Staff Survey Light 2021
University-wide Results

Date: 5 October 2021

Commissioned by: Executive Board

Conducted by: HRM Policy

Introduction

In May 2021 a Staff Survey Light (hereafter: SS Light) was sent to all staff members of Leiden University. The SS Light is a shortened version of the full Staff Survey.

The full Staff Survey is usually conducted every two or three years. The next one will take place in autumn 2022, having been postponed due to workload pressures and because various surveys were conducted during the Covid-19 crisis, both within and outside the organisation, to support policy-making processes.

In the meantime, however, the Executive Board felt it was important to monitor the current situation in relation to 1) the work pressure among University staff and 2) the status of social safety within the organisation. These topics have high priority for the Executive Board, and the University is working to improve them. One purpose of the SS Light was therefore to ask staff members about their experiences in these areas. Another purpose was to consult staff members on 3) their wishes for work arrangements after the Covid-19 crisis, in view of the exceptional circumstances caused by the crisis and the anticipated relaxation of the measures.

Method

The survey was sent to all staff members of Leiden University, both Academic Staff (AcS) and Administrative and Support Staff (ASS). It therefore covered staff in all organisational units of the University. The survey was ultimately completed by 2,815 respondents, of whom 1,350 were AcS and 1,210 ASS. The job group of 255 respondents is unknown. The response rate of each of the organisational units is shown on the next page.

The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions, of which 26 were closed-ended questions and 2 open-ended questions. In the first part of the questionnaire, staff members were asked to voluntarily provide a number of demographic details.

As most of the questions were closed-ended, the data analysis mostly yielded statistical trends. Ensuring that data could not be traced to individual respondents was taken into account at all stages of the data processing, to guarantee privacy. This was a crucial precondition for the analysis.

Report

This report presents the overall results of the SS Light at the level of the organisation, covering all staff members of Leiden University. No distinction is made between the organisational units. Separate reports giving a more in-depth analysis of the data per organisational unit have been produced, and these have been shared with the board/management of the organisational units concerned. No interpretation of the data is made in this report; the data are merely presented in summarised form on the basis of tables and charts.

A few points should be taken into consideration when reading the charts:

- The chart scales are not always the same. This solution was chosen to enhance readability: columns that are very small can disappear if the scale is too large.
- The numbers for each column ('data labels') are not shown in the charts, again to enhance readability. The report has been supplied as both a PDF file and a Word file. The numbers can be retrieved by adding them manually in the Word file (click on the chart → click on Chart Design → click on Add Chart Element).

Response rate*

	Total # staff members	Total # respondents	Response rate
ASSC	96	47	48.9%
Admin. & Central Services and Knowledge Exchange (Luris)	183	114	62.2%
ICT Shared Services	136	71	52.2%
Student & Education Affairs (SOZ)	228	128	56.1%
General Services (UFB)	195	75	38.4%
Libraries	169	83	49.1%
Faculty of Archaeology	121	80	66.1%
FGGA	333	184	55.2%
Faculty of Humanities	1263	484	38.3%
Leiden Law School	643	249	38.7%
Faculty of Social & Behavioural Sciences	878	401	45.6%
Faculty of Science	1522	505	33.1%
Graduate School of Teaching (ICLON)	86	53	61.6%

*Some of the units have been combined to ensure that data cannot be traced to individual respondents.

Contents

1. Work pressure

The University is making efforts to reduce the work pressure among all its staff. The Staff Survey 2018 revealed that nearly half of Leiden University's staff members experience their work pressure was too high. We are certainly not unique in this. The work pressure experienced at all universities in the Netherlands is high (see, for example, 'Survey of the extent and effects of structural overtime at the Dutch universities' of WOinActie (organisation that defends the interests of higher education)). The causes of heavy work pressure and its reduction are therefore a prominent focus of the VSNU agenda. Since 2018 Leiden University has been implementing the 'Work Pressure Action Plan' and reporting regularly on its progress to the trade unions in the Local Consultative Committee. More information about the University's efforts can be found on the staff website.
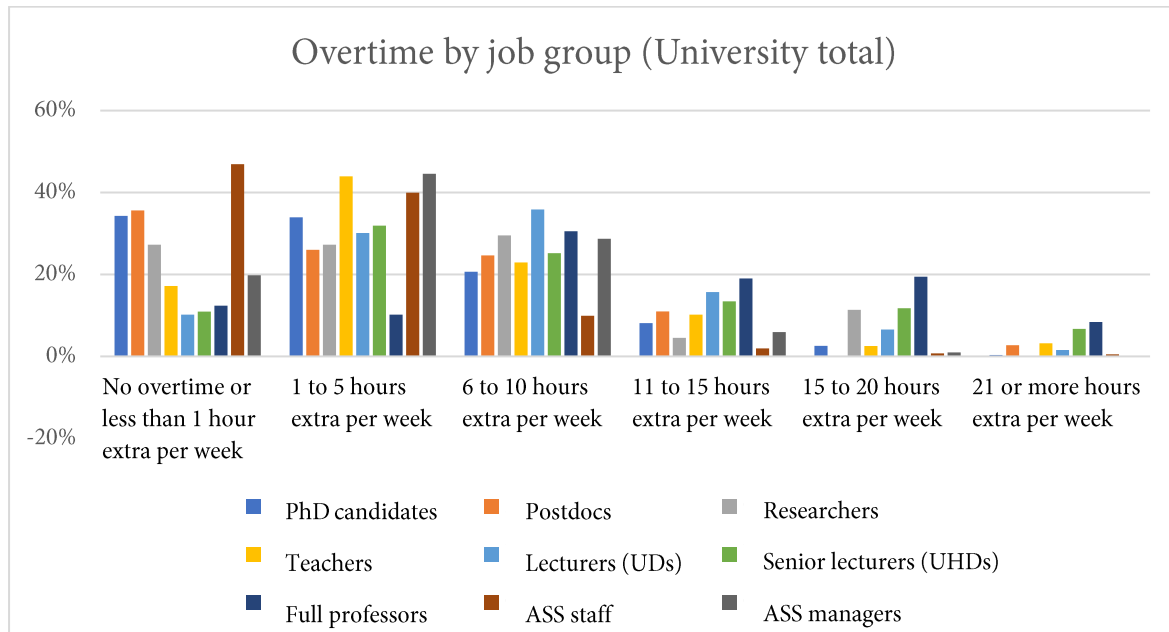
Questions about work pressure in the SS Light were formulated to gain insight into specific issues about which the University has insufficient or no knowledge at present. These are primarily issues that attract attention in discussions about work pressure, at both the Leiden University level and the national level, and they relate to the following sub-themes:

