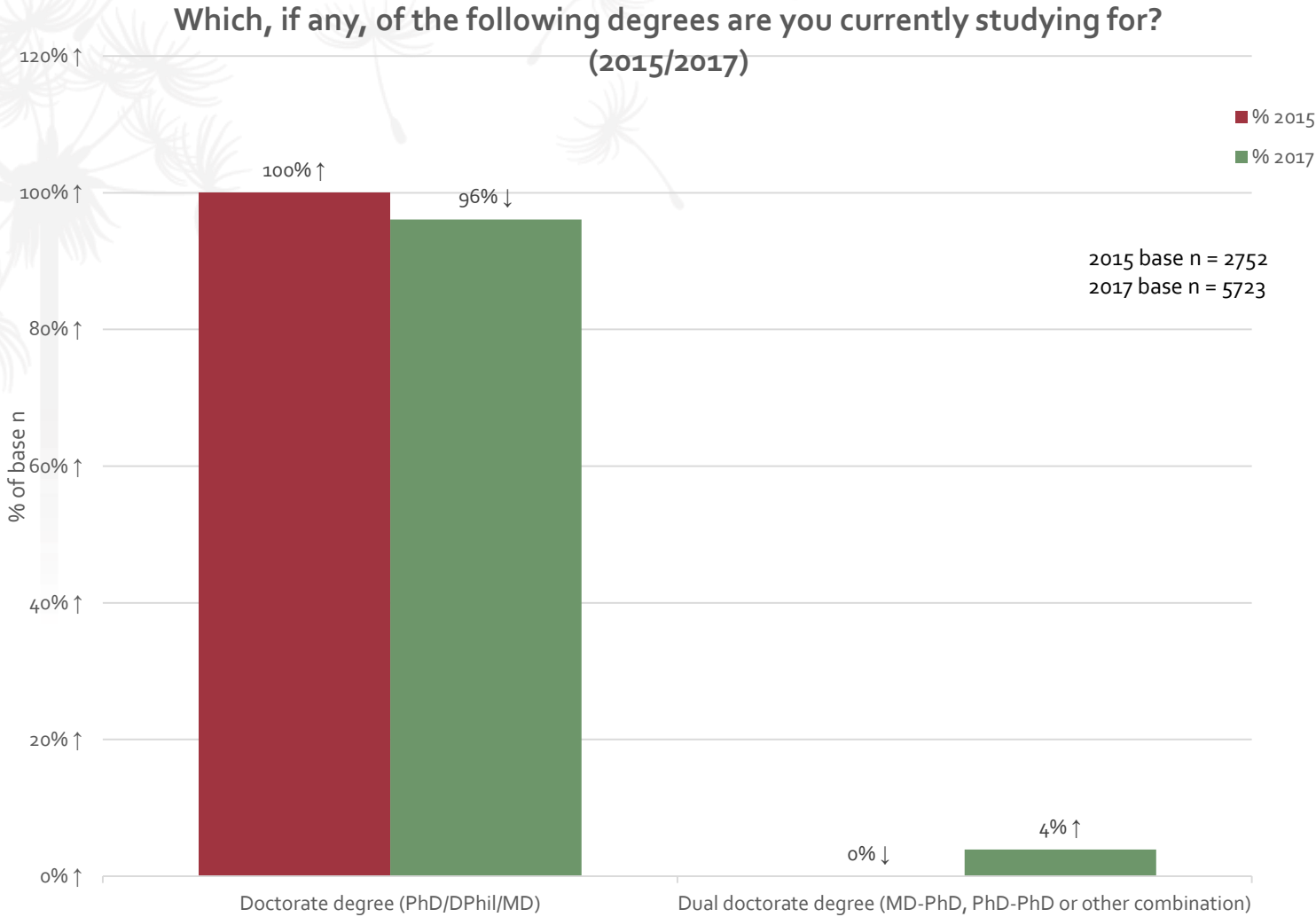




Shift Learning

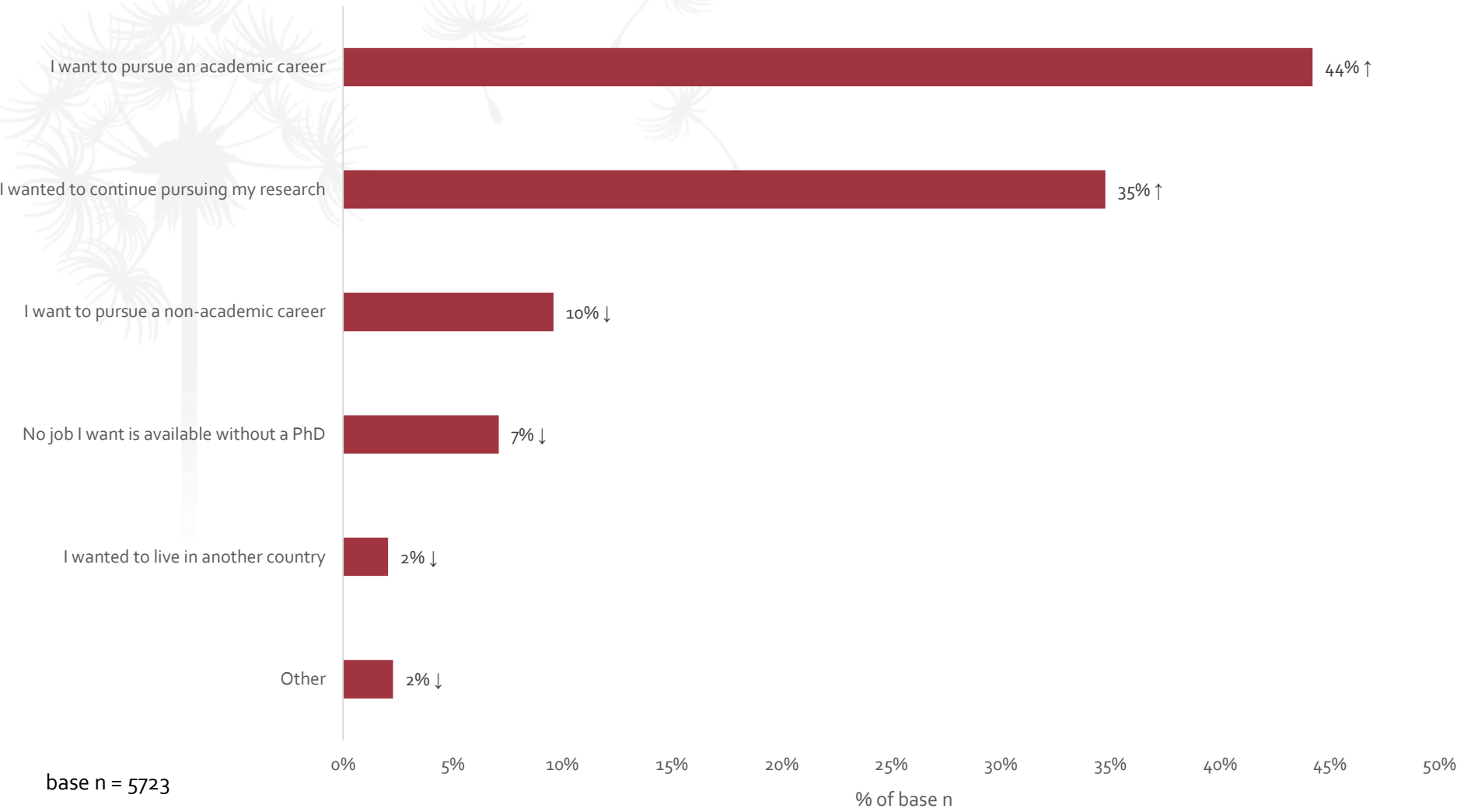
because learning
keeps changing

Nature Career Grads Survey
Topline charts

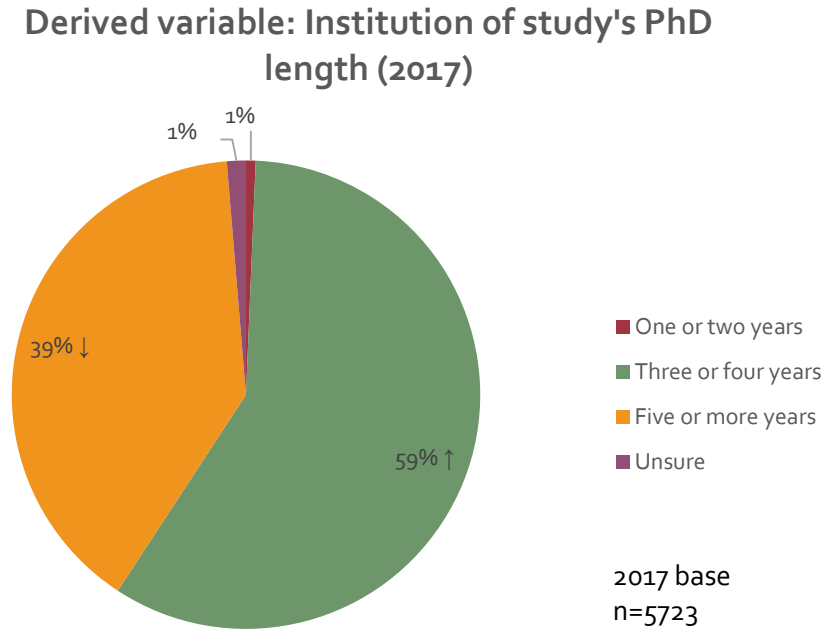
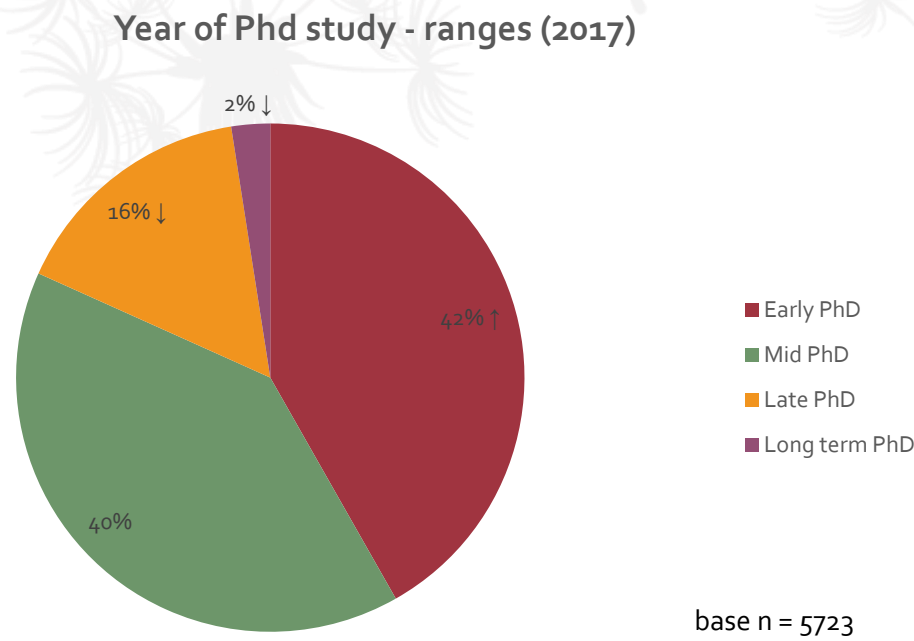


Most important reason for enrolling in PhD

Derived variable: Most important reason for enrolling in PhD (2017)

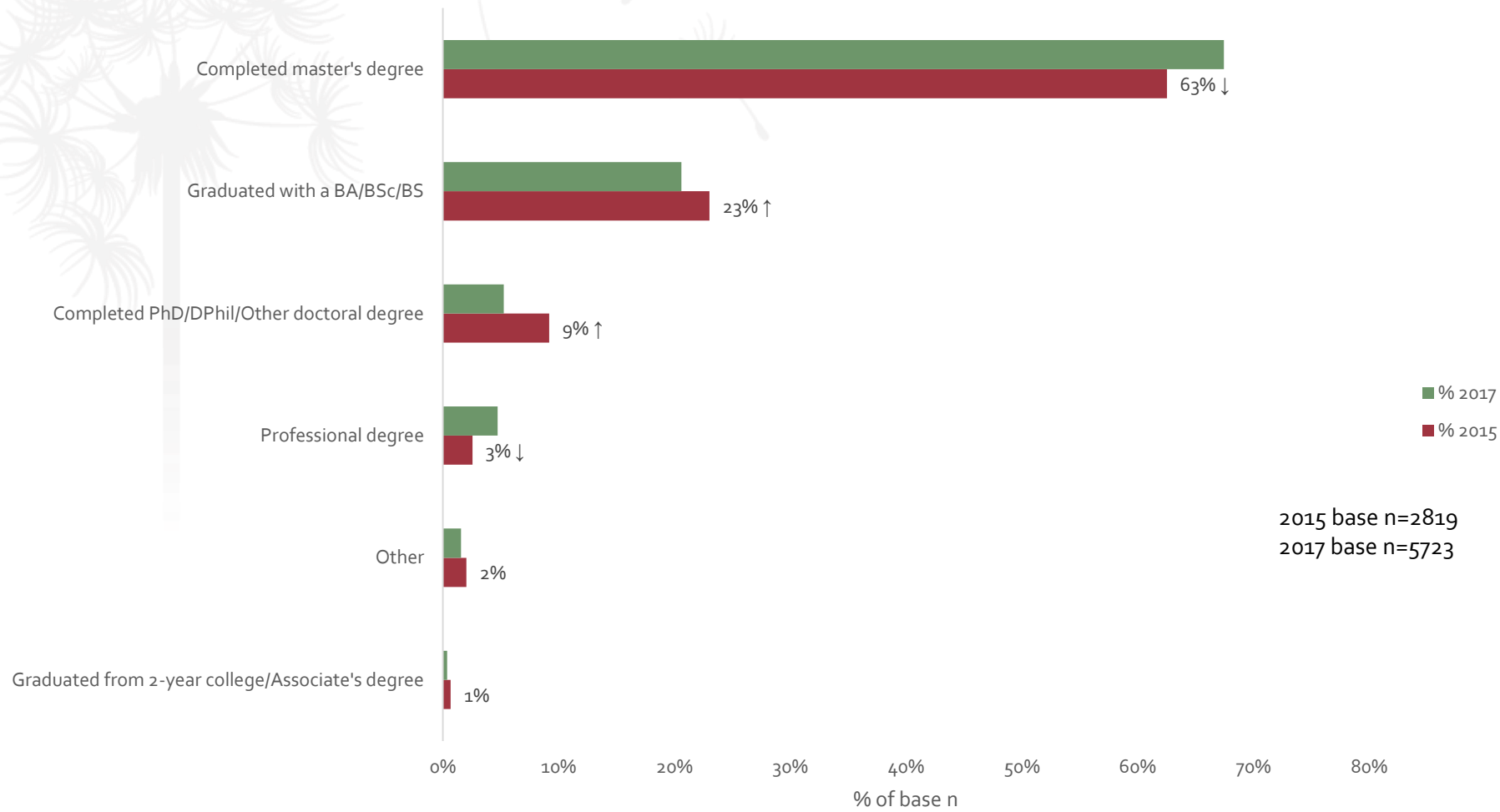


Length of PhD programme



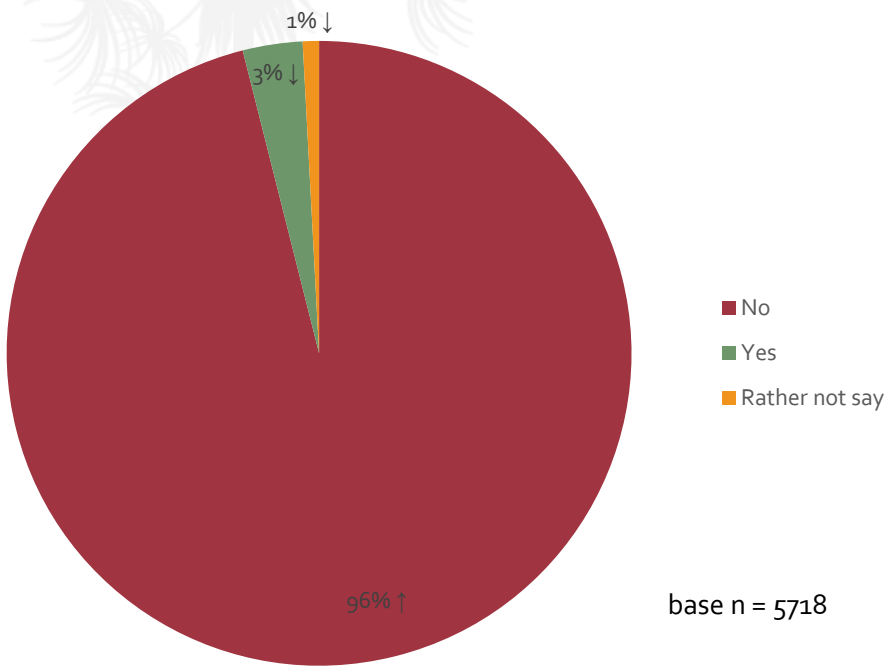
Highest level of education

What is your highest level of education to date? (2015/17)

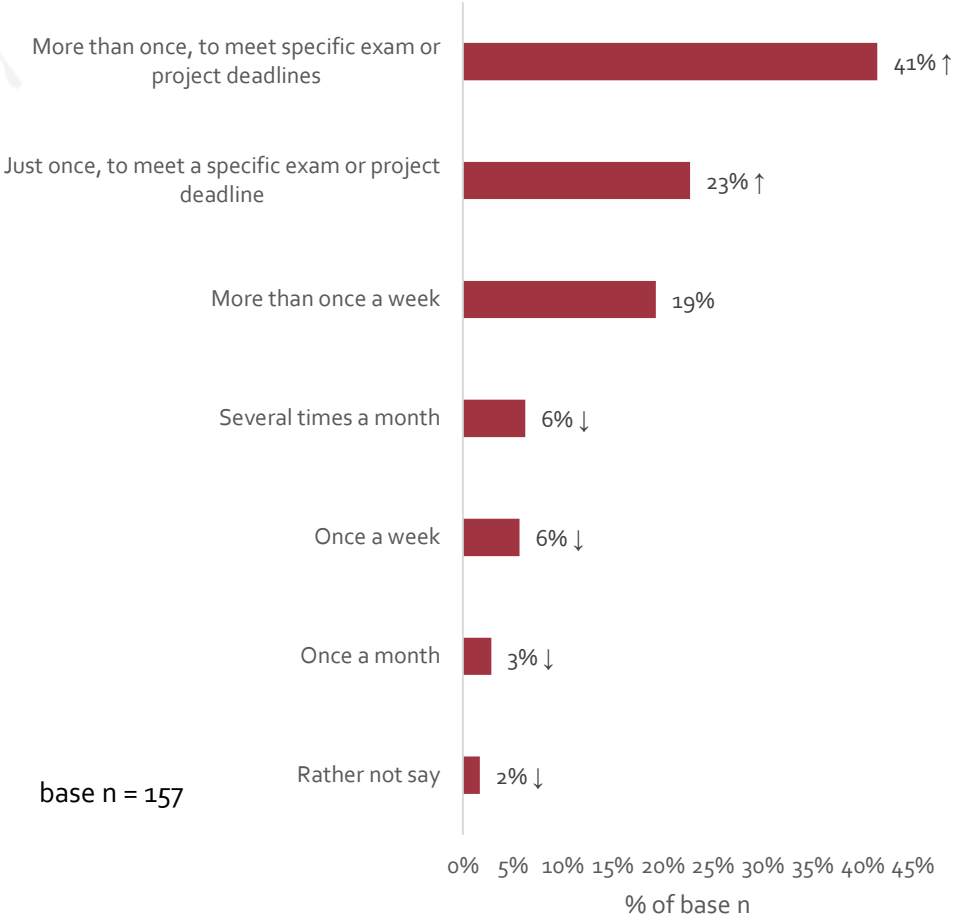


Cognitive-enhancing drugs

Have you ever taken cognitive-enhancing drugs during your graduate studies to improve concentration and memory? (2017)

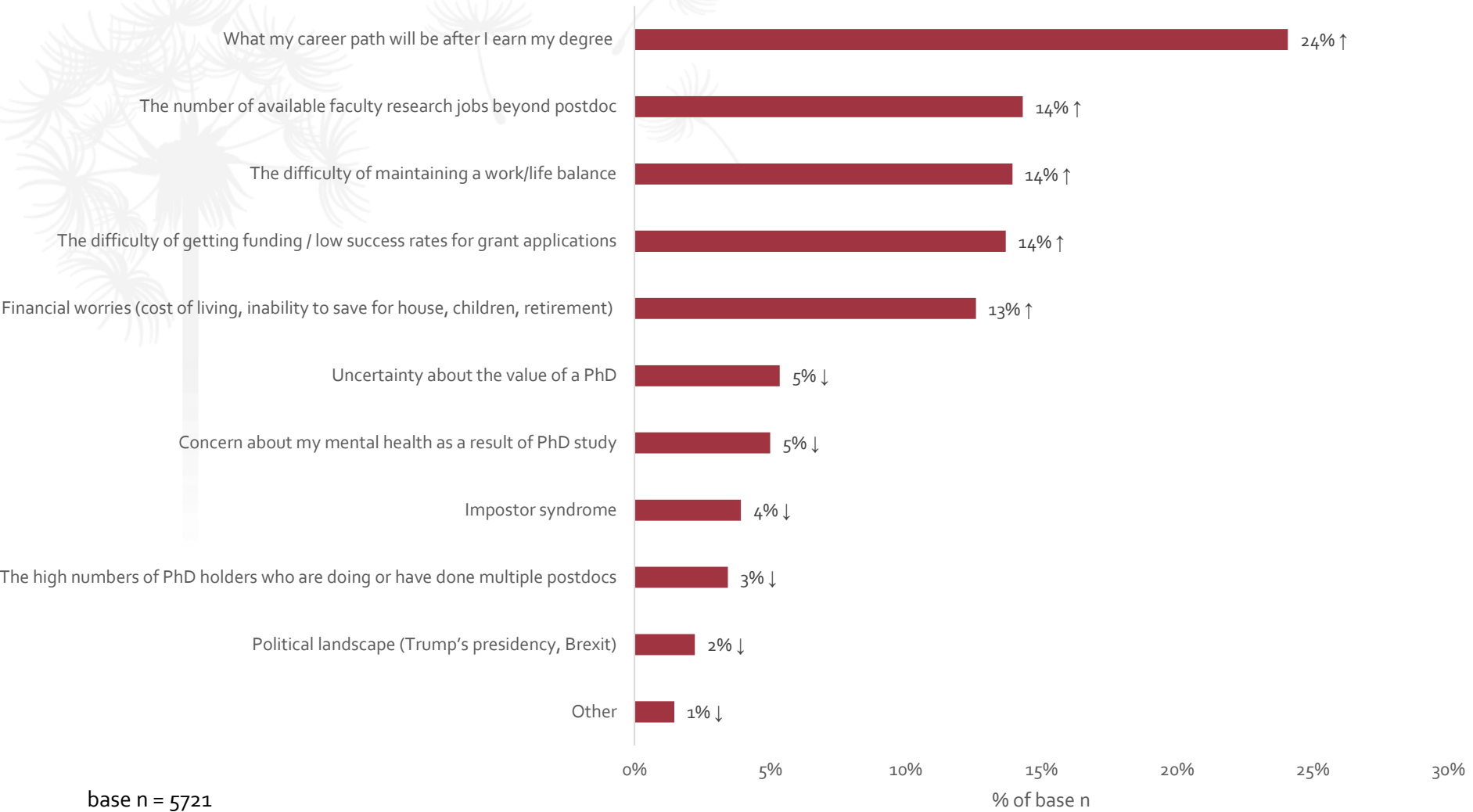


If taken cognitive-enhancing drugs, which of the following best describes your use? (2017)



