Medical University of Lodz

REPORT ON “HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH” QUANTITATIVE SURVEY 2024

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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Table of contents

INTRODUCTION

This report is an outcome of the HR Excellence in Research strategy implemented at the Medical University of Lodz. This award is granted by the European Commission to institutions operating in the R&D field that adhere to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Receiving the award involves a process of systematic monitoring of excellence in the areas defined by the aforementioned documents.
The first survey was conducted on the turn of March and April 2021. The second edition of the survey took place in the last two months of 2024 and was based on the revised version of the Charter of Researchers [1].

AIMS OF THE SURVEY

The aim of the survey was to assess the solutions implemented so far, following the results of the previous 2021 survey, and to control the strategic areas defined in the revised European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The questions in the survey were constructed in such a way as to simultaneously examine all areas specified based on the Charter's principles and take into account the specifics of the Polish higher education system.

METHODOLOGY NOTE

The survey was designed by an interdisciplinary team consisting of government employees, scientists, researchers and methodologists. The survey was quantitative in nature and was carried out using an online survey and the Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) technique. The definition of a researcher was adopted from the European Charter for Researchers, according to which a researcher is not a person whose only role is to conduct research but also to teach. Also, scientific activity is understood broadly - as conducting research, participating in conferences, conducting classes, courses, training.

The survey questionnaire consisted of 41 questions, including five demographics questions on the following: gender, age, years of service, academic title or degree, and employee group. The survey consisted of questions on the four thematic areas included in the Charter: 1/ Ethics, integrity, gender and open science, 2/ Assessment and recruitment of researchers and career progression, 3/ Working conditions and practices, 4/ Research careers and talent development. In the previous version of the Charter, those were the following: 1/ Ethical and professional aspects, 2/ Recruitment, 3/ Working conditions, 4/ Training and development. The questionnaire was made available to employees online between November and December 2024. The survey was

[1] Official Journal of the European Commission, Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe (C/2023/1640)

anonymous and voluntary, of which the respondents were informed. The questionnaire was completed by 276 employees. The response rate was assumed to be 30%, but unfortunately this goal was not achieved, despite intensive efforts to promote the survey among employees and encouragement from the University authorities.

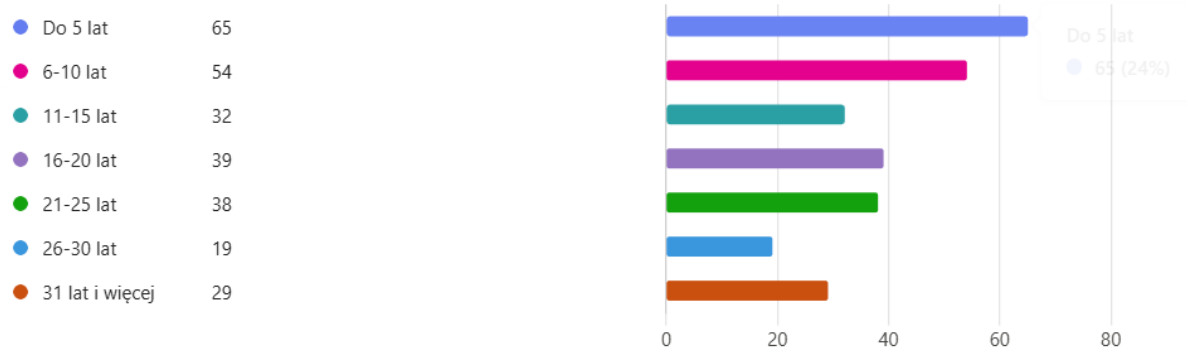
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY GROUP

A total of 276 individuals took part in the survey, of whom 64% were women, while 36% were men. Most of the respondents were 36-45 years (29%) and aged under 35 years (26%), thus younger people were in the majority (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. AGE OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

As for years of service at the Medical University of Lodz, the largest group were those with the shortest period of employment at the University (up to 10 years). This group accounted for almost half of the respondents (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. YEARS OF SERVICE AT THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF LODZ



Of the survey respondents, 57% represented research and teaching staff, while 38% were teaching staff. Scientific and technical employees and research employees accounted for a total of 5% of the staff (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. EMPLOYMENT GROUP

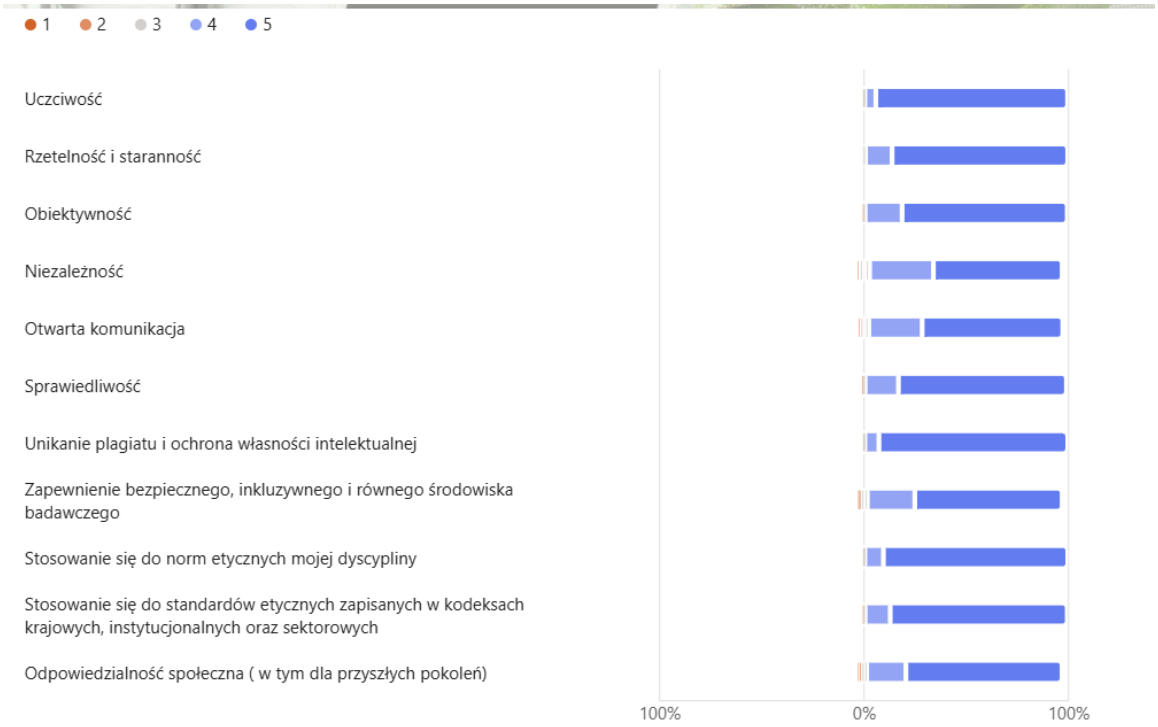
Almost two-thirds of the respondents (67%) had an employment contract for an indefinite period, while 23% had an employment contract for a definite period. Fewer than 10% were doctoral students.

PILLAR I - ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER ASPECT AND OPEN SCIENCE

The first series of questions was most extensive and covered ethical issues in the conduct of scientific activities, gender balance in research teams and also issues related to the freedom of science, research data management and the use of AI in research activities.

The respondents were asked to assess the degree to which they adhere to principles such as honesty, integrity, objectivity, independence, or fairness in their scientific activities. The results of self-assessment were very good. Most of the respondents adhere to the principles of honesty and integrity. The survey participants were also asked about ethical and legal standards. They avoid plagiarism, protect intellectual property, and adhere both to the ethical standards of their discipline as well as those contained in the codes (Figure 4).

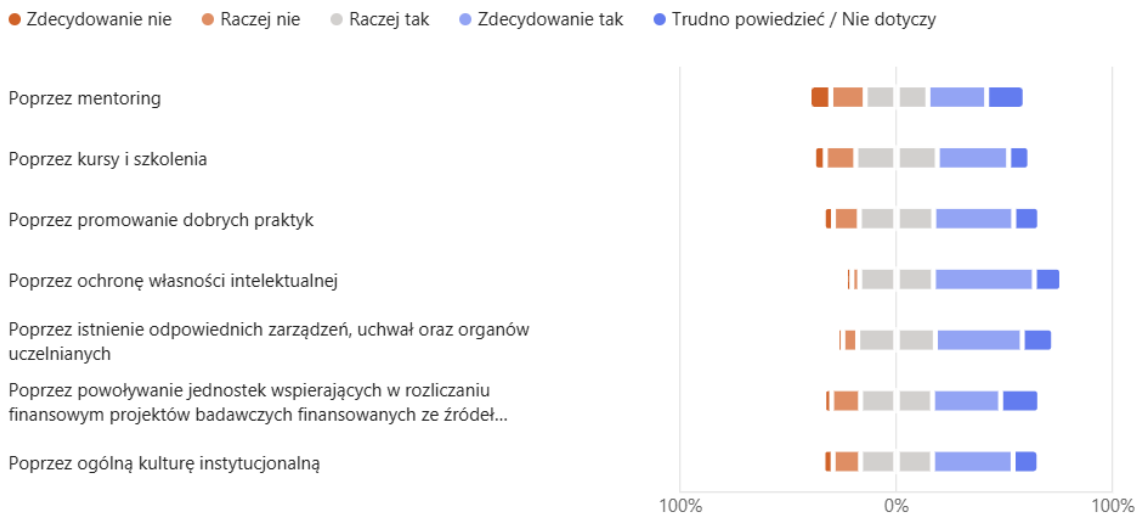
FIGURE 4. ADHERENCE TO SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES IN RESEARCH ACTIVITY (1 - I DON'T ADHERE TO IT AT ALL, 5 - I FULLY ADHERE TO IT)



The respondents also assessed the extent to which the University supports the ethics and integrity of their research activities. This assessment came out slightly worse. The survey participants indicated insufficient mentoring, lack of appropriate courses and training, and lack of an appropriate institutional culture. Support in the area of intellectual property protection was rated best (Figure 5). What is concerning is that

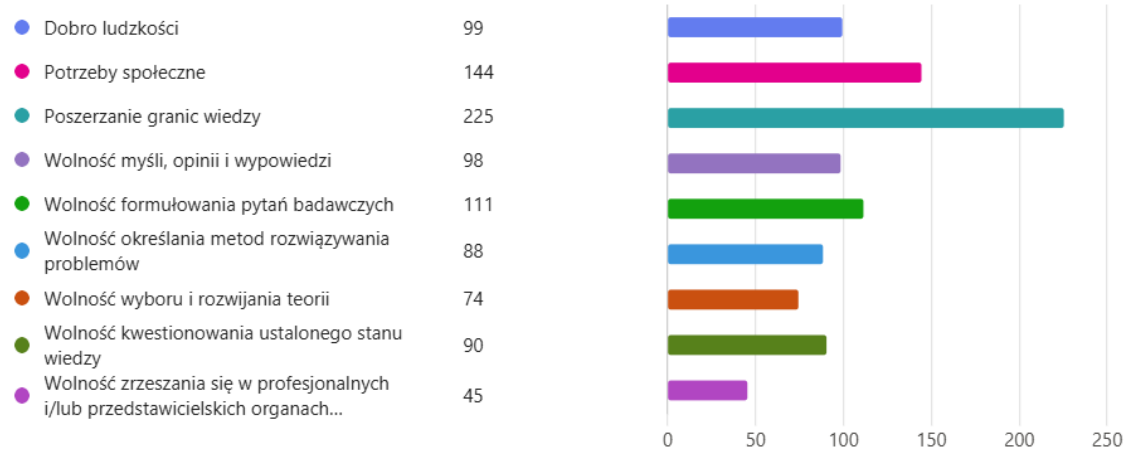
more than half of the respondents (56%) do not know whether there are bodies at the University to which incidents of research misconduct can be reported.

