

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Evaluation of PhD Day 2021 and experience with doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science MU

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Executive summary

In connection with PhD Day 2021, we contacted PhD students with a request to fill in an [online questionnaire](#) to get feedback on PhD Day 2021, as well as collect students' experiences with doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science MU.

A total of 47 respondents (8 participated in PhD Day 2021 while 39 did not) **responded**; the **return rate was 6%** (calculated based on the number of all PhD students as of 10/2021).

1. **The students who participated in PhD Day 2021** gave very positive feedback. Students rated the following parts of the programme as the most useful and beneficial: *PhD Guide, Mobilities – discover your opportunities to go abroad (video), Excellent PhD graduates at SCI MUNI: Expectations and support (live)*.
2. **The other part of the questionnaire included assessment of doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science:**
 - **Social climate regarding equality of culture, friendly or discriminatory environment** – 79% of respondents rate it 'satisfactory' or 'rather satisfactory', 12% rate it 'rather unsatisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'; 9% were not able to assess the social climate.
 - **Encountering unethical behaviour** – 21% of respondents encountered behaviour that could be considered unethical; 75% did not and 4% were not sure.
When asked about specific unethical behaviour, 41% of respondents mentioned "*abusing the position of a supervisor for own profit*", 25% reported "*discrimination and unequal treatment based on gender, age, ethnic origin, religious belief etc.*" and 17% mentioned "*unfair competitive practices among students/colleagues/teachers*".
 - **Encountering different treatment because of one's gender** – 72% of respondents did not encounter different treatment, 15% did, while 15% could not say.
 - **Encountering inappropriate comments about women and men in classes** – 79% of respondents did not encounter such comments, 17% did while 4% did not respond.
 - **Quality of different areas of support for PhD students at the Faculty of Science** – there is a noticeable *increase in negative answers* in the area of "*financial conditions for PhD students*" and the area of "*opportunities for further education and mentoring*".
 - **Desired topics of further training** – *Academic skills – writing, presentation skills, grant applications; development of soft skills; mentoring; English language courses.*

- **Areas within doctoral studies that the Faculty should focus on** – *Training and mentoring; financial support for PhD students' research activities; quality of study and research.*

1. Introduction and methodology

On the occasion of PhD Day 2021, we contacted PhD students after the event with a request to fill in an online questionnaire to get feedback on PhD Day 2021 and learn more about students' experiences with doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science MU.

The questionnaire was sent out in September 2021 to all doctoral students. The data were collected via an online Microsoft Forms questionnaire: <https://muni.cz/go/f0ad05>.

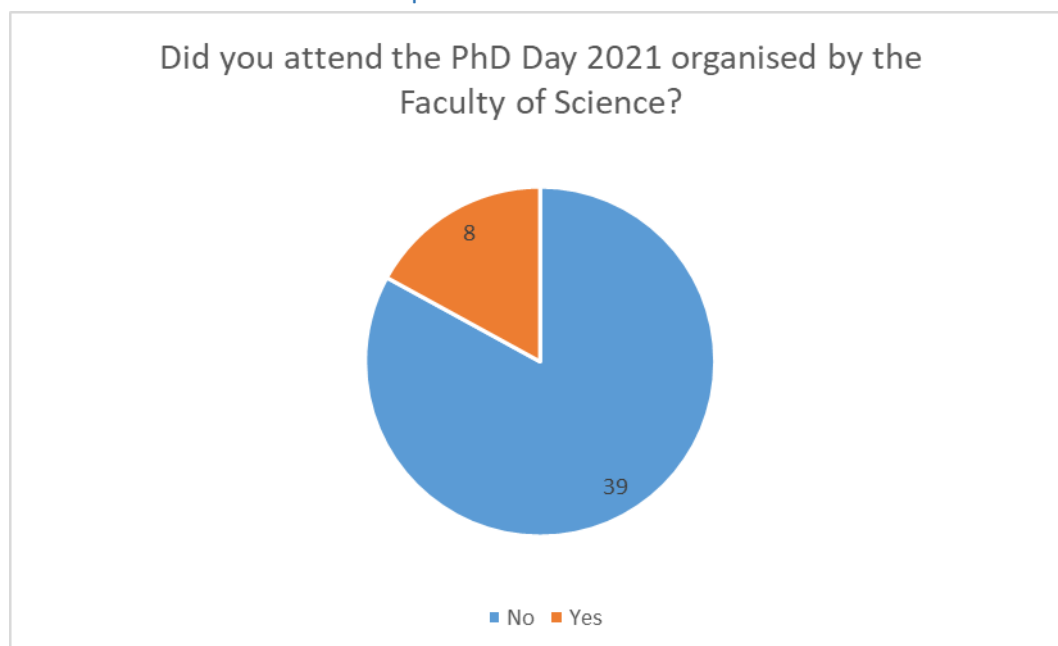
In the first part of the questionnaire, respondents who took part in the faculty's online PhD Day 2021 evaluated the course and benefits of the online and offline programme.

