



Improving research conditions, services and offers for early career researchers

TH Köln's experience in conducting a doctoral researchers survey

June 27th, 2024

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TH Köln - University of Applied Sciences

slide 1

Technology
Arts Sciences
TH Köln

Agenda

Introduction

TH Köln - University of Applied Sciences
The European Charter for Researchers
HR Excellence in Research at TH Köln

Doctoral researchers survey 2024

Procedure
Key findings
Actions undertaken or planned

Questions and discussion

Technology Arts Sciences TH Köln

Founded in 1971 as
Fachhochschule Köln



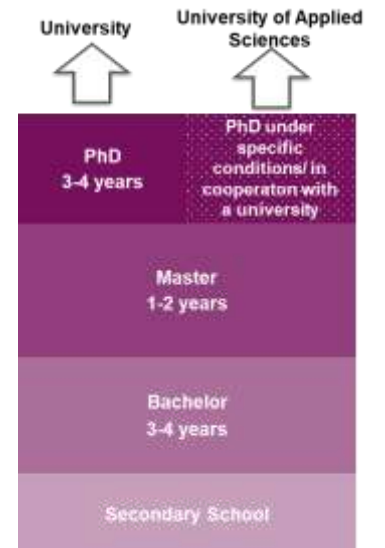
Our Profile: University of Technology, Arts and Sciences

Internationally oriented and regionally anchored university with forward-looking teaching concepts and a proven research strength who is making knowledge effectively applicable for civil society, business, culture and politics

- Institution of higher education with university elements ('teaching university')
- Education in science through a unity of teaching and research
- Our vision: Shaping social innovation

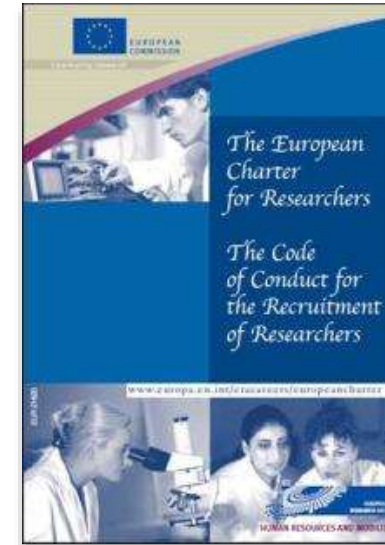
TH Köln at a Glance

- 12 faculties in 5 locations
- 23.500 students of whom 4000 are international
- 430 professors, 40 postdocs, 250 doctoral researchers



The European Charter for Researchers

- 2005 originally published as **Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers**
- 2023: Revision of the **Charter for Researchers** and publication as annex to the European COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on a 'European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe'
- Addressing **researchers R1-R4** as well as employers, funders, and policy makers



The European Charter for Researchers

20 principles defined under four pillars

- a) **Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science**
- b) **Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression**
- c) **Working Conditions and Practices**
- d) **Research Careers and Talent Development**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

HR Excellence in Research award

granted for introducing **HR Strategy for Researchers** mechanisms to implement the principles of the Charter in the institutional policies and practices

