

Presentation: Academic working life for doctoral researchers
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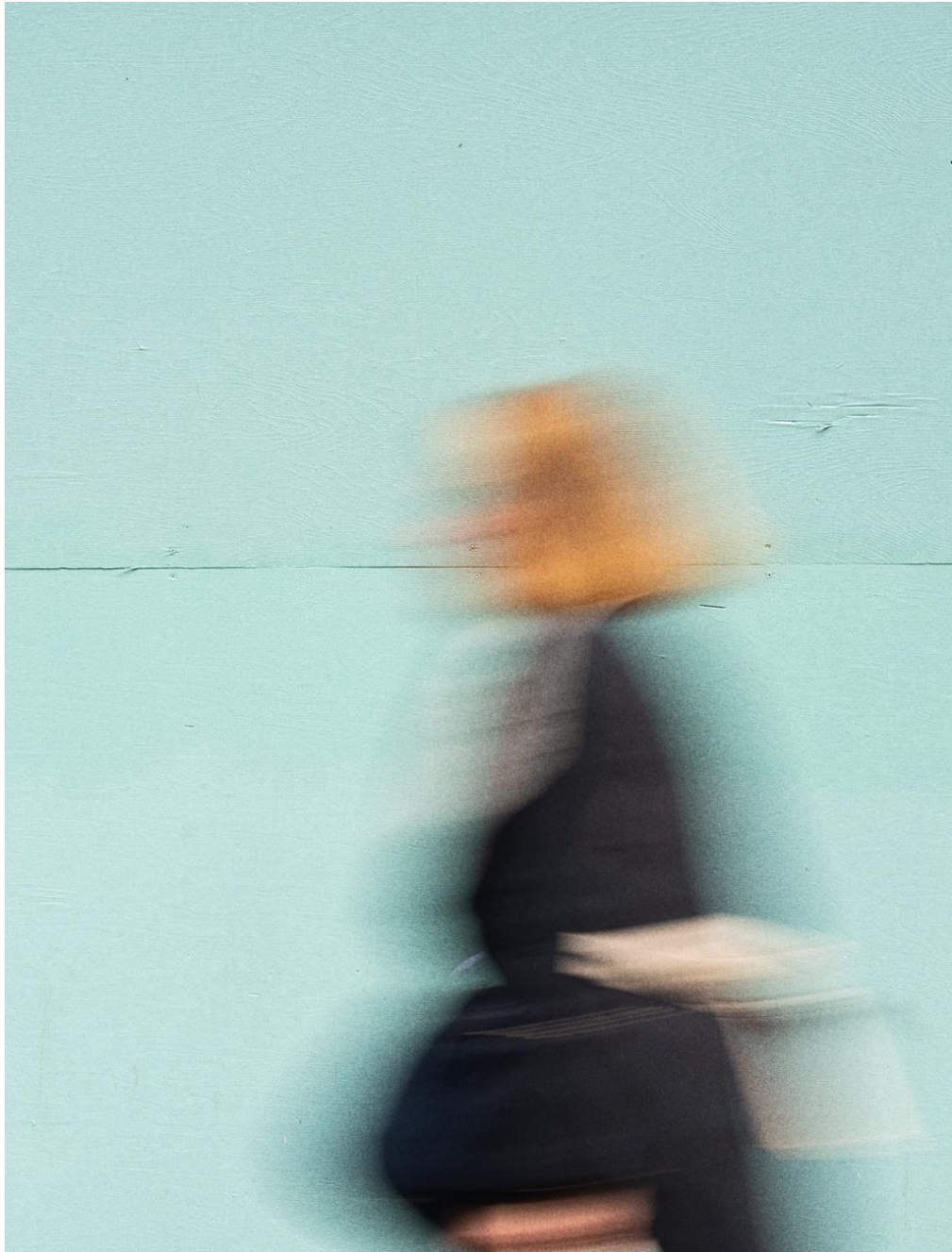
ACADEMIC WORKING LIFE FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

Webinar on current issues in doctoral education

Oct. 1, 2024, 3.00-4.30 pm.



TIETEENTEKIJÄT



Webinar programme

Opening words

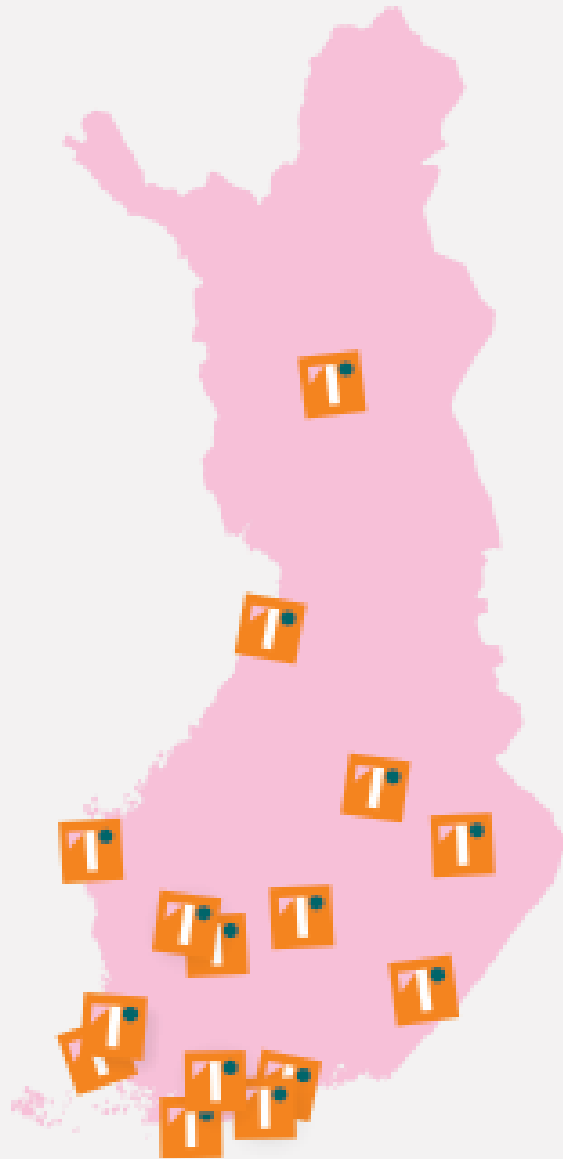
Siiri Hiidenvuori, Head of
Communications, FUURT

Introduction to the results of the
survey for early career researchers
Miia Ijäs-Idrobo, Senior Advisor, FUURT

Panel discussion on the development
of doctoral education

Q&A





Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers, FUURT (Tieteentekijät)

We are

- the leading expert on the working life of researchers in Finland.
- an active trade union that represents all those working in science, research and higher education.

Our members

- work in a variety of positions: researchers, university lecturers and teachers, professors, information specialists, various experts in science, research and higher education as well as administrative employees, grant researchers etc.
- Total of 7,000 members and 16 member associations all around Finland.

We promote our members' interests both in working life and in society at large. **We actively advocate better conditions for science, research, and higher education, as well as support our members' working lives.**