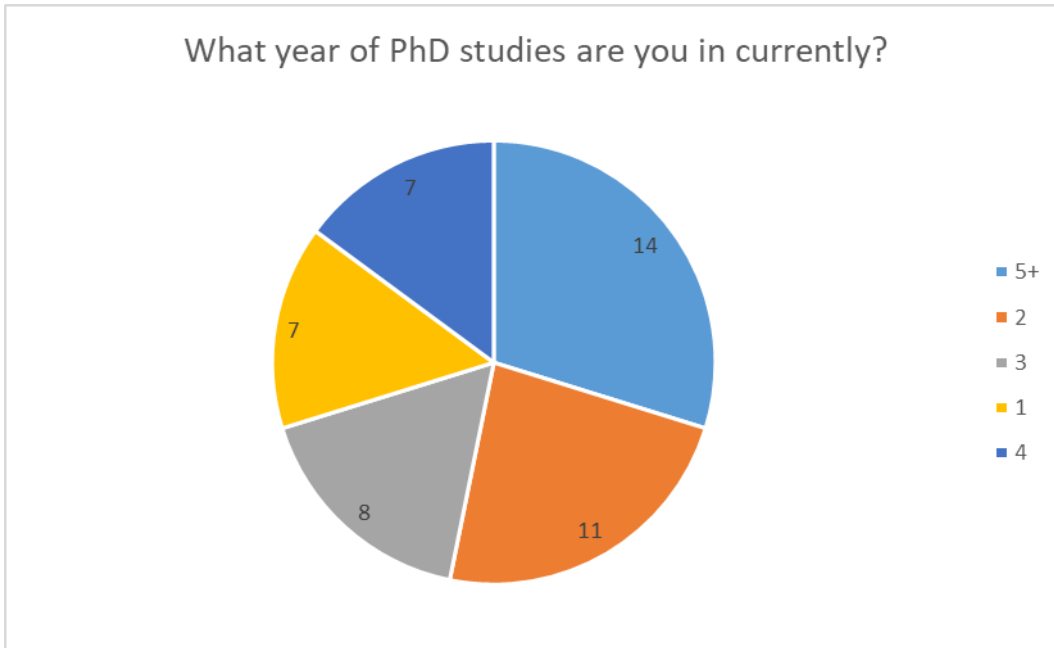
In the next part, the respondents evaluated their experience with doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science MU.

A total of **47 respondents** submitted their answers: 8 respondents participated in PhD Day 2021, 39 did not participate.

Return rate (calculated based on the number of all doctoral students as of 10/2021): 6%

