

# Maynooth University: COVID-19 Remote Working Employee Pulse Survey

2020

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## Executive Summary

A *Maynooth University – COVID-19 Remote Working Employee Pulse Survey* was launched on 3rd July 2020 with a deadline for responses by 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The objective of the survey was to gather data on Maynooth University (MU) employees' experiences of remote working during the Covid-19 restrictions to answer the following questions:

- What challenges and opportunities do colleagues face with regards to remote working?
- What supports might the University provide in the short-term to address these challenges?
- How do colleagues perceive a return to campus for work and how can the University support this?

Additionally, it included a census, on behalf of IT Services, on the devices used to work from home. This was an anonymous, voluntary survey and completion of the questions was not mandatory. The results of the survey were received by the Office of the Vice-President for Equality and Diversity and data was aggregated to prepare preliminary reports for wider analysis.

The preliminary survey results have been shared with and informed the work of several groups including:

- the Covid-19 Return to Campus Working Group;
- questions specific to IT Services have been sent to the Bursar/DirectorHR and to IT services;
- questions relating to disability have been shared with the Disability Officer/Human Resources;
- a summary of the major questions arising from the survey was collated and used to inform a discussion on the development of teaching plans with the President, Deans, Registrar, VPR, VPED, and DirectorHR;
- responses to the question about challenges and opportunities regarding remote working have informed the development of the 'Remote Working during Covid-19 Policy' for the University Executive;
- the Partnership Committee.

The main findings are summarised here:

- While only 7.3% of respondents (n=28) said that they worked remotely several times a week before the outbreak of Covid-19, 64.8% of respondents (n=247) would like to work remotely several times a week after the crisis is over;
- The majority of respondents reported that their capacity to carry out their normal duties had been reduced by more than 20% in the following aspects of work while working remotely during Covid-19: teaching (39% of respondents); research activity (37% of respondents); and preparing publications (30% of respondents);
- The majority of respondents reported no change to their capacity to carry out their normal duties in relation to: assessment (39% of respondents); administration (42% of respondents); student/staff support (33% of respondents); service delivery (36% of respondents); and reviewer activity (41% of respondents);
- There was a difference by gender in the responses of academic staff to the question of their capacity to carry out their normal duties including: Teaching (53% of male respondents reported that their capacity was lower by >20% compared to 35% of female respondents); Administration (49% of female respondents reported that their capacity was about the same, compared to 27% of male respondents); Service Delivery (43% of male respondents reported that their capacity was lower by >20%, compared to 28% female respondents); Preparing publications (11% of male respondents reported that their capacity was higher between 1%-20% compared to 2% of female respondents); Research activity (24% of male

respondents reported that their capacity was about the same compared to 13% of female respondents).

- Across all staff, 41% (n=158) of respondents reported that the volume/number of emails was up by over 20%, 36% (n=136) of respondents said calls were up by over 20%; 44% (n=167) of respondents said that the response time was about the same, and 42% (n=161) of respondents said that time spent in meetings was up by over 20%.
- Compared to normal, the majority of respondents (33% and 34%) reported that the number of hours worked daily and weekly respectively, was higher by 1%-20%. 42% of respondents reported that the hours worked outside of normal working hours was higher by more than 20%.
- Managing increased workloads while working remotely during Covid-19 was the number one challenge reported by respondents. The following were also included in the top 5 of respondents: collaboration and communication with co-workers; my physical workspace; managing new work method and internet connectivity.
- Combined together, caring (childcare, homeschooling and eldercare) was the number one personal challenge reported by respondents, followed by the following top 5 challenges: not being able to switch off from work; general anxiety about the impact of Covid-19; staying motivated; too many distractions at home.
- The top advantage of working remotely was reported as 'No traffic and no commute' by the majority of respondents, followed by: greater flexibility as to how I manage my working day; reduced costs of going to work and commuting; reduced carbon footprint; and improved quality of life.
- The majority of respondents (35%) reported 'I've adjusted well' with 8% reporting finding it 'very difficult' in relation to the transition to working from home during Covid-19.
- Respondents outlined many useful techniques/actions that they have been using during the lockdown. These can be found in Appendix 1 in aggregate form.
- The majority of respondents (58%) felt optimistic compared to when they started remote working due to Covid-19.
- The majority of respondents (42%) strongly agreed that Maynooth University is doing its best in the circumstances.
- Respondents strongly indicated a preference for e-mails from one source and there was a suggestion to have just one update e-mail that encompassed updates from all different sections.
- The top 3 supports that the majority of respondents (n=152) said would help them to work remotely more effectively was 'clarity on workload and workload planning to identify priority areas for work for short and medium term', followed by 'access to office to retrieve equipment/office chair' (n=140) and 'training supports to work remotely' (n=126).
- The top thing that respondents reported that their Head of Department or University was doing to help with their capacity to carry out normal duties at the moment was 'clear and/or regular communication' (n=103).
- Thinking ahead, the main concern respondents had about returning to campus to work was 'health risks for me arising from Covid-19' (n=212), followed by 'the impact Covid-19 conditions might have on daily social interactions with colleagues/students' (n=195), and ability to social distance in the office, laboratory, meetings' (n=180).
- The top 3 measures that the University could take to support a return to campus to work (in addition to the Return to Campus information on the MU website & Covid-19 induction training) was: facilitate flexible working patterns to reduce the numbers present on campus at the same time (n=277); guidance on future contingency plans (n=191); facilitate flexible working patterns to enable staff to manage caring responsibilities in the absence of alternatives (n=171).



## Introduction

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- What supports might the University provide in the short-term to address these challenges?
- How do colleagues perceive a return to campus for work and how can the University support this?

Additionally, it included a census, on behalf of IT Services, on the devices used to work from home.

This was an anonymous, voluntary survey and completion of the questions was not mandatory. The results of the survey were received by the Office of the Vice-President for Equality and Diversity and data was aggregated to prepare preliminary reports for wider analysis.

The preliminary survey results were shared with several groups including:

- the Covid-19 Return to Campus Working Group.
- questions specific to IT Services have been sent on to the Bursar/DirHR.
- questions relating to disability have been shared with the Disability Officer/HR.
- a summary of the major questions arising from the survey was collated and used to inform a discussion on the development of teaching plans with the President, Deans, Registrar, VPR, VPED, and DirHR.
- responses to the question about challenges and opportunities regarding remote working have informed the development of the 'Remote Working during Covid-19 Policy' for UE;
- the Partnership Committee.

Further analysis will be done on data from particular groups including: part-time staff, minority ethnic groups, gender minorities, staff with disabilities, impairments, chronic health conditions or learning differences and both older and younger staff.

As part of the Athena SWAN institutional renewal process, a more detailed analysis by gender will be carried out, however preliminary findings by gender have been included here. In this report, where a detailed cross-tabular analysis including gender is presented, gender minorities have not been included for reasons of anonymity.

## Profile of Respondents

There were 382 responses analysed, 4 responses could not be used due to technical error. Analysis has been completed on all questions. Data has been cross tabulated by gender, children's age, faculty, and staff category.

### By Staff Category

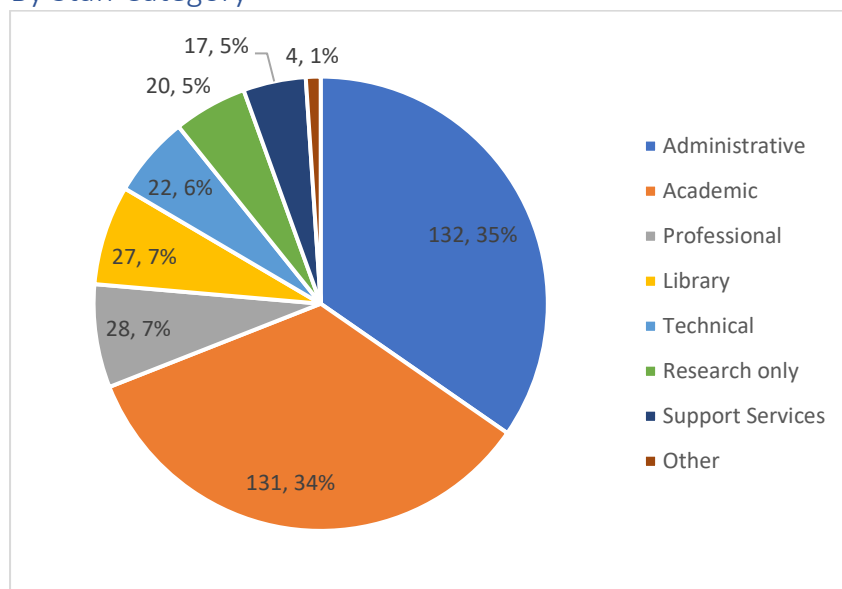


Figure 1. Respondents by staff category

### By Work Location

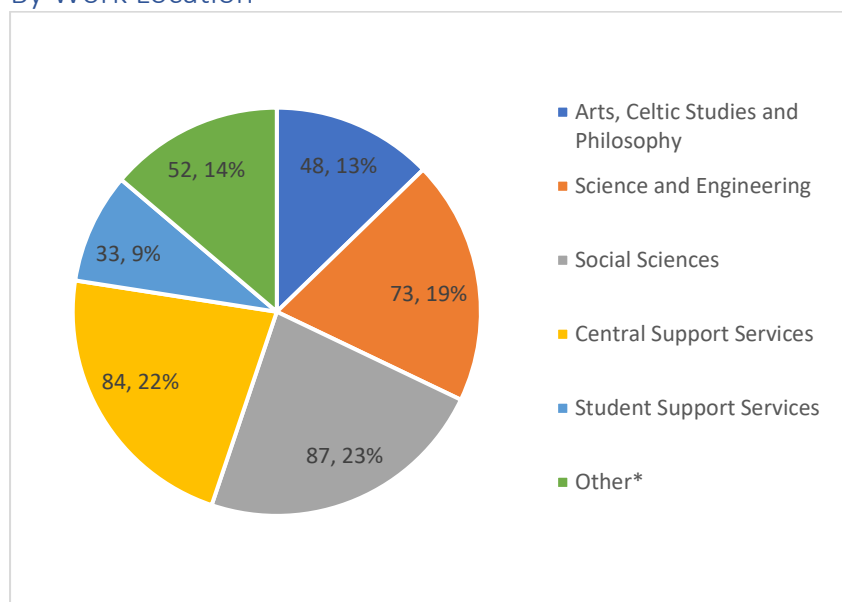


Figure 2. Respondents by location of work<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> \*Other responses include the Research Development Office, other specific University offices, the Library, and some individual academic departments.

### By Working Hours

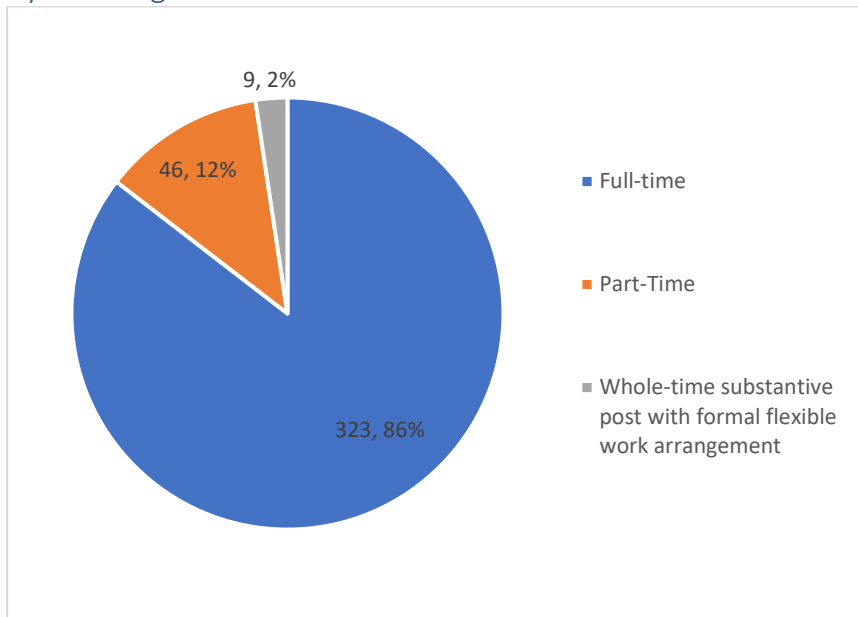


Figure 3. Respondents by working hours

### By Age

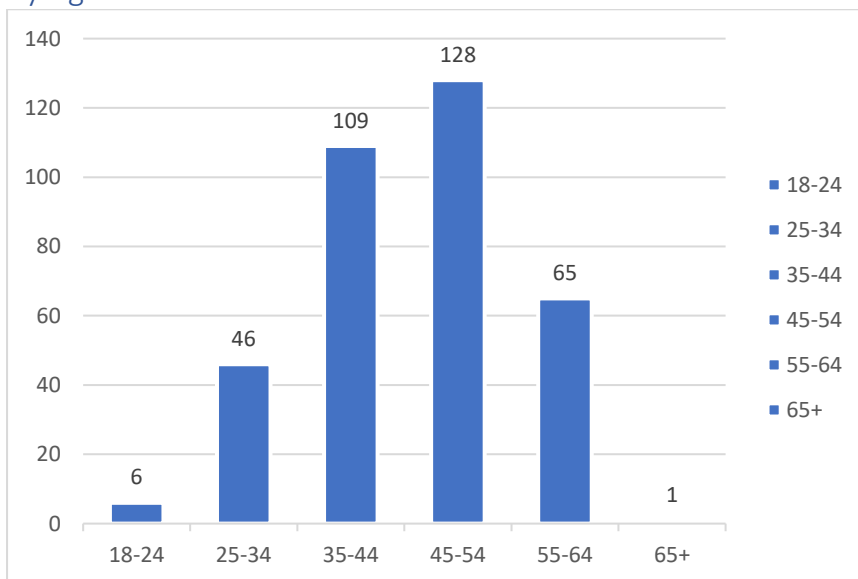


Figure 4. Respondents by age

## By Gender

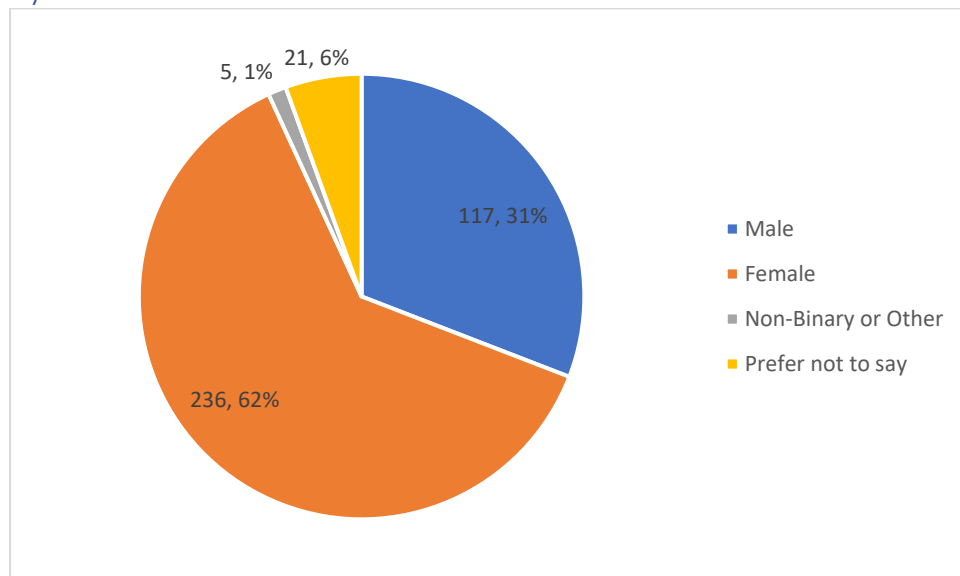


Figure 5. Respondents by gender

Table 1. Respondents by staff category by gender

	Male	Female
<b>Academic</b>	57 43.5%	61 46.6%
<b>Research only</b>	12 60.0%	6 30.0%
<b>Administrative</b>	22 16.8%	104 79.4%
<b>Technical</b>	9 40.9%	11 50.0%
<b>Professional</b>	5 17.9%	22 78.6%
<b>Library</b>	6 23.1%	18 69.2%
<b>Support Services</b>	5 29.4%	11 64.7%
<b>Other</b>	1 25.0%	3 75.0%

Table 2. Respondents by work location by gender

	Male	Female
<b>Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy</b>	15 31.3%	27 56.3%
<b>Science and Engineering</b>	34 46.6%	33 45.2%
<b>Social Sciences</b>	28 32.2%	55 63.2%
<b>Central Support Services</b>	20 24.1%	59 71.1%
<b>Student Support Services</b>	6 18.2%	26 78.8%
<b>Other</b>	14 27.5%	33 64.7%

## By Caring Responsibilities

Table 3. Respondents with or without children\*

	No.	Percent
<b>No children</b>	184	50%
<b>Total with children</b>	184	50%
Yes – under 5	66	17.9%
Yes - between 6 and 12	89	24.2%
Yes – between 13 and 18	81	22%

\*Some respondents will have chosen multiple options as they were asked to tick all that apply

45% of male respondents (n=52) and 52% of female respondents have children (n=119).

Table 4. Respondents with or without children by staff category

	No children		One or more children	
	No.	% within Staff category	No.	% within Staff category
<b>Academic</b>	66	51.6%	62	48.4%
<b>Research only</b>	18	90.0%	2	10.0%
<b>Administrative</b>	50	40.3%	74	59.7%
<b>Technical</b>	12	54.5%	10	45.5%
<b>Professional</b>	12	44.4%	15	55.6%
<b>Library</b>	11	42.3%	15	57.7%
<b>Support Services</b>	11	64.7%	6	35.3%
<b>Other</b>	4	100.0%	0	0.0%

Table 5 Respondents with other caring responsibilities\*

	No.	Percent
<b>No other caring responsibilities</b>	235	65.3%
<b>Total with other care responsibilities</b>	125	7.8%
Caring for a disabled or ill person	28	7.5%
Eldercare	96	26.7%
Other <sup>2</sup>	16	3.9%

\*Some respondents will have chosen multiple options as they were asked to tick all that apply

Table 6 Respondents situation in relation to childcare and/or other caring responsibilities\*:

	No.	Percent
The sole care provider	35	9.2
Sharing caring responsibilities	187	49.0
Other	8	2.1
Total respondents	238	60.2
Did not respond/N/A	144	39.8
Total	382	100.0

\*Some respondents will have chosen multiple options as they were asked to tick all that apply

## By Ethnicity

<sup>2</sup> Other responses include care for children over the age of 18, parents and friends.

