

Launching the Scotland Model Arctic Council

7th UK Arctic Science Conference
Durham University | 11 April 2022

SCOTMAC is newest Polar Aspect MAC programme for university students

Launching 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 first 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

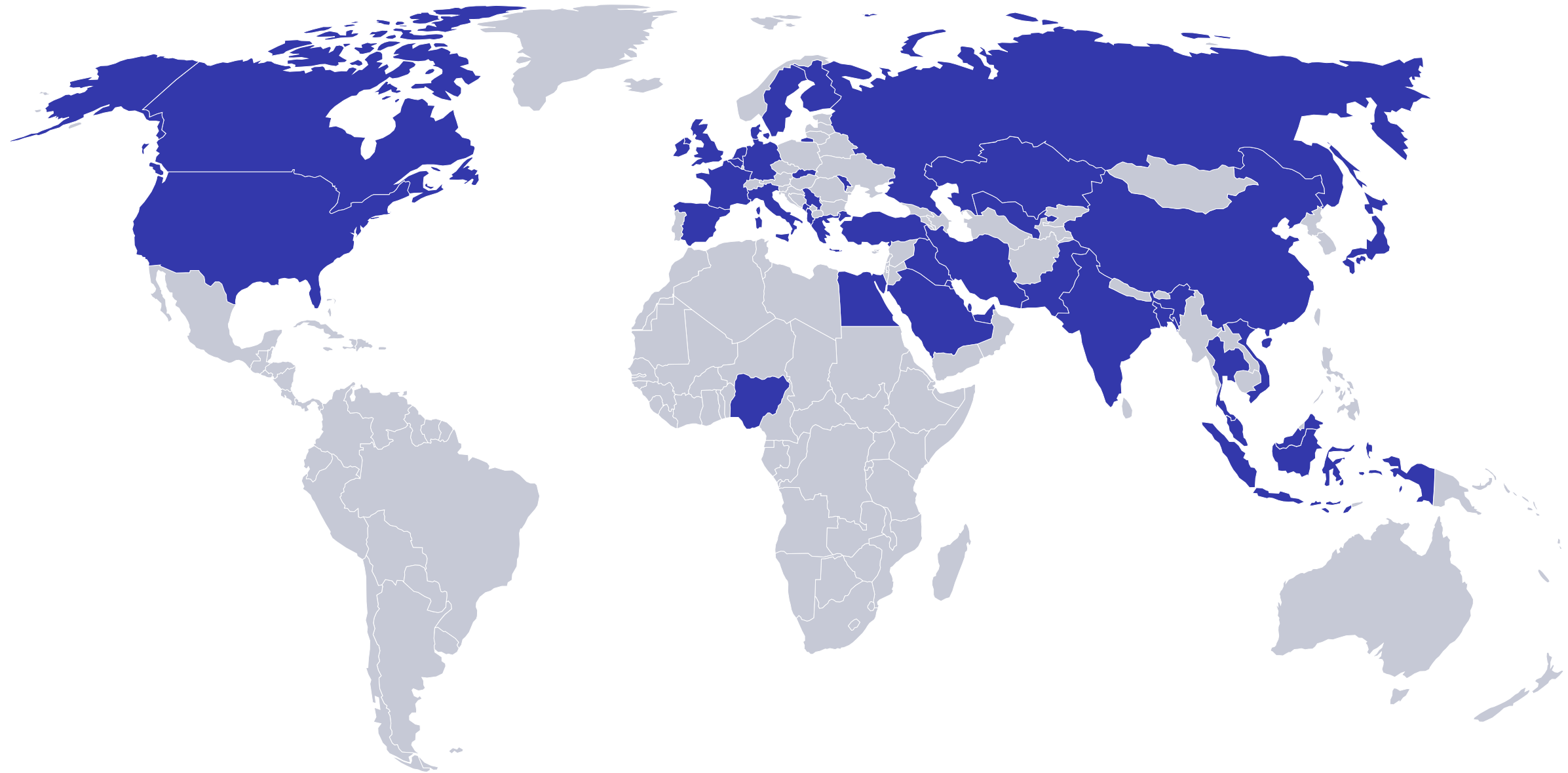


Wycombe Abbey, UK



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

anthony.speca@polaraspect.com | [@polaraspect](https://www.instagram.com/polaraspect)

