

# FIRST YEAR STUDENT SURVEY 2013

## HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS

PREPARED BY THE UNIVERSITY PLANNING OFFICE



**RYERSON  
UNIVERSITY**

Everyone Makes a Mark

## Introduction

Since 1997, Ryerson has been a member of the Canadian University Survey Consortium, a group of approximately 25 universities across Canada that conducts student surveys on a regular basis. In 2013, Ryerson, under the auspices of the Consortium, undertook the First-Year Student Survey. Students were asked about their decision to attend university and about their experiences at Ryerson. The survey was made available online to a sample of 1,000 first-year students who came to Ryerson directly from secondary school. Entrants coming from secondary school represented about 75 percent of first-year students that academic year. With 294 respondents, the response rate is 29 percent.<sup>1</sup>

## Decision to attend university

First-year students were asked about their reasons for attending university in general and their reasons for attending Ryerson in particular. The survey also examined the importance of various sources of information as they relate to students' decision to attend Ryerson.

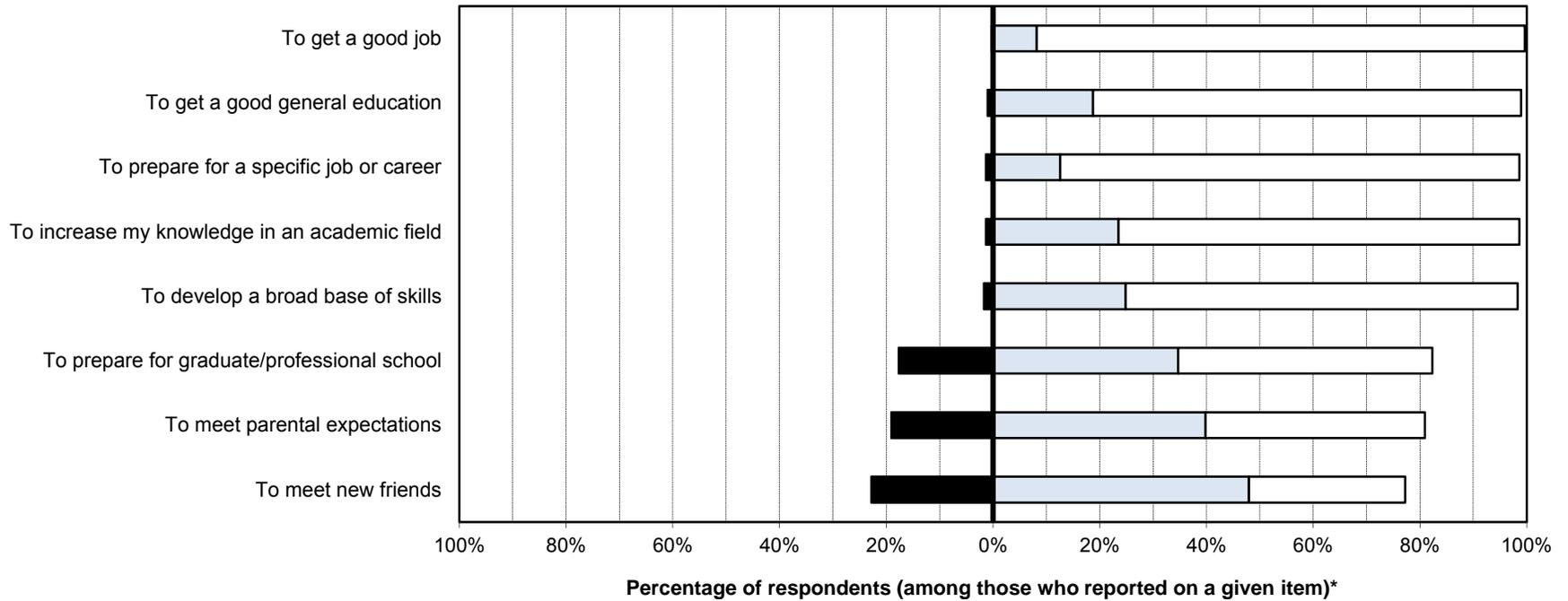
Figure 1 outlines various reasons for attending university. Virtually all students (at least 99 percent) identify "to get a good job," "to prepare for a specific job or career" and "to get a good general education" as important reasons in their decision. The vast majority of respondents also rate other academic and career-related reasons as somewhat or very important. While non-academic objectives, including "to meet parental expectations" and "to meet new friends," are of lesser importance, both are viewed as at least somewhat important by a majority of respondents. In fact, meeting parental expectations is identified by 81 percent of students as at least somewhat important in 2013, up from 76 percent in 2010 and 67 percent in 2007.

