

Should Trinity have email guidelines?

A pilot online mental health survey of staff email load and experience, and attitudes to introducing email guidelines

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Aim: Examine staff:

1. Email load
2. Email experience
3. Attitudes to introducing email guidelines.

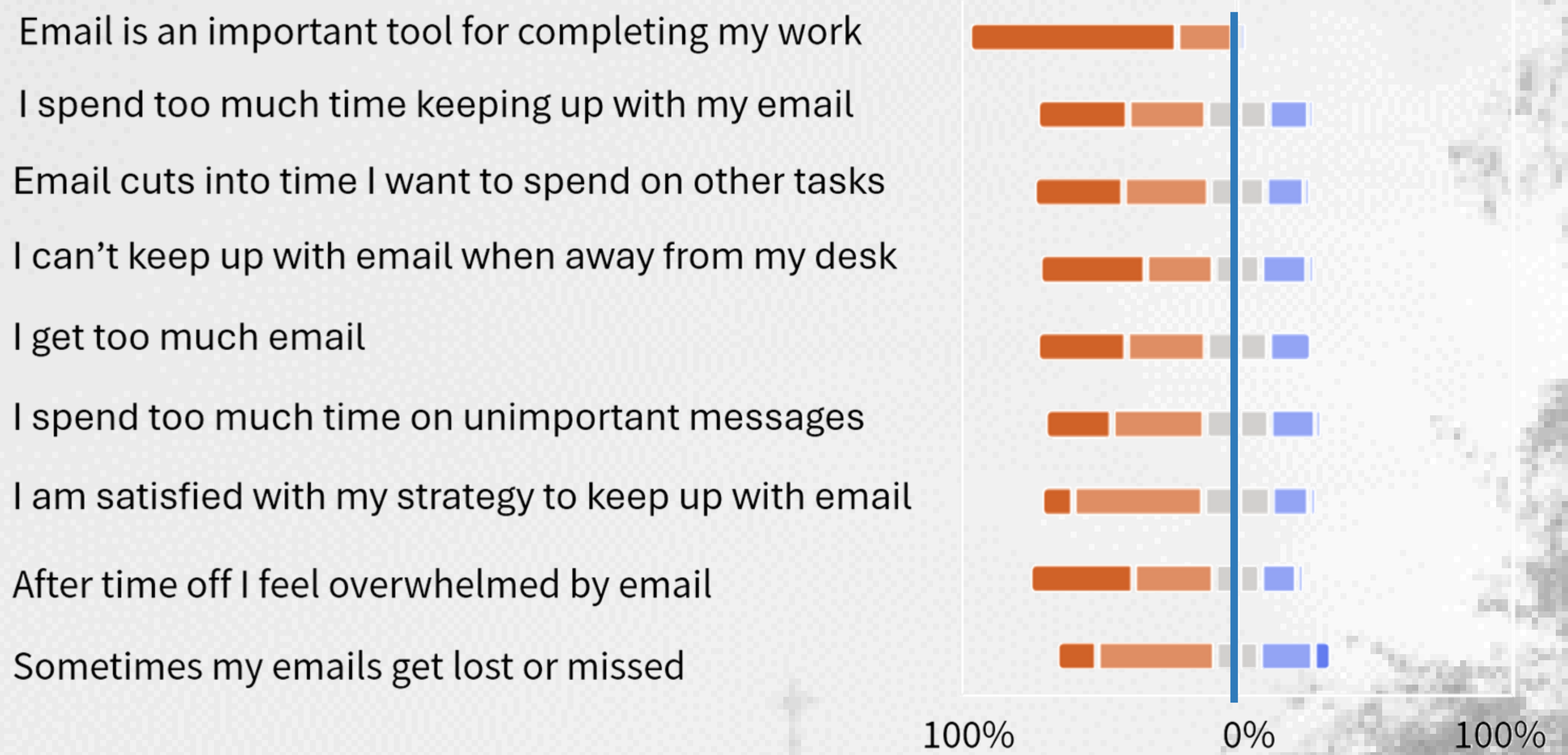
Method: An online survey, with ethical approval from the School of Medicine, was emailed as a pilot to all staff in 11 self-selected schools/departments who completed it in March, April, May 2026.

