

Accessibility support and documentation

Survey results and insights

Blackboard



CONTEXT

About Ally

Blackboard Ally focuses on making digital course content more accessible. It helps institutions gain detailed insight into the accessibility of their course content, provides guidance to teachers on how to improve the accessibility of their content, and automatically provides students with a range of more accessible alternative formats.

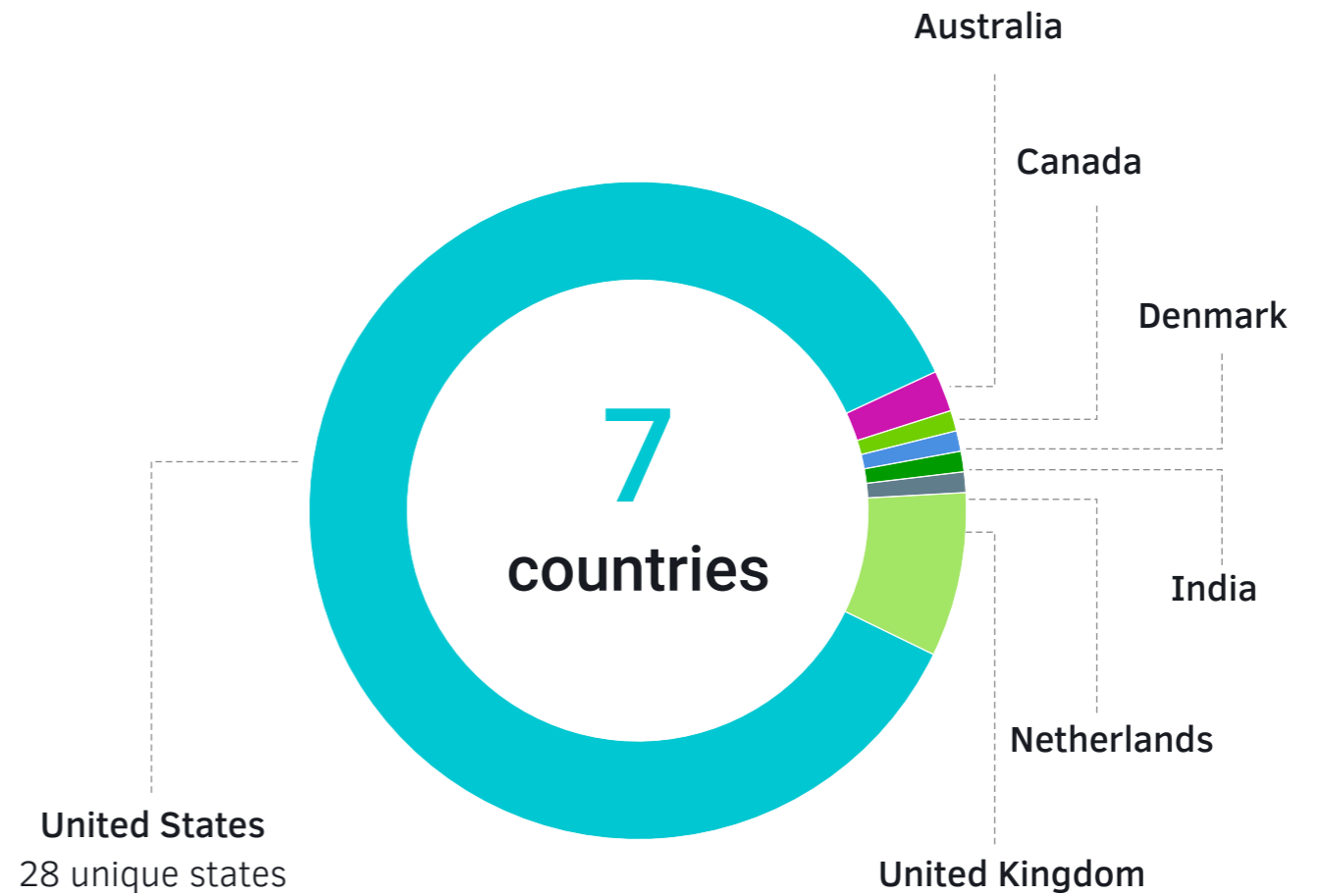
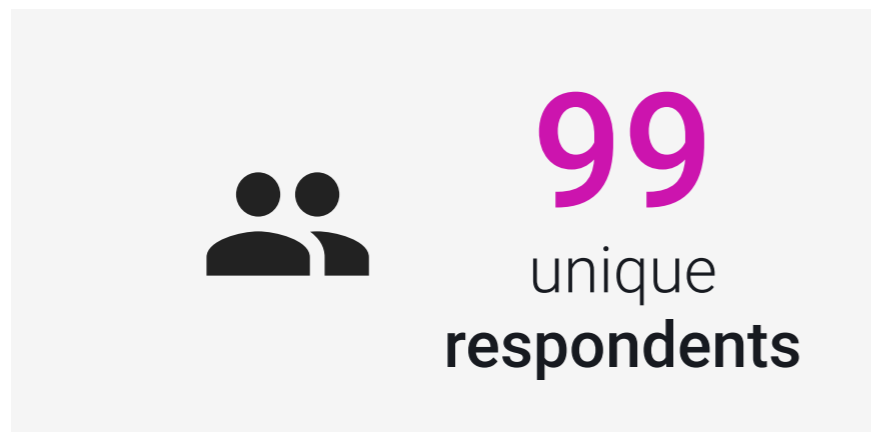
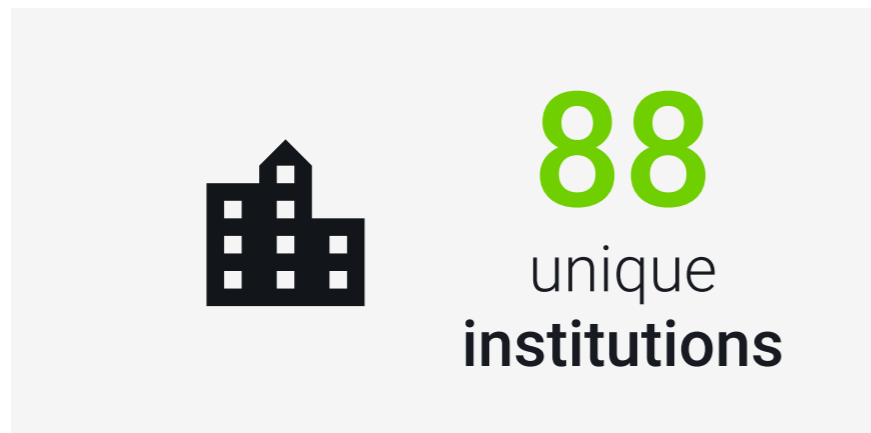
As part of our user-centered design process, we engage the Ally User Group to ensure that Ally fits institution, instructor and student needs as best as possible.

This survey

The goal of this survey was to find out more about how accessibility is organized at institutions and how Ally can best allow instructors and students to reach out for help.

The insights from the survey will then be used to inform design decisions to ensure that Ally fits into existing processes as seamlessly as possible.

