



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Report of the StudentSurvey.ie. Postgraduate Research Survey 2020/21

Quality Office

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1. Introduction

The PGR StudentSurvey.ie (Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students) 2020/21 invited responses from postgraduate research (PGR) students in 22 higher education institutions in Ireland. The survey instrument (Appendix 1) is based on the UK Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). The survey is directed at students enrolled in research masters (NFQ-L9) and research doctorates (NFQ-L10). The pilot of the PGR survey instrument took place in 2017/18 and was administered on a biennial basis from 2018/19. This report presents the findings of the National StudentSurvey.ie fieldwork conducted in March 2021. The survey is run in partnership between the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

New to the established survey instruments in 2020/21 are five COVID-19 multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions. The five additional COVID-19 questions were piloted with 64 students across six participating HEIs, and their feedback informed the determination of the final questions added to the survey.

How much do you agree with the following statements about the impact COVID-19 has had on your experience (*Definitely agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Definitely disagree*)?

1. My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication;
2. COVID-19 has affected my funding, or my ability to fund myself during my research;
3. I have adequate access to the on-campus facilities required to engage with my research;
4. I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc.);
5. I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.

Open Questions

- a) How has COVID-19 most impacted on your research?
- b) In what way(s) could your higher education institution improve its support for you during the current circumstances?

1.1 *The StudentSurvey.ie Structure*

The survey instrument is comprised of 11 indicators (outlined below), and two open comments' questions.

The PGR StudentSurvey.ie addresses the following engagement aspects (Appendix 1):

1. Research Infrastructure and Facilities;
2. Supervision;
3. Research Culture;
4. Progress and Assessment;
5. Development Opportunities;
6. Research Skills;
7. Other Transferable Skills;
8. Responsibilities and Supports;
9. Personal Outlook;
10. Motivations and Career;
11. Overall Experience.

Each aspect employs a variety of question formats: predominantly six-point 'likert scale'; a multi-rank response option is used in the 'Motivations' and 'Career' aspects; and Yes/No responses in the 'Developmental Opportunities' aspect. Each aspect has an 'open comment' response question, allowing for qualitative analysis.

1.2 Participation in PGR StudentSurvey.ie

The dates for the Trinity fieldwork were from the 8th-28th February 2021. This is the first administration of the survey under COVID-19 conditions. The Trinity response rate for 2020/21 increased by 4% when compared with 2018/19 (2020/21: 32%, 474; 2018/19: 28%, 385). Table 1 below shows the response rates since the initiation of the survey in 2017/18.

Table 1 Trinity's comparator group of institutions in the PGR StudentSurvey.ie

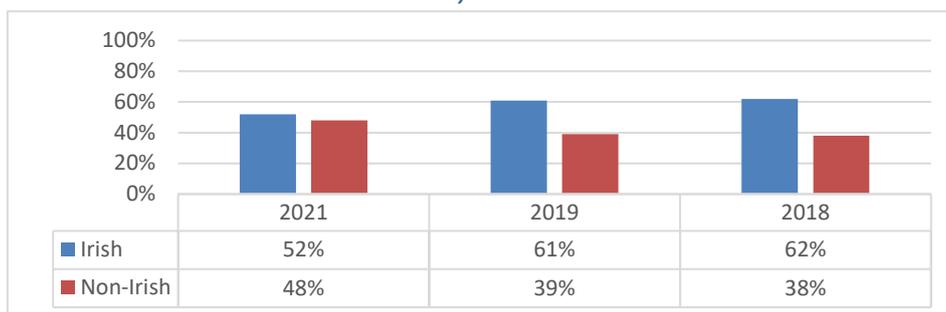
Comparator Group of HEIs with >250 PGR Students			
<i>Universities Response Rates</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2017/18</i>
<i>National population (all HEIs)</i>	10,454	9,114	9,182
<i>National response (all HEI's)</i>	3,541 (34%)	2,721 (30%)	2,336 (30%)
<i>≥ 250 population</i>	9,443	7,853	7,160
<i>≥ 250 response</i>	2,907 (31%)	2,254 (29%)	1,869 (28%)
<i>Trinity population</i>	1,498	1,382	1,430
<i>Trinity response</i>	474 (32%)	385 (28%)	379 (27%)

Table 2 Demographic Profile of Participants involved in the StudentSurvey.ie 2018/19 and 2020/21

	Trinity College Dublin 2021			Trinity College Dublin 2019		
	All Students	NFQ 9	NFQ 10	All Students	NFQ 9	NFQ 10
Population						
Survey Population	1,498	53	1,445	1,382	71	1,311
Respondents	474 (32%)	12 (23%)	451(31%)	385 (28%)	19 (27%)	366 (28%)
Sex						
Male	182 (38%)	5 (42%)	175 (39%)	147 (38%)	6 (32%)	141 (38%)
Female	292 (62%)	7 (58%)	276 (61%)	238 (62%)	13 (68%)	225 (62%)
Domicile						
Irish	248 (52%)	6 (50%)	234 (52%)	236 (61%)	13 (68%)	223 (61%)
Non-Irish	226 (48%)	6 (50%)	217 (48%)	149 (39%)	6 (32%)	143 (39%)
Mode of Study						
Full-time	429 (91%)	10 (83%)	419 (93%)	358 (93%)	16 (84%)	342 (93%)
Part-time/Remote	45 (9%)	2 (17%)	32 (7%)	27 (7%)	3 (16%)	24 (7%)
Programme Type						
Masters Research (Postgraduate)	12 (3%)	12 (100%)	0	19 (5%)	19 (100%)	0
PhD (Postgraduate)	451 (97%)	0	451 (100%)	366 (95%)	0	366 (100%)

Figure 1 below details the continuing growth in the profile of non-Irish respondents (48%) in the 2021 survey due to the impact of Trinity's *Global Relations Strategy 3*.

Figure 1 *Participation Irish vs Non-Irish cohort trend analysis*



1.3 PGR Student Survey.ie and Data Protection

Trinity is required to sign a *Data Confidentiality Agreement* to receive Institutional level data that allows detailed analysis on a Faculty, School and Programme basis. To protect the identity of PGR respondents in Schools where the numbers of registered students are small, Trinity cannot issue School- and programme-specific reports where the number of respondents is < 10 (highlighted in red in Table 3 below). Therefore 19/24 (79%) Schools will receive School and programme-specific reports.

Table 3 *List of Schools >10 to receive PGR Reports 2020/21*

AHSS		STEM		HS	
Business	14	Biochemistry and Immunology	17	Dental Science	2
Creative Arts (Drama, Film and Music)	5	Chemistry	19	Medicine	46
Education	16	Computer Science and Statistics	44	Nursing and Midwifery	17
English	14	Engineering	44	Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences	16
Histories and Humanities	33	Genetics and Microbiology	18		
Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies	12	Mathematics	4		
Law	10	Natural Sciences	35		
Linguistic, Speech and Com. Sciences	14	Physics	50		
Psychology	15				
Religion	7				
Social Sciences and Philosophy	16				
Social Work and Social Policy	6				

2. Executive Summary

This report provides the detail of responses to individual questions and presents an analysis of the indicators by Institute, year/cohort, and faculty. 2020/21 is the first full academic year to experience higher education under COVID-19 conditions and its associated challenges to the PGR cohort.

Total respondents 2021

474 (32%)

Total respondents 2019

385 (28%)

2.1 PGR StudentSurvey.ie Questions on COVID-19 Experience

The results of the five additional COVID-19 questions are outlined below and demonstrate the impact on the experience of postgraduate research students in higher education in Ireland:

- i. **79%** of respondents 'definitely/mostly agree' they *felt supported in terms of ongoing effective and timely communication.*
- ii. **62%** of respondents indicated that they had a *suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc.).*
- iii. **58%** of respondents 'definitely/mostly agree' that they *had adequate access to on-campus facilities required to engage with their research.*
- iv. **49%** of respondents 'definitely/mostly agree' that they *felt connected to their higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.*
- v. **40%** 'definitely/mostly agreed' that *COVID-19 affected their funding or ability to fund themselves during their research programme.*

Responses to survey questions that may be attributable to COVID-19 include:

- a decrease by 10% in the proportion of students who were confident that they would complete their research degree programme within the expected timescale (TCD 2021 69%; 2019 79%; 2018 80%). (*Refer 4.12*);
- a deterioration is evident in the responses to all of the questions in the *Personal Outlook* aspect: life satisfaction down -16%; work life balance down -12% and satisfaction with life within Trinity, down -15% from 2019 levels. (*Refer 4.6.3*)
- a reduction by -4% in the proportion of PGR respondents who felt their research degree programme was worthwhile (TCD 2021, 73%; 2019, 77%). This represents a -8% difference compared with the >250 comparator group (81%). (*Refer 4.6.3*)
- a number of professional development opportunities normally available to PGR students were curtailed e.g. traveling abroad, presenting at conferences, professional networking, opportunities to meet with other PhD students or research academics. (*Refer 4.6*)

The positives to be taken away from the COVID-19 experience were:

- the impact of COVID-19 on funding of PGR students was not as bad as envisaged where 60% of Trinity PGR respondents ‘definitely or somewhat disagreed’ that *COVID-19 had impacted on their research funding or their ability to fund their research*. This result reflects the positive impact of the HEA COVID-19 Cost Extension Fund and the fact that Trinity PGR student are 10% more likely to be in receipt of external funding than PGR cohorts in the >250 group (TCD 2021 27%; >250 2021 17%). (Refer 3.1 and 4.2)
- the quality and effectiveness of Supervision remained high > 85%, attaining to the success of transition to online supervision. (Refer 4.3)

The impact of interventions put in place by Trinity in recent years to improve the PGR student experience is evident in:

- a 14% increase in the proportion of PGR respondents ‘definitely or mostly agreeing’ that they *had received an appropriate orientation / induction programme* (TCD 2021 57%; TCD 2019 43 %). This increase can be linked to the introduction of PGR inductions for all intakes (September, January, and March) in 2019/20. (Refer 4.5)
- high levels of awareness of research integrity at 82% following the introduction, in 2018/19, of the mandatory PhD module ‘Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era’. (Refer 4.7)
- a reduction by 3% in the proportion of respondents in a *single supervisor* arrangement following the implementation of Thesis Committees in 2018/19 (TCD 2021 67%; 2019 70%). (Refer 4.3)
- an increase to 50% in 2021 from 42% in 2019 in the proportion of PGR respondents who reported that they had *received appropriate support and guidance in their teaching and demonstrating roles*, following the introduction of the Teaching and Supporting Learning for Graduate Teaching Assistants module in 2018/19. (Refer 4.6.5)

‘The teaching is the thing I find the most fulfilling, am best at, and feels the most useful.’ (3rd Yr, AHSS, History and Archaeology).

Figure 2 Overall Satisfaction : How would you evaluate your entire research experience at this institution?



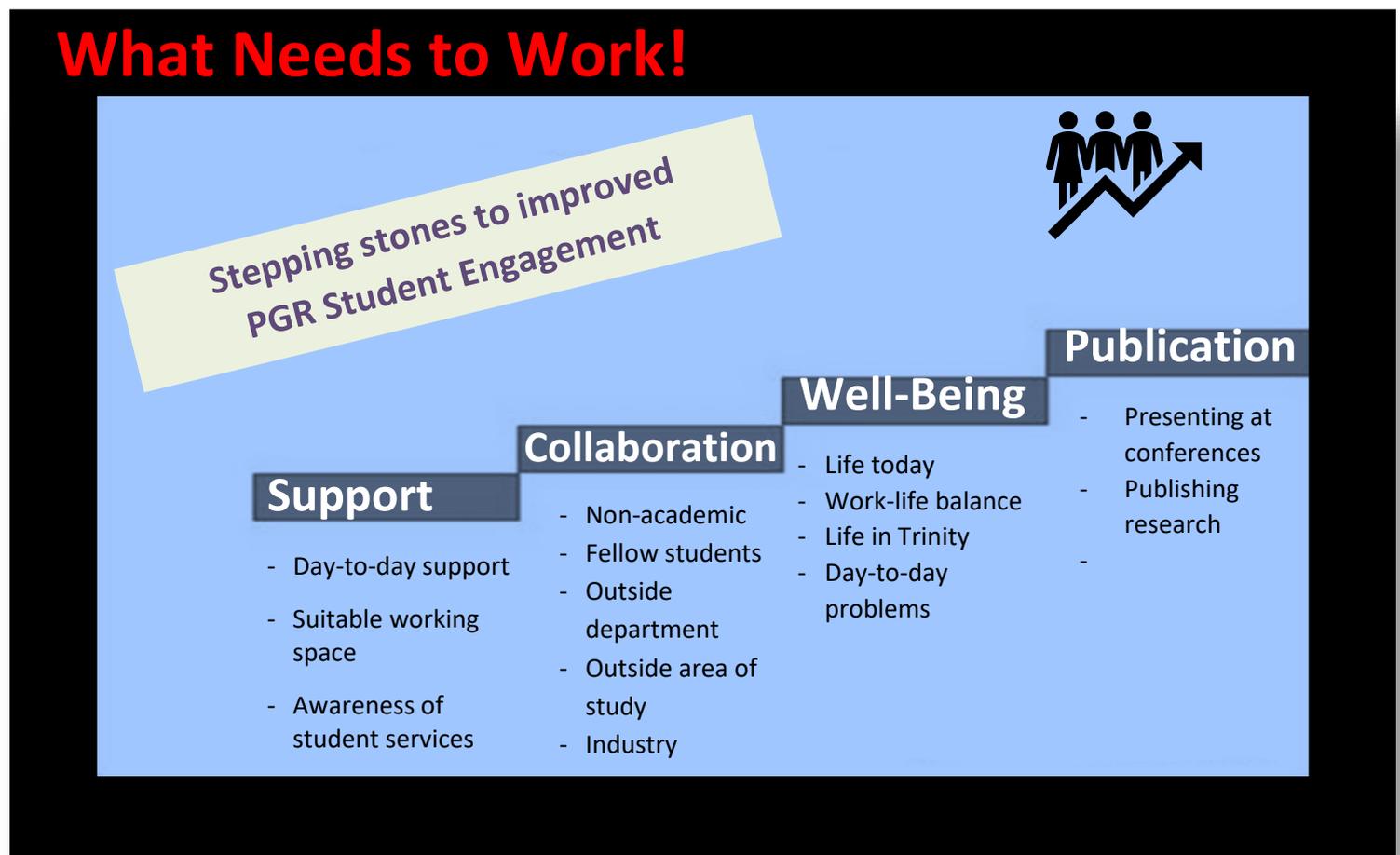
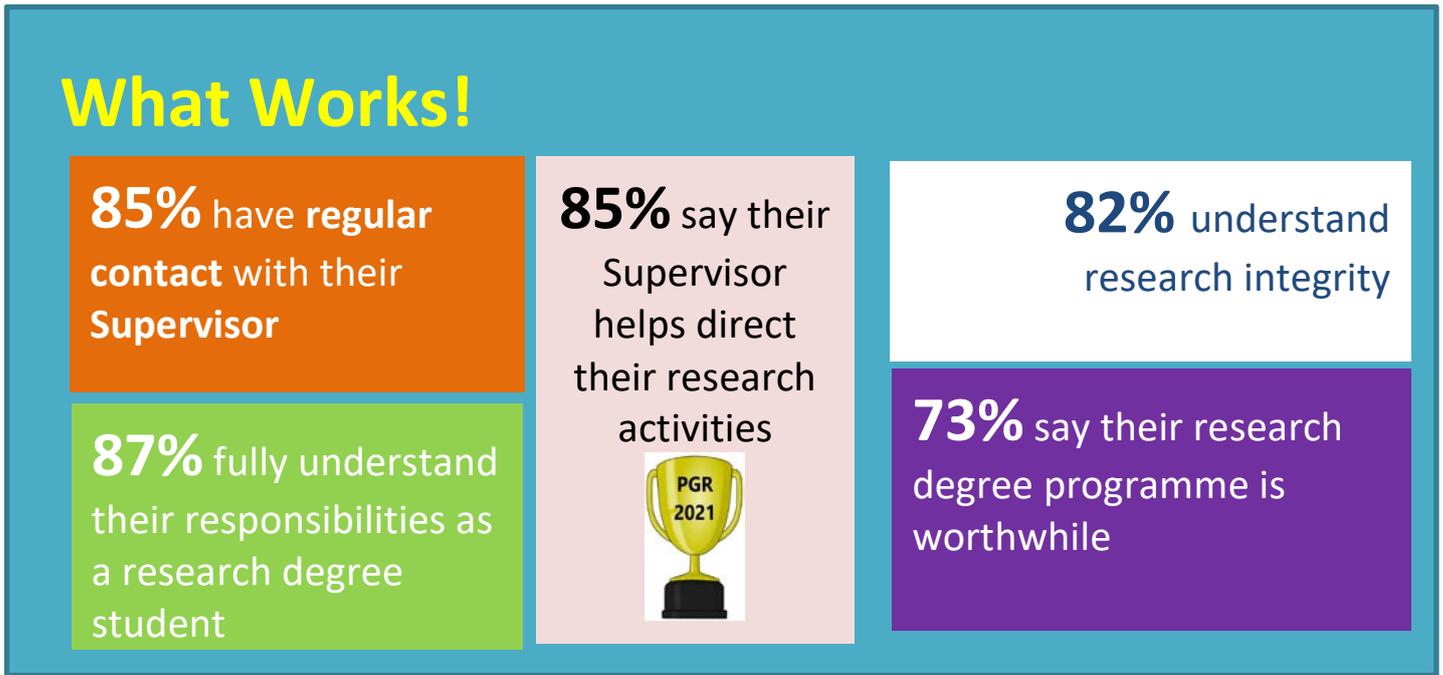
Areas where further improvement in the PGR student experience warrants consideration include:

- the overall satisfaction in evaluating the respondents' entire research continues to lag behind the >250 group (Trinity 69%, >250 76%). (Refer to fig. 2 above and 4.12)
- the experience of AHSS PGR respondents compares unfavorably across a number of aspects with that of STEM and HS respondents - infrastructure and facilities, funding, collaboration opportunities and specialist training.
- interventions to support PGR students in the latter years of their programme as an overall experience is seen to decline as the years of study progress. (Refer 4.12)
- efforts to promote informal and formal supports available to PGR students must continue. Results show little movement since the start of the survey in 2018 on student awareness of *who to talk to other than their supervisor*. (Refer 4.3)
- more *awareness of the various student supports* available to PGR students need to be highlighted as a drop of 10% is evident in 2021 compared with 2019 (2021 40%, 2019 50%). (Refer 4.6.3)
- Trinity PGRs are 10% less satisfied with their *work-life balance* than those in the comparator group of universities (TCD 2021 37%, >250 group 47%). Despite a range of initiatives in this area, Trinity continues to face challenges to keep pace with student wellbeing concerns. (Refer 4.6.3)
- increased effort to value and respond to PGR *student feedback* (TCD 2021 37%, down from 45% in 2019). (Refer 4.6.3)
- *innovation and entrepreneurial skills* and the capacity to be creative. Trinity PGR respondents continue to report lower levels of uptake of training in innovation and entrepreneurship compared with PGR respondents in the > 250 comparator group (TCD 2021 10%; > 250 group 19%). (Refer 4.6.1)

'Very little provided by the school directly' 4th Yr, AHSS, AHSS, Soc. Work and Soc. Policy

'More transferable skills - using initiative, communication' innovation. 2nd Yr, STEM, Genetics and Microbiology

Figure 3 What Works



3. The Impact of COVID-19

3.1 COVID-19 Specific Questions

The analysis presented in this section addresses the overall experience of Trinity respondents and the experience by Faculty in response to the COVID-19 questions.

Table 4 COVID-19 Specific Questions (>250 Univ, TCD and across Faculty) *Life during the COVID-19 pandemic*
Survey Section A: Appendix 1, A1 - A.5

Do you 'somewhat/definitely agree or somewhat/definitely disagree' with the following statements about the impact COVID-19 has had on your experience?

My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication.

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	7%	8%	13%	5%	6%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	15%	14%	14%	14%	11%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	45%	52%	48%	54%	54%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	33%	27%	26%	26%	28%

COVID-19 has affected my funding or my ability to fund myself during my research.

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	36%	32%	25%	36%	33%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	30%	28%	27%	29%	30%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	17%	20%	20%	19%	19%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	17%	20%	28%	16%	19%

I have adequate access to the on-campus facilities required to engage with my research.

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	15%	16%	24%	12%	12%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	26%	26%	31%	25%	20%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	44%	45%	39%	45%	56%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	15%	13%	6%	19%	12%

I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc.).

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	12%	14%	13%	15%	11%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	21%	24%	18%	26%	31%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	41%	40%	43%	40%	36%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	26%	22%	26%	19%	22%

I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	15%	18%	22%	15%	17%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	27%	34%	33%	34%	32%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	42%	37%	36%	38%	36%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	16%	12%	9%	13%	15%

The widest disparity between Trinity PGR respondents and those in other Irish Universities was in the sense of connection to College as a result of restricted access during COVID-19, where 49% of Trinity respondents’ ‘somewhat or definitely agreed’ that they felt a connection to College, compared with 58% of respondents’ in the comparator group of Irish Universities – a difference of -9%.

AHSS respondents’ chose the ‘definitely or somewhat disagree’ response options at higher rates than STEM or HS respondents on issues of communication, access to campus facilities required to engage with their research and in terms of a connection to College despite restricted access to campus. This may reflect arrangements put in place to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on students involved in Lab /Team-based research projects in STEM and HS.

3.2 Positive Impact of the HEA COVID-19 Fund on Researchers

The HEA COVID-19 Cost Extension Fund, made available in July 2020 to assist in the provision of costed extensions to research activities, has been instrumental in supporting researchers through the pandemic. This is evident in the survey findings where 60% of postgraduate research students reported that *COVID-19 did not have an impact on their funding or their ability to fund themselves during their research*. Across the faculties over half of the respondents’ report that funding did not affect their research studies (AHSS 52%, STEM 65%, HS 63%).

‘I have managed to secure adequate funding to be able to extend my research,’
3rd Yr, HS, Medicine

Table 5 COVID-19 has affected my funding or my ability to fund myself during my research

Survey Section: Appendix 1, A.2

	Trinity	Gender		Domicile		Mode of Study	
		Male	Female	Irish	Non-Irish	Full-time	Part-time
Definitely disagree	32%	33%	32%	34%	31%	32%	31%
Mostly disagree	28%	30%	27%	30%	27%	28%	33%
Mostly agree	20%	18%	20%	18%	21%	20%	16%
Definitely agree	20%	19%	21%	19%	22%	20%	20%

The positive impact of funding from the HEA COVID-19 Fund has been a contributory factor in easing much of the stress and uncertainty experienced during this turbulent period and is further evident across other profiles as seen in

the table above i.e., 64% Irish and 58% non-Irish ‘definitely or mostly disagree’ that COVID-19 affected their funding or ability to fund themselves during their research.

3.3 Qualitative Comments on COVID-19 Learning Experience

Respondents were invited to provide comments on two open questions, namely:

- I. How has COVID-19 most impacted on your research?
- II. In what way(s) could your higher education institution improve its support for you during the current circumstances?

This survey provides evidence that the *research degree programme was most valuable* in a number of ways. Of the 474 responses, 404 (85%) provided a response to the questions on the positive elements of the online/blended learning experience which they want to keep when on-campus studies resume. The figure below outlines the top four overall themes.

Figure 5 How has COVID-19 most impacted on your research?



Themes of how COVID-19 impacted research progress		
Reduced/lack of access to facilities and resources	170	42%
Research delays	101	25%
Lack of communication	83	21%
Increased stress	50	12%
Total	404	

- o Less access to facilities and resources (110, 36%): respondents reported that they had restricted and limited access to the library, labs and training with specialised equipment that is necessary for research.

‘I left Dublin to be at home, so I no longer have access to the library and have to buy research materials.’ (3rd Yr, AHSS, Religion)

‘I have to access clinical data through my TCD wired computer and have been refused VPN access due to my student status’ (2nd Yr, HS Medicine)

‘Restricted lab access means less work can get done and no training for the foreseeable future on equipment’ (2nd Yr, STEM Chemistry)

- o Delays in research (85, 28%): Limited time in lab restricted type of experiments that could be conducted.

‘Loss of workspace, data and library resources. Also, mental wellbeing and personal issues.’ (3rd Yr, Humanities and Social Sciences)

‘Huge delay to all research in the lab. Reduced the likelihood of completing all work set out at the beginning of the PhD’ (4th Yr, STEM Biochemistry and Immunology)

‘COVID has completely affected my research. A planned research trip to the USA for one of my chapters of my thesis was cancelled.’ (3rd Yr, HS Medicine)

‘COVID-19 has significantly delayed the completion of my PhD.’ (4th Yr, LLCS)

Lack of communication (62, 20%): respondents reported that the reduced communication with supervisor and School resulted in making it difficult to make new collaborations. Time lost and delays or cancelled research resulted in greater stress.

