

**FEEDBACK ON
UNDERGRADUATE
CURRICULUM
2016/2017 BATCH**

**FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE
RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

Prepared by: Dr. H.R.M.G.C. Thilakarathna

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Executive Summary.....	5
Results of the Survey	7
Main Courses of the Academic Programme	7
Industrial Training	12
Research Project.....	14
English Teaching.....	17
Computer Literacy.....	17

List of Figures

Figure 01: Satisfactory level of students for allocating courses to each academic semester .	07
Figure 02: Level of students' dissatisfaction of allocating courses in each academic semester	07
Figure 03: Adequacy of practical components allocated in each academic semester.....	09
Figure 04: Inadequate practical components available in academic semesters.....	09
Figure 05: Students' responses to overall workload in the academic programme.....	10
Figure 06: Repetition of courses in each academic semester	10
Figure 07: Students' preferences for omitting the existing courses	11
Figure 08: Preference of adding new courses to the curriculum	11
Figure 09: Preference of students for taking or exchanging interdisciplinary course(s) during the majoring programme.....	12
Figure 10: Preference of students to include industrial training programme in the curriculum.....	12
Figure 11: Preference of students to change the duration of the industrial training of the current academic programme	12
Figure 12: Time extensions suggested by the students for the duration of the industrial training.....	13
Figure 13: Students' necessity to change the offering time of the industrial training.....	14
Figure 14: Preferable time slots suggested by the students to the industrial training.....	14
Figure 15: Preference of students to include an undergraduate research project in the curriculum	15
Figure 16: Preference of students to conduct an undergraduate research symposium to present the research outcomes.....	15
Figure 17: Preference of students to evaluate the research proposals before the research work with the participation of internal and external experts in the research area of interest.....	16
Figure 18: Students' preference to evaluate the final research presentations with the participation of internal and external experts in the research area of interest....	16
Figure 19: Other course components required to be included more in the curriculum.....	16
Figure 20: Requirement of students to change the time of offering the undergraduate research project	16
Figure 21: Students' rating on the productivity of English language teaching.....	17
Figure 22: Students' expectations to make changes in the English language course	17
Figure 23: Students' rating on the productivity of the courses on Computer literacy	18
Figure 24: Students' expectation to make changes in courses related to Computer literacy	18
Figure 25: Students' acceptability of planning and sequencing (distribution) of subjects throughout the academic programme	19
Figure 26: Students' overall idea about the current undergraduate curriculum	19

List of Tables

Table 01: Reasons for dissatisfying with the way of allocating courses in each academic semester	7
Table 02: Reasons for dissatisfaction with allocating practical components in different academic semesters	9
Table 03: Reasons for time extensions suggested by the students for the duration of the industrial training	13

Introduction

This report summarises the annual survey findings on students' feedback on the undergraduate curriculum in the Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This event was undertaken as per the requirements of the faculty quality assurance cell to enhance the quality of the academic programme. The survey covers the students of the 2016/2017 batch enrolled in the BSc Agriculture degree programme and out of 146 students, only 89 students responded. While the survey was conducted online by circulating the predetermined questionnaire prepared using Google form, and it was distributed among the students via emails and WhatsApp followed by several rounds of reminders to complete it. During the survey, It was measured student satisfaction with the undergraduate curriculum under various dimensions. Information on academic semesters and their structure, undergraduate research programmes, industrial training, English teaching, and Computer literacy were the main domains that have been assessed.

Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings of the student feedback on the undergraduate curriculum provided by the faculty of agriculture. Out of 146 students' of 2016/2017 batch, only 89 responded to the survey which was conducted via the online platform. out of 89 respondents, 82% of students were satisfied with the way of allocating courses while just 18% of students were dissatisfied. Except for 4200 semesters, all other semesters indicated different levels of dissatisfaction by the students. Moreover, based on the adequacy of allocating practical components in each academic semester, only 31% of respondents mentioned that the allocation of practical components in each semester was adequate, while the majority (69%) was informed as inadequate especially 3200 and 1100 semesters were the most.

Although a considerable amount of the students (45%) claimed as the workload was moderated, more than 50% of the students stated that the workload is heavy. According to the survey's findings, 81% of respondents said that no courses were repeated during any academic semester. At the same time, 93% of respondents said there shouldn't be any omission of courses in the present curriculum. However, some of them have suggested omitting the course named "Social Harmony and Peace". At the same time, 38% of the students stated that the new courses should be added to the curriculum while the majority (62%) were not. Other than that, the majority (87%) of the students specified that they don't

have any specific interdisciplinary courses to take or exchange during the majoring programme.

Subsequently, the students' views with respect to the industrial training program of the present curriculum were obtained and 63% of the students preferred to change the duration of the industrial training of the current academic programme while the others preferred the existing duration (3 months). Among them, 47% reported that it should be extended up to 6 months. Although, most of the students (85%) agreed with the offering time (semester/year) of the industrial training programme 15% of the students stated the necessity of changing the time of offering as well.

Moreover, it was gathered information related to the undergraduate research project through the survey. All of the students considered that including an undergraduate research project in the curriculum is a good concept and the majority (83%) of the respondents did not like to change the time of the research project. As well as all students perceived it is worth conducting the undergraduate research symposium to present their research outcomes. As well as all respondents preferred to evaluate their research proposals and final research presentations with the participation of both internal and external experts in the research area of interest.

