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# Conversations about sustainability in the School of Fashion & Textiles at CSM

Analysis of market research about the curriculum during Green Week 2013  
Prepared for Anne Smith: Dean of School of Fashion & Textiles  
March 2013

Report prepared by

Lucinda Craig  
ELUCIDATION

[www.elucidationresearch.co.uk](http://www.elucidationresearch.co.uk)

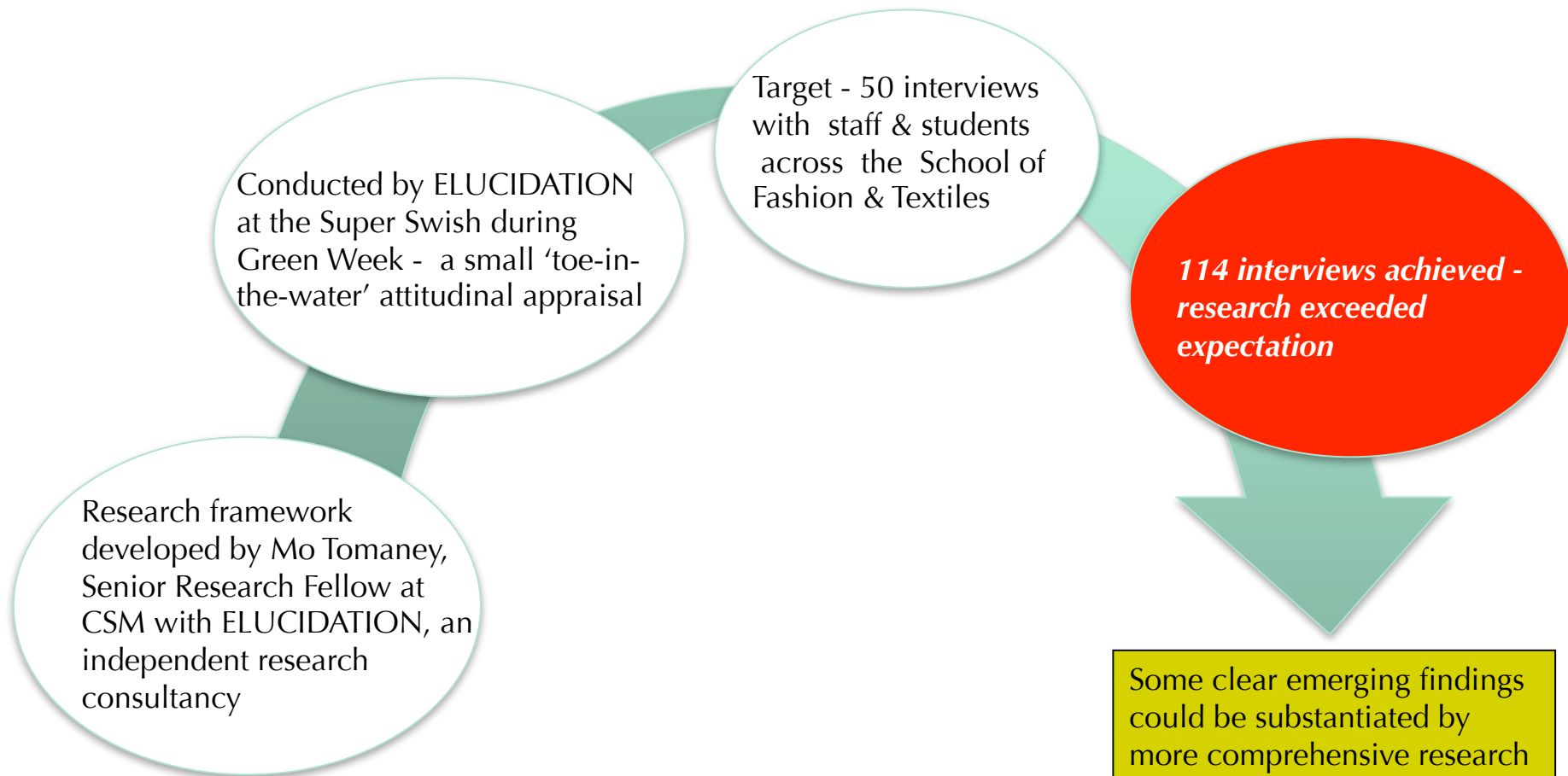
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## Project was a contribution to Green Week 2013



