

CONSULTATION WITH THE SCIENTIFIC AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITY OF TUM
REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS
AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCHERS

Analysis of HRS4R questionnaire data

Technical University of Moldova (TUM) conducted a survey on the main issues analysed and disseminated in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Scope and specific objectives

The scope of the study was to investigate the opinion of academic and research staff on TUM's current policies for academic career. The following specific objectives of the study were formulated:

- Identifying respondents' attitude towards policies regarding ethical and professional principles in research;
- Finding out respondents' views on TUM's recruitment and selection process;
- Assessing the perception of respondents about the working conditions and social security provided by TUM;
- Finding out the respondents' opinions in relation to the training and professional development opportunities offered by TUM, regardless of the researchers' career level.

Methodology of the study

Because of the COVID-19 pandemics it was decided to conduct an on-line survey. The questionnaire was developed by the *HRS4R Working Group* and is in line with the four dimensions of the Charter and the Code. The survey was developed using Google Forms (surveys) and was available on all types of gadgets (PC/notebook, tablets, mobile phones). For each dimension, items were formulated so as to meet the 40 principles for obtaining the label "Human Resources Excellence in Research". To compare and analyse the disparities between the principles, the 40 items were measured using a Likert scale response values: "Total agreement", "Agreement", "Neither agreement, nor disagreement", "Disagreement" and "Total disagreement" and "No answer – N/A". In addition to the 40 specific items of the HRS4R Charter and Code, specific questions were included to analyse the profile of the participants in the study. The questionnaire was developed in Romanian.

The TUM HRS4R Steering Committee agreed about the following scale of evaluation of the level of implementation of the 'Charter and Code' articles based on the respondents' answers:

- Less than 55% positive answers¹ – insufficiently implemented (--).
- 55% - 65% positive answers – partially implemented (-/+)
- 65% - 75% positive answers – almost but not fully implemented (+/-);
- 75% and more positive answers – fully implemented (++)

¹ Positive answers are "Total agreement" and "Agreement"

The investigated sample – selection and characteristics

To conduct this study, the reference population taken into account was represented by the academic and research staff working at the Technical University of Moldova (employees that do research and/or teaching activity), 650 people in total. Our aim was to get a maximum number of potential responses, correlated with the data collection method, but we opted for voluntary and anonymous participation. The data were collected between 06.09.2021 and 12.10.2021.

Position	Respondents	Scientific and teaching staff in the category	%
University professor	5	18	28%
Associate professor	52	216	24%
PhD student	15	84	18%
University lecturer	8	283	3%
Engineers	7	49	14%
Total	87	650	13%

Profile of the respondents

The distribution of respondents by gender is balanced, which complies with the existing gender structure at the university level (49,4% female and 50,6% male) (fig. 1).

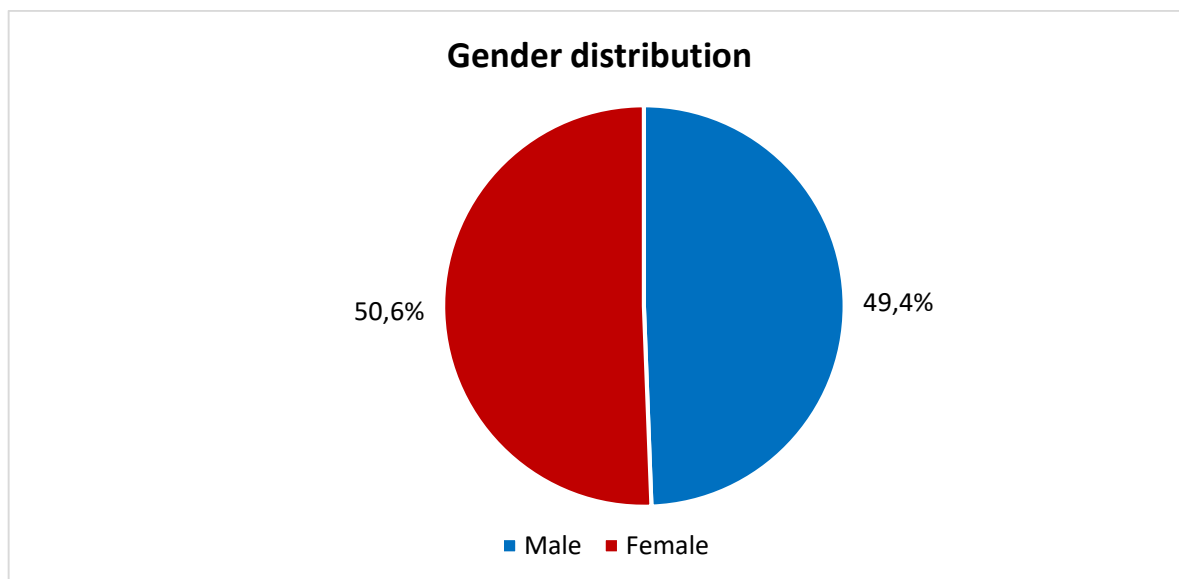


Fig. 1. Respondents distributed by gender

The age distribution validates the involvement in the survey of researchers and teachers from all age categories (fig. 2).

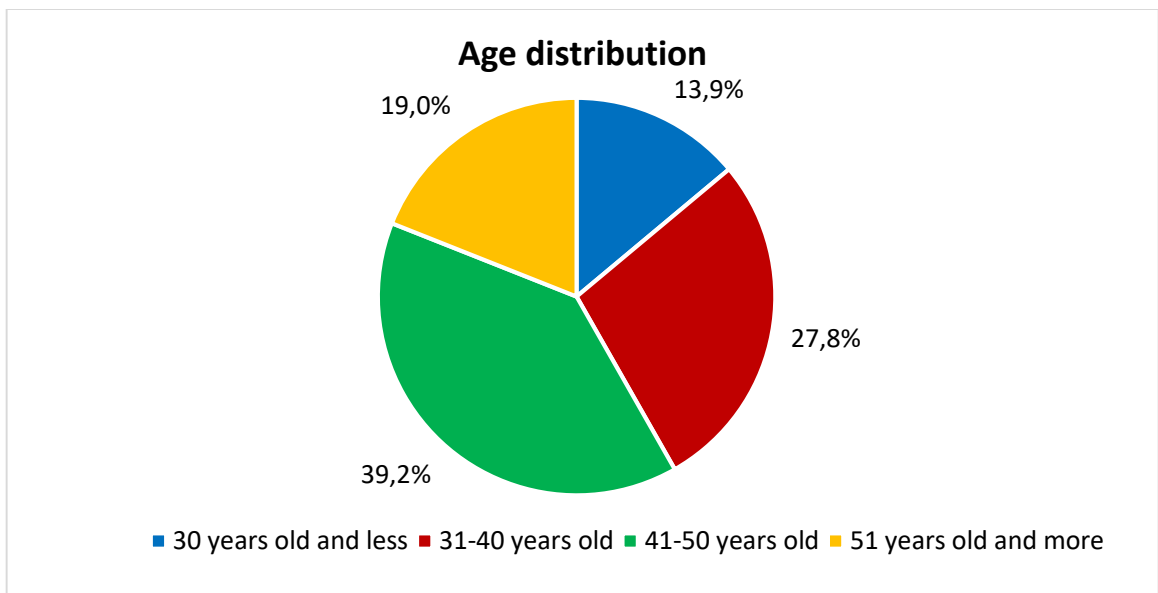


Fig. 2. Respondents distributed by age

The respondents were asked to indicate the type of unit they work in and the type of employment (full time / part time). The distribution of respondents by unit and type of employment (multiple choice) reflects the overall distribution of teaching and research staff at the university (fig. 3).

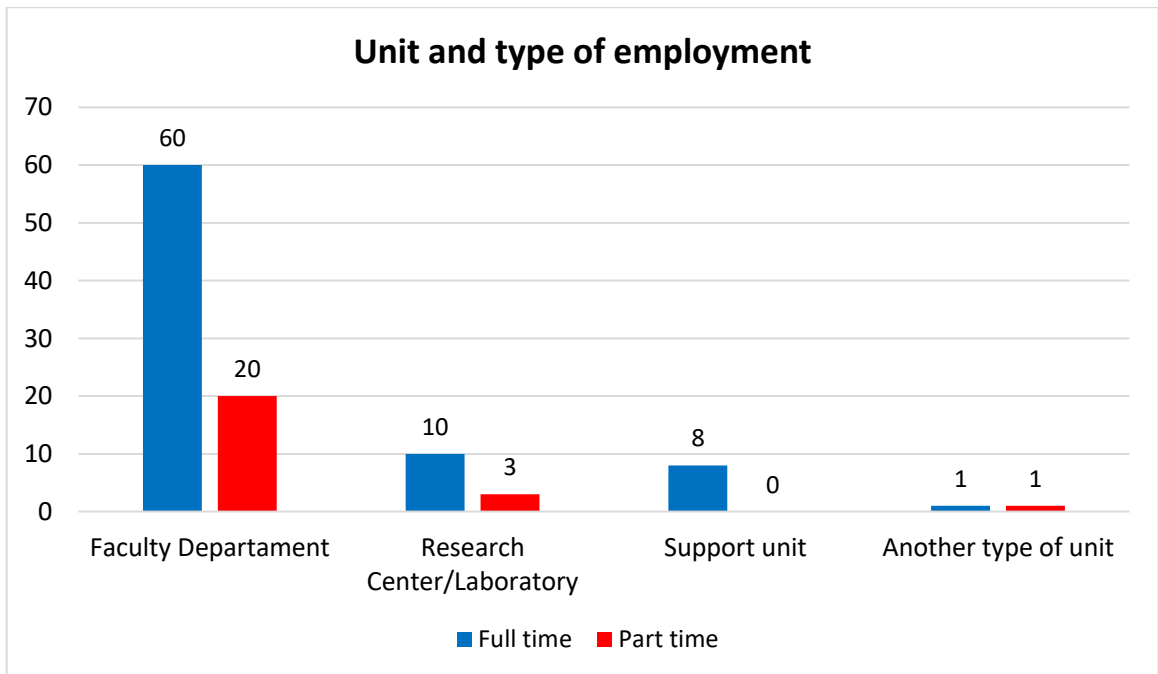


Fig. 3. Respondents distributed by unit and type of employment

The respondents selected the level of international experience. The responses show that more than half (53.6%) have studied or worked abroad for more than 1 month (fig. 4).

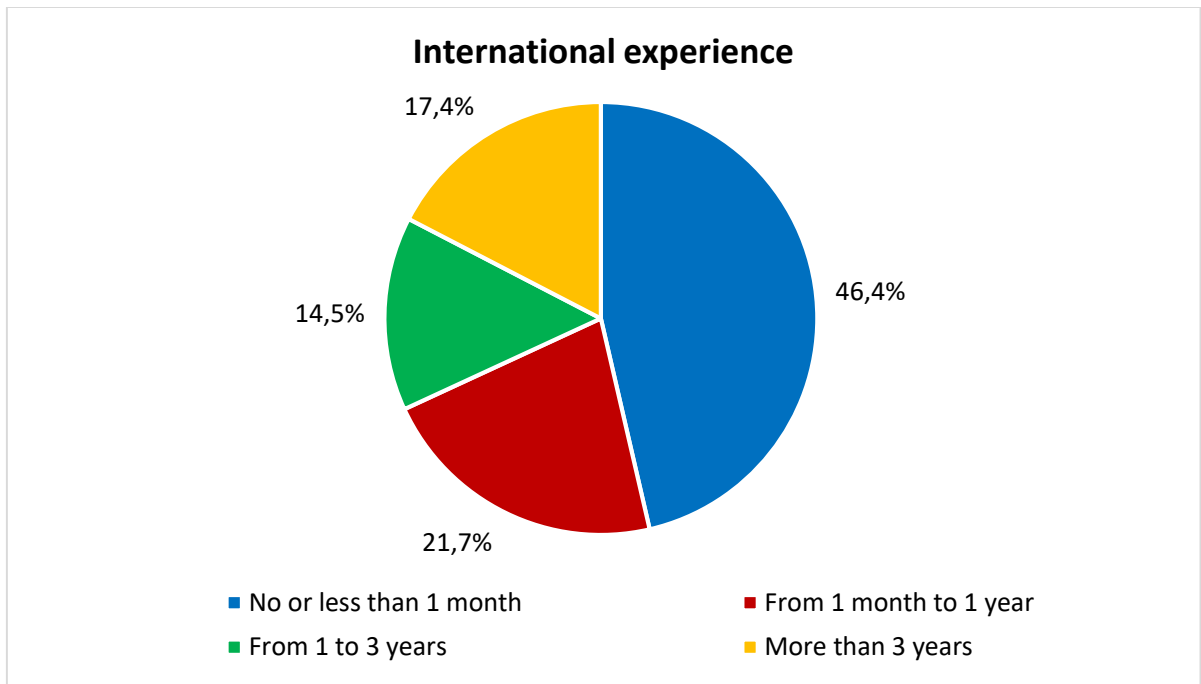
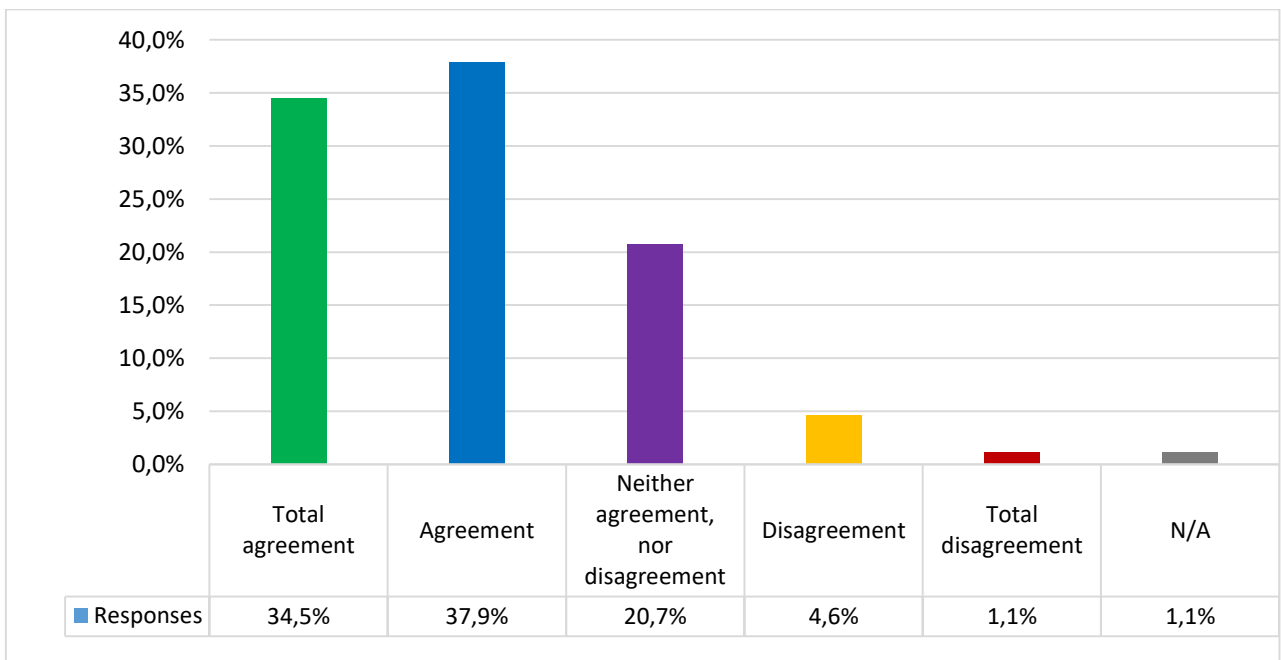


