UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

September 2026

School of Library and Information Studies **2022-24 Exit Survey Summary**

Summary of University of Alberta MLIS Graduate Exit Survey



Summary of the University of Alberta's MLIS Graduate Exit Survey 2022 - 2024

Authored by the Scheduling and Program Support Team, Faculty of Education, June 2026

Executive Summary

The Master of Library Information Studies (MLIS) Graduate Exit Survey reflects feedback from 48 graduating MLIS students at the University of Alberta (U of A). Responses were fairly evenly split between the on-campus (54.17%) and online (45.83%) course-based streams, with students enrolled on a mostly full-time (46.81%) or mostly part-time (46.81%) basis.

The core strengths of the program were the quality of instruction, dedicated and passionate professors and instructors, asynchronous online flexibility for working professionals, and the program's American Library Association (ALA) accreditation.

The key areas of concern raised by respondents were course availability and delivery, and the elimination of the practicum course.

Overall, 61.36% of graduates would recommend the program to prospective students, primarily for its flexibility and online accessibility for working professionals. Conversely, those not recommending the program indicate a lack of job-ready practical skills, limited elective course options, and over-reliance on online delivery for on-campus students.

Respondents were asked to provide constructive suggestions, which are summarized at the end of this document.

About the Survey

The MLIS Graduate Exit Survey sampled 131 graduands from the November 2022, November 2023, June 2023, and June 2024 convocations and was administered between September and December 2024. A total of 48 completed responses were received, representing a response rate of 36.6% (n = 48). This response rate reflects a slight increase from the 2021-2022 survey cycle (34.5%, n = 20). Survey participation may have been impacted by the concurrent distribution of three university-wide graduate student surveys during the same term.

The exit survey is designed to capture demographic information and the educational experiences of MLIS graduates using a mix of questions: close-ended (e.g., single choice, multiple choice); dichotomous (e.g., yes or no); 5-point Likert scale rating[1]; and open response. Some close-ended questions provided an option of '*other'* for respondents to elaborate with further details. To ensure a relevant sample size, at least 50% of respondents needed to indicate that a metric was applicable to their program experience for that metric to be included in this summary. Participation in the survey is voluntary, and some questions are not compulsory, resulting in variances in the response rate for each question.

The exit survey is a tool administered annually that supports the ALA's Standards for Accreditation (2023) in relation to evaluating processes and systems and fostering student participation in program evaluation. Publishing the report on the School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) website provides information about the program for prospective and current students and other program constituents. The information gathered is also valuable for supporting decision-making. The responses represent approximately one-third of the population sampled, and best efforts will be made to use the data meaningfully to inform continuous program improvement.[2]

Institutional Context

On July 1, 2022, a new Director was appointed immediately following the two-year interim appointment of the previous Director. Effective January 1, 2024, the SLIS transitioned from an academic unit to an administrative unit within the Faculty of Education. While administrative efforts focused on minimizing academic disruption, these organizational shifts introduced transitional periods that may be reflected in student satisfaction ratings. Administrative efforts also focused on minimizing operational disruption, and due to transitions in staffing, there was a delay in preparing this report.

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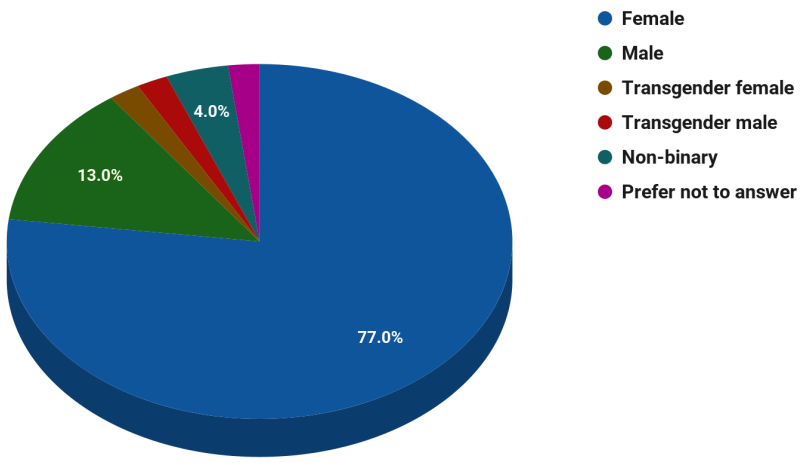
[1] 1 = Very Dissatisfied or Not at all Important; 2 = Somewhat Dissatisfied or Not Very Important; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Somewhat Satisfied or Somewhat Important; 5 = Very Satisfied or Very Important

