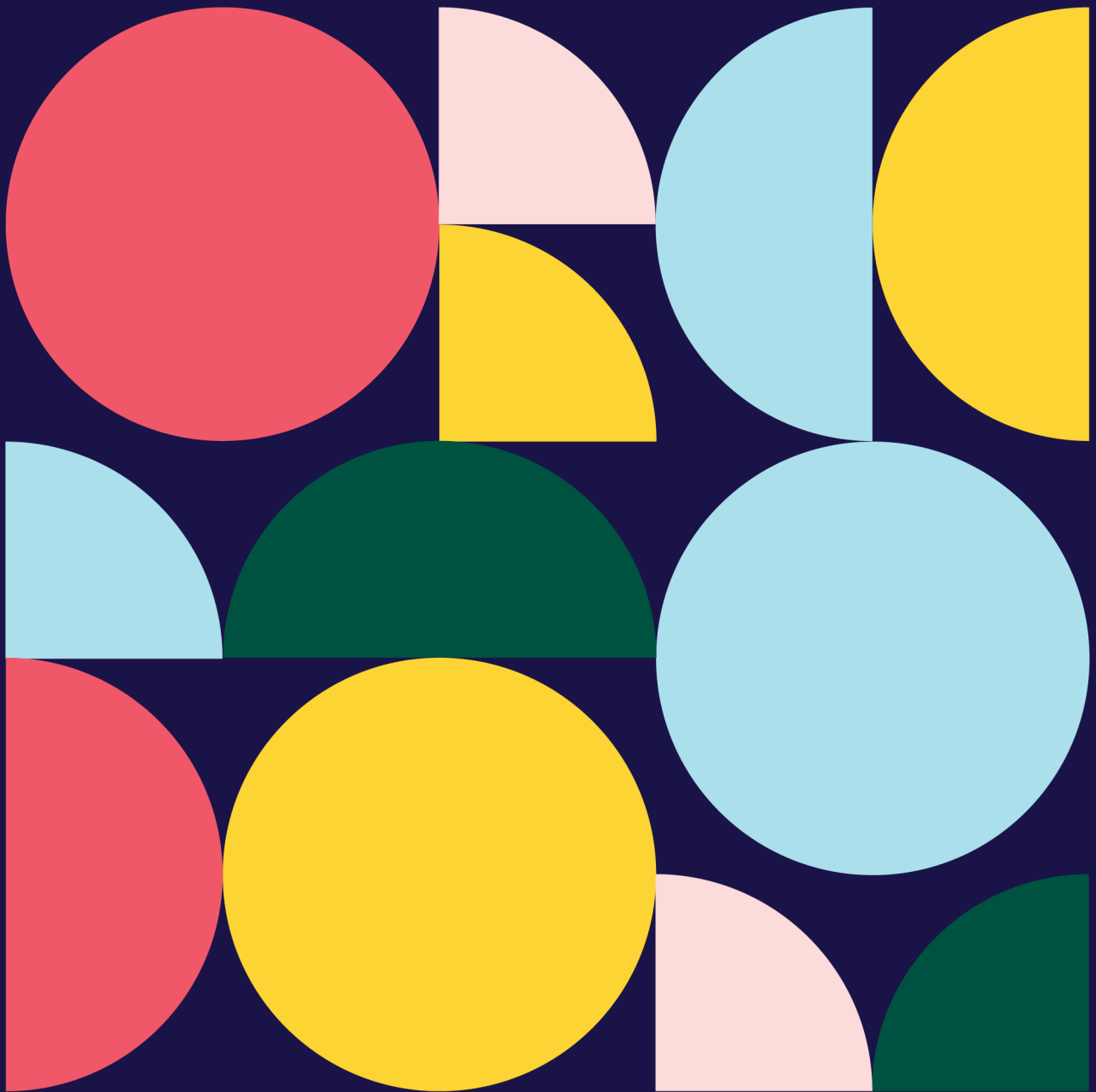




Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2026



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Introduction

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is a yearly external survey by Advance HE which collects **feedback from postgraduate taught students (PGTs)** on Masters, Postgraduate, Certificate, and Diploma courses. 2026 is the University of Bristol's fifth year participating, with **1784** or **29%** of PGTs responding, a 4% increase in responses compared to 2025. The survey consists of 45 questions, divided into 10 themes plus Overall Satisfaction. The **Community and Support themes are of particular interest to Bristol SU** because affecting change within these areas is within the Organisation's remit. As such, the analysis mostly focuses on these two themes.