‘Very limited communication and support from my School’s leadership, limited capacity to engage with colleagues, and inadequate home working environment.’ (3rd Yr, AHSS, Social Work and Social Policy)

‘Very stressful, hard to communicate research through emails, missing out on face-to-face discussions.’ (2nd Yr, STEM Computer Science and Statistics)

‘Collaboration and communication in research has not been as fruitful as it would have been should all the lab members be in TCD together.’ (1st Yr, HS Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)

- o Improved wellbeing (50, 16%): the pandemic living situation was reported as difficult due to the limited homework space, difficulties in remote access, delays in research etc. Issues relating to these led to lack of motivation, feelings of isolation and stress and anxiety for some of the respondents.

‘Loss of workspace, data and library resources. Also, mental wellbeing and personal issues.’ (3rd Yr, AHSS LSCS)

‘COVID has severely impacted my mental health which has had consequences for my research.’ (4th Yr, STEM, Physics)

‘My supervisor has always been absent at all and with the COVID it was one more excuse used for it. I never felt so lost and anxious.’ (2nd Yr, HS, Medicine)

This survey provides evidence that the *research degree programme was most valuable* in a number of ways. Of the 474 responses, 354 (75%) provided a response to the questions on the positive elements of online/blended learning experience they want to keep when on-campus studies resume. Figure 6 below outlines the top four overall themes.

Figure 6 *How has COVID-19 most impacted on your research?*



Themes in suggested improvements of supports		
Funding provision	133	38%
Improved accessibility	81	23%
Communication from Schools	76	21%
Increased support	64	18%
<i>Total</i>	<i>354</i>	

Qualitative data indicates levels of concern about the lack of communication, large online classes, the need to increase opening hours for the library.

- o Availability of funding: provision of funding to work at home, for extensions, mental health, relief funding.

‘HEA funding extension is appreciated, but the fact that it does not cover tuition fees renders it significantly less useful.’ (3rd Yr, AHSS Social Work and Social Policy)

‘Clarity in funding, confusion over costed extension caused a lot of stress that could have been avoided.’

(3rd Yr, HS, Engineering)

'Extra funding for the one-year extension' (4th Yr, HS, Nursing and Midwifery)

- Improved accessibility: respondents reported a need for more access to digital sources and library archives, widening access to labs to weekends, less paperwork, providing more notification of changes to access and regulations and make faster decisions regarding accessibility.

'More digitisation of library resources and expansion of access to paid databases.'

(4th Yr, AHSS, Histories and Humanities)

'Lower amounts of paperwork to access college and the zoology building for small, punctual needs would help.'

(4th Yr, STEM, Natural Sciences)

'Provide VPN access where needed.' (2nd Yr, HS, Medicine)

- School communication: provide timely, up-to-date, clear and frequent communication directly from Schools or Faculty.

'Better communication with students, as well as a more firm commitment to support students to get through this difficult period.' (4th Yr, AHSS, Law)

'I receive communications from my immediate supervisors and "from the Provost", but nothing from my Faculty, School, or Department.' (4th Yr, STEM, Natural Sciences)

'Effective communication and support is needed.' (1st Yr, HS, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)

- Widen support: provision of better supports listening to students, enhance online technology supports, improve mental health provision, help in broadening networking circles and guide more in forming career pathways.

'Devoting more time and support to give feedback and interact with PhD students.'

(3rd Yr, Social Sciences and Philosophy)

'Up-to-date information and strong support system.' (3rd Yr, Natural Sciences)

'Ensure postgraduate support outside of main campus.' (2nd Yr, Medicine)

Figure 8 Breakdown of student feedback across Faculties

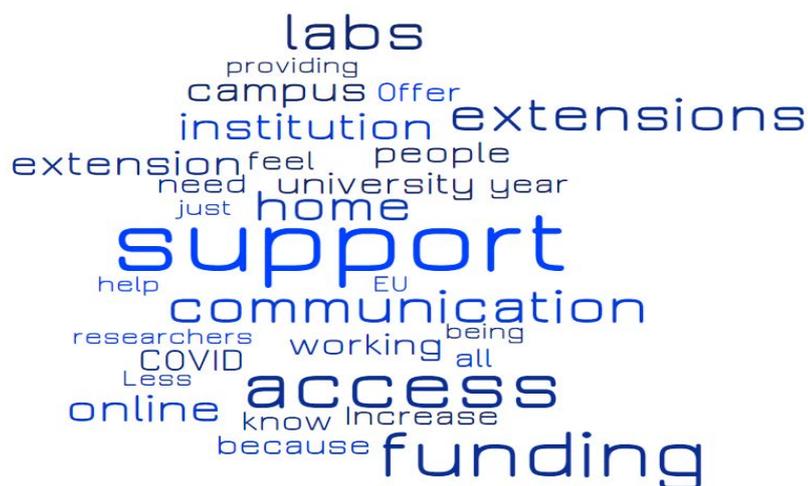
AHSS COVID Improve Suggestions



AHSS Improve COVID Themes		
Funding support	40	29%
Library access	38	28%
More Support	34	25%
Increased communication	26	18%
Total	138	

'More funding to invest in some basic infrastructure at home could help.'
(2nd Yr, AHSS, Social Sciences and Philosophy)

STEM COVID Improve Suggestions



AHSS Improve COVID Themes		
More support	70	42%
Wider access	38	23%
Funding	34	20%
Flexible extensions	26	15%
Total	168	

'I believe the university should be making students aware of all the different support networks (mental health in particular).'
(YR1, STEM, Natural Sciences)

HS COVID Improve Suggestions



HS Improve COVID Themes		
Support	25	32%
Communication	20	26%
Accessibility	17	23%
Online	15	19%
Total	77	

'Virtual communication with supervisors. Communication has been genuine and meaningful which has probably been the most important.' (HS, Nursing and Midwifery)

4. The PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2020/21

This report presents qualitative and quantitative results from 2020/21, the second year of the full implementation of the PGR Student Survey.ie (Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students), the first year being 2018/2019.

4.1 Research Infrastructure and Facilities

The findings for the ‘research infrastructure and facilities’ aspect point to the continuing disparity between the experience of AHSS PGR respondents and that of STEM and HS faculties. This continues a pattern seen in the PGR Student Survey since the Pilot in 2017/18.

Table 6 Research Infrastructure and Facilities

Survey Section B: Appendix 1, B.1 - B.4

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	2019 Trinity
Suitable working space	64%	58%	71%	56%	69%	76%
Adequate provision of computing resources /facilities	65%	53%	74%	63%	64%	66%
Library facilities	64%	44%	69%	68%	68%	79%
Access to specialist resources necessary for research	59%	45%	69%	56%	64%	71%

- Approximately two thirds of PGR respondents overall ‘definitely or mostly agree’ that they *had a suitable working space* (64%), *access to library facilities* (64%), and adequate provision of computing resources and facilities (65%). The question with the lowest performance in this aspect related to *access to specialist resources and facilities necessary for their research* (59%).
- In general STEM respondents report the most favorable conditions in terms of Research Infrastructure and Facilities, followed by HS respondents while AHSS respondents report the least favorable conditions. Factors that may influence this include the disciplinary nature of research in STEM and HS where PGR students may be allocated a ‘bench space’ as part of their PhD programme; STEM and HS continue to attract higher levels of external funding, whereas respondents in AHSS continue to report the highest levels of self-funding (44%).
- With regard to library facilities, AHSS disciplines are likely to be higher users of the library’s research archives. In 2020/21 the Library introduced a range of measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 such as click and collect and mail out of library resources to students in the republic of Ireland (see [The basics - Plan your Library visit - Library Guides at Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#)). Students who live outside the Dublin metropolitan area or who returned overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic were impacted by UK legal deposit legislation that restricts access to certain online resources in the library.

Figure 9 I have a suitable working space

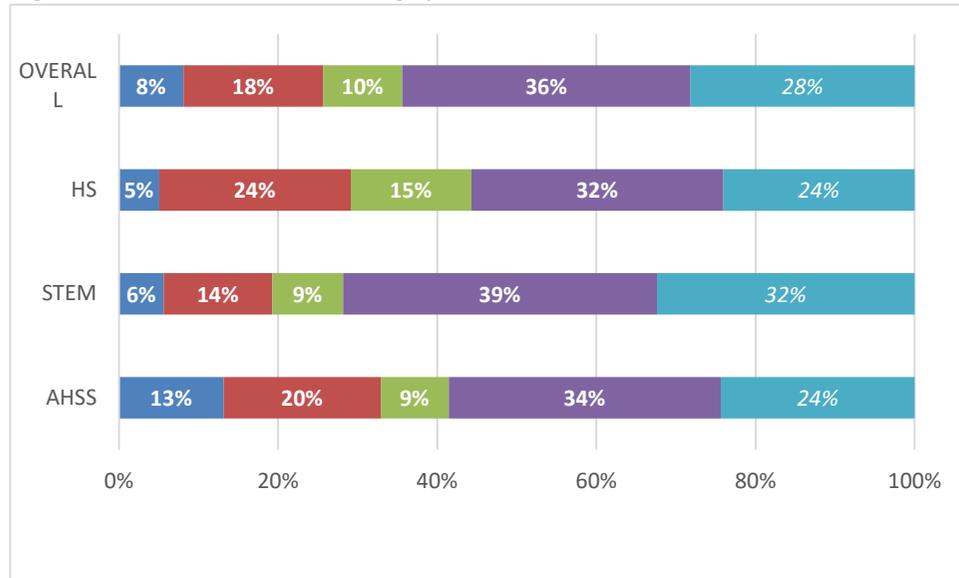


Figure 10 There is adequate provision of computing resources / facilities

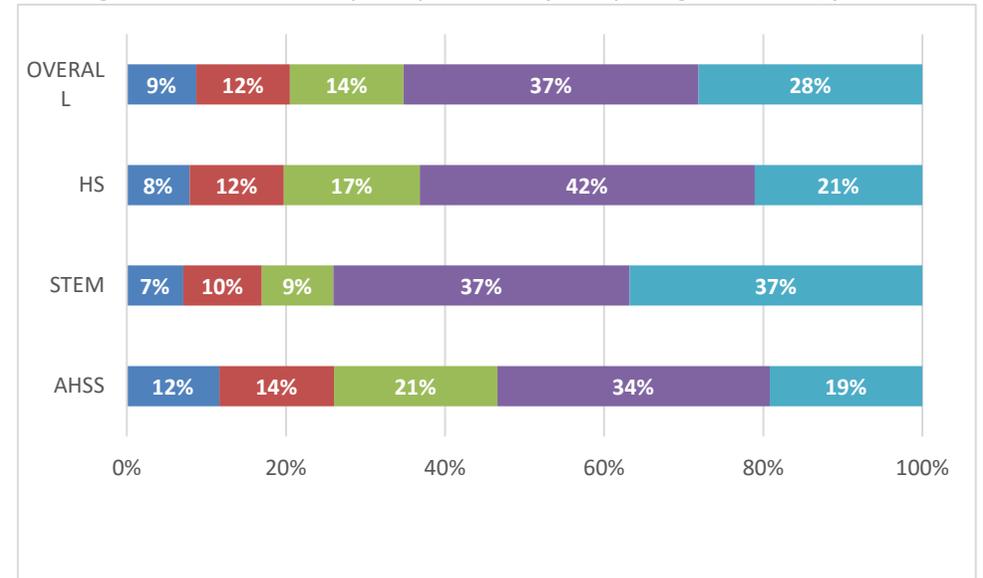


Figure 11 There is adequate provision of library facilities (including physical / online resources)

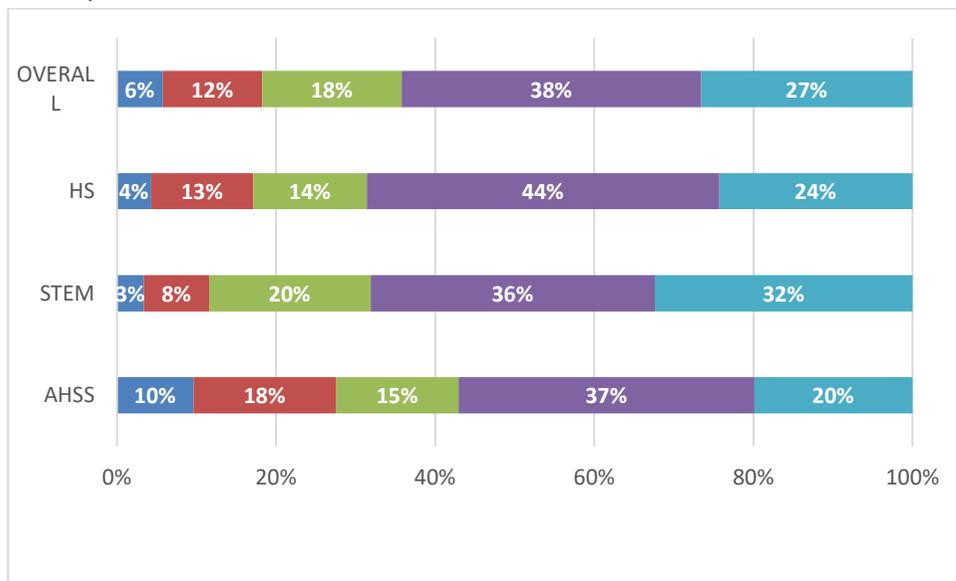
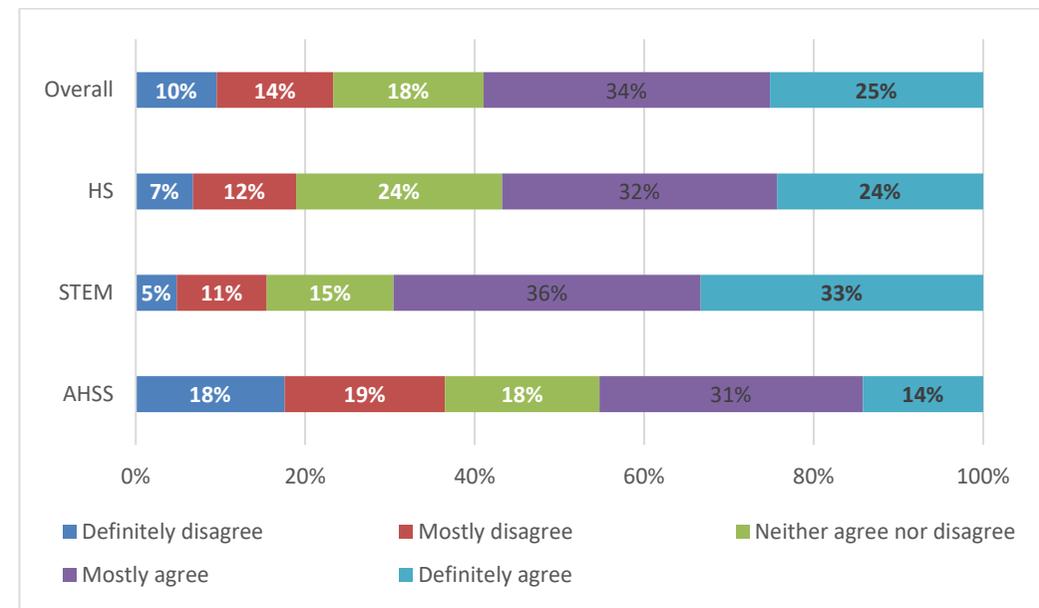


Figure 12 I have access to the specialist resources and facilities necessary for my research



4.2 Funding

Access to, and adequacy of, 'funding' over the term of the PGR lifecycle is one of the key indicators of completion in research degree programmes. Table 7 below indicates that the receipt of 'grant funding' is a key differentiator between Trinity PGR respondents (27%) and PGR respondents in the >250 comparator group (17%), a difference of 10%. The pattern of 'self-funding' and 'employer' funding remains consistent with previous years with 44% of AHSS respondents reporting that they are 'self-funded' and 13% of HS respondents describing themselves as 'employer-funded' (down from 17% in 2019).

Table 7 Source of Funding - Trinity PGR respondents compared with >250 comparator group
Survey Section B: Research Infrastructure and Facilities - Appendix 1, B.5

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	2019 Trinity
Scholarship	56%	53%	64%	40%	60%	56%
Scholarship (fees only)	5%	6%	2%	8%	7%	3%
Self-funded	21%	44%	4%	21%	19%	20%
Grant	27%	9%	35%	39%	17%	28%
Employer-funded	6%	3%	6%	13%	9%	7%

Clear distinctions on sources of funding emerge across the three faculties. As per the 2020/21 the outcomes show:

- *Scholarships* funding was the top source of financial support available to PGR respondents across all three faculties (AHSS 53%, STEM 64%, HS 40%).
- HS respondents report the highest proportion of 'grant' funded (39%), and 'employer' (13%) and the second-highest level of 'self-funding' (21%) after AHSS (44%).
- STEM respondents enjoy the highest level of 'scholarship' funding (64%) and the second highest level of 'grant' funding (35%).

Table 8 Scope of Funding Trinity PGR Respondents compared with >250 comparator group
Survey Section B: Research Infrastructure and Facilities - Appendix 1, B.6

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	2019 Trinity
Fee	94%	94%	95%	95%	97%	96%
Stipend	86%	76%	95%	75%	76%	87%
Research materials	54%	31%	66%	59%	55%	59%
Travel to conferences	48%	30%	61%	42%	53%	56%
Other travel (labs / other institutions)	24%	13%	31%	20%	27%	26%
Specialist training	24%	15%	27%	29%	25%	24%

Almost all respondents report that their *fees* are covered by their funding source (94%), with 86% stating that their funding covers some level of *stipend*. Of note is the proportion reporting their *fees cover a stipend* which is 10

percent higher for Trinity PGR respondents (86%) than PGR respondents in the >250 comparator group (76%).

Clear differences emerge in the breakdown by faculty with STEM respondents enjoying the most favorable conditions:

- Over three quarters of respondents across all three faculties report that their *stipend* was covered by their funding (AHSS 76%, STEM 95%, HS 75%);
- Funding for *research materials* is higher in laboratory-based disciplines STEM (66%) and HS (59%) compared with AHSS (31%), the Trinity overall response (54%) and ≥ 250 comparator group (55%);
- *Travel to conferences* for STEM respondents (61%) is higher than Trinity overall (48%) and the ≥ 250 comparator group (53%);
- Access to specialist training is marginally higher in HS (29%) compared with STEM (27%).

4.3 Supervision

Continuing the pattern established in the PGR Student Survey.ie in previous years, the quality of supervision is reported as being one of the most positive aspects of the PGR student experience in Trinity.

Table 9 Model of supervision Trinity vs >250 comparator group

Survey Section C: Supervision - Appendix 1, C.1

		2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	>250 Univ	2019 Trinity
I am being supervised by...	One supervisor	67%	76%	68%	39%	44%	70%
	Two supervisors	29%	22%	28%	45%	45%	29%
	Three or more supervisors	5%	2%	4%	16%	11%	1%

- The *model of supervision* as experienced by the majority of Trinity PGR respondents continues to be 1:1 supervision (67%). The dominance of the single Supervisor model reduced slightly in 2020/21, which may be due to the introduction of Thesis Committees for new doctoral research students in 2018/19.
- The one Supervisor model is the predominant model in AHSS (76%) and in STEM (68%). As per the findings from 2017/18, HS is the only faculty where a ‘two-Supervisor’ (45%) or ‘three-Supervisor’ (16%) model is evident as alternate models to the 1:1 supervisor model.

Table 10 Supervision Support*Survey Section C & I: Supervision - Appendix 1, C.2 – C.5 & Section I, I.2 - i.4*

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	2019 Trinity
Appropriate Supervisor support	83%	84%	83%	79%	86%	81%
Regular contact with Supervisor	85%	83%	85%	85%	86%	85%
Supervisor feedback helps direct research activities	85%	88%	84%	82%	87%	82%
Supervisor helps identify my training and development needs	71%	75%	75%	62%	75%	71%
Supervisor's responsibility towards the research degree student	83%	86%	82%	82%	85%	83%
Who to approach other than my Supervisor	58%	65%	56%	58%	71%	58%

- The supervision results are some of the most consistent across the survey. Across all respondents, 83% definitively or mostly agreed that their *Supervisor or Supervisors provided appropriate levels of support*;
- 85% of respondents overall reported having *regular contact with their Supervisor* and that *Supervisor feedback helps direct research activities* (85%);
- Of note is that there has been little movement since the inaugural Trinity PGR Survey in the proportion of PGR respondents who reported that they 'definitely or mostly agree' that they know *who to approach other than their Supervisor* if they have concerns about their research degree programme (202, 58%; 2016, 58%). This compares with 71% in the comparator group of Universities, a difference of 13%.

Figure 13 My supervisor(s) provides the appropriate level of support for my research

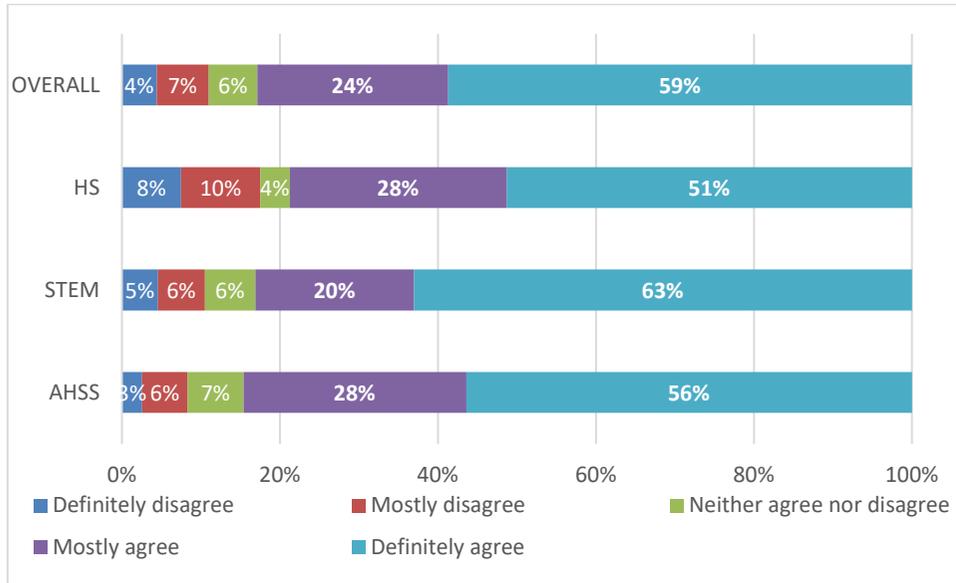


Figure 14 I have regular contact with my supervisor(s), appropriate for my needs

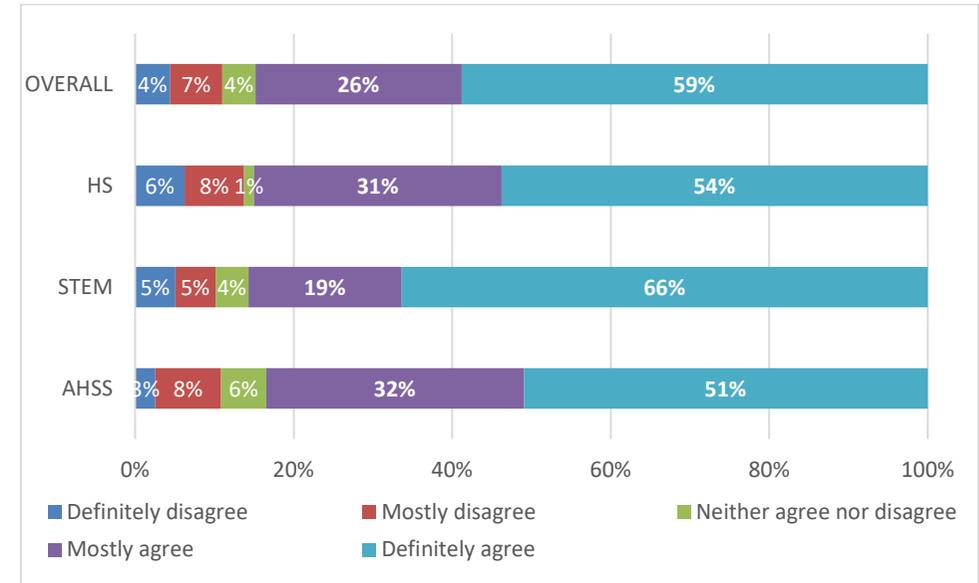


Figure 15 My supervisor(s) provides feedback that helps me to direct my research activities