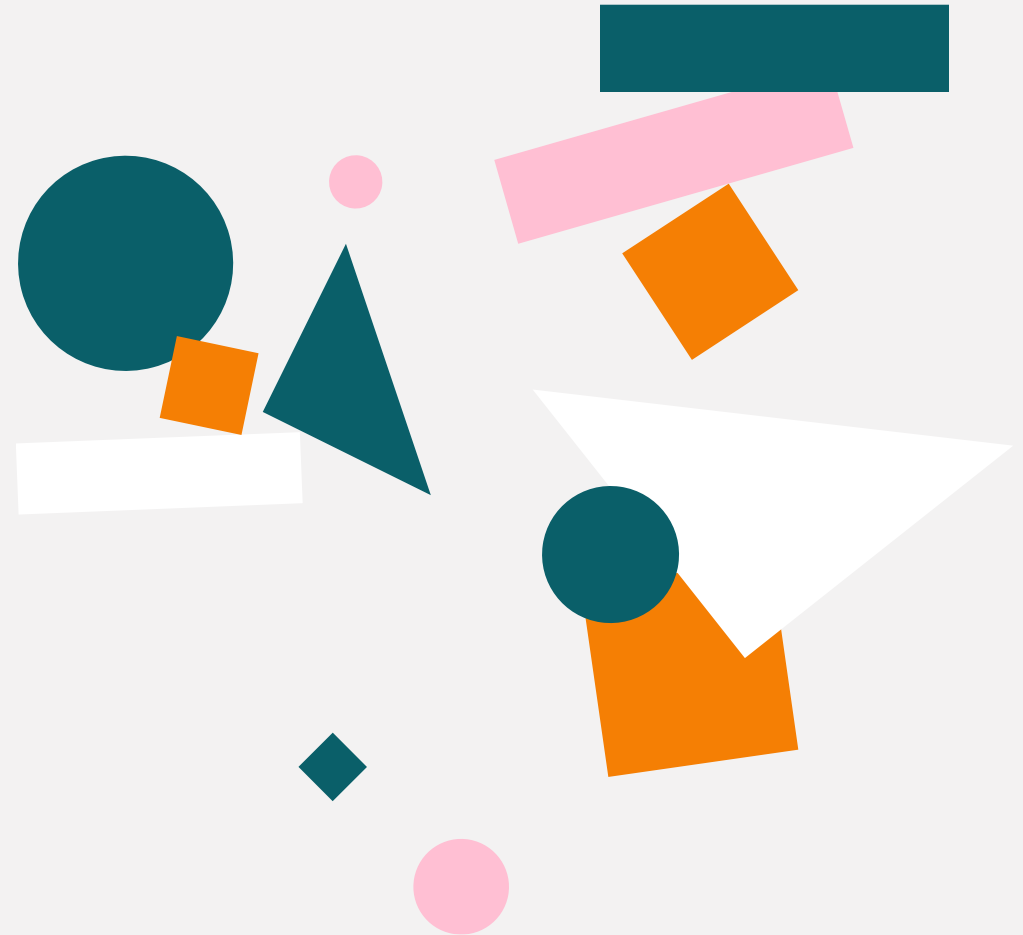


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FORSKARFÖRBUNDET • FUURT

Academic working life for doctoral researchers: results from the ECR survey 2024

PhD, senior adviser Miia Ijäs-Idrobo

FUURT webinar October 1, 2024



The content of the survey

The 2024 survey is the 4th FUURT survey for early career researchers:

- current doctoral researchers
- recently graduated PhD holders (within last 4 years).

The survey asks general questions from all respondents related to e.g. PhD research and doctoral education, as well as career prospects.

Specific set of questions is asked based on the respondent's current work situation:

- employment related questions
- grant related questions
- questions regarding unemployment.

In 2024, we also asked new questions related to e.g. research integrity (HTK) and possible experiences of inappropriate treatment in an academic context.



Basic information on respondents (2024)

- In total 1138 respondents of whom
 - 66 % are women.
 - 19 % are international respondents (other than Finnish nationals).
 - over half (54 %) are in their 30s.
 - majority (66 %) live with a spouse or with a spouse and children.
 - 77 % were conducting their PhD.



Field of science (top 5)

Of all the respondents...

22,5 % are from arts and humanities.

19,5 % from natural sciences.

19,0 % from social sciences.

8,6 % from business, administration and legal studies.

8,2 % from educational sciences.





Grant Researcher

Not an employment relationship, freedom to choose content and hours of work.

68 % of doctoral researchers have received working grants at some point.

MELA payments (pension insurance).

Possibility for a part-time employment?

Employee

For university staff, **general collective agreement** for universities applies.

Employment outside university: check applicable collective agreement.

Unemployed

If unemployed, possibility for unemployment benefits (register in TE-Services, apply for benefit from unemployment fund or Kela).

In Finland, c. 30% of ECRs have been unemployed during their PhD research or soon after completing the PhD.

PhD Training

Recognition as a fully-fledged member of the academic community.

Right to high-quality supervision, equal treatment and due credit.

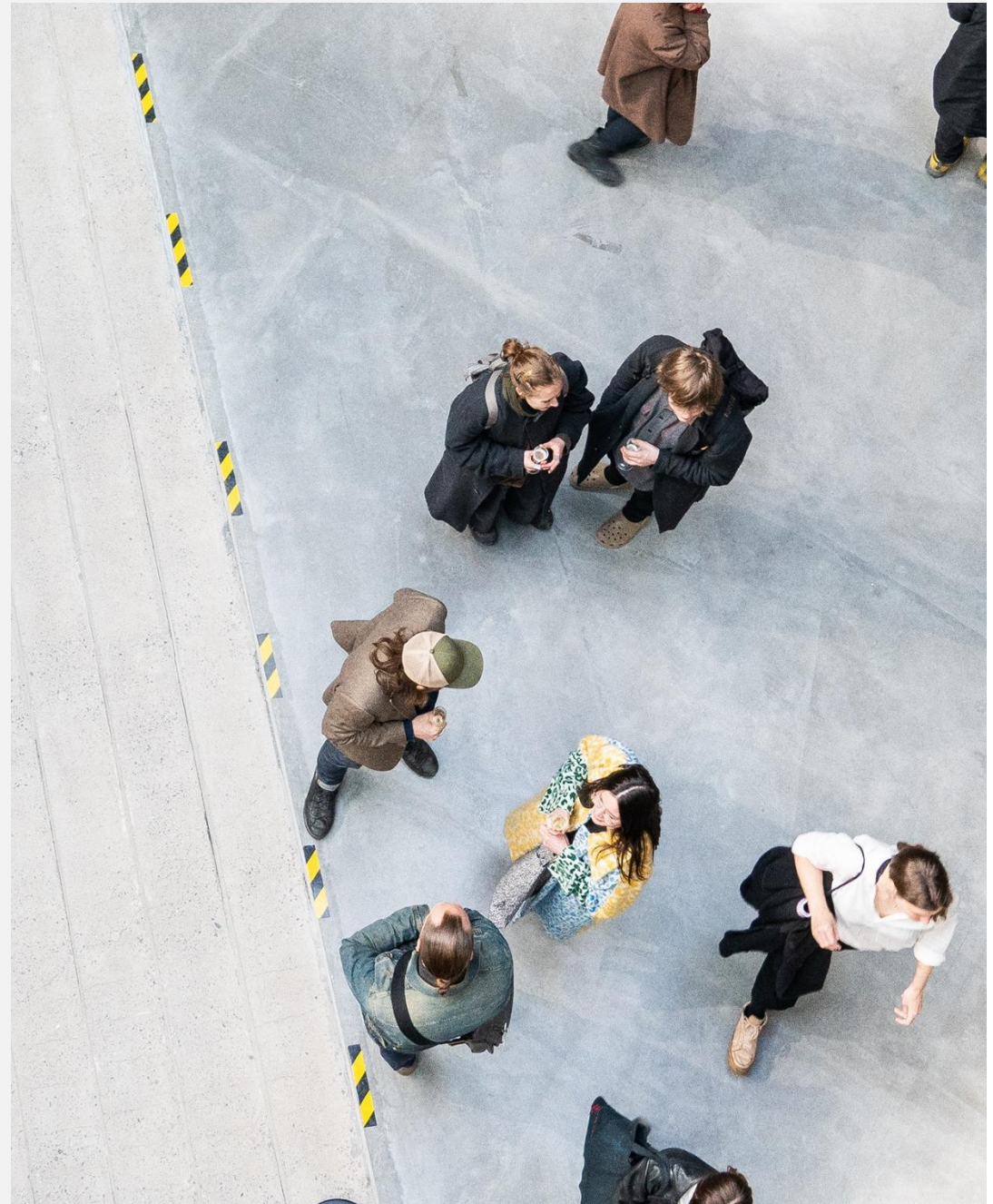
Different backgrounds, ages, motivations, and career aspirations.

From outside EU/EEA area

Residence permit rules apply: hosting agreement with the university, income requirement, can be permanent or temporary.

