

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

SURVEY

METHODOLOGY AND OUTCOMES



Narodowe Centrum Badań Jądrowych
National Centre for Nuclear Research
ŚWIERK



1. Survey methodology

1.1. Qualitative research methods

In December 2017 NCBJ expressed a declaration of commitment to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code). The Endorsement Letter will be placed on the NCBJ website together with the Action Plan for implementation.

In 2018, Prof. dr hab. Ewa Rondio, Deputy Director, Science appointed a Working Group to perform a Gap Analysis and then work on an Action Plan. The members of the Working Group were appointed mostly from the research staff, from all levels.

The main goals of the Working Group were:

- To carry out a Gap Analysis – including reviewing current practices and legal documents (ordinances) of NCBJ
- To develop an Action Plan based on the identified gaps.

To prepare these documents the following qualitative methods were used:

(1) workshops held by the Working Group

and

(2) individual interviews-discussions held by the Working Group members within their own departments-divisions

Semi-structured interviews were used with a questionnaire containing a list of open questions concerning the observation of some (selected by the Working Group) of the 40 principles – which principles NCBJ already observes and what should be done fully to implement them. This kind of research has an exploratory character. It should lead to a deeper understanding of needs and a better understanding of the meaning of the gaps identified.

During the research into practices, the Working Group decided to make a deeper analysis by running a survey exploring researchers' opinions on how NCBJ practices meet the standards described in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The results of the survey were discussed during the final workshop of the Working Group and an Action Plan was finally proposed.

1.2. Quantitative research methods

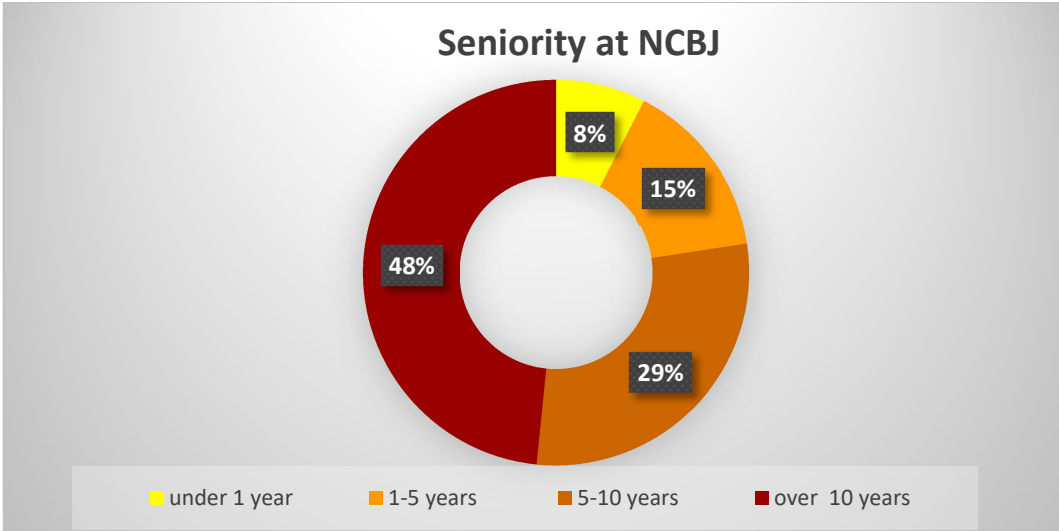
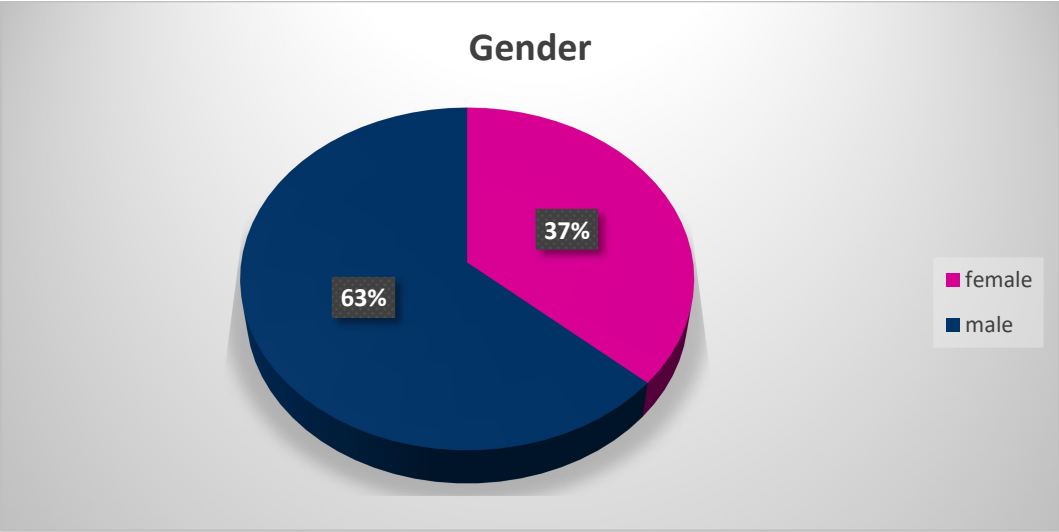
1.2.1. Summary of respondents based on various aspects

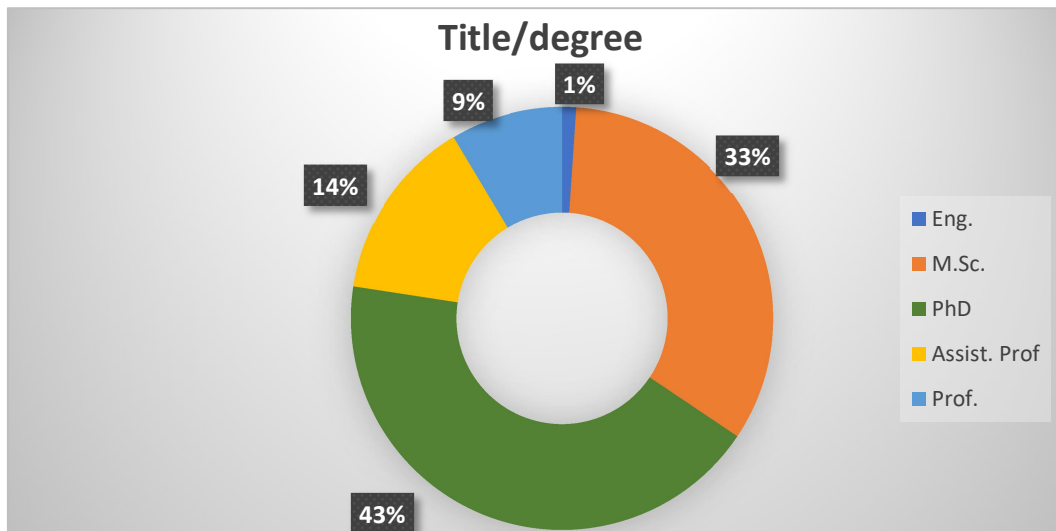
Each member of the research community at NCBJ has Internet access. All researchers were invited to participate in the online questionnaire through the internal messaging system by Prof. Aneta Malinowska, the Scientific Secretary. Questionnaires were prepared in Polish and English. To make the survey more effective, an email with individual invitations including information about the declaration of the commitment to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code) was prepared and sent out. The letter included

additional contact information so that participants could check the source and set questions. After four days a reminder e-mail was sent to respondents. Its purpose was to increase the response rate.

Anonymous opinions were collected during 7 days with the total number of responses reaching 93 (which represents 35% of all groups invited to participate in the survey). We wanted as many people as possible to complete the questionnaire, so we made the demands on the respondents as low as possible by making the questionnaire simple and easy to complete. We limited the number of questions - one question per point of HRS4RS - and we limited the demographic data. This was important due to the short time available for conducting the research. The questionnaire was more friendly for respondents, but the data thus obtained limited the possibilities of deeper analysis.

The graphs below show the sociological aspects of the respondents.





Out of the total of 270 researchers invited to respond to the questionnaire, 93 took part in the survey, which constituted a participation rate of 35%. The participants were grouped into five professional categories: Bachelor of Engineering (1), Master of Science (31), PhD (41), Assistant professor (13), Professor (8).

As can be seen from the data, the make-up of participants in the survey was quite different from that of the whole population. It is evident from the figures that a larger group of female researchers and researchers with assistant professor and professor titles participated in the research than there are in the general population of NCBJ's research staff. We can also observe that the rate of participation was higher among senior staff and people at the postdoctoral and doctoral level. This outcome shows that HRS4R is a subject particularly interesting for these groups of researchers. The larger share of respondents who have worked at NCBJ for longer, with more experience, can be explained by their deeper knowledge of the internal roles and practices of the institute. It is important to make a deeper analysis of the needs of these groups and to know their opinion about the implementation of the strategy.

