



L-Università  
ta' Malta

**Analysis of feedback submitted  
by students during the academic years  
2015-16 & 2016 -17**

# Study-Unit Feedback: Why the Need?

- The study-unit feedback exercise is intended to provide students with an opportunity to act as collaborators in the evaluation, development and enhancement of their learning experience.
- From the evaluation of feedback submitted by students, the University can gauge whether the learning environment and the academic programmes it has on offer are meeting the expectations of students.
- Feedback from students further provides lecturers and departments with an opportunity for self-evaluation and improvement.

# Study-Unit Feedback: The Process

- Study-units are selected for evaluation on a cyclical basis with the aim that over a three-to-four year period all study-units included in a programme would have been evaluated by students to allow for a complete review of the programme.
- Students are given the opportunity to comment on the study-units they follow at the end of each semester (February and June).
- Students are invited to submit their feedback *after* they have been assessed on a particular study-unit but *before* publication of the assessment result.
- The reports of feedback submitted by students are made available to lecturers *after* the results of the assessment have been published to students.

# Study-Unit Feedback: The Questionnaire

- The questionnaire is composed of 29 close-ended questions and an open-ended question which allows students to express any other concerns and/or elaborate on their previous answers.
- The close-ended questions are rated on a standard 5-point scale, where 1 indicates that the student strongly agrees with the statement and 5 indicates that the student strongly disagrees.
- The questions are divided into six sections as follows:
  - General questions on the study-unit
  - Study-unit description and actual delivery
  - Lecturing Methodology
  - Lecturer/s
  - Method of Assessment
  - Administration and Resources

# Study-Unit Feedback: Ensuring Anonymity

Participation in the feedback exercise is not mandatory and is completely anonymous. The following procedures are in place to ensure that students are not adversely affected by the feedback they submit:

1. Although students are required to log onto e-SIMS to provide feedback, all student login data is kept separate from the students' feedback responses.
2. For the purpose of data analysis, student response data is grouped together for the entire class.
3. The feedback report which is made available to lecturers, after the assessment results have been published, summarizes all the information collated as percentage values, as indicated in the sample report included on the next slide.

# Study-Unit Feedback: Sample Report



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA  
*L-Università ta' Malta*

eSIMS

Academic Name and Surname (User Code)

## University of Malta Study-unit Feedback - February Feedback Results in Percentage

<b>Response:</b>	
Number of completed study-unit feedback forms so far:	65 / 119
Current response rate:	55%

Study-unit Code	Study-unit Title	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No ans
<b>1. General Questions on the Study-Unit</b>							
	The content of the study-unit met my initial expectations.	12	68	18		2	
	The study-unit was of help in strengthening the knowledge and skills relevant to my area of study.	23	54	12	8	3	
	There was a link between this study-unit and the remaining units of the course.	12	51	20	12	5	
	I would recommend this study-unit to other students if given a choice.	12	38	31	8	11	
<b>2. Study-Unit Description and Actual Delivery</b>							
	The study-unit description was clear.	22	46	23	5	5	
	The outline of the study-unit was followed and the aims/expected learning outcomes presented in the description were achieved.	18	54	18	6	3	
	Study-unit materials (main textbooks and suggested readings) were relevant.	12	32	32	18	5	
	The amount of work involved was compatible with the credit value assigned.	28	51	11	5	6	

# Study-Unit Feedback: What action is taken?

The results of the study-unit feedback submitted by students are communicated to the following:

- 1. Lecturers of the study-unit being reviewed:** this ensures that lecturers are made aware of any concerns identified by students and provides an opportunity for self-reflection.
- 2. Heads of Department, Deans and Directors:** this allows for consideration of any emergent trends at departmental level. It is also the responsibility of Heads to discuss issues with departmental staff and ensure that these are addressed.
- 3. Director Library Services:** any feedback pertinent to library resources, particularly that indicating areas which are considered to be lacking is communicated to the Director for Library Services.

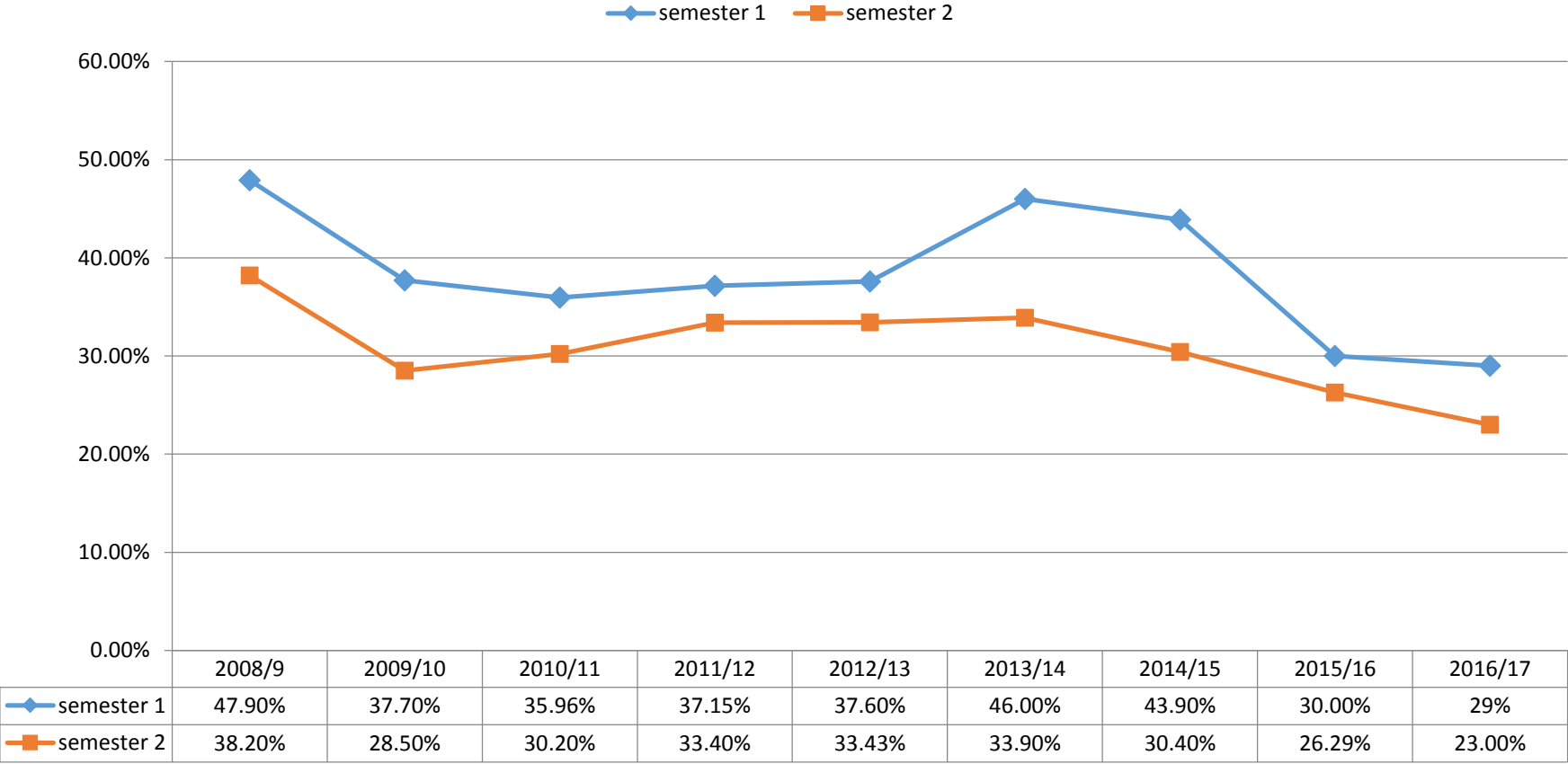
## Study-Unit Feedback: What action is taken? (2)

4. **Registrar:** any feedback relevant to administration and resources is communicated to the Registrar.
5. **Rector and Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs:** any urgent/serious matters are referred to the Rector and Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs, who will then discuss these issues with the Heads of Department concerned. Problematic study-units are monitored during subsequent exercises.
6. **Students:** a summary of the findings for the feedback conducted during each academic year is made available on the University's website. Students are further informed via e-mail of the actions taken by the University with regard to study-units which are deemed "problematic".