Besides, it also gathered information related to English teaching and Computer literacy. The majority of the students reported that the English language teaching was productive and 76% supposed that no need to make changes in the English language course. Except for 1 % of the students, all others informed that the courses in computer literacy were productive. Further, 85% of the respondents did not expect changes in courses related to computer literacy while 15% expected changes. Finally, the majority (96%) of the students accepted the way of planning and sequencing of subjects throughout the academic programme and almost all students stated that the existing curriculum was productive.

Results of the Survey

Main Courses of the Academic Programme

The satisfactory level of the way of allocating courses to each semester is illustrated in Figure 01. Accordingly, 82% of students were satisfied with the way of allocating courses while just 18% of students were dissatisfied. Among those who were not satisfied with the manner the courses are distributed among the semesters indicated which semester they were not satisfied in Figure 02. According to the responses, except 4200 semester all other semesters were indicated different levels of dissatisfaction by the students. However, the majority (20%) were dissatisfied with the 1200 semester. Therefore, it is important to reconsider the manner of courses allocated into each semester

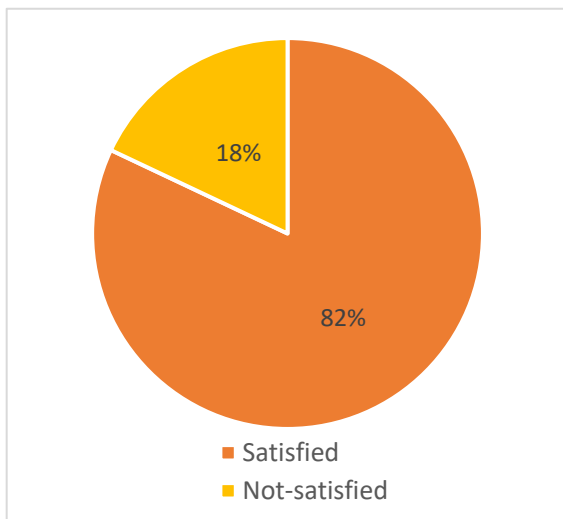


Figure 01: Satisfactory level of students for allocating courses to each academic semester

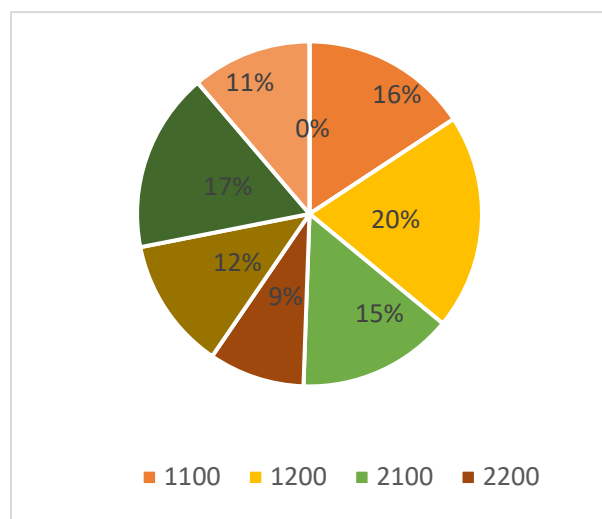


Figure 02: Level of students' dissatisfaction of allocating courses in each academic semester

Further, students had given their reasons for their dissatisfaction in each academic semester as follows (Table 01);

Table 01: Reasons for dissatisfying with the way of allocating courses in each academic semester

Semester	Reason
1100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher stress over the exam period • Difficulty of handling English (second language) as new-comers • Difficulty in grabbing some subjects like physics and mathematics as some students had not followed Physics in their advanced levels.

1200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking gaps between subjects during the examination period • Bulkiness of the subjects • Difficulties in adopting to a new environment as a fresher
2100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy workload and higher credit level to be achieved • Full-time attention on field courses eventually reduces attention on other subjects • Examination was not based on what they learnt
2200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher workload in both theory and practical
3100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher workload
3200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher workload • Because of the method of online learning, they had missed important practical and field visits
4100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of credits for this semester is less.

Moreover, the adequacy of allocating practical components in each academic semester was also assessed in this survey. Here in Figure 03, it has been illustrated the students' responses to the adequacy of practical components allocated in each academic semester. Based on the survey data, only 31% of respondents mentioned that the allocation of practical components in each semester was adequate, while the majority of students (69%) said it was inadequate. Amongst the dissatisfied students with the practical allocation in academic semesters stated that 3200 and 1100 were the most dissatisfied semesters (Figure 04), where the key modifications were required. While 4200 semester had not any dissatisfaction as it was the semester of conducting the research. According to the students' replies, 1200, 2100, 2200, 3100, and 4100 were the semesters that should require minor modifications.