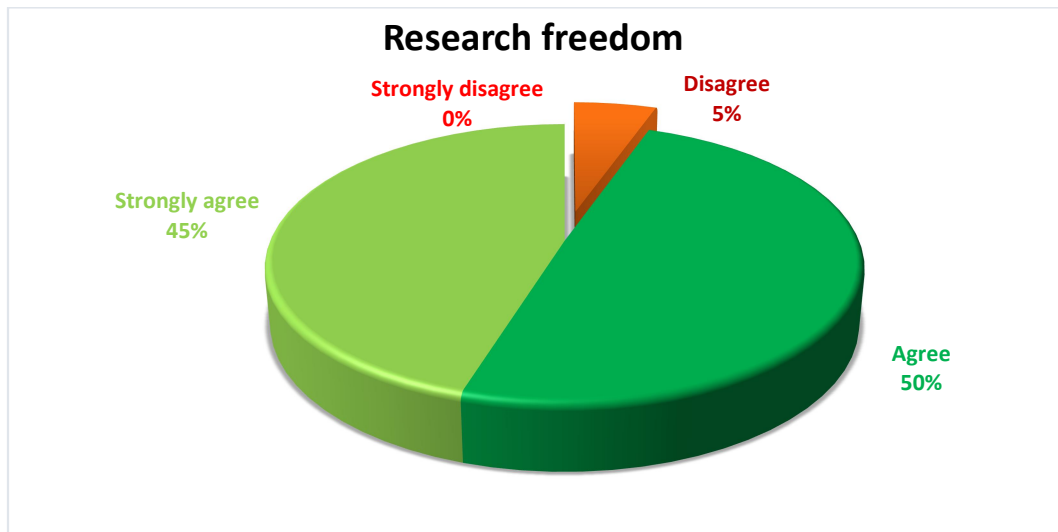
1.2.2. Detailed overview of the results of the questionnaire

Gap identification is based on positive or negative levels of agreement with each statement. We adopted the following analytic assumptions:

Number of positive answers (Agree & Strongly agree)	Rate	Action
more than 80 %	++	Gap is not identified and no action is required.
80% to 60%	+/-	Gap is identified as small and a topic we should focus on slightly during the following steps of the internal analysis
60% to 40%	-/+	Gap is identified as only partially implementing HRS4R standards and we should find some solutions

under 40%	--	Gap is identified and further action is required.
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The results of the study indicate that there are two categories of results: strengths of NCBJ practices with regard to Charter and Code principles (the points where a gap is not identified) and challenges that require corrective actions (a small gap or a gap is identified). An analysis of the questionnaire outcomes is presented in the graphs below.



Statement:

When conducting research at NCBJ researchers can experience freedom of thought and expression, and freedom to identify methods by which problems are solved recognizing reasonable limitations to this freedom (budgetary, operational or legal).

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



Statement:

NCBJ ensures that researchers comply with recognized ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles appropriate to their discipline(s) as well as to ethical standards as documented in the different national, sectoral or institutional Codes of Ethics.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



Statement:

In NCBJ researchers comply with the principles of intellectual property and rules of conduct for shared data (in the case of research carried out in collaboration with other researchers), specially avoid plagiarism, respect the rules of citation.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



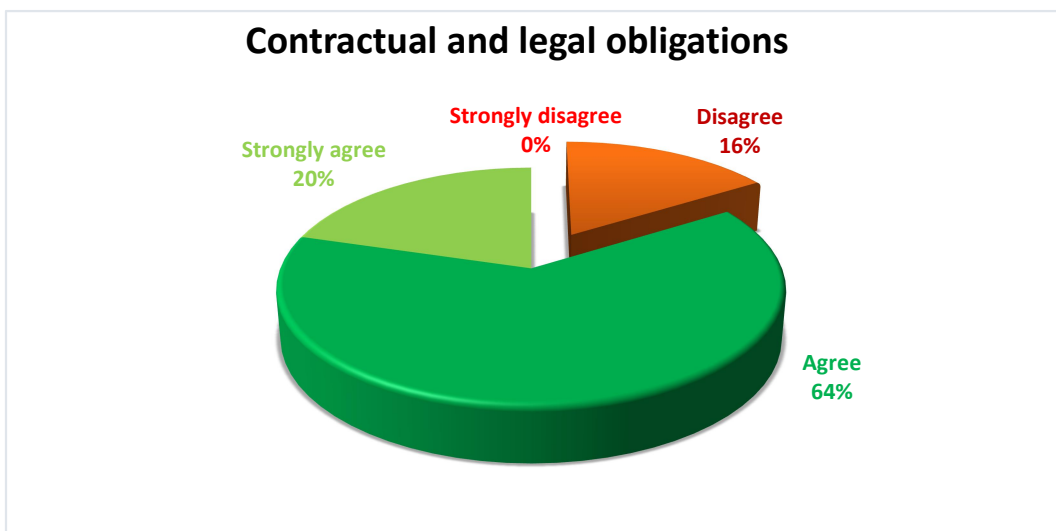
Statement:

Researchers are familiar with the strategic goals of the institute/ departments . They are familiar with research’s funding mechanisms. They seek all necessary approvals before starting their research or accessing the resources provided. They inform appropriate authorities when their research project is delayed or redefined.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required. First will be made internal analysis of specific researchers’ needs of information in area of strategic research goals/plans, funding mechanisms, managing projects. Then there will be prepare effective actions based on these information and analyses.



Statement:

NCBJ researchers are familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing working conditions, including Intellectual Property Rights regulations, and the requirements of funders.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



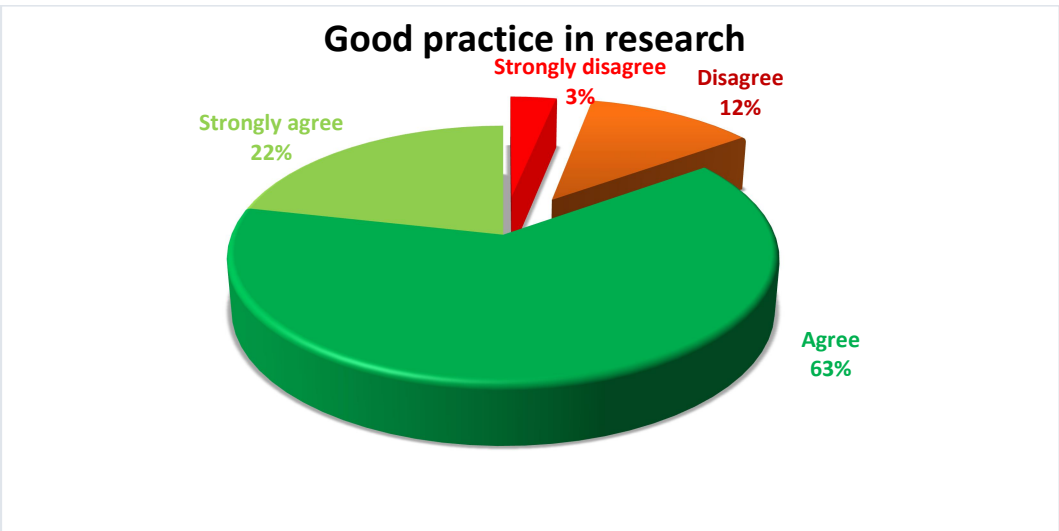
Statement:

NCBJ researchers are aware that they are accountable towards their employers, funders or other related public or private bodies as well as, on more ethical grounds, towards taxpayers as a whole. Researchers adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management in conducting and accounting for scientific research.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



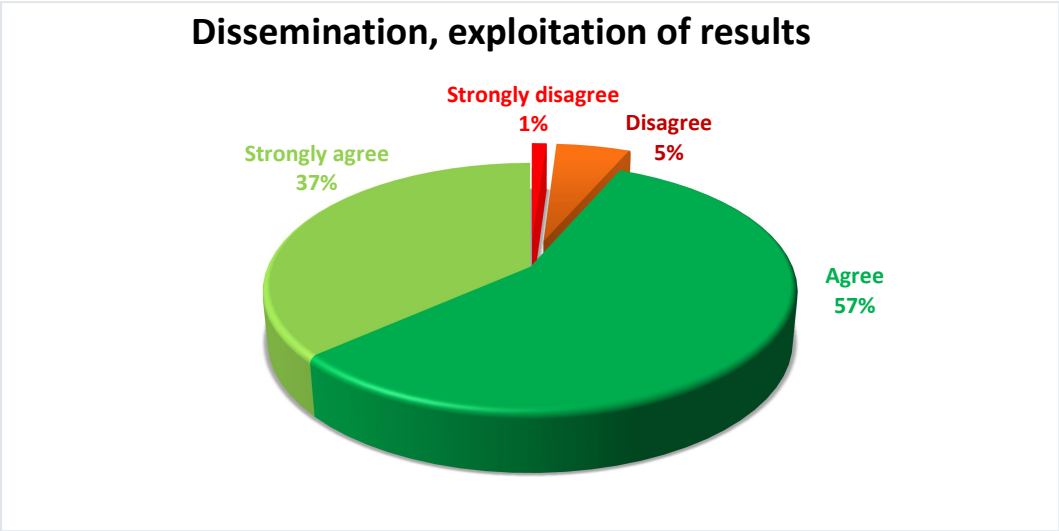
Statement:

NCBJ researchers implement practices leading to work safety, take the necessary health and safety precautions and precautions related to IT disaster prevention, and they also meet legal requirements regarding data and confidentiality protection.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



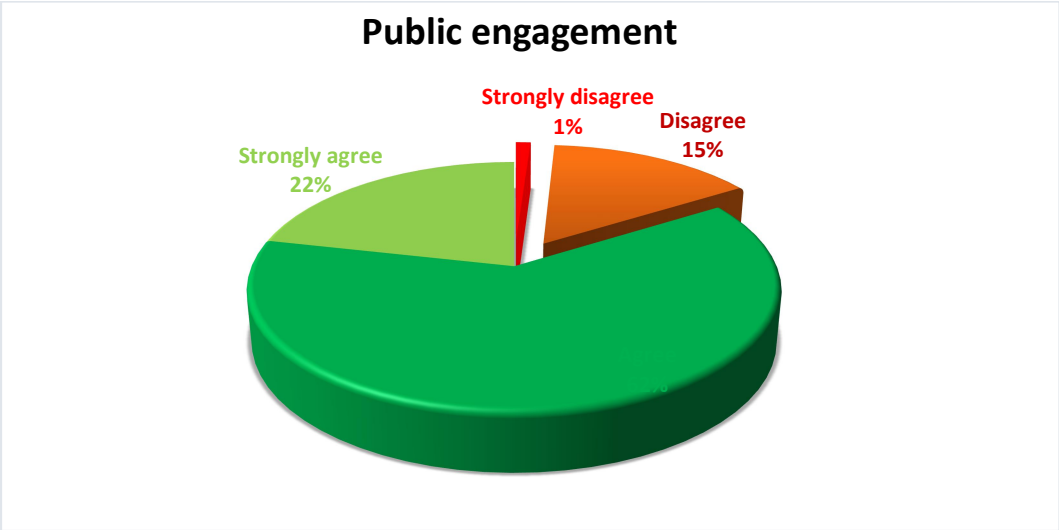
Statement:

Researchers ensure that the results of their research are widely shared and used (in accordance with obligations).