# Response Rates Over the Years

Response Rates for Academic Years 2009/10 - 2016/17



# Data Analysis for the Academic Year 2015-16

- In **February 2016**, a total of **570** study-units were selected for evaluation. Out of a possible **18,179** responses, only **5,529** complete responses were submitted.
  - **This equates to an average response rate of 30.41%**
- In **June 2016**, a total of **575** study-units were evaluated. Out of a possible **16,046** responses, only **4,214** complete responses were submitted.
  - **This equates to an average response rate of 26.26%**

# Data Analysis for the Academic Year 2016-17

- In **February 2017**, a total of **598** study-units were selected for evaluation. Out of a possible **16,827** responses, only **4,863** complete responses were submitted.
  - **This equates to an average response rate of 28.90%**
- In **June 2017**, a total of **700** study-units were evaluated. Out of a possible **17,838** responses, only **4,129** complete responses were submitted.
  - **This equates to an average response rate of 23.15%**

*The responses received at the two sessions conducted during this academic year (2016/17) are the **lowest** to date.*

# Average Response Rates: Faculties

Faculty	February Session 2016		June Session 2016		February Session 2017		June Session 2017	
	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate
Arts	97	41.88	102	31.85	92	43.52	103	33.59
Built Environment	22	12.80	19	18.08	21	16.10	16	16.13
Dental Surgery	3	79.17	12	50.00	4	62.25	20	36.90
Economics, Management & Accountancy	75	24.72	47	15.99	68	33.51	66	32.50
Education	31	27.12	55	20.27	25	28.08	53	21.02
Engineering	23	18.65	13	19.45	21	23.52	17	17.35
Health Sciences	42	18.48	52	21.42	55	24.55	53	20.58
Information & Communication Technology	23	33.26	24	19.38	64	26.41	64	20.63
Laws	30	37.16	22	26.47	26	30.27	22	18.05
Media & Knowledge Sciences	18	32.59	16	42.34	23	41.96	22	34.86
Medicine & Surgery	25	44.80	29	39.52	23	36.57	37	26.65
Science	25	21.50	41	20.94	23	30.61	40	25.40
Social Wellbeing	42	37.55	46	33.97	42	39.64	44	27.93
Theology	12	42.76	13	37.82	12	50.83	13	37.15

# Average Response Rates: Institutes

Institute	February Session 2016		June Session 2016		February Session 2017		June Session 2017	
	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate
Baroque Studies	2	5.88	4	14.55	1	63.00	1	63.00
Design and Development of Thinking	4	50.00	3	26.23	5	54.80	4	76.25
Digital Games	1	60.00	-	-	1	17.00	1	67.00
Earth Systems	8	27.27	9	34.50	9	43.78	9	40.00
European Studies	5	22.36	5	13.17	8	32.50	-	-
Islands and Small States	1	50.00	1	80.00	-	-	1	80.00
Linguistics & Language Technology	13	21.76	9	39.26	8	52.25	10	37.40
Maltese Studies	1	50.00	1	33.33	1	42.00	1	58.00
Physical Education & Sport	2	29.63	4	26.85	3	21.33	5	15.20
Public Administration & Management	1	100.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sustainable Energy	-	-	-	-	1	50	1	43.00
Tourism, Travel & Culture	11	25.52	7	16.89	9	26.44	5	19.80

# Average Response Rates: Centres & Schools

Centres and Schools	February Session 2016		June Session 2016		February Session 2017		June Session 2017	
	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate	No of Study-Units Evaluated	% Overall Response Rate
English Language Proficiency	15	30.69	2	25.00	8	21.75	43	18.79
Entrepreneurship & Business Incubation	1	26.32	1	17.00	2	45.50	1	30.00
Environmental Education & Research	1	16.67	1	8.00	1	65.00	1	22.00
Foundation Studies	7	84.76	8	70.90	5	91.00	13	58.23
Labour Studies	3	48.86	4	55.47	5	50.00	4	51.50
Liberal Arts & Sciences	18	25.46	13	45.32	16	45.25	18	48.06
MEDAC	1	7.00	5	13.04	3	10.00	4	10.75
Performing Arts	7	56.38	7	51.19	13	56.69	7	34.14
Resilience and Socioemotional Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	25.00

# Problematic Study-Units: How are these identified?

- The first filter which is applied is the average response rate. As low response rates can compromise the validity of the exercise, only those study-units which achieve a response rate of at least 30% are analysed.
- After selecting only those study-units which achieve an overall response rate of 30%+, the second filter is then applied to each of the study-units so selected.
- For any of these “filtered” study-units, if the number of negative responses to the 29 questions asked exceeds 25%, the study-unit is deemed as “problematic”.
- Negative responses are those with a rating of 3 or higher on the 5 point Likert Scale, where 1 indicates that the students strongly agree with the statement made, and 5 indicates that the students strongly disagree.

# Problematic Study-Units

- Using the filtering criteria explained above, of the **1145 study-units** evaluated during 2015/16, only **34 study-units** were identified as “problematic”. This is equivalent to 2.97% of the total study-units evaluated.
- In 2016/17, **31 study-units** of the **1298** which were evaluated over the two feedback sessions, were identified as “problematic”. This equates to 2.39% of the total study-units evaluated.
- A breakdown of the number of “problematic” study-units by F/I/C/S is included on the next slide, whilst the subsequent slide depicts the % negative responses which each of these study-units solicited.

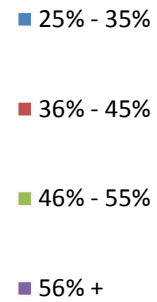
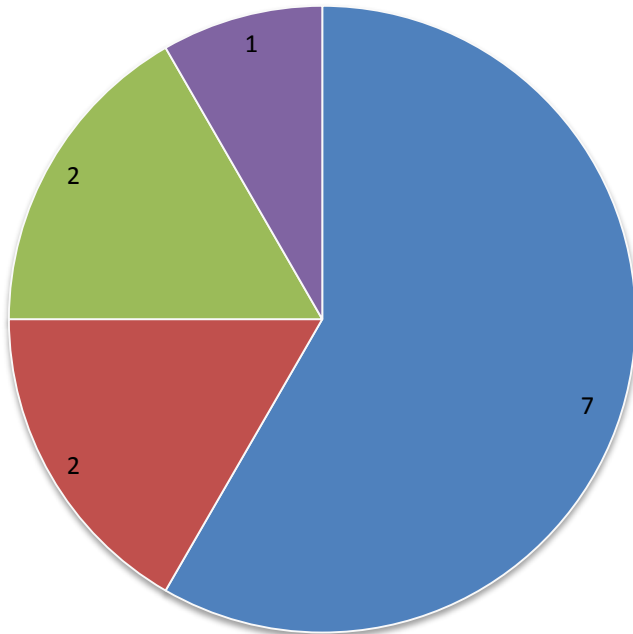


# Breakdown of Problematic Study-Units by F/I/C/S

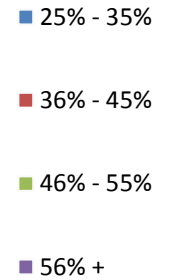
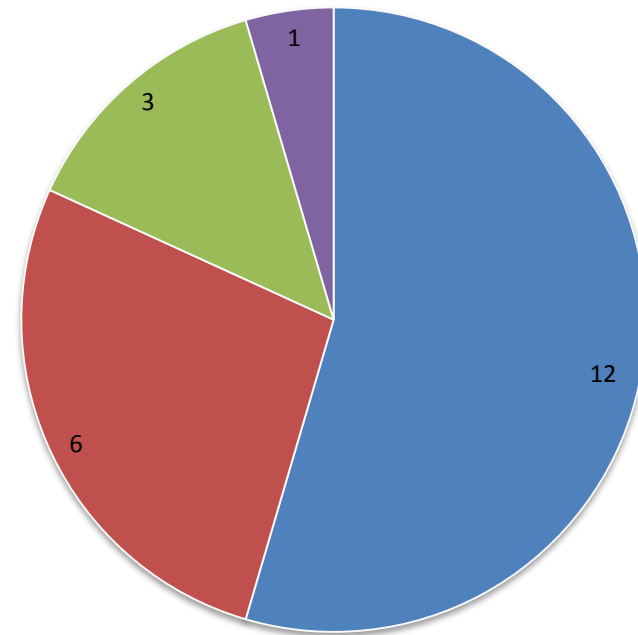
F/I/C/S	Total Study-Units Evaluated 2016	Study-Units identified as "Problematic" 2016	Total Study-Units Evaluated 2017	Study-Units identified as "Problematic" 2017
Arts	199	8	195	5
Built Environment	41	1	37	0
Dental Surgery	15	1	24	1
Economics, Management & Accountancy	122	2	134	5
Education	86	0	78	2
Health Sciences	94	2	108	3
Information & Communication Technology	47	3	128	3
Media & Knowledge Sciences	34	4	45	1
Medicine and Surgery	54	6	60	4
Science	66	2	63	0
Social Wellbeing	88	2	86	1
Linguistics	22	1	18	2
Sustainable Energy		0	2	1
Tourism, Travel & Culture	18	1	14	2
Liberal Arts & Sciences	31	1	34	0
School of Performing Arts	14	0	20	1
<b>TOTAL PROBLEMATIC</b>		<b>34</b>		<b>31</b>