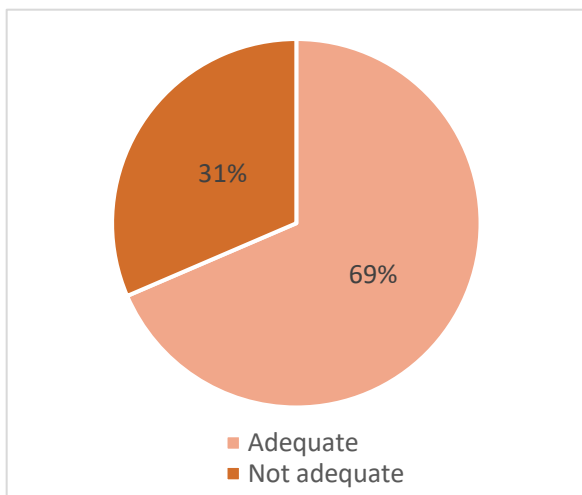


Figure 03: Adequacy of practical components allocated in each academic semester

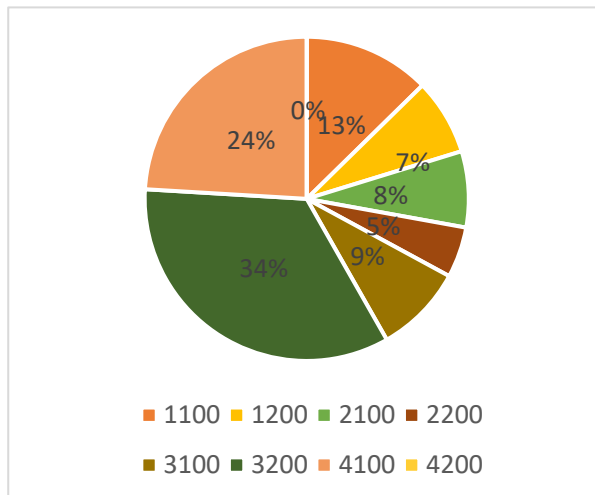


Figure 04: Inadequate practical components available in academic semesters

Furthermore, students had given reasons for their dissatisfaction with allocating practical components in some semesters as given in Table 02.

Table 02: Reasons for dissatisfaction with allocating practical components in different academic semesters

Semester	Reasons
1200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical component of biochemistry is not enough to grab the course work.
2100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is effective if the soil analysis of the field could be done before and after the field course. Practical cooperated with industries should be added.
3100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need more practicals for all animal production categories (except broiler production).
3200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field practical and industrial exposure could be increased.
4100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More practical should be added.

The students were also asked about the overall workload of the academic programme during this survey. Based on the findings (Figure 05), although most of the students (45%) claimed as the workload was moderated (neither heavy nor light), more than 50% of the students stated that the workload was heavy (40 % high and 13 % extremely high). While other only 2% of the students believed the workload was low.

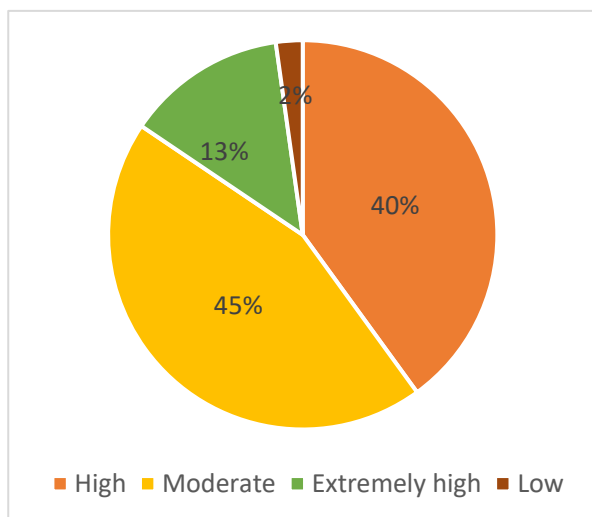


Figure 05: Students' responses to overall workload in the academic programme

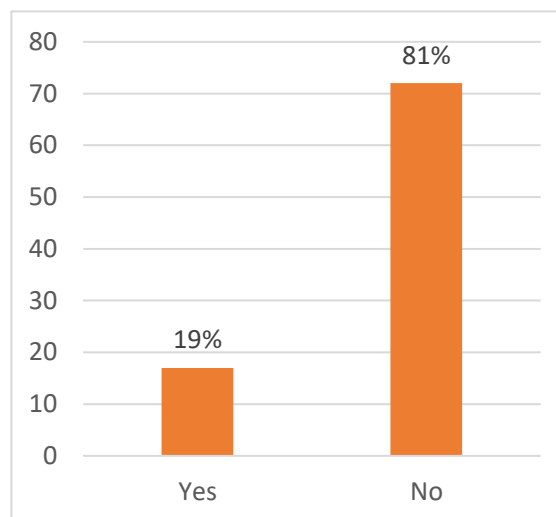


Figure 06: Repetition of courses in each academic semester

Other than that it was surveyed whether any courses were repeated throughout each semester. According to the survey's findings (Figure 06), 81% of respondents said that no courses were repeated during any given academic semester while 19% said that there were repetitions.

In addition, the survey found replies on students' preferences for omitting the existing courses from the current academic programme and it was graphically illustrated in Figure 07. Ninety-three percent (93%) of respondents said there shouldn't be any omission of courses in the present curriculum. The rest of the students (7%) were suggested to omit the courses while some of them suggested omitting the course named "Social harmony and peace" from the present curriculum.