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



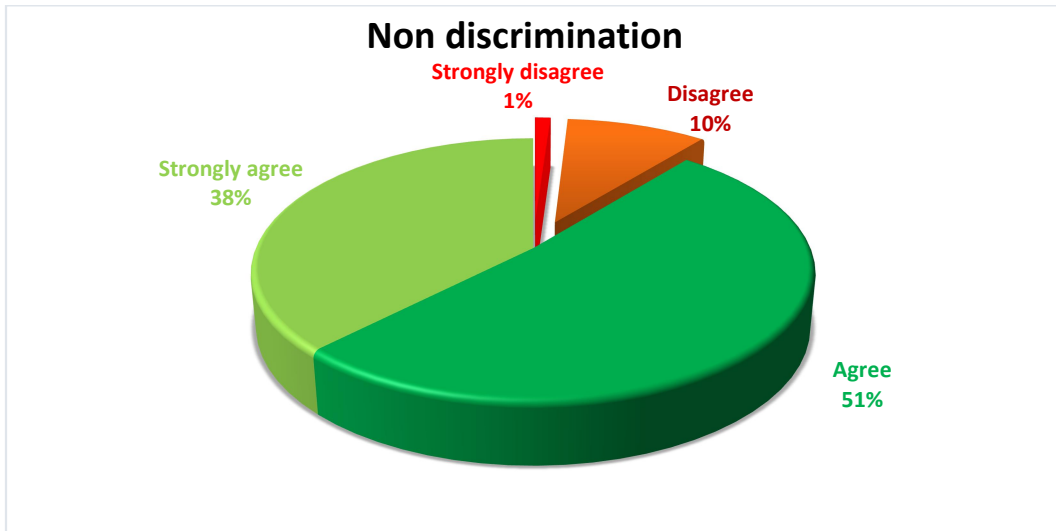
Statement:

Researchers ensure that research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



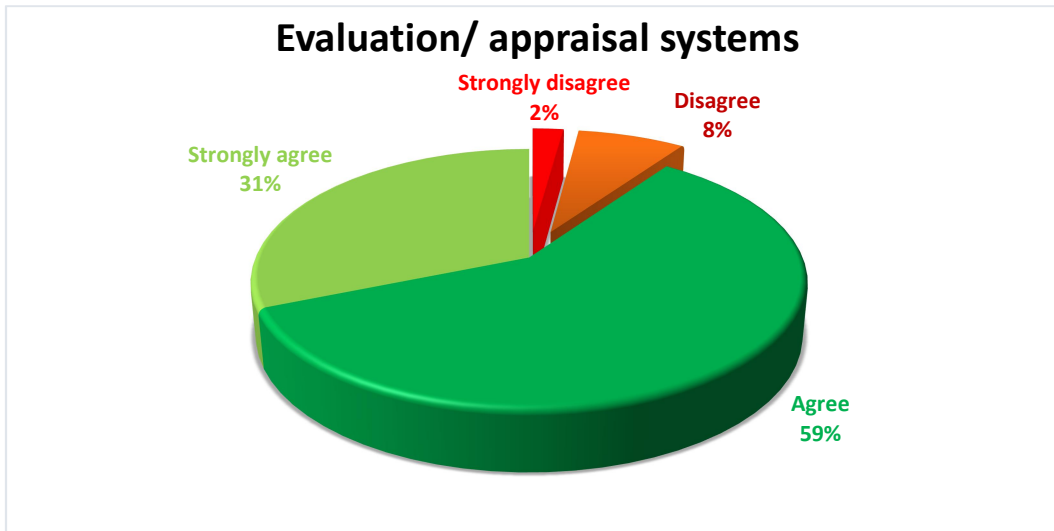
Statement:

NCBJ does not discriminate researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified. Topic of great importance, which must be constantly improved. Future activities are planned.



Statement:

NCBJ uses transparent appraisal system and periodic evaluations for assessing researchers' performance – carried by independent committee.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



Statement:

NCBJ implements recruitment and employment procedures. There is facilitate access for disadvantaged groups or researchers returning to a research career.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required.



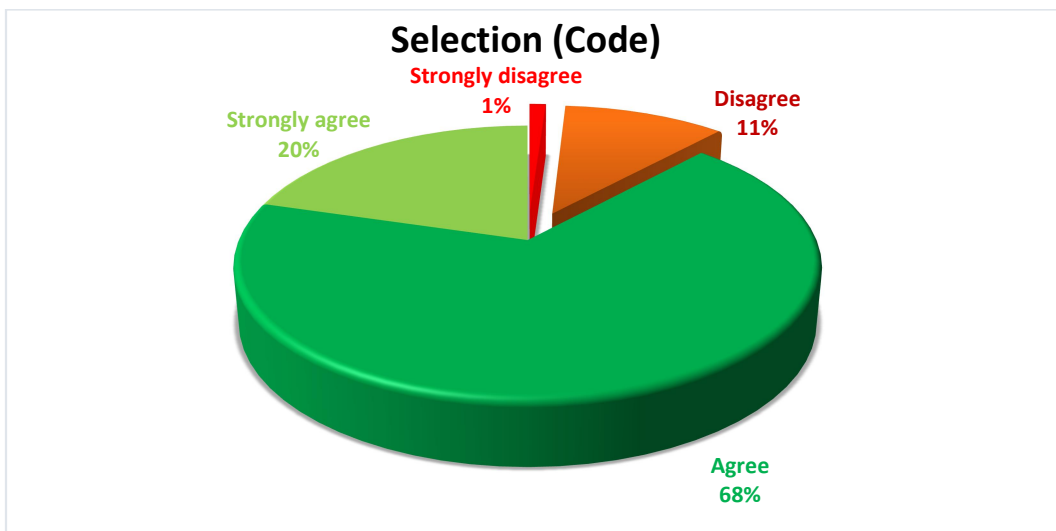
Statement:

NCBJ recruitment procedures are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable, as well as tailored to the type of positions advertised. Advertisements should give a comprehensive description and the deadlines for applications are realistic.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required.



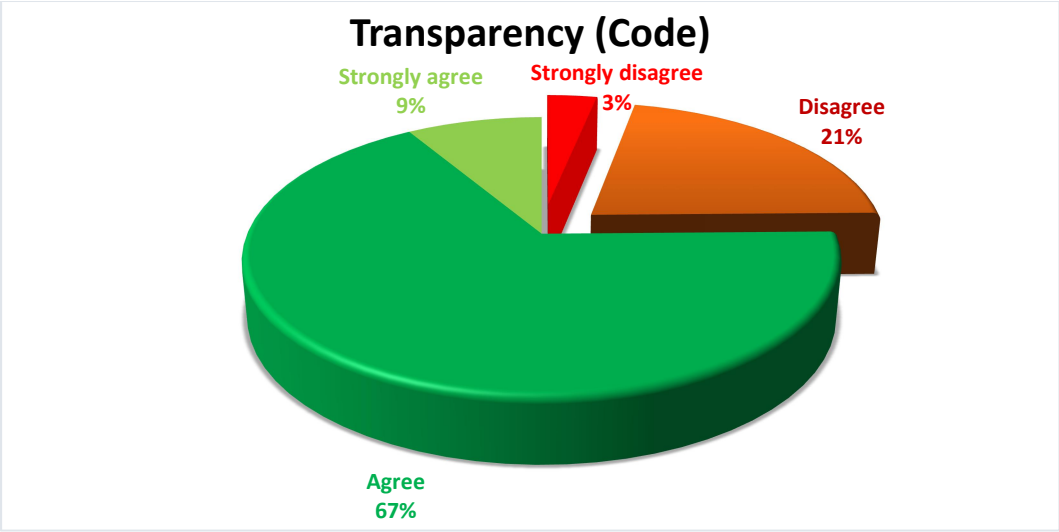
Statement:

Selection committees have an adequate gender balance and bring together diverse expertise and competences and have relevant experience to assess the candidate. They use a wide range of selection expertise.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required.



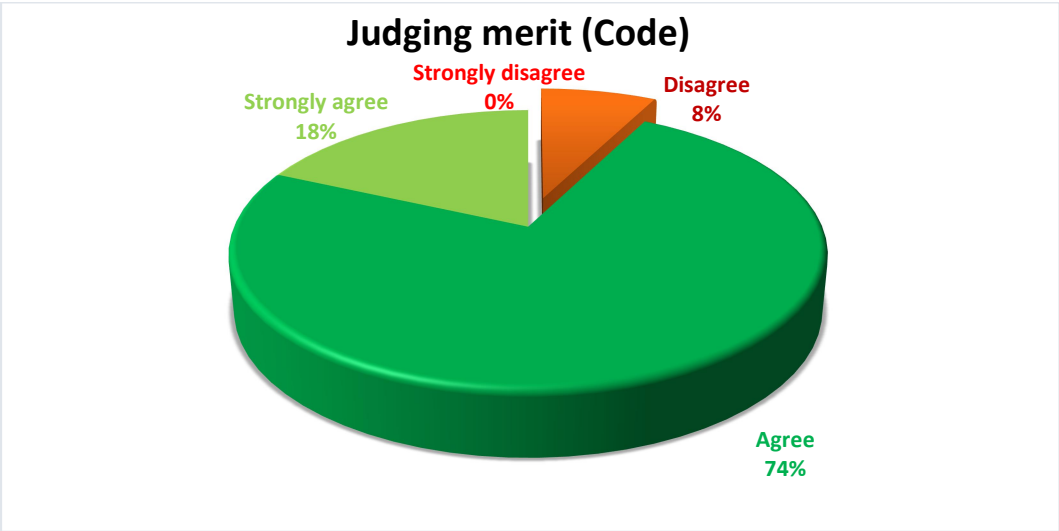
Statement:

NCBJ informs candidates about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. They are being informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required.



