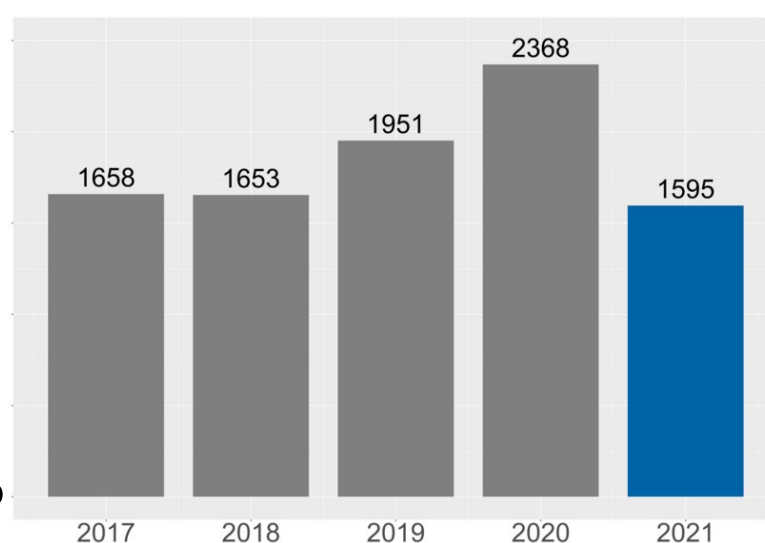


Mandatory online-self-assessments for prospective students can reach those who would profit from them the most and are being well received by students

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Introduction

- At University of Vienna, we are offering various Online-Self-Assessments or OSAs (Gleeson et al., 2014; Stoll et al., 2022) to inform & prepare prospective students.
- All of our OSAs are available year-round to everyone, are free of charge and require no registration of any kind.
- In many degree programmes, completing a subject-specific OSA is a **necessary prerequisite for enrolment** (sometimes in lieu of an admissions test, sometimes preceding it), but the actual results of the OSA are for student eyes only and have no influence on a student's chance of admission, thus facilitating honest answers.
- With 12.000 new students at University of Vienna each year, we regard OSAs as a cost-effective low-threshold tool to prepare students for both the first semester and for potential admission tests.
- A drop in student enrolment can be observed with the implementation of mandatory OSAs (graph to the right for eight degree programmes that made the switch in 2021), but what do our students think of this measure?



➤ **In English, we offer a cross-disciplinary OSA with an eye for first-generation students:** (this OSA is not mandatory)



unicheck.univie.ac.at

➤ **Find our mandatory subject-specific OSAs here (in German):** (a random code for enrolment is generated upon each completion)



self-assessment.univie.ac.at

➤ **NEW: Admission test simulation using our flexible OSA backend:** (we hope to counter commercial prep courses)



ctl.univie.ac.at/testvorbereitung

Research Question

How did the shift from a voluntary to a mandatory OSA model affect student acceptance of our OSAs?

Some of our OSAs were initially developed as a voluntary service tool for prospective students, then switched to a mandatory prerequisite for admission between 2019 and 2022. This allows us to compare aggregated results from our (optional) post-OSA evaluation surveys for the last "voluntary cohorts" and the first "mandatory cohorts".

Results (Kriegler-Kastelic et al., in press)

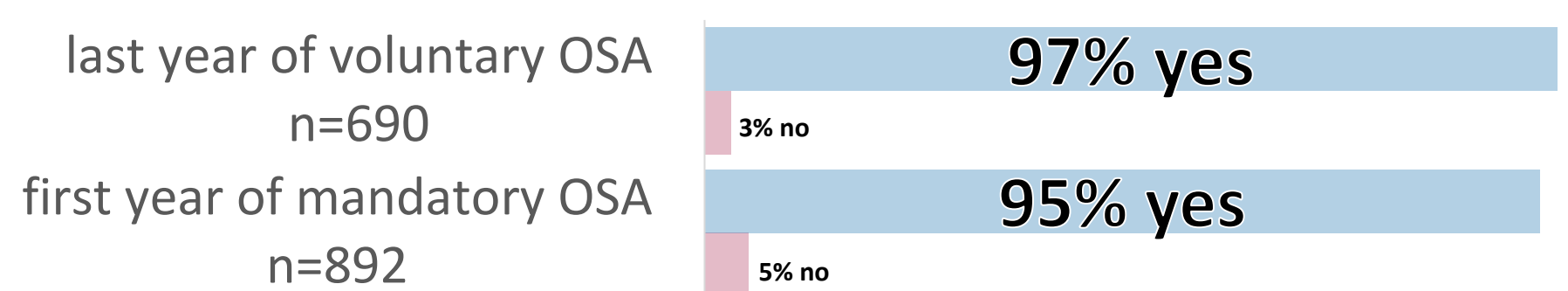
Aggregated results are shown for bachelor's programmes

