



**Athabasca
University**

Factbook 2023-24

Institutional Data Analysis

A scenic view of a park with a wooden bench on a grassy hill, surrounded by trees and purple flowers in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

Athabasca University respectfully acknowledges that we live and work on the traditional lands of the Indigenous Peoples (Inuit, First Nations, Métis) of Canada. We honour the ancestry, heritage, and gifts of the Indigenous Peoples and give thanks to them.



About Athabasca University

Our Mission

Athabasca University, Canada's Open University, is dedicated to the removal of barriers that restrict access to and success in university-level study and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for adult learners worldwide.

[Learn more about AU](#)

Like No Other | [Athabasca University's strategic plan 2024-2029](#)



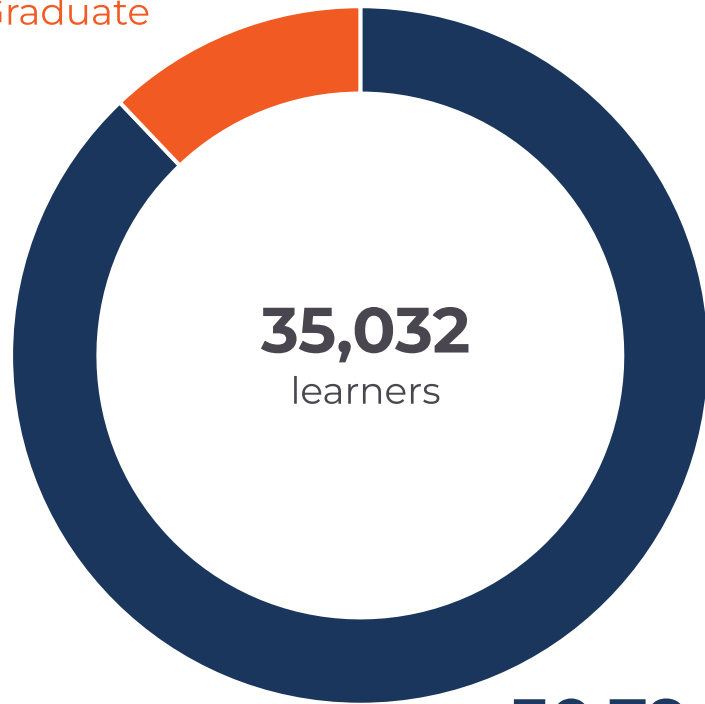
History

- 1970** Established by Government of Alberta on June 25, 1970
- 1972** Pilot project as an open, distance university
- 1973** First course 'World Ecology'
- 1976** First degrees offered in Bachelor of Arts: Liberal Studies and Bachelor of General Studies
- 1978** Permanent self-governing status as Alberta's 4th public university
- 1984** Relocated to Athabasca
- 1992** Revised mandate to offer Master's programs
- 1994** Introduced world's first online MBA
- 2001** Established Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research (renamed 'Nukskahtowin' in 2019)
- 2008** First Doctorate program, Doctor of Distance Education (EdD) opened
- 2019** PowerED™ launched
- 2020** AU celebrated 50 years
- 2021** Start-up phase announced for Integrated Learning Environment (ILE)
- 2022** Faculty of Business received AACSB accreditation as one of the world's best business schools
- 2022** First courses offered on the Brightspace platform

2023-24 Learners' Profile



4,238
Graduate



30,794
Undergraduate

32
Average Age

66%
Female

4.4%
Self-identified
Indigenous

43%
Alberta residents

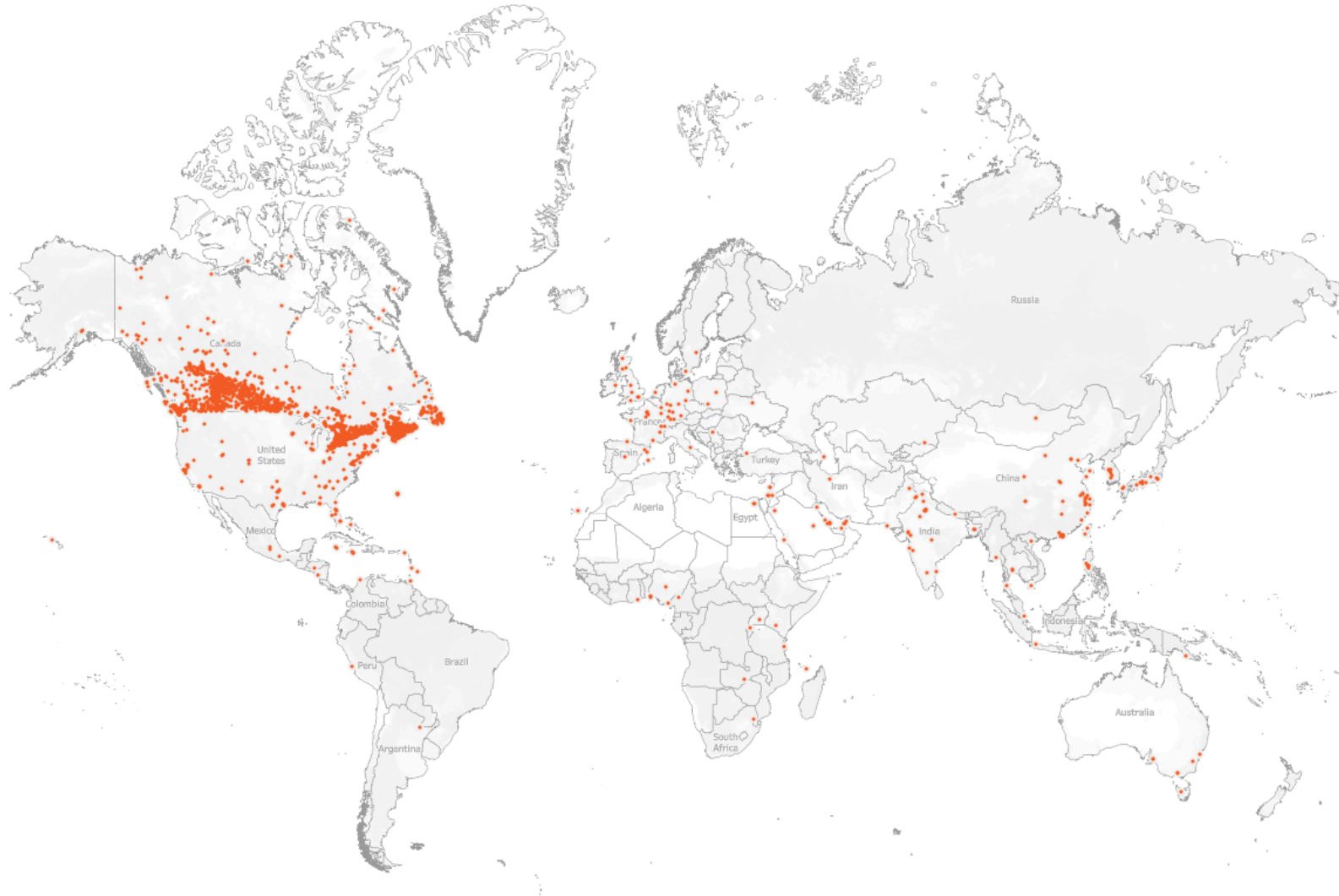
12%
Rural Canadian
residents

6.0%
International
learners

44% of AU's learners were **Non-Program**, including undergraduate visiting, undergraduate and graduate non-program learners, who may be taking courses at AU but not enrolled in an AU credential program.



2023-24 Learners Worldwide



Canada

AU learners reside in all 10 provinces and 3 territories.



69 international countries

Outside Canada, AU learners also reside in 69 countries worldwide.



2023-24 Top 10 City/Town of Residence

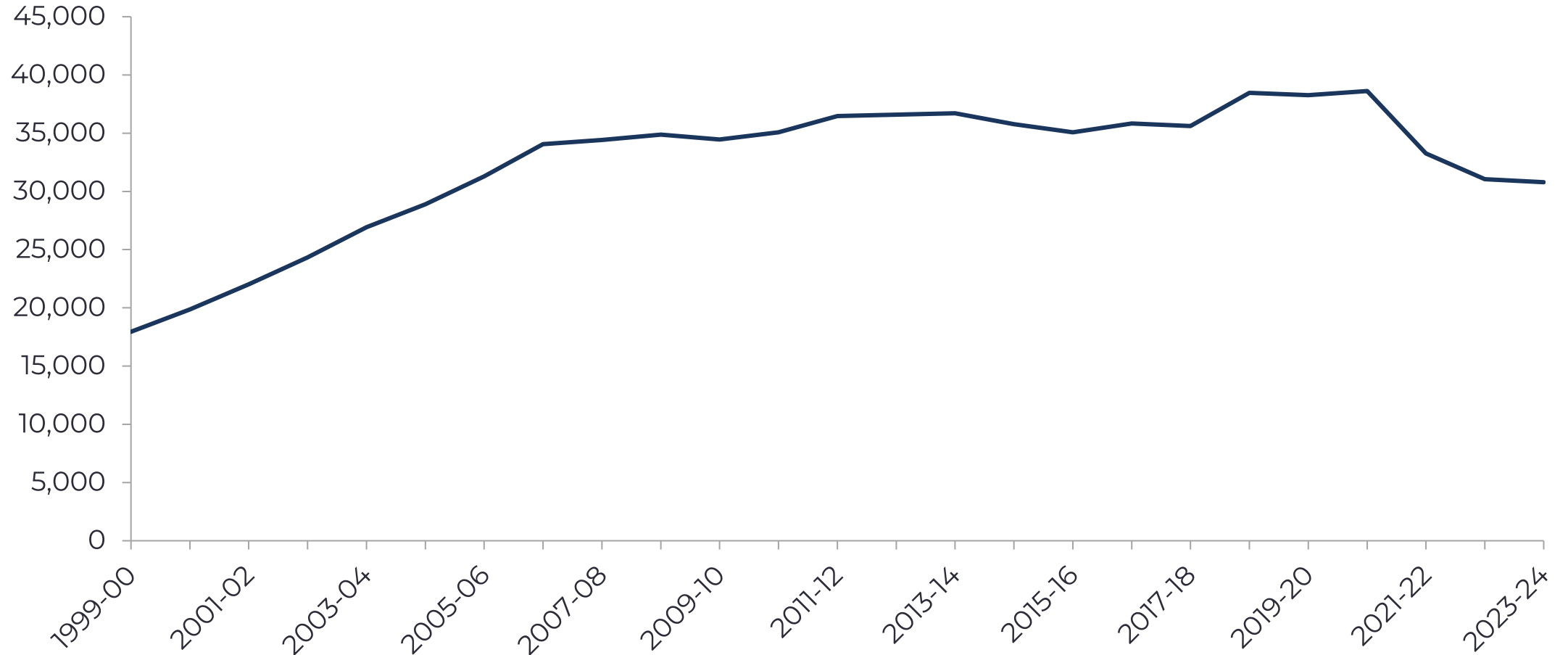
- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Calgary, AB (5,323 learners) | 6 | Vancouver, BC (503 learners) |
| 2 | Edmonton, AB (3,574) | 7 | Mississauga, ON (491) |
| 3 | Toronto, ON (1,150) | 8 | Surrey, BC (453) |
| 4 | Winnipeg, MB (892) | 9 | Hamilton, ON (409) |
| 5 | Ottawa, ON (697) | 10 | London, ON (402) |

