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NEW COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES (NCH)  
EVALUATION OF SUMMER SCHOOL 20/21: LAW  
FINAL REPORT

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2021, The New College of the Humanities (NCH) conducted three week-long Summer Schools for students who had just finished their penultimate year of secondary education:

- *Culture, Crisis, and the City*
- *Law*
- *Sustainability, Technology, and the Future*

This report presents findings from the evaluation, through a pre- and post-programme student survey, of the *Law* summer school.

35 students completed the pre-programme survey, with 29 responses to the post-programme survey.

In this report, we first present findings from the pre-programme survey, including demographic characteristics of respondents, pre-existing knowledge of NCH and aspirations for the future.

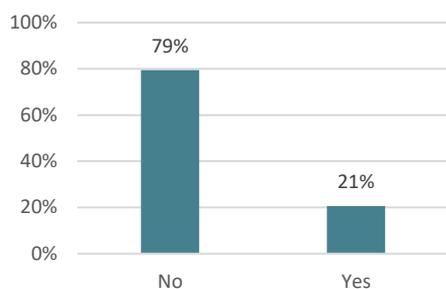
We then present findings from the post-programme survey, drawing parallels with pre-programme survey questions where comparable. Both sections also contain key findings from a thematic analysis of a variety of open-ended questions.

We conclude this report with a brief summary of findings and, where appropriate, recommendations for future practice.

## FINDINGS FROM THE PRE-PROGRAMME SURVEY

### PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF LAW AND NCH

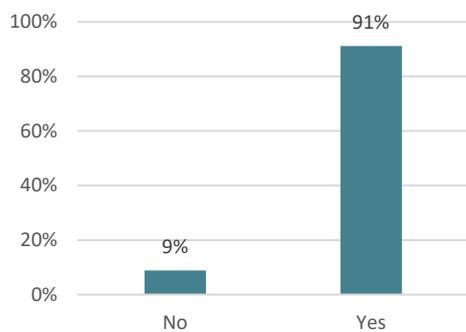
Have you, or are studying law at A-level or GCSE level?



21% of participants were studying law at A-level or had studied it a GCSE level.

**Figure 1** Have you, or are studying law at A-level or GCSE level?

Before applying to the participate in the Law Summer School, have you heard about New College of the Humanities before?



91% of participants had heard of NCH prior to participating in the Law summer school.

**Figure 2** Before applying to the participate in the Law Summer School, have you heard about New College of the Humanities before?

IF YES TO Q6In ways had you heard, or had experience with NCH before? Please select all that apply

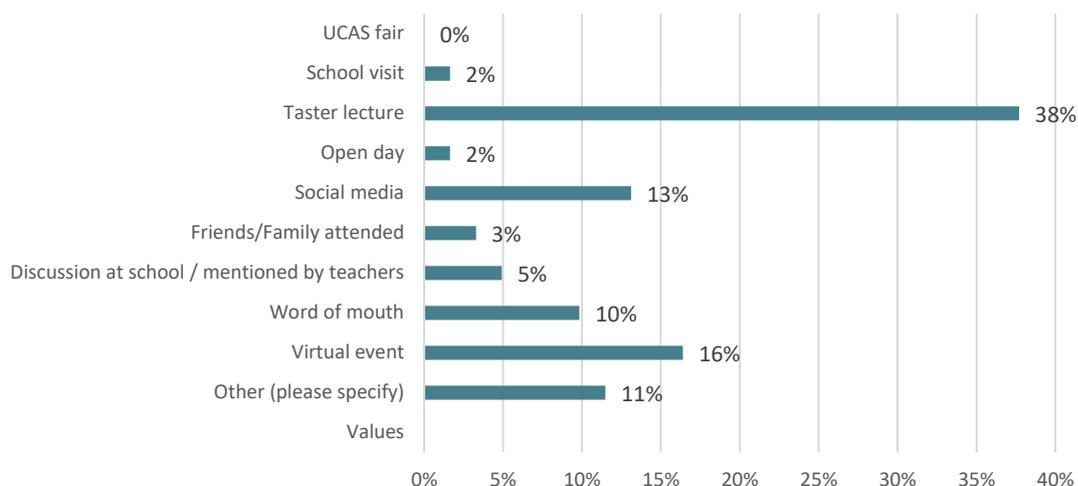
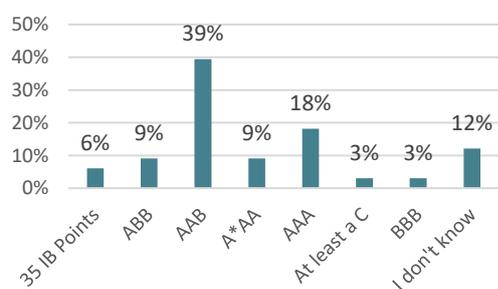


Figure 3 IF YES TO Q6In ways had you heard, or had experience with NCH before? Please select all that apply

Those students who had heard of NCH previously had done so through a variety of means including taster lectures, social media, virtual events, and word of mouth. Those who selected 'Other' specified essay competitions, a talk at school by an NCH professor, and participation in the law mentorship programme.

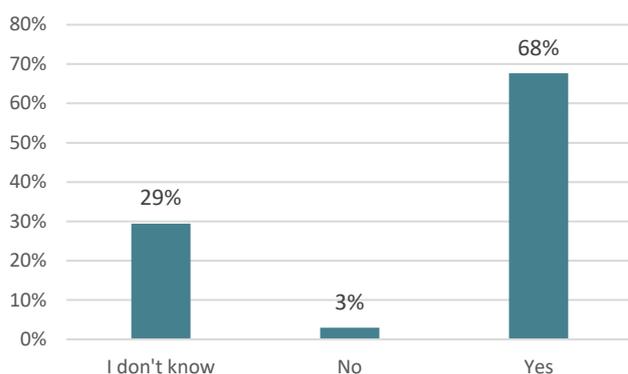
What grades do you think you need to study Law at NCH?



Students suggested an array of grades needed to study Law at NCH. For the most part, these were high grades such as AAB, A\*AA and AAA.

Figure 4 What grades do you think you need to study Law at NCH?