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

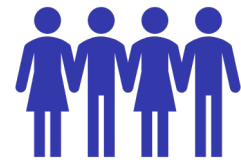
Indigenous peoples

- 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



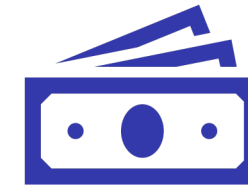
Vulnerable
Indigenous cultures



Rapid climate
change



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



High cost of living



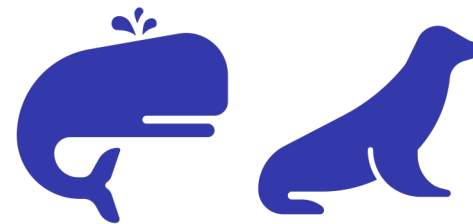
Narrowly-based
local economies



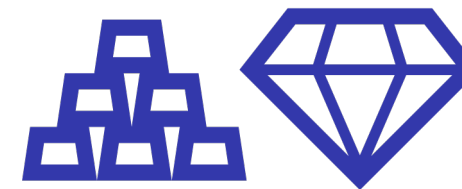
Poor community
infrastructure



High pollutant
concentrations



Fragile ecosystems

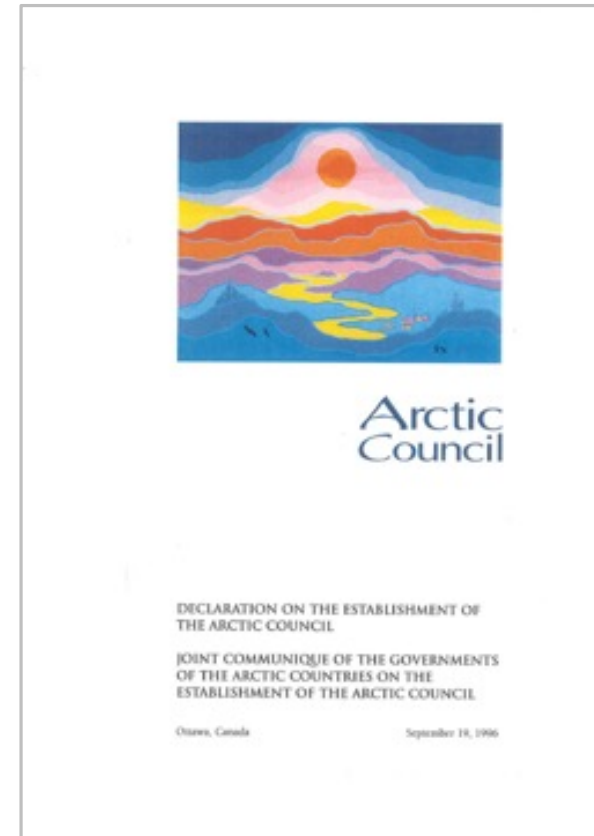


Dependence on
natural resource
extraction



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'...



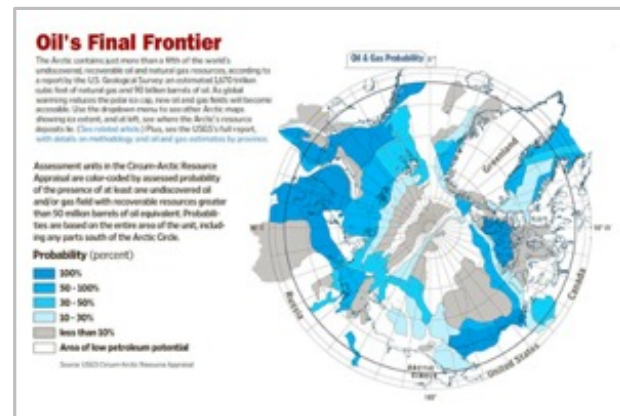
Fragile wilderness



Masculine crucible



Savage wasteland



Resource frontier



Terra nullius



Militarised zone

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

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



← Look carefully at this 'photograph'!

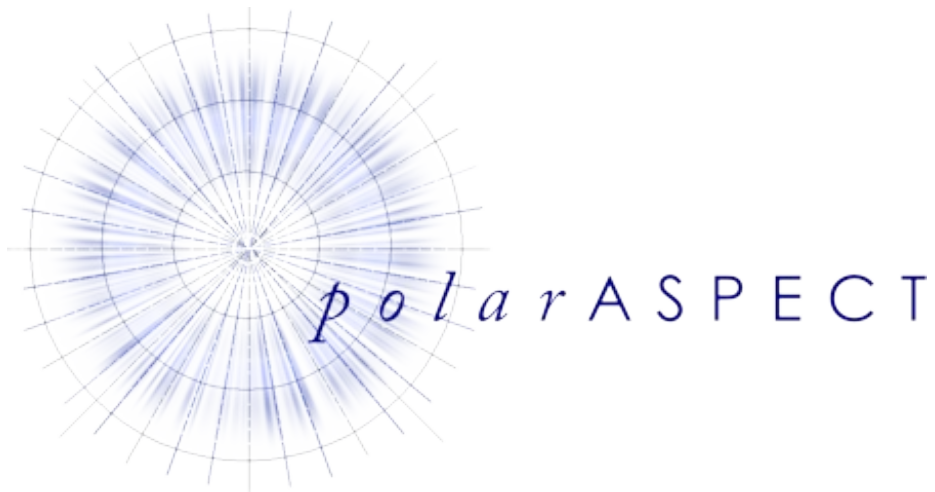
Polar Aspect MACs challenge youth to see beyond slogan
'what happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic'

SCOTMAC intended to be annual, Scotland-based educational event for university students

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



SCOTMAC 1 led by Polar Aspect and 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

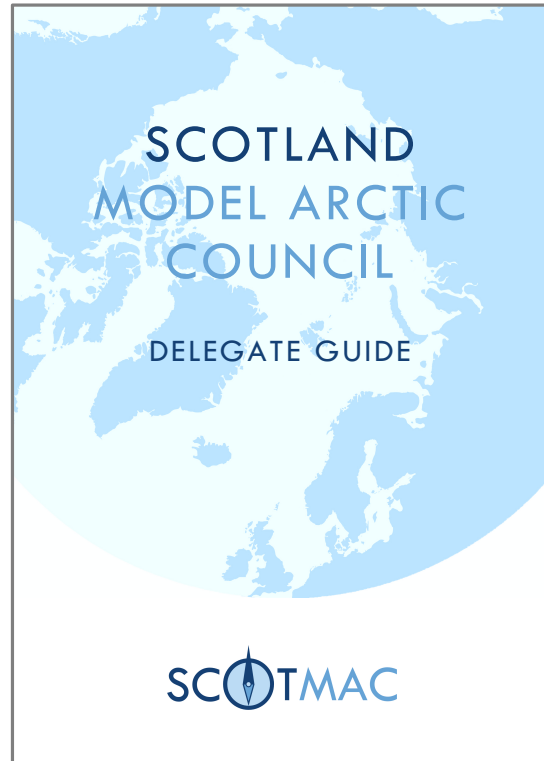
SCOTMAC 1 registration oversubscribed by more than 4x!

