

# Do undergraduate students feel prepared for the workplace?

Exploring student voices to understand workplace preparedness at the UFS

*Siyaphumelela, June 2024*



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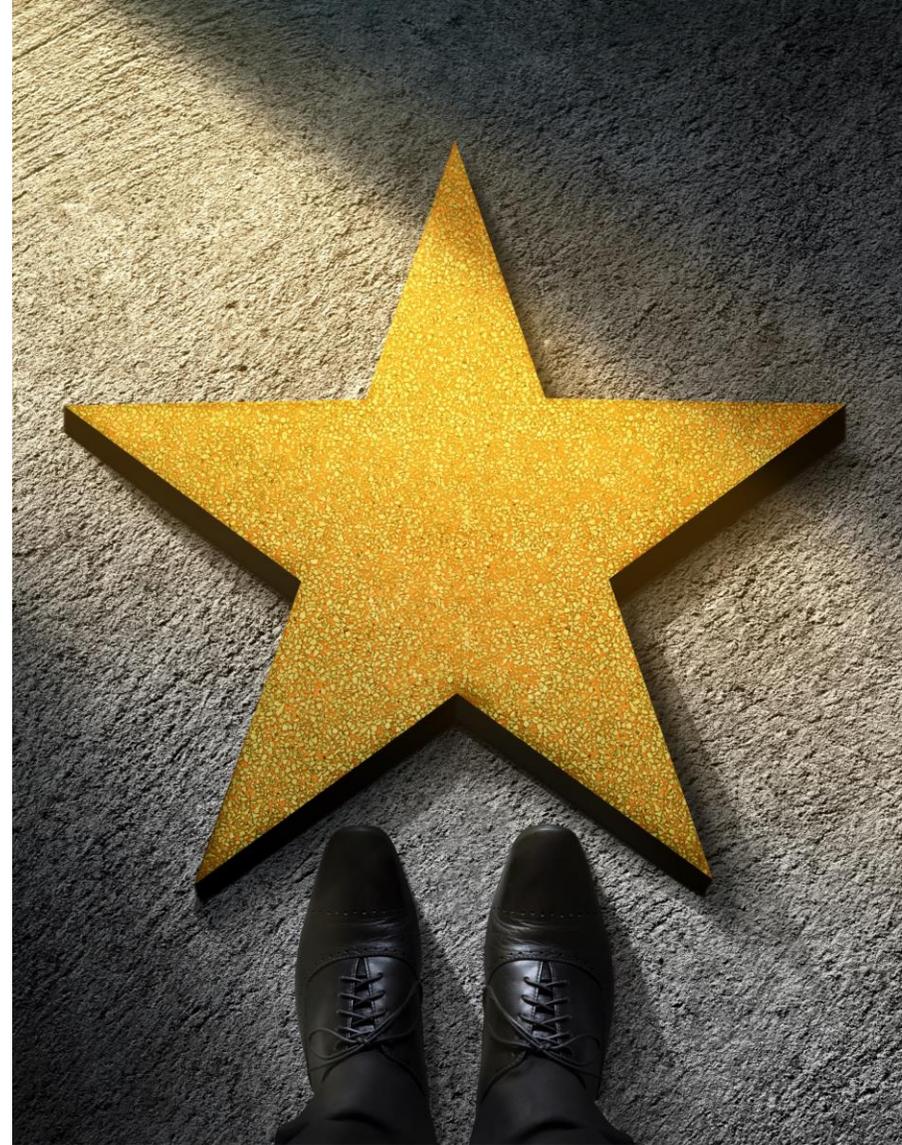
# ➔ Why should we care about the employability of our students?

- Unemployment rate (Q1 2024): 32,9%
- Youth unemployment rate (ages 15 – 34): 45,5%  
StatsSA (2024)
- Holistic education goals
- Adaptability in a changing world of work

**Student Success**



**Academic Achievement  
Throughput**





# Background

## South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE)

- Participation in educationally purposeful activities
- Perceptions of the university environment
- Estimates of educational and personal growth, etc.