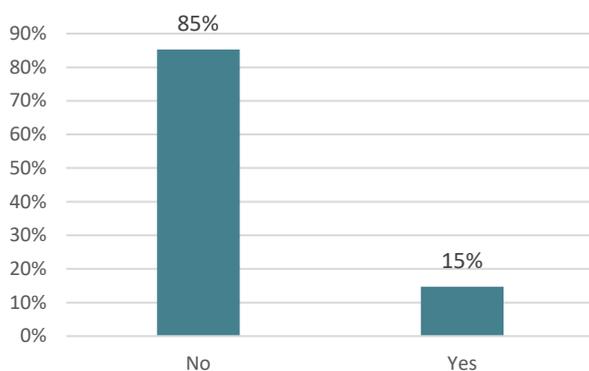
At NCH, is it possible to study a combined Law degree?



**Figure 5** At NCH, is it possible to study a combined Law degree?

68% of students said it was possible to study a combined Law degree, whilst 29% was not sure. Only 15% of students had heard of the NCH Launch Programme.

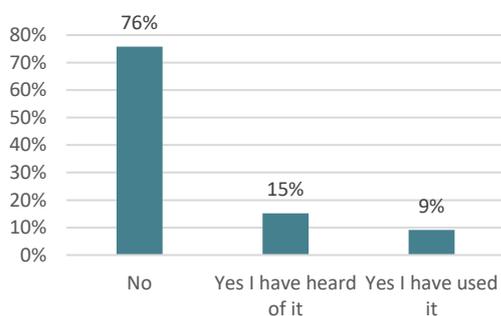
Have you heard of the NCH LAUNCH Programme?



**Figure 6** Have you heard of the NCH LAUNCH Programme?

Students who had heard of Launch described it as a programme 'to help student craft the skills they need for the professional working environment', 'a way to help you go into a career after your degree by preparing you with the necessary skills outside of academics to work in the real world', and 'a compulsory programme all students at NCH participate in which teaches the necessary skills for the workplace and also makes students more appealing to employers'.

Have you heard of, or used CANVAS before?



**Figure 7** Have you heard of, or used CANVAS before?

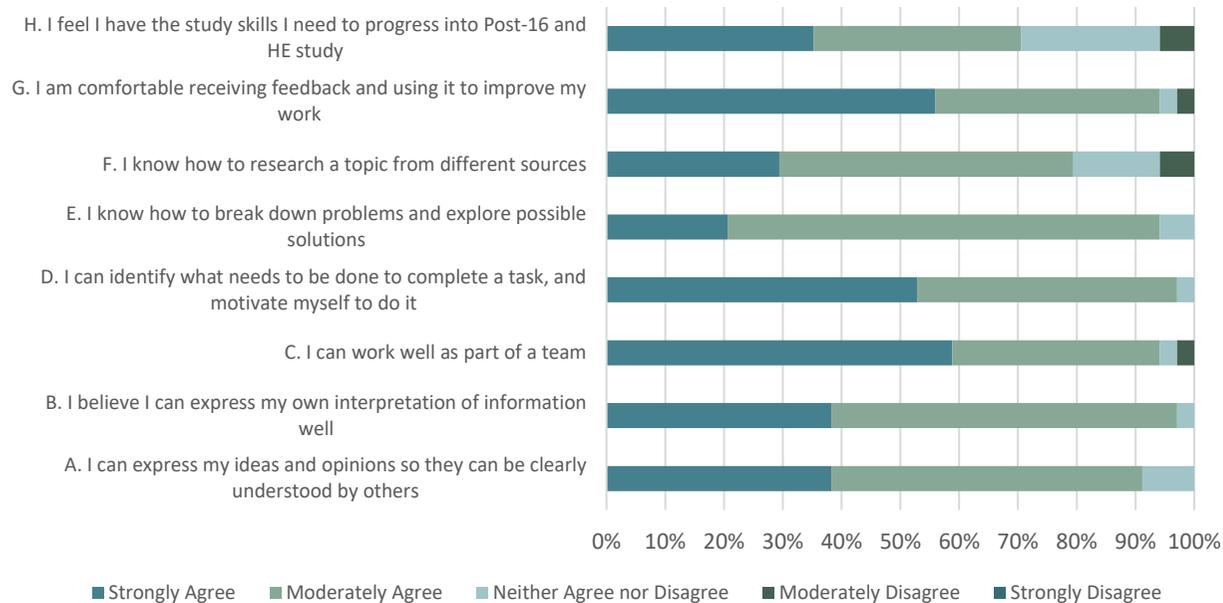
15% of students had heard of Canvas before and 9% had used it. Those who had heard of it described it as 'a system/website which supports online learning, where you can submit work and receive feedback/grades', a programme that 'gives timetable of all events and access to discussion groups', and something that was 'like Microsoft teams' that was 'used during the Covid period for students in university to be able to talk to their teachers'.

Students were asked what they thought an average week of teaching and learning at NCH might include. A number of students responded that the average week consisted of lectures and seminars. Students also thought an average week included 'independent work', such as 'essays' and 'research'. Some students thought that an average week might include 'tutorials' and 'coursework'.

Students were asked what currently appealed to them the most about NCH as an institution. Responses included the opportunities provided by NCH including combined degrees, which do not 'limit your scope of learning'. Students also commented on the specialism in humanities offered by NCH as well as the size of the University so that students are 'almost guaranteed to have personalised learning and feedback'. Other responses included the quality of the teaching.

## STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE PLANS

Thinking about how you feel about your current skills and knowledge; to what extent do you agree with the following statements:



**Figure 8** Thinking about how you feel about your current skills and knowledge; to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

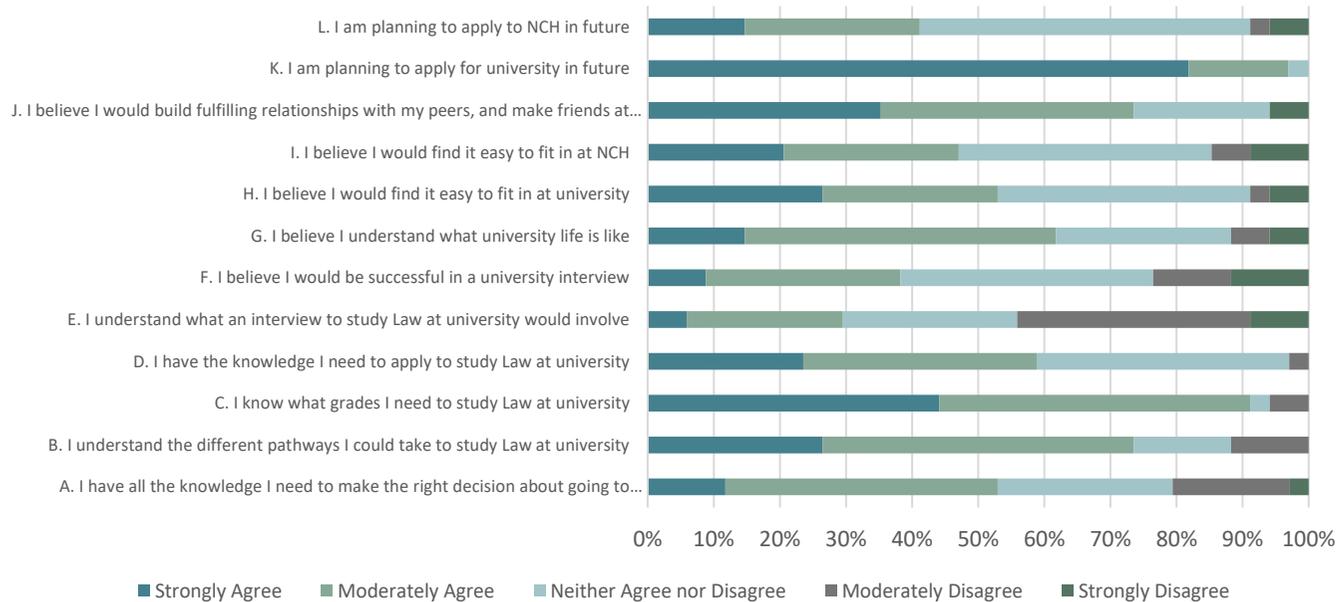
As shown in figure 8, students were mostly confident about their current skills and knowledge, with over 90% either agreeing strongly or moderately with all statements, with the exception of:

- I feel I have the study skills I need to progress into Post-16, and HE study, and
- I know how to research a topic from different sources.

Author: SEER Research and Evaluation Team, led by Dr Frances Mary Johnson

Date: November 2021

Thinking about how you feel about continuing your studies after school / college; to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

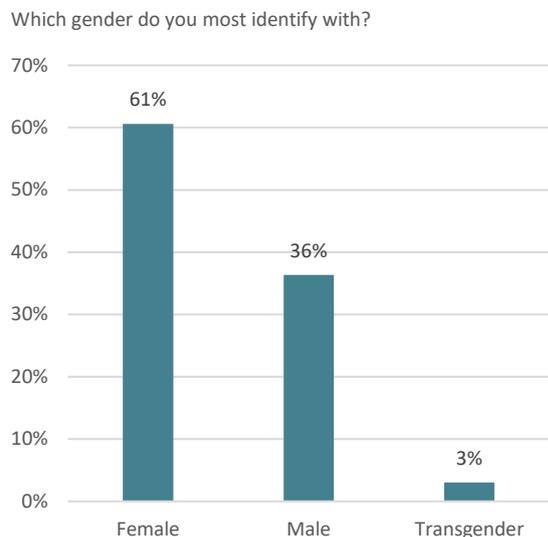


**Figure 9 Thinking about how you feel about continuing your studies after school / college; to what extent do you agree with the following statements:**

As shown in figure 9, there are notable areas of ambivalence in certain areas, principally around planning to apply to NCH in the future, feeling confident in fitting in at university, success at university interview and knowledge necessary to apply to study Law at university. Students were also unsure of what an interview to study Law at university would involve. Nearly all students either agreed or agreed strongly that they were planning to apply for university in the future.

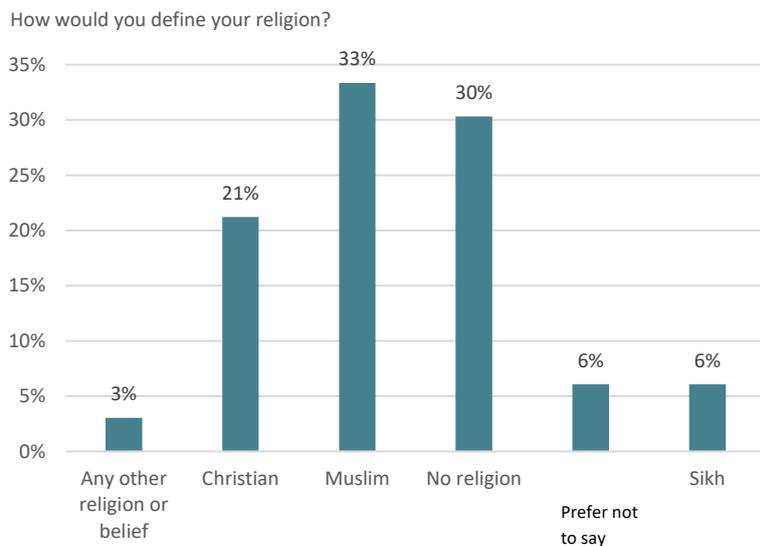
EQUALITY, ACCESS, AND DIVERSITY DATA

**Figure 10 Which gender do you most identify with?**



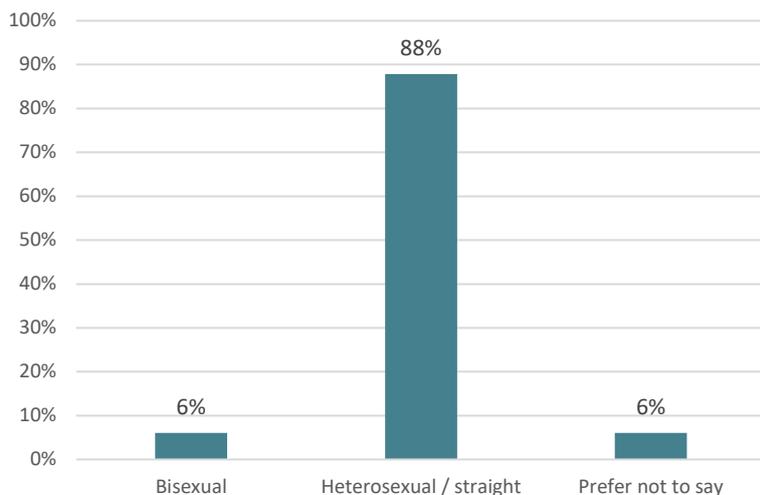
61% of participants were female, 36% were male and 3% were transgender.

