Postgraduate Feedback Evaluation Report – 2021

Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology
University of Colombo

This postgraduate (PG) feedback form focuses on the K-SAM model to reflect the learning outcomes of postgraduate degree programmes aligned with SLQF level 8, 9 and 10. Criteria are common as well as specific to Sri Lanka Quality Framework (SLQF) levels included.

This report presents the analyses of responses received for the postgraduate feedback form formulated and distributed by the blended learning committee of the University of Colombo. The original form was tailor-made for the Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (IBMBB) and was administered among the students who have completed the SLQF level 8 Postgraduate Diploma and 9 & 10 Masters degrees in Bioinformatics (BI), Cellular and Molecular Immunology (CMI) and Molecular Life Sciences (MLS) since 2008. Feedback were collected from June to September 2021. A total of 148 students were contacted to collect the feedback and breakdown is given in the Table 1.

Table 1. Statistics of the feedback collection

Description	No of students responded (%)
Total number of students responded	45 (32%)
Bioinformatics	
Total	6 (13%)
SLQF level 8	1
SLQF level 9	5
SLQF level 10	0
Cellular and Molecular Immunology	
Total	12 (27%)
SLQF level 8	0
SLQF level 9	0
SLQF level 10	12
Molecular Life Sciences	
Total	27 (60%)
SLQF level 8	1
SLQF level 9	9
SLQF level 10	17

The feedback form was designed to obtain students' views under four main sections as follows (Table 2).

Table 2. Details of the four sections included in the feedback form

Section	Complying SLQF level	No of criteria assessed
General	Common statements to all levels (SLQF 8,9,10 only)	9
Teaching, Learning and Assessment		9
Learning outcome and skill development		7
Individual study project	Specific statements for SLQF level 9 (relevant to Guided independent study) and level 10 (relevant to the Research component)	10

The responses collected at institutional level are presented as section specific bar charts. Figure 1 to 4 were generated using all 45 responses received during the feedback collection and data are presented as percentages of responses corresponded to likert scale.
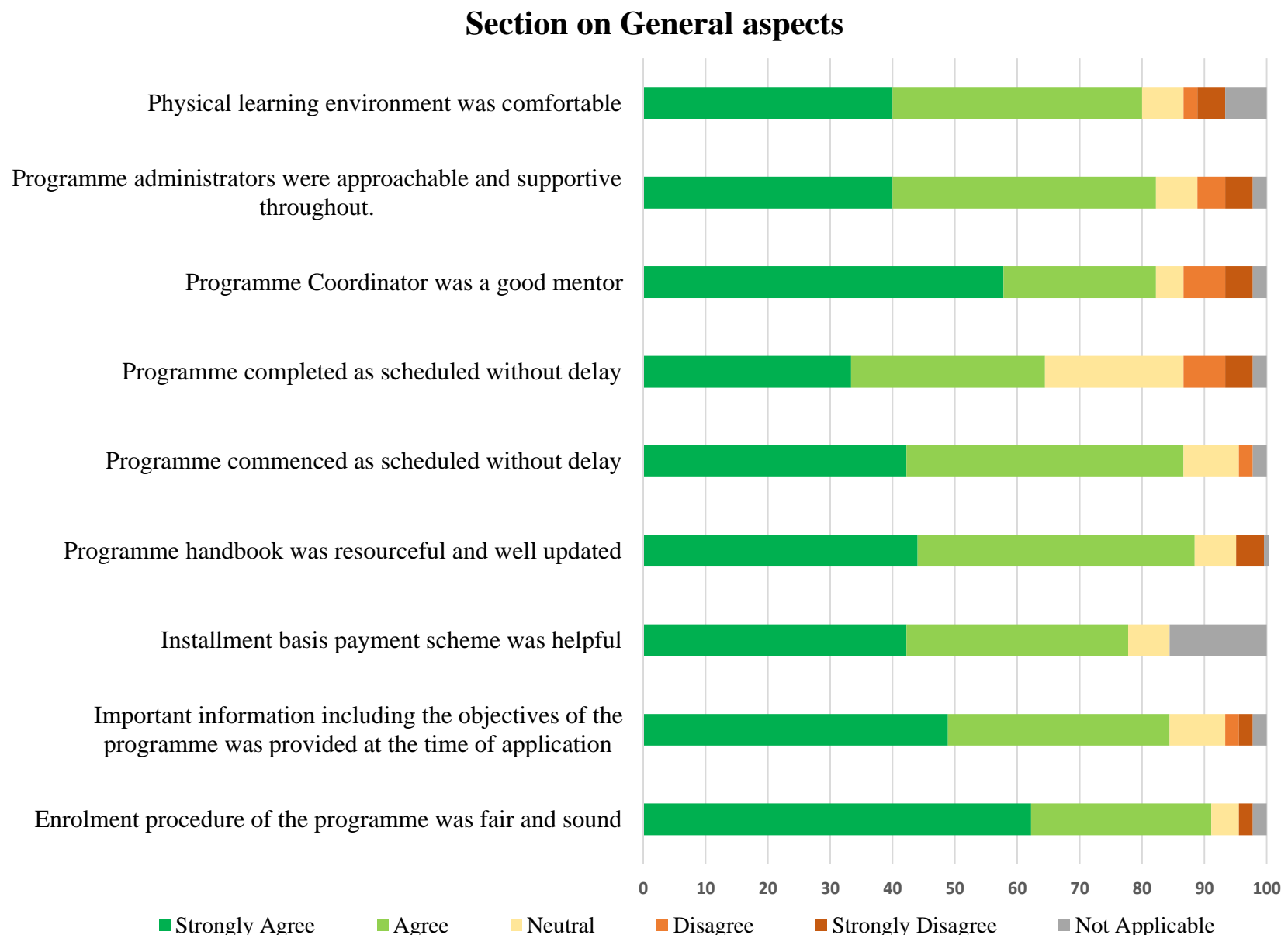
Section on General aspects

