ISAS IMPACT EVALUATION SURVEY 2020 REPORT

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

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The full list of institutions that participated in the study is included in the report.

Photo by Matthew Henry from Burst

PREFACE

The objective of this impact evaluation study is to investigate the efficacy of the Internationalization Strategy Advisory Services (ISAS) and its successor program ISAS (2.0) on internationalization initiatives at higher education institutions. All participating institutions are members of the independent, NGO, International Association of Universities (IAU), and have worked with its advisory branch, ISAS, in the past. Research objectives of this study are three-fold: 1) To identify progress institutions have made at the suggestion of ISAS; 2) To identify the reason for gaps between recommendations and implementation, defined as barriers to internationalization; 3) To analyze and share results that inform the development of IAU's future advisory services. The research method used was a combination of quantitative, through the use of an online survey, and qualitative via semi-structured interviews.

At the start of the 21st century, a substantive change occurred in higher education. Internationalization, a by-product of globalization, moved from a peripheral activity to a 'strategic issue' (Teichler, 1999) amongst institutions. This report will discuss institutions' progress toward internationalization and challenges encountered in its quest. Although the universities studied have similar objectives to accelerate internationalization, the motivations for this pursuit, and manner in which they accomplish their goals, are quite distinct. For consistency in the purposes of this study, this paper will share the same definition of internationalization that IAU has adopted:

> " [Internationalization of Higher Education is] the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society (De Wit, et al., 2015). "

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Internationalization of higher education is a dynamic and constantly evolving combination of political, economic, socio-cultural and academic rationales that deeply impacts higher education policy and institutional priorities. Individual institutions, aware of the enduring academic benefits of internationalization, must carefully consider their own rationales and meanings for its pursuit.

Since 2010, the International Association of Universities (IAU) has contributed to its member institutions' strategic internationalization efforts, through their bespoke Internationalization Strategies Advisory Services (ISAS) and ISAS (2.0) programs.

With the guidance of a panel of the field's top experts, unique policy priorities are identified and tailored recommendations are thoughtfully composed and delivered to each institution undertaking the service.

The ISAS Impact Evaluation Survey 2020 examines the impact of ISAS and ISAS (2.0) on internationalization efforts of 12 of the 17 institutions that ever undertook an ISAS or ISAS (2.0) service. The sampling of institutions included in this study, with unique regional, national and institutional contexts, are a microcosm of global higher education at large. Yet collectively, their responses convey that internationalization remains a pressing priority of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), regardless of geographic location.

HIGHLIGHTS

This study highlights the changes made based on ISAS' recommendations, provides stakeholders with visual data results, and allows universities to benchmark their growth in the following areas: 1) Overall internationalization trends; 2) Articulated mission/strategic plans; 3) Leadership, governance, structure and staff; 4) Financial resources for internationalization; 5) Internationalization of the curriculum & co-curriculum/ internationalization at home; 6) Online and distance learning; 7) Human resources and staff development; 8) Student mobility and 9) International collaboration and partnerships.

The results show that every university indicated that working with ISAS was helpful in advancing internationalization initiatives. All five institutions that undertook an ISAS (2.0) service (participants from 2016 to present) categorized it as "really helpful." This is a clear endorsement of ISAS by the institutions.

ISAS' counsel was particularly instrumental in prompting six universities to streamline their international Collaborative Partnerships to more select relationships. This reflects the results found in IAU's 5th Global Survey (2018) in which institutions chose "enhanced international cooperation and capacity building" as the most important anticipated benefit of internationalization at global level.

Taking ISAS' recommendation encouraged several universities to revise or establish an Institutional Strategy and engendered Institutional Awareness of internationalization efforts. Additionally, ISAS was credited at several universities for: driving the establishment of Global Learning Outcomes (GLOs), increasing Enrollment Targets for inbound international students, and spurring professional development on the topic of Internationalization at Home/Internationalization of the Curriculum.

IMPROVING THE SERVICE

The study also offered a space for respondents to speak to their individual experience in working with ISAS. Interviewees' suggestions on improving the process most commonly included: an alumni support network and scaffolded support during self-assessment. The common consensus on further enhancement of the ISAS service was the need for active, follow-up support after the issuance of the final report. However, financial implications for the implementation of the latter must be taken into consideration.

Even in universities where internationalization was already prioritized, which constituted the majority in this study, working with ISAS gave institutions leverage in advancing their initiatives and promoted institutional buy-in. Implementing ISAS' suggestions will be an ongoing and evolving process for HEIs, which will also benefit from self-monitoring, institutional funding, and peer support through the exchange of experiences and best practices.

In their quest for internationalization, all institutions inevitably face challenges. Overcoming those challenges requires a clear, strategic approach, one that is responsive and in alignment with the core mission and values of the institution. IAU through its advisory services stands ready to help institutions in refining or progressing their internationalization priorities built on an inclusive, fair and ethical process.

INTRODUCTION

The International Association of Universities (IAU) is a member-based NGO that serves the global higher education community. One of its core strategic priorities is to promote inclusive, fair and ethical internationalization efforts in higher education (IAU website). A pioneer in this area, the organization recognizes that internationalization has moved from a peripheral activity to a core policy and strategy at HEIs. Their primary objectives (2016-2020) are 1) Research (analyze current trends and research global developments) 2) Advisory Services (including benchmarking and impact assessment) and 3) Global Advocacy.

To advance their second objective and expand advisory services, IAU launched in 2010 the Internationalization Strategy Advisory Services (ISAS) which has "provided expert advice, up-to-date information and recommend approaches based on best practice around the world" (IAU website). This service assists HEIs in refining their internationalization policies and procedures and supports future-oriented internationalization efforts. In 2016, ISAS (2.0), "broader in scope and offer" than the original ISAS, was launched. This allowed institutions to pursue internationalization priorities bespoke to their institutions and context. Based on resources available to the university and the stage of internationalization the HEIs falls under, institutions who work directly with ISAS (2.0) choose to focus on 1 of 4 sub-strands: 1) Planning and strategy; 2) Assessing strategy and monitoring achievements; 3) Enhancing a specific area of internationalization; or 4) Achieving comprehensive internationalization.

TABLE 1

ISAS PROJECTS (2010-2016)

YEAR OF ISAS	INSTITUTION NAME (LOCATION)
2010	Hokkaido University (Japan)
2011	Moi University (Kenya)
2011	Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania)
2013	Universidad Cientifica del Peru (Peru)
2014	Meiji Univeristy (Japan)
2014	University of Botswana (Botswana)
2015	Ho Chi Minh University of Transport (Vietnam)
2015	University of Cape Coast (Ghana)
2015	University of Ghana (Ghana)
2016	American University of Bangladesh (Bangladesh)
2016	Daffodil International University (Bangladesh)

TABLE 2

ISAS 2.0 PROJECTS (2016 – PRESENT)

TYPE OF ISAS (2.0)	INSTITUTION NAME (LOCATION)	NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS
Planning & Strategy	KIIT University (India) Shigakkan University (Japan)	2
Assessing Strategy	Toyo University (Japan) Hokkaido University (Japan)	2
Enhancing a Specific Area of Internationalization	-	0
Achieving Comprehensive Internationalization	University of Bologna (Italy) RUDN University (Russian Federation) Cardiff Metropolitan University (UK)	3

DESIGN & SURVEY CATEGORIES

The Impact Evaluation Survey sought to find what, if any, impact ISAS recommendations had on the progress of internationalization efforts across the 17 higher education institutions listed above (the total number of services is 18, but the number of HEIs is 17, as Hokkaido University undertook the service twice, it was the first university undertaking ISAS in 2010 and then an ISAS (2.0) in 2016). There is an underlying assumption that institutional resources and organizational intentionality play a role in achieving its objectives. In writing the 46-question survey we focused on the following areas:

1. **Overall internationalization trends**
2. **Articulated mission/strategic plans**
3. **Leadership, governance, structure and staff**
4. **Financial resources for internationalization**
5. **Internationalization of the curriculum & co-curriculum/ internationalization at home**
6. **Online and distance learning**
7. **Human resources and staff development**
8. **Student mobility**
9. **International collaboration and partnerships**

One of the primary purposes of undertaking the ISAS Impact Evaluation Survey, and subsequent interviews, was to bring the ISAS work flow process full circle. The ISAS process begins with HEIs approaching IAU and expressing their interest in working together. After a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is agreed upon, there is a selection of IAU expert panel members with input and approval from the institution. The institution then generates a self-assessment report.

This is followed with a 2-3 day site visit to the institution and includes an expert panel review. At the end of the visit, preliminary feedback is given. The institution is later provided with a written final report, complete with policy and actionable recommendations. The entire process takes between 8 to 12 months.

However, to date, no formal follow-up has ever been made. This study seeks to fill that gap by determining what impact the ISAS process had on the areas listed above at each institution. In collecting and examining the results, institutions will be able to benchmark their progress and IAU will garner valuable feedback to inform and continue its advisory work.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods approach combining survey results and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative investigation was given priority as it provided more extensive data collection while the qualitative data provided context to the survey's results. Interpreting the results together allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem and mutually corroborated the results.

In the first phase, quantitative data was gathered in an online survey via Survey Monkey. An online survey was cost-effective and allowed efficient data collection as the institutions spanned three continents in different time zones. In the second phase, nine short semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom. Interviews gave a voice to the respondents, allowed them to elaborate on survey results, and provided real-time experiential answers and context.

SURVEY SAMPLE AND PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The ISAS Impact Evaluation Survey 2020 was sent to all HEIs that ever undertook an ISAS or ISAS (2.0): 17 HEIs across 12 countries. This is a small sample size of the global higher education community, but includes a broad range of institutions, across economic and geographic contexts. Between 2010 and 2016, eleven of those HEIs underwent ISAS reviews, with the majority of them taking place in Asia and Africa. ISAS (2.0) was launched in 2016. From that year until the present, six additional institutions undertook an ISAS (2.0) service.
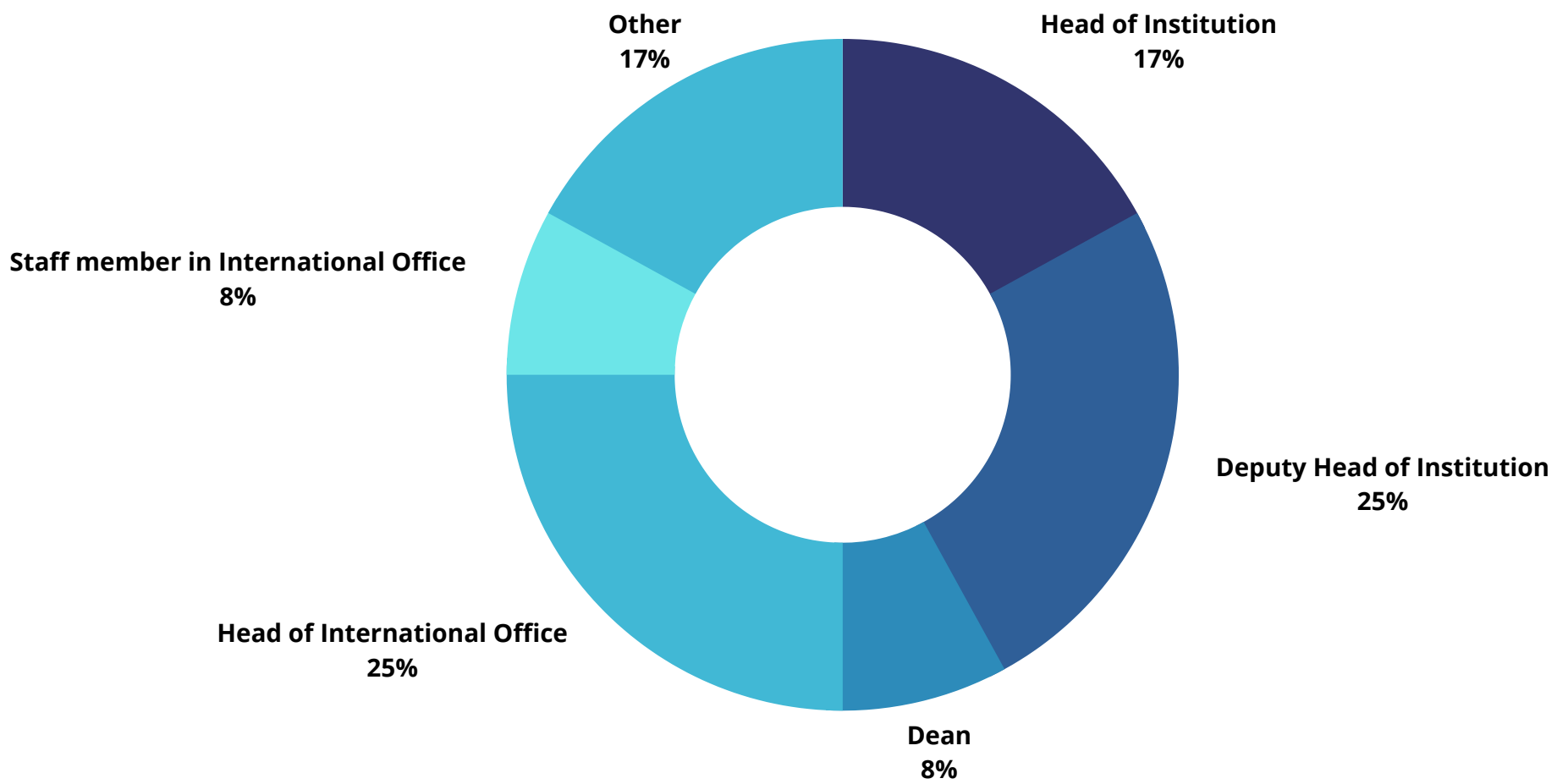
The following table reflects those institutions and their participation in the Impact Evaluation. 12 out of 17 institutions completed the survey, giving us a 70.5% response rate. Of those twelve, nine agreed to interviews. Five institutions did not respond to the invitation to the study. Representatives from universities in five countries were interviewed: Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Italy, and Japan. Representatives from universities in two more countries responded to the survey but did not participate in the interviews: Lithuania, and the Russian Federation.

INSTITUTION	COUNTRY	YEAR OF REVIEW	SURVEY	INTERVIEW	NO RESPONSE
		ISAS			
American International University Bangladesh	Bangladesh	2016	✗	✗	
Daffodil International University	Bangladesh	2016	✗	✗	
Ho Chi Minh University of Transport	Vietnam	2015			✗
Hokkaido University	Japan	2010/2016	✗	✗	
Meiji University	Japan	2014	✗		
Moi University	Kenya	2011			✗
Mykolas Romeris University	Lithuania	2011	✗		
University of Botswana	Botswana	2014			✗
Universidad Científica del Peru	Peru	2013			✗

INSTITUTION	COUNTRY	YEAR OF REVIEW	SURVEY	INTERVIEW	NO RESPONSE
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	2015	✗	✗	
University of Ghana	Ghana	2015	✗	✗	

ISAS (2.0)

INSTITUTION	COUNTRY	YEAR OF REVIEW	SURVEY	INTERVIEW	NO RESPONSE
Cardiff Metropolitan University	UK	2017			✗
KIIT	India	2018	✗	✗	
RUDN University	Russian Federation	2019	✗		
Shigakkan University	Japan	2017	✗	✗	
Toyo University	Japan	2019	✗	✗	
University of Bologna	Italy	2019	✗	✗	

Respondents included: two Heads of institutions (President, Vice-Chancellor, Rector), three Deputy Heads of Institutions, one Dean, three Heads of International Office. four respondents hold other senior positions (e.g. Deputy Executive Director for International Office and Head of Office in International Development), and one is a Staff Member in an International Office. Some participants hold dual roles at their institution. As the ISAS reviews span a decade, as expected, there have been personnel shifts. Thus, the original Steering Committee and primary point of contact changed at several universities. eight respondents indicated that they were a part of the original ISAS process, while four were not.

Fig.1 Position of respondents

Other
17%

Head of Institution
17%

Staff member in International Office
8%

Deputy Head of Institution
25%

Head of International Office
25%

Dean
8%

As the ISAS reviews span a decade, as expected, there have been personnel shifts. Thus, the original Steering Committee and primary point of contact changed at several universities. eight respondents indicated that they were a part of the original ISAS process, while four were not.

We asked that the universities submit a single response per institution. The average time to complete the survey was 17m, 6s. The first responses were collected on November 23, 2020 and the last on January 4, 2021. The survey was closed on January 15, 2021. While the original plan was to leave the survey open for two weeks, nearly all institutions asked for more time to collect data either due to personnel shifts, competing priorities (e.g. a simultaneous internal yearly-review) or because the Covid-19 pandemic altered work flow and posed disruptions.

OVERALL INTERNATIONALIZATION TRENDS

In evaluating the impact that the ISAS review had on participant institutions, two initial questions were asked. The first asked about the institutions' overall opinion of the ISAS process. A majority, eight institutions, felt "It was really helpful to advance internationalization at our institution.", while the other four indicated "It was somewhat helpful to advance internationalization." Five institutions that undertook an ISAS (2.0) project, conducted from 2016-present found it "really helpful". Additional data through further survey responses may indicate a correlation between the years since working with ISAS and overall outlook of the ISAS process. Not a single respondent indicated it had a negligible impact.

Fig. 2 Overall opinion about ISAS

What is your overall opinion about ISAS?