FIGURE 5. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY IN CONDUCTING ETHICAL AND RELIABLE RESEARCH



In their research, the respondents are primarily driven by the desire to expand the boundaries of knowledge (23%), social needs (15%) and the freedom to formulate research questions (11%) (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. IDEAS THAT GUIDE THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS IN THEIR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES (multiple choice question)

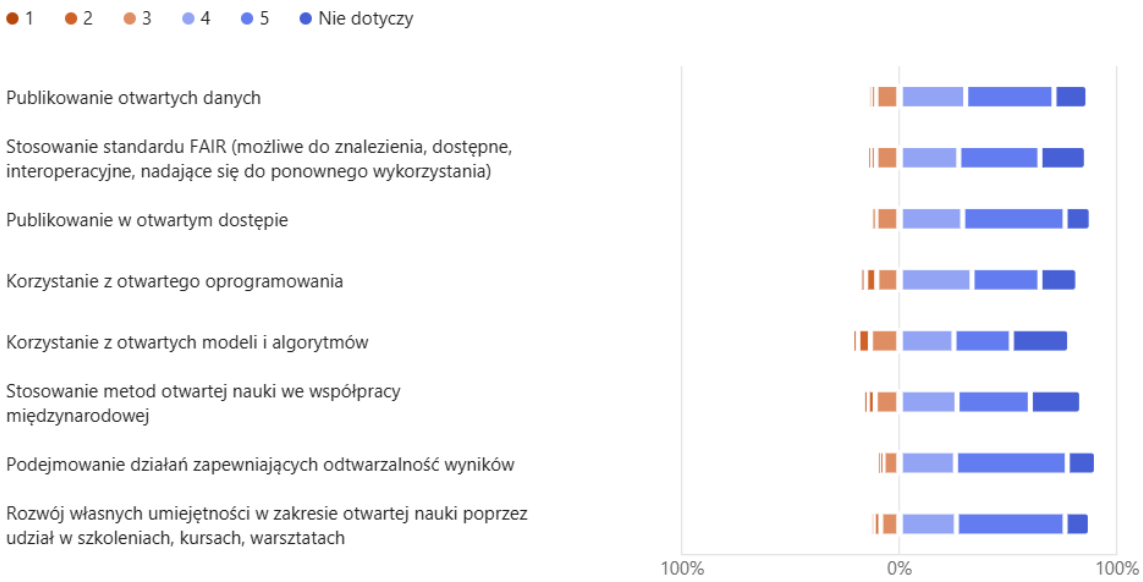


One of the key areas emphasized by the European Charter for Researchers is open science. Therefore, the respondents were asked to what extent they are guided by the principles of open science in their research activity. The largest number of respondents indicated the following aspects: taking measures to ensure reproducibility of results (more than 77% of the respondents), developing their own skills in open

science by participating in training programs, courses, workshops and also publishing in open access (in both cases over 76%). The lowest scores were given to the option of using open models and algorithms (just over 51%) and open source software (64%) (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7. ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF OPEN SCIENCE IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

(1- I never adhere to them, 5- I always adhere to them, 6- not applicable)



Assessment of support provided by the University in implementation of the principles of open science came out slightly worse than the employees' self-assessment. There is a group of employees who do not have sufficient knowledge about the activities of the University in this area (from 14 to almost 37%, depending on the response category). Among those who have such knowledge, the lowest scores were given for providing the necessary infrastructure and tools to implement open science (over 15%), using open software (14%) and using open models and algorithms (13%). The best scores were given to options of publishing in open access (more than 63%) and implementing open science principles on the international arena (more than 52%) (Figure 8).

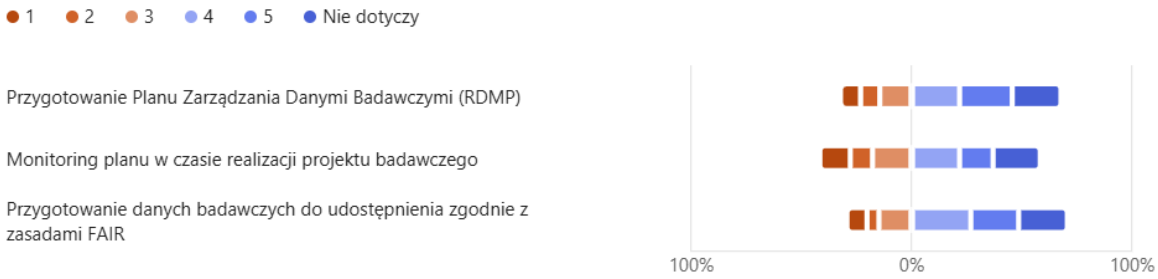
FIGURE 8. ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT OFFERED BY THE UNIVERSITY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN SCIENCE PRINCIPLES

(1- (1- not at all supportive, 5- fully supportive, 6 – I don't know / hard to say)

Research Data Management (RDM) is an important part of research work, so the next question asked concerned the extent to which the respondents need support from the University in this area. The respondents are most self-reliant in monitoring the plan when conducting research (almost 24%). However, they need support from a data steward when drawing up the Data Management Plan, and also when preparing the data for release in accordance with the FAIR rules (over 45% and 48%, respectively) (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. AREAS OF RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT THAT REQUIRE SUPPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY

(1- I don't need support, I do everything on my own, 5- I expect to receive support from a University data steward, 6 - not applicable)



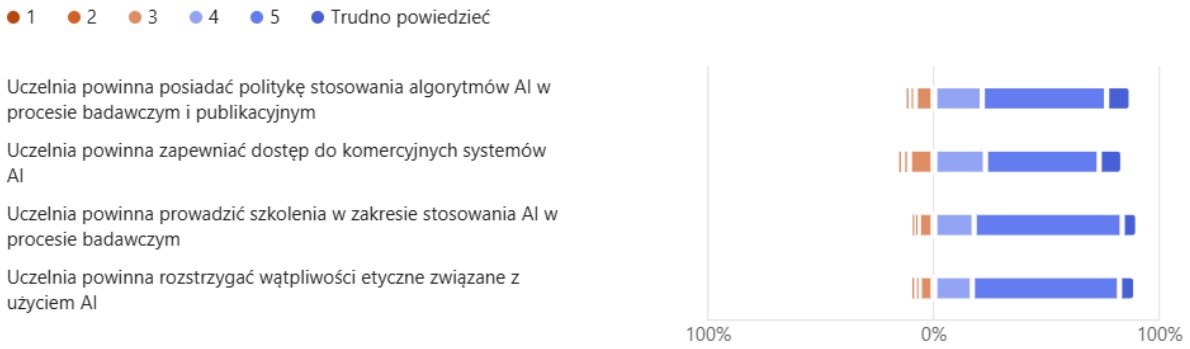
One person wrote the following comment on this question: *The phrase "I expect to receive support from a University data steward" seems a bit unfortunate to me. I expect this person to effectively take over some of the tasks. In fact, from the perspective of my position, I have a very limited knowledge on how things are in the University in general. I only know my own backyard. For me, it would be interesting to do a survey to capture the differences between the University's declarations aimed at*

creating a specific image for the public and daily practice in the various areas mentioned here (S60).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly important part of work in various fields, including research work. Our University has not yet introduced a policy on the use of AI algorithms, nor on the ethical use of AI in research work. The respondents were asked whether such solutions were needed. More than 83% agreed that the University should provide training on the use of AI in the research process, while more than 82% indicated that the University should resolve ethical issues related to the use of AI. Additionally, 76% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the University should have a policy on the use of AI algorithms in the research and publication process, while more than 73% agreed that the University should provide access to commercial AI systems. Thus, the survey shows that this area should become a priority when it comes to implementing relevant regulations and solutions (Figure 10).

FIGURE 10. EXTENT TO WHICH THE UNIVERSITY SHOULD PROVIDE SUPPORT IN THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE-BASED ALGORITHMS

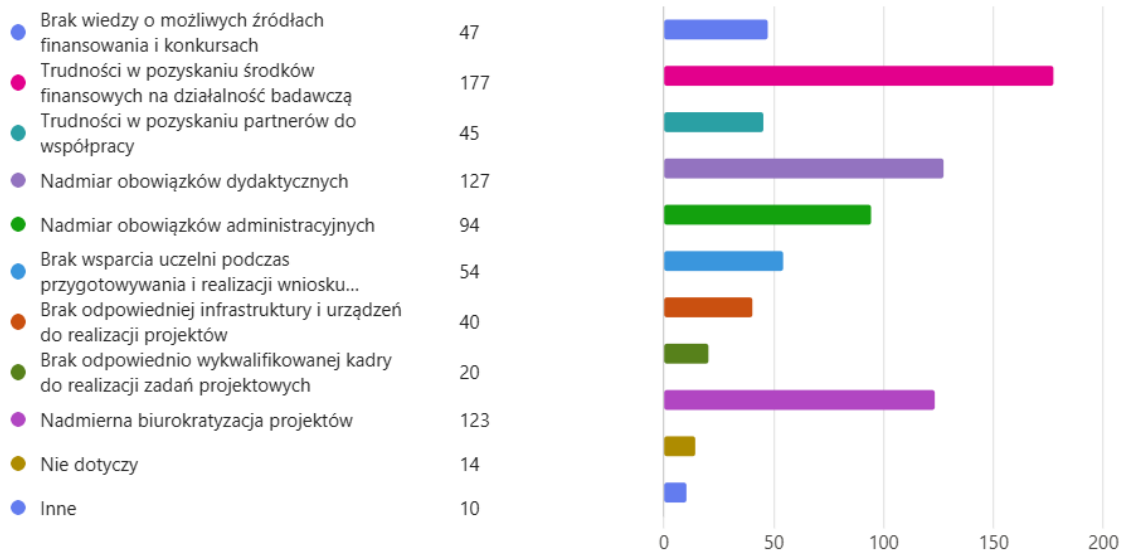
(1- it does not need to provide support, 5- it should provide full support, 6- hard to say)



The work of a researcher involves difficulties that affect both the pace of projects, their quality, and the results obtained. The respondents were asked what difficulties they encountered most often. The survey shows that the major obstacle occurs at the very beginning and is related to the difficulty of obtaining funds for research (24% of responses; in 2021 it was 64%). The second most common barrier is an excess of teaching duties (17%; in 2021 it was as high as 59%), while the third is high bureaucratization related to projects (16%) (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11. MAJOR OBSTACLES TO INITIATING AND CONDUCTING RESEARCH

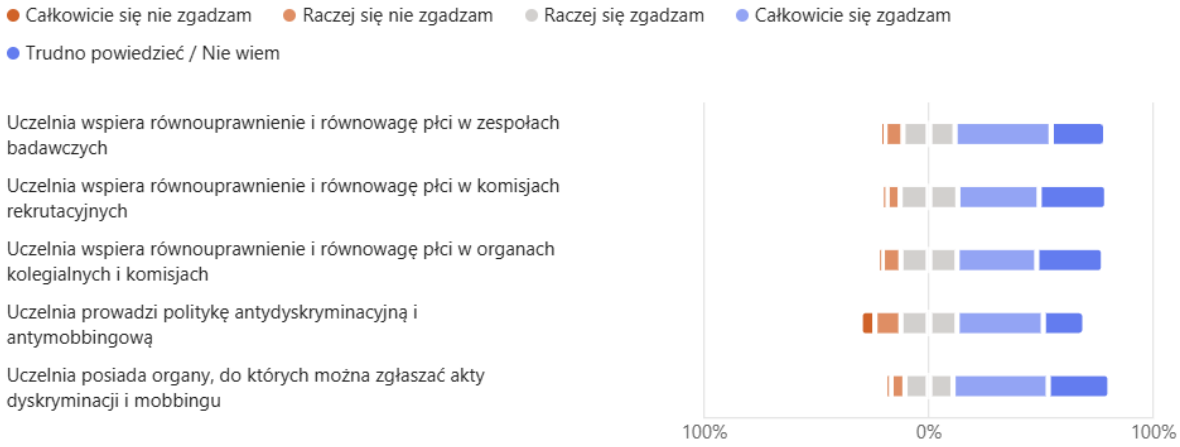
(multiple choice question)



In this context, there was also a comment from one of the survey participants: *A significant problem of the University is "tribalism," which no longer translates only into strong efforts to promote people associated with one's own group, but also, unfortunately, into obstructing the work of people from potentially competing teams, where it is already common practice to take advantage of positions held for this purpose. The most common mechanisms, unfortunately, are slander or delays in making decisions or approving subsequent stages in the processing of grant applications. This is particularly painful because, in fact, ideas or results have ceased to matter, and the most important factor is what professor an employee is associated with and how good relations the professor has with the Rector's Office, especially with the Vice Rector, which often determines whether or not a grant proposal is approved (the mechanism of "not competing with their fellows.")*

An extremely important issue emphasized by the European Charter for Researchers is gender equality and balance in both the work of research teams and the activities of committees, councils, collegiate bodies, as well as the implementation of anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies. The University's efforts on ensuring gender equality and balance in research teams was rated best (66%; in 2021 it was 74%). While most of the respondents (64%) see that the University has bodies to which acts of discrimination and bullying can be reported, unfortunately 18% admit that the Medical University of Lodz (MUL) does not have an anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policy (Figure 12). The respondents report discrimination based on gender (15%), age (12%), beliefs (over 9%), as well as single cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation (3.6%) and religion (over 3%). In the survey conducted in 2021, the results were 14,8%, 13,1%, 9,4%, 5,6% and 4,2%, respectively.