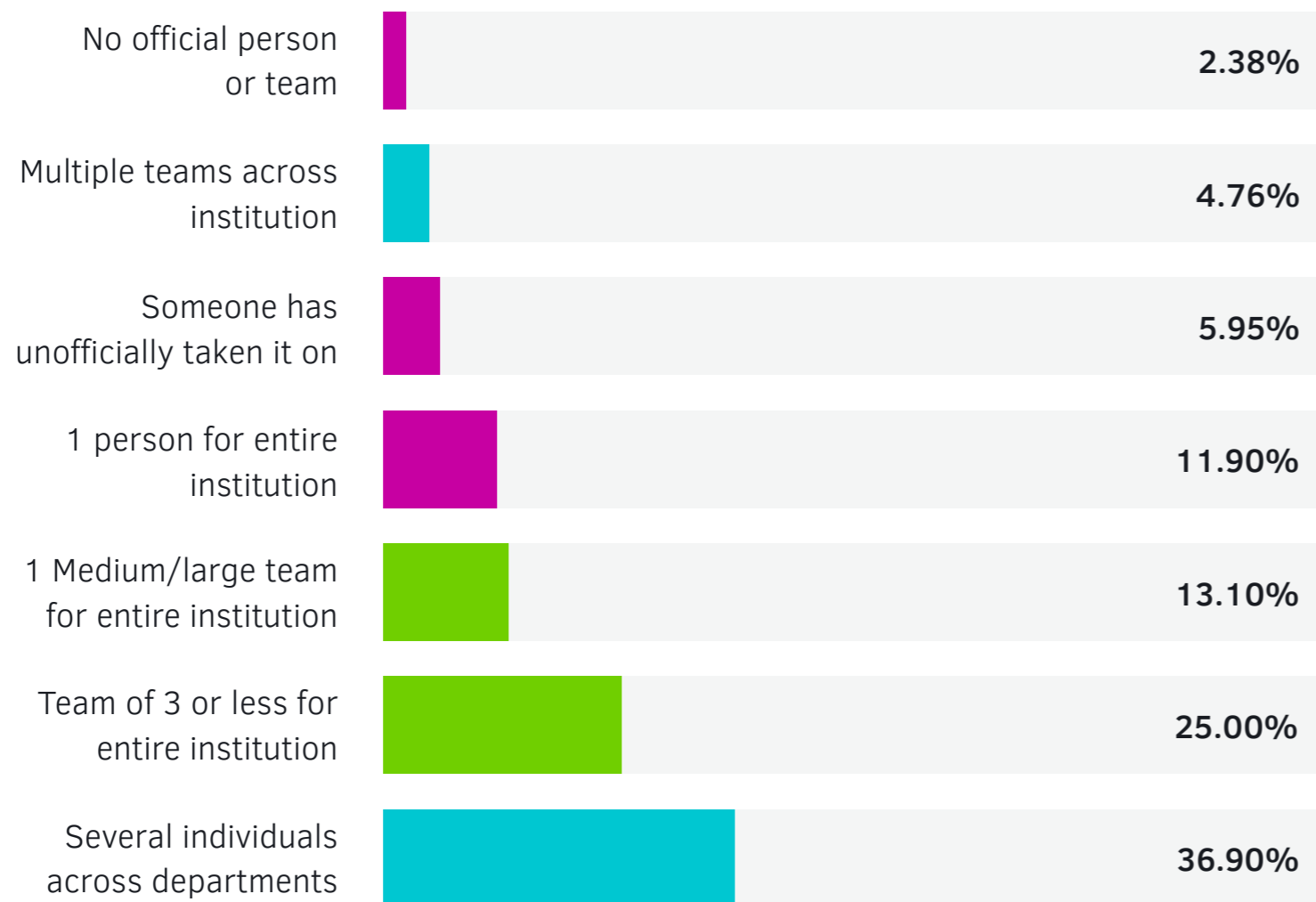
SURVEY DATA



Accessibility at your institution

QUESTION 01

Who is available at your institution to provide help with accessibility?



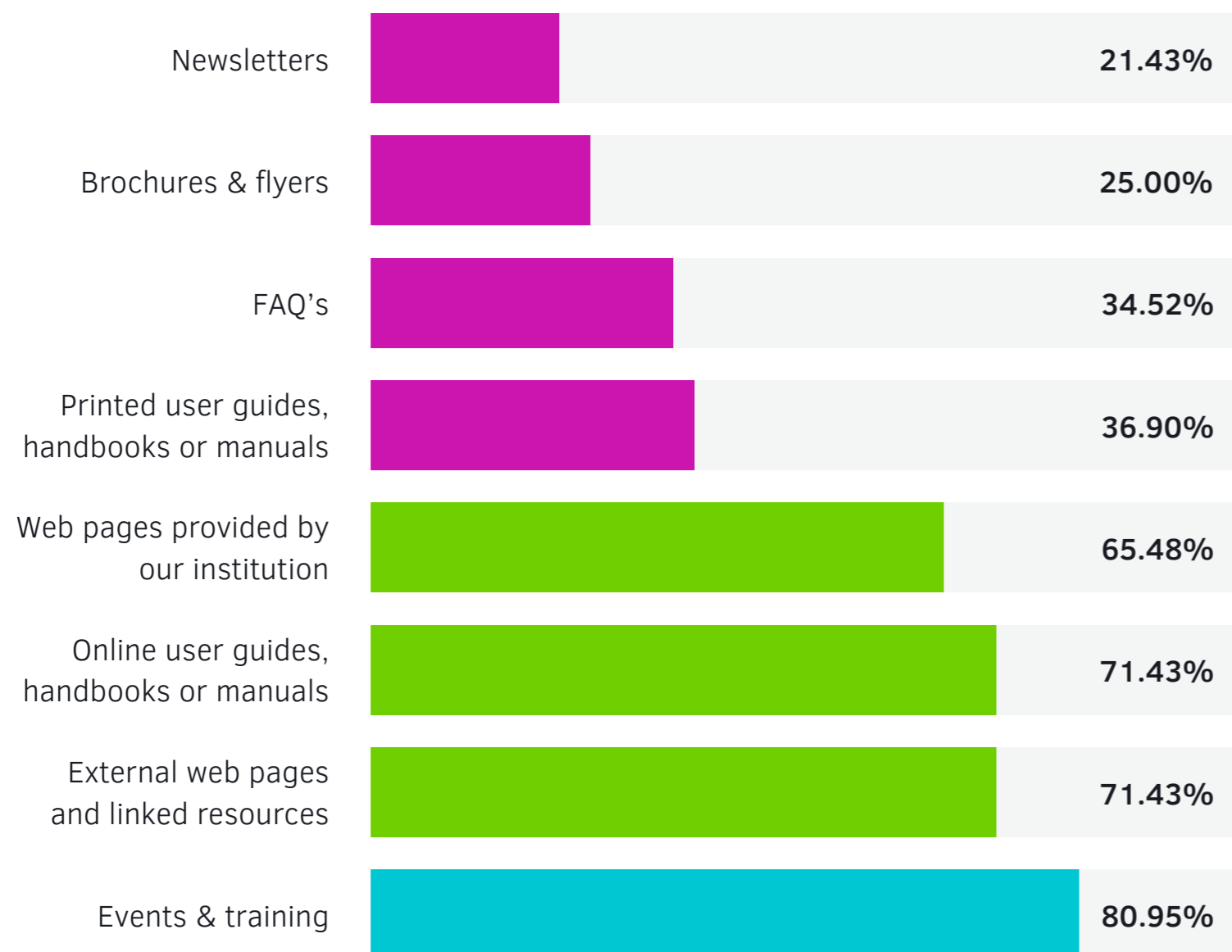
8.3% of institutions have nobody that's officially responsible for accessibility. 80% have multiple people responsible, but 42% of these are scattered.

