

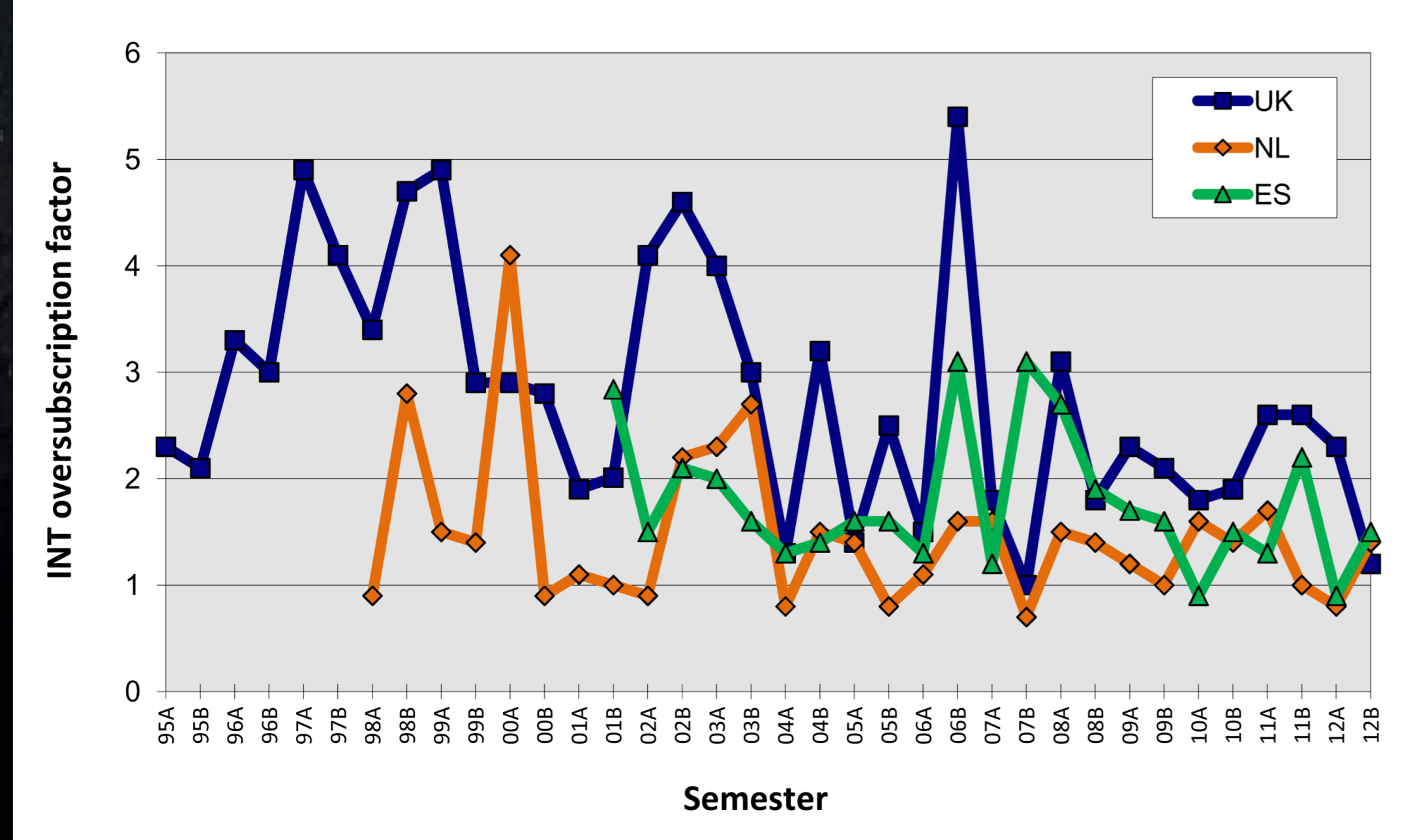
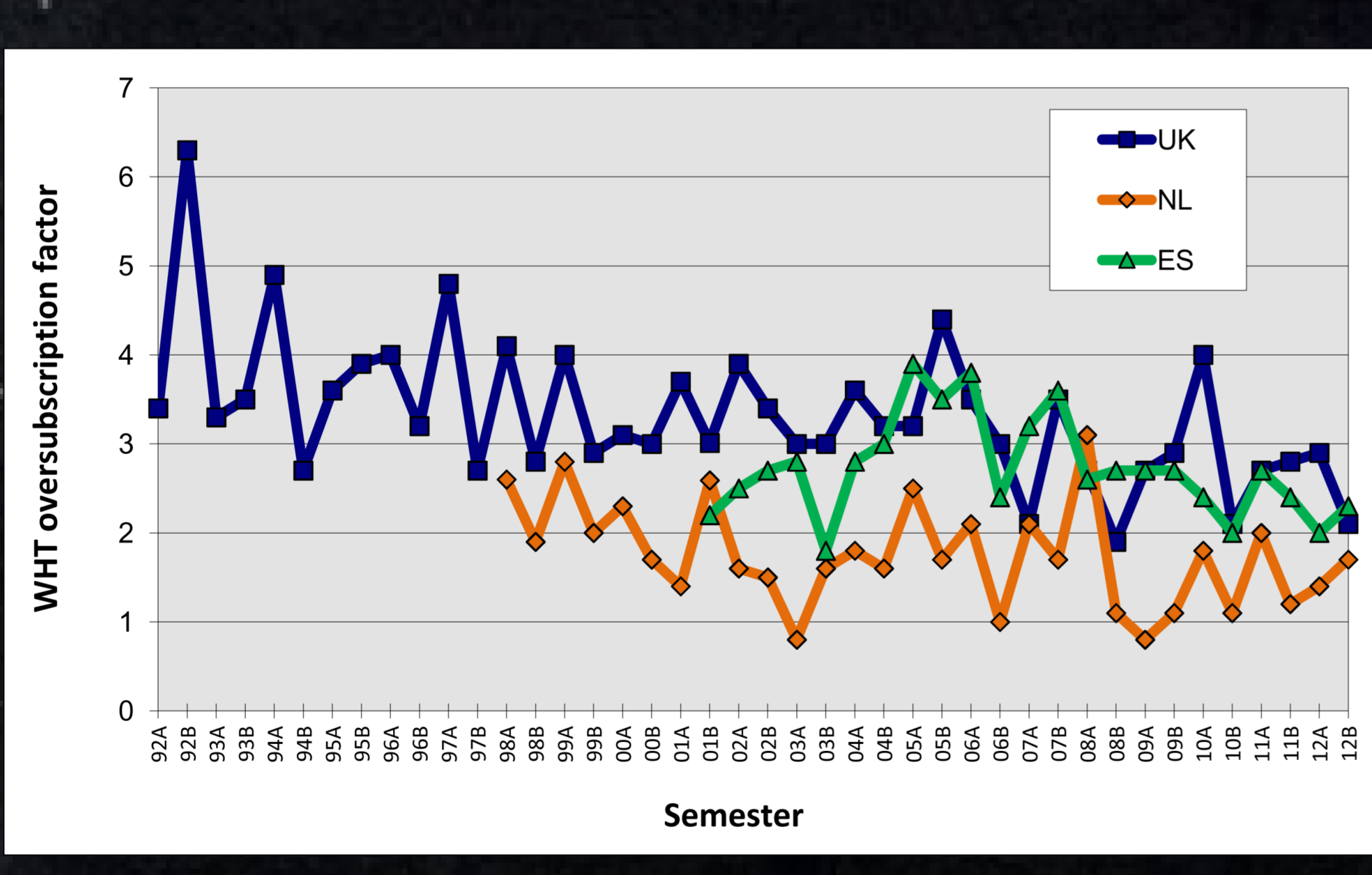
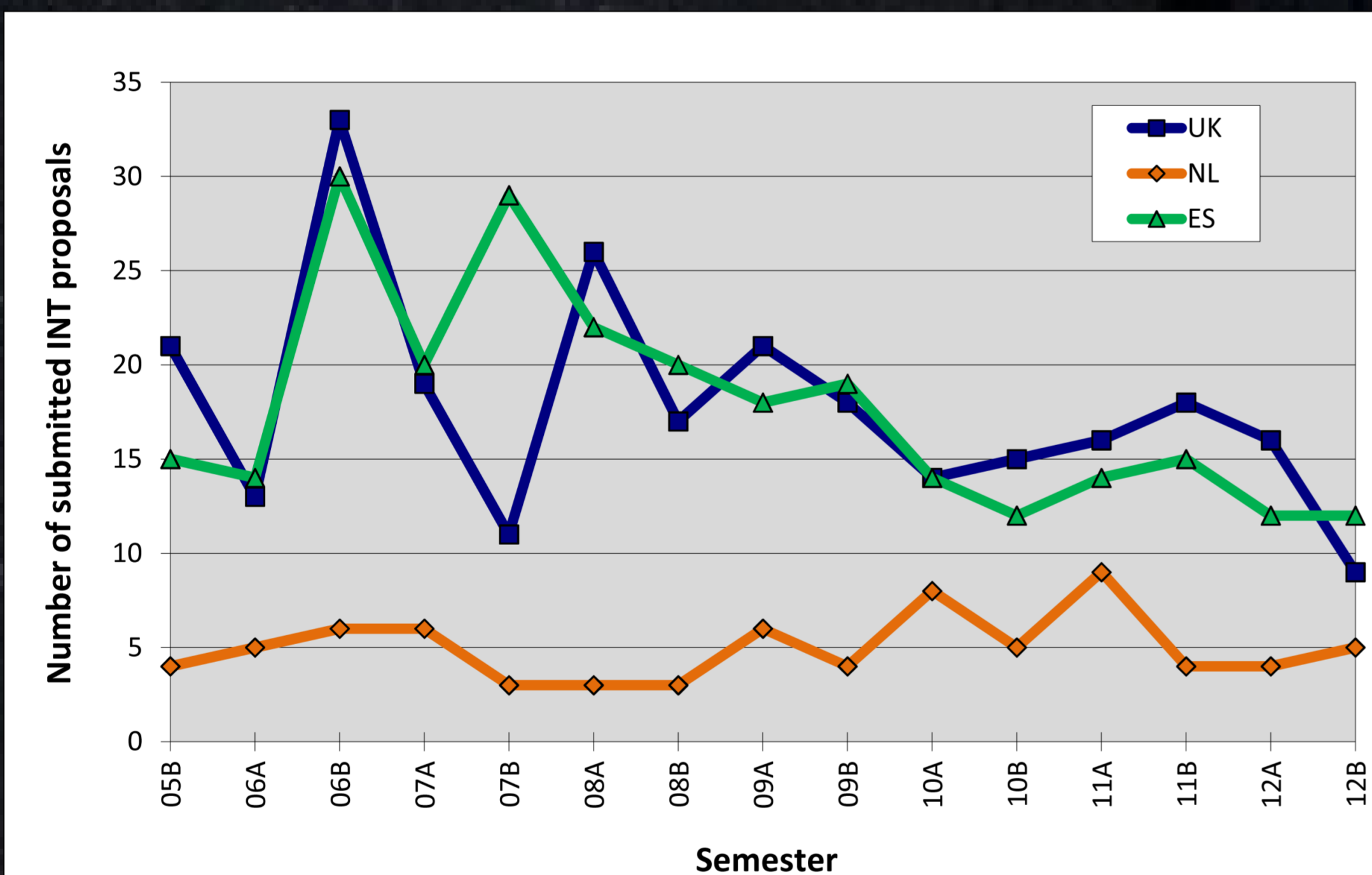
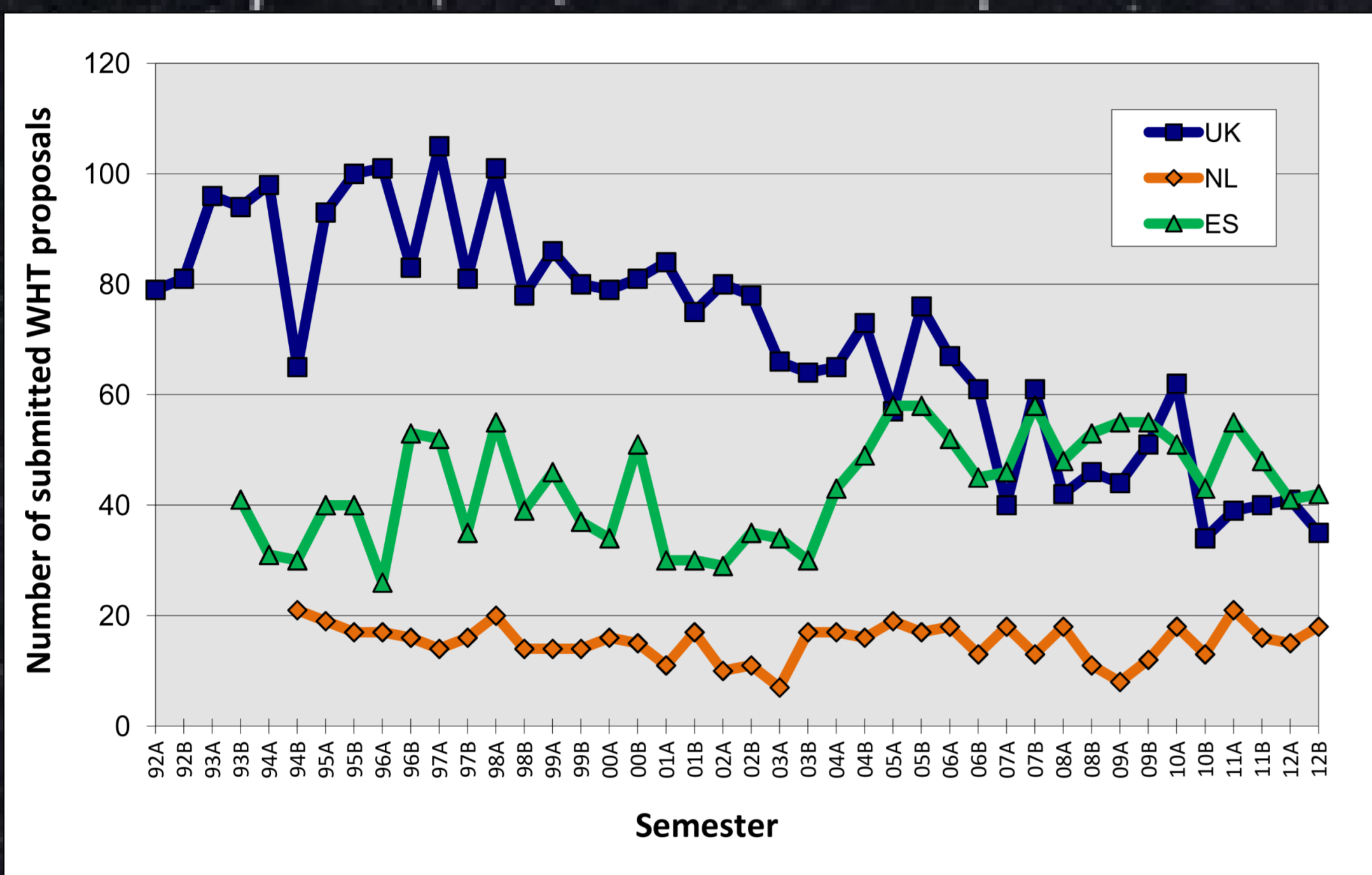


The User Base

The ING scientific community comprises astronomers from the