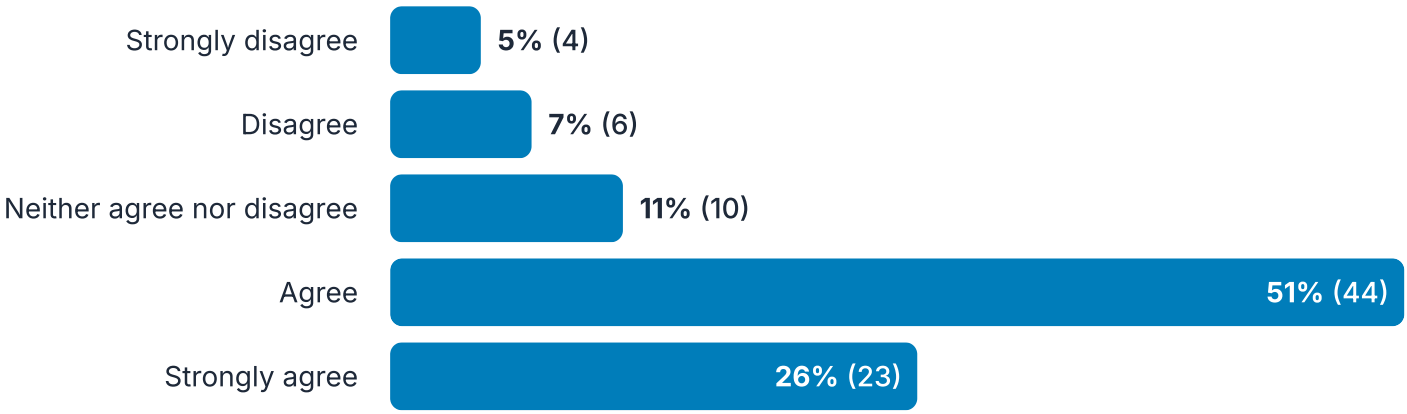
Edinburgh Neuroscience Research Culture Survey 2025

Research culture

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

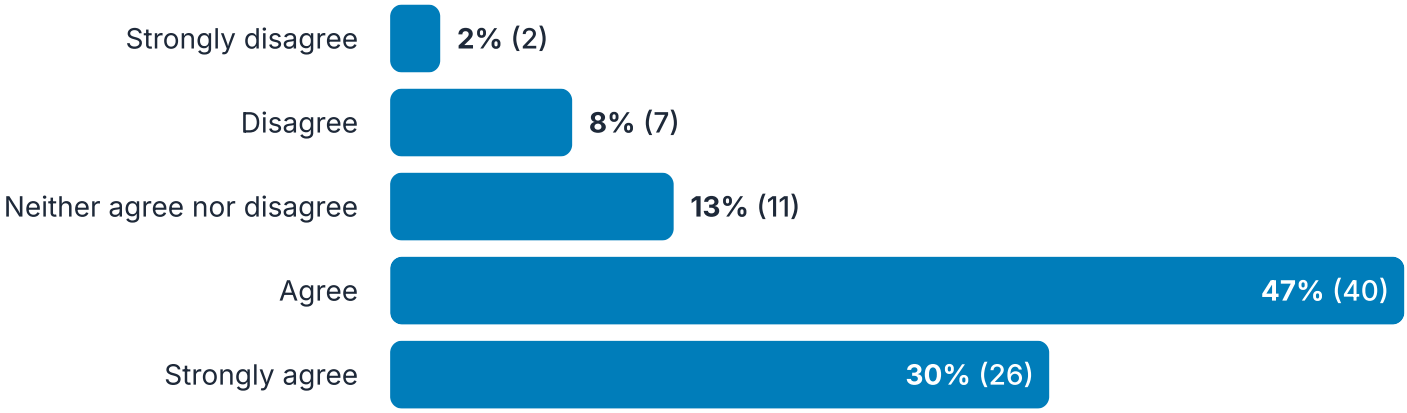
1. In general, staff and postgraduate research students are treated fairly and on their merits, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability or other protected characteristics?

Responses: 87



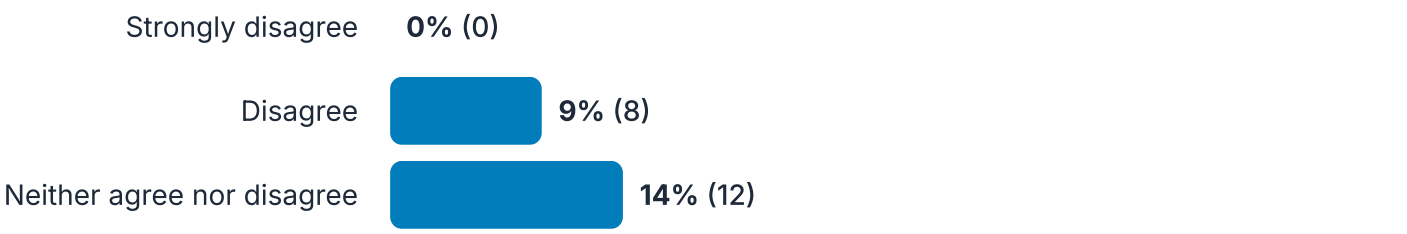
2. Unsupportive language and behaviour (e.g. inappropriate “banter” or overly familiar behaviour which may be unwanted or degrading) are considered unacceptable in my workplace

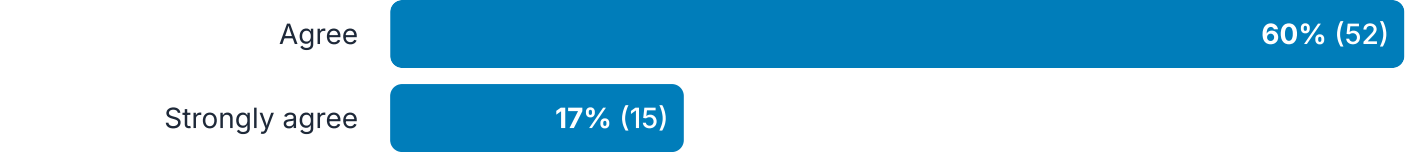
Responses: 86



3. Work-related social activities (e.g. parties, team building) are welcoming to all team members, regardless of sex/gender, age, socioeconomic status, caring responsibilities etc.

