

Examination Timetabling User Group (ETUG)

3rd Feb 2021

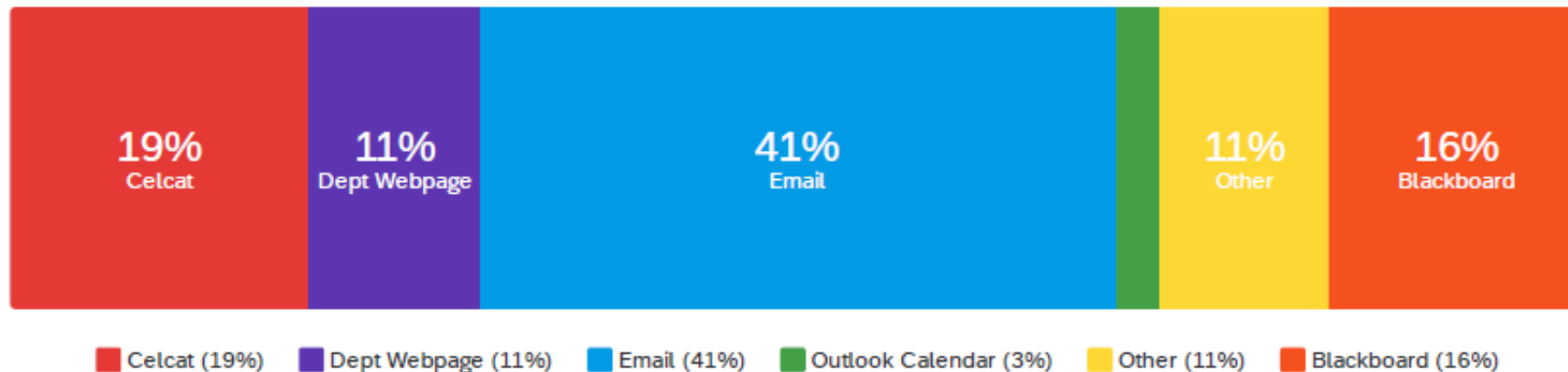
Welcome

- Minutes from the last meeting
 - Action Tracker
 - Matters Arising
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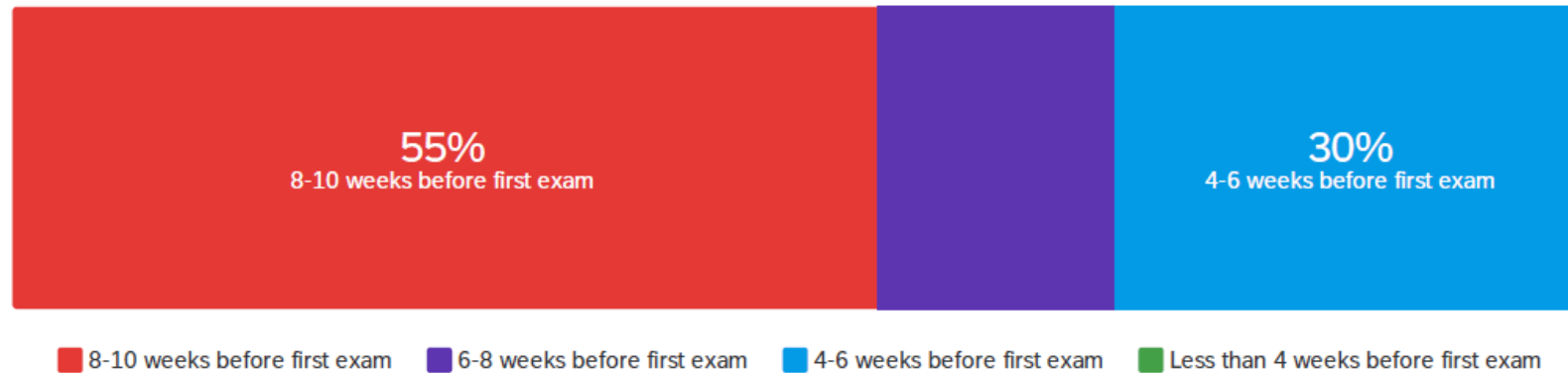
Dec/Jan 2021 TRAs – Staff Survey (Summary)

