



International Pharmacy Graduates Entry to Practice Experience Survey

Conducted for the Canadian Pharmacists
Association – CPhA

August 2023

Methodology

- Sample size: 582 international pharmacist graduates in Canada selected by the CPhA.
- Survey field dates: June 12 to July 10, 2023.
- Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- Data is shown unweighted given that there is no national population data available on practising international graduates.



Executive summary

- **Current state:** 37% of international pharmacy graduate (IPG) respondents currently or previously obtained a pharmacist license in Canada. A considerable number of these IPGs completed their pharmacy degrees in English and have previous experience in community and/or hospital pharmacy before their arrival to Canada.
- **Deciding where to live and work:** IPGs prioritize obtaining their license in provinces where they already reside, work, or have personal connections, with considerations related to the licensure process, such as time and mandatory bridging programs, taking more of a secondary role. Only a small percentage of licensed individuals choose to switch provinces during the licensing process, usually due to the licensing process being too long, complicated or they want to bypass mandatory bridging.
- **Current practices of licensed IPGs:** Almost all licensed IPGs are actively employed as pharmacists in Canada. While 90% of IPGs are working in community pharmacy settings, only 50% of IPGs indicated community pharmacy as their ideal practice setting.
- **Unlicensed IPGs current state:** The majority of unlicensed IPGs are living in Canada and actively engaged in the process of becoming a licensed pharmacists. Ontario is the primary destination for IPGs living in Canada while they work towards licensure and the most popular province for licensing. Additionally, the absence of mandatory bridging programs make licensure in Manitoba/Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces more appealing options for some IPGs. Alberta is a top province of choice for IPGs to work and live after becoming licensed.

Executive summary

- **Role of pharmacy assistant positions when pursuing licensure:** A large majority of IPGs pursuing their license in Canada are or have been employed or volunteering as pharmacy assistants. Among those who aren't, the primary reasons depend on where they are in the licensing process. Most of those who haven't yet passed the PEBC Evaluating exam can't find a pharmacy that will hire them. Those in paid roles tend to stay in their positions longer and generally find the experience to be more valuable compared to those in unpaid or volunteer roles. Of concern is how few IPGs *definitely* felt safe, respected, supported and valued in their pharmacy assistant positions.
- **Sources of information:** The majority of IPGs believe it is at least somewhat easy to access clear and comprehensive information about the licensing process in Canada. IPGs identified the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) as the top official source of information.
- **National Pharmacy Exams:** Exam schedules, exam difficulty and exam costs are the three greatest challenges faced by IPGs in relation to the PEBC examination process. While most describe the exam instructions as at least somewhat easy to follow, only 39% felt that they had a good understanding of what would be covered.
- **Entry to practice supports:** The top types of support that IPGs are aware of and use throughout the licensure process are exam preparation courses, Canadian drug and therapeutic content and paid work experience in pharmacy settings. Mentorship supports and Canadian drug and therapeutic content were identified as the most helpful supports among those who had access.
- **Value of practice:** Almost all IPGs who could not work as a student/intern/provisional pharmacist prior to the PEBC Qualifying exam think they would have been better prepared for the exam if they had been given that practice experience.

Executive summary

- **Practical training, experience and other internship requirements:** Having to independently search for a preceptor or appraiser for practical training or internship was a challenge for 89% of IPGs licensed in Canada. Over one third of IPGs spent over 3 months trying to find secure a preceptor.
- **Practical Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE):** Most IPGs had either less than a year (38%) or 1 to 2 years (46%) experience working in a Canadian pharmacy before applying for the Practical Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE) and 84% were at least somewhat confident in their readiness to practice going into their PACE assessment.
- **Bridging programs:** Just over a third (35%) of IPGs licensed in Canada since 2017 completed a pharmacist bridging program. A majority (80%) of those who completed or are in the process of completing a bridging program rate it as at least somewhat valuable, with 53% rating it as extremely valuable.
- **Entry to practice:** The majority of licensed IPGs reported that the licensing process took approximately three years – this aligns with the expectations of those currently pursuing a license, who typically anticipate the entire process to take between one to three years.
- **Greatest licensure challenges:** IPGs identified the most challenging pieces of the entire licensing process to be 1) finding work experience in a pharmacy, 2) getting clear information about steps and requirements to licensure, 3) understanding the various pathways to licensure and 4) studying for the PEBC exams.
- **Other challenges:** Among other challenges identified by IPGs, family responsibilities, length of time to licensure, costs associated with licensure, and lack of pharmacist mentorship were ranked as the greatest barriers during the licensing process.

Section 1: Introduction & Background

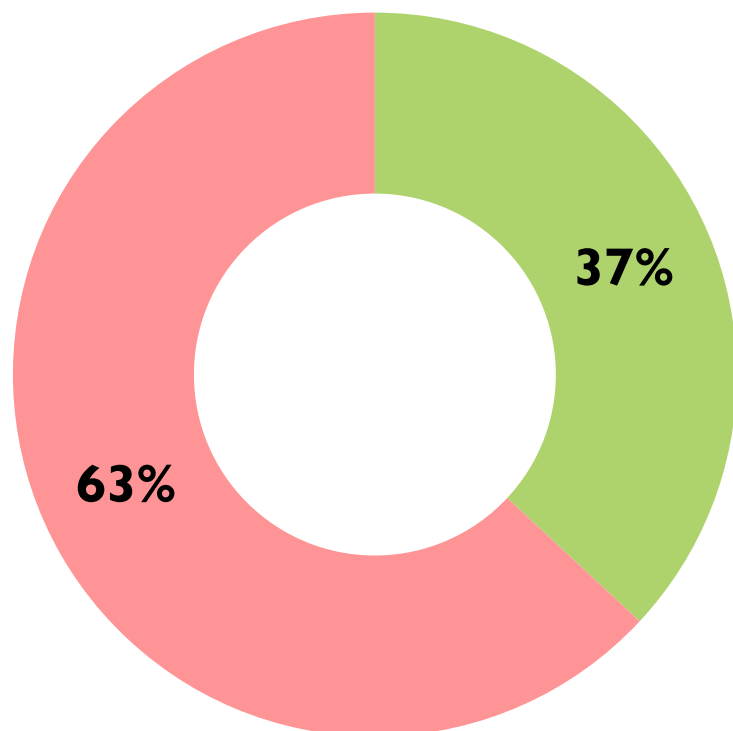
Key findings

- 37% of the International Professional Graduates (IPGs) survey respondents are or were at some point fully licensed in Canada.
- The top countries for IPGs to obtain their degree among survey respondents are India (20%) followed by Egypt (13%), Nigeria (10%) and the Philippines (10%).
- Most IPGs completed their pharmacy degree in English. The language in which IPGs completed their pharmacy degree does not appear to impact time to licensure.
- Most IPGs practiced in community (65%) or hospital pharmacy (42%) before coming to Canada with 67% having practised for at least two years. After 6 years, as more time elapses between their education and current practice as pharmacists, the likelihood of IPGs successfully passing the PEBC exams decreases. IPGs who spent fewer years working pharmacists before coming to Canada tend to obtain their Canadian license faster (1-2 years).



Are you, or have you ever been, licensed as a pharmacist in Canada?

2 out of 3 International Pharmacy Graduate (IPG) survey respondents are not currently licensed pharmacists in Canada.



■ **Yes, I am or was a fully licensed pharmacist in Canada**

“Yes” only if you have ever obtained a full pharmacist license through a provincial or territorial regulatory authority, even if you are no longer licensed or work as a pharmacist.

■ **No, I am not a licensed pharmacist in Canada**

“No” if you have never obtained a full pharmacist license in Canada. For example, you are not yet licensed, you are registered as a student or intern, or you hold a provisional, interim or emergency license.

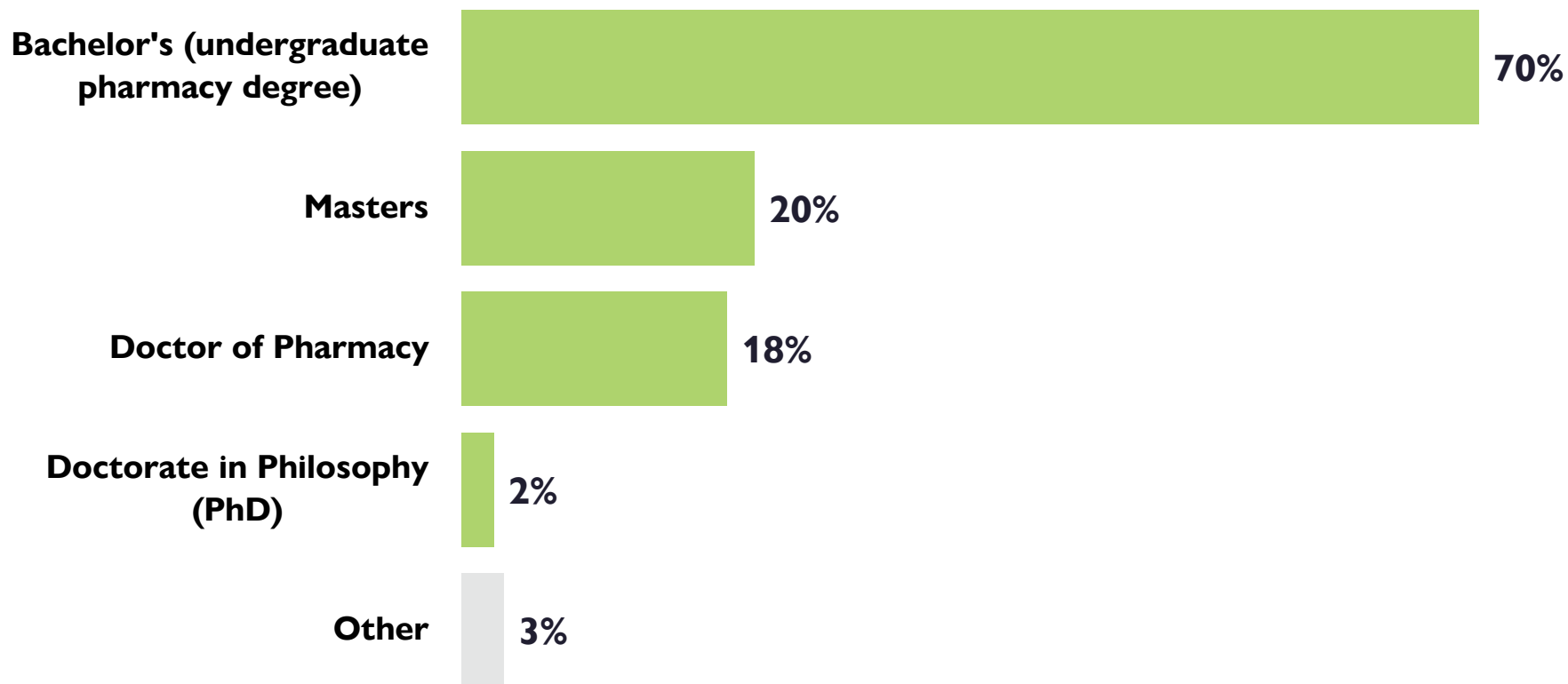
[all] Base n=582





What degrees did you have in pharmacy before arriving in Canada? (select all that apply)

Majority of IPGs had a Bachelor's degree (4-year undergraduate pharmacy degree) before arriving in Canada.



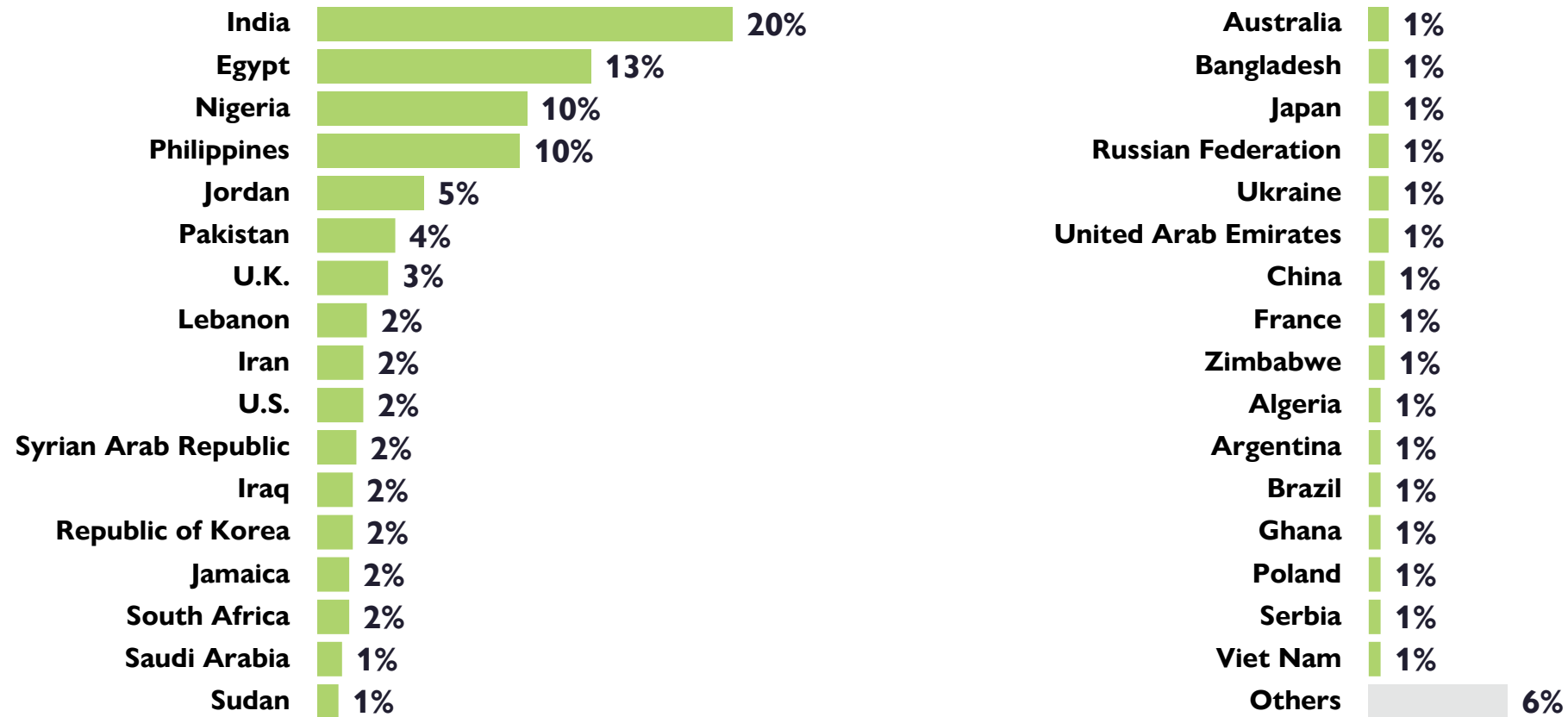
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From which country did you graduate with your first pharmacy degree?

The top 3 countries from which IPGs graduate with their first pharmacy degree are India, Egypt and Nigeria.

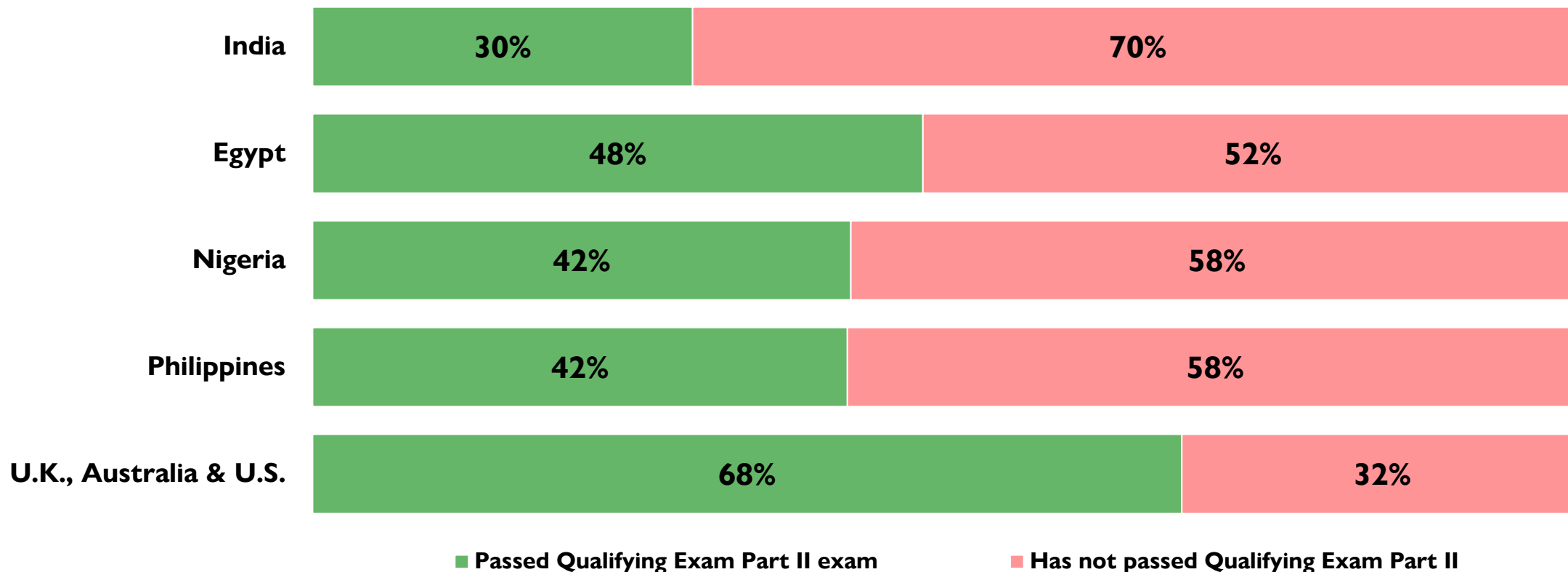


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From which country did you graduate with your first pharmacy degree?

IPGs from the U.K., Australia and U.S. had the highest success rate on PEBC's OSCE Exam

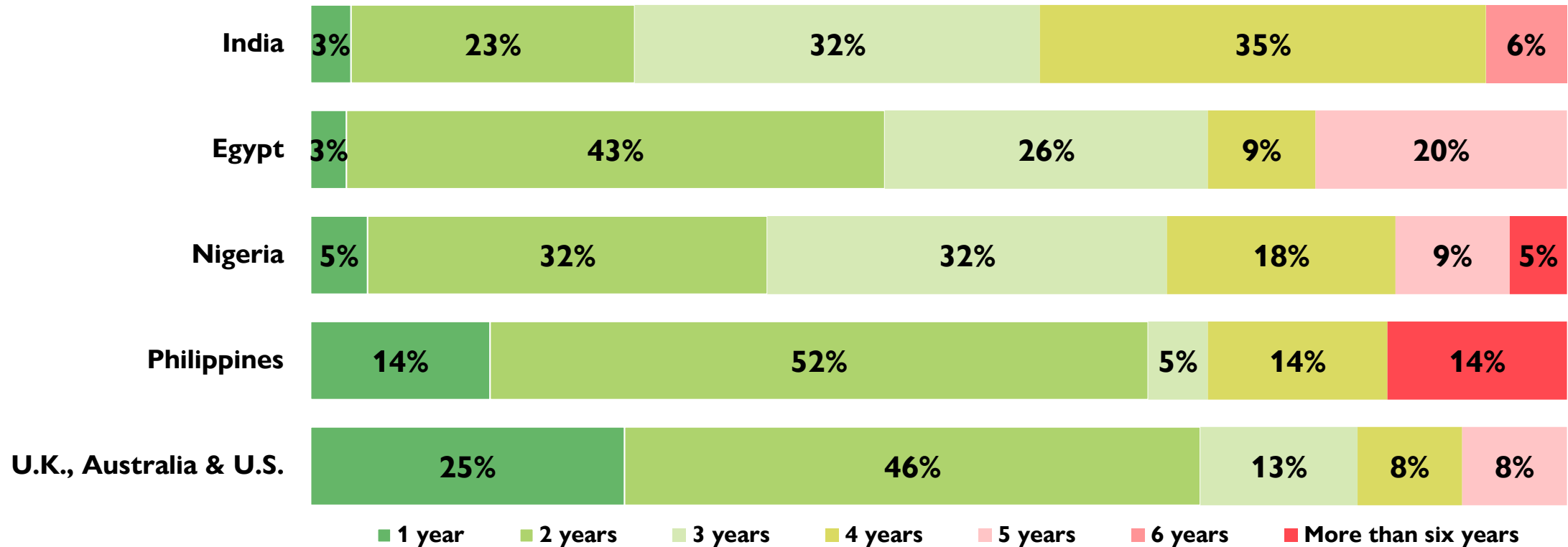


[all] Base n=582, India n=117, Egypt n=77, Nigeria n=59, Philippines n=57, UK/AUS/US n=38



From which country did you graduate with your first pharmacy degree?

IPGs from the U.K., Australia, U.S. and the Philippines were licensed the fastest (within 1-2 years).

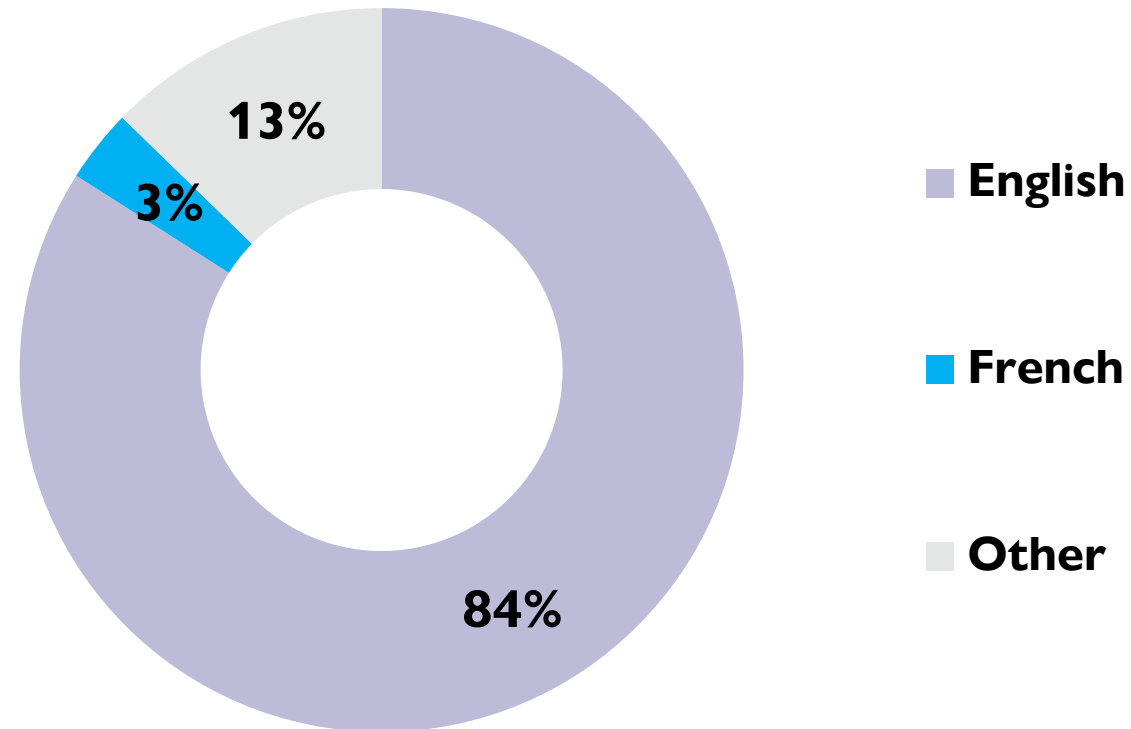


[IPGs licensed in Canada] Base n=215 India n=31, Egypt n=35, Nigeria n=22, Philippines n=21, UK/AUS/US n=24



In which language did you complete your pharmacy degree?

Most IPGs completed their pharmacy degree in English.

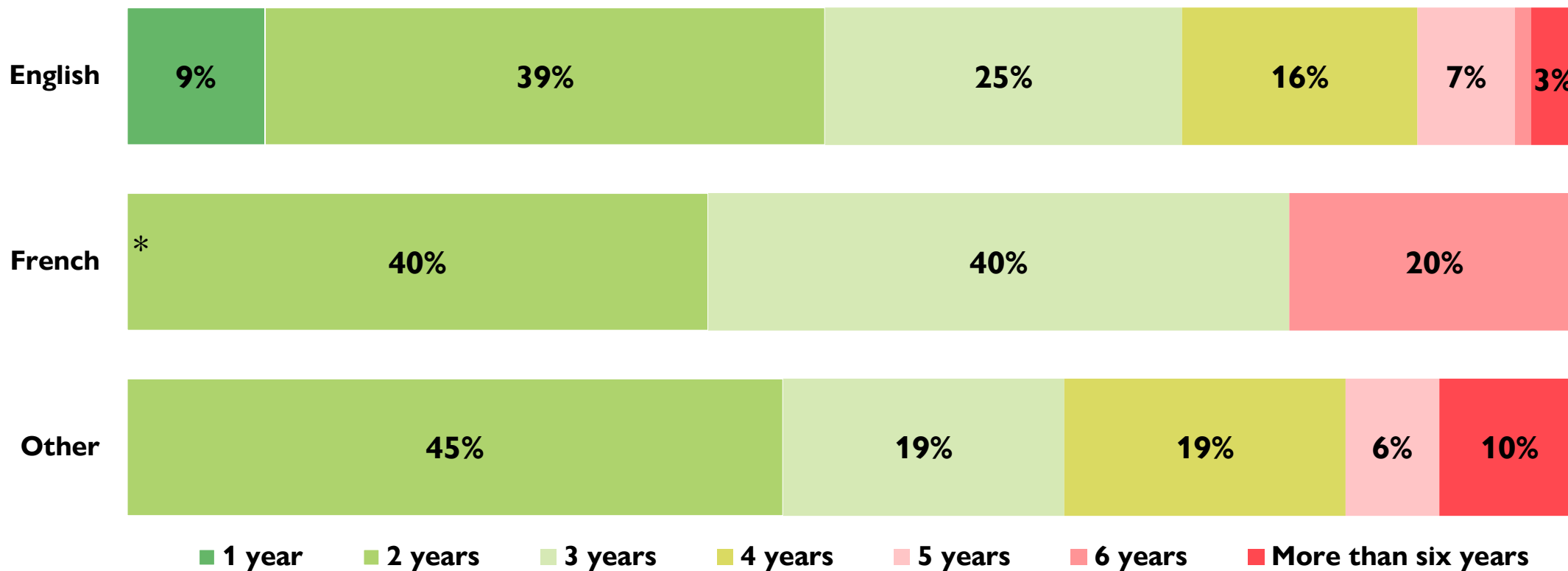


[all] Base n=582



From document evaluation/assessment of education and training to licensure, how long did it take you to become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada? | In which language did you complete your pharmacy degree?

The language of an IPG's initial pharmacy degree does not have a significant impact on the time to licensure.

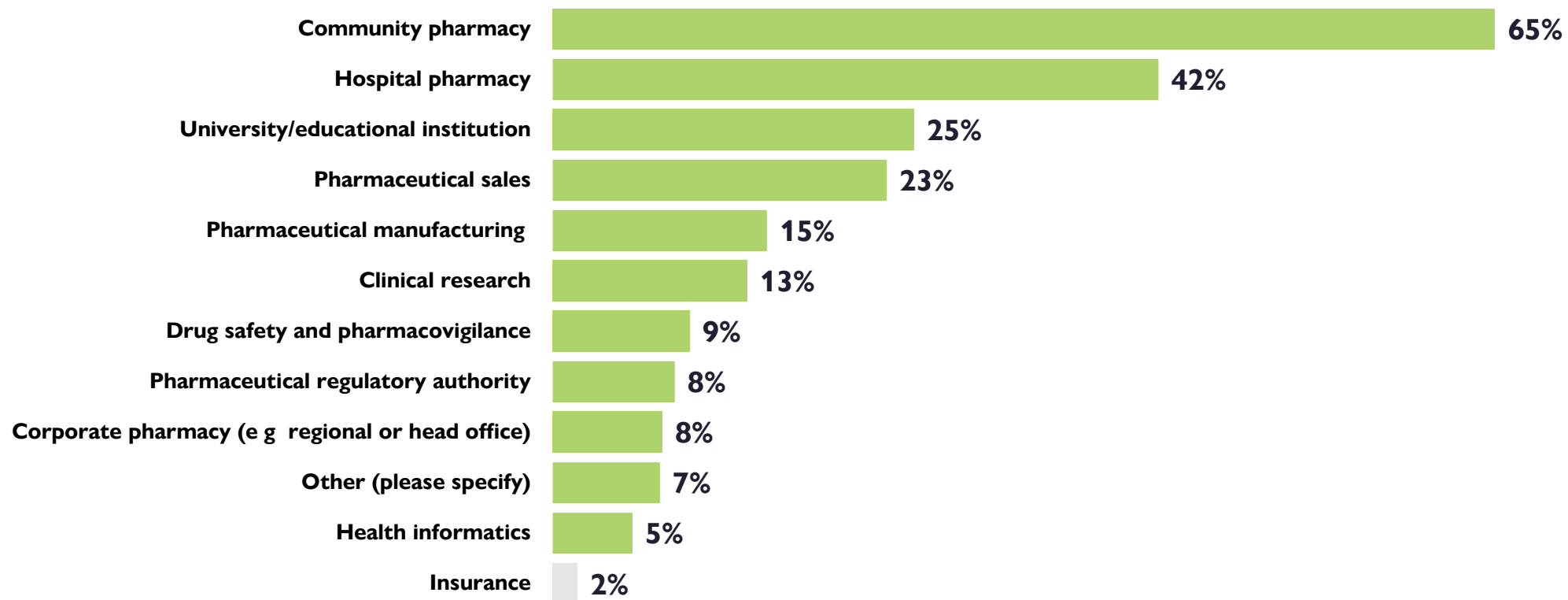


[Licensed IPGs] Base n=215 English n=179, French n=5 (* very small sample), Other n=31



What were your main fields of experience in pharmacy before arriving in Canada? (select all that apply)

The top fields of experience for IPGs before arriving in Canada are community and hospital pharmacy.

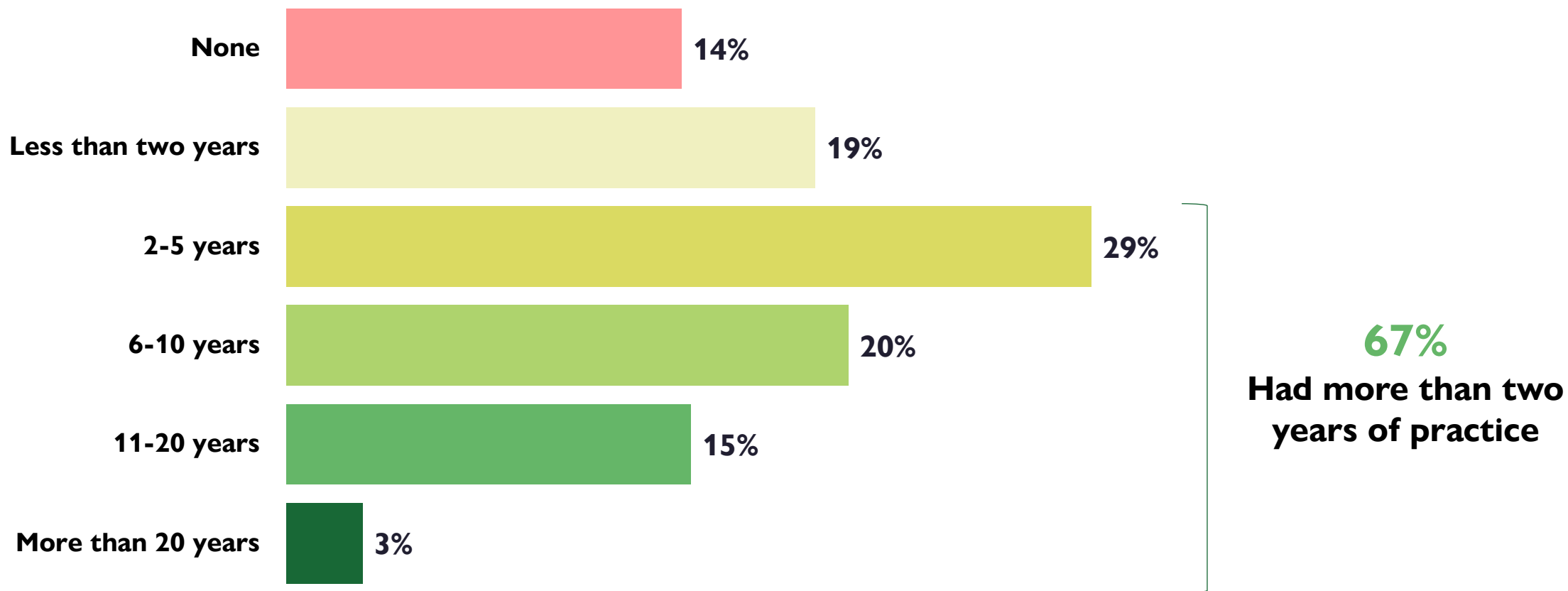


[all] Base n=582



How many years did you practice as a pharmacist before coming to Canada?

2 out of 3 IPGs worked as pharmacists for more than 2 years before coming to Canada.



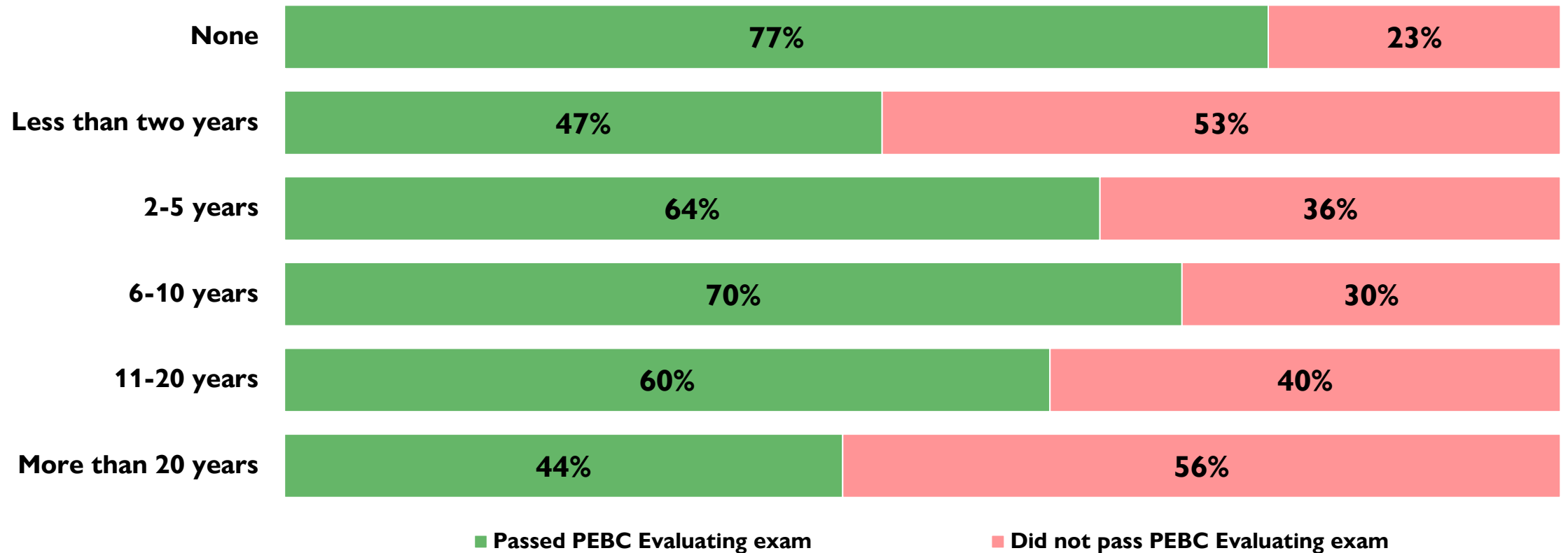
[all] Base n=582





How many years did you practice as a pharmacist before coming to Canada?

After 6 years, as more time elapses since obtaining their degree, the likelihood of IPGs successfully passing the PEBC Evaluating exam decreases.



