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Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2011

School of Technology Results for Internal Use Only

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Introduction

PRES is an online survey tool developed by the Higher Education Academy, designed to allow institutions to collect feedback on the research student experience in a convenient and comparable format, with the objective of enhancing the student experience. No institutions are named in the HEA's aggregate report and aggregate data is stored anonymously, making it impossible to construct league tables. Each institution remains the owner of its own institutional data and can publish its own PRES results internally and externally.

To avoid survey fatigue the decision was made to survey Cambridge students only every two years (2007, 2009 and 2011), and the HEA has now decided to run the survey biennially. The survey ran at Cambridge between 1st March and 17th May 2011, and should run again in 2013.

This paper reproduces the main findings of the national PRES 2011 report (by Dr L. Hodsdon and Dr A. Buckley, September 2011), and compares them to the results at Cambridge. It was therefore possible to benchmark the Cambridge results against the national aggregate, and the 15 institutions that joined the Russell Group PRES benchmark mission group in 2011.

The Russell Group benchmarking group consisted of the following institutions in addition to Cambridge: Cardiff University, Imperial College London, King's College London, Queens University Belfast, University of Birmingham, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Leeds, University of Liverpool, University of Manchester, University of Newcastle, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, and University of Warwick.

Institutional Response Rates

The University of Cambridge was one of 102 institutions that chose to use PRES in 2011 (Appendix 1). A total of 31,202 research students across the UK completed the survey, giving an overall response rate of 32%.

All Cambridge research postgraduate students (5758 in total) were sent an email inviting them to take part when the survey opened on 1st March, and three further reminder emails each a fortnight apart, until the survey closed on 17th May 2011. 3102 students completed the survey, giving a response rate of 53.9% of those who were contacted (up from 34.2% in 2009 and 30.3% in 2007). Departmental sample sizes can be seen below.

All participants in the survey were entered into a prize draw (unless they opted out) for a £200 retail voucher, and the winner, Katja Menger of Queens' College, was drawn on 18th May 2011.

Department	**N**
Arts and Humanities	*331*
Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic	20
Architecture	31
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies	34
Classics	22
Divinity	41
English	49
English and Applied Linguistics*	9
History of Art	22

Modern and Medieval Languages	62
Music	26
Philosophy	15
Biological Sciences	*429*
Babraham Institute	35
Biochemistry	64
European Bioinformatics Institute	19
Experimental Psychology	25
Genetics	32
Gurdon Institute*	6
MRC Biostatistics Unit*	7
MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit	21
National Institute of Agricultural Botany*	1
Pathology	49
Pharmacology	17
Physiology, Development and Neuroscience	45
Plant Sciences	27
Veterinary Medicine	23
Wellcome Trust Centre for Stem Cell Research*	7
Zoology	51
Clinical Medicine	*228*
Cambridge Institute for Medical Research*	3
Cancer Research UK Cambridge Research Institute	18
Clinical Biochemistry	19
Clinical Neurosciences	21
Haematology	12
Institute of Metabolic Science*	1
Medical Genetics	11
Medicine	49
Obstetrics and Gynaecology*	3
Oncology	23
Paediatrics*	1
Psychiatry	28
Public Health and Primary Care	20
Radiology*	8
Surgery	11
UPI	*125*
Animal Health Trust*	1
British Antarctic Survey*	1
MRC Cancer Cell Unit*	5
MRC Epidemiology Unit*	8
MRC Human Nutrition Research	11
MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology	48
MRC Mitochondrial Biology Unit	27
Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute	24
Humanities and Social Sciences	*602*
African Studies*	2
Archaeology	43

Biological Anthropology	22
Criminology	33
Economics	39
Education	90
History	134
History and Philosophy of Science	21
Land Economy	32
Latin American Studies	10
Law	32
Politics and International Studies	45
Social and Developmental Psychology	31
Social Anthropology	24
Sociology	43
South Asian Studies*	1
Physical Sciences	*666*
Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics	54
Astronomy	45
Chemistry	167
Earth Sciences	44
Geography	62
Materials Science and Metallurgy	69
Physics	168
Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics	45
Scott Polar Research Institute	12
Technology	*544*
Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology	73
Computer Laboratory	86
Engineering	340
Institute for Manufacturing	13
Judge Business School	32
Not Specified	177
Total	**3102**

*separate charts have not been created for departments with a sample size below 10, but these data were included in School and University totals

Section 1 Profile of respondents

1.1 Demographics

1.1.1 Gender

Nationally, the 2011 survey saw an almost equal split between male and female respondents, making the sample more representative in relation to gender (compared with HESA data) than in previous years. At Cambridge, slightly more males than females completed the survey, and the ratio differed across the Schools (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Respondents by gender

	Male	Female
National Agregate	49.7%	50.3%
University of Cambridge	52.5%	47.5%
Arts and Humanities	44.8%	55.2%
Biological Sciences	40.6%	59.4%
Clinical Medicine	44.0%	56.0%
Humanities and Social Sciences	43.0%	57.0%
Physical Sciences	60.0%	40.0%
Technology	73.8%	26.2%

1.1.2 Age

Nationally, nearly 60% of respondents were aged 30 or under, and 16.5% were over 40. At Cambridge 81.5% of respondents were under 30 years of age, with only 4.2% in the over-40 category (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Respondents by age

	> 26 yrs	26-30 yrs	31-35 yrs	36-40 yrs	41-45 yrs	46-50 yrs	51-55 yrs	56 yrs +
National Agregate	26.7%	32.7%	15.6%	8.6%	6.1%	4.3%	2.9%	3.2%
University of Cambridge	43.6%	37.9%	10.7%	3.6%	1.7%	1.2%	0.6%	0.7%
Arts and Humanities	38.3%	36.5%	14.0%	4.6%	3.0%	1.2%	0.9%	1.5%
Biological Sciences	47.5%	39.3%	10.8%	1.3%	0.7%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Clinical Medicine	32.9%	37.7%	18.4%	8.8%	1.3%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Humanities and Social Sciences	37.7%	37.1%	12.2%	5.5%	3.0%	1.8%	1.7%	1.0%
Physical Sciences	56.5%	35.2%	4.2%	1.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.3%	0.8%
Technology	40.3%	41.3%	11.0%	2.9%	1.5%	2.2%	0.4%	0.4%

Nearly a third of respondents nationally were in their first year of study, while at Cambridge first year students made up almost 37% of the sample (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Year on the programme

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9+
National Agregate	31.7%	25.7%	20.9%	13.4%	3.7%	1.5%	0.6%	0.3%	2.2%
University of Cambridge	36.9%	22.9%	20.4%	16.3%	2.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Arts and Humanities	40.9%	21.4%	19.8%	14.2%	2.2%	1.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Biological Sciences	31.9%	25.1%	20.5%	19.8%	1.8%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Clinical Medicine	34.4%	20.9%	20.9%	22.8%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Humanities and Social Sciences	47.2%	18.1%	17.4%	12.3%	3.1%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%
Physical Sciences	34.0%	23.7%	22.8%	16.1%	2.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Technology	33.1%	26.2%	19.2%	16.6%	4.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%

1.1.3 Country of Residence

Nationally nearly 60% of respondents identified their country of residence for fee purposes as UK, with nearly 30% being Non EU and the remainder EU, which is roughly in line with HESA statistics for 2009-10. At Cambridge, a greater percentage of respondents were Non-EU and EU, than was the pattern nationally (Table 1.4), and only 45.9% were Home students.

Table 1.4: Country of residence

	Home	Non EU	Other EU
National Agregate	58.8%	29.0%	12.3%
University of Cambridge	45.9%	36.2%	17.9%
Arts and Humanities	50.0%	32.1%	17.9%
Biological Sciences	48.0%	32.1%	19.9%
Clinical Medicine	54.2%	28.6%	17.2%
Humanities and Social Sciences	36.8%	42.8%	20.4%
Physical Sciences	54.1%	29.0%	16.9%
Technology	37.1%	46.8%	16.1%

1.1.4 Ethnicity

Nationally 68.1% of respondents identified themselves as being of white background, whilst amongst Cambridge respondents this was 73.9%.

Table 1.5: Respondents by ethnicity

	White	Chinese/other East Asian	Asian or Asian British	Mixed	Black or Black British
National Agregate	68.1%	8.4%	8.7%	2.9%	3.9%
University of Cambridge	73.8%	12.8%	8.5%	3.7%	1.2%
Arts and Humanities	84.7%	7.7%	1.9%	5.1%	0.6%
Biological Sciences	75.5%	12.1%	8.3%	3.1%	1.0%
Clinical Medicine	73.6%	11.4%	11.8%	2.3%	0.9%
Humanities and Social Sciences	77.6%	9.7%	6.9%	3.8%	2.0%
Physical Sciences	75.8%	11.8%	8.3%	3.7%	0.5%
Technology	60.0%	22.0%	12.9%	3.2%	2.0%

1.2 Nature and type of programme

1.2.1 Registered programme of study

Nationally the majority of respondents were working towards a PhD: 73.3% were enrolled on a PhD already, and a further 14.0% were registered as MPhil with transfer to PhD. At Cambridge these two categories constituted 90.1% of respondents (Table 1.6). Nationally 7.0% were studying for an MPhil only (compared to 2.6% in 2009), and research Masters students comprised 2.4% of the total respondents. A greater percentage at Cambridge were on an MPhil programme (9.2%), with no respondents on a professional doctorate, versus 4.2% nationally.

Table 1.6: Respondents by type of course

	PhD	Mphil with transfer to PhD	Mphil	Professional doctorate	Master in research	PhD by published work	New Route PhD
National Agregate	73.3%	14.0%	7.0%	4.2%	2.4%	0.3%	0.5%
University of Cambridge	87.5%	2.6%	9.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%
Arts and Humanities	80.9%	2.8%	16.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Biological Sciences	92.4%	3.6%	2.7%	0.0%	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%
Clinical Medicine	91.9%	5.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Humanities and Social Sciences	74.1%	4.5%	21.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Physical Sciences	91.1%	0.9%	6.9%	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%
Technology	93.8%	0.9%	4.7%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%

1.2.2 Mode of study

Nationally, the proportion of part-time students within the sample was smaller than in 2009, with 81.1% of respondents this year being full-time and 18.9% part-time. At Cambridge a much smaller percentage of respondents were part-time (only 2.5%, Table 1.7).

Table 1.7: Respondents by mode of study

	Full time	Part time
National Agregate	81.0%	19.0%
University of Cambridge	97.5%	2.5%
Arts and Humanities	96.3%	3.7%
Biological Sciences	98.4%	1.6%
Clinical Medicine	98.2%	1.8%
Humanities and Social Sciences	95.1%	4.9%
Physical Sciences	98.9%	1.1%
Technology	97.6%	2.4%

1.2.3 Source of funding

Nationally the percentage of students funding their PhDs themselves has fallen slightly from 2009, from 29.3% to 28.5%. At Cambridge only 22.2% of respondents were self-funded this year, but this much higher in some Schools (for example Humanities and Social Sciences, 48.1%, Table 1.8). The proportion funded by their institution was 25.4%, with this just 18.8% at Cambridge. An above average percentage of respondents were Research Council funded at Cambridge (30.3%), compared with the national aggregate (23.8%).

Table 1.8: Source of funding

	Research Council funded	Self-funded	Institution funded	Funded overseas	Charity	UK industry funded	EU/EC funded	UK Government funded
National Agregate	23.8%	28.5%	25.4%	11.6%	3.8%	4.1%	2.5%	4.3%
University of Cambridge	30.3%	22.2%	18.8%	13.2%	6.1%	3.8%	2.9%	2.7%
Arts and Humanities	31.0%	33.3%	22.4%	7.6%	3.8%	0.0%	1.4%	0.5%
Biological Sciences	44.5%	10.0%	16.9%	11.0%	10.7%	0.6%	4.4%	1.9%
Clinical Medicine	28.1%	9.6%	14.0%	9.6%	34.8%	0.0%	2.2%	1.7%
Humanities and Social Sciences	20.1%	48.1%	15.5%	12.0%	1.6%	0.2%	0.9%	1.4%
Physical Sciences	53.3%	10.7%	11.1%	12.1%	3.2%	4.0%	3.4%	2.0%
Technology	29.1%	22.6%	14.7%	21.5%	0.6%	6.5%	1.7%	3.4%

1.3 Motivations and career aspirations

As with previous years of PRES, across the whole sample interest in the subject was the most commonly selected main motivation for pursuing a research degree (36.9%) followed by improving career prospects for an academic/research career (30.5%). Similarly, at Cambridge these were the two most common motivations, but with a a greater proportion being motivated by an interest in their subject (45.9%, Table 1.9) than to improve career prospects (23.2%).

Table 1.9: Main motivation for the research degree programme

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
National Agregate	36.9%	30.5%	8.4%	4.5%	3.1%	12.7%	1.4%
University of Cambridge	45.9%	23.2%	8.2%	3.3%	1.8%	16.5%	1.2%
Arts and Humanities	73.5%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	1.7%	18.9%	1.3%
Biological Sciences	65.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	2.3%	27.7%	2.3%
Clinical Medicine	58.2%	0.0%	0.0%	5.2%	3.7%	30.6%	2.2%
Humanities and Social Sciences	70.4%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	2.3%	21.3%	1.8%
Physical Sciences	67.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	2.4%	25.7%	0.6%
Technology	61.7%	0.0%	0.0%	8.4%	3.0%	24.6%	2.4%

1 - My interest in the subject
2 - Improving my career prospects for an academic/research career
3 - Improving my career prospects outside of an academic/research career
4 - I was encouraged by a former academic tutor/supervisor
5 - The funding was available
6 - It felt like a natural step for me
7 - I felt inspired to work with a particular academic

Regarding anticipated career, nationally 57.7% of respondents said that they anticipated a career in higher education (44.3% teaching only and/or teaching and research, and 13.4% research only, Table 1.10). Cambridge respondents broadly followed this pattern also. It is notable that 42.3% did not have a career in HE in mind given the presumption commonly made that PhD students overwhelmingly intend to enter academic careers. It is also interesting to compare the 44.3% of PRES respondents who were intending to have a career as lecturers with research from Vitae that suggested only 14% of doctoral graduates from the period 2003-2007 have actually gone on to hold that post.

Table 1.10: Anticipated career

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
National Agregate	44.3	14.7	10.7	13.4	3.5	4.2	1.2
University of Cambridge	43.7	18.4	16.7	15.4	3.5	1.5	0.9
Arts and Humanities	70.8	3.7	14.6	6.3	2.3	1.3	1.0
Biological Sciences	35.5	18.2	11.3	30.3	2.4	1.4	0.9
Clinical Medicine	36.3	18.4	22.9	20.4	1.0	1.0	0.0
Humanities and Social Sciences	56.4	11.0	15.8	10.9	3.0	1.2	1.6
Physical Sciences	34.7	25.1	18.8	16.6	2.4	1.3	1.0
Technology	34.7	27.9	18.8	8.3	7.4	2.7	0.2

1 - Academic career in higher education (either research and teaching, or teaching only)

2 - Research career outside higher education (e.g. in a private research organisation, a charity or in an industrial environment)

3 - Any other professional career

4- Research career in higher education

5 - Self-employment (including setting up own business)

6 - Returning to or remaining with employer who is sponsoring your degree

7 - Teaching (at a level below higher education)

Section 2. Overview results and National comparison

National benchmarking

Cambridge performed above the national and Russel Group averages on 42% of all survey items (20 out of 48, Table 2.1), primarily in the areas of Infrastructure, Skills Development and Intellectual Climate.

The 24 items that were endorsed less positively by students at Cambridge than at other participating HEI's were predominantly concerning Supervision, Goals and Standards, Roles and Responsibilities, and Professional Development and Career, indicating that not only are students less satisfied with these elements of their programme than with others (such as Infrastructure), but that this dissatisfaction is greater at Cambridge than at other Universities.

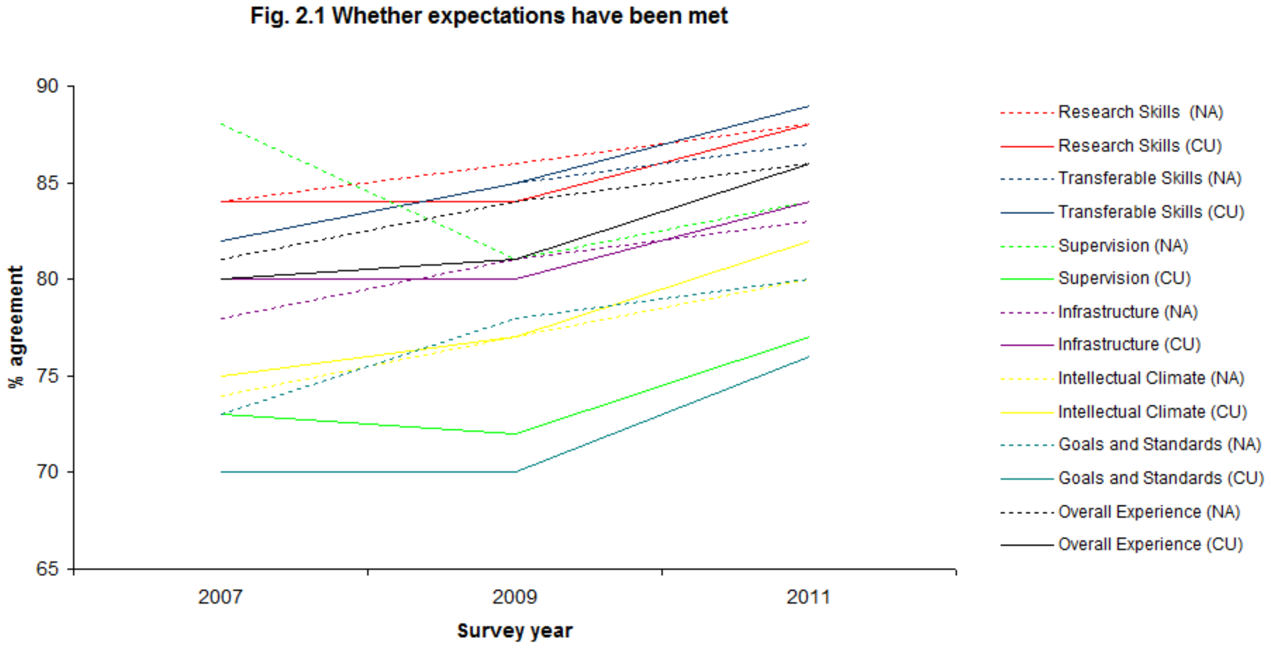
Table 2.1: No. items in each scale with % agree above or below National and Russell Group averages.

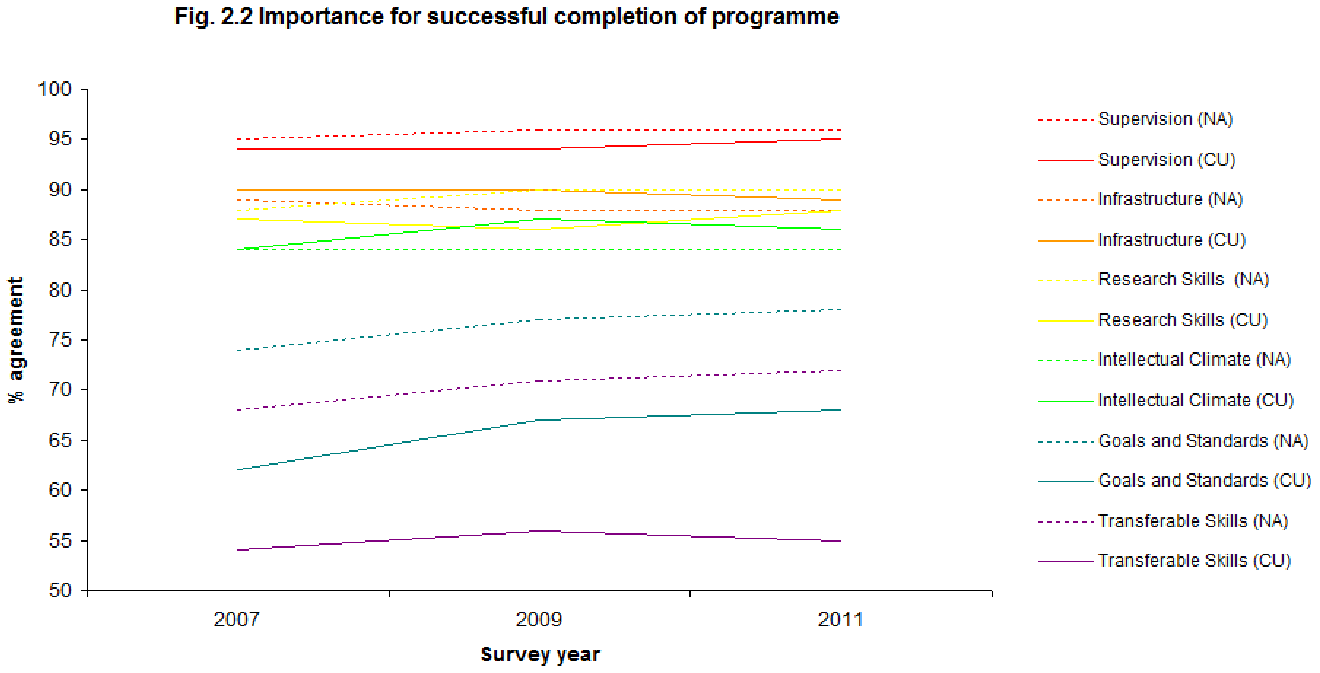
Category	Above National Average	Below National Average	Above Russell Group	Below Russell Group	CU Average agreement on items (%)
Skills Development (8 items)	4	2	5	2	81
Infrastructure (7 items)	7	0	6	0	78
Supervision (7 items)	0	7	0	7	75
Thesis Examination (4 items)	1	2	1	3	73
Goals and Standards (5 items)	0	5	0	5	71
Intellectual Climate (6 items)	6	0	6	0	67
Roles and Responsibilities (4 items)	0	4	0	4	62
Teaching Opportunities (3 items)	2	1	2	1	62
Professional Development and Career (3 items)	0	2	0	2	44
Total (47 items)	20	23	20	24	68

Importance and Expectations being met

The trend of increasing positivity seen in PRES results each year continues with the 2011 results, with 86% of respondents, both nationally and at Cambridge, stating that the overall experience of their research programme met or exceeded their expectations, compared with national figures of 81% in 2007 and 84% in 2009 (Figure 2.1). At Cambridge, satisfaction has likewise increased from 80% in 2007, and 81% in 2009.

As with previous years, nationally and at Cambridge, in 2011 Supervision was the scale that was rated as most important by respondents, with opportunities to develop transferable skills markedly less important than other areas. The ranking of these aspects by importance is consistent over all the years of the survey, apart from 2007 when access to facilities was rated as more important than developing research skills (Figure 2.2). Conversely, the development of research skills was rated as one of the most important issues. Despite these differences between transferable and research skills development, they were the two areas where respondents most felt that their expectations had been met or exceeded (Figure 2.1).



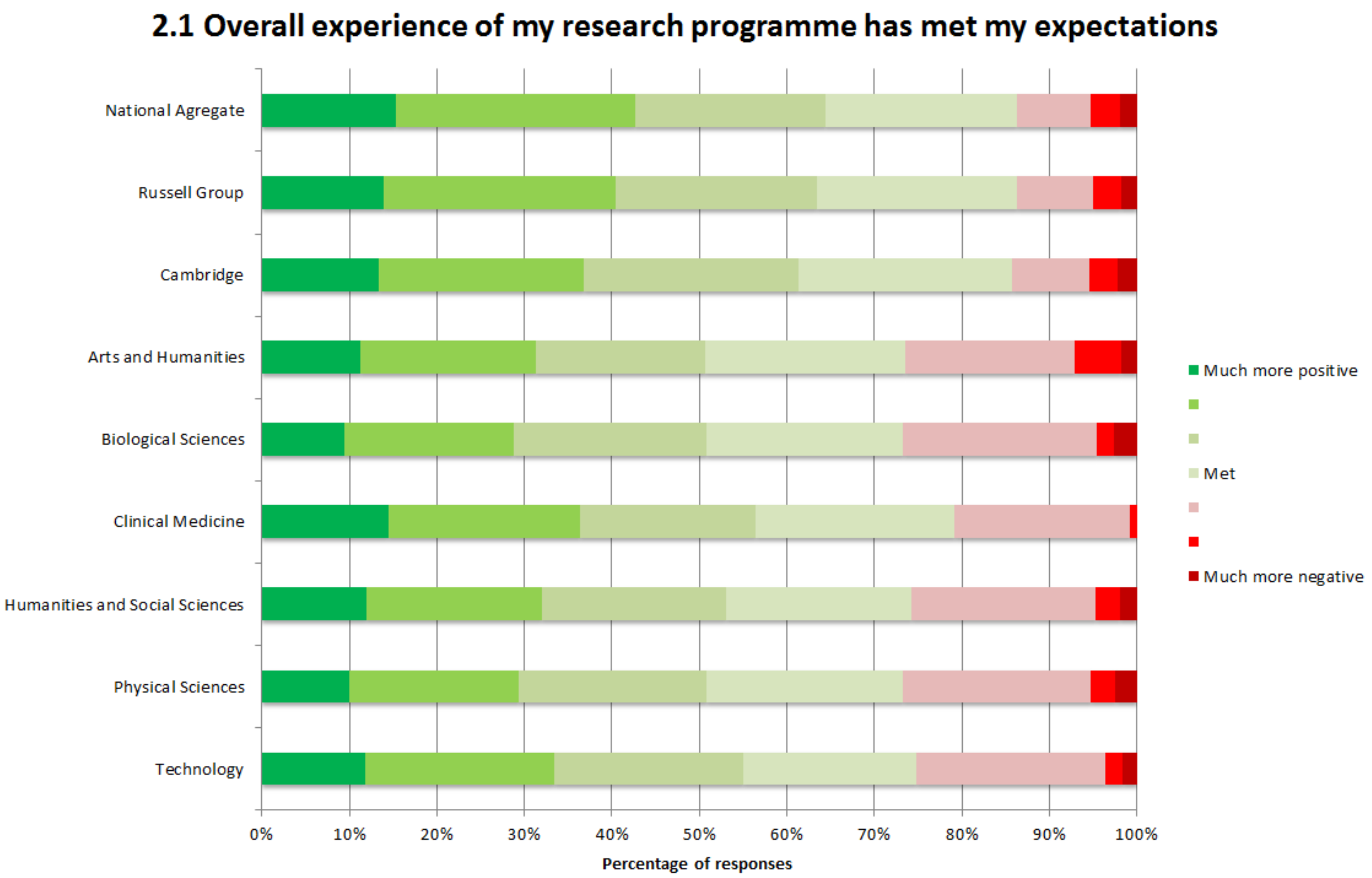


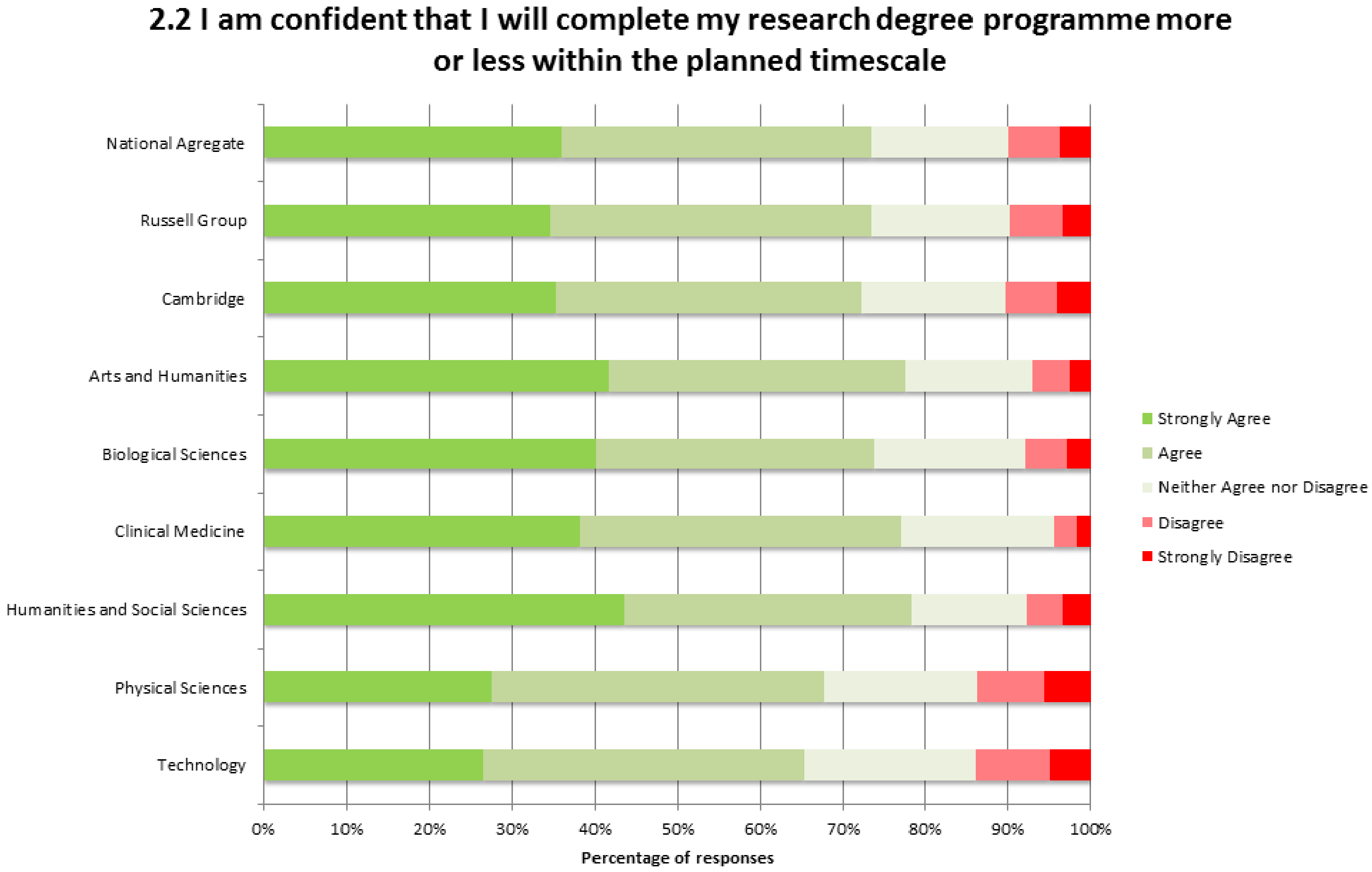
Despite being ranked the most important aspect for completion of the research degree programme, nationally Supervison was only the third most highly ranked for having met expectations in 2011 (84%, Figure 2.1). Among Cambridge respondents, only 77% agreed that supervisory support and guidance had met or exceeded their expectations, but this was up from 73% in 2007 and 72% in 2009.

Table 2.2: % agreement to statements ('mostly agree' and 'definitely agree')

	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
Overall experience of my research programme has **met my expectations**	86	86	86	0	0
I am confident that I will **complete** my research degree programme more or less **within the planned timescale**	72	73	73	-1	-1

At Cambridge 72% of respondents were confident that they would complete their research degree programme within the planned timescale. This was only 1% below the national and Russell Group averages (Table 2.2).





Section 3 Responses to PRES by item

3.1 Supervison

Although nationally Supervision items comprise the highest scoring scale in PRES, at Cambridge it is only the third most endorsed aspect of the reseach degree programme overall, while all of the items in this area are endorsed less positively at Cambridge than is the national average (Table 3.1). This is a pattern that has emerged consistently over all of the years that the survey has been run.

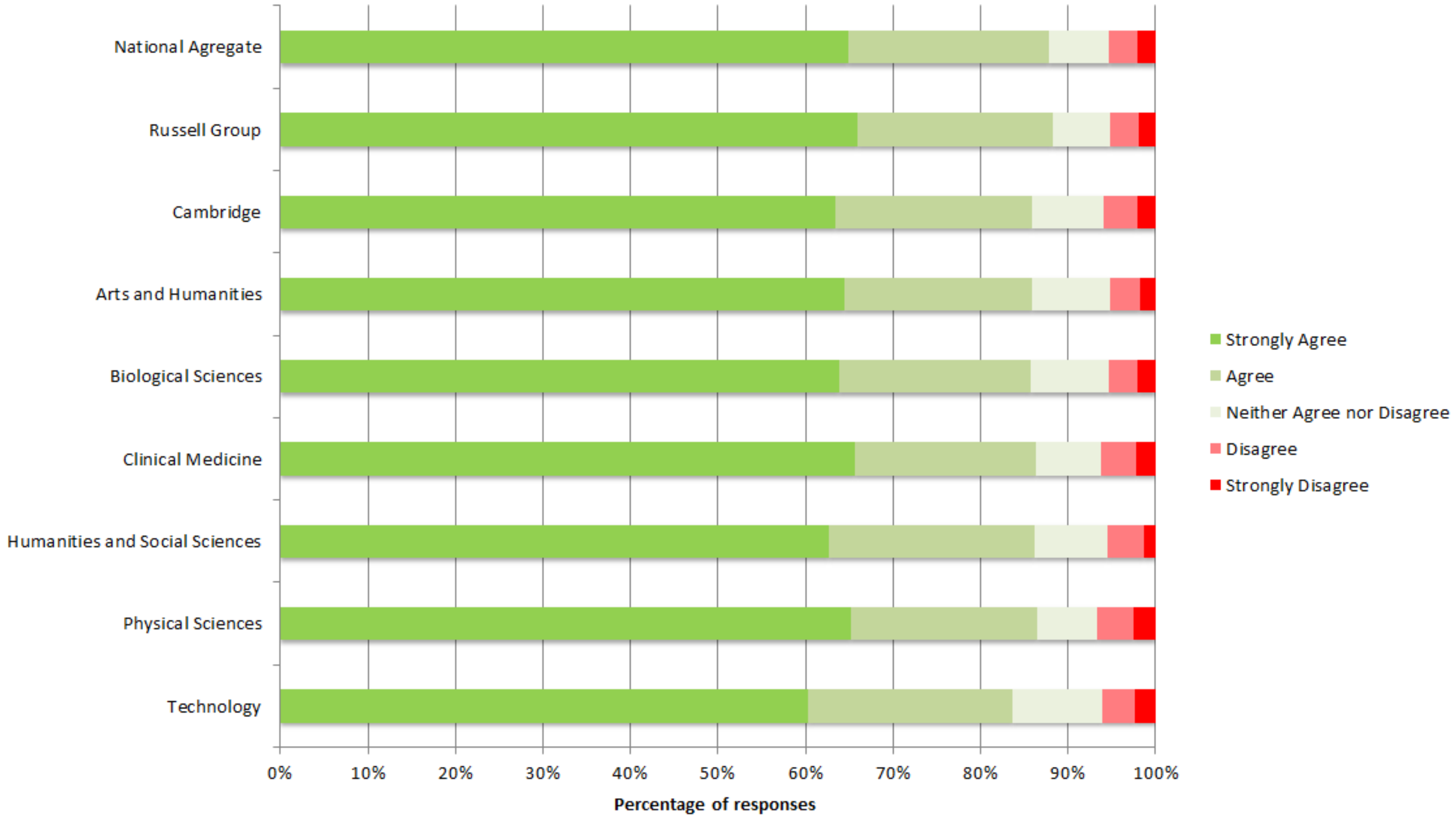
The most marked difference is for the items ‘My supervisor provides helpful feedback on my progress’ (8% less agreement) and ‘I have received good guidance in my literature search’ (7% lower).

