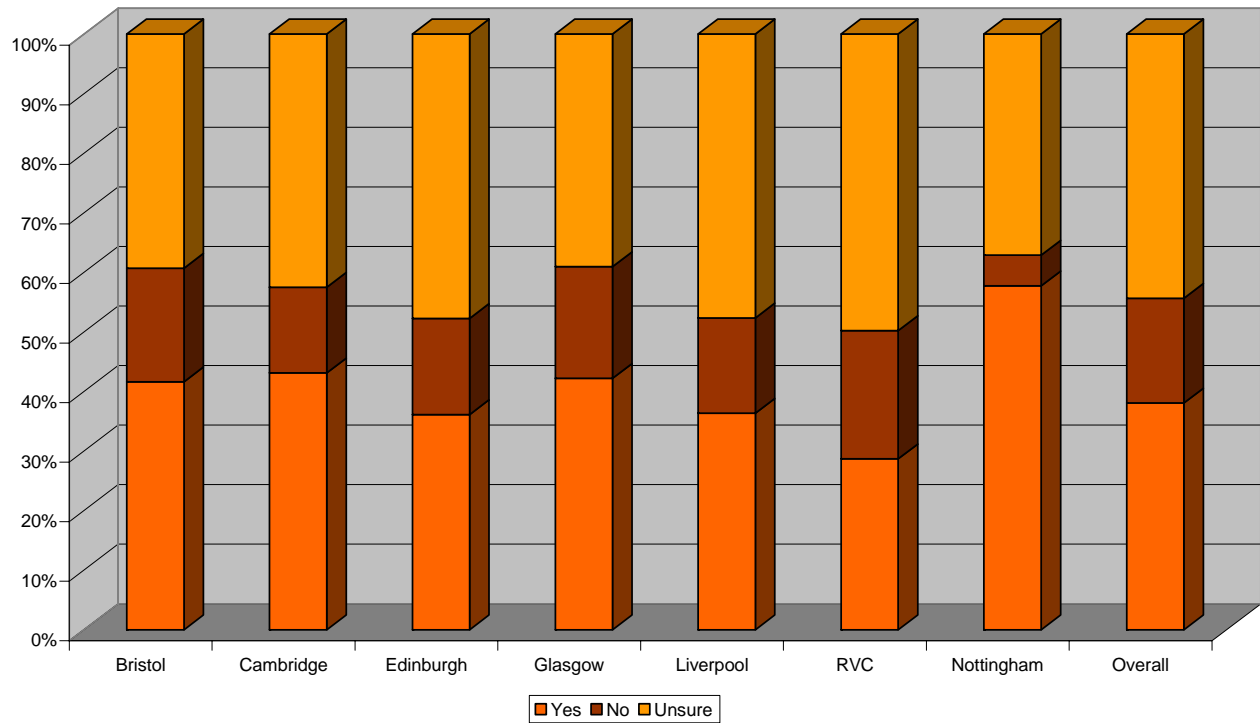
Overall



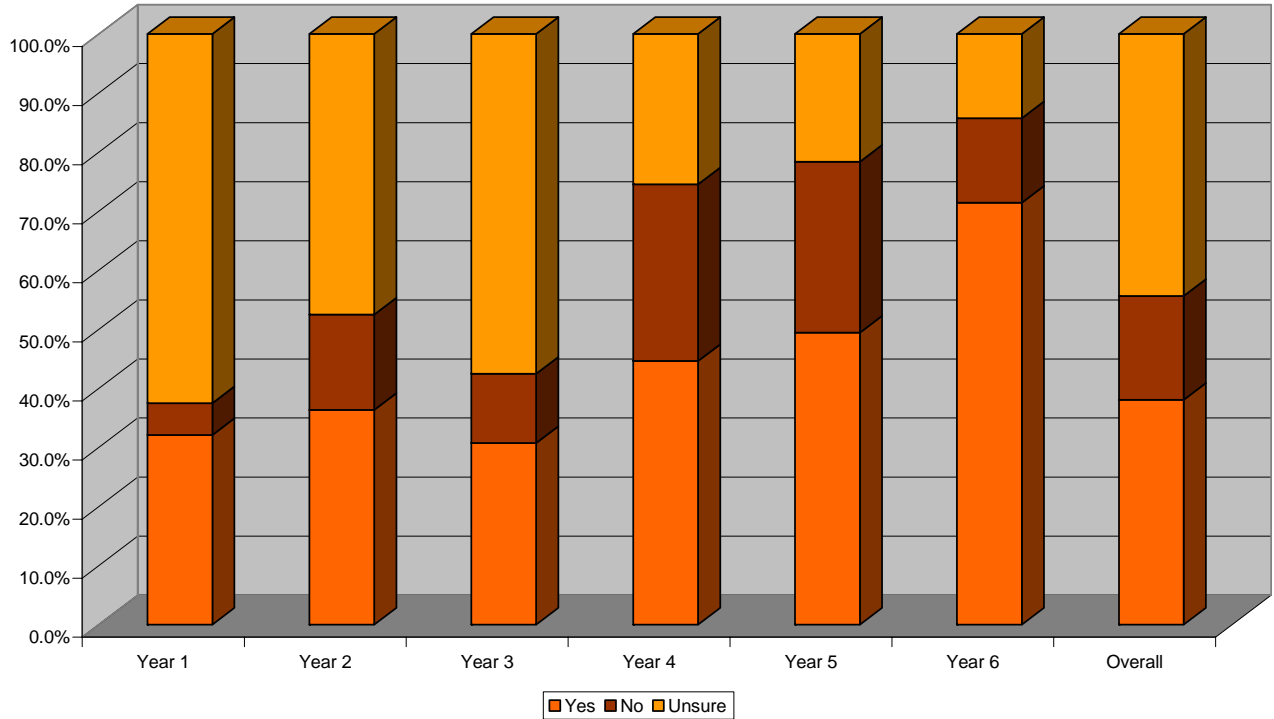
As in 2005, almost half of respondents stated that they were unsure whether there is sufficient supervision during EMS (**45.5%** in 2005 compared with **44.4%** this time around). The percentage of respondents who said that there is not enough supervision has increased significantly from **8.4%** in 2005 to **17.6%** this year.

Relying on EMS to teach us the majority of our practical skills is misguided and wrong. Not only is it expensive and logistically inconvenient but you may not learn the skills required for practice. It is the vet school's responsibility to teach these things and ensure that they are taught to a certain standard, not unstandardized, unqualified practices – Edinburgh 4th year

Breakdown by university



Breakdown by year

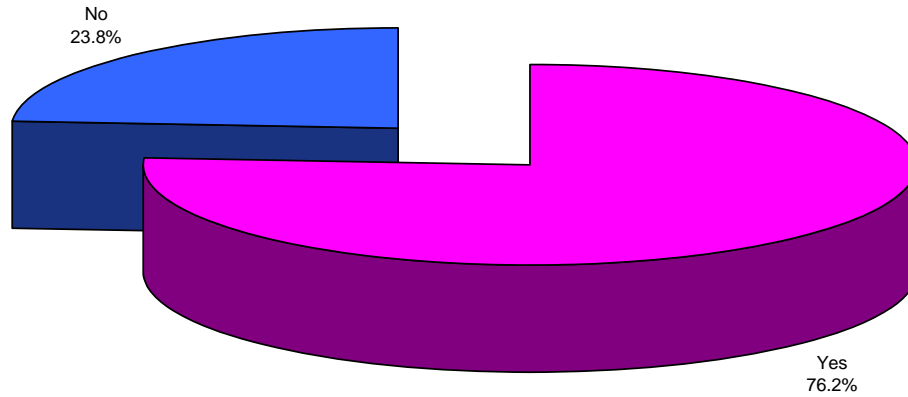


The breakdown by year is the most informative, with the majority of respondents who said that they were unsure being in years 1 (62.5%), 2 (47.5%) and 3 (57.5%). When the survey was conducted in 2005, the more experience of EMS respondents had, the more likely they were to say 'No' to this question. This year, the opposite is true, with those who have the most EMS experience most likely to say 'Yes' to this question – from 32.1% in year 1 to 49.4% in year 5.

38) Should practices be registered for EMS?

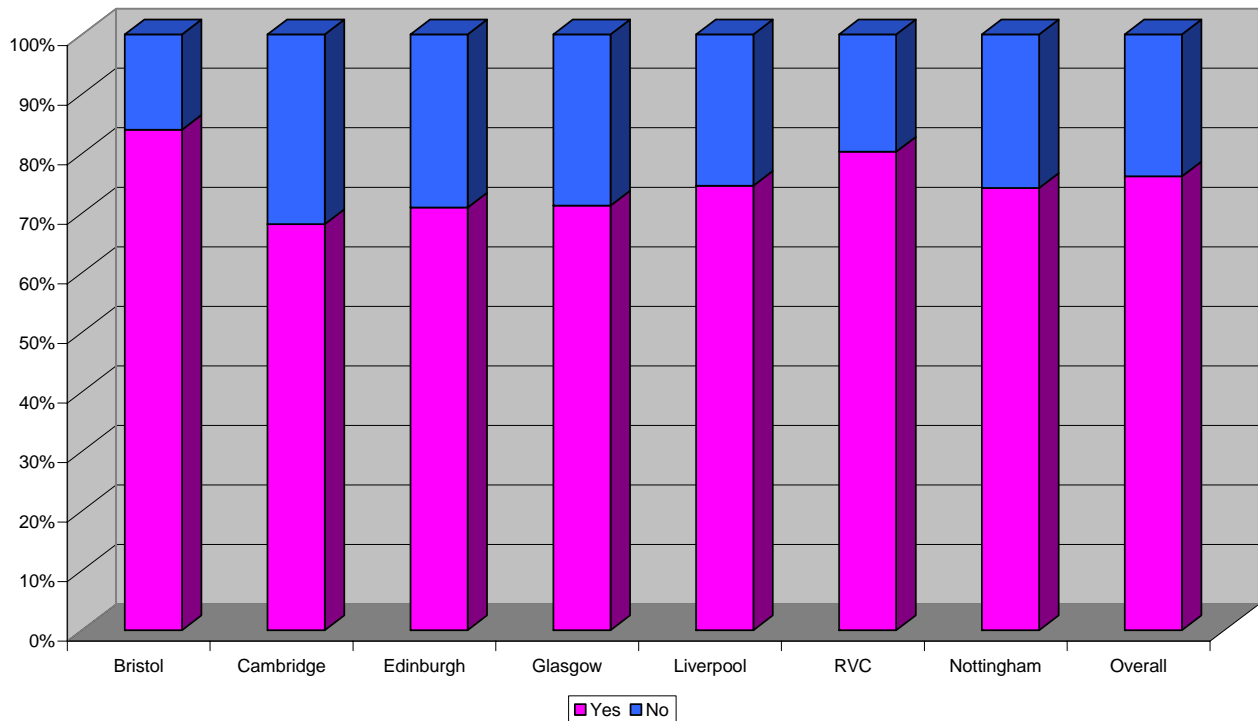
Overall

EMS requirements need to be reassessed and defined more clearly – Cambridge 4th year.



The **76.2%** of respondents who believe that practices should be registered for EMS is a notable increase on the **66.3%** in 2005's survey.

Breakdown by university



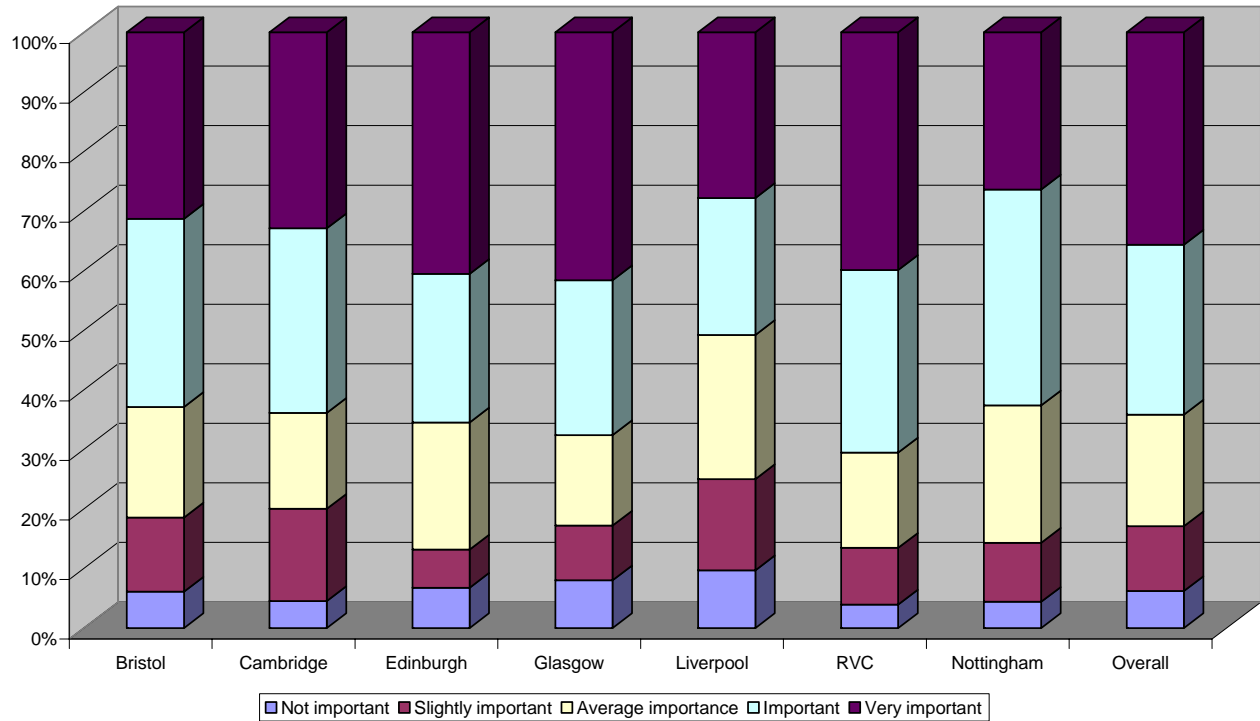
Responses were consistently in favour of practices being registered for EMS across all of the vet schools. Bristol University students have always been the ones most in favour of this and it is continued this time – up from **74.5%** in 2005 to **84.0%**.

39) Please rate the following considerations when choosing your EMS.