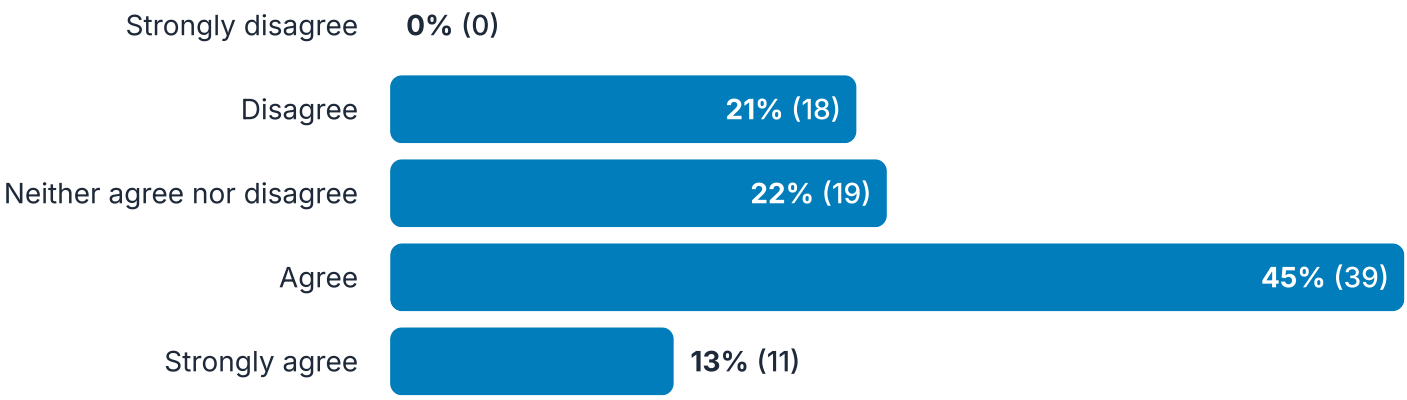
Responses: 87





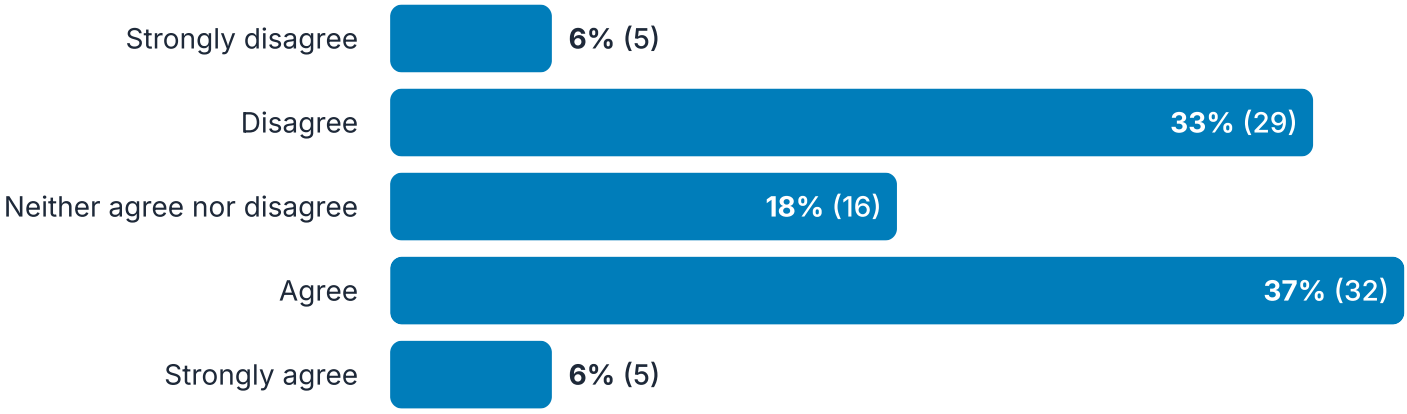
4. Work-related social activities provide a mixture of activities which, overall, mean everyone can participate

Responses: 87



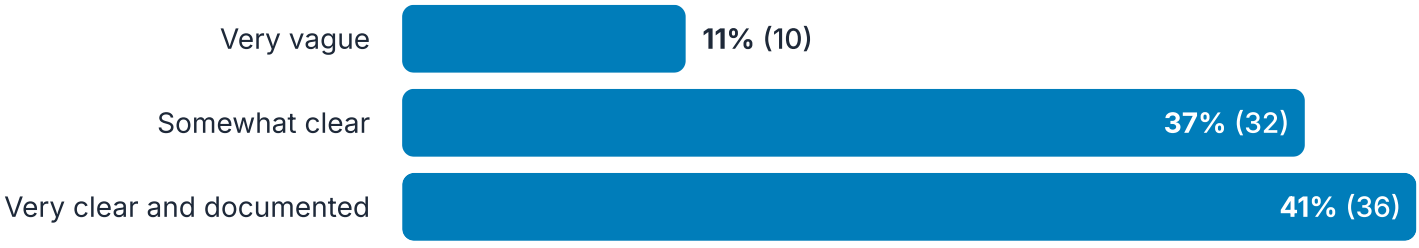
5. There are diverse role models in senior positions in my area (e.g. women, people of non-white ethnicities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, first-generation University etc)

Responses: 87



6. How clear and explicit are the expectations set by your supervisor/PI/line manager regarding your research goals and daily tasks?

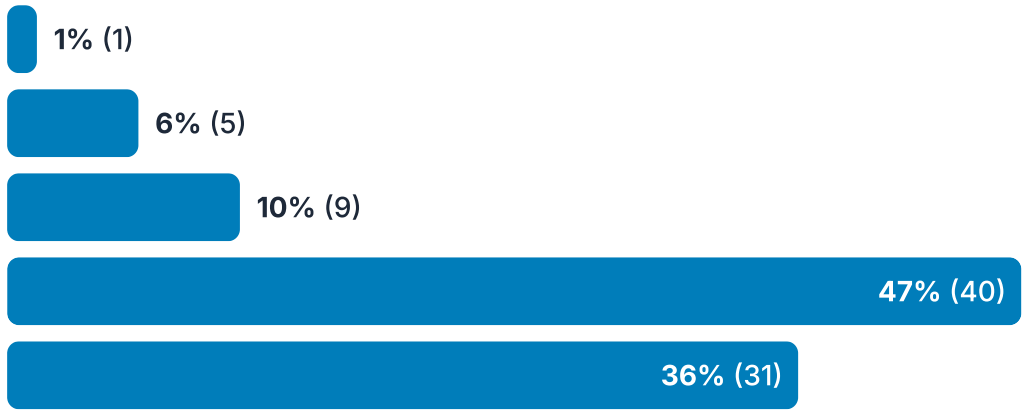
Responses: 87



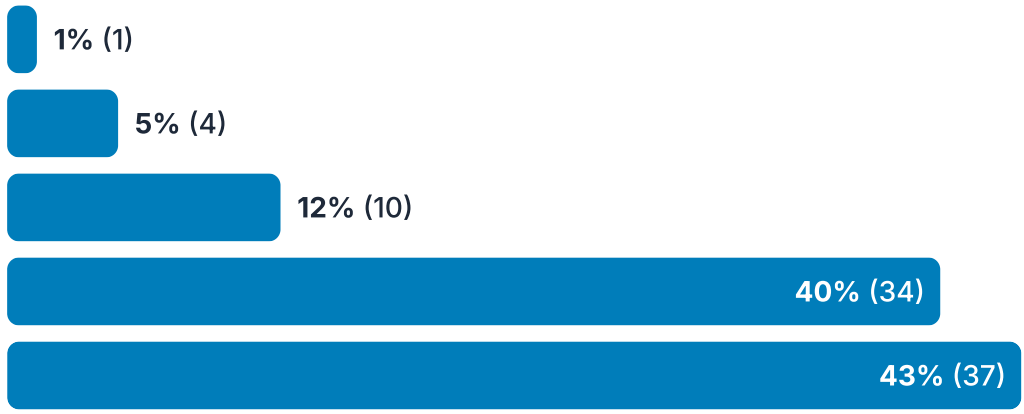
7. Your supervisor/PI/line manager provides feedback that is:

Responses: 86

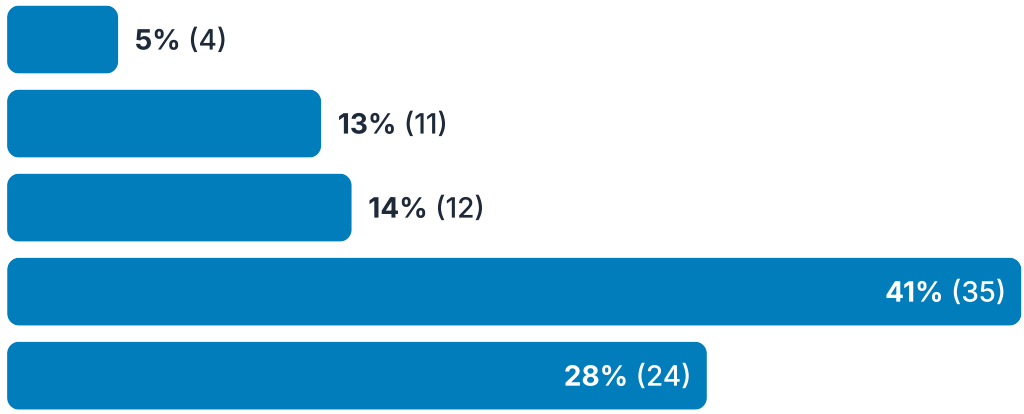
Constructive and actionable



Delivered in a way you can understand and process (e.g., written vs. verbal)



