



STFC ANNUAL STUDENT SURVEY 2025

In January 2025, the Office contacted all current students and their supervisors to request them to complete the survey. The deadline for completion of the survey was 31st March 2025. A total of 593 students responded out of the 1136 students who were contacted (52.2% response).

Percentages are based on the numbers of students that responded to the questions. Answers don't always add up to 100% due to rounding.

The main points are as follows:

83% of students met with their supervisor at least once a week.

90% of students rated their supervision that they received as 4 or 5 (i.e. good/excellent).

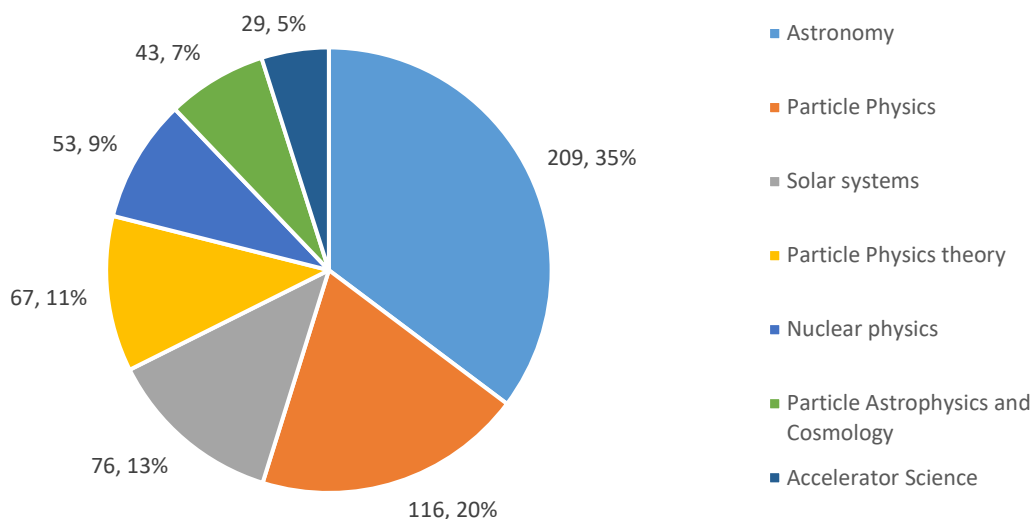
90% of students had received formal training in the first year.

65% of students wished to pursue a career in academia.

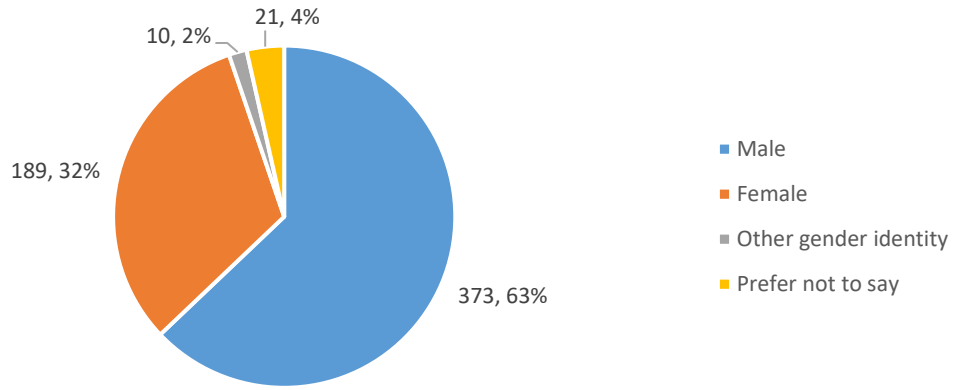
99% of students rated their overall training as good/adequate.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

