



UNIVERSITY OF
HOHENHEIM

Young Researcher Survey 2020

Survey information

Period of survey 28th of April – 12th of May 2020

Survey respondents 242

Postdoctoral academic staff (AS)

N = 55

A	N	W
61.82%	14.55%	23.63%

Doctoral candidates (DC)

N = 187*

A	N	W**
47.6%	27.3%	25.1%

* 187 DCs represent 20% of total DCs registered at UHOH

** The share of total DCs at UHOH by faculty is
A 48%, N 25%, and W 27%.



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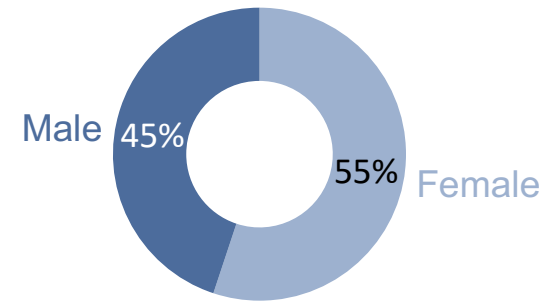
I Results for Doctoral Candidates (DC)

Sample DC – Gender

„Are you ...?”

total

The distribution of participants' gender is almost balanced – with a slightly higher proportion of women.

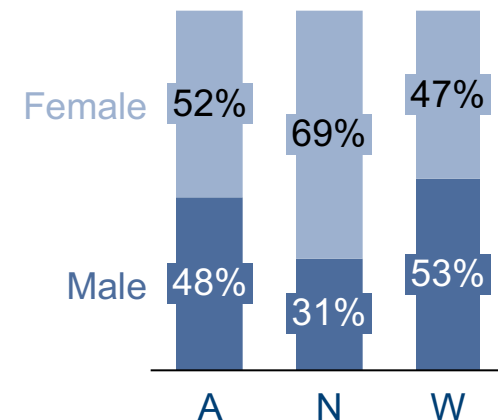


Note: The total share of female DCs at UHOH is 51% and by faculty: A 50%, N 57%, and W 46%.

by faculty

Participants of faculty N show the highest share of women.

Men and women of faculties A and W have equally participated.



Sample DC – Nationality

The majority of DCs originates from Germany.

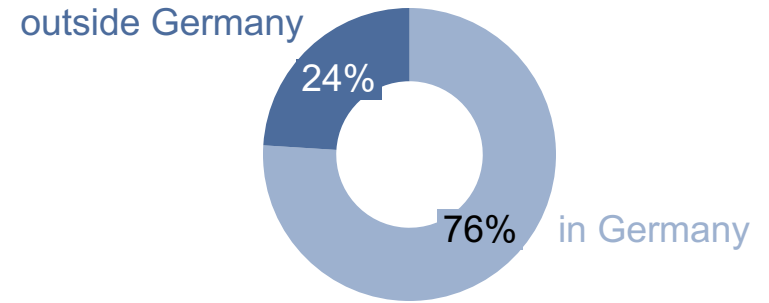
24% have spent most of their lifetime outside of Germany.

Participants of faculty A with 36% show the highest share of internationals.

Participants of faculty W with 11% the lowest.

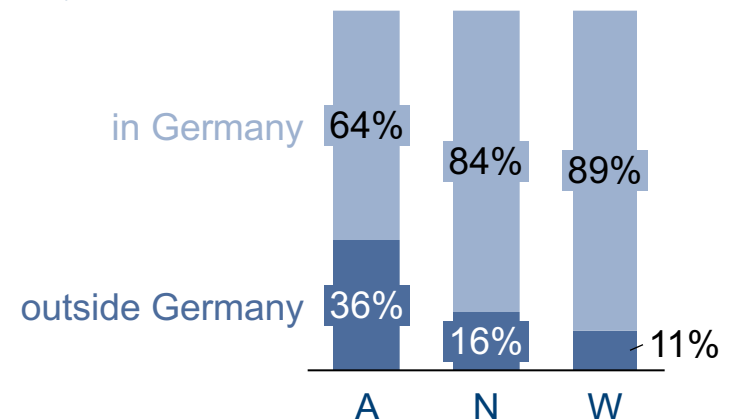
„Where have you spent most of your lifetime?“

total



Note: The total share of international DCs at UHOH is 19% and by faculty: A 39%, N 19%, and W 11%.

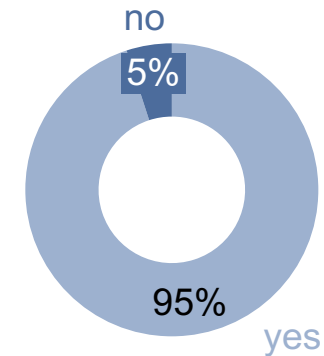
by faculty



Sample DC – Dissertation status

Only a minority, 5 %, have not yet started working on their dissertation projects.

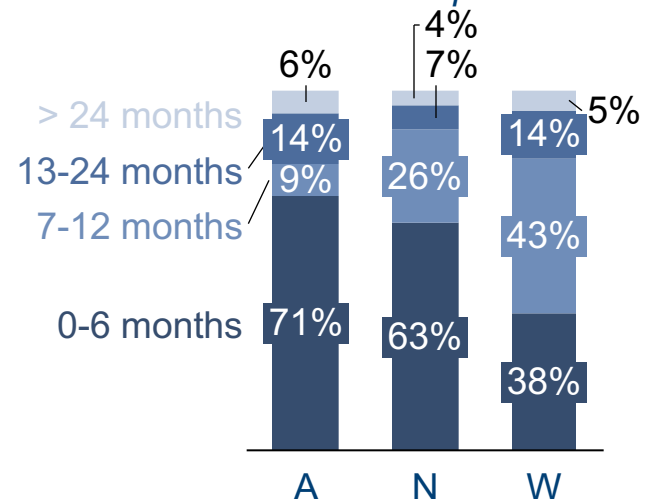
„Are you already working on your dissertation project?“



The majority of faculties A's and N's participants have applied for acceptance within the first 6 months.

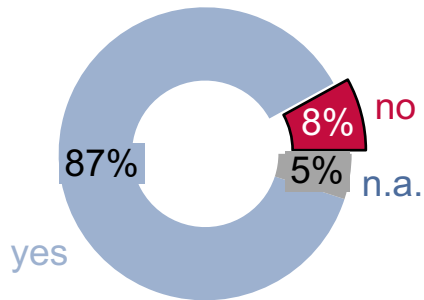
The majority of faculty W's participants within the first year.

„How much time has passed between your start of work at UHOH and your acceptance as DC?“



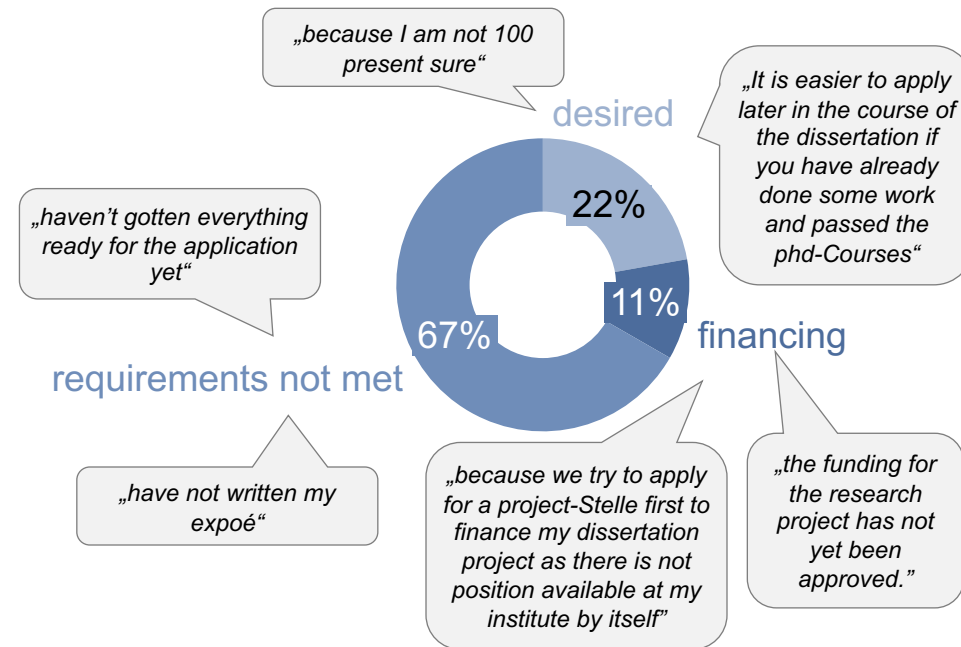
Sample DC – Dissertation status

„Is your dissertation project officially accepted by the UHOH?“



- Reasons for a postponement of the application process are either desired, related to the financing situation, or (predominantly) the application process itself.

„Why have you not yet applied for acceptance as doctoral candidate?“



Sample DC – Financing situation

„My work / studies are financed through...”

