

International Student Experience Fund (ISEF)

Information Session

Sep. 28, 2023

Michelle Beaton

Director, International Relations
Office of the Vice-President, International

michelle.beaton@utoronto.ca



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO



DEFY
GRAVITY



ISEF Goal

To fund initiatives that enhance the experience of the university's international students, in alignment with the U of T's international strategy.

ISEF: Project Examples



Addressing needs of multi-language learners and facilitating interactional diversity in the humanities through "labs"



Translating the stories of multi-language learners into comics that promote intercultural competency, empathy, and awareness



Development of faculty training resources for building global classrooms -- addressing unequal north- south power relations



Student-driven micro grants to increase physical activity among international students



ISEF 2.0

- Updated priority areas defined by ISEAC
- Explicit identification of areas of need
- New mechanisms to ensure projects' impact

ISEF: Application Streams



SEED

< \$15,000/ year

📅 Proposals accepted
on a rolling basis



IMPACT

\$15,000-\$75,000 / year

📅 Due date: October 16

ISEF: Application Process

Application submission is online:

Proposal and budget forms available online

Impact Grant proposals will be accepted by invitation on approved letters of intent submitted by the Oct 16 deadline.



uoft.me/ISEF2023

Due:
Oct. 16



*Note: It is not possible to save progress on the online application

We'd love to hear your ideas for ISEF funding!

In case of questions, please contact:



Tom Parker

Grants and Office Manager, Office of the Vice President, International
international@utoronto.ca

Global Living Learning Community (LLC)

2023-09-28

Presented by:

Chad Nuttall

Assistant Dean of Students and International Initiatives

Aline Uchoa Boghossian

International Student and Residence Education Facilitator



Global LLC was developed in partnership with Student Housing & Residence Life, In

The Global LLC is living-learning community (LLC) offered by Student Housing and Residence Life (SHRL), where in students live together in a community and they also share a common course (Anthro102). They are supported by an LLC Program Facilitator (LLC PF) and a Don to ensure academic, social, and personal growth using the residence curricular framework community model.

This LLC is led by SHRL in partnership with UTM's International Education Centre (IEC) and the Department of Anthropology.

Some elements made possible by the ISEF grant: hiring a staff member to help develop the LLC program, the Global Speaker Series, a culminating project, Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment and coaching sessions, and the integration of the Global Intercultural Fluency Training Series (GIFTS).



LLC students enrolled in ANT102 received a full letter grade higher than the class average in the course!

100% of Global LLC students feel a sense of belonging at UTM.

95.5% of Global LLC respondents indicated that as a result of living in residence, their transition to the University of Toronto has been easier.

The Student Experience in the LLC

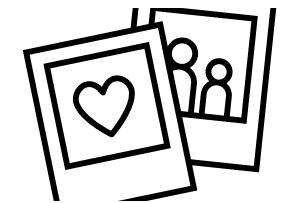


The community allowed for deep, meaningful engagement on intercultural and international topics.

Created a close community environment where flourishing friendship were developed across culture and difference.

Personal development and vulnerability that came from the GIFTS program

The Impact on me personally by being a student-staff in this community was so positive and provided me with skills I used the following year.



Speaking with Confidence: Early Oral Communication Support for Incoming International L2 Graduate Students

2019-21 International Students'
Experience Fund (ISEF) Grant

Presented by:

Jane Freeman, Director

**Graduate Centre for Academic
Communication (GCAC)**

jane.freeman@utoronto.ca



Three Components of GCAC's ISEF Grant



1)

Three-day intensive version of “Academic Conversation Skills” in late August



2)

Saturday/evening sections of “Oral Presentation Skills for Professional Master’s Students” in the fall



