DIGIN

University of Maribor
Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

DIGITAL INCLUSION IN PRACTICE: A STUDENT- CENTRED PERSPECTIVE

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DIGITAL ACCESS

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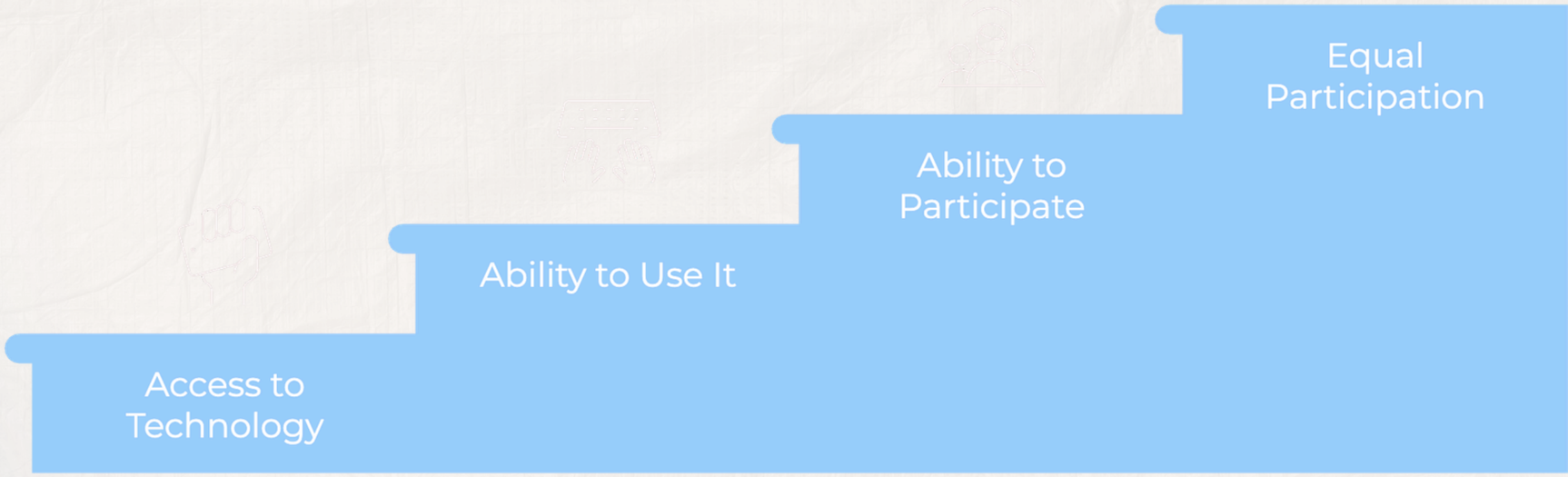
DIGITAL INCLUSION

Digital technologies are essential for higher education.
Digitalisation makes higher education more flexible.
Digitalisation can create new barriers.

Formal accessibility VS Experienced inclusion

Does the resource exist? VS Can the student use it to participate?



ACCESSIBILITY OPERATES AT SEVERAL LEVELS

International level

the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Technical framework for digital environments

the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2)

Universal Design for Learning

Anticipates **learner variability.**
Different ways of accessing, participating, learning, demonstrating knowledge.
Does not replace individual accommodations.

WE ARE NOT STARTING FROM ZERO.

01

SLOVENIAN LEGISLATION

Highter education act:
Rights and adaptations for studetns with special needs.

02

UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR

Formal accommodations.
Adapted teaching and assessment.
Accessible study materials.
Support structures.



WHAT HAPPENS IN EVERYDAY STUDENT EXPERIENCE?

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE POLICY, THE REGULATION OR THE ACCOMMODATION DECISION EXISTS?

THE STUDENT DOES *NOT* EXPERIENCE THE UNIVERSITY *AS A POLICY*.

