

Support for mid-career researchers: quantitative report

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Awareness and support when applying for funding

- Awareness of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was low among respondents (57% unaware), and even lower for its medical equivalents, regardless of clinical or non-clinical status. Furthermore, 50% of the sample felt that the clarity of information at the application stage surrounding the support they would be entitled to was lacking to some extent. However, the process of writing supporting statements was slightly more positively received, with 71% reporting that this content was discussed with them.

Roles and responsibilities

- The majority felt the responsibilities for both the award funder and themselves as individuals were made clear (74% and 72% agreeing, respectively), but 33% felt clarity around the responsibilities of the host institution were not made clear.
- 74% reported they had an identifiable point of contact for administrative and financial support. This figure drops to 63% for academic and research support, and 42% for mentoring and pastoral support.
- In all areas of support, the sponsor/mentor was most likely to deliver it (compared to institutional support leads, and other contacts), suggesting that this is the most influential or involved role when it comes to awardee support.

Experiences with support

- 57% agreed that they received sufficient support as part of their award, and 54% felt satisfied with the support they had received.
- The most consistently delivered form of support was access to equipment, facilities and lab/office space (85-88%), whereas receiving a permanent post or promotion post-award was the least delivered upon, with only 57% receiving this. This was the most reported issue amongst those dissatisfied with support (30%).
- There was a widespread lack of awareness of the processes and policies to address unfulfilled support, with 61% feeling unsure if these were in place.
- 22% did not feel confident raising concerns about unfulfilled support, and this figure rises for those who do not have a clearly defined contact for mentoring support.
- Only 36% of respondents who had raised concerns about unfulfilled support felt satisfied with how these were dealt with.

Career development

- Awareness around policies for career progression was high (71%), but there was less agreement that the decision-making process for progression is clear (42% agree) and that access to advice on career development is easily available (36% agree).
- Training around management and leadership was the most consistently delivered (69%), but 7% of the sample had not received training in any of the areas listed in the survey.

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- In 2019 the Medical Research Council (MRC, a Council within UKRI), National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), and Wellcome wrote to Vice-Chancellors, Deans, and Principals of Medical Schools and Universities to highlight the importance of institutional support for academic trainees and mid-career researchers. They expressed concern that agreements to support these researchers were being ignored once the funding had been secured.
- The three bodies commissioned Shift Insight to conduct multi-method research to help better understand the pressures that contribute to this poor support for these groups, with a view to implementing positive change. The research focuses on the support received from three funders: MRC, Wellcome, and NIHR.
- The research explores the following areas:

Support for awardees:

- Compliance with concordats and obligations
- Go-to support
- Clear escalation route

How expectations are set:

- Clarity of application guidance
- Statement of support sharing
- Supervisor advice

How expectations are delivered upon:

- Satisfaction with expectations vs delivery
- What was delivered

Long-term career development:

- Access to leadership
- Access to mentorship
- Access to careers advice

This report includes the results from the quantitative research stage. A further report detailing findings from the qualitative research is to follow.

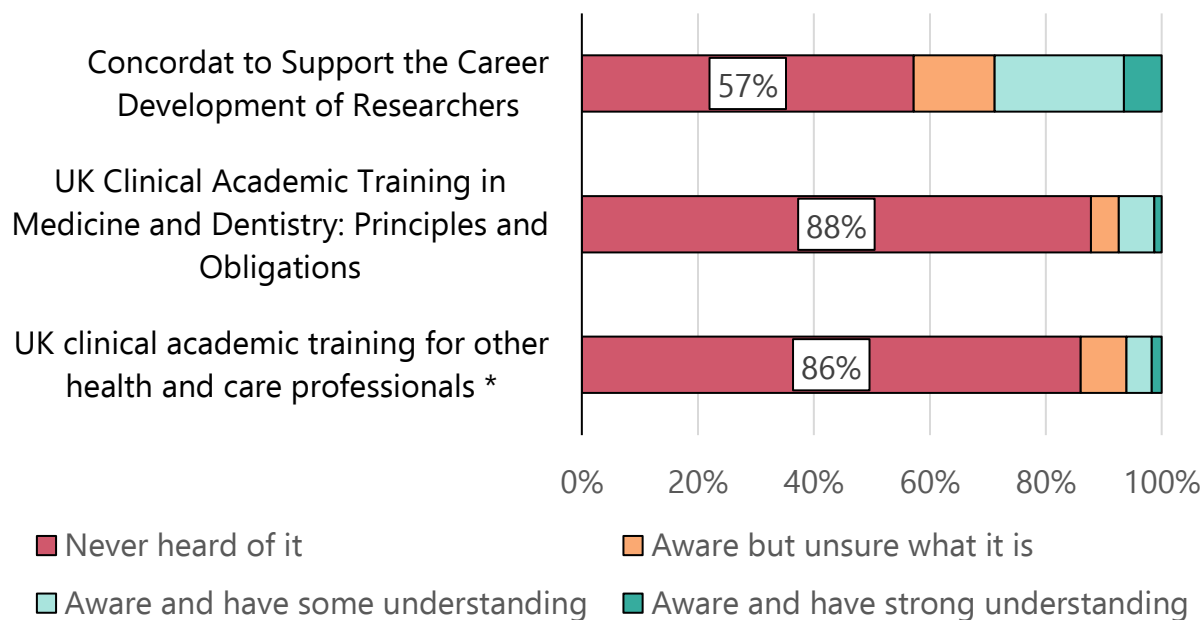
- The survey was developed by Shift in close collaboration with all three funding bodies (MRC, NIHR, Wellcome). Multiple meetings took place with the representative leads to sign-off questions in the survey development phase, so all stakeholders were able to input into the design of the survey questions.
- Shift Insight conducted **10 cognitive interviews** to ensure topics covered in the online survey were relevant and that the survey was up-to-date, understandable, and representative of this particular mid-career researcher community.
- Shift then constructed an online survey, with the aim of receiving representative responses across the UK, both in terms of geography and institution type. The survey was launched in Q1 of 2022. It was distributed via various channels from each of the three bodies to ensure the most accurate reach possible. The total sample of usable responses in this survey was 229.
- Weighting was not used since this could skew the data. This is because there is no exact population data on the number of mid-career researchers– therefore, weighting could result in some groups being over- or underrepresented.
- Respondents who were in a job role deemed too junior or too senior were **screened out** and their responses were not used for data analysis. Respondents were working in/closely affiliated with Biomedical Sciences, Computer and Mathematical Sciences, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering, Medical & Health Sciences, Life/Biological Sciences or Social Sciences & Humanities. A full profile of respondents has been provided in the appendix of this report.
- Details of data processing and analysis can be found in a separate technical report. We used Q Research software for data analysis. By default, Q conducts various tests of **statistical significance** on tables, such as independent t-tests and Chi-square tests, where applicable. Multiple-comparisons correction is applied where appropriate. A p-value of 0.05 is used for significance testing. We check the data size of each significant result to ensure we feel confident in reporting on it – for example, that there is a sufficient n size of a given cell (e.g. <10).
- **Limitations of this research** included a lack of representation of respondents from Wales or Northern Ireland. Responses from those based at UK higher education institutions also dominated the sample (88%). Of these HEI respondents, 89% came from Russell Group institutions. Those working in/affiliated with Life and Medical Sciences were also overrepresented, with Physical Sciences and Engineering representing 2% of the sample, and Computer and Mathematical Sciences and Social Sciences & Humanities each representing 1%.

Awareness and support when applying for funding

A majority of awardees had never heard of the relevant support concordats

- In discussions of support for mid-career researchers, it is helpful to begin with the awareness this group has around what they are entitled to. One of the simplest to provide this context is awareness of official policy regarding support, namely the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (and its medical equivalents) where necessary.

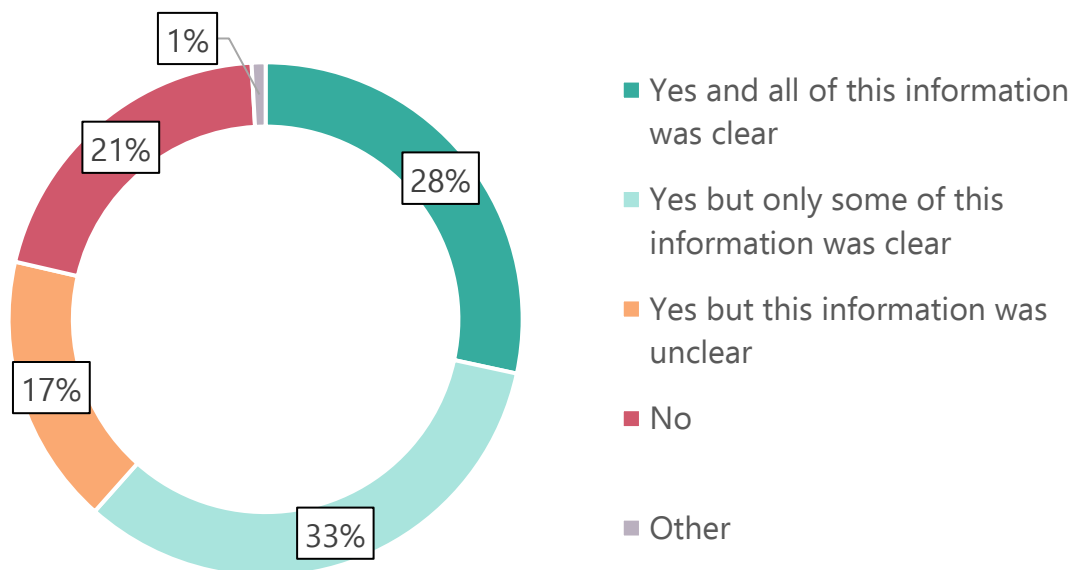
Q: Are you aware of the following?



