



# 2024 Optometry Student Report

An independent market research report on optometry students' school choices, experiences, and career aspirations.



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# Key takeaways

Optometry students in 2024 are navigating a complex landscape of educational choices, financial considerations, and career aspirations. Students are generally satisfied with their school choices, though cost and the need for effective mental health resources remain significant concerns. A key insight is the emphasis on practical clinical skills and the drive to find post-graduation employment, often influenced by word-of-mouth and networking.

Interestingly, staying close to family and friends is the most important factor for optometry students when choosing their school location, highlighting the significant role of support systems during their education.

**Whether through community networks, friends outside of their program, or other means of connection, it's clear that the current class of optometry students need adequate support and connection both in and out of school.**



# Methods

## OVERVIEW

The 2024 Optometry Student Report utilized a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data through structured and open-ended questions. The survey was conducted via Typeform, targeting a broad segment of the population of interest (current optometry students) through email and website campaigns.

## ETHICS, INTERPRETATION, AND LIMITATIONS

Respondents were informed about the survey’s purpose, voluntary participation, and data rights. All responses were anonymized. The final report includes actionable recommendations based on the data, highlighting areas for potential improvement in optometry education and support services.

## SAMPLING & QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey targeted respondents from diverse backgrounds and regions using convenience sampling methods. The questions, designed to ensure clarity and neutrality, include multiple choice, Likert scale, and open ended. Feedback from subject matter experts helped refine the survey, ensuring it was free of bias and both internally and externally valid.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

If you participated in the survey, thank you! Your input is essential for representing the diverse voices of eyecare professionals, and your participation helps ensure the validity and accuracy of these reports.

We hope you find this report useful. As always, please email us a [research@eyesoneyecare.com](mailto:research@eyesoneyecare.com) with any feedback or questions.

## DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS



**This research was conducted in April 2024 through Typeform, with a raffle incentive for (50) \$10.00 Target gift cards. 308 US and Canadian optometry students participated in our survey.**

A total of 438 individuals started the survey, with 315 completing it (a 71.9% completion rate). Data integrity was maintained through rigorous coding and cleaning using RStudio. After cleaning, quantitative responses from 308 students were analyzed using descriptive statistics and linear regression, providing detailed insights into their educational experiences and future aspirations. These insights were then translated into high-quality visualizations.

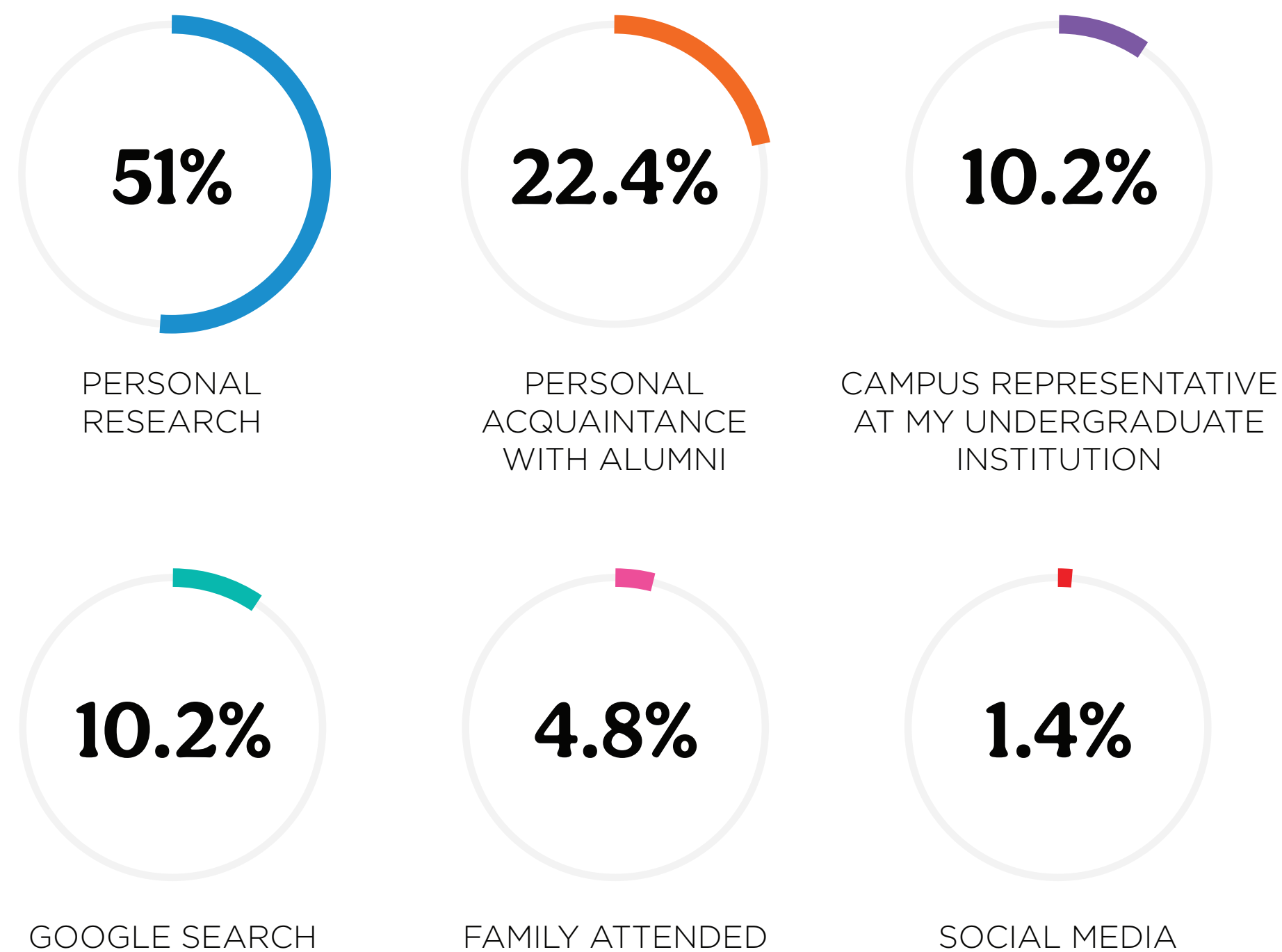
TOTAL (n = 308)

## How many optometry schools did you apply to?

**3.72**  
AVERAGE

TOTAL (n = 296)

## How did you first hear about your optometry school?



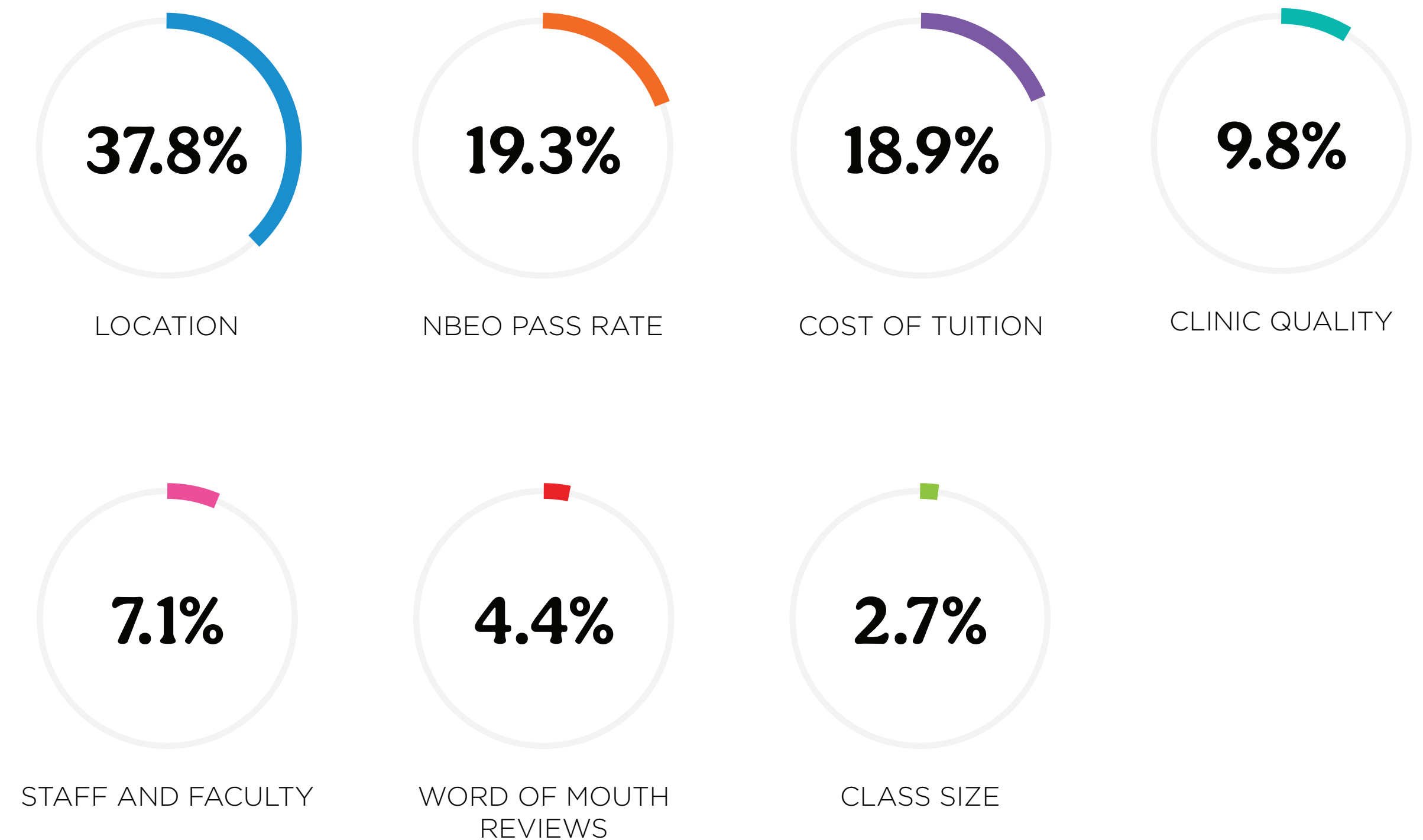
TOTAL (n = 308)

## How many optometry schools did you get offers from?

**2.67**  
AVERAGE

TOTAL (n = 294)

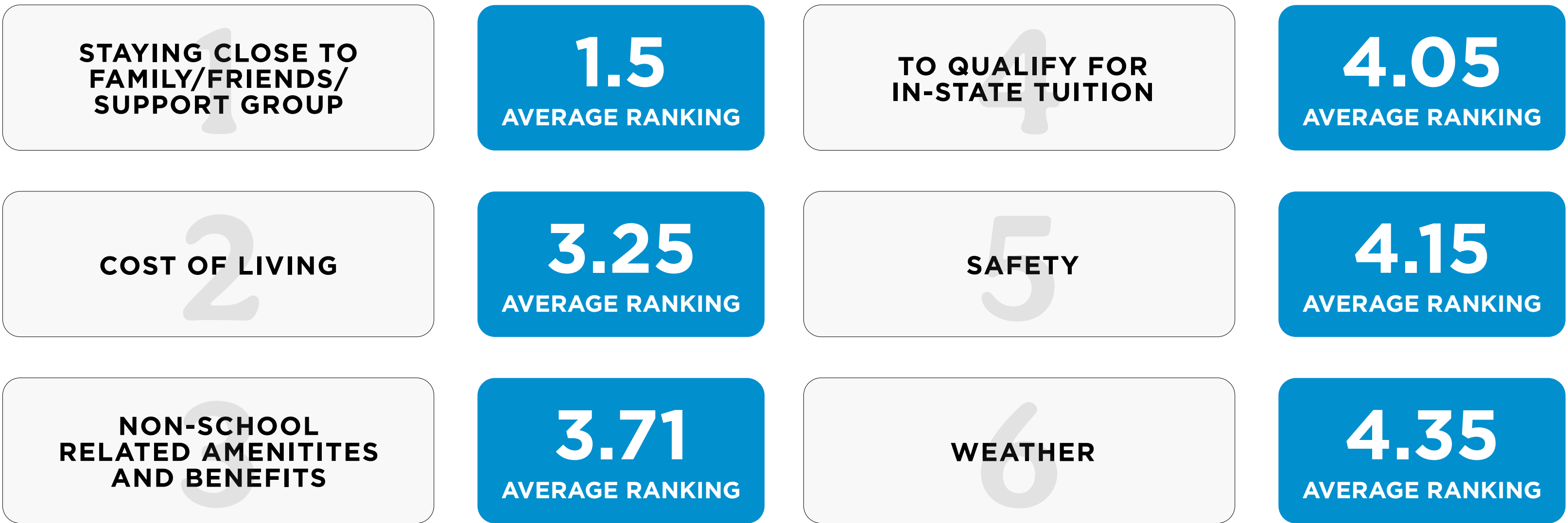
## What was the main factor in choosing your optometry school?