Figure 1 Percentage responses received for criteria under the General section

More than 80% of the students had either agreed or strongly agreed with seven criteria except two criteria on; "Programme completed as scheduled without delay" and "Installment basis payment scheme was helpful". The total responses received as agreed or strongly agreed for those two criteria remained at 64% and 78% respectively. About 22% of the students had indicated neutral or not applicable responses to the criterion relevant to installment-based payment scheme. It could be because those students would not have experienced the benefits of the installment-based payment scheme as it is a choice of the student. Overall, majority of the students had responded satisfactorily (agree or strongly agree) with all the criteria indicating positive feedback on general organization, learning environment, administration of the degree programmes and resourcefulness of the student guiding material provided timely.

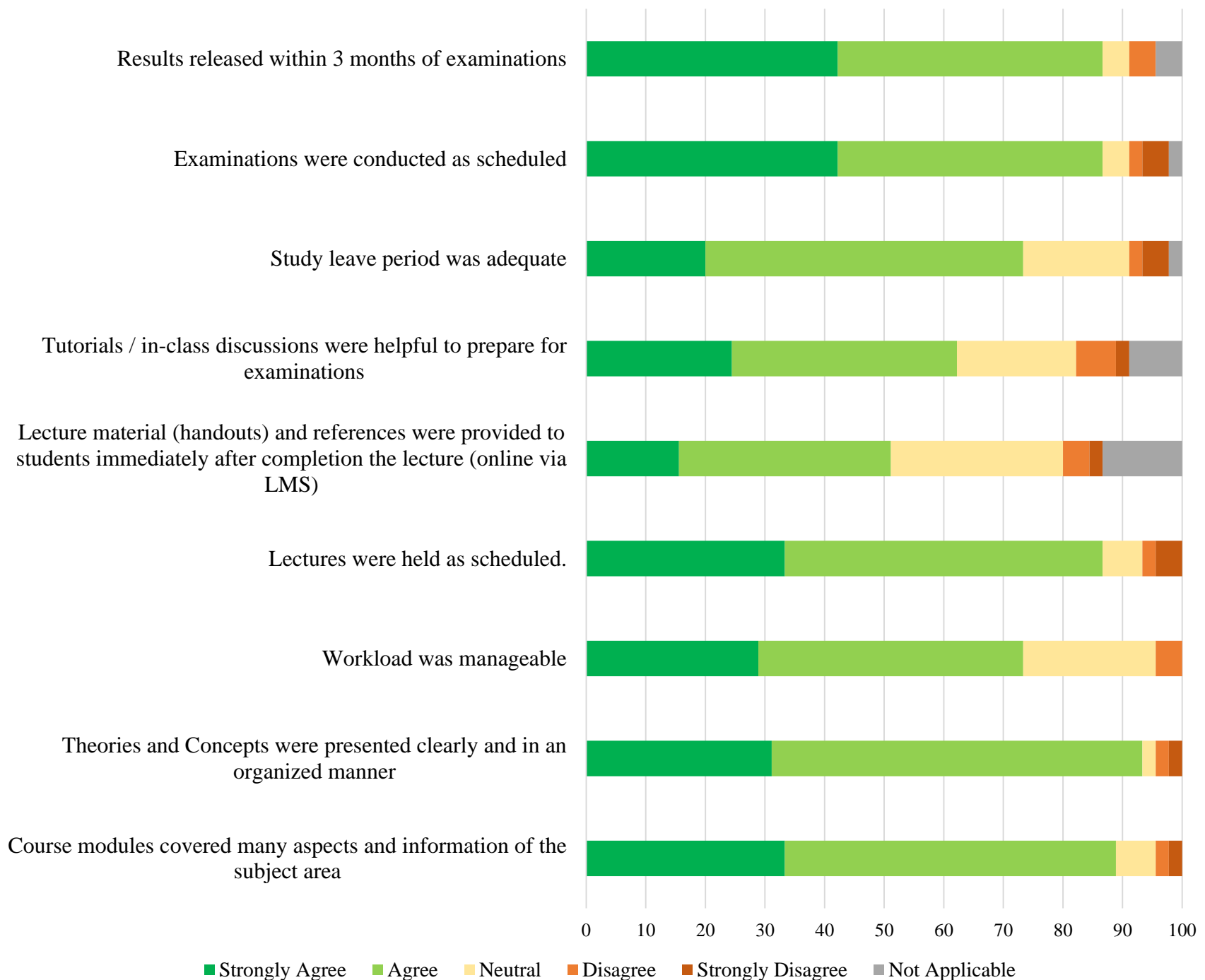## Section on teaching, learning and assessment

