



HR

Excellence in Research

Diagnosis

from the scientific community



As part of the **self-assessment phase of the HREIR** (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers) initiative, the University of Limoges wished to involve its entire academic community in carrying out the institutional assessment.

To this end, **an online survey was distributed to staff involved in research activities**: lecturers and researchers, researchers, PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, assistant lecturers (ATERs), engineers, and administrative and technical staff contributing to research activities.

The questionnaire, which was conducted between 29 April and 26 May, **received 147 responses**.

Its aim was to assess respondents' perceptions of the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers within the institution

The survey was divided into five sections:

- the respondents' profiles;
- their level of knowledge of the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct and the HREIR framework;
- their assessment of how the principles of the HREIR framework are taken into account at the University of Limoges;
- their knowledge and use of existing mechanisms;
- their suggestions for improvement and their key expectations.

The evaluation questions were organised according to the four pillars of the European framework:

Pillar 1: Ethics, scientific integrity, equality, diversity and open science;

Pillar 2: Evaluation, recruitment and career progression of researchers;

Pillar 3: Working conditions and practices;

Pillar 4: Careers in research and talent development.

For each of these pillars, respondents were invited to **freely express their observations, the difficulties they had encountered and their suggestions for improvement**. This approach made it possible to supplement the quantitative analysis of the results with a qualitative interpretation of the expectations expressed by the scientific community.

The results presented below therefore form a central part of the University of Limoges' HREIR assessment. They will help to identify the institution's strengths, areas for improvement and priorities that will inform **the future action plan aimed at enhancing attractiveness, providing support and fostering research careers**.

*Key figures
from the
survey*



147 respondents out of 1,361 staff members (response rate: 11 per cent)

44% per cent women / 53% per cent men

67% per cent of respondents with more than 10 years' service

37% per cent senior lecturers

20% per cent university professors

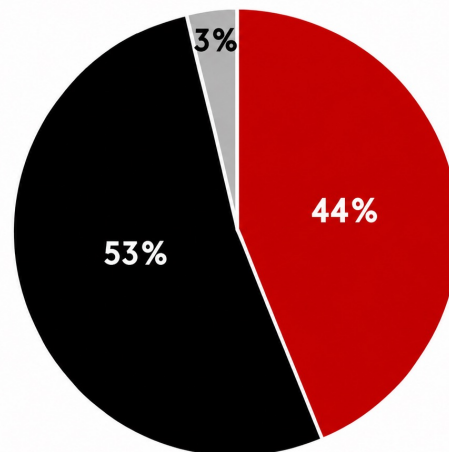
16% per cent PhD students

90 % of laboratories represented

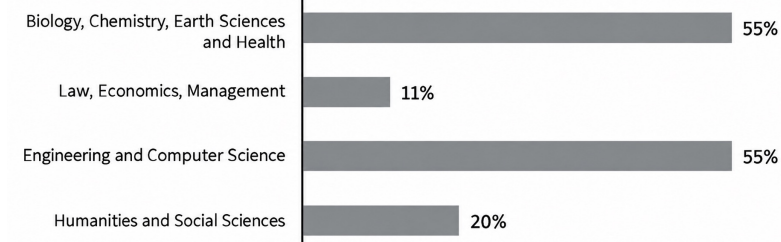
Profile of respondents...



