

Summary of the results of the employee survey on the work situation during the COVID-19 pandemic

General information

The employee survey was carried out from 15 February to 12 March 2021, at the request of the Presidential Board and the Staff Council. In consultation with the Office of Internal Surveys and the Health Management team, a [questionnaire specifically tailored](#) to the situation at the University of Oldenburg was developed.

1,234 of the 2,875 members of staff filled out the questionnaire in full, a participation rate of 42.9%.

In the following, the results of the survey are summarized and presented as a frequency scale¹. An evaluation of the free-text responses, ordered by category, will be distributed separately.

Results of the employee survey

Current working conditions

Working conditions during the pandemic

The respondents² say that so far during the COVID-19 pandemic, they appreciated above all their job security (85%), the increased digitization of work (80%) and the technical facilities (e.g. the internet connection and the software) (77%), describing these as 'very positive' or 'somewhat positive'. Nearly three quarters of the respondents rate the following aspects presented to them favourably: the compatibility of work and private life, access to information in their own area of work, cooperation with superiors, as well as their personal satisfaction with the whole arrangement for working from home and their work motivation. About 26% rate these as 'somewhat negative' or 'very unfavourable'. 68% of the respondents call their cooperation with colleagues 'very positive' or 'somewhat positive'. About half of the respondents experience the opportunities for professional development (50%) and social inclusion or the feeling of belonging in their own work environment (51%) during the pandemic as 'somewhat negative' or 'very negative'. 44% and 45% of respondents respectively experience the

¹ In the figures, some percentage summaries reach over 100% due to rounding errors.

² In this text, the term 'respondents' is synonymous with 'participants' and 'persons surveyed' and refers to the members of staff who actively took part in the survey.

perceived transparency of developments in their own field of work and the amount of work as 'somewhat negative' or 'very negative'.

Altered activities

For 53% of the employees, activities in their own area of responsibility have changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (n = 595)³. One third of this group (32%) found the transition to the altered work situation 'somewhat difficult' or 'very difficult'. However, 87% feel sufficiently able to cope with the changed tasks.

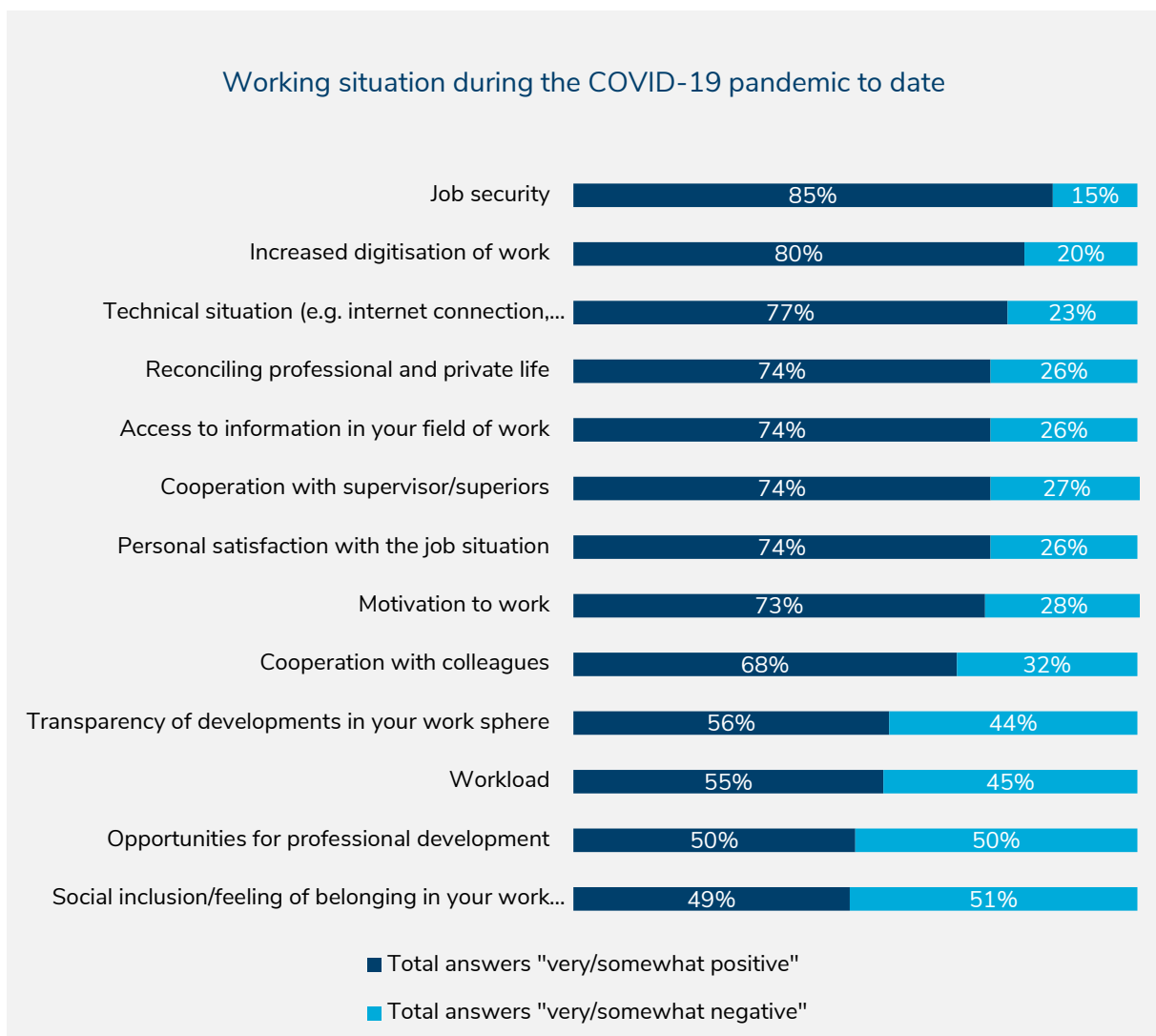


Figure 1: Working situation during the COVID-19 pandemic to date

³ In statistics, the designation 'n' describes the number of available answers. This information is given below if questions were only answered by some of the participants or could only be answered by some of the participants.