FIGURE 12. ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF GENDER EQUALITY AND BALANCE



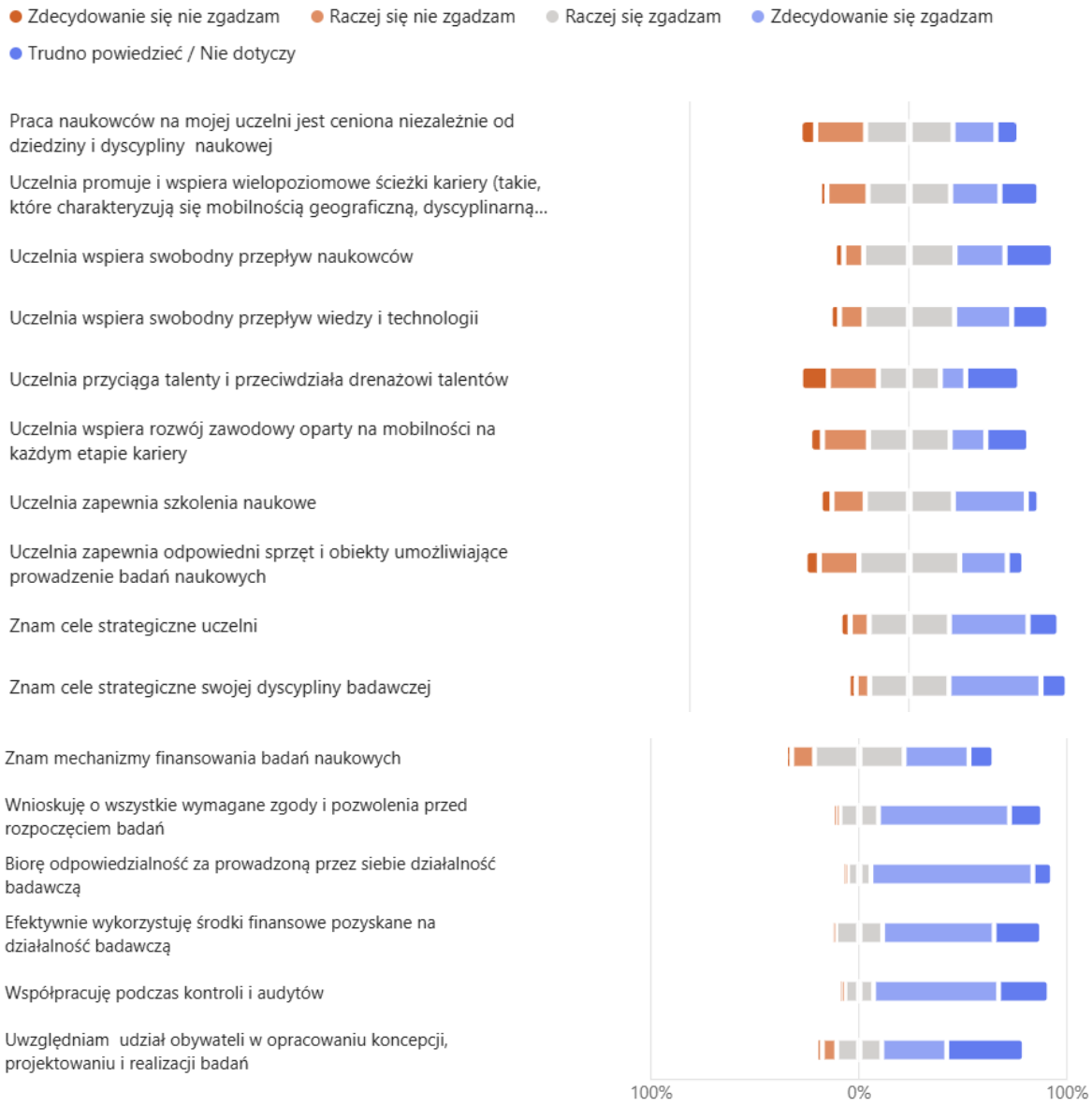
With regard to gender balance and equality, the two following comments, among others, were made: *First - when selecting the composition of committees or research teams, the competence of employees ONLY should be considered. Consideration of irrelevant characteristics, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, etc., will lead to lower quality of work. If I have a team of four talented women at my disposal, I will not forcefully exchange two of them for potentially less competent men in order to preserve some arbitrary "diversity." At medical universities, especially in majors such as nursing, we have a clear advantage of female students over male students, and I don't see any problem with that. Does the University intend to discriminate against female students to achieve "gender equality"? I hope not. Secondly, scientific research offers a chance to actually solve the global climate crisis and should not be hindered by pseudo-ecological assumptions of "sustainable development" and the like. The environmental benefits of such initiatives are negligible, and the potential losses from slowing down progress in research are enormous (A46);*

In terms of gender equality - there has never been a woman taking the position of the Rector or even a candidate for the Rector of MUL, so I guess there is still a lot of work to be done ;) (A61).

The respondents were asked to define their attitudes to over a dozen statements regarding the functioning of various University areas. Among the strengths, the respondents indicate training provided by the University (73%) and access to equipment and facilities to conduct research (67%). The worst score was given to the University's support in attracting talents and preventing talent drain (35% of negative responses), and it was also indicated that the work of researchers at the University is valued differently depending on the scientific field and discipline (30%). By answering this question, the respondents also assessed their familiarity with the strategic goals of the University and their own discipline – these are known by 72.5% and 66% of the survey participants, respectively (in 2021, 90% knew the University's strategic goals). More than

74% are familiar with research funding mechanisms (in 2021, it was more than 82%), more than 81% apply for all required approvals and permits before starting research, as many as 89% take responsibility for their research activities, 76% effectively use funds raised for research activities (98% in 2021), almost 74% cooperate during inspections and audits (more than 82% in 2021), and just over 50% consider public engagement in the conception, design and implementation of research (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13. ASSESSMENT OF STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY'S OPERATIONS AND THE RESPONDENT'S OWN ACTIVITY



When conducting research, not only ethical aspects should be taken into account, but also sustainability issues, so the respondents were asked how the University promotes the implementation of research according to these principles and encourages researchers to do so. The survey shows that employees do not know how or cannot answer this question, which was indicated by 53% of the respondents with regard to the inclusion in the University's strategy of such documents as the

European Green Deal, the 2030 Agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Green Charter. Almost 41% of the survey participants cannot express their opinion on whether the University provides mentoring in sustainable research, while almost 35% cannot answer whether the University provides training in sustainable research. Negative opinions are also expressed with regard to the last two statements, indicating a lack of such activities on the part of the University (Figure 14).

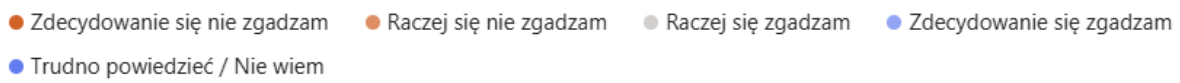
FIGURE 14. MEASURES TAKEN BY THE UNIVERSITY TO IMPLEMENT RESEARCH ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

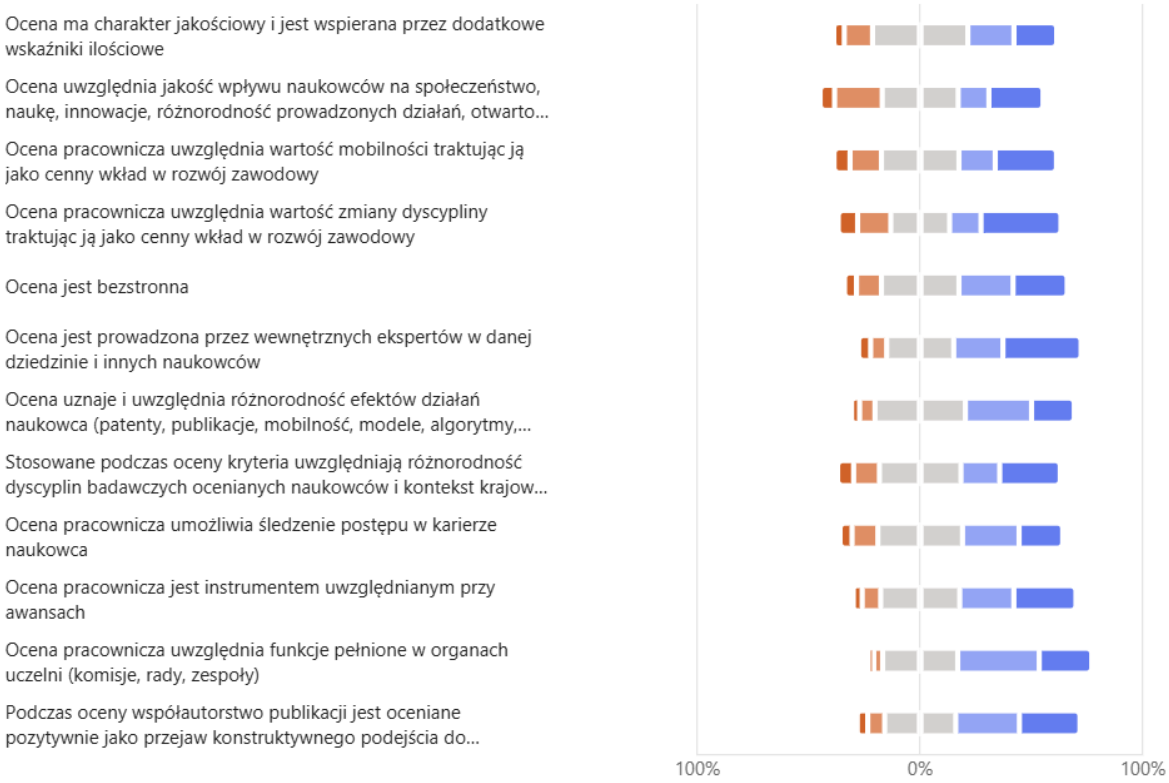
PILLAR II – ASSESSMENT AND RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCHERS AND CAREER PROGRESSION

The second series of questions concerned the System of Periodic Assessment of Teachers (SPAT) and academic career development. The survey did not include issues related to the rules of recruitment and assessment of the composition of recruitment teams. This is due to the fact that employees were hired at different time, so their experience related to the recruitment procedure is different too. Additionally, a newly hired employee is not in a position to assess whether the appointed recruitment committee is made up of competent people.

In the case of Employee Assessment, it is surprising to see a rather high percentage of "I don't know / Hard to say" answers for each of the statements (Figure 15). This may indicate poor understanding of the assessment rules, even though it was implemented several years ago. Additionally, according to 28%, the assessment does not take into account the quality of researchers' impact on society, science, innovation, diversity of activities carried out, open science principle; for more than 23%, the assessment does not take into account the value of changing the discipline (this is not seen as a valuable contribution to professional development). Twenty-one percent of the respondents think that the assessment does not take into account the value of mobility (it is not seen as a valuable contribution to professional development either). More than 17% also believe that the criteria applied in the assessment do not include the diversity of the research disciplines of the assessed researchers or the national context of conducting research in these disciplines. The criterion of the diversity of the researcher's output (patents, publications, mobility, models, algorithms, commercialization of science, mentoring, work for the University and the environment, etc.) was rated best, i.e., over 70% indicate that this criterion is taken into account in SPAT. Additionally, more than 71% think that the assessment takes into account functions performed in the University's bodies (committees, councils, teams).