[2] ***AI Statement:*** *Artificial Intelligence Tools:* Google NotebookLM and Google Gemini; *Visualization:* Google NotebookLM was used to create infographics and figures used in this report. *Calculation:* Google Gemini was used to calculate statistical averages for multiple responses. *Copy Editing:* Google Gemini was used to review the report for clarity, style and grammar. *All outputs were reviewed and approved by members of the School of Library and Information Studies.*

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Figure 1

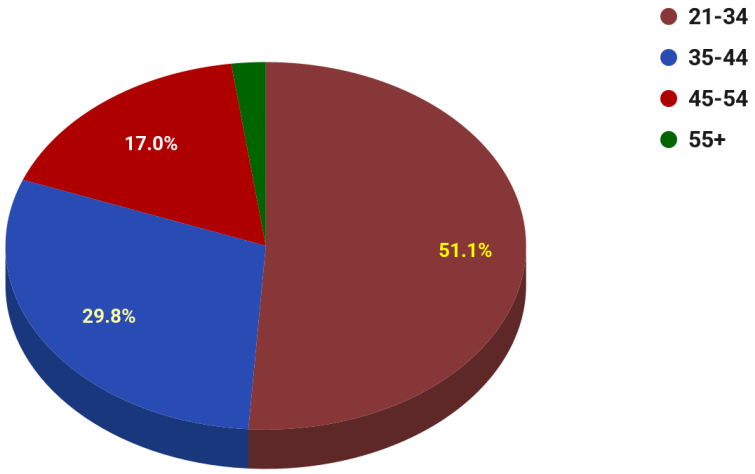
Graduate self-identification by gender



Note. n=47

Figure 2

Graduate reporting of age in years



Note. n= 47; the mean is approximately 35 years of age.

All respondents (n=48) completed the course-based MLIS program, with 54% enrolled as on-campus students and 46% enrolled as online students. For context, at the start of the Fall 2022 term, there were 217 students enrolled in the MLIS course-based program, with 76%

enrolled in the online stream and 24% enrolled in the on-campus stream. At the start of the Fall 2023 term, there were 218 students enrolled in the MLIS course-based program, with 80% in the online stream and 20% in the on-campus stream. The Fall 2023 term highlights the greatest difference between the two streams since 2018.

Respondents (n= 47) were admitted to the MLIS program between Fall 2017 and Fall 2022, and of the 137 students who graduated between November 2022 and June 2024, the average time to degree completion was 2.4 years, with 1.6 years being the average time to degree completion for students enrolled in the on-campus program (48) and 2.8 years being the average time to degree completion for students enrolled in the online program (89).

Forty-seven percent of respondents enrolled in mostly full-time coursework while the same percentage enrolled in mostly part-time course work. The remaining respondents completed a combination of full-time and part-time course work.

More than 90% of respondents indicated they were Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Conversely, fewer than 10% of respondents completed the entire Master's program with a Student Visa or enrolled in the online stream from outside Canada.

