WILEY

The Future is Now:
Accelerating Change in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Insights from our annual Society Member Survey

About this survey

It's fair to say the last year has been like no other. From a devastating pandemic to disastrous climate change, our world has faced multiple significant challenges. In the US, the trial of Harvey Weinstein and the murder of George Floyd sparked overdue conversations about gender and racial disparities, and the need for change. As much as society at large, these challenges have impacted on the research community, making it clear that a more diverse and inclusive environment is needed.

It was in this atmosphere of self-enquiry and desire for change that we conducted our 7th Society Member Survey. We focused on many things, including the importance of career support to society members, the environmental impact of printing journals, the ongoing rise and importance of open data, and the topic of this whitepaper: diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I).

While the bulk of the insights in this paper is drawn from our survey, with a particular focus on the gender and racial aspects of DE&I, we'll also draw on other research we've conducted (or supported). We hope this paper will not only summarise current perspectives on DE&I in academia, but also suggest ways societies can redress imbalances, and improve representation for all.
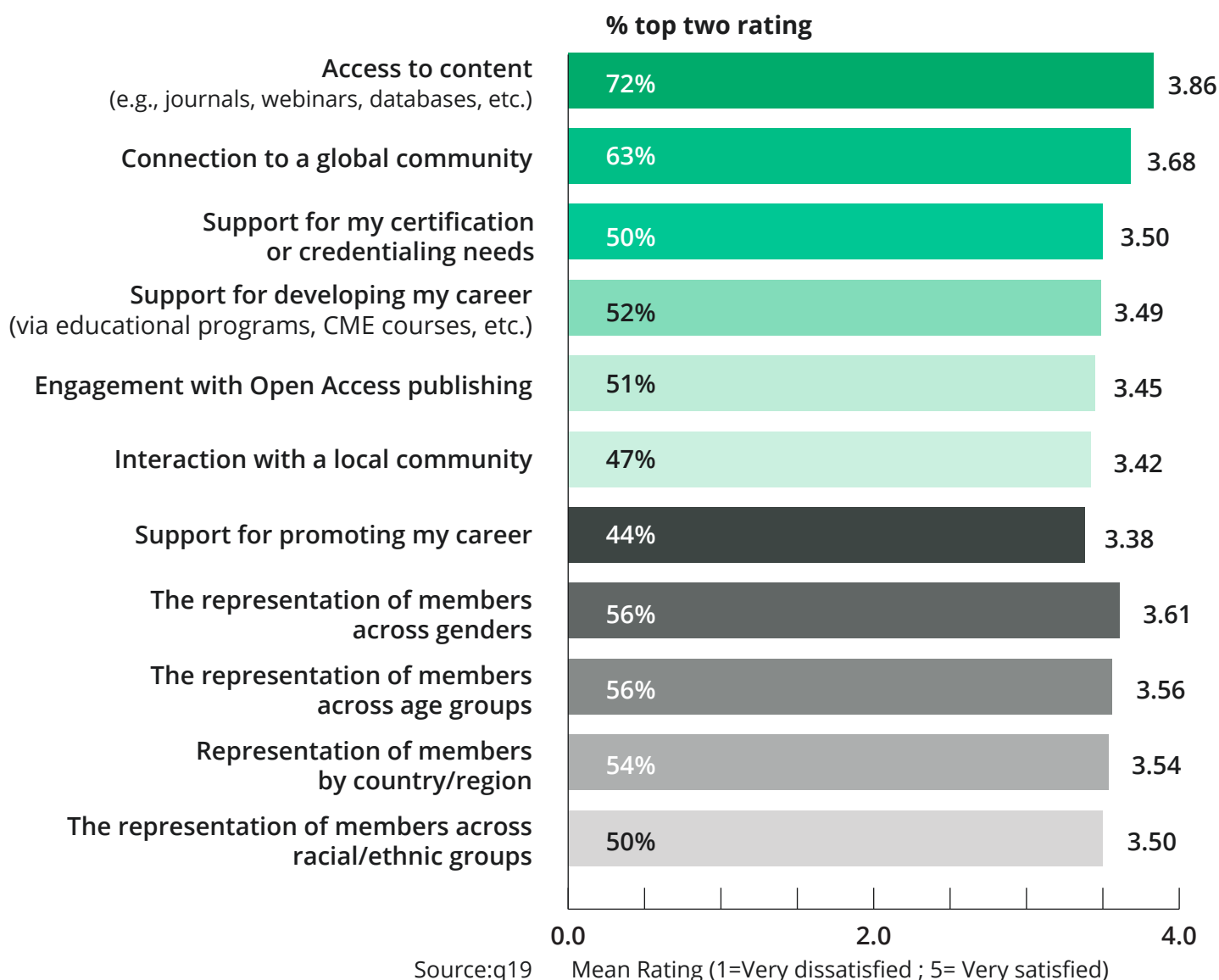
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How diverse are societies?