# Problematic Study-Units: % Negative Responses

February 2016

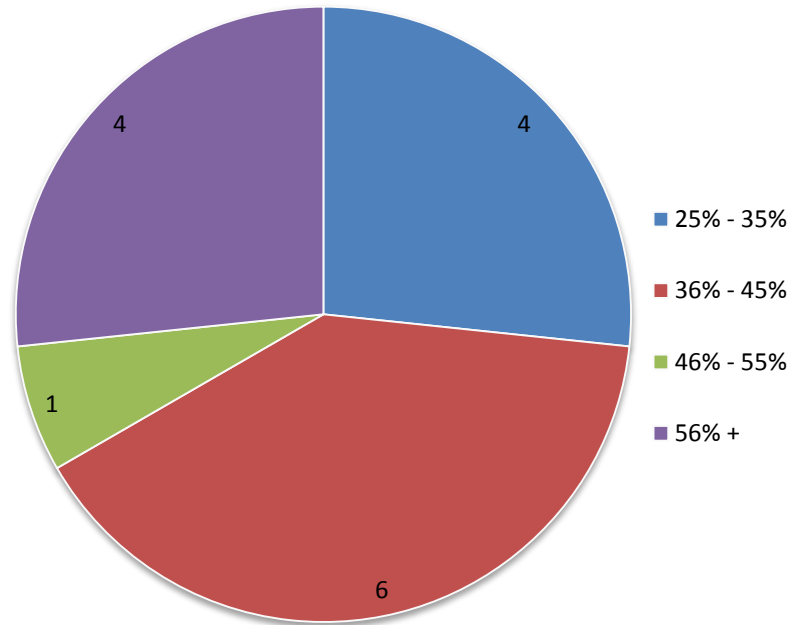


June 2016

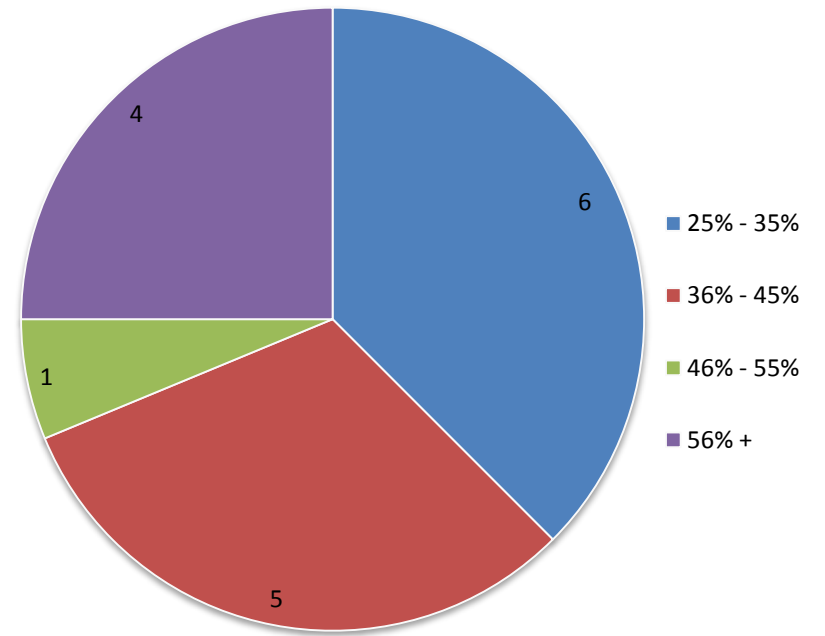


# Problematic Study-Units: % Negative Responses

February 2017



June 2017



# **Problematic Study-Units 2015/16: Action Taken**

What follows is a list of the actions which were taken by the University in response to study-units identified as “problematic”. It is to be noted that the number of actions exceeds the number of study-units identified as requiring attention, as some of the problems identified were recurrent:

## **Problematic Study-Units 2015/16 : List of Actions (1)**

1. The assessment methods were revised and better assessment procedures were introduced  
(11 instances)
2. Change in lecturer or discontinuation of service from lecturer employed on casual basis  
(5 instances)
3. The study-unit was restructured to make it more relevant to the programme  
(5 instances)
4. Change in lecturing methodology  
(4 instances)

## **Problematic Study-Units 2015/16: List of Actions (2)**

5. Revision of notes and lecturing materials, and provision of such materials through VLE (8 instances)
6. Increase in the number of tutorial and lab sessions (3 instances)
7. Change in study-unit description (3 instances)
8. Improvement of lecture logistics (3 instances)
9. Better communication with students (2 instances)

## **Problematic Study-Units 2016/17 : List of Actions (1)**

1. The study-unit was replaced or restructured to make it more relevant to the programme (7 instances)
2. The assessment methods were revised and better assessment procedures were introduced (6 instances)
3. Change in lecturer or discontinuation of service from lecturer employed on casual basis (3 instances)
4. Better Coordination of study-unit (5 instances)

## **Problematic Study-Units 2016/17: List of Actions (2)**

5. More and improved lecturing material and notes where provided (3 instances)
6. The programme was revised to provide for better sequencing of the subjects being taught (3 instances)
7. Change in lecturing methodology (2 instances)
8. Change in lecture room (1 instance)



# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis

- Apart from analysing the “problematic” study-units, all feedback submitted by students from across the University was scrutinized to identify the main weaknesses and strengths as perceived by students.
- For the purposes of this analysis, only the responses to the questions which are **common to all students** (those included in Sections 1, 2, 5 and 6) were considered.

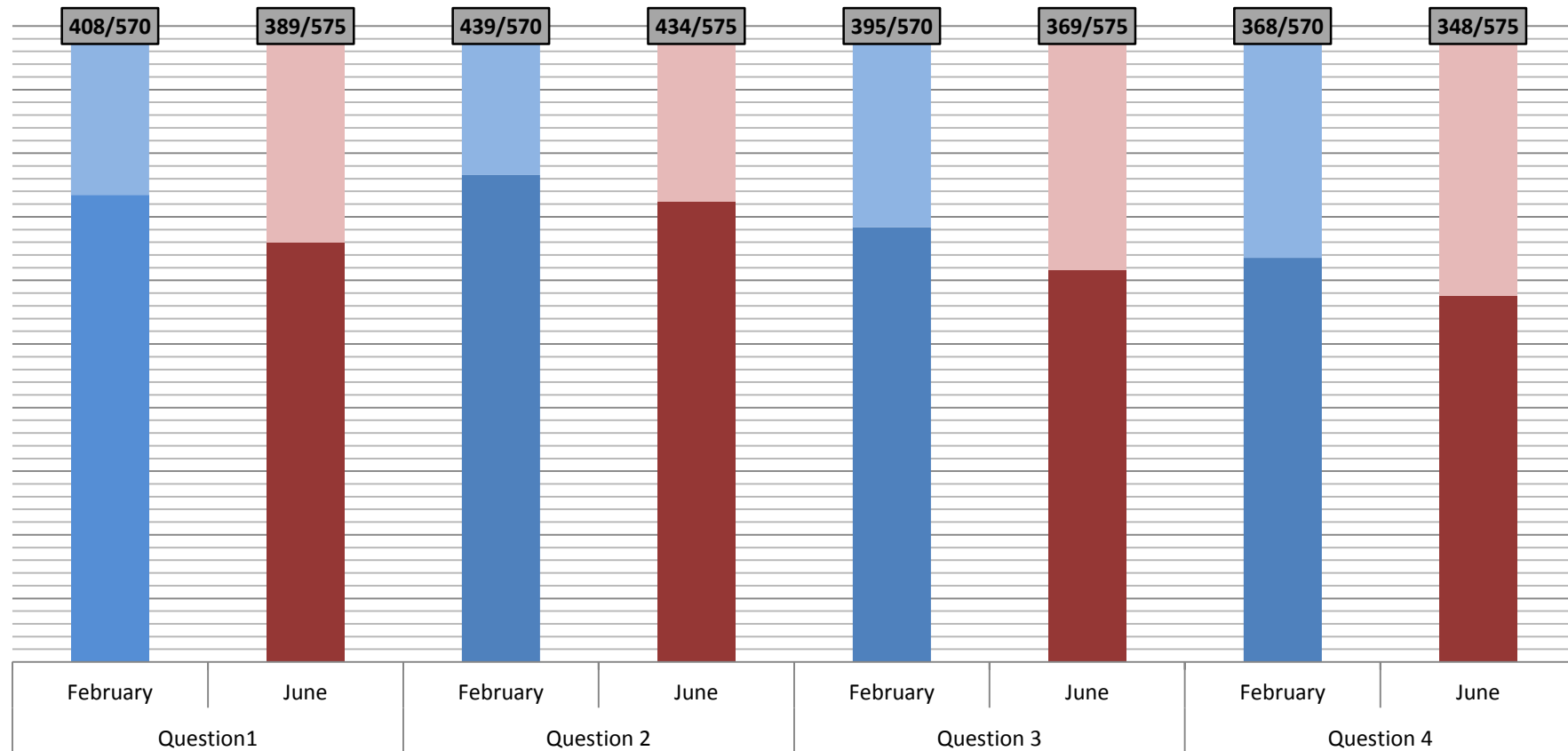
## Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis (2)

