



# Academic Advising and Personal Tutoring: Backstage Perceptions in a Metropolitan University'.

Syed Baqur Naqavi  
Rosemary Skordoulis  
LMBS

# Introduction



- ◆ London Met University has 5 Undergraduate centres
- ◆ Each centre has an Academic Leader (AL), Personal Academic Advisor Co-coordinator (PAAC) and number of Personal Academic Advisors (PAA) and Course Administrators.
- ◆ The university has a large number of students from non traditional backgrounds
- ◆ The PAA role is to support students to achieve success

# Rationale for Study



- ◆ The Business School has recently appointed a new AL and PAAC
- ◆ They were getting conflicting reports as to why the system was not working or why parts of the system needed changing
- ◆ The UG centres also operated different systems
- ◆ Some PAAs were seen as effective and others not as effective

# Four Main Areas



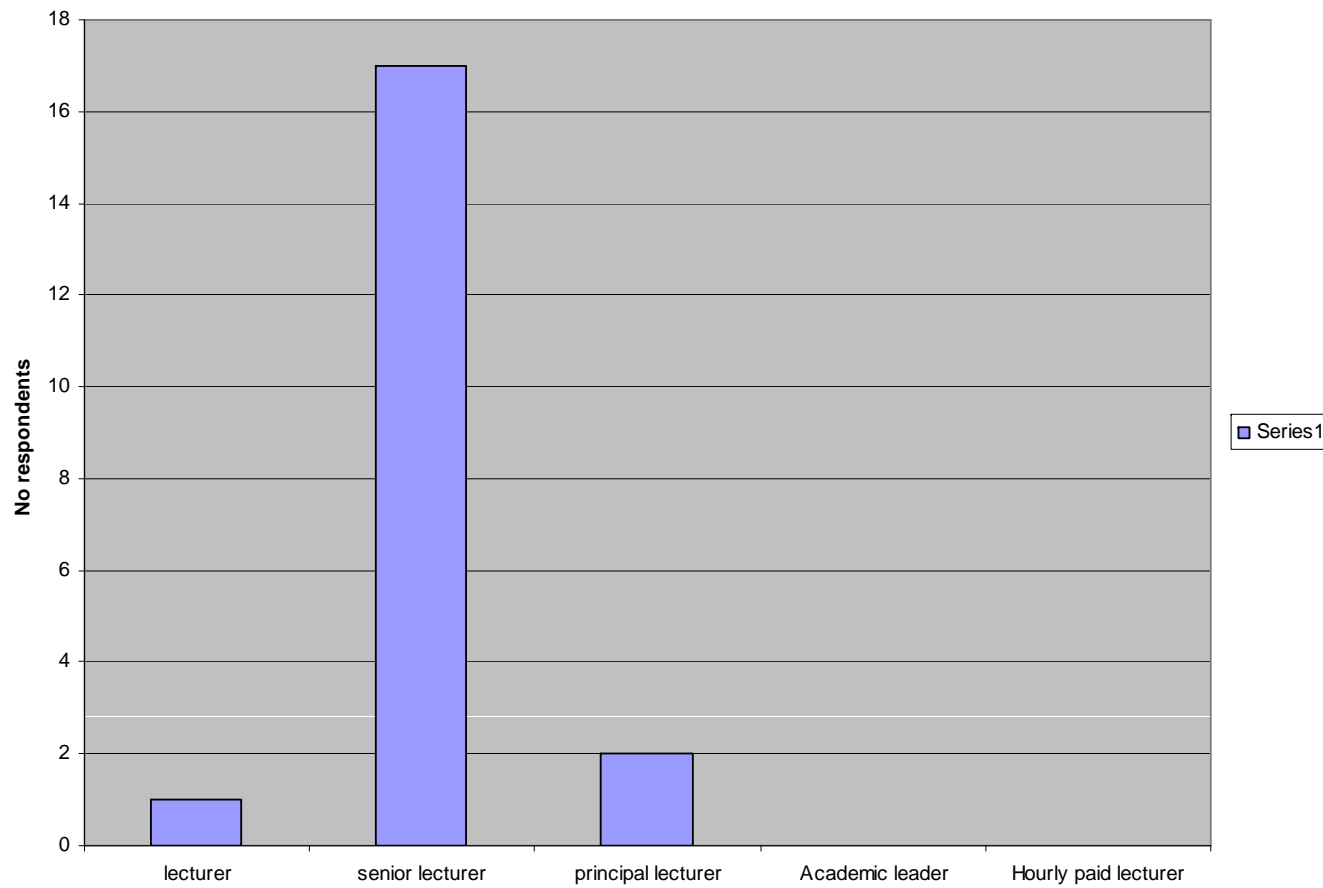
- ◆ We were interested in the quantity of time spent advising compared to other responsibilities as tutor
- ◆ We were interested in the quality of time spent in advising students
- ◆ If there were any perceived connections between teaching and advising
- ◆ What were the training needs in connection with academic advising