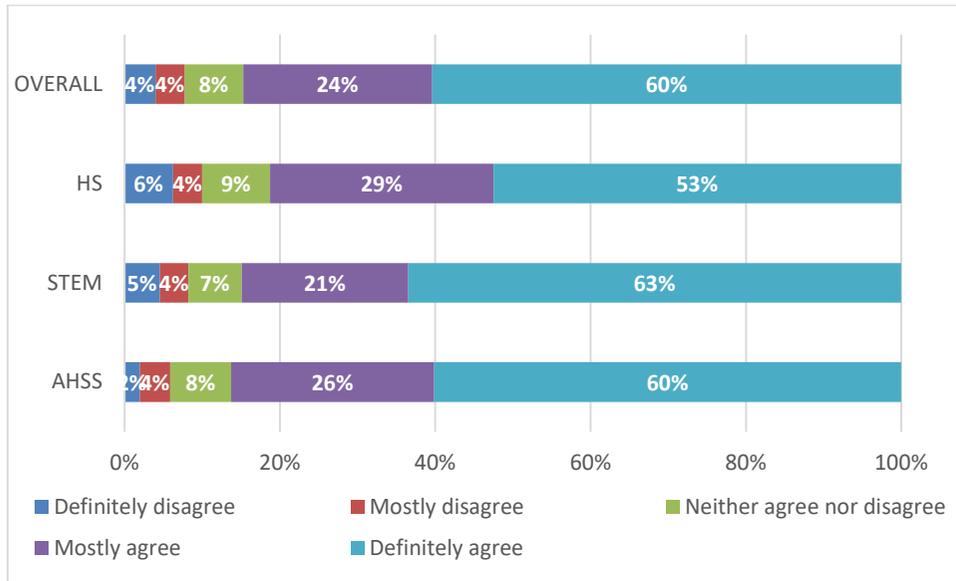


Figure 16 My supervisor(s) helps me to identify my training and development needs as a researcher

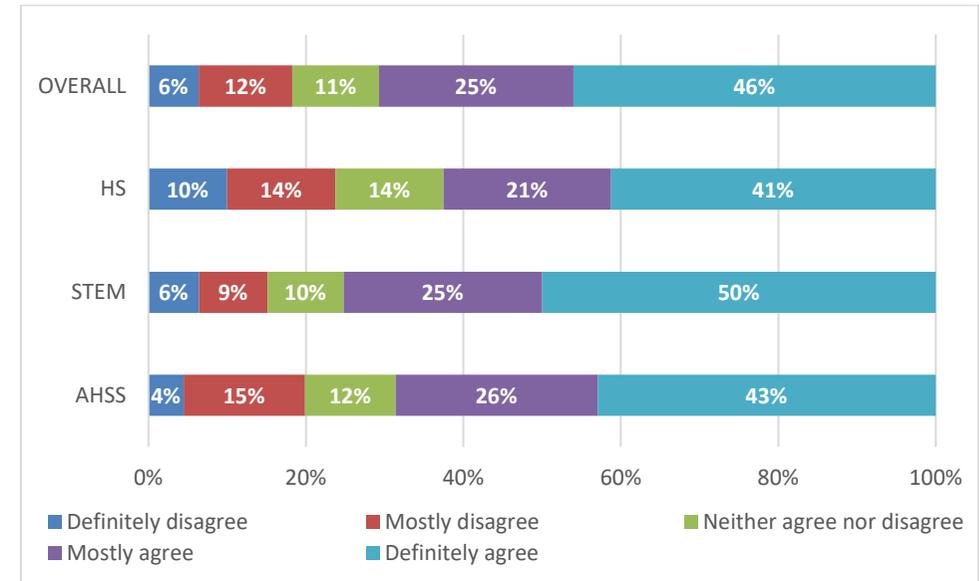


Figure 17 *I am aware of my supervisor*

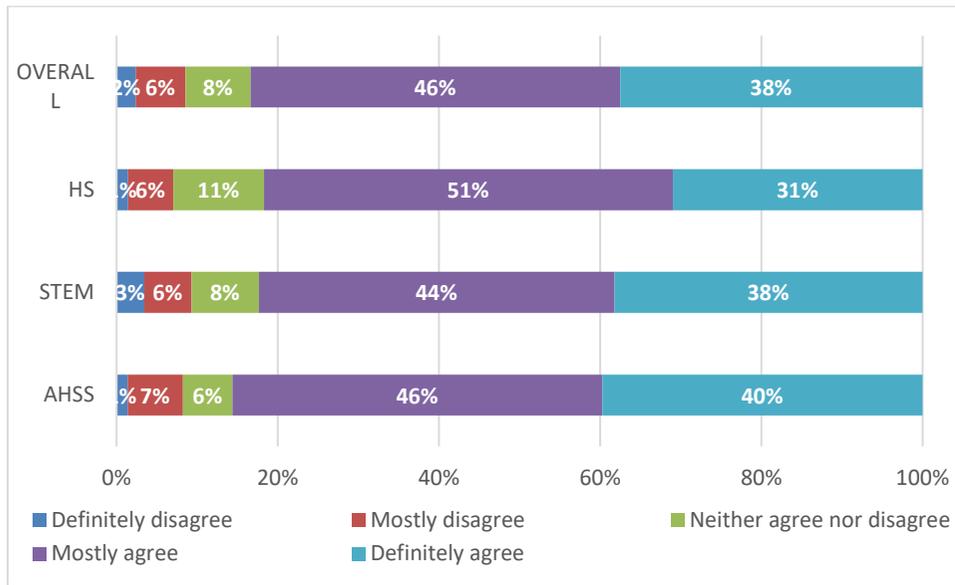
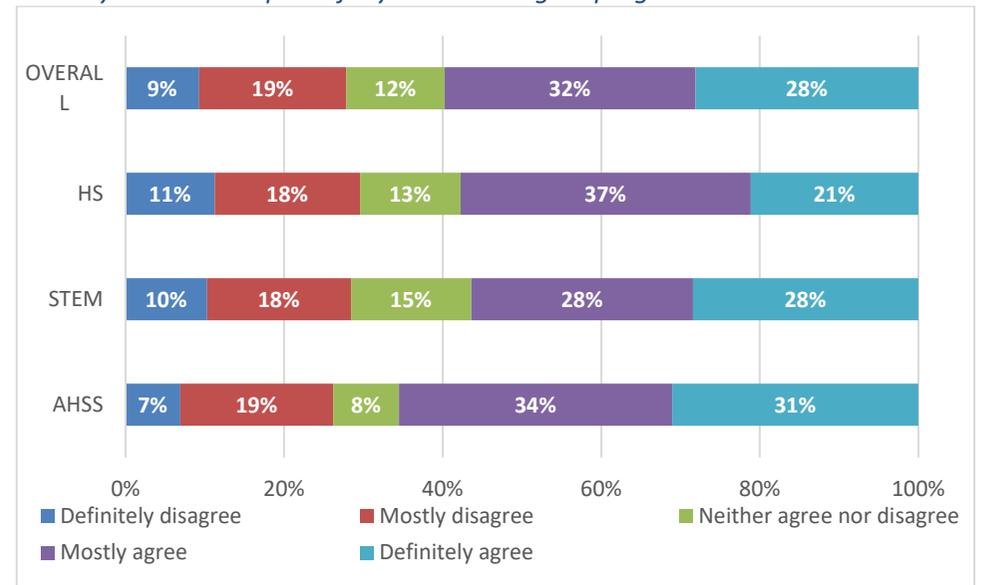


Figure 18 *Other than my supervisor(s), I know who to approach if I am concerned about any academic aspect of my research degree programme*



4.4 Research Culture

The research culture aspect is characterised by opportunities to be exposed to the research of other PGR students and departmental staff through formal and informal seminars and networking that build a sense of identity and reduce what can be an isolating experience for PGR students.

Table 11 Research Culture

Survey Section D: Supervision - Appendix 1, D.1 – D.4

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely or Most Agree)					
	2021	AHSS	STEM	HS	2019	≥ 250
My department provides access to a relevant seminar programme	69%	69%	70%	66%	68%	70%
The research ambience in my department stimulates my work	54%	42%	61%	57%	60%	58%
I have frequent opportunities to discuss my research with other research students	42%	36%	47%	46%	62%	47%
I have opportunities to become involved in the wider research community, beyond my department	38%	39%	40%	35%	50%	46%

The results across the questions relating to Research Culture were much more varied than other areas in the survey.

- The percentage of PGR respondents (69%) ‘definitely or mostly’ agreeing that they have *access to relevant seminar programmes* was the highest factor of research culture (AHSS 69%, STEM 70%, HS 66%).
- *Stimulating research ambience* follows with 54% ‘definitely or mostly’ agreeing that they have a stimulating research ambience. This compares with 60% in 2019, a fall of 6% (which may be related to Covid restrictions). STEM and HS produced similar results compared with AHSS (AHSS 42%, STEM 61%, HS 57%).
- Due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020/21 fewer opportunities were provided to students to discuss their research with each other. This is evident in the fall by 20% in response to the question ‘definitely or mostly agree’ that they had *frequent opportunities to discuss my research with other research students* (TCD 2021 42%; 2019 62%). Respondents in STEM and HS report greater opportunities to discuss their research with other research students than AHSS respondents (AHSS 36%, STEM 47%, HS 46%).
- The lowest rate of agreement was in relation to *accessing opportunities to engage with the wider research community* (38%). 39% of AHSS; 35% of HS and 40% of STEM ‘definitely or mostly disagree’ that they have opportunities to become involved in the wider research community.

Figure 19 My department provides access to a relevant seminar programme

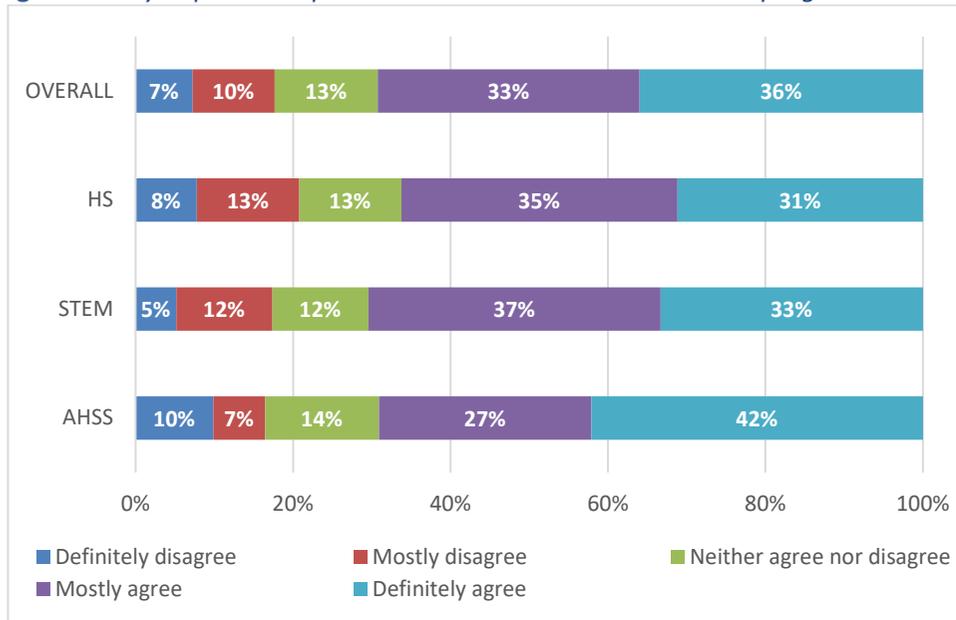


Figure 20 The research ambience in my department stimulates my work

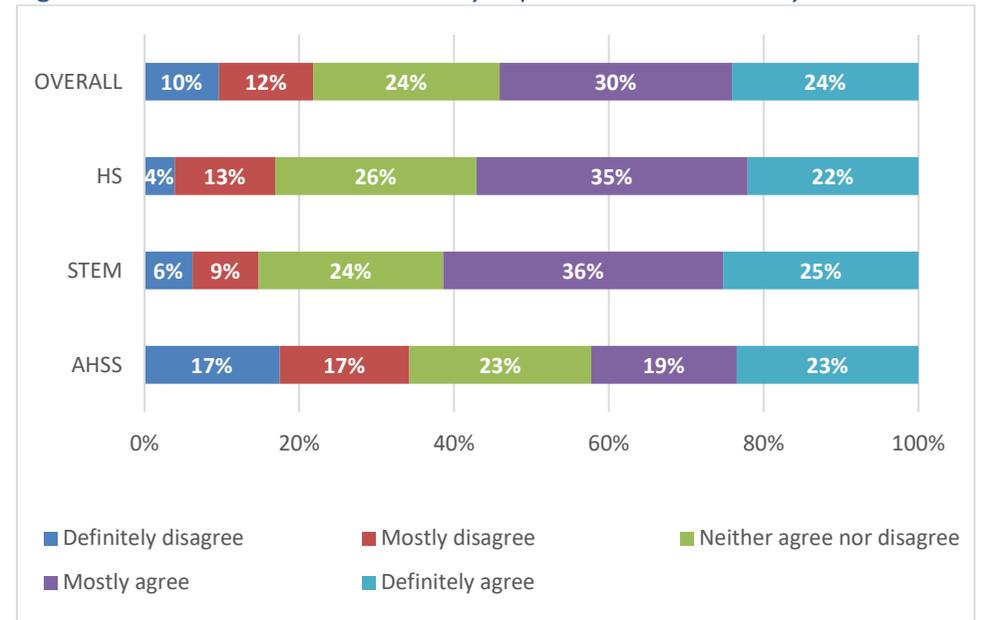


Figure 21 I have frequent opportunities to discuss my research with other research students

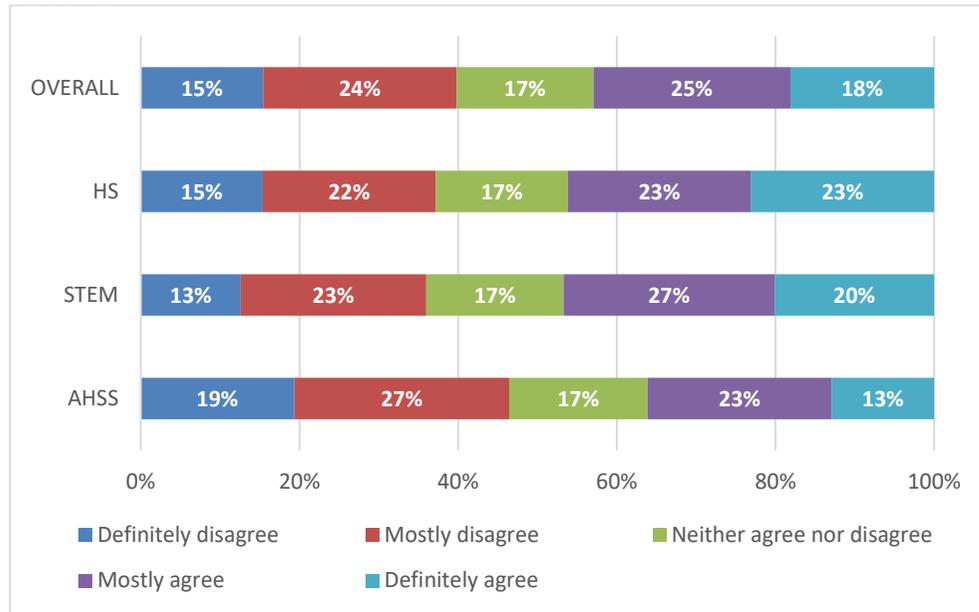
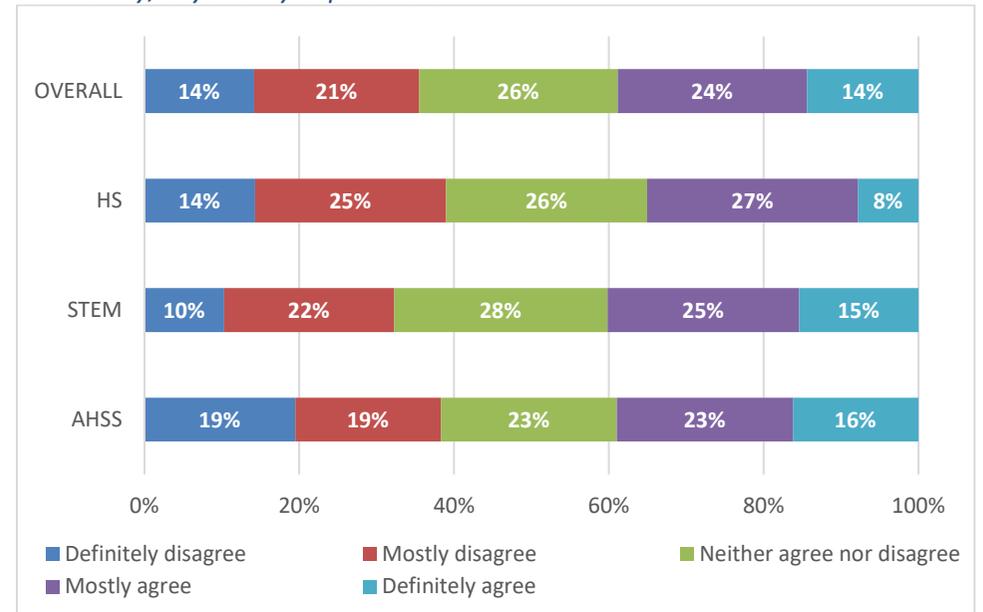


Figure 22 I have opportunities to become involved in the wider research community, beyond my department



4.5 Progress and Assessment

The aspect on progression and assessment assesses PGR respondents' understanding of the formal requirement of their research degree programme. One of the essential elements of success in terms of progress and assessment is that PGR students *understand their own responsibilities as a research student*.

Table 12 Progress and Assessment

Survey Section E & I: Supervision - Appendix 1, E.1 – E.4 and I.1

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	2019 Trinity
Appropriate Induction/ Orientation	57%	64%	55%	44%	68%	43%
Understanding of requirements for formal monitoring of progress	74%	73%	74%	78%	80%	69%
Understand the required standard for my Thesis	72%	77%	67%	72%	75%	69%
Clarity of final assessment procedure	66%	71%	63%	68%	69%	67%
Understanding of responsibilities as a research student	87%	87%	88%	87%	90%	90%

- The enhancement of PGR Orientation/Induction, e.g. increase in provision for September, January and March intakes, is evident in the increase by 14% from 2018/19 levels in the proportion of respondents stating that the induction/orientation was appropriate to their research degree programme (TCD 2020/21, 57%; 2018/19, 43%).
- Approximately three-quarters of PGR respondents overall (74%) reported that they *definitely or mostly agreed* that they *understood the formal requirements for monitoring of progress*. This was consistent across the three Faculties: 78% of HS, 74% of STEM and 73% AHSS respondents. This compares with 80% of PGR respondents in the >250 comparator group of institutions.
- AHSS (77%) results show a stronger level of understanding of the required standard of thesis and clarity of the final assessment procedure for their thesis compared with HS (72%) and (67%) STEM respondents.
- There was a high level of agreement across all PGR respondent (87%) in stating they *fully understand their responsibilities as a research degree student* (AHSS 87%, STEM 88%, HS 87%).

Figure 23 I received an appropriate induction / orientation to my research degree programme