Extent of working from home

Only 7% of the respondents say they have not worked from home at all during the pandemic to date. However, 42% of the participants worked on average almost entirely ('up to 100%') from home, and 24% of them 'up to 80 %'. Three groups, each comprising 10% of the respondents, stated that they worked from home up to an average of 20%, 40% or 60%.

Satisfaction with working from home:

76% of those surveyed who have worked at least partially from home since the beginning of the pandemic (n = 1,140) are currently 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with the arrangement. 45% of the participants say that their attitude towards working from home became more positive. The attitude of 42% 'did not change' and 12% state that their attitude has become less positive. 10% of the respondents who have been working from home at least part of the time during the pandemic already had an approved teleworking position before the pandemic (teleworking contract).

Communication and cooperation

Conflicts

Most respondents (74%) report that conflicts in their area of work 'remained the same' during the pandemic to date. 15% experienced an increase and 11% a decline in conflicts.

*The following answers are from respondents who say they are **not working from home themselves**, but were asked to assess the situation of team mates or superiors who are working from home (n = 81).*

Communication with superiors and team mates

35% of respondents report that communication with their direct supervisor has changed for the worse. 61% say it has 'not changed', and 4% perceived an improvement. As far as team mates are concerned, 26% of the participants say their communication with colleagues is worse than before the pandemic, 71% see no change and 3% report a trend toward improvement.

76% of the respondents say that other departments of the university are more difficult to reach than before. The remaining 24% see no change. None of the respondents who are not working from home see an improvement.

Communication channels

Meetings in person: 42% of the respondents who are not working from home themselves continue to have personal contacts with team mates 'once a day' or 'several times a day'. Another 27% have such contacts 'once a week' or 'several times a week' and 31% 'less than once a week'.

Email: 29% of the respondents use email 'daily' or 'several times a day' as a means of communication with their team or their direct supervisor. 50% of the respondents use it once or several times a week, and 22% less frequently.

19% of the participants speak with their team or direct supervisor at least once a day on the phone. 38% are in touch by telephone 'once a week' or 'several times a week' and 43% 'less than once a week'.

Video conferences: Only 4% of the participants communicate at least once a day with their team or their direct supervisor by video conference, while 40% do this 'once a week' or 'several times a week' and more than half (56%) 'less than once weekly'.

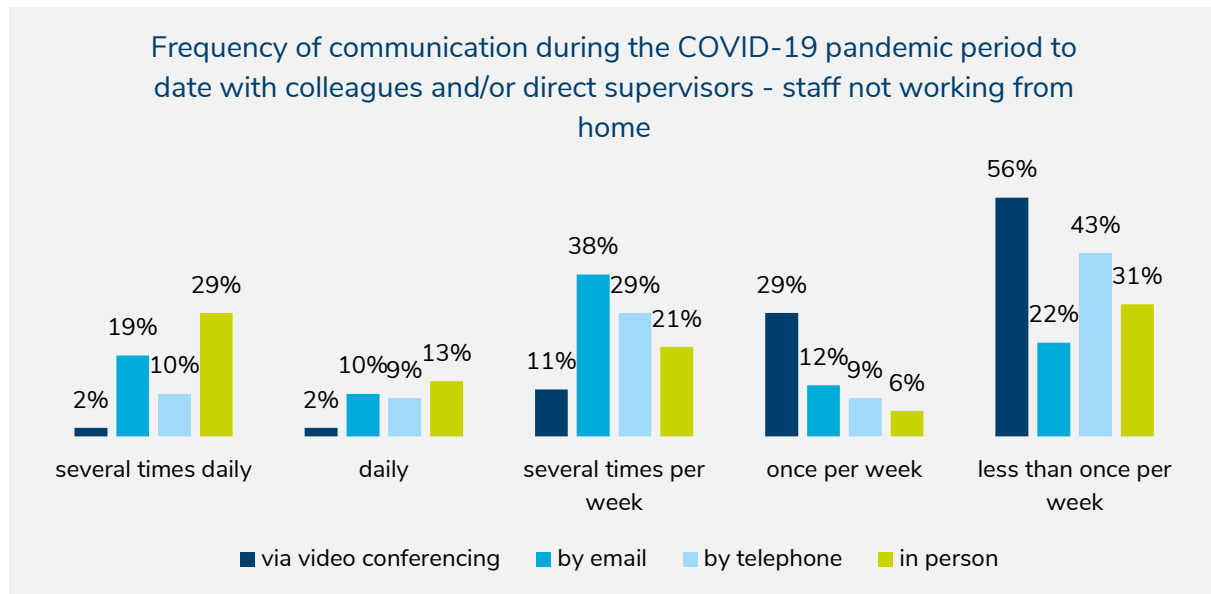


Figure 2: Frequency of communication (persons not working from home)

The following answers come from participants who say they are **working from home at least part of the time** (n = 1,140).

One quarter (25%) of the respondents currently find their communication with their direct supervisor 'less positive' than before. The majority (68%) see 'no change', and 8% of the respondents see changes for the better. Nearly half of all participants (47%) rate their communication 'less positive' than before. A further 47% see 'no change' and 6% see a trend toward improvement.