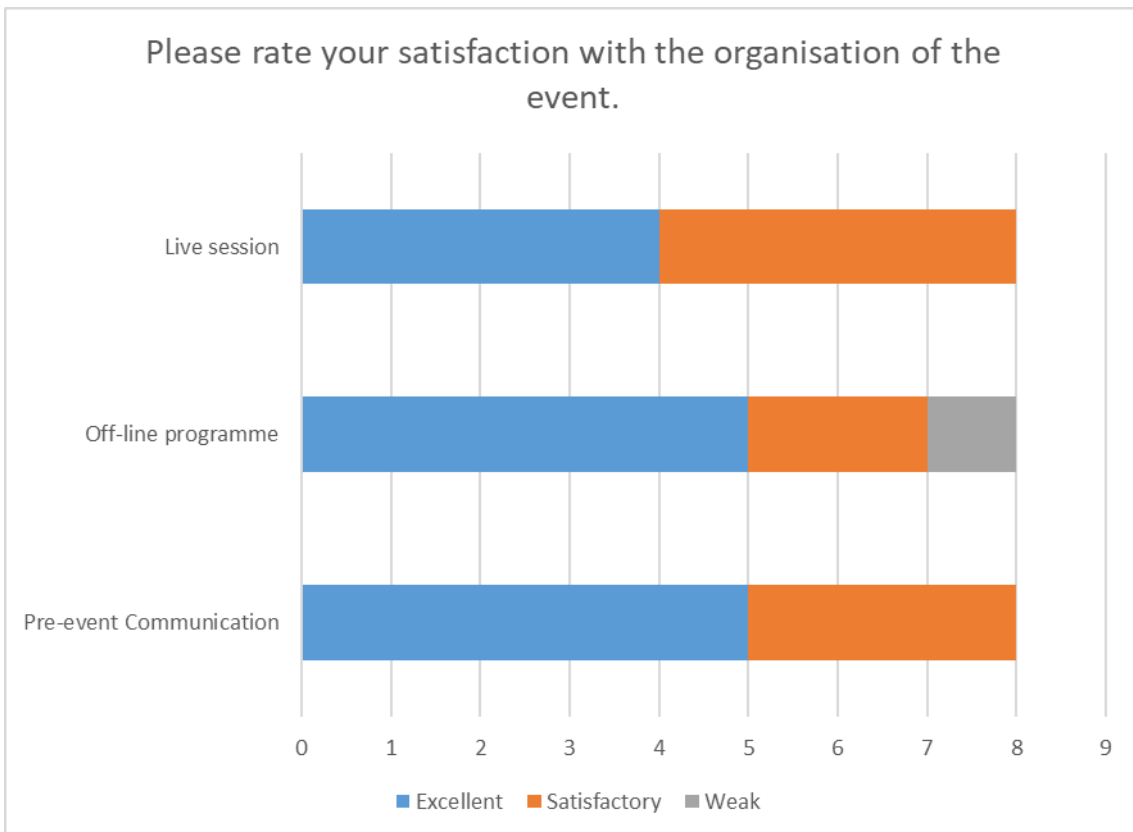
2. Characteristics of respondents



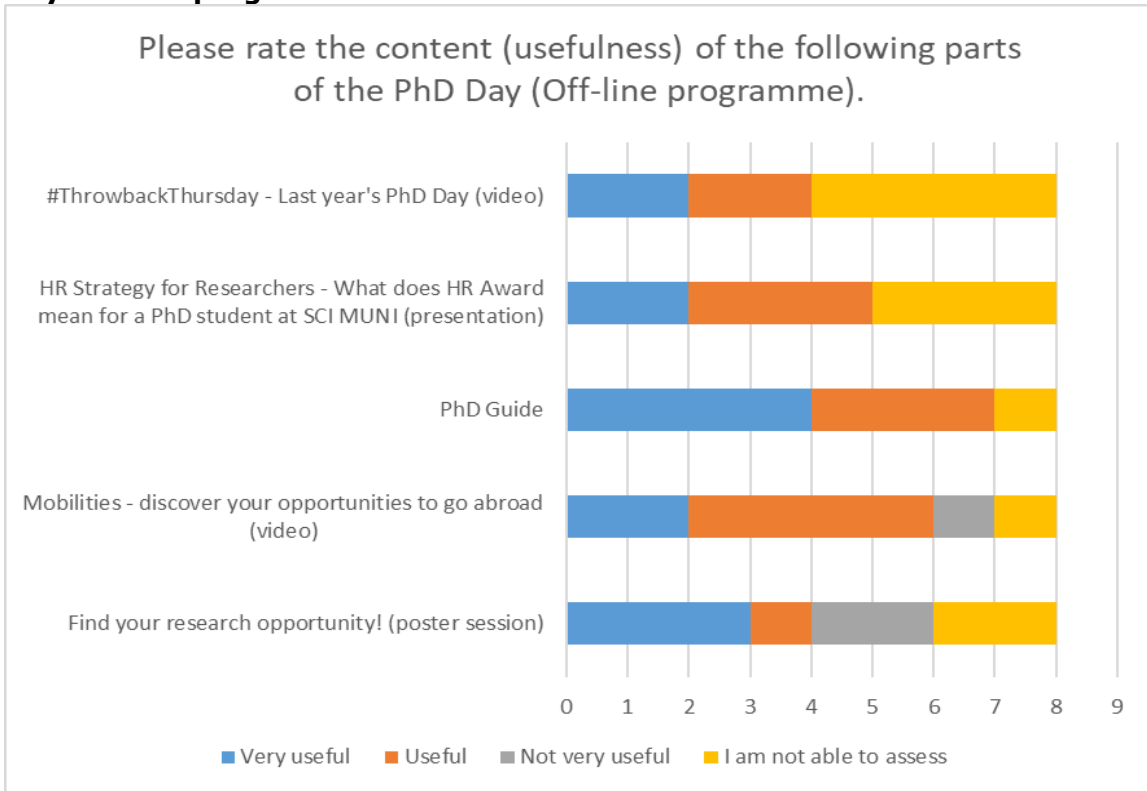


3. Evaluation of the Faculty PhD Day 2021

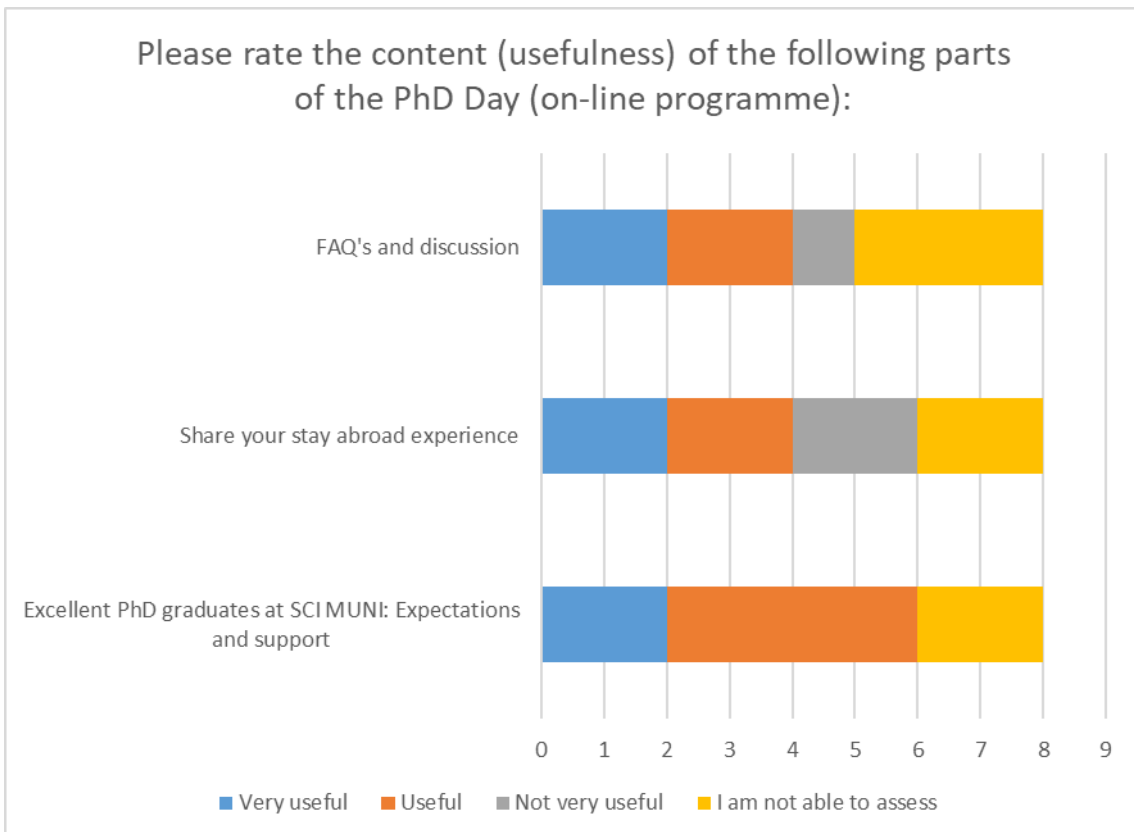
Question: Please rate your satisfaction with the organisation of the event.