**It was somewhat helpful
33%**

**It was really helpful
67%**
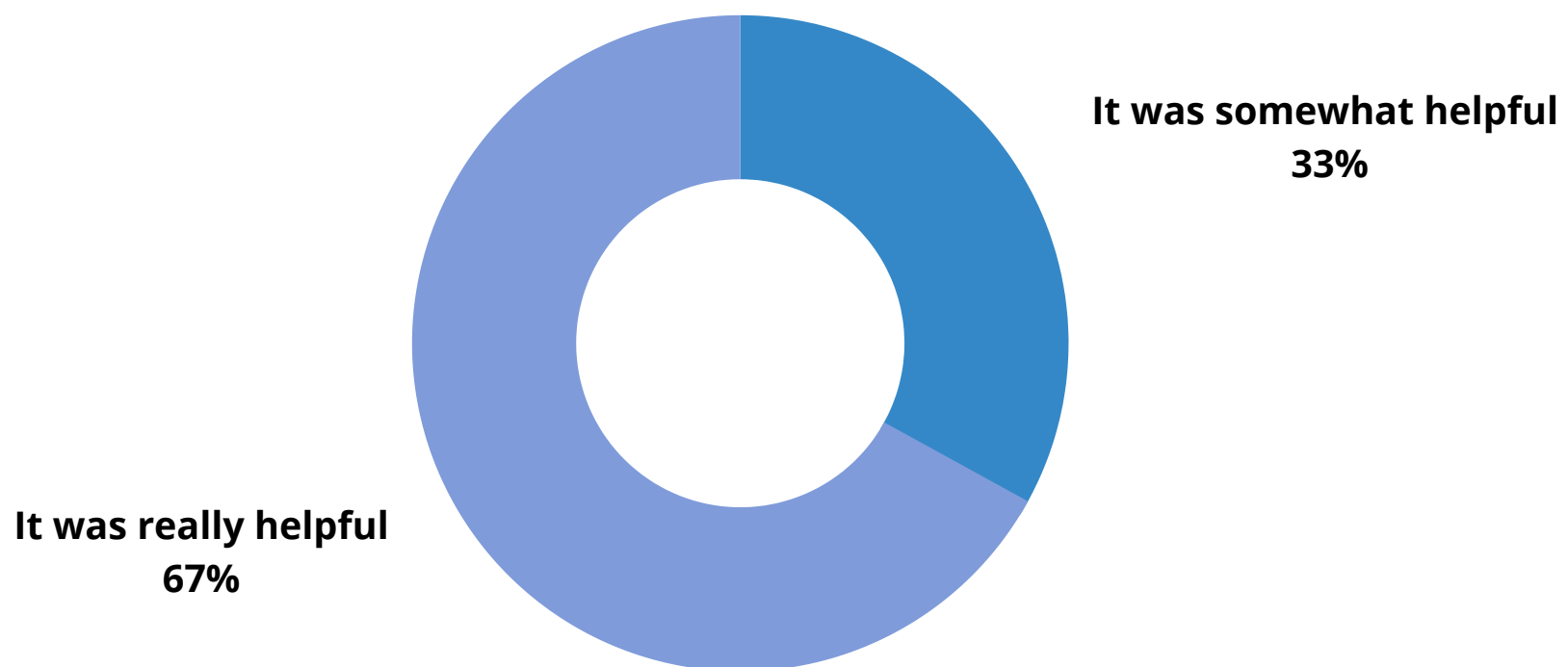
Progress in internationalization

A clear majority of institutions, eleven, noted progress in internationalization since completion of their time with ISAS. 'Significant progress' was made at three universities and eight progressed 'moderately.' Six of these 'moderate' responses were from the more recent (2016-present) ISAS (2.0) projects, which could be explained by the fact that changes in internationalization require time. However, additional data would need to be gathered to determine a correlation between the years passed and internationalization progress. One university indicated no progress, choosing the response 'No, but internationalization efforts were already strong.'

For context, during interviews, participants were asked to expand on this answer. Two institutions noted a 'moderate' response due to the Covid-19 pandemic hampering internationalization efforts, while one chose moderate, "because our own response to recommendations has not been that swift." This is further explored in the interview section.

Fig. 3 Progress in internationalisation

Since the time of the completion of your work with ISAS, has your institution noted progress in internationalization? (Please select only one)

No, but internationalization efforts were already strong
8%

Yes, significantly
25%

Yes, moderately
67%
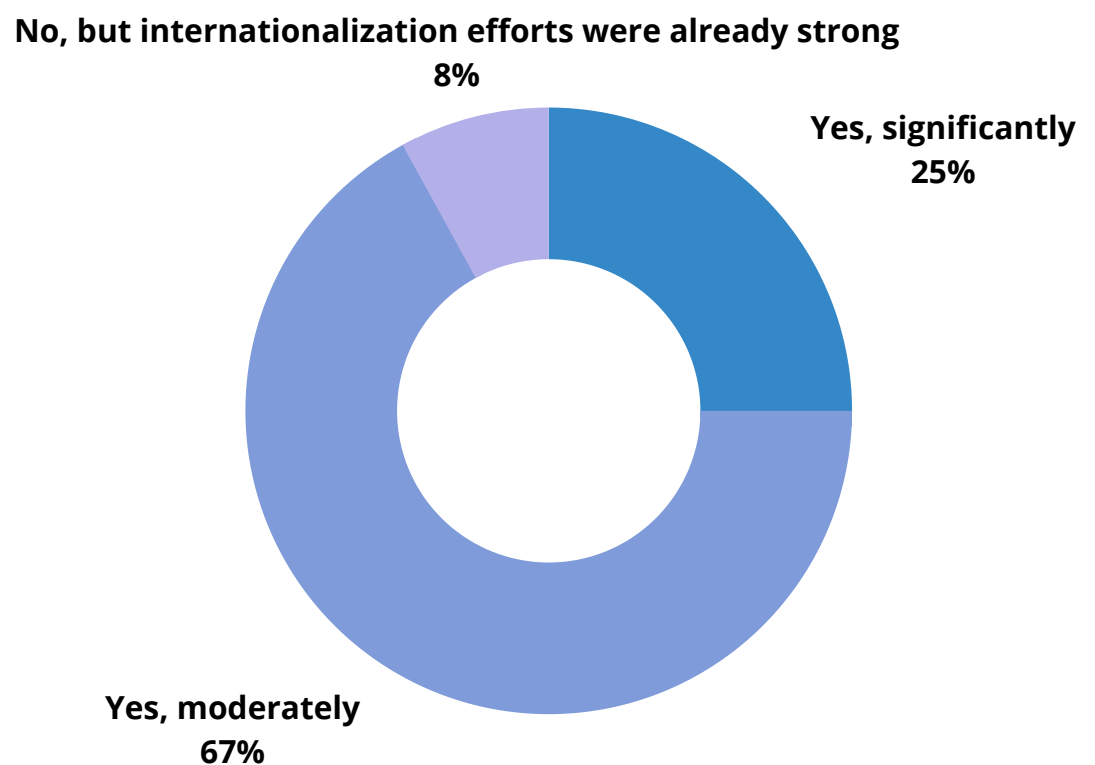
'Develop globally competent graduates' is the top priority for institutions' present-day internationalization goals. Also highly prioritized are: 'rise in international rankings and reputation and/or maintain competitiveness' as well as 'improve the quality of teaching.' A majority of respondents, nine, also chose 'enhance international cooperation and capacity building' as a top goal. This is consistent with IAU's 5th Global Survey findings (Marinoni, 2019), as this was chosen as the most important expected benefit of internationalization on a global level.

Fig. 4 Internationalization goals

What are the present-day goals for internationalization at your institution?

'Bi- or multi-lateral international student exchanges,' 'Internationalization of the curriculum/at home,' and 'Collaborative, international research' are given the highest priority of internationalization activities across all universities. These are followed closely by 'Increase outgoing mobility for home students.' Perhaps surprisingly, in light of the current context due to the Covid-19 pandemic, only four responses indicated that internationalization via delivery of distance/online learning was a present-day goal.

Fig. 5 Priority activities

Which internationalization activities take highest priority on campus?
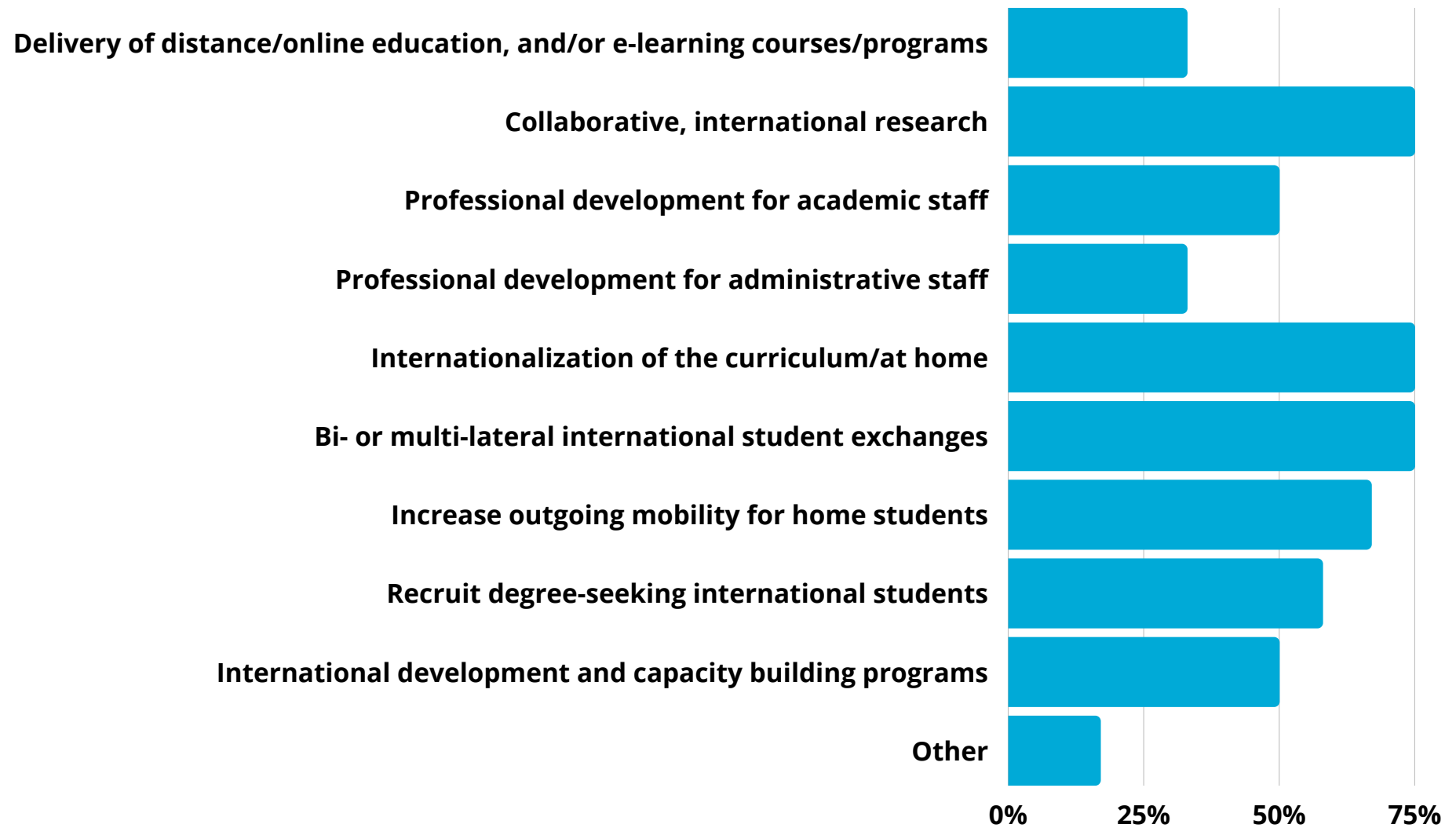
Articulated Mission/Strategic Plan

A clear majority of institutions, eleven, had an articulated commitment to internationalization in its mission statement prior to the ISAS process. All indicated it was amongst the top five priorities in institutional strategic plans or, while not a standalone priority, was an important dimension amongst them. One of the biggest impacts the ISAS process had was spurring universities to develop or revise a specific internationalization strategy, noted in seven universities.

Fig. 6 Articulated commitment to internationalization in mission

Has your institution developed an articulated commitment to internationalization in its mission statement?

**Yes, at the suggestion of ISAS
8%**

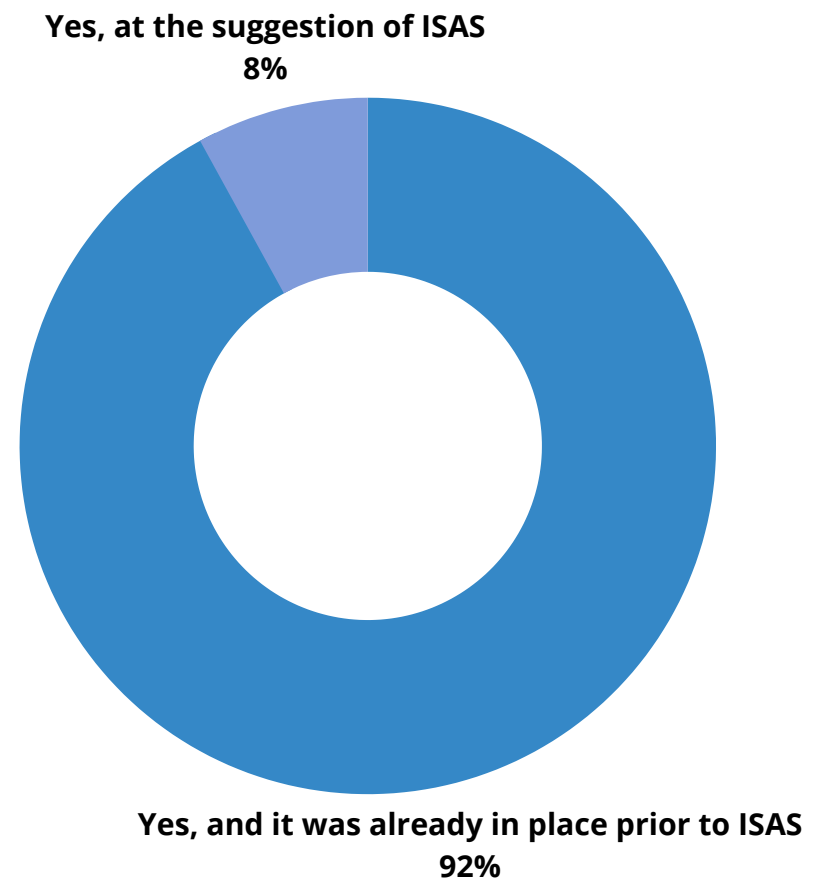**Yes, and it was already in place prior to ISAS
92%**

Fig. 7 Internationalization among top five priorities in strategic plan

Is internationalization among the top 5 priorities of your institution's strategic plan?
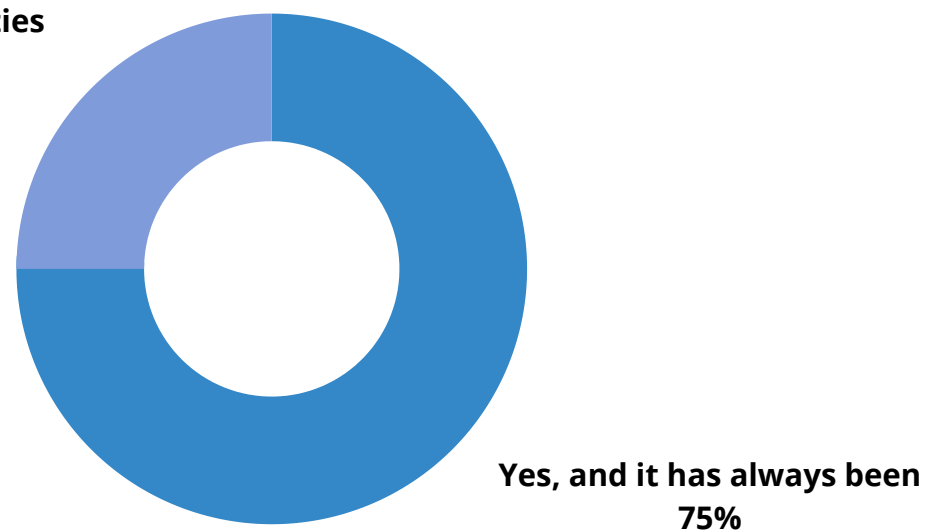
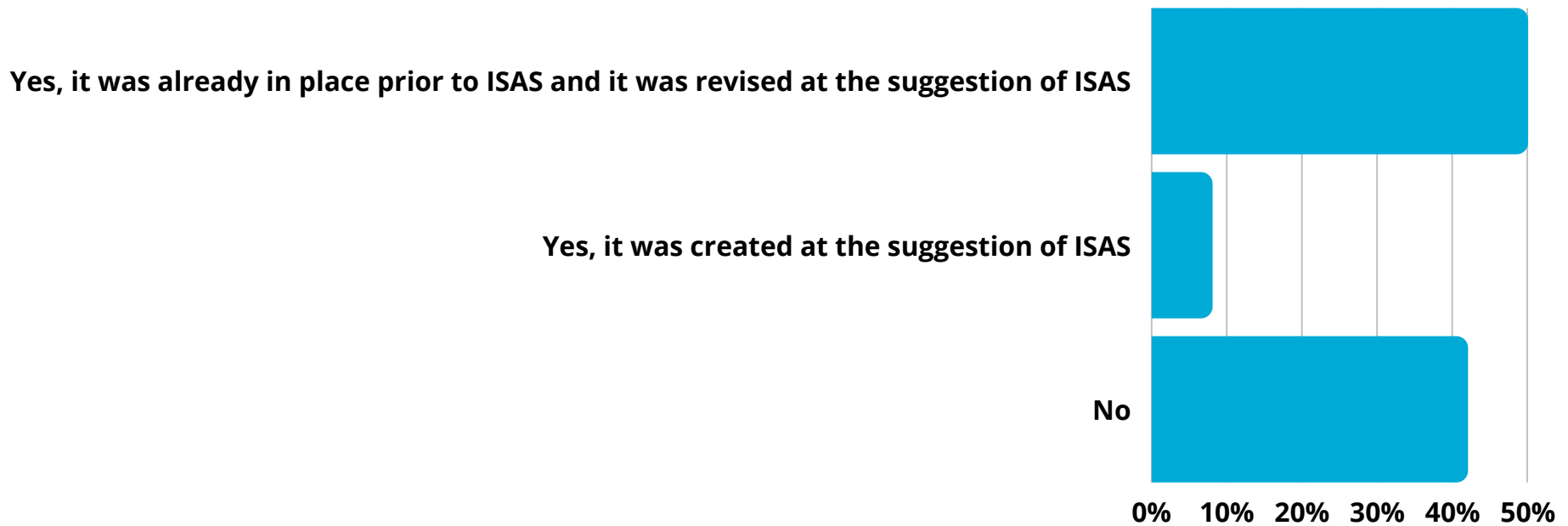**Not as a standalone priority, but is in our top 5 priorities
25%**

**Yes, and it has always been
75%**

Fig. 8 Internationalization strategy

Has your institution developed or revised a specific internationalization strategy?