Peter Laskey (Head of Exam Timetabling)
Feb 2021

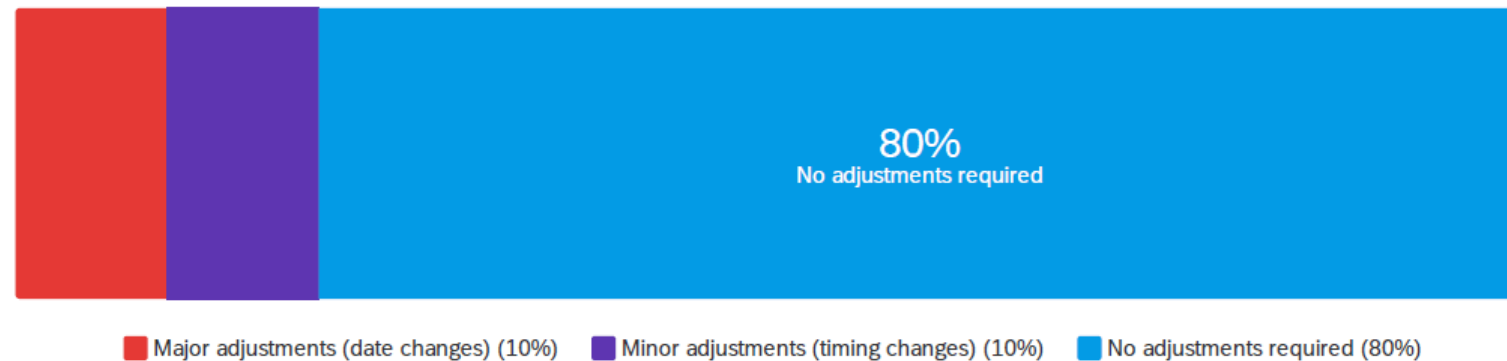
Q2 - Exam Timetabling What method(s) were used to publish Dec/Jan exam timetables to students?



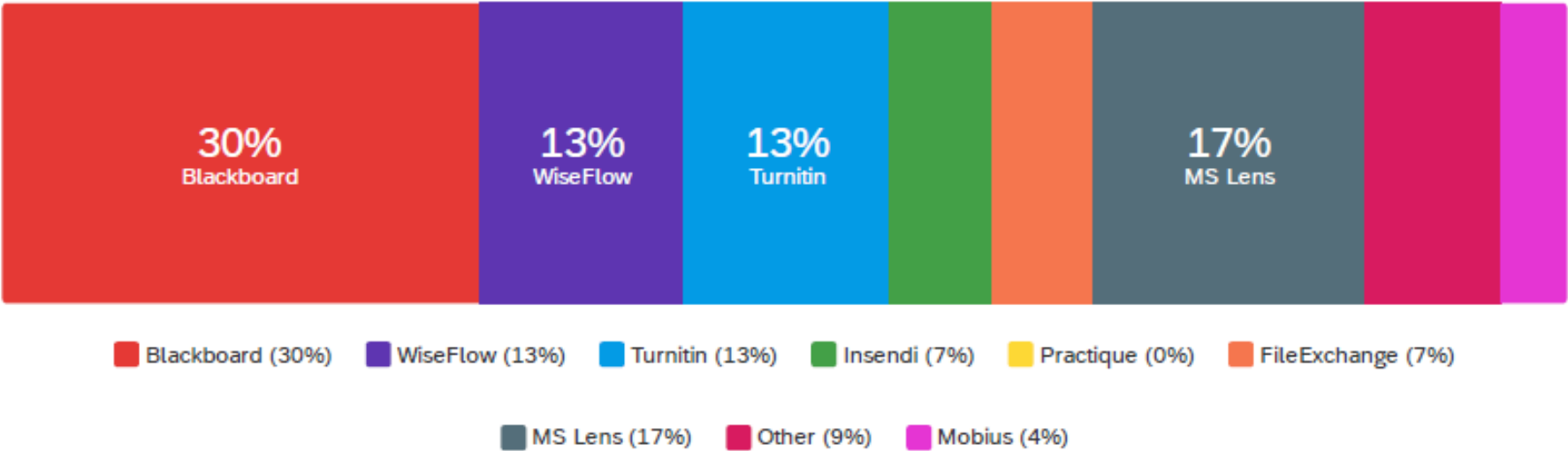
Q3 - When was the Dec/Jan exam timetable published to students?



Q4 - Once published, were any changes made following student feedback?