- Over half of the sample had never heard of the Concordat, while only 29% were aware of it and had understanding of what it is. This sets an interesting precedent for the rest of this report: most awardees were navigating their research landscape unaware of the support standards that all parties should be held accountable to.
- Similarly, 88% of the sample had never heard of the UK Clinical Academic Training in Medicine and Dentistry: Principles and Obligations. However it should be noted that the majority of our sample were not clinically-qualified.
- Awareness and knowledge of the Clinical Principles and Obligations increased to 25% when looking at just those who were clinically-qualified, versus just 1% for those who aren't. However, 64% of clinically-qualified respondents had still never heard of the Clinical Principles and Obligations. Figures were similar for the Principles and Obligations for Nurses, Midwives, AHPs and other Healthcare Professionals.
- There were no differences in understanding of these documents by funder, university type, or demographics. This suggests that these documents may not be distributed, or at least signposted to, effectively. Additional promotion of relevant obligations may provide researchers with more agency in seeking the support they are entitled to.

Many awardees were made aware of entitled support, but it was not always clear

Q: Were you made aware of what career support you would be entitled to from your host organisation as part of your award during the application stage?



The following definition of ‘career support’ was provided within the survey:

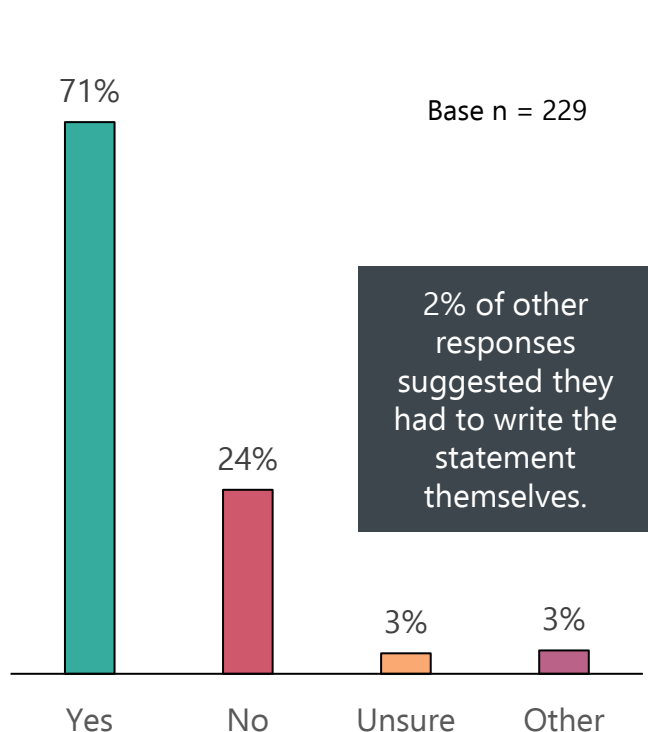
Career support may include research support, administrative support, access to labs or equipment, availability of PhD students or staff, as well as career development opportunities.

- Even though a majority of respondents had not heard of the relevant concordats, 79% were made aware of the career support they would be entitled to during the application stage. However, a most of these (representing 50% of the entire sample) felt that the clarity of information surrounding this support was lacking to some extent.
- 21% of all respondents felt that they were not made aware of the career support they were entitled to. This suggests that support is not being outlined clearly and effectively enough at the outset of awards, and that discussion around this with awardees may be lacking.
- Interestingly, there were no statistically significant differences in awareness of entitled support between those who did and did not have an understanding of the Concordat or either version of the medical Principles or Obligations. This suggests that those who are aware of these do not necessarily go to extra lengths to seek out what support they are entitled to.

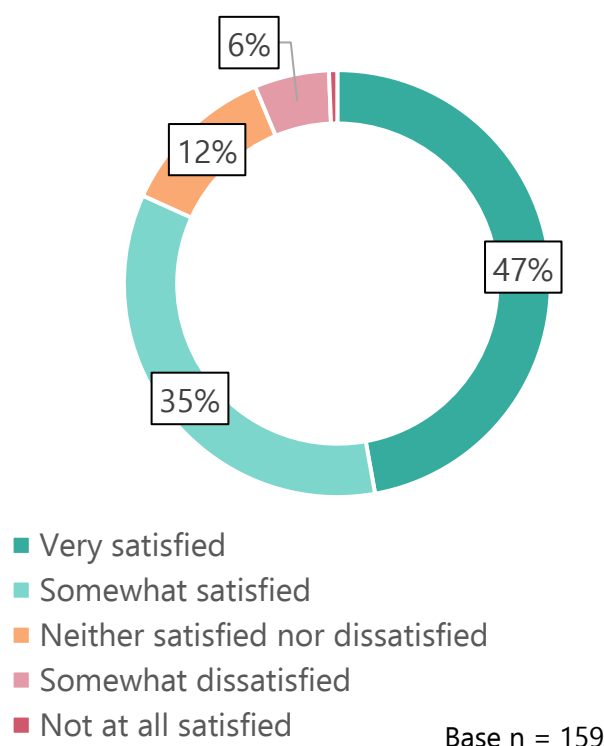
Discussions regarding supporting statements were mostly helpful and informative for awardees

- The supporting statement, a key part of the application stage, is designed to be written collaboratively with awardees, and may be key in allowing them to understand the support they may be eventually offered.

Q: Was the content of [the supporting statement/letter] discussed with you as part of the application process*?



Q: How satisfied were you with the discussions you had to provide this statement/letter?

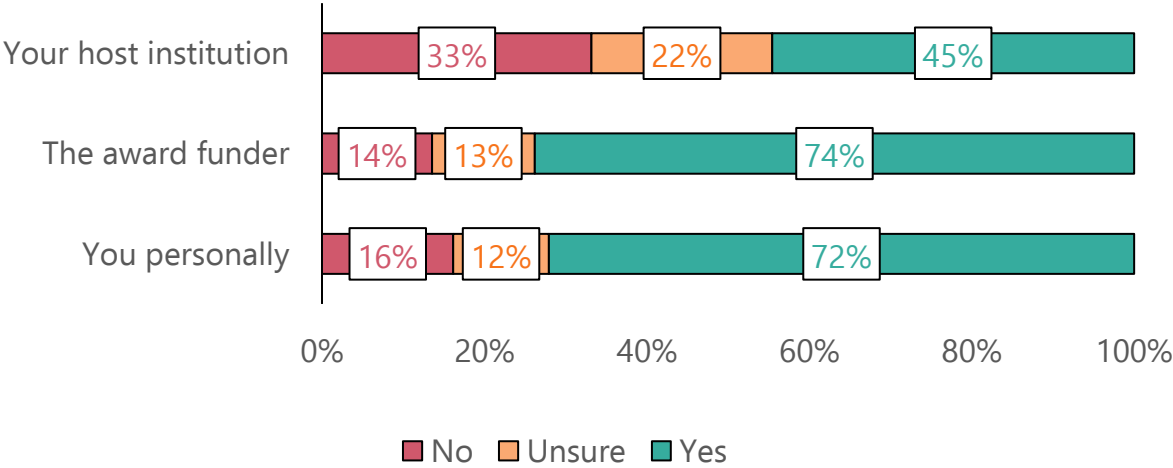


- 71% of the overall sample had the content of their supporting letter/statement discussed with them as part of their application process. There were very little differences to this figure when looking at job role and length of award, as well as both funder and institution type.
- Of the respondents who had had their supporting letter/statement discussed with them, 82% were satisfied with these discussions. Only 10 respondents overall felt unsatisfied with this discussion.
- When asked for further detail, these respondents specified that they had been expected to write the letter themselves, that there had been no input from the Head of Department, or both. They felt that promises made in the discussion, particularly around availability of PhD students and access to facilities, were not upheld.

Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities of host institutions were communicated less clearly than the responsibilities of funders and researchers

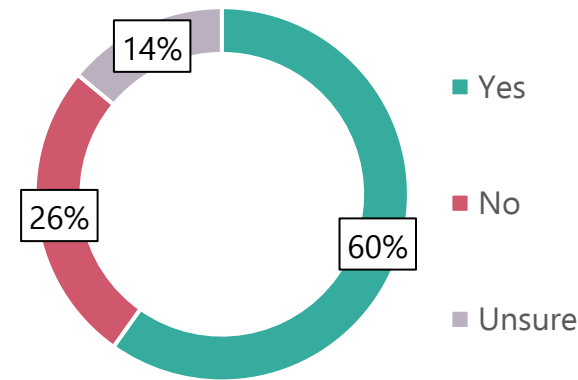
Q: When you had been awarded your grant/fellowship, was there transparency and clarity on what the responsibilities were for each of the following parties in relation to career support?



- Whilst the majority of the sample believed that the responsibilities for both the award funder and themselves as individuals were made clear and transparent (74% and 72% agreeing, respectively), clarity around the responsibilities of the host institution were much lower, with a third feeling these were not made clear.
- This figure changes depending on institution type. Those working at research institutes were more likely to agree that the responsibilities of their host institution were clear (67% yes) than those at universities or HEIs (44% yes). However, it should be noted that those working at research institutes were a minority in the sample (7%). There were no notable differences between those working at Russell Group institutions versus those within other HEI categories.
- Those in the job role Senior Lecturer (or equivalents) were most likely to feel that their own responsibilities were made clear (82% yes), whereas Independent Fellows / Personal Fellowship Holders were least likely (62% yes). There was little difference between those who were and were not clinically qualified.