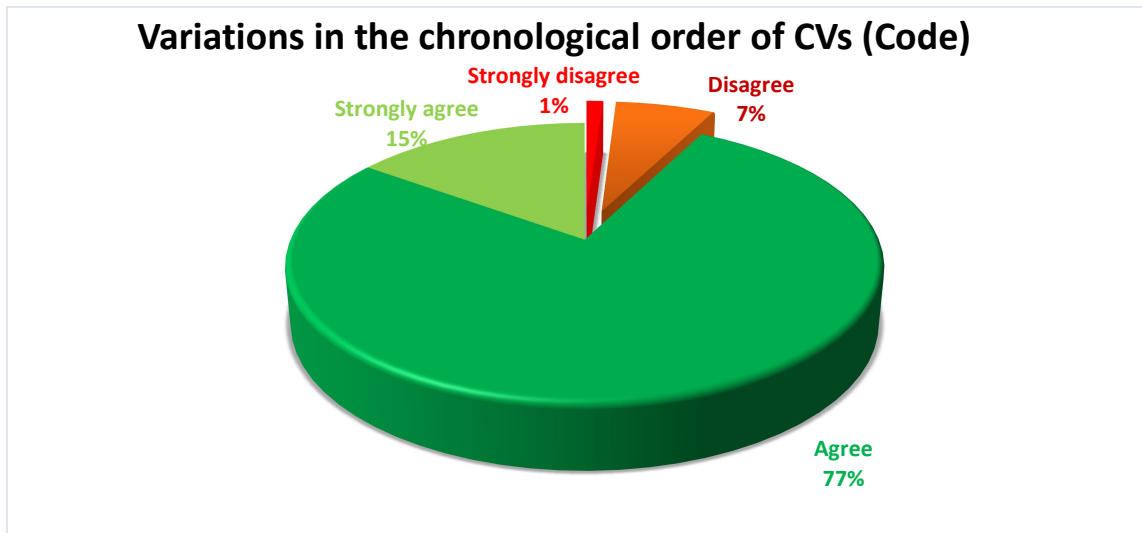
Statement:

The selection process should take into consideration the whole range of experience of the candidates - their expertise is judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on outstanding results within a diversified career path and not only on the number of publications.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/+

Qualitative research showed small gap, so future action required.



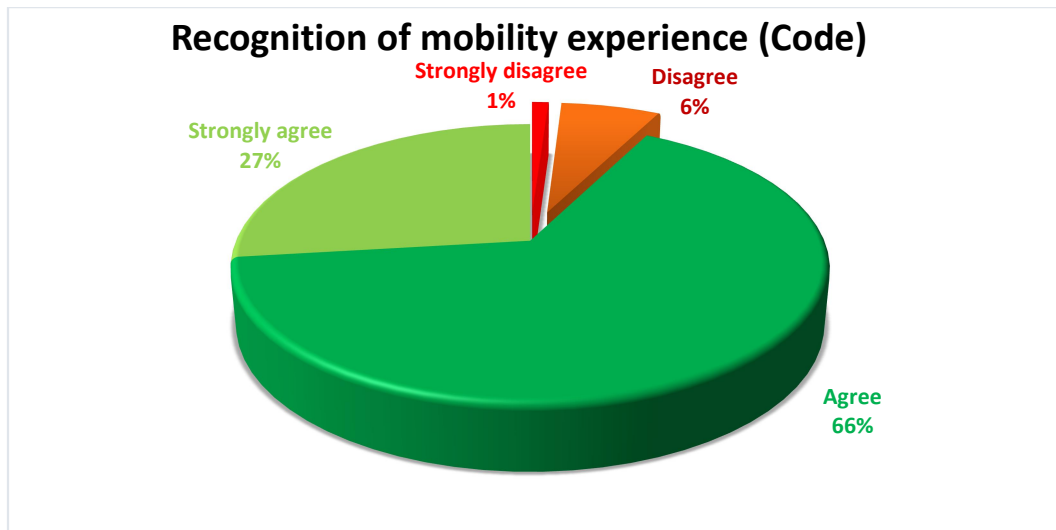
Statement:

NCBJ does not penalize career breaks/ variations in the chronological order of CVs; accepts evidence-based CVs reflecting a representative array of achievements and qualifications to the post.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



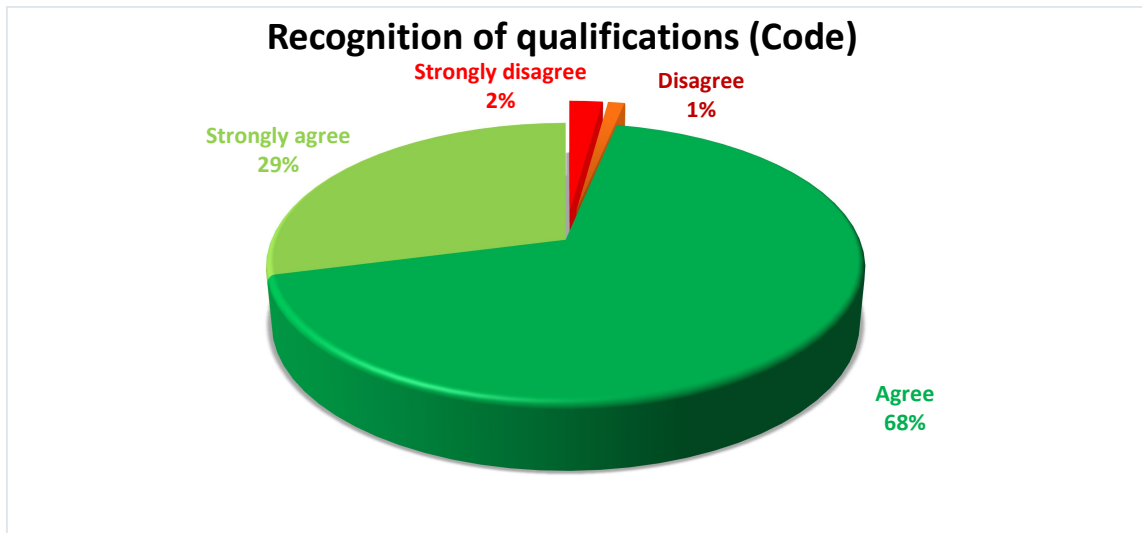
Statement:

NCBJ recognizes any mobility experience or changes from one discipline or sector to another or country and considers it a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



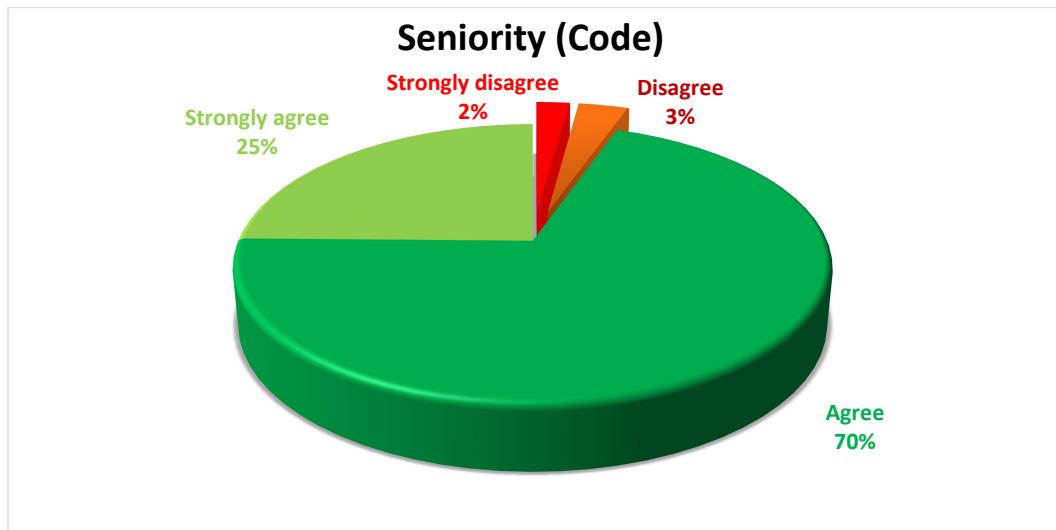
Statement:

NCBJ recognizes academic and professional qualifications, including qualifications obtained abroad, also in those cases where nostrification is required.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



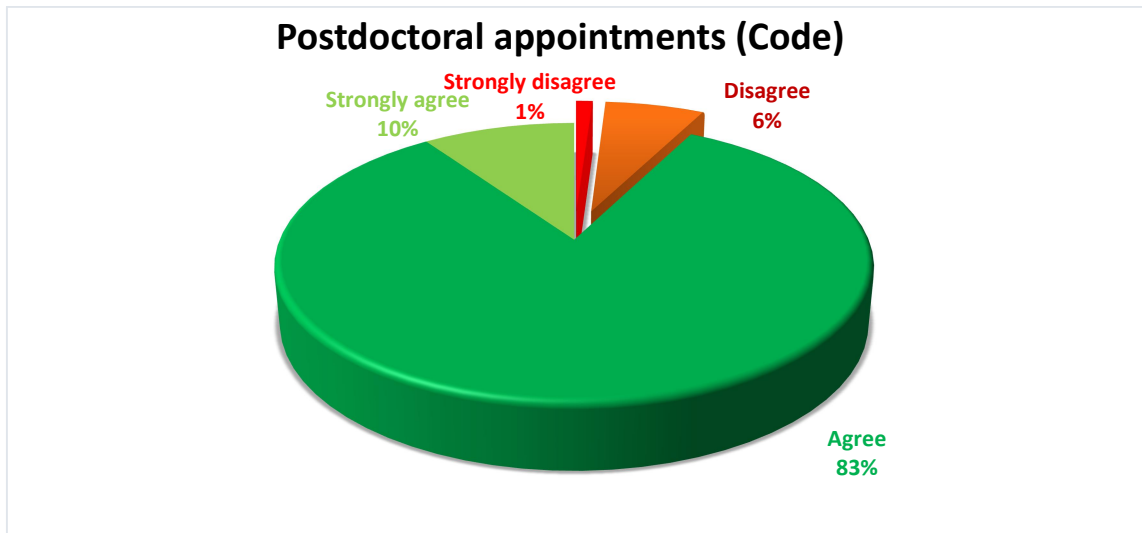
Statement:

NCBJ specifies in the recruitment process the levels of qualifications required in line with the needs of the position. It focuses on evaluation of quality of achievements.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



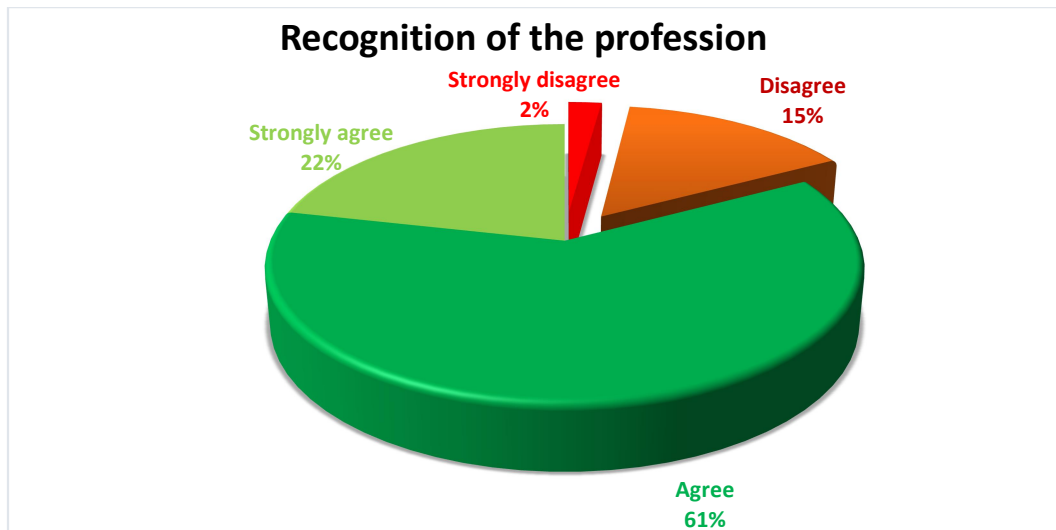
Statement:

NCBJ has established and uses clear rules and standards for the recruitment of postdoctoral researchers including the maximum duration and the objectives of research.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



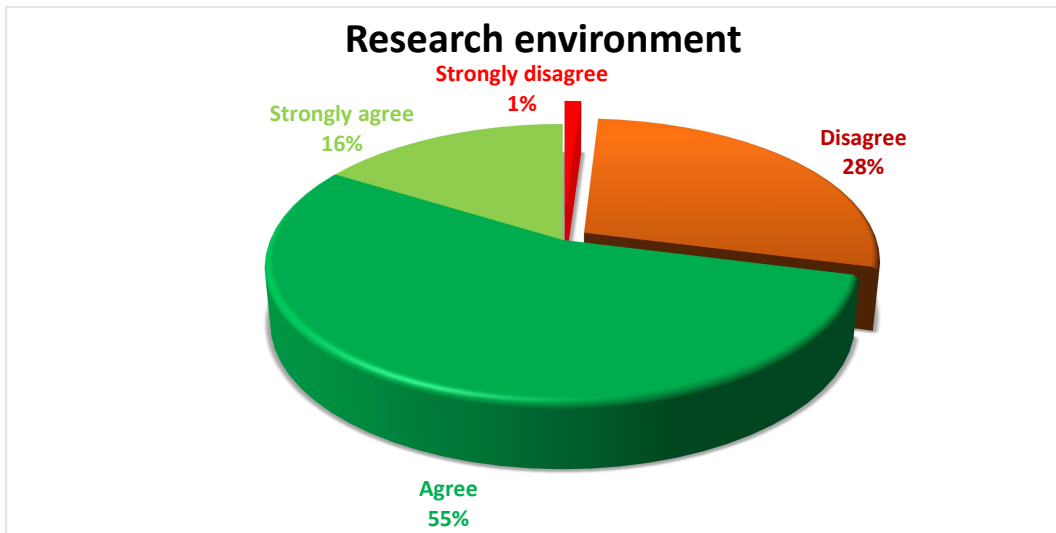
Statement:

Researchers engaged in a research career are recognized as professionals independently from formal name of position.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



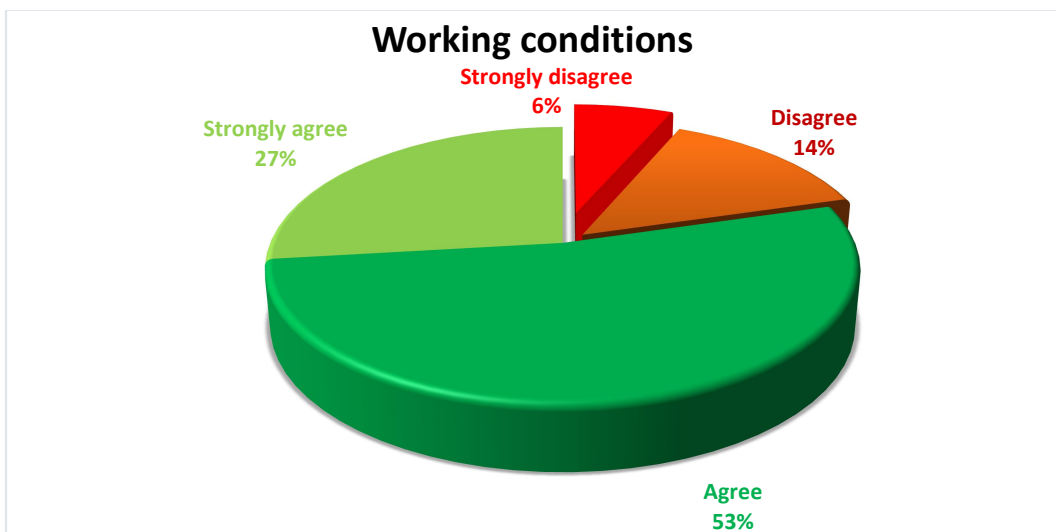
Statement:

NCBJ cares about creating the most stimulating research environment, offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including remote collaboration over research networks. It monitors to ensure that national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety in research are observed.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required.



Statement:

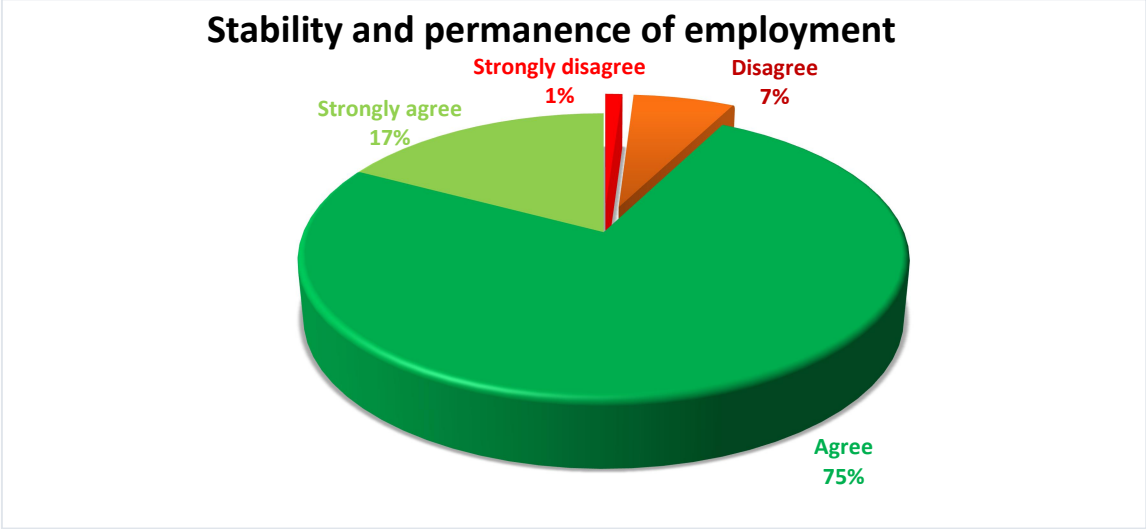
NCBJ ensures that the working conditions for researchers provide appropriate flexibility (such as flexible work time) in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral

collective-bargaining agreements. NCBJ aims to provide working conditions which allow both women and men researchers to combine family and work.

Conclusion:

The rate: -/+

Gap is identified, future action required.