Almost all respondents (97 percent) applied to more than one university. Figure 2 illustrates respondents' reasons for choosing Ryerson rather than another university. The top-rated reasons relate to Ryerson's academic strengths: quality of academic programs, specific career-related programs, and the University's reputation. At least 94 percent of respondents identify each of these reasons as being somewhat or very important. Availability of public transportation is named as important by 82 percent of respondents. At least 75 percent identify factors related to Ryerson's location as important, specifically the size of the city and the ability to live close to home. Most students rate having friends who attend Ryerson, or having parents or relatives who want them to attend, as not important. Compared to previous rounds of the survey, more students (72 percent) indicate the size of Ryerson as an important factor in their choice of university – only 62 to 63 percent reported that this was important in 2007 and 2010.

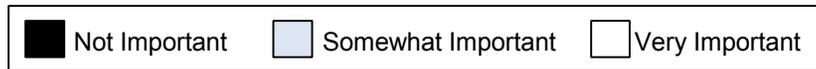
Figure 3 illustrates the extent to which various sources and types of information influenced students to attend Ryerson. Respondents report that word of mouth, view books, brochures or pamphlets, and the University website were the most effective in determining Ryerson as their choice. (More than 80 percent report that these sources were important in their decision.) More than three quarters indicate that campus visits and advice from high school counselors or teachers were important. Contact from University staff or faculty, recruitment fairs, and high school visits made by University staff were each rated as important by about two-thirds (64 to 67 percent) of students. Maclean's rankings were viewed as important by 61 percent.

<sup>1</sup> Nineteen times out of twenty, the percentages shown throughout this report are estimated to be accurate within 4.8 percentage points.

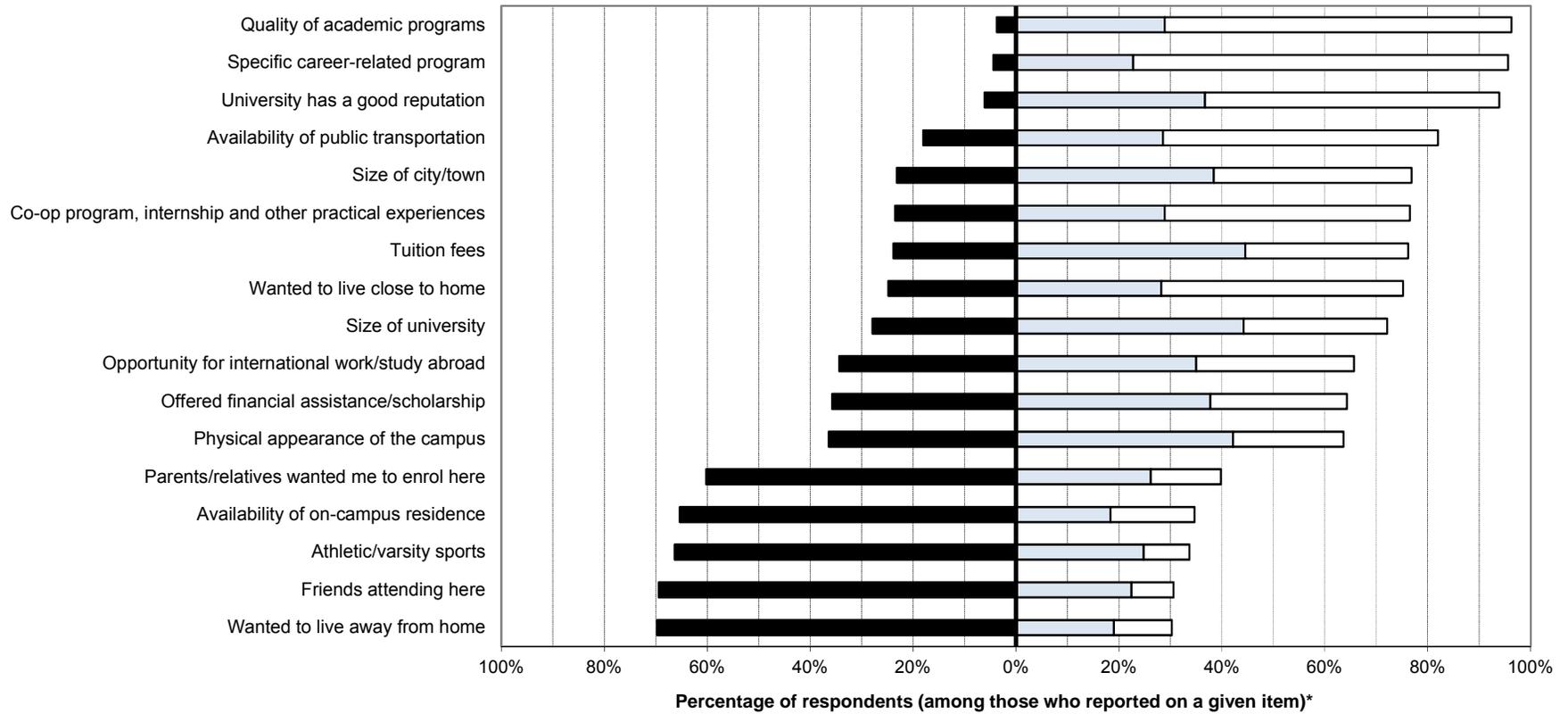
**Figure 1: Students' reasons for attending university**



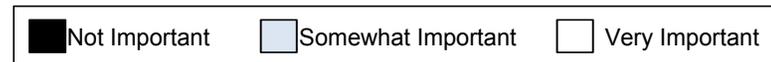
\*NOTE: 100 percent of respondents reported on each item.



