

# Summary of Market Research Findings

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**Title:** Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) 2013 – Summary Report

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 Core findings

- Overall the findings of the survey are very positive, with the vast majority of results ahead of or in line with the sector and RG group averages.
- The vast majority of respondents feel fairly treated in comparison to other staff types in terms of training and development opportunities, flexible working, opportunities to attend conferences/meetings and their terms and conditions of employment. However, issues exist with opportunities for promotion/progression and opportunities to participate in decision making processes.
- Most respondents feel well integrated into their department's research community, but less well integrated into the wider institution's research community.
- Only 57% of respondents have participated in staff appraisals within the past two years, with around two thirds of these finding the process useful particularly for reviewing personal progress, but generally not leading to changes in working practices.
- Knowledge and understanding of the various UK initiatives relevant to research staff remains low, particularly in relation to the various Concordats.
- Whilst most respondents received job descriptions and details of the qualifications needed for their post, fewer received details of the transferable, personal and management skills required.
- A higher proportion of respondents say that they received a University induction compared to the previous survey, however only a small proportion of these respondents found this induction to be useful.
- Most respondents have been encouraged to engage in personal and career development, although a significant number do not have clear career development plans and do not keep a formal record of their professional development.
- Training and professional development tends to largely concentrate on research skills and techniques, and communication, whereas there is a great deal of interest in areas such as knowledge exchange, leadership and management, public engagement, supervision, teaching and lecturing, and financial management.
- There appears to be a relatively poor uptake of training and professional development activities, with a fifth having spent no time on this in the past 12 months and nearly half spending 5 days or less.

- The vast majority of respondents agree that the University of Southampton is committed to equality and diversity, however some issues are felt to exist in terms of career progression and promotion, participation in decision making, gender and age.

### **1.2 Summary of areas for improvement:**

- Opportunities for promotion/progression and to participate in decision making processes.
- Integration of research staff into the wider institutions research community.
- Ensure all research staff participate in appraisals and improve their usefulness beyond reviewing personal progress.
- Improve knowledge and understanding of the various UK initiatives relevant to research staff, particularly in relation to the various Concordats.
- Ensure applicants receive details of the transferable, personal and management skills required.
- Improve the usefulness of the University induction by understanding attendee requirements.
- Ensure research staff have clear career development plans and keep records of professional development.
- Maximise the uptake of professional development activities by ensuring what is offered matches requirements.
- Investigate the issues felt to exist in terms of career progression and promotion, participation in decision making, pregnancy and maternity, gender and age.

## 2. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Background

The Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) is a biennial survey that gathers anonymous data about working conditions, career aspirations and career development opportunities for research staff and research leaders in UK higher education.

CROS is supported by Vitae, a UK organisation that champions the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in Higher Education Institutes and Research Institutes.

This is the third year that the University of Southampton has participated in the CROS, having also participated in 2009 and 2011. A total of 68 institutions participated in the 2013 survey, compared to 45 in 2011.

### 2.2 Methodology

CROS is an online survey which contains a set of core questions which have been derived based on the previous CROS surveys and the principles of the Concordat for the Careers Development of Researchers. In addition to the core questions, institutions have the ability to add their own specific questions to the survey.

This year's fieldwork period for CROS was 7th to 31st May. All eligible staff were sent an email inviting them to participate in the survey, with a number of reminder emails also being sent to maximise response rates.

Following the survey, institutions receive the results of their own questions, plus aggregated results for the sector. Benchmarking groups can also be set up between groups of organisations to allow anonymised data to be compared privately between institutions. The University of Southampton is a member of the Russell Group benchmark group.

### 2.3 Sample

While it is difficult to arrive at a common definition across every institution in the UK, the CROS Steering Group use the definition contained in the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers:

'Researchers are broadly defined as individuals whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and who are employed for this purpose. It is recognised that this broad category of staffing covers a wide range of staff with different disciplinary backgrounds, levels of training, experience and responsibility, types of contract (fixed or open ended, full or part time), and different career expectations and intentions.'

At the University of Southampton, the sample was derived from two lists, one of all staff with 'Research' in the job title and the second of early career researchers). Any duplicates and inappropriate entries (e.g. 'Research Professor') were removed from these lists, leaving a sample population size of 894.

