



Supportive and Sustainable: Creating an Interactive PGR Community at the University of Northampton

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Our Vision

To develop a collaborative, supportive, innovative research community to transform lives, create impact and inspire change



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Aims and Objectives

To create a multi-functional PhD support group to increase engagement, wellbeing and participation through the use of ABL

To sustain the FEASST@8's CAleRO informed curriculum development to create and deliver ABL-led activities

To use 'learning by doing' and 'work-placement' to develop students' digital literacy through engaging with and contributing to the multi-functional peer support group

To establish an online community to overcome PhD students' isolation and thus support their wellbeing and mental health

To make the experience and resulting digital artifact available to others and embed them as part of the discipline-based development and annual review

What is the problem?

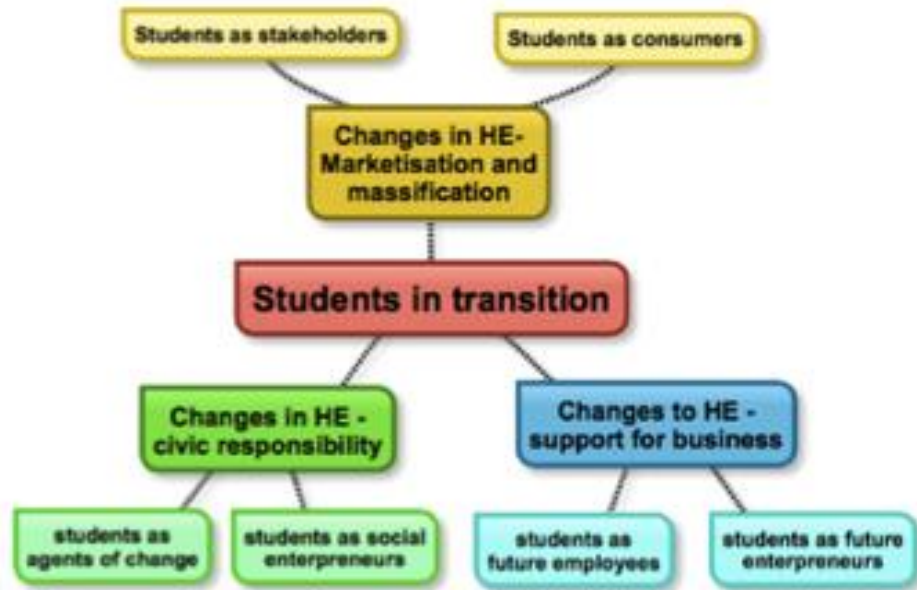


A diverse
Doctoral
cohort

Isolation
from events
and peers

The starting points ...

The changing nature of being a student: from customer to civic engagement



POINT 2

The FEH cohort is varied in terms of age, professional experience, motivations, and ability to benefit from what is currently available.

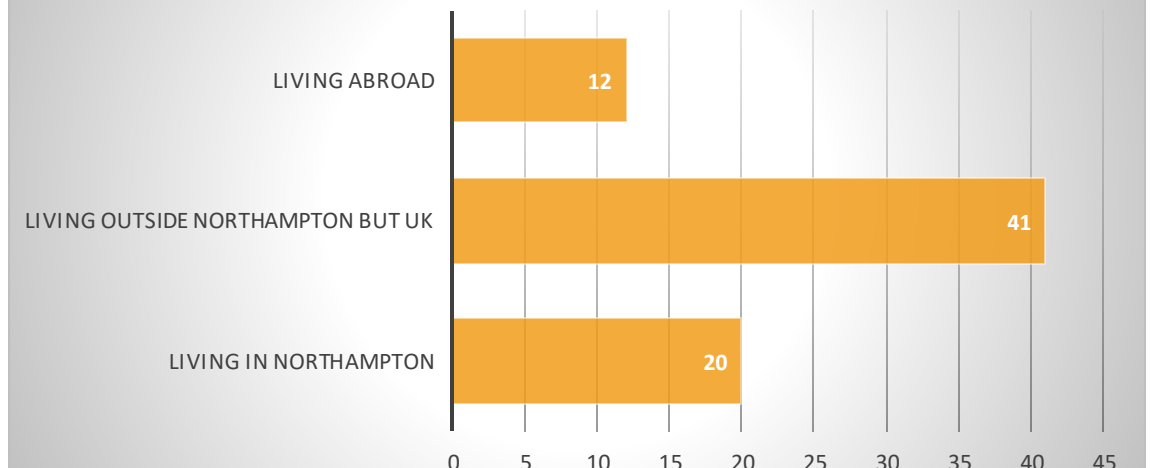
While diversity is a strength, it can also be a limitation. SuCCEED@8 started a process of **inclusion** valuing diversity and enabling equity.