# Demographic profile of PAAs

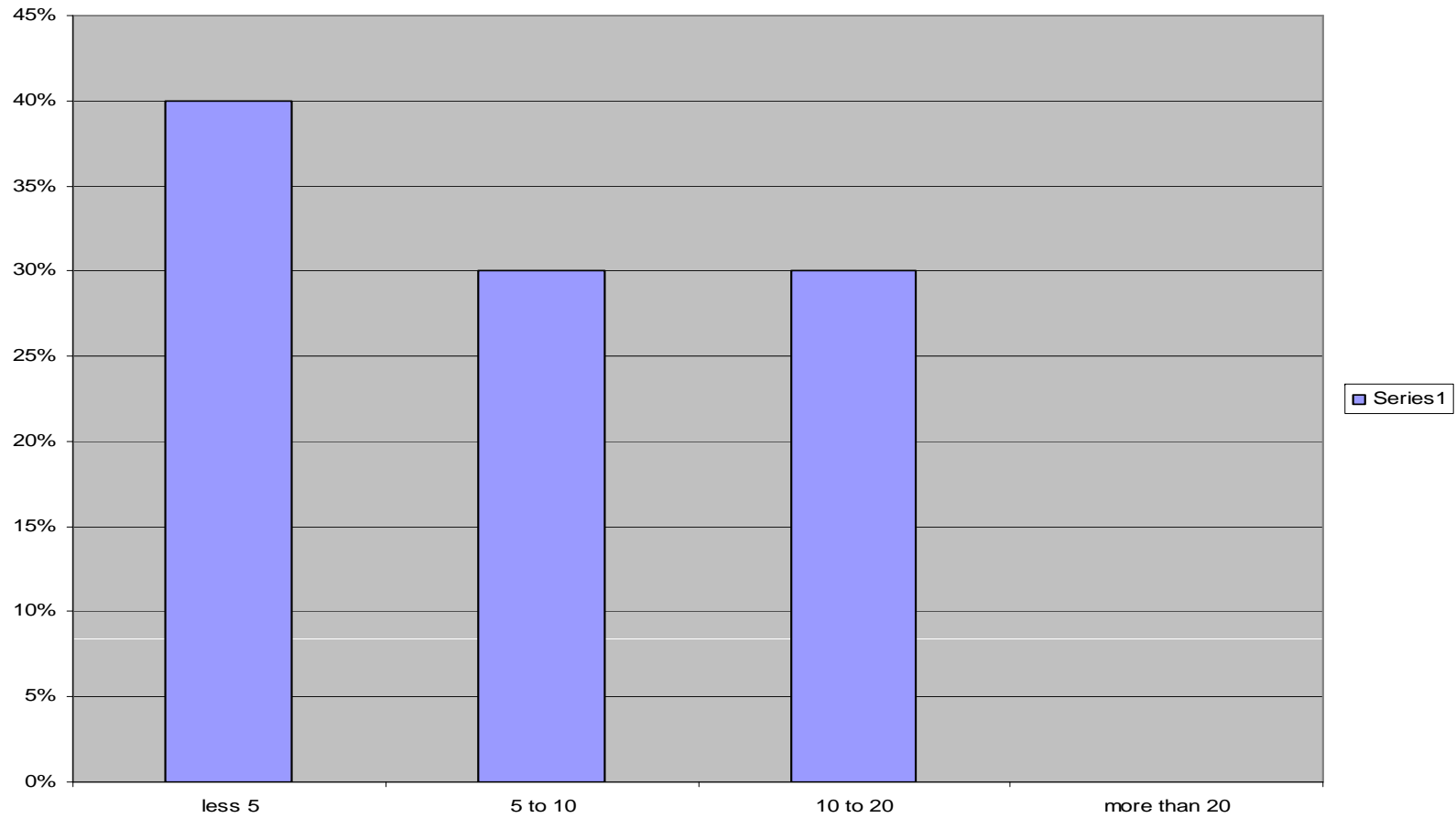
# What is your current post



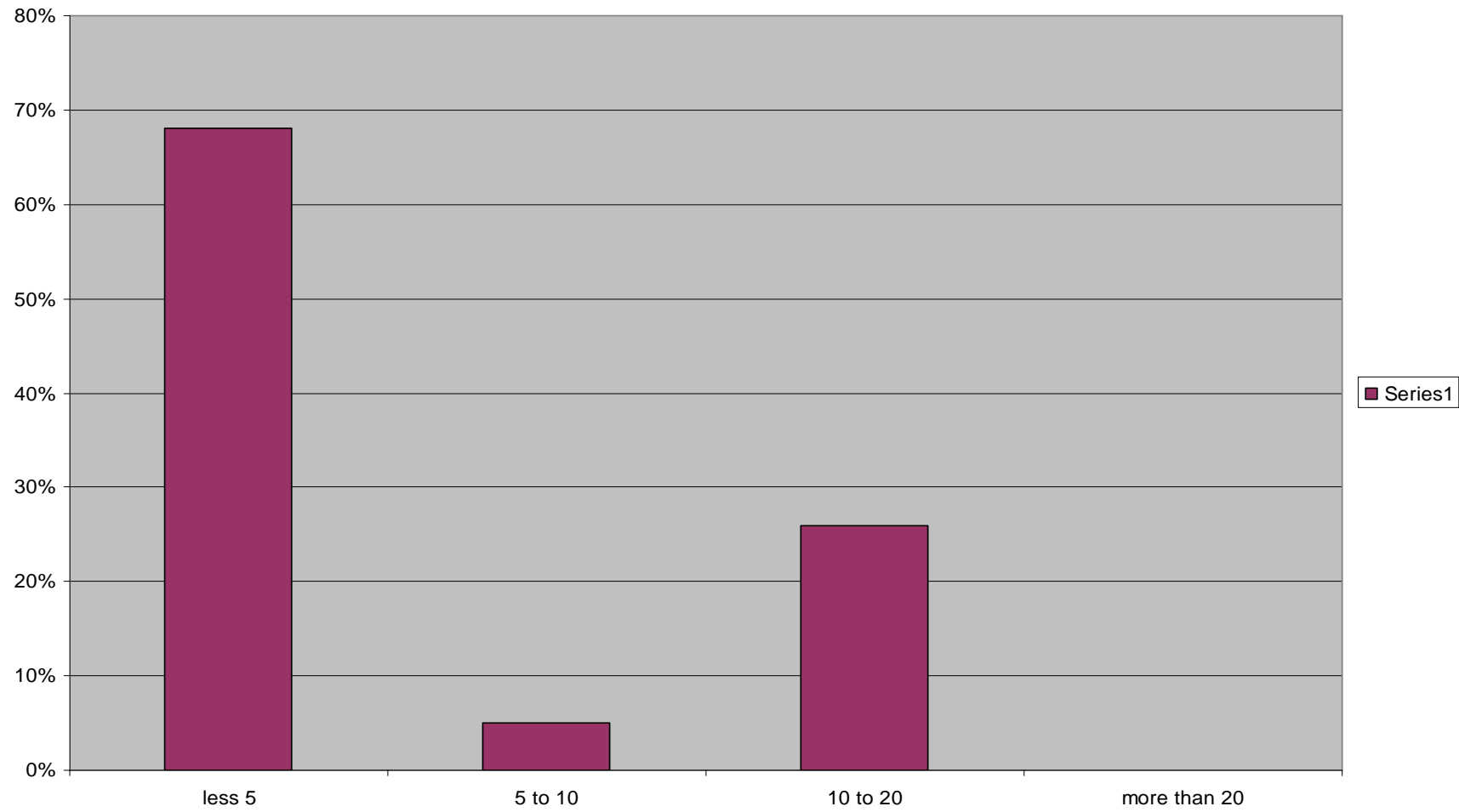
What is your current post



# Years at current school



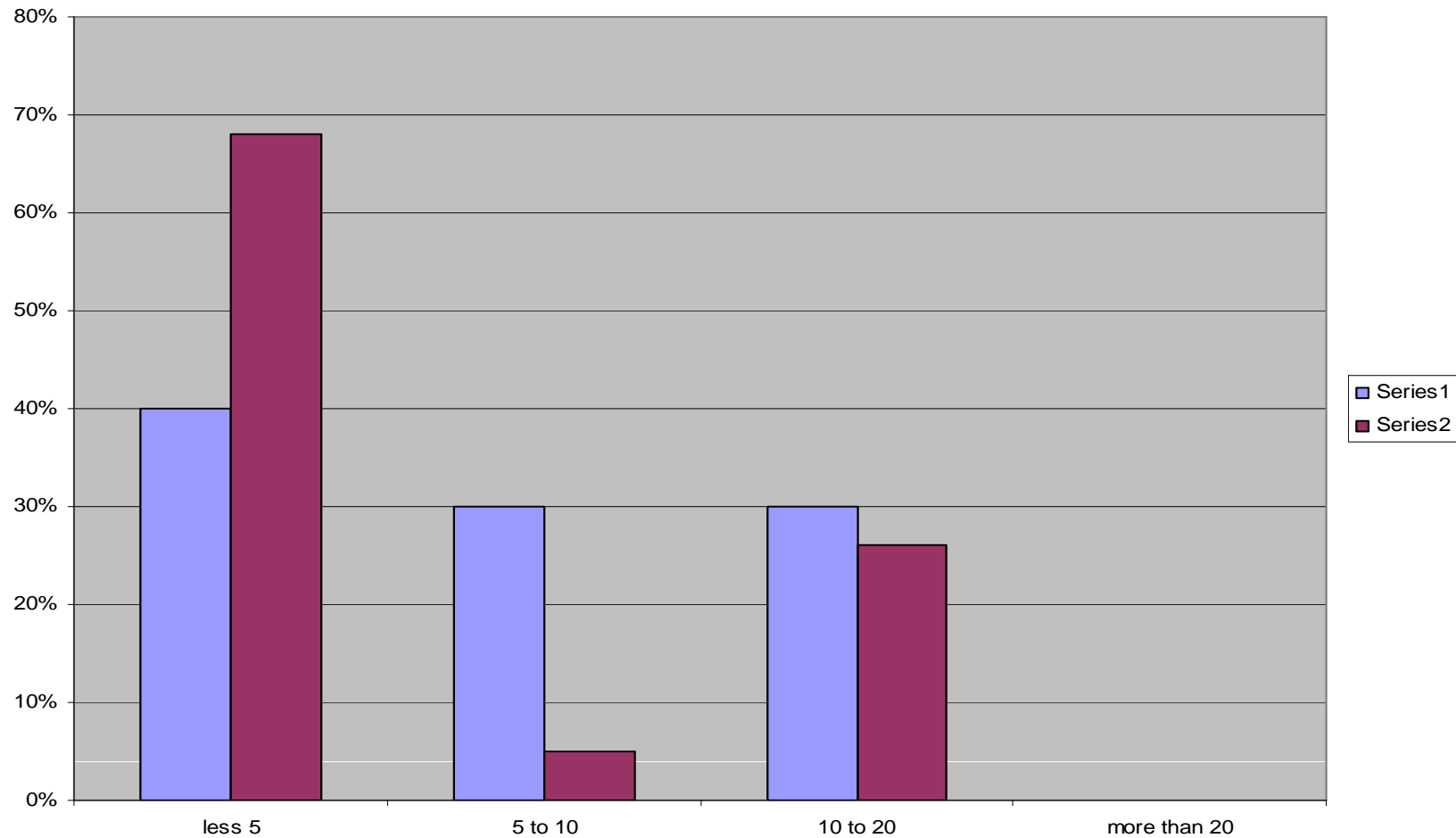