- working overtime,
- experienced work pressure compared with preferred work pressure,
- work pressure in delivering education and its consequences for the ratio of education to research in academic positions.
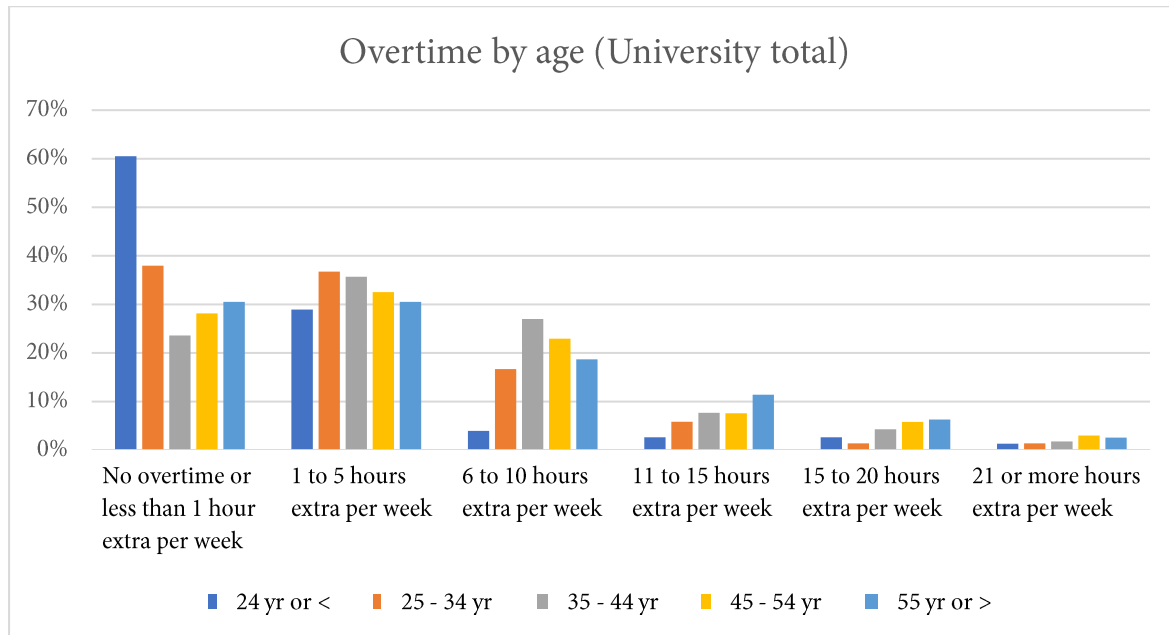
1.1 Overtime

Staff members were asked if they work overtime and, if so, how much overtime per week they have worked on average during the past year. The following respondents were combined into a single group: respondents who reported that they do not work overtime and those who reported that they work less than one hour of overtime per week. The data of the respondents who reported that they work overtime has been processed to create charts of the average number of hours of overtime, showing the percentage of respondents in each case.
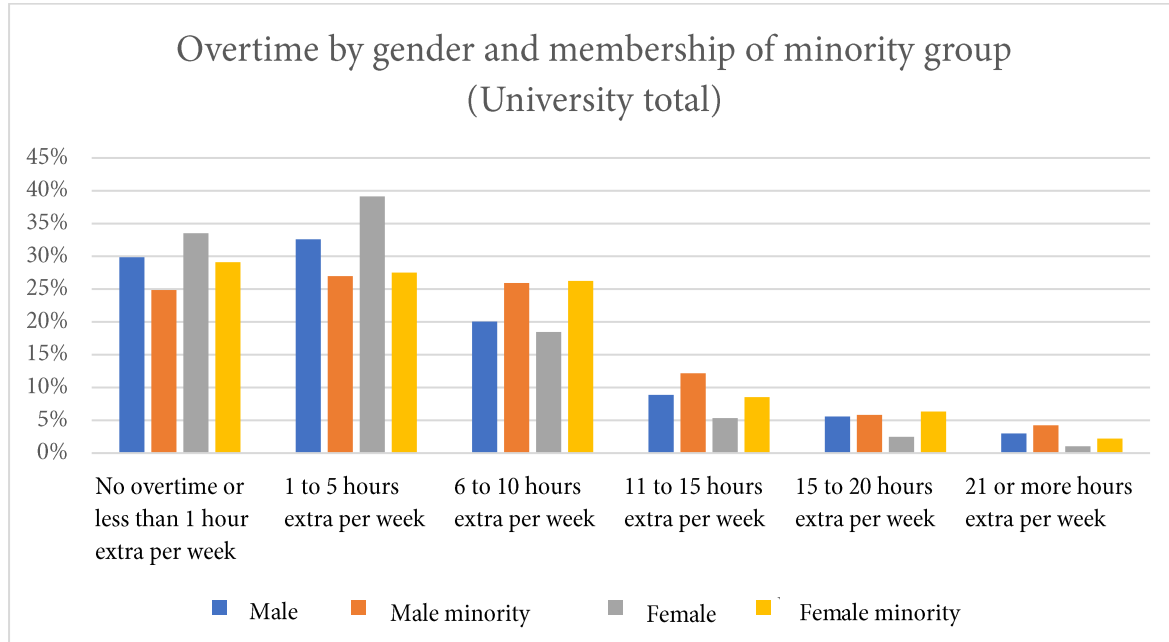
By job group

Overtime by job group (University total)

Legend: PhD candidates, Postdocs, Researchers, Teachers, Lecturers (UDs), Senior lecturers (UHDs), Full professors, ASS staff, ASS managers

By age

Overtime by age (University total)

Legend: 24 yr or <, 25 - 34 yr, 35 - 44 yr, 45 - 54 yr, 55 yr or >

By gender and membership of minority group*

Overtime by gender and membership of minority group
(University total)

* To ensure that data cannot be traced to individual respondents, further breakdown of average scores for staff members who identify as non-binary or other is not possible.

1.2 Experienced work pressure

Work pressure can be experienced differently by individual staff members (for example, as too low, just right or too high). This rating is subjective and therefore influenced by factors such as an individual's expectations and capacity. If the experienced work pressure is measured without asking about the preferred work pressure, the data obtained will be difficult to interpret. After all, when is work pressure too high or too low? The questionnaire therefore asked about both experienced work pressure and preferred work pressure, so that work pressure can be measured in terms of the difference between the two.

Respondents were asked to indicate the grade they would give their current work pressure and the grade they would give their preferred work pressure. The scale runs from 0 (=no work pressure) to 10 (=extremely high work pressure). The tables and charts on the following pages show:

- the average scores for experienced work pressure and preferred work pressure for each variable (job group, age and gender),
- percentages of experienced work pressure on the scale from 0 to 10 for each variable.