UNDERGRADUATE



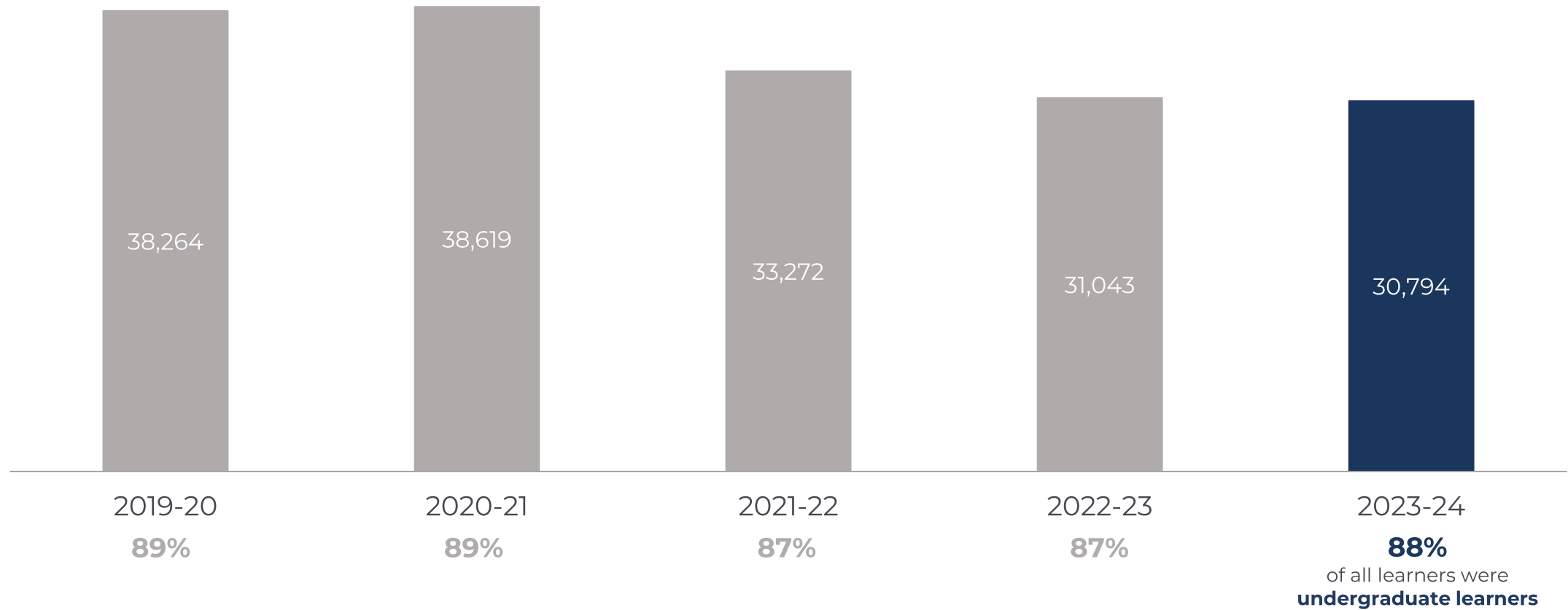


Undergraduate 25 Year Enrolment Trend

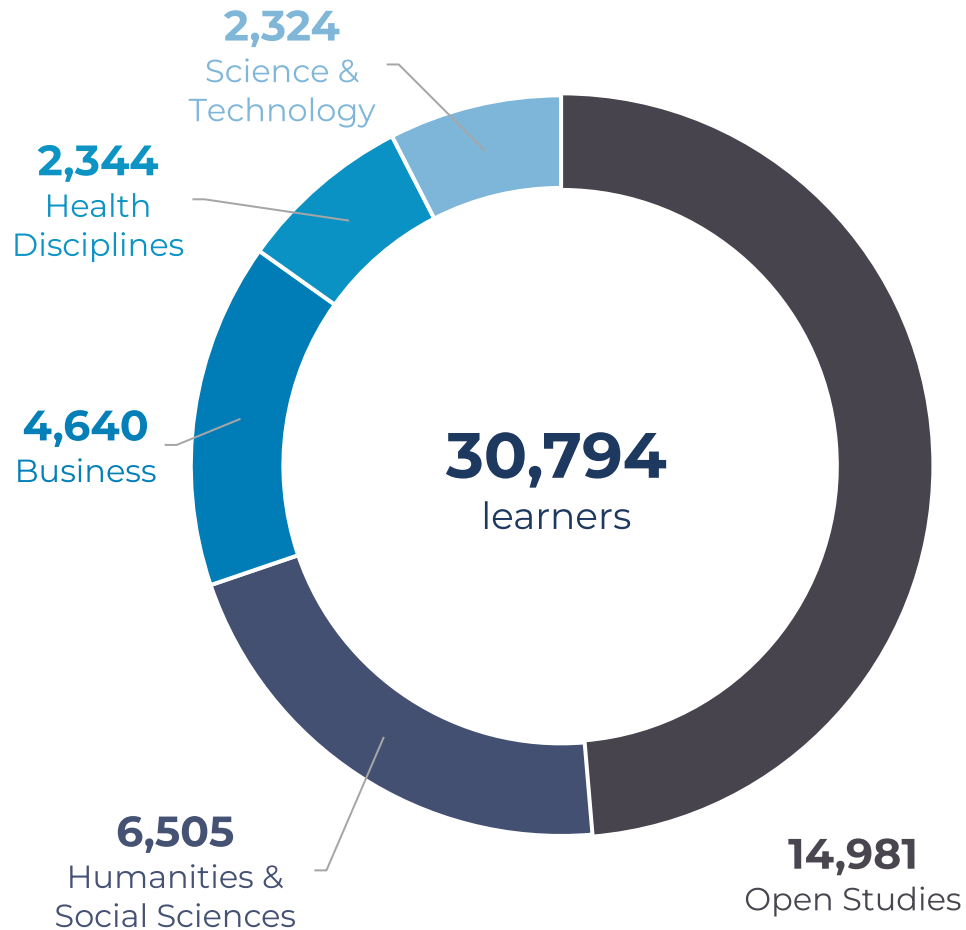




Undergraduate Learners



2023-24 Learners' Profile: Undergraduate



32
Average Age

65%
Female

4.4%
Self-identified
Indigenous

45%
Alberta residents

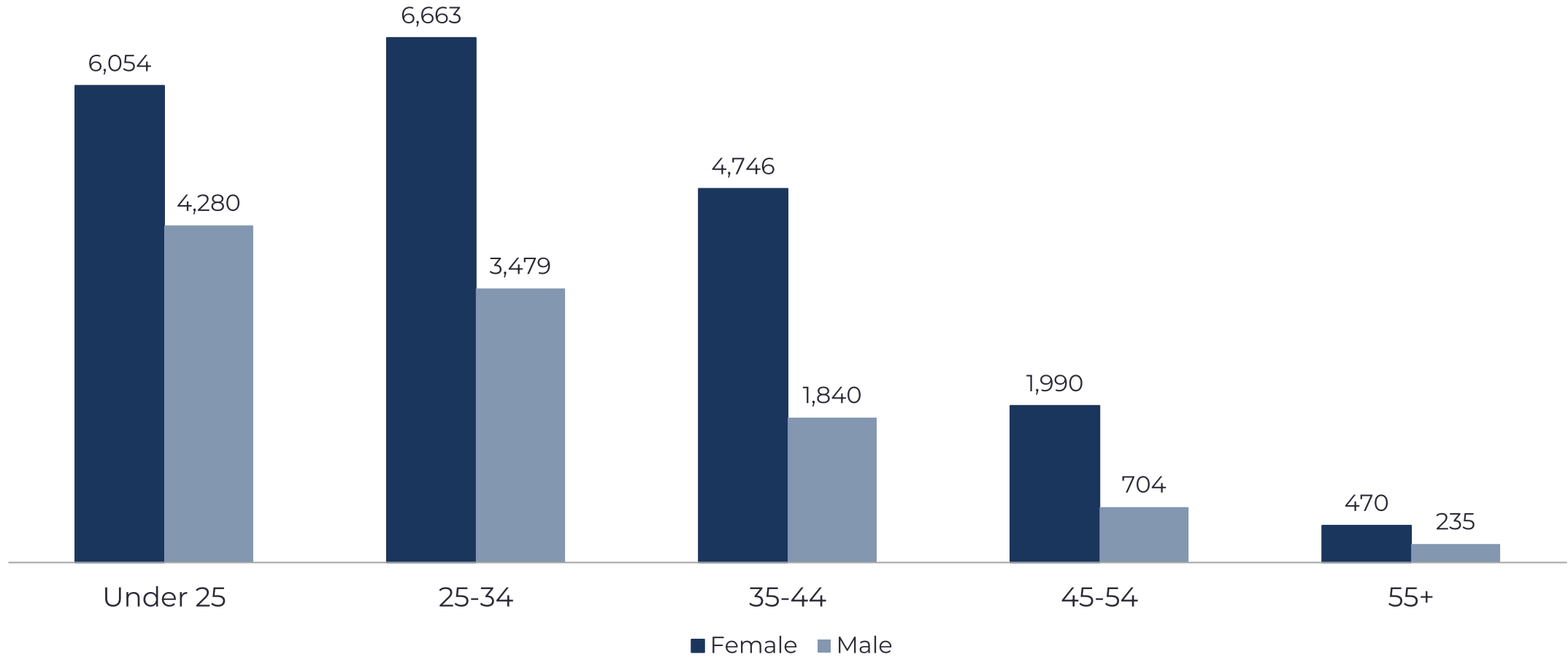
12%
Rural Canadian
residents

6.6%
International
learners

49% of AU's undergraduate learners were **Open Studies**, including undergraduate visiting and non-program learners, who may be taking courses at AU but not enrolled in an AU undergraduate credential program.

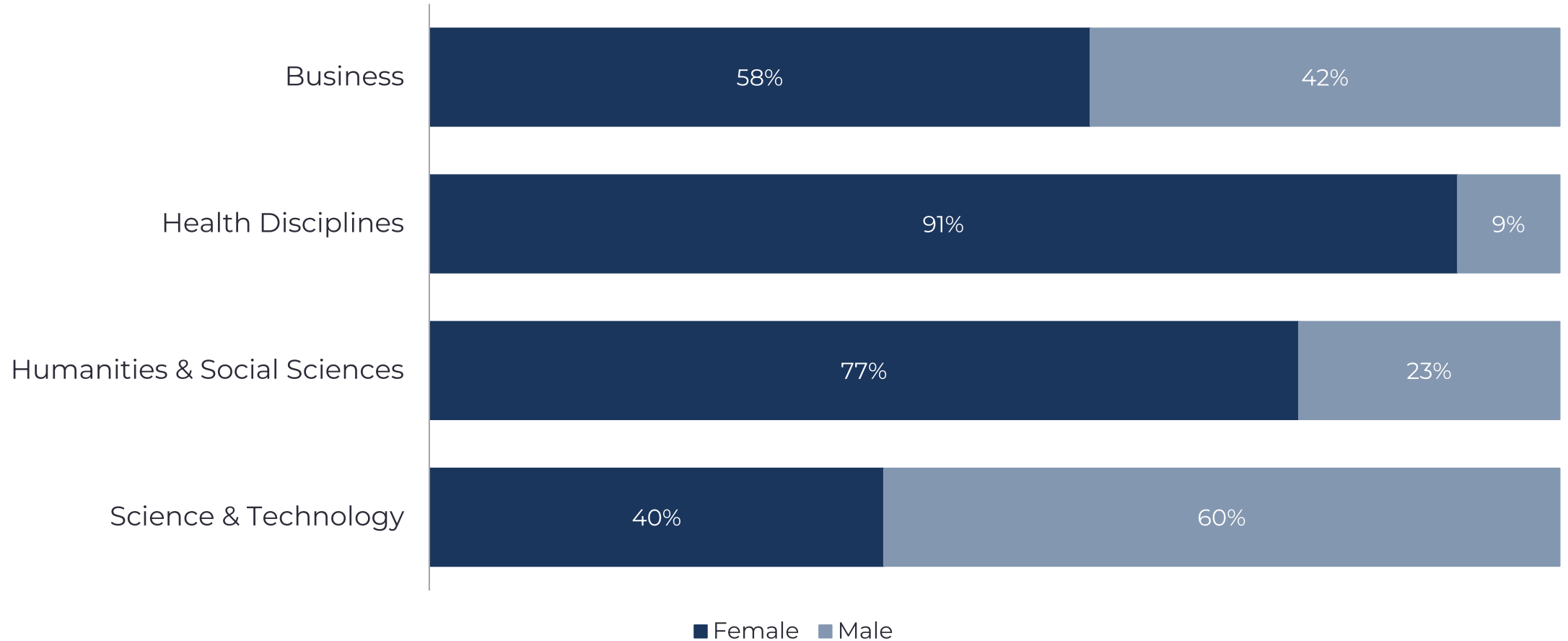


2023-24 Undergraduate Age & Gender (Sex)



