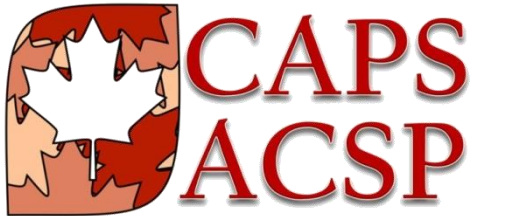


CAPS-ACSP / Mitacs 2013 Survey of Postdoctoral Scholars



Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars
Association Canadienne des Stagiaires Post-doctoraux



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Survey Instrument & Response

1830 Canadian postdocs completed the survey between March 22 and April 29th, 2013, in about 20 minutes each.

Table 1: Respondents by Institution

	Number of Respondents		Number of Respondents
University of Toronto	211	University of Waterloo	46
University of British Columbia	209	University of Ottawa	44
McGill University	202	University of Victoria	42
University of Alberta	99	Université de Sherbrooke	38
University of Western Ontario	91	Queen's University	32
Université Laval	81	Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute	22
McMaster University	78	Carleton University	20
University of Saskatchewan	75	Memorial University of Newfoundland	20
Dalhousie University	70	Other	329
Université de Montréal	59	Prefer not to answer	9
University of Calgary	53	Total	1,830

1094 of these respondents provided an e-mail address to be contacted again, for a follow-up survey!

Demographics

Who is the Canadian Postdoc?

- The average Canadian postdoc is 34 years old.
- They are male (53%) and female (46%).
- Most are married or in a common-law relationship (69%).
- One-third (35%) have dependent children.
- Over 50% of Canadian postdocs are landed immigrants or on work visas.

In short, postdocs are adults: in the middle of their lives, but at the beginning of their careers.

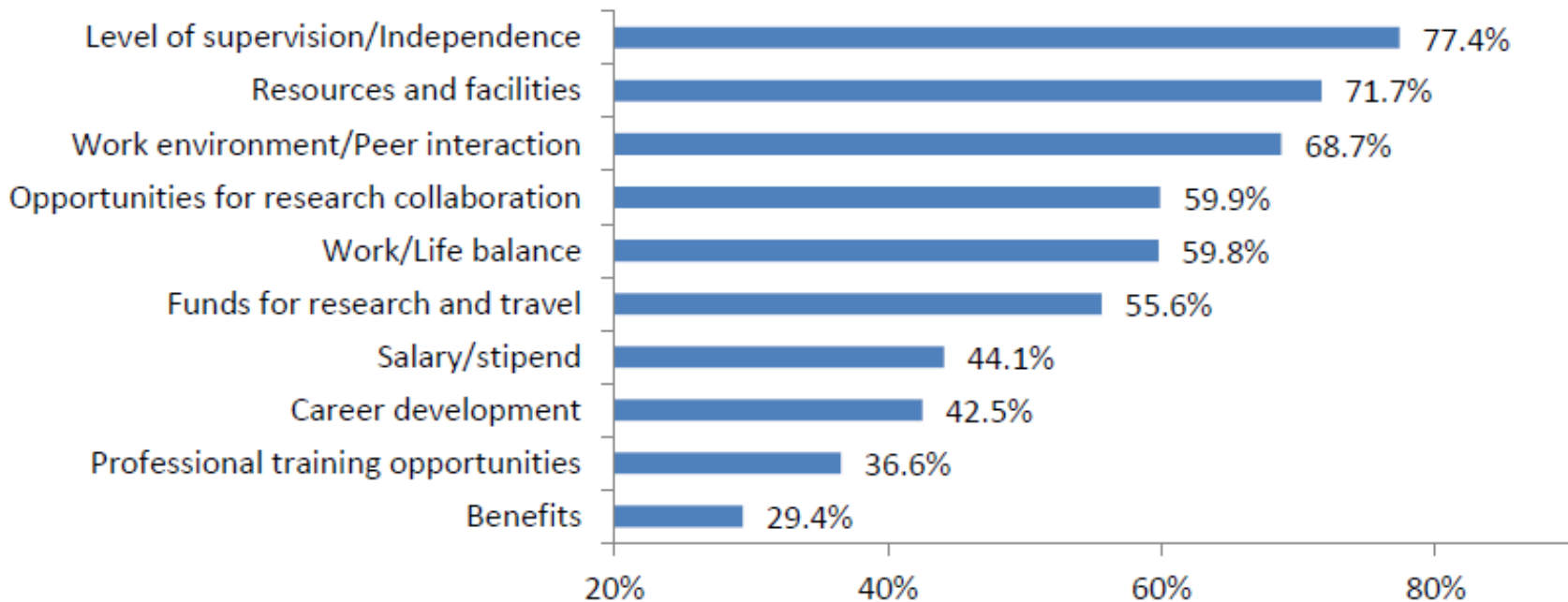
Figure 16: Top benefits desired among those without access or who do not know if they have access¹¹