Yes, it was already in place prior to ISAS and it was revised at the suggestion of ISAS

Yes, it was created at the suggestion of ISAS

No

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

Leadership/Governance, Structure & Staff

All institutions entered the ISAS process with a designated office tasked with leading internationalization efforts. Nearly all the institutions came into the ISAS process with an advisory committee tasked with internationalization. Most of the institutions also entered ISAS with a leadership position tasked with internationalization initiatives, while two indicated such a position was created at the suggestion of ISAS. One university created an International Education and Research position while another tasked the existing Head of IRO with follow-up activities based on recommendations from ISAS.

Fig. 9 Leadership position in charge of internationalization

Within your institution, is there a leadership position in charge of internationalization?
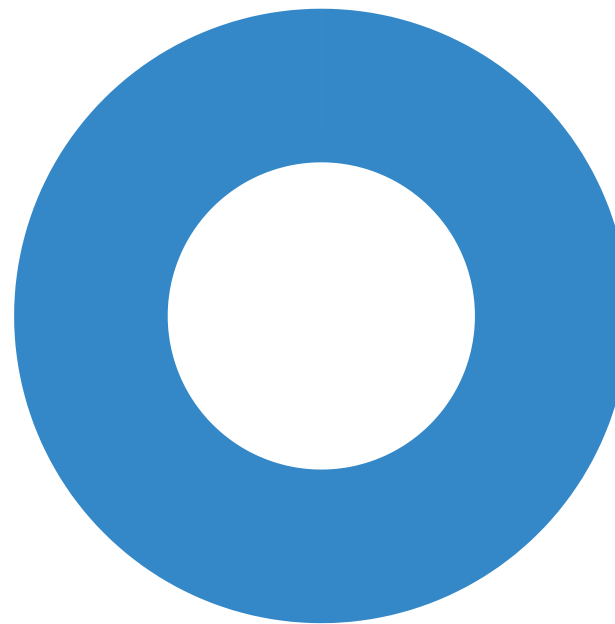
Yes, and it was created at the suggestion of ISAS
17%
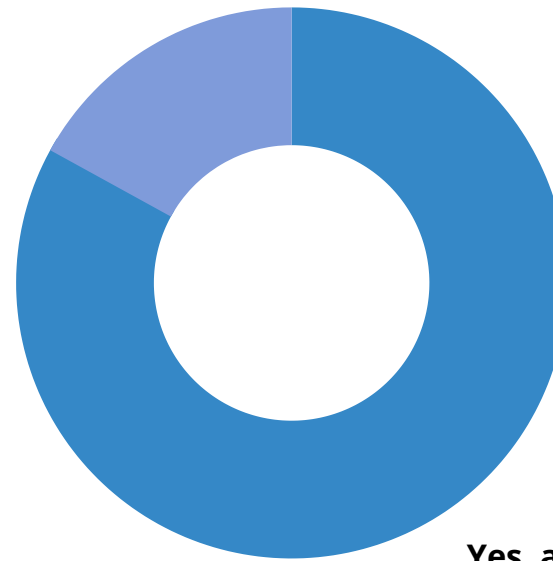
Yes, and it was in place before ISAS
83%

Fig. 10 Internationalization office

Is there an office charged with leading internationalization efforts?

Yes, and it was in place before ISAS
100%

Fig. 11 Internationalization committee

Is there an internationalization committee solely tasked with advisory efforts on internationalization?
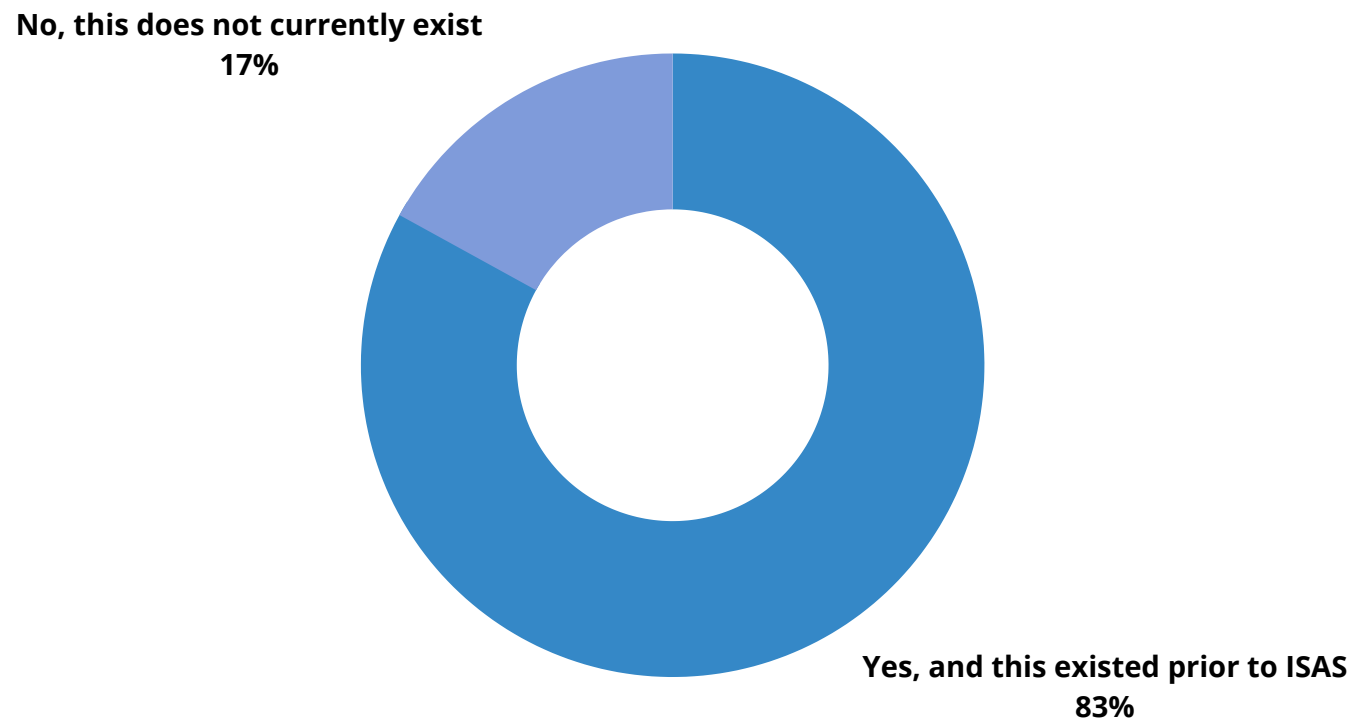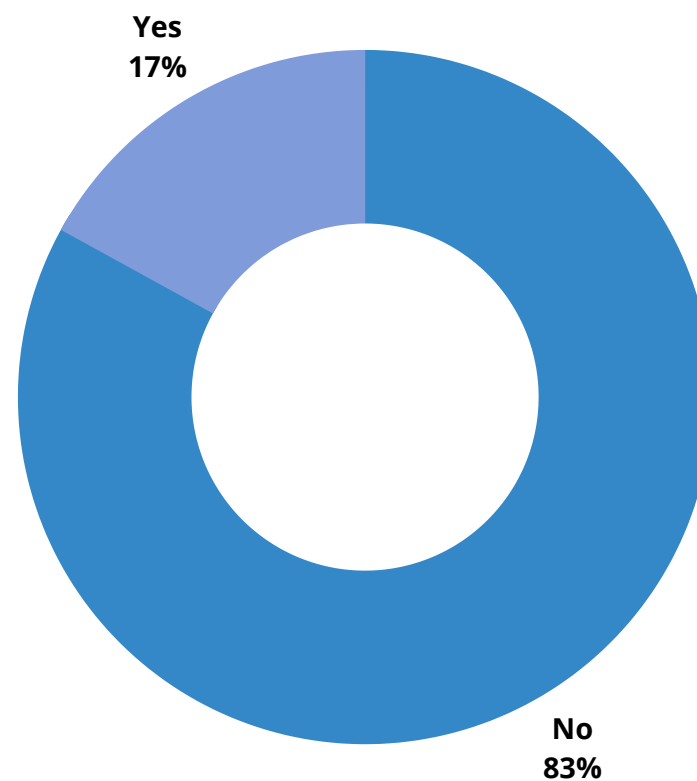
**No, this does not currently exist
17%**

**Yes, and this existed prior to ISAS
83%**

Fig. 12 Offices or positions created at the suggestion of ISAS

**Yes
17%**

Have any other offices or positions that drive internationalization been founded at the suggestion of ISAS?

**No
83%**

Financial Resources for Internationalization

Dedicated funds to support internationalization initiatives were available in all institutions. Financial support flows primarily to three places: 'Professional development abroad,' 'Students studying abroad' and 'Conducting research abroad.' At the advice of ISAS, one institution implemented scholarships for students studying abroad, one began scholarships to attract international students, and one provided on-campus training related to internationalization.

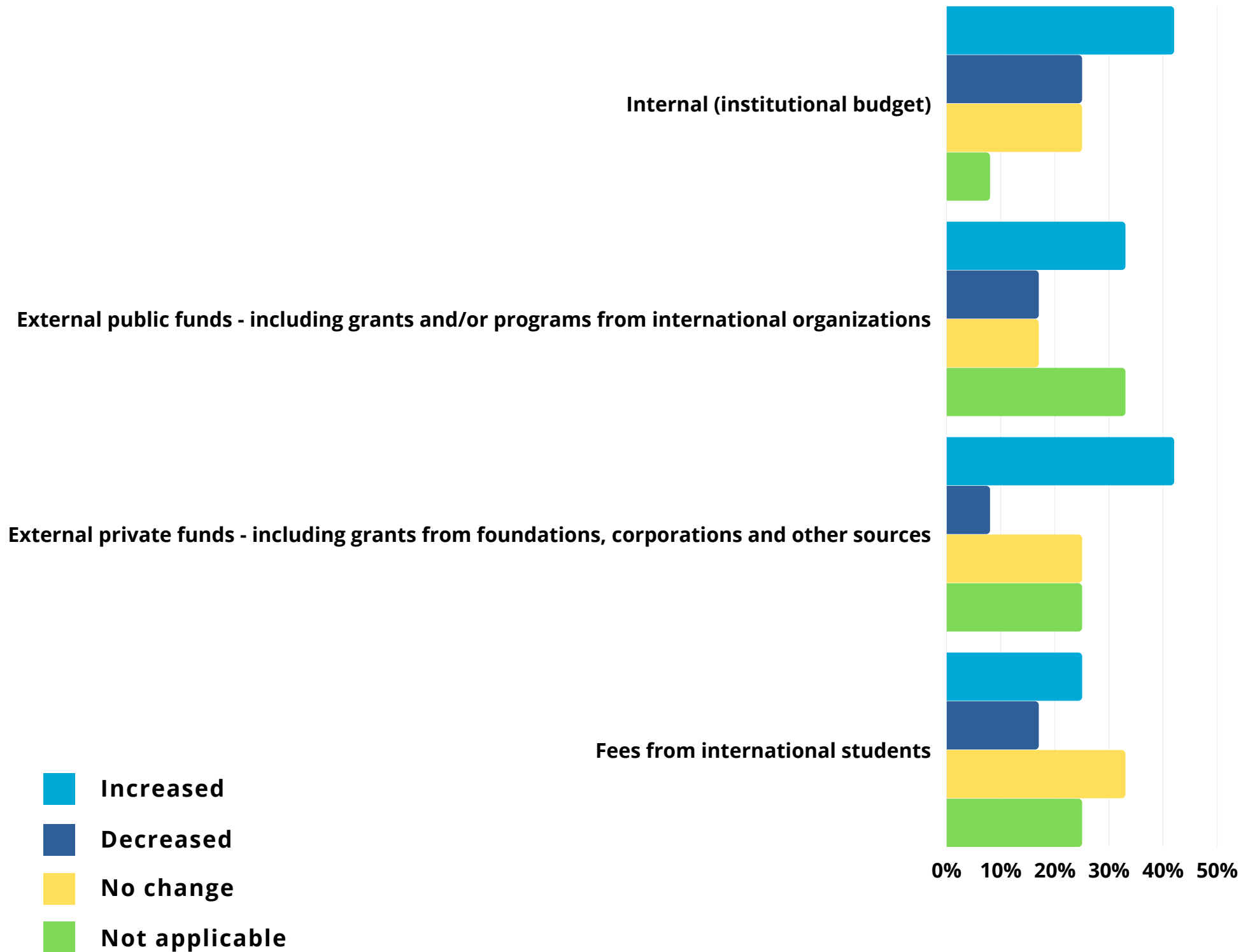Fig. 13 Dedicated funds to support internationalization

Are there dedicated funds to support internationalization initiatives at your institution?

**Yes
100%**
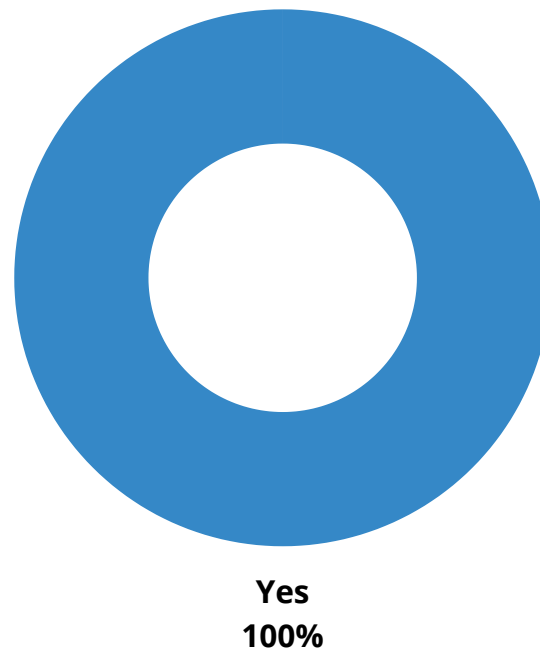
After ISAS, five universities reported both an increase in their institutional budget for internationalization and in external private funds (e.g. grants from foundations, corporations and other sources). three reported no change to their internal budget while the same number reported decreases. Whether there were funding fluctuations, or funding remained constant in other areas, greatly varied by institution. However, we cannot conclusively determine that the rise in budgeting is due to working with ISAS, or other independent factors.

Fig. 14 Change of internationalization funding post-ISAS (pre-Covid-19)

To the best of your knowledge, how has internationalization funding changed post-ISAS (pre-Covid)?

Internal (institutional budget)

External public funds - including grants and/or programs from international organizations

External private funds - including grants from foundations, corporations and other sources

Fees from international students

■ Increased

■ Decreased

■ No change

■ Not applicable

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

'Professional development abroad', 'conducting research abroad' and 'providing scholarships for students studying abroad' were the highest prioritized areas of institutional funding for internationalization. The vast majority of institutions had pre-existing funding for those endeavors in place prior to their work with ISAS.

Fig. 15 Funding for activities

Does your institution provide funding for the following?

- **Professional development abroad**
- **Conducting research abroad**
- **Attracting visiting professors/researchers**
- **Scholarships for students studying abroad**
- **Scholarships to attract international students**
- **On campus training related to internationalization**

0%　25%　50%　75%　100%

- ■ **Yes, funding in place prior to ISAS**
- ■ **Yes, funding implemented at the suggestion of ISAS**
- ■ **No or not applicable**

Internationalization of the Curriculum & Co-Curriculum (IoC)/Internationalization at Home (IaH)

Articulated global learning outcomes (GLOs) were present at a majority of the universities, prior to ISAS. At ISAS' suggestion, three implemented GLOs to aid in the internationalization of the curriculum for its students.

