

## **KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL STUDY COURSES BY STUDENTS OF NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY**

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### ***Abstract***

*The General Studies (GS) courses are a set of Courses in the university educational system where the students are exposed to areas other than their core area of study. They are meant to broaden the students' horizon in order to produce a well- informed individual. They are usually taken in the first year of admission. Because these courses are not in the 'core' area of the students study, some tend to see GS courses as unimportant and therefore perform poorly in them. We set out to look at the knowledge, attitudes and assessment of GS courses by students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nnewi campus whose courses of study are related to human health. It is hoped that the information gained from this study will help the School of General Studies (SGS) improve the set of GS courses taken by these set of students. This is a questionnaire based study where a set of questions covering the purposes of the study are administered to students that have gone beyond the first year and had taken the GS courses. These are the set of students that we considered in a position to give a good assessment of the programme. They comprised studying the various programmes in the Nnewi campus including Environmental Health Sciences, Health Sciences and Technology, Basic Medical Sciences and Medicine. They were requested to rate the various aspects of the SGS using a scale of 5 – 1. There was also a space for free comments to accommodate for whatever issue bordering the students that we may have missed in the main body of the questionnaire. 185 respondents were analysed. The attitude of the students towards the GS courses is generally very good and they considered GS courses very relevant to whatever courses they are pursuing. The conduct of the GS examinations and the manner of the release of the results were considered excellent. They complained that the venues for the lectures are inadequate and that many of the lecturers do not give the lectures as scheduled. They thought that the buying of the GS textbooks should be made optional. On the individual courses, they considered 101, 102, 108, 109 excellent, 103, 104, 106 very good and 105 and 107 just good. This study concludes that GS courses are very relevant and the students have very good disposition towards the courses. The problems of inadequate lecture venues and some lecturers who do not give their lectures appropriately need to be addressed.*

### **Introduction**

The General Studies (GS) courses are a set of Courses in the university educational system where the students are exposed to areas other than their core area of study. All students in the university must take GS courses which are meant to broaden the students' horizon in order to produce a well- informed individual<sup>1-5</sup>. The institution of general studies in Nigerian Universities originated with the University law 1961, (E.N.L. No 21, of 1961, status 6) as the College of General Studies. The Federal Military Government, on October 22nd, 1977, directed Nigerian Universities to introduce a programme on national awareness and that the programme be made compulsory for all students in Nigerian Universities. An enabling decree was promulgated in the same year providing for the establishment and recognition of General Studies Unit in all Nigerian Universities<sup>5</sup>. Later, National Universities Commission (NUC) in 1989

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approved minimum academic requirement for General Studies for all Nigerian Universities as such General Studies Courses are compulsory for all categories of studies.

The aim of General Studies is to produce graduates capable of directing projects in fields outside their areas of specialization in order to foster societal sustainable development. The study fosters intelligibility, effective communication in English language and keep students abreast with fundamentals of the Humanities, Natural and Social Sciences thereby, empower graduates to proffer solutions to basic social problems. They are usually taken in the first year of admission to give the new students insight into various disciplines especially those they may not be facing in their university education. In some North American universities, GS is a full one year course<sup>6-7</sup>. Because these courses are not in the 'core' area of the students study, some tend to see GS courses as unimportant, pay less attention to the courses and therefore perform poorly in them. The National Universities Commission (NUC) is the agency regulating university education in Nigeria. NUC made General Studies an obligatory passage for all students running degree programmes in Nigeria stating that 'All Nigerian Universities should offer the General Studies programme which should account for 10 credit units and must be computed into the award of a degree<sup>3</sup>. It is known that the General Studies programme since first introduced has been undergoing revisions by the NUC to make it more relevant to the current realities. Consequent upon these, the Nnamdi Azikiwe University has incorporated GS programmes into her studies and created a School headed by a Director, two Deputy Directors, lecturers and administrative staff to run the School<sup>4</sup>. In view of the importance of GS courses to the overall development of the students, we set out to look at the knowledge, attitudes and assessment of GS courses by students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nnewi campus whose courses of study are related to human health. From time to time policies are reviewed, and it is important that those to be affected by these policies and guidelines make useful input to enhance the efficacy of the system. The importance of this feedback system has been recognized in some studies<sup>8-10</sup>.

It is hoped that the information gained from this study will help the School of General Studies (SGS) improve the set of GS courses taken by these set of students.