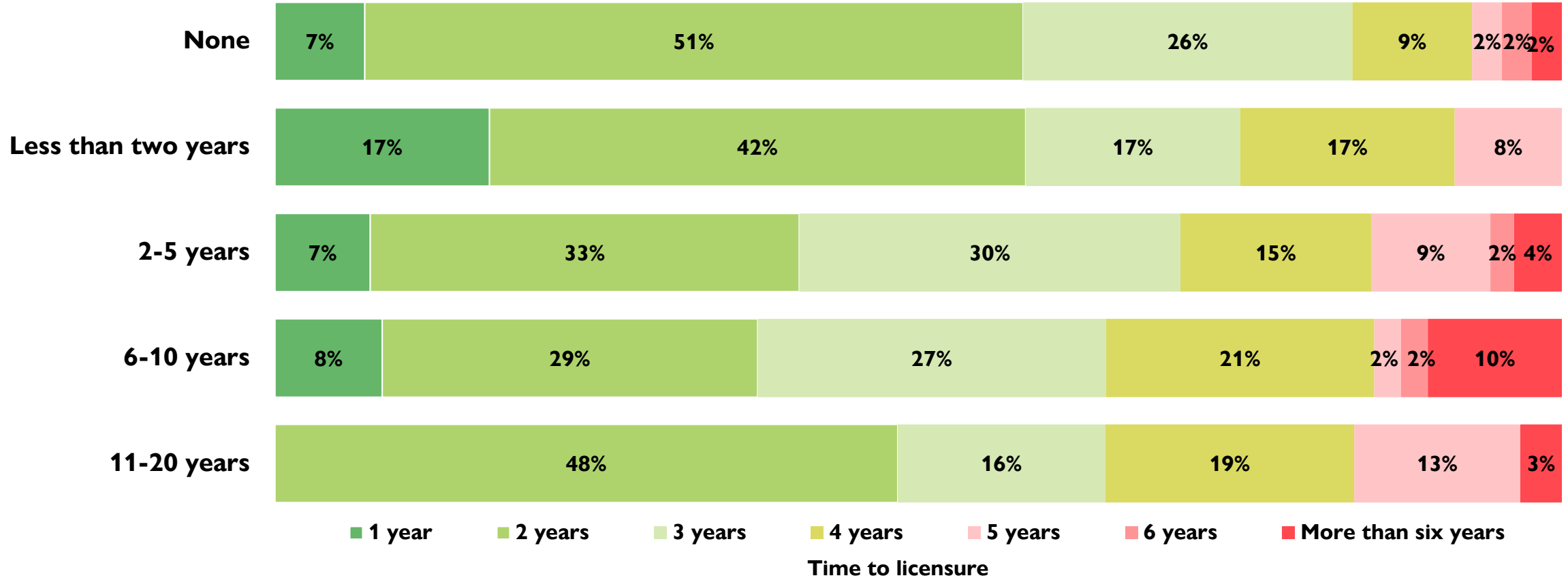
Base n=465, None n=83, <2 n=111, 2-5 n=169, 6-10 n=118, 11-20 n=85, >20 n=16. Passed n=373, did not pass n = 92 (includes those in progress as may be reattempting)



How many years did you practice as a pharmacist before coming to Canada? From document evaluation/assessment of education and training to licensure, how long did it take you to become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada?

IPGs who spent fewer years practicing as pharmacists before coming to Canada tend to obtain their Canadian license quicker (1-2 years).

Years practiced as a pharmacist before coming to Canada



[Those with licensure] Base n=215 None n=43, <2 n=36, 2-5 n=54, 6-10 n=48, 11-20 n=31, >20 n=3

Section 2:

Journey within Canada

(Licensed pharmacists)

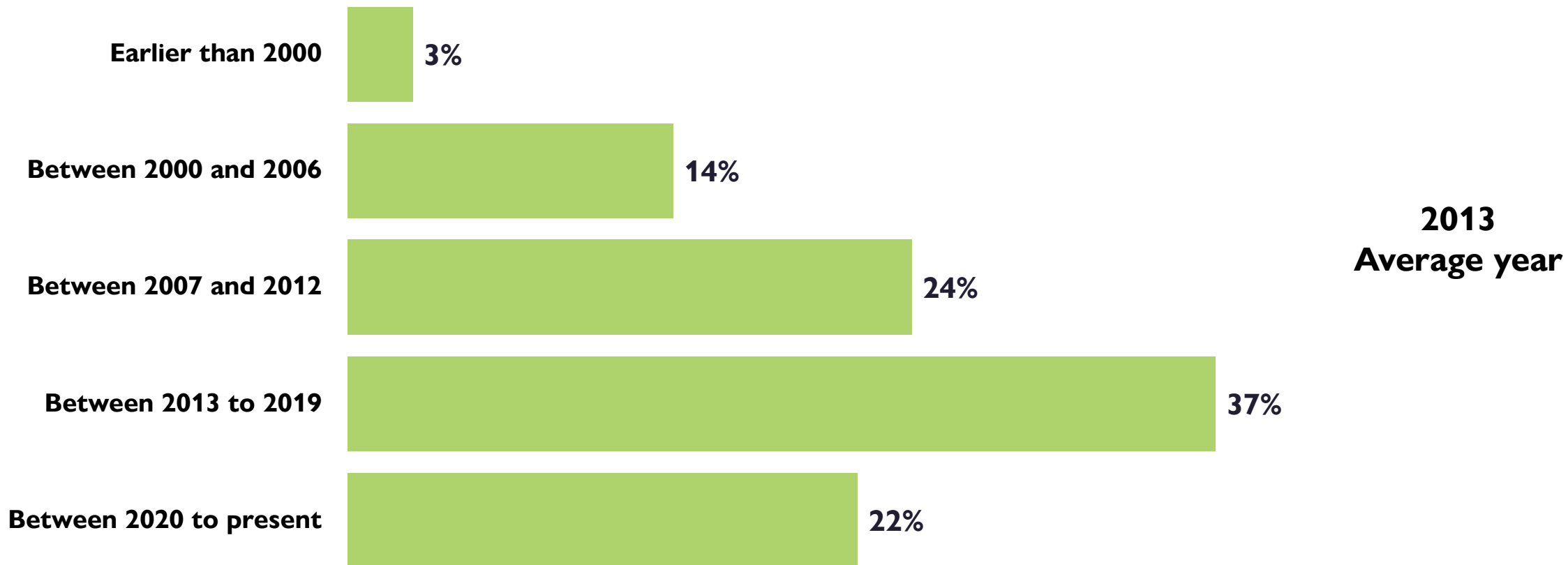
Key findings

- Most licensed IPG respondents became licensed in Canada within the last 10 years.
- Ontario is the top arrival point with 45% of licensed IPGs having first entered Canada there. However, only 40% of licensed IPGs currently live and practice in the province. BC and Alberta receive the most IPGs after they've obtained their license in another province.
- The number one reason for getting licensed in a province is already living or working there (58%). The next most important reasons are personal connections in the province (22%), being able to get licensed in the least amount of time (20%), and the ability to bypass a mandatory bridging program (20%).
- A small percentage (13%) of licensed IPGs stopped pursuing their license in one province and began the licensing process again in another province.
 - The top reasons to change provinces during the licensing process were that the licensing process was taking too long (34%), they wanted to bypass mandatory bridging (28%), or the licensing process was too complicated (24%). Most IPGs who chose to change provinces during their licensing pursuit moved out of Ontario.
- 20% of licensed IPGs chose to move away from their original province of licensure. Over half (55%) of these IPGs moved to another province or territory less than a year after becoming licensed.



What year did you first become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada?

59% of licensed IPG respondents obtained their license to practice in Canada within the last ten years.

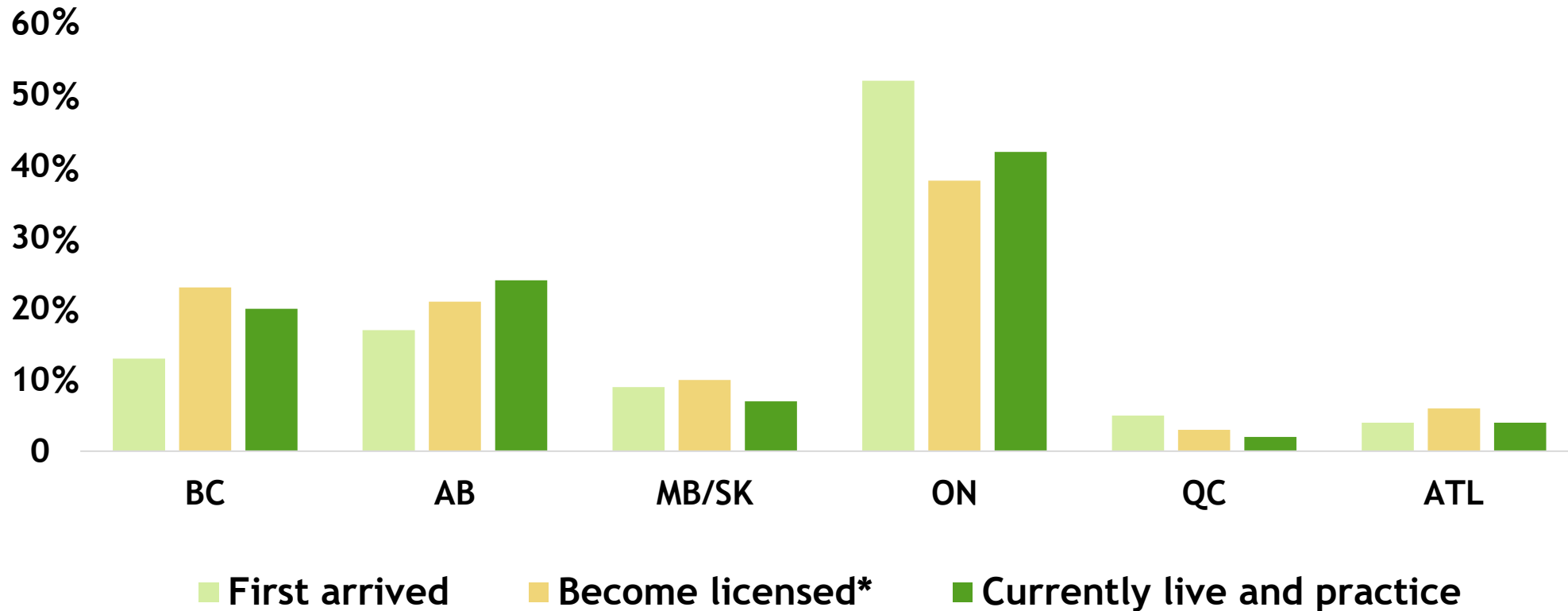


[Those who are or were fully licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=215



Where did you first arrive when you came to Canada? | In which province did you first become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada? | Where do you currently live and practice in Canada?

Most IPGs chose to arrive, become licensed, live and practice in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia (all years).



[Those who are or were fully licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=215

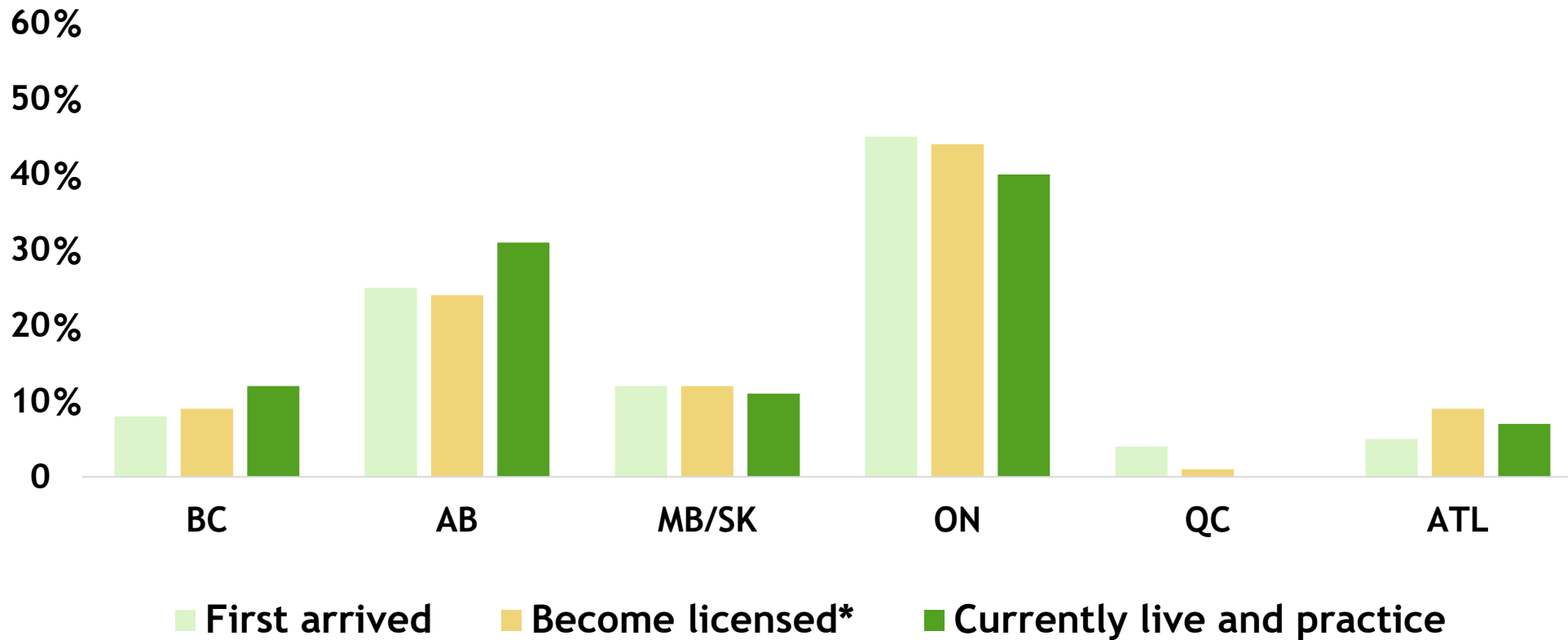
*Note: Provinces listed only



Where did you first arrive when you came to Canada? | In which province did you first become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada? | Where do you currently live and practice in Canada?

Most IPGs chose to arrive, become licensed, live and practice in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

Licensed in Canada since 2017



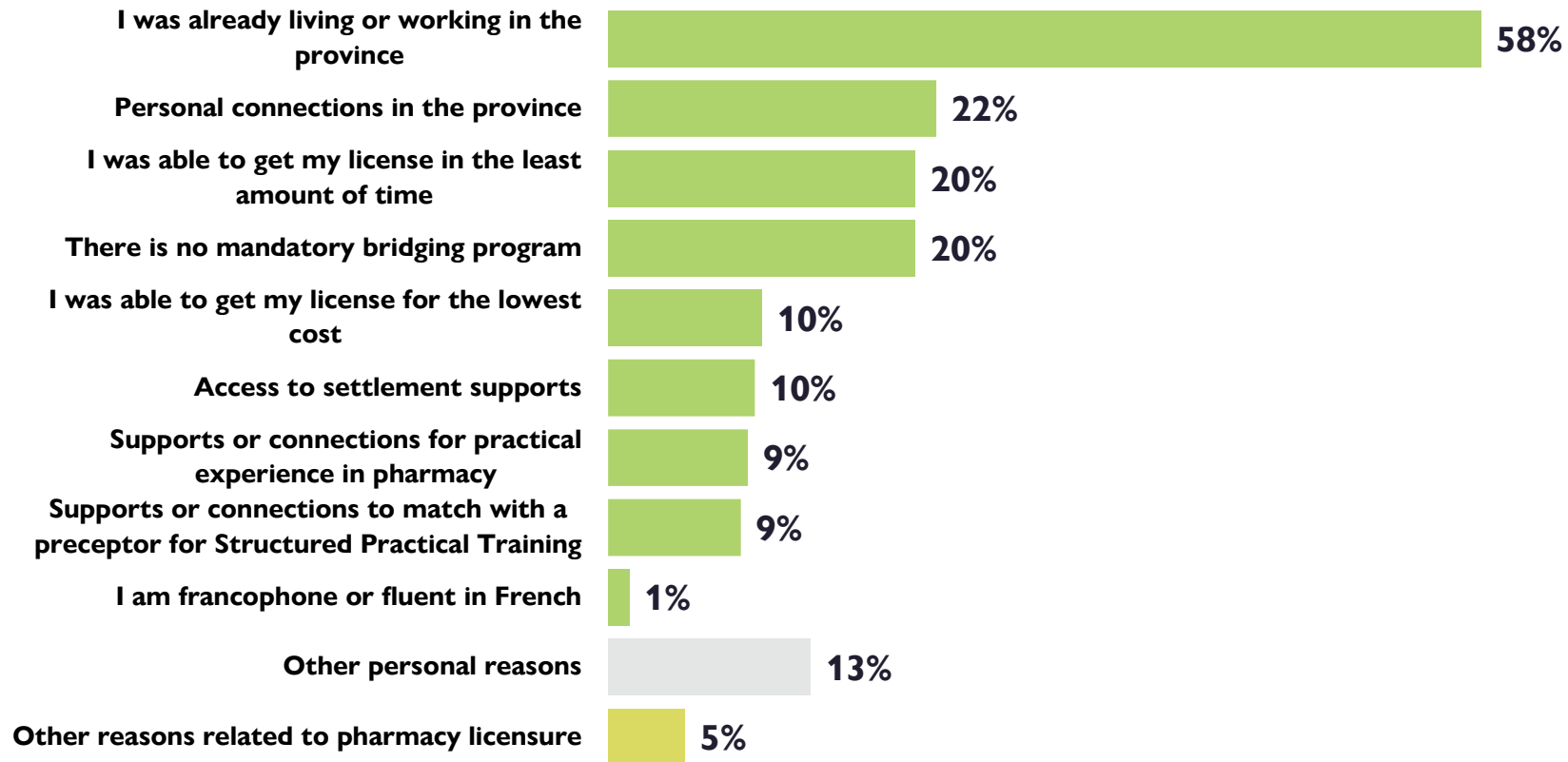
[Those who are or were fully licensed pharmacist in Canada since 2017] Base n=75

*Note: Provinces listed only



Why did you choose to obtain your pharmacist license in this province? (select all that apply)

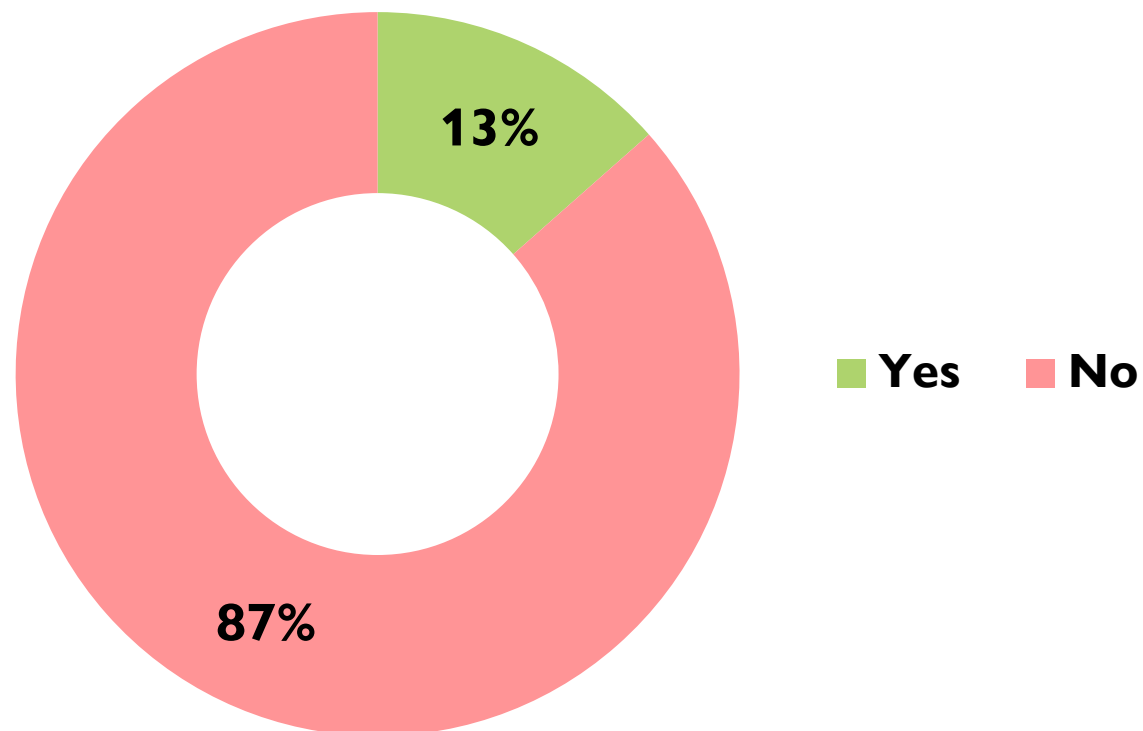
Already living or working in the province was the most common reason for IPGs to obtain their license in that province



[Those who are or were fully licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=215

At any point did you stop pursuing your license in one province and begin the licensing process again in another province?

A majority of IPGs remained in the same province throughout their pursuit of licensure.

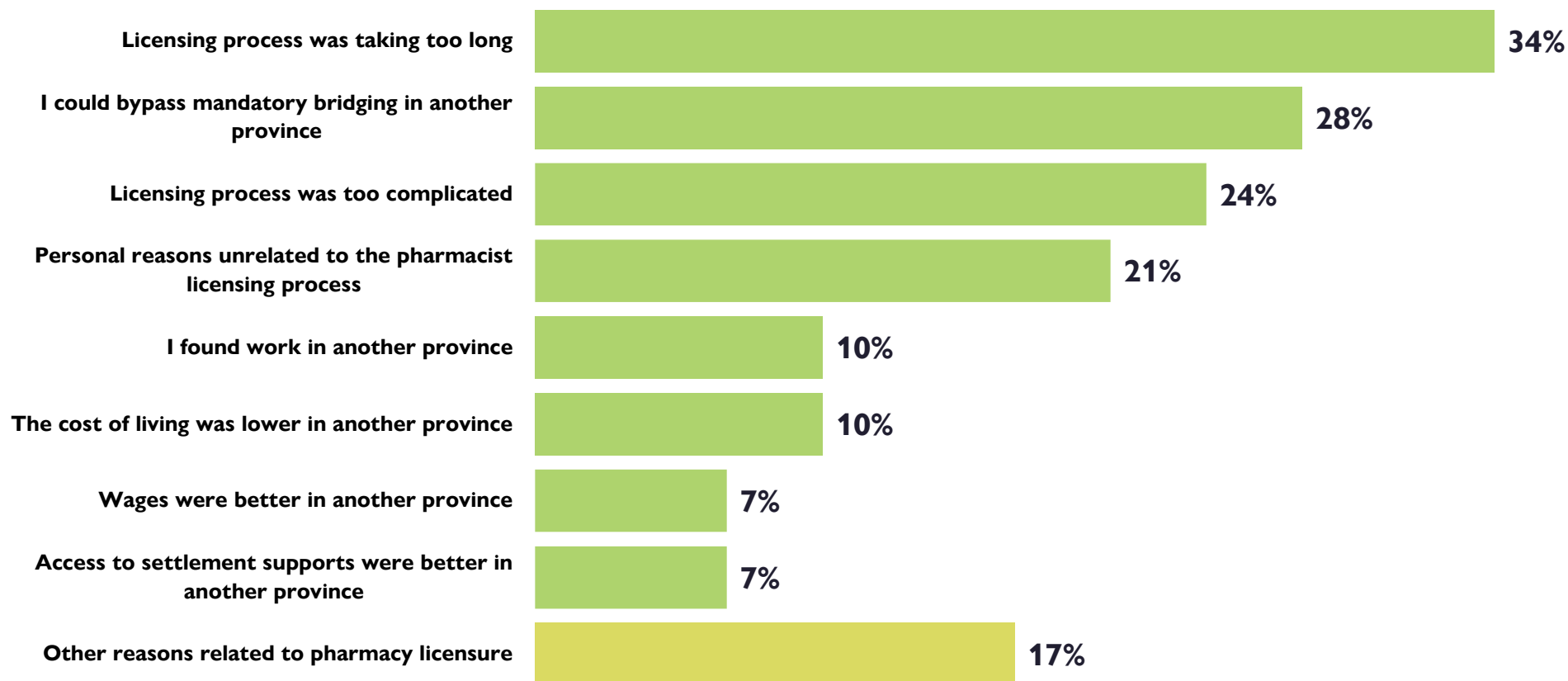


[Those who are or were fully licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=215



What made you decide to stop the licensing process in one province and begin in another? (select all that apply)

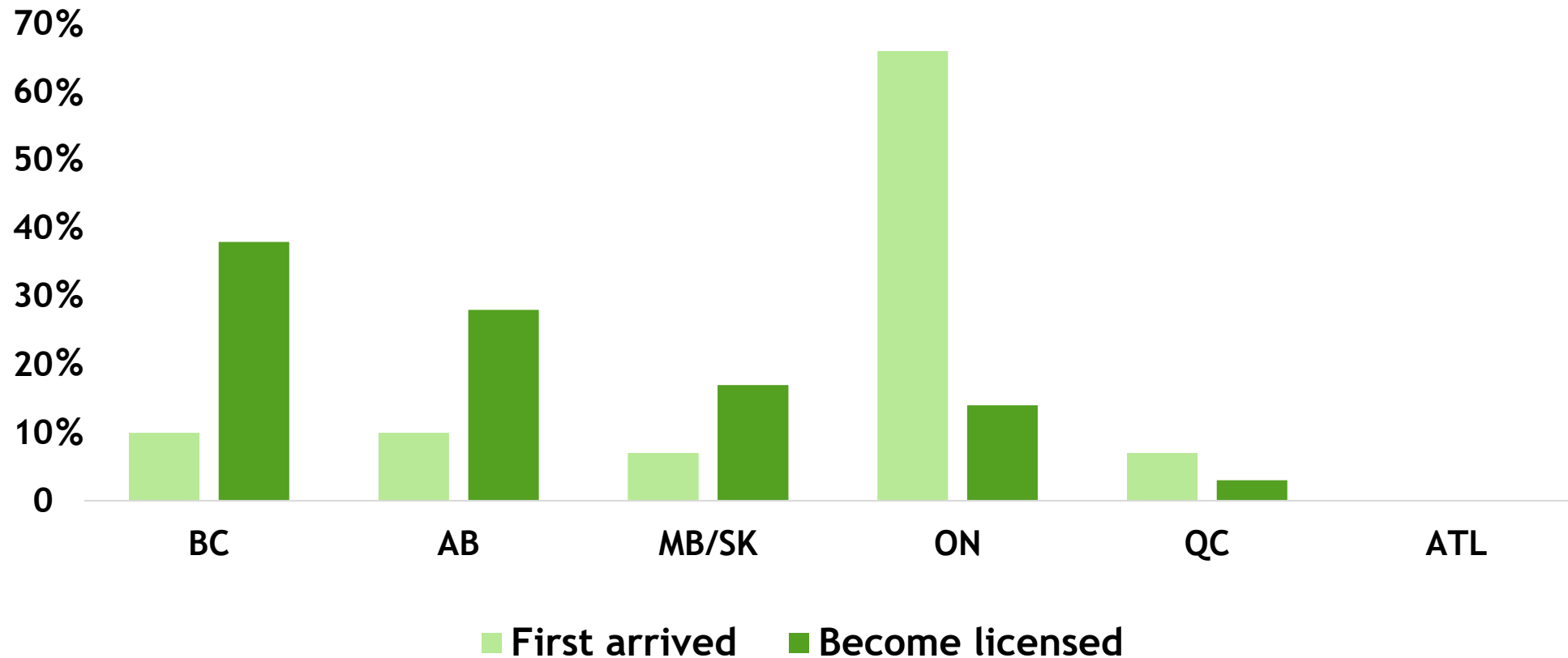
The top reason IPGs changed provinces during the licensing process was because licensure was taking too long.



[Those who are or were fully licensed pharmacist in Canada & decided to change province for training] Base n=29

Where did you first arrive when you came to Canada? | In which province did you first become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada?

Most IPGs who chose to change provinces during the licensure process moved out of Ontario.

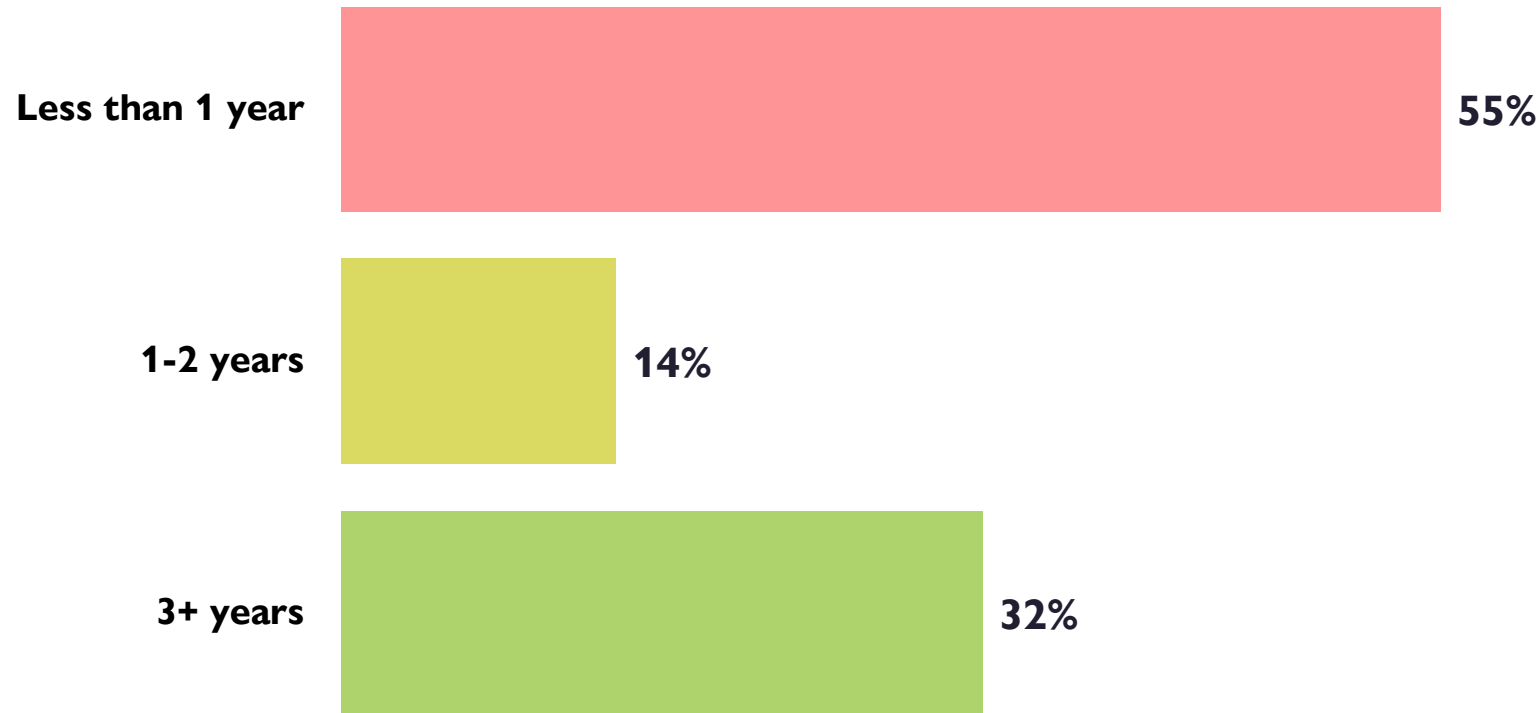


[Those who changed provinces during their licensing pursuit] Base n=29



How long after becoming licensed in your original province of licensure did you move to another province/territory?

More than half of the IPGs who are no longer living/practising in their original province of licensure moved within less than a year of being licensed (all years).

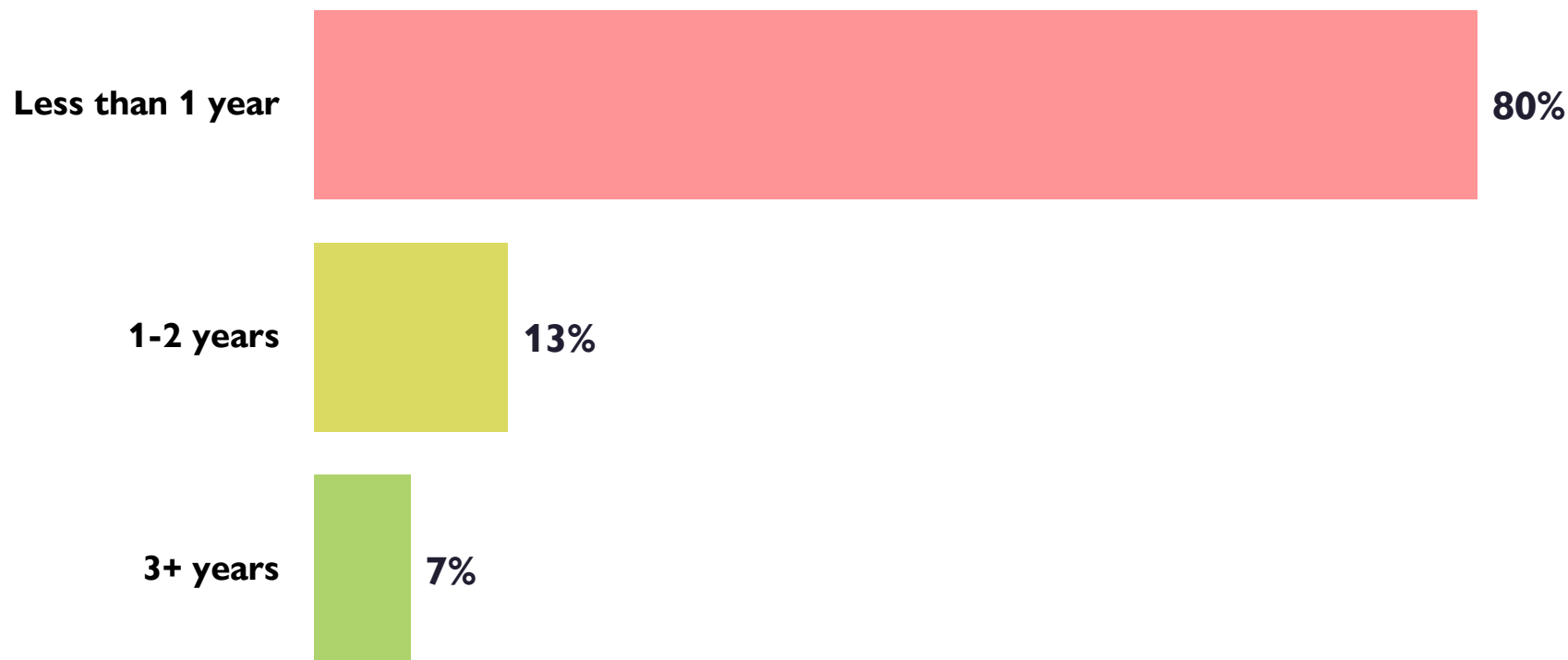


[Those who moved to another province after becoming licensed] Base n=44



How long after becoming licensed in your original province of licensure did you move to another province/territory?

80% of the IPGs who became licensed in Canada since 2017 and are no longer living/practising in their original province of licensure moved within less than a year of being licensed.