The majority of faculty W’s participants are employed as academic staff.

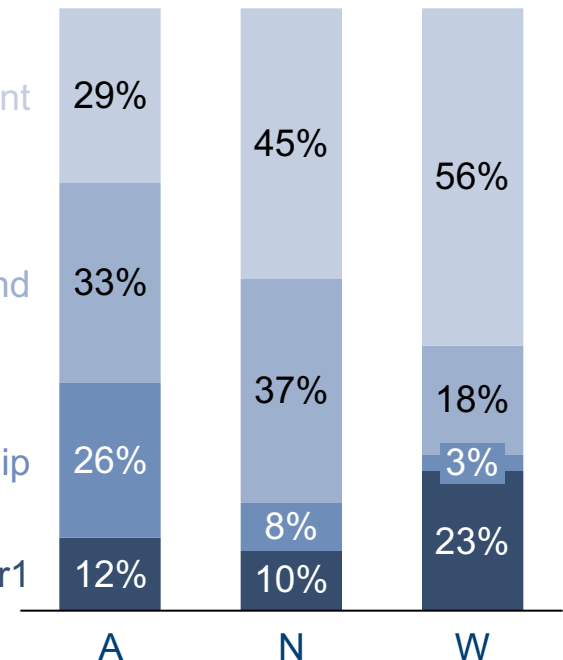
Faculties A’s and N’s participants indicate a higher share of third-party-funded PhD projects.

UHOH employment

Third-Party fund

Scholarship

Other¹



Note: Other¹ includes external candidates.

„Live on my own financial means”

„Personal finances”

„Myself and we were awarded a research grant”

statements on “other” financing sources

„Hilfskraftstelle”

„freelance”

„Museum for Natural History”

„I have no more contract”

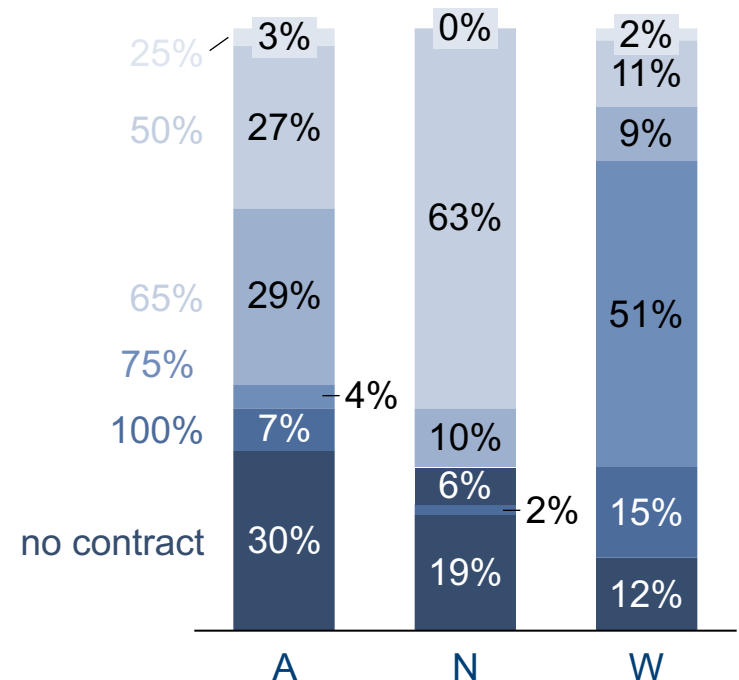
“Had a scholarship for three months, maybe 6 months a hiwi-contract, the rest of the time i was financially unstable (without a contract from the university, i had to work on some jobs and my parents helped me out”

Sample DC – Financing situation

Part-time employments constitute the absolute majority across all faculties. Only a minority of participants are fully employed.

50-65% shares are prevailing in faculties A and N, and 75% shares in faculty W.

„What share of a full position do you have on average?“



FYI:

50% TVL 13 Stage 1 means a net income of approx. 1.300 € in Stuttgart.
DFG recommends at least 65%.

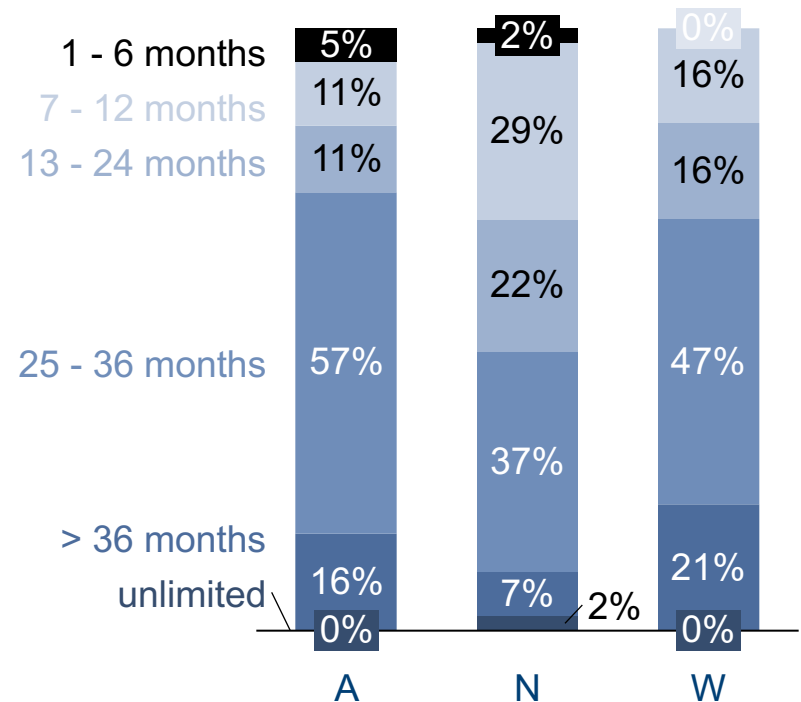
Sample DC – Financing situation

„What is the average contracted duration of your position (in months)?“

Contracts issued up to 6 months seems to be a phenomenon that has only been experienced by participants of faculties A and N.

The majority of contracts last between 25 to 36 months.

Unlimited contracts for doctoral candidates represent an exception in faculty N.



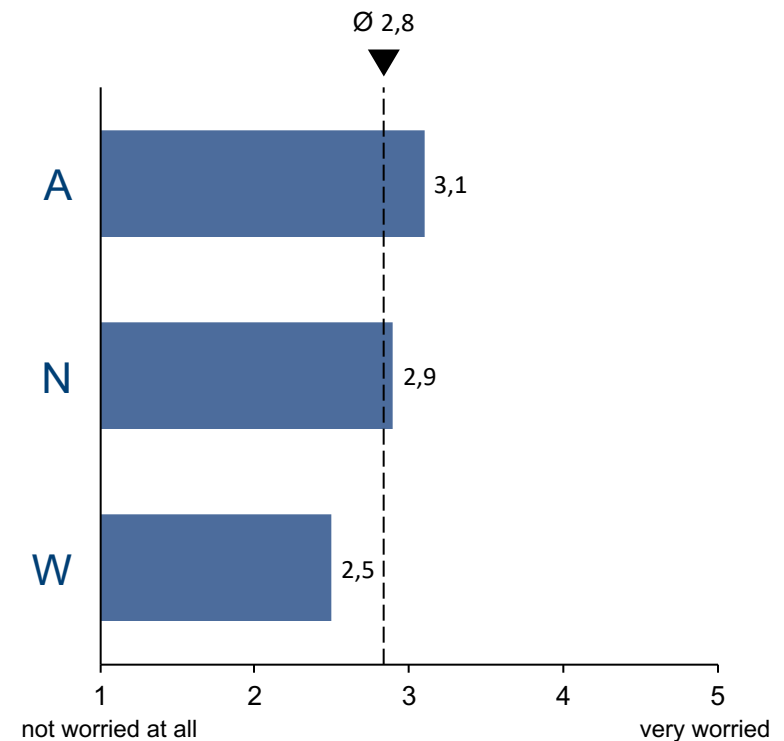
FYI:

WissZeitG specifies at least 3 years in the so-called qualification phase (for doctorate),

Sample DC – Financing situation

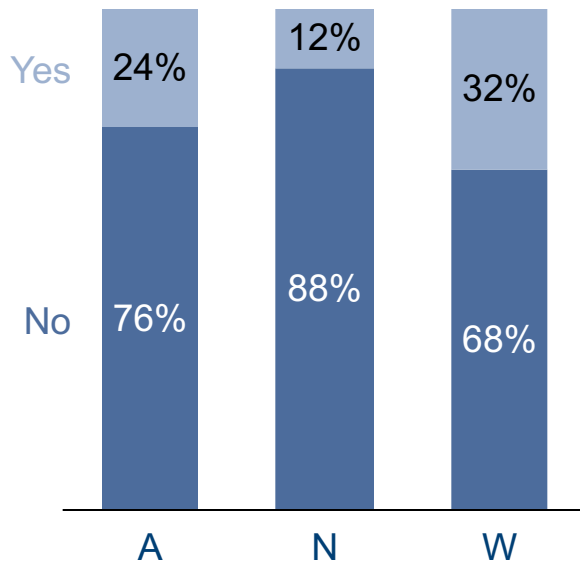
In line with the shorter contract durations and lower employment shares, participants of faculties A and N on average are more worried with regards to their financial insecurities.