Table 7. Respondents by Ethnicity\*

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	No <sup>3</sup> .	Percent	
White Irish		72.5%	75.9%
White European		13.6%	14.3%
Any other White Background		3.0%	3.2%
Black African		0.3%	0.3%
Pakistani		0.3%	0.3%
Arabic Irish		0.3%	0.3%
Middle East Asia Arabic		0.3%	0.3%
South American Irish		0.5%	0.5%
Brazilian		0.3%	0.3%
Any other South American background		0.3%	0.3%
Mixed		0.8%	0.8%
Other		0.5%	0.5%
Prefer not to say		7.6%	7.9%
<b>Total</b>	396	100.0%	104.8%

\*Some respondents chose multiple options

<sup>3</sup> Numbers per category have not been included for reasons of anonymity.

## By Disability

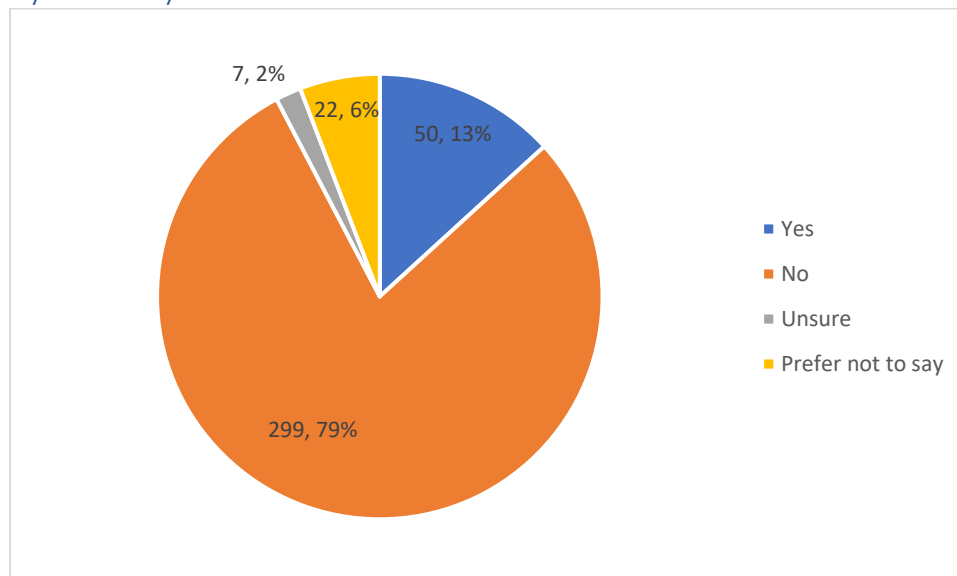


Figure 6. Respondents with or without a disability, impairment, chronic health condition (including mental health) or learning difference.

Table 8. Breakdown of disclosed disabilities, impairments, chronic health conditions & learning differences\*

	No <sup>4</sup> .	Percent
Deaf or hearing impairment		1.9%
Blind or visual impairment not corrected by glasses		1.2%
Specific learning difficulty (for example dyslexia)		0.4%
Developmental condition or social/ communication difficulty (for example, speech or language impairment, Autistic Spectrum Disorder including Asperger's Syndrome)		0.4%
Physical impairment or mobility difficulty (for example, difficulty using your arms, use of a wheelchair or other walking aid)		2.7%
Mental health difficulty (for example, depression, an anxiety disorder, or bipolar disorder)		5.4%
Prefer not to say		11.2%
Not applicable		70.0%
Other <sup>5</sup>		6.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*Some respondents will have chosen multiple options

<sup>4</sup> Numbers per category have not been included for reasons of anonymity.

<sup>5</sup> Other responses included details of autoimmune conditions, chronic fatigue conditions, multiple sclerosis, respiratory conditions, and other long-term illnesses.

## Working Remotely

### Q2. Is it possible for you to work effectively from home during this period?

- Yes, fully 53% (n=202)
- Yes, partially 46% (n=175)
- Not at all 1% (n=4)
- Did not respond 0% (n=1)

### Q3 & Q26. Remote working before Covid-19 vs desire to continue working remotely after the crisis is over?

While only 7.3% of respondents (n=28) said that they worked remotely several times a week before the outbreak of Covid-19, 64.8% of respondents (n=247) would like to work remotely several times a week after the crisis is over.

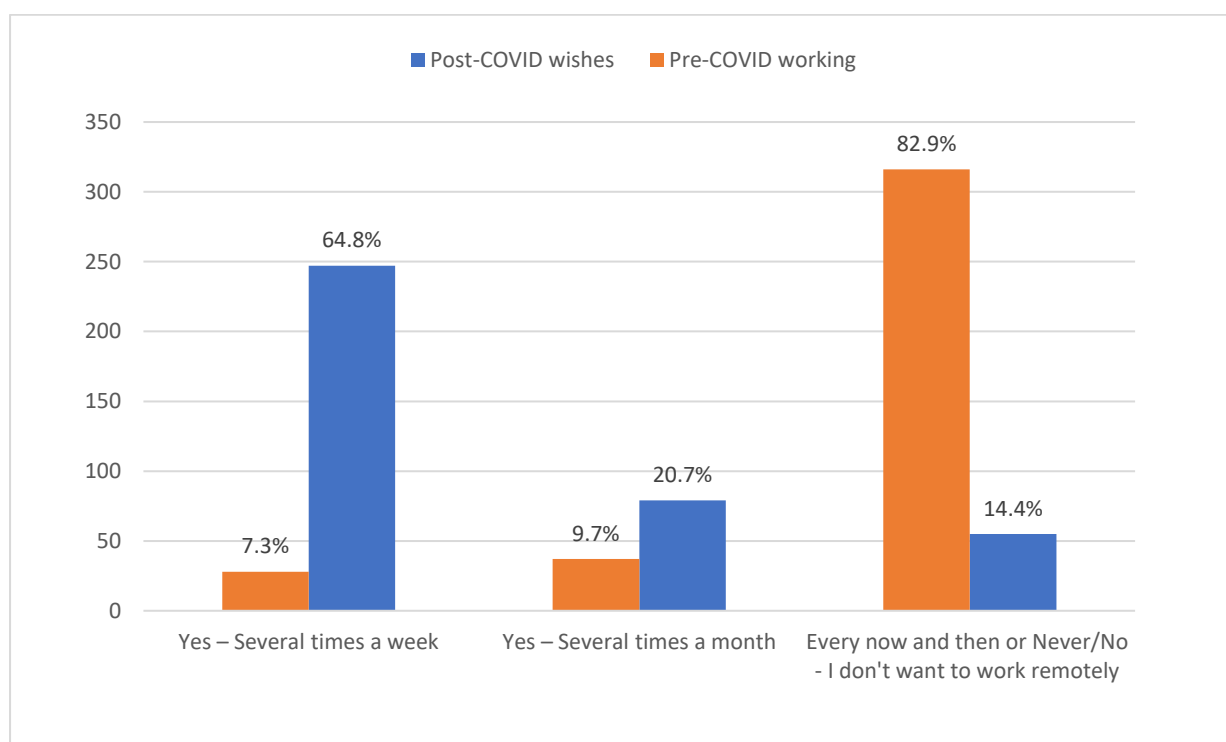


Figure 7. Number/percentage of respondents indicating how often they worked remotely before Covid-19 vs numbers/percentage who would like to continue working remotely after the crisis is over.

### Q4. If you worked remotely before the outbreak of COVID-19, how does the experience compare with working remotely now?

- It is more challenging working remotely now 62% (n=138)
- It is easier working remotely now 23% (n=51)
- No difference 15% (n=32)



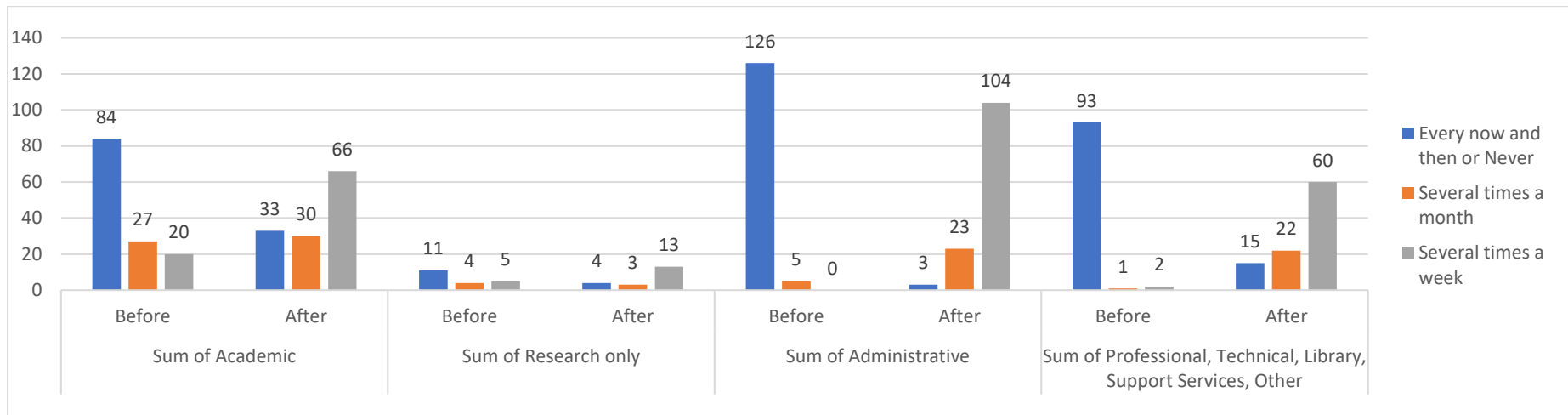


Figure 8. Remote working before Covid-19 vs desire for working remotely after Covid-19 by staff category

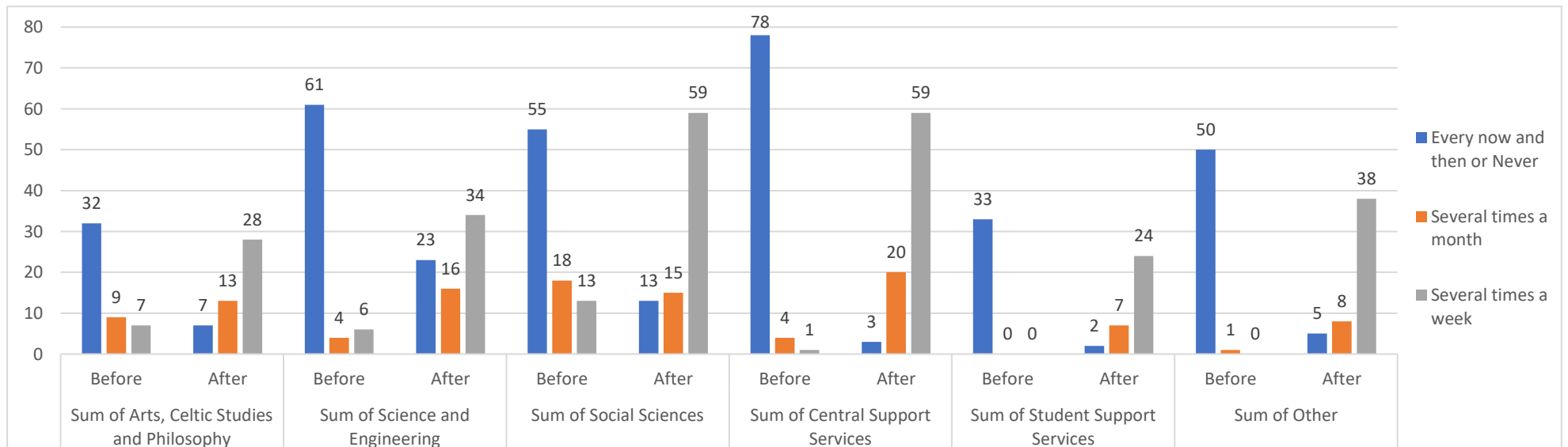


Figure 9. Remote working before Covid-19 vs desire for working remotely after Covid-19 by work location.

## Capacity to carry out normal duties

### Q5. Compared to normal, my capacity to carry out my normal duties in the following aspects of work while working remotely during COVID-19:

Please note that not all categories were filled out by all staff, for example teaching and assessment would predominantly have been filled out by Academic staff. This is reflected in the number of respondents.