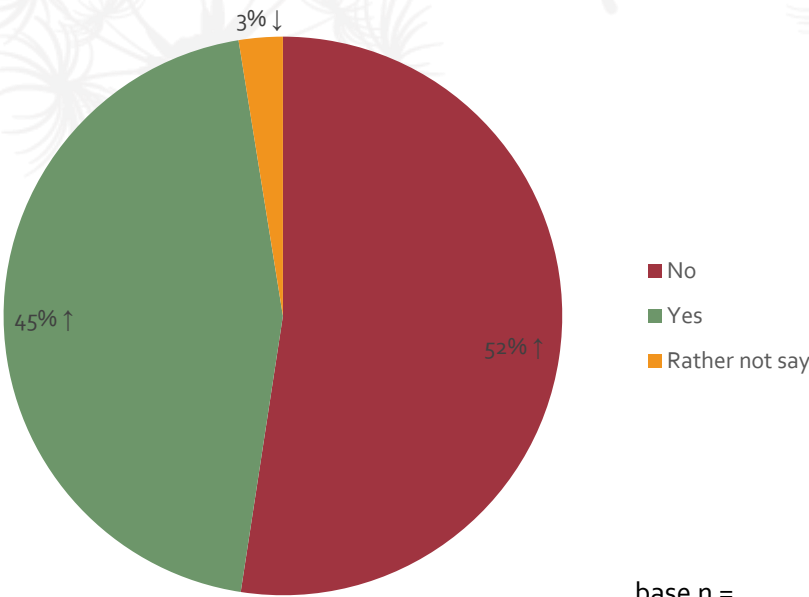
Area of most concern since starting PhD

Derived variable: Area of most concern since starting PhD (2017)



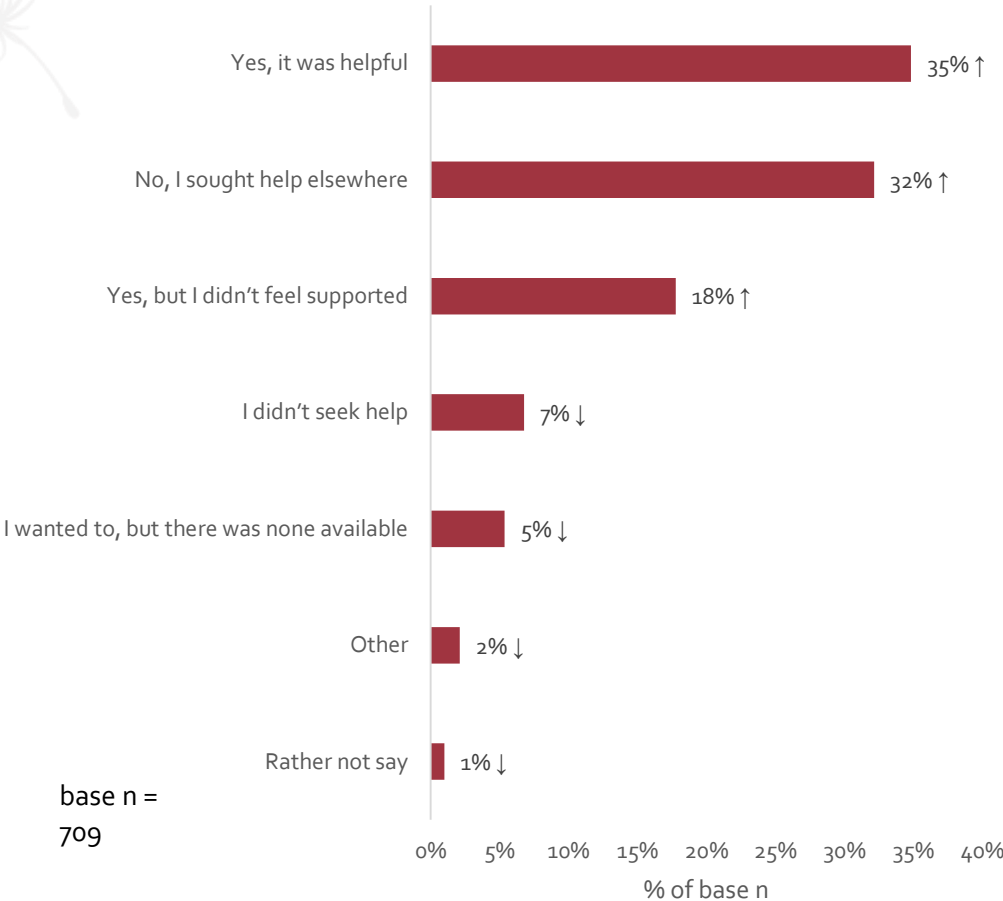
Seeking help for anxiety or depression

Have you ever sought help for anxiety or depression caused by PhD study? (2017)



base n =
1574

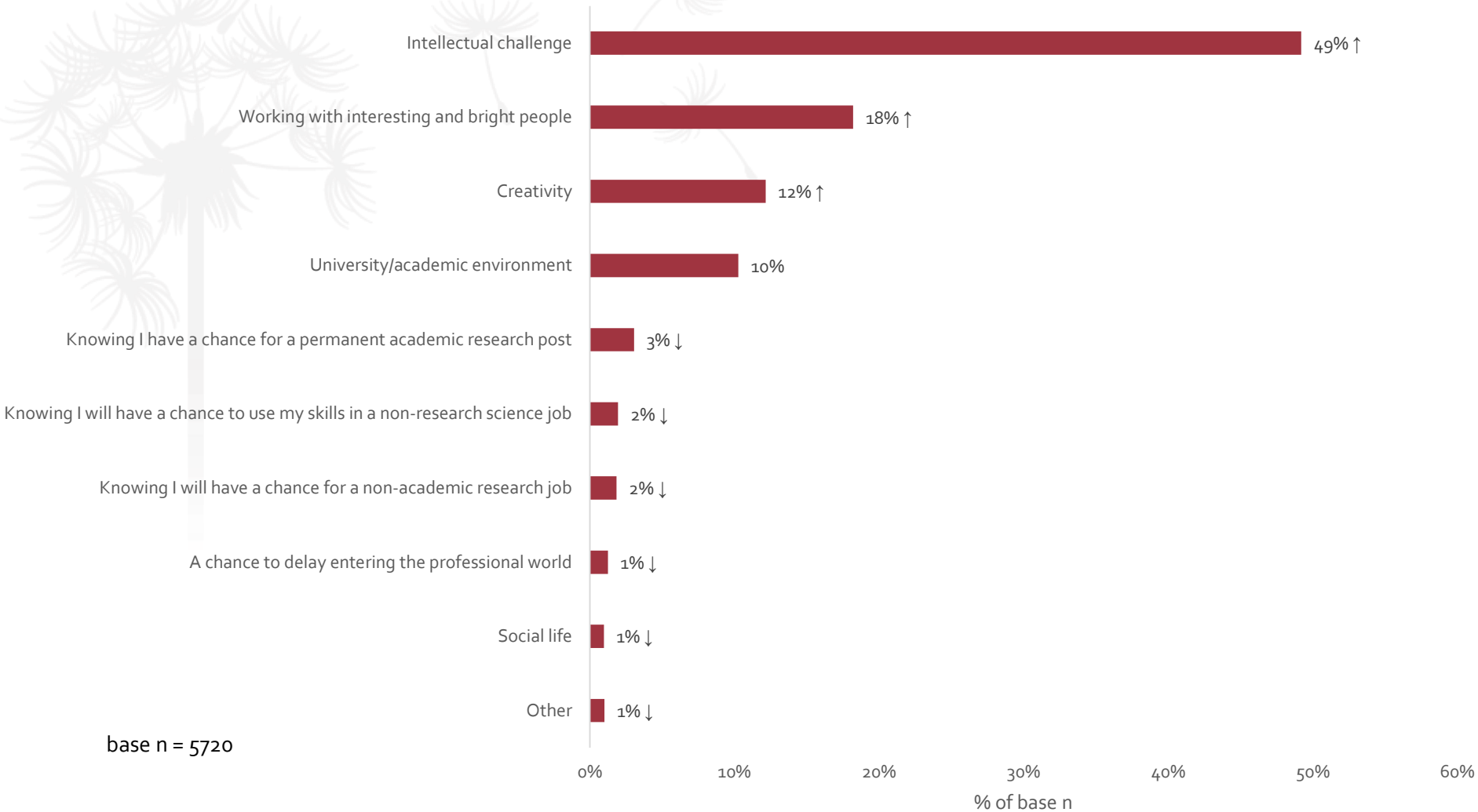
Did you seek help for anxiety or depression within your institution? (2017)



base n =
709

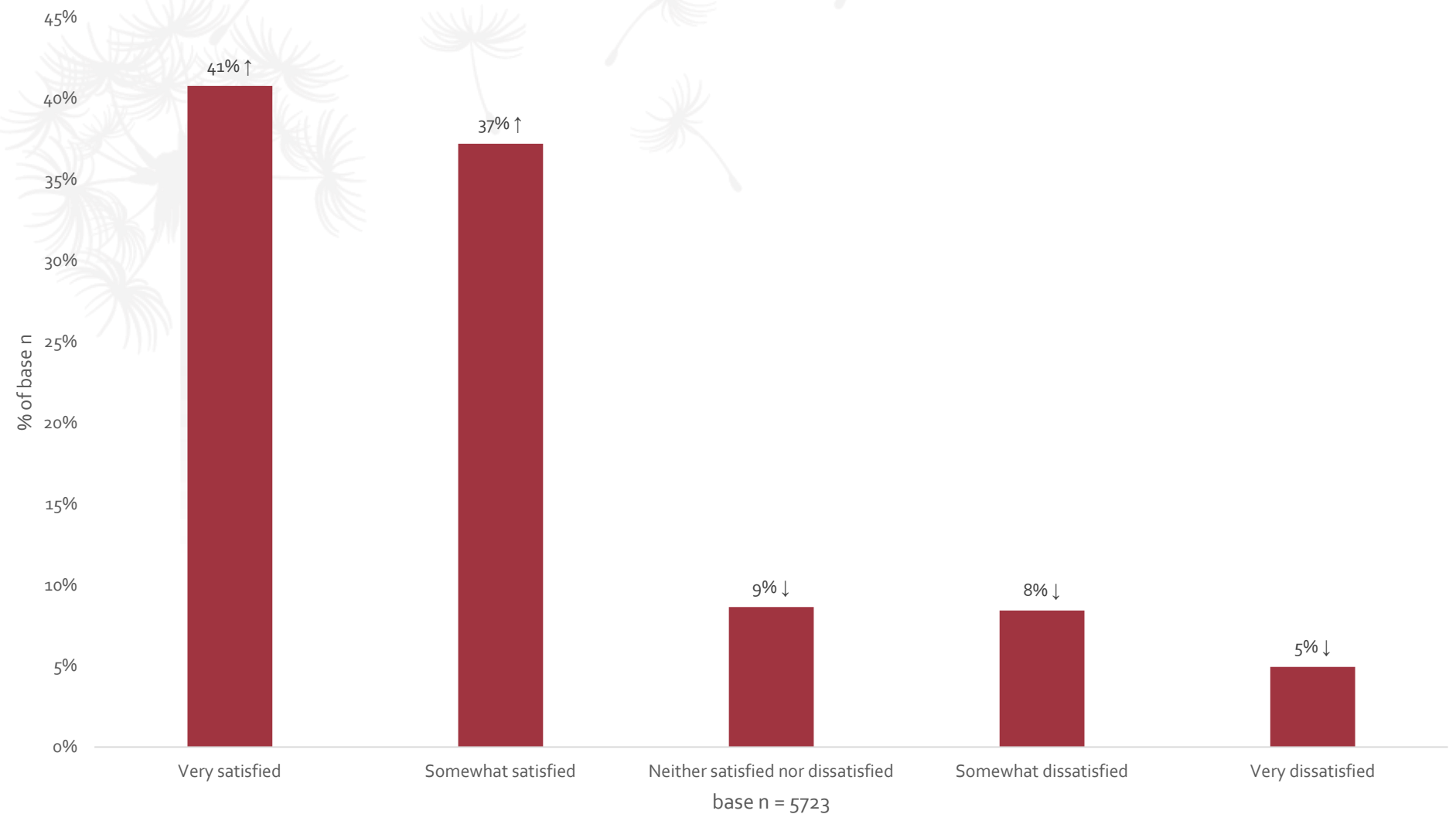
Areas most enjoyed about PhD

Derived variable: Areas most enjoyed about PhD (2017)



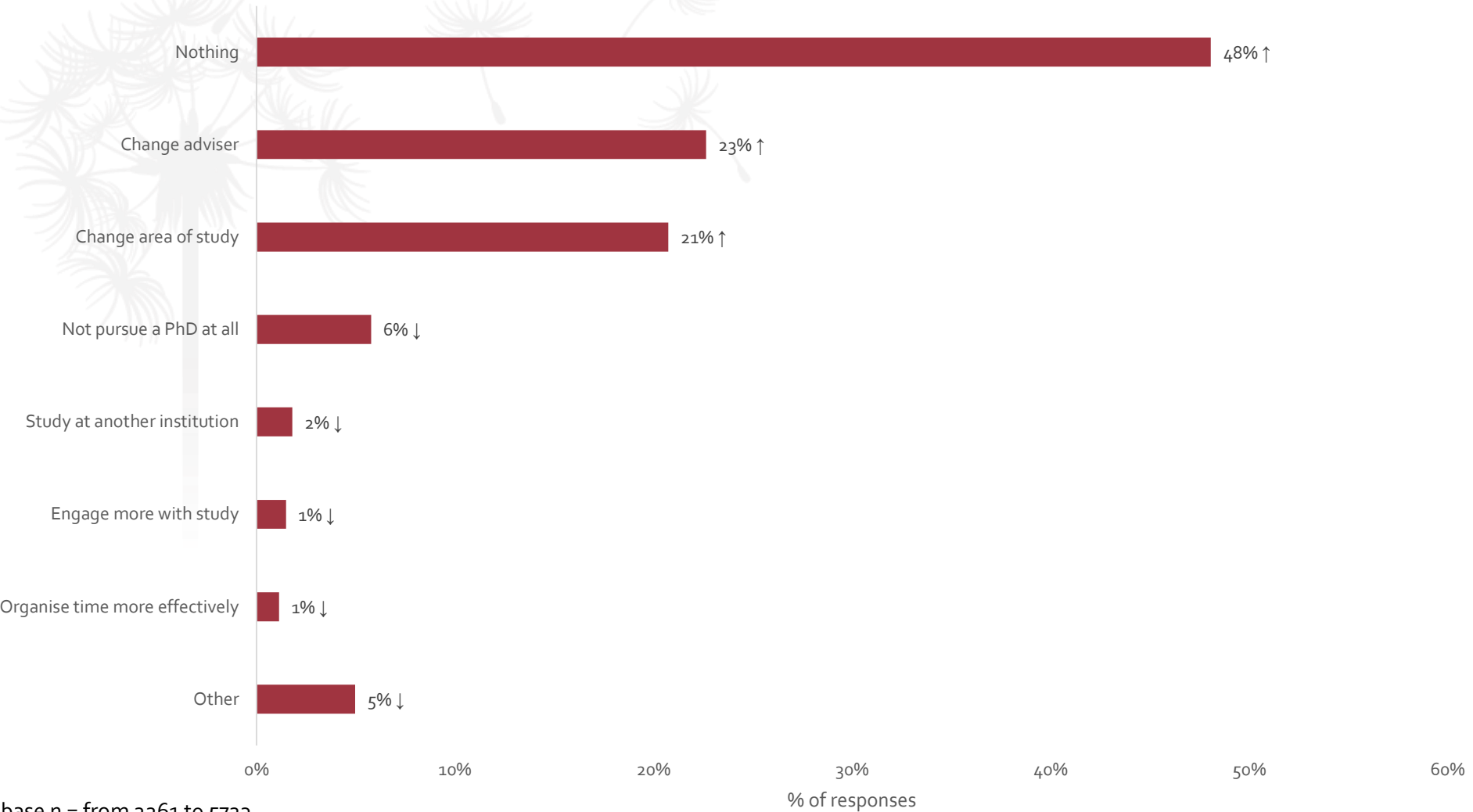
Satisfaction with decision to pursue PhD

How satisfied are you with your decision to pursue a PhD? (2017)



What done differently with PhD study

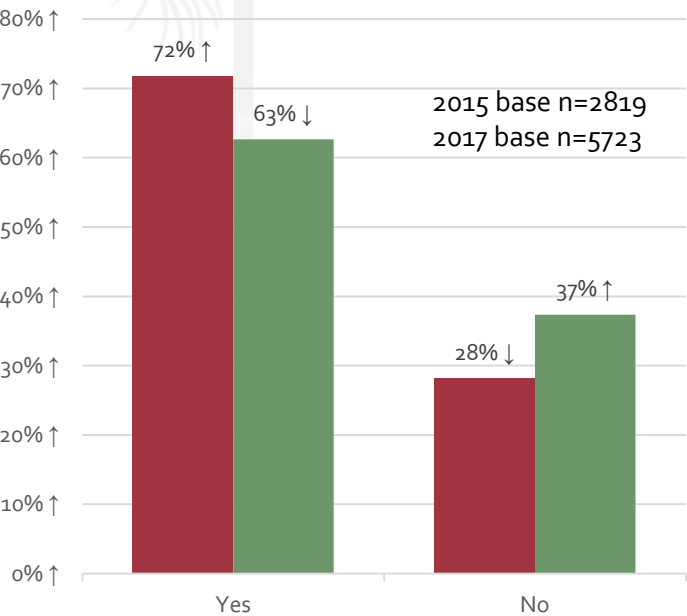
What would you do differently right now if you were starting your programme? (2017)



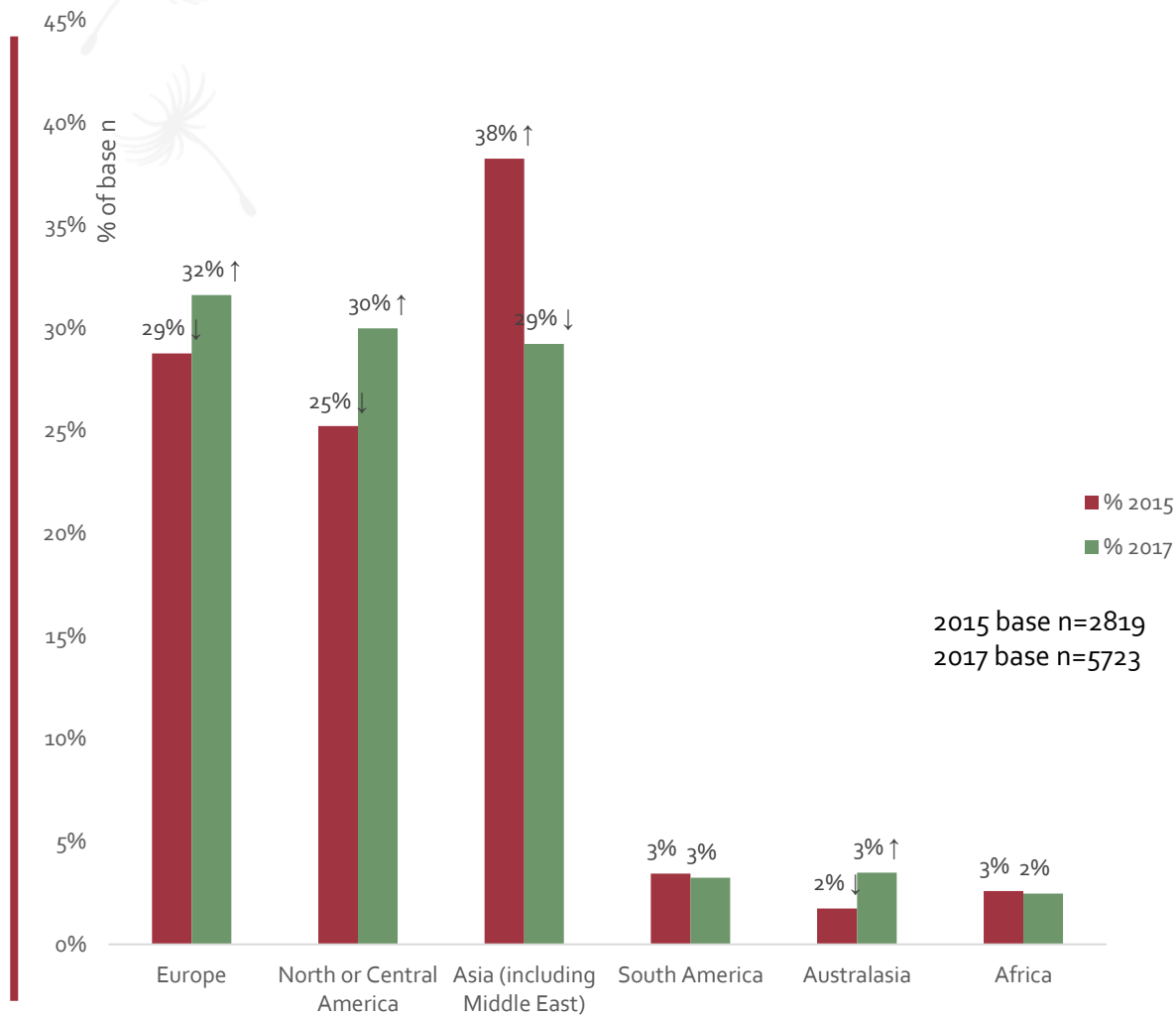
Current living situation

Are you studying in the country where you grew up? (2015/2017)