„How worried are you when you think about the duration of your contract and the financing situation?“

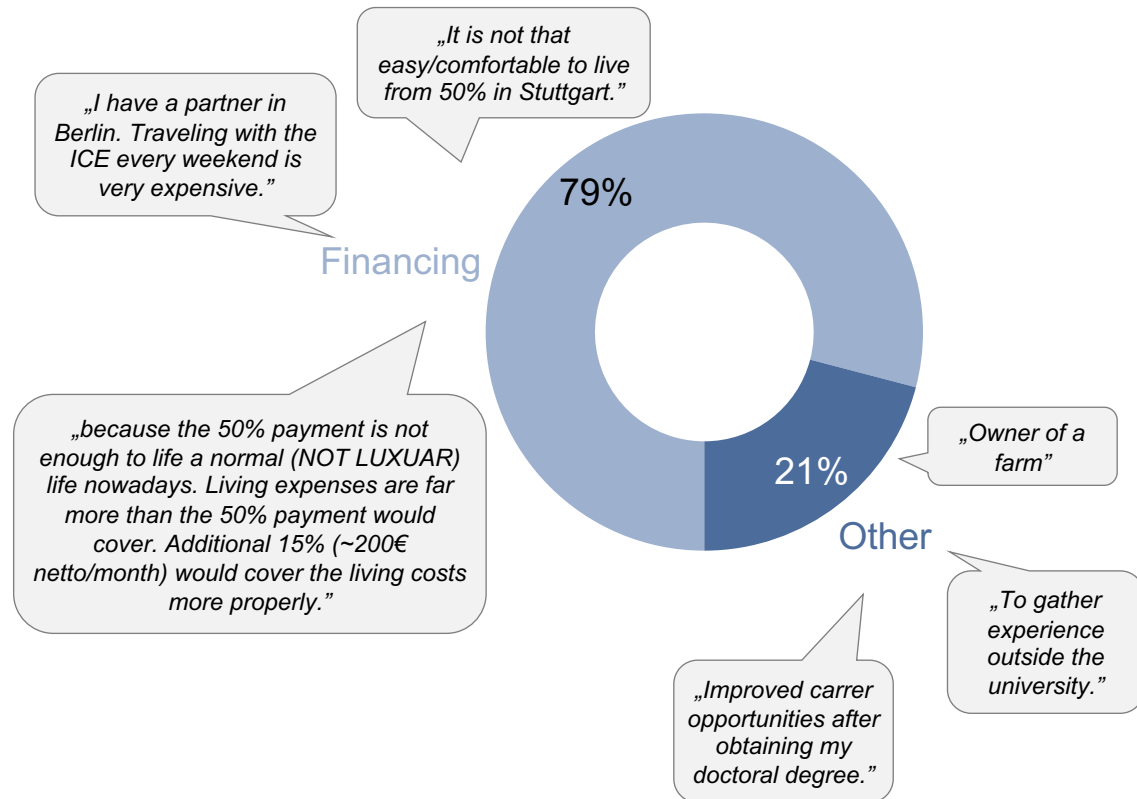


Sample DC – Financing situation

„Do you have any additional job(s)?”



„Why do you have an additional job(s)?”

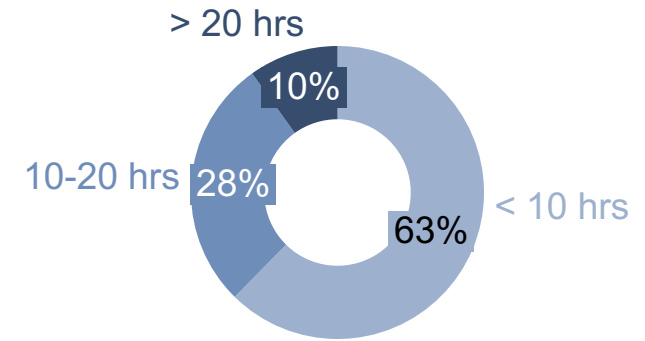


Sample DC – Financing situation

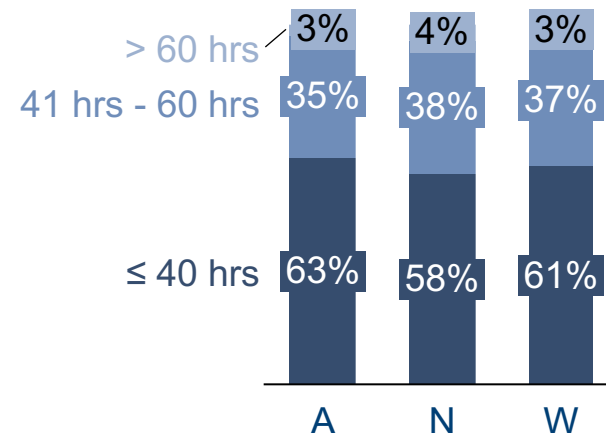
The additional working time in secondary occupations corresponds somewhat to the additional required share at a 100% position.

Although the majority of participants do not have 100%-contracts, they seem to work much more than specified in their contracts – consistently across all faculties.

„How many hours per week do you work in your additional job(s)?"



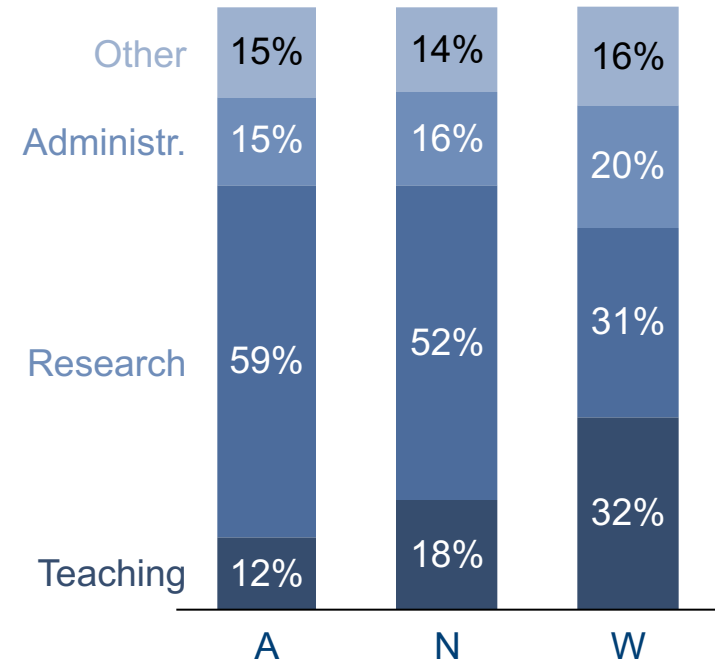
„What is your actual working time per week (in hours) at the UHOH?"



Sample DC – Work distribution

For the participants from faculties A and N, research forms the major part of their work, while for those from faculty W the working time is divided equally between research and teaching.

„Please indicate the distribution of your working time on ...”



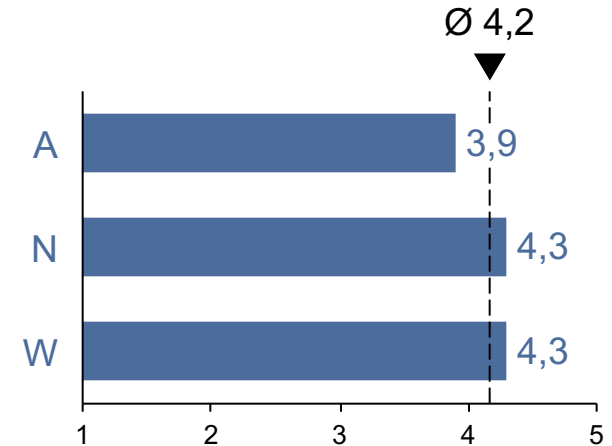
Sample DC – Duration & career

On average, all participants expect a duration of about 4 years for their dissertation projects.