More than half of the participants say the accessibility of other university units is worse than before (55%). 43% experience this as 'unchanged' and 2% as better.

Communication channels

Email: Many respondents working from home at least part time use email for communications 'several times a day' (39%), 'daily' (20%) or 'several times a week' (30%). Another 11% of the respondents communicate by email 'once a week' or less.

Regular communication also takes place by phone: 22% of the respondents use this at least once a day, 45% once or several times a week. 33% speak on the phone with their direct supervisor or team mates less than once a week.

Participants also often use video conferencing as a means of communication: 19% use it 'several times a day' or 'daily' to communicate with their colleagues, 63% 'once a week' or 'several times a week', and 18% less frequently.

Meetings in person: Currently only 5% of those working from home meet their direct supervisor or team mates daily in person. 30% say that such meetings take place 'once a week' or 'several times a week', and 65% report a frequency of 'less than once' a week.

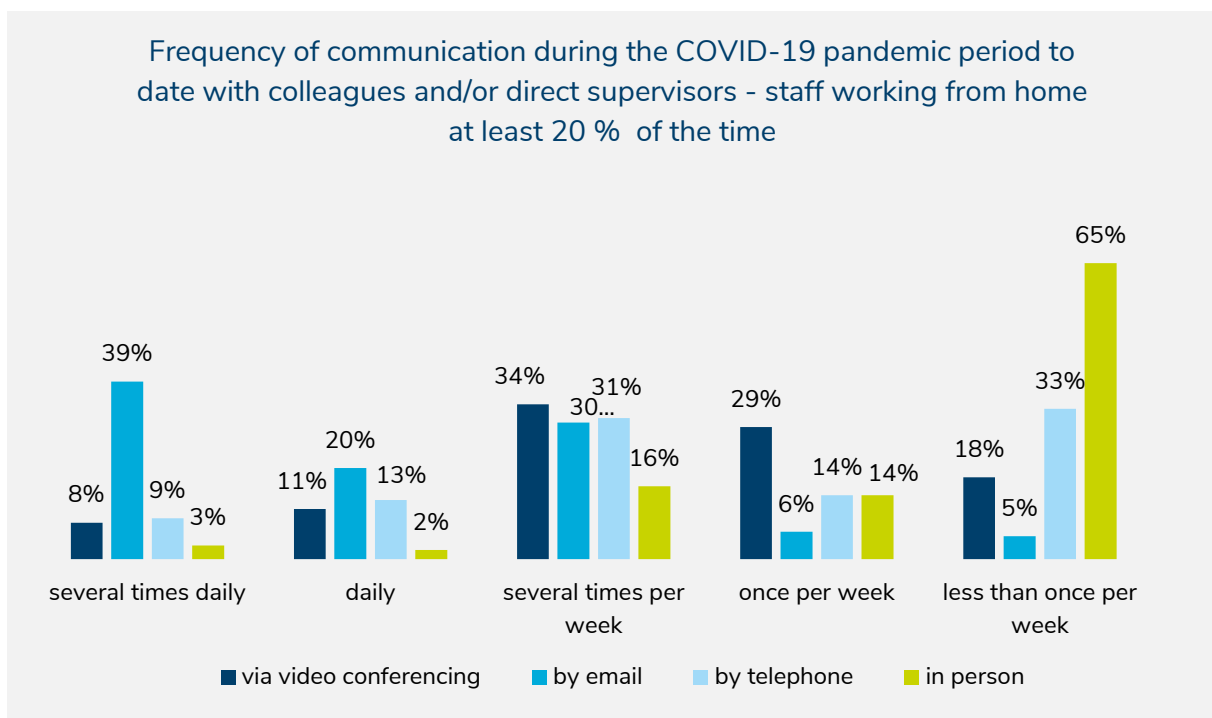


Figure 3: Frequency of communication (persons working from home at least 20% of the time)

Communication and cooperation

91% of the participants say they feel they are treated fairly by their direct supervisor when working from home, as at the office. A similarly large majority also feel that their direct supervisor trusts them to do their work properly while working from home (92%), and 95% feel the same about their team mates. 94% say they feel free to organize their work as they see fit when working from home, and 81% feel that they are sufficiently involved in decisions affecting their own work. Furthermore, 82% of the participants 'fully' or 'more or less' agree that they receive all the information they need to complete their tasks when working from home. However, one quarter of the participants believes that work is not fairly distributed under working-from-home conditions.

28% of the respondents feel that their direct supervisors do not show enough appreciation for the work they do from home, and 23% say that the guidance they receive for working from home is somewhat or completely insufficient.



Figure 4: Communication and cooperation when working from home (WFH)

Management responsibility

Responsibility for personnel

17% of those polled state that they are managers. Of these (n = 196), 40% are responsible for up to five employees, 42% for six to 15 employees and 18% for more than 15 employees.

Activity of employees working from home:

Most managers (62%) report that on average, their staff worked 'up to 80%' or 'up to 100%' from home during the pandemic. 17% put the rate at 'up to 60%' and a further 17% at 'up to 20%' or 'up to 40%'. Only 4% say that their team 'did not' work from home during the pandemic. 88% of the managers say they are 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with the way their staff work from home.

87% state that they are satisfied with the communication with their team while working from home. Roughly half of the managers (46%) explain that their own attitude towards working from home has 'become more positive'. A further 46% say it has 'not changed', and 9% say their attitude toward working from home has become more negative.

Work organization and compatibility of work and private life when working from home

The following answers come from participants who say they are **working from home at least part of the time** (n = 1,140).

Tasks when working from home

A large majority of the respondents state that they are currently able to carry out their tasks well while working from home: 32% of the participants say this applies to 'up to 100%' of their tasks, 35% say this applies to 'up to 80%' of tasks and another 15% say it is true of 'up to 60%' of tasks. 17% of the participants say they can do up to 20% or 40% of their tasks well at home, and 1% of those who working from home explain that this does not apply to their work at all.