POINT 1

The role, identity, and expectations we have of our students have changed.

Yet, PGR/PhD students have remained an unknown and invisible cohort whose potential for innovation is untapped and wasted.

FEH PGR students by place of residence



PhD students face:

Isolation

Anxiety

Stress



Low self-esteem

Depression

Loneliness

Work done so far

Formed a community
of PhD students

Peer Support
sessions

Blog writing

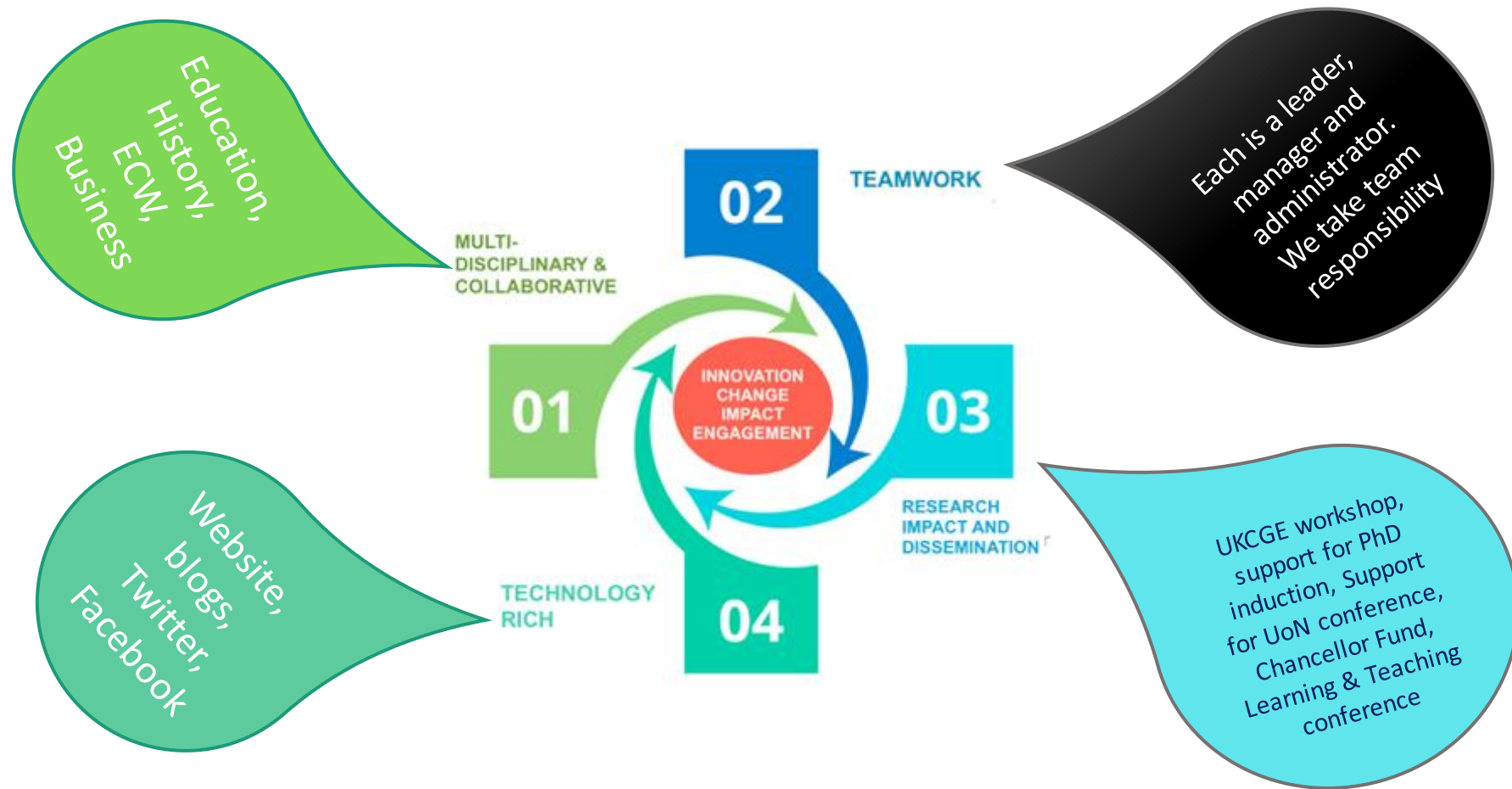
Abstract writing
workshop

Website

Facebook group

Twitter page

How have we done it?