01.
COURSE DESIGN

02.
TEACHER INSTRUCTION

03.
MOODLE (DIGITAL) ENVIRONMENT

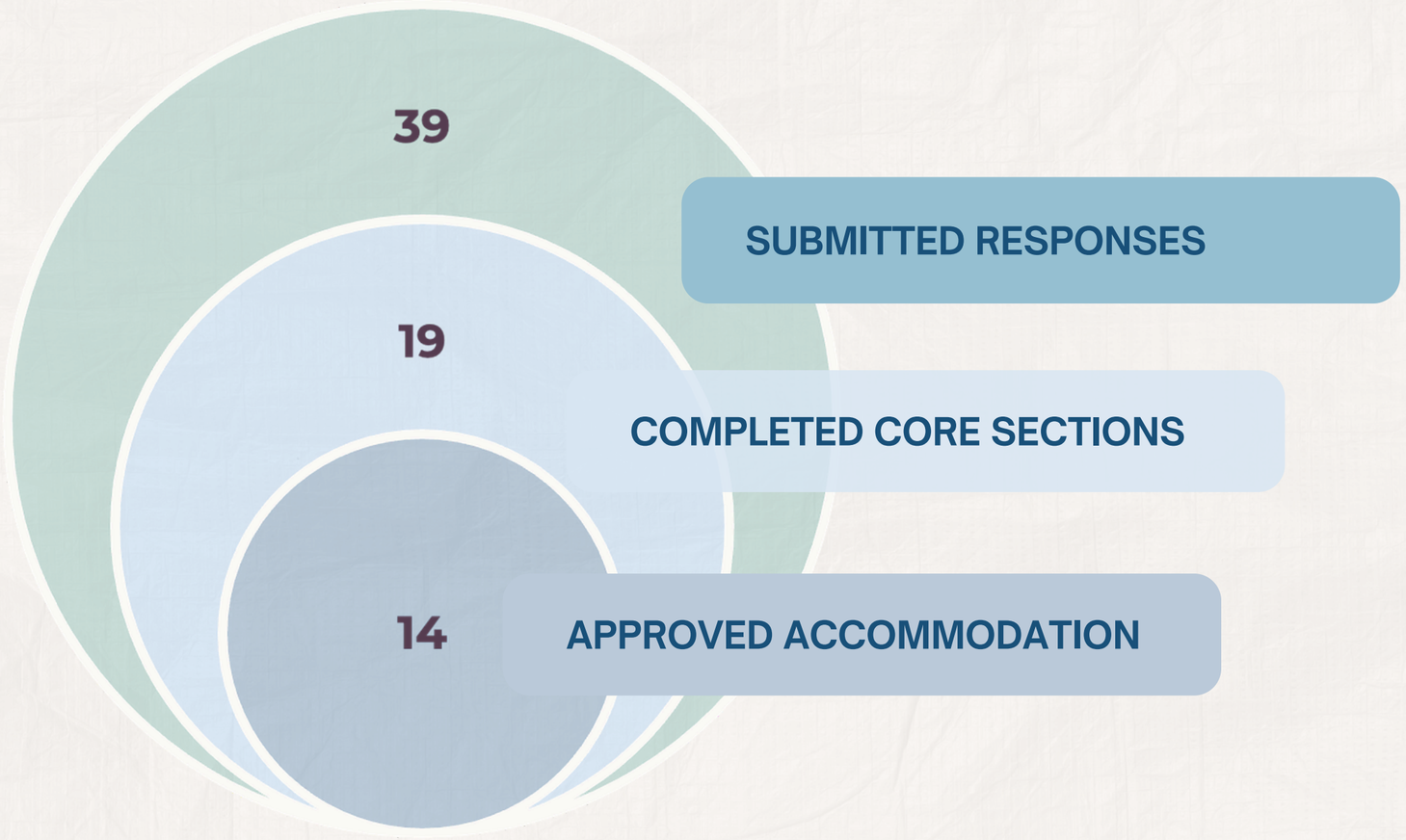
04.
COMMUNICATION

05.
ASSESSMENT

06.
ACCOMMODATION

ACCESSIBILITY ALSO DEPENDS ON HOW *EASY A RIGHT IS TO USE*.