# No of years as a PAA



# Number of years in current post and number of years as PAA



no of year in current post and no of years as paa



# Demographic Profile

## Summary



- ◆ 85% are Senior Lecturers
- ◆ 40% have been at the current school for less than 5 years
- ◆ 68% have been a PAA for less than 5 years
- ◆ Those that are PAA for more than 5 years will probably remain as PAA

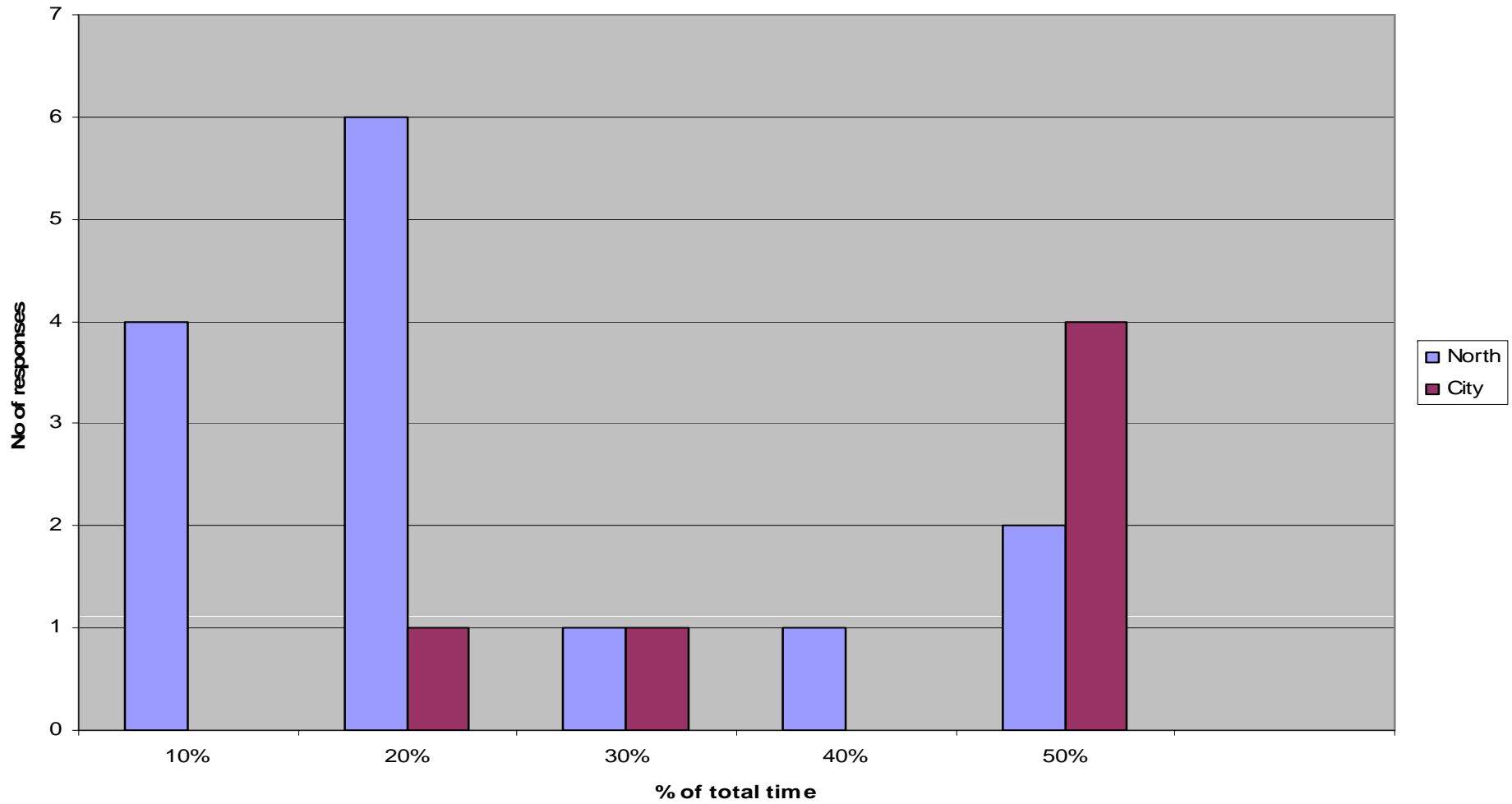
# Quantity of time spent advising compared to your other responsibilities