Cost (e.g. travel, accommodation, etc)

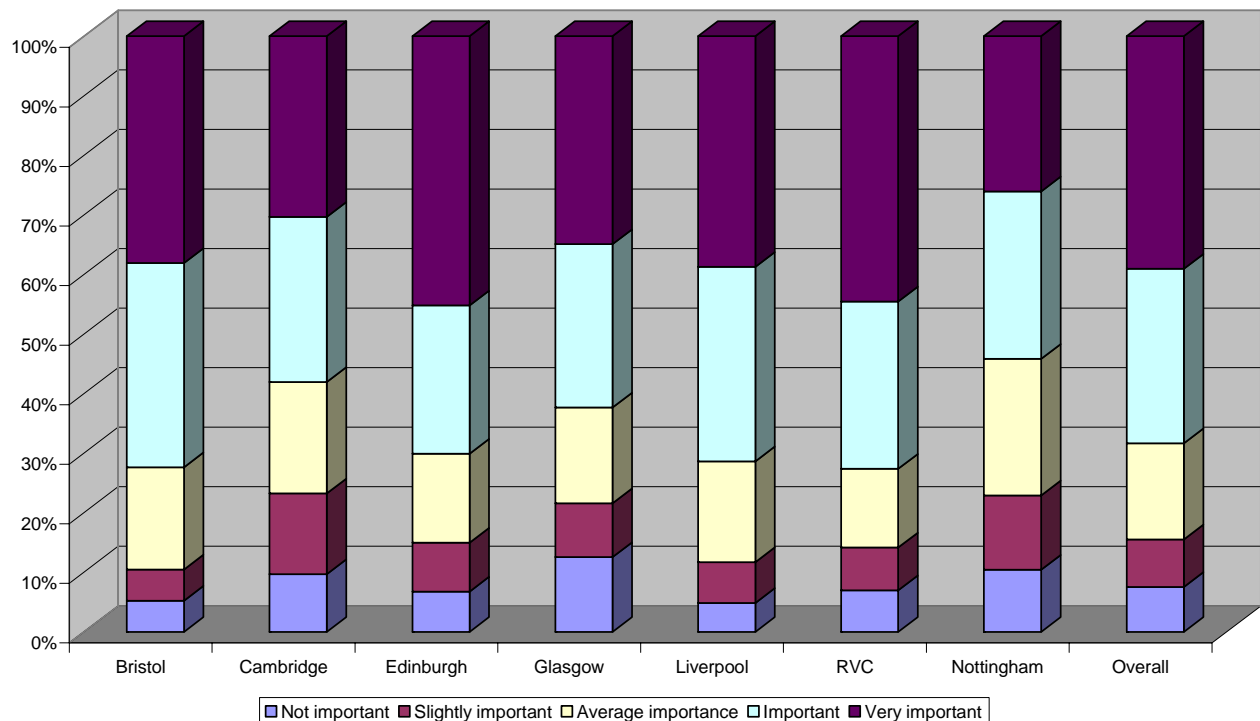
“There should be an extra loan available for our compulsory EMS, just as medical students get” – RVC 2nd year

Breakdown by university



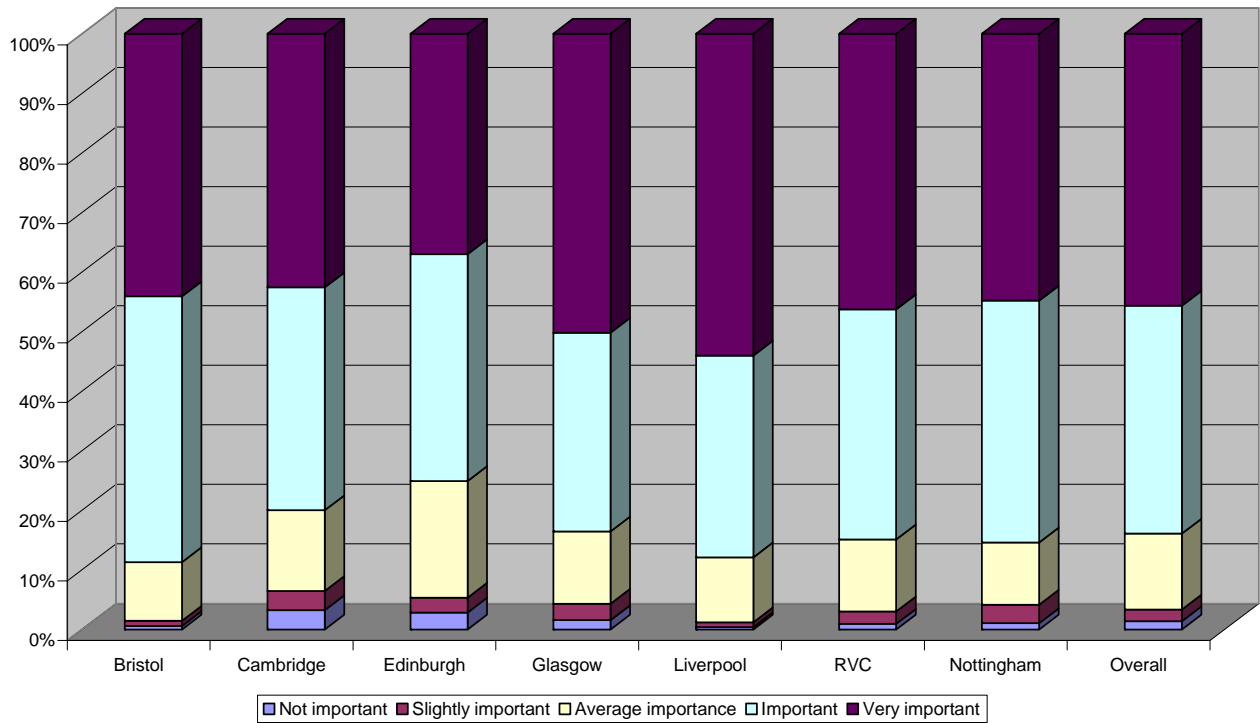
Location (e.g. close to home/ college)

Breakdown by university



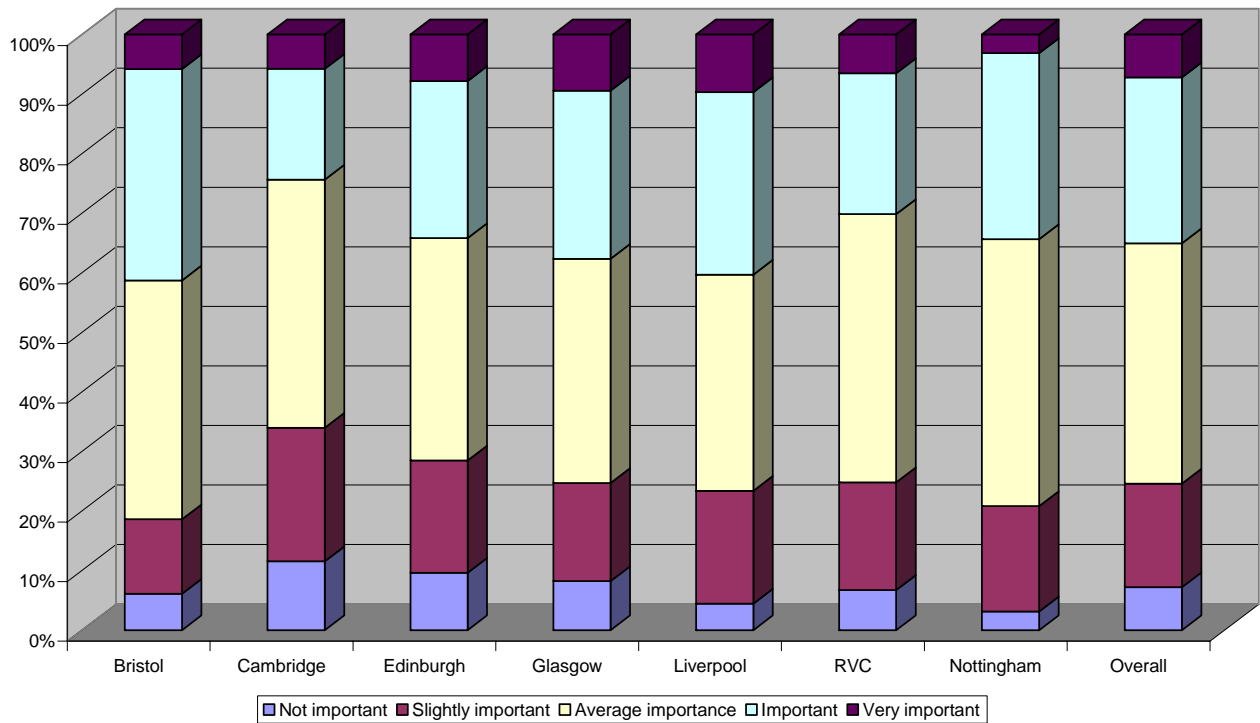
Type of practice (e.g. range of experience)

Breakdown by university



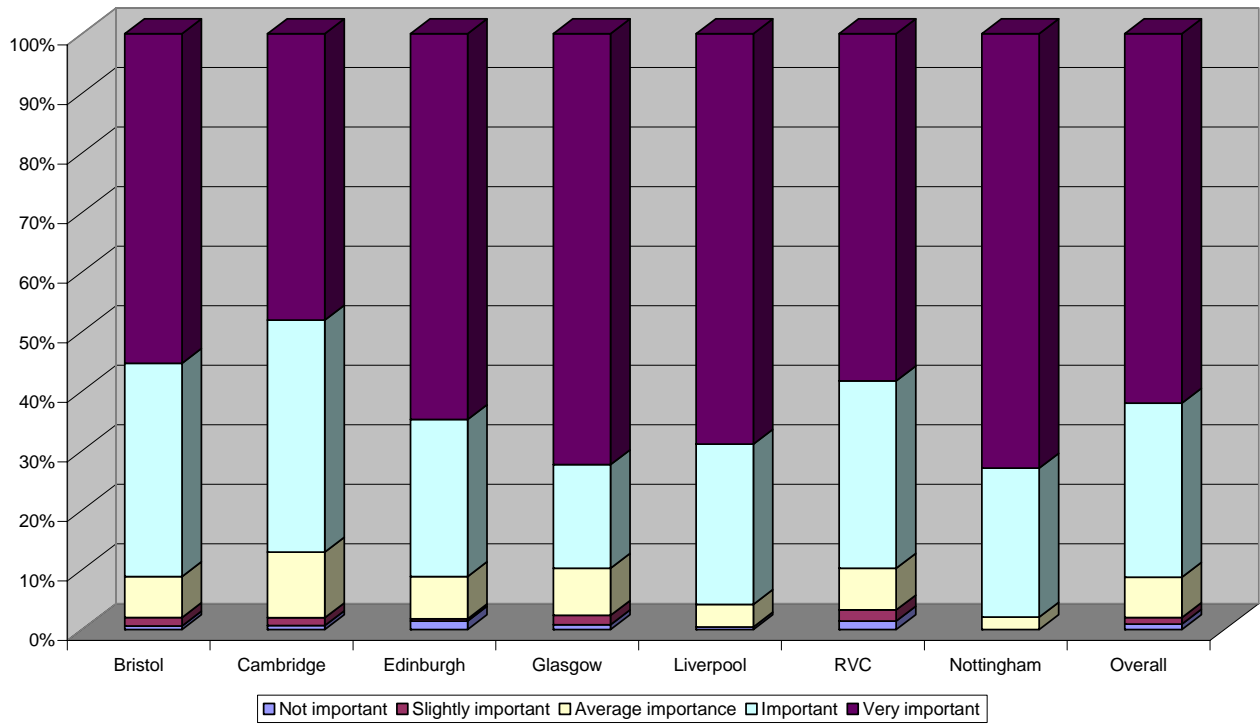
Equipment available

Breakdown by university



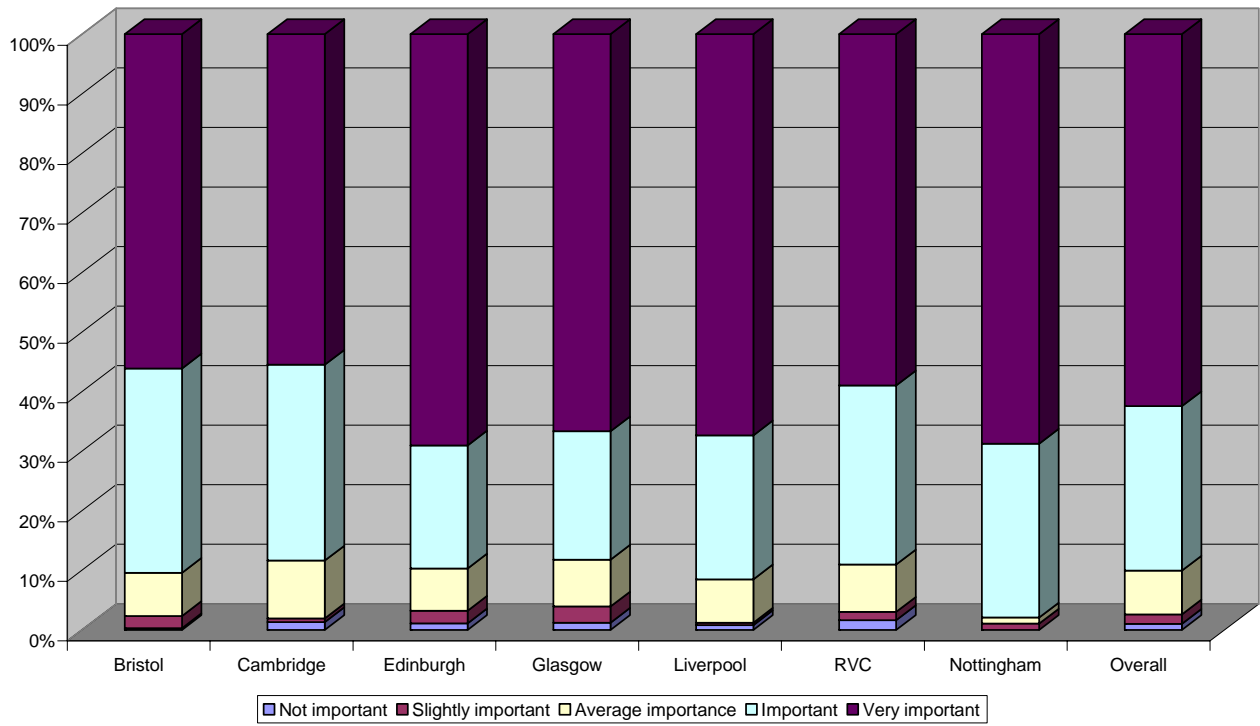
Hands-on experience

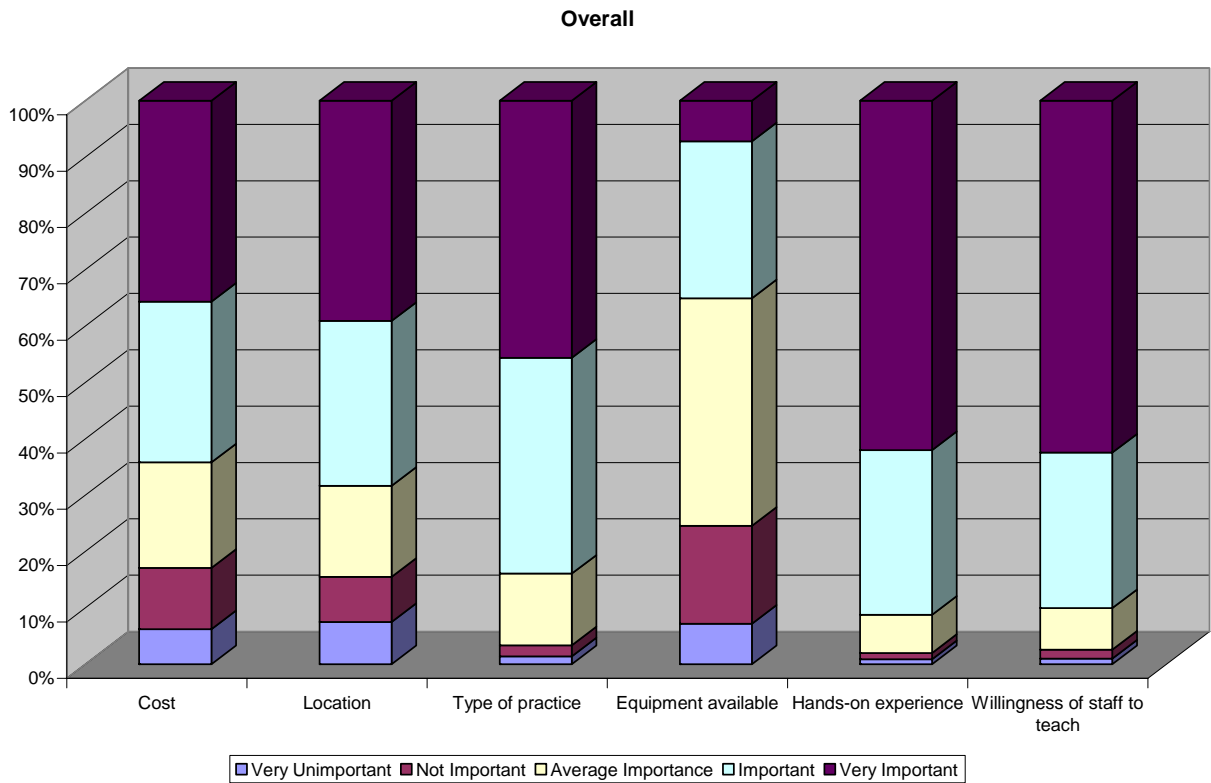
Breakdown by university



Willingness of staff to teach

Breakdown by university





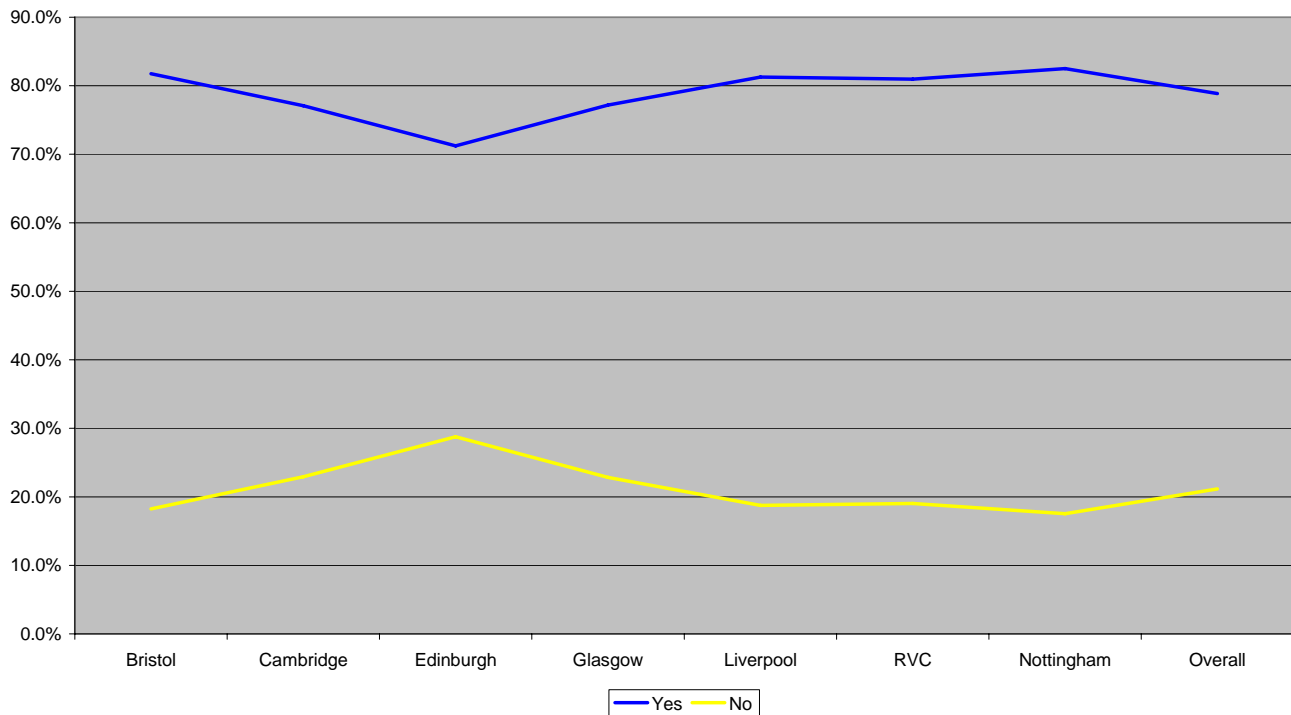
As in previous years, there are occasional notable differences between the responses received from students at different universities:

- The location was very important to **45.2%** of Edinburgh respondents compared with just **26.0%** of those at Nottingham.
- The type of practice was very important to **54.0%** of Liverpool students compared with **37.0%** of Edinburgh students.