Source: Polar Aspect

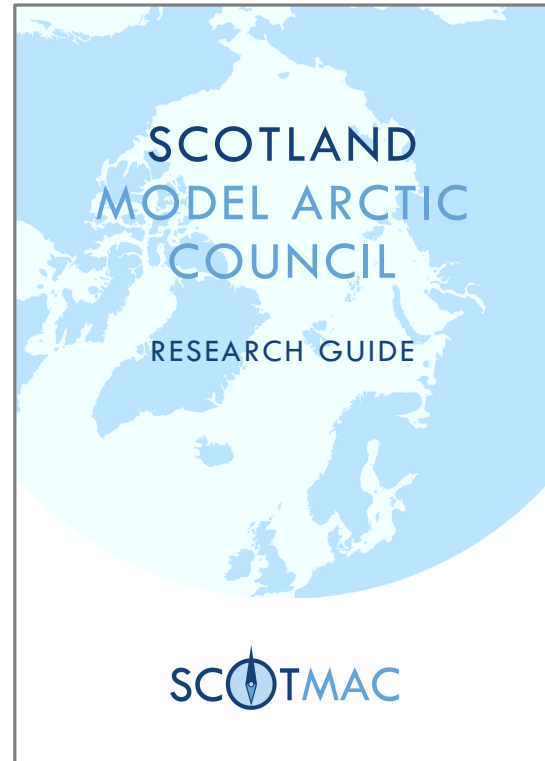
Note: Does not include 8 students selected, but who withdrew just ahead of conference, nor 1 student who could not participate due to falling ill day before conference

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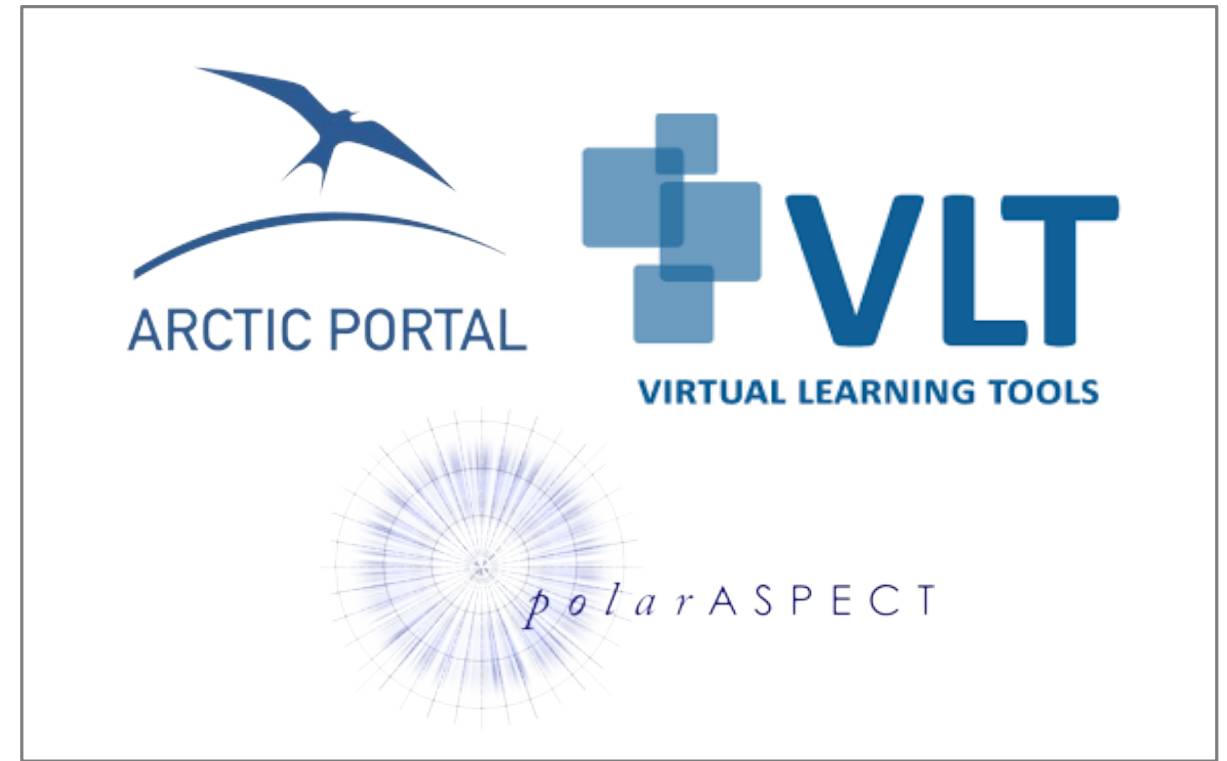
Learning began with conference preparations, culminating in pre-circulated discussion papers from each delegation



Structure and rules of procedure



Issue briefs and preparation guide



Starter research library

SCOTMAC 1 focused on challenges associated with growth of Arctic shipping, and with intergenerational IK transfer

Source: Polar Aspect; Arctic Portal (company and VLT logos)

SCOTMAC 1 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 1 as youth diplomacy—‘Seeking consensus in troubled times’

SCOTMAC 1 began with 'teaching morning' involving Arctic, diplomatic and political experts