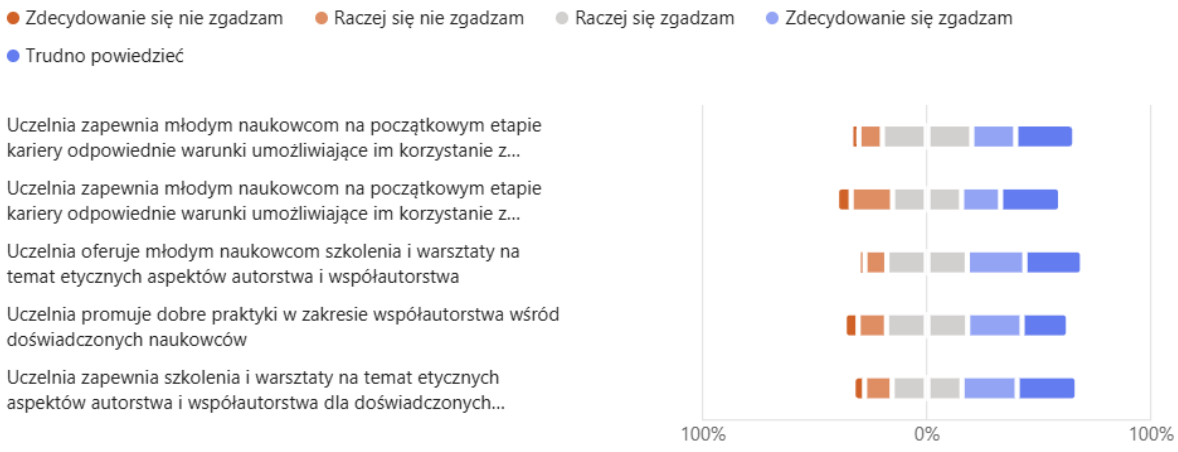
FIGURE 15. ASSESSMENT OF THE CRITERIA INCLUDED IN THE SYSTEM OF PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS





Another question focused on one element of research activity, i.e., publications. The respondents assessed the publication practices of both novice and experienced researchers. Twenty-five percent of the respondents think that the University does not provide adequate conditions for young researchers at the beginning of their career to exercise their right to publish their research results independently of their supervisors, while 18% believe that the University does not promote good co-authorship practices among experienced researchers. Over 61% of the respondents think that the Medical University of Lodz offers training and workshops on ethical aspects of authorship and co-authorship to young researchers (Figure 16).

FIGURE 16. ASSESSMENT OF PUBLICATION PRACTICES

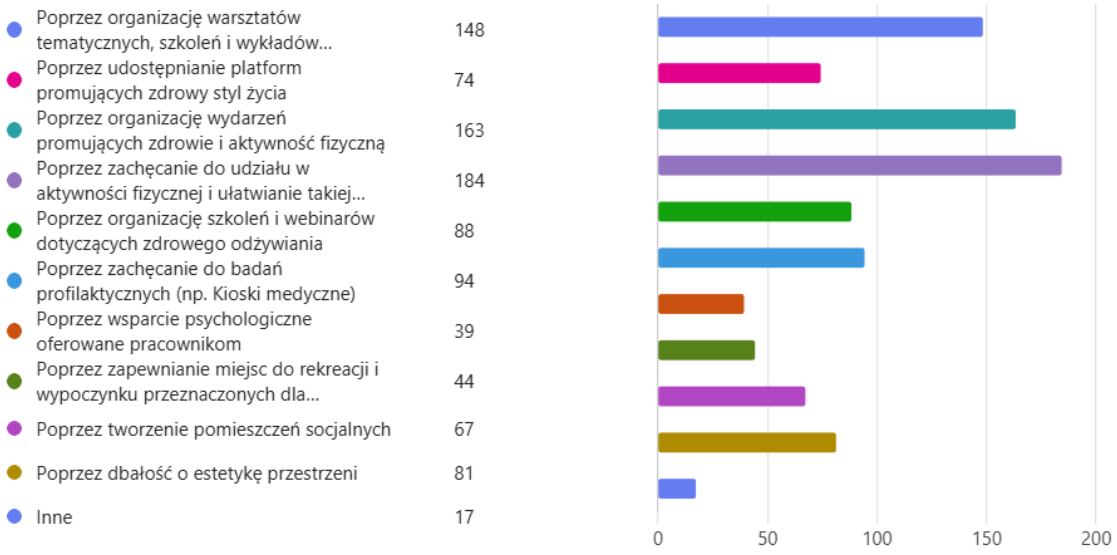


PILLAR III – WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES

The next series of questions was related to assessment of working conditions and practices. The respondents indicate how the Medical University of Lodz supports mental health and well-being of its staff. The most commonly chosen examples are encouraging and facilitating participation in physical activity (program of fitness club cards) (18%), organizing events to promote health and physical activity (16%), and organizing thematic workshops, training sessions and open-access lectures on mental health and well-being (15%). Psychological support and provision of space for recreation and leisure for employees are least frequently indicated (4% each) (Figure 17).

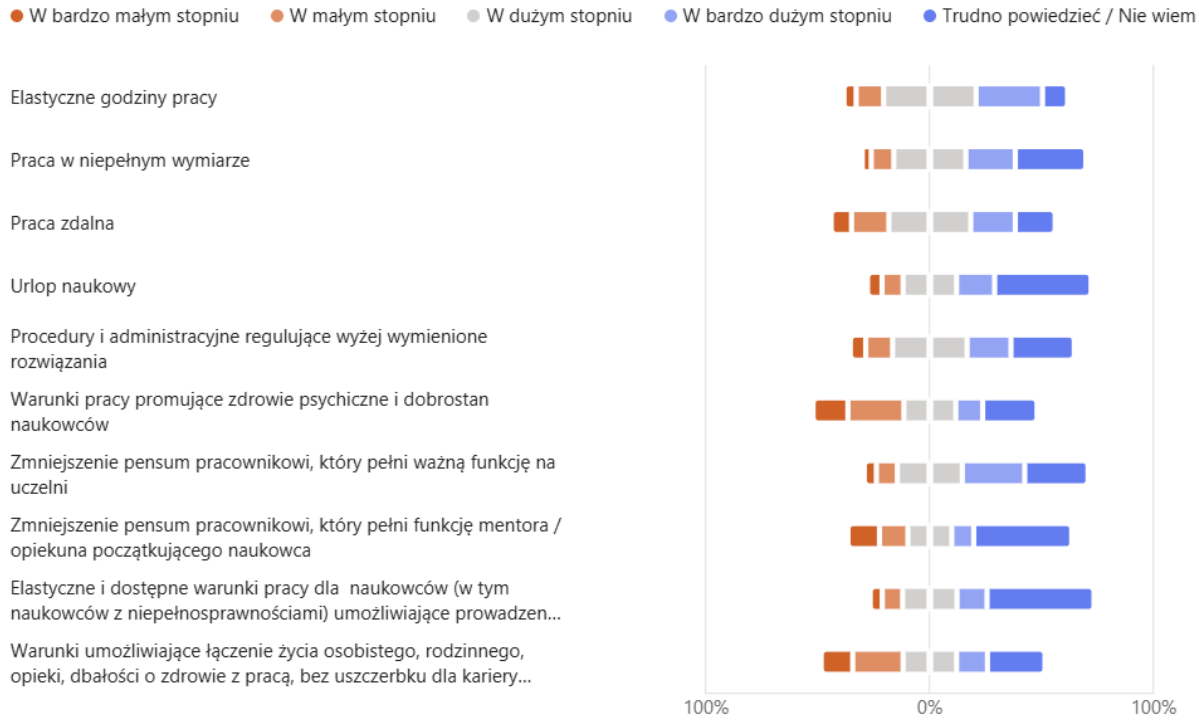
FIGURE 17. WAYS OF SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE STAFF APPLIED BY THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF LODZ

(multiple choice questions)



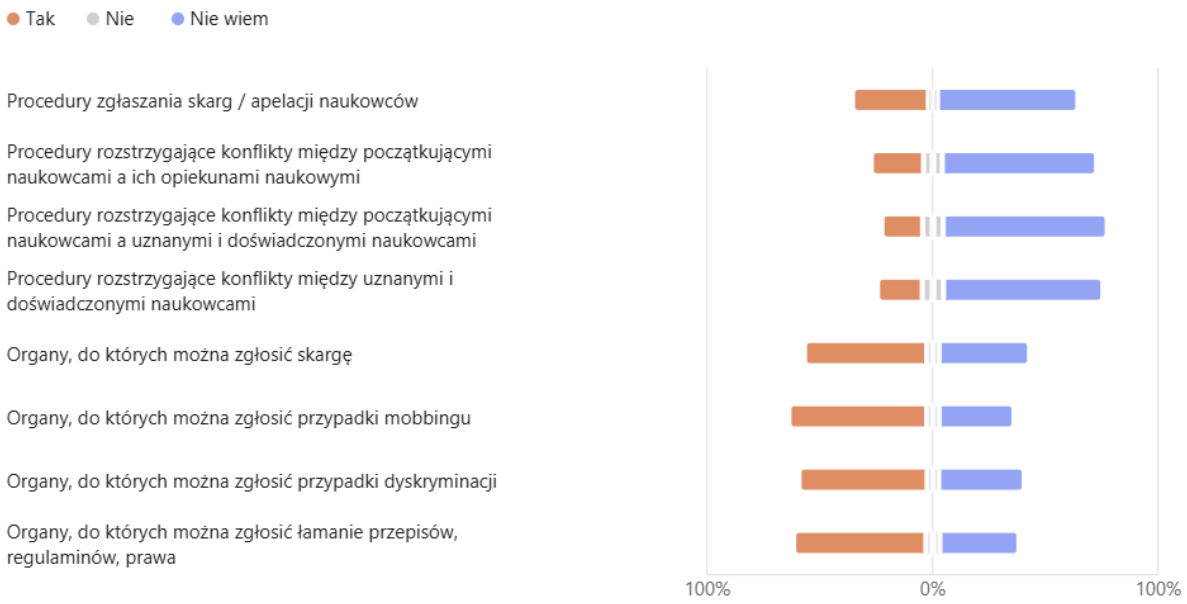
An element of promoting health and well-being is providing appropriate working conditions. More than 40% of the respondents note that working conditions do not promote mental health and well-being among researchers, 36% point to difficulties in achieving work-life balance, while 28% indicate a lack of remote work option. On the other hand, flexible working hours are rated best (71%), as well as the possibility of reducing the number of teaching hours for an employee who also performs another important function at the University (almost 57%) (Figure 18).

FIGURE 18. EXTENT TO WHICH THE UNIVERSITY ENSURES WORKING CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE STAFF



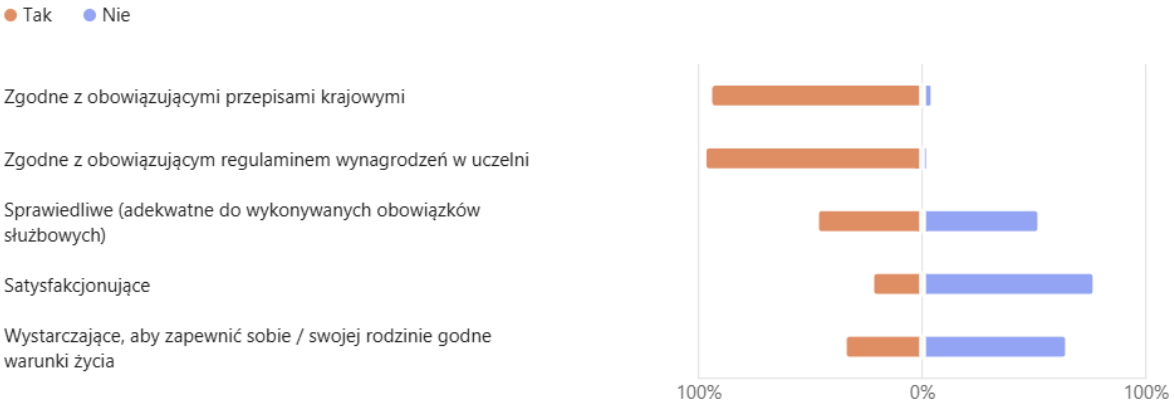
Professional work gives rise to tensions and conflicts, so it is important that there are adequate procedures and bodies to which one can refer in a conflict situation. The respondents were asked if they were aware of the existence of University procedures and bodies with which complaints and appeals can be filed or by which conflicts may be resolved. As for knowledge of procedures, it is definitely insufficient as between 60 and 70% of the respondents are not familiar with them. While, as regards knowledge of the bodies to which one can report a problem, it is slightly better (more than 50% of the survey participants know such bodies at the University), however, the percentage of those who do not have this knowledge is still high (Figure 19).