## Topical modules

- Academic Advising
- Experiences with Writing
- Inclusiveness and Decoloniality
- Career and Workforce Preparation (NEW)
- Experiences with Online Learning (NEW)
- Mental Health and Well-being (NEW)



# Background

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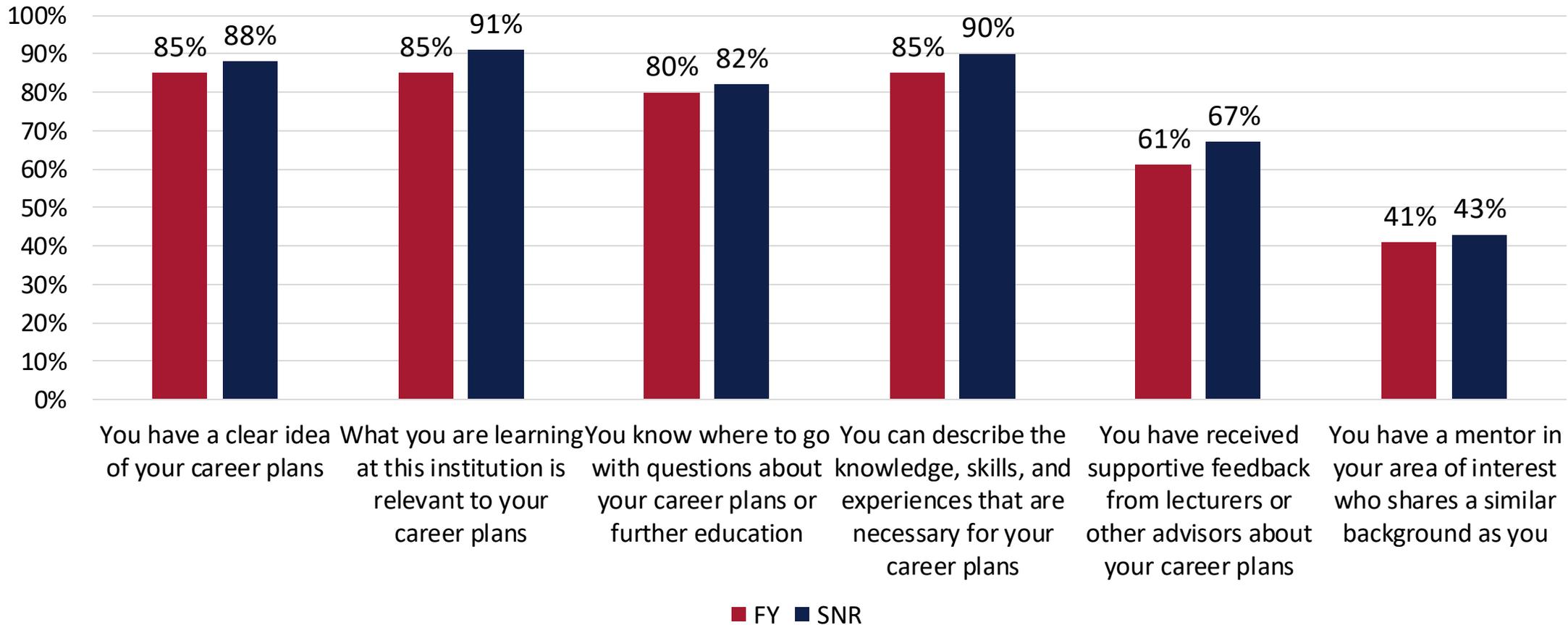
## Topical modules

- Academic Advising
- Experiences with Writing
- Inclusiveness and Decoloniality
- **Career and Workforce Preparation (NEW)** (N=2125)
- Experiences with Online Learning (NEW)
- Mental Health and Well-being (NEW)