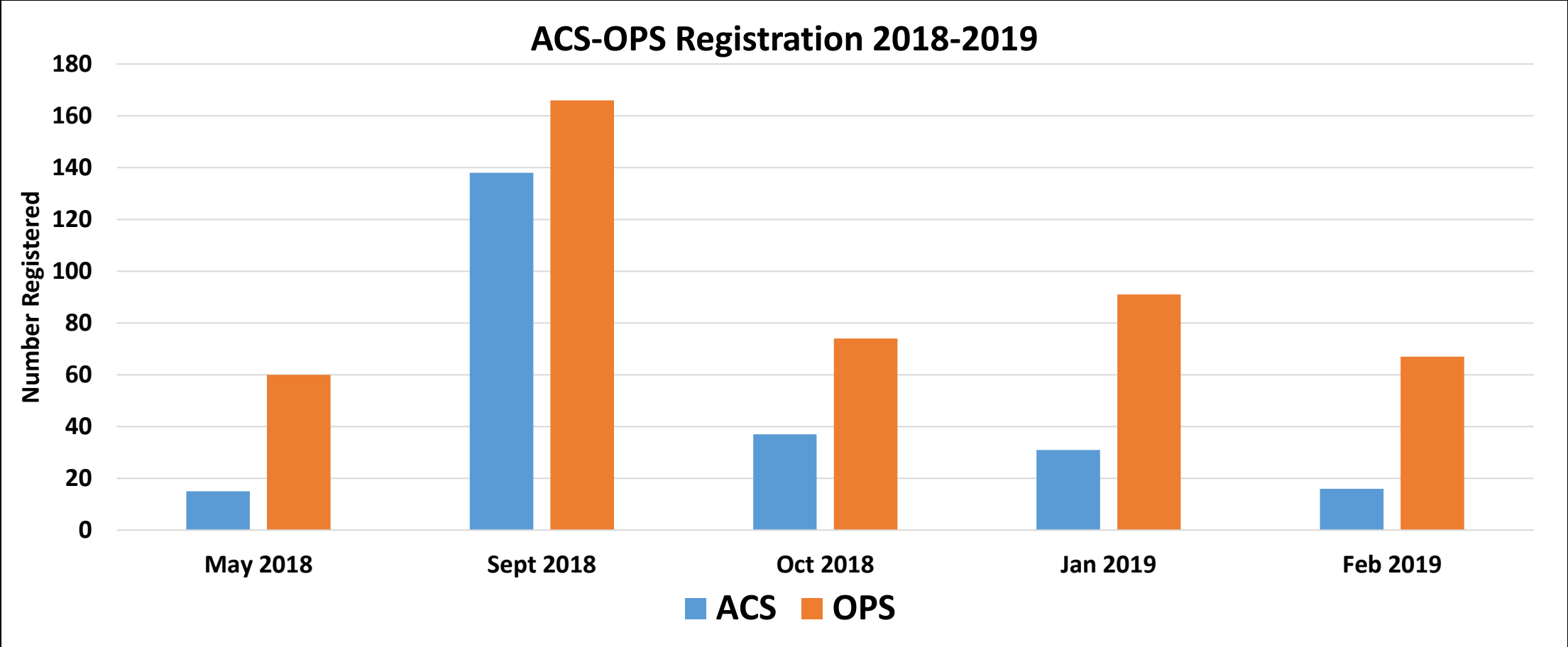
3)

Half-day workshop in late August on “Writing and Speaking at the Graduate Level”

Information to gather in preparing to apply

- Identify the need (for what you're proposing)
- Gather evidence to support and communicate that need
- Seek decanal approval to apply (for impact grants, which must be funded by your unit after ISEF funds end)
- Set the project you propose in the context of unit, faculty, and university goals
- Describe the proposed plan with budget
- Identify how you will measure/evaluate success
- Note plans for continuing/refining the proposed offering

Seasonal Demand for Speaking Courses



1. Rationale: Why are you undertaking this project? What specific need will it meet, and how does it intersect with unit, division, and/or institutional goals? (750 words)

In recent years, the University of Toronto has deepened its commitment to becoming an internationally significant research university. One of the three priorities in President Gertler's Installation Address was to strengthen and deepen international partnerships. A milestone identified in fulfilling that goal is increasing international PhD enrolment and support. In recent years U of T has placed high priority on recruiting the best international students from around the world. The number of international graduate students at U of T has grown by a remarkable 693%, from 967 in 2000 to 6,706 in 2018, and that growth continues. Coupled with the recruitment of talented international students is a firm commitment to supporting them once they arrive.

Some of the practical means through which that support is provided is through the work of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), in particular through the development of an International Student Portal and the extensive front-line support of international students offered through SGS's Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC). Through non-credit courses, workshops, and individual appointments, GCAC provides both L1 and L2 graduate students with professional development in the oral and written communication skills needed in graduate school and beyond. (In this proposal, we use the terms L1 and L2 speakers to differentiate between students who learned English early, as a first or other language, and those who learned it later in life.) In 2017-18, 5,432 students from 81 of U of T's graduate departments participated in GCAC's offerings. Approximately 65% - 70% of GCAC participants are L2 speakers, and most of those are international students.