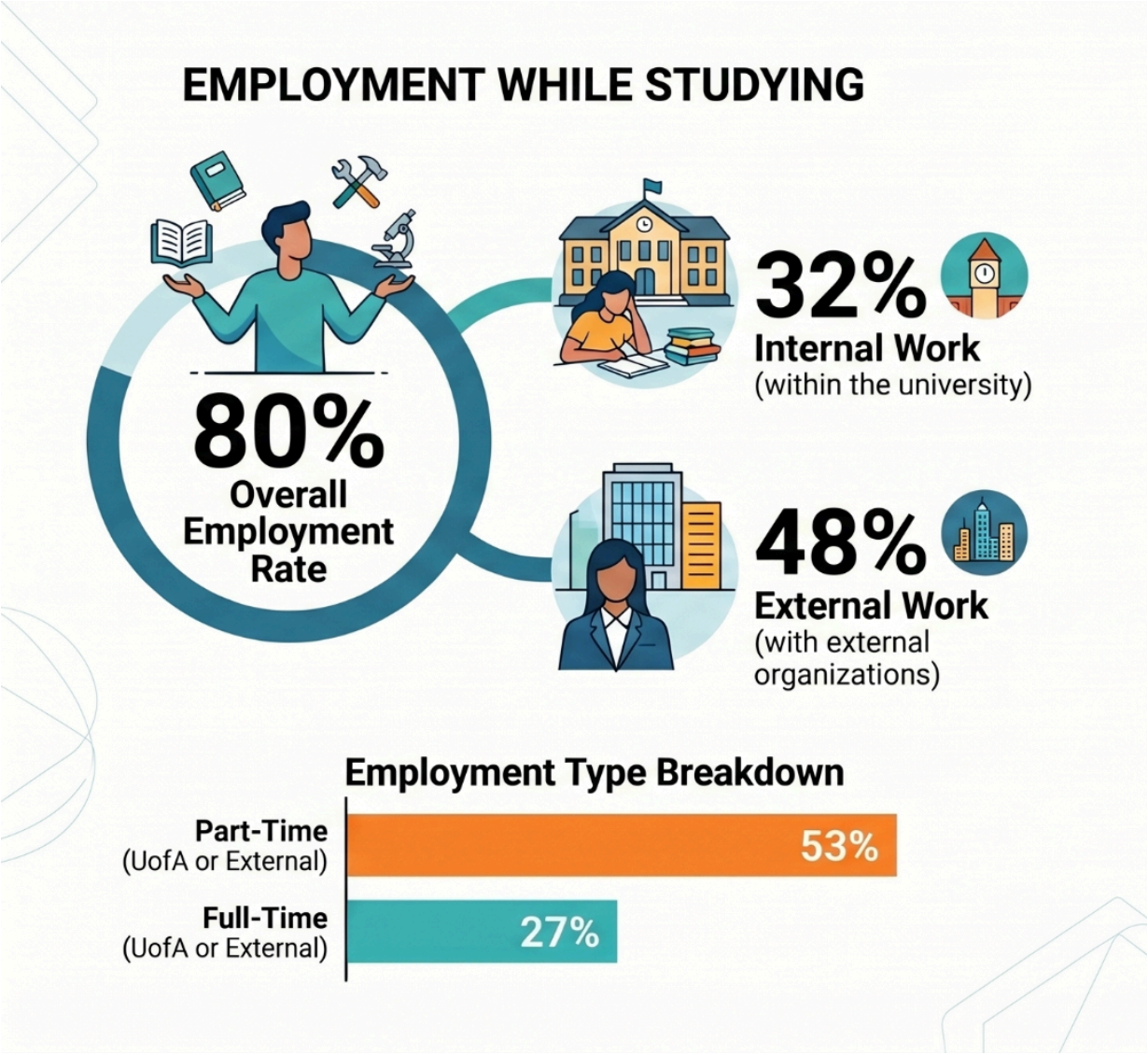
Seeking Information

When seeking information about the MLIS program, there was an equal distribution between the use of online resources (77%) and social networks (78%). Online resources used included the SLIS website, the U of A's online learning website, the ALA website, and resources for teacher-librarians communicated by their school district. Social networks used included conferences, faculty members internal and external to the U of A; colleagues, co-workers and supervisors; friends or family members; and U of A alumni of the MLIS program. Per more than 50% responses, the SLIS website was the most referenced resource.