FIGURE 19. KNOWLEDGE ON THE PROCEDURES AND BODIES ESTABLISHED FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION



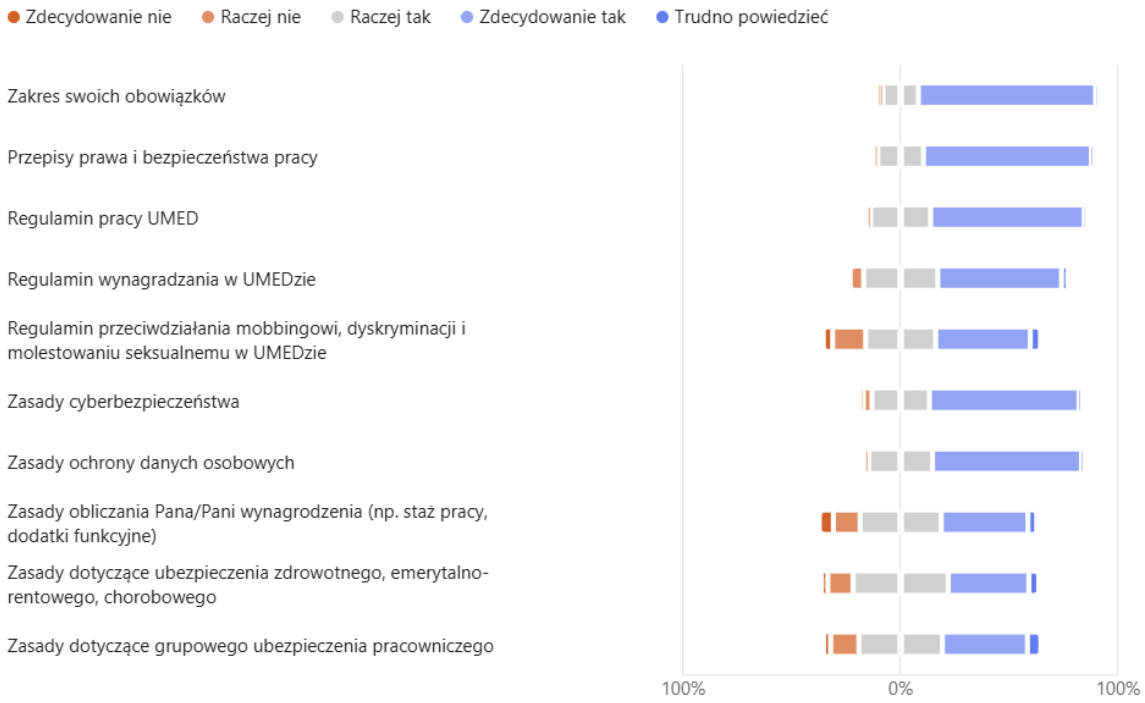
Job satisfaction also has a material dimension and is measured by the amount of salary. Almost all of the survey respondents agree that salaries are paid in compliance with the applicable national regulations and the University's regulations on remuneration, however, for 77% of the survey participants, it is not satisfactory, for 65% it is not sufficient, while for just over half it is also not adequate compared to the duties performed (Figure 20).

FIGURE 20. ASSESSMENT OF REMUNERATION



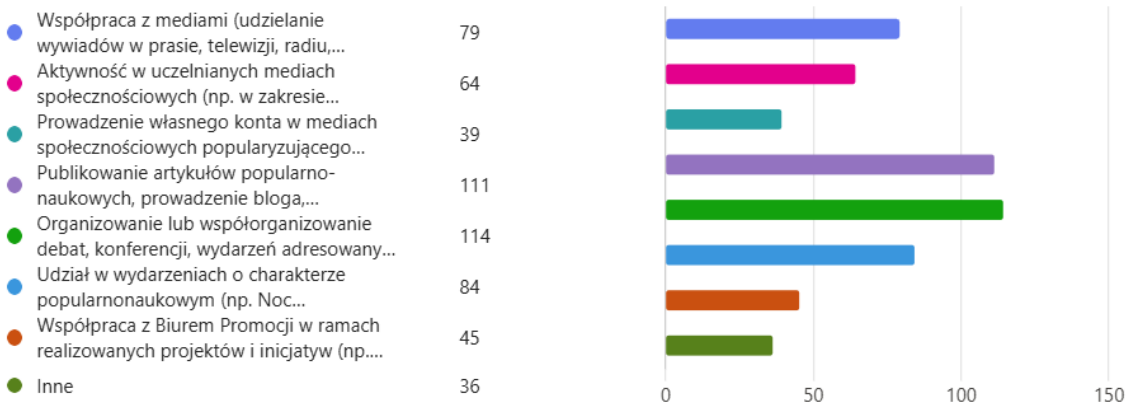
A vast majority of the staff are aware of their responsibilities, health and safety regulations, the University's work regulations, cyber security and data protection rules. Areas in which education is required are the rules of calculating remuneration, rules of counteracting bullying and discrimination, and rules for calculating insurance premiums (Figure 21).

FIGURE 21. KNOWLEDGE OF REGULATIONS RELATED TO WORK PERFORMED



The respondents are eager to popularize the results of their research activities. They most often do this by organizing or co-organizing debates, conferences, events addressed to a wide audience (20%), publishing popular scientific articles, keeping blogs, recording podcasts (19%), participating in popular science events (e.g., Researchers' Night, science picnics and festivals, *Senioralia* (a national event organized for the elderly) - 15%) and cooperating with the media (giving interviews in the press, TV, radio, social media - 14%) (Figure 22).

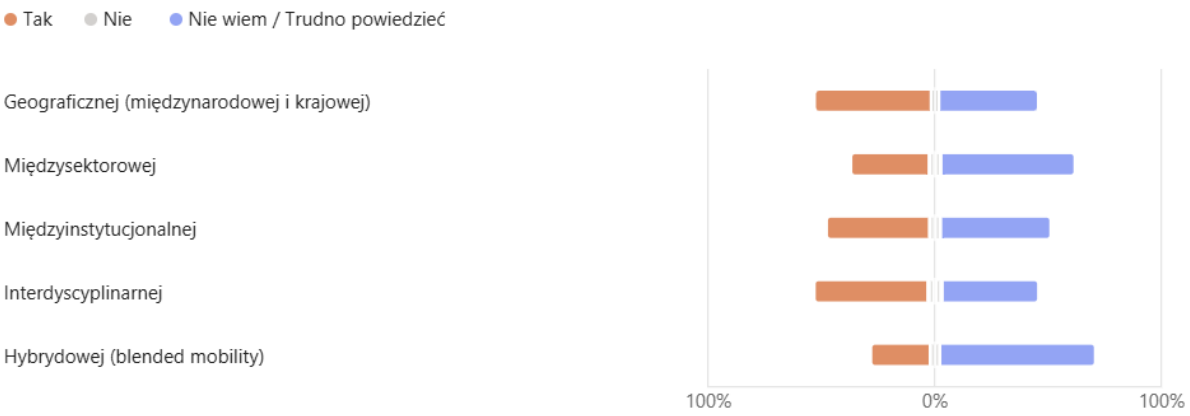
FIGURE 22. FORMS AND METHODS OF POPULARIZING SCIENCE



PILLAR IV - RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

The last area specified in the European Charter for Researchers concerns the development of scientific careers and talents. One of the elements emphasized in the updated version of the document is the value of mobility, so the respondents were asked once again about this issue, this time in detail. Unfortunately, there is still a large group of employees who do not know or cannot say whether the University recognizes the value of geographic (45%), cross-sectoral (60%), cross-institutional (50%), interdisciplinary (43%) and hybrid (blended) (70%) mobility. At the same time, there is an equally large group that recognizes the importance the University attaches to these types of mobility (Figure 23). The lack of knowledge in this regard may result from the fact that 77% of the respondents have never participated in a mobility meeting organized by the University. These respondents, when asked about their preferred form of meetings, most often indicate online group meetings (41%), training on the Moodle platform (21%) and in-person group meetings (20%).

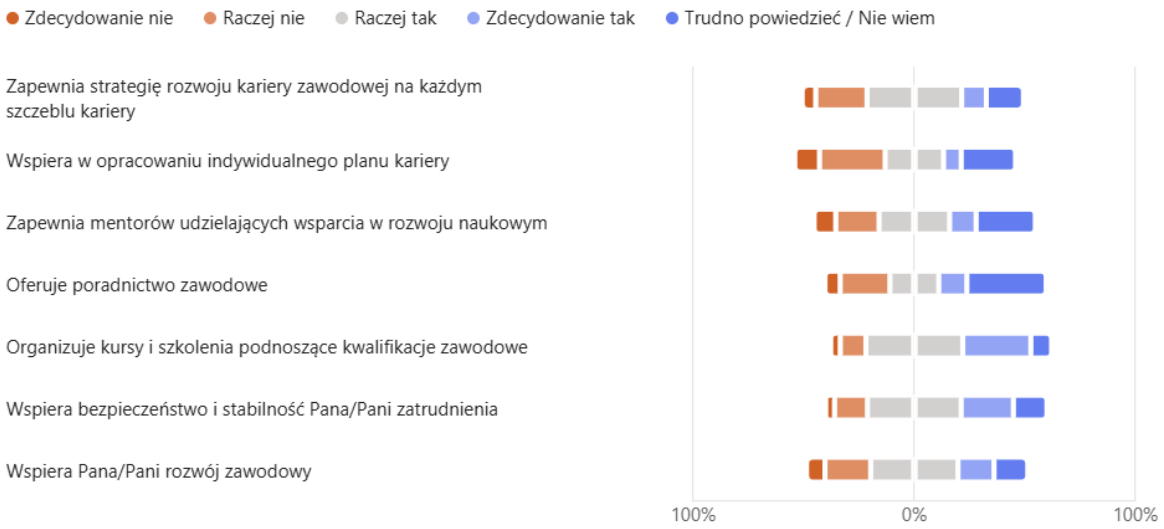
FIGURE 23. ASSESSMENT OF RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF MOBILITY BY THE UNIVERSITY



In the next question, the respondents were asked to assess the extent to which the University supports their professional development and career path. Support for an individual career path was rated as worst, with more than 41% of the respondents admitting that the University does not support them in this aspect. Twenty-nine percent do not feel supported in professional development either, and the same number of the survey participants think that the University does not provide a strategy for career development at specific stages of career. A lot of the respondents (almost 36%) are not able to comment on the offer of career guidance. What they assess as best is definitely access to training and courses (74% agree

that the University provides support in this area), while 66% also notice support related to job security and stability (Figure 24).