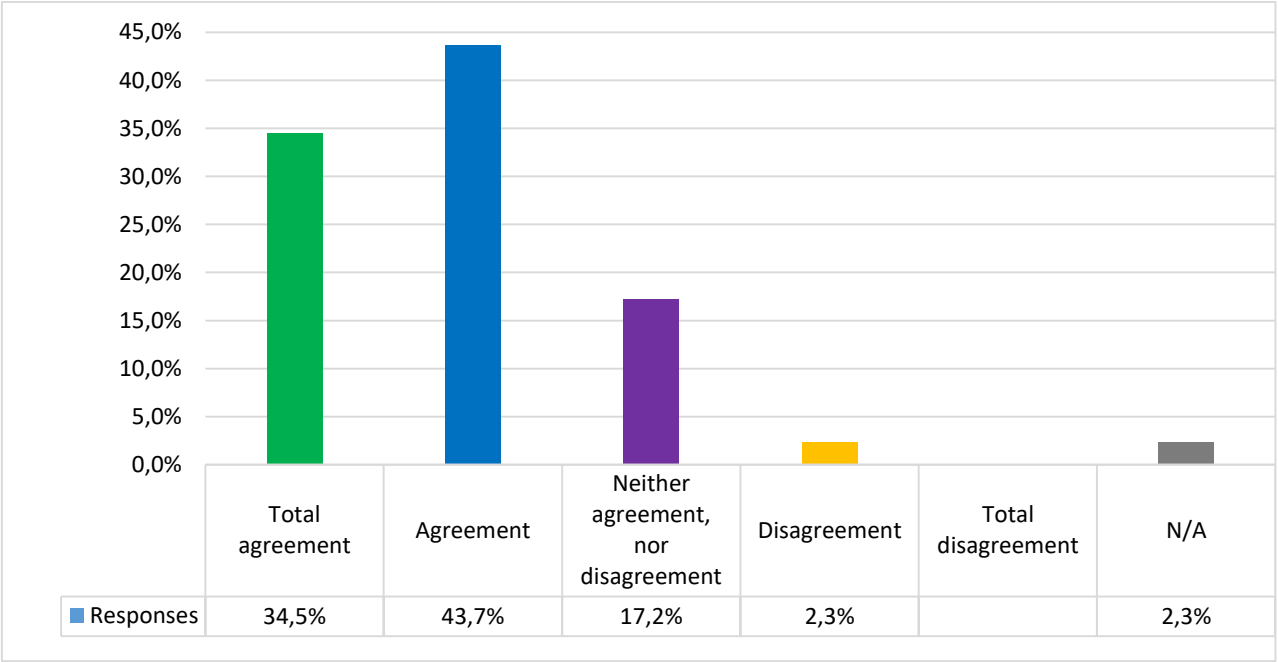
Fig. 4. International experience of the respondents

1. Ethical and Professional Aspects

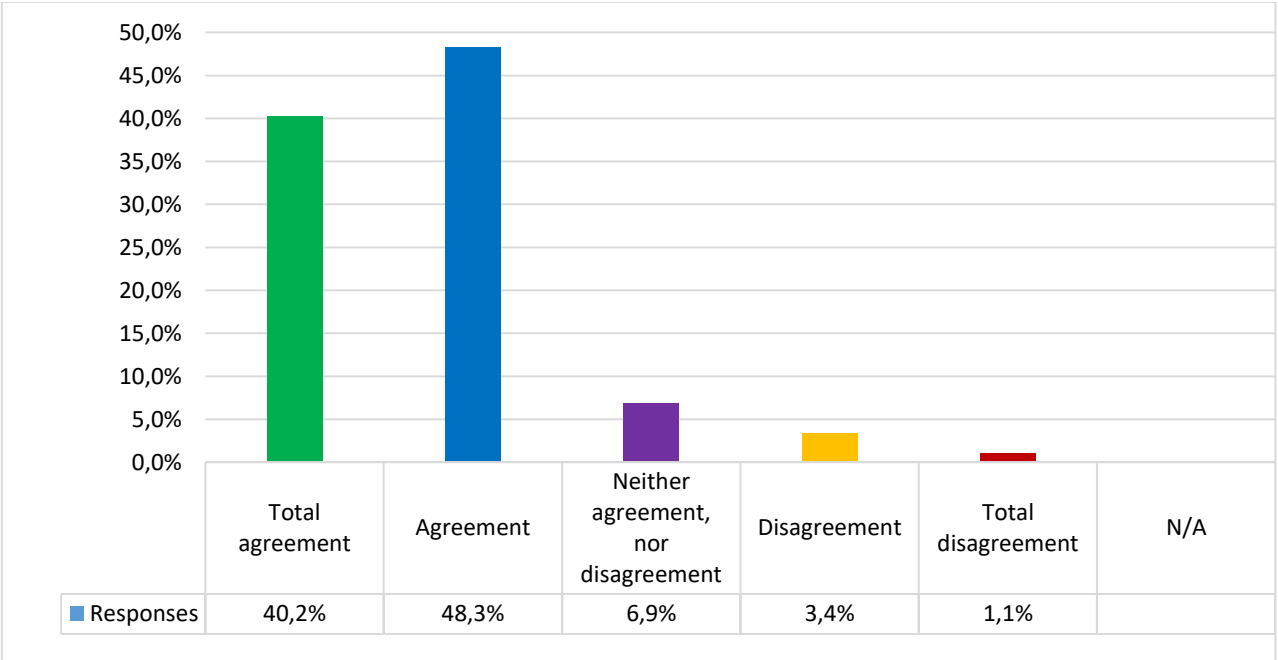
Q.1.1. TUM provides researchers with adequate means to focus their research on the well-being of mankind and to expand the boundaries of their scientific knowledge while enjoying freedom of thought and expression and freedom to identify methods for solving problems, in accordance with recognized ethical principles and practices (always taking into account the budgetary or infrastructure constraints of TUM).



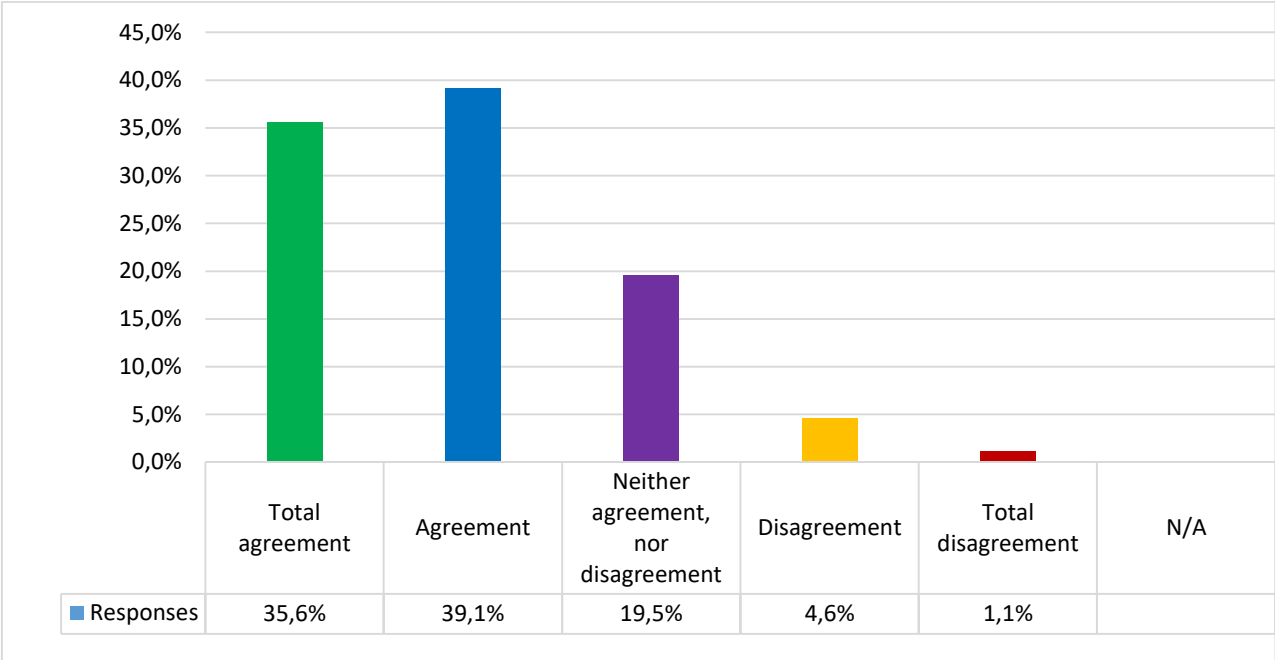
Q 1.2. TUM distributes and correctly applies the Institutional Code of Professional Ethics and Deontology.



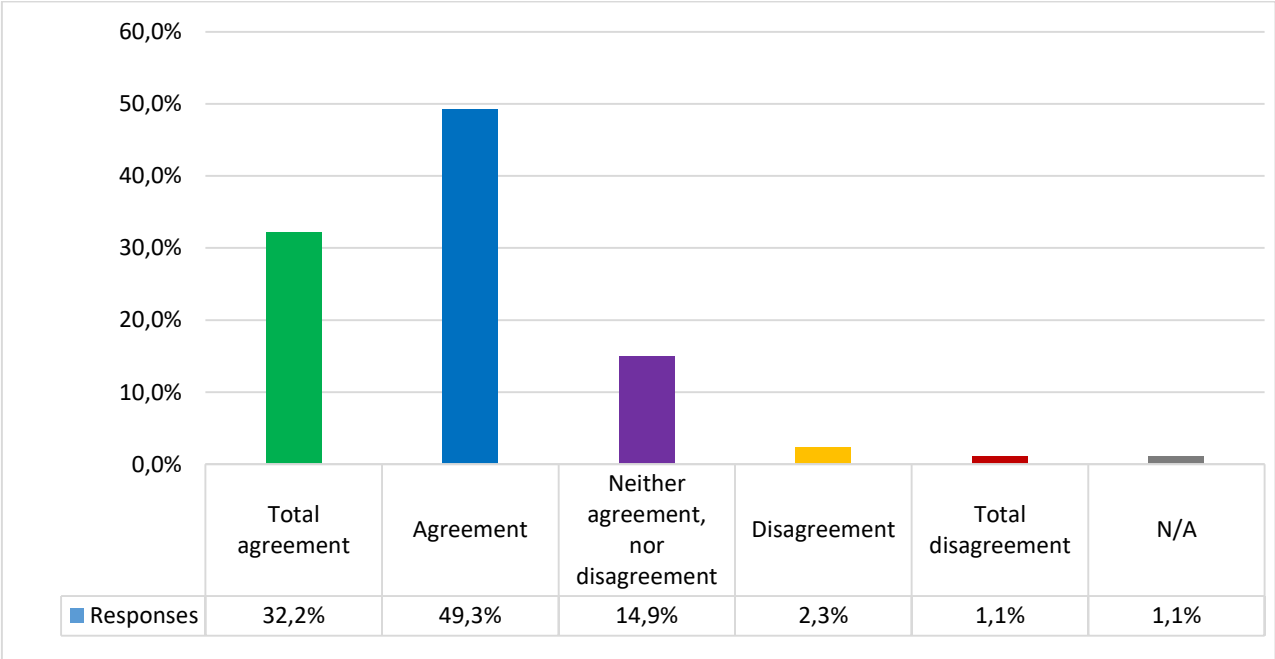
Q 1.3. TUM ensures that researchers are informed and that research is monitored so that it is relevant to society and does not duplicate research previously conducted elsewhere / on other projects. TUM condemns any plagiarism and promotes the originality of the research policy.



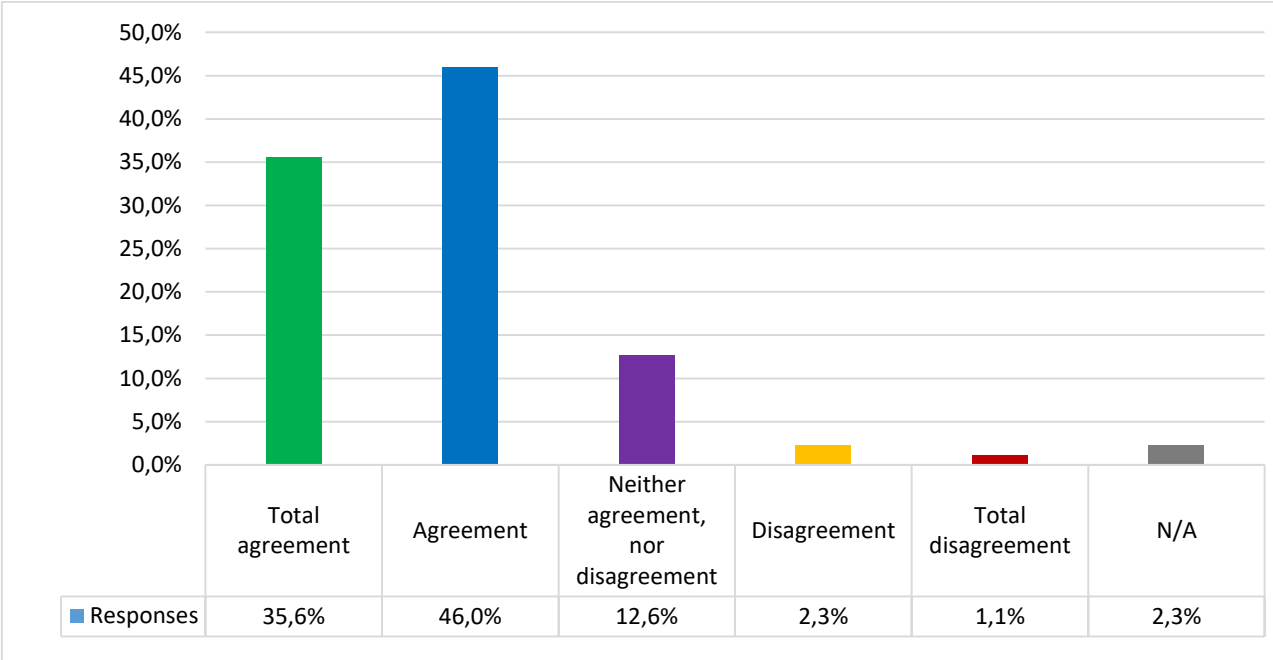
Q 1.4. TUM provides adequate means for researchers to become familiar with the institutional strategic objectives and the decisions taken by the existing governing bodies (Board of Directors / Senate / Scientific Council / Faculty Council).



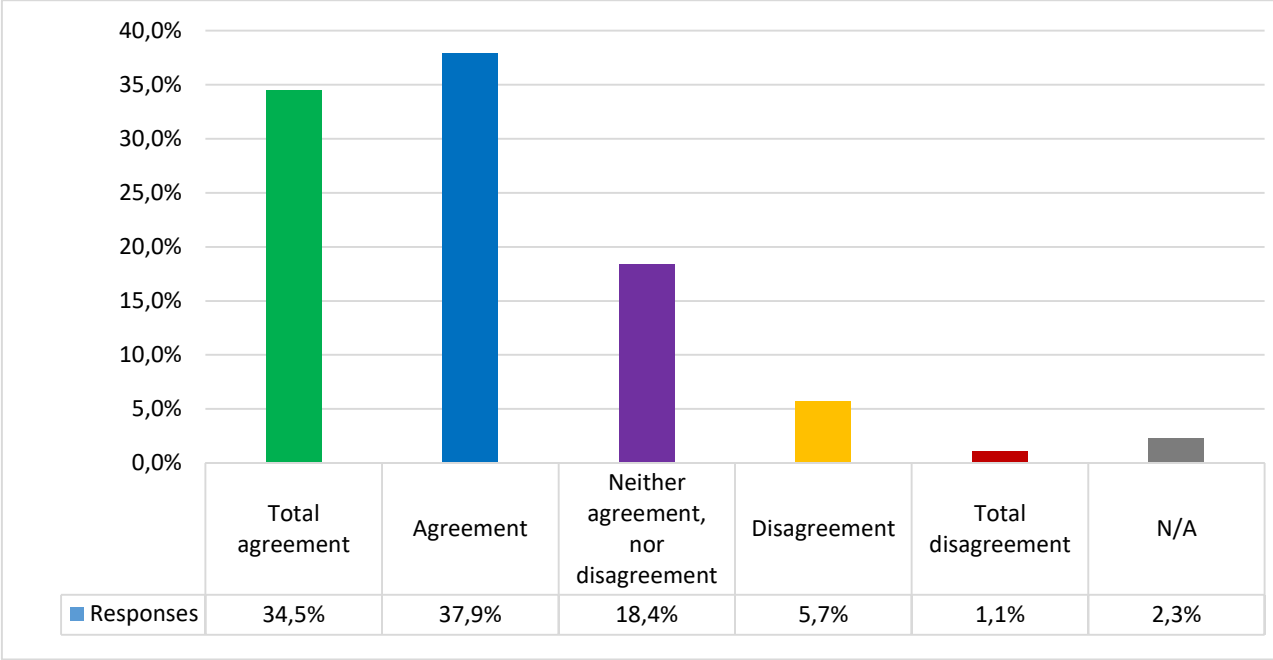
Q 1.5. TUM provides adequate means for researchers to know and comply with national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and / or working conditions. This includes the regulations on intellectual property rights and the requirements and conditions imposed by any sponsor or funder, regardless of the nature of their contract.