Good relationships with mentors were key to effective career support delivery

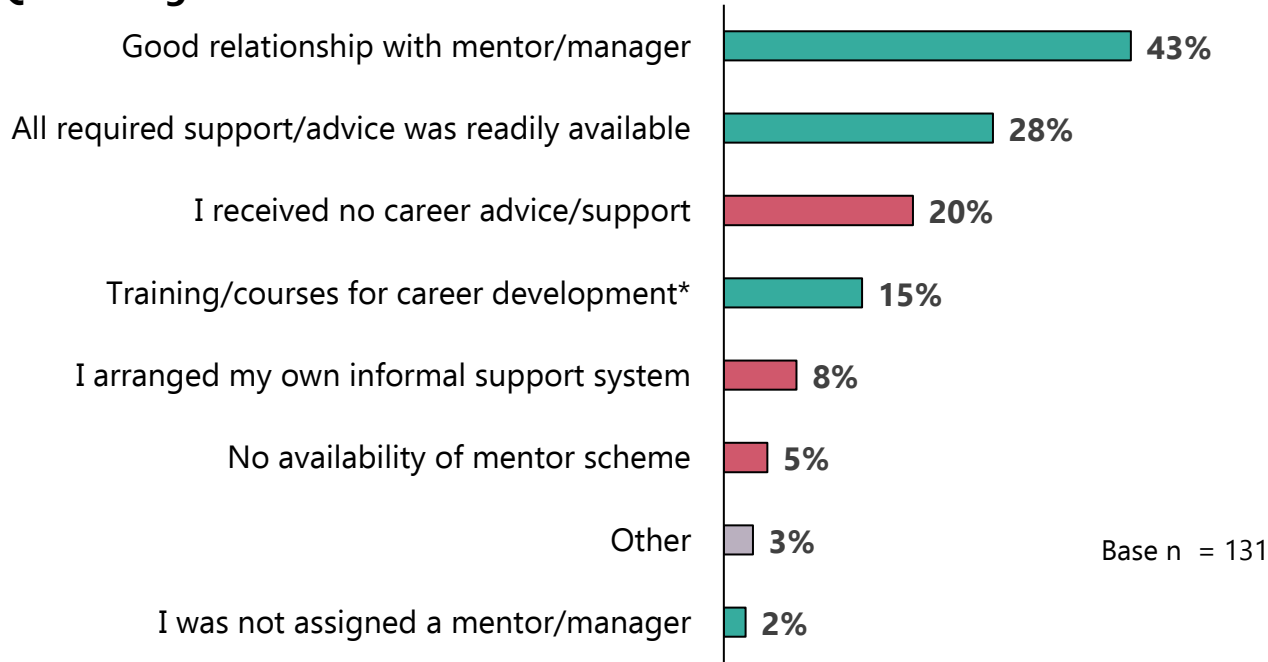
Q: Was there advice or guidance provided from your supervisor, sponsor or a mentor in relation to receiving career support?



Base n = 229

- Clarity around available career support at the outset of awards appears to be key to awardees eventually receiving that support. 75% of those who had had clear career support discussed with them prior to starting had received advice or guidance from their sponsor/mentor.
- Likewise, 75% of those who felt that the responsibilities of the host institution had been made clear to them at the outset had also received this career support.
- Of those who had received career advice or guidance, many cited the good personal relationship they had with their mentor, suggesting this is key to ensuring this support is delivered. This is further supported by the 13% who either had no mentor scheme available and/or arranged their own informal support.

Q: Please give more details



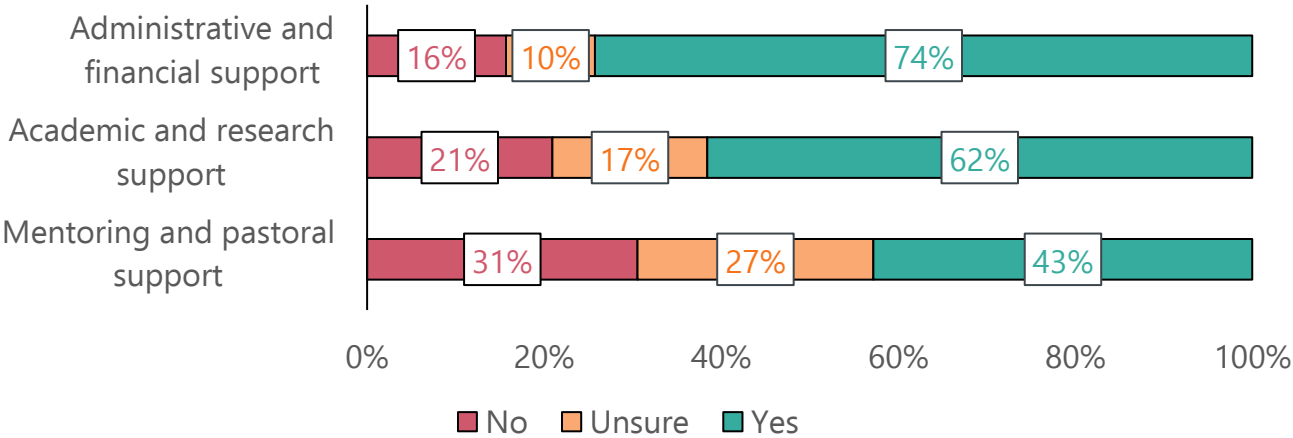
Base n = 131

“Mentors highlight development opportunities from [both the] funder and university. They provide advice and support on career and next steps in the meetings and I know that I can approach them for advice at any time.”

Postdoctoral Fellow, Russell Group institution, Medicine

Identifiable points of contact were most common for administrative and financial support

Q: Is there an identifiable point of contact at your institution who has a role in providing support to awardees?



- Administrative and financial support was the most likely form of support to have an identifiable point of contact for respondents (74% yes), and mentoring and pastoral support was the least likely (43% yes). Mentoring and pastoral support also had the highest level of respondents answering 'no' (31%) and 'unsure' (27%), suggesting that this is the area with the most gaps in support, and the area where support is least clear.
- There was a strong correlation between awardees having an identifiable point of contact for all 3 types of support, and being informed about the support available to them early in their award period. For example, of those who said they had an identifiable point of contact for mentoring and pastoral support, 42% felt that career support entitlement had been clearly outlined to them during the application stage.
- Conversely, of those who felt they did not have an contact for academic and research support, 46% felt their career support entitlement had not been outlined to them clearly.
- The same was also true of those who had had their supporting letter/statement discussed with them prior to submission. For example, 70% of those who had had the letter/statement discussed with them had a contact for academic and research support, compared to 15% for those who had not had the letter/statement discussed. Figures are similar for administrative and financial support.
- This highlights the importance of making career support information clear to awardees as early as possible, making them more likely to be able to find help when they need it further along in their award period.
- Clinically-qualified respondents were less likely to have a point of contact for administrative and academic support (59%). By contrast, 80% of non-clinically qualified respondents had a contact for administrative and financial support. This may be related to how these support roles are defined within medical departments and institutions. Alternatively, support contacts simply may not be provided at all for clinically-qualified respondents.

Mentors were more likely to deliver support than institutions and other contacts

Q: Please indicate if you received the following support as part of your award:

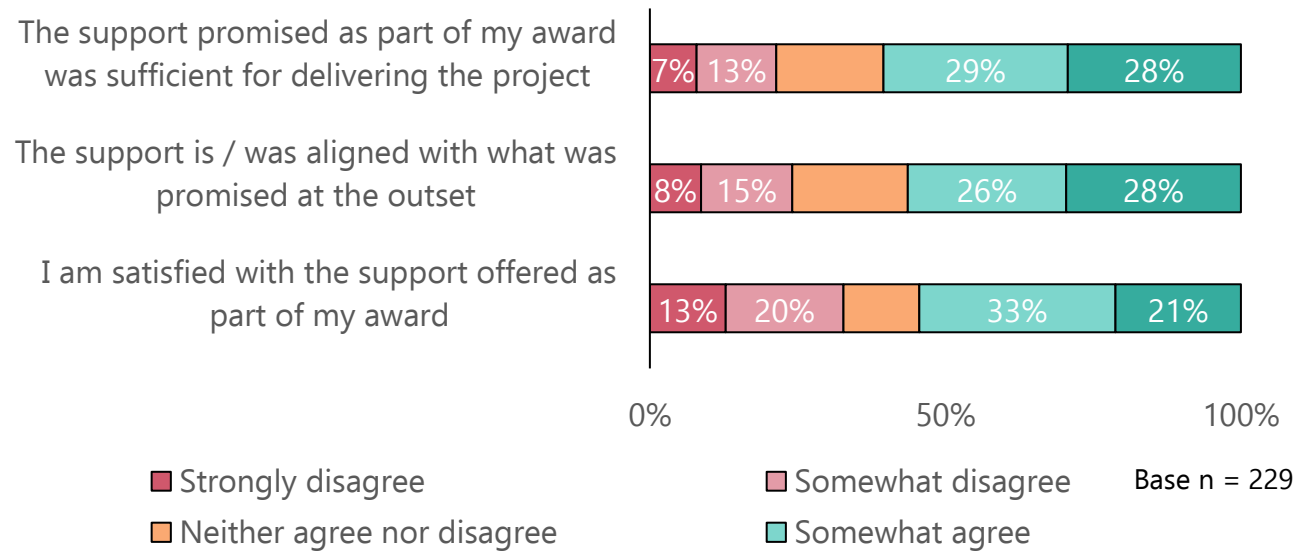
	Yes, via sponsor/mentor	Yes, via institution support lead	Yes, via another contact	No
Help with accessing resources (e.g. lab/office space, equipment, staff or research services)	51%	34%	17%	14%
Help with navigating processes and systems at your institution	41%	30%	24%	21%
Guidance and training on setting up a research group *	37%	11%	14%	45%
Access to appropriate career development support and advice	46%	17%	23%	30%
Support/advice for leadership development opportunities	39%	21%	32%	29%

- In all areas of support, the sponsor/mentor was most likely to deliver it, suggesting that this is the most influential or involved role when it comes to awardee support. The exception to this was guidance on setting up a research group, for which 45% of respondents did not receive support. This was also the form of support with the highest level of non-applicability, so it is possible that this area is less important for some groups. These figures remain consistent across both funders and university type
- The area in which institution support leads provided the most support was help with accessing resources (34%). However, sponsors/mentors were still providing the most help overall in this area (51%). The exception to this is when looking at research institutes alone, where support leads provided more help with navigating institutional processes and systems (73%) than sponsors/mentors (33%). However, it should be noted that our sample of research institutes is small, making this more of an indicative finding.
- Other contacts are being used for support and advice for leadership development opportunities, almost on par with sponsors/mentors (32% vs. 39%), suggesting that this is an area where funders and institutions may not be providing adequate support. As mentioned, clinically-qualified respondents are less likely to have identifiable points of contact for all forms of support. This further supports the suggestion that these roles are less well-defined within medical departments and institutions. This could also potentially be linked to these spaces being generally smaller than those of other disciplines.