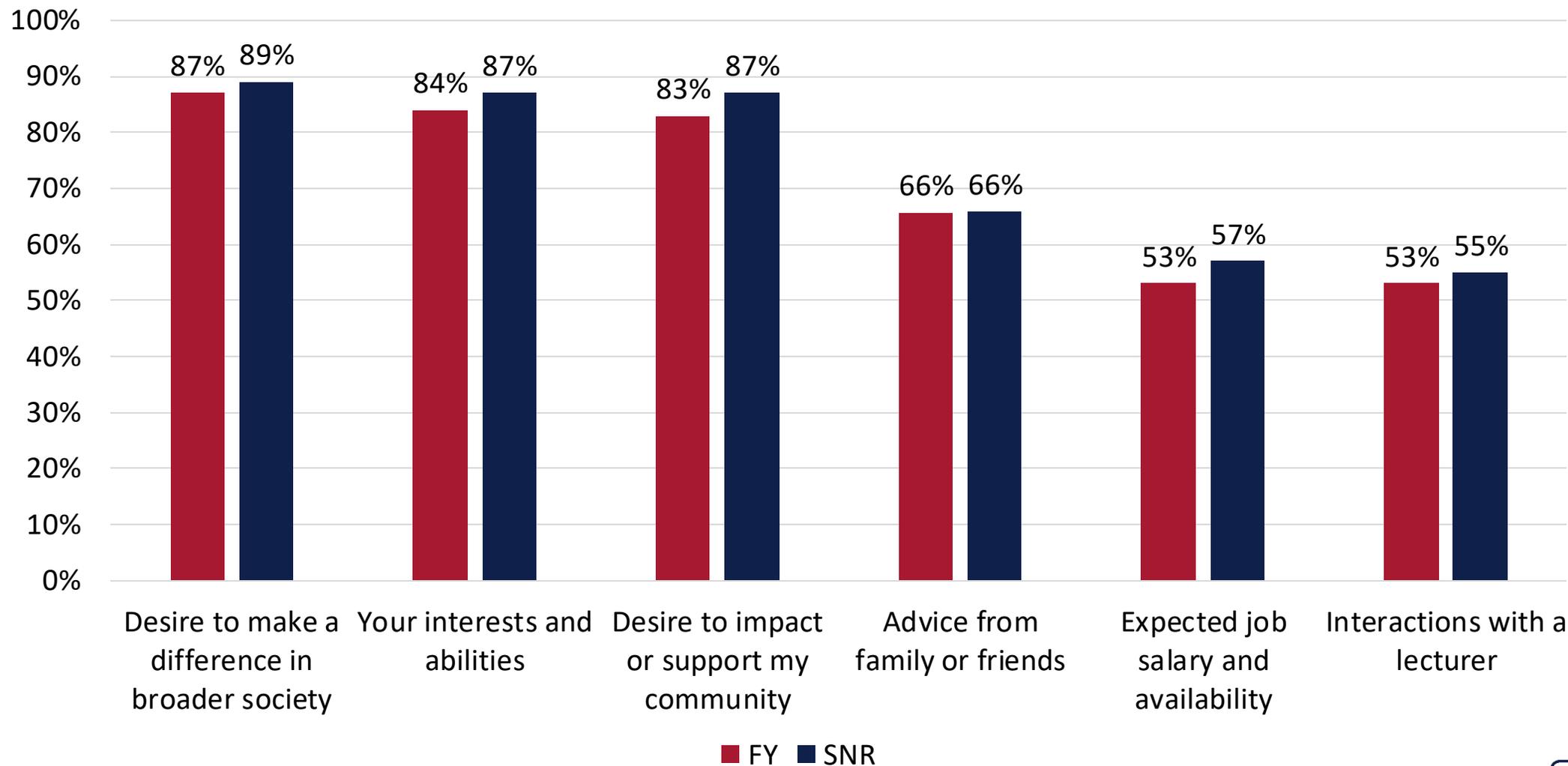
# Institutional contributions to students' career plans