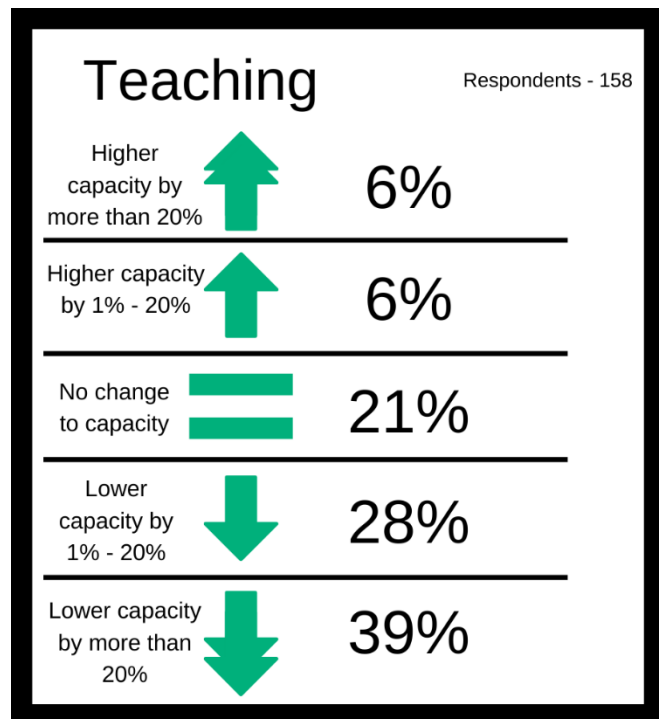


Figure 12. Teaching capacity change

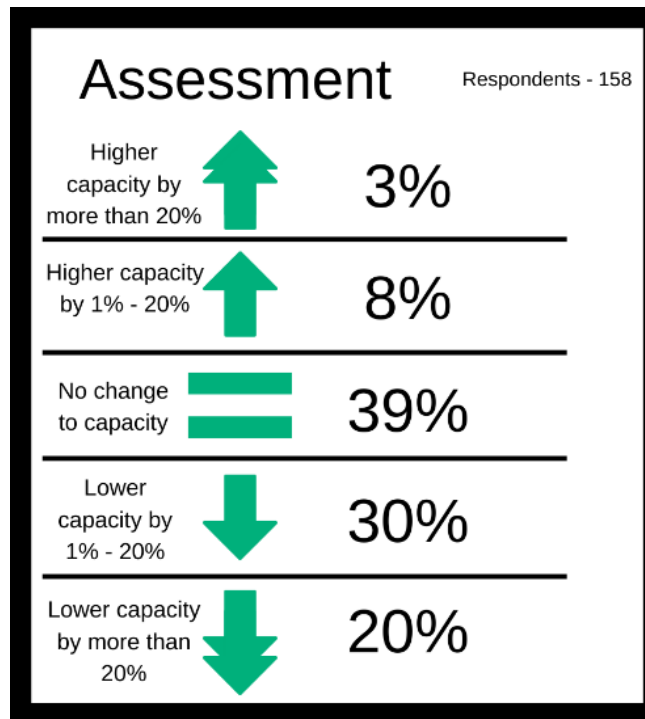


Figure 11. Assessment capacity change

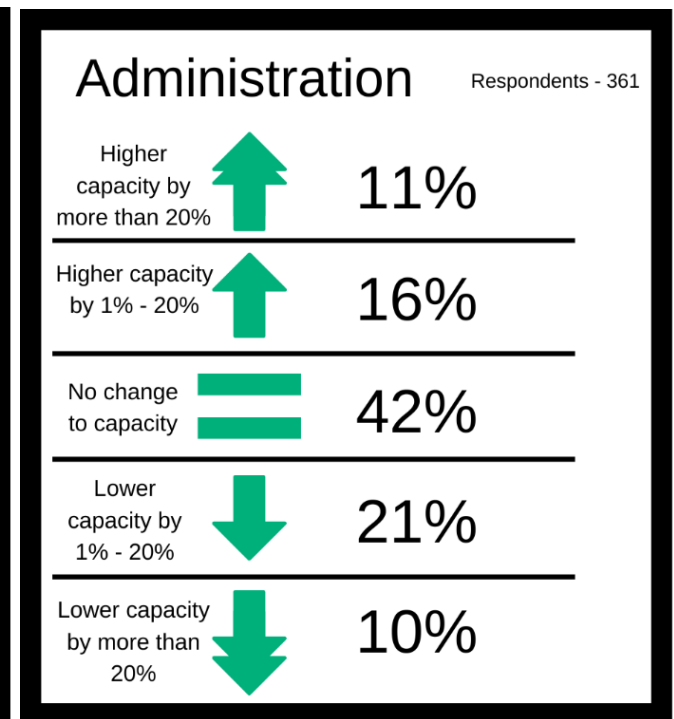


Figure 10. Administration capacity change

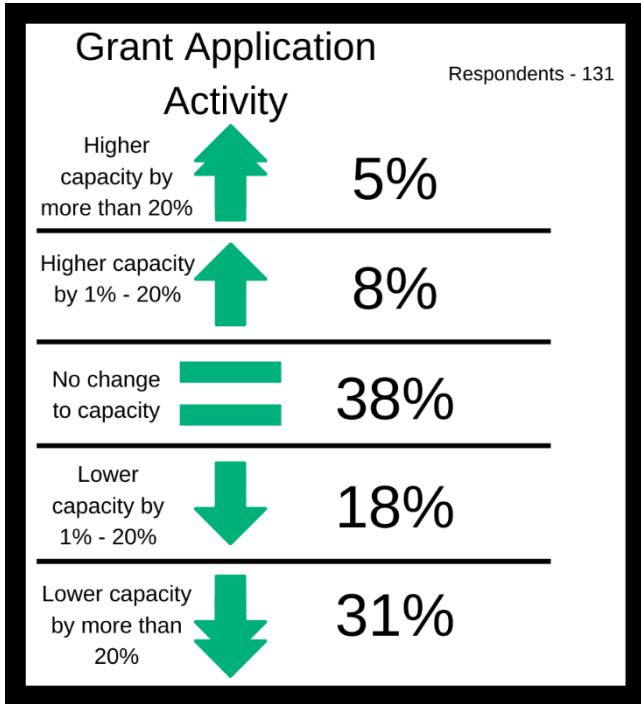


Figure 15. Grant application activity capacity change

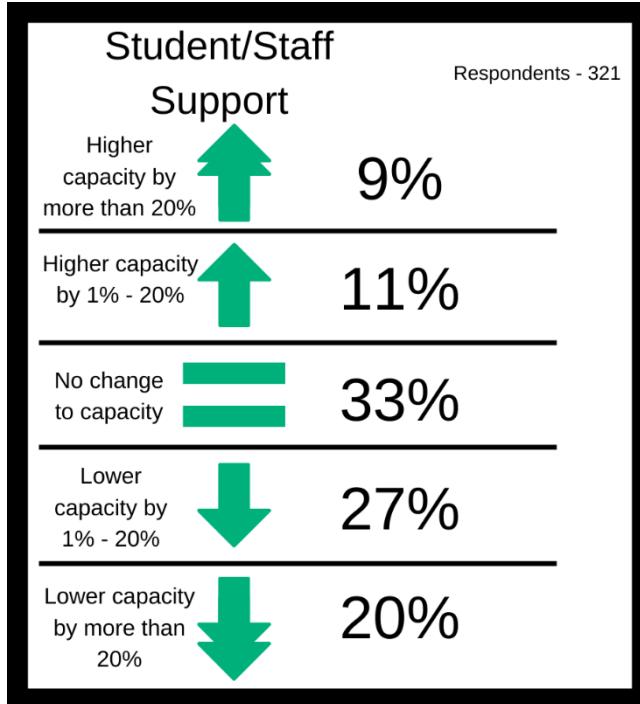


Figure 13. Student/Staff support capacity change

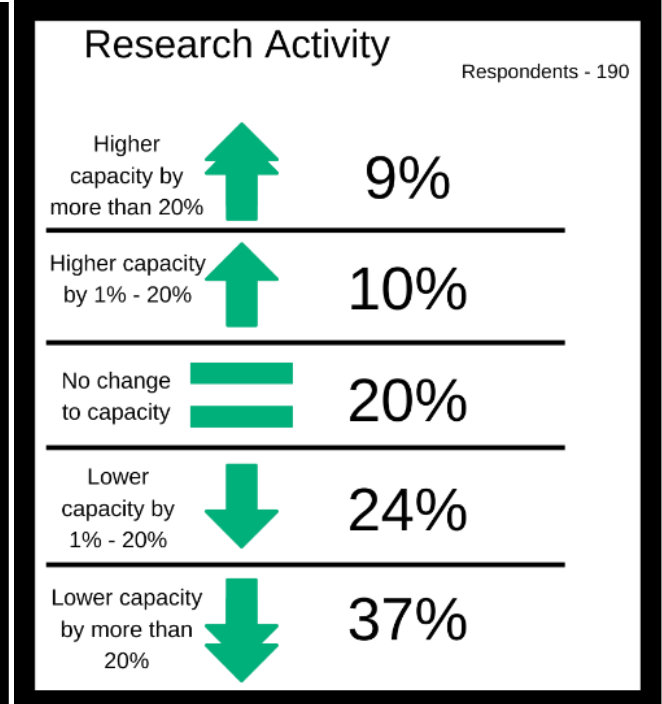


Figure 14. Research activity capacity change

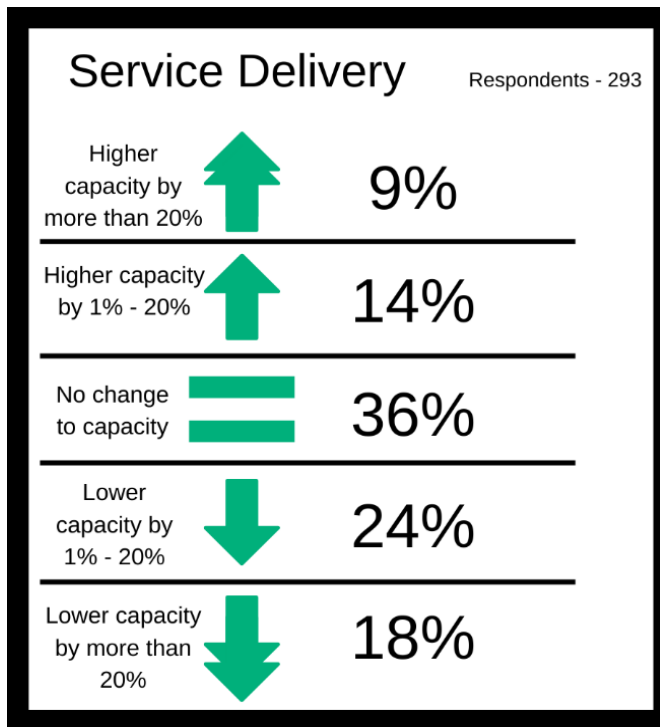


Figure 17. Service delivery capacity change

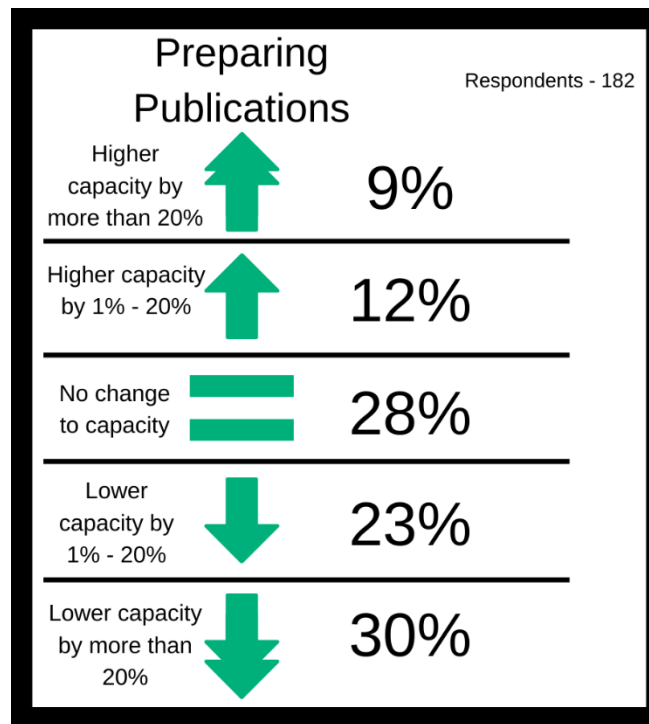


Figure 18. Preparing publications capacity change

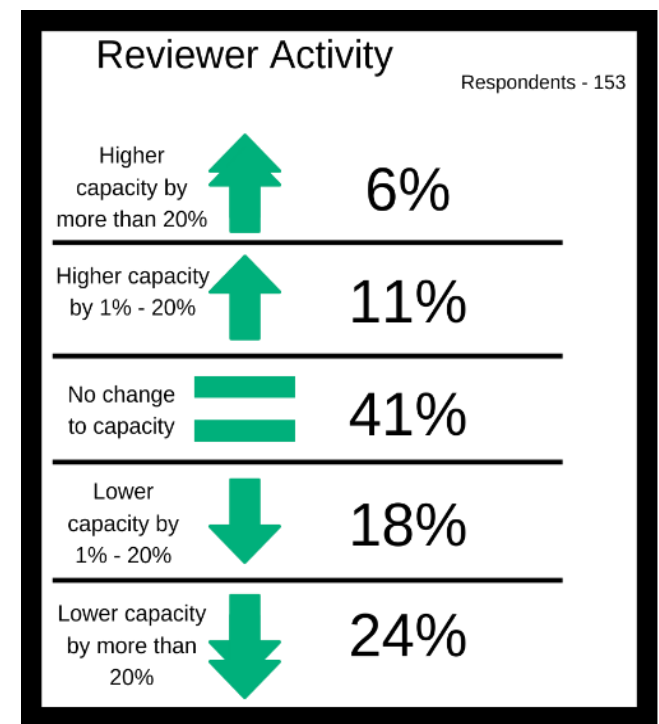


Figure 16. Reviewer activity capacity change

**Q5. cont. Compared to normal, my capacity to carry out my normal duties in the following aspects of work while working remotely during COVID-19:**

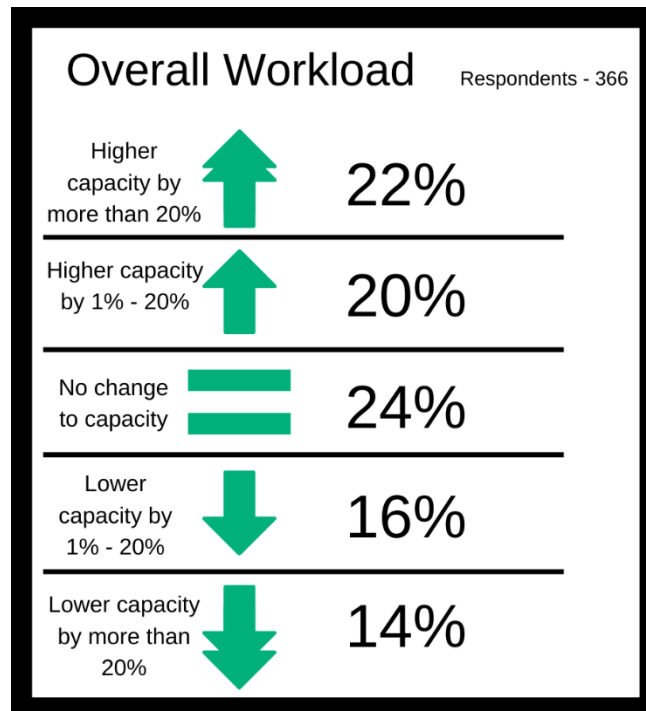


Figure 19. Overall workload capacity change

Table 9. Other comments on capacity

Comments	Responses
Additional time doing work due to changed methods	19
Lack of internet or equipment or on campus facilities	10
Reference to childcare needs	9
Reduced or slower communication with colleagues	9
Staff did longer hours to meet increased workload	7
Had no choice but to increase capacity	5
Easier to do work at home	5
Shifted priorities due to increased workload	5
More efficient	4
Missing student interaction	4
Worked on campus	1
More training courses	1
Short staffed	1

## Academic Staff by Gender

**Q5. Compared to normal, my capacity to carry out my normal duties in the following aspects of work while working remotely during COVID-19:**

*Table 10. Academic staff teaching capacity change by gender*

Teaching	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	20	30
	34.5%	52.6%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	18	14
	31.0%	24.6%
About the same	12	7
	20.7%	12.3%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	5	2
	8.6%	3.5%
Higher by > 20%	3	4
	5.2%	7.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Table 12. Academic staff administration capacity change by gender*

Administration	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	7	15
	11.5%	26.8%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	13	18
	21.3%	32.1%
About the same	30	15
	49.2%	26.8%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	7	6
	11.5%	10.7%
Higher by > 20%	4	2
	6.6%	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Table 11. Academic staff assessment capacity change by gender*

Assessment	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	8	16
	13.6%	29.1%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	19	15
	32.2%	27.3%
About the same	24	21
	40.7%	38.2%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	8	2
	13.6%	3.6%
Higher by > 20%	0	1
	0.0%	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Table 13. Academic staff grant application capacity change by gender*

Grant application	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	17	18
	35.4%	42.9%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	8	6
	16.7%	14.3%
About the same	17	17
	35.4%	40.5%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	4	1
	8.3%	2.4%
Higher by > 20%	2	0
	4.2%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>42</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 14. Academic staff student/staff support capacity change by gender

Student/Staff Support	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	20	24
	32.8%	42.9%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	17	14
	27.9%	25.0%
About the same	16	13
	26.2%	23.2%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	5	2
	8.2%	3.6%
Higher by > 20%	3	3
	4.9%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 16. Academic staff service delivery capacity change by gender

Service Delivery	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	12	20
	27.9%	42.6%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	12	12
	27.9%	25.5%
About the same	16	13
	37.2%	27.7%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	2	2
	4.7%	4.3%
Higher by > 20%	1	0
	2.3%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 15. Academic staff research activity capacity change by gender

Research Activity	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	29	21
	48.3%	38.2%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	15	13
	25.0%	23.6%
About the same	8	13
	13.3%	23.6%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	3	5
	5.0%	9.1%
Higher by > 20%	5	3
	8.3%	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 17. Academic staff preparing publications capacity change by gender

Preparing Publications	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	23	21
	39.7%	39.6%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	14	9
	24.1%	17.0%
About the same	15	15
	25.9%	28.3%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	1	6
	1.7%	11.3%
Higher by > 20%	5	2
	8.6%	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>53</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 18. Academic staff reviewer activity capacity change by gender

Reviewer activity	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	18	15
	34.0%	28.8%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	8	9
	15.1%	17.3%
About the same	23	20
	43.4%	38.5%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	1	5
	1.9%	9.6%
Higher by > 20%	3	3
	5.7%	5.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>52</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 19. Academic staff overall workload capacity change by gender

Overall workload	Female	Male
Lower by > 20%	21	14
	34.4%	24.6%
Lower by between 1% and 20%	10	14
	16.4%	24.6%
About the same	5	7
	8.2%	12.3%
Higher by between 1% and 20%	10	7
	16.4%	12.3%
Higher by > 20%	15	15
	24.6%	26.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Volume of Work

**Q6. Compared to normal, the level of the following aspects of my work while working remotely during COVID-19 is:**

- In terms of volume/number:
  - 41% (n=158) said e-mails were up by over 20%
  - 36% (n=136) said calls were up by over 20%
  - 44% (n=167) said that response time was about the same
  - 42% (n=161) said that time spent in meetings was up by over 20%

*Table 20. Other comments on work volume & time*

Comments	Responses
There are more meetings	11
Meetings are more efficient.	7
Work takes longer	5
There is more work	3
I am doing more evening work	2
I have no work phone	2
I am missing interaction	2
Reference to the impact of childcare	1
Lack of clarity from University	1
Enjoyed working from home	1
Dislike being online all the time	1
I worked additional hours	1

*“The past 16 weeks have been very challenging as the level of work rose exponentially. It truly felt like I was pushed to break point over the weeks.”*

## Time spent working during COVID-19

Q7. Compared to normal, my time during COVID-19 remote-working is:

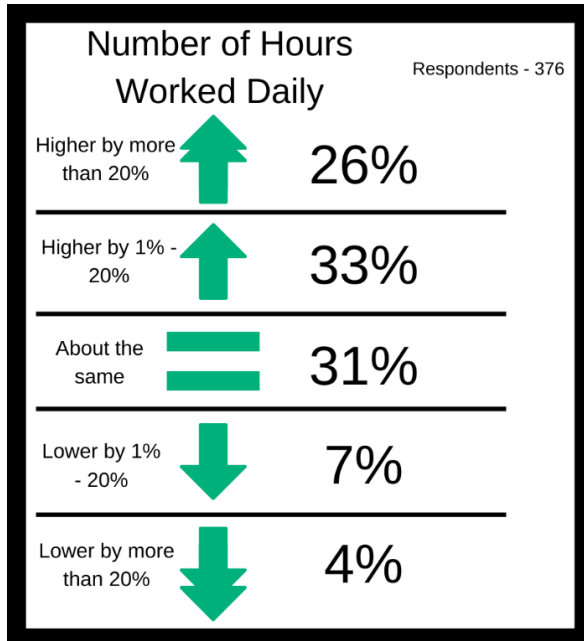


Figure 21. Number of hours worked daily

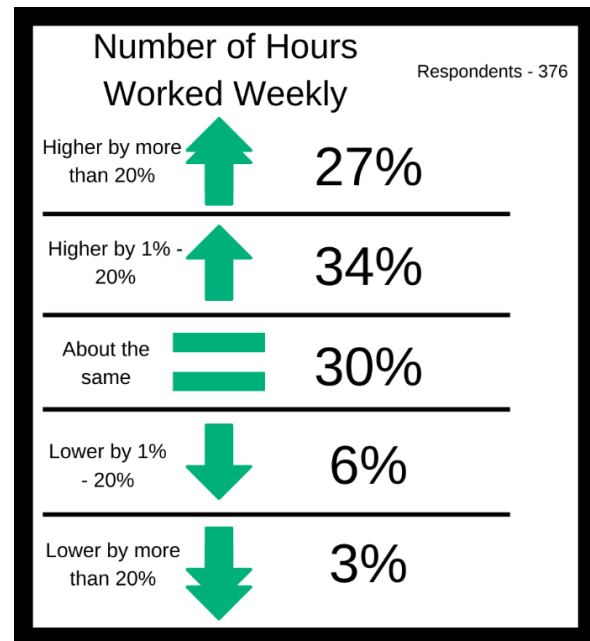


Figure 23. Number of hours worked weekly

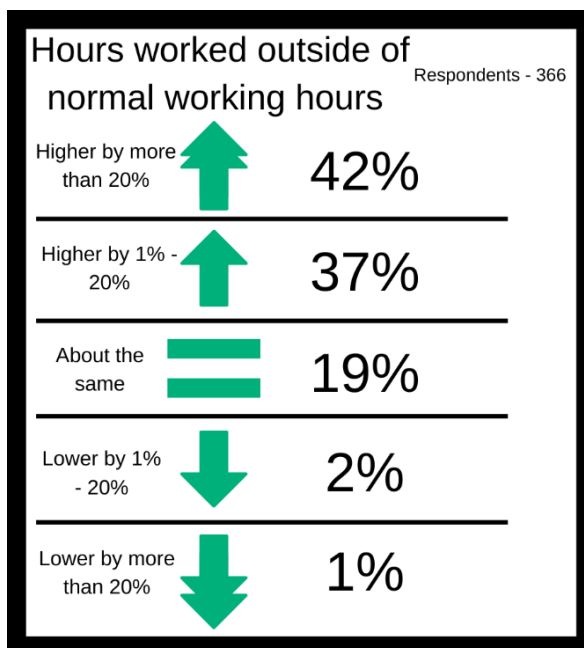


Figure 22. Hours worked outside of normal working hours

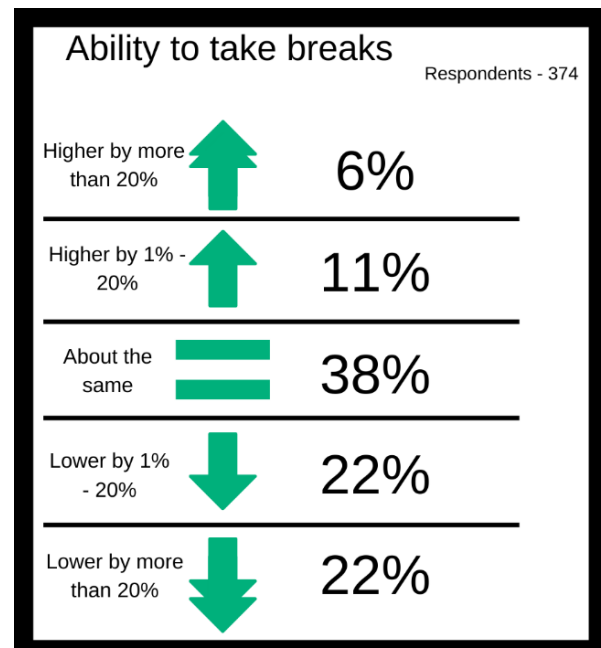


Figure 20. Ability to take breaks

Table 21. Comments on working hours

Comments	Responses
Work done on weekends/additional hours done to catch up	12
Work-life balance difficult to maintain	11
Increase in work volume	11
Breaks filled with other work	6
Childcare	4
Caring responsibilities	2
Worked normal hours	2
Lunch break easier to take	2
COVID-19 research took up time	1
Email volume too large	1
Eye problems developed	1
Working from home more productive	1
Staff shortage	1
Miss human interaction	1
Return to campus changed	1