Overall, there are big differences in the level of importance applied to each category by the respondents. Just **7.2%** of respondents thought the equipment available was very important whilst **62.4%** thought the willingness of staff to teach was very important.

40) Do you think that you should be taught all areas of veterinary medicine during the undergraduate course?

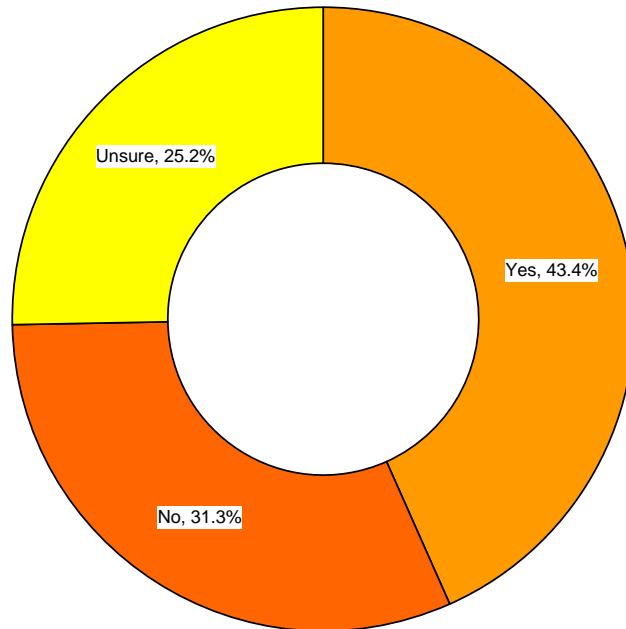
Breakdown by university



There was a strong opinion in favour of all areas being taught (**78.8%** for and **21.2%** against). There was not much variation in the response rates at the different universities with Edinburgh having the least students in favour (**71.2%**) and Nottingham having the most (**82.5%**). This does represent a bit of a change in the opinion of Edinburgh students as they have always previously been among the strongest in favour (**81.4%** in 2002 and **82.1%** in 2005). Overall, the results are very similar to 2005, when **79.7%** of respondents indicated that all areas of veterinary medicine should be taught.

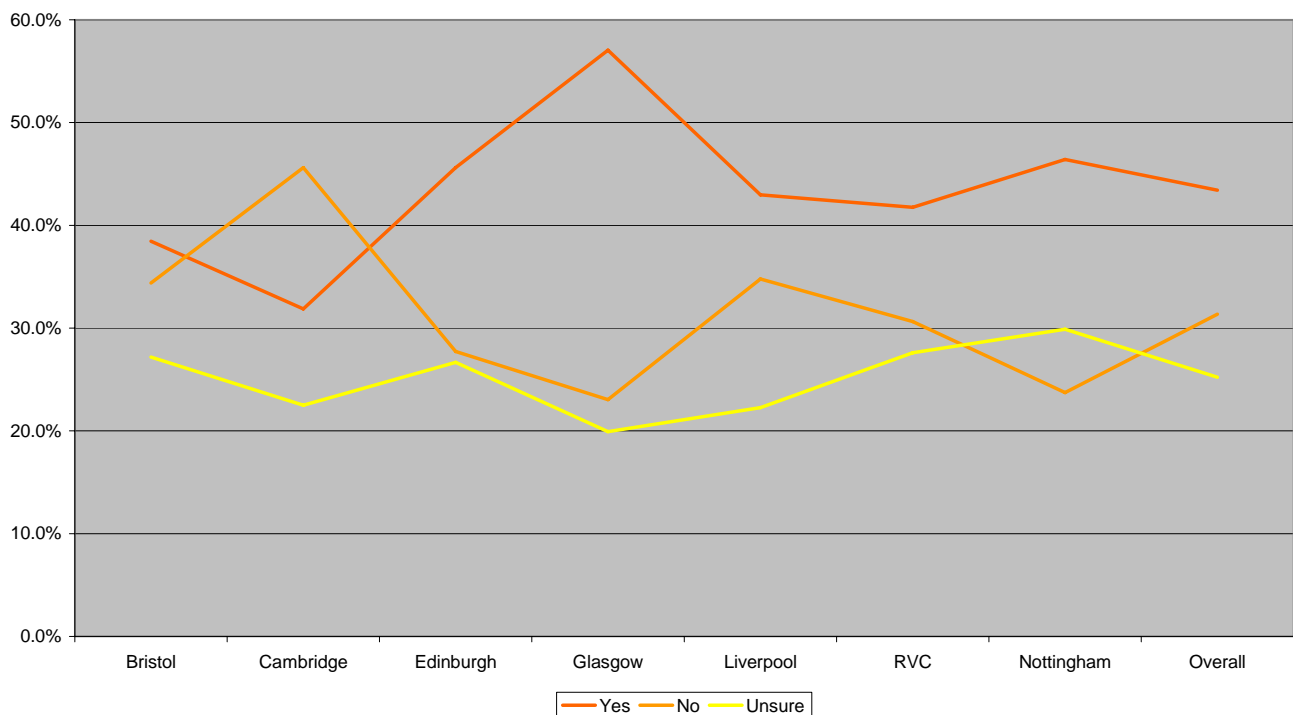
41) Would you consider doing a more specialised degree to be qualified to work in a narrower field?

Overall



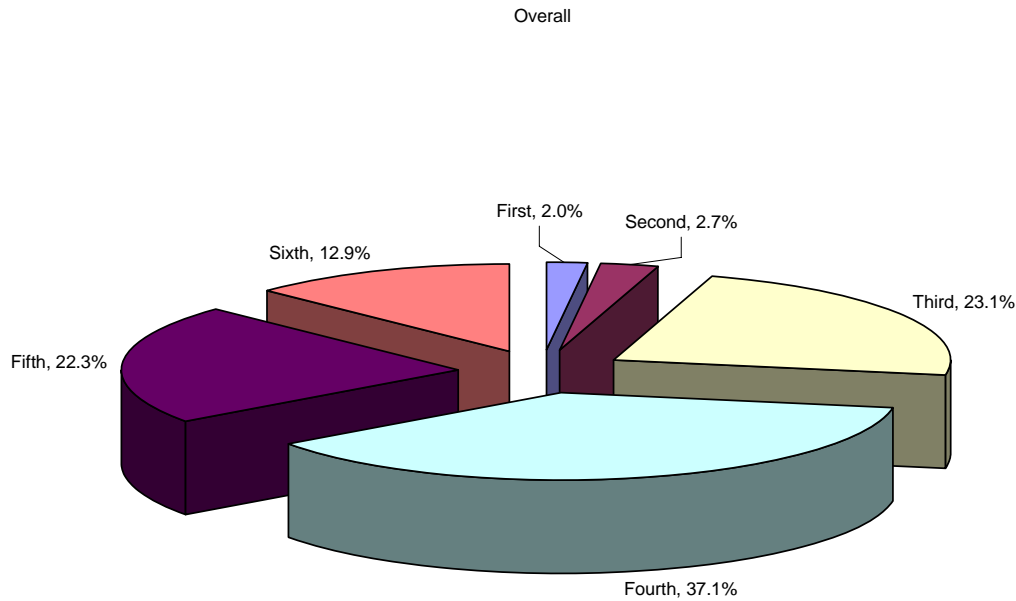
In previous years we have reported a steady increase in the percentage of respondents who would consider doing a more specialised degree (**26.0%** in 1999 to **33.0%** in 2005). This year has seen a rather larger increase up to **43.4%**. This coupled with the increase in the numbers who are unsure means that, for the first time, more respondents have said 'Yes' than have said 'No'.

Breakdown by university



Cambridge respondents were the only ones who said No (**45.6%**) in larger numbers than they said 'Yes' (**31.9%**).

41a) If 'Yes', in which year do you think specialisation should start?



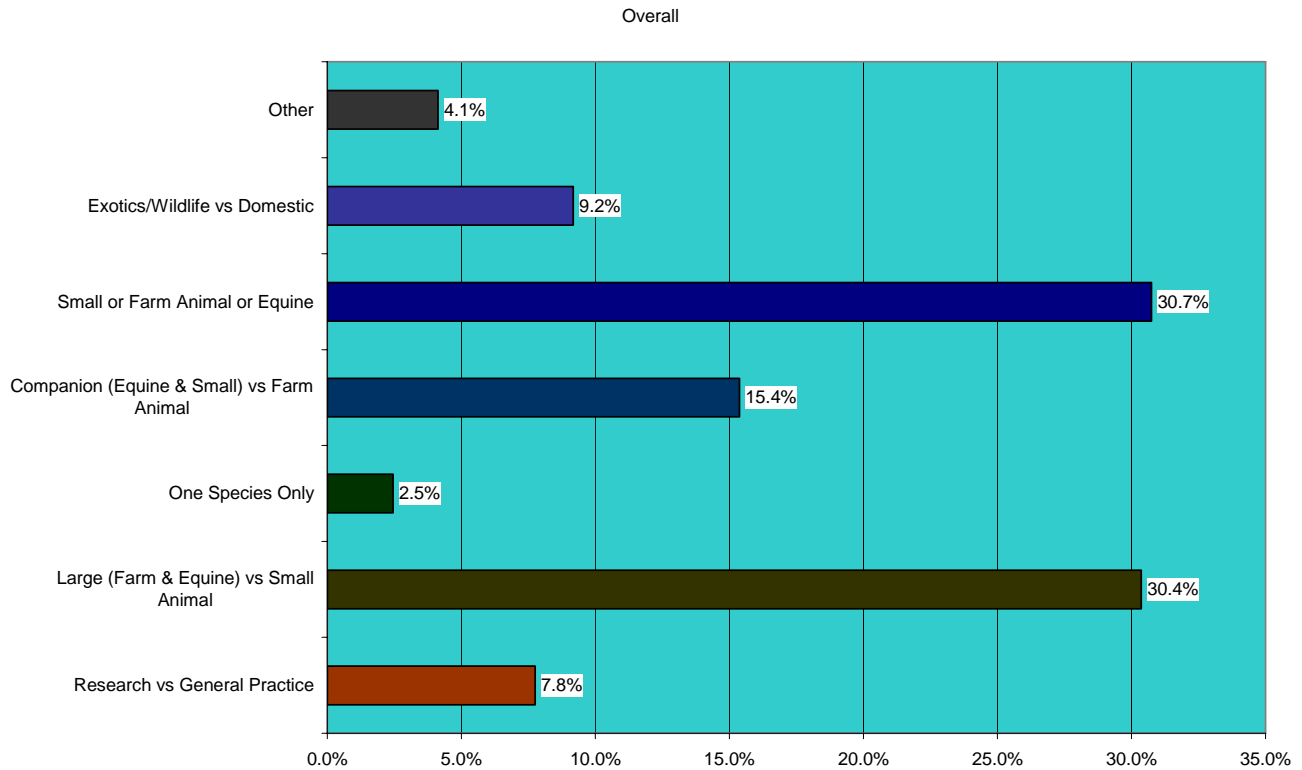
The responses are almost identical to those in 2005, with **98.0%** of students thinking that the course should start out as a general one before specialisation being introduced part-way through. Also as in 2005, the most popular year for specialisation commencing was the fourth (**37.1%** in 2008 compared with **36.6%** in 2005).

"I do not believe in specialisation at an early stage as perceptions change throughout the course. I came to uni only interested in small and equine but now wish to work in farm too. Specialisation would make this impossible" – Bristol 3rd year

It worries me that narrowing your disciplines before you graduate is being thought about. We should graduate and then go on to specialise! – RVC 4th year

I think specialisation would be an excellent idea. At times, I have been very stressed trying to learn so much detail for exams on subjects I know I will not need once I graduate. Also, arranging farm EMS is extremely difficult. Specialisation early would leave the farm practices available for those students who actually want to go – RVC 4th year

41b) If 'Yes', how should the specialised sections of the course be separated?



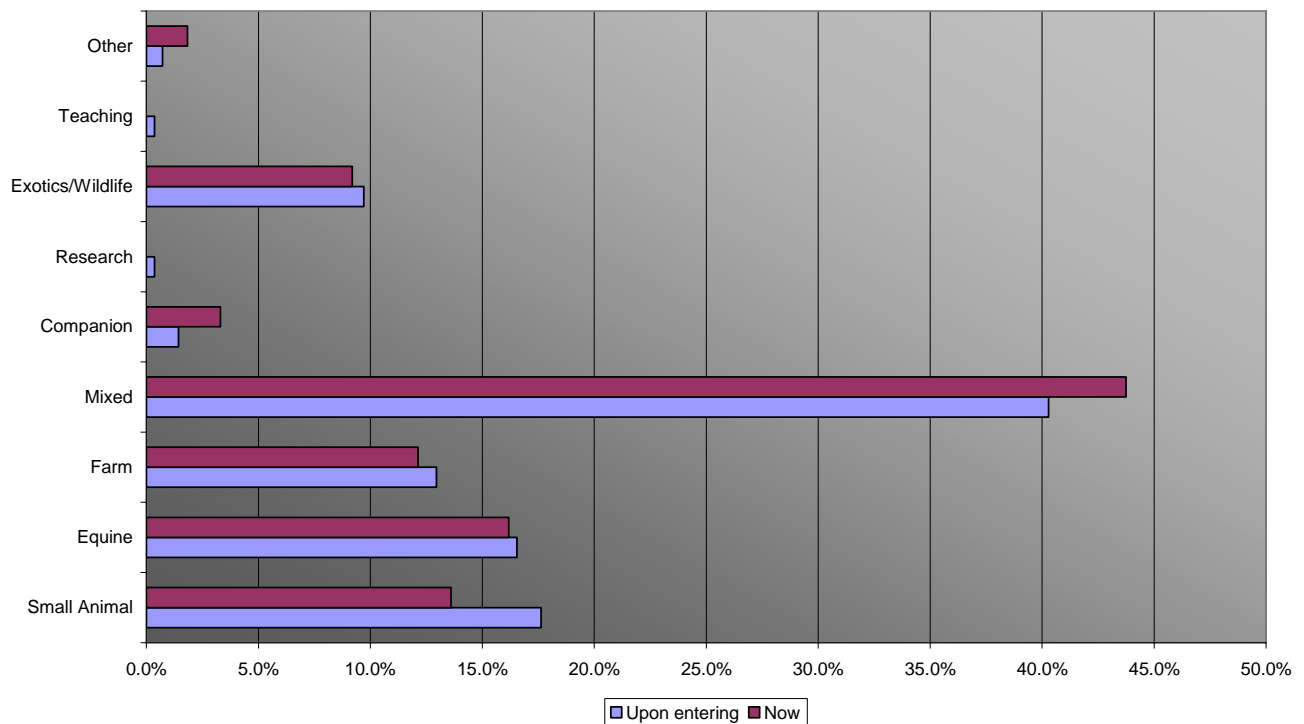
Although 'Small or Farm Animal or Equine' (30.7%) remains the most popular way of dividing the course, the gap has been closed to almost nothing by those indicating it should be split 'Large (Farm Animal & Equine) v's Small' (30.4%). This is a continuation of the previous trend – up from 14.3% in 2002 to 24.3% in 2005.