Employment status of the survey respondents

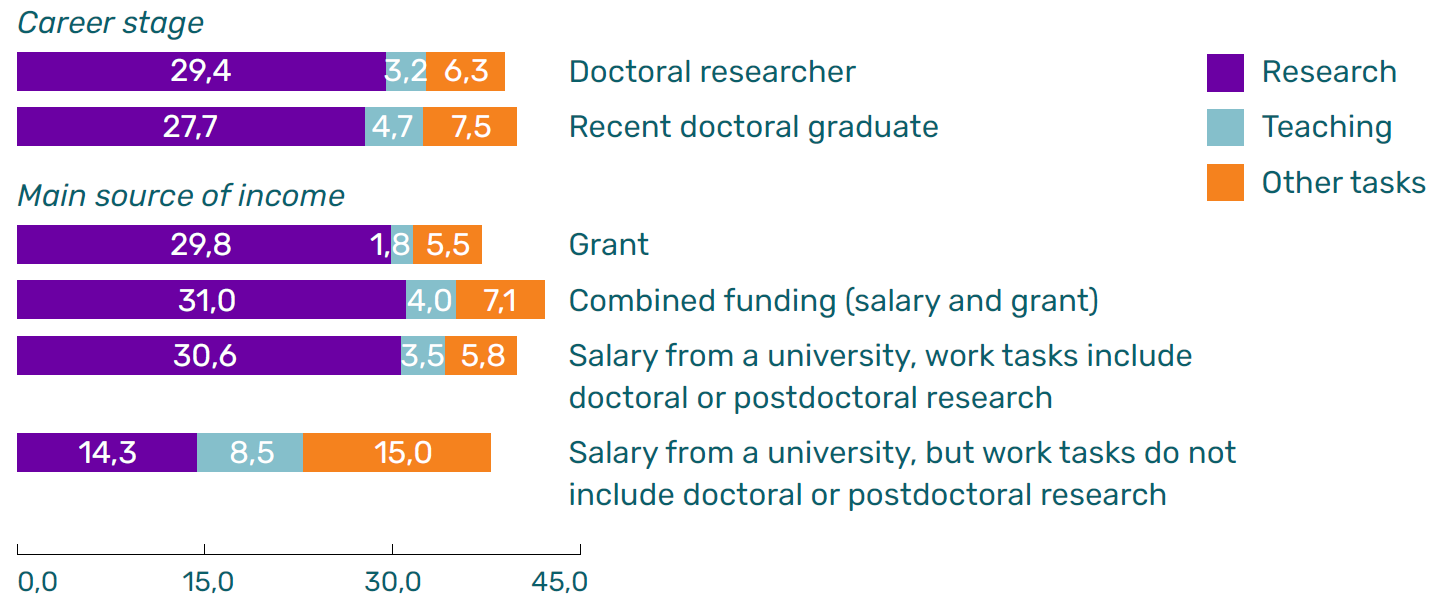
56% worked at a university as an employee.
17% were grant-funded researchers.
10% worked in the public sector.
4% in companies (private sector).
3% worked at a university of applied sciences (AMK).
6% were unemployed at the time of the survey.



Content of work at the early career stage

- 80% said their dissertation is article-based.
- 74% had already published at least one scientific, peer-reviewed article.
- 80% of the publications were written in English.
- Only 12% had not participated in a scientific conference during the past 24 months.
- 60% had taught and 38% had supervised thesis work on higher education level in the past 24 months.

Figure 6: "Estimate the average amount of work time you spend on the following tasks" by career stage and main source of income. Average comparison, hours per week.



Doctoral supervision

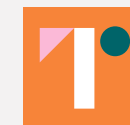
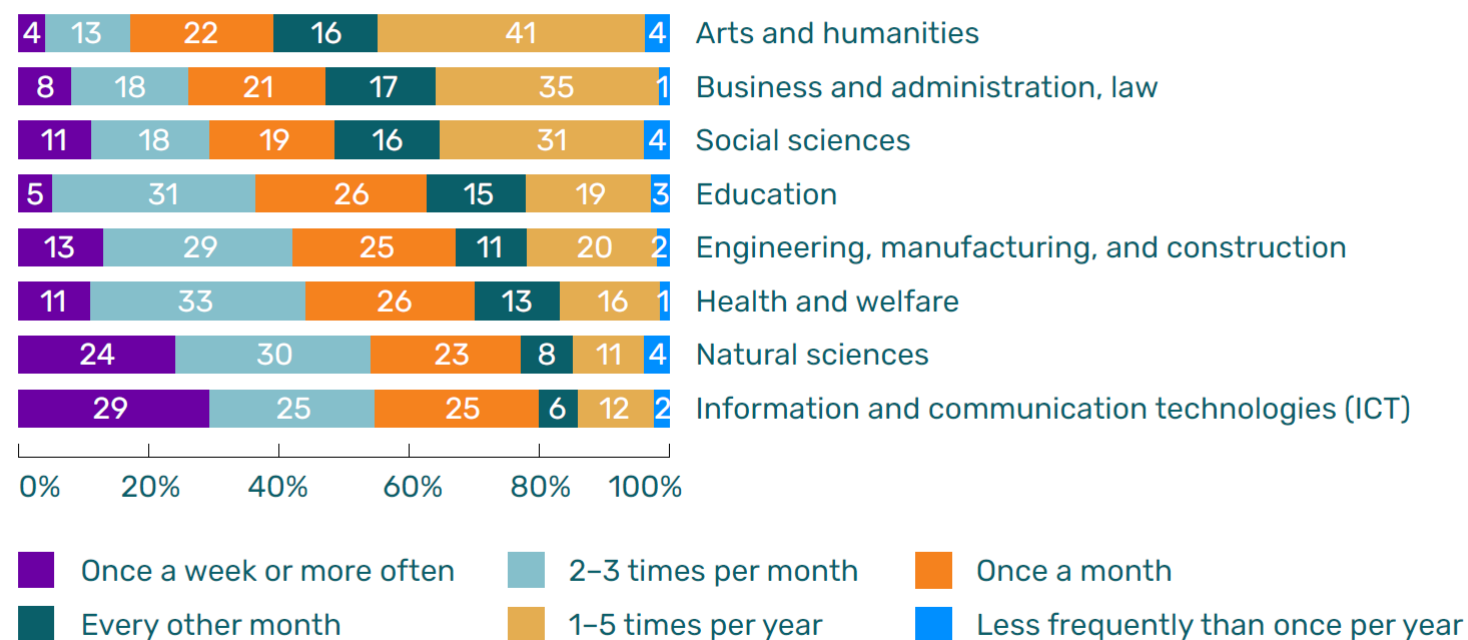
Of the survey respondents, c. 60% were satisfied with the amount and quality of supervision.

There is variety within the frequency of supervision between different fields.

In general, c. 60% of respondents said that their supervisor had encouraged them to pursue an academic career.

Only about 20% said their supervisor had encouraged them to pursue a career outside academia. Also here there were differences between fields.

Figure 1: Discussions with a dissertation supervisor by field of education, by percentage.





Career counselling and mobility

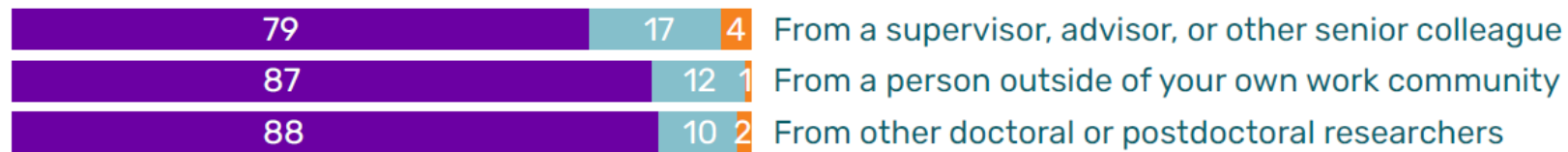
- The most typical form of career support is discussions with one's PhD supervisor: c. 50% of the respondents.
- 32% of the respondents said they had not received career counselling as part of doctoral education.
- The most common form of mobility is international mobility to a university abroad (22%).
- 30% of respondents said they had otherwise cooperated with actors outside one's own university (other cooperation than "formal mobility").