Most of U of T's incoming international L2 graduate students have considerably more experience reading and writing in English than listening and speaking. Those who learned English in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (English classes taught in non-English speaking countries) have usually focused mostly on reading and writing with emphasis on grammatical and discourse competencies. When such students arrive in multicultural Toronto, however, they are surrounded by English spoken in a range of accents and paces containing many unfamiliar colloquial expressions. Many are also new to the genres of graduate communication. In such circumstances, students need to develop conversational microskills, such as how to ask for repetition or to check and show understanding (Tsang, 2002), sociolinguistic competence ("knowing what is expected socially and culturally by users of the target language"), and strategic competence ("the ability to compensate for imperfect knowledge of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse rules") such as how to enter and exit conversations without causing offense (Canale, 1980; Freeman, 2003).

To address the needs described above, GCAC offers a course called Academic Conversation Skills (ACS) that helps students develop strategies for increasing their clarity and confidence when conversing in English. This non-credit course is 2 hours per week for 6 weeks, and it is heavily in demand. We offer 15-16 sections of ACS per year, 8 of which are in September, and lengthy waiting lists mean that many incoming students who feel an urgent need for the course cannot enrol. In September 2018, 32 students were on waiting lists for the ACS course. By offering a large section of this course in August in addition to the regular sections that start in mid-September, we aim to help L2 students prepare to participate more fully, and with more confidence, in their graduate communities from when they first arrive. We also aim to extend capacity so that no incoming international L2 student is excluded.

In keeping with a need for oral communication support, many international students attempt to register for our courses on Oral Presentation Skills (OPS) in September. In 2018, 154 students were on waiting lists . . .

Through the programming proposed below, and in keeping with SGS's mission of fostering an outstanding graduate experience for our diverse student population, we aim to enrich and expand the oral communication support we offer to graduate students in their first few months at U of T.