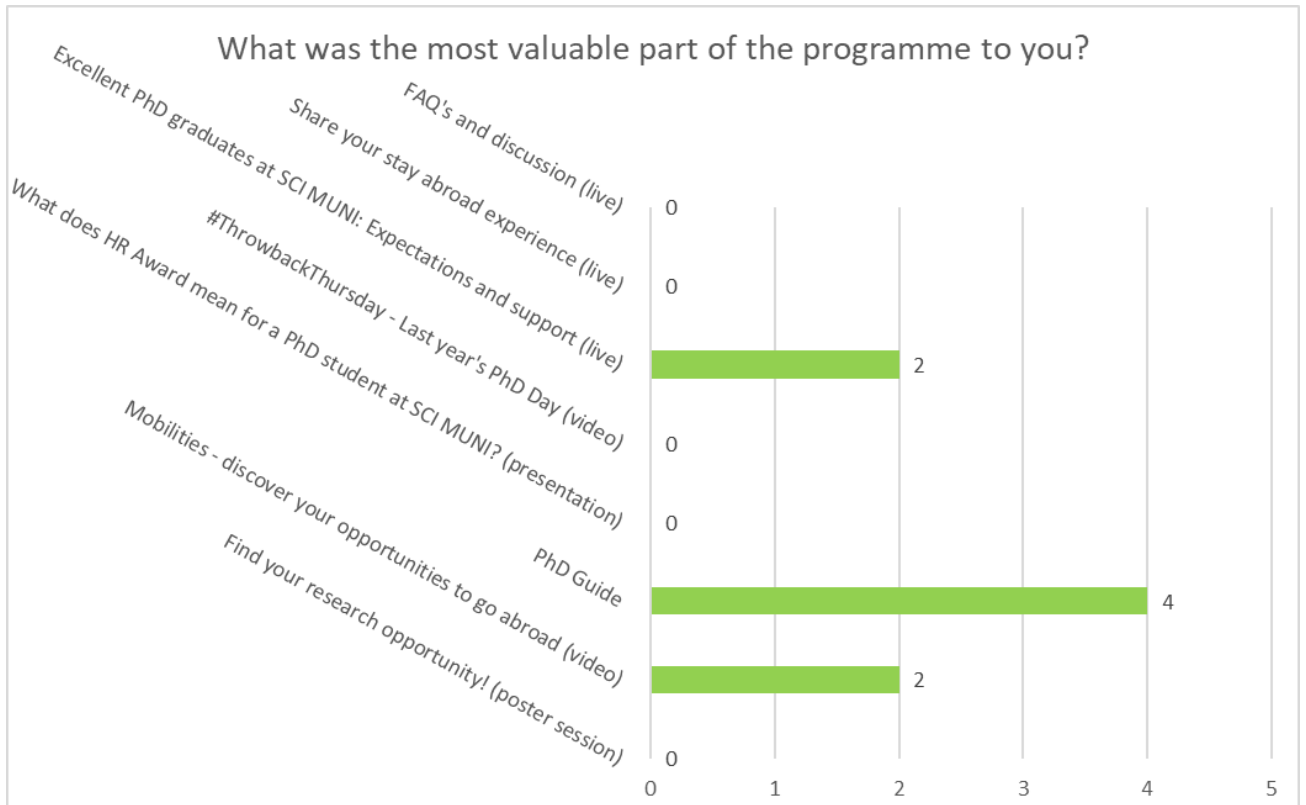
Question: Please rate the content (usefulness) of the following parts of the PhD Day Off-line programme.