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



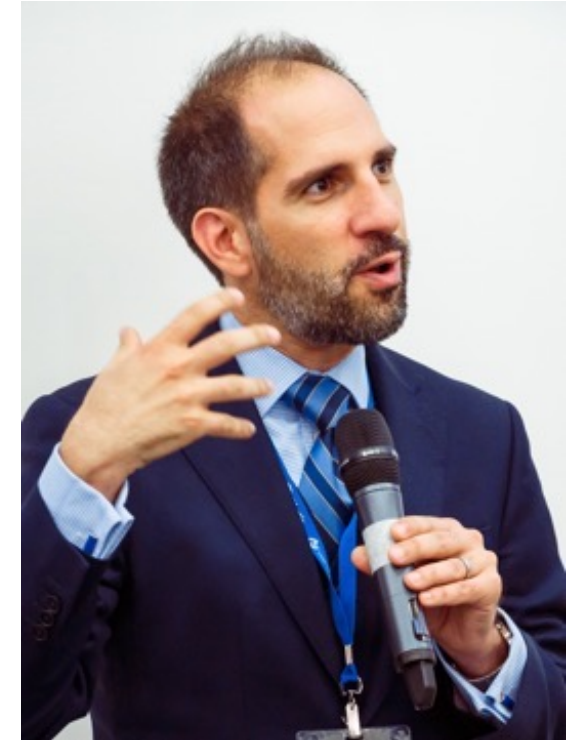
Mr Neil Gray MSP
Scottish Minister
for Culture, Europe
and International
Development



Dr Sian Henley
University
of Edinburgh



Dr Sennan Mattar
Glasgow
Caledonian
University



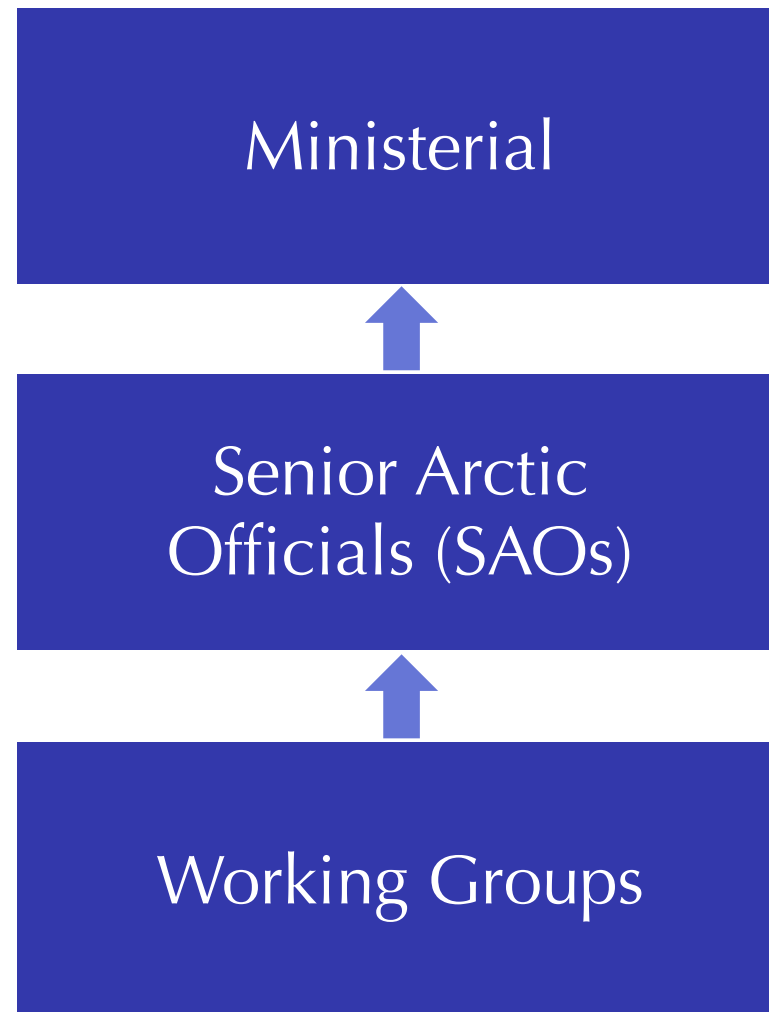
Dr Anthony Specca
Polar Aspect,
Trent University
and University
of East Anglia

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

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SCOTMAC 1 proceeded through full cycle of Arctic Council meetings, from Working Groups to Ministerial