OPTOMETRY STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFIED LOCATION AS THE MAIN FACTOR IN THEIR CHOICE OF OPTOMETRY SCHOOL (n = 110)

# What about the location of this institution mattered most?

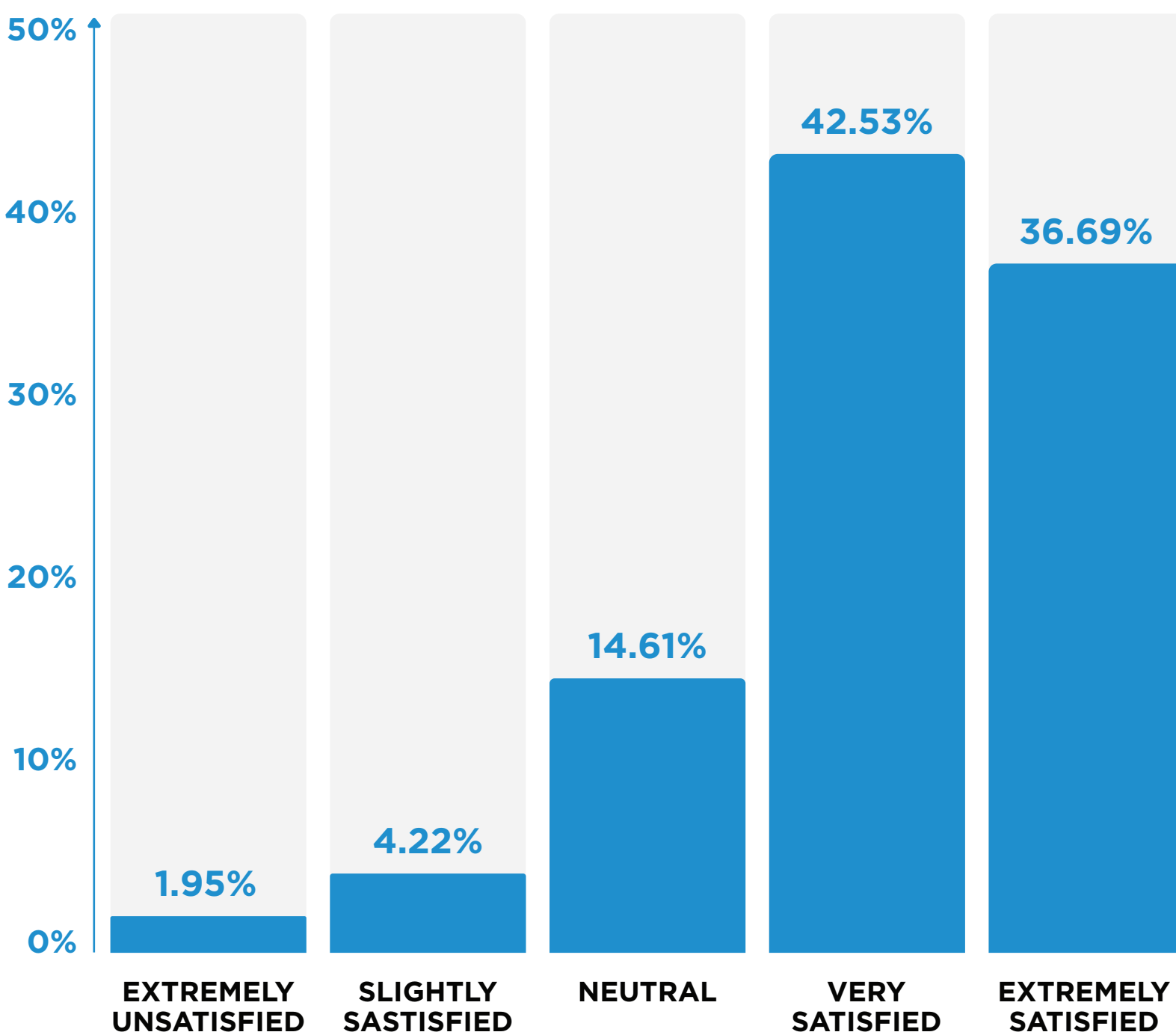
\*Respondents were asked to rank the following:



Staying close to family and friends is, on average, the top priority for optometry students when selecting their school location, underscoring the crucial role of support systems during their education. Cost of living and non-school related amenities, such as new experiences and transportation, also play crucial roles in their decision-making process.

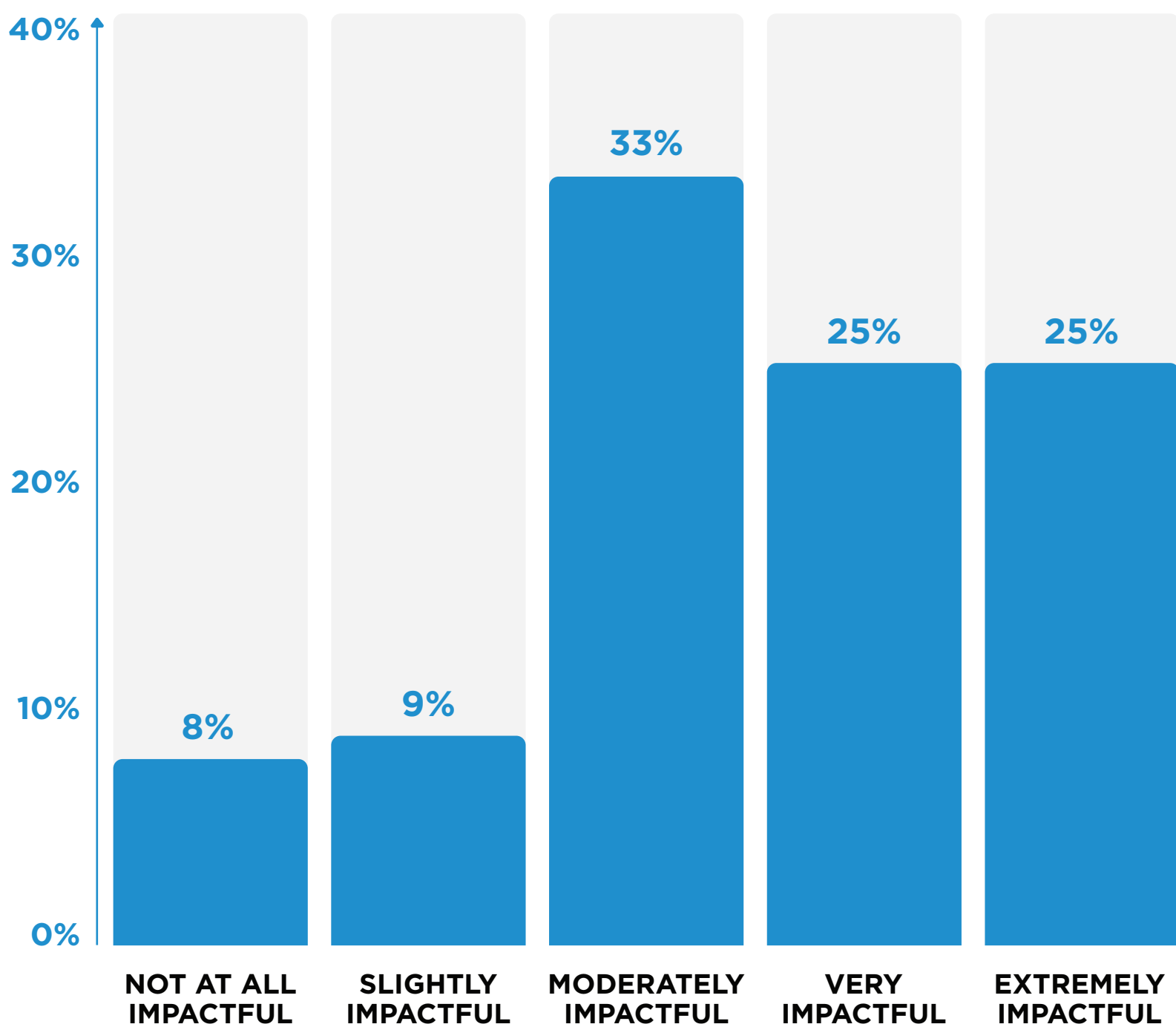
TOTAL (n = 308)

## To what extent are you satisfied with your choice of optometry school?



TOTAL (n = 308)

## Rate how much the cost of tuition impacted your choice of optometry school.

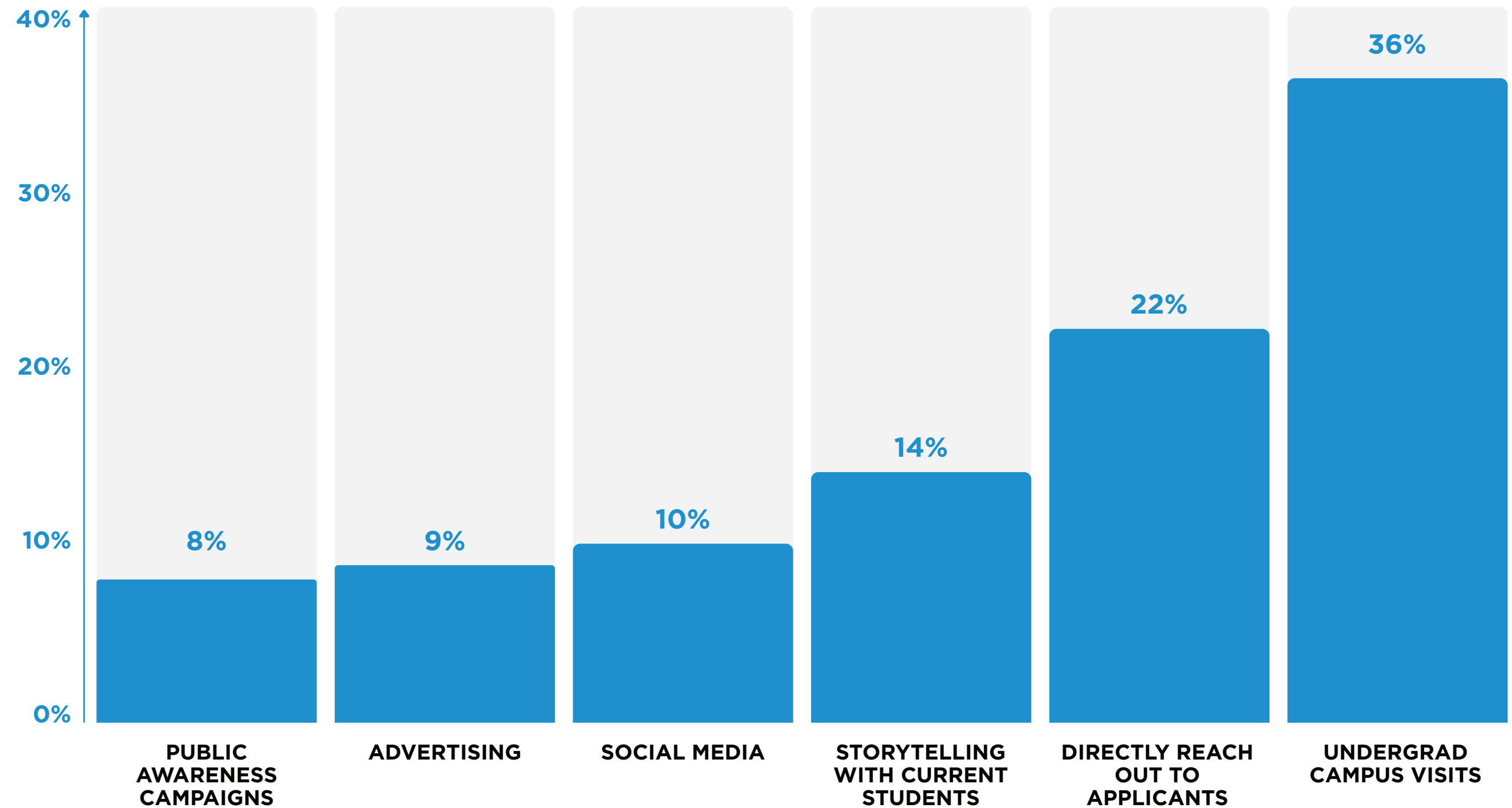


The results indicate that the cost of tuition significantly influences optometry students' choice of school. A majority of students (83%) find tuition costs to be at least moderately impactful, with one-third considering it very impactful. Only a small percentage (9%) feel that tuition cost does not impact their decision at all. This underscores the critical role of financial considerations in students' decision-making processes.



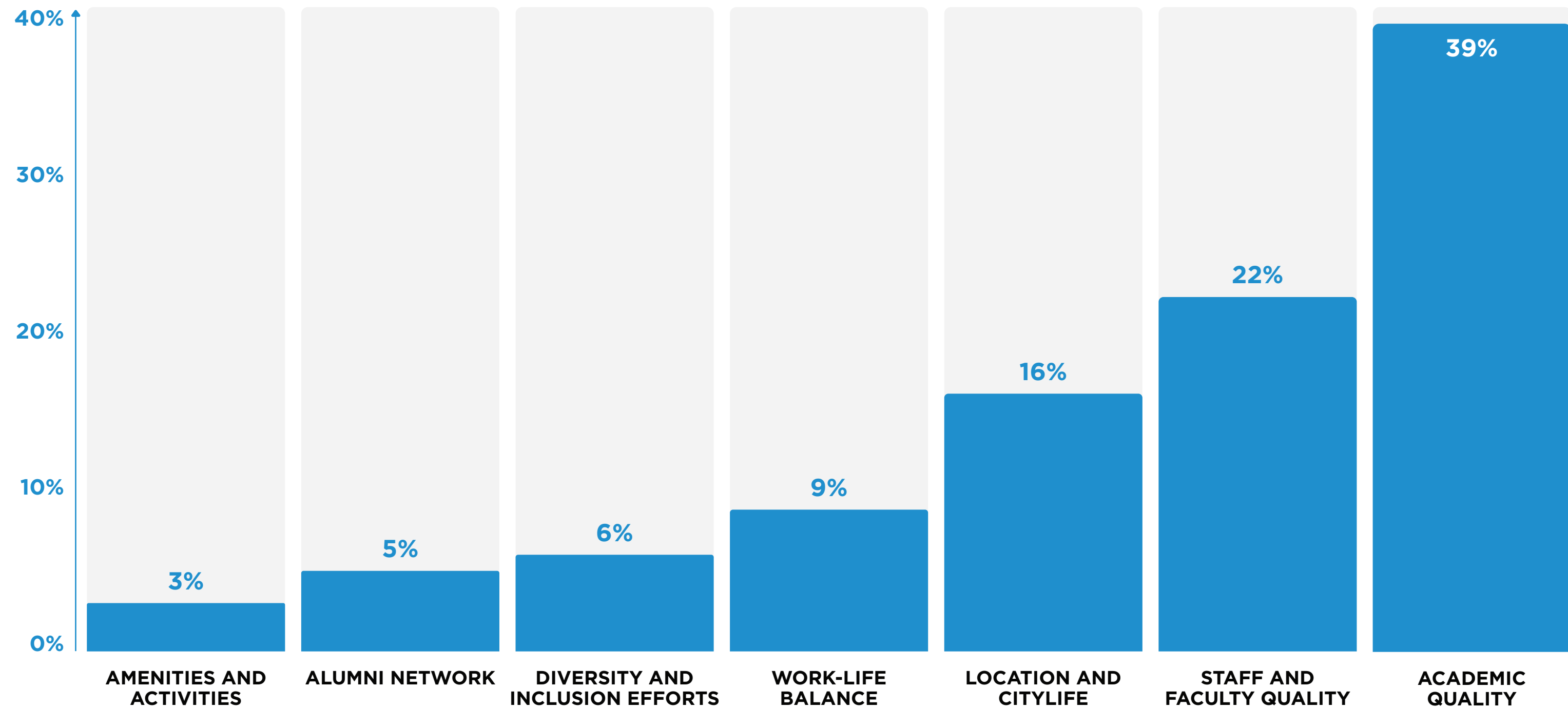
TOTAL (n = 300)

