



Office of the President

Jacob Färnert  
Analyst  
Management Secretariat

## Summary of results – Research Staff Consultation Survey within Stockholm University’s Application for the HR Excellence in Research Award

### Background

On 26 June 2025, the Vice-Chancellor decided on a project and a set of measures to supplement Stockholm University’s application for certification for the HR Excellence in Research Award (ref. SU FV-2343-25). This decision followed the University’s application for HRS4R, now renamed the HR Excellence in Research Award, which the European Commission assessed as insufficient and requiring additional work in order to meet the certification criteria.

Part of the Commission’s critique concerned the preparation of the application and the perceived lack of engagement among academic staff. The Commission welcomed the efforts made by the Working Group to build involvement but considered these measures insufficient to achieve a comprehensive perspective that included the views of researchers across all parts of the University and all career stages (R1–R4). In its assessment, the Commission also expressed a strong preference for survey-based methods as a means of engaging academic staff.

After careful consideration and following consultations within the organisation, the conclusion was drawn that a traditional survey would neither be effective nor well-received. The Working Group, in dialogue with the Steering committee, determined that a traditional survey was not the most suitable method. The risk of low response rates was judged significant, and the fixed-response format would have limited the possibility for nuanced reflection. Instead, all departments were asked to organise structured consultations with researchers, with particular attention to R2–R4. The project team provided shared briefing materials to ensure consistency across departments, and each department was asked to submit written summaries to the Working Group based on a set of questions. In parallel, the

Working Group initiated consultations with the Student Union's Doctoral Students Councils to capture the perspectives of R1.

### **Response Rate**

A total of 38 out of 48 departments<sup>1</sup> submitted results, corresponding to 79 percent. The Faculty of Science submitted input from 13 out of 15 organisational units, the Faculty of Social Sciences from 14 out of 18, the Faculty of Humanities from 10 out of 13, and the Faculty of Law from 1 out of 1.

It is difficult to determine precisely how many researchers participated in the engagement process. Based on an estimated average of 12 researchers per department, the Working Group assesses that at least 450 researchers were involved. This corresponds to approximately 20 percent of the University's total number of research staff.<sup>2</sup>

### **Survey questions**

The discussions were structured around four thematic areas:

#### **1. Recruitment and career paths**

- a) Are the recruitment processes at Stockholm University transparent to external applicants and clearly focused on relevant qualifications?
- b) Are academic career paths at SU clearly articulated and easy to find?
- c) Are the regulations governing researchers' employment conditions clear and accessible?
- d) Suggestions for improvement?

#### **2. Research support**

- a) Is the administrative support for applying for external research funding functioning satisfactorily?
- b) Are research projects and research results at Stockholm University effectively communicated and made visible?
- c) Does SU provide opportunities for international exchanges as part of researchers' employment?
- d) Suggestions for improvement?

#### **3. Research ethics and data management**

---

<sup>1</sup> Some institutes and centres with employees also contributed input, which has influenced the selection.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), 2025, *Higher Education in Numbers*. In 2024, there were 2,168.7 full-time equivalent employed individuals within the research and teaching staff at Stockholm University, excluding doctoral students.

- a) Do I, and researchers in general, have sufficient knowledge of the fundamental research ethics principles relevant to my field?
- b) Do I, and researchers in general, have adequate understanding of the requirements for data management and data protection in research within my discipline?
- c) How can Stockholm University provide better support in addressing the above issues?