Experiences with support

Setting the correct expectations and a good mentor relationship were key to feeling that support is delivered upon

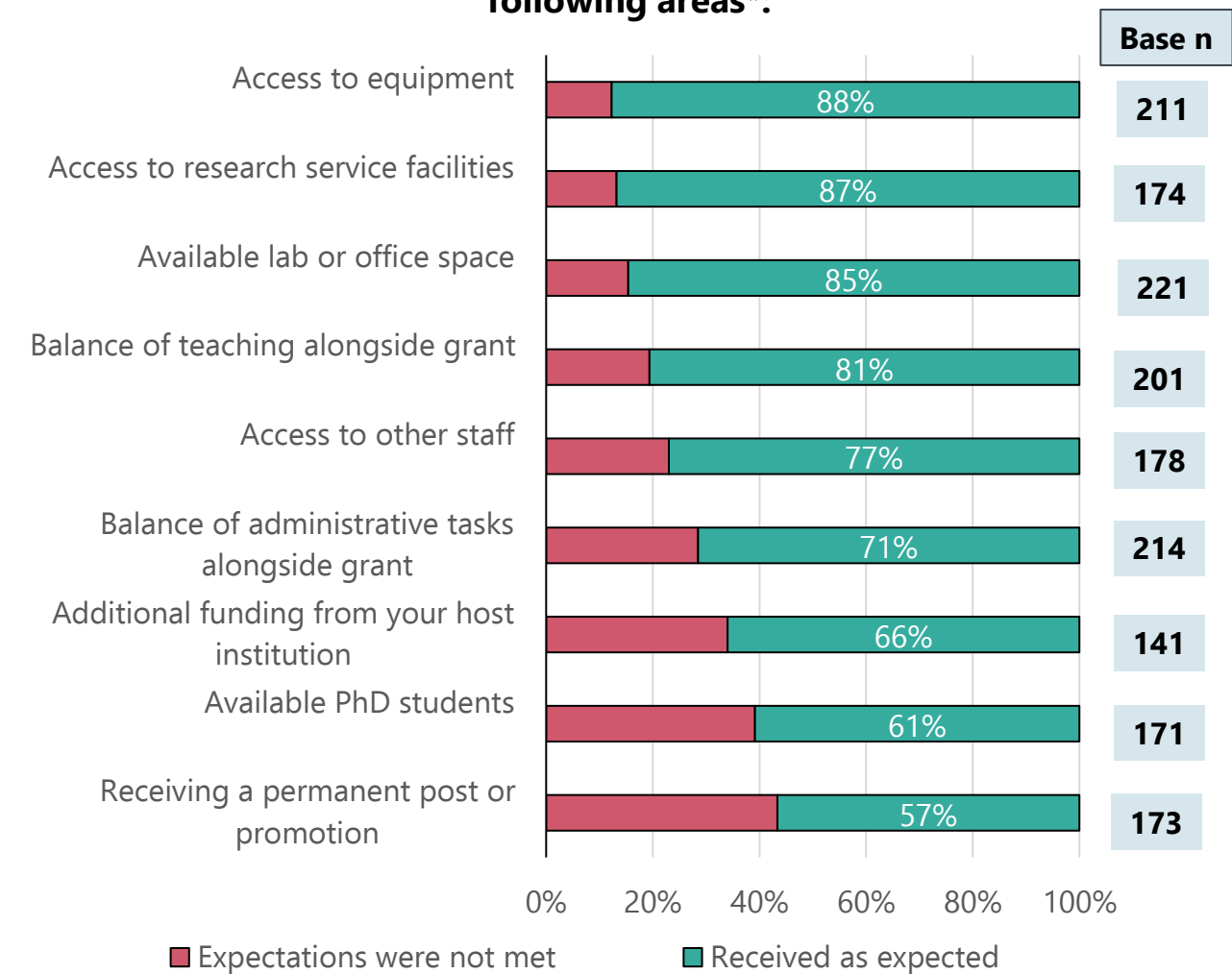
Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements related to the career support promised to you as part of your award?



- Respondents mostly agreed that the support was sufficient for delivering the project (57%). Once again, ensuring that awardees are informed early in the process about the support available to them appears to be key. There was a direct correlation between those who were made aware of the support they were entitled to during the application stage, as well as those whose supporting letter/statement was discussed with them, and likelihood of agreeing with all of the above statements.
- For example, 85% of those who felt all information about the support they were entitled to was clear also agreed that they were satisfied with the support offered as part of their award. Similarly, 64% of those whose supporting letter/statement was discussed with them felt that the support was aligned with what was promised to them at the outset. This highlights the importance of setting the right expectations from the outset of awards.
- Ensuring that career support from sponsors/mentors is delivered upon during the award period is also key to satisfaction. 72% of those who received advice or guidance from their sponsor/mentor about career support also agreed that they were satisfied with the support offered as part of their award. This resonates with findings presented earlier in this report about the impact a good relationship with a mentor can have on support experiences. Helping foster relationships between awardees and those they work most closely with is key to these awardees feeling that the expected support can be fulfilled.
- The importance of mentoring/pastoral support is also evident, with 76% of those with an identifiable contact for pastoral support agreeing that they were satisfied with the support they received overall. Conversely, 59% of those with no identifiable contact for pastoral support reported that they were unsatisfied with their overall support. This further highlights the importance of a positive mentor-awardee relationship.

Equipment access was delivered most effectively, while receiving a permanent position is the least fulfilled

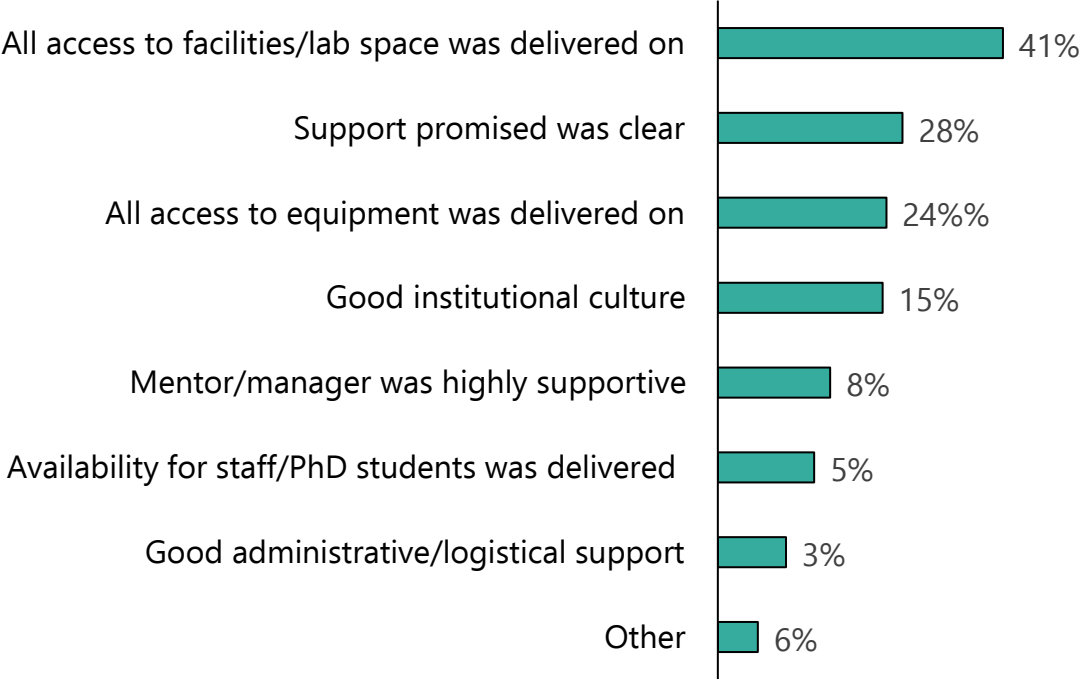
Q: Please indicate if your expectations were met for the following areas*:



- Access to equipment and research facilities were the least problematic areas in terms of support expectations being met, with 82% and 81% of the sample agreeing they received these. The areas in which expectations were most commonly not met were the availability of PhD students for projects (39% expectations not met), and receiving a permanent post or promotion after their project had come to an end (43% expectations not met). Receiving a post or promotion was also the most frequently cited complaint when respondents were prompted for more details (30%).
- The ability to access support throughout the duration of the project had the greatest impact on these figures, usually by exacerbating them. For example, 38% of those without an identifiable contact for academic and research support reported issues accessing equipment. Likewise, 64% of those who received no advice or guidance around career support reported issues securing a permanent post or promotion once the award had ended.
- Institution type, HEI type, and funder did not have a great impact on these figures, suggesting that issues with support are consistent across the sector.

Facility access and institutional culture were cited by those with positive support experiences

Q: Some of your responses suggest that the support offered to you was delivered upon. Why do you say this?



- Access to facilities and space was the area where most respondents felt that their promised support had been delivered upon.
- Respondents also reported various factors which have been grouped as 'good institutional culture'. This includes respondents feeling that the institution was a friendly and suitable place to conduct research, and instances where extra informal support had occurred relating to finances and securing a promotion or permanent position after the award had ended.

"I received access to lab space, office space and facilities either in line with what was promised or in excess of what was promised. The balance of admin/teaching has been as promised - being kept fairly minimal throughout the majority of the fellowship. I did not receive additional funding from my institution, but none was promised so that has also met my expectation."

