

# Introducing the Scotland Model Arctic Council

8<sup>th</sup> UK Arctic Science Conference

British Antarctic Survey | 13 September 2023

# SCOTMAC is newest Polar Aspect MAC programme for university students

## Introducing the Scotland Model Arctic Council

1. An introduction to Polar Aspect Model Arctic Councils
2. The Scotland Model Arctic Council programme
3. Results from the Scotland Model Arctic Council

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## Polar Aspect MACs are experiential learning events at which pupils or students simulate real Arctic Council



← NORMAC Senior Arctic Officials Meeting (Norwich, UK, March 2019)

Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials Meeting (Rovaniemi, Finland, November 2018)



Source: Polar Aspect; Arctic Council (right image)

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Since 2016, Polar Aspect have designed and run numerous MACs for schools and universities, in person and online



Norwich School, UK



Colegio Ayalde, Spain



Trent University, Canada  
& University of East Anglia, UK



Trent University, Canada  
(online module-based MACs)



Online, worldwide  
(including delegate training)



Trent University, Canada  
& Yukon University, Canada

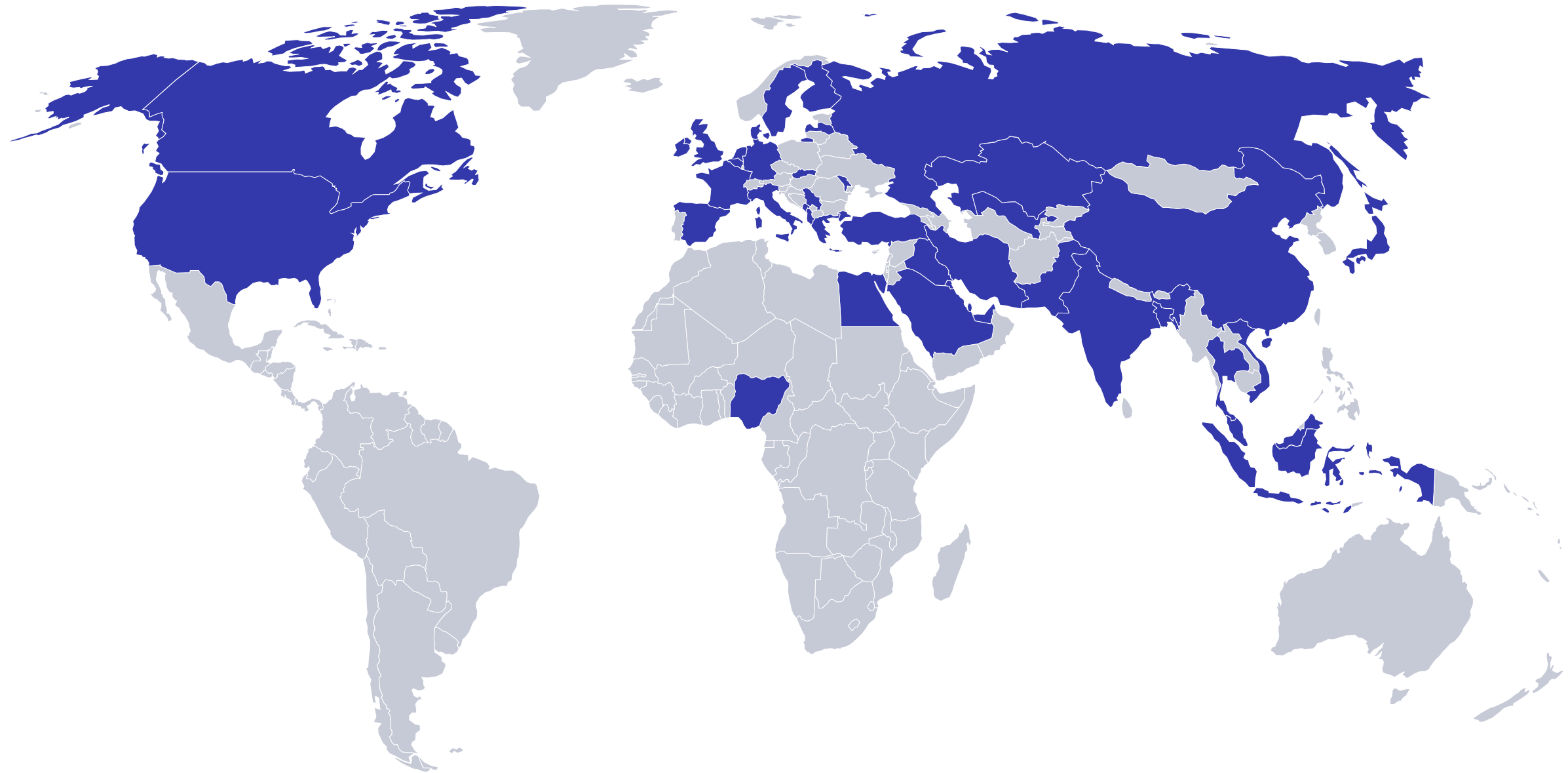


Wycombe Abbey, UK



Scottish-Arctic Network, UK  
& Trent University, Canada

# Polar Aspect MACs have raised awareness of Arctic amongst hundreds of youth from around world



Source: Polar Aspect

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# Research shows diplomatic simulations such as Polar Aspect MACs deliver valuable educational benefits



Significant and better-retained learning



Teaching tailored to variety of learning styles



Improved independent learning skills



Cooperative learning and co-creation of knowledge



Improved communication and interpersonal skills



Understanding of ambiguities and power dynamics of IR



Appreciation of diverse or conflicting perspectives and beliefs



Enjoyable, motivating and empowering learning

# Polar Aspect MACs designed to reflect unique features of Arctic Council

## Consensus

- All decisions by consensus of Arctic States—substantive and procedural
- Participants challenged to find bridging solutions

## Collaboration

- All declarations collaboratively drafted at conference
- Emphasis on persuasion, negotiation and joint problem-solving