Response rate (n, RR)

Total: (198, 11%). Schools: Medicine (63, 11%), Natural Science (16, 10%), Psychology (6, 11%), Engineering (10, 4%), Nursing & Midwifery (13, 8%)
 Departments: College Health (6, 15%), Library (23, 14%), Student Counselling (13, 22%), Disability (1, 7%), Human Resources (10, 15%), Academic Registry (17, 21%)

1. Email load

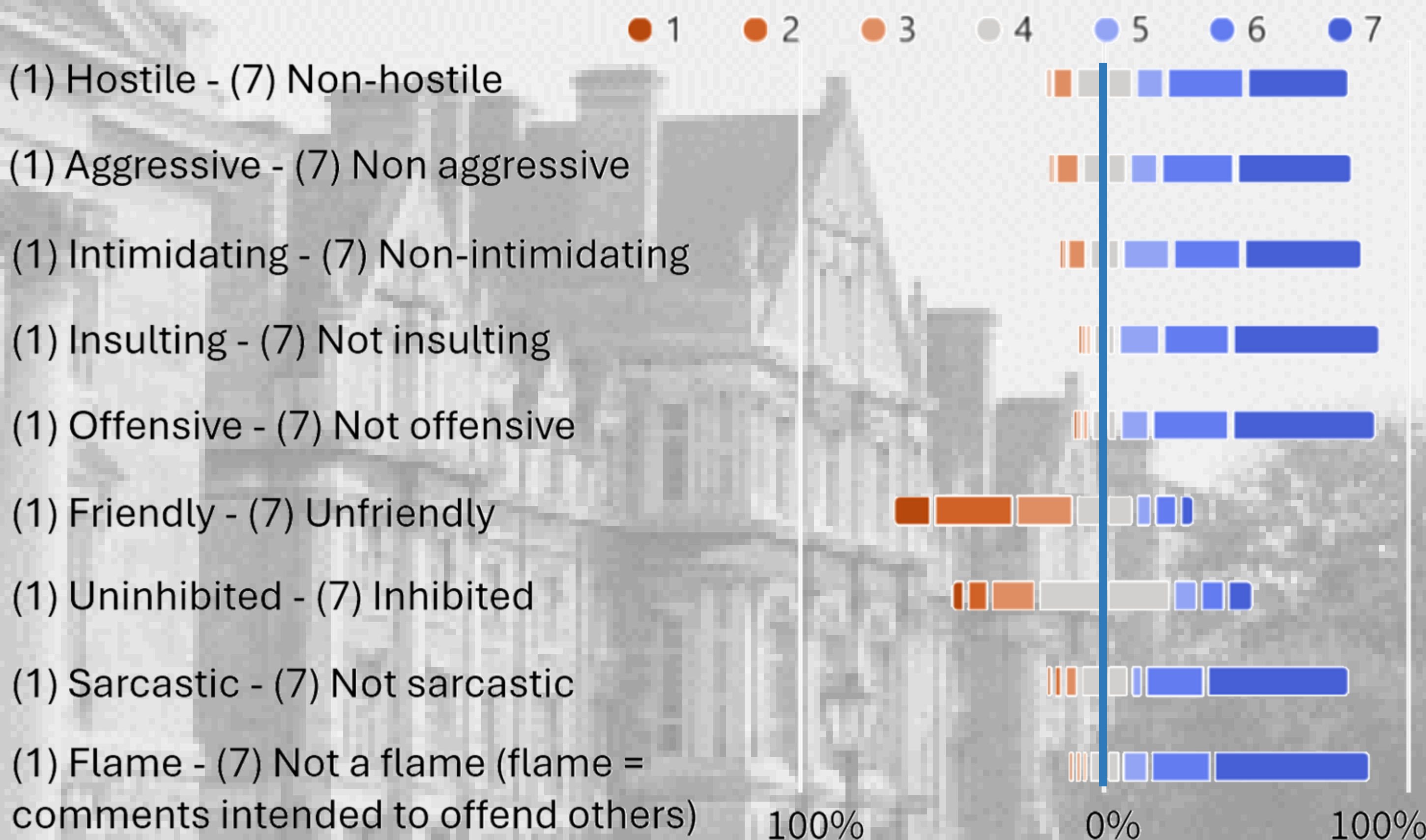
Rate these statements: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree



Summary 1: Email is both an important tool and a source of overload for Trinity staff. Note: questions adapted from [Hogan and Fisher \(2006\)](#).