# What do you think your school can do better to attract more applicants of better quality?



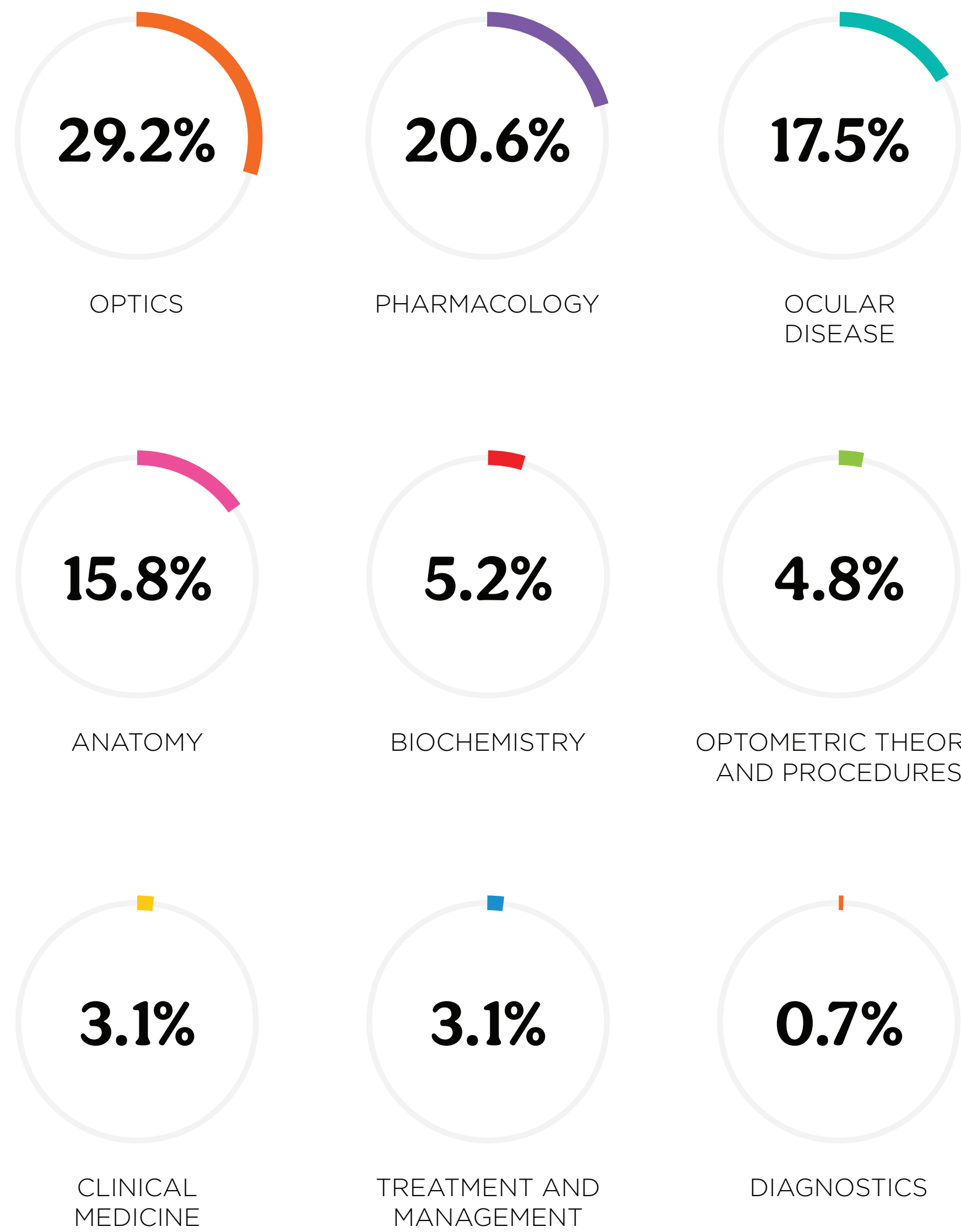
TOTAL (n = 300)

# If your school were to advertise one thing that would bring in the best quality applicants, what should they advertise?



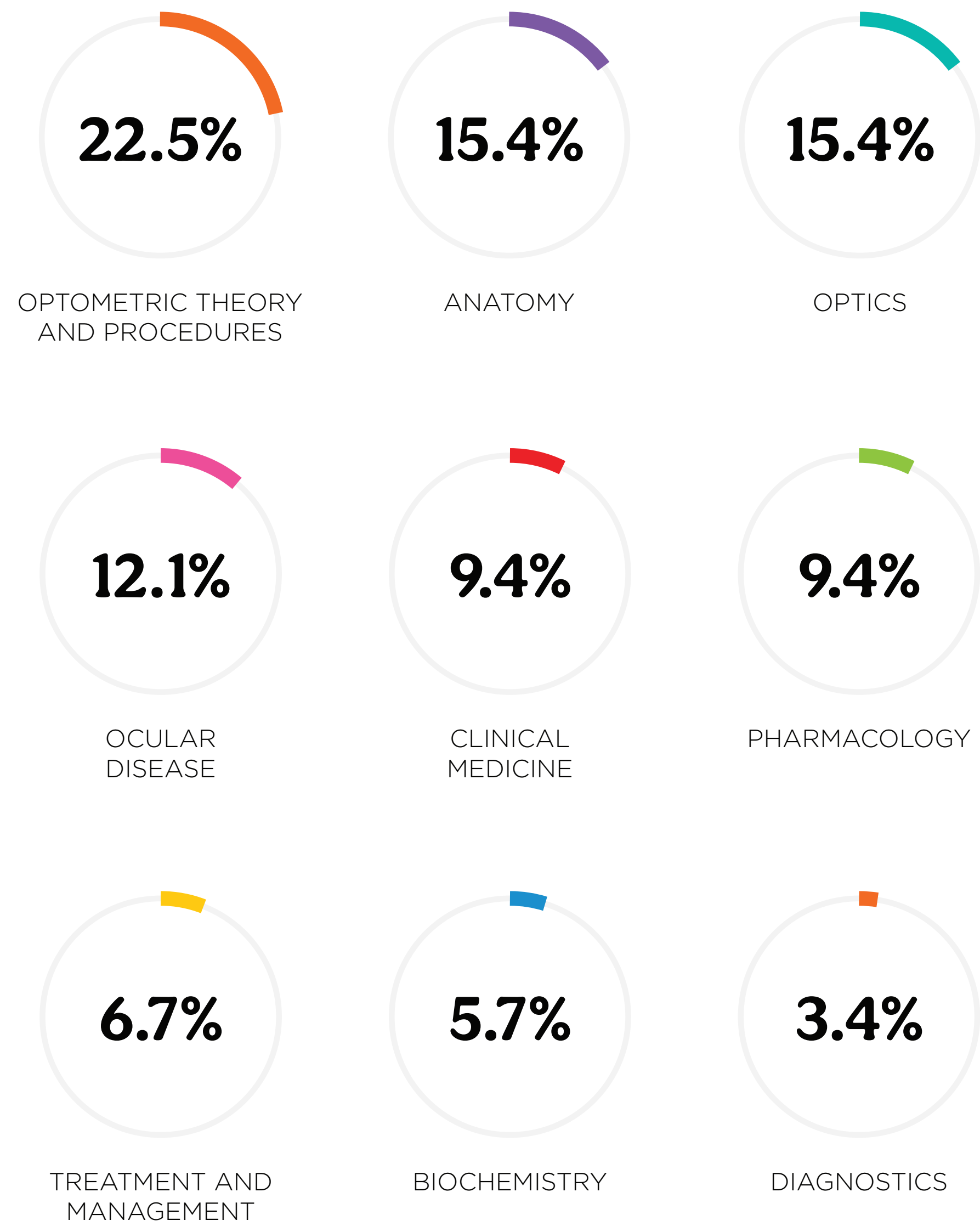
TOTAL (n = 291)

In your opinion, what is the most difficult subject in optometry school?



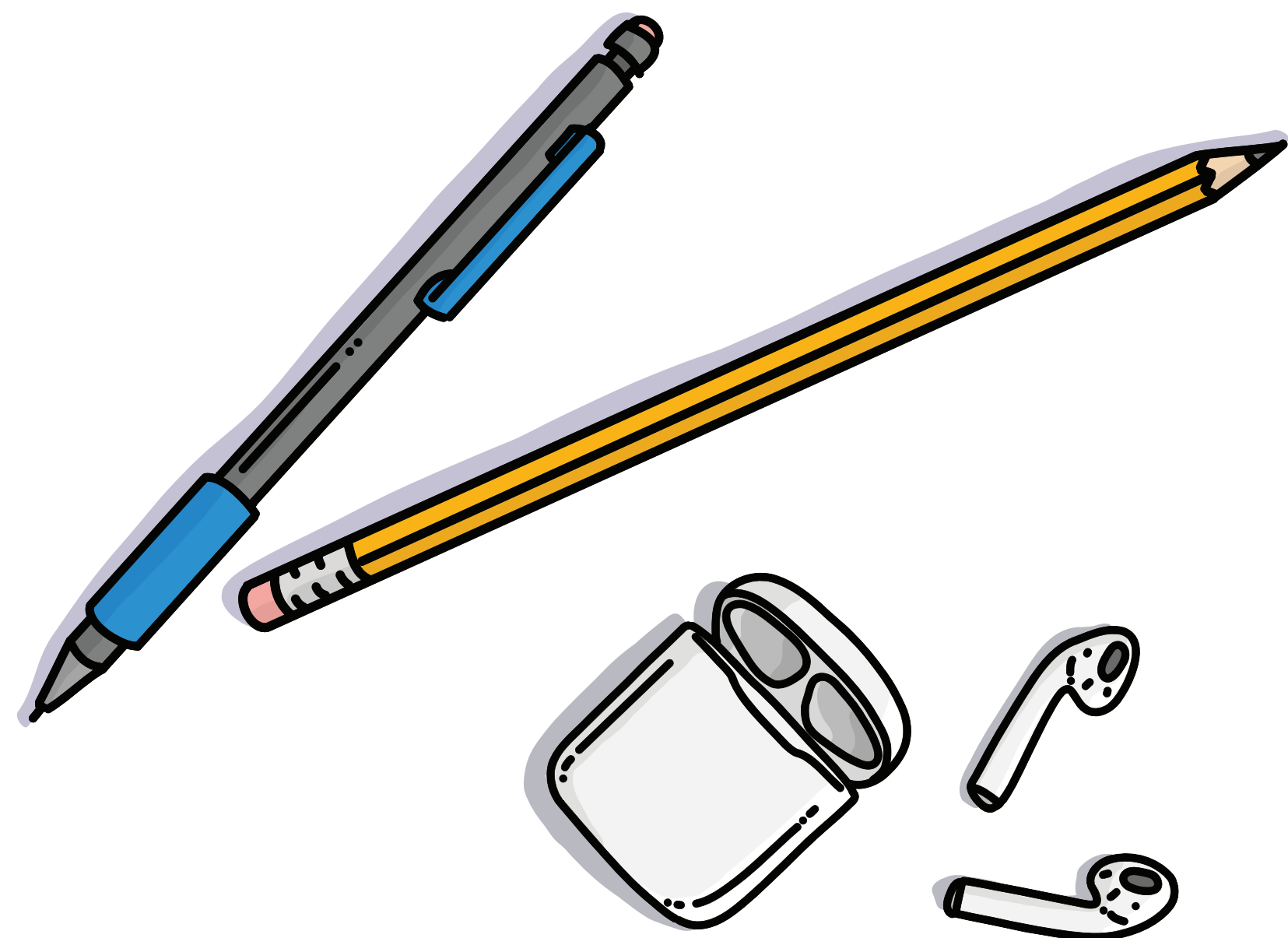
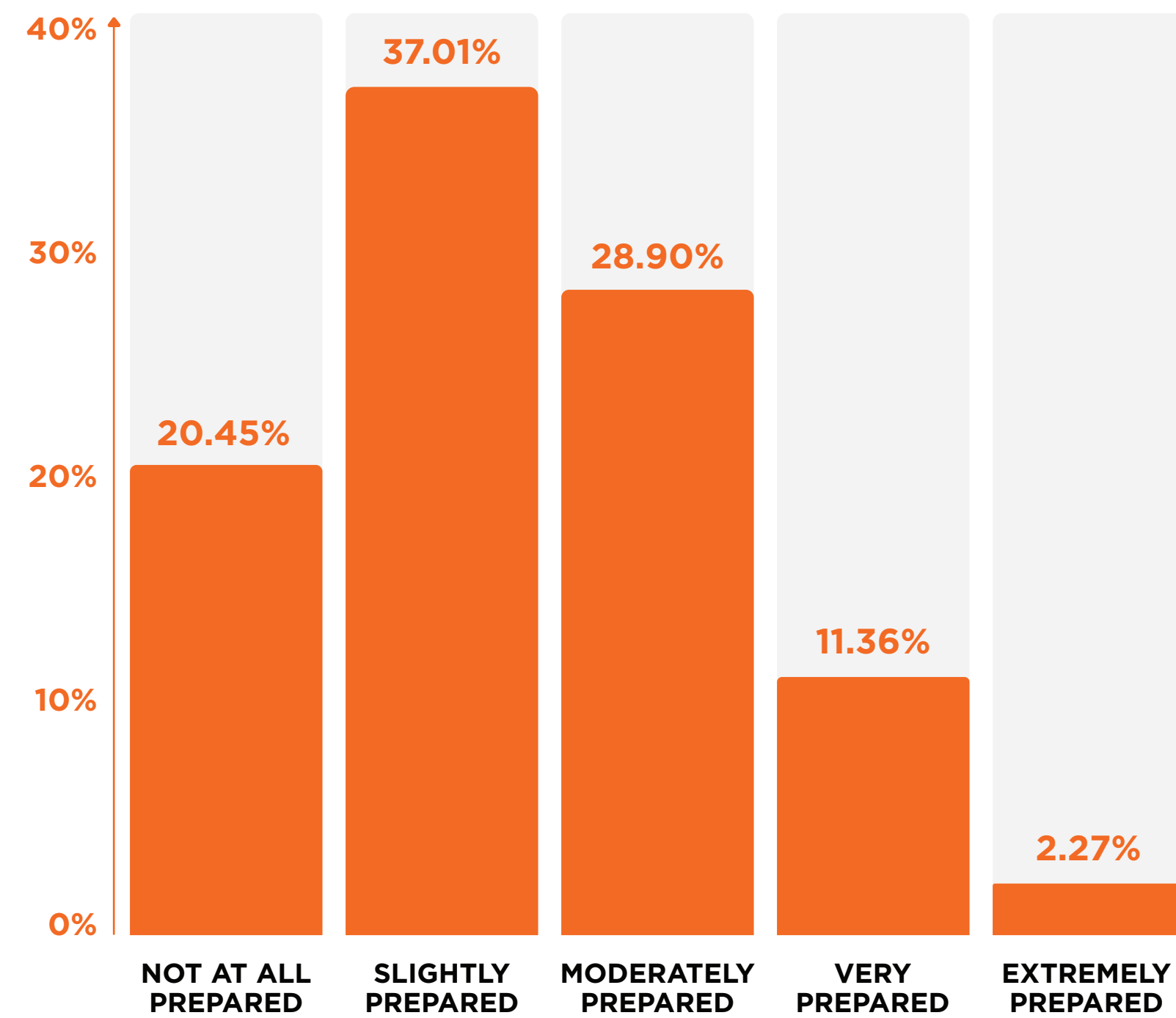
TOTAL (n = 298)

In your opinion, what is the easiest subject in optometry school?