#### 4. Mentorship and collegiality

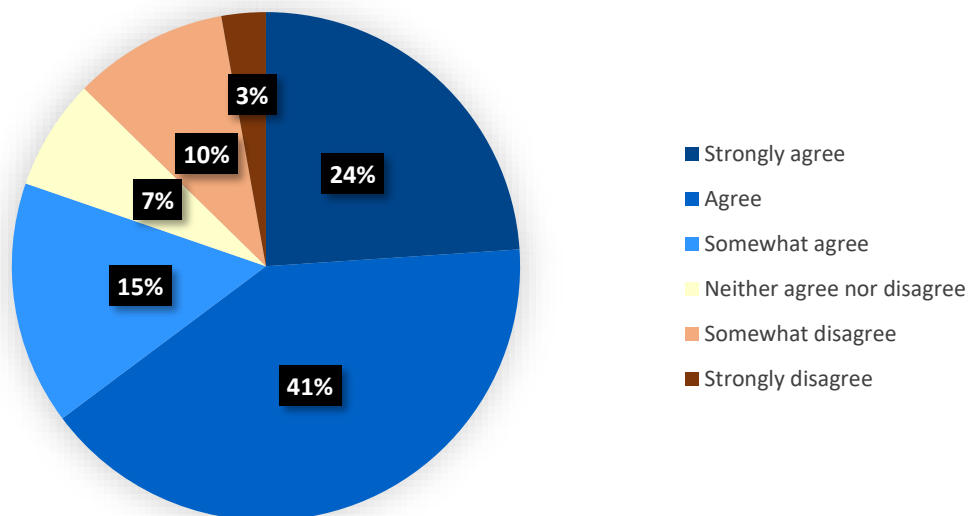
- a) Does Stockholm University need to further develop its mentorship support for early-career researchers?
- b) Are there sufficient opportunities to develop one's own supervisory skills?
- c) Does SU provide good conditions for collegial collaboration?
- d) Suggestions for improvement?

## Results

The results are presented below using this thematic structure.

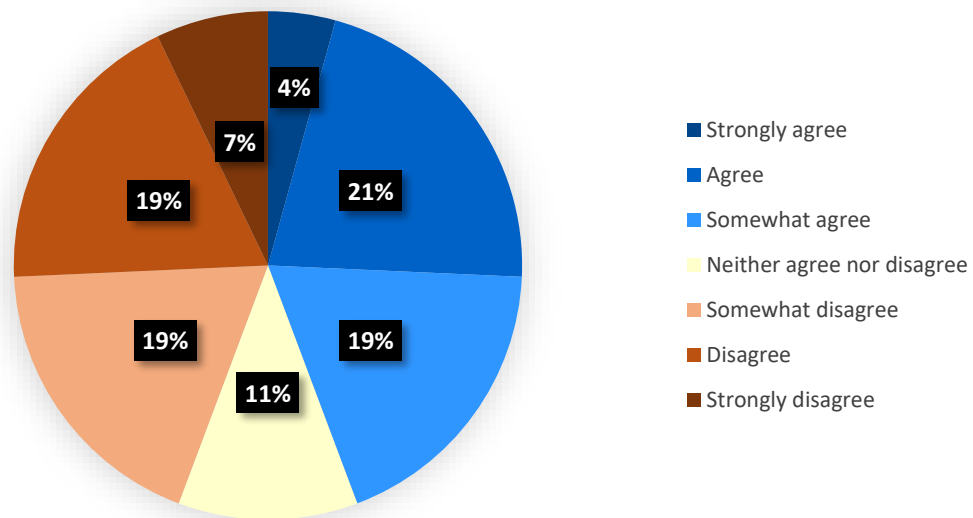
### Recruitment and Career Paths

**Are the recruitment processes at Stockholm University transparent to external applicants and clearly focused on relevant qualifications?**



Out of 71 consultation groups, 24% strongly agree (17), 41% agree (29), and a further 15% somewhat agree (11) that recruitment processes are transparent and clearly focused on relevant qualifications. In total, 80% of groups are positive. 7% are neutral (5), while 10% somewhat disagree (7) and 3% strongly disagree (2), giving 13% negative responses. Roughly six to one positive to negative which gives a strong signal that there is broad confidence in transparency and qualifications-focus.