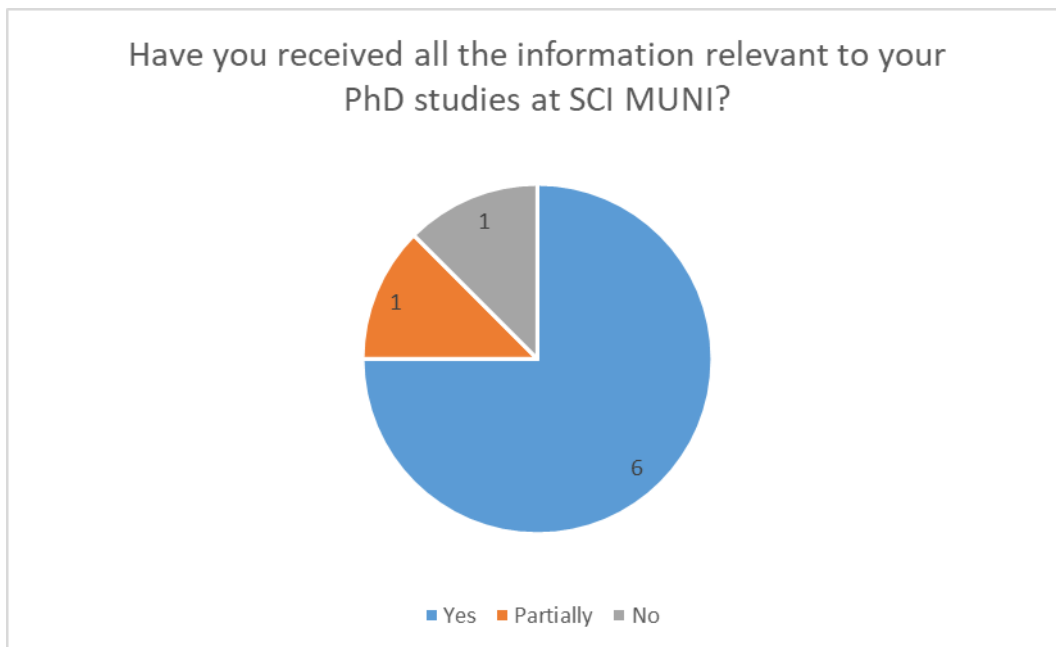
Question: Please rate the content (usefulness) of the following parts of the PhD Day (on-line programme).



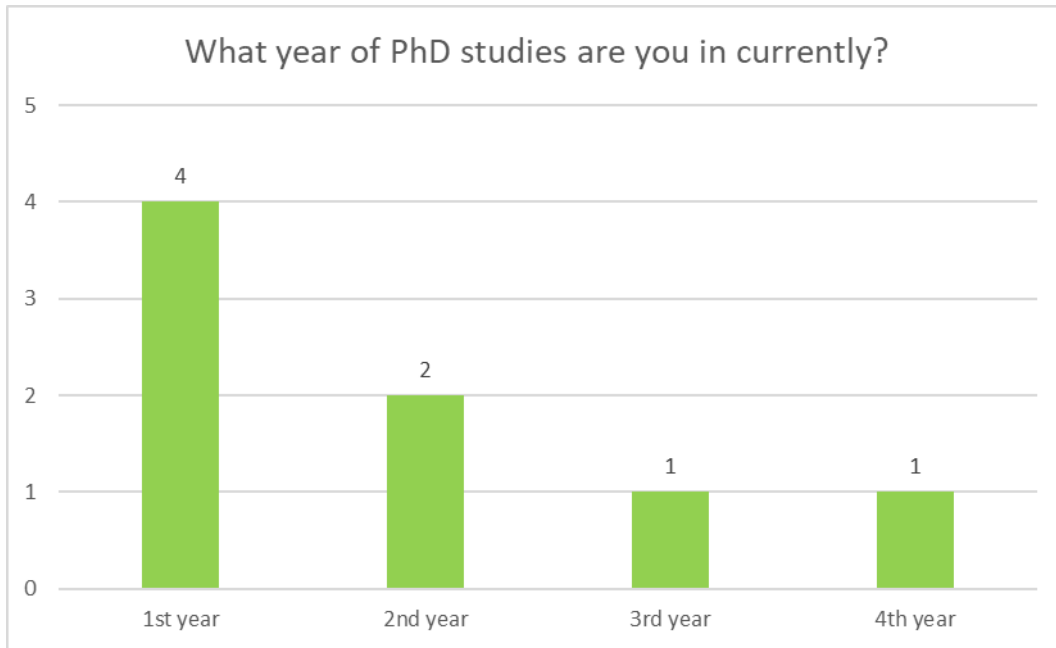
Question: What was the most valuable part of the programme to you?



Question: Have you received all the information relevant to your PhD studies at SCI MUNI?



Question: What year of PhD studies are you in currently?

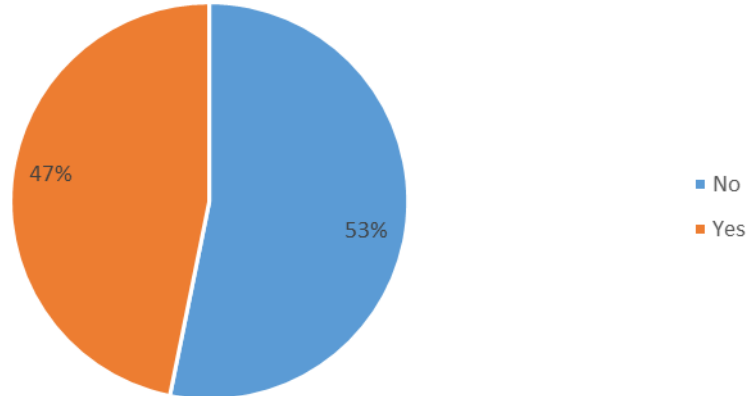


These results need to be interpreted in light of the fact that only 8 of the 47 students who completed the questionnaire participated in the PhD day (and, therefore, were able to evaluate its course). Nevertheless, the feedback received from these respondents was **positive**. Students rated **the following parts of the programme as the most useful and beneficial**: *PhD Guide, Mobilities – discover your opportunities to go abroad (video), Excellent PhD graduates at SCI MUNI: Expectations and support (live)*.