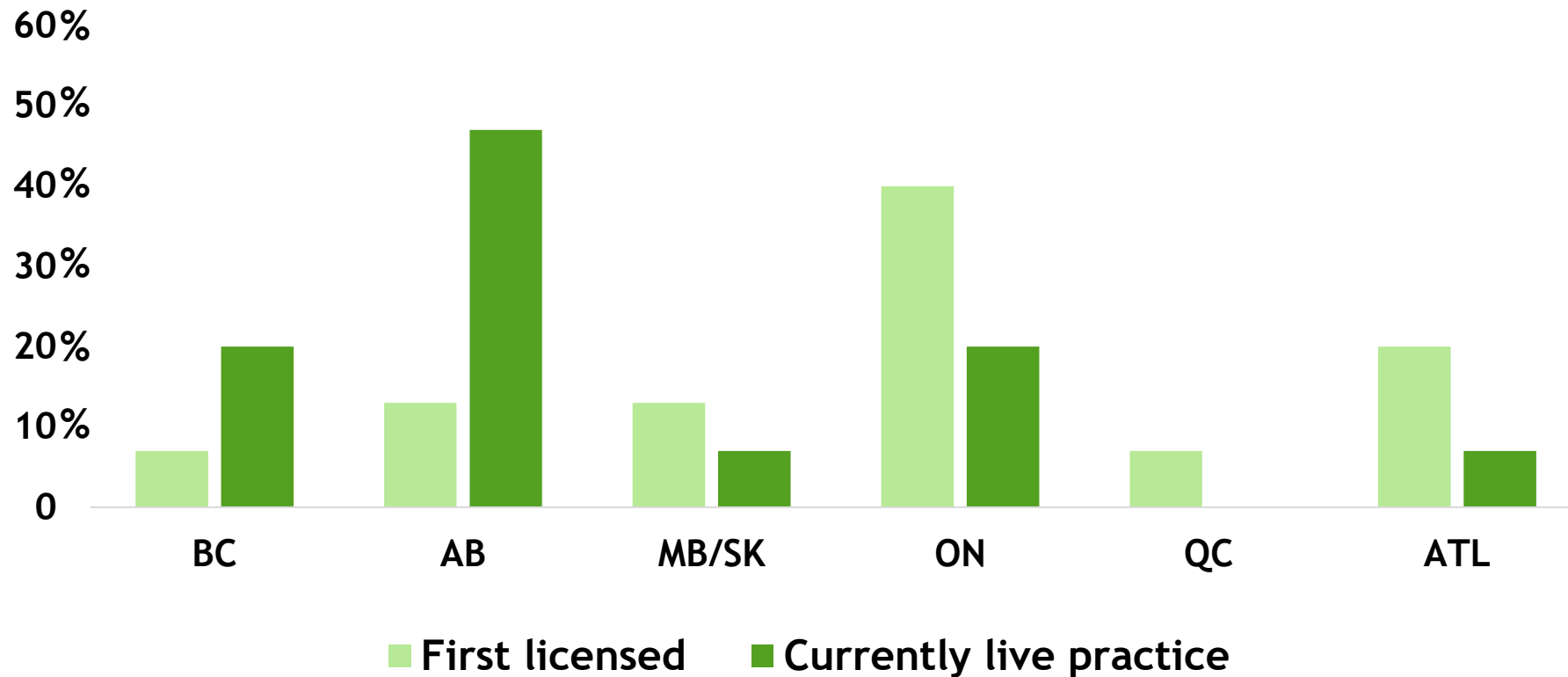


[Those who moved to another province after becoming licensed (only those licensed since 2017)] Base n=15

In which province did you first become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada? | Where do you currently live and practice in Canada?

Province of first licensure vs where IPGs currently live/practice

Licensed in Canada since 2017



[Those who moved to another province after becoming licensed (only those licensed since 2017)] Base n=15

Section 3: Current Employment (Licensed pharmacists)

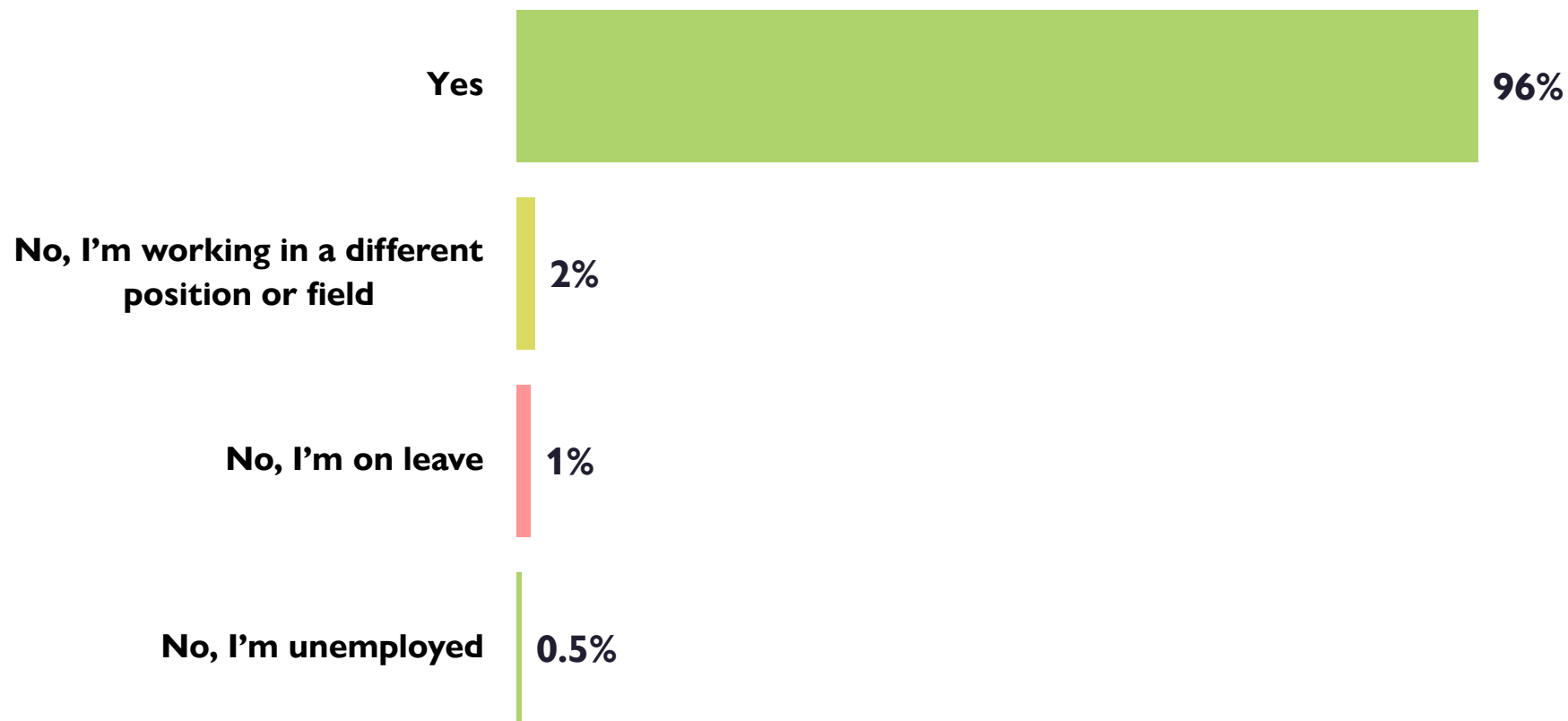
Key findings

- Virtually all licensed IPGs (96%) are currently working as pharmacists in Canada.
- Community pharmacies are the main practice setting for licensed IPGs. Most IPGs work in chain/franchise (40%) and independent pharmacies (40%) followed by grocery/mass merchandiser (18%) and hospital pharmacies (8%).
- While close to 90% of licensed IPGs work in community pharmacy, only 50% of IPGs identified community pharmacy as their ideal practice setting.
- Only 8% of licensed IPGs work in hospital pharmacy though 14% identified hospital pharmacy as their ideal practice setting.



Are you currently working as a pharmacist?

Almost all IPGs who are fully licensed pharmacists in Canada are currently working as a pharmacist.



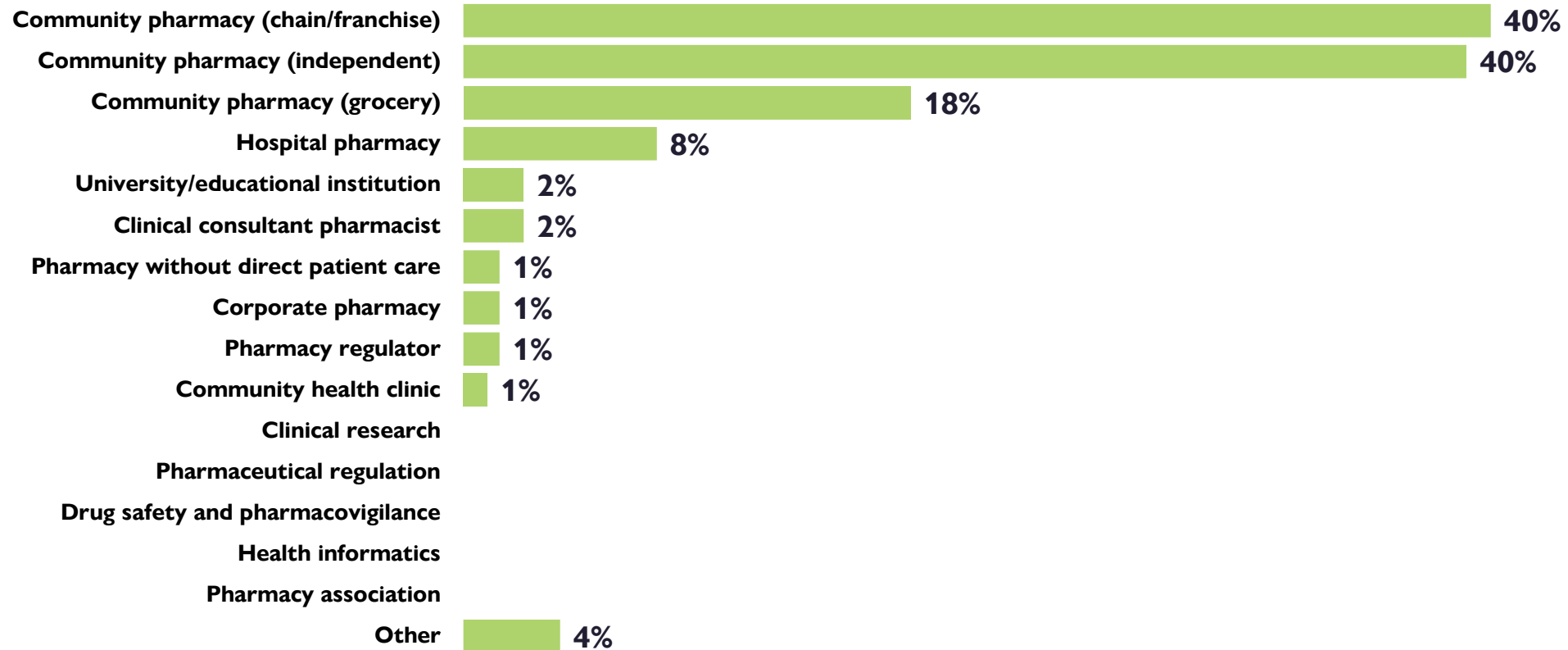
[Those who are or were fully licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=215





In which type of pharmacy or practice setting do you currently work? (select all that apply)

Most IPGs are working in a community pharmacy setting



[Those who are currently working as a pharmacist] Base n=210



In which type of pharmacy or practice setting do you currently work? (select all that apply) | What is your ideal practice setting? (select one)

	Currently work	Ideal setting
Community pharmacy	90%	50%
Hospital pharmacy	8%	14%
Other not listed, please specify	4%	3%
University/educational institution	2%	6%
Clinical consultant pharmacist, e.g., academic detailing pharmacist, etc.	2%	4%
Pharmacy without direct patient care, e.g., central-fill, mail-order, etc.	1%	3%
Corporate pharmacy (e.g., regional or head office)	1%	3%
Pharmacy regulator	1%	1%
Community health clinic or other primary care clinic setting	1%	5%
Clinical research	0%	4%
Pharmaceutical regulation (Health Canada)	0%	3%
Drug safety and pharmacovigilance	0%	2%
Health informatics	0%	2%
Pharmacy association	0%	1%

[Those who are currently working as a pharmacist] Base n=210 | Base [all IPGs but question not mandatory] n=537

Section 4: Plans for Licensure (Not Licensed)

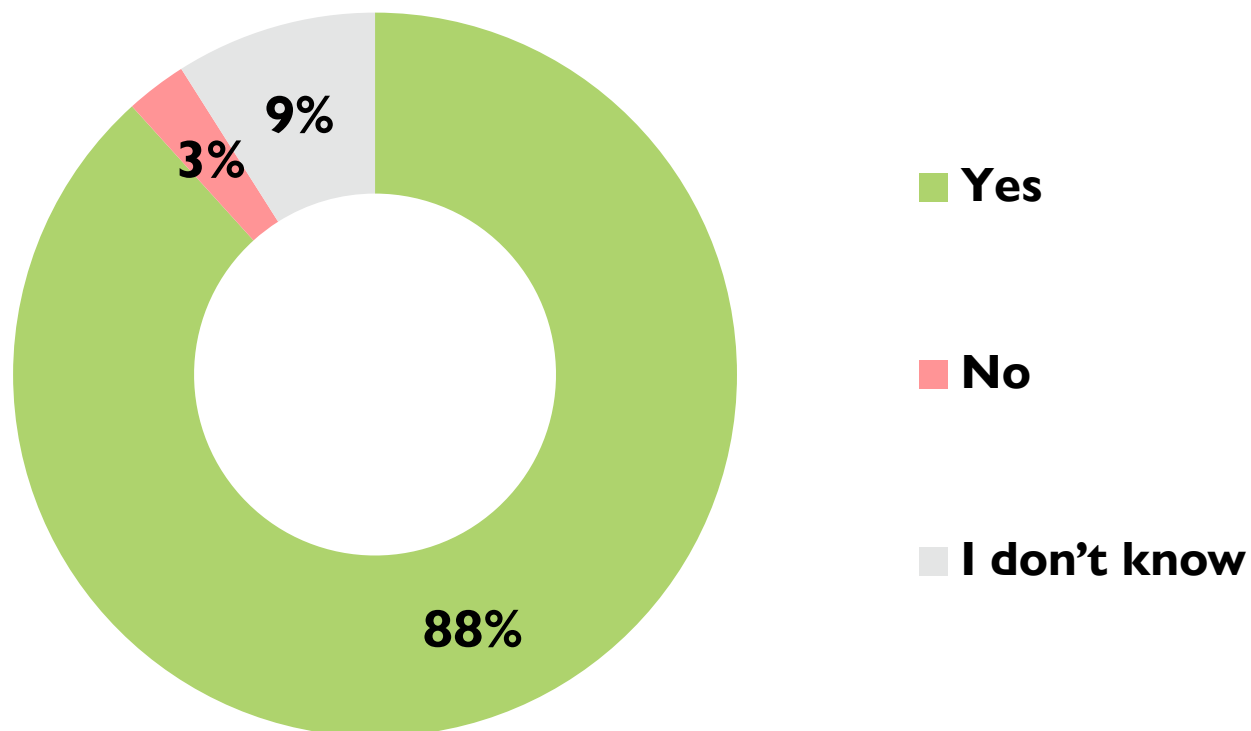
Key findings

- Among unlicensed IPG survey respondents, 88% plan to complete all the steps to become a licensed pharmacist in Canada. Only 3% do not intend to and 9% are unsure.
 - Cost and time are the main factors for those who do not plan to complete the licensing process.
- 88% of IPG respondents are currently living in Canada while in the process of becoming a full licensed pharmacist.
- In addition to already living in the province (71%), wanting to work in English (34%) and personal connections (19%), being able to bypass mandatory bridging (15%), being able to obtain a license in the least amount of time (14%), and having access to supports and connections that will help get practical experience in pharmacy (12%) are the top reasons IPGs choose a province for licensure.
- Ontario is the top arrival point (52%) for unlicensed IPGs, the most likely place for IPGs to be currently living (41%), the most likely place IPGs plan to get licenced (44%) and where they plan to work and settle (37%).
- Many IPGs intend to become licensed in Ontario, the Atlantic provinces and Manitoba/Saskatchewan but plan to move to other jurisdictions after licensure.
- Ontario and Alberta are the most attractive provinces for future licensed pharmacists, but unlike Ontario, IPGs living in Alberta will likely travel to other provinces to become licensed.
- About half of IPGs in the process of becoming pharmacists in Canada completed or attempted Enrolment in Pharmacists' Gateway Canada (51%) and PEBC Document Evaluation (51%) before living in Canada.



Do you plan to complete all the steps to become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada?

Among unlicensed IPGs, 88% plan to complete all the steps to become licensed pharmacists in Canada.

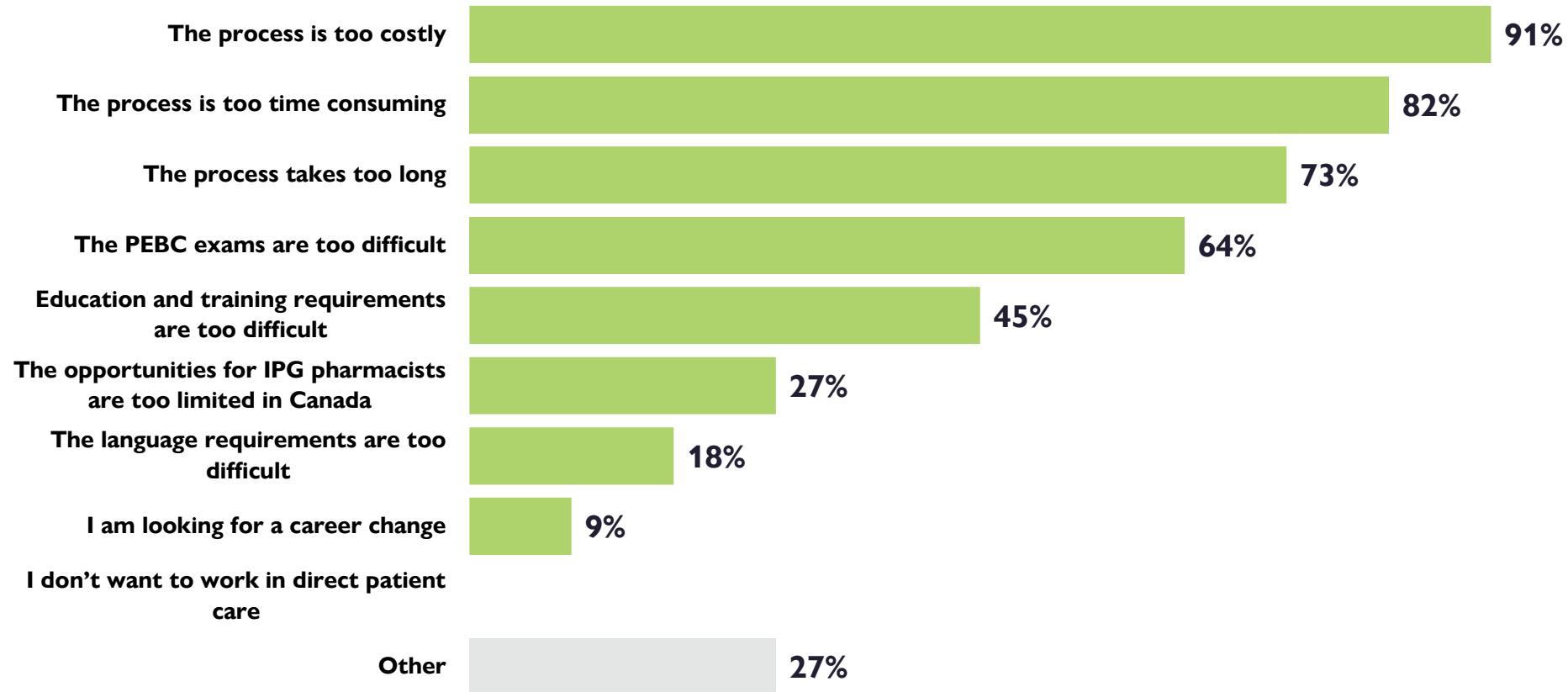


[Those who are in the process of becoming fully licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=367



Why don't you plan to become a licensed pharmacist in Canada? (select all that apply)

IPGs who don't plan to become a licensed pharmacist in Canada cite cost, time commitment and exam difficulty as the main reasons why.

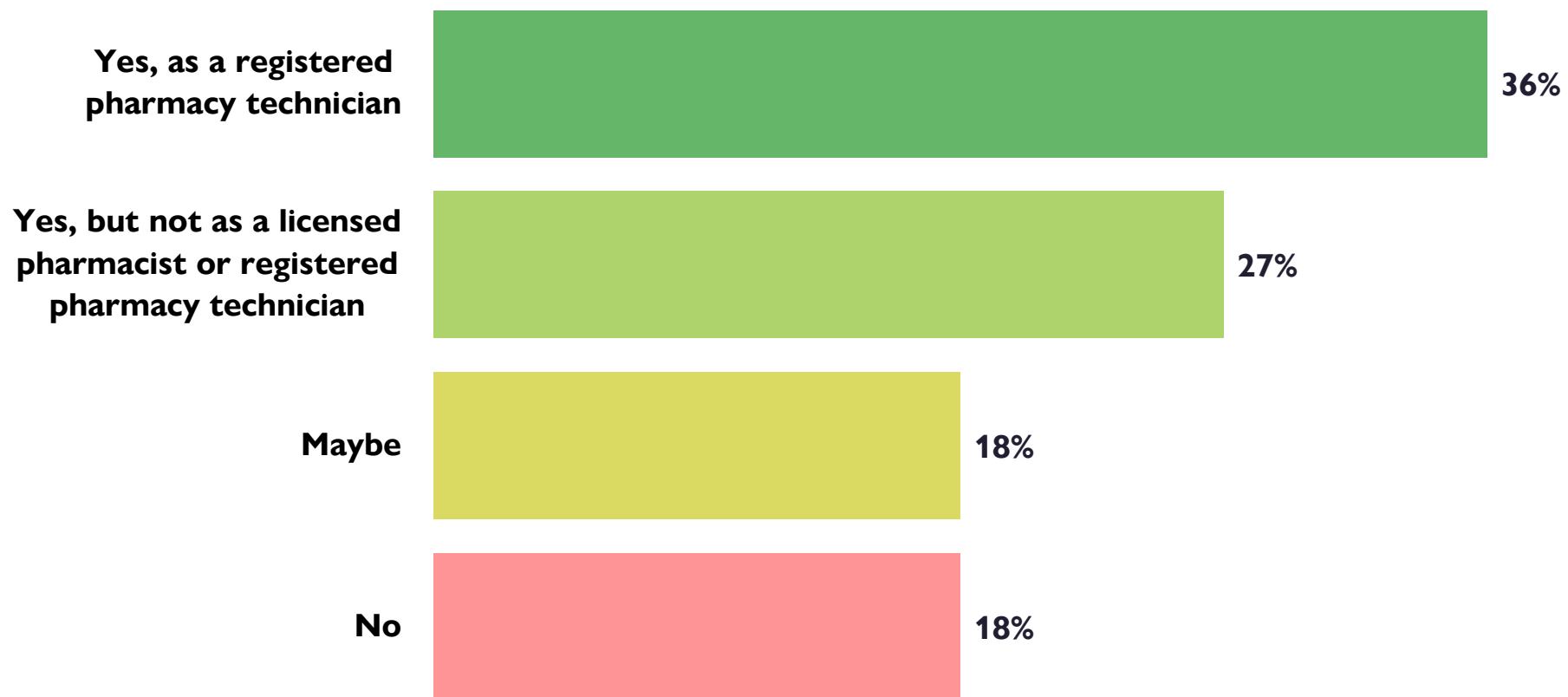


[Those who are not planning to become licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=11 * Caution small sample size



Do you work or plan to work in the pharmacy sector in Canada?

63% of IPGs who don't plan to become a licensed pharmacist in Canada, plan to work in the pharmacy sector either as a pharmacy technician or in another role.

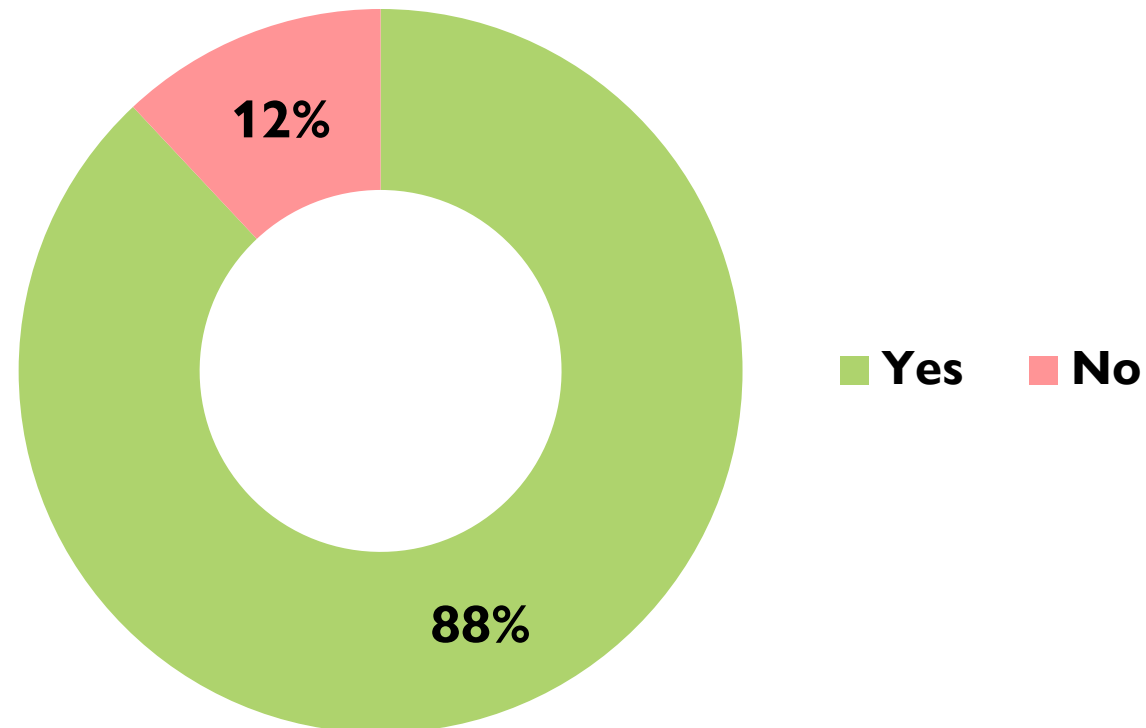


[Those who are not planning to become licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=11 * Caution small sample size



Are you currently living in Canada?

The vast majority of IPGs are currently living in Canada while pursuing their pharmacist license.

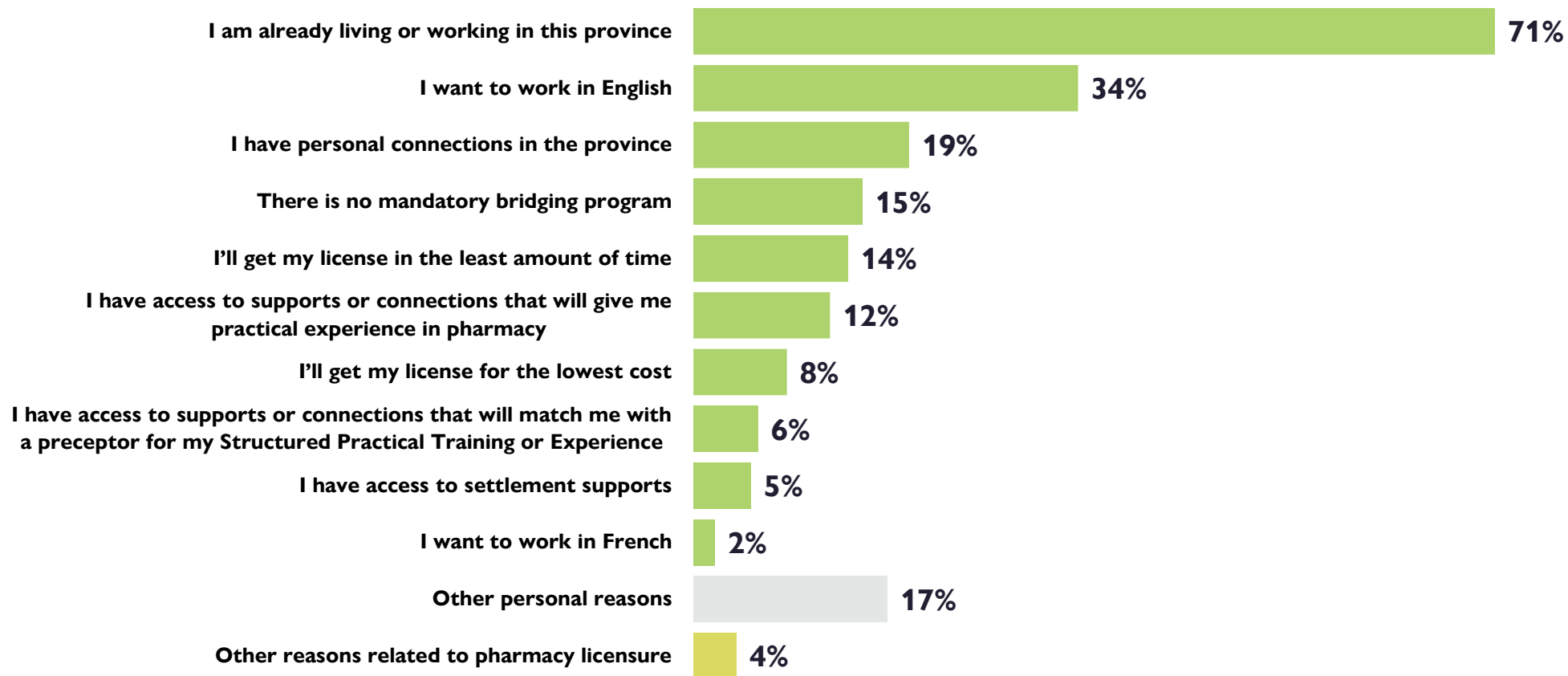


[Those who are in the process of becoming fully licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=367



Why do you plan on getting your pharmacist license in this province? (select all that apply)

Reasons IPGs choose to become licensed in their chosen province of licensure:

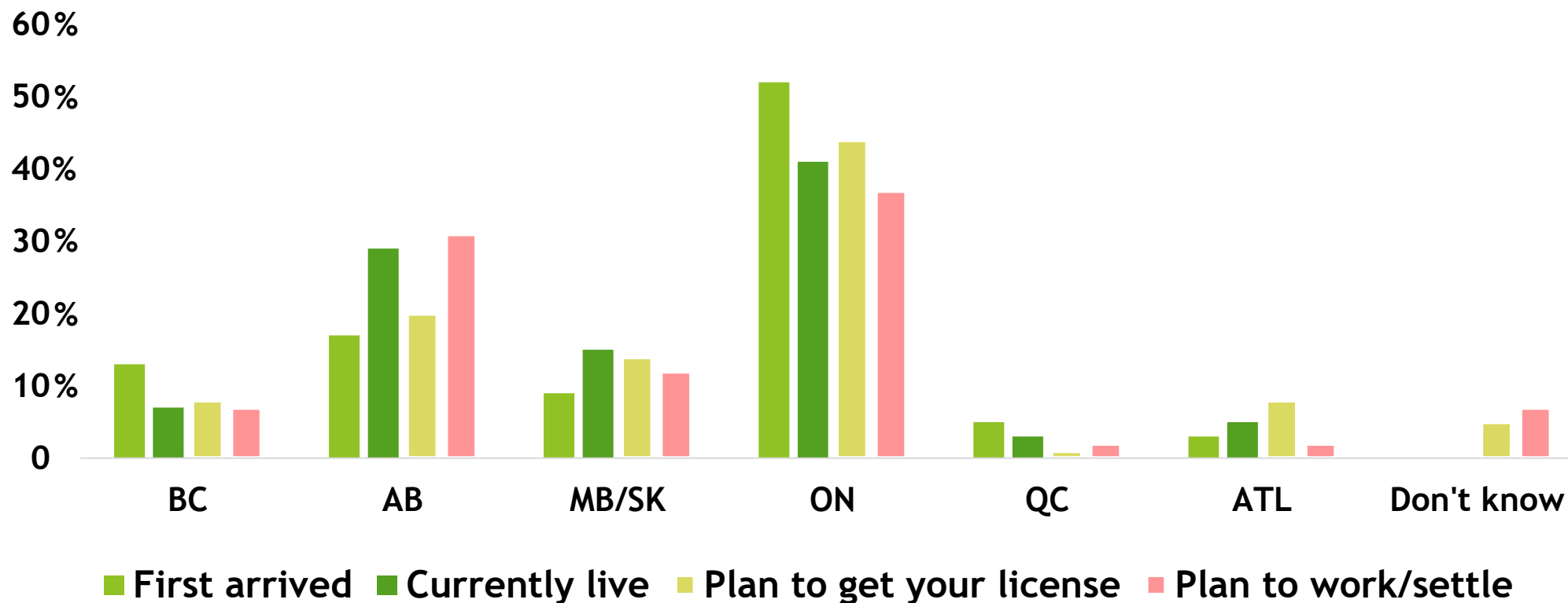


[Those who are planning to become licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=310



Where did you first arrive when you came to Canada? | Where do you currently live in Canada? | Where in Canada do you plan to get your pharmacist license? | Where in Canada do you plan to work and settle?

Many IPGs arrive, live, plan to become licensed and plan to work/settle in Ontario and Western Canada.

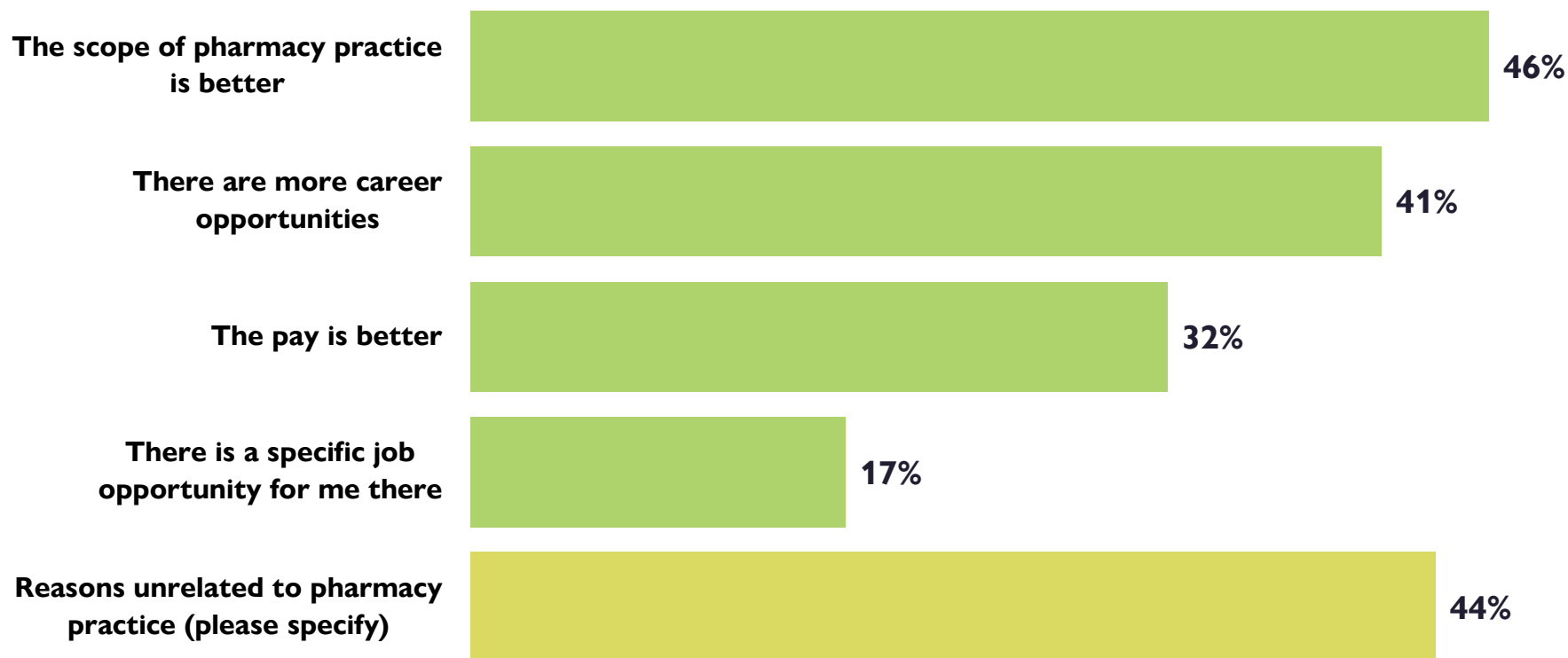


[Those who are in the process of becoming a licensed pharmacist in Canada & are living in Canada & who have completed the PEBC evaluating exam] Base n=206



Why do you want to live and practice in this province or territory? (select all that apply)

Scope of practice, career opportunities, and pay are the key drivers in where IPGs choose to settle, if different from where they plan to become licensed.



Specified reasons include: affordability, family, and environment.

[Those pursuing their license whose chosen province to live and practice does not match the province in which they will obtain their license] Base n=41



Where you are in the pharmacist licensure process?