42) In which area did you envisage practicing?

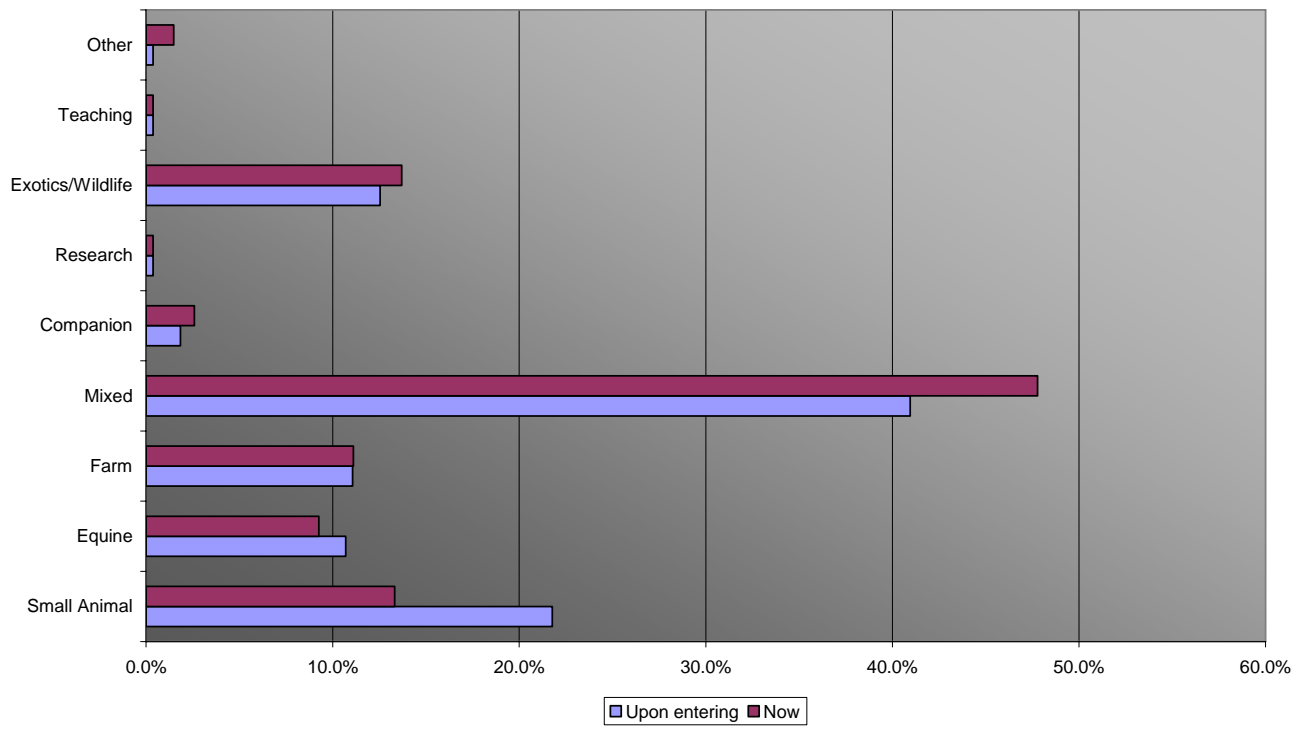
(a) When you entered vet school?

(b) Now?