FUNDING

Figure 3

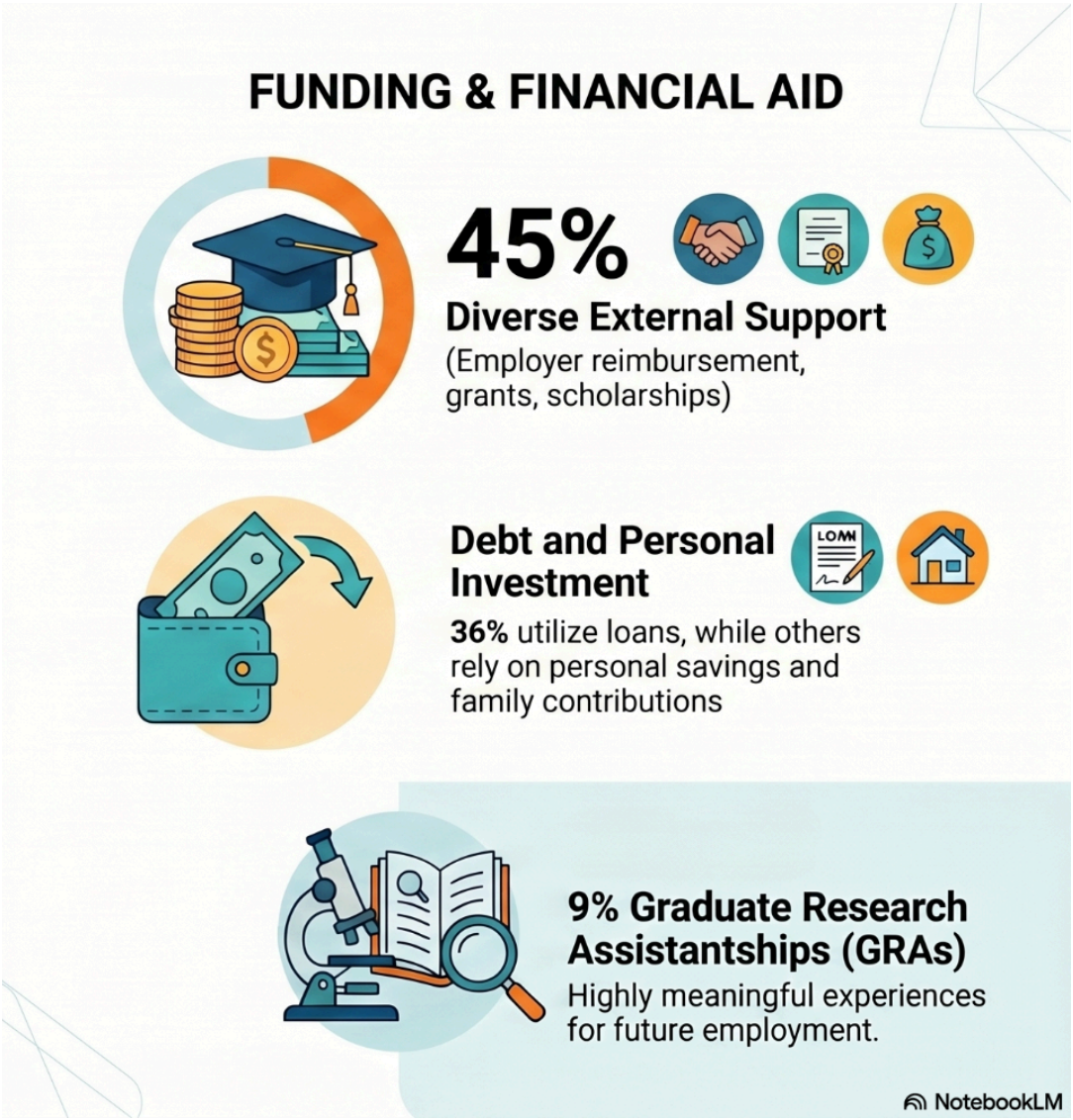
Employment status while completing the MLIS[3]