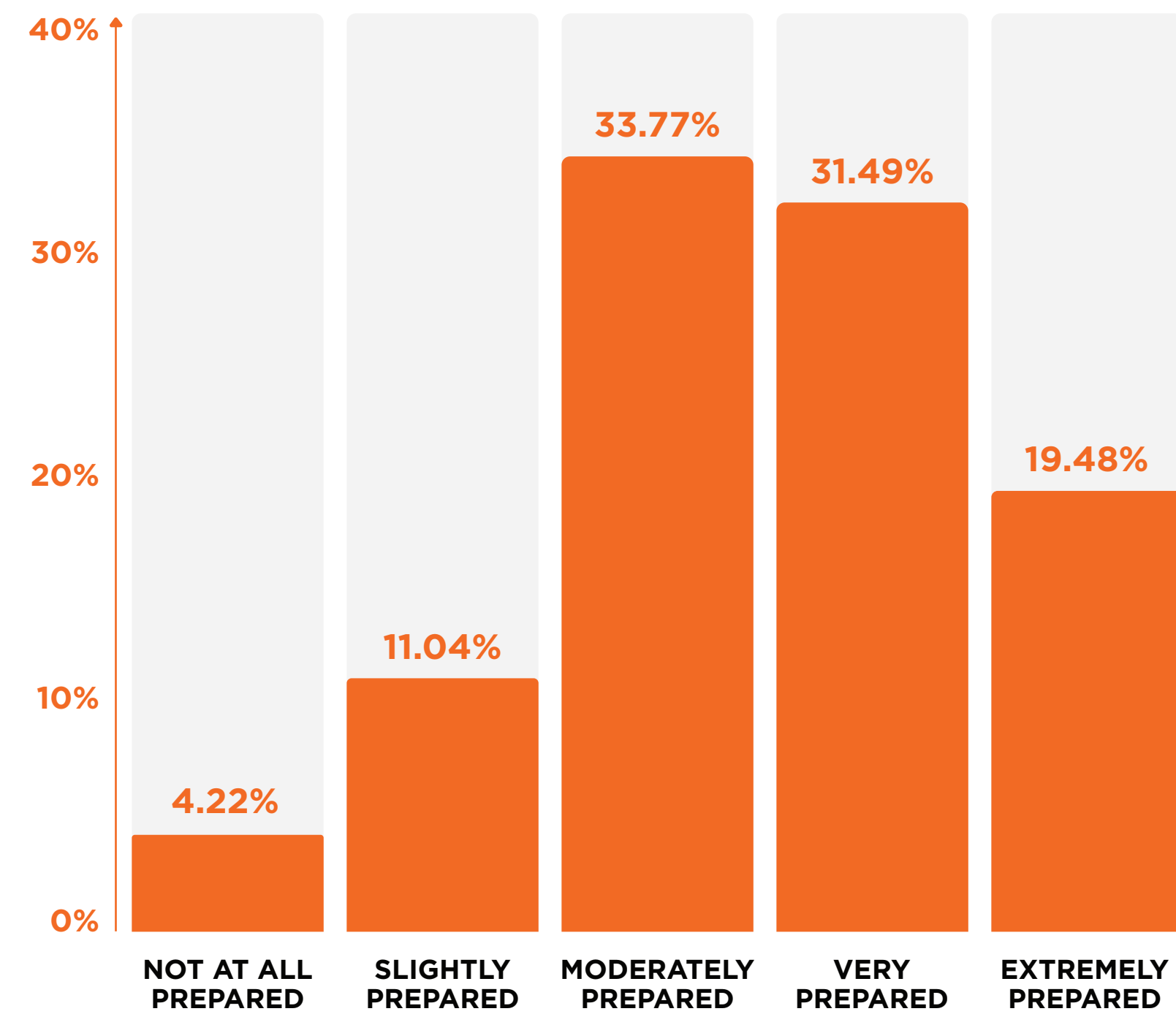
TOTAL (n = 308)

Rate how prepared you feel for the business aspects of optometry (e.g., managing staff, practice finances, or an optical).



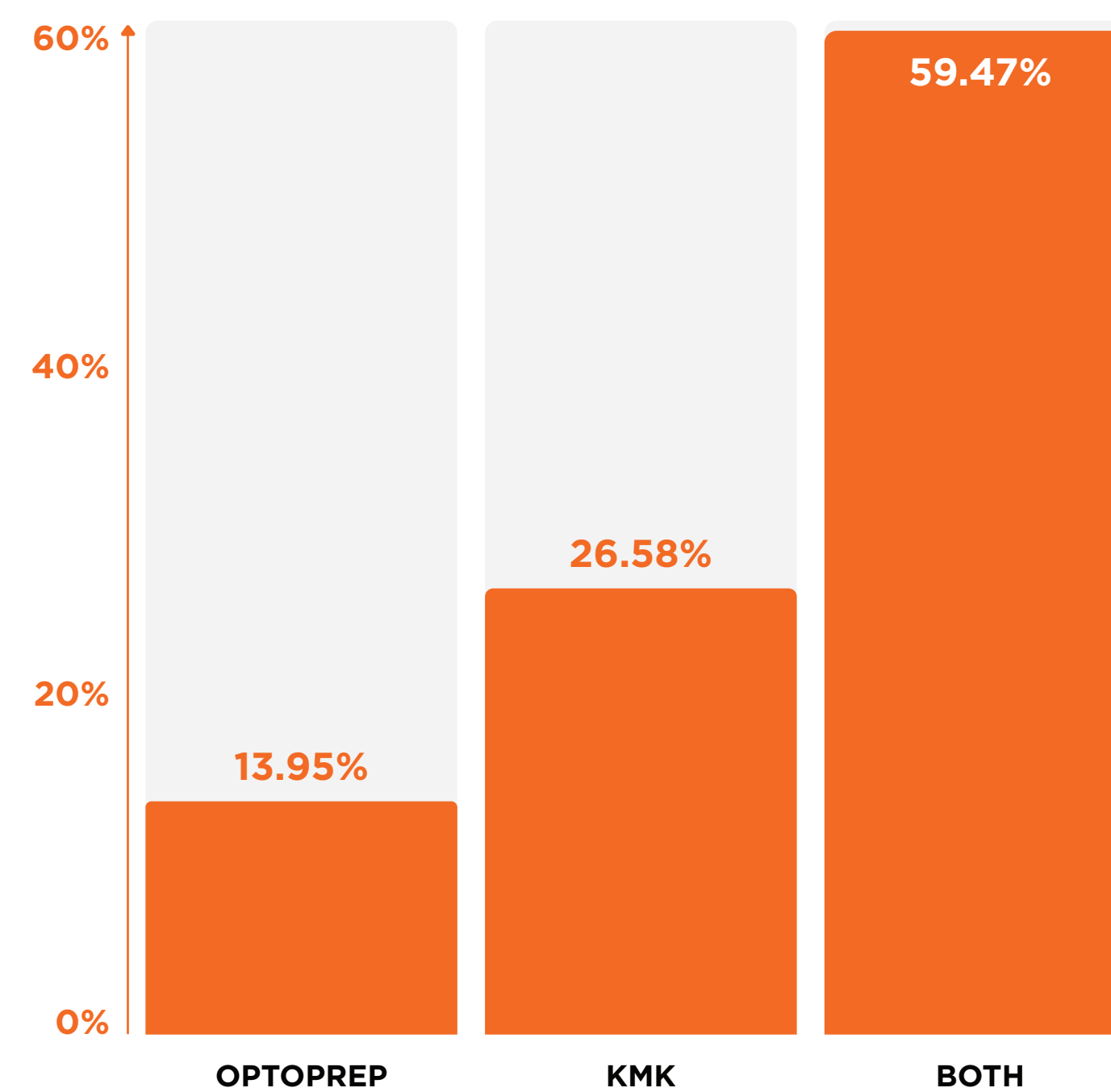
TOTAL (n = 308)

Rate how prepared you feel for boards.



TOTAL (n = 301)

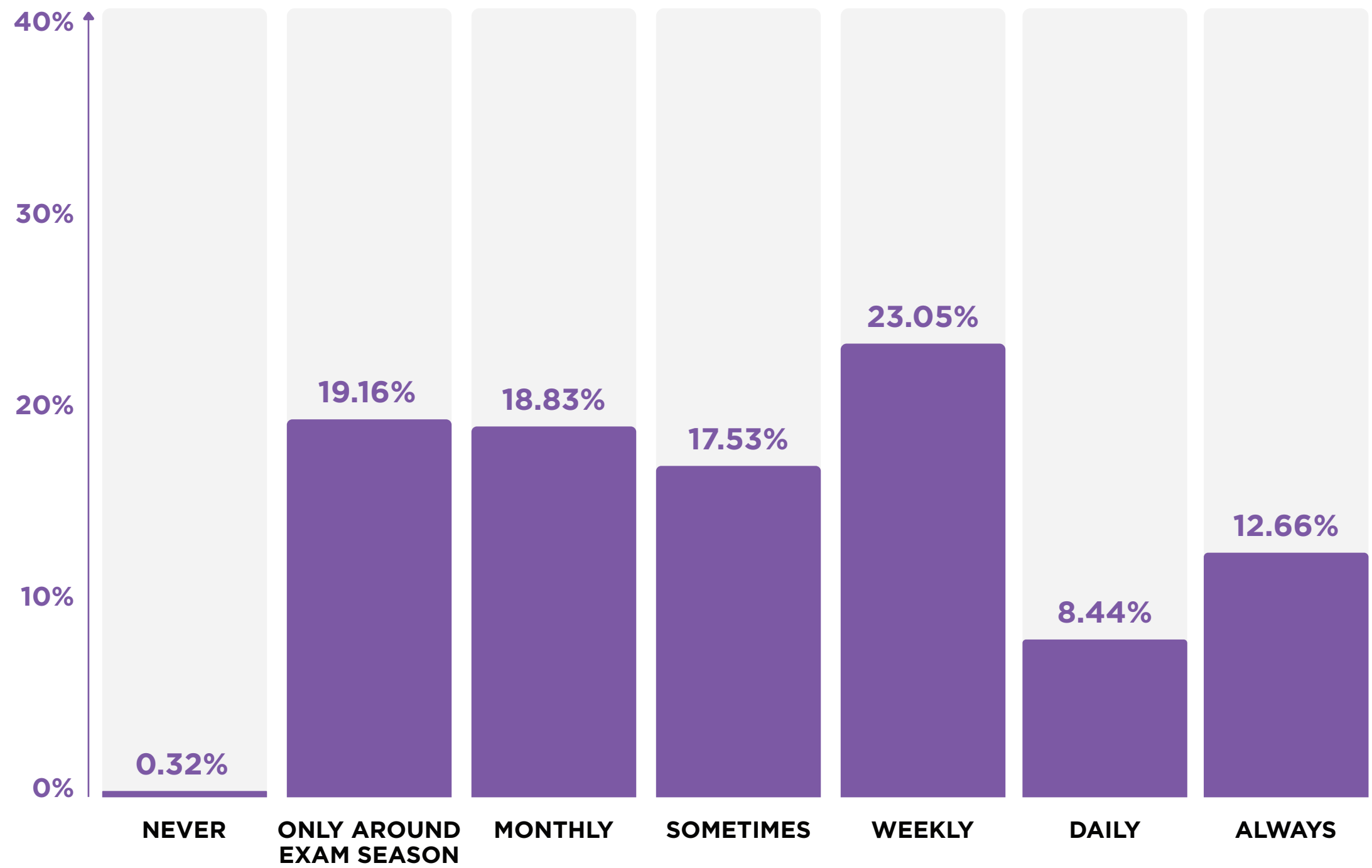
What resources will you (or did you) use to study for boards?