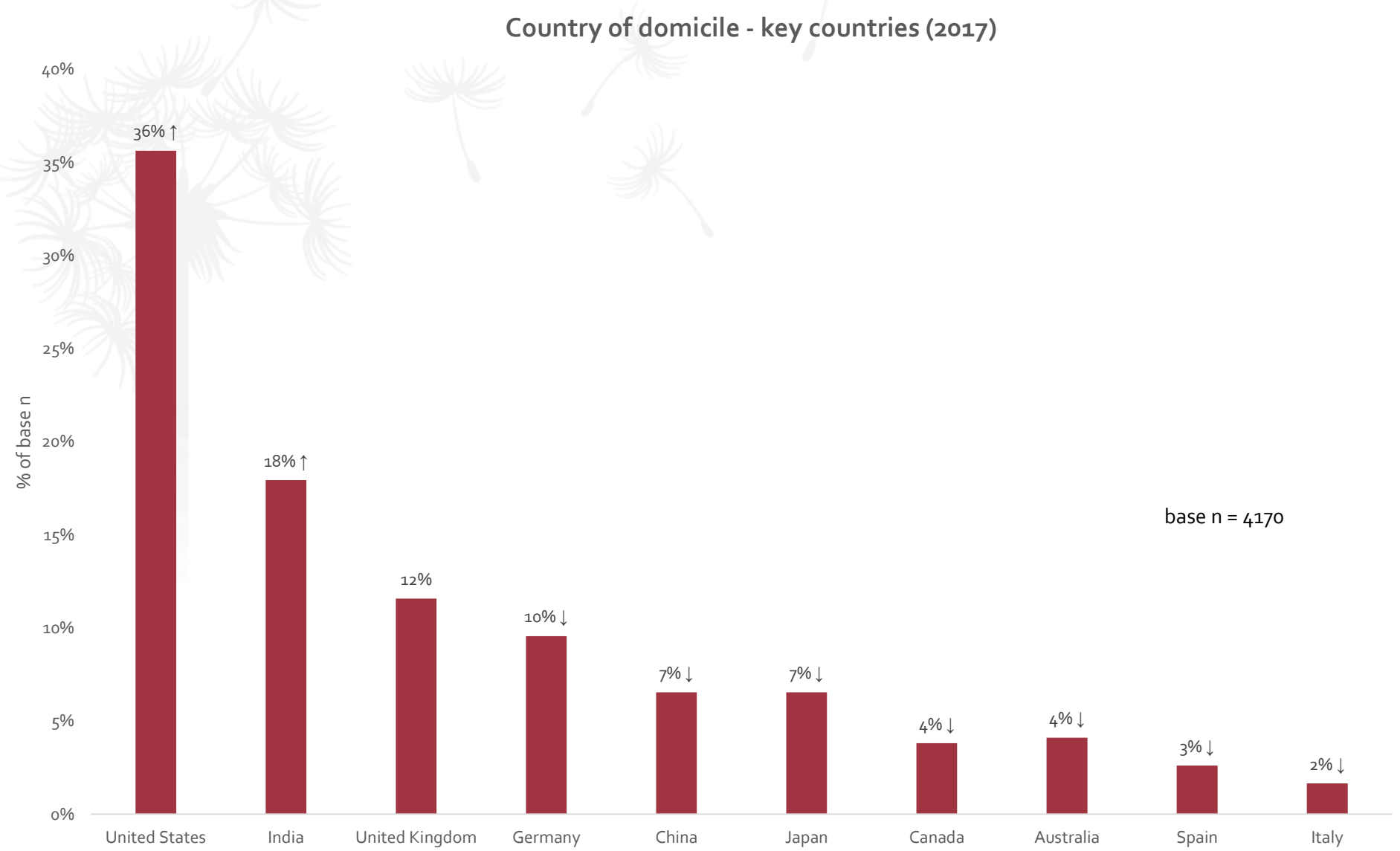
■ 2015 ■ 2017



Where do you currently live? (2015/17)

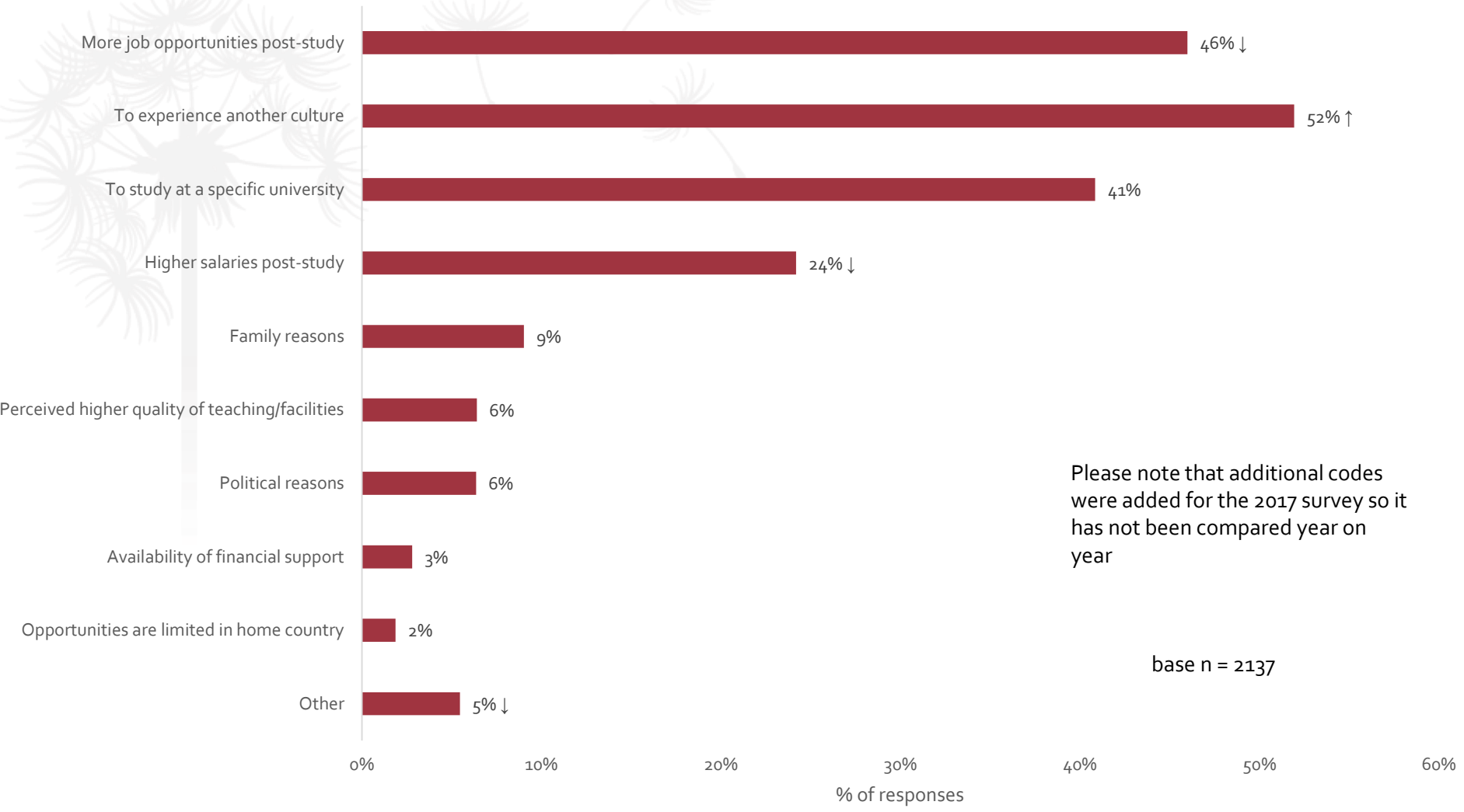


Country of domicile



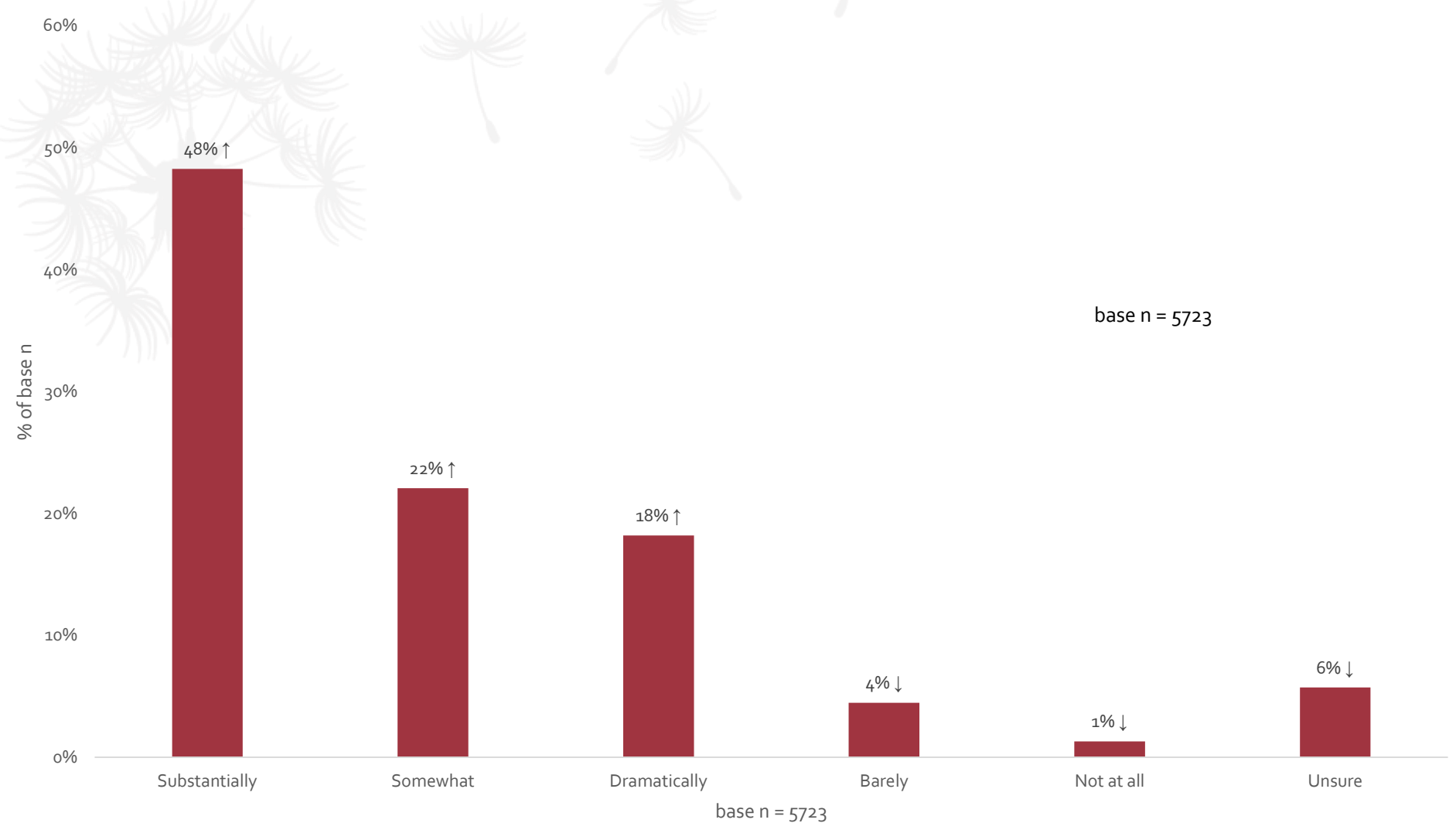
Motivation to study outside of country of upbringing

What prompted you to study outside your country of upbringing? (2015/17)

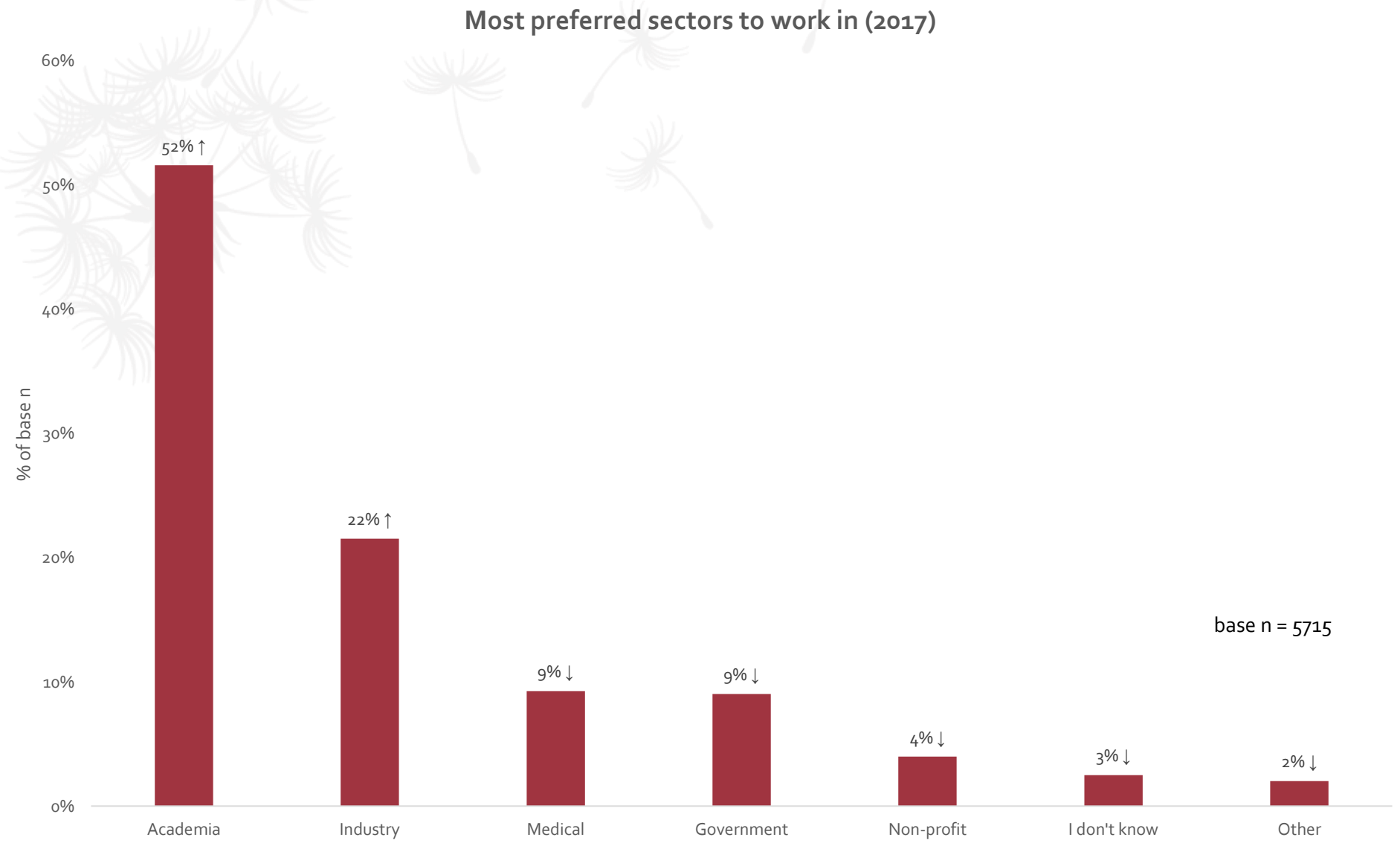


Expectation of job prospects post-study

How much do you expect your PhD to improve your job prospects? (2017)

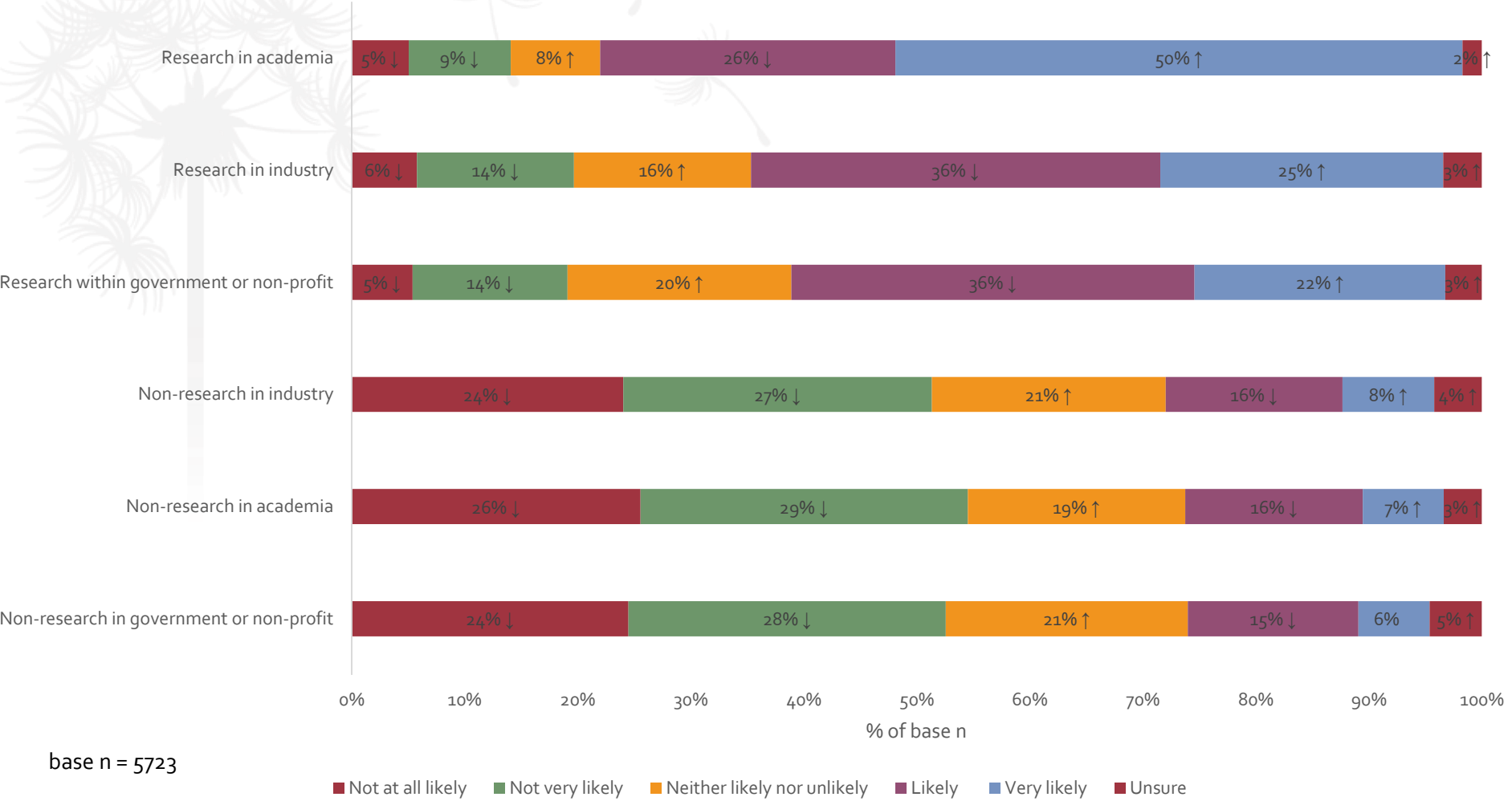


Most preferred sector to work in



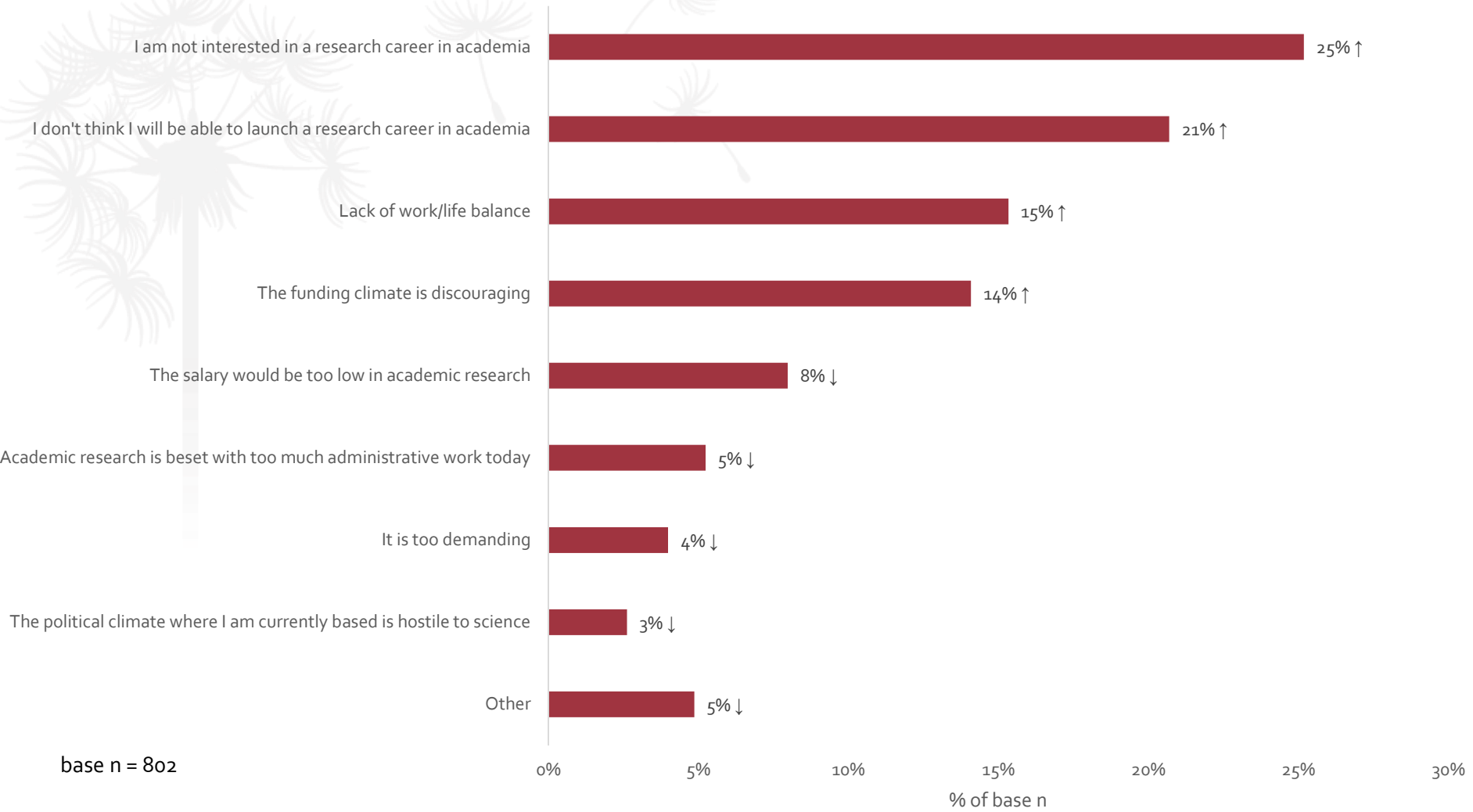
Likelihood to pursue career paths

How likely are you to pursue one of these career paths upon completion of your programme?
(2017)

