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Growing a Research Culture in an Irish Technological University

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Background



- 14 Institutes of Technology across the Republic of Ireland.
- Irish Institutes of Technology (IoT), traditionally focused on vocational education – providing good quality graduates well trained for the workforce.
- The plan is to merge 14 existing IoTs into 4 Technological Universities.
- The first Irish Technical University to be established by September 2018:
 - Dublin IT
 - IT Blanchardstown
 - IT Tallaght
- However, IoTs were primarily teaching focused rather than research and teaching - the IoTs constitute about 11% of the national research effort.
- There is need for building a research culture and enhancing the research capacity in IoTs/TUs.

Motivation



- The move to becoming a Technological University requires greater emphasis on research and research outputs.
- This study aims to identify the factors, that contribute to research activity by academic and research staff across Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT).
- The results from the study will help DIT to grow a research culture and enhance research capacity.

- Academic and Research staff survey across four IoTs:
 1. Dublin Institute of Technology,
 2. Cork Institute of Technology,
 3. Institute of Technology Sligo and
 4. Waterford Institute of Technology.
- Combined number of academic and research staff across DIT is: 1,738.
- All academic and research staff were emailed and invited to participate in survey (Survey Monkey).
- To date 310 staff participated in the survey.
- 39 questions, of which 38 quantitative questions and one open ended question.
- Survey was open on 14th March 2018 and will close on 29th April 2018.

Results – Preliminary Survey Data Analysis

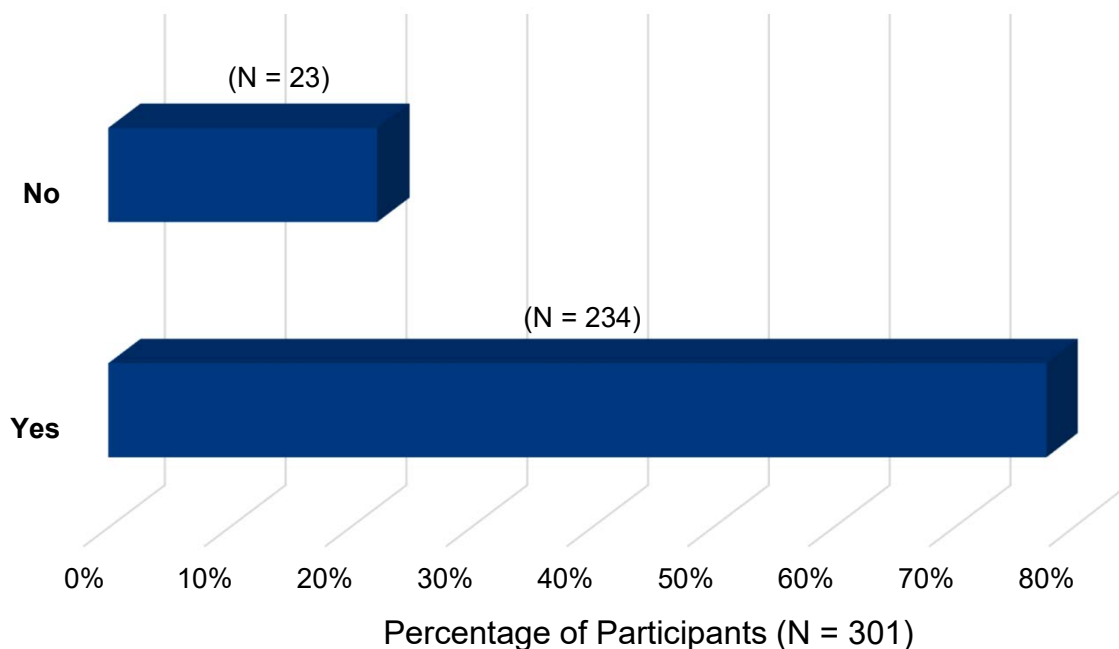
- Participant Profile; DIT, N = 310

		Response percent	Response No.
Gender	Male	55	170
	Female	43	134
	I prefer not to say	1.9	6
Position in DIT	Lecturer	37.42	116
	Assistant Lecturer	27.10	84
	Senior Lecturer (I,II,III)	24.84	77
	Researcher	5.81	18
	Other	4.84	15
Highest Qualification to Date	L10 - PhD	60.65	188
	L9 - Masters	32.91	102
	L8 – Honours Degree	4.52	14
	L7 – Bachelor Degree	0.97	3
	Other	0.97	3