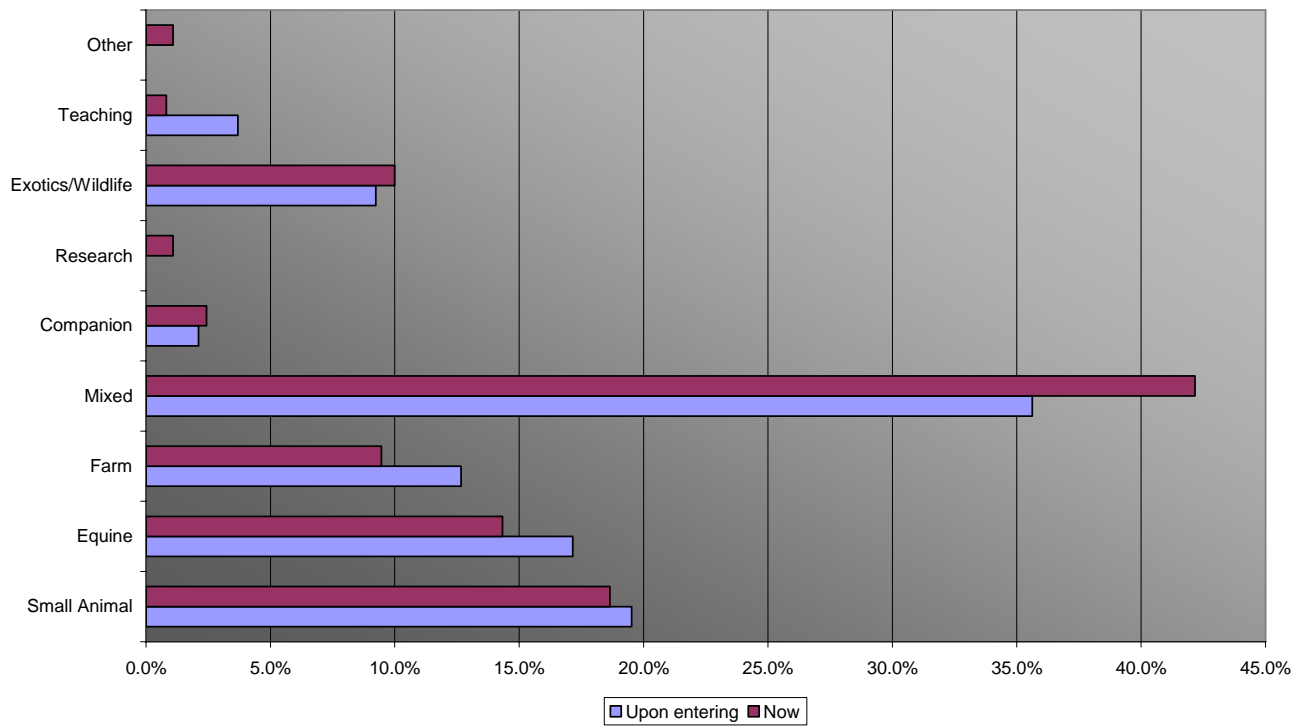
Year 1



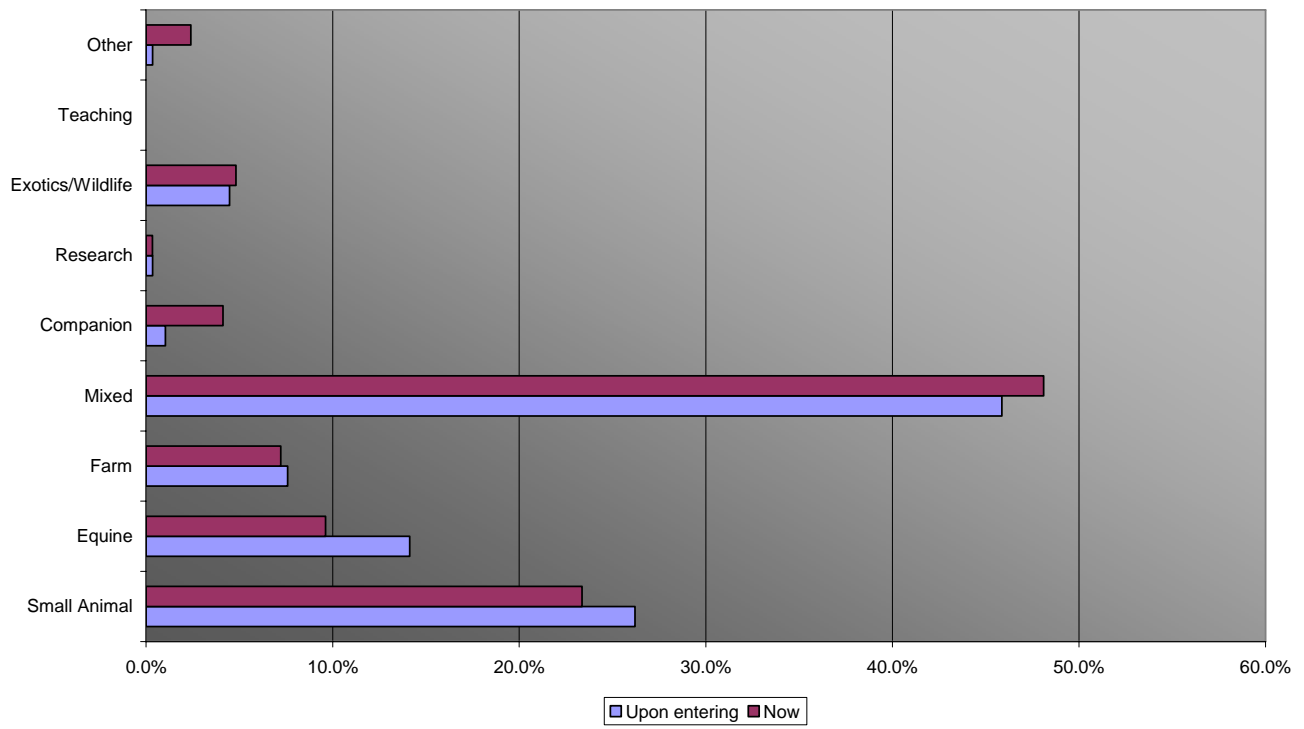
Year 2



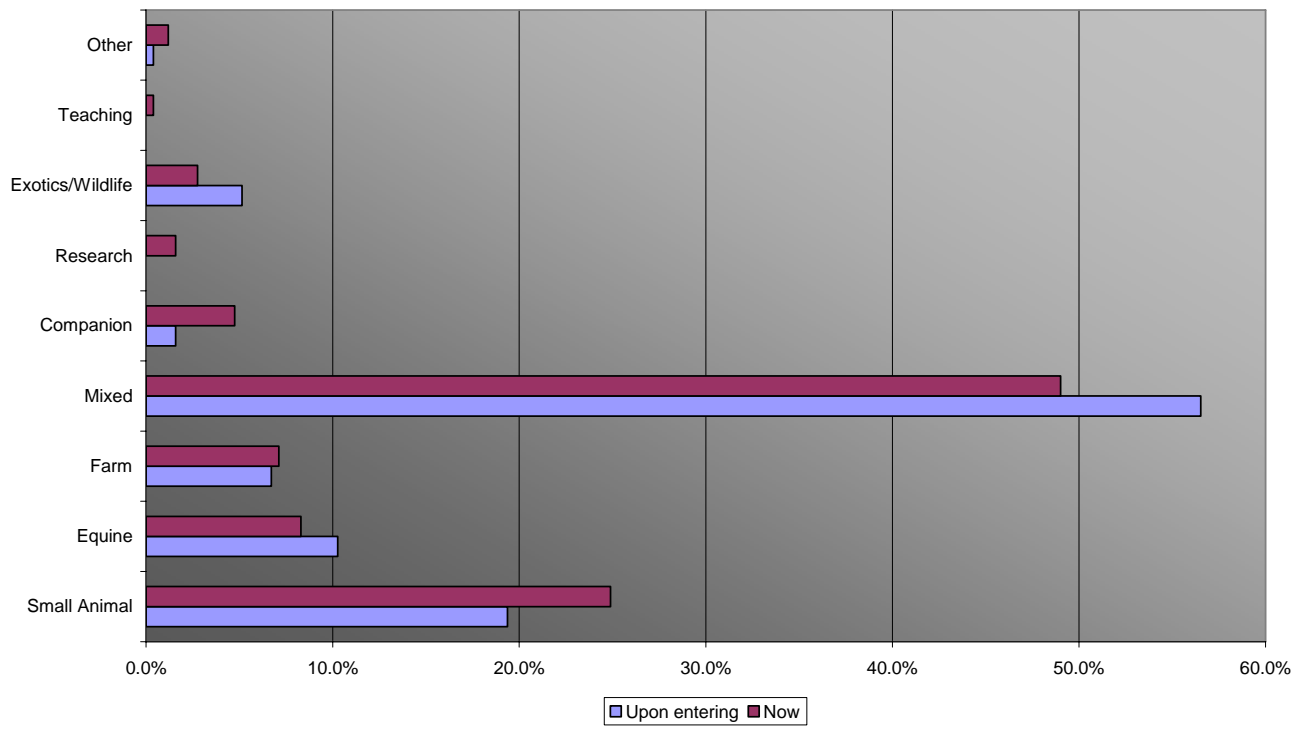
Year 3

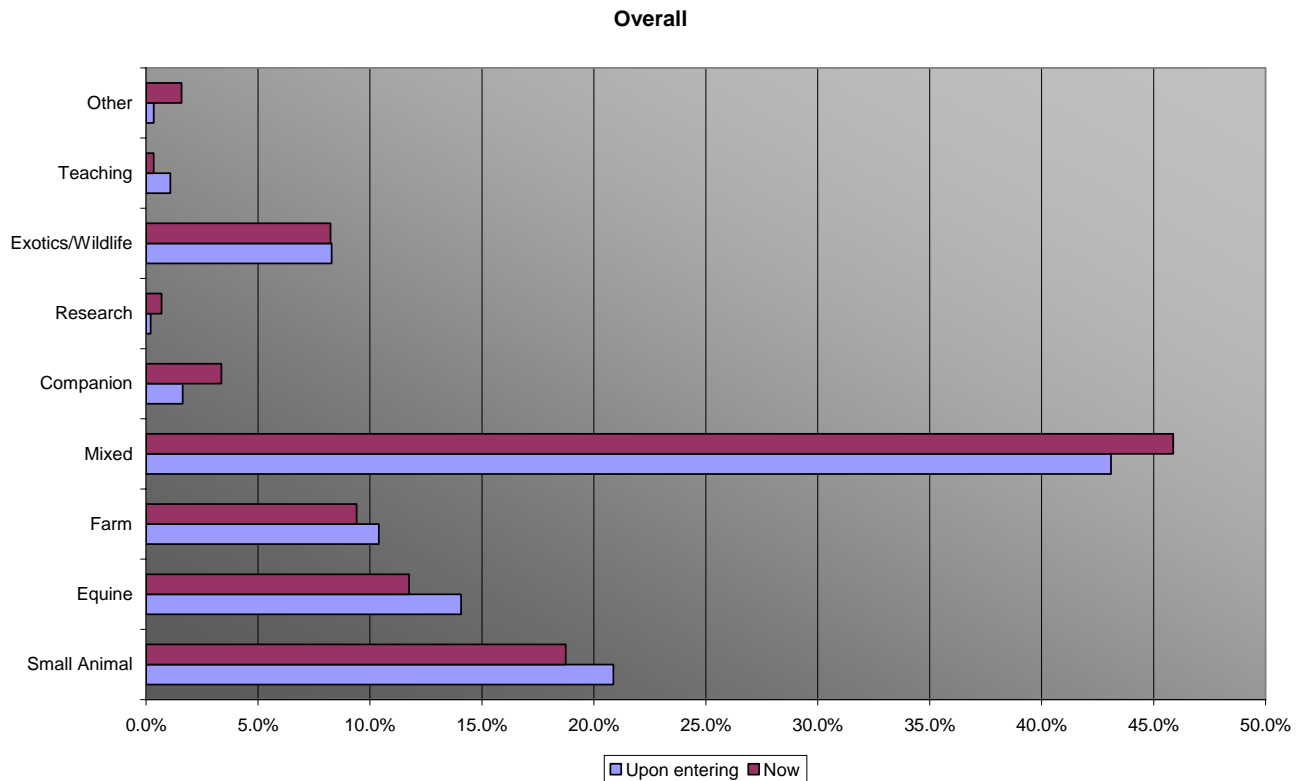


Year 4



Year 5



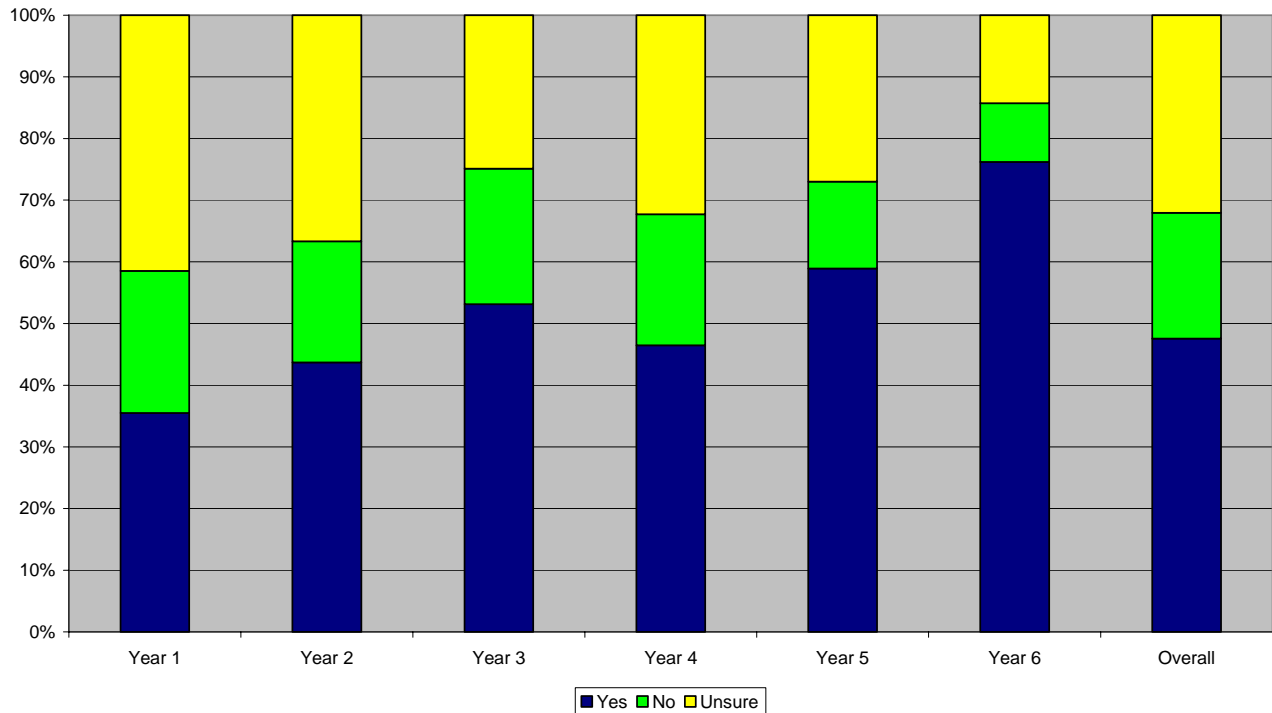


The above sequence of tables provides some interesting information:

- Respondents change their mind very early on in the course about what they would like to do upon graduation. As an example, see the drop from **17.6%** of 1st year students intending to practice small animal medicine when they enter vet school changing to **13.6%** just a few months later. Conversely, see the **40.3%** originally intending to enter mixed practice increase to **43.8%**.
- In every year apart from year 5, the percentage of students intending to enter mixed practice increases and the percentage intending to enter small animal practice decreases. In the final year, these roles are reversed so that the **19.4%** originally intending to practice small animal medicine increases to **24.9%** and the **56.5%** originally intending to enter mixed practice decreases to **49.0%**. This does appear to be an unusual trend as this is a reversal of the figures reported in the 2005 survey.
- The intention to enter mixed practice when starting the course (**43.1%**) and now (**45.9%**) is by far and away the most popular option among the respondents.
- Although the overall numbers for small animal medicine do experience some drop off as students are going through the course - **20.9%** down to **18.8%**, when compared with previous years the percentage of students now intending to practice small animal medicine is increasing (up from **16.0%**) in 2005.

43) After graduation, will you consider further study?

Breakdown by year

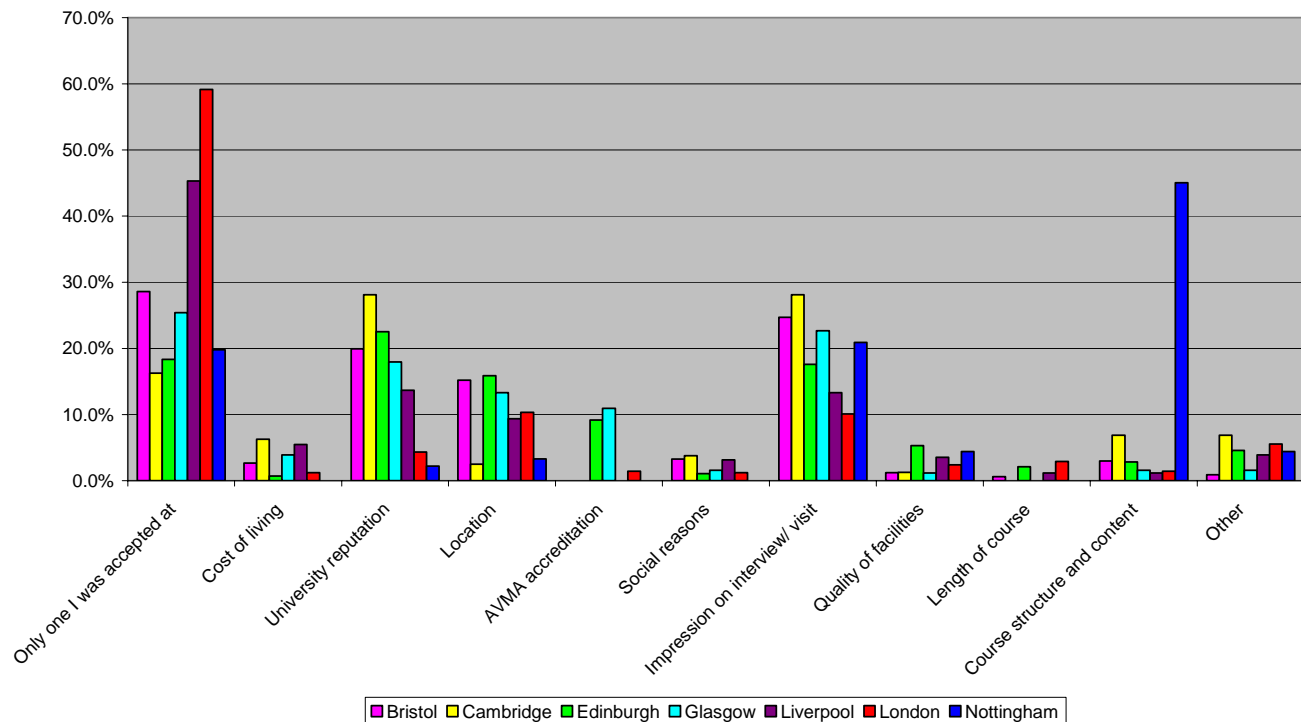


Overall, the **47.6%** of respondents who have indicated that they will consider further study is a small drop from the **52.2%** reported in 2005. The breakdown by year does clearly indicate that the closer to graduation students become, the more likely they are to consider further study.

The tragic thing is the appalling funding of post-graduate positions. After 5 – 6 years at vet school, following with an internship/ residency is almost impossible when you expect to get paid between £10k and 12k. I will go into general practice and not research referral purely because I need to support my family now – Cambridge 6th year

44) How did you choose which vet school to study at?

Breakdown by university



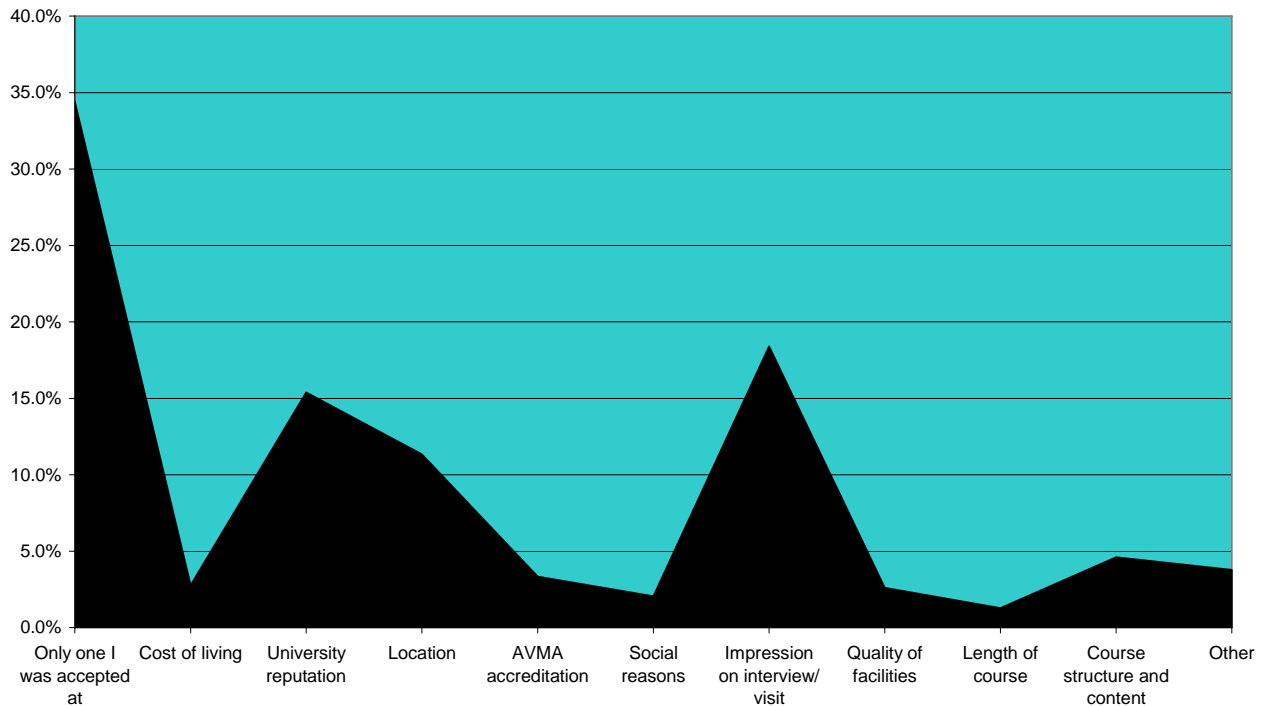
‘The only one I was accepted at’ has traditionally been the main reason given by respondents at all universities. This year it remains clearly the main reason at London (**59.1%**) and Liverpool (**45.3%**) but even these are significantly down on the **70.1%** and **59.2%** respectively reported in 2005.

The stand out response to this question is the **45.1%** of students at Nottingham who said that they chose to study there because of the course structure and content. This was more than 6 times higher than the next placed university in this category (Cambridge **6.9%**).

“There are amazing amounts of practical work at Nottingham. I feel very lucky to have access to this” – Nottingham 2nd year

This is an excellent university. I really enjoy it! – Glasgow 2nd year

Overall

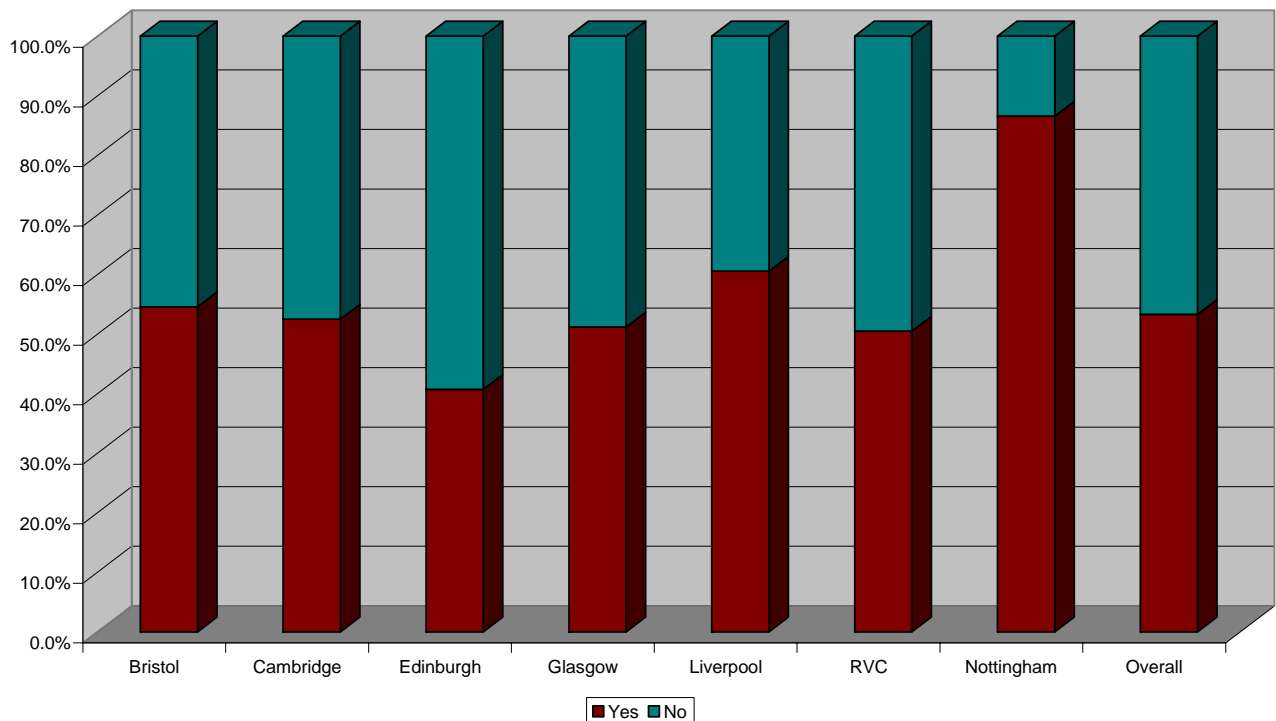


Overall, just over a third (34.4%) of respondents went to their particular university because it was the only one they were accepted at, down from 45.7% in 2005.

45) Do you ever attend any AVS organised events?

Breakdown by university

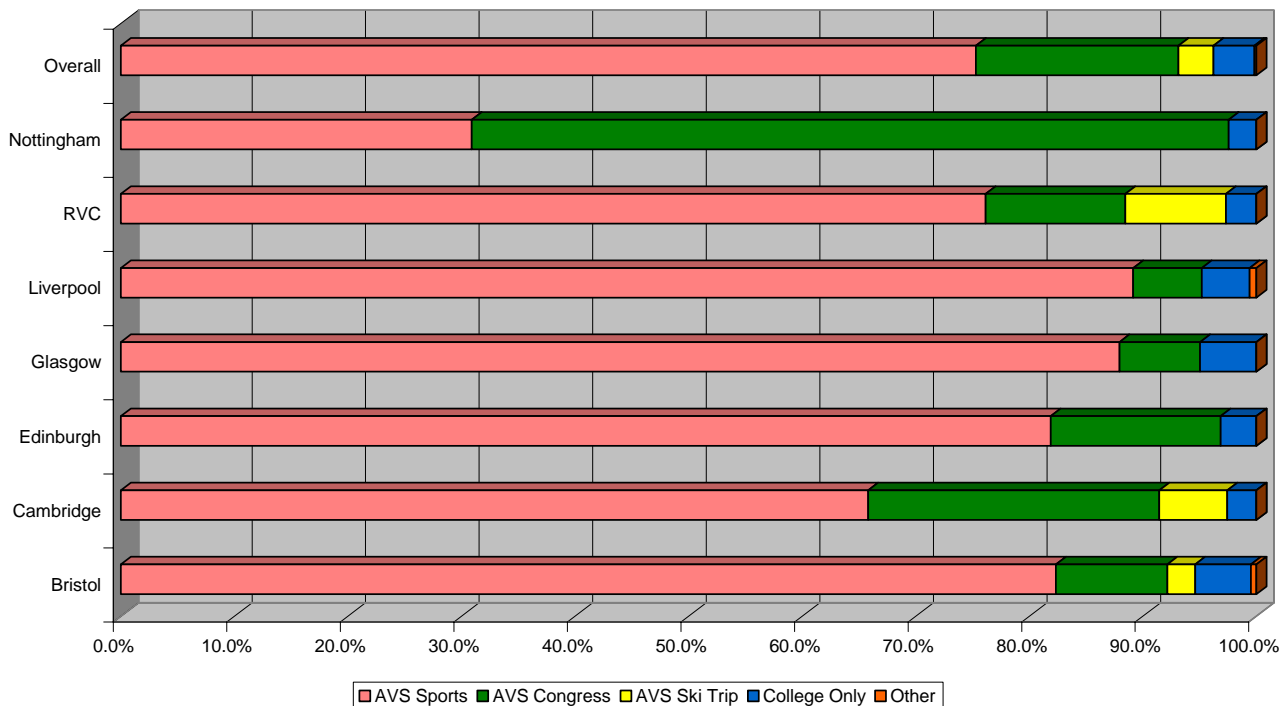
“There needs to be more sport played at the AVS sports weekend so that it actually lives up to its name” – Nottingham 1st year



Overall, just over half (53.3%) of respondents have attended AVS events. This is down notably from the 64.1% reported in 2005. There is also a wide range between the universities, with 40.7% of Edinburgh students having attended AVS events compared with 86.6% of Nottingham students.