Broadly speaking, our survey showed that members are satisfied with the diversity of their societies. However, with satisfaction levels falling, societies cannot afford to be complacent. Last year, 62% of members told us they were satisfied with the representation of members across genders. This year, that dropped to 56%. This may reflect the growing proportion of women and early career researchers responding to the survey. So, even though representation is increasing, satisfaction isn't. Similarly, satisfaction with the representation of racial and ethnic groups has also fallen from 57% to 50%.

Rate your level of satisfaction with your society/societies in the following areas.

% top two rating

Category	% top two rating	Mean Rating
Access to content (e.g., journals, webinars, databases, etc.)	72%	3.86
Connection to a global community	63%	3.68
Support for my certification or credentialing needs	50%	3.50
Support for developing my career (via educational programs, CME courses, etc.)	52%	3.49
Engagement with Open Access publishing	51%	3.45
Interaction with a local community	47%	3.42
Support for promoting my career	44%	3.38
The representation of members across genders	56%	3.61
The representation of members across age groups	56%	3.56
Representation of members by country/region	54%	3.54
The representation of members across racial/ethnic groups	50%	3.50

Source:q19   Mean Rating (1=Very dissatisfied ; 5= Very satisfied)

Taking the lead

However, access to a diverse, cross-cultural global community remains a major draw for potential society members. It's an attraction that's amplified if a society takes the lead in promoting DE&I. 61% said they would be more likely to join a society that took a strong stance on diversity—particularly for members in Africa and Central Asia, along with those working in Nursing and the Humanities. In fact, taking the lead is strongly linked with recommendations and approval, since it gives members the chance to connect with (and learn from) individuals they wouldn't usually meet.

Across the board, 75% of respondents said it is important for societies to take the lead on DE&I. Not only that, 68% of those believed publishers should also lead in this area, working alongside societies. This opinion was particularly strong among students (85%) and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) (84%), along with researchers in Agricultural Science (92%) and Business, Finance, and Accounting (84%).

However, US respondents were less keen, with 46% saying they were neutral on whether publishers should take a lead on DE&I. This may reflect the older demographic of respondents in the US, since older members tend to be more ambivalent on DE&I. It's clear publishers have a central role in influencing change, and helping societies become more representative organisations.

The challenges facing editors and journals

Societies represent researchers at all career stages, with a variety of roles that reflect those different stages. One of the most common leadership roles is journal editorial board member. Our survey asked about the challenges faced by society members who also sit on editorial boards.

As ever, many spoke of issues of recruiting and engaging members—issues that have been made more difficult by the pandemic. However, diversity issues also surfaced. Respondents told us that "recruiting new minority [sic] members" was particularly difficult, and that the biggest challenge was to "reconcile various people's needs […], represent people of different backgrounds, and try to meet contradictory demands".

"Institutional and cultural change takes time, effort, and persistence."

Those are the words of [Cynthia Garcia Coll](#), the former editor of *Child Development* for the Society of Research in *Child Development* (SRCD), who took the lead in making her journal more diverse. Coll realised that, while children from all racial and ethnic groups show examples of problematic behaviour, Child Development tended to publish research taken from the BILPOC (Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and People of Color) community. Yet, when the journal published examples of normative behaviour, it tended to use research drawn from white North American or European communities. So it was clear: if the journal was to truly represent the diversity of the US and world populations, change was necessary.

Coll's first challenge was to get the editorial board on side, and develop a common language between the journal's different disciplines (including economists, anthropologists, and linguists). Of course, as Coll notes, any attempt to change the status quo will never be universally welcomed.

Despite the backlash, changes were made. Criteria around international submissions and statistical consultation were evaluated, while new standards were created to help prospective authors describe populations and samples. In the end, the quality of research remained high, while also reflecting the diverse living conditions of the world's children.

Expanding the diversity of editorial boards

This is a situation recognised in a separate survey of Wiley editors from February 2021. We asked whether there was sufficient diversity in their authors, reviewers, and editorial board members. The answer was almost exactly split between 'yes' and 'no'. However, there was broad agreement that efforts to expand diversity need to be improved. Most importantly, prioritising diversity among authors, before leading on to reviewers and board members.

Our survey also found many editors feel they lack all of the necessary demographic data to assess the diversity of their authors and reviewers, but 61% said they were still actively looking to expand the diversity of their editorial boards.

Open access opens the way

We've seen a rise in open access publishing recently, and it appears OA is helping journals reach a wider readership. 30% of editors reported OA had brought them new readers, while 32% reported it helped them attract a more diverse readership.