Key takeaways

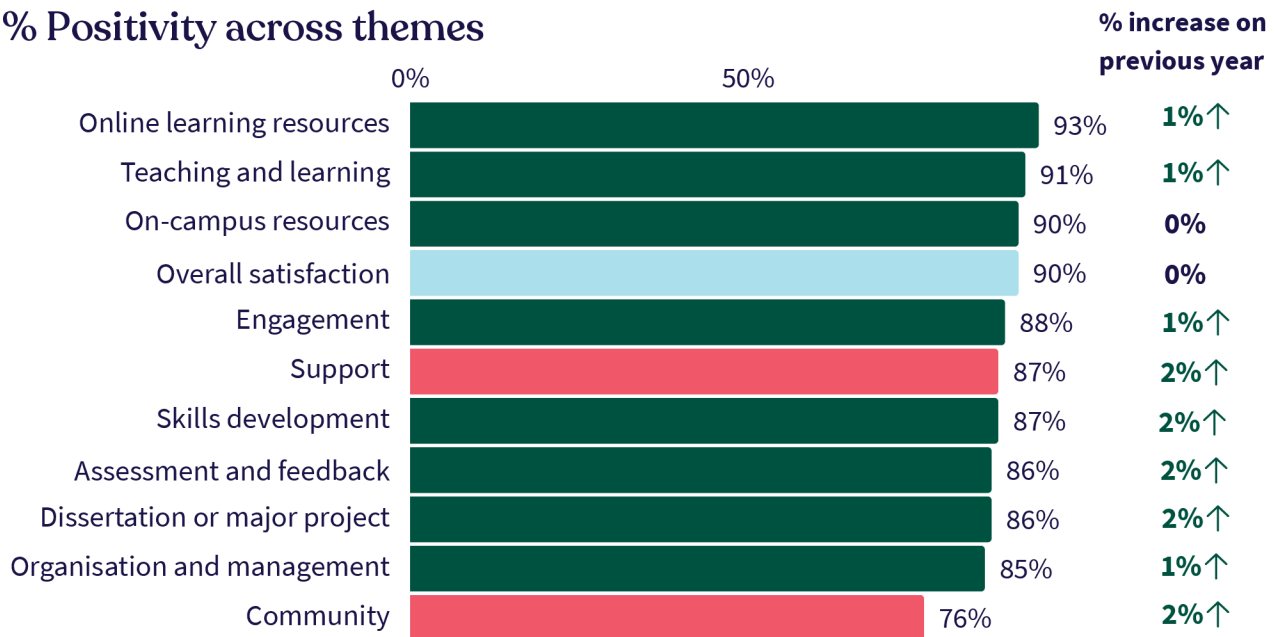
- 'Community' and 'Support' themes are **improving faster** than the overall picture.
- Within 'Community', **opportunities to socialise with other PGTs** has improved the most over the past year, **increasing by 5%**.
- **Lower scores** across both 'Community' and 'Support' are consistently seen among **White students, home students, Disabled students, second-year students, and part-time PGTs**.
- **Ethnic minority PGTs show greater variation in their scores** when intersectional factors are considered, indicating that their experiences are more strongly shaped by overlapping identities compared to White PGTs.
- **White students and Disabled students score significantly lower on health and wellbeing support**, compared to ethnic minority PGTs and non-disabled students.

Recommendations

- **Continue to build upon existing community and support work** which has had an impact on overall PGT scores.
- Adopt an intersectional engagement strategy rooted in data, recognising the complex experiences of our diverse student body.
- **Build more inclusive and accessible PGT programmes of events and activities** to encourage community-building, particularly amongst disabled students.
- **Design support services that are accessible and inclusive** for our diverse student body.