Figure 2 Percentage responses received for criteria under Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Matters related to administration and readiness for assessments had received satisfactory responses (agree or strongly agree) ranging from 52 – 88 % of the responders. The responses highlight the need of additional attention from academics and programme coordinators to make the lecture material available online immediately after the completion of lectures. Responses received with respect to the course content and quality of delivery were satisfactory. Although some responders had demonstrated undesired responses on the timely completion of the programmes under the general section (Figure 1), interestingly more than 80% of the responders have agreed/strongly agreed that the lectures were conducted as scheduled with no delays.

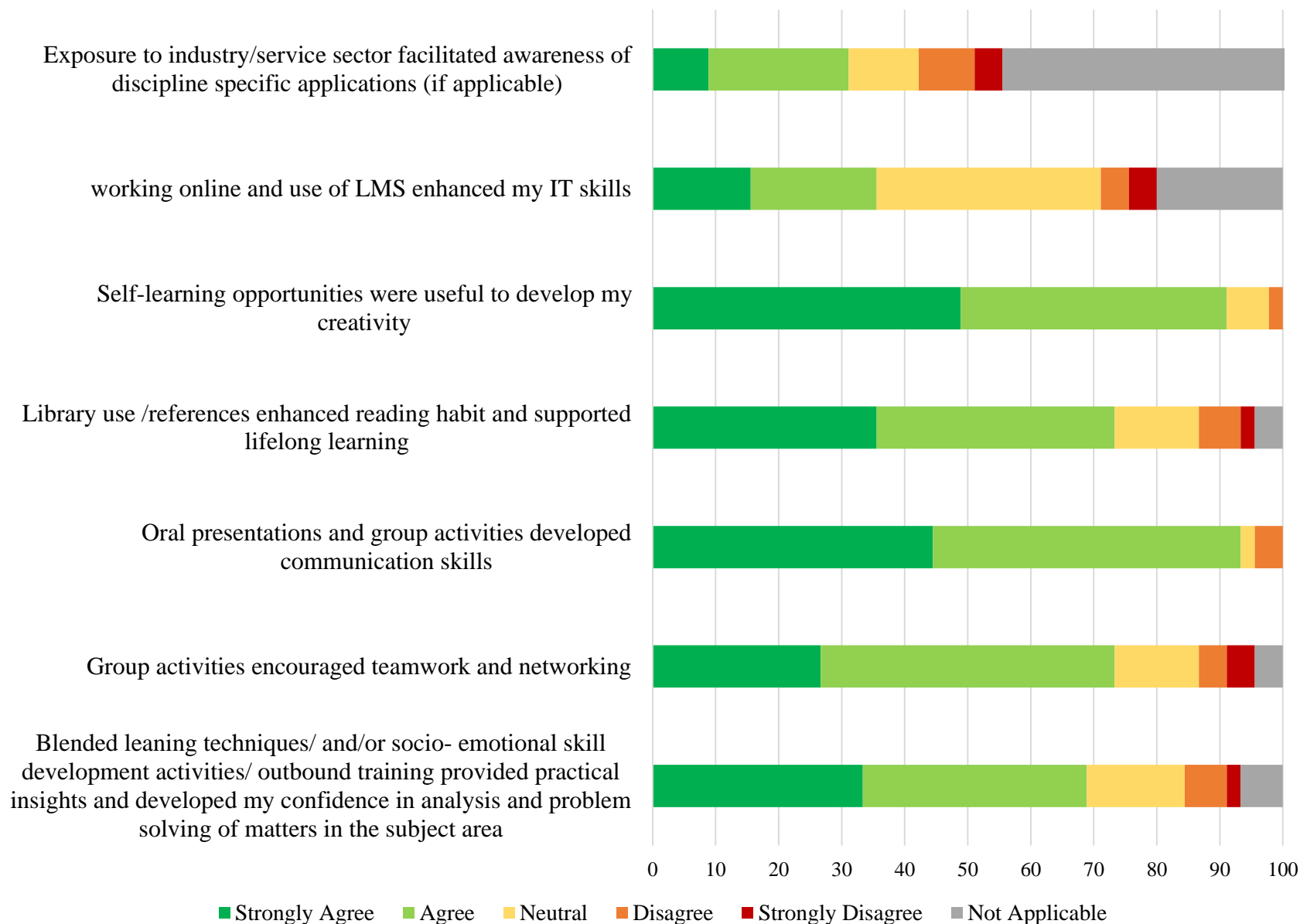## Section on learning outcomes and skill development