Table 3.1: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to supervision items

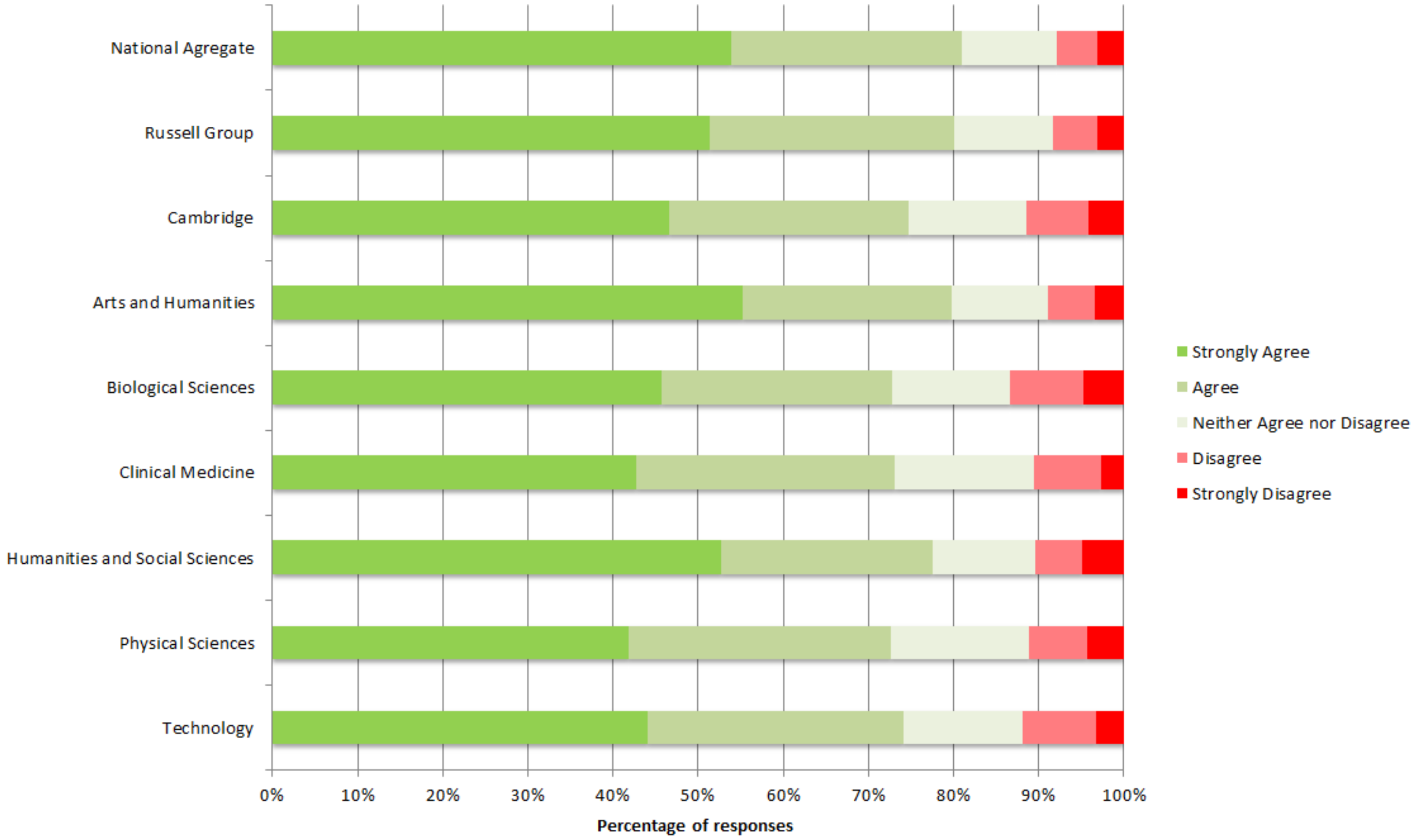
	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
My supervisor/s have the **skills and subject knowledge** to adequately support my research	86	88	88	-2	-2
My supervisor/s make a real effort to **understand any difficulties** I face	75	81	80	-6	-5
I have been given good **guidance in topic selection** and refinement by my supervisor/s	72	78	78	-6	-6

I have received good **guidance in my literature search** from my supervisor/s	64	71	70	-7	-6
My supervisor/s provide **helpful feedback** on my progress	71	79	78	-8	-7
My supervisor/s are **available** when I need them	77	79	79	-2	-2
Importance of supervisory support and guidance	95	96	96	-1	-1
Supervisory support and guidance has **met my expectations**	77	84	83	-7	-6

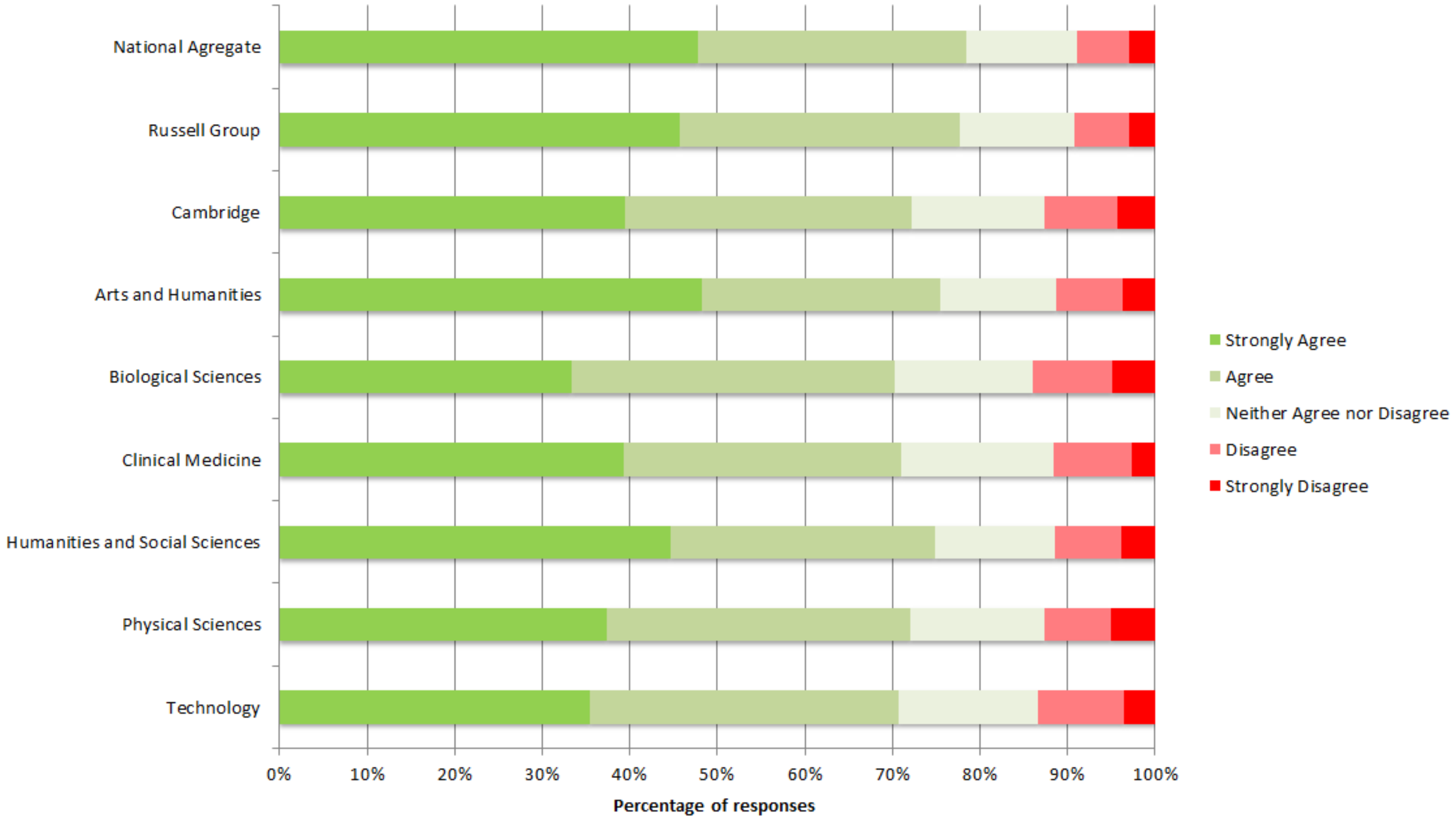
3.1.1 My supervisor/s have the skills and subject knowledge to adequately support my research



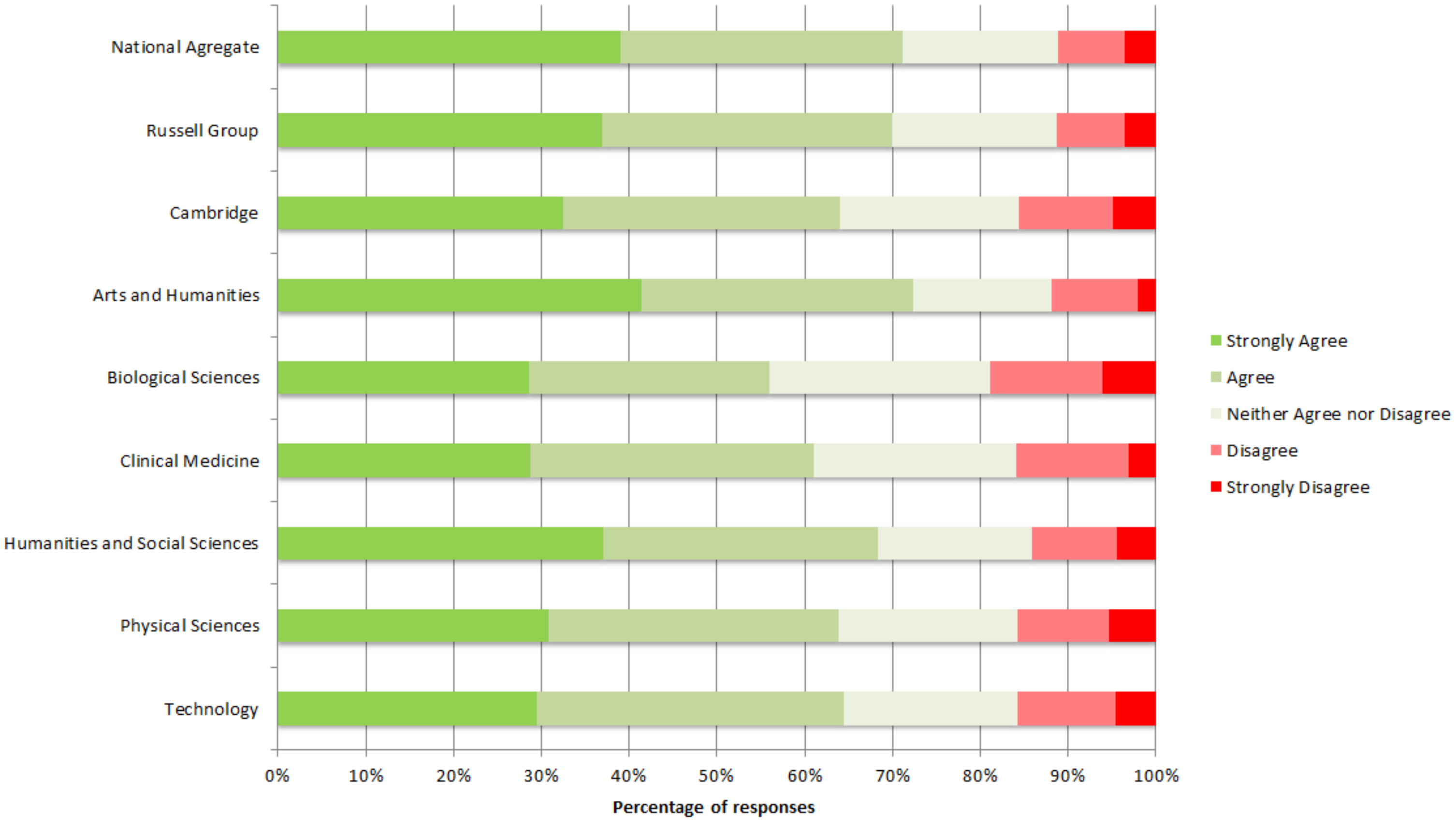
3.1.2 My supervisor/s make a real effort to understand any difficulties I face



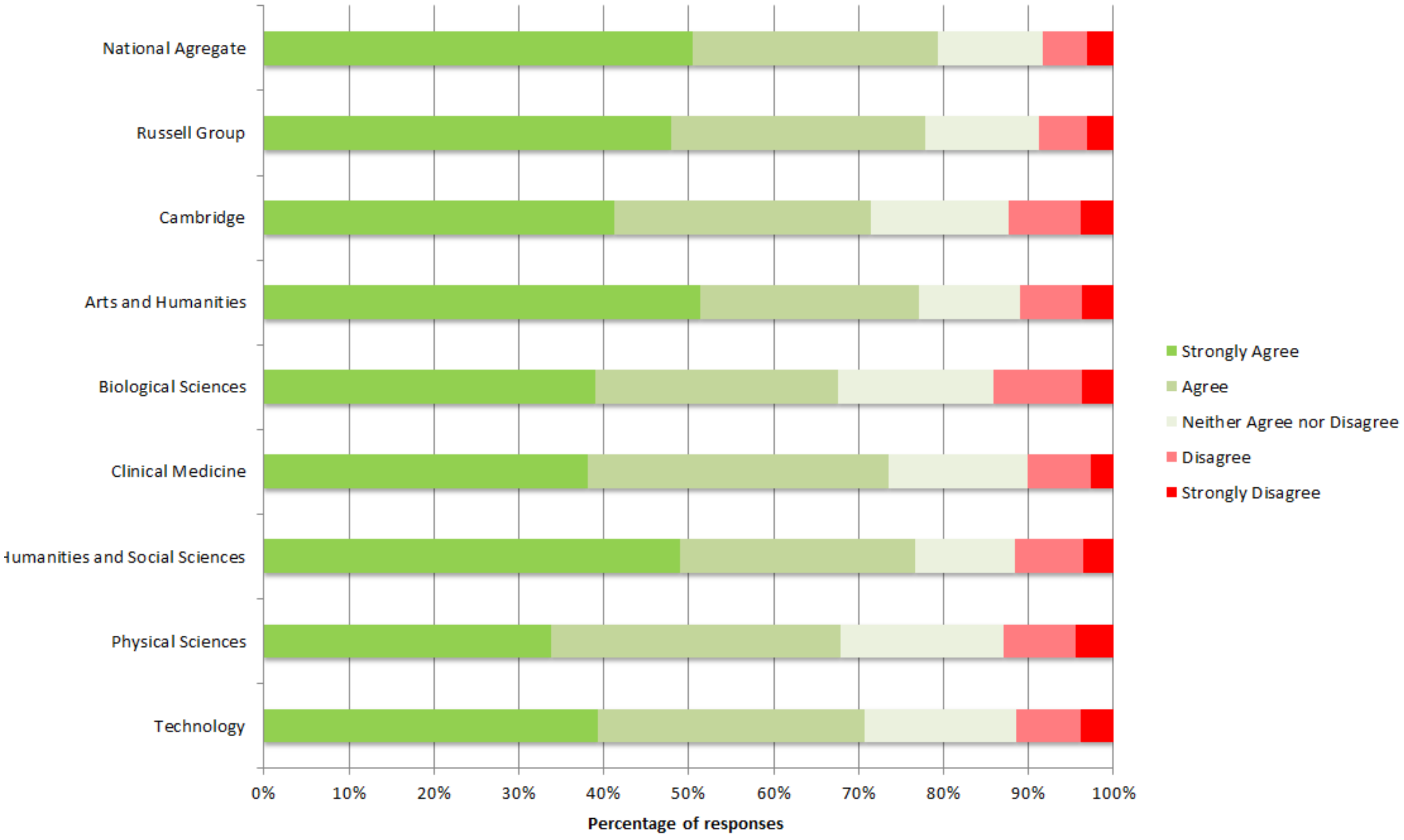
3.1.3 I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my supervisor/s

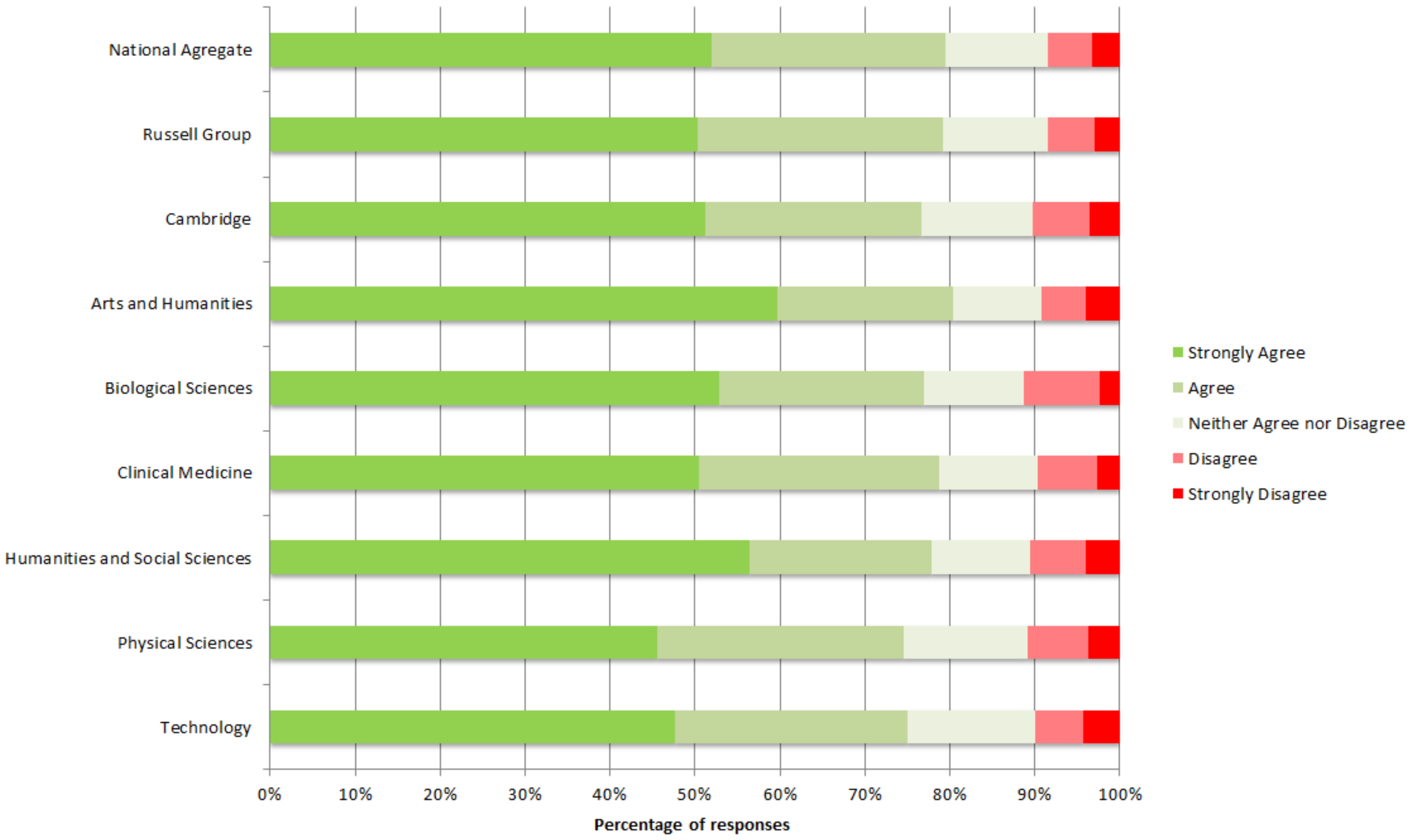


3.1.4 I have received good guidance in my literature search from my supervisor/s

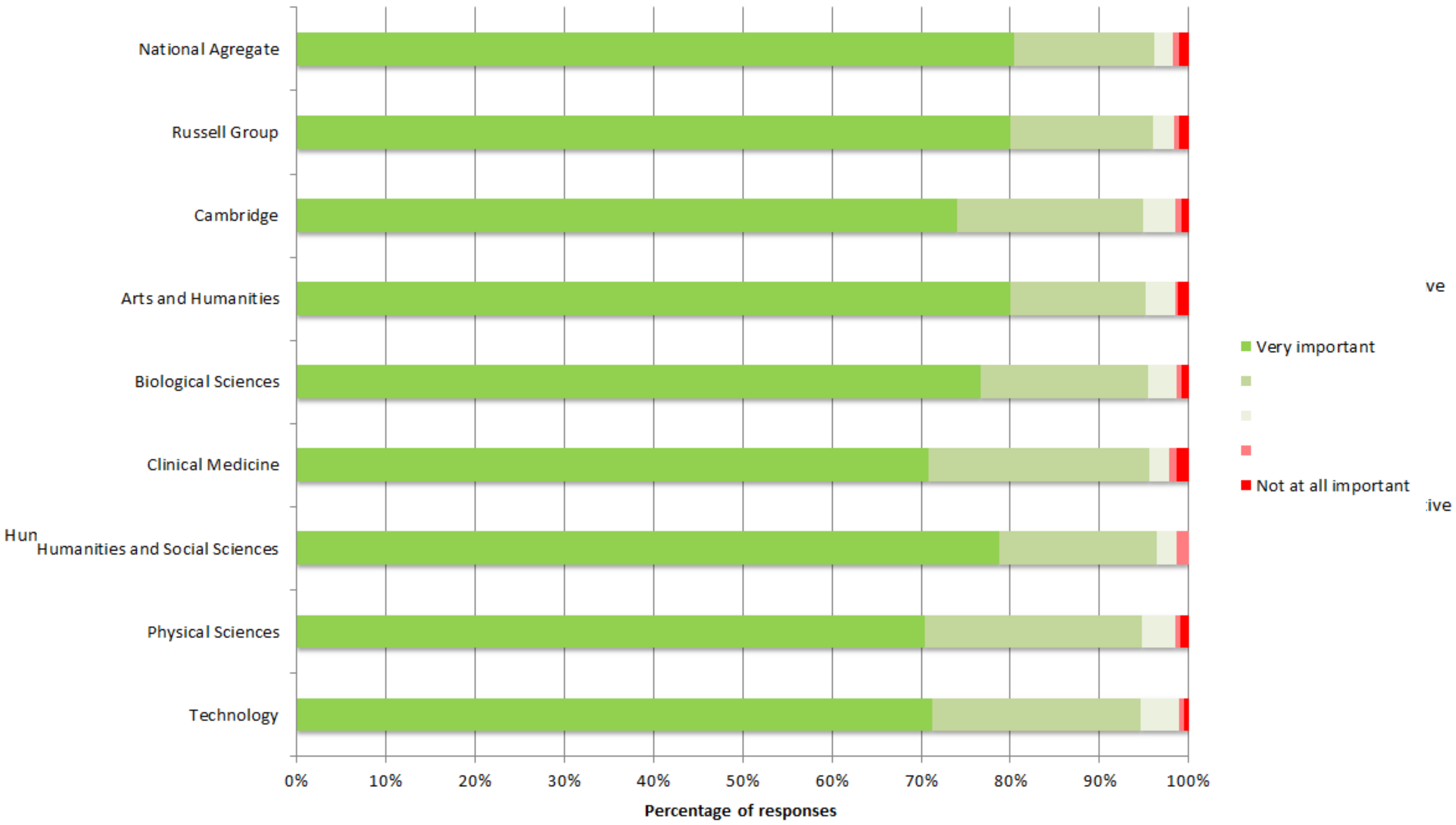


3.1.5 My supervisor/s provide helpful feedback on my progress





3.1.6 My supervisor/s are available when I need them



3.1.8 Supervisory support and guidance has met my expectations
3.1.7 Importance of supervisory support and guidance

3.2 Skills Development

Skills Development is also a high scoring scale, with respondents being particularly positive that their experience so far has improved their ability to learn independently and their analytical skills, these items ranking first and second highest respectively by % agree, both nationally and at Cambridge (Table 3.2).

This is also an area where Cambridge respondents were more positive on a number of items than was the average nationally – in particular 'There are adequate opportunities for me to develop my transferable skills' (7% higher), and 'There are adequate opportunities for me to develop my research skills' (5% higher). It is interesting to note, however, that the difference in endorsement of the items on analytical and communication skills, ability to learn independently and confidence in managing a research project, at Cambridge and nationally, is not particularly high as a consequence of these increased opportunities to develop skills.

A Cambridge-only question on whether respondents found the transferable skills courses they had attended to be useful for their personal development, showed 79% agreement, with 82% of respondents having attended courses (Table 3.3).

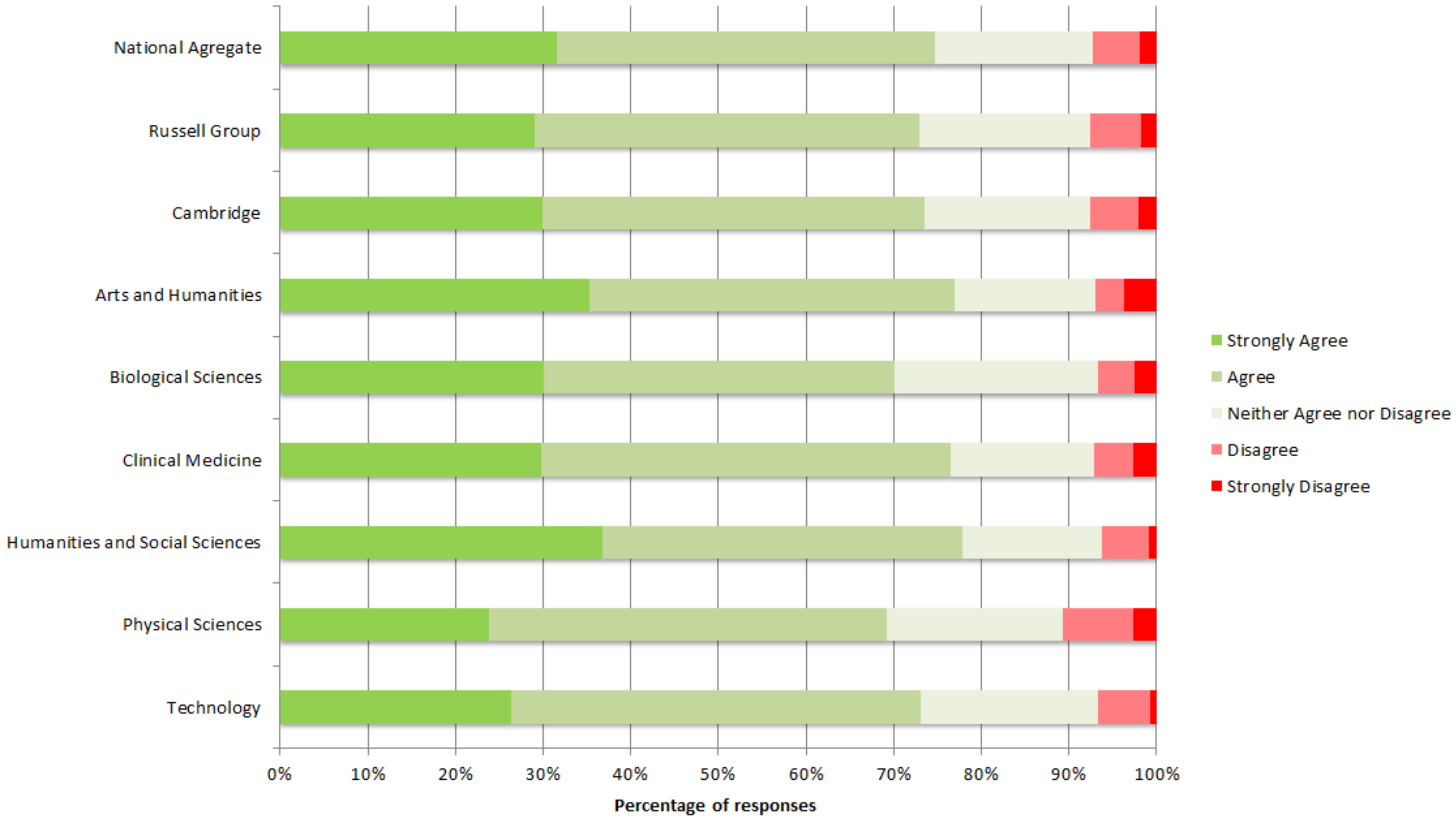
Table 3.2: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to skills development items

	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
As a result of my experience so far I feel confident about **managing a research project**	73	75	73	-2	0
My experience so far has improved my **analytical skills**	83	82	82	1	1
My experience so far has helped me to develop a range of **communication skills**	73	74	73	-1	0
As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to **learn independently**	84	84	84	0	0
Importance of opportunities to develop a range of **research skills**	88	90	90	-2	-2
There are **adequate opportunities** available for me to further develop my **research skills**	80	75	76	5	4
Opportunities to develop a range of **research skill**s have **met my expectations**	88	88	88	0	0
Importance of opportunities to develop a range of **transferable skills**	55	72	71	-17	-16
There are **adequate opportunities** available for me to further develop my **transferable skills**	78	71	72	7	6
Opportunities to develop a range of **transferable skills** have **met my expectations**	89	87	88	2	1

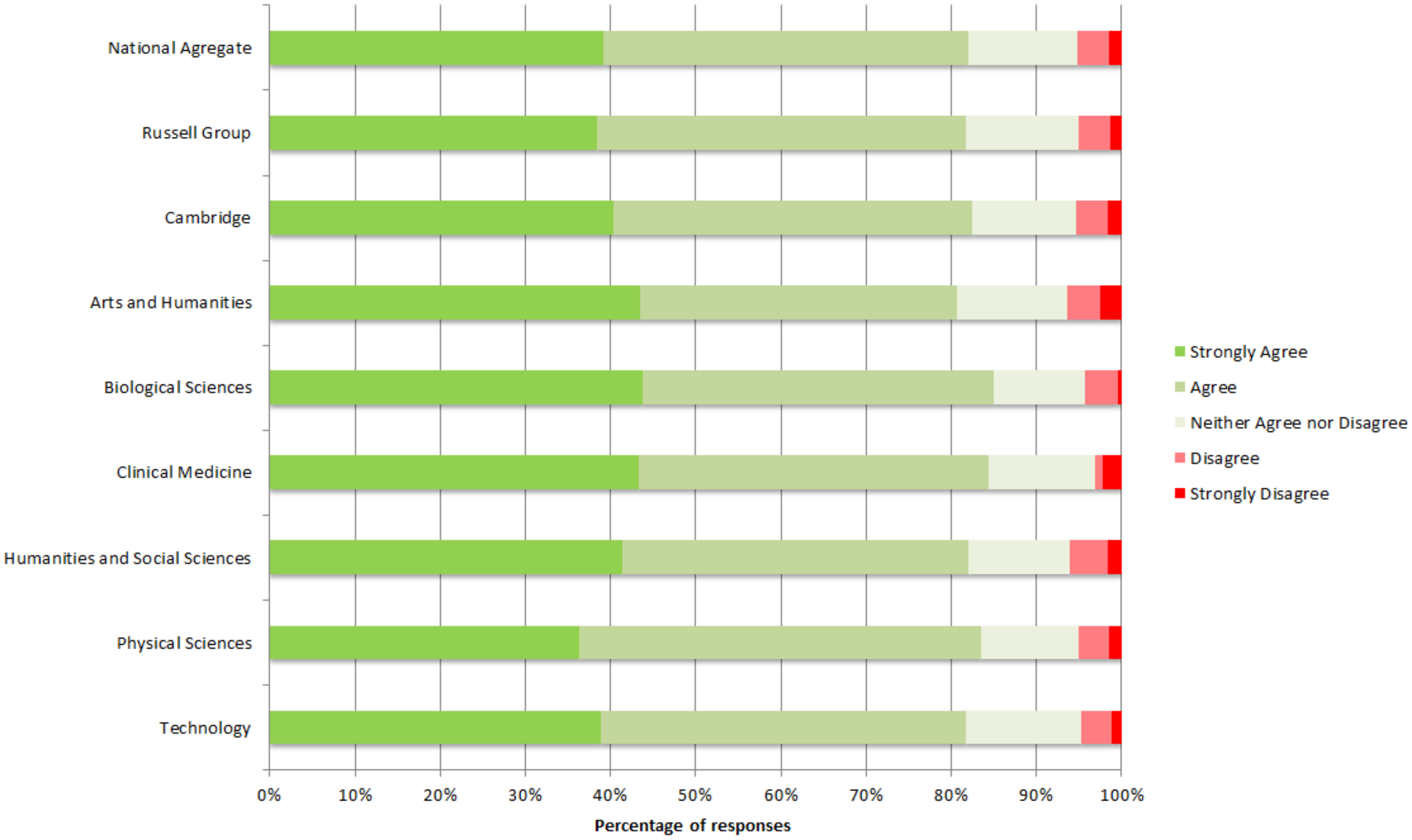
Table 3.3 .The transferable skills courses I have attended have been useful for my personal development

	% positive responses (sample size)	% that have attended courses
Cambridge	79 (2532)	82
Arts and Humanities	75 (234)	72
Biological Sciences	87 (401)	89
Clinical Medicine	89 (204)	90
Humanities and Social Sciences	76 (387)	65
Physical Sciences	69 (594)	89
Technology	84 (500)	92

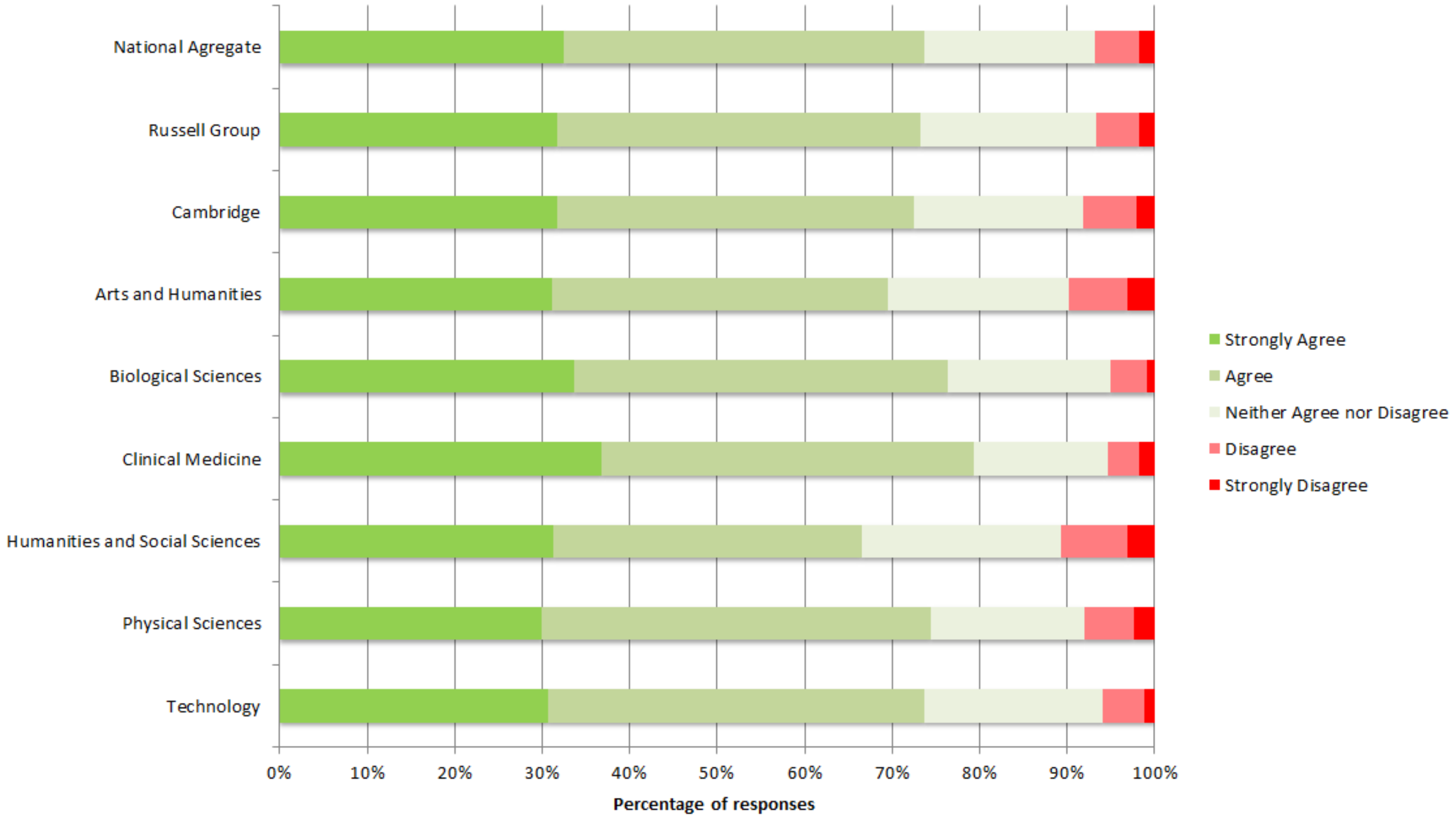
3.2.1 As a result of my experience so far I feel confident about managing a research project



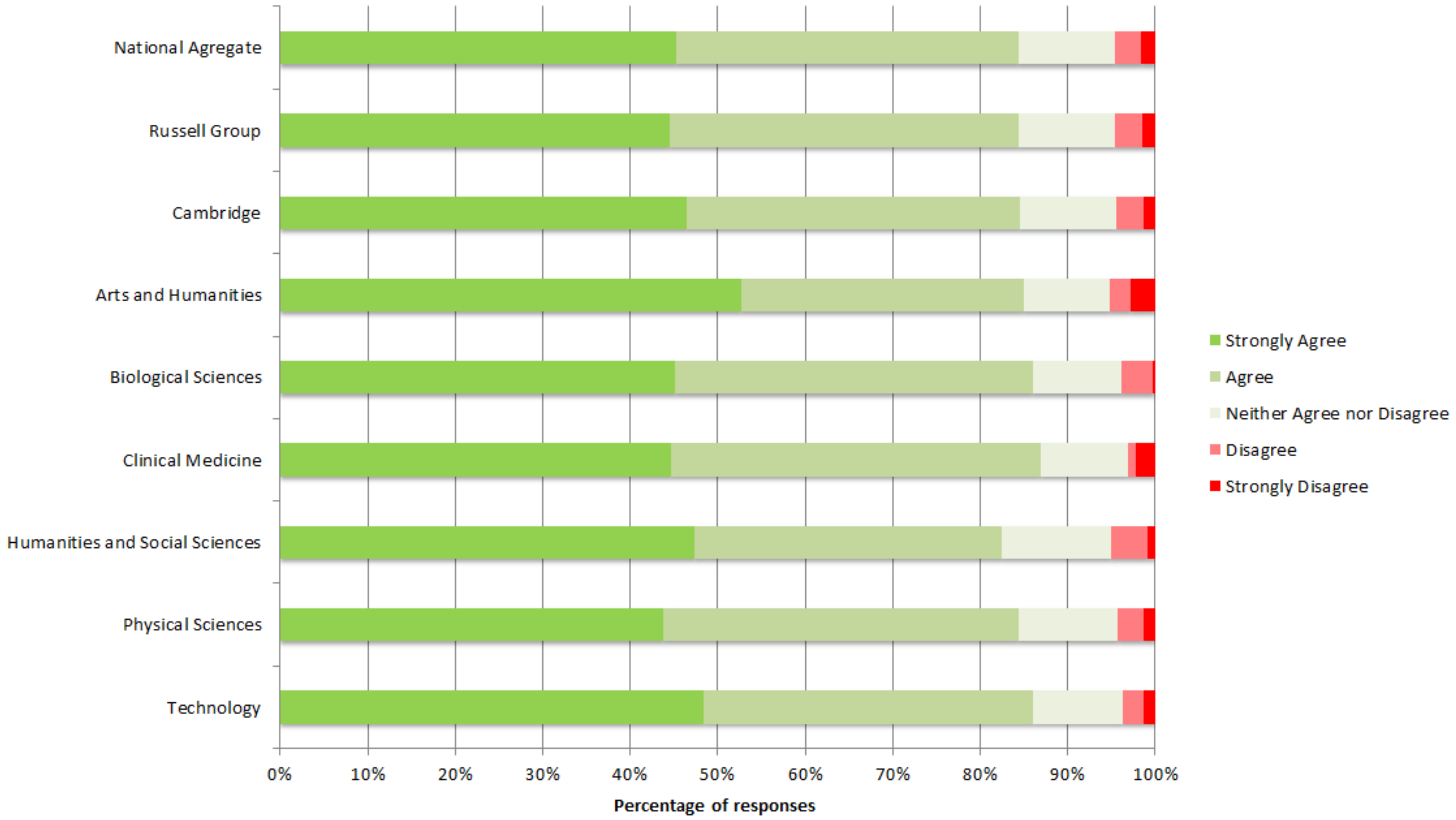
3.2.2 My experience so far has improved my analytical skills



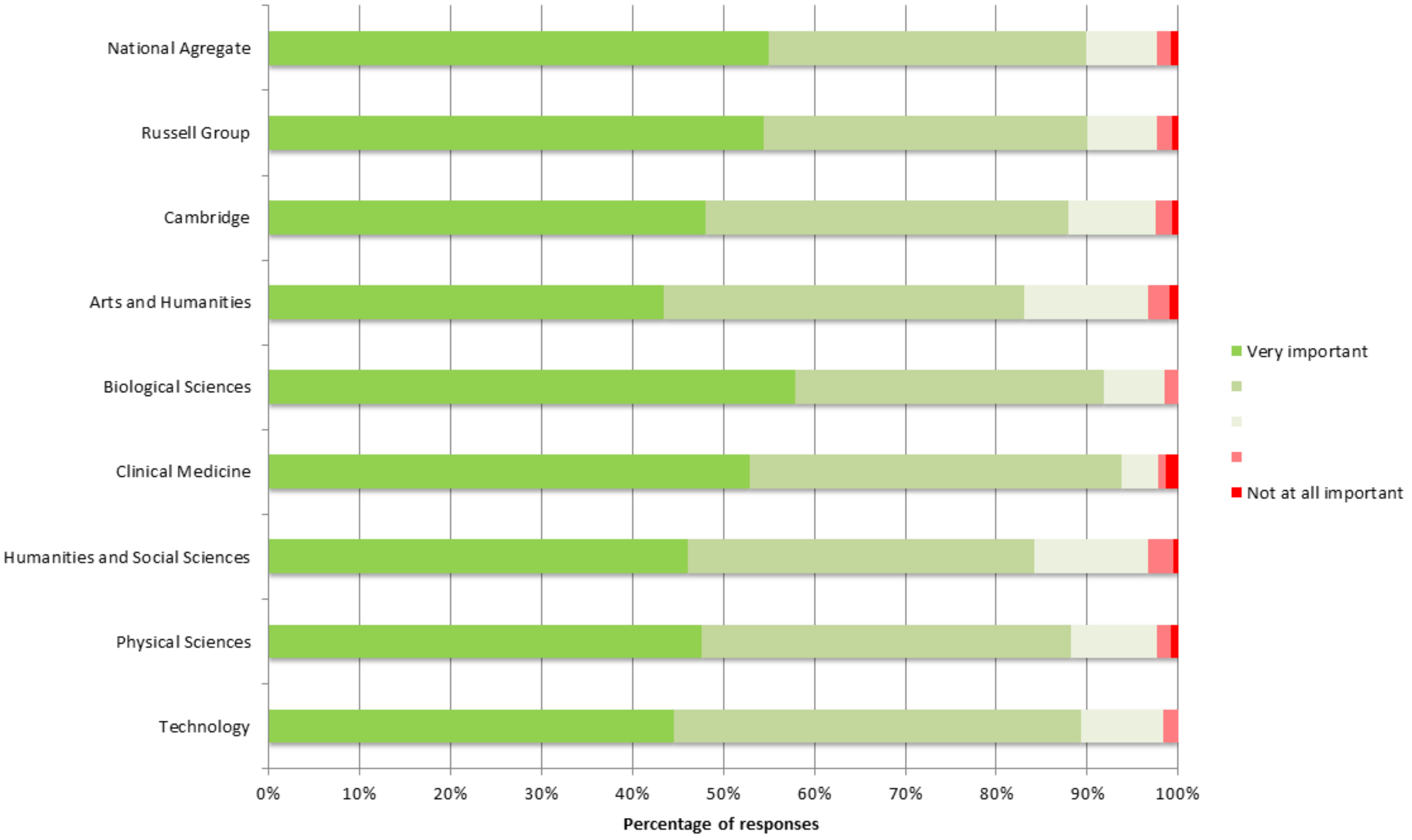
3.2.3 My experience so far has helped me to develop a range of communication skills