However, our editor survey also revealed some editors were concerned that limited funding will lead to fewer submissions from outside of Europe (where OA funding is more common). Fewer submissions could mean a less representative journal.

In fact, one respondent even wrote that:

"Open access is the biggest threat to diversity currently facing publishing.

As a researcher from the Southern hemisphere, outside the immense wealth and research funding of Europe, China, and North America, open access is a huge barrier to publication."

The rise in transitional agreements, along with Article Processing Charge (APC) waivers and discounts, mean it doesn't have to be like this. However, to make solutions like these happen, publishers and societies need to work together.
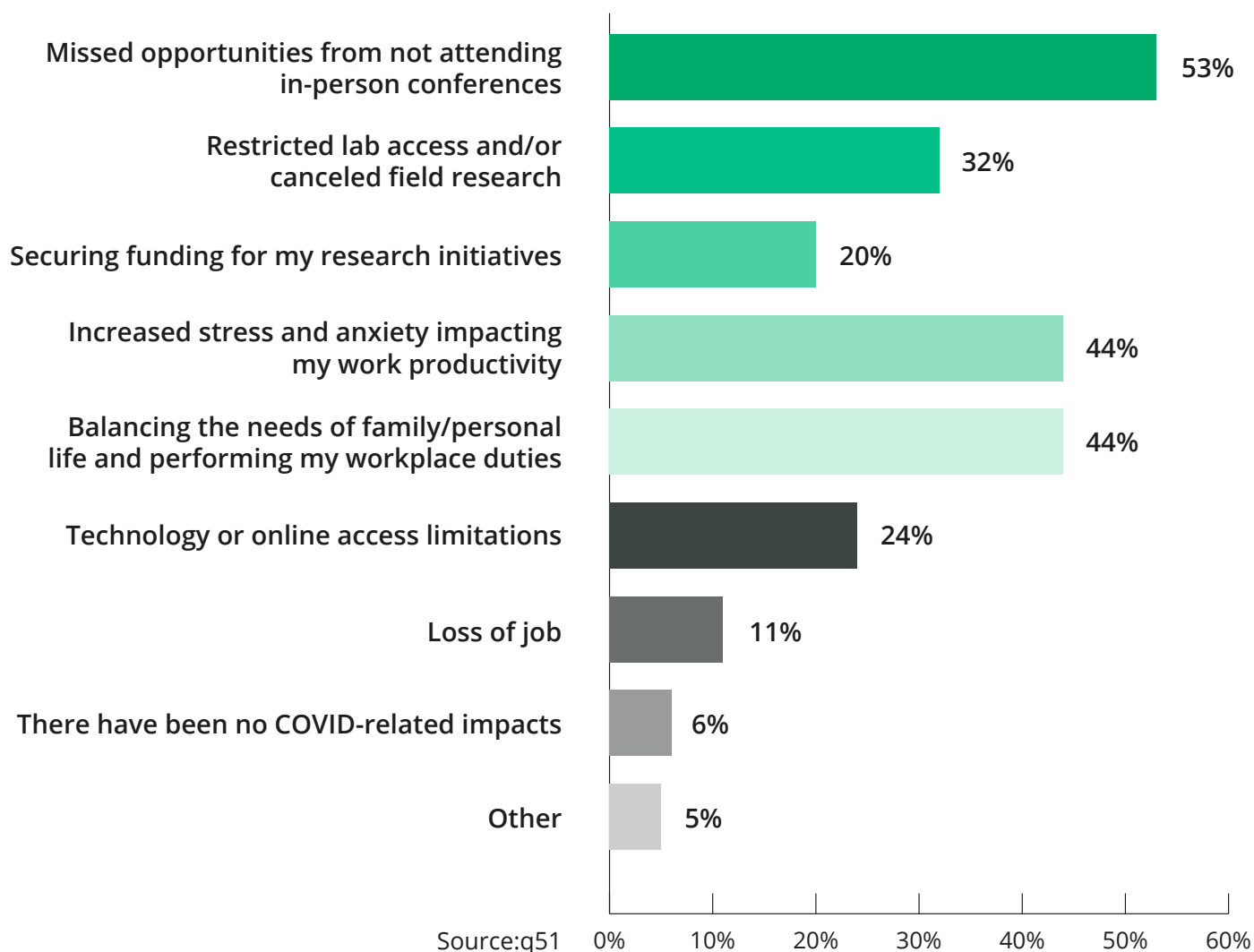
DE&I in the face of a pandemic

Inevitably, our survey reflects the impact of the pandemic. Not just on research, but on mental health, work/life balance, and the consequences for careers and educational development.

Our survey found that:

- 53% of respondents felt they'd missed opportunities by not attending in-person conferences and events
- 44% had developed increased anxiety and stress, affecting their productivity at work
- 44% had difficulty balancing family and personal lives with their work

In which of the following areas, if any, have you been impacted by the COVID pandemic?