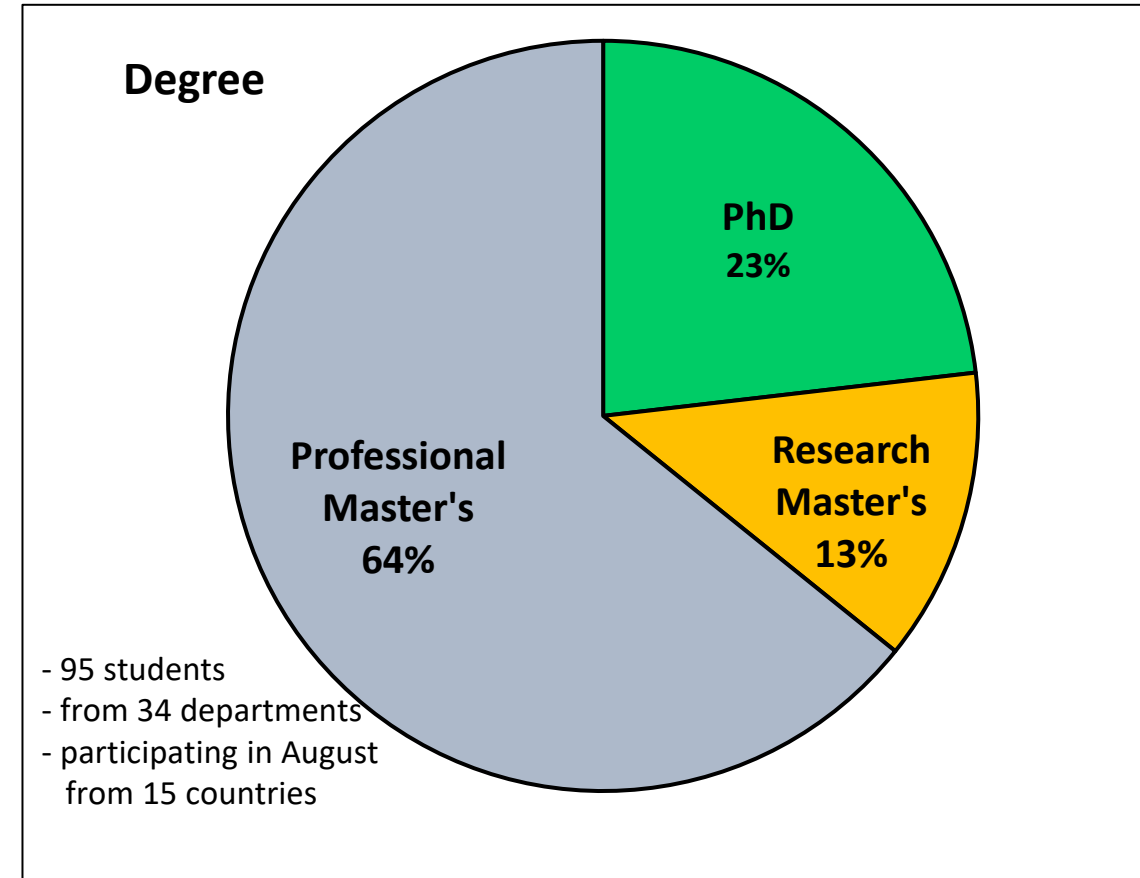
ISEF Criteria 2021-22

Criteria	Description	3	2	1	0
Alignment with ISEF goals (x 2.5)	The degree to which the project is focused on ISEF priority areas	The project is very clearly connected to ISEF priority areas	The project is somewhat connected to some aspect of ISEF priority areas	The project is tangentially connected to ISEF priority areas	There is no apparent connection to ISEF priority areas
Collaboration across Divisions (Yes (3) or No (0) Only)	The project includes co-collaborators from other divisions, either from the start of the project, or as a means of expanding their project in their final year of funding				The project does not include co-collaborators from other divisions, either from the start of the project, or as a means of expanding their project in their final year of funding
Engagement of each of U of T student, staff, and faculty Communities (Yes (3) or No (0) only)	The project appropriately engages each of: U of T's student, faculty, and staff communities through representative project leadership and/or advisory groups.				The project does not appropriately engage each of: U of T's student, faculty, and staff communities through representative project leadership and/or advisory groups.

Assessment & Evaluation	The assessment/ evaluation component of the project is present	The methodology for assessing/ evaluating the success of the project is clearly and extensively articulated	The methodology for assessing/ evaluating the success of the project is articulated	The methodology for assessing/ evaluating the success of the project is vaguely articulated	No methodology for assessing/ evaluating the success of the project is articulated in the proposal
Transferability	The transferability of the project's idea or concept to other units	The proposal clearly and specifically articulates how the project can be used by other units (with specific examples)	The proposal articulates how the project can be used by other units but without specific examples	The idea that other units could use the project is vaguely articulated	There is no articulation of how other units could make use of the project
UofT Resources (Yes (3) or No (0) Only)	The degree to which the project leverages existing resources and mechanisms at U of T	The proposal identifies U of T resources or services that could be leveraged to support the project			The proposal fails to articulate any U of T resources or services that could be used to support the project

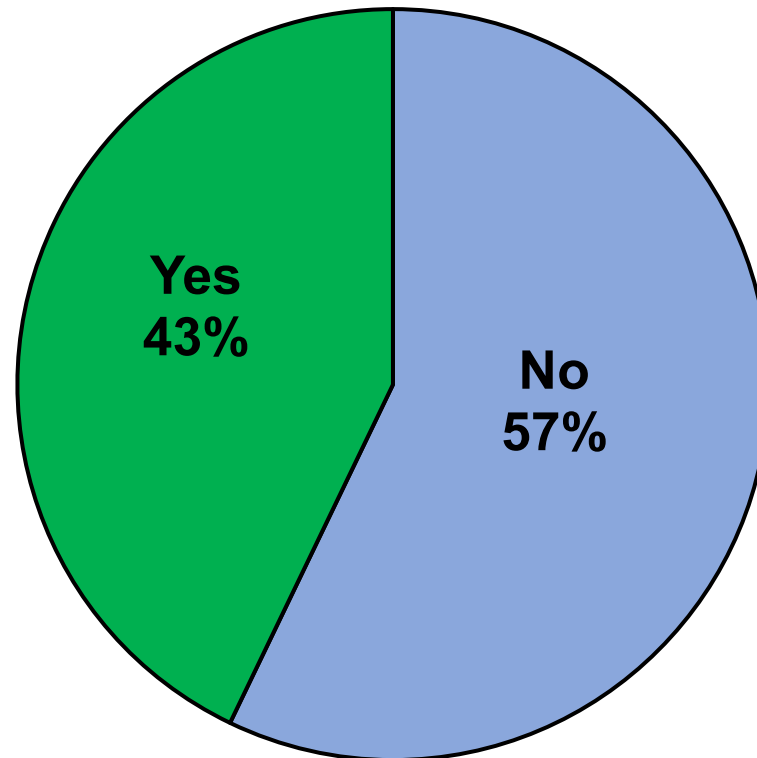
Academic Conversation Skills Intensive: 2023 Student Demographics

