

MENDELU Employee Feedback on the Implementation of the HR AWARD Action Plan



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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Introduction

Our university has now been a holder of the prestigious HR Award for two years. There have been a number of changes at MENDELU over this time. Some of these have been very pronounced, others rather inconspicuous. Yet they were all intended to make our university a more transparent and attractive employer for its employees.

An online survey was conducted in August and September 2020, the primary aim of which was to determine how the university employees perceived these changes. Another goal of the survey was to inform the employees about all the steps we have taken in relation to the HR Award over these two years – and there were many of them.

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted anonymously using Google Forms, and was available to all employees.

The survey contained a total of 79 conditional questions (each respondent was shown only a fraction of this number based on their responses). The questions were thematically divided into six sections:

1. Sorting questions
2. Ethics and correct research practices
3. Employee awareness in the areas of human resource management and support for research and development
4. Open and transparent recruitment
5. Employee career development
6. Other employment conditions and benefits

The majority of the questions were optional, so each had a different quantity of responses in the final summary. Only the sorting questions were mandatory, because if they were not answered, the questionnaire results could not be meaningfully contextualized.

There were close-ended questions, open-ended questions, and questions that had the form of a Likert scale.

Respondents

A request to complete the questionnaire was sent to the e-mail address of every person in the MENDELU employee database. The questionnaire was completed by 441 respondents out of a total of approximately 1,600 employees. This means that 27.6% of the questionnaires were returned. The respondents were:

- 222 academic staff members,
- 39 academic researchers,
- 64 non-academic researchers,
- 31 postgraduate students,
- 142 administrative employees,
- 2 blue-collar workers.

The questionnaire took into account the fact that some employees have more than one function at MENDELU.

Employees from all parts of the university, of different age categories, both sexes and different job positions participated in the survey. Given the rate of return and the cross-sectional nature of the master sample of the respondents, the results are sufficiently representative.

The results of the close-ended questions were evaluated proportionally in the form of a pie or bar chart; the responses to the open-ended questions were partially summarized and coded due to the high quantity.

List of Abbreviations

FA – Faculty of AgriSciences

FRDIS – Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies

ILL – Institute of Lifelong Learning

FFWT – Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology

R&D – Research and Development Office

HRMO - Human Resource Management Office

FBE – Faculty of Business and Economics

FH – Faculty of Horticulture

Results

Basic categorization of respondents:

Chart 1A – Structure of respondents by position

441 responses (respondents had the opportunity to indicate more than one position)

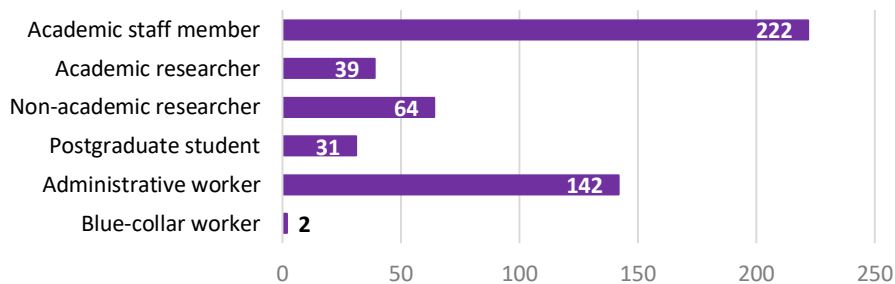


Chart 1B – Structure of respondents by sex

441 responses

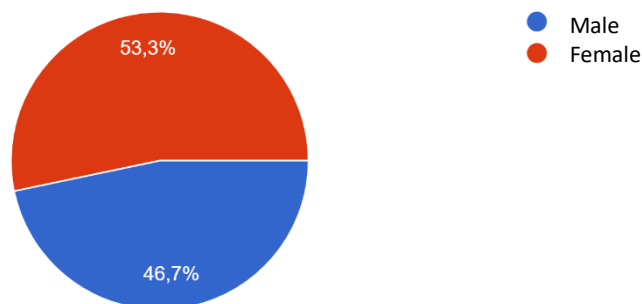
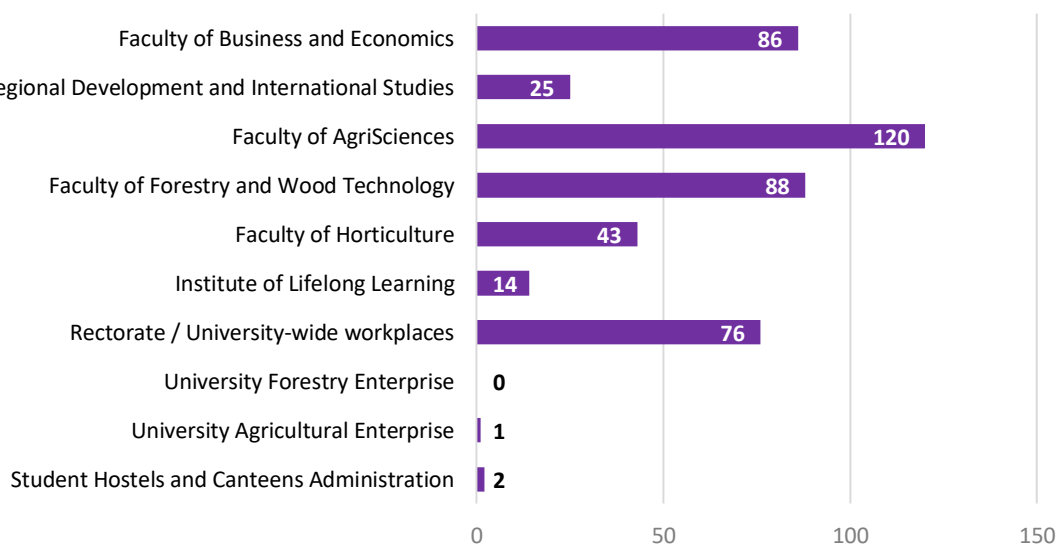


Chart 1C – Structure of respondents by university component

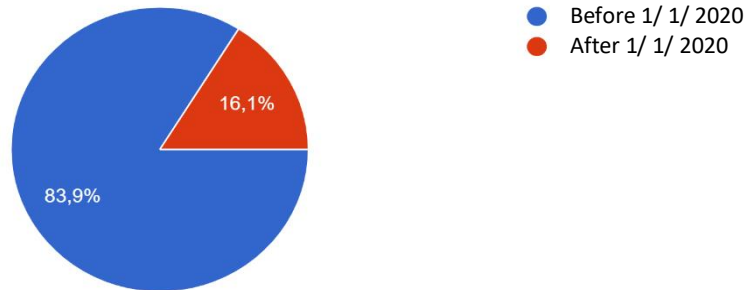
441 responses (respondents had the opportunity to indicate more than one university component)



Open and transparent recruitment

Chart 2 – When did you join MENDELU?

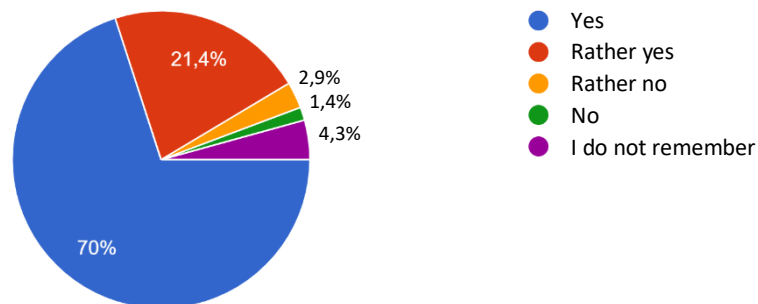
441 responses



Due to the topicality of this subject, the questions related to employee recruitment were targeted at respondents who joined MENDELU after 1/1/2019.

Chart 3A – Was the recruitment procedure you participated in professional?