Endorsement of the Charter - HR Excellence in Research

Awarded organisations per country

Charter & Code

✓ 1511 C&C endorsing organisations

HR Excellence in Research Award

✓ 724 awarded organisations
✓ 127 applicant organisations

Renewal Phase

✓ 477 applicant organisations
✓ 5 site visits organised

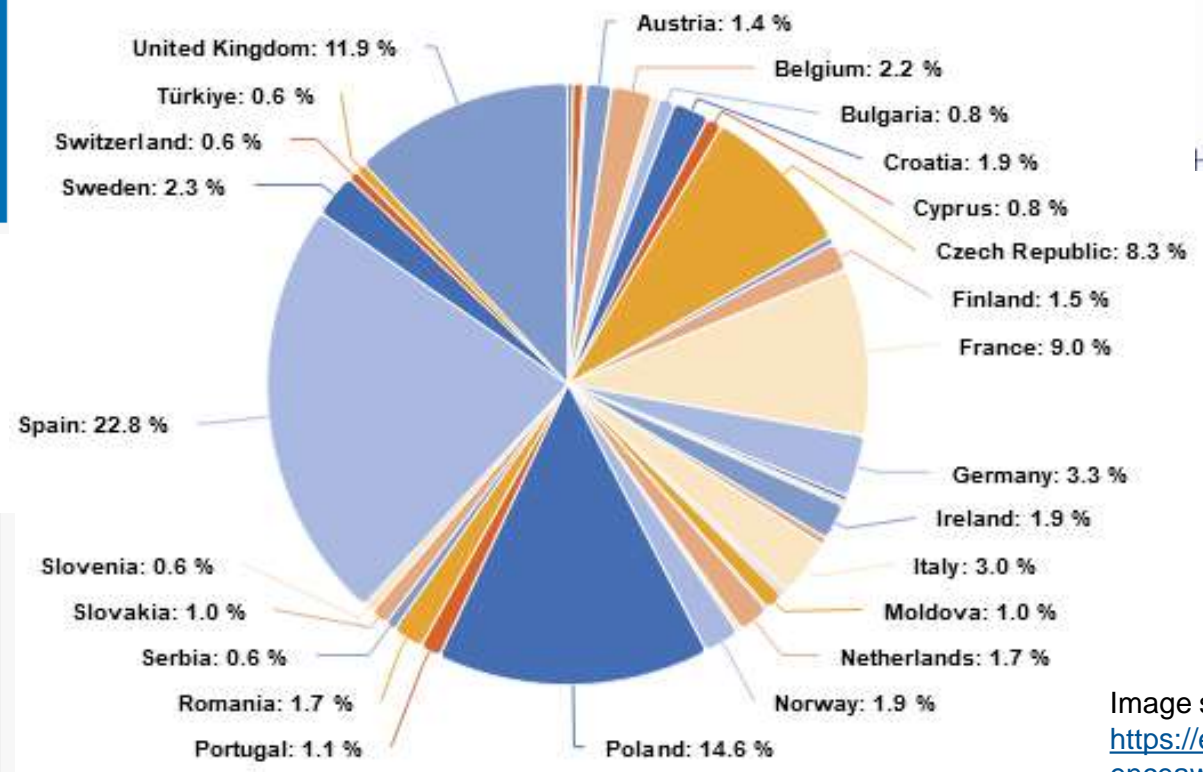
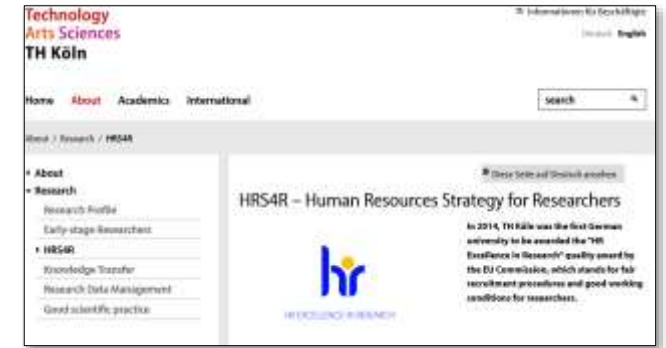


Image source and further information:
<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/hrexcellenceaward/hr-excellence/dashboard>

HR Excellence in Research at TH Köln

- Endorsement of Charter & Code as one of the **first institutions in Germany** in 2012
- „**HR Excellence in Research**“ award in 2014, successful award renewals in 2017, 2020, and 2024
- **HR Excellence in Research strategy**
 - developed together with researchers R1-R4
 - closely aligned with university strategy (university development plan 2030)
 - Action plan focussing on improving the conditions for early career researchers
 - Surveys among doctoral researchers in 2012 and 2024