Netherlands (NL), Spain (ES) and the United Kingdom (UK). In 2002 the UK became a member of ESO and Spain joined ING as a full operating partner, and the time available to the operating countries changed from the historical values of 15% (NL), 20% (ES) and 60% (UK) to reflect the new levels of financial contribution. The present division of time between the operating partners is 28% (NL), 34% (ES) and 33% (UK). The remaining 5% of time is devoted to large-scale international time projects (ITP).

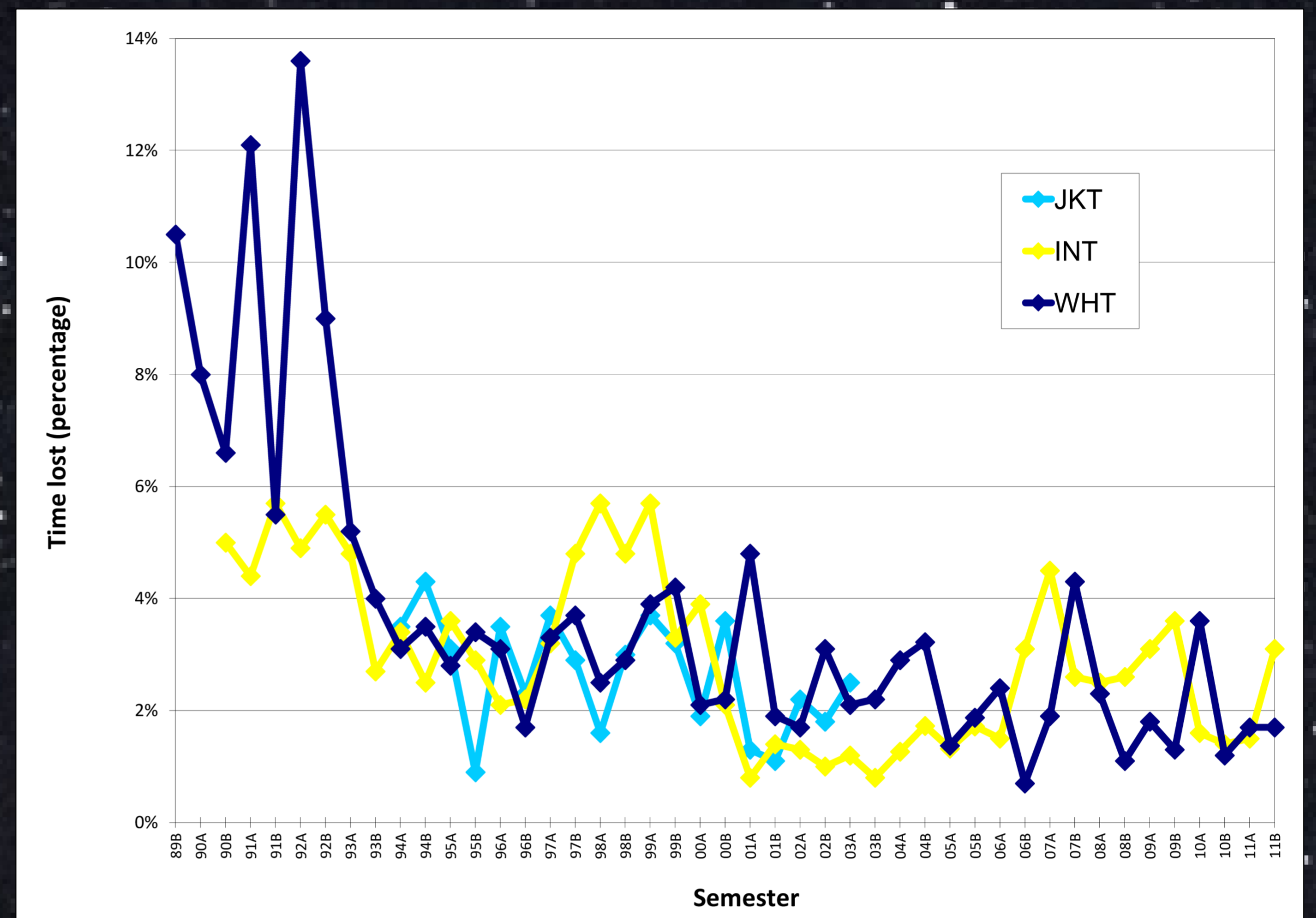
Time Allocation

Telescope proposals are accepted bi-annually and observing awards for each semester are made by time allocation committees (TACs) sitting in the NL, ES and the UK. Demand for