Department	Enrolment
Aerospace Science and Engineering	1
Anthropology	2
Applied Psychology and Human Development	12
Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering	1
Chemistry	1
Civil and Mineral Engineering	1
Computer Science	2
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning	2
Dentistry	1
Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies	1
Earth Sciences	1
Electrical and Computer Engineering	6
Global Affairs	4
Health Policy, Management and Evaluation	2
History	1
Information	1
Law	4
Leadership, Higher and Adult Education	9
Management	3
Management and Innovation	3
Materials Science and Engineering	1
Mathematical Finance	2
Mathematics	1
Mechanical and Industrial Engineering	12
Medical Biophysics	3
Medical Science	1
Physics	1
Physiology	2
Political Science	1
Public Health Sciences	2
Public Policy and Governance	3
Rehabilitation Science	1
Social Justice Education	1
Social Work	6

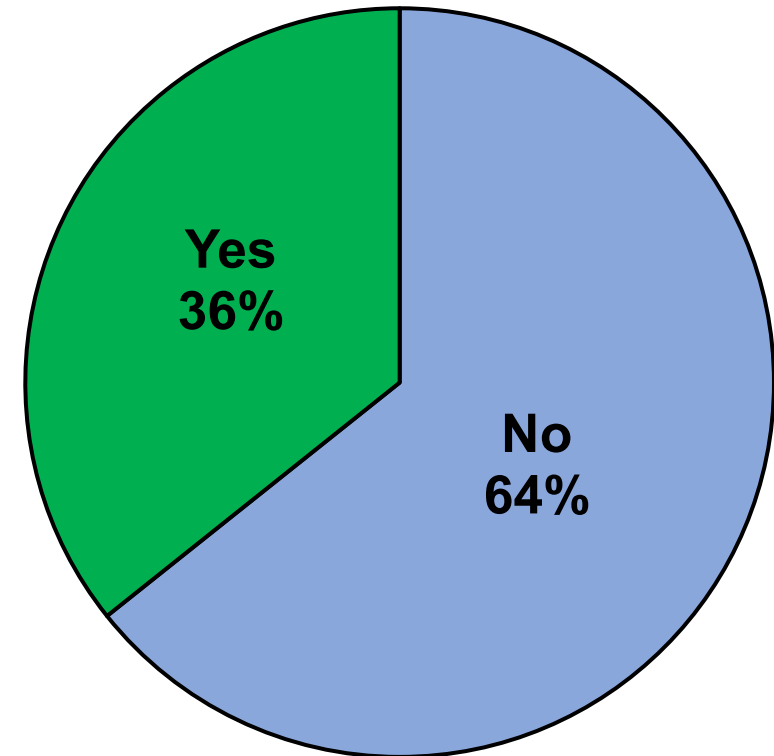


Understanding Student Motivation

Did you come earlier than you originally planned in order to take this course?