Main Survey Findings

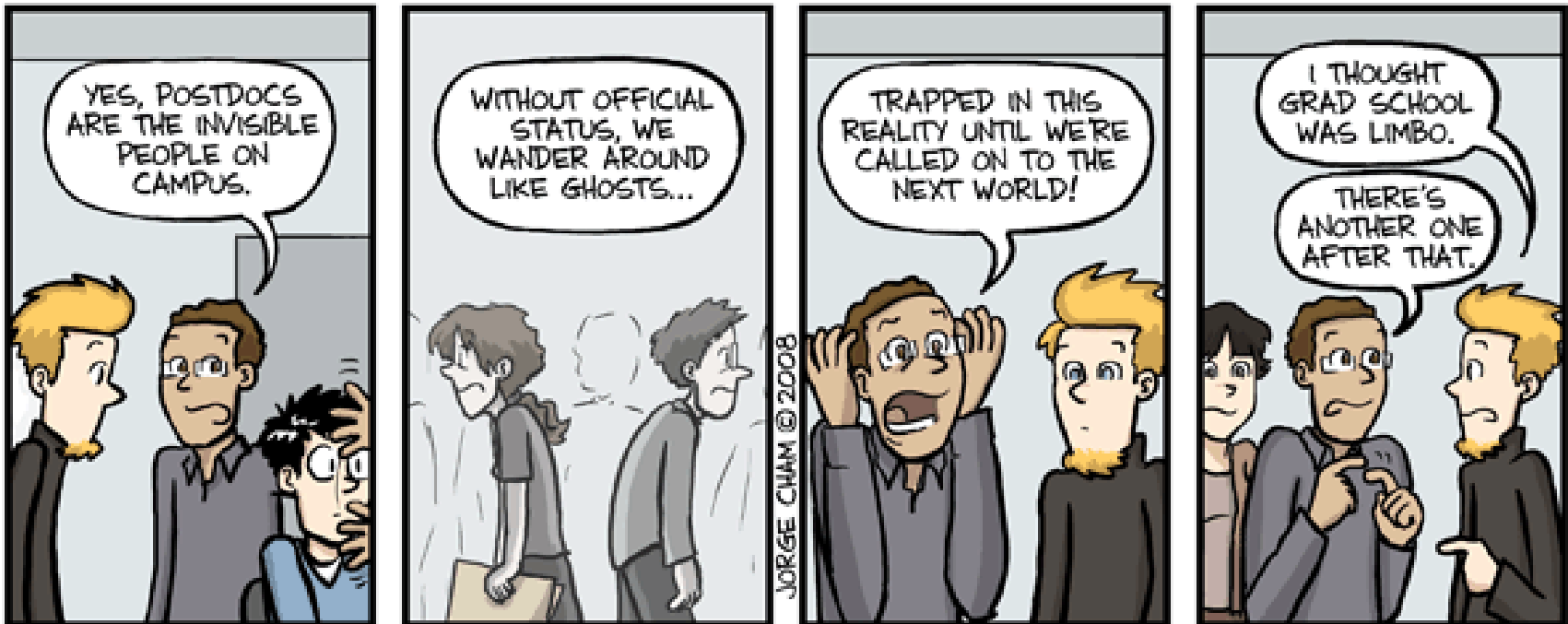
- Administrative Ambiguity
- Low Compensation and Benefits
- Insufficient Training

Satisfaction Level (Completely or Somewhat) with Elements of Postdoctoral Administration and Training



What Postdocs Do

43% of the first authors in research articles in *Science* were postdoctoral scholars (figures from 1999).