45a) If 'Yes', which events have you attended?

Breakdown by university

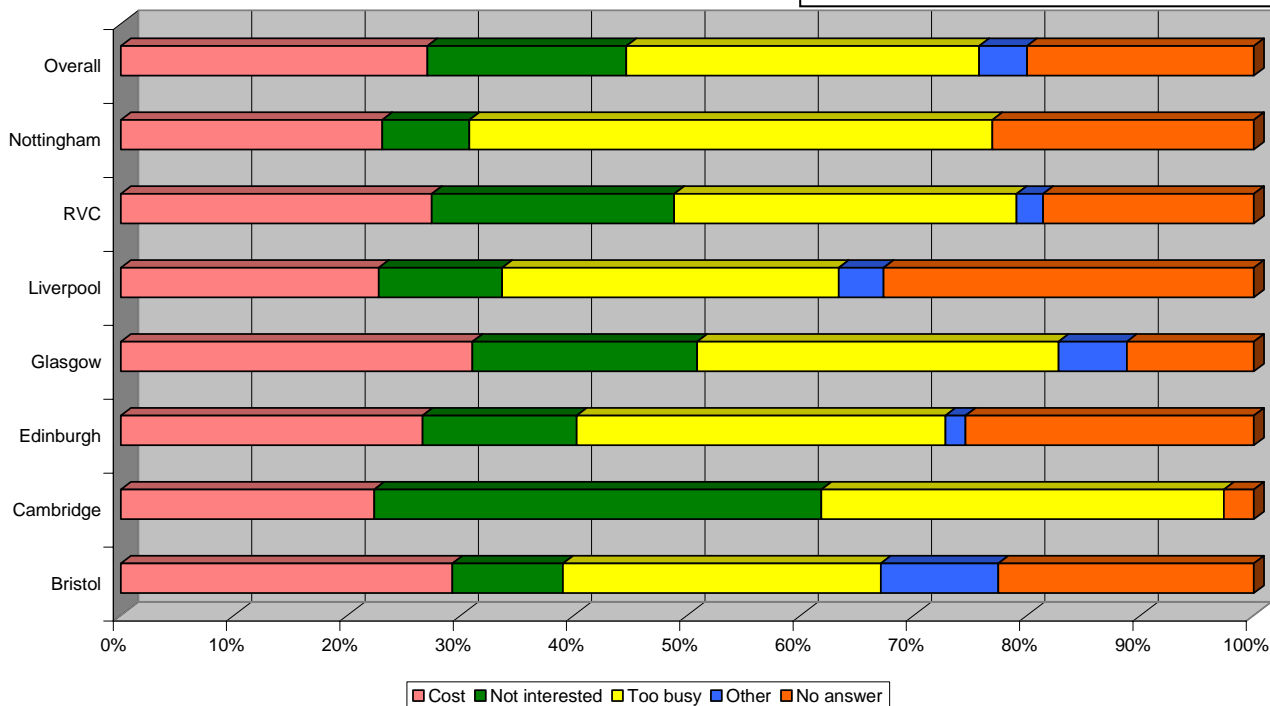


Nottingham students who had attended AVS events were far more likely to have gone to AVS Congress than any of their counterparts at other universities (no doubt, partly because they hosted it in 2008). Overall, AVS Sports weekend is the most likely event for respondents to have attended (75.3%)

45b) If 'No', why have you not attended?

Breakdown by university

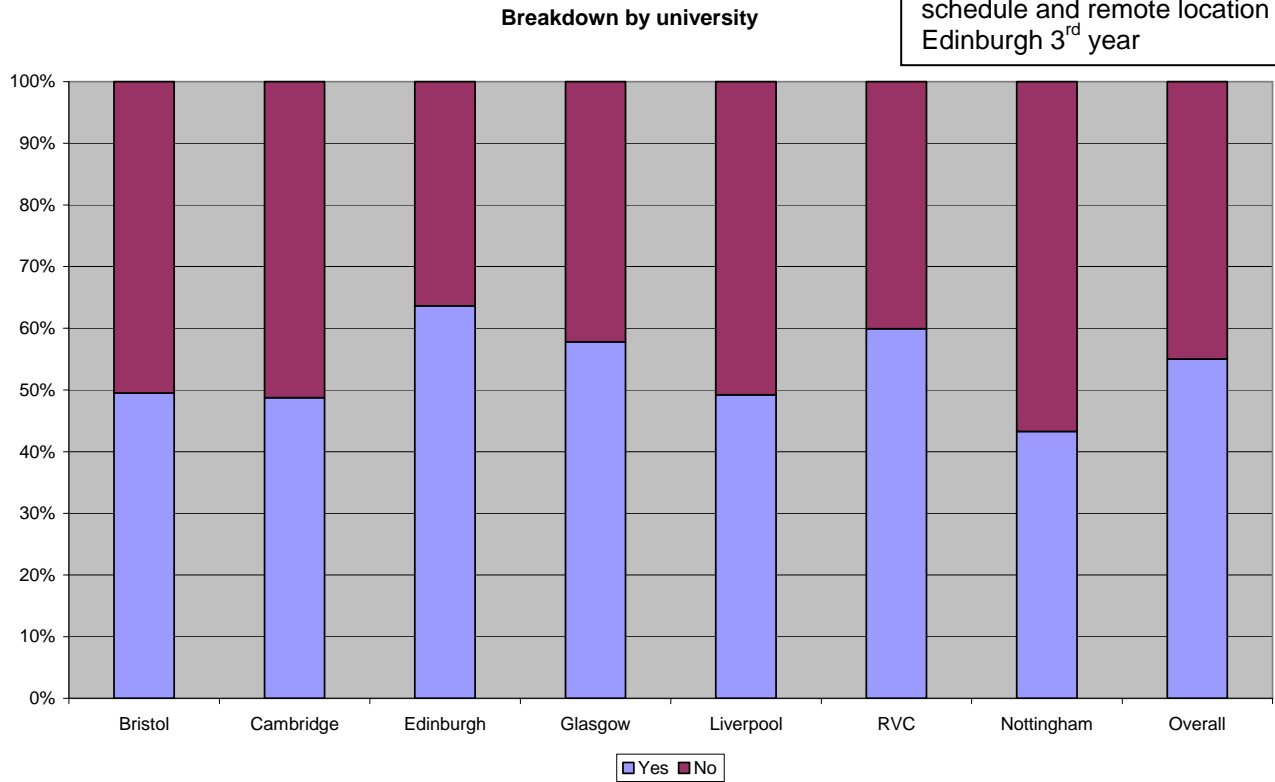
“Other than AVS Sports, we are told little about what AVS does. More information about issues such as student welfare would be good. JAVS is great. A lot more should be made of it!” – Bristol 4th year



There was quite a high reluctance to answer this question (20.0%), but the main reason given was cost (31.1%).

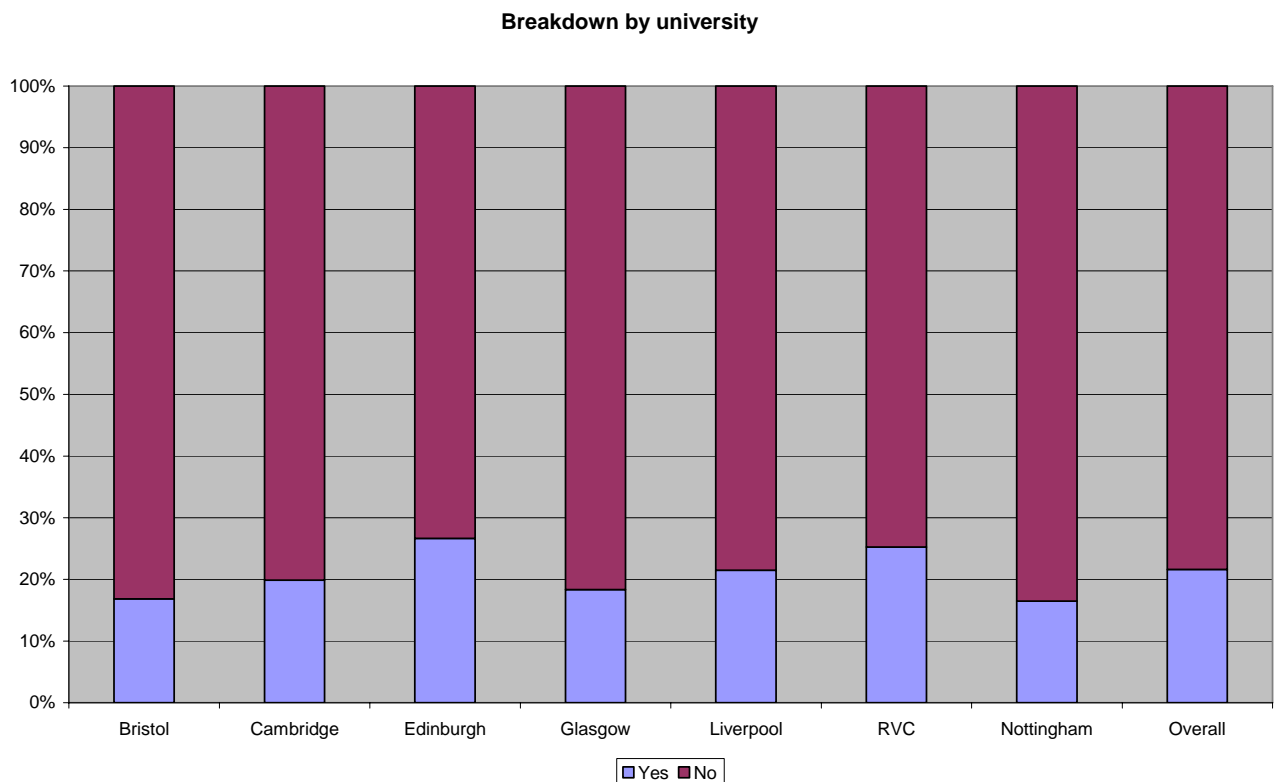
46a) Have you ever suffered from or do you currently suffer from stress?

“Counselling for stress management is difficult to access due to rigorous schedule and remote location of uni” – Edinburgh 3rd year



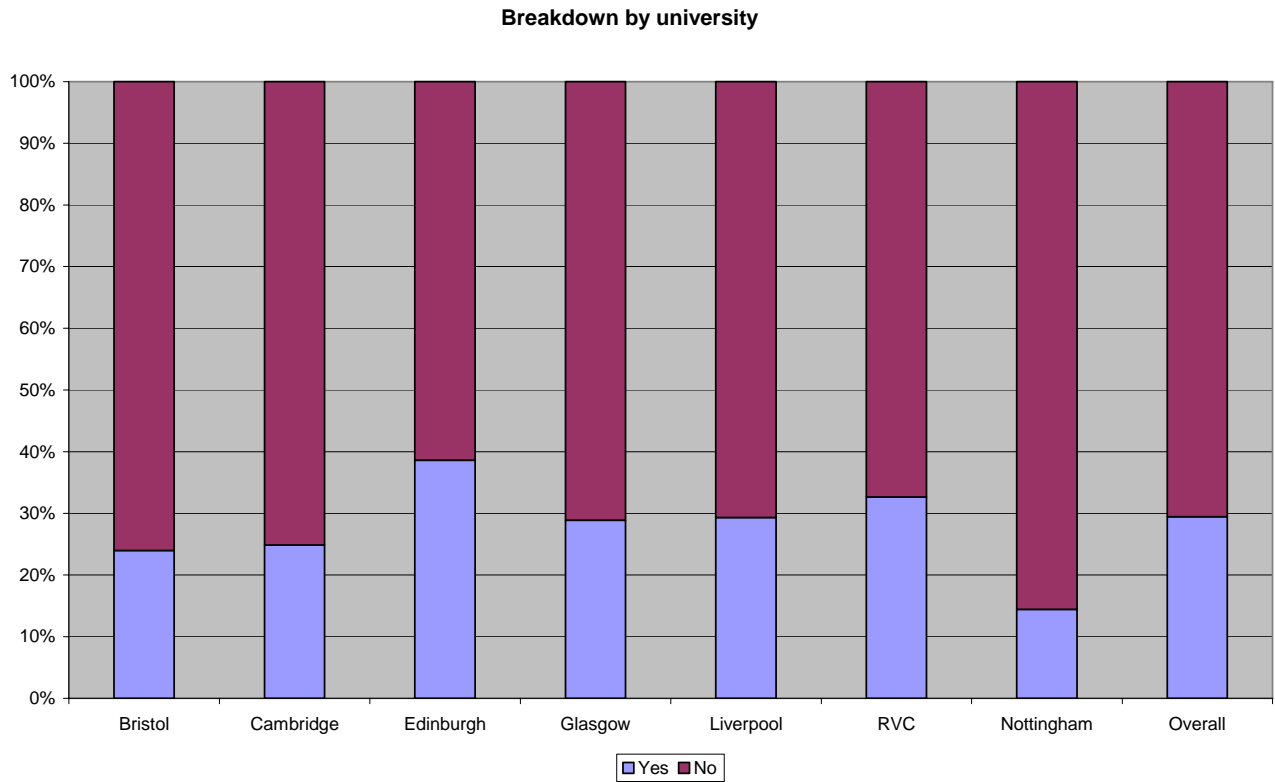
More than half of the respondents (**55.0%**) have suffered from or are currently suffering from stress.

46b) Have you ever suffered from or do you currently suffer from depression?



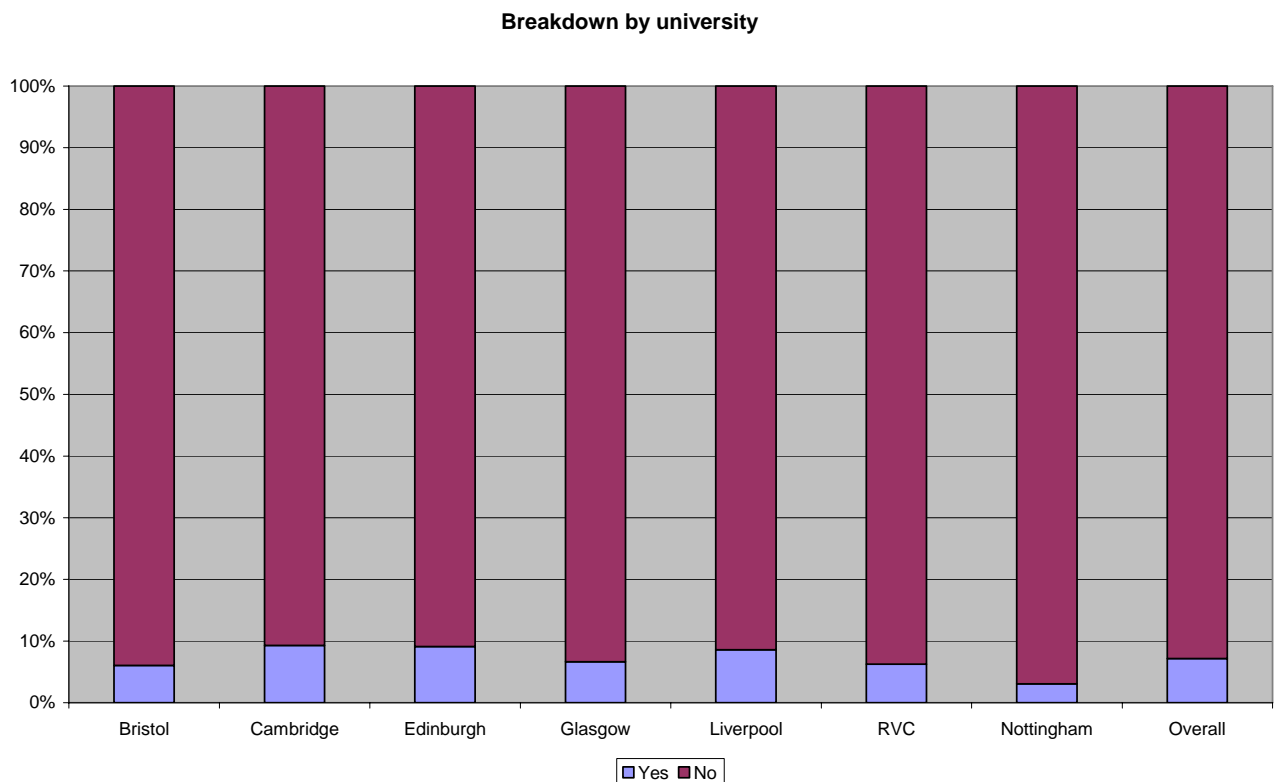
Just over a fifth of the respondents (**21.6%**) have suffered from or are currently suffering from depression.