Topline

% Positivity across themes

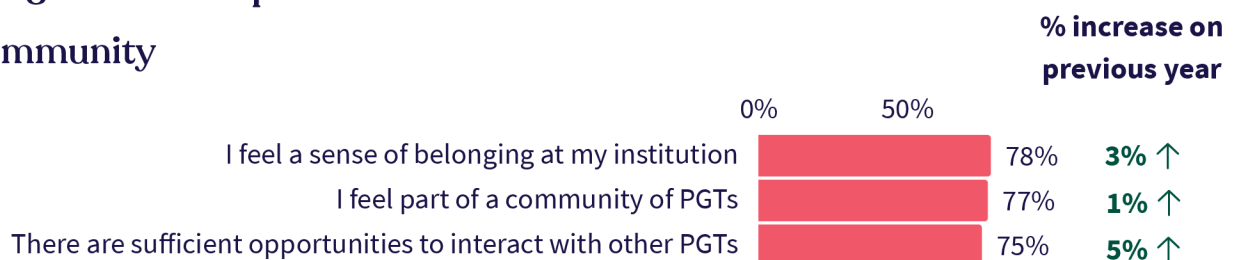


Most themes improved from 2025. Overall, scores went up by 1.3% this year, a smaller rise than last year's 3.3%. This is likely because scores are already high, leaving less room for further improvement. **'Community' and 'Support' both improved faster than average in both years.** However, even with a 2% improvement, 'Community' is still the area postgraduate taught (PGT) students rate lowest.

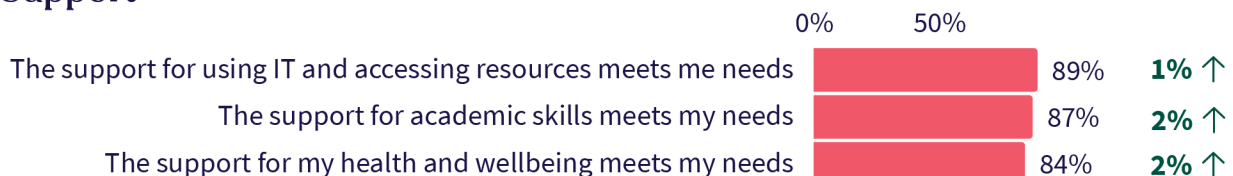
Community and Support

% Agree across questions within themes

Community



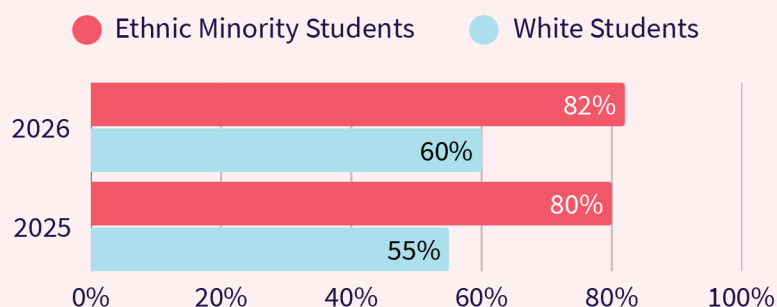
Support



Although 'Community' is still the lowest-scoring area overall, it's also seen the biggest improvement this year. In particular, PGT students now **feel they have more chances to interact with others**, and report a stronger sense of belonging, with every Community score above 75% for the first time.

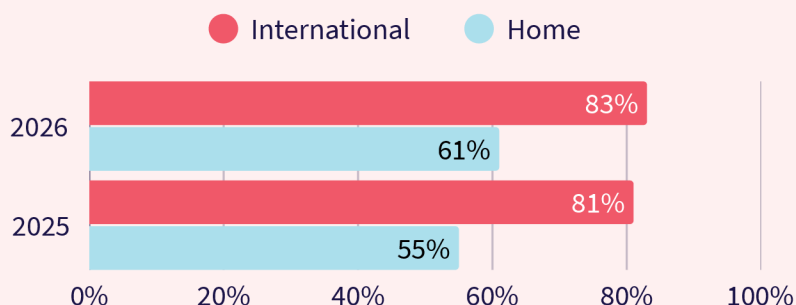
Community in Detail

Ethnicity



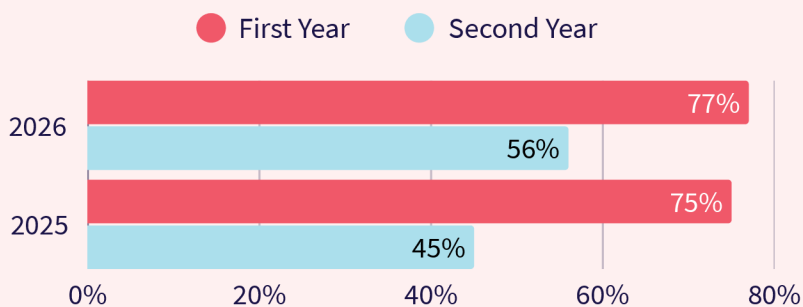
Gap between ethnic minority and White students (22%) has closed by 3% since 2025