### 2.4 Response rates

The University of Southampton achieved a 31% response rate overall, compared to 34% in 2011 and 29% in 2009. This compares to the sector average of 26%. As the table below demonstrates, response rate across the Faculties varied from 20% to 59%.

Faculty	Total sample	Responses	Percentage
Business & Law	18	4	22%
Engineering and the Environment	157	42	27%
Health Sciences	37	22	59%
Humanities	21	9	43%
Medicine	196	66	34%
Natural and Environmental Sciences	146	54	37%
Physical Science and Engineering	199	40	20%
Social and Human Science	120	30	25%
Totals	894	276	31%

## 2.5 Statistical reliability

It should be remembered that the sample of respondents is not the entire population of academic research staff. The figures presented in this report are therefore not exactly what they would be if we were to survey the entire population. However, by using the confidence interval we can predict that if the entire population had answered the survey, the answers would be within a certain percentage of the observed value (this is assuming that the sample is representative).

The table below illustrates the predicted ranges of variation from the observed percentage based on different proportions of the population answering a single response.

Confidence intervals for each proportion answering a single response

	C.I at 95%	C.I at 99%
10% or 90%	±2.94%	±3.88%
30% or 70%	±4.50%	±5.92%
50%	±4.91%	±6.46%

**NB:** The tables above show confidence intervals for each of the four populations. Confidence intervals are defined by the sample size and the proportion of a specific answer. Therefore the confidence interval for a given sample will vary depending on the range of answers given. The tables above show confidence intervals for 10%, 30%, 50%, 70% and 90% of respondents giving a specific answer, at both 95% and 99% probability levels. For example, if we'd asked the Accept sample "do you like chocolate?" and 70% had replied "yes", the confidence interval would be ±4.0 % at the 95% level.

## 2.4 This report

This report highlights the key findings for the survey at a University level. Separate analyses will be made available to each Faculty where base sizes are large enough.

Please note that the results for each question are provided in Appendix 1 and a list of all participating institutions and RG b-club membership can be found in Appendix 2.

## 3. RESPONDENT PROFILE

- 28% of respondents have been a researcher less than 3 years, while 41% have been for more than 6 years.
- 55% have been at Southampton less than 3 years, 18% more than 6 years
- 49% have only had one contract of employment as a researcher
- 87% work full-time
- 85% are on fixed term contracts, and of those 67% are on contracts which last 1-3 years
  
- 75% are aged 26-40
- 51% are female
- 87% have a doctorate or equivalent qualification
- 62% are British nationals, and of those 9% are not from a white ethnic background
- Of those who are not British nationals, 51% are from another EU country
- 96% said they do not have a disability

## 4. KEY FINDINGS

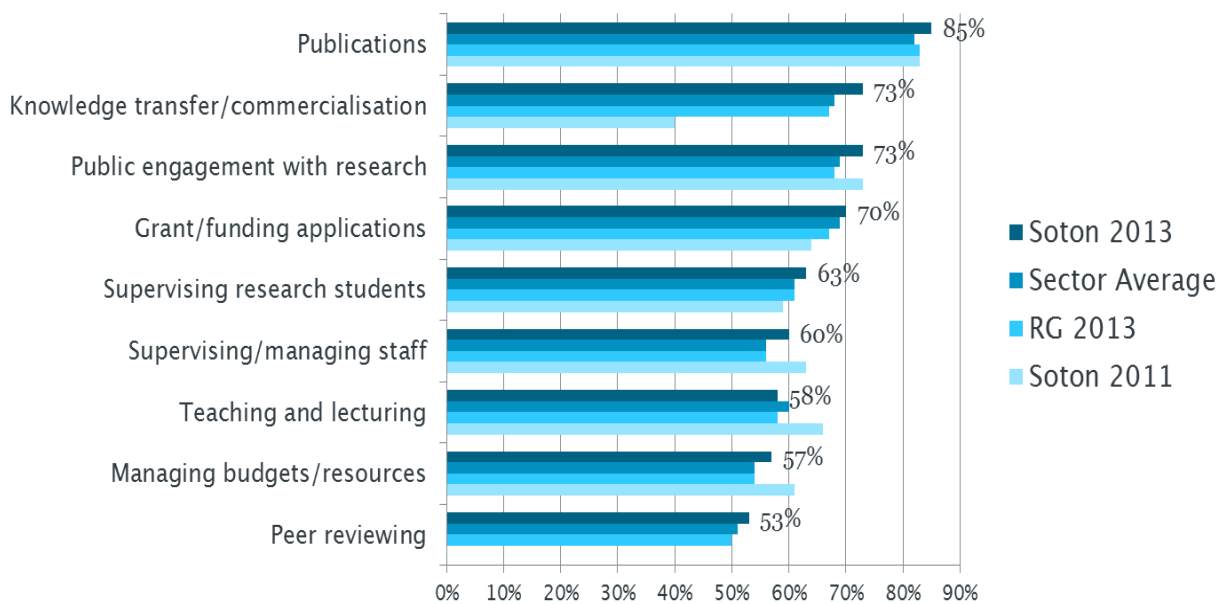
This section details the key findings from CROS 2013, discussed under the following questionnaire headings:

- 4.1 Recognition and value
- 4.2 Recruitment and selection
- 4.3 Support and careers development
- 4.4 Equality and diversity
- 4.5 University of Southampton questions

### 4.1 Recognition and value

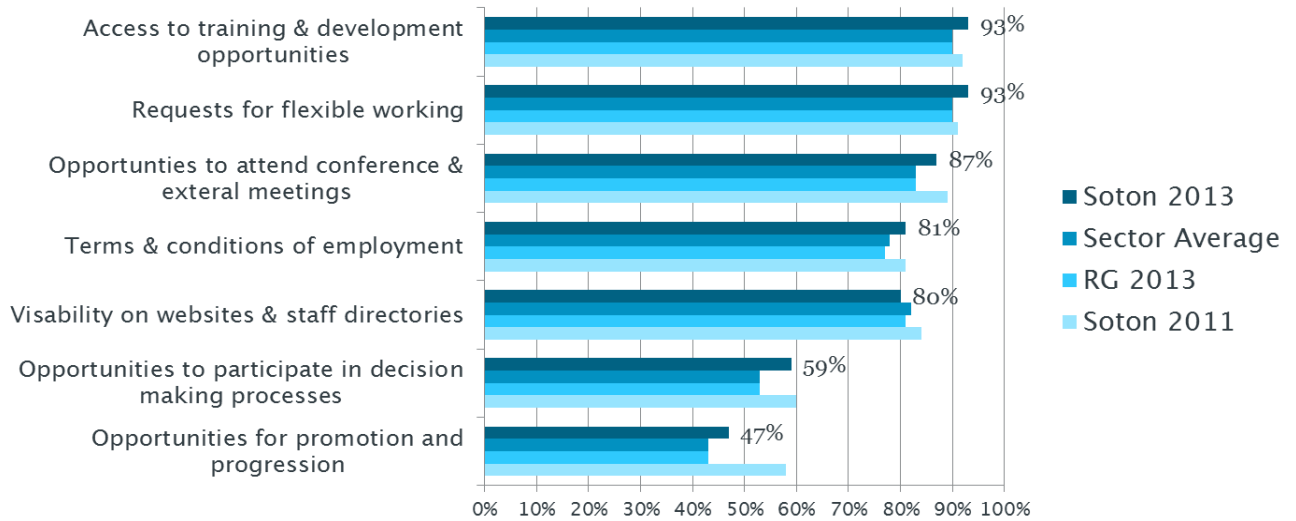
#### 4.1.1 Recognition and value of the contribution you make

- The area where most respondents feel their contribution is recognised and valued is publications, with this being ahead of the sector and RG averages, as well as being an improvement on 2011.
- Other areas where the majority of respondents feel that their contribution is recognised and valued include knowledge transfer and commercialisation activities, public engagement and research and grants/funding applications. Again ratings are ahead of both the sector and RG averages.
- Since 2011 there have been decreases in the proportion saying that their contribution to supervising/managing staff, teaching and lecturing and managing budgets and resources are recognised and valued.