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Basically just two departments for a multi-campus institution; Online Education with instructional design staff to assist with formatting/producing accessible materials and the Access Office staff at each campus to facilitate student accommodations and resources.

QUESTION 02

What documentation is provided at your institution around the accessibility of course content?



The majority offers at least 2 types of documentation. 'Online materials' and 'Events & training' are offered most. Reaching and attracting instructors is a significant challenge.

“ Training is provided, but faculty do not attend. It is not enforced at the faculty level.

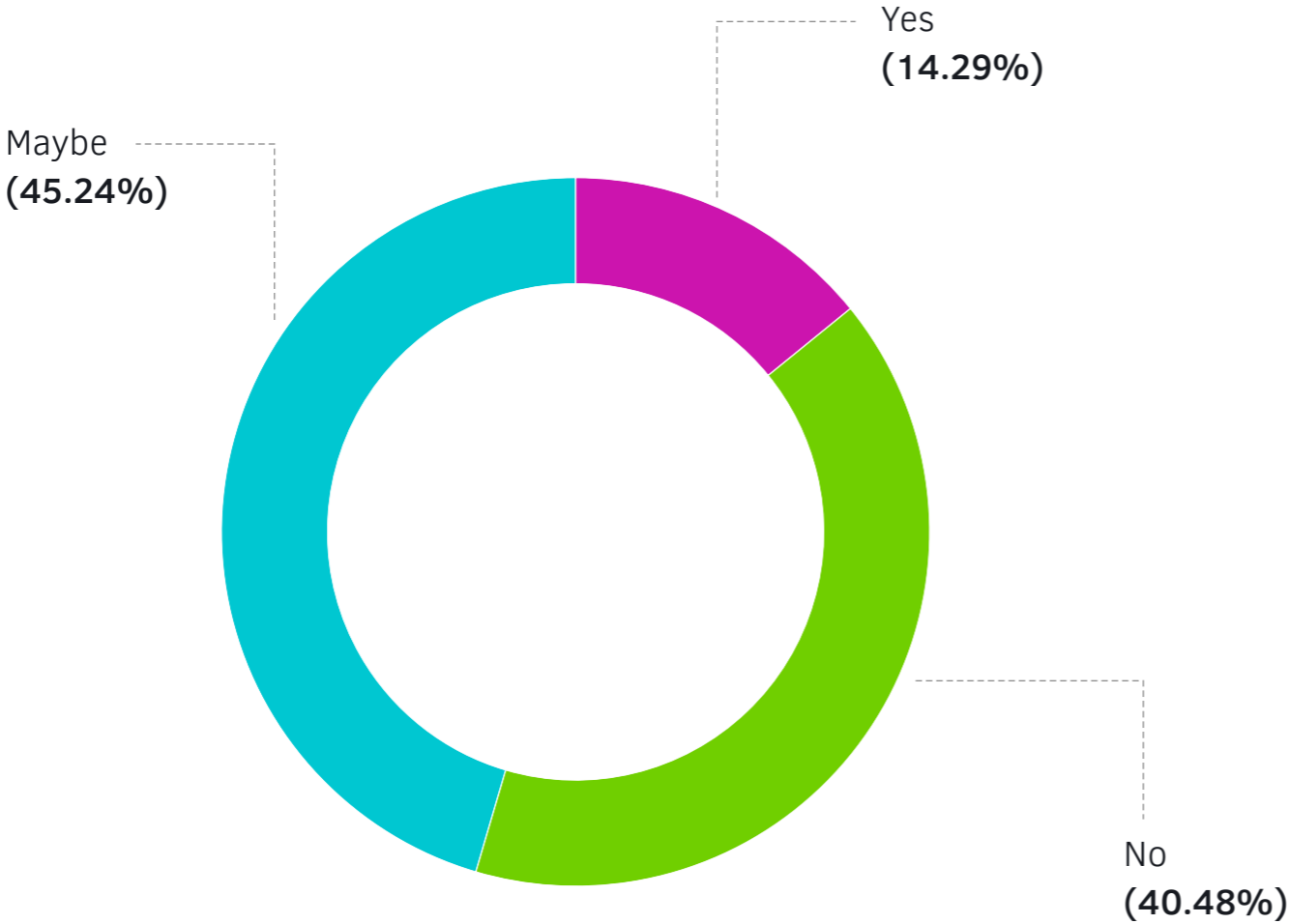
“ There have been a few sparsely-attended training sessions. We are discussing the possibility to the Office of Disability Services automatically enroll any instructor who has a student who needs accommodations.

INCONCLUSIVE

Additional understanding and experience with the Ally instructor feedback is required to assess how Ally and existing documentation should tie together

QUESTION 03 **INCONCLUSIVE**

Is there any existing documentation that should be connected to the Ally instructor feedback?



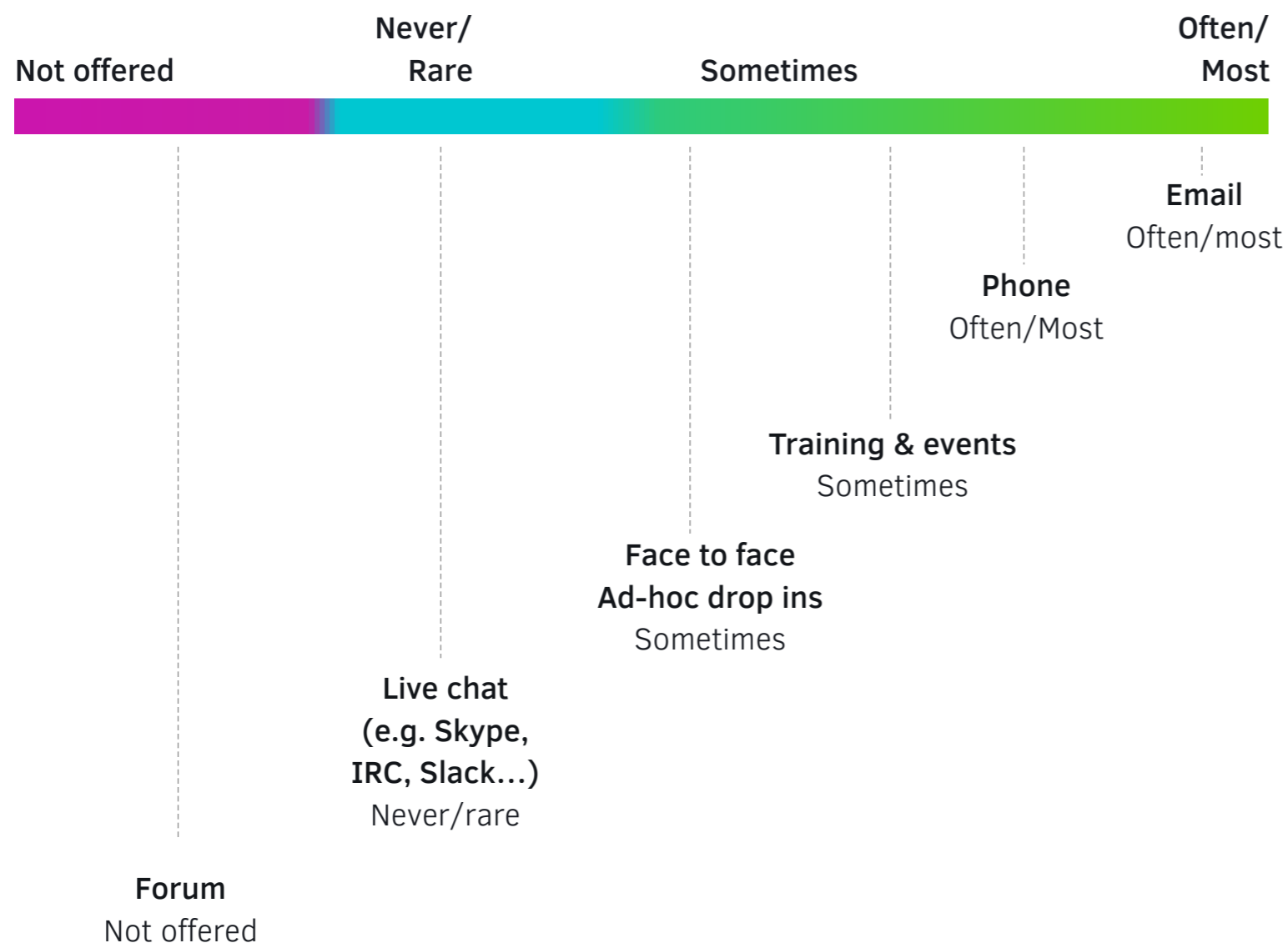
“ Not sure what is already in the Ally instructor feedback.