Quite a bit and Very much



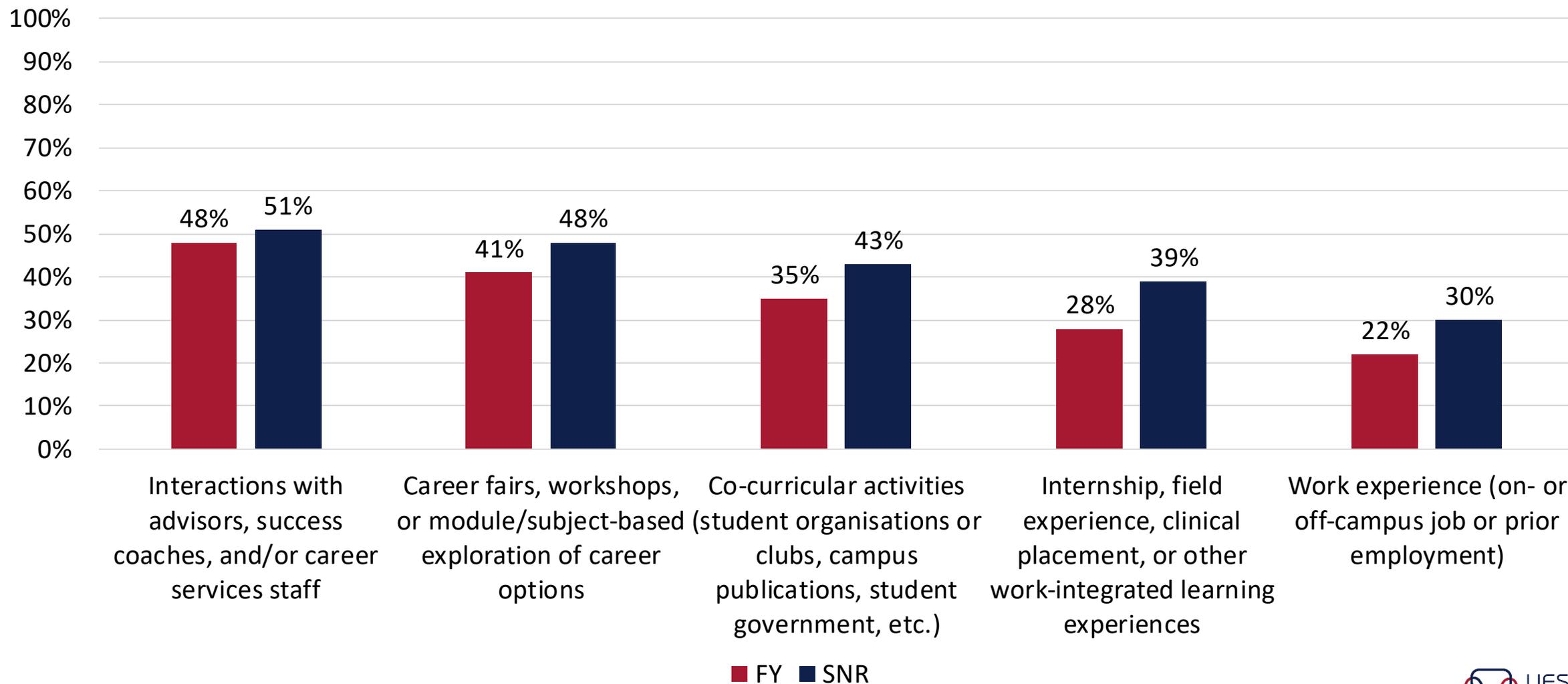
# Highest influence on career goals

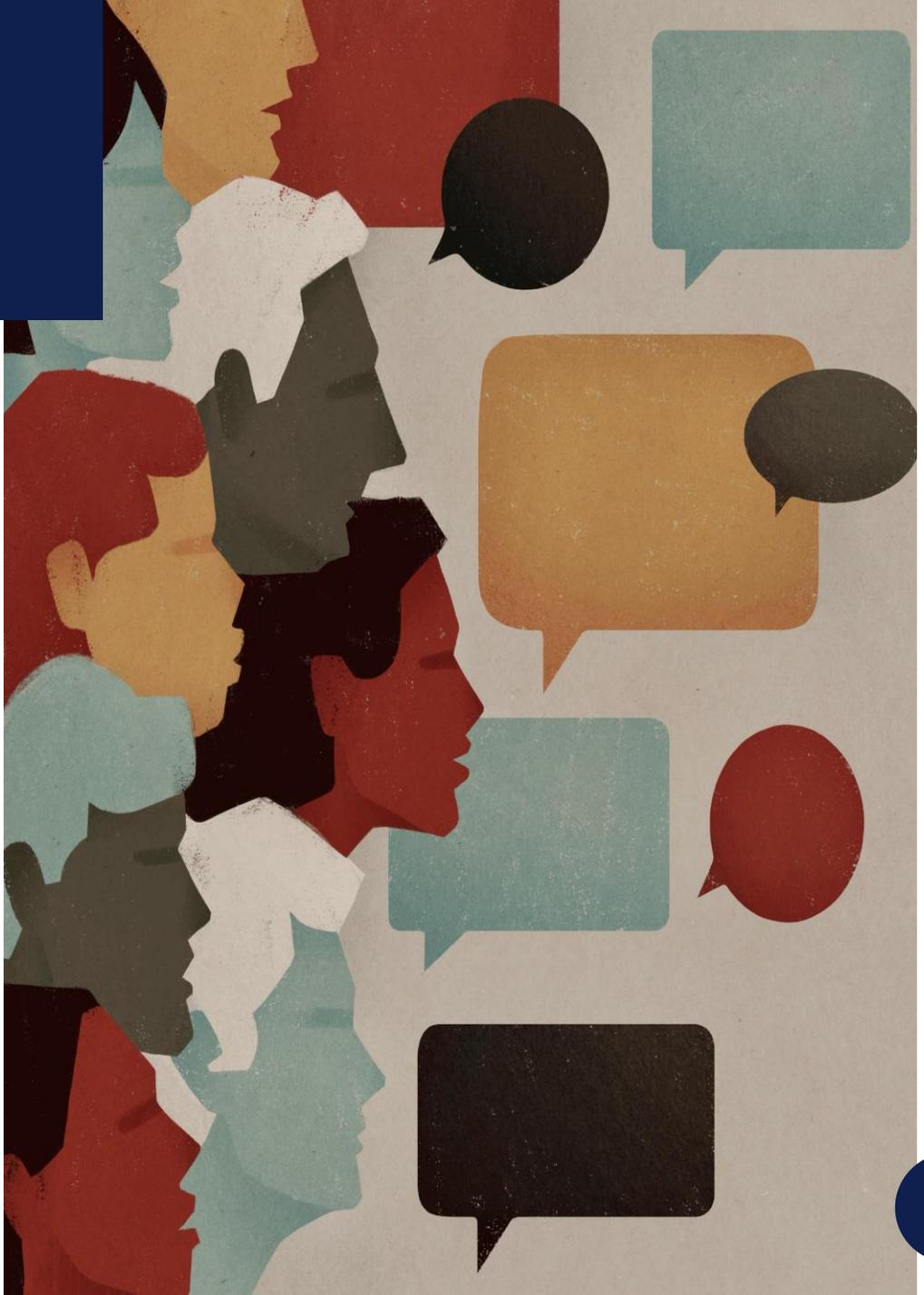
Quite a bit and Very much



# Lowest influence on career goals

Quite a bit and Very much





# Qualitative findings

Is there anything this