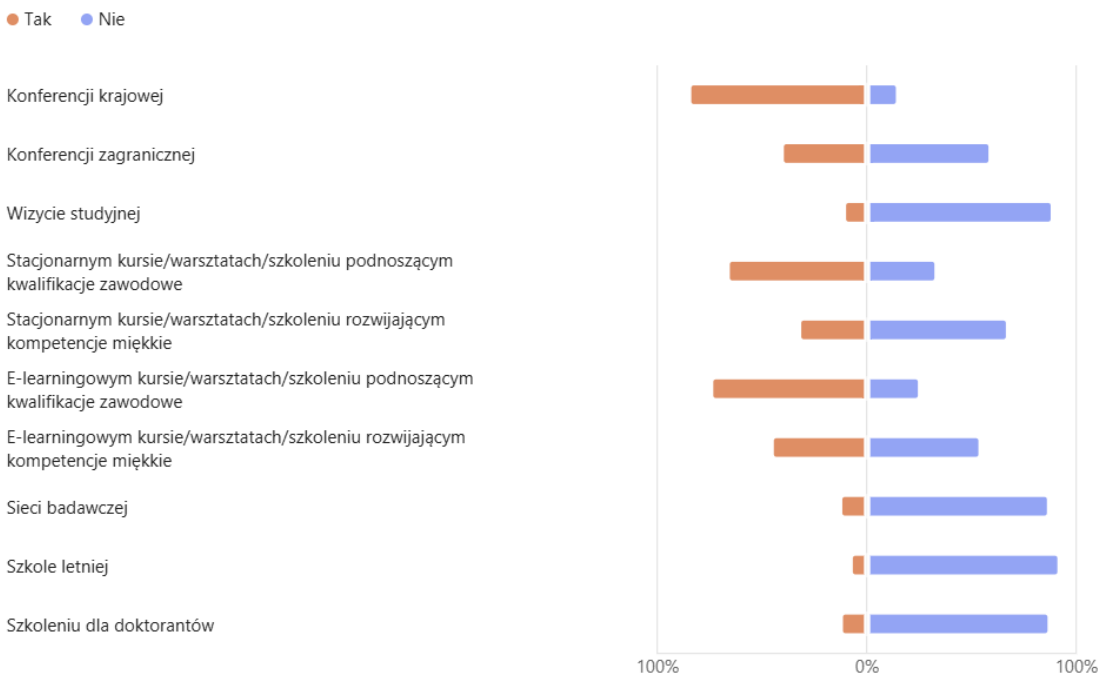
FIGURE 24. SUPPORT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER PATH PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY



In this context, there was a comment from one of the survey participants: *Recently, there has been an increasing lack of support and real involvement of universities in the development of research and teaching staff. Decisions regarding promotions or development opportunities are discretionary, which creates frustration and a sense of injustice. Although the University's procedures and departments formally exist, in practice they do not support employees, and problems are ignored instead of being solved. This way of doing things negatively affects motivation and the atmosphere at work (S52).*

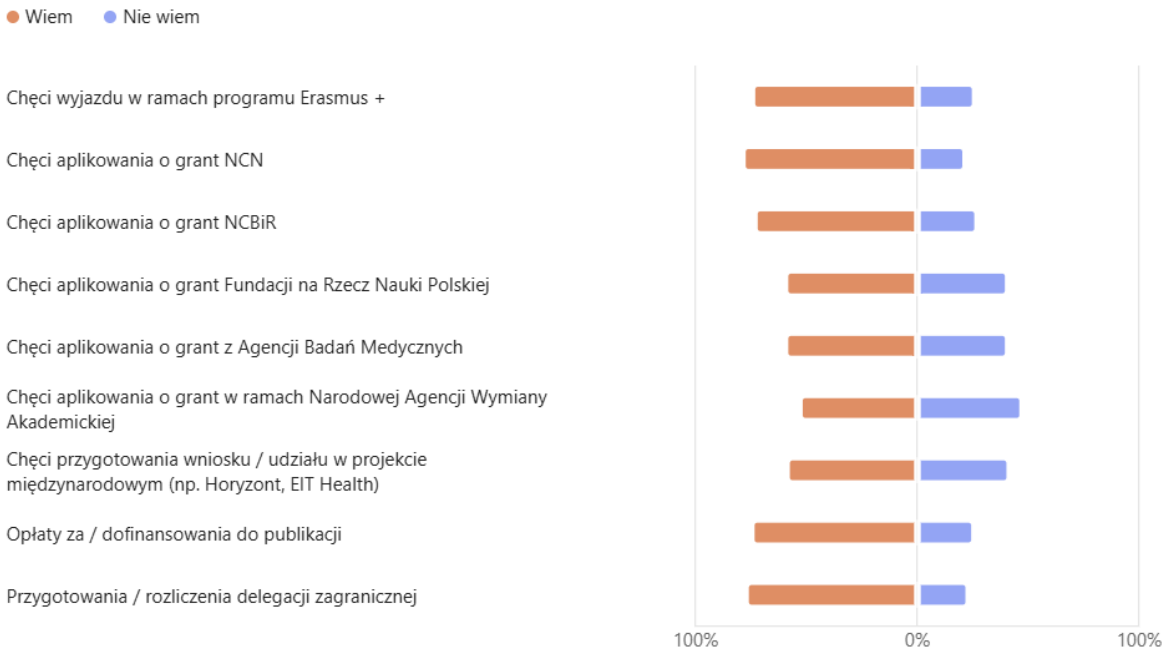
The respondents were also asked about the types of activities they undertake to improve their competencies and stimulate professional development. The most common activities indicated are attending national conferences (85%), participating in e-learning courses (almost 75%) or on-site (almost 67%) course/workshop/training to improve professional skills, attending a foreign conference (41%). Only 8% attend summer schools, 11% choose study visits, while 13% participate in a research network (Figure 25). In 2021, 40.5% of the respondents did not participate in any form of research and teaching mobility.

FIGURE 25. PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES IMPROVING COMPETENCIES AND STIMULATING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



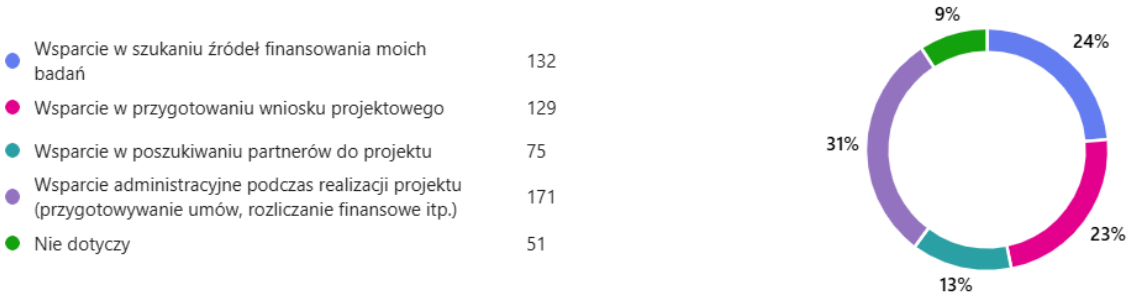
When conducting their research, researchers obtain funding from external sources, and also benefit from foreign business trips or publication co-financing. They were asked if they knew which unit at the University they could turn to if they sought funding or support in dealing with financial settlements. Most employees know which units can provide assistance in these processes. More than 78% know where to turn to apply for a National science Centre grant, 77% know which unit assists in preparing/dealing with financial settlements related to a foreign business trip. Seventy-four percent declare that they knew who they should contact if they wanted to go on an Erasmus+ trip and to pay for / obtain co-funding for a publication (Figure 26). One of the respondents points out the problem of lack of cooperation between administrative departments and researchers: *A very serious problem at the University is a lack of cooperation between various administrative departments (Public Procurement Department, Equipment Department) with scientific and research staff. Administrative staff very often lack substantive knowledge on purchasing categorization, public procurement laws and problem solving. Scientific and research staff are burdened with administrative tasks, must be familiar with regulations, and are repeatedly held responsible for administrative tasks (S54).*

FIGURE 26.KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNITS THAT SUPPORT SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN THE UNIVERSITY



However, it turns out that researchers need support during preparation of project applications and implementation of research projects. Thirty-one percent need administrative support during project implementation (preparing contracts, financial settlements, etc.), 24% during the search for funding sources, while 23% need help in preparing a project application. The respondents do best in finding partners for their projects (Figure 27).

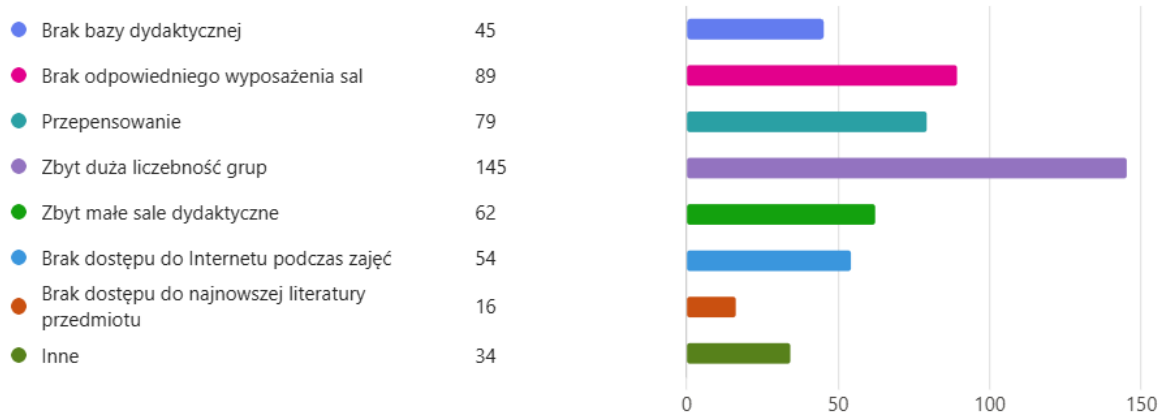
FIGURE 27. NEEDS FOR SUPPORT IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



A vast majority of the survey participants are employed in research and teaching or teaching positions and conduct classes (95%). The next questions focused on the experience related to teaching students. The survey respondents indicate a number of important problems affecting the quality of education (and thus assessment of staff and units). First of all, the most significant problem is the excessive size of groups. This is due to the lower limit for a seminar group (24 students) adopted at the University and a lack of an upper limit, which leads to cases where seminars resemble lectures, as groups often have 40 students or more (28% of the respondents experience this problem). This issue is also mentioned in the respondents' comments at the end of the survey, in an open-ended question. The second problem is the lack of adequate equipment in classrooms, which is indicated by 17% of the

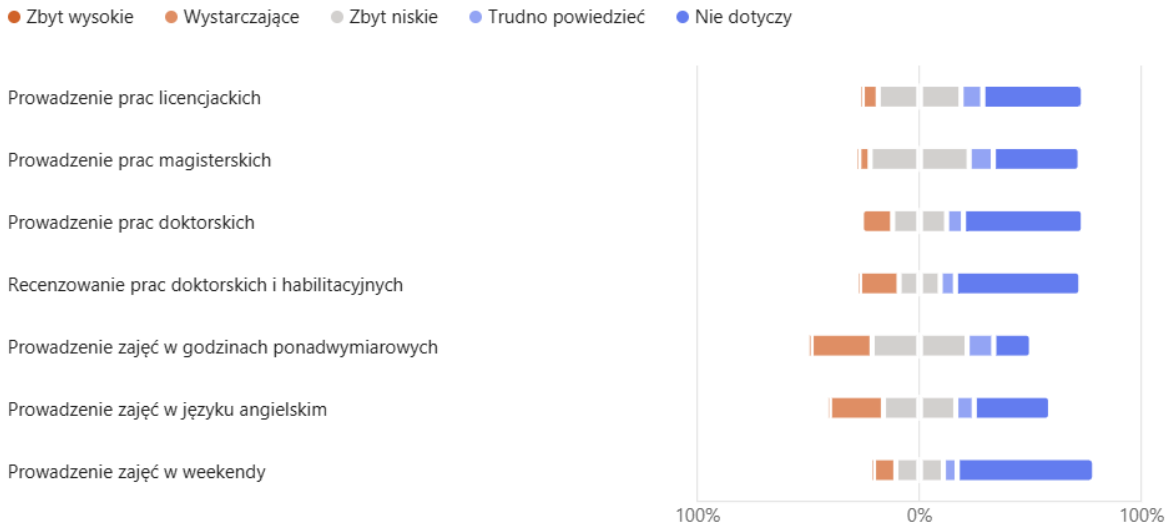
respondents, and too high minimum number of teaching hours (this problem is emphasized by 15%) (Figure 28). The latter issue is also raised by the respondents in the last question. They indicate that in the University, there are situations in which Unit A is assigned an excessive number of teaching hours and hires a new employee, whereas Unit B, whose employees are competent enough to conduct Unit B's classes, is assigned a lower number of hours. Some respondents suggest that a coordinator be appointed at the University to monitor the process of rational and economical distribution of teaching hours, which would prevent friction and tension between units that begin to compete for them: *Lack of cooperation between units in terms of classes taught. "Snatching" classes from other units. There should be a central department in the University to coordinate the distribution of classes among academic units to prevent situations in which some units with similar profiles receive an excessive number of teaching hours, while in others the number of hours is too low, just because the head of a particular unit holds a more important position at the University and "wins" classes for their unit. Then, they report a problem of shortage of staff in the unit and hire more people when classes in the same subject could be successfully taught by another unit which has been assigned a too low number of teaching hours. However, there is no willingness to cooperate in this area at the University (S24).*

FIGURE 28. MAJOR DIFFICULTIES RELATED TO CONDUCTING CLASSES



The respondents were also asked to assess the amount of remuneration for supervising theses, reviews, and teaching overtime, at weekends and in English. They think that remuneration is too low for the following: teaching overtime (43% of the respondents), supervising bachelor's theses (37%) and master's theses (more than 44%) (Figure 29). In 2021, the respondents assessed the fairness of the remuneration for supervision activity. More than 62% thought that remuneration for supervision over bachelor's and master's theses was not fair. Only remuneration received for supervision over doctoral theses was assessed more positively, with 62% of the survey participants admitting that they were paid fairly.

