

‘WHAT HARM HAVE STUDENTS EXPERIENCED WHILE LEFT IN LIMBO?’ Resourcing academic misconduct at YSJ University London campus

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Introduction

In 2020-21, the UK welcomed **>600,000** higher education **international students**. Of those, **>80%** constituted **non-EU students**, representing **10.6% growth**, with sponsored study visa rates reaching the highest number on record, denoting not only a recovery from COVID-19, but an **increase on pre-pandemic quotients** (HESA, 2022).

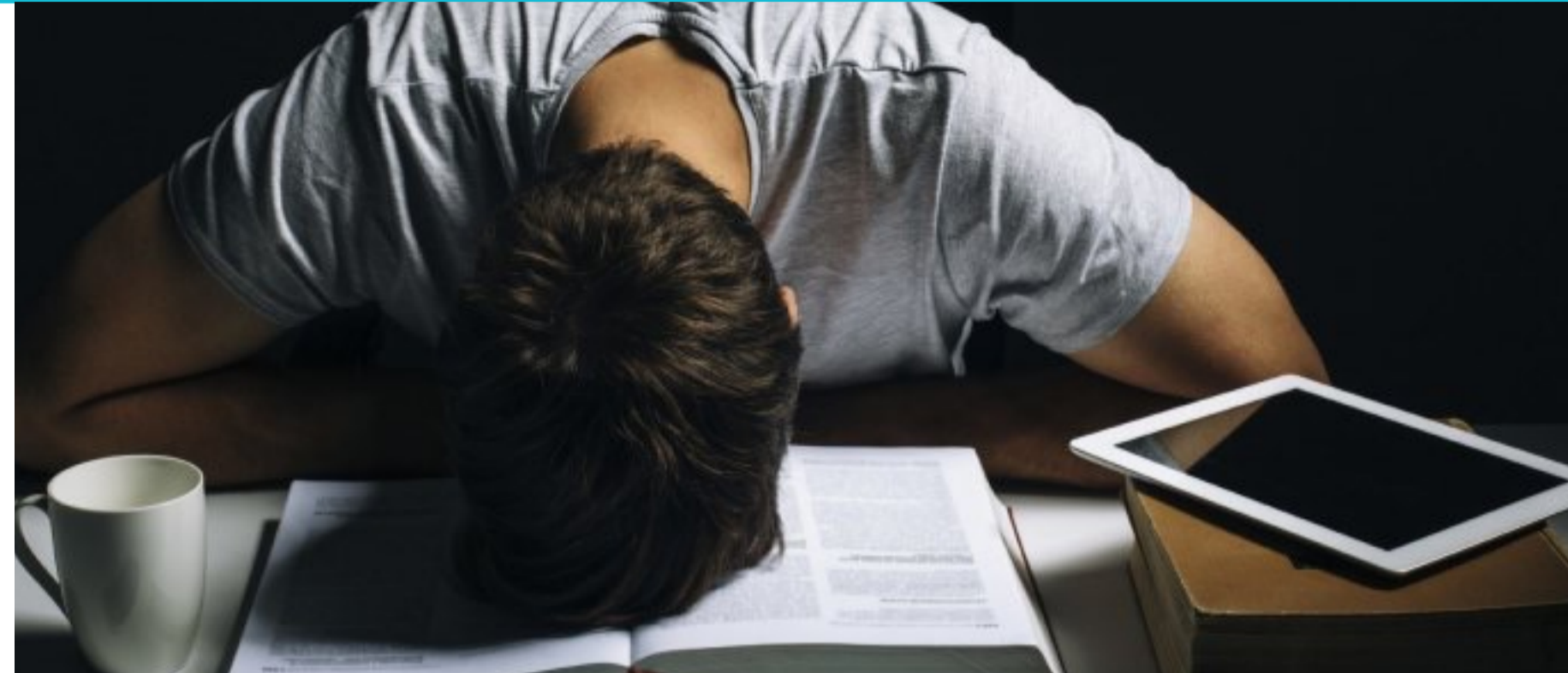
With London ranking QS Best Student City 2023 (for the third time in a row), the sustained attraction to the UK’s capital for international study comes as no surprise. While there are obvious benefits of cultivating a diverse and globally-connected student body, **disproportionate numbers of academic misconduct infringements have been (rightly or wrongly) associated** (Beasley, 2016; Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2019).