Work organization (see Fig. 5): 91% of the participants say they can self-organize well when working from home. 65% experience fewer interruptions when working from home, and 58% say they can work more productively from home than at the office. However, almost half of the respondents (47%) say that access to documents and materials they need for their work is more difficult from home. Besides, 41% say they hardly or never keep track of working hours and breaks while working from home.

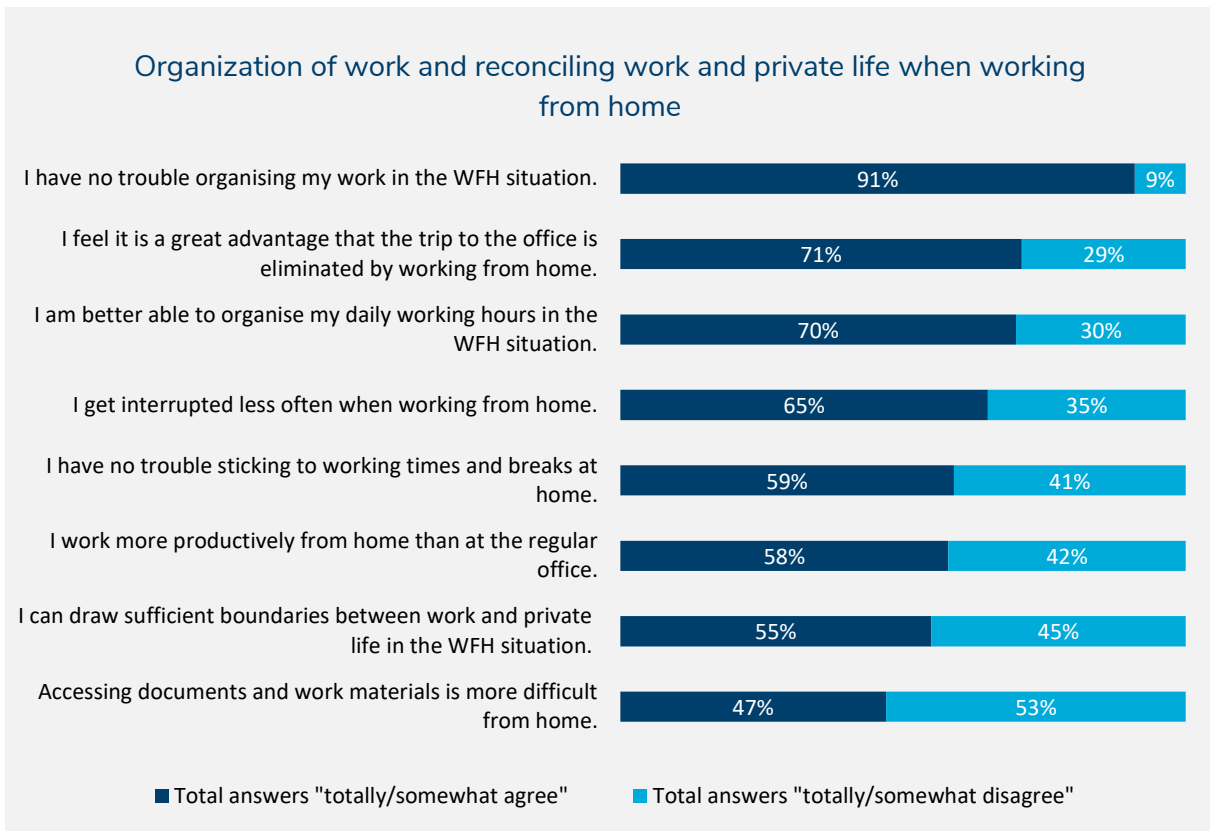


Figure 5: Organization of work and reconciling work and private life when working from home

Compatibility

70% say it is 'somewhat true' or 'completely true' that at home, they are better able to spread their working hours over the day, and 71% of the respondents feel it is a great advantage that they do not have to travel to the office when working from home. 45% of the participants find themselves unable to separate work and private life sufficiently while working from home.

Equipment and technology in the WFH situation

The following answers come from participants who say they are **working from home at least part of the time** (n = 1,140).

Workplace

About half of the respondents (51%) say they have a separate room, for example a study, for working from home. Another 28% have a clearly separated work area that continually serves as a workplace. 21% do not have a dedicated workplace—they improvise.

Facilities and technology

86% of the participants say it is 'somewhat true' or 'completely true' that they can work well from home. 88% of the participants have the technical facilities (hardware and software) they need in their home office. 89% say it is 'completely true' or 'somewhat true' that they have a stable internet connection.

27% say they do not have suitable furniture (e.g. a desk and desk chair) at home.

Digitization

97% of the participants say they are sufficiently skilled to be able to work digitally. 93% of the respondents feel protected by the arrangements regarding the security of personal data provided so far by the University of Oldenburg. 25% of the respondents feel concerned about unresolved questions regarding working from home, for instance in the fields of labour and insurance law.