Figure 3 Percentage responses received for criteria under Learning outcomes and skill development

Highly satisfactory responses have been received on contribution of teaching-learning methods conducted to enhance skills and learnings of the students. It also showed that the pre-defined programme outcomes and course outcomes have been achieved with respect to creativity, independent thinking, communication skills, ability to work in a team, networking etc. However, the satisfactory level of the responses received for the first two criteria tested under this section were poor. The fact that more than 40% of the responders has indicated their response as not applicable with respect to industry exposure may emphasize that the lack of provision for it in the current curriculum. Therefore, it is recommended to introduce industry exposure/training/intern to students following Masters Degrees at IBMBB. Students' responses for improvement of IT skills through online work and use of LMS are not satisfactory in the current context highlighting the need of necessary actions towards that.
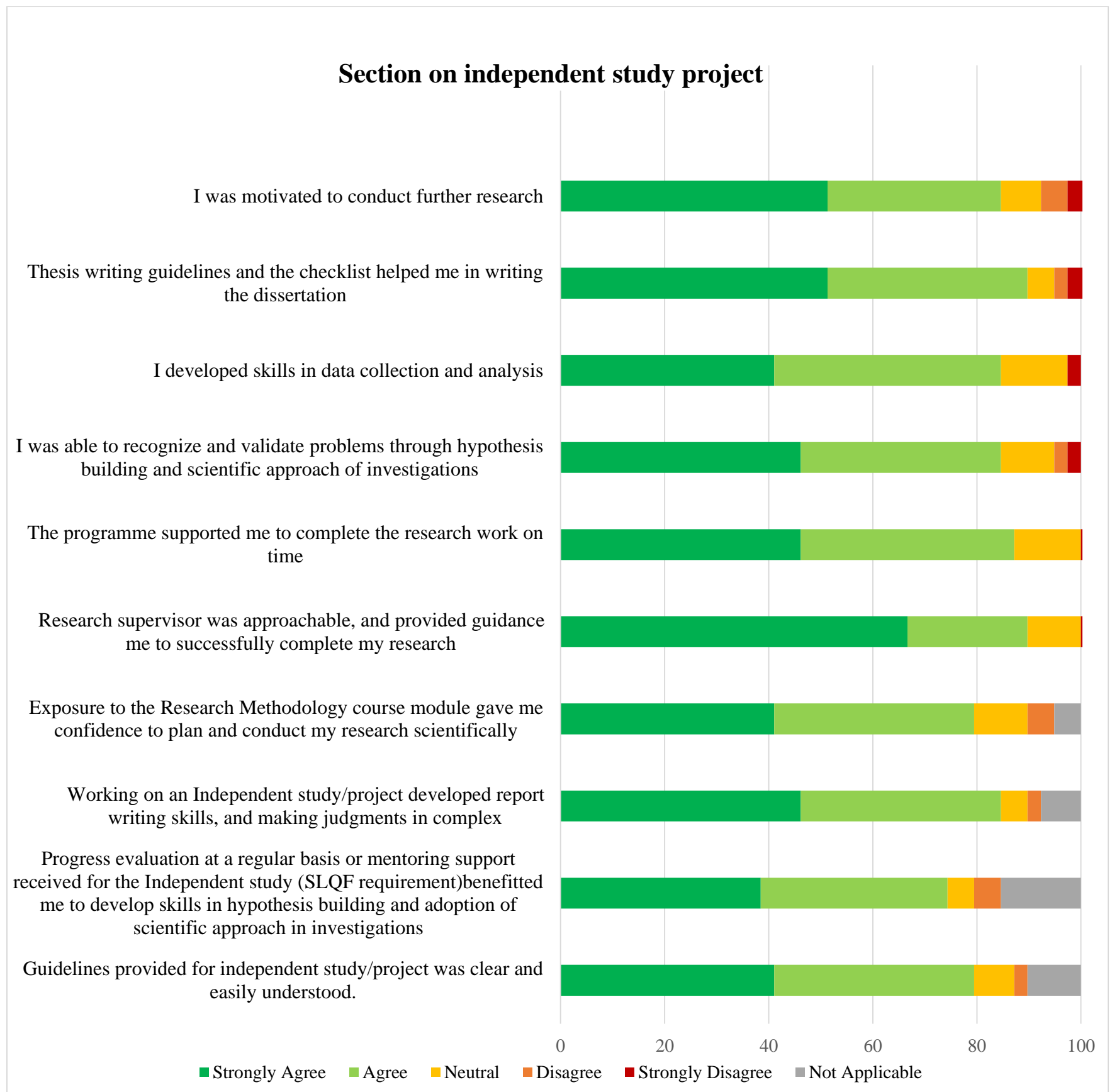
Figure 4 Percentage responses received for criteria under independent study project

