

Research in Film Schools Enquiry - 2025 Edition

Presented by Barbara Turquier and Louna Lambert - La Fémis

With support by GEECT

General information about the enquiry

Overall approach

- Comparative analysis of research practices in European film schools
- Conducted through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews
- Builds upon the earlier survey led by Barbara Turquier (2015) to allow for longitudinal comparison

Survey

- Questionnaire titled “**Research in Film Schools – 2025 Edition**”
- Launched April – May 2025 among members of the GEECT (101 schools)
- **30 responses collected** (~30% response rate)
- Mix of single choice, multiple choice questions and type-in questions (select ‘Other’ if none of the responses match your school)

Interviews

- **5 in-depth semi-structured interviews** conducted with selected respondents to deepen insights

Interviewed schools

- Danish Film School
- INSAS
- University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf
- La Fémis
- Norwegian Film School

Objectives

- Explore how **integrating theoretical research and professional practice** can enhance film students’ training and foster innovation in the cinematic field
- Define a **research framework within a film school** that supports knowledge production while guiding students’ professional development.

List of the responding film schools

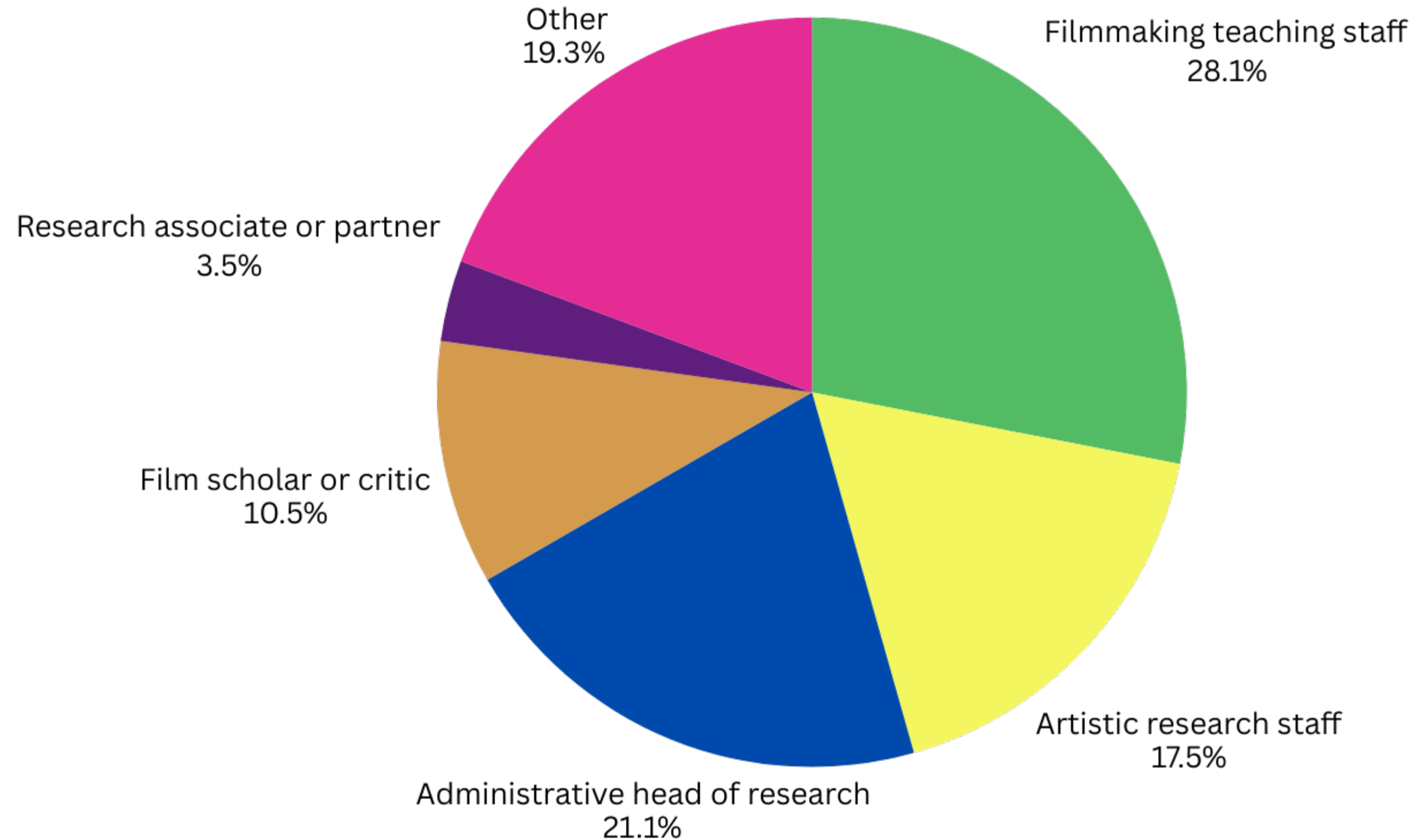
National higher Institute of Performing Arts and Media
Technique (INSAS)
KASK & Conservatorium (HOGENT - Howest)
RITCS School of Arts
National Film School of Denmark (DDF)
Baltic Film, Media and Arts School - Tallinn University (BFM)
Finland Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK)
France Higher School of Cinematographic Studies (ESEC)
National Higher Audiovisual School (ENSAV)
French National Film School (La Fémis)
National Audiovisual Institute (INA)
Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University
(TAFU)
Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF (FBKW)
Macromedia University of Applied Sciences
Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)
Sam Spiegel Film and Television School
Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC)