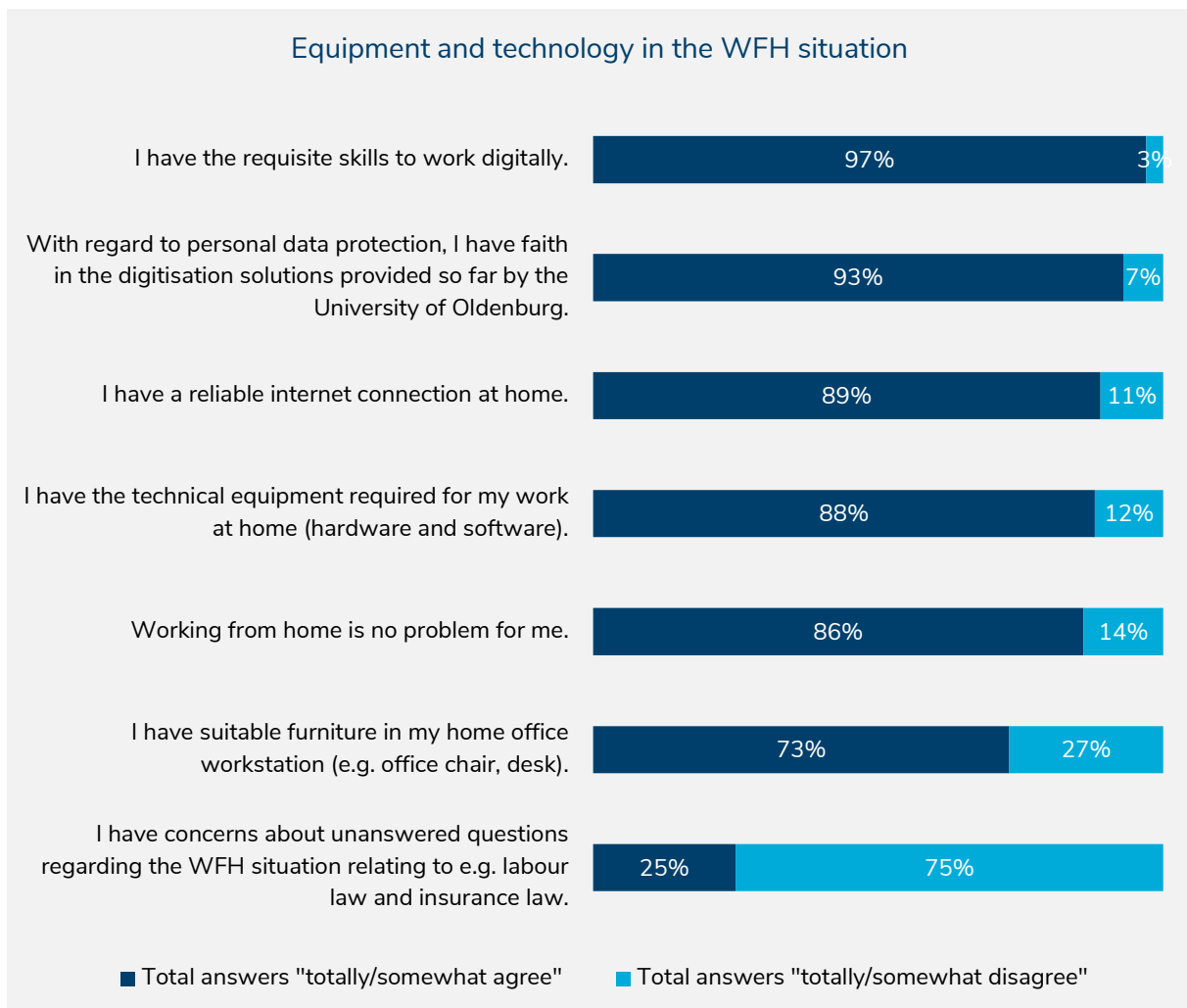


Figure 6: Equipment and technology in the WFH situation

Support, service and advice offered

The following answers come from participants **working from home at least part of the time** (n = 1,140). This additional information "n" refers to persons who have used such services and rated them.

Assessment of services offered

Most respondents say they are satisfied with the support, service and guidance provided by the university, to the extent that they made use of this during the COVID-19 pandemic. Around 90% say they are 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with the following services: continuing education (PEOE).

(n = 330), psychosocial counselling (n = 32), IT services (n = 961), training in university didactics (n = 195), the Graduate Academy and Graduate Schools (n = 120), as well the library (n = 361). Around three quarters of the participants with user experience during the pandemic indicated that they were satisfied with the Representative of Employees with Disabilities (n = 32), university sports facilities (n = 102) and health management services.

(n = 65). Furthermore, 67% are 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with the services offered by the Staff Council, the representative of youth and trainees (n = 131), 64% with the family service (n = 54), 61% with the Workplace Safety Unit (n = 321) and 53% with the company doctor (n = 53).