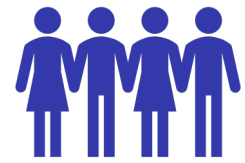
## Indigenous peoples

- Delegates play Indigenous peoples as well as Arctic States
- Learn what small but determined groups can achieve on global stage

## Focus

- In-depth engagement with one of world's most important regions
- Focus on sustainable development and environmental protection

# Polar Aspect MAC agendas naturally revolve around issues of sustainability—both social and environmental



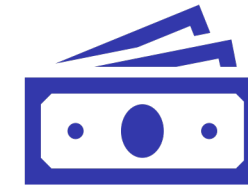
Vulnerable  
Indigenous cultures



Rapid climate  
change



Limited access to  
public goods (e.g.  
education, health  
care)



High cost of living



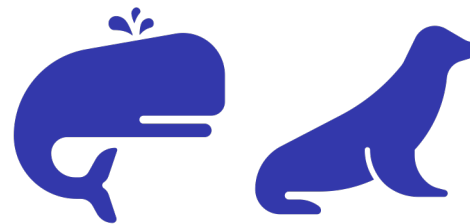
Narrowly-based  
local economies



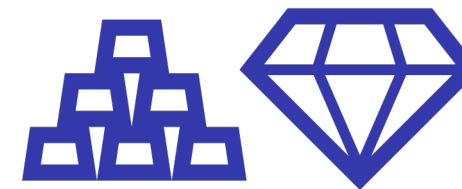
Poor community  
infrastructure



High pollutant  
concentrations



Fragile ecosystems



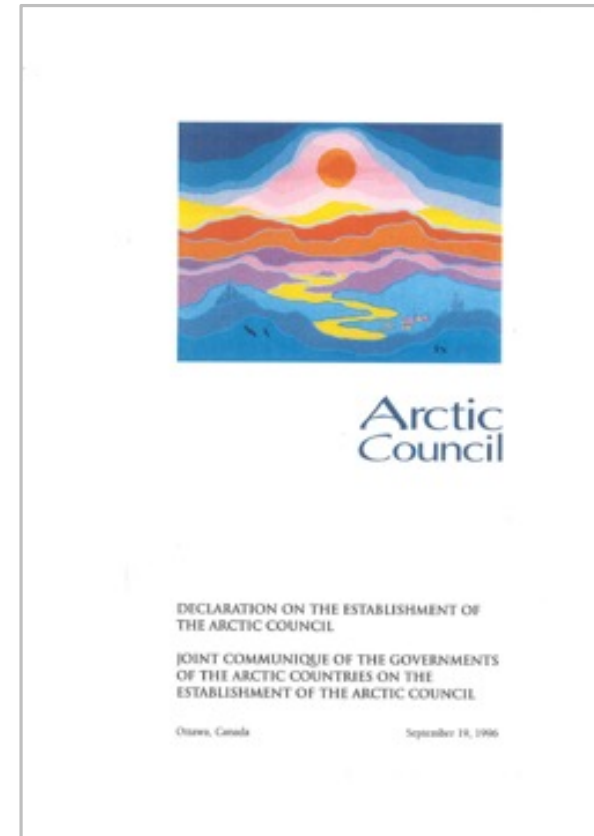
Dependence on  
natural resource  
extraction



Constrained  
physical and digital  
connectivity



# Rule of consensus requires Polar Aspect MAC delegates to grapple with tensions in sustainable development



## Ottawa Declaration (1996)

'Decisions of the Arctic Council are to be by consensus of the Members' (Article 7)

'It is the need for consensus (not just a majority) that makes it truly special' – *Teacher*

# Indigenous participation in Arctic Council foregrounds idea of Arctic as homeland



Polar Aspect MAC participants learn to value Arctic as place where lives and livelihoods matter

Source: Polar Aspect; Mats Nyvolds/Sermitsiaq (left image); Hamlet of Clyde River/Greenpeace (right image)

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# Polar Aspect MACs serve as general antidote to many one-dimensional or dubious 'Arctic imaginaries'...



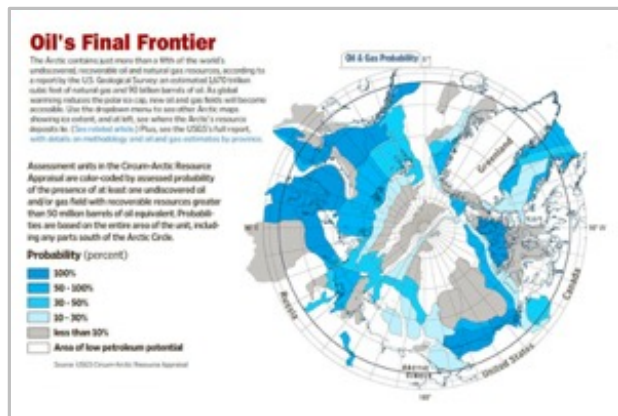
Fragile wilderness



Masculine crucible



Savage wasteland



Resource frontier



Terra nullius



Militarised zone



Scientific laboratory

Source: Polar Aspect; Florian Ledoux, Ranulph Fiennes, Nicholas Ray/Paramount Pictures, International Maritime Organisation, US Senator Dan Sullivan, Encyclopaedia Britannica, USGS (images clockwise from top left)

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...not least of Arctic merely as backdrop for climate 'morality play' in which we have starring role



← Look carefully at this 'photograph'!