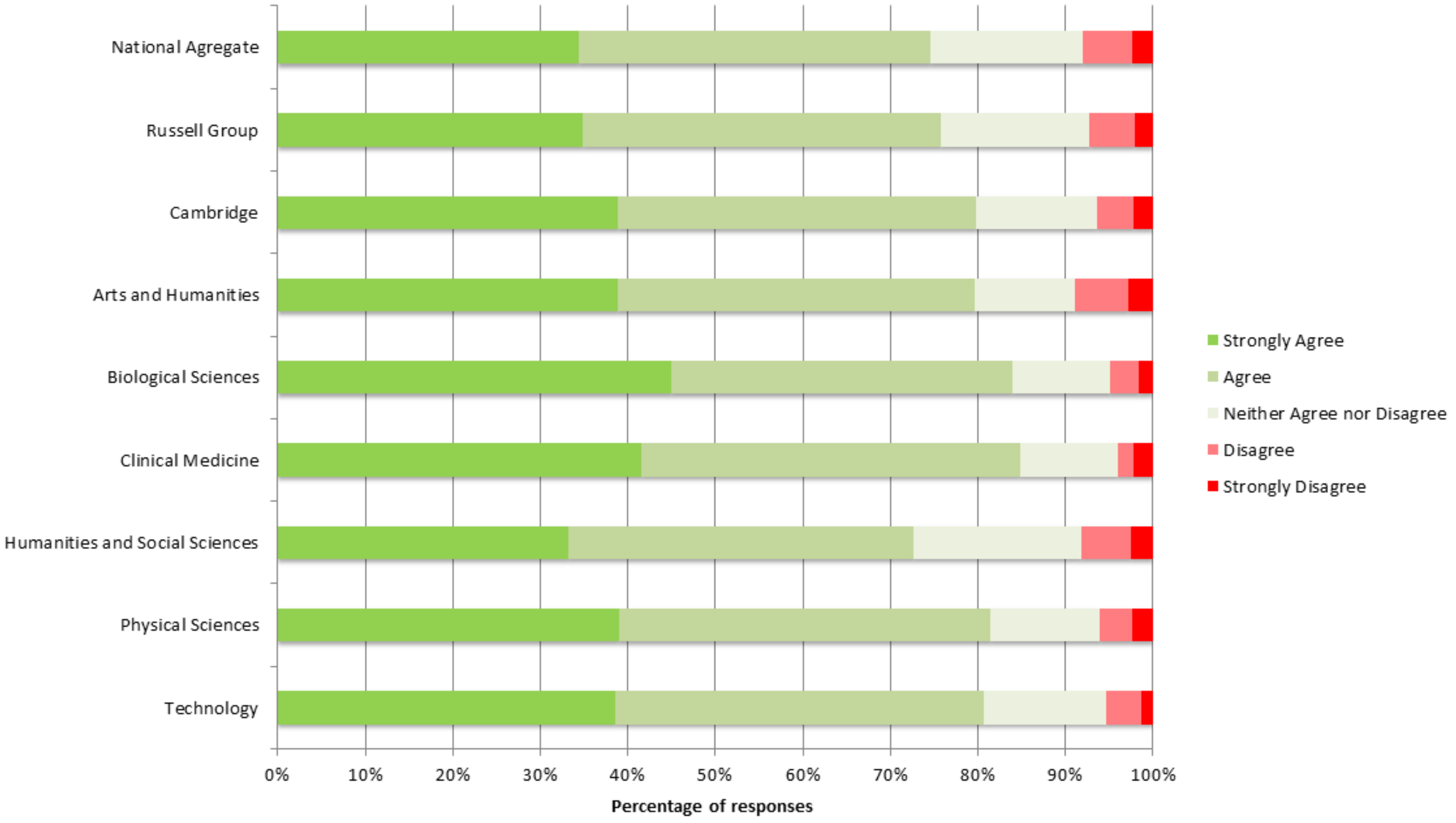
3.2.4 As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to learn independently



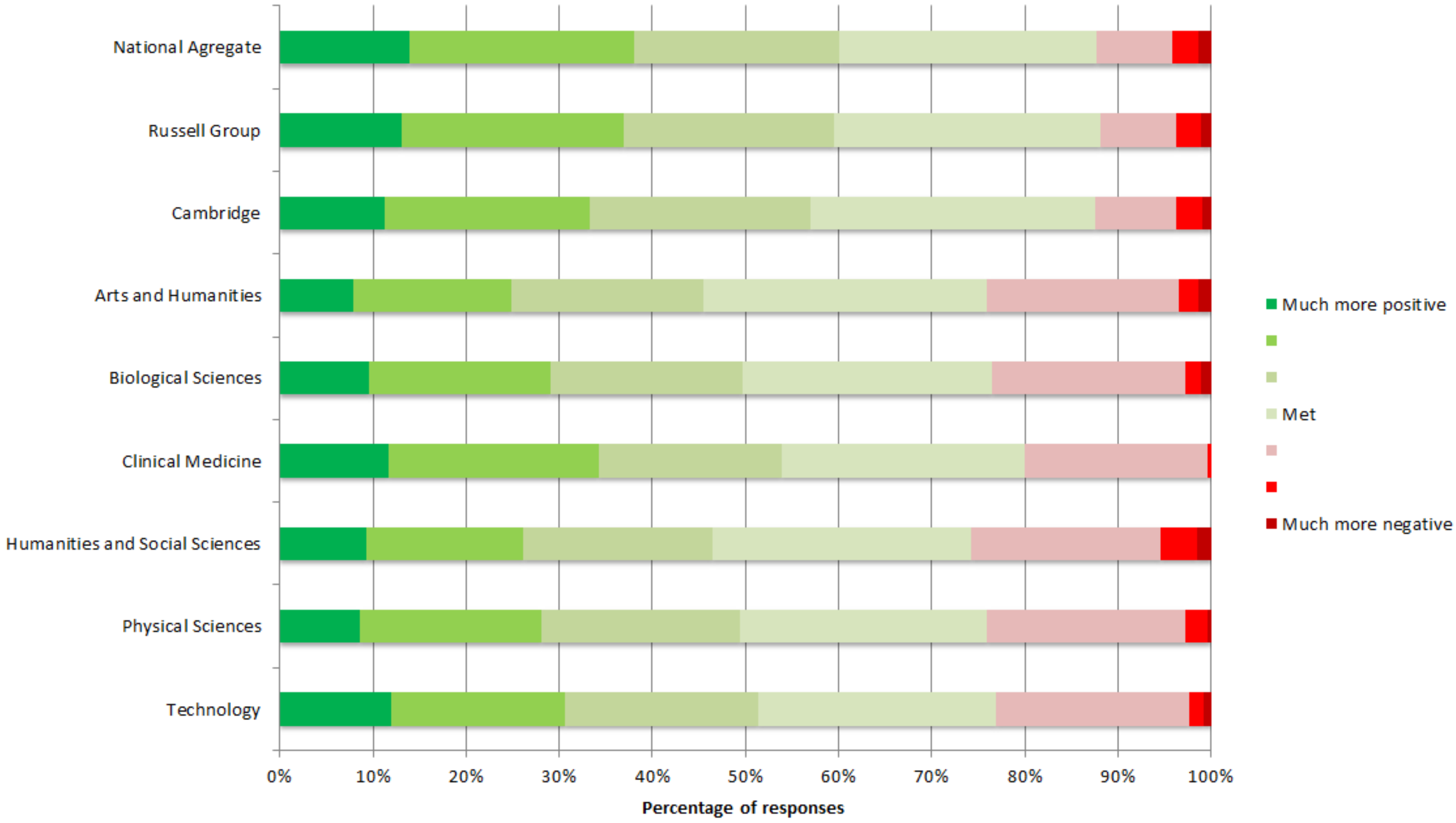
3.2.5 Importance of opportunities to develop a range of research skills



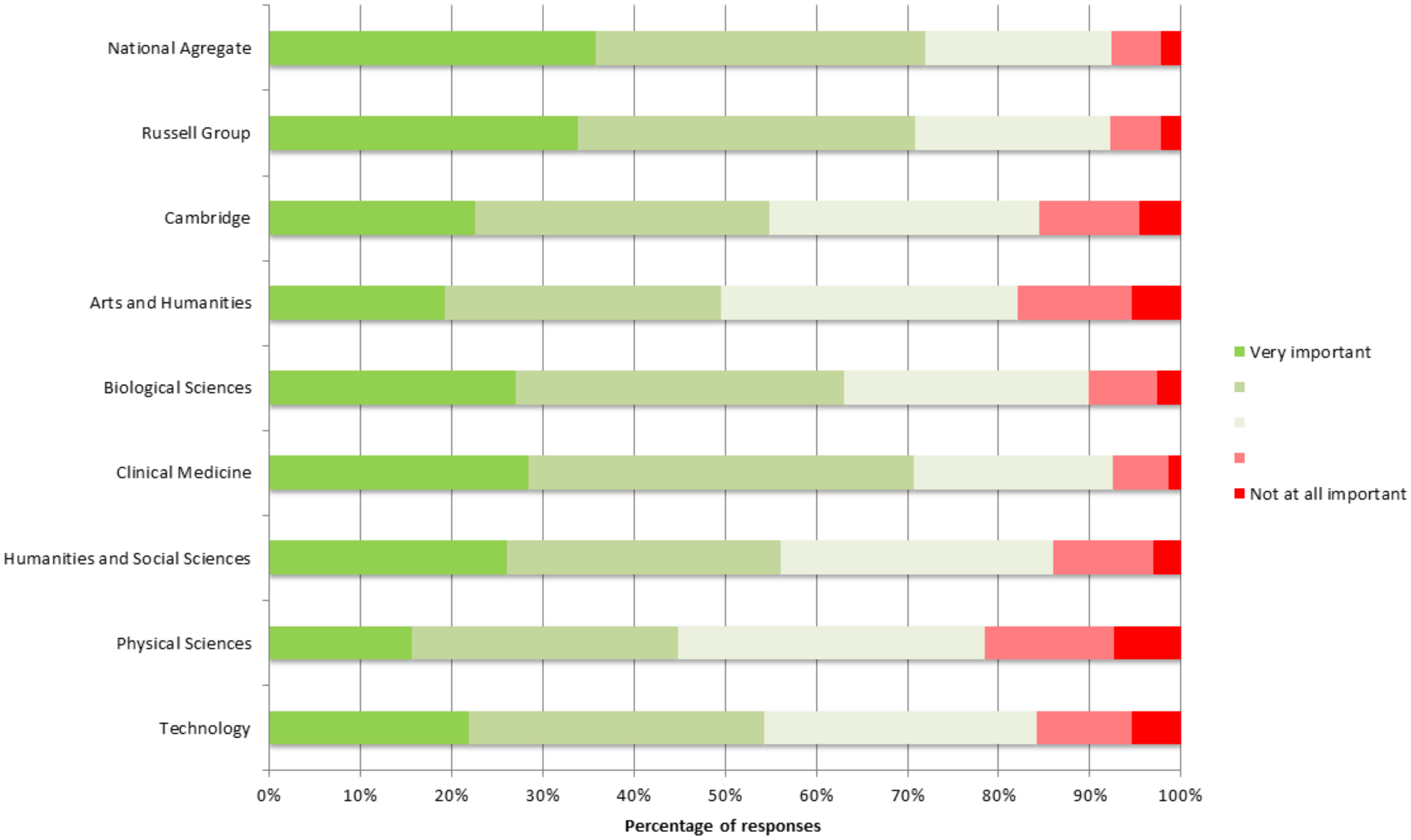
3.2.6 There are adequate opportunities available for me to further develop my research skills



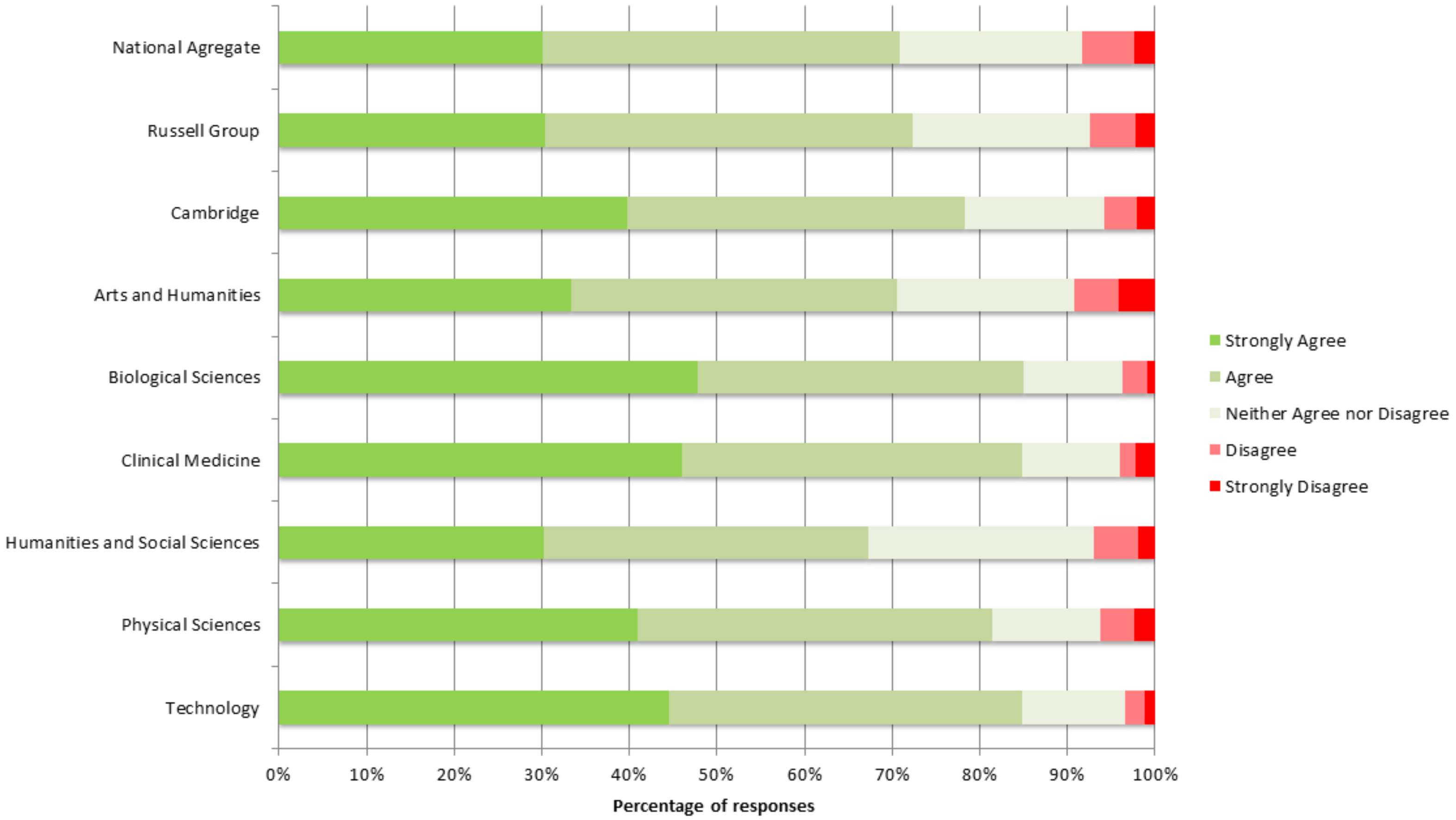
3.2.7 Opportunities to develop a range of research skills have met my expectations



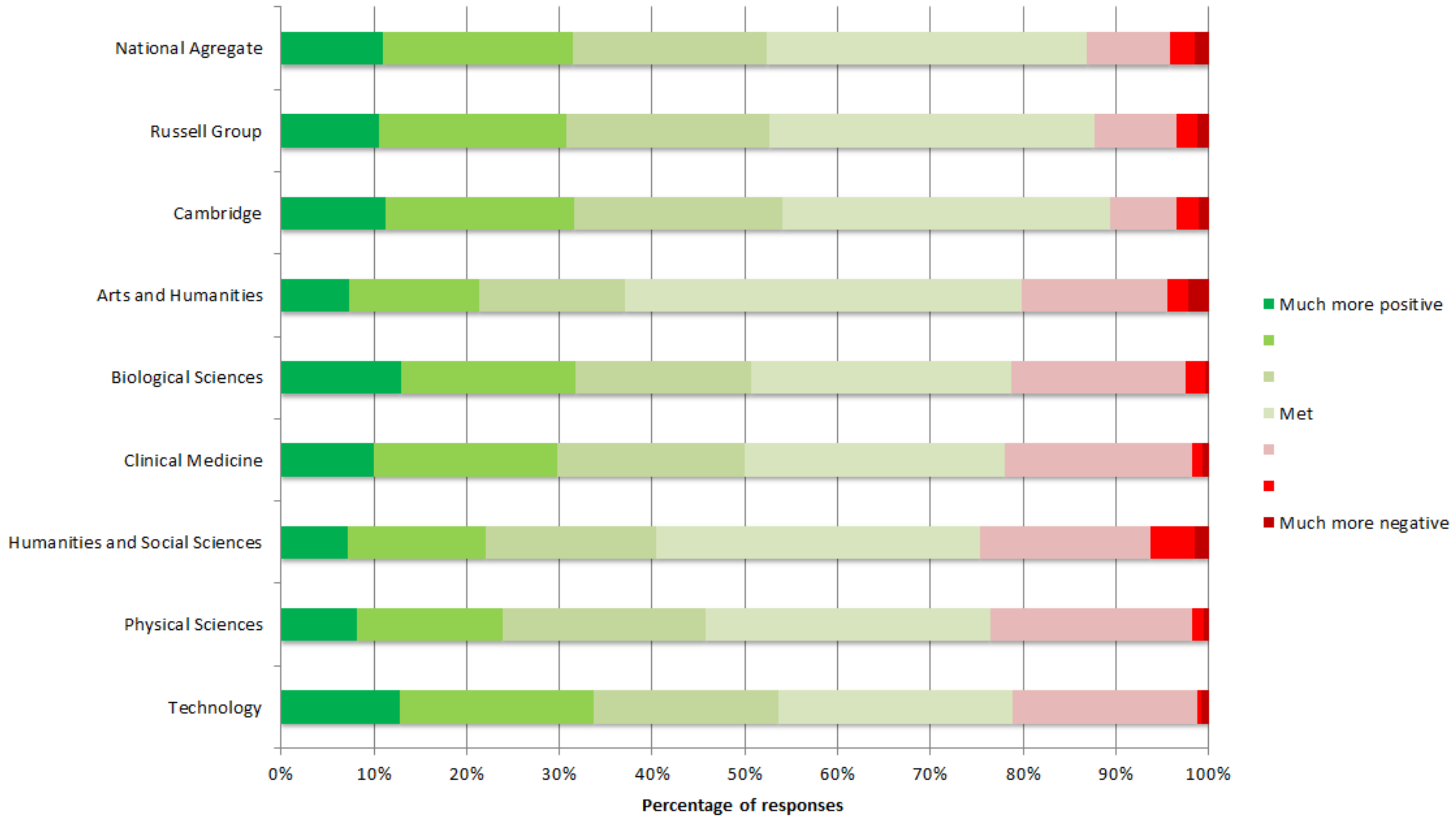
3.2.8 Importance of opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills



3.2.9 There are adequate opportunities available for me to further develop my transferable skills



3.2.10 Opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills have met my expectations



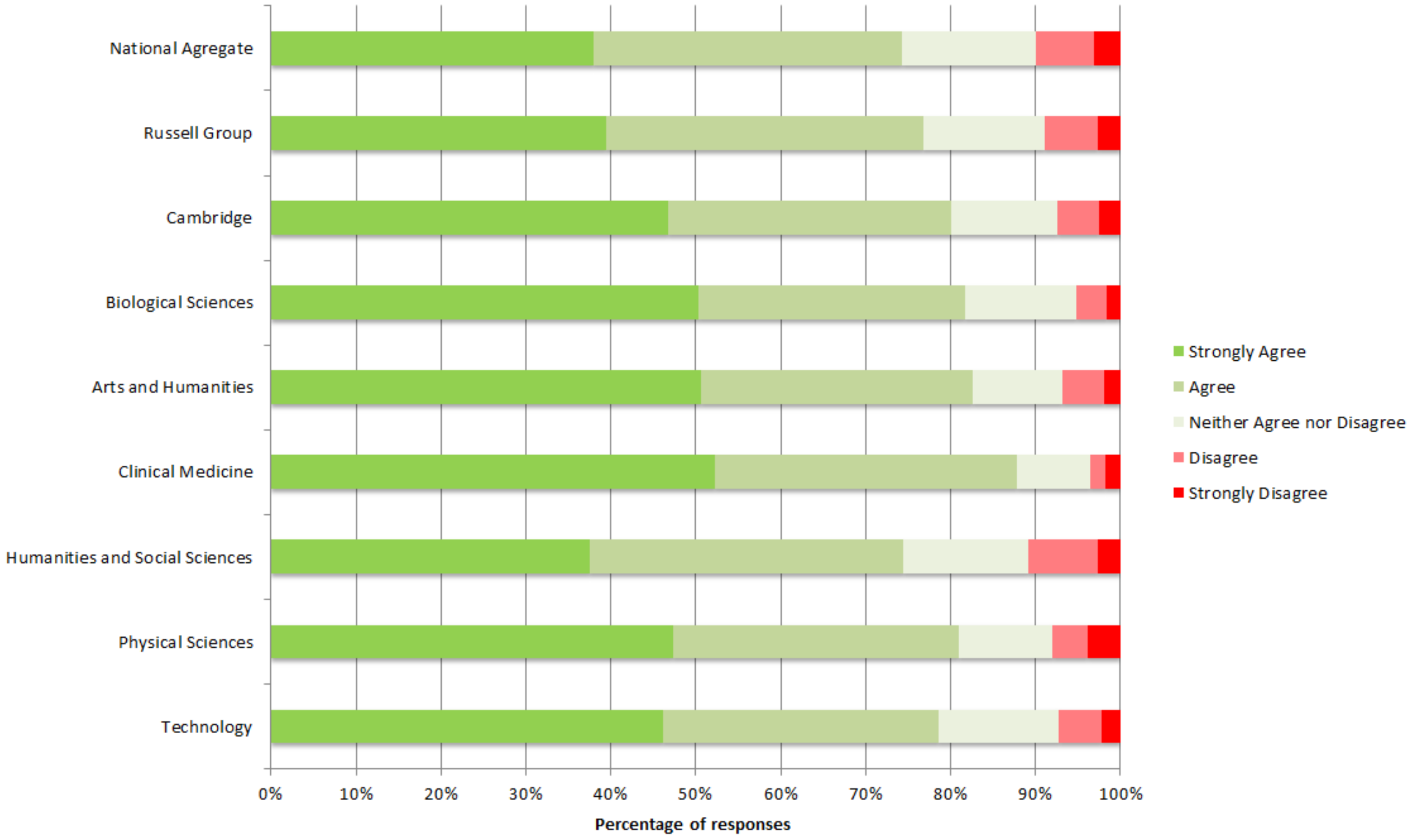
3.3 Infrastructure

Table 3.4: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to infrastructure items

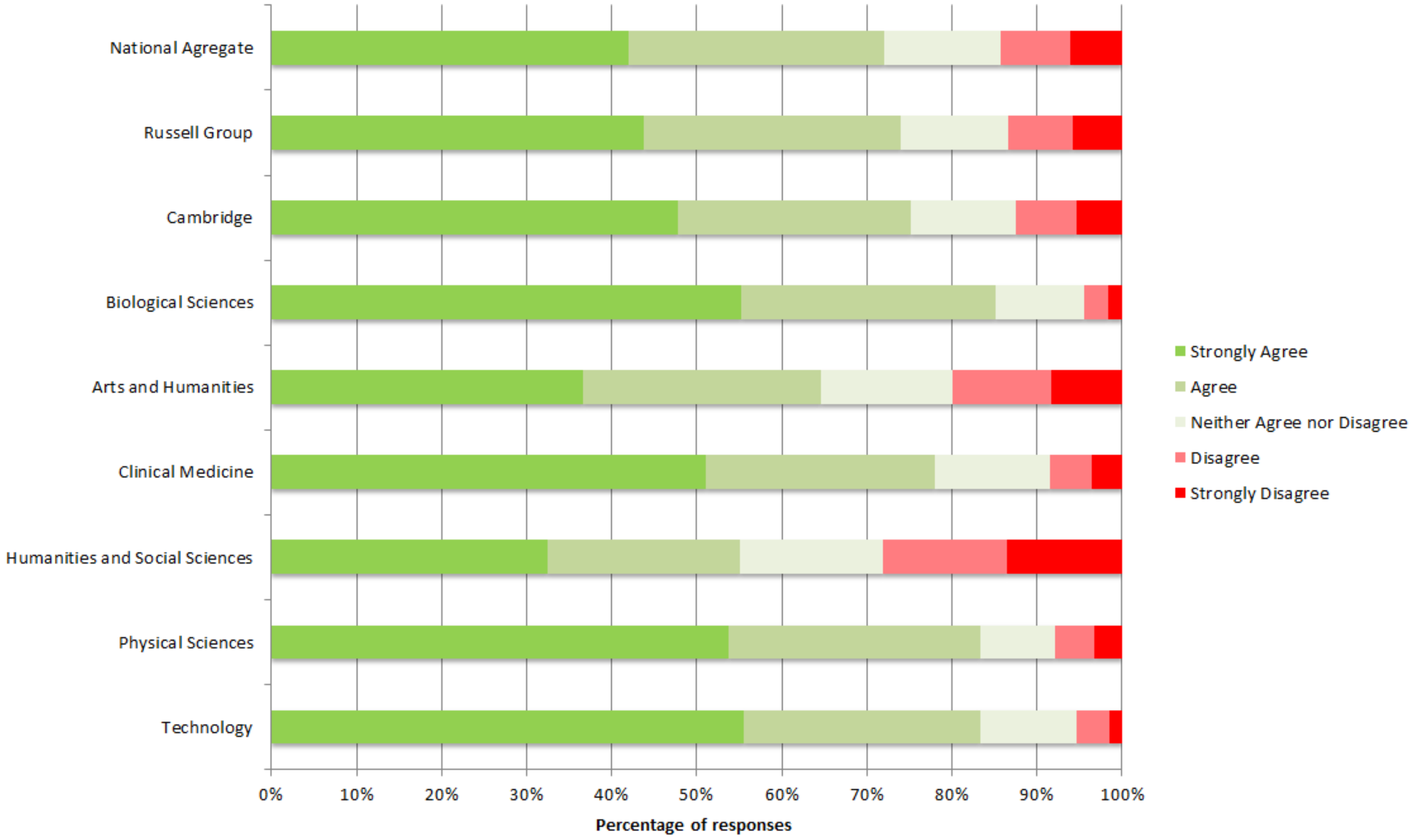
	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
I have adequate access to the **equipment** necessary for my research	80	74	77	6	3
I have a **suitable working space**	75	72	74	3	1
There is appropriate **financial support** for research activities	64	57	60	7	4
There is adequate provision of **computing resources** and facilities	77	72	74	5	3
There is adequate provision of **library** facilities	85	75	80	10	5
I have the **technical support** I need	77	70	70	7	7
Importance of access to appropriate facilities	89	88	90	1	-1
Access to appropriate facilities has **met my expectations**	84	83	84	1	0

Nationally, respondents were relatively positive in response to the Infrastructure items (Table 3.4), and at Cambridge this aspect was the second most positively rated on average overall (after Skills Development). The lowest endorsement was for the statement that there was appropriate financial support for research activities, although this is perhaps unsurprising given the inevitable competition for funding.

At Cambridge, respondents were more positive than the national aggregate on all of the Infrastructure scale items, with the greatest difference being for library facilities (10%), financial support (7%) and technical support (7%).

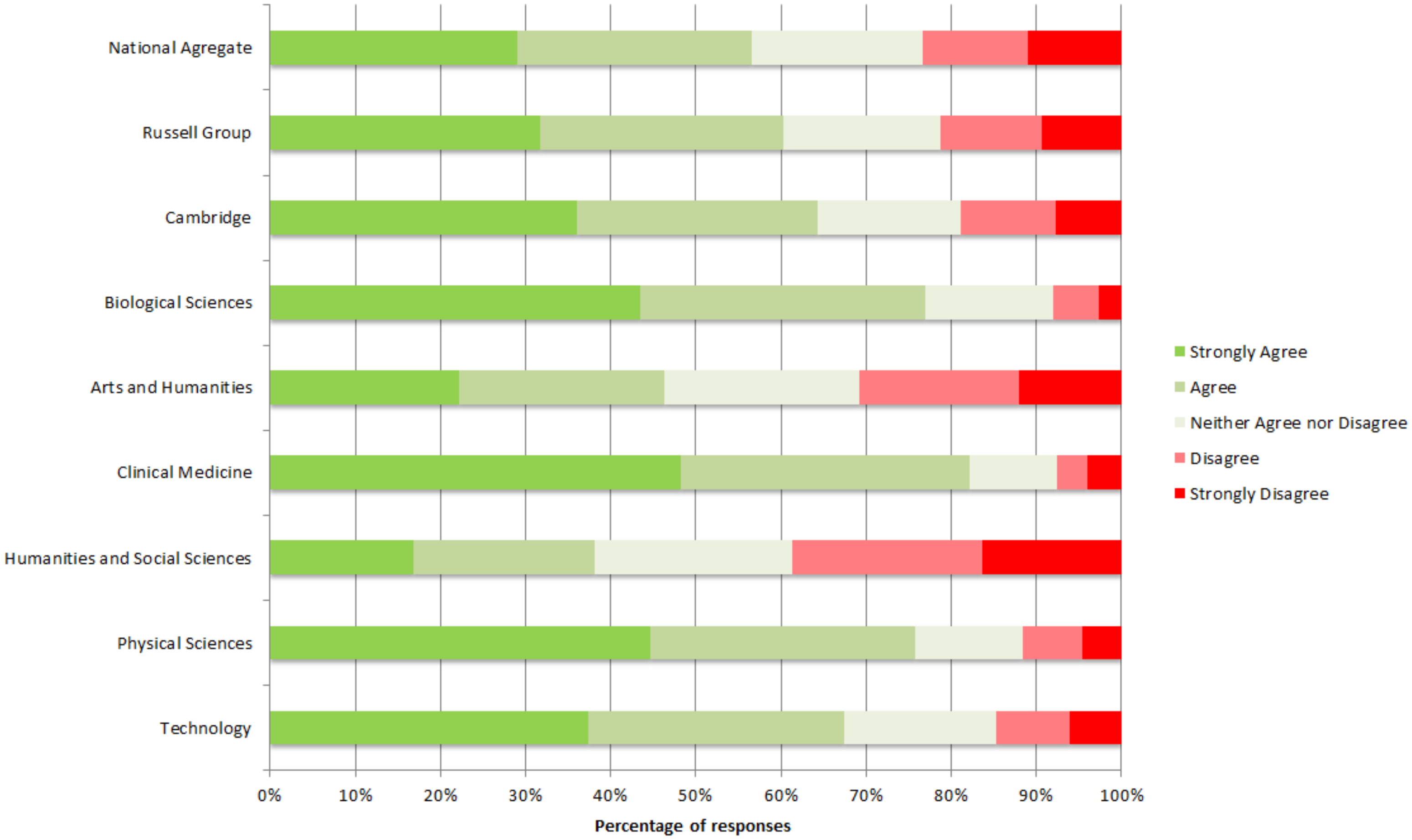


3.3.1 I have adequate access to the equipment necessary for my research

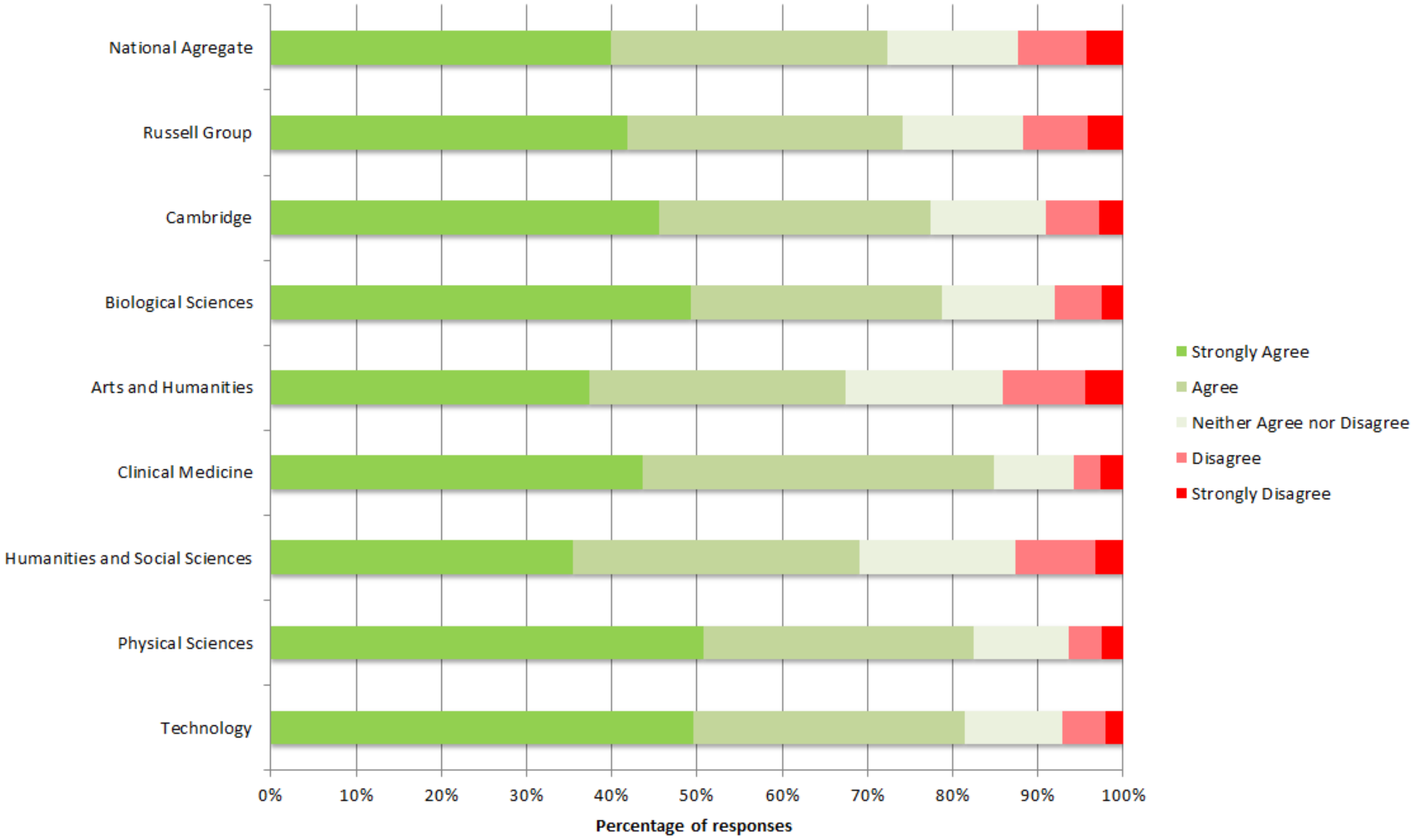


3.3.2 I have a suitable working space

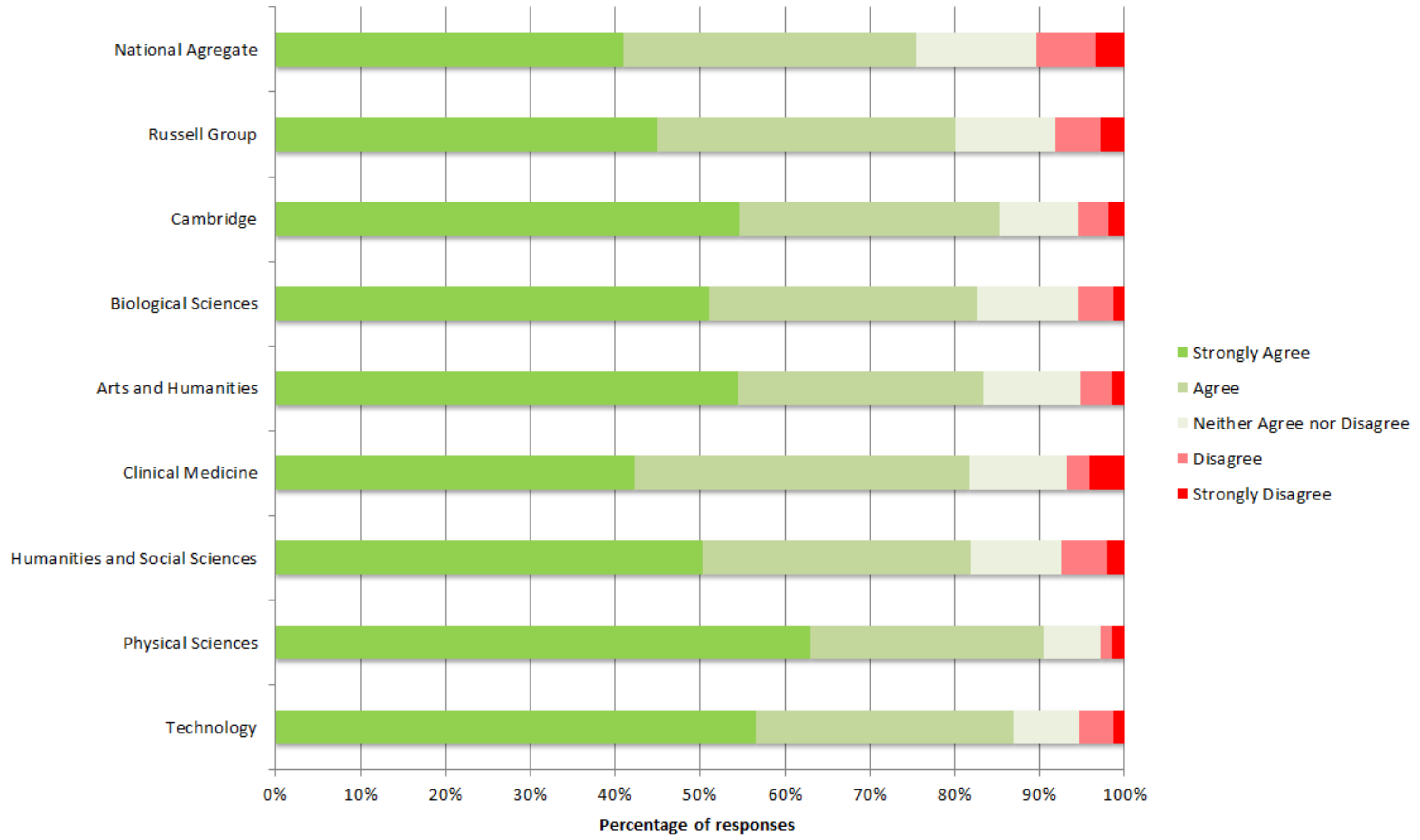
3.3.3 There is appropriate financial support for research activities