- Chemistry; English and American Studies; Law (Diploma); Transcultural Communication (switched 2019)
- Astronomy; Japanology; Korean Studies; Sinology; Theatre, Film and Media Studies (switched 2021)*

Last year of voluntary OSA	First year of mandatory OSA
N = 4804 completed OSAs	N = 9510 completed OSAs

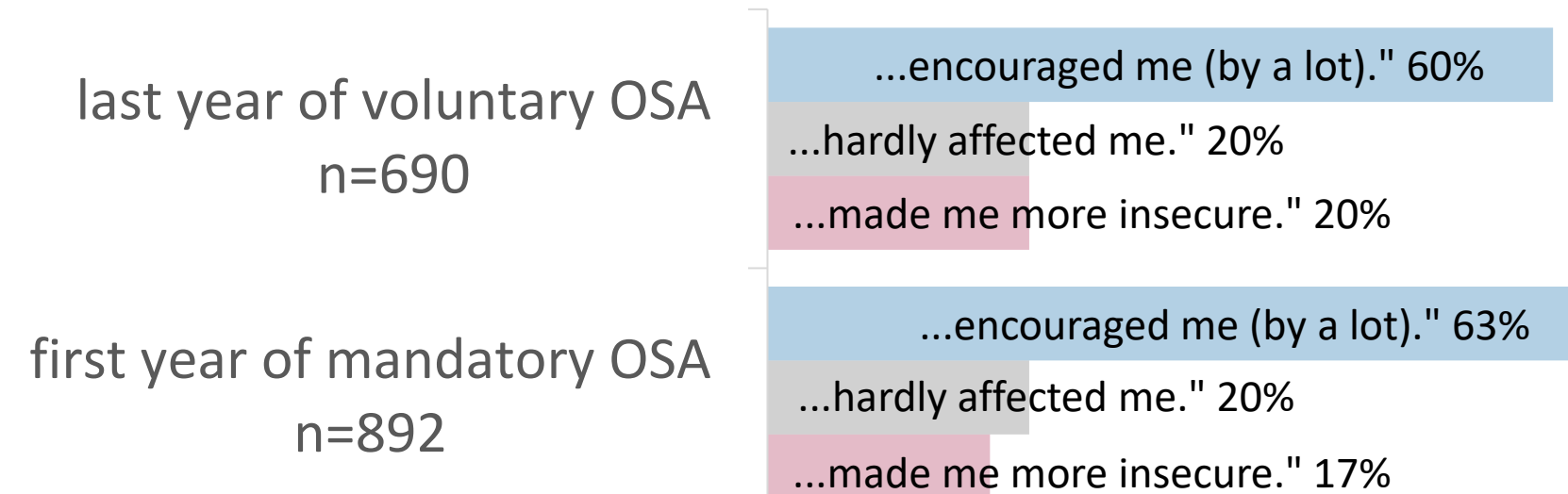
*Oriental Studies, Slavonic Studies and Comparative Literature also received a newly-developed mandatory OSA in 2021, but no data from 2020 was available.

"Would you recommend the OSA to other prospective students?,"



Response rate 14% for voluntary OSAs, 9% for mandatory OSAs. A Pearson chi-squared test with continuity correction was conducted between recommendation (yes/no) and OSA status (voluntary/mandatory). No expected cell frequencies were less than 5. There was a statistically significant, but not relevant, association between recommendation and OSA status, $\chi^2(1, 1582) = 4.69, p = .030, \phi = .058$.

"In my decision to study, the OSA has ..."



The introduction of mandatory OSAs had no adverse impact on the self-reported (reinforcing or selective) effect of the OSA; a Pearson chi-square test with continuity correction between "hardly affected" and "positively or negatively reinforced" did not reveal a statistically significant association, $\chi^2(1, 1582) = .05, p = .820$.

A supplementary qualitative content analysis of our rich open-ended feedback responses indicates that OSA acceptance depends on other factors, primarily

- **user experience (UX) with the online platform** and
- **face validity of the employed modules**

Conclusion

Online-self-assessments are a well-established tool to prepare prospective students for their studies, and our findings support the push for mandatory OSAs to ensure that not only the "already-well-informed" and the "already-motivated" can reflect their decision. However, fast-changing technical developments require frequent investments into our OSA infrastructure to ensure a good user experience and thus acceptance of our OSAs.

References:

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- Kriegler-Kastelic, G., Gleeson, R., Krol, I. & Schott, R. (in press). Zur Qualität und Akzeptanz von verpflichtenden OSAs an der Universität Wien – ein Bericht aus der Praxis. In H. Steiner (Ed.), *Online-Assessment* (2nd edition). Heidelberg: Springer.
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