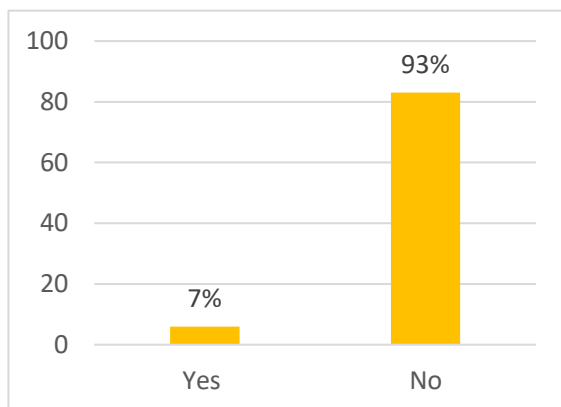


Figure 07: Students' preferences for omitting the existing courses

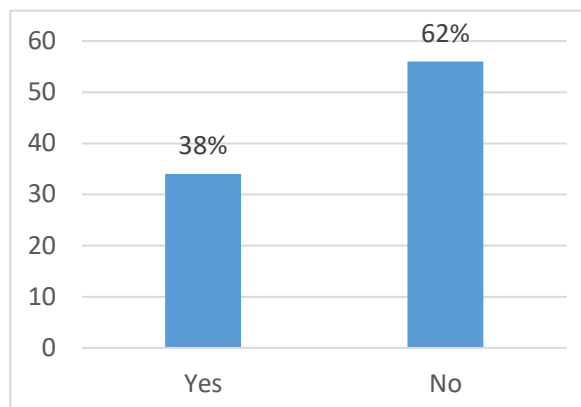


Figure 08: Preference of adding new courses to the curriculum

Apart from that it was gathered information on students' preference for adding new courses to the curriculum too. According to Figure 08, only 38% of the students stated that the new courses should be added to the curriculum while the majority (62%) were not.

Further, students had suggested some courses that should be preferred to include in the curriculum. Most of them had an interest on offering advanced courses such as biotechnology, molecular biology, microbiology and plant breeding. As well as some of them suggested more industrial-related courses such as quality assurance, safety and ISO standards, food manufacturing certification, the export process of goods, agri-business, courses based on modern agriculture techniques, and courses related to GIS, drone technologies etc. Other than that, they were interested on learning some other courses like basic computer programmes, software development-related courses, human resource management, leadership development and some languages (professional English, Japanese).

Preference of students for taking or exchanging interdisciplinary course(s) during the majoring programme was also assessed in this survey and Figure 09 displayed the responses pertaining to the preference of students for taking or exchanging interdisciplinary courses during the majoring programme. At this point, the majority (87%) of the students specified that they don't have any interdisciplinary courses for taking or exchanging during the majoring programme. However, some students had suggested agro-forestry, wildlife and agro-eco tourism like courses for taking as interdisciplinary courses during the majoring programme.

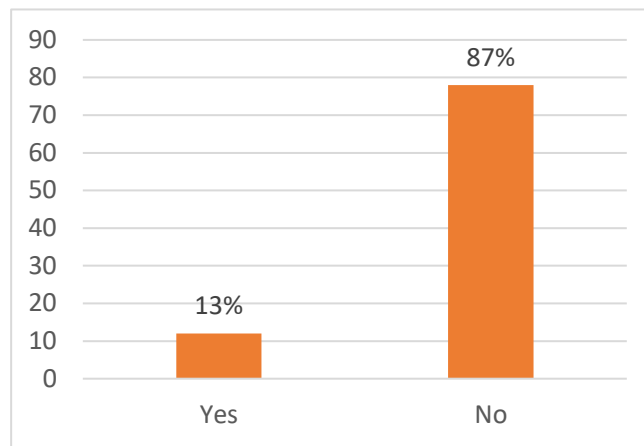


Figure 09: Preference of students for taking or exchanging interdisciplinary course(s) during the majoring programme

Industrial Training

Students' views with respect to the industrial training programme of the present curriculum were obtained. Based on that all students preferred the availability of industrial training programme in the curriculum (Figure 10). However, according to Figure 11, 63% of the students preferred to change the duration of the industrial training of the current academic programme while the rest preferred the existing duration (3 months). As displayed in Figure 12 among the respondents who were suggested to change the duration of the industrial training programme, 47% reported that it should be extended up to 6 months period. While 15% reported that the training period should be less than 3 months. Whereas few of them favoured holding an industrial training programme for more than 6 months.

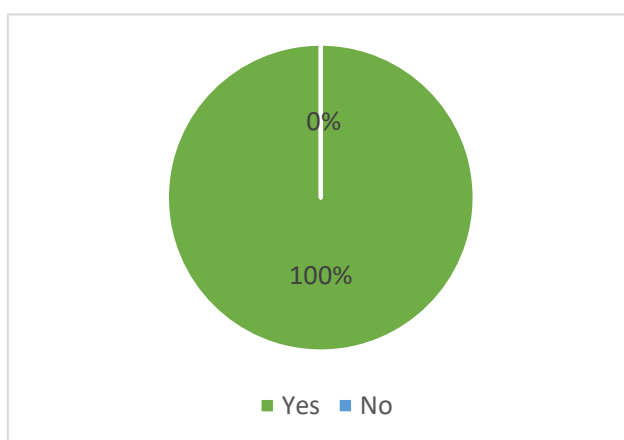


Figure 10: Preference of students to include industrial training programme in the curriculum

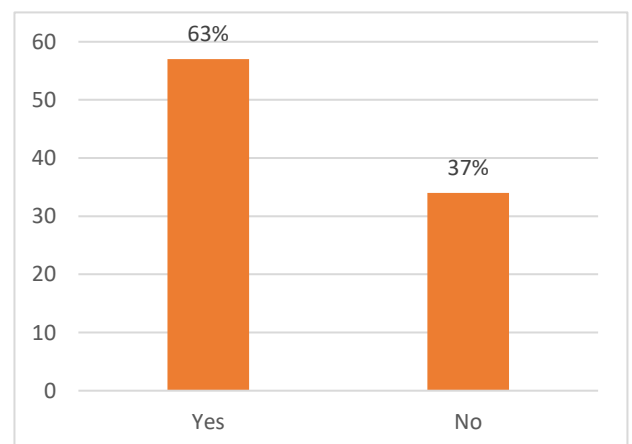


Figure 11: Preference of students to change the duration of the industrial training of the current academic programme