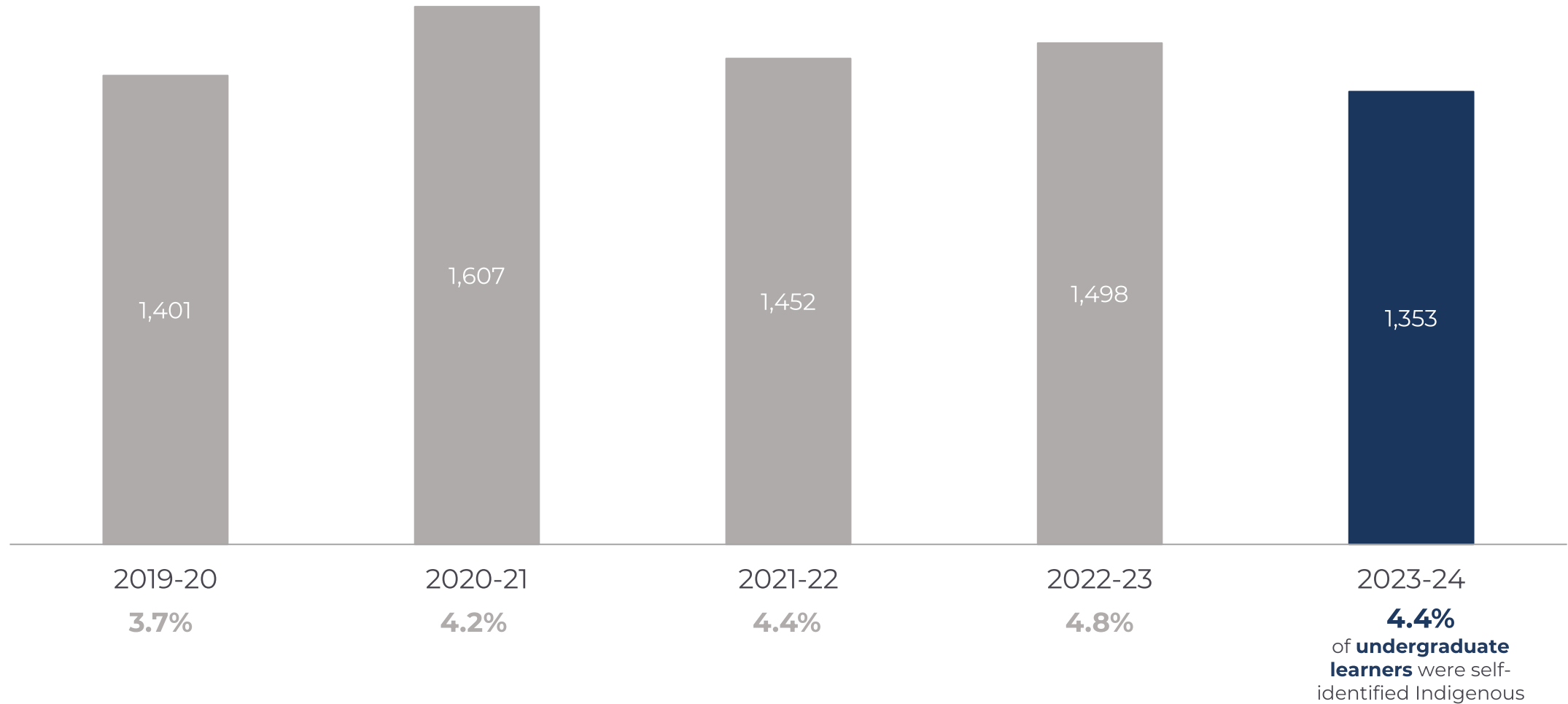


2023-24 Undergraduate Gender (Sex) Distribution by Faculty



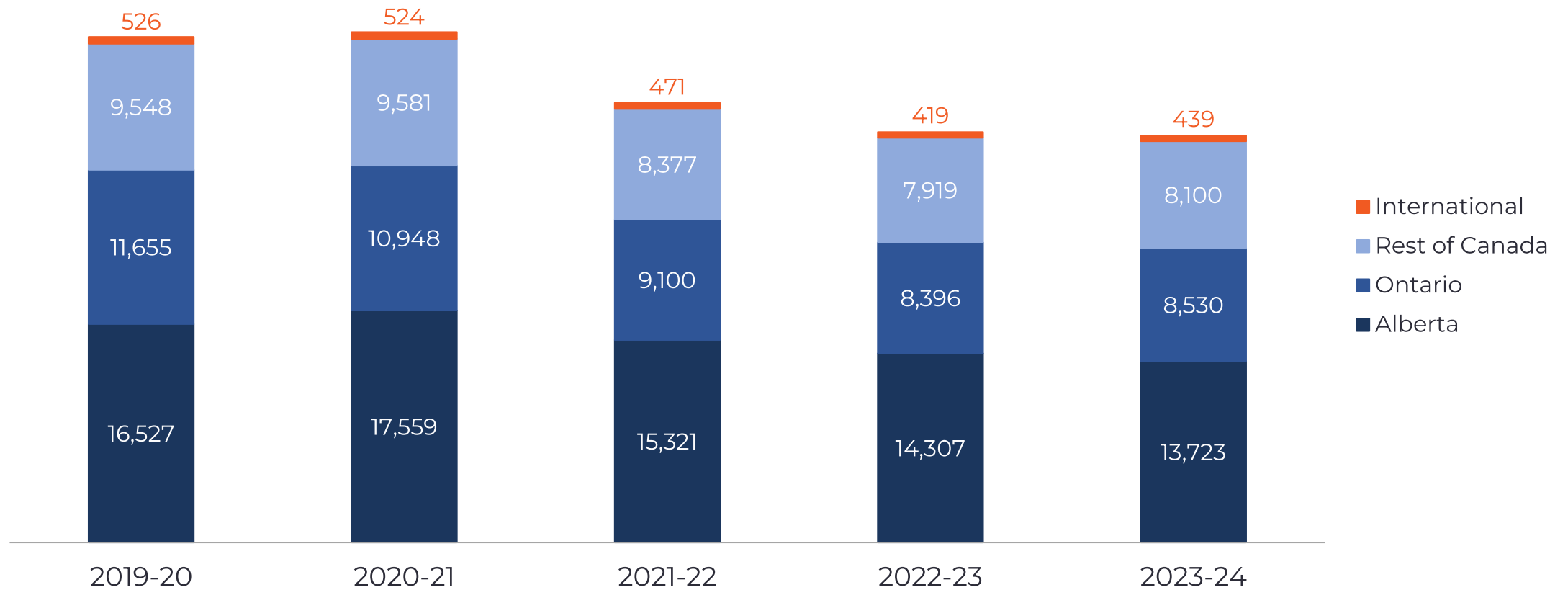


Undergraduate Indigenous Learners





Undergraduate Location of Residence





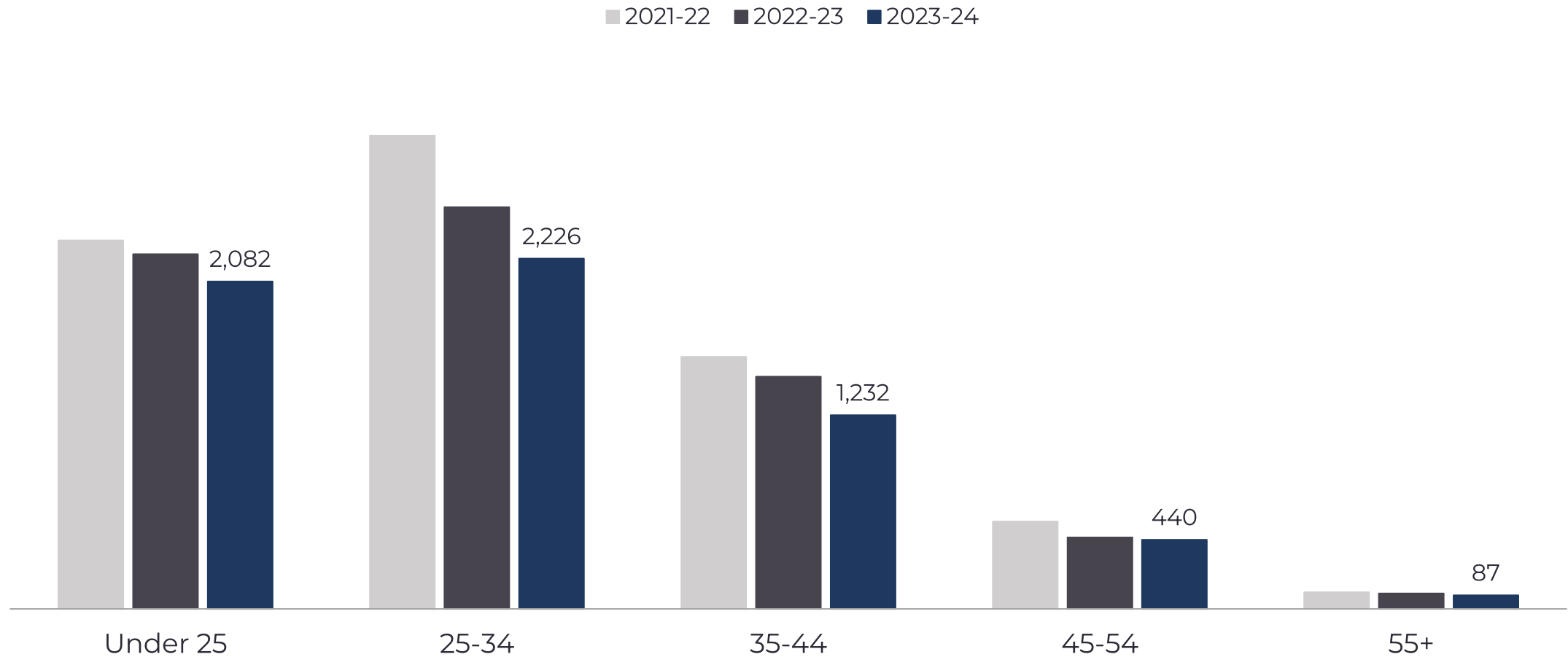
2023-24 Undergraduate Rural Learners





First-Time Undergraduate Learners*

(Age at first Undergraduate Program Enrollment Date)



(*): First-time program enrollments at the undergraduate level, excluding learners in Open Studies



Undergraduate Program Learners

Program Faculty	Program Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Business	Bachelor of Commerce	3,035	2,928	2,868
	Bachelor of Management (3 Year)	1,151	1,073	1,088
	Bachelor of Management*	277	135	77
	Certificates & Diplomas	714	646	607
Health Disciplines	Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing	2,162	2,237	1,716
	Post-RN Bachelor of Nursing	473	418	370
	Bachelor of Health Administration*	511	436	258
Non-Program	Open Studies	15,154	14,089	14,981

(*): Suspended program no longer open at AU.

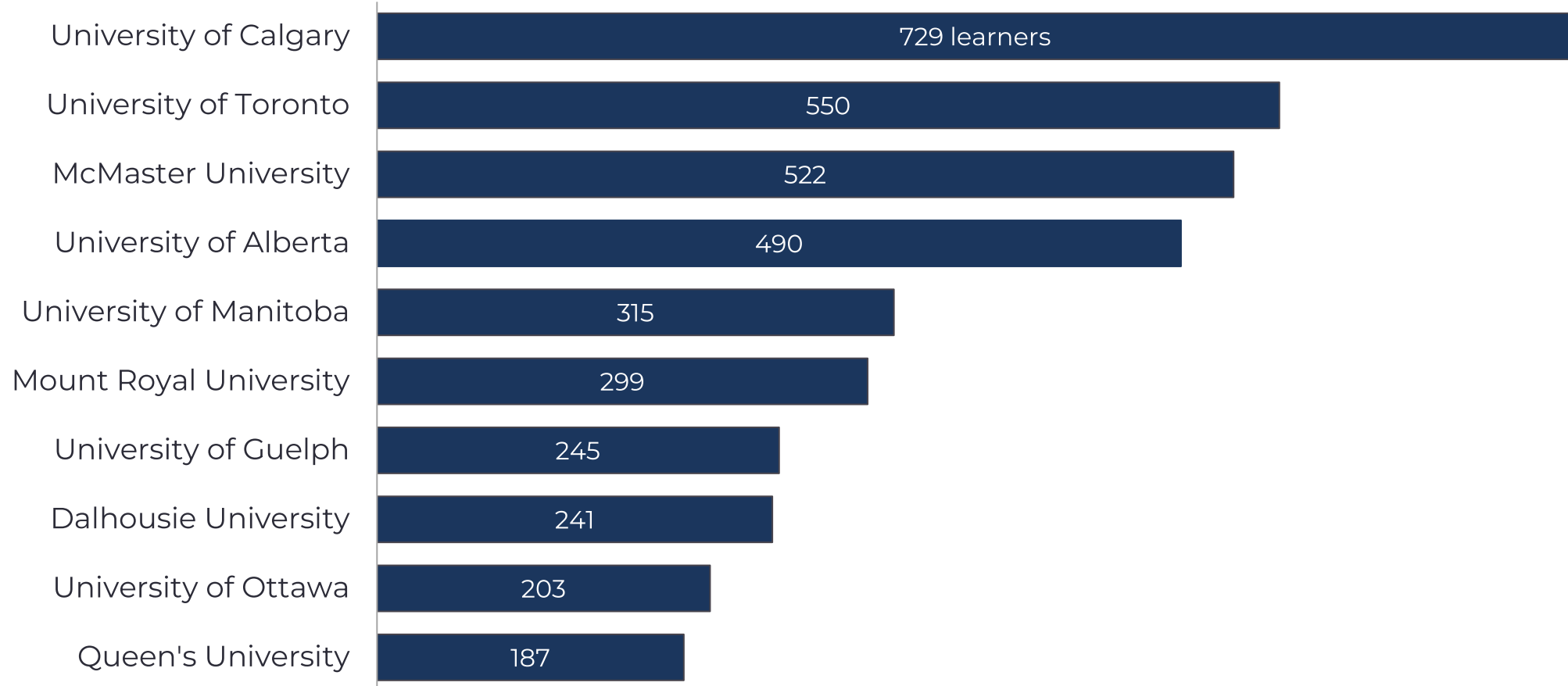


Undergraduate Program Learners

Program Faculty	Program Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Humanities & Social Sciences	Bachelor of Arts	2,691	2,494	2,431
	Bachelor of Arts (3 Year)	1,201	1,108	1,079
	Bachelor of Professional Arts	1,210	1,019	970
	Bachelor of General Studies	850	887	900
	Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations	729	649	602
	Certificates & Diplomas	625	605	523
Science & Technology	Bachelor of Science (General)	419	372	355
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Applied Mathematics)	212	206	217
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Biological Sciences)	470	427	423
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Computing and Information Systems)	912	900	940
	Bachelor of Science in Architecture	267	240	231
	Certificates & Diplomas	209	174	158