Doctoral researchers survey in 2024

Survey addressing all **doctoral researchers at TH Köln in all disciplines**

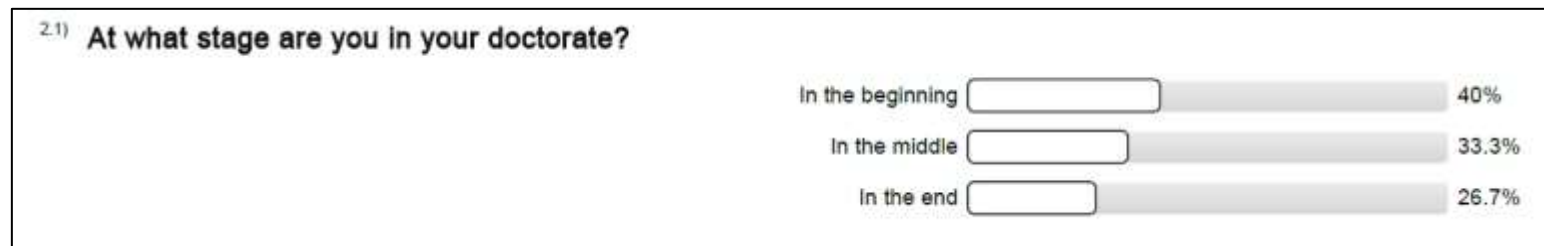
- **Voluntary** and **anonymous**
- **80 questions** (multiple choice and open text)
- Divided into **three sections**:
 - A. General conditions and supervision**
 - B. Advice and information**
 - C. Events and funding**
- **Sent out via email** to all doctoral researchers
- **Reminder** after 10 days; answering time: **3 weeks**



Doctoral researchers survey in 2024 – participants

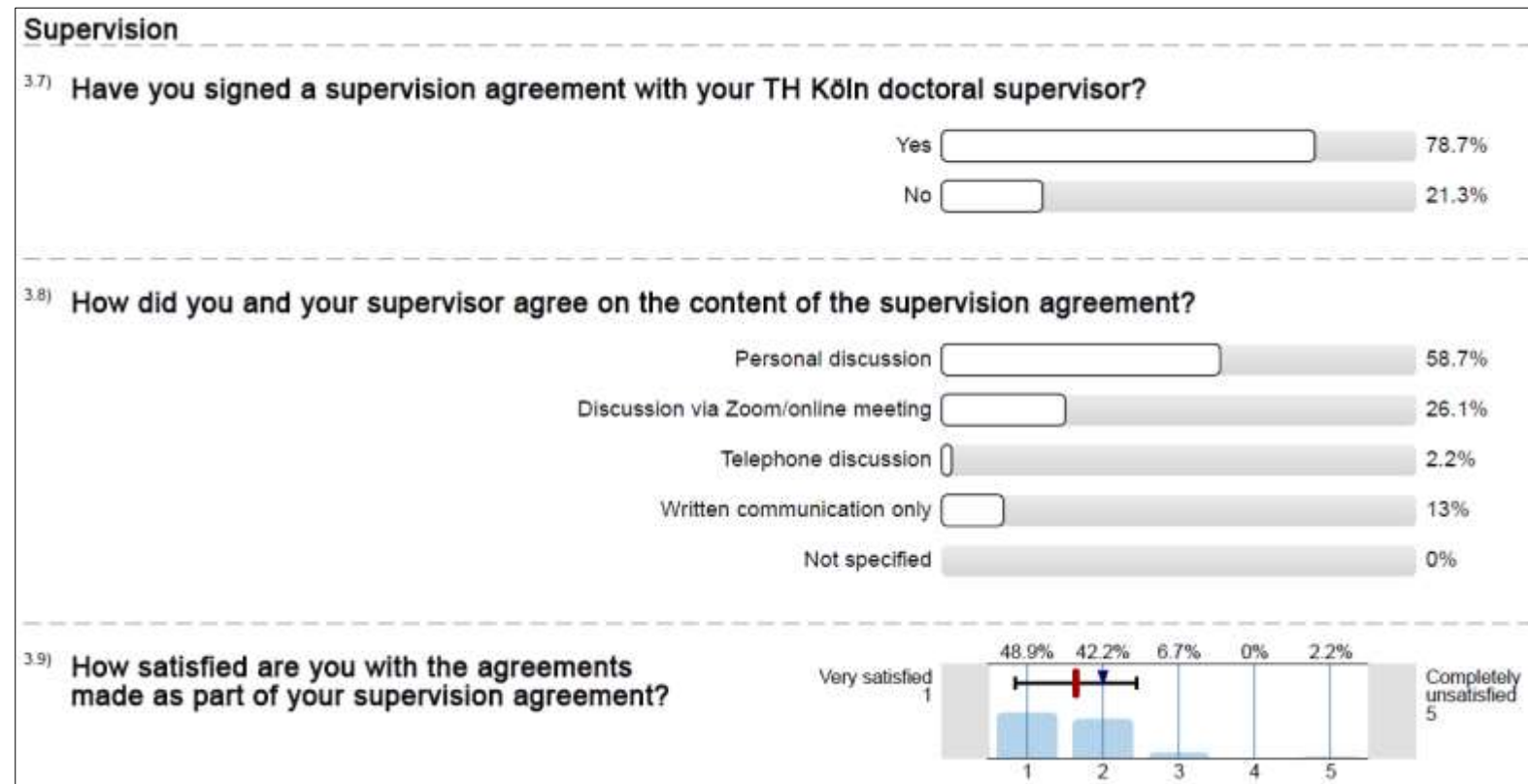
Response rate: 26,5 % (62 of 234)