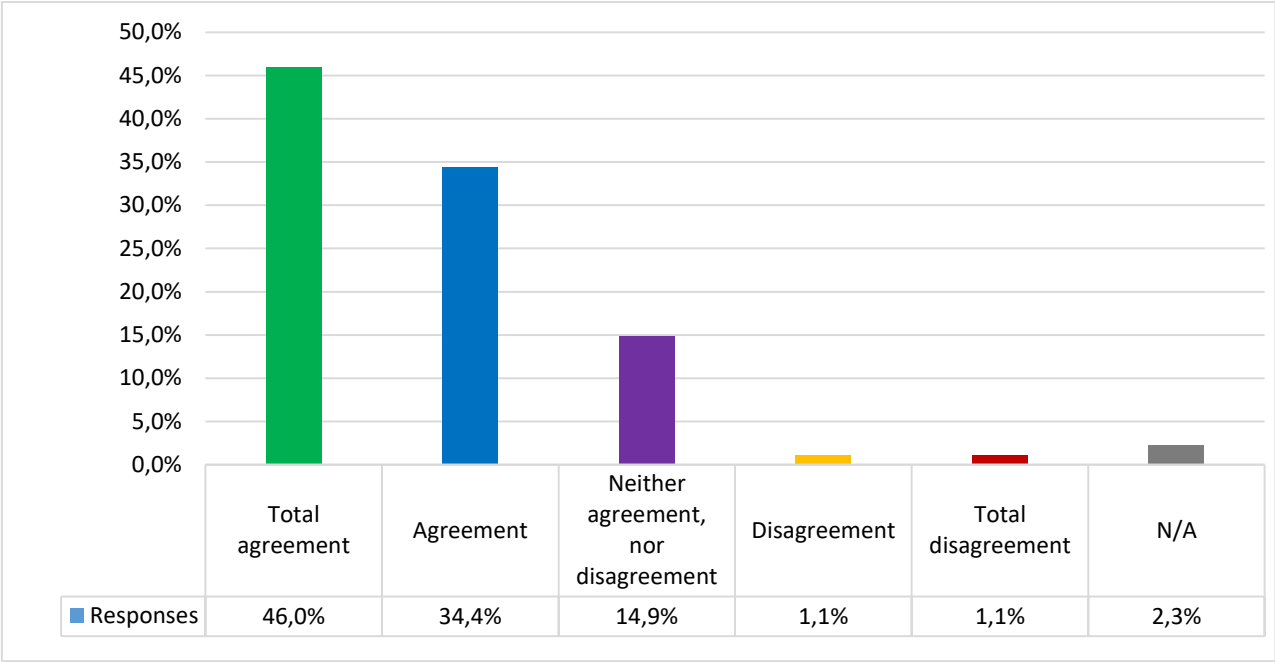
Q 1.6. TUM provides adequate means / information to make researchers aware that they are accountable to their employers, funders or other related public or private bodies, and, for ethical reasons, to society as a whole.



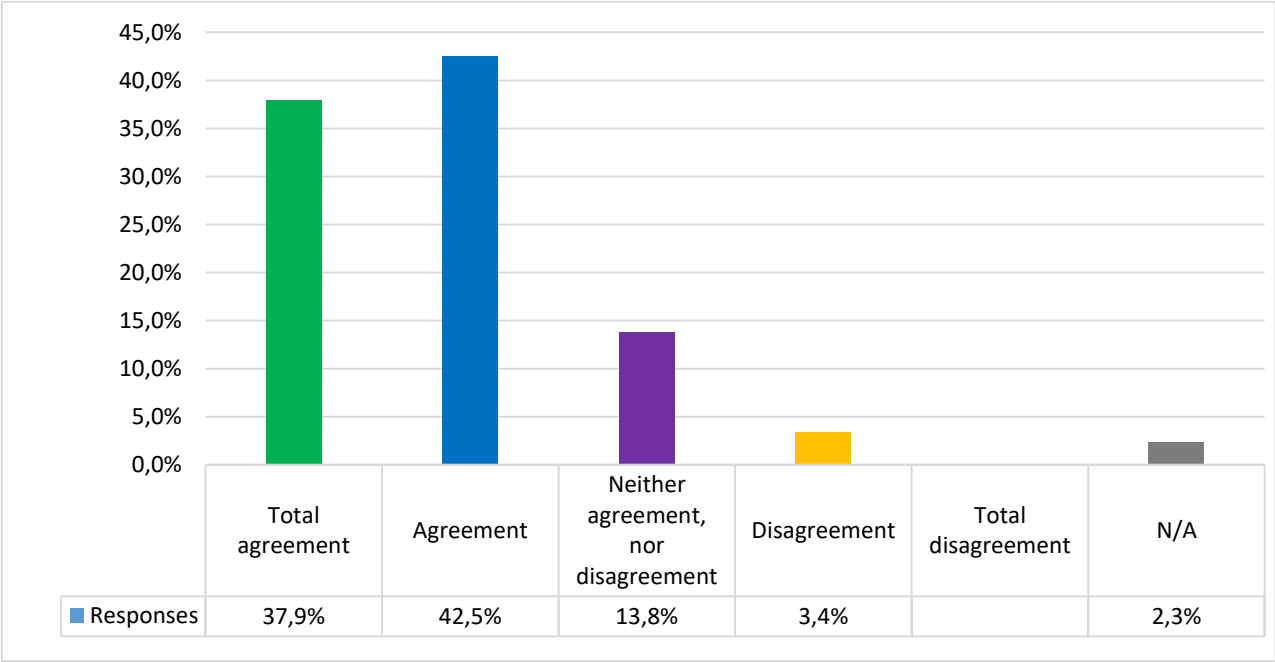
Q 1.7. TUM provides researchers with adequate means in accordance with the national research legislation in force: provides adequate working conditions, informs about necessary health and safety rules, creates conditions for data protection and confidentiality.



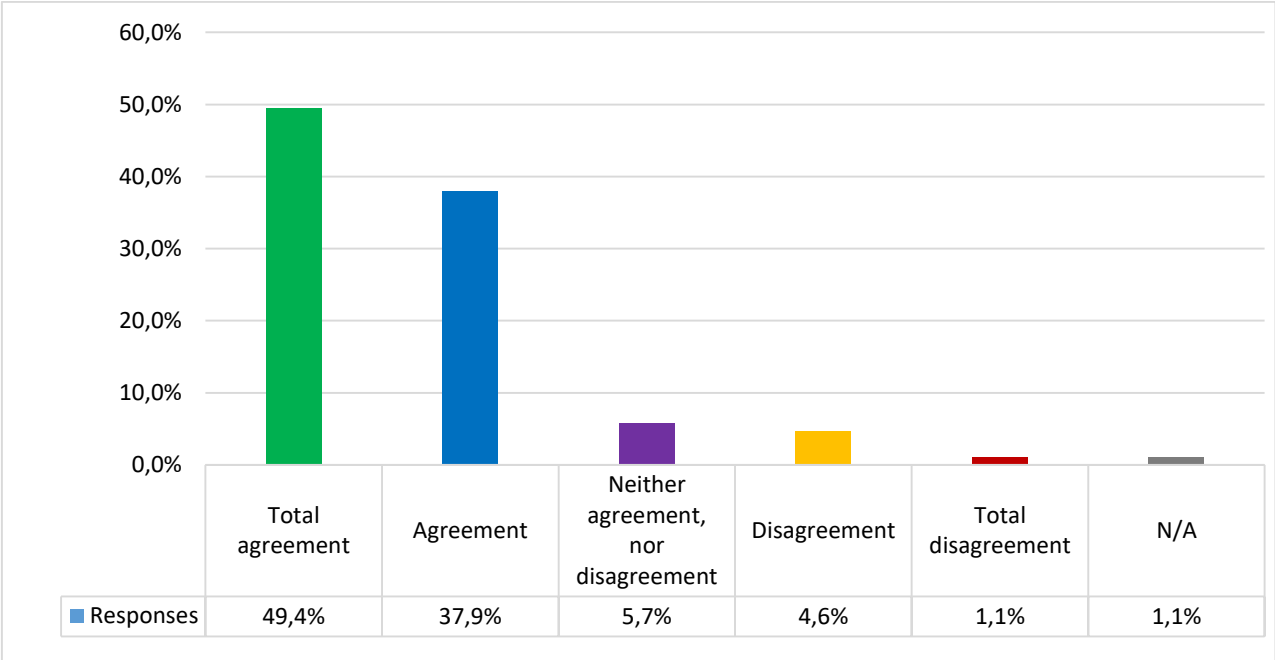
Q 1.8. TUM ensures the dissemination and exploitation of the research results (communication, presentation at trade fairs, technology transfer and, where appropriate, marketing of results).



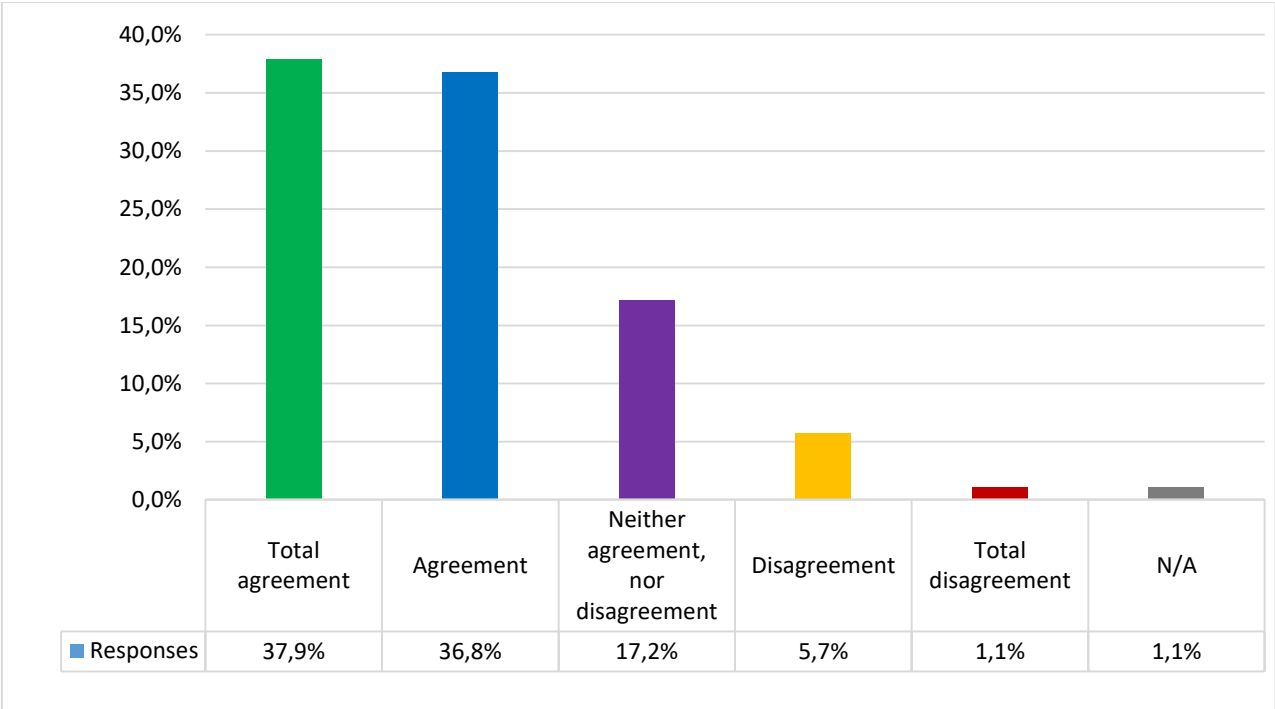
Q 1.9. TUM promotes and disseminates research in society in such a way that it can be understood by non-specialists, thus ensuring communication between science and the general public.



Q 1.10. TUM does not discriminate in any way against researchers based on gender, age, ethnicity, national, social or economic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability or political opinion.

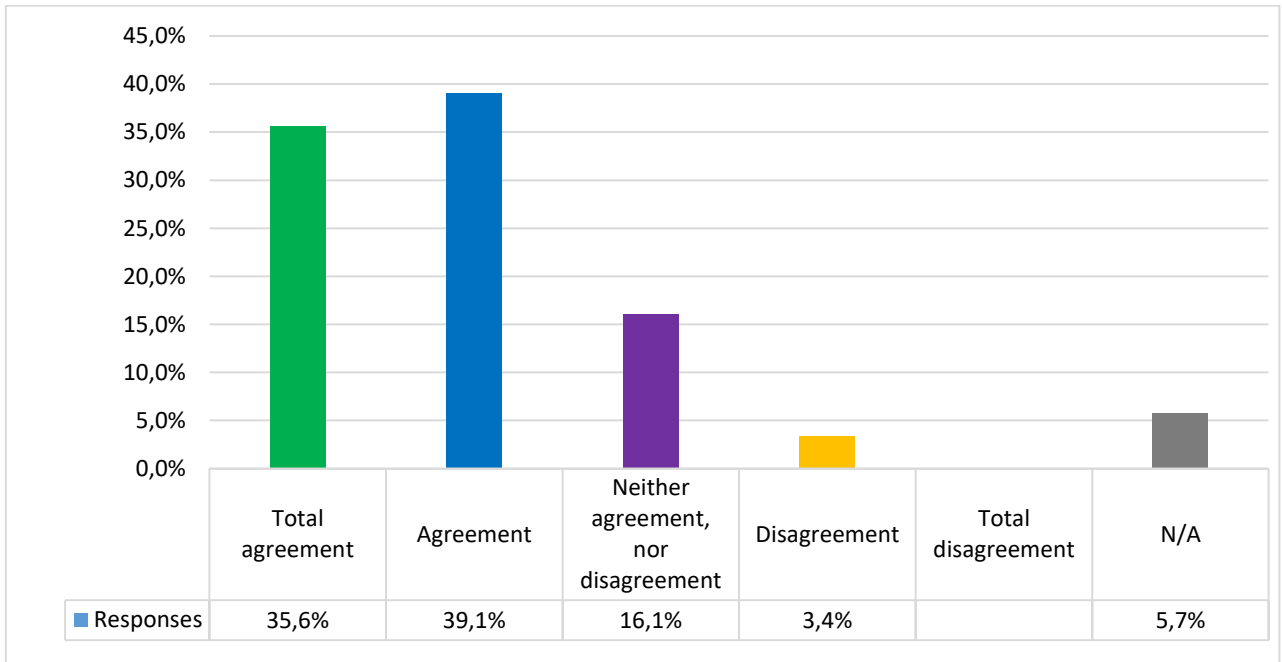


Q 1.11. TUM applies professional performance evaluation systems with regard to researchers (including senior researchers) on a regular basis and in a transparent manner.