### **Aims and Objectives**

1. To assess the knowledge, attitude, and assessment/views of students who passed through the GS programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.
2. To use the information gained from this study to help the School of General Studies (SGS) improve the administration of GS courses in Nnamdi Azikiwe University and the University system in Nigeria.

### **Materials and Methods**

This is a questionnaire based study where a set of questions covering the purpose of the study are administered to students that have gone beyond the first year and had taken and passed the GS courses. These are the set of students that we considered in a position to give a good assessment of the programme using students in the Nnewi campus. They were requested to rate the various aspects of the SGS using a scale of 5 – 1. There was also a space for free comments to accommodate for whatever issue bordering the students that we may have missed in the main body of the questionnaire. The results were collated and analysed by simple statistical methods.

## Results and Discussion

185 responses were analysed. The attitude of the students towards the GS courses is generally very good (90%) and (86%) considered GS courses very relevant to whatever courses they are pursuing – Table 1. The conduct of the GS examinations and the manner of the release of the results were considered excellent (83% and 70% respectively) – Table 1. They complained that the venues for the lectures are inadequate/ poor (55%), with just 14% feeling that the lecture venues were good enough. There is urgent need to improve the lecture venues for the GS courses. The lecturers were rated high (83%) but 17% were not satisfied and suggested an improvement both in the method of teaching and the frequency of lectures. Eighty-three percent (83%) were happy with the method of conduct of GS examinations while 70% rated the manner of release of the result of GS exams as very good. However, only about thirty percent (30%) felt satisfied with the method of registration of GS courses, thirty-seven percent (37%) were not happy while 33% felt it was just good. There may be need to do a cross-sectional study to identify the real problems and proffer solutions. 63% felt happy and satisfied with buying of the GS textbooks though a few thought that it should be made optional. Almost 65% rated the staff of the SGS as friendly/ good while 35% felt that their attitude were poor/ unfriendly.

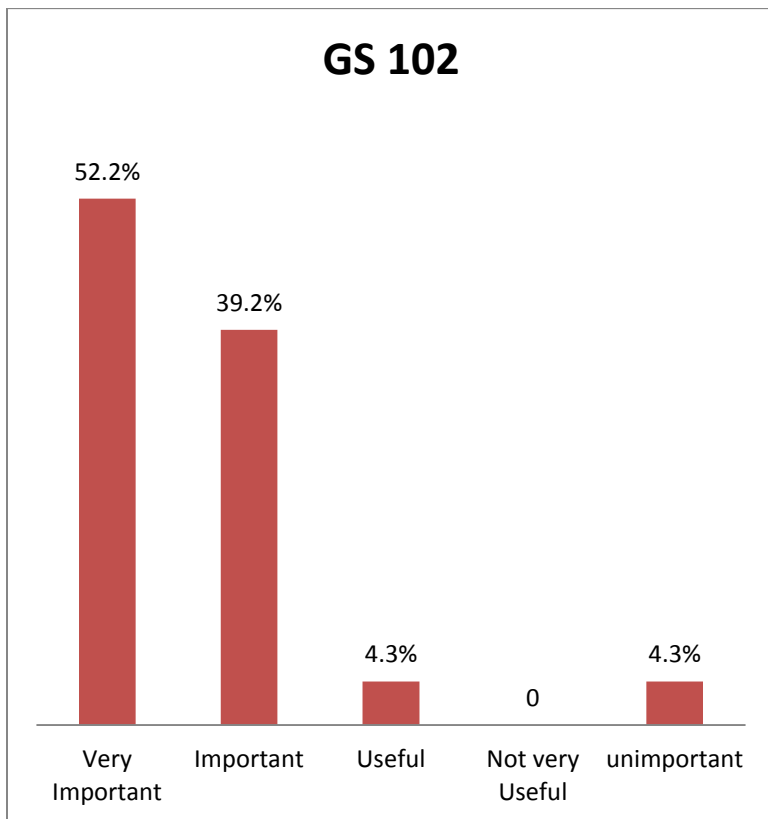
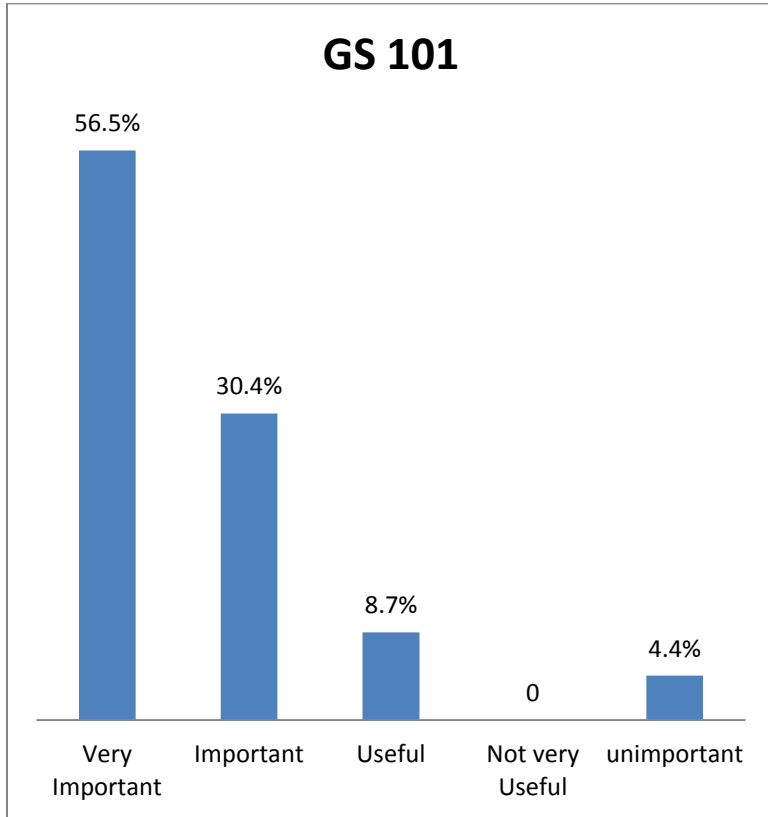
**Table 1:**  
**Responses to General Questions**