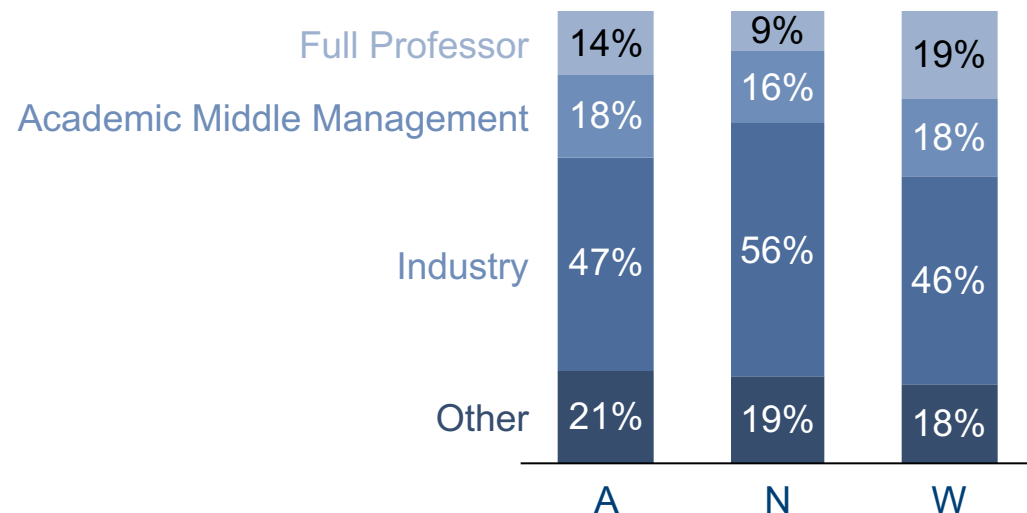
An industry job constitutes the career goal of the majority of participants – regardless of the faculty.

Only a small fraction of participants has set the goal of a professorship.

„How many years do you expect to need from the start to the completion of your dissertation project?“

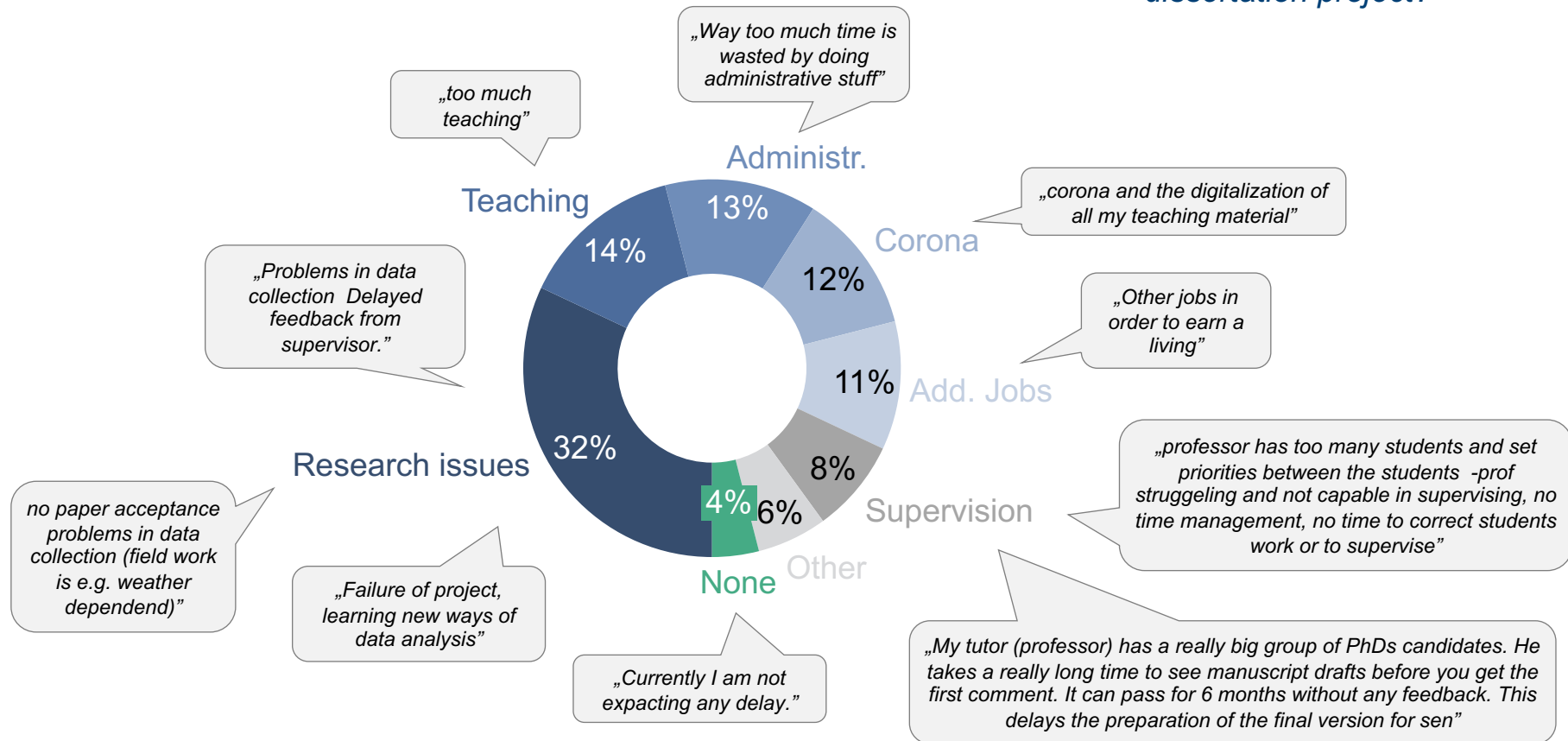


„What is your career goal?“



Sample DC – Hampering factors

„Which factors negatively impact the time schedule of your dissertation project?“



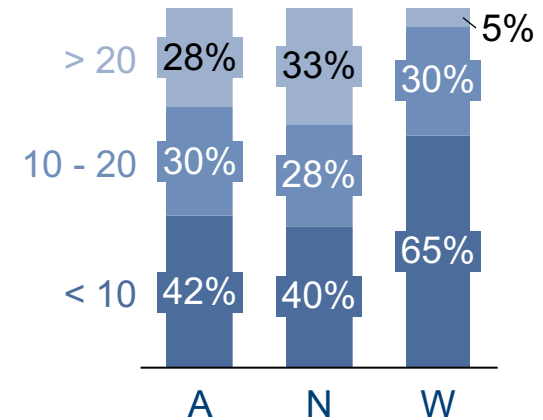
Sample DC – Thesis supervision

Overall, meetings with supervisors tend to predominantly take place up to ten times per year.

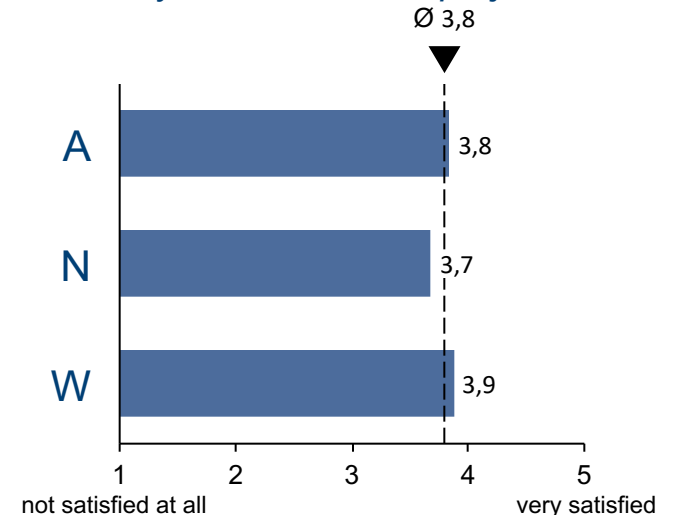
Participants of faculties A and N on average indicate an even higher interaction frequency with their supervisors.

On average, participants of all faculties indicate a high level of satisfaction regarding the supervision of their dissertation projects (4 out of 5 points).

„How often per year do you meet your supervisor for discussions on your dissertation project?“



„How satisfied are you with the supervision of your dissertation project?“

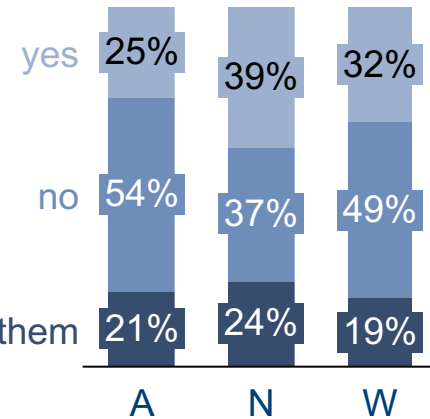


Sample DC – PhD course offers

Information on the research workshops offered at the UHOH have not reached about every fifth of the participants.

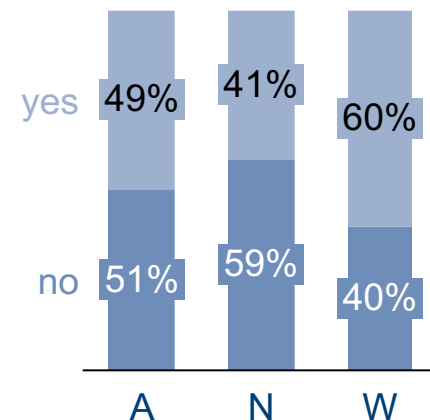
no, because I have never heard of them

„Have you ever participated in a research workshop at the UHOH?“



Divided opinions about the benefits of the courses offered.