- Close inspection of the statements included under Sections 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the questionnaire (and in particular those which solicited 50%+ negative responses of the total submitted), would indicate that for a number of study-units, students believe that:
  - The amount of work involved in the assessment and the time allowed were not fair
  - The amount of work was incompatible with the assigned credit value
  - Library, lab resources and lecture rooms were not always considered sufficient

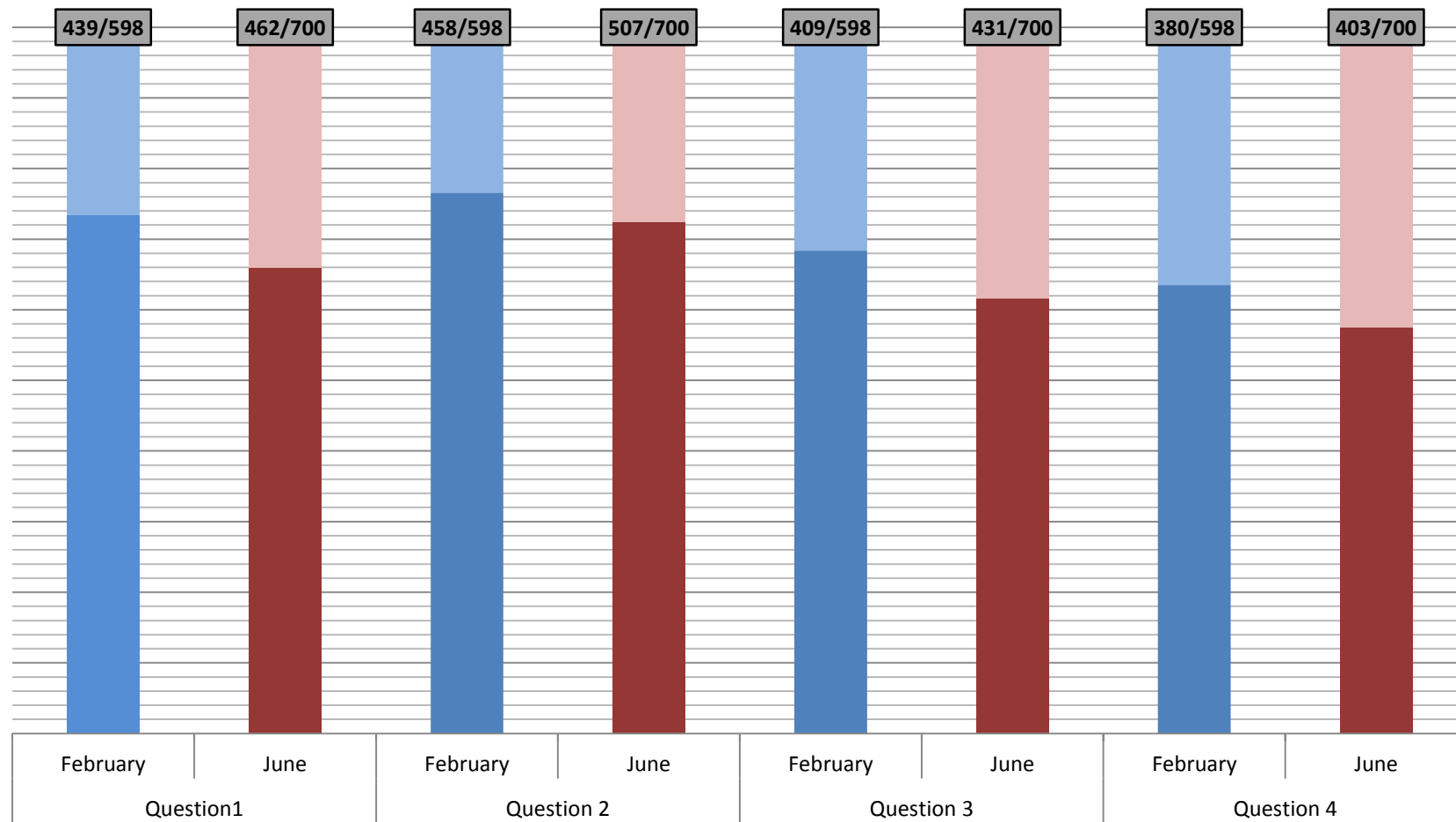
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis (3)

- Apart from analysing the negative responses, we also sought to gauge the students' overall satisfaction by considering those statements to which students responded that they were in agreement (or strong agreement) with.
- For the purpose of this analysis, we considered those study-units which registered 75%+ positive responses (of the total submitted). This information is depicted in the following slides:

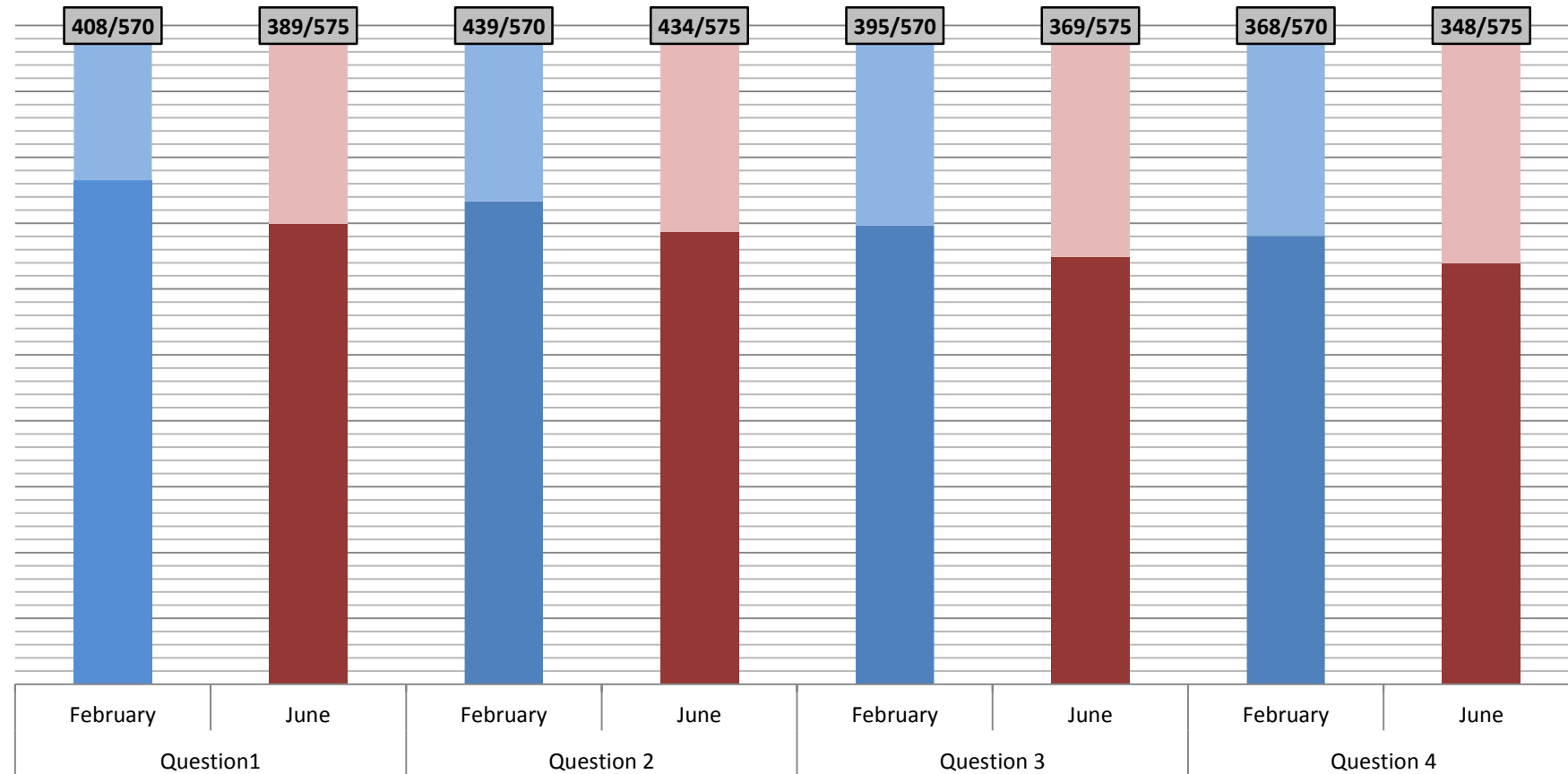
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 1 – 2015/2016