Item	Response (%)	Remarks
1. General attitude towards GS courses	Very important (5) - 27.2 Important (4) - 27.2 Useful/just good (3) - 35.5 Not useful very useful/poor (2) - 8.3 Unimportant/very poor (1) - 1.8	90% positive
2. Timing of GS courses/lectures	Very important(5) - 7.2 Important (4) - 14.5 Useful/just good (3) - 52.0 Not useful very useful/poor (2) - 17.9 Unimportant/very poor (1) - 8.4	74% satisfied
3. Adequacy of lecture venues	Very important(5) - 5.4 Important (4) - 9.1 Useful/just good (3) - 30.7 Poor (2) - 32.5 Very poor (1) - 22.3	86% Poor
4. Rating of GS lecturers	Excellent (5) - 20.5 Very good (4) - 28.1 Good (3) - 34.5 Poor (2) - 12.3 Very poor (1) - 4.6	83% Good
5. Conduct of GS exams	Excellent(5) - 33.3 Very good (4) - 22.6	83% Good

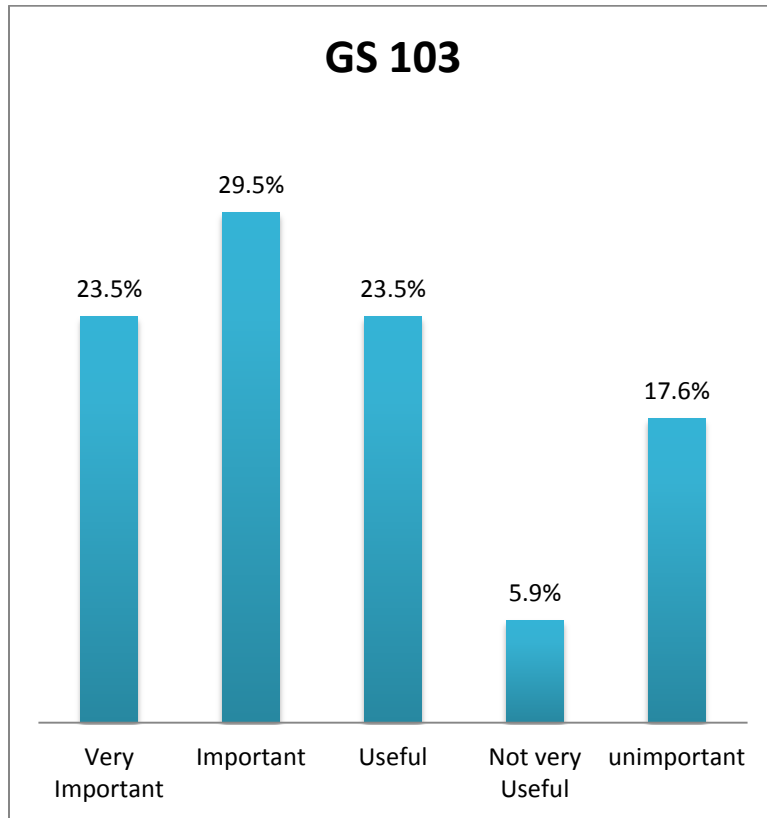
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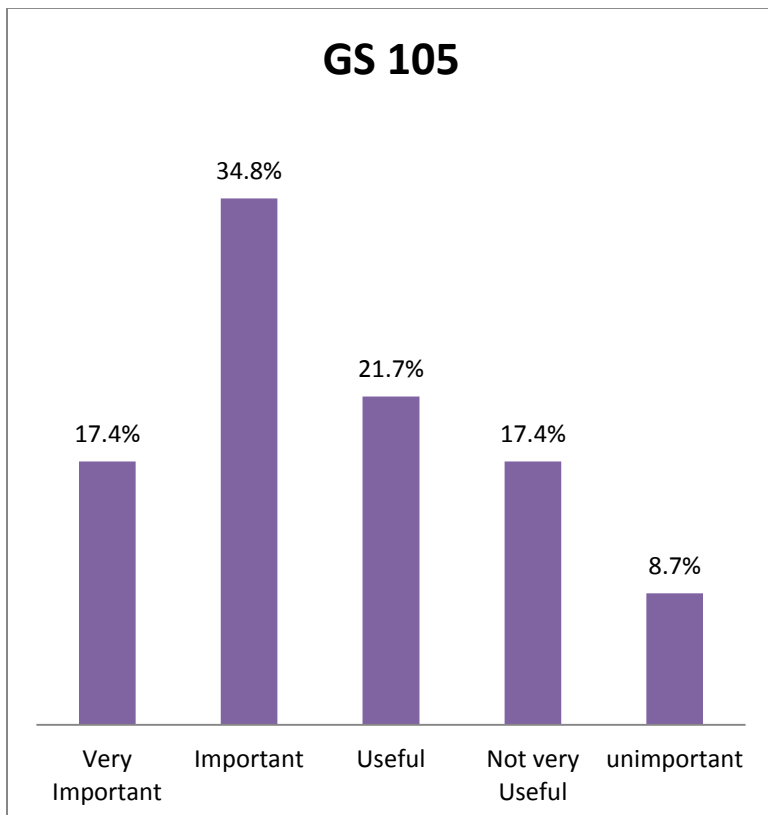
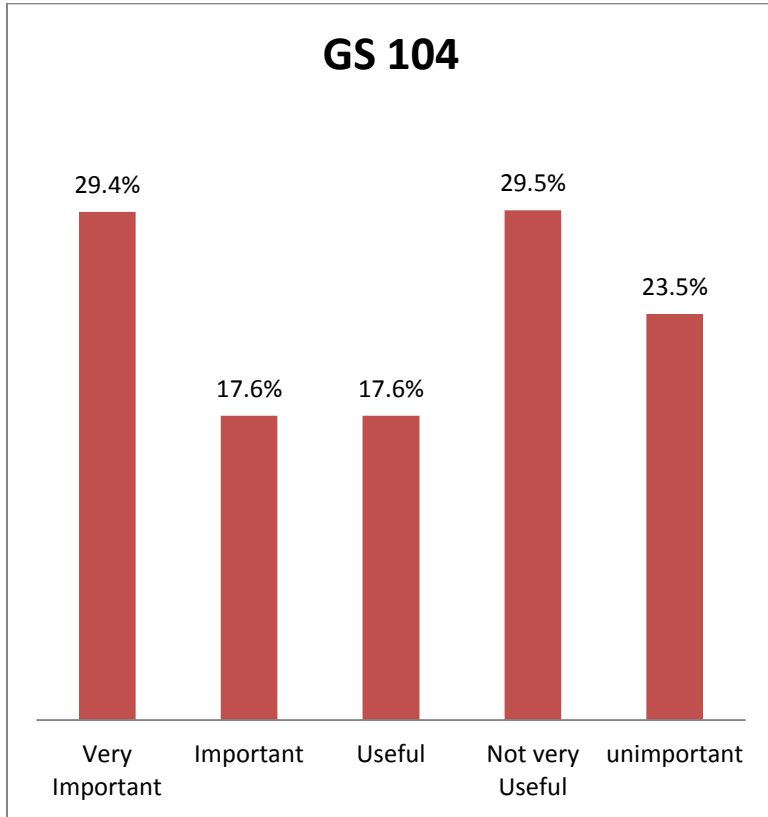
		Just good (3) - 27.4	