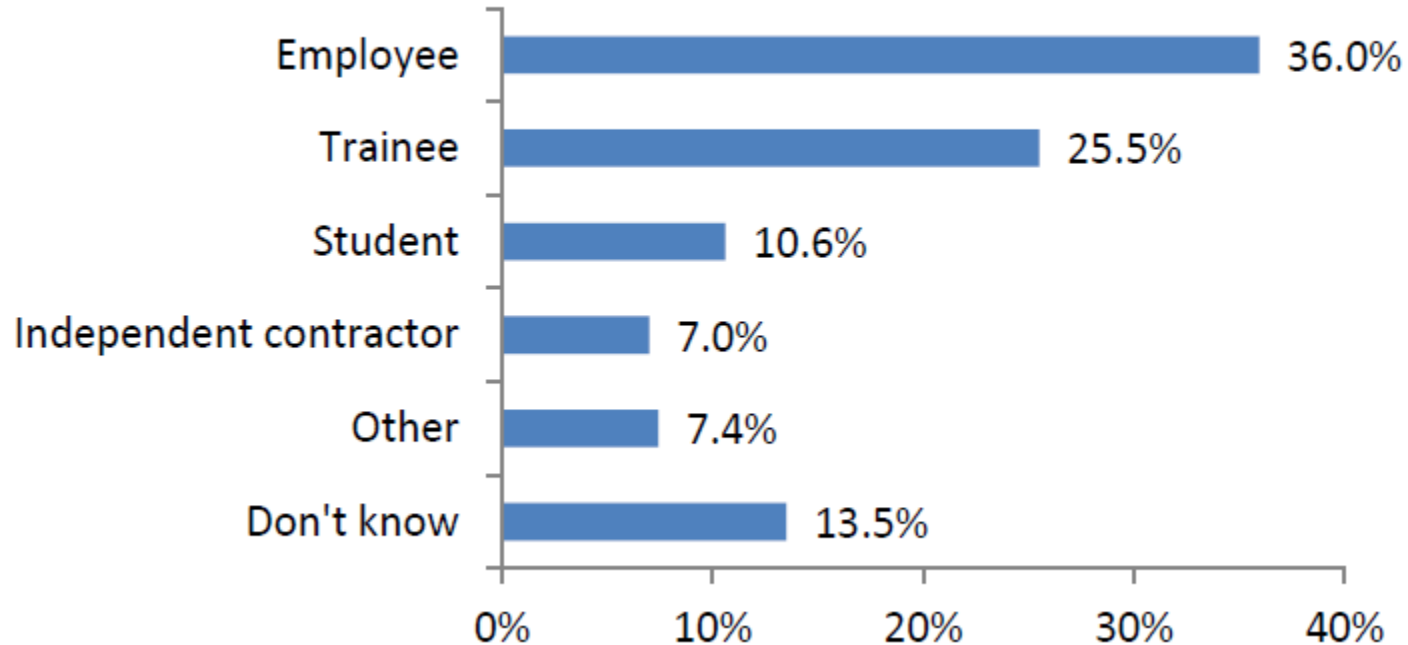
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<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/285/5433/1531>

<http://www.phdcomics.com/comics/archive.php?comid=1102> Title: The Post-doctoral Sense, pt. 2.