Q7 - Which online platform(s) were used to conduct Dec/Jan TRAs? (select as many as required)



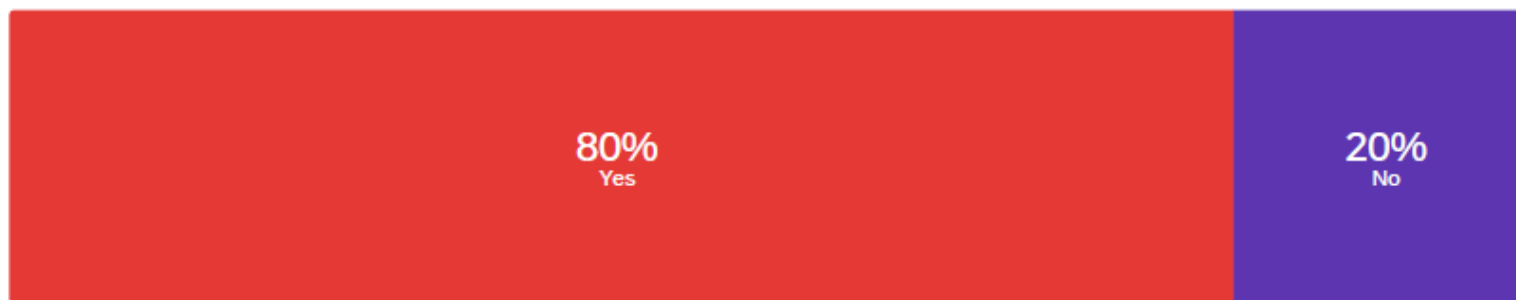
Q9 - Was there a local deadline for exam papers to be provided for preparations? e.g.

converting to the online platform



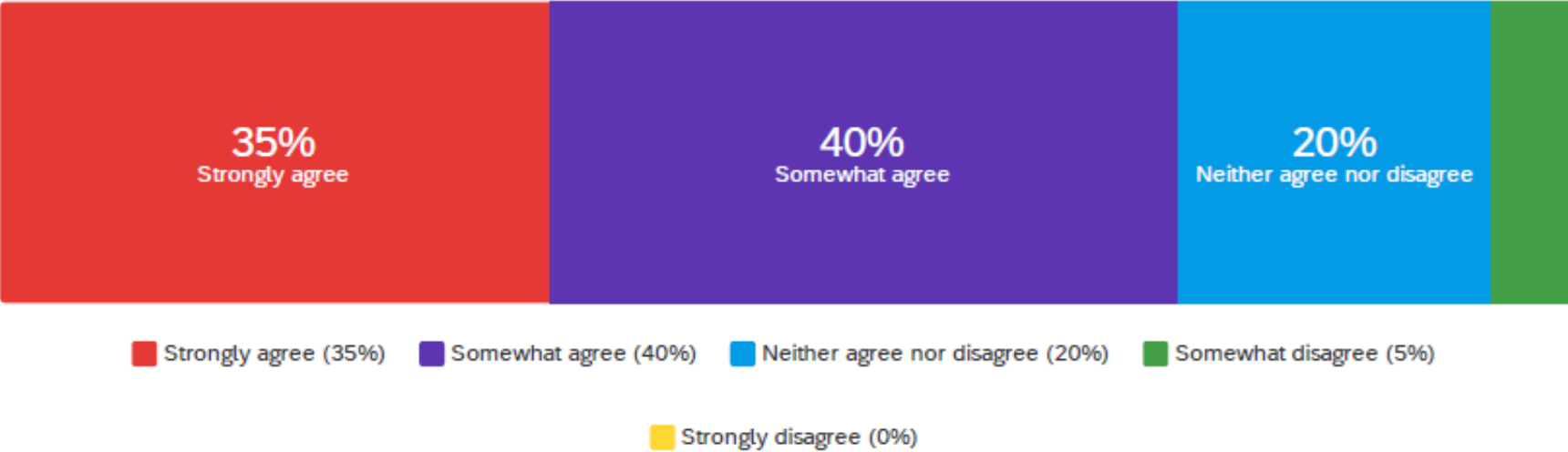
Yes No

Q10 - If yes, was this exam paper deadline generally met?