By job group

	PhD candidate	Teacher	Postdoc researcher	Researcher	Lecturer (UD)
Current work pressure	6.93	7.25	6.86	6.64	7.64
Preferred work pressure	5.20	4.87	4.59	5.21	4.83
Difference	*1.73*	*2.39*	*2.27*	*1.43*	*2.81*
	Senior lecturer (UHD)	Full professor	ASS staff	ASS manager	
Current work pressure	7.64	7.66	6.55	7.41	
Preferred work pressure	5.51	5.60	5.49	5.93	
Difference	*2.00*	*2.05*	*1.06*	*1.48*	
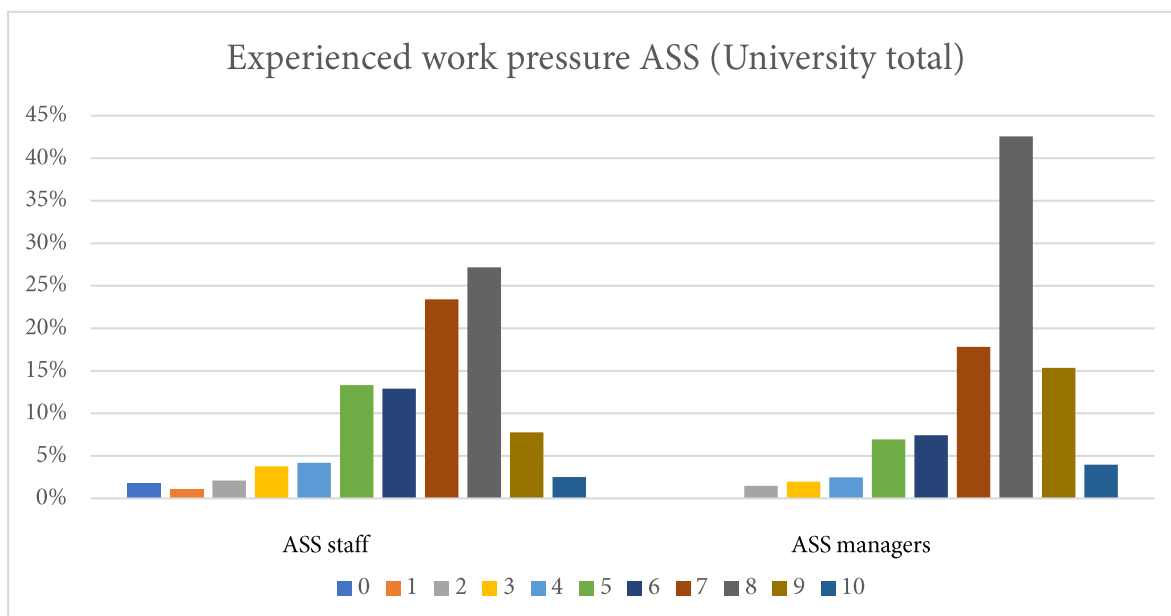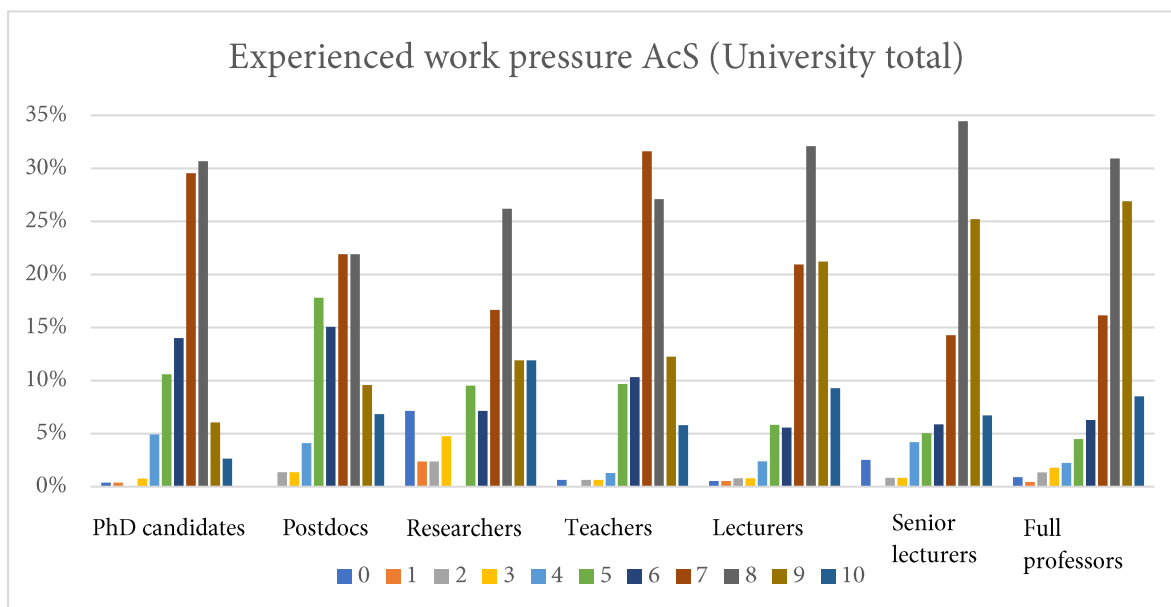
By age

	24 years or less	25to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 years or more
Current work pressure	5.88	6.68	7.29	7.22	7.04
Preferred work pressure	5.39	5.17	5.11	5.41	5.57
Difference	*0.49*	*1.51*	*2.19*	*1.81*	*1.47*

Experienced work pressure by age (University total)
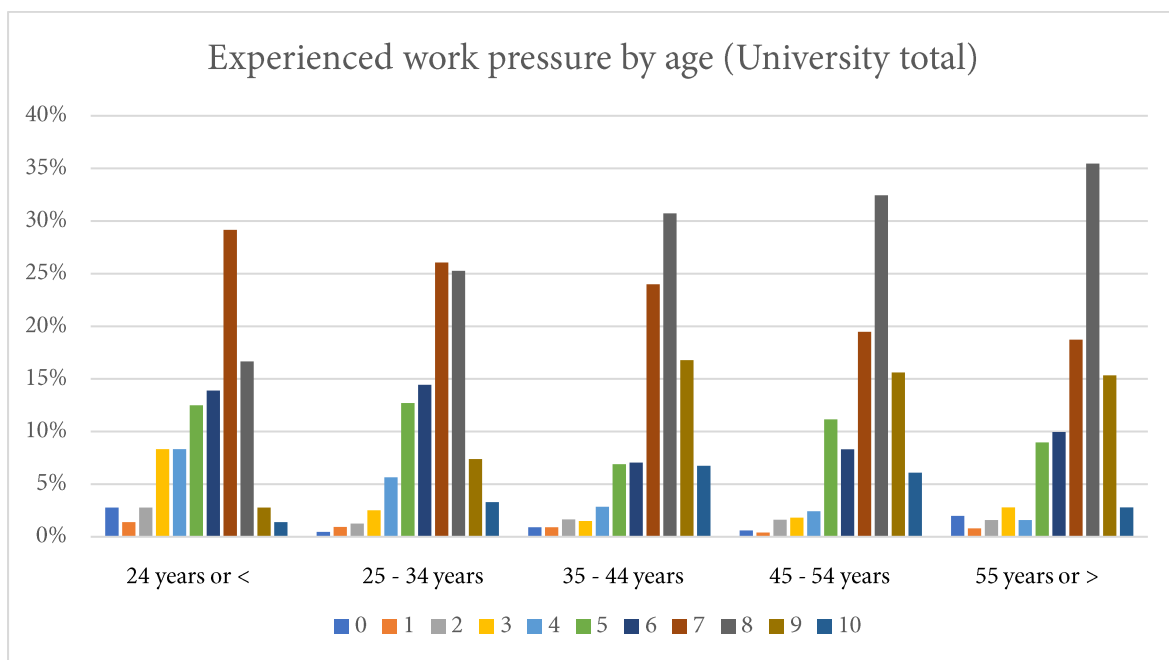
By gender and membership of minority group*

	Male	Female
Current work pressure	7.08	6.98
Preferred work pressure	5.41	5.24
Difference	*1.67*	*1.74*