■ Women
■ Men
■ Prefer not to answer

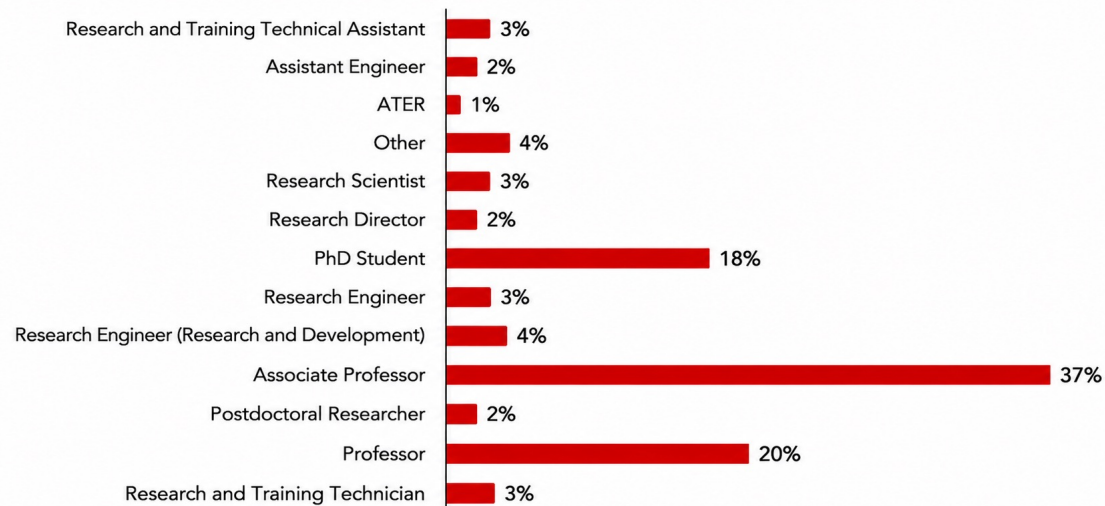


gender

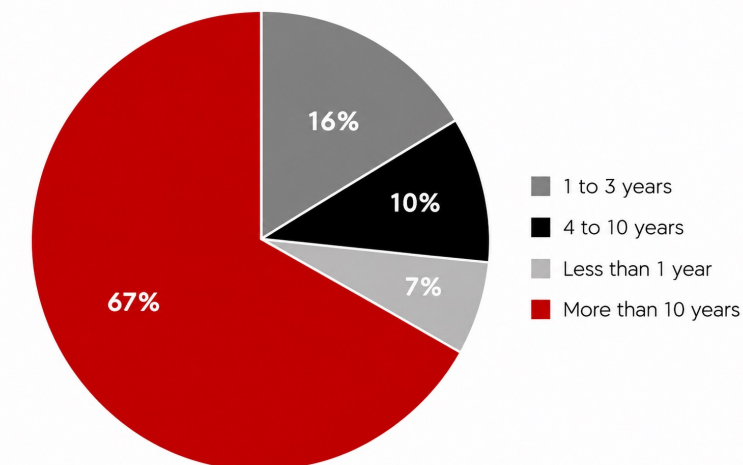


field

status



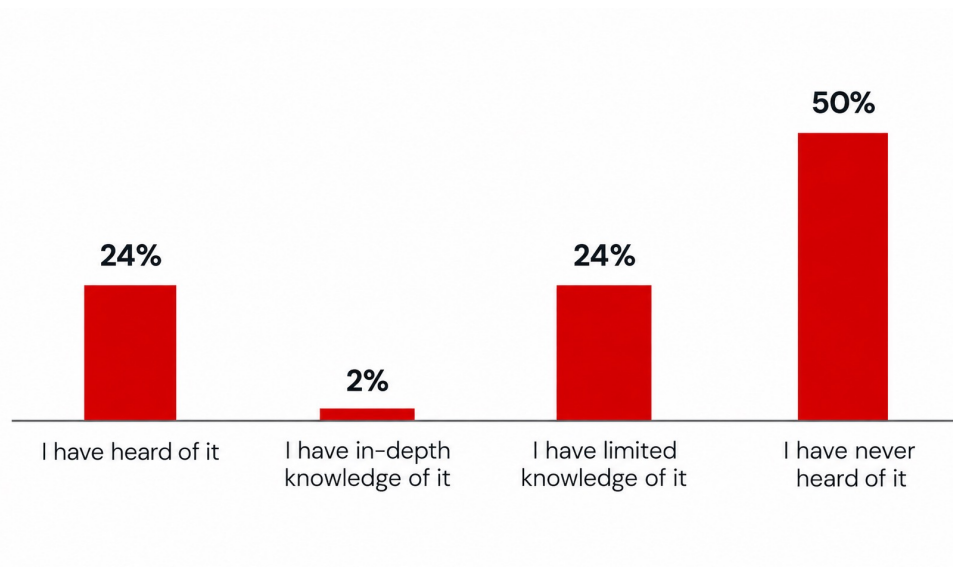
length of service