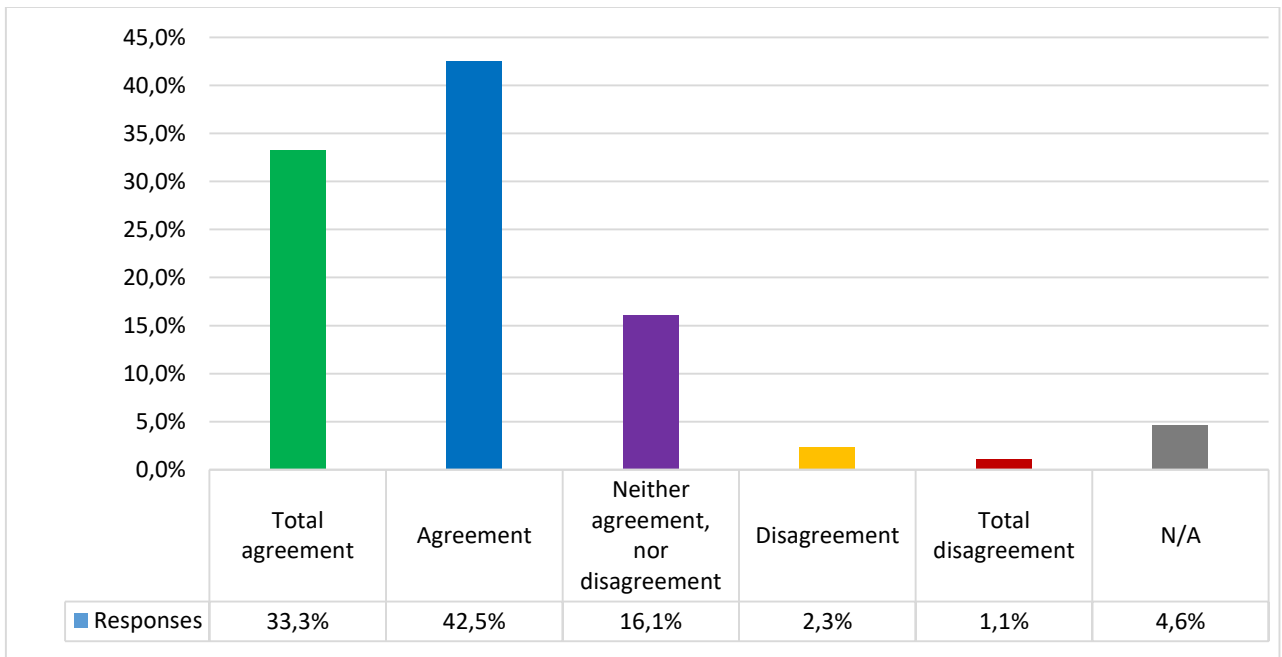


2. Recruitment and Selection

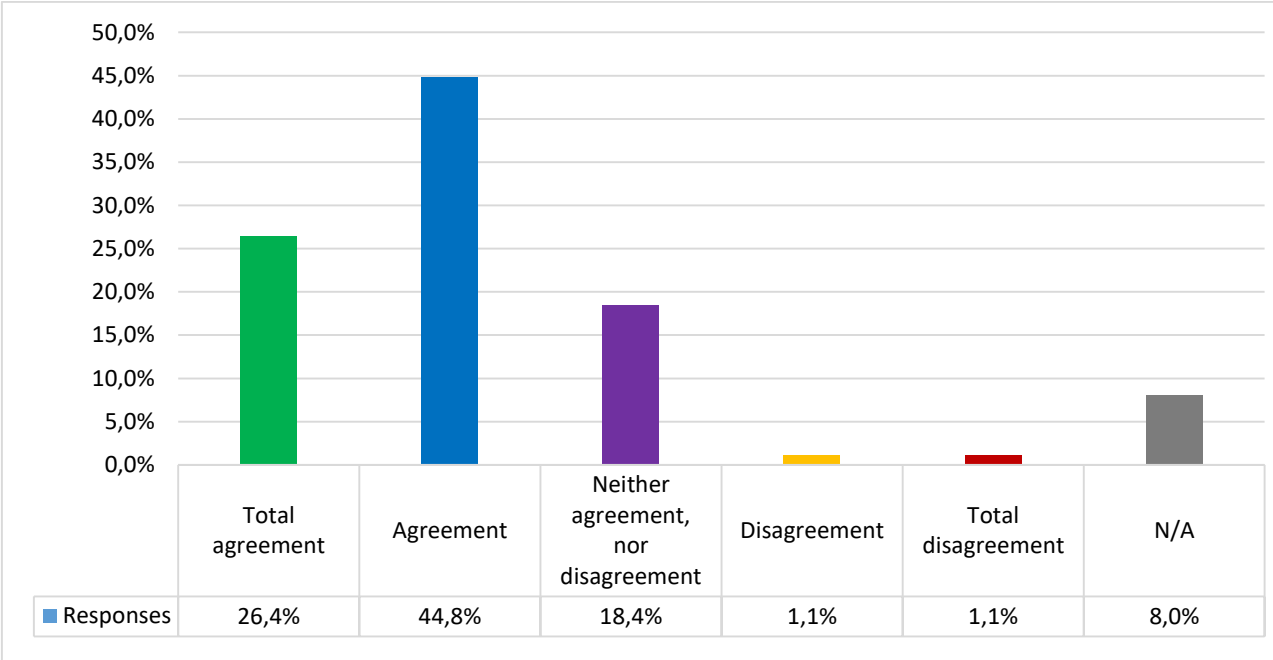
Q 2.1. In the recruitment process TUM provides information on the requirement of researchers, which are clearly specified and do not limit the access of disadvantaged groups or researchers returning to a research career.



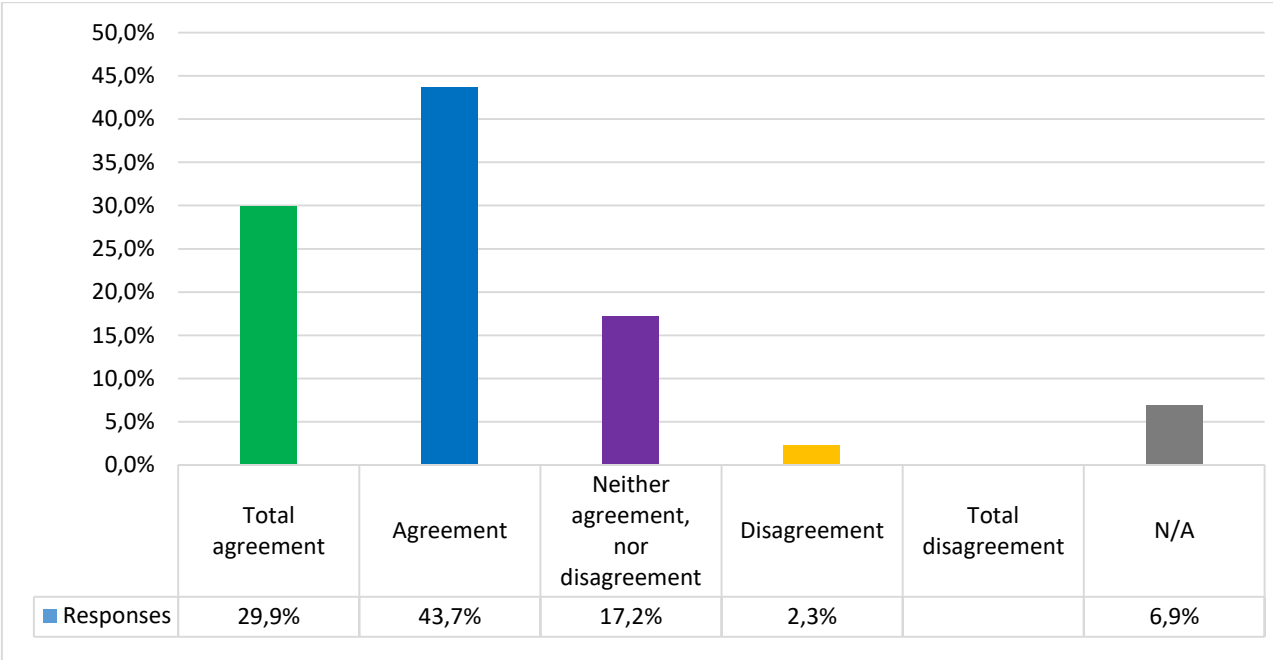
Q 2.2. TUM applies open, transparent recruitment procedures, adapted to the type of research positions announced. The announcements contain a comprehensive description of the knowledge and skills required, and the dead-line for the submission of dossiers is realistic and sufficient.



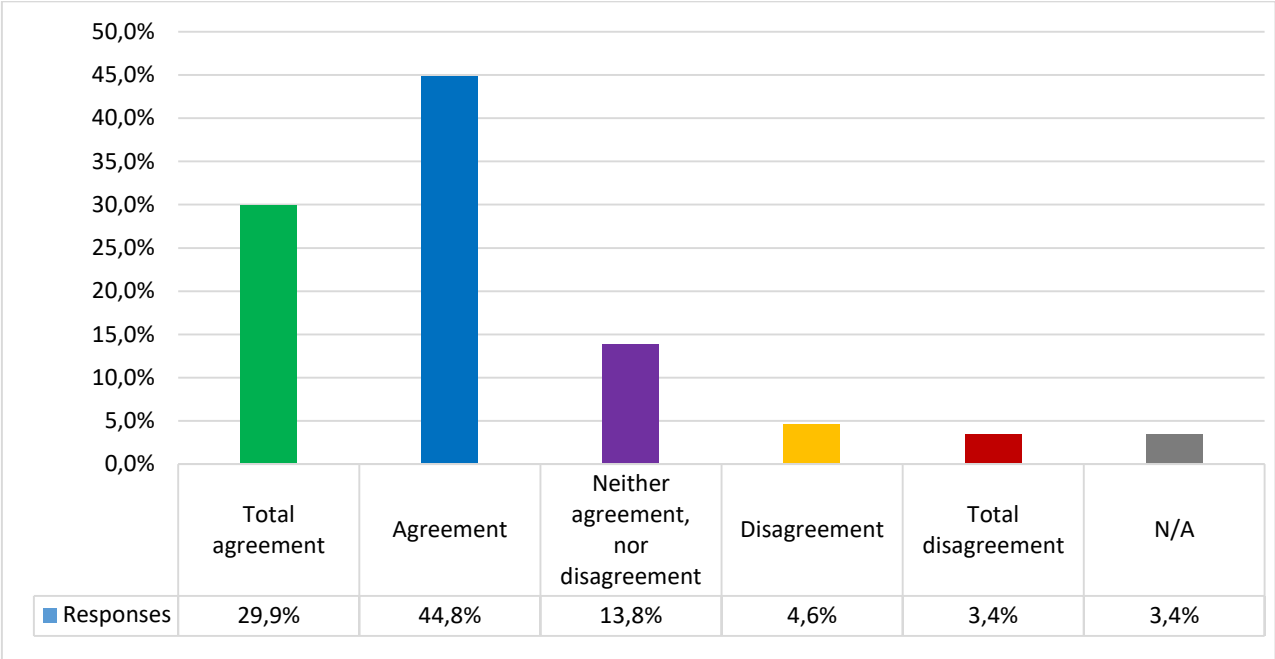
Q 2.3. The selection committees, chosen or appointed by TUM, combine expertise and competence and ensure an appropriate gender balance and, where appropriate, include members from different sectors and disciplines, with relevant experience for the evaluation of the candidates.



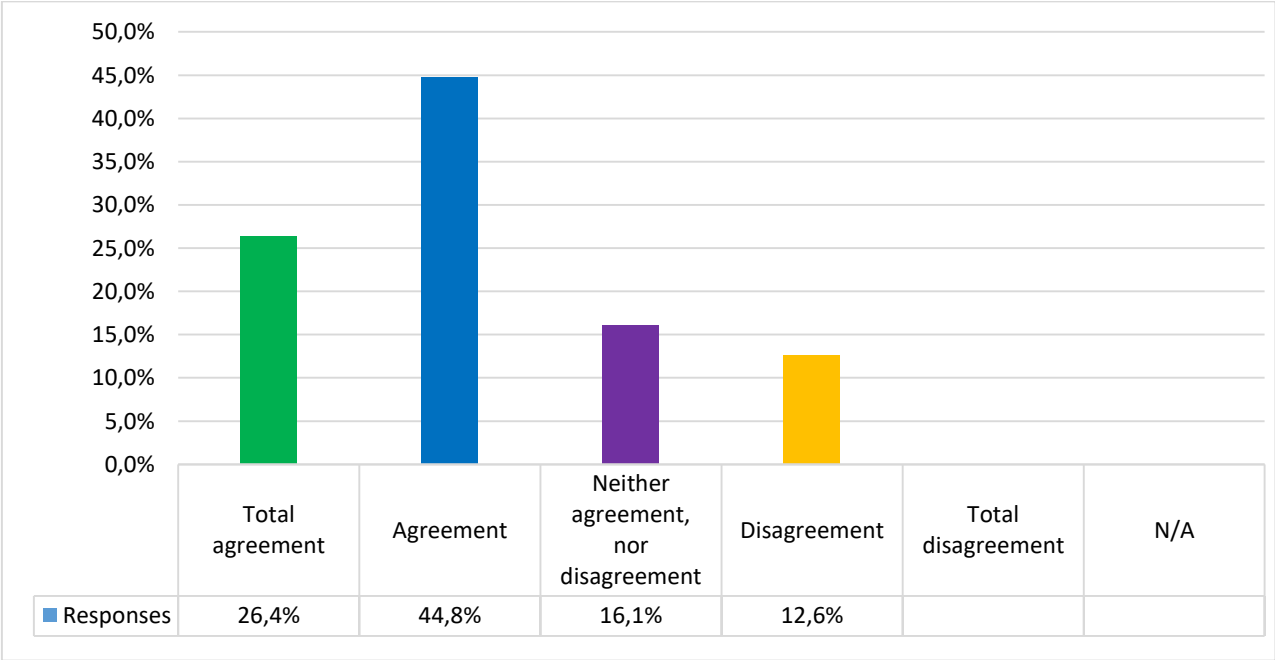
Q 2.4. Before selection, TUM informs about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. After the selection process, TUM informs about the strengths and weaknesses of submitted applications.



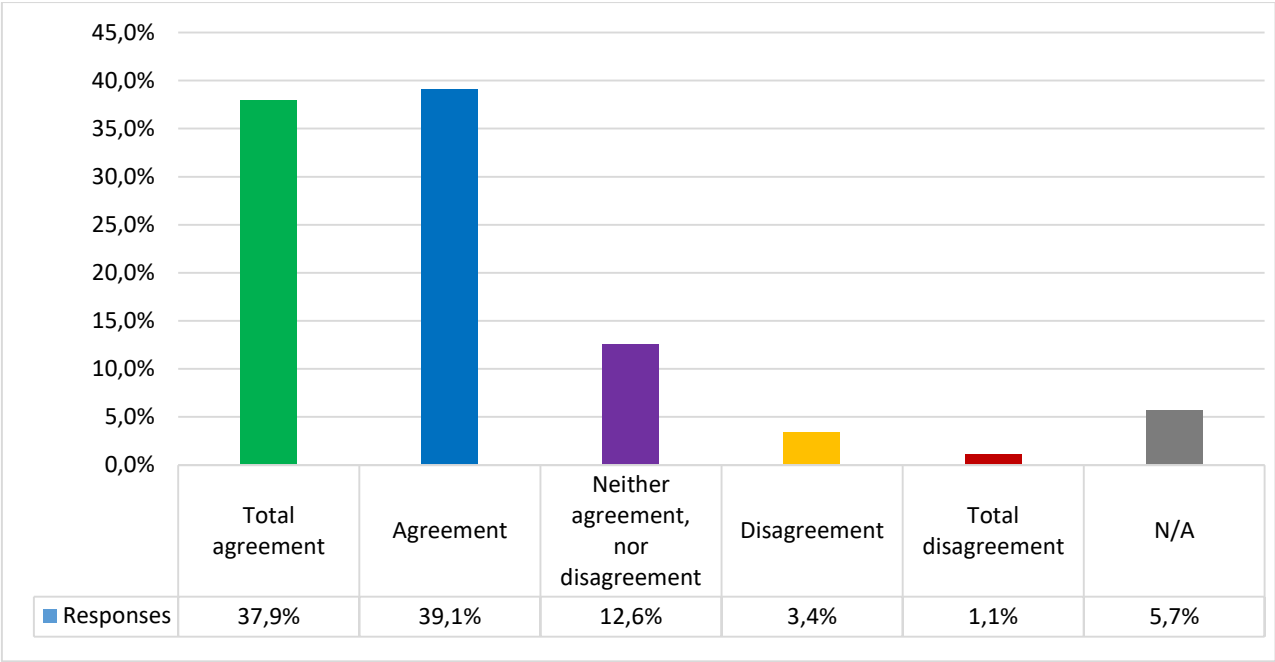
Q 2.5. TUM evaluates merit qualitatively and quantitatively, focusing on outstanding results in a diverse career and not just the number of publications (bibliometric indices are appropriately balanced in a number of evaluation criteria, such as teaching, supervision or coordination, teamwork, knowledge transfer, research and innovation management and dissemination activities for public information).



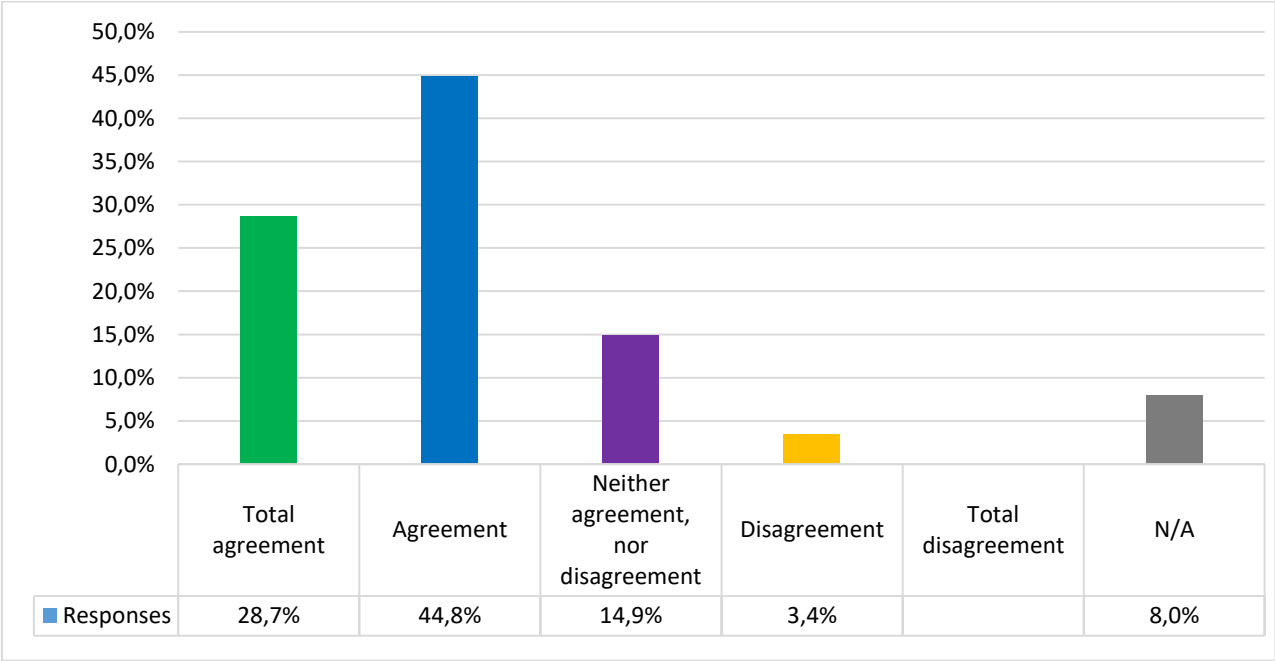
Q 2.6. TUM does not penalize career breaks or changes in the chronological order of CVs, therefore candidates are allowed to submit evidence-based CVs that reflect a representative range of achievements and qualifications appropriate to the position for which the recruitment is made.