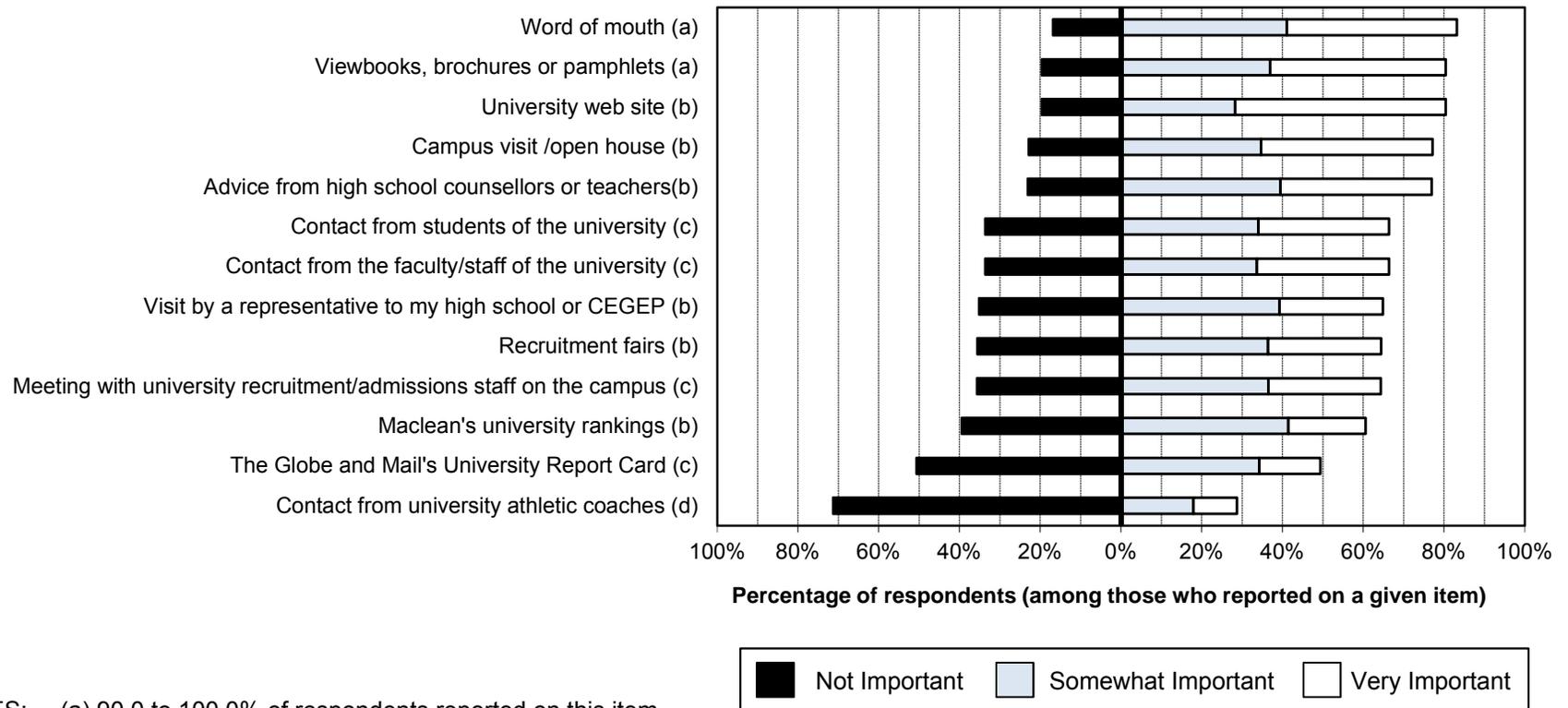
**Figure 2: Students' reasons for attending Ryerson University**



\*NOTE: 100 percent of respondents reported on each item.



**Figure 3: Factors that influence students to attend Ryerson University**



NOTES: (a) 90.0 to 100.0% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (b) 80.0 to 89.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (c) 70.0 to 79.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (d) 60.0 to 69.9% of respondents reported on this item.

### **Experience with registration**

89 percent of respondents indicate that they used online portals for registration and 84 percent of them report being at least somewhat satisfied with their experience. Of the 20 percent of students who report registering in person, 87 percent indicate being at least somewhat satisfied.

90 percent of respondents are satisfied with their ability to get into the courses they wanted.