„Do the course offers help you achieve your career goals?“

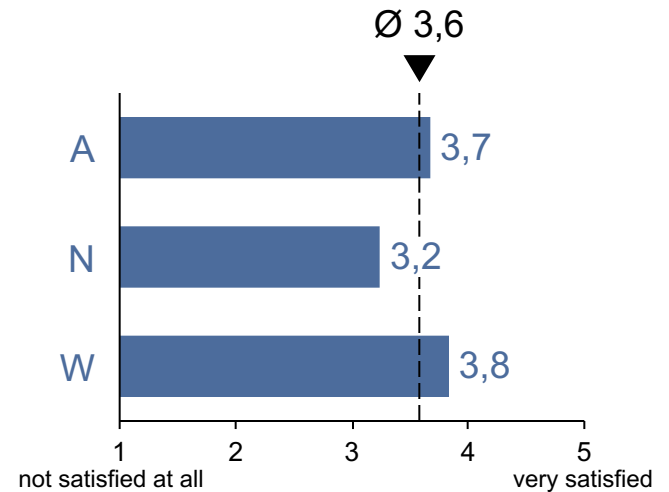


Sample DC – Overall satisfaction

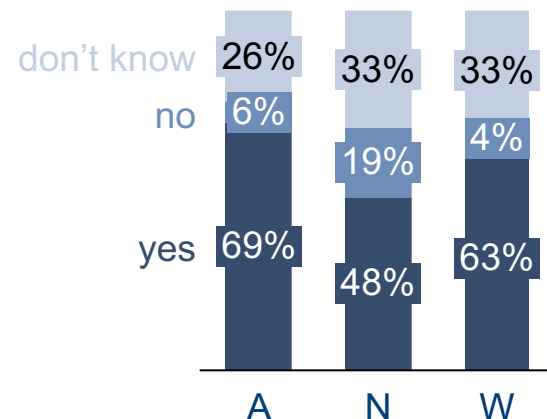
On average, DC participants seem to be highly satisfied as doctoral candidates – especially in faculties A and W with approximately 4 out of 5 points.

The majority of DC participants, especially of faculties A and W, would recommend others doing a dissertation at the UHOH.

„How satisfied are you as a doctoral candidate at the UHOH?“



„Would you recommend others to do a dissertation at the UHOH?“



Sample DC – Overall satisfaction

„Why would you recommend others doing a dissertation at the UHOH?“

„I would recommend my way of doing cooperative PhD studies with two universities and two supervisors“

„very collegial atmosphere in the Mittelbau, very nice place to work and the job itself is fun. On the other hand, there are better universities to do your phd-studies, many professors have completely wrong priorities regarding the supervision of phds“

„can only speak for my institute and funding was never an issue so I can recommend but no idea about working conditions in other faculties/institutes“

„It is highly depending on the professor and the institute. There are institutes I would never do a dissertation, even though the topic would be interesting, because I know that the support of the doctoral students is not that good.“

„undecided, pros are there, cons as well“

„probably i wouldn't do it again, so i'm not sure if i can recommend it“

„I am an external candidate. I hardly know anybody at the University.“

„As the conditions in every institute are different, hard to give a general recommendation.“

„I have not enough experience working at the University. But i dont get any feedback from my promotor from hohenheim and i think the level is quite low compared to other european universities and its to much german centered“

„Why would you not recommend others doing a dissertation at the UHOH?“

„outdated and opinionated leadership management that is not transparent“

„no money and time, only work for the project goals“

„not international at all“

„There is no contact point for problems“

„Not in the department or with the prof I'm doing my phd with“

„Not at my Institute.“

„not in my department.“

„Payment is usually limited to 3 years, communication (especially with administration, but also between researchers) is bad“

Sample DC – Improvements

„What should be the priorities to improve the environment for you as young researchers?”

„- housing for PhD students (especially those coming from outside Germany). Before they sign the contract or leave their country, they should be assured of having a room upon their arrival in Germany. - Guidance in choosing the right health insurance”

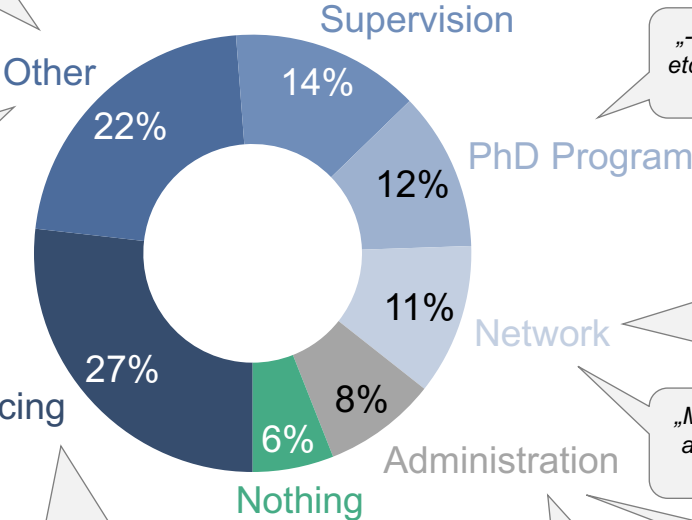
„better leadership qualities of supervisor (Prof.)”

„Collect/establish Good Practice - Guidelines for departments, supervisors, candidates”

„ - longer duration of the projects - better laboratory equipment”

„The financial situation in the institutes or chairs is problematic, leading to high workload, short-term contracts and does not allow any planning security.”

„- more information about the offers (workshops etc.) of the Graduate Academy - more structured PhD- Programms”



„- Research formation (theoretical exchange, empirical exchange) of young researchers - didactic formation - regular possibility to connect between the researchers of different departments”

„More exchange with other academic staff from other faculties”

„Gehalt Wenn man sich nicht ständig in finanziellen Notlagen befinden würde, deswegen zusätzlich arbeiten und ständig einen ängstlichen Blick auf den Kontostand werfen müsste, dann könnte man sich besser auf seine Forschungsarbeit konzentrieren.”

„Contracts of at least 75% in general for PhD students (in my case I'm very lucky)”

„I'm okay”
„I am happy the way it is”

„Reduce bureaucracy”

„Decrease administration effort.”

Concluding remarks for doctoral candidates

- Overall, we find support for a high level of satisfaction – as DC in general as well as with the supervision.
 - Many aspects at UHOH for DCs are working out very well.
 - The centralized support of the graduate academy is appreciated, especially with regard to the provided framework for supervisions.
- It seems that the formal requirements, e.g. for acceptance as doctoral candidate, cause a high administrative effort.
 - Need for facilitation and standardization of the process across faculties.

Concluding remarks for doctoral candidates

- Depending on the faculty, we observe differences in terms of employment share and work distribution (research vs. teaching).
 - Need for financial security & sufficient time for research.
- DCs call for more informal, but also research related exchange and networking possibilities.
 - Need for more networking events and formats.
- Training and course offers as well as their benefits are not yet sufficiently known and taken advantage of.
 - Need for a better communication of workshop offers and in some instances more developed PhD programs.



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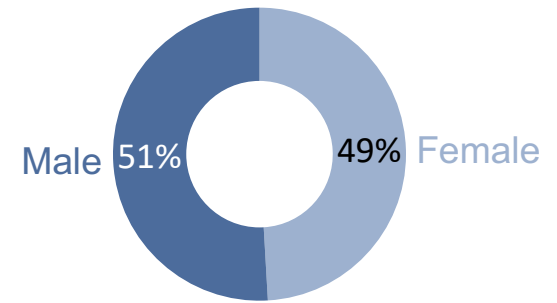
Results for Postdoctoral Academic Staff (AS)

Sample AS – Gender

„Are you ...?“

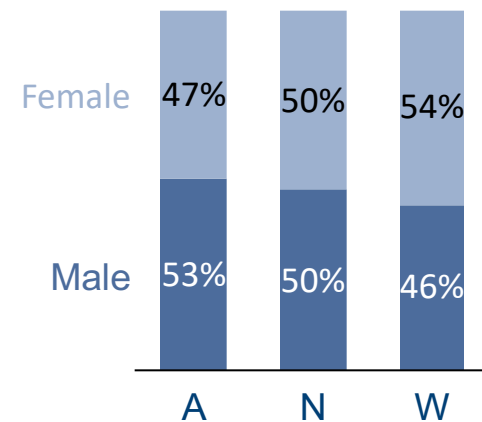
The distribution of participants' gender is balanced.

total



Also across the faculties, women and men have participated equally.

by faculty



Sample AS – Nationality

The majority of AS' originates from Germany.

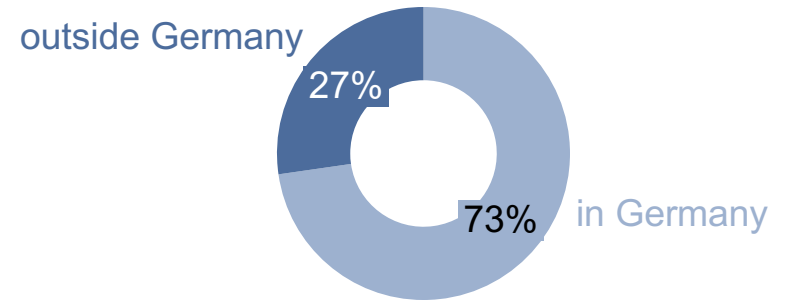
27% have spent most of their lifetime outside of Germany.