70 responses

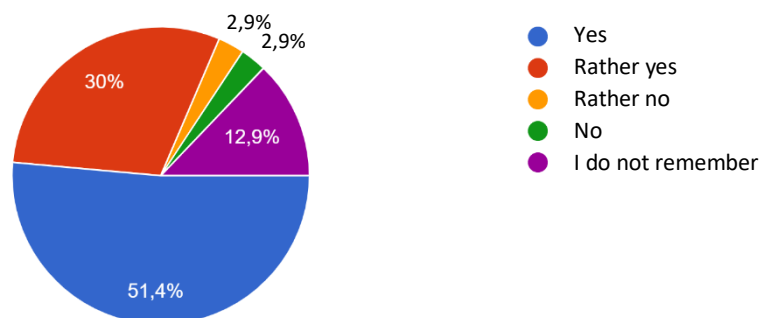


91.4% of respondents consider the recruitment procedure either professional or rather professional.

In their responses to an open-ended question where respondents could specify what they did not like about the recruitment procedure, they mentioned, for example, too many counterparty participants, discord in the selection committee, unclear job descriptions, and a lack of prepared employment documentation when they started work.

Chart 3B – Did the advertisement contain a clear and concise description of the position offered and the working conditions?

70 responses



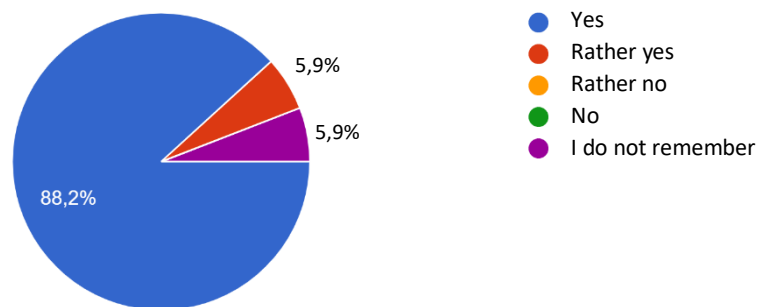
81.4% of the respondents who joined after 1/1/2019 assessed the description of the offered position and working conditions as concise or rather concise.

To the additional open-ended question “What did you not like about the advertisement or what was missing in it?”, respondents stated that they lacked more detailed information related to the job description and the financial remuneration.

94.1% of respondents assessed the conduct of the selection committee as correct or rather correct.

Chart 3C – Was the behaviour of the selection committee correct?

68 responses

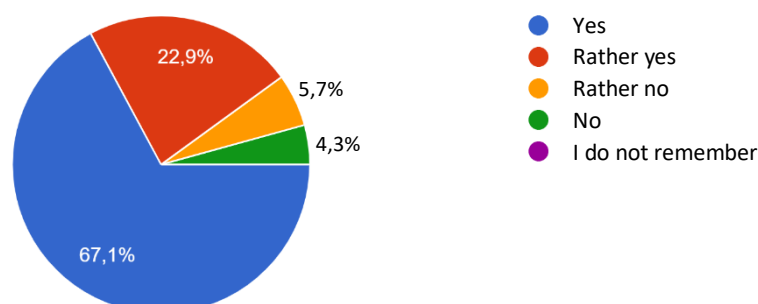


Respondents were asked a supplementary question asking them to express what they did not like about the behaviour of the selection committee. Respondents saw, for example, bias of opinion and discord and disagreement within the selection committee, and they found it unpleasant that they did not know the names and positions of the members of the committee, or who their future superior would be.

Nine tenths of respondents who joined MENDELU after 1/1/2019 assessed the communication of the HR Officer related to the start of their employment as professional or rather professional. According to a tenth of the respondents, the communication was unprofessional or rather unprofessional.

Chart 3D – Was the communication from the HR officer regarding your joining MENDELU professional?

70 responses



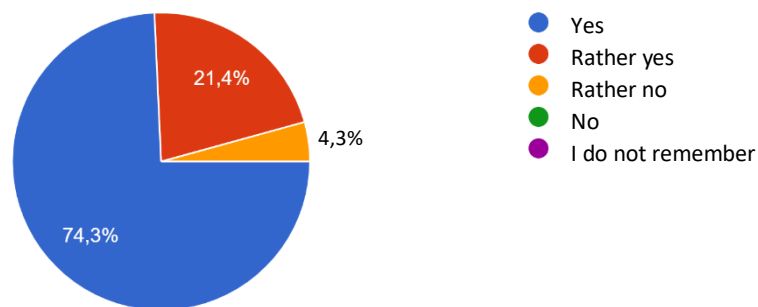
Some respondents who assessed the communication about joining MENDELU as unprofessional or rather unprofessional added that they particularly did not like the fact that they had not received detailed instructions related to commencing work and that they did not have enough information

to help them gain a basic understanding of their job. The respondents mentioned a lack of cooperation by the HR Officer when filling out the employment documentation and poor communication before and when joining MENDELU.

For 95.7% of respondents, the communication from their direct superior regarding the onboarding process was professional or rather professional.

Chart 3E – Was the communication from your direct superior regarding your joining MENDELU professional?

70 responses

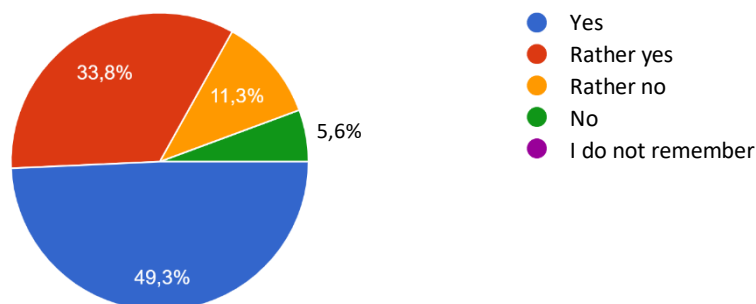


Respondents who answered “rather not” added that their working conditions and workplace were not sufficiently prepared for them. They mentioned insufficient communication and lack of interest on the part of their superior.

83.1% of the respondents were satisfied or rather satisfied with the course of their onboarding.

Chart 3F – Were you satisfied with the course of your onboarding (training)?

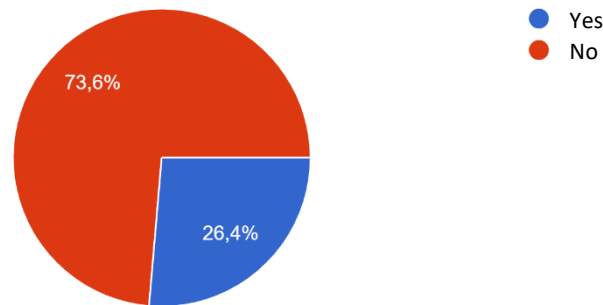
71 responses



To the question “What did you not like during your onboarding (training)?”, respondents most often mentioned an insufficient or complete lack of care and training, stating they were “thrown in at the deep end”, or the impossibility of obtaining training from the person who worked in the position before them.

Chart 4 – Have you ever participated in a selection procedure at MENDELU as a selection committee member?

440 responses



The following questions are for respondents who have participated in a selection procedure as a selection committee member.

Almost half of the respondents who have participated in a selection procedure as a committee member would welcome the possibility of training in this area.

Chart 5A – Would you welcome recruitment and selection training?