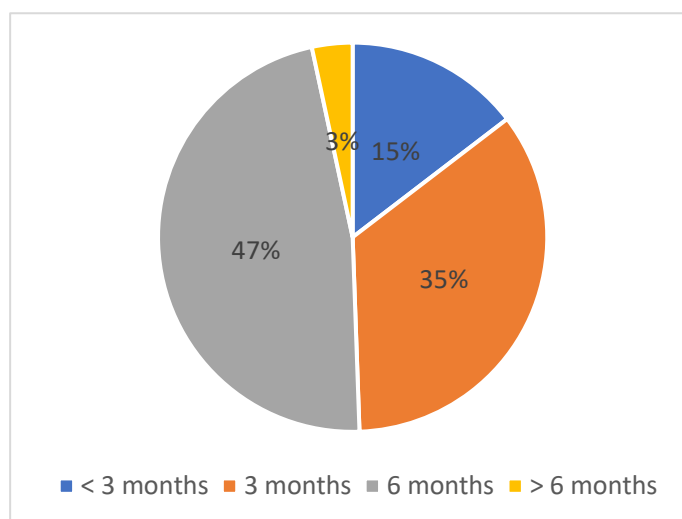


Figure 12: Time extensions suggested by the students for the duration of the industrial training

In line with the time extensions suggested by the students for the duration of the industrial training, students provided the reasons for selecting the above duration as the period of industrial training in Table 03.

Table 03: Reasons for time extensions suggested by the students for the duration of the industrial training

Duration	Reason
<3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To complete the degree quickly There is no payment in most of the industrial training locations No job opportunities in most the sectors
3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 months period is enough for identification and getting knowledge and experiences
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most industries are looking for trainees for a minimum 6 months period It is important in finding a job 6 months is needed to adjust to the working environment, to meet and know well about the people who are working, and to learn things with hand on experience
>6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >6 months of training will be important in their future career

Although, most of the students (85%) agreed with the offering time (semester/year) of the industrial training programme while 15% of the students stated the necessity of changing the time of offering (Figure 13). Accordingly, 50% of the students who stated the necessity of changing time slots (semester/year) conducting the industrial training programme, suggested 4200 semesters as the preferable time while 10% of the student suggested 2200 semester, 4100 semester, before the research, after the research and simultaneously with the research correspondingly (Figure 14).

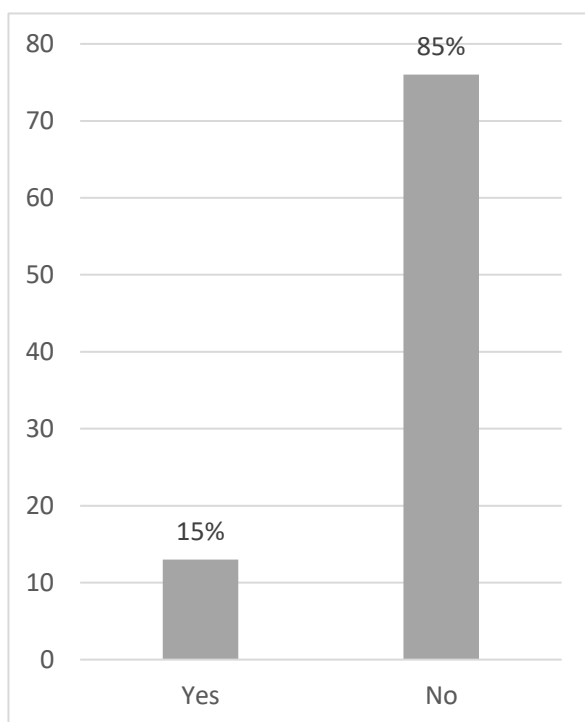


Figure 13: Students' necessity to change the offering time of the industrial training

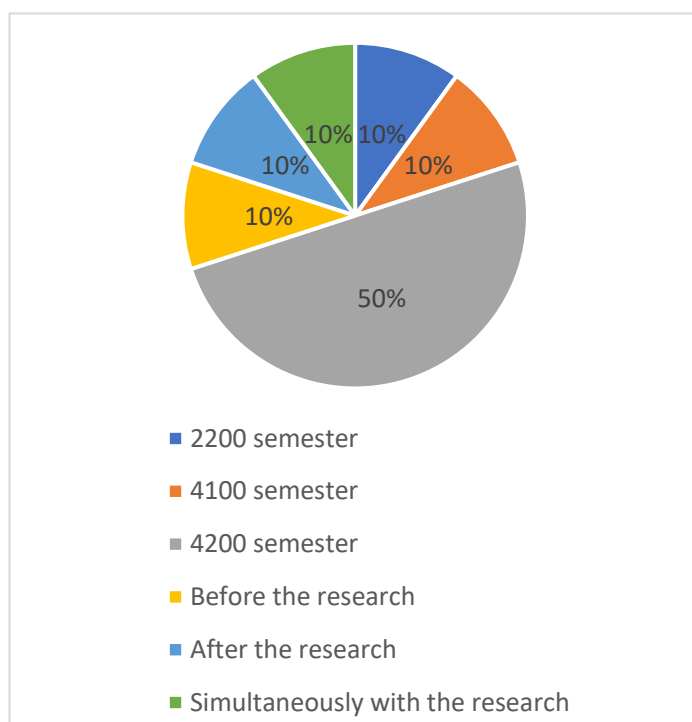


Figure 14: Preferable time slots suggested by the students to the industrial training

Research Project

Moreover, it was gathered information related to the undergraduate research project through the survey. All of the students (Figure 15) considered that including undergraduate research project in the curriculum is a good concept. As well as Figure 16 contrasts that all students (100%) perceived it is worth conducting the undergraduate research symposium to present their research outcome. While Figure 17 shows that all respondents (100%) preferred to evaluate the research proposals before the research work with the participation of internal and external experts in the research of interest. Following Figure 18, every respondent (100%)

also preferred to evaluate the final research presentation with the participation of internal and external experts in the research area of interest.