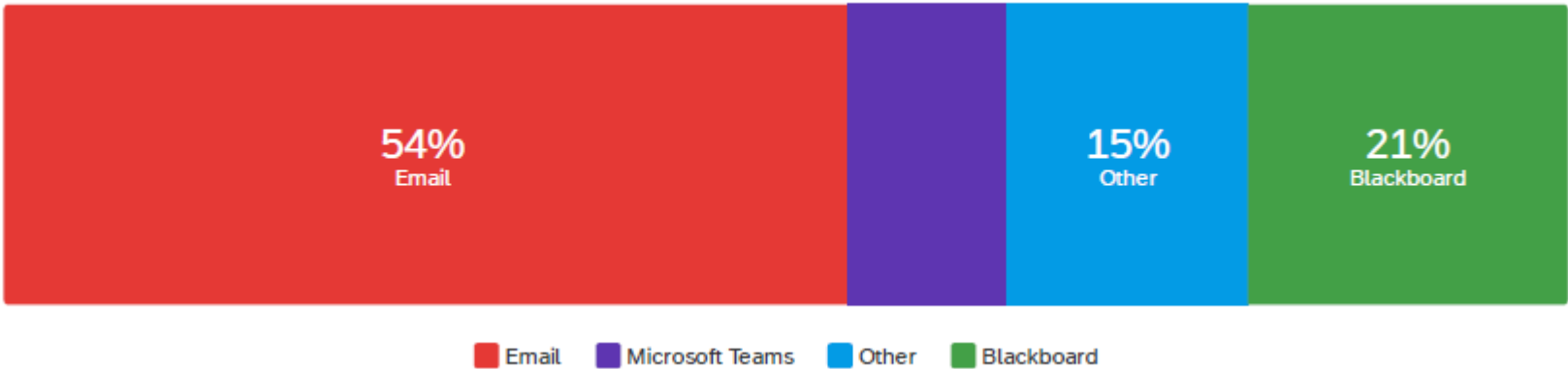
Yes No

Q12 - Do you feel there was enough local support in place to prepare Dec/Jan TRAs?



Additional comments
The lack of staff meant that submission issues were often handled way outside business hours.
The help provided by the Ed. Tech. team was invaluable.
TRAs were set up by our Ed Tech Team and finer details added by Department team. Can only answer the above question on behalf of the Department team, our Ed Tech team may need more support.
As the papers did not require printing, I was able to be flexible with submission deadlines. Most leads stuck to the deadline and our external examiners were really kind and communicated well.

Q14 - How did you communicate with students during the assessments?



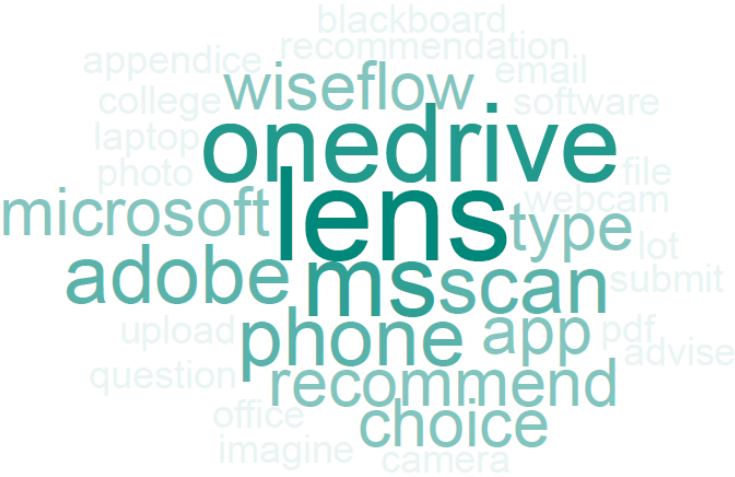
Other
Outlook, Skype chat
insendi
Announcement/Email function on Blackboard
WISEflow instant messaging
WISEflow platform messaging

Q15 - Were students required to handwrite and scan any part(s) of their exam script? If

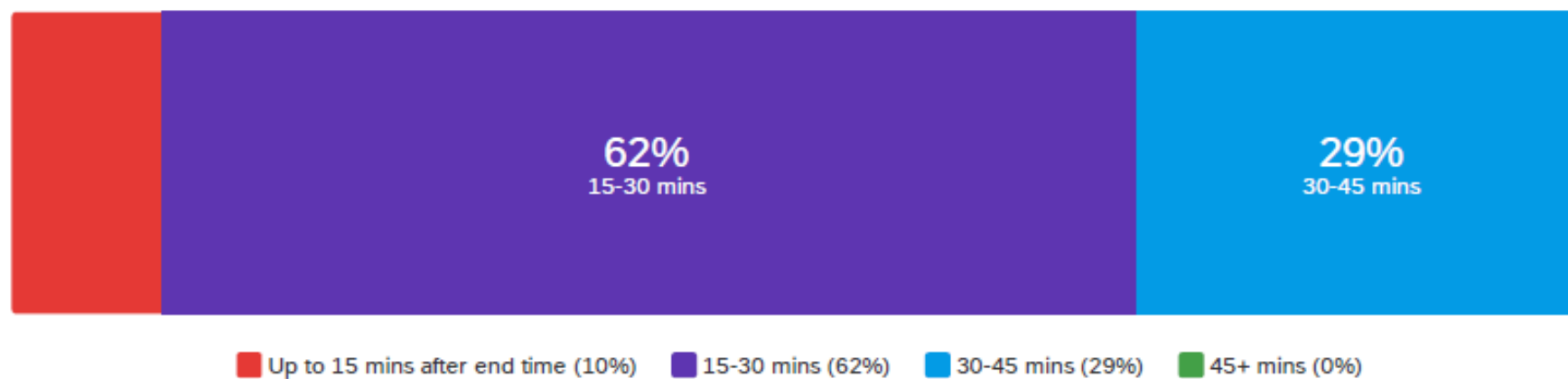
Yes, please confirm which software was used by students to scan/submit.