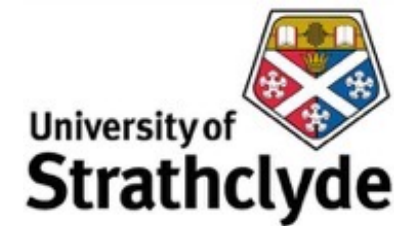
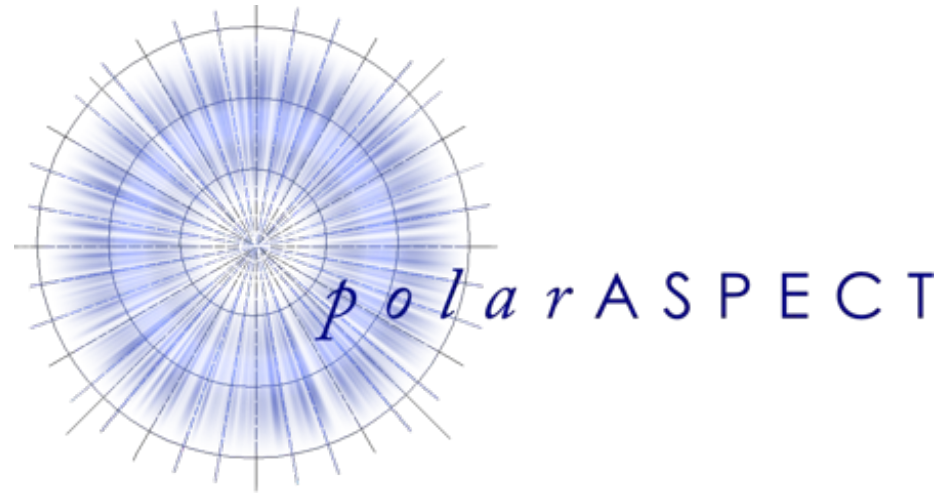
Polar Aspect MACs challenge youth to see beyond slogan  
'what happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic'

SCOTMAC is annual, Scotland-based event for undergraduate students

## Introducing the Scotland Model Arctic Council

1. An introduction to Polar Aspect Model Arctic Councils
2. The Scotland Model Arctic Council programme
3. Results from the Scotland Model Arctic Council

# SCOTMAC is educational initiative of Polar Aspect in collaboration with Scottish-Arctic Network



Source: Polar Aspect; organisations shown (logos)

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# SCOTMAC 1 led by Polar Aspect and ScAN/SAMS-UHI, with collaboration and funding from additional partners



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

Nordic & Arctic Policy Unit, External Affairs Directorate



Scottish Government support through fund for Arctic Connections Policy Framework

Source: Polar Aspect; organisations shown (logos)

# Diverse group of 25 undergraduate students—21 delegates and 4 Secretariat staff—participated in SCOTMAC 1

## Universities

- Aberystwyth Uni
- Glasgow Caledonian Uni
- Heriot-Watt Uni
- Robert Gordon Uni
- Uni of Aberdeen
- Uni of Barcelona
- Uni of Cambridge
- Uni of Edinburgh
- Uni of Highlands & Islands
- Uni of St Andrews
- Uni of Strathclyde

## Courses

- Applied Bioscience
- Architectural Technology
- Environmental Sci/Mgmt
- Geography
- Geology/Geoscience
- History
- Language (French, Russian)
- Law
- Marine Biology/Science
- Politics/Int'l Relations
- Sustainable Development

## Home countries

- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

SCOTMAC 1 registration oversubscribed by more than 4x!

Source: Polar Aspect

Note: Does not include 8 students selected, but who withdrew just ahead of conference, nor 1 student who could not participate due to falling ill day before conference

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# SCOTMAC 2 led by Polar Aspect and ScAN/GCU, with collaboration and funding from additional partners



Nordic & Arctic Policy Unit, External Affairs Directorate



Supported by Scottish Government once again through Arctic Connections Fund

Source: Polar Aspect; organisations shown (logos)

# Diverse group of 27 undergraduate students—24 delegates and 3 Secretariat staff—took part in SCOTMAC 2

## Universities

- Glasgow Caledonian Uni
- Glasgow School of Art
- Heriot-Watt Uni
- Leiden Uni
- Robert Gordon Uni
- Stanford Uni
- Uni of Aberdeen
- Uni of Edinburgh
- Uni of Highlands & Islands
- Uni of St Andrews
- Uni of Strathclyde

## Courses

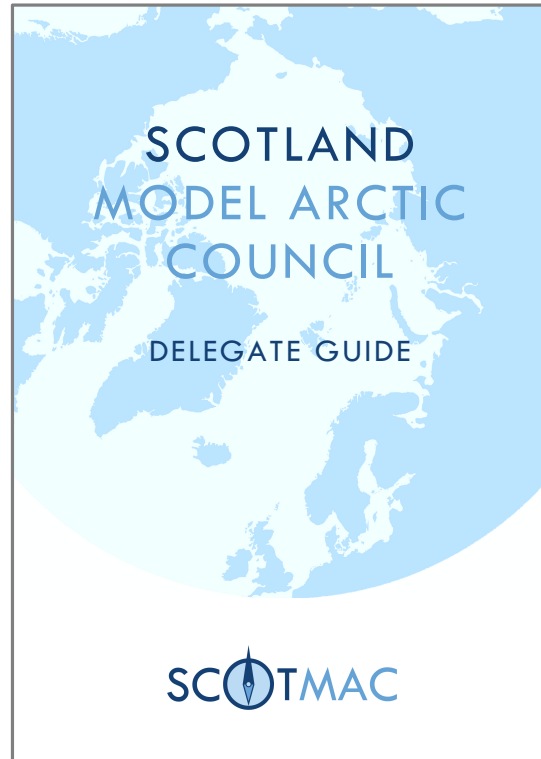
- Anthropology
- Biology/Ecology
- Business/Finance
- Contemporary Art/Design
- Environmental Sci/Mgmt
- Geography
- History
- Journalism
- Marine Biology/Science
- Modern Languages
- Politics/Public Policy/IR/Law
- Security Studies