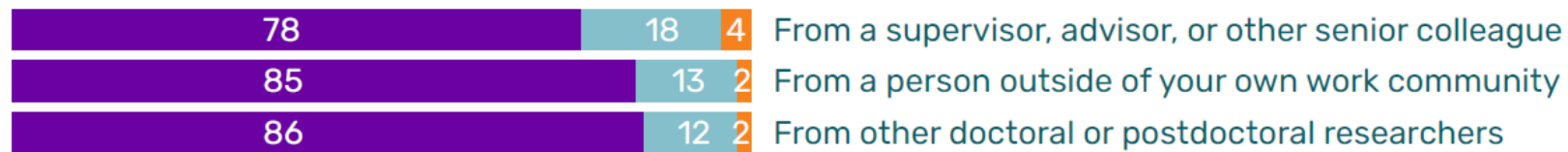
Inappropriate treatment in academia

Figure 11: Experienced inappropriate treatment, by percentage.

Bullying or violence



Discrimination



Sexual harassment



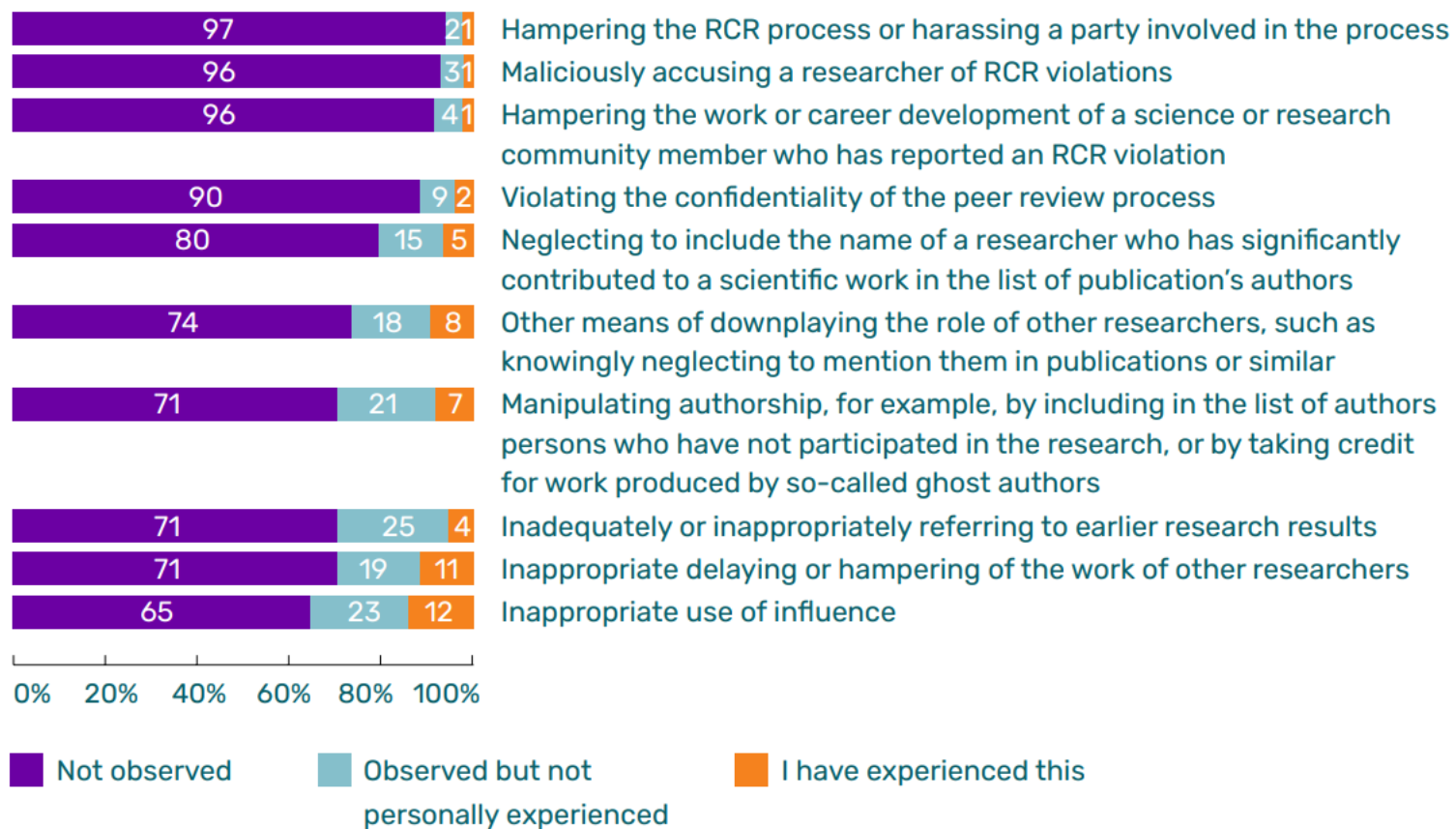
Never Occasionally Often

- Inappropriate treatment is unfortunately common in academia.
- The problem is not only in Finland; also international studies show similar if not worse results.
- FUURT wants to raise awareness on the issue e.g. as part of supervisors' induction.

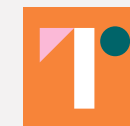


Research integrity vs. disregard for the responsible conduct of research (RCR)

Figure 15: "Have you ever observed or personally experienced the following behaviours within the academic community?", by percentage.



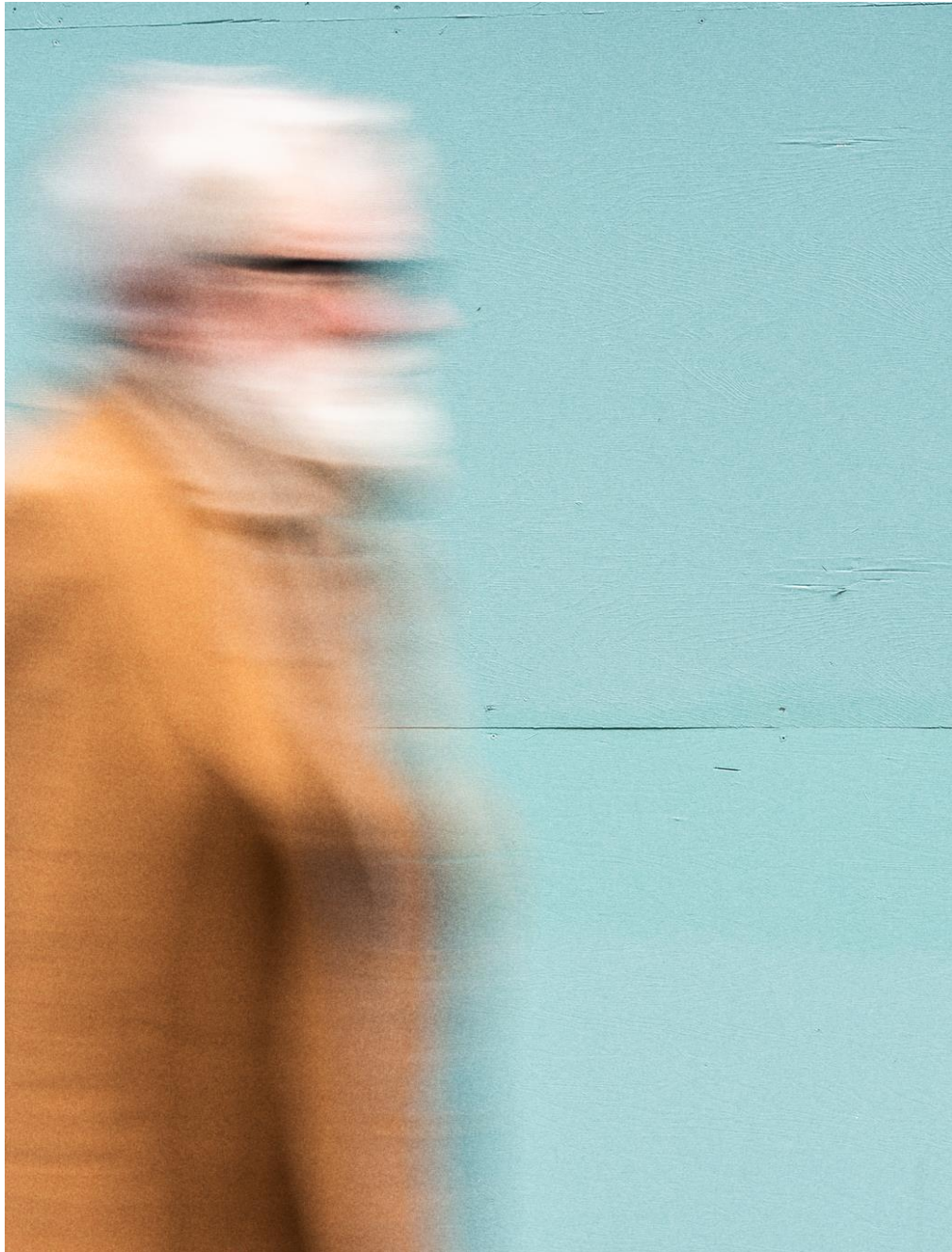
Compared to how common experiences of inappropriate treatment were among the respondents, it seems that the direct disregard for the RCR is less common.