### **Orientation experience**

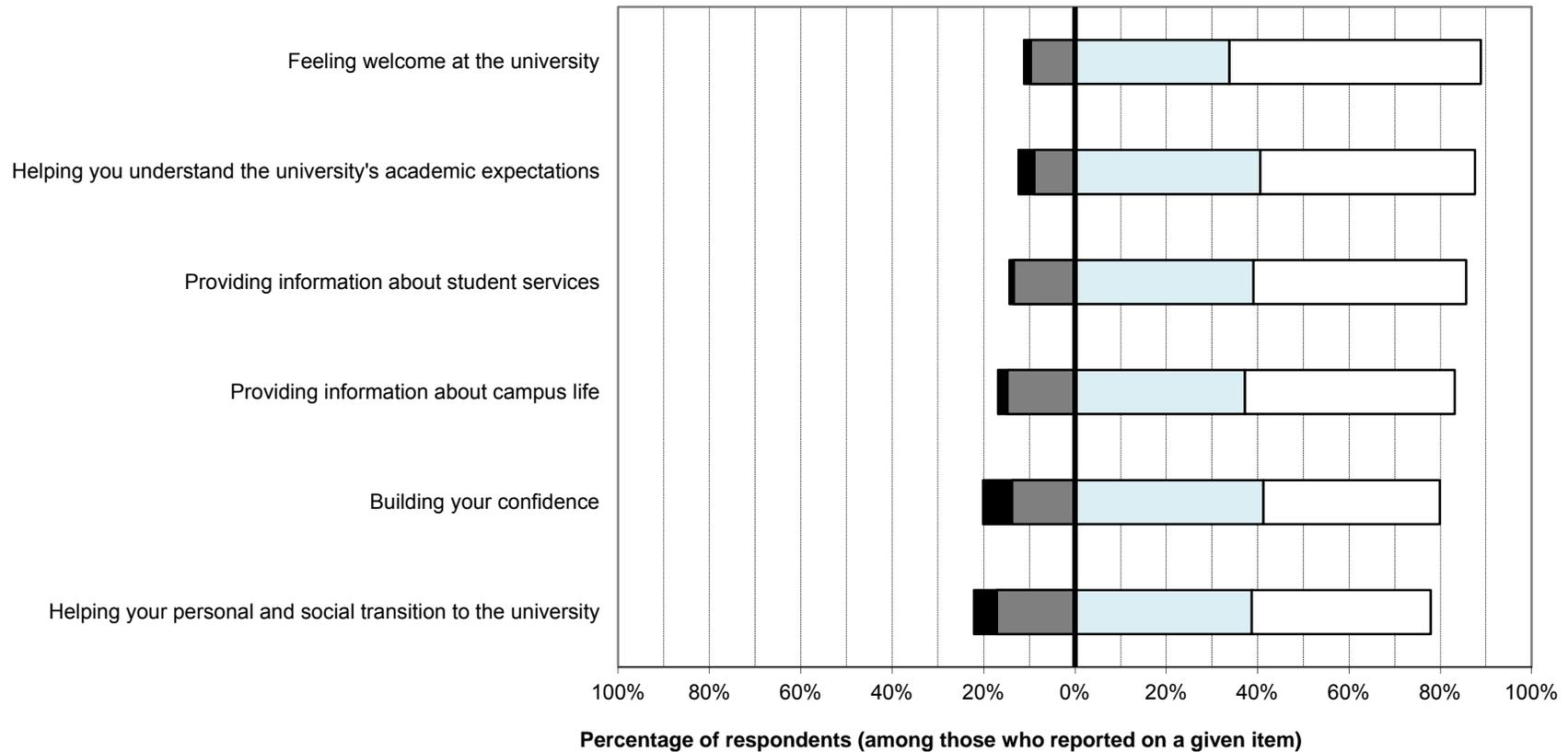
71 percent of first-year students report participating in orientation programs or activities. Generally, respondents are satisfied with all aspects of the orientation program evaluated. As Figure 4 illustrates, 89 percent report feeling welcome at the university. In addition, 83 to 86 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with being helped to understand the university's academic expectations, the provision of information about campus life, and information about student services. These results are consistent with those reported in the 2010 round of the survey.

### **Adjusting to university**

Respondents were asked about their level of success in adjusting to various aspects of university life. As Figure 5 illustrates, most respondents report success in their transition. They are very comfortable with finding their way around campus, understanding the content and information presented in courses, choosing a program of studies to meet their objectives, and meeting academic demands – more than 90 percent of respondents report success in these areas. Fewer students, 78 percent, indicate feeling that they belong at university.

Students are less likely to report success with finding suitable and affordable housing (46 percent) and getting involved in campus activities (48 percent).