## Home countries

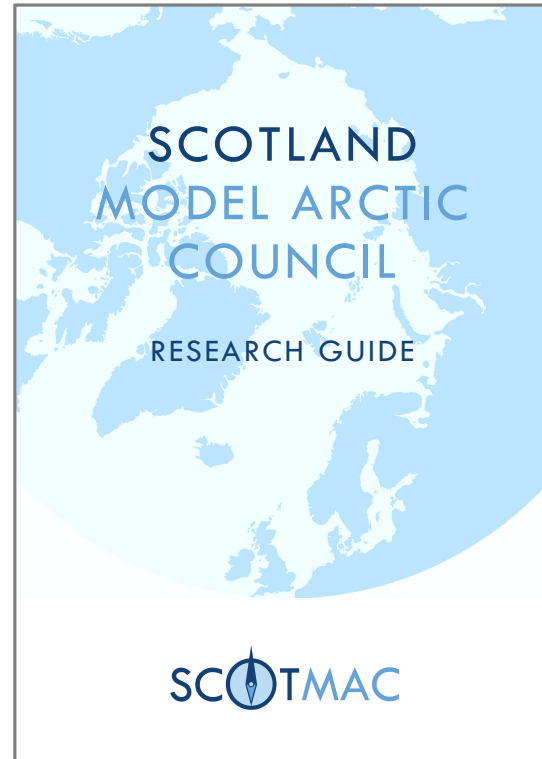
- Belarus
- Belgium
- France
- Germany
- India
- Japan
- Latvia
- Netherlands
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

SCOTMAC 2 applications oversubscribed by more than 2x, even with shorter application period than for SCOTMAC 1

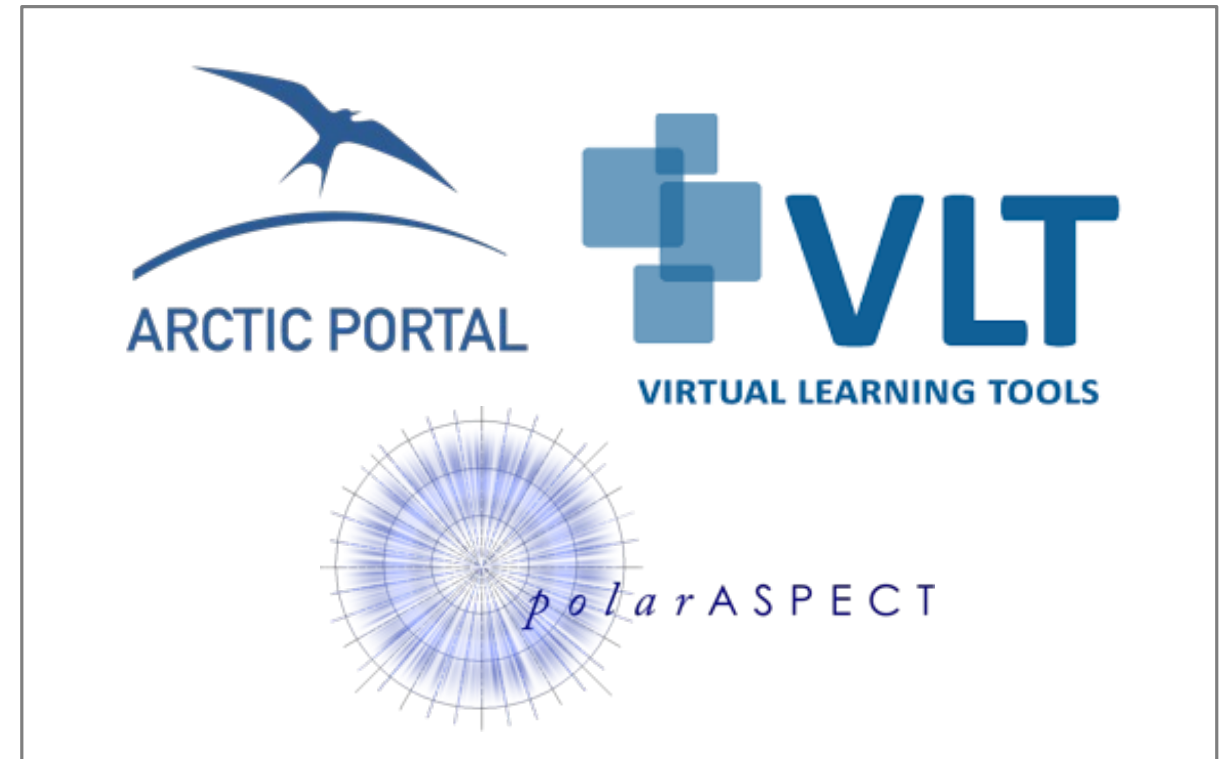
# Learning began with conference preparations, culminating in pre-circulated discussion papers from each delegation



Structure and rules of procedure



Issue briefs and preparation guide



Starter research library

SCOTMAC 1 topics: Arctic shipping, intergenerational IK transfer  
 SCOTMAC 2 topics: future of Arctic Council, climate engineering

# Both SCOTMACs took place against backdrop of war in Ukraine, and pause in Arctic Council diplomacy



НІ ВІЙНИ!  
НЕТ ВОЙНЕ!  
NO TO WAR!