* Breakdown of average scores is not available for staff members belonging to a minority group. However, data about experienced work pressure are presented below. To ensure that data cannot be traced to individual respondents, staff members who identify as non-binary or other are not included.
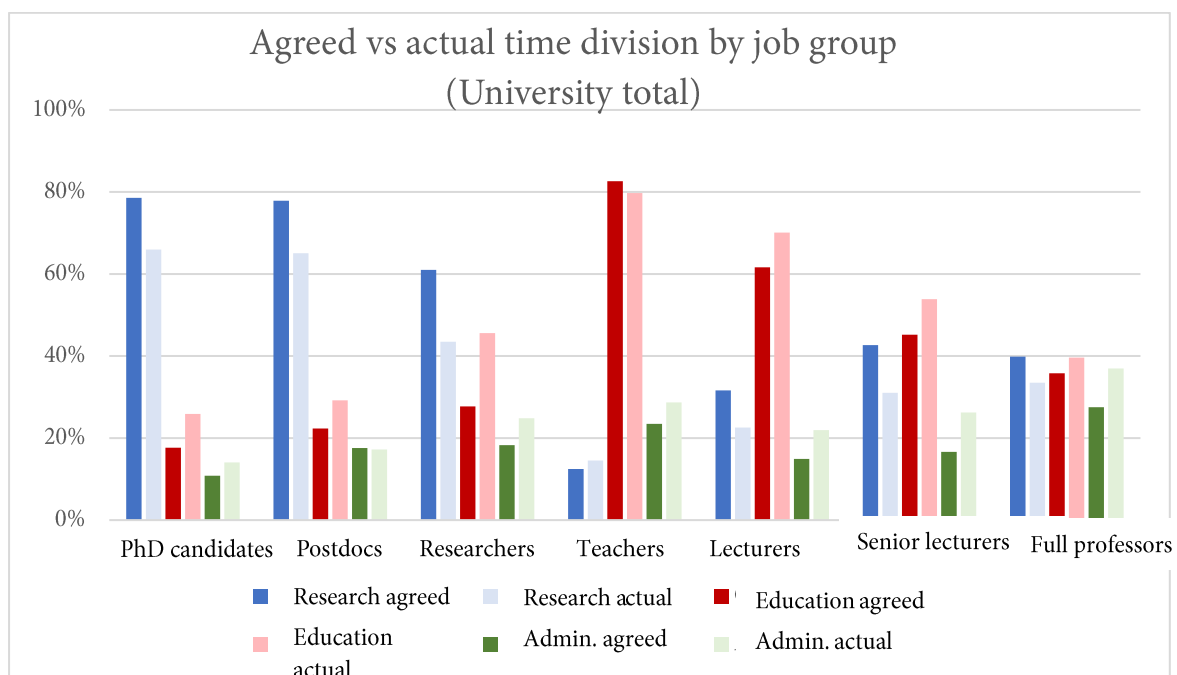

Experienced work pressure by gender and membership of minority group (University total)
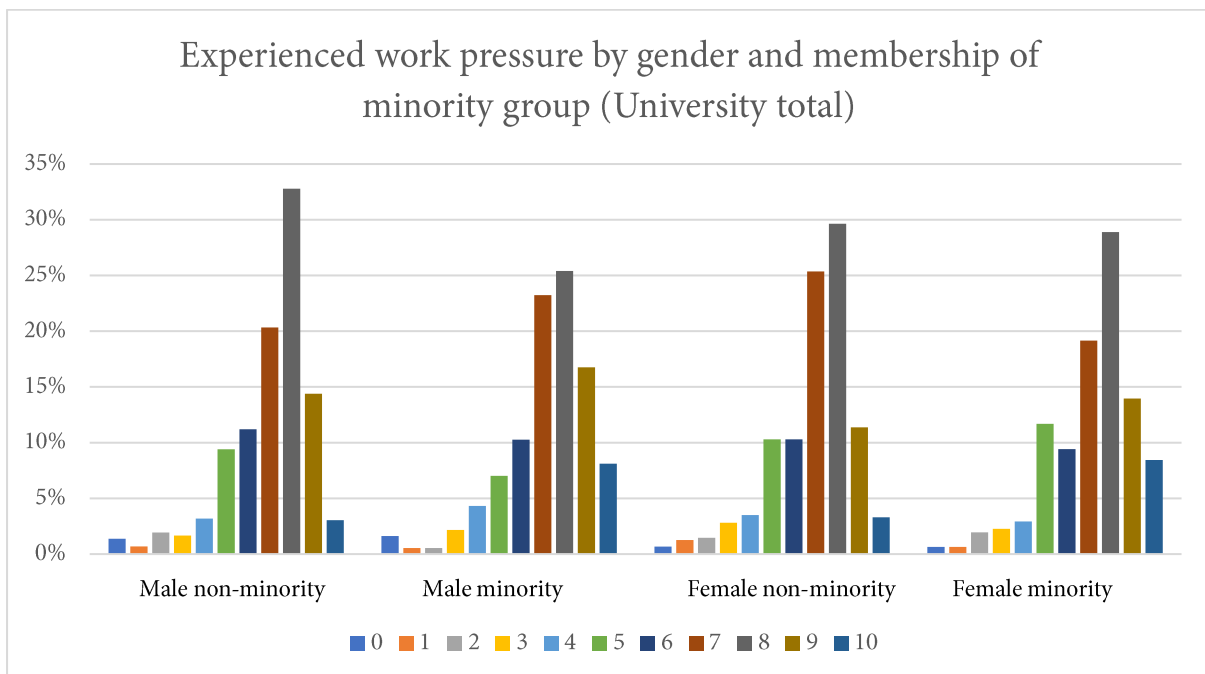
1.3 Education/research ratio

The WOinActie report 'Survey of the extent and effects of structural overtime at the Dutch universities', and the subsequent investigation by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, drew attention to the disproportionate amount of time required by education tasks, in excess of the hours allocated for them. These criticisms have also been voiced within Leiden University. As a result of this underestimation, AcS conduct their research in overtime hours or can spend less time on research than agreed.
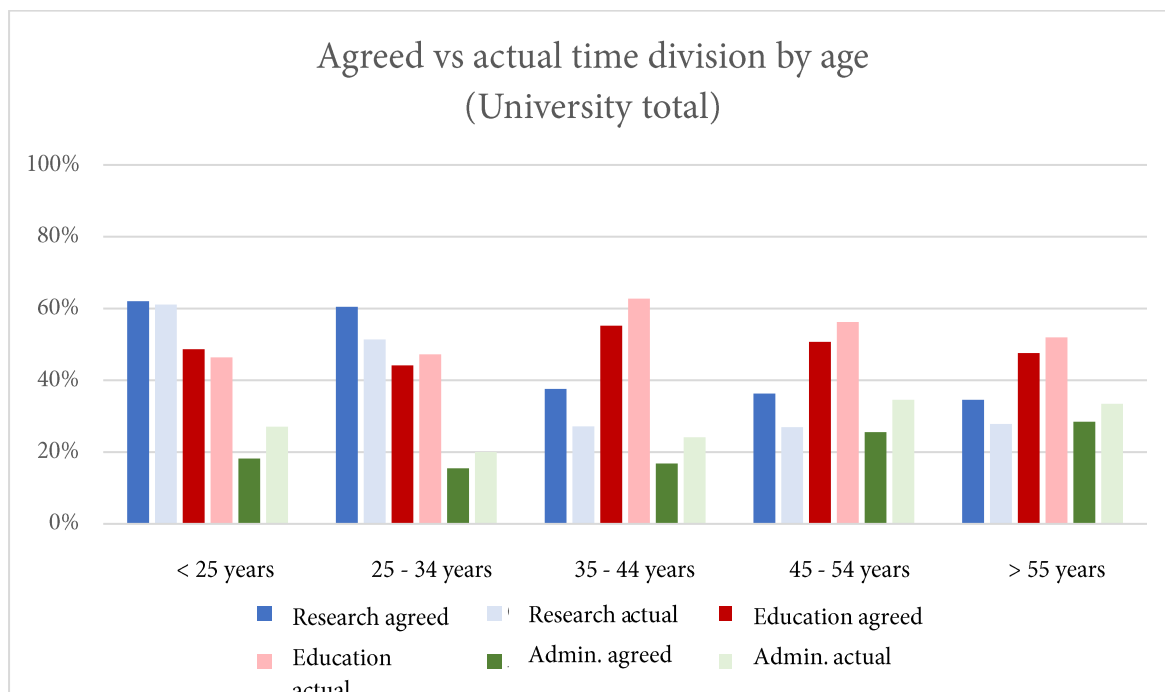
The SS Light investigated the difference between agreed time and actual time spent on the various tasks. AcS respondents reported the time division they had <u>agreed</u> for 1) research, 2) education and 3) administration. They then reported their <u>actual</u> time division. The average time division is shown in percentages.