Fee Status



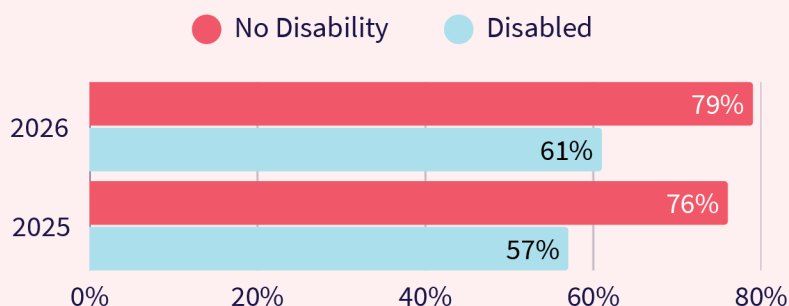
Gap between international and home students (22%) has closed by 4% since 2025

Year of Study



Gap between first and second year students (21%) has closed by 9% since 2025

Disability

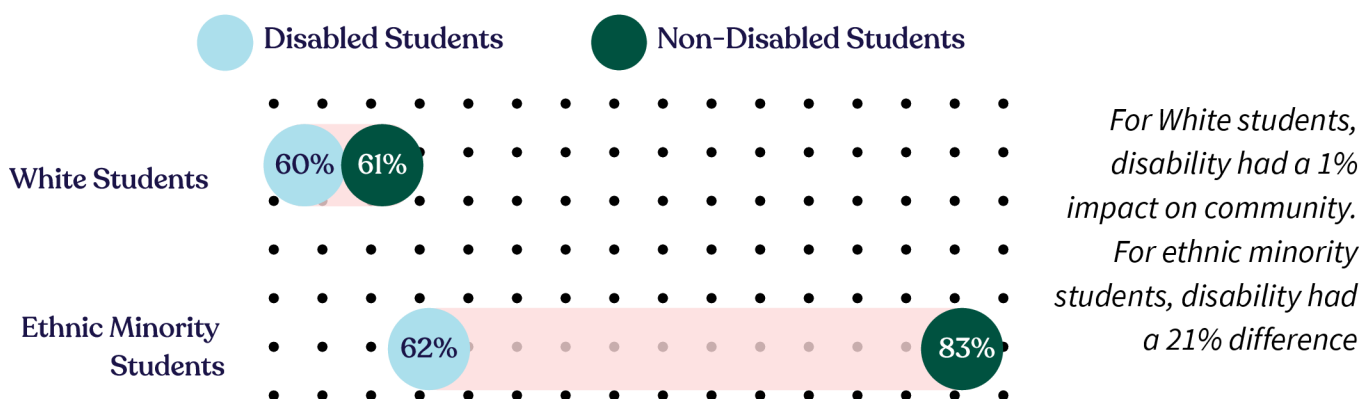


Gap between Disabled and non-disabled students (18%) has closed by 1% since 2025

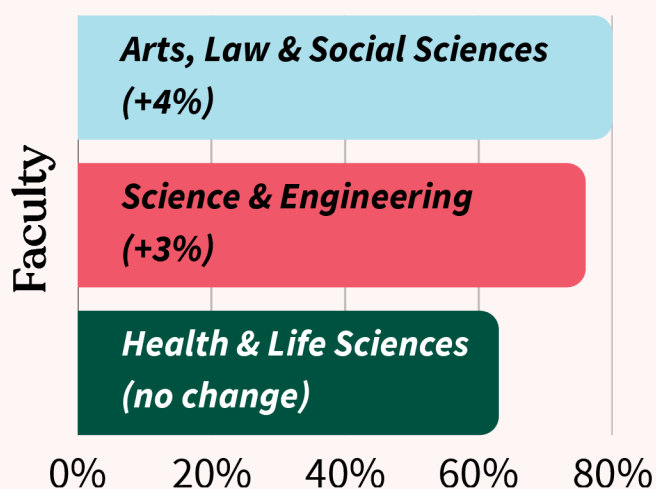
Responses to questions related to 'Community' varied within demographic categories. Despite the closing gaps, **Ethnicity, Fee Status, Disability, and Year of Study all impact PGTs sense of community and belonging.**

The picture is more complicated when we consider intersectional experiences. Whilst ethnic minority PGTs report higher scores on 'Community' than White PGTs, their experiences are more varied. Overall, when we take into account the impact of other characteristics and enrolment, **ethnic minorities' reporting of community fluctuates more than twice as much as White PGTs.***