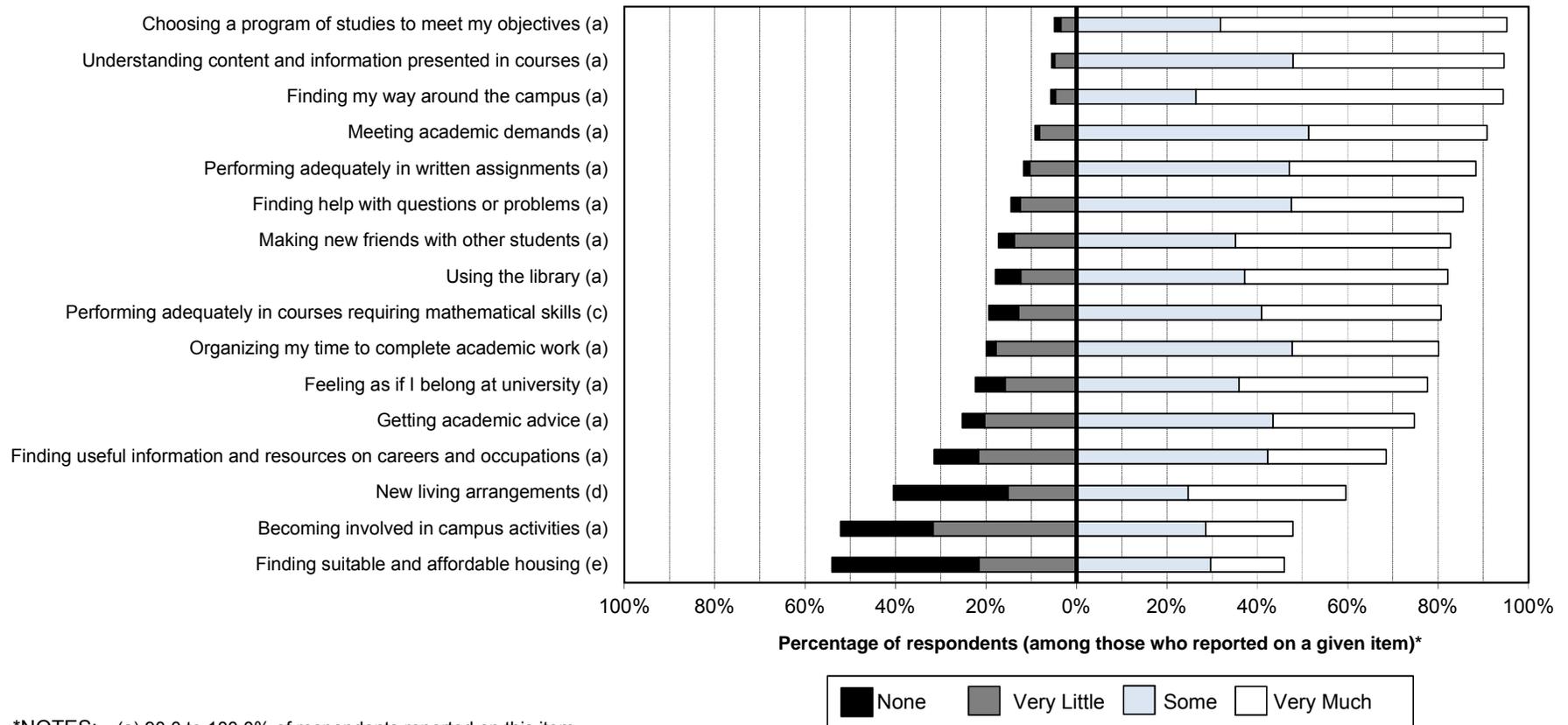
**Figure 4: Satisfaction with orientation**



NOTE: 64.0 to 70.0% of respondents reported on these items.



Figure 5: Students' transition to university



\*NOTES: (a) 90.0 to 100.0% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (b) 80.0 to 89.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (c) 70.0 to 79.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (d) 60.0 to 69.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (e) 50.0 to 59.9% of respondents reported on this item.

## Perception of the University

Overall, students' impressions of their first year at Ryerson are positive. 62 percent of respondents report that their experience at Ryerson has met their expectations, while 24 percent indicate that it has exceeded their expectations.

First-year students were asked about their perception of various features of the University: average class size, personal safety on campus, instructional facilities, concern shown by the University for students, general condition of buildings and grounds, social and informal meeting spaces, Ryerson's commitment to environmental sustainability, and study space.

The vast majority (94 percent) of respondents report being satisfied or very satisfied with the average size of classes and 89 percent report similarly for instructional facilities (e.g., classrooms, labs, equipment).

86 percent of students report that they are satisfied with the University's commitment to environmental sustainability. This represents an increase of 10 points over the previous round of the survey conducted in 2010, when this question was first introduced.

82 percent of respondents report being satisfied with personal safety on campus, which marks a decline from previous rounds of the survey. Two thirds of students express satisfaction with study space, which is also lower than the level reported in previous years. However, the question of "social and informal meeting spaces" was raised for the first time in 2013 and 85 percent of respondents reported being satisfied in this area. Results are summarized in Figure 6.