[3] *Respondents had the opportunity to select one or more options to describe their specific employment experience. For example, when indicating their employment status during their degree completion, one respondent could be employed part-time at the U of A, employed part-time outside of the U of A, and receiving a scholarship, award or bursary.*

Figure 4

Other sources of funding accessed to complete the MLIS

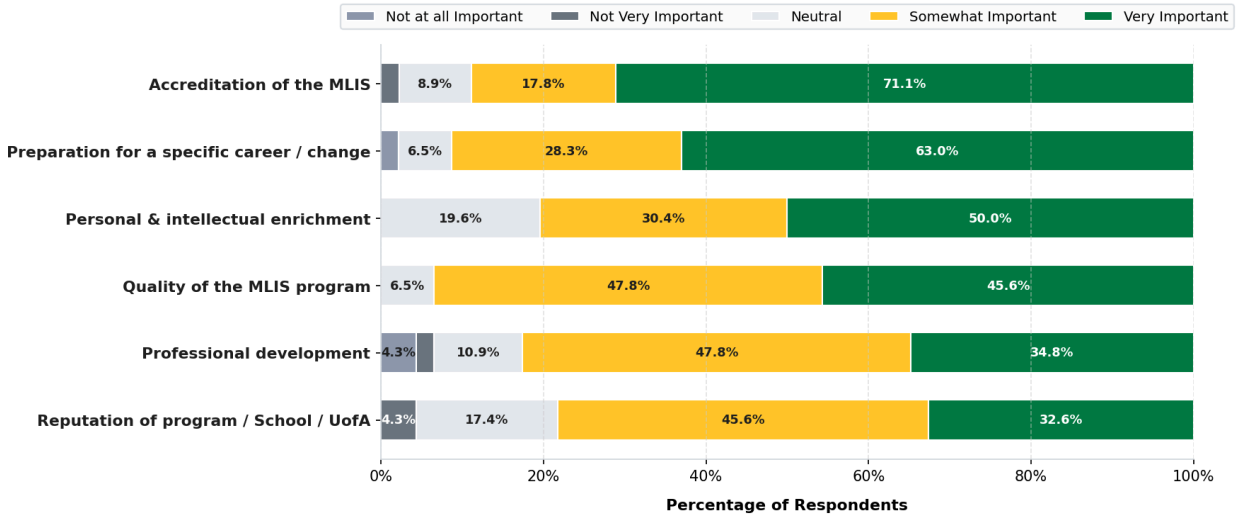


Note. All respondents who secured a GRA were satisfied with the experience (somewhat satisfied or very satisfied), specifying it was *"a meaningful experience which helped with employment."*

CHOOSING A GRADUATE PROGRAM

Figure 5

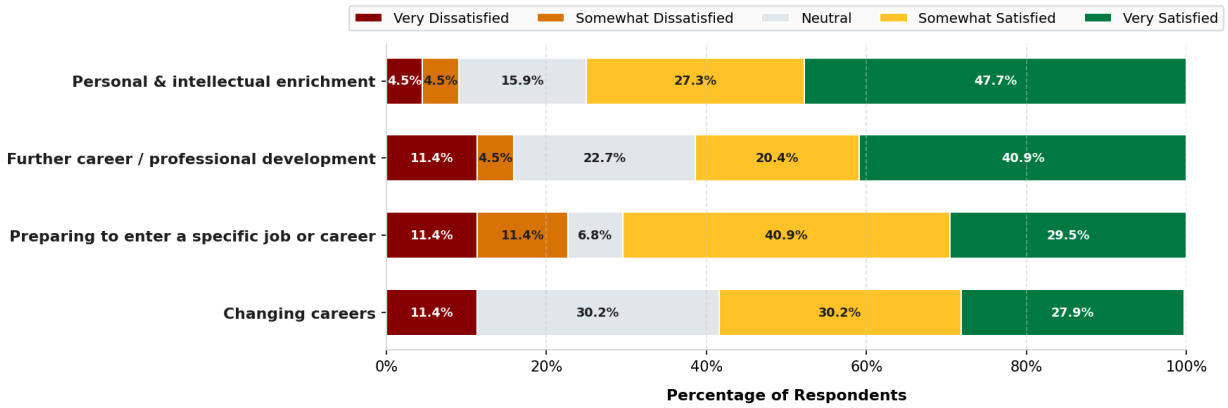
Deciding Factors to Apply to the MLIS Degree Program