4. Evaluation of experience with doctoral studies

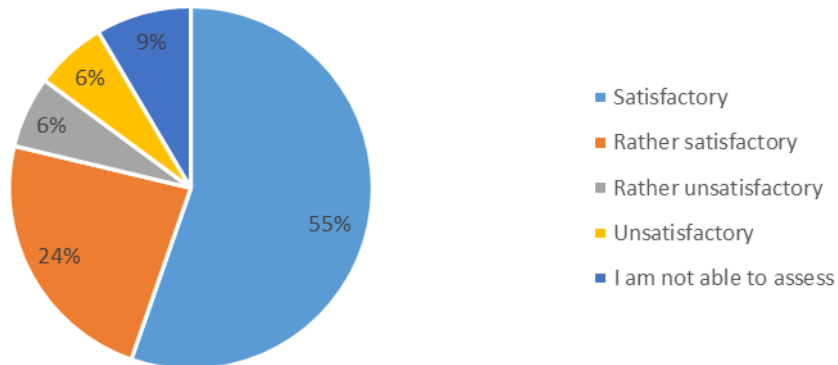
Question: Do you know that the Faculty of Science is holder of the HR Excellence in Research Award and since 2018 has been creating and implementing new people strategy (HR Strategy for Researchers)?

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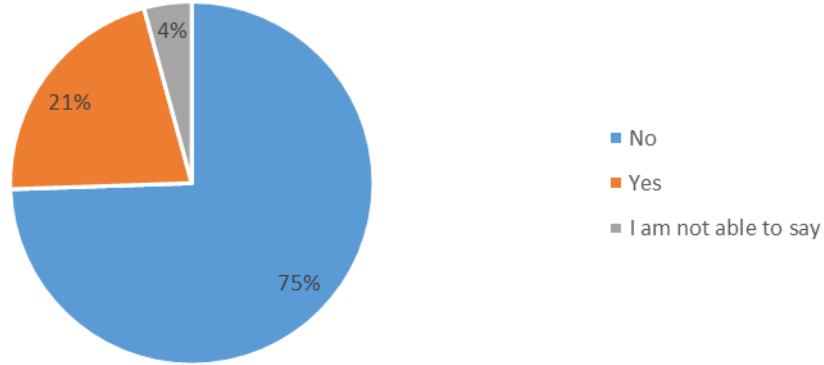
Question: Please rate the faculty social climate regarding equality of culture, friendly or discriminatory environment.

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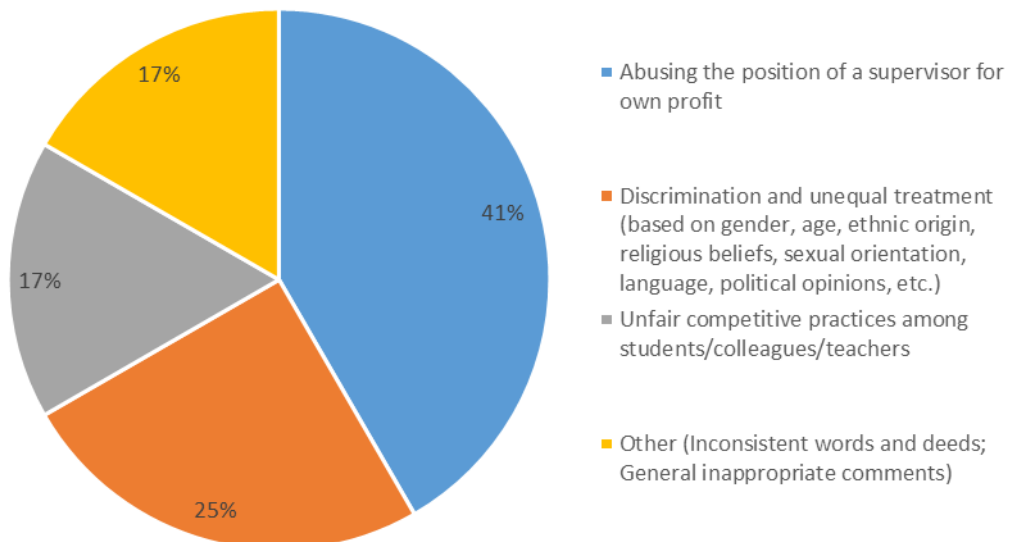
Question: During your studies at the Faculty, have you encountered any behaviour that could be considered unethical?