46c) Have you ever suffered from or do you currently suffer from anxiety?



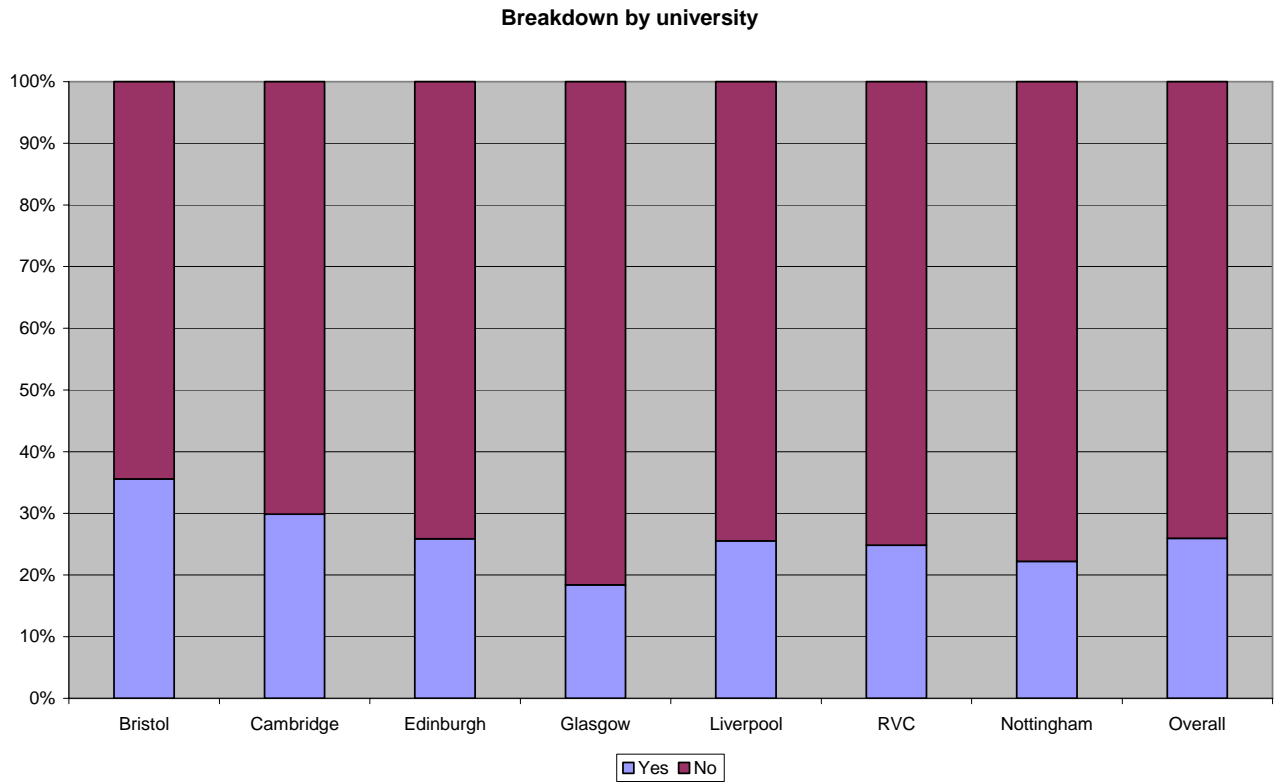
Over a quarter of respondents (29.4%) have suffered or are currently suffering from anxiety.

46d) Have you ever suffered from or do you currently suffer from an eating disorder?



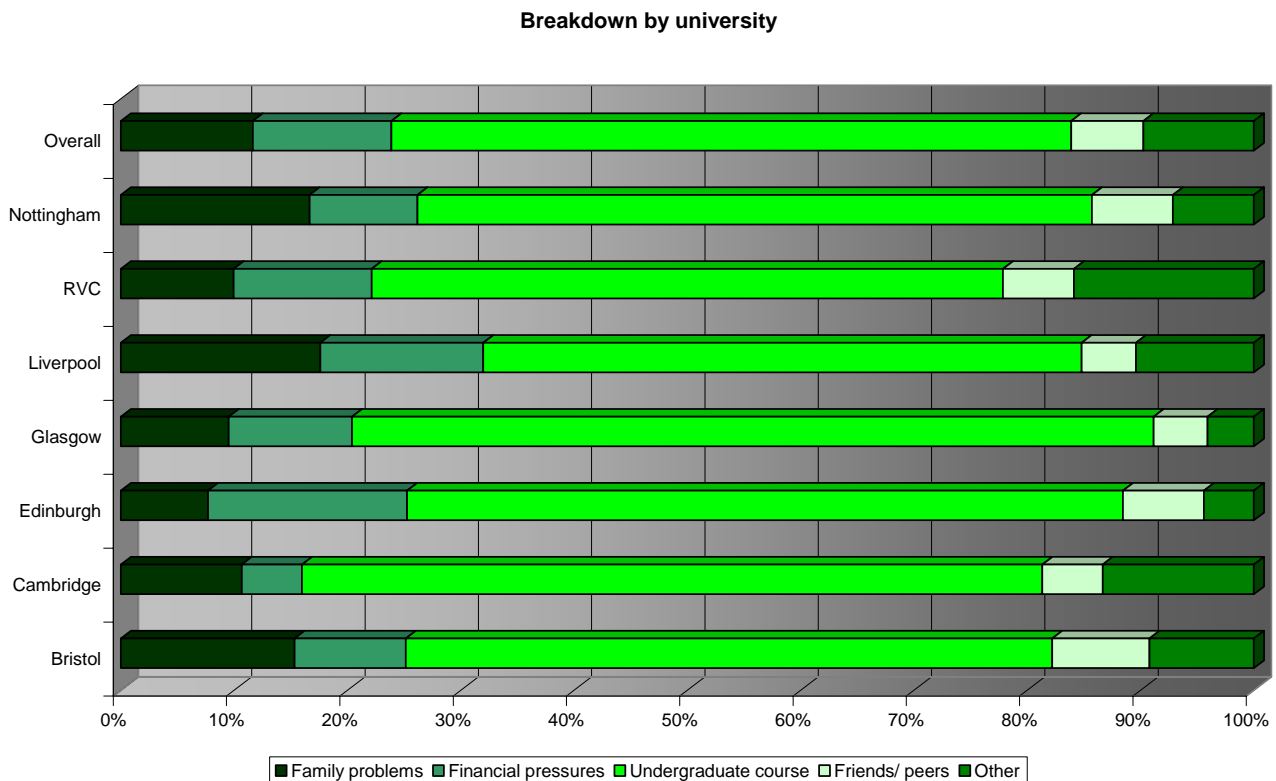
Around 1 in every 14 respondents (7.2%) has suffered from or is currently suffering from an eating disorder.

47) If 'Yes', have you ever sought help for any of those listed in question 46?



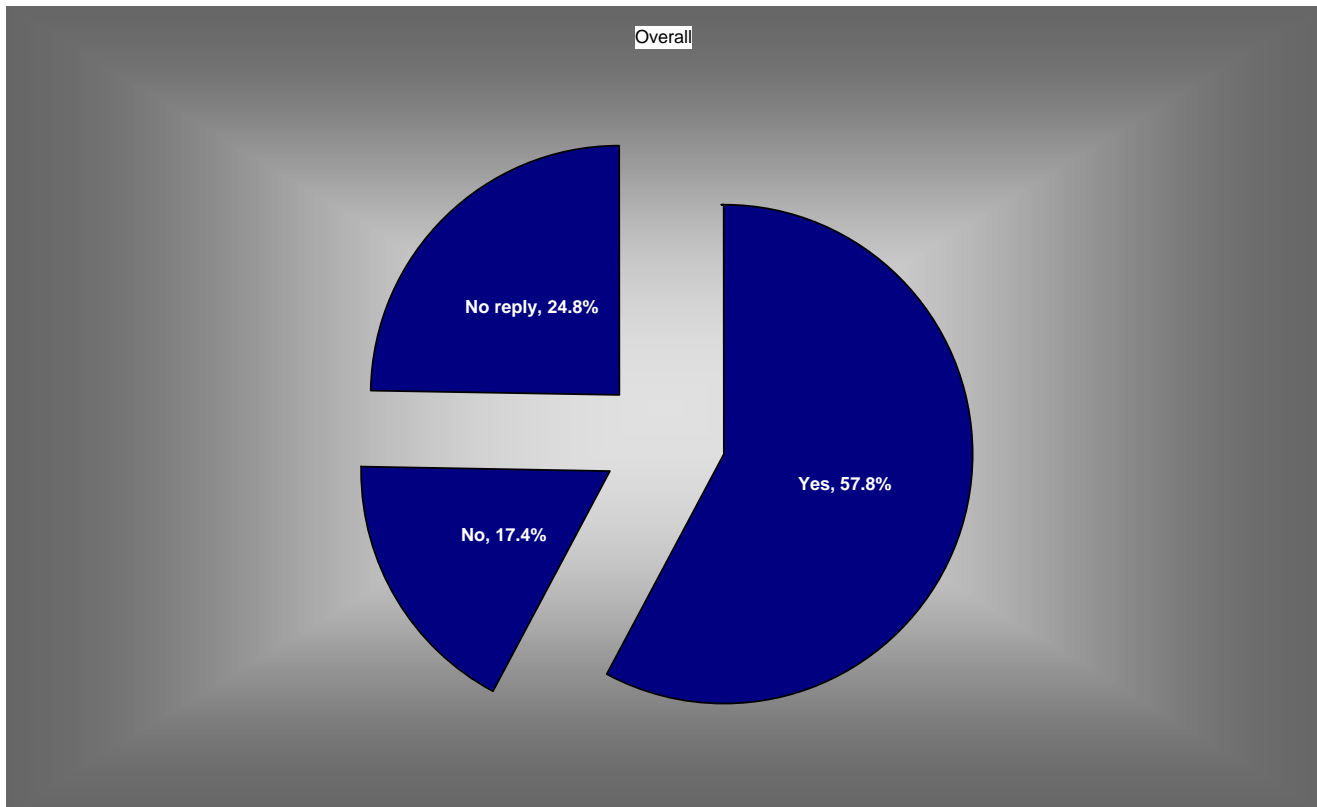
Almost three-quarters (74.1%) of those respondents who reported suffering from stress, depression, anxiety or eating disorders have not sought help for them.

48) If you answered 'Yes' to any of the options in question 46, what do you consider to have been the main contributory factor?



Overwhelmingly, the factor most attributed to any problems suffered is the undergraduate course (60.0%).

49) If you did ever suffer from any of the problems in question 46, would you know where to go for help?



This question had a surprisingly high number who did not respond to it. However, it is clear that the majority of respondents would know where to go for help. However, at least **17.4%** of respondents not knowing where they could go for help are a significant enough minority to be concerned about.

“The college tutor system does not work, the college is very impersonal and it is difficult to know who to approach if you have a problem” – RVC 5th year

Veterinary support services should be more widely advertised to students.
 Financial advice/ mental health/ eating disorders – I think there are such services available but they are not widely known about. Notices on the back of toilet doors are always a really good place to advertise, freephone services run by vets or by people who understand the stresses of vet school would be a really good idea – Edinburgh 4th year

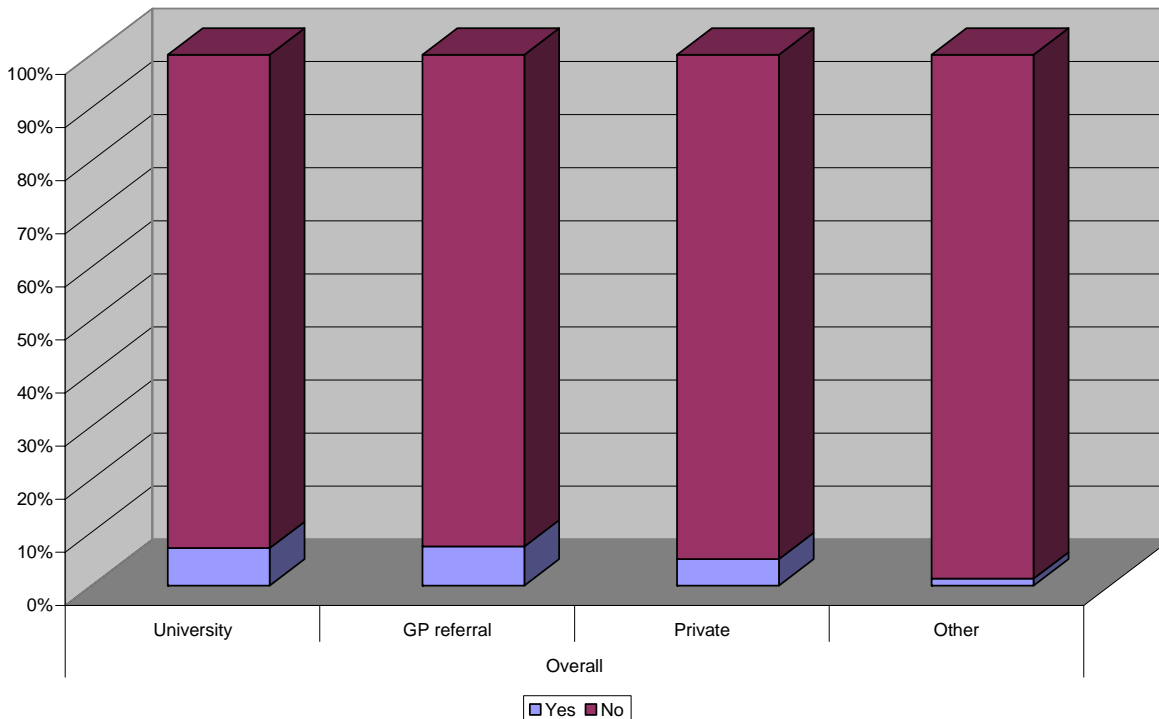
The issues of mental and physical wellbeing should definitely be part of the course; as well as the teaching of emotional intelligence, problems such as isolation once graduated and the high risk of depression in the veterinary profession – Cambridge 5th year

The high stress levels encountered at vet school are ridiculous. I know several people in my year who are on anti-depressants, beta-blockers, diazepam etc. None of them were on these medications before the course but now regularly dose themselves with these drugs – Bristol 5th year

50) Have you ever used any of the following counselling services?