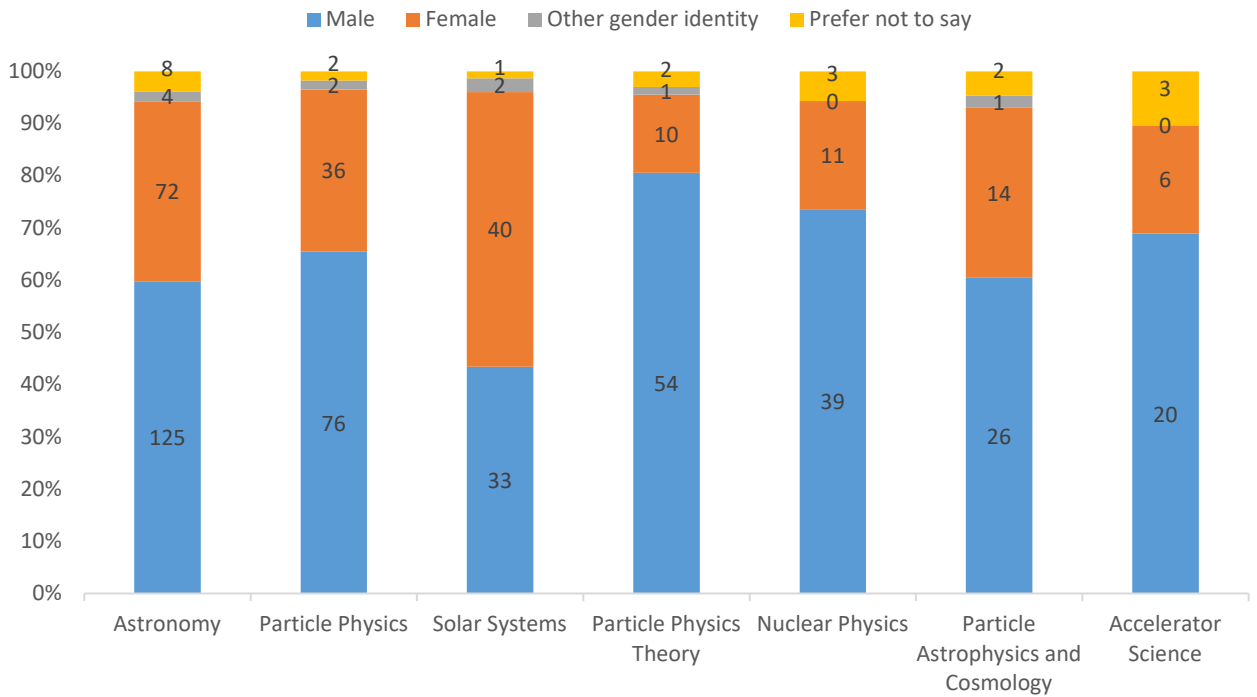
General Field of Research



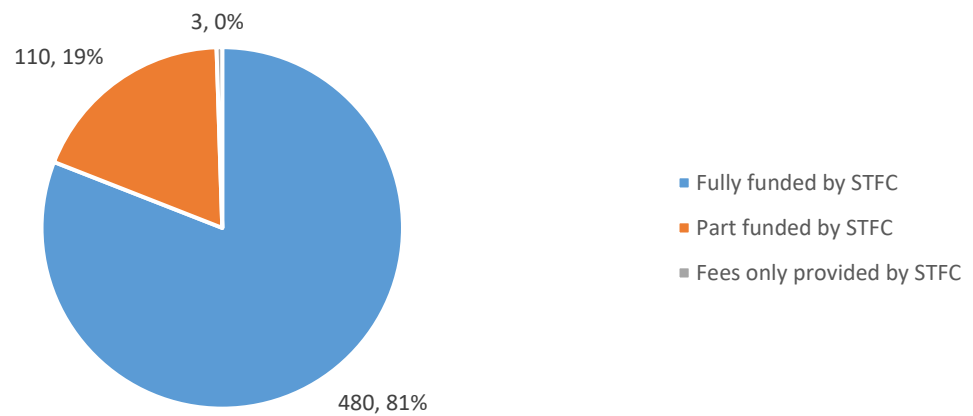
Gender Balance



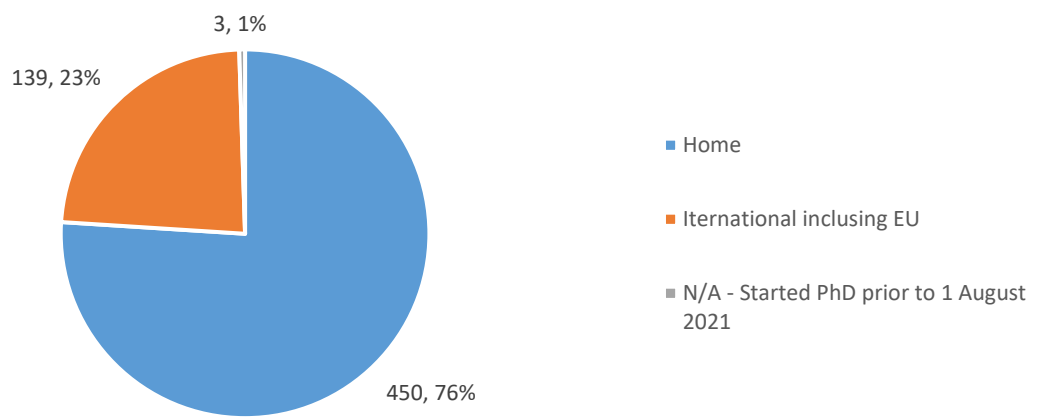
Gender Balance in Research Field



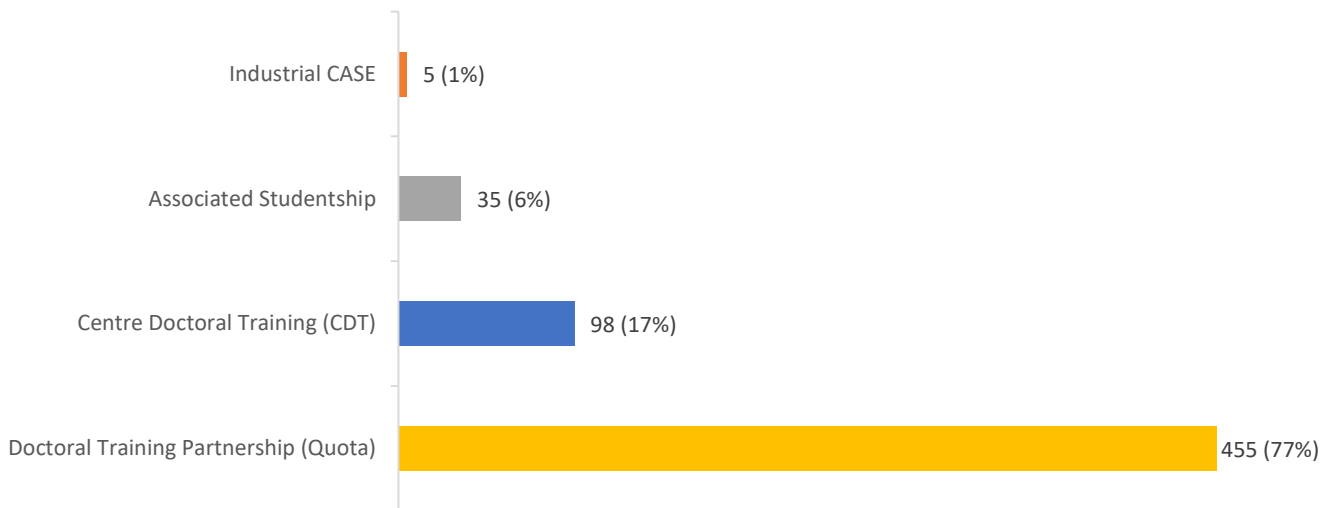
Form of funding received



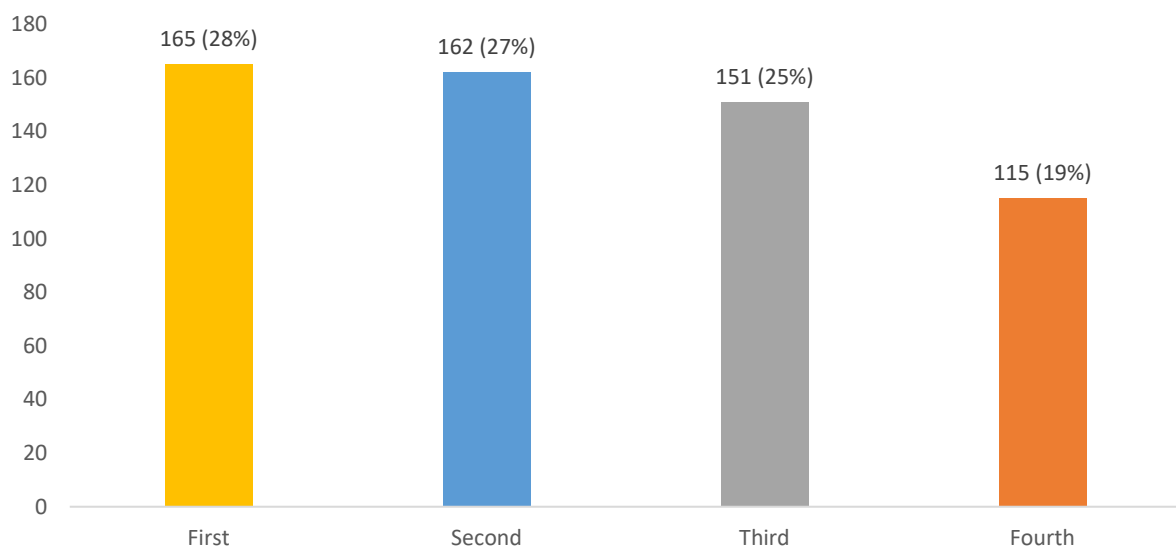
Home / International Studentships



Type of studentship

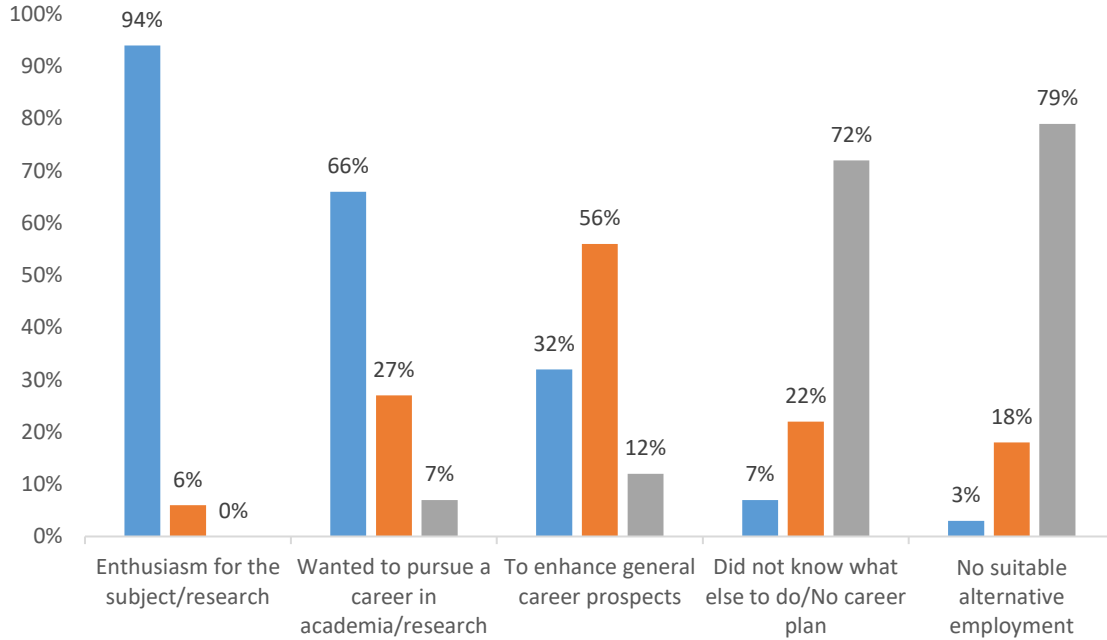


Year of PhD



Of which **589** students were full time and **4** part time.

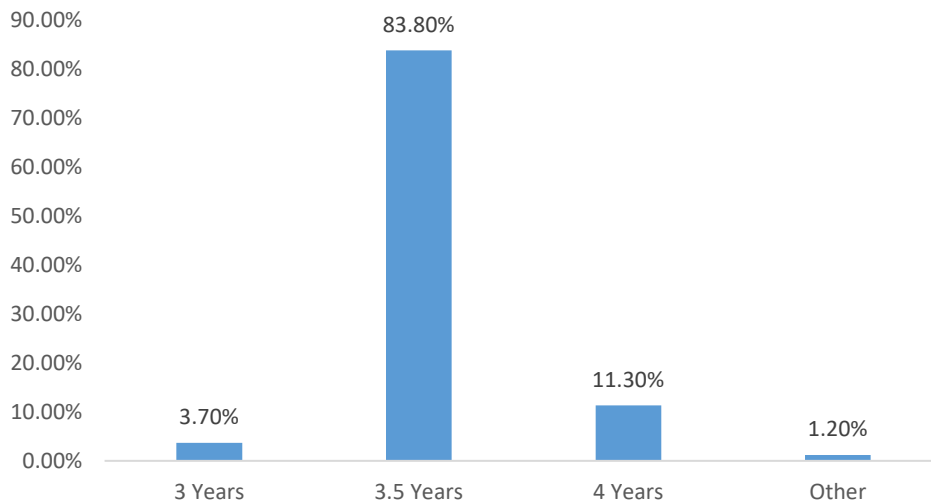
Reasons for undertaking a PhD (1st year students only – 165 responses)



FUNDING PERIOD

95% of students confirmed their funding period was discussed and agreed with their supervisor at the beginning of their PhD.

How long is their funded period?

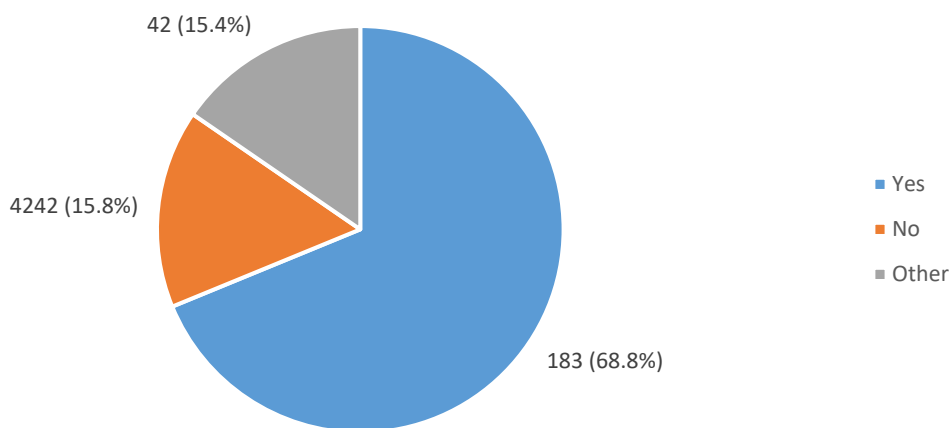


NB. Some students noted 3 years 3 months, 3 years 7.5 months and 5 years of funding which are likely due to extensions given.

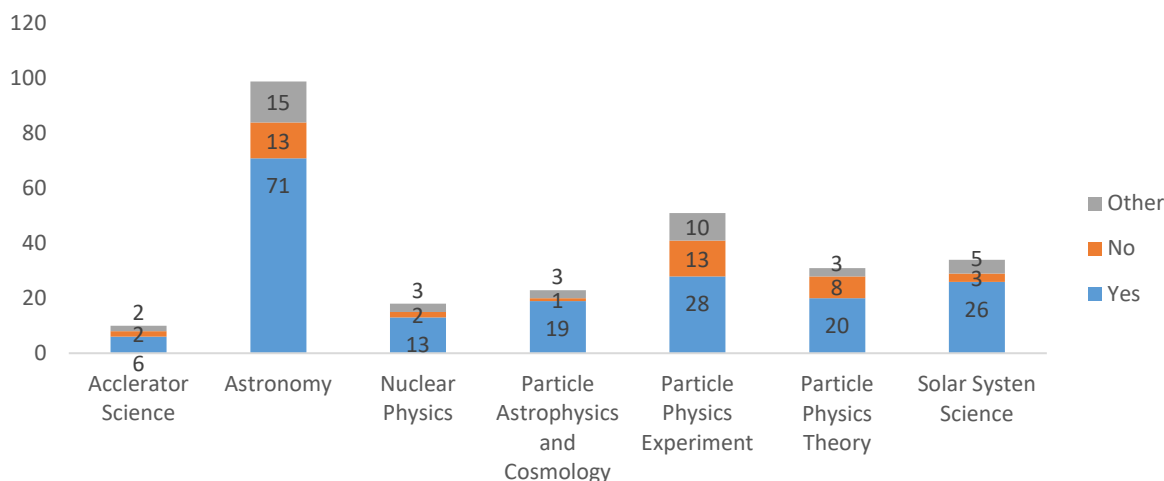
PHD SUBMISSION - Questions asked of 3rd and 4th year students only

There were 266 third and fourth-year students who completed the questionnaire.