Category	Percentage
Missed opportunities from not attending in-person conferences	53%
Restricted lab access and/or canceled field research	32%
Securing funding for my research initiatives	20%
Increased stress and anxiety impacting my work productivity	44%
Balancing the needs of family/personal life and performing my workplace duties	44%
Technology or online access limitations	24%
Loss of job	11%
There have been no COVID-related impacts	6%
Other	5%

Source:q51

It's true that groups already facing significant challenges before the pandemic have been further challenged by its effects—and disproportionately so. Take the representation of women within learned societies. This has always lagged behind men, despite small signs of growth each year. The pandemic has widened this division. 51% of female respondents declared difficulty in maintaining a work/life balance compared to 42% of men, while 49% of women said they faced increased levels of stress during the pandemic compared to 42% of men.

Disparities compounded by crisis

The Brave New World study, co-sponsored by Wiley and conducted between November 2020 and February 2021, uncovered similar findings. The study found the pandemic had increased gender disparity, and highlighted racial inequalities. Particularly in BIPOC communities, where the virus has had a disproportionate impact.

BRAVE NEW WORLD:
SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION
AFTER COVID

- 59% of respondents had taken on extra household chores
- 51% had taken on responsibility for home-schooling
- 33% had dependent care, and 46% had other caring responsibilities

The study also found that professional responsibilities had increased, with 53% spending more time on lecture preparation and planning and 48% spending more time supporting students.

Yet, when these numbers are broken down, the gender and racial disparities become clearer. Respondents from the BIPOC community were less likely to report extra home-schooling responsibilities and care of dependents, but 62% were more likely to have increased household chores.

Further divide is shown in respondents' answers when asked to consider the amount of time spent on research due to the pandemic:

- 37% of Black respondents said they had less time for research, compared to 30% of white respondents
- 45% of women said they had less time for research, compared to 37% of men
- 50% of women said they had increased caring responsibilities, compared to 44% of men
- 68% of women faced more household chores, compared to 55% of men

We can expect, as the pandemic recedes, that these extra responsibilities will reduce or disappear. However, as the Wiley Society Member Survey and Brave New World research shows, these hidden responsibilities have always had inbuilt gender and racial disparities. This research also shows the potential for long-term career damage for women and those from a BIPOC background if action isn't taken.
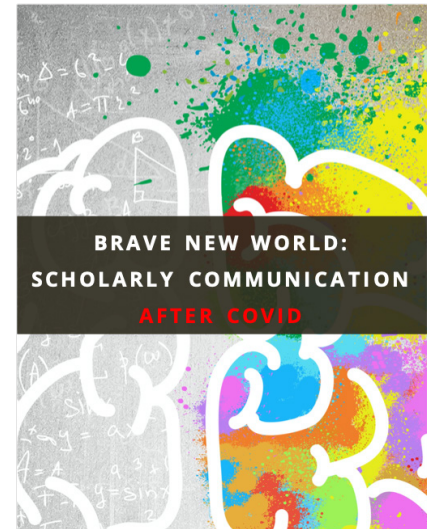
Key takeaways

The last year has had a major impact on everyone. Challenges around fair representation and inclusivity have been thrown into sharp relief. Addressing them has never been more urgent—and in that sense, the future really is now.

Our research shows there are reasons to be optimistic—not least because DE&I is now firmly on the agenda within our community. So, here are some ways societies can become forces for change.

Closer partnership between societies and publishers

Our survey made it clear that members want closer collaboration between societies and publishers to address DE&I issues. We noted the growing importance of open data—and, among societies which already support open data, an even stronger call for more publisher support. So, talk to your publisher. After all, they're there to help you meet *all* of your members' needs.

"If Wiley wanted to track diversity data (maybe keep it blind from editors/reviewers as it should not impact quality decisions) and give updates to editors on where they stand that would be a help."