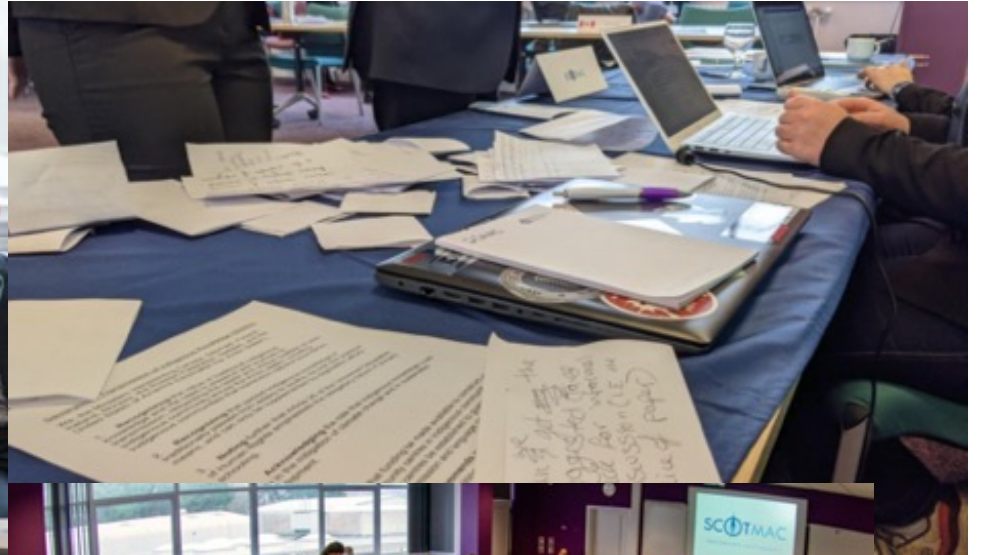
Polar Aspect MAC meeting structure



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



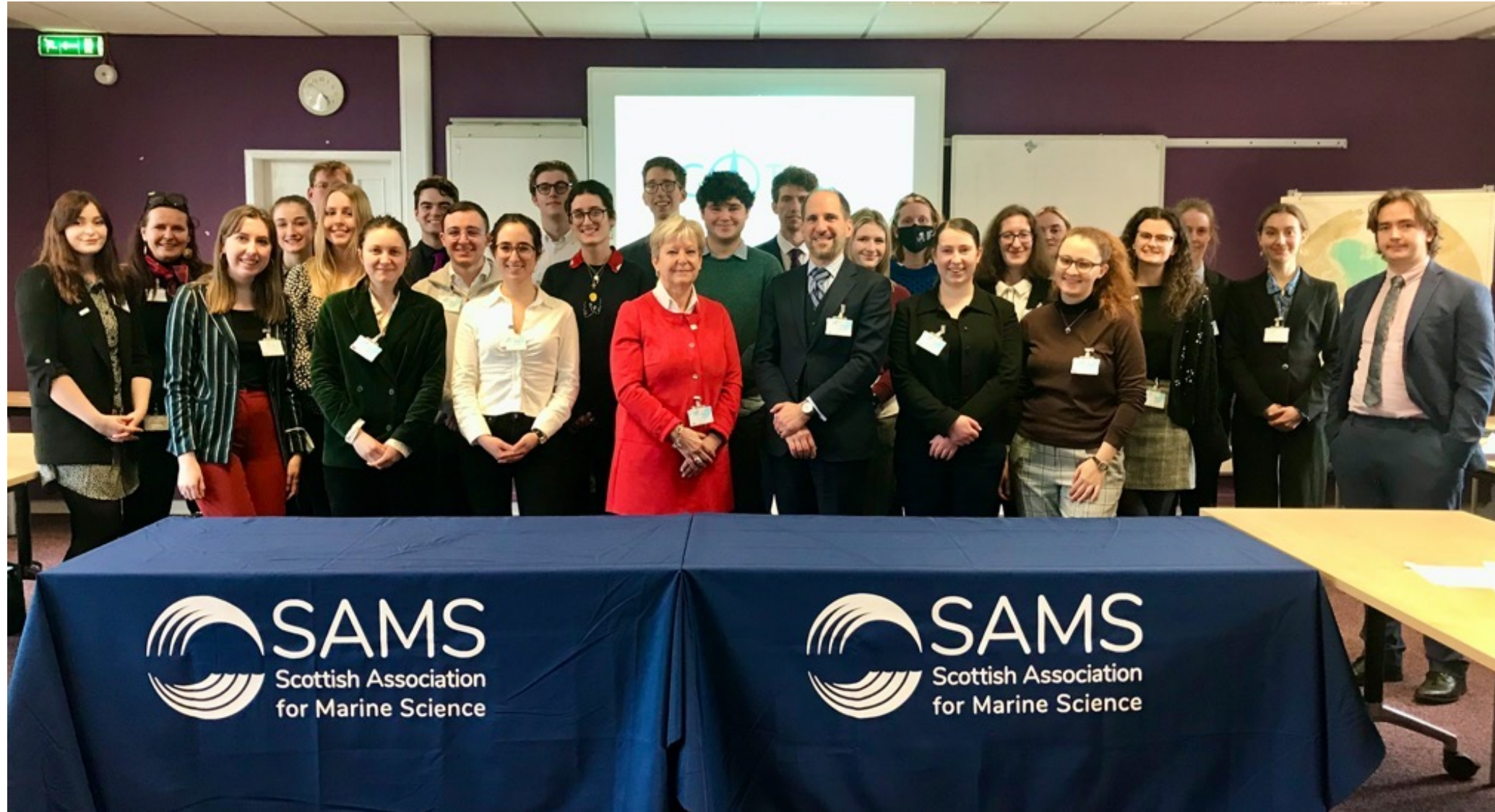
Experience → Reflect → Learn → Apply → Repeat

Source: Polar Aspect, loosely following Kolb (1984)

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Two dinners, as well as informal gatherings, helped bond SCOTMAC 1 students and faculty together as colleagues



Short surveys regularly used to evaluate educational impact of Polar Aspect MACs, including SCOTMAC 1