Institute for Theater, Audiovisual and Cinematic Studies, Saint-
Joseph University of Beirut (IESAV)
Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts - Balamand University (ALBA-
UOB)
Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy (LMTA)
The Norwegian Film School (DNF)
Krzysztof Kieslowski Film School
Lisbon Theatre and Film School (ESTC)
Lusófona University
The Academy of Performing Arts - Film and Television Faculty
(VSMU)
The Madrid Film School (ECAM)
Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH)
Bilkent University / Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture /
Department of Communication and Design
Istanbul Culture University / Art and Design Faculty / Department
of Radio, Television and Cinema (IKU)
Yasar University / Faculty of Communications
London College of Communication (LCC)

Respondents' Profiles

Respondents' profiles show polyactivity (multiple choice question).

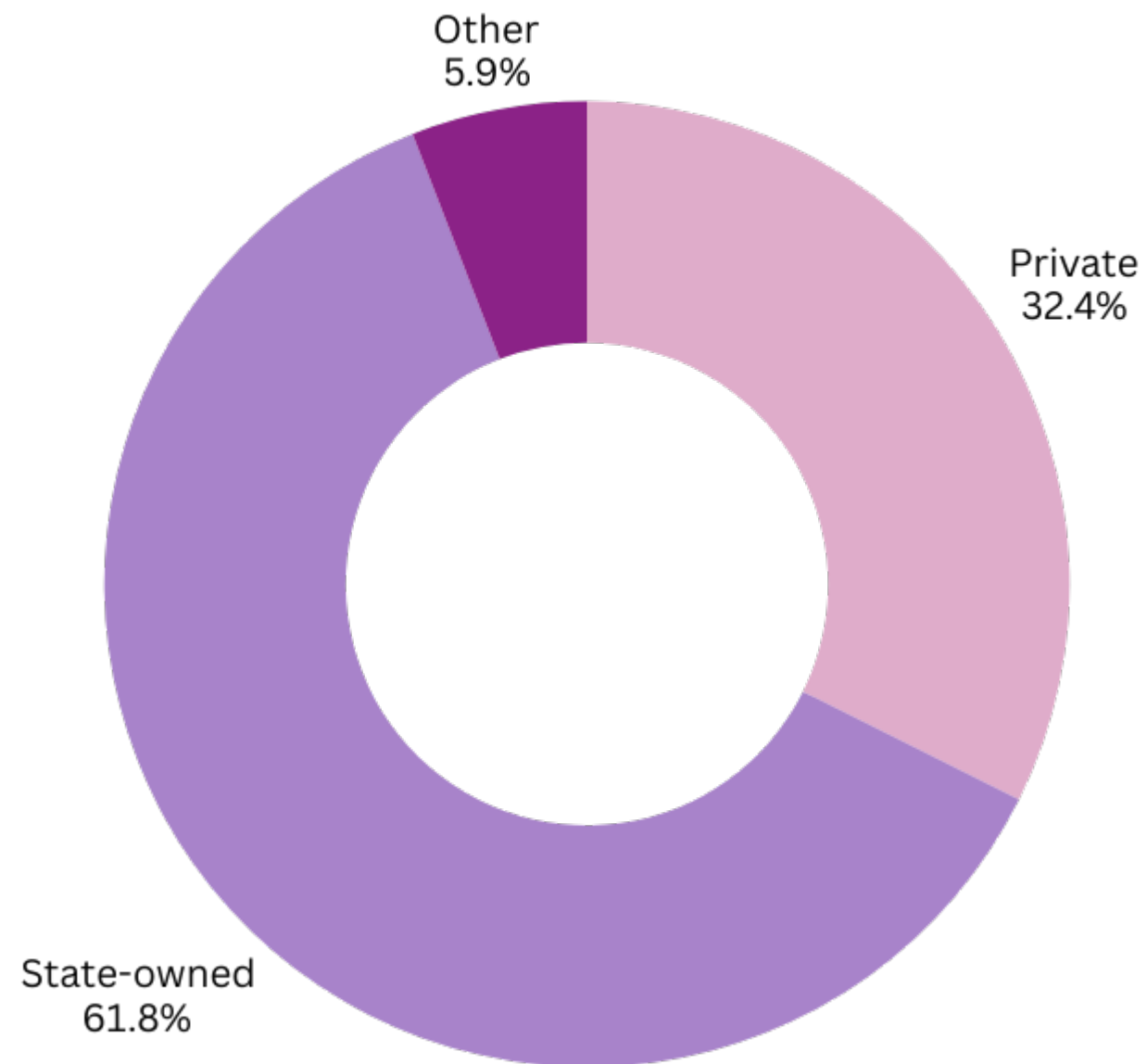
Research actors often have other responsibilities.