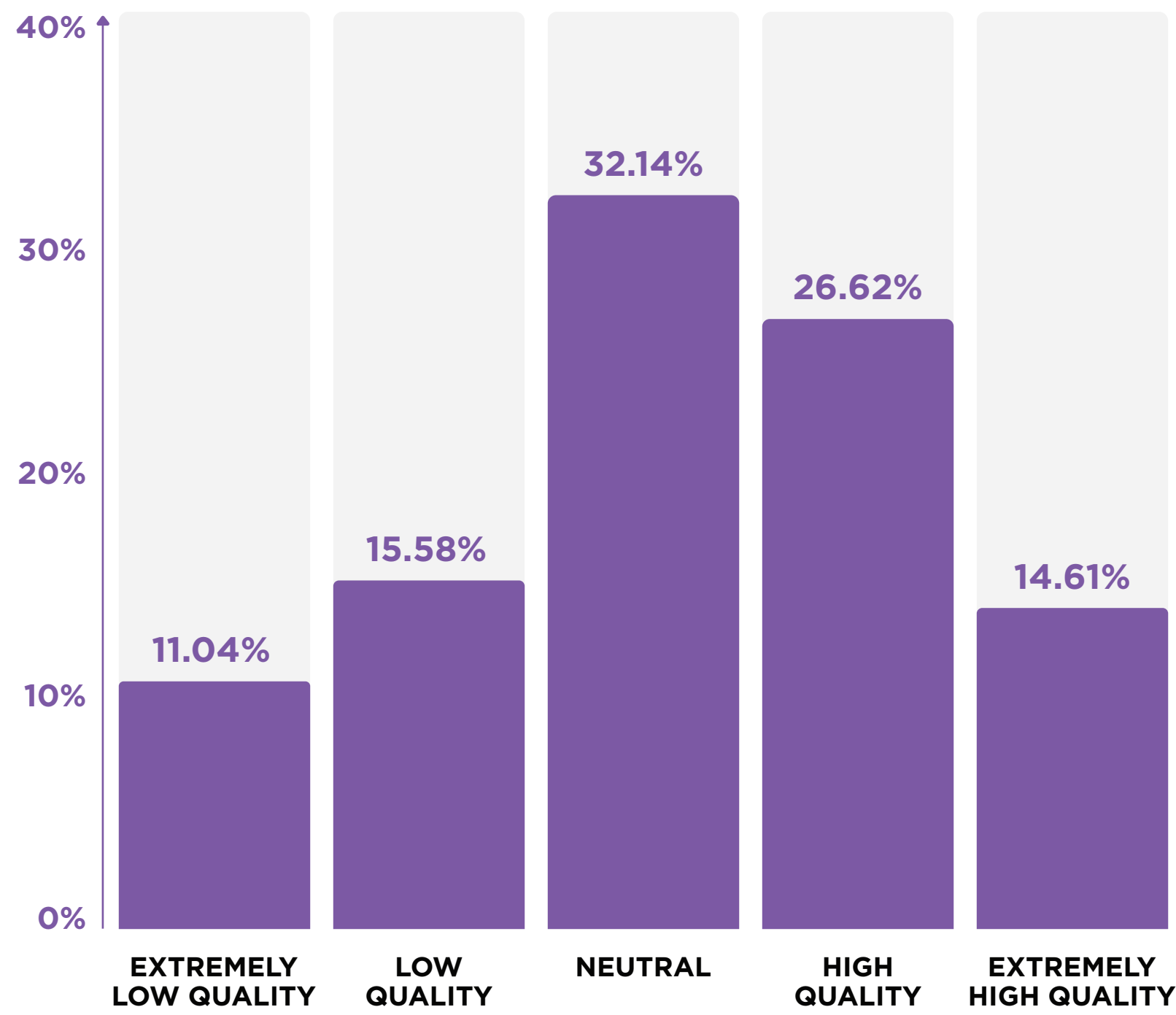
TOTAL (n = 308)

# During your time in optometry school, how often do you feel burnt out?



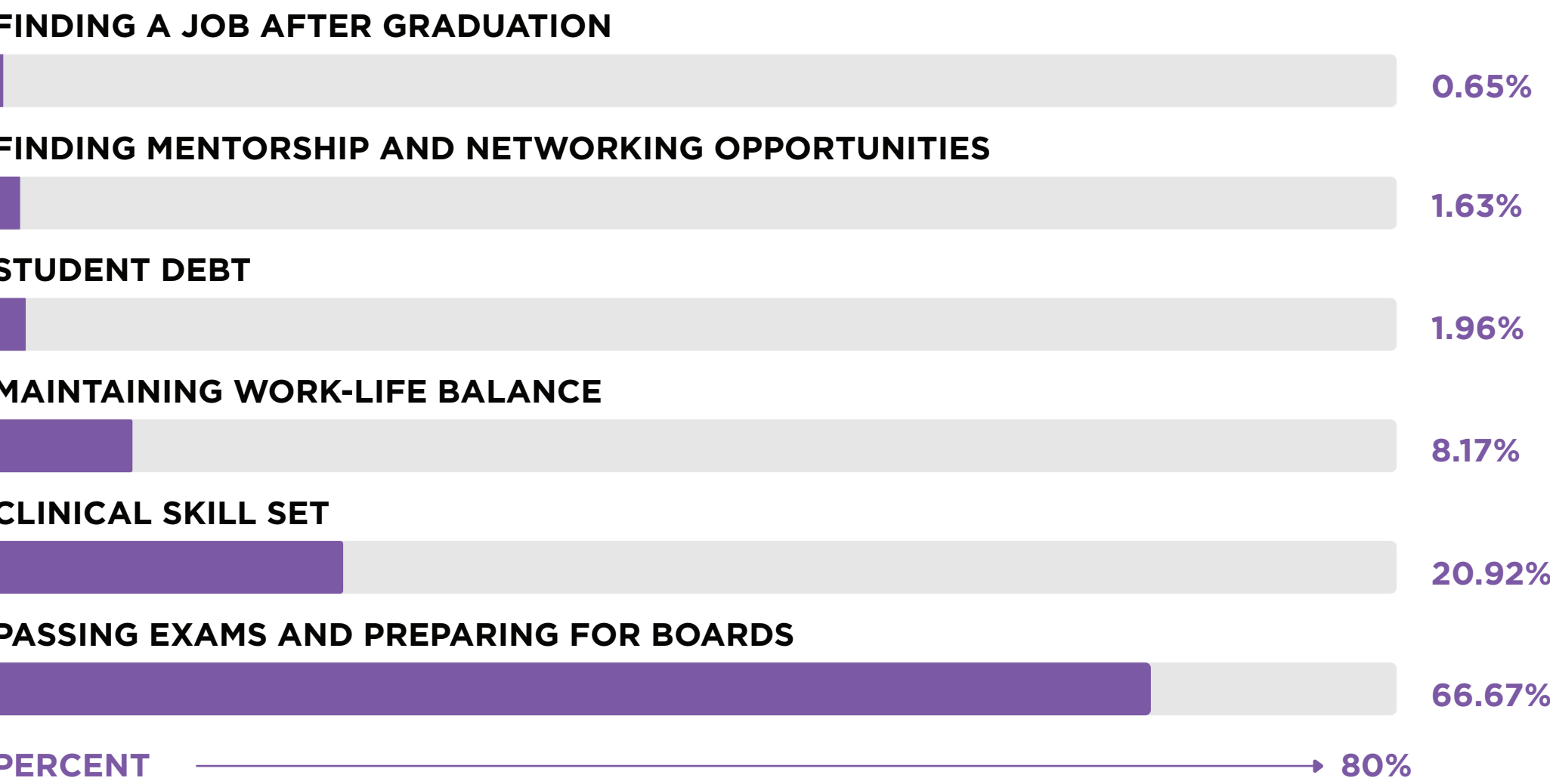
TOTAL (n = 308)

# Rate the quality of the mental health resources your school provides to your class.



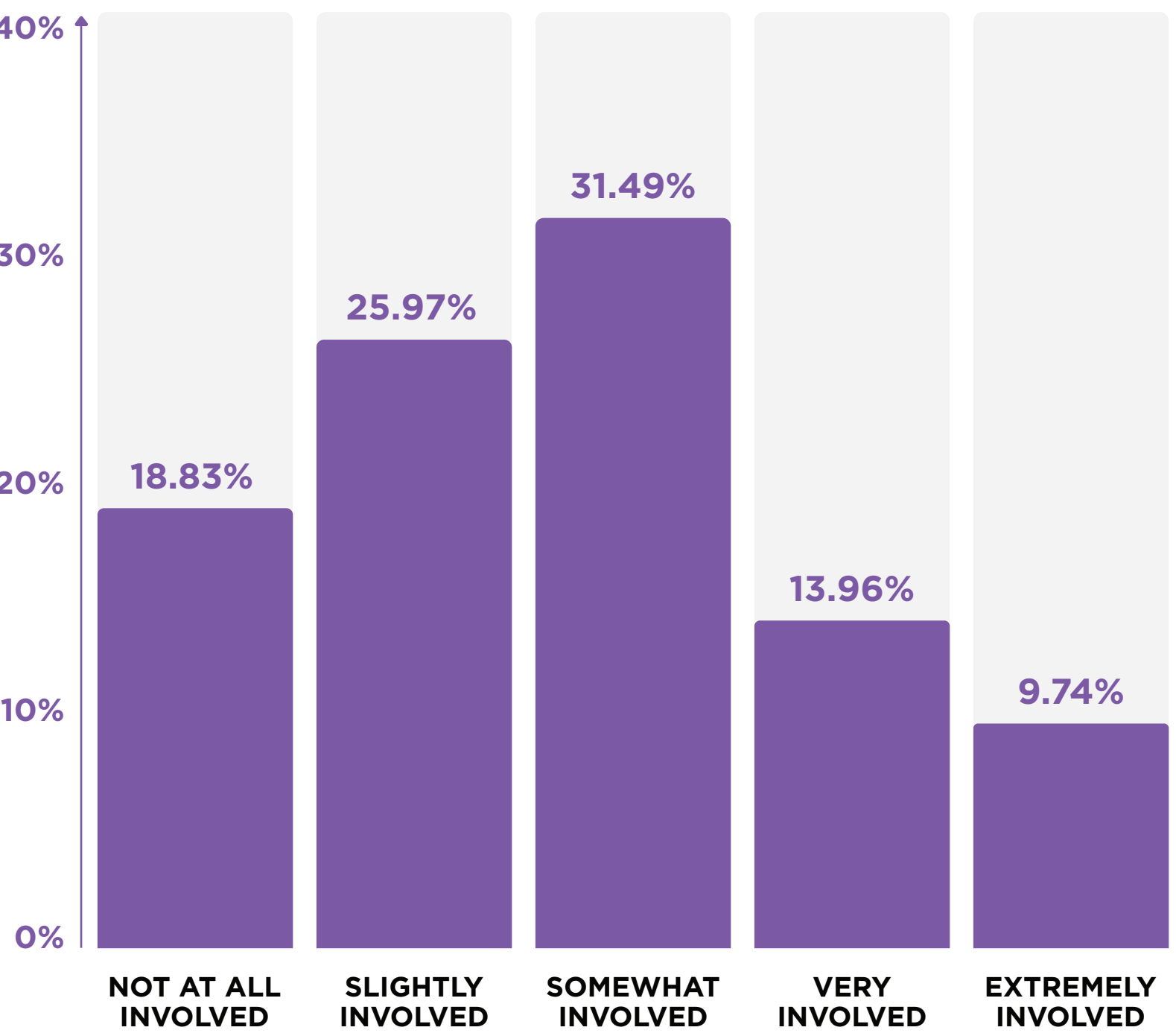
TOTAL (n = 308)

# What is your main focus during optometry school?



TOTAL (n = 308)

# How involved are you with the AOA/AOSA?



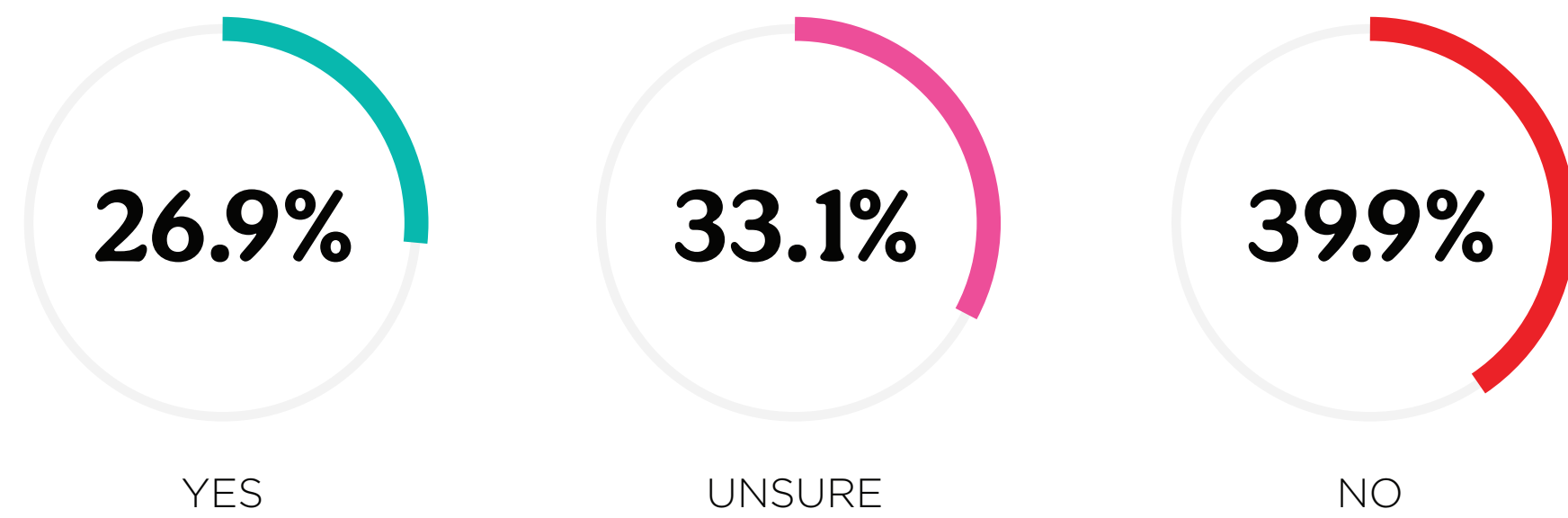
TOTAL (n = 206)