Impact & Reach



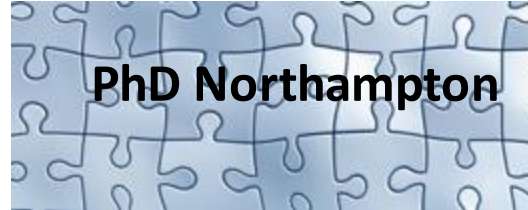
@Succeedat8

Tweets
488

Following
257

Followers
194

Likes
1,276



36 members and growing

Achievements so far

Faculty PhD Induction (October 2017 and March 2018)

Support through ABL 6 PhD students to write and successfully submit abstracts to ECER conference

Support the organisation of the UoN conference

Provide training for abstract and blog writing

Contribute to Graduate School Update Day on wellbeing & resilience (June 2018)

Increase the visibility of doctoral programme at UoN

Keynote at UKCGE workshop for deans of Graduate Schools

Submission to REDS conference on PhD careers and employment

UoN PGR workspace launch

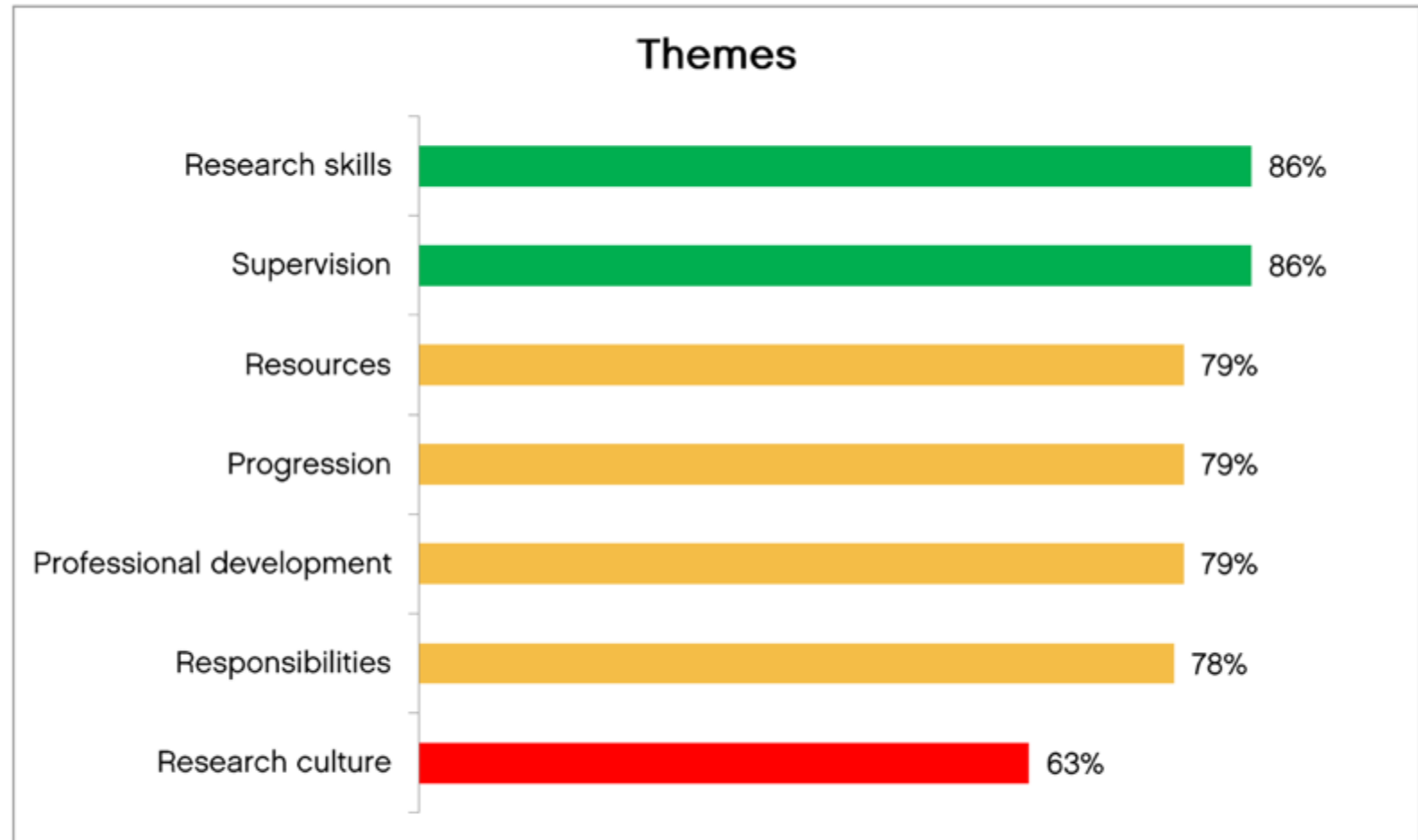


Skills developed as co-researchers

- Digital skills
- Communication
- Leadership
- Networking
- Collaboration

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2018

The PRES survey measures satisfaction across a range of 7 themes, each one comprising a number of individual questions which contribute to the overall score for each theme.