As with the DCs, participants of faculty A with 65% show the highest share of internationals.

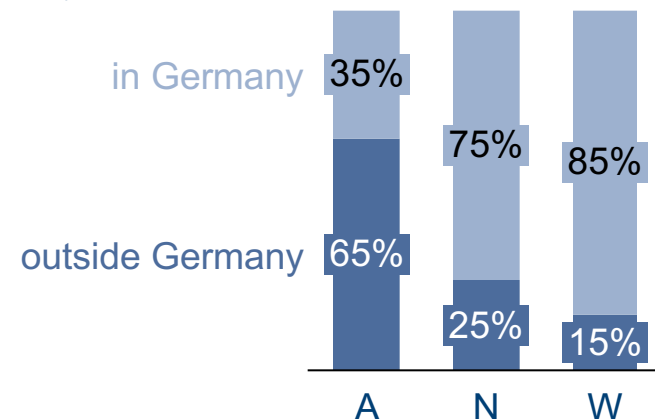
Participants of faculty W with 15% the lowest.

„Where have you spent most of your lifetime?“

total



by faculty

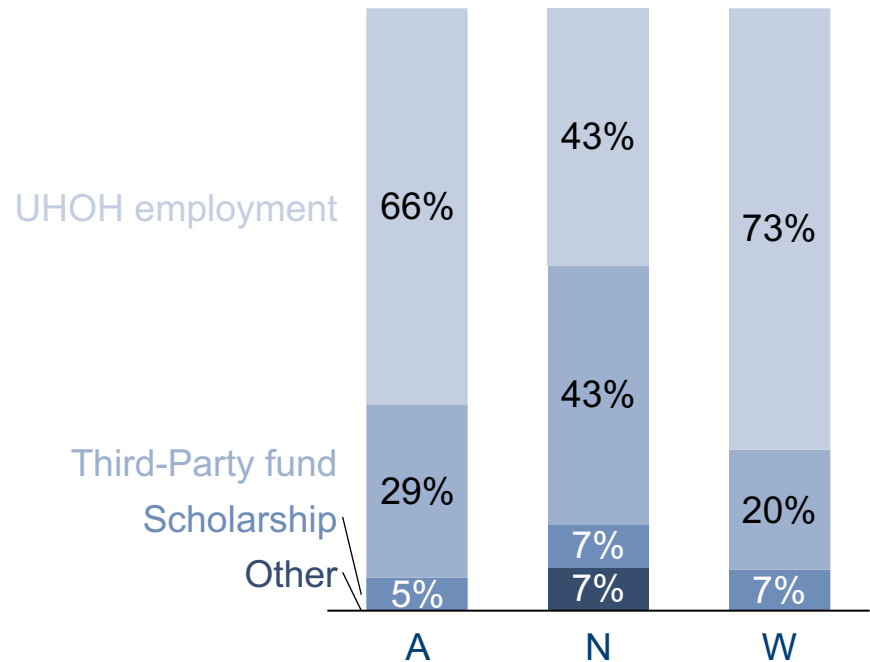


Sample AS – Financing situation

„My work / studies are financed through...”

The majority of faculties A's and W's participants are employed as academic staff.

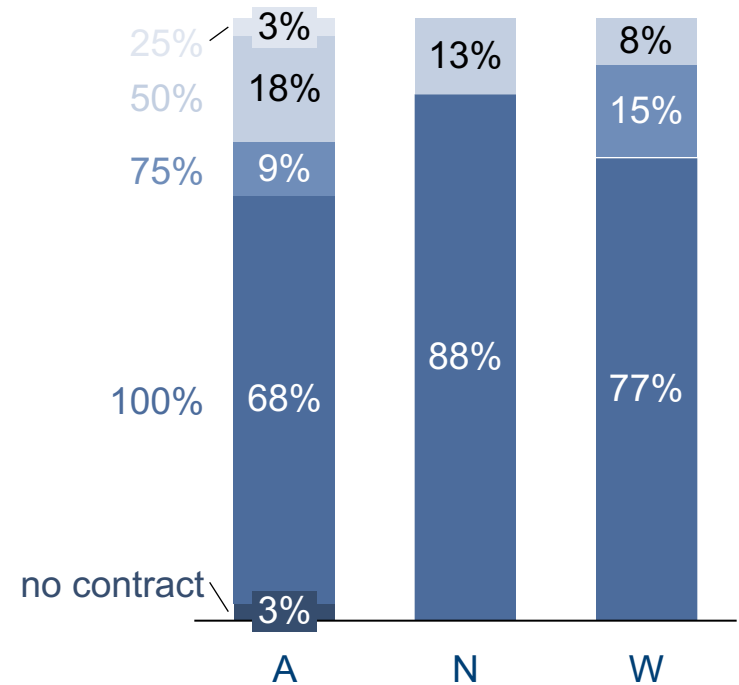
Faculties N's participants indicate a comparatively higher share of third-party-funded AS positions.



Sample AS – Financing situation

The majority of postdoctoral participants are fully employed.

„What share of a full position do you have on average?“

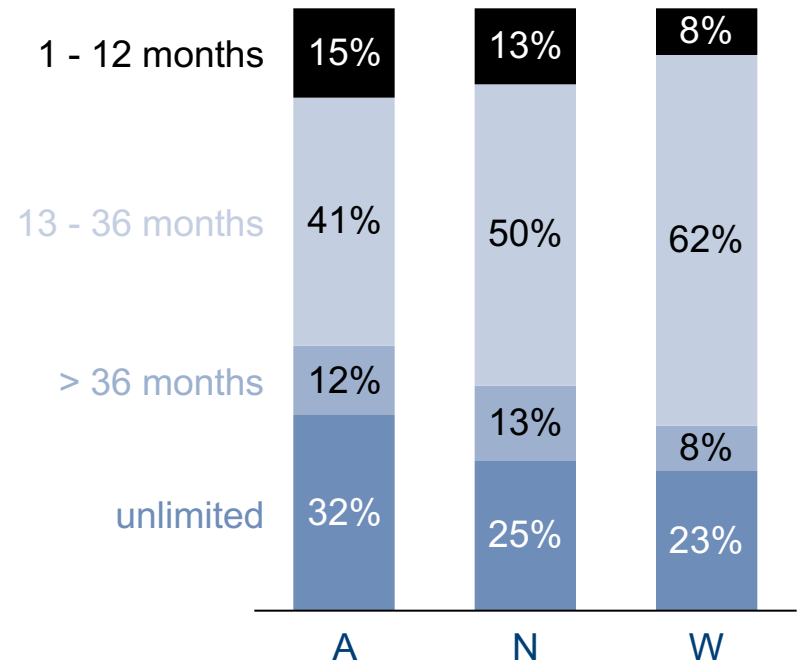


Sample AS – Financing situation

„What is the average contracted duration of your position (in months)?”

The majority of contracts last between 13 to 36 months.

Unlimited contracts for postdoctoral academic staff only make up for a small fraction.

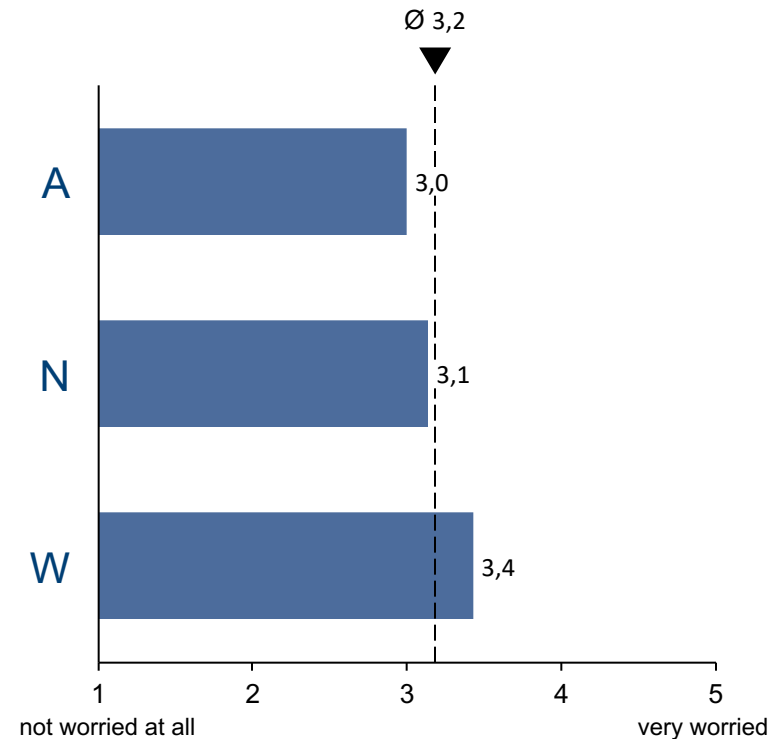


Sample AS – Financing situation

Overall, there exists a financing insecurity among the participants.