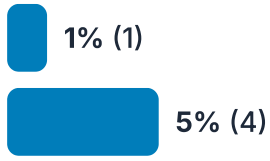
Consistent and predictable



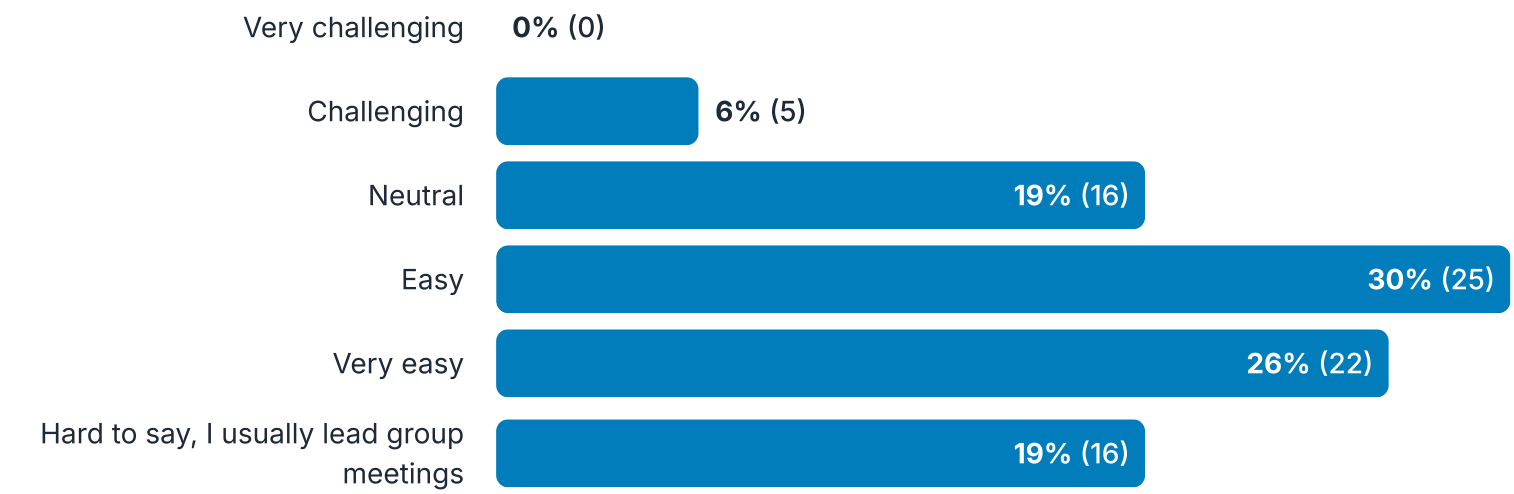
8. How do you find group meetings (e.g., lab meetings, journal clubs)?

Responses: 84

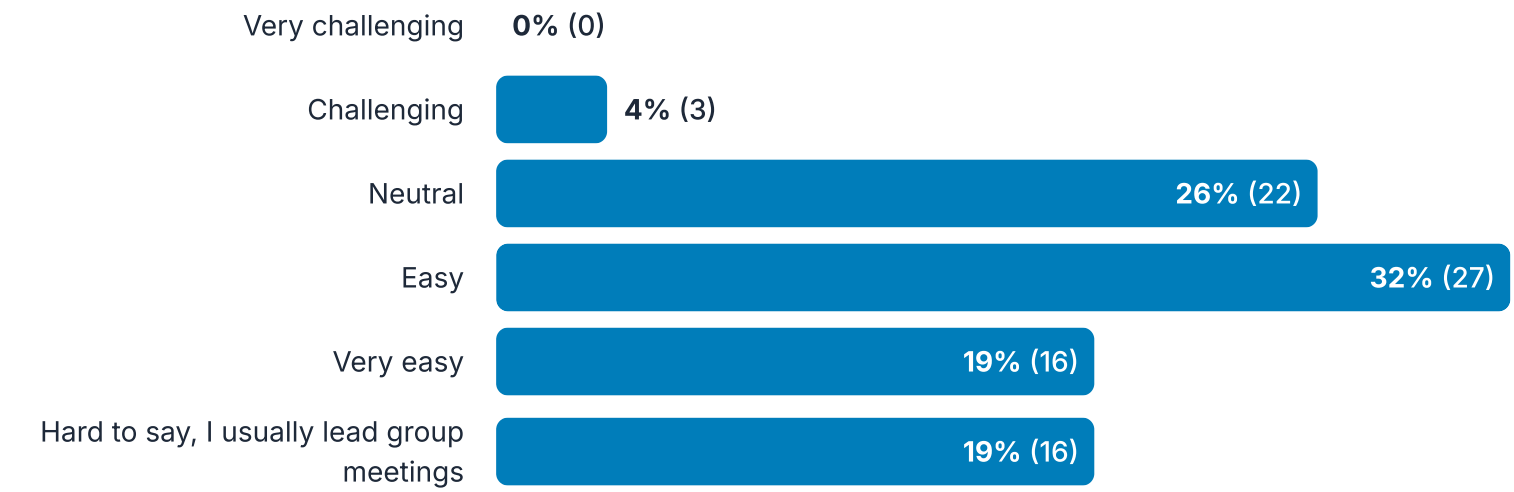
Pace of discussion



Ability to follow conversational turns



Pressure to contribute verbally on the spot



---

9. Are alternative ways to contribute to discussions offered or welcomed (e.g., contributing via chat during a meeting, providing written comments afterwards)?

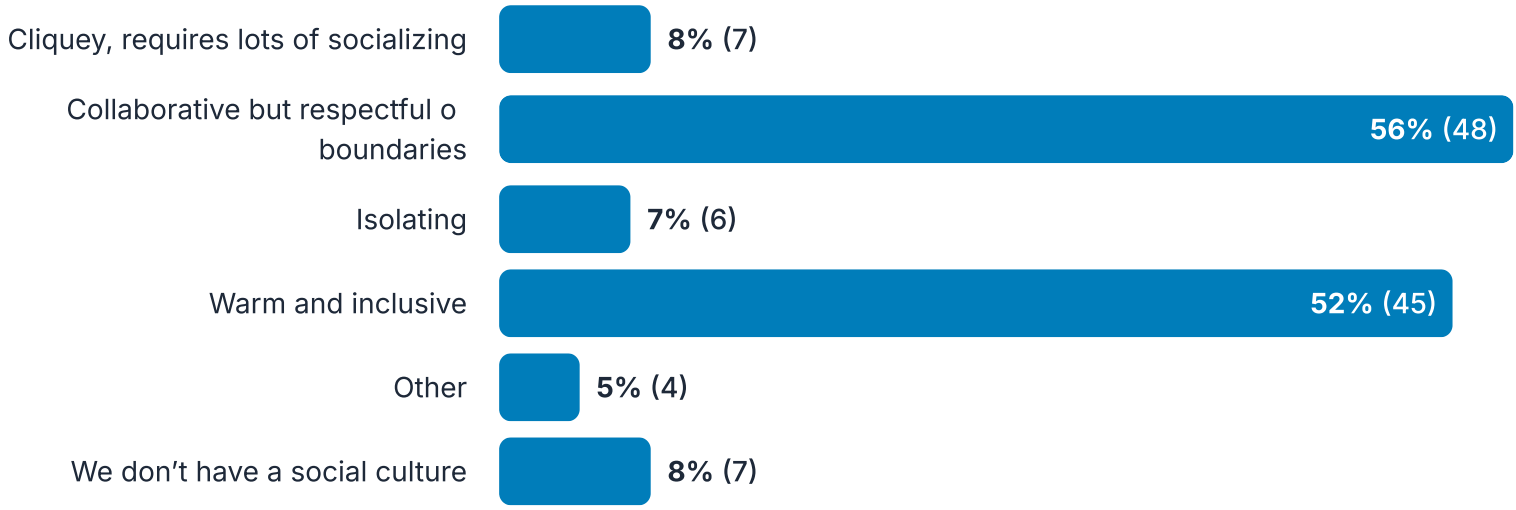
Responses: 85

Sometimes

Written reviews of journal club papers

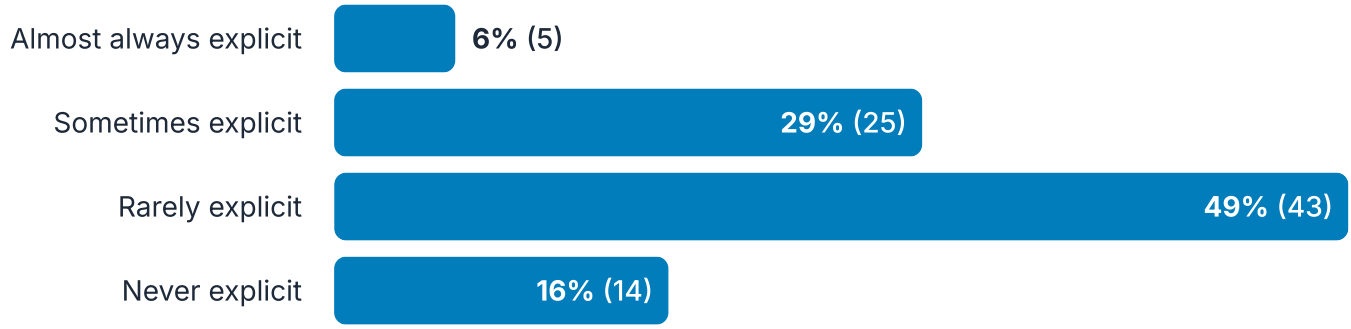
10. How would you describe the social culture in your research group? Please tick all that apply.