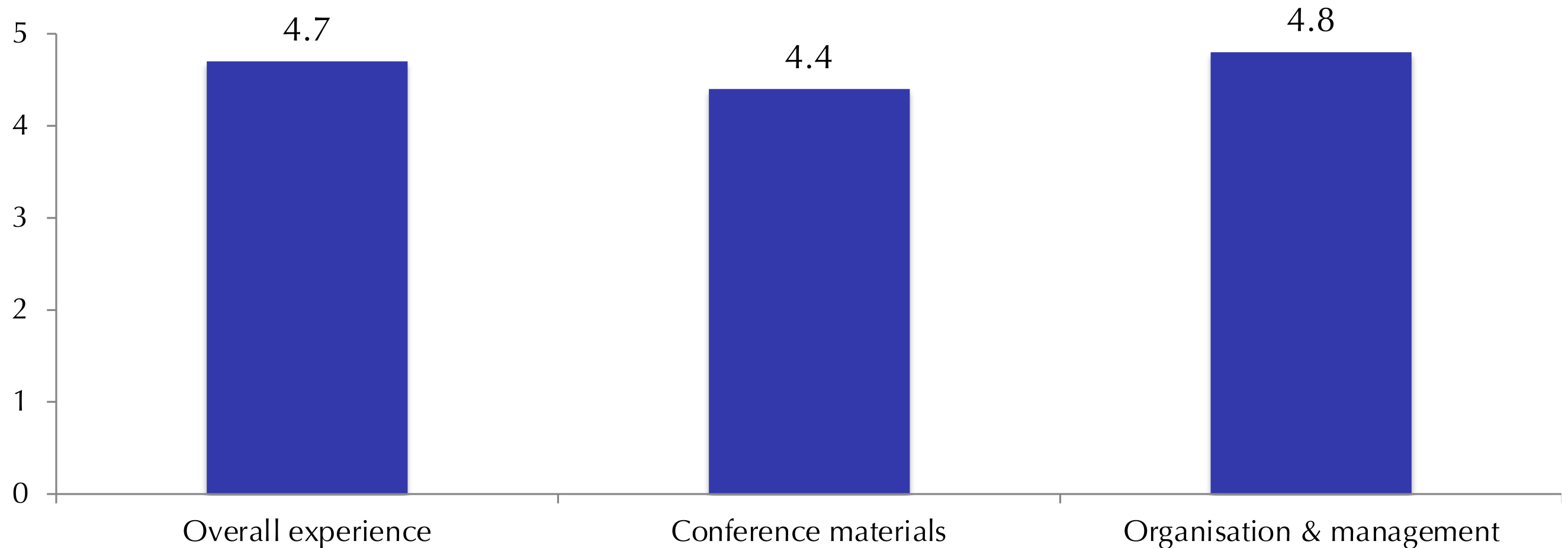
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SCOTMAC 1 students very pleased with programme and experience overall

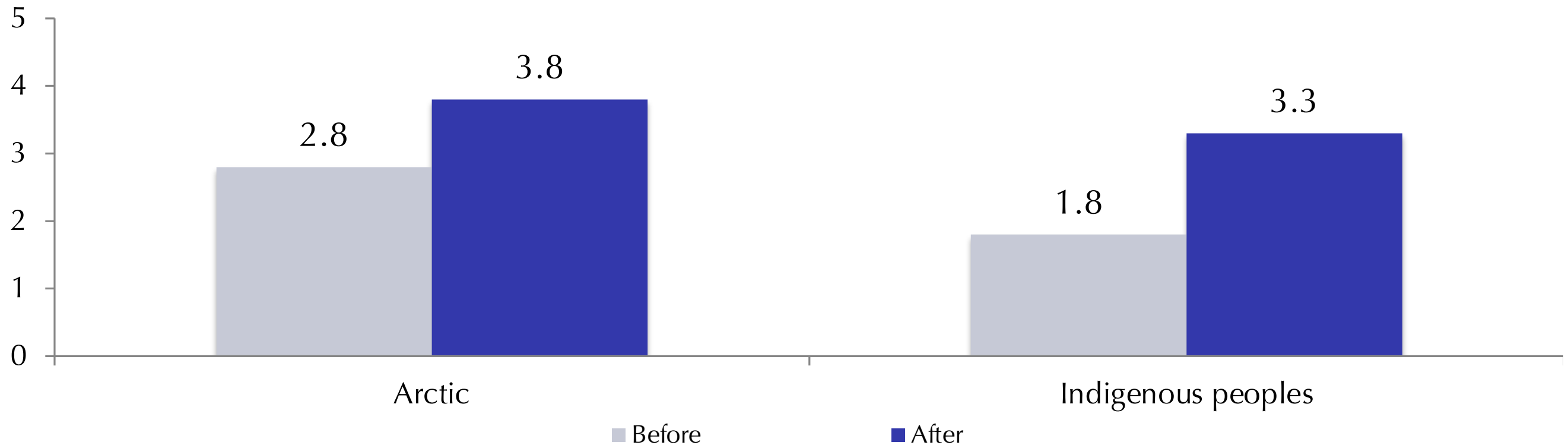
Ratings of SCOTMAC 1 programme and experience

(Average rating out of 5; n=22)