At the same time, Figure 20 presents the requirement of students to change the time of offering the undergraduate research project. According to this majority, (83%) of the respondents did not like to change the time of the research project, but 17% liked to change. Moreover, the survey asked about other components required to be included in the curriculum. Therein, Figure 19 shows that 65% of the students suggested to include the components like data analysis, research methodologies and scientific writing in the curriculum. The rest of the students indicated preferences for at least one of the above components.

Students also noted that it is very important to have a research project since it improves their knowledge and skills and also it contributes to new findings which are very useful for the development of the country. They suggested expanding the research project by providing more resources.

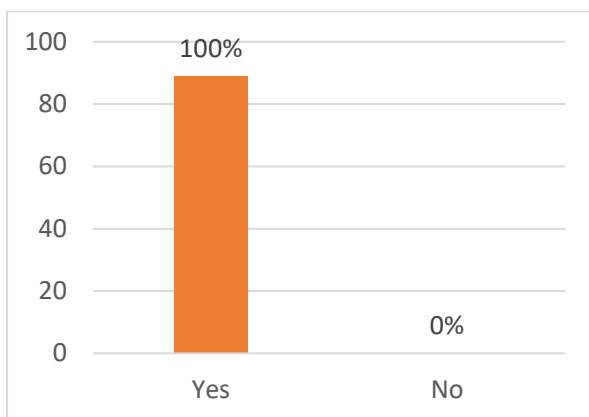


Figure 15: Preference of students to include an undergraduate research project in the curriculum

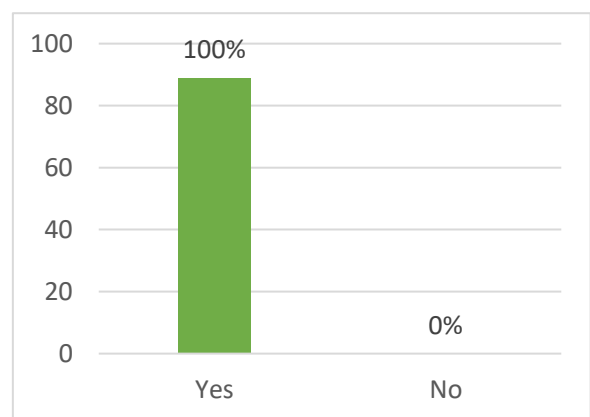


Figure 16: Preference of students to conduct an undergraduate research symposium to present the research outcomes

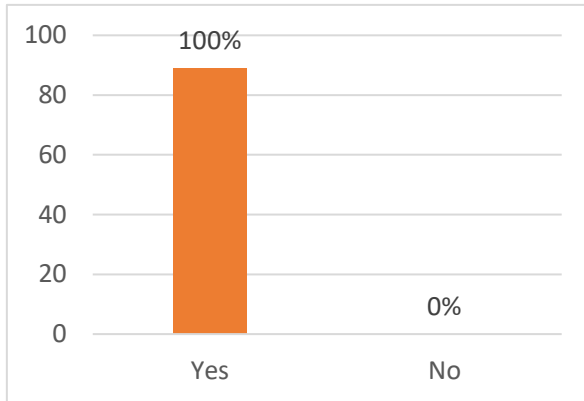


Figure 17: Preference of students to evaluate the research proposals before the research work with the participation of internal and external experts in the research area of interest

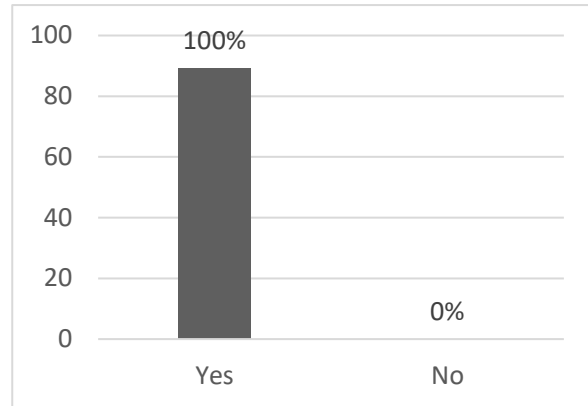


Figure 18: Students' preference to evaluate the final research presentations with the participation of internal and external experts in the research area of interest

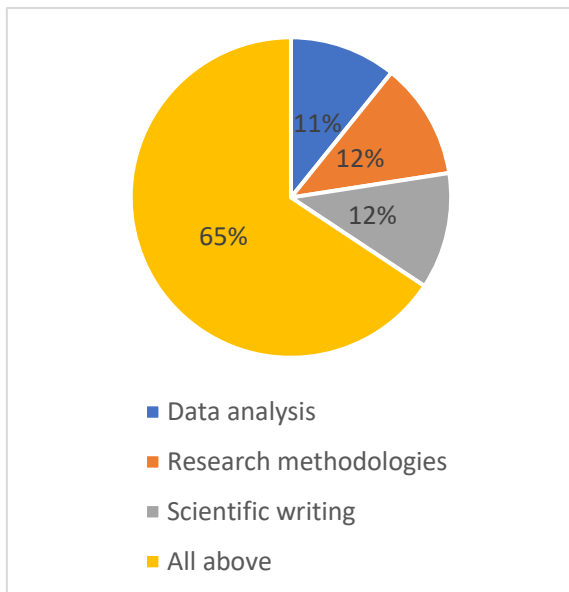


Figure 19: Other course components required to be included more in the curriculum