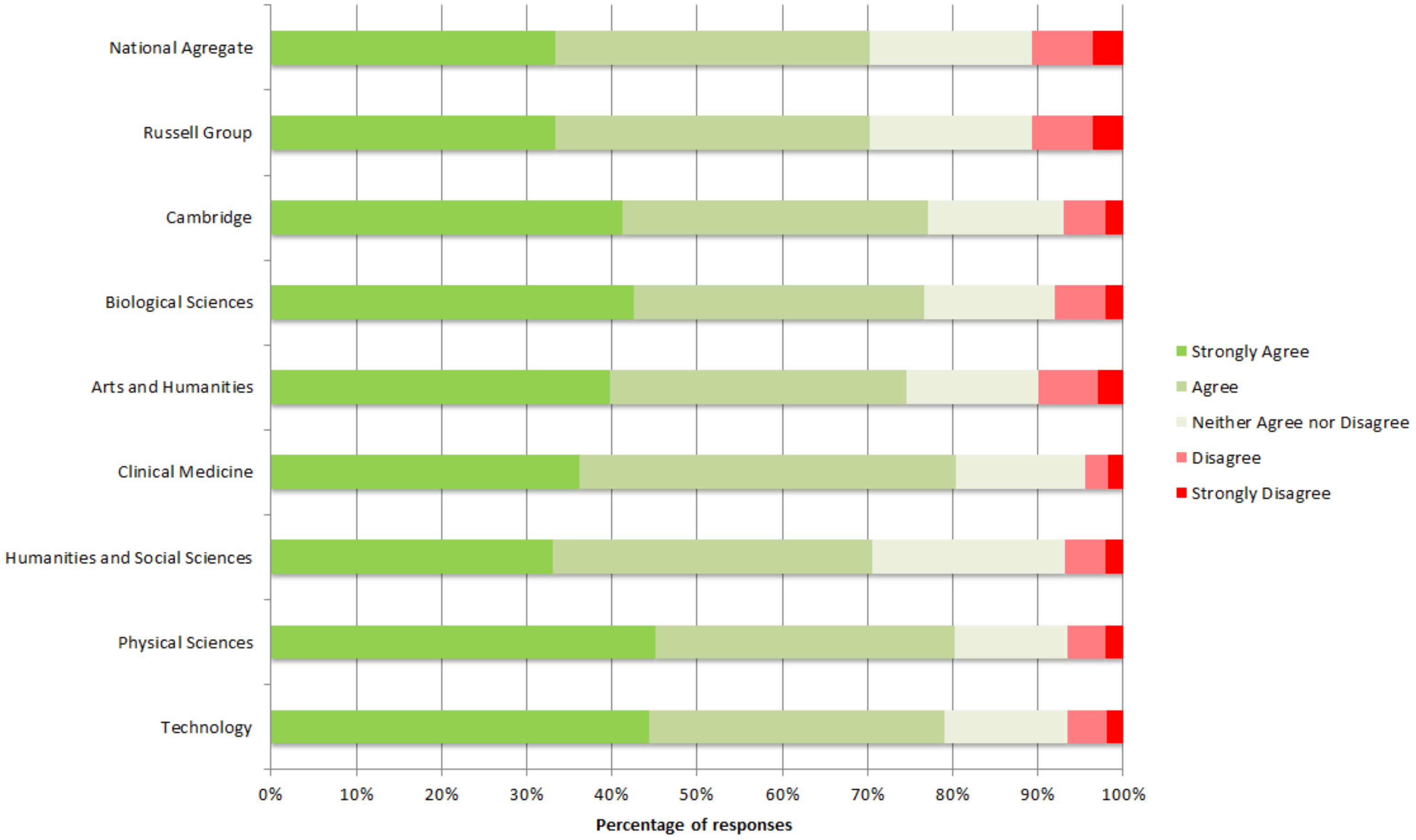
3.3.4 There is adequate provision of computing resources and facilities



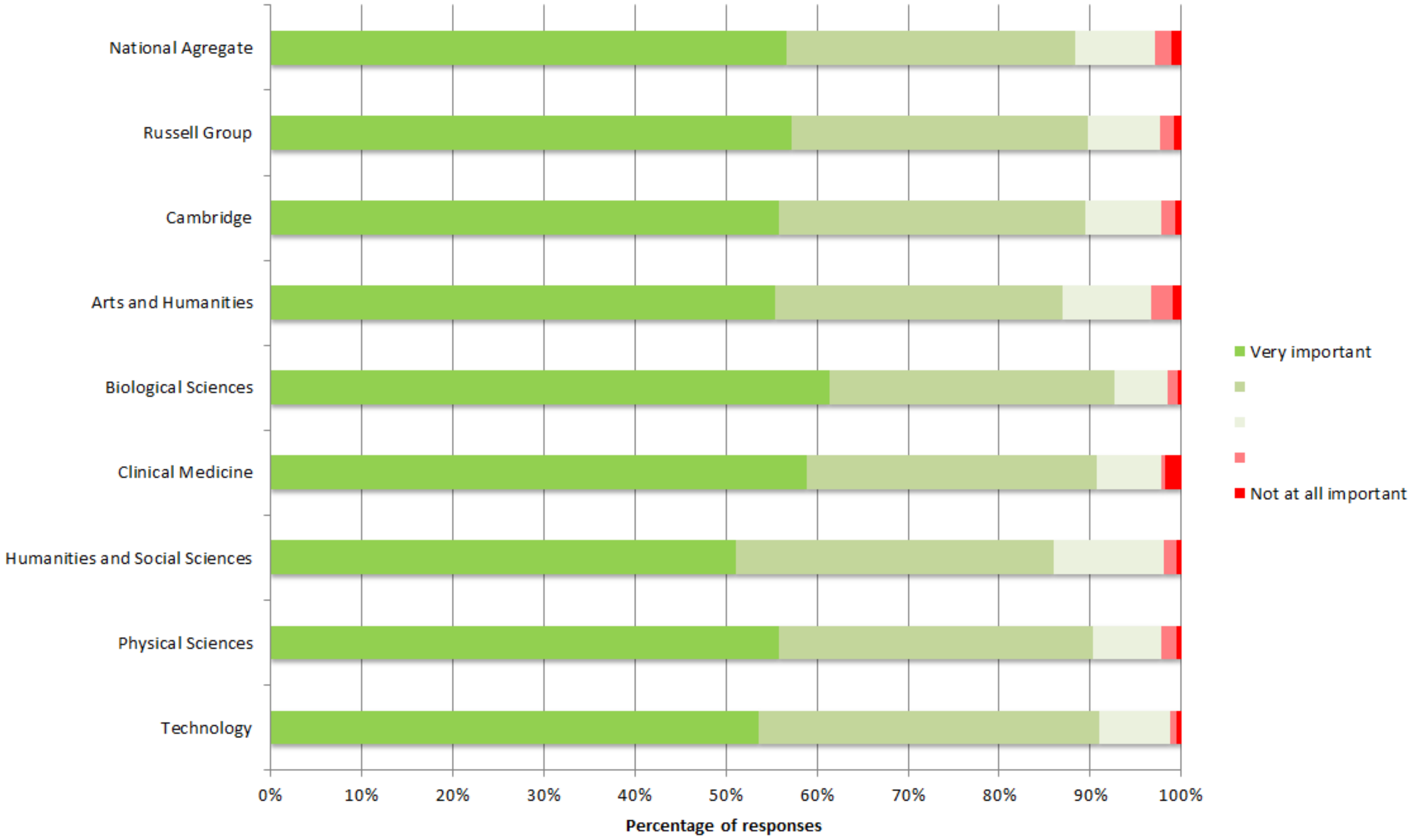
3.3.5 There is adequate provision of library facilities



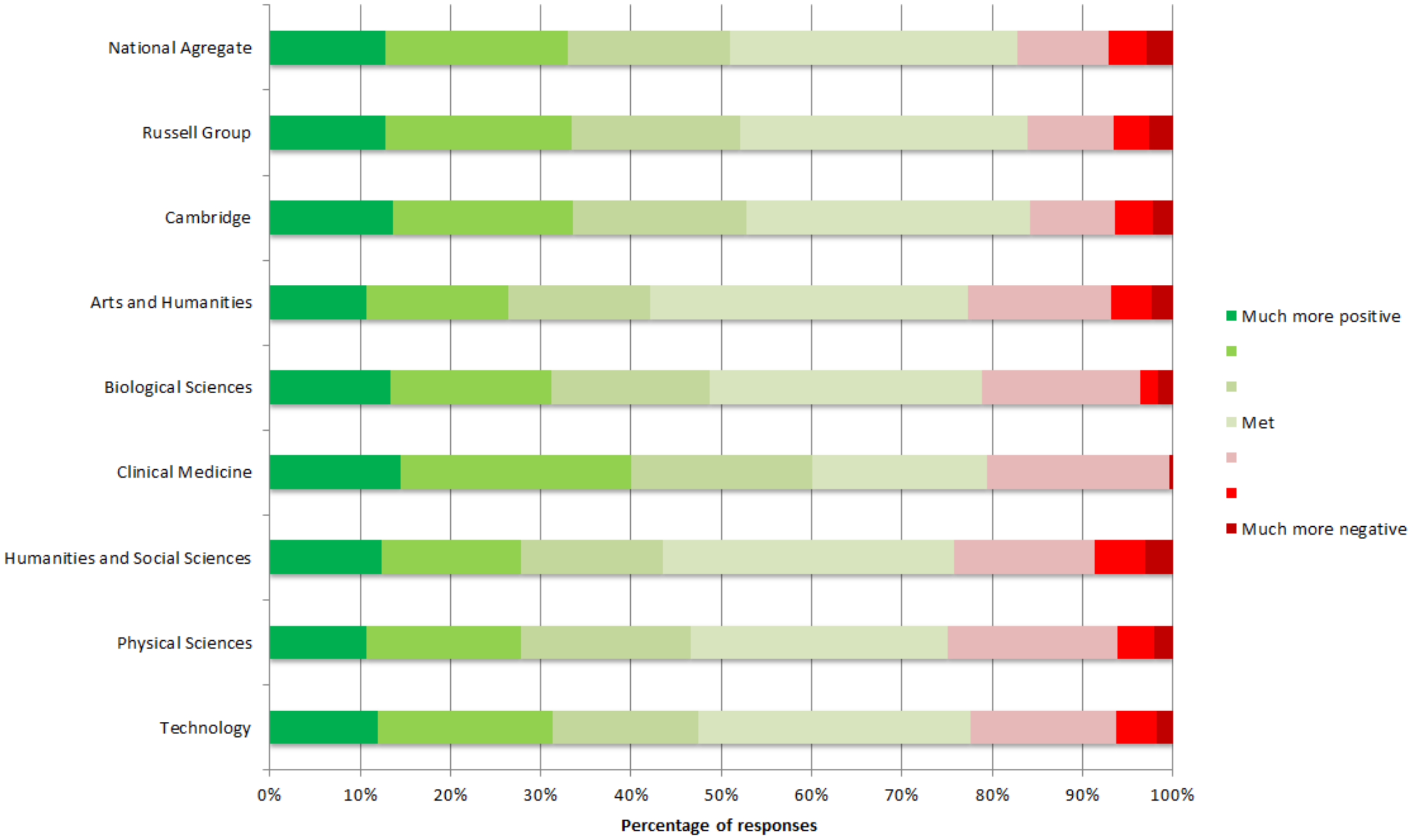
3.3.6 I have the technical support I need



3.3.7 Importance of access to appropriate facilities



3.3.8 Access to appropriate facilities has met my expectations



3.4 Intellectual Climate

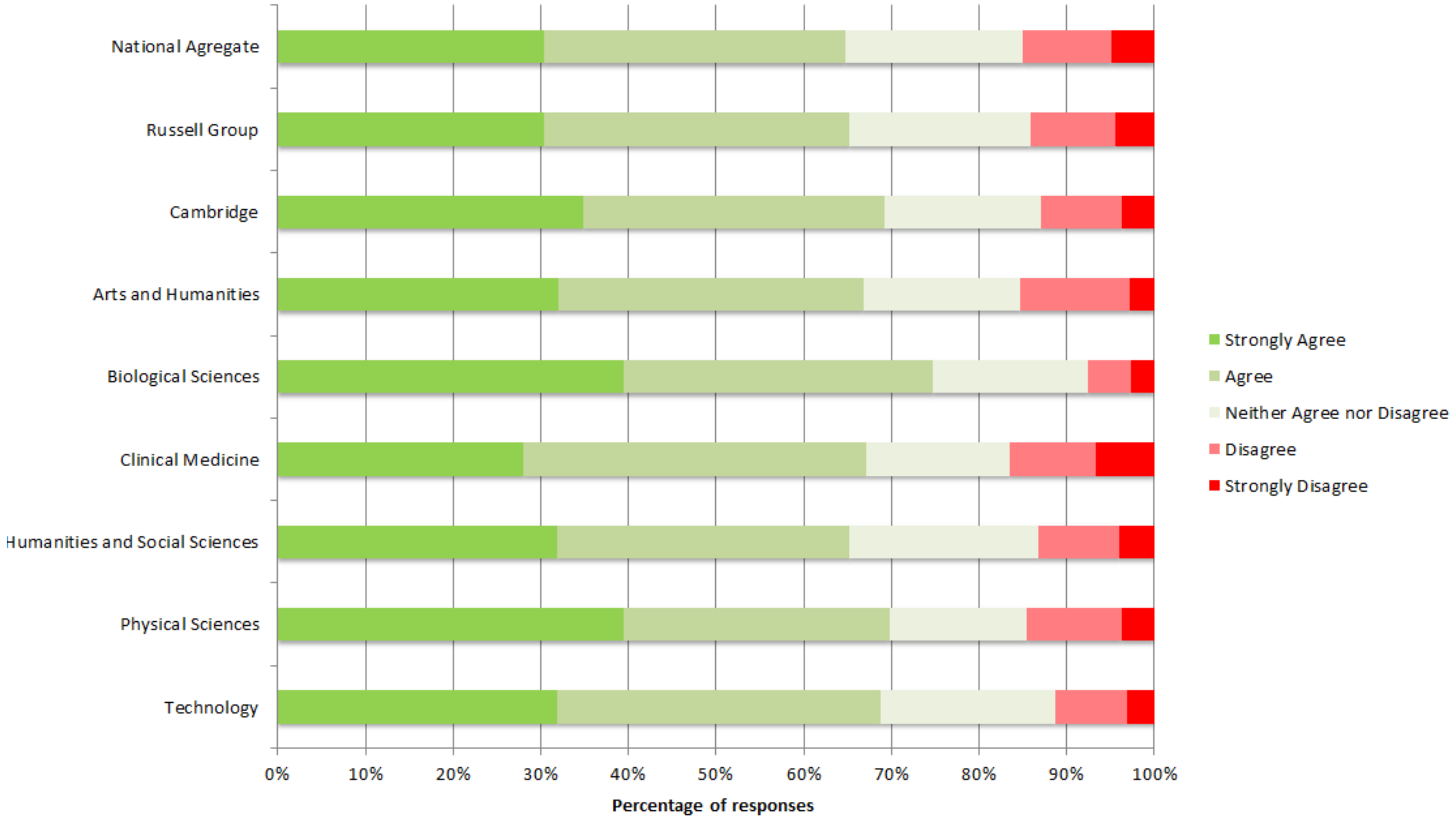
Table 3.5 Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to intellectual climate items

	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
My department provides opportunities for **social contact** with other research students	69	65	65	4	4
My department provides opportunities for me to become involved in the broader **research culture**	66	62	62	4	4
The **research ambience** in my department or faculty stimulates my work	62	58	59	4	3
I feel **integrated** into my department's community	56	54	54	2	2
My department provides a good **seminar programme** for research students	70	65	66	5	4
Importance of the research environment	86	84	85	2	1
The research environment has **met my expectations**	82	80	81	2	1

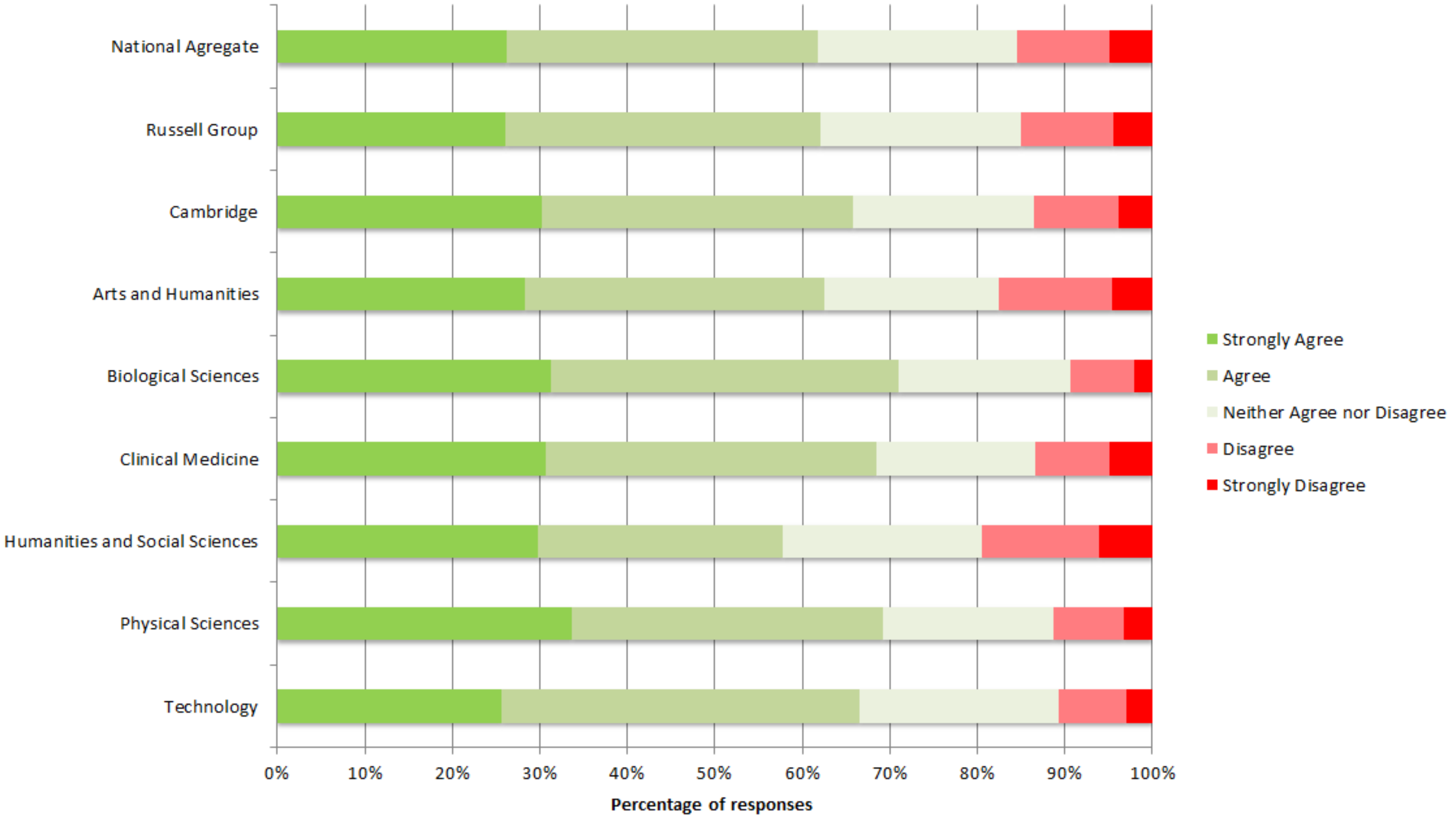
Nationally, Intellectual Climate scored the second lowest of all the scales in PRES, but at Cambridge it was fourth lowest, and all of the items were scored more positively than was the national trend (Table 3.5).

Nonetheless, even at Cambridge only just over half agreed that they felt integrated into their department’s community (56%), and only 62% felt stimulated by the research ambience in their department or faculty.

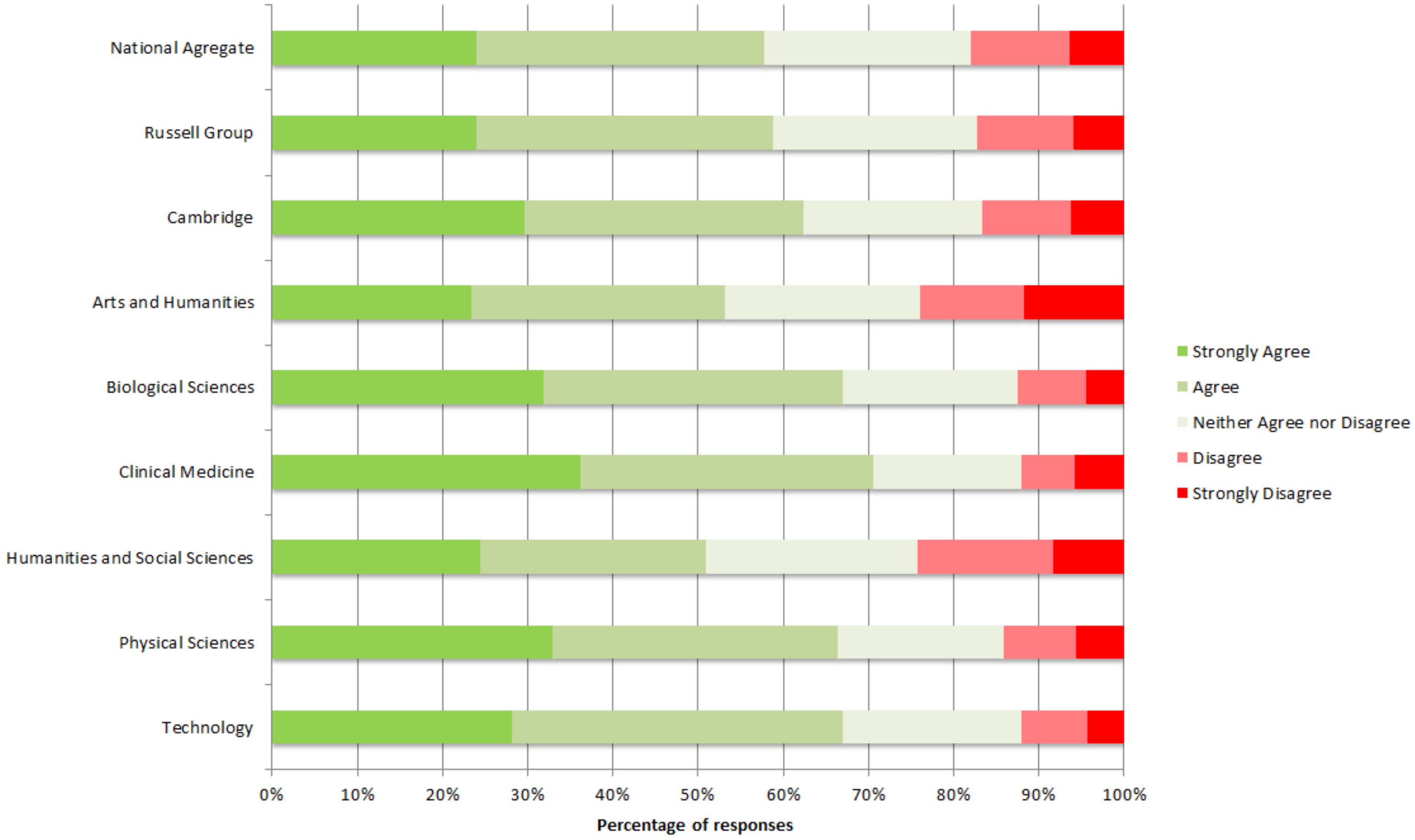
3.4.1 My department provides opportunities for social contact with other research students



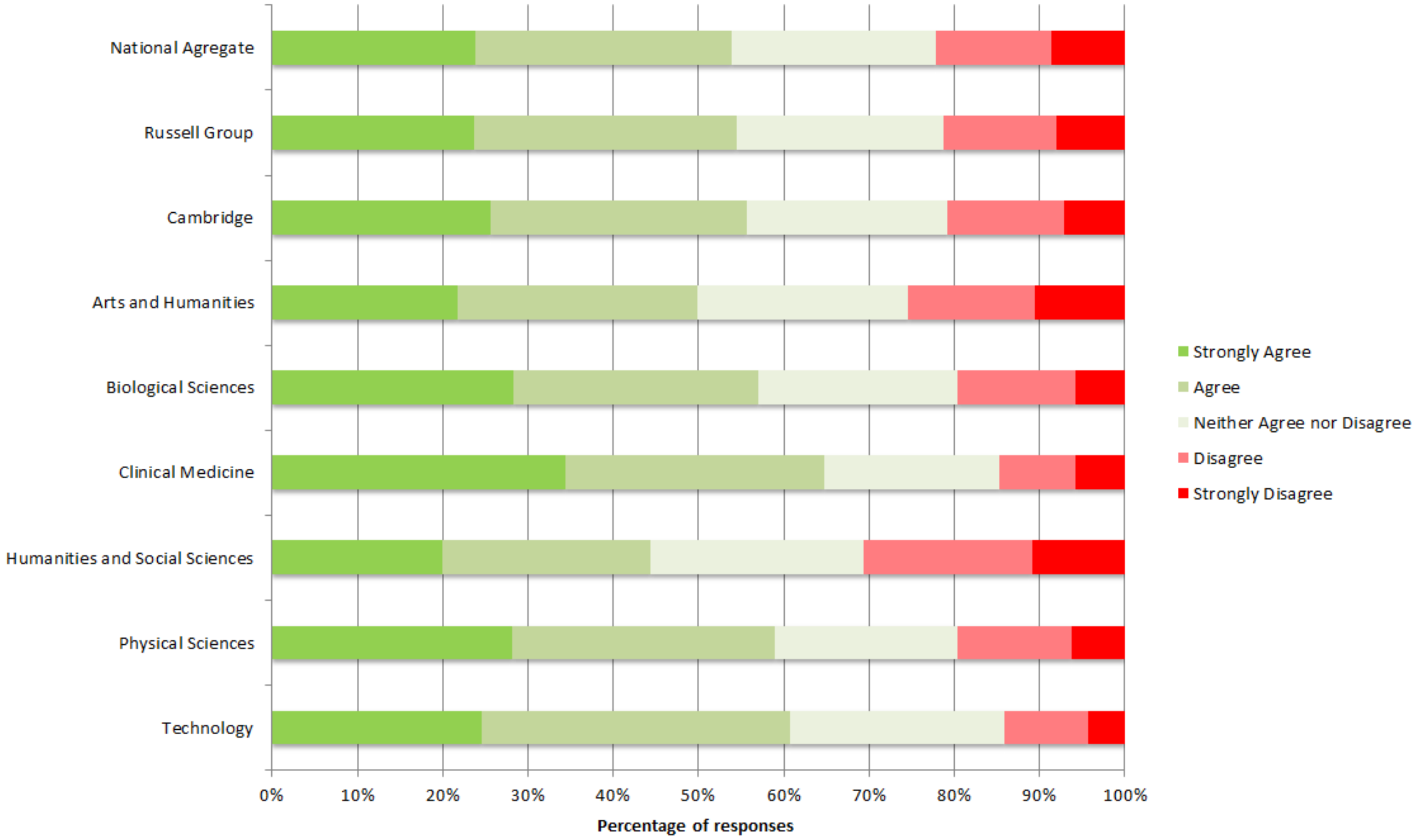
3.4.2 My department provides opportunities for me to become involved in the broader research culture



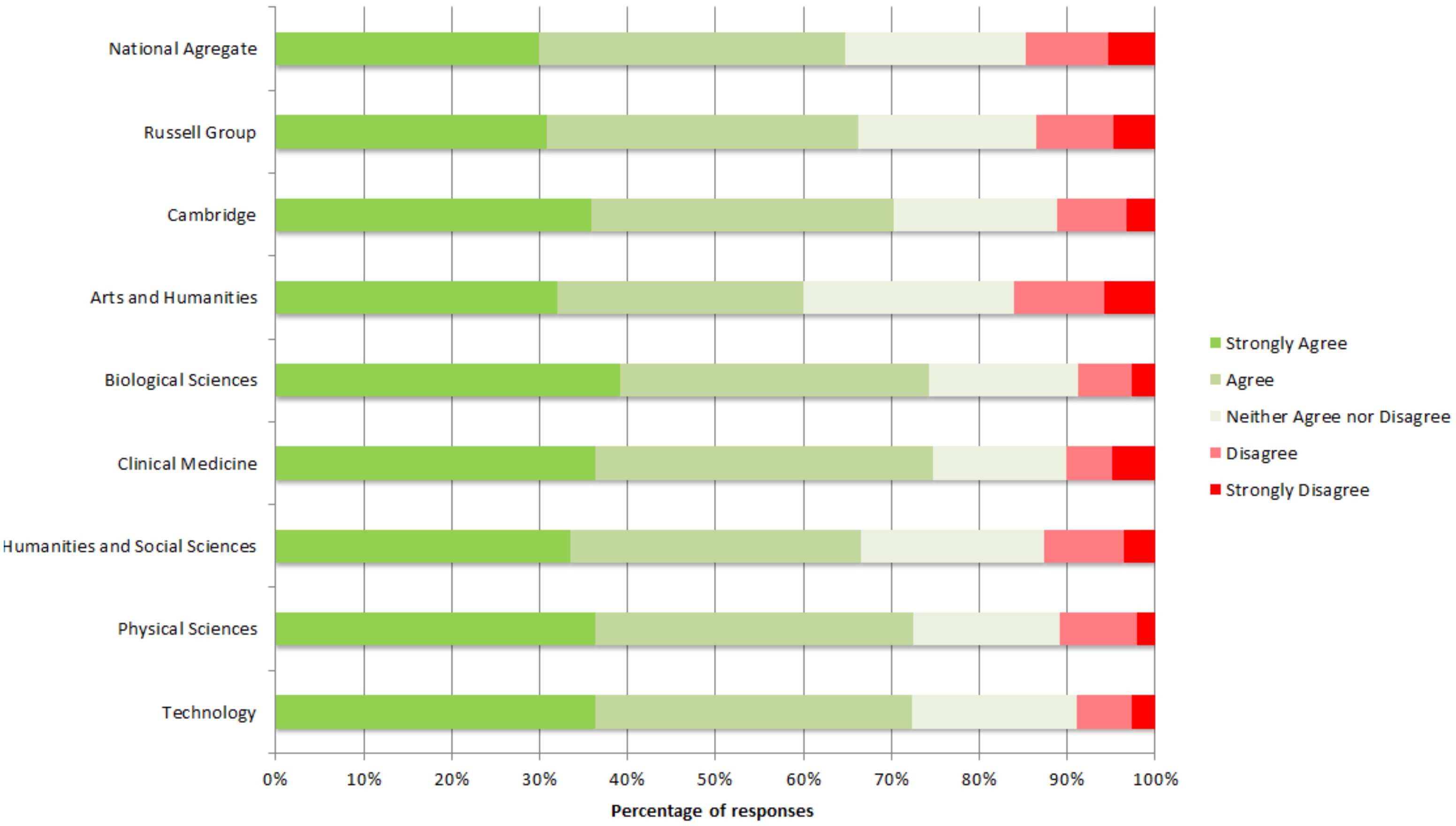
3.4.3 The research ambience in my department or faculty stimulates my work



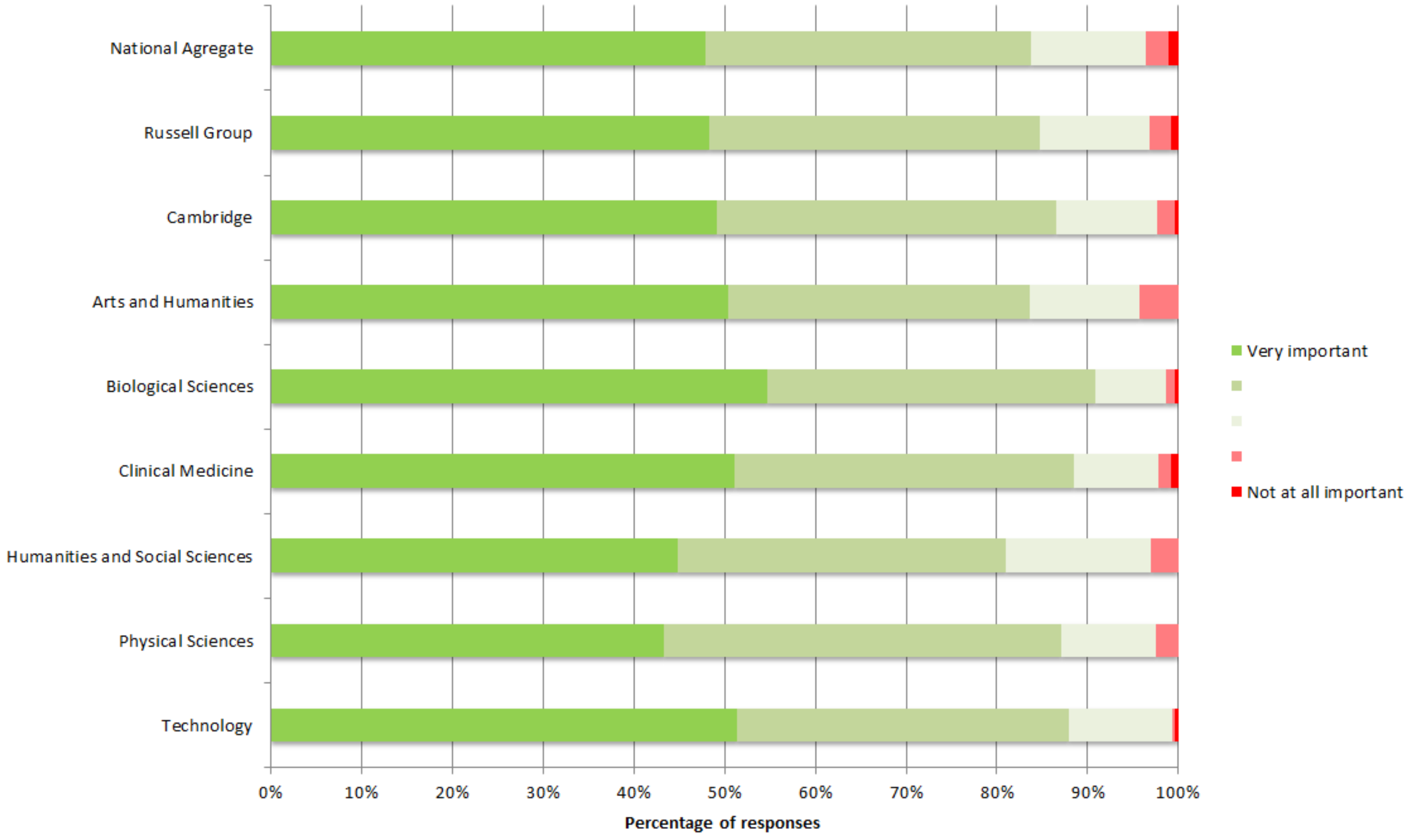
3.4.4 I feel integrated into my department's community



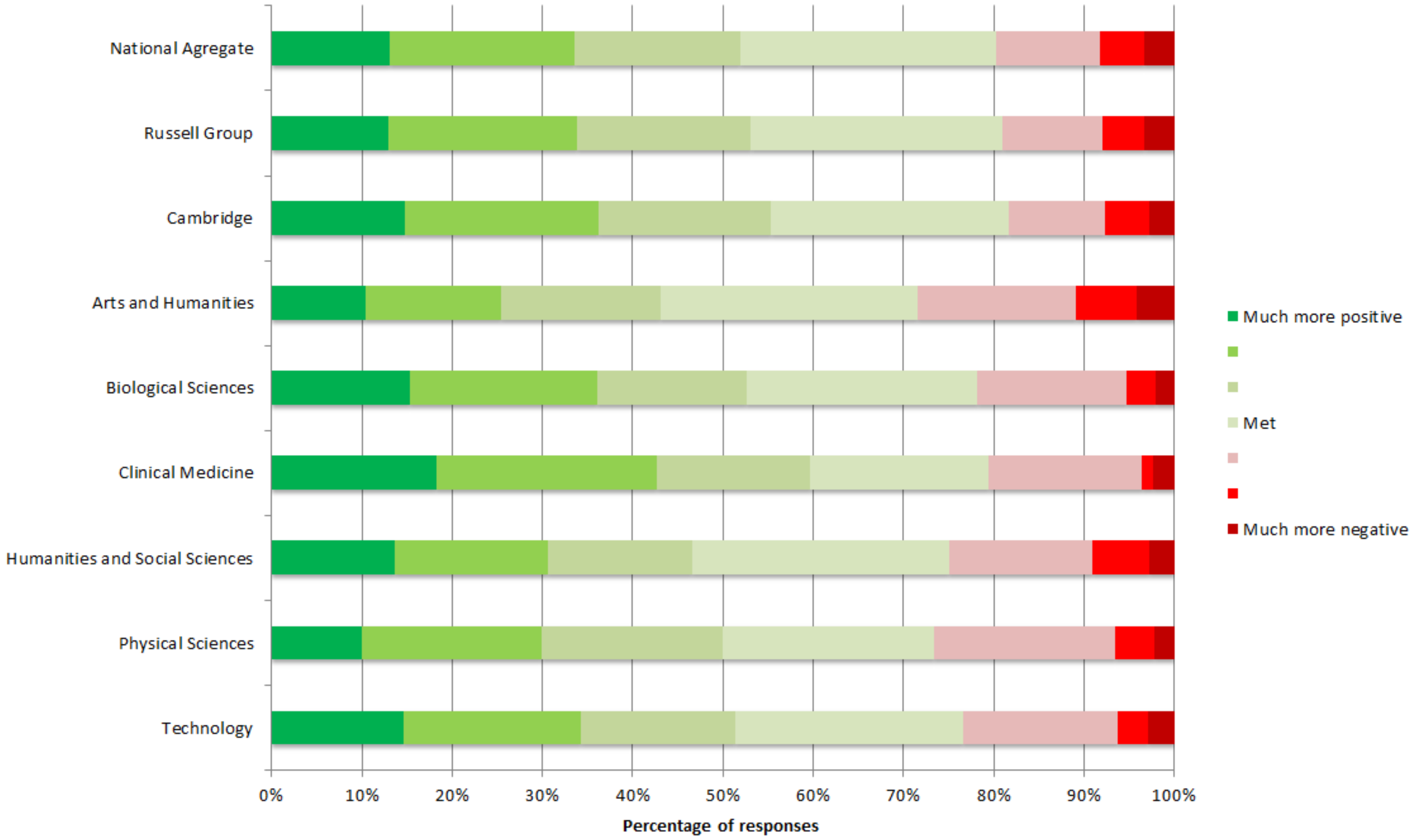
3.4.5 My department provides a good seminar programme for research students



3.4.6 Importance of the research environment



3.4.7 The research environment has met my expectations



3.5 Goals and Standards

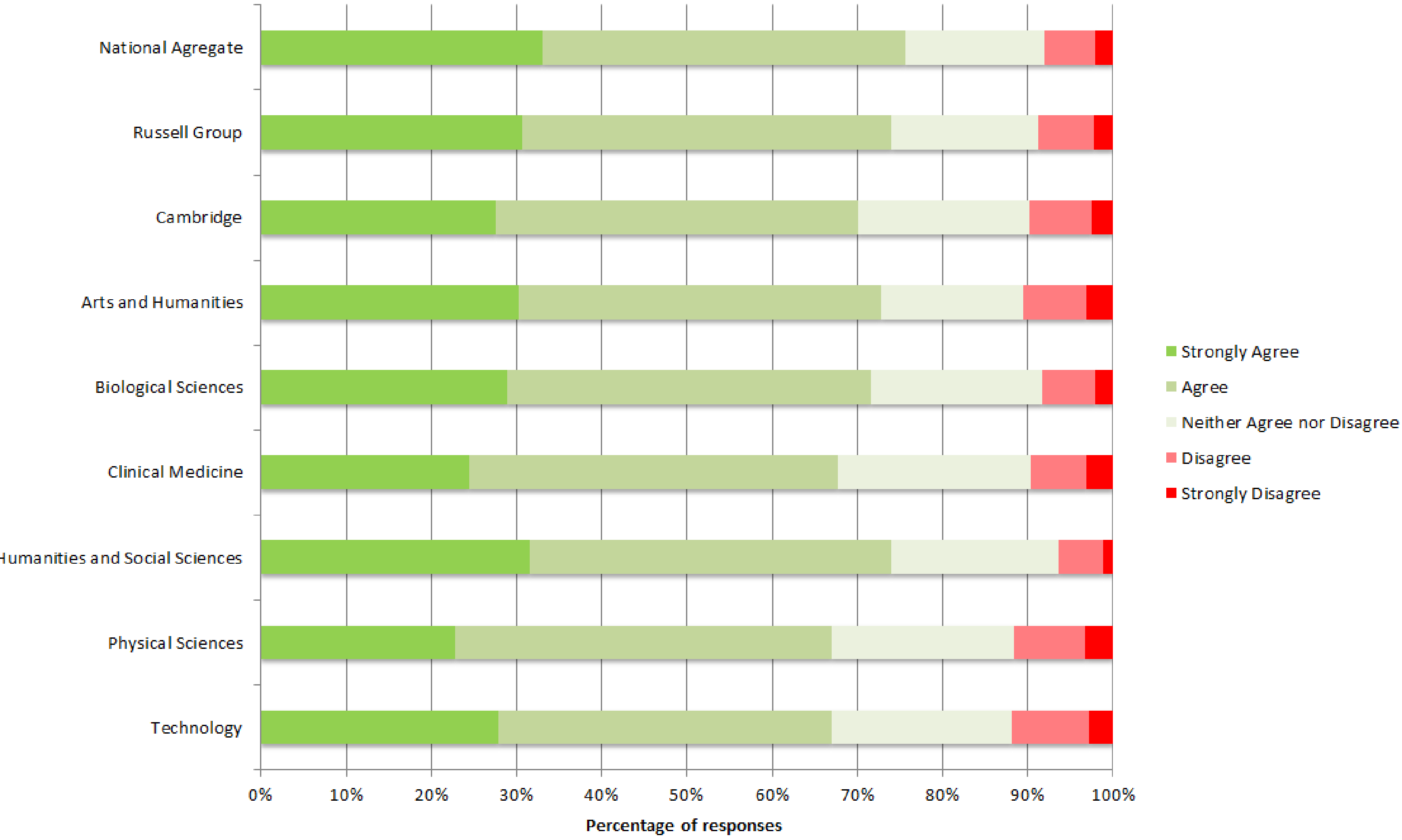
Nationally, responses were generally positive in this area, with between 76% and 79% agreeing on all items except for understanding the requirements of thesis examination, for which below 70% agreed (Table 3.6).