## Work-Related Challenges

**Q8. Of the following, what are the TOP 5 challenges you are currently facing while working remotely**

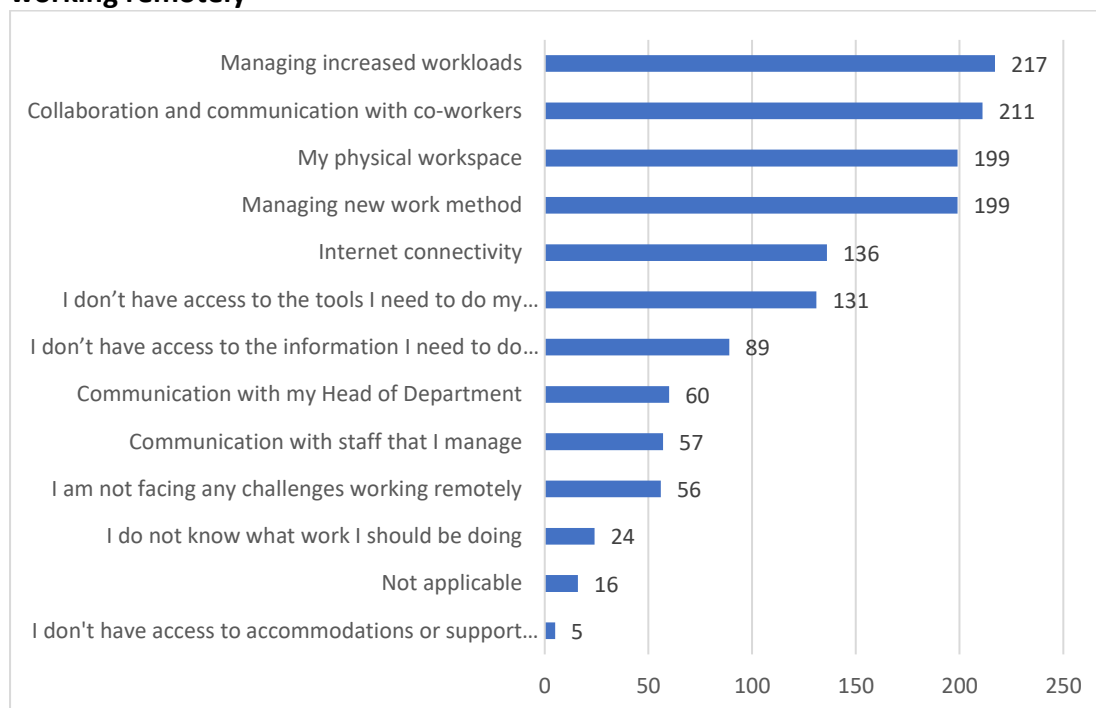


Figure 24. Number of respondents who selected these challenges in their TOP 5 work-related challenges.

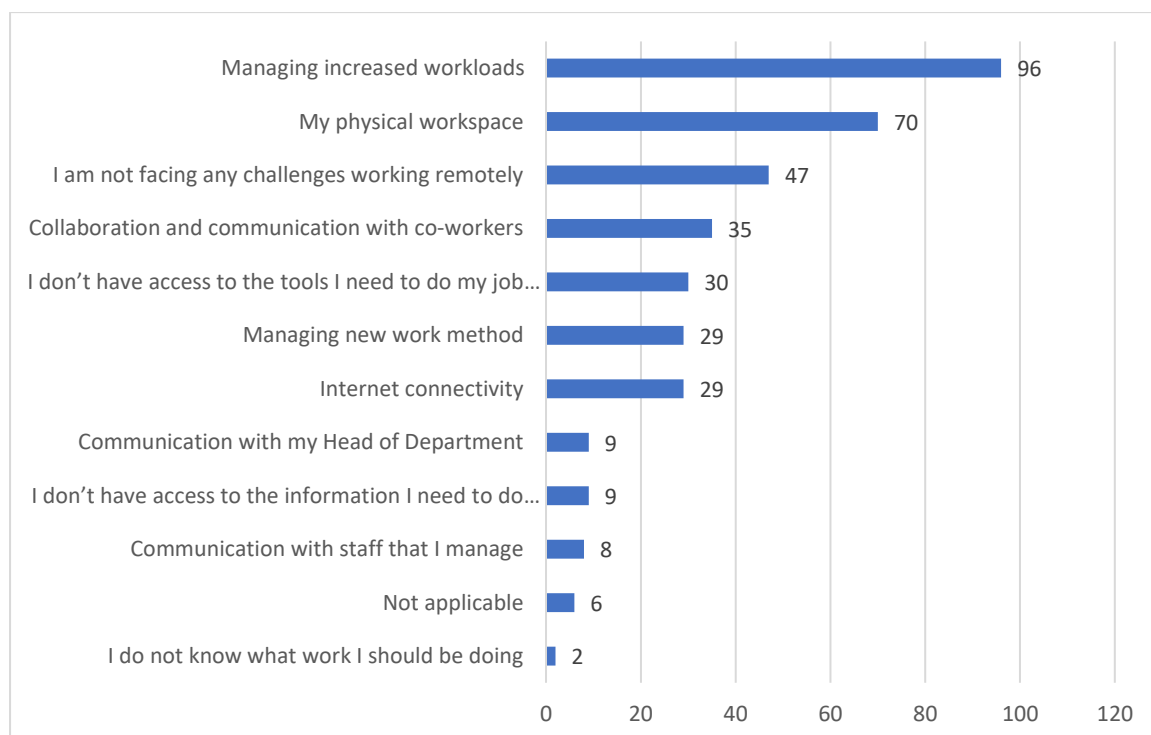


Figure 25. Number of respondents who selected this challenge as their number 1 work-related challenge.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents who selected physical workspace as their number 1 challenge had children under the age of 13 (n=40). Twenty-five percent of the respondents with children under 13 (n=40) selected 'my physical workspace' as their number 1 challenge.

Only 47 people out of 370 respondents chose 'I am not facing any challenges' (13%) and did not select any other challenge. Of these, 34 were administrative staff (72%), and 55% had no children (n=26).

## Personal Challenges

**Q9. Of the following, what are the TOP 5 challenges you are currently facing while working remotely**

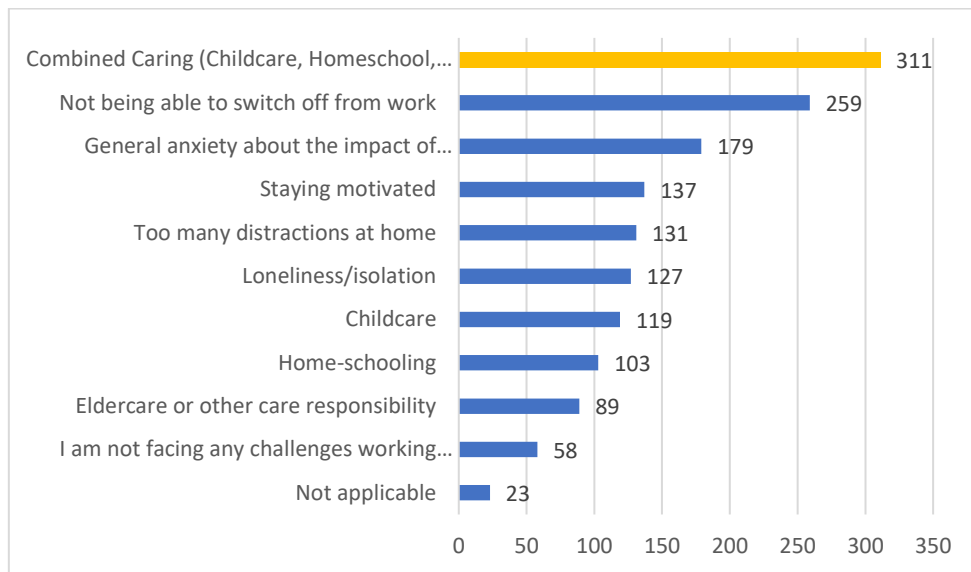


Figure 26. Number of respondents who selected these challenges in their TOP 5 personal challenges.

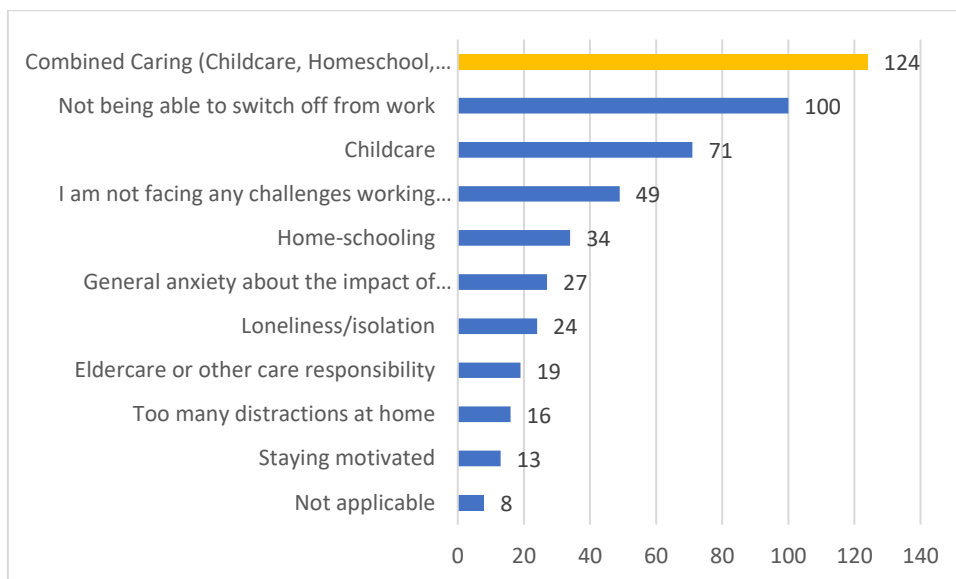


Figure 27. Number of respondents who selected this challenge as their number 1 personal challenge.

When combined (as seen in yellow in Figures 26 and 27), caring responsibilities is the number one challenge for 124 out of 361 respondents (34%).

Of the 66 respondents with children under the age of five, 80% selected childcare as their top challenge (n=53).

Of the 236 respondents with children under 18:

- 50% selected childcare in their top 5 challenges (n=118)
- 44% selected home-schooling in their top 5 challenges (n=103)

Home-schooling was selected in the top 5 by:

- 52% of those with children between 13 and 18 (n=42)
- 84% with children between 6 and 12 (n=75)
- 45% with children under 5 (n=30)

Table 22. Other challenges

Challenge	Responses
Caring challenges – childcare and eldercare, particularly for solo carers	13
Communication with colleagues – difficulties with professional and social communication	6
Costs associated from working from home and poor work environment	6
Slow or unclear communication from University and decision-making	6
High workload and/or fears around progression	5
Personal & mental health challenges	5
Technology challenges	4
Communication with students	4
Access to campus facilities	3
Differences in the level of effort being put in by colleagues	2
Challenges returning to campus	1
Reliance on screens	1

## Advantages

### Q10. What are the TOP 5 advantages of working remotely?



Figure 28. Number of respondents who selected these in their TOP 5 advantages of working remotely.

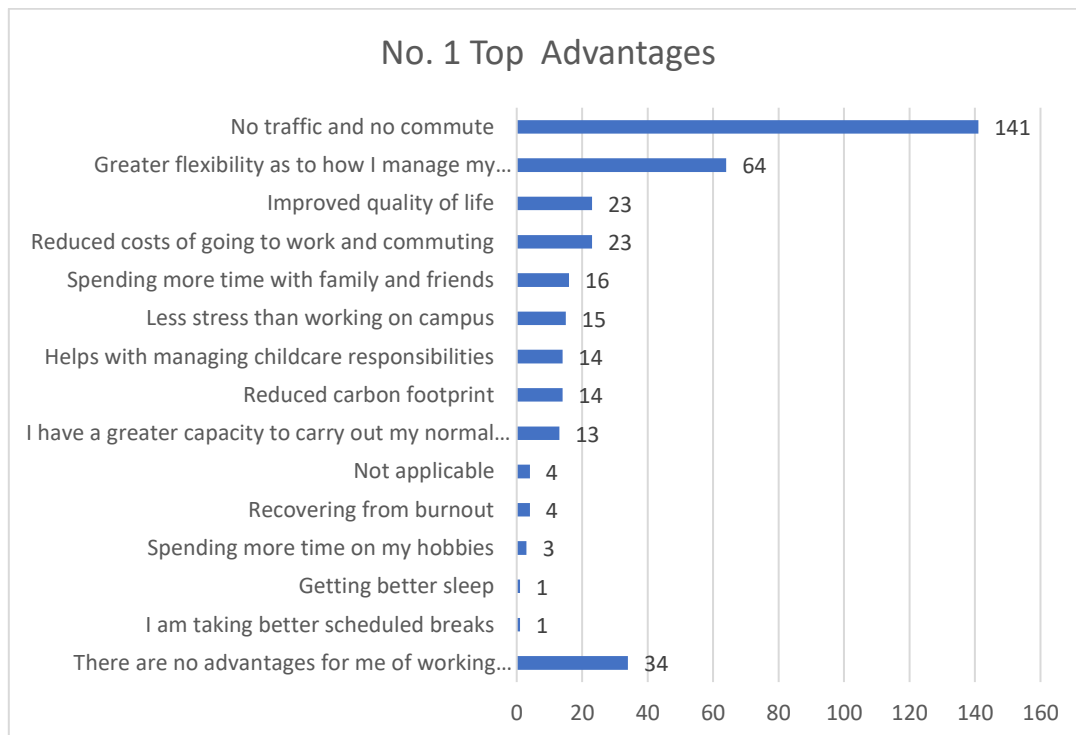


Figure 29. Number of respondents who selected this challenge as their number 1 personal challenge.



Table 23. Other Advantages

Advantages	Responses
Expanded that there were no advantages for them (or expanding on challenges)	12
Under normal circumstances there would be advantages but not now	6
There are less distractions	5
More control over working environment	3
Better work life balance	3
Better lunches	2
All the advantages above	2
Would like to continue	1
More confident	1
Easier to carry out caring	1
Greater comfort	1
Healthier	1
Not putting family at risk	1

## Managing the Transition

### Q11. How have you found your transition to working from home during COVID-19 to date?

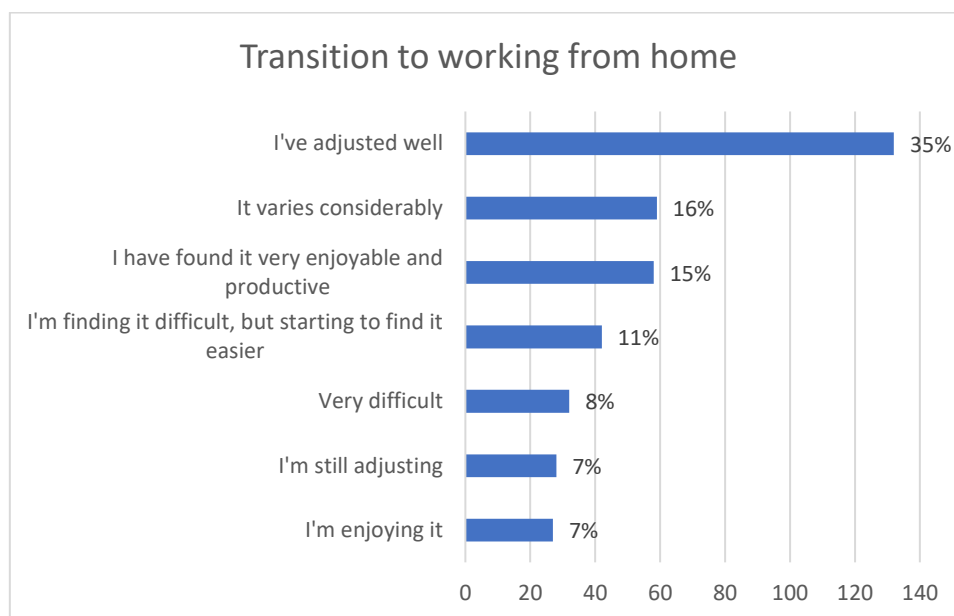


Figure 30. Respondents by number/percentage indicating their transition to working from home.