Staff members could fill in percentages themselves. The time division stated by some of the respondents did not add up to exactly 100%, which means that the sum of the percentages in this report is also not 100%.

By job group

By age

Agreed vs actual time division by age
(University total)

By gender*

Agreed vs actual time division by gender
(University total)

* To ensure that data cannot be traced to individual respondents, staff members who identify as non-binary or other are not included.

By gender and membership of minority group*

Agreed vs actual time division by gender and membership of minority group (University total)
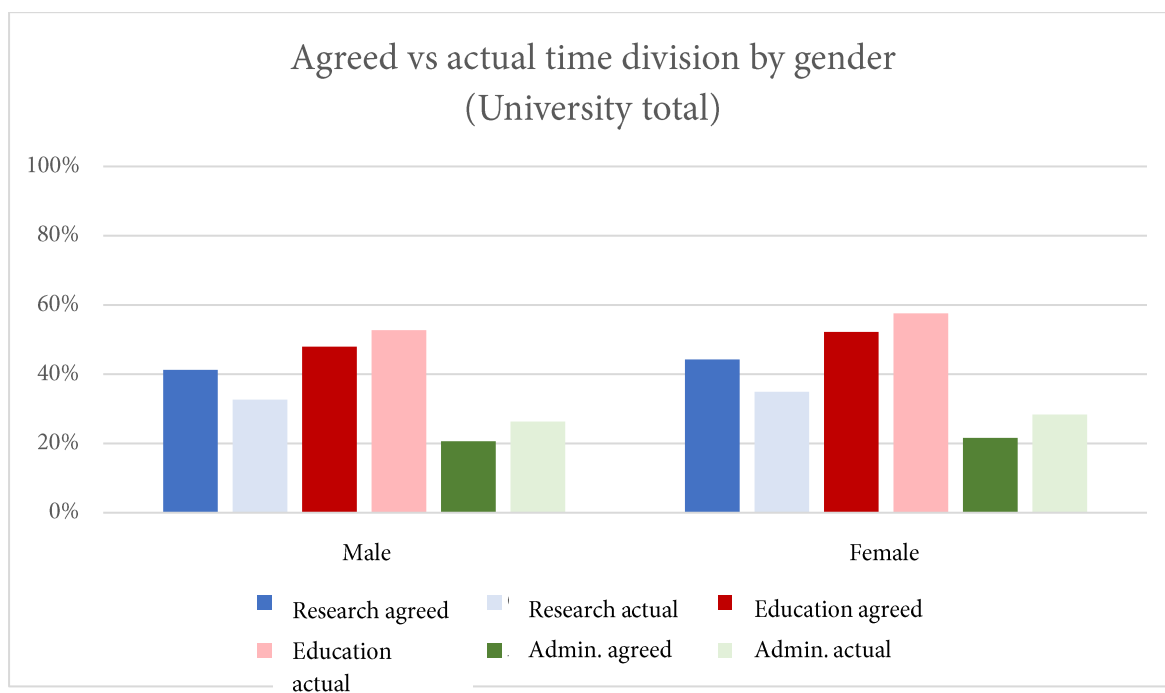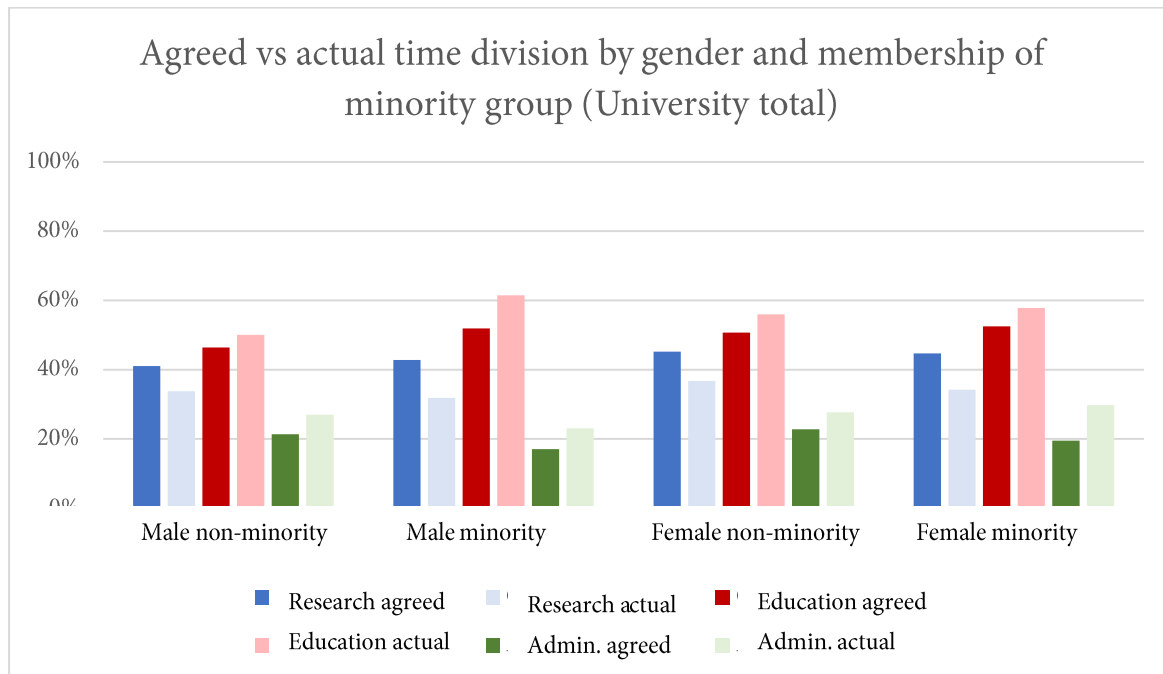
* To ensure that data cannot be traced to individual respondents, staff members who identify as non-binary or other are not included.

2. Social safety

All staff members need to have a feeling of social safety if they are to deliver their optimum performance. The University is working to address problems in the context of social safety, including such issues as: unacceptable behaviour (e.g. unfair treatment, exclusion, racism, discrimination, intimidation, sexual harassment), malpractice, disturbed work relationships and conflicts, and violations of academic integrity. The actions undertaken by the University include creating a network of confidential counsellors who help staff members to resolve problems, establishing complaints committees and starting recruitment for a new ombuds role, which will focus on the work environment. It is evident from various criticisms voiced within the organisation that problems in the area of social safety are still occurring. The SS Light therefore gave attention to social safety on the basis of:

- the types of cases that occur in the organisation, where they take place and who mainly experiences these problems,
- the extent to which staff members who experience problems are inclined to report them,
- open-ended text responses allowing staff members to express more about this topic in their own words, so that the quantitative results can be interpreted.

2.1 Problems in the organisation

Staff members were asked whether they had experienced and/or witnessed a problem relating to the work environment during the past year. The results indicate the nature of problems that occur. The chart below shows the percentage of staff members who personally experienced or witnessed a specific type of problem.