“ Perhaps. I don't know enough about Ally yet.

Accessibility and teaching staff

QUESTION 04

How does teaching staff request help at your institution regarding the accessibility of their course content?



Email and phone are used most often by faculty to request help. Training sessions are only sparsely attended. Many faculty only reach out when receiving a request from a student.

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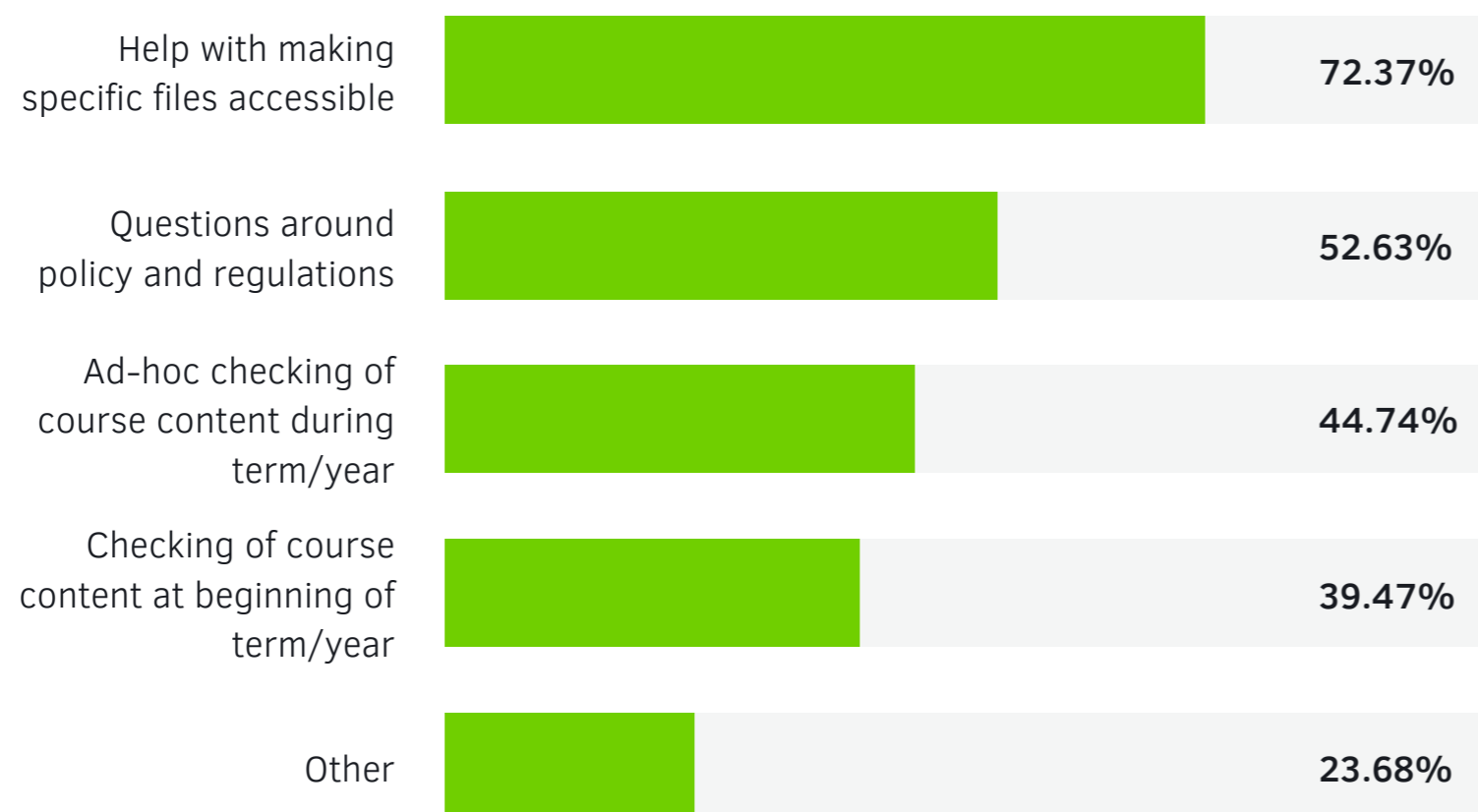
Training is offered in formalized sessions and one-on-one, but attendance is sparse.

“

Generally faculty work with the Disability service office if they have a student with a need.

QUESTION 05

What are the most common accessibility requests from teaching staff?



Most requests are for help with making specific files accessible. However, faculty don't make lots of enquiries, unless prompted. Many requests are for video captioning.