Q1: % of total work time spent advising

Q2: Average length of time advising

Q3: No of times you see a student per  
semester

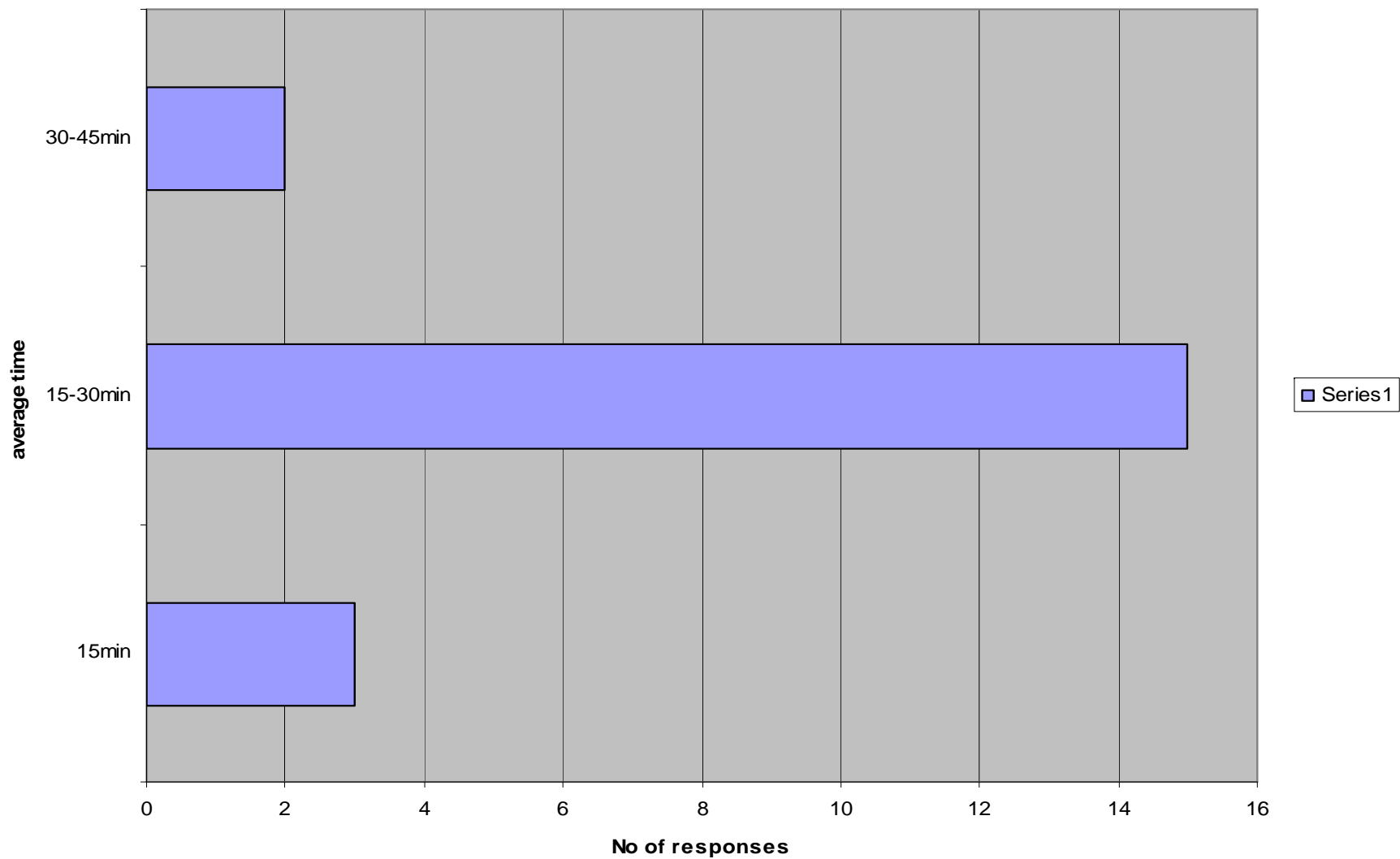
During a typical semester, what percentage of your total time do you spend advising student