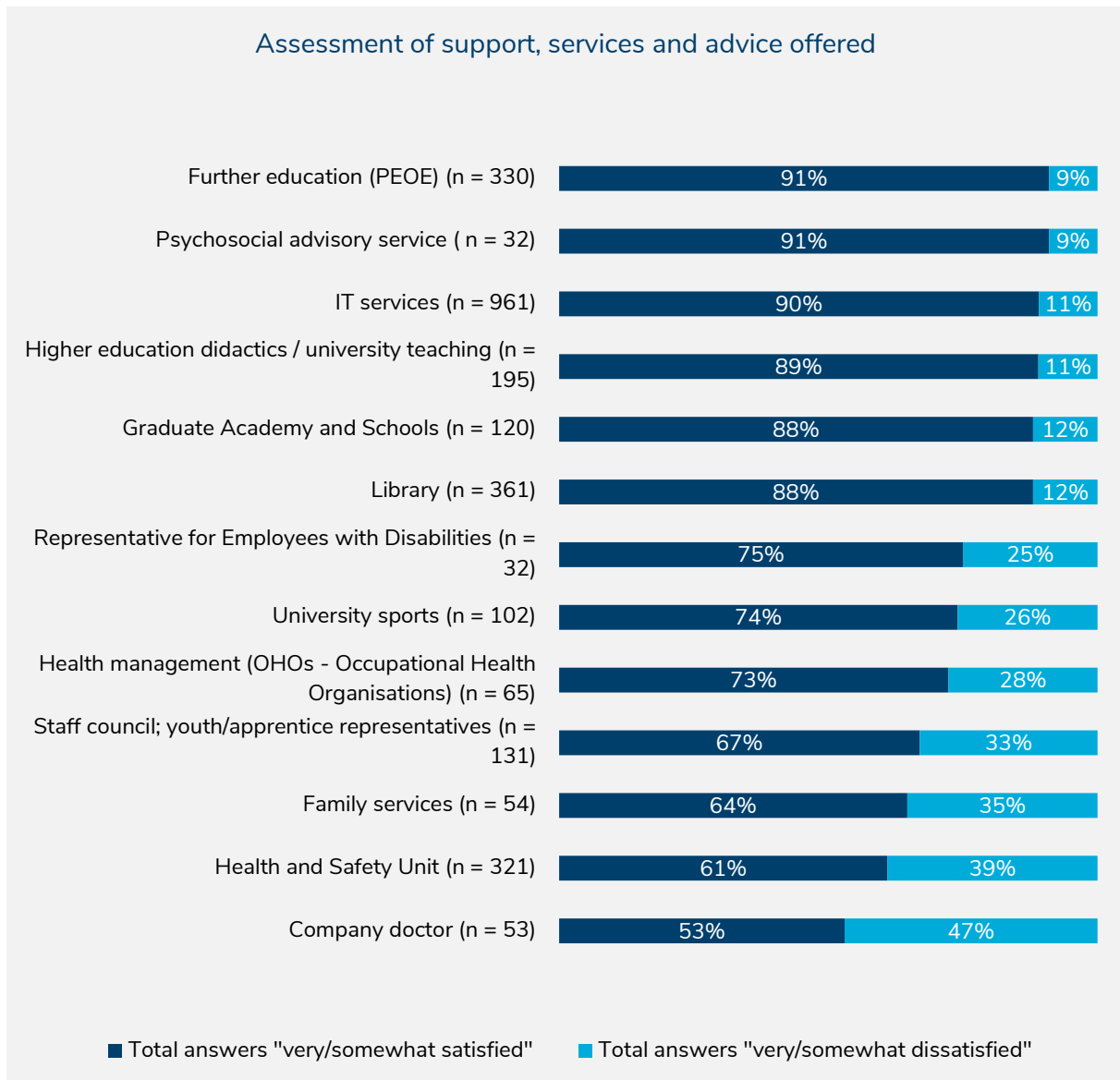


Figure 7: Assessment of support, service and advice during the COVID-19 pandemic to date

Measures of the Presidential Board and the department concerned (see Fig. 8):

81% of the respondents state they are 'very satisfied' or 'quite satisfied' with the information on emergency and contingency measures provided by the Presidential Board during the COVID-19 pandemic to date. 88% of the participants feel the same way about the information provided by their own department. 80% are satisfied with the measures taken by the Presidential Board and 87% with the measures of their own department.

The university's policies for containing the pandemic were also rated favourably. 84% approved of the Presidential Board's policies and 87% of the policies of their own department. 85% of the respondents say they are satisfied with their department's flexibility in finding solutions, and 69% say the same of the Presidential Board. Similarly, more persons approve of the rapid response of their own department

than of the response of the Presidential Board. 81% say they are 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with the speed of their own department, while 63% say the same of the Presidential Board.