Cambridge respondents were less positive than the national and Russell Group averages on all items in this scale, most markedly on ‘I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress’ (6% lower endorsement).

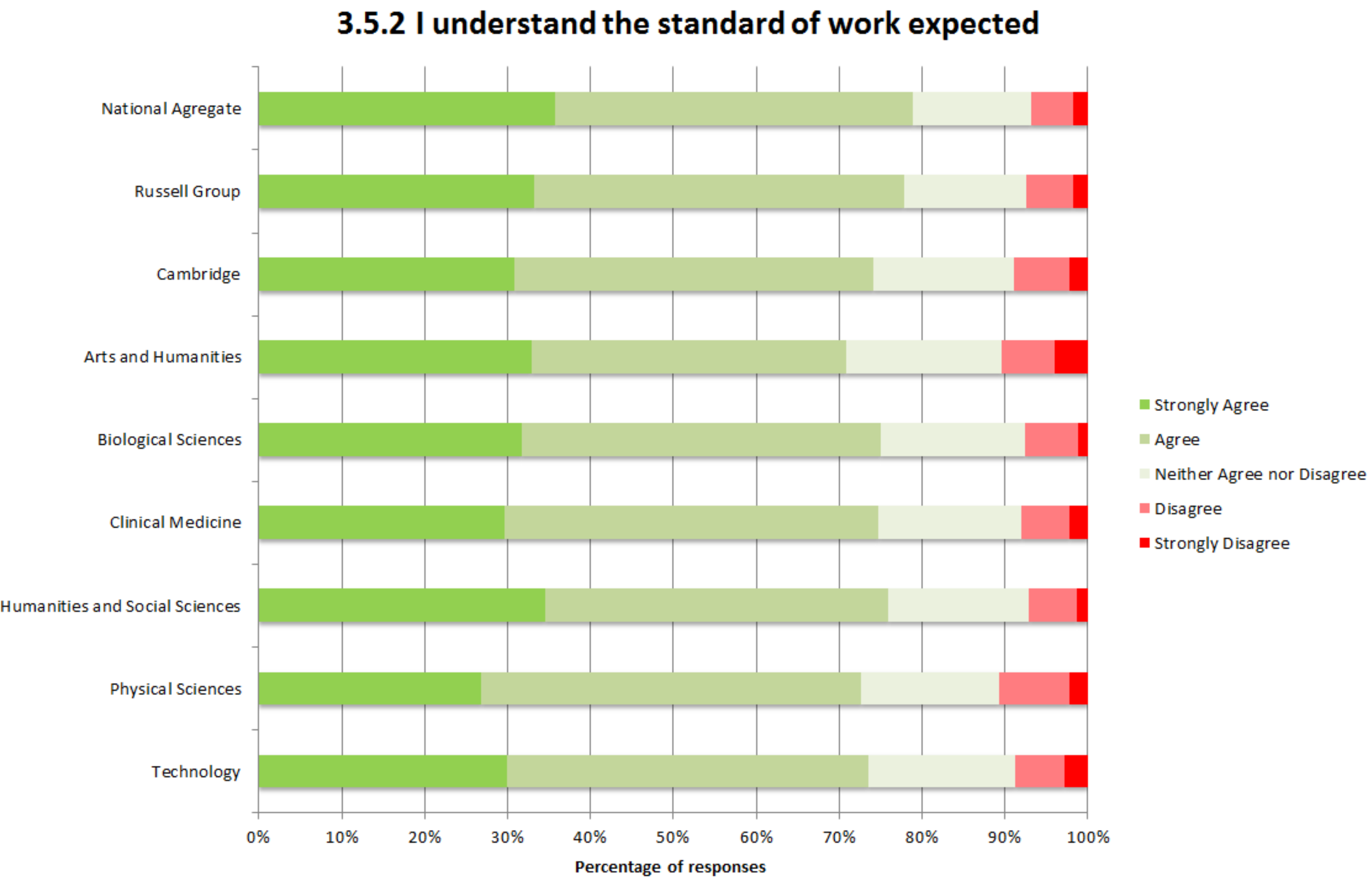
Table 3.6: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to goals and standards items

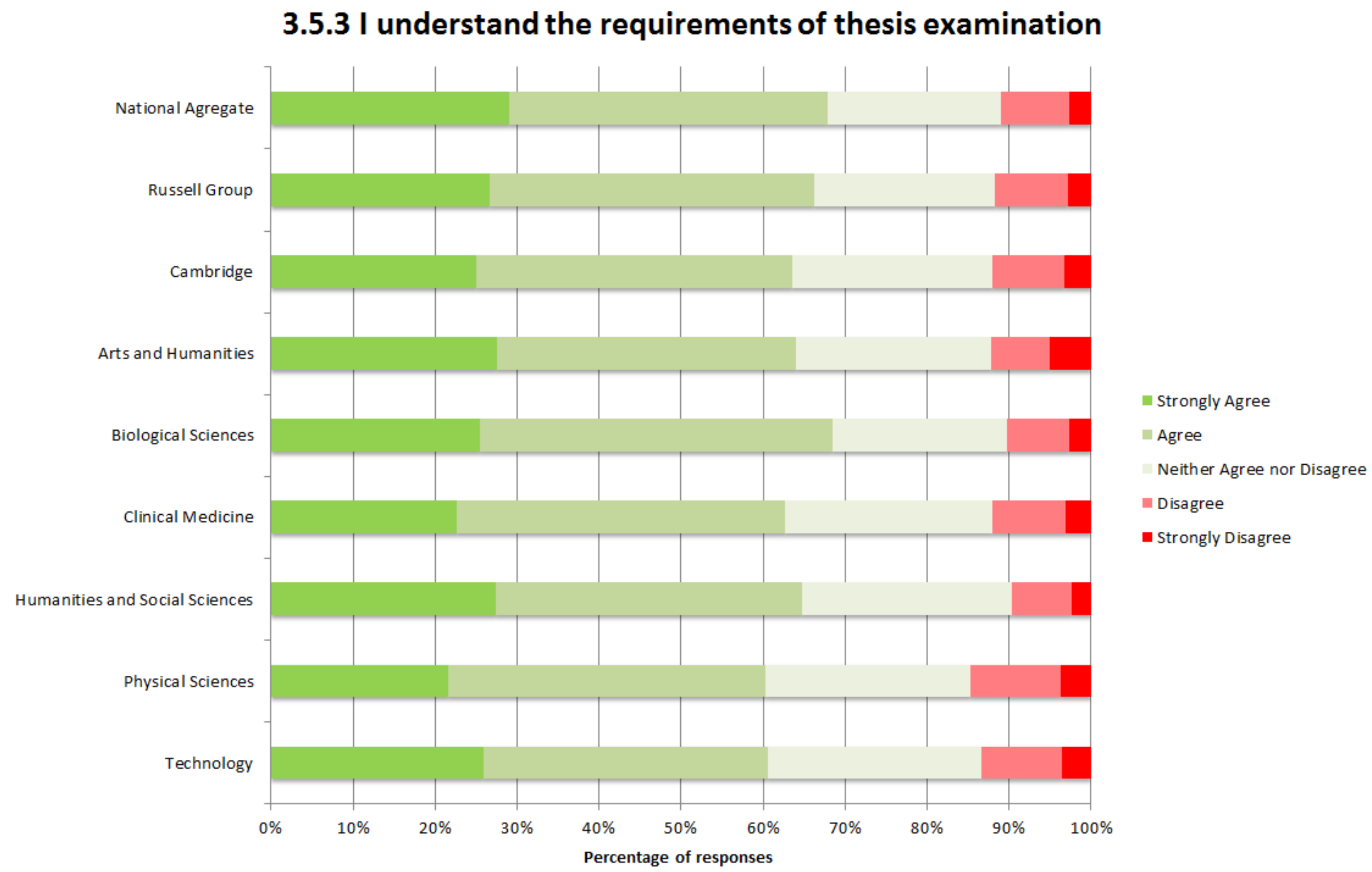
	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
I understand the **required standard for the thesis**	70	76	74	-6	-4
I understand the **standard of work expected**	74	79	78	-5	-4
I understand the **requirements of thesis examination**	63	68	66	-5	-3
I understand the **requirements and deadlines** for formal monitoring of my **progress**	71	77	76	-6	-5
Importance of provision of guidance on institutional standards and expectations for my	68	78	76	-10	-8

research degree programme					
Provision of guidance on institutional standards and expectations for my research degree programme has **met my expectations**	76	80	79	-4	-3

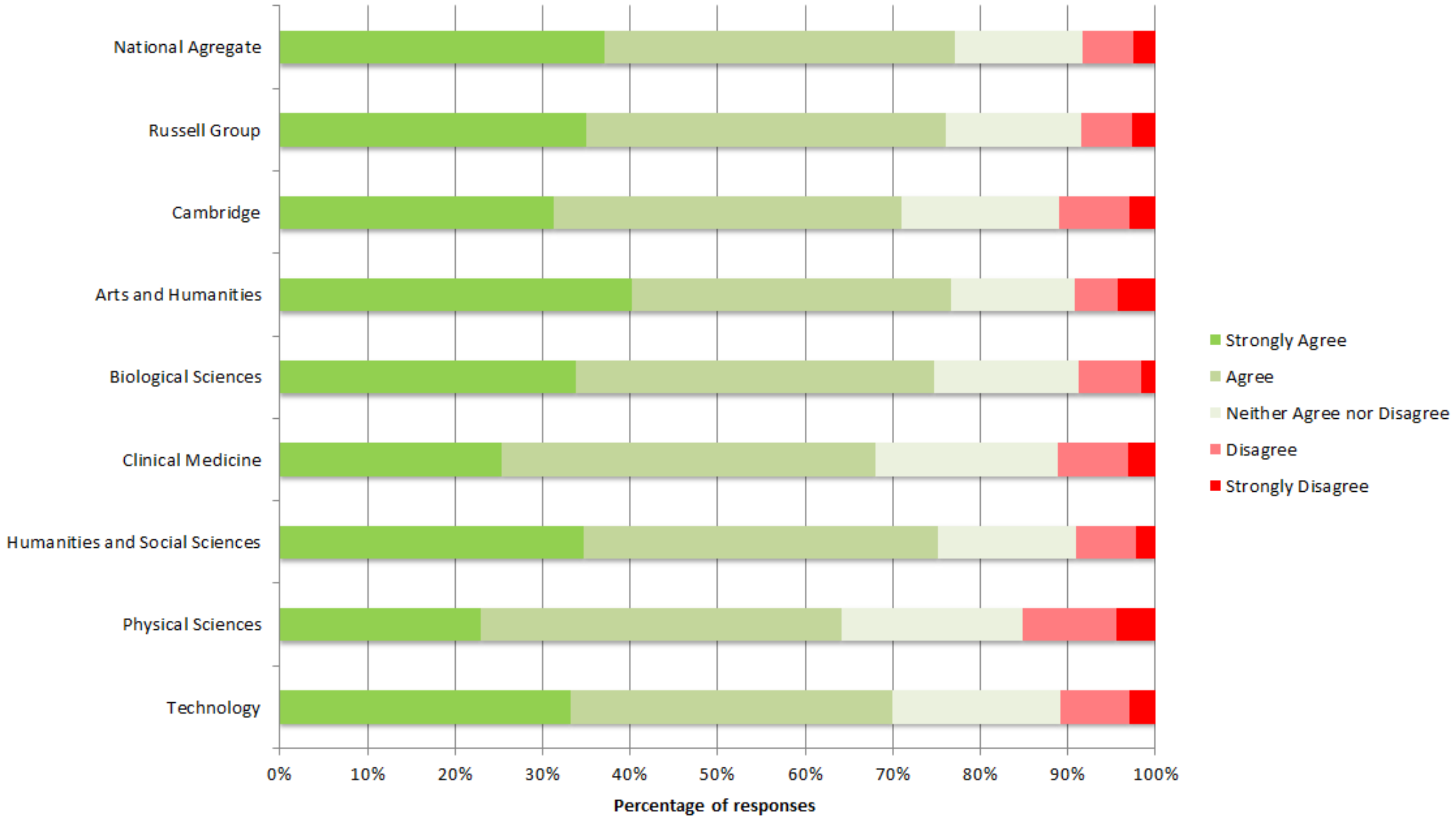


3.5.1 I understand the required standard for the thesis

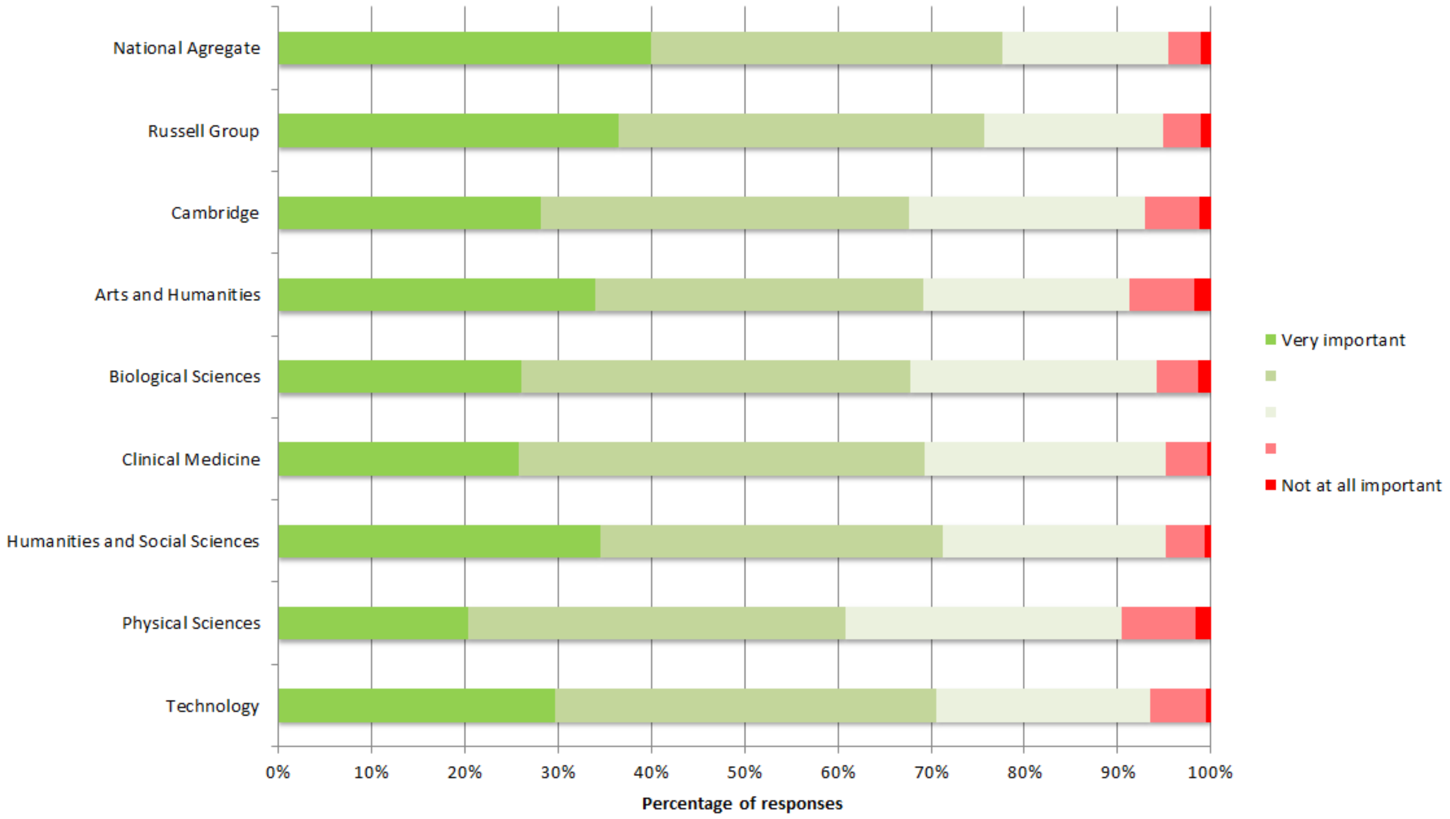

3.5.2 I understand the standard of work expected
National Agregate
Russell Group
Cambridge
Arts and Humanities
Biological Sciences
Clinical Medicine
Humanities and Social Sciences
Physical Sciences
Technology
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Percentage of responses
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree


3.5.3 I understand the requirements of thesis examination
National Agregate
Russell Group
Cambridge
Arts and Humanities
Biological Sciences
Clinical Medicine
Humanities and Social Sciences
Physical Sciences
Technology
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Percentage of responses
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

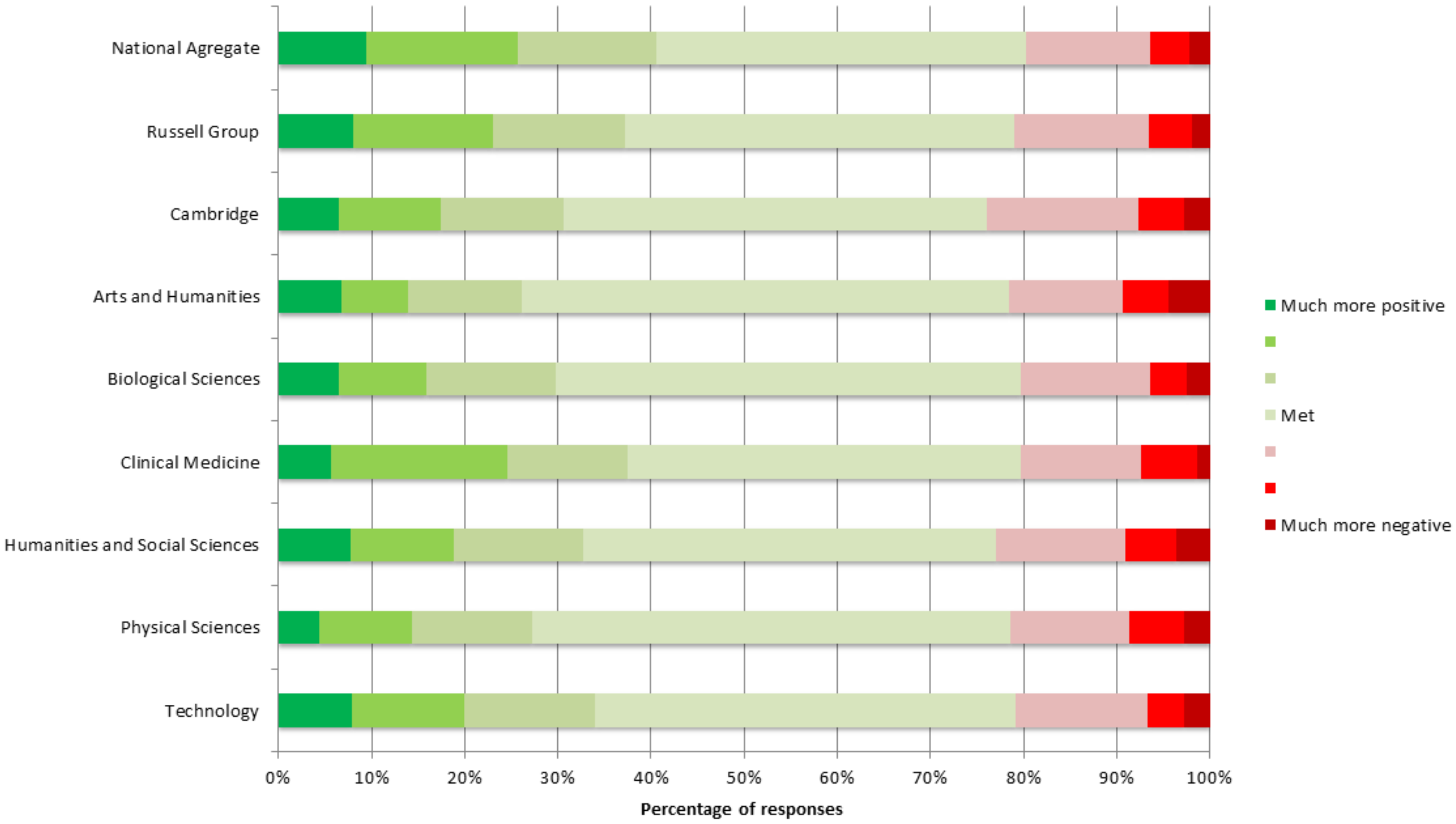
3.5.4 I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress



3.5.5 Importance of provision of guidance on institutional standards and expectations



3.5.6 Provision of guidance on institutional standards has met my expectations



3.6 Thesis Examination

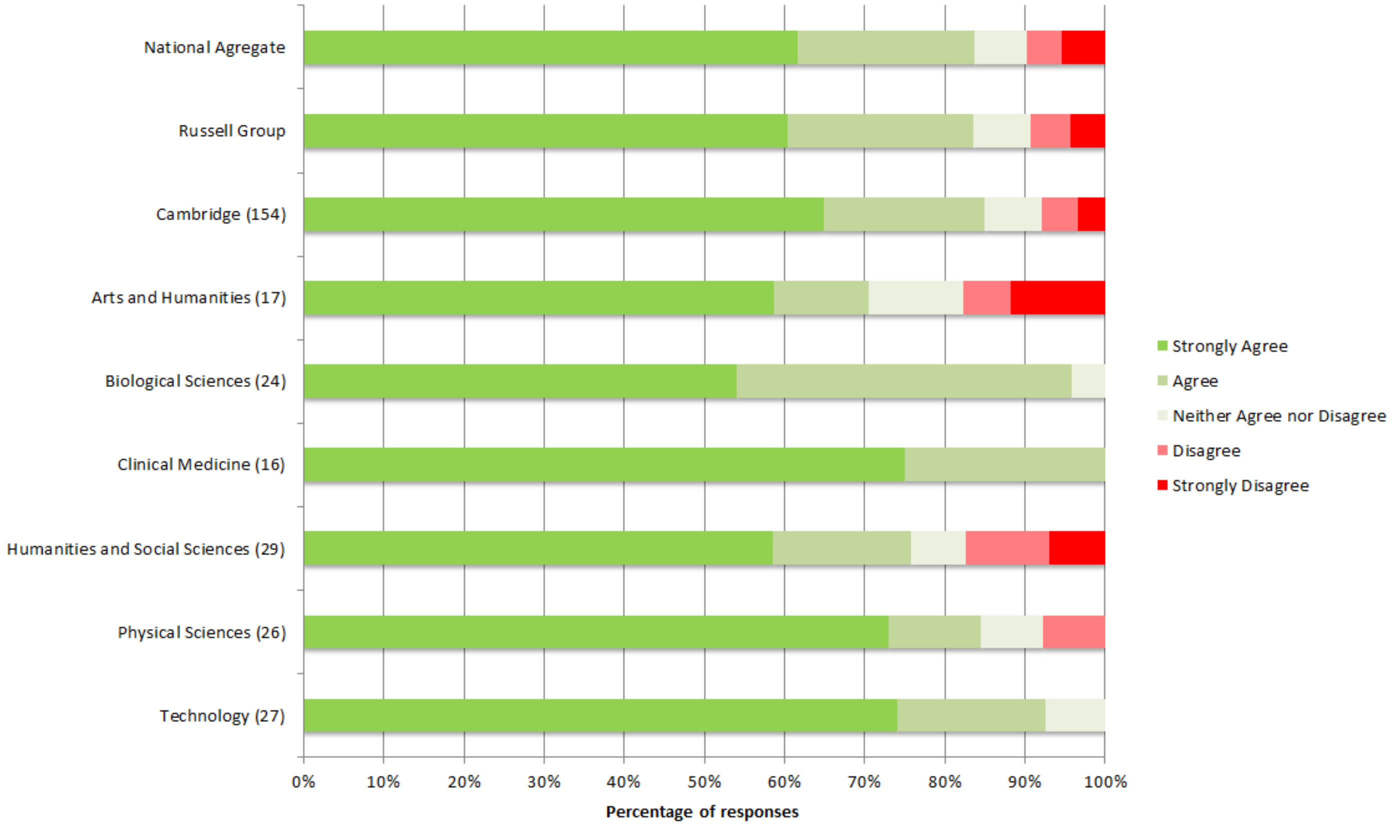
Table 3.7: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to thesis examination items

	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
The thesis examination **process was fair**	85	84	84	1	1
The examination of my thesis was completed in a **reasonable time scale**	78	78	79	0	-1
I was given adequate **support and guidance in preparation** for my viva voce	54	74	72	-20	-18
I was given adequate **support and guidance to make any changes** to my thesis following my viva voce	74	78	78	-4	-4

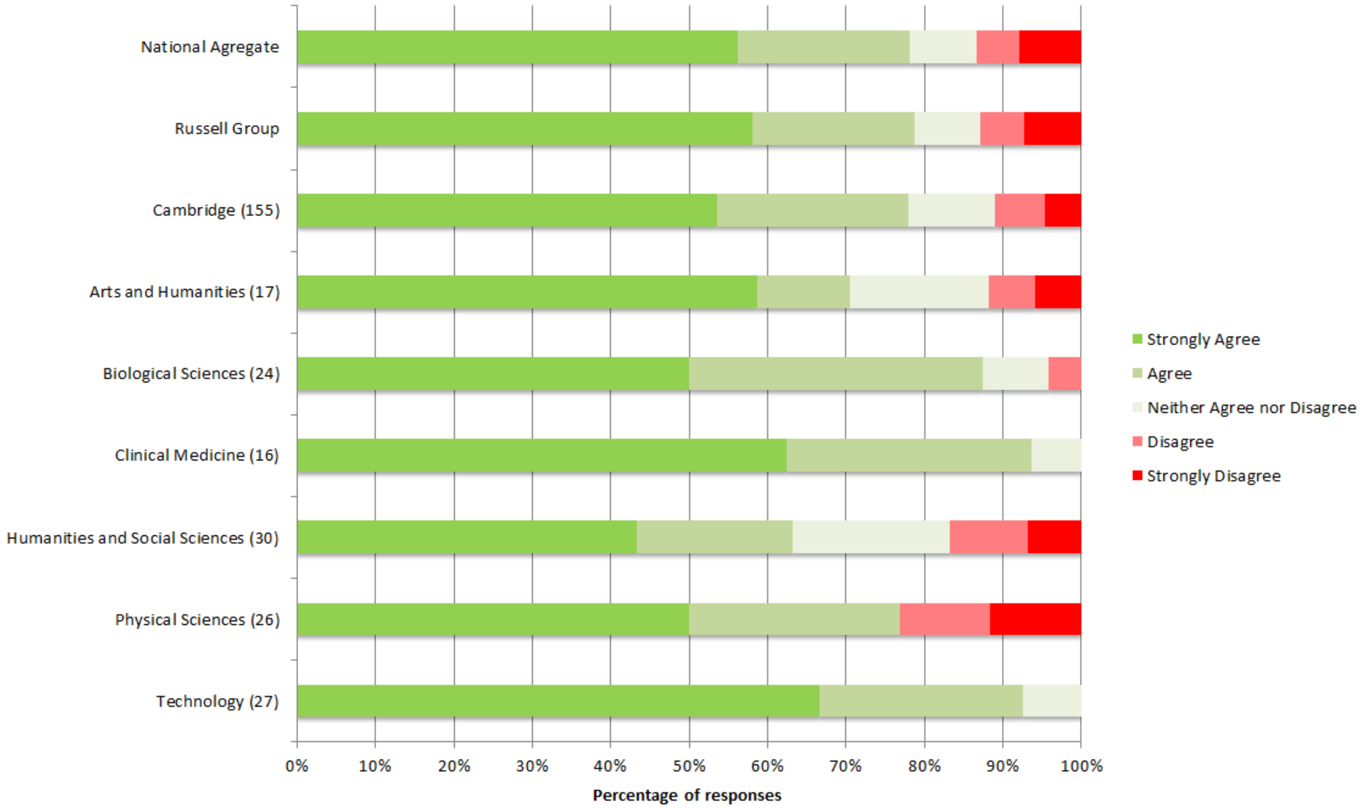
This scale yields a much smaller set of data, due to the small numbers of respondents who had completed their final examination: nationally only 4.6% (N=1,401) of the total respondents responded to these items. The most positive results were for ‘the thesis examination process was fair’, and the least positive were for ‘I was given adequate support and guidance in preparation for my viva voce’. The ranking of these items by % agree is consistent over all years of the survey.

Despite the small number of respondents at Cambridge for these items, the results were not disimilar to the national findings, with the exception of the item ‘I was given adequate support and guidance in preparation for my viva voce’, which had 20% lower endorsement at Cambridge than nationally. However, the small sample size across many departments makes meaningful conclusions difficult.

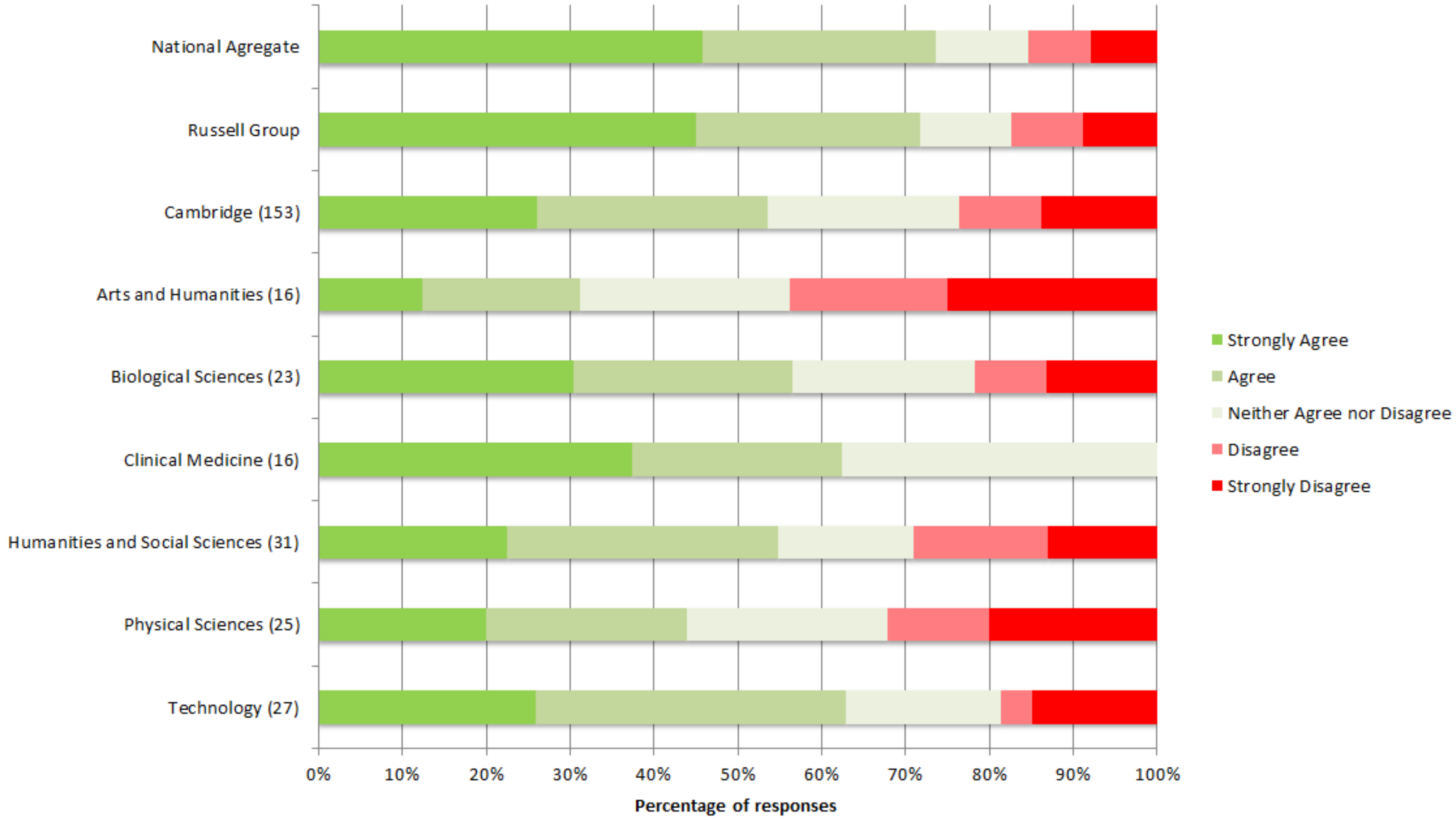
3.6.1 The thesis examination process was fair



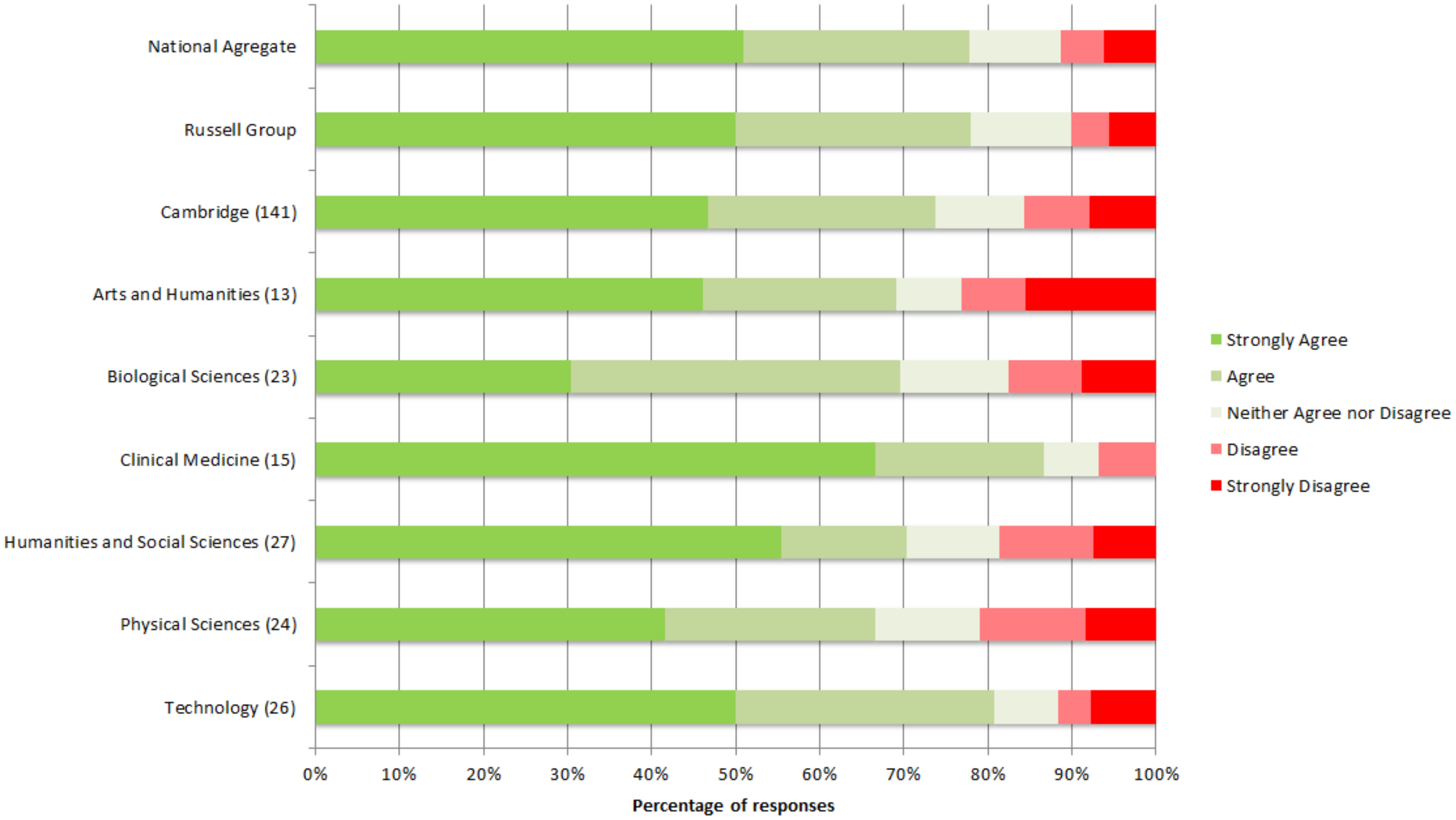
3.6.2 The examination of my thesis was completed in a reasonable time scale



3.6.3 I was given adequate support and guidance in preparation for my viva voce



3.6.4 I was given adequate support and guidance to make any changes to my thesis following my viva voce



3.7 Professional Development and Career

Table 3.8: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to professional development and career items

	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
I am encouraged to **think about the range of career opportunities** that are available to me.	44	44	44	0	0
I am encouraged to **reflect on my professional development** needs	45	51	49	-6	-4
I am encouraged to **reflect on my career development** needs	44	48	46	-4	-2

Nationally this is the least positive scale, and at Cambridge also. Within the scale, 'I am encouraged to think about the range of career opportunities that are available to me' was the least positively endorsed, whilst at Cambridge endoresment of the item 'I am encouraged to reflect on my career development needs' was equally low (Table 3.8).