# Average length of time spent with students for advising purposes



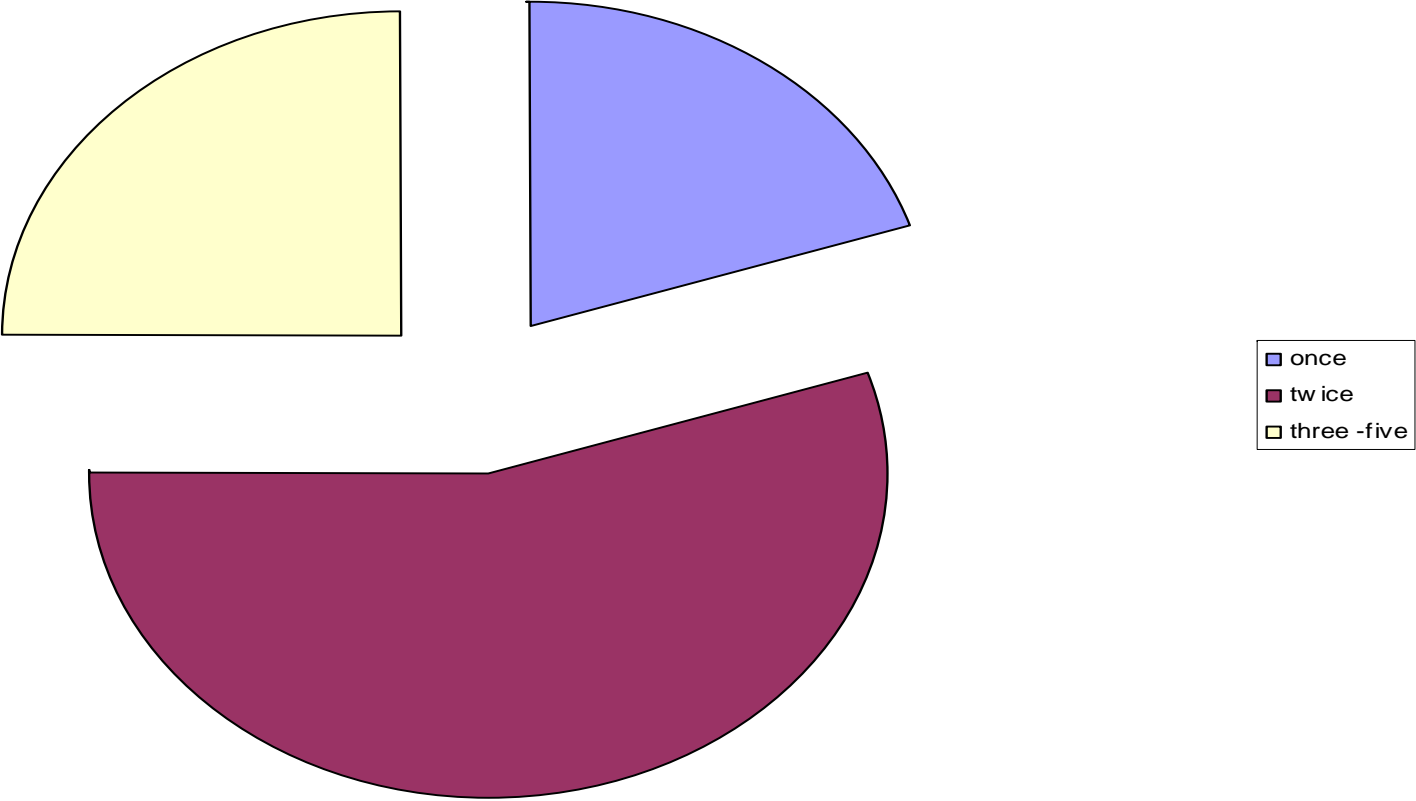
Average length of time spend with a student for advising purposes



# How often do you see students per semester



How often do you meet your students per semester



# Quantity of time spent advising as compared to other responsibilities - Summary



- ◆ Average time spent on advising was 20%
- ◆ However this seemed to equate to actual allocation time as a PAA
- ◆ Average length of time 15-30 min
- ◆ On average students are seen twice per semester

# The quality of time spent advising your students

Q1: What issues are regularly  
discussed

Q2: What % of time is spent on each  
issue of discussion

# What are the main areas of discussion when you meet your students



◆ Programme Planning	100%
◆ Academic Progress	100%
◆ Attendance	80%
◆ Future Academic Plans	85%
◆ Career Options	70%
◆ Student Personal Problems	95%
◆ Student Financial Issues	50%

Of the time spent with students  
what % is spent on the  
following



◆ Programme Planning	44%
◆ Academic Progress	16%
◆ Attendance	9%
◆ Future Academic Plans	8%
◆ Career Options	7%
◆ Student Personal Problems	13%
◆ Student Financial Issues	3%

# Quality of Time Spent Advising Students - Summary



- ◆ The 3 most frequent issues of discussion
  - ◆ Programme Planning
  - ◆ Academic progress
  - ◆ Student personal problems
- ◆ Least frequent issue of discussion
  - ◆ Financial issues
    - ◆ Students are directed to student support services
- ◆ Above are supported by finding on time spent on each issue
- ◆ Attendance had 80% - may have something to do with electronic register system

# Perceived Connections Between your Teaching and Advising



- ◆ Q1: Do you think UG teaching replaces/ supplements teaching?
- ◆ Q2: What role does academic advising play in your PADAS?
- ◆ Q3: How useful do you find academic advising compared to other aspects of your role?
- ◆ Do you perceive any significant difference in student attitudes towards your roles as Academic Adviser and Lecturer?