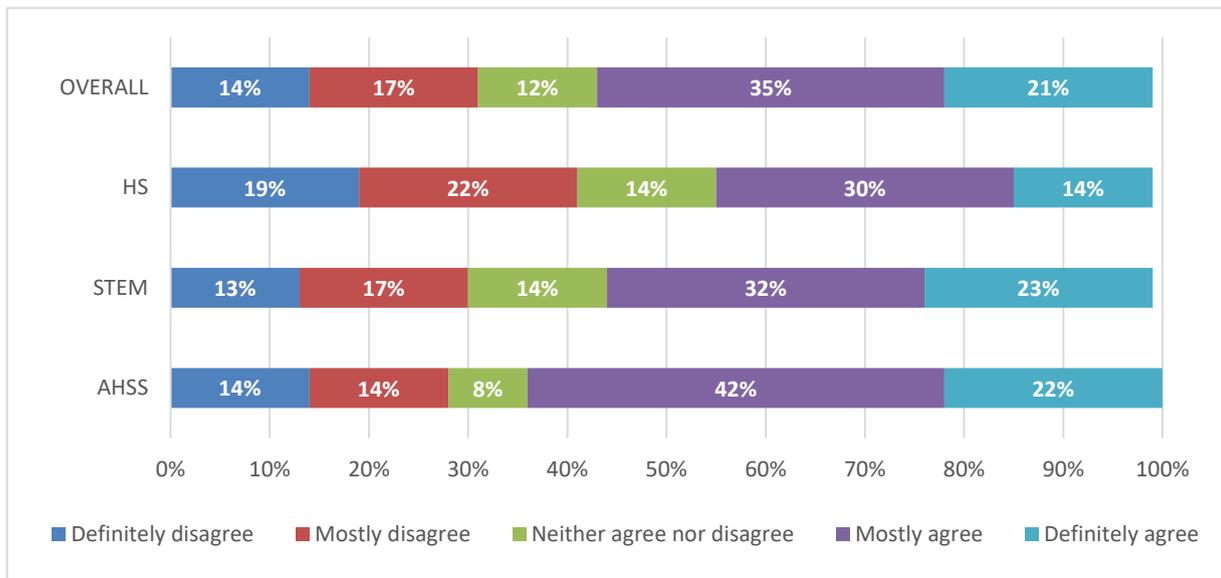


Figure 24 I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress

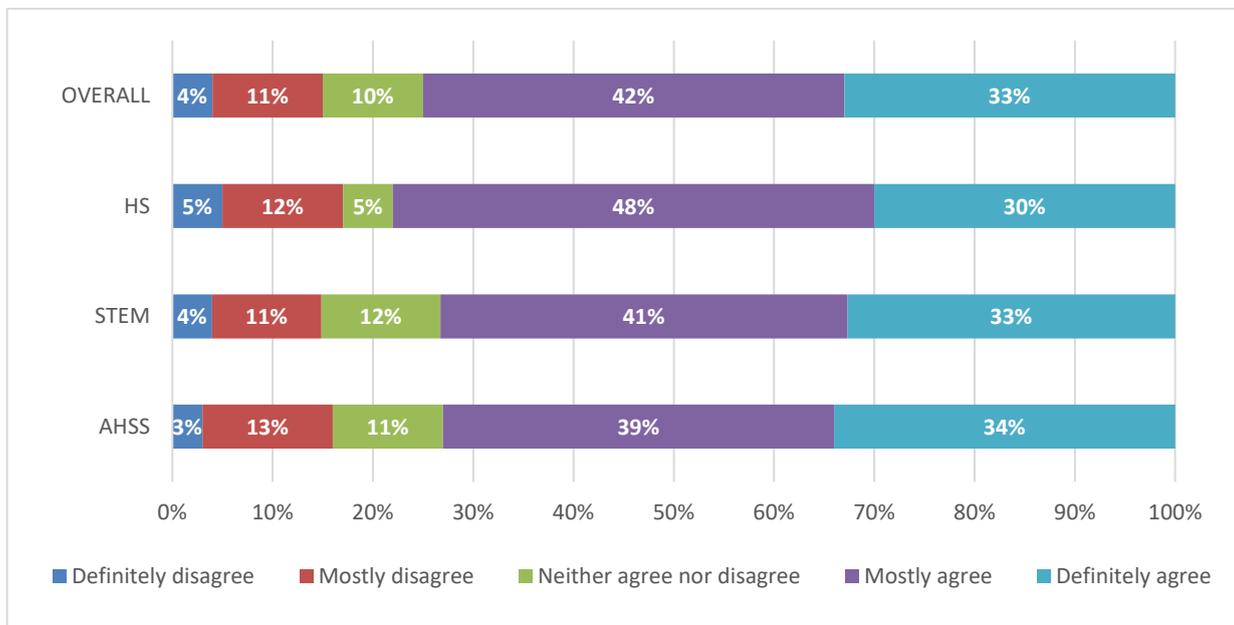


Figure 25 I understand the required standard for my thesis

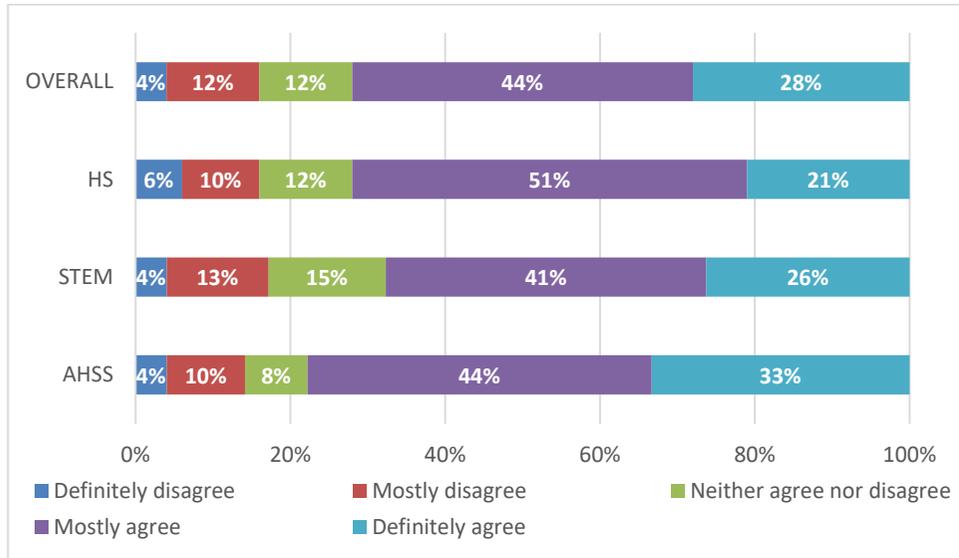


Figure 26 The final assessment procedures for my research degree are clear to me

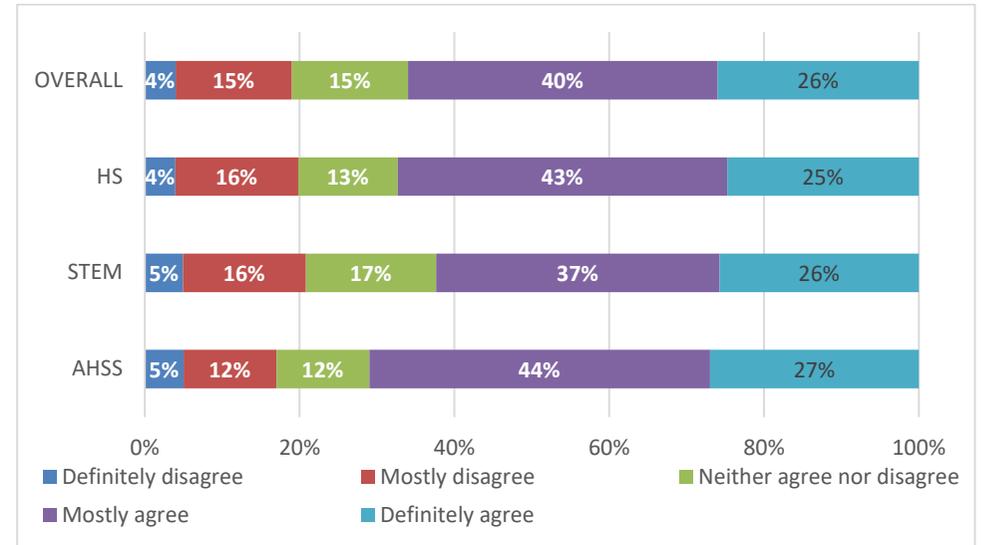
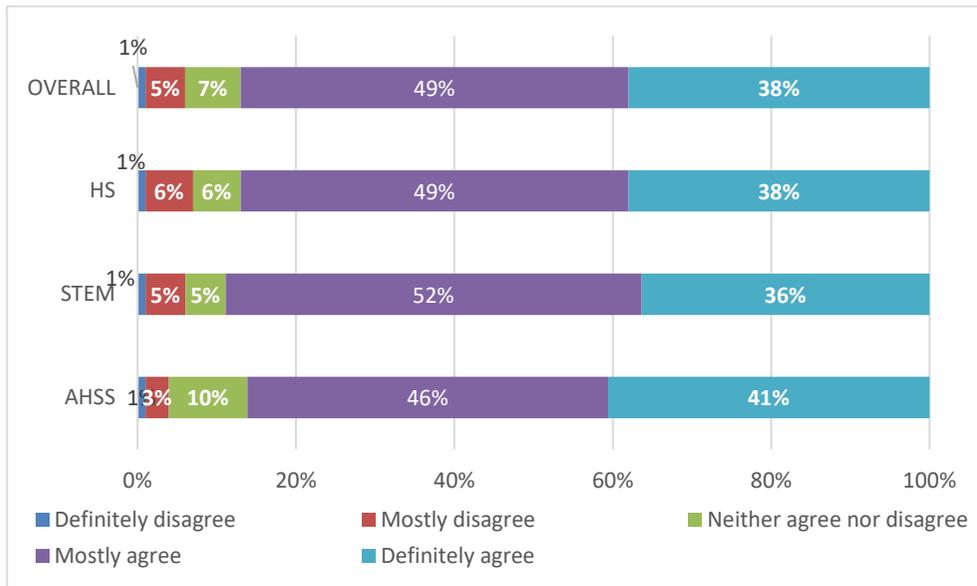


Figure 27 I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student



4.6 Development Opportunities

The Development Opportunities' aspect seeks to ensure that the core research and transferable skills, as outlined in the [IUA PhD Skills Statement](#), and [Ireland's Framework for Good Practice in Research Degree Programmes](#), are developed through participation in research degree programmes. There are fifteen statements addressing areas of development such as skills attainment, professional and career development and teaching and demonstrating. These will be addressed as they relate to/support each other, rather than in the order they appear e.g.

- Skills Attainment – Appendix 1, F1; F2; E3; F10 and F11;
- Professional Development – Appendix 1, F.6; E7; E08, F.9 and F.15;
- Career Development - Appendix 1, F.4; F.5; F12; F13 and F14;
- Teaching and Demonstrating – Appendix 1, F16, F17 and F18.

4.6.1 Skills Attainment

This area is a key part of the survey, which requires consideration of what development opportunities are taken by respondents and to investigate why opportunities are not availed of.

Table 13 Skills Attainment

Survey Section F: Development Opportunities, Appendix 1, F2; F3; F10 and F11

Questions	Responses	2021				> 250	2019
		Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	Univ	Trinity
Agreeing a personal training or development plan	Yes	38%	39%	38%	35%	46%	40%
	No / Not avail.	62%	61%	62%	65%	54%	60%
Receiving training to develop my research skills	Yes	69%	62%	69%	83%	80%	66%
	No / Not avail.	31%	38%	31%	17%	20%	34%
Receiving training to develop my other transferable skills	Yes	49%	38%	54%	59%	65%	50%
	No / Not avail.	51%	62%	46%	41%	35%	50%
Receiving training in entrepreneurship and innovation	Yes	10%	7%	13%	9%	19%	12%
	No / Not avail.	90%	93%	87%	91%	83%	88%
Putting training in entrepreneurship and innovation into practice	Yes	6%	3%	9%	3%	9%	4%
	No / Not avail.	94%	97%	9%	97%	91%	96%

- Receiving training to develop research skills is core to the PGR student experience. In 2020/21, 69% of Trinity PGR respondents reported that they had *availed of training to develop their research skills* and 49% *availed of training to develop other transferable skills*. This compares with 80% (-11%) and 65% (-16%) respectively in the comparator >250 group.
- 46% of PGR respondents in the >250 comparator institutions' group reported that they agreed a personal *training or development plan* compared with 38% of Trinity PGR respondents overall (-8%); 39% of AHSS respondents; 38% of STEM respondents and 35% of HS respondents. Of note is that a further 21% of AHSS respondents reported that this option was 'not available' to them, compared with 15% of STEM and 12% of HS respondents.
- Trinity has an Innovation & Entrepreneurship Strategy and Tangent offers programmes in entrepreneurship. However, only 10% of PGR respondents overall reported that they had received training in innovation and

entrepreneurship, compared with 19% of PGR respondents in the >250 comparator group of institutions. Respondents in STEM (13%) are more likely to avail of *training in innovation and entrepreneurship* compared with HS (9%) and AHSS (7%). Of note is that 22% of respondents report that training in this area was not available to them. Training in Innovation and Entrepreneurship is included in the [Postgraduate Research Student Handbook](#) in an effort to embed awareness of this training for PGR students and Supervisors. Only 6% of PGR respondents report that they had put their training in entrepreneurship and innovation into practice i.e. leverage the opportunity to submit an invention disclosure or file a patent related to their research. STEM (9%) respondents were most likely to put their training in entrepreneurship and innovation into practice compared with AHSS (3%) and HS (3%) respondents.

Figure 28 *Putting training in entrepreneurship and innovation into practice*

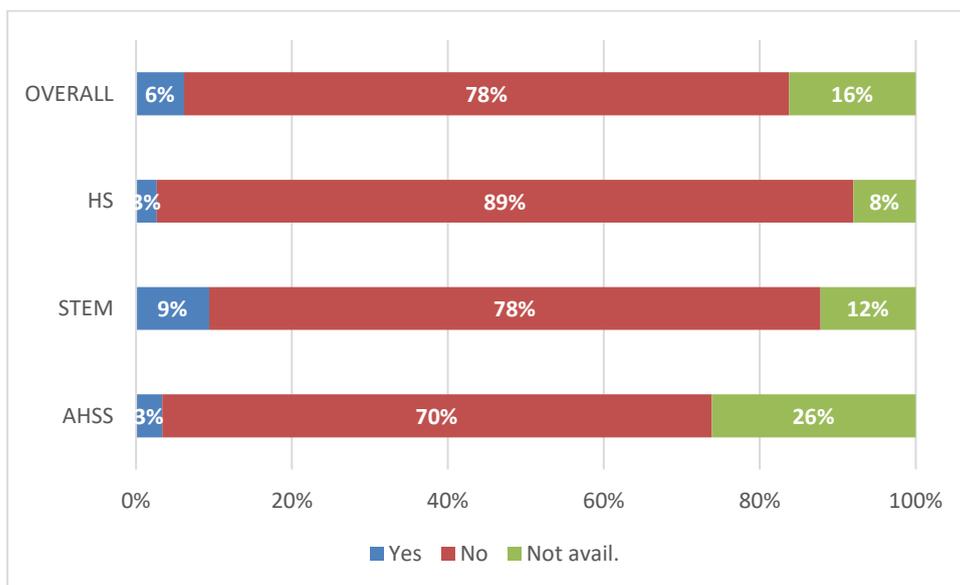


Figure 29 *Agreeing a personal training or development plan*

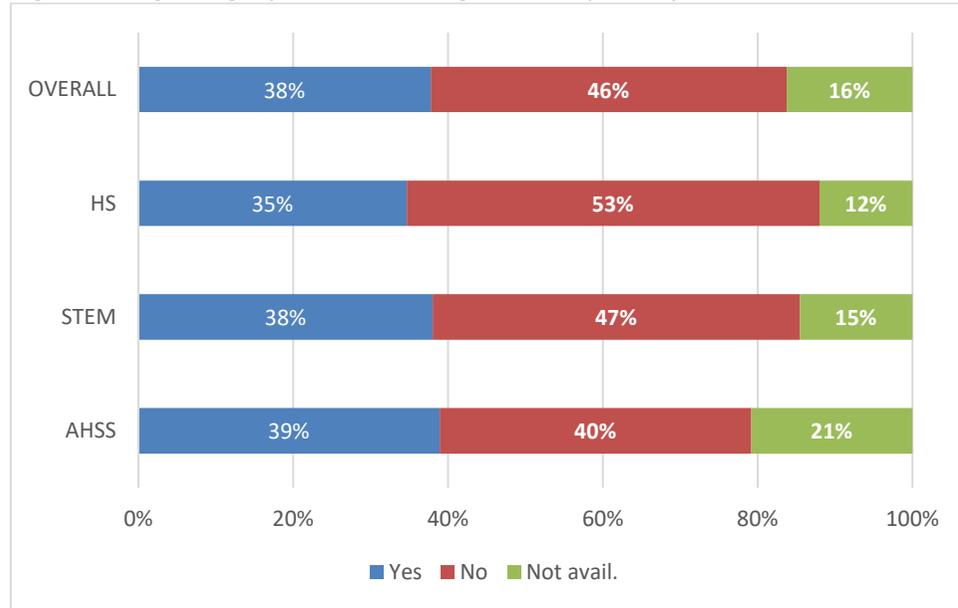


Figure 30 *Receiving training to develop my research skills*

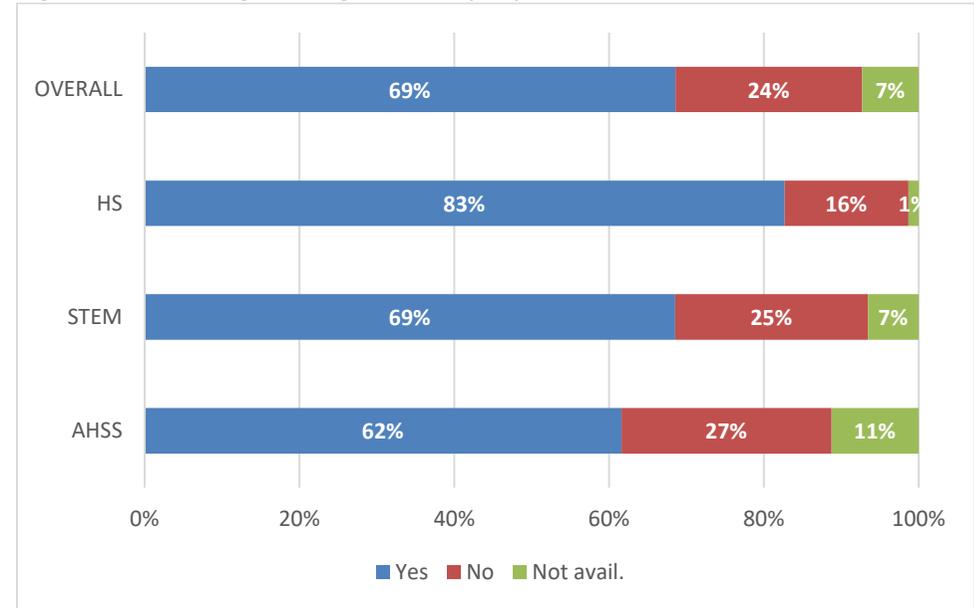


Figure 31 *Receiving training to develop my other transferable skills*

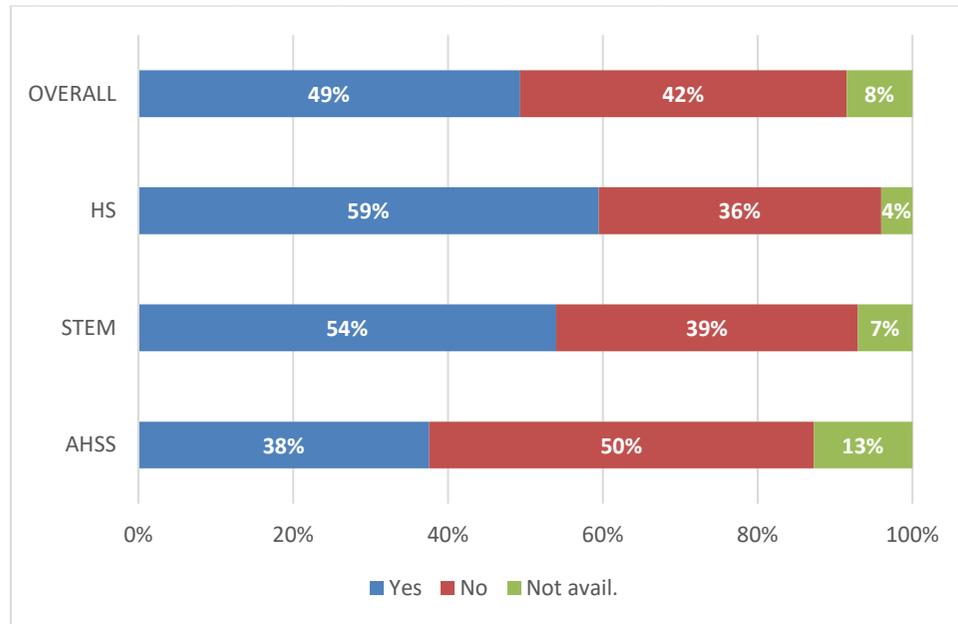
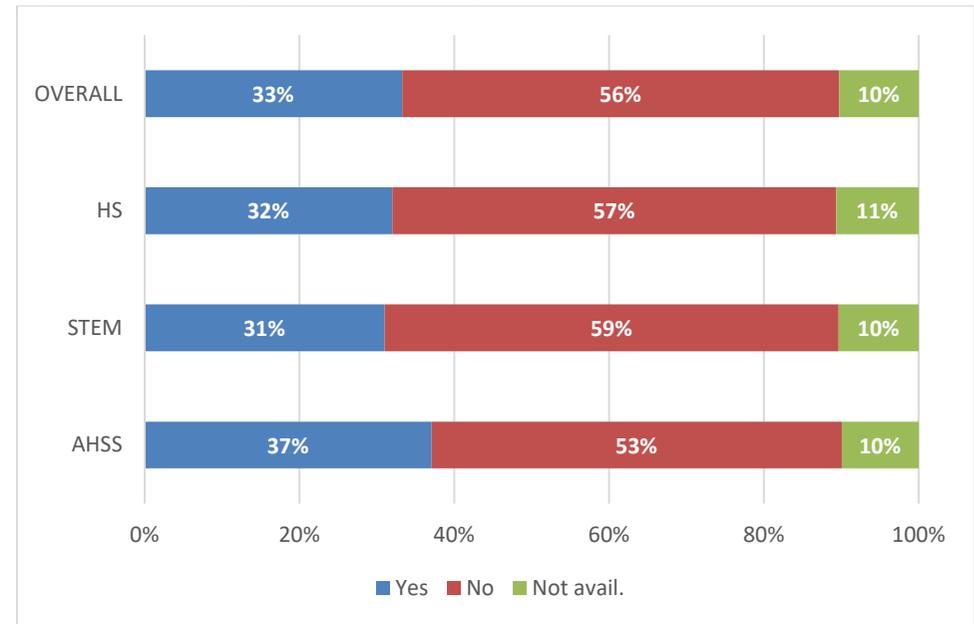


Figure 32 *Receiving advice on career options*



4.6.2 Professional Development

The *professional development* opportunities addressed in this section relate to opportunities to attend an academic research conference, present a paper at a research conference, submit a paper for publication and communicate your research to a non-research audience. The underlying theme is that each provides the opportunity to bring one’s research, or the experience of being a research student in Trinity, into the public domain.

Table 14 Progress Development

Survey Section F: Development Opportunities, Appendix 1, - Appendix 1, F.6; F7; F8, F.9 and F.15

Questions	Responses	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	>250 Univ	2019 Trinity
Attending an academic research conference	Yes	70%	69%	68%	78%	72%	85%
	No / Not avail.	30%	31%	32%	22%	28%	15%
Presenting a paper or poster at an academic research conference	Yes	62%	61%	59%	69%	60%	70%
	No / Not avail.	38%	39%	41%	31%	40%	30%
Submitting a paper for publication in an academic journal or book	Yes	50%	46%	49%	63%	51%	51%
	No / Not avail.	50%	54%	51%	37%	49%	49%
Communicating your research to a non-academic audience	Yes	40%	40%	38%	41%	41%	43%
	No / Not avail.	60%	60%	62%	59%	58%	61%

- The disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen in the response to the ‘No/not Available’ response option e.g., *conference attendance* (30%) in 2021 compares with 15% in 2019 (a decrease of 15%) and *presenting a paper or poster at research conferences* (38% in 2021 compares with 30% in 2019 (a decrease of -8%).
- Respondents across HS report the highest *attendance of academic research conferences* (AHSS 69%, STEM 68%, HS 78%), *presenting a paper or poster* (AHSS 61%, STEM 59%, HS 69%) and *submitting a paper for publication* (AHSS 46%, STEM 49%, HS 63%).
- Opportunities to work collaboratively with non-academic audiences remained consistent during COVID-19 compared with 2019 (2021 40%, 2019; 43%). Across the faculties the lower level of engagement outside their research environment is similar across the faculties (AHSS 40%, STEM 38%, HS 41%).

Figure 33 *Attending an academic research conference*

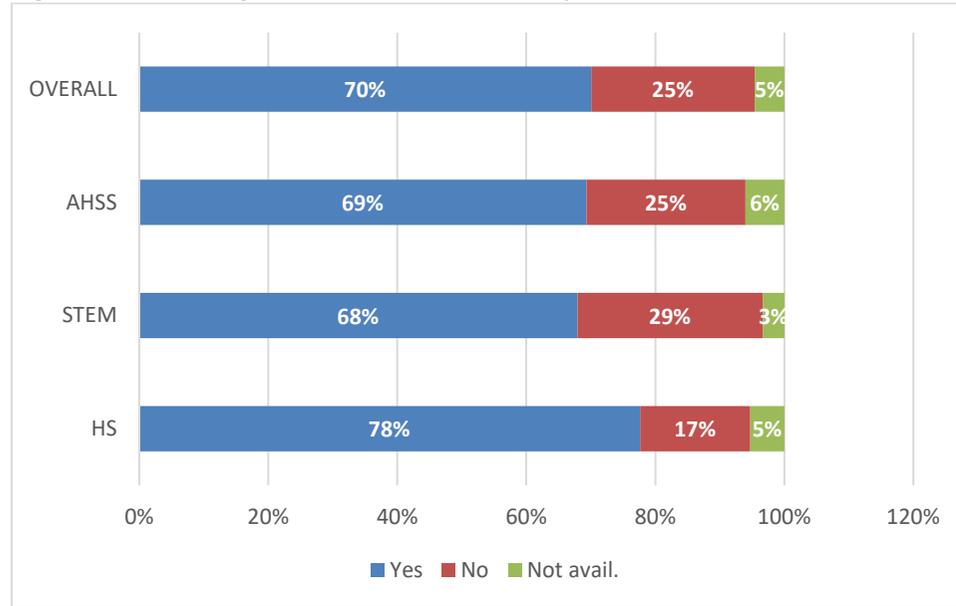


Figure 34 *Presenting a paper or poster at an academic research conference*

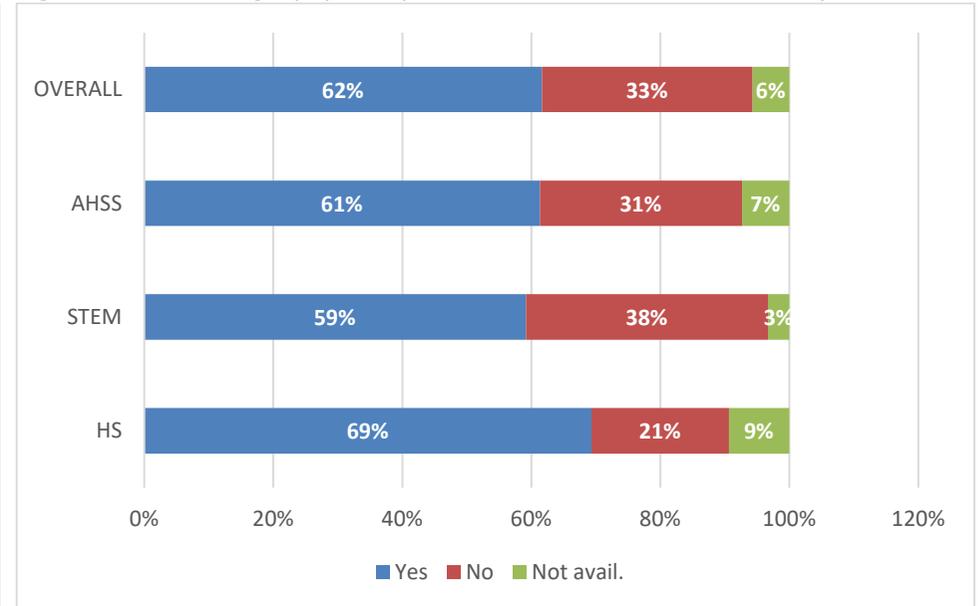


Figure 35 *Submitting a paper for publication in an academic journal or book*

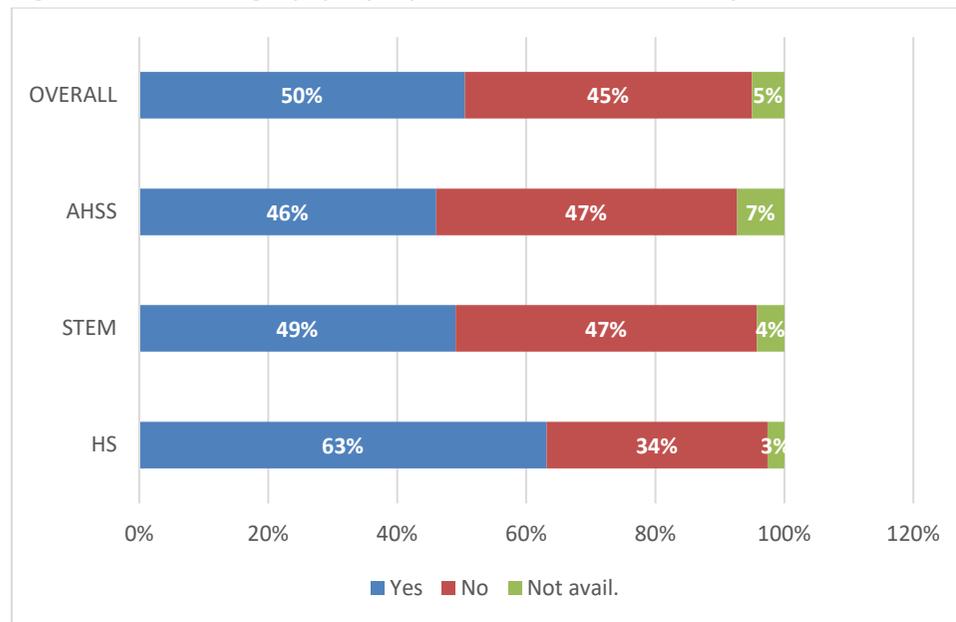
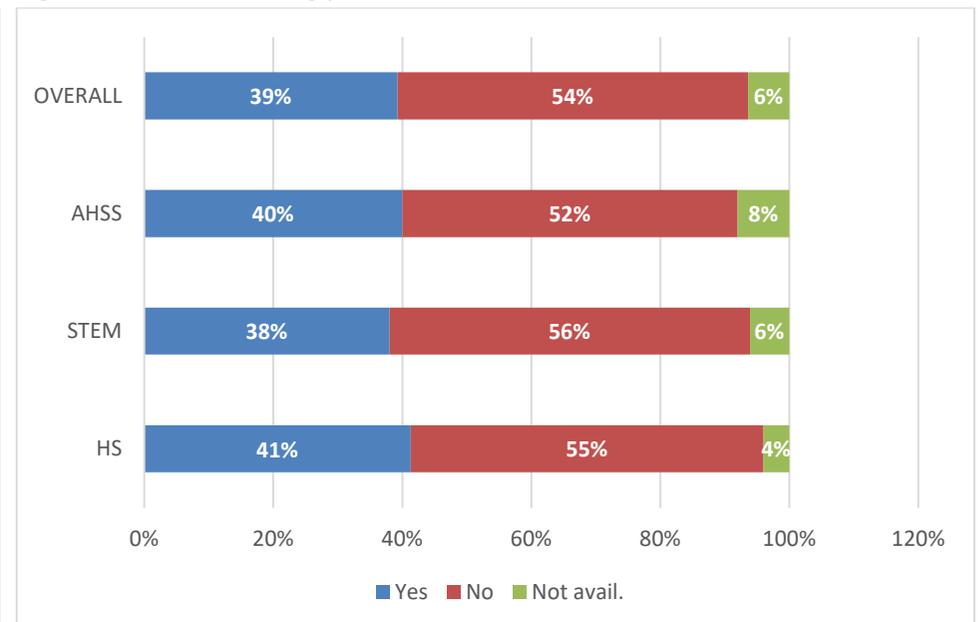


Figure 36 *Communicating your research to a non-academic audience*



4.6.3 Personal Outlook and Supports

Questions relating to *Personal Outlook* were introduced for the first time in 2019, following calls for their inclusion from PGR students who responded to the pilot survey in 2018. These questions are modelled on the questions included in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and were pre-tested with PGR students in five participating higher education institutions before being included in the survey. Results for the Personal Outlook aspect were poor sectoral-wide in 2021, compared with 2019, reflecting the impact of COVID-19.