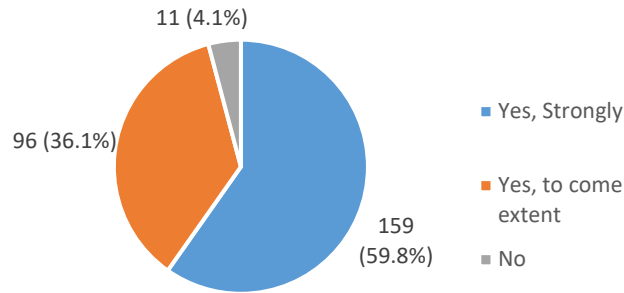
Do you think you have sufficient time within the funded duration of your studentship to complete your PhD, including writing up?



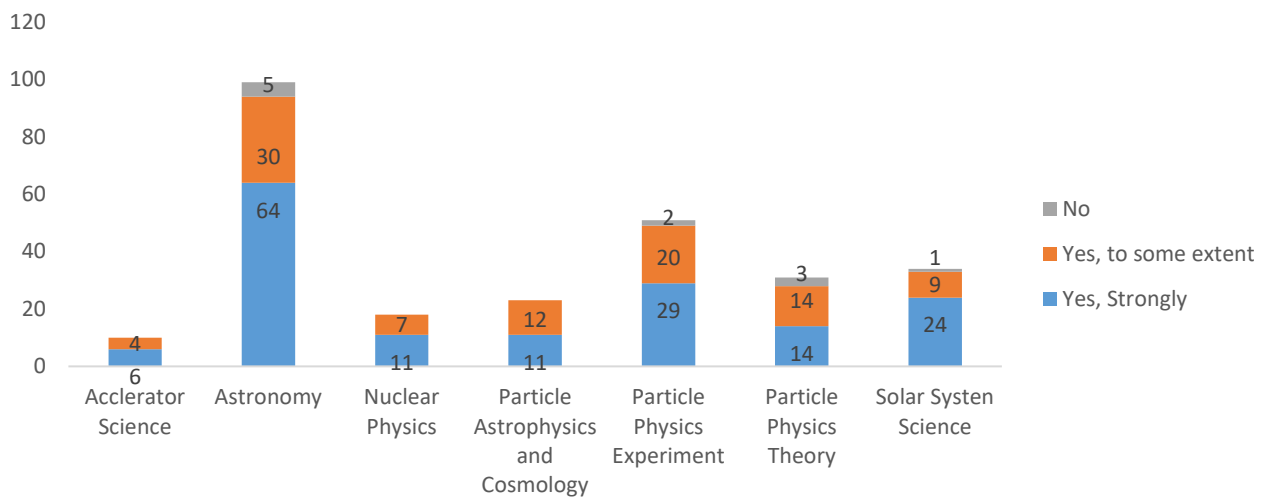
Breakdown of third and fourth-year submission question “Do you think you have sufficient time within the funded duration of your studentship to complete your PhD, including writing up?” by research area:-



STFC expects student projects to be planned and supported such that they may be completed within the funded duration of the studentship. Do you consider your institution actively encourages students to complete their PhD, including writing up, within the funded duration of the studentship?

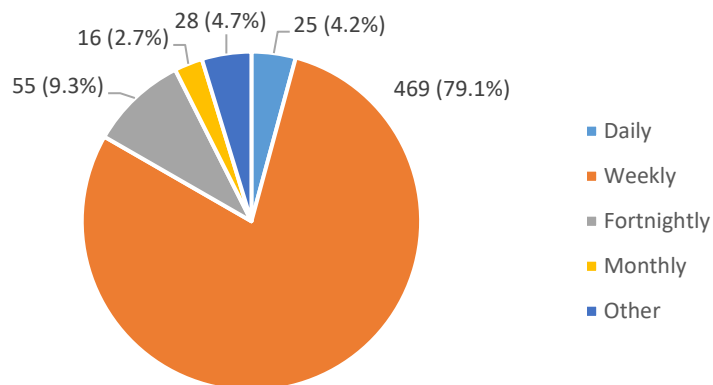


Breakdown of third and fourth-year submission question “STFC expects student projects to be planned and supported such that they may be completed within the funded duration of the studentship. Do you consider your institution actively encourages students to complete their PhD, including writing up, within the funded duration of the studentship?” by research area:-



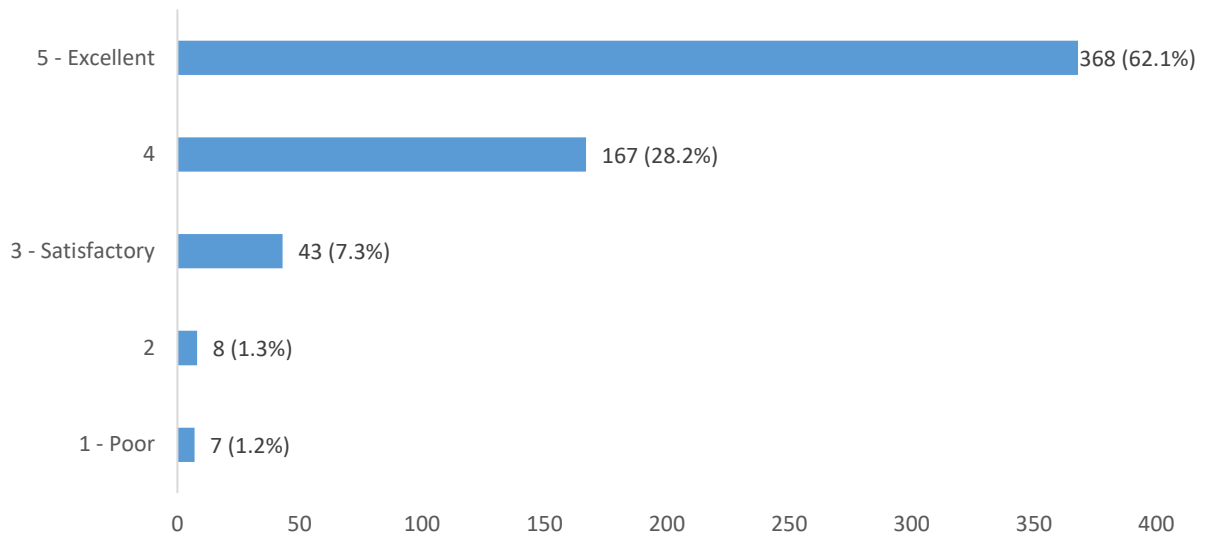
SUPERVISORY ARRANGEMENTS

Frequency of contact with supervisor

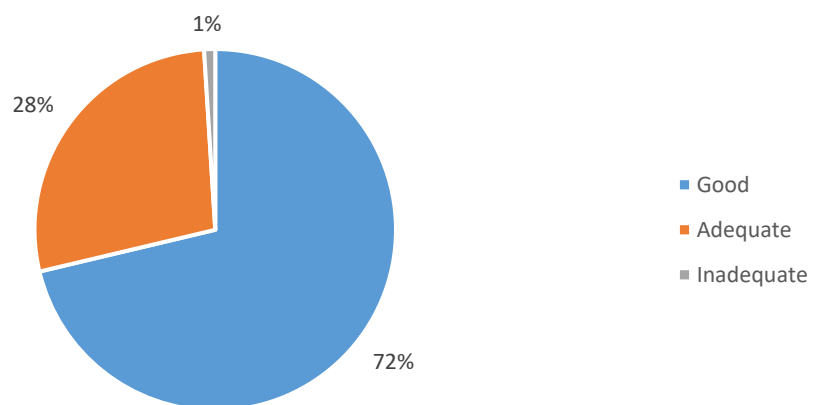


87% of students stated that they received help/advice from a second supervisor or other people in their department.