Classification Status

Figure 6: Classification status⁶

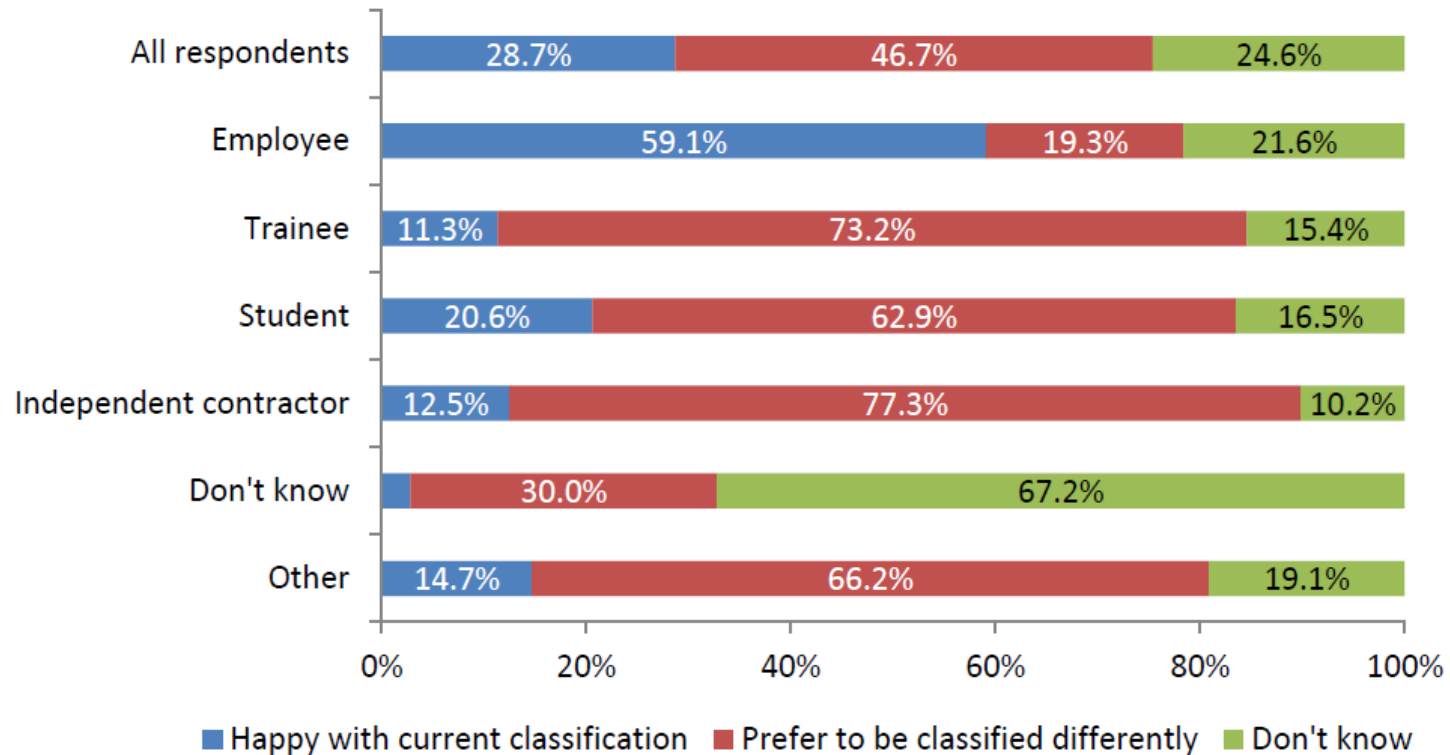


“... Furthermore, postdoctoral fellow[s] don’t have access to medical clinics in universities because they are not students. But we are not employees either. That gray zone between students and employee[s] is really frustrating.”