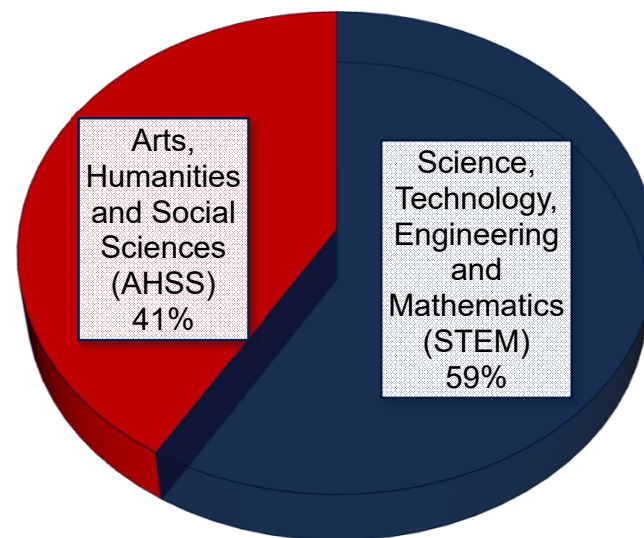
Results – Preliminary Survey Data Analysis

- Participant Profile; DIT

Do you consider yourself an active researcher?



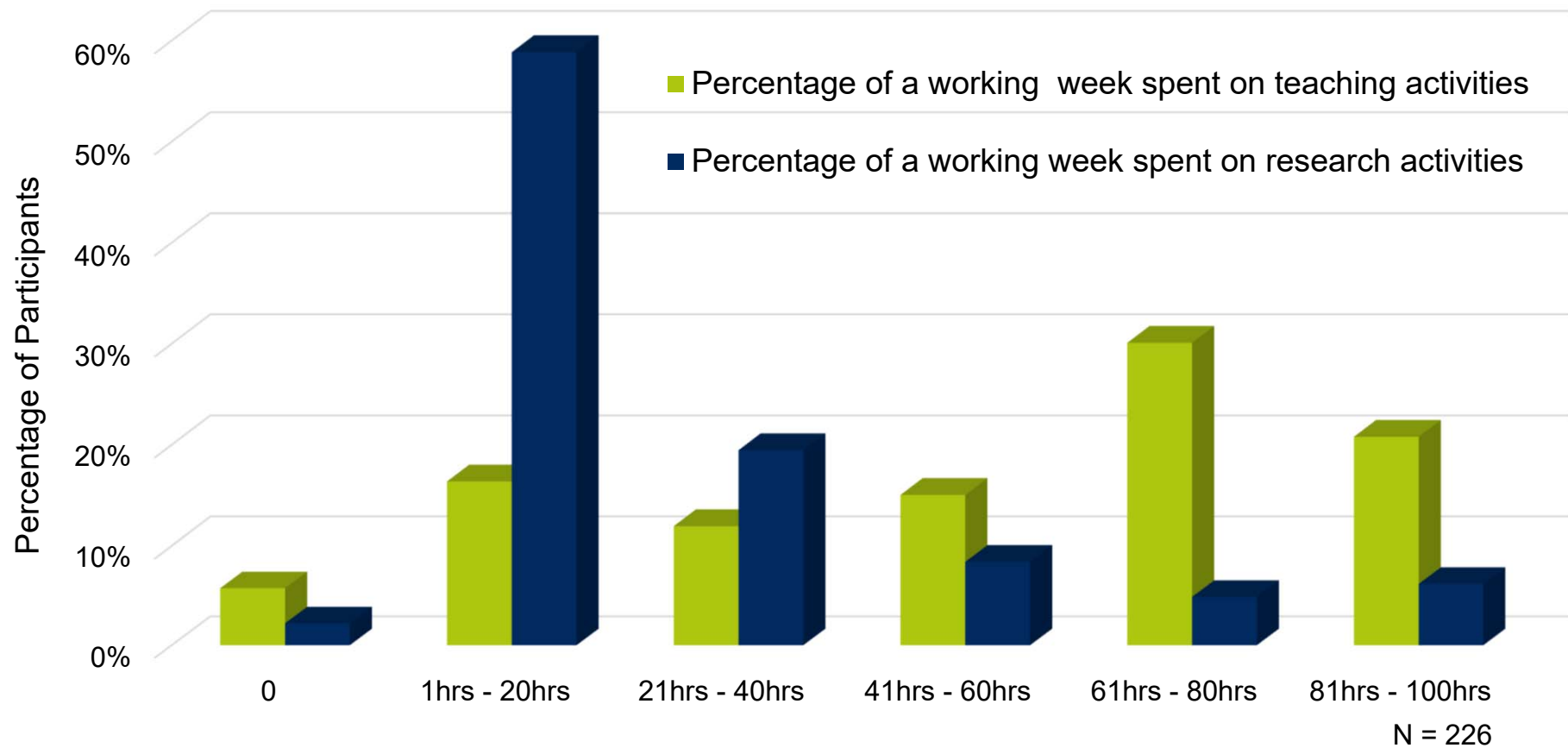
Research Field



N = 310

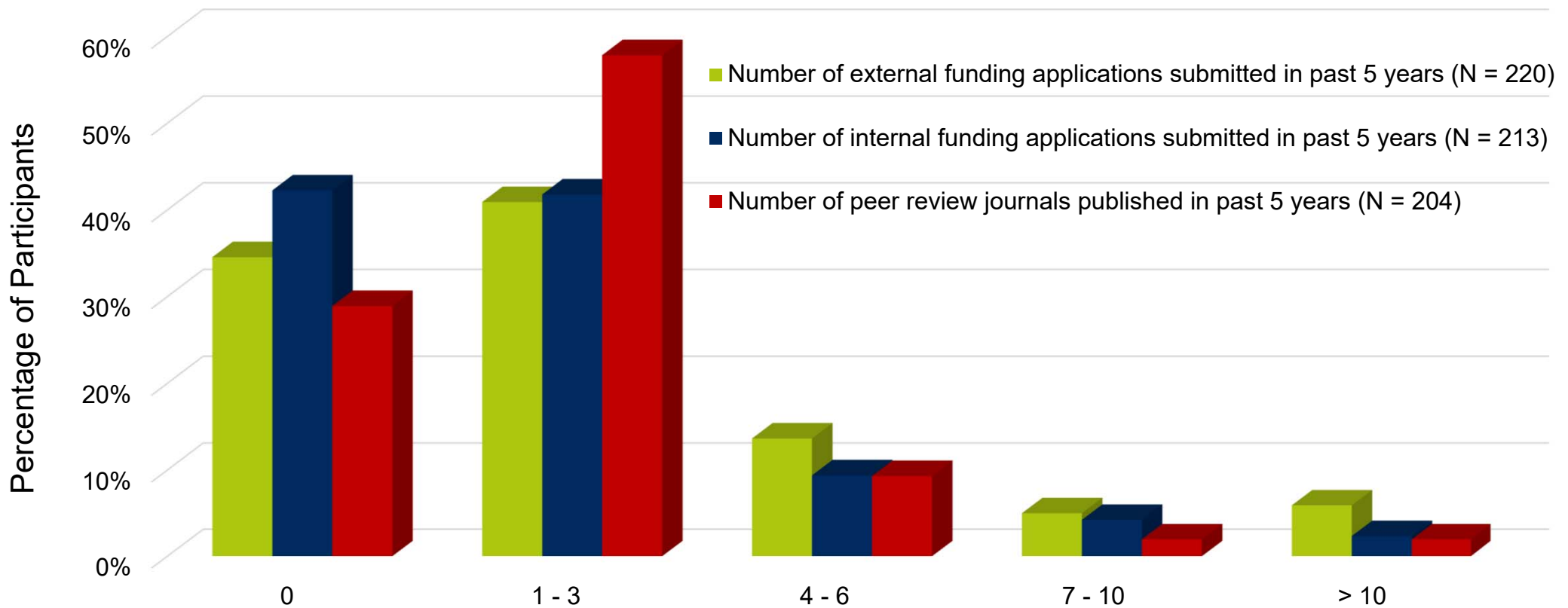
Results – Preliminary Survey Data Analysis