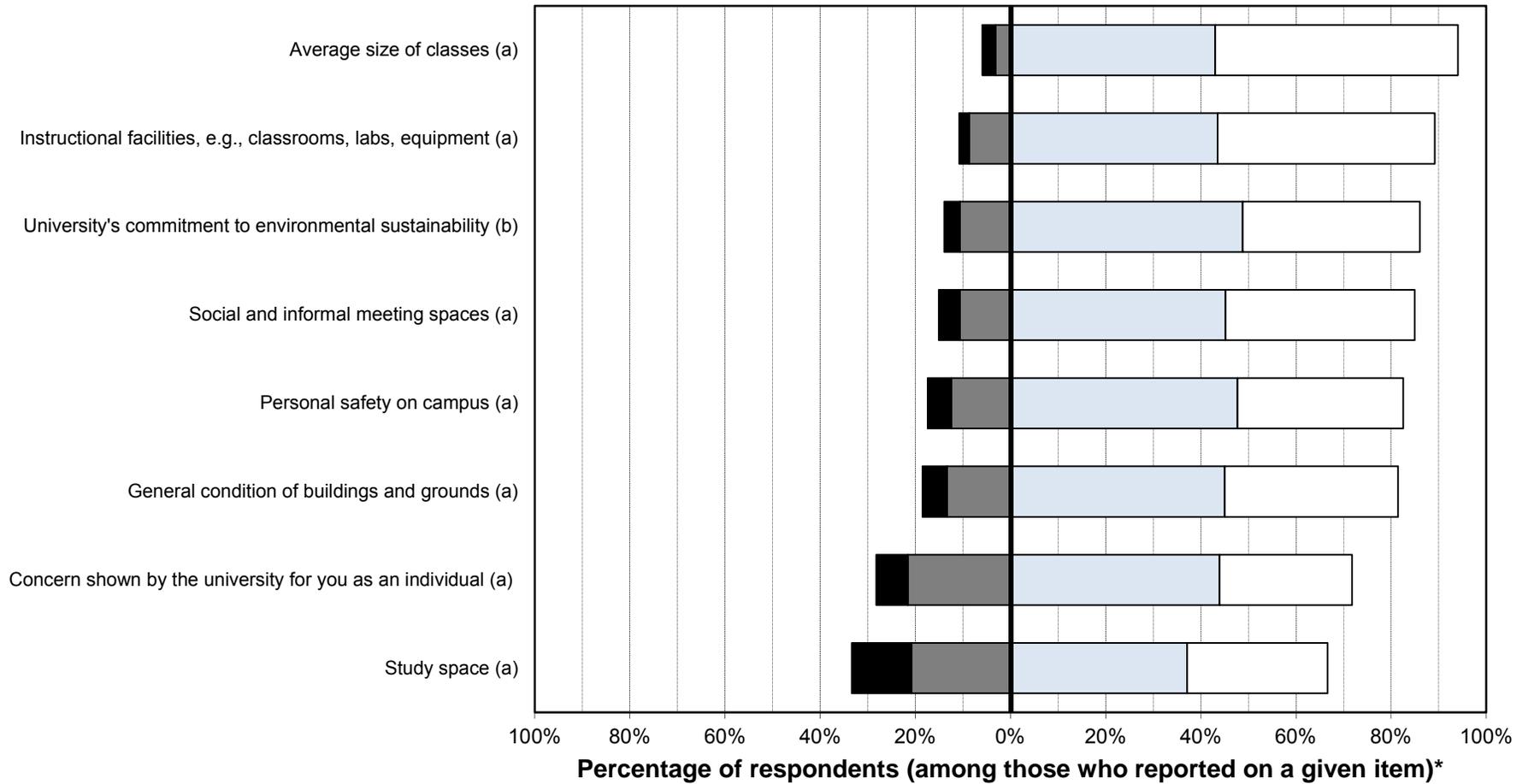
Figure 7 summarizes student satisfaction with an array of university services. Most campus services receive positive ratings by the majority of respondents, including key academic services such as library facilities (with 88 percent of students reporting satisfaction) and academic advising (86 percent).

At least 90 percent of first-year students are satisfied with facilities for student associations and clubs, recreational facilities and athletic facilities. Satisfaction with university-based social activities has increased from 78 percent in both the 2007 and 2010 rounds of the survey to 88 percent in 2013.

For 2013, a series of questions about the technology employed at Ryerson were added to the survey. These included on-campus Wi-Fi, online course management systems, computer support services, and university email. 87 to 95 percent of respondents report being satisfied or very satisfied with each of these services.

Respondents also indicated their level of agreement with various statements about the teaching they received during their first year at Ryerson. Results are favourable. 89 percent of students agree that most of their professors are reasonably accessible outside of class to help students. In addition, 85 percent express satisfaction with the quality of teaching that they have received, and 91 percent are satisfied with their decision to attend Ryerson. Results are summarized in Figure 8.