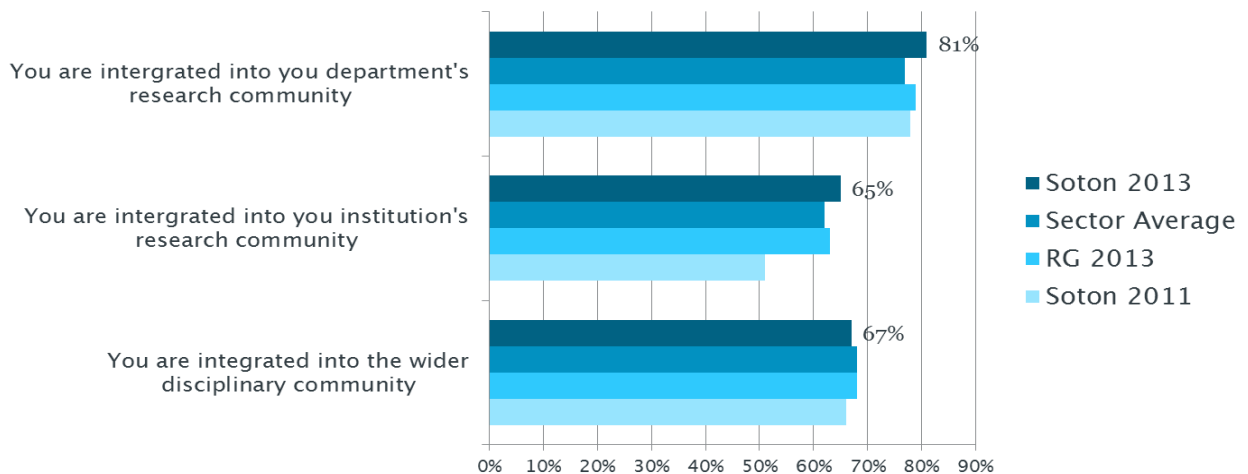
#### 4.1.2 Treatment in comparison to other types of staff

- The vast majority of respondents feel that they are treated fairly compared to other staff types in terms of access to training and development opportunities and requests for flexible working, with both measures being ahead of the sector and RG averages and slightly up on 2011 figures.
- Most respondents also feel that they are treated fairly in relation to opportunities to attend conferences and external meeting, their terms and conditions of employment and their visibility on websites and staff directories.
- The areas performing least well, although still ahead of the sector and RG, are opportunities for promotion and progression, and to participate in decision making processes. The proportion feeling fairly treated in terms of promotion and progression opportunities fell by 11 percentage point compared to the 2011 survey results.