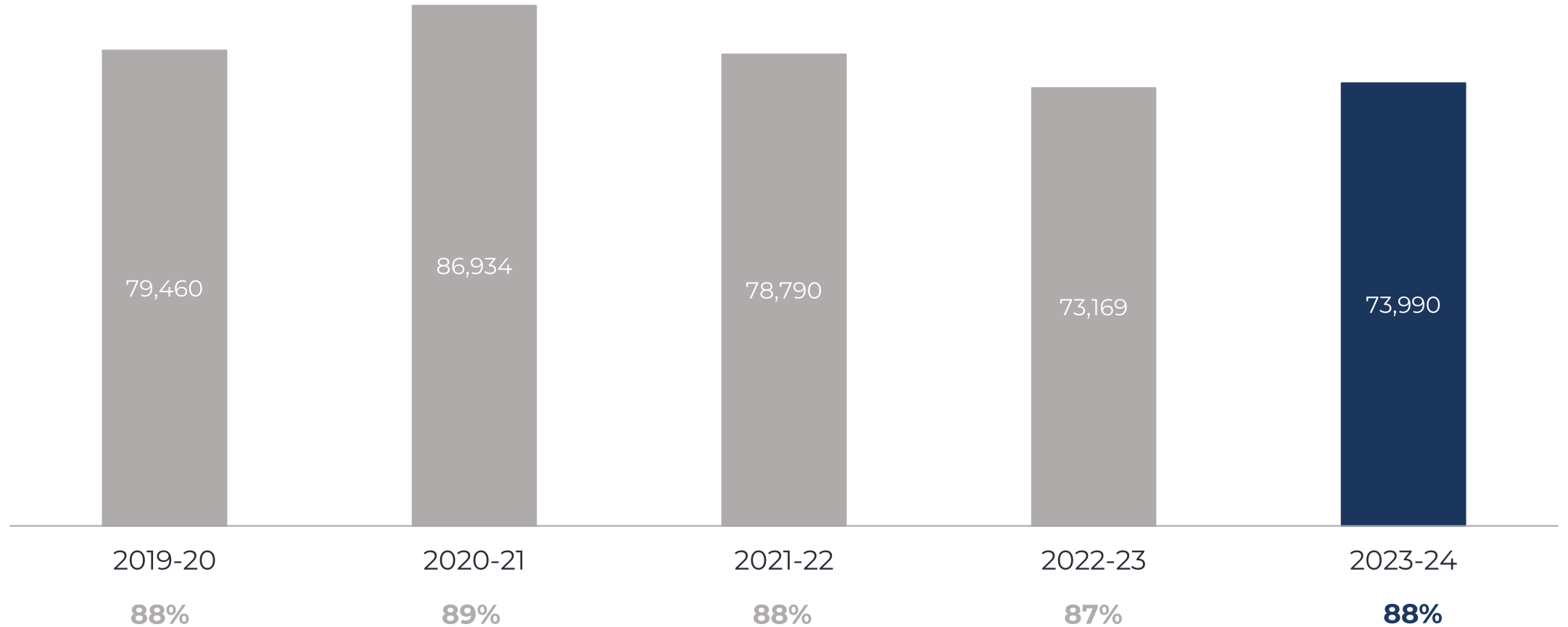
2023-24 Top 10 Visiting Institutions





Undergraduate Course Starts

(3 credit equivalents)



88%
of all weighted net course starts were
in **undergraduate level courses**



2023-24 Top 10 Undergraduate Courses

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | ENGL255 (2,332 course starts) | 6 | PSYC290 (1,120 course starts) |
| 2 | BIOL235 (1,508) | 7 | CMIS245 (1,032) |
| 3 | MATH215 (1,447) | 8 | ADMN233 (787) |
| 4 | ACCT253 (1,251) | 9 | ECON247 (766) |
| 5 | PSYC289 (1,128) | 10 | MATH265 (761) |



2023-24 Undergraduate Course Distribution

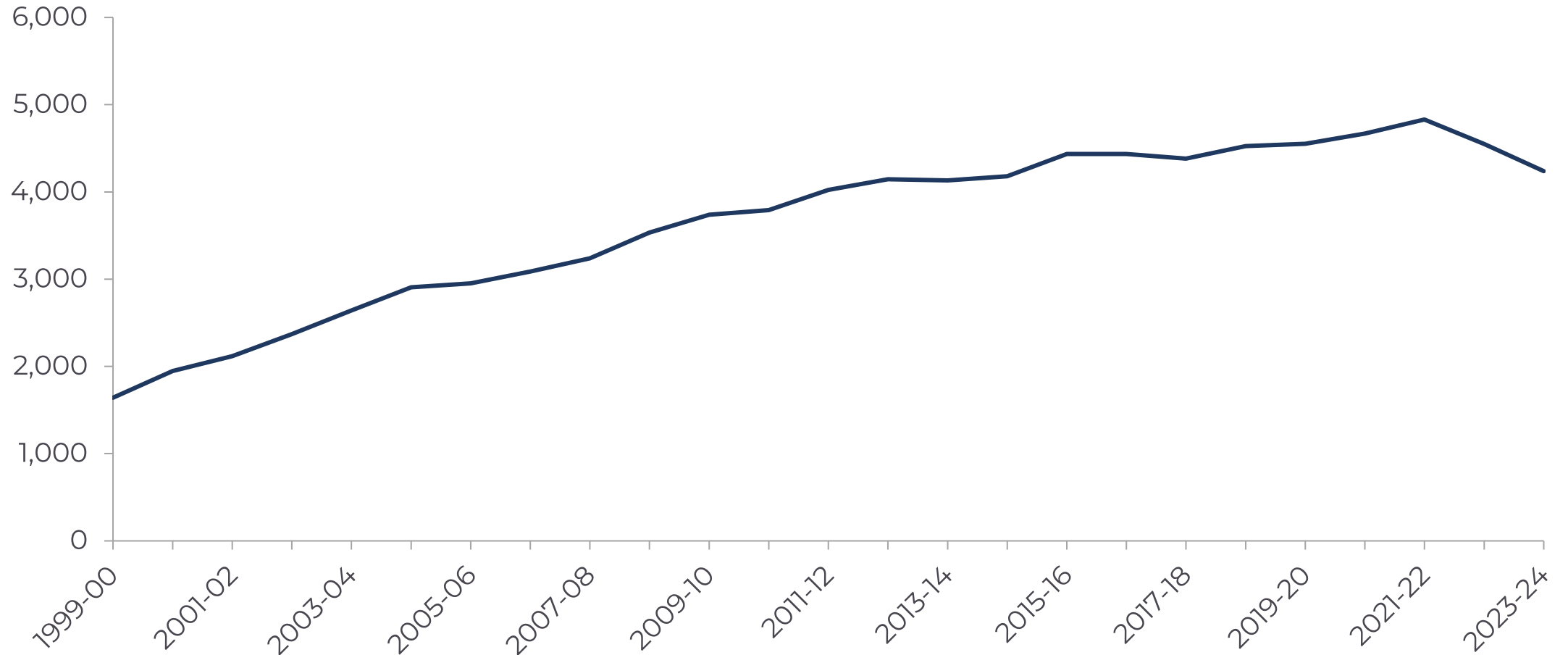
Course Faculty	Number of Courses	Course Starts
Business	84	16,381
Health Disciplines	32	4,292
Humanities & Social Sciences	388	33,814
Science & Technology	138	16,678
Total	642	71,165