In case you experience or witness inappropriate treatment, act and report on it!

- FUURT has guidelines how to act in situations of harassment and inappropriate treatment, see www.tieteentekijat.fi
- Don't stay alone! Report and ask for help and support e.g. from
 - Your supervisor
 - Local union representative (shop steward)
 - Your work place HR personnel
 - Your work place Occupational safety representative
 - Occupational health-care
 - Union lawyer





The attractiveness of academic career

The respondents identified esp. the following factors that increase the attractiveness of academic careers:

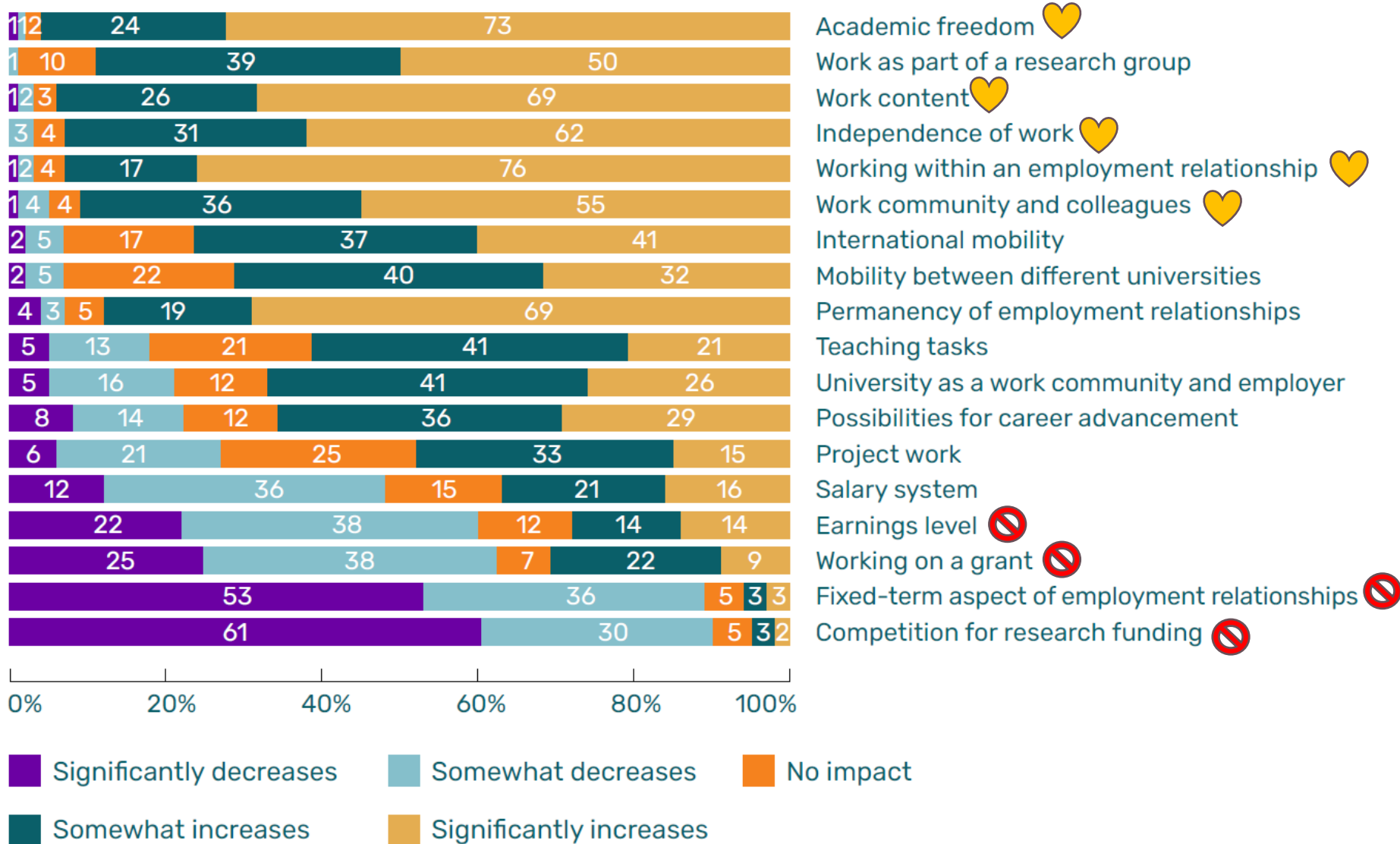
- Academic freedom
- Content of work
- Independence of work
- Work community and colleagues

Factors that decrease the attractiveness are esp.

- Competition for research funding
- Fixed-term nature of work
- Working on a grant
- Earnings level



Figure 9: Factors increasing and decreasing the appeal of an academic career, by percentage.



The image of an academic career ❤️ 🚫



Precarity of research funding

Table 2: Number of sources of funding by career stage and in total, by percentage.

| | Doctoral research | | | Postdoctoral research | Other fundings |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | Doctoral researchers | Recent doctoral graduates | Total | Total | Total |
| None | 12,0 | 2,0 | 9,7 | 50,5 | 26,6 |
| 1 | 32,7 | 19,5 | 29,7 | 25,7 | 22,4 |
| 2-3 | 35,6 | 37,5 | 36,0 | 19,4 | 27,2 |
| 4-6 | 14,4 | 25,9 | 17,1 | 3,9 | 16,0 |
| 7-10 | 4,3 | 10,8 | 5,8 | 0,2 | 4,1 |
| More than 10 | 1,0 | 4,4 | 1,8 | 0,2 | 3,7 |
| Total | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |
| N | 660 | 227 | 1 085 | 459 | 887 |
| I don't know / Does not apply | | | 3,8 | 48,6 | 15,6 |