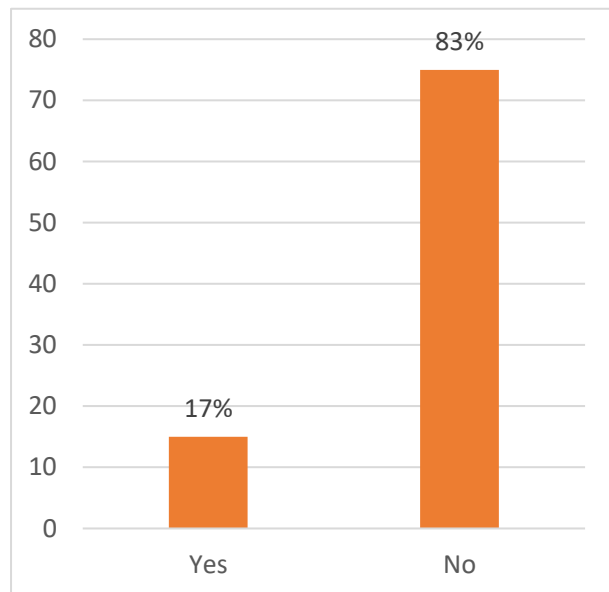


Figure 20: Requirement of students to change the time of offering the undergraduate research project

English Teaching

Besides, it was gathered information related to English teaching through the survey. Accordingly, students' rating on the productivity of English language teaching is given in Figure 21. Accordingly, the majority of the students rated that the English language teaching was productive (61%- very productive, 37%- productive). Only 2% indicated that it was unproductive. Figure 22 demonstrates the students' expectations to make changes in the English language course. Among them, the majority (76%) supposed that no need to make changes to the English language course. About 21% of the respondents expected changes in the English language course. They had remarked that the English teaching programme would be better if it was more oriented on spoken English and ILTES-targeted lessons.

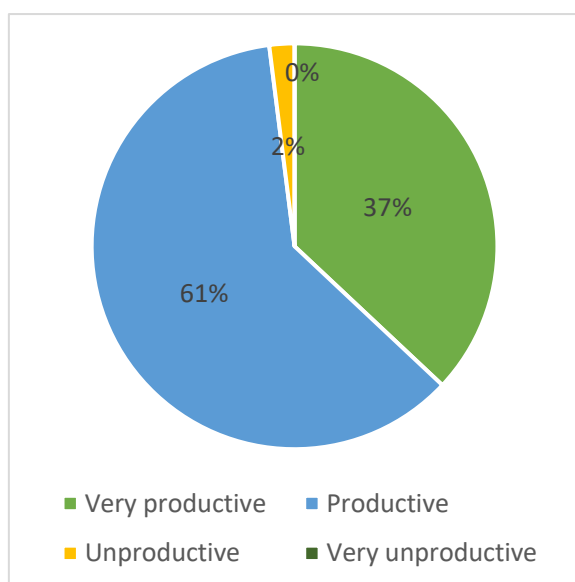


Figure 21: Students' rating on the productivity of English language teaching

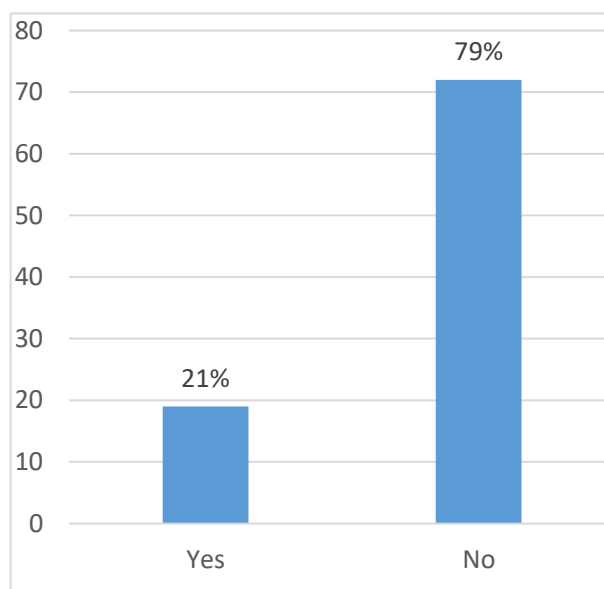


Figure 22: Students' expectations to make changes in the English language course

Computer Literacy

The information was gathered in relation to computer literacy in this survey and Figure 23 contrasts the rating of the students on the productivity of the courses on computer literacy. Although, the majority of them said that the courses on computer literacy were productive (33%- very productive, 66%- productive), only 1% of the students said it was unproductive. Further, Figure 24 shows the students' expectations to make changes in courses related to Computer literacy. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents did not expect to make

changes in courses related to computer literacy while 15% of students expected changes. It has been suggested to include subjects like advanced computer learning, graphic designing and office courses etc. in the curriculum.