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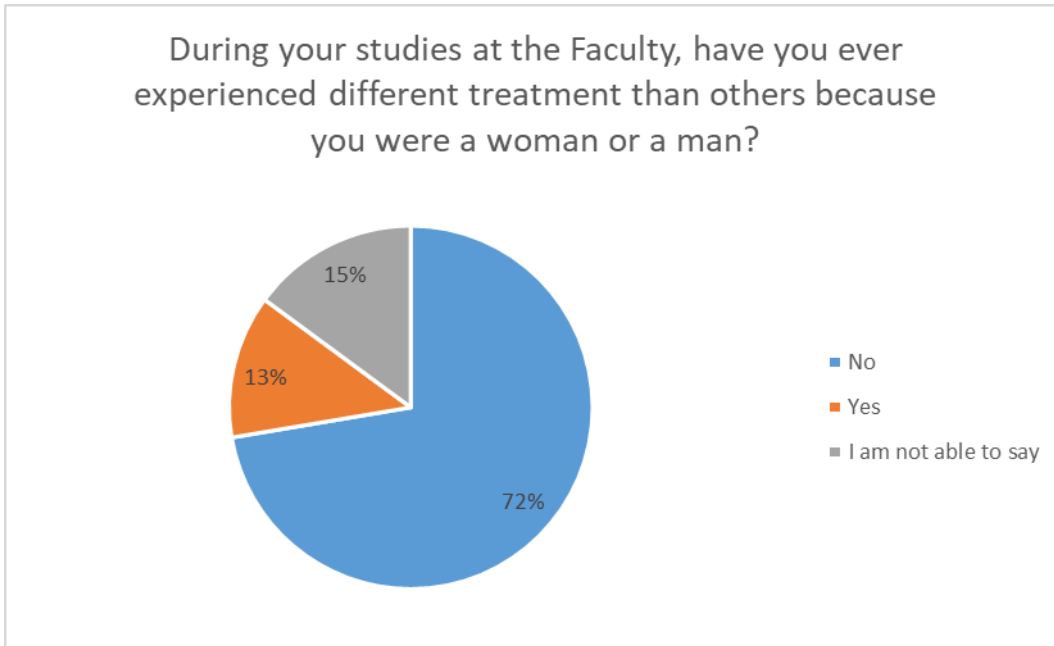


Question: If so, what type of behaviour was that?

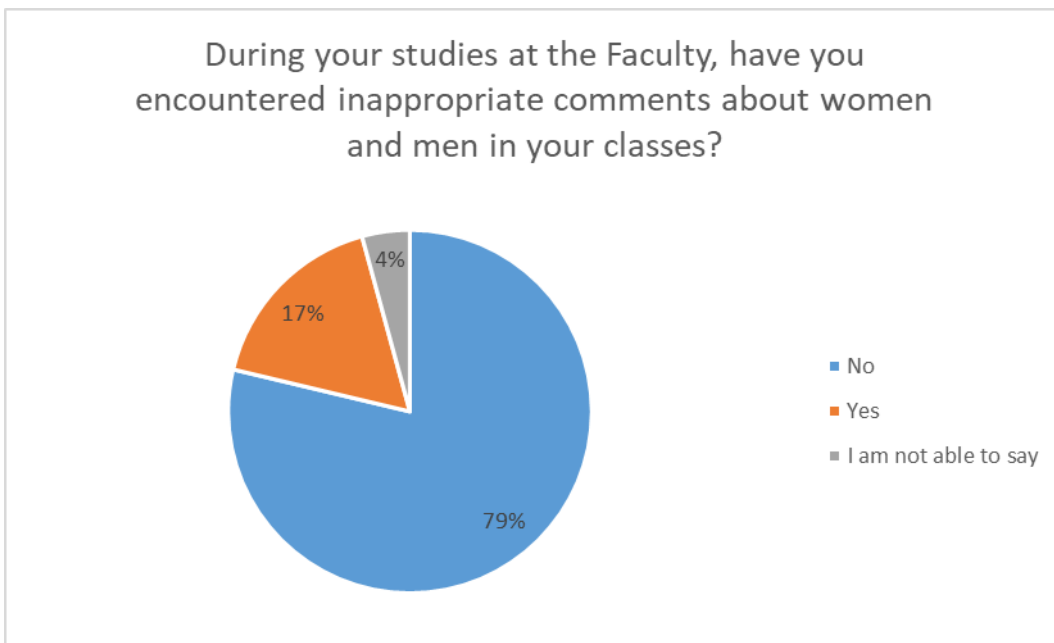
If so, what type of behaviour was that?