- Strong ‘no to war’ statement clearly made at start of conference
- Special significance—youth demonstrating commitment to dialogue and capacity for concord
- No fictive Russian Chairmanship—all Polar Aspect MACs chaired neutrally by Polar Aspect
- No discussion of military matters (in keeping with real Arctic Council prohibition)
- Underscoring ‘A7’ agreement that Arctic Council remains of enduring value

Media coverage highlighted SCOTMAC as youth diplomacy—‘Seeking consensus in troubled times’

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# SCOTMAC starts with 'teaching morning' involving Arctic and diplomatic experts (SCOTMAC 1 speakers shown)



Ms Marie-Anne  
Coninx  
Egmont Institute /  
Former EU Arctic  
Ambassador



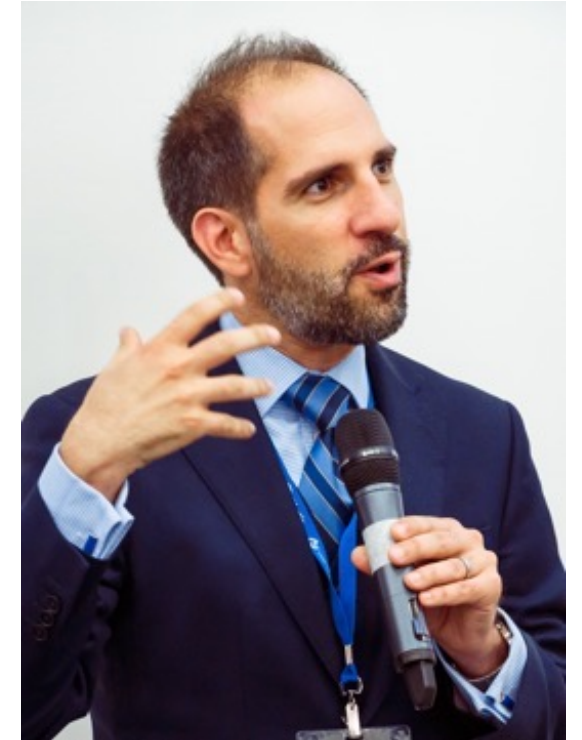
Mr Neil Gray MSP  
Scottish Minister  
for Culture, Europe  
and International  
Development



Dr Sian Henley  
University  
of Edinburgh



Dr Sennan Mattar  
Glasgow  
Caledonian  
University



Dr Anthony Speca  
Polar Aspect,  
Trent University  
and University  
of East Anglia

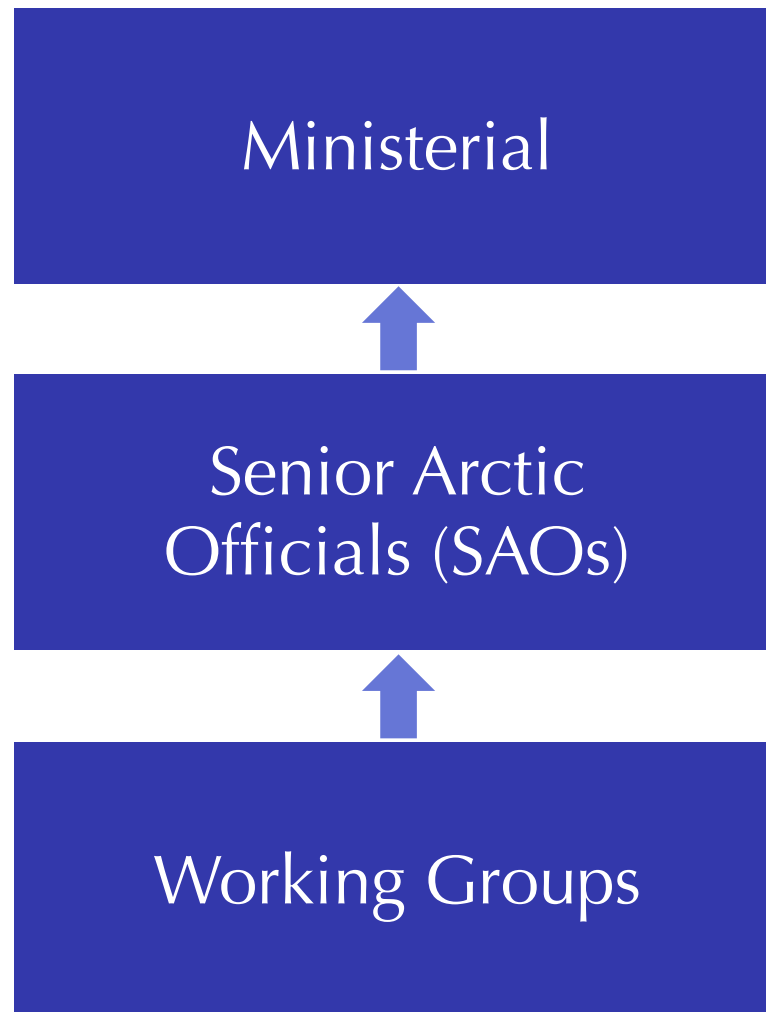
Source: Polar Aspect; Marie-Anne Coninx, Neil Gray, Sian Henley, Sennan Mattar (respective photos)

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# SCOTMAC proceeds through full cycle of Arctic Council meetings, from Working Groups to Ministerial

## Polar Aspect MAC meeting structure



- Arctic Council (every 2 years): Foreign Ministers and PP leaders approving declaration and directing future activities
- Polar Aspect MAC: Decision on declaration, closing statements
- Arctic Council (every 6 months): ‘Arctic ambassadors’ overseeing operations, shaping policy and negotiating declaration
- Polar Aspect MAC: Negotiation and drafting of declaration
- Arctic Council: Technical experts carrying out research and projects
- Polar Aspect MAC: ‘Pre-SAO’ initial exchange of views to define issues and identify areas of agreement and disagreement

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# SCOTMAC 1 involved intense 3 days of model diplomacy and learning, ending in jointly agreed 'Oban Declaration'



Source: Polar Aspect

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# SCOTMAC 2 also involved similarly intense model diplomacy and learning, ending in 'Glasgow Declaration'



Source: Polar Aspect

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# Daily 'debriefings' facilitated by experts helped SCOTMAC participants transform experience into learning



Experience → Reflect → Learn → Apply → Repeat

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Two dinners, as well as informal gatherings, helped bond SCOTMAC students and faculty together as colleagues