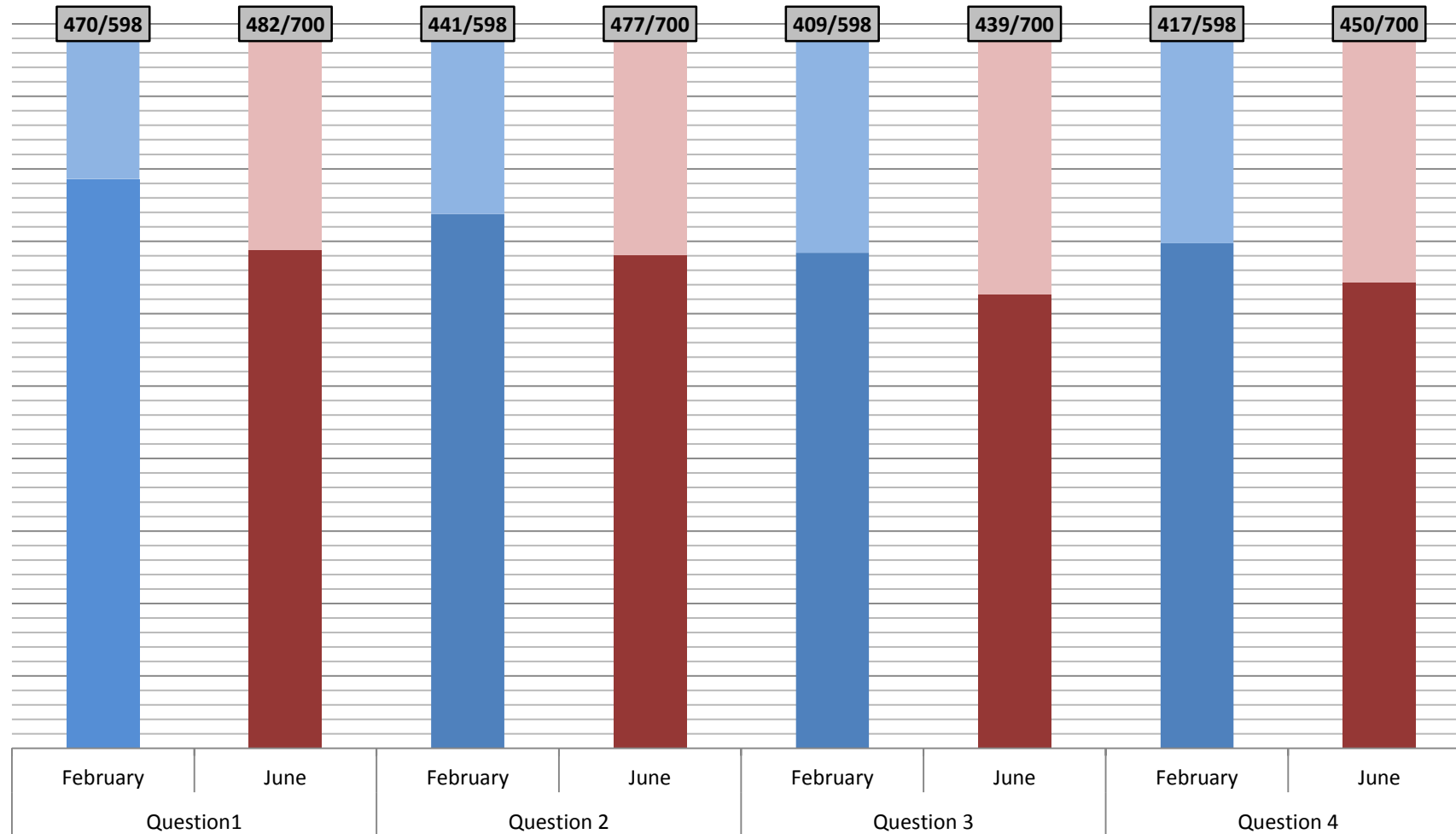
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 1 – 2016/2017



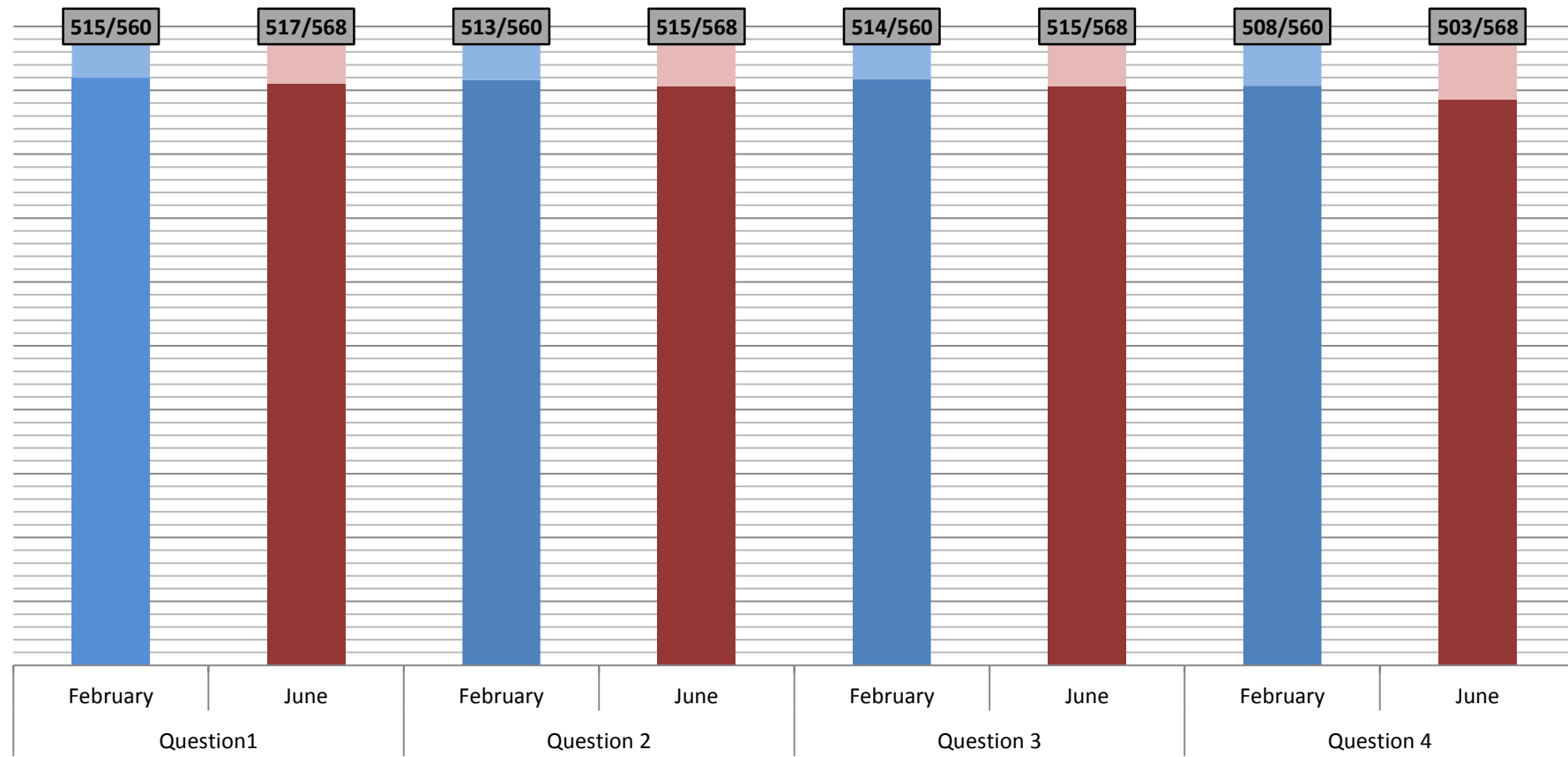
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 2 – 2015/2016



# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 2 – 2016/2017

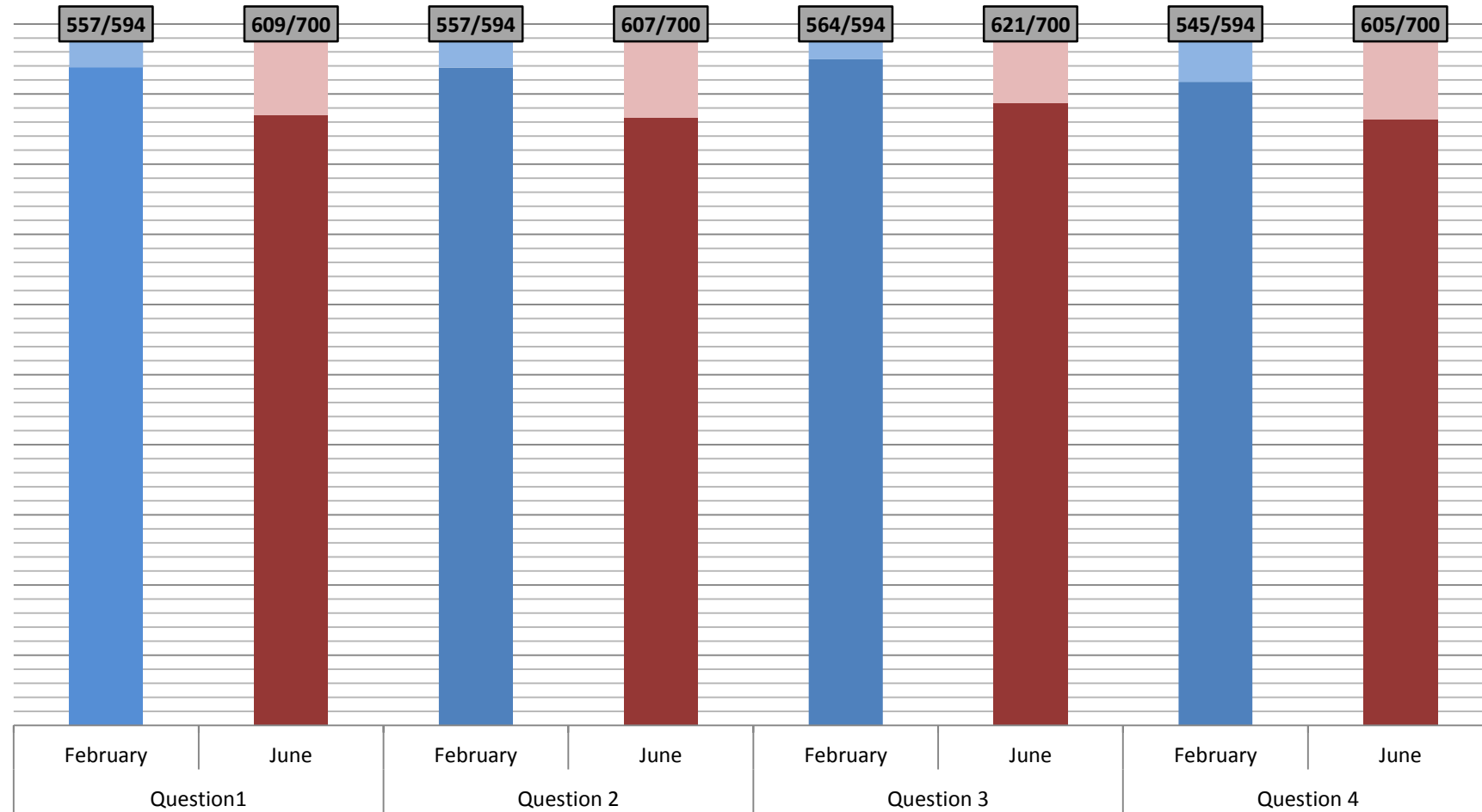


# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 5 (General) – 2015/2016

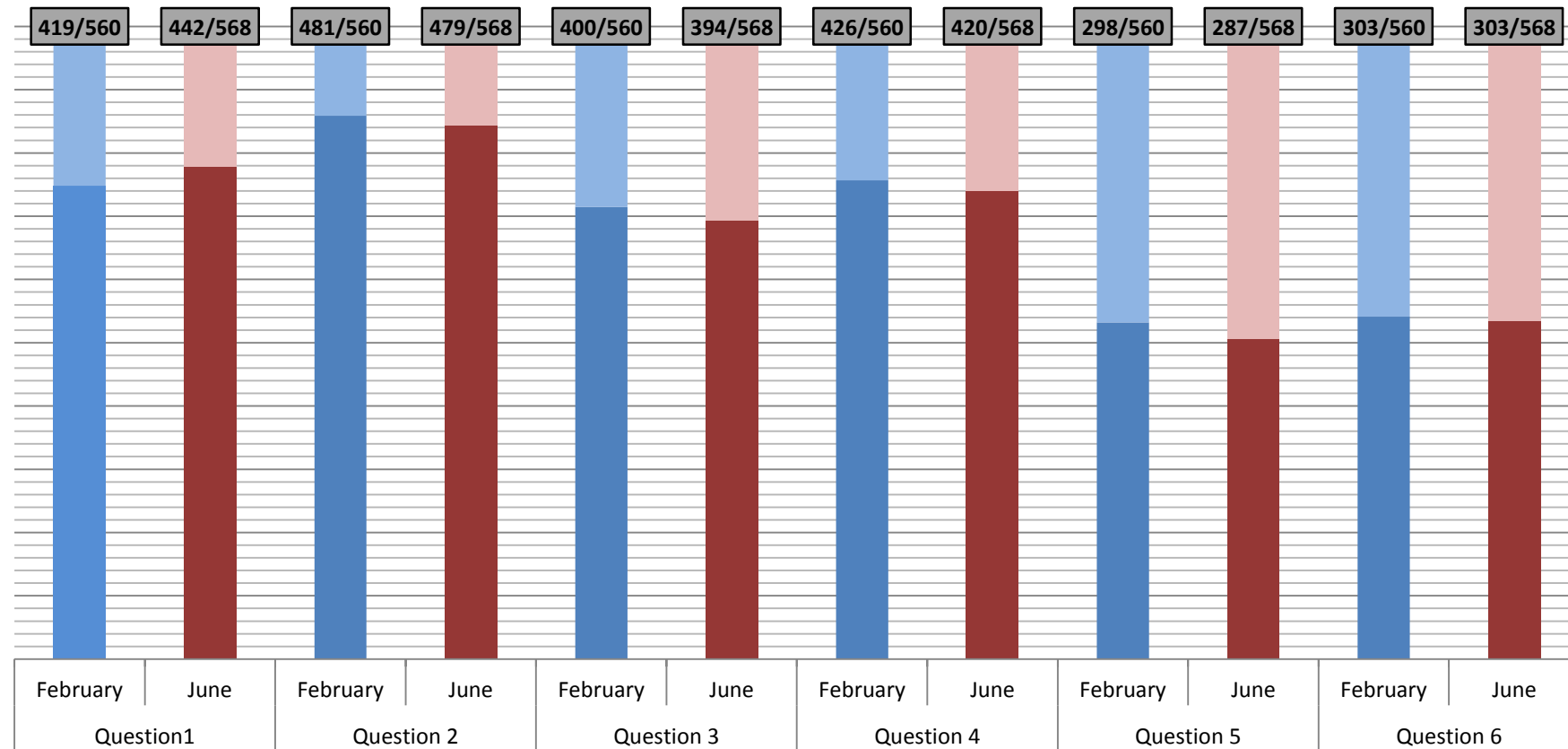




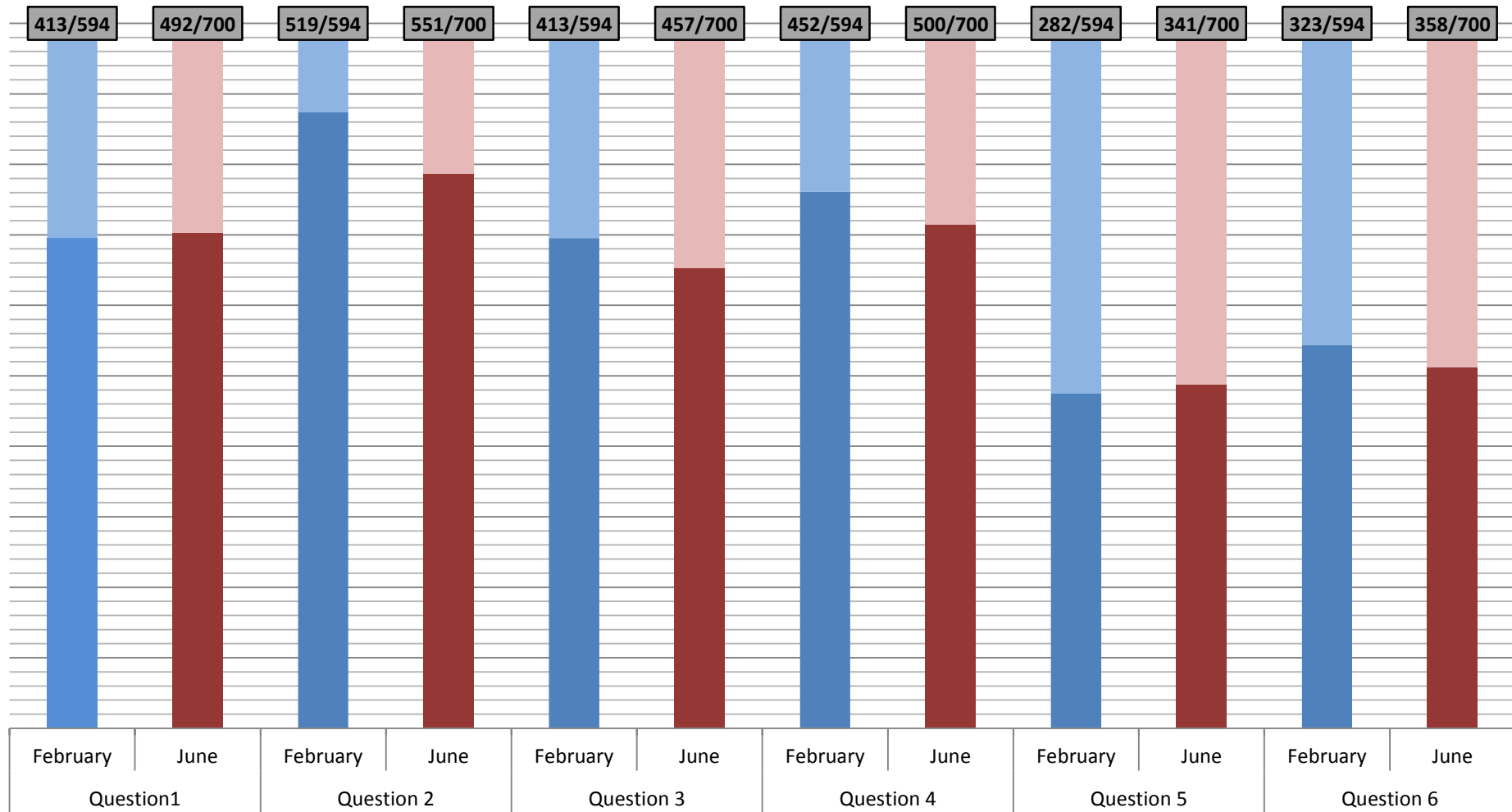
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 5 (General) – 2016/2017