30% identified as having no religion, 33% as Muslim and 21% as Christian. A minority specified Sikh, prefer not to say, and any other religion or belief.



**Figure 11 How would you define your religion?**

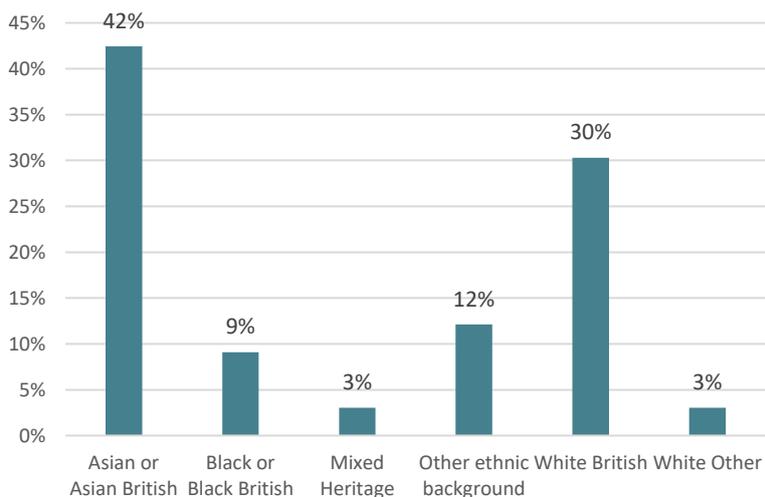
What is your sexual orientation?



88% of students identified as heterosexual, 6% as bisexual and 6% said they would prefer not to say.

Figure 12 What is your sexual orientation?

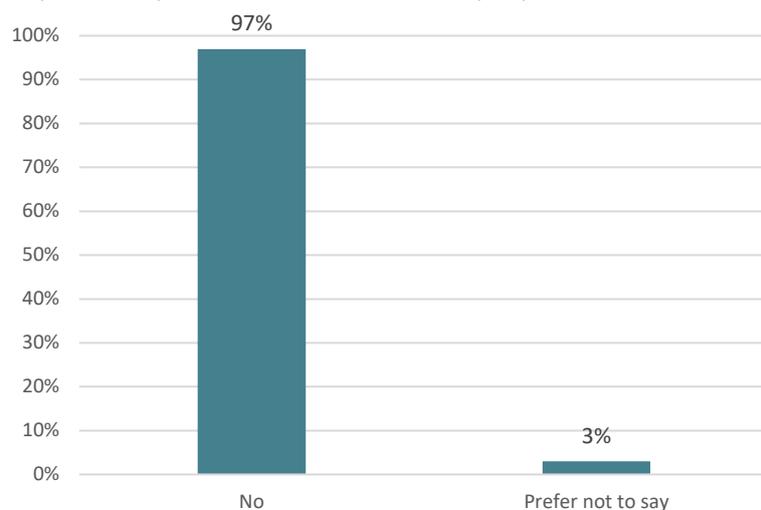
What ethnic group do you most identify with?



42% of students identified as Asian or Asian British while 30% identified as White British. Other responses included Black or Black British (9%), Mixed Heritage (3%), White Other (3%), or 'Other ethnic background' (12%).

Figure 13 What ethnic group do you most identify with?

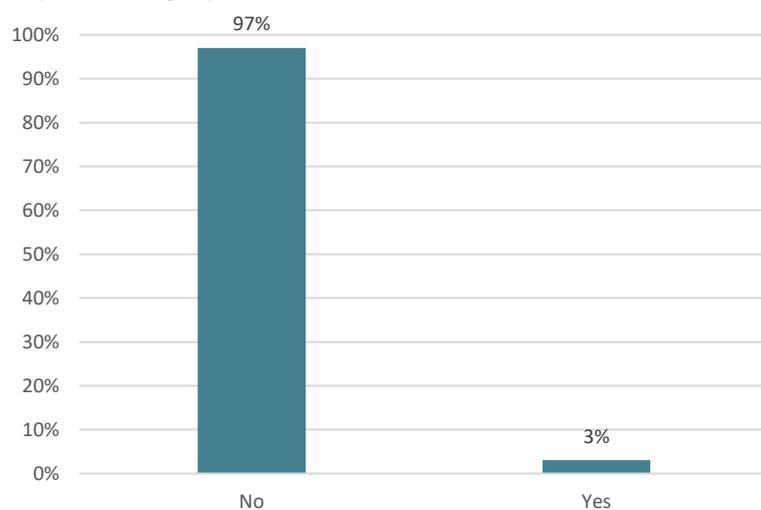
Do you consider yourself to be disabled\* under the Equality Act 2010?



97% of students would not consider themselves disabled under the Equality Act 2010, while 3% said they would prefer not to say.

**Figure 14** Do you consider yourself to be disabled\* under the Equality Act 2010?

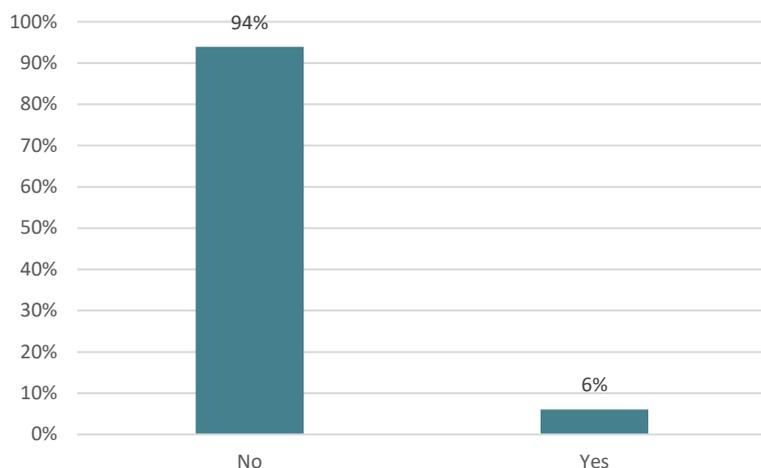
Do you have caring responsibilities for others?