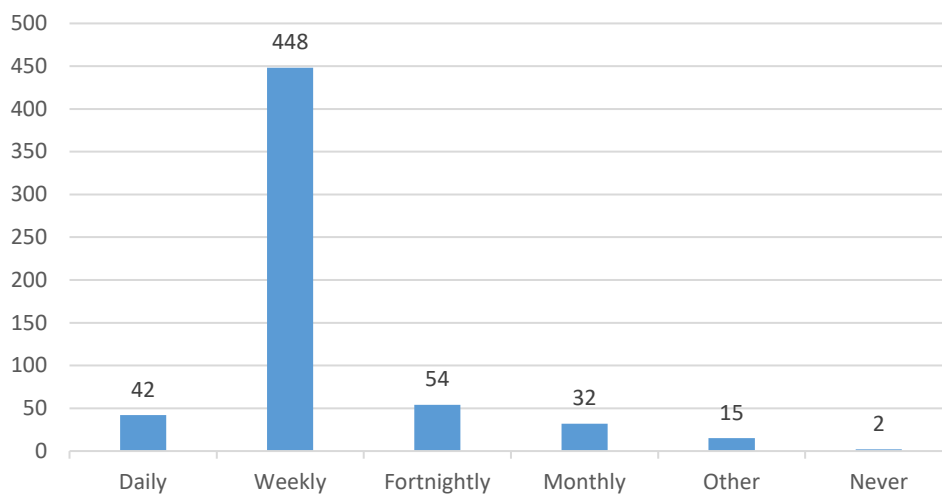
Usefulness of Supervision



Rating of Induction Programme (1st year students only – 165 responses)



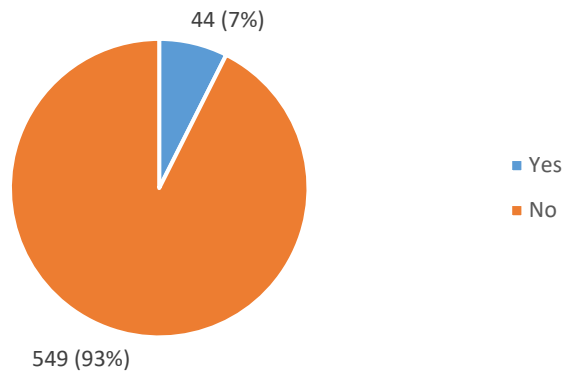
Attendance at group/departmental seminars



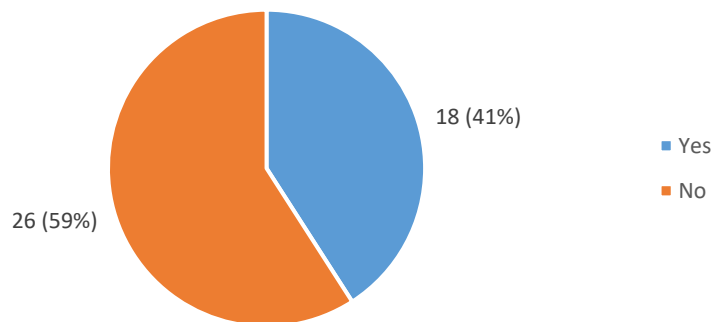
84% of students attended group/departmental seminars once a week or more. This includes students who selected other and noted they have between daily and weekly seminars. **1.2%** of students cannot or do not attend group/departmental seminars.

WELLBEING

Have you encountered problems or difficulties with your **supervisory team**, whether professional or personal?

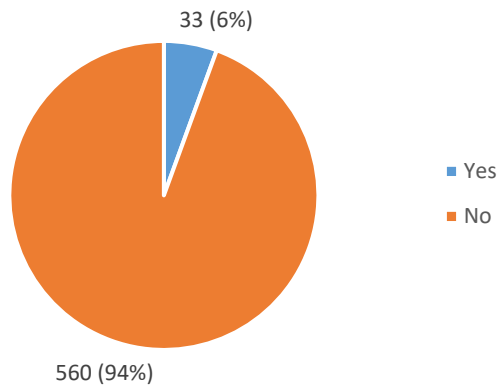


If answered yes, did you report this to your institution?

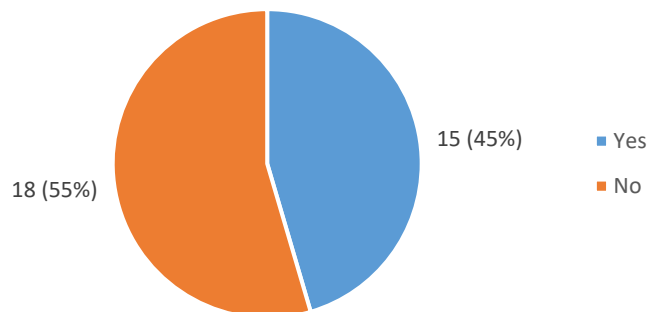


Of the **18** students that reported difficulties **12** students were satisfied with the way their problems were handled and **6** were not.

Have you encountered any problems or difficulties with other members of your **department**, whether professional or personal?

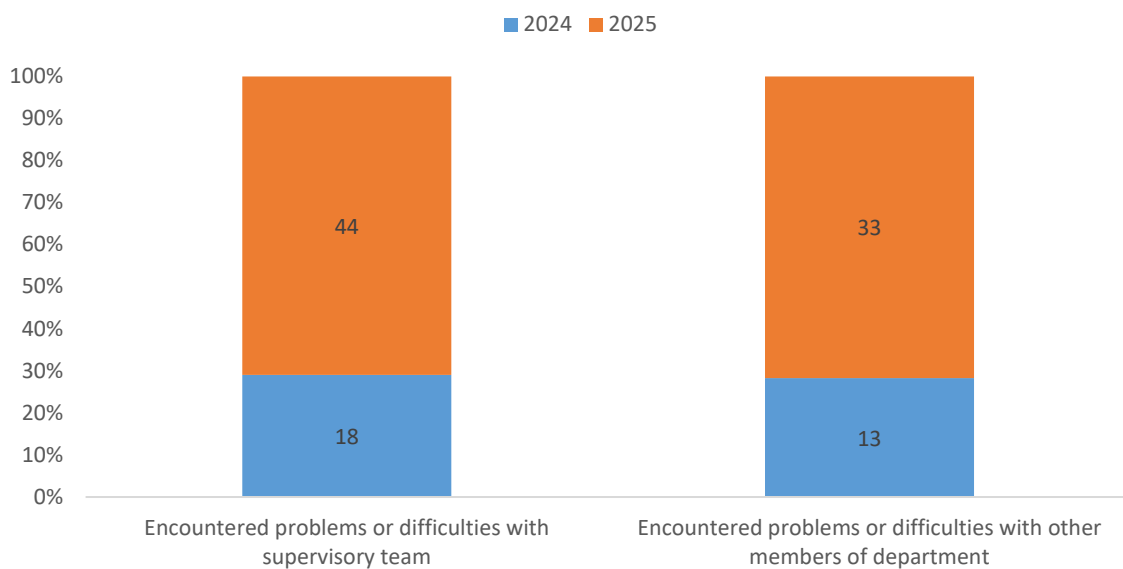


If yes, did you report this to your institution?



Of the **15** students that reported the problems to their institution **6** were satisfied with the way their problems were handled and **9** were not.

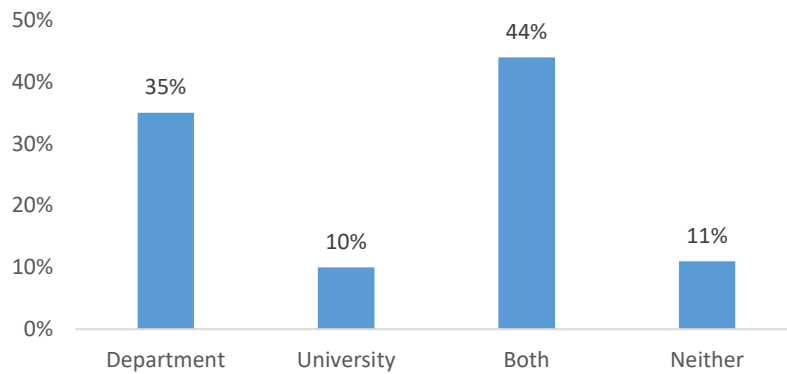
Comparison of the number of students that have encountered problems in 2024 to 2025



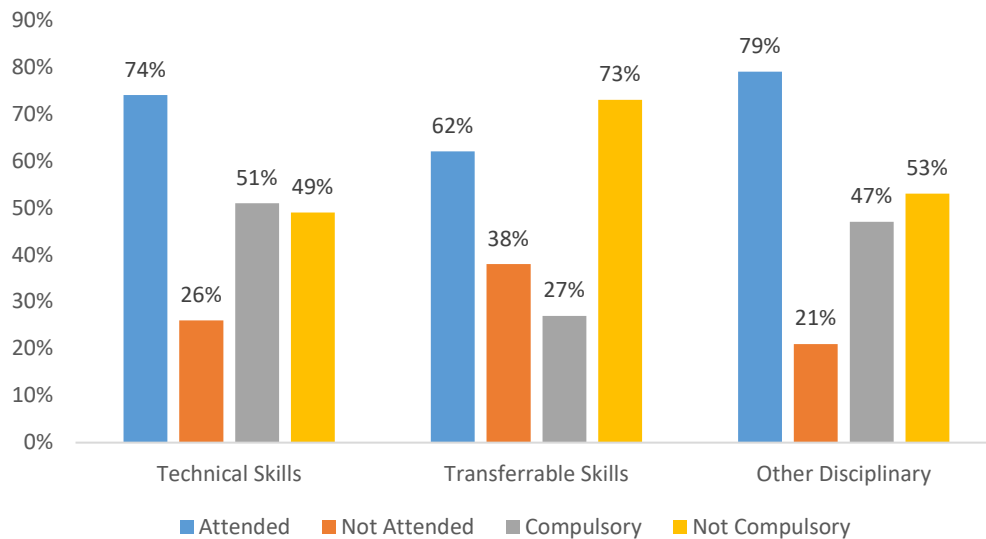
To note, the questions on wellbeing were not mandatory for the previous surveys.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

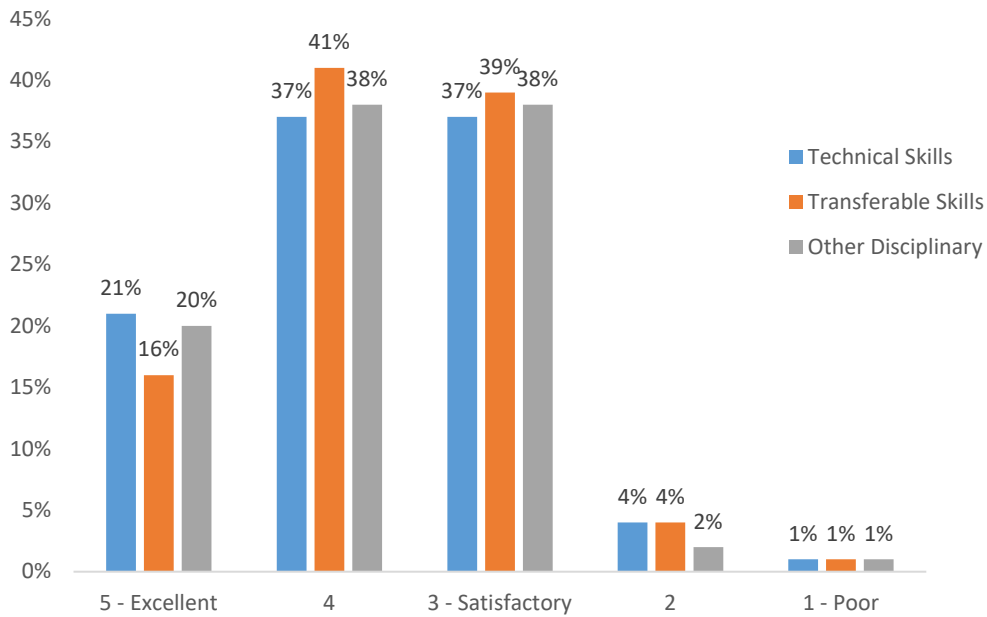
Formal training (e.g. lectures) provided during first year



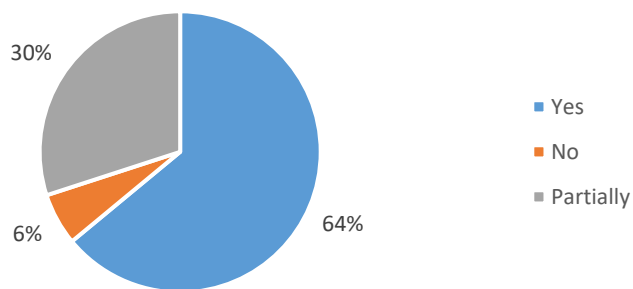
Take up of technical, transferable and other disciplinary skills



Usefulness of technical, transferable and other disciplinary skills training



Were the broader transferrable skills training sufficient?