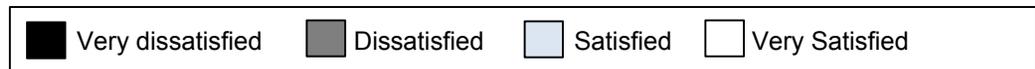
**Figure 6: Perception of the University**



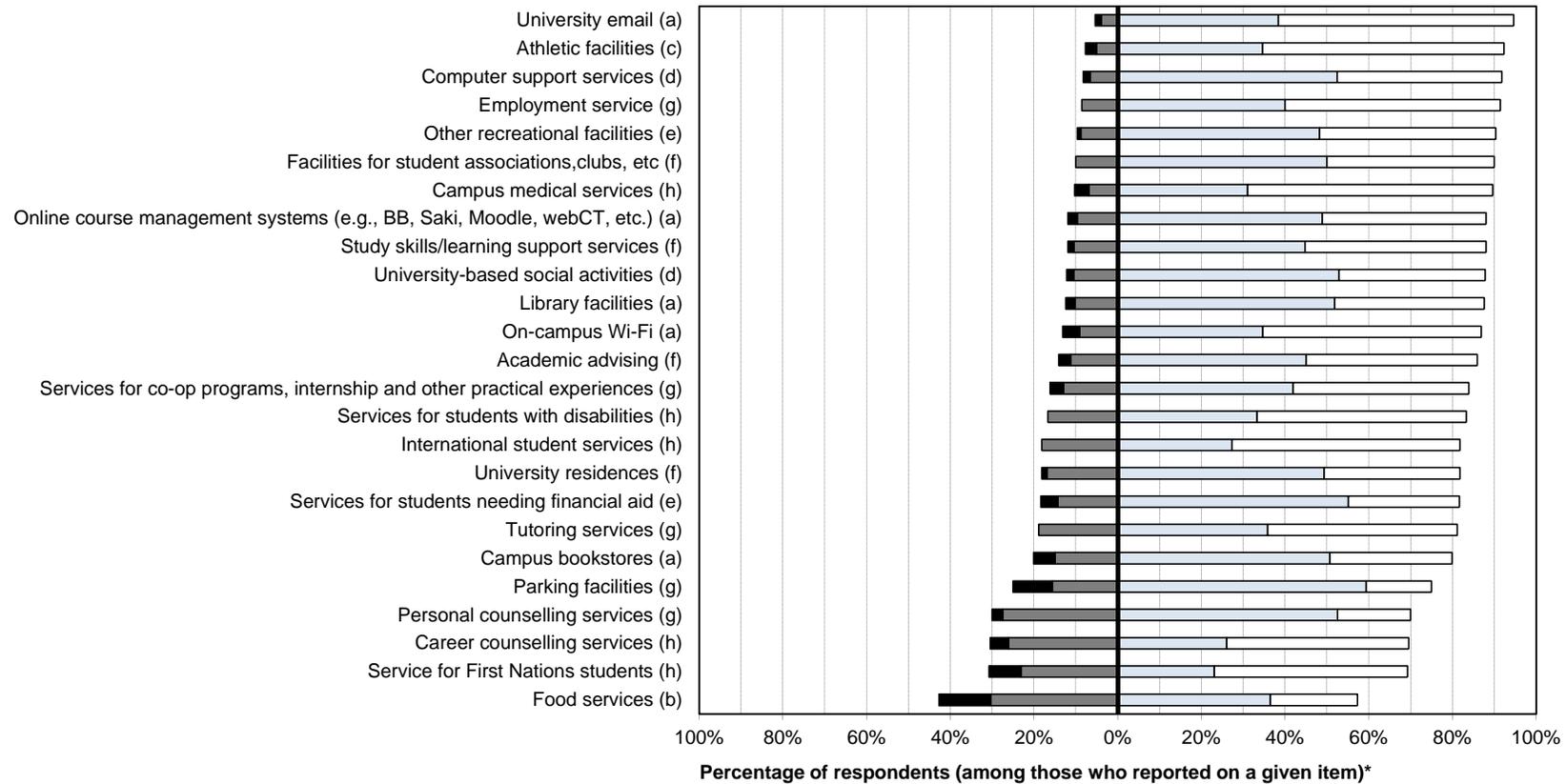
NOTE:

(a) At least 93 percent of respondents reported on this item.

(b) 83 percent of respondents reported on this item.