observing time is high; the diagrams show the numbers of proposals submitted from each community and the levels of oversubscription.



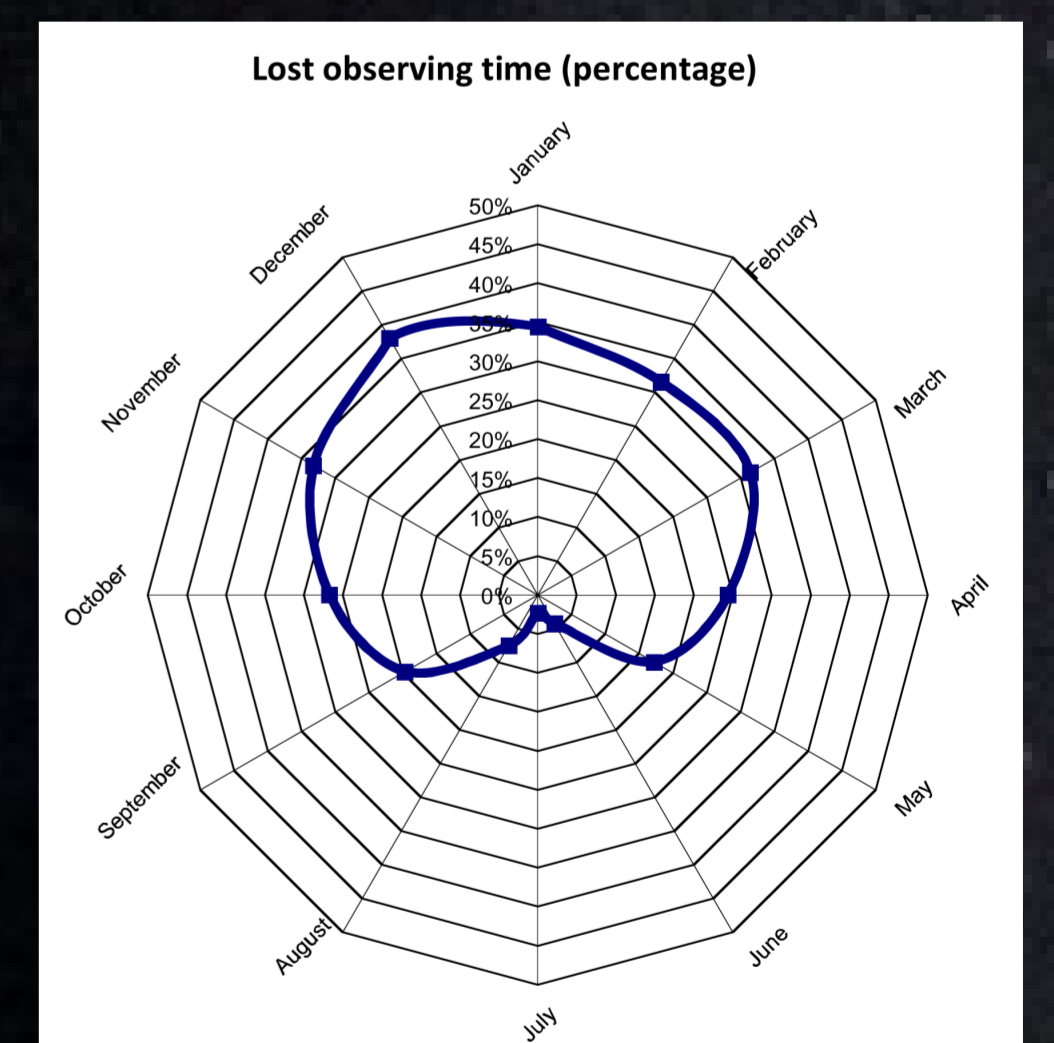
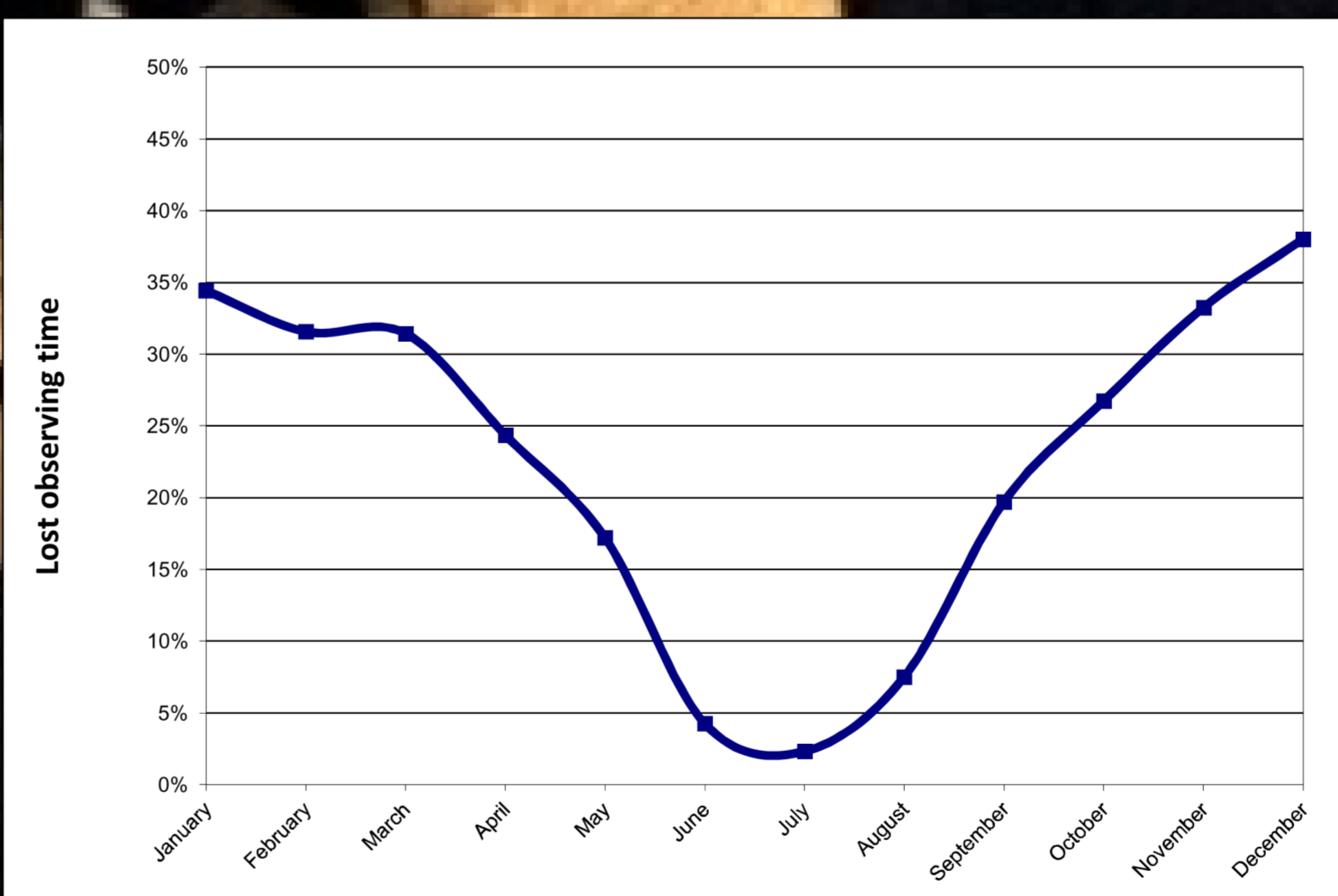
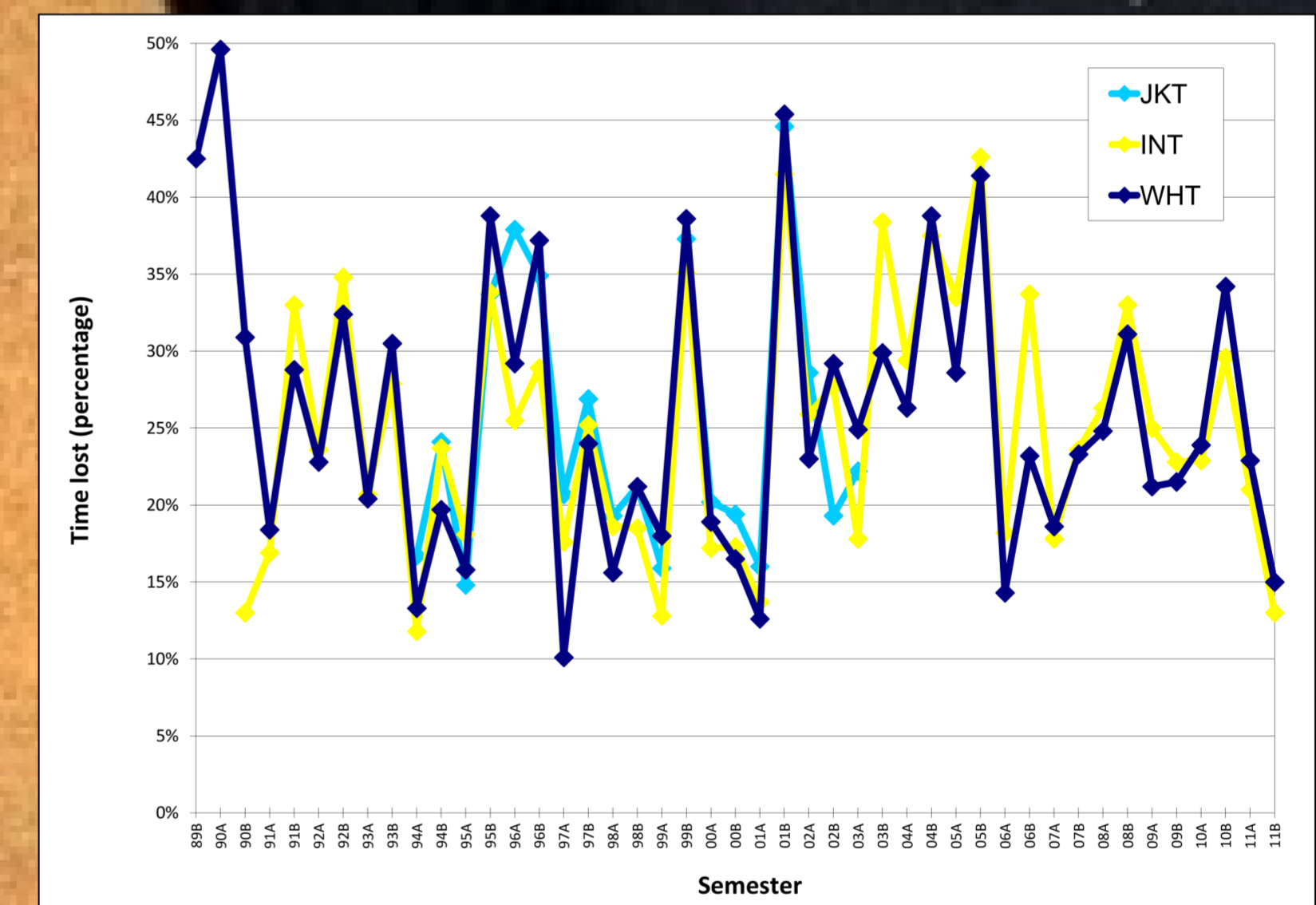