When deciding to apply to the MLIS program, Figure 5 shows the importance of the MLIS program's ALA accreditation. Notably, of all the metrics in the survey measured, accreditation scored the highest weighted average (4.58 out of 5), suggesting its additive value to the learning experience and career development. Also important were the overall quality of the MLIS program (93.4%) and students' preparedness for a specific career or career change (91.3%). In contrast, eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit (78.3%), specific professor / supervisor in the program (58.7%), and on-campus study opportunities (47.8%) were the least important factors when deciding whether to apply to the MLIS program.

Figure 6

MLIS Helping Meet Your Goals

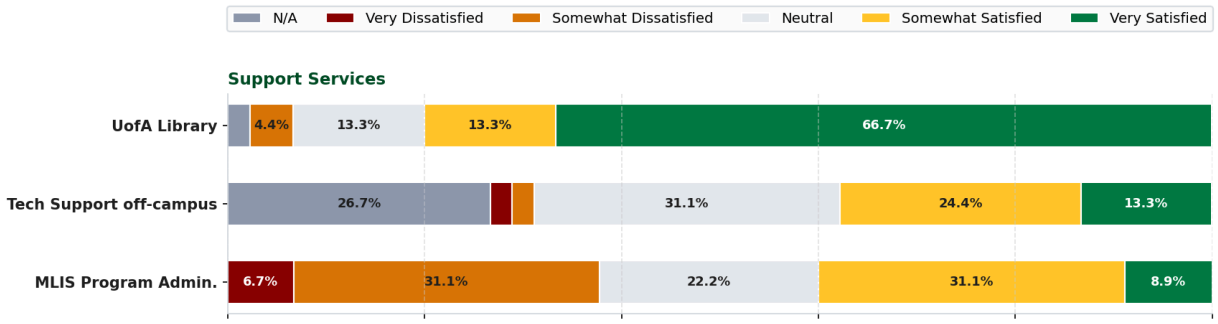


The four categories listed in Figure 6 were also four of the top six deciding factors for students applying to the MLIS program (see Figure 5). Notably, in terms of satisfaction relative to meeting their goals, personal and intellectual enrichment rated high (4.09 weighted average). Compared to the previous survey (2021-2022) results, preparing to enter a specific job/career (+0.22) and changing careers (+0.13) also had higher levels of satisfaction.

RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Figure 7

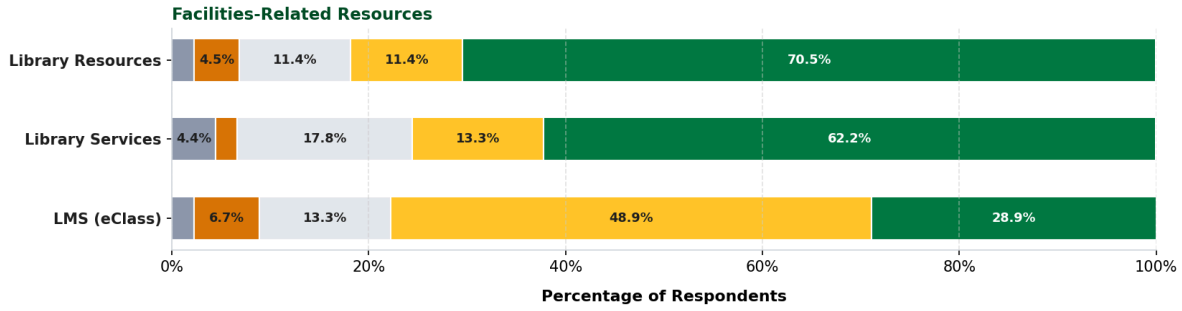
Satisfaction ratings for U of A support services