# Do you think your Undergraduate classroom teaching:



◆ Replaces the need for academic advising

0%

◆ Is a supplement to a academic advising

75%

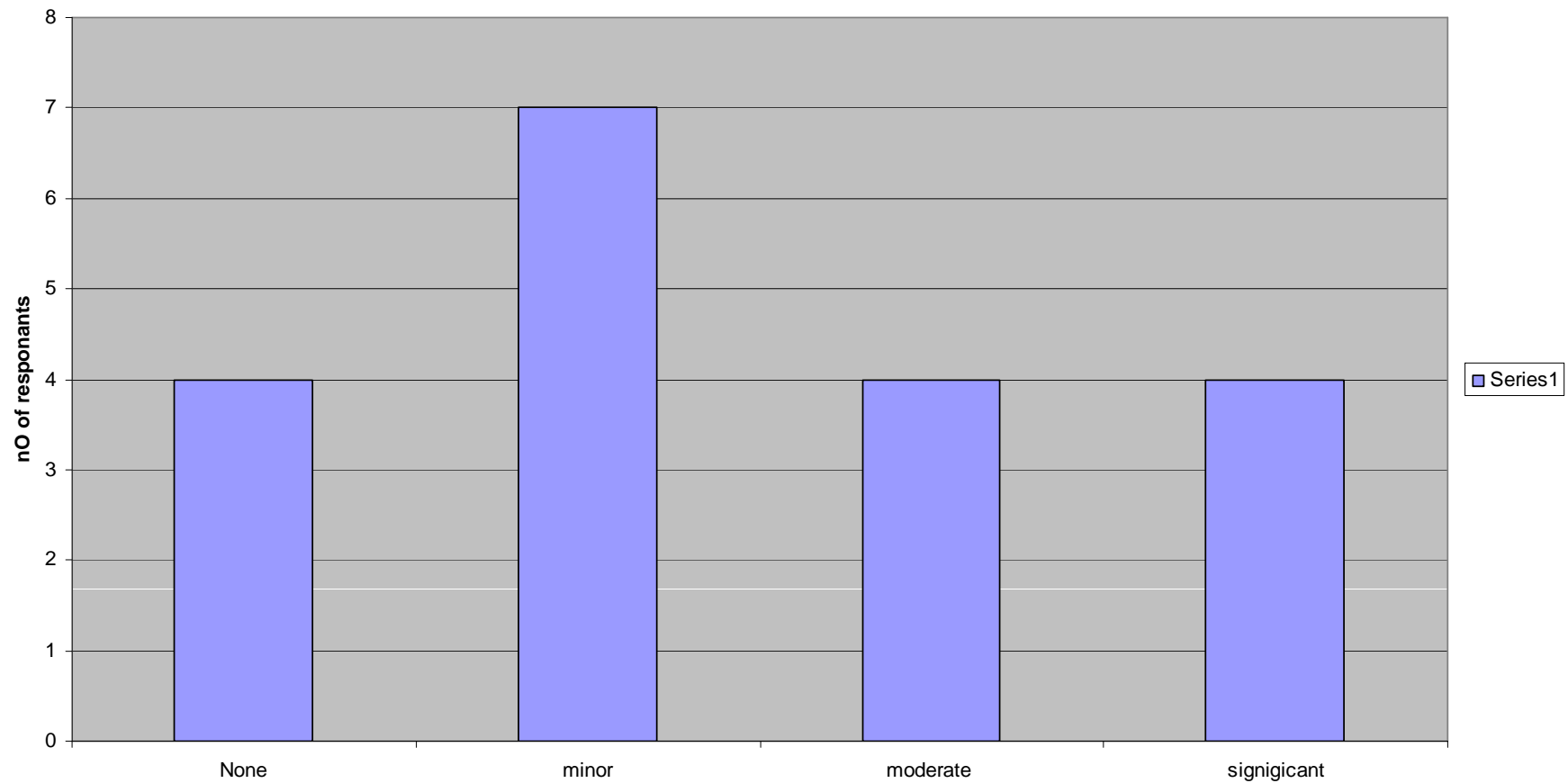
◆ Has no relation to academic advising

25%

# What role does Academic Advising play in your PADAS



What role does Academic Advising play In PADAS



# How useful do you find Academic Advising compared to other aspects of your role? (1)



- ◆ I enjoy the role
- ◆ Useful for students and makes me more empathetic to student needs
  - ◆ *'They need someone to turn to in times of need'*
- ◆ Personal investment in student makes a difference in effort made in classroom and retention
- ◆ The role is an interface between student and the University making students' life easier
- ◆ I have learnt a lot about the course structures and university regulations as PAA

# Interesting quotes



- ◆ *‘ I think ever since I was given this role my students are happier and I feel part of their personal development’*
- ◆ *‘I enjoy the role, we are the human face of the university’*
- ◆ *‘PAA must give insight into the need for differentiating, and successful outcomes for different type of learners’*
- ◆ *‘It is essential and good practice to keep accurate records of student meeting’*

# How useful do you find Academic Advising compared to other aspects of your role? (2)



- ◆ Lack of time
- ◆ My role as PAA is not directly relevant to my other University duties
- ◆ Useful for student - hardly any incentives for the staff
- ◆ Frustrating when students do not turn up for appointments
- ◆ IT systems do not always support us
- ◆ Physical location is a problem

# Interesting quotes



- ◆ *'Some people treat the PAA role as minor adjunct to teaching and it is more important than that, but time is the biggest factor to doing the job well'*
- ◆ *'I have over 160 students over two campuses and have no time to see them all individually'*
- ◆ *'My job description does not include half the things I do for my students'*
- ◆ *'It takes time to develop the right skills for academic advising'*
- ◆ *'I prefer to see students in my room'*