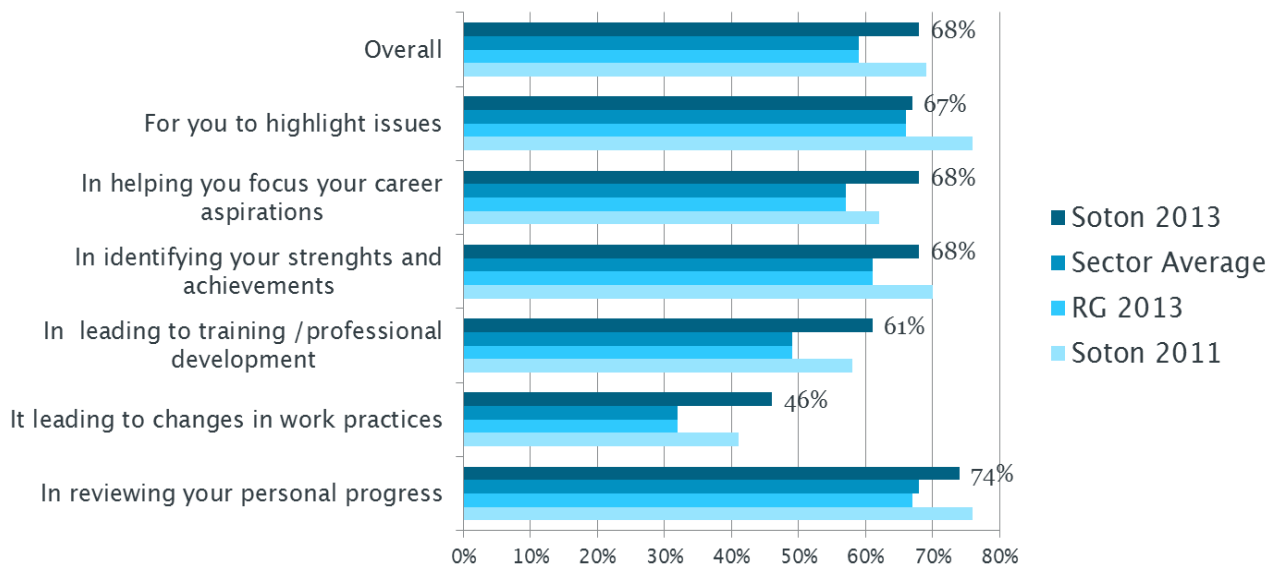
#### 4.1.3 Integration

- 81% of respondents feel integrated into their department’s research community, with the proportion being slightly higher than the sector and RG averages and the 2011 survey results.
- Only two thirds, feel the same about the University’s research community, however, this is a significant improvement on 2011 and slightly above sector and RG averages.
- A similar number feel integrated into the wider research community, on par with sector and RG comparisons and the 2011 survey.



#### 4.1.4 Staff appraisals

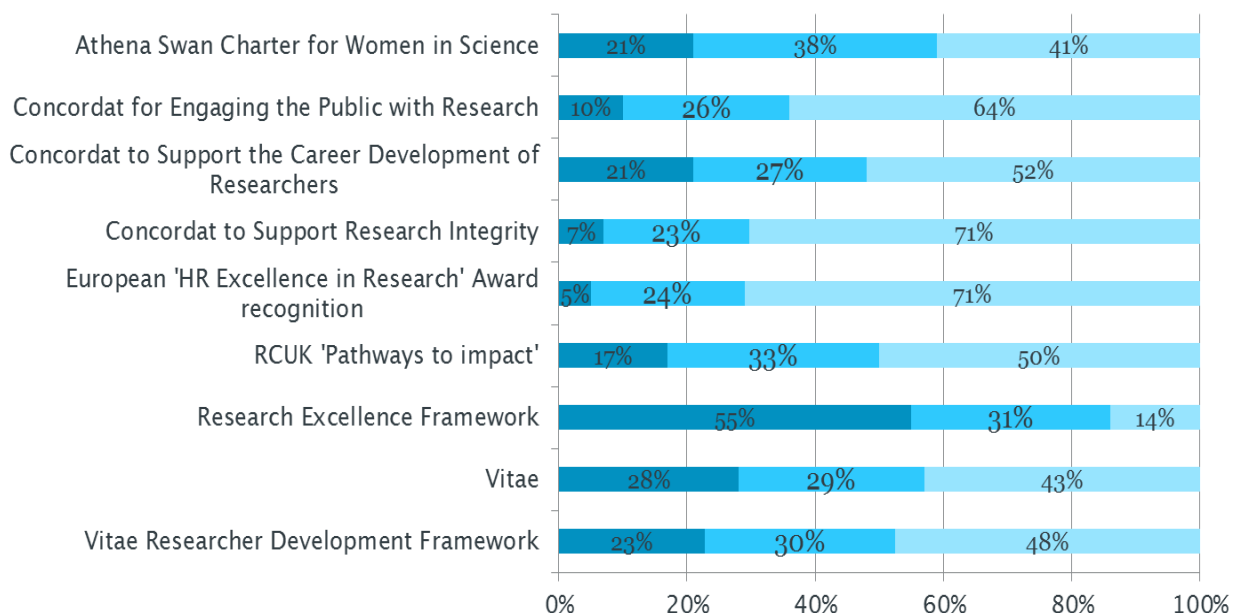
- Over the past 2 years, 57% of research staff surveyed have participated in a staff appraisal.
- Amongst those who have not done so, the main reasons are having only recently been appointment and not having been invited to do so.
- Overall, just over two thirds of respondents rate staff appraisals a useful. This is level with the 2011 survey results and ahead of both the sector and RG averages.
- The most useful aspect of staff appraisals are said to be reviewing personal progress, whilst the least useful element is the appraisal actually leading to changes in work practices.



#### 4.1.5 Knowledge and understanding of UK initiatives relevant to research staff.

- Knowledge and understanding of the various UK initiatives relevant to research staff are relatively low, particularly the various Concordat initiatives and the European HR Excellence in Research Award.
- The Research Excellence Framework is the most widely known and understood initiative, with 55% having some understanding of it (48% in 2011).
- Understanding of Vitae continues to improve, with 28% having some understanding compared to 18% in 2011 and 9% in 2009.