Source: Polar Aspect

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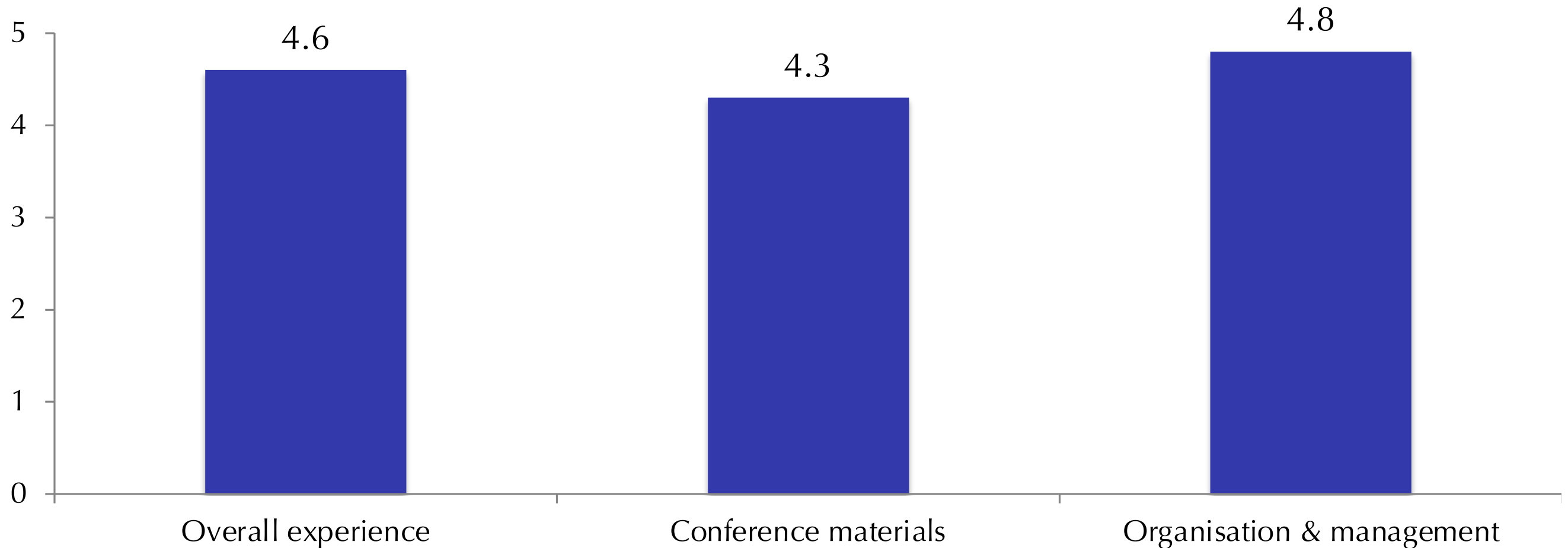
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# SCOTMAC students very pleased with programme and experience overall

## Ratings of SCOTMAC programme and experience

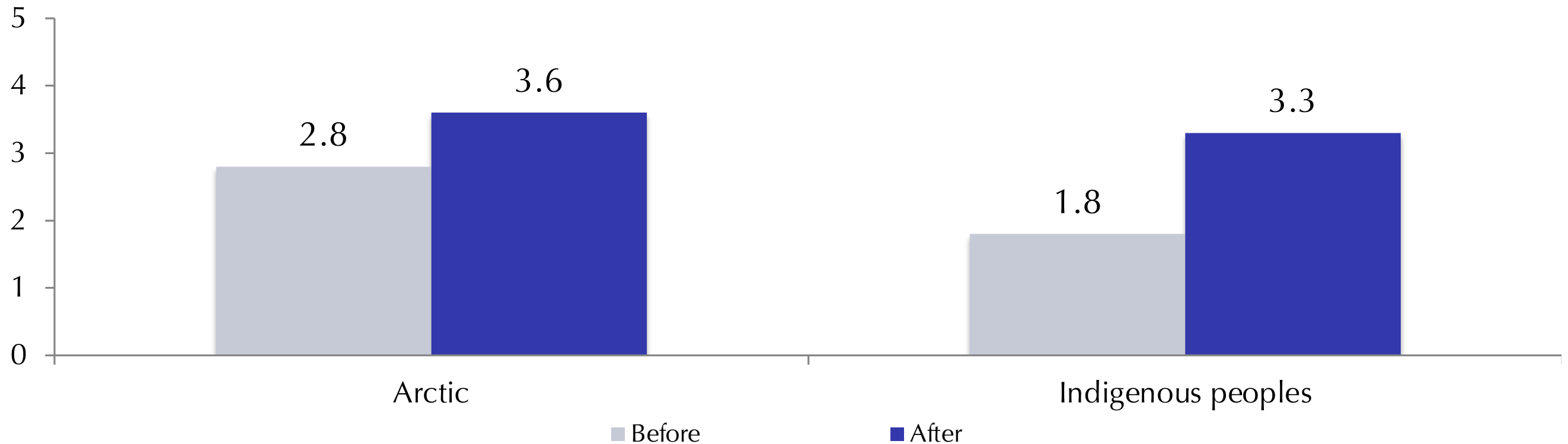
(Average rating out of 5; n=44 for both)



# SCOTMAC students certain that they learned much from their experience

## Self-reported knowledge before and after SCOTMAC

(Average rating out of 5; n=44)