PRELIMINARY ONLINE SURVEY



SUBMITTED RESPONSES

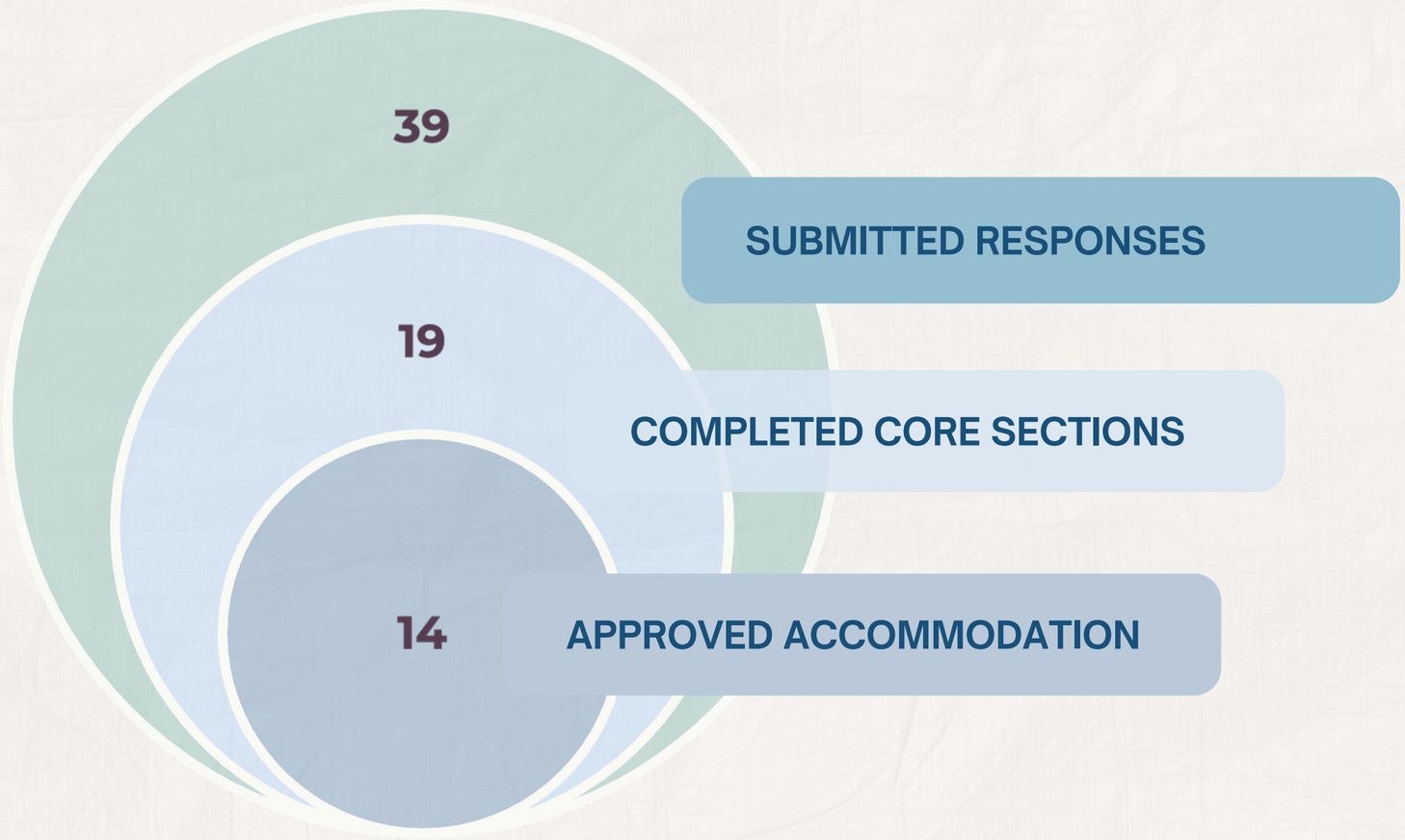
COMPLETED CORE SECTIONS

APPROVED ACCOMMODATION

7 DIMENSIONS

- Learning materials
- Digital environment
- Teaching & assessment
- Communication
- Institutional support
- Equal participation
- Inclusion & belonging