116 responses

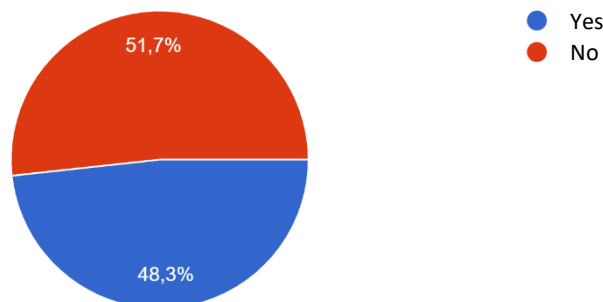
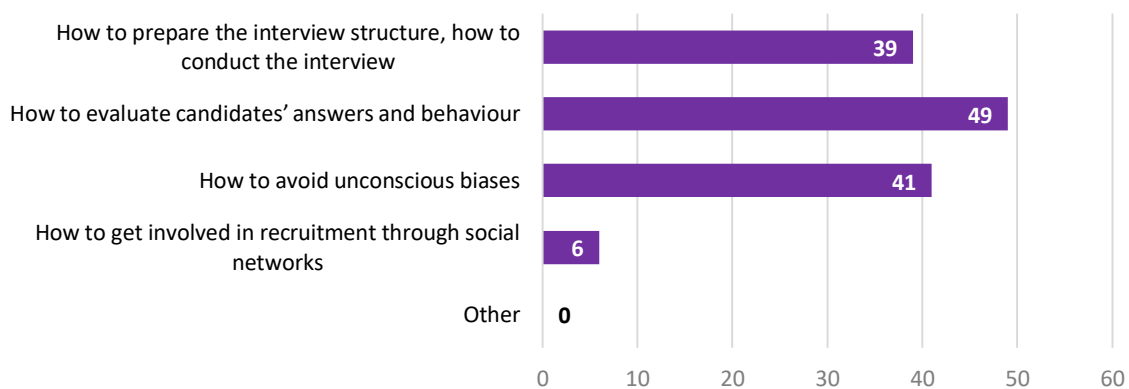


Chart 5B – What should such training primarily include?

56 responses (respondents could indicate more than one option)



More than half of the respondents who have been selection committee members would welcome candidate testing.

Chart 5C – Would you welcome candidate testing (language skills, computer skills, personality, etc.)?

114 responses

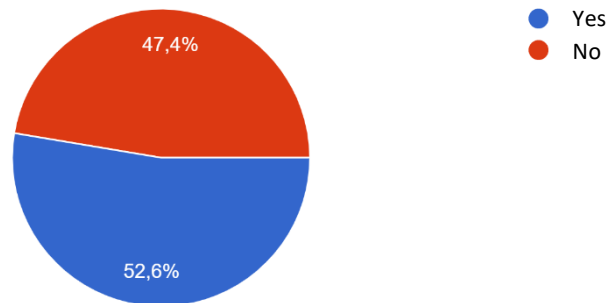
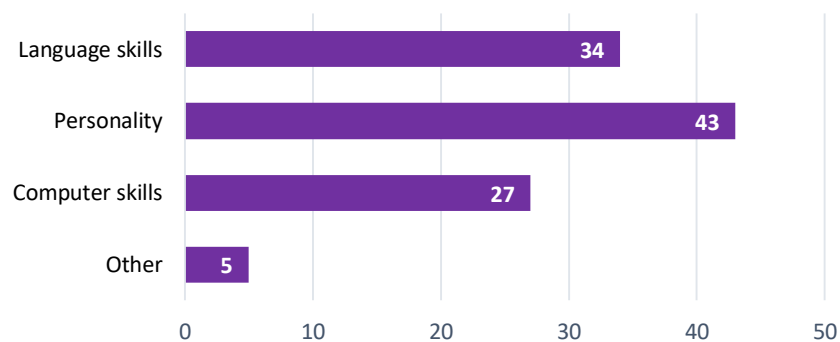


Chart 5D – In what area(s) would you like to test candidates?

56 responses (respondents had the opportunity to indicate more than one area of testing)



Respondents who would welcome candidate testing added that professional expertise, knowledge and experience, and communication skills needed to be tested.

Ethics and correct research practices

The survey showed that about half of the respondents are familiar with the content of the revised Code of Conduct for MENDELU Employees, Students and Graduates.

Chart 6 – Are you familiar with the content of the revised Code of Conduct for MENDELU Employees, Students and Graduates?

438 responses

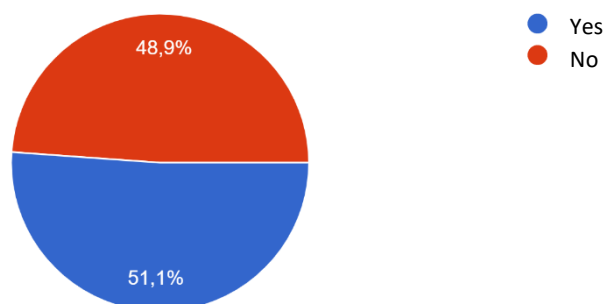


Chart 7A – Do you know what issues you can address by turning to the MENDELU Ethics Committee?

437 responses

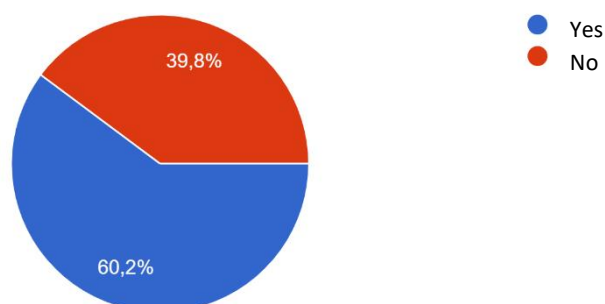
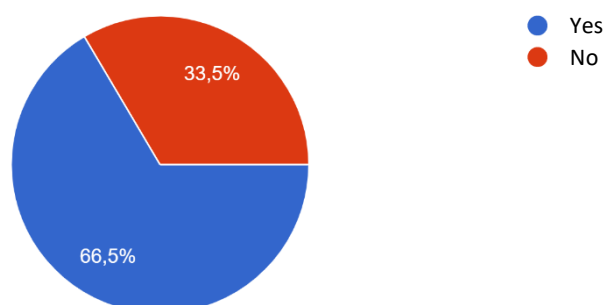


Chart 7B – Do you have confidence in the MENDELU Ethics Committee?

400 responses



To the supplementary question of why they do not have confidence in the Ethics Committee, respondents stated that they do not know the committee, are not aware of its activities, and do not know what issues it is meant to deal with. Some respondents expressed distrust in its objectivity and impartiality. Some survey participants indicated that the acts of the Ethics Committee are motivated by political reasons.

According to the questionnaire, almost three quarters of respondents are not familiar with the content of the MENDELU Integrity Policy Statement. 29% of academic staff members, researchers and doctoral students are familiar with it.

Chart 8A – Are you familiar with the content of the MENDELU Research Integrity Policy Statement?

436 responses

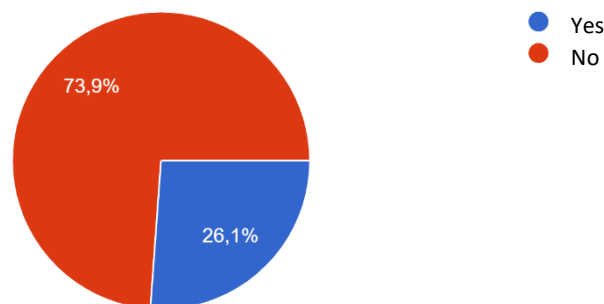


Chart 8B – Should MENDELU pay more attention to research integrity or any of its areas?

427 responses



22% of the respondents indicated the research integrity areas that MENDELU should focus on, as shown in the following chart.

Chart 8C – In which areas should MENDELU pay more attention to research integrity?