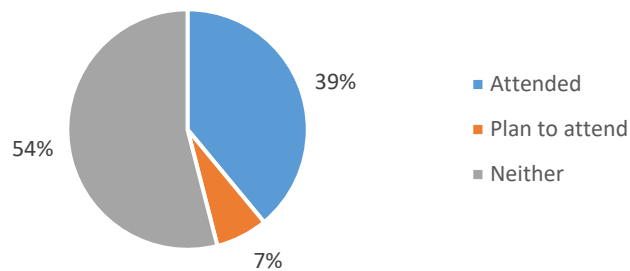
Students were asked what other training they would like to have received and the following were a range of the training students would like access to:

- Nuclear theory
- Academic writing
- Writing skills; publications, applications, research proposals and paper writing
- Presentation skills
- Coding and computing
- Networking and conferences
- Securing grants
- Public communication skills, networking and interpersonal skills
- High performance computing and programming
- Training on how to 'sell' skills gained during PhD
- Time management
- Finding resources
- Handling stress and mental health
- Job interview training, writing CVs and cover letters
- Organisation
- Machine learning
- Statistics and AI skills

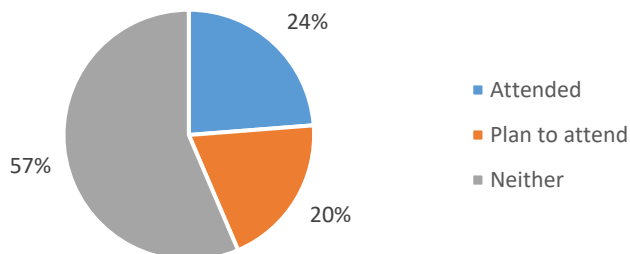
Equipment training
 Technical training on statistics and data analysis
 Research specific training – wet lab working, XRF training, HPC clusters
 Budgeting

77% of students cited that their department had a nominated Postgraduate tutor with overall responsibility for co-ordinating their research training.

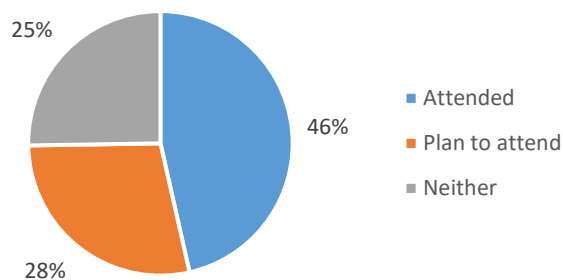
Astronomy students' attendance at the Introductory to Astronomy Summer School
207 Astronomy students responded to the question



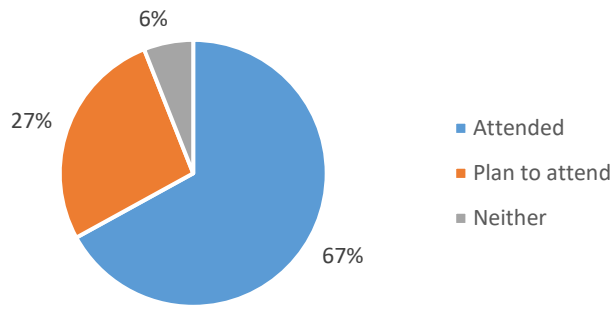
Solar students' attendance at Introductory to Solar System Science Summer School
76 Solar System students responded to the question



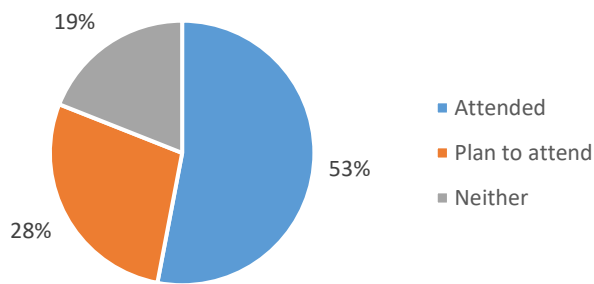
Particle Physics students' attendance at BUSSTEPP – British Universities Summer School in Theoretical Elementary Particle Physics
67 Particle Physics Theory students responded to the question



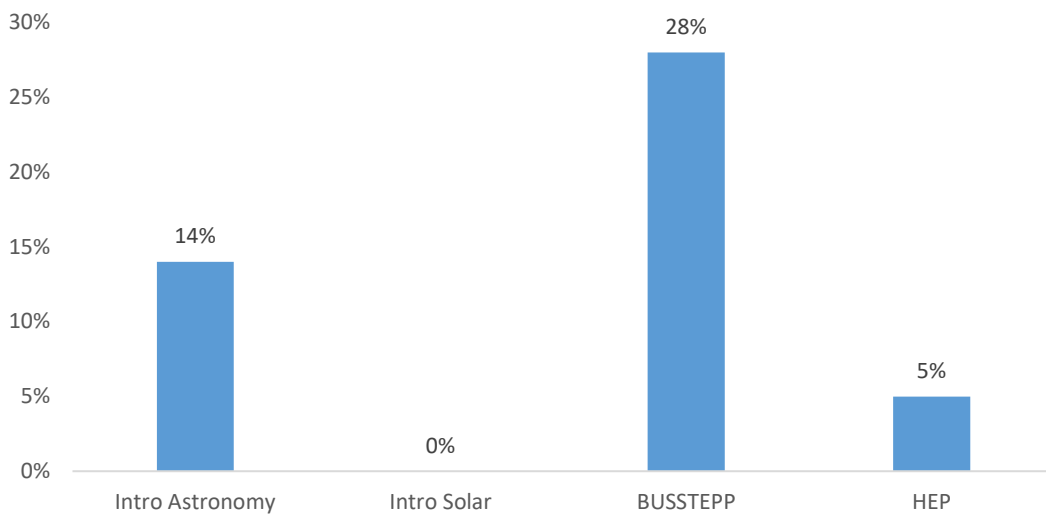
Particle Physics students' attendance at High Energy Physics Summer School (HEP)
116 Particle Physics Experimental students responded to the question



Nuclear Physics students' attendance at Nuclear Summer School
53 Nuclear Physics students responded to the question

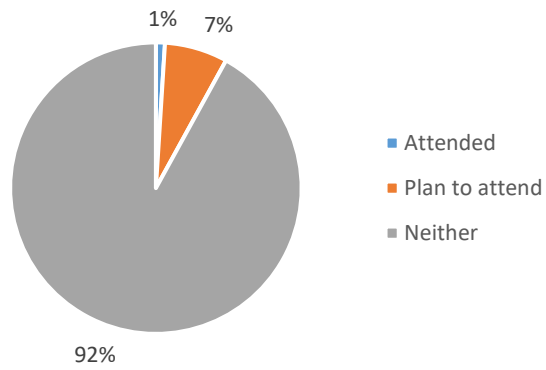


Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology students' attendance at summer schools
43 Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology students responded to the questionnaire

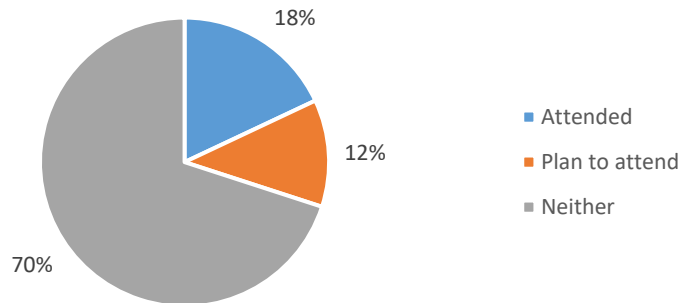


There were **29** Accelerator Science students that completed the questionnaire, and only one had attended the High Energy Physics fundamental summer school.