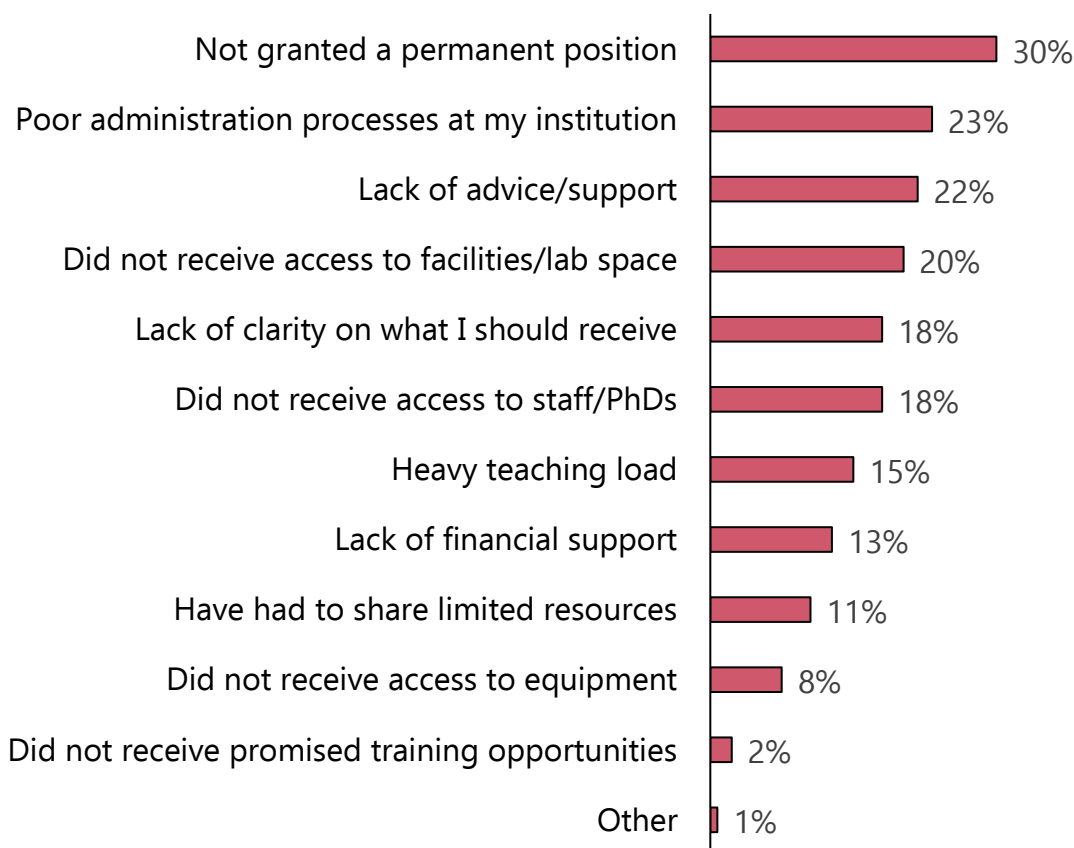
Independent Fellow, Undisclosed HEI, Biomedical Sciences

"The support was delivered due to the quality and high calibre of my mentors who are very supportive of my career progression. This is very bespoke and not really institutional, but it works! However, overall my host institution has a high track record of aiding and progressing early career researchers seeking full independence in academia."

Senior Lecturer, Russell Group institution, Medicine

Lack of permanent position offers and poor administrative practices were cited by those with poor support experiences

Q: Some of your responses suggest that the support offered to you was not delivered upon. Why do you say this?



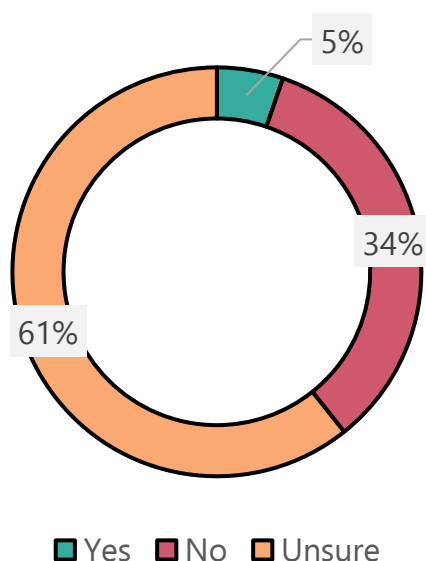
- Not receiving a permanent position at the end of the award was a key issue for 30% of respondents who felt that their support was not delivered upon. This was often crucial to their choice to take part in the award, and could create precarity and anxiety when not delivered upon.
- Inability to access adequate support was also a key issue, through obstacles such as difficult administration processes (23%), a lack of clarity around support (18%), or support just not being available at all (22%).

"Expectations of my career progression and my teaching contribution is constantly changing and I am still not clear what is expected of me in order to gain a permanent, or other fixed term contract. I have had 4 different line managers which have all given different advice on what is expected of me, but on the whole this has been vague. It is still unclear what applications for additional external funding will be supported by the University and what will not."

Independent Fellow, Undisclosed HEI, Biological sciences

Awareness of policies to address unfulfilled support is low

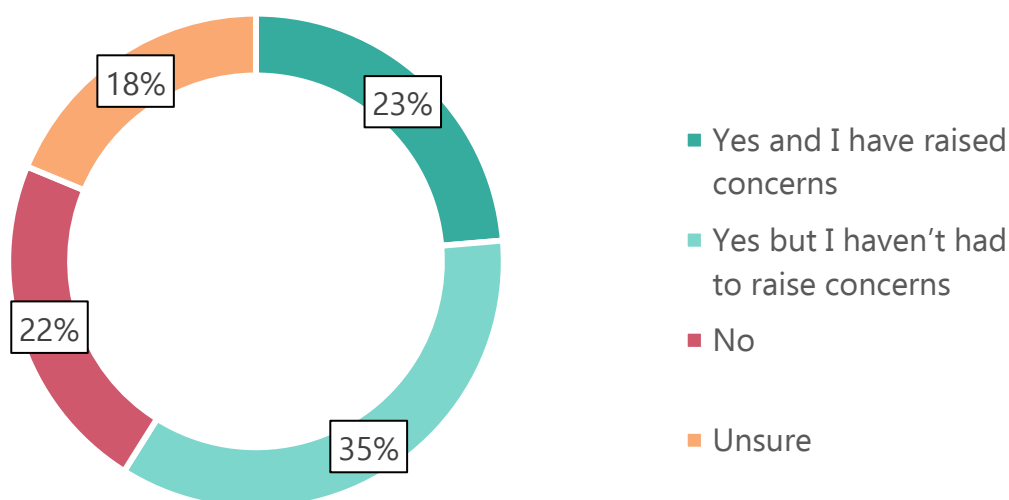
Q: Is there a clear process or policy in place if support promised by your host institution as part of the funding agreement is not provided?



- There was a widespread lack of awareness of the processes and policies in place to address unfulfilled support, with 61% of the sample feeling unsure if these were in place.
- This appeared to be consistent across institution types and funders, suggesting that these factors do not impact policy awareness or clarity. Interestingly, awareness of concordats did not impact these figures either, suggesting that institutional policies around support may not necessarily match these concordats.
- Having identifiable contacts for all types of support, as well as receiving career support from mentors, also did not have an impact on these overall levels of policy awareness, suggesting that these channels may not be effectively communicating to awardees how they can access unfulfilled support.
- These channels also appear key to building awardee confidence to ask for support, as discussed overleaf..

Availability of pastoral support impacts confidence to report support concerns

Q: Would you feel confident or able to raise concerns if you encountered a lack of promised support?



- Respondents were more likely to report they would not feel confident to raise concerns if they did not have an identifiable contact for academic and research support (48%), administrative and financial support (47%) and mentoring and pastoral support (40%).
- Awardees who had received support from their sponsor/mentor with tasks such as navigating institutional processes and career and leadership development were more likely to feel confident about raising concerns about unfulfilled support (48%, 55% and 60% answered 'yes but I have not had to raise concerns', respectively. This suggests that personalized experiences of one-on-one support are effective in encouraging awardees to speak up for support they feel is not being delivered.
- It is notable that researchers felt less able to speak out if they did not have an identifiable institutional contact for pastoral care. Barriers to raising concerns are likely to include a fear of reprisal to the detriment to their career progression. These experiences are likely to be stressful and damaging to researchers' wellbeing - and these results suggest that researchers who are not equipped with pastoral support feel less able to put their head above the parapet.

Most of those who raised concerns about support had not received a satisfactory resolution

Q: How satisfied are you with how the concerns you raised were dealt with?



Base n = 53

- Not at all satisfied

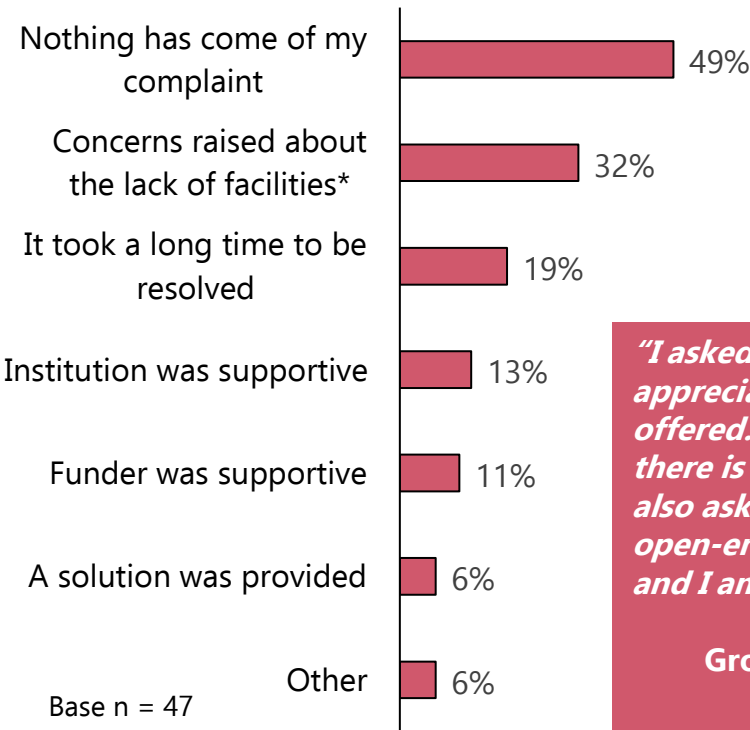
■ Somewhat dissatisfied

■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

■ Somewhat satisfied

- Only around a third of respondents who had raised concerns about unfulfilled support felt satisfied with how these were dealt with (36%).
- Effective mentoring support plays a key role in ensuring support concerns are properly addressed: 63% of those who felt satisfied that their concerns were dealt with also had a point of contact for mentoring support.
- This is also one of the few factors in the research where gender plays a role. Those who were dissatisfied were more likely to be female (61%) than male (39%) although the small overall sample here should be kept in mind.