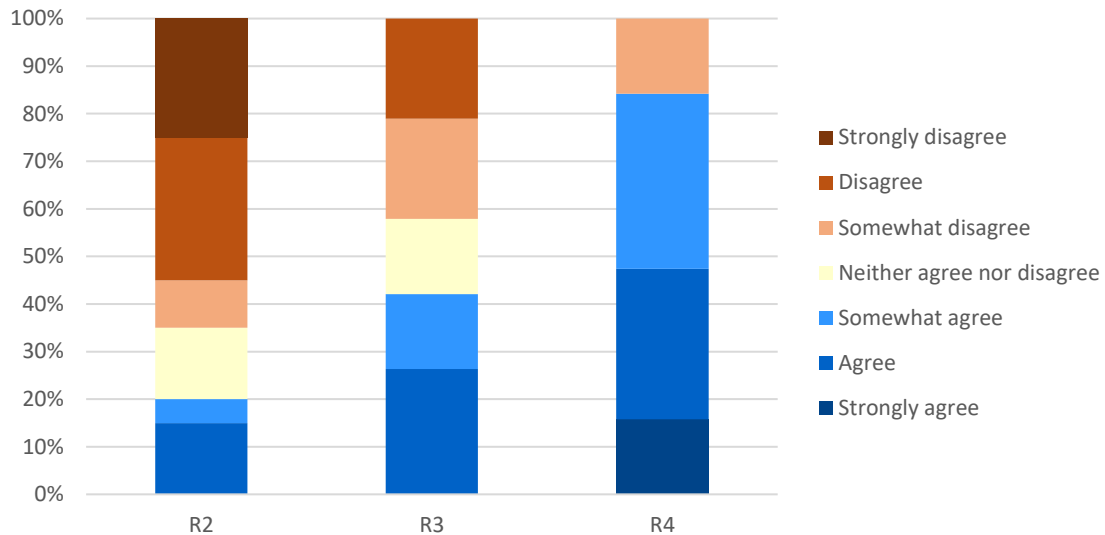
**Are academic career paths at SU clearly articulated and easy to find?**



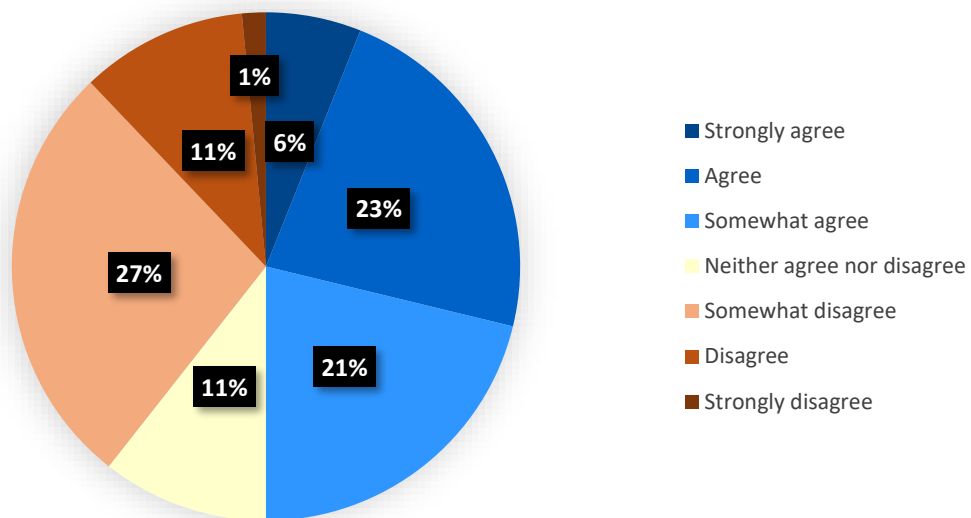
The results indicate that career-path clarity is not perceived as strongly as recruitment transparency. Out of 70 groups, 4% strongly agree (3) and 21% agree (15) that academic career paths at the university are clearly articulated and easy to find, with a further 19% somewhat agree (13). In total, 44% of groups are positive. 11% are neutral (8), while 19% somewhat disagree (13), 19% disagree (13) and 7% strongly disagree (5), giving 44% negative responses overall. This near 1:1 balance (positive to negative) suggests that information on career pathways is harder to locate or interpret consistently.