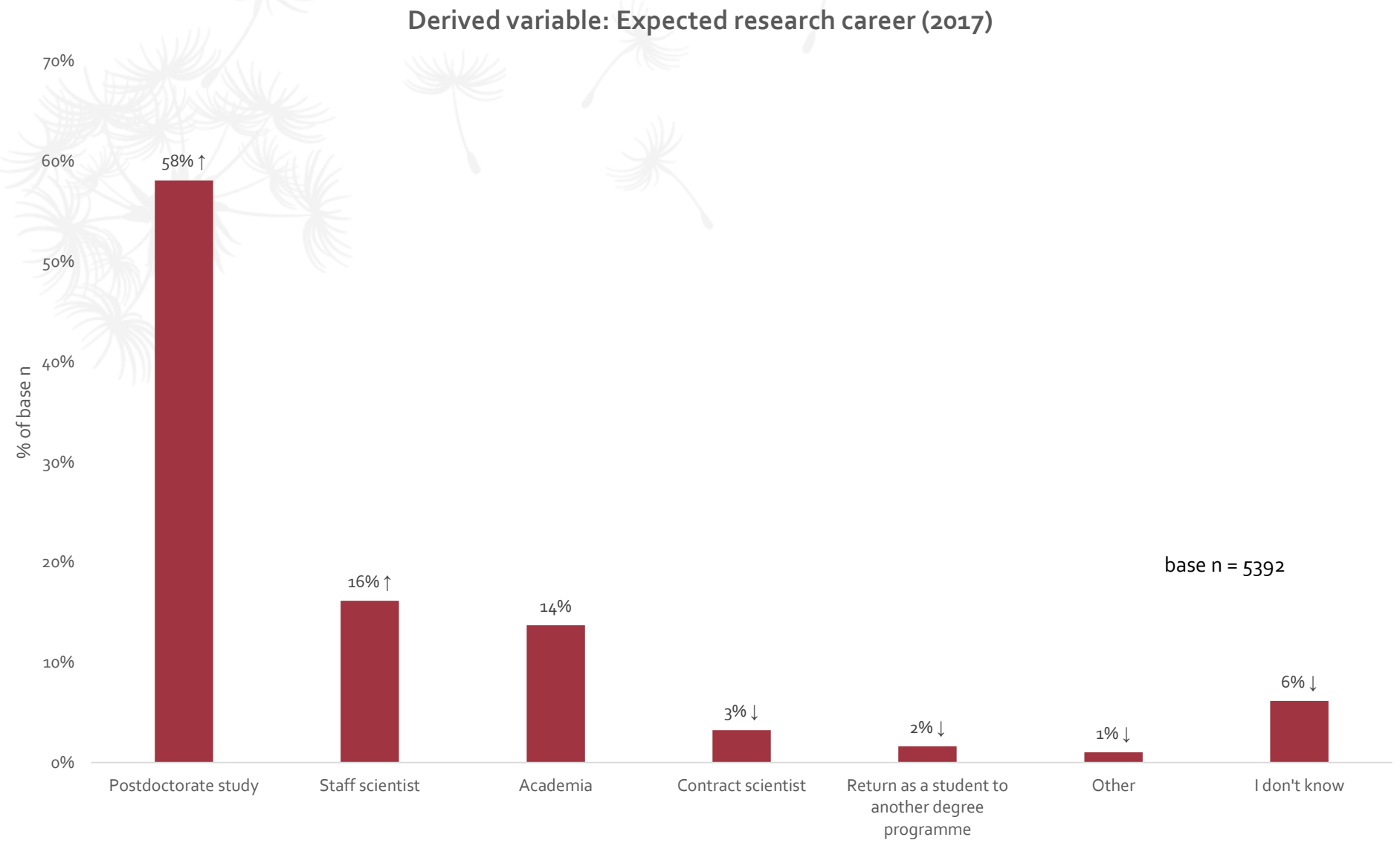


Reasons for not pursuing an academic career

Derived variable: Most important reason for not pursuing academic career (2017)



Expected career in research



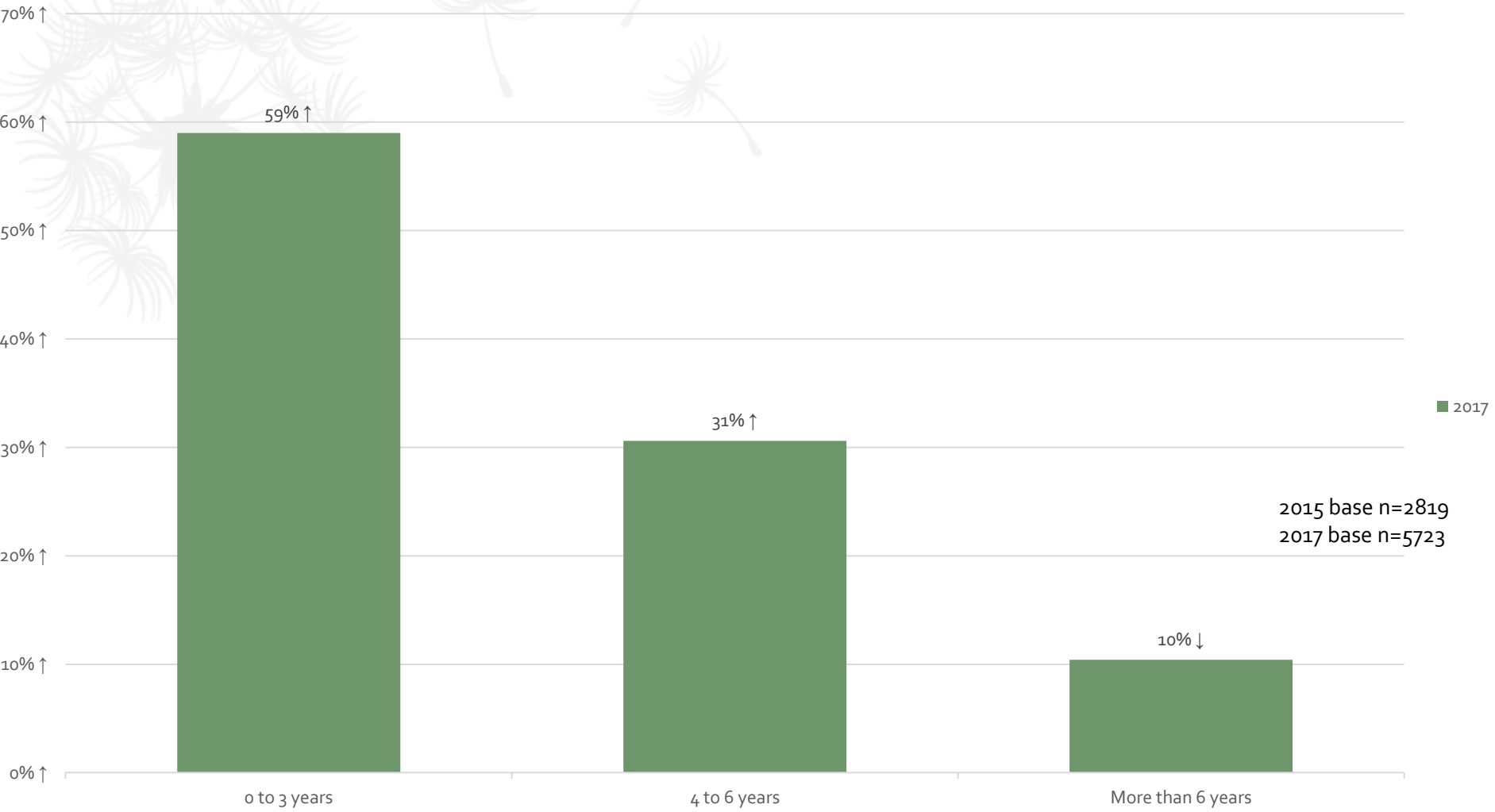
What type of career are you interested in?

- This was another open text box in which we asked respondents to give an unprompted account of their preferred career post-study.
- Academia vs industry
- As seen in the closed code questions, entering into academia was the most commonly mentioned career path, either through research, teaching or a combination of the two.
- However, many respondents were open to either working in academia or industry – **having the opportunity to carry out research** was the most important factor.
- *Translational research in academia, possibly combined with industry (biotech) opportunities as well to commercialize medically relevant research.*
- Availability of jobs is a consideration
- **The instability of the jobs available** in academic also made industry an attractive second option.
- *I'd like to try out the academic market, but there's no guarantees there so looking for an industry job as a backup (or going back to an engineering job)*
- Information about available jobs
- Only a small number of respondents were unsure about which career path they were interested in , suggesting that they were **reasonably well informed about which jobs are available to them post study.**



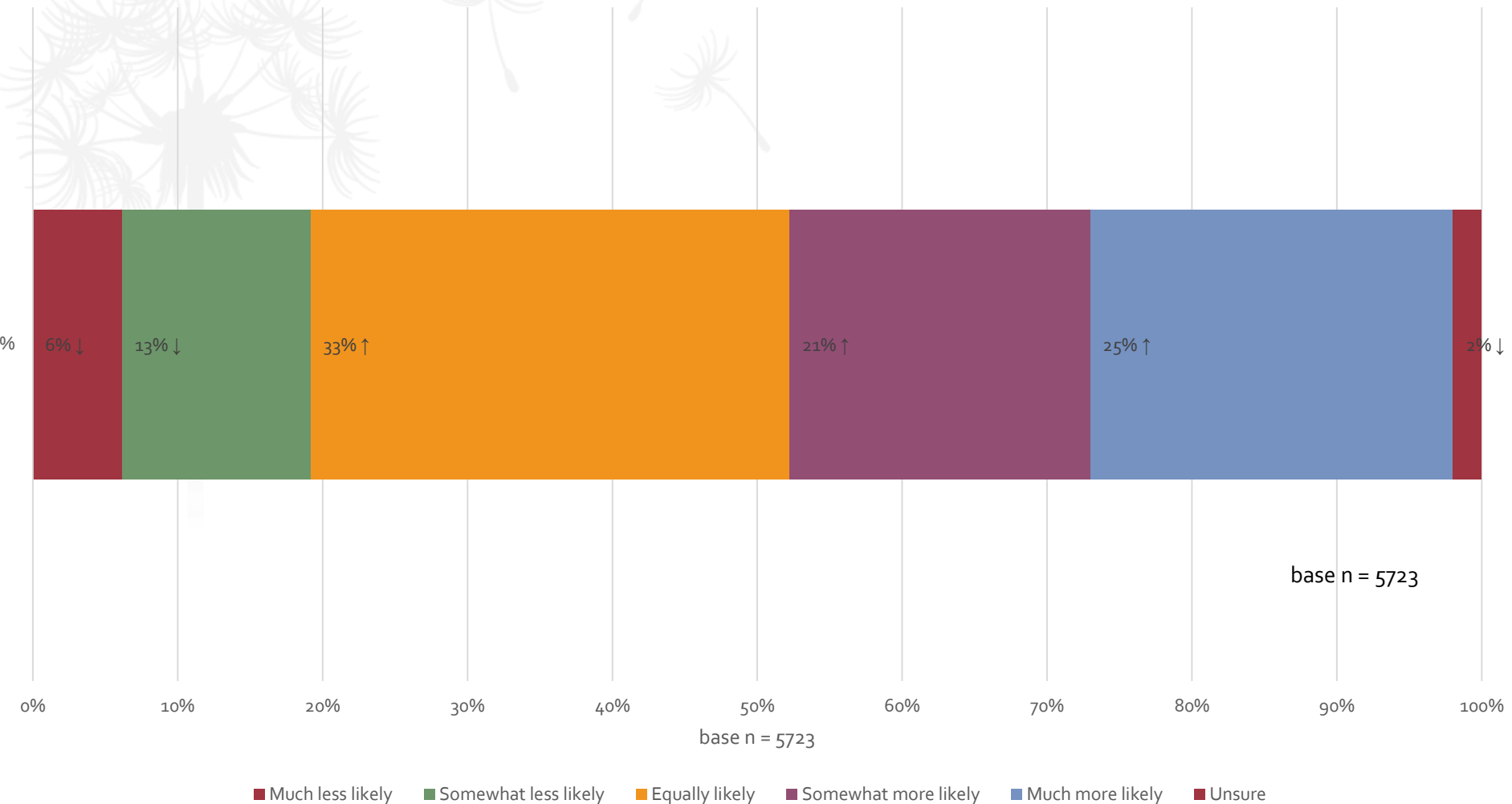
Length of time before finding employment

After completing your PhD, how long do you think it will take you to find a permanent (non-trainee) position?



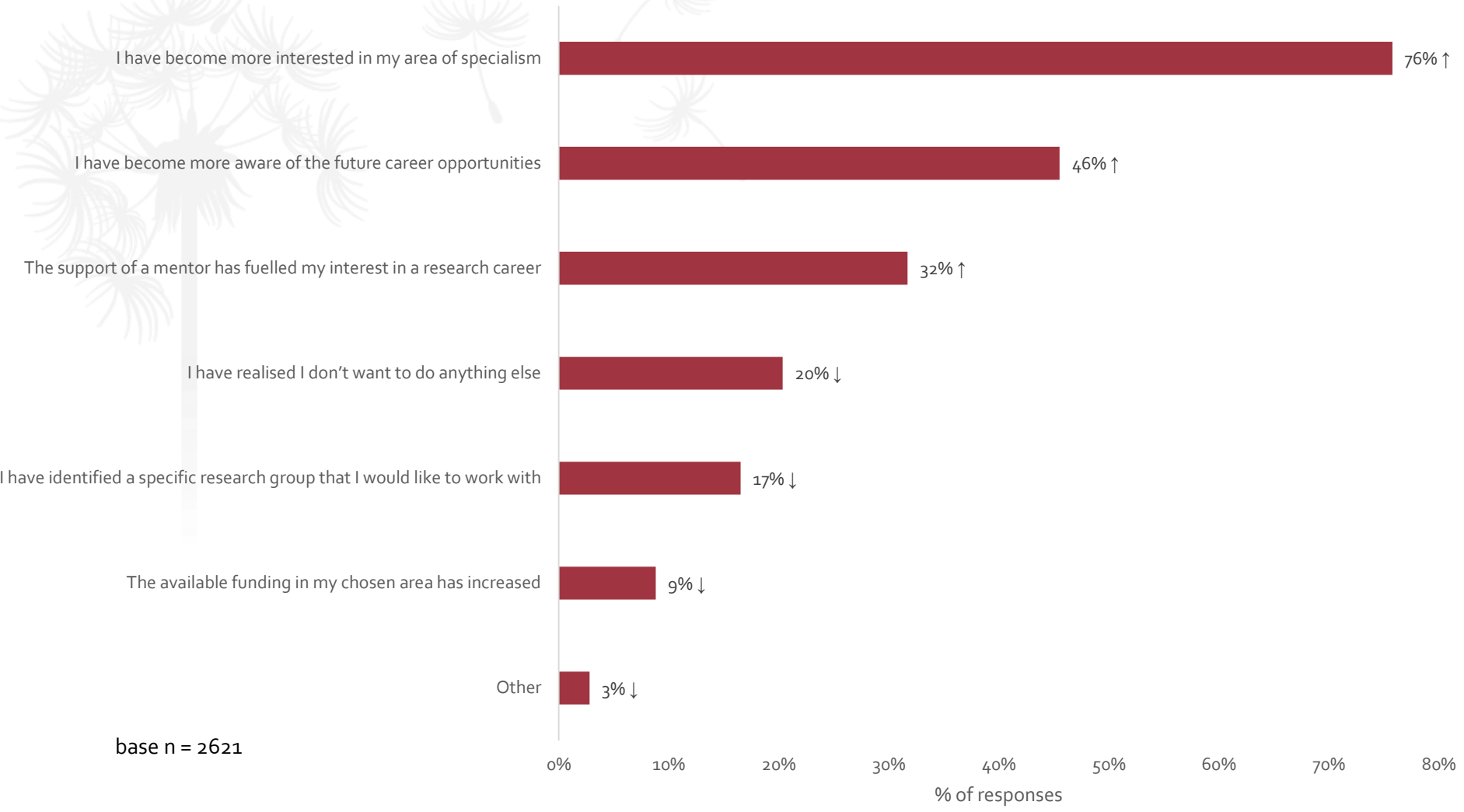
Likelihood to pursue a research career

How much more likely are you now to pursue a research career than when you launched your PhD programme? (2017)



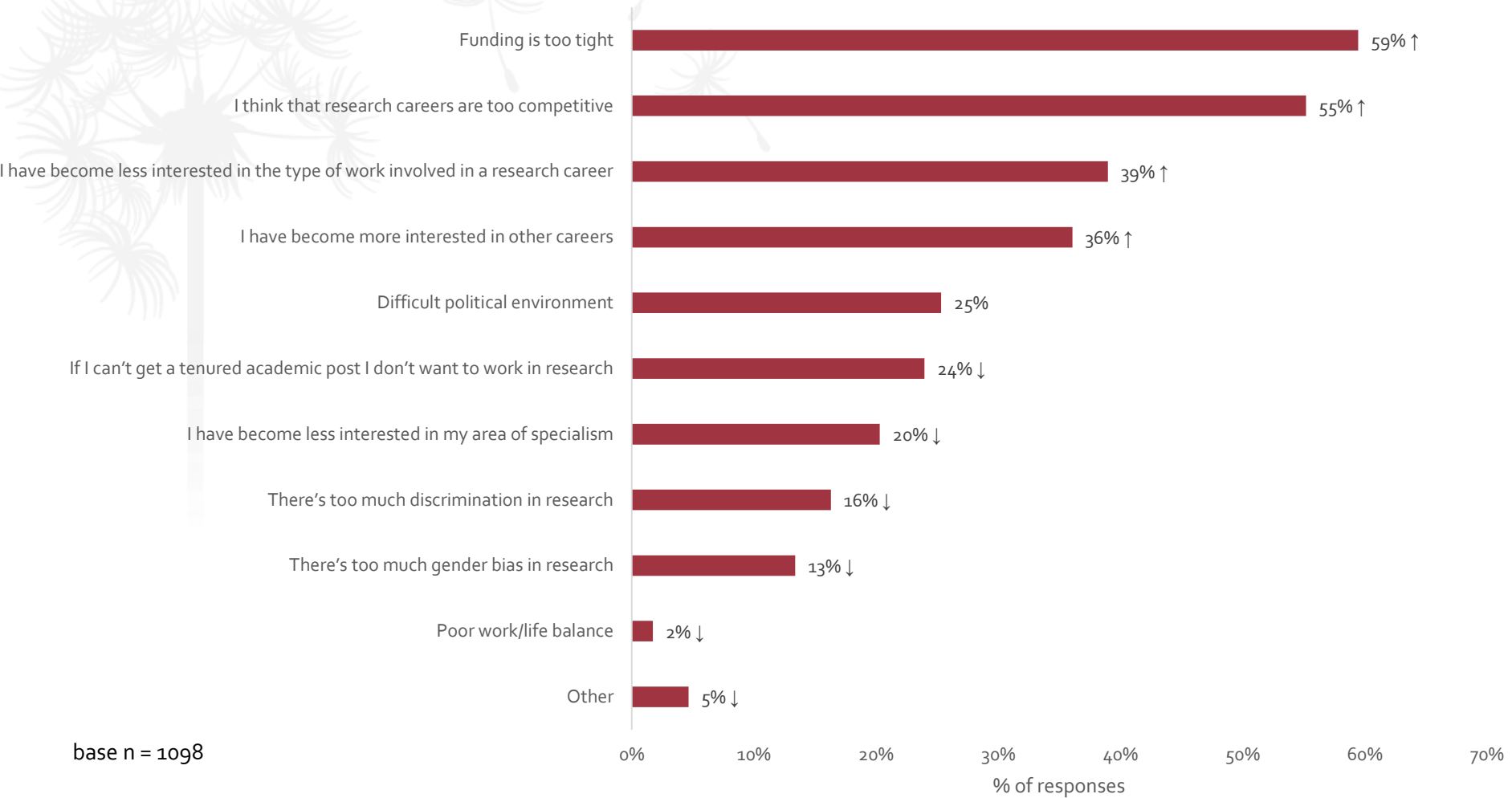
More likely to pursue a research career

Why are you more likely to pursue a research career? (2017)