Of the 132 respondents who reported that they had adjusted well:

- 58 were Administrative staff (45% of Administrative respondents)
- 31 were Academic staff (24% of Academic respondents)
- 13 were Professional staff (46% of Professional staff respondents)
- 10 were Library Staff (37% of Library staff)
- 8 were Technical staff (36% of Technical staff)
- 6 were Support Services staff (35% of Support Services staff)
- 4 were Research-only staff (20% of Research-only staff respondents)

Of the respondents with children under 5 (n=66):

- 21% said that they have adjusted well (n=14)
- 20% found the transition very difficult (n=13)
- 14% said that they found it enjoyable and productive (n=9)

### Q12. Are there any actions you have taken to make remote work more positive during this time, that others might benefit from hearing about?

Respondents outlined many useful techniques/actions that they have been using during the lockdown. These can be found in Appendix 1 in aggregate form.

## Work Schedule

**Q13. If you were able to maintain a regular work schedule, do you take the following: daily lunch break, daily fresh air, frequent breaks?**

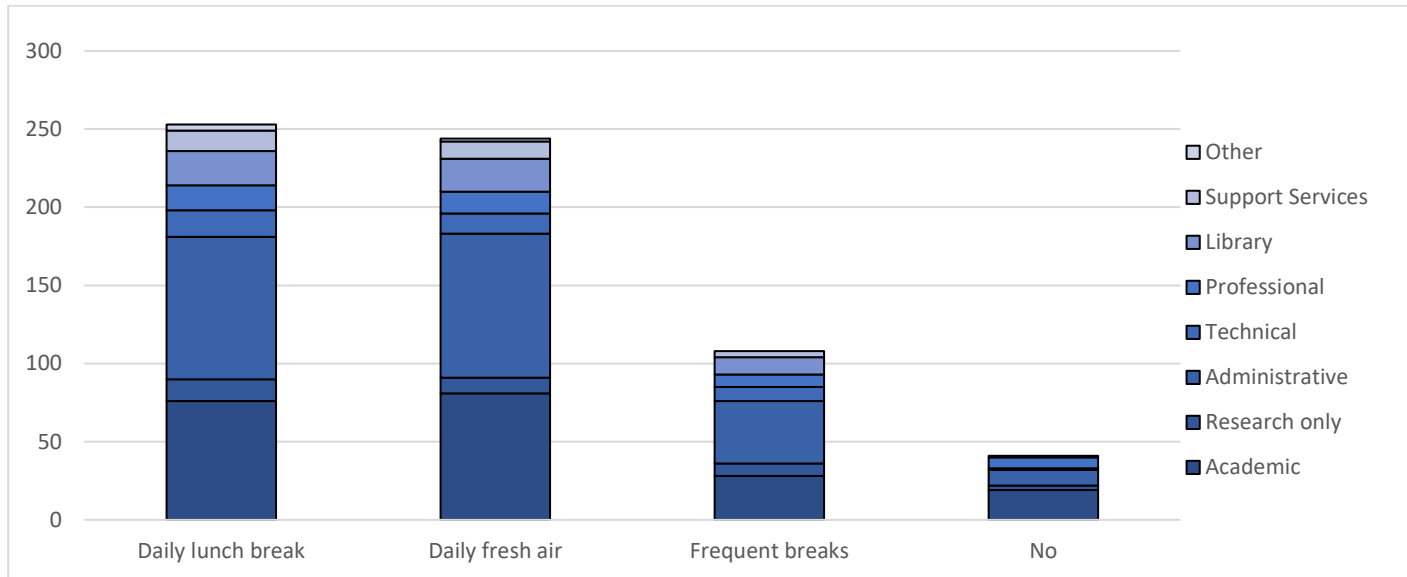


Figure 31. Number of respondents by staff category indicating that they were able to maintain regular breaks.

Table 24. Number of respondents by staff category, indicating the breaks that they were able to take\*.

Break types	Academic	Research only	Administrative	Technical	Professional	Library	Support Services	Other	Total
Daily lunch break	76 (60%)	14 (74%)	91 (71%)	17 (77%)	16 (59%)	22 (81%)	13 (76%)	4 (100%)	253 (68%)
Daily fresh air	81 (64%)	10 (53%)	92 (71%)	13 (59%)	14 (52%)	21 (78%)	11 (65%)	2 (50%)	244 (66%)
Frequent breaks	28 (22%)	8 (42%)	40 (31%)	9 (41%)	8 (30%)	11 (41%)	4 (24%)	0 (0%)	108 (29%)
No breaks	19 (15%)	3 (16%)	10 (8%)	1 (5%)	7 (26%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	41 (11%)

\*Respondents chose multiple options

Of the respondents who reported that they were not taking breaks, 27% of these had children under 5 (n=11). This represents 18% of all the respondents with children under five. Nine percent of respondents who had no children, reported not taking breaks (n=16).

**Q14. Compared to when you started remote working due to COVID-19, are you feeling more optimistic or more pessimistic about working from home?**

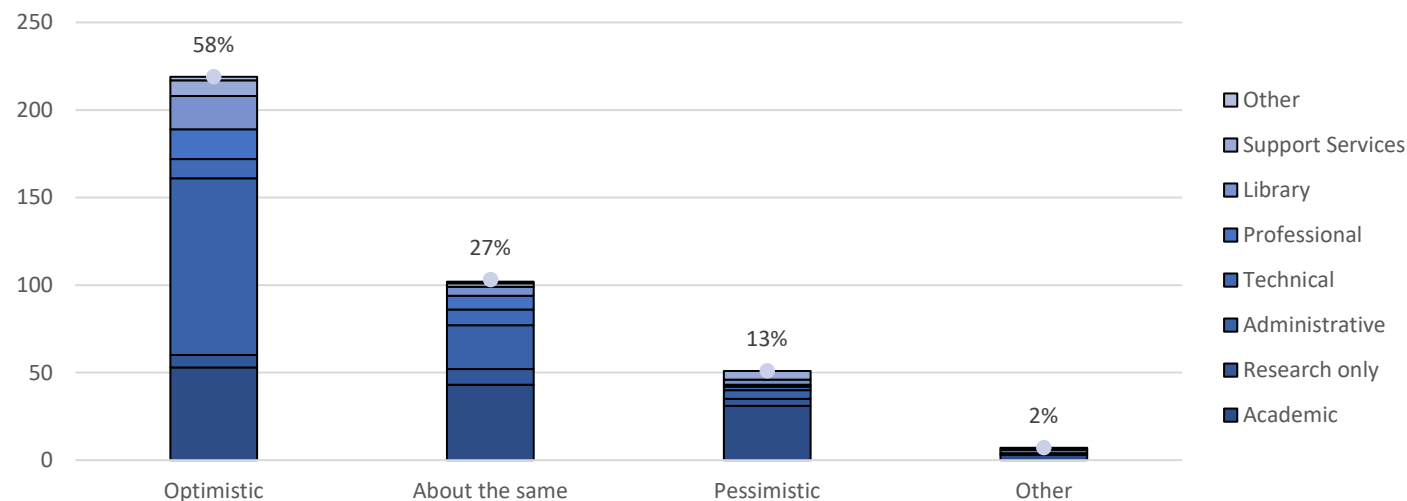


Figure 32. Number of respondents by staff category indicating how they are feeling about working from home now.

Table 25. Number of respondents by staff category indicating how they are feeling about working from home now.

	Optimistic	About the same	Pessimistic	Other
<b>Academic</b>	53	43	31	3
<b>Research only</b>	7	9	4	0
<b>Administrative</b>	101	25	5	1
<b>Technical</b>	11	9	2	0
<b>Professional</b>	17	8	1	2
<b>Library</b>	19	5	3	0
<b>Support Services</b>	9	2	5	0
<b>Other</b>	2	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	219	103	51	7

## Maynooth University Response

**Q15. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about how Maynooth University is supporting you to work remotely during COVID-19.**

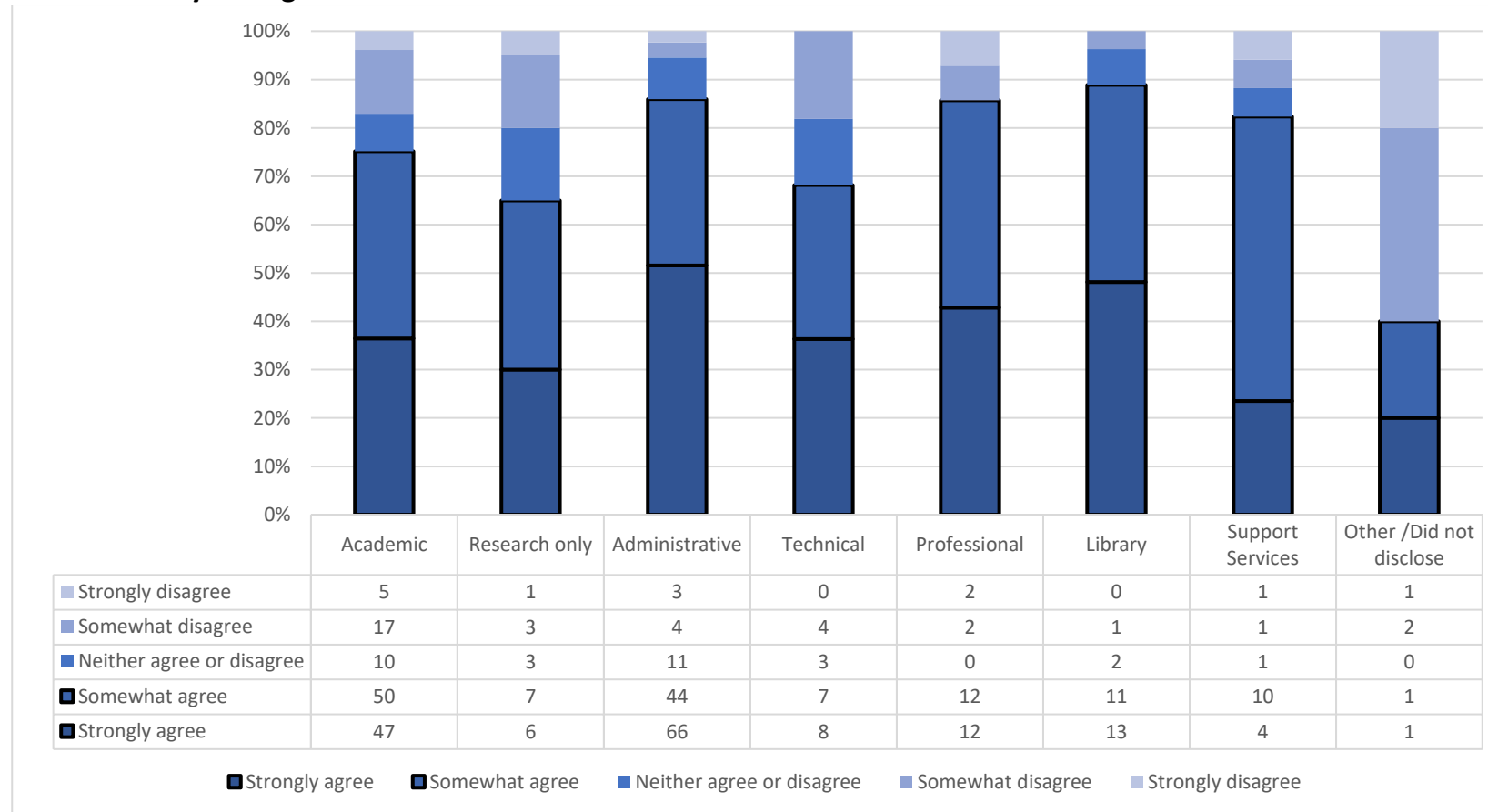


Figure 33. Number/percentage of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that Maynooth University is regularly communicating with them.

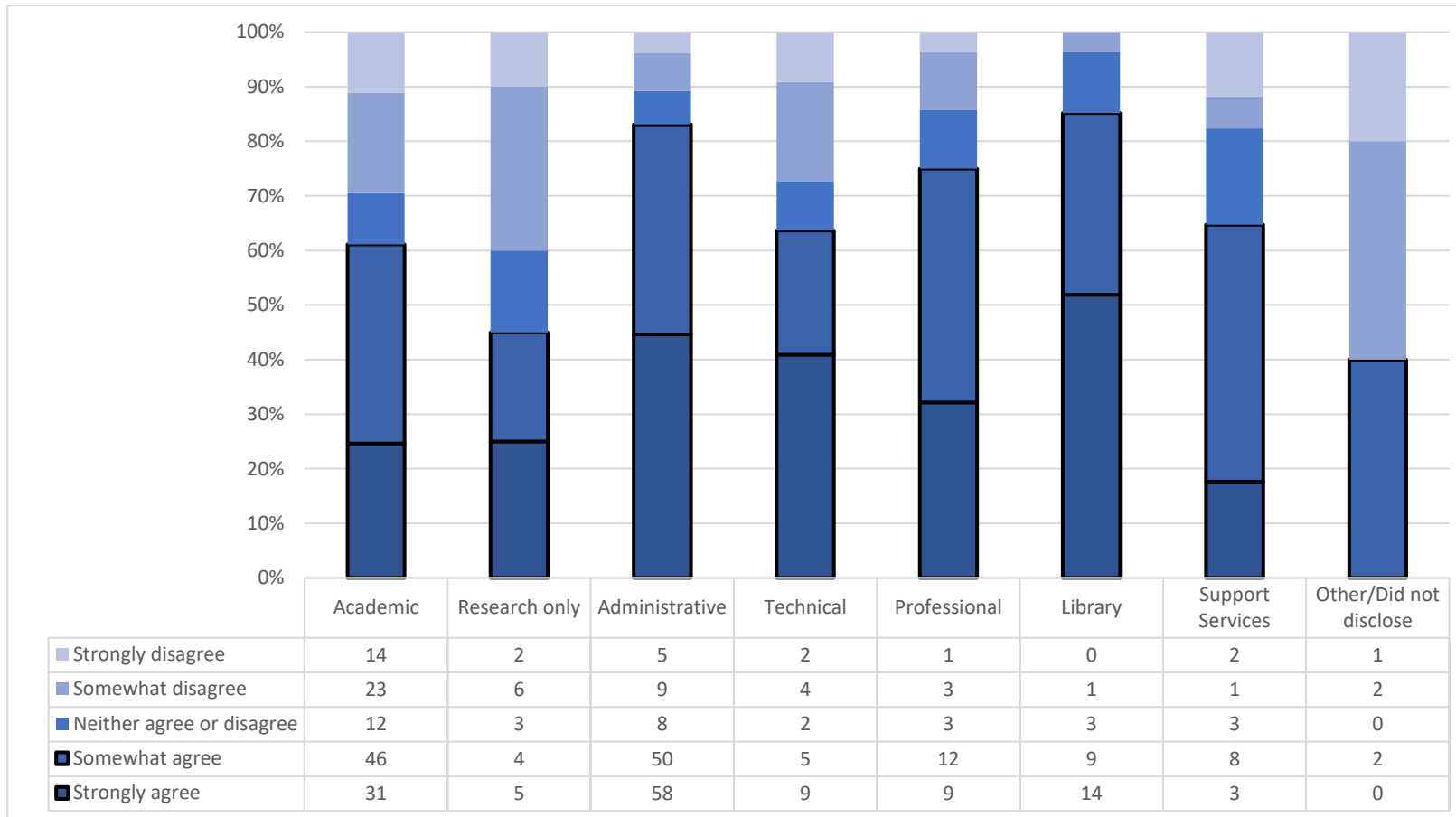


Figure 34. Number/percentage of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that they feel informed by Maynooth University.