Table 15 Personal Outlook and Supports
Survey Section J: Appendix 1, J.1 – J.4

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					2019 Trinity
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	
Satisfied with their life nowadays	52%	55%	45%	63%	57%	68%
Satisfied with work-life balance	37%	42%	46%	63%	47%	49%
Satisfied with life nowadays within my Institution	46%	40%	46%	55%	55%	61%
There is someone in my institution I can talk to about my day-to-day problems	42%	39%	42%	53%	45%	54%
I feel that my research degree programme is worthwhile	73%	73%	71%	79%	81%	77%

One area that continues to score relatively poorly nationally is the quality of *wellbeing* of respondents, which may potentially hold the key to boosting the overall rating of the experience. These questions enable Trinity to provide direct comparisons of levels of wellbeing among Trinity PGRs with PGRs in other Universities. The results show that Trinity PGR respondents are less happy with their work/life balance (TCD 2021, 37% vs >250 group, 47%) a difference of 10%.

- Just over half (52%) of PGR respondents ‘definitely or mostly agree’ that they are satisfied with their *lives at the moment*. This compares with 68% in 2019 (-16%) and a drop of -5% compared with the comparator group of >250 (57%).
- Similarly, the percentage of those agreeing that they were satisfied with *their life in their Institution* (46%), also dropped by -15% from 2019 and was 9% lower than the comparator group of >250. This trend is reflected across the Faculties, with AHSS respondents reporting the lowest level of satisfaction with their life within Trinity (AHSS 40%, STEM 46%, HS 55%).
- The proportion of Trinity PGR respondents reporting *satisfaction with work-life balance* (37%), was a drop of 12% from 2019 levels and 10% lower than respondents in the >250 comparator group.
- *Access to someone to talk to about day-to-day problems* reduced from 54% in 2019 to 42% in 2021 (a drop of

12%). This downward trend is also evident across AHSS (-18%) and STEM (-17%) from 2019 levels, with the Faculty of HS remaining consistent with 2019 (2021 53%, 2019 52%).

- 73% of Trinity PGR respondents ‘definitely or mostly’ agreed that they felt their *research degree was worthwhile*, compared with 77% in 2019 (drop of 4%) and 81% in the > 250 comparator group.

Table 16 Personal Outlook across cohorts

		Domicile Group				Mode of Study				Sex			
		Irish		Non-Irish		Full-Time		Part-time /Remote		Male		Female	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Satisfied with my life nowadays	<i>Mostly/ Definitely agree</i>	126	56%	90	46%	187	49%	29	74%	79	52%	137	51%
Satisfied with my life within my institution nowadays	<i>Mostly/ Definitely agree</i>	105	48%	85	44%	167	44%	23	61%	68	45%	122	46%
Satisfied with my work-life balance	<i>Mostly/ Definitely agree</i>	83	37%	73	37%	139	37%	17	44%	62	41%	94	35%
There is someone in my institution I can talk to about my day-to-day problems	<i>Mostly/ Definitely agree</i>	100	45%	74	39%	158	42%	16	43%	61	41%	113	43%
My research degree programme is worthwhile	<i>Mostly/ Definitely agree</i>	166	74%	142	72%	273	72%	35	90%	112	74%	196	73%

The findings reveal a difficulty in respondents achieving a work-life balance across all sectors of the demographics (see Table above). Those who identified themselves as part-time/remote respondents reported the highest satisfaction levels *with life nowadays* (74%), *with life within Trinity* (61%), overall *contentment with work-life balance* (44%). 90% of the Part-time/Remote cohort felt that their *research degree programme was worthwhile*, compared with 70% of respondents overall.

Figure 37 *I am satisfied with my life nowadays*

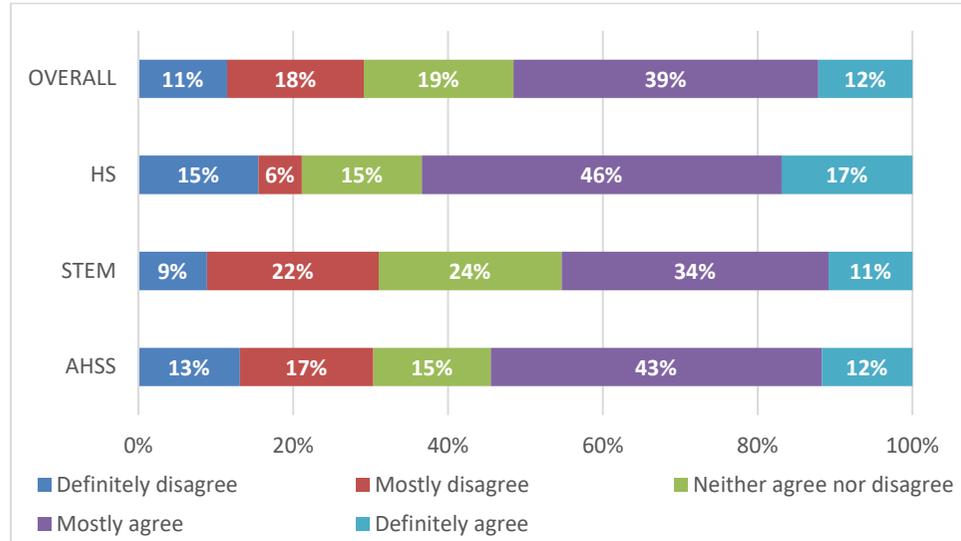


Figure 38 *I am satisfied with my life within my institution nowadays*

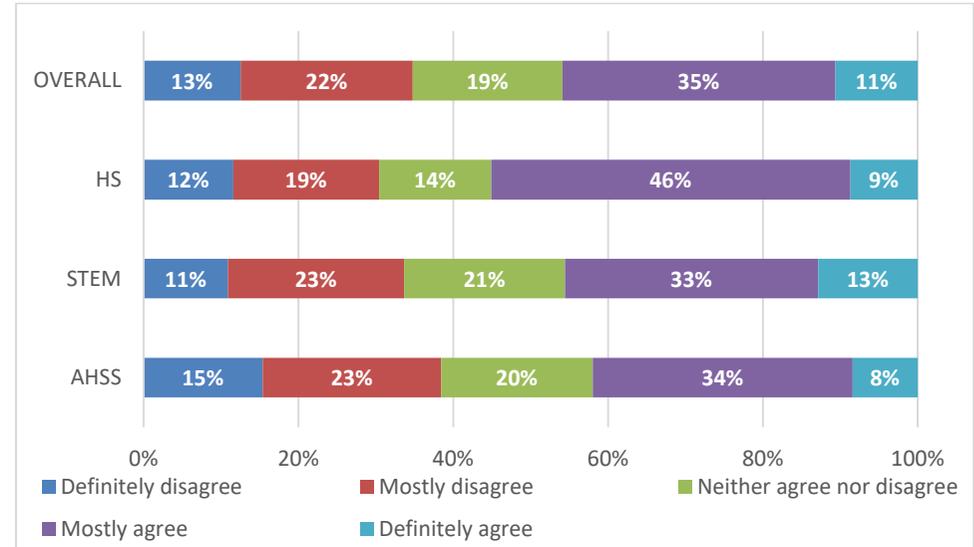


Figure 39 *I am satisfied with my work-life balance*

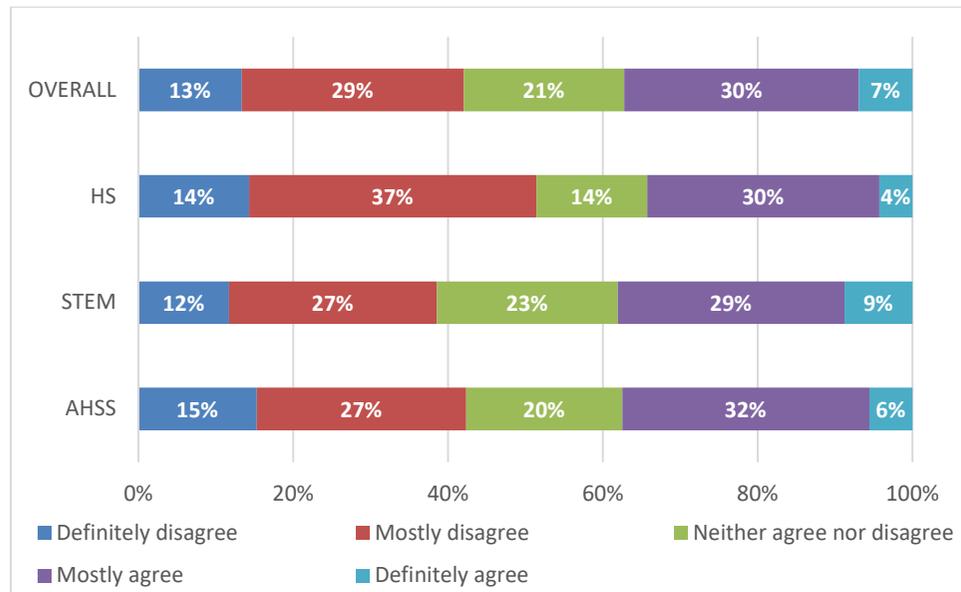


Figure 40 *There is someone in my institution I can talk to about my day-to-day problems*

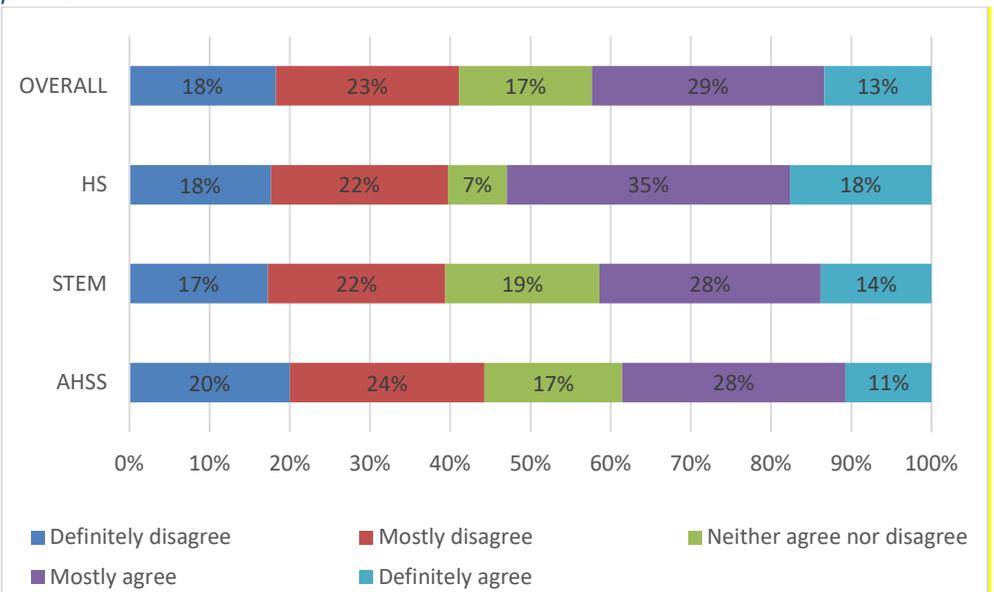


Figure 41 *I feel that my research degree programme is worthwhile*

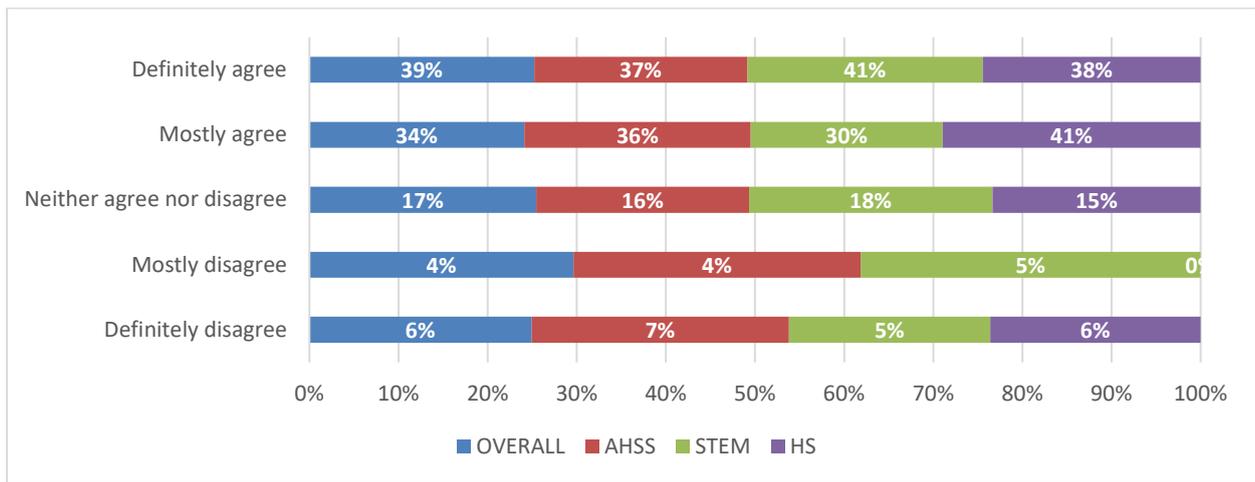


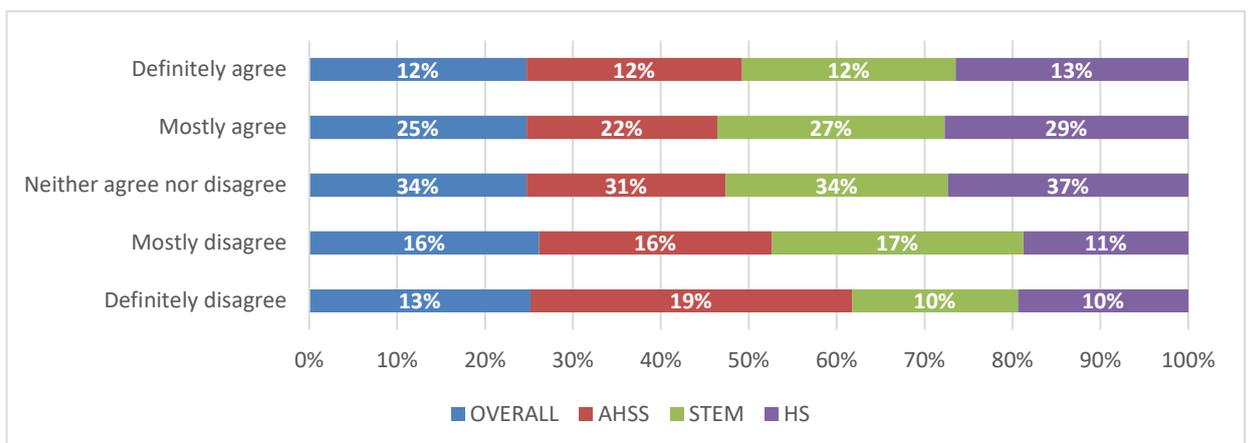
Table 17 **Personal Outlook and Supports**

Survey Section I: Appendix 1, I.5 and I.6

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					2019 Trinity
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	
My feedback is valued and responded to	37%	34%	39%	42%	45%	45%
Awareness of various available student supports	40%	43%	38%	37%	36%	50%

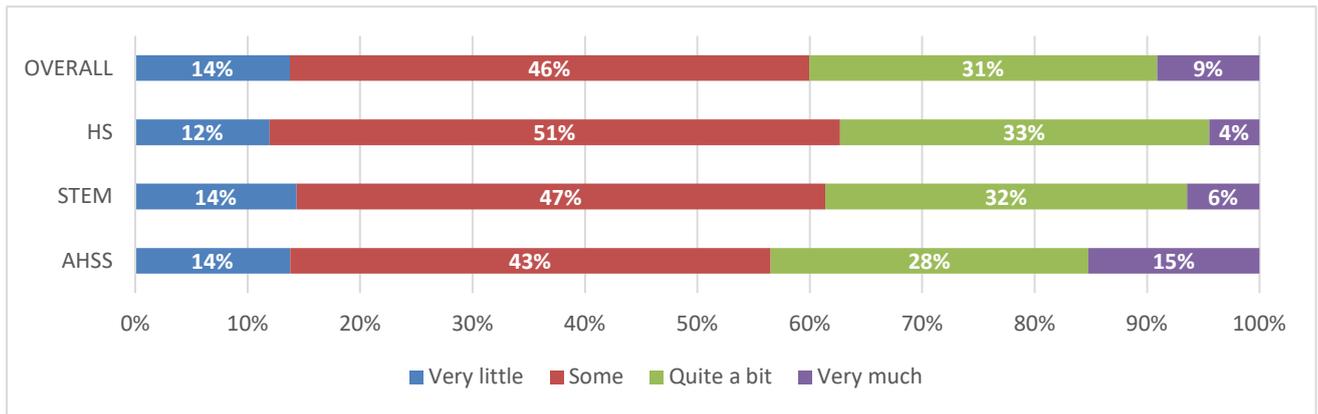
The percentage of respondents exhibiting knowledge of sources of support was notably lower. For instance, *40% of respondents said that they were very much or quite a bit aware* of the various student supports available to them. This was evident across the faculties, particularly across AHSS where 43% stated that they disagreed with this statement (AHSS 43%, STEM 38%, HS 37%).

Figure 42 *My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students*



The final question in this aspect, ‘my feedback is valued and responded to’, continues to perform poorly with 37% of Trinity PGR respondents ‘definitely or mostly’ agreeing with this statement compared with 45% across Irish Universities.

Figure 43 How aware are you of the various student supports available? (Recreation, healthcare, counselling, etc.)



The percentage of respondents exhibiting knowledge of sources of support was notably lower. For instance, 40% of respondents said that they were very much or quite a bit aware of the various student supports available to them. This was evident across the faculties, particularly across AHSS where 43% stated that they disagreed with this statement (AHSS 43%, STEM 38%, HS 37%).

Across College greater efforts are required to integrate students into the life of College both in terms of academic life and social life. In planning such events efforts should be made to include the needs of part-time PGR respondents and those with outside commitments be that work that is necessary to sustain their participation in research programmes or caring commitments noting that 18% of respondents withdraw for personal and family reasons i.e. the inability to manage their work-life balance successfully.

4.6.4 Career Development

Career development addresses seeking career advice, taking part in a placement or internship, working collaboratively with industry and/or a civil society or public organisation, all of which can be expected to assist in the post-research degree career transition for candidates who are not seeking to pursue an academic career in higher education or are seeking a research career outside of higher education.

Table 18 Career Development

Survey Section F - Appendix 1, F.4; F.5; F.12; F.13 and F.14

Questions	Responses	2021				> 250	2019
		Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	Univ	Trinity
Receiving advice on career options	Yes	33%	37%	31%	32%	35%	35%
	No / Not avail.	67%	63%	69%	68%	65%	65%
Taking part in a placement or internship	Yes	11%	11%	12%	8%	15%	15%
	No / Not avail.	89%	89%	88%	92%	85%	85%
Working as part of a team	Yes	62%	39%	75%	71%	66%	65%
	No / Not avail.	38%	41%	25%	29%	34%	35%
Working collaboratively with industry	Yes	18%	11%	24%	15%	24%	18%
	No / Not avail.	82%	89%	76%	85%	76%	82%
Working collaboratively with a civil society organisation or public organisation	Yes	14%	12%	13%	23%	23%	21%
	No / Not avail.	86%	88%	87%	77%	77%	79%

- The findings show that 11% of PGR respondents had the *opportunity to undertake a placement or internship*, a decrease of -4% since 2019. Notably, 89% state that the opportunities for placements or internships were not available.
- The ability to *work as part of a team* is often described as a ‘soft or transferable’ skill sought by employers. It is available to 62% of PGR respondents in both Trinity and 66% across the >250 comparator group of institutions. The opportunity is embedded in the Trinity PGR experience for STEM (75%) and HS (71%) respondents, as per the disciplinary nature of work in these fields, while it is less available in AHSS (39%).
- Working collaboratively with industry is more prevalent across STEM disciplines (AHSS 11%, STEM 24%, HS 15%).