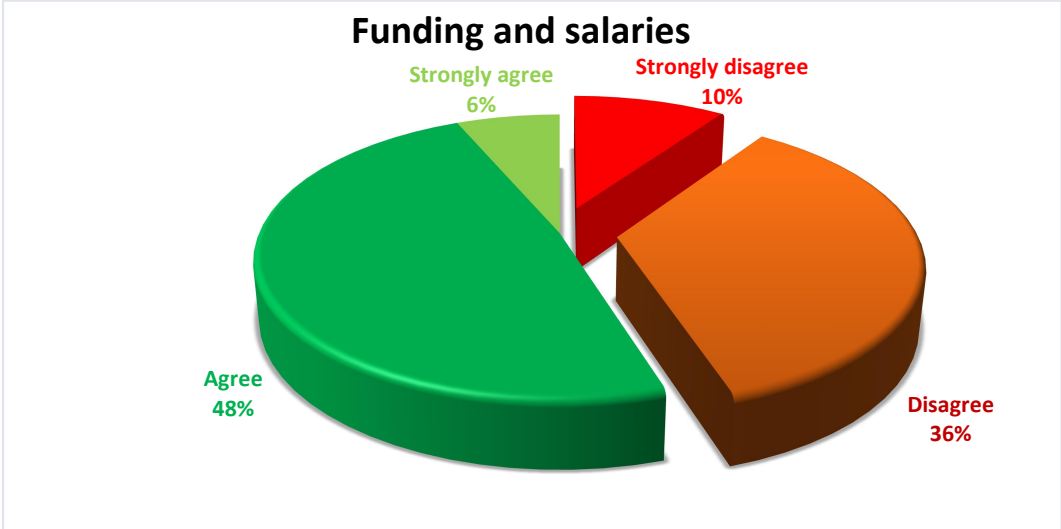
Statement:

NCBJ ensures that the performance of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment. The efforts are made to improve stability of employment abiding rules and principles of national legislation and those expressed in the EU Directive on Fixed-Term Work.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



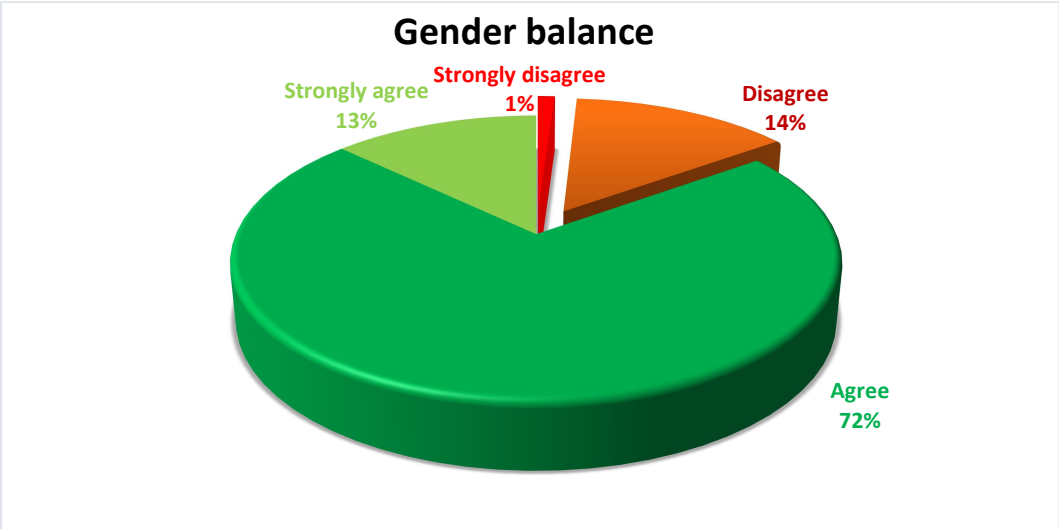
Statement:

NCBJ ensures for researchers at all career stages fair and attractive conditions of salaries and research funding with adequate and equitable social security provisions and other benefits in accordance with national legislation.

Conclusion:

The rate: -/+

Gap is identified, future action required.



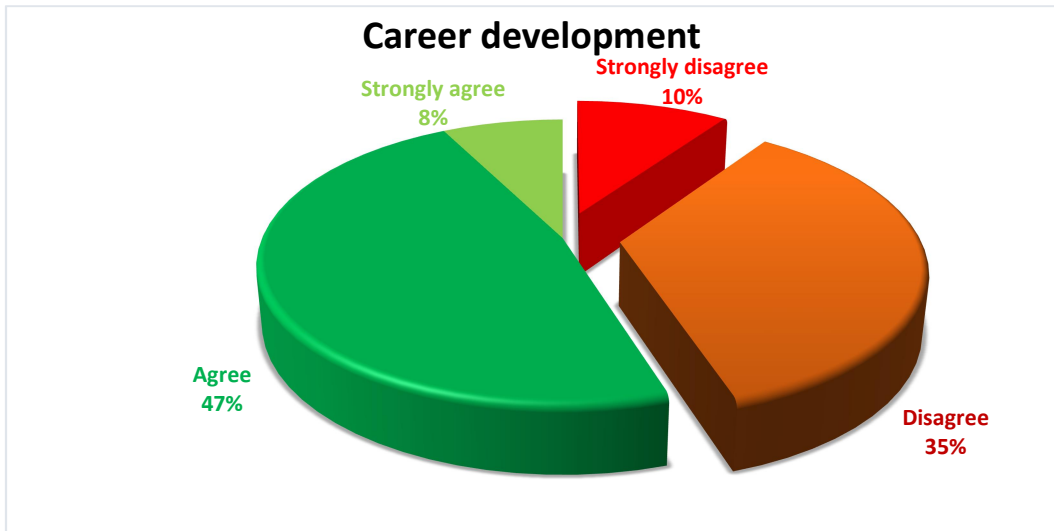
Statement:

NCBJ creates conditions aiming for a representative gender balance at all levels of staff and in the decision-making bodies. The policy of an equal opportunity is applied - policy concerning recruitment and promotions, without taking precedence over competence criteria.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified. Topic of great importance, which must be constantly improved. Future activities are planned.



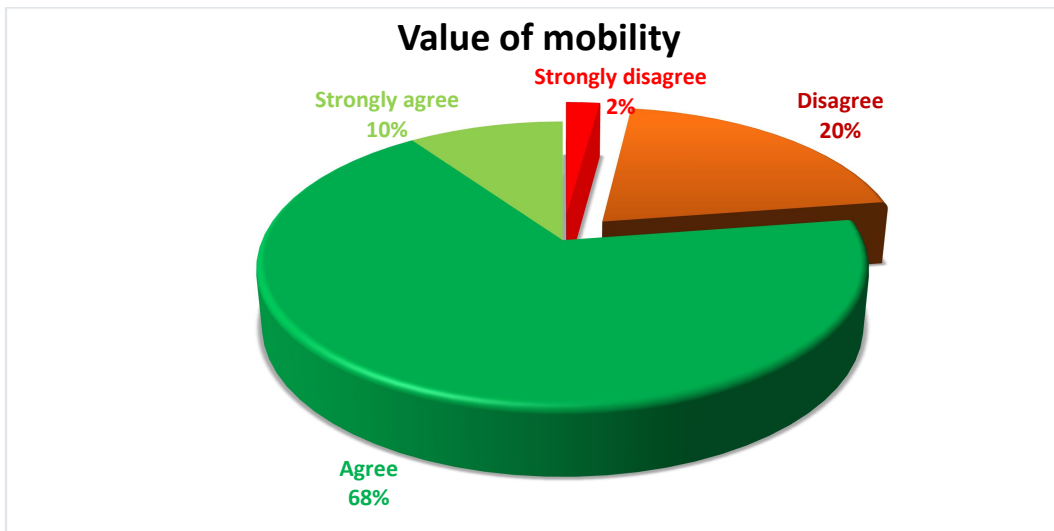
Statement:

At NCBJ there is specified career development path concerning researchers at all stages of their career. Mentors, who are able to support and inspire professional development of researchers, are available.

Conclusion:

The rate: -/+

Gap is identified, future action required.



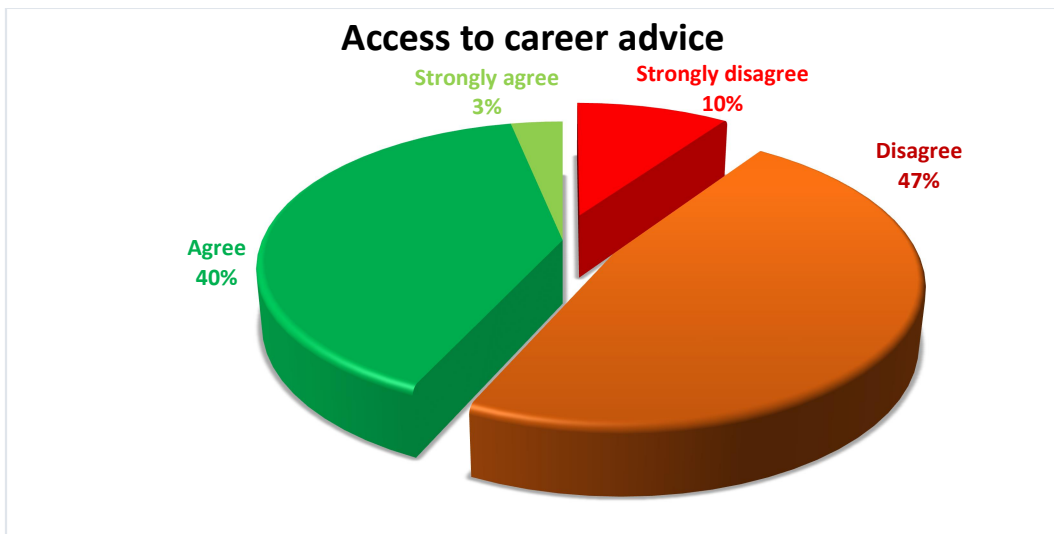
Statement:

NCBJ as an employer recognizes the value of geographical, inter-sectoral, trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility, as well as mobility between the public and private sector as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development – at any stage of a researcher’s career.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required.