To understand the variation better, we disaggregated the responses by researcher stage where this could be coded, covering 58 groups (note that doctoral candidates, R1, were consulted separately; some mixed groups included R1 participants). Among R2 groups, only 20% are positive (agree/somewhat agree), 15% are neutral and 65% are negative. For R3, 42% are positive, 16% neutral and 42% negative; for R4, 84% are positive, 0% neutral and 16% negative. In other words, perceived clarity improves markedly with seniority. It is strong for R4, finely balanced for R3, and weakest for R2. The pattern is clear and points to a targeted

need at earlier career stages



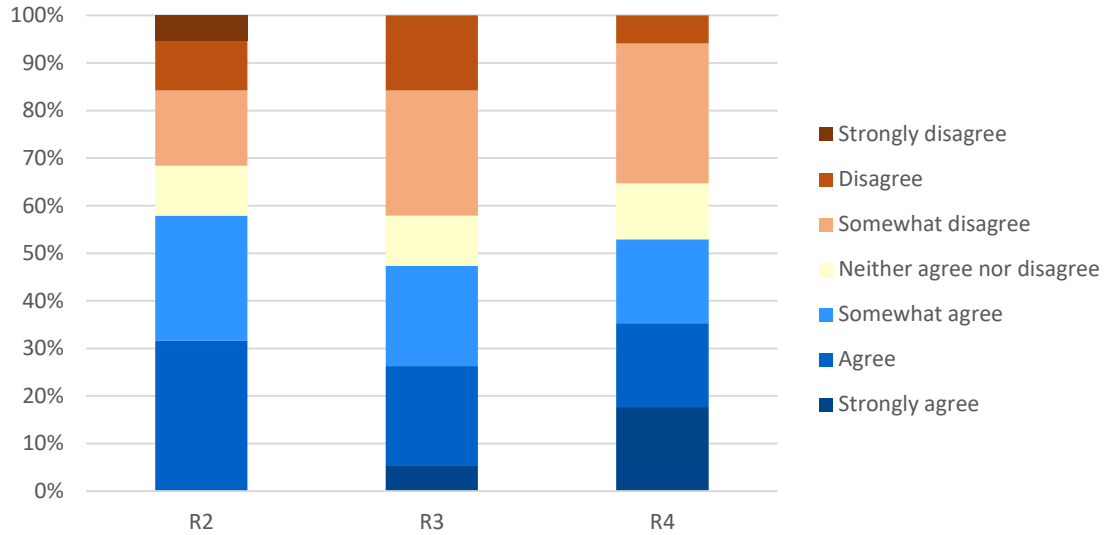
Are the regulations governing researchers' employment conditions clear and accessible?



Across 66 consultation groups, 6% strongly agree (4), 23% agree (15) and 21% somewhat agree (14) that the regulations governing researchers' employment conditions are clear and accessible, giving 50% positive responses overall. A further 11% are neutral (7), while 27% somewhat disagree (18), 11% disagree (7) and 2% strongly disagree (1), totalling 39% negative. The balance is therefore only marginally positive, indicating that many still find the regulatory information difficult to locate or interpret.

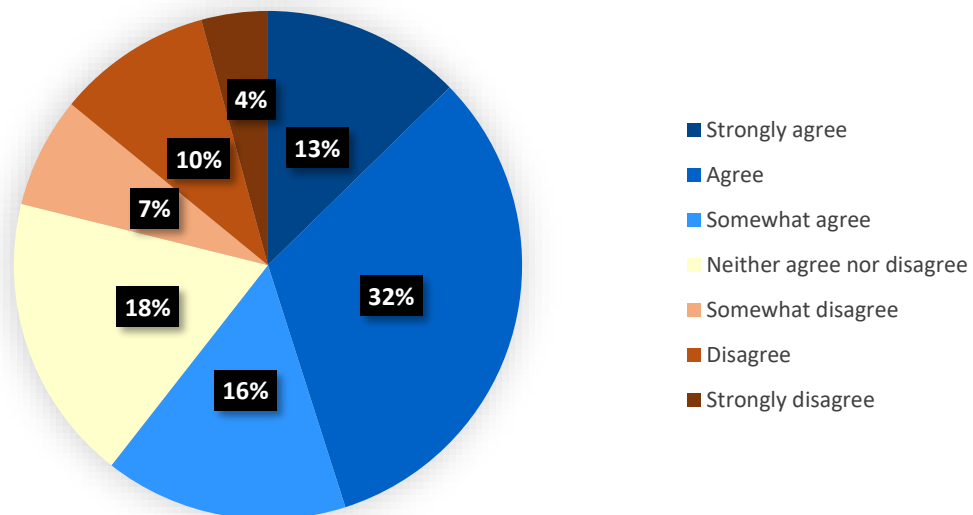
Breaking this down by career stage where coding was possible, among R2 groups 58% are positive, 11% neutral and 32% negative. For R3, 47% are positive, 11% neutral and 42% negative. For R4, 53% are positive, 12% neutral and 35% negative. In short, perceptions are mixed across stages, with R3 reporting the least clarity. The overall pattern suggests a need

to consolidate and inform about core employment-conditions more effectively across all levels.