97 responses (respondents could indicate more than one option)

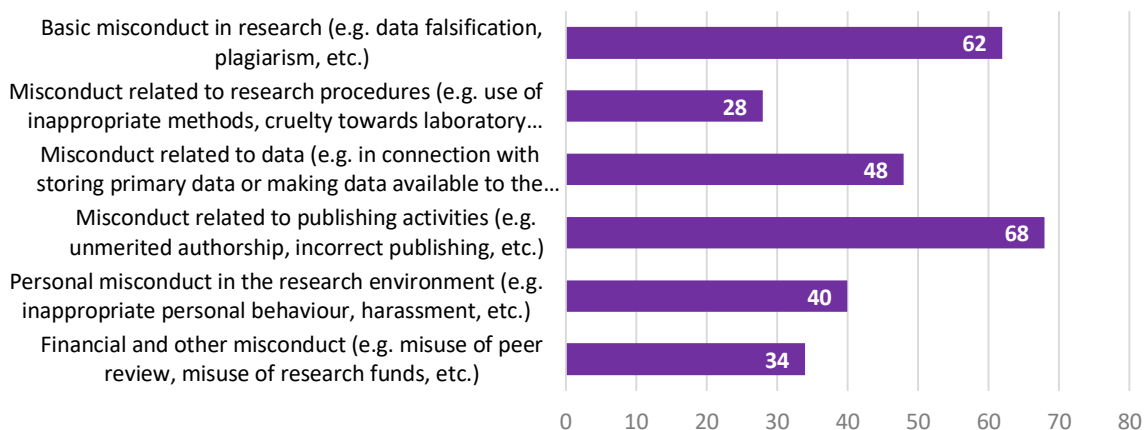
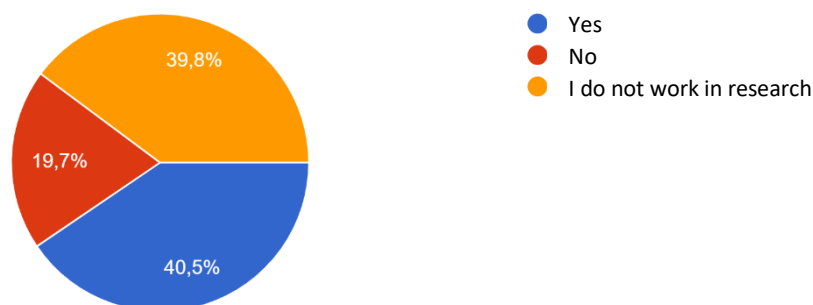


Chart 8D – If you work in research, would additional education regarding research integrity help you?

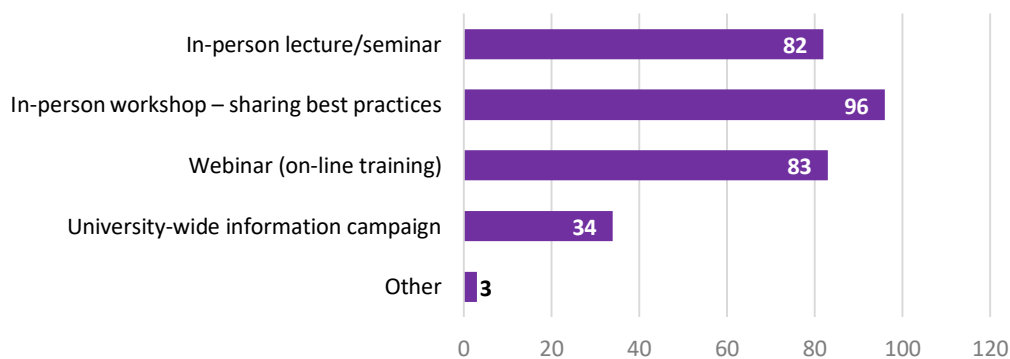
437 responses



40.5% of respondents recommend additional education regarding research integrity, in the forms described below.

Chart 8E – What form should this education take?

175 responses (respondents had the opportunity to indicate more than one form of education)



Respondents, for example, added that any method may be appropriate if properly implemented.

More than a third of respondents think that MENDELU should set up an institution to address workplace issues, e.g. conflicts with colleagues and superiors, discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment.

Chart 9A – Do you think that MENDELU should set up a special body to address workplace issues (e.g. conflicts with colleagues and superiors, discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment)?

434 responses

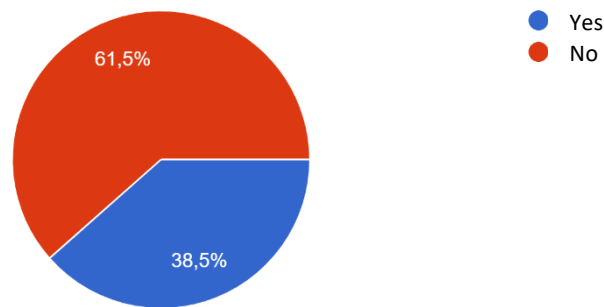


Chart 9B – Who should play this role?

166 responses (respondents could indicate more than one option)



Respondents added that it would be appropriate if this role was fulfilled by an external worker or a person independent of MENDELU.

Employee Awareness in the Areas of Human Resources Management and Support for Research and Development

Chart 10A – Did you know that there is a Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) website?

441 responses

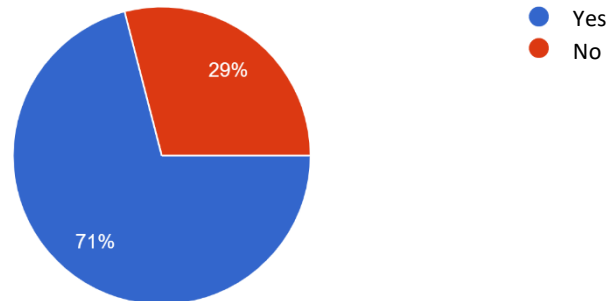
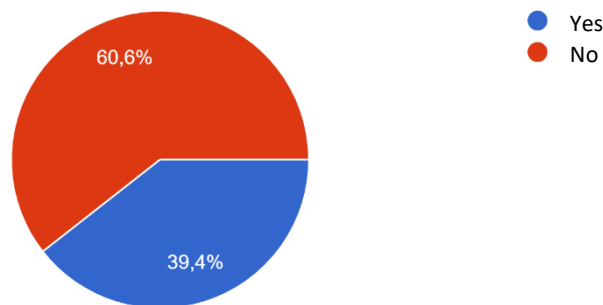


Chart 10B – Do you use the HRMO website?

412 responses



To the additional question “What information are you most interested in?”, respondents who use the HRMO website indicated contacts, benefits, forms, job opportunities, and other practical information, such as the MENDELU Employee Guide.

On the other hand, respondents lack information about education, personal growth opportunities, and the division of competencies of HRMO employees. They lack, for example, procedures (processes) and information on the employment of disadvantaged people. Employees also lack a visible link to the HRMO website on the home page of MENDELU.

Survey participants who do not use the HRMO website did not know that it existed, do not need it, or do not have time for it. Some respondents stated that the website does not provide essential information and is uninteresting.

Some respondents subscribe to the HR Newsletter, which they consider sufficient, or they receive this information from other sources, and so they do not use the HRMO website.

More than half of the respondents know of the HR Newsletter but less than half are satisfied with its content.

Chart 11A – Did you know the HR Newsletter exists?

440 responses

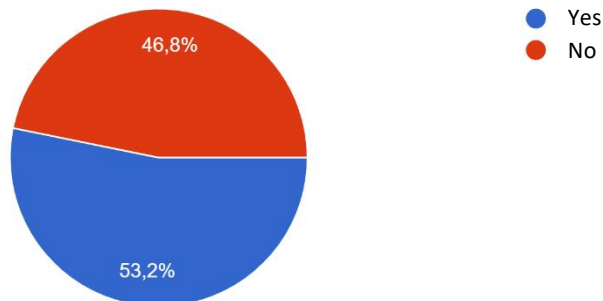
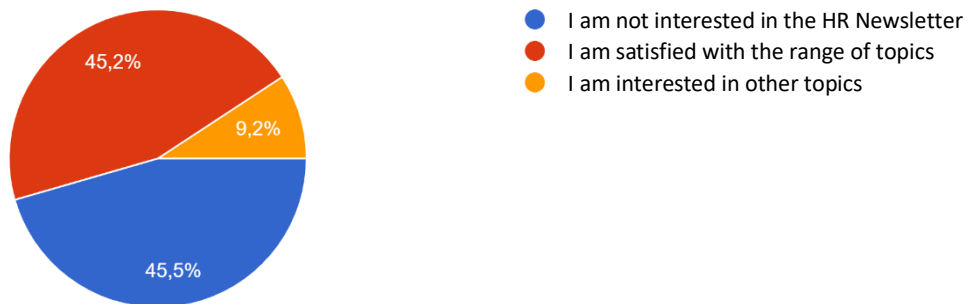


Chart 11B – If you subscribe to the HR Newsletter, are you satisfied with its content or would you like more information?