- Majority of the participants were at the **beginning of the doctorate**
- Due to protection of anonymity **no further differentiation** of responses among gender, faculty, etc.



Doctoral researchers survey in 2024 – selected results and actions

Section A: General conditions and supervision



Doctoral researchers survey in 2024 – selected results and actions

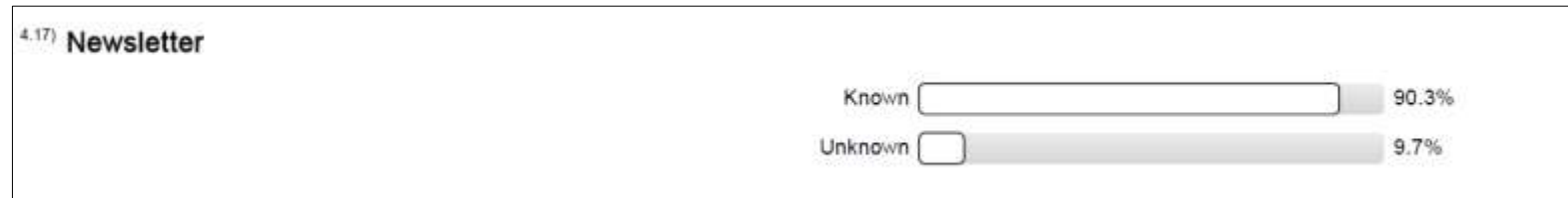
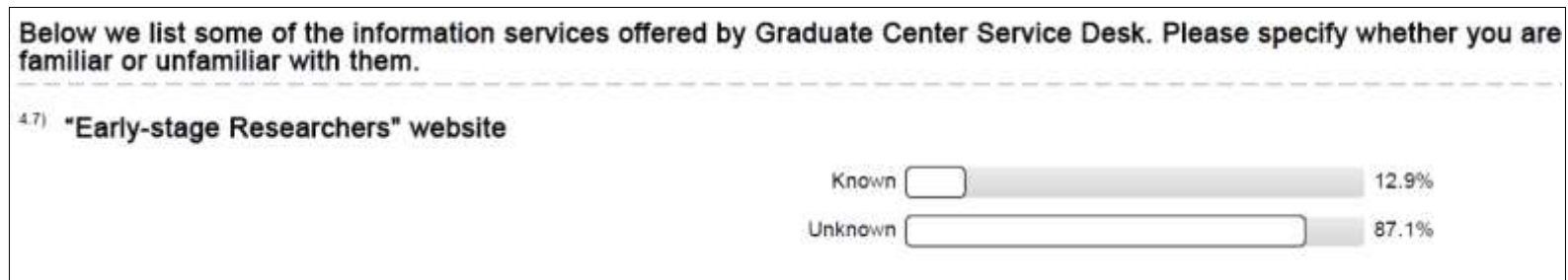
Section A: General conditions and supervision