Figure 44 Receiving advice on career options

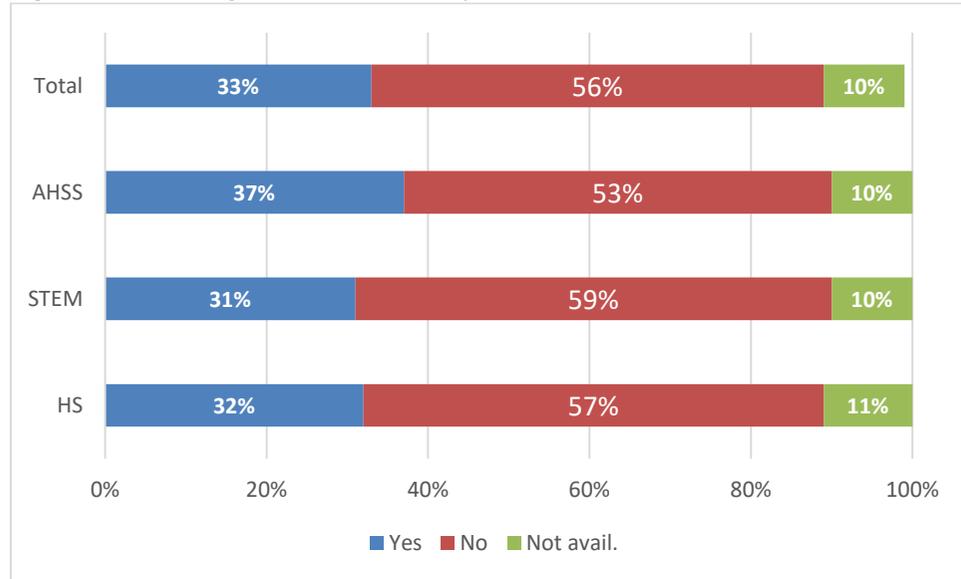


Figure 45 Taking part in a placement or internship

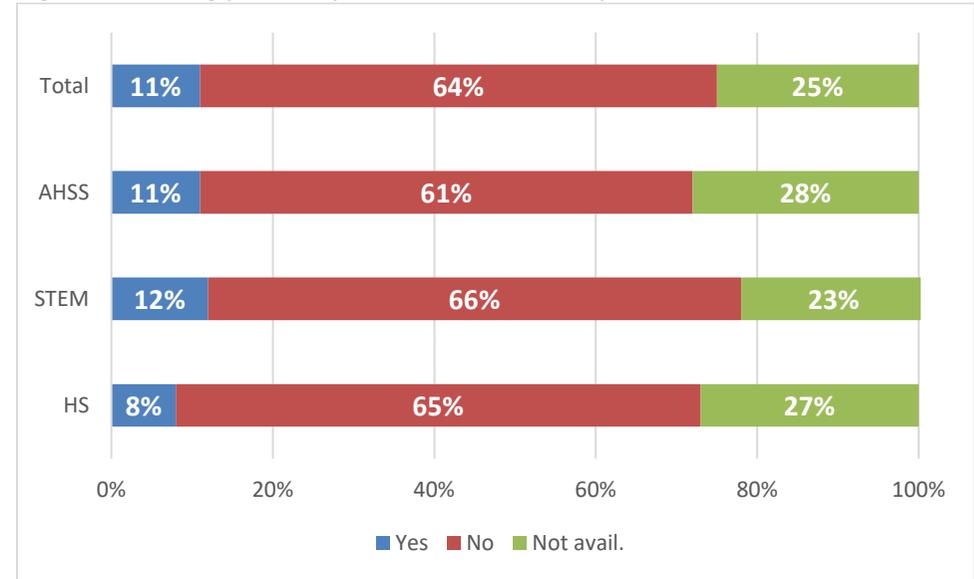


Figure 46 Working as part of a team

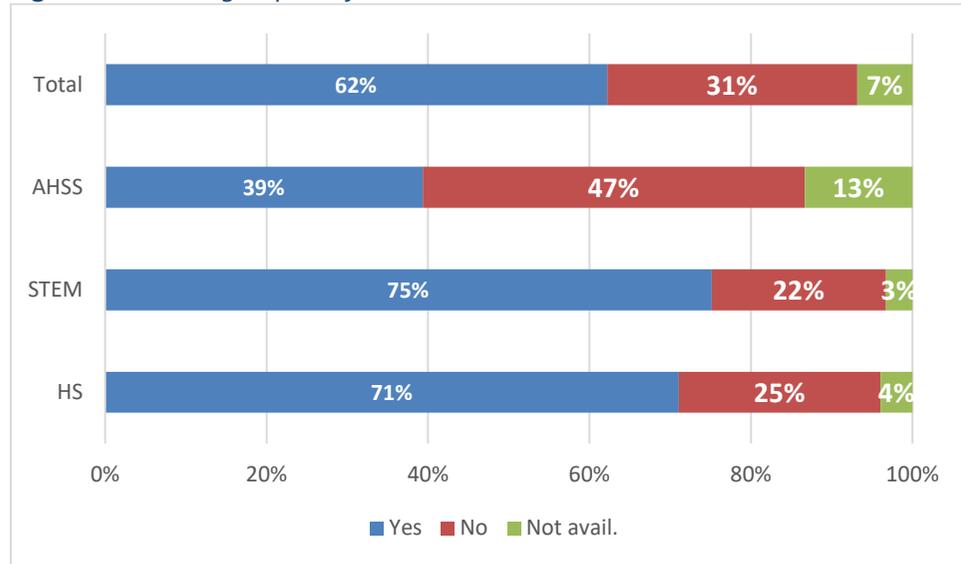
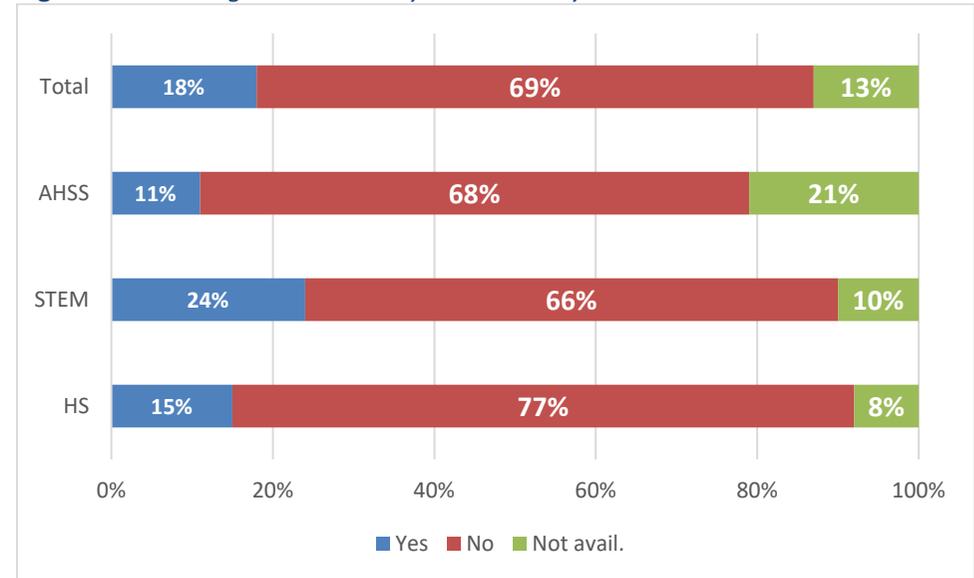


Figure 47 Working collaboratively with industry



4.6.5 Teaching and Demonstrating

The majority of Trinity PGR respondents have the *opportunity to teach/demonstrate* and agree that this *enhanced their research degree experience*.

- The *opportunity to teach and demonstrate* was reported by 70% of PGR respondents in Trinity compared with 64% of the >250 comparator group of institutions. As has been the case in previous years, STEM PGR respondents report the highest level of opportunities to engage in teaching and demonstrating (77%), followed by HS (64%) and AHSS respondents (64%).
- 69% of respondents who engage in teaching and demonstrating report that the experience was *beneficial to their research degree programme* (HS 79%, STEM 62% and AHSS 79%). This compares with 66% of PGR respondents in the >250 comparator group of institutions.
- 50% of respondents 'definitely or mostly agreed' that they were given *appropriate support and guidance to carry out their tutoring or demonstrating role*. This was also evident across the faculties (AHSS 48%, STEM 50%, HS 51%). This compares with 43% in 2019 showing a continuing improvement over time since the introduction of the Teaching and Supporting Learning for Graduate Teaching Assistants module.

Table 19 Teaching / Demonstrating

Survey Section F: Appendix 1, F.16 – F.18

Questions	Responses	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	> 250 Univ	2019 Trinity
Please indicate whether you have taught (or demonstrated) at your institution during your research degree programme:	Yes	70%	64%	77%	64%	64%	72%
	No	30%	36%	23%	36%	36%	28%
Do you agree or disagree that the teaching / demonstration you delivered enhanced your overall research experience?	Definitely disagree	5%	3%	7%	8%	8%	6%
	Mostly disagree	9%	6%	10%	13%	10%	10%
	Neither agree nor disagree	17%	13%	21%	10%	15%	14%
	Mostly agree	32%	31%	30%	42%	26%	35%
	Definitely agree	37%	48%	32%	27%	39%	36%
Do you agree or disagree that you have been given appropriate support and guidance for your teaching / demonstration?	Definitely disagree	11%	13%	10%	11%	10%	13%
	Mostly disagree	22%	19%	24%	21%	18%	24%
	Neither agree nor disagree	18%	21%	16%	17%	16%	20%
	Mostly agree	30%	29%	29%	34%	34%	28%
	Definitely agree	20%	19%	21%	17%	22%	15%

Figure 48 Please indicate whether you have taught (or demonstrated) at your institution during your research degree programme:

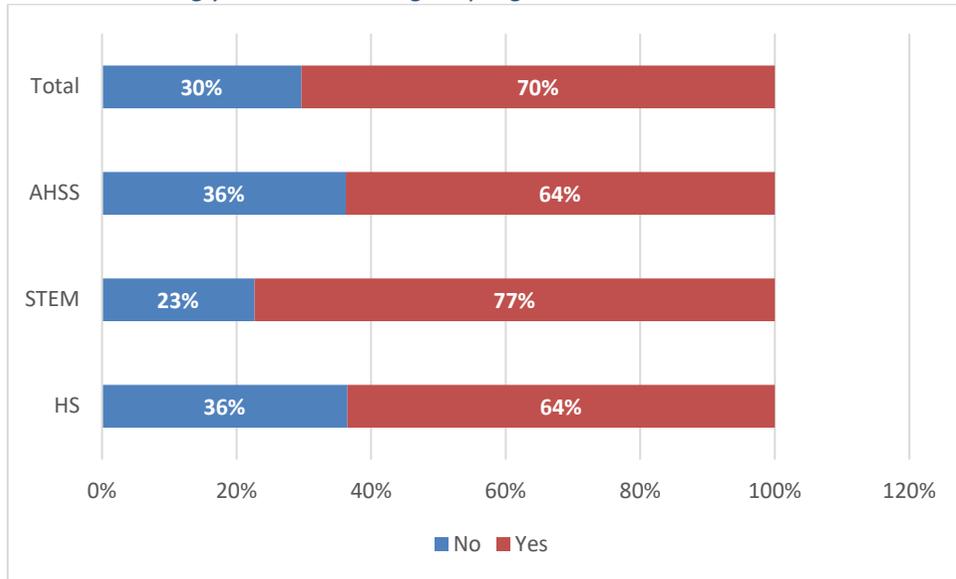


Figure 49 Do you agree or disagree that the teaching / demonstration you delivered enhanced your overall research experience?

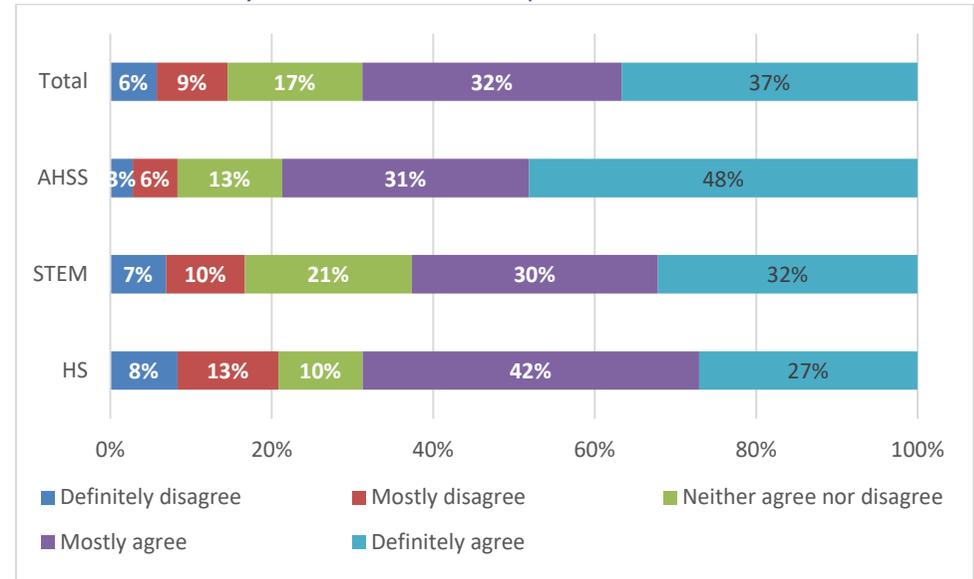
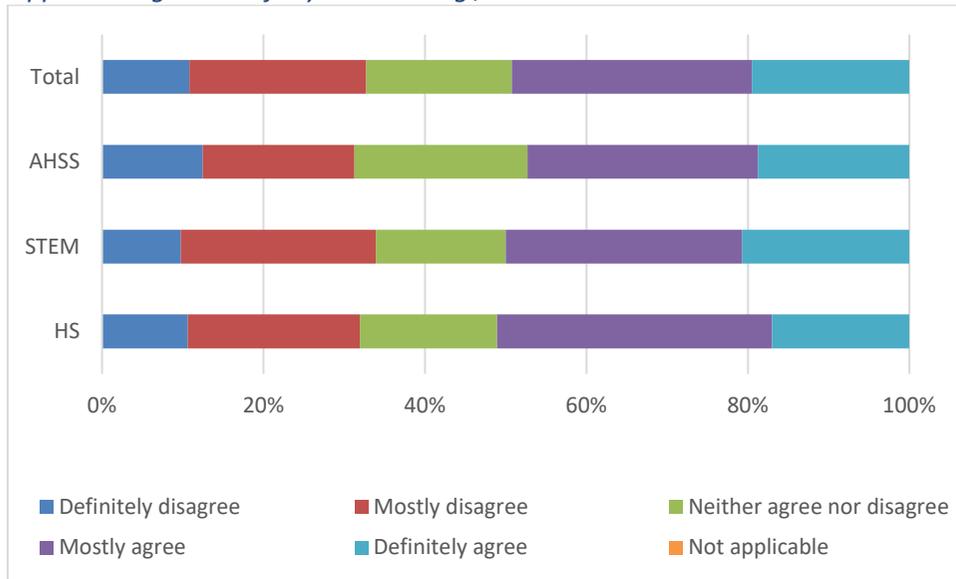


Figure 50 Do you agree or disagree that you have been given appropriate support and guidance for your teaching / demonstration?



4.7 Research Skills

Discipline-specific research skills are an expected competency to be attained by all PGR students engaged in research degree programmes. The Research Skills aspect is one of the best experiences reported by Trinity PGR respondents.

Table 20 Research Skills

Survey Section G: Appendix 1, G.1 – G.4

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					2019 Trinity
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	
Applying appropriate research methodologies, tools, techniques	87%	83%	89%	88%	88%	90%
Attained critical analysis and research evaluations skills	88%	83%	92%	89%	86%	86%
Confidence to be creative or innovative	66%	65%	66%	71%	74%	69%
Understanding of 'research integrity'	82%	78%	83%	88%	89%	83%

- 87% of Trinity PGR respondents 'definitely or mostly' agreed they developed skills in the application of *appropriate research methodologies, tools, and techniques* during their time in Trinity. This was consistent across the faculties (AHSS 83%, STEM, 89%, HS 88%).
- A similarly high proportions of PGR respondents reported that they had *attained critical analysis and research evaluations skills* with 88% of Trinity's respondents overall; 92% of STEM; 89% of HS and 83% of AHSS respondents reporting that they had attained these skills during their research degree programme.
- Core attributes expected from a research leader include understanding of research integrity, research ethics, and avoidance of plagiarism. 82% of Trinity's respondents overall, 88% of HS, 83% of STEM and 78% of AHSS respondents 'definitely or mostly agree' that they have developed an understanding of research integrity during their research degree programme.
- The lowest results attained in this series of questions relate to confidence in the ability to innovate and be creative. Two-thirds of PGR respondents (66%) reported that had developed confidence in this regard during their research degree programme, compared with 74% in the comparator group of >250. This question produced the lowest result across all faculties (AHSS 65%, STEM, 66%, HS 71%).

Figure 51 My skills in applying appropriate research methodologies, tools and techniques

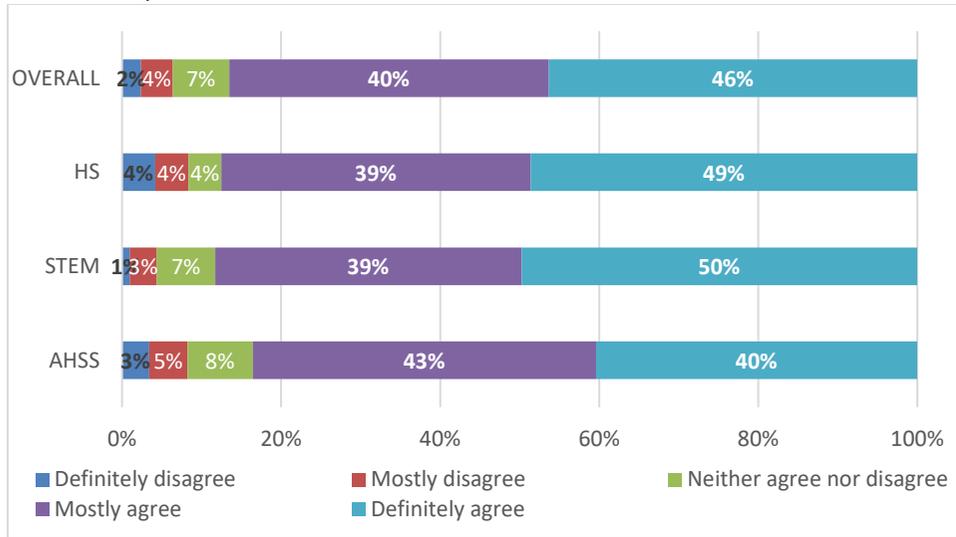


Figure 52 My skills in critically analysing and evaluating findings and results

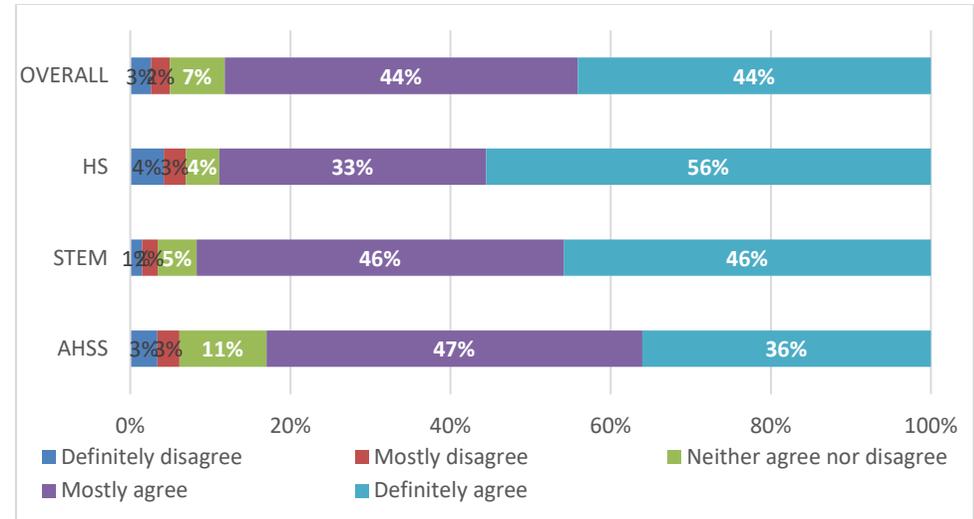


Figure 53 My confidence to be creative or innovative

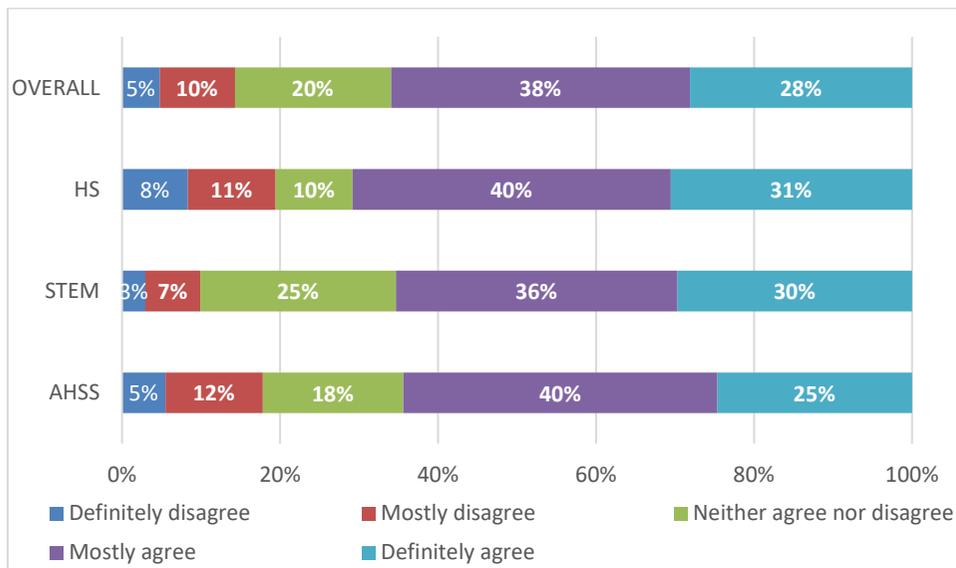
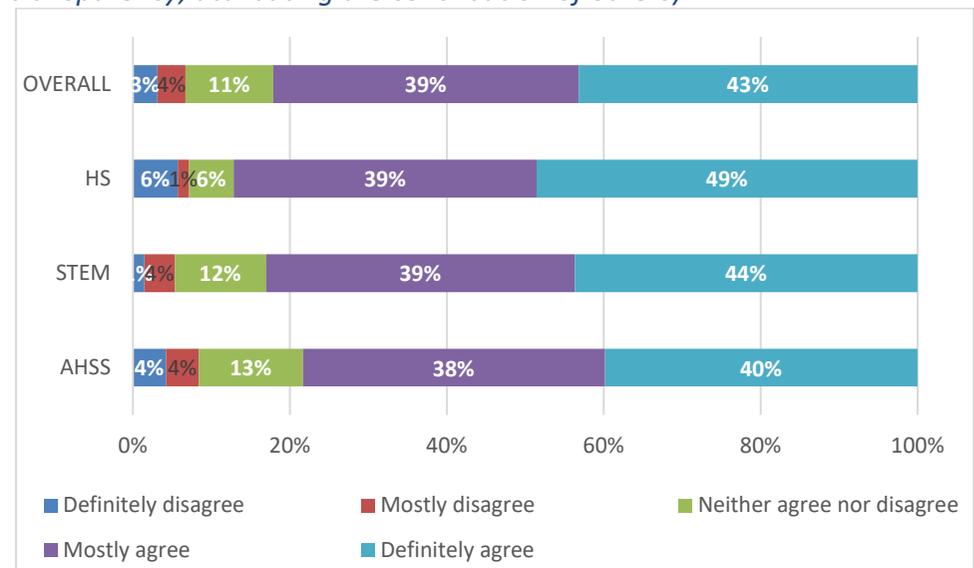


Figure 54 My understanding of research integrity (e.g. rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution of others)



4.8 Other Transferable Skills

The 'Other Transferable Skills' aspect contains four questions, two of which have been addressed in earlier sections of the report. *Develop Contacts/Professional Networks* has been addressed in Research Culture (section 4.4) while *Communicate Information to a Diverse Audience* was discussed under the heading 'Professional Development Opportunities' section 4.5.

Table 21 Other Transferable Skills

Survey Section H: Appendix 1, H.1- H.4

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					2019 Trinity
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	
Ability to manage projects	73%	63%	75%	83%	75%	77%
Ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences	70%	59%	75%	75%	73%	73%
Developed contacts or professional networks	63%	59%	61%	76%	64%	74%
Increasingly managed my own professional development	74%	72%	73%	81%	76%	75%

The results of *Other Transferable Skills* are quite consistent.

- The results indicate that 73% of Trinity respondents state that they have *developed skills in managing projects*. 83% of HS and 75% of STEM respondents *definitely or mostly agree* with this statement. This may reflect the disciplinary nature of projects in HS and STEM, with higher levels of external grants (STEM) and employer funding (HS) placing external pressure on the delivery of projects on time. In comparison, 63% of AHSS respondents *definitely or mostly agree* that they had developed the *ability to manage projects*.
- 74% of respondents *definitely or mostly agree* that they have developed the ability to *manage their own professional development*. This was most evident in HS (81%), followed by STEM (73%) and AHSS (72%).
- The impact of COVID-19 can be seen in the reduced level of agreement with the question pertaining to *developing professional networks: 2020/21, 63%*, compared with *2018/19, 74%*. The results varied across the faculties in this regard, again highest in HS (76%), followed by STEM (61%) and AHSS (59%) respondents.
- The highest score across this section is respondents definitely or mostly agreeing that they have increasingly managed their own professional development (2021 74%, 2019 75%). This is evident particularly in HS 81%, followed by 73% STEM AND 72% in AHSS.