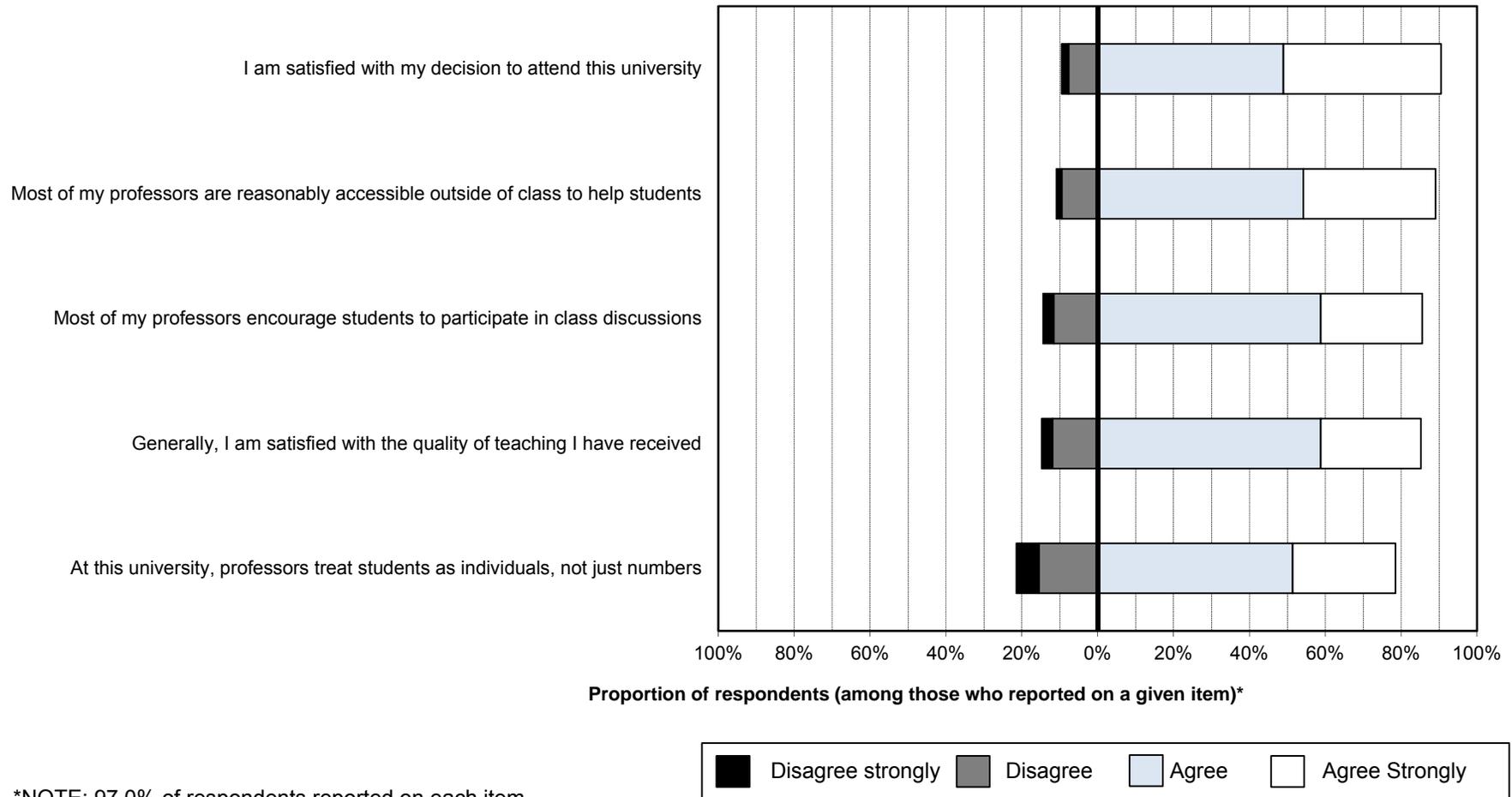


**Figure 7: Satisfaction with university services**



\*NOTE (a) 90.0 to 100.0% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (b) 60.0 to 69.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (c) 50.0 to 59.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (d) 40.0 to 49.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (e) 30.0 to 39.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (f) 20.0 to 29.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (g) 10.0 to 19.9% of respondents reported on this item.  
 (h) 5.0 to 9.9% of respondents reported on this item.

**Figure 8: Satisfaction with teaching**



\*NOTE: 97.0% of respondents reported on each item.

## Financing of university education

48 percent of respondents indicate that they received a scholarship, bursary or other financial award from the university. This is consistent with reports from 2010.

42 percent of respondents report that they are employed, while 37 percent are looking for work. Respondents who are employed work an average of 13.2 hours per week. (This is similar to the 2010 round of the survey, when 38 percent of respondents were employed, and the average number of hours worked was 12.6. In 2007, roughly half of students were employed and they worked an average of 14 hours weekly.)

56 percent of respondents indicate that their employment has no impact on their academic performance, while 28 percent report that it has a negative impact. 17 percent indicate that their employment has a positive impact on their academic performance.

## Profile of first-year students

Nearly all respondents (98 percent) report that their permanent home before attending Ryerson is located in Ontario. 76 percent of students live with their parents, guardians or relatives; 13 percent live in on-campus housing, and 10 percent live in rented accommodations off campus.

About 8 percent of respondents identify as having a disability.

Table 1 provides a comparison of the survey group and the actual population of first-year students admitted from secondary school in terms of gender, average age, and Faculty of registration. Females are over-represented among the survey respondents, and the average age of respondents is somewhat older than the first-year population. The distribution of respondents by Faculty roughly approximates that for the actual population, although Community Services is somewhat overrepresented, and students from Ted Rogers School of Management are somewhat underrepresented among respondents.

**Table 1: Comparison of survey sample and the population of first-year students entering Ryerson from secondary school**

	Sample	Population
<b>GENDER</b>		
Female	60.5%	49.8%
Male	39.5%	50.2%
<b>AGE (years)</b>		
Mean	18.6	18.1
<b>FACULTY</b>		
Arts	18.4%	15.5%
Communication & Design	15.0%	14.4%
Community Services	16.7%	12.4%
Engineering & Architecture	15.0%	15.9%
Science	7.1%	8.8%
Ted Rogers School of Management	27.9%	32.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

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