3% of respondents reported that they did have caring responsibilities for others.

**Figure 15** Do you have caring responsibilities for others?

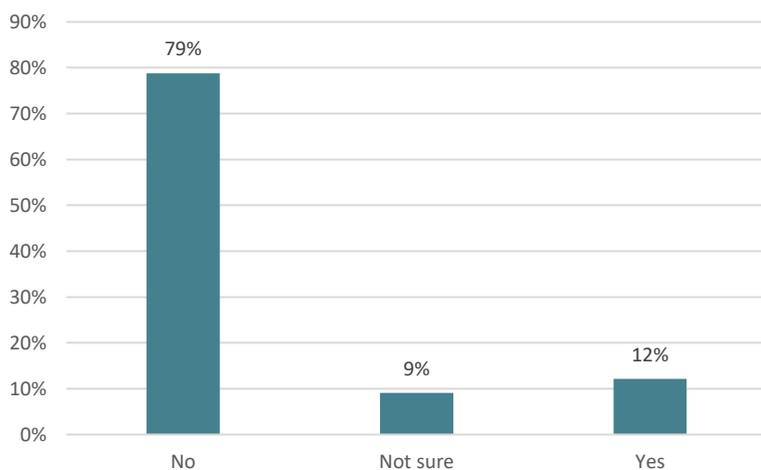
Have you had experience within the social care-system? Or would you define yourself as estranged from your family?



6% of students disclosed they had experience of the social care system or that they would describe themselves as estranged from their family.

**Figure 16** Have you had experience within the social care-system? Or would you define yourself as estranged from your family?

Have you, or your family been eligible to receive free school meals within the last 5 years?



12% of students had been eligible to receive free school meals within the last five years and 9% were not sure. 79% reported they had not been eligible.

**Figure 17** Have you, or your family been eligible to receive free school meals within the last 5 years?

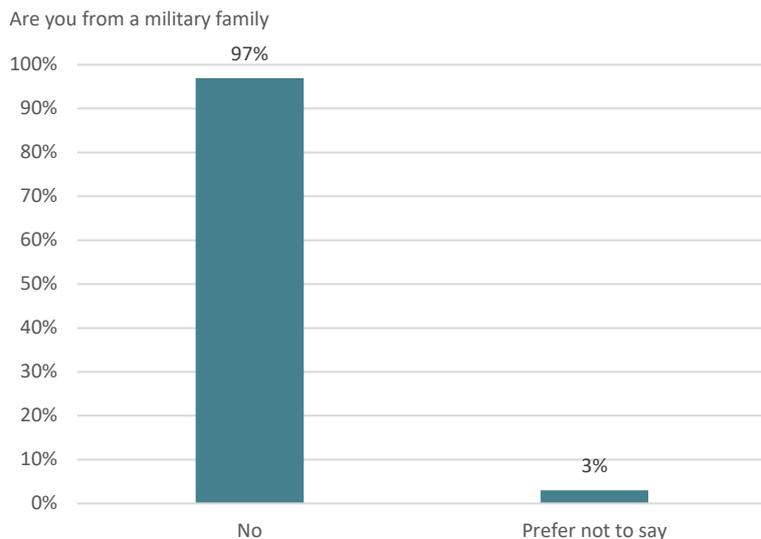


Figure 18 Are you from a military family

No student reported coming from a military family or having refugee status, although 3% (1 individual) preferred not to say or was unsure.

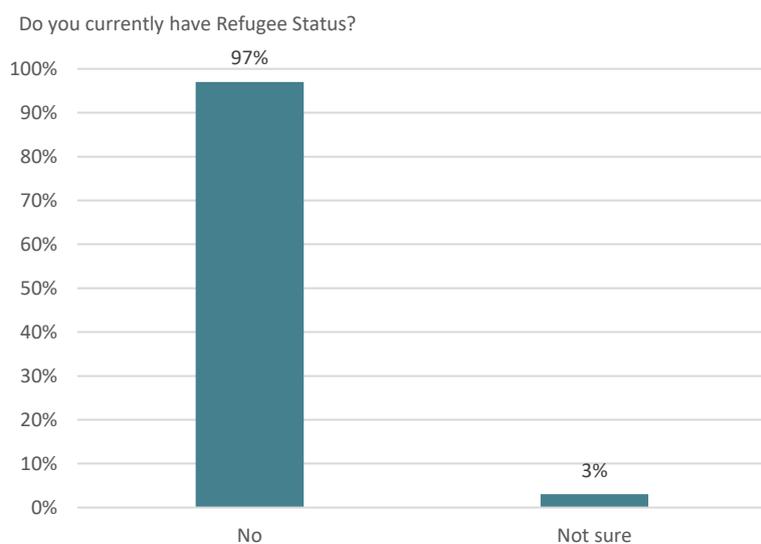
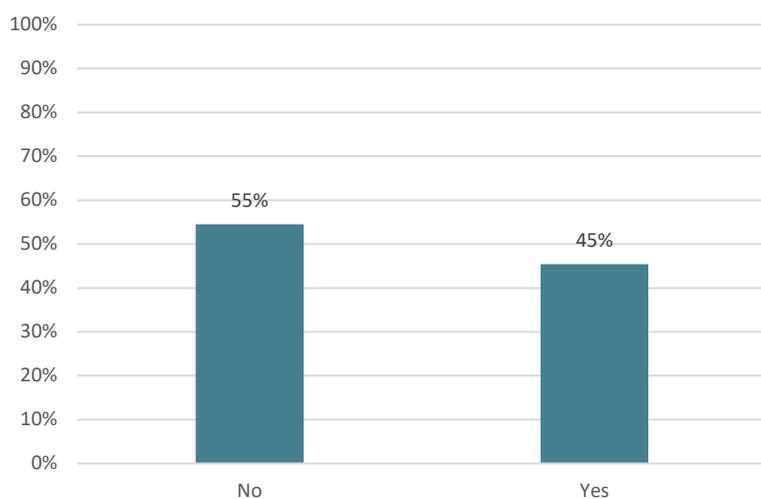


Figure 19 Do you currently have Refugee Status?