Figure 55 My ability to manage projects

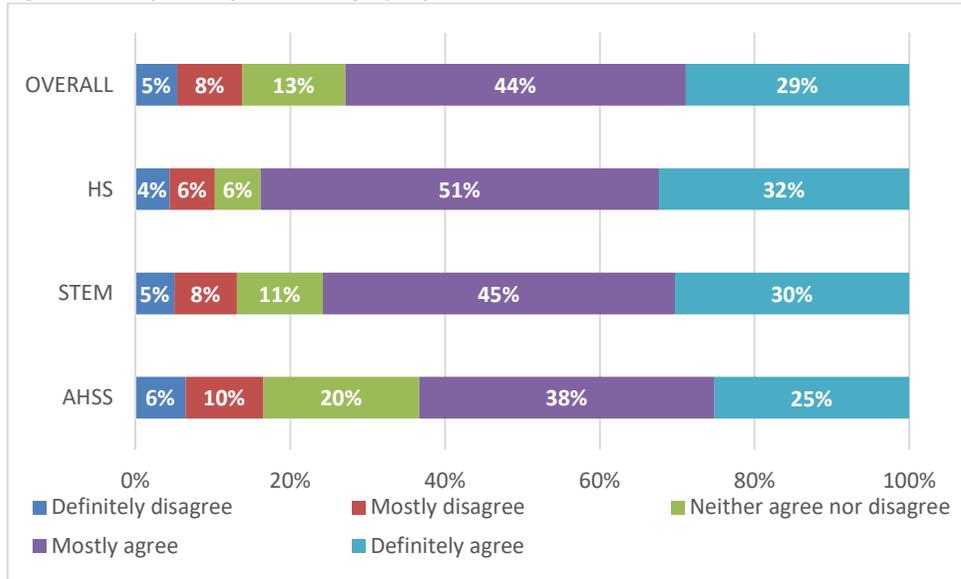


Figure 56 Ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences

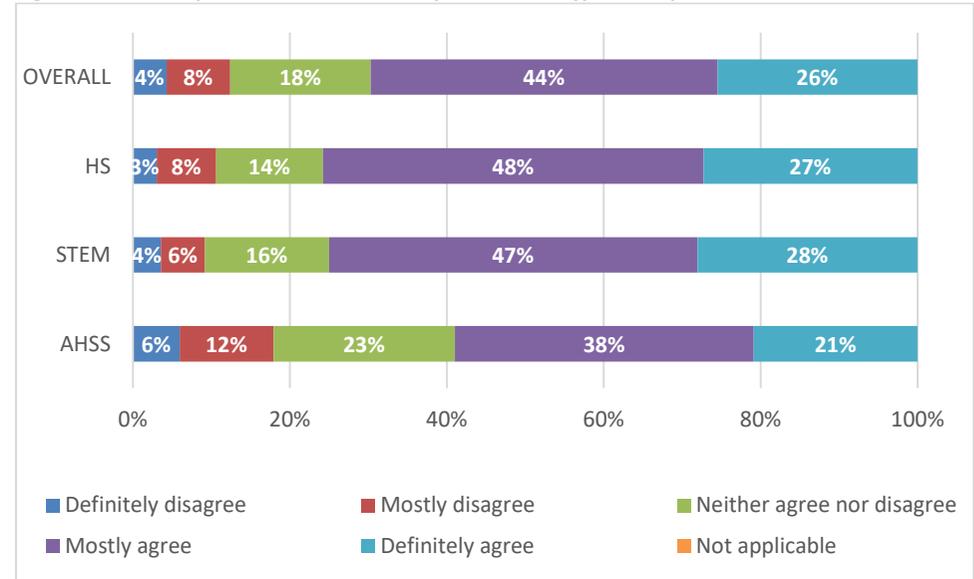


Figure 57 Developed contacts or professional networks

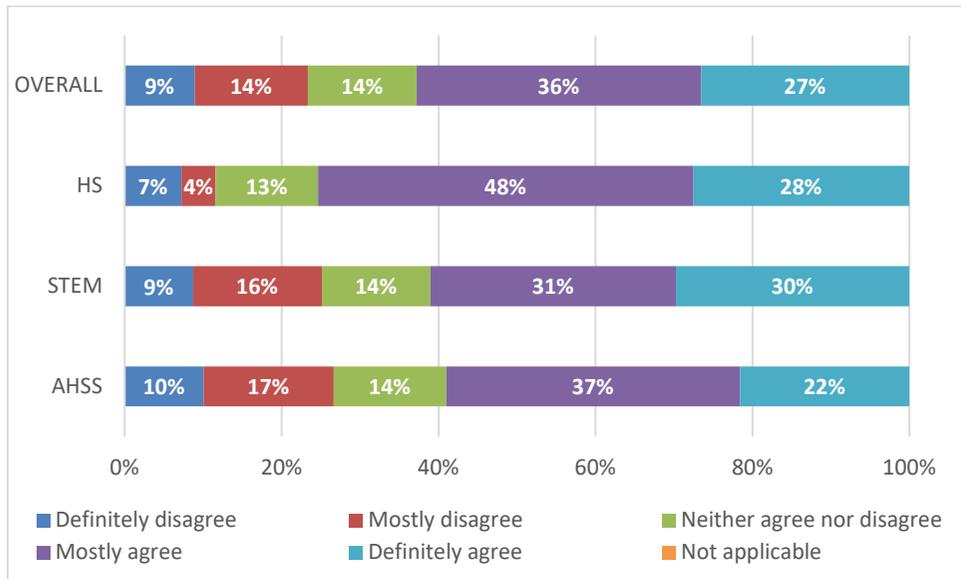
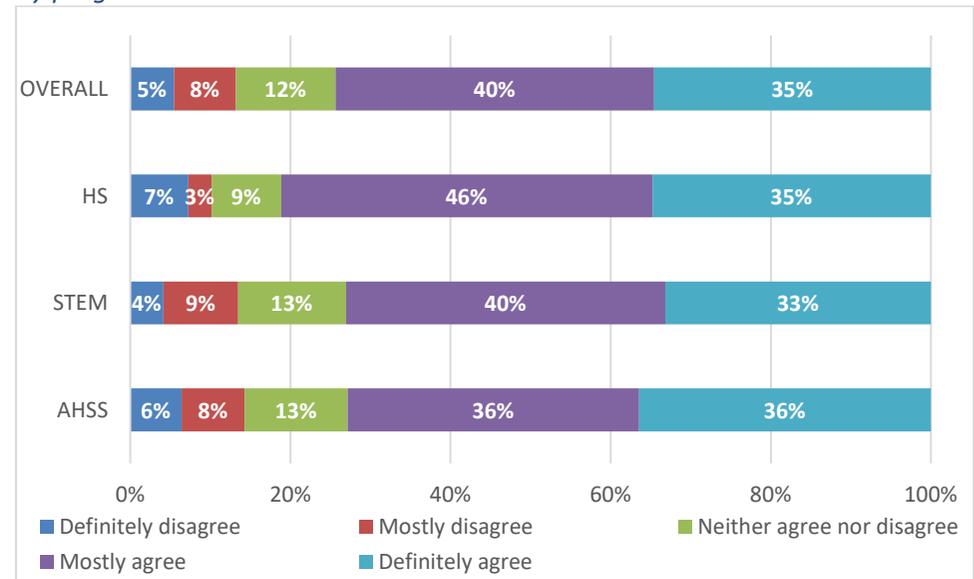


Figure 58 I have increasingly managed my own professional development during my programme



4.9 Motivations

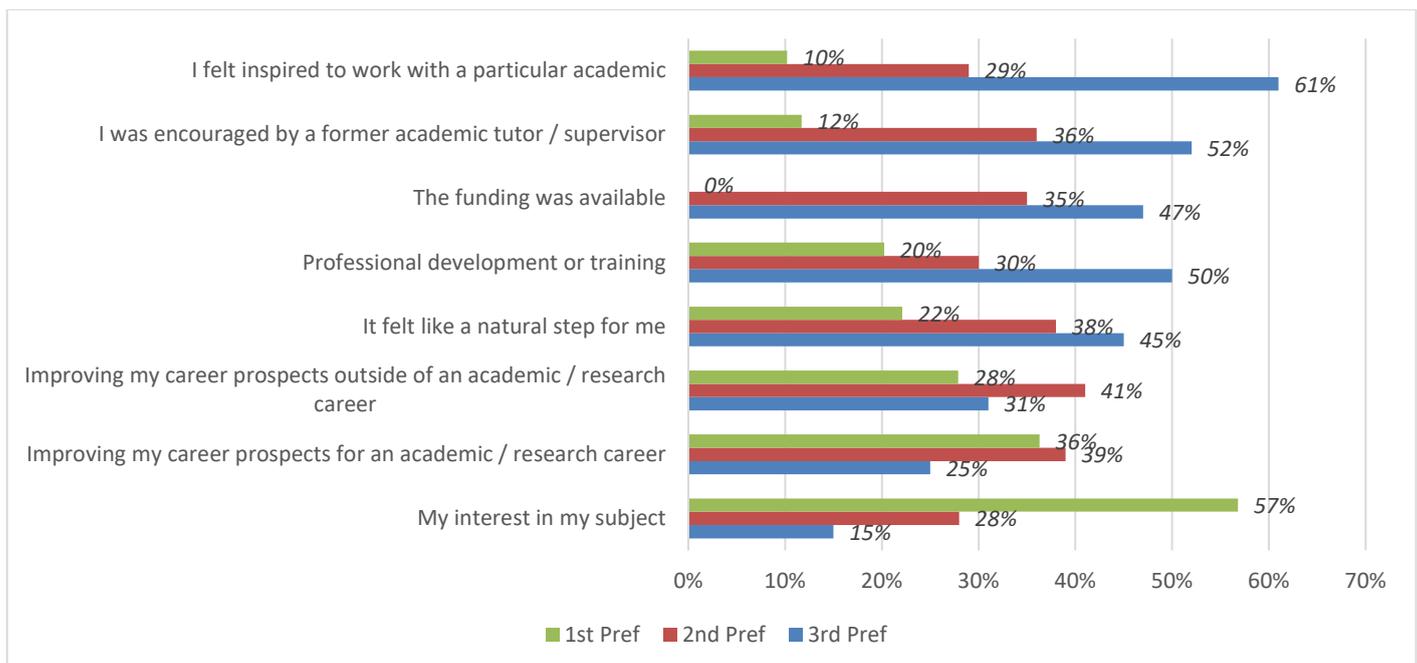
Respondents were asked to rank their top three motivations for pursuing a research degree programme from the list of options and prioritise these by designating them as priority 1, 2 or 3. The top three ranked motivations are outlined in the Table below.

Table 22 Motivation - top three motivations for pursuing a research degree programme from the list of options
Survey Section K: Appendix 1, K.1 - K.9

Rank 2021	Top three motivation	OVERALL	AHSS	STEM	HS
1	My interest in my subject	57%	My interest in my subject (70%)	My interest in my subject (48%)	My interest in my subject (51%)
2	Improving my career prospects outside of an academic / research career	41%	Improving my career prospects for an academic / research career (52%)	The funding was available (48%)	Improving my career prospects outside of an academic/res. Career (52%)
3	I felt inspired to work with a particular academic	61%	The funding was available (63%)	I felt inspired to work with a particular academic (68%)	The funding was available (85%)

The highest ranked motivation in 2018, 2019 and in 2021 was *interest in the research subject*. This was ranked first by 57% of all respondents and across all three faculties, AHSS (70%), STEM (48%) and HS (51%). This was followed in second place by *improving career prospects outside for an academic/research career* which was selected by 41% of all respondents and by 52% of HS and AHSS respondents. Availability of funding was cited across faculties as either the second or third key priority in motivating a respondent to pursue a degree programme (AHSS 3rd preference 63%, STEM 2nd preference 48%), HS 3rd preference 85%).

Figure 59 Please select your top three motivations for pursuing a research degree



4.10 Career Aspirations

Respondents were asked to select their top three Career Aspirations from the list of options and rank them in order of preference 1-3.

Table 23 Career Aspirations – select the top three types of career you have in mind for when you finish your research degree.

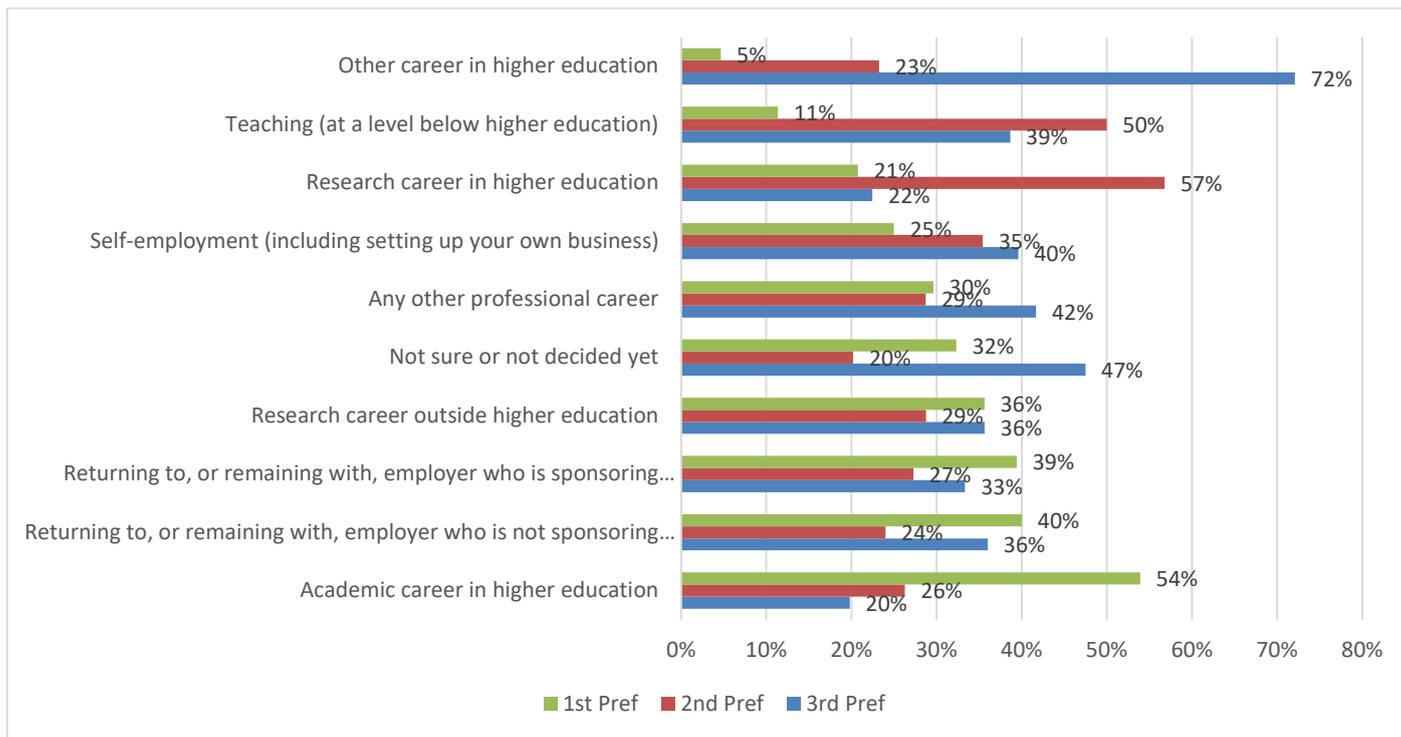
Survey Section L: Appendix 1, L.1 - L.11

Rank 2021	Top three Career Aspirations	OVERALL	AHSS	STEM	HS
1	Academic career in higher education	54%	Academic career in higher education (68%)	Academic career in higher education (44%)	Returning to, or remaining with, employer who is sponsoring your degree (70%)
2	Research career in higher education	57%	Research career in higher education (67%)	Research career in higher education (50%) and Teaching (at a level below higher education) 50%	Research career in higher education (51%)
3	Other career in higher education	72%	Other career in higher education (78%)	Other career in higher education (67%)	Teaching (at a level below higher education) (67%)

An *academic career in higher education* was the highest priority for the largest number of respondents (54%). A *research career in higher education* (57%) was the second highest priority. The third priority was in the area of a *research career outside higher education* (72%).

An *academic career in higher education* was the highest priority for respondents across AHSS (68%) and STEM (44%) and *returning to, or remaining with, employer who is sponsoring your degree* was the top priority for those from HS (70%). All three faculties agreed that a *research career in higher education* was a second priority (AHSS 67%, STEM 50%, HS 51%). Similar to STEM, HS selected *teaching* (67%) as a preference, their third, being the second in STEM (50%). AHSS (78%) and STEM (67%) selected *other career in higher education* as their third preference. Of note is the proportion of PGR respondents who report that they are *not sure or not decided yet* which was 32% overall and 41% in AHSS, 31% STEM and 21% in HS.

Figure 60 Please select your top three motivations for pursuing a research degree



4.11 Research Integrity

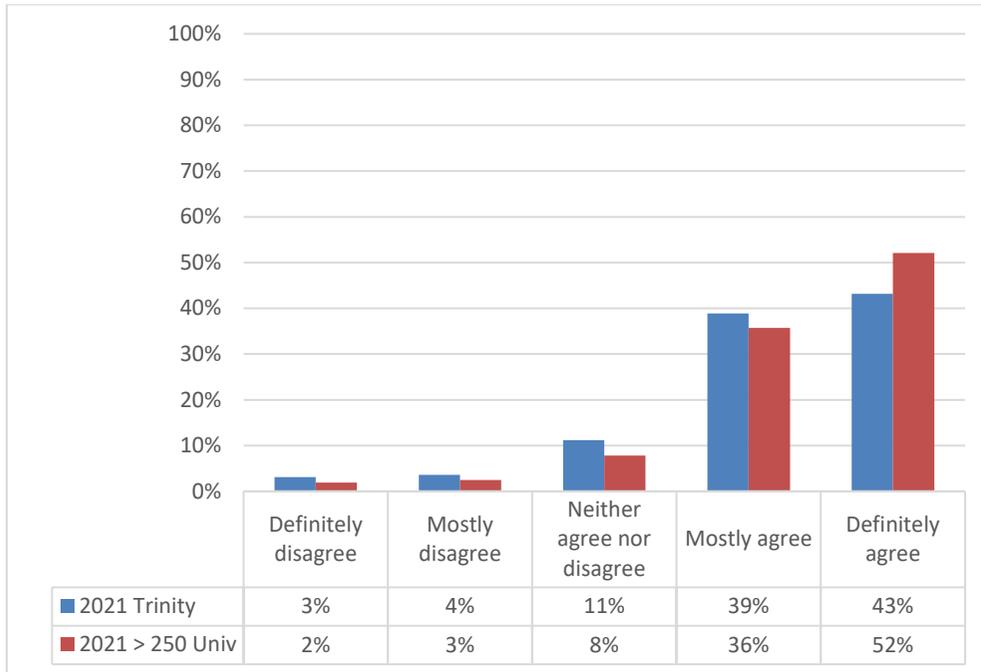
Awareness of, and training in, research integrity have been enhanced over the lifetime of the PGR Student Survey. In 2018/19 the mandatory PhD module ‘Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship’ was introduced for all doctoral studies’ students. The survey question on ‘research integrity’ can be used to track the embedding of awareness and training on research integrity, an issue of increasing importance for researching funding bodies e.g., SFI and in Trinity’s research networks - LERU and TORCH (associated with CHARM-EU- the European Universities Initiative).

The findings show that the understanding of research integrity remains static across Trinity respondents as 82% of respondents ‘mostly or definitely agree’ in both 2019 and in 2021. This compares with 89% in 2021 and 83% in 2019 in the comparator group of Irish Universities. Recent developments in the area and plans for future development include:

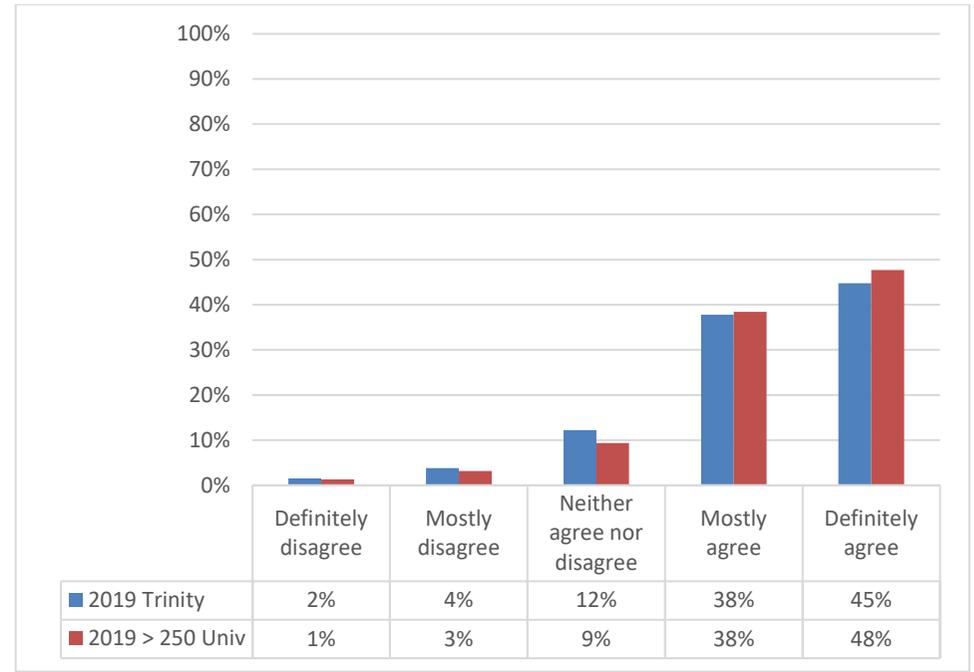
- In June 2021, the College Board approved a revised ‘[Good Research Practice Policy](#)’, which places an increased focus on research integrity awareness and training;
- Revisions to the Epigeum Module on Research Integrity, mandatory for all research staff;
- Enhancements of the College Statutes on research misconduct and the introduction of a [research misconduct flowchart](#) detailing the process for how alleged cases of research misconduct are managed in College.

Figure 61 understanding of 'research integrity' (e.g., rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution of others) has developed during my programme (Trinity results 2021 and 2019 and other Universities 2021)

Trinity and other Universities results 2021



Trinity and other Universities results 2019



4.12 Overall Experience

The *Overall Experience* aspect is comprised of two questions (i) *How would you evaluate your entire research experience at this institution?*; and (ii) *confidence in completing the research degree programme within expected timescale?*

Table 24 Overall Experience

Survey Section M: Appendix 1, M.1

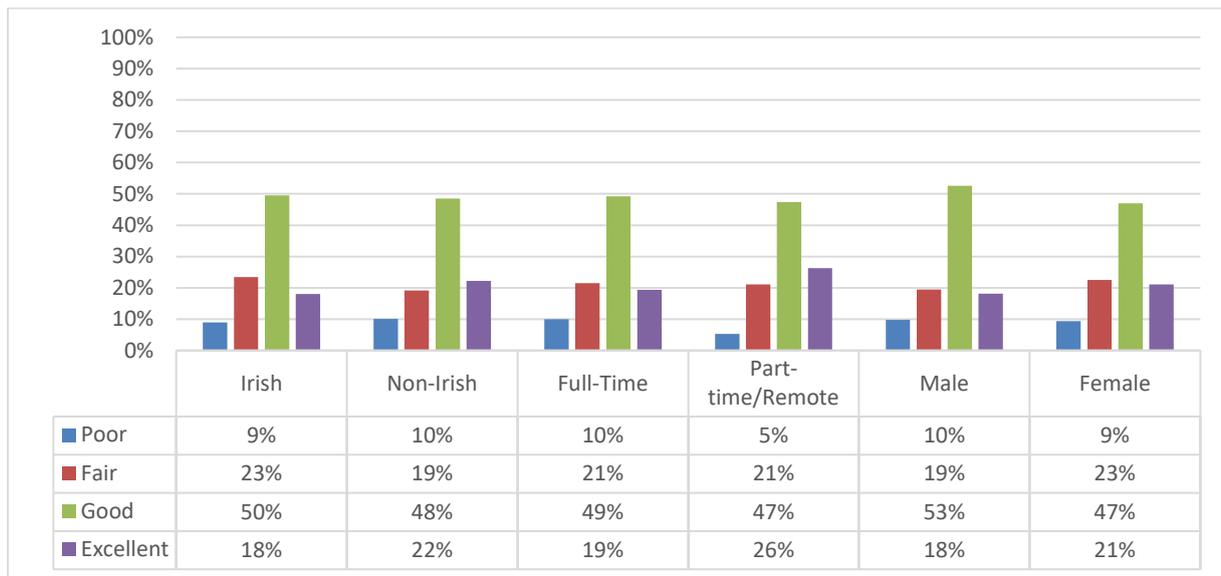
Questions	(% of respondents who respond Excellent or Good)					
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	2019 Trinity
How would you evaluate your entire research experience at this institution?	69%	61%	73%	76%	76%	68%

The percentage of respondents who rated their *Overall Experience* in their Institution as ‘good or excellent’ was approximately 76% for ≥ 250 respondents and 69% in Trinity. This continues a pattern in recent years where the experience in Trinity lags behind that of the >250 comparator group

Figure 62 Overall Trinity Experience - How would you evaluate your entire research experience at this Institution?



Figure 63 How would you evaluate your entire research experience at this institution?



The above figure explores the demographic breakdown of respondents reporting a 'good or excellent' research experience in Trinity, such as domicile, gender and mode of study.