-Survey Respondent

Satisfaction with Status

Figure 9: Satisfaction with current classification by current classification

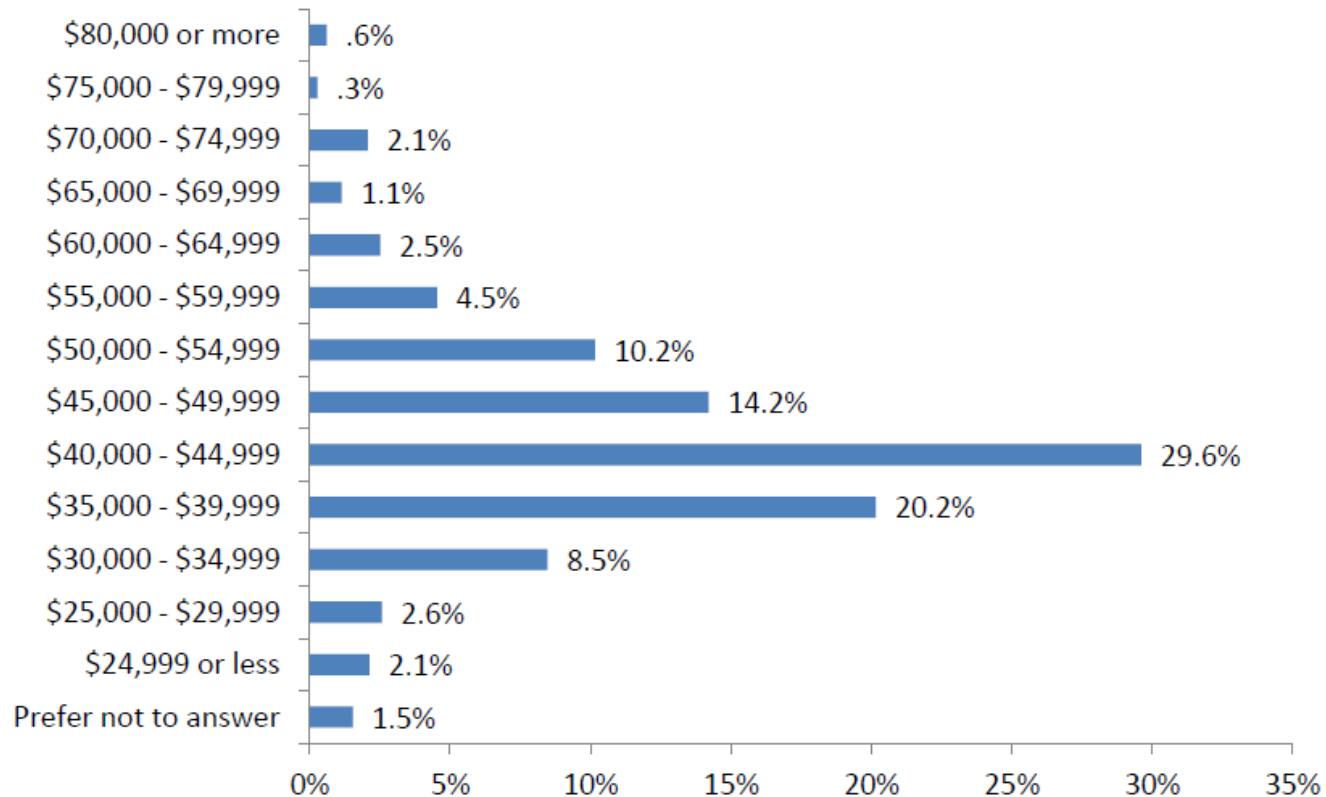


The preferred classification was overwhelmingly (>75%) in favour of status as employees.

Compensation

“We are taxed as though it is regular income, and yet don’t get EI. It seems unfair. Not to mention the fact that with taxes, I actually took home more as a PhD student, than I did as a postdoc.”
-Survey Respondent