Where unlicensed IPGs are at in the licensure process:

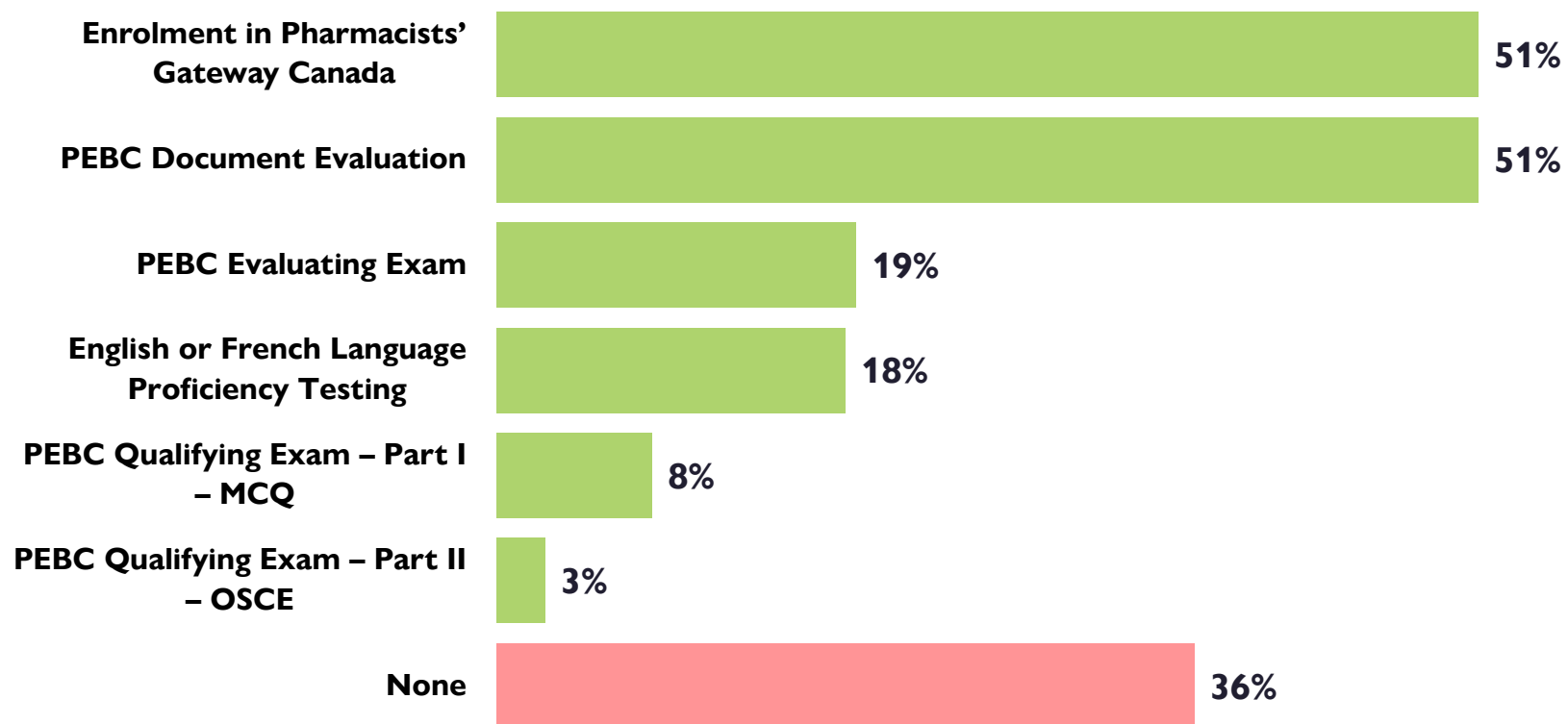
	Completed successfully	Completed but was not successful	In progress	Not started	Not applicable or not required
PEBC Document Evaluation	75%	1%	11%	11%	1%
Enrolment in Pharmacists' Gateway Canada	73%	1%	11%	13%	1%
Assessment of education and training	50%	0%	13%	25%	13%
PEBC Evaluating Exam	43%	1%	24%	29%	2%
English or French Language Proficiency Testing	34%	1%	6%	51%	8%
PEBC Qualifying Exam – Part I – MCQ	16%	2%	20%	59%	2%
Pre-registration with a College of Pharmacy	15%	0%	3%	74%	8%
Jurisprudence course or exam	9%	0%	3%	84%	4%
IPG Bridging program	9%	0%	4%	66%	22%
Practical training or internship	6%	0%	6%	81%	8%
PEBC Qualifying Exam – Part II – OSCE	5%	2%	15%	75%	2%
Practice assessment (e.g. NS, NB) or Practice Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE) (e.g. ON, PEI)	2%	0%	2%	81%	15%
Application for licensure through College of Pharmacy	1%	0%	5%	87%	7%
Full university pharmacy program	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
Université de Montréal programme de Qualification en pharmacie by the Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec (OPQ)	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%

[Those who are in the process of becoming fully licensed pharmacist in Canada] Base n=367



Please select which steps you completed or attempted before living in Canada (select all that apply)

About half of IPGs who are in the process of becoming licensed in Canada enrolled in Pharmacists' Gateway Canada and began PEBC Document Evaluation before living in Canada



[Those who are in the process of becoming fully licensed pharmacist in Canada (outside of Quebec) and who have started each step] Base n=360

Section 5:
First Experience in Pharmacy
**(Licensed pharmacists and those who
plan to become licensed)**

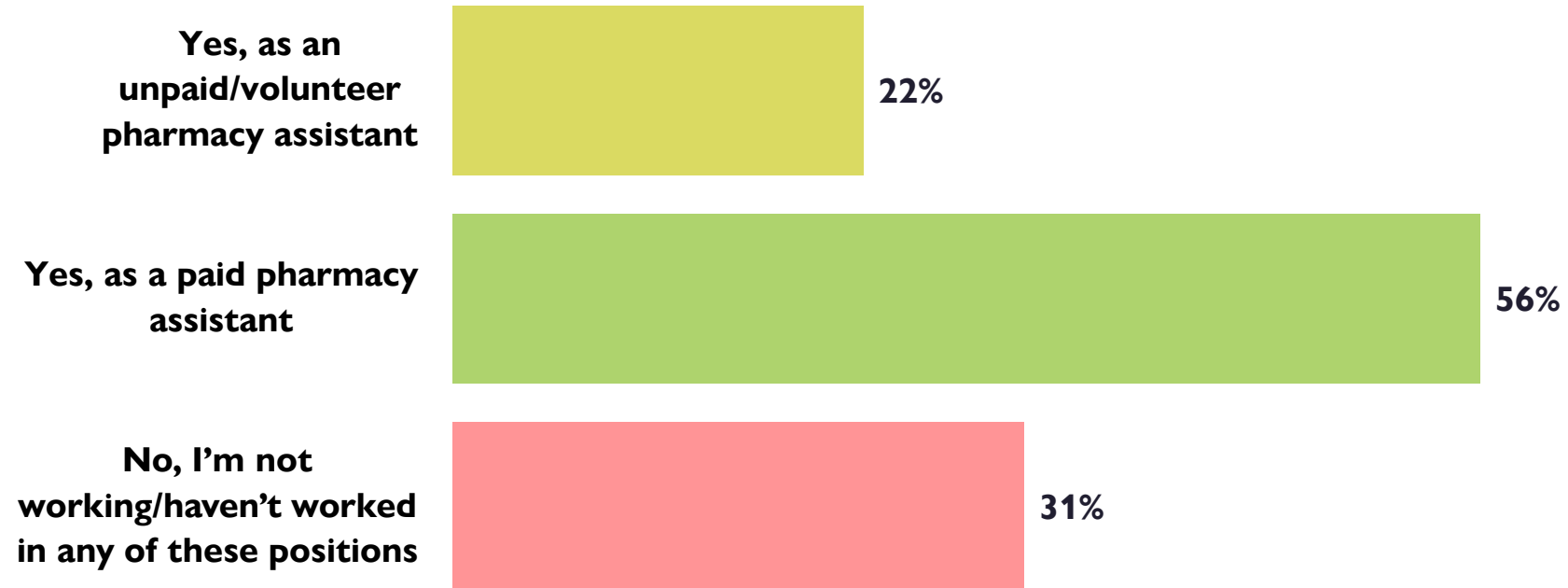
Key findings

- A majority (78%) of IPGs pursuing licensure in Canada have worked or are working as pharmacy assistants. More than half (56%) are/were paid pharmacy assistants and 22% are/were unpaid volunteers.
 - Among those who aren't working as pharmacy assistants, the primary reasons depend on where they are in the licensure process. Among those who haven't yet passed the PEBC Evaluating exam, most can't find a pharmacy that will hire them. IPGs who have passed the PEBC Evaluative exam cite studying for the Qualifying exam as the primary reason for not working as an assistant.
- Among licensed IPGs, 86% worked as pharmacy assistants while they pursued their license, with 45% in paid roles and 41% in unpaid positions.
 - For those who did not work as assistants (25%), the main reason identified was to focus on studying for the PEBC exam (39%). The following reasons were not being able to find a volunteer (31%) or paid (20%) position.
- Among those who worked as pharmacy assistants, unpaid volunteers worked less time in the position (49% worked less than 3 months) than those who were paid (10% worked less than 3 months).
 - Paid positions were also more likely to be viewed as valuable (49% extremely valuable) compared with unpaid/volunteer positions (29%).
- IPGs who worked as pharmacy assistants in paid or unpaid positions obtained their license to practice faster than those who didn't work as assistants.
- Only 57% of IPGs *definitely* felt safe in their pharmacy assistant positions. Less than half reported *definitely* feeling respected (46%), part of the team (45%), supported (42%) and valued (37%).

Have you worked or volunteered as a pharmacy assistant in Canada while you pursue your pharmacist license? (select all that apply)

More than half (56%) of IPGs pursuing their license have worked or volunteered as a paid pharmacy assistant.

Not licensed in Canada



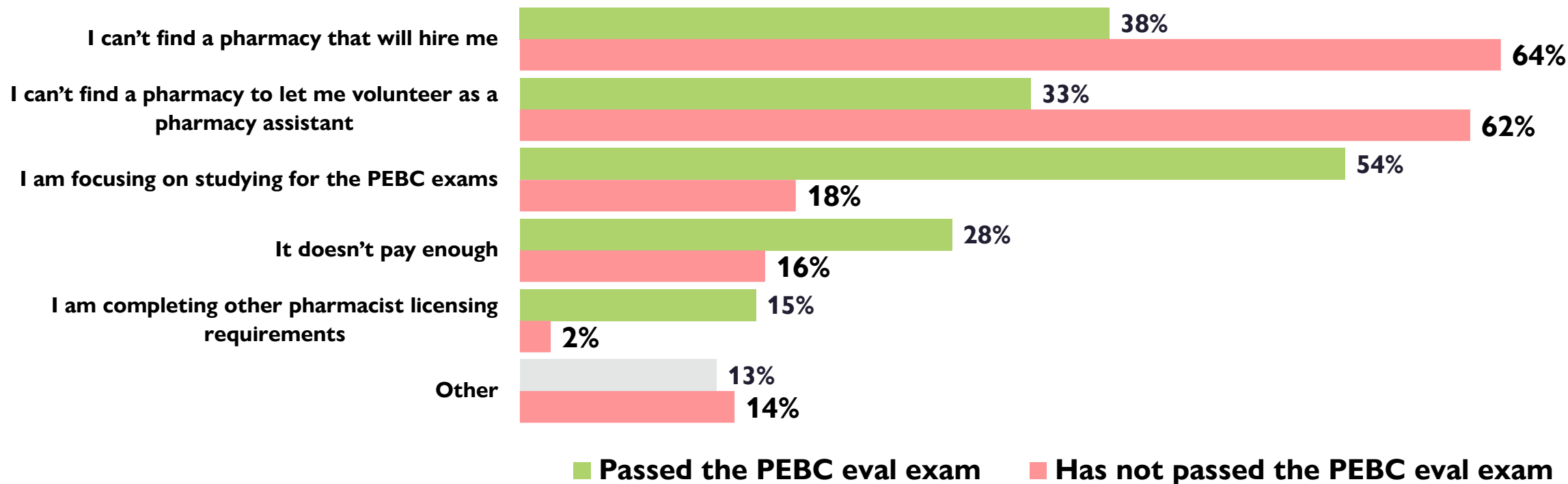
[Those who are not licensed pharmacists in Canada & plan to complete the licensing process & currently live in Canada] Base n=285



Why haven't you worked or volunteered as a pharmacy assistant in Canada while you pursue your license? (select all that apply) | Where you are in the pharmacist licensure process?

Reasons cited by IPGs for not working or volunteering as a pharmacy assistant while pursuing licensure:

Not licensed in Canada

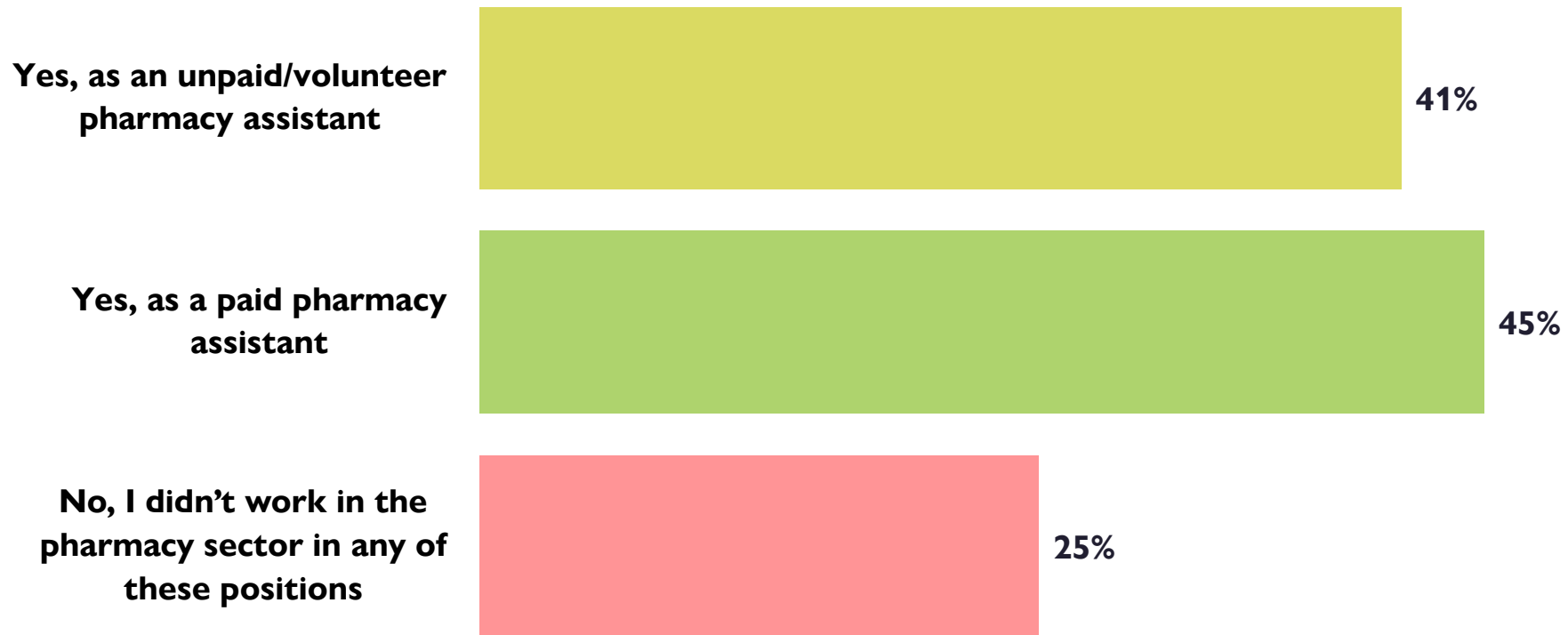


[Those who haven't worked as a pharmacy assistant while pursuing license] Base n=89

Did you work or volunteer as a pharmacy assistant in Canada while you pursued your pharmacist license? (select all that apply)

Most licensed IPGs worked or volunteered as pharmacy assistants while they pursued their pharmacist license.

Licensed in Canada



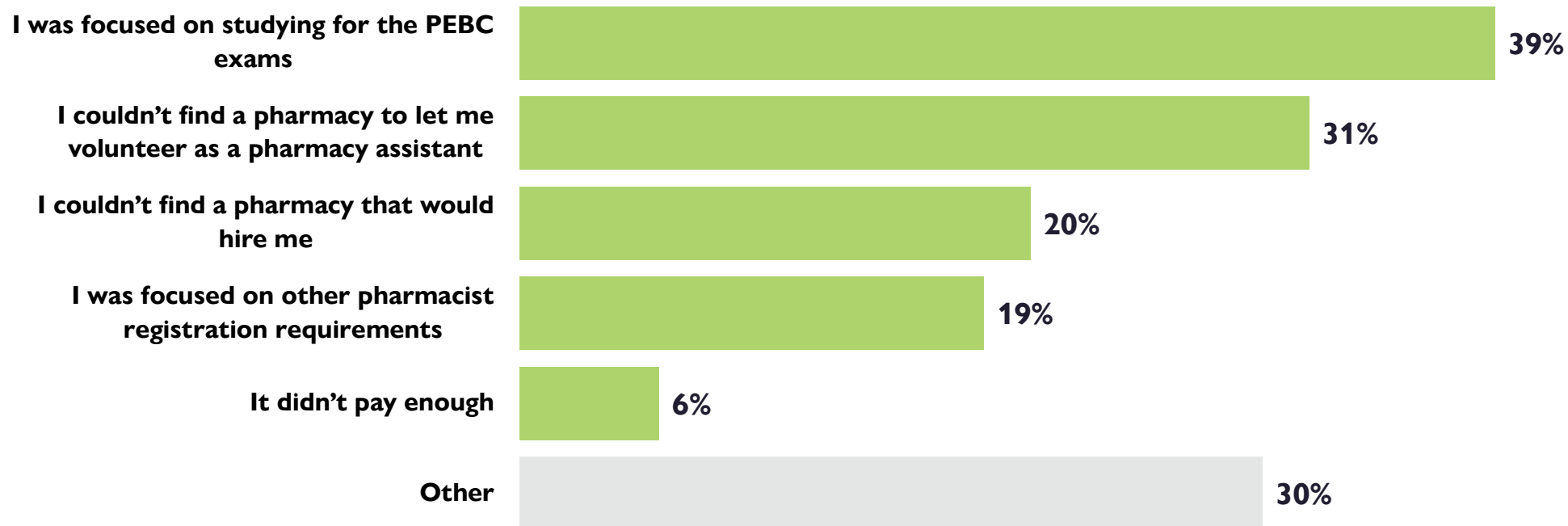
[Those who are licensed pharmacists in Canada] Base n=215



Why didn't you work or volunteer as a pharmacy assistant while you pursued your license? (select all that apply)

Reasons cited by IPGs for not working or volunteering as a pharmacy assistant while pursuing licensure:

Licensed in Canada

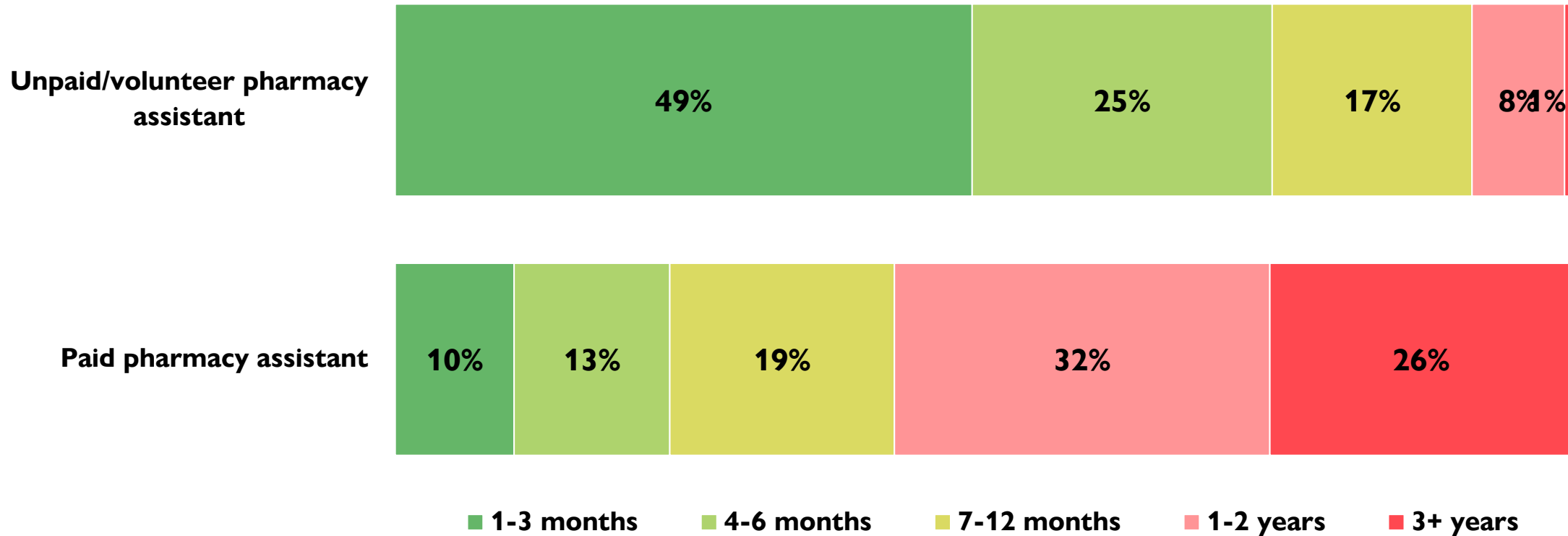


[Those who haven't worked as a pharmacy assistant while pursuing licensure] Base n=54



How long did you work or have you worked as a pharmacy assistant?

Unlicensed IPGs who were paid in their role as pharmacy assistant worked longer than those who were unpaid.

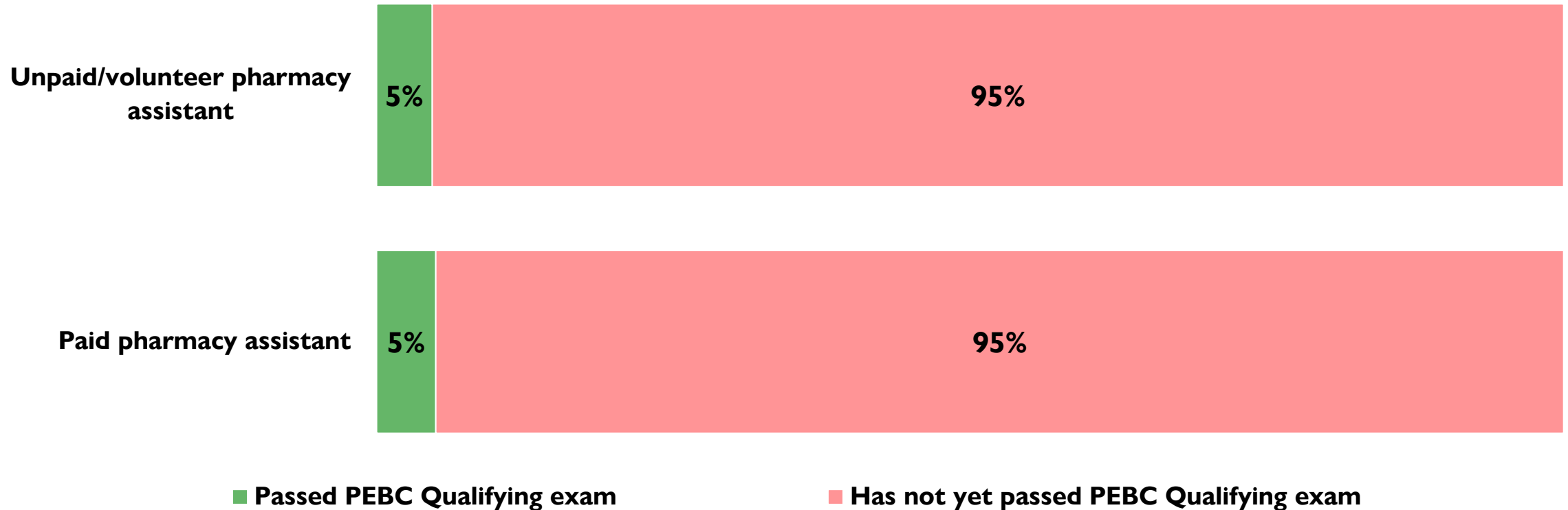


[Those who worked as a pharmacy assistant while pursuing license] Base n=153 to 257



Have you worked or volunteered as a pharmacy assistant in Canada while you pursue your pharmacist license? (select all that apply) | Where you are in the pharmacist licensure process?

The success rate on the PEBC Qualifying exam remained consistent whether or not pharmacy assistants were paid or unpaid.

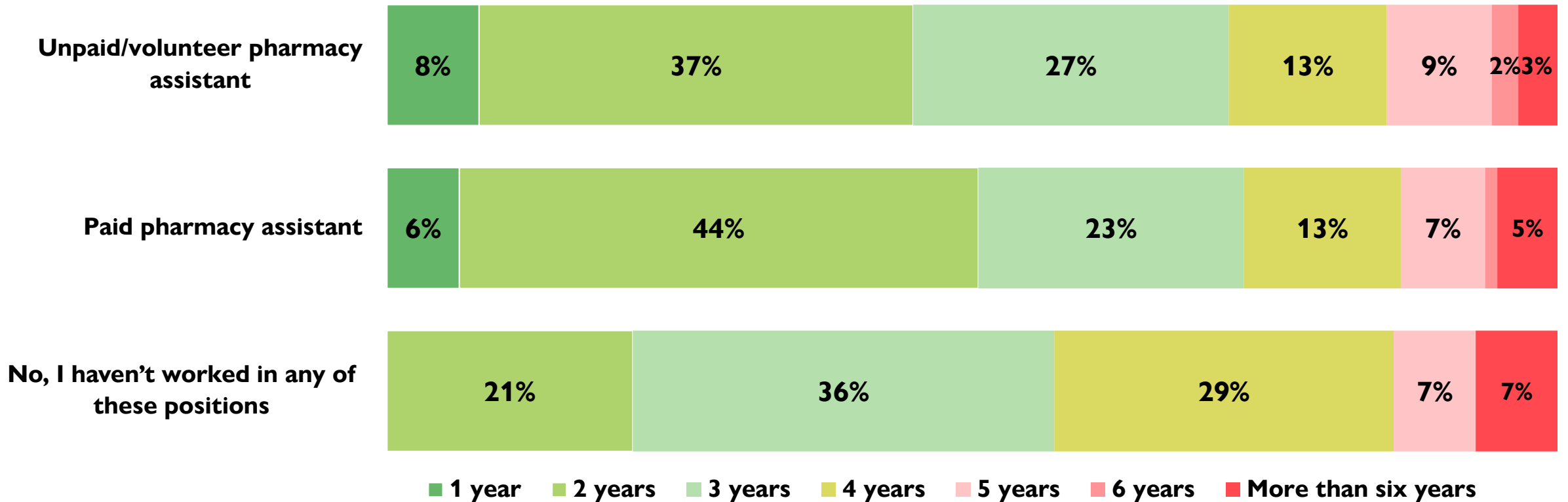


[Those who worked as an unpaid/volunteer pharmacy assistant and passed the Qualifying exam] Base n=64 | [Those who worked as paid pharmacy assistant and passed the Qualifying exam] Base n=160



From document evaluation/assessment of education and training to licensure, how long did it take you to become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada? | Did you work or volunteer as a pharmacy assistant in Canada while you pursued your pharmacist license? (select all that apply)

IPGs who worked as paid or unpaid pharmacy assistants obtained their license faster than those who didn't.

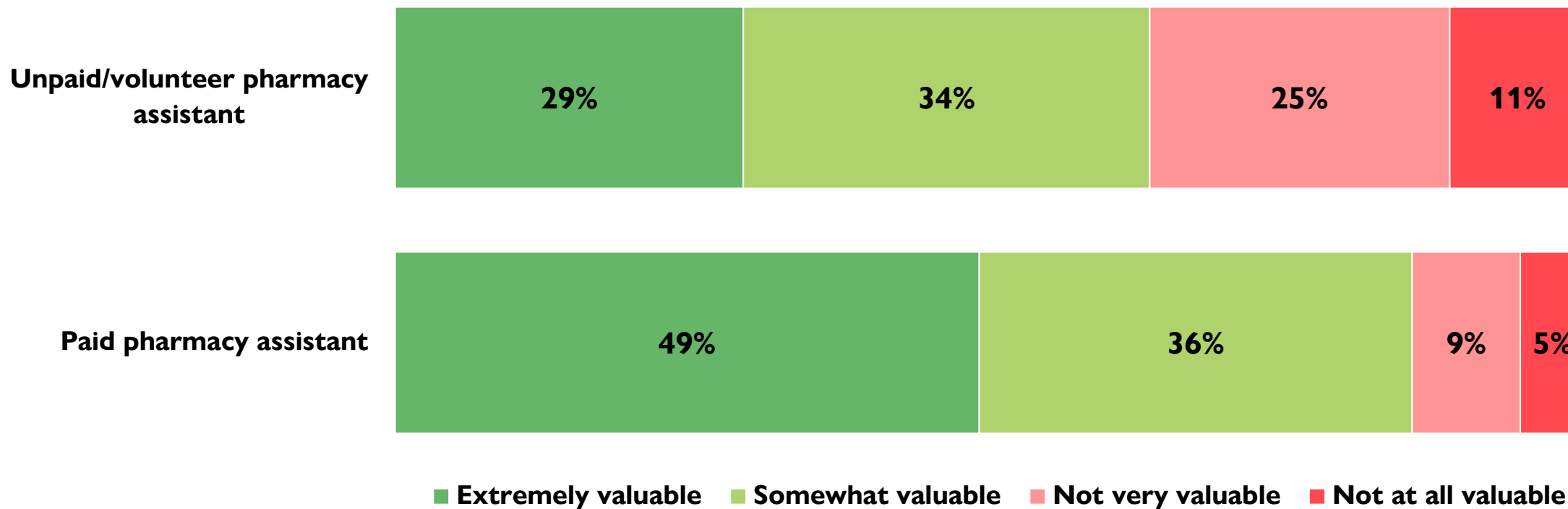


[Those licensed since 2017 and worked as an unpaid/volunteer pharmacy assistant] Base n=56 | [Those licensed since 2017 and worked as paid pharmacy assistant] Base n=126 | [Those licensed since 2017 and did not work in any of these positions] Base n=14



How valuable were your pharmacy assistant positions in helping to prepare you for the PEBC exams and/or licensure?

IPGs who were paid pharmacy assistants felt their position was more helpful in preparing them for the PEBC exams and/or licensure than those who were unpaid or volunteers.

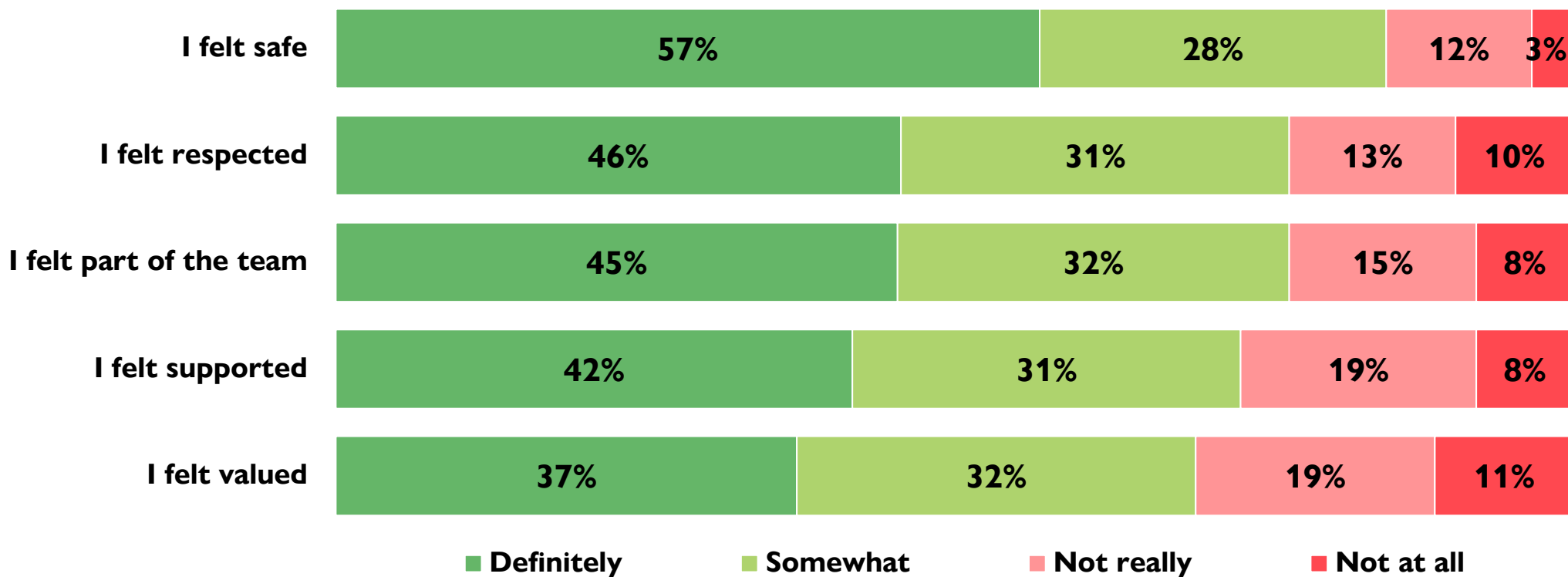


[Those who passed the PEBC eval exam and worked as an unpaid/volunteer pharmacy assistant] Base n=123 | [Those who passed the PEBC eval exam and worked as a paid pharmacy assistant] Base n=165



How would you describe these first work/volunteer experiences in pharmacy in Canada?

Only 57% of IPGs *definitely* felt safe in their pharmacy assistant positions. Less than half reported *definitely* feeling respected, part of the team, supported and valued.



[Those who worked in a paid or unpaid job while pursuing a license] Base n=357

Section 6: Sources of Information (All IPGs)

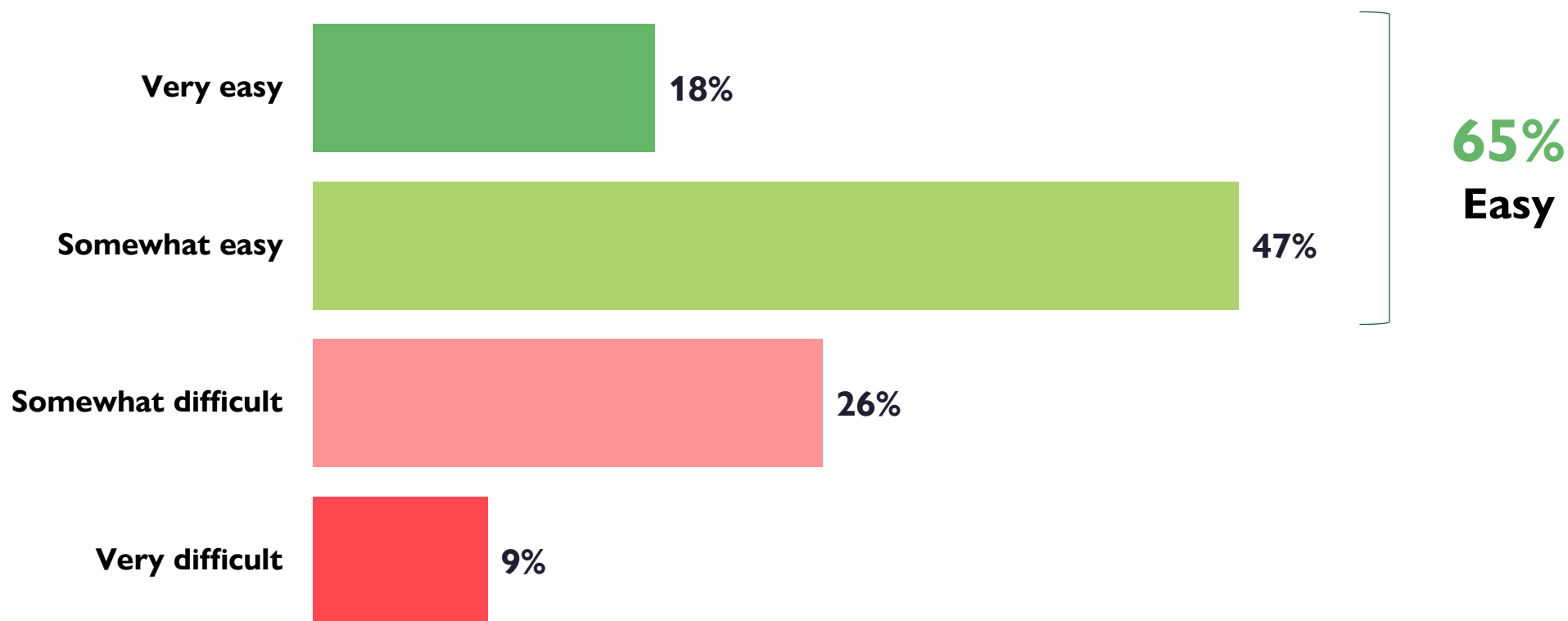
Key findings

- 18% of IPGs felt it was very easy and 47% somewhat easy to find clear and complete information about the pharmacist licensing process in Canada. Over a third of IPGs found it at least somewhat difficult to find clear and complete information about licensing in Canada.
- Among official sources of information from pharmacy organizations in Canada, IPGs rank PEBC, NAPRA/Pharmacist's Gateway Canada and the provincial College of Pharmacy as the top sources of information about licensing processes.
- In comments, many IPGs cited having to consult multiple sources to get a clear picture of the licensing process in Canada. Many consulted unofficial sources for information such as through friends, online forums, YouTube, private exam preparatory companies and recruitment agencies.