Do your parents have University qualifications?

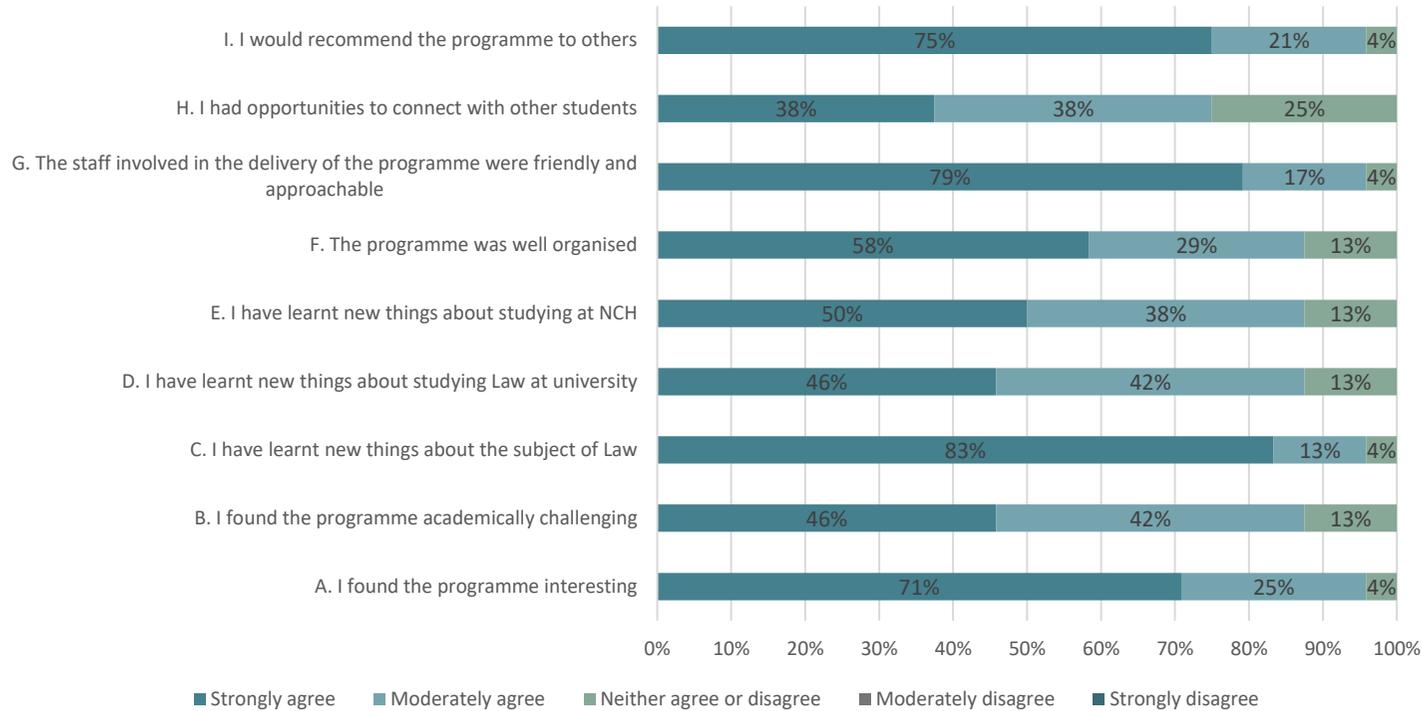


55% of students reported that their parents did not have university qualifications, while 45% reported that their parents did have university qualifications.

**Figure 20** Do your parents have University qualifications?

## FINDINGS FROM THE POST-PROGRAMME SURVEY

Thinking about your experience on the Law Summer School; to what extent do you agree with the following statements:



**Figure 21** Thinking about your experience on the Law Summer School; to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

Students responded positively to the programme, with over 90% agreeing strongly or moderately with most statements. 96% of students either agreed strongly or moderately that they would recommend the programme to others, that they found the programme interesting, and that they had learnt new things about the subject of Law. There was some ambivalence, however, in terms of students having opportunities to connect with each other.

Author: SEER Research and Evaluation Team, led by Dr Frances Mary Johnson

Date: November 2021

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## RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

### **What was your Favourite Part of the Law Summer School?**

Student responses to the question above included 'learning and applying new knowledge about the law', and 'having intellectual legal conversations with new people with the same interests and passion as you.' Students were also very positive about the summer school staff, who were supportive and shared their own experiences. One student mentioned 'Brian's positivity' and another commented, 'all the staff were very patient and friendly'.

### **What could be done to improve the Law Summer School?**

Student responses to the question above included recommending shorter sessions with more breaks, 'to make sure timings are stuck to, instead of going over time.' Another student suggested more opportunities to talk to one another, with smaller breakout rooms and icebreakers to make 'interacting in the breakout rooms less awkward'. Other suggestions included a slower pace of delivery, a certificate of completion, as well as 'the opportunity to do some essay-based questions' and 'maybe more options other than criminal and contract law'.

### **What will be your biggest 'take-away' piece of information/learning from your time on the Law Summer School?**

Responses to the question above included learning about the criminal law in general or the study of law at university. One student commented,

*'the information learnt about criminal law has been extremely useful for application during my additional readings'*

Another said,

*'as someone who has never had the opportunity to partake in a course similar to this involving the law, my biggest take-away was being able to get a more accurate general idea of how the law works, which I previously did not have.'*

One student also reported that the summer school had given them 'confidence to share ideas'.