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## Management summary



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- 1 **A generational difference\* is identified** with students being engaged with sustainability and social innovation to quite a significant degree more so than staff
- 2 There is a **receptiveness to more inclusion of sustainability themes & application to fashion practice in the curriculum** – some feel current content is ‘just right’ but many others think it is ‘too little’
- 3 **‘Cross-disciplinary input’, ‘external speakers’ and ‘ex-curricular activity such as Green Week and this Swish’** are all wanted as well as **‘more about sustainability on my course’**

\* Based on a survey of  
103 CSM students and 11 staff  
during Green Week on March 7<sup>th</sup> 2013



Mo Tomaney & Lucinda Craig for CSM March 2013 motomaney@gmail.com

# Enthusiastic survey participation: a topic people like to engage with



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What

Who

When

114\* interviews



38 questionnaires on an iPad



110+ self-completion

- **11 staff + 103 students**



- Mainly 1<sup>st</sup> years on BA Fashion and BA Textiles



- A few from Jewellery & MA courses

Researcher Lucinda Craig  
Project proposed by Mo Tomaney

- 7th March 2013

- **Day of the Big Green Super Swish at CSM**



- Incentivised with Ben & Jerry's ice cream



\* Total does not = 148 because some overlap





# Green week appreciated but many felt it needed more publicity



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## Opportunity to boost engagement: students love fun, social 'green' activity

77% thought UAL Green Week was good or great

Swish and Swap Shop best appreciated events

94% thought the Swish was good or great

Minimal awareness of UAL events outside of CSM



*Recycling clothes is very good and it brings people together...*

*It's really important that we teach students to be more aware – it's less visible in the fashion industry but it is where we're going*



*It's good for the environment, especially for design students, it interests me, swapping is better than wasting...*

*It could have been better advertised. Although it's going on and there are great activities people aren't aware of any of it*



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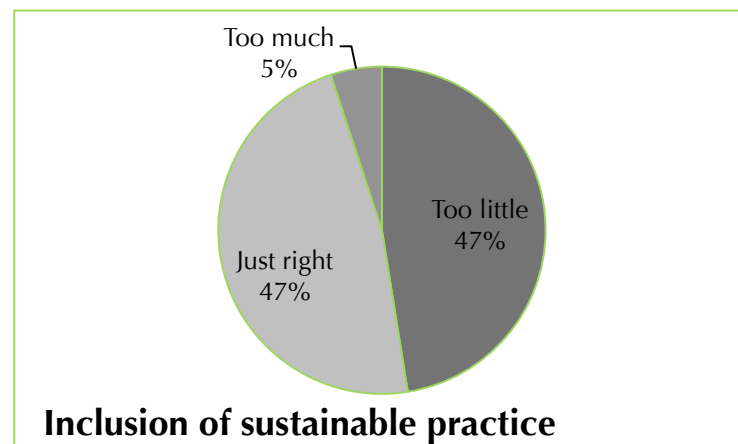
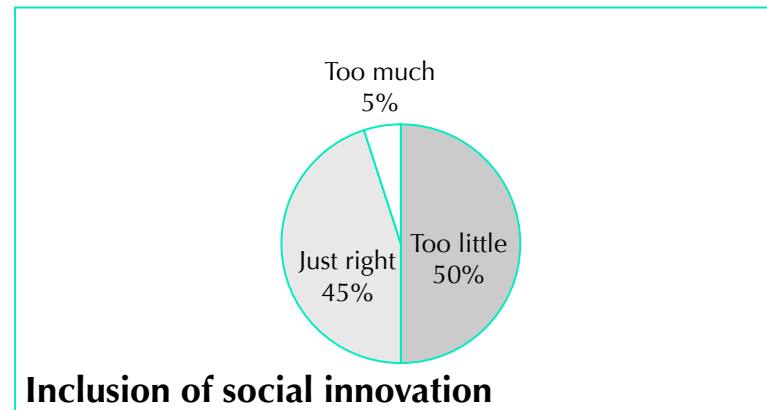
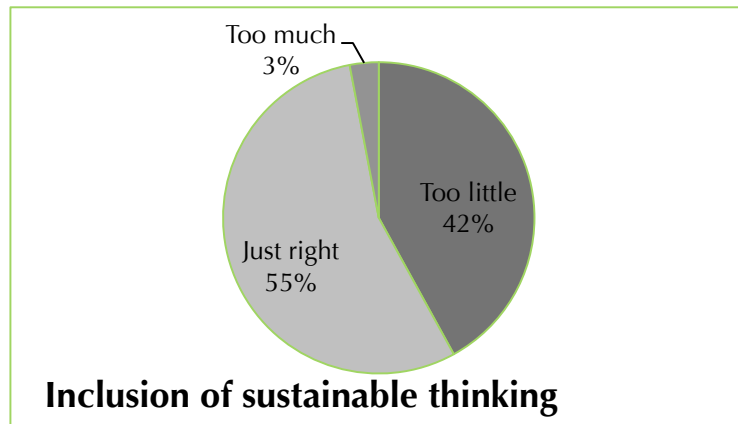


## Strong sense that CSM School of Fashion & Textiles courses could include more on sustainable thinking, practice & social innovation...