FIGURE 29. ASSESSMENT OF REMUNERATION FOR SUPERVISING THESES, REVIEWS AND CONDUCTING CLASSES OVERTIME, AT WEEKENDS AND IN ENGLISH

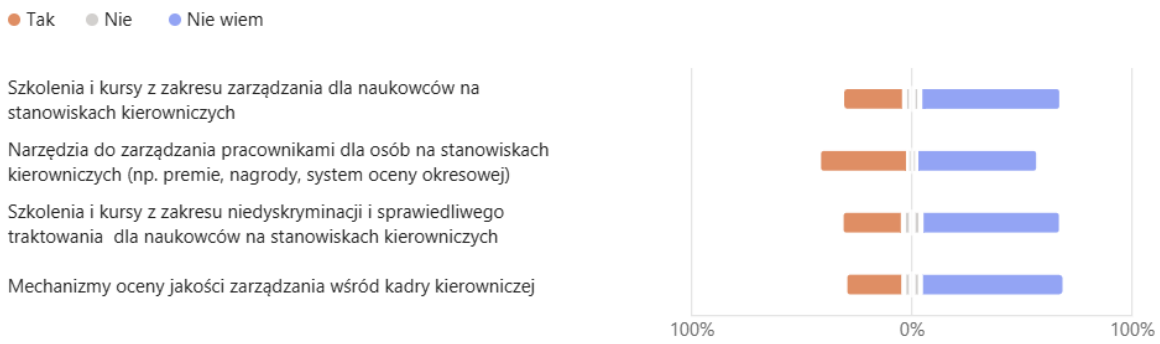


Good management is required for effective teamwork, relieving tensions and resolving conflicts, on a regular basis and in a constructive way. In this regard, the survey also asked the participants whether the University supports management development. As the results show, the majority of the respondents have no knowledge on this issue. Over 65% do not know whether the University has mechanisms for assessment of the quality of management among managerial staff, almost 65% have no knowledge of management training and courses for researchers in managerial positions, while 64% do not know whether managerial staff are offered training and courses on non-discrimination and fair treatment (Figure 30). In an open-ended question, there was a statement indicating a low level of competence among the University managerial staff: *(...) lack of assessment of the heads of University departments and units, most of them have no idea how to manage and support people, pursuing their own particular interests only (...) (S50).*

I would like to add that the fate of a doctoral student at MUL is left hanging in the air - they neither have full rights as an employee nor as a student. They are not entitled to any allowances because they are not employees, despite the fact that they often do more teaching than other staff. So they are not entitled to the allowance awarded to a department in this respect. Nor can they be given a research allowance, even though they are often the people who publish most in their unit and work the longest hours on a monthly basis. They are not even entitled to receive a coat, even though they perform laboratory work. The desk that a doctoral student uses does not have to meet any occupational health and safety standards or support good practices, such as a comfortable seat, a footrest, a proper monitor. It is not required that they be provided with a computer, shoes, or anything that in any way supports the existence of an ordinary employee, as they are not employees, in fact. Frequently, considering their commitment, they are the most effective yet the most overlooked people when it comes to any benefits, employee rights or student rights. In units, employees in technical positions do their doctoral theses without performing any of their duties in less time than stipulated in a doctoral school, whereas doctoral students have to attend classes, teach classes themselves, often overtime, additionally do research work and are still held accountable for everything, year after year. Meanwhile, in 2-3 years, technical employees, doing research work only, reach the same academic degree without fulfilling any of the above requirements simply because they did not get into doctoral school

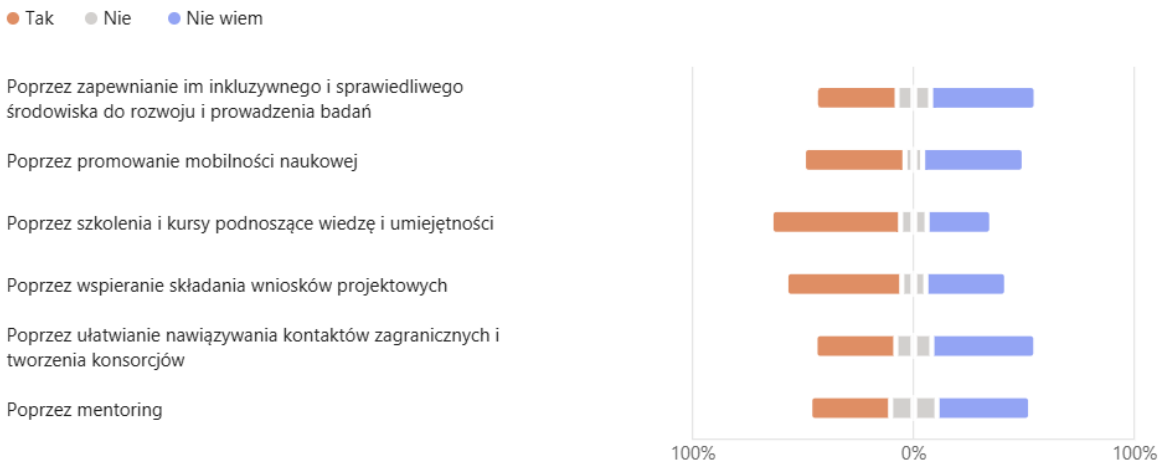
under the conditions that a regular International Doctoral School student had to fulfill. Without receiving proper education, such an employee does not acquire any values or knowledge on the world of science, and is most often an unreflective reproducer, just doing tasks assigned to them. Hence, if the working conditions at specific positions are assessed in the above survey, the working and employment conditions of a doctoral student are assessed rather negatively compared to those offered to a regular employee (S10).

FIGURE 30. ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT IN DEVELOPMENT OFFERED TO MANAGERIAL STAFF



University development is also about investing in and supporting young researchers. The respondents rate mentoring the worst - 21% express the opinion that the University does not support young researchers in this way. However, almost 59% indicate that the University provides them with access to training and courses and also supports them in submitting project applications (over 52%). A significant group of the respondents did not know how to answer this question, which may be due to a lack of interest in these issues (Figure 31). However, this may be an indicator of a low organizational culture ("It doesn't concern me, so I don't care about it").

FIGURE 31. KNOWLEDGE ON THE FORMS OF SUPPORT OFFERED TO YOUNG RESEARCHERS



In this context, it is worth mentioning some of the comments on the situation of young researchers and doctoral students (included in the last open question): *A lack of a defined*

function (role) of a mentor, a senior experienced researcher in relation to younger researchers (S5).

An obstacle for young researchers is the lack of sufficient support in obtaining grants from the University (S9).

Lack of adequate support for young researchers in cases of bullying - biased opinions on the conduct of researchers who have worked at the University for a long time and "have connections." The problem of gender discrimination is hardly a current issue, in contrast to bullying behavior, especially that exhibited by female researchers (S17).

I would like to add that the fate of a doctoral student at MUL is left hanging in the air - they neither have full rights as an employee nor as a student. They are not entitled to any allowances because they are not employees, despite the fact that they often do more teaching than other staff. So they are not entitled to the allowance awarded to a department in this respect. Nor can they be given a research allowance, even though they are often the people who publish most in their unit and work the longest hours on a monthly basis. They are not even entitled to receive a coat, even though they perform laboratory work. The desk that a doctoral student uses does not have to meet any occupational health and safety standards or support good practices, such as a comfortable seat, a footrest, a proper monitor. It is not required that they be provided with a computer, shoes, or anything that in any way supports the existence of an ordinary employee, as they are not employees, in fact. Frequently, considering their commitment, they are the most effective yet the most overlooked people when it comes to any benefits, employee rights or student rights. In units, employees in technical positions do their doctoral theses without performing any of their duties in less time than stipulated in a doctoral school, whereas doctoral students have to attend classes, teach classes themselves, often overtime, additionally do research work and are still held accountable for everything, year after year. Meanwhile, in 2-3 years, technical employees, doing research work only, reach the same academic degree without fulfilling any of the above requirements simply because they did not get into doctoral school under the conditions that a regular International Doctoral School student had to fulfill. Without receiving proper education, such an employee does not acquire any values or knowledge on the world of science, and is most often an unreflective reproducer, just doing tasks assigned to them. Hence, if the working conditions at specific positions are assessed in the above survey, the working and employment conditions of a doctoral student are assessed rather negatively compared to those offered to a regular employee (S10).

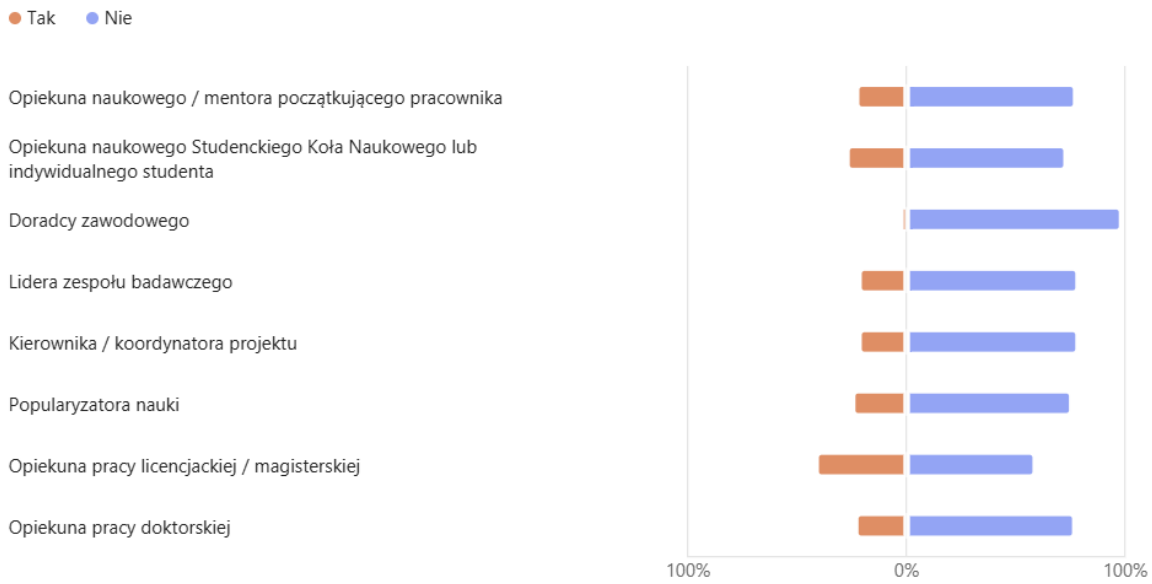
A doctoral student is expected to work full time. A prerequisite for admission to the doctoral school is to demonstrate a certain level of competence of the doctoral student. A doctoral student is a person who has studied for several years, achieving high grades and engaging in additional activity. The doctoral student must also submit regular reports on their work (already after the first year), facing criticism worthy of an experienced researcher, even though this is only the beginning of their research career. The doctoral student is assessed and held accountable mainly for the progress of their thesis, but if there are temporary problems with it, the committee either gives little or no recognition to the doctoral student's other achievements. The mental pressure and the so-called "learning-

curve" or "entry threshold" for a doctoral student is enormous, compared to work in other sectors. The doctoral student is treated as if, from the very beginning, they were expected to perfectly know not only the subject matter in question, but also all research design, statistical, methodological issues. At the same time, the quality of doctoral school classes is not high, and free training is scarce and you have to wait for it. Unfortunately, contrary to the requirements, the work of a doctoral student is a job that is paid below the national minimum, which, for doctoral students who do not hold the title of doctor, is a huge financial blow. With the new year, the minimum wage increases, inflation is not stagnant, so the current salaries of doctoral students from PLN 3100 net will drop by PLN 200-300 in real terms. With such a low salary, each PLN 500 is a huge difference, and it determines whether a doctoral student will have to ask their family/partner for financial support, or will seek an extra job instead of thinking about their doctoral studies. Grants cannot support a doctoral student in the 1st year. Really few people are ready and will get enough help from a supervisor to submit a grant, and even fewer will pass the 10-20% success threshold of the National Science Centre (NCN). It would be a great bonus if the so-called "'incentive allowance" was applied for doctoral students like for other staff members, so that some real financial help, apart from reputation, would go along with writing papers. It is difficult to represent Polish science with dignity when, instead of focusing on development, doctoral students are burdened with financial worries, the rigors of time frames, the prospect of another reporting session (for which they have no idea how to properly fill out the documents). They are often additionally depressed by unsuccessful experiments, and lack of time and/or adequate expertise from their supervisor. Even reducing the rigor of reporting sessions in the 1st year of doctoral studies, adjusting the scholarship in the new year against inflation to a net level of PLN 3300-3400, or introducing incentive allowances for publications for doctoral students would be tremendous support that would significantly increase the efficiency of doctoral students and contribute to the University's success (S23).