institution could do better to help students develop their career plans or gain work-related skills?

*“Career talk sessions to help students develop their career plans”*

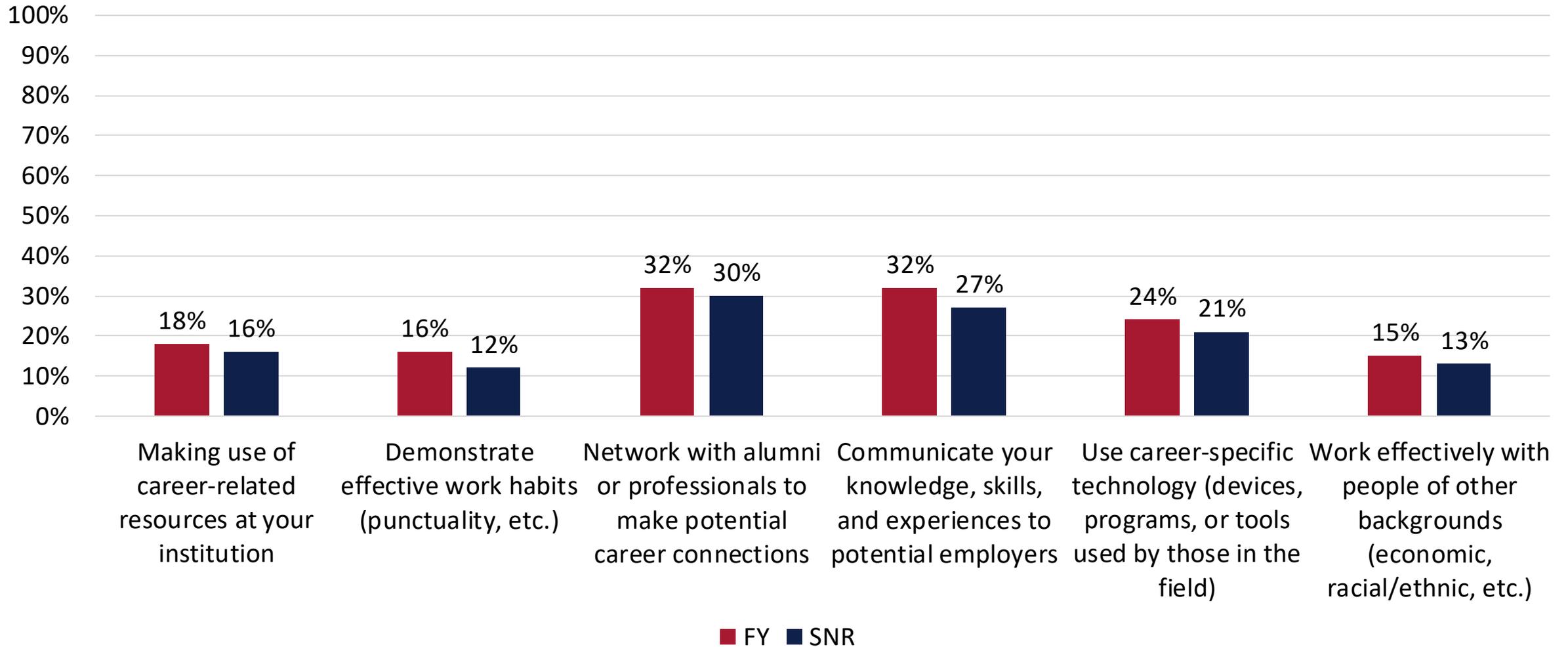
*“Advising students about their choices and present more events about career plans”*