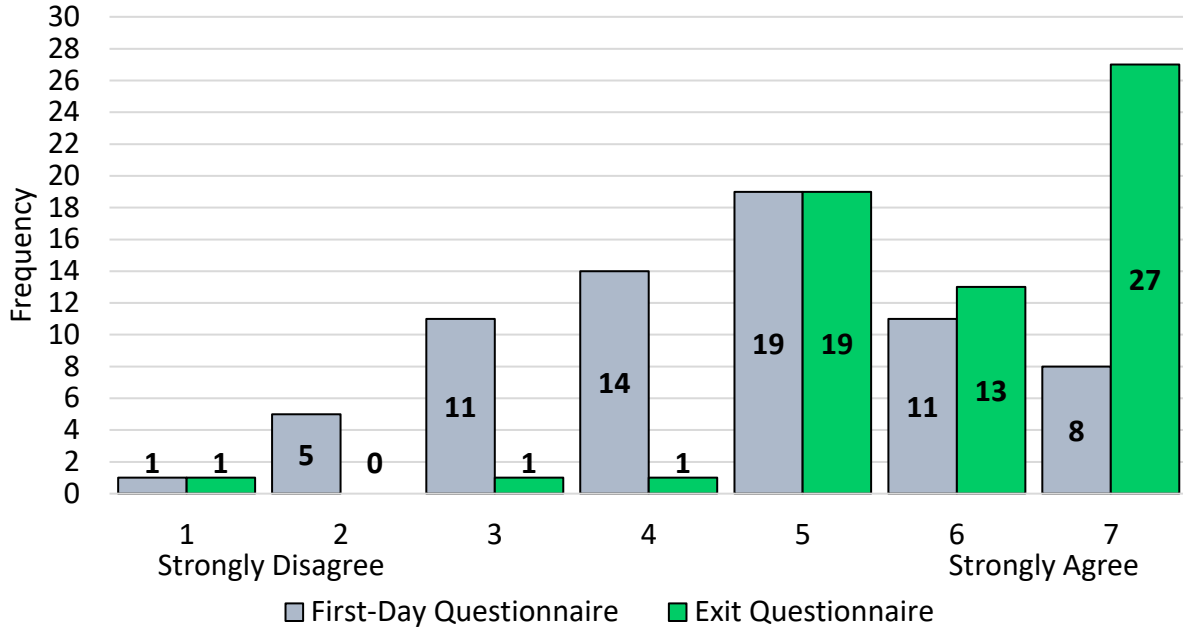


Have you previously completed a degree in an English speaking University?