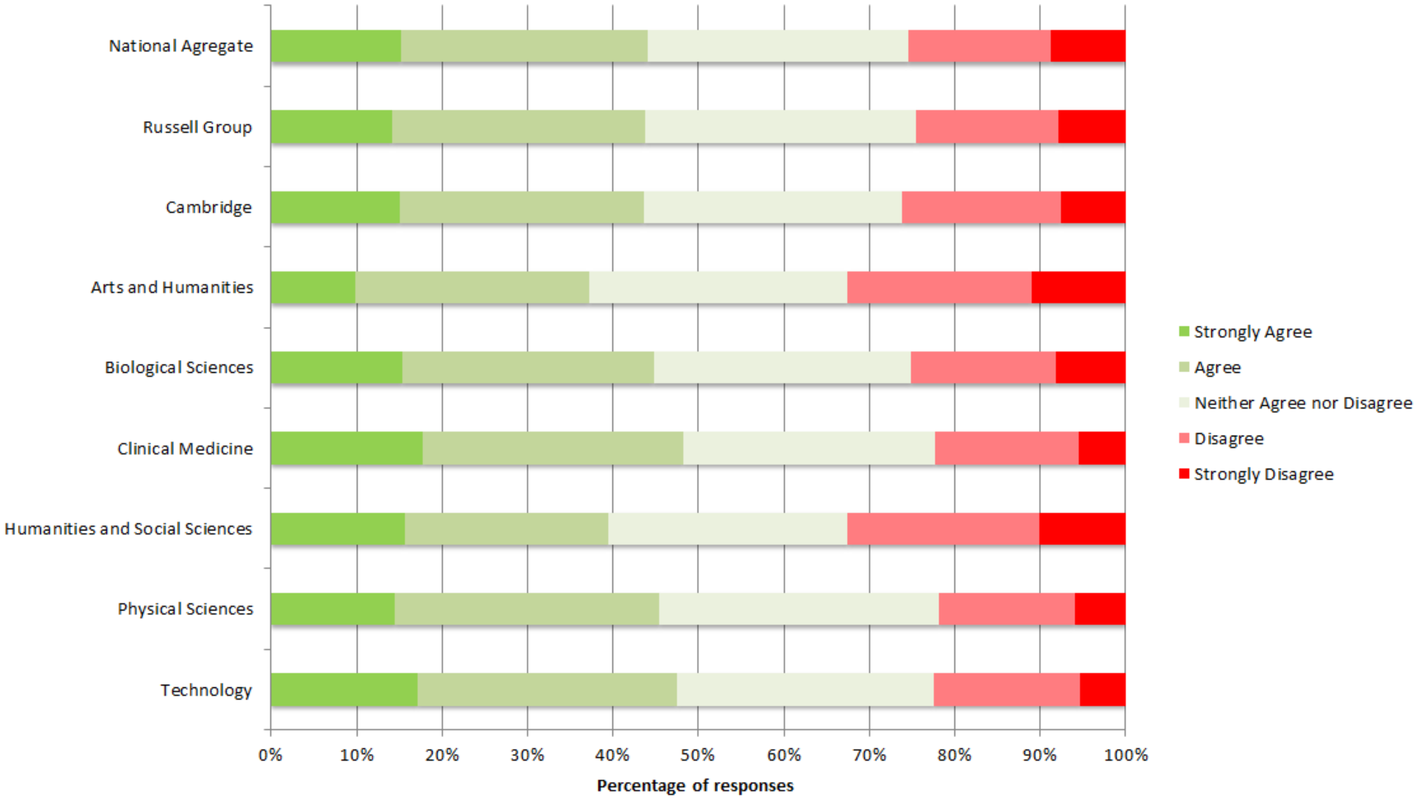
'I am encouraged to reflect on my professional development needs' was also lower at Cambridge than nationally, perhaps confusingly, since respondents agreed that there were more opportunities for skills development at Cambridge than was the national trend. It remains probable that students are not relating the emphasis departments place on transferable skills training with a concern for their personal and career progression.

The Cambridge-only question on whether respondents valued the resources of the University Careers Service, showed 86% agreement amongst respondents who had utilised them, but these made up less than half of all respondents (45%, Table 3.9). Only 4% of Cambridge respondents were unaware that the Careers Service existed.

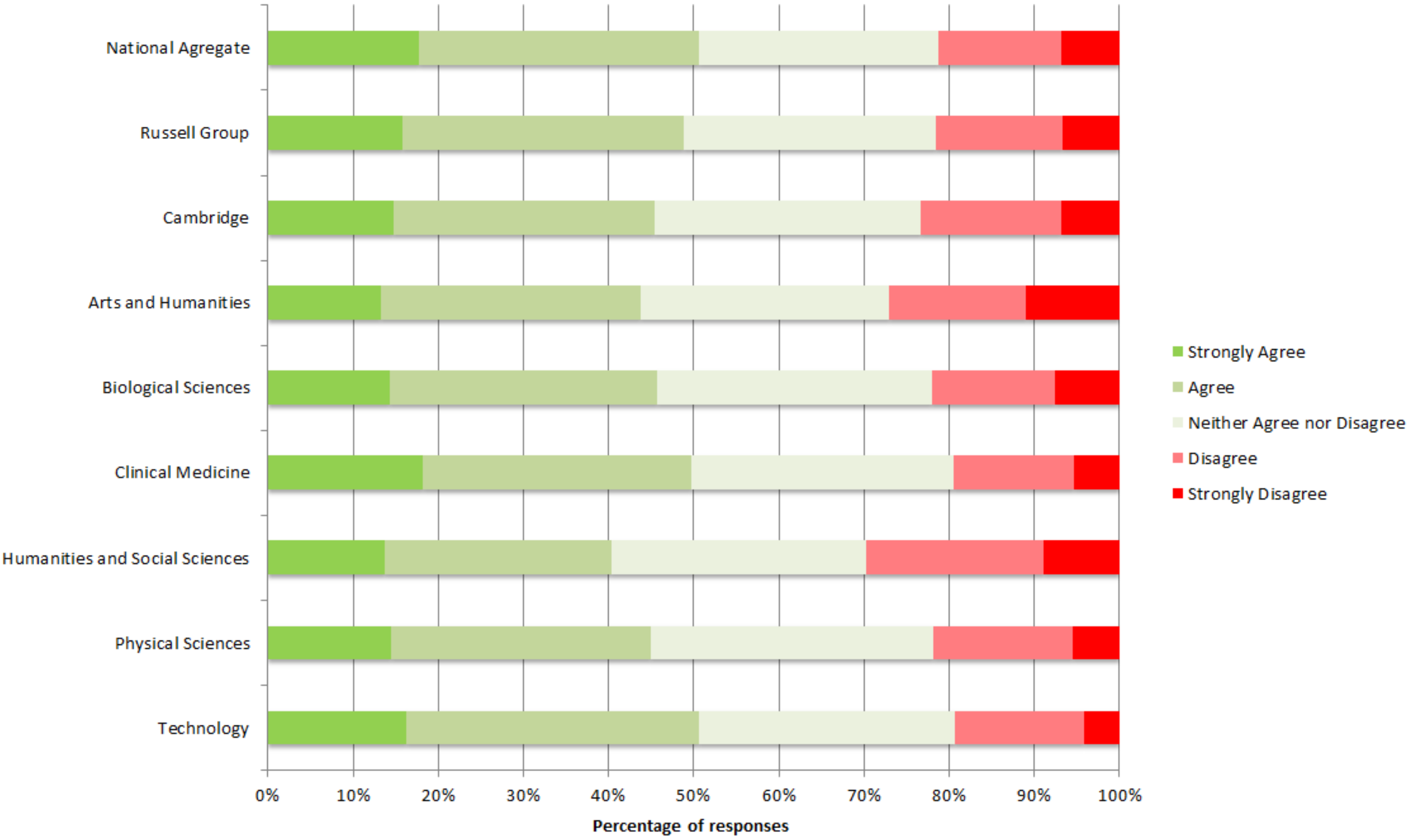
Table 3.9. I have valued the resources of Cambridge University Careers Service in developing my career plans [Cambridge-only question]

	% positive agreement (sample size)	% that have used resources (no.)	% aware of but have never used the Careers Service (no.)	% not aware of the Careers Service (no.)
Technology	89 (282)	52 (282)	42 (228)	6 (32)
Physical Sciences	86 (304)	46 (304)	52 (342)	3 (17)
Humanities and Social Sciences	82 (250)	42 (250)	54 (324)	5 (28)
Clinical Medicine	94 (99)	44 (99)	52 (117)	4 (8)
Biological Sciences	94 (196)	43 (196)	53 (241)	4 (16)
Arts and Humanities	80 (128)	39 (128)	57 (188)	4 (12)
Cambridge	86 (1377)	45 (1377)	51 (1573)	4 (124)

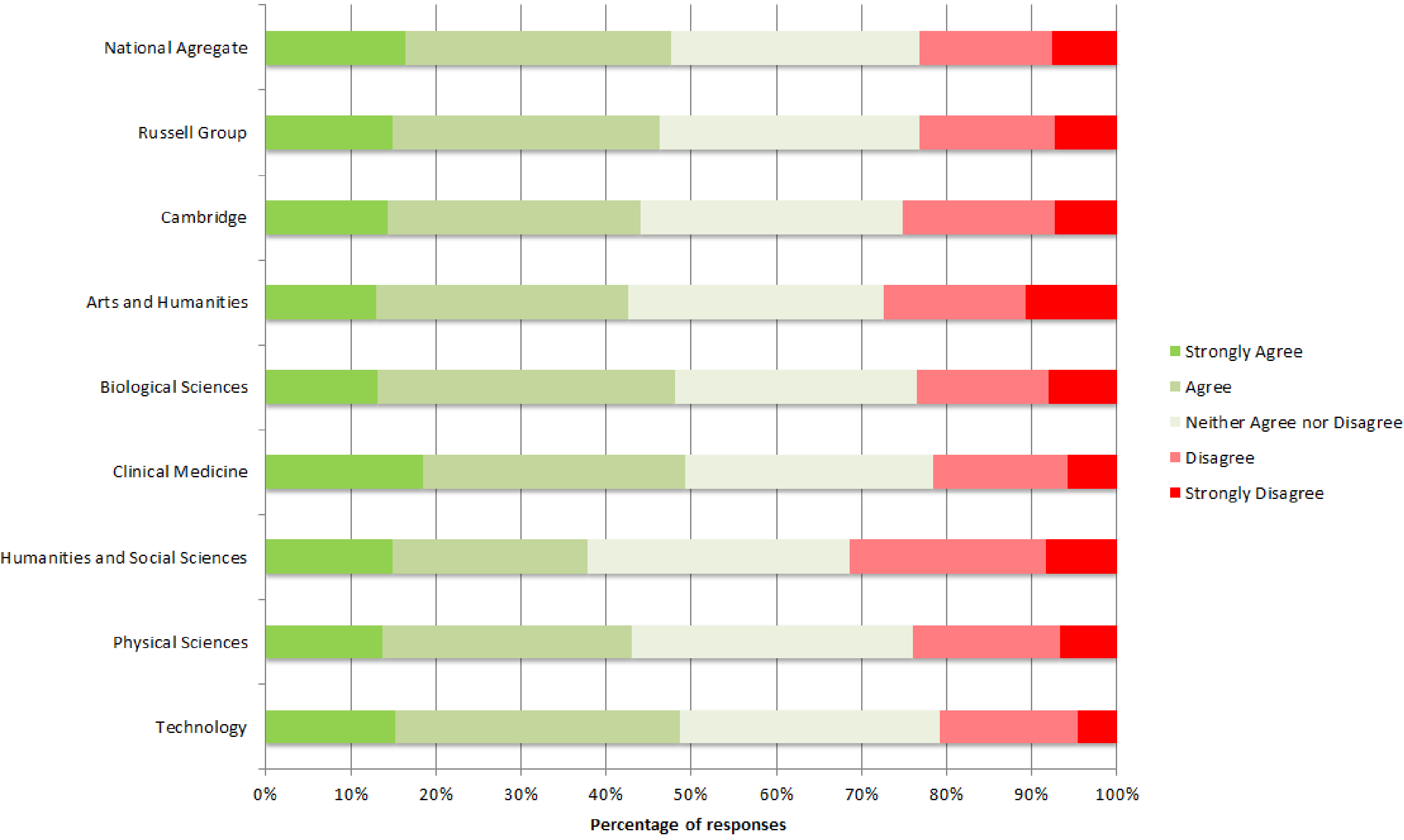
3.7.1 I am encouraged to think about the range of career opportunities that are available to me.



3.7.2 I am encouraged to reflect on my professional development needs



3.7.3 I am encouraged to reflect on my career development needs



3.8 Roles and Responsibilities

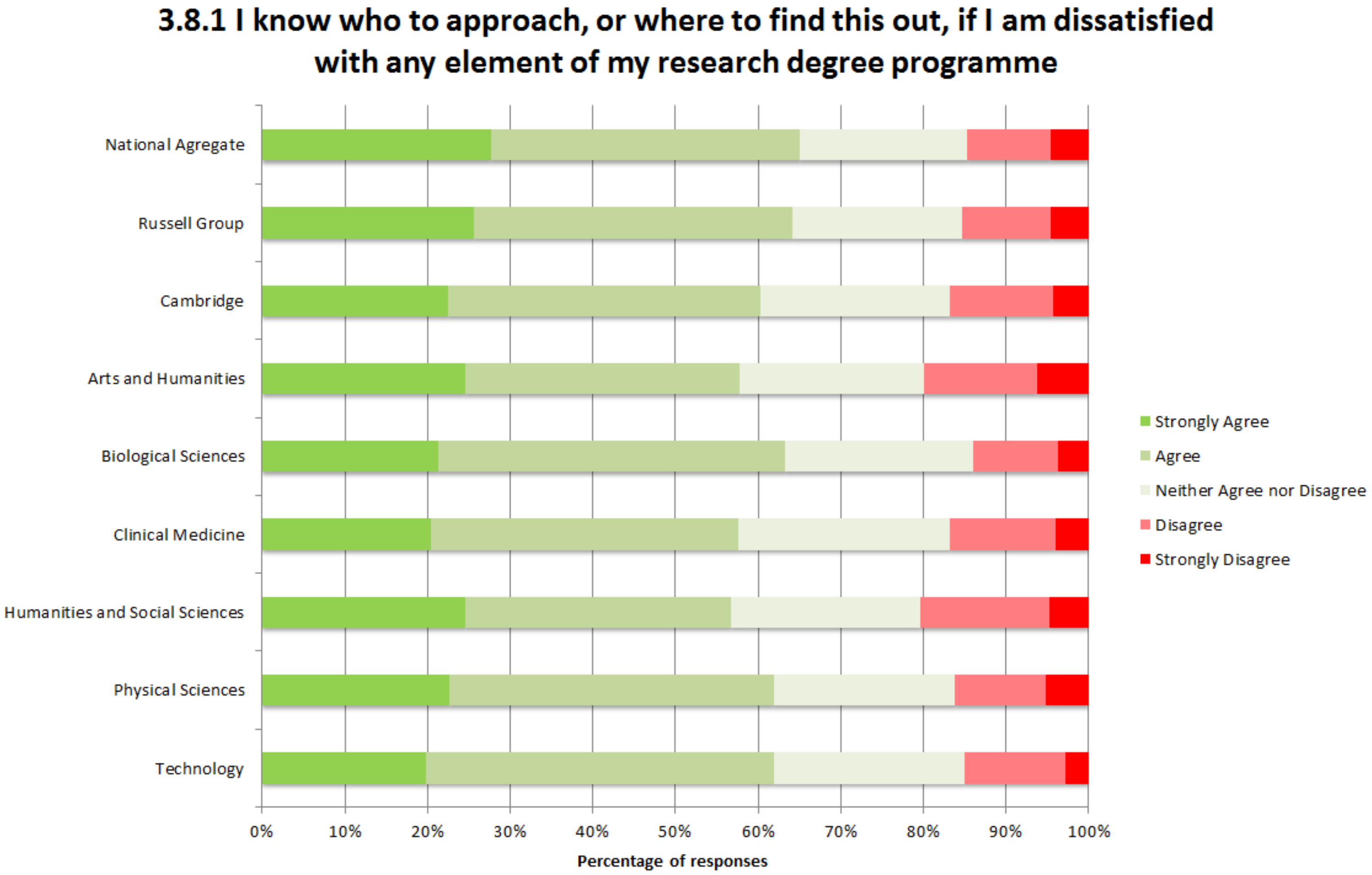
Table 3.9: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to roles and responsibilities items

	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
I know **who to approach**, or where to find this out, if I am **dissatisfied** with any element of my research degree programme	60	65	64	-5	-4
My institution **values and responds to feedback** from research degree students	55	58	56	-3	-1
I understand **my responsibilities** as a research degree student	75	81	80	-6	-5
I am aware of **my institution's responsibilities** towards me as a research degree student	56	64	61	-8	-5

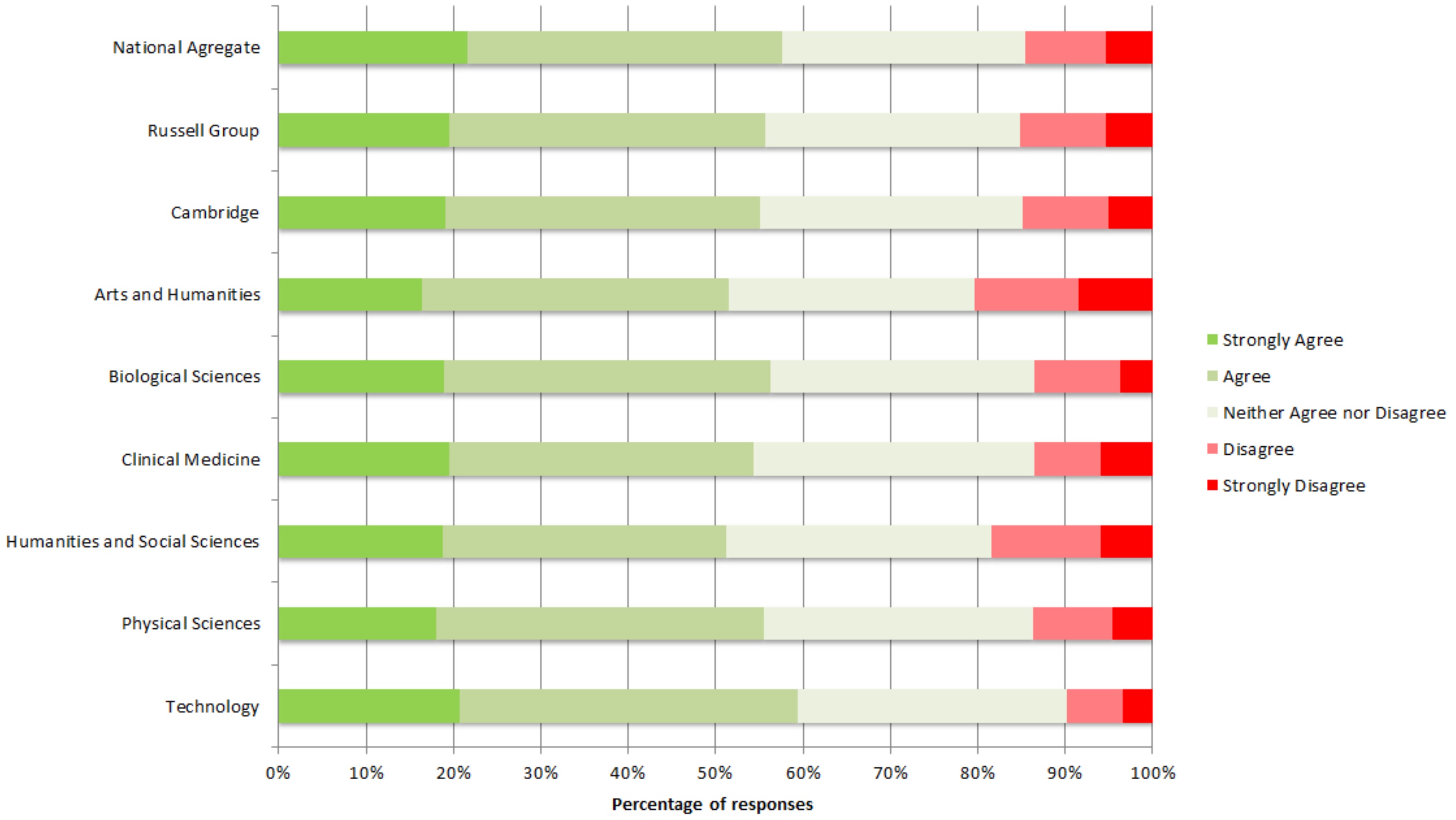
While respondents were generally less positive about these items on a national level, the item 'I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student' is markedly more positive than the other items in this group, with a % agree that is 16% higher than the next most positive item ('I know who to approach, or where to find this out, if I am dissatisfied with any element of my research degree programme', Table 3.9).

Respondents at Cambridge were on average less positive on all items, than across the sector, with the biggest difference in endorsement of the item 'I am aware of my institution's responsibilities towards me as a research degree student' (8% lower).

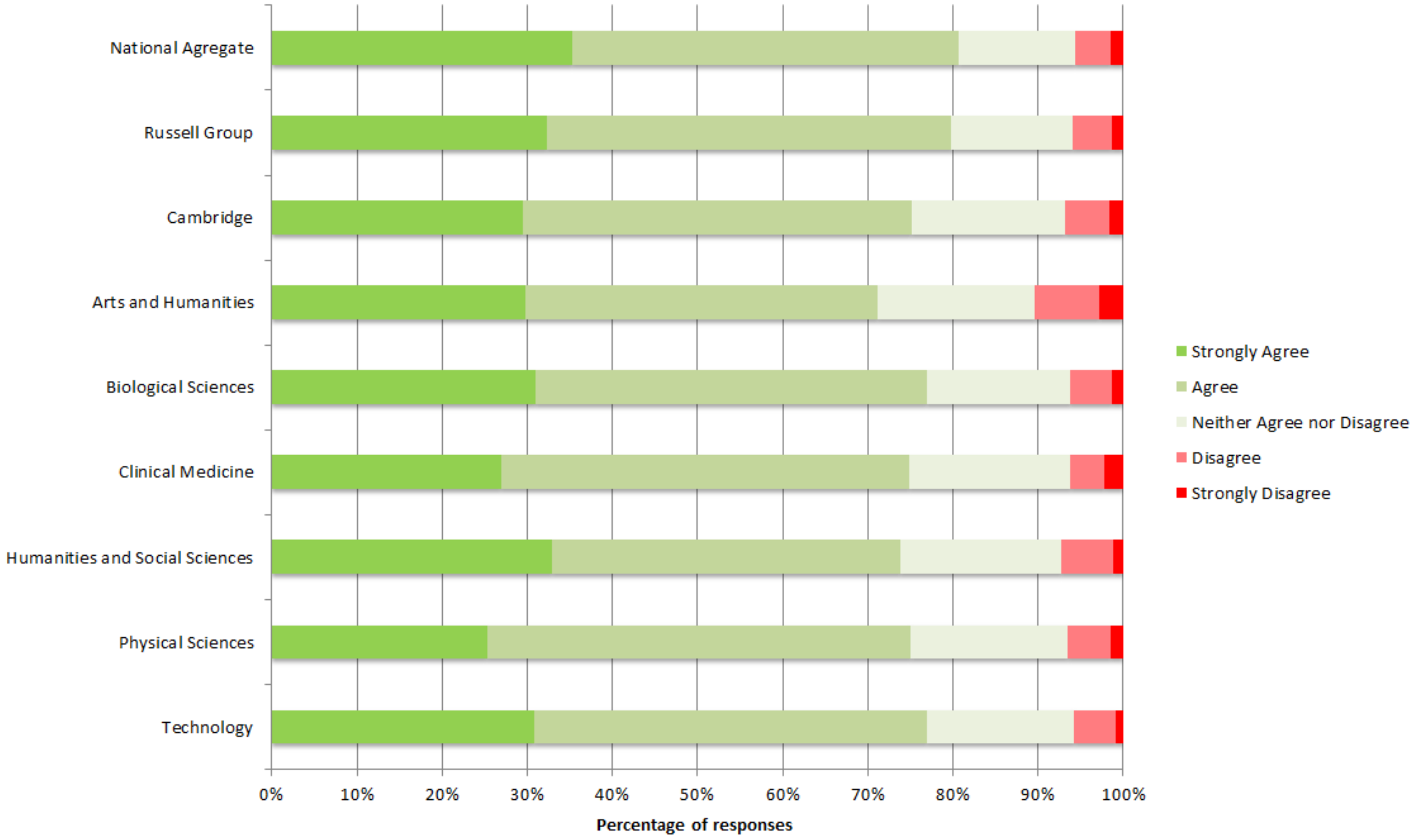
This is the third lowest rated aspect of the research degree experience at Cambridge, and something that may warrant attention.



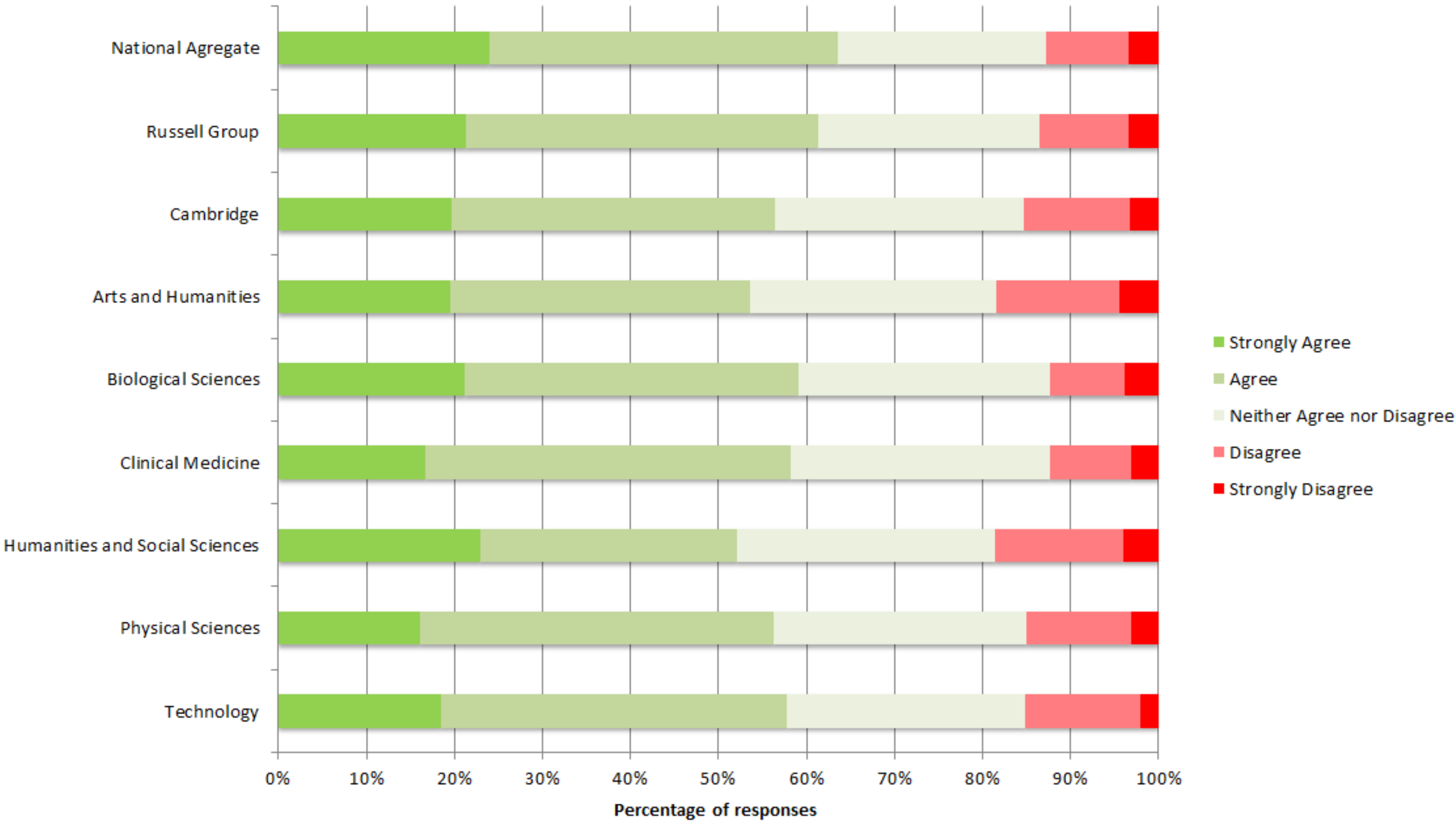
3.8.2 My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students



3.8.3 I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student



3.8.4 I am aware of my institution's responsibilities towards me as a research degree student



3.9 Teaching

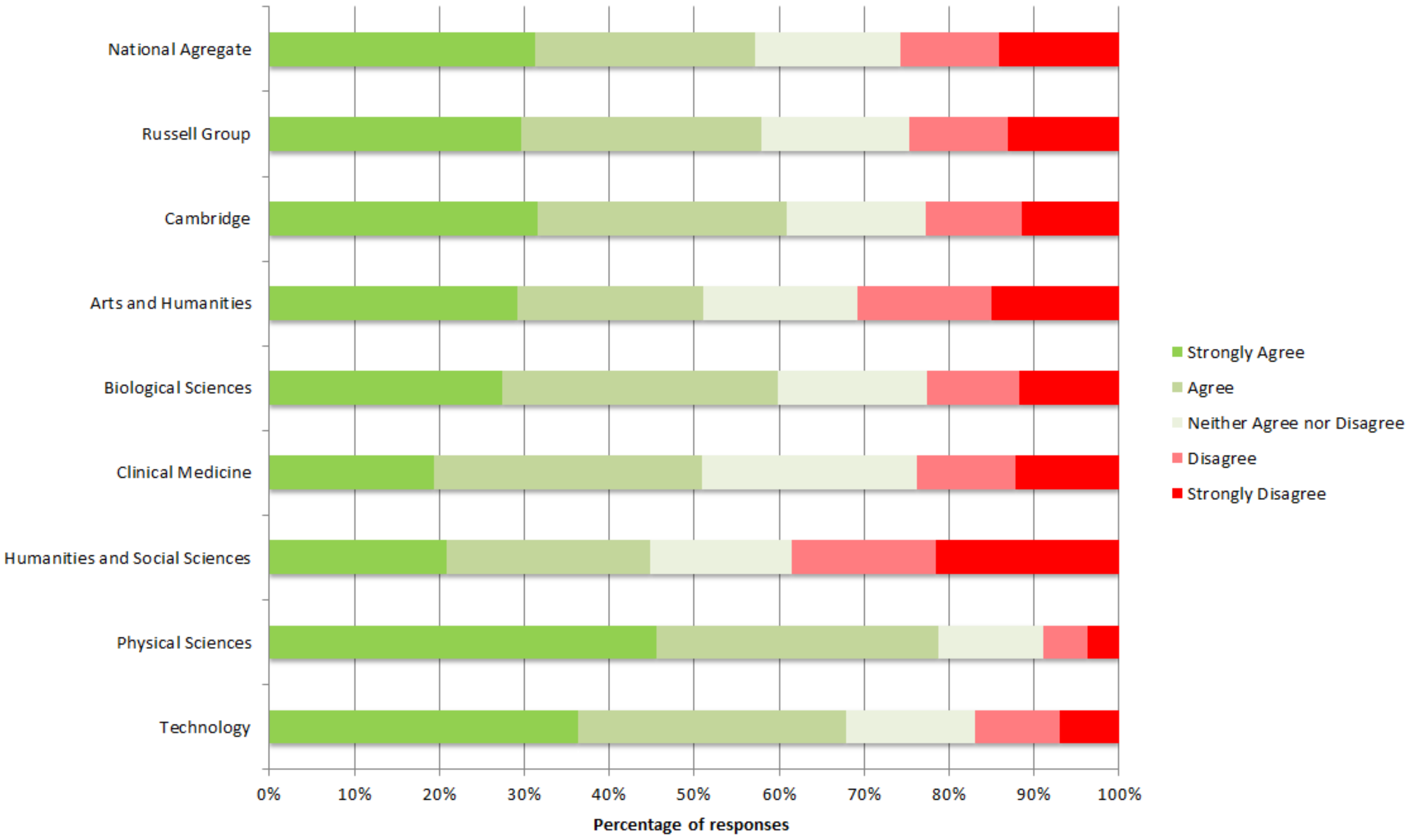
Table 3.10: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to teaching items

	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
I have had **adequate opportunity to gain experience** of teaching [e.g., lectures, seminars or workshops] whilst doing my research degree programme	61	57	58	4	3
I have been given **adequate support and guidance** for my teaching	50	51	51	-1	-1
I think the experience that I have gained through teaching has been a **worthwhile aspect** of my research degree programme	76	71	71	5	5

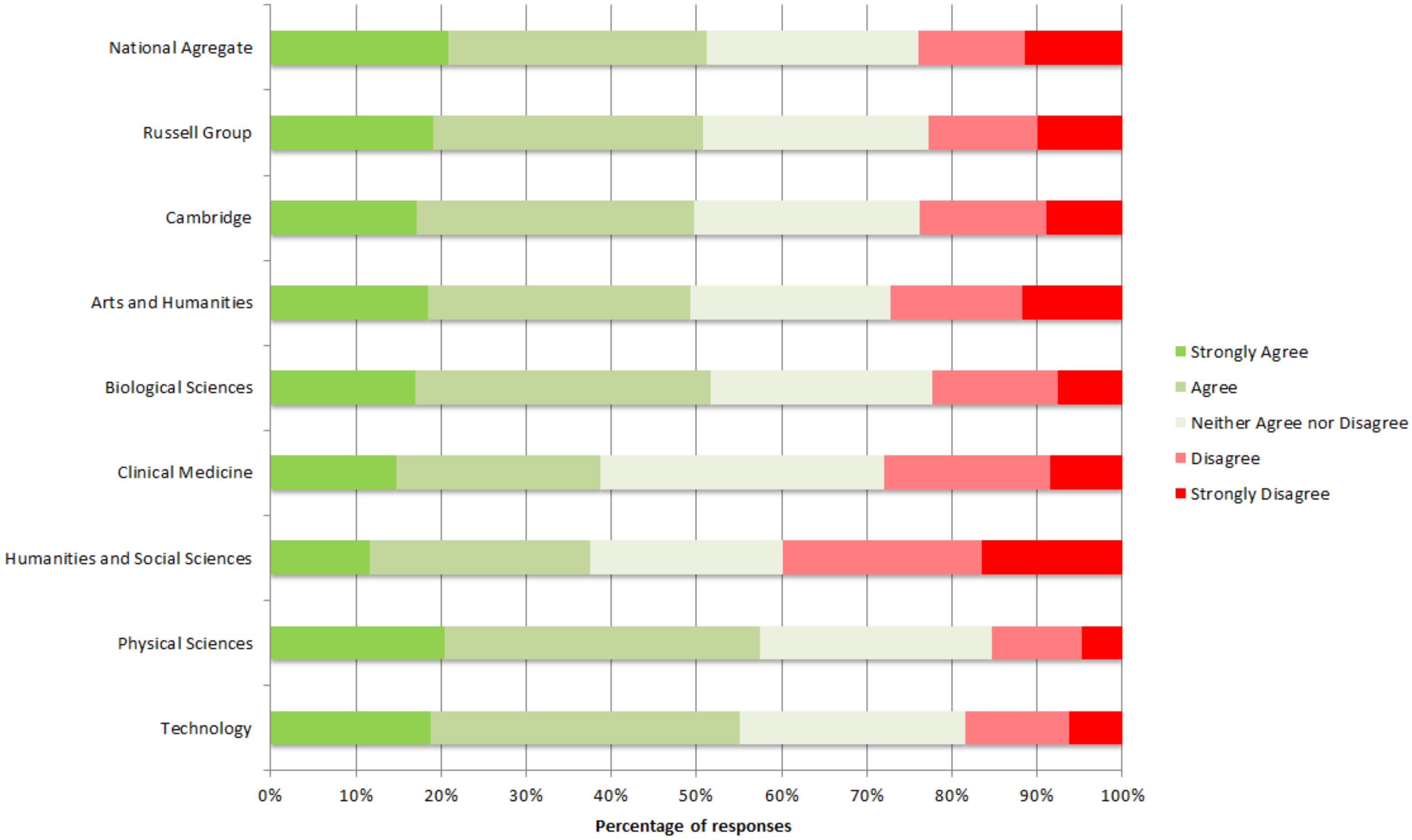
As with the items on roles and responsibilities, there is a divergence of scores for these items nationally, with the item ‘I think the experience that I have gained through teaching has been a worthwhile aspect of my research degree programme’ having a % agree that is 14% higher than the next most positive item (‘I have had adequate opportunity to gain experience of teaching’, Table 3.10). At Cambridge the gap between these items was of a similar magnitude, but both were more positively endorsed, than was the national average (5% and 4% respectively).

It is interesting to note the greater positivity that respondents expressed about the experience of teaching, compared to the opportunities and support for that teaching.