SCOTMAC 1 students certain that they learned much from their experience

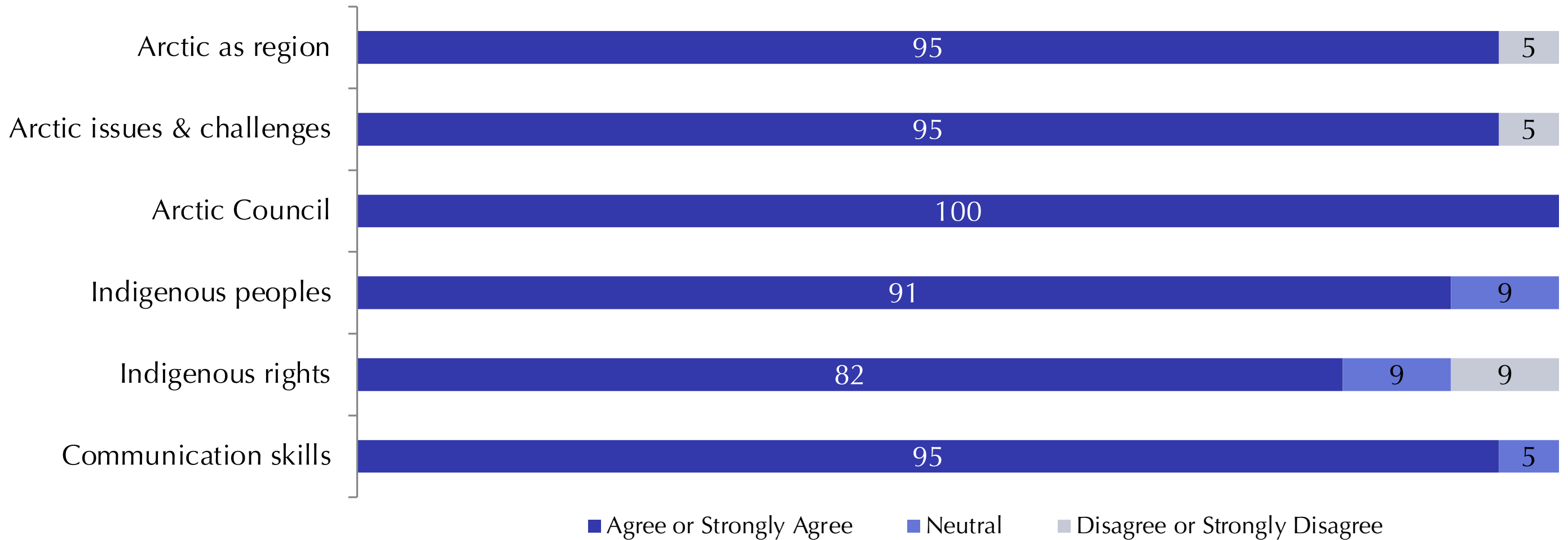
Self-reported knowledge before and after SCOTMAC 1
(Average rating out of 5; n=22)



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

SCOTMAC 1 students clearly agree that they learned about Arctic and Arctic peoples, as well as communication skills

Agreement on areas of learning from SCOTMAC 1
 (% of responding students; n=22)