(Wiley Editor)
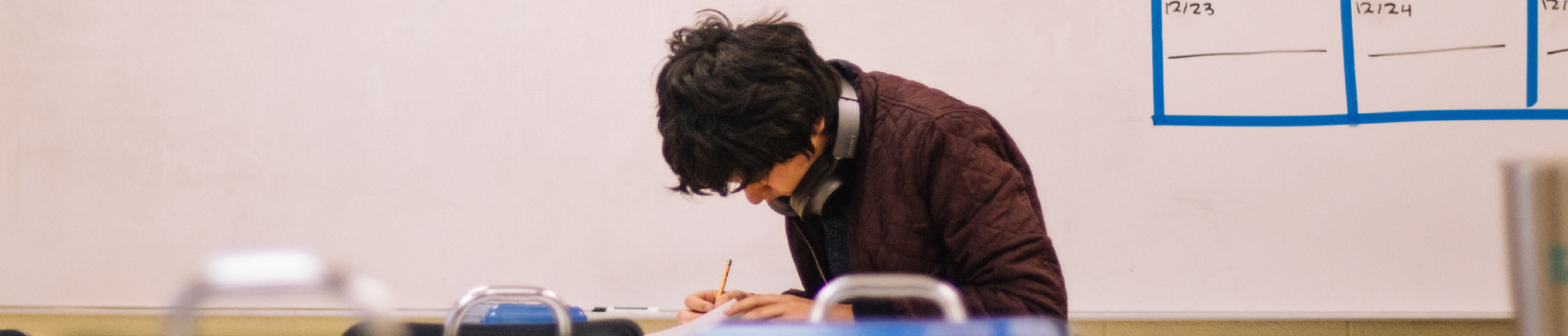
Remove the barriers from training opportunities

By increasing recruitment for prestige roles, alongside supporting scholarships and other initiatives, societies can increase opportunities for under-represented groups. To do this, societies could consider using their resources to improve access to development opportunities. This could be training, education and certification, career support, or providing networking and collaboration opportunities. Whatever the route, the ultimate destination is to provide opportunities to the greatest number possible.

Going virtual makes conferences more accessible

In the past year, conferences have moved to a largely virtual format. Our survey showed that this is acceptable to members while pandemic restrictions are in place, but there's little doubt that future, post-pandemic conferences will retain at least some virtual components. Not least because virtual conferences save financial and environmental resources, tend to be more time-efficient, and enable more researchers to attend more conferences. Just as importantly, they also widen access for those who would not usually be able to attend due to cost, location, or caring responsibilities.

"[Virtual conferences] are typically less expensive to register, and you can attend the symposia you are interested in regardless of where you are located and when travel is not an option."

Open access needs to be open for all

Editors expressed concerns about equal access to funds to cover APCs, particularly for authors in low and middle income countries. Likewise, our survey also noted disparities within disciplines. If research is to be truly representative and inclusive, equal access to funding is crucial.

Societies should be innovative in considering their priorities, and making the most effective use of their budget. For example: with fewer in-person conferences, could travel funds be diverted to pay for APCs?

Make editorial boards more representative

Our survey suggests satisfaction with representation in societies is falling. At the same time, editors report the difficulty of recruiting members from under-represented groups. One thing is certain: change starts from the top. If members don't see themselves in society leadership, they won't see the value in joining. Our survey shows this is an ongoing block for recruitment.

So, be a force for positive change. Make sure a proportion of your editorial board is recruited from the BIPOC community, and has a representative gender split. Your members will thank you for it.

Change is never easy, but it's never been more important. As Cynthia Garcia Coll said about the changes she instigated at *Child Development*:
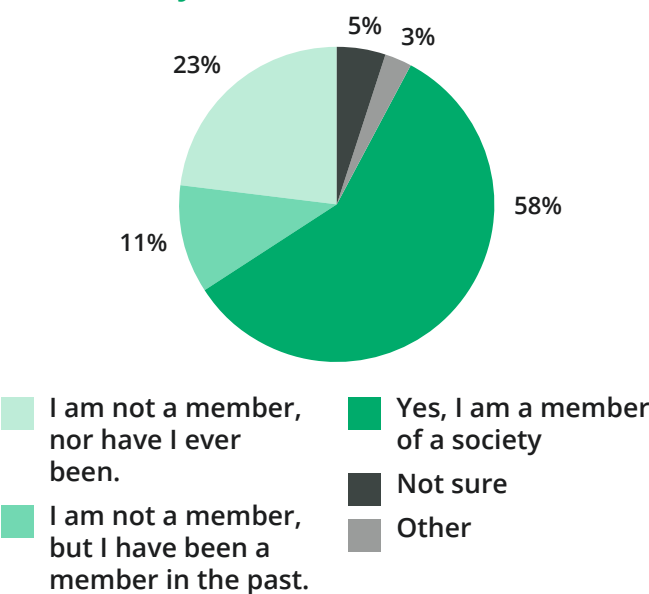
"The research world is changing and so is our knowledge and our scholars. I hope that in 100 years from now this will be old history."
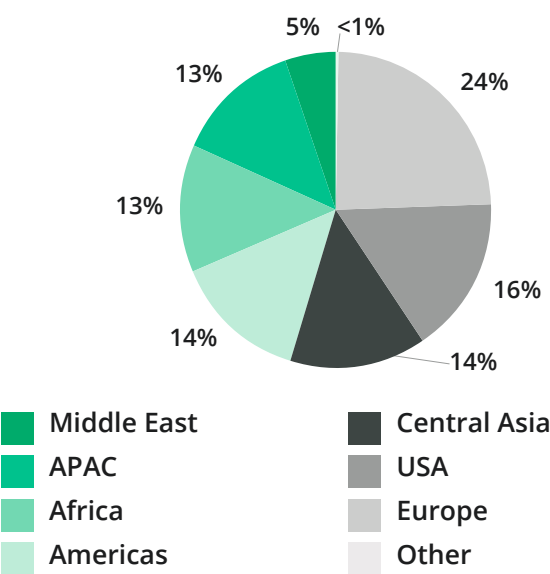
Overview of respondents