- Teaching Vs Research



Results – Preliminary Survey Data Analysis

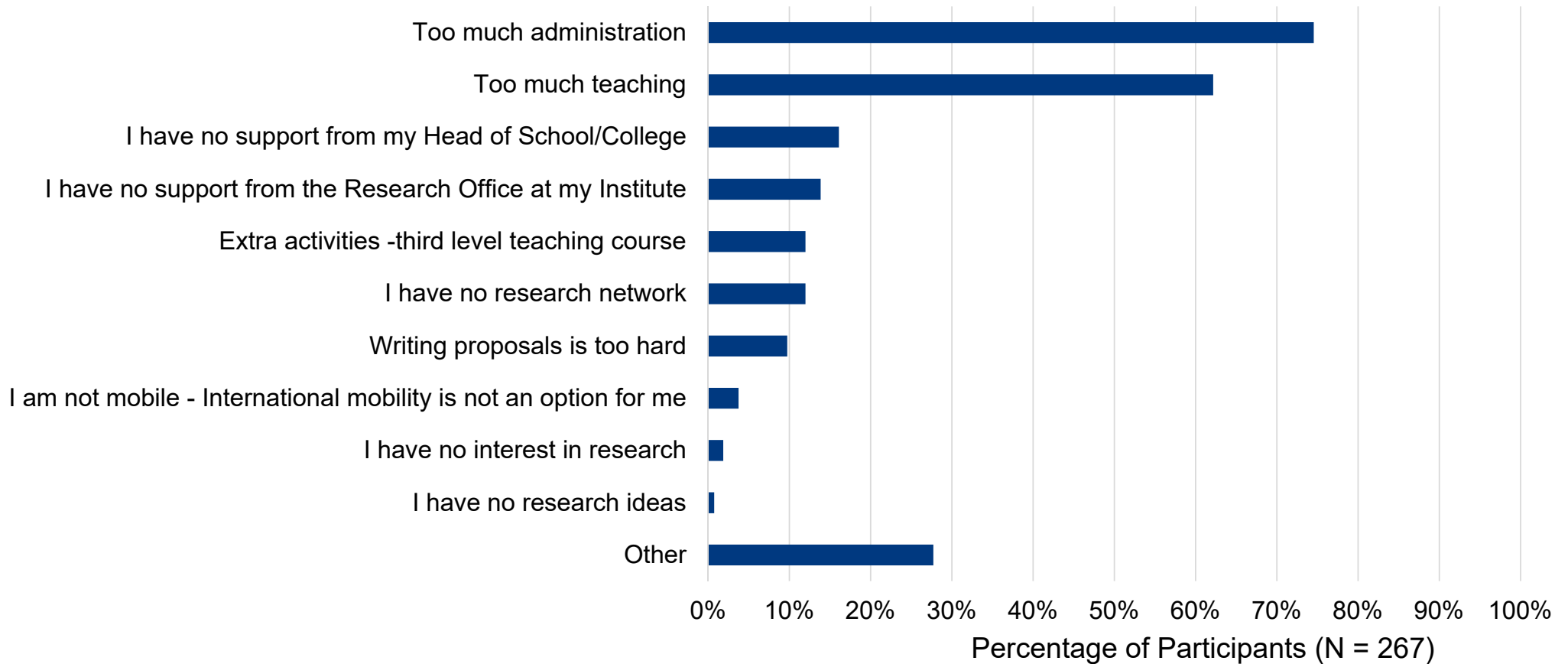
- Research Activity



Results – Preliminary Survey Data Analysis

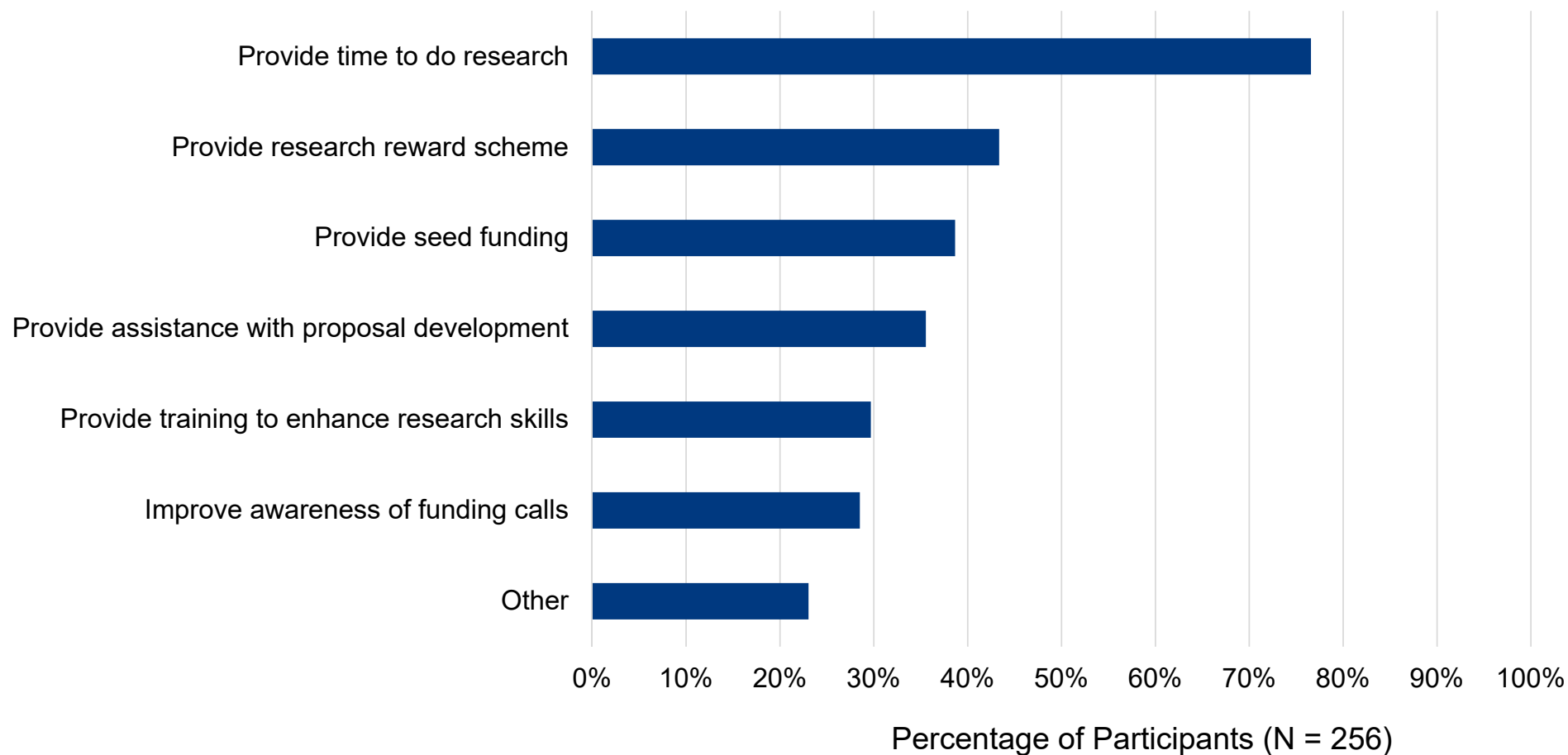


Research Blockers



Results – Preliminary Survey Data Analysis

- Research Support



Results – Preliminary Survey Data Analysis

- Q: How could your Institute better support the development of the Research Culture within the Institute?

*“**Provide time to do research** for academic staff - currently they need to be successful in receiving a grant to buy time out. They need to be given time and support to work on proposals as part of their day job.” (Participant 244)*

*“There is very little **support** for project PIs or coordinators in relation to **finance or administration**. The research office should be there to support researchers and help them manage projects in terms of administration and finance.” (Participant 226)*

*“**Teaching hours, assessment and corrections, and student administration dominate my schedule at the expense of time to research during term time.** During busy times during term I am doing well to allocate a few hours to research per week. More structured buy-out time for research projects is important.” (Participant 172)*

Conclusions



- The survey has succeeded in giving a voice to research active staff in DIT.
- DIT has a cohort of academic and research staff who consider themselves research active, who need support.
- To grow its research output and enhance research capacity DIT should consider the following supports, suggested by staff:
 - Reduce teaching hours and administration load,
 - Provide support to research active staff on School/College level,
 - Introduce research reward scheme,
 - Introduce research proposal writing workshops,
 - Promote of cross disciplinary research collaboration.
- In turn, such an investment will result in improvement of research activity and growth of the research culture in new, upcoming Technological University.

Acknowledgements



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Questions & Discussion

Thank you for your attention!

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