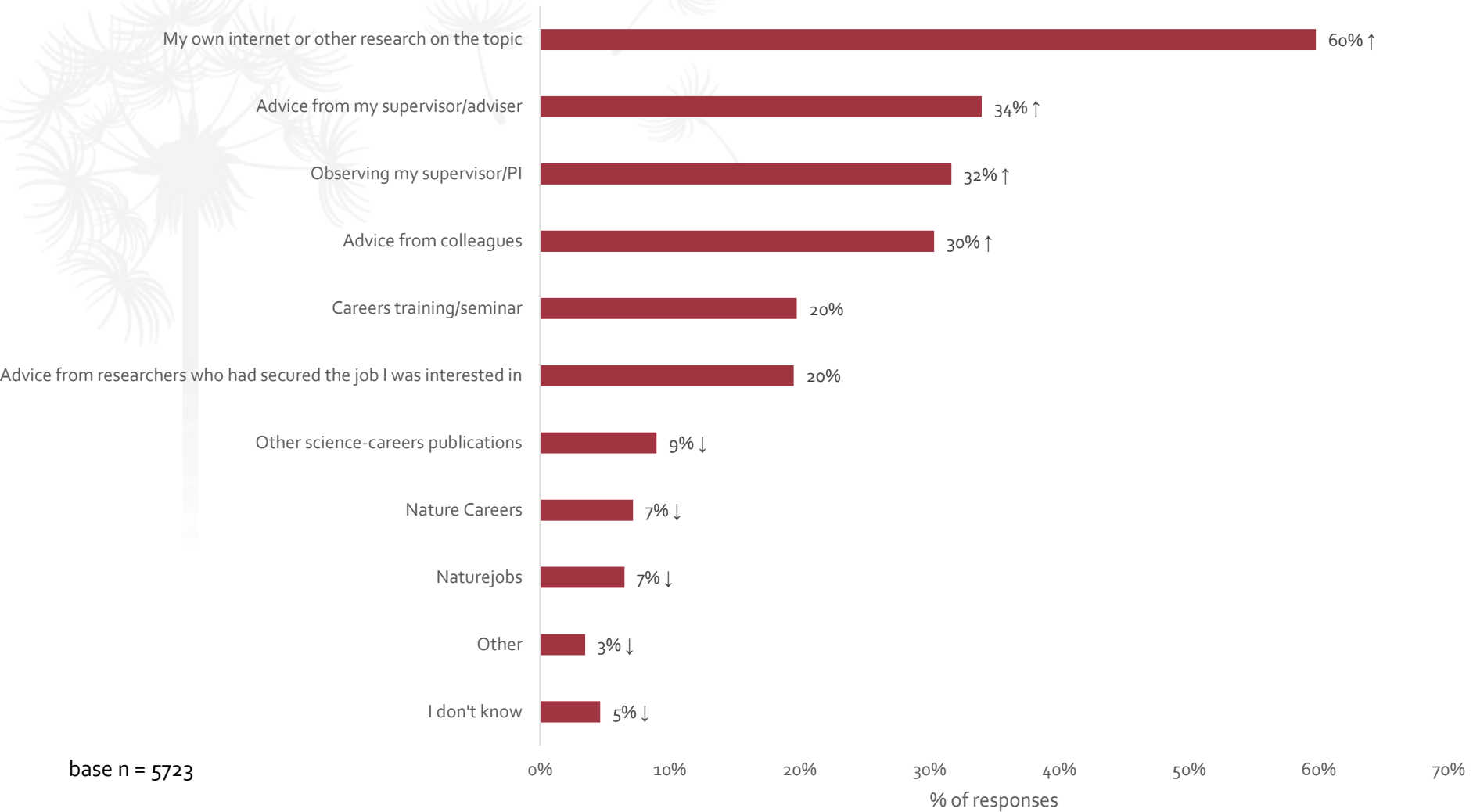
Likelihood of starting a research career

Why are you less likely to start a research career than when you started your programme?
(2017)



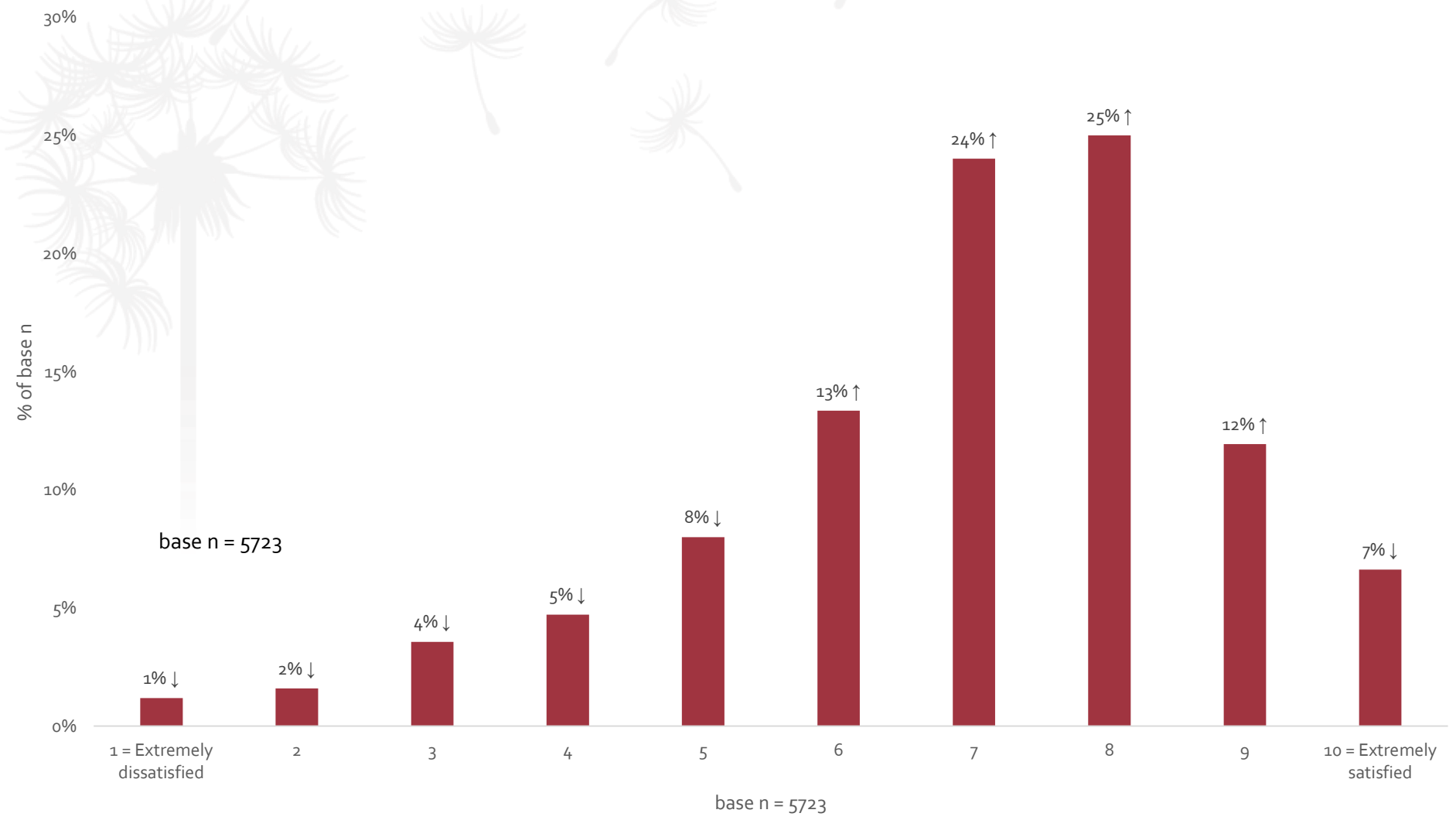
Arriving at current career decision

How did you arrive at your current career decision? (2017)



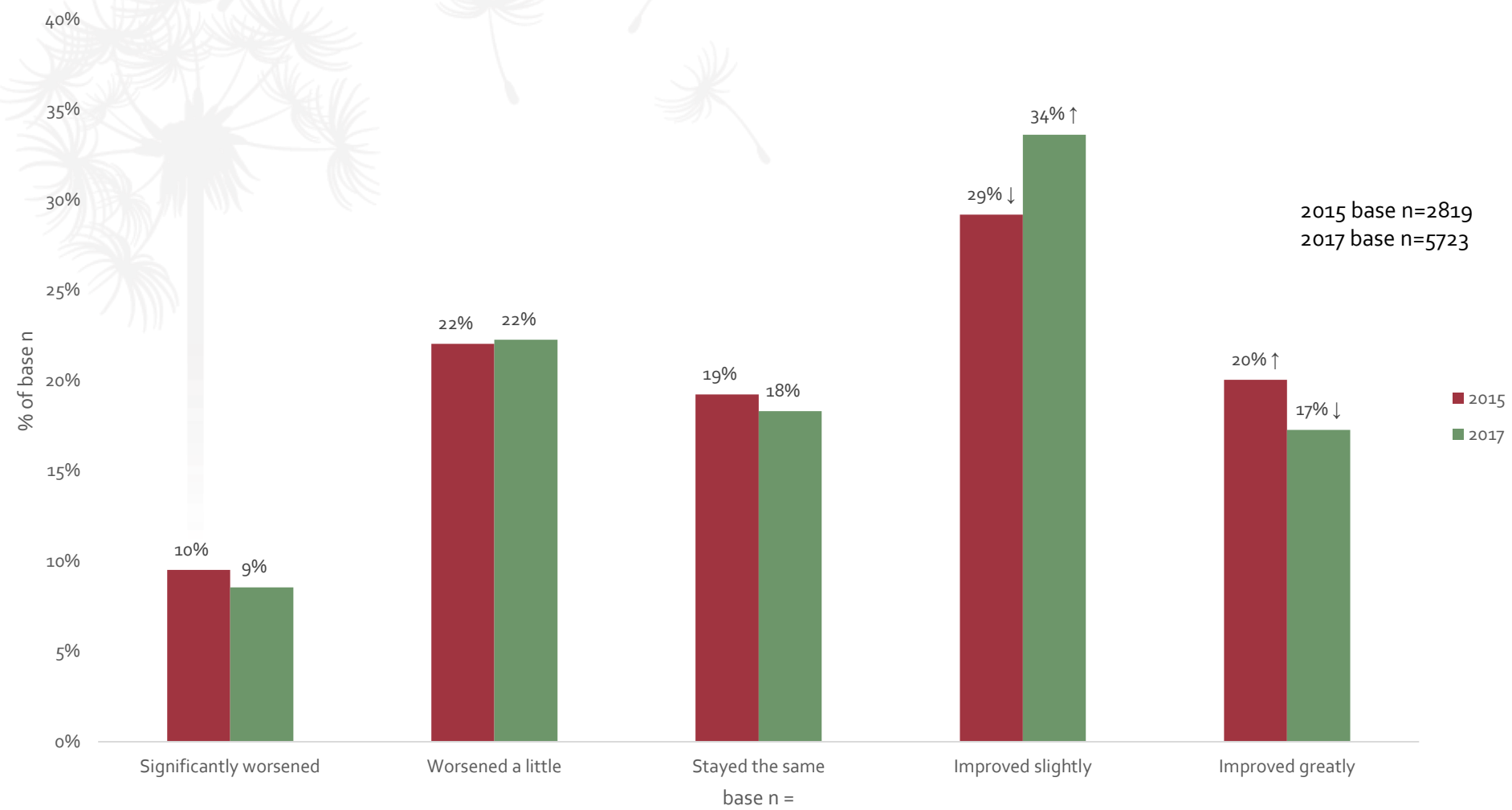
Level of satisfaction with PhD Experience

On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your PhD experience? (2017)



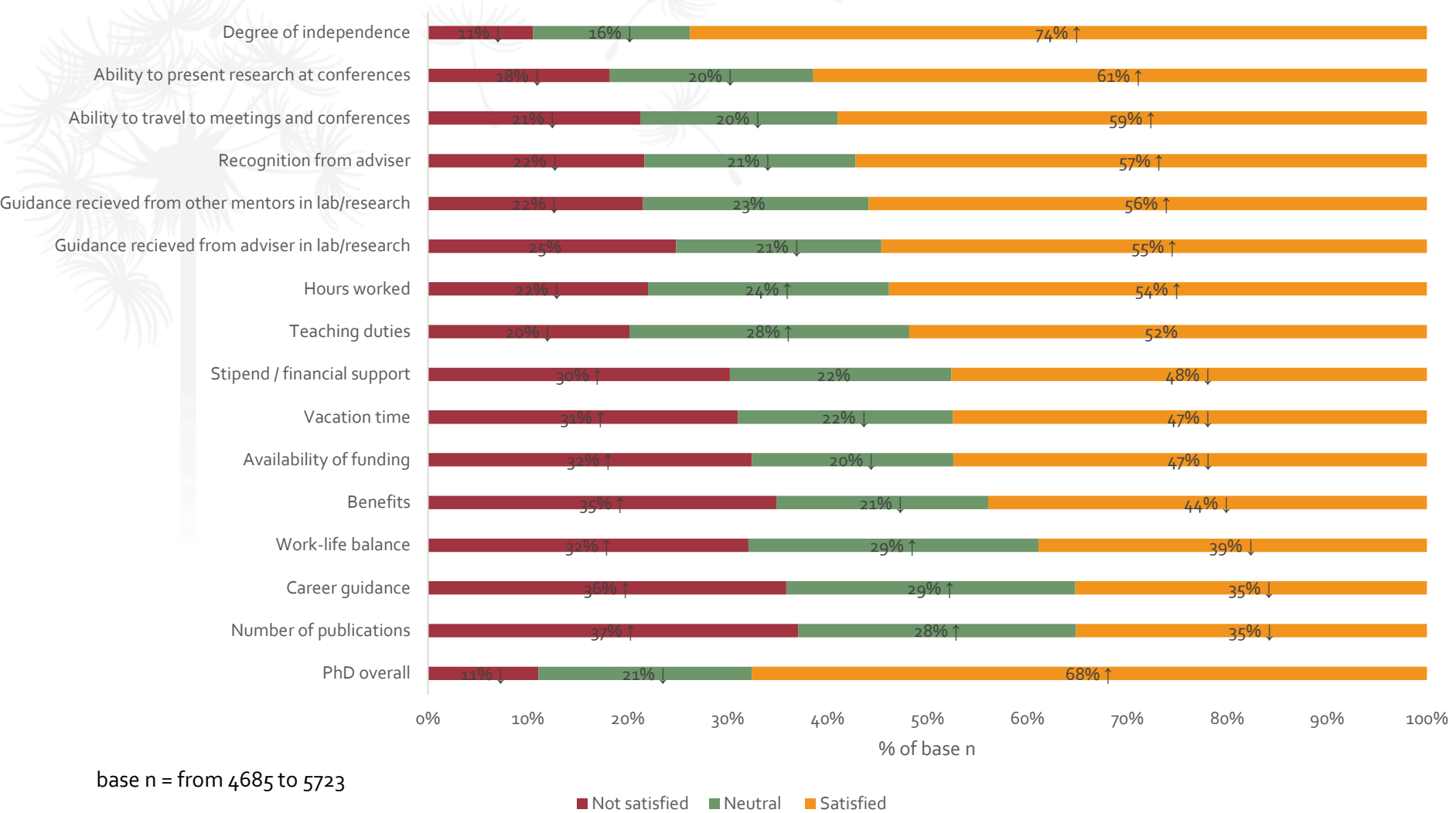
Change in level of satisfaction since start of experience

Since the very start of your graduate school experience, would you say your level of satisfaction has: (2015/17)



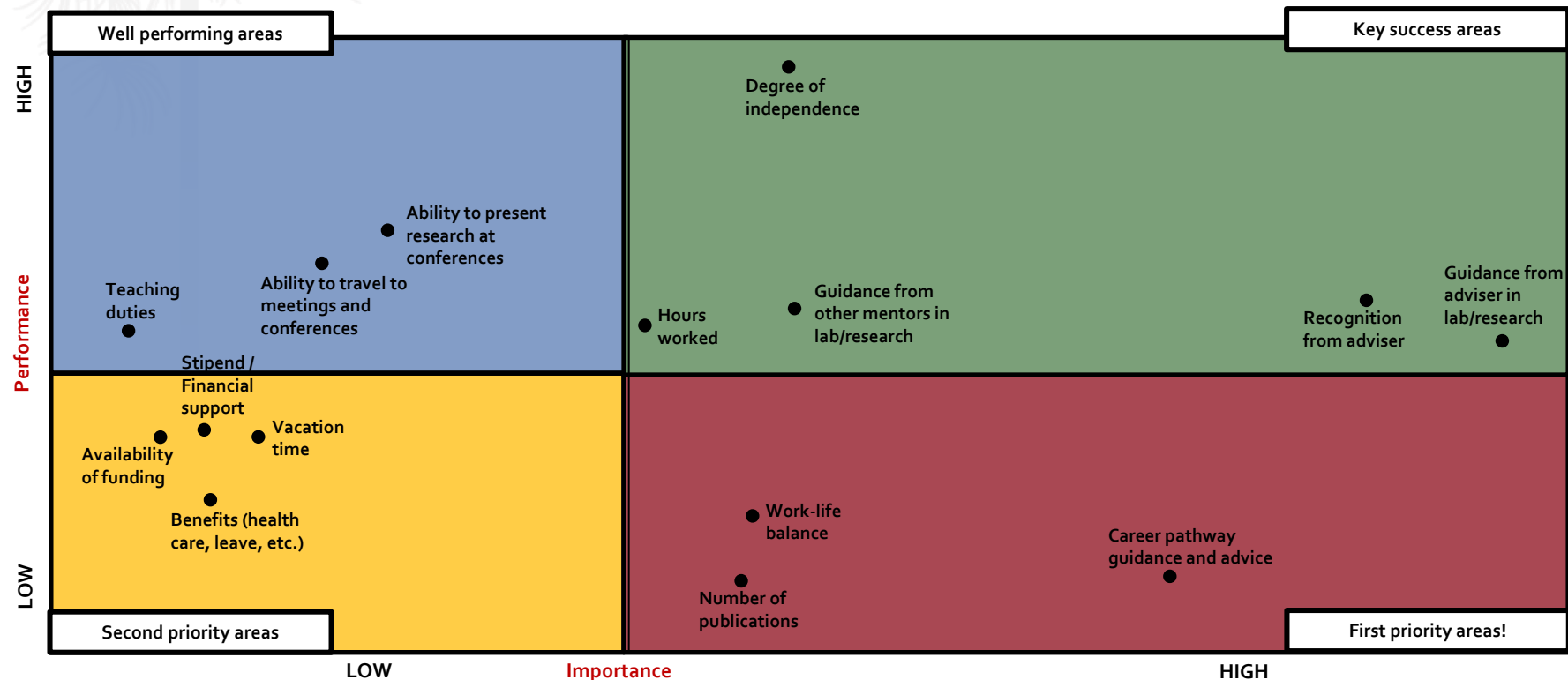
Satisfaction with PhD elements and with PhD overall

Derived variable: Satisfaction with PhD elements((2017)



An importance–performance analysis (using Shapley regression) has been performed to derive which attributes and aspects of a PhD have the greatest impact on overall PhD experience. **Guidance received from the adviser in lab/research has the greatest impact on PhD experience, followed by recognition from the adviser.**

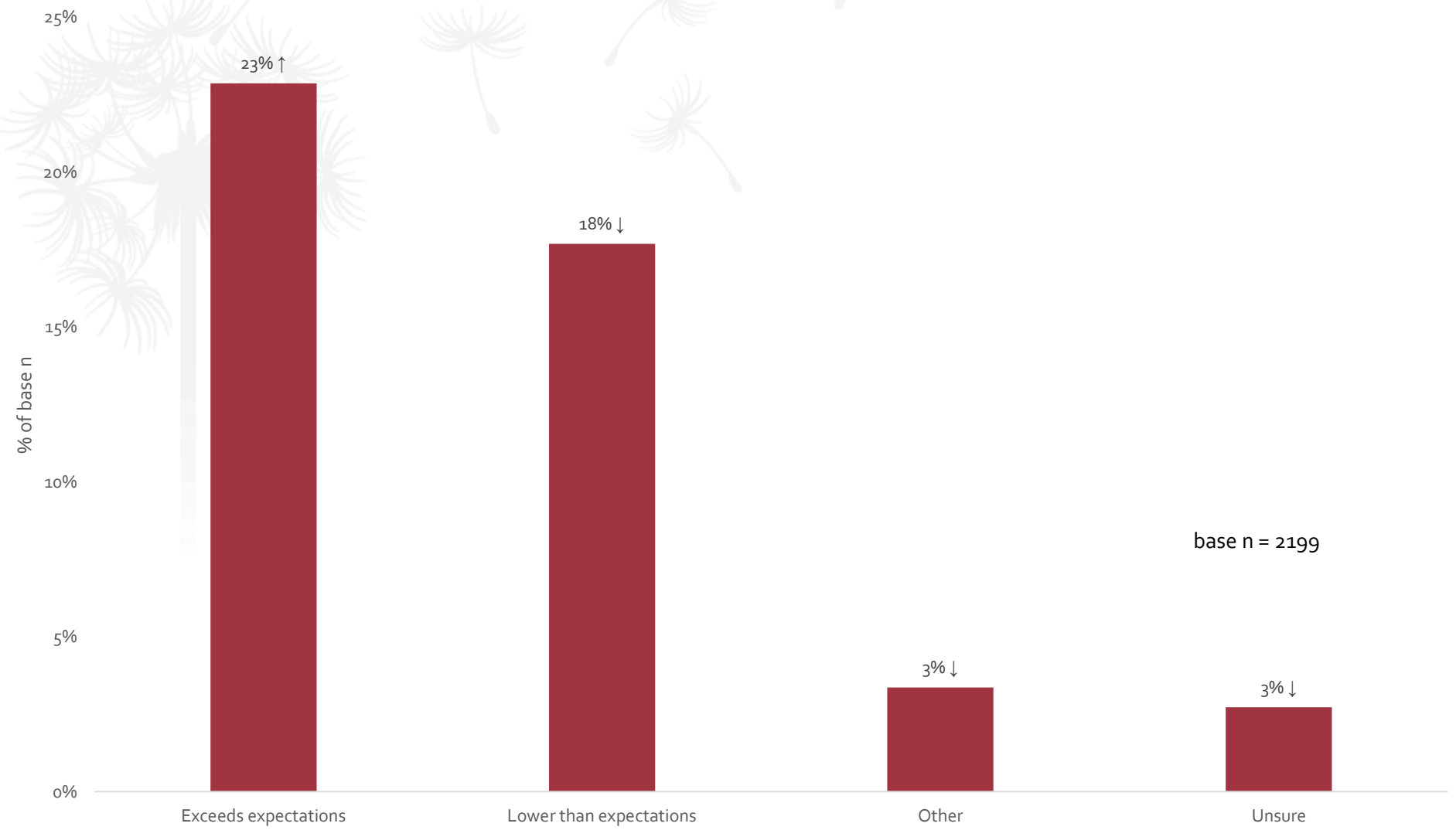
- Key success areas for PhD experience are guidance received from the adviser in lab/research, and recognition from the adviser.
- Career pathway guidance and advice, work-life balance and number of publications are the biggest areas of opportunity as this holds high levels of importance to the PhD experience but currently low satisfaction amongst current PhD students. Nonetheless, all attributes and aspects of a PhD are found to have a significant influence and should therefore be taken into consideration.