All the criteria under independent study project had received ≥70% of agreed or strongly agreed responses. However, since students who completed the SLQF level 9 and 10 had received experience relevant to the criteria indicated under independent study project, Figure 4 does not include the responses received from SLQF level 8. It was also noted that the students completed the SLQF level 9 of Bioinformatics (BI) have also marked their responses as not applicable. Hence, their responses were disregarded in these analyses. Overall responses indicate that the students who completed SLQF level 9 and 10 degrees in CMI and MLS have acknowledged the criteria tested positively.

Summary and recommendations

Students' perception on the relevant Degree/Diploma was assessed under four sections in this feedback collection. Those sections were 1) general, 2) teaching, learning and assessments, 3) learning outcomes & skill development and 4) independent study project. Analyses of the responses revealed that all the criteria assessed under 4 sections had received more than 50% of satisfactory responses (agreed and strongly agreed) except 2 criteria which were focused on the industry internship and IT skills. More than 30% of the students took part in this feedback collection had not agreed with the criterion on "programme completed with no delays". However, more than 85% had indicated that the lectures were conducted with no delays under the teaching and learning section. Therefore, the delays in the programmes which were meant by some students could be due to logistic and practical difficulties which could have possibly raised due to uncontrollable delays in third parties such as delays in reagent supplies due to various reasons, delays at authorizing bodies including ethics and other approvals, etc. Therefore, it is recommended to take actions to minimize such delays and target to complete the programmes as scheduled. Attention of all academics and programme coordinators is required to make the lecture material available online immediately after the completion of a lectures in order to support student learning.

Students' responses were poor for the criteria on industry internship and enhancement of IT skills. Responses may indicate that industry internship/ exposure to relevant sector has not been a component in some degree programmes. Conducting internship programmes would be an added value to the profile of post-graduates as it provides an opportunity for them to obtain hands-on knowledge in the relevant career-field in addition to the academic knowledge received from the university. Further, it may provide a platform for the students to obtain the real-world experience, to establish critical network connections, to learn new skills and improve the existing skills and in overall to be a best suitable candidate for the present job market. Therefore, it is recommended to provide the industry internship to acquire skills and knowledge on discipline specific applications to improve the career prospects of the postgraduates. It is also recommended to take necessary actions to enhance the IT skills by online working and by use of LMS. The use of advanced, interactive online tools (eg. H5P in LMS) could be useful in supporting the students to improve their IT skills.

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This report was submitted to the Director, IBMBB on 2022.03.22.

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