■ I have some understanding of these ■ I know these but I don't know the detail ■ I have never heard of this/these



#### 4.2 Recruitment and selection

- Just under half of respondents found out about their current post through an advertisement/job listing, with nearly a quarter doing so via word of mouth.
- The majority received a job description (87%), details of the qualifications required (87%) and the specialist skills required by the post holder (85%). Only 70%, however, received details of the transferable/personal/management skills required for the post.

## 4.2.1 Induction

- Three quarters of respondents were offered a local induction to their immediate role, with most finding this to be useful.
- Just under two thirds were offered a department/faculty induction, with this being more or less on par with 2011. While not all respondents found this to be useful, improvements have been made since the previous survey.
- Just under two thirds of respondents had also been offered a University inductions, a huge improvement on 2011 when over half had not done so. The proportion finding this useful, however, is fairly low.

	Southampton 2013	Survey average	RG group average	Southampton 2011
<b>Local induction to your immediate role...</b>				
...was useful	66%	59%	60%	53%
...was not useful	7%	13%	14%	15%
...was not offered	24%	26%	24%	27%
...was offered but not taken	2%	2%	3%	6%
<b>Departmental / Faculty induction...</b>				
...was useful	44%	40%	41%	35%
...was not useful	13%	20%	20%	17%
...was not offered	38%	35%	33%	40%
...was offered but not taken	6%	5%	5%	9%
<b>University induction...</b>				
...was useful	31%	34%	32%	16%
...was not useful	20%	27%	26%	20%
...was not offered	38%	29%	31%	53%
...was offered but not taken	11%	11%	12%	14%

## 4.3 Support and career development

### 4.3.1 Career development

- 81% of respondents have been encouraged to engage in personal and career development, this is ahead of the sector and RG averages (73%) and a slight improvement on 2011 (78%).
- However, only 56% say that they have a clear career development plan and 62% maintain a formal record of their continuing professional development.
- Only 14% are said to use the Vitae Research Development Framework to support their continuing professional development activities, although this is still ahead of the sector and RG averages of 9% and 8% respectively.

### 4.3.2 Training

- The main training and professional development that have been undertaken by respondents are in the areas of skills and research techniques, and communication and dissemination, while the main areas of interest are knowledge exchange, leadership and management, public engagement, career management, supervision of doctoral/masters student and teaching or lecturing.
- During the past 12 months a fifth of respondents had spent no time on training or continuing professional development activities, with 45% spending up to 5 days doing so. Only 5% of respondents has spent more than 10 days engaging in these activities.