Fig. 16a and 16b Articulated global learning outcomes (GLOs)

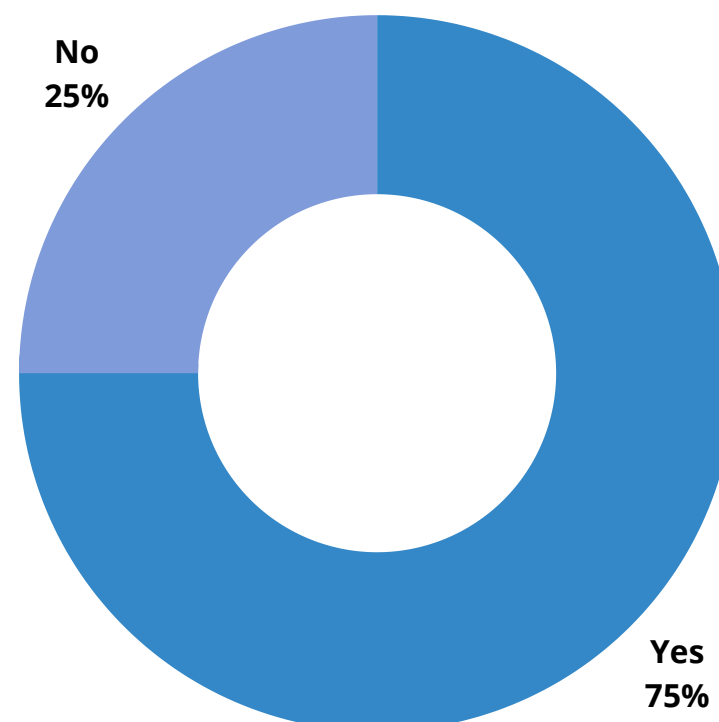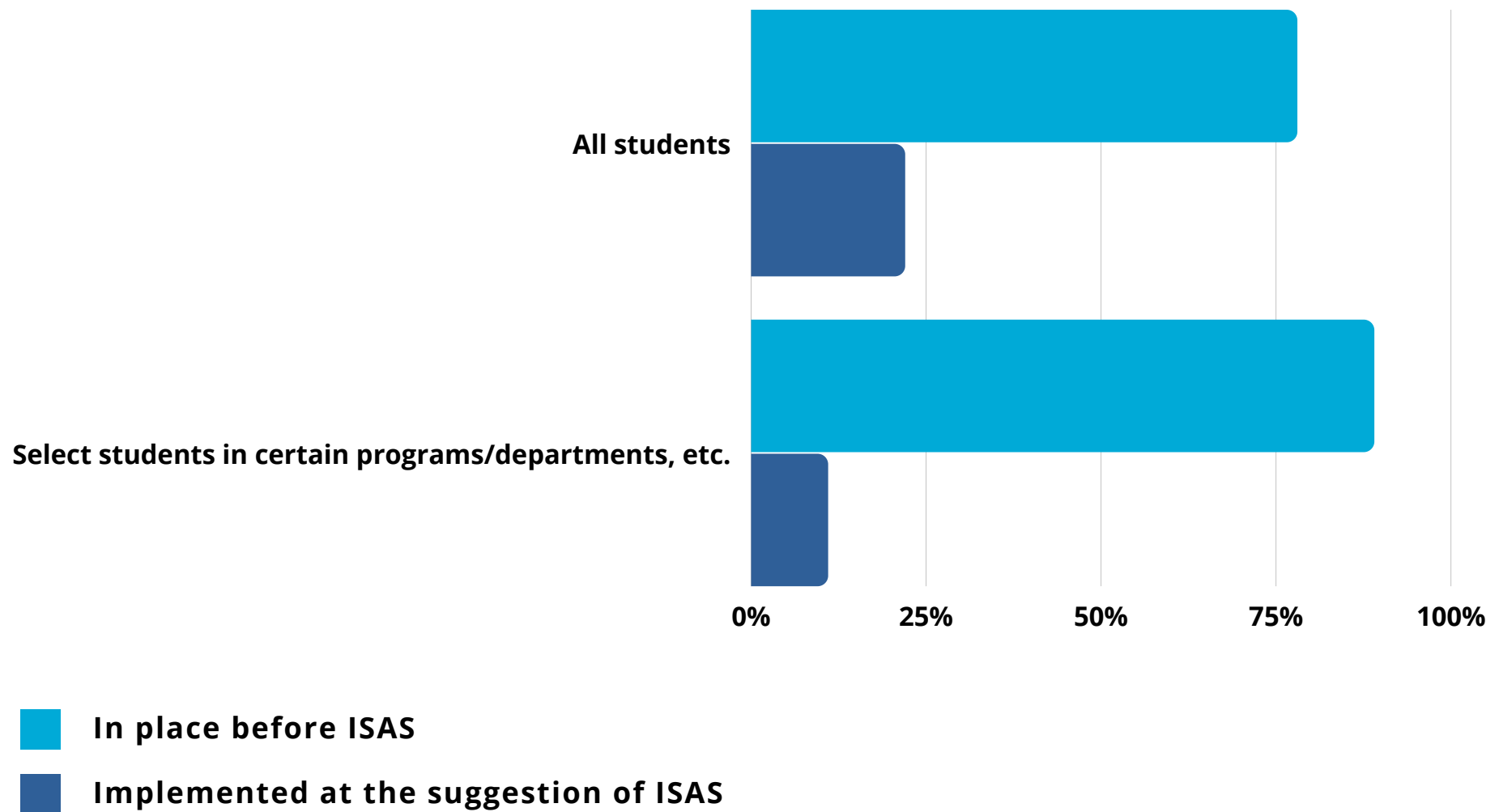### a) Are there articulated global learning outcomes for students at your institution?

Fig. 16a and 16b Articulated global learning outcomes (GLOs)

b) To whom do the articulated global learning outcomes apply?

■ **In place before ISAS**

■ **Implemented at the suggestion of ISAS**

IaH/IoC encourages universities to integrate global perspectives throughout the formal curriculum and co-curriculum for all students. It is not reliant on student mobility for internationalization efforts. Initiatives to spur the internationalization of the curriculum and co-curriculum were present, institution-wide, at a majority of institutions prior to ISAS. Two of institutions employed this recommendation due to ISAS. Of those institutions with a language policy, all were implemented prior to ISAS.

Fig. 17 Internationalization of the Curriculum & Co-Curriculum/ Internationalization at Home

Is your institution currently engaged in initiatives to spur internationalization of the curriculum/ co-curriculum/ internationalization at home?
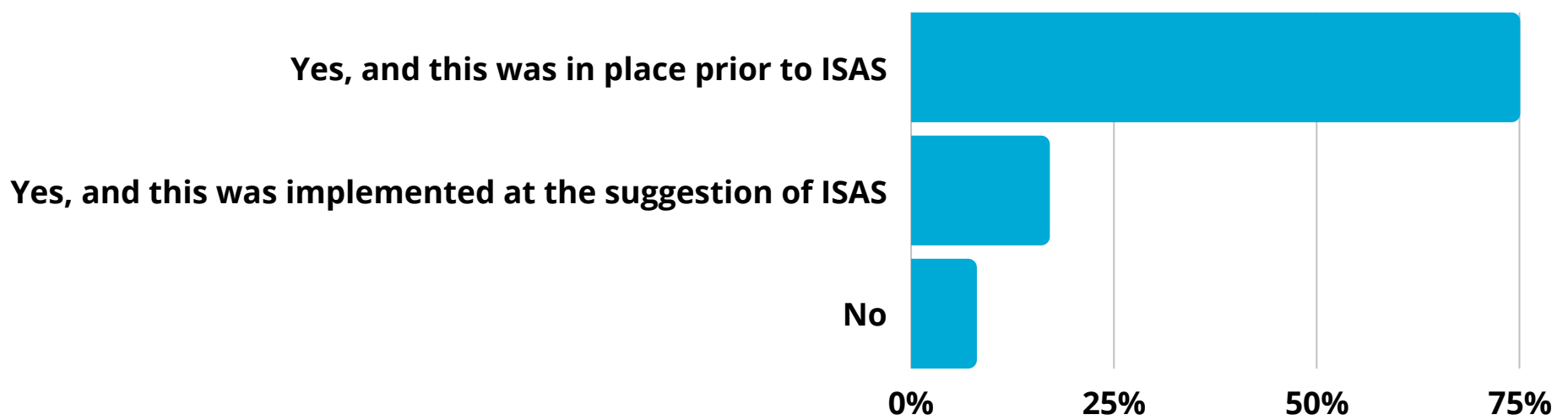

Fig. 18 Level at which IoC/IaH take place

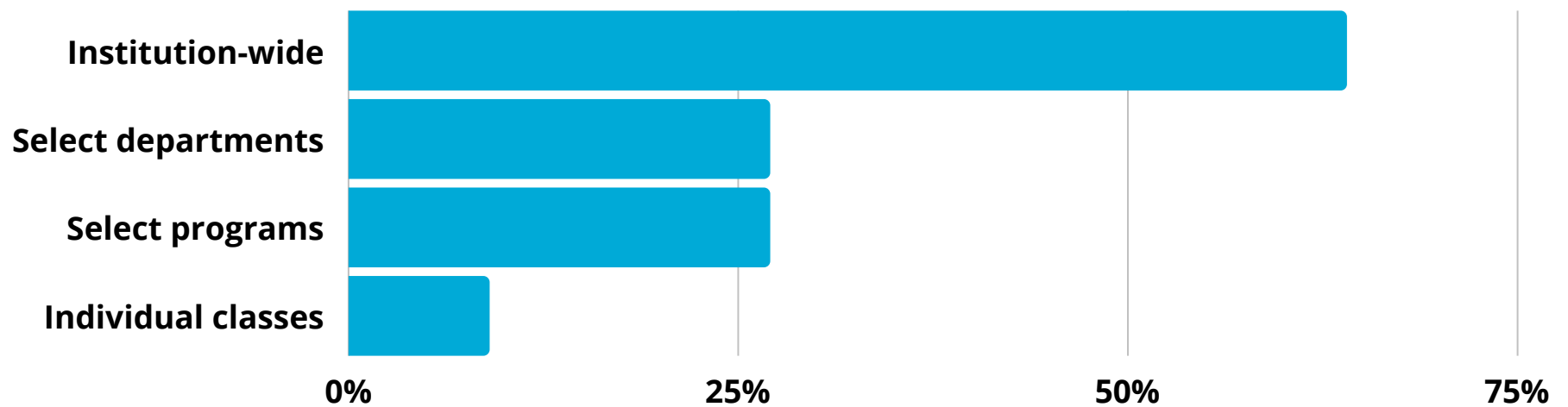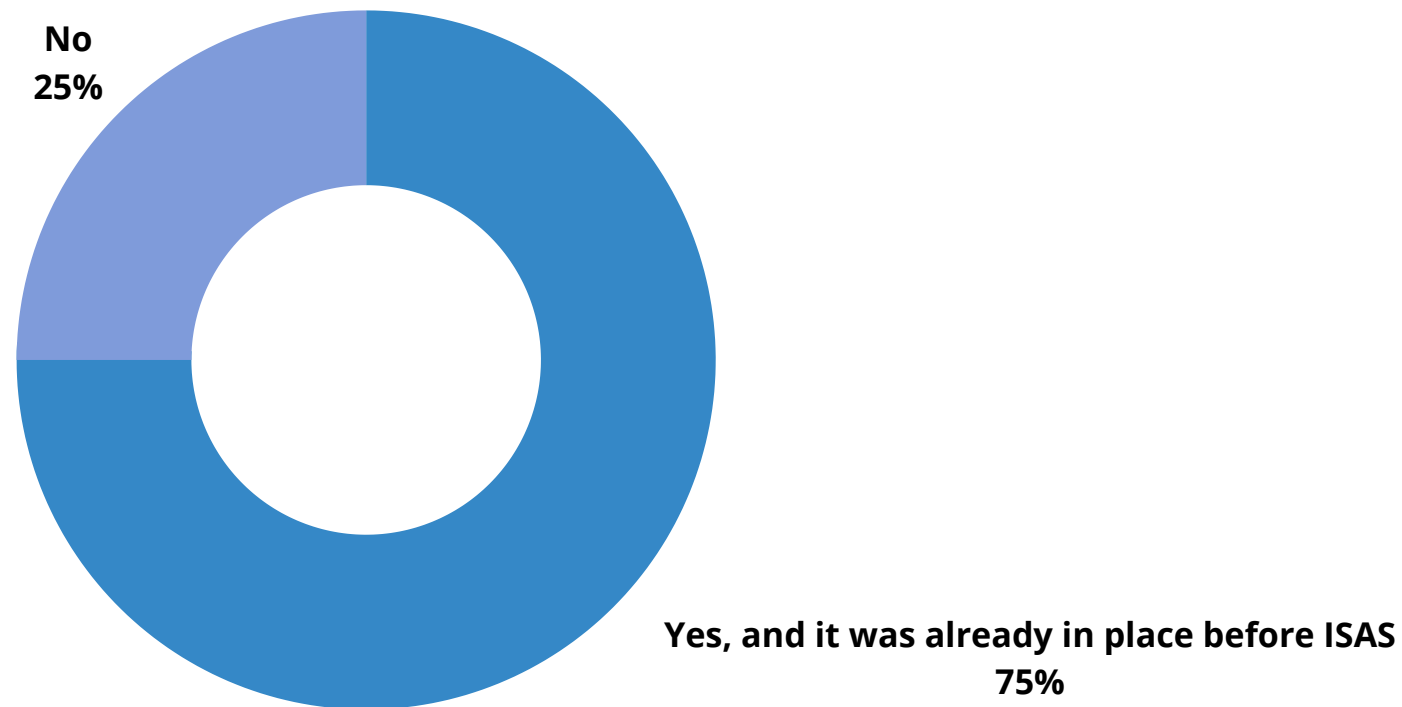**At what level are those efforts taking place?**

Fig. 19 Language policy

Is there a language policy in place at your institution?

No
25%

Yes, and it was already in place before ISAS
75%

Where applicable, international concentrations/minors/degree are offered mainly in business, social sciences, and engineering programs. Nearly all existed before ISAS. Similarly, of the eleven universities that offer local traditions as part of curriculum, one incorporated this due to recommendations from ISAS.

Fig. 20 International concentrations/minors/degree

In the following fields, are international or global concentrations/degrees/minors/certificates offered?
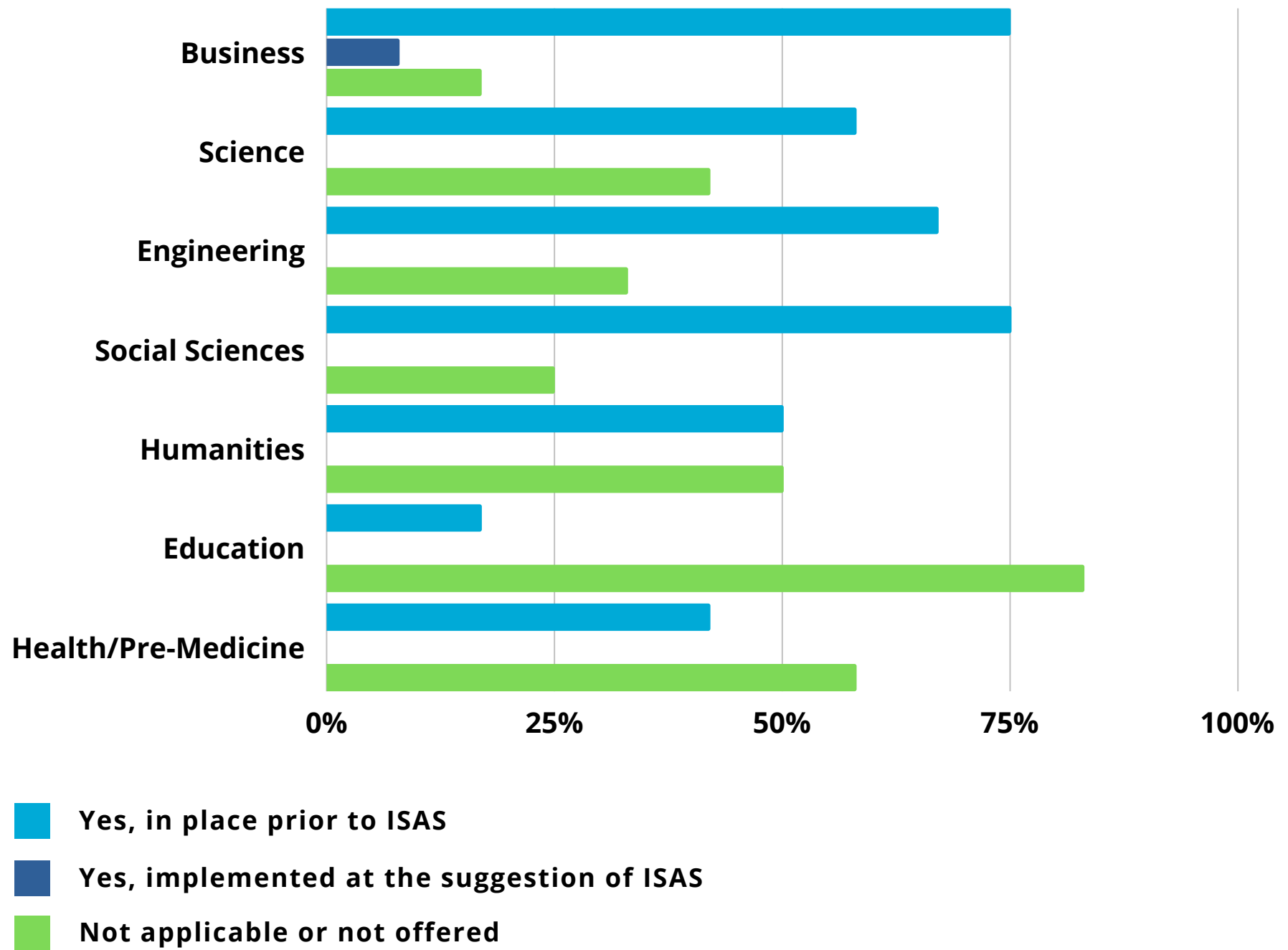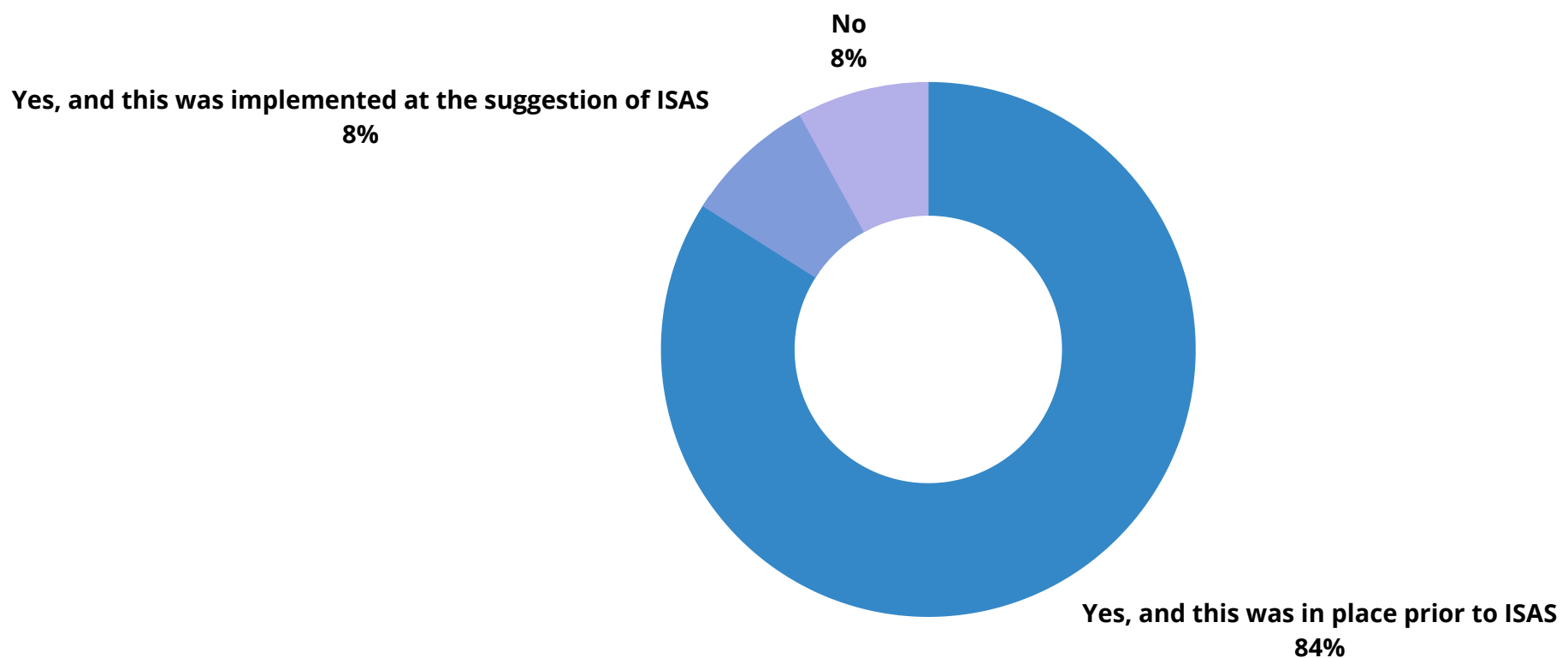