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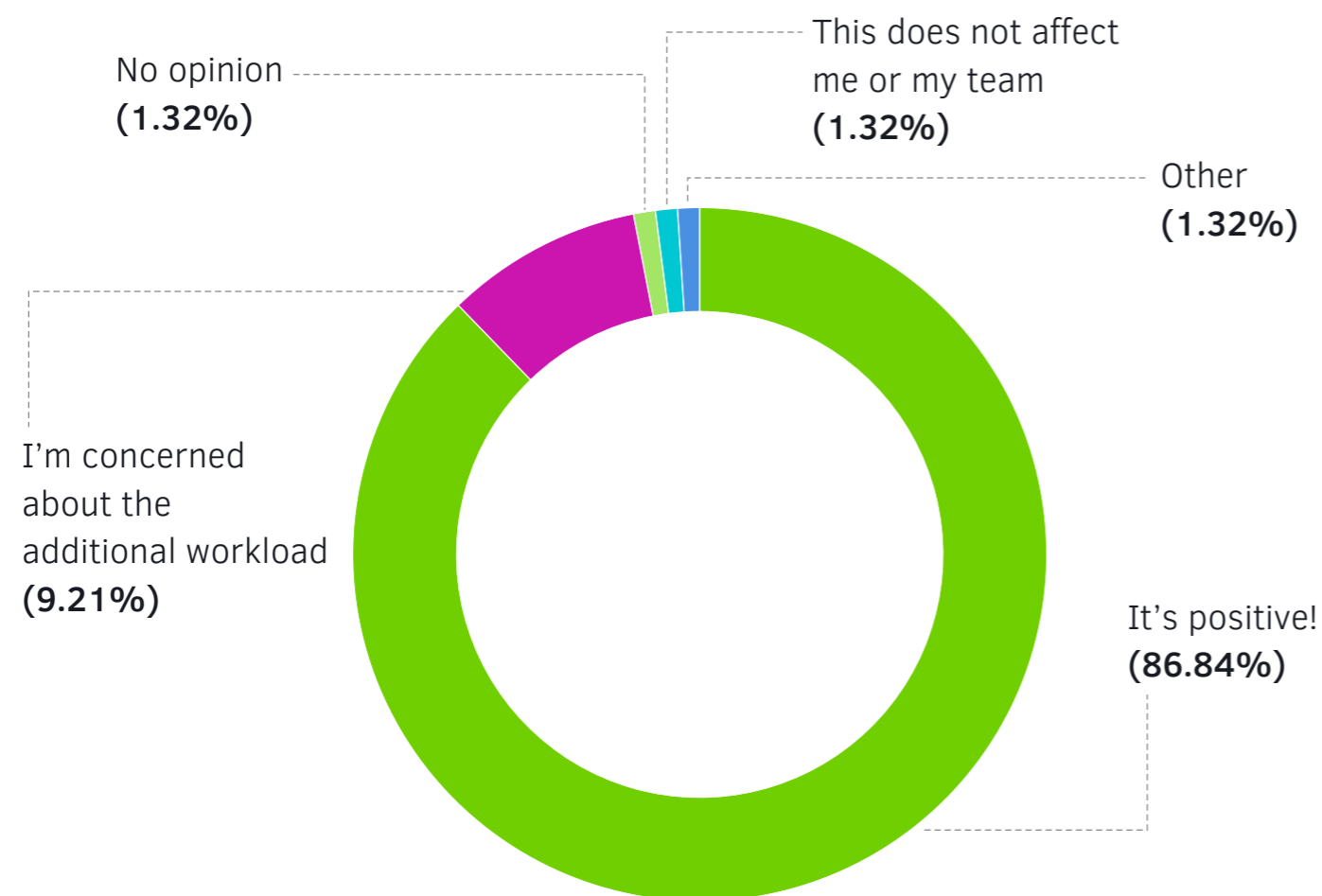
Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of request from faculty...it's usually the student that requests more accessibility.

“

Faculty usually request help in response to an accommodations request presented by a student.

QUESTION 06

Ally may generate extra awareness and requests from teaching staff about accessibility. How do you feel about this?



Over 85% of respondents indicate that extra awareness and requests triggered by Ally would be a positive outcome, despite the potential of increased workload.

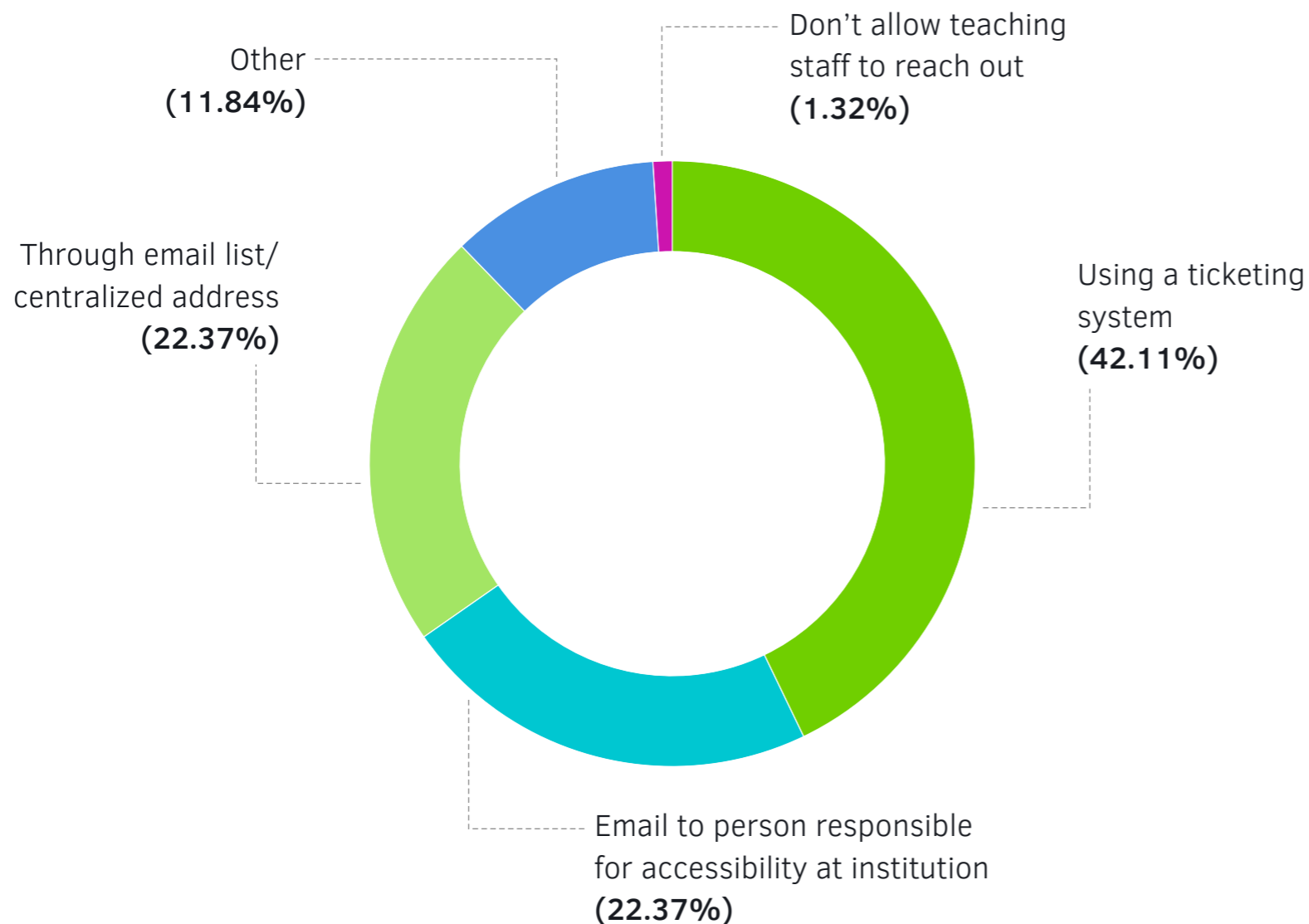
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But it's a needed step in order to make all faculty aware.