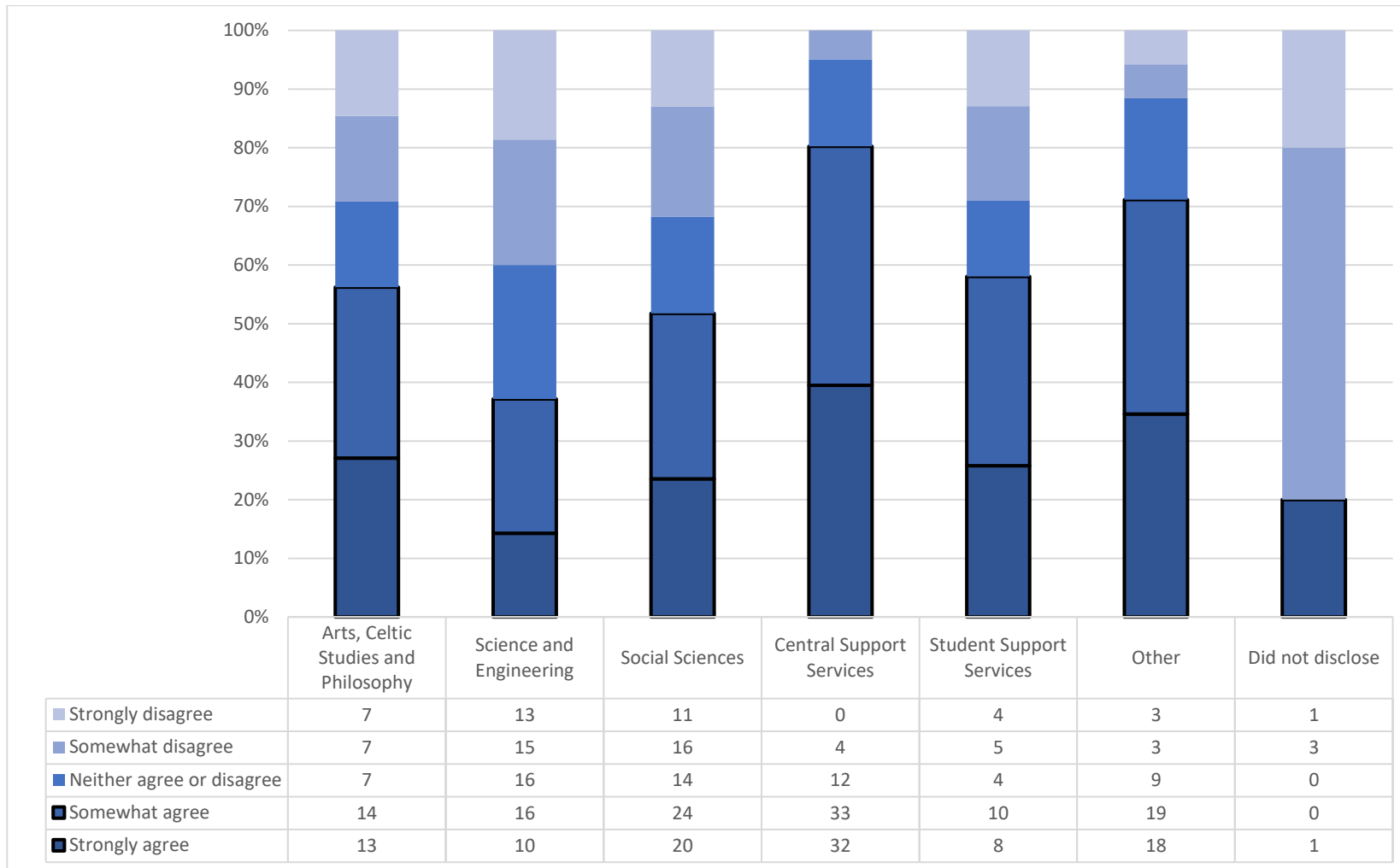


Figure 35. Number/percentage of respondents by area, that agree/disagree that they feel supported by Maynooth University.

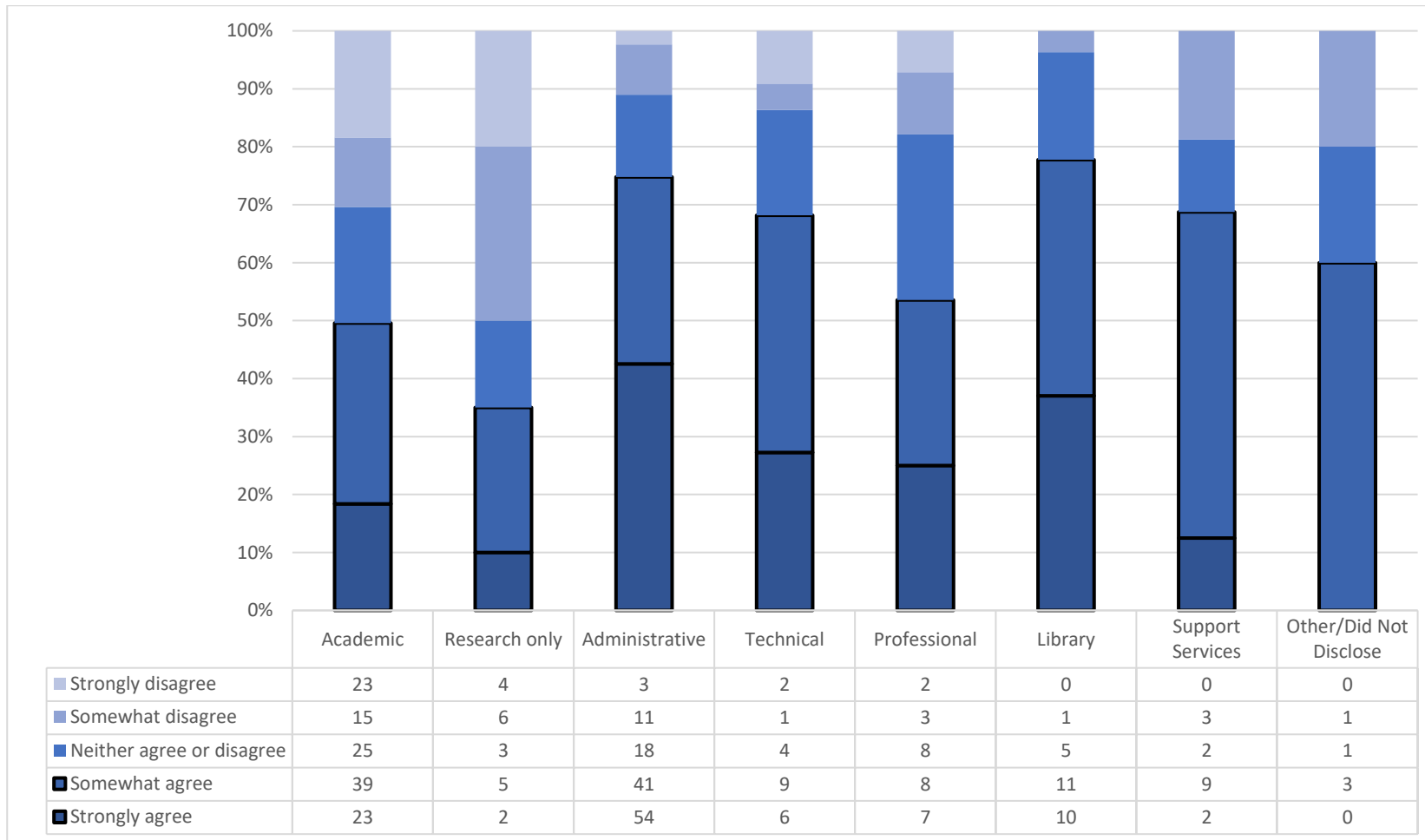


Figure 36. Number/percentage of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that they feel part of the team.

The majority of each staff category reported feeling that they were part of the team, except for research only respondents where 50% of respondents did not feel part of the team (n=10).



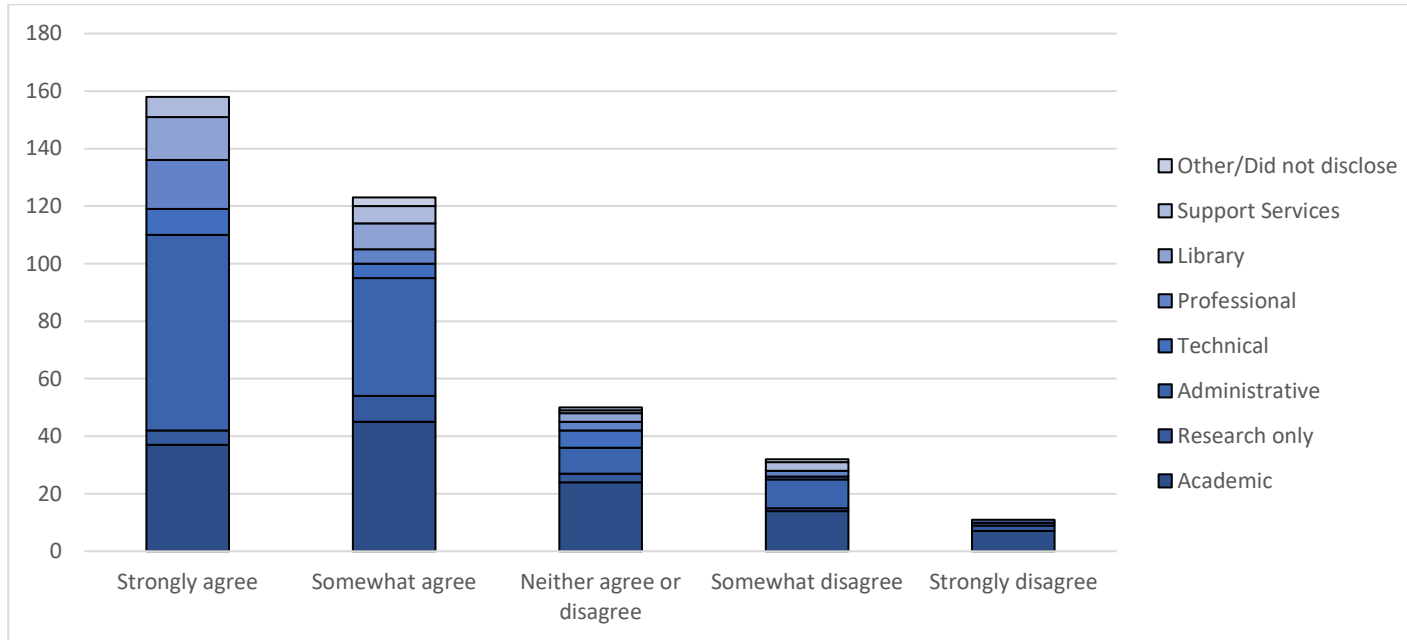


Figure 37. Number of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that Maynooth University is doing its best in the circumstances.

Table 26. Number of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that Maynooth University is doing its best in the circumstances.

	Academic	Research only	Administrative	Technical	Professional	Library	Support Services	Other	Total
<b>Strongly agree</b>	37 (29%)	5 (25%)	68 (52%)	9 (43%)	17 (61%)	15 (56%)	7 (41%)	0 (0%)	158 (42%)
<b>Somewhat agree</b>	45 (35%)	9 (45%)	41 (32%)	5 (24%)	5 (18%)	9 (33%)	6 (35%)	3 (60%)	123 (33%)
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	24 (19%)	3 (15%)	9 (7%)	6 (28%)	3 (11%)	3 (11%)	1 (6%)	1 (20%)	50 (13%)
<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	14(11%)	1 (5%)	10 (8%)	1 (5%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	3 (18%)	1 (20%)	32 (9%)
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	7 (6%)	2 (10%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (3%)
<b>Total</b>	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

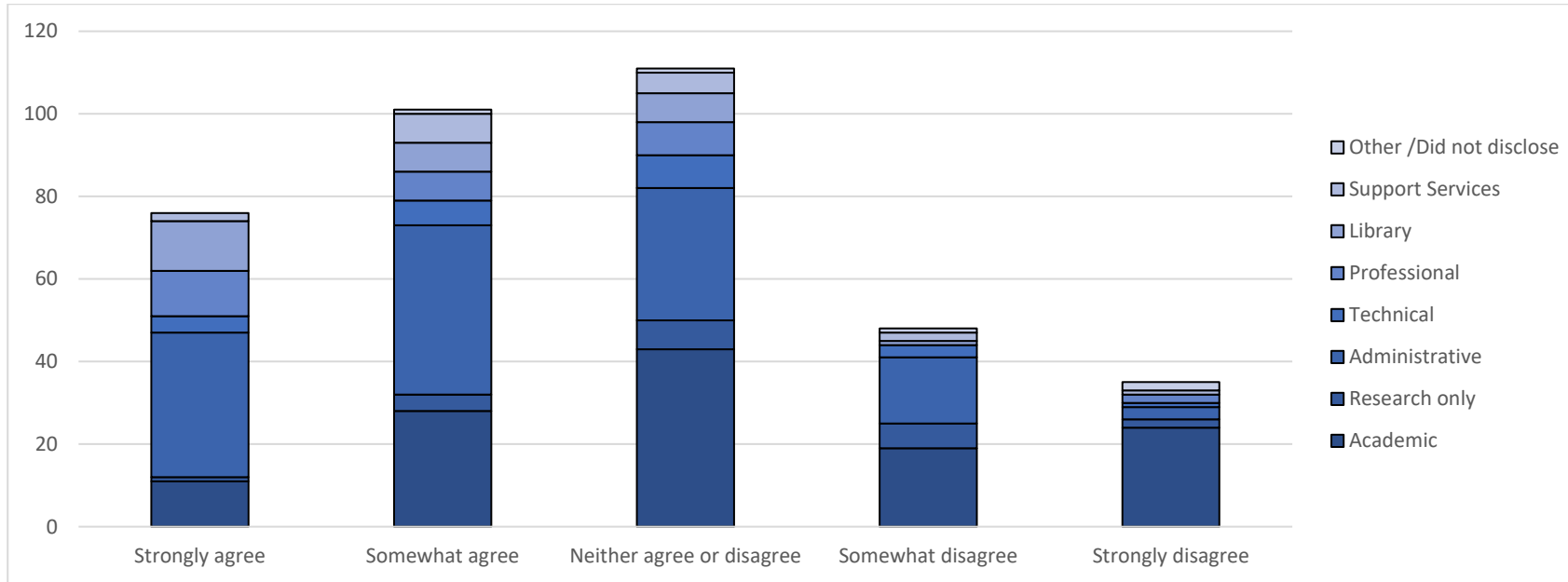


Figure 38. Number of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that Maynooth University is providing them with well-being supports.

Table 27. Number of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that Maynooth University is providing them with well-being supports.

	Academic	Research only	Administrative	Technical	Professional	Library	Support Services	Other	Total
<b>Strongly agree</b>	11 (9%)	1 (5%)	35 (28%)	4 (18%)	11(39%)	12 (44%)	2 (12%)	0 (0%)	76 (20%)
<b>Somewhat agree</b>	28 (22%)	4 (20%)	41 (32%)	6 (27%)	7 (25%)	7 (26%)	7 (41%)	1 (20%)	101 (27%)
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	43 (35%)	7 (35%)	32 (25%)	8 (36%)	8 (29%)	7 (26%)	5 (29%)	1 (20%)	111 (30%)
<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	19 (15%)	6 (30%)	16 (13%)	3 (14%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	2 (12%)	1 (20%)	48 (13%)
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	24 (19%)	2 (10%)	3 (2%)	1 (5%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	2 (40%)	35 (10%)
<b>Total</b>	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

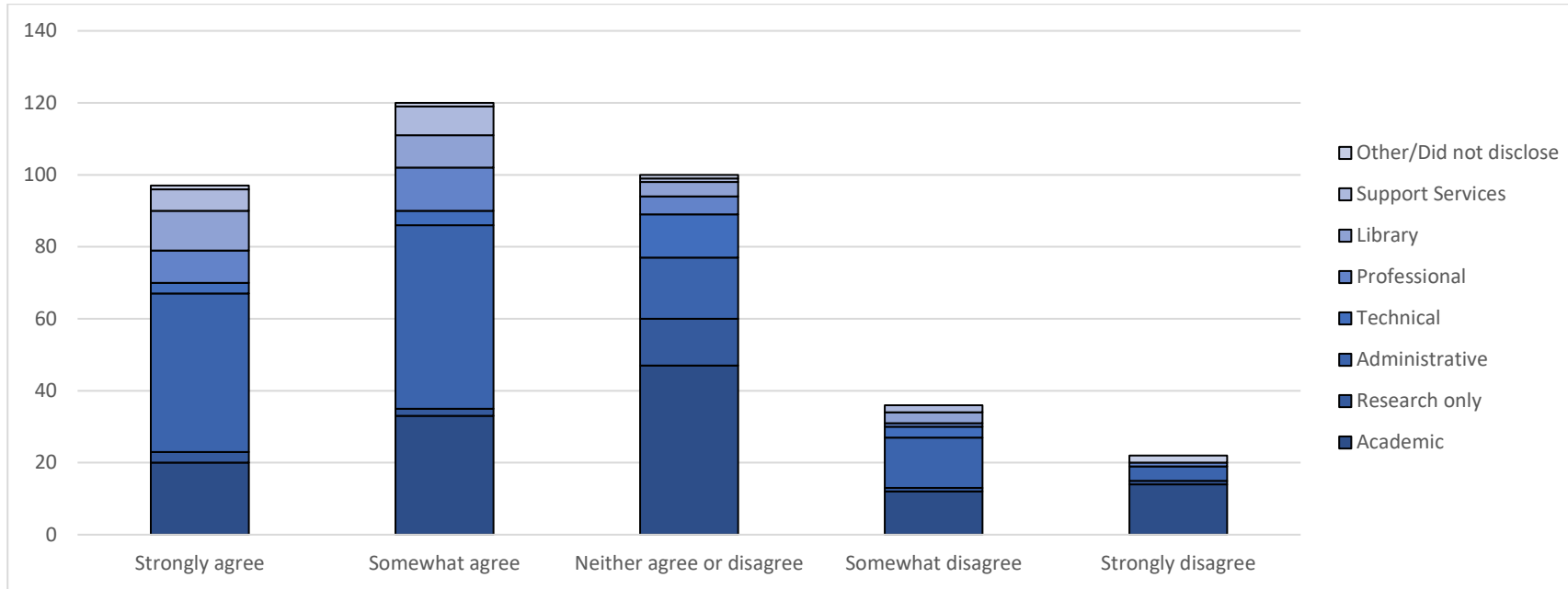


Figure 39. Number of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that the Maynooth University website provided clear health & safety advice for working remotely.

Table 28. Number of respondents by staff category, that agree/disagree that the Maynooth University website provided clear health & safety advice for working remotely.