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE PLANS REVISITED

Thinking about how you feel about continuing your studies after school / college, after your participation in the Law Summer School to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

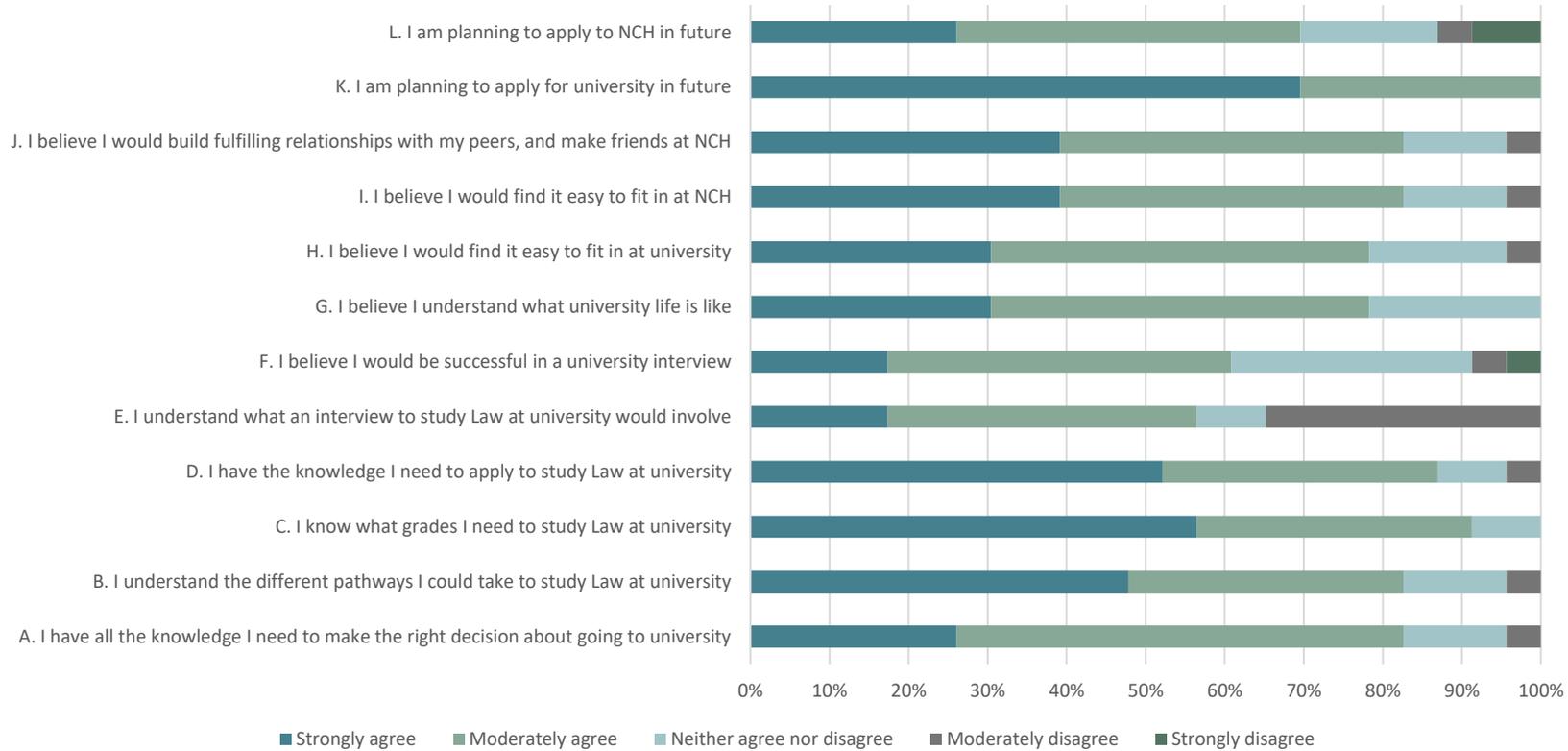
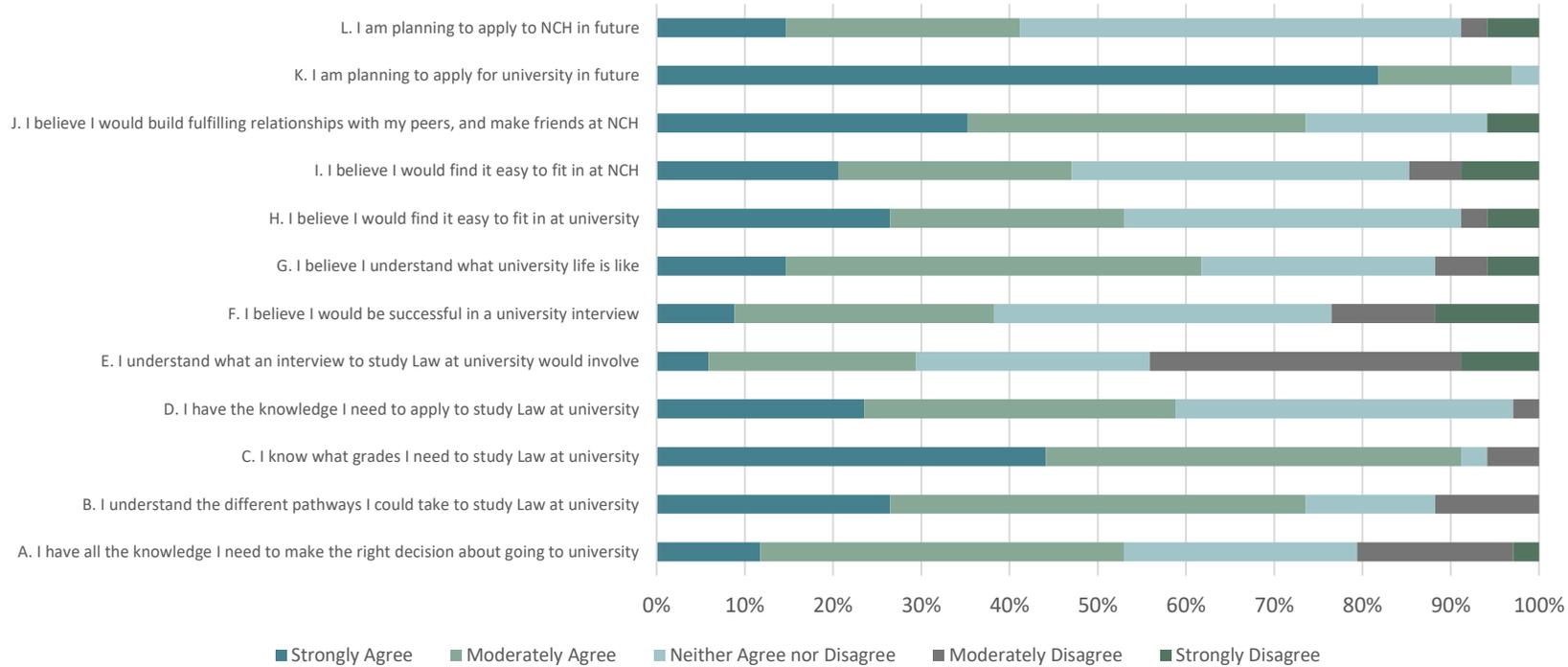


Figure 22 Thinking about how you feel about continuing your studies after school / college, after your participation in the Law Summer School to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

Figure 37 shows student responses to statements that were also asked in the pre-programme survey (see figure 9, reproduced below for comparative purposes).