“
Would be thrilled if this was the result.

“
Even though I am concerned with additional workload, it's still positive.

QUESTION 07

When teaching staff request help with making their content accessible through Ally, how should the institution be notified?



The majority prefers a request through email or a ticketing system, depending on what the institution already has in place.

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An email would be good too, but a ticketing system might be the best way to ensure tracking.

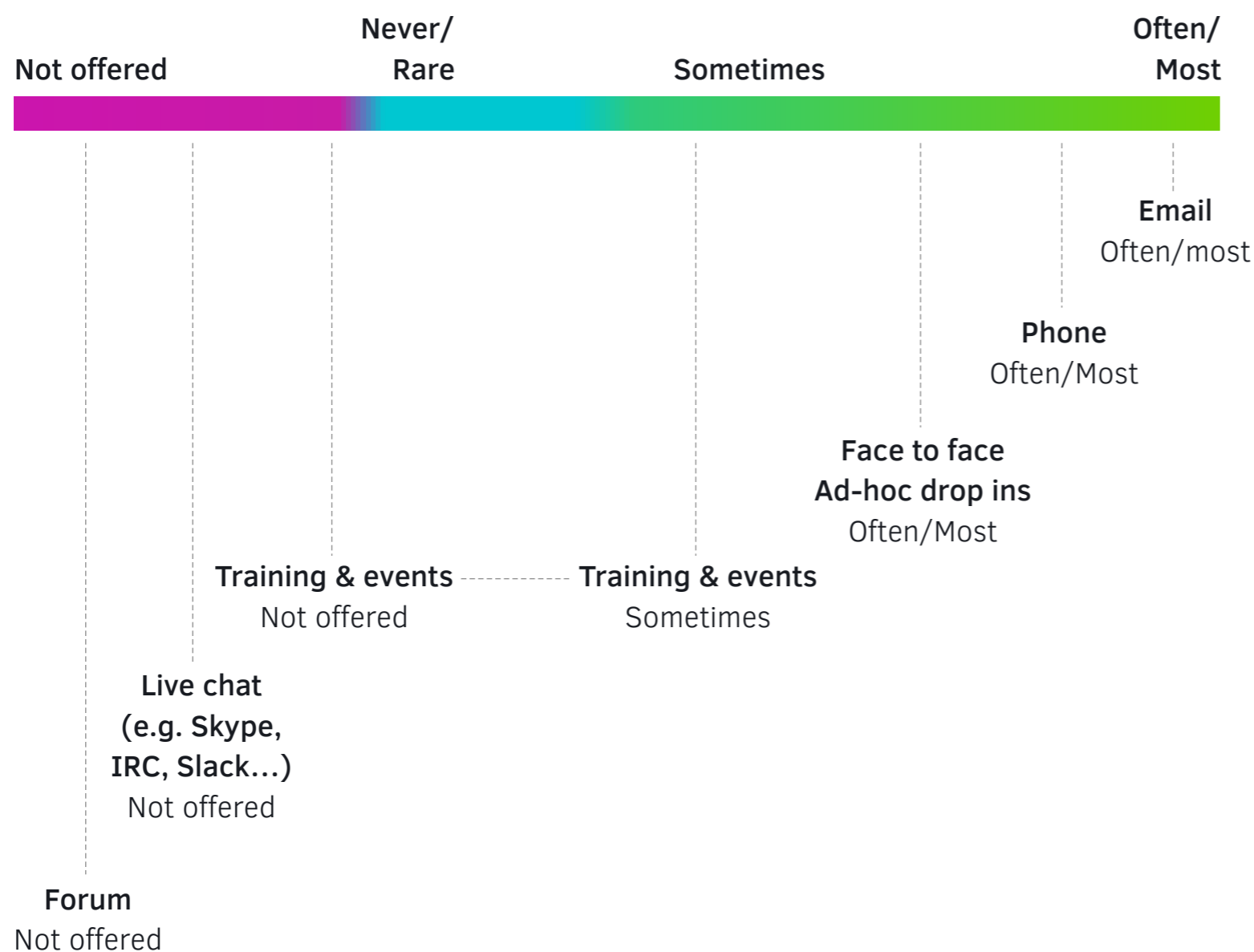
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Email to person is probably what will happen at my institution, but it would be great if it fell into a ticketing system (future thought).

Accessibility and students

QUESTION 08

How do students request help at your institution regarding the accessibility of their course content?



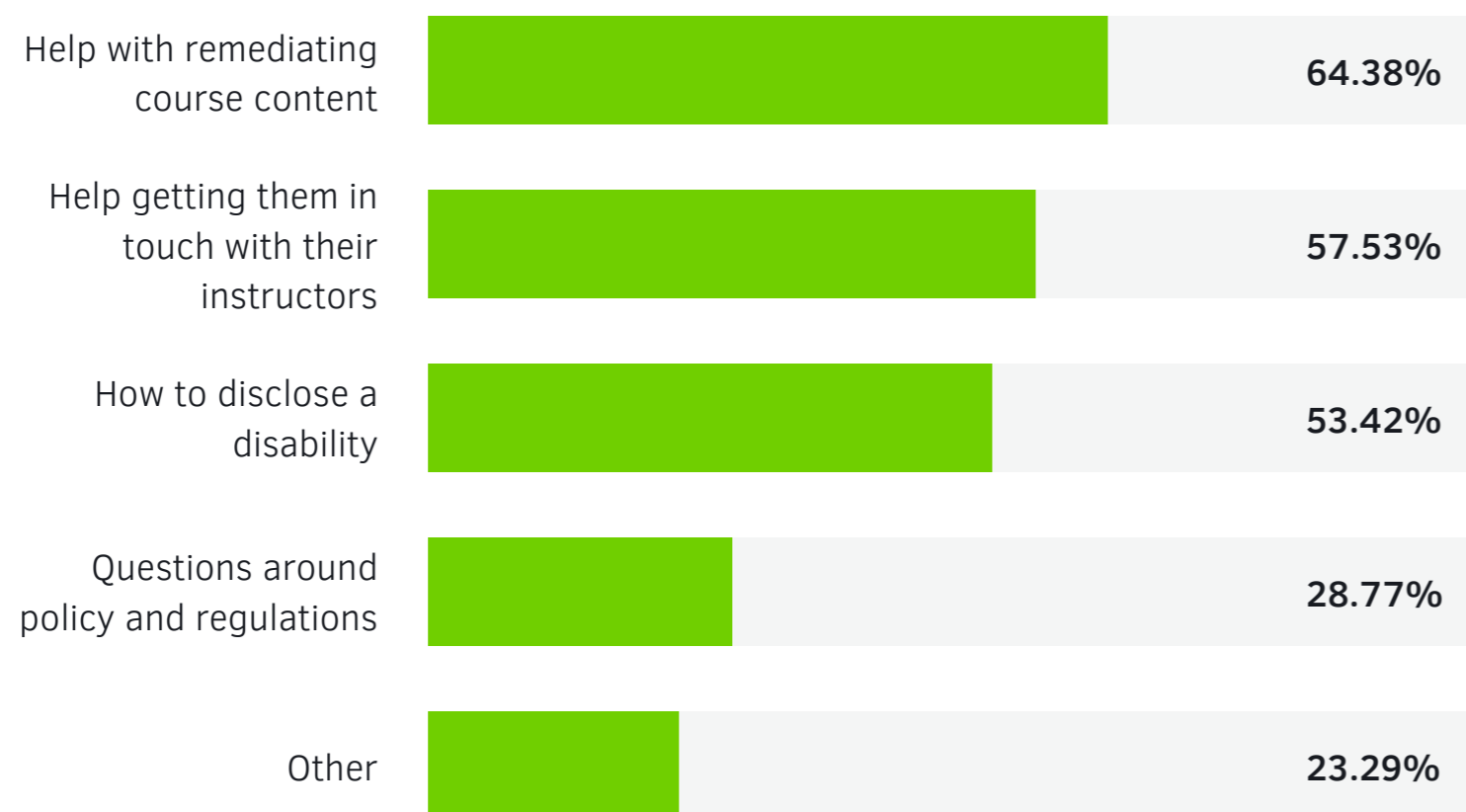
Students mostly use email and phone to request help. Students also frequently use ad-hoc face to face meetings. Students often need a certificate before being allowed to request help.