Q: Please give details on your concern and response



- A follow-up open question probed further how respondents felt about the outcome of raising their concerns.
- Nearly half of these respondents (49%) felt their concern had not been dealt with at all, while a further 19% felt that it took a long time for their concerns to be resolved.

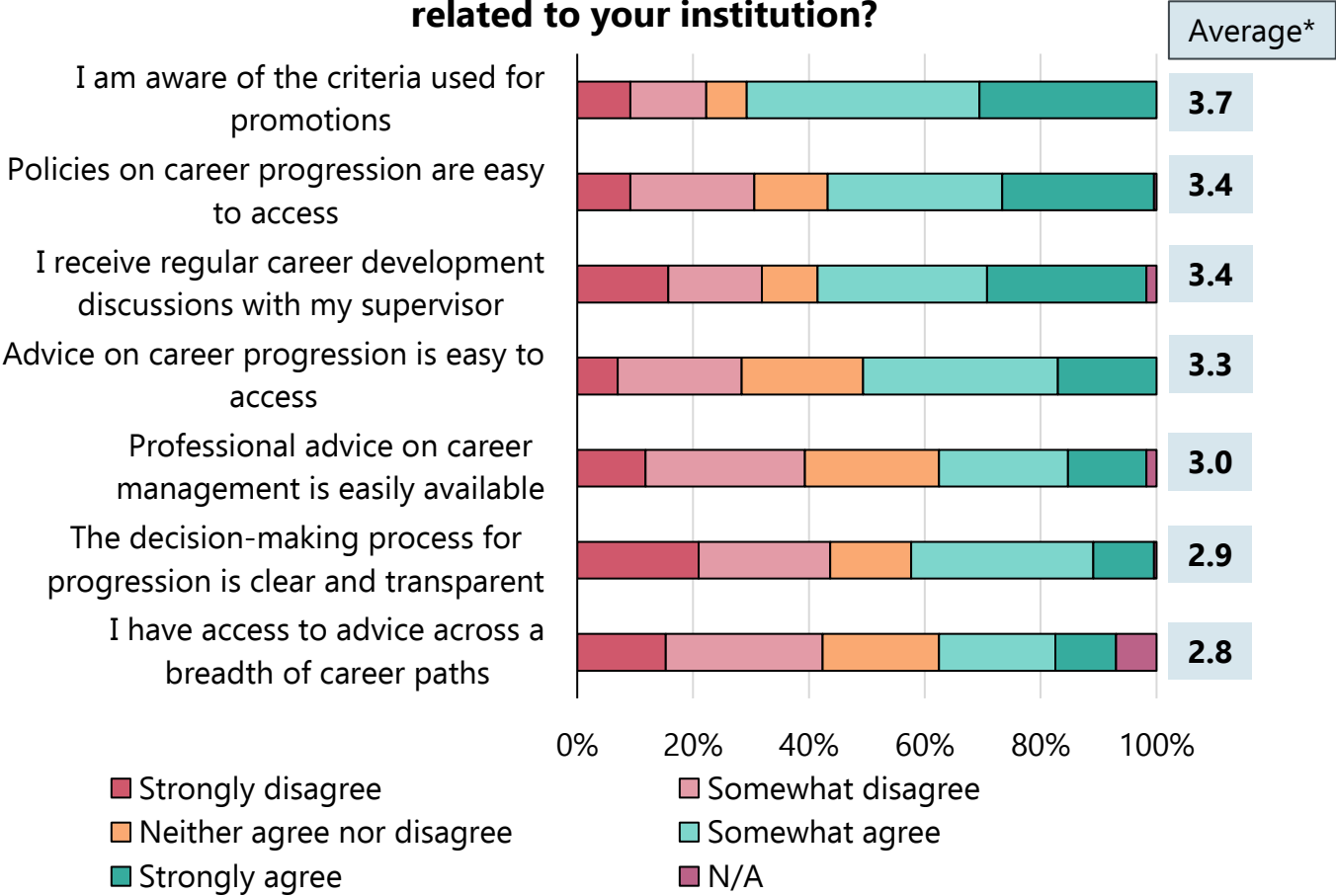
"I asked for more space and my concerns were appreciated. But no immediate solution was offered. Some possibilities were discussed but there is no clear timeline or a clear process. I also asked for the contract to be amended as open-ended as promised. This is still ongoing and I am not sure what decision I will get."

Group Leader, Research institute, Biological sciences

Career development

Awareness around policies for career progression was high

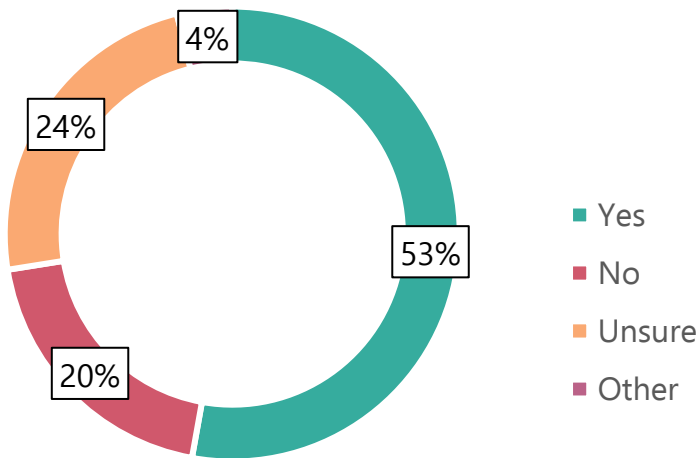
Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements related to your institution?



- The most agreed-with statements around career development both relate to institutional policies regarding promotion and progression. This may be due to the high demand for these once awarded projects come to a close. Furthermore, because these are among the top areas of support that awardees feel do not meet expectations, awardees may be more likely to seek out what the exact policies on these are.
- This resonates with the statement about progression policies being clear receiving a lower level of agreement. Access to advice about a breadth of career paths received the lowest level of agreement, but this may be because it is also the statement that was least relevant to the sample (7% not applicable).
- As seen elsewhere in this report, factors such as institution type, HEI type, and funder did not particularly impact figures. However, those who were made aware of the support they would be entitled to upfront were more likely to describe career progression support as easy to access, such as policies (72%) and advice (71%).
- Having identifiable contacts particularly for academic and administrative support also made awardees more likely to feel that advice on career progression was easy to access (60% and 59%, respectively).

Awareness and uptake of professional development opportunities dropped when career support was not made clear

Q: Have you been provided with opportunities to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year?



- Just over half of respondents were provided with opportunities to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development per year (53%). In the case of this particular area of career support, it appears that awareness of all available support at the outset of the research project was key to whether awardees received these professional development days.
- There was a strong relationship between awardees' awareness of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and their likelihood to have been offered these professional development opportunities – 67% of those aware of the Concordat had been offered this.
- Similarly, those who had not had their entitled support made clear to them before starting their award period were more likely to have not been provided with these professional development opportunities (38%). Those who felt that the career support roles, both of both the institution and themselves personally, had not been made clear at the outset were also more likely to report not being provided with these opportunities (34% and 38%, respectively).
- As expected, those who had received advice and guidance about career support from their mentor were more likely to have been offered these opportunity days (61%). The opposite was true of those who did not have an identifiable contact for either academic and mentoring support, with 35% and 33% of these respondents respectively having not been offered these opportunity days.
- Receiving these professional development opportunities also contributes to awardees feeling that their overall promised support has been delivered. 64% of those who felt that their received support was aligned with what was promised at the outset had been offered these professional development opportunities, compared to 12% who were not offered them.

Lack of access to training led to lower levels of satisfaction with support overall.

Q: Have you been provided with access to training for the following areas as part of your current role?



- Management and leadership skills were the most commonly accessed areas of training by the sample, with 69% having been provided with this. This resonates with the keenness of awardees to gain a promotion or other career progression at the close of their award period, which has been expressed throughout this report.
- Those who felt dissatisfied with the support offered as part of their award were less likely to have received training in several areas, including management and leadership (51%), research ethics and governance (41%) and research/project management (41%).
- 7% of the sample had not received any of the training listed above, representing 17 respondents. 7 of these respondents felt that they had not been made aware of the support they'd be entitled to at the outset of their award, with a further 6 feeling that this information was unclear. 14 of these respondents also disagreed that professional advice about career development was easy to access at their institution. This suggests there could be a lack of agency from awardees in seeking out the training they are entitled to, potentially stemming from this not being made clear to them at the outset.

Conclusion and recommendations

Several recurring themes emerged across the survey results. These will be further explored by the qualitative phase of this research. Interim findings include the following:

Signposting and support clarity

- This research highlights the importance of setting the right support expectations for awardees. Clarity and transparency at the outset of awards around precisely what support will be available consistently led to greater likelihood to access support and to ultimately feeling satisfied with what is delivered.
- Roles and responsibilities of the host institution were in particular less clear than those of funders and awardees themselves.
- Those who felt that support had been made clear at the outset were more likely to be aware of identifiable points of contacts for different types of support, to have accessed career development advice, and to have accessed different kinds of training.
- **Recommendations:** Ensure expectations around support are outlined upfront and are realistic. This means awardees have greater awareness of their support options, as well as what to do in the event this support is not delivered. This will help to close the satisfaction gap in expected support.

Awareness of policy and process

- There was a strong lack of awareness of institutional policies and processes to address instances of unfulfilled support among respondents (61%). This appeared to be consistent across institution types and funders, suggesting that these do not impact policy awareness or clarity.
- The majority of the sample were also unaware of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Whilst it is expected that this will not be known to all, it does indicate that awardees may lack agency in seeking out the support they are entitled to.
- Those who were more satisfied with support overall had a higher level of awareness of entitled support, and correctly aligned expectations.
- This highlights two potential issues with support delivery: first, that there may be insufficient signposting to support channels for awardees, and second, that these support channels may simply not exist for certain groups of awardees.
- **Recommendations:** Ensure that necessary policies and processes are widely distributed and easily accessible. Also be aware of how policies, processes and support channels will vary across institution types and sizes. Where these policies do not exist, or are particularly difficult to access, it could be worth providing a route for researchers to flag support concerns directly with funders.