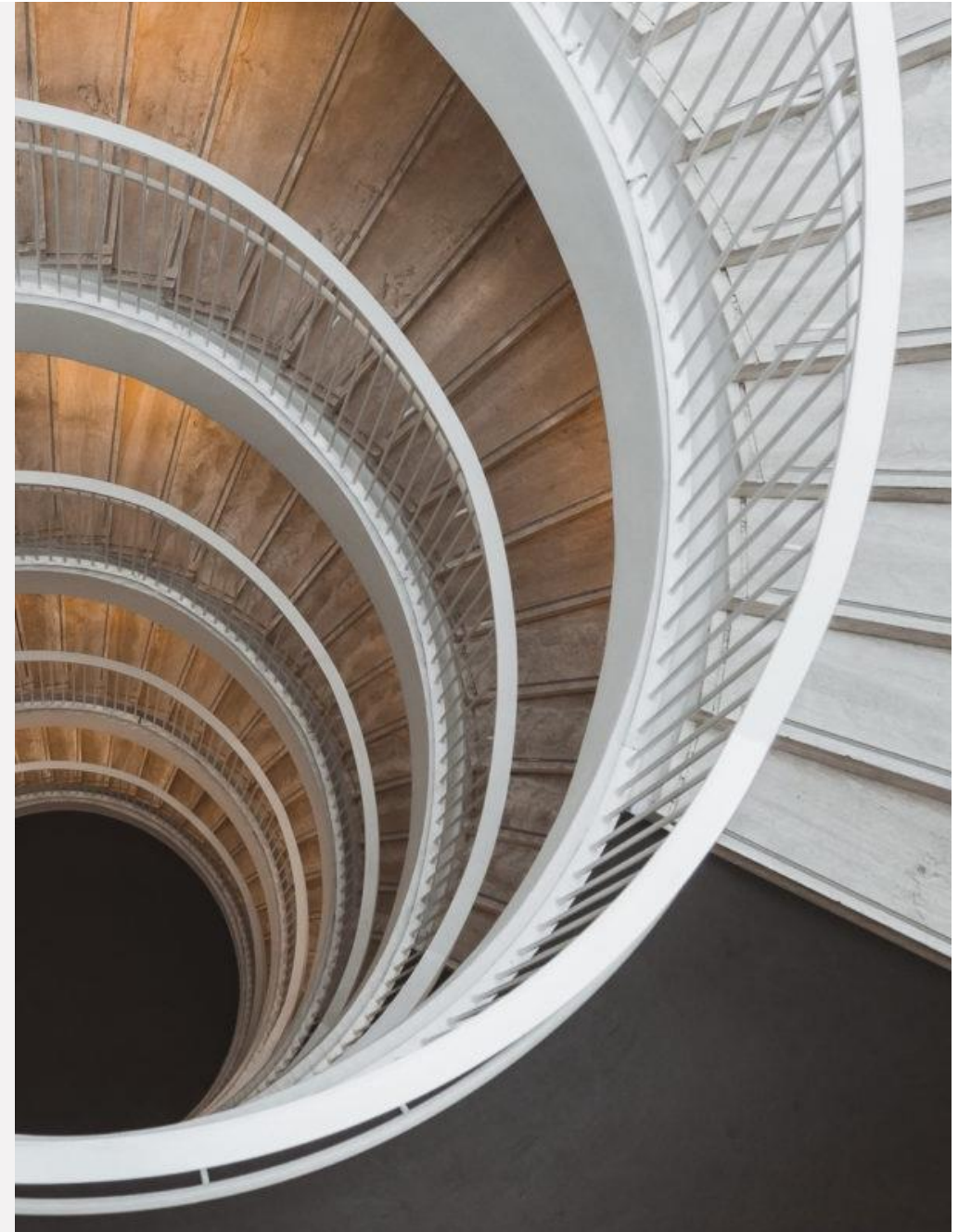
Work with a grant?

The image of grant-funded work is often negative, due to e.g.

- low income level (c. 2.300 €/month)
- precarity of work: typical grant period is 12 months at a time
- time consuming application processes
- uncertain status at the university
- gaps in social security

However, there are also positive developments e.g. that universities have stopped asking for rent for work-spaces.

FUURT continues to advocate for good grant practices and better recognition of grant-funded work in the society at large.



University salaries are medium salaries in 2023 based on Sivista report.

Private and public sector salaries are examples of medium salaries for similar job titles based on different salary tools (e.g. Duunitori, Oikotie). Esp. in the private sector salaries can vary a lot depending on a company, branch of industry etc.

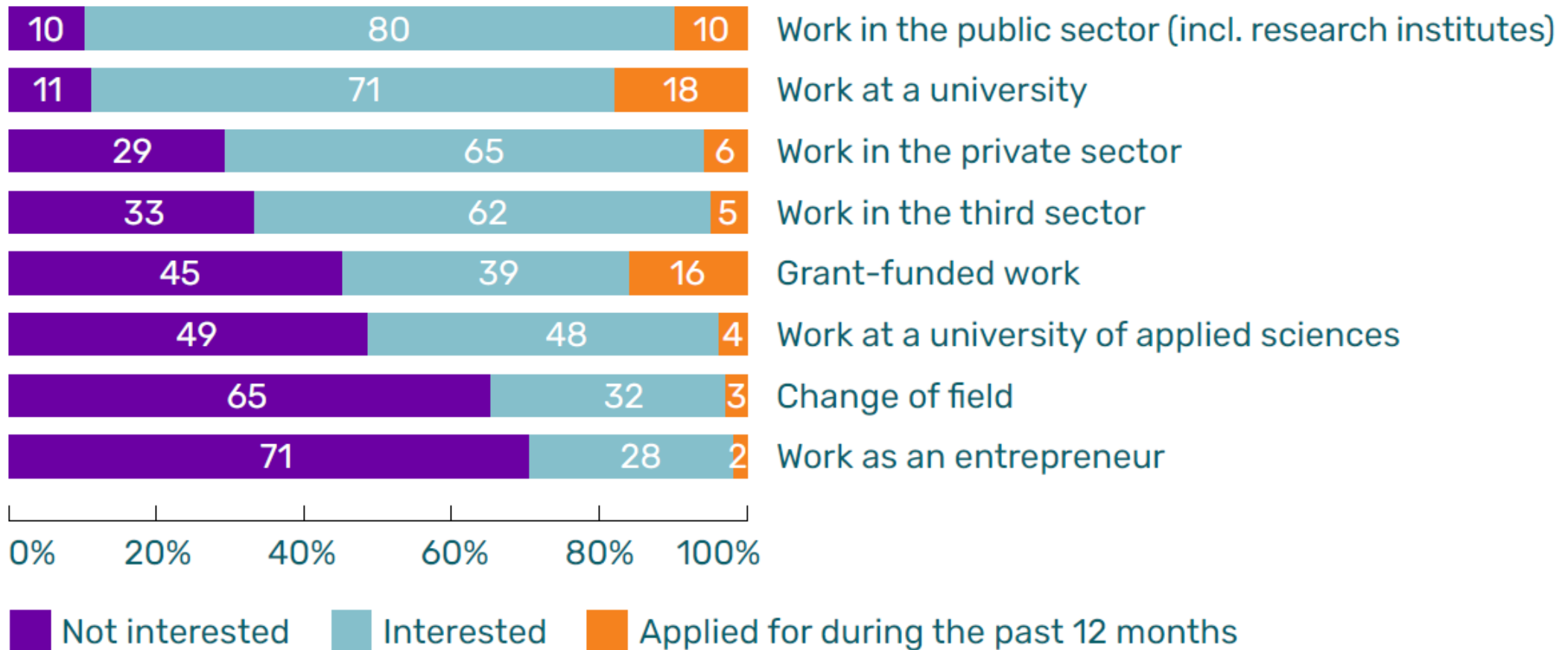
* Source: YTN data 2022

Salary examples in different research career stages (€/month).