Research Councils' Graduate Schools Programme



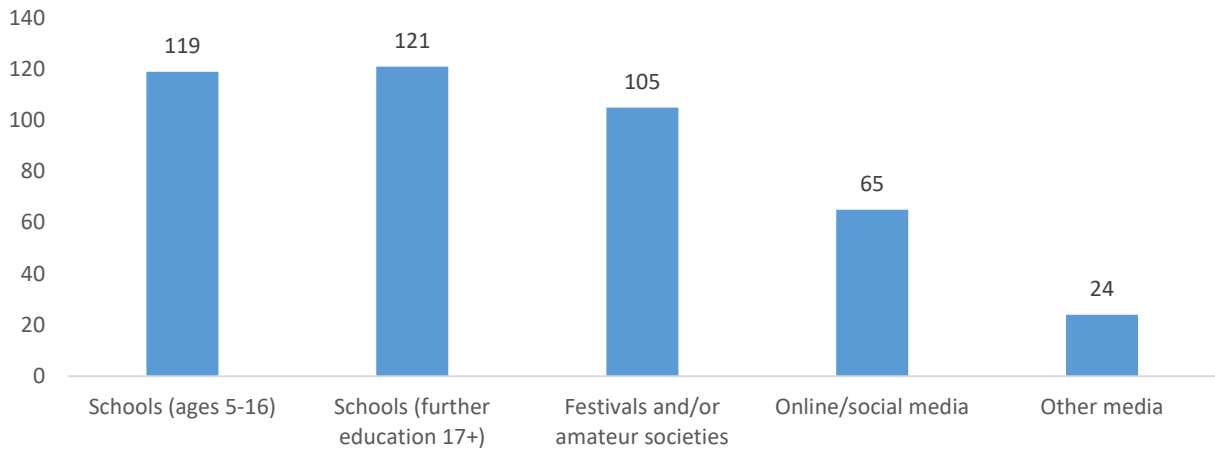
Other STFC Funded Summer Schools or Short Courses



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

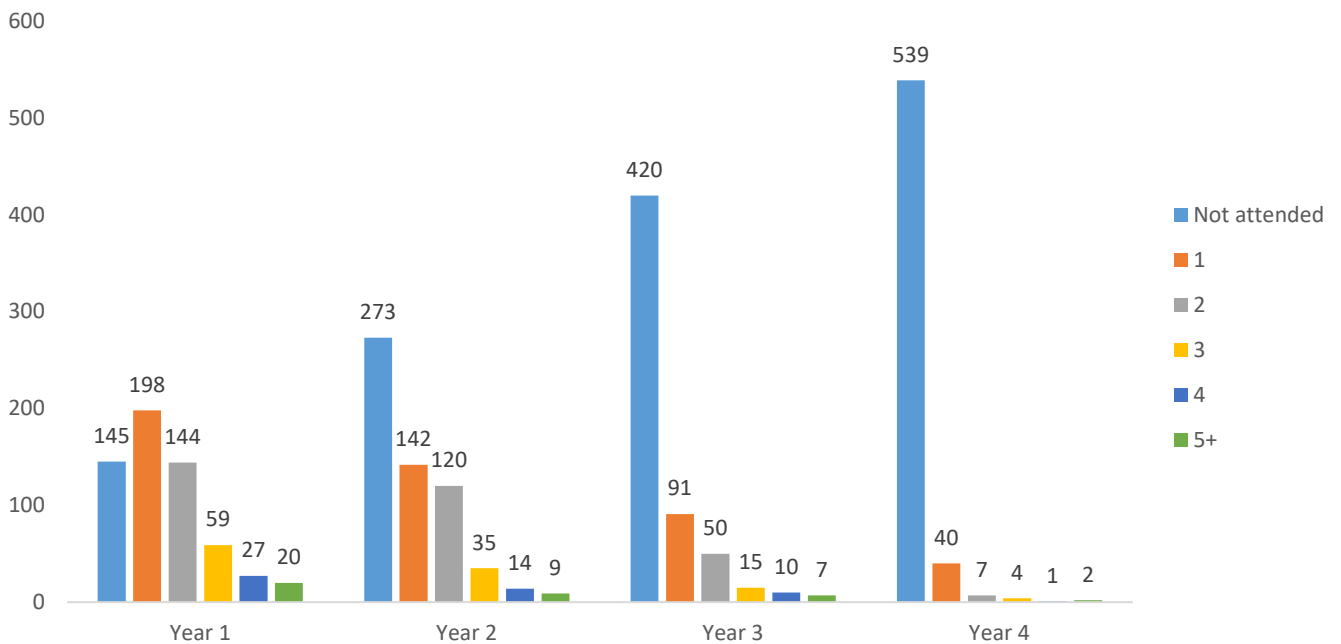
Communicated research to wider public audience.

41% of students had communicated research to a wider public audience and many communicated to more than one audience.

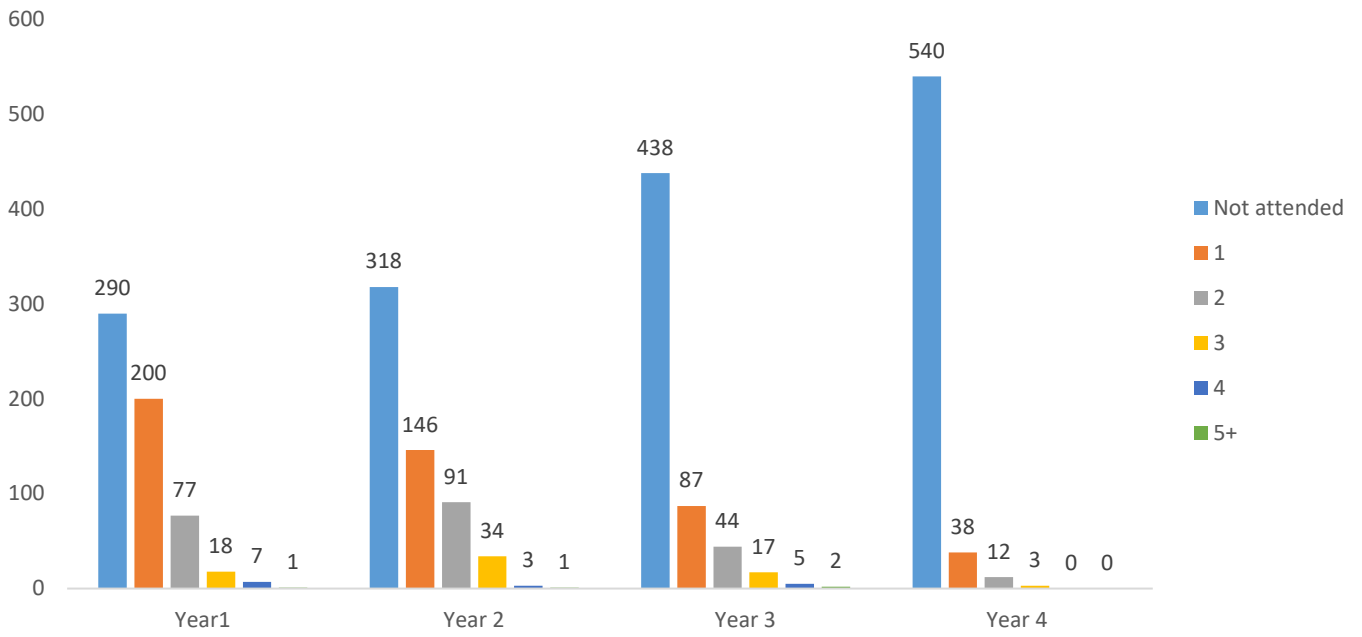


'Other' forms of public engagement students mentioned were science magazines, radio Talk at Malta Astronomical Society, podcasts, The Open University event, posters, Zooniverse, local pub talks, observatory open evenings, French embassy, newsletters, IoP 3 Minute Wonder competition, STEM for Britain, conferences, YouTube videos, career panel discussions.

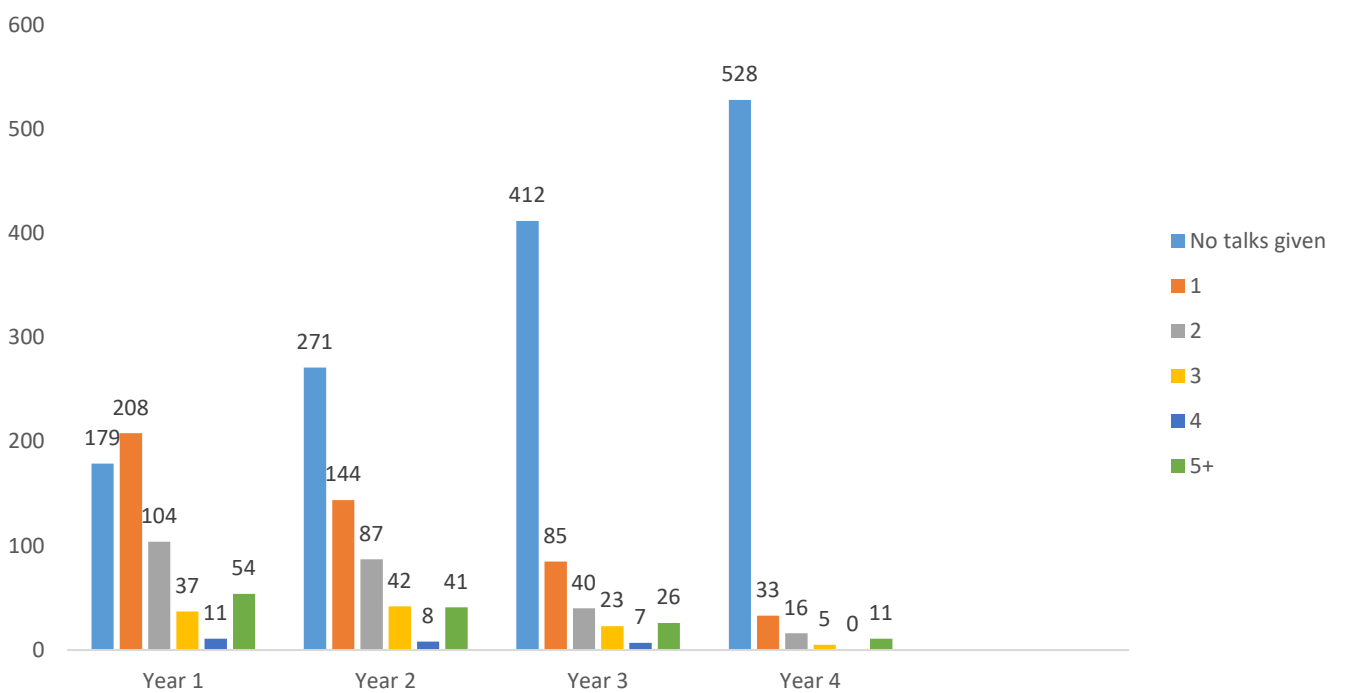
Attendance at UK workshops or conferences by year