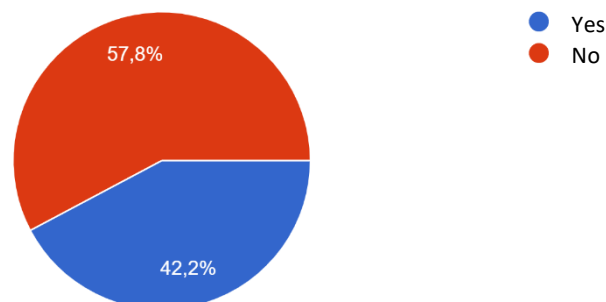
336 responses



Respondents interested in other topics would welcome more information on education, development, personal growth, and science.

Chart 12A – Did you know that there is a R&D Office website?

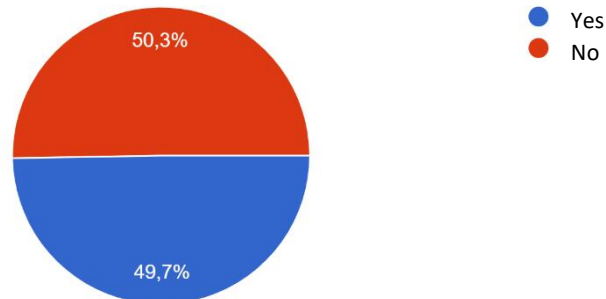
438 responses



Half of the respondents who know of the R&D website also use it.

Chart 12B – Do you use the R&D website?

187 responses



Respondents who use the R&D website added that on this website they are most interested in the conditions of grants, information about projects, and current calls.

Respondents indicated that the website lacks information on contractual research and individual project support. Some respondents considered the website confusing. Survey participants lack clear specifications of the work done by the R&D employees.

Respondents who know of the R&D website but do not use it explain this by saying that they do not need it for their work or that the website does not contain the information they want. Others subscribe to the R&D Newsletter, which provides them with the information they need.

Chart 13A – Did you know the R&D Newsletter exists?

435 responses

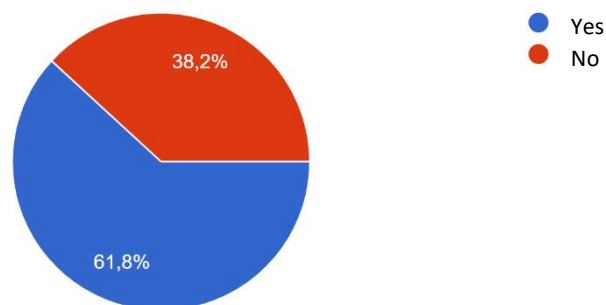


Chart 13B – If you subscribe to the R&D Newsletter, are you satisfied with its content or would you like more information?

359 responses

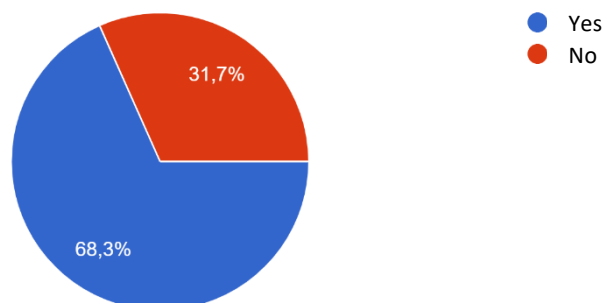


5.8% of the respondents are interested in expanding the range of topics, such as the inclusion of information on calls from private foundations, or a platform for creating inter-faculty research teams, current information on R&D, and changes in the evaluation of journals.

Employee Career Development

Chart 14A – Are there regular individual meetings with your superior at your workplace regarding your work and your professional development?

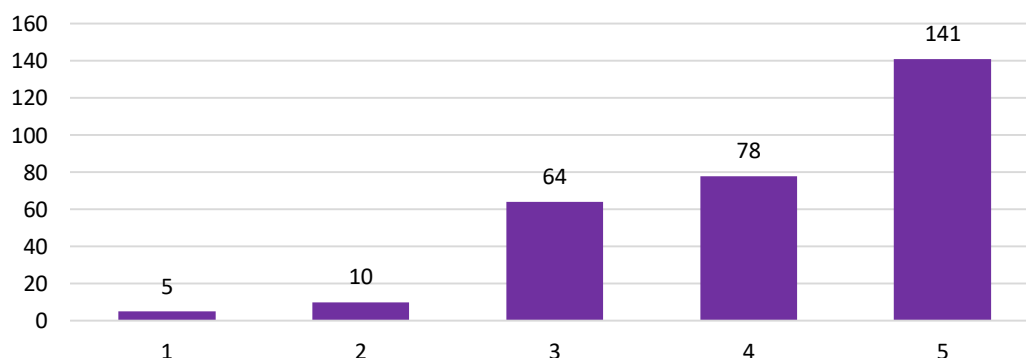
439 responses



Just under half of the respondents who have regular individual meetings with their superior are completely satisfied with these meetings.

Chart 14B – Does the form of the meetings suit you? (1 – not at all, 5 – completely)

298 responses



Two thirds of those who do not attend such meetings expressed an interest in regular individual meetings regarding their work and professional development.

Chart 14C – Would you be interested in regular individual meetings with your superior at your workplace regarding your work and your professional development?

135 responses

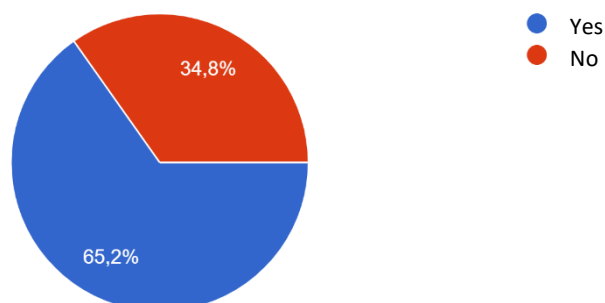
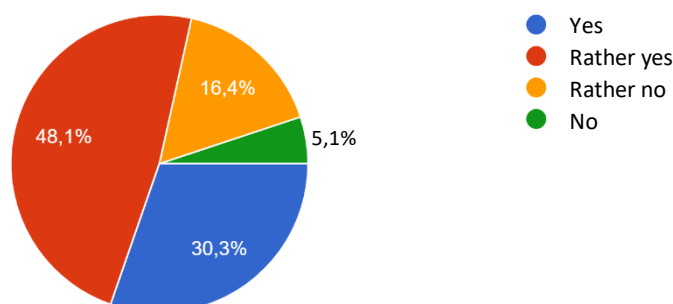


Chart 15 – Are you satisfied with your professional/career development?

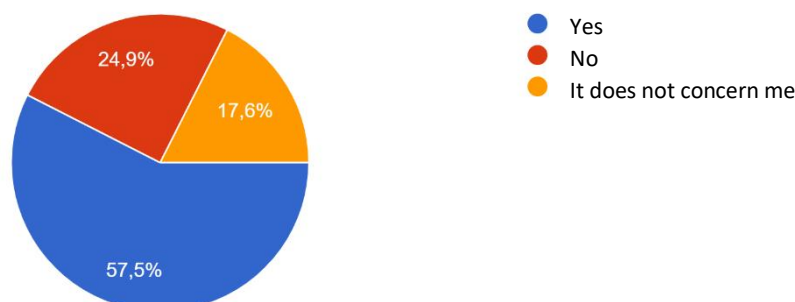
432 responses



To the supplementary question of what respondents lack in terms of professional/career growth, they stated, for example, a common vision, adequate remuneration, appreciation of their proactive work, and interest shown by their superior. Respondents lack a comprehensive education concept, clear rules and a development strategy. They would welcome free language courses, training connected with their role, and soft skills training.