How easy was it for you to find clear and complete information about the pharmacist licensing process in Canada?

65% of IPGs found it at least somewhat easy to find information about the pharmacist licensing process in Canada.

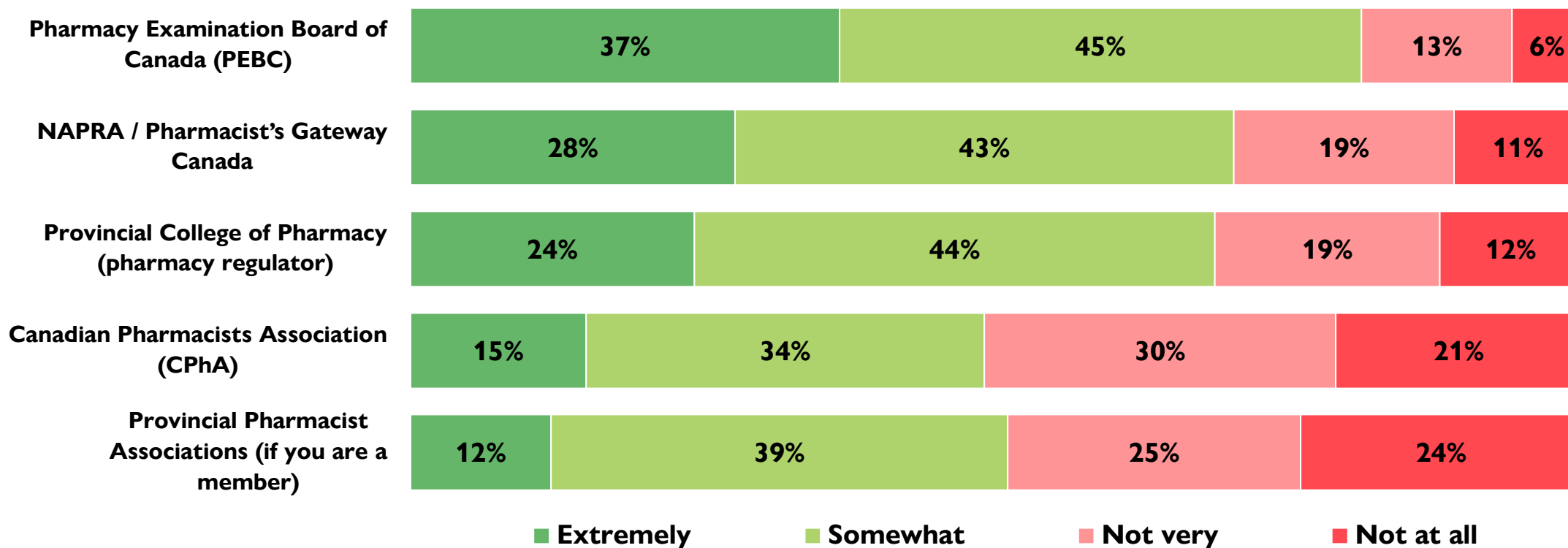


[all] Base n=582



How would you rate the sources below in terms of how accessible, helpful and supportive they are/were to you in the licensure process?

Among pharmacy organizations, IPGs rank PEBC and NAPRA/Pharmacist Gateway Canada as the top sources of information about the licensure process.



[all] Base n=582

Section 7: National Pharmacy Exams

Key findings

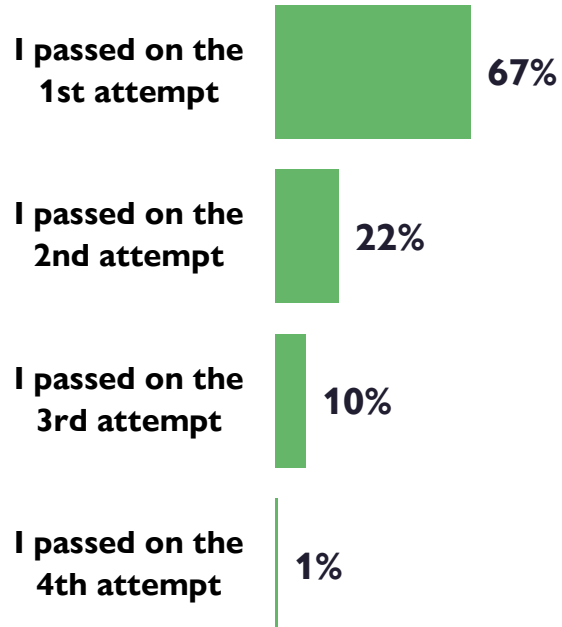
- PEBC Evaluating Exam: Among licensed IPGs (since 2017) and those who successfully completed the PEBC Evaluating Exam, 67% passed on their first attempt and 22% passed on their second attempt. Of those who are still in-progress, 49% have attempted it once unsuccessfully and 13% have attempted it twice unsuccessfully.
- PEBC Qualifying Part I (MCQ) Exam: Among licensed IPGs (since 2017) and those who successfully completed the PEBC Qualifying Part I (MCQ) Exam, 48% passed on their first attempt and 34% passed on their second attempt. Of those who are still in-progress, 38% have attempted it once unsuccessfully and 30% have attempted it twice unsuccessfully.
- PEBC Qualifying Part II (OSCE) Exam: Among licensed IPGs (since 2017) and those who successfully completed the PEBC Qualifying Part II (OSCE) Exam, 63% passed on their first attempt and 27% passed on their second attempt. Of those who are still in-progress, 52% have attempted it once unsuccessfully and 23% have attempted it twice unsuccessfully.
- The 3 greatest challenges identified by IPGs in relation to the PEBC examination process are exam schedules (47%), exam difficulty (45%) and exam costs (44%).
- Only 39% felt that they had a good understanding of what would be covered in the PEBC exams before taking them.
- Most IPGs (81%) describe the PEBC exam instructions as at least somewhat easy to follow, and most (89%) describe the English language used in the PEBC exams as at least somewhat easy to understand.



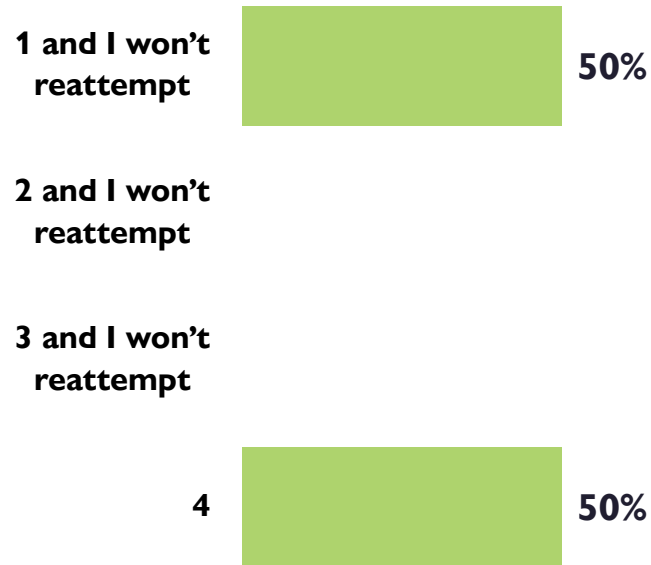
How many times did you attempt the PEBC Evaluating Exam?

Self reported PEBC Evaluating Exam success:

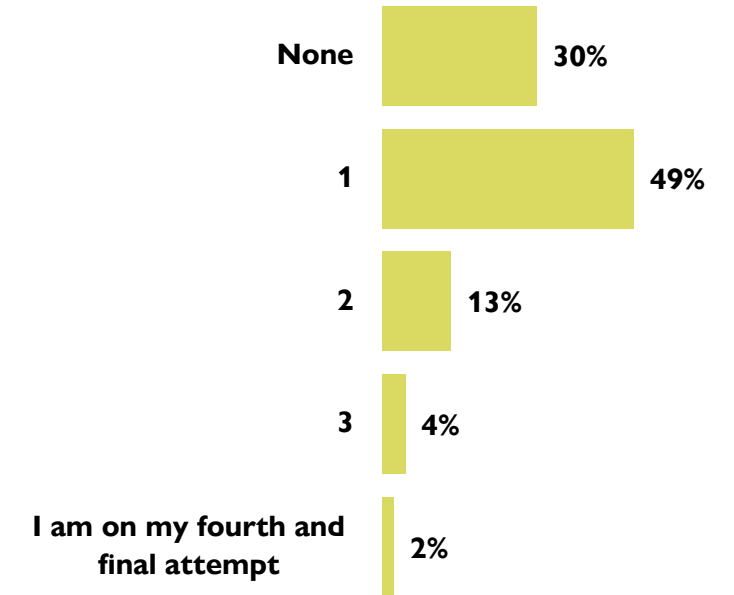
Completed successfully



Completed but not successful



In progress/reattempts



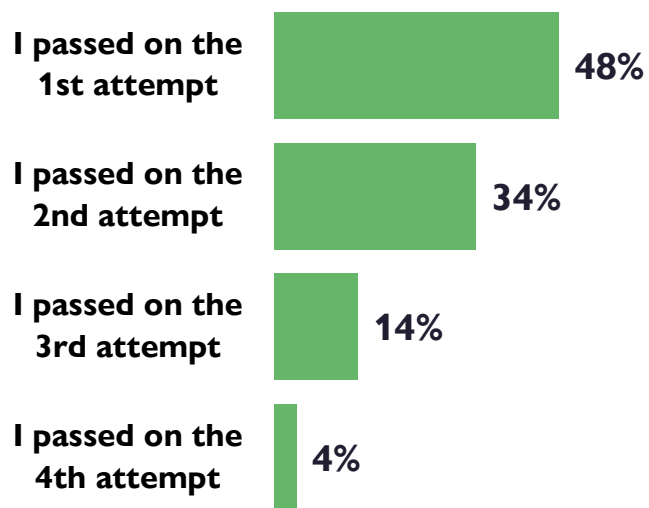
[Those who completed successfully PEBC Evaluating Exam and are either unlicensed or were licensed since 2017] Base n=230 | [Those who completed but not successfully] Base n=4 | [Those who are in progress/reattempts] Base n=89



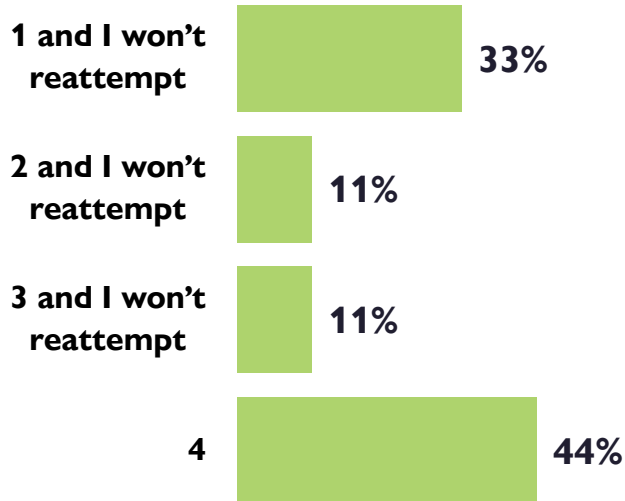
How many times did you attempt the PEBC Qualifying Part I (MCQ) Exam?

Self reported PEBC Qualifying Part I (MCQ) Exam success:

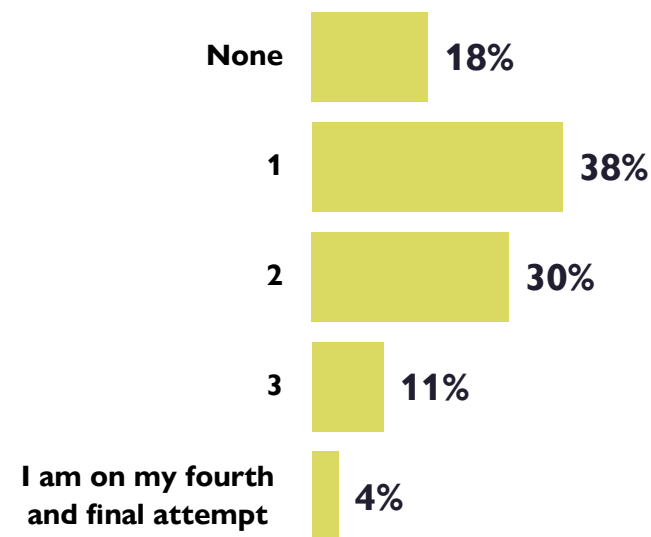
Completed successfully



Completed but not successful



In progress/reattempts

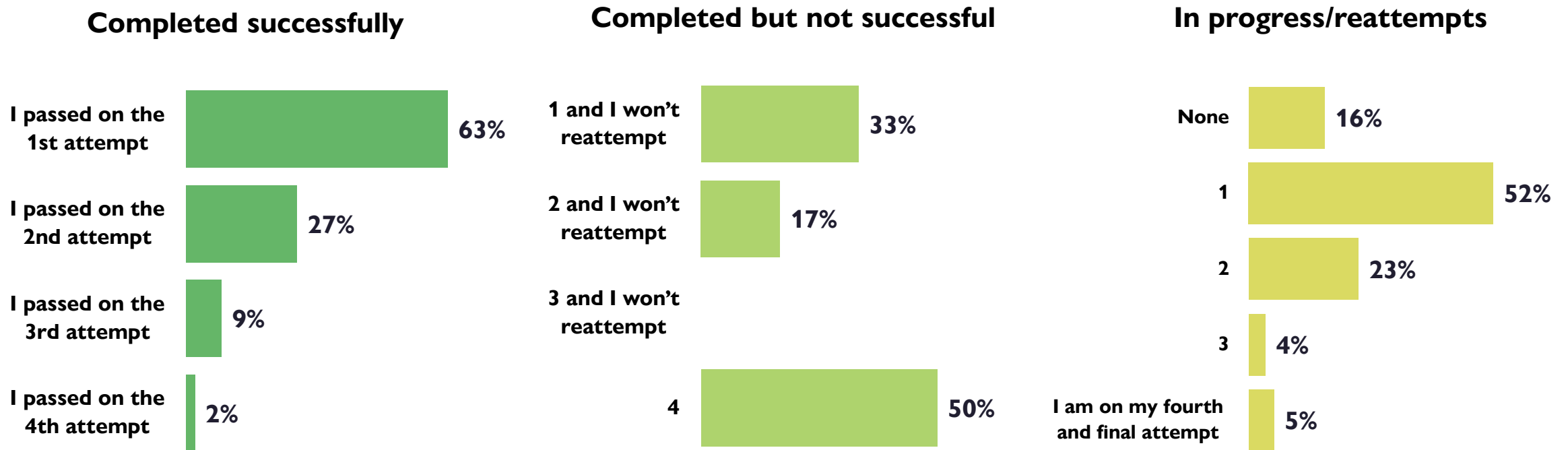


[Those who completed successfully PEBC Qualifying Part I (MCQ) exam & were licensed since 2017 or are unlicensed] Base n=135 | [Those who completed but not successfully] Base n=9 | [Those who are in progress/reattempts] Base n=74



How many times did you attempt the PEBC Qualifying Part II (OSCE) Exam?

Self reported PEBC Qualifying Part II (OSCE) Exam success:



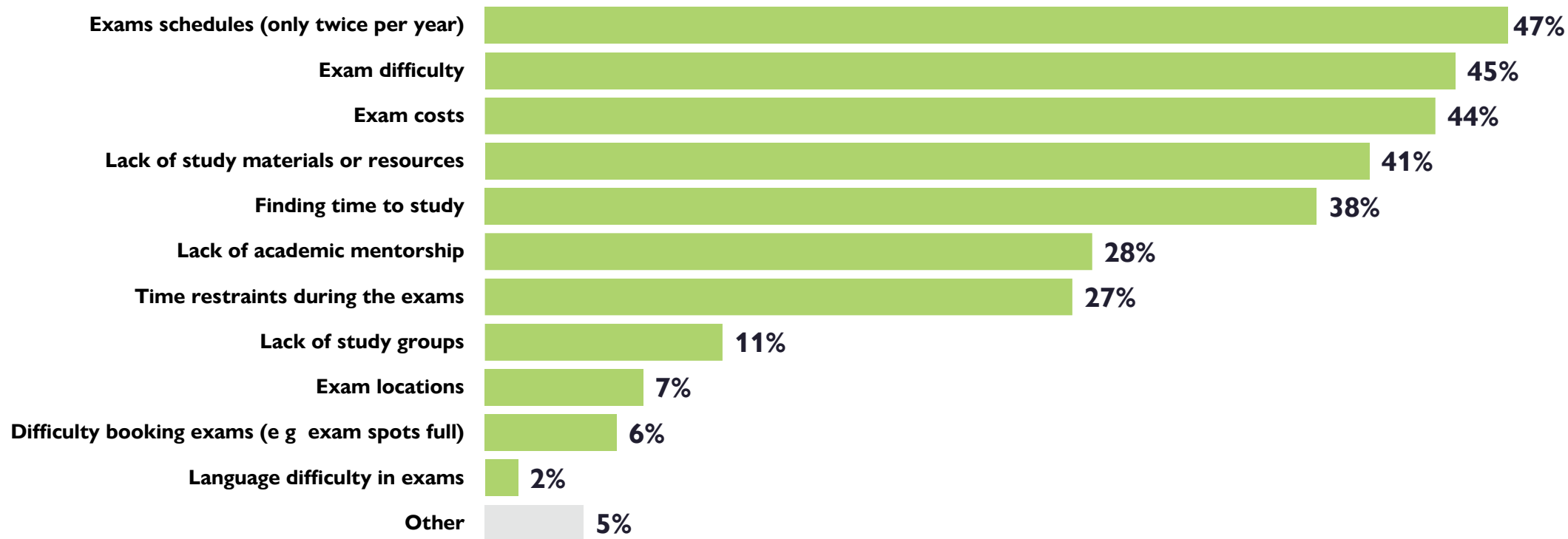
[Those who completed successfully PEBC Qualifying Part II (OSCE) exam & were licensed since 2017 or are unlicensed] Base n=94 | [Those who completed but not successfully] Base n=6 | [Those who are in progress/reattempts] Base n=56



What are the 3 greatest challenges you faced or are facing related to the PEBC examination process? (select 3)

Greatest challenges faced by IPGs relating to the PEBC examination process:

Licensed in Canada after 2017 or Unlicensed

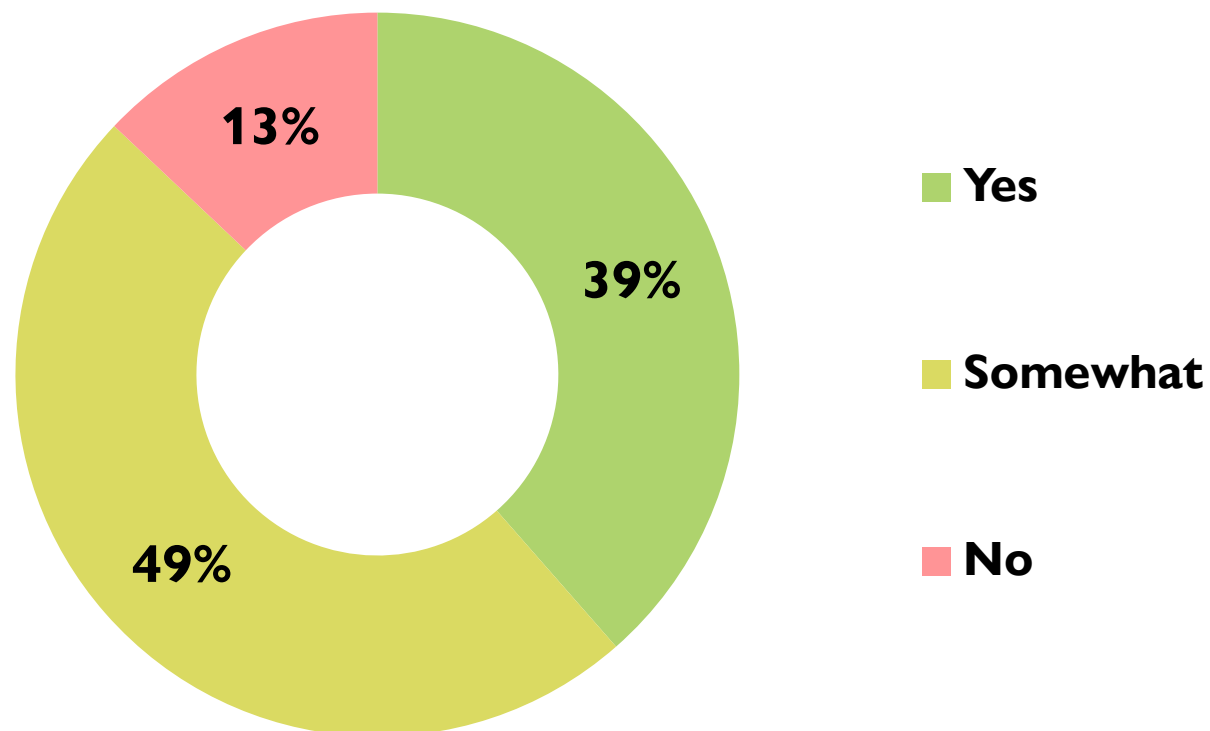


[Those licensed in Canada since 2017 or unlicensed and successfully attempted/not successfully attempted/in the process of PEBC exams] Base n=469



Do you believe you had a good understanding of what would be covered in the PEBC exams before taking them?

39% of IPGs felt they had a good understanding of what would be covered in the PEBC exams before taking them.

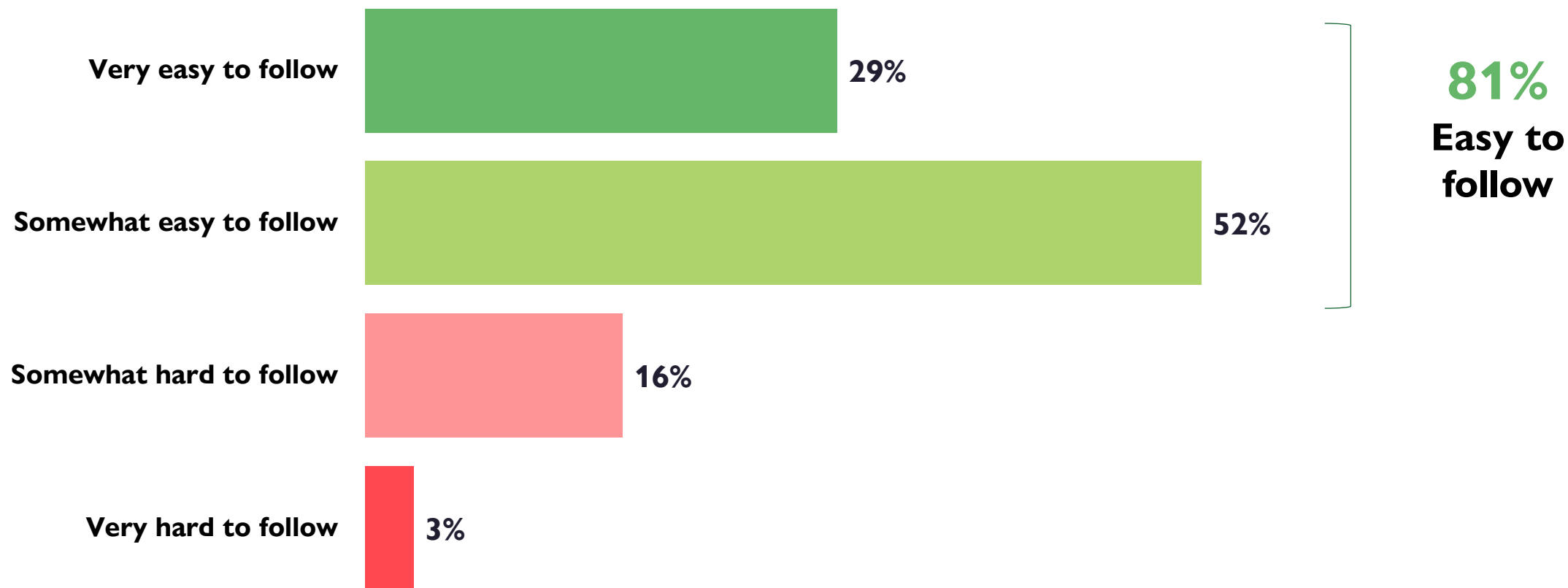


[Those who attempted PEBC Qualifying Part I or Part II exams and those who were licensed in Canada after 2017] Base n=301



How would you describe the PEBC exam instructions?

Most IPGs describe the PEBC exam instructions as at least somewhat easy to follow.



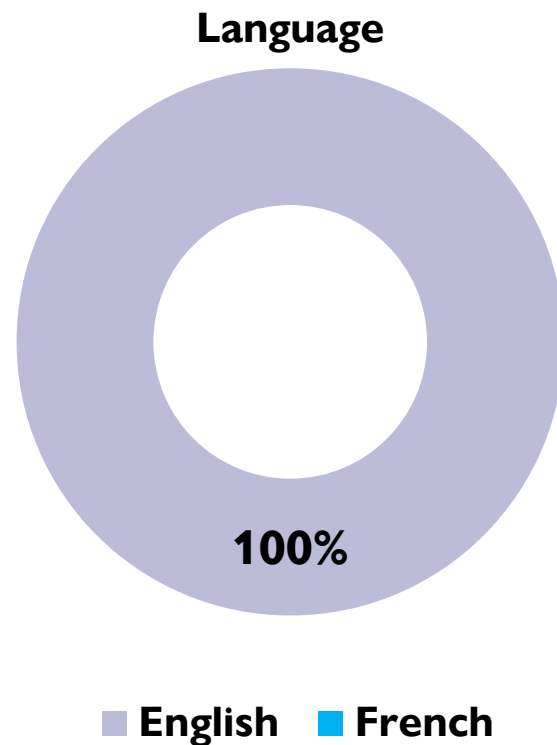
[Those who attempted PEBC Qualifying Part I or Part II exams and those who were licensed in Canada after 2017] Base n=301



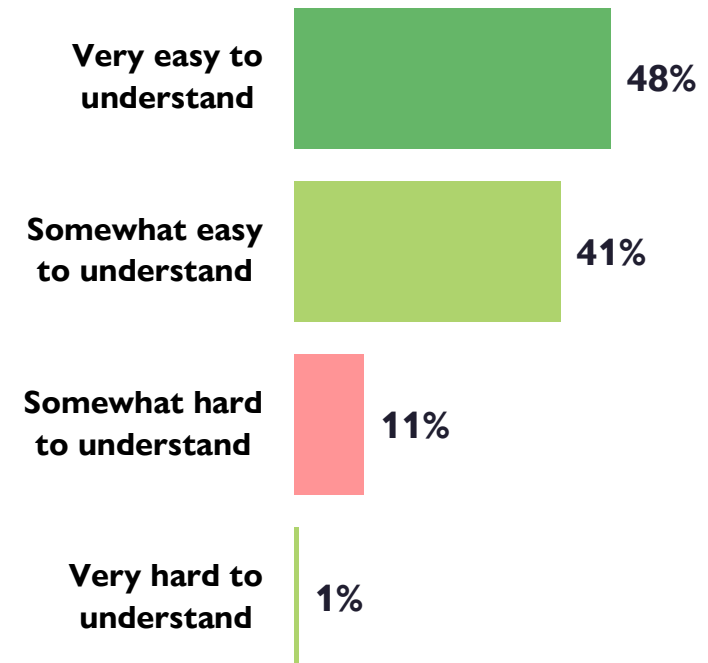
Did you take the PEBC exams in English or in French? | How would you describe the English or French language used in the PEBC exams? | How would you describe the quality of French used in the French exam?

Most described the English language in the PEBC exams as at least somewhat easy to understand.

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or Unlicensed



Description of the English language



[Those who attempted PEBC Qualifying Part I or Part II exams and those who were licensed in Canada after 2017] Base n=301 |

Section 8:

Entry to Practice Supports

Key findings

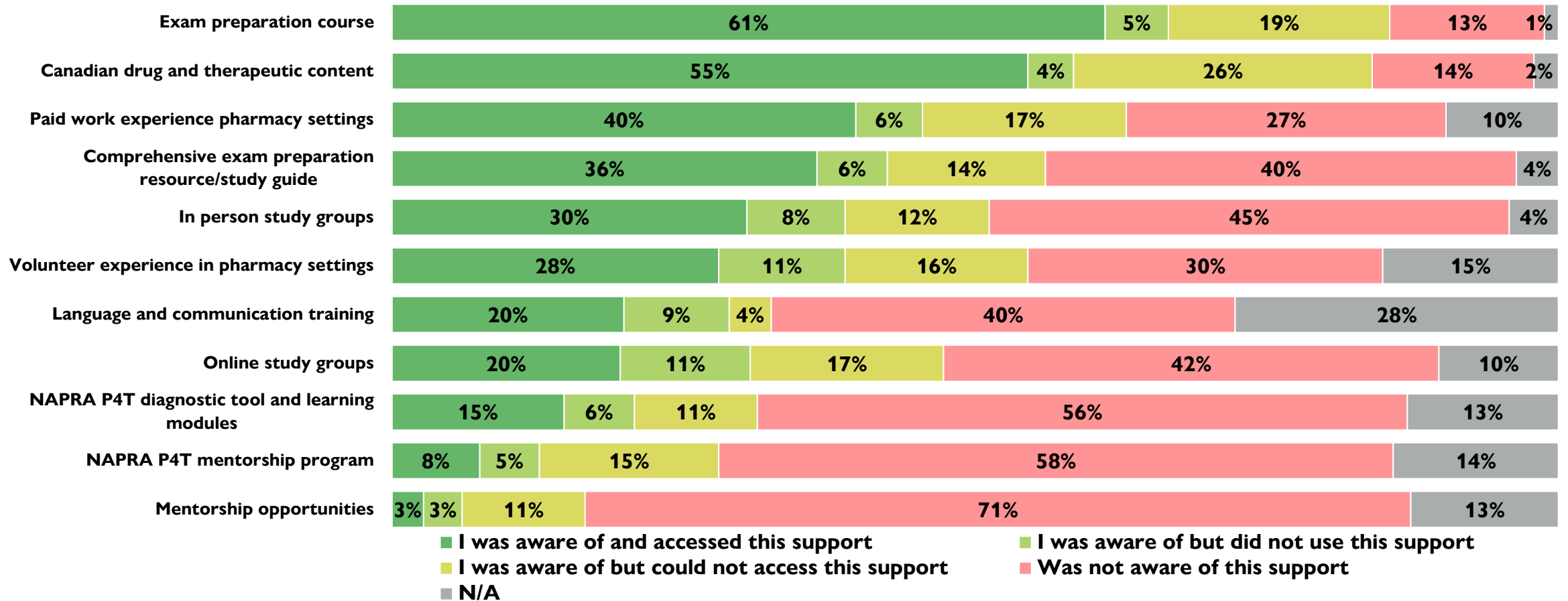
- The top supports accessed by IPGs throughout the licensure process are PEBC exam preparation courses (61%), Canadian drug and therapeutic content (55%) and paid work experience in pharmacy settings (40%).
 - These three supports were also highest ranked in terms of those that IPGs were aware of but could not access: Canadian drug and therapeutic content (26%), exam preparation course (19%), paid work experience in pharmacy (17%).
- While only 3% of IPGs were able to access mentorship opportunities, these opportunities were identified as the most helpful supports by those who had access to them. The second most helpful support was Canadian drug and therapeutic content.
- Across all supports listed, those who had access to them found them at least somewhat helpful.
- For those who did not have access to the supports listed, IPGs identified paid work experience in pharmacy settings and Canadian drug and therapeutic content as those that would have been the most helpful.



Please identify your awareness of and access to the following supports throughout the licensure process:

IPG awareness and access to supports throughout the licensure process

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or Unlicensed



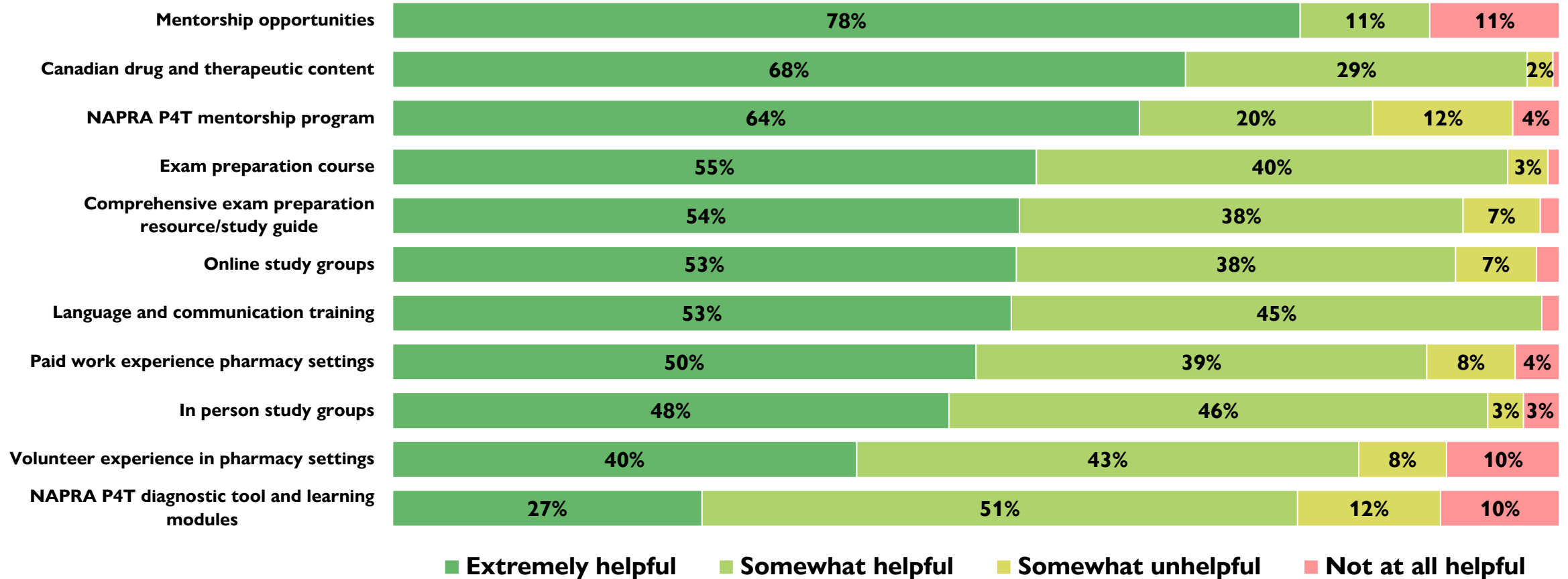
[Those who attempted successfully, not successfully or in the process of PEBC Qualifying exam or were licensed in Canada since 2017] Base n=332



Of the supports you accessed during the licensure process, how helpful were they?

Across all supports accessed, a majority of IPGs found the support to be either extremely helpful or somewhat helpful.