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Few thought there was too much on these topics with opinion split between whether inclusion was 'just right' or 'too little'



Many thought a fair amount was already in courses with obvious topics included being

- sustainable materials
- sustainability in fashion generally
- over-consumption of fashion
- and innovation in sustainable design and technique

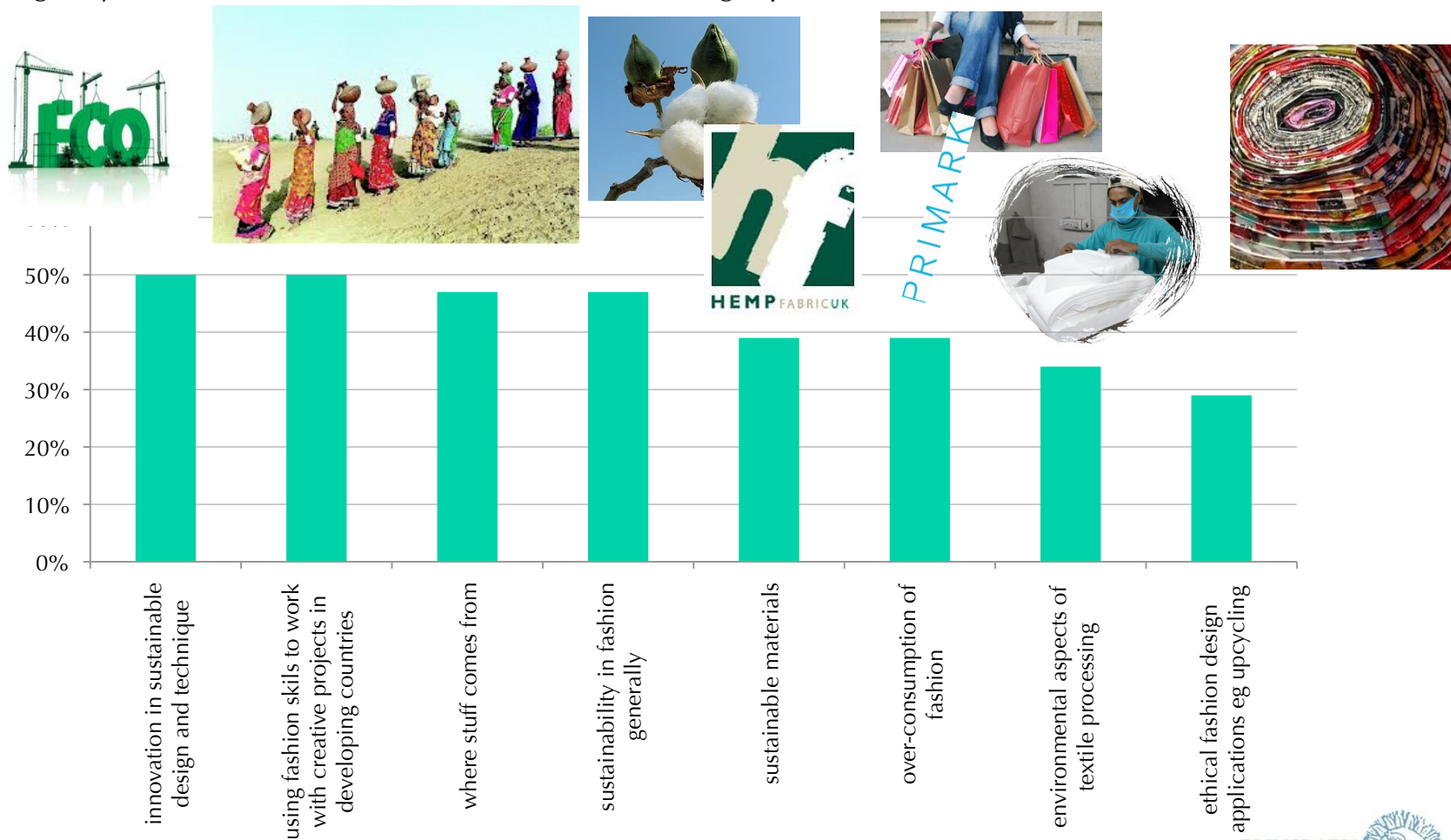


# Appetite for more learning across a broad range of themes related to sustainability- with emphasis on innovation and projects in developing countries