Our survey received 1,444 responses, across 45 different disciplines and 113 countries.
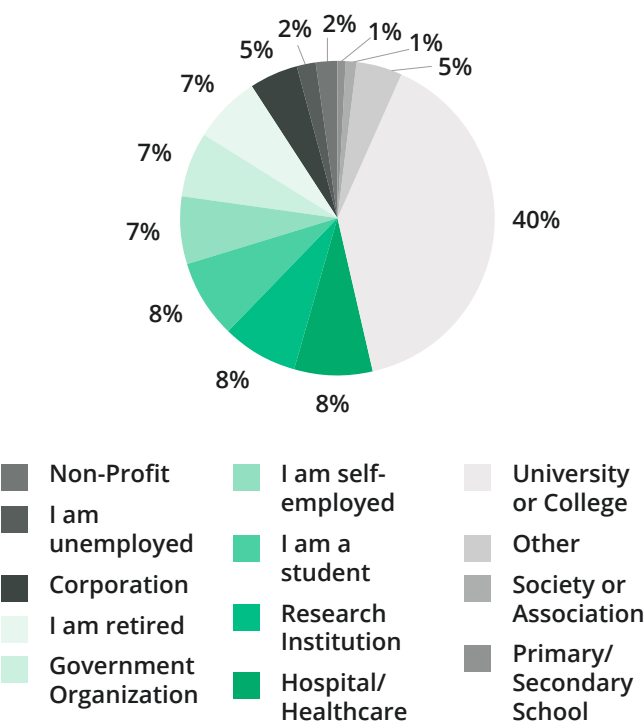
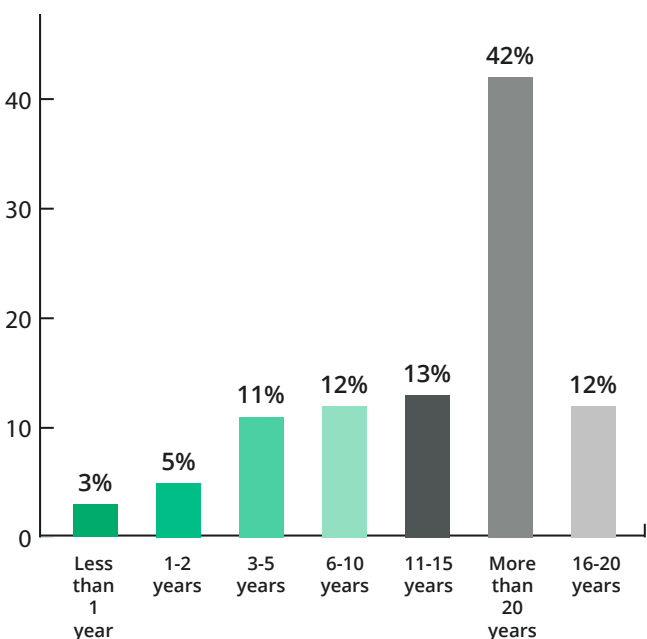## Are you currently a member of a society or association?

- 5%
- 3%
- 23%
- 58%
- 11%

Legend:
- I am not a member, nor have I ever been.
- I am not a member, but I have been a member in the past.
- Yes, I am a member of a society
- Not sure
- Other

In which region are you located?

- 5%
- <1%
- 13%
- 24%
- 13%
- 16%
- 14%
- 14%

Legend:
- Middle East
- APAC
- Africa
- Americas
- Central Asia
- USA
- Europe
- Other

Please select your work status/ primary place of work.

- 2%
- 2%
- 1%
- 1%
- 5%
- 5%
- 7%
- 40%
- 7%
- 7%
- 8%
- 8%
- 8%

Legend:
- Non-Profit
- I am unemployed
- Corporation
- I am retired
- Government Organization
- I am self-employed
- I am a student
- Research Institution
- Hospital/ Healthcare
- University or College
- Other
- Society or Association
- Primary/ Secondary School

How many years of experience do you have in your field?

| Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	More than 20 years	16-20 years
3%	5%	11%	12%	13%	42%	12%

Membership trends

Society membership continues to fall. 58% of respondents said they were currently members of a society, the lowest level since 2016 (compared to 62% in 2020). It's not clear why this fall is happening, but what is certainly significant is the growing numbers who have never been members of a society. While the number of members leaving remained consistent at around 10%, the number who have never joined a society rose from 19% in 2020 to 23% this year. As such, the benefits of membership are clearly not getting through.