Responses: 86



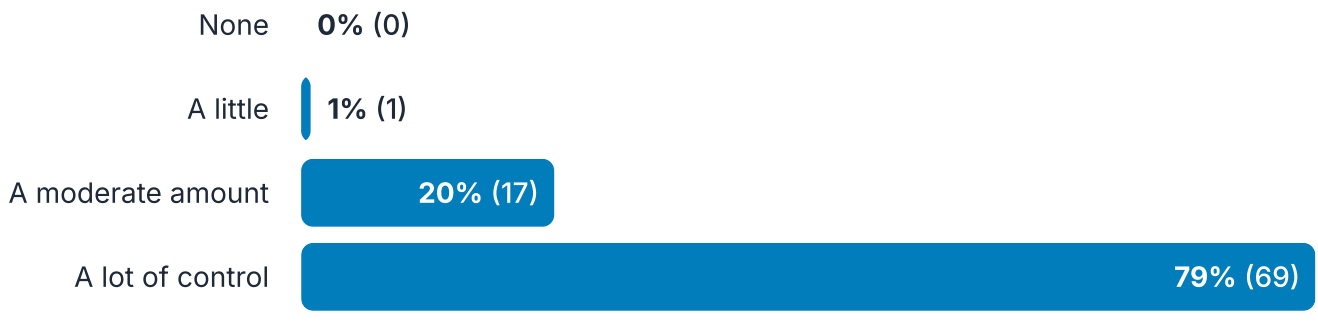
11. Are the "unwritten rules" of academic culture (e.g., networking, self-promotion, navigating hierarchy) explained explicitly, or are you expected to just "pick them up"?

Responses: 87



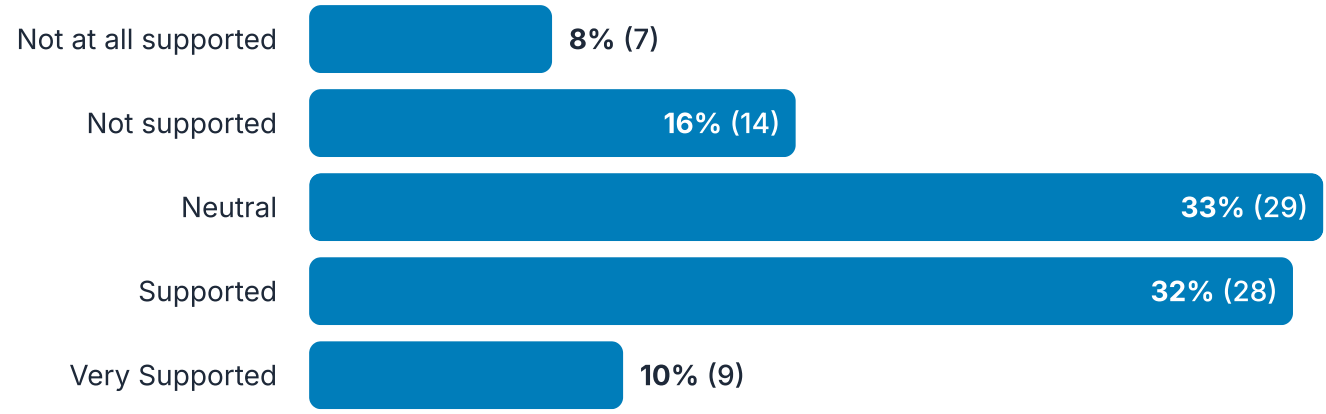
12. How much control do you have over structuring your workday and the order of your tasks?

Responses: 87



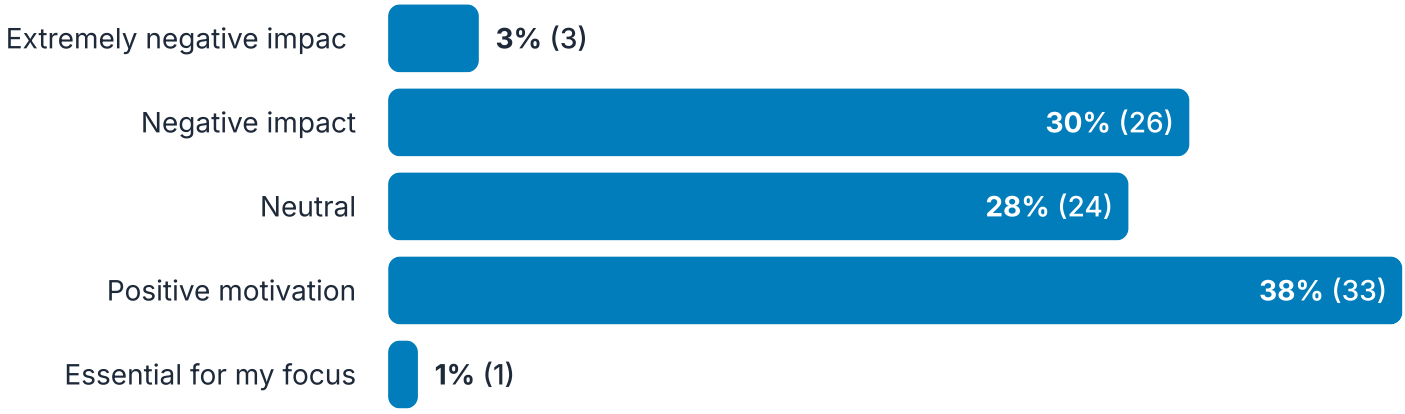
13. How supported do you feel in finding and using strategies to manage your workload, especially with open-ended tasks like writing and reading?

Responses: 87



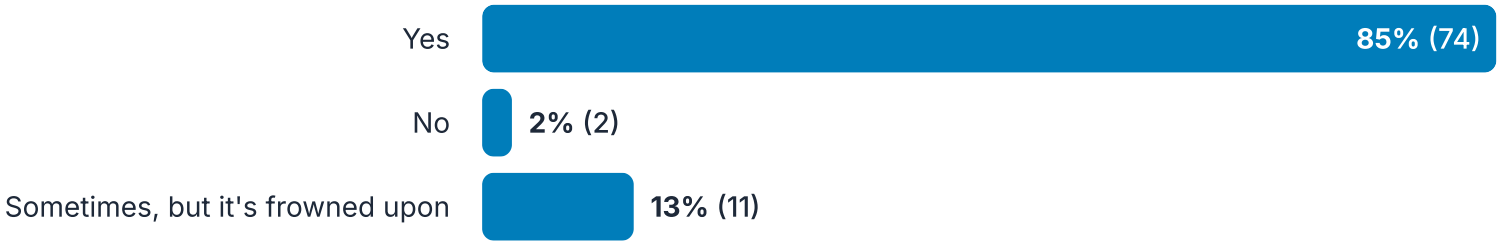
14. To what extent do deadlines and time pressures impact your well-being and the quality of your work?

Responses: 87



15. Are flexible working hours (where possible) an accepted and supported practice in your group?

Responses: 87



16. I have undertaken training at this University in:

Responses: 86

Neither 14% (12)

[redacted]

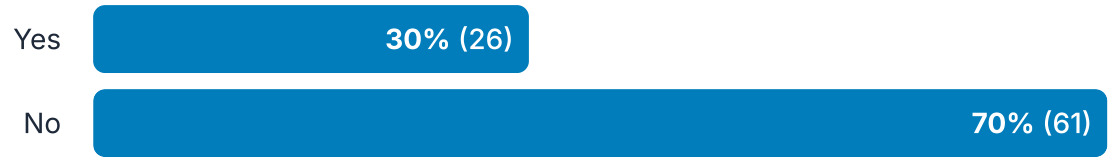
[redacted]

19. Would you like to answer questions about the experience of researchers with physical health problems?

Responses: 87

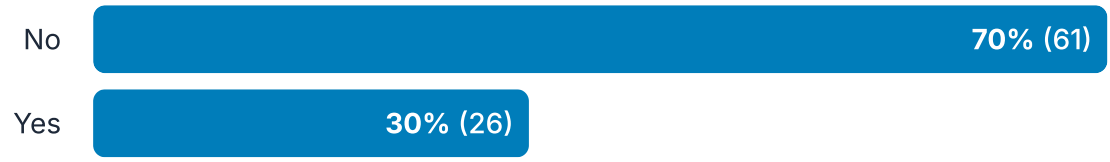
20. Would you like to answer questions about the experience of researchers with mental health problems?