GRADUATE



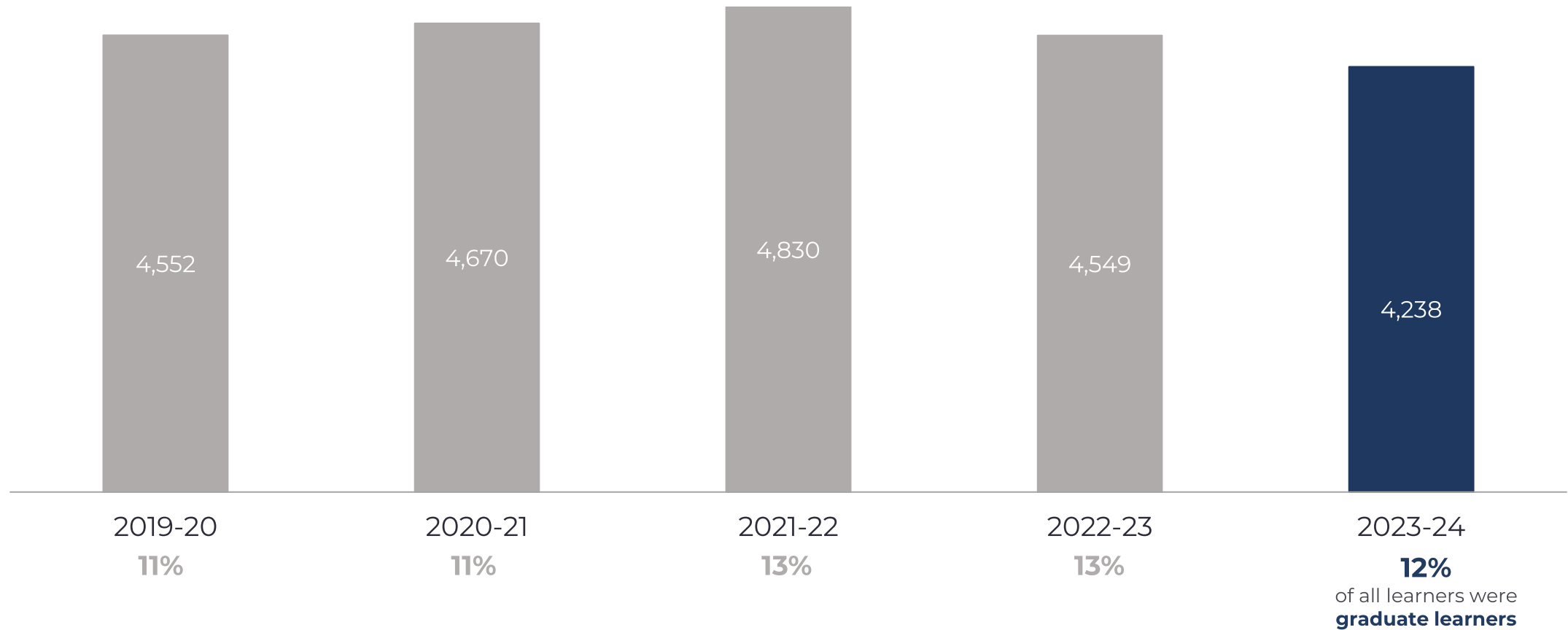


Graduate 25 Year Enrolment Trend

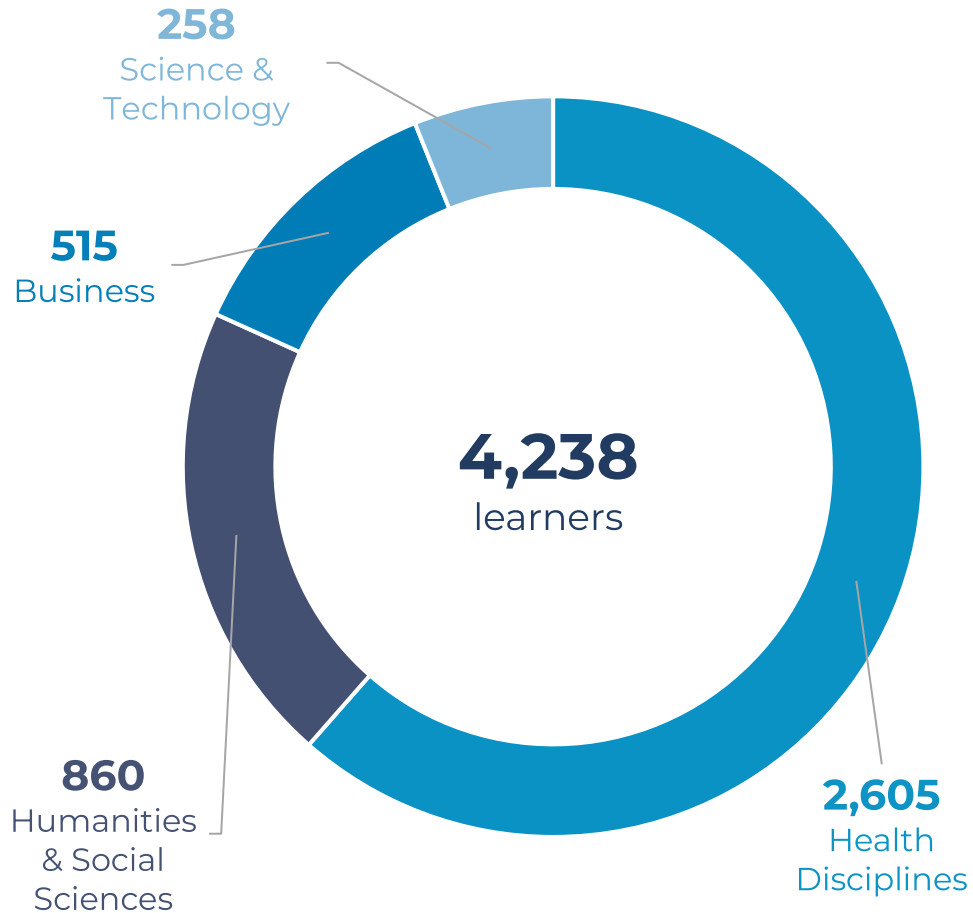




Graduate Learners



2023-24 Learners' Profile: Graduate



38
Average Age

78%
Female

4.0%
Self-identified
Indigenous

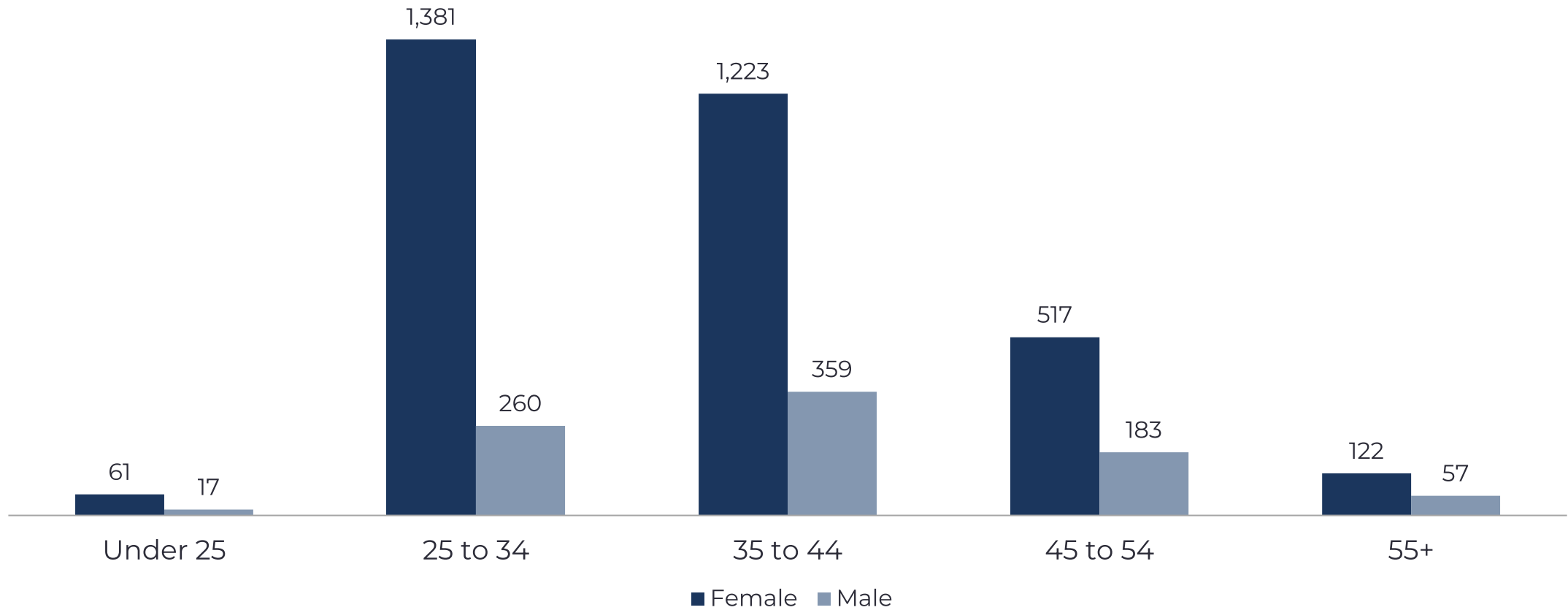
29%
Alberta residents

13%
Rural Canadian
residents

1.7%
International
learners

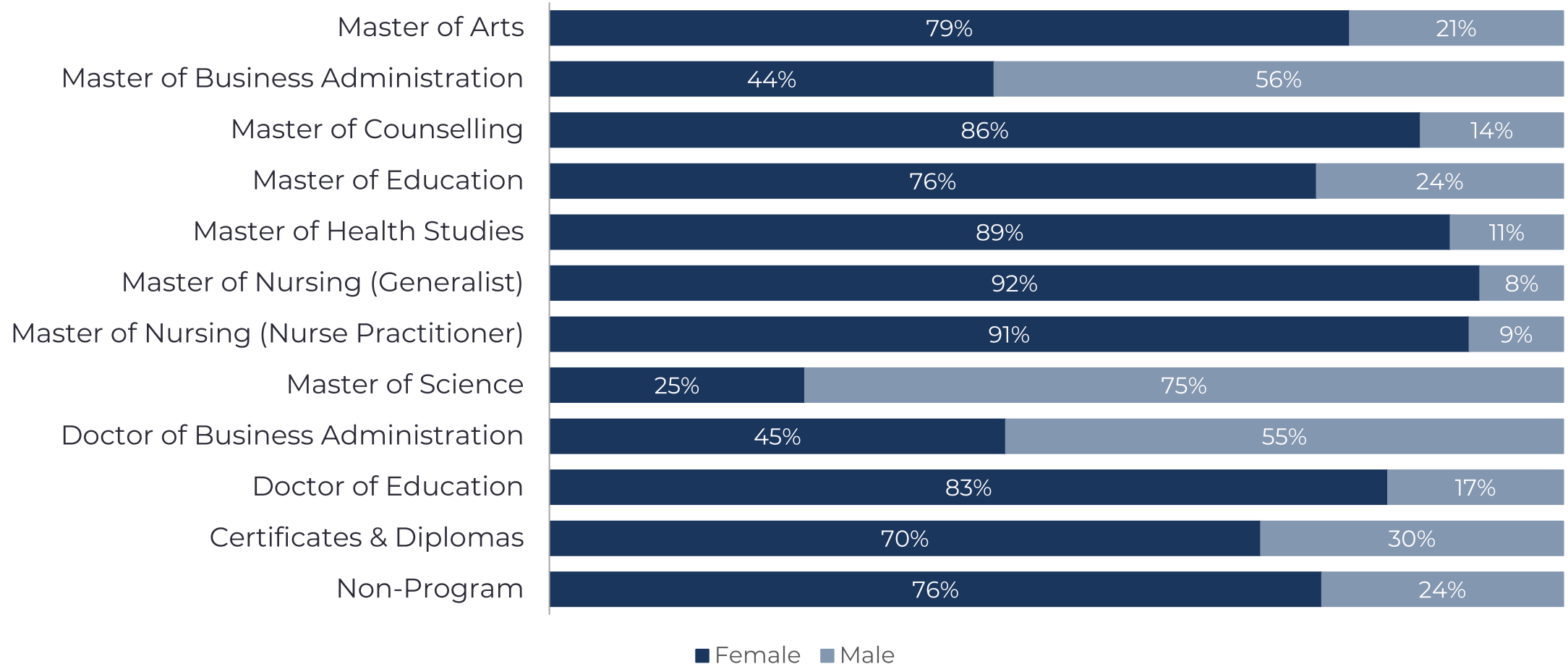


2023-24 Graduate Learner Age & Gender (Sex)