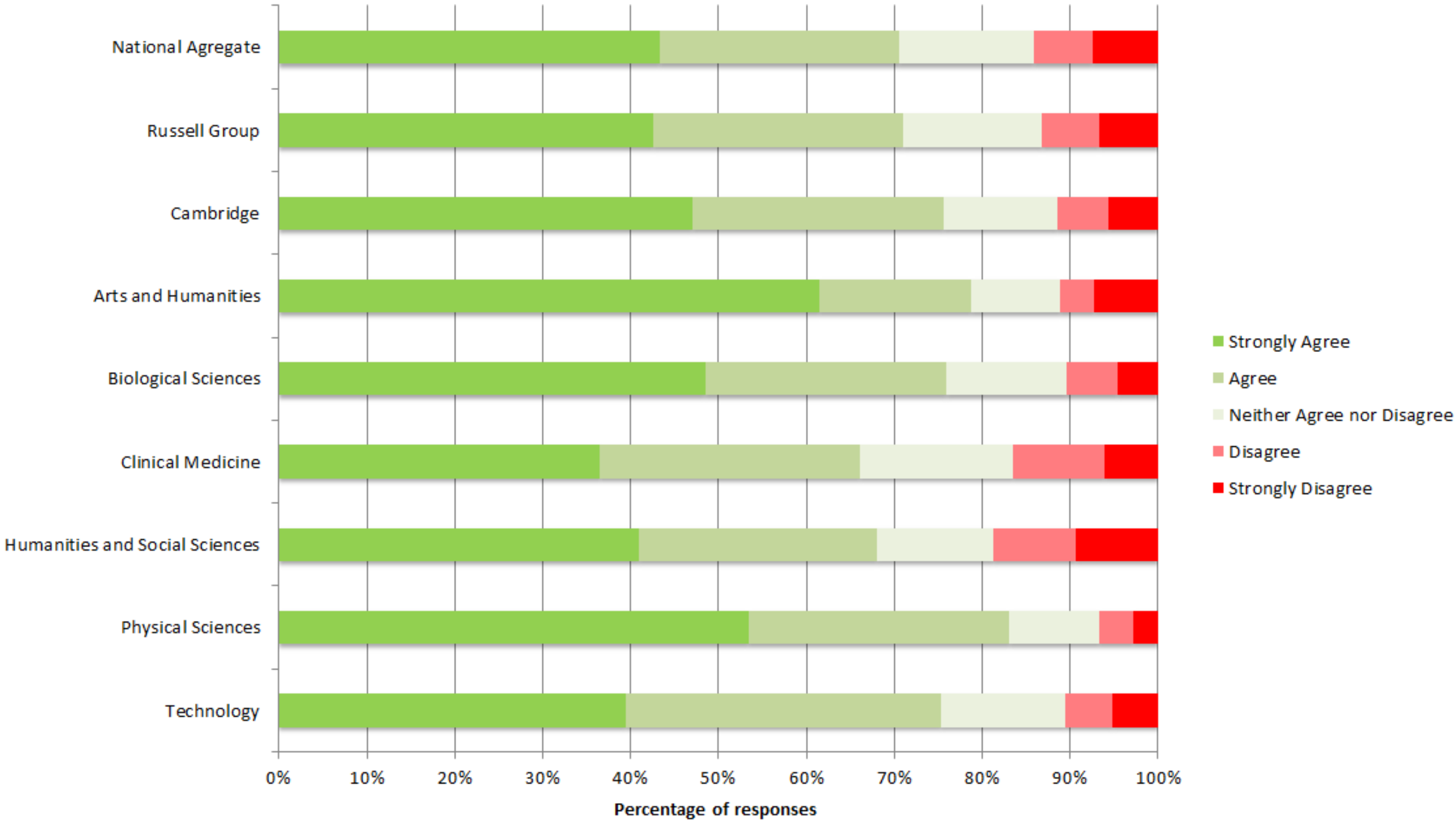
3.9.1 I have had adequate opportunity to gain experience of teaching



3.9.2 I have been given adequate support and guidance for my teaching



3.9.3 I think the experience that I have gained through teaching has been a worthwhile aspect of my research degree programme



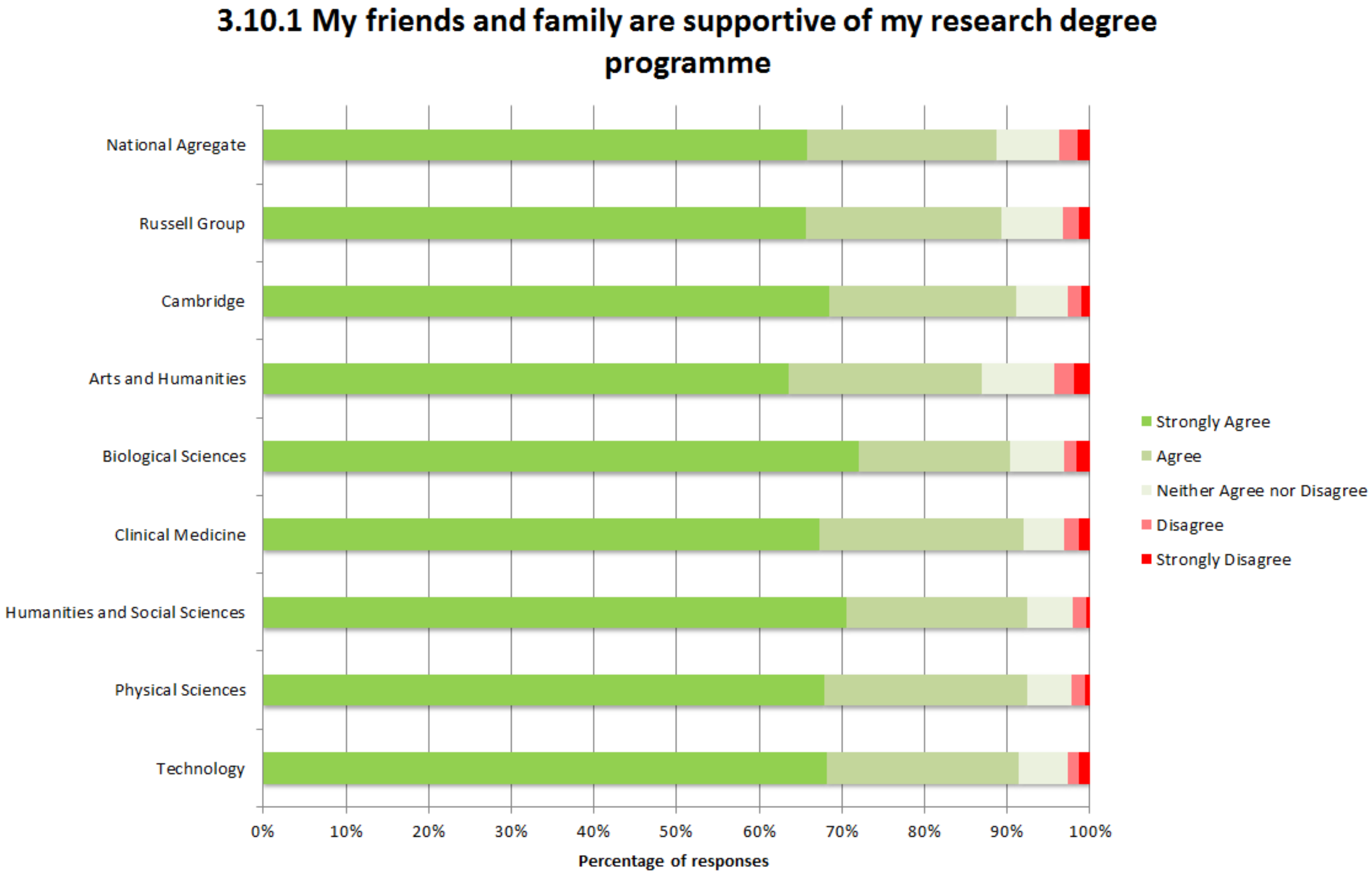
3.10 Personal Factors

Table 3.11: Cambridge and benchmarking % positive responses to personal items

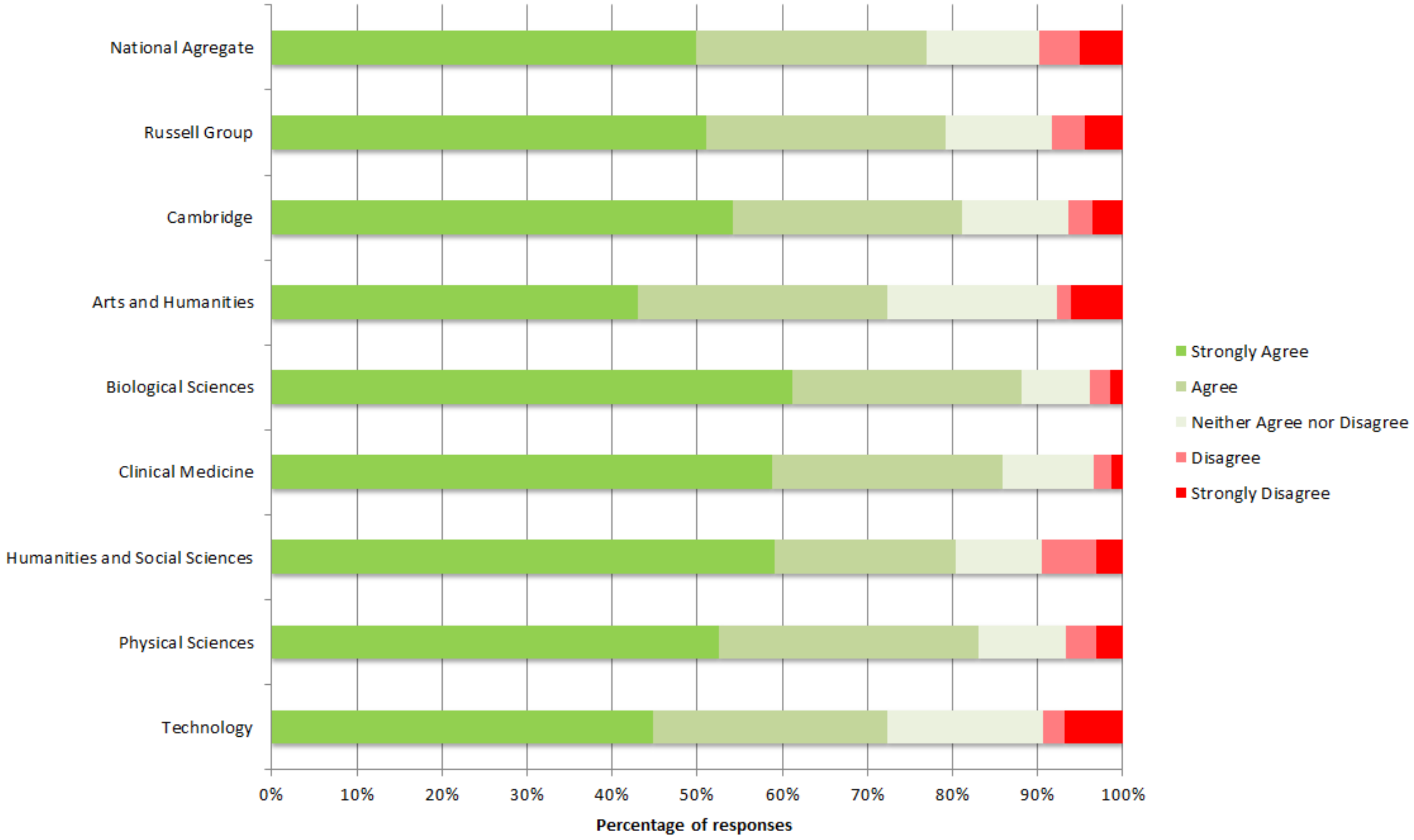
	Cambridge	National Average	Russell Group	National diff.	Russell Group diff.
My **friends and family are supportive** of my research degree programme	91	89	89	2	2
My **employer is supportive** of my research degree programme	81	77	79	4	2
The **financing** of my research degree programme **places a strain** on my personal finances	42	49	47	-7	-5

The scores for these items vary greatly, which is perhaps unsurprising given that they cover very different issues. With a national % agree of 89%, 'My friends and family are supportive of my research degree programme' receives the most positivity out of all the items on the survey. At Cambridge the agreement is even higher, at 91% (table 3.11).

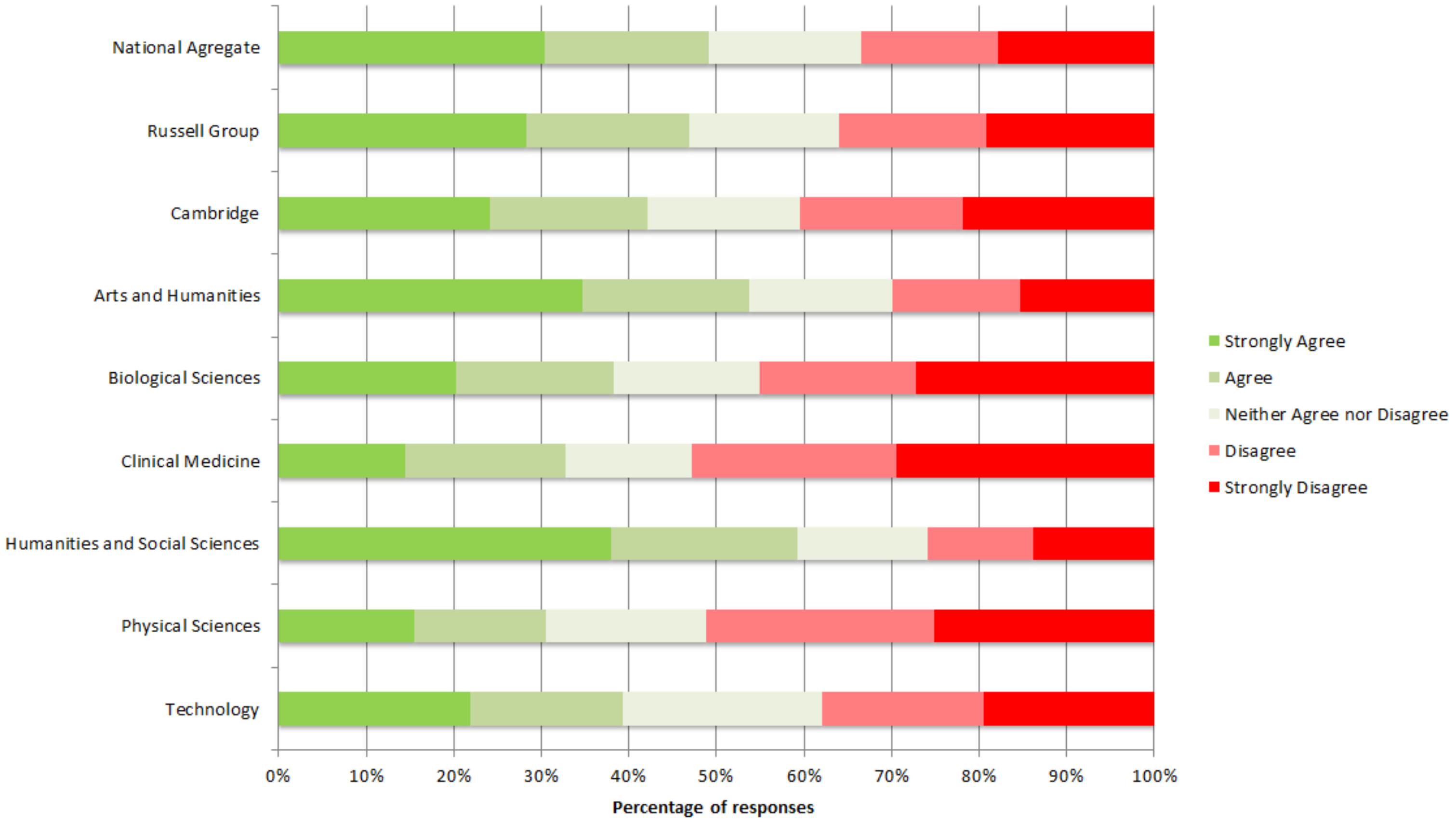
It is inappropriate to compare the item 'The financing of my research degree programme places a strain on my personal finances' with scores for other items, as this is the only one in the survey where the phrasing is negative, thus reversing the normal implication of greater positivity where there is a higher % agree. While the % agree for this item has decreased by 2% since 2009, given the negative phrasing of the statement this is consistent with the general trend of increased positivity apparent in the 2011 results. Again, at Cambridge there was lower endorsement of this item than nationally (7%), meaning that finances are less strained for respondents at Cambridge on average, than across the rest of the sector.



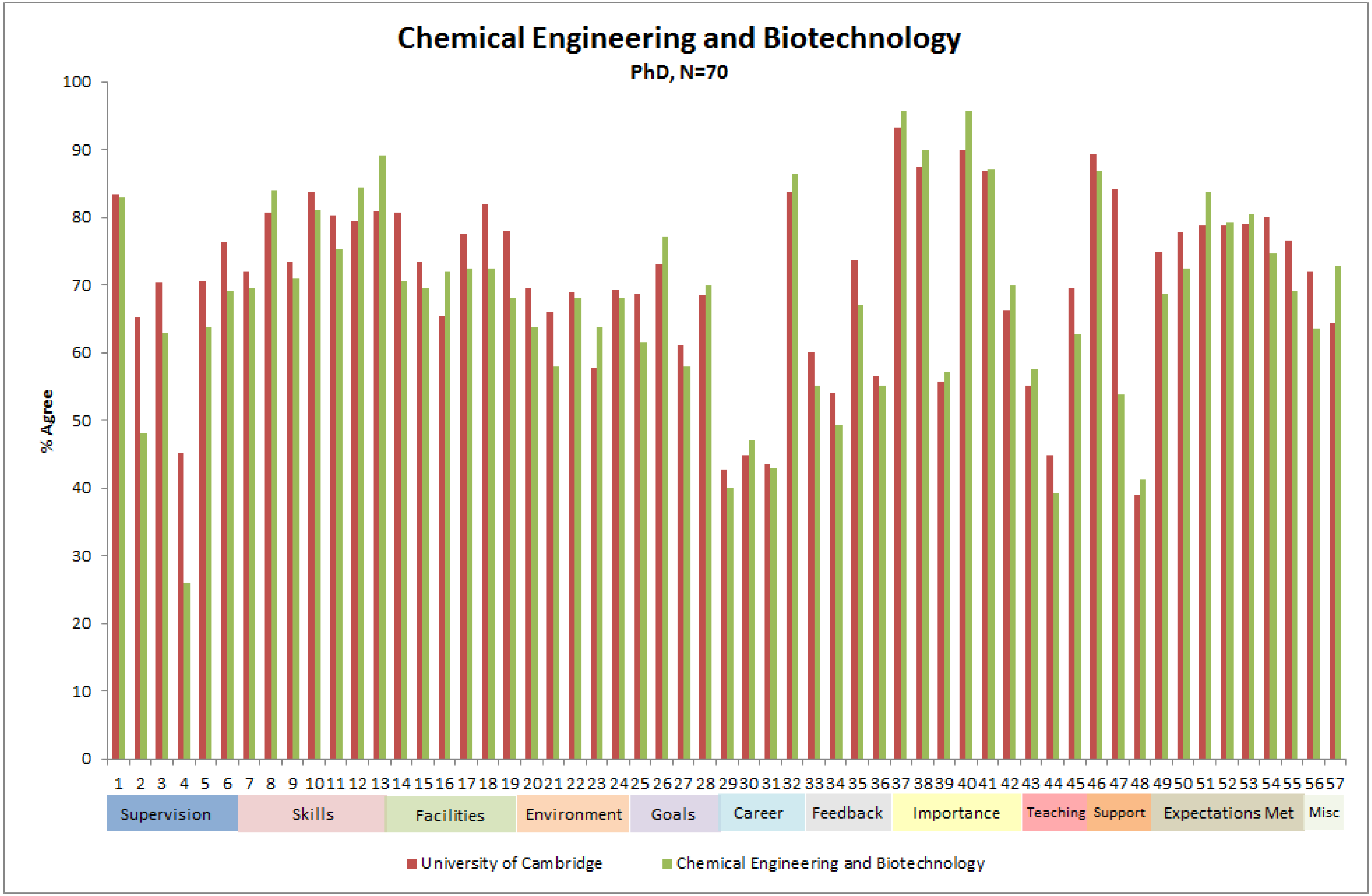
3.10.2 My employer is supportive of my research degree programme

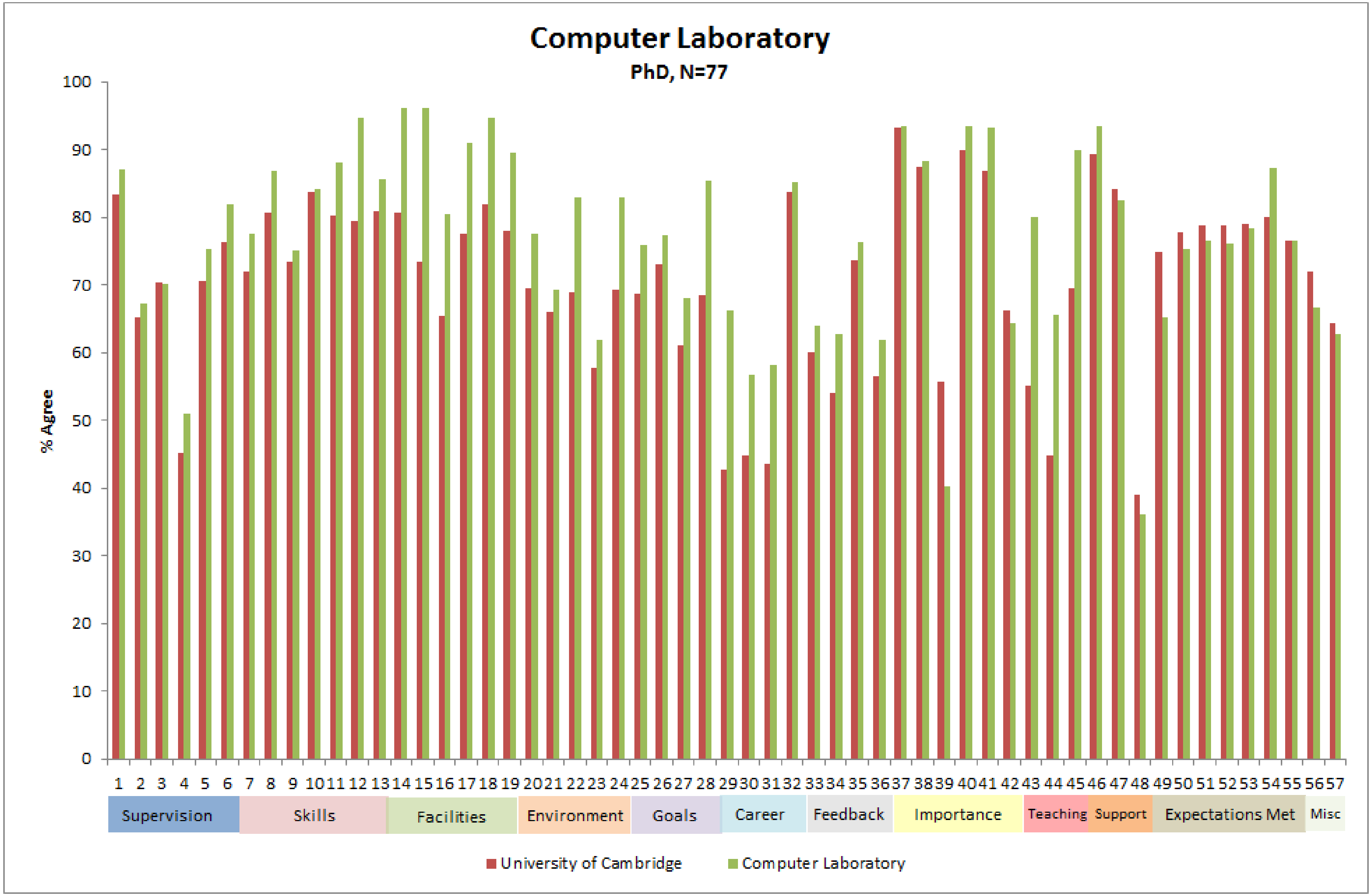


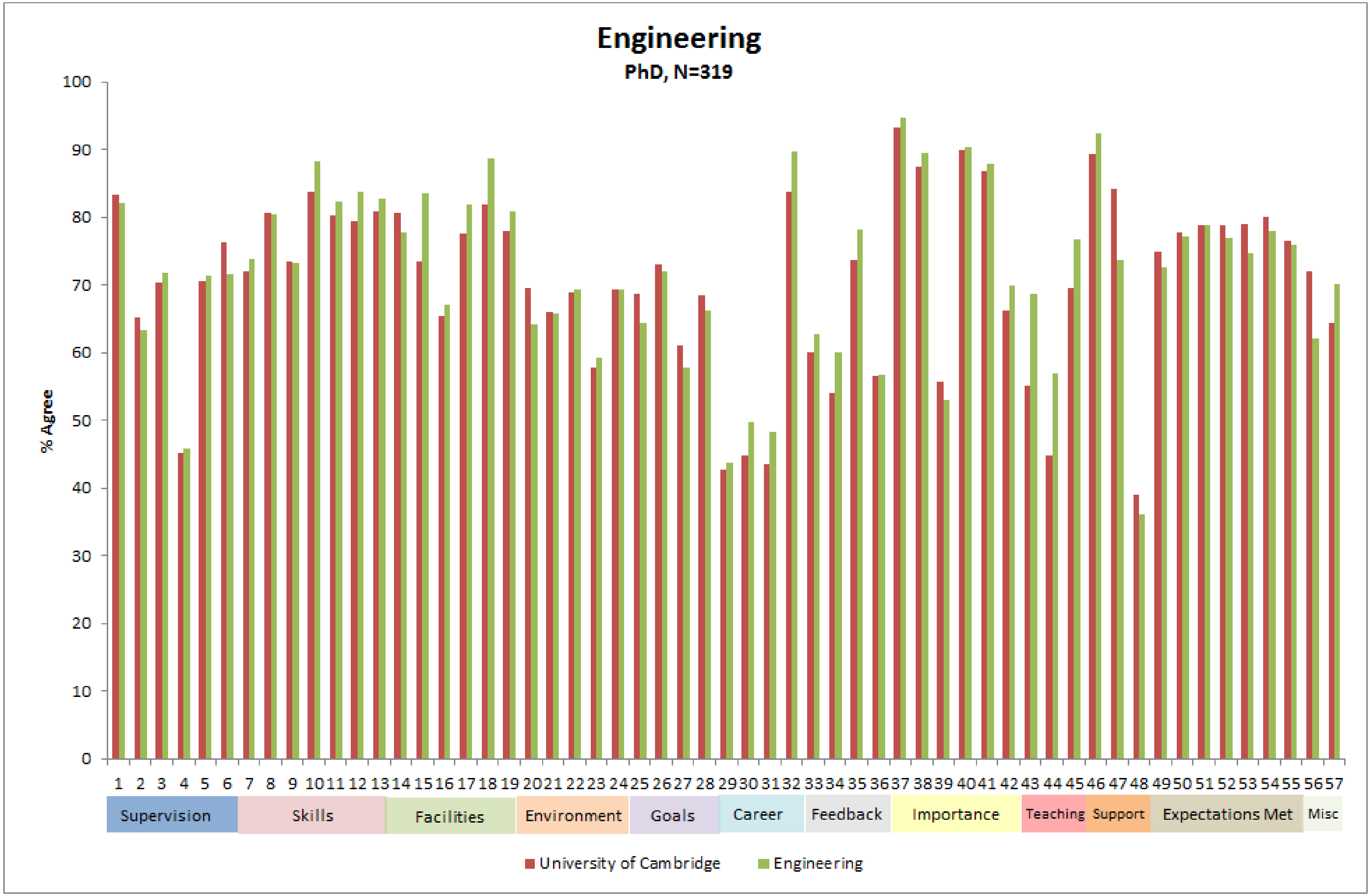
3.10.3 The financing of my research degree programme places a strain on my personal finances

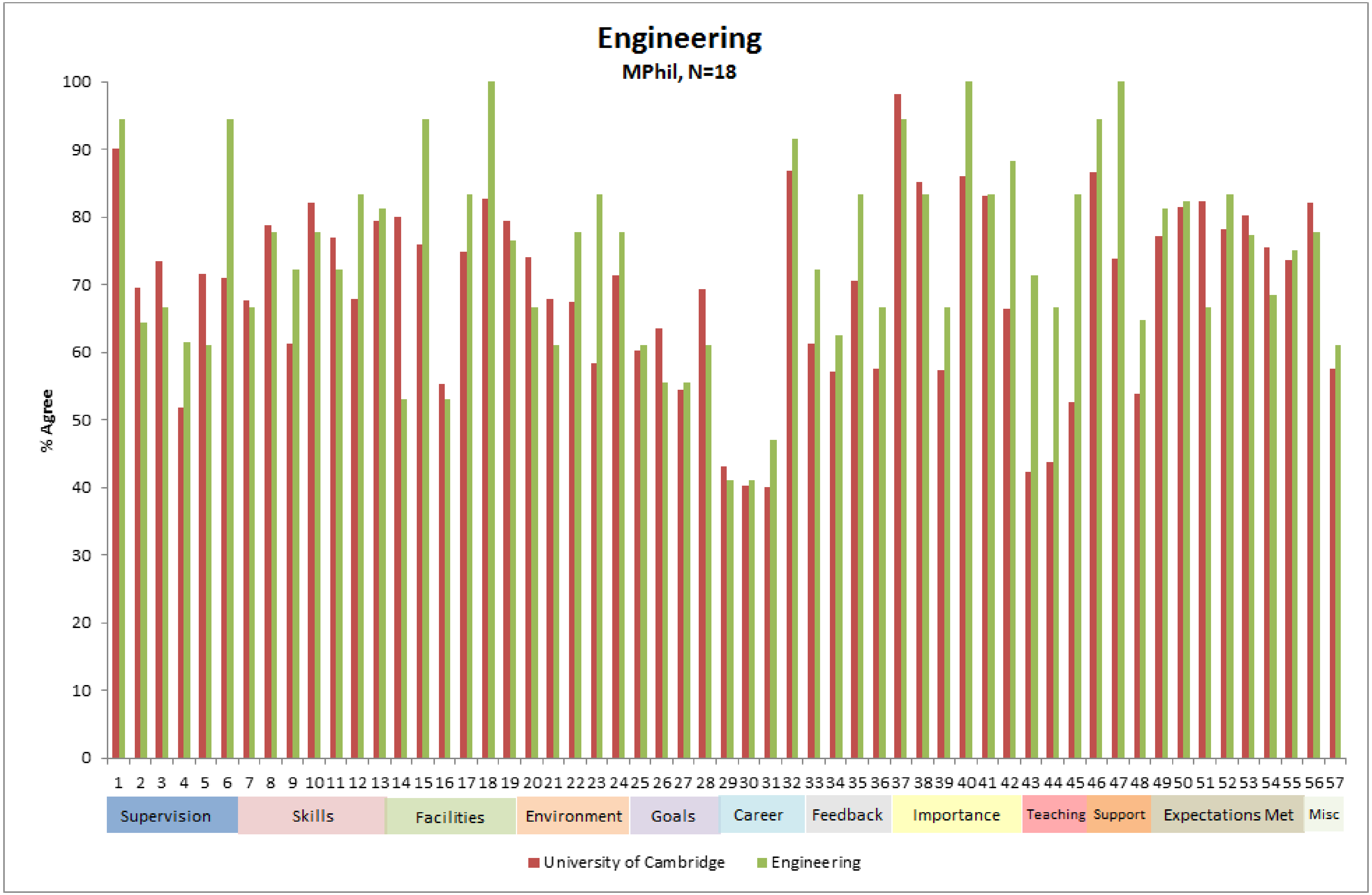


Section 4 All questions by Faculty/Department




Computer Laboratory
PhD, N=77
% Agree
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57
Supervision
Skills
Facilities
Environment
Goals
Career
Feedback
Importance
Teaching
Support
Expectations Met
Misc
University of Cambridge
Computer Laboratory


Engineering
PhD, N=319
% Agree
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57
Supervision
Skills
Facilities
Environment
Goals
Career
Feedback
Importance
Teaching
Support
Expectations Met
Misc
🟥 University of Cambridge
🟩 Engineering


Engineering
MPhil, N=18
% Agree
100
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80
70
60
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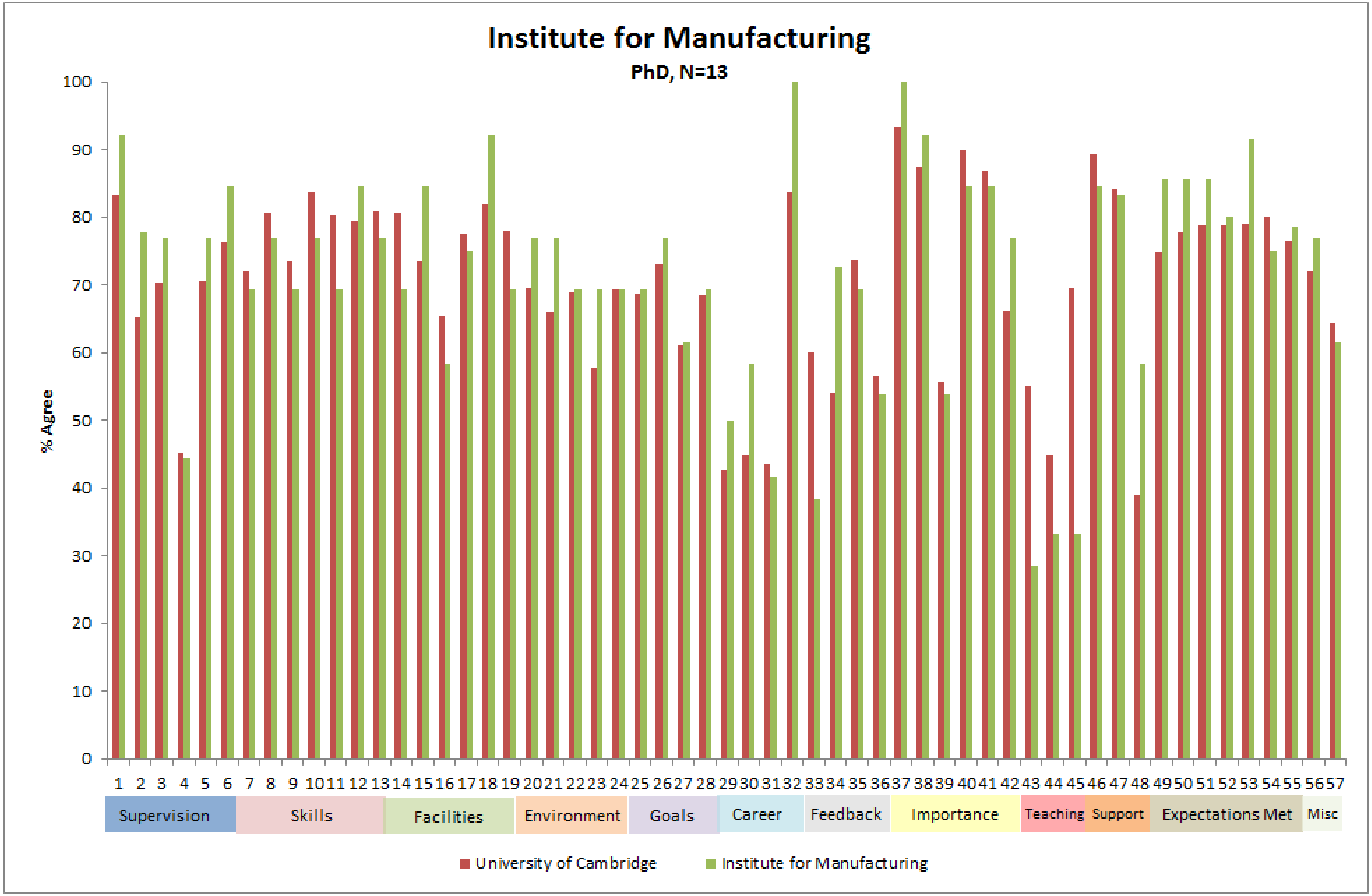
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57
Supervision
Skills
Facilities
Environment
Goals
Career
Feedback
Importance
Teaching
Support
Expectations Met
Misc
University of Cambridge
Engineering


Institute for Manufacturing
PhD, N=13
% Agree
100
90
80
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60
50
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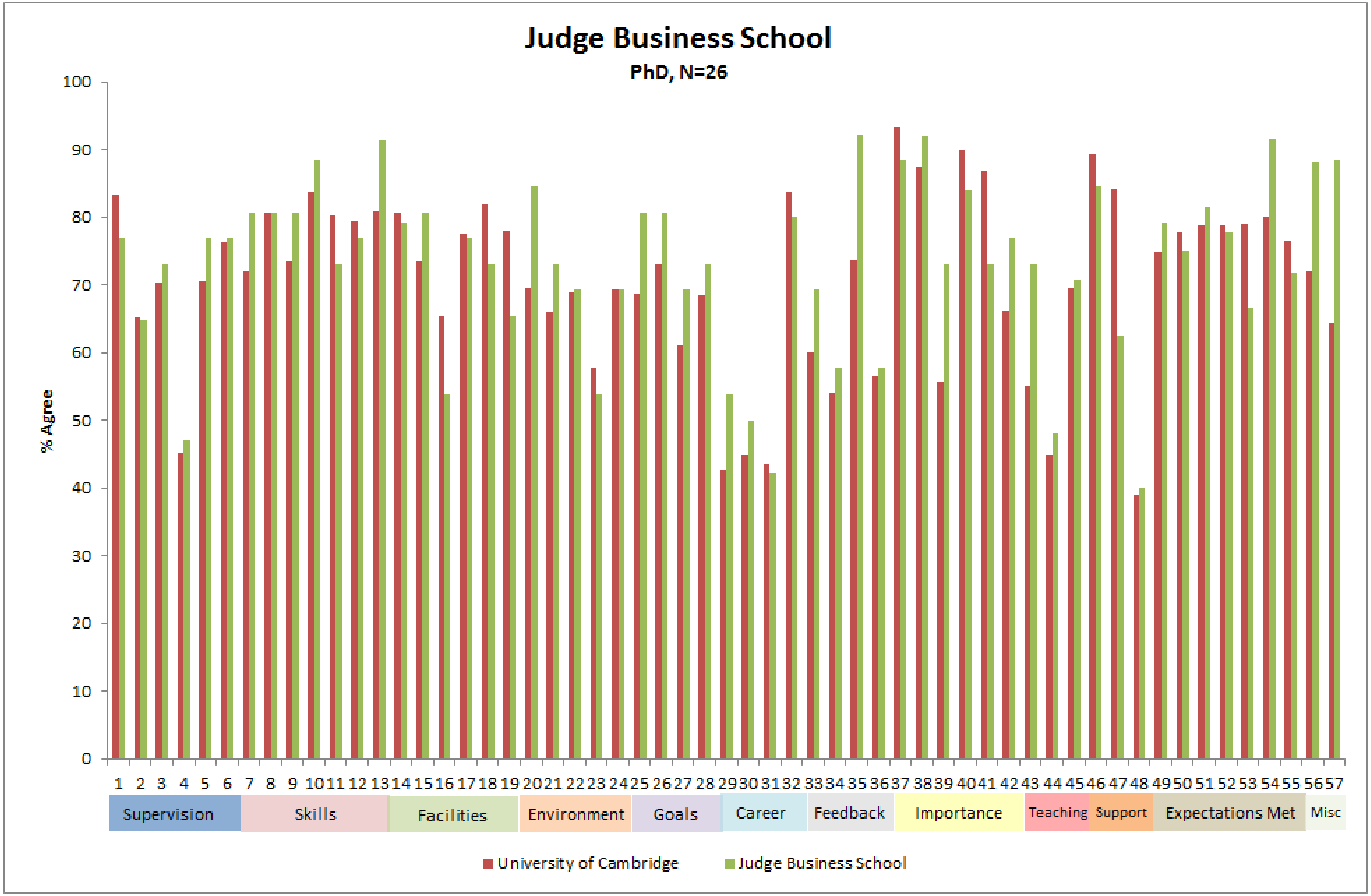
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57
Supervision
Skills
Facilities
Environment
Goals
Career
Feedback
Importance
Teaching
Support
Expectations Met
Misc
University of Cambridge
Institute for Manufacturing


Judge Business School
PhD, N=26
% Agree
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57
Supervision
Skills
Facilities
Environment
Goals
Career
Feedback
Importance
Teaching
Support
Expectations Met
Misc
University of Cambridge
Judge Business School

Appendix 1: PRES 2011 list of participating institutions

Aberystwyth University
Anglia Ruskin University
Aston University
Bath Spa University
Birkbeck, University of London
Birmingham City University
Bournemouth University
Brunel University
Buckinghamshire New University
Canterbury Christ Church University
Cardiff University
Central School of Speech and Drama
City University
Coventry University
Cranfield University
De Montfort University
Glasgow Caledonian University
Glyndwr University
Goldsmiths
Harper Adams University College
Heriot-Watt University
Imperial College London
Institute of Education University of London
Keele University
King's College London
Kingston University
Lancaster University
Leeds Metropolitan University
Liverpool John Moores University
London Metropolitan University
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Loughborough University
Manchester Metropolitan University
Napier University Edinburgh
Northumbria University
Nottingham Trent University
Open University
Oxford Brookes University
Bangor University
Queen Mary, University of London
Queens University Belfast
Robert Gordon University
Royal College of Art
Royal Holloway, University of London
School of Oriental & African Studies
Southampton Solent University
St Mary's University College Twickenham
Swansea University
Teesside University
The Institute of Cancer Research
The Royal Veterinary College
The University of Northampton
UWIC
University of Aberdeen
University of Bath
University of Birmingham
University of Bolton
University of Buckingham
University of Central Lancashire
University of Chester
University of Dundee
University of East Anglia
University of East London
University of Edinburgh
University of Essex
University of Exeter
University of Glamorgan
University of Glasgow
University of Greenwich
University of Hertfordshire
University of Huddersfield
University of Hull
University of Kent
University of Leeds
University of Leicester
University of Lincoln
University of Liverpool
University of Manchester
University of Newcastle
University of Plymouth
University of Portsmouth
University of Reading
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University of Stirling
University of Strathclyde
University of Sunderland
University of Surrey
University of Ulster
University of Wales Trinity Saint David
University of Wales, Newport
University of Warwick
University of Westminster
University of Winchester
University of Wolverhampton
University of Worcester
University of York
University of the Arts London
University of the West of Scotland
York St John University

Appendix 2: List of PRES questions

Supervision

1 My supervisor/s have the skills and subject knowledge to adequately support my research
2 My supervisor/s make a real effort to understand any difficulties I face
3 I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my supervisor/s
4 I have received good guidance in my literature search from my supervisor/s
5 My supervisor/s provide helpful feedback on my progress
6 My supervisor/s are available when I need them

Skills

7 As a result of my experience so far I feel confident about managing a research project
8 My experience so far has improved my analytical skills
9 My experience so far has helped me to develop a range of communication skills
10 As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to learn independently
11 There are adequate opportunities available for me to further develop my research skills
12 There are adequate opportunities available for me to further develop my transferable skills
13 The transferable skills courses I have attended have been useful for my personal development.