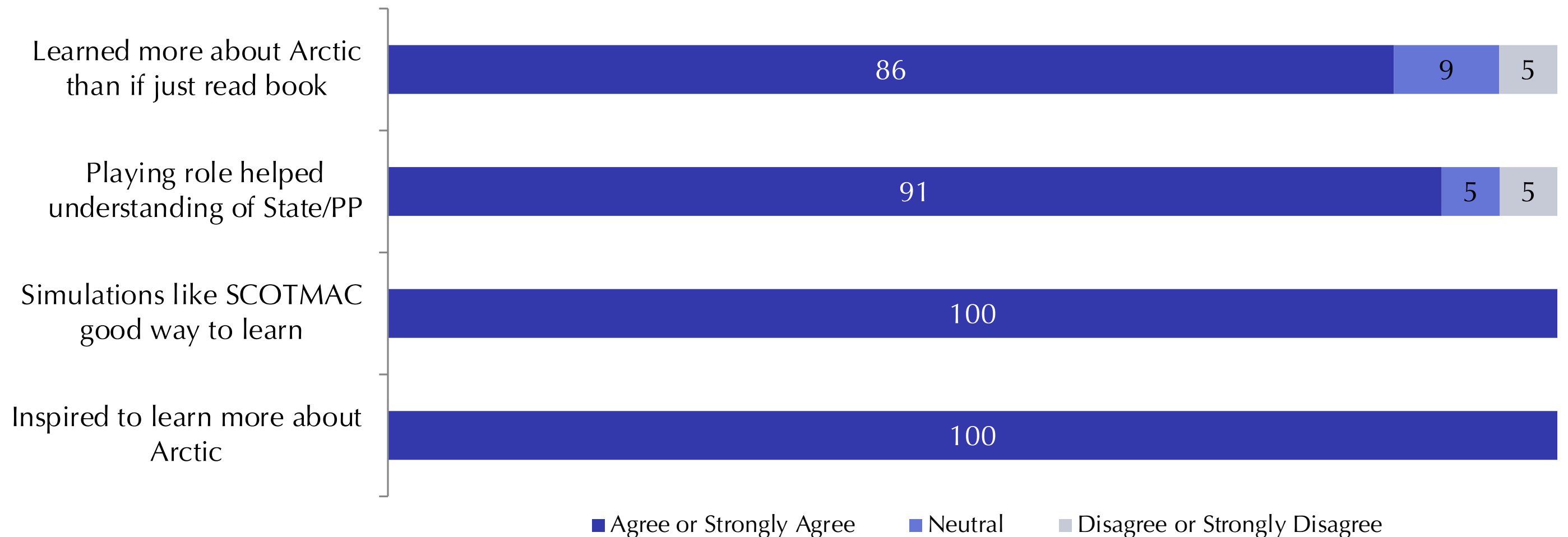


Source: Polar Aspect

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

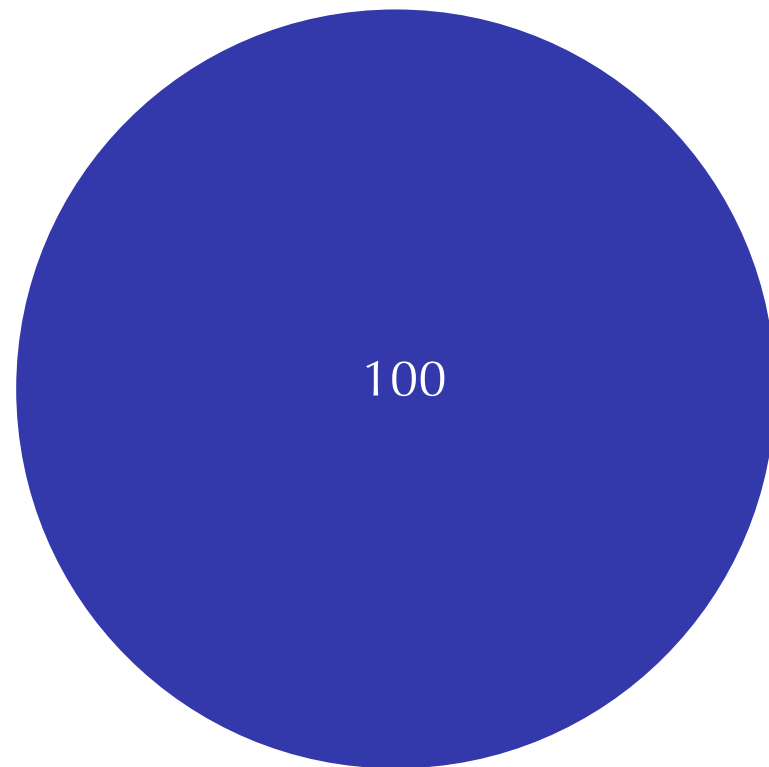
Agreement on effectiveness of learning from SCOTMAC 1

(% of responding students; n=22)

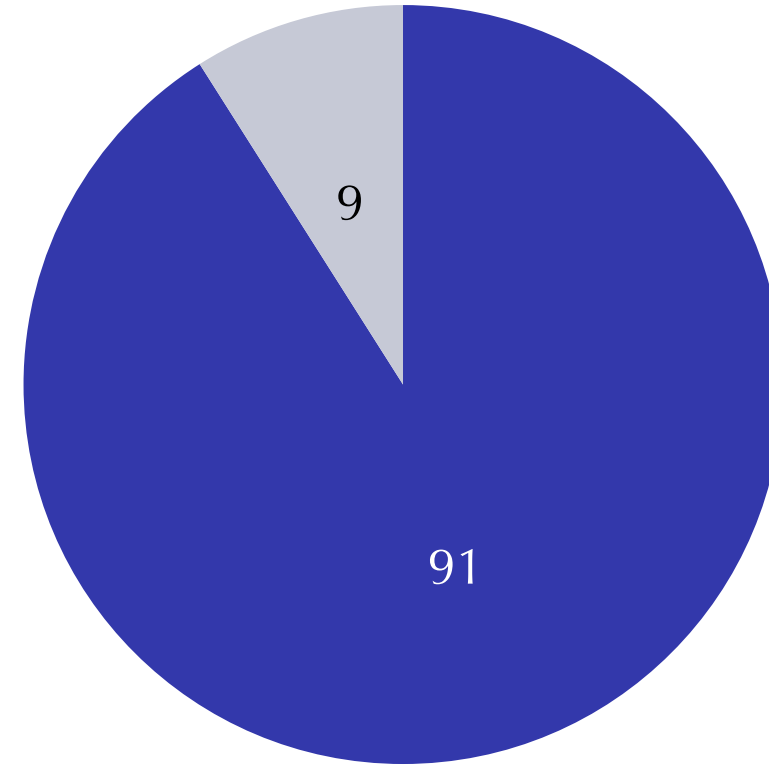


SCOTMAC 1 students would also recommend Polar Aspect MAC to others, and a great majority would do it all again

Intention to recommend (left) or repeat (right) Polar Aspect MAC
(% of responding students; n=22)



■ Yes ■ No



■ Yes ■ No

Testimonials from SCOTMAC 1 students were extremely positive overall—a selection

- *'Amazingly organised and appreciated every minute of this experience.'*
- *'The initial presentations by experts helped everyone gain more knowledge on the Arctic including environmental and social issues. The introductory speech on the Arctic as a homeland was incredibly inspiring and thought-provoking.'*
- *'Having to carry out prior research and research during the conference developed my understanding of the Arctic as a homeland, and so my image when I close my eyes is no longer just an idyllic icy background with a polar bear, but a diverse array of people, ecosystems, infrastructure and issues.'*
- *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 1 equally inspiring



Dr Anuschka Miller
Scottish Association
for Marine Science

'As a Co-host of SCOTMAC I was reminded of the pleasures of being a student and having your eyes opened to new thoughts, fields of activity and experiences.'

'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.'

'The SCOTMAC experience encouraged me to attend a UN Oceans Conference briefing discussing a draft political declaration for this summer's summit and to now explore how my institution may be able to contribute at that level.'

'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.'

SCOTMAC now intended to rotate around Scottish-Arctic Network, with SCOTMAC 2 ideally next year



Thank you very much to ScAN, SAMS, UHI and Oban!

Finally, please allow me to introduce myself



Dr Anthony Speca

- 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'd be delighted to hear from you about Polar Aspect MACs!

SCOTMAC 1 Co-host and ScAN/SAMS-UHI faculty member
Prof Finlo Cottier regrets being unable to attend today

Thank you

Dr Anthony Speca

Polar Aspect

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Prof Finlo Cottier

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