Responses: 87



21. Would you like to answer questions about the experience of researchers with neurodiversity?

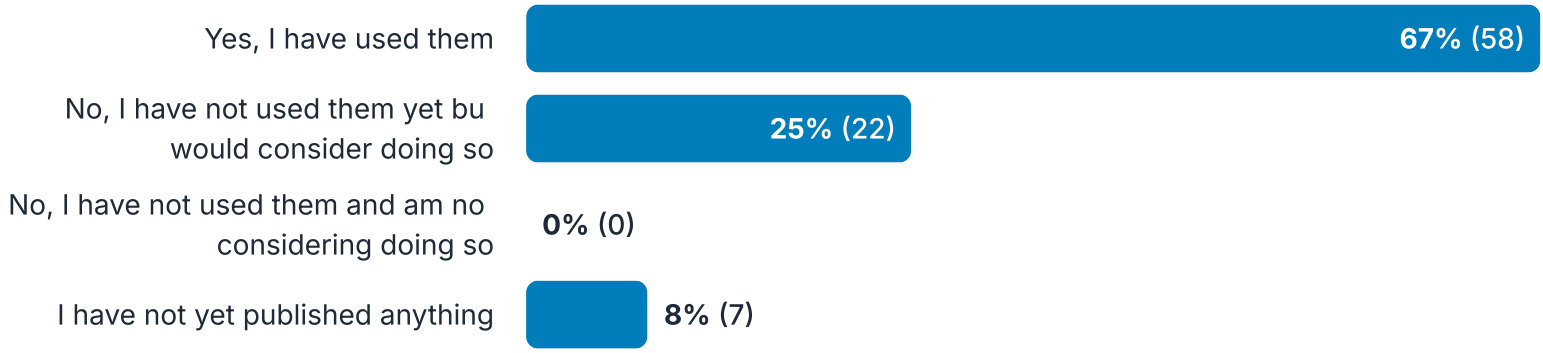
Responses: 87



Open science and good research practices

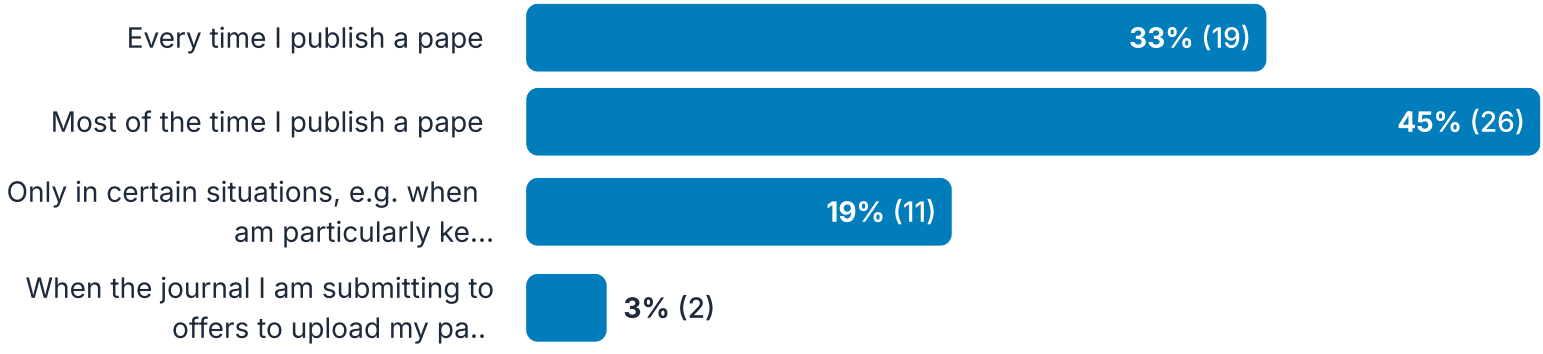
22. When seeking to publish your research, have you used or considered using preprint servers such as BioRxiv, PsyArXiv, medRxiv, etc?

Responses: 87



23. How often do you use them?

Responses: 58



The first reason is that it allows rapid dissemination of results and secures the priority of my contribution, which is especially important in a system where peer review is extremely slow and often dysfunctional. Second, preprints avoid paywalls and make it easy to share methods, code, and large data sets, which is useful for the community.

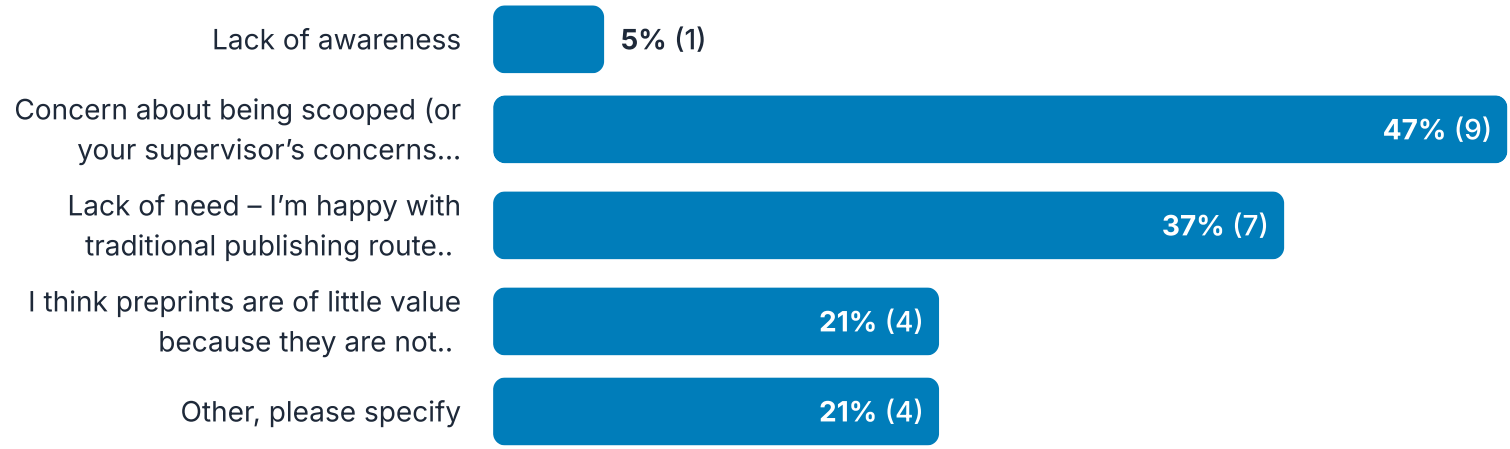
to share the work openly and quickly

Timely dissemination of findings and open access

Getting the data out there as publication pipelines are so slow.

25. What do you see as the barriers?

Responses: 19



26. If you answered "other, please specify" above, please elaborate.

Responses: 4

None

not at the stage where im thinking of publishing

Often time demands make it hard for me to do every aspect of my job, sometimes putting preprint together gets pushed to lower priority unfortunately

I publish little so have had little opportunity. I will use pre-prints for a paper I am completing now, however.

27. Do you have any other comments or thoughts about preprints?

Responses: 27

No

It would be helpful if we had a strongly positive view of preprinting. The university could encourage it by asking staff like ERO, librarians, data managers to encourage and support preprinting.

I think they are a good thing - and once stopped me being gazumped by another group when the journal had been slow reviewing my paper (using openly available data). The preprint showed that we had written the work up first.

Risk of being accepted knowledge without appropriate review

Fully positive experience - everyone should use

I fully support them and their use.