Base: All respondents (16,747).



PRES 2018
results

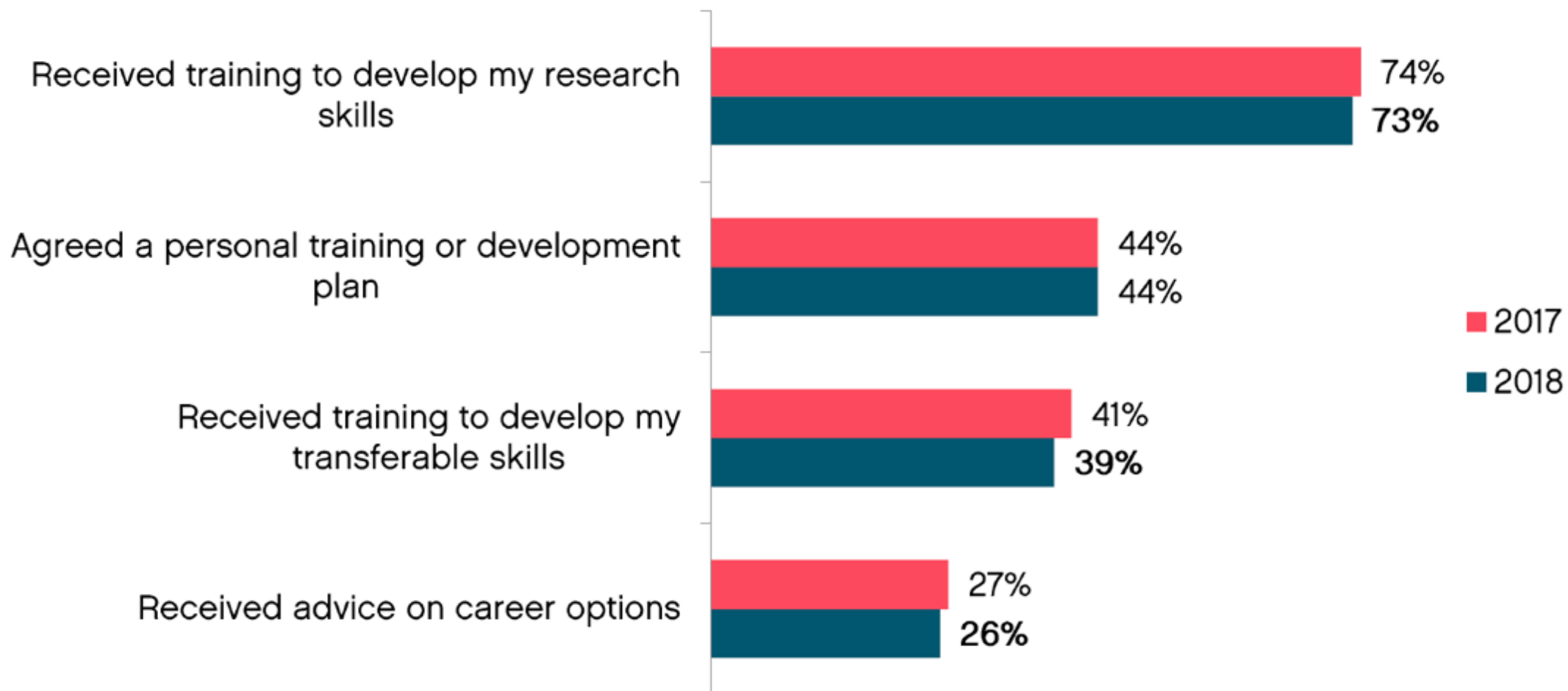
Only around 63% of PGR students are satisfied with their research culture, and their opportunities to collaborate with other students



Improving this aspect potentially holds the key to driving improvements in satisfaction overall but also with providing students a way to experiment with post-PhD opportunities

PRES 2018


Skills training and advice





PRES 2018
results

Yet less than 50% of PGR students are satisfied with the support they receive in applying the skills they learn and in developing a career plan



Improving this aspect potentially holds the key to enabling students to make informed choices during and after their studies

Ongoing and Future plans: A PGR Community

UoN is moving forward to build a stronger PGR community inclusive of students, supervisors and student support services

Increase the number of PGR students involved as researchers or co-researchers in projects

Expanding the opportunities of students to take part or lead in research and innovation projects

Dedicated support through Changemaker Hub and Graduate School ECRs training and staff development