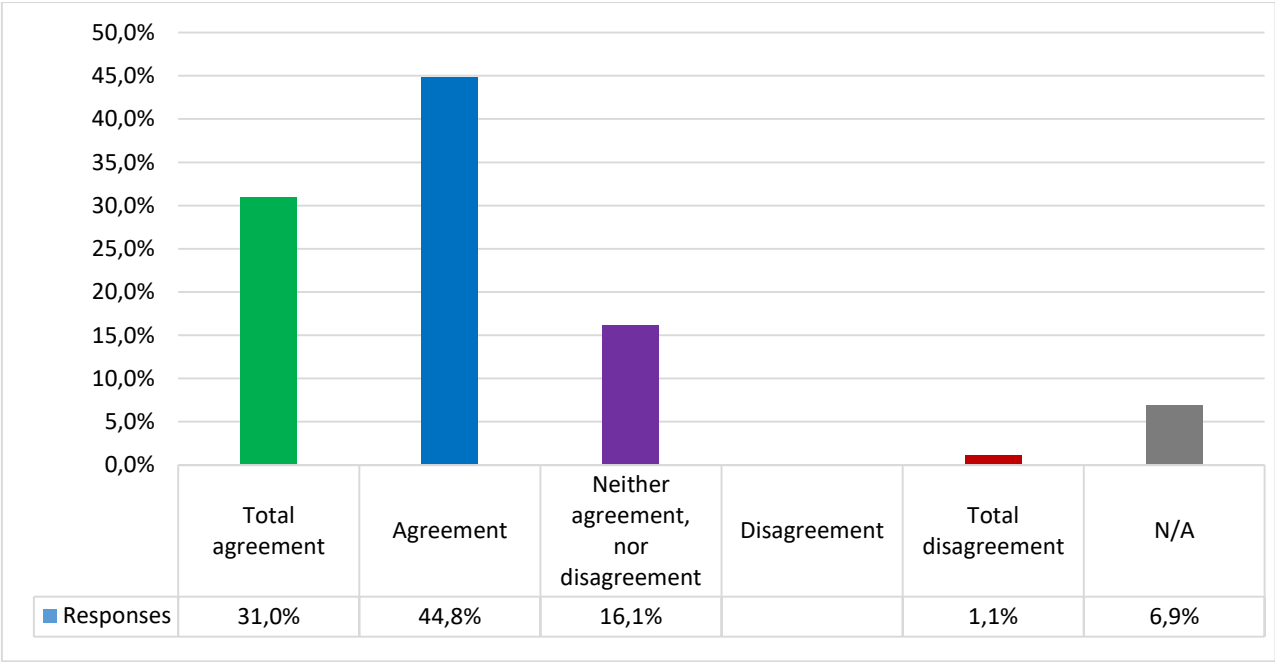
Q 2.7. TUM considers any mobility experience to be a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher, for example, a stay in another country / region or in another research setting (public or private) or a change from one discipline or sector to another, either as part of initial research training, or at a later stage of the research career, or virtual mobility experience.



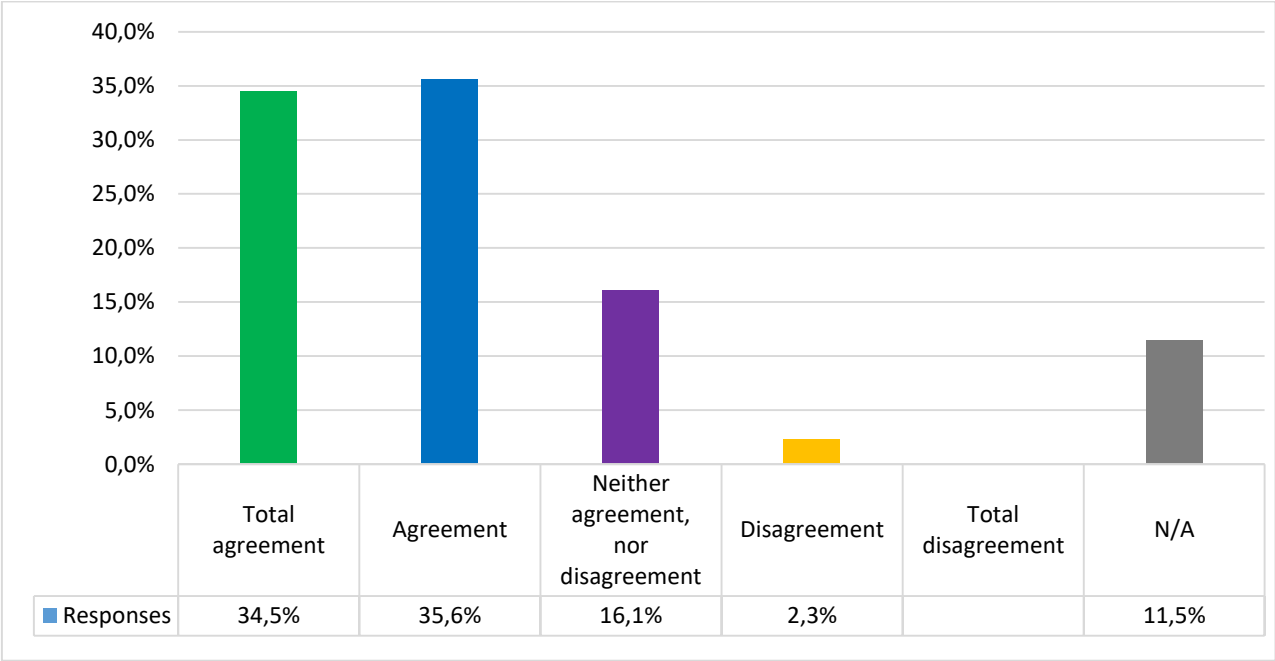
Q 2.8. TUM provides for the appropriate assessment of the academic and professional qualifications, including non-formal qualifications, of all researchers, especially in the context of international and professional mobility.



Q 2.9. The required qualification levels are in line with the needs of the job and there are no barriers set for admission. TUM recognizes and evaluates qualifications focusing on the person's accomplishments rather than their circumstances or the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were obtained.

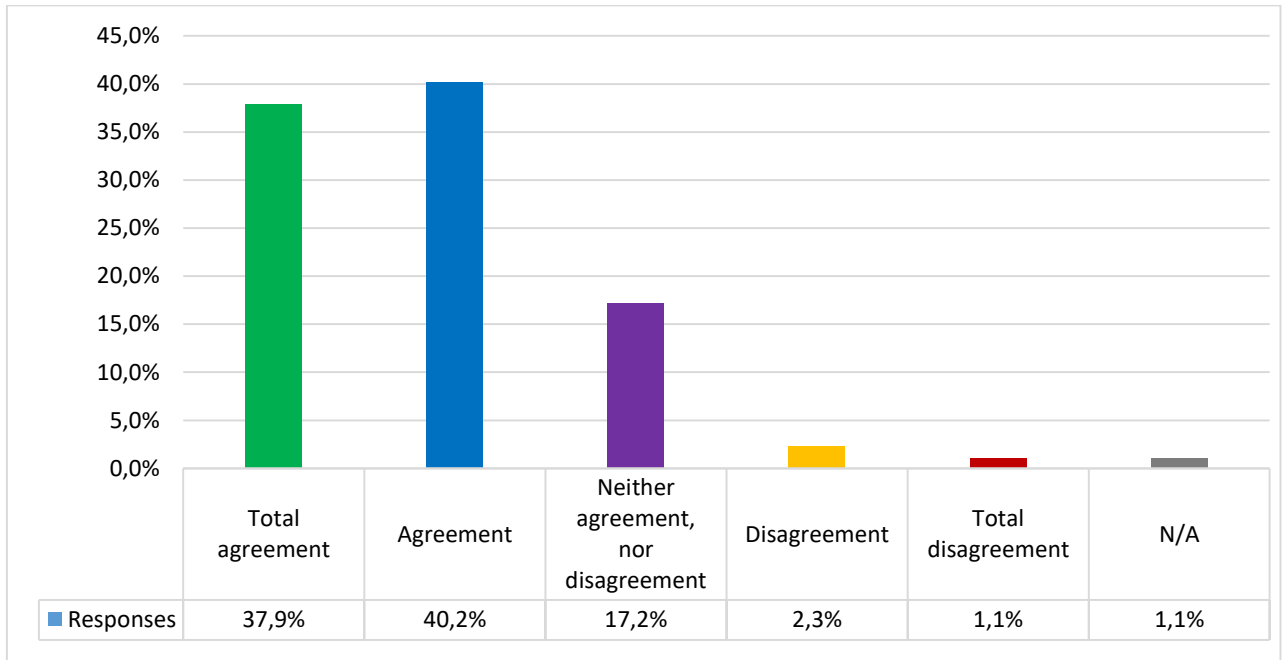


Q 2.10. TUM follows clear and explicit rules for the recruitment and promotion of postdoctoral researchers, as postdoctoral status should be transitional, with the main aim of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career in the context of a long-term career.

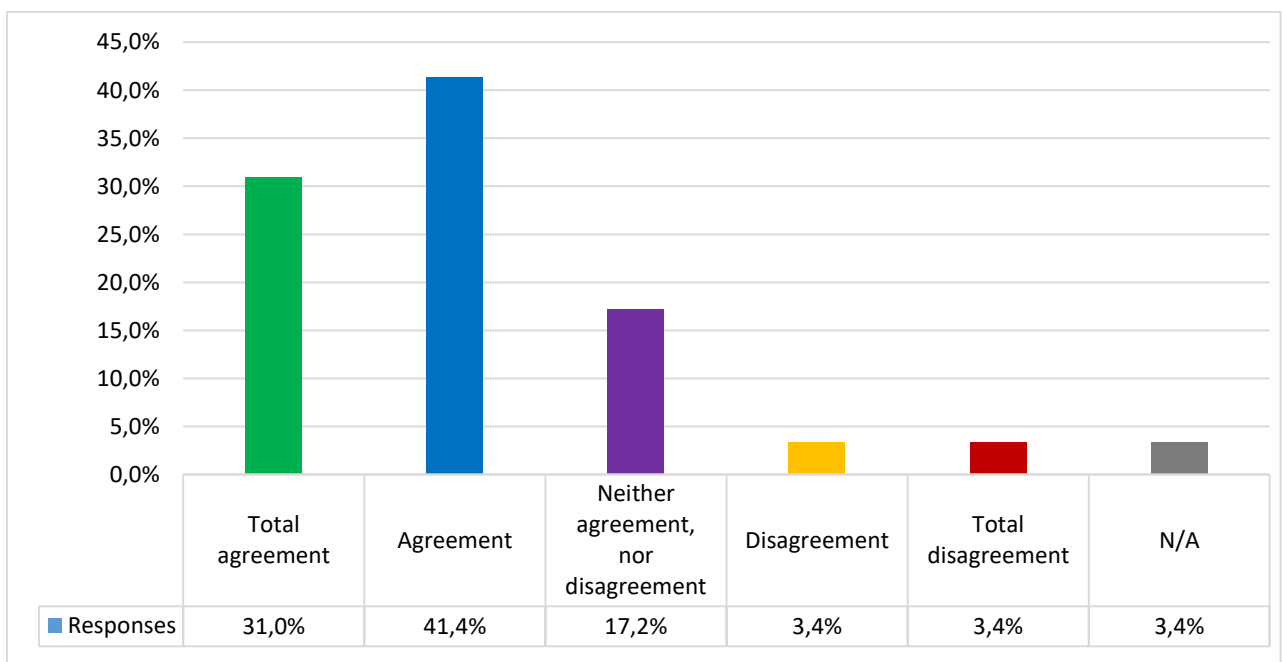


3. Working conditions and social security

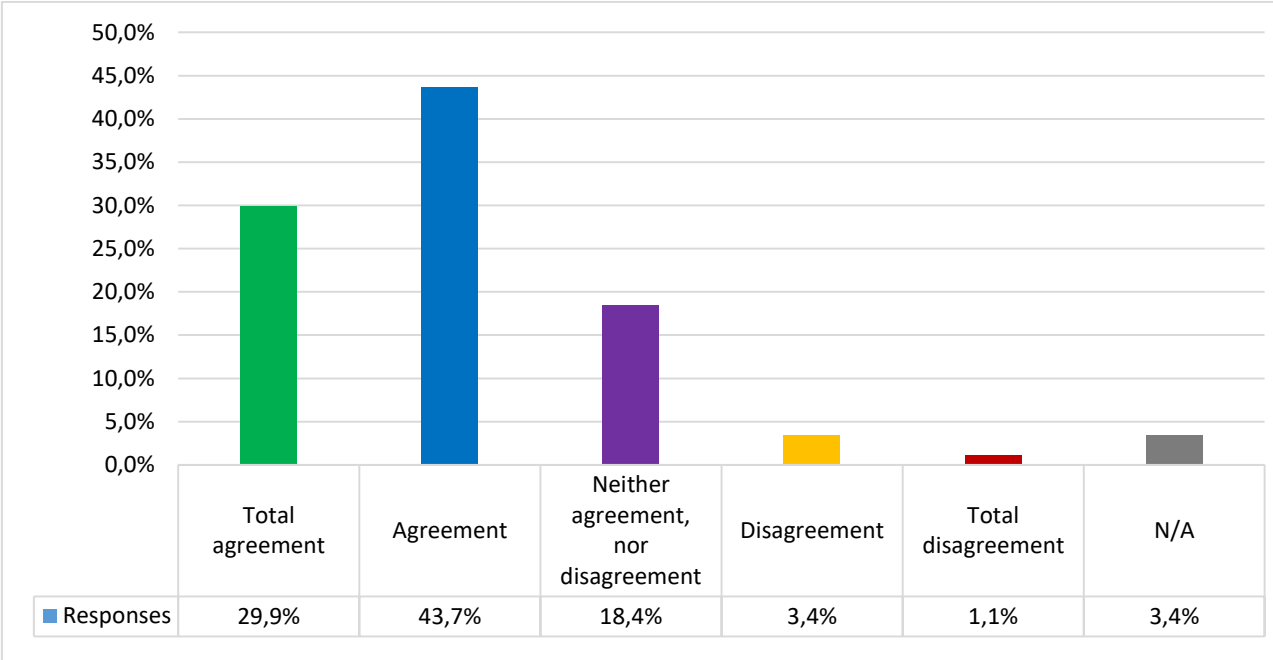
Q 3.1. All researchers involved in a research career are recognized by TUM as professionals and are treated accordingly, regardless of their classification.