## Research support

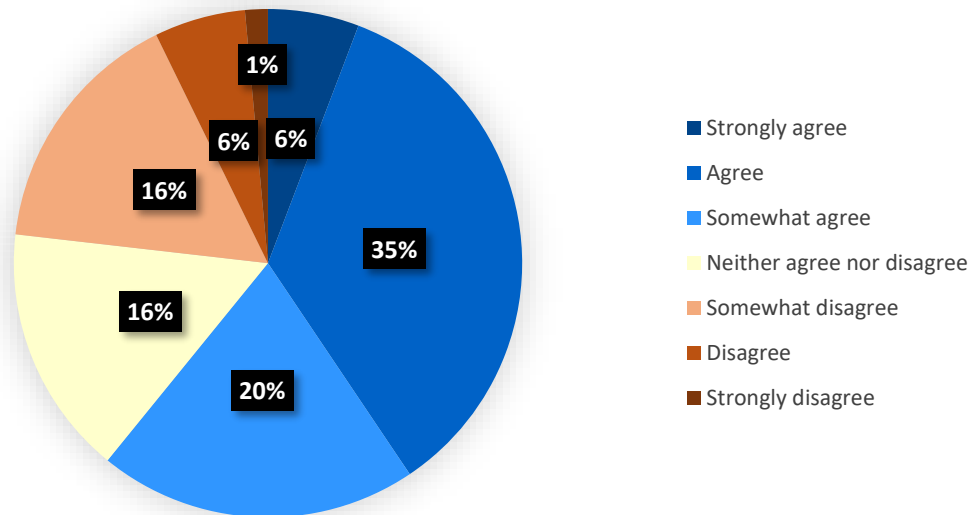
**Is the administrative support for applying for external research funding functioning satisfactorily?**



Out of 71 responses, 13% strongly agree (9), 32% agree (23) and 15% somewhat agree (11) that the administrative support for external research funding is functioning satisfactorily, which is 61% positive overall. 18% are neutral (13). On the negative side, 7% somewhat disagree (5), 10% disagree (7) and 4% strongly disagree (3), totalling 21%. The balance is

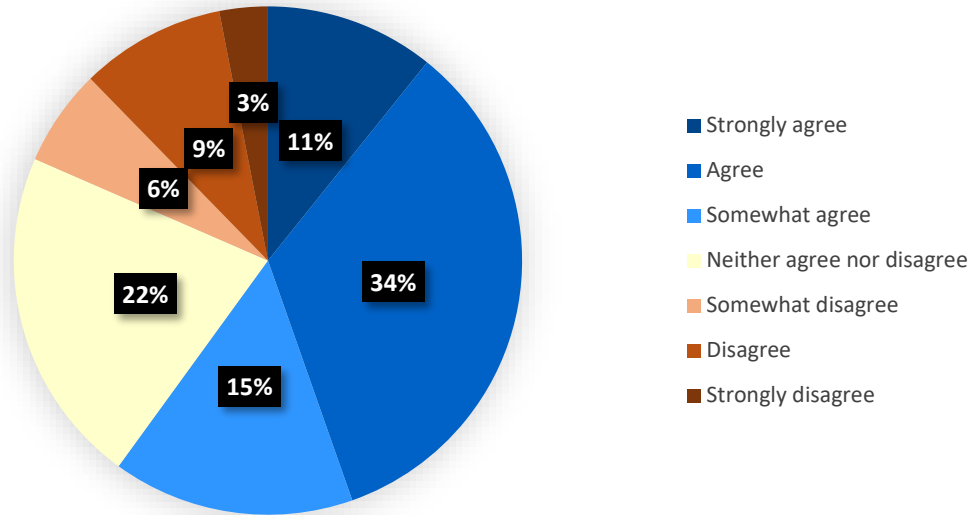
broadly favourable (roughly three to one positive to negative), but the sizeable neutral share suggests uneven experiences.