NB: Items are HIGH or LOW importance/performance RELATIVE to other items in the set. Horizontal axis – importance scores, vertical axis – satisfaction scores. Axes are based on variation from the average i.e. high importance = above average importance. All aspects together explain 45% of students’ satisfaction with their PhD experience, therefore 55% is unaccounted for. Base n = 5723

Comparison with original expectations

How does your PhD programme compare to your original expectations? (2017)



Comparison with original expectations – summary of open responses

- We coded the responses which fall into one of four categories: Exceeded expectation, met expectation, lower than expectation and unsure.

Lack of support and guidance

- The most common reason that the PhD experiences fell short of respondents' expectation is that their advisors did not offer them the support and guidance that they expected.
- *It has been below my expectations so far. I feel as though I am having to be entirely self-directed in my learning and am not gaining any knowledge from my advisors.*

Mental health issues

- Mental health issues as a result of PhD study was also mentioned here. Stress and isolation were cited as concerns earlier in the survey and we have seen that many respondents reported experiencing mental health issues as a result of their study.
- *Much lower. I did not expect to have additional mental health problems due to my PhD*
- *It was not as expected. Initially, the hardships were believed to be incubation period, but it worsened day by day. Lack of mental health support adds to the already burdened mind.*

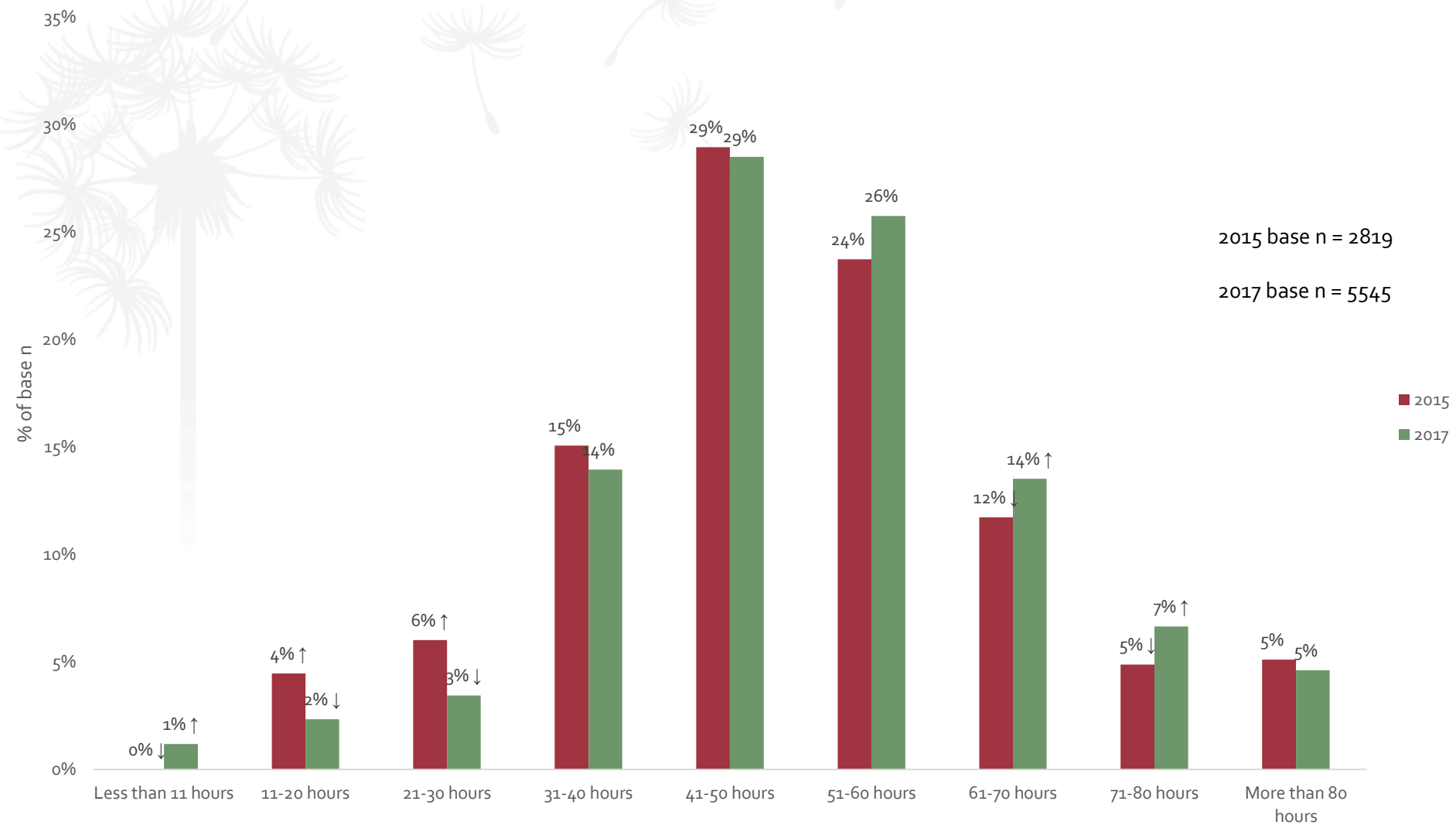
Exceeded expectations in terms of intellectual stimulation and interest

- However, there were many respondents who felt that their PhD positively exceeded their expectations in terms of providing intellectual stimulation and interest in their subject. A common comment was that the work was harder than they expected. It is unclear whether this is positive, due to the rigour of the work required or, as previously stated, this is due to the lack of guidance received in their study.
- *Harder and more challenging, but more exciting as well*

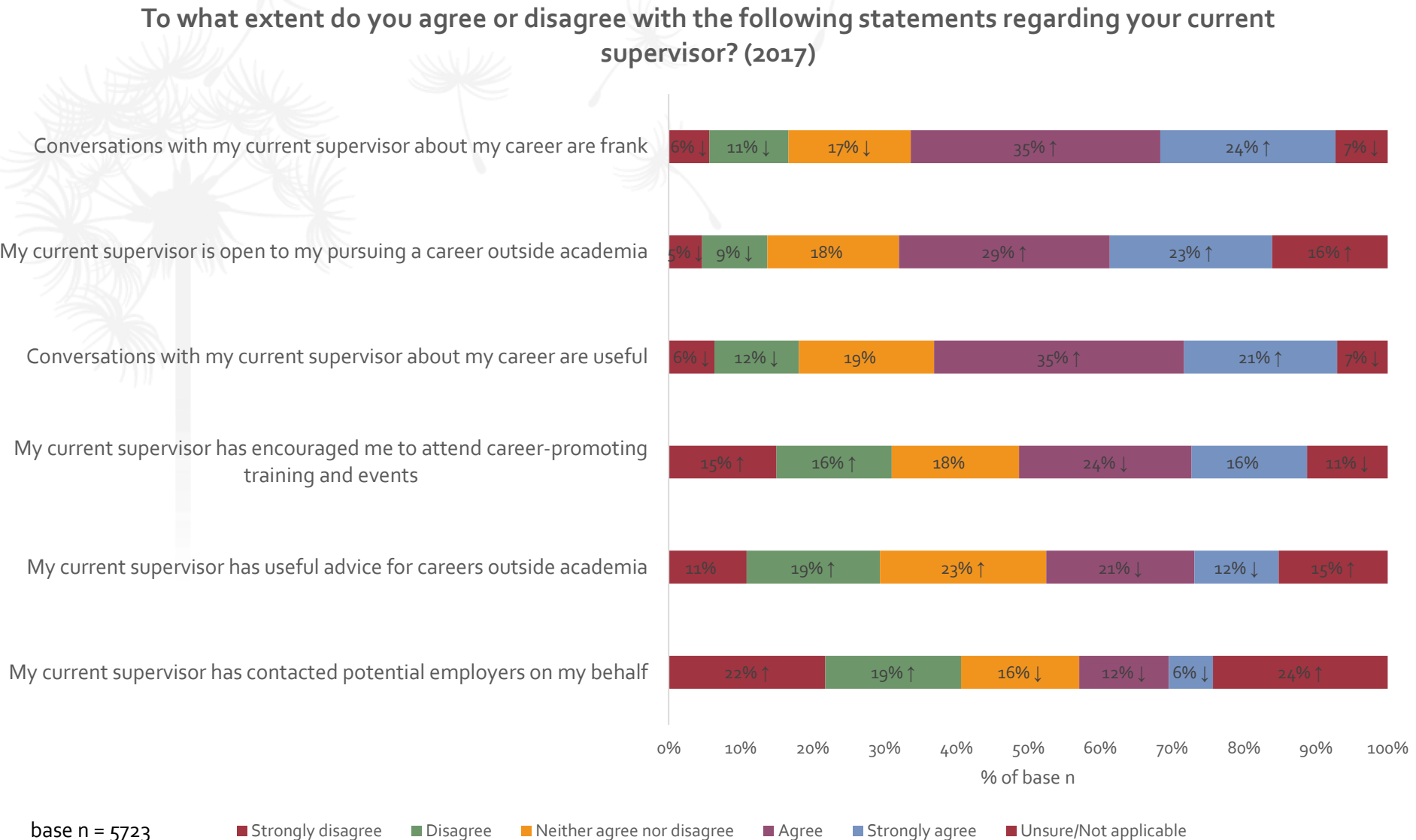


Hours worked per week

On average, how many hours a week do you typically work?

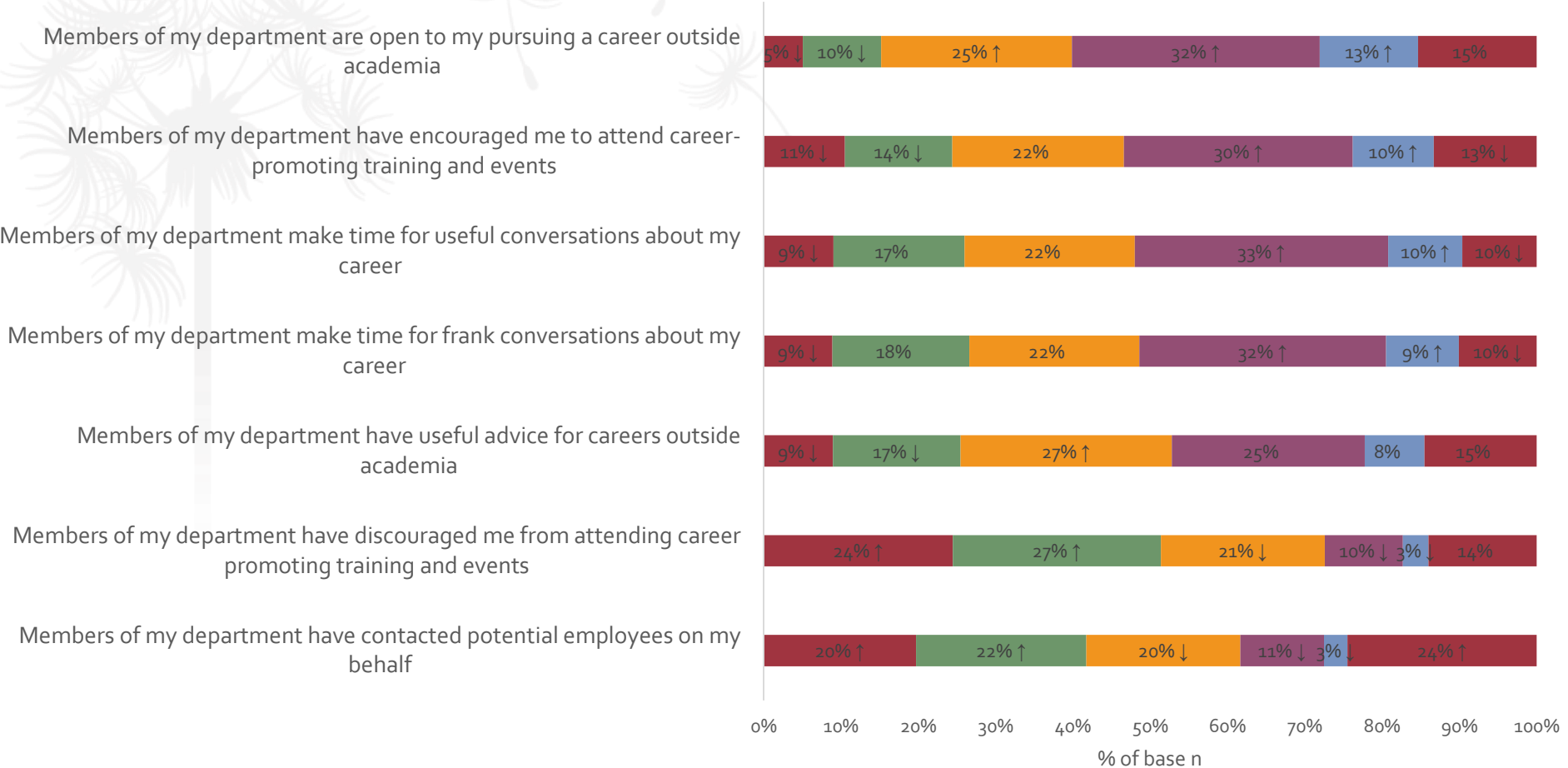


Statements regarding current supervisor



Statements regarding other faculty members or scientists

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding other faculty members or scientists in your department? (2017)



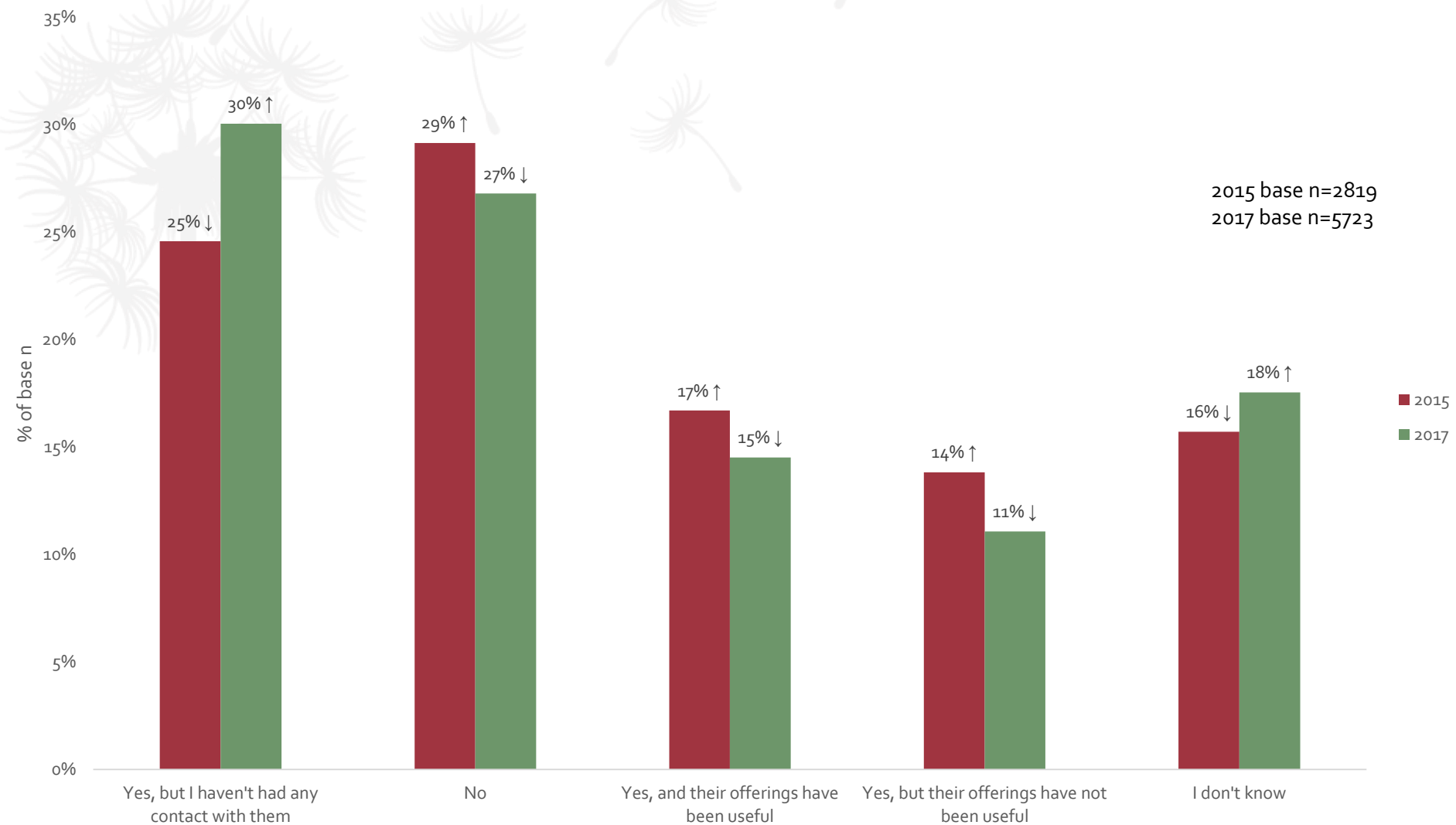
base n = 5723

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree Unsure/Not applicable



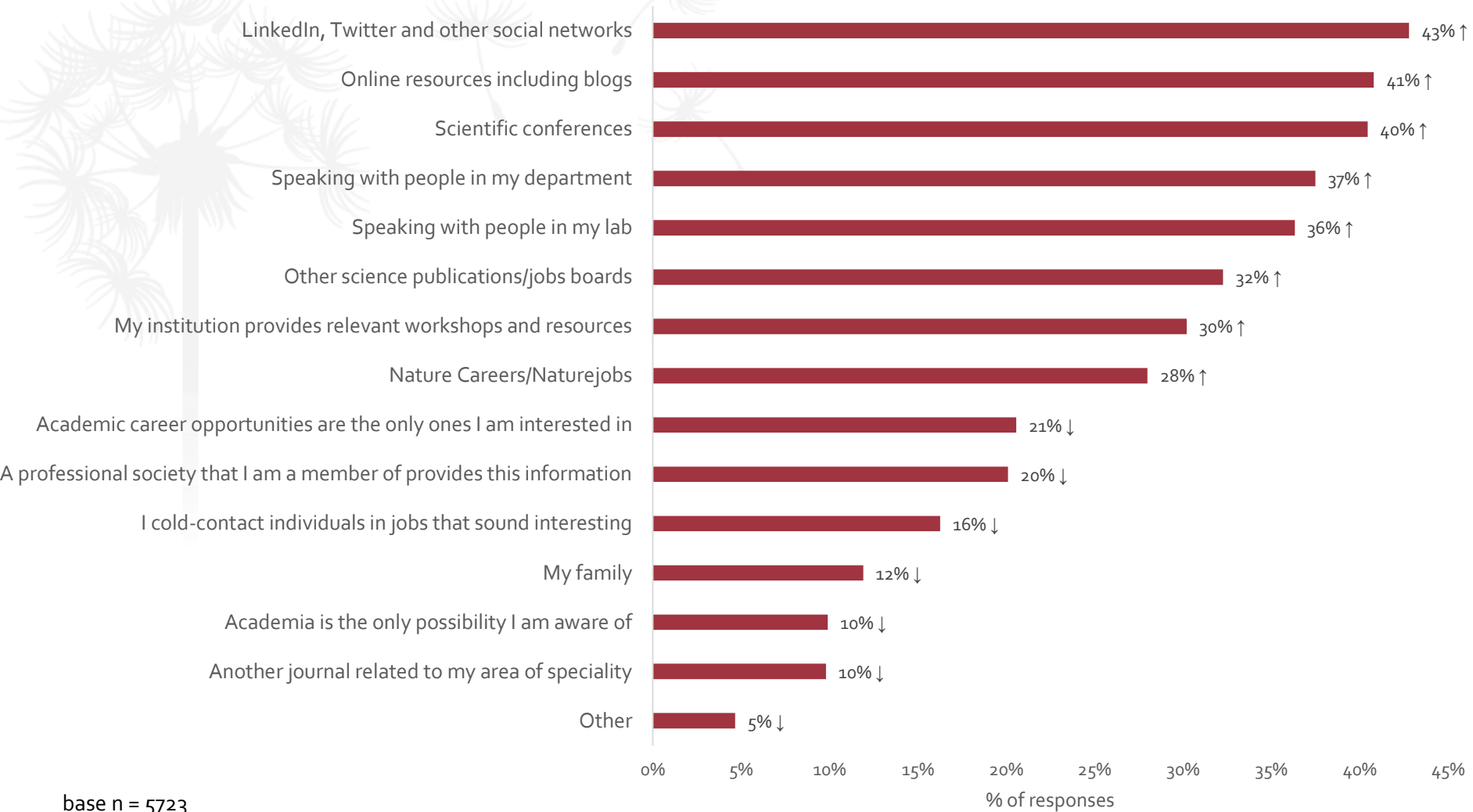
Availability of career advisory services for science PhDs