	Academic	Research only	Administrative	Technical	Professional	Library	Support Services	Other	Total
<b>Strongly agree</b>	20 (16%)	3 (15%)	44 (34%)	3 (14%)	9 (32%)	11 (41%)	6 (41%)	1 (20%)	97 (26%)
<b>Somewhat agree</b>	33 (26%)	2 (10%)	51 (39%)	4 (18%)	12 (43%)	9 (33%)	8 (35%)	1 (20%)	120 (32%)
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	47 (37%)	13 (65%)	17 (13%)	12 (54%)	5 (18%)	4 (15%)	1 (6%)	1 (20%)	100 (27%)
<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	12 (10%)	1 (5%)	14 (11%)	3 (14%)	1 (3.5%)	3 (11%)	2 (18%)	0 (0%)	36 (9%)
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	14 (11%)	1 (5%)	4 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	22 (6%)
<b>Total</b>	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

**Q16. Do you have any other comments to add about how Maynooth University is making remote working during COVID-19 easier or more difficult, in these unexpected circumstances?**

*Table 29. Difficulties in remote working*

More difficult	Responses
Staff raising technology needed or bought out of pocket	28
Better communication needed	27
Slow/unclear decision making	16
Information about new teaching year needed	13
Training in new technologies needed	12
Workload management needed	10
More support for caring needed	8
More coordinated approach	6
Digital resources needed	6
University could give option of future remote working	6
Online delivery takes more time	6
Need more admin support	5
Reduction of Friday Emails needed	5
Policy document on COVID-19 period needed	5
Additional leadership needed	5
Additional EAS would be useful	3
Raised an equality Issue	3
Request for better chair	2
Request for home-working allowance	2
Request for more H&S guidance	2
Request for asynchronous staff training	1
Unable to research	1
Raising difficulty for part-time staff	1
Discussion space for staff	1

*Table 30. Things making remote working easier*

Easier	Responses
Has been supportive	21
Commending central support	8
University has been accommodating	7
I have regular meetings with HOD	3
Bringing home technology made it easier	3
Feel informed	3
I have more autonomy	1

**Q17. What is your preference for communications / updates from the university?**

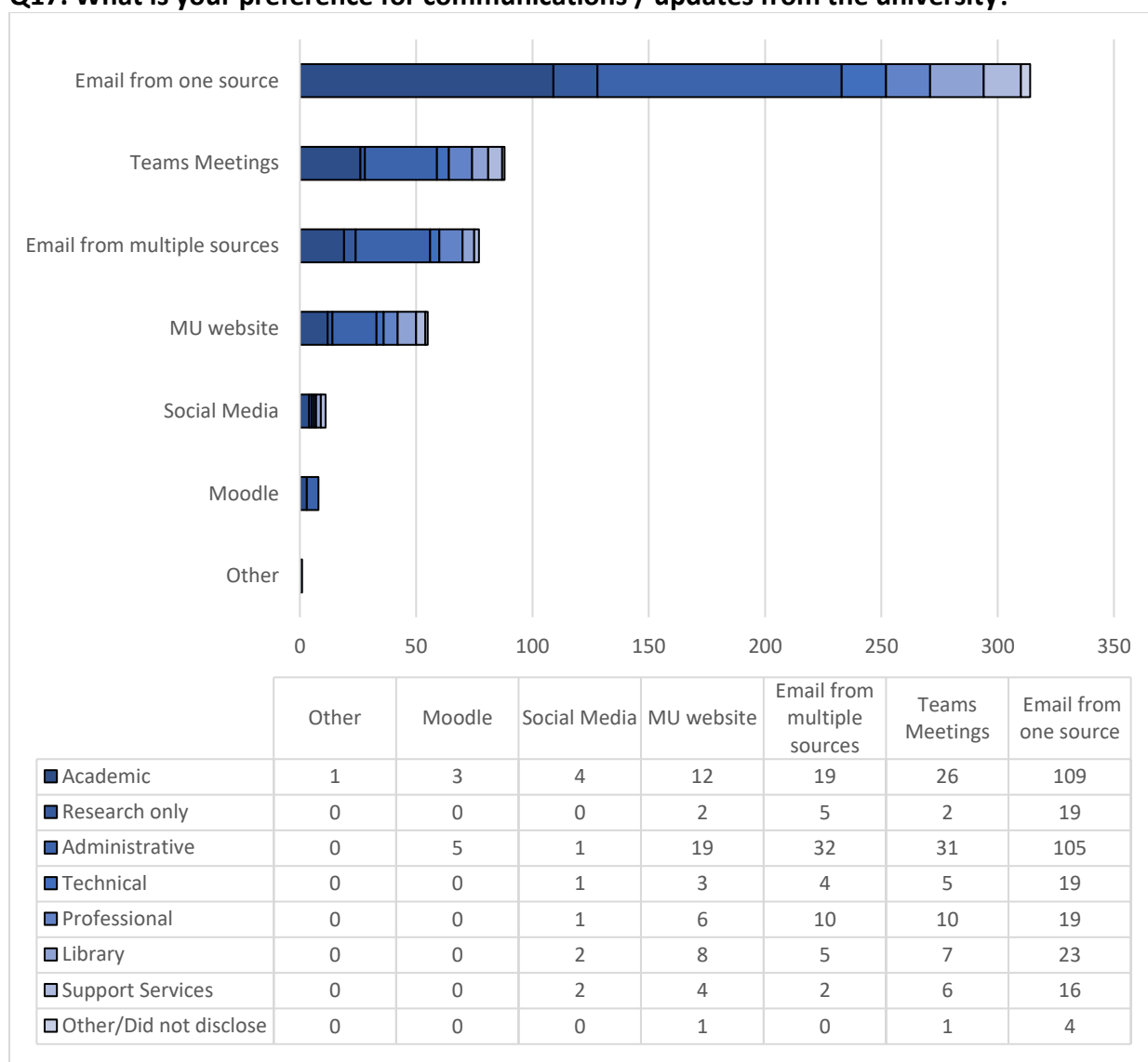


Figure 40. Number of respondents by staff category, indicating a preference for communications / updates from the University.

Respondents strongly indicated a preference for e-mails from one source and there was a suggestion to have just one update e-mail that encompassed updates from all different sections.

### Q18. What supports would help you to work remotely more effectively?

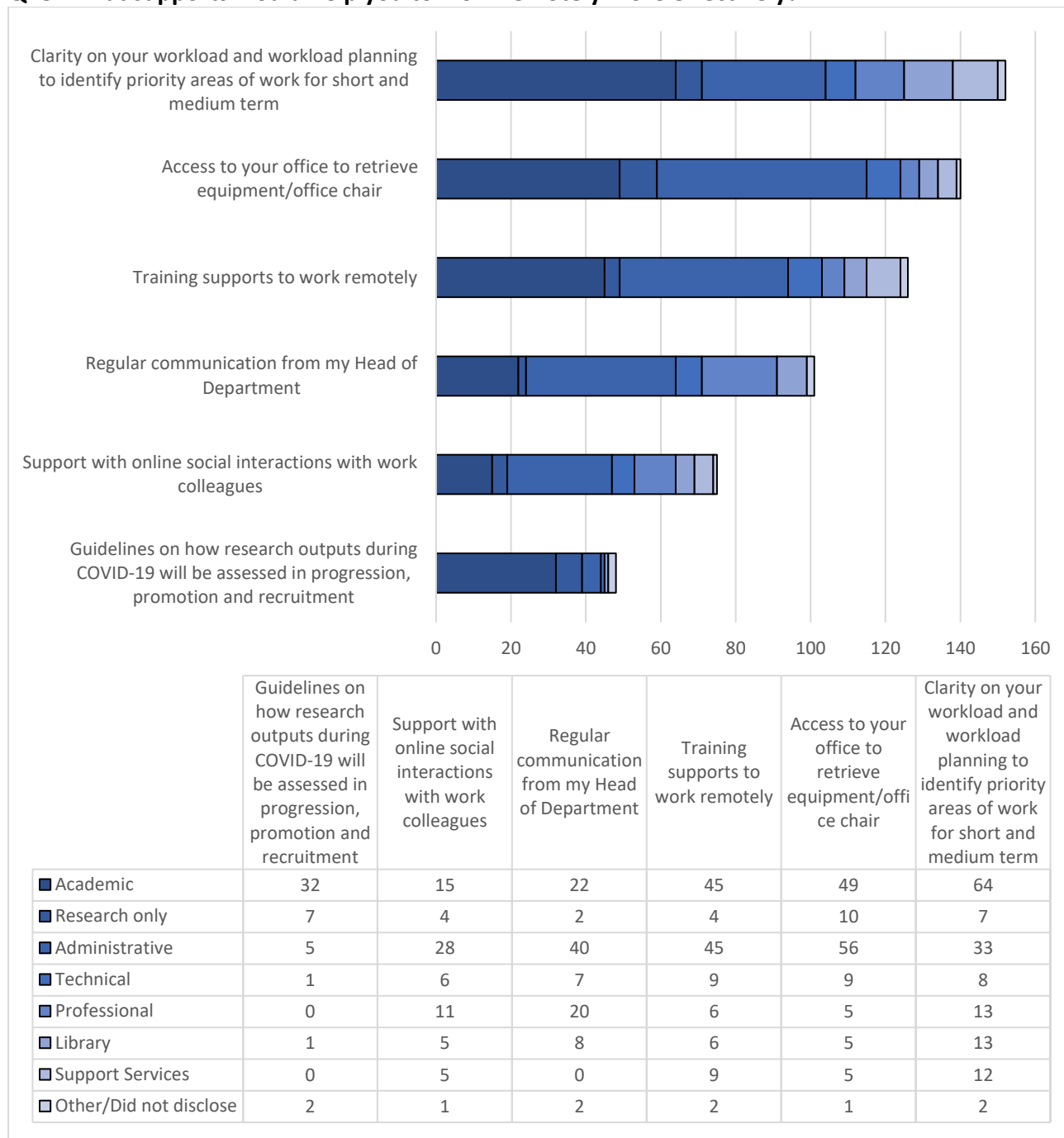


Figure 41. Number of respondents by staff category<sup>6</sup> indicating the TOP 3 supports that would help them to work remotely more effectively.

<sup>6</sup> Five people selected reasonable accommodation to support staff members with a disability – this was not included in the graph for reasons of anonymity.

**Q19. What is the top thing your Head of Department or the University is doing to help your capacity to carry out your normal duties at the moment?**

There was a large volume of qualitative responses submitted for this question. To provide an overview of the responses received, they were categorised under the following headings with an indication of the number of responses included in each category<sup>7</sup>.

*Table 31. Head of Department or University supports.*

Supports	Responses
Clear and/or regular communication	103
Regular meetings	45
Providing support	27
Leniency & Understanding	23
Open door policy	16
Flexibility	14
Quick response	13
Good planning	11
Ordering technology & equipment	10
Autonomy	9
Equipment from campus	7
Training sessions	7
Prioritisation	6
Getting back to campus	5
Teaching guidelines	5
Checking in	5
Need additional clarity from MU	4
Listen/Collaborate	3

Straight talking	3
Leadership	3
Providing VPN	3
IT support	3
Everything possible	2
Thanking team	2
Update emails from MU	2
Communication could have been better	2
Trusting me	2
Wellbeing support	2
Managing email volume	1
Reliant on staff doing additional work	1
Support in online teaching	1
I am over capacity	1
Only communicating with me when I am online	1
Meetings often cancelled – not helpful	1
Work designation	1
Teams setup	1
This survey itself	1

<sup>7</sup> Seven people said that this was not applicable, 14 people said that their Head of Department or the University was doing nothing to help.

**Q20. What is the top thing your Head of Department or the University could do to help your capacity to carry out your normal duties at the moment?**

There was a large volume of qualitative responses submitted for this question. To provide an overview of the responses received, they were categorised under the following headings with an indication of the number of responses included in each category<sup>8</sup>.

*Table 32. Additional supports that could be provided*

Possibility	Responses
Clarity for future	34
Workload allocation support	34
Equipment/Technology	33
Clear communication	25
Continue current support	20
Teaching clarity	18
Additional guidance	14
Acknowledge challenges	10
More departmental meetings	10
Training	10
Check-in	9
Allow access to office	7
HODs pass on comms	7
Consult with staff	6
IT Support	6
Realistic expectations	6
Staff shortage	6
Prioritisation	5
Allow autonomy	4
Childcare issues	4

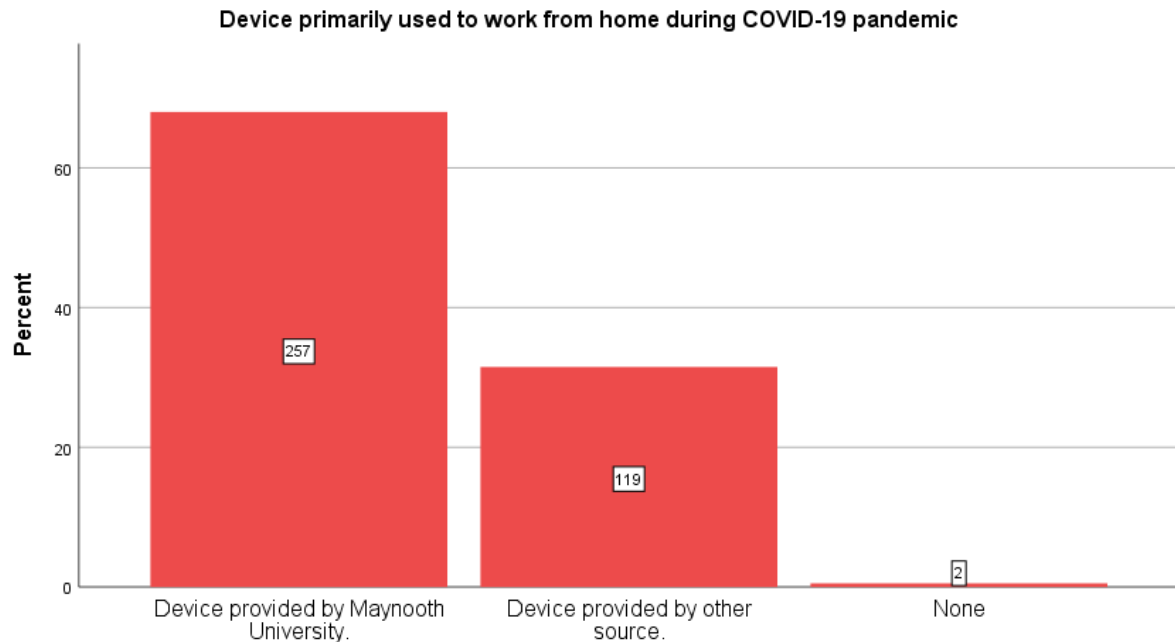
Reimbursement for money spent on home working	4
Remote working clarity for the future	4
Team building	4
Allow departmental flexibility for next year	3
Allow flexible working hours	3
Collaboration	3
Protected time	3
Risk assess workplace	3
One to one meetings	3
Advocate for remote teaching	2
Allow resumption of lab-based work	2
Pay staff overtime	3
More online resources	2
Accommodation	1
Shorter staff meetings	1
Support new staff members	1
Take part in equality training	1
Move hard copy docs online	1
Staff wellbeing support	1
Work from home allowance	1
On campus work	1

<sup>8</sup> Six people gave answers that were not applicable. Five people said that there was nothing more that their Head of Department or the University could do to help.



## Census of Devices used to work from home

**Q21. Please describe the device you are primarily using to work from home during the Covid-19 pandemic.**

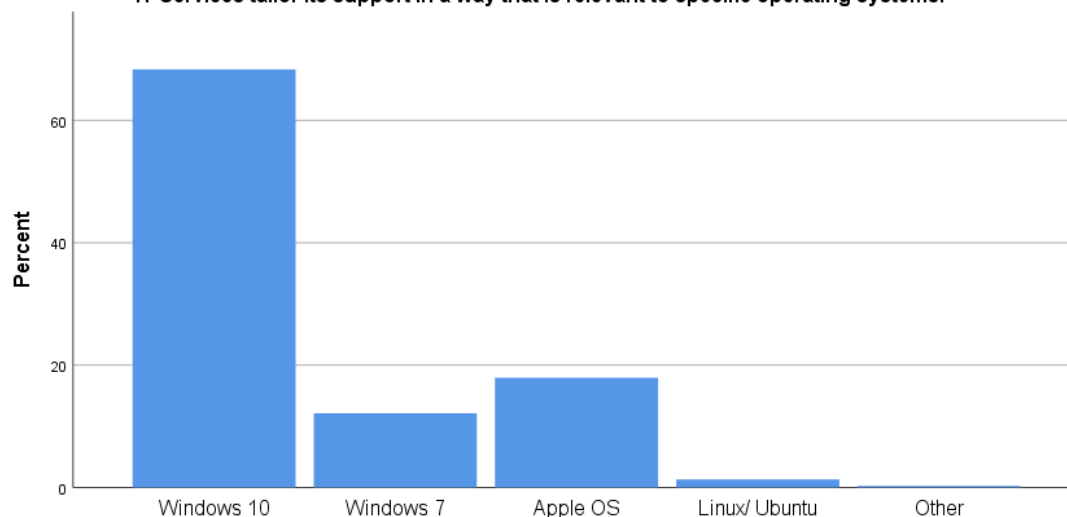


Please describe the device you are primarily using to work from home during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Figure 42. Device source

**Q22. Please indicate the operating system of the device in question.**

Simple Bar Percent of Please indicate the operating system of the device in question. This information will help IT Services tailor its support in a way that is relevant to specific operating systems.



Please indicate the operating system of the device in question. This information will help IT Services tailor its support in a way that is relevant to specific operating systems.