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or Unlicensed

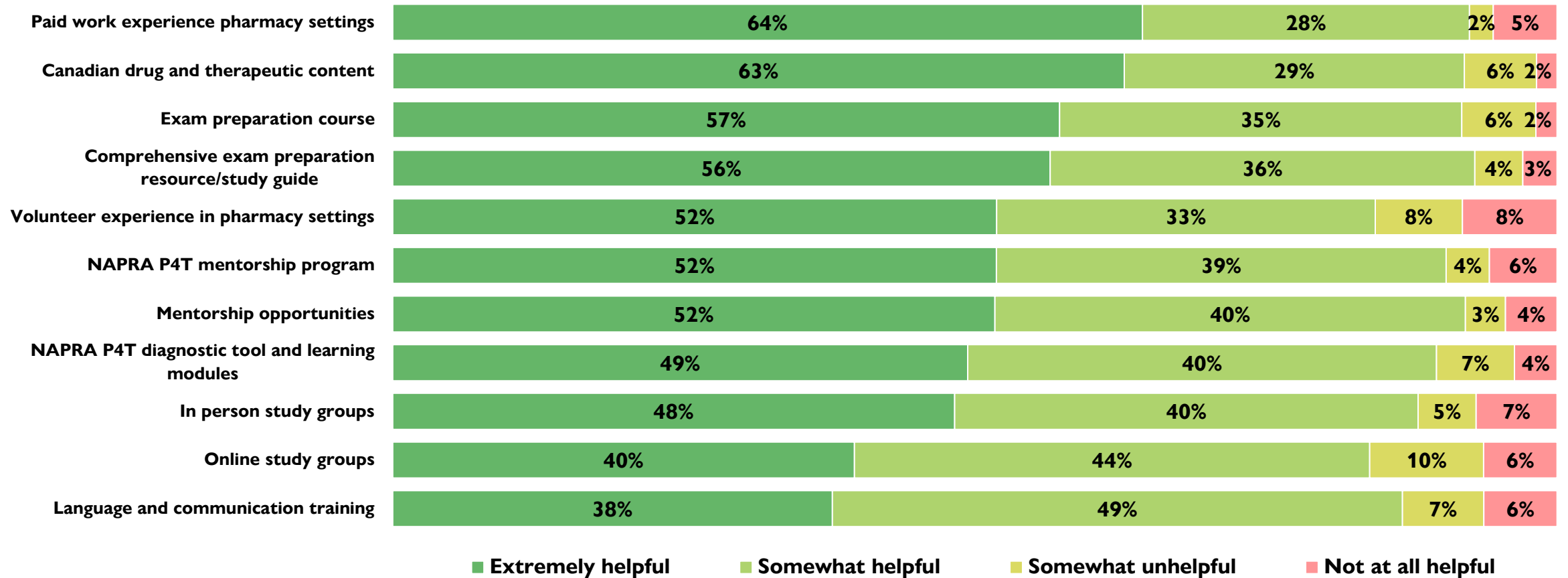


[Those who attempted successfully, not successfully or in the process of PEBC Qualifying exam or were licensed in Canada since 2017]] Base n=9 to 203

Of the supports you did not access or have access to how helpful do you believe they would have been throughout the licensure process?

IPGs believe the supports they did not access or have access to would have been either extremely helpful or somewhat helpful throughout the licensure process.

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or Unlicensed



[Those who attempted successfully, not successfully or in the process of PEBC Qualifying exam or were licensed in Canada since 2017 & did not access support] Base n=110 to 203

Section 9:

Experience as Pharmacist Student, Intern or Provisional Pharmacist

Some Regulators allow IPGs to register and work as “students”, “interns” or “provisional pharmacists” in pharmacy under supervision before completing the PEBC Qualifying Exam Part I (MCQ) or Part II (OSCE) and before the structured internship or Practical Training period (e.g. Structured Practical Training) and/or entry to practice assessment (e.g. Practice Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE)). The following section explores IPGs’ experiences in these roles and the value they provide in preparing for the Qualifying exam and licensure.

Key findings

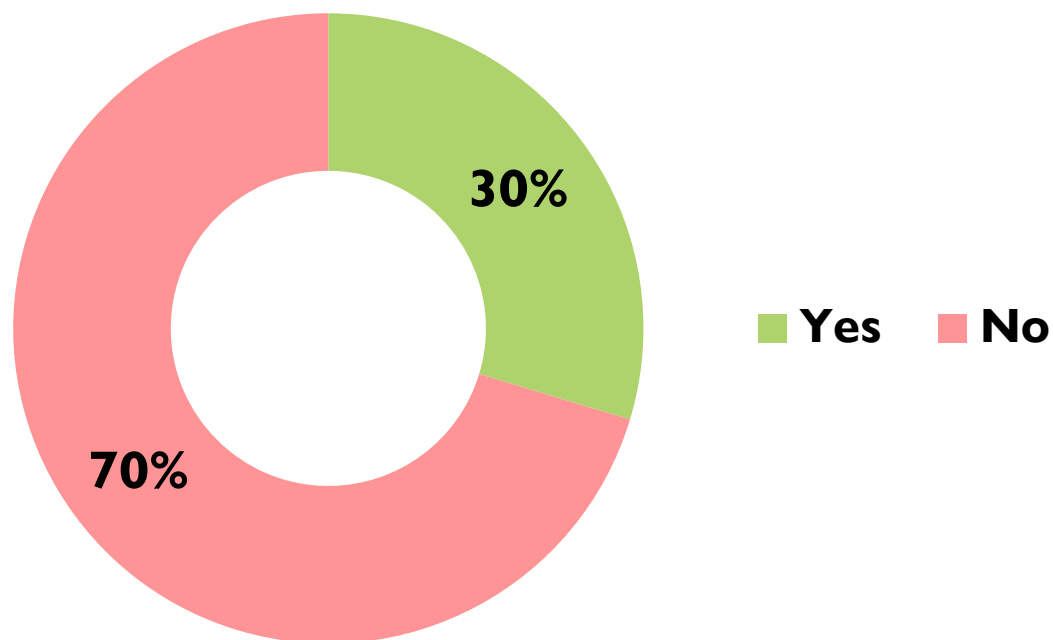
- Just under one third (30%) of IPGs outside Quebec who are either unlicensed or licensed since 2017, practised or are practising as a student, intern or provisional pharmacist before completing the PEBC Qualifying Exam.
 - For those who did not practice student, intern or provisional pharmacist, the main reason identified was that provincial regulations prevented them from doing so (39%). The second top reason was not being able to find a paid position (23%).
- Almost all IPGs who could not work as a student, intern or provisional pharmacist think they would have been better prepared for the PEBC Qualifying Exam if they'd had that experience.
- Most IPGs (64%) who practiced as a student, intern or provisional pharmacist were paid and 76% felt they were able to work to full scope of practice under supervision.
- The average length of time for IPGs to work as a student, intern or provisional pharmacist is 6.4 months and a majority (74%) found the experience to be extremely valuable.
- The main benefits identified by those who worked as a student, intern or provisional pharmacist before taking the Qualifying Exam were an improved understanding of pharmacy practice in Canada (93%), improved understanding of the health care system (49%) and experience applying patient care skills and performing clinical services (41%).



Did you practice or are you practising as a student, pharmacist intern or provisional pharmacist before completing the PEBC Qualifying Exam Part I (MCQ) or Part II (OSCE)?

30% of IPGs practiced or are practising as a student, pharmacist intern or provincial pharmacist before completing the PEBC Qualifying Exam.

Licensed in Canada after 2017 or Unlicensed



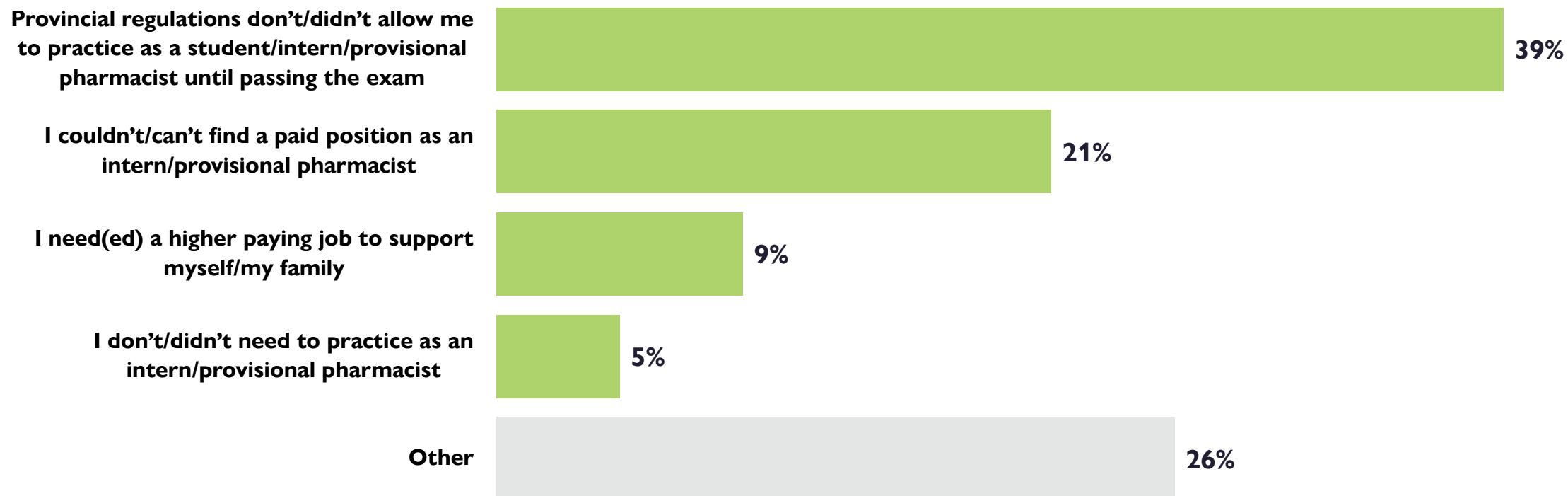
[Those who became licensed since 2017 or plan to license in Canada (except Quebec) and successfully completed the PEBC Evaluating exam] Base n=182



Why not?

For those who did not practice as a student/intern/provisional pharmacist, provincial regulations were the main reason for not doing so.

Licensed in Canada after 2017 or Unlicensed

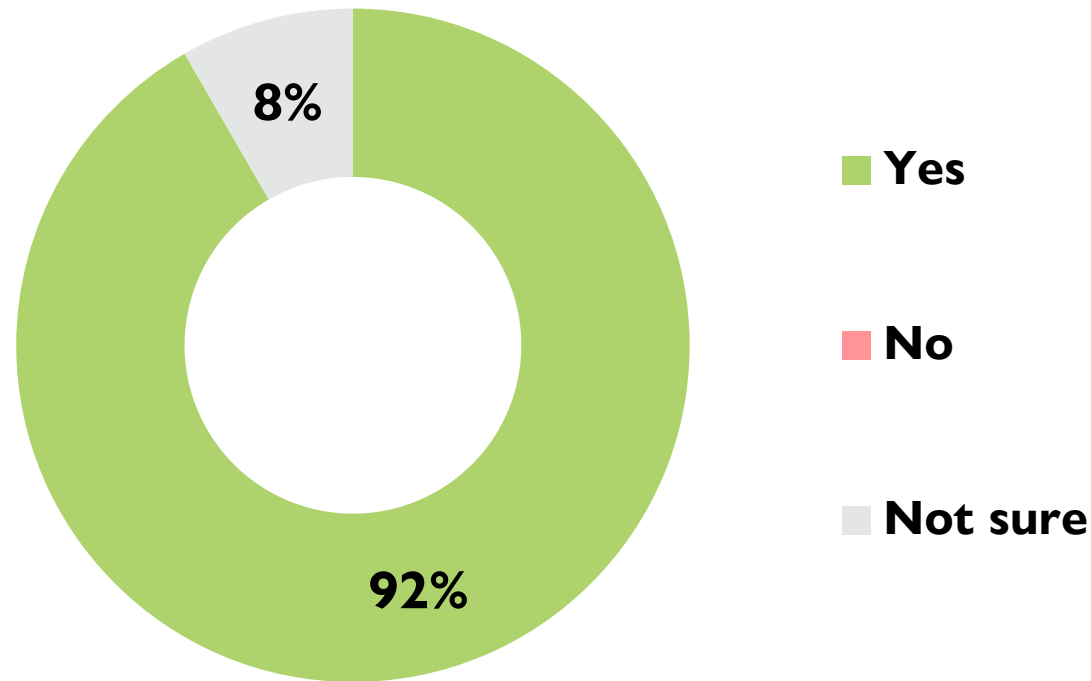


[Those who did not practice as an intern before the PEBC Qualifying exam & were licensed since 2017 or unlicensed] Base n=127



Do you believe you would have been better prepared for the PEBC Qualifying Exam and other licensing assessments had you been able to work as a student/pharmacist intern/provisional pharmacist before completing the PEBC Qualifying Exam Part I (MCQ) or Part II (OSCE)?

Almost all IPGs who could not work as a student/intern/provisional pharmacist think they would have been better prepared for the PEBC Qualifying Exam if they had.



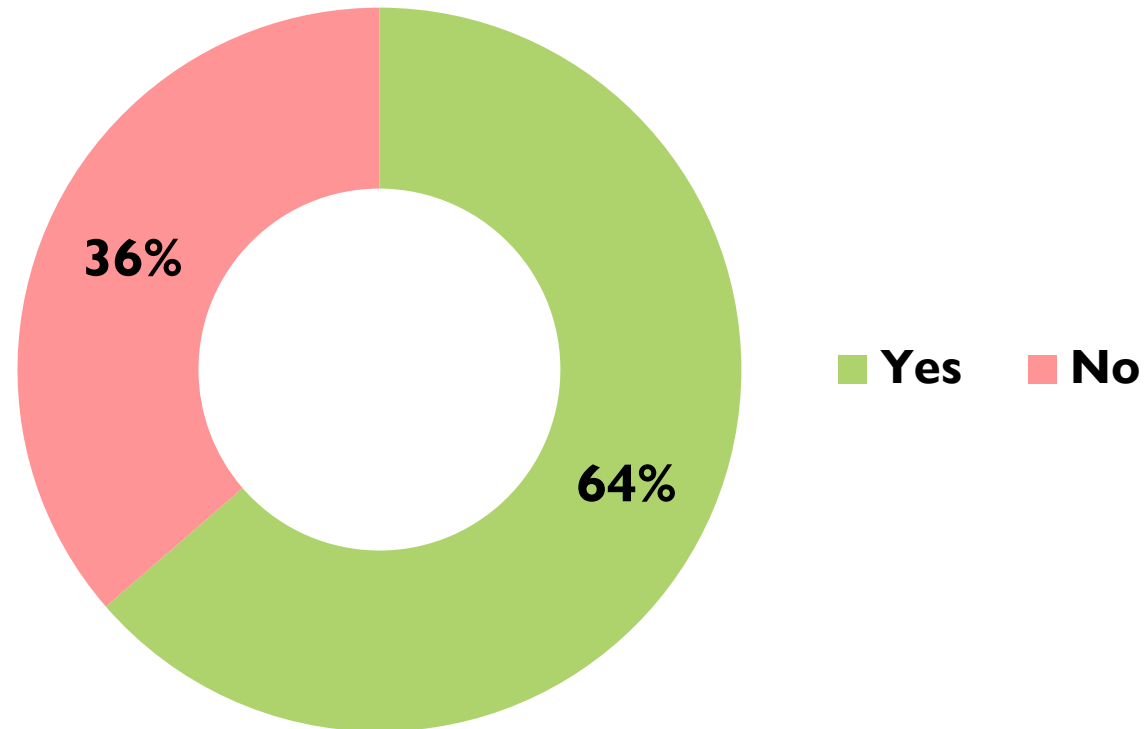
[Those who could not work as an intern & licensed since 2017 or unlicensed] Base n=48



Are you/were you paid in your position as a pharmacist student/intern/provisional pharmacist?

64% of IPGs who have worked as a student/intern/provisional pharmacist were paid in that position.

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or Unlicensed



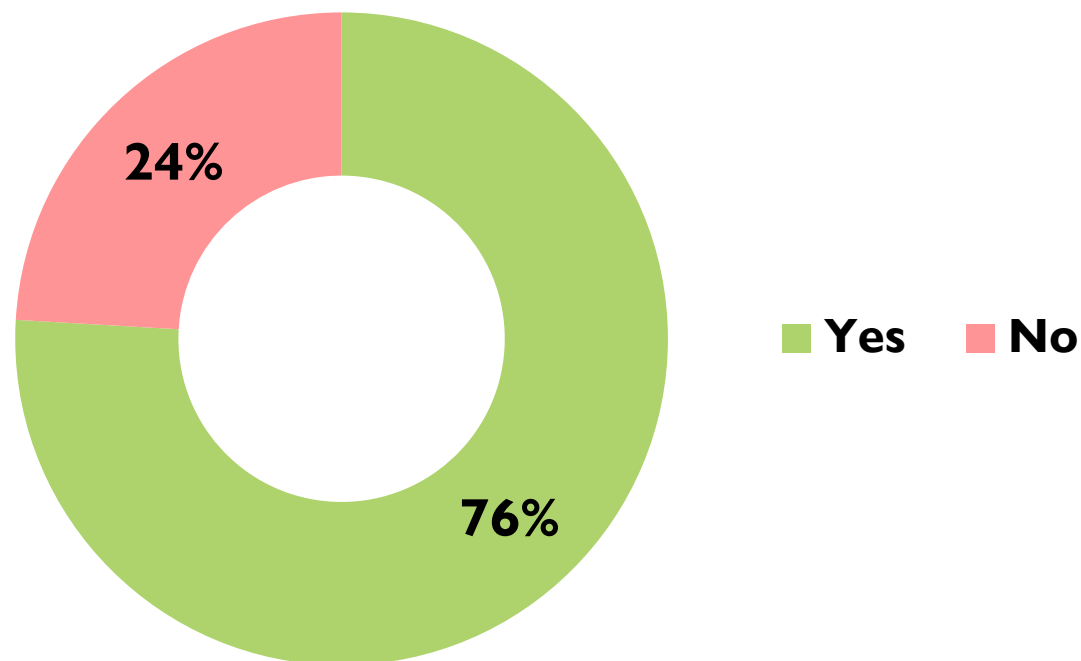
[Those who work as a pharmacist intern and are unlicensed or were licensed since 2017] Base n=55



Are you/were you able to work to full pharmacist scope of practice (under supervision) as a pharmacist student/intern/provisional pharmacist?

76% of IPGs felt they were able to work to full scope of practice (under supervision) as a student/intern/provisional pharmacist.

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or Unlicensed



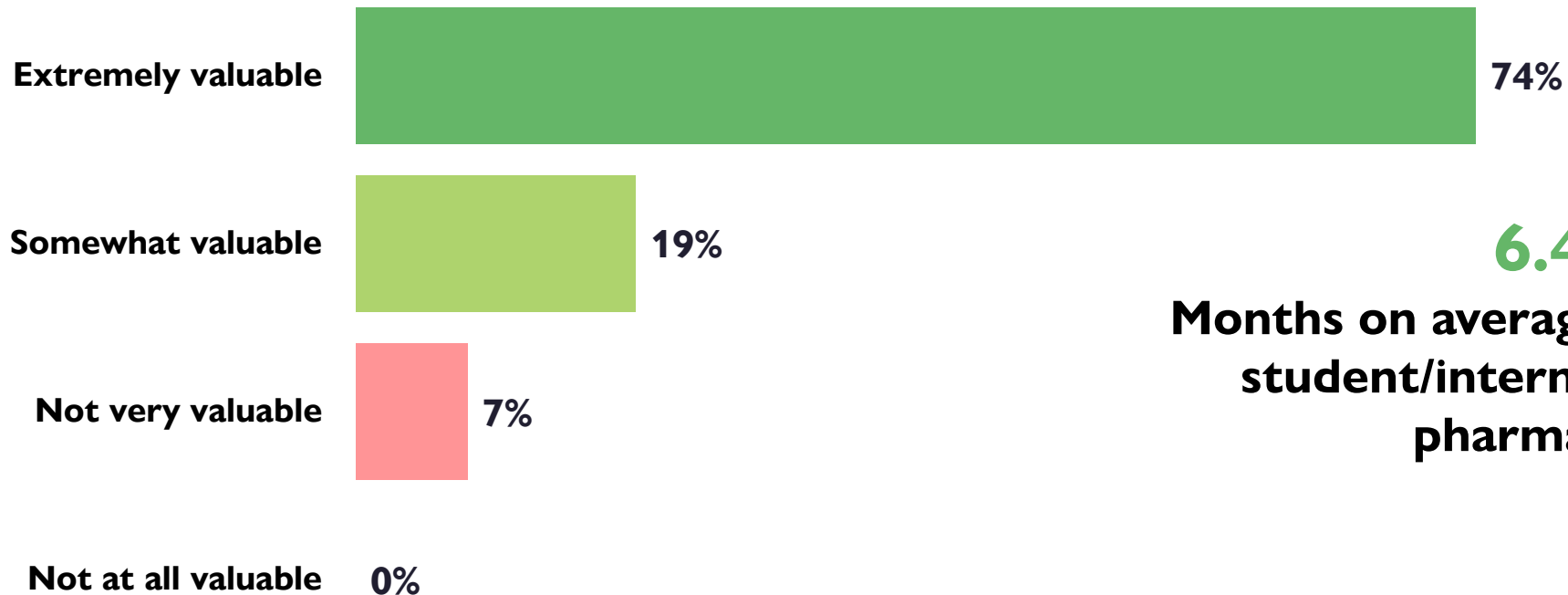
[Those who work as a pharmacist intern and became licensed since 2017 or are unlicensed] Base n=55



How would you rate the value of your experience as a pharmacist student/intern/provisional pharmacist in terms of preparing you to be a pharmacist in Canada? | How long (in months) did you work as a pharmacist student/intern/provisional pharmacist?

74% of IPGs rated their experience as a student/intern/provisional pharmacist as extremely valuable

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or Unlicensed



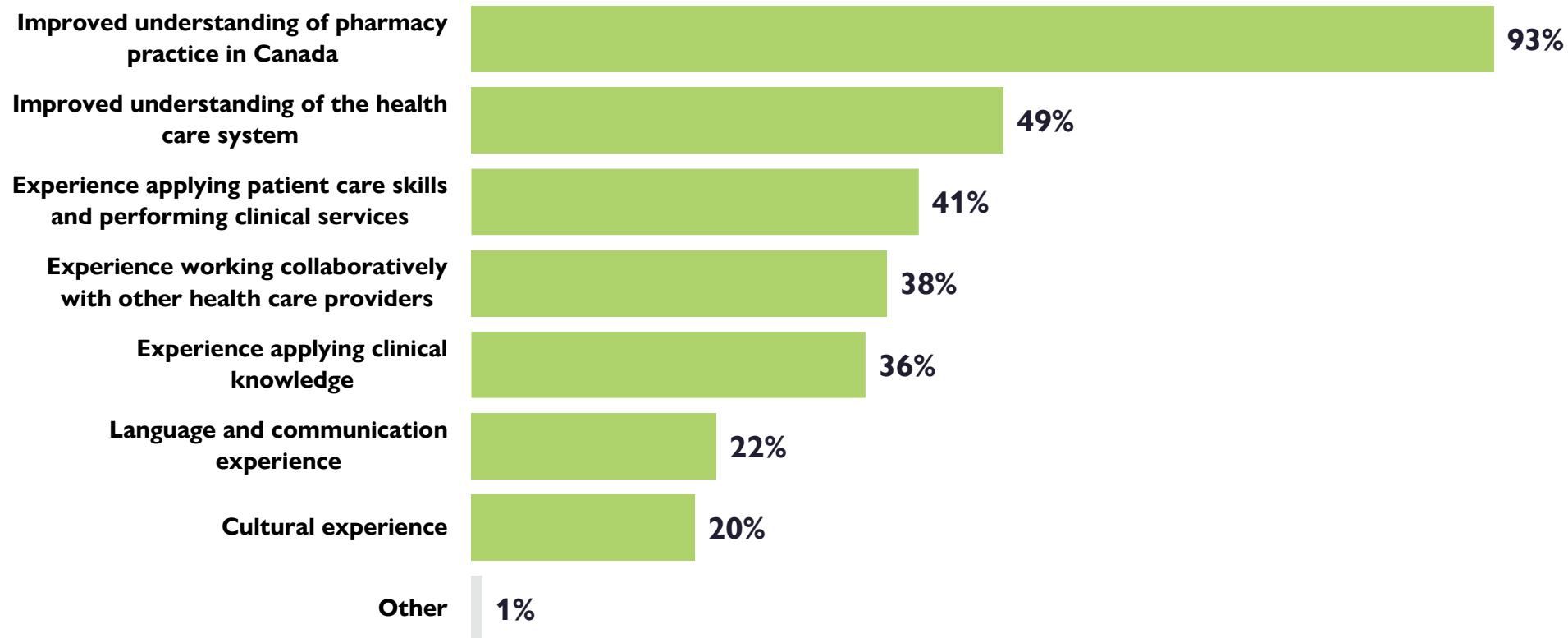
6.4
Months on average working as a student/intern/provisional pharmacist

[Those who work as a pharmacist intern and are unlicensed or licensed since 2017] Base n=54



What provided you with the most value in your experience as a pharmacist student/intern/provisional pharmacist? Please select your top 3

IPGs felt the most valuable experience as a pharmacist student/intern/provisional pharmacist is that it improved their understanding of pharmacy practice in Canada.



[Those who find value to work as a pharmacist intern] Base n=103

Section 10:

Practical training, experience and other internship requirements

Pharmacy regulators across Canada have different names and requirements for the internship period during which IPGs are required to work in pharmacy practice for a designated number of hours under the supervision of a preceptor. The internship period is generally followed by an assessment from the preceptor or by another designated assessor, depending on the province.

This step in the licensure process may be called Structured Practical Training, Structured Practical Experience, Appraisal and Assessment or Internship, depending on the regulator. The below section explores IPG experiences with this step in the licensure process and, for simplicity, we refer to this step generally as “Practical Training.”

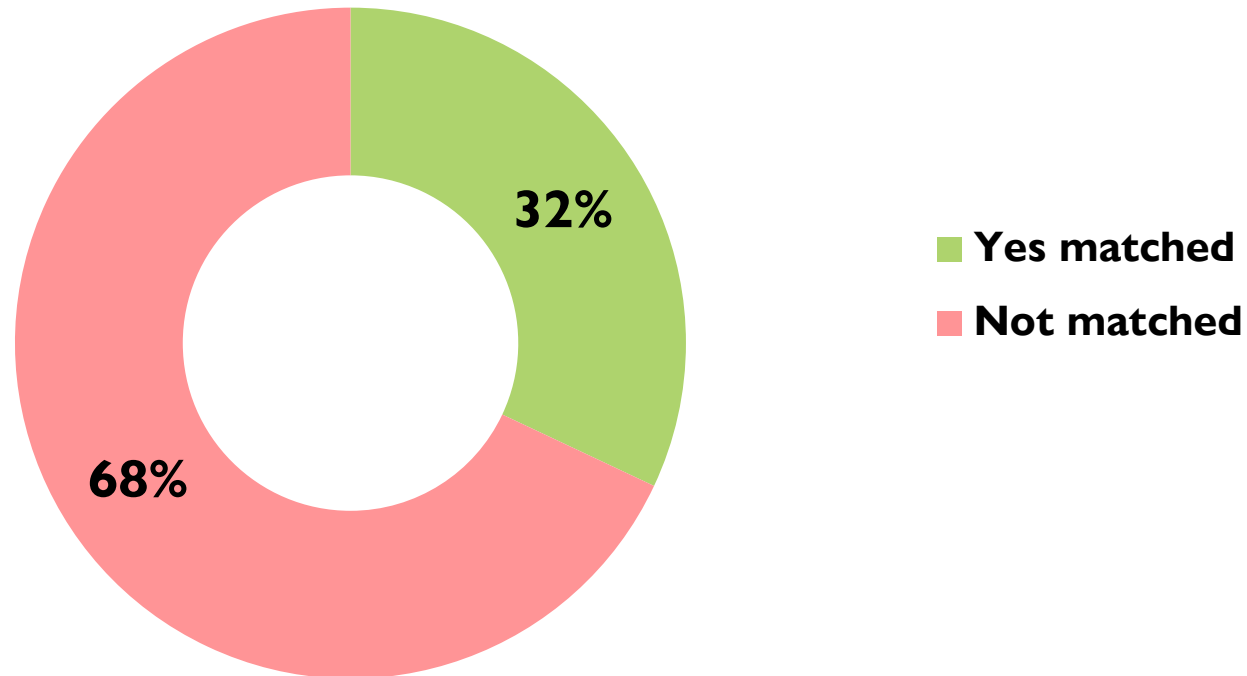
Key findings

- Among IPGs licensed in Canada since 2017 and who completed practical training, only 32% were matched with a preceptor or appraiser for their practical training through their College of Pharmacy.
- Of those who were not matched with a preceptor, only 4% found it easy to find a preceptor or appraiser on their own compared with 51% who found it very challenging.
 - 26% of IPGs who were not matched found a preceptor in less than a month, 38% found a preceptor in one to two months and 36% spent 3 or more months trying to find a preceptor.
- 42% of IPGs were paid during their practical training placements.
- 77% were satisfied with the number of hours required to complete practical training. On average, IPGs believe 862 hours should be required, which is about 5-6 months. The median is 500 hours.
- Most IPGs completed or are completing practical training after attempting the PEBC Qualifying Exams (MCQ and OSCE).
 - Among those who completed practical training before the Qualifying exam, 86% believe it helped prepare them for the exam.
 - Among those who completed practical training after the Qualifying exam, 74% believe doing practical training before the exam would have better prepared them for the exam.
- 63% of IPGs believe that practical training is extremely valuable in terms of preparation to be a pharmacist in Canada



Were you matched with a preceptor or appraiser for your Practical Training through your College of Pharmacy? | Where do you currently live and practice in Canada?

Only 32% of IPGs who became licensed in Canada were matched with a preceptor or appraiser for their practical training



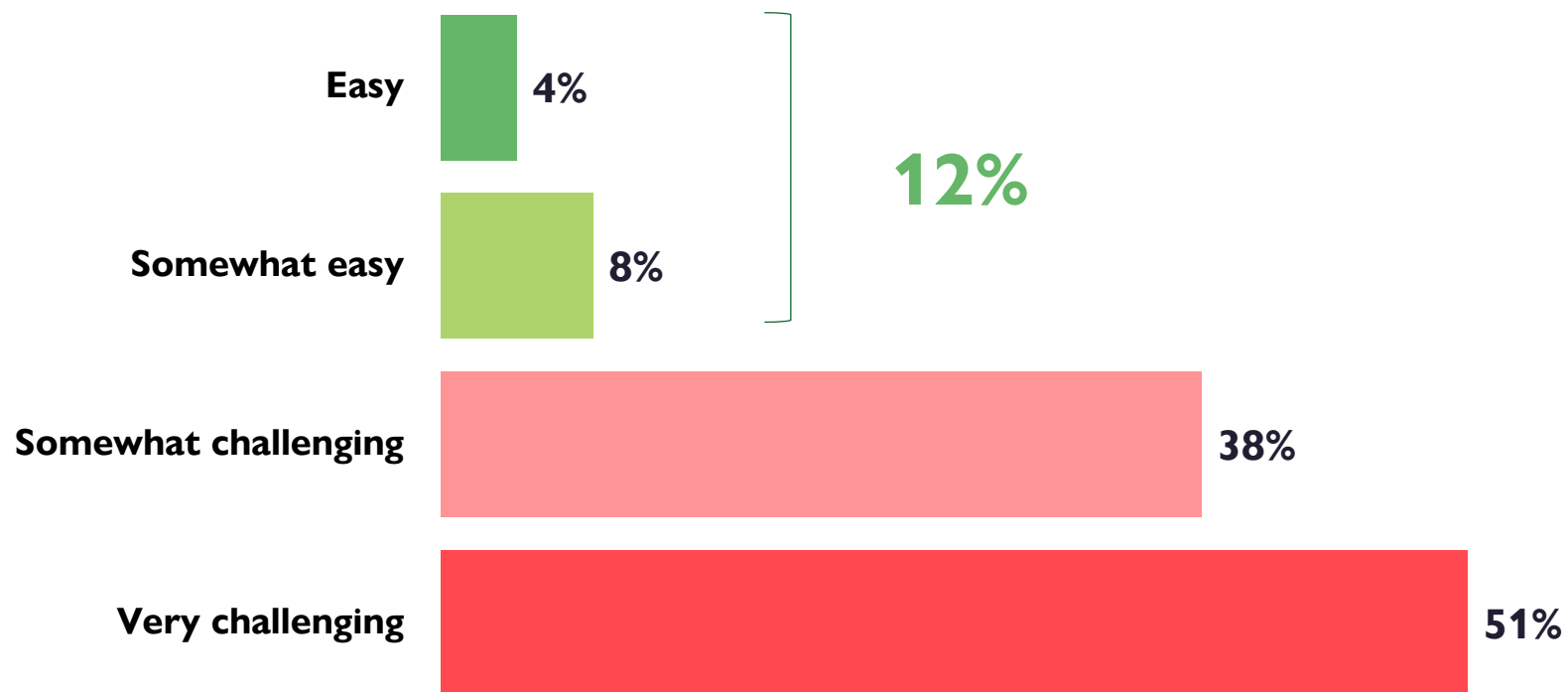
[Those who became licensed as a pharmacist in Canada since 2017] Base n=78



How would you describe the experience of having to find your own preceptor or appraiser for Practical Training?

Of those not matched by their College, only 4% found it easy to find a preceptor or appraiser on their own.

Licensed in Canada after 2017



[Those who were not matched with a preceptor or appraiser for their practical training though their college of pharmacy & were licensed since 2017 or unlicensed] Base n=53



How long did it take you or has it taken you so far to find or secure a preceptor or appraiser?

1 in 4 IPGs who were not matched with a preceptor or appraiser for their practical training found a match in less than a month.

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or unlicensed



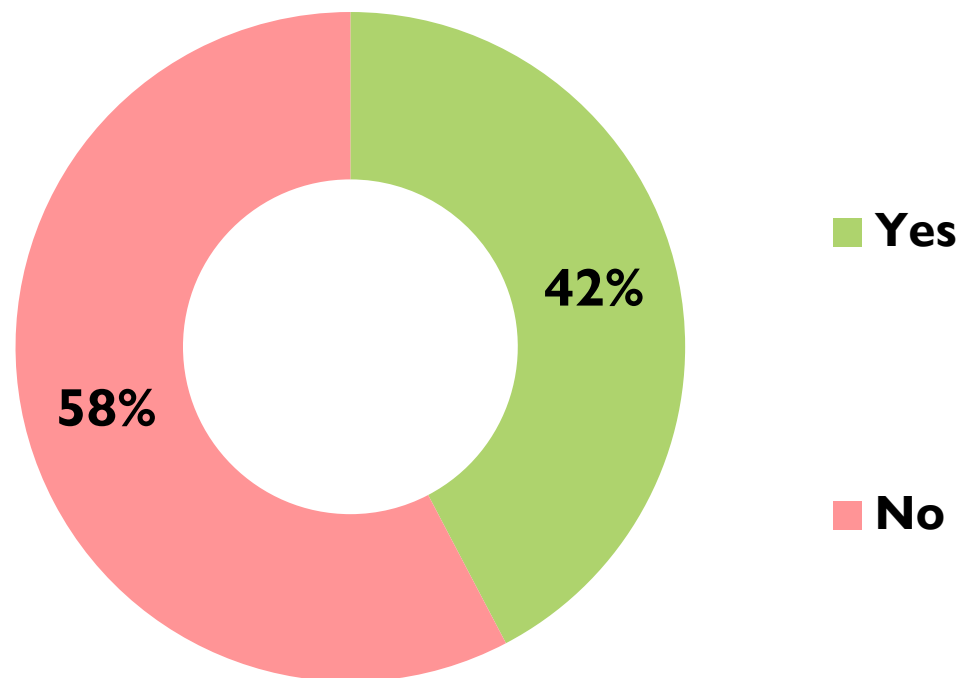
[Those who were not matched with a preceptor or appraiser for their practical training through their college of pharmacy & those licensed since 2017 or unlicensed] Base n=53



Is/was your Practical Training a paid placement?

More than half of practical training placements were unpaid.