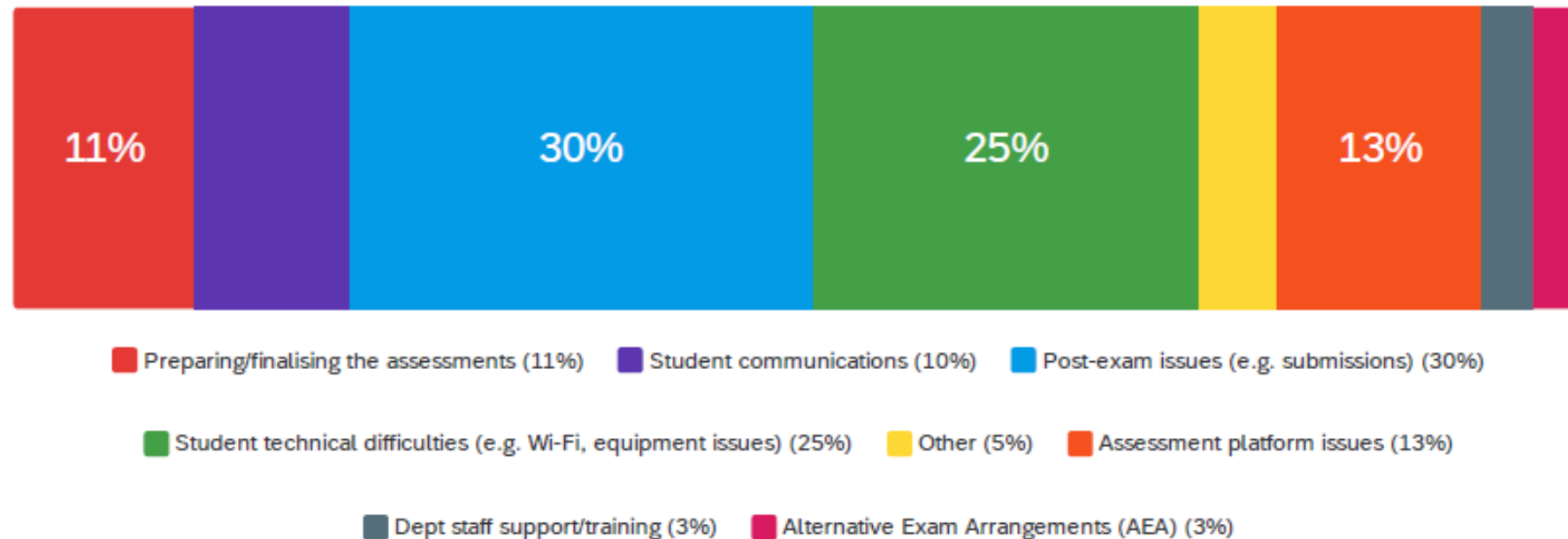
Yes No



Q16 - How much time was allocated for students to submit their assessment (post-exam)?



Q17 - What were the most challenging aspects of administering TRAs overall?(select as many as required)



Q18 - Please provide any additional comments you have on Administering TRAs below.

The 1st Year students had a lot of **technical issues**. More than last summer.

The final 30 minute **upload period is incredibly stressful** for the staff monitoring the students' submissions.

The process and activity consumes vast amounts of time, and limits the ability to do any other productive work (day job). In some ways more efficient than in-house exams, but control is lost. EG: We really have no idea if students are writing beyond the end time of an exam, whereas in an examination hall, this is simple to control and manage.

It would be good **when any issues/errors arise with Blackboard that all users are notified directly by ICT** and not sent to administrators to communicate.