Table 25 Overall Experience

Survey Section M: Appendix 1, M.21

Questions	(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)					2019 Trinity
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	
I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution's expected timescale	69%	64%	72%	70%	70%	79%

In relation to the likelihood of respondents meeting their thesis submission deadline, 69% of Trinity respondents (down from 79% in 2019), and 70% of respondents across Irish Universities, reported they were confident of meeting their submission deadline. This is a drop of 10% from 2019 across Trinity. STEM respondents were the most confident in terms of *completing my research degree programme within the institution's expected timescale*, (AHSS 64%; STEM 72%; HS 70%).

Figure 64 Overall Trinity Experience - I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution's expected timescale?

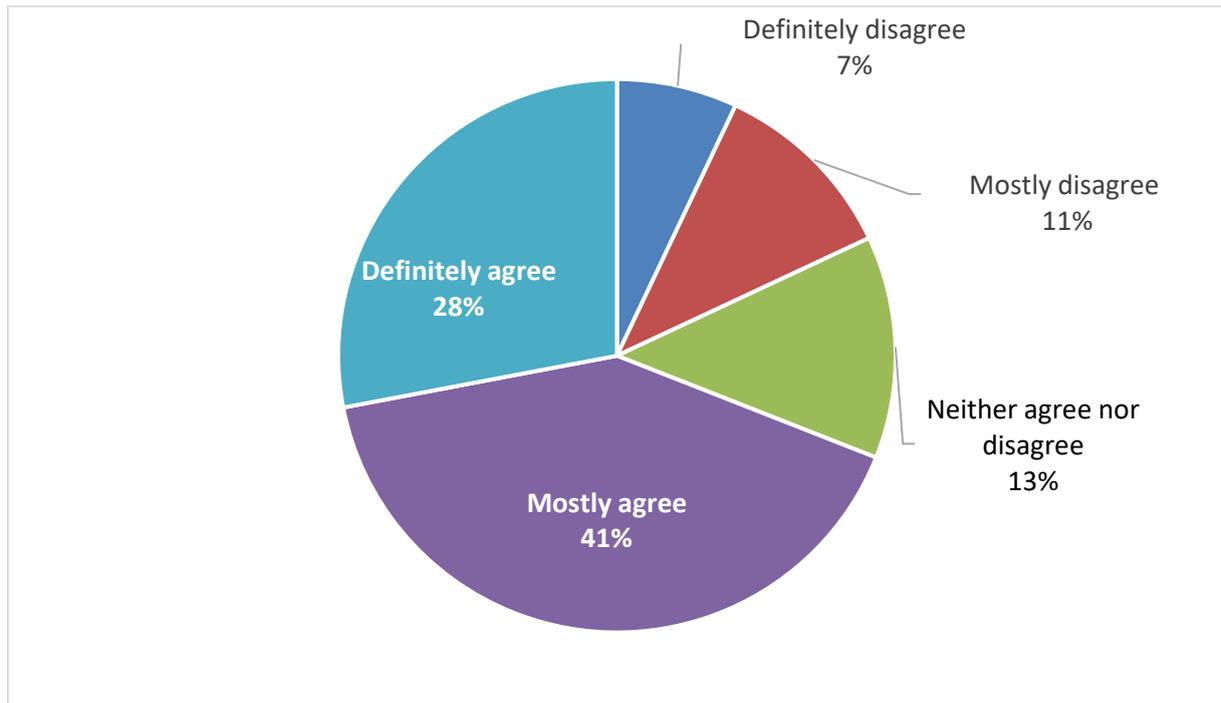
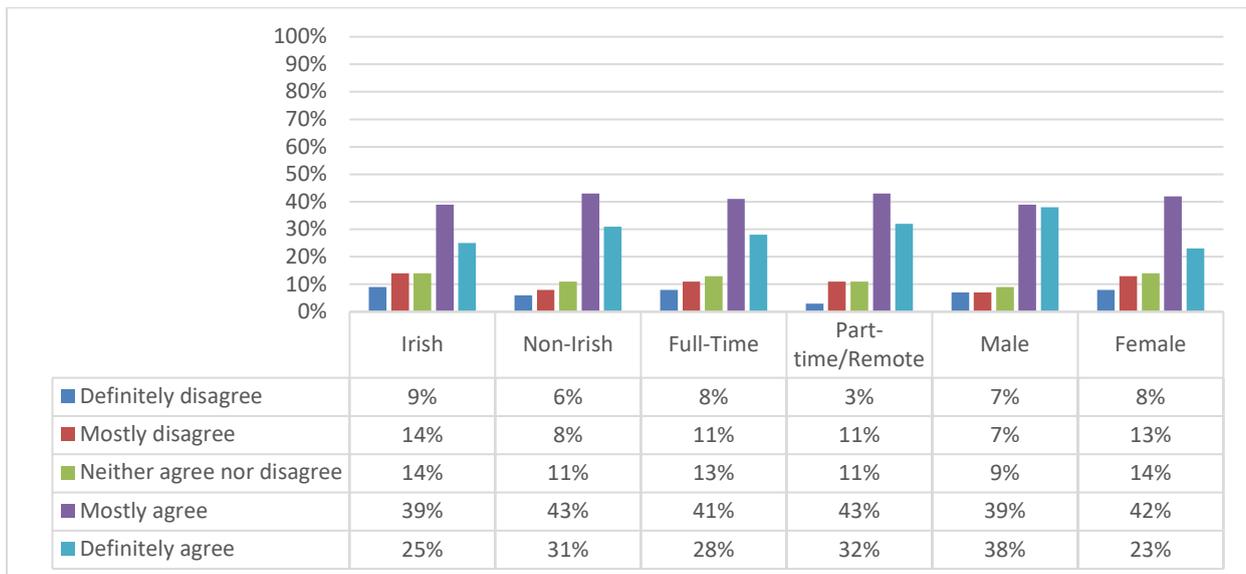


Figure 65 I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution's expected timescale



The difference by cohort in the degree of *confidence in completing their research degree programme within the expected timescale* is presented in the Figure above. Higher levels of male, non-Irish and full-time respondent groups stated that they had more confidence in completing their research degree programme with their expected timescale. There was a 12% difference in confidence between male (77%) and female (65%) respondents in completing the programme within the *expected deadline*; an 11% difference by domicile group (Irish 64%, 74% non-Irish) and a 6% difference between part-time (75%) and full-time (69%).

Table 26 Years of Study

		<i>1st Year</i>	<i>2nd Year</i>	<i>3rd Year</i>	<i>4th Year</i>				
How would you evaluate your entire research experience at this institution?	<i>Poor</i>	6%	9	7%	6	16%	15	11%	9
	<i>Fair</i>	16%	23	16%	14	19%	18	35%	29
	<i>Good</i>	51%	73	55%	48	47%	44	45%	38
	<i>Excellent</i>	26%	37	22%	19	18%	17	10%	8
I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution's expected timescale	<i>Definitely disagree</i>	3%	4	2%	2	13%	12	16%	13
	<i>Mostly disagree</i>	3%	4	11%	10	17%	16	17%	14
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	14%	20	10%	9	9%	8	16%	13
	<i>Mostly agree</i>	44%	62	43%	37	40%	38	35%	29
	<i>Definitely agree</i>	36%	51	33%	29	21%	20	17%	14

Further exploration by year of study reveals that those in the early stages of their research differ in their overall satisfaction compared with those in the later years of study who are approaching their thesis submission deadlines. In 1st year, there was an 80% confidence in completing their studies within their targeted timeframe compared with a drop to 61% in 3rd year and 52% in 4th year. Stronger confidence in the early years of study continue in their evaluation of their entire research experience where 77% of those in 1st year, compared with 55% in 4th year (a decrease of 22%) who report that they *consider their Institution* as 'good or excellent'. HS (76%) respondents rate their overall experience higher than respondents in Trinity overall or in AHSS (61%) and STEM (73%), in particular in Year 2 and Year 4 of their research degree experience where 89% and 85% of respondents respectively report their overall experience as 'good or excellent'.

4.13 Withdrawal

An important part of understanding the PGR experience is to analyse the proportions of PGRs who considered leaving their programme.

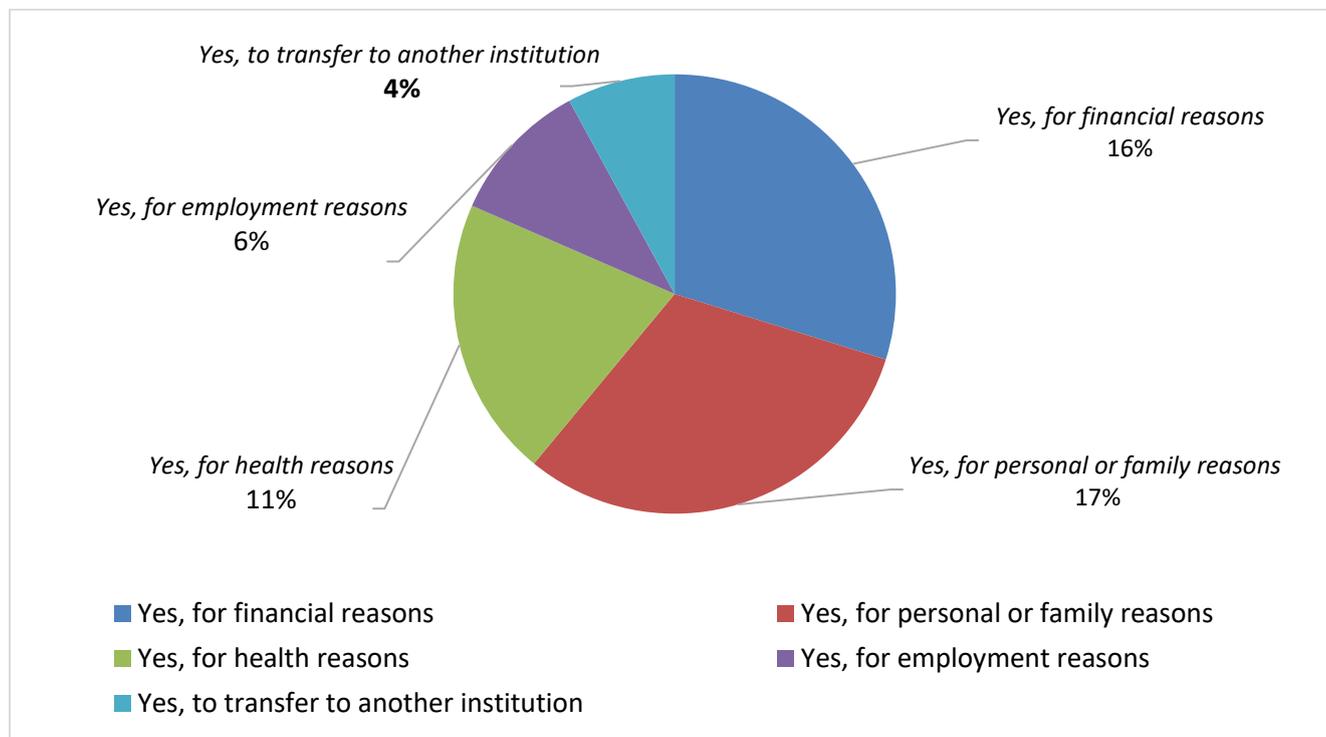
Table 27 Withdrawal

Survey Section M: Appendix 1, M.5 - M.10

<i>Questions</i>	<i>(% of respondents who Definitely / Mostly Agree)</i>					
	2021 Trinity	AHSS	STEM	HS	≥ 250 Univ	2019 Trinity
Have you ever seriously considered withdrawing from your research degree programme? No.	60%	54%	66%	55%	64%	57%
<i>Yes, for financial reasons</i>	16%	27%	8%	15%	14%	23%
<i>Yes, for personal or family reasons</i>	17%	17%	14%	25%	16%	18%
<i>Yes for health reasons</i>	9%	10%	12%	11%	10%	11%
<i>Yes for employment reasons</i>	4%	6%	5%	6%	7%	6%
<i>Yes to transfer to another institutions</i>	9%	6%	3%	4%	4%	6%

Almost 65% ≥ 250 Univ and 60% of TCD respondents have not seriously considered withdrawing from their research degree programme. Where respondents have, it has been mainly for *personal or family reasons* (17%) or *financial reasons* (16%). STEM (14%) and HS (25%) respondents considered withdrawing for *personal or family reasons*, while 27% of AHSS respondents considered withdrawing for *financial reasons*. This aligns with the fact that 44% of AHSS respondents are self-funded.

Figure 66 *Have you ever seriously considered withdrawing from your research degree programme?*



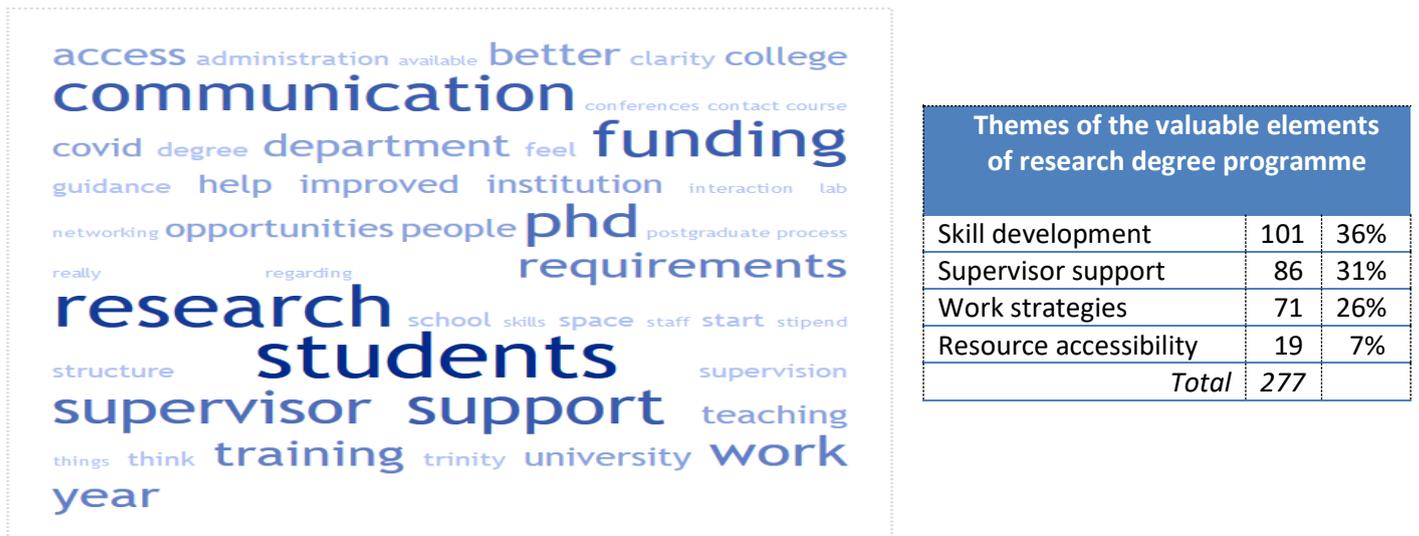
4.14 Open Comments – Overall Experience of Research Degree Programme

Respondents were invited to provide comments on two open questions, namely:

- I. What aspects / elements of your research degree programme are most valuable?
- II. What aspects of your research degree experience could be improved?

This survey provides evidence that the *research degree programme was most valuable* in a number of ways. Of the 474 responses, 277 (58%) provided a response to the questions on the positive elements of online/blended learning experience they want to keep when on-campus studies resume. The figure below outlines the top four overall themes.

Figure 67 What aspects / elements of your research degree programme are most valuable?



- Development of research skills (101, 36%): respondents reported that they enhanced their learning skills by broadening their performances in writing, communicating, and using transferable, technical and project management skills. This allowed respondents to work at their own speed and get the most out of their programme. This was a key benefit highlighted by respondents.

‘Development of transferrable skills including: written communication, teaching, and independent critical thinking.’ (1st Yr, AHSS, Psychology)

- Support of Supervisor (86, 31%): the provision of support and guidance, the help to form ideas, build relationships, widen networks and avail of Supervisor subject knowledge were some of the supports that motivated respondents and lifted morale during COVID-19.

‘I can work independently and can still rely on my supervisor's support should I need it.’ (1st Yr, HS, Medicine)

- Self-learning (71, 26%): the benefits of independent learning, having autonomy and carrying out specialised research were important to help respondents to advance in their research performance.

‘Ability to carry out specialised research that cannot be learned anywhere else in Ireland.’ (4th Yr, STEM, Genetics)

- Access (19, 7%): having access to resources, workspace, funding, seminars, materials, and laboratory experiments were some of the benefits that respondents captioned as key to their learning.

‘That the particular research space that I'm in is cutting-edge so there would hopefully be ample jobs in the space after graduating.’ (3rd Yr, STEM, Engineering)

- Widen accessibility (50, 17%): respondents were looking for wider access to a range of resources (library was cited as a key resource) and advice to help their mental health during the coronavirus pandemic.

'Communicating changes to access and regulations with more notice.' (3rd Yr, STEM, Chemistry)

'It would be great for making more online access to books and etc.' (3rd Yr, HS, Nursing and Midwifery)

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Thank you for taking PGR StudentSurvey.ie in 2021. Some of the questions may seem less relevant while your access to campus is limited but please answer them as accurately as possible, based on your experience of the academic year (to date). There are new questions in the survey this year that will ask you specifically about your experience engaging with your higher education institution during COVID-19 and they will appear at the beginning of the survey.

Section A: Life during the COVID-19 pandemic

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the impact COVID-19 has had on your experience?

		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
A.1	My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.2	COVID-19 has affected my funding or my ability to fund myself during my research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.3	I have adequate access to the on-campus facilities required to engage with my research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.4	I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.5	I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.6	How has COVID-19 most impacted on your research?				
A.7	In what way(s) could your higher education institution improve its support for you during the current circumstances?				

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Section B: Research Infrastructure and Facilities

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about research infrastructure and facilities?		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
B.1	I have a suitable working space						
B.2	There is adequate provision of computing resources / facilities						
B.3	There is adequate provision of library facilities (including physical / online resources)						
B.4	I have access to the specialist resources and facilities necessary for my research						
B.5	My research is funded by [Please select all that apply]						
	Scholarship			Grant			
	Scholarship (fees only)			Employer-funded			
	Self-funded						
B.6	My funding covers [Please select all that apply]						
	Fees			Travel to conferences			
	Stipend			Other travel (labs / other institutions)			
	Research materials			Specialist training			
B.7	If you have any additional comments about research infrastructure and facilities, please write them in here						

Section C: Supervision

		One supervisor	Two supervisors	Three or more supervisors
C.1	I am being supervised by...			

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about supervision?							
		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
C.2	My supervisor(s) provides the appropriate level of support for my research						
C.3	I have regular contact with my supervisor(s), appropriate for my needs						
C.4	My supervisor(s) provides feedback that helps me to direct my research activities						
C.5	My supervisor(s) help me to identify my training and development needs as a researcher						
C.6	If you have any additional comments about supervision, please write them in here						

Section D: Research Culture

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the research culture? [Note: Where we have used the term 'department' please answer with respect to your centre, school, institute, graduate school, or other unit where you are primarily based or attached for your research]							
		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
D.1	My department provides access to a relevant seminar programme						
D.2	The research ambience in my department stimulates my work						
D.3	I have frequent opportunities to discuss my research with other research students						

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		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
D.4	I have opportunities to become involved in the wider research community, beyond my department						

D.5	If you have any additional comments about research culture, please write them in here

Section E: Progress and Assessment

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about induction, progression arrangements and assessment?

		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
E.1	I received an appropriate induction / orientation to my research degree programme						

		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
E.2	I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress						

		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
E.3	I understand the required standard for my thesis						

		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
E.4	The final assessment procedures for my research degree are clear to me						

E.5	If you have any additional comments about induction, progression arrangements and assessment, please write them in here

Section F: Development Opportunities

Have you availed of the following opportunities during your research degree programme? [select all that apply]		Yes	No	Not available
F.01	Agreeing a personal training or development plan			
F.02	Receiving training to develop my research skills			
F.03	Receiving training to develop my other transferable skills			
F.04	Receiving advice on career options			
F.05	Taking part in a placement or internship			
F.06	Attending an academic research conference			
F.07	Presenting a paper or poster at an academic research conference			
F.08	Submitting a paper for publication in an academic journal or book			
F.09	Communicating your research to a non-academic audience			
F.10	Receiving training in entrepreneurship and innovation			
F.11	Putting training in entrepreneurship and innovation into practice e.g., submitting an invention disclosure or filing a patent application			
F.12	Working as part of a team			
F.13	Working collaboratively with industry			
F.14	Working collaboratively with a civil society organisation or public organisation			
F.15	Spending time abroad (outside of the Republic of Ireland) as part of your research degree			

F.16	Please indicate whether you have taught (or demonstrated) at your institution during your research degree programme	Yes	No				
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
F.17	Do you agree or disagree that the teaching / demonstration you delivered enhanced your overall research experience?	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F.18	Do you agree or disagree that you have been given appropriate support and guidance for your teaching / demonstration?	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F.19	If you have any additional comments about development opportunities (including teaching / demonstrating), please write them in here						

Section G: Research Skills

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about development of research skills?		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
G.1	My skills in applying appropriate research methodologies, tools and techniques have developed during my programme						
G.2	My skills in critically analysing and evaluating findings and results have developed during my programme						
G.3	My confidence to be creative or innovative has developed during my programme						
G.4	My understanding of 'research integrity' (e.g., rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution of others) has developed during my programme						
G.5	If you have any additional comments about research skills development, please write them in here						

Section H: Other Transferable Skills

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about development of other transferable skills?		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
H.1	My ability to manage projects has developed during my programme						
H.2	My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my programme						
H.3	I have developed contacts or professional networks during my programme						
H.4	I have increasingly managed my own professional development during my programme						

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H.5	If you have any additional comments about development of other transferable skills, please write them in here

Section I: Responsibilities and Supports

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about responsibilities and supports?

		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
I.1	I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I.2	I am aware of my supervisor(s)' responsibilities towards me as a research degree student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I.3	Other than my supervisor(s), I know who to approach if I am concerned about any academic aspect of my research degree programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I.4	Who / what unit would you approach? (please provide the unit or role rather than an individual name)						
I.5	How aware are you of the various student supports available? (Recreation, healthcare, counselling, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I.6	My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I.7	If you have any additional comments about student / staff responsibilities and supports, please write them in here						

Section J: Personal outlook

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your personal outlook?		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
J.1	I am satisfied with my life nowadays						
J.1	I am satisfied with my life within my institution nowadays						
J.2	I am satisfied with my work-life balance						
J.3	There is someone in my institution I can talk to about my day-to-day problems						
J.4	I feel that my research degree programme is worthwhile						
J.5	If you have any additional comments about your personal outlook, please write them in here						

If you have been affected by any of the issues raised by Section J, or elsewhere in the survey, please contact the student support service in your institution.

Sections K and L: Motivations and Career

Please select your top three motivations for pursuing a research degree from the following list, and prioritise these by writing 1, 2 or 3 (1=highest, 3=lowest priority)	
K.1	My interest in my subject
K.2	Improving my career prospects for an academic / research career
K.3	Improving my career prospects outside of an academic/research career
K.4	I was encouraged by a former academic tutor/supervisor
K.5	The funding was available
K.6	It felt like a natural step for me
K.7	I felt inspired to work with a particular academic
K.8	Professional development or training
K.9	Other (Please specify):

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Please select the top three types of career you have in mind for when you finish your research degree, and prioritise these by writing 1, 2 or 3 (1=highest, 3=lowest priority)		
L.1	Academic career in higher education (either research and teaching, or teaching only)	
L.2	Research career in higher education	
L.3	Other career in higher education	
L.4	Research career outside higher education (e.g., in a private research organisation, a charity or in an industrial environment)	
L.5	Teaching (at a level below higher education)	
L.6	Returning to, or remaining with, employer who is sponsoring your degree	
L.7	Returning to, or remaining with, employer who is not sponsoring your degree	
L.8	Self-employment (including setting up your own business)	
L.9	Any other professional career	
L.10	Not sure or not decided yet	
L.11	Other (Please specify):	

Section M: Overall Experience

		Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
M.1	How would you evaluate your entire research experience at this institution?				

M.2	What aspects / elements of your research degree programme are most valuable?

M.3	What aspects of your research degree experience could be improved?

		Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
M.4	I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution's expected timescale						

Have you ever seriously considered withdrawing from your research degree programme? [select all that apply]		
M.5	No, I have not seriously considered withdrawing	
M.6	Yes, for financial reasons	
M.7	Yes, for personal or family reasons	
M.8	Yes, for health reasons	

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M.9	Yes, for employment reasons	
M.10	Yes, to transfer to another institution	
M.11	Other (please state)	

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.

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