Of those who aren't members, 42% said they haven't been asked, while 23% said they don't know what's available. The opportunities are there, but societies need better, more compelling messaging.

How many different societies are you currently a member of?

Source: q7

Bar chart values:
- 1: 25%
- 2: 30%
- 3: 21%
- 4: 11%
- 5: 5%
- 6 or more: 8%
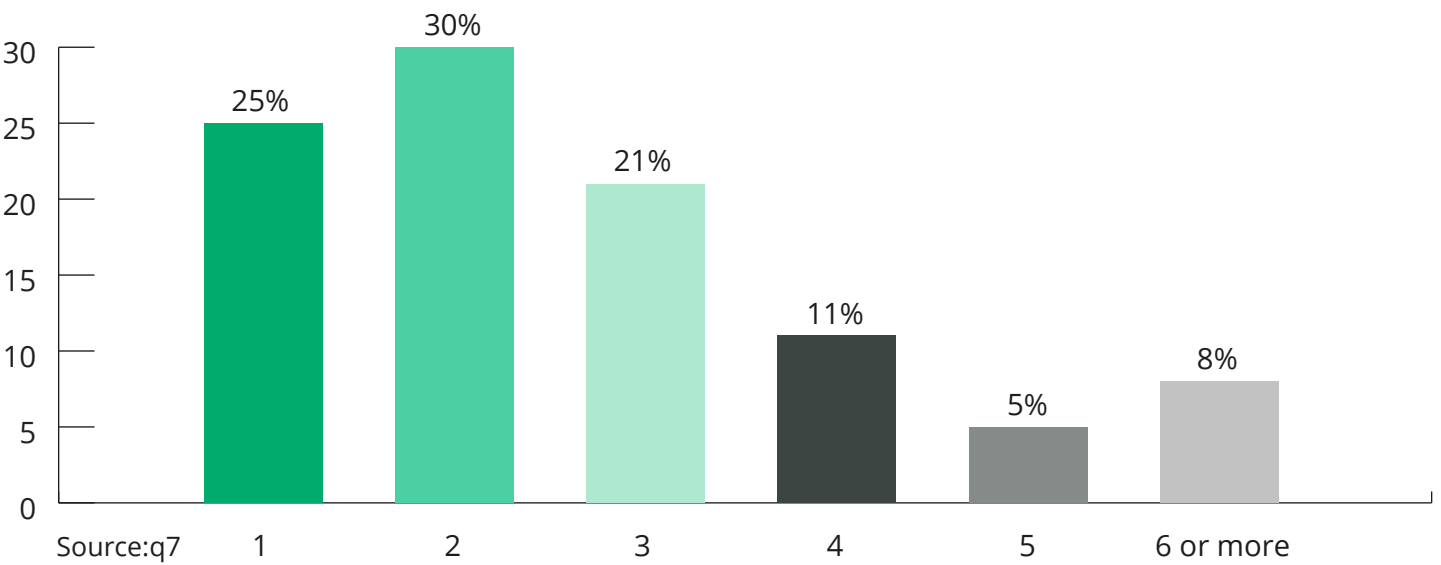
Gender diversity

The number of women responding remained steady at 36%, but there are noticeable differences in gender diversity across subjects and geography. Take engineering, for example, where 85% of respondents were men. In the Middle East and Africa, 76% and 70% of responses were from men, whereas 71% of those in nursing were from women, and 45% in the US. What does this mean? That there is still a long way to go until we reach genuine gender equity across research. More positively, 49% of respondents with under 5 years' experience were women, so change appears to be coming.

Belonging to more than one society

Membership of more than one society continues to be the standard. The average member belongs to three societies, while around 8% belonged to six or more. What is striking, though, is that it appears the more research a member consumes and produces, the more likely they are to join multiple societies (particularly in the US).

The key to career success

Careers was a central focus of our survey. Across the board, it appears career support is the most important reason to join a society. But all is not well. Satisfaction with career support continues to fall, down from 49% last year to 44%. Among those who left a society in the last 12 months, 15% stated a lack of career support as the reason behind their decision.

All is not lost, however. Members who use career support services really value them, especially in learning and development. 83% said they value the service they receive, and give their societies a much higher Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 57, compared to the average society member score of 20. So, while general satisfaction with career support is low, the opportunity is clear: create a truly valuable careers support service for your members, and they will become your biggest advocates.

What matters to early career researchers?