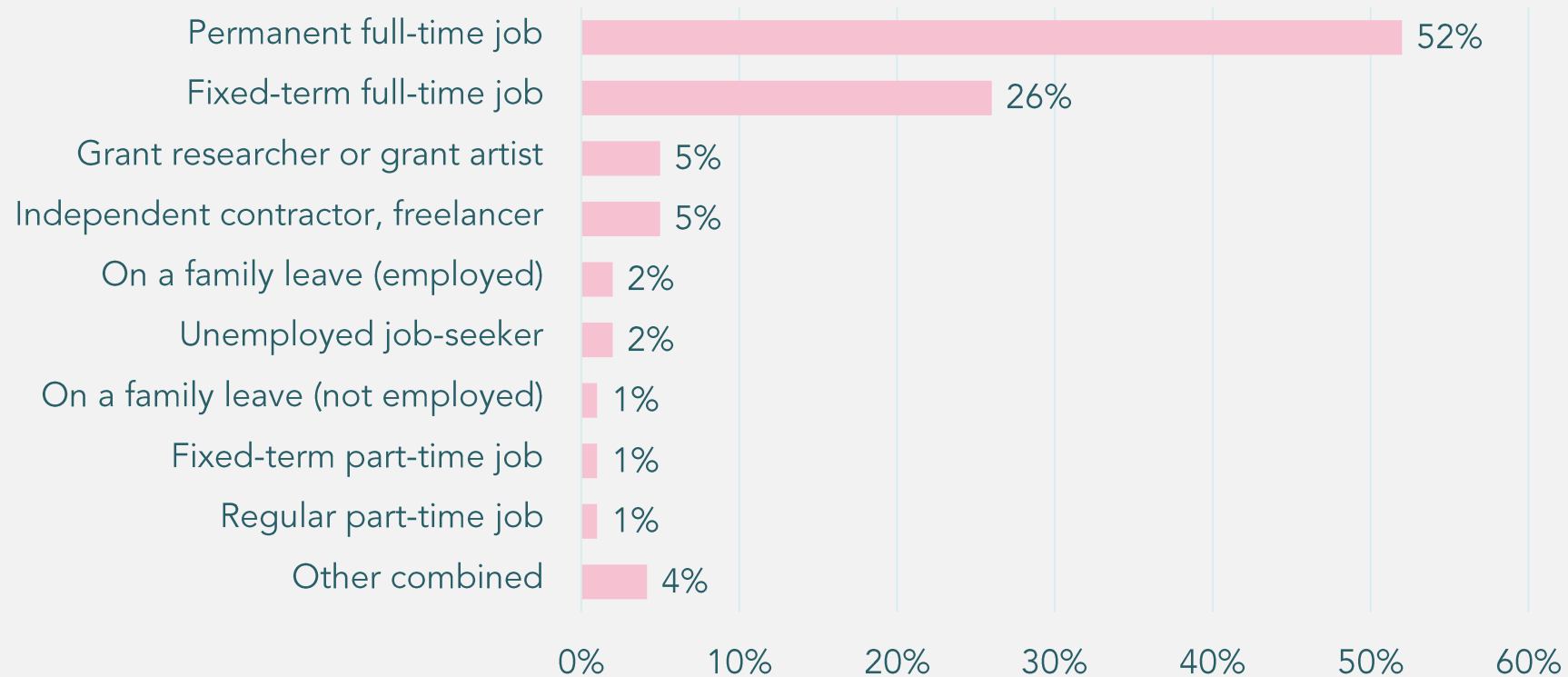
| Career stage | University | Private sector | Public sector |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| R 1 | Doctoral researcher 2820 € | Starting salary (medium) for recently graduated* 3300 € | Researcher 3500 € |
| R 2 | Postdoctoral researcher 3920 € | Researcher 4200 € | Researcher 4260 € |
| R 3 | University researcher/ lecturer 4870 € | Senior researcher 4890 € | Senior researcher 4580 € |
| R 4 | Professor (full) 7770 € | Research manager / Research director 5200–... € | Research manager / Research director / Professor c. 5650–7400 € |

Career prospects

Figure 19: "What type of work options interest you?", by percentage.



DOCTORATES' LABOUR MARKET POSITION 3 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

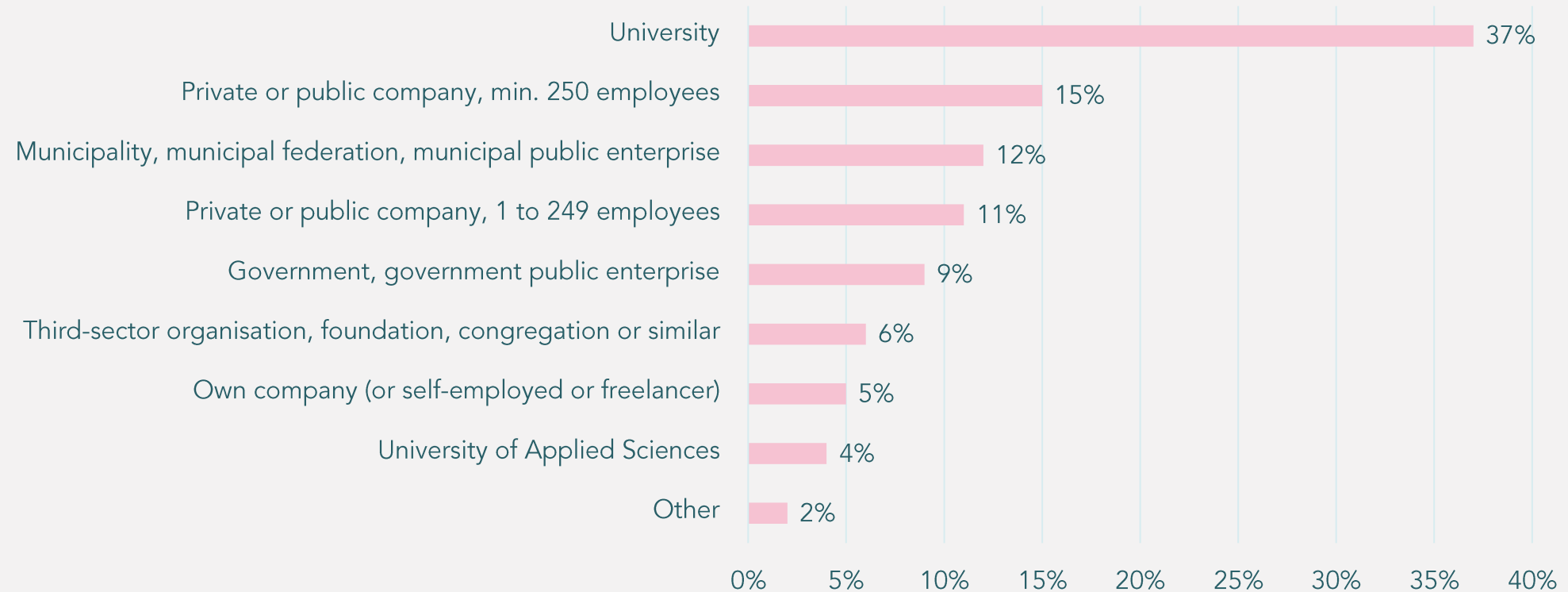


2021, n=842

Source: Vipunen.fi / Aarresaari career monitoring survey 2021



DOCTORATES' MAIN EMPLOYER 3 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