Does your institution have career advisory services for science PhDs? (2015/17)



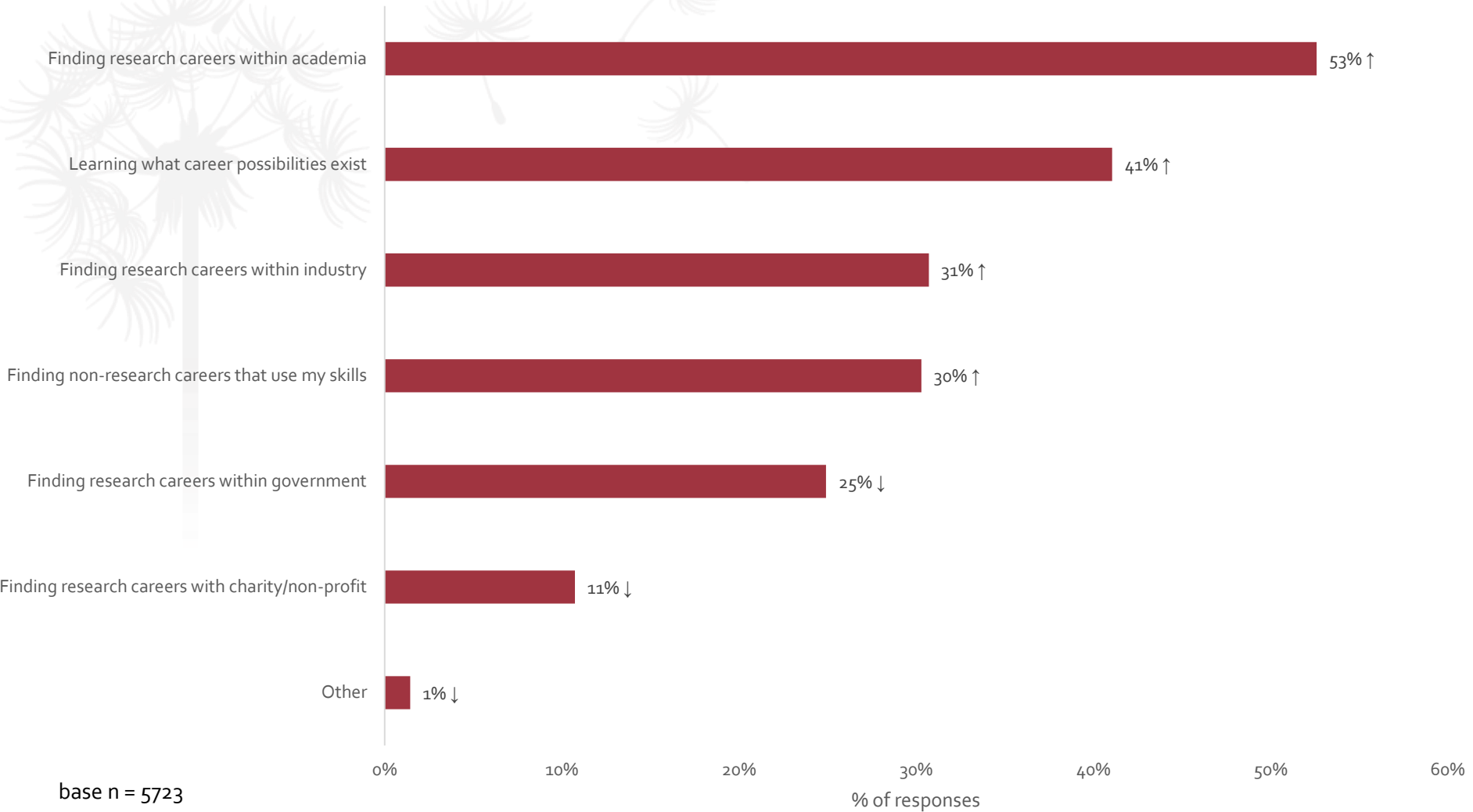
Ways of learning about available career opportunities

How do you learn about available career opportunities that are beyond academia? (2017)

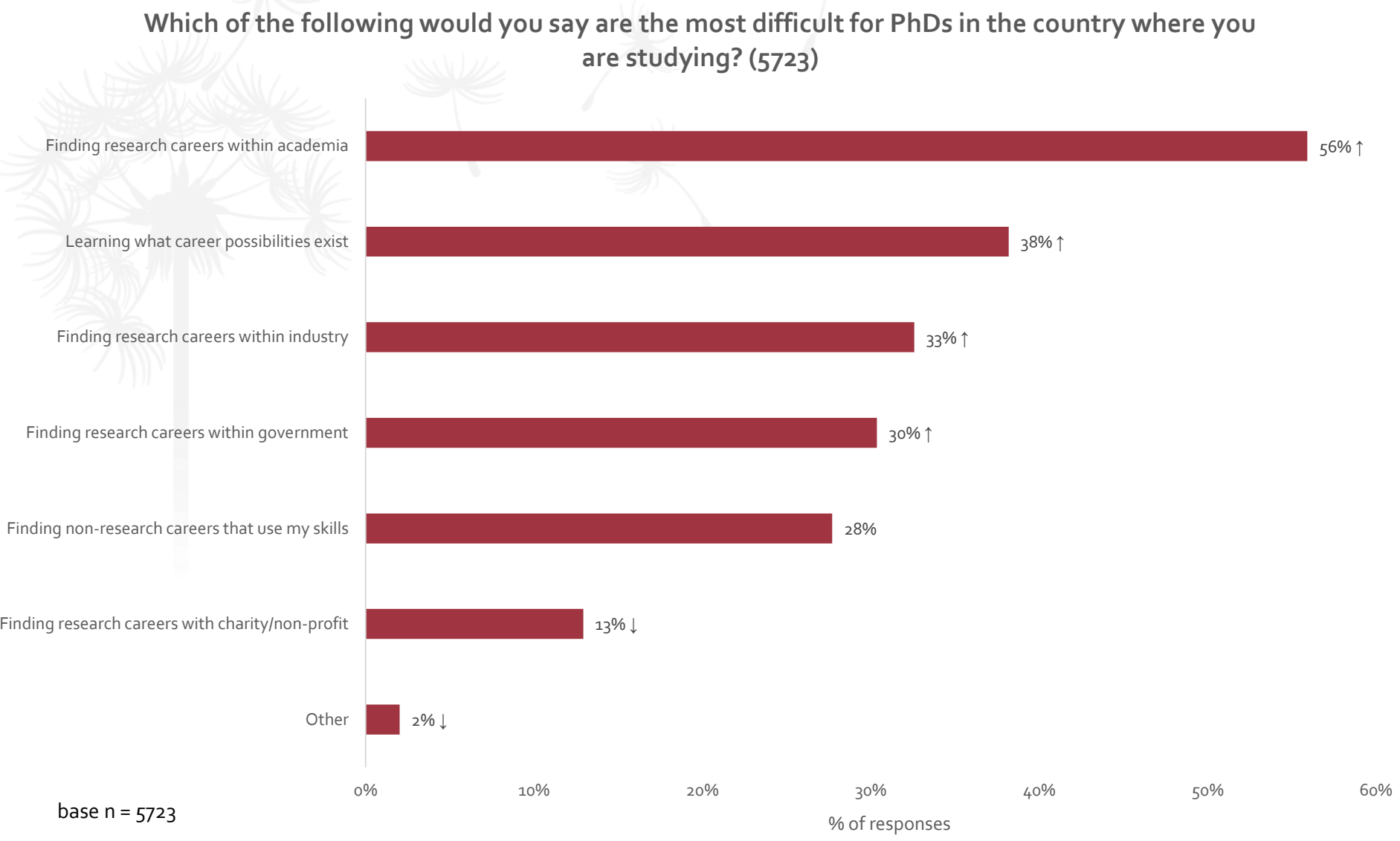


Most difficult for PhDs in their own discipline

Which of the following would you say are the most difficult for PhDs in your discipline? (2017)

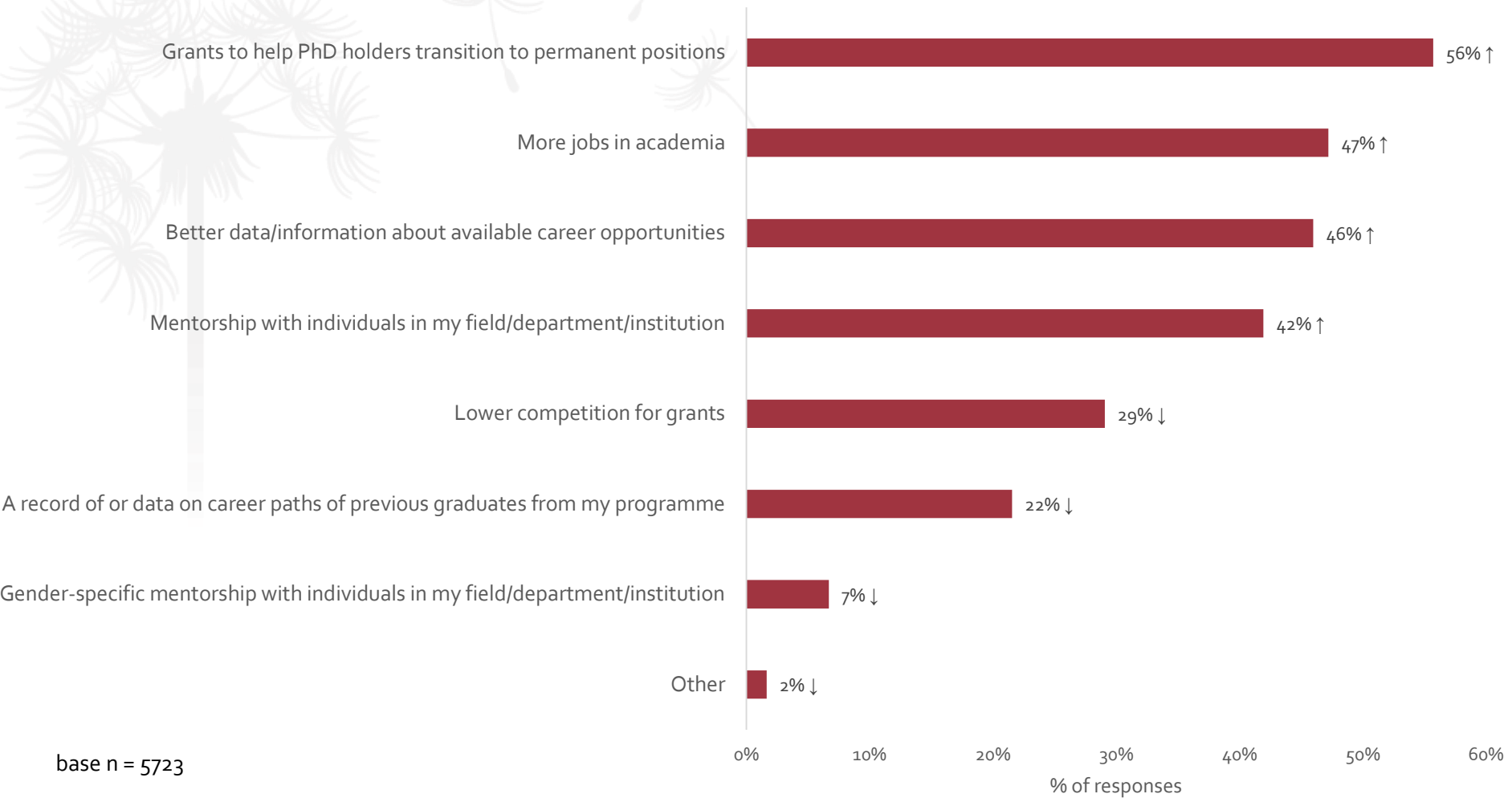


Most difficult for PhDs in the country in which they're studying



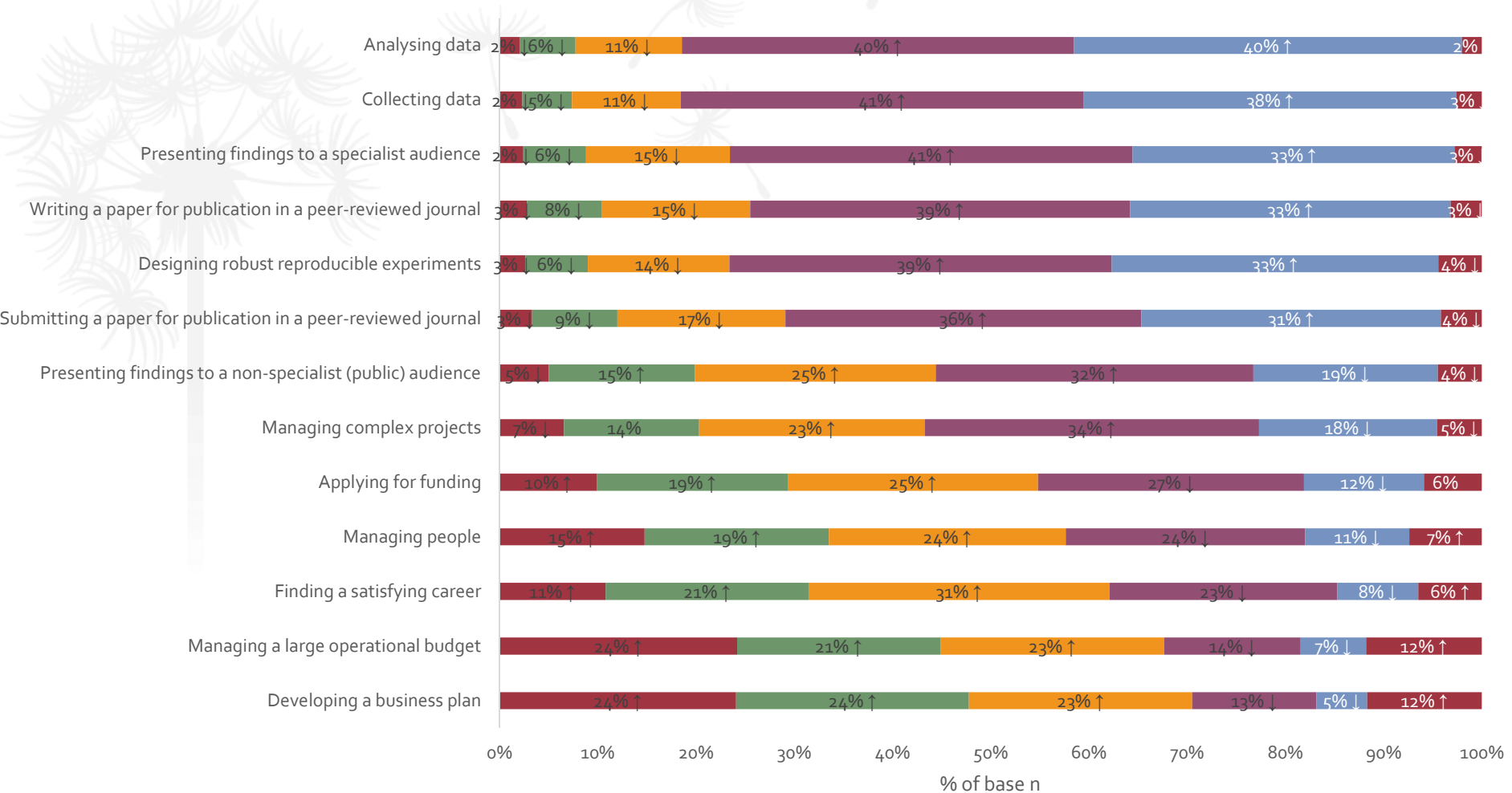
Resources most needed in order to establish a satisfying career

Which of the following resources do you think PhDs need the most in order to establish a satisfying career? (2017)



Extent to which programme is preparing PhDs to carry out activities

How well is your programme preparing you to carry out each of the following activities? (2017)



base n = 5723

Not at all well Not very well Neither well nor not well Well Very well Unsure/Not applicable

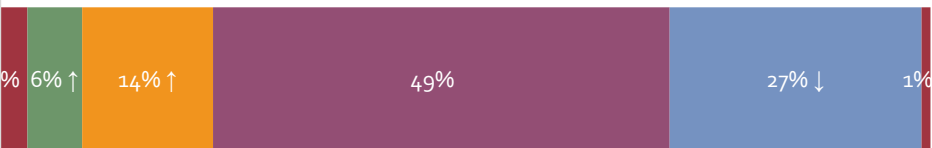
Preparation for a research career or a non-research, science-related career

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (2017)

I feel that my programme is preparing me well for a non-research science-related career



I feel that my programme is preparing me well for a research career



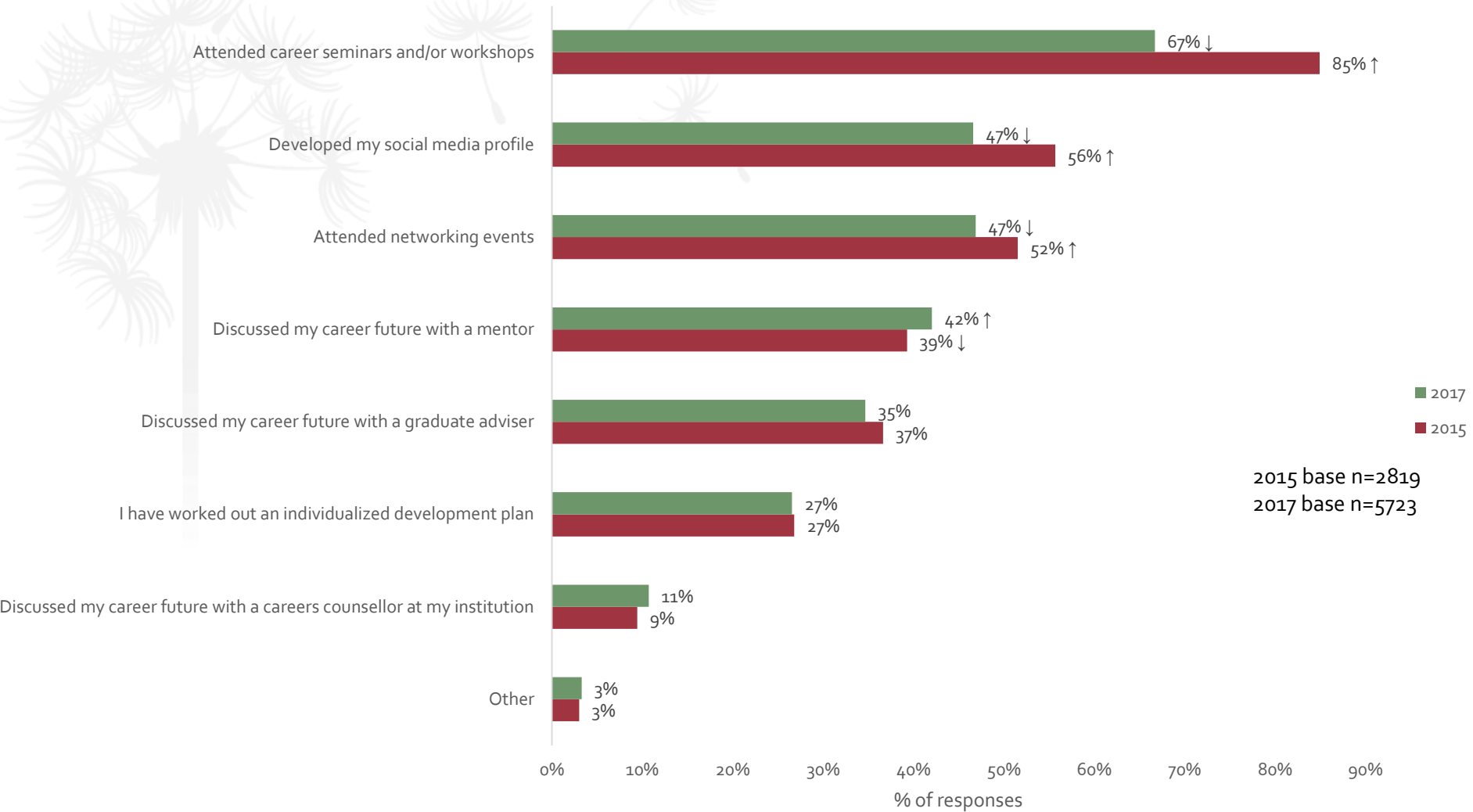
base n = 5723

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
% of base n

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree Unsure/Not applicable

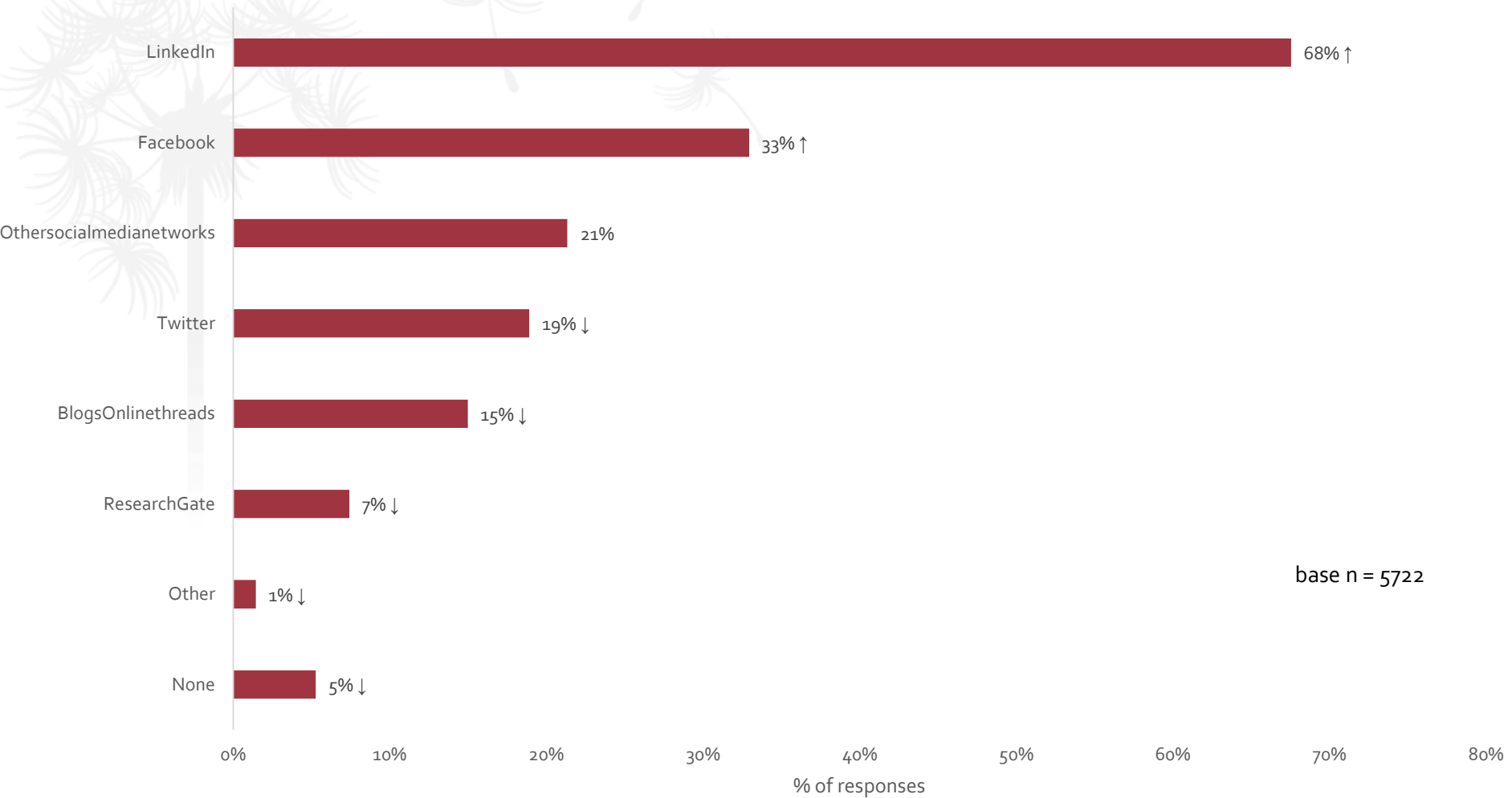
Activities done to advance career

Which, if any, of the following activities have you done to advance your career? (2015/17)