Identifiable points of contact

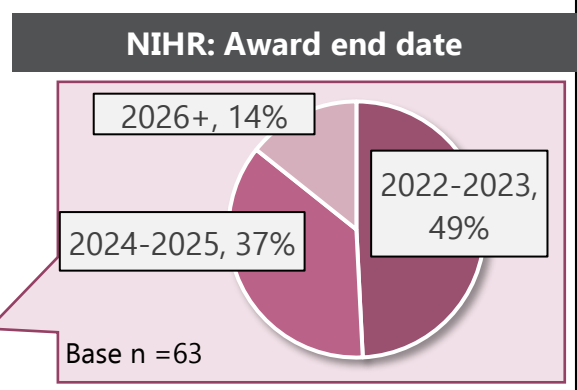
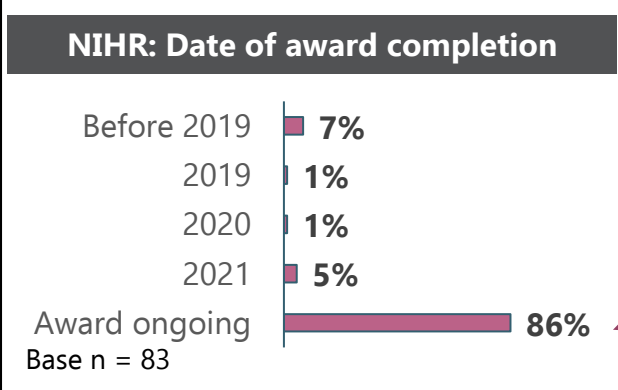
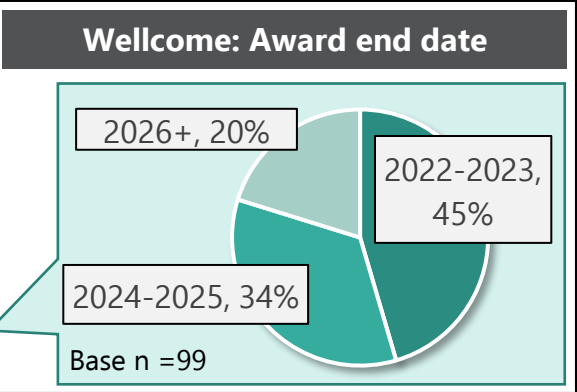
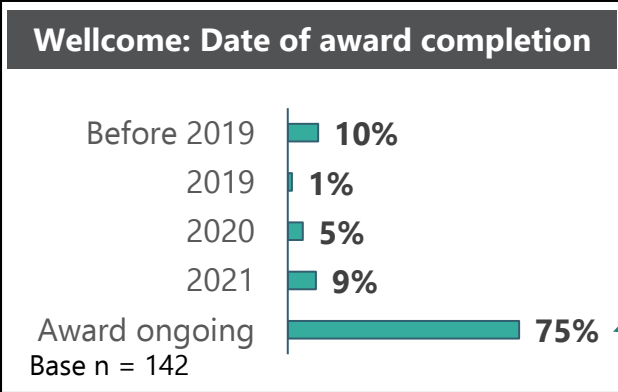
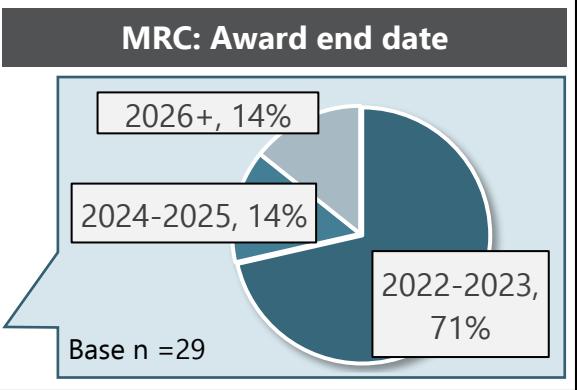
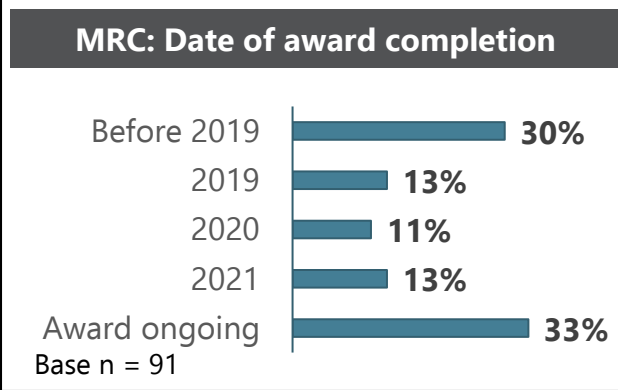
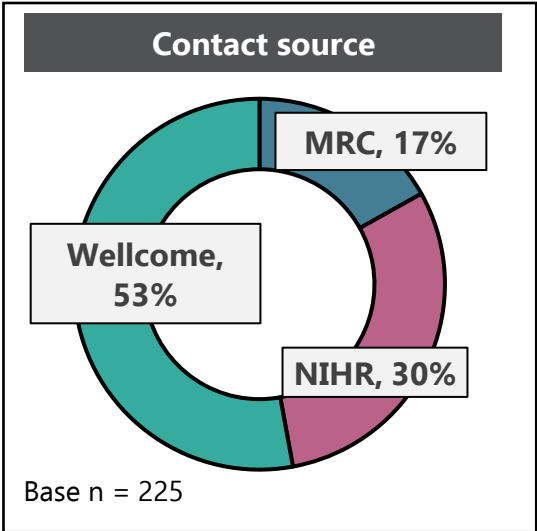
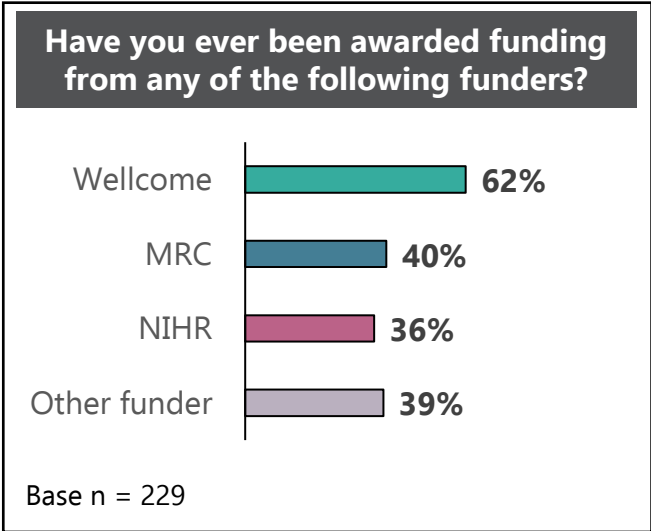
- Ensuring that awardees have clearly identifiable points of contact for specific types of support was highlighted as key to accessing and being satisfied with support in these survey results.
- Identifiable contacts for administrative and financial support were most widespread, with around three quarters reporting they had these, but contacts for mentoring and pastoral support were lower, with less than half the sample having these.
- Over a third of those without an identifiable contact for academic and research support reported issues accessing equipment. Respondents were also more likely to report that they would not feel confident raising concerns if they did not have an identifiable contact for academic and research support. It is well-documented that not knowing how to raise concerns or worse, not feeling able to raise concerns at all, is a key element of poor research culture.
- Having contacts, particularly for academic and administrative support, made awardees more likely to feel that advice on career progression was easy to access. Lack of access to these contacts can have material consequences for awardees – nearly two thirds of those who received no advice or guidance around career support reported issues in securing a permanent post or promotion once the award had ended.
- Clinically-qualified respondents were less likely to have identifiable points of contact for support. This may be due to the differing nature of the institutions and departments they work in, and is worth accounting for when considering how best to support this group.
- **Recommendations:** Communicating identifiable points of contact relates strongly to ensuring that support entitlement is outlined clearly upfront. In areas where precise support cannot be guaranteed (so clarity about this is harder to establish) ensuring awardees have contacts they can speak with to navigate support means that satisfaction with support is more likely.

Mentorship

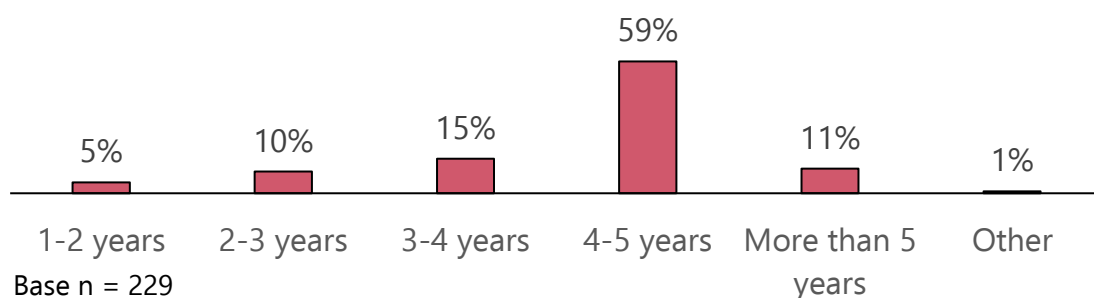
- Mentors, supervisors, and sponsors played a key role in ensuring awardees could access support of all kinds.
- The personal nature of this relationship often fostered successful delivery of support. For example, of those who had received advice around career support, just under half cited the good personal relationship with their mentor as part of their satisfaction. Having access to this trusted relationship is particularly important when we consider those who are already a minority in research. Women were less likely to feel satisfied with how support concerns were dealt with in this research. A personalized mentor relationship may foster an environment where concerns can be raised more easily, and dealt with more effectively.
- Mentors were also identified as the party most likely to deliver all forms of support, from access to equipment to leadership development advice. They were more likely to deliver this than institutional support leads in all instances. This could suggest that the role of mentors is becoming overloaded.