No

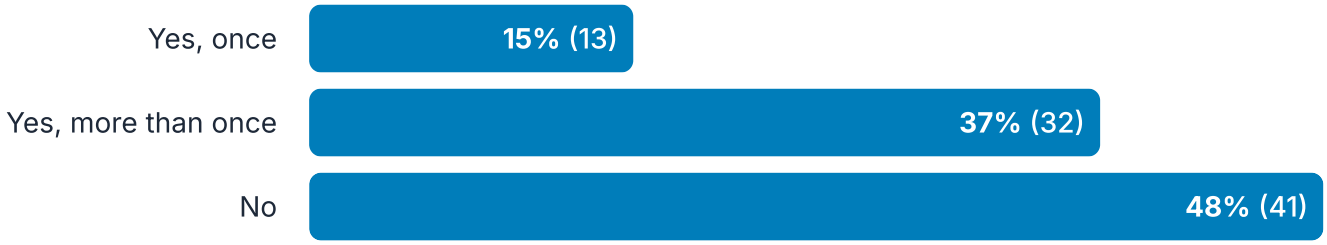
The perceived esteem of these as outputs still lags way behind fully pee -reviewed journal articles for life sciences research

They are great!

---

28. Have you ever deposited datasets arising from your research to an open repository?

Responses: 86



---

29. Which repository/es did you use?

Responses: 39

OSF, Edinburgh DataShare (?)

Ediburgh DataShare, PRIDE

pride

Zenodo

Datashare, GUDMAP

GitHub

Pride

PRIDE. UoE CMVM Roslin Institute Functional Genetics and Development, DataShare

osf, zenodo

Dryad, GRO Dataverse, Open Science Framework

University open data store

Not sure - others in my group did it

OSF

Depends on the journal and type of data (e.g., genome sequences are different from an Excel spreadsheet). For standard, experimental data I've used Dryad.)

RIDE - PRoteomics IDEntifications Database, Code Ocean

DataShare, OSF

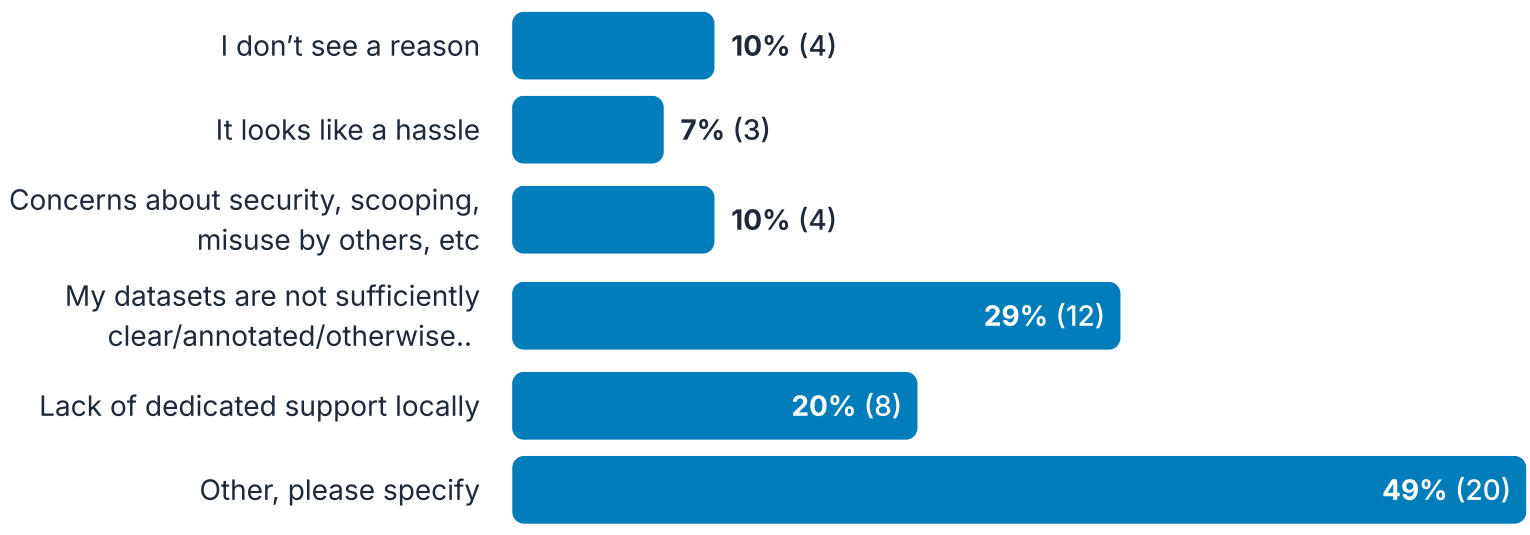
ENA

NCBI, EMBL

---

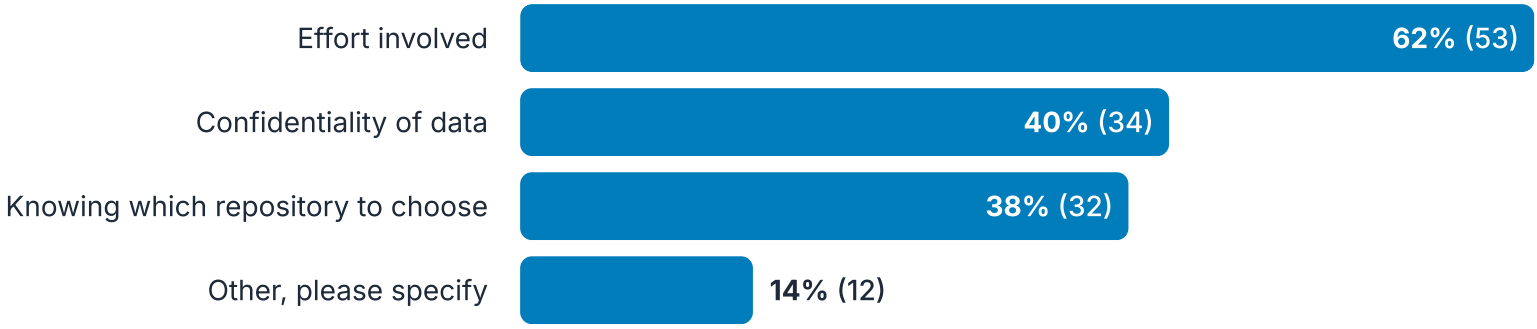
30. If you have not deposited any datasets, what has been the main reason stopping you?

Responses: 41



31. Whether you have deposited datasets or not, what do you see as the challenges or barriers for doing so (or doing so more often)? Please click all that apply.

Responses: 85



32. If you answered "other, please specify" above, please elaborate.

Responses: 11

> Re Q31 and Q32, we already have a mechanism in place for sharing data without using a repository that is approved by ethics etc. No need to do the work twice.

> The text box is missing Question 30. For both - I'm almost always using secondary dataset that are not mine to share - however these are typically open to other researchers to apply for.

> I am professional staff but involved in publications and data management for the lab. We always deposit publication-associated research data in open repositories and have also started depositing original source data too (e.g. Datashare, BioImage Archive, EIDF). Barriers include limit on data set size, some repositories charge a fee, others do not provide a persistent identifier, i.e. only a URL and not the requisite doi.

> Not applicable

> Whether consent has been obtained

> I don't see open repositories as challenging to use and I think they should be the norm for every publication

> Cost. Cost of staff to do it properly, i.e. share data/code in a useful way (well annotated, well formatted) such that it will be 'easily' usable by others.