		Poor (2) - 11.3	
		Unimportant/very poor (1) - 5.4	
6. Release of Results	Excellent(5) - 33.3	70% Good	
		Very good (4) - 16.7	
		Just good (3) - 21.6	
		Poor (2) - 17.3	
		Unimportant/very poor (1) - 11.1	
7. Method of Course registration	Excellent(5) - 12.0	70% Good	
		Very good (4) - 17.3	
		Just good (3) - 33.5	
		Poor (2) - 18.6	
		Unimportant/very poor (1) - 18.6	
8. Buying of GS textbooks	Very important(5) - 13.8	63% satisfied	
		Important (4) - 19.8	
		Useful/just good (3) - 29.9	
		Not useful very useful/poor (2) - 17.9	
		Unimportant/very poor (1) - 18.6	
9. Attitude of GS Staff to students	Excellent(5) - 13.0	70% Good	
		Very good (4) - 19.7	
		Just good (3) - 32.1	
		Poor (2) - 20.4	
		Unimportant/very poor (1) - 14.8	
10. Relevance of GS courses to students	Very important(5) - 42.8	90% positive	
		Important (4) - 27.7	
		Useful/just good (3) - 15.6	
		Not useful very useful/poor (2) - 9.8	
		Unimportant/very poor (1) - 4.1	