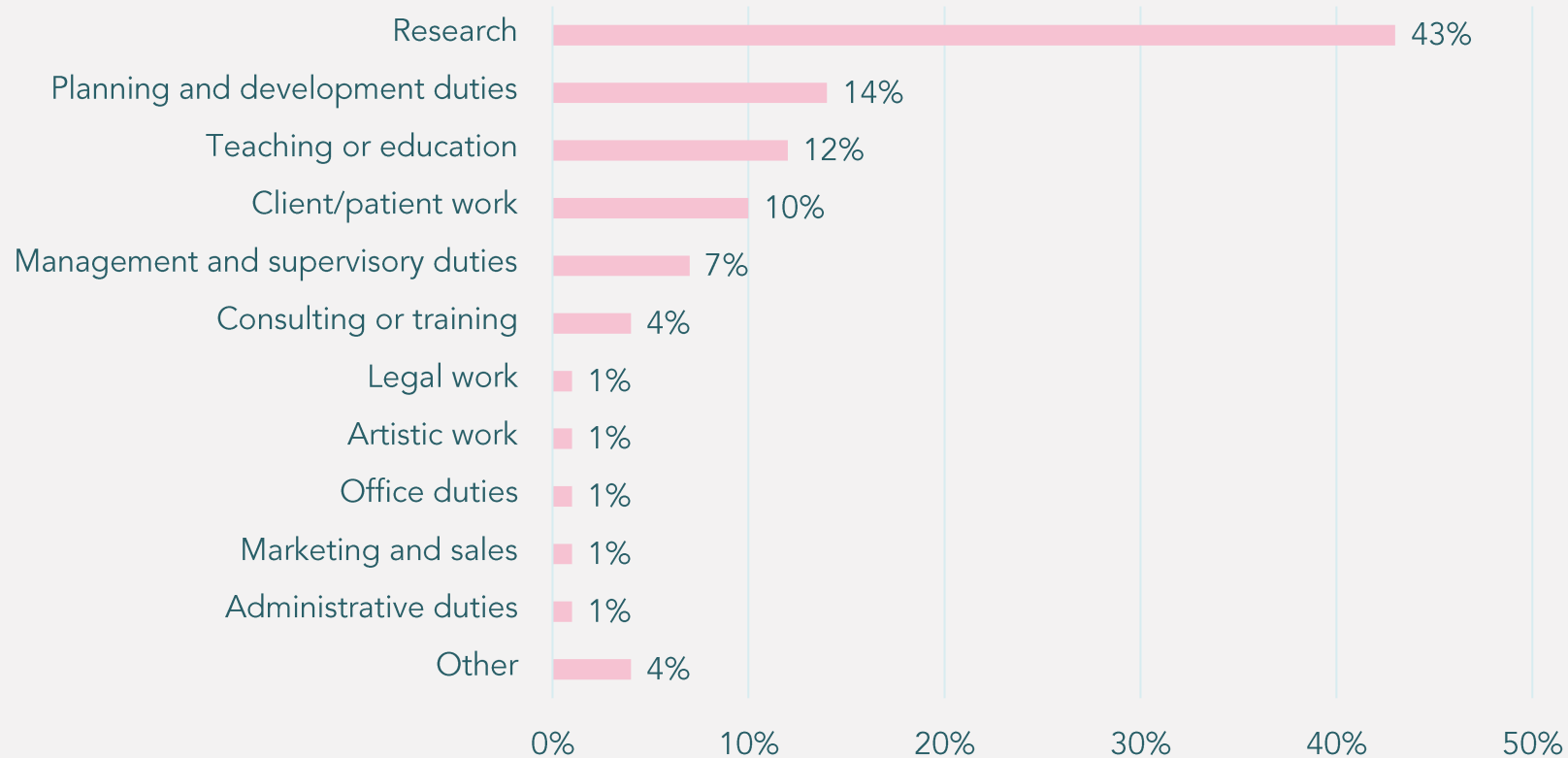


2021, n=781

Source: Vipunen.fi / Aarresaari career monitoring survey 2021



DOCTORATES' MAIN DUTY AT WORK 3 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION



2021, n=801

Source: Vipunen.fi / Aarresaari career monitoring survey 2021



Rights and obligations of a doctoral researcher

Rights

- Recognition as a fully fledged member of the scientific and work community
- Right to electronic services and access to the university's relevant mailing lists
- High-quality supervision, constructive feedback (recommendation to have more than one supervisor)
- The right to switch supervisors in the event of a serious conflict
- Equal treatment
- Due credit in co-authoring processes

Obligations

- Ensuring the progress of the work as agreed
- Informing the supervisor(s) of the work stages and factors affecting the work
- Tending to personal energy levels and well-being
- Participating in the funding application process for the thesis
- Listening and taking into consideration feedback concerning the scientific work
- Complying with good, responsible scientific practice and high-level research ethics

Our guidelines to support a positive researcher-supervisor relationship:



Remember to take care of yourself!

How many weeks of paid holiday / free from work you have taken in the last 12 months? (% of respondents)

| | Employment | Grant |
|---------|------------|-------|
| 0 weeks | 12,1 | 22,8 |
| 1 week | 4,9 | 6,5 |
| 2 weeks | 8,2 | 10,9 |
| 3 weeks | 8,7 | 6,8 |
| 4 weeks | 19,2 | 21,1 |
| 5 weeks | 19,8 | 13,9 |
| 6 weeks | 16,7 | 12,6 |
| 7 weeks | 3,3 | 1,7 |
| 8 weeks | 3,3 | 1,7 |

- If you are employed by the university: check the collective agreement!
 - In universities' research and teaching positions there are no dedicated holidays. Employees must work 1,612 hours a year, otherwise they are off duty.
- Grant researchers do not have regulated working time. As a grant researcher, you decide on your working hours and plan for your holidays independently as you see fit!

Source: FUURT survey for early career researchers 2024 (n = 1138).



Early career researcher (ECR) or Doctoral researcher

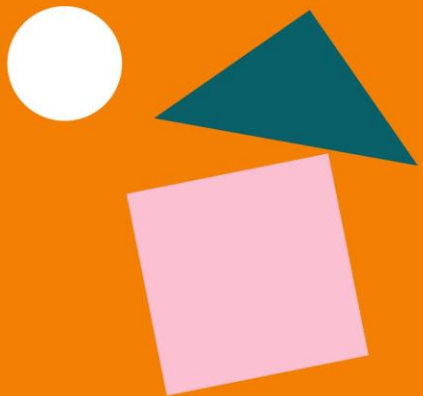
Who you are:

"All researchers are engaged in the conception or creation of new scientific knowledge based on original concepts or hypotheses. Researchers are professionals whose work should be valued, independently of the sector in which they operate. This should commence at the beginning of their careers, namely at postgraduate level, and should include all levels, regardless of their classification at national level."
European Charter for Researchers 2023, page 8.

FUURT recommends the title of **doctoral researcher** or **early career researcher** vs. "student".

→ Professional recognition in and outside academia.

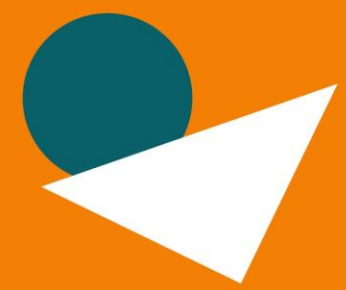
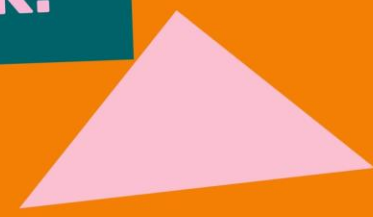




KIITOS!

THANKS!

TACK!



USEFUL INFORMATION

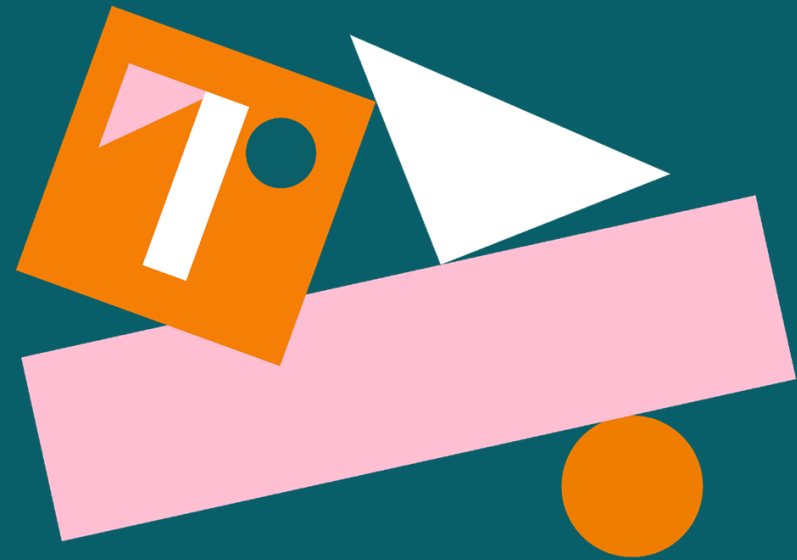
For early career researchers:



For grant researchers:



And if you are not a
member yet...



“FUURT’s role is crucial in facilitating dialogue, offering support, and lobbying for governmental reforms to create a more inclusive and supportive academic environment in Finland.”



Melissa Plath, FUURT member

What does FUURT offer?

- Within the universities, we support and assist our members with an **extensive and competent network of Union shop stewards and advisors** right within the workplace.
- We negotiate with the Employers’ Association of Universities in Finland (Sivista) on the **wages and other employment terms and conditions** of university personnel.



- We **actively lobby** on issues such as
 - the position of fixed-term employees,
 - the status of early career researchers,
 - the employment of doctorate holders,
 - improving the situation of grant researchers,
 - and the funding of higher education and science in general.
- We provide a **supportive network** of professionals in research and academia throughout Finland.
- We offer **career counselling, training and coaching and legal counselling** tailored for those working in research.

“The union’s role in providing a support system cannot be overstated, particularly in the sometimes isolating world of academia.”



Felix Epp, FUURT member

FUURT MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Legal counselling & shop steward services

Employment, copyright, equality, social security issues, discrimination...

Legal protection benefit

Unemployment fund membership

Salary counselling

Career services and coaching for researchers

Insurance benefits

MELA, Kela, taxation...

Grant information guide

Content in English

Acatiimi magazine

Akava membership benefits

Discounts



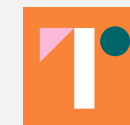
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Your first month of membership is now free of charge!

**GLOBAL
POWER**





KIITOS!

THANKS!

TACK!