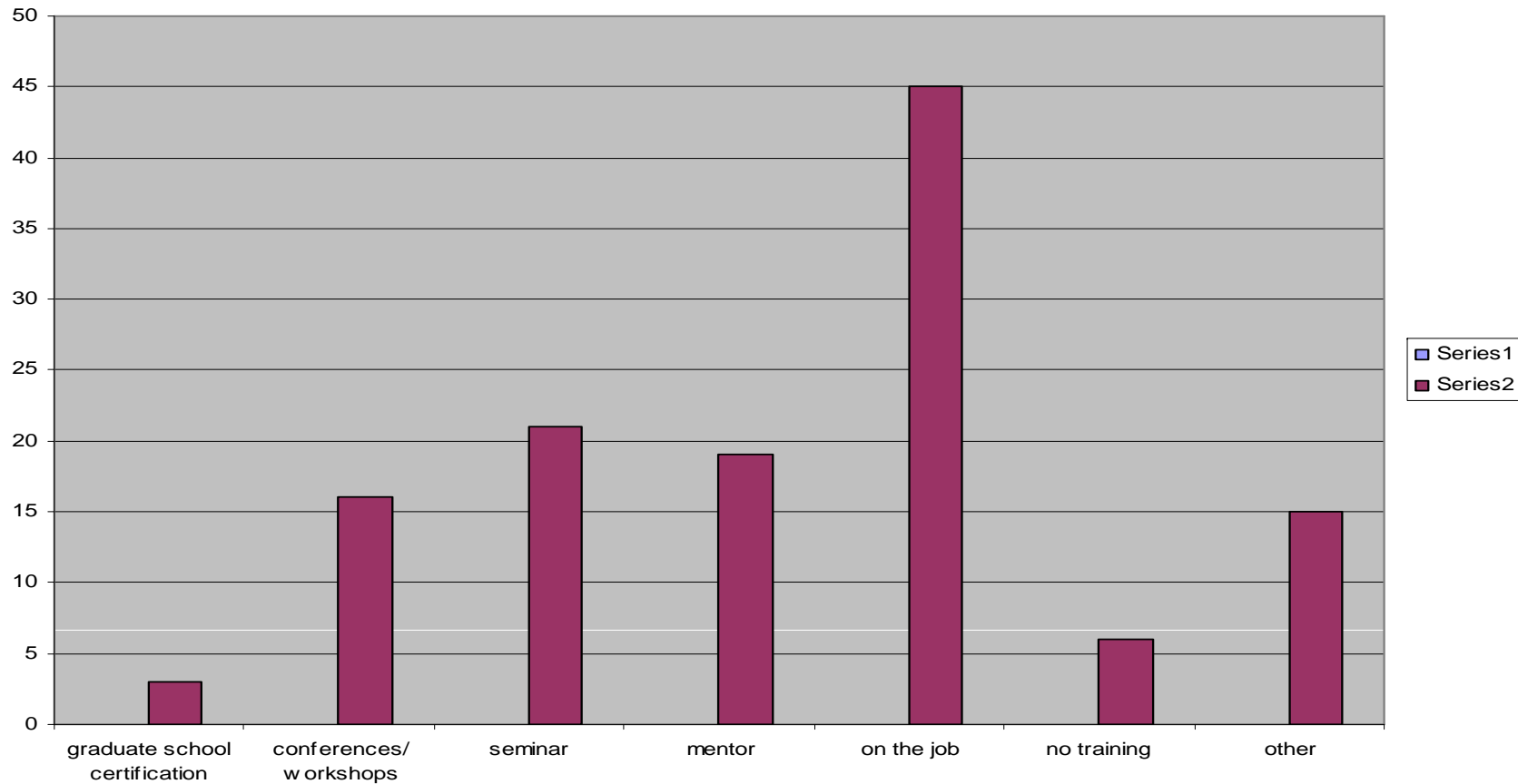
# Training Needs Analysis

Formal and Informal Training  
Future Training Needs

# What type of training have you received as an academic advisor



What type of training have you received



# Have you had informal training?



- ◆ Undergraduate staff are experts and very helpful
- ◆ Course Administrators are best source of information and understand the regulations and processes
- ◆ Experience has been gained by dealing with different problems
- ◆ Talking to other PAAs has helped me

# Interesting quotes (1)



- ◆ *'In my opinion, the key to training is to select people who wish to do the job and enjoy talking to students'*
- ◆ *'Some staff seem to resent the role as somehow 'inferior' use of their time, others see its value'*
- ◆ *'Some staff see the role as easy route to do nothing / something else'*
- ◆ *'The vast majority of advice is not academic at all, it is steering students through the bureaucracy that surrounds programme planning'*

## Interesting quotes (2)



- ◆ *‘Some PAAs are not up to the job or do not want to be - these have the potential to do huge amount of damage to student’s self esteem’*
- ◆ *‘At present there is mistrust amongst colleagues who think some PAAs are not up to the job’*
- ◆ *‘Professionalisation of the role would require some degree of sanctions against underperforming colleagues, this is something the university is not necessary good at’*

# What type of training would be useful to you in your role as academic advisor



- ◆ University regulations
- ◆ Course structures
- ◆ IT systems
- ◆ Administration systems and procedures
- ◆ Information about support services and where to send students with legal, financial and personal problems - more importantly who to send them to
- ◆ Counselling, social work, mental health training
- ◆ Customer service ( how to deal with student complaints)
- ◆ Practice of advising and disciplining
- ◆ Shadowing a PAA

# Conclusion



- ◆ On the whole PAAs enjoy the role and can see that it adds value to the student experience
- ◆ However there are things that make the role frustrating:
  - ◆ Lack of time
  - ◆ Lack of recognition for academic advising
  - ◆ IT systems that do not support the processes
  - ◆ Location and number of students
  - ◆ Distrust in delivery system
  - ◆ No sanctions against poor performers
  - ◆ Need for good record keeping