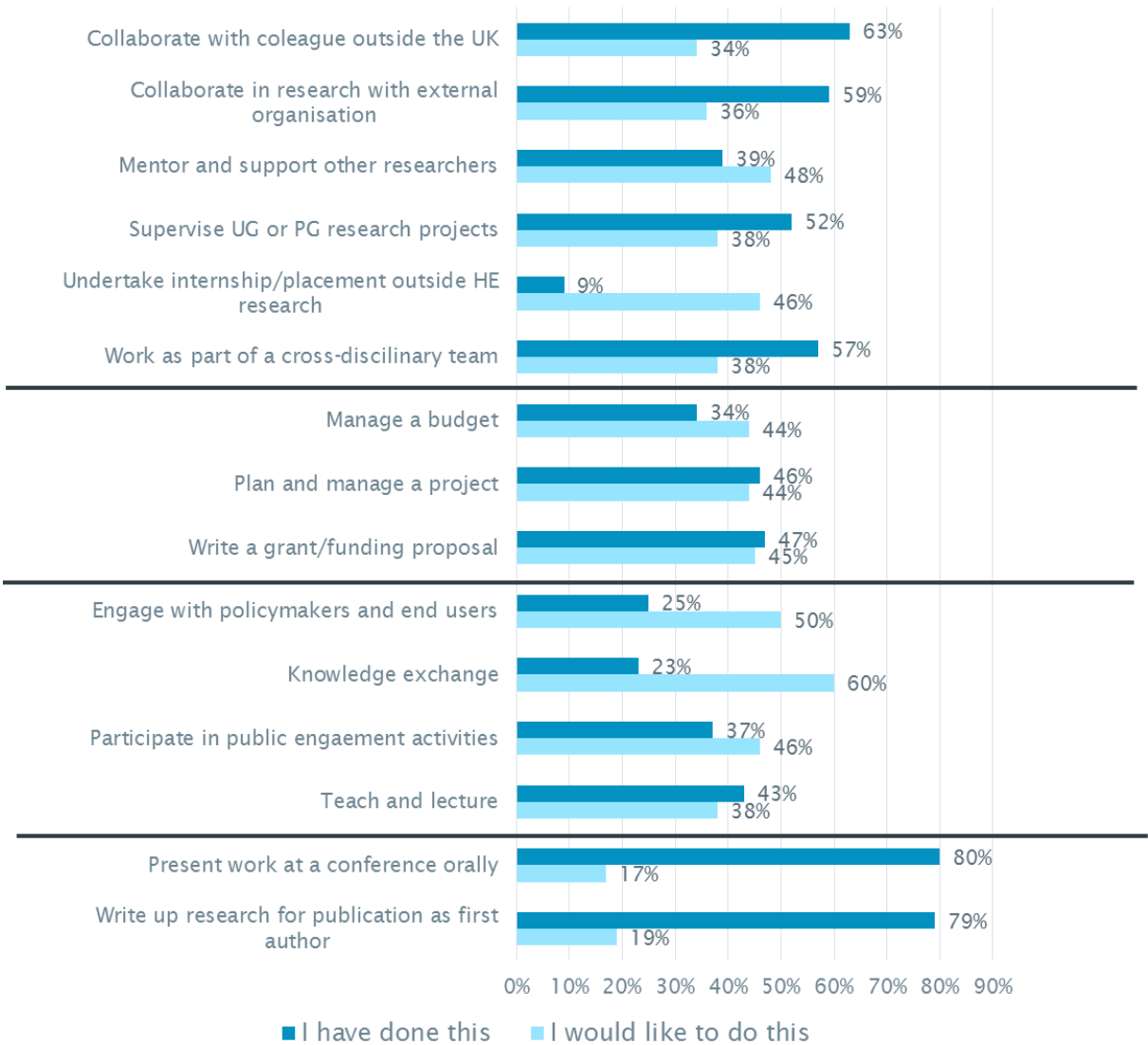


### 4.3.3 Career aspirations

- The majority of respondents aspire to and expect to work in the long term in higher education, primarily involved in research and teaching or research alone.
- A slightly higher proportion of Southampton respondents expect to be employed in the area that they aspire to work in than both the sector and RG group averages.

### 4.3.4 Professional Development

- Respondents were asked which professional development activities they have undertaken and which they would like to undertake in the areas of working with others, research and financial management, engagement and impact and communication and dissemination.
- The areas in which respondents have had most experience are presenting work at a conference and writing up research for publication, whilst hardly any have undertaken an internship or scholarship.
- The main areas where respondents would like to gain experience are knowledge exchange, engaging with policy makers/end users, mentoring/supporting other researchers and in the various financial management aspects listed.