Chart 16A – You are interested in mobility?

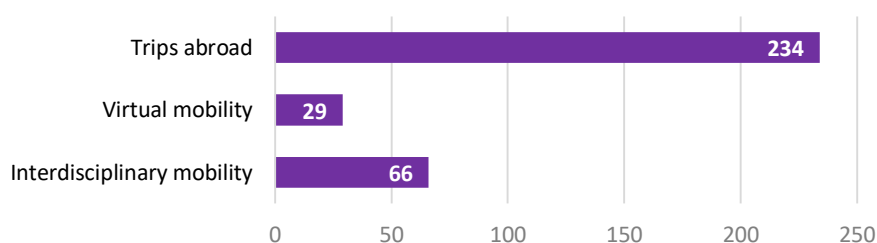
433 responses



Respondents interested in mobility predominantly prefer trips abroad.

Chart 16B – What form of mobility do you prefer?

248 responses (respondents had the opportunity to indicate more than one form of mobility)



Respondents answered the supplementary question “What do you see as obstacles to the use of mobility?” Among the responses, they most often mentioned being too busy, a lack of time, and excessive administration. Others indicated family or financial reasons and, last but not least, the current global epidemic.

30.3% of the respondents are interested in mentoring as a mentee, but almost a quarter of them are not aware of what this is.

Chart 17A – Would you be interested in participating in mentoring as a mentee (i.e. to be mentored)?

429 responses

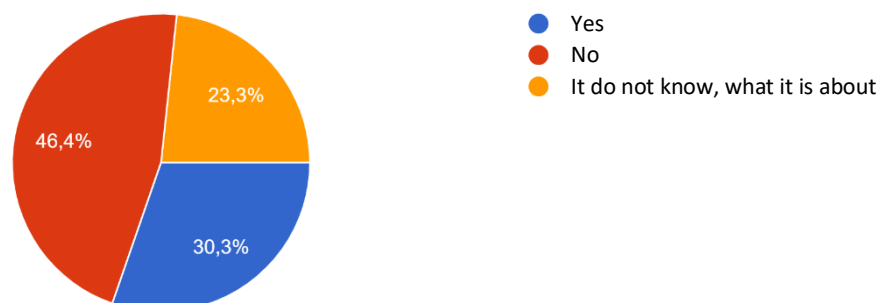
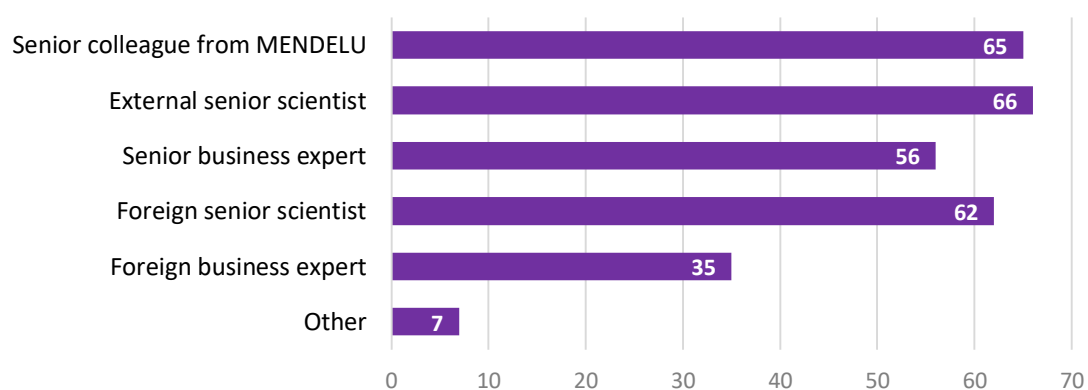


Chart 17B – Who would you prefer as your mentor?

129 responses (respondents could indicate more than one option)

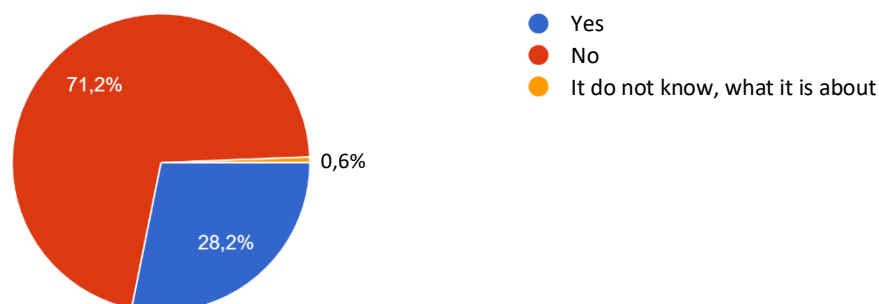


In the “Other” responses, participants mostly indicated external specialists/experts in their field.

Almost a third of respondents are interested in being a mentor.

Chart 18 – Would you be interested in participating in mentoring as a mentor (i.e. doing the mentoring)?

323 responses



Other Employment Conditions and Benefits

Chart 19A – Has there been a change in your remuneration in connection with the new Salary Regulation?

429 responses

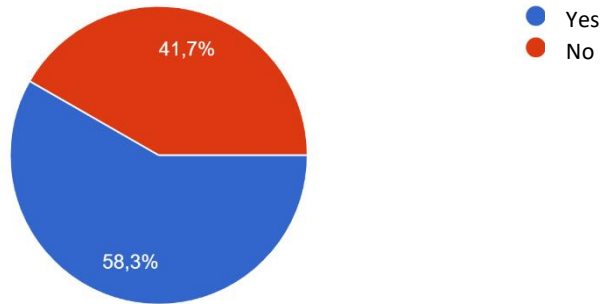


Chart 19B – Has this change been positive?

248 responses

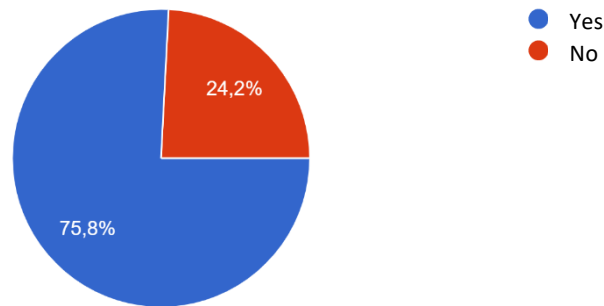


Chart 20A – Are you aware of the employee benefits? Select the ones you knew of.