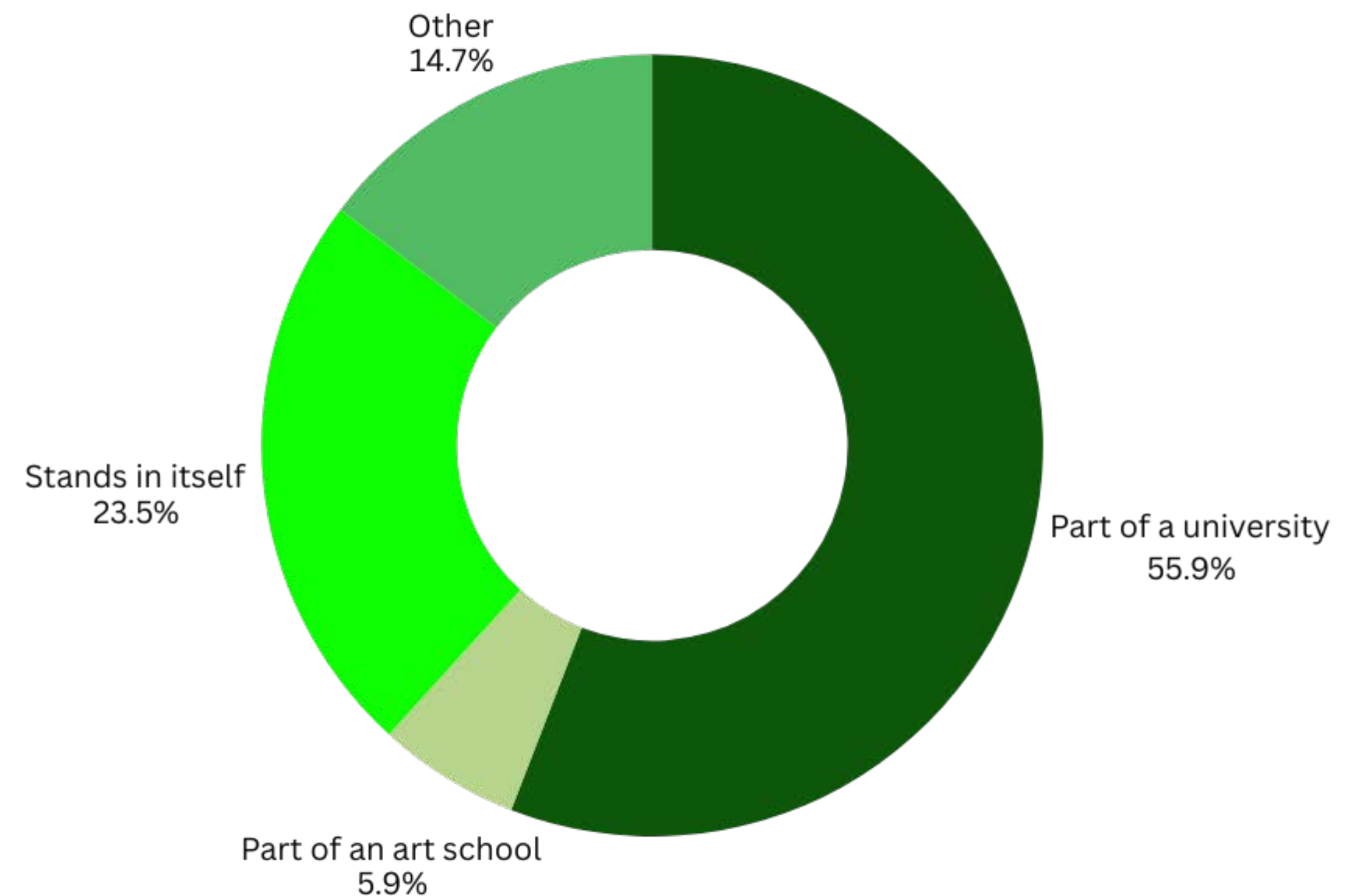
Typology of schools

Most of the responding institutions are funded and affiliated with a university.

What type of school do you work in?