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% saying they would like to learn more about the following topics



# Complex topic deserving more attention



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***"It's a big and overlooked part of fashion that deserves more attention"***

*"We are a generation who should be conscious of everything! So we can actually change things!!"*

*"Sweat shop awareness and facts about the high street"*

*"I think it would be really eye-opening if more sustainable learning was integrated into the fashion and textiles courses "*

## Complexity of the topic is acknowledged

*"I feel that fashion is just one small area effecting the environment and overall there is so much more that we can be doing individually or as a group "*

*"There are so many influential people who could give good talks "*

*"I think that you can't do textiles and not know about it because it is the future "*

***"Knowledge is generally quite basic -- would be good to have time for these topics to be covered in greater depth"***

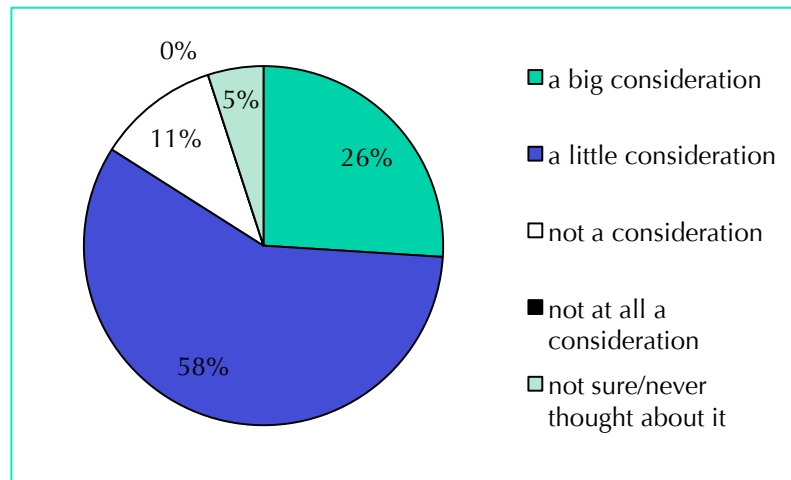


# 84% claim sustainability is a consideration in their practice



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84% say it is a consideration with 26% saying it is a big consideration



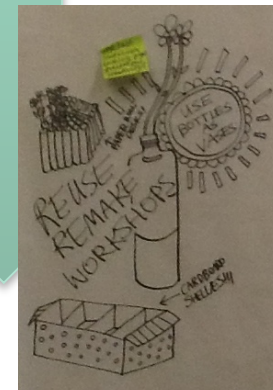
Staff comments show there is quite a feeling of guilt about it – especially about wastage

*"It isn't something that I've ever explored in the past, therefore I didn't think I need to do it at the moment"*

*"Sustainability in general is overlooked in most mediums – fashion is no different"*

*"The world is moving in an eco-friendly direction but it is too segregated. We as fashion students should promote sustainable living as well as being concerned for hunger and animals"*

*"Thinking about it but I need to think about it more"*





## Marked enthusiasm going forward for more curricular inclusion of sustainability



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Students would appreciate delivery being:

- in the context of their own course
- cross-disciplinary
- and including external speakers and ex-curricular content