Closely connected to the need for quality careers support is the importance of listening to the concerns of early career researchers (ECRs). The typical society member last joined a new society just over five and a half years ago. This group tends to prefer accessing journal content online, and is drawn to societies publishing at least some of their titles open access.

Like previous years, working with universities is considered the best way to recruit younger members, according to 58% of respondents. What's striking is how publishing content in media explicitly targeted at less experienced members pays dividends. This approach results in a well above average NPS of 60 among the group advocating closer links with universities.
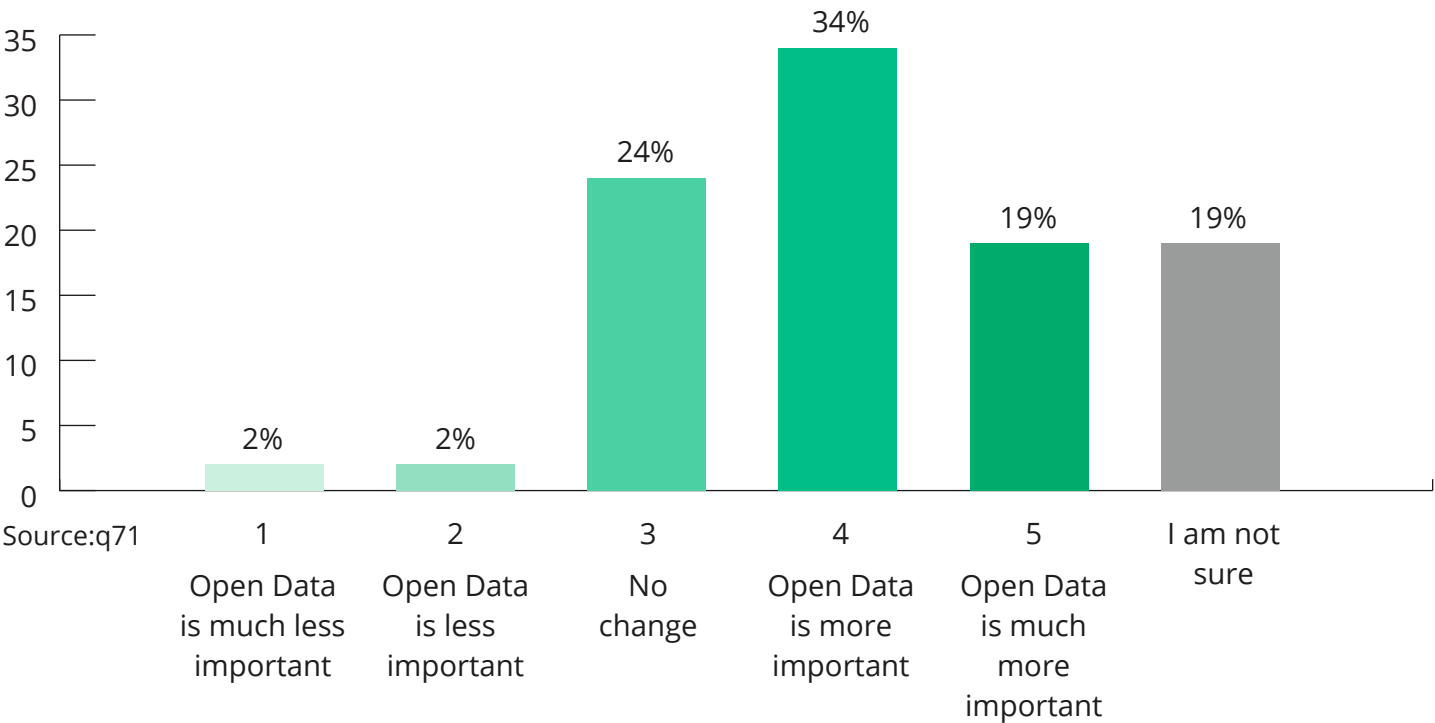
If societies talk to students and ECRs in their own language, they won't just recruit more—they'll also achieve higher levels of satisfaction.

The continuing rise of open data

Open access publishing is increasing, used by 43% of respondents compared to 38% in 2020, and our survey highlights the increasing importance of open data. Momentum is clearly growing, with 53% reporting that open data was more important than it was 12 months ago—especially among those who have published OA, and who value access to society journals without extra costs. Societies have clearly recognised this too, as support for open data is on the rise, growing from 35% in 2020 to 42% this year.

How has the society's support for Open Data changed over the past 12 months?

Source:q71

1 Open Data is much less important	2 Open Data is less important	3 No change	4 Open Data is more important	5 Open Data is much more important	I am not sure
2%	2%	24%	34%	19%	19%

Acknowledgements

More than ever, we'd like to thank everyone who participated in our Society Member Survey, along with our other research initiatives. These insights would not have been possible without your time and opinions, shared during such extraordinary times.

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