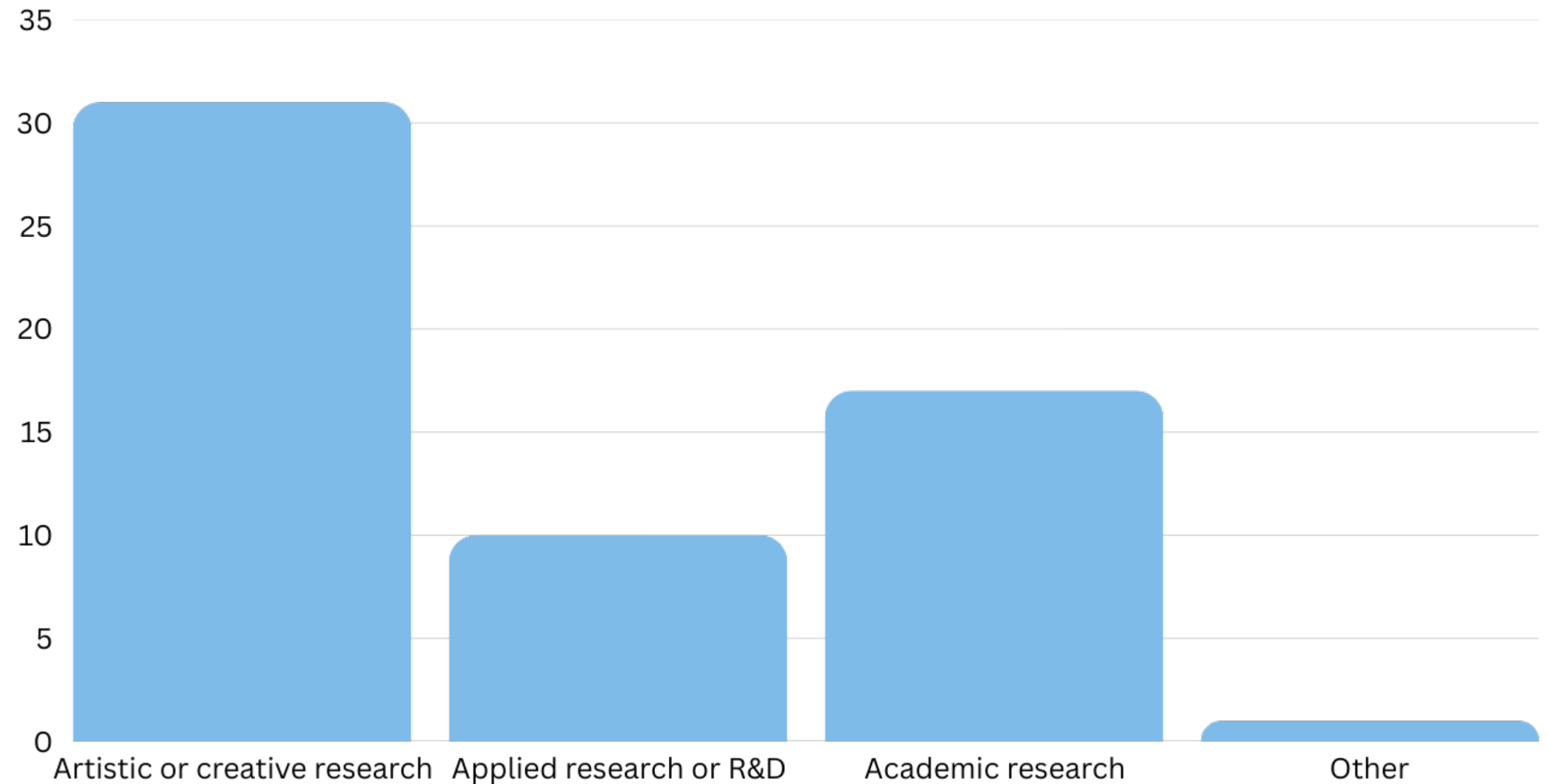


Is your school part of a wider institution?