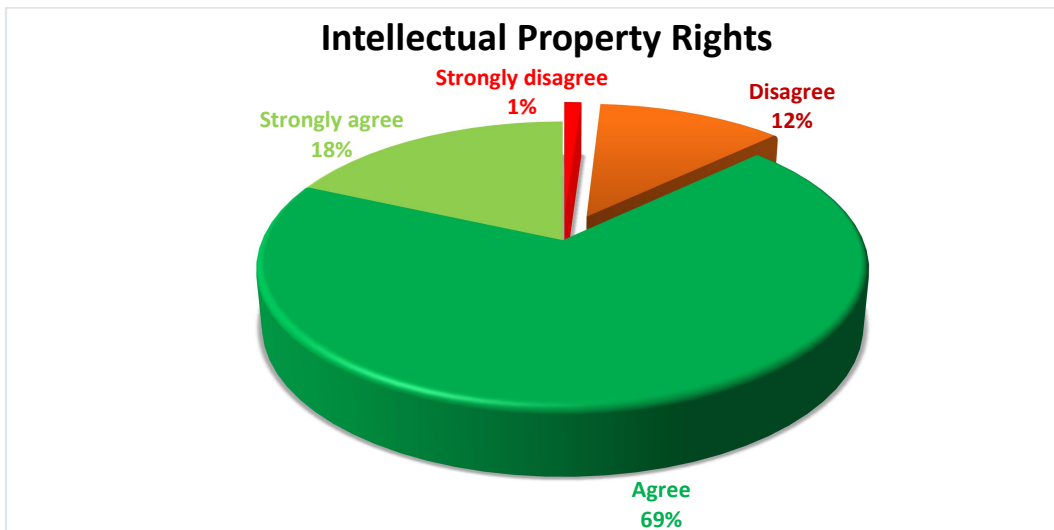
Statement:

NCBJ offers – for researchers at all stages of their careers - career advice and support in collaboration with other institutions and structures.

Conclusion:

The rate: -/+

Gap is identified, future action required.



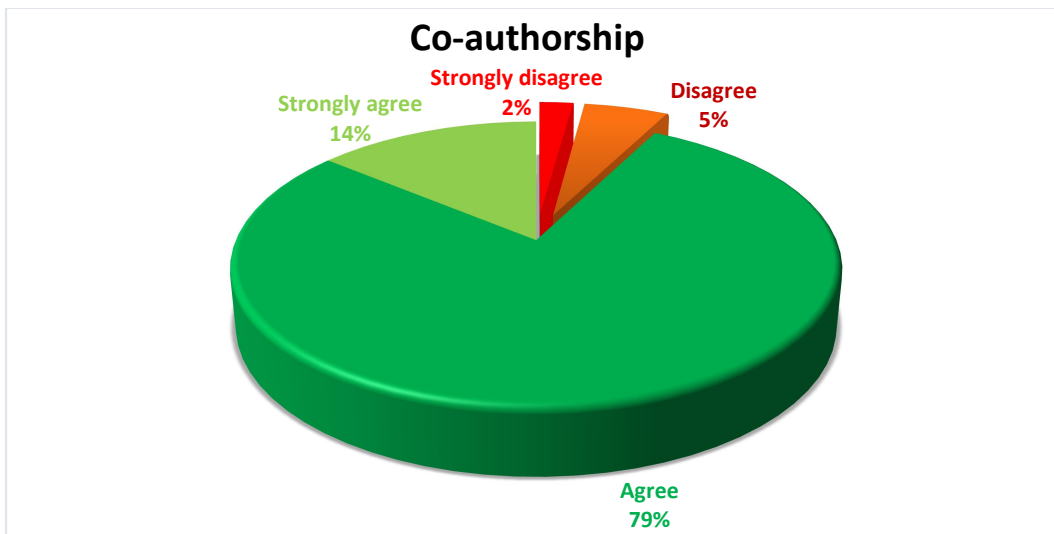
Statement:

NCBJ ensures for researchers appropriate protection of Intellectual Property Rights, including copyrights. Internal policies and practices clearly specify, which rights belong to researchers and which to the employer or other parties.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, future action required.



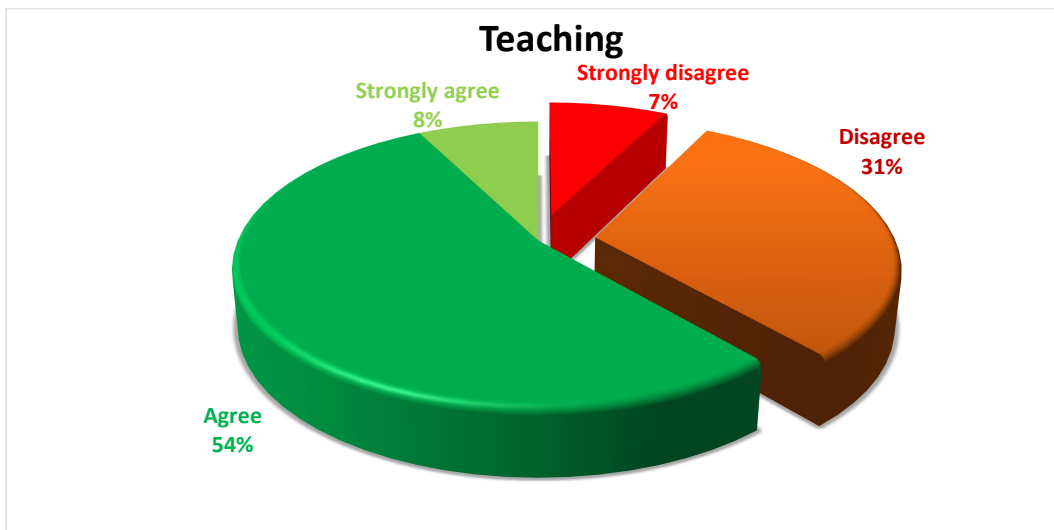
Statement:

NCBJ ensures that researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, have necessary conditions so that can enjoy the right to be recognized and listed and/or quoted in the context of their actual contributions as co-authors of papers, patents etc.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, future action required.



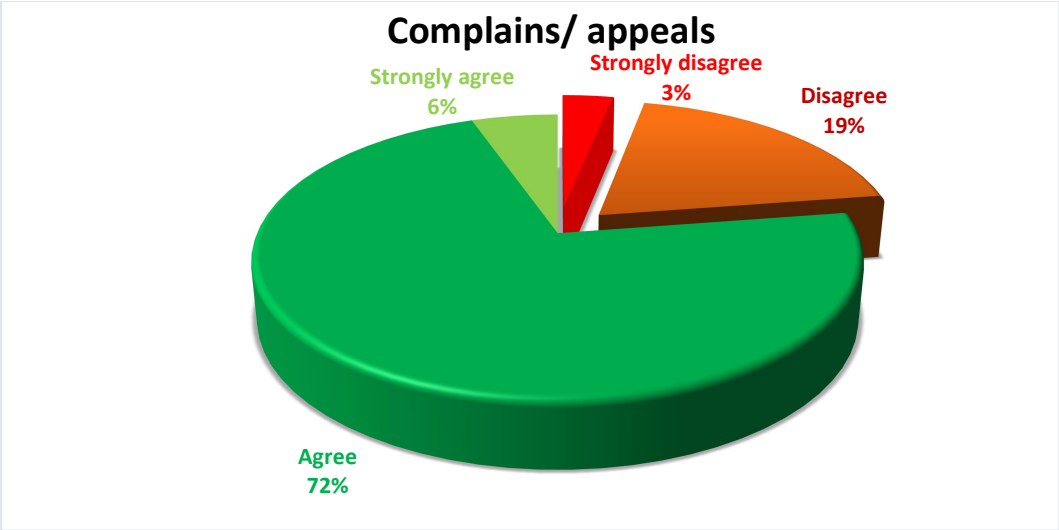
Statement:

NCBJ implements practices ensuring support for involvement of senior researchers in teaching early-stage researchers and students of doctoral schools.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required.



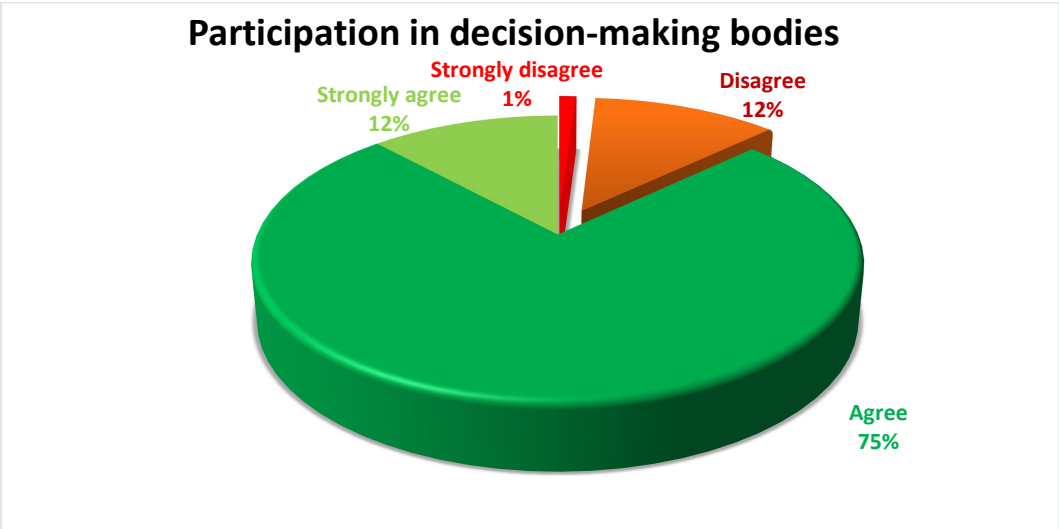
Statement:

NCBJ uses established procedure of dealing with complaints/appeals of researchers including those concerning ethical issues, discrimination, work related conflicts (also between supervisors and early-stage researchers).

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified, future action required.