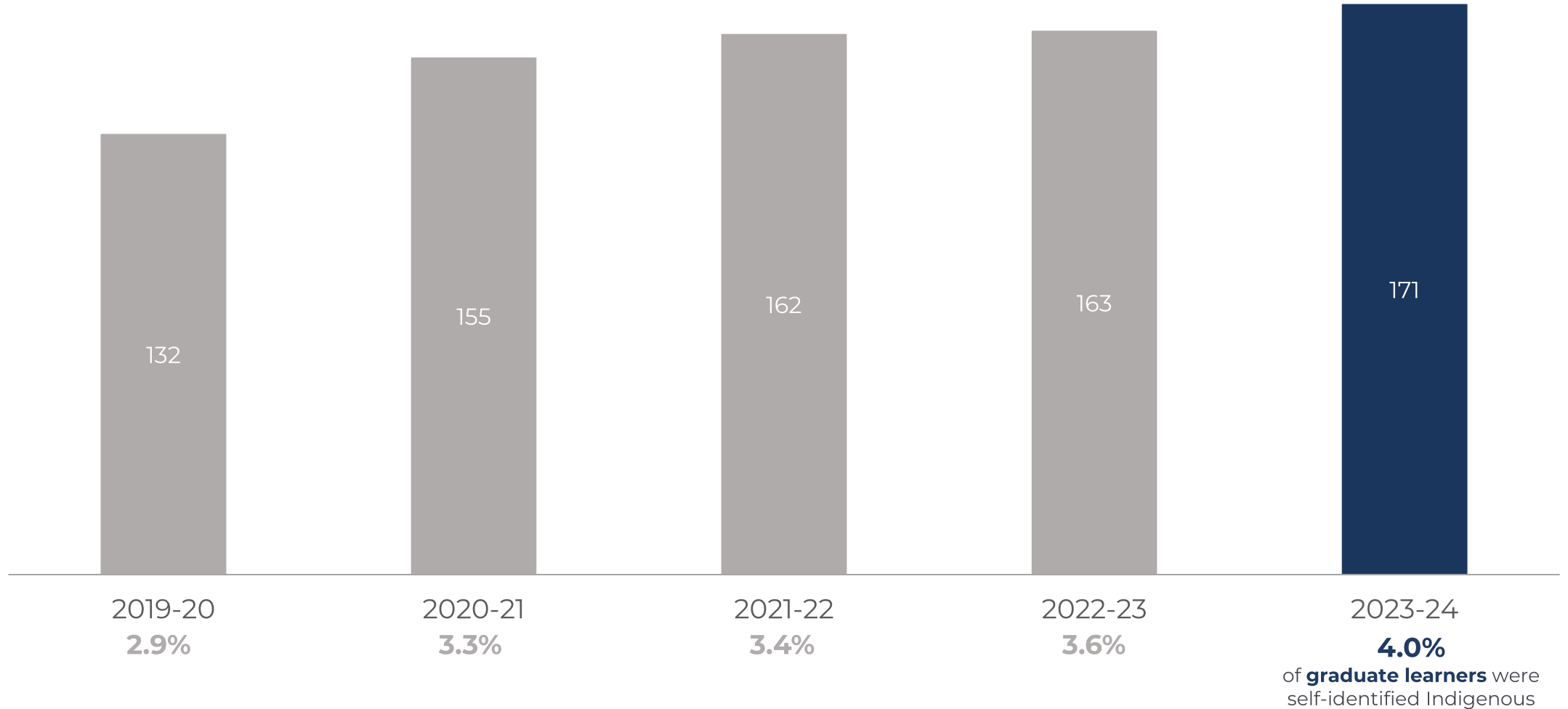


2023-24 Graduate Gender (Sex) Distribution by Program



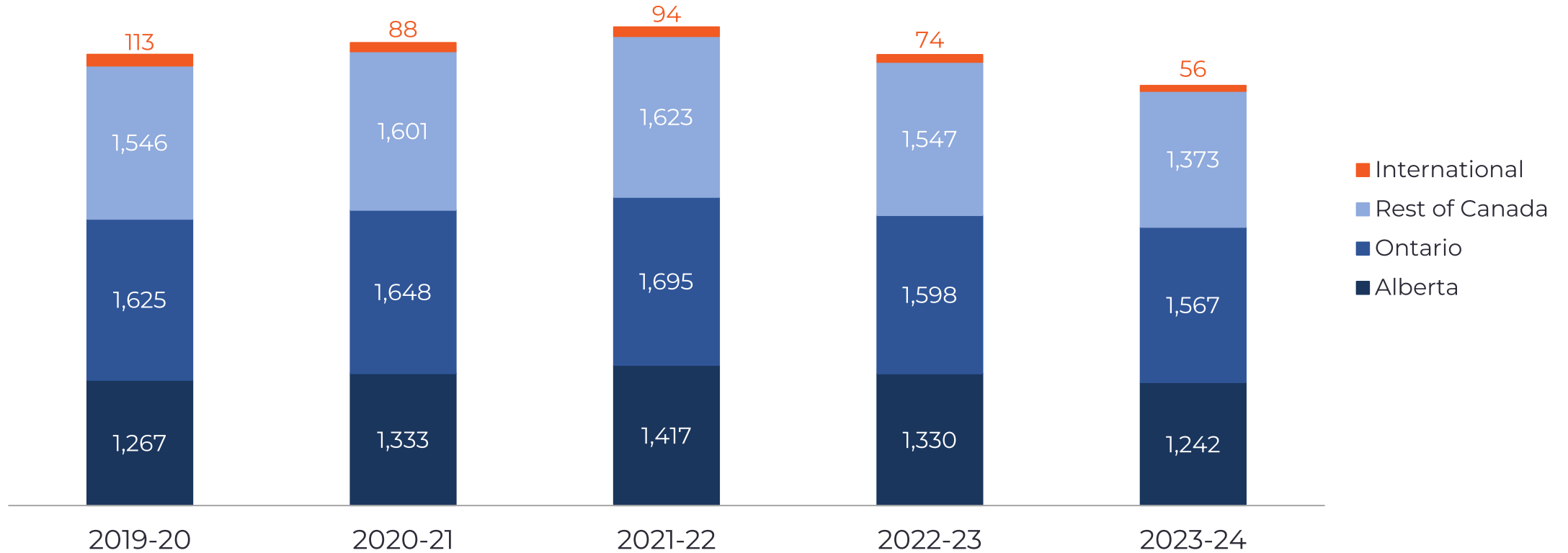


Graduate Indigenous Learners





Graduate Location of Residence





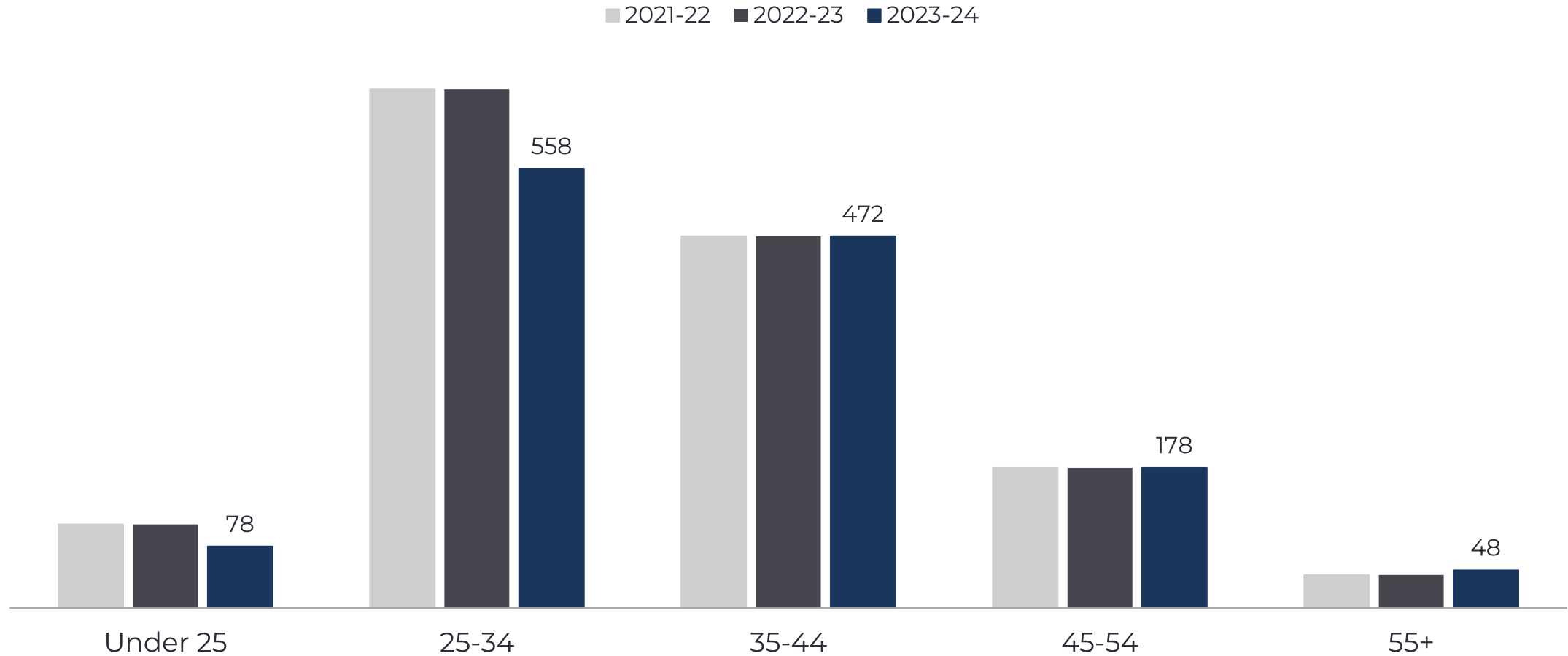
2023-24 Graduate Rural Learners





First-Time Graduate Learners*

(Age at first Graduate Program Enrollment Date)



(*): First-time program enrollments at the graduate level.



Graduate Program Learners

Program Faculty	Program Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Business	Doctor of Business Administration	30	26	20
	Master of Business Administration	485	428	385
	Certificates & Diplomas	108	95	76
	Non-Program	162	154	34
Health Disciplines	Master of Nursing (Generalist)	1,141	1,115	1,032
	Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner)	654	620	616
	Master of Counselling	376	368	369
	Master of Health Studies	292	265	269
	Certificates & Diplomas	88	92	108
	Non-Program	251	213	211



Graduate Program Learners

Program Faculty	Program Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Humanities & Social Sciences	Doctor of Education	60	51	52
	Master of Education	268	268	269
	Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies	464	410	374
	Certificates & Diplomas	98	99	86
	Non-Program	112	83	79
Science & Technology	Master of Science	128	122	124
	Certificates & Diplomas	24	28	29
	Non-Program	89	112	105



2023-24 Top Graduate Visiting Institutions

(Western Deans' Agreement)

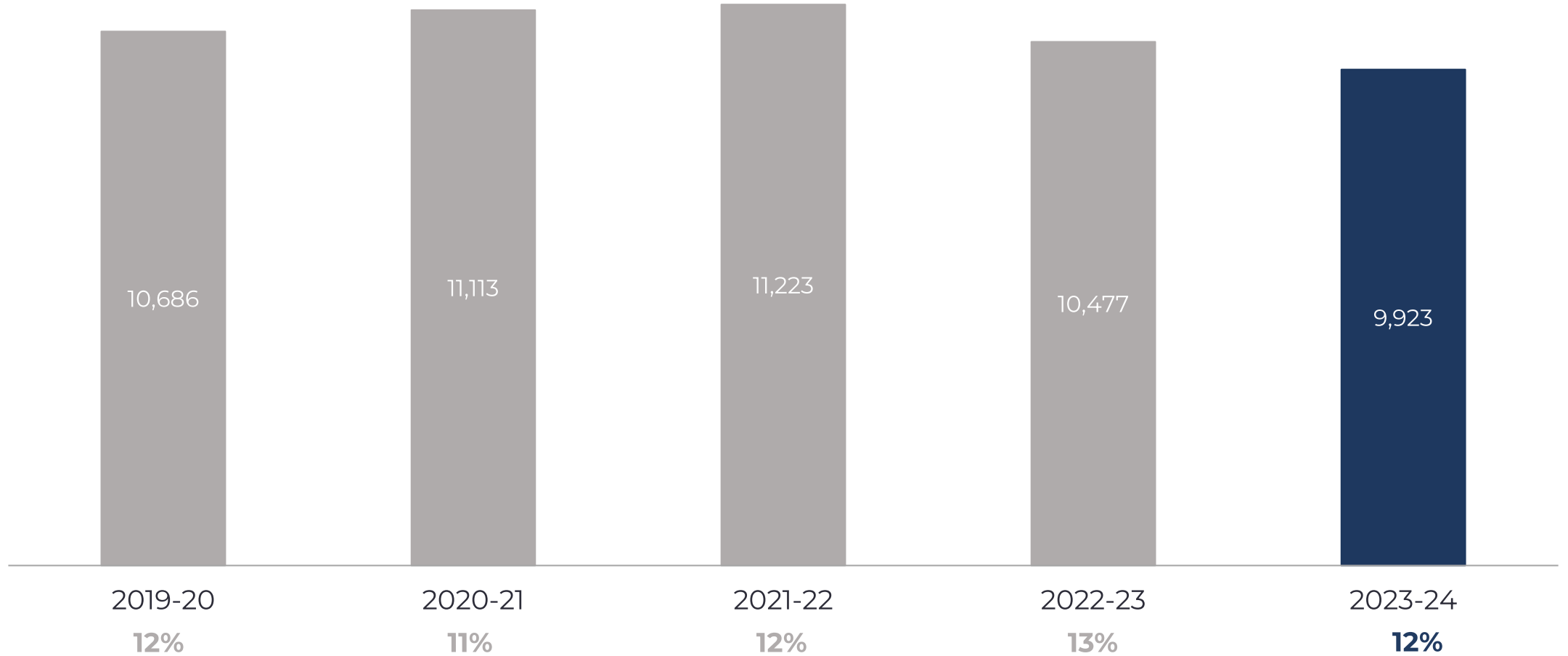
Institution	Learners
University of Saskatchewan	10
University of Victoria	10
University of British Columbia	8
University of Alberta	6
University of Calgary	5
University of Northern British Columbia	*
University of Winnipeg	*
University of British Columbia (Okanagan)	*
University of Manitoba	*
Thompson Rivers University	*
University of Lethbridge	*

(*): Numbers suppressed for less than 5 learners.



Graduate Course Starts*

(3 credit equivalents)



of all weighted net course starts were in **graduate level courses**

(*): Doctoral students are not enrolled in proposal or dissertation course until they pass.



2023-24 Top 10 Graduate Courses

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | NURS000 (271 course starts) | 6 | NURS609 (208 course starts) |
| 2 | NURS610 (234) | 7 | NURS516 (206) |
| 3 | NURS608 (230) | 8 | NURS623 (201) |
| 4 | NURS603 (215) | 9 | NURS621 (200) |
| 5 | NURS611 (209) | 9 | NURS604 (200) |



2023-24 Graduate Course Distribution

Course Faculty	Number of Courses	Course Starts
Business	63	1,750
Health Disciplines	79	6,951
Humanities & Social Sciences	95	1,869
Science & Technology	41	465
Total	278	11,035



CONVOCATION 2024

Image Sources: [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#)





Undergraduate Credentials Awarded

Program Faculty	Program Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Business	Bachelor of Commerce	82	90	85
	Bachelor of Management (3 Year)	102	92	79
	Bachelor of Management*	23	17	6
	Certificates & Diplomas	73	57	50
Health Disciplines	Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing	99	105	118
	Post-RN Bachelor of Nursing	69	53	59
	Bachelor of Health Administration*	16	19	18

(*): Suspended program no longer open at AU.



Undergraduate Credentials Awarded

Program Faculty	Program Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Humanities & Social Sciences	Bachelor of General Studies	111	129	132
	Bachelor of Professional Arts	115	95	95
	Bachelor of Arts	72	87	92
	Bachelor of Arts (3 Year)	60	62	80
	Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations	64	61	57
	Certificates & Diplomas	76	77	72
Science & Technology	Bachelor of Science (General)	17	14	14
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Applied Mathematics)	*	*	5
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Biological Sciences)	9	12	18
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Computing and Information Systems)	13	12	15
	Bachelor of Science in Architecture	*	6	*
Certificates & Diplomas	11	16	9	

(*): Numbers suppressed for less than 5 credentials awarded.



2023-24 Undergraduate Average Time-to-Degree (T2D)

Program Faculty	Program Name	Degrees Awarded	Average T2D (Years)**
Business	Bachelor of Commerce	85	5.1
	Bachelor of Management*	6	5.9
	Bachelor of Management (3 Year)	79	5.3
Health Disciplines	Bachelor of Health Administration*	18	2.8
	Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing	118	6.6
	Post-RN Bachelor of Nursing	59	6.3

(*): Suspended program no longer open at AU.

(**): Time-to-Degree (T2D): Time in years. Degree date less Minimum Program Enrollment date.



2023-24 Undergraduate Average Time-to-Degree (T2D)

Program Faculty	Program Name	Degrees Awarded	Average T2D (Years)**
Humanities & Social Sciences	Bachelor of Arts	92	4.8
	Bachelor of Arts (3 Year)	80	5.3
	Bachelor of General Studies	132	2.7
	Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations	57	5.7
	Bachelor of Professional Arts	95	5.7
Science & Technology	Bachelor of Science (General)	14	5.7
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Applied Mathematics)	5	5.0
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Biological Sciences)	18	7.6
	Bachelor of Science (Major in Computing and Information Systems)	15	7.1
	Bachelor of Science in Architecture	*	5.8

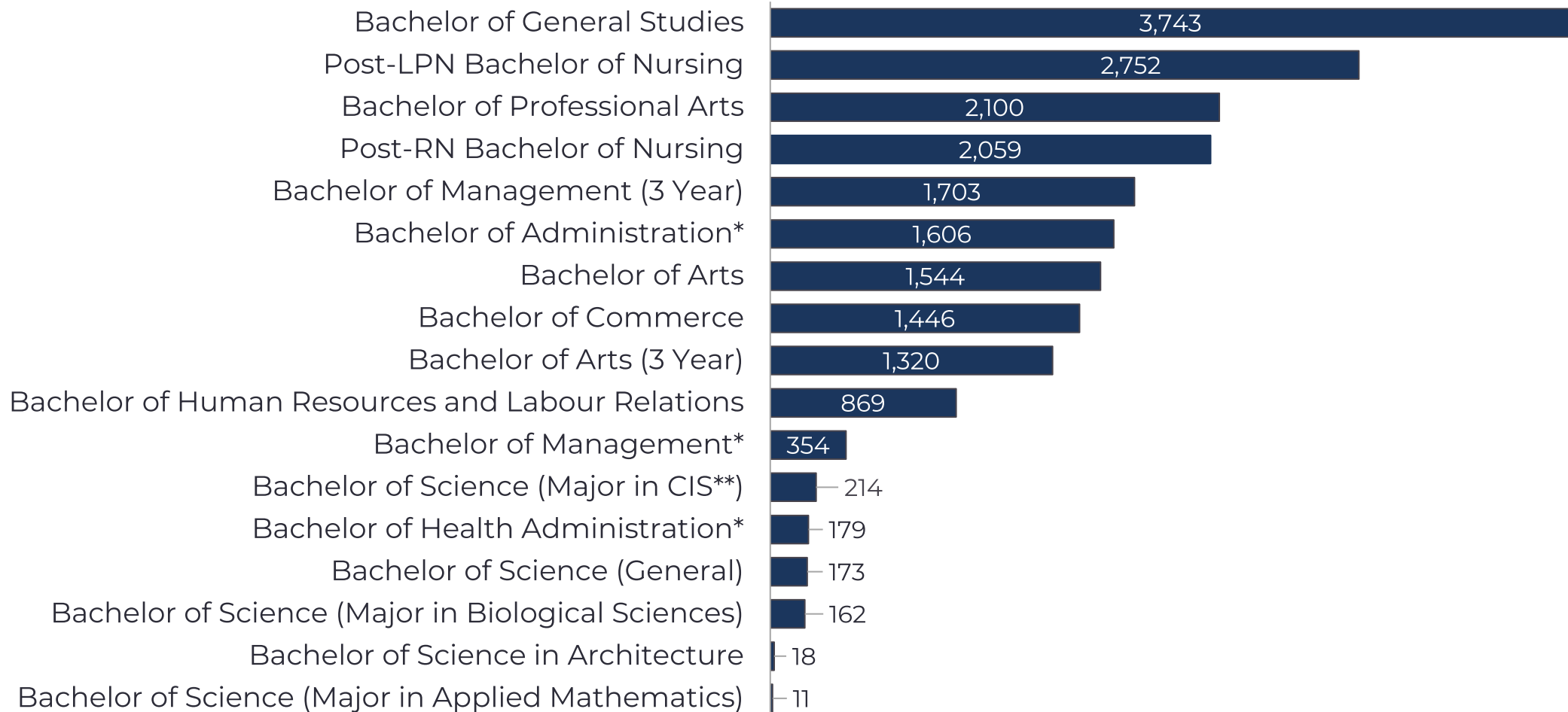
(*): Numbers suppressed for less than 5 credentials awarded.