All the issues raised in the questions require detailed and careful consideration. Doctoral students conduct their research, provide guidance to students doing research as part of, for example, a master's degree program, conduct classes, and must have an extra job so that they can make a decent living (this does not apply to doctoral students who are physicians because they have the right to pursue their doctoral studies after completion of their full-time at hospital). Dealing with administrative issues related to foreign business trips is a nightmare. If a doctoral student wants to use a piece of equipment that is left standing and dusting, they have to pay for it (sic!), at their own university! Another problem that may be observed at the University is bullying (S32).

Working at the University is not only about conducting research and teaching. Researchers are or should also be active in other fields related to university activities as this is also part of their competence development. The respondents were asked what functions they have performed in the current academic year. The results show that working at the University is not common. The most common are thesis supervision (more than 41%), supervision of the Student Scientific Circle (SSC) or an individual student (27%) and popularization of science (more than 24%) (Figure 32).

FIGURE 32. FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS IN THIS ACADEMIC YEAR



Finally, the respondents were asked to assess experienced researchers as potential role models for those just beginning their careers at the University. More than half believe that experienced researchers build constructive and positive relationships with novice researchers, and that they effectively transfer knowledge to them (Figure 33).

FIGURE 33. ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENCED RESEARCHERS AS POTENTIAL ROLE MODELS

In the last open-ended question of the survey, the respondents could enter their comments and reflections which were not included in the questionnaire. A total of 64 entries were submitted, however, only 35 were comments with substantive content. The other answers to the question “Is there anything you would like to add?” were mostly “No,” “Nothing,” “Nothing to add.”

Other comments, apart from those quoted in the report to illustrate specific issues, were general and related to the work of teachers.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

The questionnaire does not allow for a fair and comprehensive assessment of the University's operations, especially in identifying potential irregularities. An example of this is item 40 of the survey, where the questions and answers are formulated inappropriately, as they refer to general cases that are difficult to assess by a regular employee who is an experienced researcher. Additionally, many questions force the "I don't know" answer, which prevents a full assessment of the University's operations. This results from the fact that a surveyed employee taking a position below that of the Dean does not have sufficient access to information about the functioning of the whole institution and thus its assessment. They can only rely on the opinion they have heard which, in this case, would not be a reliable approach to the issue being addressed. Comments: Despite the existence of bodies responsible for processing applications, their effectiveness leaves much to be desired. Such procedures are usually limited to registering a notification, without taking any concrete corrective action or coming up with solutions. The University often hinders or even prevents professional development of employees, treating them in an instrumental way. Problems raised by staff remain unresolved. Moreover, employees are assigned tasks that are beyond their competence or scope of responsibilities. Although they lack real tools to deal with these issues, they are held accountable for the results, even though they are beyond their control. Thus, the University even makes it harder rather than easier to do their jobs. Administrative and non-academic departments often function improperly, and the consequences of their mistakes are passed on to the academic staff, which increases the burden on the latter. Lack of accountability for repeated mistakes means that these problems are trivialized and left unresolved. Recently, one can observe an intensification of sham and ineffective actions, which leads to growing frustration among employees. Low salaries and small differences in pay between positions with various levels of responsibility further discourage professional development. The lack of transparent rules and acceptance of lack of integrity in some teams negatively affects employee morale. Favoring selected groups compared to others deepens the sense of injustice. As a result, those involved in scientific and teaching development are often marginalized, which results in a lack of motivation to further develop and invest in their competencies (S3).

Lack of appropriate rooms and equipment (mostly outdated) 2. Low salaries 3. Undervaluing, e.g. in the form of bonuses that are awarded other universities for scientific publications and other scientific activities 4. Lack of initiatives for academic/staff integration...etc. 5. Conservative, old-fashioned methods of university management and perception of the work of researchers and teachers (S11).

1.The level of bureaucratization of work is increasingly absurd 2.Difficulties in communicating with decision-makers (no response to e-mails sent) (S12).

The University is not a corporation - lack of support in every field of activity of employees, prevalence of bullying, lack of assessment of the heads of departments and units; most of them have no idea how to provide leadership and support people, they just pursue their own vested interests - because access to money, the employee are left alone, if you don't like it, you can leave, widespread publication corruption, and a totally absurd thing, i.e., an employee who is a teacher can't get an award for scientific-publishing activity, teaching awards are given only at the request of the heads of units who classify employees as better and "more better" at their own discretion, etc. (S50).

The following solutions should be introduced: Remuneration for reviews of master's degree and bachelor's degree theses; Doubling of teaching hours for classes conducted in a foreign language and a multiplier of 1.5 for classes at weekends, Standardization of settlements for bachelor's and master's seminars (either fair remuneration or an adequate number of hours included in the teaching load always, regardless of the degree of supplementation of other employees of the unit); Elimination /reduction of the requirement of the student's 80% contribution to the scientific article which is to be the form of defense of the master's or bachelor's thesis.; Defining clear and substantively justified limits of maximum number of students in seminar groups for the whole University; Opening the option of free and real competition in the creation of elective courses for all university units (abolition of obligatory elective courses, etc.). The MUL is a good employer, however, it can be better and even a kind of pioneer in creating friendly and constructive solutions for staff and students (S63).

Responses regarding salaries, for example, result from a lack of knowledge of what the remuneration for project work will be and when it will be paid. As for equipment required for specific positions, the University provides support in this area but due to procedures it is very extended in time, as a result of which, for example, if some equipment is missing or breaks down, the employee has to cope with such a problem for several months. There is great value in training organized for employees and cooperation between different departments (S59).

COMMENTS ON THE WORK OF TEACHERS:

Employees holding the position of teacher are not supported in scientific activities. A teacher who is employed in such a position is not eligible for publication funding because they are not in the so-called N number. Teachers with scientific publications are not eligible for certain awards given to academic staff members. A teacher should be offered opportunities of academic development (S18).

I would like to draw attention to the system of rewarding teaching staff, where the award for the best MUL teacher is unattainable, in the situation of a smaller number of students (smaller than, for example, in the Faculty of Medicine). In some majors, even with many teaching hours, it is impossible to collect enough surveys to qualify for the said award. I believe that the system should be improved, for example, by the percentage of surveys in relation to the number of students in a particular course/subject (S21).

A scientific award for publication on the financial side should also be included for employees in teaching positions. Without this, teaching assistant professors are not as motivated to write publications and at the same time are required to do so, just as they are required to participate in research (S53).

Lack of remuneration for or inclusion of the time devoted to conducting a SSC in the teaching salary. For example, if after a year (SSC report), a scientific paper is published, then the SSC Supervisor should get either a financial allowance as for a bachelor's/master's thesis or a salary paid for overtime or teaching hours. The time the Supervisor devotes to the Scientific Circle is really a significant contribution (S22).

STUDENT ASSESSMENT NO EVALUATION SURVEYS TO ASSESS WORK OF STUDENTS OR AT LEAST DEAN GROUPS IN INDIVIDUAL COURSES. STUDENTS CAN ASSESS ACADEMIC TEACHERS ANONYMOUSLY THROUGH SURVEYS, WHILE IT DOES NOT WORK THE OTHER WAY (S57).

OTHER COMMENTS:

There is too little training for employees and young researchers in the use and application of Statistica (S8).

Some questions cannot be answered honestly because, to a large extent, many research and teaching topics depend on the faculty of the University and the people working there. This is because there are major interdepartmental differences that are not talked about out loud (S14).

Lack of information on how and where to communicate the effects of the survey (S51).

Overall, I assess our University very positively with regard to the issues discussed in the survey (S56).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PILLAR I ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER ASPECT AND OPEN SCIENCE	
Conclusion	**Recommendations**
Employees need support in ethics and integrity of research activities	• *Mentoring program - should be an award but should involve some form of gratification (additional hours added to the teaching load, reduction of the teaching hours)* • *Courses and training* • *Support in financial settlements related to projects (by competent units or mentors)* • *Strengthening the institutional culture of the University (by promoting norms and values in social media, promoting good practices in co-authoring publications, organizing events that integrate the environment around certain values - for example, a meeting during which staff, together with the authorities, will prepare something for the charity)*
Insufficient knowledge about the bodies to which cases of research dishonesty can be reported	*Familiarizing the staff with a unit's profile and presentation of its employees (mailing, Intranet, social media)*
Difficulties in applying the principles of open science Lack of support in this area from the University	*Training on accessibility to open source software, open models and algorithms, their use and ethical issues related to their use*
Need for support in the area of Research Data Management (RDM)	• *Organization of training in this area for those interested* • *Exchange of experience with people who have knowledge in this area* • *Employment/Appointment of data stewards*
Need for support in AI application	• *Training* • *Developing a strategy for AI application in academic, research, teaching and administrative work*
Difficulties in starting and carrying out research - difficulty in obtaining funds, excessive didacticism, excessive bureaucratization	• *Administrative support in the implementation and settlement of projects*

	• *Creating the possibility of crediting, e.g., 20% of teaching hours (48h/240h) based on research activities for research and teaching staff*
Problem with attracting and retaining talents	• *Promotion of attractive employment conditions*
Unequal treatment of work depending on the discipline	• *Forms of interdepartmental integration*
Inadequate research infrastructure (equipment and facilities for research)	• *Analysis of gaps in this area and opportunities for covering deficits in this area*
Inadequate support in mobility	• *Analysis of current activities*
Inadequate knowledge of the University's strategic goals and of its discipline and research funding mechanisms	• *Strategy – knowledge contest*
Insufficient knowledge regarding promotion of sustainable research implementation by the MUL	• *Mailing + short training*
PILLAR II ASSESSMENT AND RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCHERS AND CAREER PROGRESSION	
Insufficient support for young researchers in publishing	• *Mentoring / Mentorship program*
Insufficient knowledge of the system of periodic assessment of teachers (SPAT)	• On the occasion of the next edition - more information on the procedures, criteria, etc. •
PILLAR III WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES	
They recognize activities aimed at supporting well-being and mental health, but these are insufficient. Insufficient attention to ensuring appropriate working conditions in terms of mental health, work-life balance, remote work, reducing the number of teaching hours for the mentor	• *Meetings and workshops with psychologists and psychotherapists*
Insufficient knowledge on: • **procedures for reporting complaints/appeals by researchers,** • **procedures for resolving conflicts between novice**	• *Education – mailing, attractive presentation of the procedures*

researchers and their supervisors, • **procedures to resolve conflicts between novice researchers and recognized and experienced researchers,** • **anti-bullying procedures,** • **salary calculations,** • **insurance**	
PILLAR IV **RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT**	
Insufficient knowledge of mobility opportunities related to absence in thematic meetings. Preferred form - online group meetings	• *Online group meetings with "ambassadors"*
Insufficient support in career development	• *Meetings with a career counselor*
"Conservatism" in terms of participation in scientific and research events	• *Creating and promoting the offer of study visits, summer schools, research networks and training for doctoral students*
Insufficient support in conducting projects (administrative matters, seeking sources of funding)	• *Analysis of specific needs and opportunities to provide more effective support*
Problems concerning teaching activities - too many groups, lack of equipment in the classrooms, excessive number of teaching hours	• *Negotiations with the authorities to reduce the size of seminar groups* • *Encouraging cooperation in the rational distribution of hours between units*
Insufficient knowledge about training and courses for researchers in managerial positions, tools for managing employees for persons in managerial positions, mechanisms for management quality assessment among managerial staff	• *Education – training for managerial staff*
Low commitment to extra university roles and responsibilities among staff	• *Integration activities, programs to encourage them to take on new responsibilities (it is important that these employees are appreciated by their superiors)*

STRENGTHS IDENTIFIED BY THE SURVEY:

1. Research training - it is important, it is recognized and employees benefit from it.
2. Dissemination of the results of work - the survey shows that employees are eager to do this.
3. The work and role of experienced researchers are assessed positively.