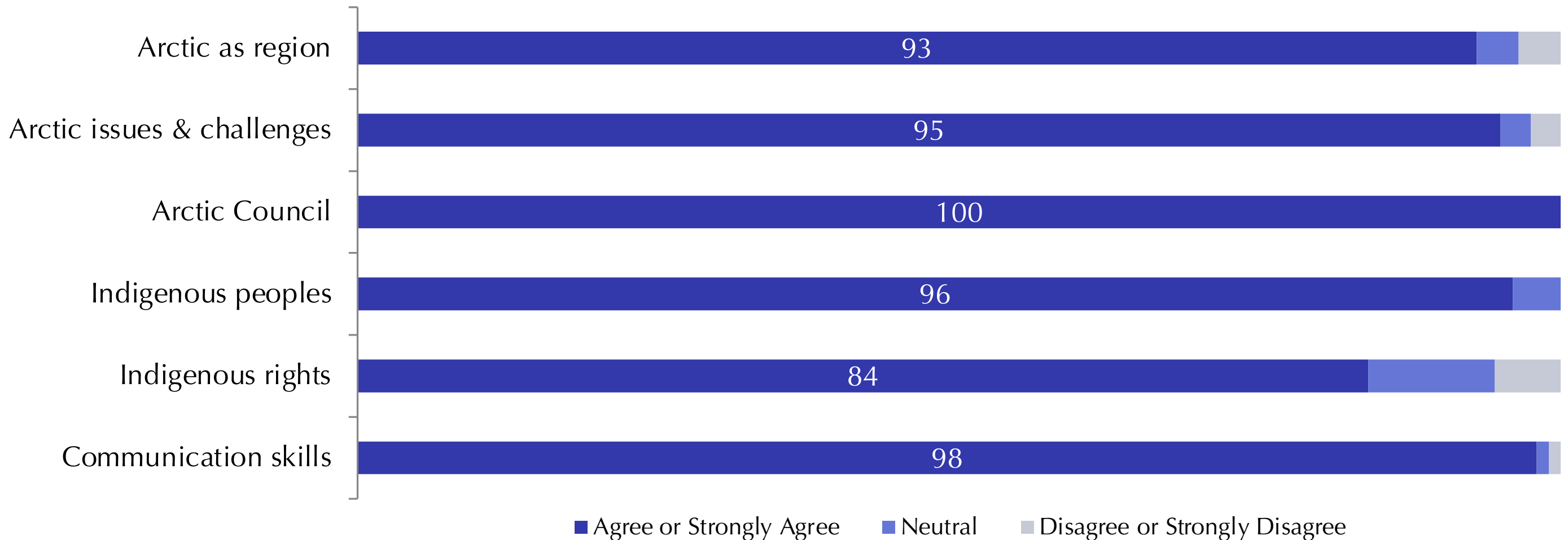


Students didn't start as, or suddenly become, Arctic experts!  
Shows direction of and certainty about learning

# SCOTMAC students clearly agree that they learned about Arctic and Arctic peoples, as well as communication skills

## Agreement on areas of learning from SCOTMAC

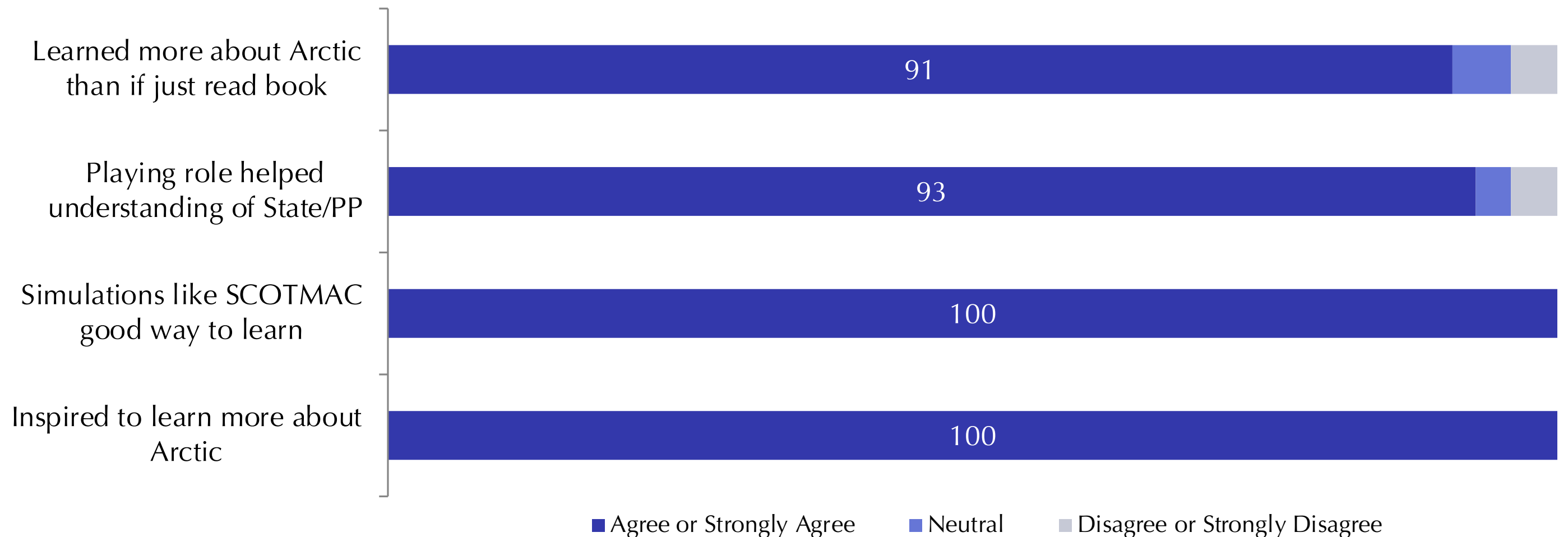
(% of responding students; n=44)