**Are research projects and research results at Stockholm University effectively communicated and made visible?**



Of 69 consultation groups, 6% strongly agree (4), 35% agree (24) and 20% somewhat agree (14) that research projects and results at the university are effectively communicated and made visible, which is 61% positive overall. 16% are neutral (11). On the negative side, 16% somewhat disagree (11), 6% disagree (4) and 1% strongly disagree (1), totalling 23%. The balance is moderately favourable, roughly three to one positive to negative, but the sizeable neutral share and nearly a quarter negative suggest uneven visibility and reach.

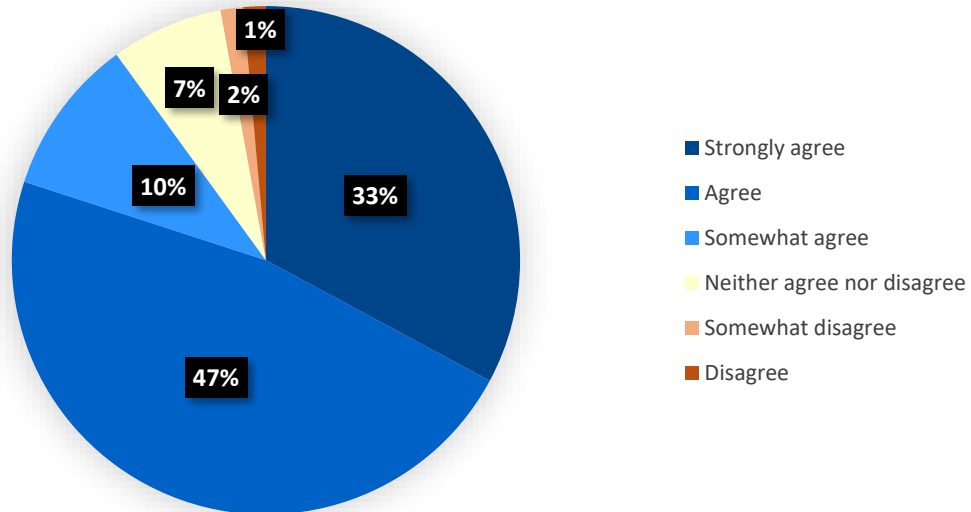
**Does SU provide opportunities for international exchanges as part of researchers' employment?**



Out of 65 consultation groups, 11% strongly agree (7), 34% agree (22) and 15% somewhat agree (10) that the university provides opportunities for international exchanges as part of researchers' employment, which is 60% positive overall. 22% are neutral (14). On the negative side, 6% somewhat disagree (4), 9% disagree (6) and 3% strongly disagree (2), totalling 18%. The balance is moderately favourable (roughly three to one positive to negative), but the sizeable neutral share points to uneven access or awareness across units and disciplines.