Actions undertaken or planned in response to the survey:

- **Transparent information on employment possibilities** for doctoral researchers compiled and published on internal website
- Revision of the TH Köln „**Guidelines for good supervision**“ (draft version)
- Agenda item for the next „**Networking meeting for doctoral supervisors**“

Doctoral researchers survey in 2024 – selected results and actions

Section B: Advice and information



Doctoral researchers survey in 2024 – selected results and actions

Section B: Advice and information

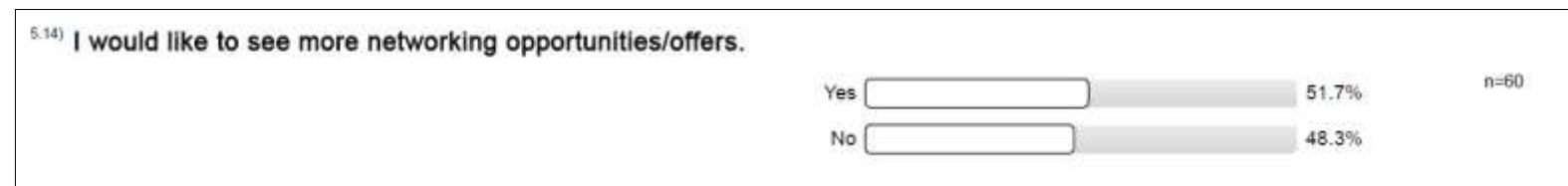
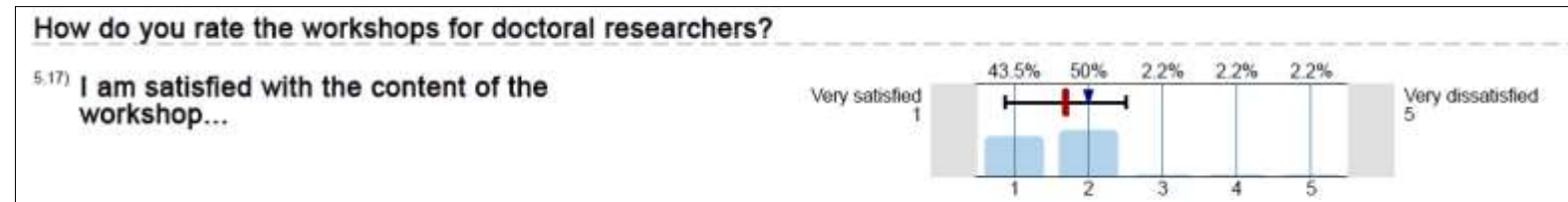
Actions undertaken or planned in response to the survey:

- Use **newsletter** for all central information, **new rubric** „Have you heard of...?“
- Always use **diverse information channels** (newsletter, LinkedIn, Zoom office hour etc.) to make new offers known
- **Increase awareness** of the website among students interested in a doctorate and supervisors

Doctoral researchers survey in 2024 – selected results and actions

Section C: Events and funding

- Evaluation of offers and networking opportunities, general satisfaction
- Desire for events at more remote campi



Doctoral researchers survey in 2024 – selected results and actions

Section C: Events and funding

Actions undertaken or planned in response to survey:

- **Coffee break dialogues as informal networking opportunities** offered at several locations/campi in June
- Consideration of **further qualification events** in when planning the qualification program for the following semesters
- **Transparent information** on limitations of funding programmes



Summary

Improving research conditions, services, and offers for early career researchers –

Applied practices at TH Köln:

- Institutional commitment towards the Charter for Researchers
- Active involvement of Doctoral Researcher Committee/Board (R1) in process
- Regular survey among doctoral researchers (our goal: every 3 years)
 - Transparent communication of survey results
 - Consideration of results for practices at Graduate Center Service Desk

Thank you for your attention!



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<https://www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r>

<https://www.th-koeln.de/earlystageresearchers>