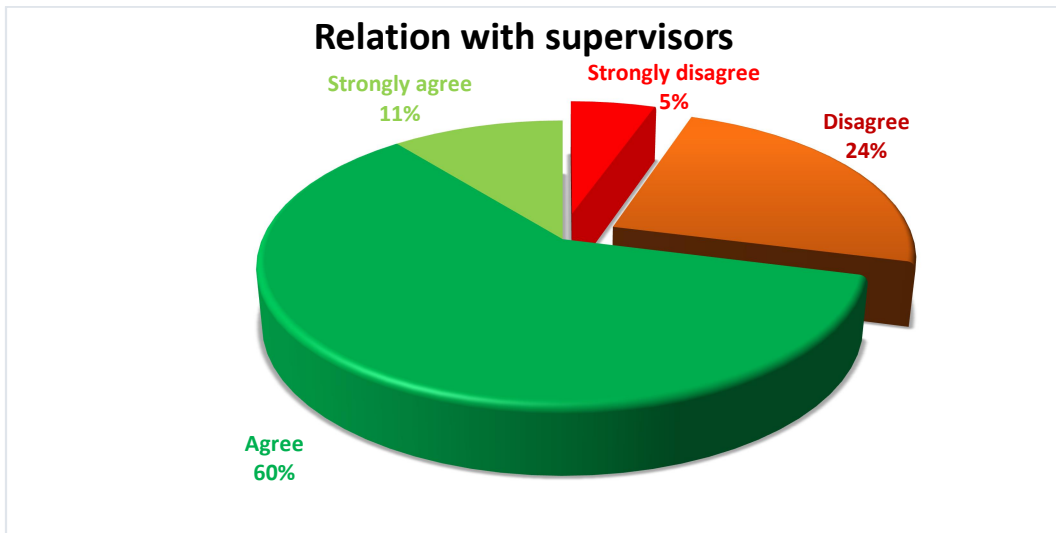
Statement:

NCBJ offers researchers the right to be represented in the information, consultation, and decision-making bodies so their individual and collective interests are protected and represented; they have a chance to be actively involved in NCBJ activities.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



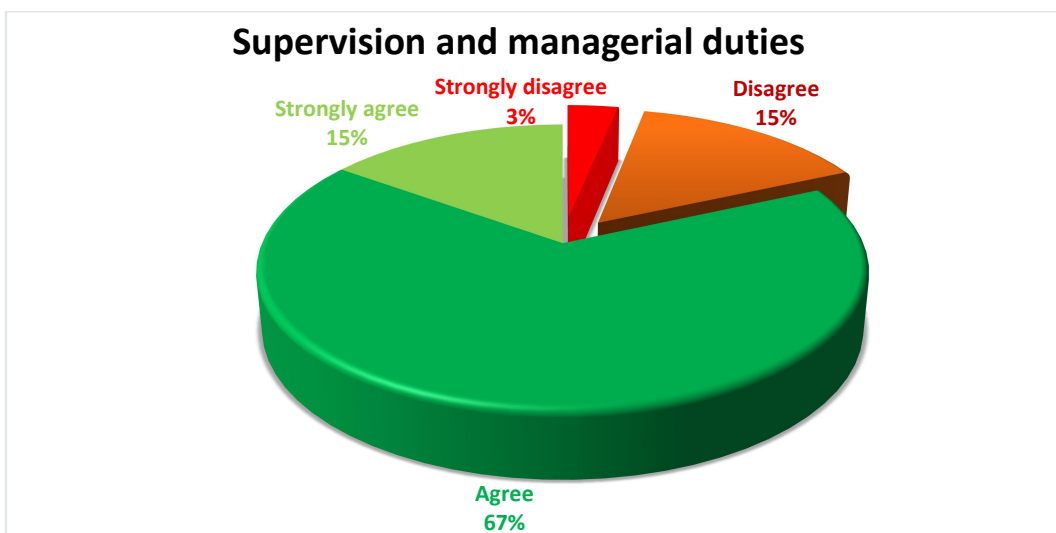
Statement:

Early-stage researchers establish regular forms of communication with their supervisors. They obtain current comments, feedbacks, and agree on schedules and milestones of their research work.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified. First will be made internal analysis of specific young researchers' needs at relation with supervisor. Then there will be prepare effective actions based on these information and analyses.



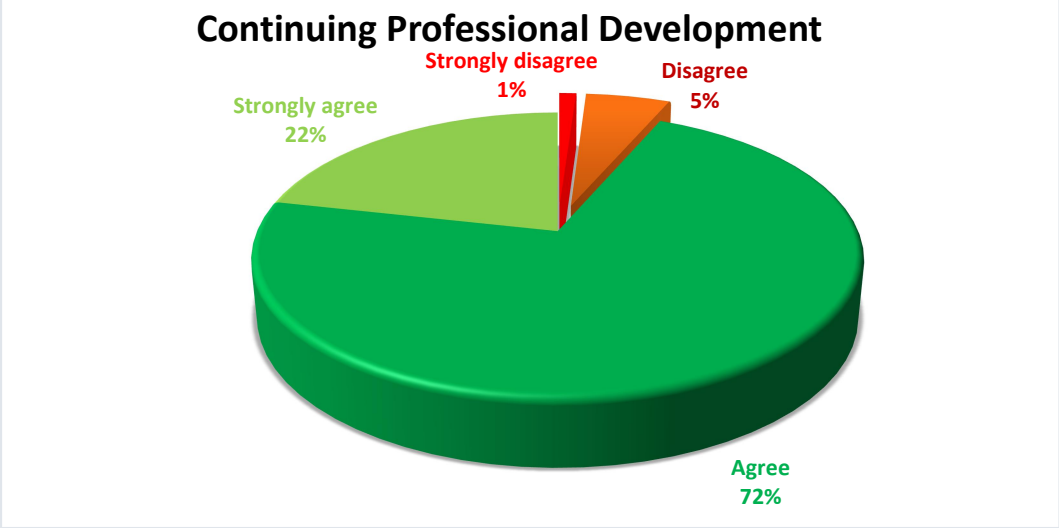
Statement:

Senior researchers at NCBJ, who have multi-faceted roles as supervisors, mentors, career advisors, project coordinators etc., perform these tasks according to the highest professional standards and build up positive relationships with the early-stage researchers.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



Statement:

Researchers at all career stages seek opportunities to continually update and expand their competencies by using a variety of ways including seminars, conferences, e-learning and other educational means.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



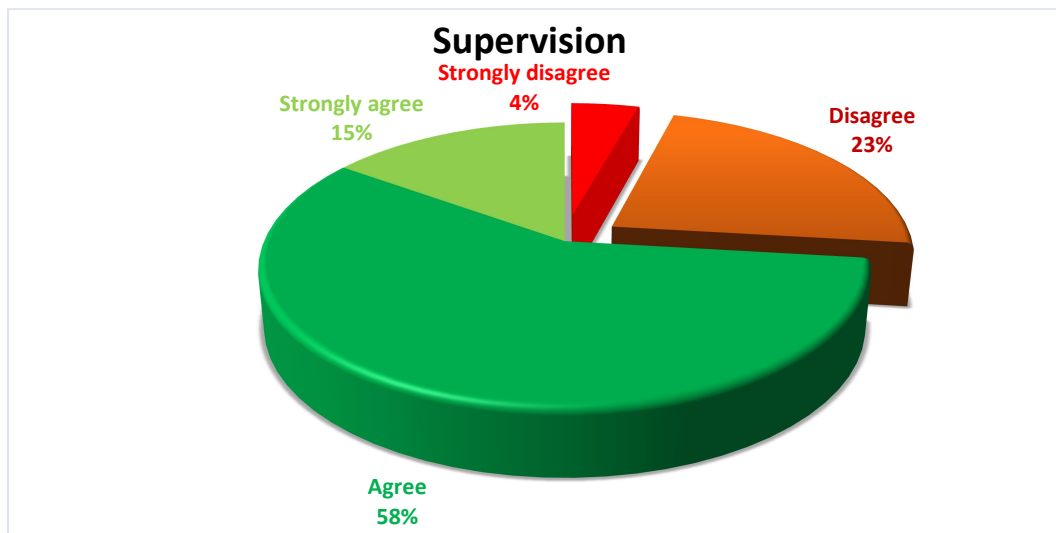
Statement:

NCBJ ensures that all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation are given opportunity for professional development by seminars, conferences, e-learning and other measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies.

Conclusion:

The rate: ++

Gap is not identified, there is no action required.



Statement:

NCBJ appoints supervisors/leaders of research groups and projects with sufficient expertise in supervising research, having the time, knowledge, experience, competences and commitment to be able to offer the research trainee appropriate support.

Conclusion:

The rate: +/-

Small gap is identified. First will be made internal analysis of specific young researchers' needs at relation with supervisor. Then there will be prepare effective actions based on these information and analyses.

2. SUMMARY

The outcome of the internal gap analysis is assessed as quite positive. A relatively small number of weak points are found: 12 small gaps and 4 gaps are identified.

The main problems are issues related to the development of scientific careers:

- Access to career advice (-/+)
- Career development (-/+)
- Teaching (+/-)
- Supervision (+/-)
- Relations with supervisors (+/-)

- Complaints/ appeals (+/-)
- Value of mobility (+/-)

The others group of challenges for implementation are issues related to working conditions:

- Funding and salaries (-/+)
- Working conditions (-/+)
- Research environment (+/-)
- Professional attitude (+/-)

The third group of challenges for implementation are issues related to recruitment and selection:

- Recruitment (+/-)
- Recruitment (Code) (+/-)
- Selection (Code) (+/-)
- Judging merit (Code) (+/-)
- Transparency (Code) (+/-).

The Working Group had an opportunity to confirm and modify ideas formed before the survey. The outcomes from the survey were similar to the qualitative research.

After this analysis the Working Group formulated its final conclusion for the Gap Analysis. The Action Plan was discussed and prepared.