*“Regarding the issue of career planning / advising I think it could be better if students have knowledge of options before or during the registration because then they'll would be able to make better decisions regarding their careers”*

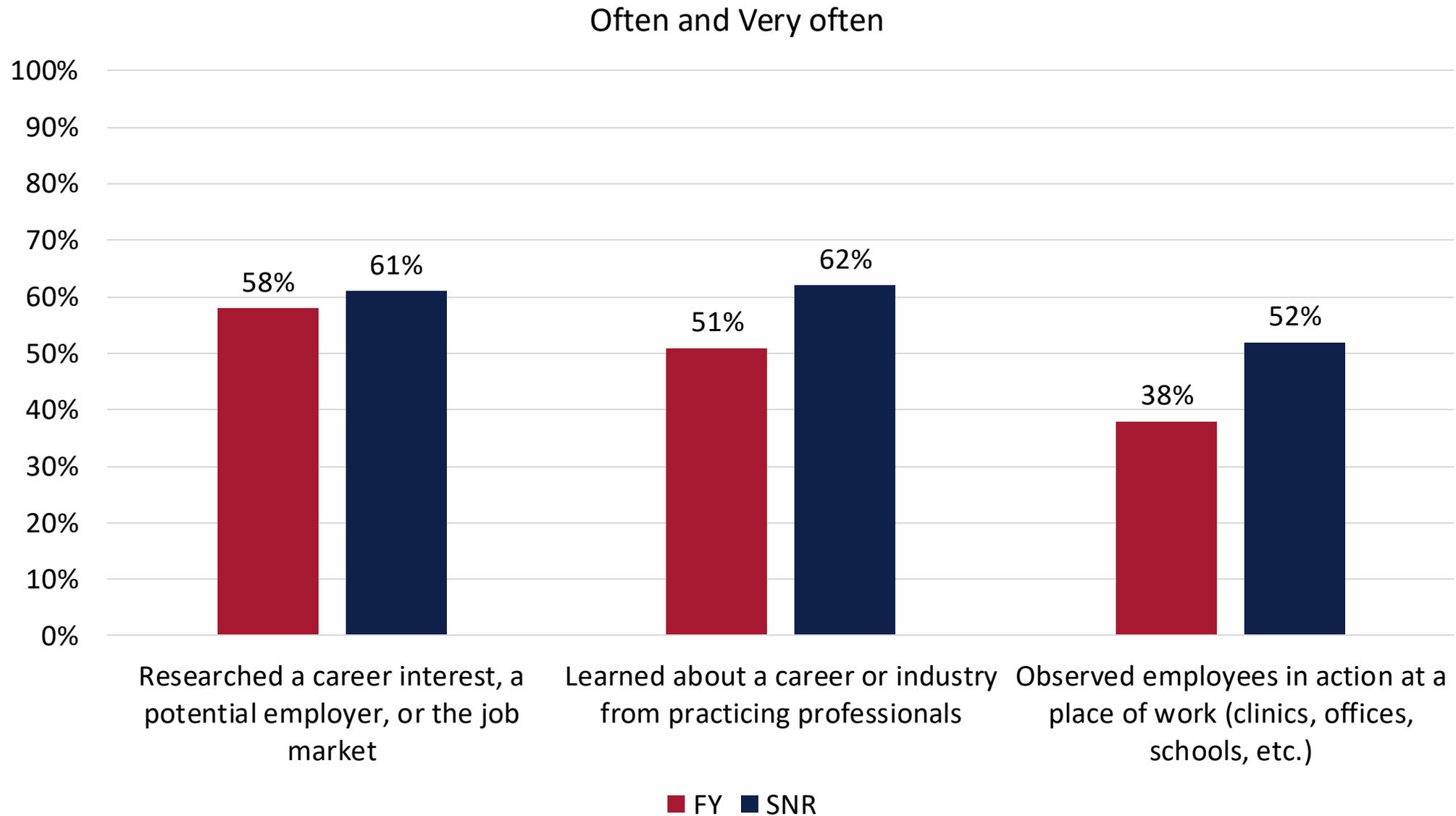


# Confidence in work-related skills

Not at all and Some



# Career exploration in the curriculum





# Qualitative findings

Is there anything this institution could do better to help students develop their career plans or gain work-related skills?