Profile of respondents

Profile of Respondents | Funding

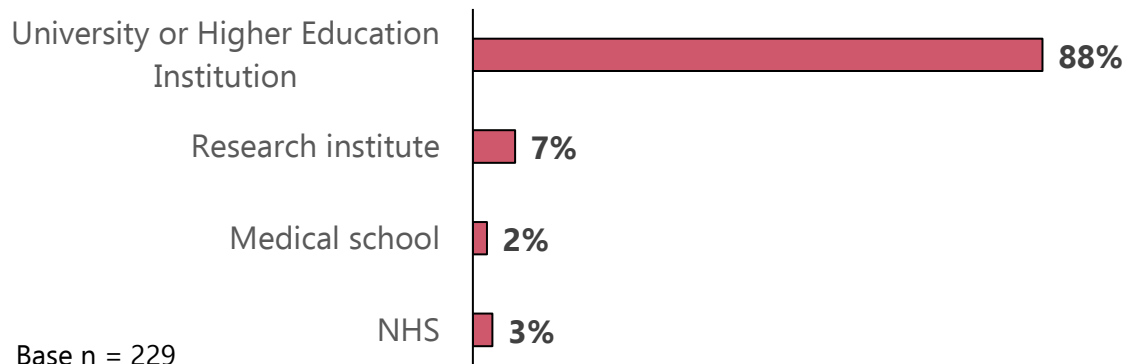


How long is / was your awarded grant / fellowship?

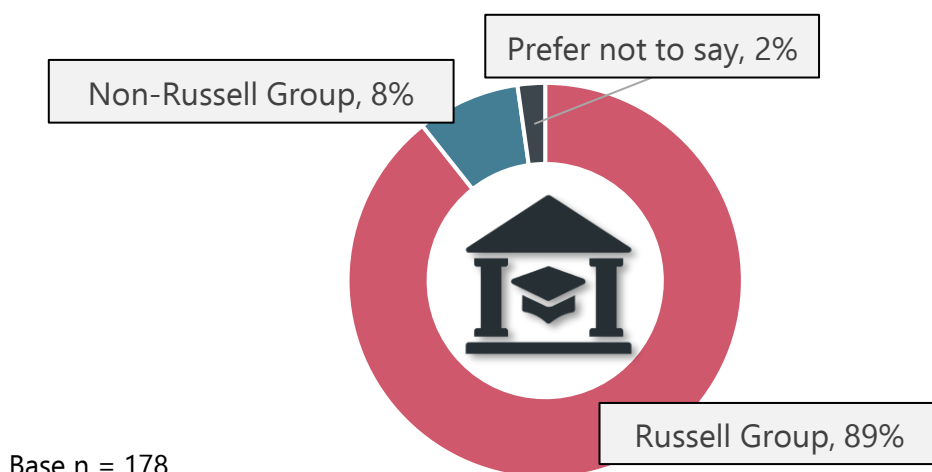


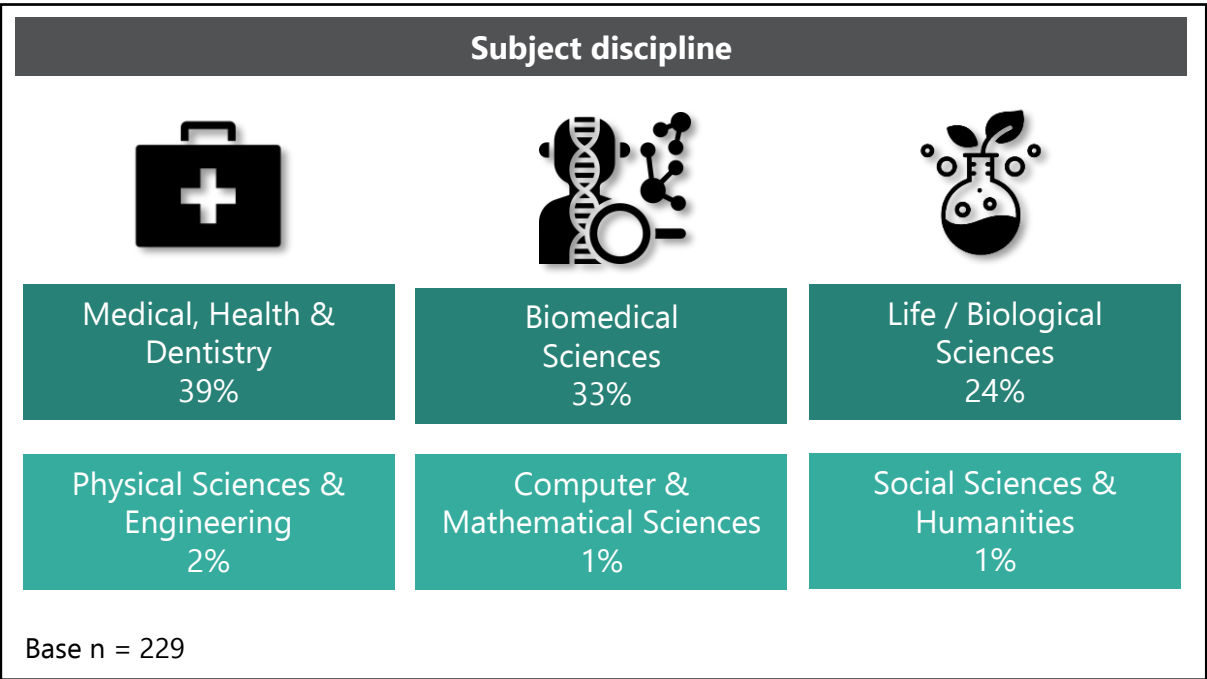
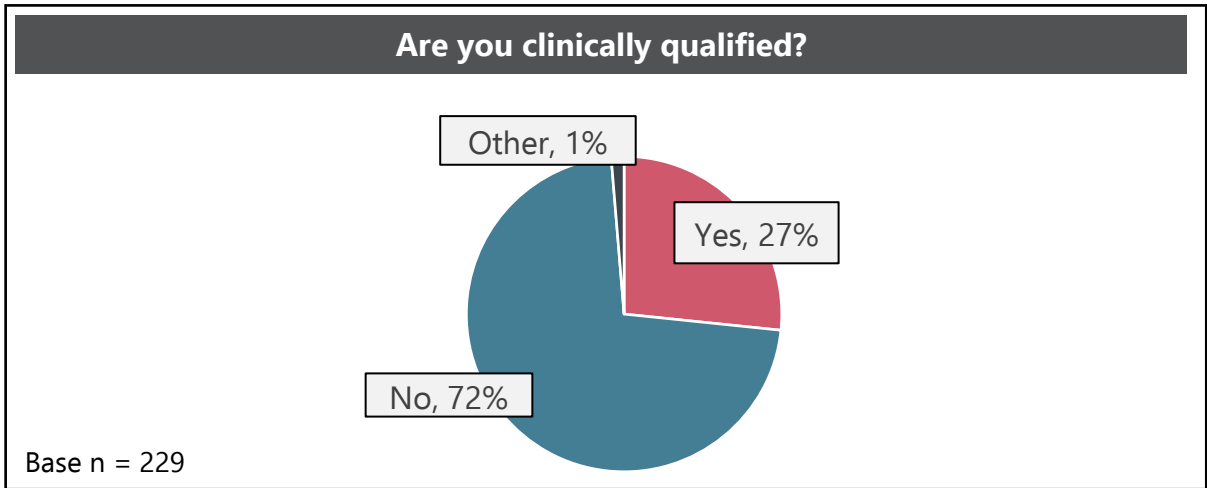
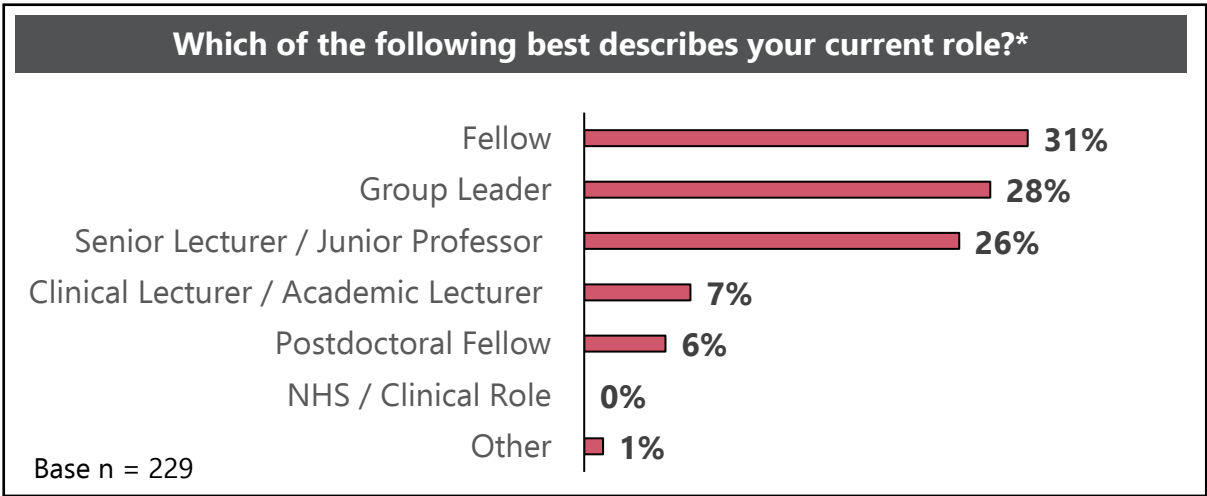
Profile of Respondents | Institution

Which best describes the host institution you are / were at when you were awarded funding?



University type





*Job role categories truncated.
Fellow - Independent Fellow / Personal Fellowship holder
Senior lecturer / Junior professor - Senior Clinical Lecturer / Senior Lecturer or Assistant / Associate Professor / Research Professor

Any Question?

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