# What do you think is the biggest threat to optometry?



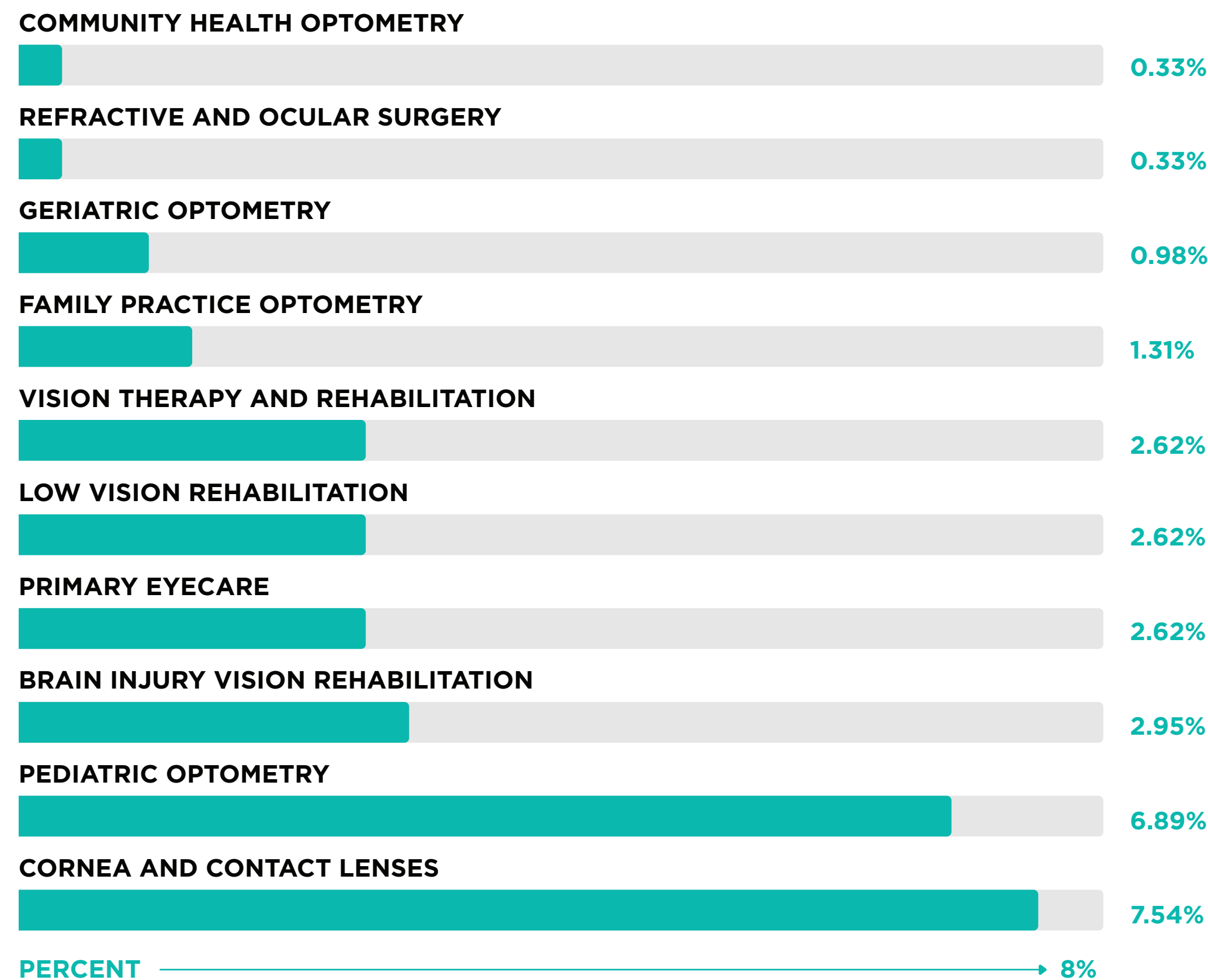
TOTAL (n = 308)

Do you plan to pursue surgical privileges as appropriate, based on your state, following graduation?



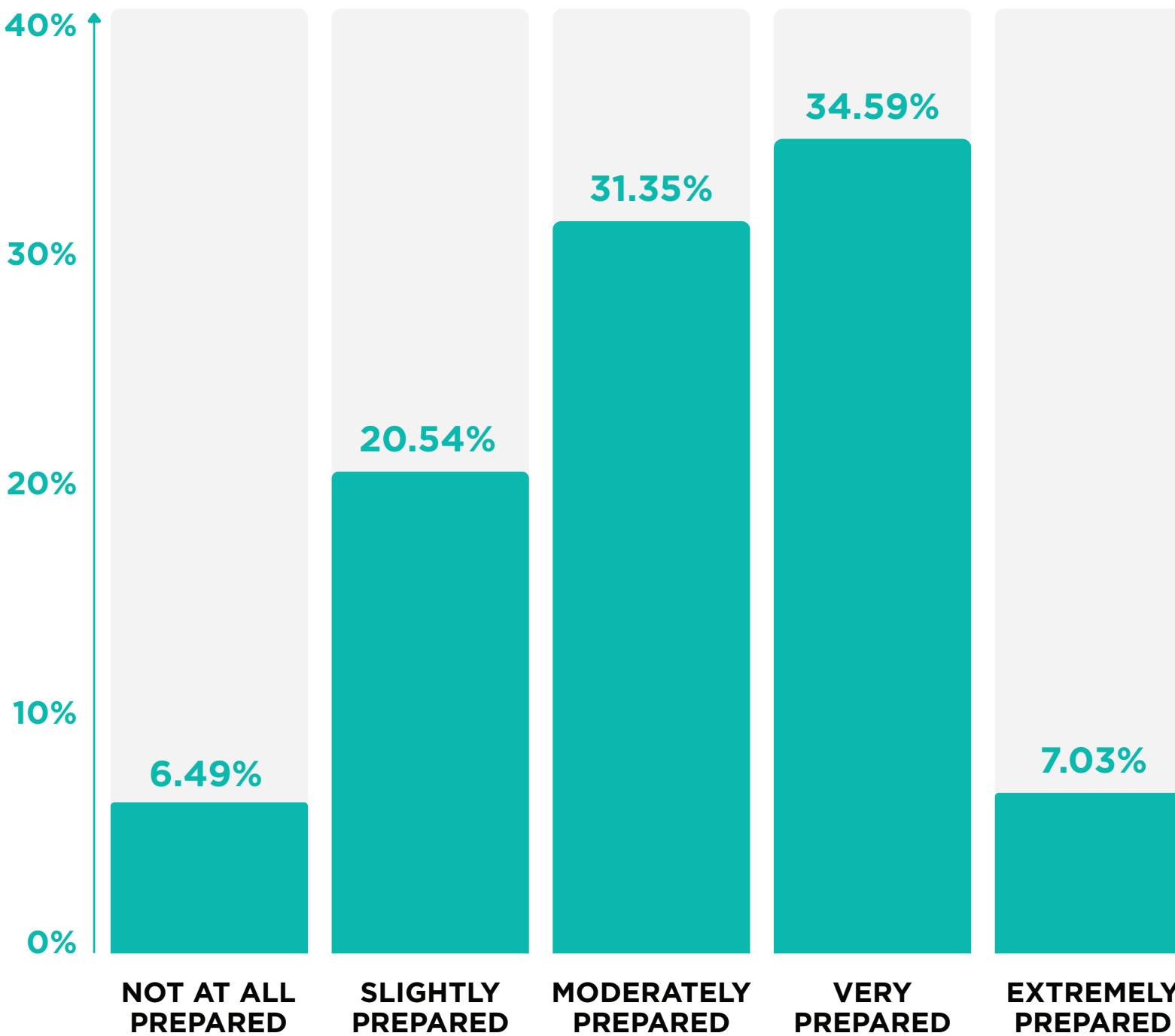
TOTAL (n = 305)

What specialty do you plan to do a residency in, if at all?



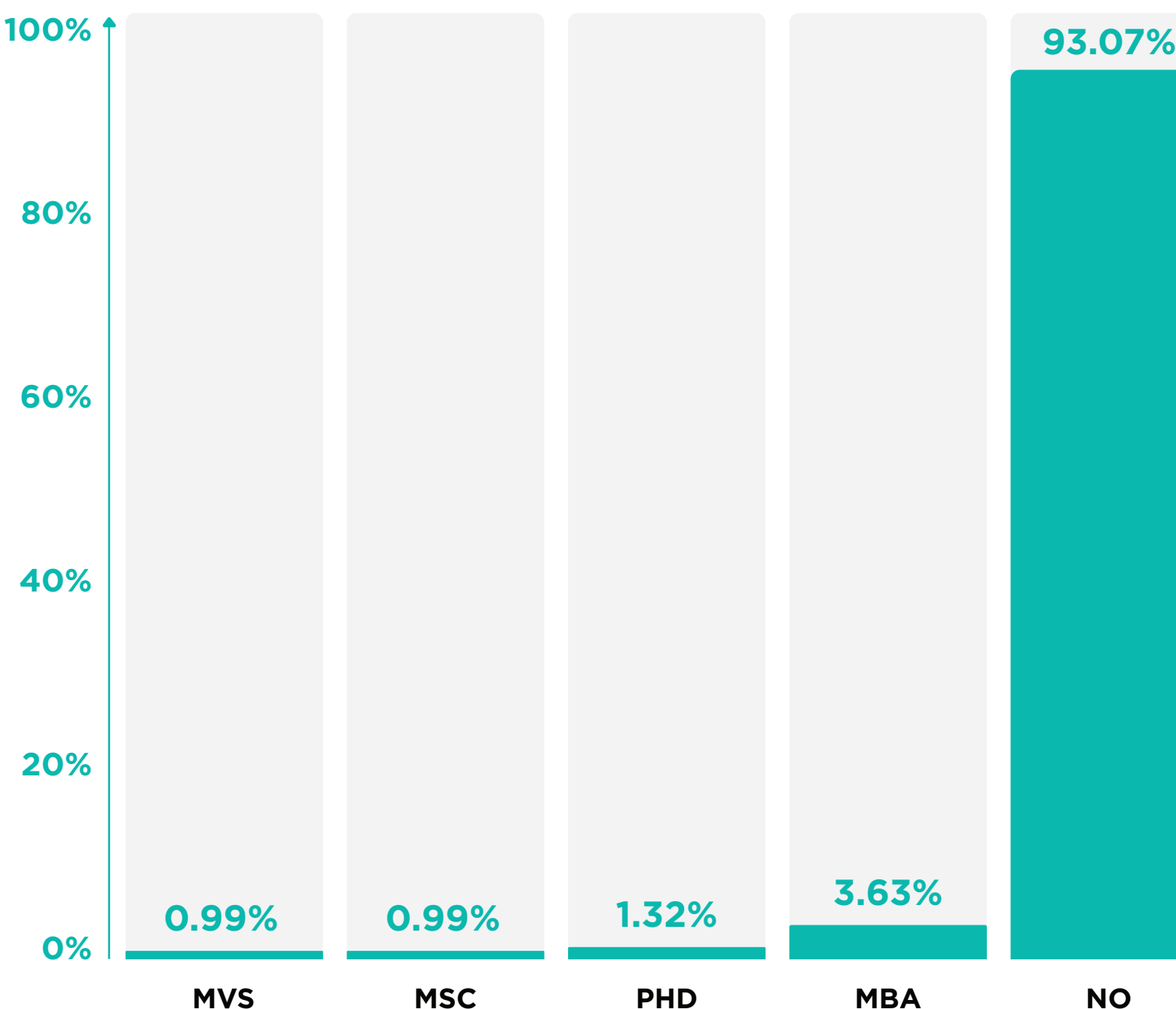
TOTAL (n = 185)

Rate how prepared you feel to exercise your surgical privileges based on your training in optometry school.



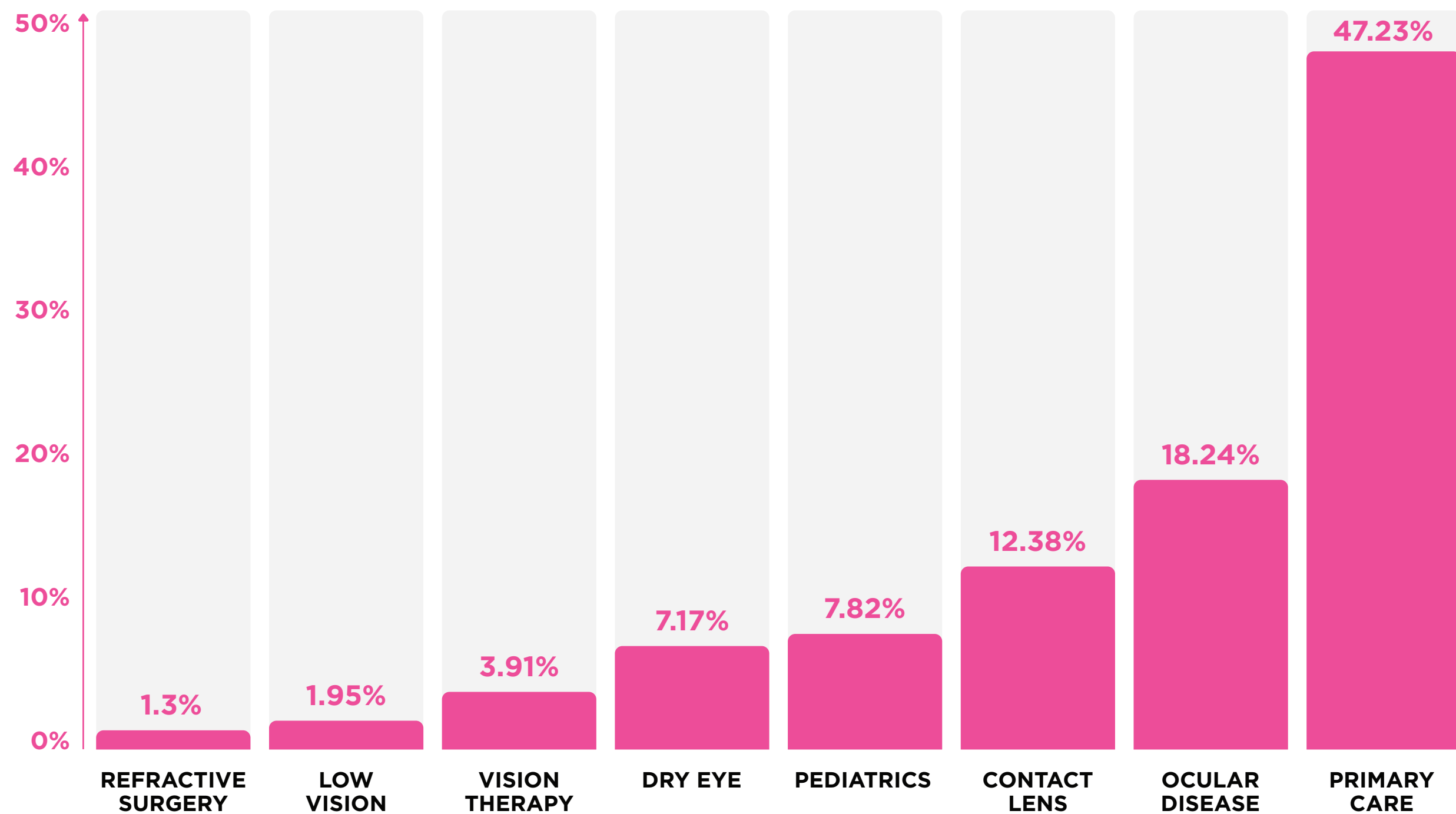
TOTAL (n = 303)

Do you plan on pursuing further postgraduate degrees?