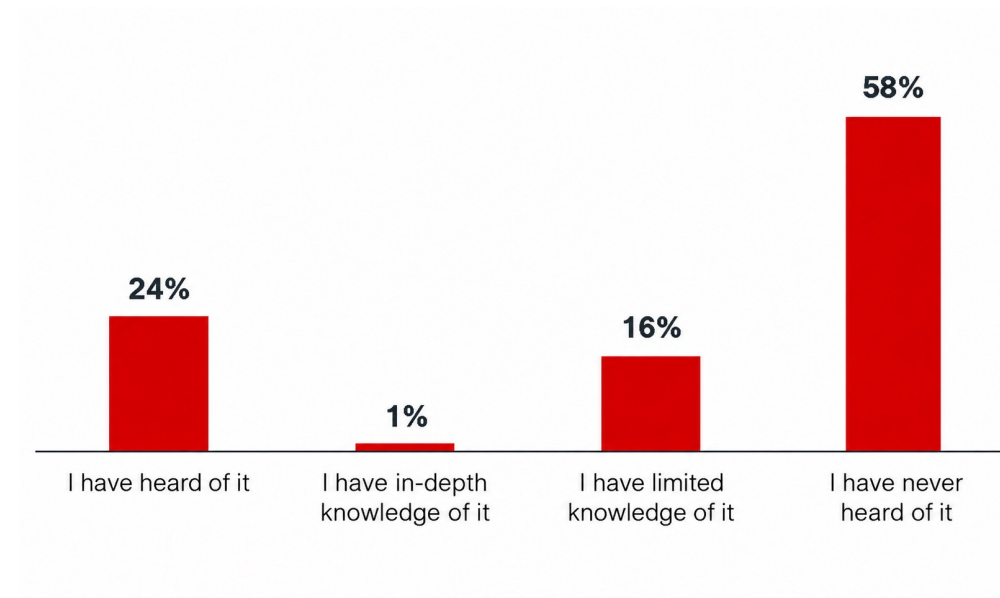
*How much do
you know
about...*



... the European Charter for
Researchers and the Code of
Conduct for the Recruitment of
Researchers



... the Human Resources Strategy for
Researchers (HREIR)