Licensed in Canada since 2017 or unlicensed



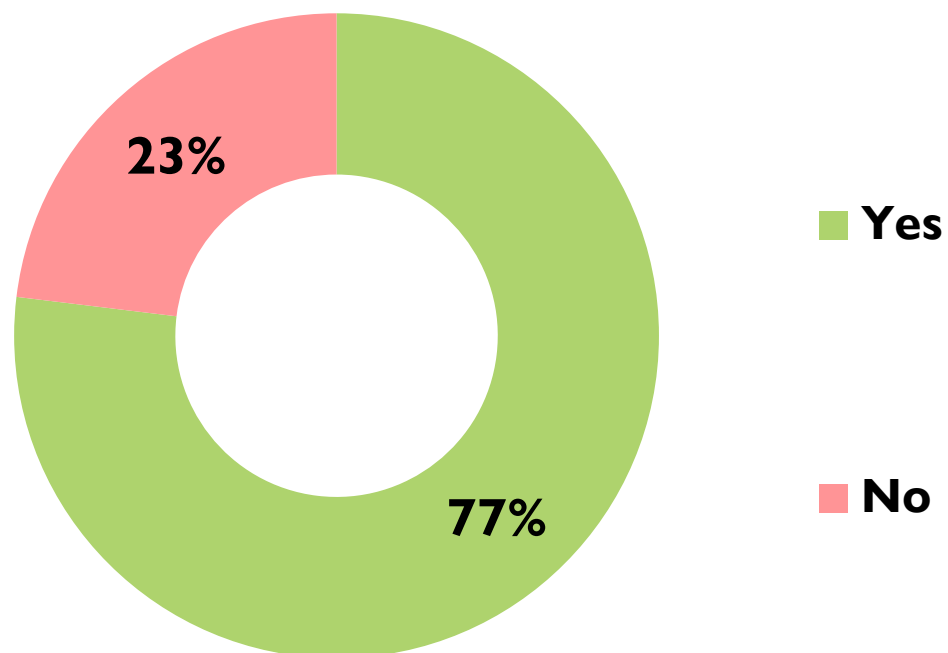
[IPGs who have or are currently undertaking practical training & were licensed since 2017 or unlicensed] Base n=78



Do you think the number of hours required to complete Practical Training in your province of licensure is appropriate? | How many hours do you believe should be required for Practical Training?

77% are satisfied with the number of hours required to complete practical training in their province of licensure.

Licensed in Canada after 2017 or unlicensed



On average, those who completed Practical Training think **862 hours** should be required, which is about 22 weeks or 5-6 months

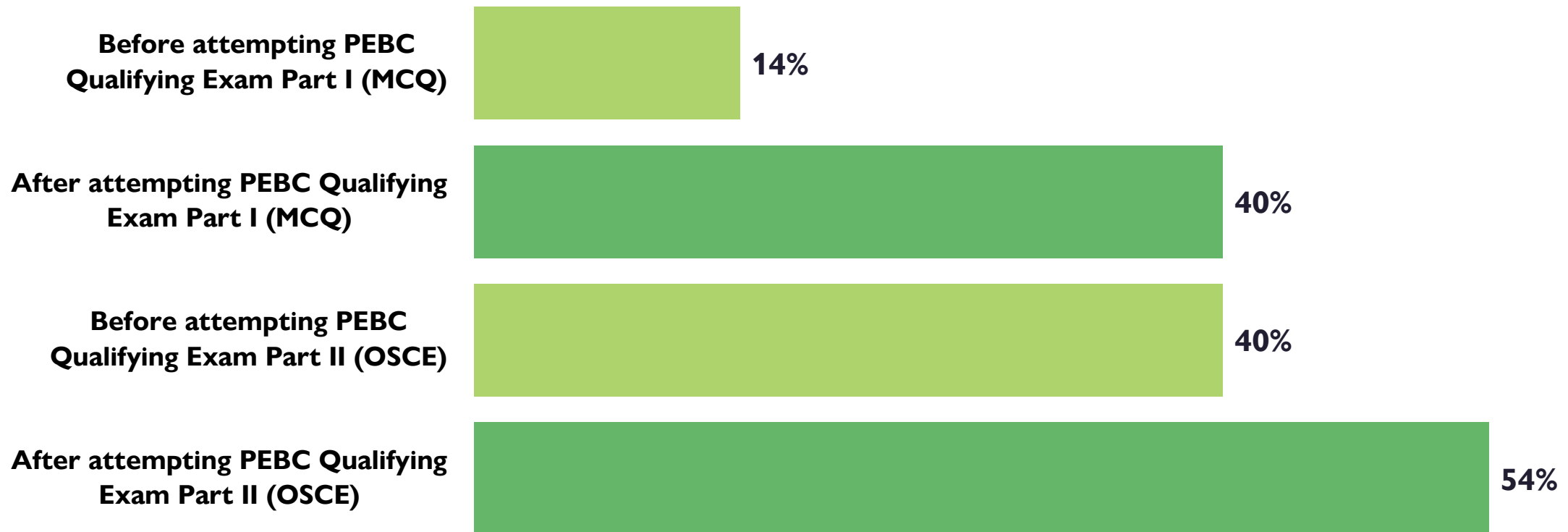
[IPGs who have or are currently undertaking practical training & were licensed since 2017 or unlicensed] Base n=78



Did you complete or are you completing Practical Training before or after the PEBC Qualifying Exam (MCQ or OSCE)? (select all that apply)

More IPGs complete practical training after the PEBC Qualifying exam than before the Qualifying exam.

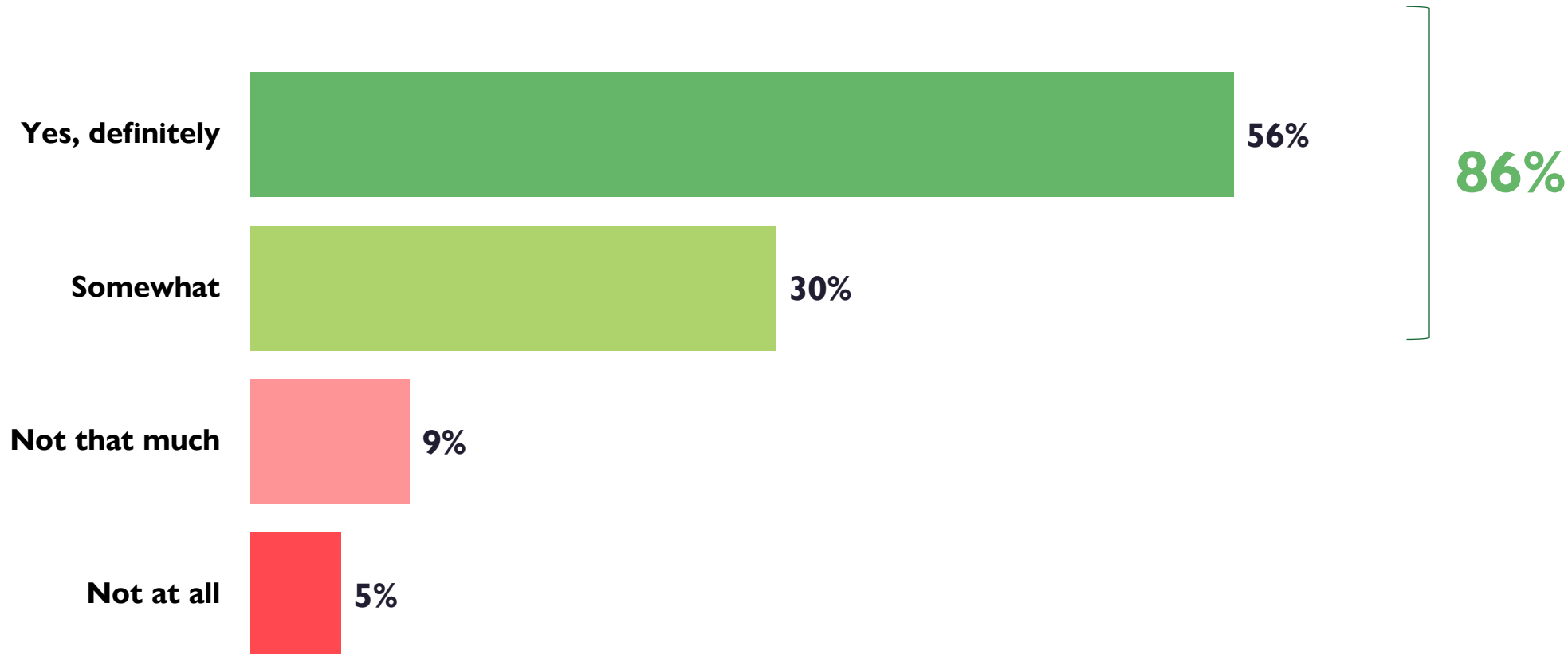
Licensed in Canada since 2017 and unlicensed



[IPGs who have or are currently undertaking practical training or licensed since 2017] Base n=78

Did completing Practical Training before the PEBC Qualifying Exam (MCQ or OSCE) help or is it helping you prepare you for the exam?

86% of IPGs who completed practical training before the Qualifying exam agree it helped them prepare for the exam.



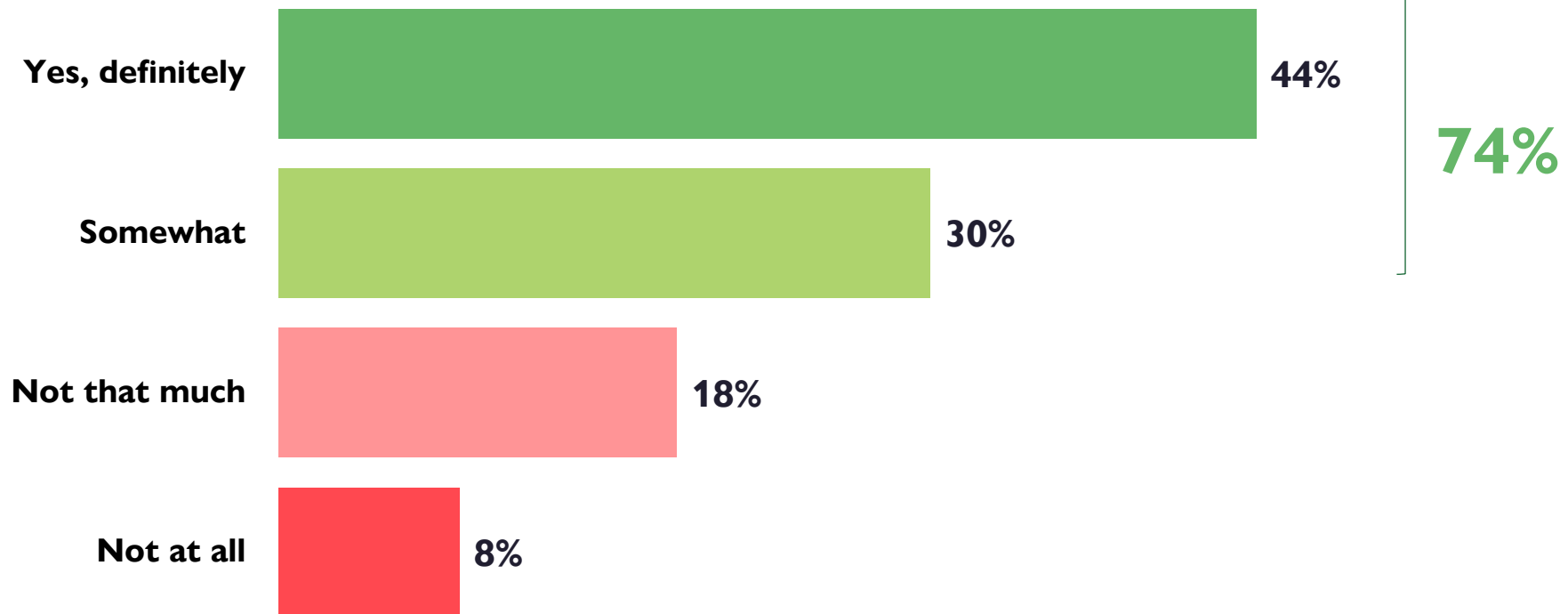
[Those who completed practical training before PEBC Qualifying Exam] Base n=77 n=11-31



Do you think that completing Practical Training before the PEBC Qualifying Exam (MCQ or OSCE) would have better prepared you for the exam?

For those who completed practical training after the Qualifying exam, 74% agree they would have better prepared for the exam if they had done their practical training before the exam.

Licensed in Canada after 2017



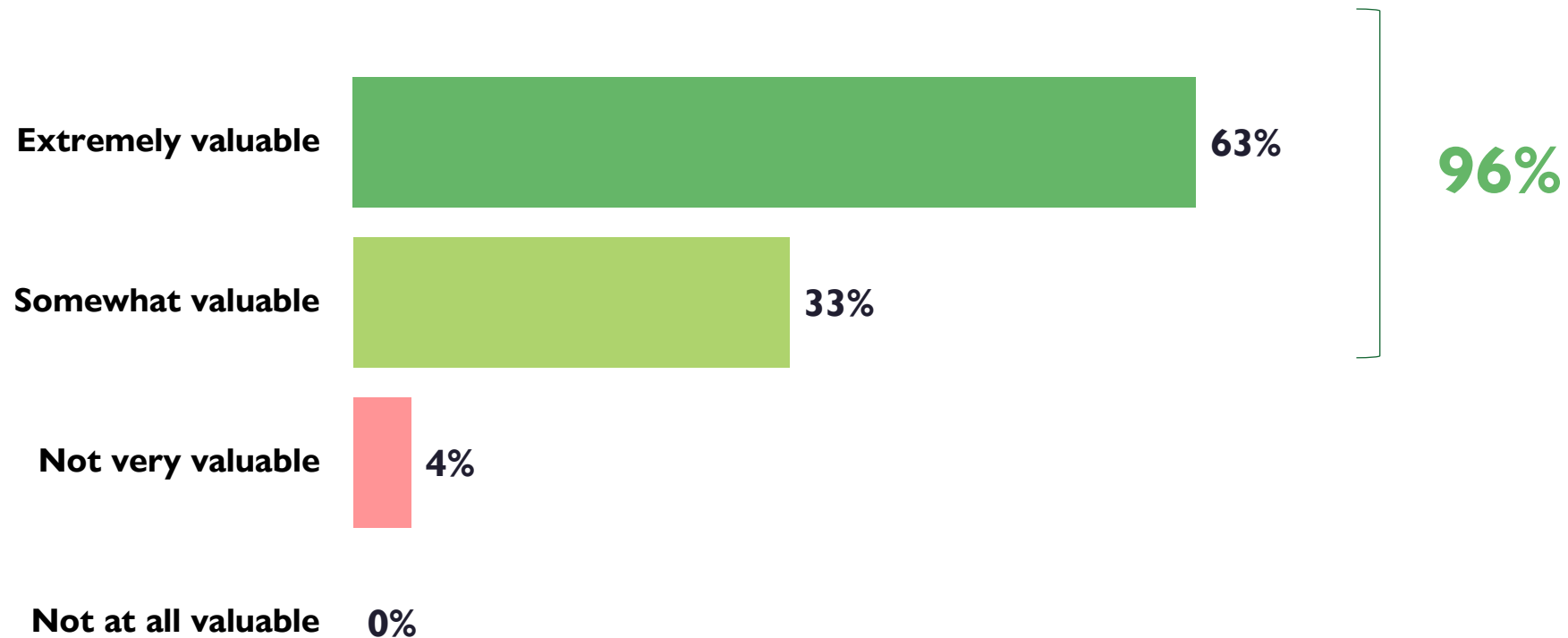
[Those who completed practical training after PEBC Qualifying Exam and those who were licensed since 2017] Base n=61 n=31-42



How would you rate the value of your Practical Training in terms of preparing you to be a pharmacist in Canada?

96% of licensed IPGs believe practical training was at least somewhat valuable in terms of preparing them to be a pharmacist in Canada.

Licensed in Canada after 2017

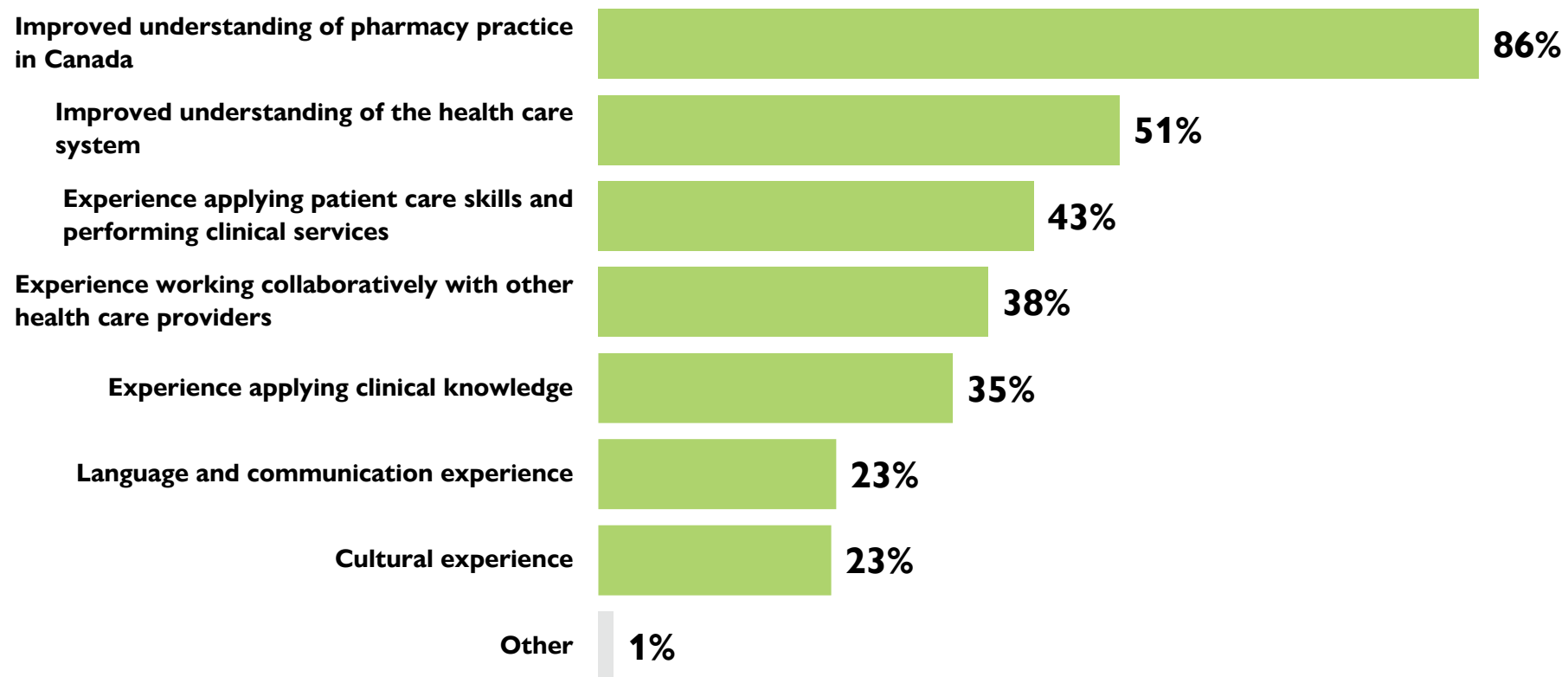


[IPGs licensed since 2017] Base n=46



What aspects of Practical Training in a Canadian pharmacy setting were of most value to you? Please select your top 3

An improved understanding of pharmacy practice in Canada was identified as the most valuable aspect of practical training:



[Those who rated the value of Practical Training in preparing you as “Extremely valuable” or “Somewhat Valuable”] Base n=44

Section 11: Practical Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE)

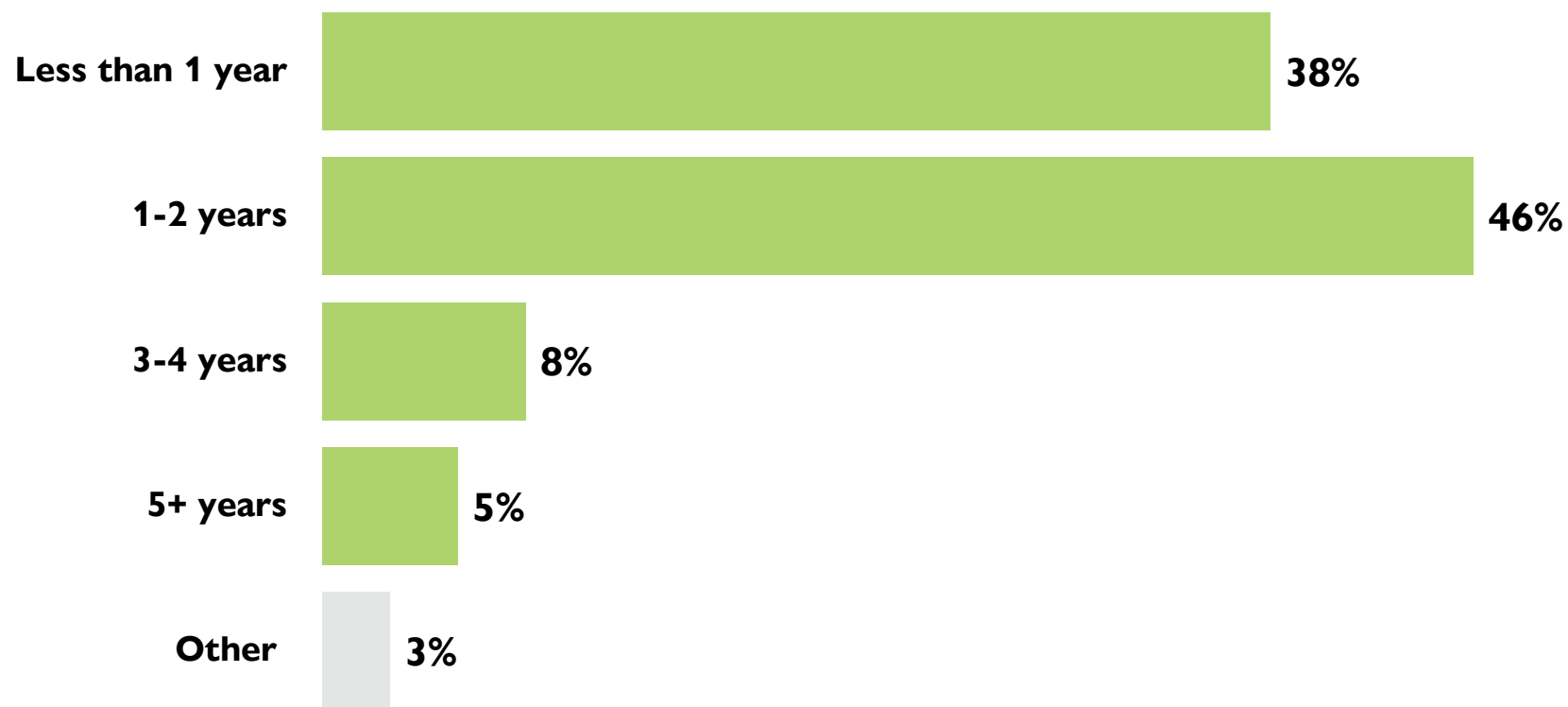
Key findings

- Most IPGs had either less than a year (38%) or 1 to 2 years (46%) experience working in a Canadian pharmacy before applying to complete the Practical Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE) in Ontario.
- 84% were at least somewhat confident in their readiness to practice as a pharmacist going into their PACE assessment.



How much experience working in a Canadian pharmacy did you have before applying to the Practical Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE) (first attempt)?

The majority of IPGs had less than 2 years experience working in a Canadian pharmacy before applying to PACE (first attempt).

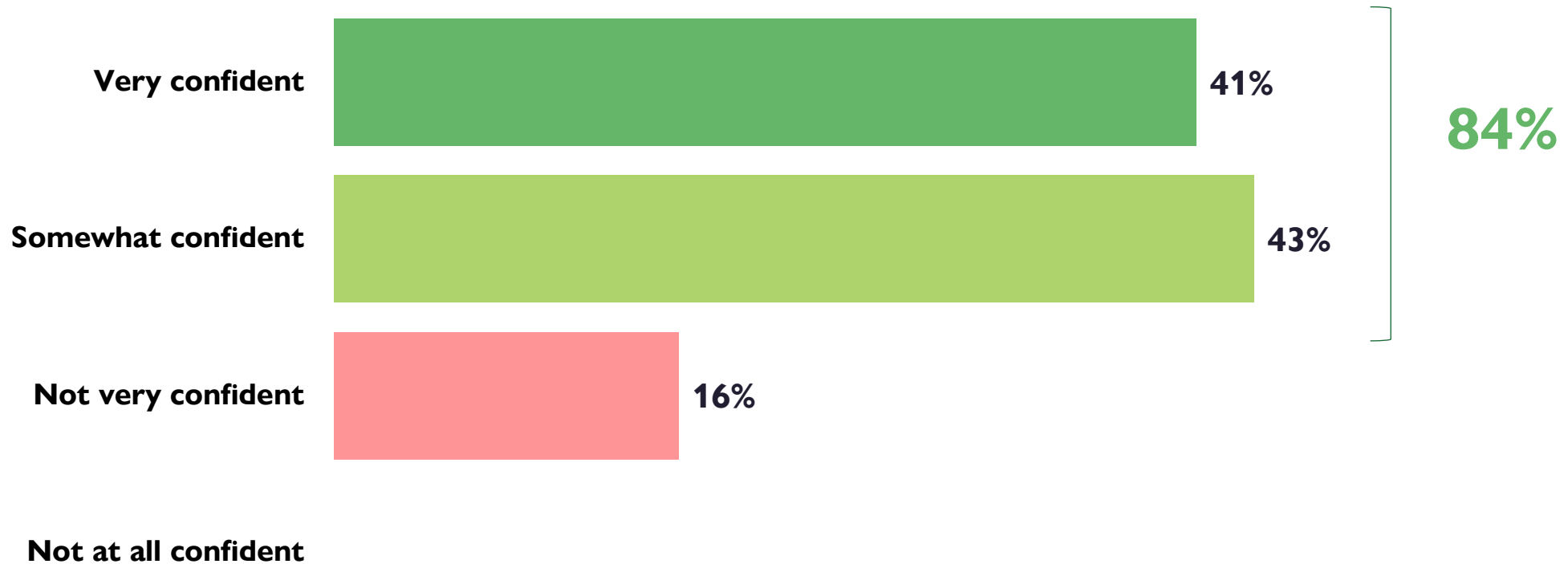


[Those who successfully completed, did not successfully complete or in progress of completing PACE] Base n=37



How confident are/were you in your readiness to practice as a pharmacist going into your PACE assessment?

84% were at least somewhat confident in their readiness to practice as a pharmacist going into their PACE assessment.



[Those who completed successfully, not successfully or in progress PACE] Base n=37

Section 12: Bridging Programs

A pharmacy bridging program consists of educational courses designed specifically to "bridge" international training, education and experience, and help IPGs acquire the knowledge and skills they need to meet Canadian practice standards.

Key findings

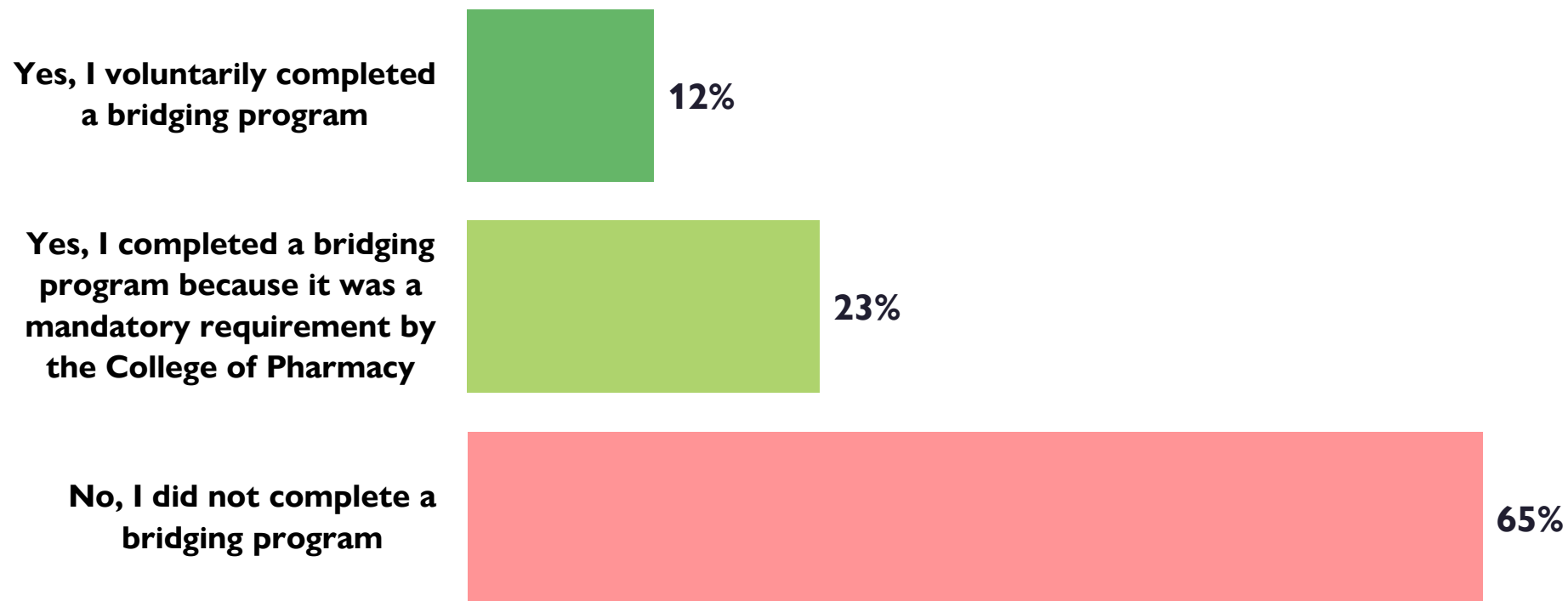
- Among IPGs licenses since 2017, 12% voluntarily completed a bridging program while 23% were required by their provincial College of Pharmacy to complete a bridging program.
- The most likely time to take a bridging program was after an unsuccessful attempt at PEBC Qualifying Part I (MCQ) (35%) or after passing the PEBC Evaluating Exam (27%).
- 80% of IPGs who took or are taking a bridging program rate it as at least somewhat valuable.
- The top five most valued topics or learning areas of the bridging programs are pharmacy practice in Canada (88%), patient care skills (83%), clinical knowledge and decision-making (66%), ethical, legal and professional responsibilities of pharmacists (65%) and the Canadian health care system (60%).



Did you complete a pharmacist bridging program before becoming licensed as a pharmacist in Canada?

35% of IPGs completed a pharmacist bridging program before becoming licensed.

Licensed in Canada since 2017

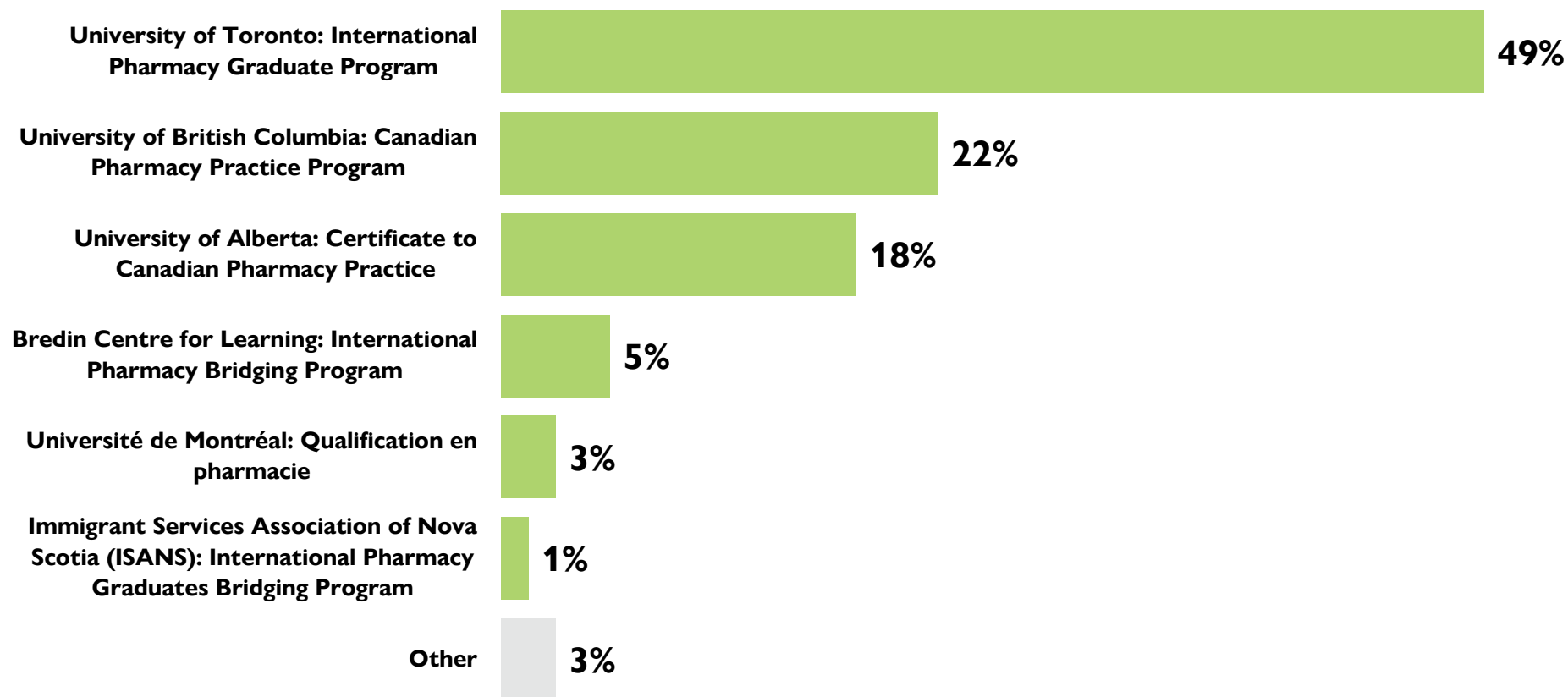


[IPGs who were licensed as pharmacists in Canada since 2017] Base n=75



Which bridging program are you enrolled in or have you completed?

The bridging program at the University of Toronto enrolls and graduates the most IPGs among bridging programs.



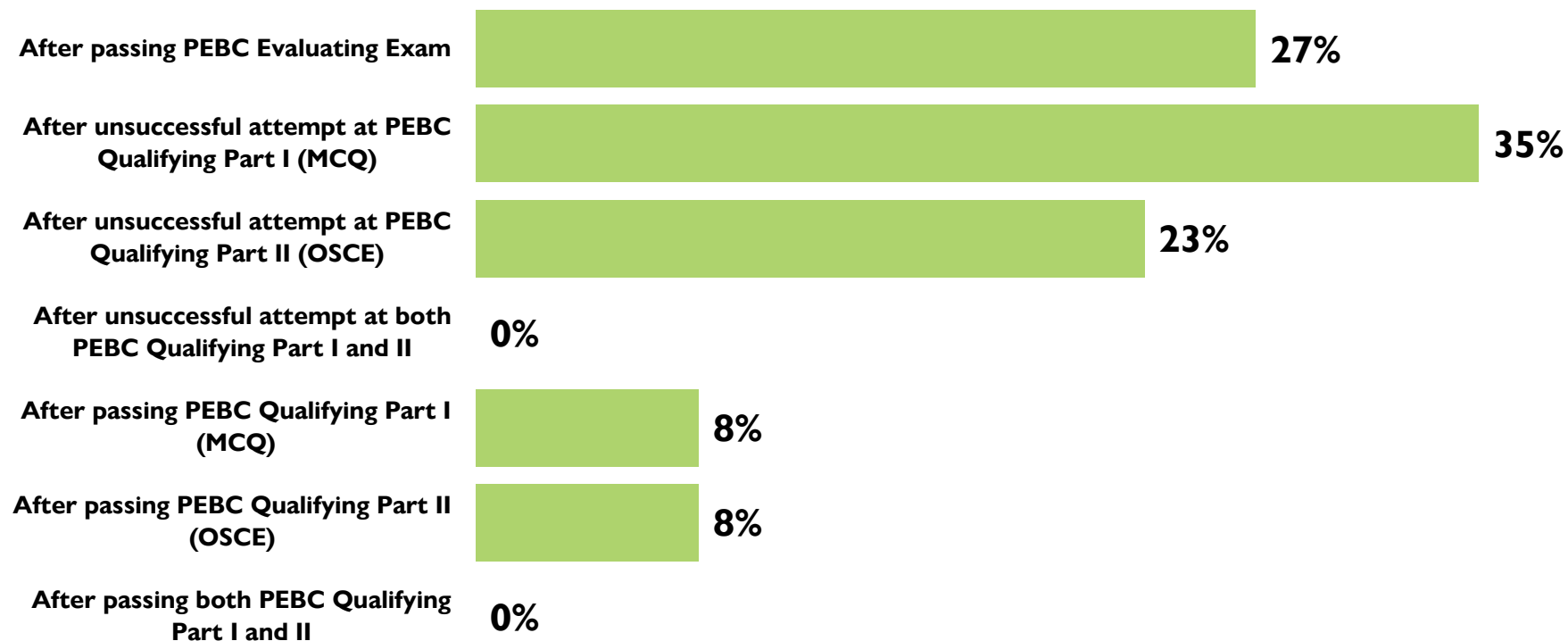
[Those who completed successfully, not successfully or in the progress of a bridging program & those licensed since 2017] Base n=74



At which point in the exam or licensure process did you take the bridging program?