Figure 43. Device operating system

**Q23. Please feel free to give us any additional feedback on your IT experience of working from home.**

Key themes were:

- IT Services were highly commended for being very good and supportive, with any issues being dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Updates to laptops to bring them into line with latest security standards were frequently mentioned
- A printer with a scanner would have been more suitable
- Being provided with a laptop would have been helpful, many were using old devices from home
- Many respondents purchased additional equipment to be able to work more efficiently from home e.g. monitors, writing pad, earphones/headsets, webcam, keyboard, mouse, docking stations, desk, office chair, e-pen.
- Broadband connectivity was noted as an issue
- Suggestion to have a work phone package with unlimited data in case phone is needed as a hotspot when broadband goes down (Virgin Media in Maynooth!!!!)
- Noted that the cost of internet at home has increased due to use for work
- Questions around Teams as an effective platform for lecturing?
- Preference for Zoom for team working
- Regular IT training for staff was suggested and support for teaching
- Physical challenge of working on a laptop long-term including: eye strain, backache, neck pain

## Return to Campus

### Q24. Thinking ahead, what are your main concerns about returning to campus to work?

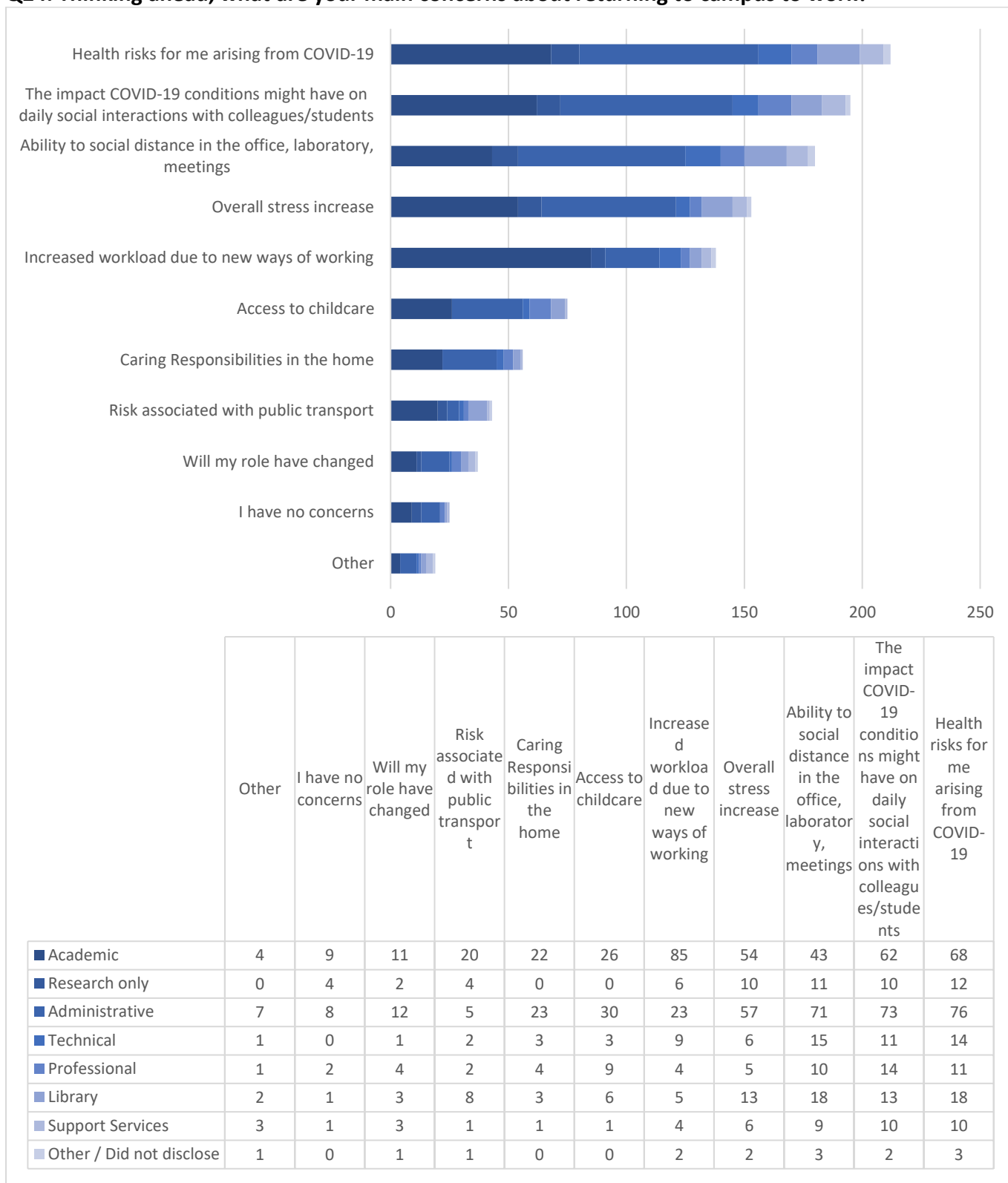


Figure 44. Number of respondents by staff category, indicating their main concerns about returning to campus to work.

**Q25. What measures could the University take to support a return to campus to work (in addition to the Return to Campus information on the MU website & COVID-19 induction training)? Select the top 3 or select the first option if nothing further is needed.**

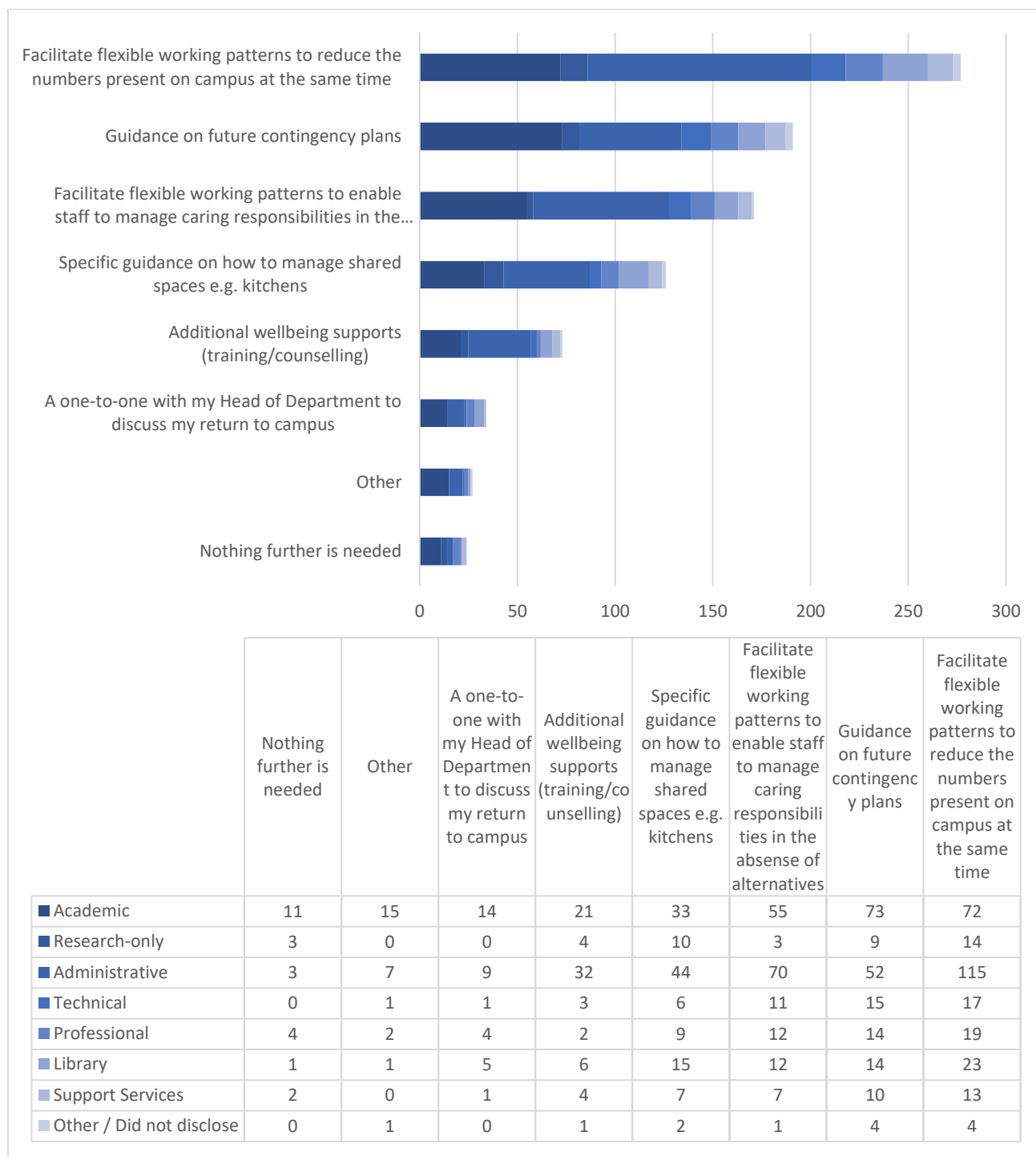


Figure 45. Number of respondents by staff category, indicating measures the University could take to support a return to campus to work

## Appendix 1 – Respondent suggestions for improving remote working during Covid-19

### Q12. Are there any actions you have taken to make remote work more positive during this time, that others might benefit from hearing about?

Comments in **bold** were suggested by more than 5 staff members.

#### Social & Team connectivity

- **Have a scheduled remote tea break/huddle/lunch with colleagues through teams.**
- **I schedule regular meetings with colleagues for updates etc, so everything is not by text. Teams.**
- Share information to all staff immediately, begin each meeting with a brief check in and update.
- Implement shared outlook calendars with colleagues to show when you are not available or in meetings.
- Scheduling writing groups to keep writing activity as a priority.
- Adoption of Teams as a collaboration tool.

#### Boundaries and Breaks

- **A fixed routine.**
- **Having structured/regular breaks.**
- **Routine in relation to start and end of working day e.g. cycling/walking/closing office door/swapping to personal laptop/returning space to be a home space/putting on work clothes.**
- Do not schedule back to back meetings on Zoom during the day.
- Ensured that I have my own working space separate to my wife. Try to limit our interactions during work hours so that we can separate work/life balance.
- Finding a place to work outside the house.
- Not starting too early. It can be too easy to increase the length of your work week by 'just checking' after hours. Unless there is some urgency around an issue, I do not do that anymore.
- I made a conscious decision to accept that I would not be able to do everything that I would in normal circumstances. Many important things were left on pause while carrying teaching duties, to prioritise childcare, mental health and a good home environment.
- Setting expectations of your available times so you are not always contactable by others who are working to different schedules.
- Taking a few days off without looking at e-mail. Uninstalling Outlook from my phone.
- Try to keep regular working hours and do not just keep checking mails once you have finished for the day.
- Screen-free time is precious. I also try to limit using chat on MS Teams as it can be distracting.

#### Health and Wellbeing

- **A regular schedule of exercise.**
- Also excellent were the Mindfulness sessions organised by MU at the beginning of lockdown; were brilliant and really helped at the time.
- Organise a dedicated staff wellbeing day.
- Getting up at the same time as normal and using that time in the morning to enjoy hobbies. It gets the day off to a good start.
- Trying to get out for some fresh air at least 3 times a week.
- Mindfulness practice.

- Taking days off when needed.
- Catching up on boxsets; online shopping; making sure to watch a few movies a week.
- I am sleeping better and there is much less tension between me and my family.
- Reconnecting with hobbies was a great benefit from being home.
- I take regular breaks and work in my garden - its good therapy and the fresh air and exercise means I return to my desk with more energy.
- I needed to have a total break from the news, work, and caring responsibilities so I would go upstairs to my bedroom, draw the blinds, and listen to an audiobook for an hour. I just needed some time to recharge myself before I could take care of everyone in my life.
- I think it is important to give yourself permission to feel that things are "out of the ordinary" and that it is entirely normal to feel upended by the sudden change in the rhythm of our lives
- Stay in touch with family and friends.
- I was able to join an online wellness writing workshop (twice), but it is no longer being offered.
- Music.
- One hour of power every day to do meditation, walk, read etc.
- Practicing self-forgiveness.
- Take walk breaks and breathe fresh air and notice nature.

#### Technology and Set Up

- **Created a dedicated/designated workspace/home office.**
- **Bought office equipment to help with working from home.**
- **Brought home my tech kit and/or chair from the office so that I had all the same resources at my home desk.**
- I have good equipment.
- Moved my laptop to eye level.
- I connected an old TV via a cable to my laptop. Bigger and better!
- This is facilitated by a working space in the home which is used only for work.
- I have had broadband installed in my home.

#### Communication

- Put detailed auto replies on the office email and FAQs on website so there was less frustration from students, colleagues and public who may be trying to get in touch and answered emails within a half day or less so that people felt that they were being heard and responded to quickly and with as up to date information as was available.
- Keep meetings short and focused.
- I had been working on not printing material before lockdown and I have not needed to print anything for 4 months.
- I include a sentence at the end of my email to say that if colleagues receive this email outside of working hours they are not expected to respond until they are in work.
- Sharing Virtual International conference best practice.

#### Productivity and Development

- Used a diary to write down all the things done in a day. Good way to record the small things completed.
- I use productivity timers (like Pomodoro) to help remind me to take breaks.
- Creating lists for the week ahead on Friday evening to stay motivated.
- I have undertaken CPD courses online with HR Learning and Development.
- I set out my child's home school tasks the night before so that the plan was developed from the start of the day.
- A good clock to manage time.
- We completed a staff training (through an external provider) on Agile working, including setting up workstations, early intervention programme.

- Allowing outlook to create "focus time" using its analytics means a block of time is assigned for "do not disturb" so that no teams meetings or notifications will appear.

#### Flexible Working

- Apart from scheduled meetings etc, I stopped trying to work between 9-5 as it was difficult/stressful and unfair to my small children. Instead I worked 6am-9am and 5pm-2am and at weekends when my husband could care for the children. But this is unsustainable!
- Both my wife and I had to work from home, while minding two young children. Having a fixed schedule where one worked and the other minded children, and swapping over, helped a lot. You knew when you could work and prioritised what to do in that time.
- I can do household chores in daylight hours which would otherwise get left to the weekend and do a few extra work hours in the evening or on a weekend morning. Therefore, my weekends have fewer chores in them.
- I use my calendar to organise my entire day and upcoming days and weeks, with tasks etc. listed.
- I have stopped working on weekends.
- I requested access to my office once restrictions were eased a little. Even coming in once or twice a week has supported me in getting more work done.
- Working on own time schedule and ignoring the 9-5 routine.

## Appendix 4 - Major Questions arising from Survey

All the qualitative responses were analysed to identify major questions arising from respondents. These have been summarised below. \* indicates multiple respondents raising the question.

### Remote working

1. Will it be possible to continue remote working following the opening of campus for safety reasons? For whom will this be possible? \*
2. Will there be a possibility of working remotely full or part time following the pandemic? \*
3. Will staff have the option of working on campus full-time, and when (particularly a concern for laboratory-based staff)? \*
4. Is remote only teaching an option for some courses/teaching staff? \*
5. What will be the situation for those with underlying conditions and their households?
6. How will the decision on who returns to campus be made, e.g. considering caring concerns and not solely on who lives closest?

### Childcare & Gender

1. Will there be flexibility in hours required to be working if schools do not return and childcare continues to have a reduced capacity? \*
2. Will there be a recognition of the lack of breaks for those with childcare while schools and childcare facilities are not an option? \*
3. Will measures be taken to support staff with caring responsibilities long-term in relation to career progression and lost research time? \*
4. Is the University considering the gendered impact of COVID-19?

### Technology

1. Will training be provided for staff who are struggling with technology? \*
2. Will there be support for the move to online teaching, CPD in using technologies which support good online teaching and support in preparing for the new semester? \*

### Financial Support/Equipment/Staff

1. Will the University refund equipment bought by staff for working from home out of pocket, reimburse phone costs or provide a working from home allowance? \*
2. Can the University provide equipment for an ergonomic home set up, sufficient broadband and laptops for those using their own? \*
3. Will ongoing staff shortages/lack of resources in some areas be addressed to prevent further exacerbation of issues during the pandemic?

### Health and safety

1. Is campus opening up too soon?
2. There are lecture theatres, open plan offices with closed ventilation systems and no ability to open windows, has this been accounted for in planning? \*
3. Will additional VDU consults be available to staff with eye strain following the remote working period? Additionally, a call for those who need reasonable accommodations as an option for those who have conditions which advise less screen time to come forward might be useful.
4. How will shared spaces be managed e.g. bathrooms, kitchens? Will upgrades be made to some handwashing facilities to ensure that hand dryers for example are not putting staff at increased risk?
5. Will face coverings be mandatory?
6. Will there be temperature checks used?
7. Will the University be deep cleaned before a return?

### Student Interaction

1. Will meetings with students for support etc. be able to be held on campus?
2. How will social distancing be policed?



## Mental Health and Wellbeing

1. Can the University support the organization of social space to interact with colleagues, whether online or offline?
2. How will the University address the needs of vulnerable students?
3. What additional wellbeing supports will be provided e.g. staff wellbeing day, additional EAP, counselling etc.? \*

## Return to Campus Logistics

1. What on campus facilities will be reopening, e.g. restaurants, sports etc.?

## Workload

1. Will there be recognition for the additional pastoral support, hours taken to deliver lectures multiple times, additional hours worked during the pandemic, additional work for those able to work during office hours due to expectations from elsewhere? \*
  - a. *Most staff (60%) worked longer hours during the pandemic, 76% worked outside what would be considered normal hours, it might be nice to do something to recognise this contribution. Question from one member of staff re: compensation, many raised extra hours as the norm.*
2. Will there be support for the increased role of the HoD as a go between the University and the staff?
3. Is there a possibility for support from the University in regaining work-life balance and boundaries? \*

## Human Resources

1. Will there be support with onboarding new staff?
2. Can the University provide guidance on how to mitigate the impact on planned sabbaticals?
3. Could some staff training be held asynchronously as was asked for students?

## Communication

1. How is the University planning to provide clear consistent communication to its staff about decisions going forward? \*
2. Can the COVID update move from a Friday? \*
3. How will the learning from the pandemic be retained?
4. Will there be department specific policies?

## Other Comments

1. A need for decrease in email activity \*
2. Question raised re: the disparity in effort made by staff in some depts.
3. Clarity on placements for students.
4. "My understanding is that there is some guidance from the University / the Registrar's Office. However, this advice may not be fully applicable in the specific context of my department (very large class sizes). As it is unclear how we are going to deliver our modules, no teaching allocations have been made, so it is difficult to prepare."
5. "Another core issue is that it takes much more time to prepare online delivery than doing it face-to-face. The University should account for this."
6. "In addition, there was (at least initially) a lot of pressure to deliver exam results on time. I have to mark several hundred exams in Semester 2. I think it is unreasonable to expect that this can be done within two weeks time."
7. "It is somewhat odd to receive e-mails that ask us to be mindful about our health while simultaneously sending out e-mails that put a lot of stress on people."
8. Emails sent to all staff not just academic HODs.



# Ollscoil Mhá Nuad

Ollscoil na hÉireann  
Má Nuad

**Contact details:**

Oifig an Leasuachtaráin do Chomhionannas agus Éagsúlacht, Ollscoil Má Nuad, Maigh Nuad, Co. Chill Dara, Éire.

Office of the Vice-President for Equality & Diversity, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland.

E: [equality@mu.ie](mailto:equality@mu.ie) W: [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/edi](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/edi)