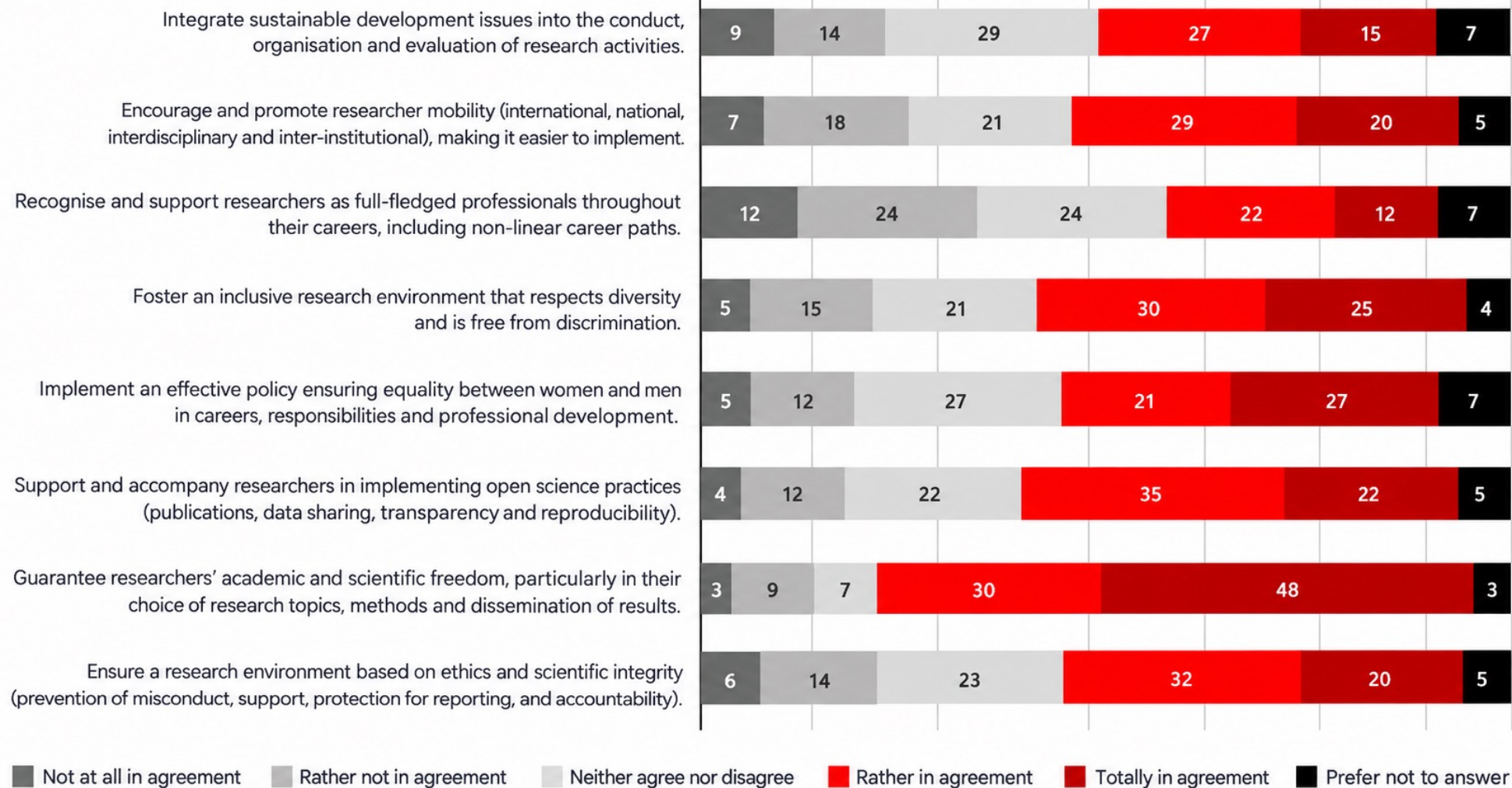


Pillar 1

Ethics,
scientific
integrity,
equality,
diversity and
open science

*Answers
to the questions*

Do you consider that the University of Limoges (as a percentage)...



Pillar 1

**Ethics,
scientific
integrity,
equality,
diversity and
open science**

Optional fields

On reading the open-ended comments, several recurring themes emerge. Overall, they reflect an endorsement of the principles of Pillar 1, but also a perceived gap between stated intentions and the reality experienced by some of the respondents.

1. A disconnect between stated principles and their actual implementation: several respondents feel that issues such as ethics, integrity, equality and sustainable development feature prominently in institutional discourse, but are not sufficiently evident in day-to-day practice. Some even describe these principles as 'artificial' or out of touch with the realities on the ground.

2. An administrative burden deemed excessive

A recurring concern relates to the increasing complexity of administrative procedures. Respondents expressed the hope that the promotion of good practices would not result in new constraints or training requirements, but rather in greater trust, empowerment and simplification.

3. A need for greater support for researchers

Several comments highlight the lack of support in setting up and managing research projects, particularly when responding to calls for proposals (ANR, AAP, etc.). Researchers feel that support services are under considerable strain and that additional resources would be needed to enable them to devote more time to their scientific activities.

4. Concerns regarding equality and governance

Issues of gender equality elicit mixed reactions. Some respondents consider that the current arrangements may lead to reverse discrimination. Others highlight a lack of renewal or representativeness in certain laboratory bodies, citing in particular the absence of elections for several years.

5. A desire for greater recognition of professional commitment

Several comments reflect a feeling that the work invested in research activities is not sufficiently recognised. Some respondents question the consistency between the ethical values espoused and the ways in which the most committed staff are recognised or remunerated.

6. A broader conception of sustainable development

Some participants would like the concept of sustainable development not to be limited to its environmental dimension, but to incorporate social, organisational and human dimensions to a greater extent, particularly quality of life at work and researchers' workload.

7. A need to monitor career paths and progression

A few comments highlighted the lack of forums for discussion or regular meetings enabling researchers to take stock of their career paths, prospects for advancement or plans for mobility.

Pillar 2

Evaluation,
recruitment
and career
progression
of researchers

*Answers
to the questions*

Do you consider that the University of Limoges (as a percentage)...



Pillar 2

**Evaluation,
recruitment
and career
progression
of researchers**

Optional fields

On reading the open comments under Pillar 2 – Evaluation, recruitment and career progression of researchers, several significant concerns emerge. These relate primarily to the transparency of procedures, career prospects and evaluation criteria.