- Yes, in place prior to ISAS
- Yes, implemented at the suggestion of ISAS
- Not applicable or not offered

Fig. 21 Local traditions as part of curriculum

Are local traditions incorporated as a course or perspective in the curriculum?

No
8%

Yes, and this was implemented at the suggestion of ISAS
8%

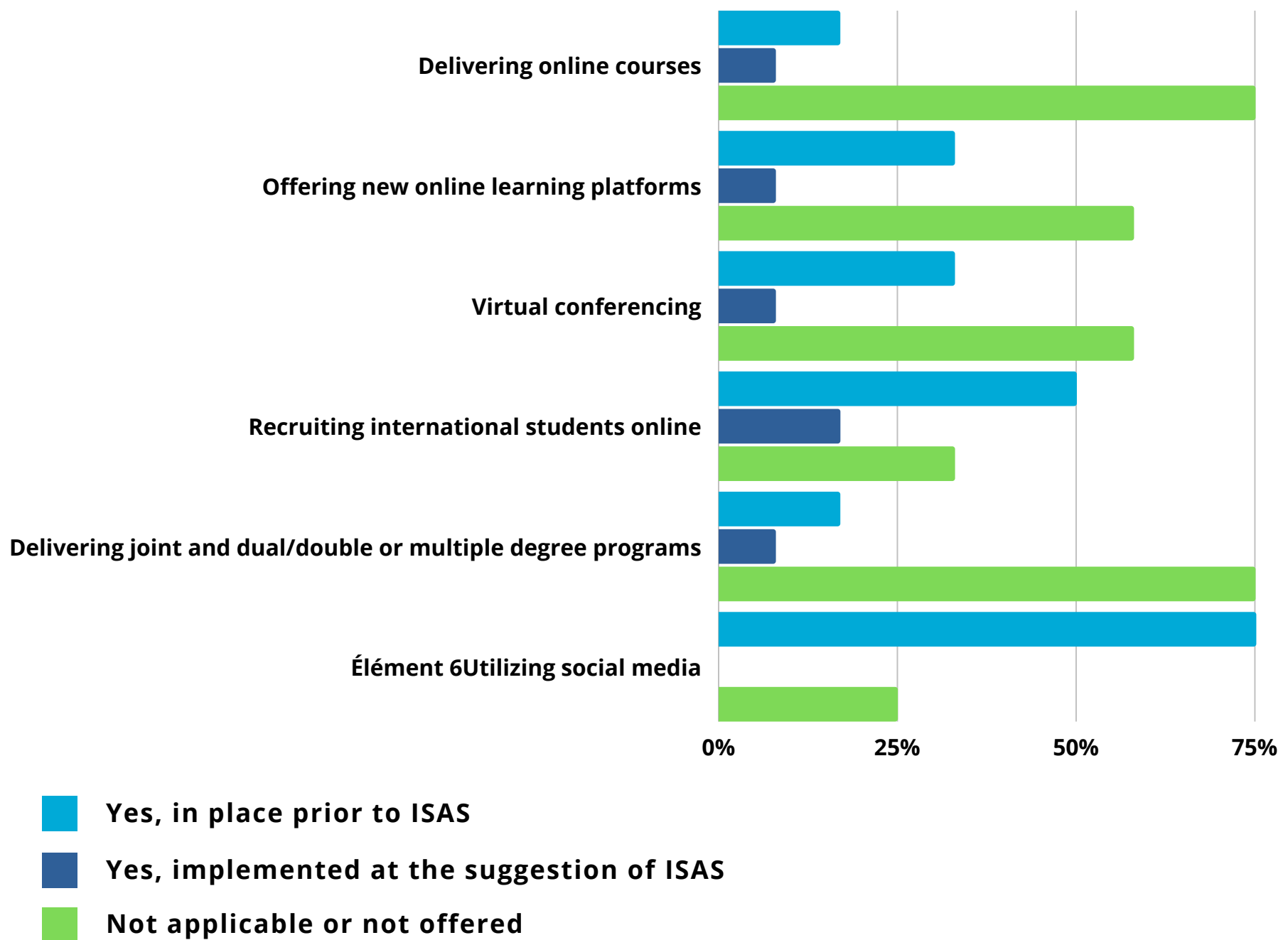**Yes, and this was in place prior to ISAS**
84%

Online & Distance Learning

Social media is the primary online modality to facilitate internationalization activities for nine respondents. Six institutions recruit international students online. After working together, ISAS drove two universities to launch this mode of recruitment.

Fig. 22 Modes of online and distance learning

Which of the following modes of online and distance learning does your institution currently use to facilitate internationalization activities?

- **Yes, in place prior to ISAS**
- **Yes, implemented at the suggestion of ISAS**
- **Not applicable or not offered**

Human Resources and Staff Development

The importance of international experience and research in hiring new faculty is apparent across nearly all universities. Eleven consider such experience 'always' or 'occasionally' during the hiring process. Six give consideration to international work or research experience in faculty tenure or promotion and six do not. One university implemented this guideline at ISAS' recommendation.

Fig. 23 International experience in faculty tenure or promotion

Are there articulated guidelines in place to consider international work or research experience in faculty tenure or promotion?
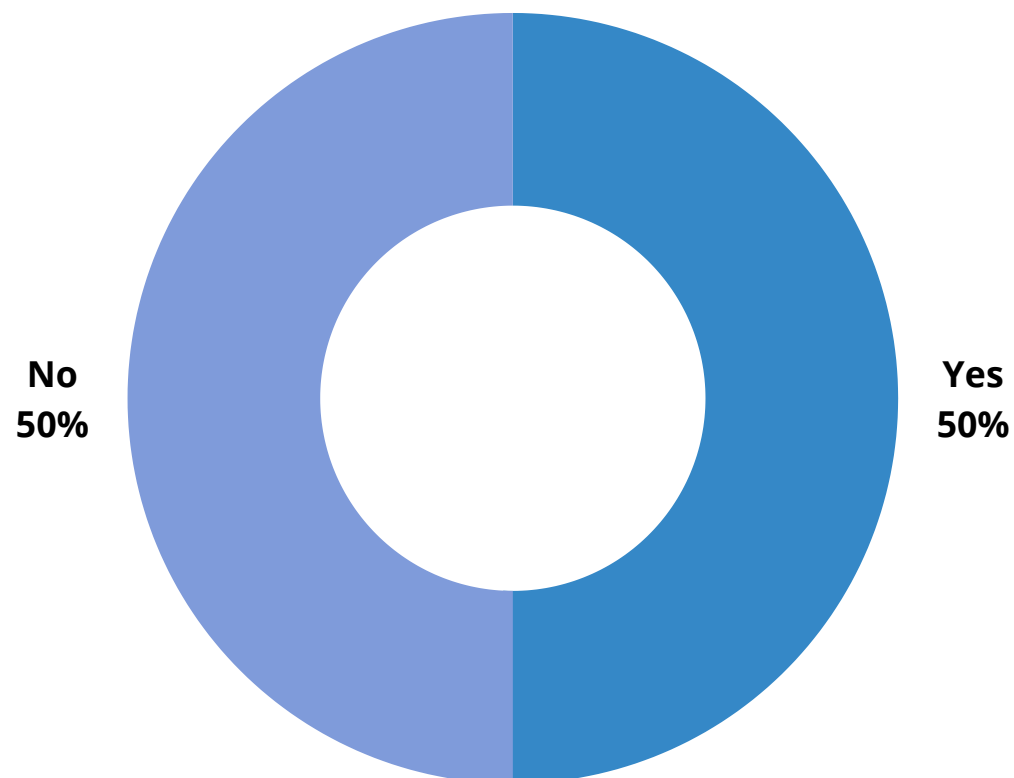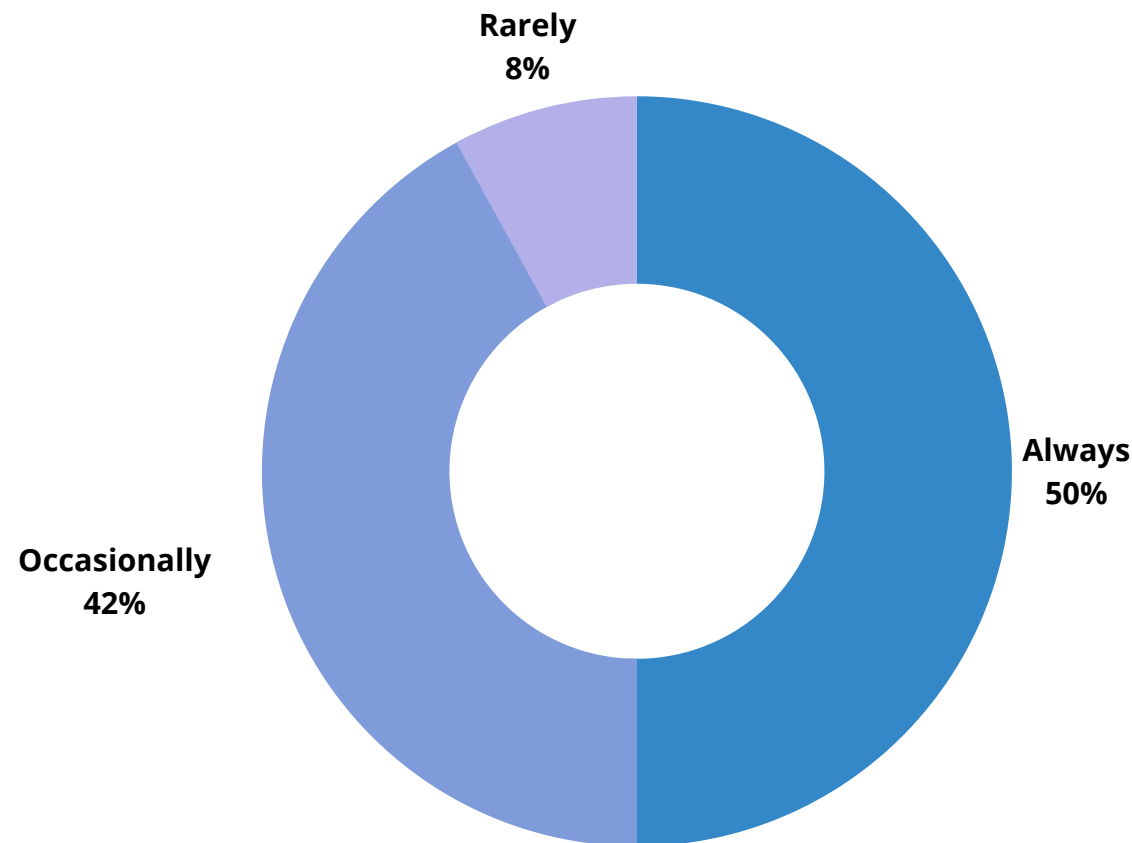
No
50%

Yes
50%

Fig. 24 International experience in hiring process

During the faculty hiring process does international experience or research bear on the institution's decision?


Opportunities for faculty professional development (PD) via foreign language courses are provided at eight institutions. Six universities also offer PD in 'Instruction and integration of international students,' and the 'Use of technology to incorporate international facets of coursework.'

Interestingly, the principal impact ISAS had was outside of these areas. At its' recommendation, three universities implemented PD on the topic of 'Internationalization of the curriculum,' two on 'Assessing global learning,' and one on the 'Instruction and integration of international students.

Fig. 25 Professional development opportunities

Which workshops/seminars/professional development opportunities have been offered to faculty in the last three years (pre-Covid)?

Yes, in place prior to ISAS

Yes, implemented at the suggestion of ISAS

Not applicable or not offered
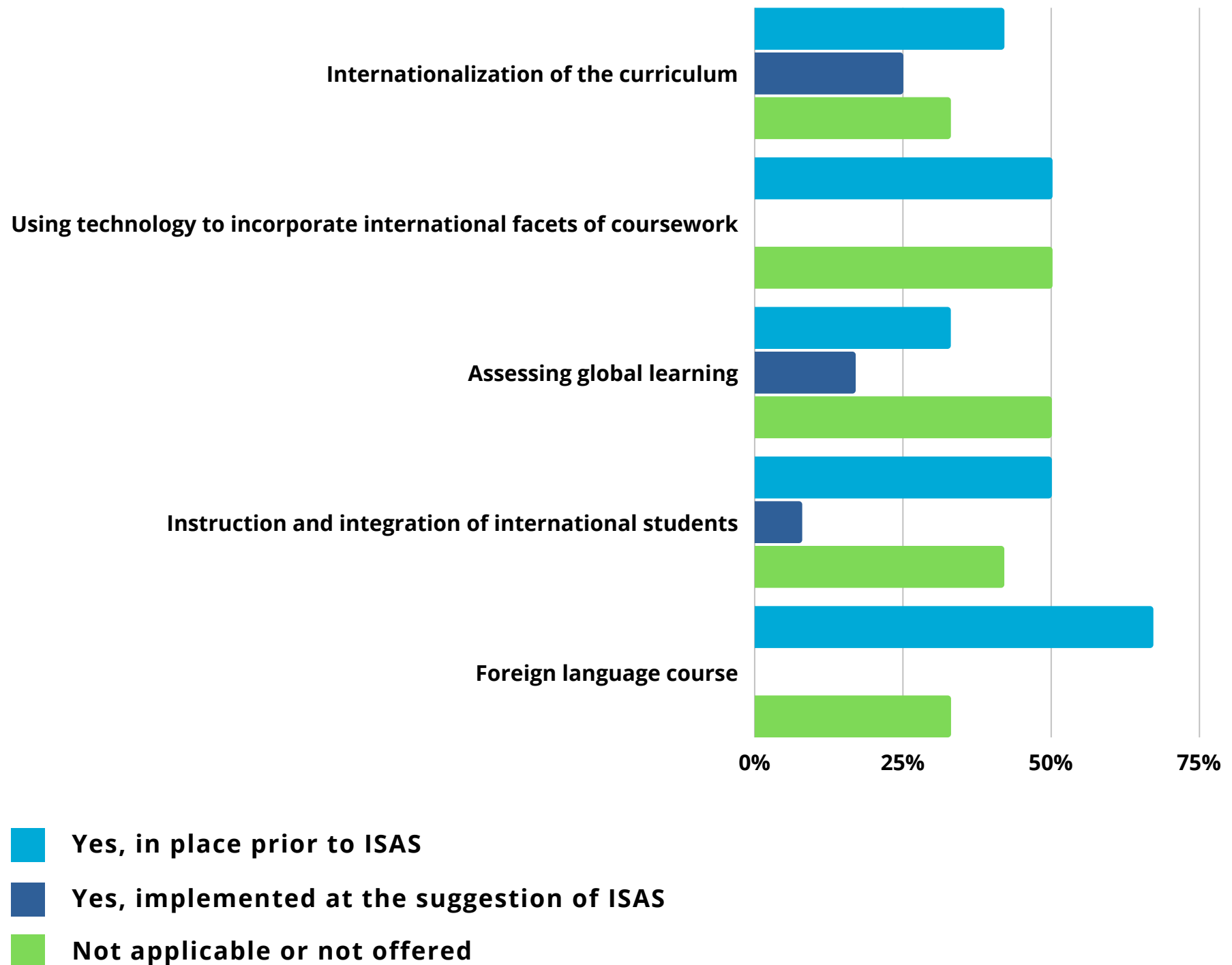
Student Mobility

Nearly all institutions, eleven, both actively recruit international students and have specific enrollment targets for undergraduates and graduate students. Working with ISAS compelled three of the universities with enrollment targets to increase their aim.