> I have not yet collected any data

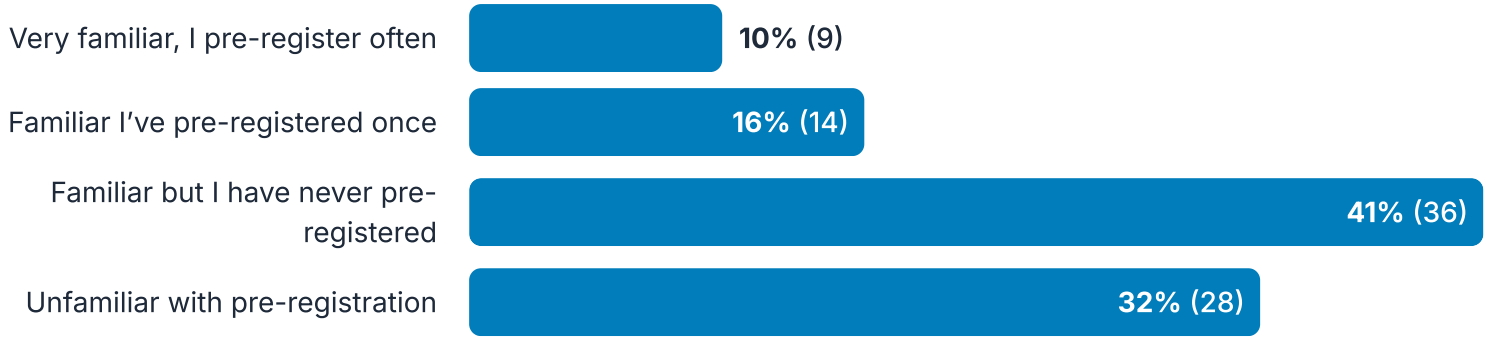
> It takes some effort (not that much really), but I've consistently found it by far the most useful administrative activity.

> time demands..

> Not my area of work

33. How familiar are you with pre-registration?

Responses: 87



34. What was your main motivation for doing so?

Responses: 18

> Usually it's when students want to do it.

> documenting our experiment plans

> It's good practice.

> Making clear my objectives, analysis plans and hypotheses ahead of a study

> Planning analyses and data handling in detail ahead of time to avoid practices like exploratory analyses, P-hacking, results-fishing (and have this documented). It's also a requirement for publication in some of the journals I was aiming for.

> Transparency and compliance with reporting guidelines

> transparency

> To hold myself accountable to follow the protocol outlined prior to having seen any of the results. Also, as an early-career researcher, it is really helpful to get feedback from my supervisors and collaborators on the research plan because it provides a firm ground for what they can expect from me. There are no surprises later down the line when we all agree on the research to be conducted before I get started with the hands-on work.

> To try a new way of doing open science, but ultimately found it very restrictive when the project was in early conception.

> To experience it, and PI chose to do it.

> showing my working, that I'm not HARKing

> pre-registered systematic reviews

My PI advised me to

Being clear and open about experimental design.

good research practice; makes work more robust, less prone to HARKing (or such postulations)

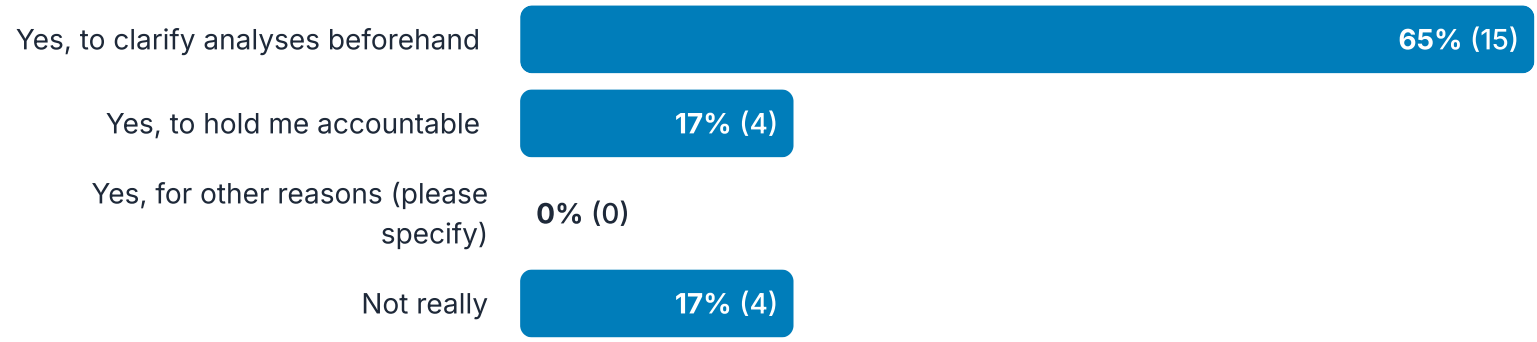
To see what the process was like

It increases trust and transparency in research. It is the right thing to do.

commitment to open science principles, trustworthiness of the research, supporting junior colleagues to learn this as a skill and practice

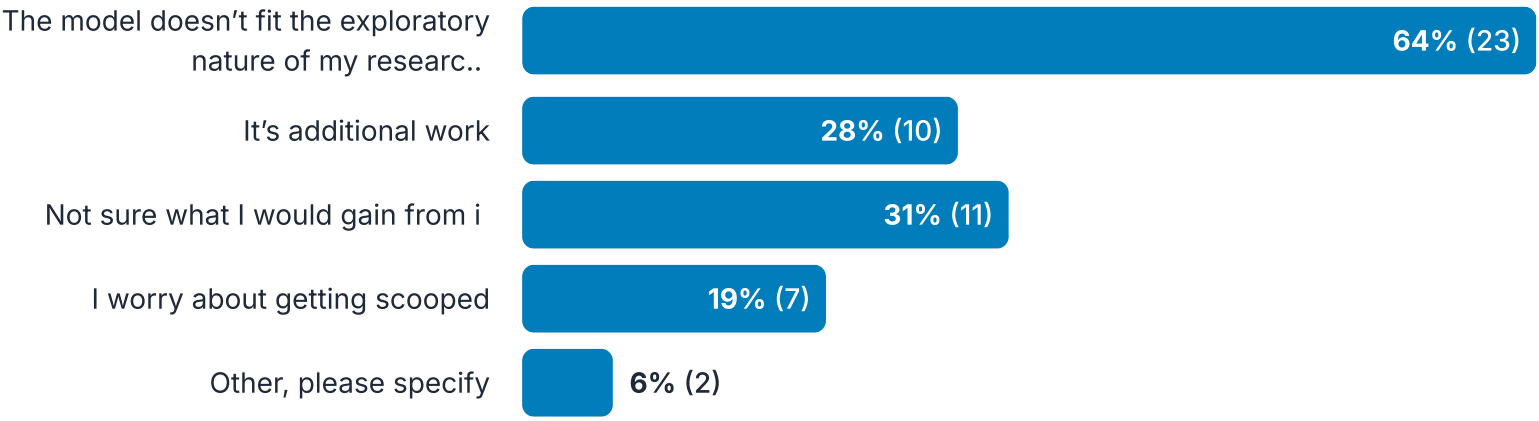
35. Did you find pre-registration a useful exercise?

Responses: 23



36. What is the main reason for that?

Responses: 36



37. If you answered "other, please specify" above, please elaborate here.

Responses: 2

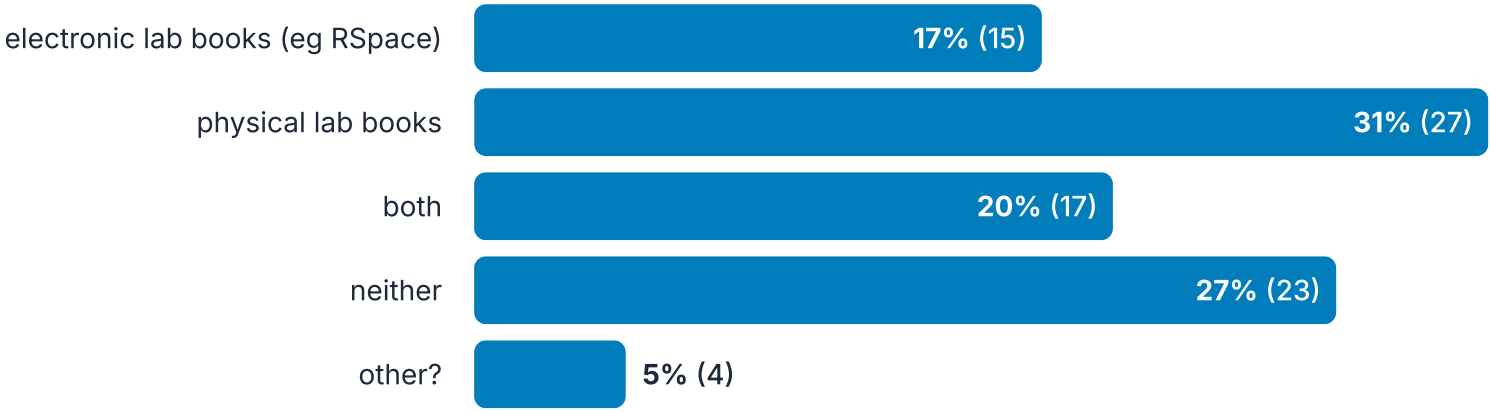
i haven't had the opportunity to pre-register as I mainly work on existing cohorts