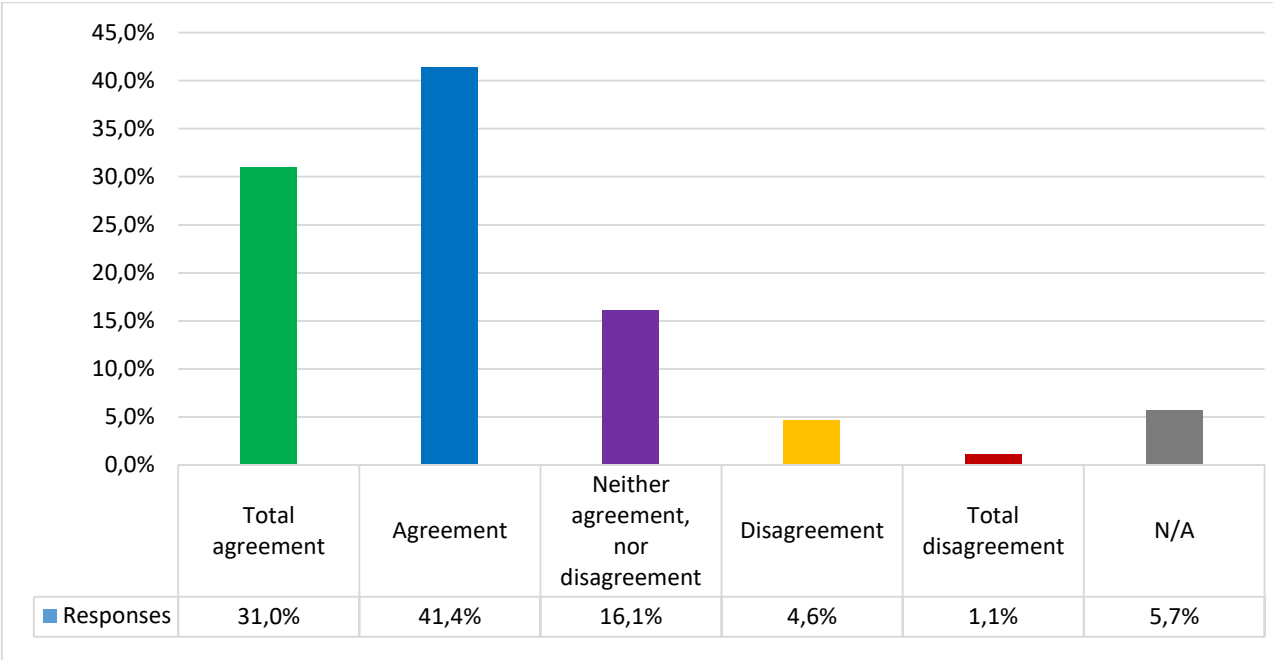
Q 3.2. TUM promotes the creation of a stimulating research environment and / or a research training environment (providing appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities) and the achievement of national or sectoral regulations on research health and safety.



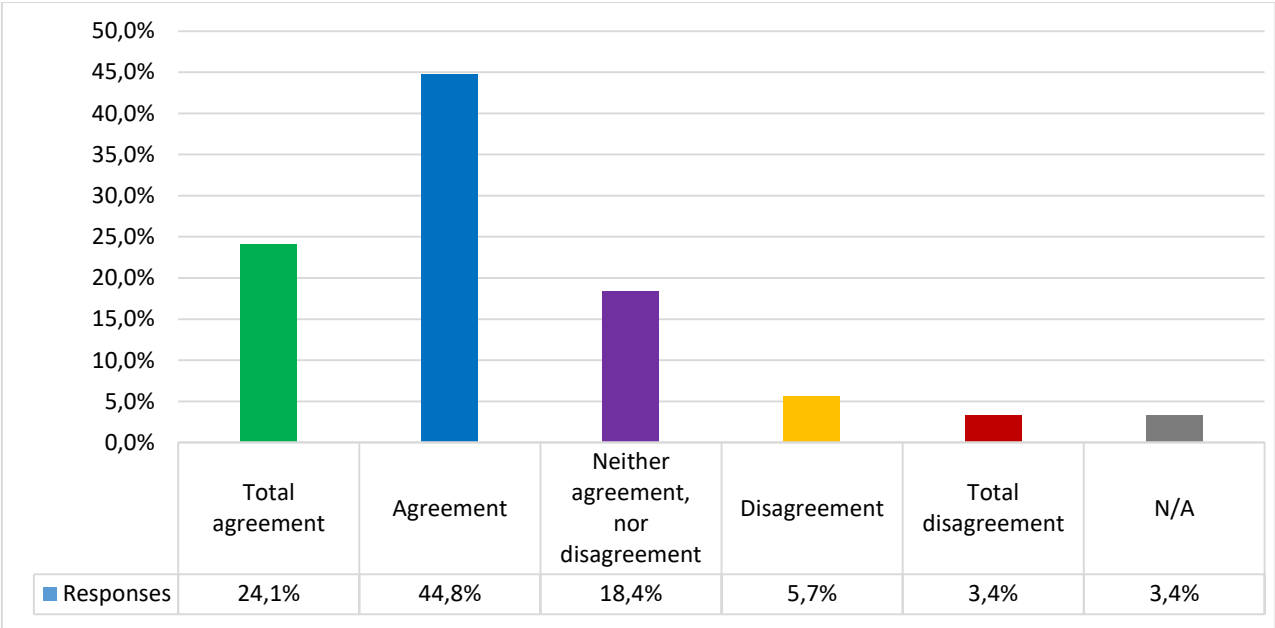
Q 3.3. TUM provides, where appropriate, the flexibility considered essential for the successful performance of research, in accordance with the national legislation in force, providing opportunities to enable researchers to combine family life and work, children and career.



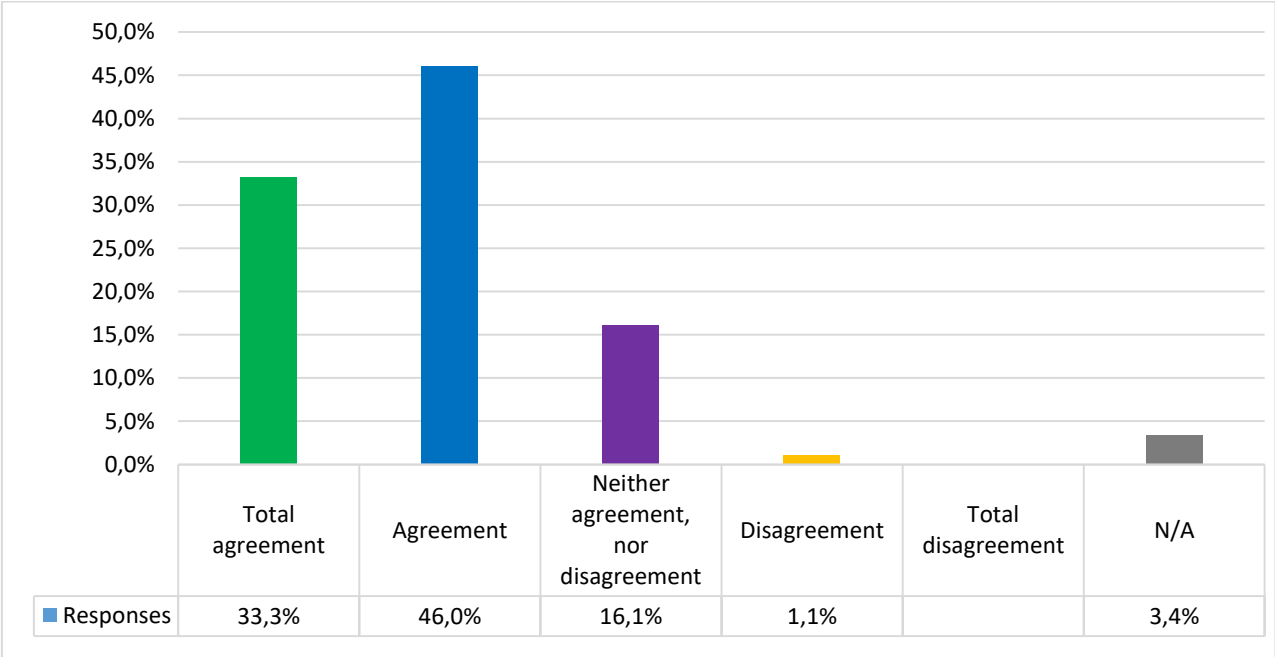
Q 3.4. TUM ensures that the performance of researchers is not undermined by the instability of employment contracts and is therefore committed, as far as possible, to improving the stability of employment conditions for researchers.



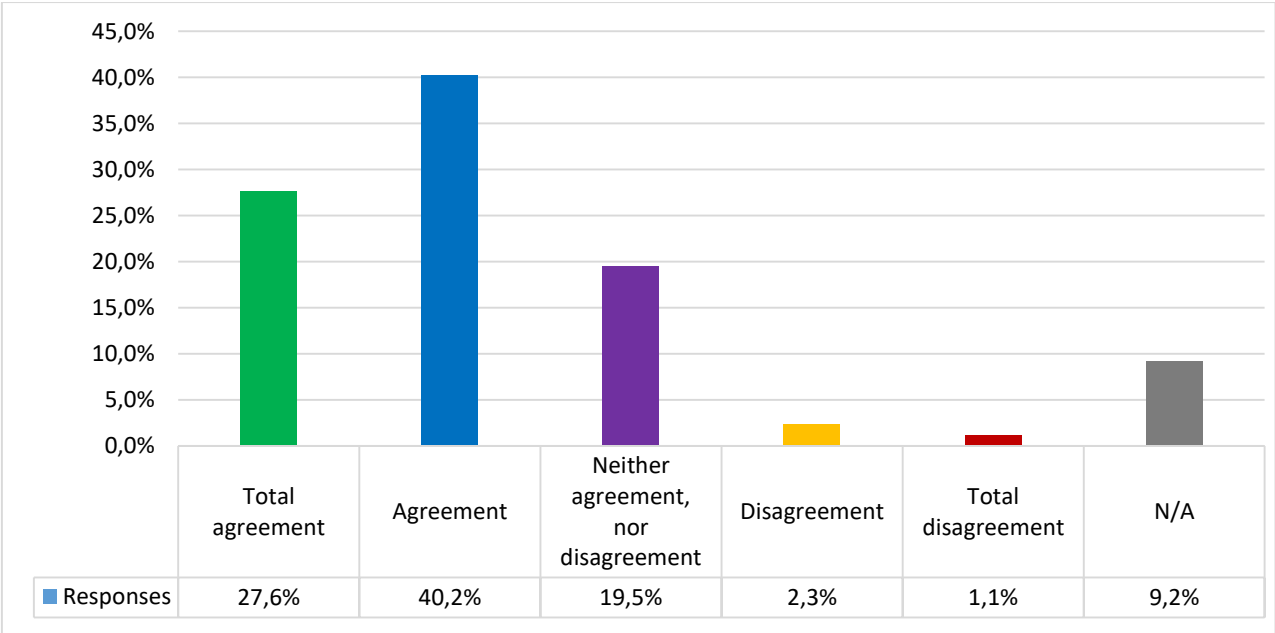
Q 3.5. TUM ensures that researchers at all stages of their career benefit from fair and attractive funding conditions and / or salaries with adequate and equitable social security provisions (including sickness and parental benefits, pension rights and unemployment benefits) in accordance with existing provisions, national law and national or institutional collective agreements.



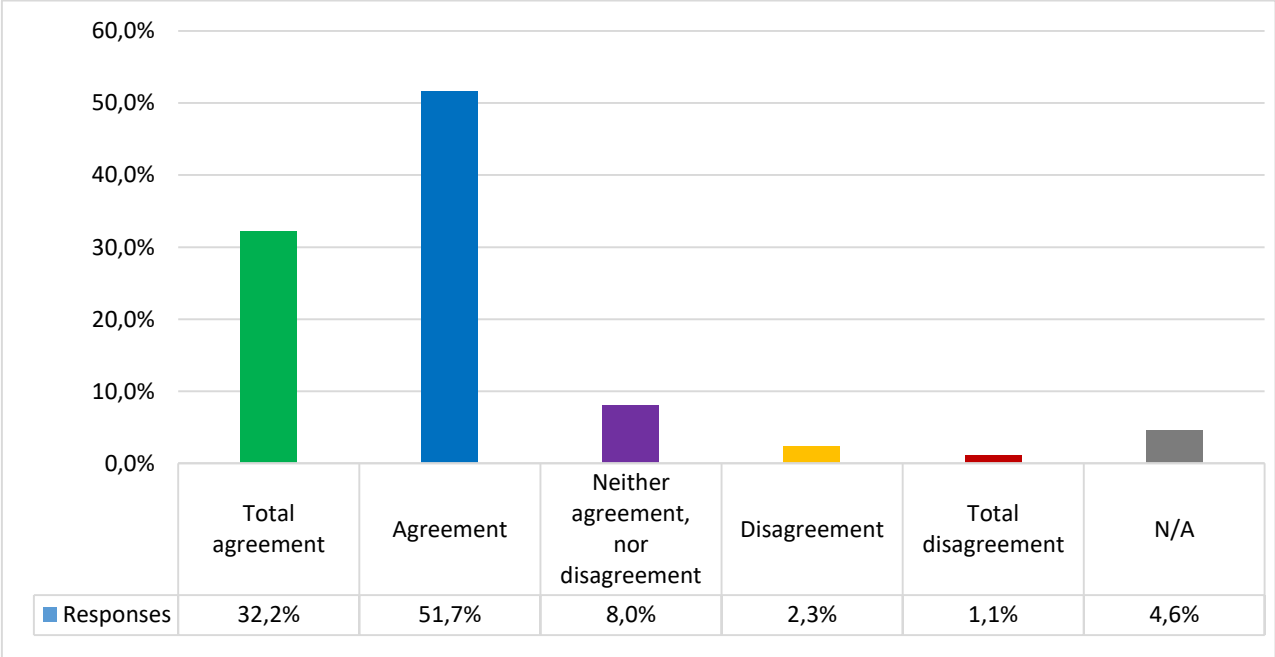
Q 3.6. TUM pursues a representative gender balance at all staff levels, including supervisory and management. This is done on the basis of a policy of equal opportunities for recruitment and later stages of the career, without, however, taking precedence over the criteria of quality and competence. In order to ensure equality, the selection and evaluation committees have an appropriate gender balance.



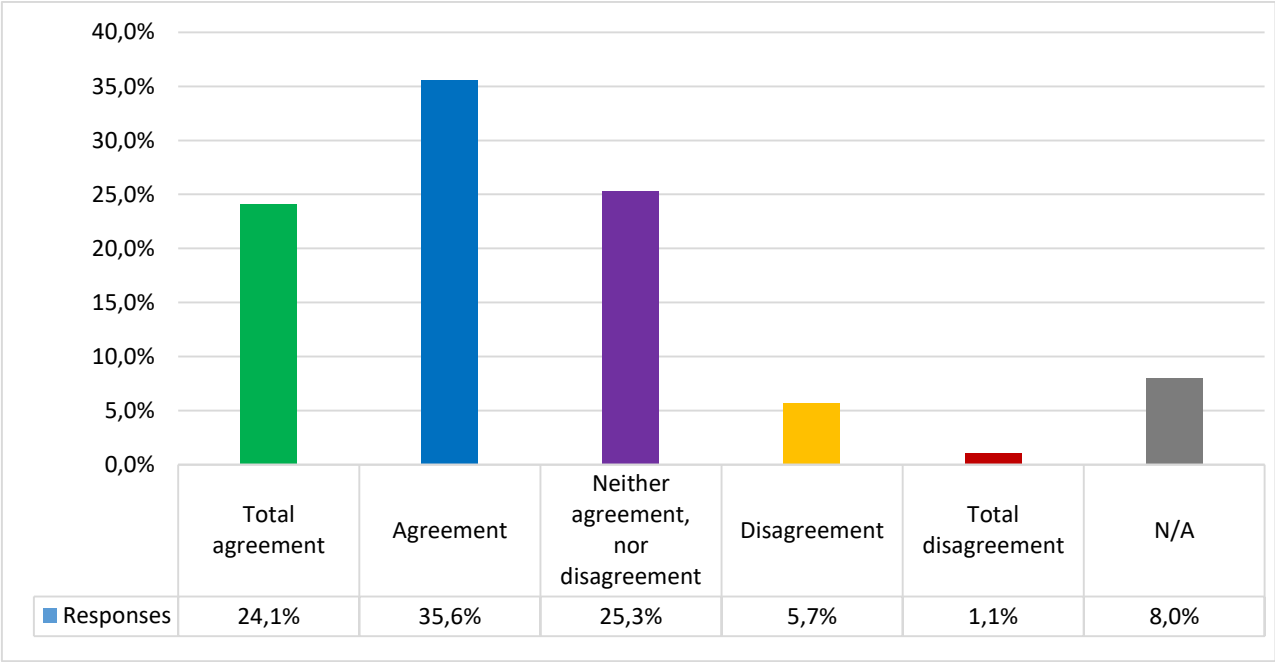
Q 3.7. TUM has defined a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, and provides guidance and / or mentoring for the personal and professional development of researchers to help reduce insecurities in the professional future.