2. Email experience

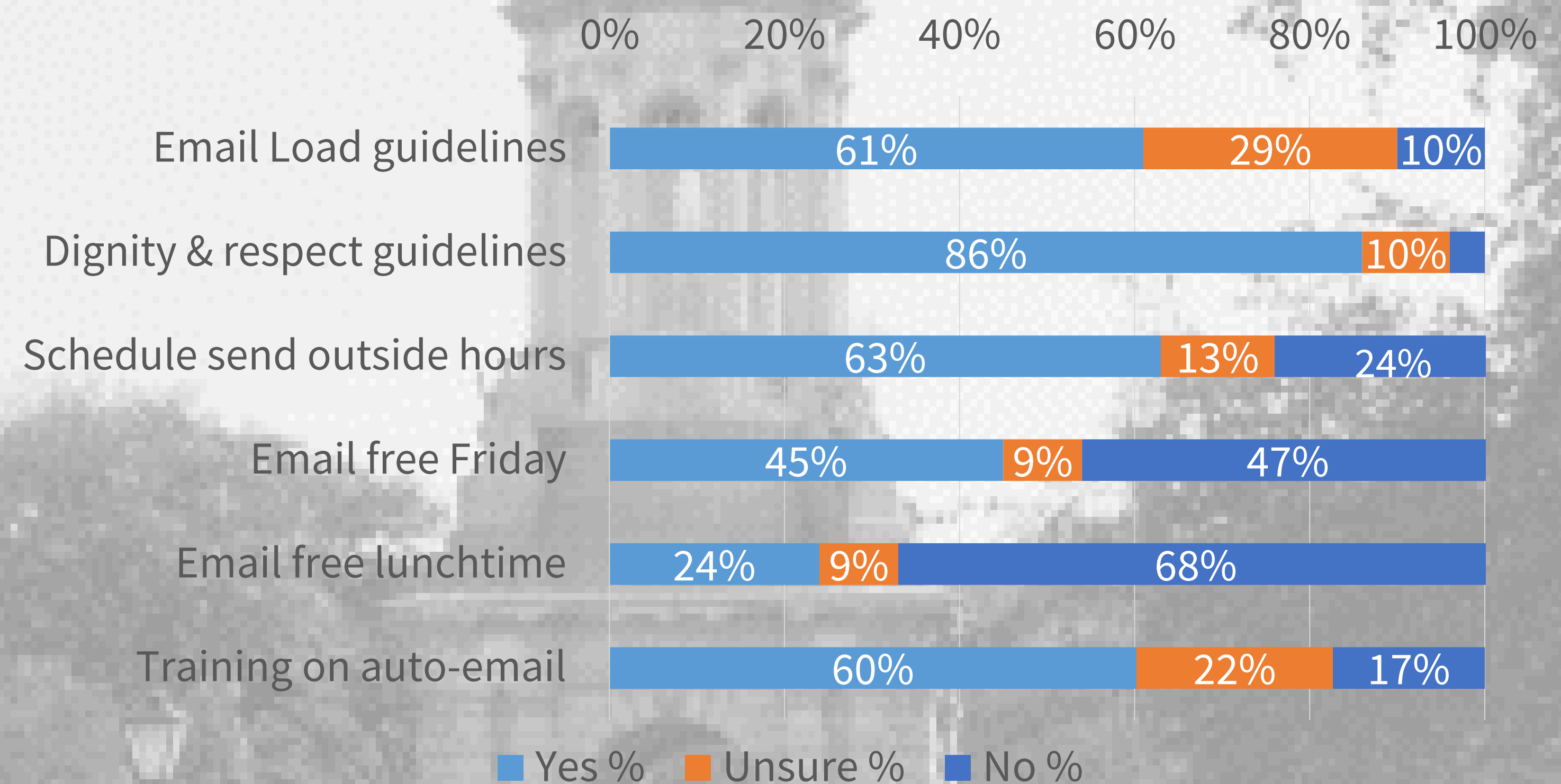
In general, do you experience email as:



Summary 2: Email is generally experienced positively as non-hostile, non-aggressive, non-intimidating and non-sarcastic. Importantly, for a small number of respondents, this is not so. Note: questions adapted from [Turnage \(2006\)](#)

3. Attitudes to introducing email guidelines

Do you support (n=196):



Summary 3: The strongest support for guidelines is on dignity and respect (86%) with strong support also found for email load (61%). Support varies for specific measures with strong support for schedule sending outside working hours (63%), but support for email free Friday divided at Yes (45%)/No (47%). Training on automating email is strongly supported (60%). Note: Questions based on [School of Medicine Email Policy](#)

Guidelines on email load and experience are supported by respondents. Further qualitative research could resolve questions raised in this survey and with server-level data measuring traffic during that process, could become a Trinity Living Lab like the [Tobacco Free Campus Living Lab](#).

Sense of coherence (SoC): While email is an important tool for respondents to complete their work and is generally experienced positively, it is also a source of overload and for some, a lack of dignity and respect. It is also not clear if email free Friday should be introduced. Resolving this ambivalence may support colleagues to achieve a stronger SoC, ie. their confidence the world makes sense. SoC is [associated with](#) better mental health.

Sustainability, Thrive and next steps: Trinity Sustainability Strategy, endorsed by Thrive, aims to enhance mental health in individuals, communities and systems. Whilst respondents indicated strong support for training on automating emails, knitting email guidelines into Thrive commitment 6.1 "Digital Transformation Roadmap" may be a mechanism for achieving system level mental health support.



Strategic relevance: Email Guidelines align to Thrive Commitment 4.2 "A workplace where values are fully lived" and are relevant to Thrive's ambition to knit sustainability into all commitments via Trinity Sustainability Strategy, which aims to enhance mental health.