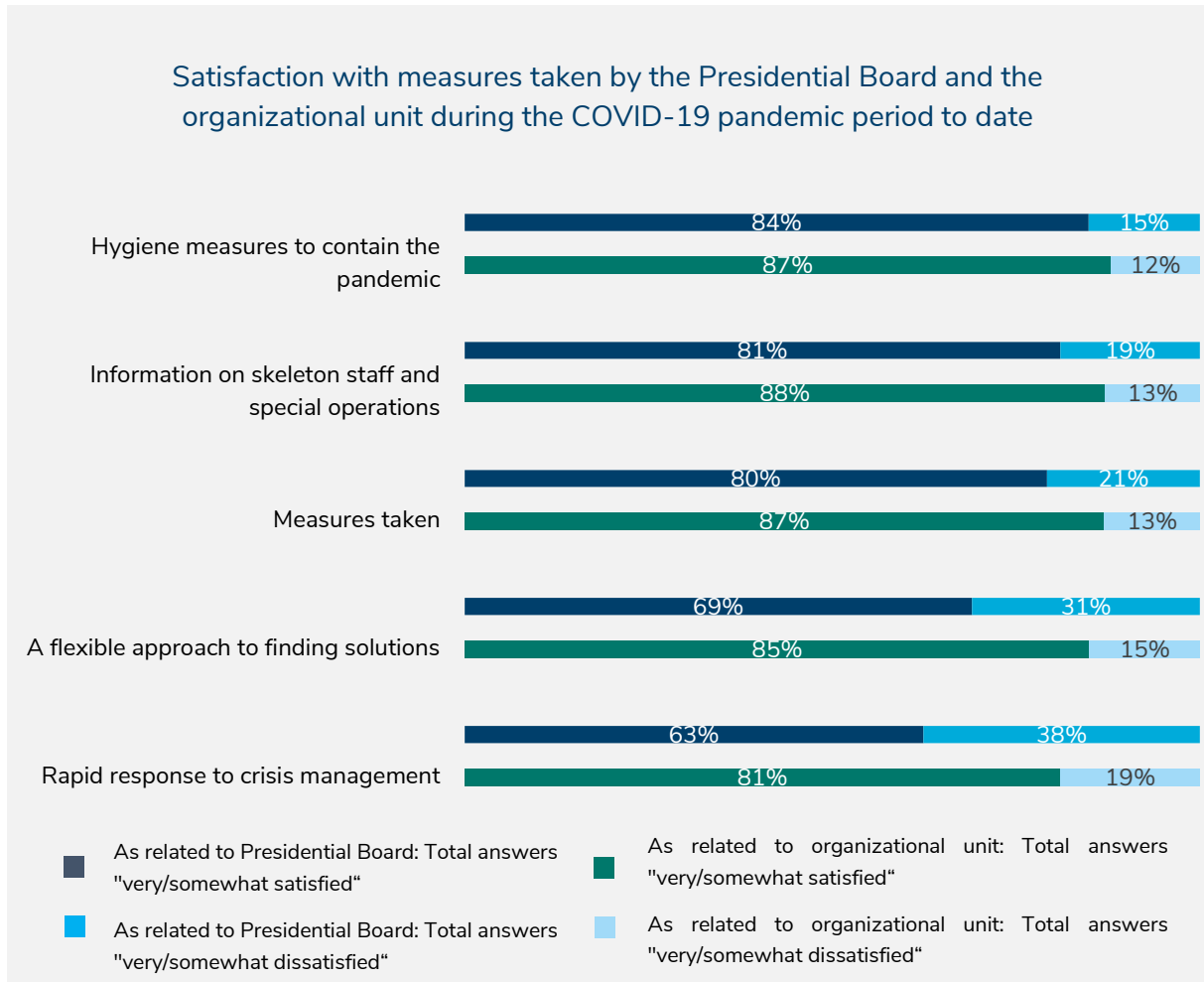


Figure 8: Satisfaction with measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic to date

Conference and video tools

Generally speaking, respondents who used conference and video tools provided so far by the University during the COVID-19 pandemic rate them favourably. Over 90% are 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with Cloud Storage.

(n = 802), and the same applies to Stud.IP. (n = 908). 86% rate BigBlueButton (n = 1,176) favourably and 84% approve of WebEx (n = 303). However, only 61% of the users are satisfied with Adobe Connect/DFN (n = 201).

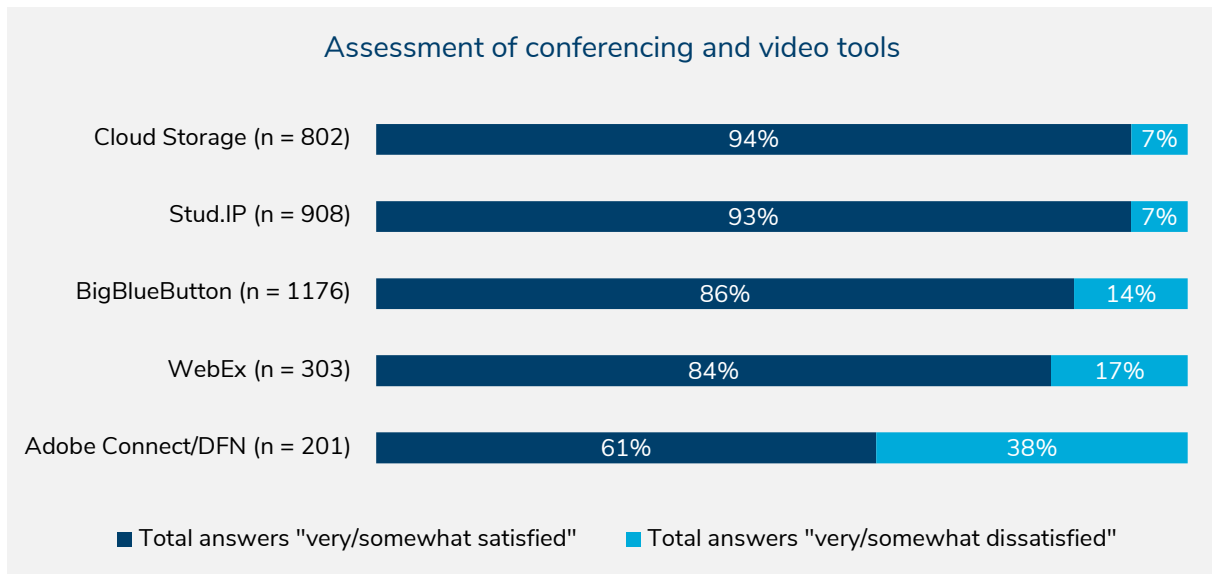


Figure 9: Assessment of conference and video tools during the COVID-19 pandemic to date

Outlook

Working from home in the future (respondents' own opinions)

Most respondents say that in the future, they would like to go on using the option of working from home (for example, teleworking or another form of mobile work). About half of the respondents would like to do this for 'up to 40%' or 'up to 60%' of their working hours. Both these options are equally popular. 15% of the participants would even want to work from home for 'up to 80%' and a further 7% favour doing this for 'up to 100%' of their working hours. Others are less enthusiastic. 16% would only want to do this for 'up to 20%' of their working hours, and 4% of the participants say they would not want to work from home at all. Finally, 6% of the participants say that in their job, working from home is not possible.

Working from home in the future (assessment by direct supervisors for their teams)

The respondents with managerial responsibilities also expressed a positive overall opinion of the possibility of their team working from home in the future: 20% favour it for 'up to 20%' of their team's working hours, 34% for 'up to 40%' and a further 26% for 'up to 60%'. 9% of the direct supervisors favour working from home for 'up to 80%' and 2% say 'up to 100%'. However, 6% state that working from home is not possible for their team, and 4% do not favour the option even if it were possible.