Figure 12: Gross annual salary/stipend

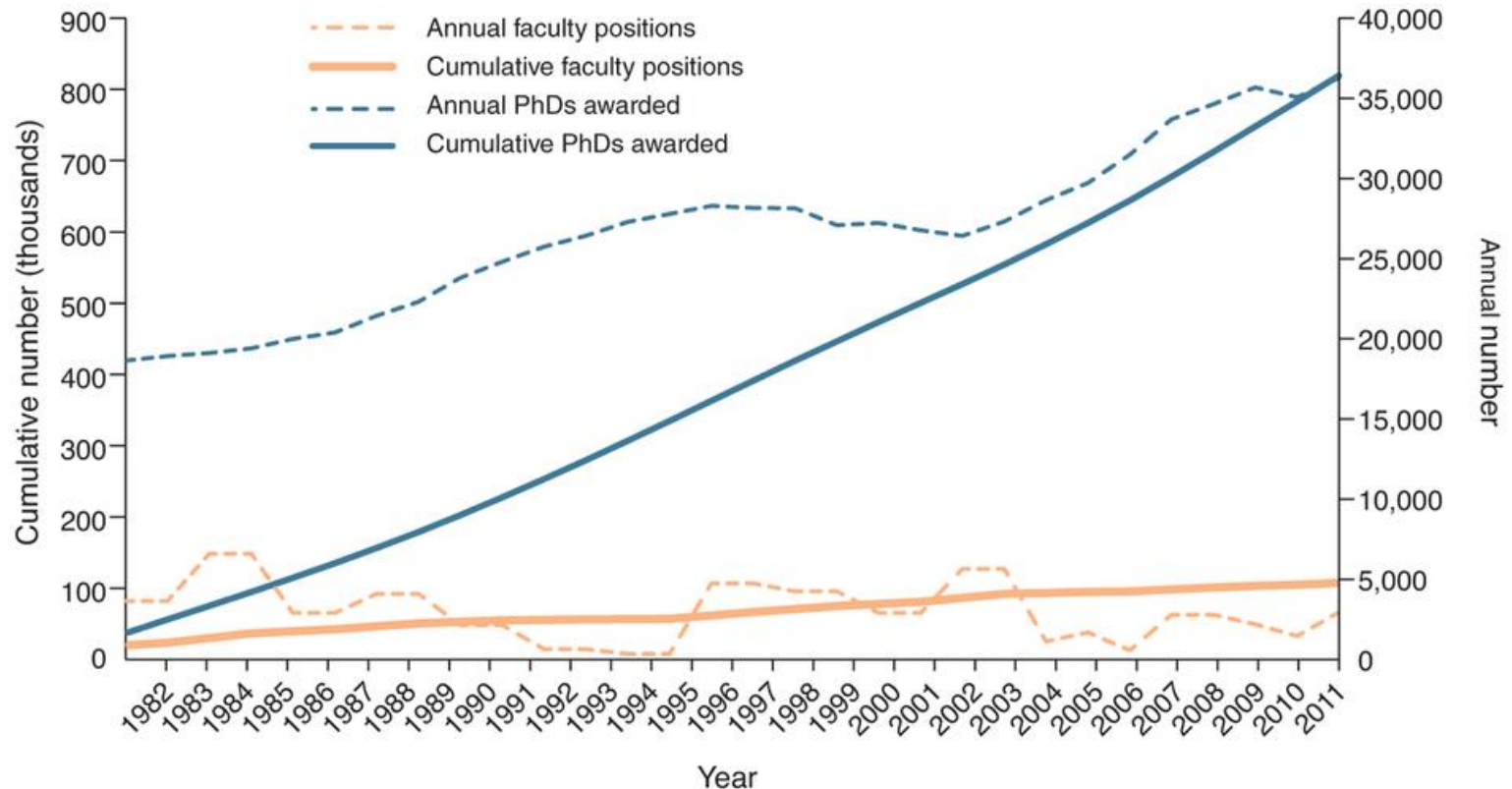


“I make less as a postdoctoral fellow than I [made] as a PhD because of income tax.”
-Survey Respondent

The Ivory Tower

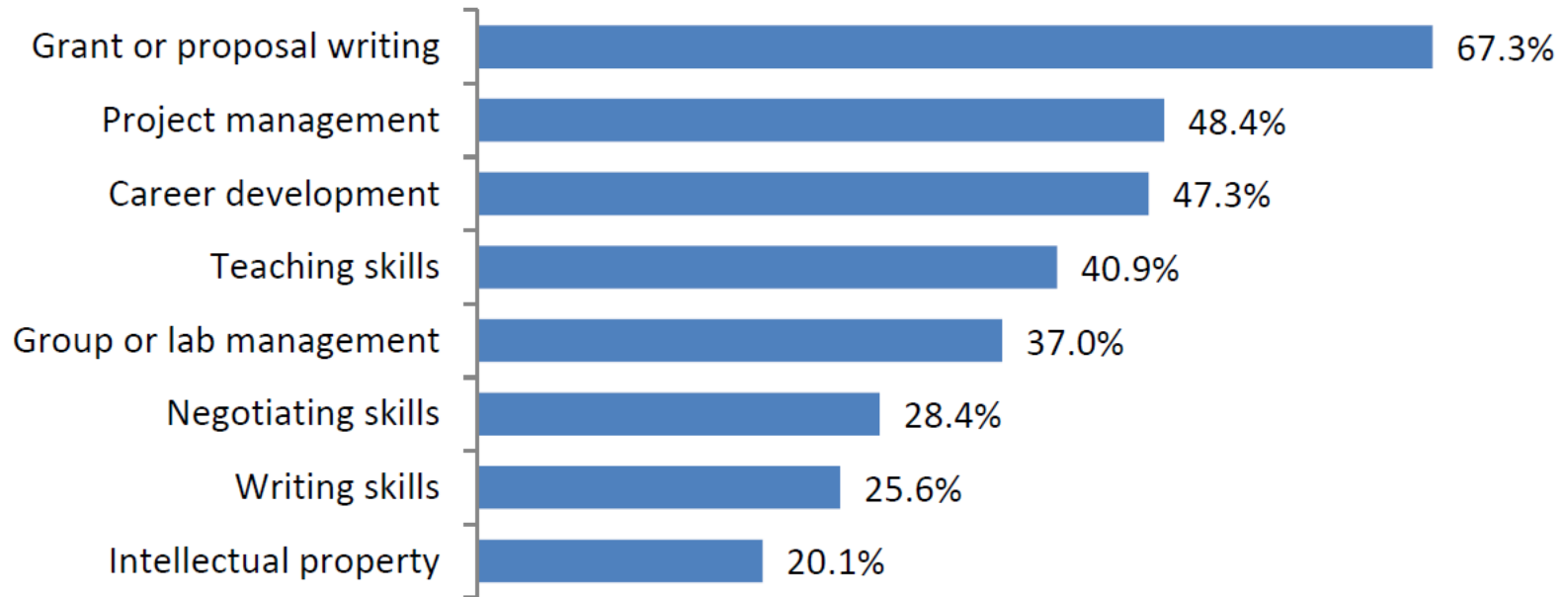
Prior to beginning their current postdoctoral position, over 80% of respondents state that their career goal is to be university research faculty. Currently, over 70% of the postdocs surveyed are hoping for a career in academia.