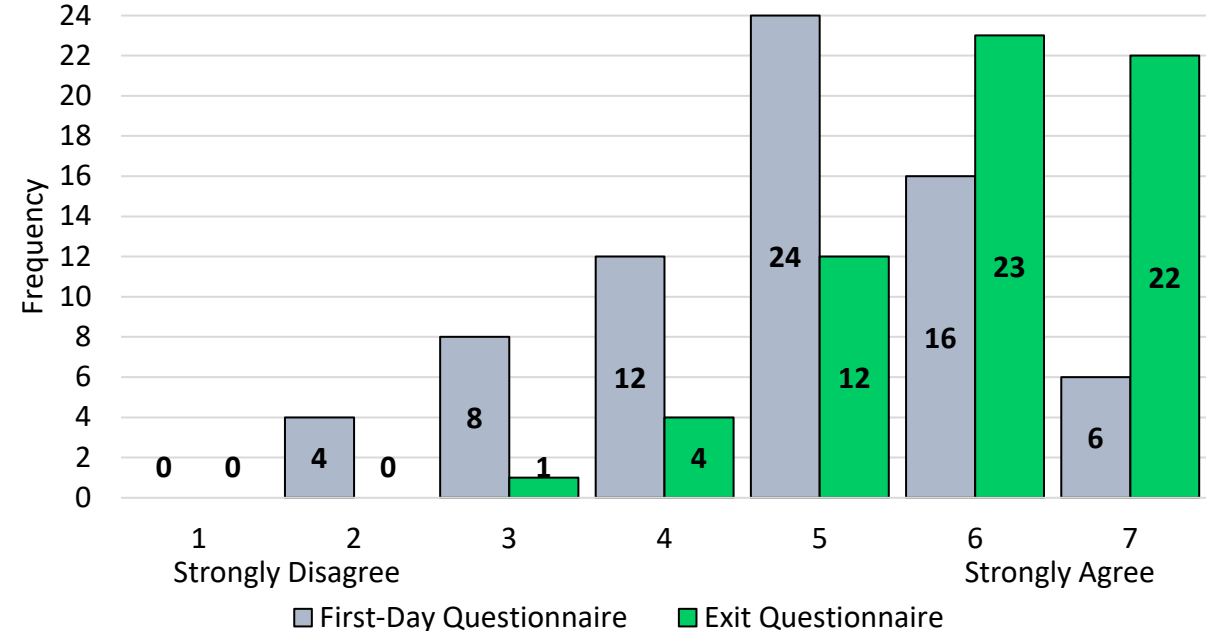


Improved confidence: first day -- last day questionnaires

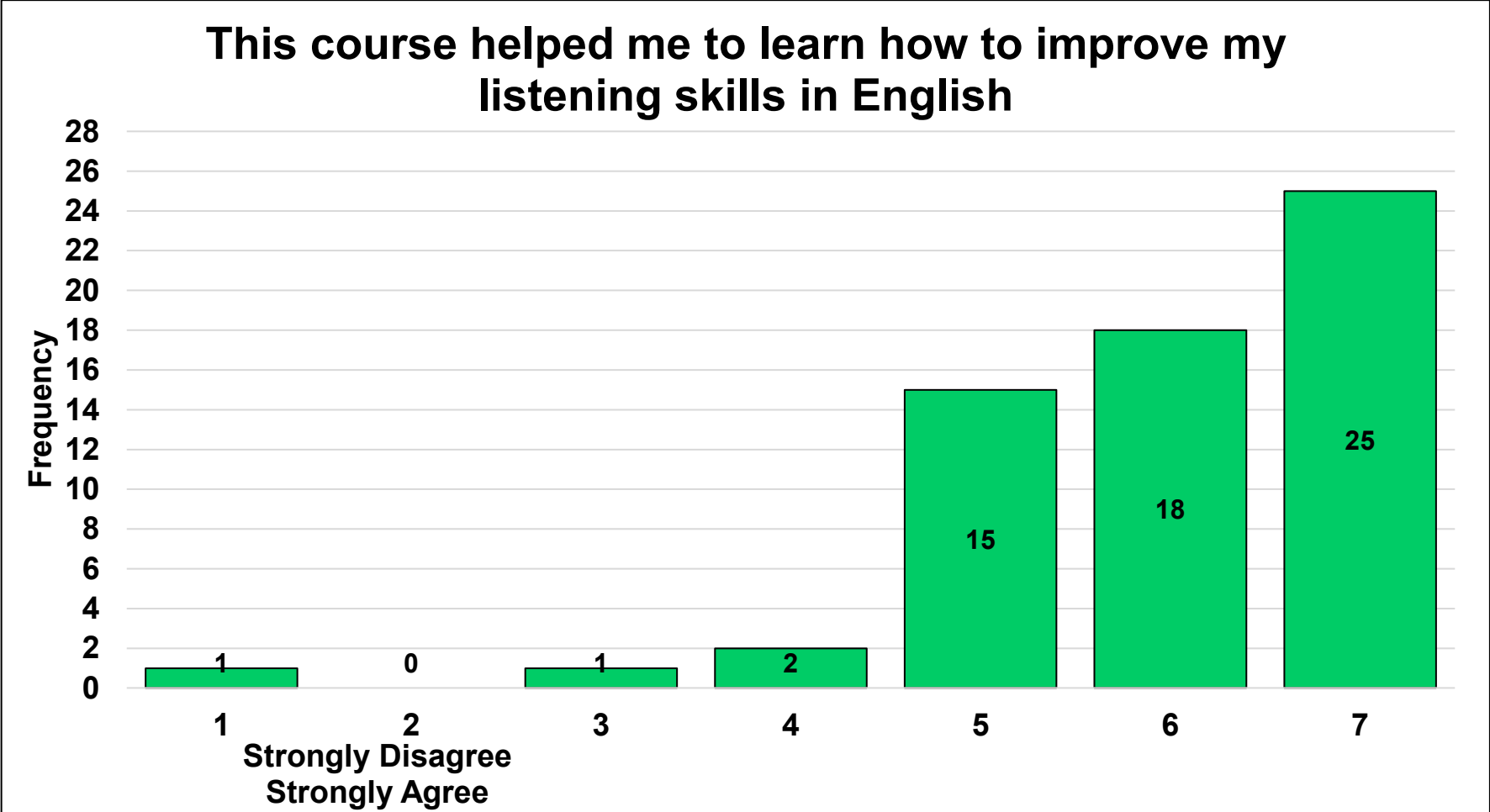
I am comfortable initiating conversations in English with people I don't know



I am confident in my ability to join group discussions in English



Final-day Questionnaire: Listening



Please list the most important things you learned in this course

- How to disagree politely
- How to join/interrupt a conversation
- Listening and understanding lectures in English
- Skills for leading small group discussions
- Cultural awareness during conversations
- Be prepared for possible networking opportunities, such as with an elevator pitch
- Asking questions when necessary instead of keeping silent
- Brave to talk is the first step, and then keep practicing