Fig. 26 Recruitment of international students

Does your institution actively recruit international students?
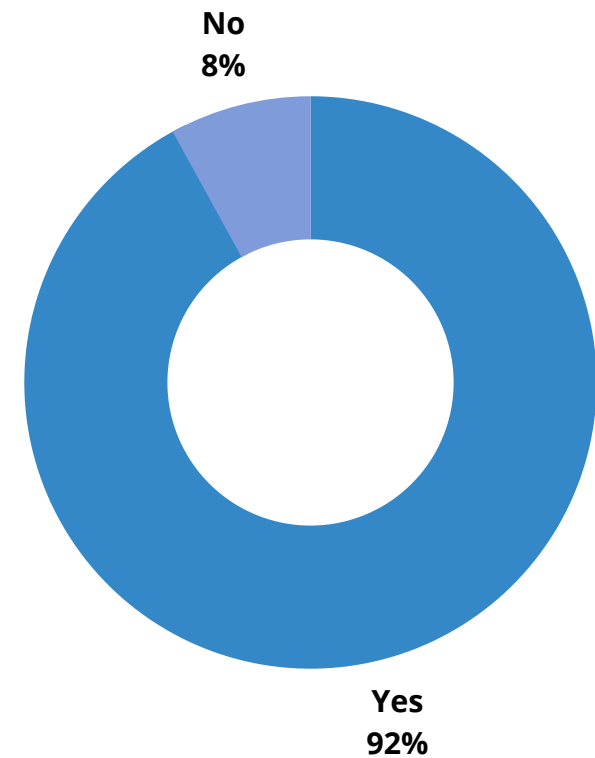
**No
8%**

**Yes
92%**

Fig. 27 Enrollment targets for international students

**No
9%**

Are there specific enrollment targets for international students?
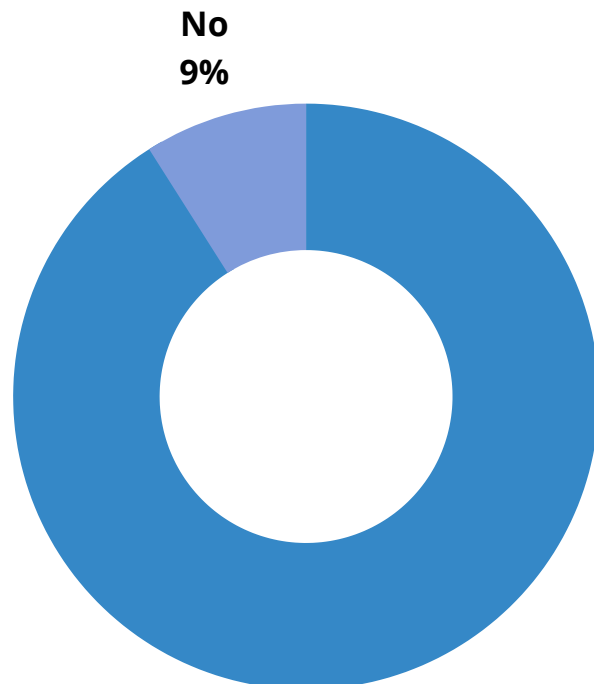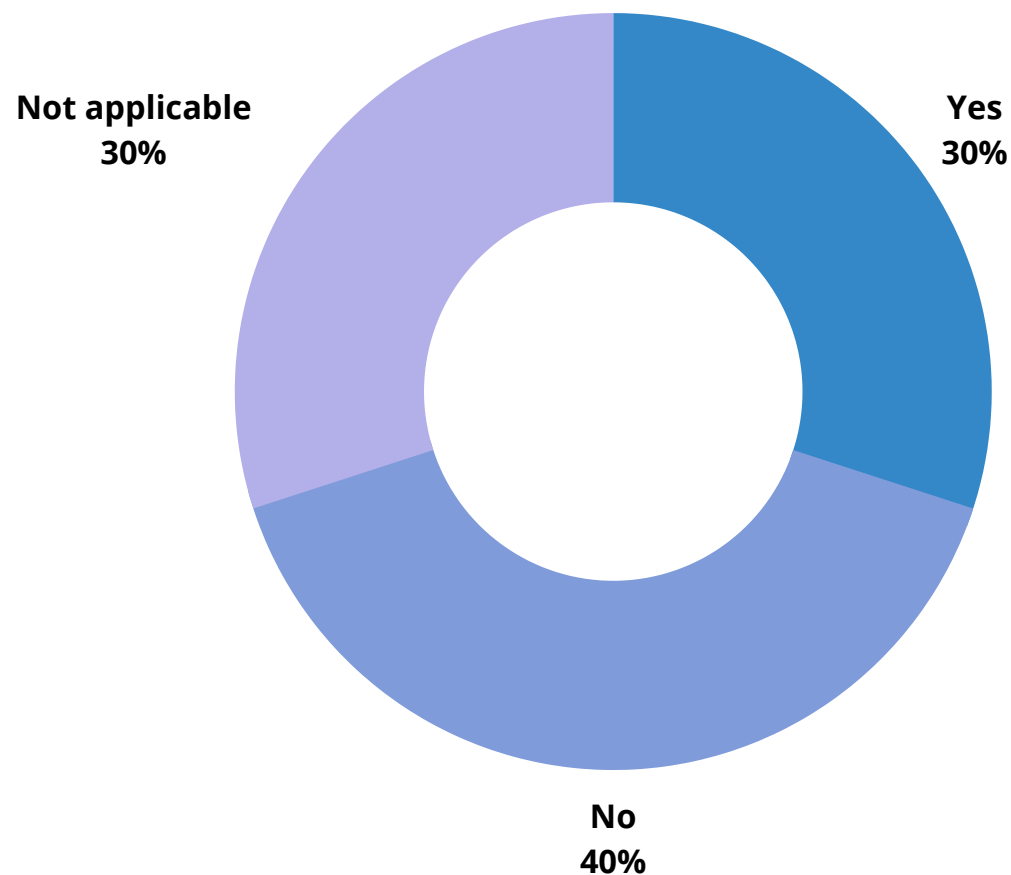
**Yes, for undergraduates and graduate students
91%**

Fig. 28 Increase of enrollment targets

Were enrollment targets (at any level) increased at the suggestion of ISAS?

Not applicable
30%

Yes
30%

No
40%

International students have many channels of support at their host university. All universities surveyed offer 'individual academic support,' while the majority also offer 'housing assistance', 'language support' and a 'separate orientation to the host institution.' One university implemented an alumni support chapter at ISAS's recommendation while another one began a separate orientation to host country and the regional community.

Fig. 29 Support to international students

Which of the following measures of support are offered to international students?

Legend:
- ■ Yes, offered prior to ISAS
- ■ Yes, implemented at the suggestion of ISAS
- ■ Not offered at this time
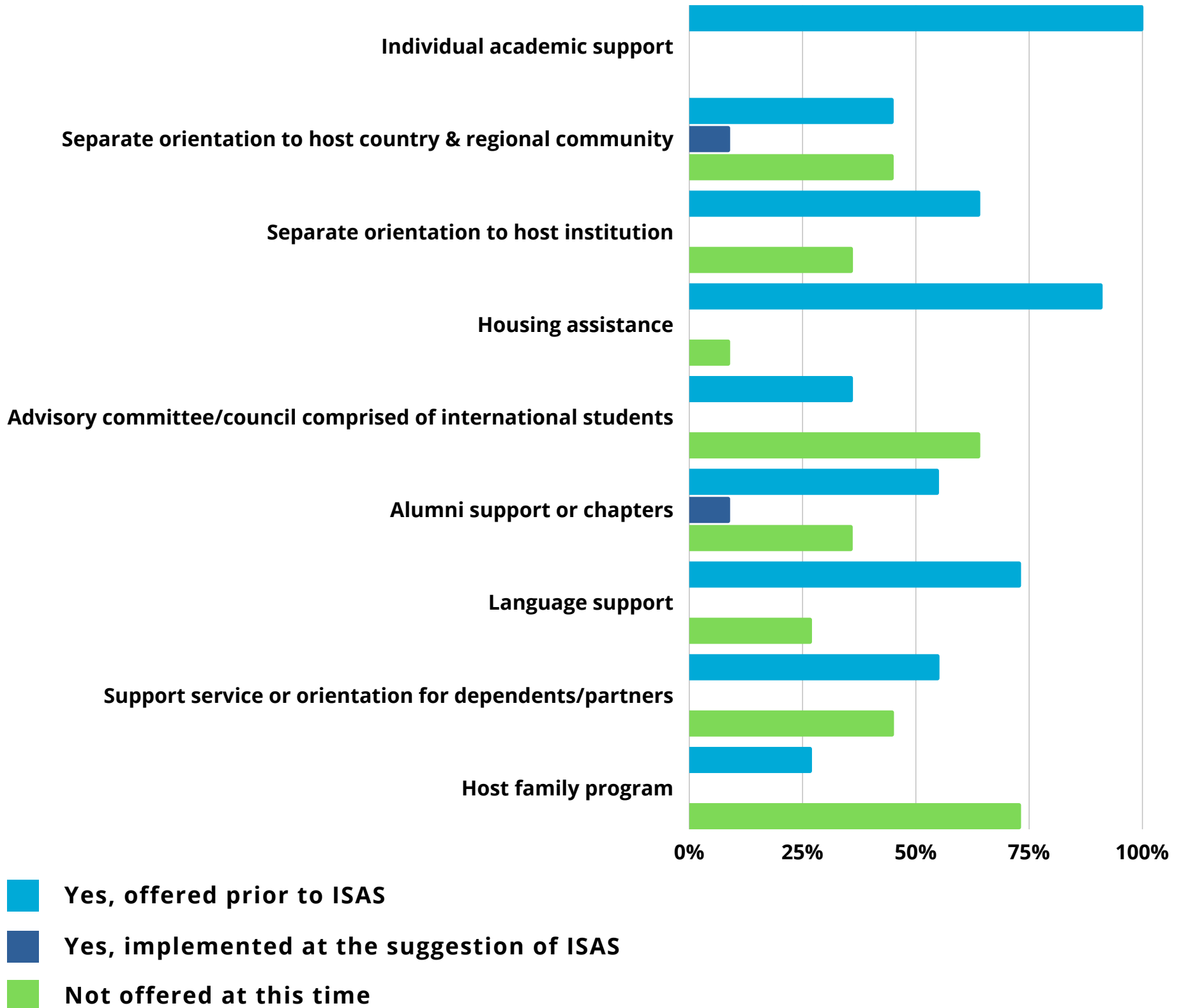
Funding for outgoing student mobility is offered at nine universities and all were implemented prior to ISAS. Nearly all institutions, ten, have participation targets for undergraduates while nine have targets for graduate students.

Fig. 30 Funds for outgoing student mobility

Does your institution provide funds for outgoing student mobility (pre-Covid)?

No
25%

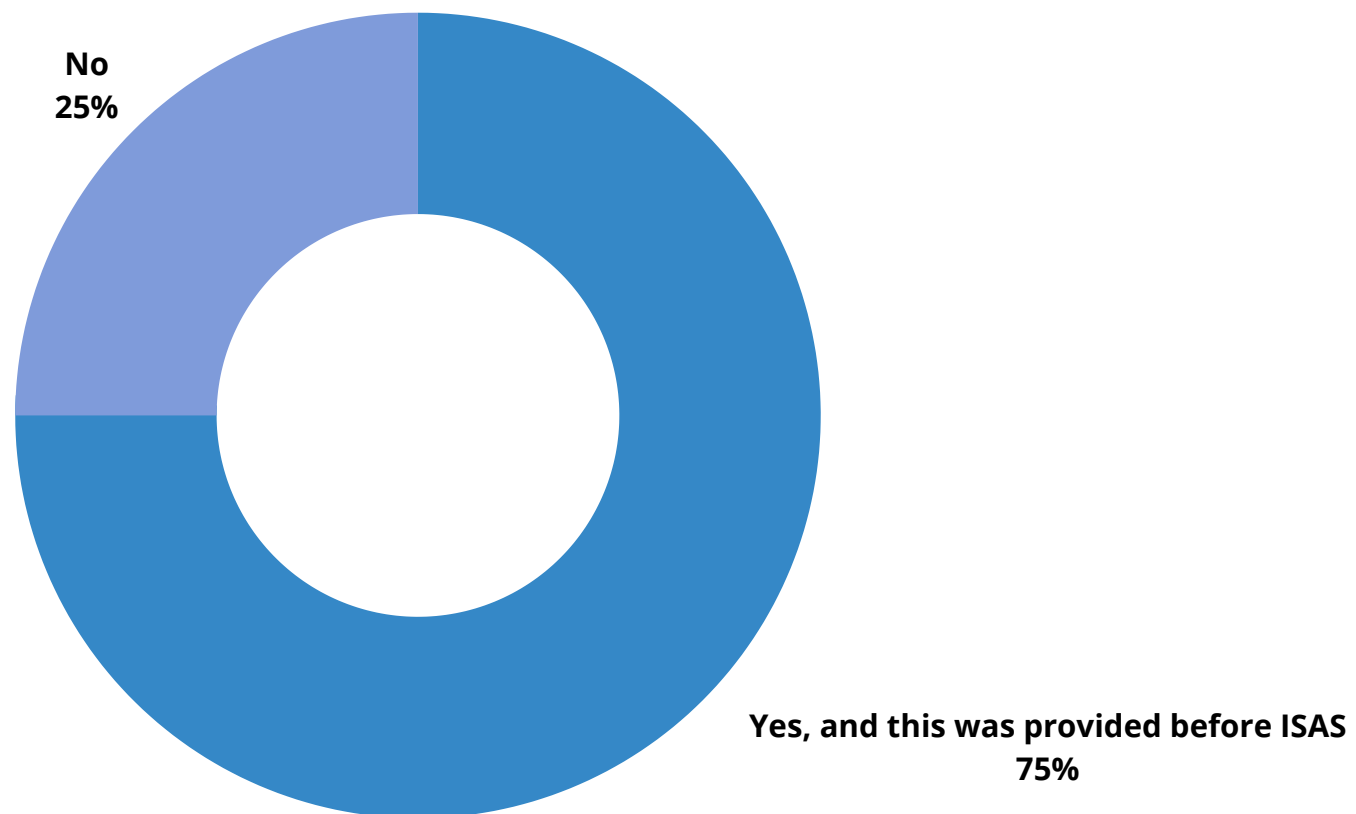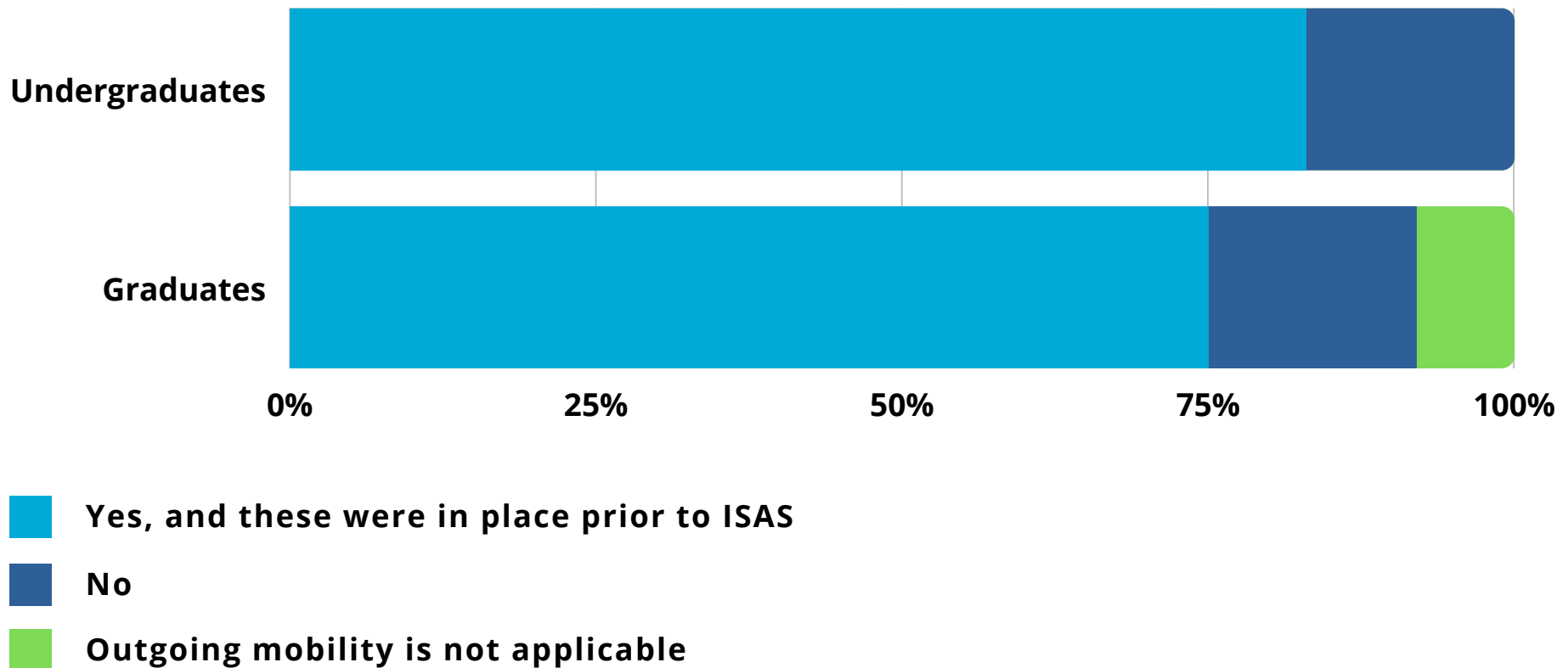Yes, and this was provided before ISAS
75%

Fig. 31 Targets for outgoing mobility

Does your institution have specific participation targets for outgoing mobility during a student's tenure (pre-Covid)?