TOTAL (n = 307)

## What do you anticipate being your clinical focus after graduation?



TOTAL (n = 179)

## For 2024 grads only, how many jobs did you apply to?

2.53

AVERAGE

TOTAL (n = 179)

## What is your main focus after graduating optometry school?

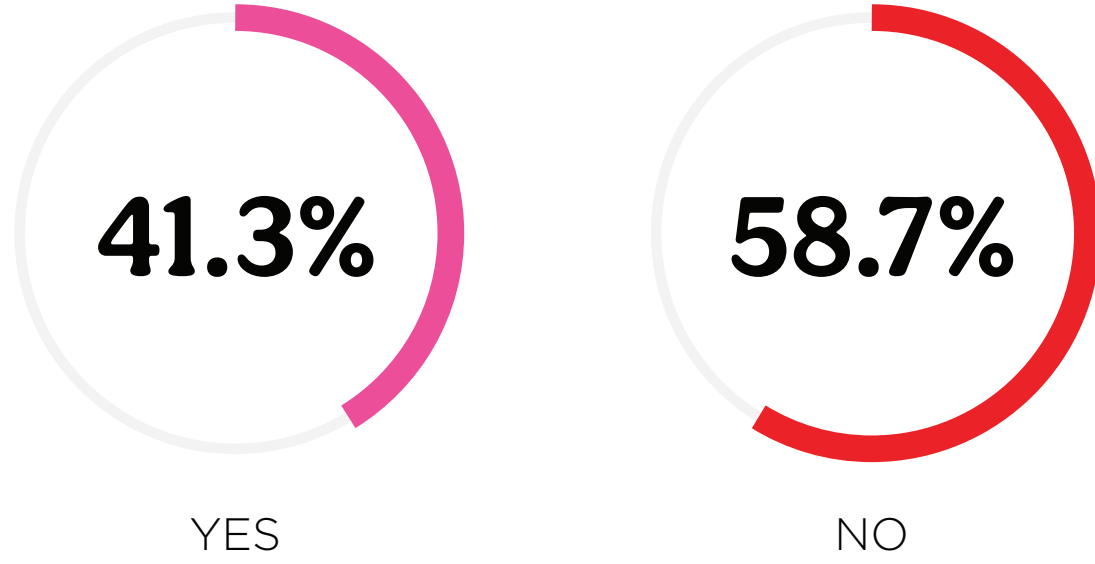
1  
MAINTAINING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

2  
STUDENT DEBT

3  
FINDING A JOB AFTER GRADUATION

TOTAL (n = 308)

## Do you already have a job lined up after graduation?



TOTAL (n = 130)

## How did you find your job?

1  
WORD OF MOUTH

2  
RESIDENCY

3  
RECRUITER

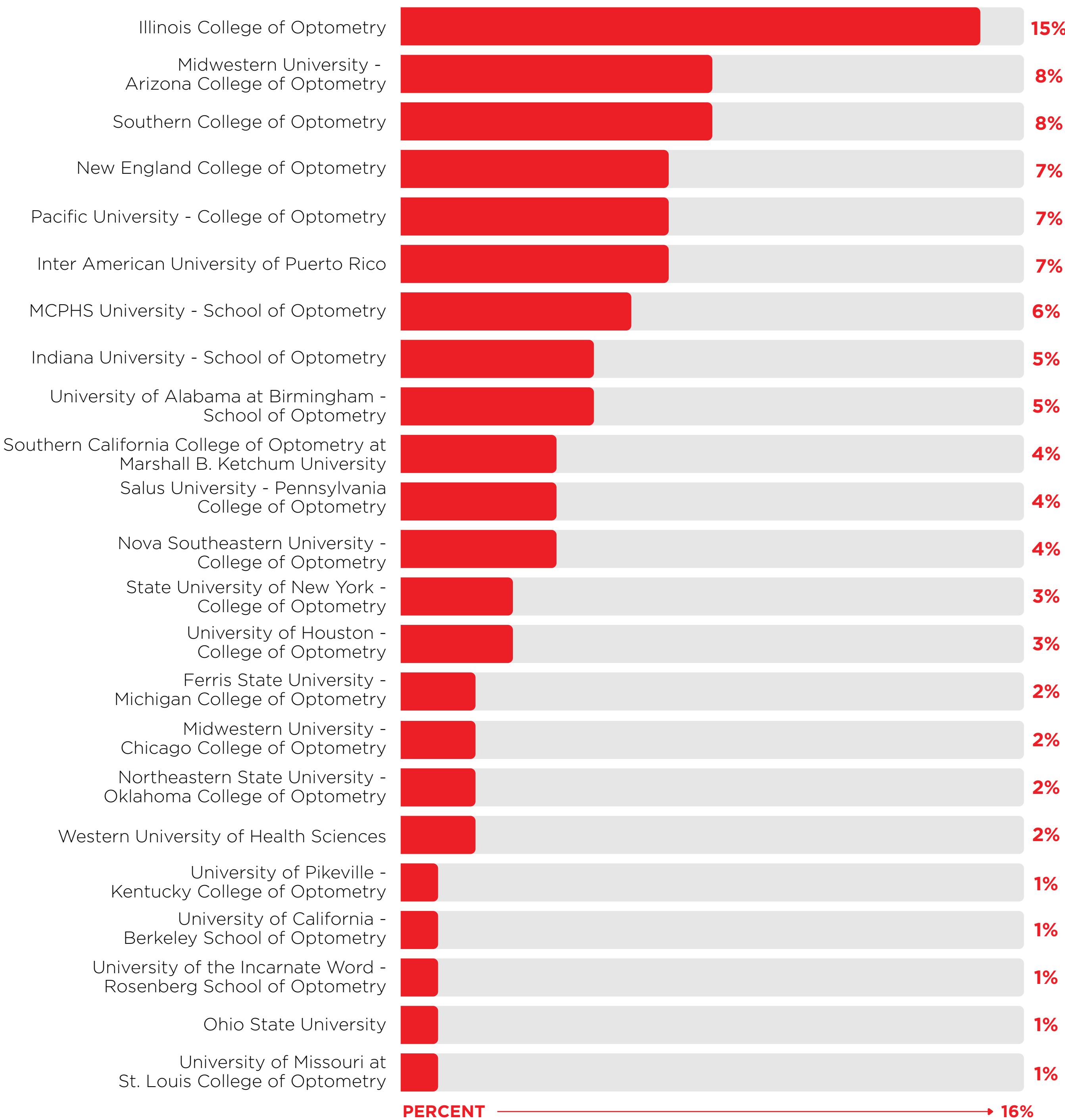
The most common way optometry students found their job is through word of mouth, accounting for **28%** of the responses. This is followed by residency programs at **17%** and recruiters at **12%**. These top three methods highlight the importance of personal connections, clinical training experiences, and professional recruitment services in securing employment within the field.

Getting in touch with potential employers and navigating a landscape of networking opportunities can be challenging. We've made it ridiculously easy for you and other optometry students through our exclusive job board, [Eyes On Eyecare Jobs](#). Browse available jobs or chat with our dedicated team of recruiters who are determined to match you with an amazing opportunity in the eyecare space.



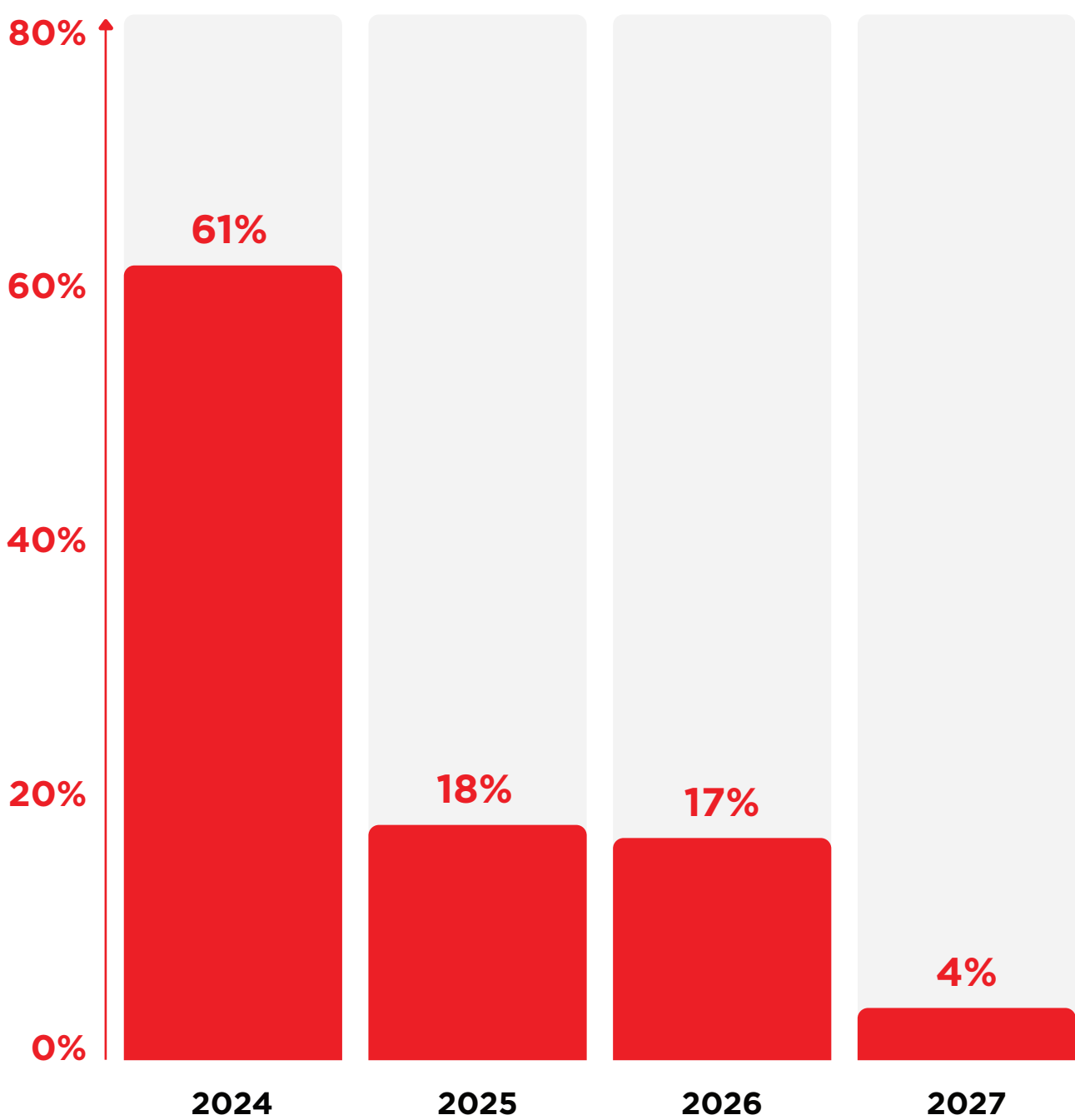
TOTAL (n = 308)

# What optometry school do you currently attend?



TOTAL (n = 303)

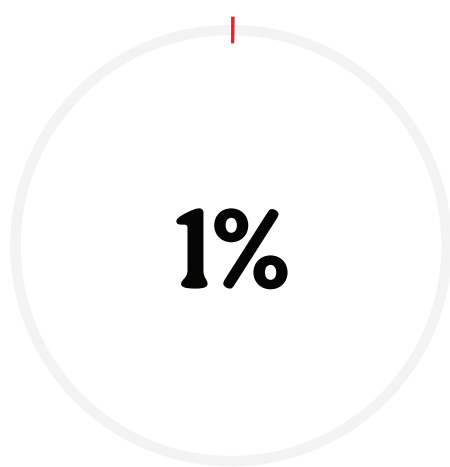
# What year are you graduating from optometry school?



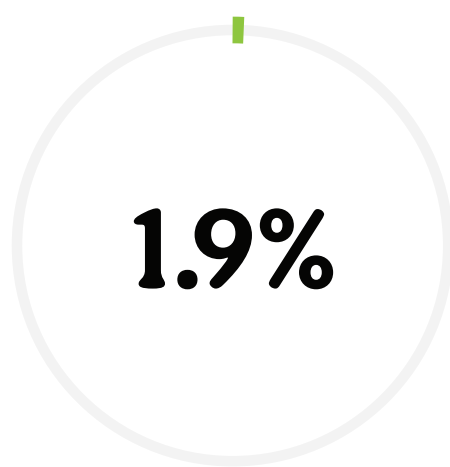
\*Only commercially available outside the US

TOTAL (n = 221)

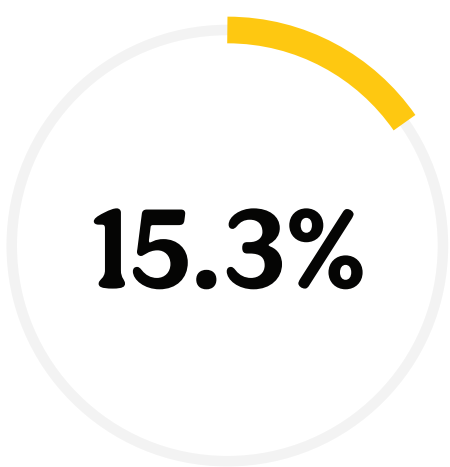
## Do you currently have a part-time job outside of optometry school?