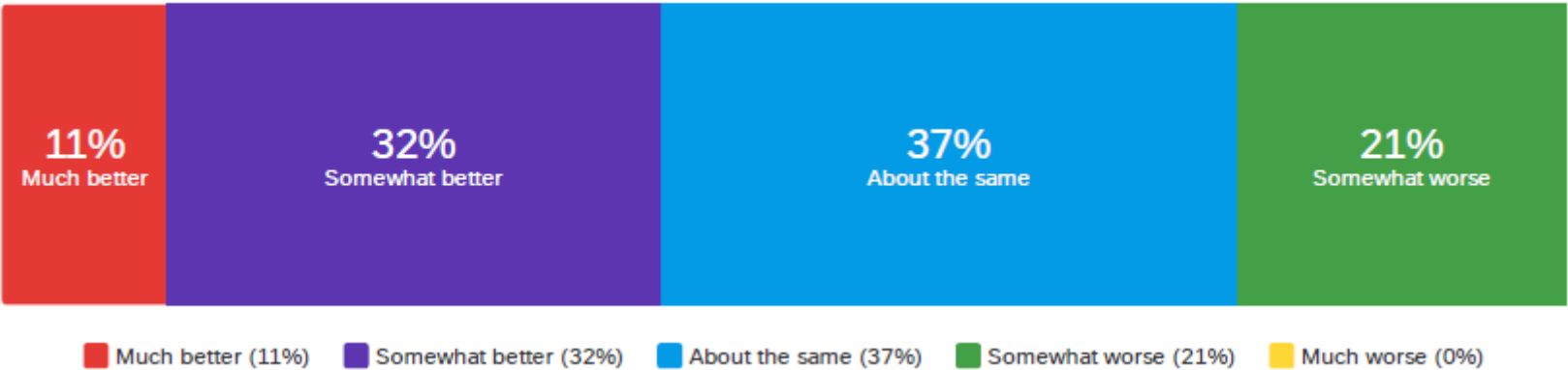
The submission period was very stressful both for students and staff. This year we hired GTAs to support with the submissions - they were responsible for monitoring the exam mailbox and responding to student queries; whilst this did relieve pressure I was the only staff member involved with the process and I had to support the GTAs throughout. **I found it far more stressful than the summer exams when there was more staff support.**

A number of students had problems uploading and it wasn't always evident if it was a genuine problem or not - this was very stressful especially in the last few minutes leading up to submission deadlines. We need something in place where we can know for certain when a student created the document. I was able to check the time the PDF was created for some late submissions but for others as this data had been removed.

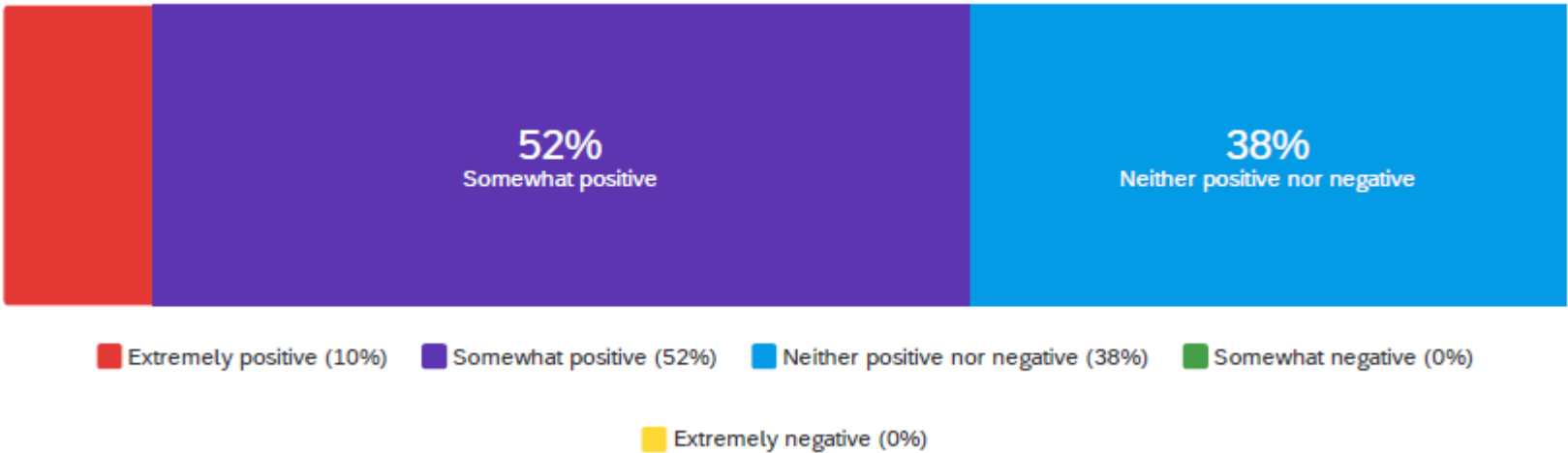
It is likely we will be running exams online next year - if this is the case then the College does need to look at the process in more detail and make the submission process smoother for all.