**Pre-programme** Thinking about how you feel about continuing your studies after school / college; to what extent do you agree with the following statements:



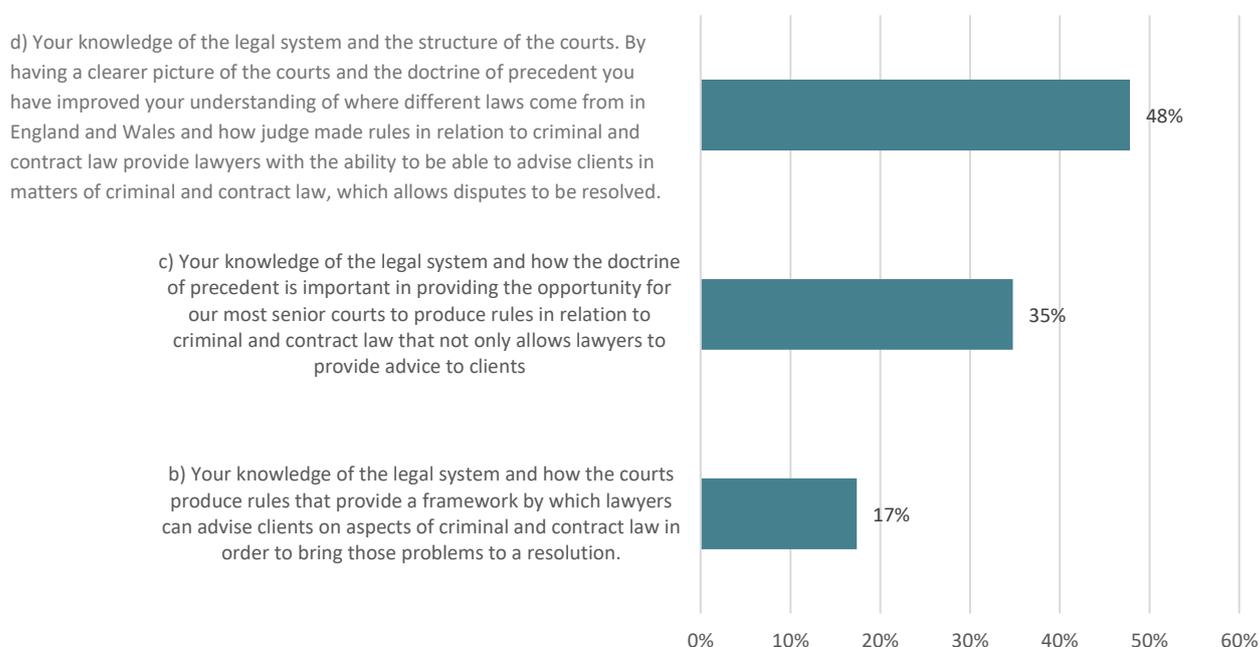
**Figure 23** Thinking about how you feel about continuing your studies after school / college; to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

In comparing figure 9 (pre-programme) with figure 37 (post programme), we see some positive changes in terms of student hopes and aspirations for the future. Post-programme, students are more likely to report and increased in knowledge allowing them to make the right decision about going to university and are more likely to agree strongly that they understand the different pathways they could take to study law at university.

There remains some ambivalence about what studying law at university would entail, although this has decreased. Similarly, some students remain uncertain about the university admissions interview. We see from figure 37 that students are more likely to report that they understand what university life will be like and that they feel they would fit into NCH, although there is still some uncertainty in this area.

Students are more likely to agree strongly or moderately that they are planning to apply to NCH in the future, and 100% of students agreed either moderately or strongly that they were planning to apply to university in the future.

Which of the following best describes the improvement for you in relation to your knowledge of the law:



**Figure 24** Which of the following best describes the improvement for you in relation to your knowledge of the law

48% of students felt they had improved their understanding of where different laws come from in England and Wales (see point d, above in figure 38). 35% felt their knowledge of how the doctrine of precedent is important had improved (point c), and 17% felt their knowledge of how the courts produce rules that provide a framework for lawyers had improved (point b).

## CONCLUSION

Findings in this report show that students who took part in the NCH Law Summer School found it interesting and informative. Staff were perceived as friendly and approachable and nearly all participants said they would recommend the programme to others.

Prior to taking part in the programme, most students had already heard of NCH through existing NCH outreach activities but also through word of mouth. NCH is perceived as a high-attaining university and students are attracted to it because of the high quality of teaching, specialization in the humanities, and the small size of the institution allowing for a personalized delivery.

Students taking part in the programme are already confident about their skills and knowledge, particularly in terms of academic attainment and in terms of HE decision-making. Nearly all participants were planning on applying to university prior to the programme, although they were less certain about applying specifically to NCH. After the programme, all students were planning on applying to university and more were planning on applying to NCH.

This cohort was reasonably diverse in terms of religion and ethnicity and a significant proportion of students do not have parents who attended university.

In terms of recommendations, we would suggest obtaining IMD and POLAR4 measures to further build the data picture of cohort composition. It would also be advantageous to focus more on opportunities for students to interact and connect with each other, which is arguably more difficult with online delivery. NCH may also want to reach out to students who are as able academically but perhaps less confident in their next steps or in their decision to apply to university, as the programme may have a bigger impact engaging with 'harder to reach' populations.