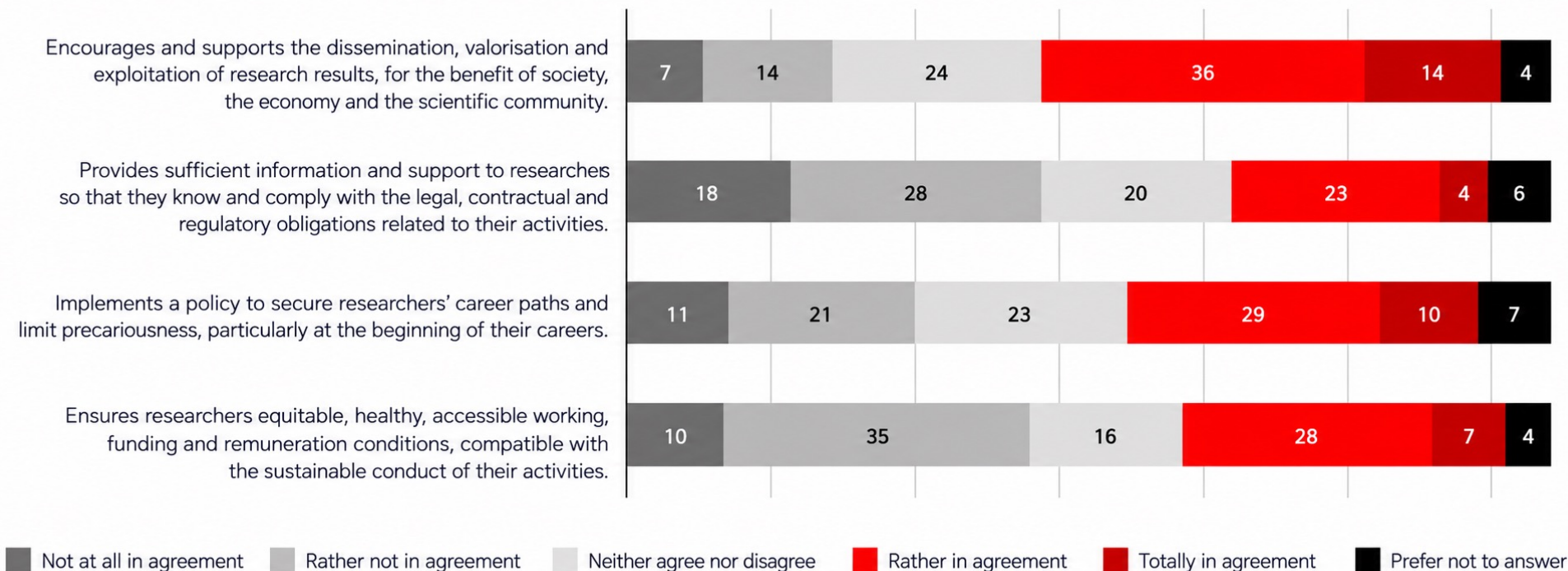
1. **A lack of transparency and clarity in recruitment:** many respondents express mistrust of recruitment and promotion processes. Recruitment drives are sometimes perceived as lacking sufficient transparency, with a sense that certain profiles or posts may be predetermined. Several comments highlight a discrepancy between the stated principles of fairness and the reality of the practices observed.
2. **Career prospects deemed insufficient:** respondents highlight the difficulties in career progression, particularly for early-career researchers and lecturers-researchers at the start or mid-point of their careers. The lack of vacant posts, limited opportunities for advancement and the absence of clear prospects are regularly cited as demotivating factors that may lead some colleagues to consider leaving the institution.
3. **Recognition of merit seen as an area for improvement:** several comments suggest that career progression still relies heavily on seniority or on criteria deemed insufficiently clear, and call for greater consideration to be given to the quality of scientific achievements, the responsibilities held, collective contribution and the excellence of the results obtained.
4. **Recruitment procedures perceived as lengthy and complex:** recruitment timescales are frequently identified as a weak point. Some respondents feel that the length of the procedures has become a deterrent for candidates, particularly PhD students and postdoctoral researchers. There is a strong expectation for administrative simplification and a reduction in processing times.
5. **An evaluation process that does not always reflect the diversity of academic activities:** comments highlight the difficulty in recognising the full range of roles carried out by researchers and research-teaching staff. Activities such as teaching, leadership, project management, facilitating group work or administrative responsibilities are sometimes perceived as not being sufficiently valued in evaluation and career progression processes.
6. **Concerns regarding scientific evaluation criteria:** several respondents questioned the weight given to bibliometric indicators in career assessments and emphasised that, whilst these indicators may be suitable for certain disciplines, they are less relevant in others, particularly in the social sciences and humanities. There appears to be a call for a more qualitative evaluation that is better tailored to the specific characteristics of each discipline, in line with European guidelines promoted in particular by COARA.
7. **Perceived disparities between disciplines and organisational units:** some comments refer to differences in treatment depending on the constituent units, departments or disciplines. Opportunities for career progression, the distribution of responsibilities and the conditions under which research is carried out are sometimes perceived as being unevenly distributed within the institution.