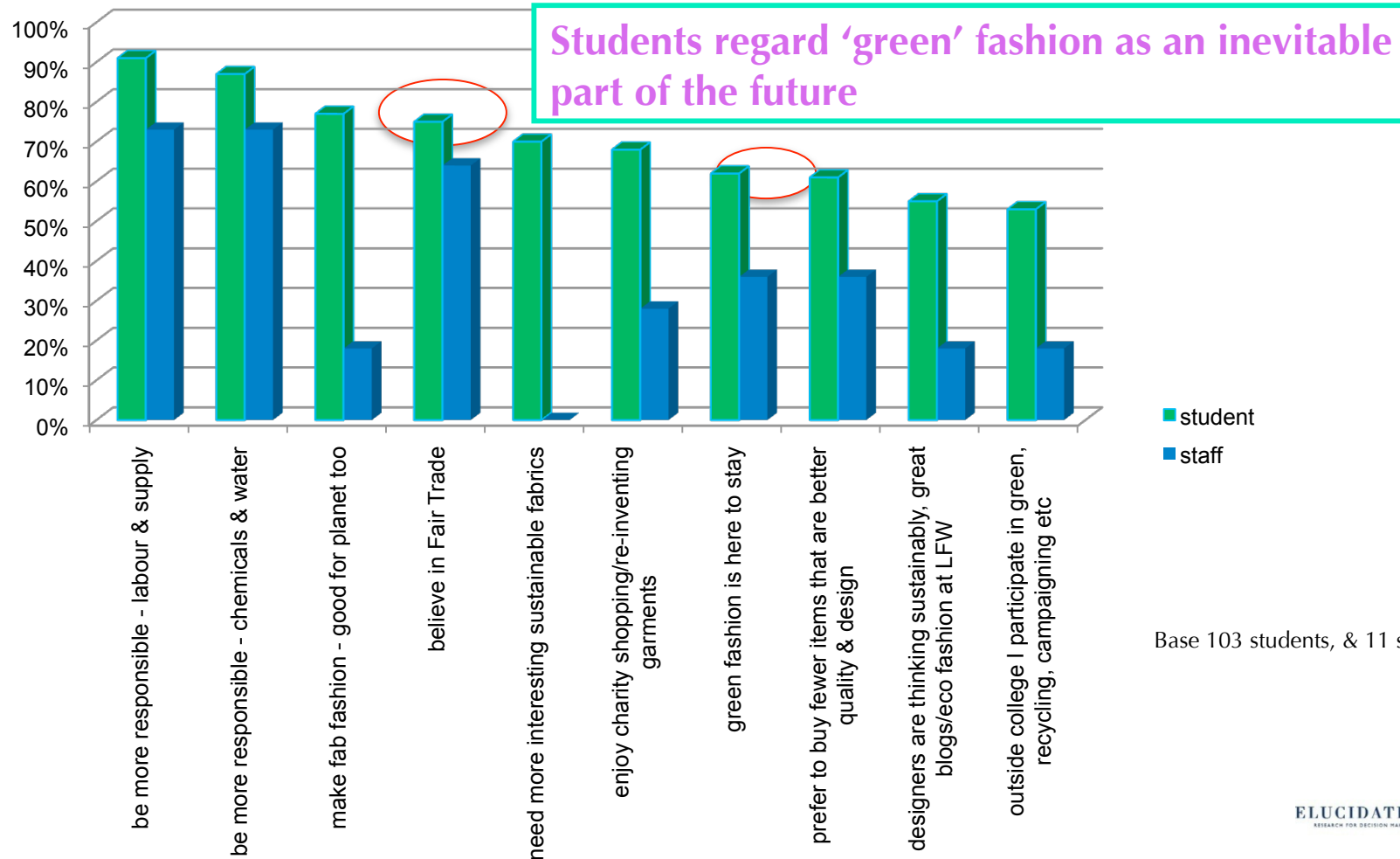
# Students 'ahead' of staff in their commitment to and enthusiasm for all things eco/sustainable



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Agreement with attitudinal statements shows students are markedly more engaged than staff



Base 103 students, & 11 staff

Mo Tomaney & Lucinda Craig for CSM March 2013



# A complex topic - people holding contrary opinions or with views not matching behaviour



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**Students more enthusiastic than staff but can be naïve about the variance between expressed opinion and behaviour:**

- desire for new sustainable fabrics to work with
- eco-fashion blogs
- charity shopping and re-inventing garments
- re-cycling and 'green' things outside of college
- engaged with sustainability through college work

But, other conflicting responses:

*"I love fast fashion – I can't afford to wear designer stuff"*

*"I never think about sustainability when I buy fashion"*

*"I don't want to learn about sustainable fashion"*

**Students Staff**

40%

0%

39%

0%

14%

0%

Sustainable is  
the future way

But I want to buy lots  
of cheap clothes



The survey offers many indications that students believe 'green' fashion is here to stay and that they want to learn more about it for commercial and personal reasons

# So what next?

## Recommend more debate and research



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### Insight

A generational shift is identified

*Students engage with sustainability as a driver for innovation to a greater degree than staff*

Receptiveness to more curriculum inclusion – some feel current content is just right' but many others think it is 'too little'

'Cross-disciplinary input', 'external speakers' and 'ex-curricular activity such as Green Week (& the Swish' are all wanted as well as **'more about sustainability on my course'**

### Learning

CSM should think hard about more inclusion around sustainability

Students - in many cases international -are asking for more and diverse aspects of sustainability to be addressed in curriculae.

Students are open about methods of delivery. However, they believe that sustainability is here to stay & should be given more attention.

### Action

Opportunity for staff/ students debate

Extend reach & analysis of these preliminary findings with a 2<sup>nd</sup> survey reaching a more widespread audience

Important for UAL/CSM to forge ahead – this limited survey offers a clear learning that CSM School of Fashion & Textiles collegiate seek sustainability innovation & inclusion





# Thank you

We'd be happy to answer any further questions so please don't hesitate to contact us:

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