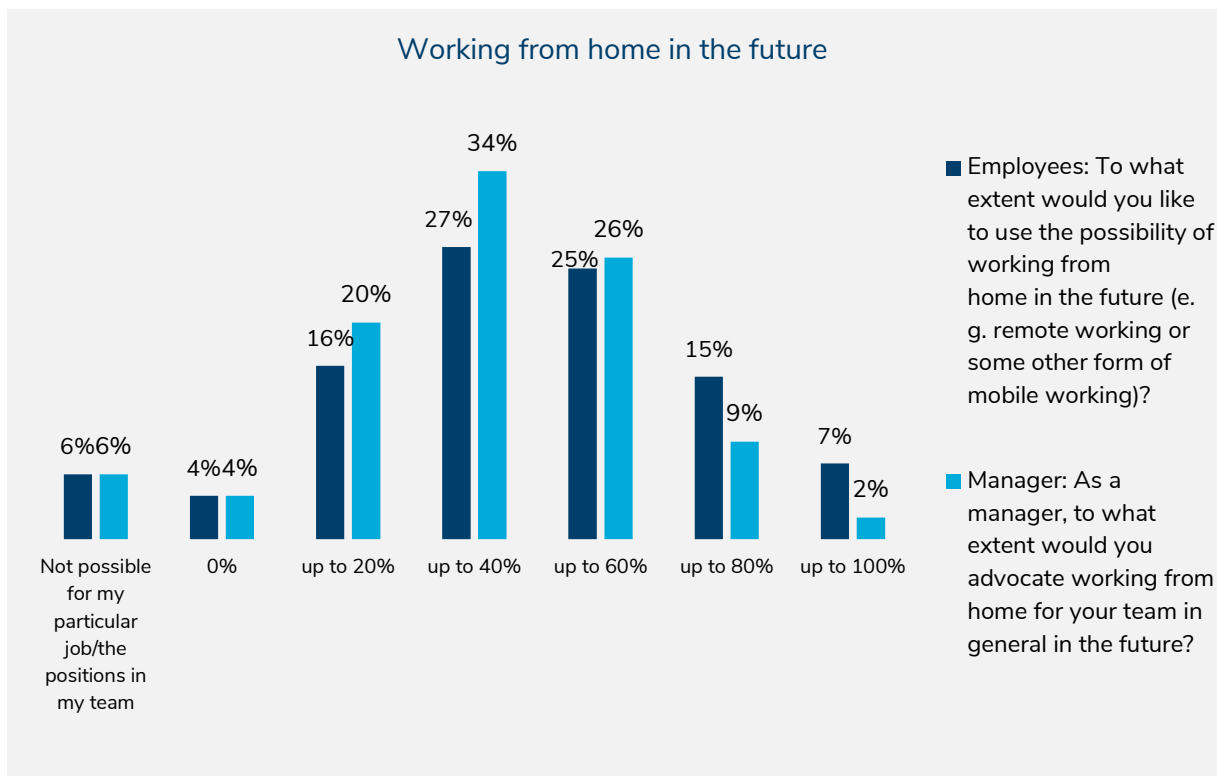


Figure 10: Working from home in the future

Family and child care duties

39% of the participants have one or more children in their household, and in the case of 25% of all respondents, at least one child is 12 years old or younger. 35% of the group with children in their household (n = 413) take care of their family and children mostly alone. Of the participants with family responsibilities, 81% state that working from home would help them to better combine work with parenting tasks, on the condition that the children can go to school and day care. 9% of the respondents do not see this advantage, and a similar number 'cannot tell' at the moment.

Other care tasks

10% of the participants take care of relatives, and 40% of them (n = 106) do this alone. 69% of the participants with such responsibilities say that when the pandemic and its restrictions are over, they would be better able to combine work and care if they worked from home. 22% say this does not apply to them, and a further 9% cannot tell.

Enhancement of current facilities

Multiple answers were possible to the question for which areas the participants would like to have more and better facilities for working from home. Most would like collaboration tools (583 respondents). Many participants would like to have audio and video production tools (384), chat functions (362), and more video platforms for meetings, teaching and the like (351). 332 respondents are in favour of more

opportunities for professional development, 301 would like to see more health services, and 295 ask for more IT support.

Demographic data

Status group

43% of the participants belong to the status group 'MTV - administrative staff', and another 14% to the group 'MTV - technical staff'. 32% are academic staff, 5% hold a professorship. A further 4% are lecturers and 1% describe their status as 'academic/research assistant'. Multiple answers were possible for this question.

Field of work

More than half of the respondents work in the university's schools (63%), many of them in School V (22%). The affiliation of the others is distributed as follows: 13% of the respondents are from School VI, 9% from School II, 8% from School I, 7% from School III and 4% from School IV. 21% of the respondents work for the Presidential Board or the Central Administration, 13% in the area of 'Central Institutions, Scientific Centres, Research Centres' and a further 3% in other areas. Multiple answers were possible.

Working hours

Most respondents (58%) work full-time at the university; 39% work part time (50% or more), and 3% 'part time (less than 50%)'.

Contract

62% of the respondents have a permanent employment contract with the university. 35% of the contracts have a fixed term and a further 4% of the participants have a proportionate fixed-term contract.

Age

Around half of the participants (54%) are '30 to 50 years' old. 30% of the respondents say they are 'over 50 years' old and 16% are 'under 30 years' old.

Sex

62% of the respondents are female and 37% male. 1% describe their gender as 'other'.

Disability

4% of the participants have a disability.

Distance from home to work

Nearly half (44%) of the participants live 'up to 5 km' from the university. Another 28% travel 6 to 20 km to work. 14% travel between 21 and 50 km and 15% 'more than 50 km'. All distances are one-way.