436 responses (respondents could indicate more than one option)

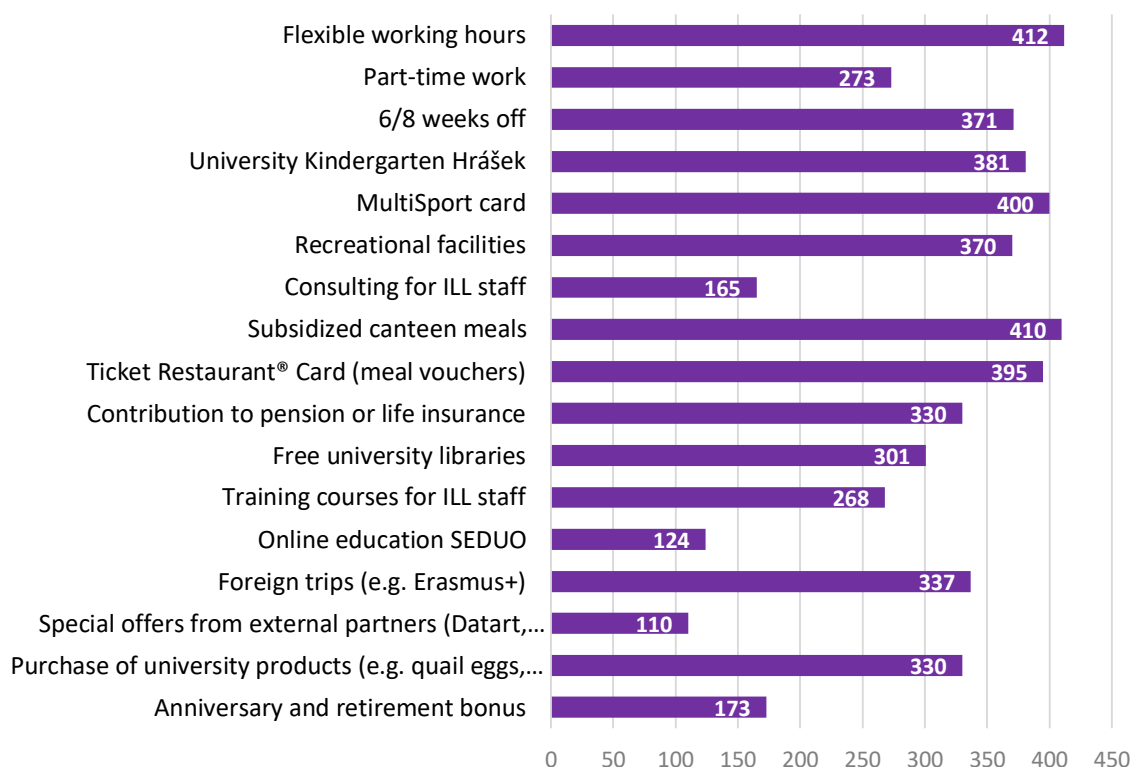
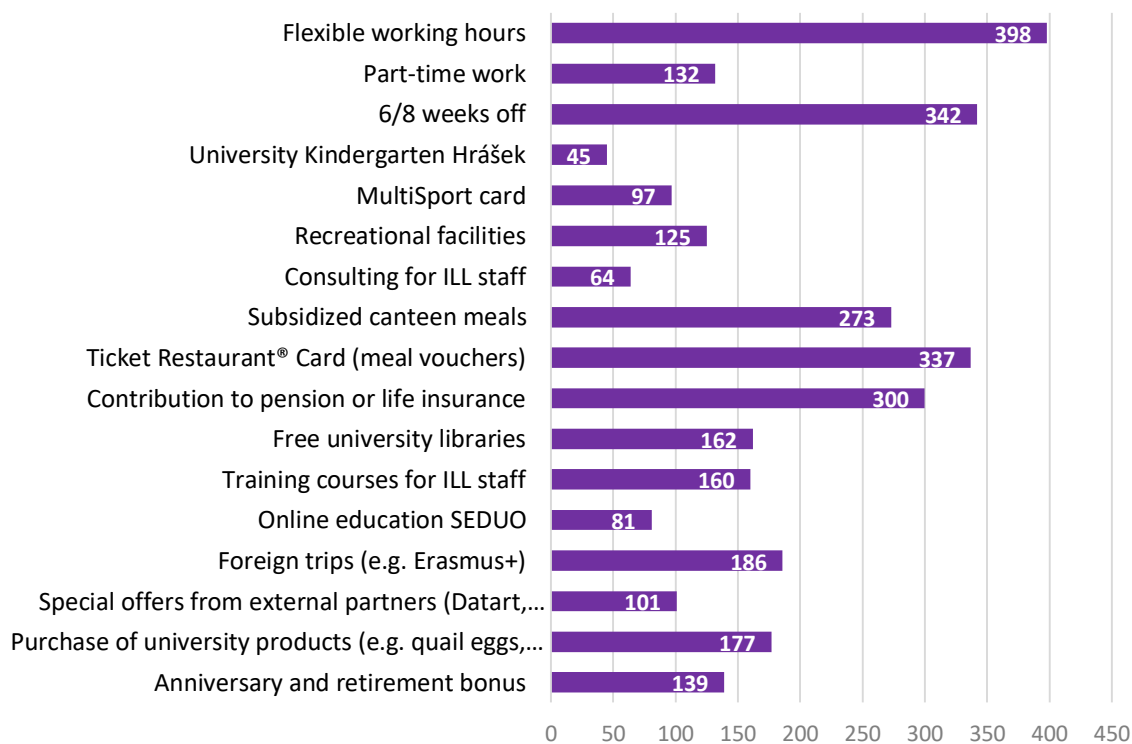


Chart 20B – Which employee benefits do you find attractive?

435 responses (respondents could indicate more than one option)

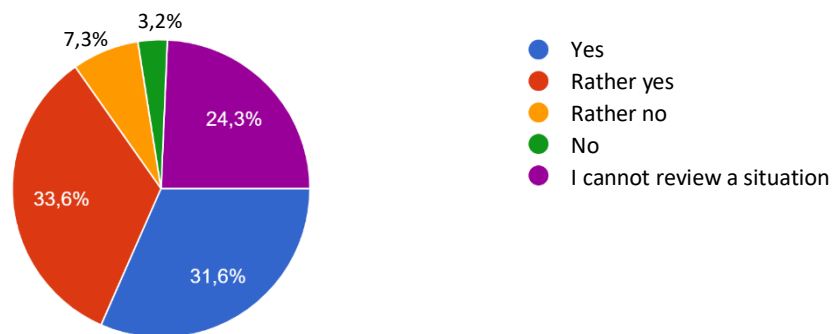


Respondents indicated that in the area of benefits they are also interested in:

- A special mobile phone tariff for employees and their families
- Increasing the pension insurance contribution, the possibility of using this contribution from the very beginning of their employment relationship
- Free language courses, on-line education and other courses
- Home office
- Business laptop, business phone
- Improving the quality of lunches served in the canteen
- Support for sport and relaxation on the campus – gym, relaxation zone, etc.
- An offer of discounted admissions to cultural events
- A MultiSport card with increased discounts
- A kindergarten for smaller children on the university campus
- The possibility of transferring hours worked to the next month and the possibility of taking compensatory leave
- Discounted stays in recreational centres
- Sick days

Chart 21 – Are the services of the HR Office / your HR officer sufficient for you?

440 responses

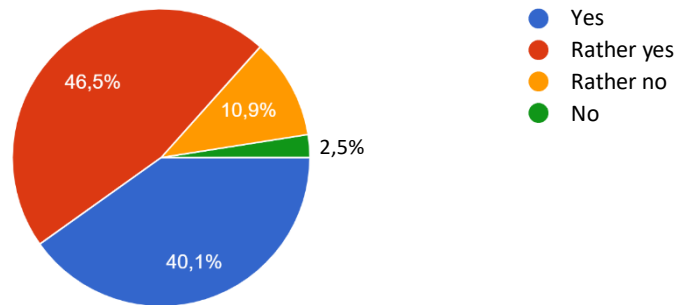


Almost two thirds of the respondents are either satisfied or rather satisfied with the services of the HR Office / their HR Officer.

The 10.5% of the respondents for whom the services of the HR Office or HR officer were not sufficient were asked to specify what deficiencies they saw in the services of the HR Office / HR Officer. Some respondents complained about the frequent rotation of HR professionals and the resulting lack of knowledge of processes and administrative procedures. Others pointed out not only a low level of professionalism, unhelpfulness and mistakes, but also long delays in dealing with administrative matters. On the other hand, other respondents expressed satisfaction with improvements in the services of the HR Office.

Chart 22 – Are you able to balance your work and family/personal life under your current working conditions?

441 responses



Respondents see as the main obstacles to balancing their work and personal/family life uneven workloads – they are overwhelmed with teaching during the academic year – the amount of overtime, and the necessity to work in the evenings or at weekends. Other obstacles mentioned included, for example, a high administrative burden and the inability to use home office.