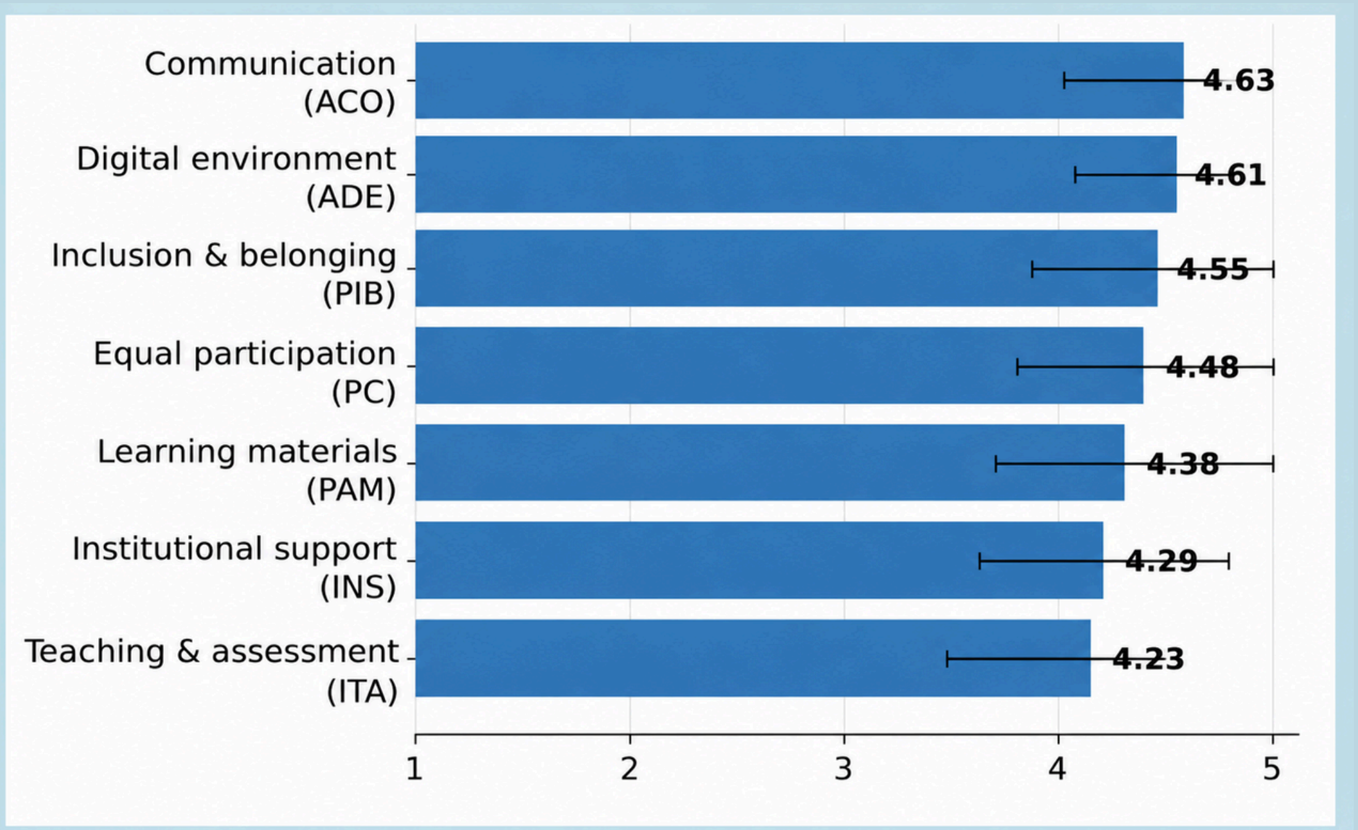
PRELIMINARY ONLINE SURVEY



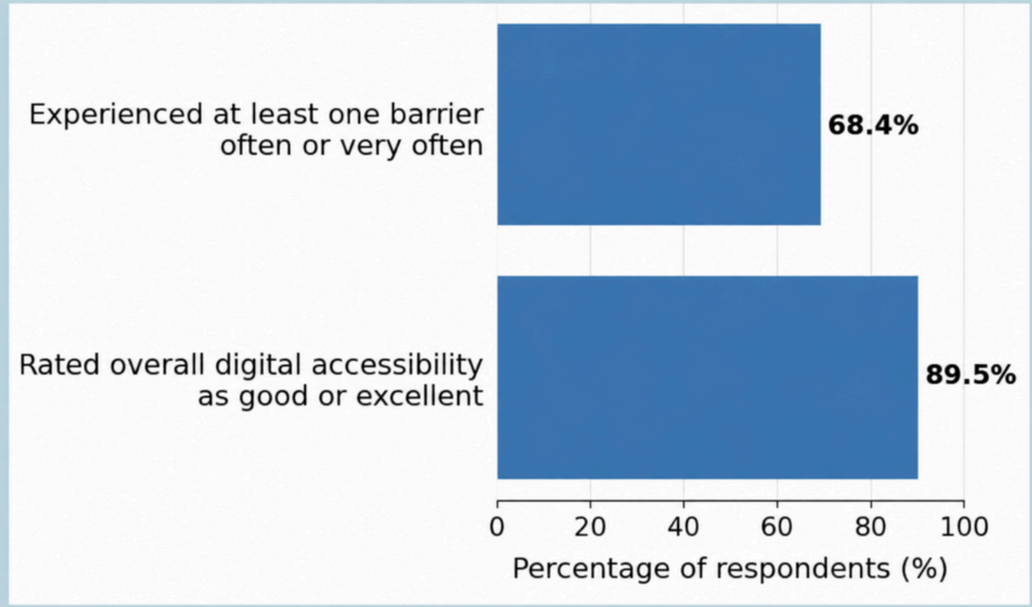
Status Type	Number of Students
Recognised special-needs status	11
Another recognised special status	5
No current formal status	3