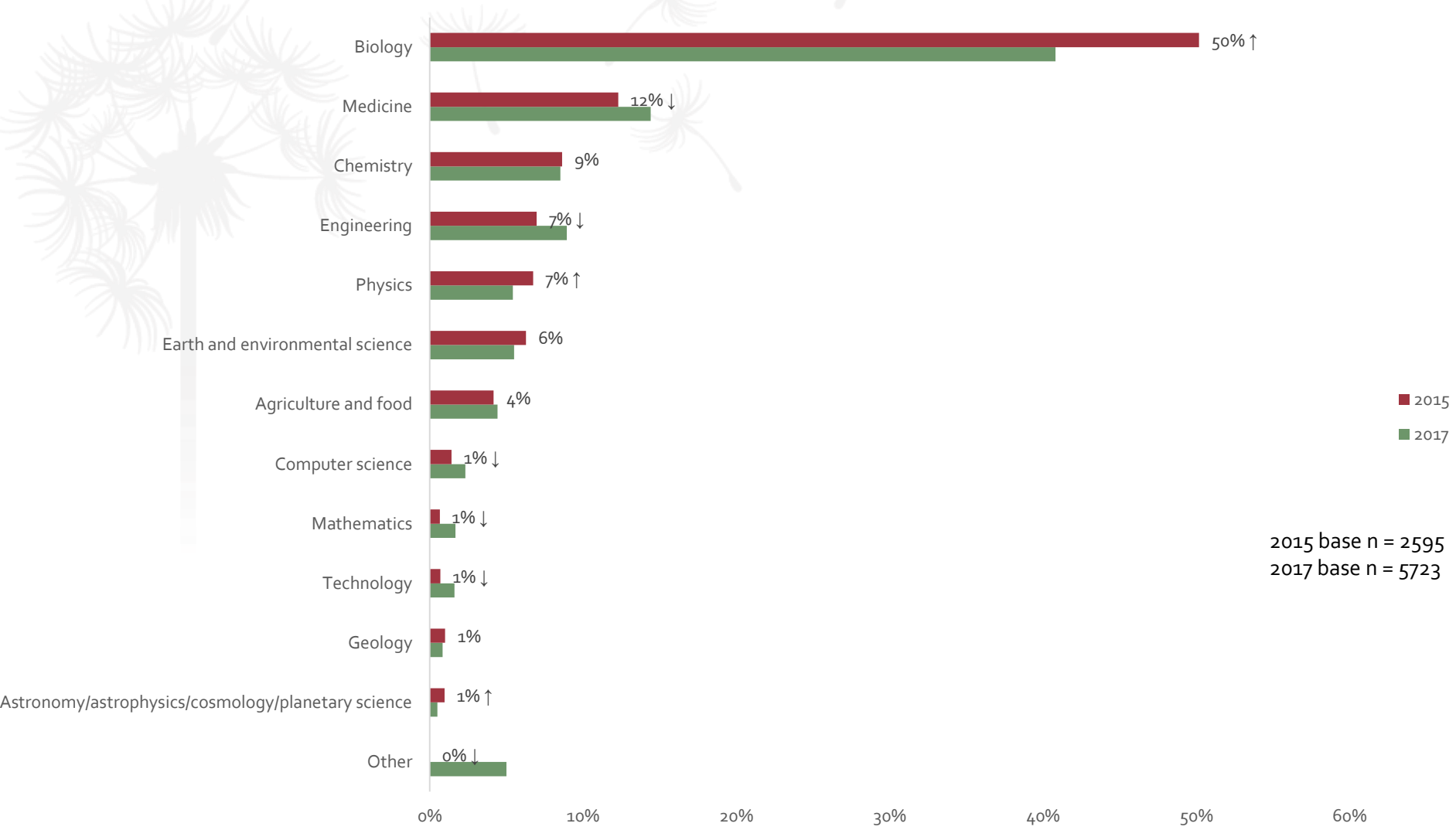
Social media networks used to build professional networks

Which of the following social media networks have you used to build your professional network? (2017)



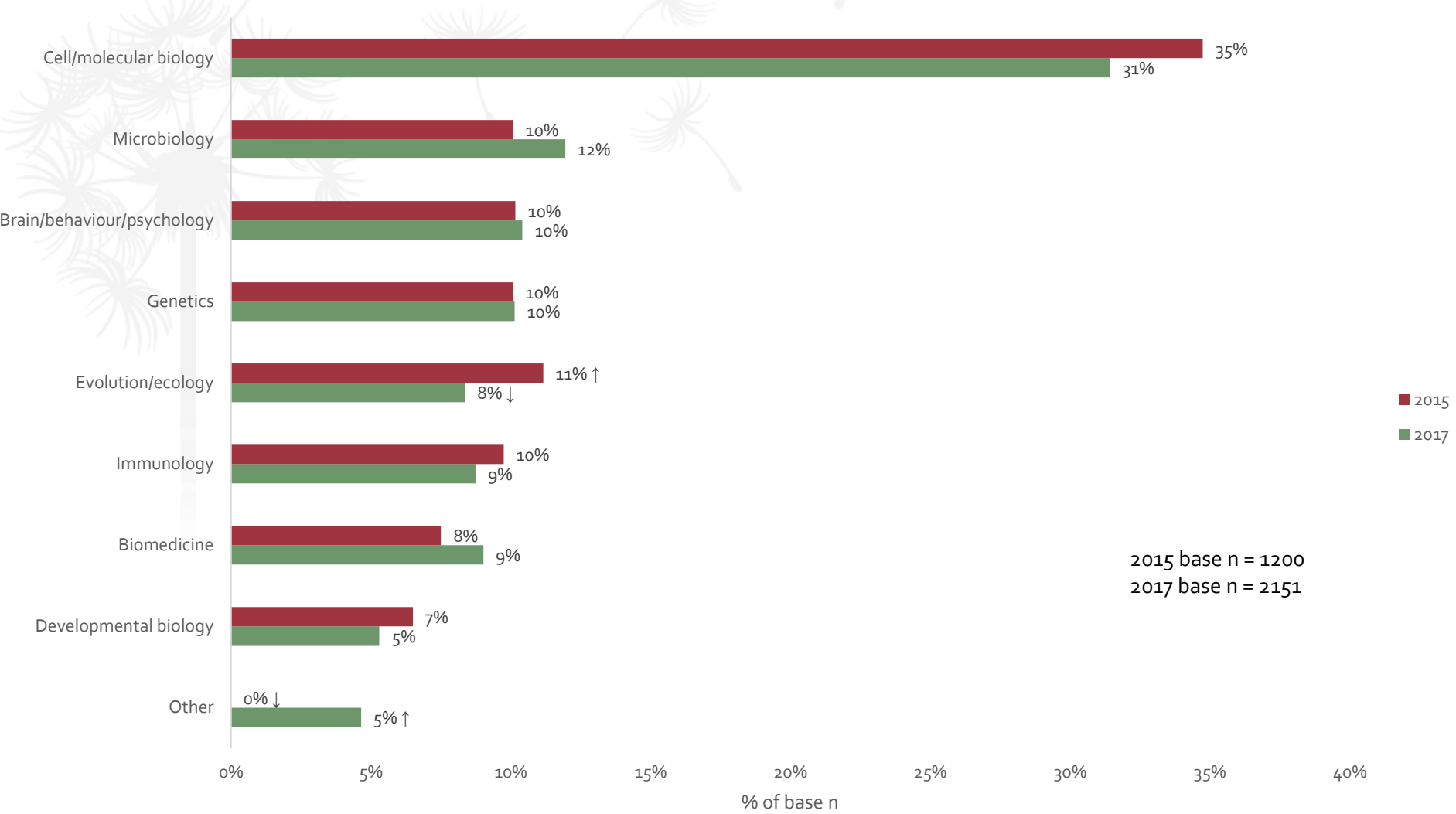
Primary subject area

Which of the following most closely represents your primary subject area? (2015/17)



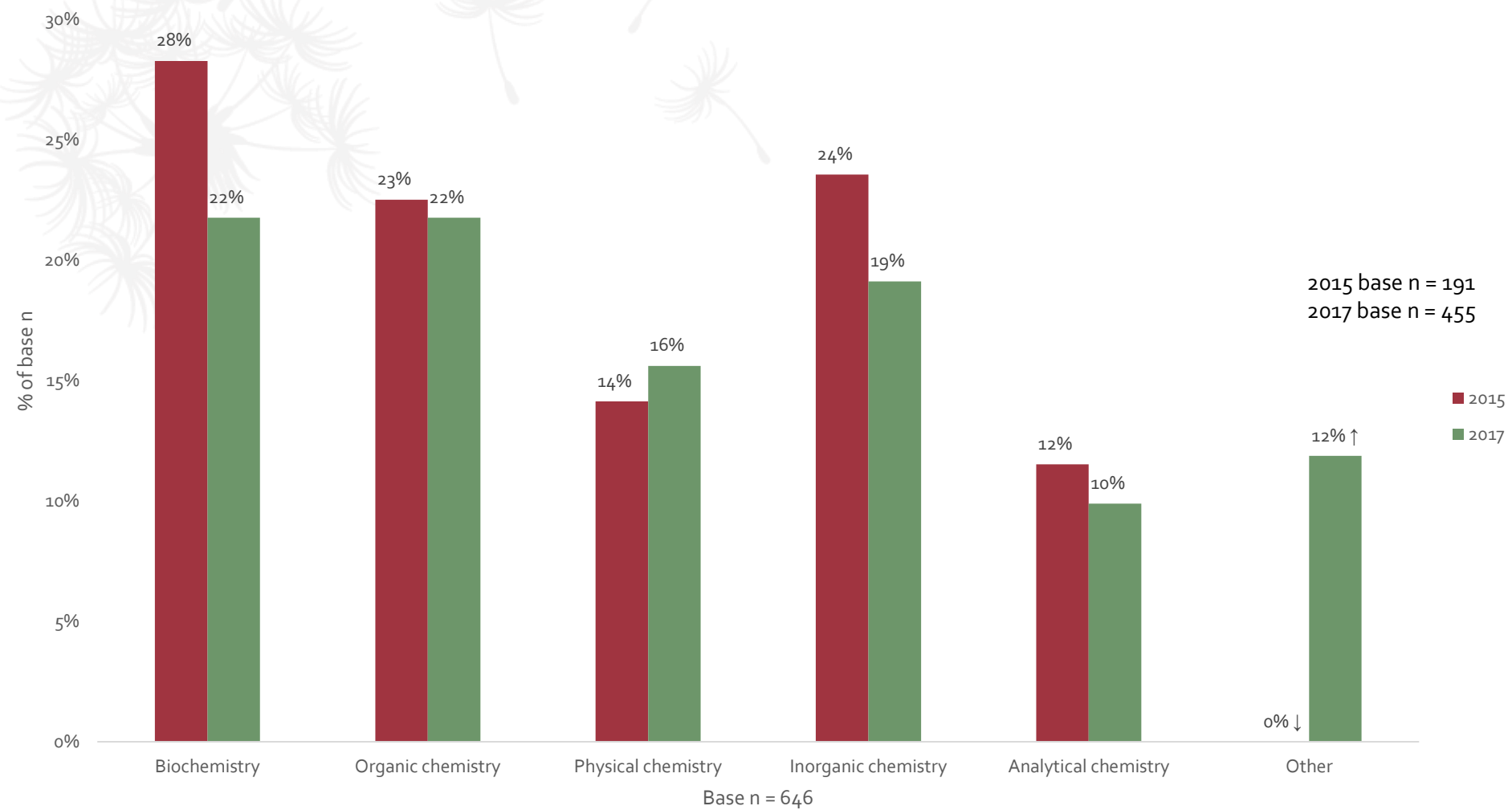
Primary subject area in Biology

Which of the following most closely represents your primary subject area in Biology? (2015/17)



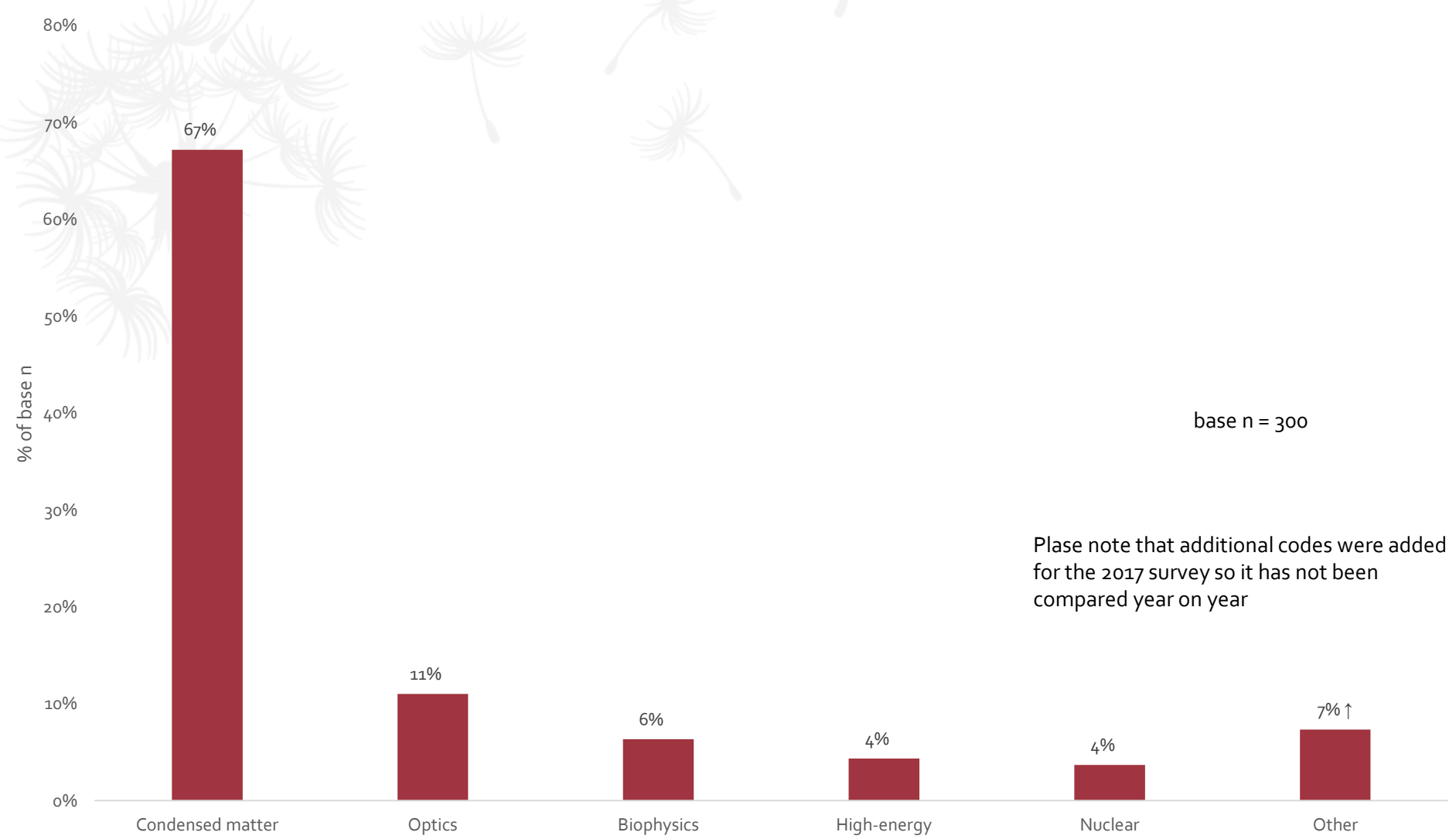
Primary subject area in chemistry

Which of the following most closely represents your primary subject area in Chemistry?
(2015/17)

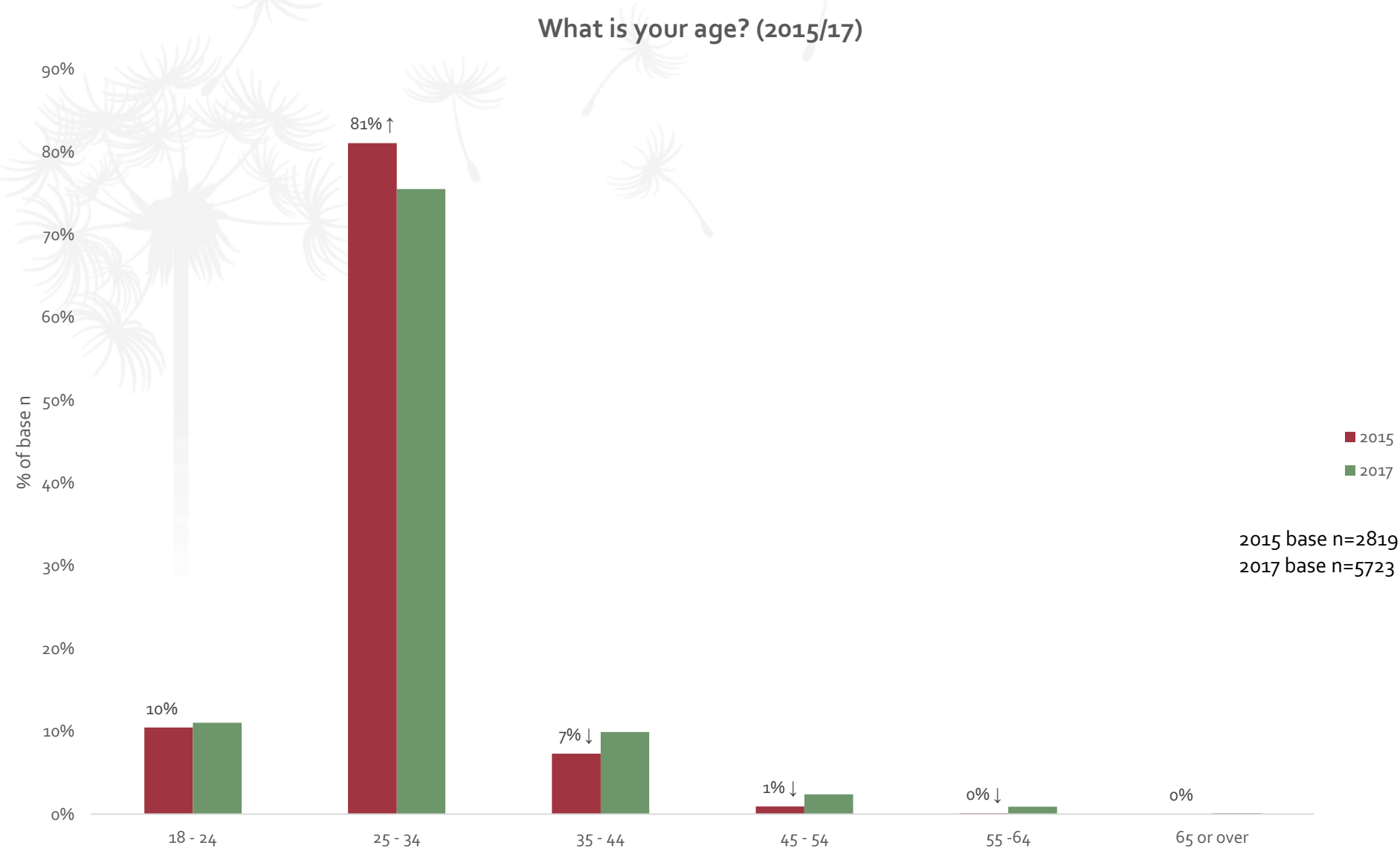


Primary subject area in Physics

Which of the following most closely represents your primary subject area in Physics? (2017)



Age bands





Shift Learning

because learning
keeps changing

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