It was very **difficult to ensure student engagement prior to the exam week** which meant, especially as we are using Wiseflow, which is not widely used within the College yet, that their exam was the first time students encountered the system. This caused confusion especially among those whose home dept is not the Business School and thus are used to a different method of administering exams. It is important to note that this is not the reflection of the comms and training opportunities we offered which was the same across all our programmes.

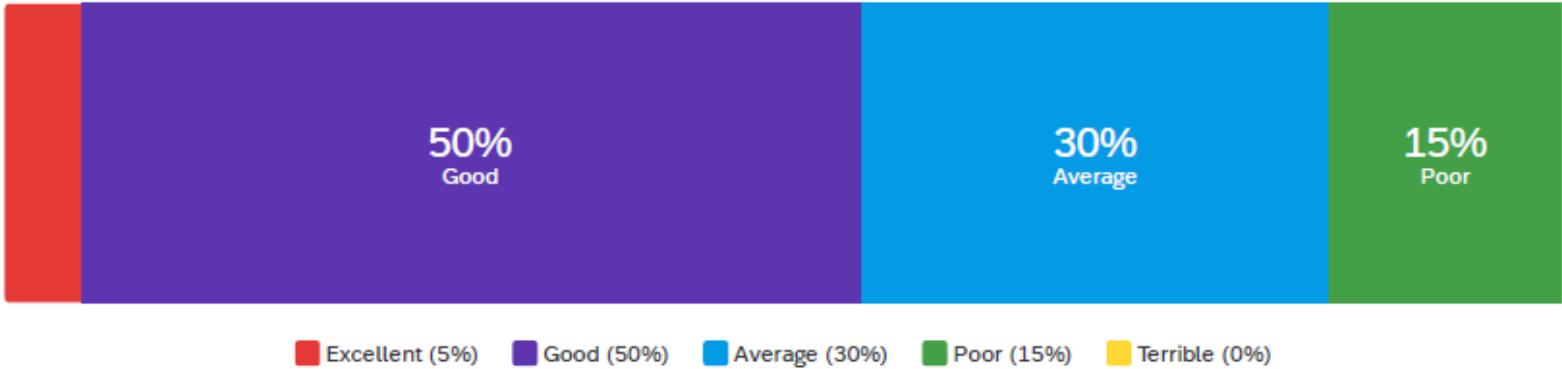
Q19 - How was your overall experience of the Dec/Jan TRAs compared to Summer 2020?



Q22 - Based on student interactions, how would you describe the general student consensus on TRAs following the Dec/Jan exam period?



Q20 - How would you rate the academic integrity of TRAs in their current method of delivery?



Additional comments:

- It is conceivable that a proportion of students are exploiting the circumstances and either working on answers with another person/s or using the upload time to continue working, but we are looking at grade distribution in our School to try to monitor this.
- Despite having introduced a code of academic integrity that students agree to, we still get some cases of plagiarism
- Very hard to police these exams.
- We have **no idea how much cheating/communication/copying is going on.**
- Unfortunately, we are not currently able to filter out academic misconduct taking place during exams (this includes communicating with peers, or using any of the class notes/slides, or indeed the internet). What's more, and this is an issue across the board, it seems that proving academic misconduct after the fact is often impossible.
- We are still relying on the good will of students. We can't be 100% certain that students are not communicating with each other.
- There is clearly an added element of trust and integrity that we expect students to have when doing exams remotely that just isn't there if they are in an exam hall and you can see what they are doing. There is a feeling amongst staff that cheating and/or collusion across some programmes in our department has been widespread but we can not prove it in most cases so therefore students who were honest and did not cheat at all might be disadvantaged in the marking.

Q23 - Ahead of the Summer 2021 TRAs, what could improve the experience further for students?

I plan to release the timetable this week (3rd Feb) which should hopefully give students enough time to prepare. Exam clashes have been avoided but this tends to create some anxiety.

Time-stamping the exam documents - if all students could provide this it would be less stressful for students that are having problems uploading.

Practice on MS lens

We need a system in place that captures when students make their initial .pdfs for submission. I have a sense that students are writing into their submission window (i.e. the 20 mins we give them for uploading to the platform). However there's no way of proving this with current tools.