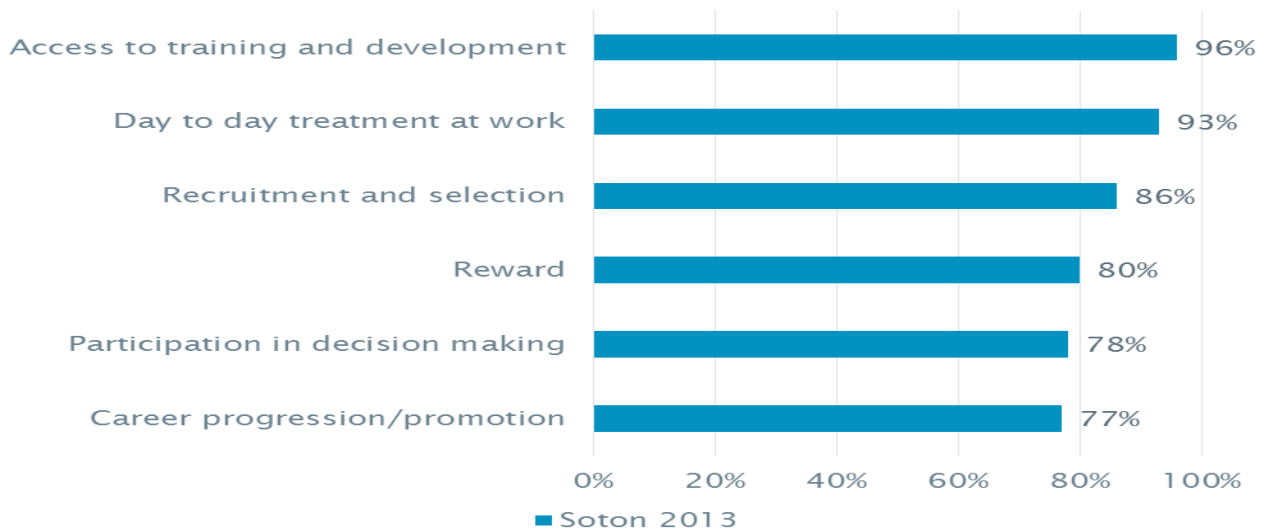


#### 4.4 Equality and diversity

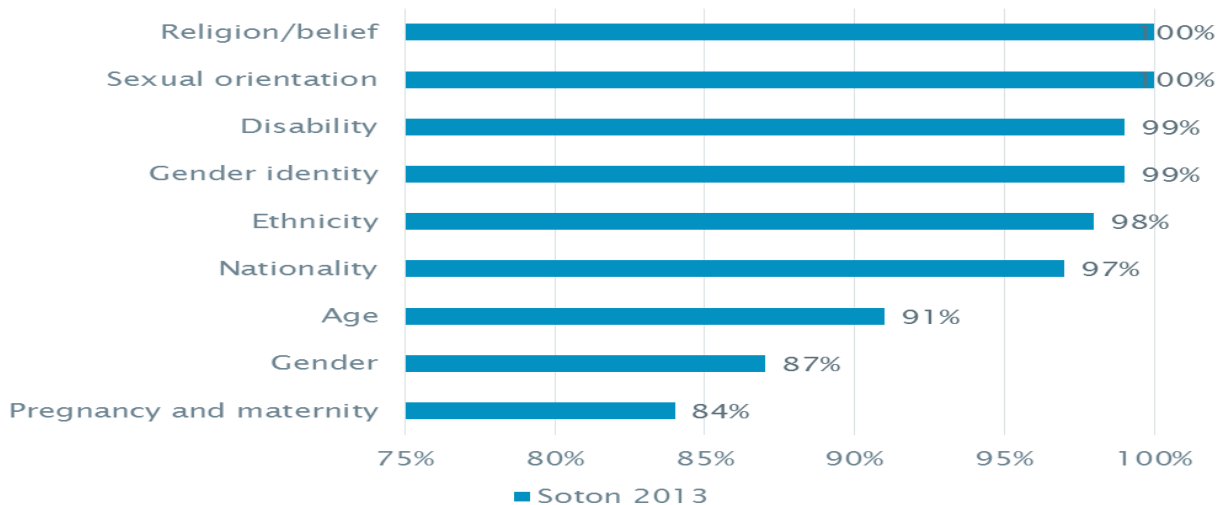
- 89% of respondents agree that the University of Southampton is committed to equality and diversity. This is ahead of the previous survey (81%) and the sector and RG averages (86% and 85% respectively).
- Three quarters are satisfied with their work-life balance. Again this is ahead of the previous survey (68%), sector (70%) and RG group averages (70%).

##### 4.4.1 Fair treatment of staff

- The vast majority of respondents agree that the University treats staff fairly in relation to access to training and development, and day to day treatment, with most also agreeing that recruitment and selection is fair.
- However, around a fifth disagree that staff are treated fairly in relation to career progression/promotion, participation in decision making and reward.



- All respondents agree that staff are treated fairly in relation to religious beliefs and sexual orientation, with the vast majority also agreeing to fair treatment in the areas of disability, gender identity, ethnicity and nationality.
- However, 16% do not believe that this applies to pregnancy and maternity, 13% gender and 9% age.



## **4.5 University of Southampton questions**

### **4.5.1 Awareness and importance of European HR Excellence in Research Award**

- Only 20% of respondents are aware that the University of Southampton holds the European HR Excellence in Research Award.
- 14% of respondents say that in the future they will be more likely to choose an employer who help this award, with a further 25% being slightly more likely.
- 61%, however, said that this would not influence their choice.