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Students with disabilities must register with the Access office and provide documentation for their disability. They are then provided with an ‘instructor notification memo’ for each of their courses that explains their allowable accommodations.

QUESTION 09

What are the most common accessibility requests from students?



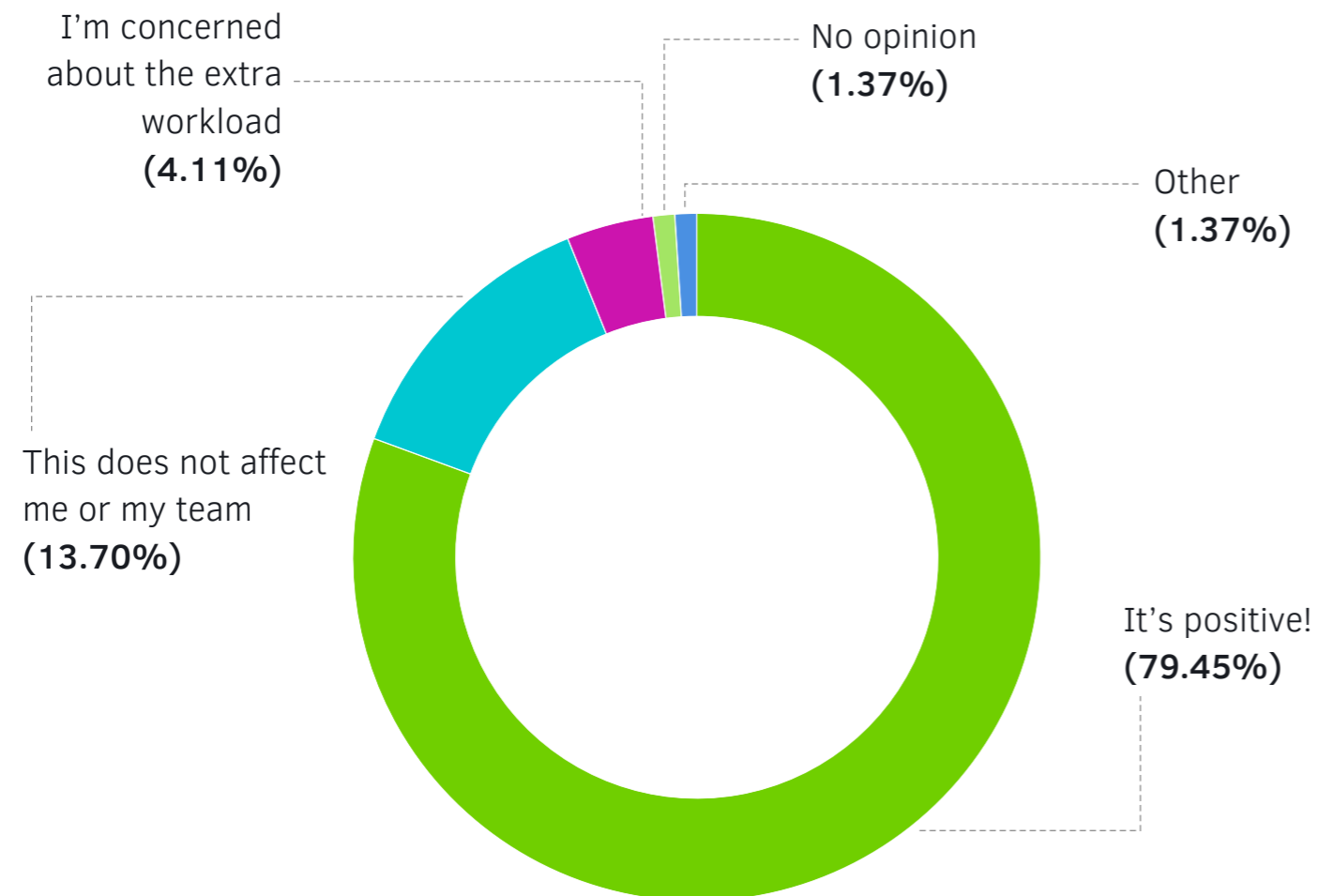
The most common request from students is help with course content remediation. Students also frequently need general accessibility help, such as help with assistive technology, note taking, etc.

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Students need help with: 1) remediating course content including textbooks (especially STEM), course materials (PDF, DOC, etc.), videos captioning; 2) accessing third-party platforms (e.g., Pearson, etc.); 3) in-person test proctoring or supporting extended time; 4) note-taking & interpreters.

QUESTION 10

Ally may generate extra awareness and requests from students about accessibility. How do you feel about this?



80% of respondents indicate that extra awareness and requests triggered by Ally would be a positive outcome, despite the potential of increased workload.