*“Offering more practical modules or subjects that directly relate to the desired career paths would be beneficial”*

*“By requiring all students to complete a career planning module in their first year, and by integrating employability skills development into existing modules and subjects”*

*“I wish the institution could provide practicals for all courses if possible; in order for all students to have an experience and an idea regarding the world of work.”*



# Use of career resources and services

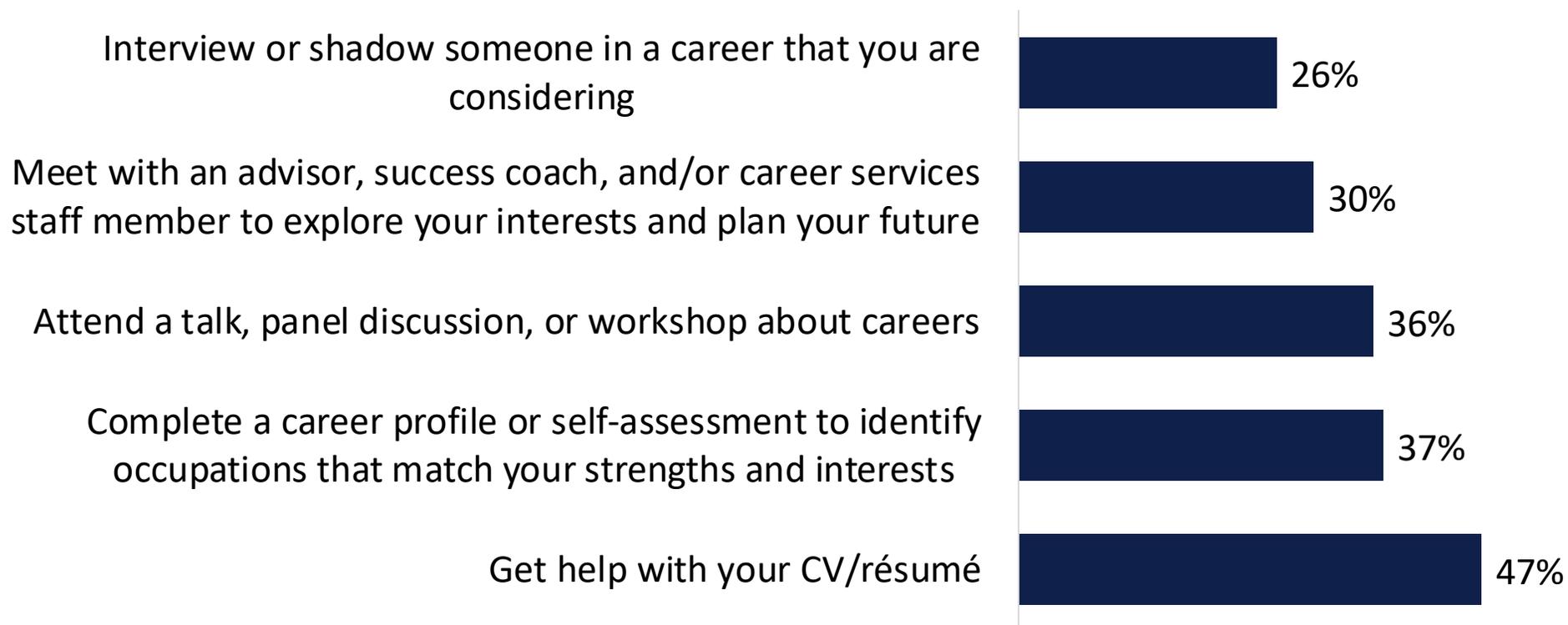
## Practices first-years plan to do





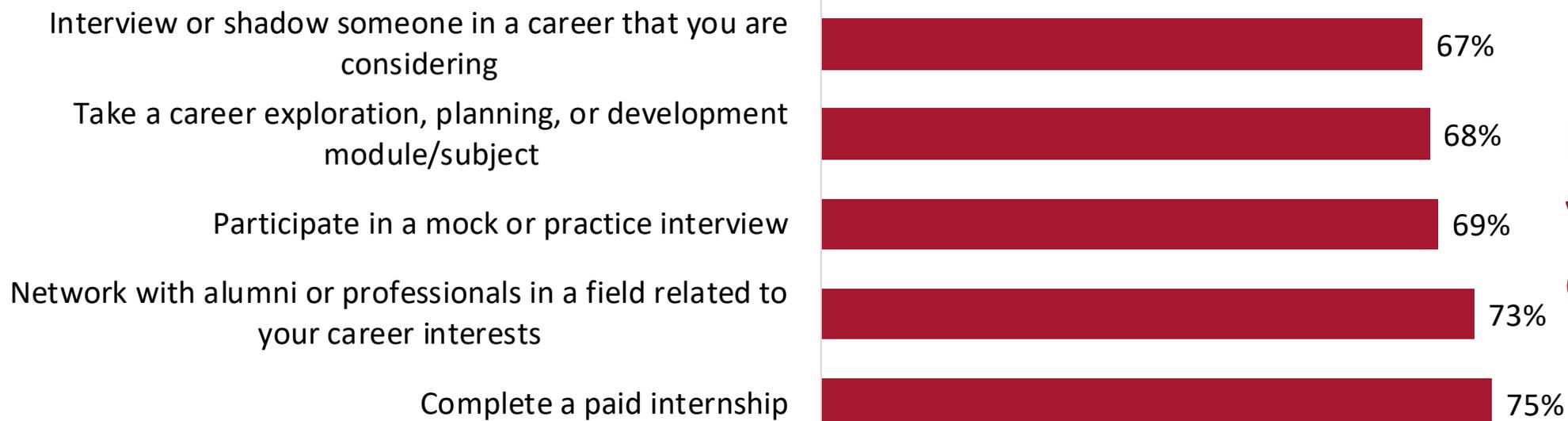
# Use of career resources and services

## Practices seniors have done or are in progress of doing

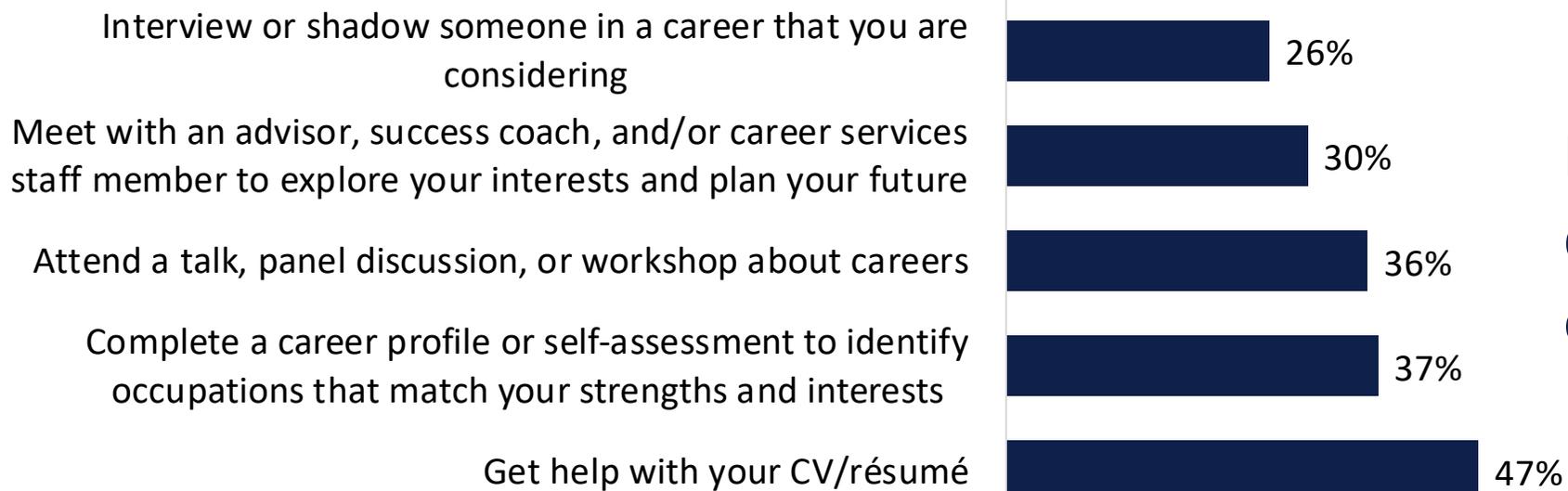




# Use of career resources and services



**Practices first-years plan to do**



**Practices seniors have done or are in progress of doing**



# More student voices

*“I believe that the institution provides enough resources for career plans and programmes that help students gain work-related skills. The institution should work on ways on influencing students to participate and engage in these resources”.*

*“Improve on the marketing to students so that it (career plan sessions and work-related skills development) becomes something they feel compelled to explore”.*

*“Students sometimes miss certain emails and Blackboard announcements because they have a lot going on”.*

# What now?

Career  
Fairs

Company  
presentations

CV and  
interview  
prep

Work  
readiness  
tutorials

Student  
placement

Faculty-  
specific  
career  
weeks

Job portal  
with job  
adverts

LinkedIn  
profile  
setup

- What does this data mean (career services, curriculum design, academic advising...)?
- Integrating career development into the curriculum
- Student journey: first-year vs senior vs final-year support



# Thank You ?

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