On the individual courses, they considered 101, 102, 108, 109 excellent, 103, 104, 106 very good and 105 and 107 just good. The responses are presented graphically below.

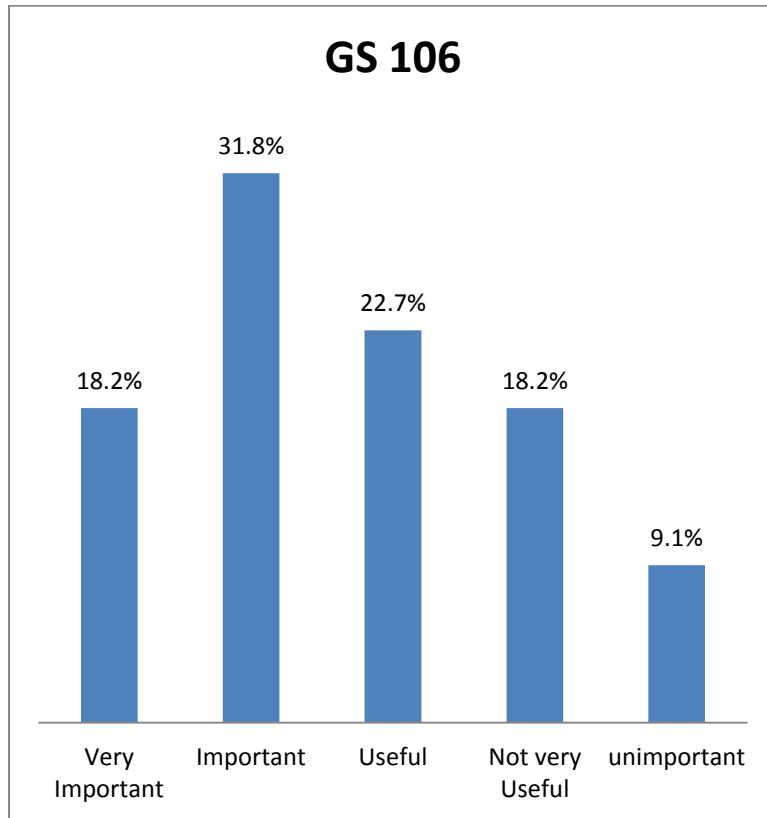


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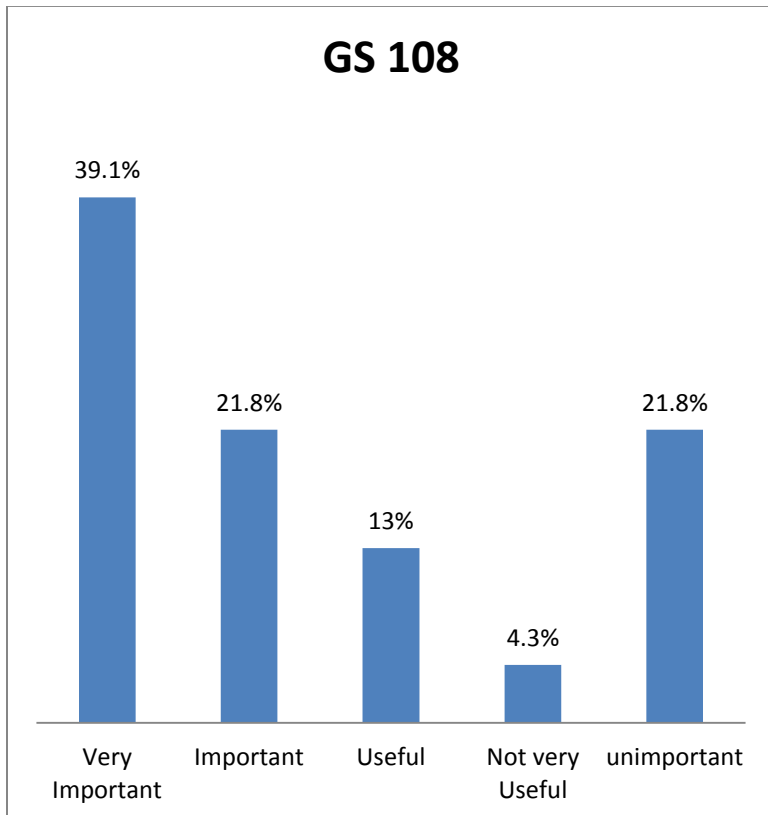
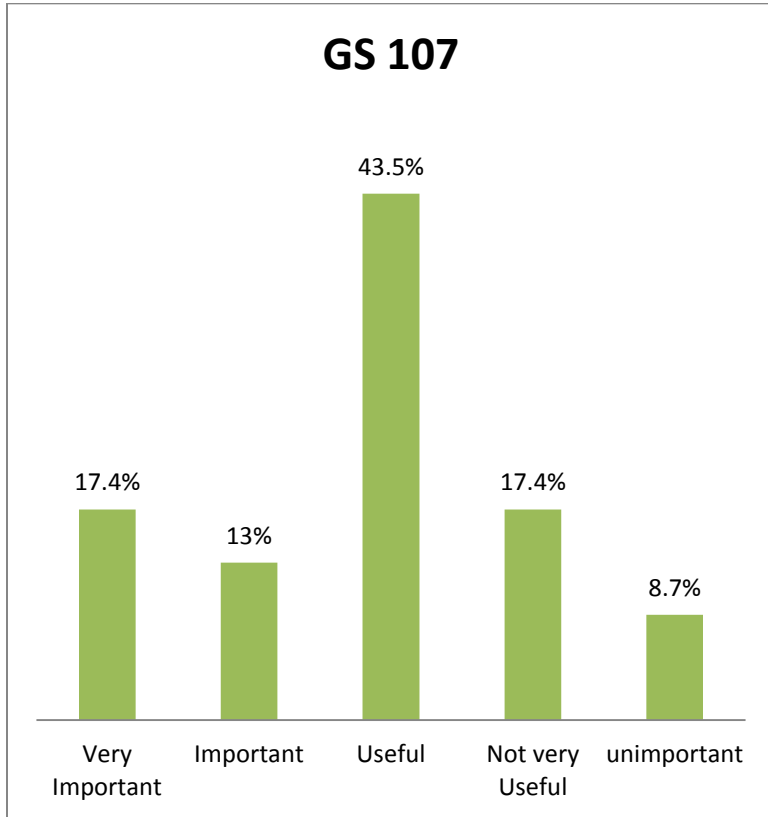