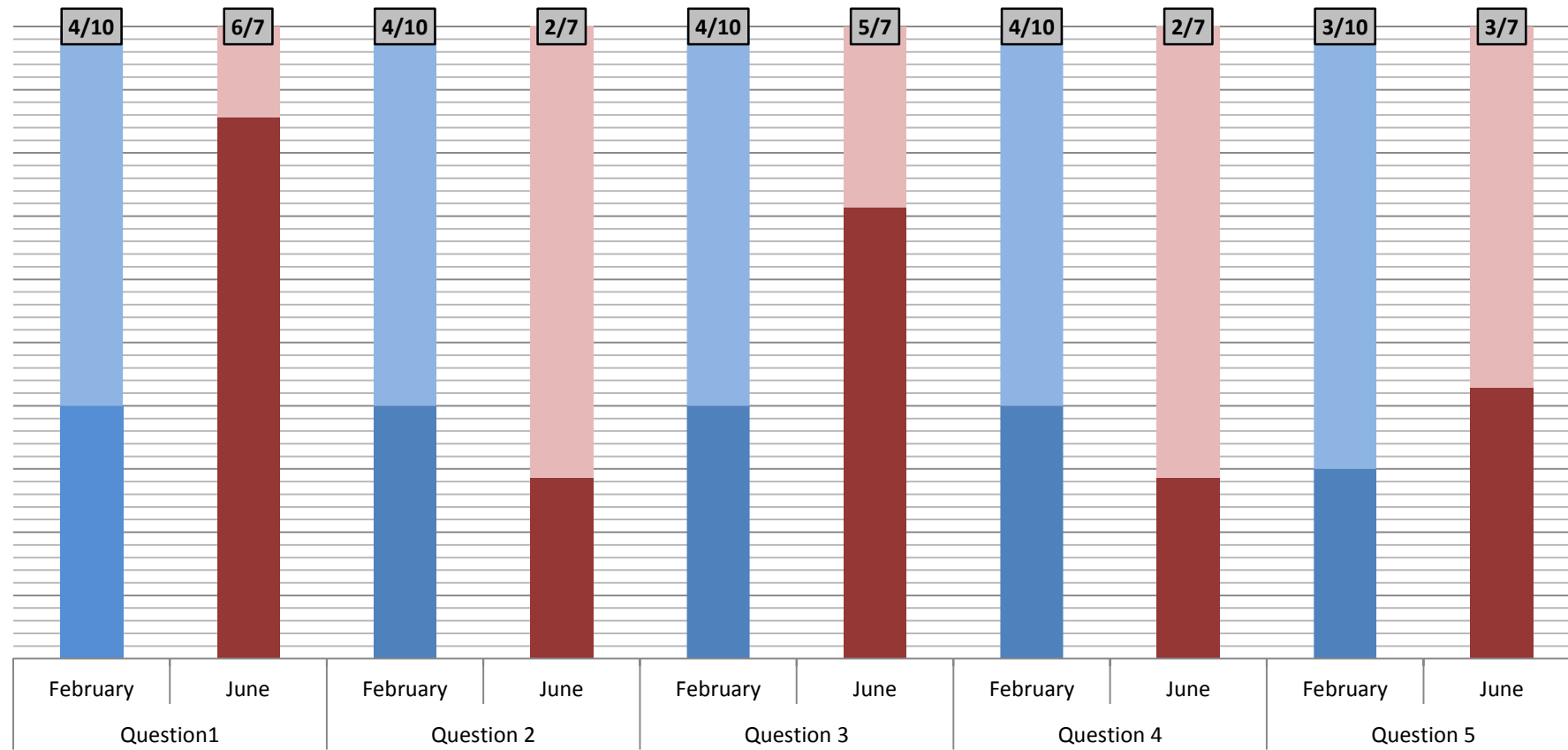
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 6 (General) – 2015/2016



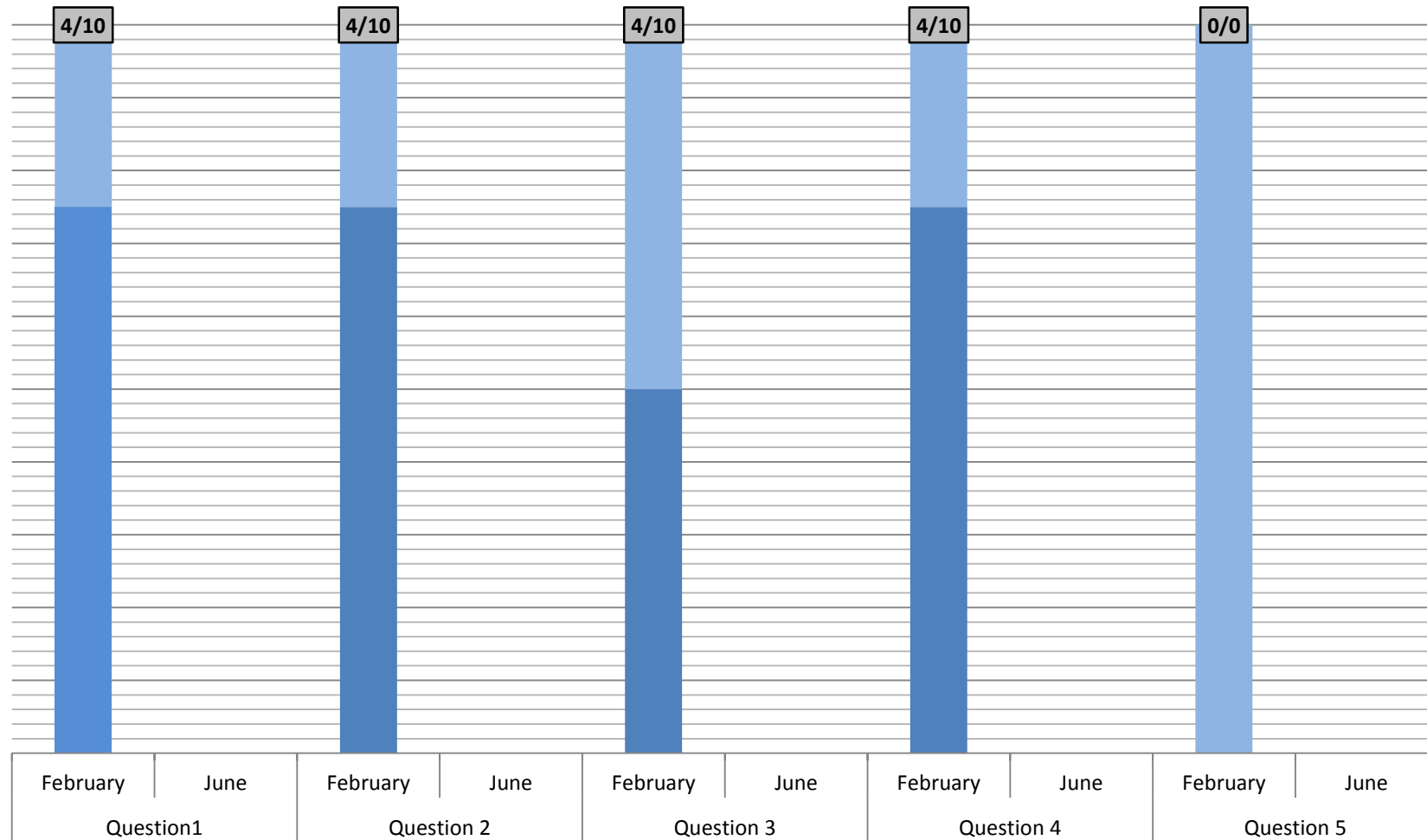
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 6 (General) – 2016/2017