THE OVERALL PICTURE IS POSITIVE

Preliminary profile of digital inclusion

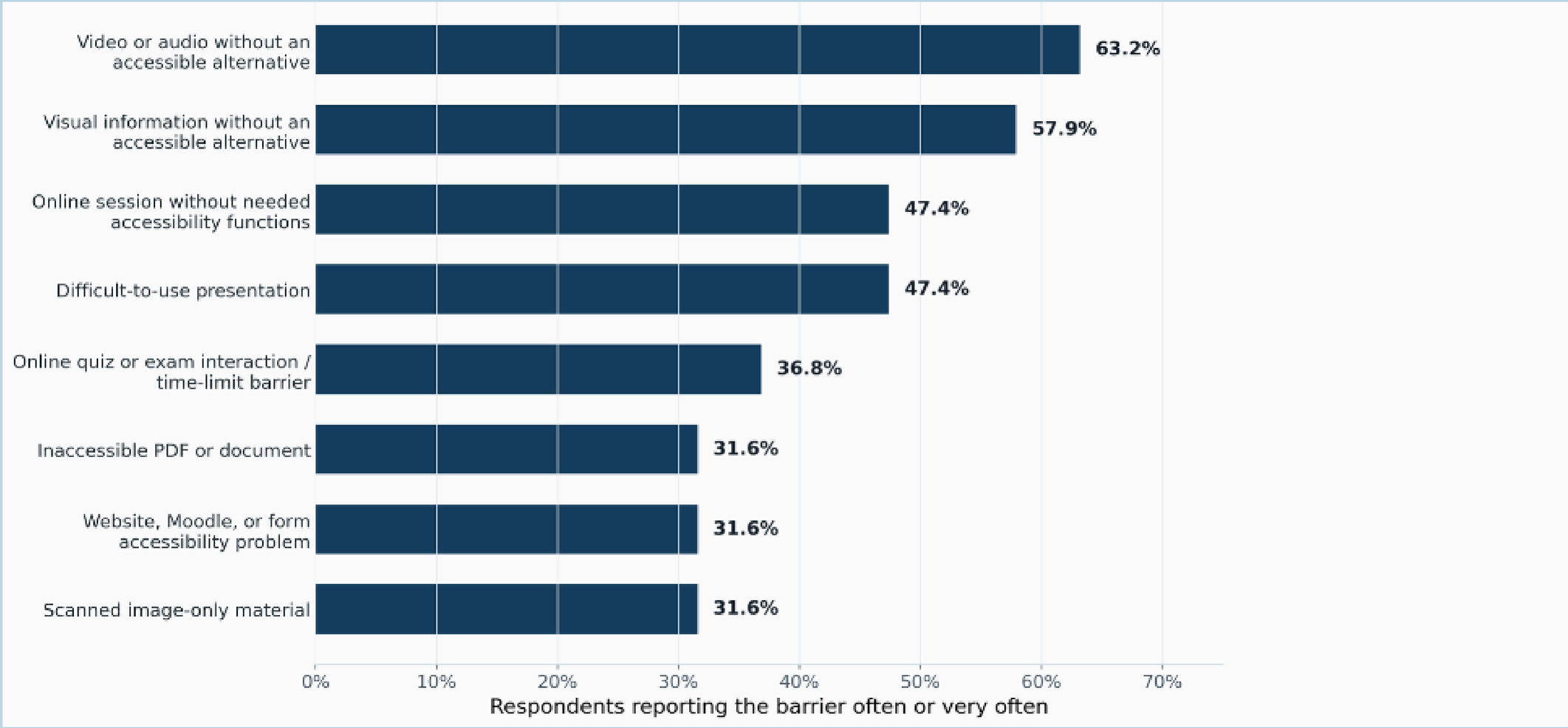


Overall assessment vs. recurring barriers



POSITIVE OVERALL != BARRIER-FREE

Most frequently reported barriers, n =19



ACCOMMODATIONS: EFFECTIVE, BUT NOT ALWAYS EFFORTLESS

4.57/5

ACCOMMODATION EFFECTIVNESS

57,1%

REPEATEDLY EXPLAINED THEIR NEEDS

42,9%

REMINDED STAFF

How much of organisational burden can reasonably be carried by the system rather than by the student ?

WHAT STUDENTS DESCRIBED AS MEANINGFUL INCLUSION



FROM ACCESSIBILITY TO PARTICIPATION

Reactive accommodation	Proactive accessibility
Individual good practice	Consistent practice
Student coordination	Institutional coordination
Digital access	Independent participation

SO, WHAT DOES DIGITAL INCLUSION MEAN FOR A STUDENT?

01 ACCESS

02 FLEXIBILITY

03 COMMUNICATION

04 SUPPORT

05 AUTONOMY

06 BELONGING

MAKE PARTICIPATION POSSIBLE.

THANK YOU!



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