Pillar 3

Working
conditions
and
practices

Answers
to the questions

Do you consider that the University of Limoges (as a percentage)...



Pillar 3

Working conditions and practices

Optional fields

On reading the open-ended comments under Pillar 3 – Working Conditions and Practices, several recurring themes emerge. These mainly concern workload, staff support, resources allocated to research, and the balance between the various tasks carried out.

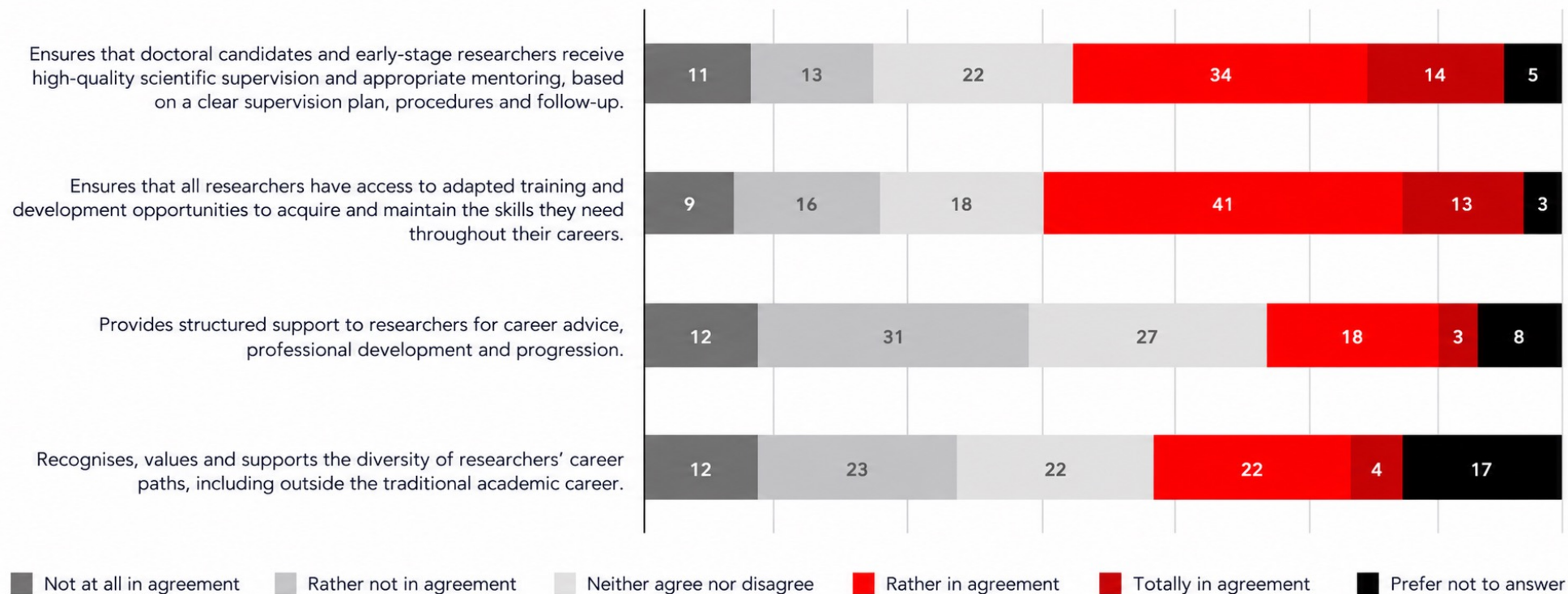
- 1. An administrative burden perceived as increasing:** the most frequently raised issue concerns the growing administrative burden, both for researchers and for support staff. Several respondents feel that the proliferation of procedures, checks and management obligations reduces the time devoted to scientific activities. Procedures relating to tasks, expenditure or projects are perceived as particularly time-consuming.
- 2. Insufficient resources to support research activity:** numerous comments highlight a disconnect between stated research ambitions and the resources actually available, citing in particular a lack of support staff, recruitment difficulties and insufficient recognition of the workload associated with administrative and management tasks.
- 3. A difficult balance between teaching and research:** several academic staff highlight the difficulty of reconciling the demands of teaching, research and collective responsibilities. Some feel that the current organisation encourages a fragmentation of working time, which is not particularly compatible with certain research activities requiring long periods of concentration.
- 4. Support perceived as uneven across different groups and disciplines:** the comments reveal high expectations regarding support, particularly amongst PhD students, early-career researchers and some academic staff. Several respondents indicate that they do not feel sufficiently supported in their career progression or in their research activities. Differences are also perceived between disciplines, particularly to the detriment of the social sciences and humanities.
- 5. Expressed needs regarding training and professional development:** several participants raised questions about the continuing professional development opportunities offered by the institution and the recognition of time spent on such training. PhD students also highlighted a need for more structured support on the practical aspects of a researcher's role, beyond simply completing their thesis.
- 6. A perception of inequalities in working conditions:** some comments highlight disparities between departments, laboratories or categories of staff. Working conditions, mental workload, support options and access to certain schemes appear to be unevenly distributed across different work contexts.
- 7. Recognition of the role of support functions:** several respondents highlight the vital role played by research support services, in particular the AVRUL and administrative staff. However, these same staff members report being faced with an excessive workload which limits their ability to effectively support research activities.