In half of the ten open responses, respondents specified the need for clearer communication about the various administrative units - Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS, formerly FGSR), SLIS, and Education Student Services (ESS) - and the relationship between them. The primary concern was delayed response times to, and ownership of, student inquiries. These comments might reflect student perceptions of changes resulting from the early stages of the program's transition from an academic to an administrative unit.

Figure 8

Satisfaction ratings for U of A facilities-related services

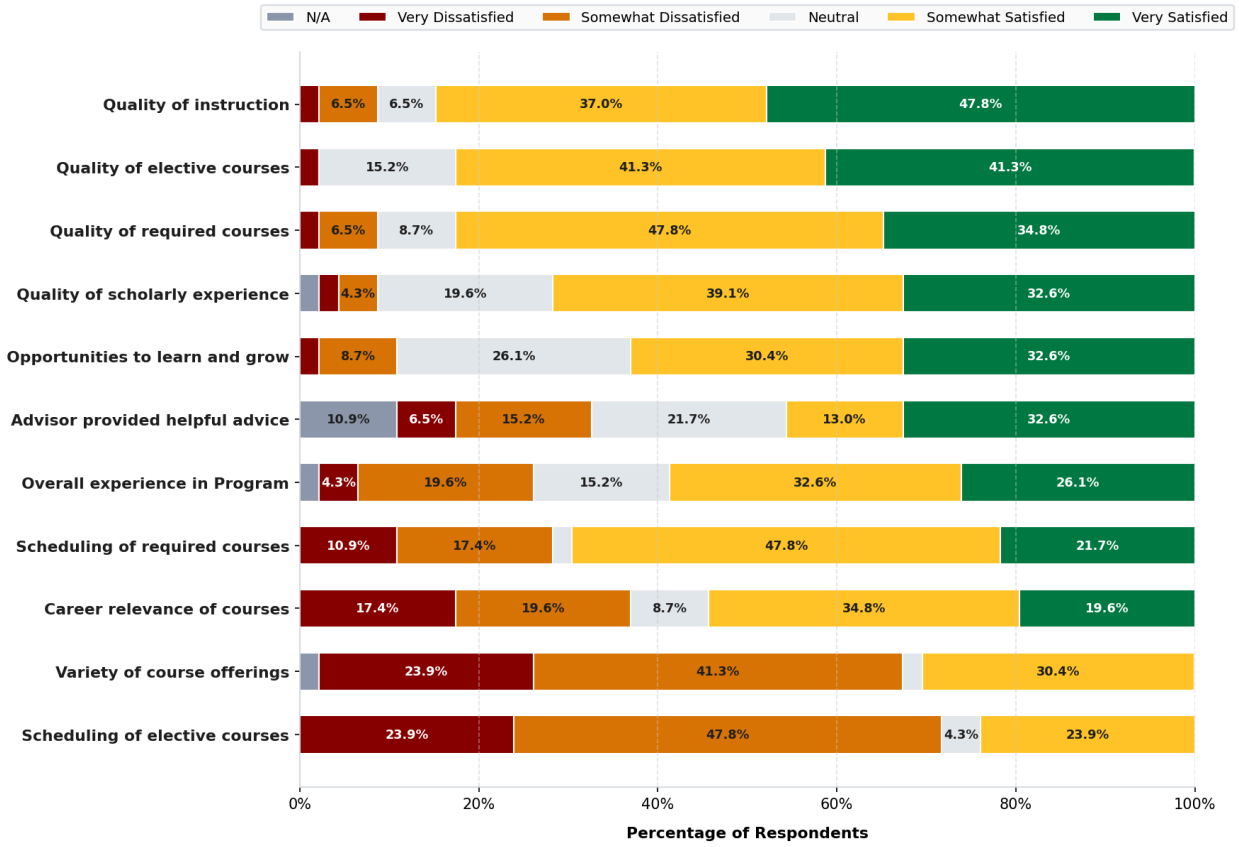


Figures 7 and 8 show that the University of Alberta Library's resources and services continue to be a service with which respondents are satisfied, with responses ranging between 75% and 82%.

YOUR MLIS PROGRAM

Figure 9

Levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the MLIS program



As illustrated in Figure 8, respondents were satisfied with the quality of instruction (84.8%) and the quality of required and elective courses (82.6%); however, the program has an opportunity to improve the variety, availability, and scheduling of elective courses.

STUDENT FEEDBACK AND CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS

Recommending the MLIS Program

Approximately 61% of respondents (n=44) would recommend the MLIS to prospective students (67% reported in 2021-2022). When prompted to elaborate on their recommendation, over 80% of the individuals provided detailed feedback, 95% of which specified the accessibility, flexibility and convenience of online learning, and learning while working. For example, *"being able to work on it from across the country is great", and* "*the opportunity to pursue my degree while maintaining a better work-life balance than I had doing a previous on-campus master's degree."*

Half of the respondents recommended the MLIS program for its employment enhancement and/or high-quality programming, well-stated in the following two comments, *"if they [prospective students] would like to advance their career/open up career opportunities even outside of the library, then the MLIS will help",* and noting that it was *"an enriching, thought-provoking program."*

Key Strengths

Thirty-five of the 48 respondents provided feedback on the program's key strengths. Open responses were coded, and two prevalent strengths were identified.