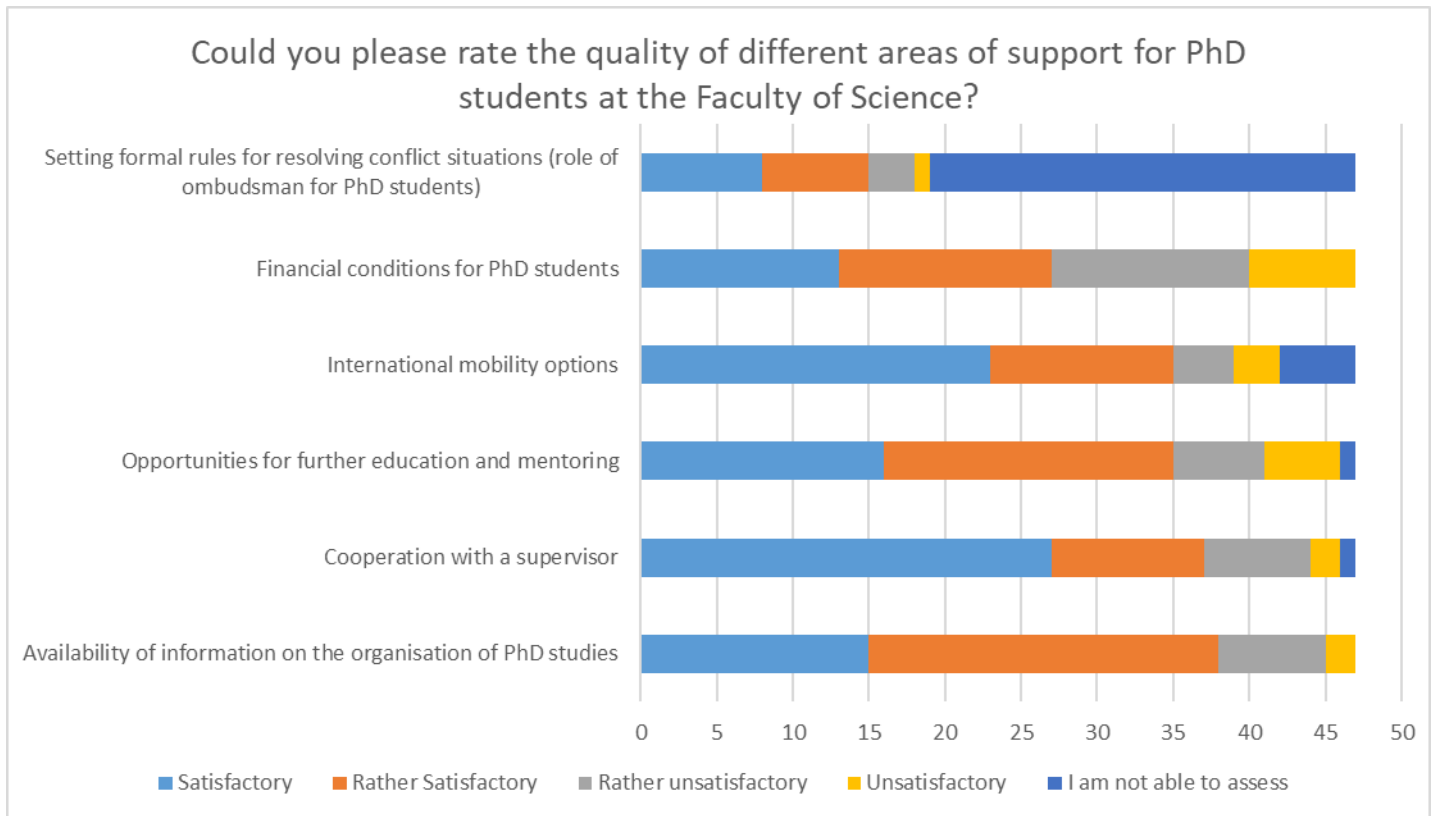
Question: During your studies at the Faculty, have you ever experienced different treatment than others because you were a woman or a man?



Question: During your studies at the Faculty, have you encountered inappropriate comments about women and men in your classes?



Question: Could you please rate the quality of different areas of support for PhD students at the Faculty of Science?



Question: For the next period we plan to organise trainings for PhD students. Which topic would you prefer? (open-ended question)

Recurring suggestions (grouped into main thematic areas, including the specific respondent statements):

- Academic skills – academic writing, presentation skills, grant applications (“*presentation skills, academic writing; trainings on communication skills and writing scientific research paper; writing PhD thesis; how to write an appropriate proposal; grant writing*”)
- PhD studies – possibilities and requirements (“*if I can't manage to write my thesis in time, which opportunities do I have; funding opportunities from faculty and their update; how to apply for an internship abroad; PhD study organisation and requirements; grant options*”)
- Soft skills development (“*development of soft skills; team work*”)
- Mental health (“*mental health of students and employees; well-being; work/life balance, family*”)
- Opportunities after PhD studies (“*academic life after Ph.D. - lab organization, position opportunities; carrier options after PhD - when people drop out, what kinds of jobs they manage to get, not only in academic and business area, but also in diagnostics, for example - maybe a networking event*”)
- Mentoring (“*opportunities for further education and mentoring*”)
- English language courses (“*technical English linguistic course; English language*”)

Individual suggestions (specific respondent statements):

- *"Managing people, leadership"*
- *"Women in science"*
- *"Data processing and programming"*
- *"How to manage interviews (for a scholarship, with future host institution etc.)"*

Question: What areas within doctoral studies should the Faculty focus on in the upcoming period? (open-ended question)**Recurring suggestions** (grouped into main thematic areas, including the specific respondent statements):

- Training and mentoring (*"mentoring; developing communication skills, the ability of team working; if students are required to teach, give them some course which shows them the basic areas of focus for teachers role; language courses"*)
- Financial support for PhD students' research activities (*"open possibilities for further cooperation of PhD students with the Faculty; employment opportunities; financial support"*)
- Quality of study and research (*"invite more experts from foreign universities for lectures; preference for quality over quantity of the students and focus on their project-relevant topics; quality of research and supervision; more capability of the labs; internationalization, higher ratio of foreign PhD students; attract international PhD candidates to enrich the environment"*)

Individual suggestions (specific respondent statements):

- *"More motivation to successfully end the PhD study"*
- *"Cutting down on 'paper work' PhD students have to go through"*
- *"Evaluation of the relationship between student and supervisor in every semester"*
- *"More events for PhD students to communicate with each other"*
- *"English as a standard for scientific work"*
- *"Is it possible to have a kindergarten available for kids of researchers for faculty?"*