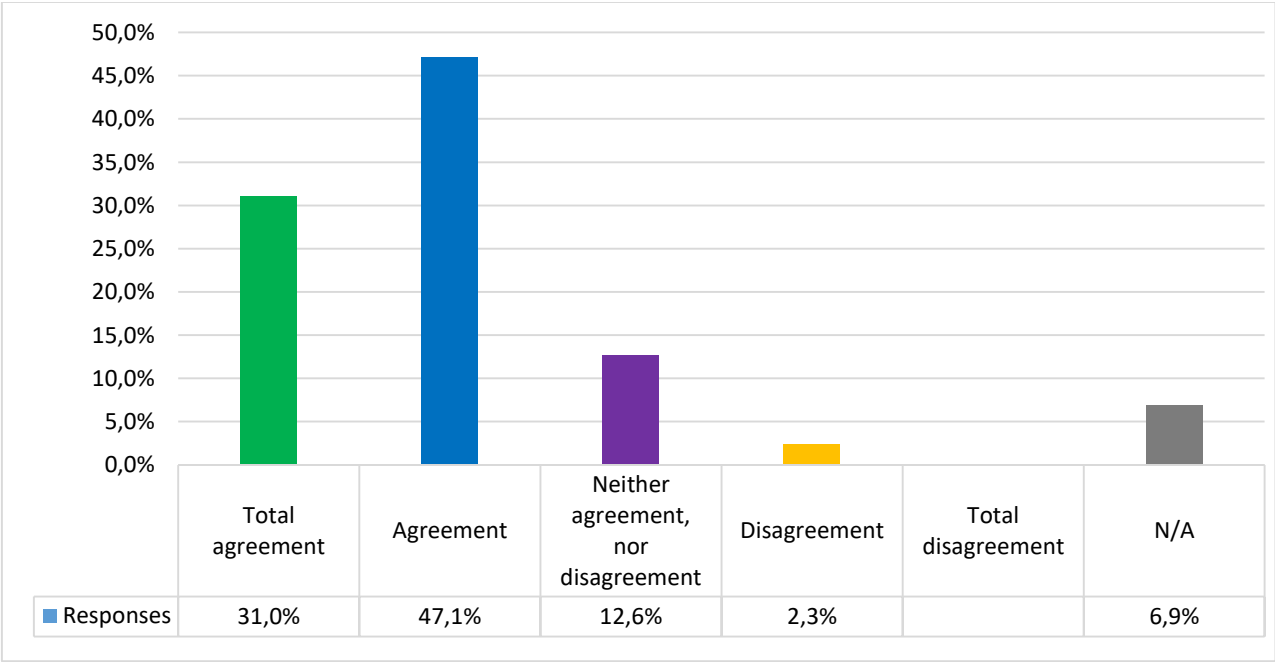
Q 3.8. TUM recognizes the value of geographical, cross-sectoral, inter- and cross-disciplinary and virtual mobility, as well as mobility between the public and private sectors as an important means of improving scientific knowledge and professional development at any stage in a researcher's career.



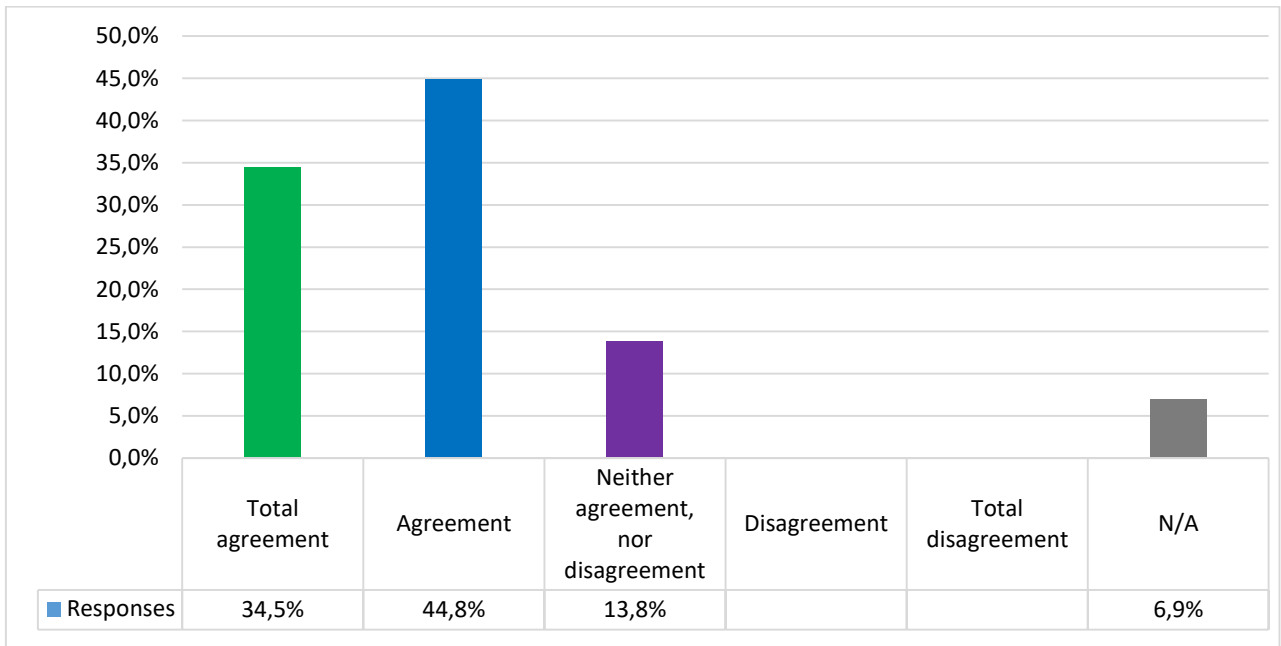
Q 3.9. TUM offers researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual status, career guidance and employment assistance.



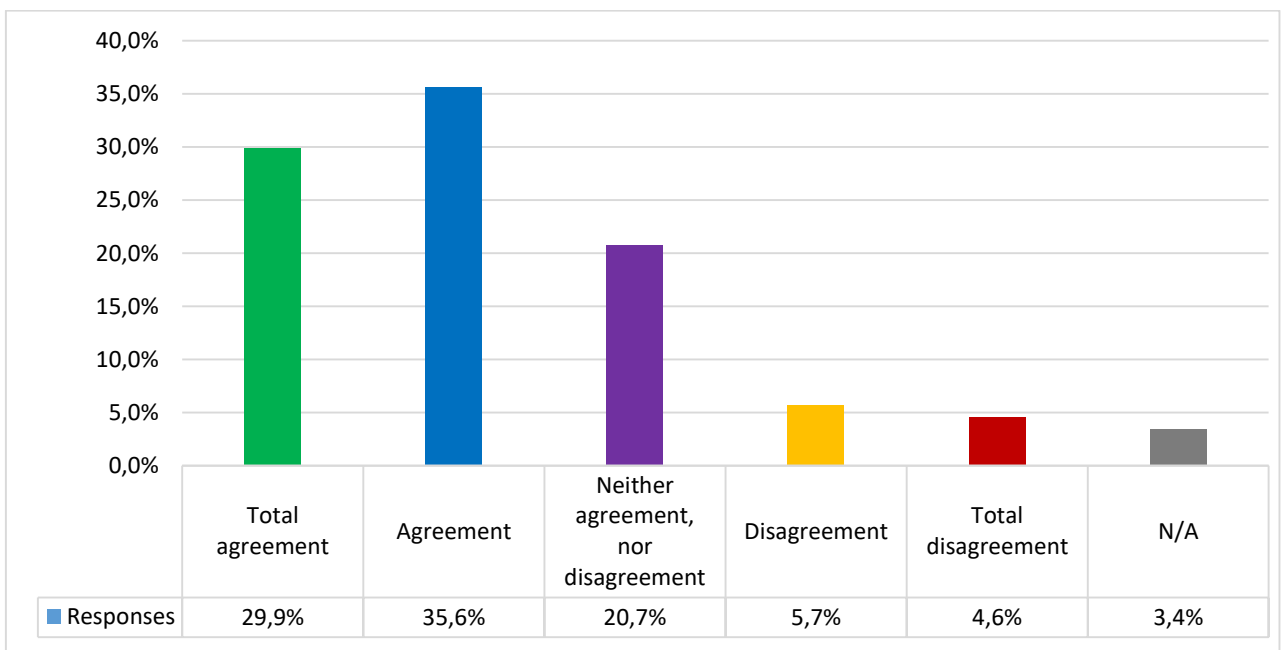
Q 3.10. TUM provides researchers at any stage of their career with the opportunity to benefit from the exploitation of their research and development results through legal protection and, in particular, through adequate protection of intellectual property rights, including copyright.



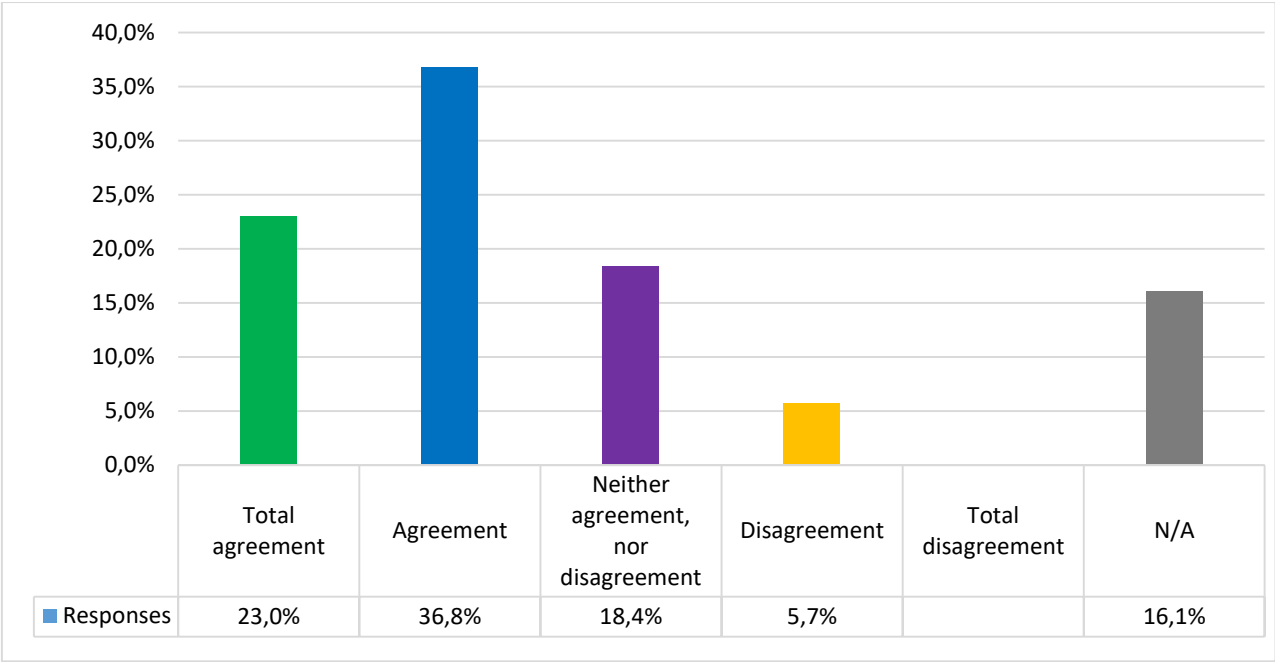
Q 3.11. Co-authorship is viewed positively by institutions when evaluating staff, as evidence of a constructive approach to research. Therefore, TUM develops strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research career, with the necessary framework conditions for them to enjoy the right to be recognized and listed and / or cited, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc., or to publish their own research results independently of their supervisors.



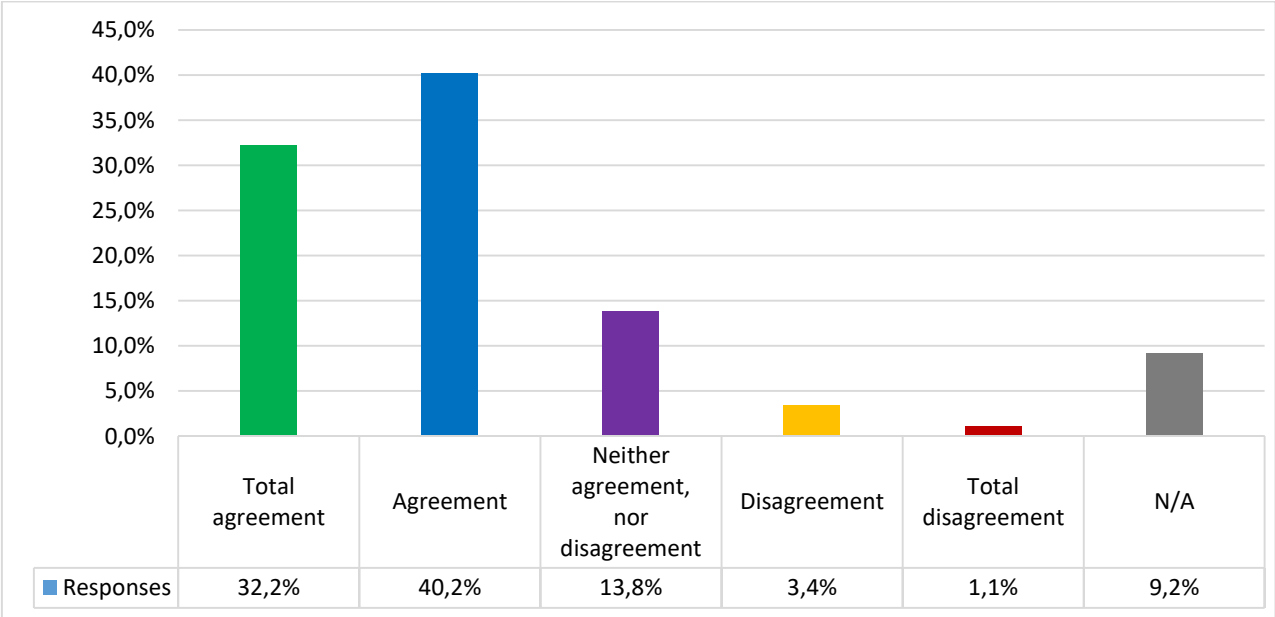
Q 3.12. TUM provides adequate remuneration for teaching. The teaching activity, as well as the time spent by senior members of the novice teaching staff as part of their teaching commitment, are taken into account in the assessment systems.



Q 3.13. TUM has established appropriate procedures to deal with researchers' complaints / appeals, including disputes between supervisors and trainee researchers, providing all research staff with confidential and informal assistance in resolving labour disputes and grievances, in order to promote a fair attitude.

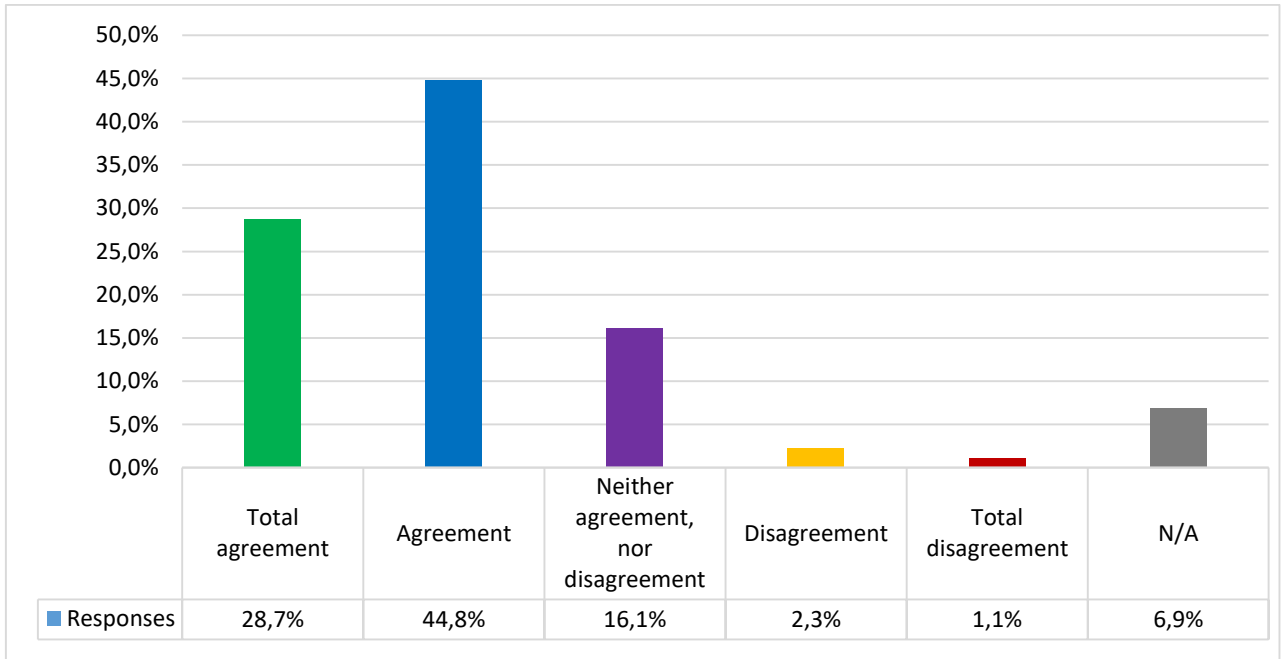


Q 3.14. TUM allows researchers to be legitimately represented in the relevant information, consultation and decision-making bodies of the institution, to protect and promote their individual and collective interests as professionals and to actively contribute to the operation of the institution.