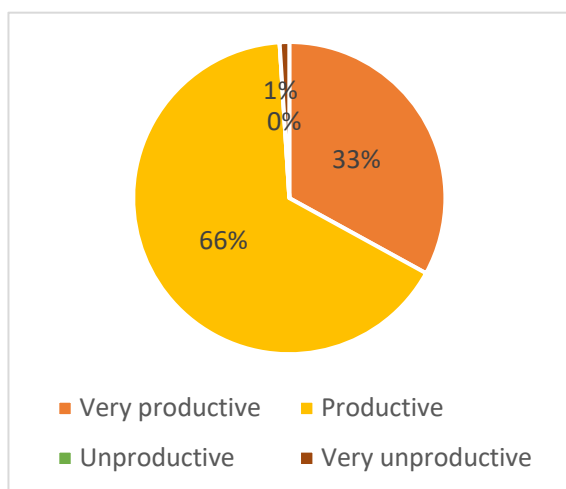


Figure 23: Students' rating on the productivity of the courses on Computer literacy

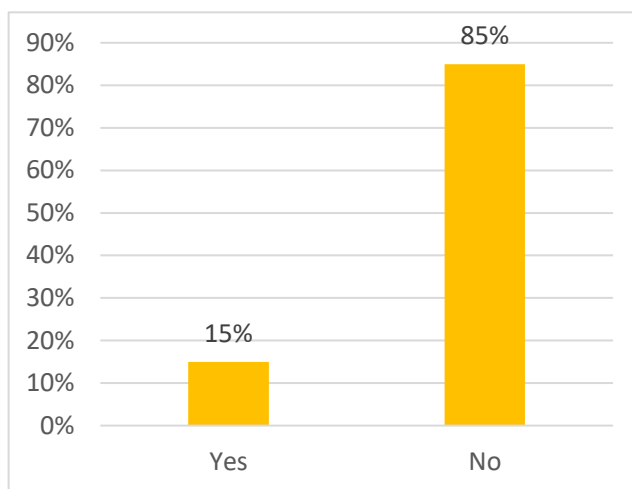


Figure 24: Students' expectation to make changes in courses related to Computer literacy

The overall acceptability of students on planning and sequencing (distribution) of subjects throughout the academic programme was evaluated. According to Figure 25, the majority (96%) of the students accepted the way of planning and sequencing of subjects throughout the academic programme. At last, almost all students stated that the curriculum was productive (Figure 26), 37% reported it was “very productive” and 67% reported it as “productive”.

Finally, students made some suggestions for further improvements in the undergraduate curriculum. They had suggested to increase the time allocation for the practical components and field visits while reducing the bulkiness of theory since it is important to improve their soft skills while fulfilling the requirements of many industries. As well as they pointed out the importance of including technological subjects such as biotechnology, molecular biology, agri-business etc. It was further suggested that it is vital to change industrial training as a credited programme since industrial exposure is the most significant factor when finding job opportunities. Most importantly they emphasised the importance of completing the degree programme on time.

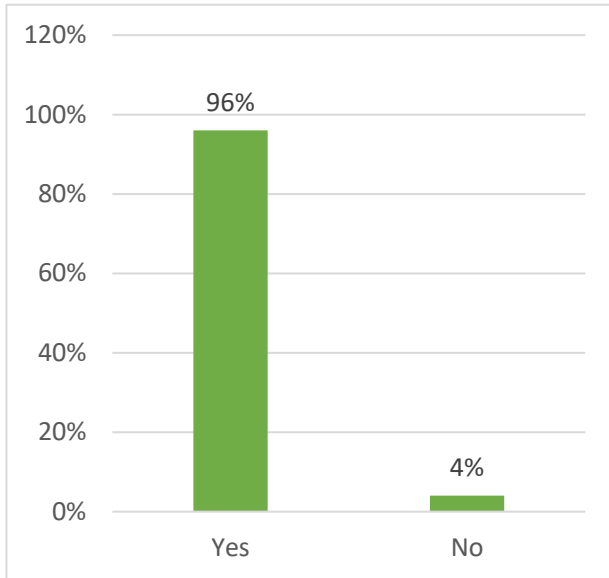


Figure 25: Students' acceptability of planning and sequencing (distribution) of subjects throughout the academic programme

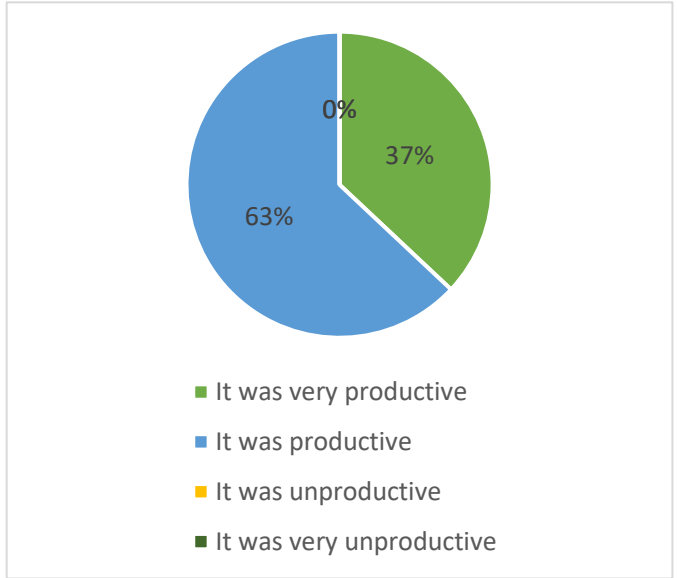


Figure 26: Students' overall idea about the current undergraduate curriculum