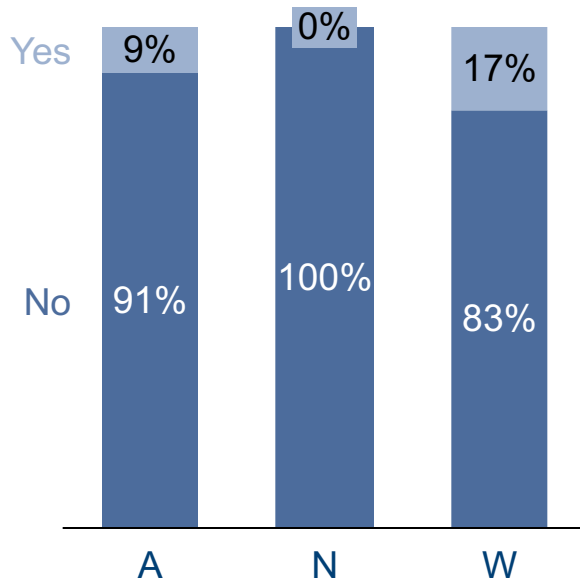
Postdoctoral participants of faculty W indicate a slightly higher financing insecurity.

„How worried are you when you think about the duration of your contract and the financing situation?“



Sample AS – Financing situation

„Do you have any additional job(s)?”



„Participation in a start-up together with former phd-student.”

„lecturer”

„Interested in work and topics outside the university, esp. to get and keep in contact with actual problems in the industry sector as well as in technical fields”

„Why do you have any additional job(s)?”

„Strengthening network to find a permanent position..”

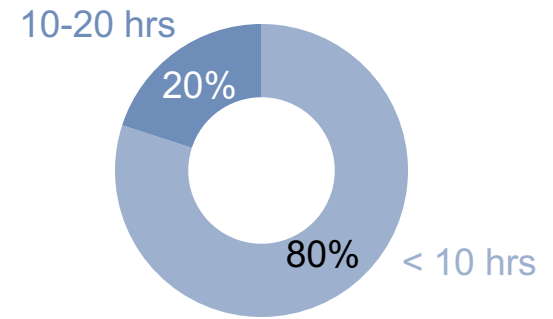
„There are other responsibilities that are interesting for me, these complement my work with Hohenheim”

Sample AS – Financing situation

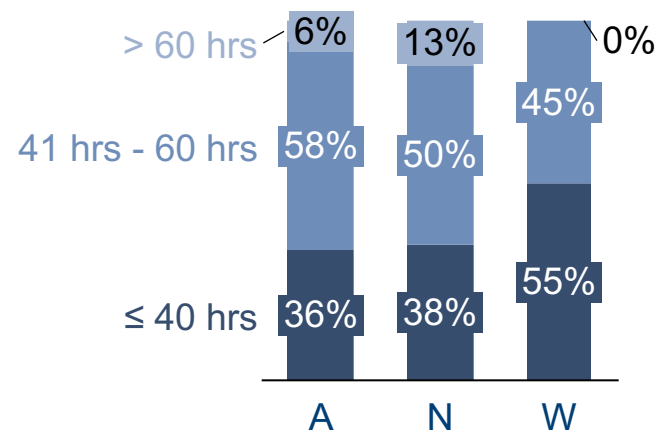
Of the few who are engaged in an additional activity, most work less than 10 hours a week in this activity.

The indicated working time corresponds approximately to the specified employment share.

„How many hours per week do you work in your additional job(s)?”



„What is your actual working time per week (in hours) at the UHOH?”

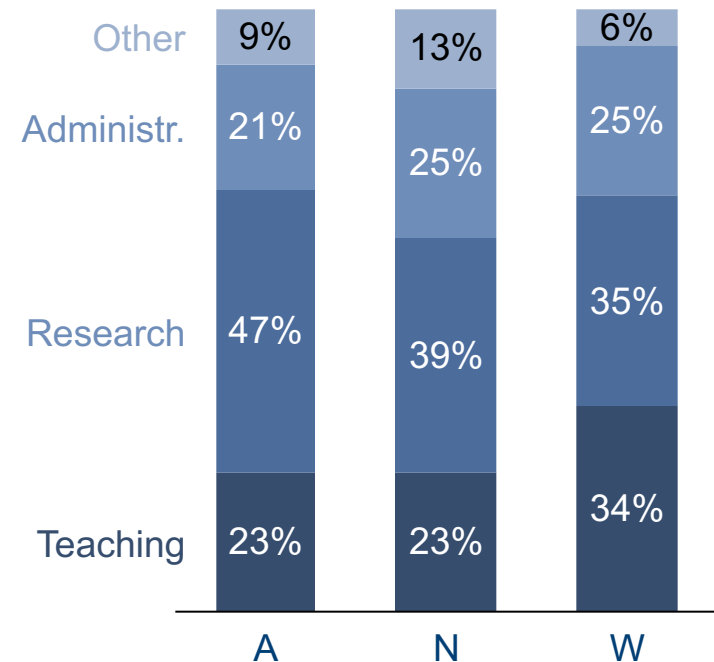


Sample AS – Work distribution

„Please indicate the distribution of your working time on ...”

As for the doctoral candidates, participants of faculty W show a higher share of teaching activity.

Research makes up for the majority of working time for postdoctoral participants of faculties A and N.

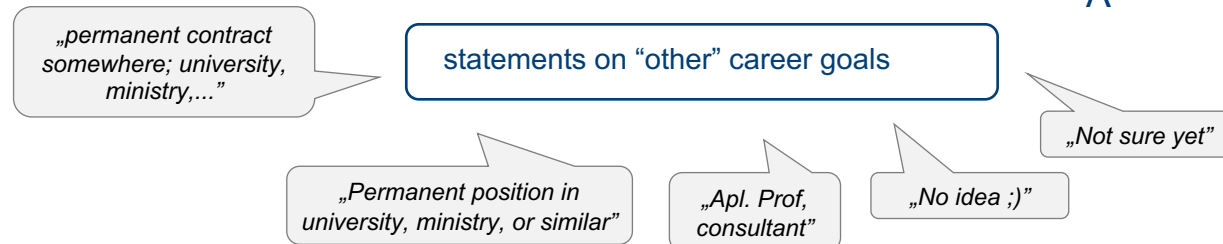
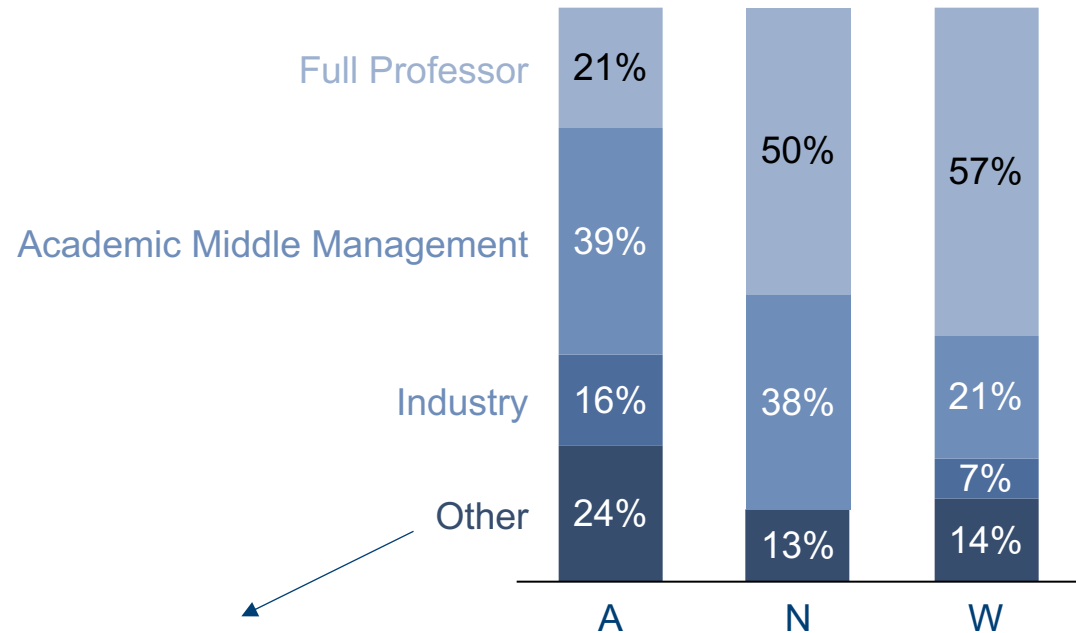


Sample AS – Career goals

„What is your career goal?”

An industry job constitutes the career goal of the minority of participants.

The majority aims at an academic career – either as professor or in the academic middle management.