Yes, and these were in place prior to ISAS

No

Outgoing mobility is not applicable

The pandemic has had substantial impact on student mobility across the globe. Survey findings reflect this reality. Decreases across the board were reported in: outgoing student mobility, international internships, and research aboard. A majority also saw decreases in 'international internships' and 'inbound international students.' 'International, collaborative partnerships' was the least affected area and remained constant for six universities, while three universities reported increases in this area. 'Inbound international students' numbers decreased for eight universities, but three noted this metric remained constant.

Fig. 32 Effect of Covid-19 on student mobility

To the best of your knowledge, how have the following changed due to Covid-19?

Increased

Decreased

No change

Not applicable
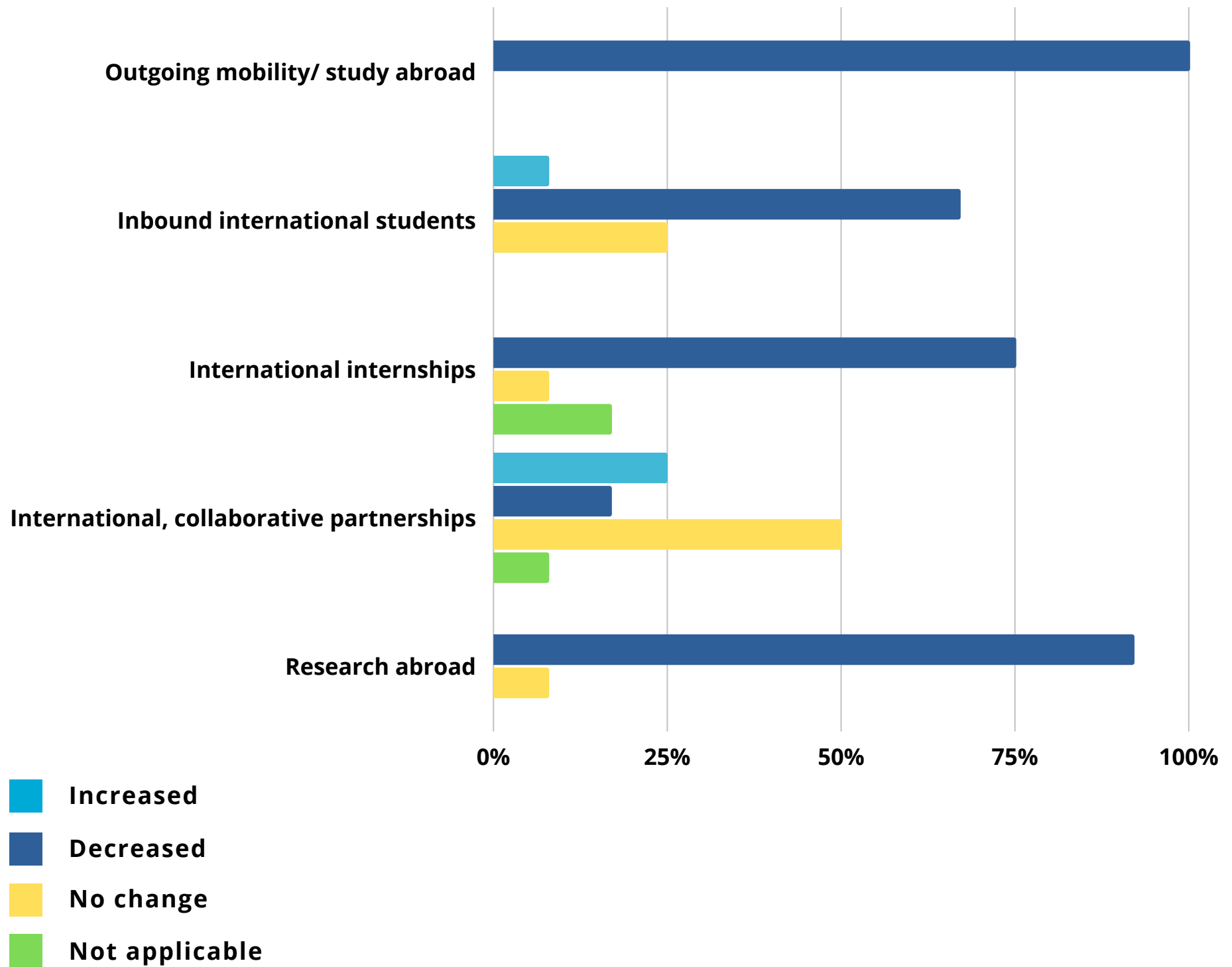
International Collaboration & Partnerships

All universities had current, international, collaborative partnerships arrangements before working with ISAS. Partnerships are diverse: all of them partner with other academic institutions, seven with NGOs, six with businesses and corporations, and three with foreign governments. One university reported partnering with international alumni associations as well.

Fig. 33 International partners

With whom does your institution currently partner abroad?
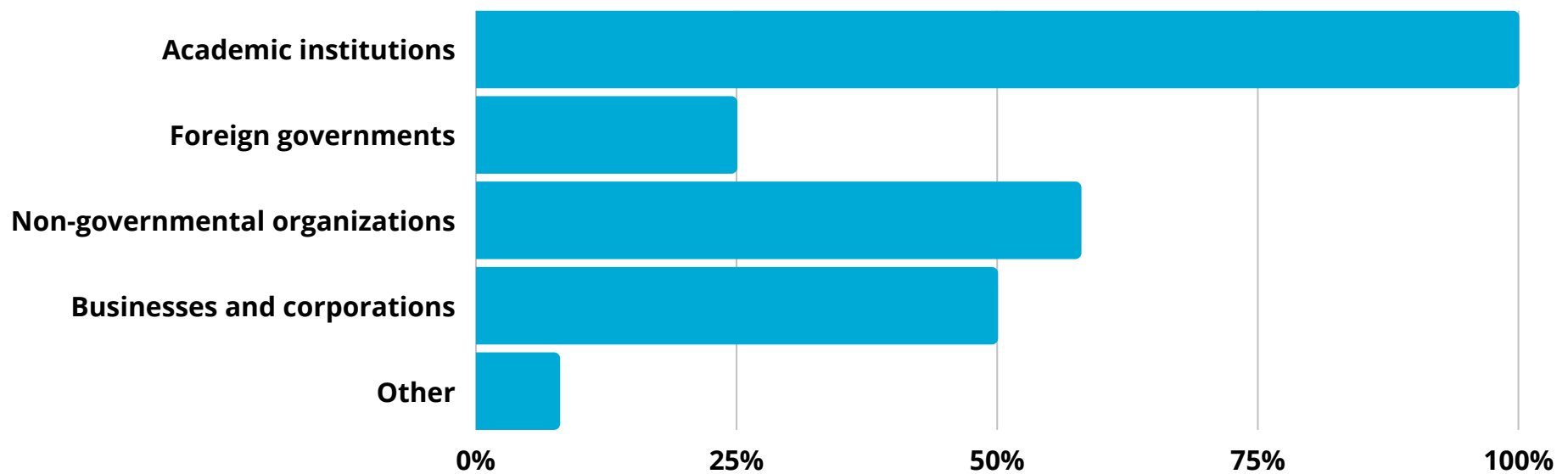
When asked to describe their institutions' approach to collaborative partnerships, all universities reported moving to fewer, more select international partnerships. ISAS had a clear impact here as six universities reported streamlining their partnerships at ISAS' suggestion.

Fig. 34 Institutional approach to international collaboration and partnership

What best describes your institution's approach to international collaboration and partnerships (pre-Covid)?

Yes, offered prior to ISAS

Yes, implemented at the suggestion of ISAS
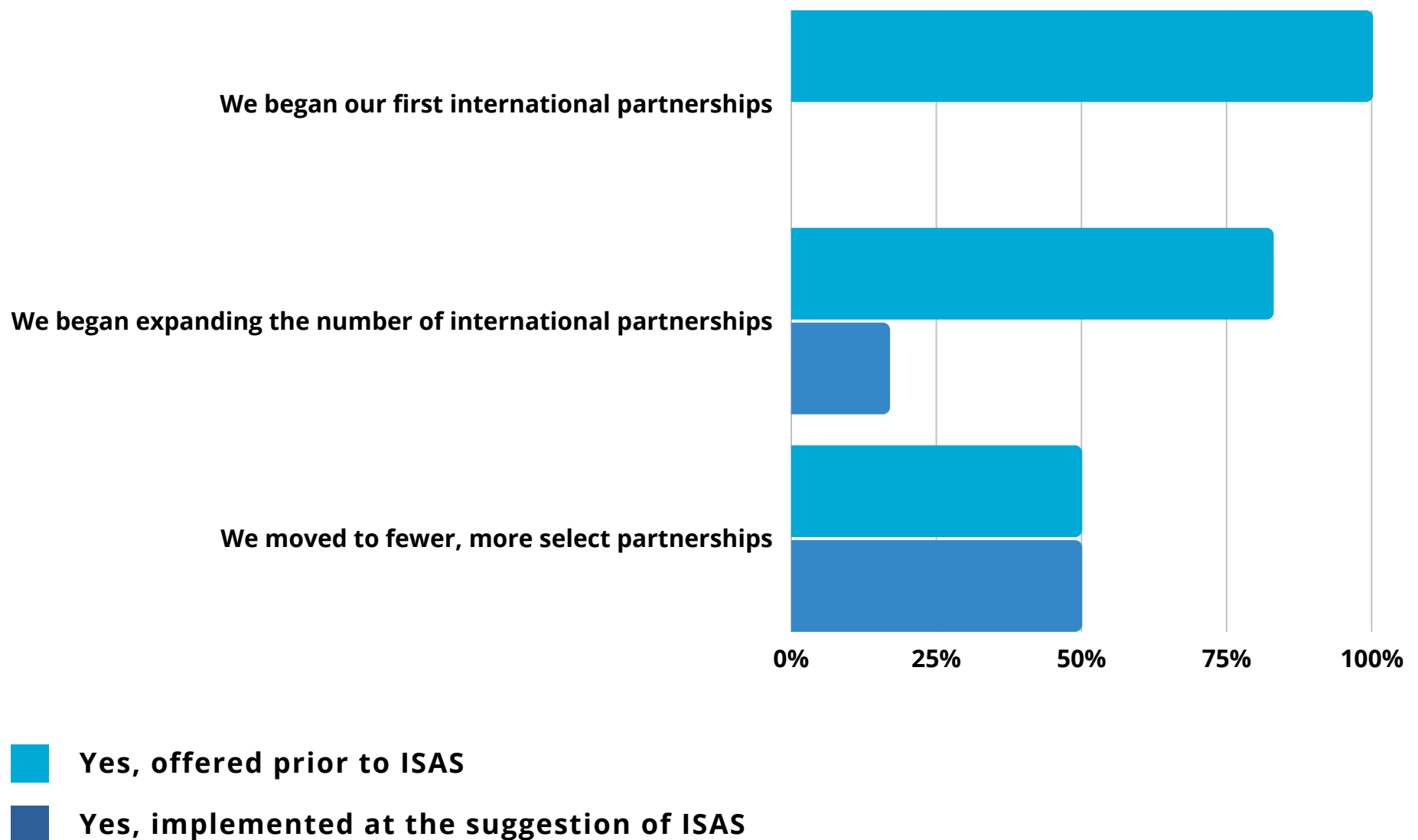
Nearly all universities report having a specific staff member appointed to developing international partnerships. None were implemented at the suggestion of ISAS.

Fig. 35 Specific staff member dedicated to international partnerships

Is there a specific staff member appointed to developing international partnerships?

No
8%

Yes, and the position was in place prior to ISAS
92%
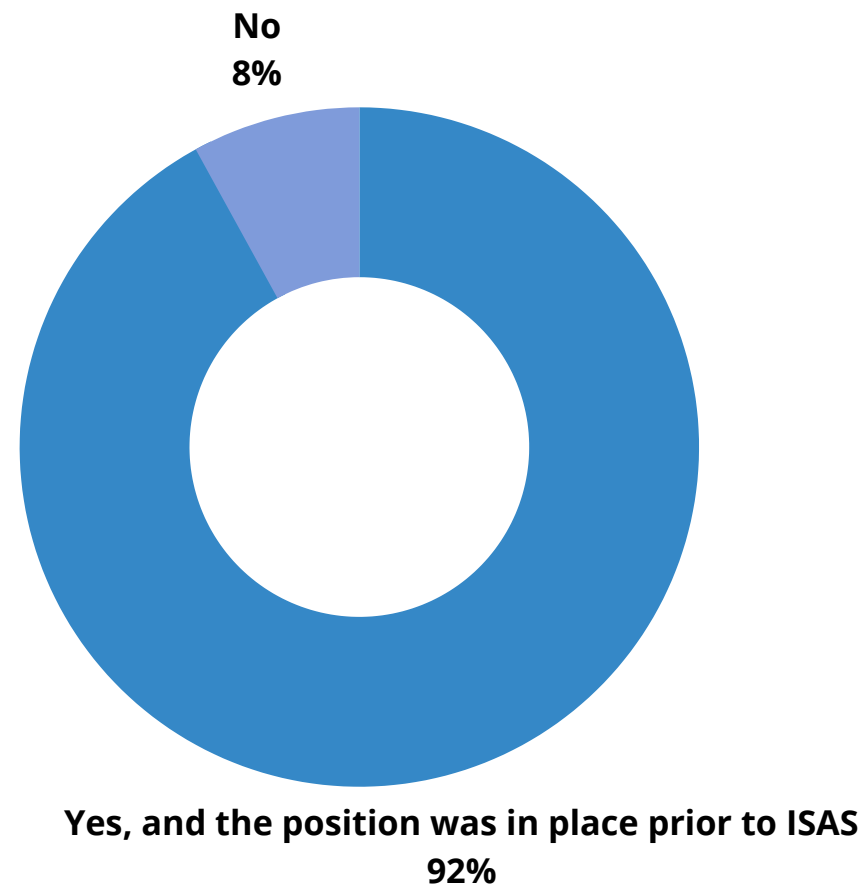
Of the seven universities that offer a dual/multiple degree program, one institution reported this implementation was due to an ISAS recommendation.

Fig. 36 Dual/multiple degree programs

Does your institution offer dual/multiple degree programs with (an) institution(s) abroad?

**No
42%**

**Yes, and the program(s) was/were in place prior to ISAS
50%**

**Yes, and the program(s) was/were implemented at the suggestion of ISAS
8%**

Fig. 37 Partners in dual/multiple degree programs

Does your institution currently partner in any joint-degree programs?