Chart 23A – Did you know that there is a counsellor providing assistance on balancing the work and family/personal life at the HRMO?

439 responses

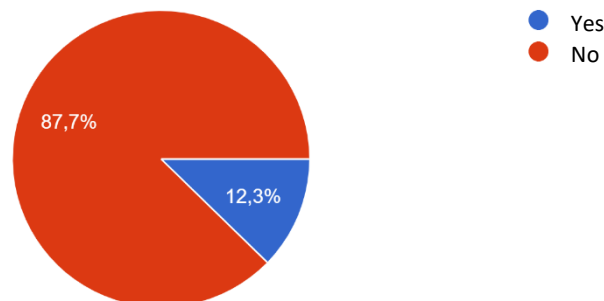
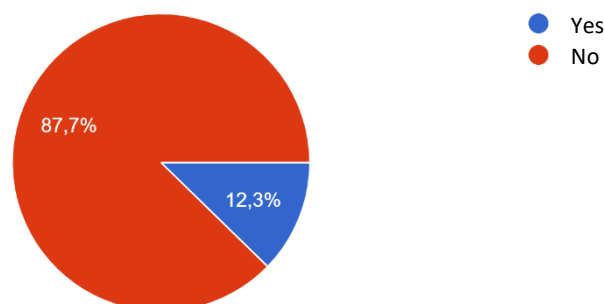


Chart 23B – Have you ever used or would you use the services of the counsellor providing assistance on balancing the work and family/personal life?

431 responses



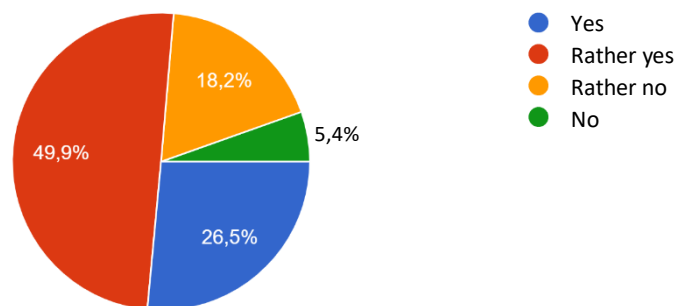
Respondents would make use of the counsellor providing assistance on balancing the work and family/personal life to help them improve their time management and to improve their organization of work. Other respondents would consider contacting the counsellor in connection with parenthood issues, e.g. for help in relation to maternity leave and the return to work, or administrative and information support (e.g. return grant).

To the question “Why would you not use the services of a counsellor providing assistance on balancing work and family/personal life?”, some replied that they had not previously heard of such a counsellor or did not need them because they were satisfied or already knew what to do. Other respondents expressed a lack of confidence in the counsellor, who is also an employee of MENDELU, while others had doubts about the counsellor’s qualifications, experience and confidentiality. Other respondents felt that the counsellor would not be able to solve their problems.

76.4% of respondents would recommend or rather recommend working for MENDELU to their acquaintances and friends.

Chart 24A – Would you recommend working for MENDELU to your acquaintances or friends?

423 responses



The reasons why respondents would recommend working for MENDELU were, for example, the stability of MENDELU as an employer, and that it is a prestigious institution with a promising future. Some respondents stressed the great community, interesting and meaningful work, the freedom of research, or working conditions and benefits.

On the other hand, the respondents who would not recommend working for MENDELU stated as the main reasons the low financial remuneration, excessive administrative burden and high workload. The respondents also mentioned, for example, the outdated system, disagreeable community, and their relationship with their superior.

Chart 24B – How likely are you to recommend working for MENDELU to your acquaintances or friends? (1 – completely unlikely, 10 – very likely)

430 responses

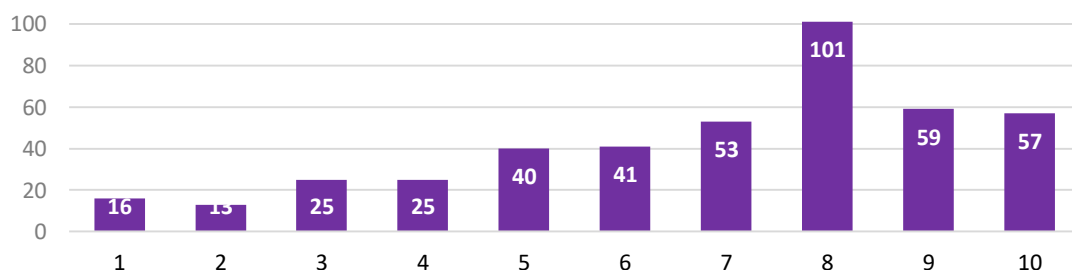
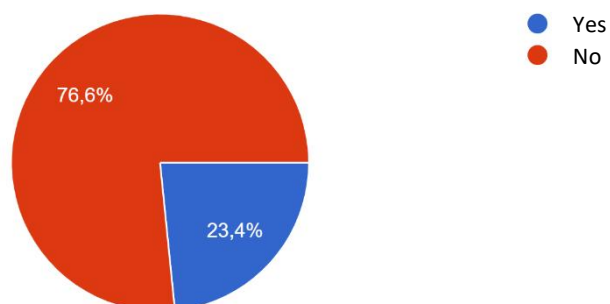


Chart 25A – Are you considering leaving MENDELU?

423 responses

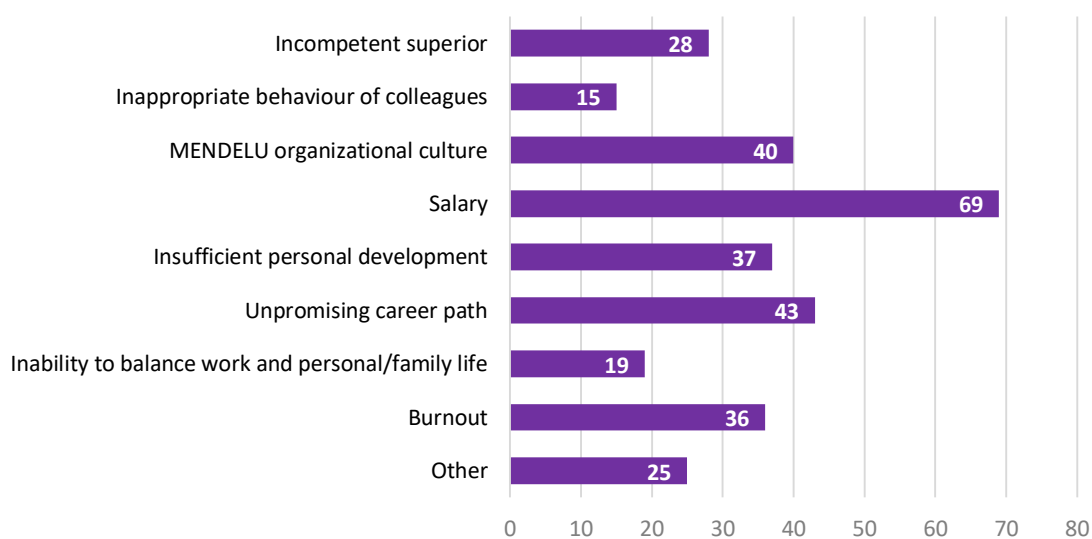


More than three quarters of the respondents are not considering leaving MENDELU.

72% of the respondents who are considering leaving MENDELU want to leave because of the insufficient financial remuneration.

Chart 25B – Why are you considering leaving MENDELU?

96 responses (respondents could indicate more than one option)



Reasons indicated under “Other” included, for example, having opinions that are different from those of the faculty management, unequal treatment of employees, an unsatisfactory relationship with their superior, or approaching retirement.



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Thanks

Dear colleagues, many thanks to those of you who participated in our survey. You have provided us with valuable feedback that we hope to utilize in our ongoing efforts to make MENDELU a better place in which to work and live. Thank you!