# SCOTMAC 1 students also clearly agree that MAC-style learning effective and inspiring

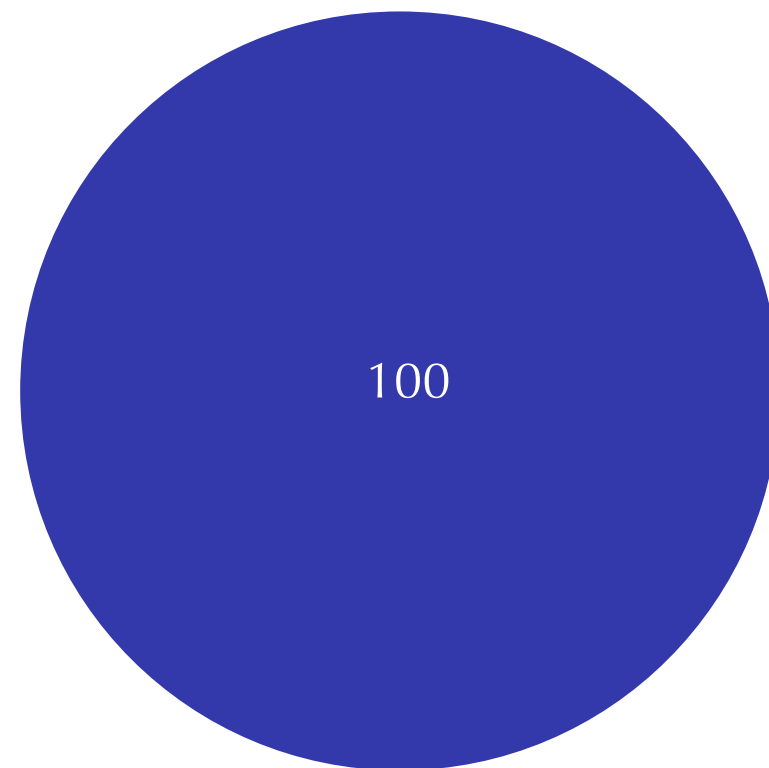
## Agreement on effectiveness of learning from SCOTMAC

(% of responding students; n=44)

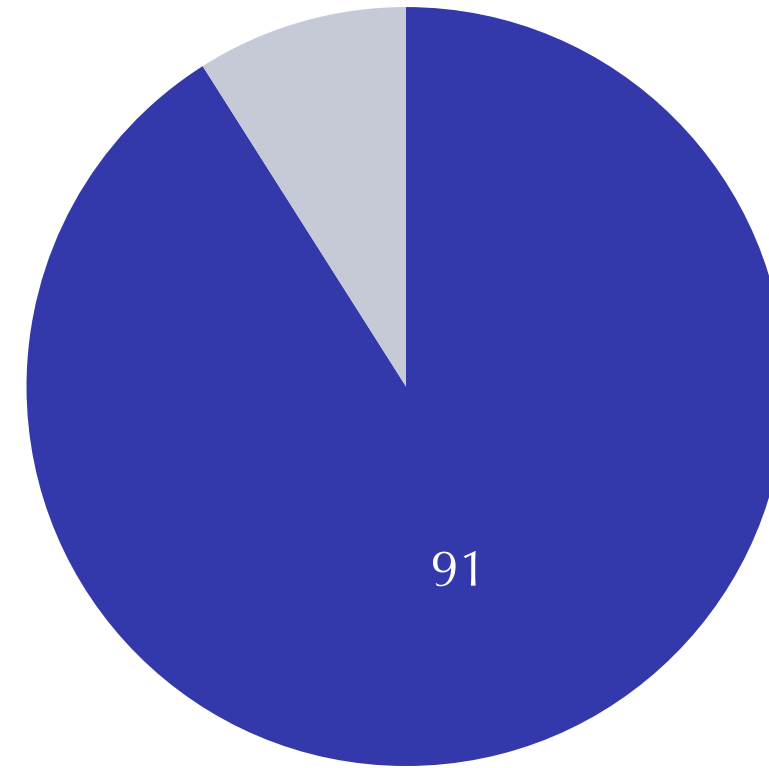


# SCOTMAC students would also recommend Polar Aspect MAC to others, and a great majority would do it all again

Intention to recommend (left) or repeat (right) Polar Aspect MAC  
(% of responding students; n=44)



■ Yes ■ No



■ Yes ■ No



# Testimonials from SCOTMAC students were extremely positive overall—a selection

- *'Amazingly organised and appreciated every minute of this experience.'*
- *'The conference is brilliantly organised, everyone is very supportive and friendly, and it's an experience I would strongly recommend to any university student with an interest in politics, international relations, as well as the Arctic.'*
- *'Before participating in SCOTMAC, my knowledge of the Arctic and its peoples was incredibly limited. To be entirely honest, I didn't even know the Arctic Council existed. However, I feel like I have learnt so much more about the Arctic in a diplomatic, social and environmental sense.'*
- *'I walked away from this conference with a much deeper understanding about myself and how to effectively communicate with others in the future.'*
- *'I felt that Anthony was also very helpful at guiding us when we need it but allowing us to do it alone as well.'*
- *'I believe everyone should have the opportunity to do something like this while they are young!'*
- *'It was without doubt the best extra-curricular activity I've done whilst at university. Sad to leave!'*

# Faculty seem to have found SCOTMAC equally inspiring

*'I learnt so much myself as the world of diplomacy is not one that marine scientists habitually engage with. Learning how diplomacy works can give scientists a voice in international decision making.'*

*'SCOTMAC may have been for the students, but I benefited too and am filled with new ideas and plans. Thank you, Anthony and Polar Aspect, for such a wonderful experience.'*

-- Anuschka Miller, Scottish Association for Marine Science

*'Fantastic event and absolutely incredible experience for me as a guest and for participating students. Many many thanks to Anthony and the team for organising MAC events across the country and giving pupils and students the opportunity to develop such important skills.'*

*'This is experiential learning at its best and most useful.'*

-- Alona Roitershtein, Robert Gordon University

# Finally, please allow me to introduce myself



## Dr Anthony Specca

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- I'm on faculty of University of East Anglia, Trent University (Canada) and Norwich School
- I teach Geography and Circumpolar Studies at university, and Philosophy, Politics and Economics at school
- I'm also Managing Director of UArctic Læra Institute for Circumpolar Education
- I was formerly civil servant with Government of Nunavut in Canadian Arctic
- I'm passionate about educating today's youth about Arctic!

I'd be delighted to hear from any students, faculty or universities interested in MAC!

# Thank you

Dr Anthony Speca

Polar Aspect,  
Trent University &  
University of East Anglia

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