In reality, far fewer than that will achieve this goal.



Training Desires

Figure 20: Interest in formal professional development training¹⁵



“I am constantly stressed that I won’t be able to get a job as a university professor, but I really don’t have a satisfactory ‘Plan B’ if this doesn’t work out.”

-Survey Respondent

Training Availability

Exposure to Non-Academic Career Opportunities

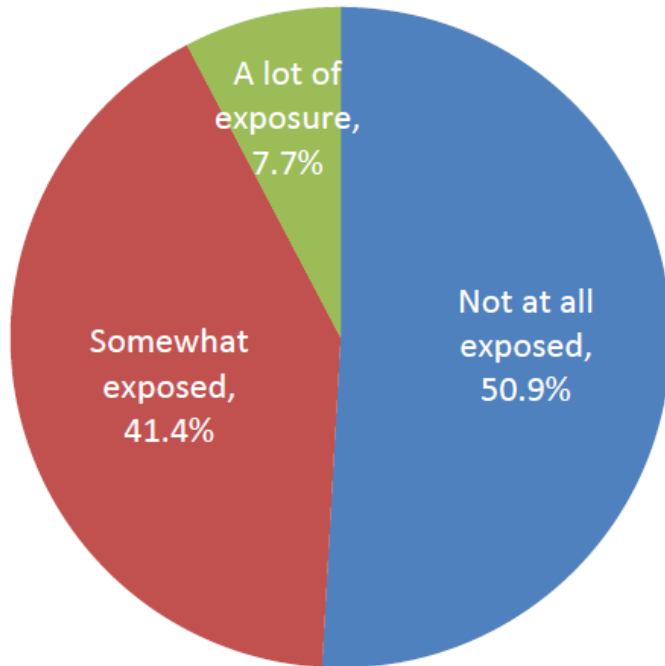
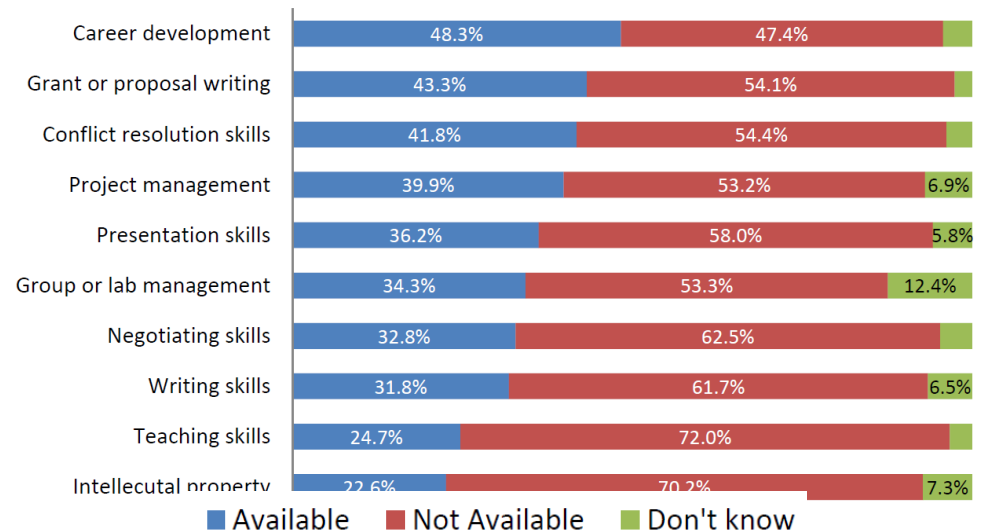