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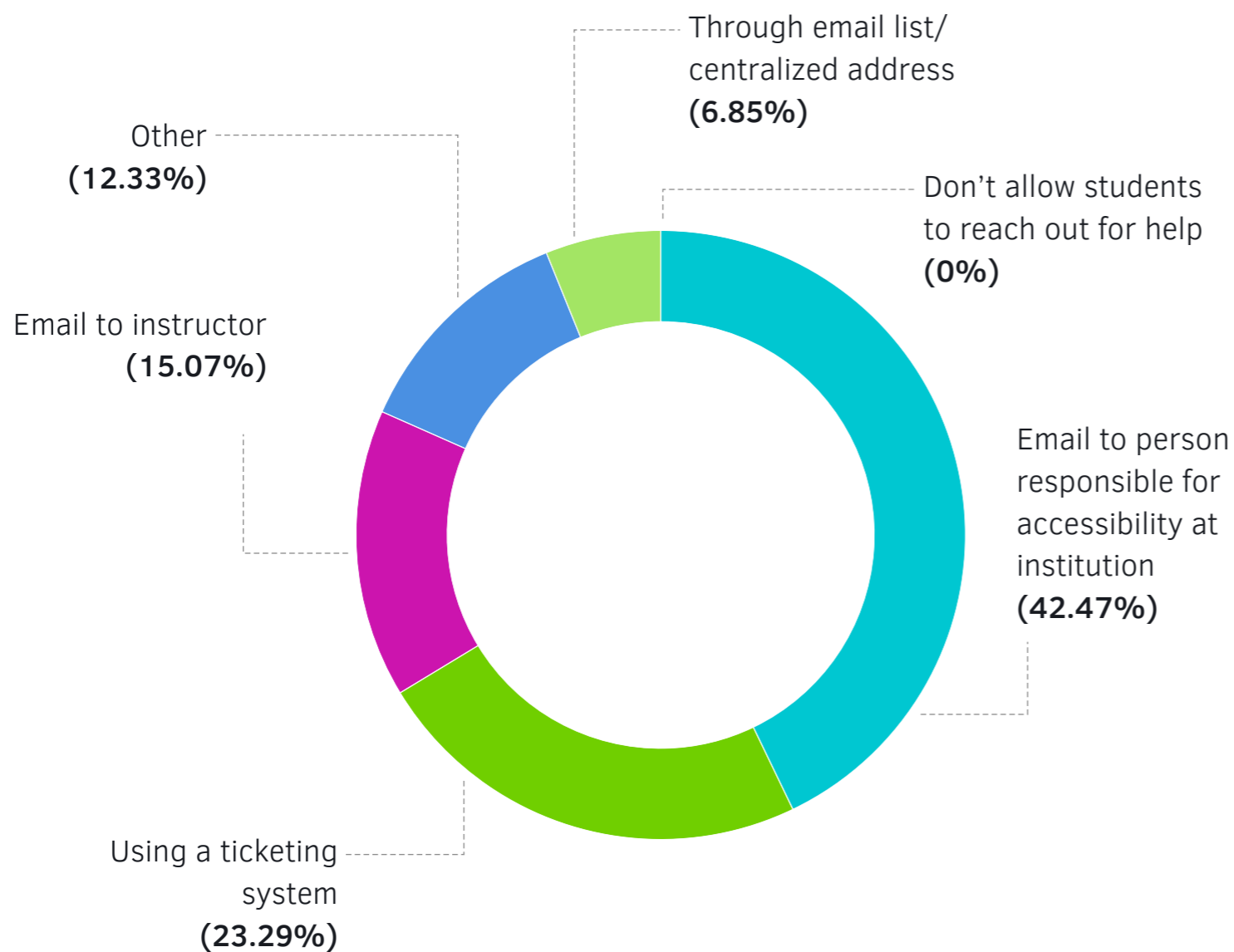
Would be thrilled if students felt more empowered to ask questions.

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Ally has enormous potential to support student learning, especially for those who do not self-identify or for students who can benefit from alternate formats.

QUESTION 11

When students request help with making their content accessible through Ally, how should the institution be notified?



The majority prefers a request through email or a ticketing system. There is an interest in cc-ing the instructor to help raise awareness.

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Ultimately the instructor should take responsibility [...]. It would be [good] if the email went to both the instructor and the ticketing system so we can make sure that faculty learn to respond appropriately to these requests.

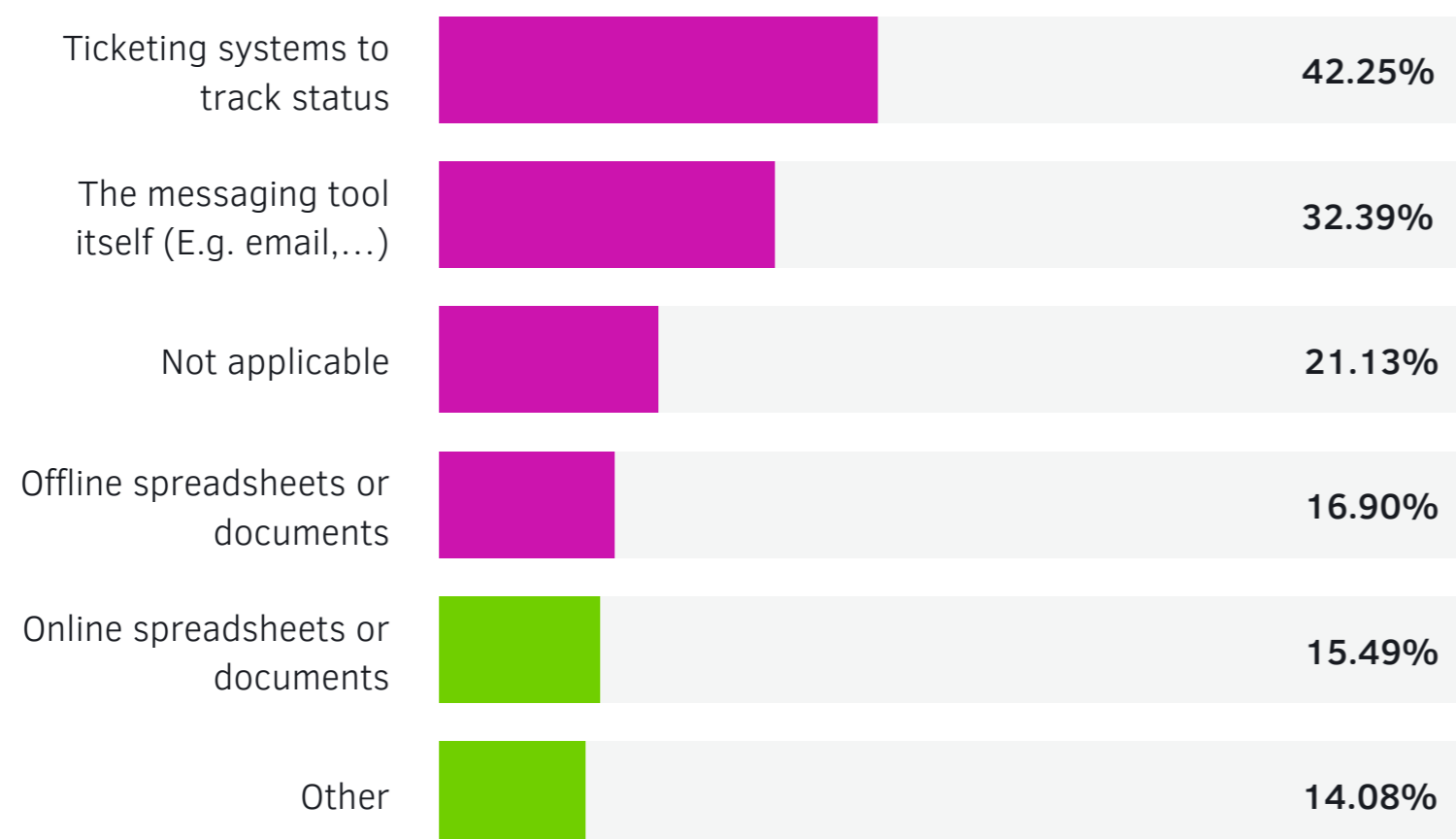
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Instructors to be made aware as well as accessibility team.

Tools and managing requests

QUESTION 12

What tools and systems does your institution use to manage or track incoming requests from teaching staff and students regarding accessibility?



Many said the use of tools could be more streamlined; sometimes a mix of tools is used for different purposes, or different departments use different tools. Some said that they want to move to a ticketing system.

“ We don't actually use anything centralized for this. We need help, maybe?

“ Plan to move to ticketing system.

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