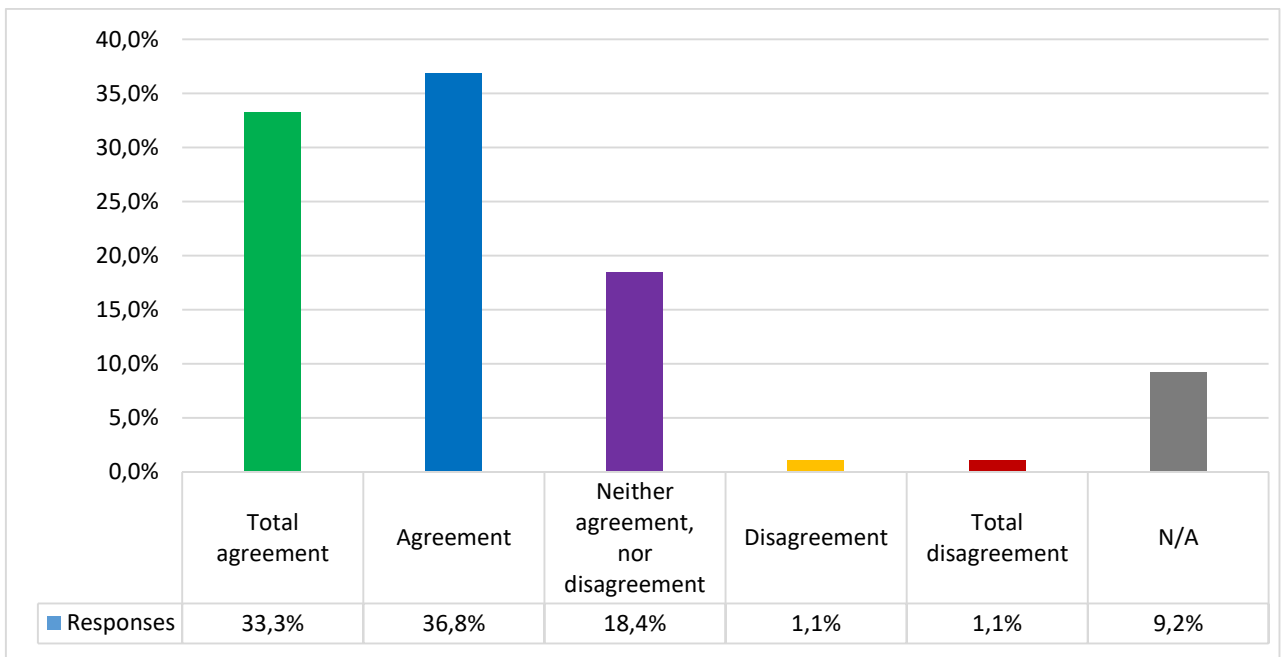


4. Education and careers

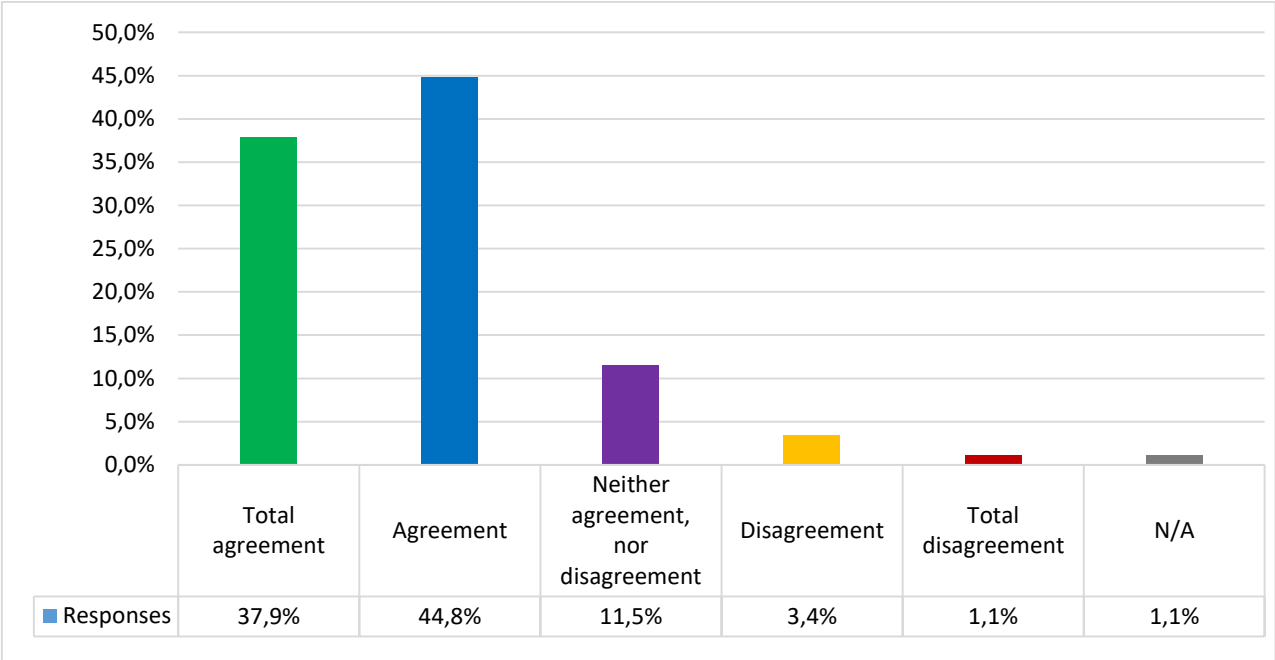
Q 4.1. TUM promotes and evaluates good practices between supervisors and trainee researchers in order to benefit from their collaboration (ensuring structured / regular continuity, monitoring work progress and research results, feedback through reports and seminars, working in accordance with the agreed programs, reference stages, research results).



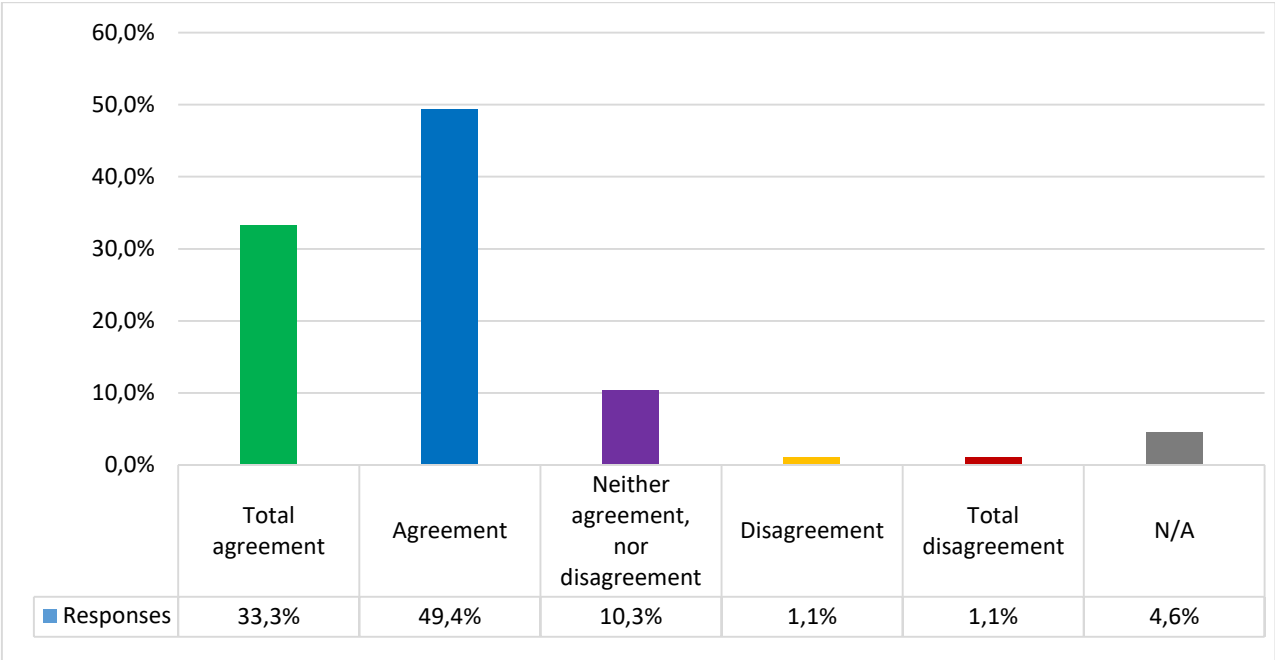
Q 4.2. At TUM, senior researchers, as supervisors or mentors of researchers, build a constructive and positive relationship with trainee researchers, in order to establish the conditions for the efficient transfer of knowledge and for the further successful development of researchers' career.



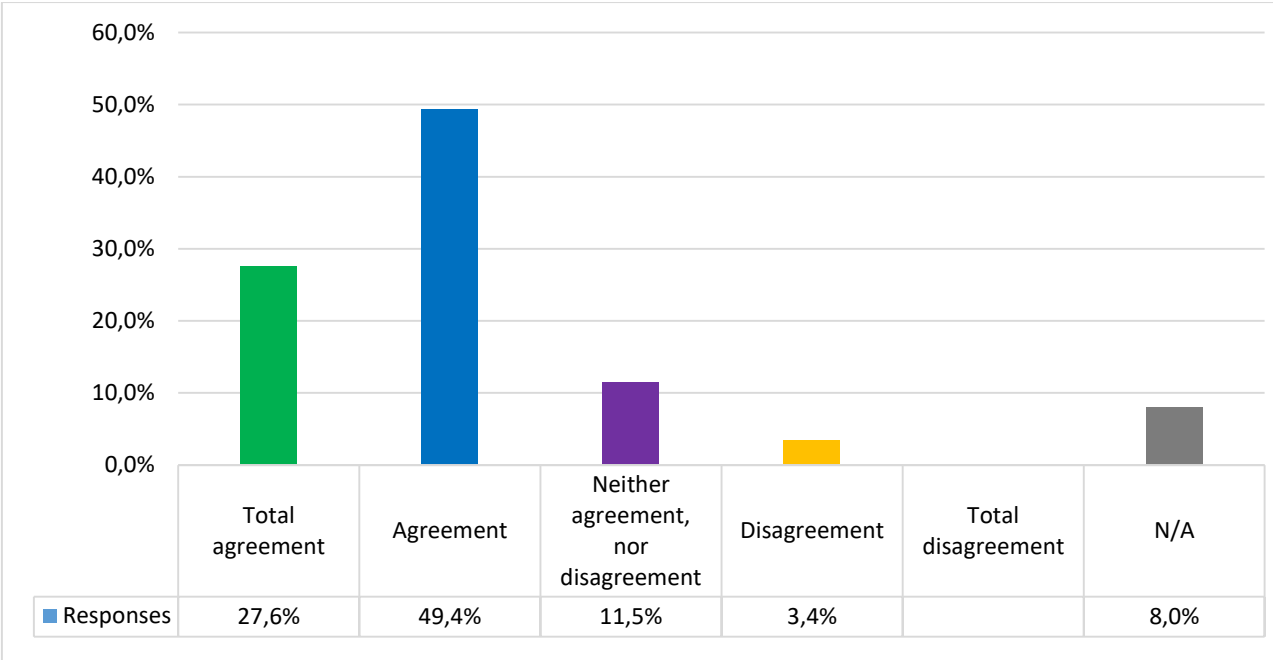
Q 4.3. TUM provides appropriate means, such as scientific seminars, workshops, conferences and e-learning systems, for researchers at all stages of their career to develop themselves continuously, update and expand their skills and competencies on a regular basis.



Q 4.4. TUM ensures all people who are at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, with the opportunity to develop professionally and create employability possibilities through access to skill development activities.



Q 4.5. TUM provides trainee researchers with the opportunity to clearly address a designated person (supervisor) to seek any necessary information and to obtain assistance in their professional duties. The supervisor should provide adequate support for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as for the necessary feedback mechanisms.



The number of responses (excluding N/A), percentages of positive answers (Total agreement + Agreement), their sum, mean score, standard deviation and level of implementation of Code and Charter principles is presented in the table below.

Based on data in the table, the *Analysis and implementation team of the HRS4R label* concluded that there are 2 issues that are partly implemented, 20 issues are almost but not fully implemented, and 18 issues are fully implemented.

Table 1. The overall analysis of responses

Q	Issue	No of answers	Total Agreement (%)	Agreement (%)	Total positive answers (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation	Implementation level
1.	Ethical and Professional Aspect							
1.1.	Research freedom	87	34,5%	37,9%	72,4%	4,01	1,017	+/-
1.2.	Ethical principles	87	34,5%	43,7%	78,2%	4,13	0,994	++
1.3.	Professional responsibility	87	40,2%	48,3%	88,5%	4,23	0,817	++
1.4.	Professional attitude	87	35,6%	39,1%	74,7%	4,03	0,921	+/-
1.5.	Contractual and legal obligations	87	32,2%	48,3%	80,5%	4,09	0,926	++
1.6.	Accountability	87	35,6%	46,0%	81,6%	4,15	1,027	++
1.7.	Good practice in research	87	34,5%	37,9%	72,4%	4,01	1,112	+/-
1.8.	Dissemination, exploitation of results	87	46,0%	34,5%	80,5%	4,26	1,055	++
1.9.	Public engagement	87	37,9%	42,5%	80,5%	4,18	1,014	++
1.10.	Non discrimination	87	49,4%	37,9%	87,4%	4,31	0,982	++
1.11.	Evaluation/ appraisal systems	87	37,9%	36,8%	74,7%	4,06	1,040	+/-
2.	Recruitment and Selection							
2.1.	Recruitment	87	35,6%	39,1%	74,7%	4,13	1,258	+/-
2.2.	Recruitment (Code)	87	33,3%	42,5%	75,9%	4,10	1,197	++
2.3.	Selection (Code)	87	26,4%	44,8%	71,3%	4,03	1,348	+/-
2.4.	Transparency (Code)	87	29,9%	43,7%	73,6%	4,09	1,284	+/-
2.5.	Judging merit (Code)	87	29,9%	44,8%	74,7%	3,96	1,212	+/-
2.6.	Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	87	26,4%	44,8%	71,3%	4,12	1,521	+/-
2.7.	Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	87	37,9%	39,1%	77,0%	4,16	1,296	++
2.8.	Recognition of qualifications (Code)	87	28,7%	44,8%	73,6%	4,08	1,349	+/-
2.9.	Seniority (Code)	87	31,0%	44,8%	75,9%	4,12	1,293	++
2.10.	Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	87	34,5%	35,6%	70,1%	4,16	1,536	+/-

Q	Issue	No of answers	Total Agreement (%)	Agreement (%)	Total positive answers (%)	Mean score	Standard deviation	Implementation level
3.	Working Conditions and Social Security							
3.1.	Recognition of the profession	87	37,9%	40,2%	78,2%	4,13	0,967	++
3.2.	Research environment	87	31,0%	41,4%	72,4%	3,96	1,212	+/-
3.3.	Working conditions	87	29,9%	43,7%	73,6%	4,01	1,129	+/-
3.4.	Stability and permanence of employment	87	31,0%	41,4%	72,4%	4,02	1,286	+/-
3.5.	Funding and salaries	87	24,1%	44,8%	69,0%	3,83	1,202	+/-
3.6.	Gender balance	87	33,3%	46,0%	79,3%	4,15	1,051	++
3.7.	Career development	87	27,6%	40,2%	67,8%	4,00	1,423	+/-
3.8.	Value of mobility	87	32,2%	51,7%	83,9%	4,17	1,161	++
3.9.	Access to career advice	87	24,1%	35,6%	59,8%	3,83	1,380	-/+
3.10.	Intellectual Property Rights	87	31,0%	47,1%	78,2%	4,15	1,277	++
3.11.	Co-authorship	87	34,5%	44,8%	79,3%	4,22	1,265	++
3.12.	Teaching	87	29,9%	35,6%	65,5%	3,83	1,277	+/-
3.13.	Complains/ appeals	87	23,0%	36,8%	59,8%	3,92	1,656	-/+
3.14.	Participation in decision-making bodies	87	32,2%	40,2%	72,4%	4,09	1,454	+/-
4.	Training and Development							
4.1.	Relation with supervisors	87	28,7%	44,8%	73,6%	4,05	1,309	+/-
4.2.	Supervision and managerial duties	87	33,3%	36,8%	70,1%	4,10	1,444	+/-
4.3.	Continuing Professional Development	87	37,9%	44,8%	82,8%	4,16	0,958	++
4.4.	Access to research training and continuous development	87	33,3%	49,4%	82,8%	4,18	1,156	++
4.5.	Supervision	87	27,9%	50,0%	77,9%	4,10	1,279	++

Note: 5 points scale (1 = Total disagreement, 2 = Disagreement, 3 = Neither agreement, nor disagreement, 4 = Agreement, 5 = Total agreement).