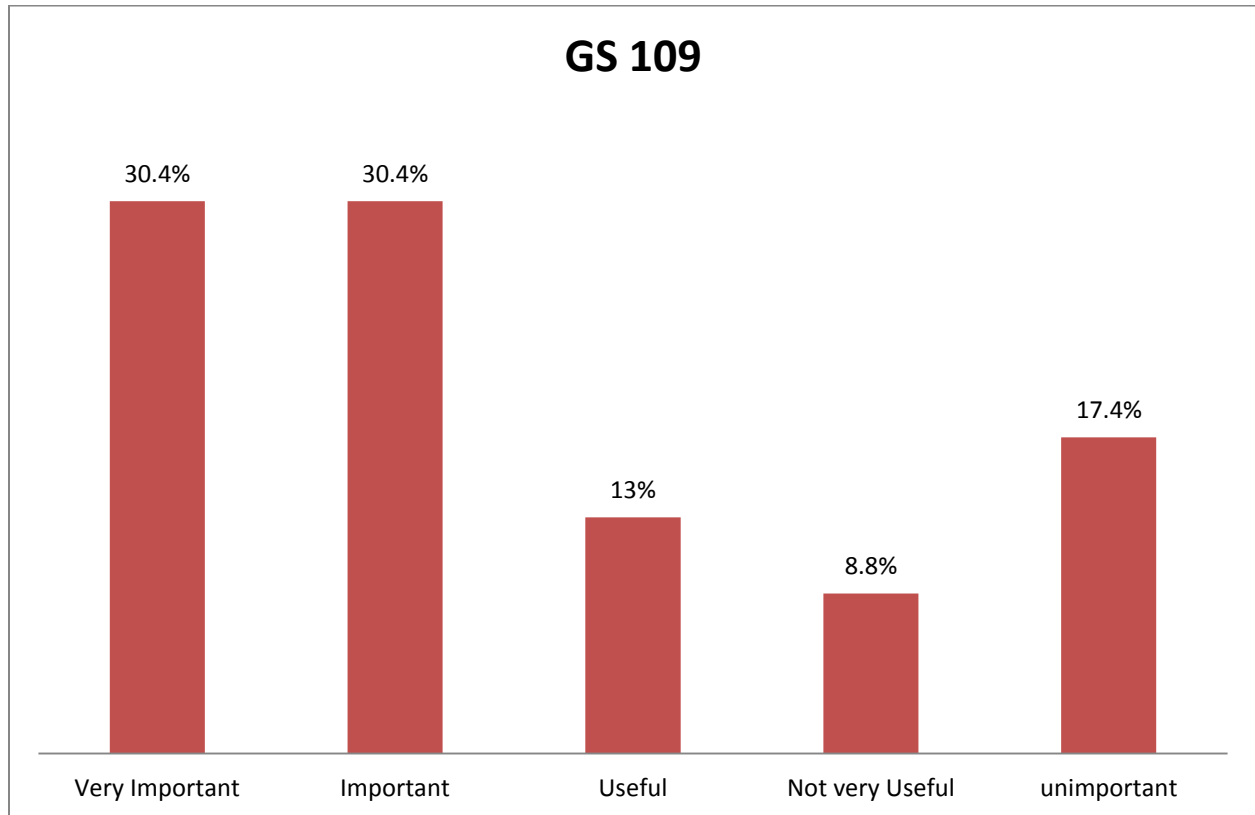
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### **Conclusion**

General Study (GS) courses are very relevant and the students have very good disposition towards the courses. The current method of administering the programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University is very good and acceptable to the students. Adequate well equipped lecture venues need to be provided for GS course. The problem of some lecturers who do not give their lectures appropriately need to be addressed.

### **Recommendations**

1. General Study courses should be sustained and strengthened.
2. Lecture venues large enough to accommodate the expected students need to be provided and properly equipped.
3. A study on the perceived difficulties with registration process to be done to further improve the services rendered by the School of General Studies.

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## Questionnaire

### The knowledge, Attitude and Assessment of Usefulness of General Study (GS) Courses

Score on a scale of 5 : 1=very poor/ unimportant, 2= poor/not very useful, 3 = good/just useful, 4= very good/important, 5= excellent/excited/very important.

1. What was your attitude towards the GS courses generally?.....
2. What is your view about the timing of GS courses in relation to other courses?.....
3. What is your view about the adequacy of the lecture venues?.....
4. How would you rate the GS lecturers.....
5. How would you rate the conduct of GS examinations.....
6. How would you rate the manner of release of release of GS results.....
7. Method of registration of GS courses.....
8. Buying of GS textbooks.....
9. How student friendly is the School of General Studies?.....

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10. How relevant do you think the GS courses are to you.....

11. Rate the GS courses according to how useful/important you think they are to you;

- GS 101.....
- GS 102.....
- GS 103.....
- GS 104.....
- GS 105.....
- GS 106.....
- GS 107.....
- GS 108.....
- GS 109.....

Kindly make suggestions for improvement of the GS programme

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Thank you.