Facilities

14 I have adequate access to the equipment necessary for my research
15 I have a suitable working space
16 There is appropriate financial support for research activities
17 There is adequate provision of computing resources and facilities
18 There is adequate provision of library facilities
19 I have the technical support I need

Environment

20 My department provides opportunities for social contact with other research students
21 My department provides opportunities for me to become involved in the broader research culture
22 My department provides a good seminar programme for research students
23 I feel integrated into my department's community
24 My department provides a good seminar programme for research students

Goals

25 I understand the required standard for the thesis
26 I understand the standard of work expected
27 I understand the requirements of thesis examination
28 I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress

Career

29 I am encouraged to think about the range of career opportunities that are available to me.
30 I am encouraged to reflect on my professional development needs
31 I am encouraged to reflect on my career development needs
32 I have valued the resources of Cambridge University Careers Service in developing my career plans.

Feedback

33 I know who to approach, or where to find this out, if I am dissatisfied with any element of my research degree programme
34 My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students
35 I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student
36 I am aware of my institution's responsibilities towards me as a research degree student

Importance

37 Supervisory support and guidance
38 Opportunities to develop a range of research skills

39 Opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills
40 Access to appropriate facilities
41 The research environment
42 Provision of guidance on institutional standards and expectations for your research degree programme

Teaching
43 I have had adequate opportunity to gain experience of teaching [e.g., lectures, seminars or workshops] whilst doing my research degree programme
44 I have been given adequate support and guidance for my teaching
45 I think the experience that I have gained through teaching has been a worthwhile aspect of my research degree programme

Support
46 My friends and family are supportive of my research degree programme
47 My employer is supportive of my research degree programme
48 The financing of my research degree programme places a strain on my personal finances.

Expectations Met
49 Supervisory support and guidance
50 Opportunities to develop a range of research skills
51 Opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills
52 Access to appropriate facilities
53 The research environment
54 Provision of guidance on institutional standards and expectations for your research degree programme
55 Overall experience of my research programme

Miscellaneous
56 I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme more or less within the planned timescale
57 I found the admissions procedures at Cambridge to be responsive and efficient.

Thesis*
The thesis examination process was fair
The examination of my thesis was completed in a reasonable time scale
I was given adequate support and guidance in preparation for my viva voce
I was given adequate support and guidance to make any changes to my thesis following my viva voce

*due to the small number of responses to this question, results were not included in Faculty/Department charts

Appendix 3 – Free text responses

Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

What would further improve your experience?

"It would be good to have a second supervisor, so the primary one does not have the full power on my degree, funding and future."

"1. The health and safety emphasis often appears to be on following the rules to the letter rather than good practice. I would prefer more thought into the best way to encourage people to comply with systems (making them as easy and intuitive as possible). 2. It is occasionally difficult to find equipment across departments/the university. It would be helpful if there was a university-wide database of equipment (eg SEM, AFM, etc), which might also help reduce duplicate resources."

"A better supervisor."

"A clear guidline on institutional standards and expectations for your research degree programme in the middle of my studying time (rather than at the begnning)"

"A feedback system to be able to provide feedback about your supervisor would be very helpful."

"A functional and fair HR department that fires the dead wood, and keeps the good stuff. A lot of these problems though could be diminished by having "stronger" more mature management."

"Better planning of activities."

"Better structured training in first year would greatly help the experience."

"I am base in West Cambridge which is away from my main department. That means I do not enjoy the same social interactions that my department mates have and there's very little things you could do in West Cambridge apart from laboratory work."

"I am nervous about universities accepting projects from industrial sponsors that are tenuously academic. I feel it is often an excuse for companies to get cheap labour for a boring research project of little general interest. Students typically decide to do a PhD because they are interested by the subject and not for cynical career improvement. For this reason , in the sciences and engineering, they may often feel cheated by mundane commercially relevant, but ultimately uninteresting work.

I am very grateful to recieve full PhD funding, without which I could not do the program at all. However, the allowances are enough to survive rather than to live. Cambridge is expensive.

I am very new in the university and just starting my research program, just three weeks, therefore unable to give opinion about this."

"I found that being part of a joing research group (P3G) really helped me to get settled in the department. It's given me the opportunity to meet others who are not necessarily from the same backgroud as me."

"It would be a significant improvement if I were to have a second supervisor. I would have liked to have regular constructive feedback on my progress in different aspects of my skills development, in the form of supervision reports. On a confidential note: I have experienced insulting, sarcastic, demeaning and emotionally abusive behaviour on a regular basis during supervision meetings over a long period of time (Jan 2009 onwards). When my progress and emotional well-being were affected by such abuse, I was directly threatened not to expect good reference letters for grant renewal applications unless I became more productive. I required the regular support of university counseling services in order to survive such experiences for several months. Despite the fact that I was self-motivated as I began my program and was really passionate about my project, I was seriously considering quitting my PhD during my 2nd year due to such abuse. If I had had a second supervisor who was less abusive, more approachable, more emotionally consistent, less temperamental, and more equipped to lead, manage and motivate research students without intimidating or manipulating them, I feel that I would have achieved a lot more progress, increased my confidence, and maximised my opportunities as PhD student."

"more focus on timescales for deciding on the next career step"

"Sometimes people with low research skills or doubtful academic qualifications join, so the work increases. However the research quality decreases and I say Not for Cambirdge. (unlucky me perhaps).

the communication between students and the university is very poor. the administration is not approachable nor helpful, nor is the information available in easily accessible form.

Very difficult to address the needs to master new analytical techniques and research what needs doing."

"Very happy with the research degree programme - excellent supervisors and environment. More cross-collaboration with other departments would be good - I collaborate mainly between Engineering-Chemical Engineering. As a computational researcher, collaboration with e.g. DAMTP/Maths would be great."

"Wasn't happy with the ethos supervisor used to "run the lab", essentially delegating all supervisory work to managers. Wasn't pleased with the way myself and other PhD students were sometimes treated by them."

Further information regarding your teaching experience

"1st year student - will (hopefully) start supervisions next year."
"A good source of extra money."
"basically no experience it was not encouraged"
"Did some supervision work to a group of undergraduates students."
"For the past two years, I have supervised graduating students in their final year research project."
"I am very new to the program, just three weeks, therefore unable to give opinion about this."

"I have never been given the opportunity of teaching, even the courses which were available were for students who already are involved in teaching!"

"I supervise second year Chem Eng undergraduates for the Convergence Chemistry course. Although there are not that many supervisions each term, I am thoroughly enjoying the experience."
"i supervise undergraduate courses."
"I think have teaching experience is very good for a research student"
"It was fun."
"More feedback would have been helpful."

"My supervisor has never thought me anything so teaching is not the philosophy here here everyone on its own. Money money money."
"My teaching experience has certainly encouraged me to consider a career in teaching."
"SUpervised 2nd and 3rd year students. Helped to co-supervise an MEng project."
"supervising undergraduates"

"Training is particularly poor as is quality assurance. How does this department vet the teachers they present to undergraduates? Answer they don't? I certainly feel that some of the departmental teaching I have done has not been in either my field of research or anything I had an experience of. Also their exists little opportunity to co-operate on teaching methods, for example it is very much an individual spirit - no one exchanges solutions notes or comments etc."

"Tutoring small groups of final year students; demonstrating in practical classes and marking laboratory reports. Was familiar with the system as I had completed my undergraduate degree in the same institution, otherwise would have preferred more guidance on what to expect."

Importance of supervisory support and guidance

"Despite usual university policy, I have not been assigned a second supervisor. I do not have someone to provide practical guidance in day-to-day concerns in the lab, or any other source of expert advice apart from my primary supervisor."

"I understand this is one of the most important aspect of research degree programme. But I'm thoroughly dissatisfied with the supervisory support provided to me."

"Invaluable when it happens"

"You need all of these for a productive environment!"

Computer Laboratory

What would further improve your experience?

"Additional involvment from my supervisor"

"Better support from the department independent of political infighting, support rather than punishment when problems arrise, genuine interest in research rather than arbitrary metrics that are of no value except to the funding bodies."

"Departmental philosophy seems to be "sink or swim", and not much help is given to those sinking. Rarely met supervisor throughout PhD, wish he had been more forceful in getting me to finish on time."

"Having a more defined project goal and confirmation of global interest in my research."

"I am given a lot of independence and liberty in structuring my work, which I appreciate. It does mean that it's really up to *me* to do my PhD, which is great. However, it also means that the experience is more daunting at times than it would be if I were integrated into a bigger research project with concrete goals and deliverables."

"I felt I was given relatively little feedback during my research, although my supervisor was extremely helpful towards the end of my degree in shepherding the completion of my thesis. There is likely a happy medium, perhaps unreached in this case, between hands-off and micro-management. I suspect my degree would have been finished a year faster with a bit more engagement. One possible improvement would be to require a "secondary supervisor" who is not in the same research group as the primary supervisor. In my case, my secondary supervisor didn't actually read my thesis, indicating that several months advance notice would be required for any text to be read. On the other hand, my primary supervisor provided substantive chapter feedback within days, and often hours, of my sending them to him. As a whole, the department was uninviting: weekly "happy hours" discouraged the attendance of students who don't drink (of whom there are many), and the space was too small to hold many members of the department (and very noisy even then). I felt I had a good relationship with students and staff within my research group, but little contact outside of the research group. There were few, if any, social events spanning research groups, and throughout most of my degree, I didn't know the names of professors, research staff, or students outside of my immediate corridor. With a few exceptions, support staff were difficult to approach, and at times even unprofessional (especially the system administration staff). Little or no guidance was provided on career structure in terms of academic or industrial research options; despite this, the outcome seems to have been good. Having experienced this and other research environments, the Computer Laboratory clearly performs cutting edge research with remarkable competence, and no questions can be raised about the quality of research. In that sense, it was a remarkable place to do a PhD, but clearly some refinement is needed."

"I have a great supervisor, but some of my research has ended up being quite different from his main interests, which at times can be frustrating."

"I would like to do some lab work in fields far removed from my area of research. I consider myself a scientist, but I am a theoretician and don't get to do any lab work."

"It is exceptionally intensive, but I feel that I am learning a lot."

"It would be great if one could intermit over the summer, if one is taking on an internship, so that one doesn't 'lose' valuable PhD time."

"More funding opportunities for home (UK) students, new to Cambridge."

"More mental health support Clear description of thesis requirements"

"More social activities and events organised for research students."

"My main problem has been my relationship with my supervisor which hasn't been good. It has therefore made my overall research experience difficult and not enjoyable. Perhaps a change of supervisor or department would be helpful. Because, I have previously, given a good working environment, enjoyed research and been passionate about my work."

"There is absolutely no way to correct/overcome bad supervision. Department/institution, while supportive, prefer quantity over quality therefore supervisor viewpoint is always given priority."

"Writing more papers."

Further information regarding your teaching experience

"Currently I have no teaching experience. It is not a part of my research program."

"Have done supervisions in small groups (2-3 students at a time) but would love more large-group lecture-style experience (since I am interested in being a professor when I complete my degree)."

"Held supervisions in five different courses."

"Helped had been undergraduate at same institution so experienced teaching from other side"

"I am still at the beginning of my PhD but supervised a course for second year students and demonstrated two other courses, one for first year students and one for the MPhil ACS."

"I had the opportunity to give a guest lecture in an undergraduate course once a year. Towards the end of my degree, a programme of optional lectures taught by post-graduate students was introduced; this is an improvement, but no encouragement was made to participate in that programme. I also had the opportunity to do small group teaching, which was valuable, but there were few appropriate teaching spaces available in the building (and fewer as time went by). Overall, the opportunities for lecturing were limited, as were the opportunities for learning about lecturing. This is disappointing, given the expectation that many post-graduates will move on quickly to career positions involving teaching. I would like to see more formal mentoring by supervisors regarding teaching, and especially, more mentoring in the preparation and practice of lecturing. Today, this happens with some supervisors and some students, but the programme does not ensure it occurs reliably (and hence, it happens rarely)."

"I have supervised two modules. A part I module last term, with 6 students and a part IB module this term with 12 students."

"I have supervised undergraduate students and delivered a lecture on a final-year undergraduate course."

"I have supervised undergraduates, and lectured a postgraduate course. I am doing the TAP course this year too."

"I like teaching (supervising) a lot, but it does take a huge amount of time to do it properly (in terms of preparation and marking). In many cases, research students sacrifice the thoroughness of their teaching preparation and marking in order to avoid losing too much time to it (and also because only the time spent in front of students is paid)."

"I supervised several groups of undergrads."

"I've given several seminars as part of outreach projects to GCSE/A-level students and arranged activities ranging from a few hours to covering two days."

"More opportunity for lectures would be nice"

"Never done supervisions, just seminars and workshops"

"Relatively few opportunities for someone who came from a mathematical background, rather than a computer science one. I don't feel able to put myself up as a supervisor for courses I have never formally studied."

"Supervising undergrads every year so far"

"Supervising undergraduate students"

"Supervision of undergraduate students"

"Supervision work in four courses over two years."

"Supervisions (small classes), lecturing, demonstrating."

"Supervisions of groups of 2-3 undergraduate students."

"Supervisions only"

"The CL department disallows MPhil students from supervising or assisting in the teaching of undergraduate courses. No satisfactory reason has been given for this - graduate workers and PhD students with the same academic experience are allowed to do so."

"Undergraduate supervision"

Importance of opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills

"Transferable skills are nice, but certainly not necessary for completing a PhD."

Importance of provision of guidance on institutional standards and expectations for your research degree programme

"Get good research done, supervised well, and the thesis will largely follow."

Importance of supervisory support and guidance

"...and he delivers!"
"I am lucky to have a good supervisor. I have seen others that are awful"

Engineering

What would further improve your experience?

"A better supervisor"

"A better support system for students would place less stress on the students. The current supervision reporting seems to be one sided and works against the student if the supervisor does not care for the students objectives and development needs"

"A general early lack of direction, and extra work not related to my thesis, from the project sponsor were the main negative points, though this was down to one individual rather than the company as whole (whose support, otherwise, was good). Some clearer and earlier guidelines on provision of support from the sponsor and non-disclosure agreements would have helped."

"a more mandatory plan for ongoing publications during the process & more active involvement in writing for publication by supervisors (although I appreciate their priorities make this difficult)."

"Absence of sense in the guidance of my supervisor is the main limit, even if working independently is a valuable experience."

"Although I am happy with my supervisor, it would be helpful if she had more specialist knowledge of my research topic. I feel that I have to rely on other academics around the University too much for a critical view of the technical aspects of my research."

"Although the research environment is of a very high standard, I find there is not enough interaction between research students in different groups in general. I feel the department could do more to promote more interaction between research groups to promote a more positive research environment which promotes interaction and potential collaboration between groups."

"As a single parent of two young children, it took me longer, to finish the course, than I had previously expected."

"Being able to interact with other students or researchers working in the same field and discussing with them, in the form of a seminar for example."

Being forced to take two modules is really annoying and a big waste of time. We are adequately able to attend those lectures we think we need without having to then waste a lot of time on useless lectures just because we have to sit an exam in them."

"Being from the Netherlands, I would really expect the facilities to be better: properly heated offices, height-adjustable desks, clean toilets."

"Better inter research group communication."

"Better structure and more guidance."

"Better support for non-traditional students, in particular, skill development for more senior students, and in particular to that- more transferable skills training for lecturing/teaching careers (too much on research careers!!)"

"Design a whole electricity generating system will help me learn much about the interdisciplinary experience. Also, I can learn how to do work in a unfamiliar research field."

"engage in more research projects"

"Ensure group collaboration and introduction to how the group's system works and terminology (for new joiners)"

"Events to mix with other research groups would be nice. Many areas of research between the divisions overlap, I don't feel that there is much opportunity to talk and get to know research students/professors in other divisions."

"facilities should be better managed and maintained"

"From my perspective, the university needs to develop instruments to lay off supervisors that show objectively inacceptable behaviour."

"funding options more widely available and more supervisor / advisor support"

"Greater provision of courses designed to develop analytical/theoretical techniques at the graduate level (cf. the American system)."

"Having a supervisor who sticks to the rules and does not lie and bully would further improve my experience. Also, it would help, if bullying could be reported anonymously, without it going straight back to the person complained about. The relevant department's website does state that complaints are being treated confidentially, however this is factually not the case. As a result I am finding myself unable to take further action and will only be able to make a proper complaint, once I have received my degree. In the meantime this means that I have missed approximately 12 months of work, due to acute depression and anxiety disorder."

"Help narrowing the project, and understanding the responsibilities and expectations of the student would be helpful."

"I am really grateful to have such a encouraging and supportive supervisor like mine, Prof. Kenichi Soga."

"I am supported to attend several conferences and workshops which are all very helpful."

"I believe to participate some international conferences on my research topic will benefit my experience a lot."

"I don't receive enough support from my supervisor."

"I had to struggle a bit to get my advisor to agree that I go on an internship for the summer. Internships are a valuable experience and they help to get a better job after graduation. There should be a regulation guaranteeing that a student be able to do an internship if he/she wants to.

I have been in Cambridge just for almost 2 months, so it is difficult to address all the aspects by now."

"I have been struggling in terms of financial support. My project is not funded from any source. The facilities available are not adequate. Other than this everything is fine."

"I might leave academic research after completing my PhD."

"I transferred to my current research group from a different department. I have received excellent support from the postdoctoral research associates in my group, which has helped me make the transition."

"I would have lived closer to Cambridge."

"I would learn more practical skills like ecomonics and languages at the same time seeking for my degree"

"I would like my division to be more sociable. At the moment, I find my office quite unsociable. It would be good if there are regular project presentations where students get to present their work to the group."

"I would stop investing in training students to complete research with in universities and give grants to people working in SMEs. From my own personal experience, I have learnt far more from working in small businesses than in the univerisity. The reason for completing the PhD is that it is a title that is useful."

"If the Engineering department division B could specifically provide the research students an intense language programme or transferable skills related to our field, it would be very much appreciated."

"Improved networking with other researchers in my area in my department."

"Improving the research environment (ambience) has to definitely improve for better research.

In this University there are a few groups that do top class research but the majority of them are ordinary or bleow average. I was lucky to have been able to change to a group that is world class and restart my PhD. I think this flexibility is fantastic!"

"It was all very good."

"It would be great if the researcher would supported to attend and take part iin their research domain conferences and discussion."

"It's been a wonderful experience in Cambridge so far!"

"It's been great."

"Just started my PhD, but so far so perfect"

"Learn to be more independent and developing critical thinking."

"Letting Supervisors know the boundaries of their influence over the students' research as some are quite domineering."

"Make it longer."

"Many research facilities are available but more guidance could be given on how to access them."

"Meeting groups with people working in the same topic in Cambridge and exchange of knoweldge"

"Mini-group projects to help develop research skills"

"More active support network within the department, in addition to the supervisor's role."

"More contact and guidance from my supervisor."

"More contact with academics from the main engineering department (my lab is 2 miles from the main site)"

"More department social events please"

"more financial resources available for mature students."

"more financial support and research options for the industrial inclined"

"More financial supports for student fees and research expenses."

"More funding for research for example in purchasing things needed for experiments."

"More time with supervisor, and especially when starting out give some sort of idea of what is expected during a phd"

"More transparancy of what funding is available with my department would be helpful and in particular,once having applied for funding, knowing when (to a week's acuracy) we will hear an outcome."

"Motivated Technicians who don't stop for chats and tea breaks every time you want to get some work done. 6 months to get an engine running on a dyno is a farce"

"My feeling is that everybody here is very busy and professors/technicians have no time if I ask something to them, thus I have to spend a lot of time to learn by myself basic things that they could easily do. My question is: Does it make sense that a professor is the supervisor of several students in so different topics if he does not have a full knowledge of such topics and not even the time to help the students?"

"My own personal circumstances have been the main factor affecting my ability to complete within the timescale, and I feel that my supervisors have been very supportive of this. However I feel I would be more confident in my work if my research group or supervisors had shown interest in my research methods and had therefore been able to guide me or comment on my data analysis, or if my supervisors had attended my seminar presentations and commented on those. I would also benefit from staff sharing more of their own ideas rather than trying to find guidance from mine. At the moment I feel that it was a mistake on my part to do a PhD, particularly in an academic area in which I have no experience and therefore no ability to take part in teaching activities, because I feel at a disadvantage when it comes to a future career in academia. I'm not sure what help a PhD will be to me in any other career. However it also feels as if it's been a great privilege to have been at Cambridge, so I have very mixed feelings about the whole experience. I will only be able to judge it fully and in context when I've completed my PhD, but the feeling of academic isolation and the lack of confidence I feel in my work because of that, was not something that I had expected to feel.

My Phd is too lonely, if there is teamwork and collaboration that would be perfect."

"My research group has six PhD students working on the same project, which provides useful support. The project is also linked with an industrial consortium, which greatly enriches my access to data."

"My supervisor is amazing."

"my supervisor just has too many students, also supervisor is a bad role model for good scientific conduct by expecting authorship simply due to his role as a supervisor without fulfilling even minimal requirements for authorship (such as reading the finished paper not even speaking of early drafts) even if the journals state these as prerequisites"

"One important point is the time the supervisor has for a student. This is not only required for guidance of research, which can also be obtained through senior colleagues. This is more necessary for giving feedback on the research reports (such as journal papers). My experience has seen that a supervisor takes months to give feedback on a single paper. In fact the cumulative time taken to read reports, including the thesis, is sometimes more than one year. Understandibly they are busy but this affects research speed and motivation. And a student is not to compromise on the quantity of research this delays his moving on to the next job, which often comes without financial support from the university or schol agency or the supervisor. This is often the most dissapointing factor when I look back. Else, a biosensors PhD from Cambridge has been worthwhile. One suggestion: a trans-departmental subject such as biosensors needs more flexible collaborations between departments. But there is a high inertia in the environment for working closely together."

"One key difficulty is having an idea of your progress. I think it would be good to use number of conference and journal publications to do this and the department could set guidelines e.g. a student should aim to have at least two published journal articles or 3 conference papers."

"part time students are rare, some extra guidance would be helpful."

"Post-acceptance funding opportunities for international students."

"Remove the requirement for taking 2 classes/modules from PhD program and instead provide training in teaching/lecturing. Then allow PhD students to teach/lecture beginning level courses/modules."

"Research skills development. Greater opportunities for cross-discipline involvement with other research areas"

"Sometimes lack of material to do proper experiments."

"The Department is broken into silos and lacks a sense of unity. It is also depressing to meet other PhD students with little or no ability to speak English - poor standards"

"The structures in place for dealing with any issues arising are inadequate, if the problems are with your supervisor. My personal experience of seeking help throughout my department from my department head, and the graduate student mediator, has been inadequate and distressing. The unstructured research training provided by the department does not meet the needs of students. The standards for work are opaque, and it is difficult in the case of problems to decide how to proceed in solving them. Supervisory issues easily become dominant and cause actual hindrance to the research programme."

"The thing I really concern is the financial support. To be honest, I have some financial difficulty, and I am not sure if I can find enough funding for my following years. And I found the funding resources in Cambridge is very limited for a current student, who did not get any funding when he started his course. This really makes me depressed. I think my pressure come more from financial issue than research."

"This University is unique on many aspects, and so far I have had a wonderful experience. I have improved the way I think and I have enriched my background. But the name of The University of Cambridge is associated to academic excellence as well, which at a PhD level greatly depends on the proper guidance a supervisor provides. This guidance related to the target of the work which will be done, and maybe to some techniques which can be used. This is the only weak point for my research experience up to now(I am on the second year of my research), but again every supervisor has his own way of working. But in the end, in my case I believe that changing a supervisor can solve the problem."

"To enable better integration into a wider (UK and European)research community more institutional financial support for attending conferences."

"To get confidence to discuss my subject"

"Work internship is very helpful."

Further information regarding your teaching experience

"- 3 years supervising 2nd year Engineering Mathematics - 3/4 sessions as a stand in laboratory experiment "demonstrator""

"1st year lab demostratinions and 4th year project supervisions"

"As I am still a first year student, I have not taken up any supervisions(Hence the NA). However, I do think I have adequate opportunity and support to gain teaching experience at the Engineering Department."

"Before Cambridge, 4 years lecturing in my home country. In Cambridge, 4 years supervising students."

"Beside being a PhD student I am also a teaching assistant at the department of engineering"

"Currently in my 1st year so haven't done much teaching"

"demonstrating"

"Demonstrating lab work with groups of 12-20 Small-group supervising (2-3 students)"

"Demonstrations of 4th year courses and supervisions of 1st and 3rd year engineering courses"

"Did Lab demonstrations"

"Have actively been prevented from gaining teaching experience."

"Have just started on my research and have not explored the oppurtunities in teaching."

"Haven't done any yet"

"I acted as Engineering Department Teaching Assistant."

"I am a first year PhD and therefore I have not had any chance to teach or supervise other younger students."

"I am a first year PhD student and I am going to improve these skills during my PhD certainly."

"I am a first year PhD student and until now I could not enter into teaching domain."

"I am a full-time lecturer already"

"I am disappointed that PhD students are not able to lecture classes like they are in the US. This will make me less attractive to US universities should I try to apply for post doctoral work there."

"I am first year PhD student, I haven't started teaching yet."

"I am in my first year and have yet to present my research in any context."

"I am treasurer of the GreenBRIDGE society. My involvement with them has provided me with opportunities to teach. Also, as an EPSRC ICase funded student I have run/facilitated workshops and disseminated information for the industrial partner. I have enquired about taking a teaching/supervisory role on the IDBE masters course."

"I apptreciated teh trust I was given in helping out with courses, delivering lectures etc. It was valuable to get a taste of this aspect of academia."

"I barely have a chance to teach others."

"I did 1A IEP lab2 demonstration for the past two terms."

"I did not teach. I found it is extremely tough to complete the courses and exams in the first year and complete PhD in a challenging area such as biosensors in three years. Therefore I could not afford to spend further time for teaching, which is possible in a four-year format, but not three-year."

"I did only lab demonstrations so far."

"I did some undergradute teaching labs and I feel that it has made me more confident when dealing with problems as they come because the problems arise at evry occaion are diffrent. The work is chanllenging but satisfactory."

"I didn't teach because I am here as a Erasmus student"

"I find supervising an enriching experience, which allows me to think about the subject in much greater detail than I had when I was merely an undergraduate."

"I gave tutorials to about 8 second-year engineering undergraduates for two academic years."

"I have already been a Lecturer for a number of years and have PG Certificate in Academic Practice"

"I have been taking supervisions this term for a third year control module. I feel well supported."

"I have conducted an experiment demostration in my department. This is helpful for me. I could practice explaining one thing in a language I cannot handle perfectly yet. Besides, it is a good experience outside of research."

"I have done demonstration and supervision for undergraduates."

"I have not had any teaching experience so far!"

"I have supervised for two 3rd year uyndergraduate modules. This has been challenging but worthwhile."

"I have supervised two courses up to now and it has been a wonderful experience, I dare say the best for me at the University. The undergraduate students of this University are bright, and I get the chance to participate in their engineering education. Furthermore I sharply improve my knowledge on the field I supervise. This can be useful even in the research I have to conduct, since answering the questions of the students makes me think better about the underlying principles of mechanics."

"I have undertaken small group teaching (1 to 3 students) running through problems set in lectures and placing the teaching in a broader context"

"I haven't done any teaching."

"I haven't had any."

"I still haven't taught as I'm working towards improving my communication skills first"

"I studied here as an undergrad so I knew what was expected."

"I supervise 6 small groups of first year undergraduates in an engineering module, for 5 hours each per year. I was able to attend a supervision training course in preparation."

"I supervised 3rd year undergraduates."

"I supervised students for two courses, in which there was little interaction between myself and the lecturers/course administrators. I find reading clubs are useful platforms for interaction with other researchers and allow one to hone presentation skills.I do however feel there should be more, smaller, topic focussed reading clubs."

"I superviser 4th year project students and 1st year PhD students during some projects"

"I supervising undergraduates 1 on 1, and run larger lab sessions. The teaching element has been great, probably the part of the PhD I enjoy the most. I am considering teaching as a career as a result."

"I would like more opportunities for teaching. The difficulty is if your research is multi-disciplinary, but sits in one department, you may be more suited to teach in another department but contact/interaction/opportunity is limited."

"In Engineering it's a shame there's no opportunity to supervise the 4th year courses since these are typically the most interesting"

"It was interesting and enjoyable."

"it was useful"

"It would be helpful if I could get feedback from students that I demonstrate to."

"I've done some teaching through supervision of third year modules and fourth year projects."

"I've done supervisions, which were great. However, I had to infer by myself or ask around about many practical aspects of supervisions, even after attending the training session. These aspects (how many supervisions ? when to submit report ? how long in advance to give out the work ?, etc.) should be taught somehow (e.g. a webpage, per department or even centralized)"

"I've supervised 3rd year undergraduate students and it has made me think and understand a lot more about the fundamentals of my research area."

"Lab demonstration"

"Lab demonstration for undergraduate students"

"Lab demonstrations and supervisions are mainly seen by students as ways to earn more money rather than useful experiences"

"Lab supervisor, for 2nd year machine labs."

"Limited assistant demonstrating so far"

"MET design project"

"no support whatsoever for students giving supervisions - leads to undergrads being given wrong answers because no model answers are provided to supervisors and also supervisors sometimes get it wrong (when I pointed this out I was unhelpfully told I should go to the lectures which I supervised - but they are on the other end of town and take place while I am supposed to do my research)"

"no teaching experience"

"No teaching experience"

"No teaching experience as a first year PhD student."

"no teaching opportunities offered currently"

"On Q.11 where I answered "disagree" it is not the case that I think it should change. It is good that it was a struggle to understand the material and how to teach it, and also allowed to develop my own teaching technique. I think that was most rewarding and also made me a good teacher."

"Only in first year so not involved in teaching. Hope to be in the 2nd and 3rd years."

"Part IIB research management"

"Running small group (2-3 people) teaching for first years in my college."

"Supervise 5 groups of 2 per term"

"Supervising"

"supervising (tutoring) 2nd year students on the thermofluid mechanics course."

"Supervising Lab demonstrations Outreach"

"Supervising students on example problems"

"Supervising the undergrads was really enjoyable"

"Supervision positions seem to be all filled (both at the Department and the College) from middle of Lent term onwards"

"Supervisions and demonstrations"

"Supervisions are an important part of a PhD"

"Supervisions for small group studies and lab demonstrations."

"supervisor to second year students"

"Teaching experience is certainly an important way to gain further knowlege into the topic of a subject. I do benefit significantly from teaching."

"Teaching was not encouraged at all (by my supervisor or the department). My master's is in business and PhD is in engineering, which could have been valuable for teaching engineers business courses. Although I approached several people to help teaching, I only managed to help out in one class. Very disappointing for people in multi-disciplinary areas. Valuable contributions are overlooked."

"The support received from the course responsible/supervisor can vary significantly from one person to another."

"there are few opportunities for teaching."

"There can be more opportunities."

"They asked me to do supervision and after I said yes they said that I couldn't do it because I didn't have done the related training. I didn't have any idea how to do supervision and not even about the training"

"Very little opportunity outside of lab demonstrations or supervisions."

"Very very useful!"

"Wish I was given more teaching opportunities"

"Would be nice to have more supervision rooms available in the Engineering department. Also, a priority system for supervisors who are at Colleges which are far away from CUED would be nice."

"Would very much like to do more teaching but opportunities are limited"

Importance of access to appropriate facilities

"Absolute necessity."

"company provides as well"

"Good research needs good facilities and equipment"

"In Engineering, no facilities, no resource."

"Lack of appropriate facilities can hugely affect research time, e.g. not having the facities to carry out biological experiments in the Nanoscience Centre caused me a delay of months on order to complete the experiments elsewhere."

"lacking in this area"

"Need more supervision rooms. Also, a phone room would be nice since making and recieving calls in the DVRO is quite disruptive to others."
"Not having these wopuld be a seemingly uneccessary hindrance"

Importance of opportunities to develop a range of research skills

"available to me"
"Breadth and depth of reserach skills are important"
"Especially the ability to learn/do research independently"
"improving analytics and logics, creativity"
"It could be useful."
"Very important to be competitive in the job market."

Importance of opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills

"a valuble component, but not important for completion"
"available to me"
"Being a student here necessarily brings transferable skills."
"But important for post studies work."
"Having worked in industry for 14 years this was not a priority or urgent need for me"
"part time student"
"teaching, societies, MCR"
"This just seems like box-ticking and a waste of time."
"This will be important in the future. Not just for this PhD."

Importance of provision of guidance on institutional standards and expectations for your research degree programme

"A structured approach to explaining expected standards, and best practices for research proposals, lit reviews, thesis, etc would be highly beneficial"
"available to me"
"Being aware of what is expected is convenient."
"Knowing the recipe for success is critical"
"Students need some direction."
"what?"
"when there is no input on the supervisor's behalf, this guidance can help students understand where they stand with respect to their research."

Importance of supervisory support and guidance

"Absolutely critical"
"available to me"
"Helps you find solutions to your problems, there for support."
"I appreciate my supervisor for letting me the freedom to work independetnly."
"I manage without guidance, then it is not so important!"
"The most important factor"
"This becomes more important if the research student has less experience and visibility of the research."
"This is by far the most important"
"This is crucial, especially for 1st yr PhD student."

"Very helpful to have but at teh end of teh day, it is still up to the individual student to perform"

"without any guidance from the supervisor, at least on specifying a proper research goal, I do not think that it is probable for a student to conduct good research, no matter how much he works."

Importance of the research environment

"A good environment really helps."

"available to me"

"helps to inspire, which is crucial for research."

"Hlepful in motivating and stimulating students"

"PhD student needs motivation and food for thought and problem resolution from the environment. Very important."

Institute for Manufacturing

What would further improve your experience?

"access to post doc or further research programmes"

"As a part-time PhD student, the beginning phase is quite confusing. Mandatory modules that are stretched out over the full term are extremely difficult to attent, especially when living in a foreign country"

"I have specific personal circumstances that have put a strain on the program. Also the part time nature makes it more difficult for the supervisors, but overall it is good."

"If depatment was intergrated with a relivant library providing easier access to reding material and space for quiter reading and studying rater than in the lab"

"I'm a part time student in full time employment. Whilst the department does lots of extra curricular activities these are often advertised on short notice which prevents me from being free to attend. My part time status has also lead me to apply lower scores in relation to computing support etc."

"The experience at the Institute for Manufacturing has been outstanding in terms of a supportive dynamic environment."

Further information regarding your teaching experience

"I am still a 1st year PhD Student so I didn't have the opportunity to teach."

"No teaching during research, but during regular job."

Importance of opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills

"Very useful but not important for completion"

Importance of supervisory support and guidance

"At least initially"

Judge Business School

What would further improve your experience?

"A truly remarkable experience. The time demands of executive education teaching for my supervisors is a challenge for them to manage."

"Easier access to database such as World Scope and other private databases."

"electronic access to journals not based upon arbitrary subscriptions"

"I don't feel that our department does enough to integrate PhD students with other more senior researchers. This could be much improved and has the potential to add value for staff and research students."

"I expected my supervisor to support me, but he saw me as an assistant to do work for him. In four years we spent six hours in total discussing my work."

"I have changed my supervisor last year and it has been the best decision ever."

"Like in many US universities, PhD students should be employed as part-time research assistants. I am married but my wife cannot come to Cambridge as I could not find enough funds to bring her to Cambridge. This makes life very difficult for me!"

"More interaction between PhD students in the form of seminars on work in progress could improve the experience."

"More structured career opportunities. Specifically, if the University Career services would offer a list of available post-doc positions for my research interests."

Further information regarding your teaching experience

"Enjoyed it"

"I didnt have the chance to do any teaching yet, but i will be assisting my supervisor in June/July"

"I don't think my supervisor has given me adequate guidance for my teaching and would expect more support in seeking this guide of experience"

"I found supervising undergraduates to take up a great amount of my time, and the payment to be disproportionate of my effort."

"I have gained a fair experience with supervisions (tutorials) and marking"

"I have taught undergraduate degree in Accounting for 2 years before embarking on my PHD program in Cambridge in Oct 2010."

"No teaching opportunities for the last two terms"

"supervising undergraduates. also had teaching experience prior to commencing PhD"

"Teaching is very valuable for proficiency in the subject taught and teaching also is personally very rewarding."

"Teaching opportunities have been Very valuable for my professional development. I hope these opportunities continue to be plentiful for Ph.D. students."

Importance of opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills

"I received funding to participate in a course in London"

Importance of supervisory support and guidance

"Having a good supervisor is the key to success."

"Never had any, would liked it, but managed without"

Importance of the research environment