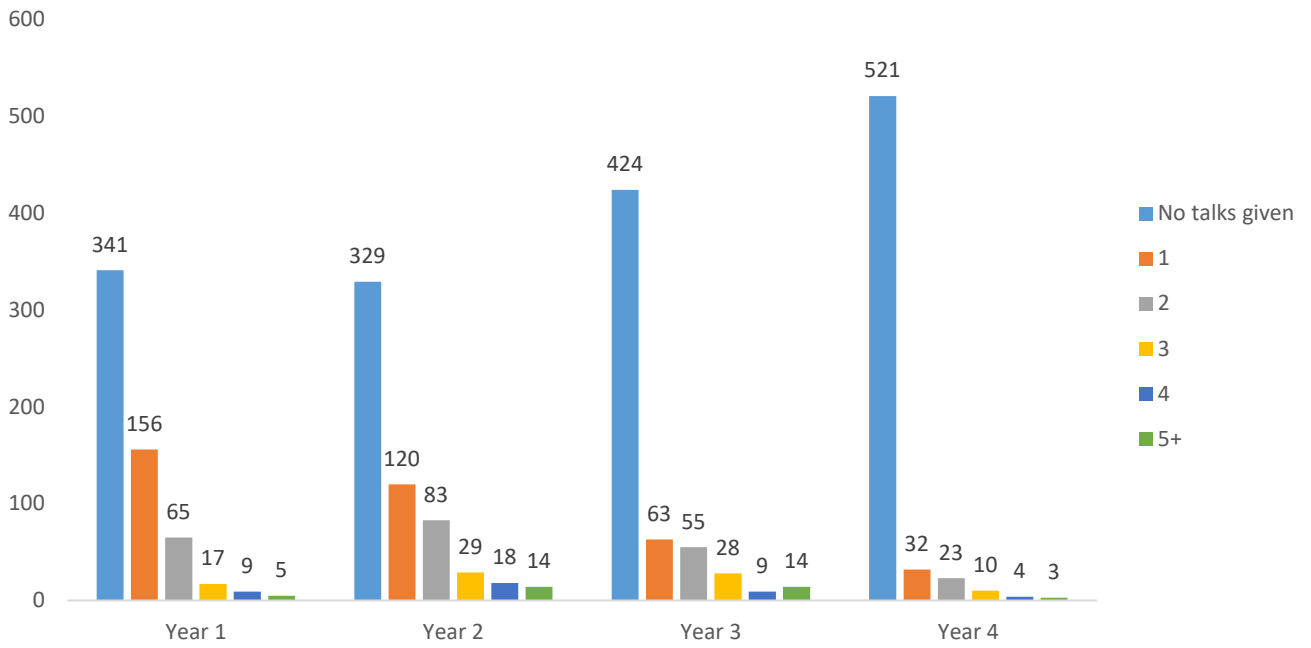
Attendance at overseas workshops or conferences by year



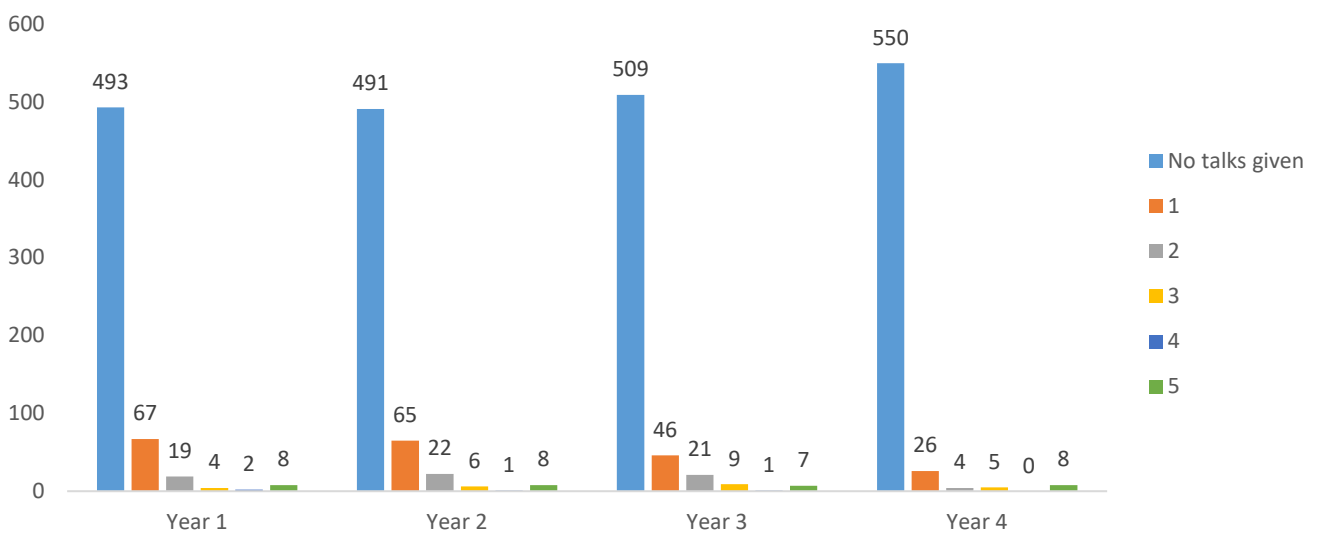
Research talks given within institution per year



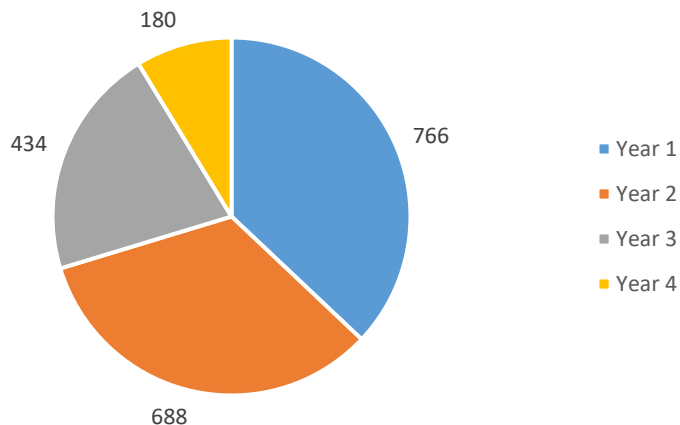
Research talks given at conferences and or workshops per year



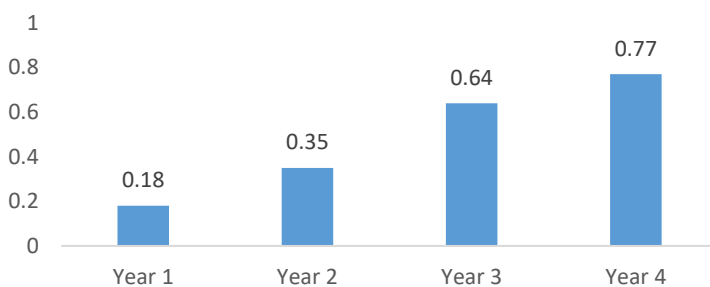
Research talks given at other external events



Total number of Research talks given



Average number of papers published per student in each year

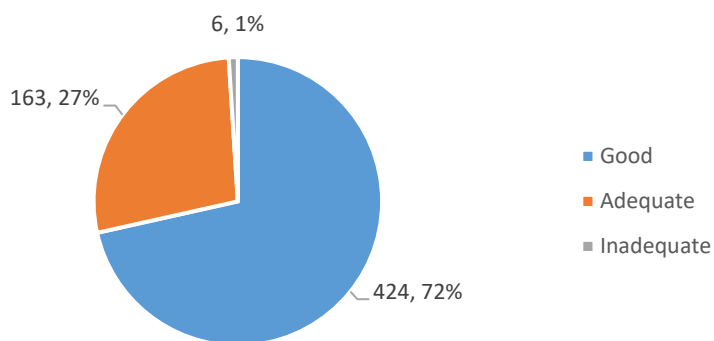


Year	No of Students	No of Papers Published in year	Average per student per year
1	593	104	0.18
2	428	149	0.35
3	266	170	0.64
4	115	88	0.77

In total the current 4th year students have published **252** papers during their awards. This equates to an average of **2.19** papers each during their studentship.

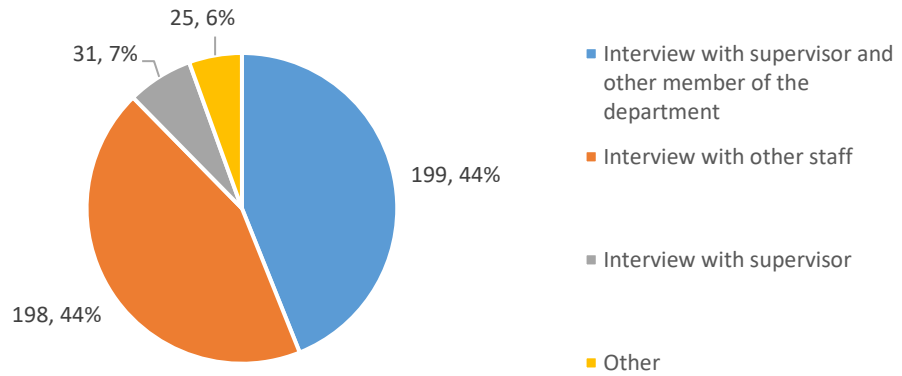
MONITORING

Rating of overall training



77% of students were required to submit a written progress report on their PhD in 2024/25.