- a) University b) GP referral c) Private d) Other

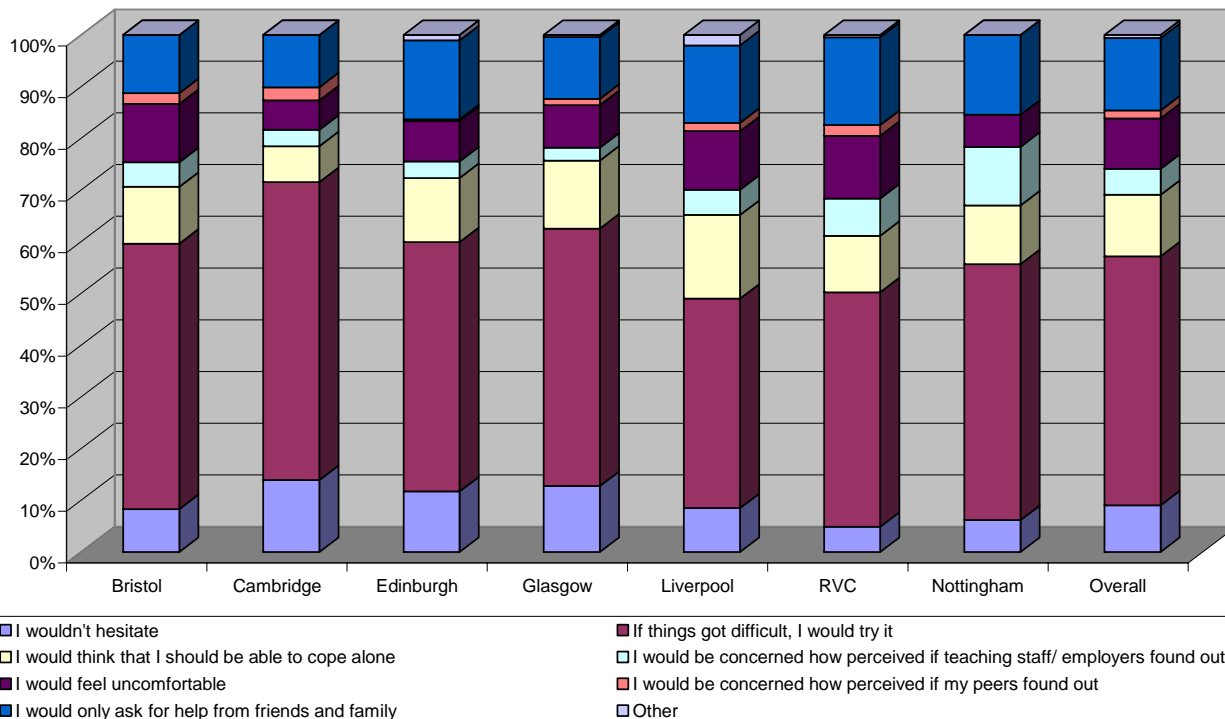
Overall



The percentage of respondents who have actually used any counselling service is relatively low – the most used being the 7.4% who have had a GP referral.

51) How would you feel asking for help regarding any mental health/ wellbeing issues?

Breakdown by university

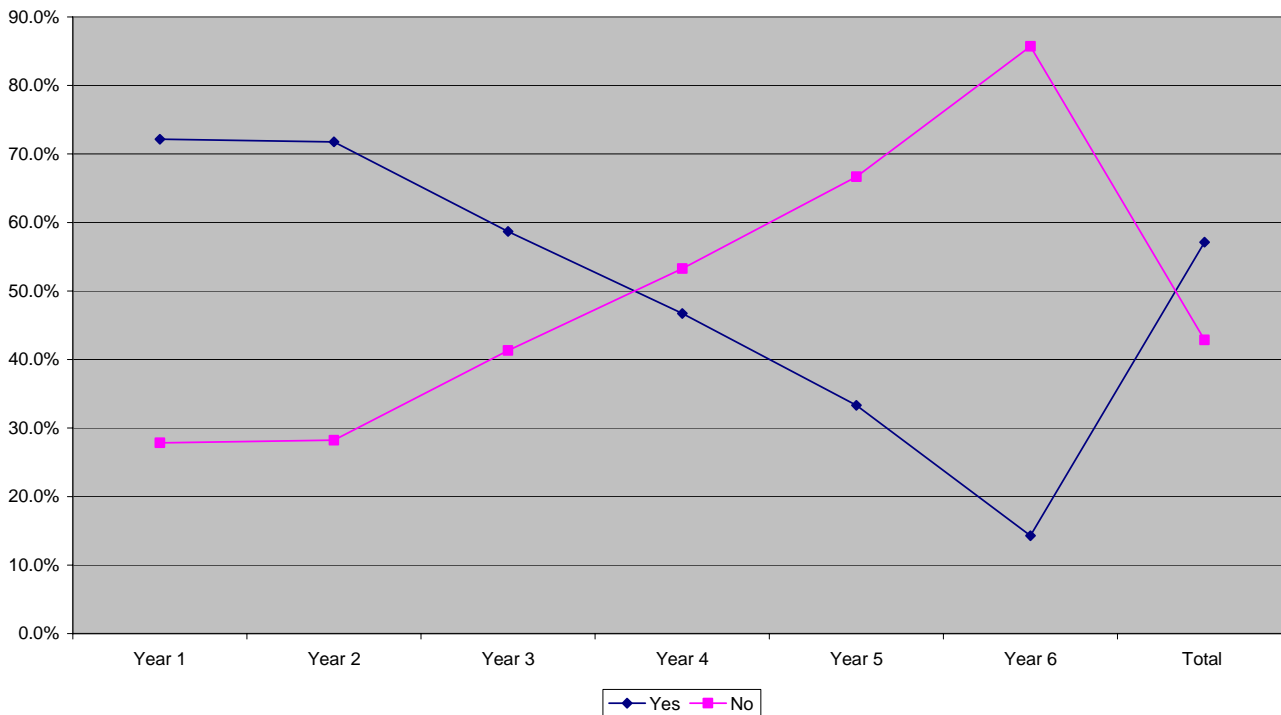


Overall, **57.2%** of respondents either wouldn't hesitate or would try it if they felt things got too difficult. A further **14.0%** would at least be prepared to turn to friends and family for help.

However, that does leave over a quarter of respondents who have answered that they think they should be able to cope alone (**11.9%**), would be concerned about perceptions if teaching staff or employers found out (**5.0%**), would feel uncomfortable (**9.8%**) or concerned about if their peers found out (**1.6%**).

52) Were you aware of the prevalence of mental wellbeing issues in the profession when you entered vet school?

Breakdown by year

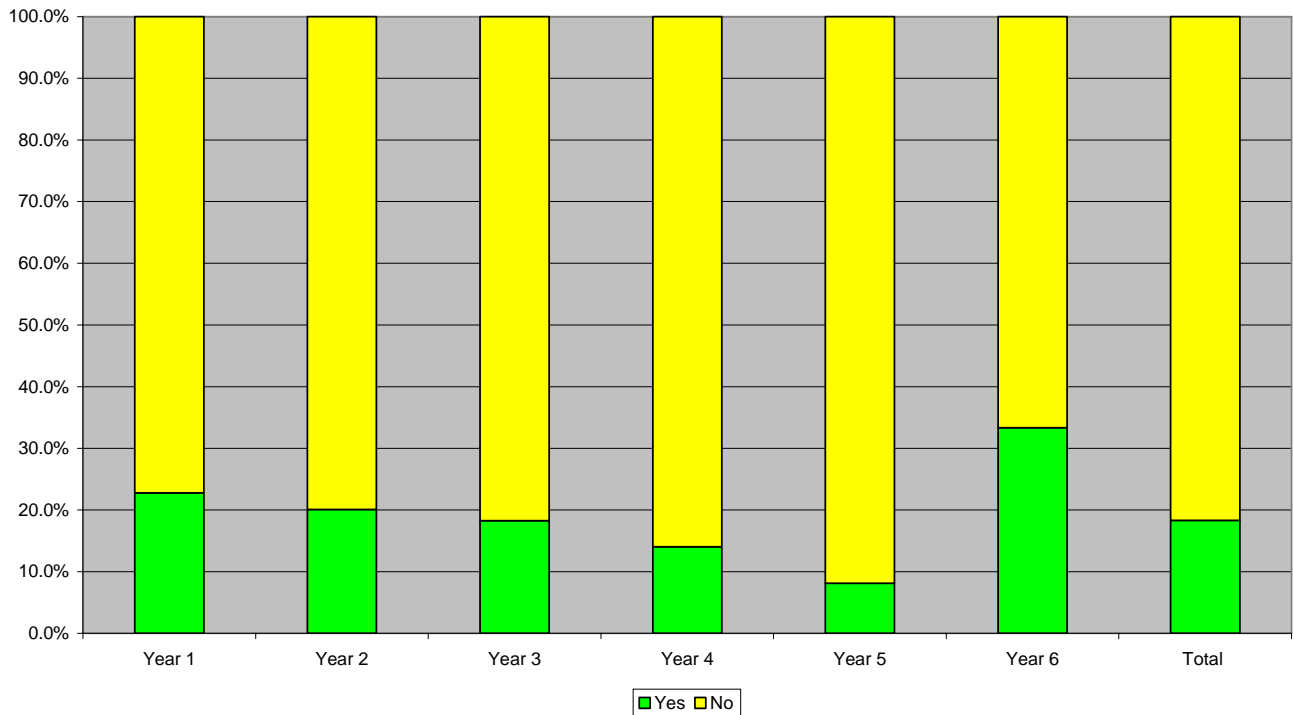


The breakdown by year in response to this question is particularly illuminating. Overall, **57.1%** of respondents were aware of the mental wellbeing issues and **42.9%** were not.

However, this only tells half of the story. It is clear that in recent years more information has been made available regarding this issue. The response from 5th year students was **66.7%** were not aware and **33.3%** were and this has completely turned around for 1st year students, where **72.2%** were aware and **27.8%** were not.

52a) If 'Yes', was it a consideration you included before entering vet school?

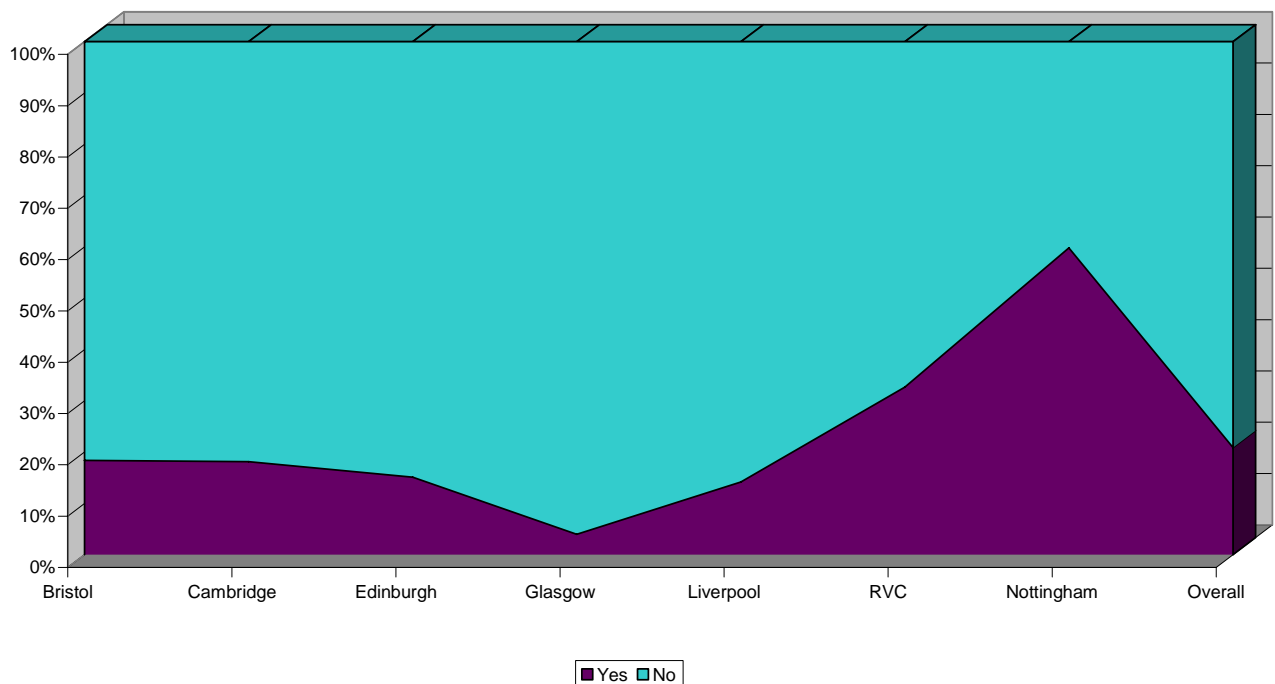
Breakdown by year



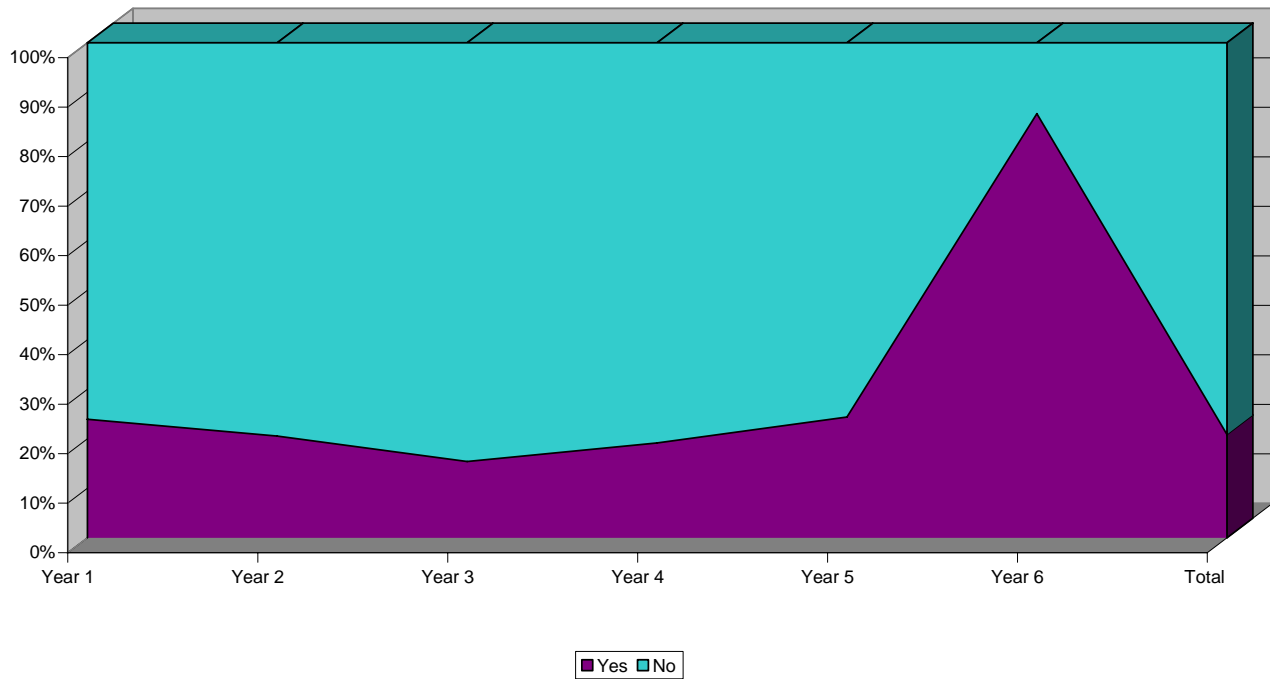
Although there is a big difference in the awareness of the profession’s mental wellbeing issues, the percentage of respondents who are aware of it and actively take it into consideration is only steadily increasing. Where the awareness has leapt from **33.3%** to **72.2%** between 5th and 1st year students, those who consider its ramifications has only increased from **8.1%** to **22.8%**.

52b) Has mental health/ wellbeing been included as part of your veterinary medicine course?

Breakdown by university



Breakdown by year



The previous two tables perhaps suggest an area that the universities can strive to improve. Excluding the sixth year students at Cambridge, the highest rating achieved is the **24.4%** of 5th year students who say that mental health and wellbeing have been included as a part of the course. The figures do show a small increase amongst first and second year students so it may be that the universities are starting to consider approaching this subject.

When the figures are considered by university, Glasgow students are notable for the fact that far fewer of them believe that mental health and wellbeing have been included as a part of the course (**4.0%**) than anywhere else. At the opposite end of the spectrum, it appears that the different approach being taken by Nottingham University does include mental health and wellbeing as **59.8%** of respondents there have indicated that that it has been included.

"My psychological wellbeing was a problem well before I was at vet school, so maybe the course does select high achievers who aren't particularly emotionally intelligent. I would say I will definitely go into practice with a poor ability to cope emotionalv" – Liverpool 5th year

"Veterinary student welfare and support is shocking compared to my first degree. Something must be done" – Liverpool 4th year

"There should definitely be more encouraging talks reminding us that being a vet is great. We are constantly told about the bad sides such as the high suicide rate. The good points should also be given to remind us why we wanted this and to keep students motivated" – Bristol 3rd year