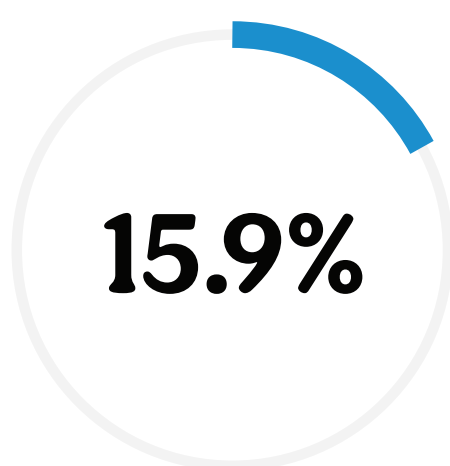
YES, FOR ABOUT 40 HOURS PER WEEK



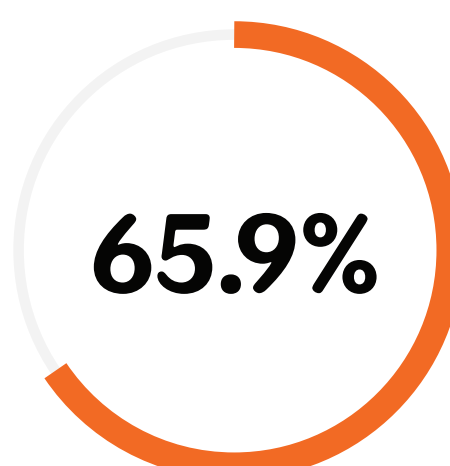
YES, FOR ABOUT 20 HOURS PER WEEK



I'VE HAD ONE IN THE PAST, BUT NOT CURRENTLY



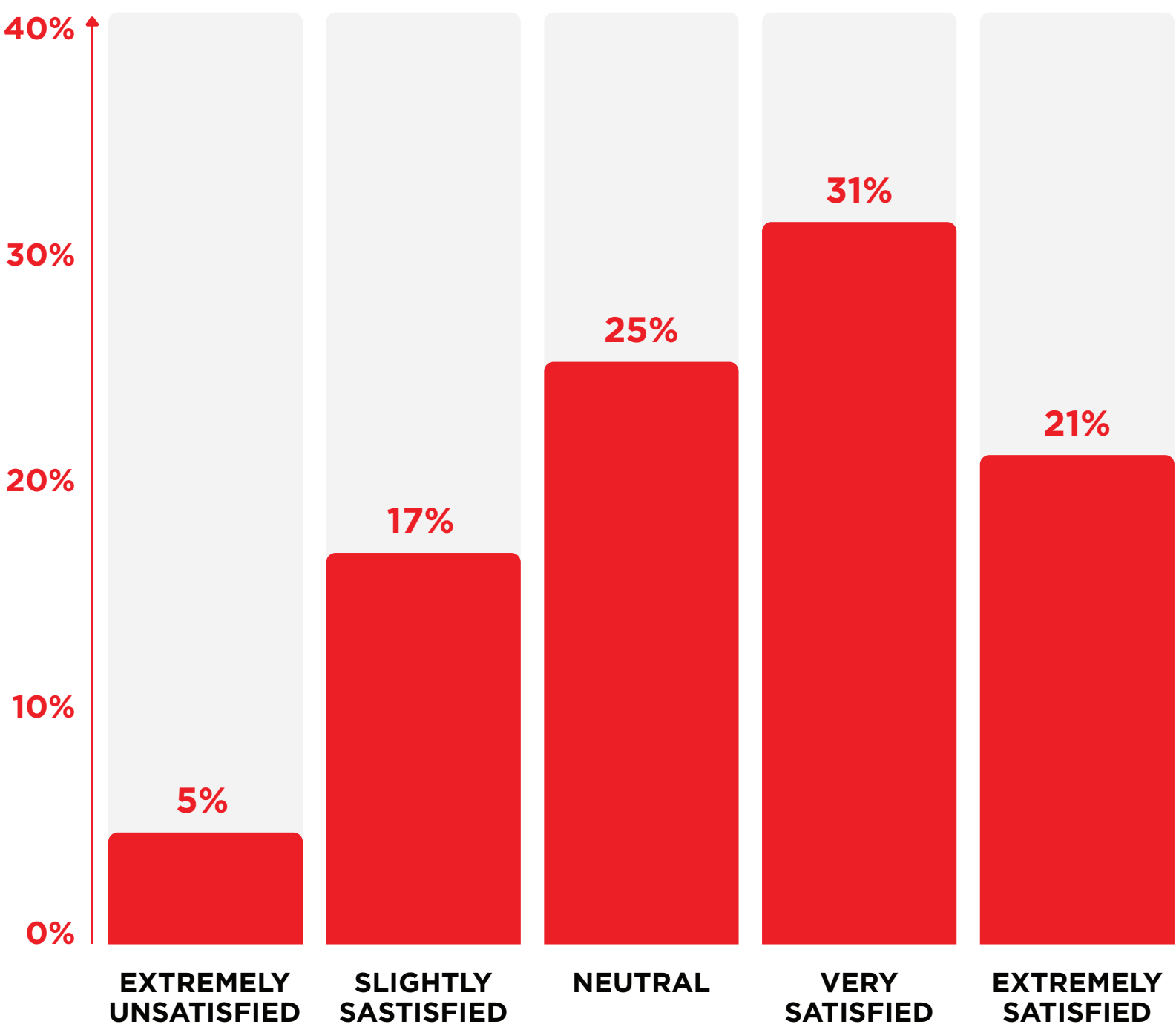
YES, FOR ABOUT 10 HOURS PER WEEK



NO

TOTAL (n = 210)

## How satisfied are you with your GPA?



TOTAL (n = 221)

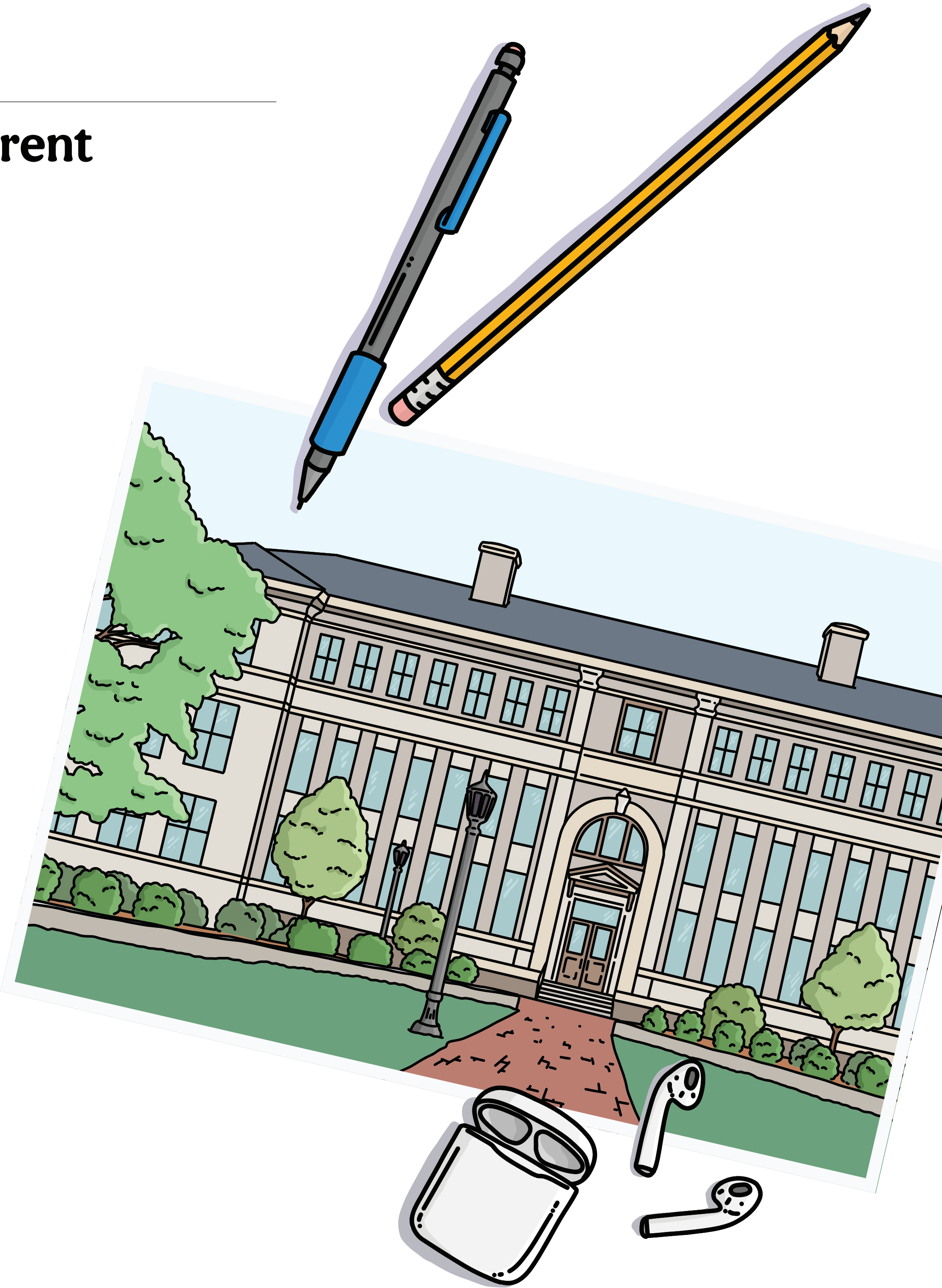
## How much student loan debt do you currently have?

**\$165,322**  
AVERAGE

TOTAL (n = 210)

## What is your current overall GPA?

**3.34**  
AVERAGE





## Persevere and Persist

“You are smarter than you believe and you can do hard things!”

“Keep your head up! If it was easy, everyone would do it!”

“Believe in yourselves! We’re all smart enough to be here.”

“Push through! It’s a tough journey, but worth it in the end.”

## Exercise Integrity and Discipline

“Prepare for boards early!”

“Study early and often for boards.”

“Study with intention. Regurgitation is not good in the long term.”

## Prioritize Balance and Self-Care

“Relax, it will all work out.”

“Maintain work-life balance—the years will fly by before you know it.”

“Don’t be too hard on yourself”

“Take breaks from studying and do well on externships.”

“Work hard but also have a good work-life balance.”

“Make time for the things you enjoy doing and the people who matter most in your life.”

## Build Support Systems

“Reach out often for help, and don’t wait until the last minute to ask for it.”

“Get to know your classmates and faculty”

“Develop a good support system with classmates, faculty, and family/friends.”

“Never be afraid to ask questions, be open to learn more even after graduation.”

“Find a good group of friends at school! And it’s okay if your friend group switches up throughout.”

## Remember Your “Why”

“Remember why you started optometry school in the first place!”

“Keep advocating for optometry to change eyecare for future generations to come!”

“Remember your ‘why’! Learning and refining skills can be uncomfortable and frustrating.”

“Keep in mind your reason for wanting to pursue optometry and utilize this passion to motivate yourself to power through.”

## Practice Clinical Skills as Much as Possible

“Take time to really learn clinical skills and why you’re doing them!”

“Practice your clinical skills as much as you can!”

“Jump at every clinical opportunity to learn.”

“Practice clinical skills as much as possible on as many different people as you can!”

## Make the Most of Your Experience

“Once you get your studying schedule down and feel confident in your knowledge, explore life outside of school!”

“Make the most out of your time in school. You’re allowed to take breaks.”

“Enjoy the journey as much as possible.”

“Time goes so fast, soak up knowledge and also memories!”

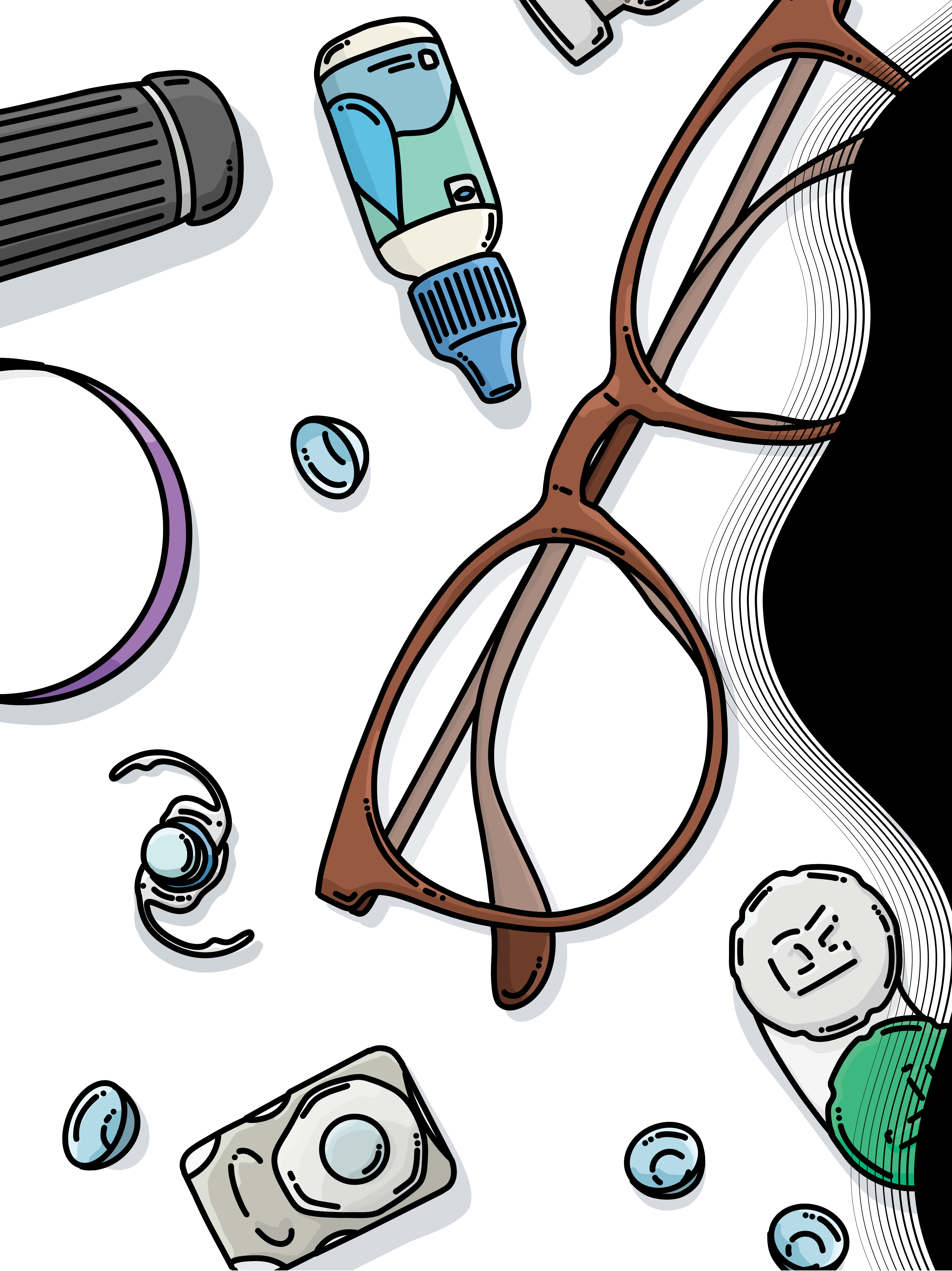
## Impact Optometry as a Whole

“Be the student who goes on to advance our profession.”

“Remember the original reason why you chose to apply! Optometry school is tough, but it’ll be worth it in the end!”

“Find where your great joy overlaps with eyecare’s great needs”





## What is Eyes On Eyecare?

[EyesOnEyecare.com](https://eyesoneyecare.com) is the #1 provider of clinical and career education for emerging optometrists and ophthalmologists through our all-in-one digital content platform. More than 60,000 ECPs come to [EyesOnEyecare.com](https://eyesoneyecare.com) for news, events, CE/ CME, custom courses, and clinical content.

Learn more at [events.eyesoneyecare.com](https://events.eyesoneyecare.com).

**eo** MARKET RESEARCH