Difficult to know-maybe following the instructions provided. Will review the guidelines provided, and give additional practice sessions. **Many students ignored the practice sessions, to their detriment.**

Better communication method - **we really need a form of instant messaging which targets individual students** and effectively gets them to notice the message without having to keep an eye on another programme etc.(such as email), without encouraging student collaboration or access to non-permitted resources

Clearer communications prior to the exam period, a more streamlined way to communicate during the exams, and **faculty engaging more with the new, remote assessment types.**

Ask students to turn their webcams on when doing the exam. This is what they expect to have happen when we have a Q&A before the exam period and I think it would increase the trust that they have in our processes maintain the academic prestige of an Imperial degree.

Exams should be open book as from my point of view is **very difficult to police possible plagiarism when no invigilating.**

I don't know how to fix this - but **the biggest problems are around submissions and late submissions.** Some students are submitting over an hour late - its very difficult for us to accept and mark these.

Q24 - What could improve the experience further for staff?

I need to create some process notes on pre, during and post exam processes for the team so everyone is working with the same methods. Time seems to escape far too quickly though at the moment :)

Proper **recognition of the work** involved.

Students reading the TRA instructions and submitting their files carefully

It would also help to **have a list of tips that we can pass on to students from ICT/FoNS LT**, eg. how to reduce the file size

Banner module registrations / replacing student module registrations in DSS to be sorted out. **Compiling exam candidate lists took weeks instead of hours.** No confidence in the records held centrally.

Students engaging better with the provided training, using the remote allowance time to properly check their work. **better triage and management of student expectations re. post-exam queries** (we currently only have one or two staff trying to respond to sometimes hundreds of student emails as well as fixing/checking within the platform as a result - this often leads to students 'spamming' the various different email inboxes, other staff, academics etc, and sending repeated chasers, worsening the issue.

We all know that during the exam period, we work roughly double the hours we normally do, yet we get compensated by TOIL being offered, and not additional pay. While I understand that above a certain salary band, OT payment is not usually offered, it would be great, especially as we are all stuck at home, to be paid for our additional work.

Have **additional staff to support post exam queries**.

We've had loads of MC claims around late submissions. We have to be strict and we often ask ICT to verify files haven't be edited by students. That's really time consuming. Perhaps we can have **College wide guidenance to say that all departments can accept up to 5(>) minutes late without question**. But after that we don't accept at all. Obviously we can't publish this to students.

More time, in the day!

The support I received from my colleagues and manager during the Dec/Jan exam periods was second to none. Despite the ~80-hour work week!

Conclusion

- **Submission Process**— Student technical issues, time-stamping scripts, volume of post-exam queries
 - **Academic Integrity** – Feeling some students working beyond end time, collaborating, difficult to prove
 - **Student Comms** – Responsiveness during exam, outside email tool
 - **Student Engagement** – Pre-exam training, platform practice, external dept students/platforms
 - **Resources** – Time, staff, recognition of work involved
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Student Feedback

- ICU surveying students following Dec/Jan 2021 TRAs
 - Question list offered around ETUG discussion points, Summer TRAs findings (ICU to include)
 - Results/feedback to be circulated (via ETUG) as soon as received
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Digital Assessment Group

(Sub-group of Ed Tech Guild)

Purpose

- Identify technical/service options to enhance online assessment
- Ensure smooth, secure delivery/administration
- Find gaps in current QA policy that can support it

Process

- Evaluate suite of current digital assessment tools, central support
- Investigate online proctoring – scoping exercise, level of online assessment post-pandemic
- Updating College QA policy and regulations to support online assessment (e.g. submission time-stamping)

Input

- PL/ETUG contribution, TRAs survey feedback etc

Conducting Online Assessments 2020-21

Areas of Policy

- Approval Process/Alternative Assessment
 - Assessment Timetabling
 - Assessment
 - Submission of Assessment
 - Academic Integrity
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- Provide College-level steer for departments
 - Establish best practice
 - Evolving document, staff feedback following Dec/Jan exams?

Summer 2021 – Exam Timetabling

Collate Requirements

- Draft/final exam timetables (email request to follow)
- Estimated student numbers
- CTSO support available – Exam timetabling or creating Celcat exam events

Circulate Exam Timetables

- Horizons slot (28th April AM?)
- ICT resources to support
- Wider College-level awareness

Exam Timetable Publishing

- 10 week window – 15th Feb publish (w/c 26th April exams)

March 2021

- Similar TRA events as previous years?
- Collate Exam TT's?
- ICT support?

2020/21 ETUG meetings

- Pre-Summer follow-up needed? e.g. late March/early April?
 - July
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