Nature of cases: experienced and witnessed (University total)
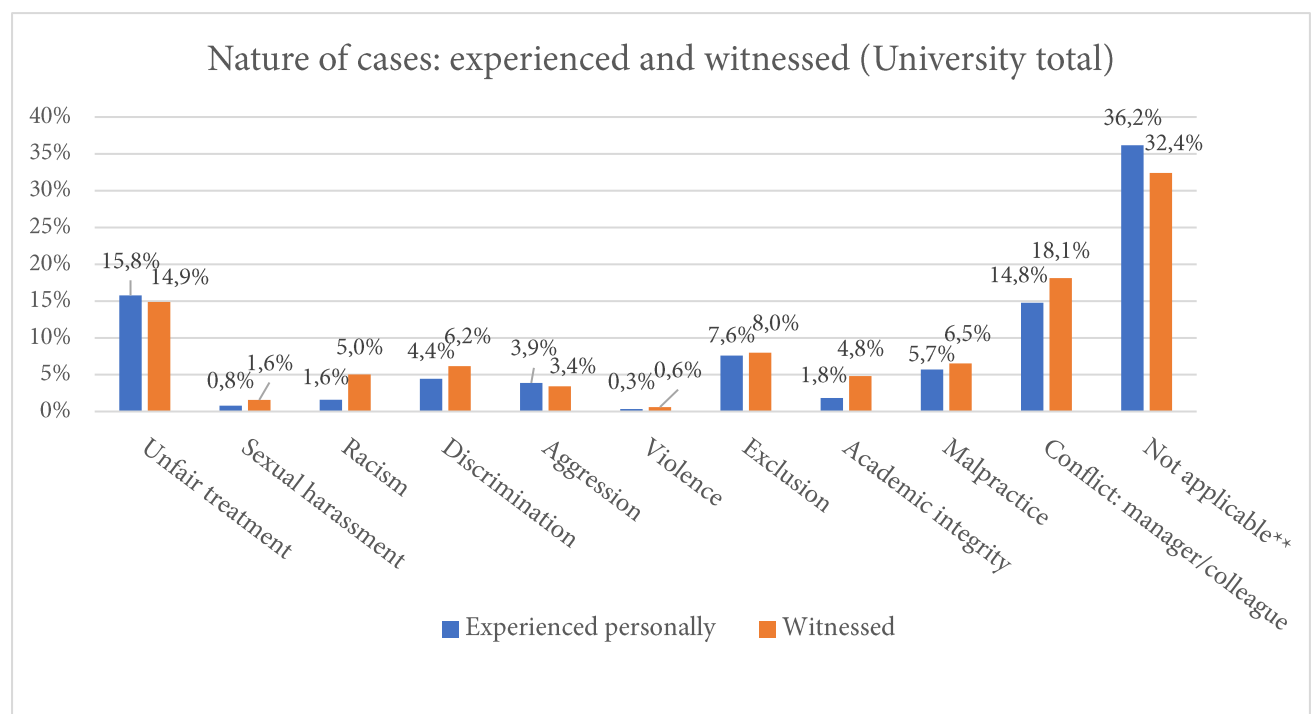
This question was supplemented with an open-ended question, inviting staff members to explain their response in more detail using their own words. The qualitative message conveyed by staff members is summarised under various themes in the table below, together with the number of staff members who gave each response.

Structural problems	
Problems in hierarchical structure and/or abuse of position of power.	60
Aggression, bullying, intimidation and/or exclusion take place.	35
Social safety is a policy issue.	33
Racism takes place (e.g. origin, language).	28
There are problems in the work atmosphere or work environment.	25
Discrimination based on position/unequal treatment of staff takes place.	22
The handling of a case resulted in a bad outcome.	20
Discrimination based on gender takes place.	18
Agreements, promises and/or rules are broken.	10
Discrimination based on age takes place.	5
Sexual harassment takes place.	2
Policy and support	
Support by HRM departments when problems occur is insufficient, slow and/or absent.	43
Practical support when problems occur is insufficient.	15
Specific roles have a clearer view of problems relating to social safety.	9
There is too much focus on diversity and inclusion.	7
Own experience of problems	
I have experienced problems and tried to find a solution for them.	39
I have had a conflict with my manager.	34
I have had a conflict with a colleague.	17
The handling of a case resulted in a good outcome.	12
I have had a conflict with a student.	7
Working during the Covid-19 crisis	
Working online results in more problems.	10
Working online results in fewer problems.	8
Other responses	**8**

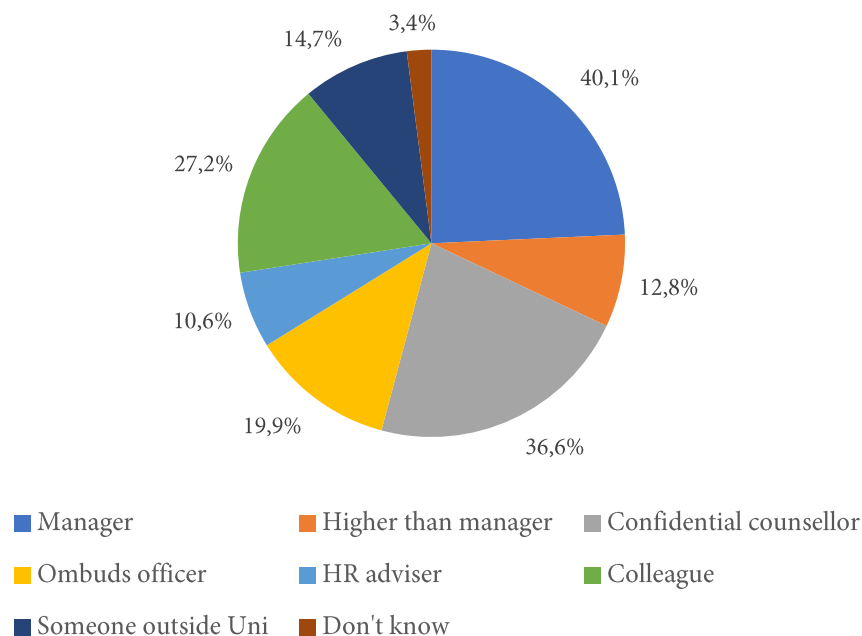## 2.2 Inclination to report problems

Staff members were asked whether they would want to discuss a problem with someone, if they experienced or witnessed one in the work environment in the future. Responses to this question give insight into how much trust staff members have about reporting a problem or discussing a case within the organisation.

Would you want to discuss a problem? (University total)

- 26,70% Don't know
- 5% No
- 68,40% Yes

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know
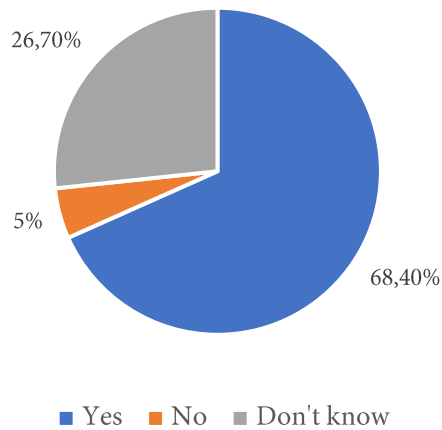
When staff members stated that they would want to discuss a problem with someone in the future, if one occurred, they were also asked with whom they would want to discuss it. Responses to this question give insight into staff members' trust in various role holders/bodies within the organisation.

With whom would you want to discuss it? (University total)

- 14,7%
- 3,4%
- 40,1%
- 27,2%
- 12,8%
- 10,6%
- 19,9%
- 36,6%

Legend:
■ Manager ■ Higher than manager ■ Confidential counsellor
■ Ombuds officer ■ HR adviser ■ Colleague
■ Someone outside Uni ■ Don't know

3. Working after the Covid-19 crisis

The Covid-19 measures for Dutch universities are in the process of being relaxed. Leiden University aims to make the best possible use of the more relaxed situation and is currently preparing for this. Staff members were therefore asked about their wishes in relation to working life after the Covid-19 crisis.