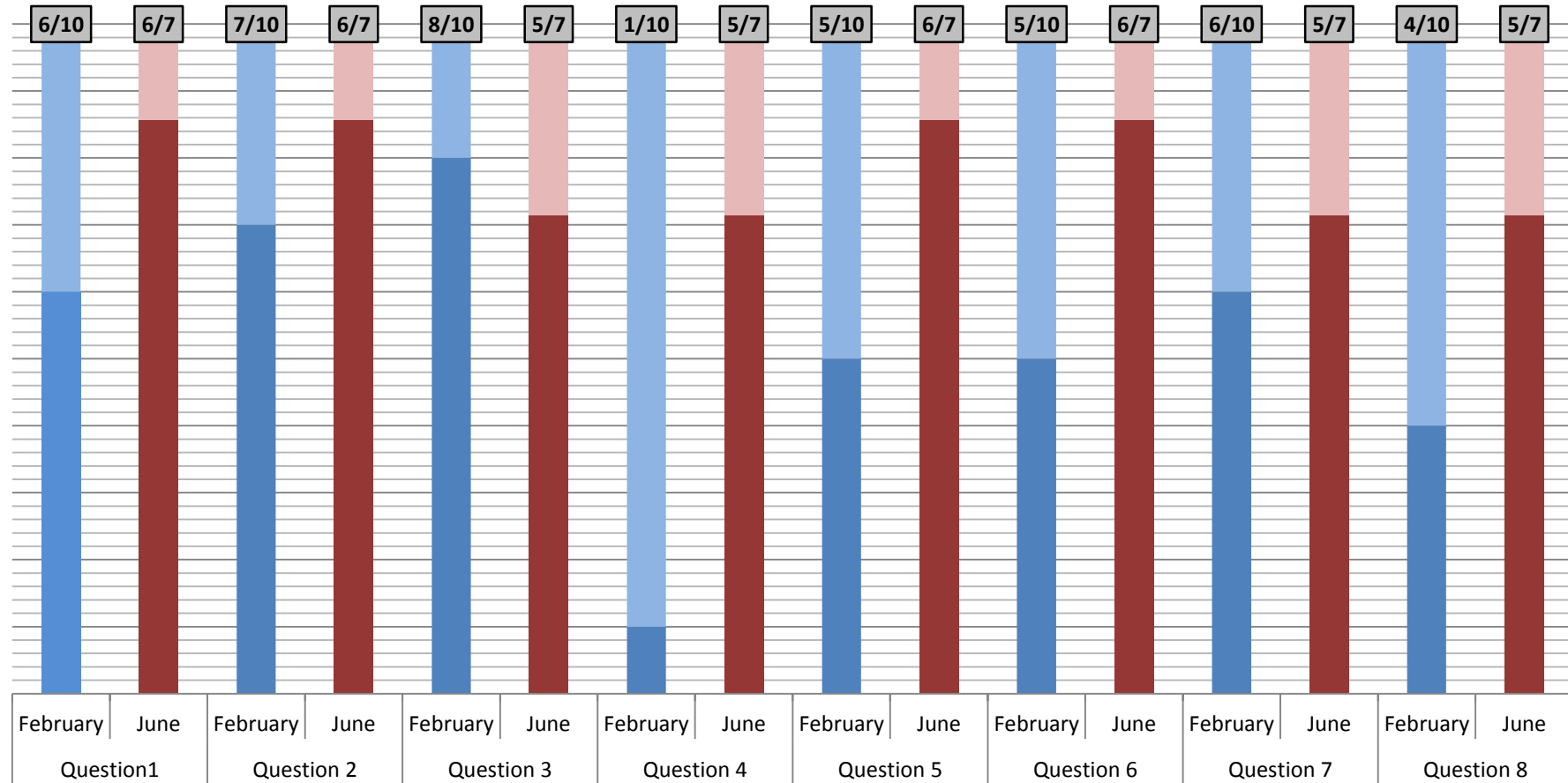
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 5 (Practical) – 2015/2016



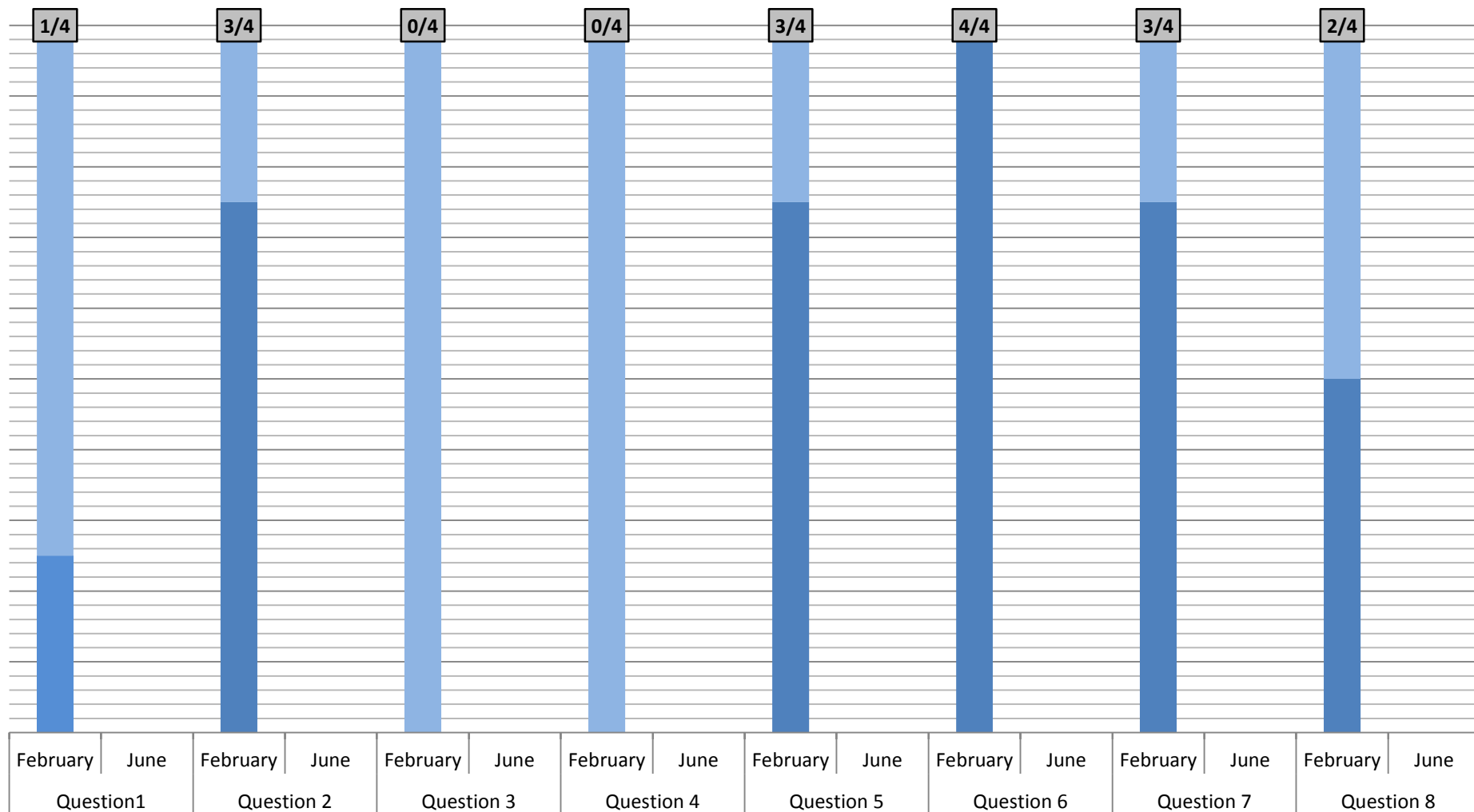
# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 5 (Practical) – 2016/2017



# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 6 (Practical) – 2015/2016



# Study-Unit Feedback: Further Analysis – Section 6 (Practical) – 2016/2017



# Study-Unit Feedback: The Way Forward

- The data presented would suggest that students appear to be generally satisfied with the quality of service provision.
- A limitation of the study however, is the low response rate, which despite repeated and sustained efforts to get more students to participate in the exercise, registers as the lowest to date.
- As part of the University's commitment to engage students as partners in their learning experience, the University, through its Programme Validation Committee, is currently exploring novel ways of conducting these exercises.