Types of research activities

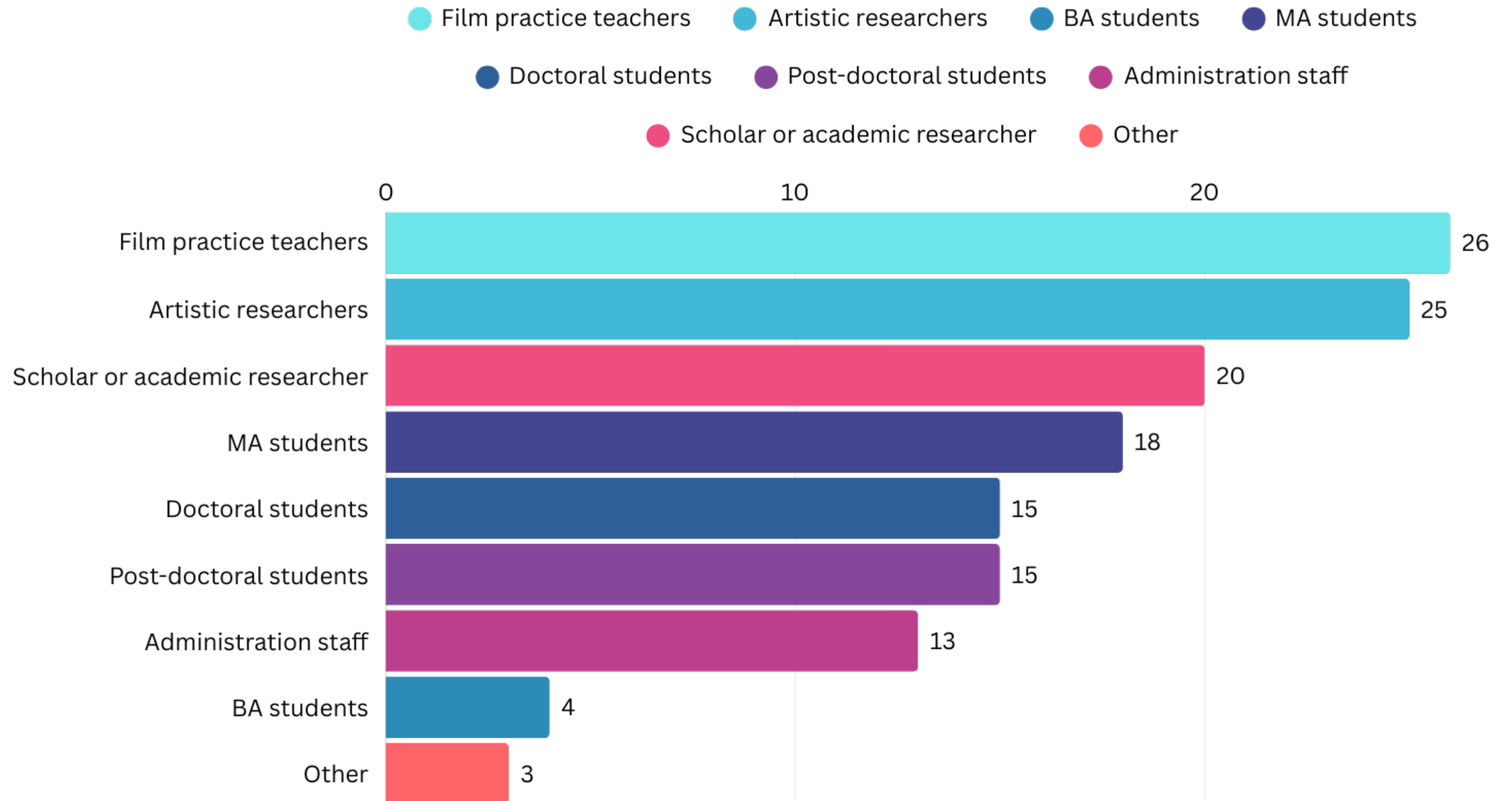
How would you define the research activities in your schools? (multiple choice)



“Artistic research” has become the main label we now identify research activities in film schools.