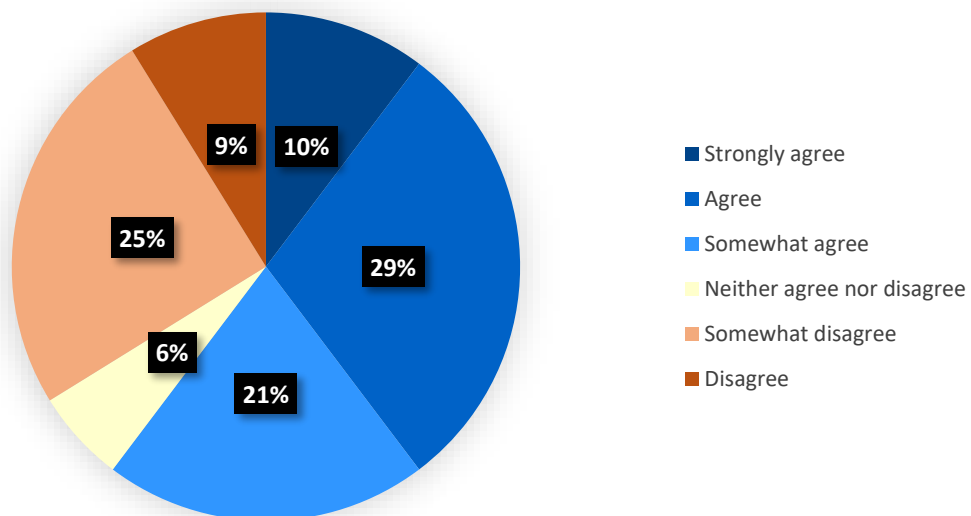
## Research ethics and data management

**Do I, and researchers in general, have sufficient knowledge of the fundamental research ethics principles relevant to my field?**



Out of 70 consultation groups, 33% strongly agree (23), 47% agree (33), and a further 10% somewhat agree (7) that they have sufficient knowledge of fundamental research ethics principles relevant to their field. In total, 90% are positive. 7% are neutral (5), while 3% are negative (1 somewhat disagree; 1 disagree). This is the strongest result in the set, indicating broad confidence in baseline ethics knowledge.

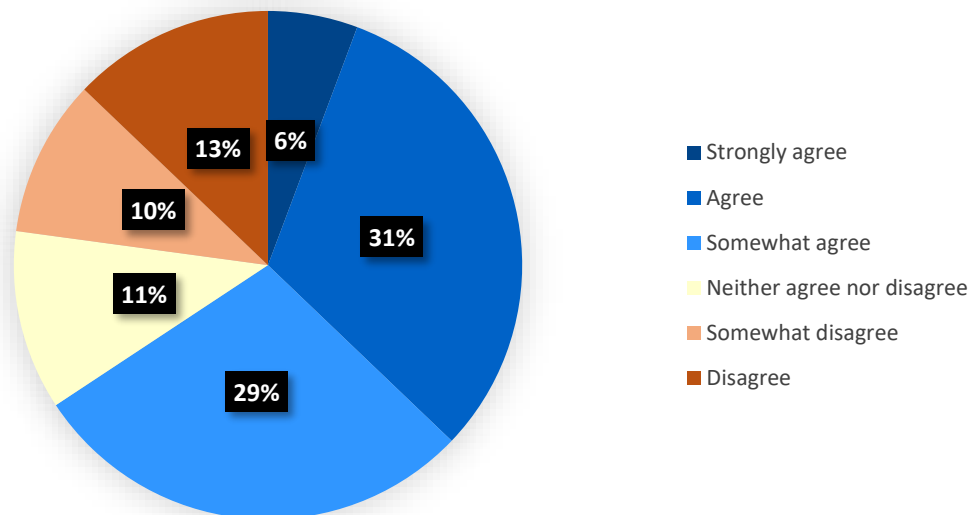
**Do I, and researchers in general, have adequate understanding of the requirements for data management and data protection in research within my discipline?**



Out of 68 consultation groups, 10% strongly agree (7), 29% agree (20) and 21% somewhat agree (14) that researchers have adequate understanding of data-management and data-protection requirements, which is 60% positive overall. 6% are neutral (4). On the negative side, 25% somewhat disagree (17) and 9% disagree (6), totalling 34%. The balance is therefore mixed, while a clear majority report sufficient understanding, more than a third indicate gaps.