1. Half of the responses highlighted the advantages of the breadth, expertise, and diverse backgrounds of instructors, well-detailed in the following two responses: *"The majority of instructors in the MLIS program are very helpful, knowledgeable and supportive, and foster a great deal of interest in LIS" and, "I appreciated having the chance to develop skills in diverse areas like technology, academic research, interpersonal skills and broader societal topics."*

2. One respondent shared how the *"online MLIS program allows working professionals to continue their employment while completing the degree; the asynchronous learning is a crucial part of that."* This excerpt was typical of comments shared by one-third of respondents who highlighted the value and flexibility of online asynchronous course delivery and acknowledged the importance of being able to fulfill employment or other life responsibilities (e.g., caregiving) while completing a professional Master's degree.

Constructive Suggestions

Respondents were asked to provide constructive suggestions in three areas: support services, facility resources, and the overall MLIS program. Less than one quarter of respondents offered suggestions about support services, while 6 suggestions were provided regarding facility resources. More than three-quarters of respondents offered constructive suggestions for improving the MLIS program. The suggestions were coded, and the following issues emerged.

- Administrative Accountability, Organization and Communication - Some students shared examples of delayed response times, and a need for timelier advising and communication about course information. A few respondents described the administrative support services as disorganized, providing examples of inquiries being transferred between various units without taking accountability or not being answered.

- Quality of Learning Spaces - Repeatedly, respondents expressed a desire for on-campus learning and work spaces suitable for a professional Master's-level program (e.g., rooms with windows and furniture/amenities such as movable tables and chairs instead of tablet arm chairs).

- Elective Courses: Catalogue Audit and Transparent Scheduling - Some students reported frustration regarding elective courses listed in the course catalogue that were not offered over the course of their degree and the frequency and variety of elective course offerings.

- Practicum Opportunities - Concern was expressed for the absence of practicum placements, especially for students with minimal or no work experience in the sector. Comments also mentioned the perceived advantages of practicum opportunities providing hands-on, practical experiences that help with job-readiness and employability after graduation.

Leading with Purpose.

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