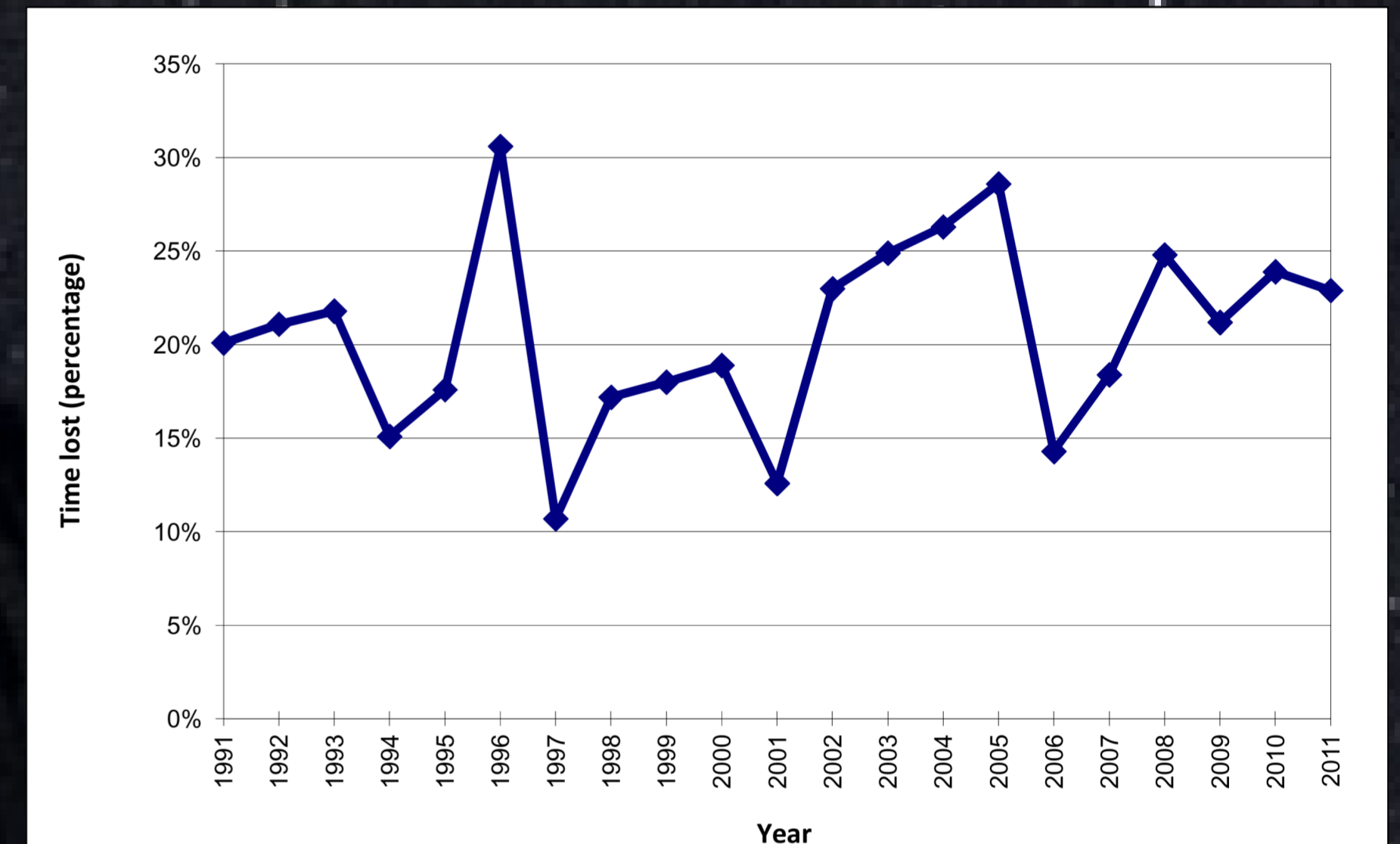
Technical Downtime

The WHT and its instrumentation demonstrate a high degree of technical reliability. The diagram shows technical downtime expressed as a percentage of scheduled time; in recent semesters this figure is generally less than 3%.



Site Quality

The WHT is situated on a world-class astronomical site. Observing time lost due to bad weather is only ~5% in the summer months, rising to a peak of ~40% in winter. About 85% of clear weather is photometric and the median seeing is ~0.7 arc-second.



User Satisfaction

Users of ING facilities leave with a positive impression of their experience; 88% rate their level of satisfaction as either 'good' or 'excellent'.