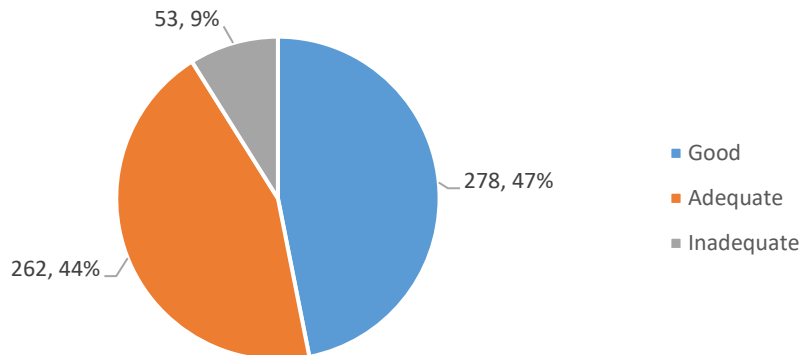
Assessment of progress report



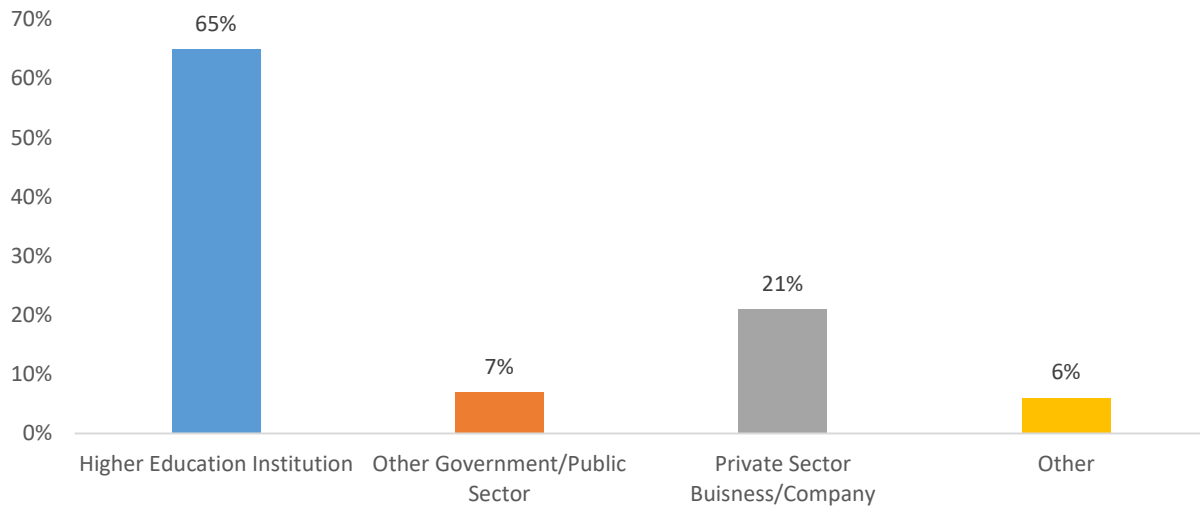
Other forms of assessments included written reports, research plan, research log, presentation, completion of thesis and viva, online report.

FUTURE CAREER

Rating of career guidance available during PhD

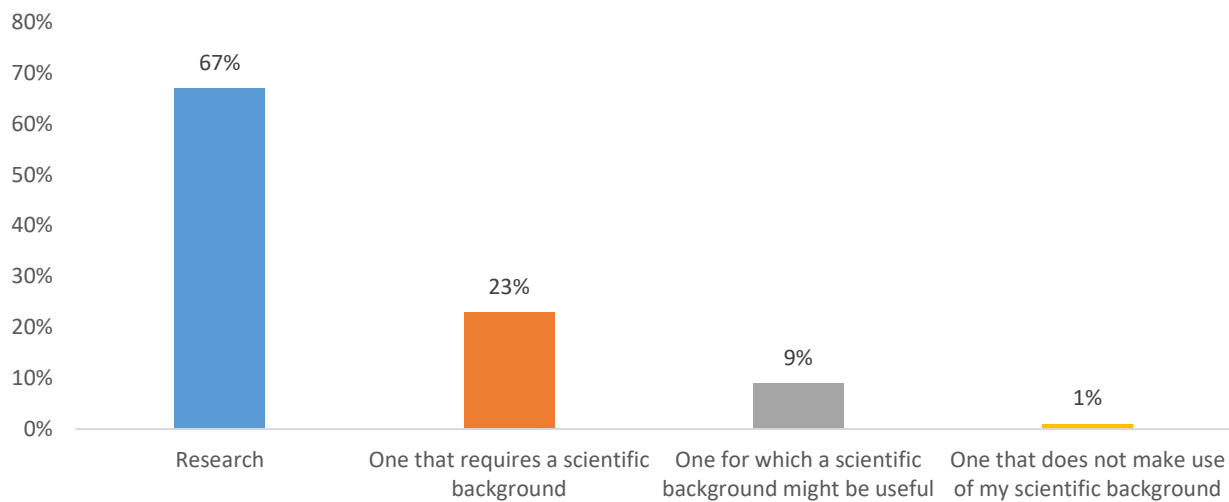


Type of organisation wish to work for upon completion of PhD

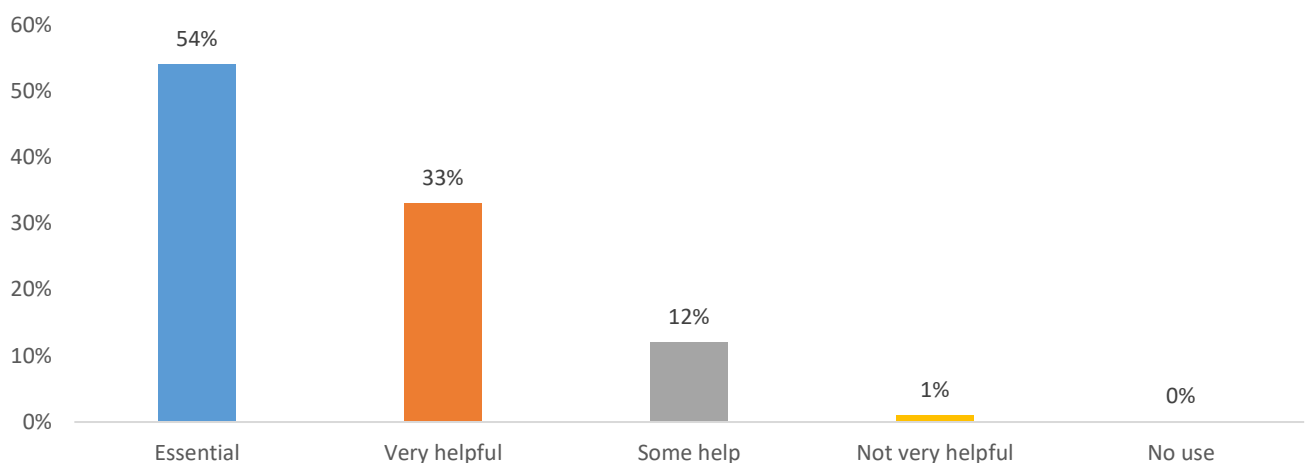


Of the 36 responses to 'other' 26 students were unsure or undecided on what type of organisation they wish to work in upon completion.

Sort of role intend to work in upon completion of PhD

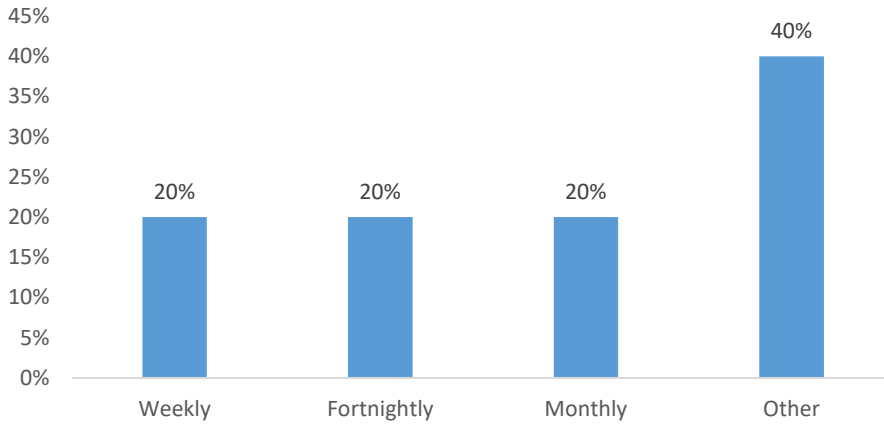


To what extent do you think your PhD will help you get a job?



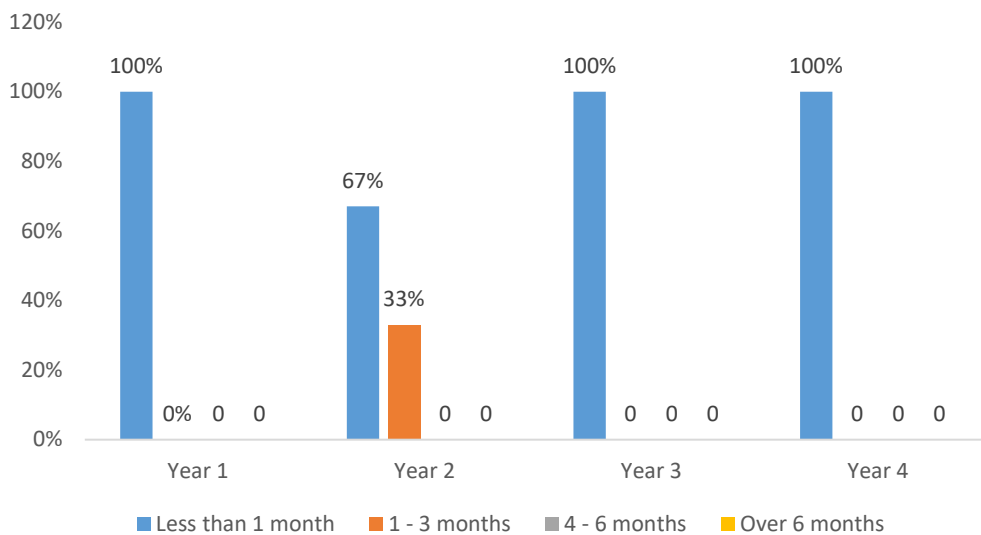
INDUSTRIAL CASE STUDENTSHIPS

Frequency of contact with Industrial partner
5 Industrial CASE students responded to the survey



It was noted the cases of Other that students met less frequently and dependant on the status of the project, but discussions were productive.

Time spent on premises of Industrial partner per year
4 Industrial CASE students responded to this question on the survey; 2 in their first year and 2 in their second year.



Students are expected to spend 3 months a year on average at their CASE Industrial Partner premises.

END OF REPORT
 June 2025