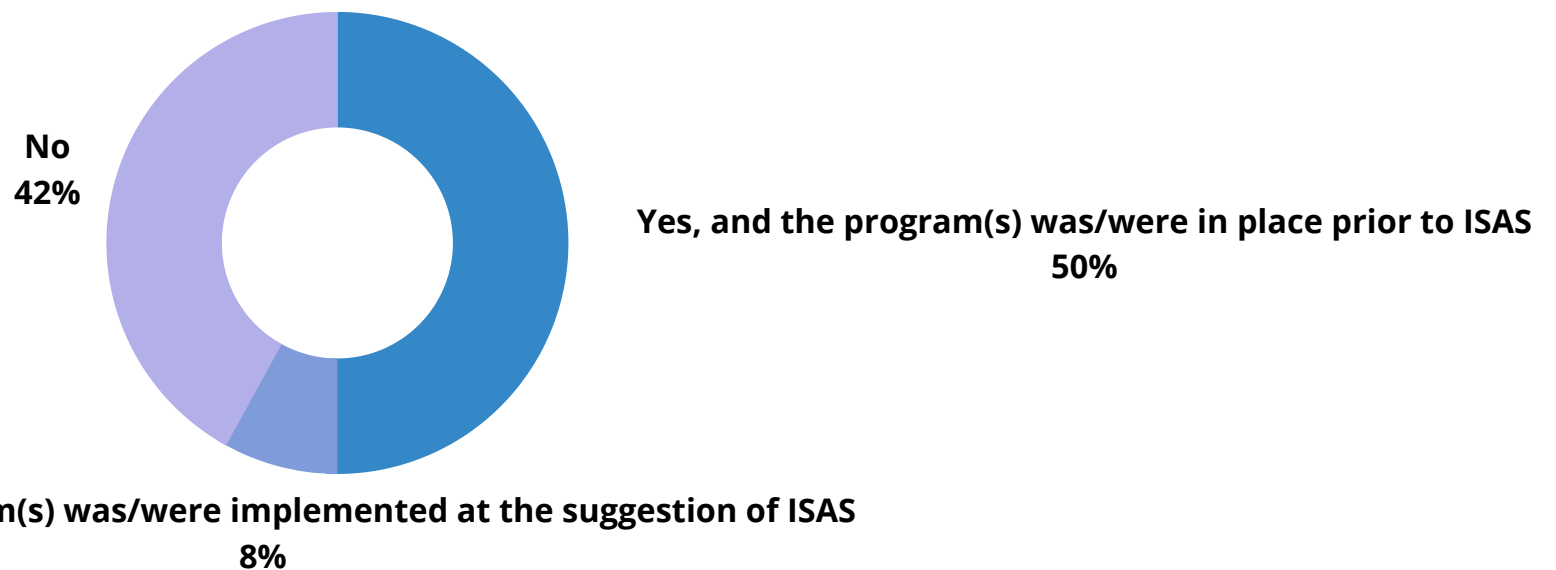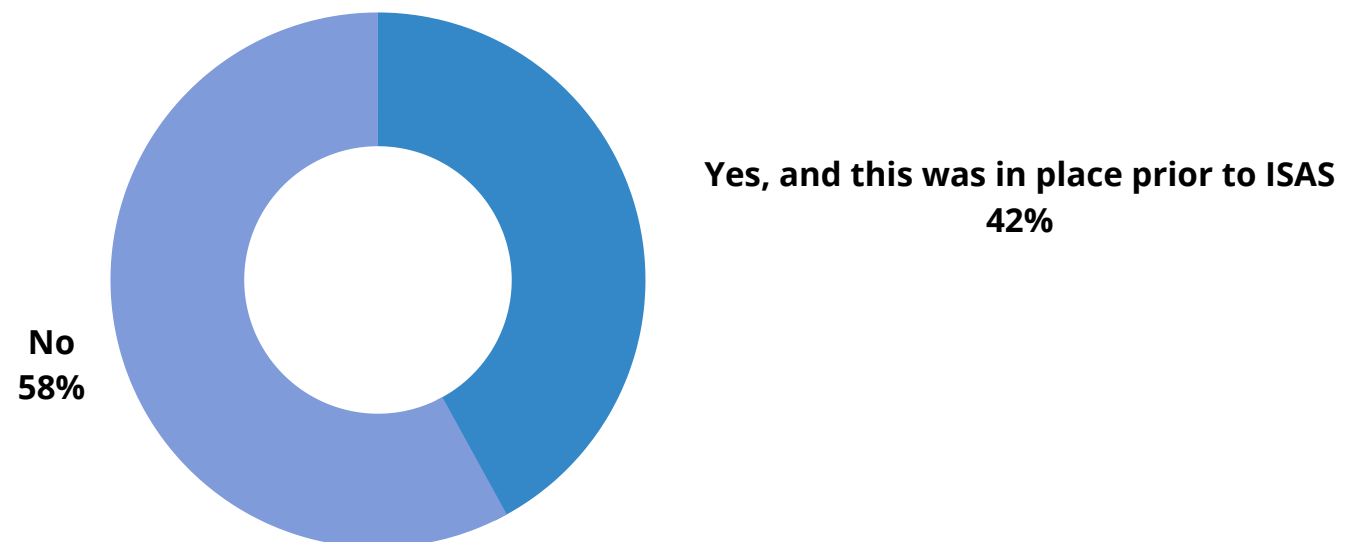**Yes, and this was in place prior to ISAS
42%**

**No
58%**

Of the twelve institutions that responded to the survey, nine agreed to follow-up, semi-structured interviews: AIUB, Daffodil International University, Hokkaido University, University of Cape Coast, University of Ghana, KIIT, Shigakkan University, Toyo University and the University of Bologna. Countries represented included: Bangladesh, India, Japan, Ghana and Italy. The interviews were done over Zoom and typically lasted 20 minutes. With the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Boston College, and participant permission, an audio recording via Otter.ai, was made for future reference. Questions were e-mailed in advance to give the interviewees time to reflect and compose their thoughts. The interview was brief and asked three open-ended questions:

1. *One of the first survey questions asked you to indicate whether working with ISAS was significantly impactful on your university, moderately impactful, or did not result in significant change. Can you please expand on this answer?*
2. *Can you say a few words on your experience working with ISAS? Would you recommend its advisory services to other institutions? Is there anything you believe it should be changed in the ISAS process or anything you would suggest IAU to add?*
3. *What opportunities are most vital to deepen internationalization at your institution? What are the most pressing barriers to future progress?*

To code the interviews, commonalities across responses, or answers that the interviewee stressed were important to their particular institution were looked for. At the conclusion of the interviews, responses were de-identified and audio recordings were deleted.

Overall Impact

Of utmost interest to IAU, at the heart of the entire study, was discovering where the ISAS process had an impact on the universities' internationalization efforts. As a whole, universities found the process impactful. From the survey, eight universities felt 'It was really helpful to advance internationalization,' while four thought it 'somewhat helpful.' A majority, eight, noted 'moderate progress' in internationalization efforts since ISAS, while three reported 'significant progress.' Here, the interviews offered nuanced context to the survey results.

Question 1 – Was ISAS impactful?

In response to Question 1, remarks were consistent with survey findings that ISAS was a beneficial process to the universities.One commented it was 'really effective and impactful for the internationalization, and it's really guided the international leaders.' Another remarked, "suggestions made by IAU was very valuable…we utilized the suggestion from ISAS very much." A third stated, "I'm definitely quite sure this is really helpful for any educational institutions in the globe."

One university noted the process made them "more conscious about our internationalization" and raised "awareness." Another felt having the "declaration of internationalization" in place allowed them to "pursue alternative ways to internationalize" and commented that in the face of Covid-19, without ISAS, they would have "given up entirely."

Several respondents remarked that working with ISAS moved them beyond primarily focusing on academic mobility. It allowed them to go "more in-depth in terms of curriculum, practices and policies." Another university that already had a robust international strategy felt working with the ISAS team allowed the university to identify "where [and how] to make changes," to "institutionalize internationalization." This was supported by other comments that the process aided in "developing a culture of internationalization on the campus itself," helped with "bringing international culture into the system" and that the process "very much helped us to understand the current status of our university's internationalization."

One university was transparent in that it had not yet formed an institutional internationalization plan, despite ISAS proposing it be given top priority. However, the same respondent felt that the process offered a "blueprint that guides our activities, our mode of engagement with collaborators, partners, economic mobility strategies and financing activities" and aided in institutional "buy-in."

Question 2 - Would you Recommend ISAS to other Institutions?

There was a clear consensus during the interviews, that working with ISAS was impactful on internationalization efforts and that participants would recommend the advisory service to other institutions. Interviewees confidently, and unanimously, would recommend the service to other universities.

Some key comments:

- ISAS will be very helpful to any institutions on this globe.
- Any institution associated with ISAS will benefit out of its broad perspective and the people connected to this – those having lots of experience in academics and internationalization.
- Do recommend other institutions get into the process, because it gave us new sight, new vision of looking at ourselves. [We] found what we are lacking in a global standard.
- ISAS has given us a different view of ourselves
- Yes, I would definitely recommend ISAS because of the recognition and awareness it brought to the institution.
- I recommend, of course, but I have to say that the institution, needs to have a clear objective in involving IAU and ISAS…. our internal aim was to make the academic community, the university community, more aware, and more linked when it deals with internationalization… if you have this goal. I would recommend.
- Their presence…created that awareness and institutional buy-in and often engender the necessary support for internationalization.
- Yes, I recommend, very much ISAS to other universities who are willing to internationalize their universities.

Question 3 - Suggestions for Change

During the interviews, respondents were also queried about recommendations for the process going forward. Interviewees were asked, "Given your experience, do you believe anything should be added or changed to the process?"

Suggestions included finding ways to "maintain or sustain our partnership," "sponsor research," and provide more collaboration between member institutions in developing and developed countries for "capacity building." Other suggestions included the formation of an "alumni organization" whereby institutions can "exchange our ideas and our experiences."

The common consensus was the need for active, follow-up support after the issuance of the final report. One university remarked they would like to strengthen the connection of the ISAS board to the institution and "if any institution need help from their experiences, it [ISAS board] will facilitate that." Some felt that regularly employing "tracking and box-checking" to see if institutions are implementing recommendations and felt that an "offer support to the institution" would be helpful as institutions have their "own pressing needs and agendas."

Desire for scaffolded support during the self-assessment stage was another key theme that surfaced during interviews. One respondent noted that while the "two visits were absolutely perfect. Well done, very well organized and very fruitful for our community" they would have liked more help during the self-evaluation process. "I would say we have been a little bit lost, because we expected more support in defining the self-evaluation process from the experts."

A separate institution concurred, and recommended "Implementation, a kind of roadmap of sort...something more like a peer-review structure system so that the individual universities on their own would feel the need to implement things to fit into a broader scheme and not find excuses not to do so."

A third spoke highly of the self-evaluation process as helpful but alluded to it being onerous. While the respondent noted that the university learned quite a bit from the self-evaluation process "there might be some possibility to reduce the burden of the universities," noting other institutions would need to have "energy or willingness, a strong will to internationalize themselves."

Question 4 - Barriers to Internationalization

According to January 2021 UNESCO figures, the global pandemic is still affecting some 312m learners from pre-primary to tertiary education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data). Its ramifications were discussed in nearly every interview and noted as one of the greatest barriers to making progress toward internationalization objectives.

Several institutions have halted outbound exchange and language programs. Others noted disruptions to the academic calendar and that "virtual classes have not been that effective." However, one remarked it also served as an opportunity as it "enabled us to emphasize our remote study network" and "experimenting with online internationalization" and also allowed us to "cultivate news ways of communications, new ways of exchanges and international cooperation because of Covid-19."

Offering foresight into the landscape of higher education post-pandemic, one respondent reflected, "After the pandemic we are thinking maybe there will be a little bit of cultural barriers" and spoke to the importance of resiliency. "Sometimes we are talking about the resilience in the intellectual level, resilience in the society, resilience in thought, resilience in behavior, but some behavioral and cultural barriers may come in the process of internationalization. There will be a need to 'build up the confidence' for international students to travel to study again."

Barriers to internationalization, outside of the pandemic, were also discussed. One institution noted the "biggest challenge is academic mobility both inbound and outbound" as "competition is high" for international students across the globe. Even with partner institutions with MOUs in place there is "not much educational aid" so the "relationship, thus far, has been skewed." Thus a key issue is the need to develop relationships within the region, particularly with "African south region and East Asia Pacific" areas since current MOUs are largely with Western (US and European) institutions.

ISAS projects span a decade and include universities across four continents. Regardless of timing and geographic location, nearly all universities in this study reported advancements in internationalization efforts since working with ISAS.

Eleven institutions entered the process with an articulated commitment to internationalization in their mission statement. All of them indicated it was amongst the top five priorities in institutional strategic plans or, while not a standalone priority, was an important dimension amongst them. These results show that at almost all institutions internationalization was somewhat already established and a priority. This result is visible in almost all responses, as many of the internationalization policies and activities were already in place before ISAS.As the Key Findings demonstrate, a primary benefit in working with ISAS is the advancement of specific, strategic internationalization efforts and institutional buy-in.

Endorsement

Eight universities surveyed reported the impact from ISAS was 'really helpful to advance internationalization' and the other four indicated "It was somewhat helpful to advance internationalization." Interviewees confidently, and unanimously, recommended the service to other universities. This is clearly an endorsement of ISAS by the institutions.

Institutional Strategy

ISAS aided in developing or revising internationalization strategies at seven universities surveyed, six underwent revision and one was newly formulated. Have a clearly defined institutional strategy, in concert with the institution's mission and priorities, can determine if goals are strategically relevant and enhance organizational direction. A strategy with current, realistic, and quantifiable benchmarks can help position the university for sustainable success in internationalization. Results show that ISAS is instrumental to universities in this endeavor.

Institutional Awareness

Interviewees felt the ISAS process engendered institutional buy-in and raised awareness and consciousness about internationalization efforts throughout the university community. Buy-in is critical for large-scale implementation and change. Results convey that working with ISAS is a useful way to ensure faculty and staff have a vested interest in internationalization efforts.

Funding

Five universities noted institutional budgeting for internationalization initiatives increased after working with ISAS. Five reported increases in external private funding while four saw increases in external public funding. These numbers are higher than those who reported a decrease of funding. However, it is difficult to prove a correlation between ISAS and the change in the level of funding, as this might be due to many other external factors.

Global Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Three universities surveyed implemented Global Learning Outcomes for students due to ISAS; six had pre-existing GLOs and three did not. With today's demand for globally-prepared graduates, it is crucial for administrators to address the efficacy of programs in achieving student learning outcomes. As 'developing globally competent graduates' was scored as the first priority for institutions,' this area of implementation, due to ISAS, is important.

Enrollment Targets

Ten universities report specific enrollment targets for inbound international students; three of them increased their aims due to ISAS recommendations. Working with ISAS can help clarify appropriate enrollment targets for today's hyper-competitive arena for international students, keeping unique regional considerations and university goals in mind.

Professional Development

There is a growing consideration in higher education for Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC)/Internationalization at Home (IaH). This is reflected in our study as eleven institutions report engaging in this practice. Three universities implemented Professional Development opportunities on the topic at ISAS's advice. ISAS clearly recognizes the importance of training higher education professionals on Ioc/IaH and drives institutions to prioritize this area.

Partnerships

When queried, all universities reported streamlining their collaborative partnerships. Six reported narrowing the scope to fewer, more select relationships due ISAS' counsel. Efficacious partnerships have profound implications for university research, knowledge generation and dissemination. Concentrating on mutually advantageous partnerships allows for more precise alignment with institutional goals, and crafts working relationships that are positioned for long-term success. Thus, this area of strength for universities who have worked with ISAS is particularly noteworthy.

Follow-Up Support

The interviews brought to light that while all the institutions endorse undergoing ISAS, many would also like follow-up support from IAU and its experts.Financial implications for such support must be addressed in future conversations to properly evaluate this possibility.

Internationalization of higher education is a complex, non-linear process that must be contextualized. Funding, unique regional and national considerations, a supportive framework to aid implementation, and institutional prioritization, are a few of the key variables that can either inhibit or catalyze internationalization for universities.

As the Key Findings show, even in cases where internationalization efforts are well-established, working with ISAS gives universities leverage in strategically advancing those efforts. Internationalization for higher education institutions is a unique process and ISAS is sensitive to the fact that "there is no 'one size fits all' model or approach." This is why every report and action plan is completely bespoke to individual universities. The International Strategies Advisory Service process is a valuable instrument for universities wishing to develop, advance, or review their internationalization policies. Its process and recommendations have the potential to influence future institutional policy decisions. This study highlights the significant impact that ISAS has had on member institutions and portends its significance to the future internationalization efforts of higher education institutions around the world.

DEFINITION OF TERMS FOR ISAS IMPACT EVALUATION SURVEY 2020

Term	Definition
Articulation program	A collaborative agreement between two HEIs in which students take the first part of their program at home and the second part abroad (3+1, 2+2, etc.).
Dual / double or multiple degree program	A dual/double or multiple degree program is developed collaboratively by two or more partner HEIs; graduates are awarded qualifications at equivalent level by all HEIs involved.
International academic staff members	Individuals who were not born in and/or do not have their first degree from a postsecondary institution in the country where they have their primary academic appointment - and the appointment must be regular, full-time status. (M. Yudkevich, P. G. Altbach, and L. E. Rumbley, International Faculty in Higher Education, Routledge, 2017)

Term	Definition
Internationalization at home	Internationalization at home is a term referring to "the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments" (Beelen and Jones 2015)
Internationalization of the curriculum	"the incorporation of international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study" (Leask, 2015).
International students	International students are those who are not residents of their country of study or those who received their prior education in another country. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, OECD and Eurostat, 2006) They can be degree seeking international students – who are studying for a degree at a degree granting institution in or from another country (including cross-border education).

APPENDICES

Term	Definition
International students	They also can be credit-seeking international students – who are studying for credits in a program in another country (including both cross-border delivery from the own institution, as well as study abroad programs of the own institution, as well as exchanges and service learning at partner institutions).
Joint Degree Program	A joint degree program is developed collaboratively by two or more partner HEIs; graduates are awarded one joint qualification.
Joint University	A HEI co-founded and established in host country involving both local and foreign sending HEI/providers collaborating on academic programs. Qualifications can be awarded by either or both host and sending country HEIs.
Language Policy	"Language practices, language beliefs, and languagemanagement." Primary tenets for HEIs include: institutional language for administration and communication, language of instruction and support, language degree programmes, language support for researchers and administration, language repertoire students are expected to have upon enrolment (Spolsky, 2004; Lauridsen, 2013).

APPENDICES

Term	Definition
Learning outcomes	Learning outcomes are the knowledge, skills and abilities that a student is expected to obtain as a result of a particular educational experience.
Strategic partnership	A strategic partnership is a formal alliance between two or more higher education institutions developed through an intentional process whereby the partners share resources and leverage complementary strengths to achieve defined common objectives. Strategic cooperation is tied to the strategic goals and objectives of an academic unit, college, or university as a whole. It indicates a multi-dimensional engagement between the involved institutions and implies the joint undertaking of a diverse range of activities. (Institute of International Education /Free University of Berlin, 2015)
Transnational education (TNE)	The mobility of education programs and institutions/providers across international borders. (Knight 2017).

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