Misconduct & internationalisation

International students experience unique challenges that place them at risk of academic misconduct, including **language barriers, cultural variance and upheaval, stress and anxiety** around **academic expectations and readiness**, and **difficulties with policy comprehension**. Misconduct has the potential to jeopardise student continuation, retention and achievement, leaving international students especially susceptible to the academic, mental health and wellbeing consequences of a violation (Parnther, 2022; QAA, 2022).

Misconduct & York St John

AY20/21 saw **273 misconduct referrals** across the University, **+148%** on AY19/20. Of those, **165 cases** originated in London (~60% of referrals) with **152** receiving a **penalty**. London produced **12** termination outcomes representing **~85%** of the University’s overall termination rate. Management and administrative support was **misaligned to the ‘misconduct demand’**.



“Where a student has knowingly engaged in misconduct, some might say that experiencing delays and increased mental stress ‘serves them right’, but if our processes are supposed to help students learn from their experiences, what are long delays creating besides resentment towards the institution? And what about when the investigation or hearing finds no misconduct occurred?”

London’s pilot

Aims: streamline the misconduct process and decrease the volume of allegations and/or infringements:



Hired ‘Academic Misconduct & Reassessment Lead’



Created ‘Misconduct Production Line’



Increased **student support & targeted training packages**

Outcomes and impact

Improved efficiency: of **78 flags** initially evaluated at School inquiry, **41% returned** for marking prior to Boards.

Controlled allegations: AY21/22, YSJ saw a **substantial drop** in referrals (n=188) and terminations (n=5), with **London accounting for <30%** overall.

‘Ripple effect’: significant contribution to improved **student satisfaction and wellbeing**, exceeding sector (ISB, 2021).

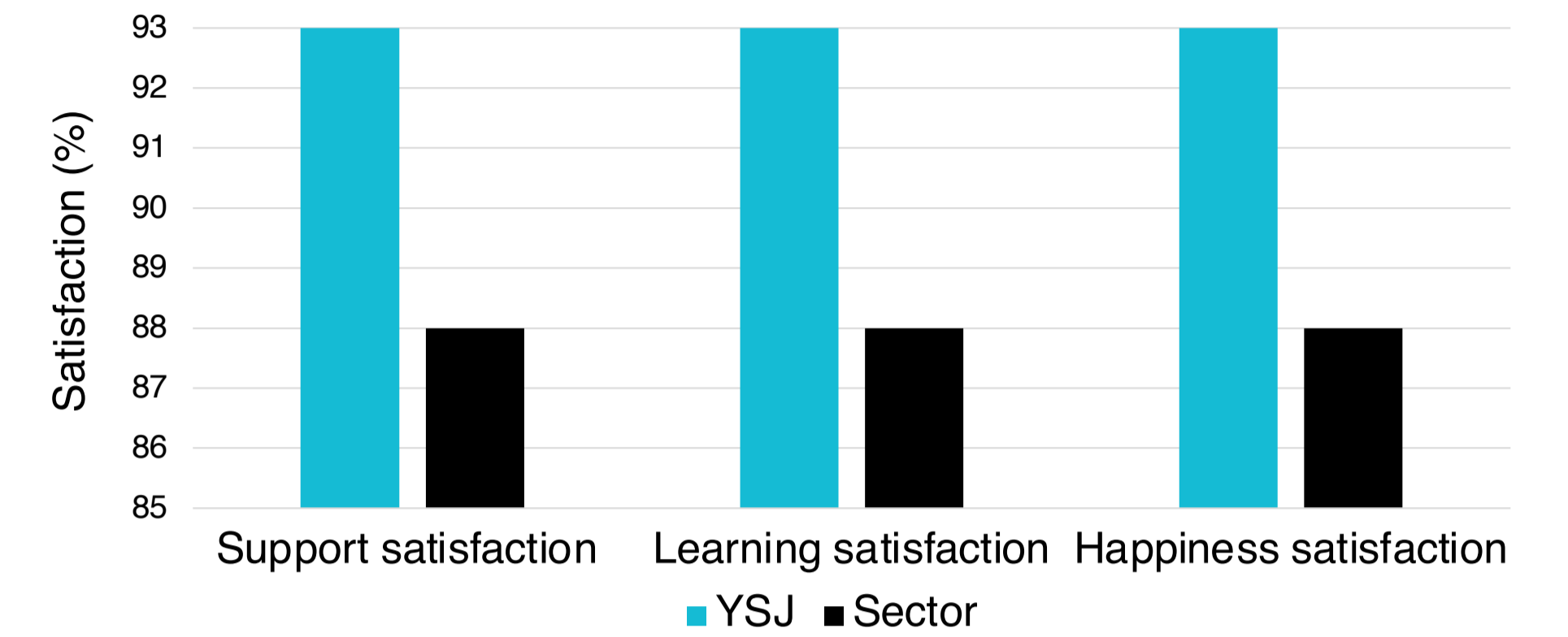


Figure 1. International student satisfaction (ISB, 2022)