3.1 On-site presence at the University

Staff members were first asked whether their role had made it necessary to work on site at the University during the Covid-19 crisis.

Necessary to work on site at the University during the Covid-19 crisis? (University total)

26,7%

73,3%

■ No ■ Yes
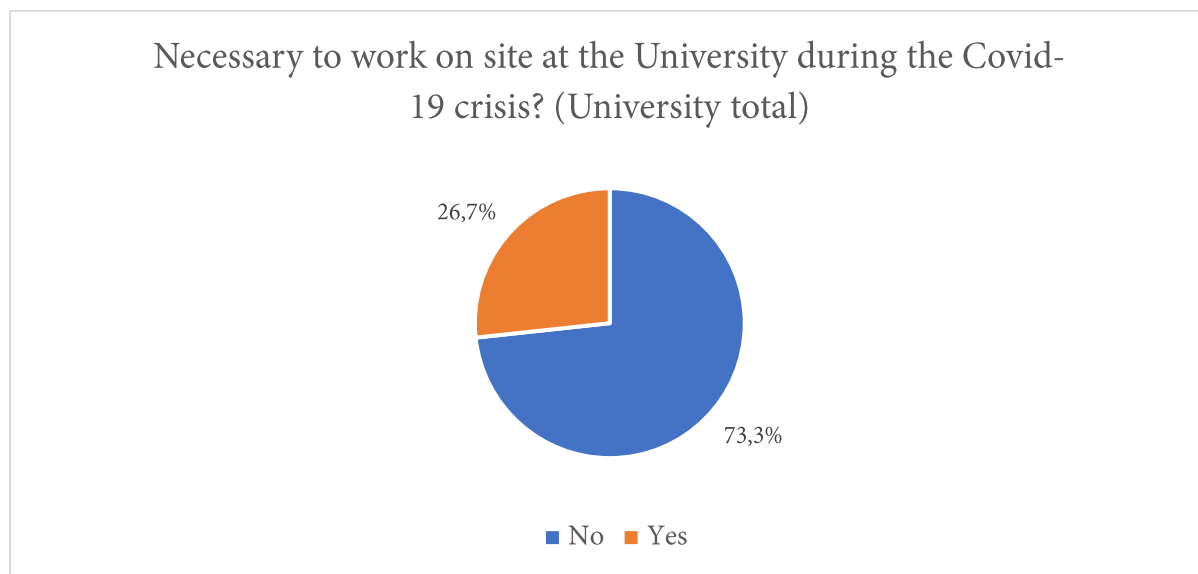
3.2 Conditions for working on site at the University again

Staff members who answered 'no' to this question could then select statements to indicate which provisions would help them to feel comfortable about returning to the office. They could select multiple statements. The purpose of this question was to consult staff members about the circumstances under which they would like to start working on site at the University again.

What would help you to feel comfortable about working on site at the University again? (University total)
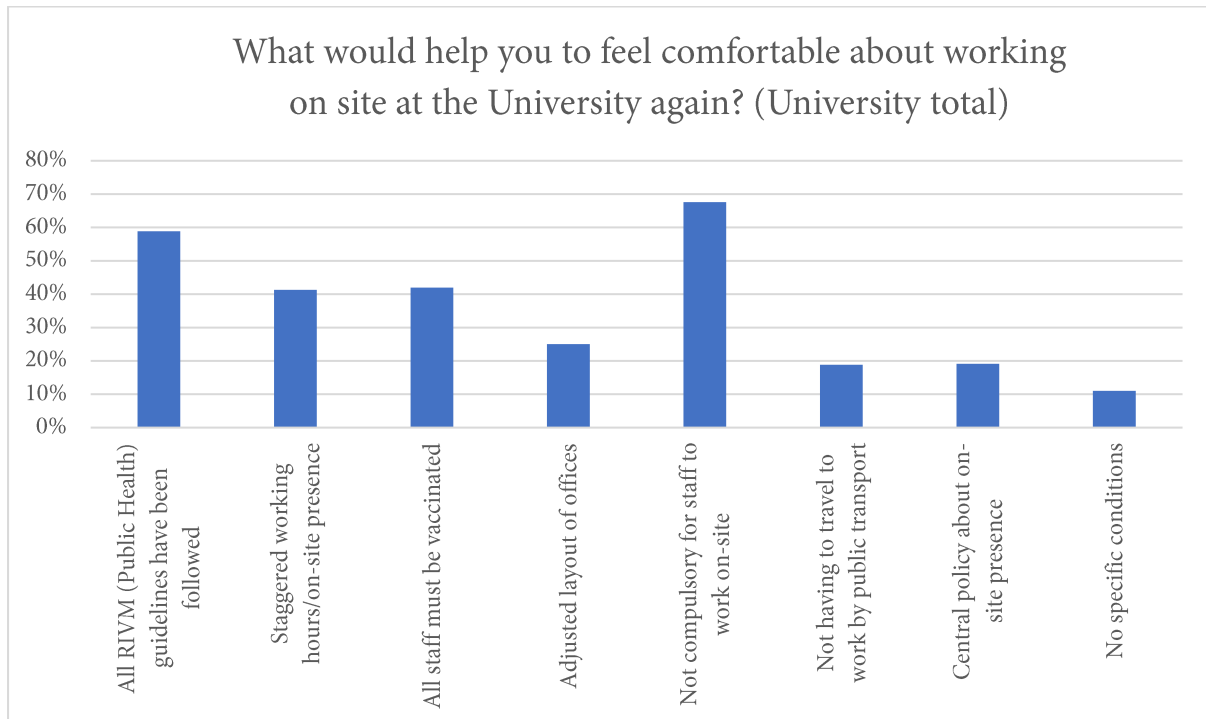