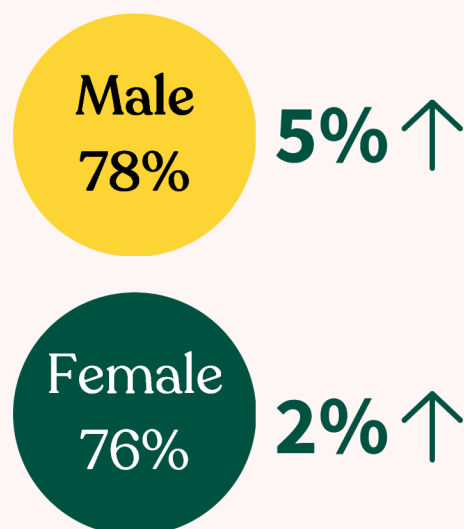
'Community' Response Ranges: Ethnicity x Disability



Other Demographics



The faculty Health & Life Sciences remains the lowest scoring on community questions and is the only faculty to see no rise in scores since last year.

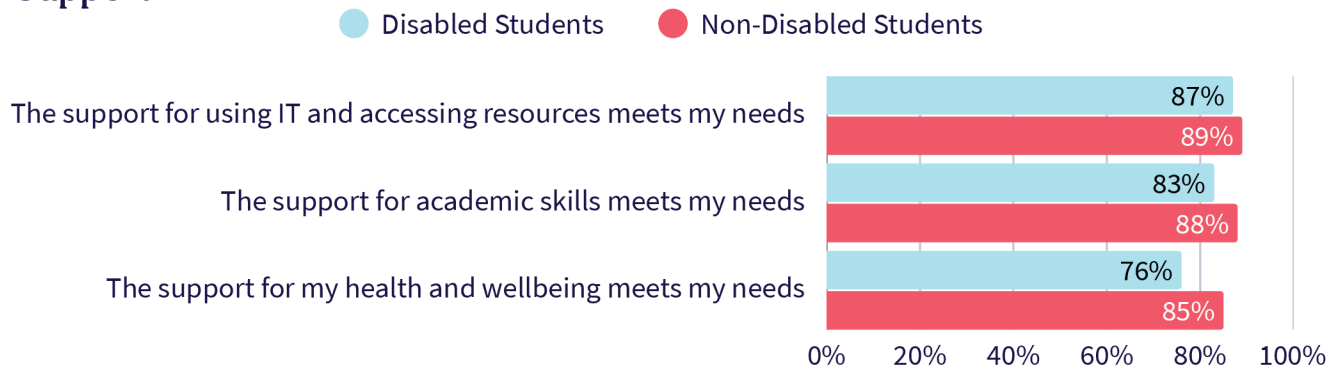


The difference between sexes remains minimal. However, male PGTs have overtaken female PGTs on community questions this year.

Support in Detail

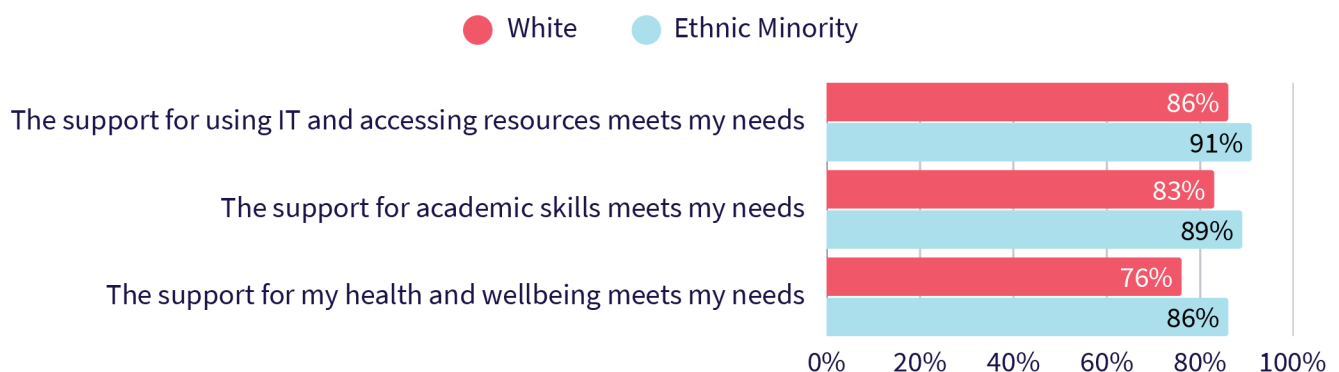
% Agree for disabled students and non-disabled students