The most likely time to take a bridging program is after an unsuccessful attempt at PEBC Qualifying Part I or after passing the PEBC Evaluating Exam.

Licensed in Canada since 2017

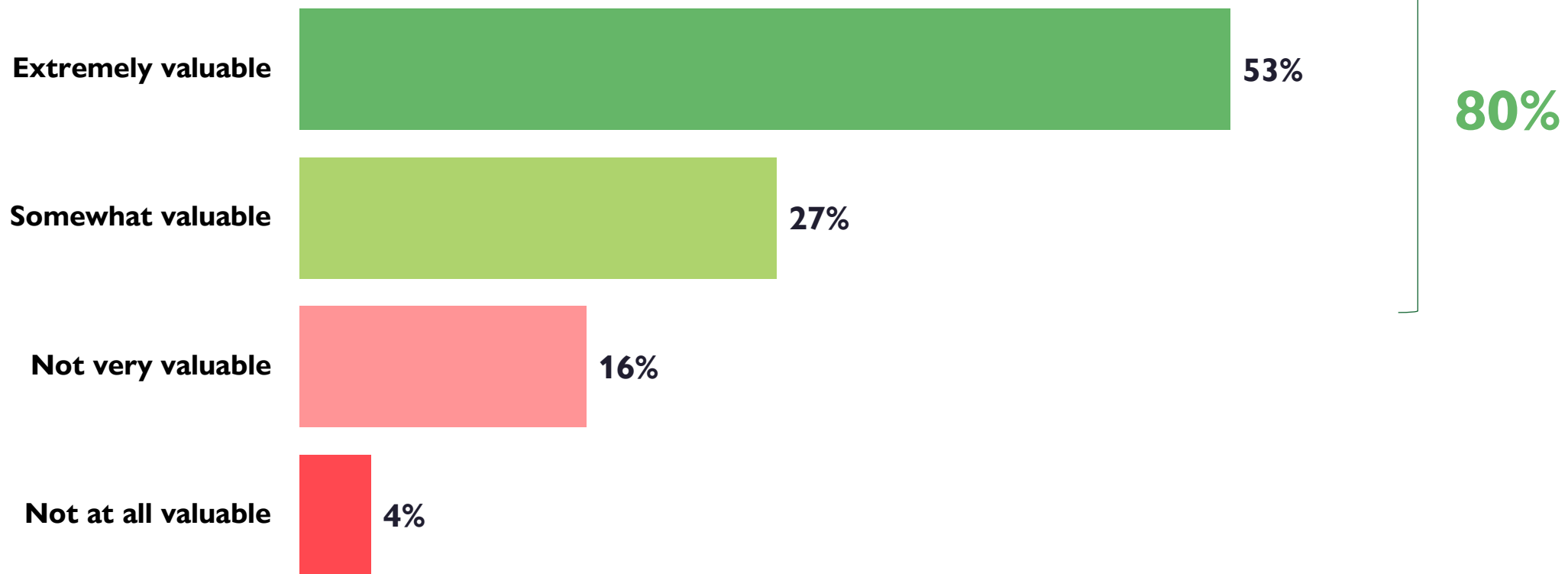


[Those who completed a bridging program outside Quebec and were licensed since 2017] Base n=26



How would you rate the value of the bridging program you completed or are taking in terms of preparing you to be a pharmacist in Canada?

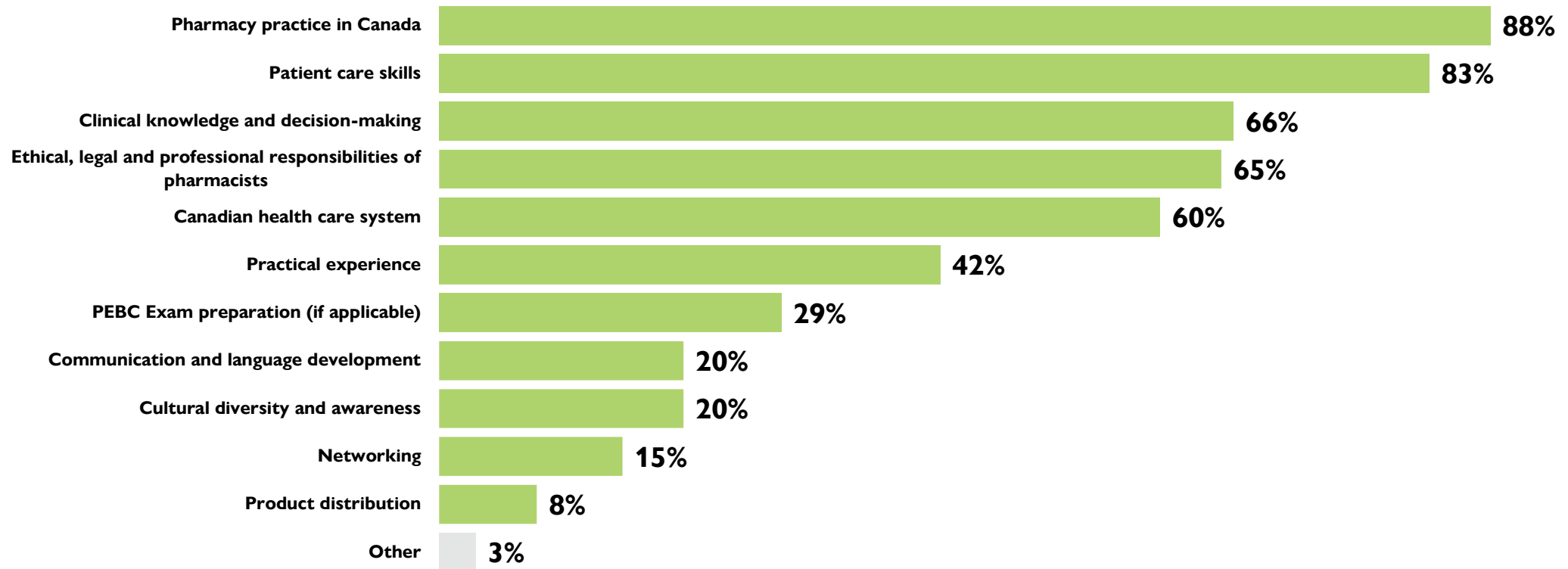
80% of those who completed or are enrolled in a bridging program rate it as at least somewhat valuable.



[those who completed successfully, not successfully or in the progress of a bridging program & licensed after 2017] Base n=74

What topics, components or learning areas of the bridging program are/were of most value to you? Please select your top 5

Pharmacy practice in Canada and patient care skills ranked highest among bridging program topics or learning areas:



[those who rate a bridging program as extremely or somewhat valuable] Base n=98

Section 13: Entry to Practice Process

Key findings

- Over one third (36%) of IPGs licensed after 2017 took three years to obtain their license and 28% took two years or less. The rest (36%) took four years or longer to become licensed.
- Among IPGs who aren't yet licensed in Canada, 64% have spent three years or less pursuing their license so far.
- More than half of unlicensed IPGs (57%) expect that licensure will take three years or less. Just under a third (28%) believe it will take four to five years.
- IPGs licensed after 2017 and unlicensed IPGs who have passed the PEBC Qualifying exam identified the most challenging pieces of the entire licensing process to be 1) finding work experience in a pharmacy (57%), 2) getting clear information about steps and requirements to licensure (39%), 3) getting clear information about the different pathways to licensure (37%) and 4) studying for the PEBC exams (35%).
 - When this question is expanded to include all IPGs who completed the survey, the top most challenging pieces are studying for the PEBC exams (66%), finding pharmacy work experience (50%), taking the PEBC exams (44%), and getting clear information about steps and requirements to licensure (39%).
- Among other challenges identified by IPGs, family responsibilities, length of time to licensure, costs associated with licensure, and lack of pharmacist mentorship were ranked as the greatest barriers during the licensing process.

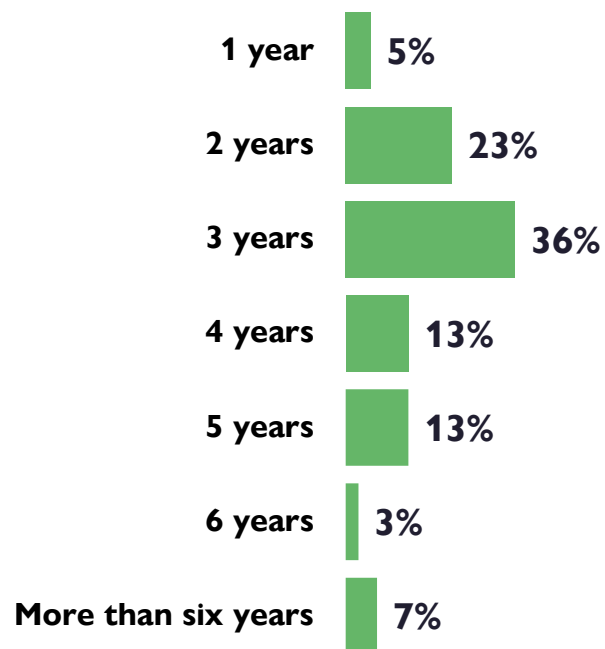


From document evaluation/assessment of education and training to licensure, how long did it take you to become licensed as a pharmacist in Canada? | From document evaluation/assessment of education and training until now, how long has the licensing process taken you so far to complete? | From document evaluation to licensure, how many years do you expect it will take for you to become licensed?

Length of time to licensure among licensed IPGs

Licensed in Canada since 2017

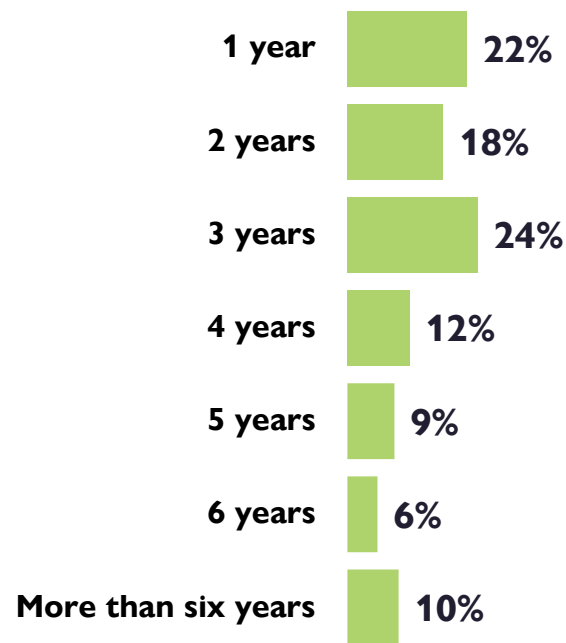
Total time to licensure



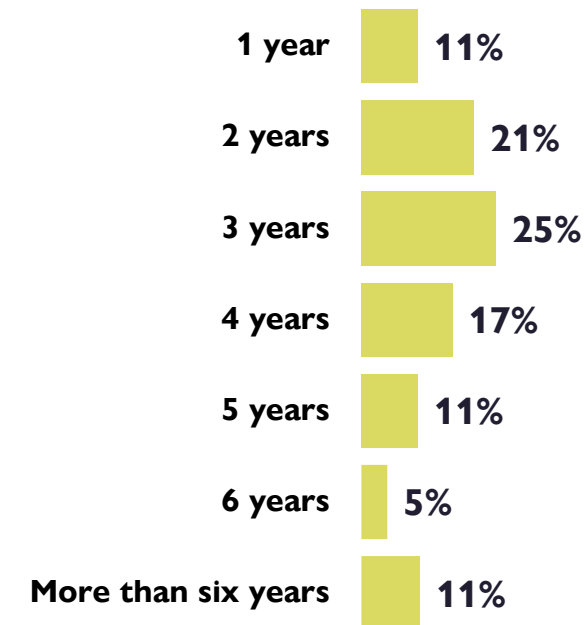
Time spent and expectations of total time to licensure among unlicensed IPGs.

Unlicensed IPGs

Time spent so far



Expectations of total time

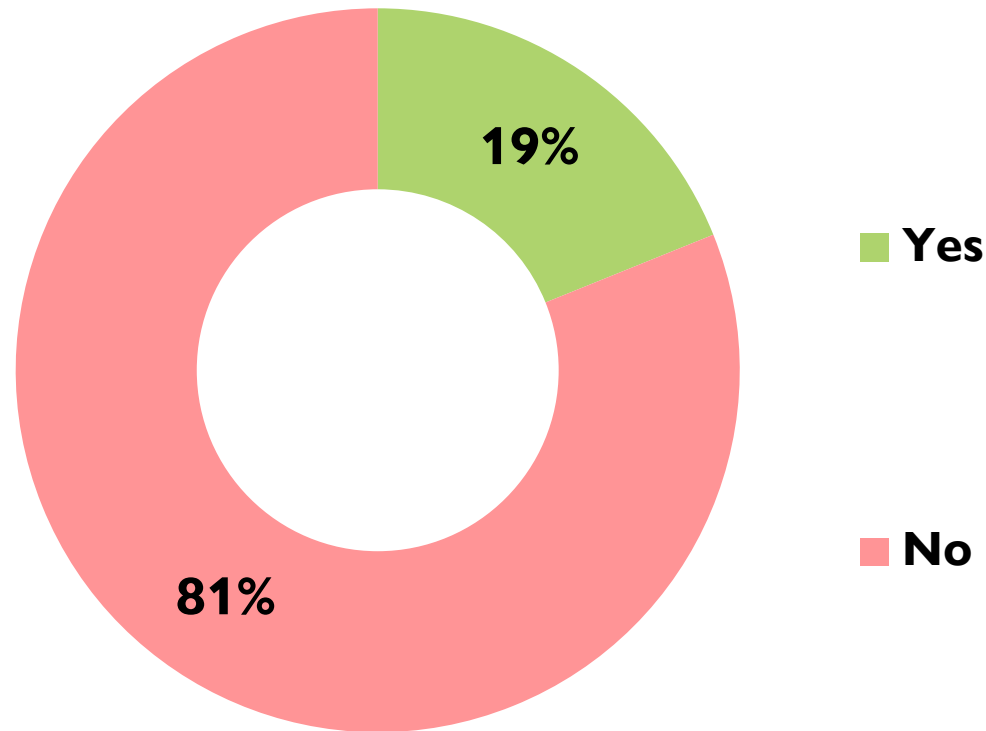


[IPGs who were licensed as pharmacists in Canada since 2017] Base n=75 | [IPGs who are in the process of becoming licensed] Base n=251 | [IPGs who are in the process of becoming licensed] Base n=247



Not including any programs required to obtain your pharmacist license, do you/did you have a government-issued study permit or student visa to study at a designated learning institution while you pursue/pursued your pharmacist license?

2 in 10 IPGs have/had a government-issues study permit while they pursue/pursued their pharmacist license.

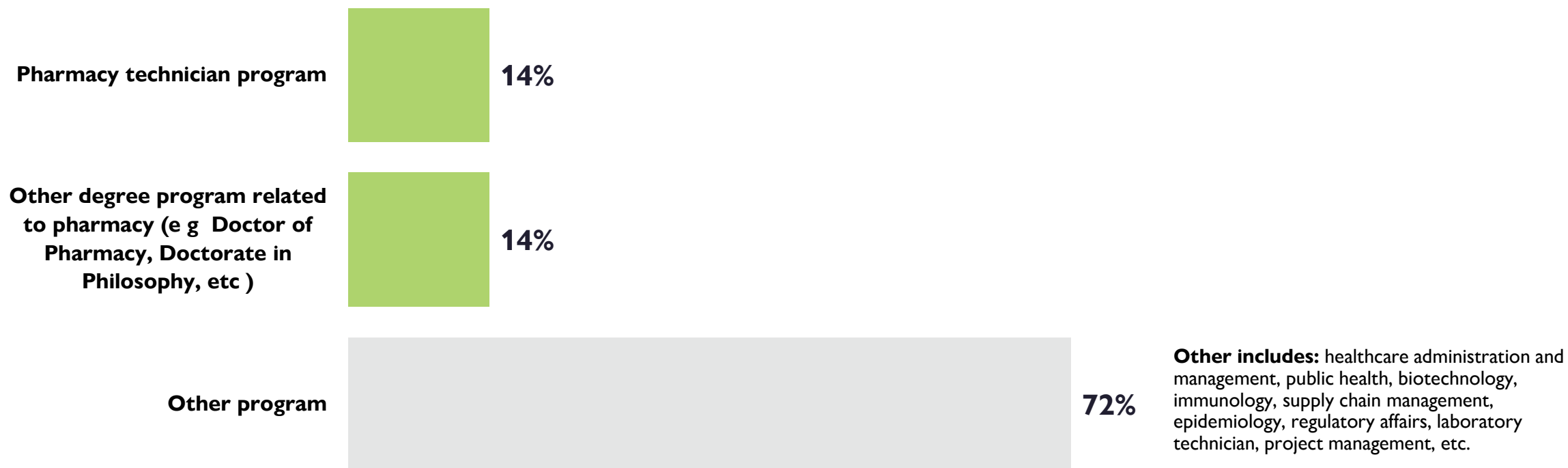


[All] Base n=577



What type of program are/were you enrolled in?

Of those who had/have a study permit, 14% are or were enrolled in a pharmacy technician program.

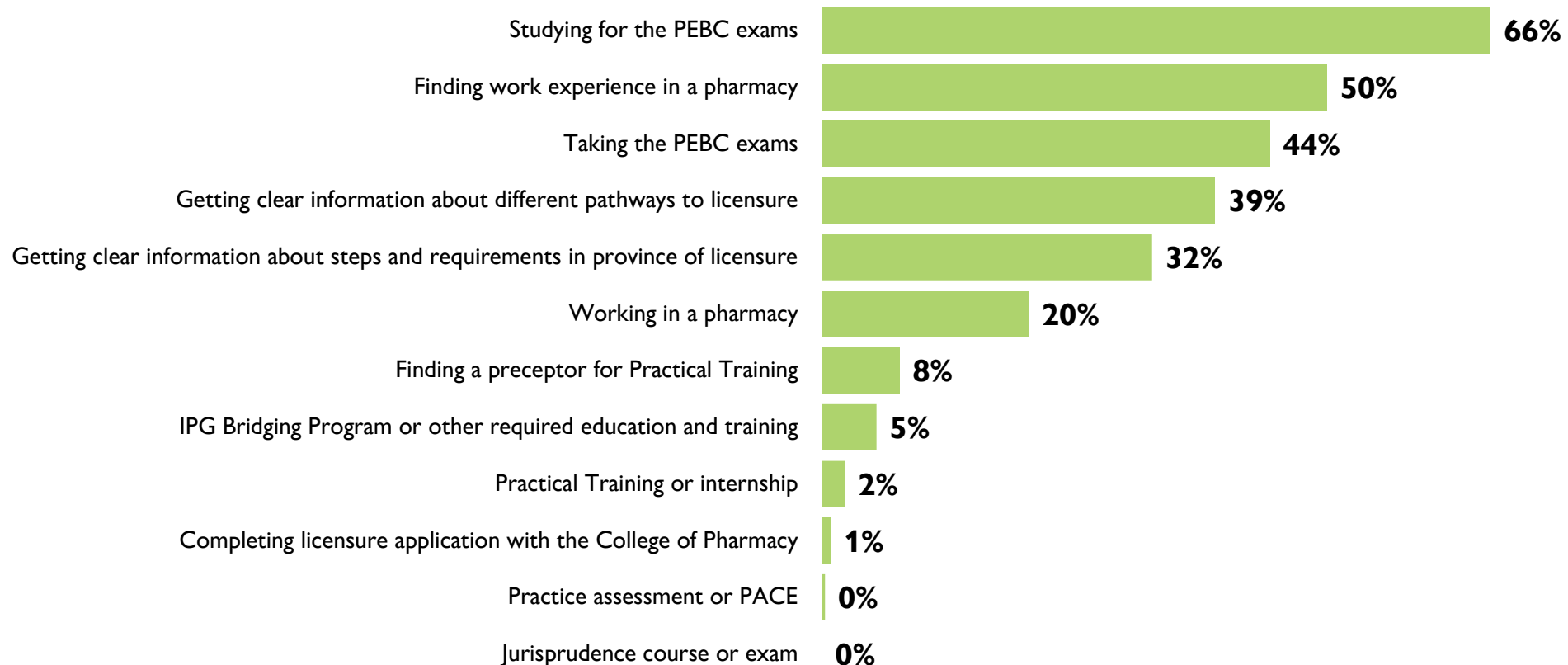


[those who had/have a study permit to pursue a pharmacist license] Base n=107



Please select which are/were the most challenging pieces (if applicable) of the entire pharmacist licensing process for you. Please select your top 3

The most challenging pieces of the entire pharmacist licensing process identified by all IPGs:

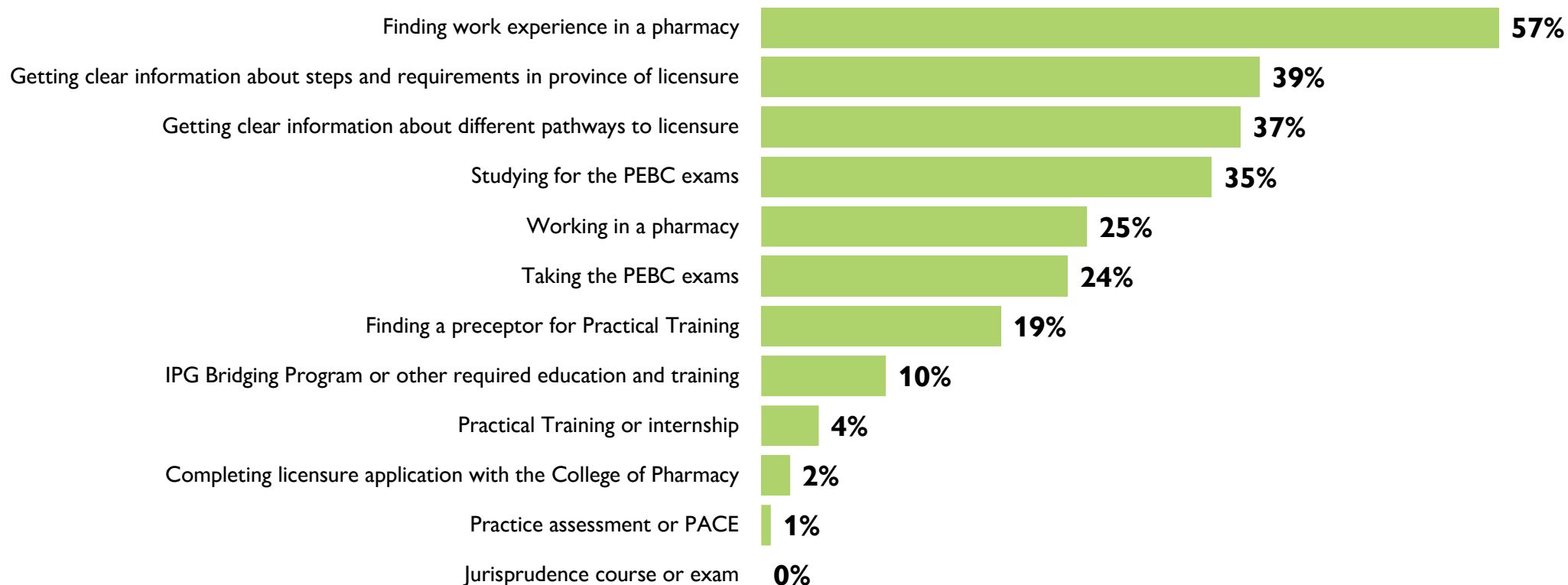


[IPGs who intend to become pharmacists in Canada, who completed document evaluation or education assessment or IPGs licensed since 2017] Base n=354



Please select which are/were the most challenging pieces (if applicable) of the entire pharmacist licensing process for you. Please select your top 3

The most challenging pieces of the entire pharmacist licensing process identified by IPGs: Licensed in Canada since 2017 and those who've passed the Qualifying exam

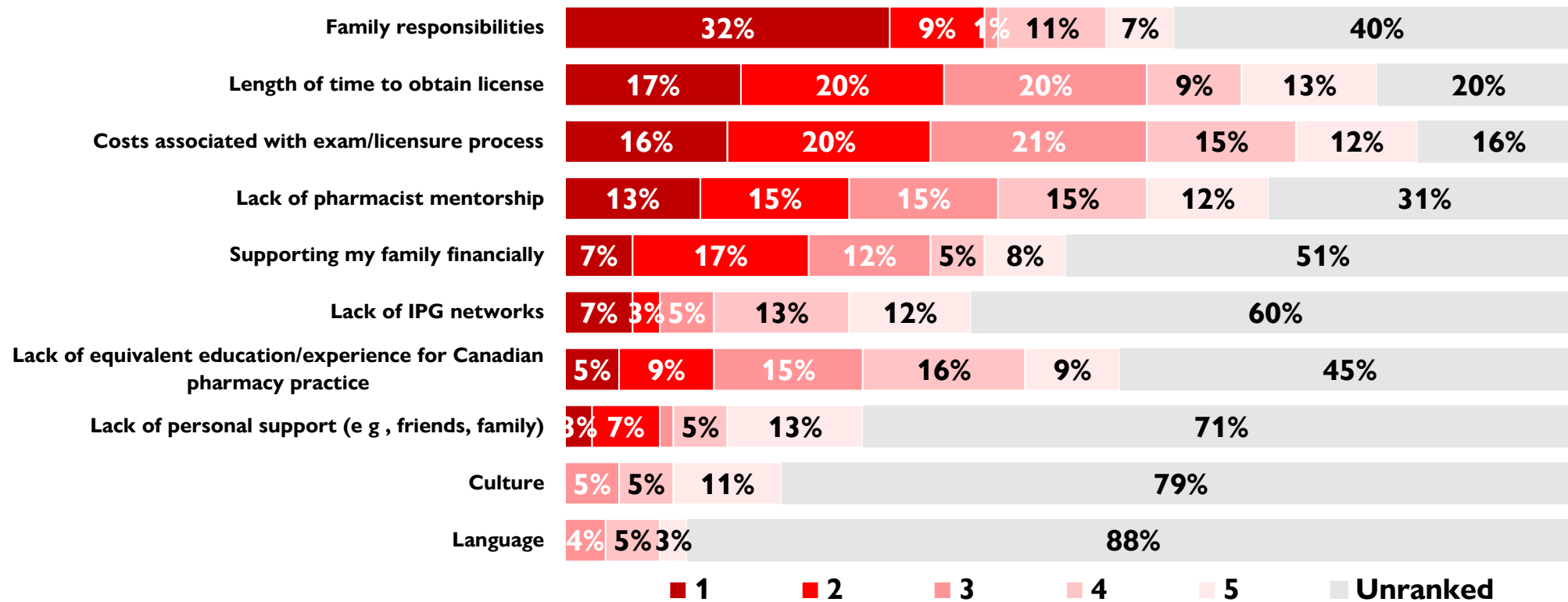


[IPGs licensed since 2017 and unlicensed IPGs who have passed the Qualifying exam] Base n=135



Please select which are/were the most challenging issues for you during the licensing process (Please rank the top 5 in order of most challenging with 1 being most challenging)

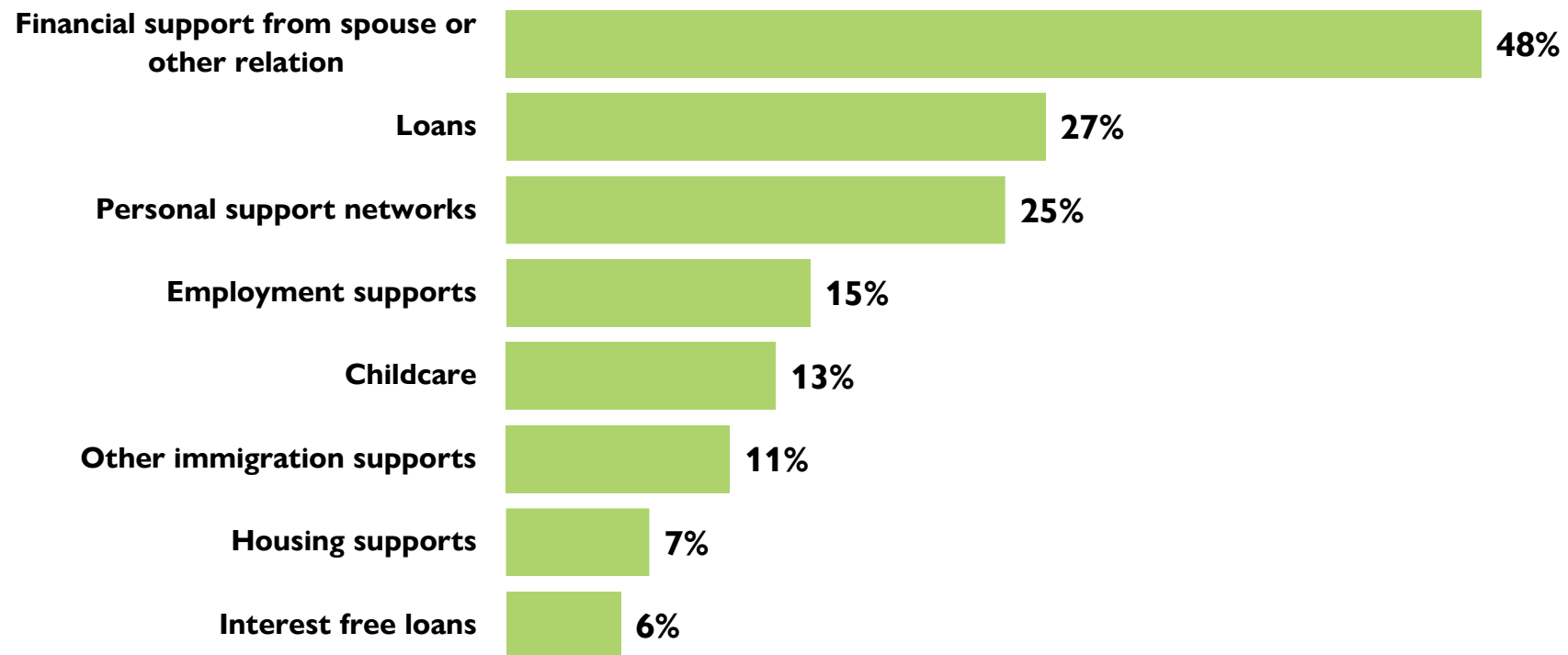
IPGs identified costs and time to licensure as the most challenging issues they faced or are facing during the licensure process.



[IPGs licensed since 2017 or unlicensed] Base n=75

What settlement and other supports do you or did you have access to during the licensing process? (select all that apply)

The top supports accessed during the licensing process were financial supports:



[Those licensed since 2017 or unlicensed] Base n=354

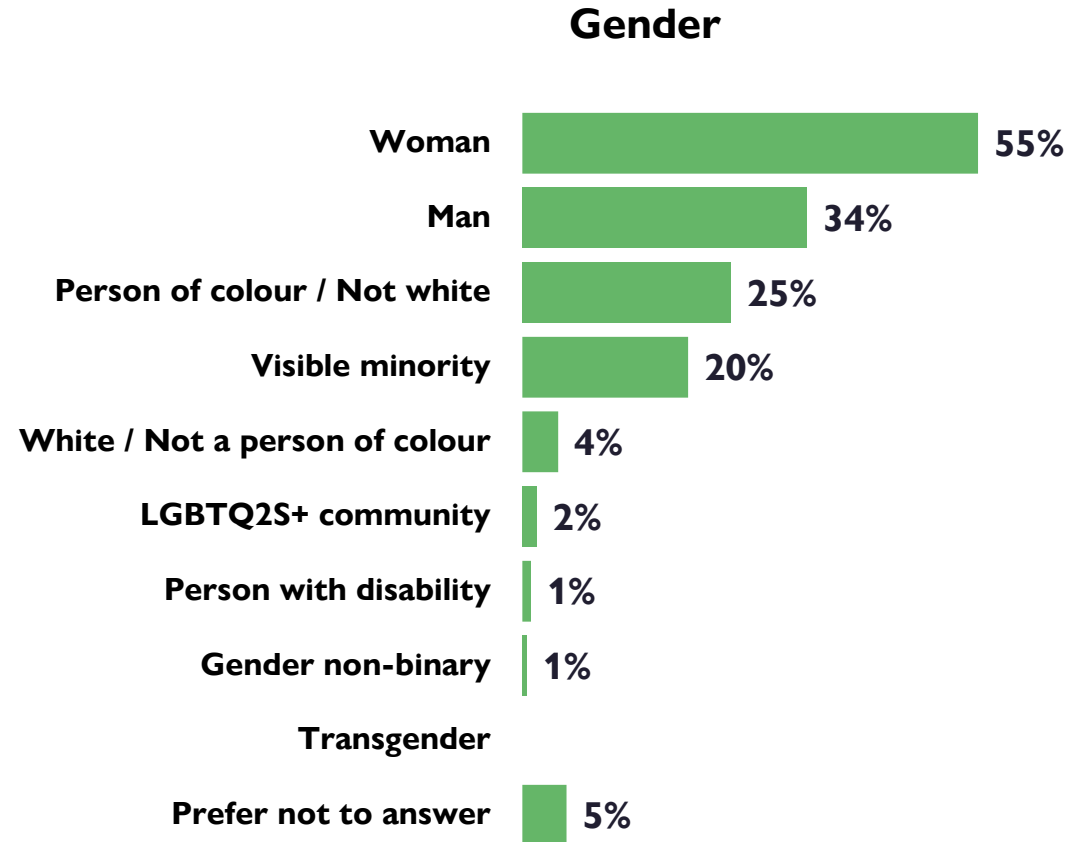
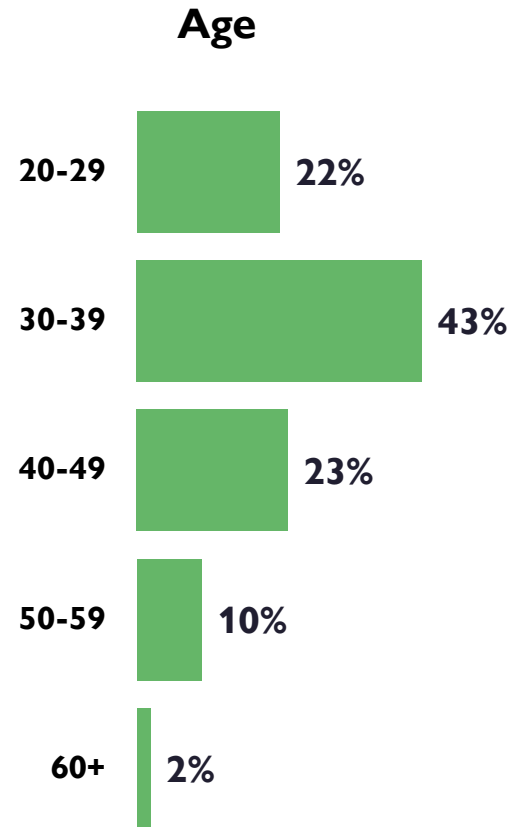
Section 14: Demographics





What is your age? | What is your ideal practice setting?

Demographics



[All] Base n=539

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Thank You