Figure 19: Formal training received specifically for postdoctoral scholars



“I am constantly stressed that I won’t be able to get a job as a university professor, but I really don’t have a satisfactory ‘Plan B’ if this doesn’t work out.”

-Survey Respondent

Thanks

Sunny Marche



Phil Clifford



Thank You

Please note that specific survey data can be extracted and provided for research purposes (potentially for a fee, depending on complexity of the extraction and cleaning) to interested parties. Contact survey@caps-acsp.ca for details and a requisition form.

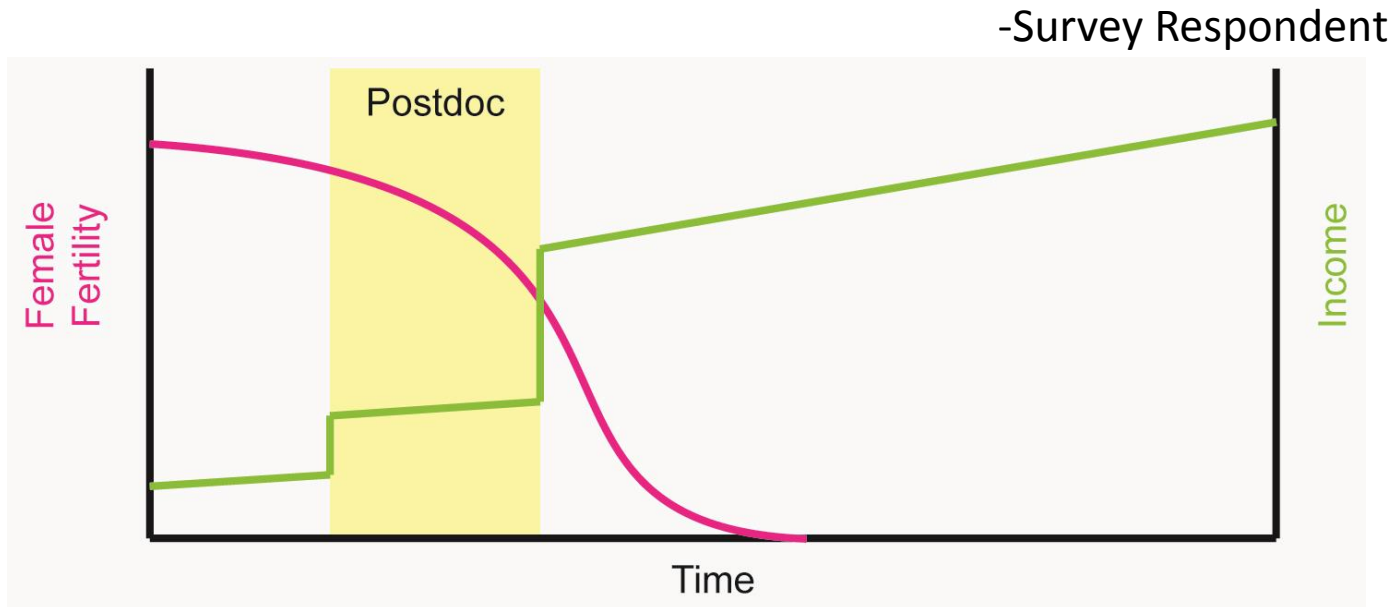
Future...



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Work-Life Balance

“As a mom, I feel that my career is suffering because my children come first... How can we find a better work-life balance?”



“I don’t think that it is fair to expect someone to go through an extended period of education, and then 3-5+ years of temporary, low-paid employment as a ‘trainee’ with no benefits, probably in several different locations before they can even start to apply for permanent employment. The uncertainty is incredibly difficult, especially at a time when people are trying to maintain long-term relationships and start families.”

-Survey Respondent