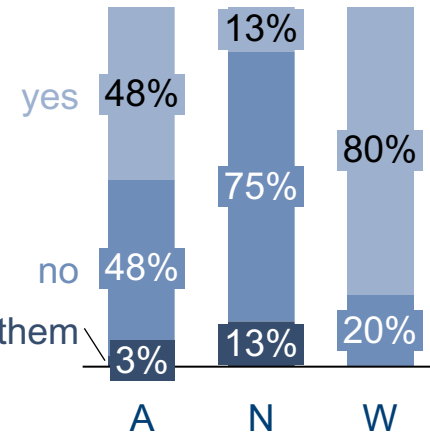


Sample AS – PhD course offers

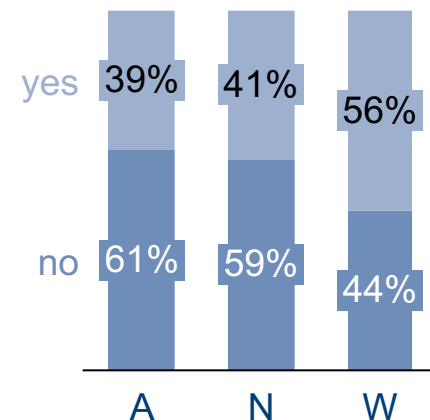
The offered research workshops are especially used by the postdoctoral participants from faculties W and A.

no, because I have never heard of them

„Have you ever participated in a research workshop at the UHOH?“



„Do the course offers help you achieve your career goals?“



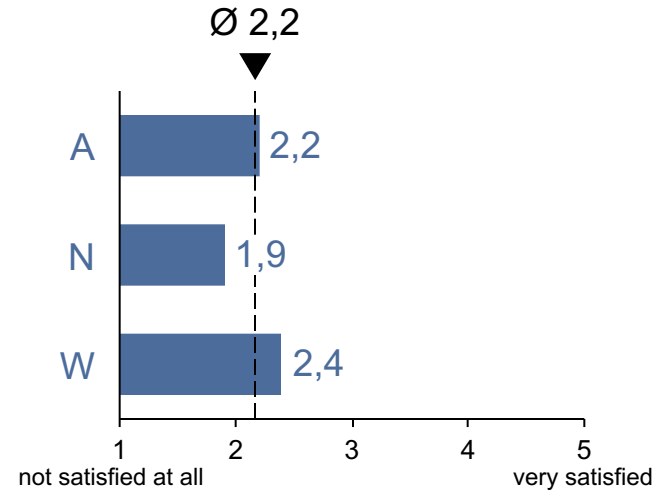
However, as for the doctoral candidates, benefits of the courses offered are not recognized equally by all.

Sample AS – Overall satisfaction

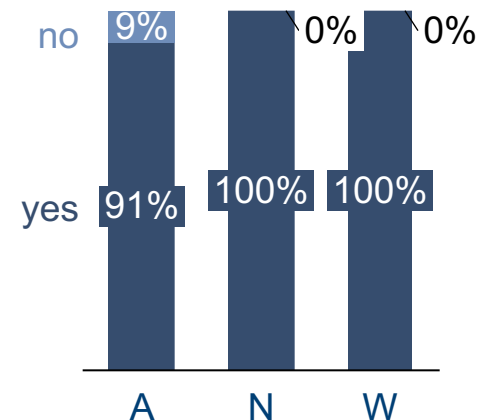
On average, participants seem to be rather unsatisfied as postdoctoral academic staff.

Interestingly, almost every participant would recommend others working or researching at the UHOH.

„How satisfied are you as a researcher / lecturer at the UHOH?“



„Would you recommend others working / researching at the UHOH?“



Sample AS – Overall satisfaction

„Why would you recommend others working / researching at the UHOH?“

„ Small size is an advantage for teaching. Several unique features, Humboldt reloaded, helpful administrative staff, nice colleagues“

„Vibrant research environment“

„ Because of it's small size personal networks can be initiated very fast. Since working might by very similar at different universities, living in this part of Germany is quite nice: Good infrastructure, nice ambient.“

„Highly productive university, Nice campus, lots of additional courses offered (language center, sports),

„the working climate at our instute is good; also good co-operation with neighbouring institutes; some institutes are well connected with each other“

„ Very good colleagues, many units in the administration very supportive (despite my remark), good research facilities, very international research profile and student body, good opportunities to work inter- and transdisciplinary“

„It In general, the work situation at universities in Germany is ok. Eg contracts with all social benefits are good. Hohenheim has apparently also a good reputation, which may also be a plus in your CV..

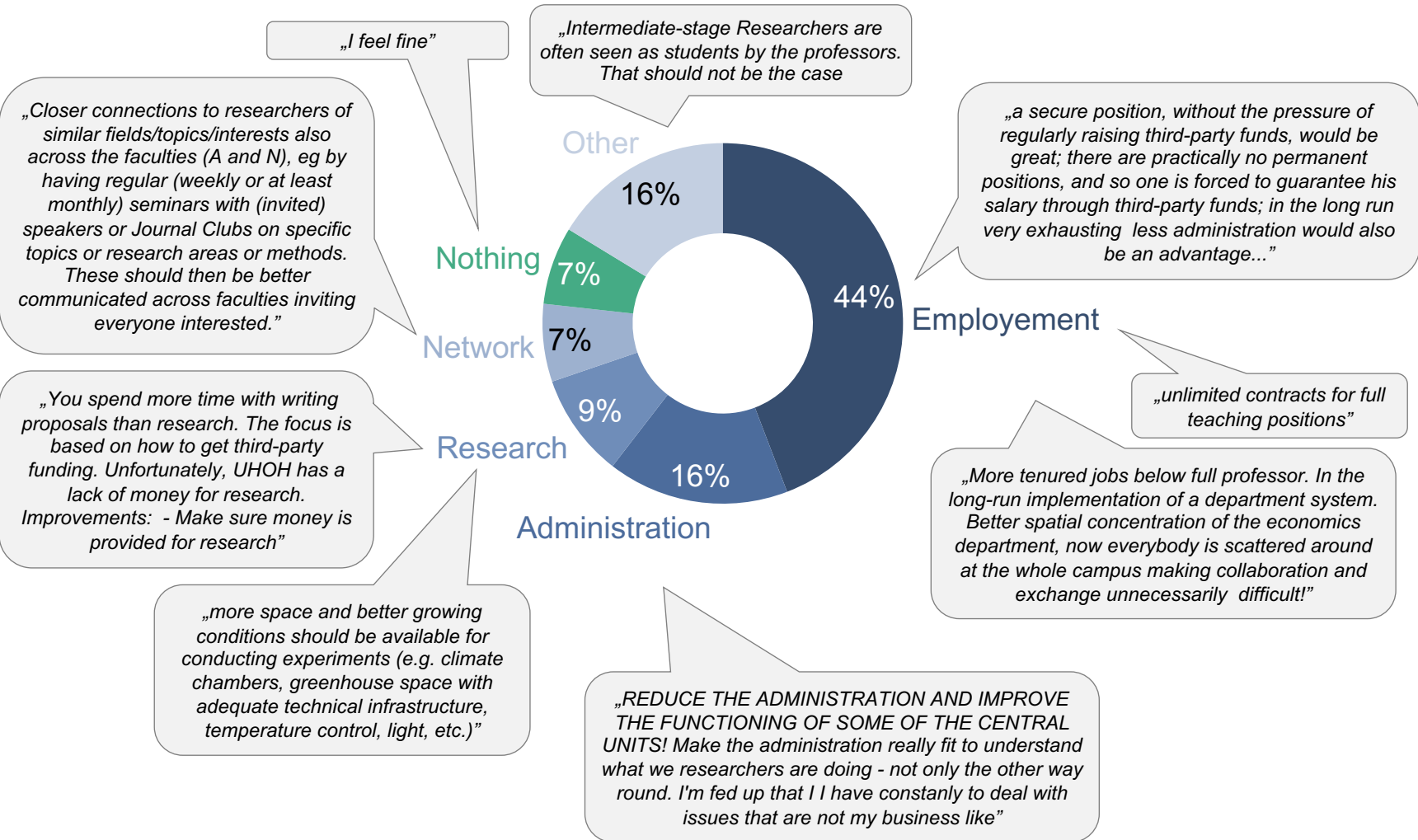
„Why would you not recommend others working / researching at the UHOH?“

„Discrepancy between payment and workload.“

„The only negative thing is the living situation in the area. It can be difficult to find a flat, so perhaps if the university could initiate some scheme to help new arrivals to find something.“

Sample AS – Improvements

„What should be the priorities to improve the environment for you?“



Concluding remarks for postdoctoral academic staff

- The overall level of satisfaction of AS' participants is rather low.
Interestingly, however, almost every AS participant would recommend others researching or working at the UHOH.
- We find financial insecurity, especially with regards to the contract durations, to constitute a great burden.
 - Need for financial security.
- As for the doctoral candidates, we find differences with regard to work distribution across faculties.



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Many thanks to all participants for contributing!

Responsible for the survey are
the doctoral candidates' representative in the senate of the UHOH:

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