> Couldn’t find platform flexible enough for my research design

---

38. Question on electronic lab books: For recording your experiments, do you use:

Responses: 86



---

39. If you answered "other" above, please name or describe the lab book system you use for recording your experiments.

Responses: 3

> dry-lab, we use a mix of personal notes, filling out preexisting forms, and documenting things using standard practice on various databases (e.g., GitHub)

> Not applicable

> Combination of physical lab books and excel spreadhseets

Edinburgh University Research Optimisation Course (EUROC)

These questions relate to EUROC, a course developed to support researchers working with animals to design, conduct, analyse and report on their experiments in the most reproducible way possible. You can read more about and access EUROC here: https://bioresearch-veterinary-services.ed.ac.uk/animal-welfare/resources-for-improving-experimental-design

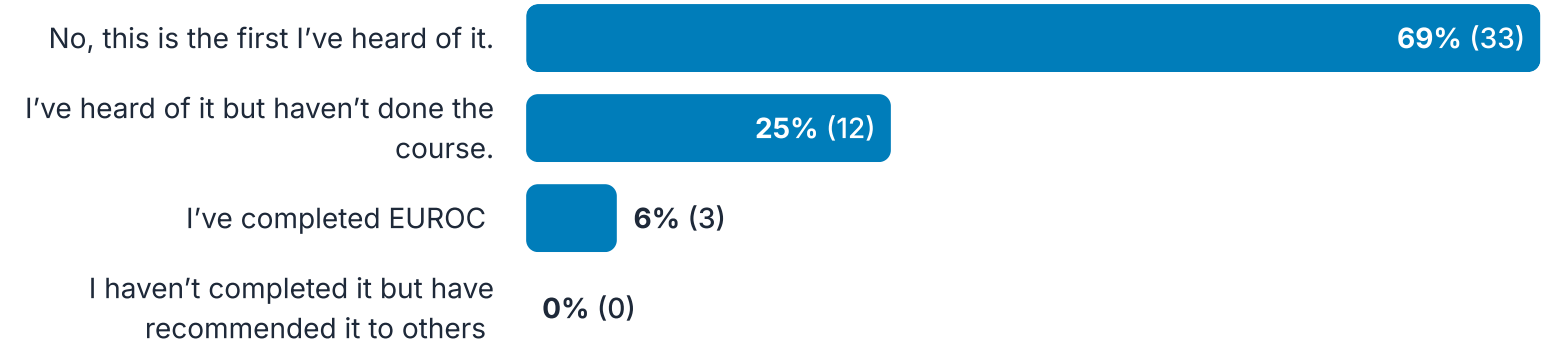
40. Do you work with non-human animals?

Responses: 88

---

41. Before taking this survey, were you aware of EUROC?

Responses: 48



Research evaluation and responsible research metrics

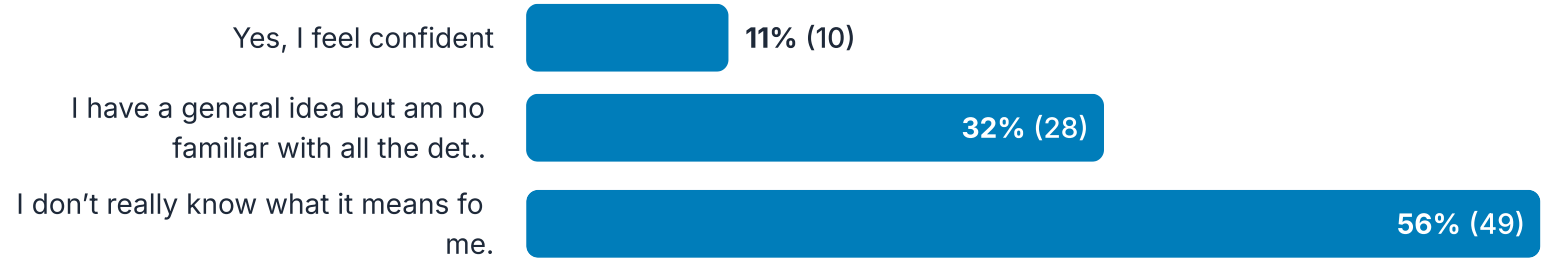
Responsible use of research metrics is about setting out how we use quantitative measures and analysis appropriately and fairly alongside more qualitative information to recognise and support high quality research. The University of Edinburgh signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) in 2019, and signed up to Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) commitments in 2023. DORA provides a roadmap for global reform in research assessment that universities, funding bodies and individual researchers can sign up to. As a signatory, the University supports DORA's vision to 'advance practical and robust approaches to research assessment globally and across all scholarly disciplines'. CoARA is a collective of organisations committed to reforming the methods and processes by which research, researchers, and research organisations are evaluated. As a signatory we have agreed to implement reform in the assessment of research, researchers, and research organisations. You can read more about responsible metrics here: https://www.ed.ac.uk/research-cultures/home/responsible-research-assessment

42. Before taking this survey, were you aware of DORA and CoARA, and that the University of Edinburgh is a signatory?

Responses: 88

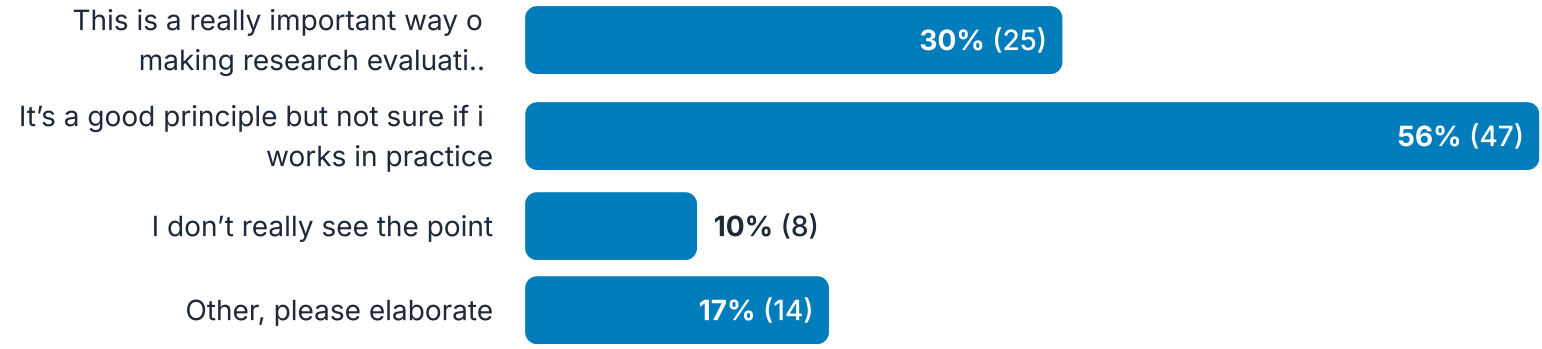
43. Do you feel confident that you understand the responsibilities that DORA and CoARA place on the institution, and what this means for how you and your work is evaluated?

Responses: 87



44. In general, what do you think about DORA and responsible metrics?

Responses: 84



45. If you answered "other, please elaborate" above, please provide further details here.

Responses: 11

I discovered those things with this survey and I think it is very important and relevant. Maybe it just escaped my attention, but I think those things are unsufficiently promoted by the University.

I don't know enough about it to comment.

I think it sounds super useful but I also think that probably most researchers who really care about their science already intuitively follow ethical research practices. It's more for those who don't care so much and cut corners that this seems useful

I don't know enough about it to have an opinion

I don't even know what that means

I'm not familiar with these metrics, so I can't comment

i think it is a good thing and important - but not sure if this is necessarily a commonly held view among senior researchers in power (i.e. funding panels/reviewers) and do worry that as ecrs we can do the right thing by DORA/Coara and be penalised/be less competitive for funding/promotion e.g. by prioritising open access journals rather than impact factor when publishing

I would assume these issues were always considered by researchers using animals in their research.

Don't know what DORA is

Heard of it, but can't remember what it is about

not informed enough to answer