(**): Time-to-Degree (T2D): Time in years. Degree date less Minimum Program Enrollment date.



Total Undergraduate Degrees Awarded

(All-time as of March 31, 2024)



(*): Suspended or closed program no longer open at AU.

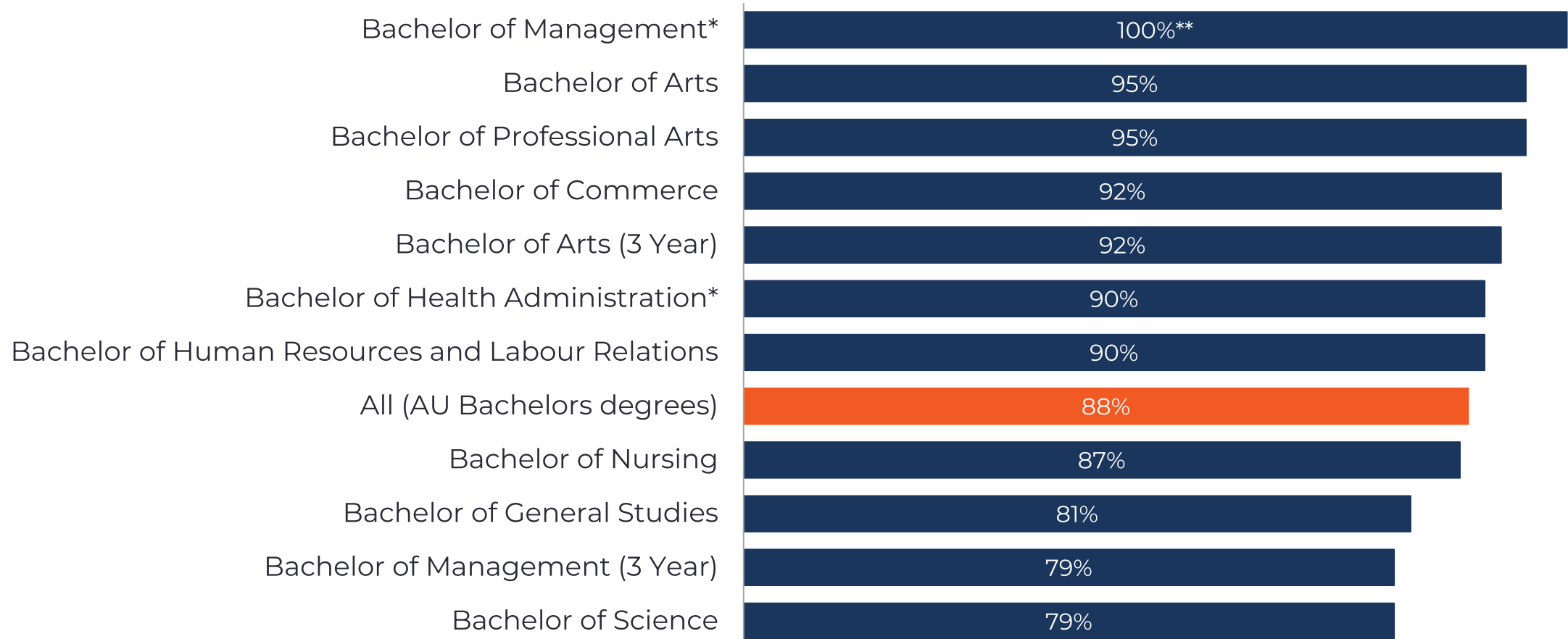
(**): The name for the major in Computing and Information Systems was shortened to "CIS".



Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024:

Cost Benefits of a Bachelor's degree

Valid percentage of undergraduate alumni who agree or strongly agree that their program was worth the financial cost



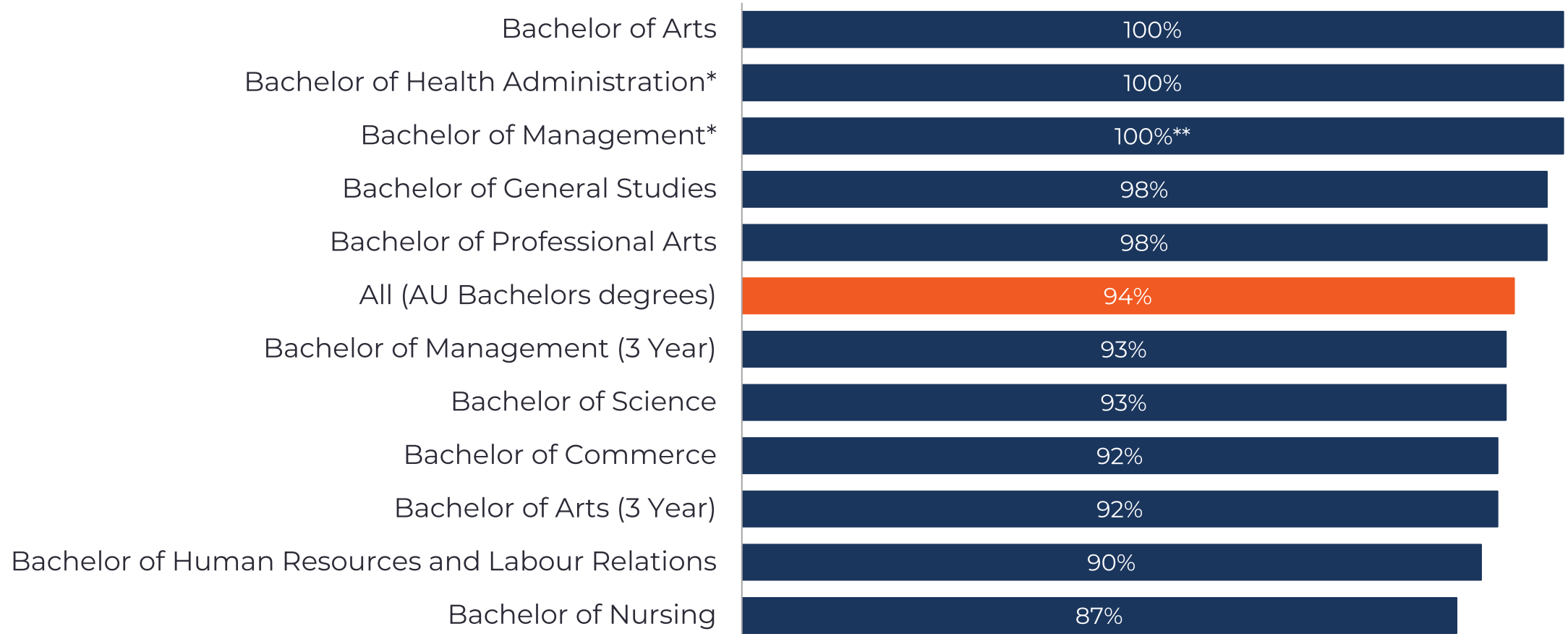
(*): Suspended program no longer open at AU.

(**): Low number of respondents, less than 10 respondents.



Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024: Bachelor's degree program quality

Valid percentage of undergraduate alumni satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the program



(*): Suspended program no longer open at AU.

(**): Low number of respondents, less than 10 respondents.



Graduate Credentials Awarded

Program Faculty	Program Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Business	Doctor of Business Administration	5	*	*
	Master of Business Administration	145	127	98
	Certificates & Diplomas	125	108	101
Health Disciplines	Master of Nursing (Generalist)	228	254	211
	Master of Nursing (Nursing Practitioner)	119	106	145
	Master of Counselling	79	95	84
	Master of Health Studies	51	60	49
	Certificates & Diplomas	14	13	15
Humanities & Social Sciences	Doctor of Education	8	13	11
	Master of Education	54	47	57
	Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies	57	69	72
	Certificates & Diplomas	47	27	28
Science & Technology	Master of Science	24	16	18
	Certificates & Diplomas	10	11	7

(*): Numbers suppressed for less than 5 credentials awarded.



2023-24 Graduate Average Time-to-Degree (T2D)

Program Faculty	Program Name	Degrees Awarded	Average T2D (Years)**
Business	Doctor of Business Administration	*	6.9
	Master of Business Administration	98	3.5
Health Disciplines	Master of Counselling	84	3.9
	Master of Health Studies	49	4.6
	Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner)	145	4.1
	Master of Nursing (Generalist)	211	4.1
Humanities & Social Sciences	Doctor of Education	11	6.7
	Master of Education	57	3.4
	Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies	72	4.7
Science & Technology	Master of Science	18	5.2

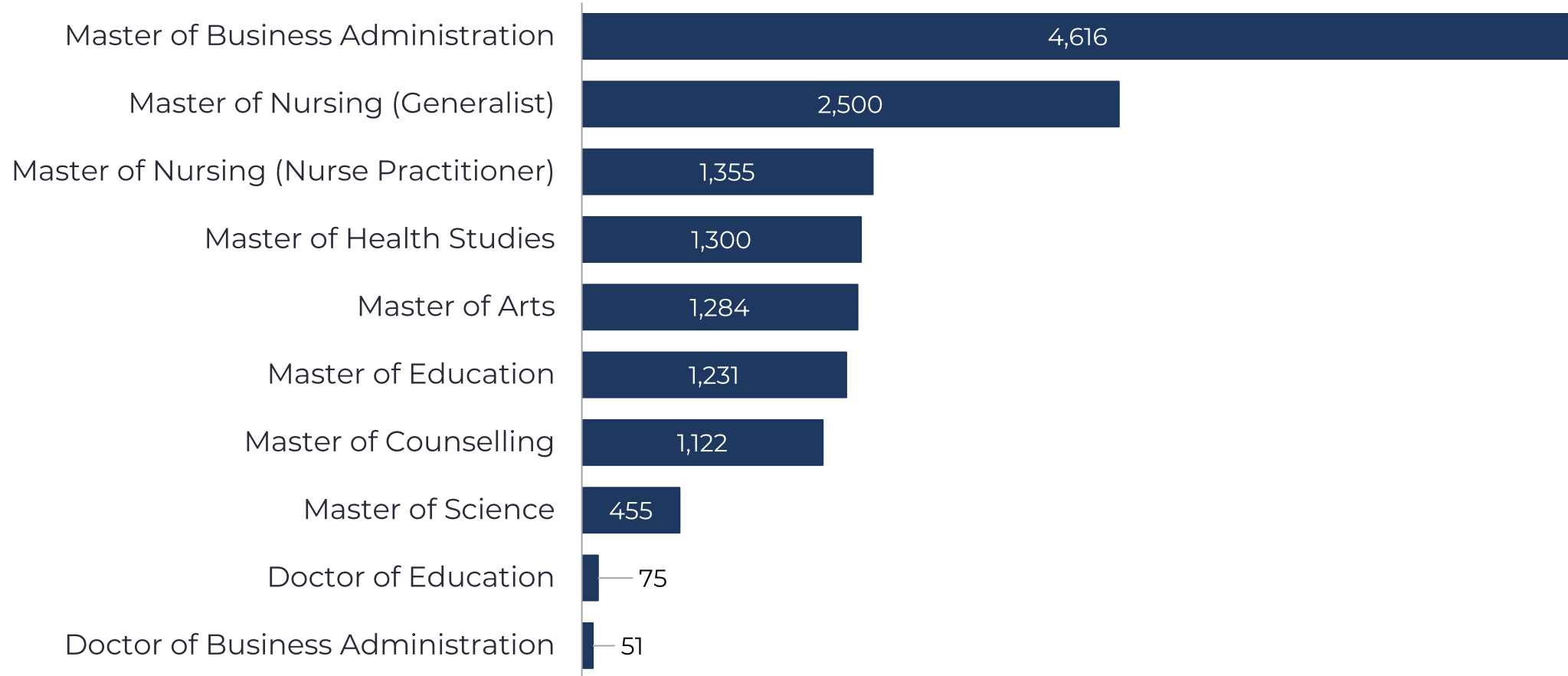
(*): Numbers suppressed for less than 5 credentials awarded.