Support



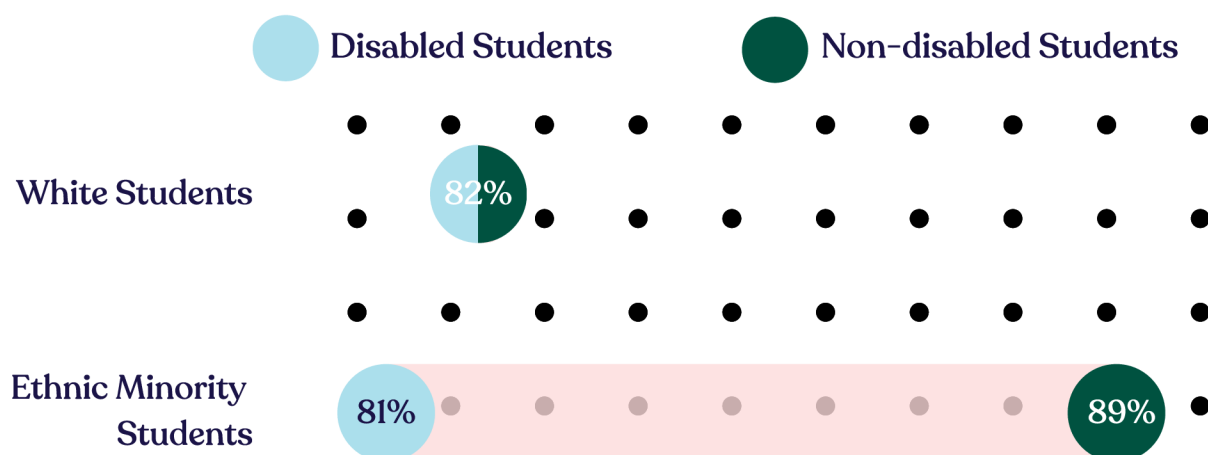
When it comes to support, **Disabled students still report lower scores than non-disabled students**. Despite closing 4% since last year, the **biggest discrepancy continues to be around support for health and wellbeing with a gap of 9%**.

% Agree for White students and ethnic minority students



When it comes to support, **White students continue to report lower scores**. However, the gap has closed since last year from 12% overall to 7%. The biggest gap remains with regards to support for health and wellbeing with a gap of 10%.

'Support' Response Ranges: Ethnicity x Disability



The pattern of overlapping identities making a bigger difference for ethnic minority students shows up again in the support scores. For White students, the overall 'Support' score stayed steady at 82%, whether or not they had a disability. But for ethnic minority students, disability status made a real difference: **Disabled ethnic minority students scored 81%, compared to 89% for non-disabled ethnic minority students.****

Overall, the differences in 'Support' scores were smaller than what we saw for 'Community'. That said, ethnic minority postgraduate students still gave more varied answers when we looked at combinations of factors (like nationality, year of study, or disability status) compared with White students. **This tells us that overlapping aspects of identity matter more for how supported ethnic minority students feel.**

Other demographics

- Fee Status had a 7% difference in 'Support' scores, with International students scoring 89% and Home students 82%.
- There was **little differences between sexes**, with male PGTs at 85% and female PGTs at 88%.
- **Health and Life Sciences PGTs reported the best support experiences** (88%) followed by Arts, Law, and Social Sciences (87%) and Science and Engineering students (85%).

***Standard deviation in responses to 'Support' questions for White PGTs when intersected with other characteristics was 3.2, for ethnic minority students it was 5.3.*

Demographics

Demographic		Response Rate (%)	No. of Respondents
Mode of Study	Full-Time	31%	1636
	Part-Time	16%	148
Year of Study	1	30%	1715
	2	24%	68
Faculty	Arts, Law, and Social Sciences	29%	1132
	Health and Life Sciences	25%	227
	Science and Engineering	30%	425
Fee Status	Home	27%	505
	International	30%	1279
Sex	Female	30%	1048
	Male	28%	729
Ethnicity	Ethnic Minority	29%	1277
	White	30%	442
Disability	Disabled	29%	195
	Non-Disabled	29%	1556