Pillar 4

Careers in
research and
talent
development

*Réponses
aux questions*

Do you consider that the University of Limoges (as a percentage)...



The feedback received on Pillar 4 highlights several key expectations regarding career guidance, access to training and support for early-career researchers.

- 1. A need for increased resources to support those at the start of their careers:** several respondents emphasise the need to provide better support for PhD students, postdocs and early-career researchers. The lack of funding dedicated to early-career researchers is identified as a major obstacle to talent development and the pursuit of a scientific career.
- 2. Training provision deemed insufficiently tailored to researchers' needs:** respondents acknowledge that training is available, but feel that it does not always meet the practical needs encountered in the day-to-day work of a researcher. There are calls for more practical training, particularly in the areas of setting up and managing research projects, responding to calls for proposals, securing funding and steering scientific projects.
Several comments also highlight a failure to adapt the provision to the specific characteristics of the social sciences and humanities.
- 3. Difficulties in accessing training:** whilst training programmes do exist, several respondents indicated that current working conditions make it difficult for them to take part. Teaching workload, research activities and organisational constraints are said to limit staff availability for training; respondents also highlighted the difficulties faced by department heads in authorising such absences against a backdrop of staff shortages.
- 4. Career support perceived as lacking visibility:** several participants stated that they were unable to clearly identify the career development support schemes offered by the institution. The feedback reflects a lack of visibility regarding existing initiatives, as well as a greater need for information on the opportunities for career support and development.
- 5. Mixed views on doctoral supervision:** doctoral schools are generally recognised as providing a structured framework for supporting doctoral students. However, some respondents point out that the quality of supervision also depends heavily on the individual commitment of thesis supervisors. Several comments emphasise that recognised scientific expertise does not necessarily guarantee high-quality personal and professional support.
- 6. Significant concern regarding the administrative burden:** as in the other pillars, the administrative overload appears to be a factor limiting skills development and career support. Respondents consider that the increasing number of administrative tasks reduces the time available for training, research and professional development.
- 7. Calls for clarification on respective responsibilities:** some comments question the scope of the institution's responsibility in providing academic support to PhD students. They point out that the quality of academic supervision is primarily the responsibility of thesis supervisors and researchers authorised to supervise research, even though the institution may put in place a framework and support mechanisms.

What the
scientific
community tells
us

8 priorities



Ensuring sufficient time
is set aside for research

To reduce the administrative burden and minimise the fragmentation of activities, thereby enabling researchers to devote more time to their scientific work.

Strengthening human
resources

Anticipate staff departures, support recruitment and consolidate the support functions essential to the development of research.

Ensuring fairness and
transparency

Make recruitment, promotion and the allocation of responsibilities more transparent in order to strengthen confidence in decision-making processes.

Supporting career
development

Develop more structured career support, from the PhD stage through to the most advanced stages of an academic career.

Simplifying procedures
and tools

Improve access to information, clarify the institutional structure and reduce the complexity of administrative procedures

Supporting PhD students
and early-career
researchers

Strengthen support mechanisms, funding, opportunities for mobility and the conditions for launching scientific careers.

Fostering dialogue and
active listening

Give greater weight to feedback from the field and foster an institutional culture based on participation and co-creation.

Promoting a respectful
working environment

Strengthen measures relating to ethics, scientific integrity, the prevention of psychosocial risks and quality of life at work.