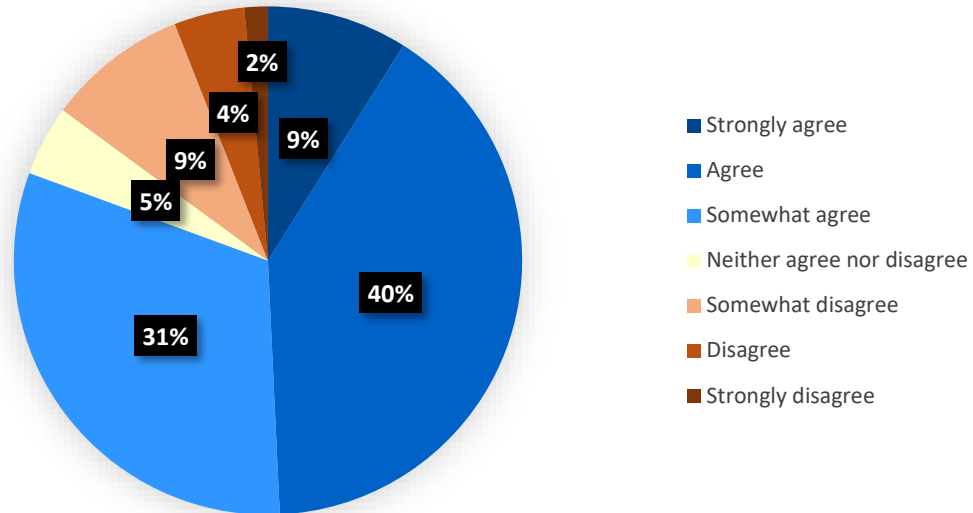
## Mentorship and collegiality

**Does Stockholm University need to further develop its mentorship support for early-career researchers?**



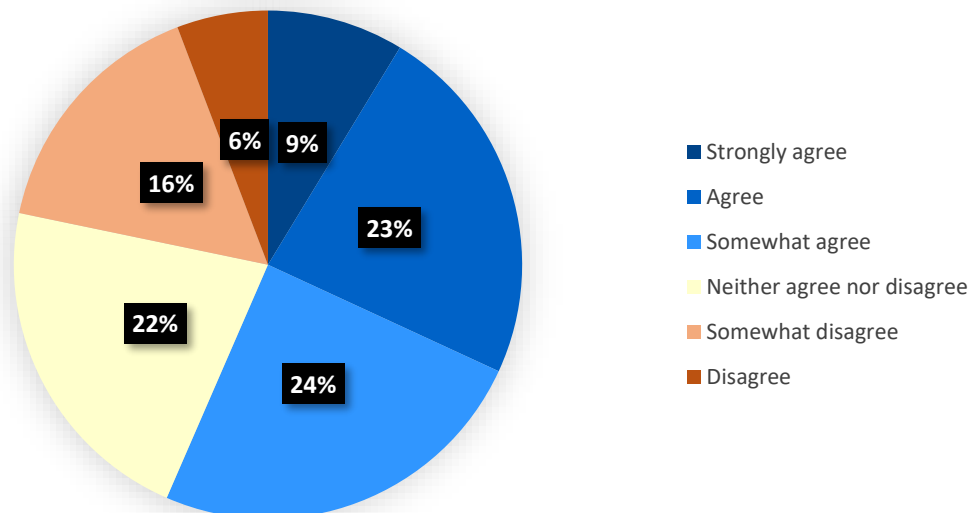
Out of 70 responses, 6% strongly agree (4), 31% agree (22) and 29% somewhat agree (20) that the university needs to further develop mentorship support for early-career researchers, which is 66% in favour overall. 11% are neutral (8). On the other side, 10% somewhat disagree (7) and 13% disagree (9), giving 23% against. The balance clearly indicates a perceived need to strengthen mentoring programmes.

**Are there sufficient opportunities to develop one's own supervisory skills?**



Out of 67 consultation groups, 9% strongly agree (6), 40% agree (27) and 31% somewhat agree (21) that there are sufficient opportunities to develop one's own supervisory skills, which is 81% positive overall. 4% are neutral (3). On the negative side, 9% somewhat disagree (6), 4% disagree (3) and 1% strongly disagree (1), totalling 15%. The balance is clearly favourable, roughly five to one positive to negative, indicating that it is generally regarded as adequate.

**Does SU provide good conditions for collegial collaboration?**



Out of 69 consultation groups, 9% strongly agree (6), 23% agree (16) and 25% somewhat agree (17) that the university provides good conditions for collegial collaboration, which is 57% positive overall. 22% are neutral (15). On the negative side, 16% somewhat disagree

(11) and 6% disagree (4), totalling 22%. The results point to a moderately positive but clearly fragmented picture, while over half of the groups express confidence in collegial conditions, the sizeable neutral share and the one-fifth negative responses indicate substantial variation across departments. Taken together, the distribution suggests that collegial collaboration is functioning reasonably well in many areas but lacks consistency overall.

---