Staff members were also asked how many days of the week they would like to work on site at the University again, bearing in mind the responses to the above question. The responses to this question help to measure the extent to which staff members want to work on site at the University again when this becomes permitted.
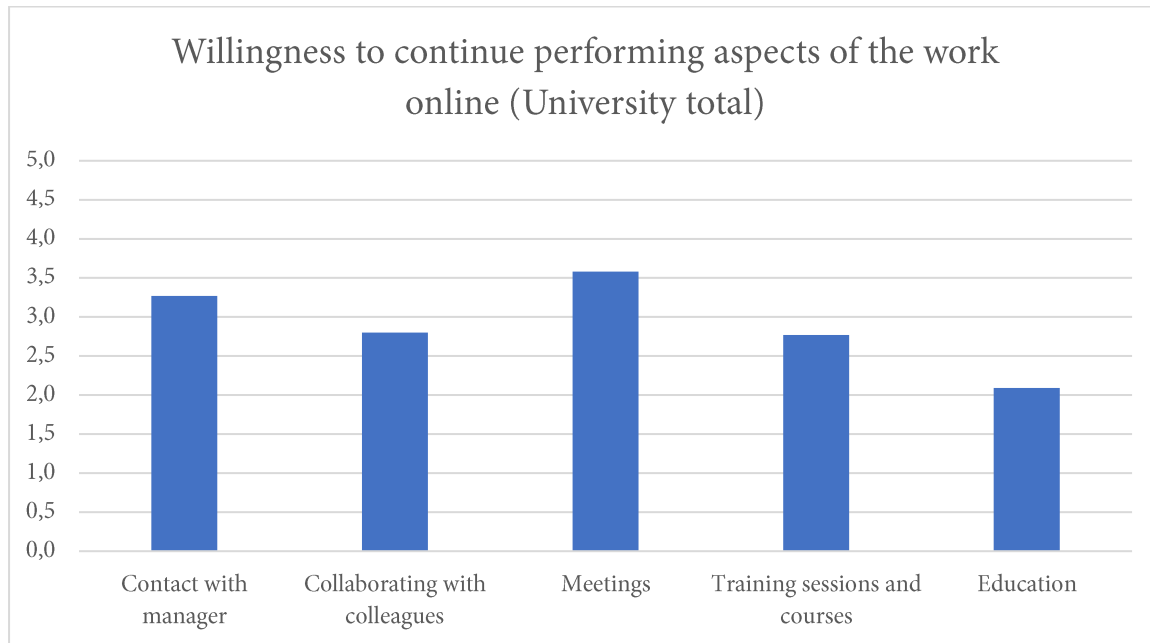
How many days of the week would you like to work on site at the University? (University total)
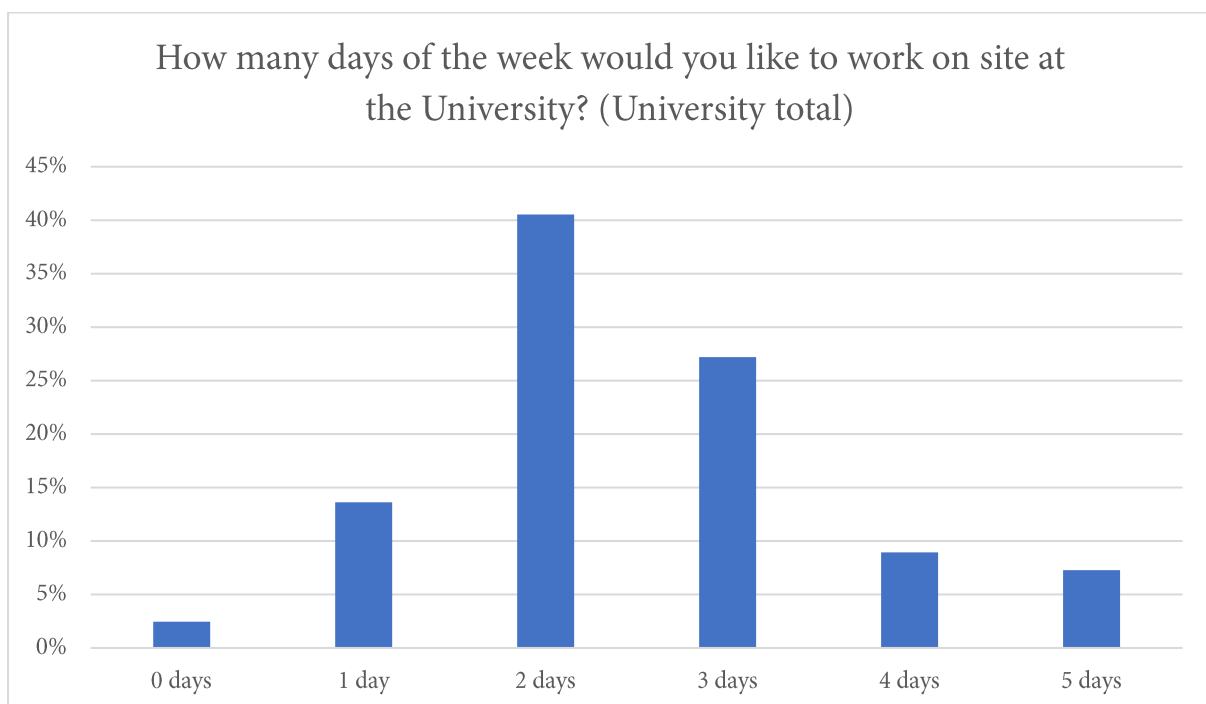
Staff members were then asked to further specify the days on which they would prefer to work on site at the University again.

Which days of the week would you like to work on site at the University? (University total)
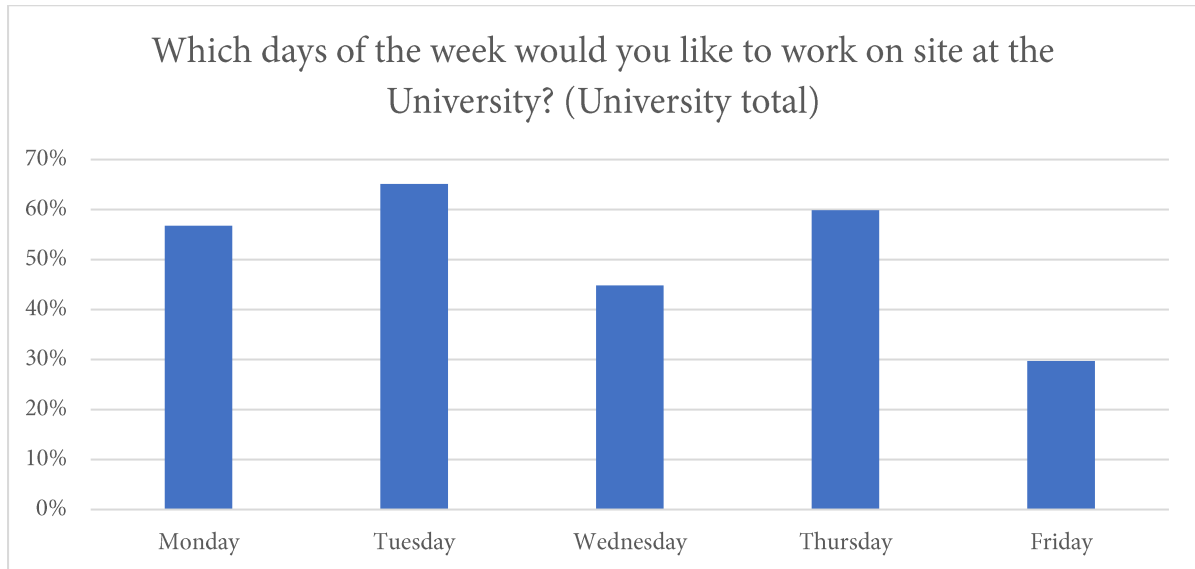
3.3 Way of working

Staff members were asked to indicate how willing they would be to continue performing some aspects of working life online in the future. On the one hand, this question served as consultation to identify which aspects went well while staff were working from home and to discover whether they would be willing to continue performing these aspects remotely. On the other hand, this question served as consultation to identify which aspects of work should preferably be performed on site at the University and to discover whether staff members are less willing to continue performing these aspects online in the future. The responses to this question were given on a scale from 0 (=completely unwilling) to 5 (=completely willing). The average scores are shown on the next page.

Willingness to continue performing aspects of the work online (University total)

Aspect	Value
Contact with manager	~3.3
Collaborating with colleagues	~2.8
Meetings	~3.6
Training sessions and courses	~2.75
Education	~2.1

Finally, an open-ended question gave staff members the opportunity to state in their own words what else they need from the organisation if remote working is to take place effectively. The responses are classified into themes in the table below, together with the number of staff members who gave each response.

Equipment
Hardware	209
Software	79
Work mobile phone	37

Home office
Furniture for home office	126
Facilitated home office	70
Health & safety aspects of home office	18

Policy and support
Payment for working from home	65
Practical support	37
Mental health support	13

Way of working
Facilitation of remote teamwork	38
Autonomy/own time scheduling	37
Social contact with colleagues	18