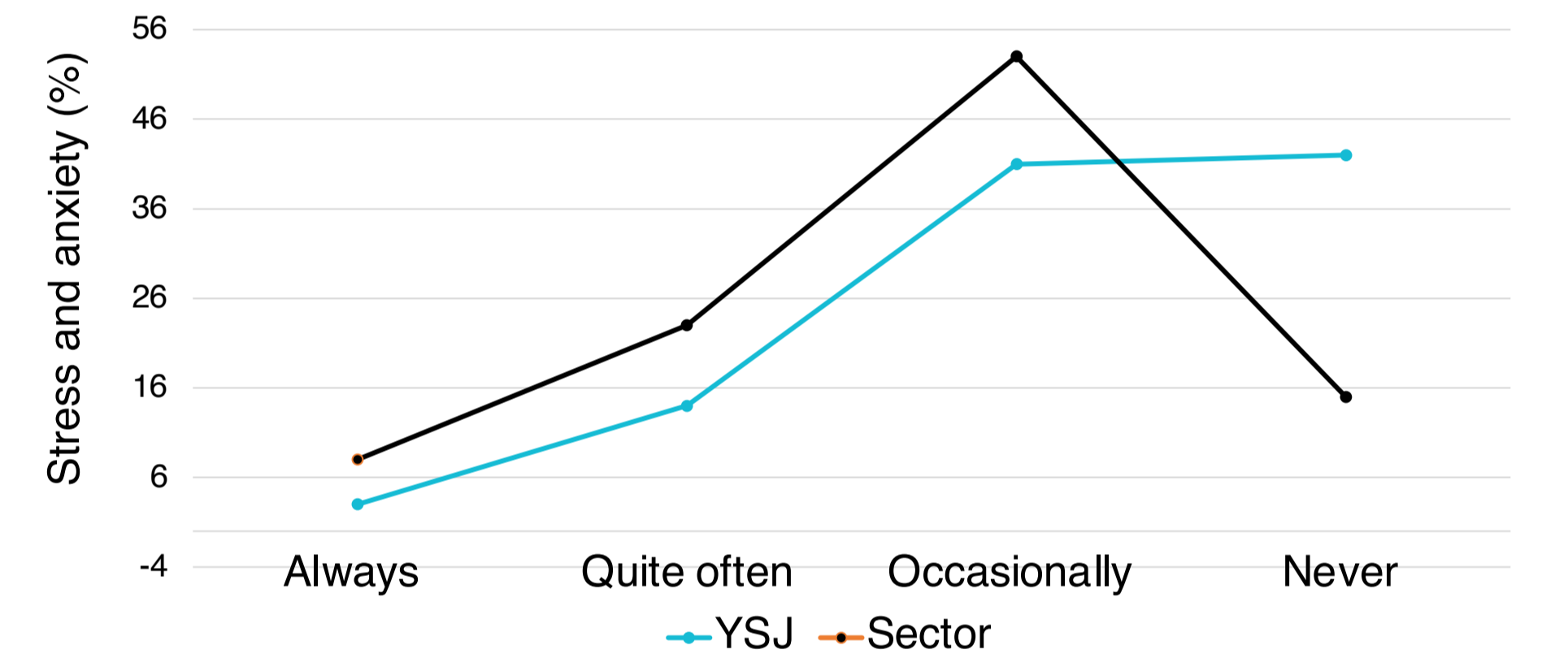


Figure 2. International student stress and anxiety (ISB, 2022)

Reflections

Does YSJ, as a University, need to look beyond the West for guidelines to and understanding of academic integrity, for international students?

Does YSJ need to better understand value judgements and ‘acceptance’ of misconduct, in a bid to create a culture of globally-minded integrity?

References

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