(**): Time-to-Degree (T2D): Time in years. Degree date less Minimum Program Enrollment date.



Total Graduate Degrees Awarded

(All-time as of March 31, 2024)

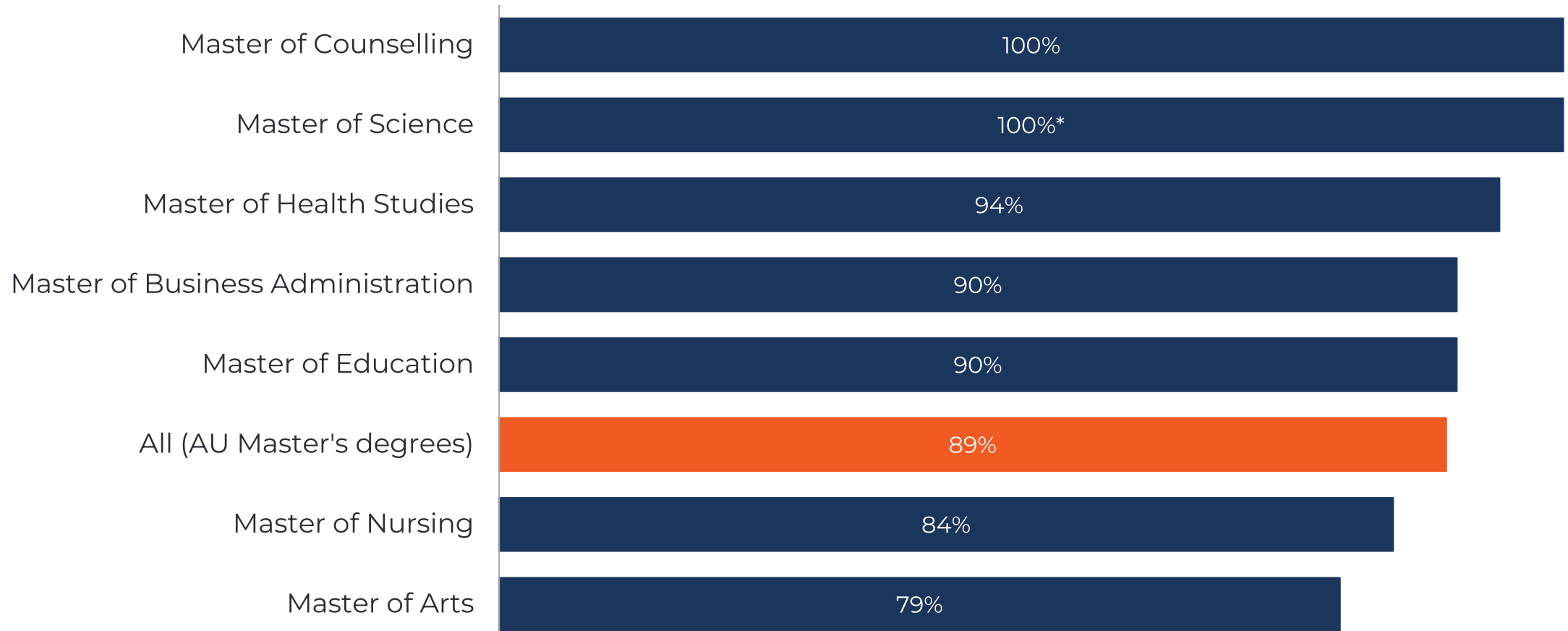




Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024:

Cost Benefits of a Master's Degree

Valid percentage of graduate alumni who agree or strongly agree that their program was worth the financial cost



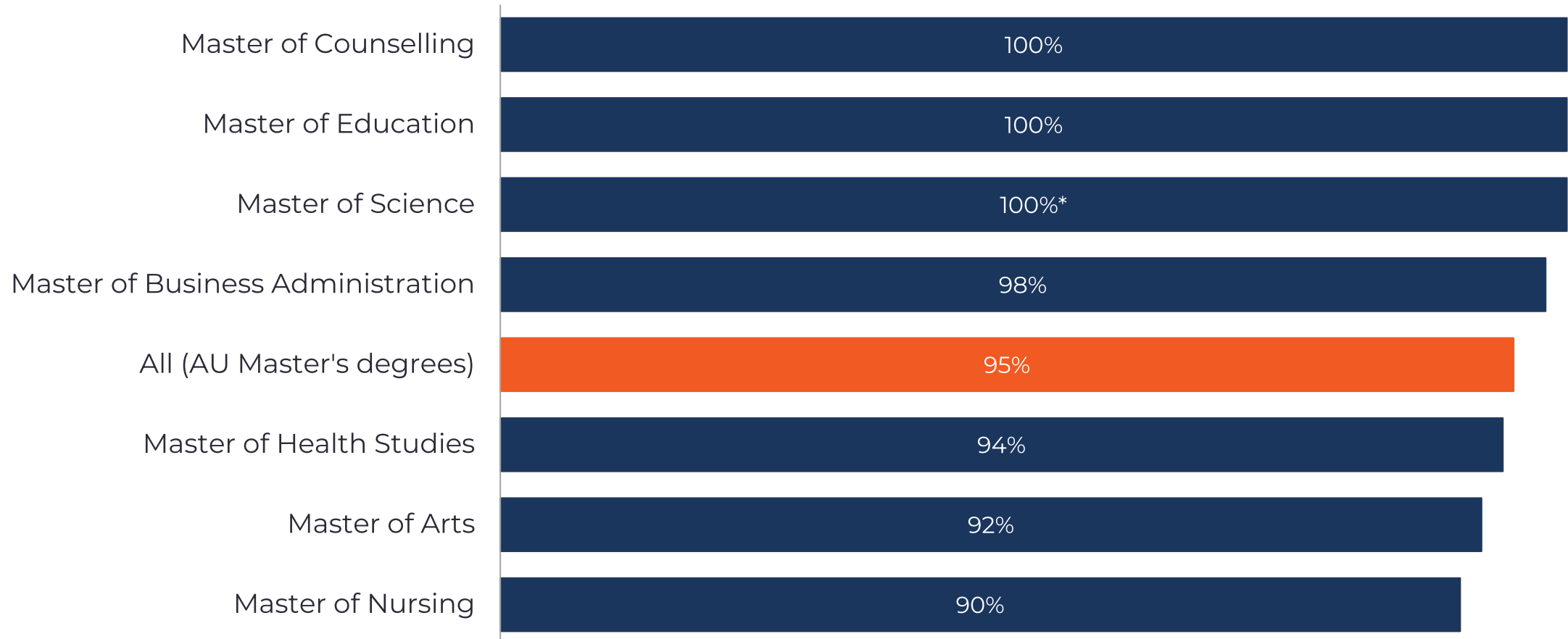
(*): Low number of respondents, less than 10 respondents.



Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024:

Master's degree program quality

Valid percentage of graduate alumni satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the program



(*): Low number of respondents, less than 10 respondents.

RESEARCH





Research Funding for Graduate Students

Athabasca University financially supports the research of our graduate students through the Graduate Student Research Fund (GSRF) and other research awards.

The **Graduate Student Research Fund (GSRF)** is intended to:

- enhance the research experience of award recipients
- foster research creativity and innovation
- support graduate students' research-focused endeavors
- encourage dissemination of master's or doctoral research
- acknowledge graduate students' contributions to AU's research climate

The fund provides awards to both master's and doctoral students.

For more information, please visit AU's [awards, scholarships, and bursaries page](#).



Research Funding for Graduate Students

Other funding sources

AU also provides or administers a number of graduate scholarships and awards to help students conduct and disseminate research.

- [Faculty of Graduate Studies – Graduate funding](#)
- [Support Services | Financial Aid and Awards - Awards finder](#)

External funding

The Research Office maintains a [list of external funding opportunities for graduate students](#) and will help you apply for these awards.

Research Institutes



Athabasca River Basin Research Institute (ARBRI)

The Athabasca River Basin Research Institute (ARBRI) leads in research related to the environment to the environment, ecosystems, and communities of northern Alberta.



Athabasca University Geophysical Observatory

The observatory conducts optical and magnetic studies of the aurora borealis and has enabled us to forge research collaborations across Canada and around the world.

Canada Research Chairs



Canada Research Chair in Hydrological Sustainability

Dr. Scott Ketcheson, Faculty of Science & Technology

As a field hydrologist, Dr. Ketcheson studies the movement of water between forests, wetlands, and streams in northern Alberta. His research program uses both traditional hydrological techniques and innovative sensor networks to gain a direct process-based understanding of the hydrological function and importance of headwater catchments for generating freshwater in tributary river networks within the Athabasca River Basin. Additional information on Dr. Ketcheson's hydrology research can be found on his website: [AU Hydrology](#).

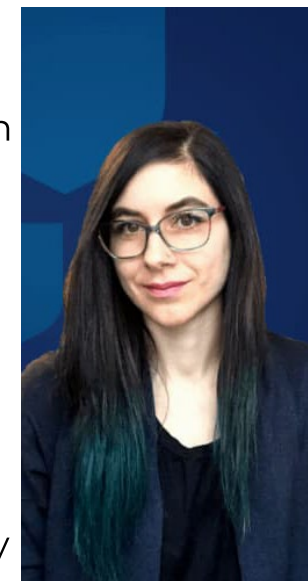


Canada Research Chair in Regulation, Social Governance, and Inequities in Health

Dr. Terra Manca, Faculty of Health Disciplines

The COVID-19 pandemic raised many questions about what happens when gender and cultural norms intersect with regulations and the development of public health information about vaccines, infectious diseases and health risks. For example, many pandemic responses lacked consideration for pregnancy and for pregnant women's need to receive and give care.

As Canada Research Chair in Regulation, Social Governance, and Inequities in Health, Dr. Terra Manca is studying vaccination in pregnancy, vaccine uptake, and health governance. She and her research team aim to demonstrate how regulatory governance and policy can interact to (re)produce social inequities. They are also exploring how gender and intersecting social locations (race, class, age and more) shape health governance, including vaccination. Finally, they are advancing ideas about how efforts to contain infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, often transfer the responsibility for mitigating health risks and providing care to individuals. Ultimately, their work will inform policy recommendations to improve health and reduce inequities.



Canada Research Chairs



Canada Research Chair in Sound Studies

Dr. Mickey Vallee, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. Vallee's interdisciplinary research focuses on innovation in sound-based technologies and how new local and global research communities can be built around these innovations. By building an understanding of the personal and collective experiences that people have with emerging sound technologies, Dr. Vallee will investigate how the sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities engage with technological innovation.



Canada Research Chair Rights-Based Organizational Development

Dr. Angela Workman-Stark, Faculty of Business

Even though human rights legislation prohibits discrimination, discriminatory practices persist, particularly in public safety organizations. And they are not limited to the internal environment—reports depict examples of persons denied justice or access to services based on gender, sexuality or race, for example. Not only are the costs significant for individuals and organizations, but the failure of authority figures to protect the rights of the citizens they serve strikes at the heart of a democratic society.

As Canada Research Chair in Rights-Based Organizational Development, Dr. Angela Workman-Stark is examining these issues through a human rights lens. She and her research team are developing a framework that incorporates the systems and practices needed to preserve and promote human rights in organizations that are prone to discriminatory practices. They aim to understand how and why human rights violations persist in public safety organizations and to identify the critical levers that support human rights, justice and inclusion.



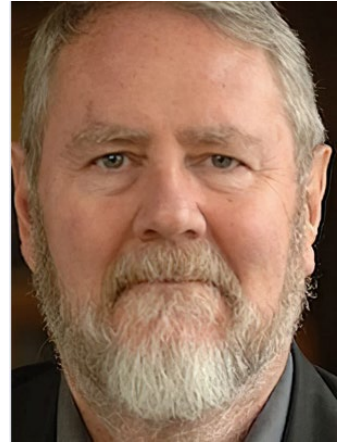
Athabasca University Chairs



UNESCO/ICDE Chairholder in Open Educational Resources (OER)

Dr. Rory McGreal, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. McGreal is responsible for promoting the use and reuse of free, openly licensed educational content institutionally, nationally, and internationally, with a particular focus on developing countries. Both UNESCO and the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) support the use of open educational resources (OER) as being essential for the achievement of the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal 4: Education for All. He has delivered OER seminars, keynote presentations and conducted workshops in more than 60 countries.



Commonwealth of Learning Chairholder in Emerging Technologies in Open and Distance Learning

Dr. Mohamed Ally, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. Ally is conducting research that will impact both developed and developing countries. He is currently a Canadian expert on information technology for learning, education and training (ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 36) (Information technology for learning, education and training) to set international standards for mobile learning, online learning, virtual reality, and augmented reality. Professor Ally has edited/co-edited 15 books on the use of emerging technologies in education and presented speeches at many national and international conferences. He is a founding director of the International Mobile Learning Association and the International Association for Blended Learning.





OAU

Canada's
Open
University