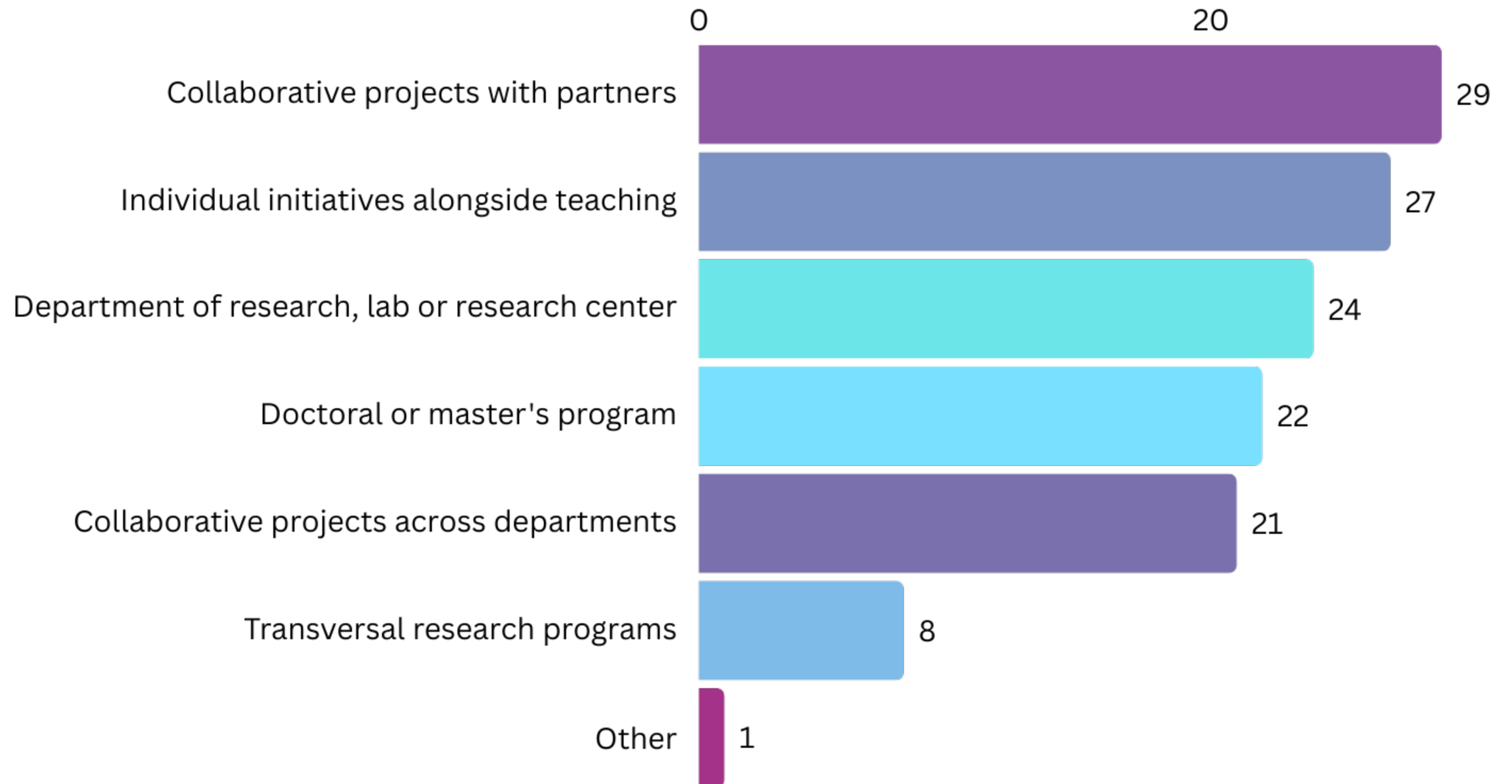
Typology of researchers

Most research is done by film practice teachers, students and non-permanent staff. Academic research happens in schools linked to universities.



Organization of research activities

Although research is inherently linked to teaching, paradoxically, specific structures are devoted exclusively to its activities.



Example of research centers at University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF

“These institutes are designed to be fully integrated into the university, ensuring they are seen as a permanent part of it rather than temporary projects—an important distinction when facing budget restrictions.”

Donata Haag (Head of research at University Babelsberg)

Types of centres mentioned:

- **Institute for Artistic Research** → advances artistic film research through experimentation, support, and international exchange
- **Media Research Center Babelsberg** → unites media researchers at Film University, fostering exchange, research, and teaching across film, media, and communication studies in national and international contexts
- **Center for Jewish Film and Audiovisual Memory Culture** → emerging centre, developed from a colleague's research group, connected with Holocaust and remembrance studies, combining multiple research institutions

Characteristics:

- Centres are not **short-term projects** → they become part of the university structure
- Provide visibility, institutional legitimacy, and funding opportunities
- Linked to **partnerships** (Film Museum Potsdam, archives)

Example of a project: The “Arena Method” – Danish Film School

“Over four years, students work with the 'arena method,' a collaborative approach that structures feedback, material collection, and co-creation”

Jakob Høgel (Head of studies and research, Danish Film School)

About the methodology:

- Developed by a director as both a film project and a **pedagogical method**
- Focuses on environment as a generator of stories → narratives created through sensory input (sound, visuals), not words
- **Applied in a feature film**

Integration into education:

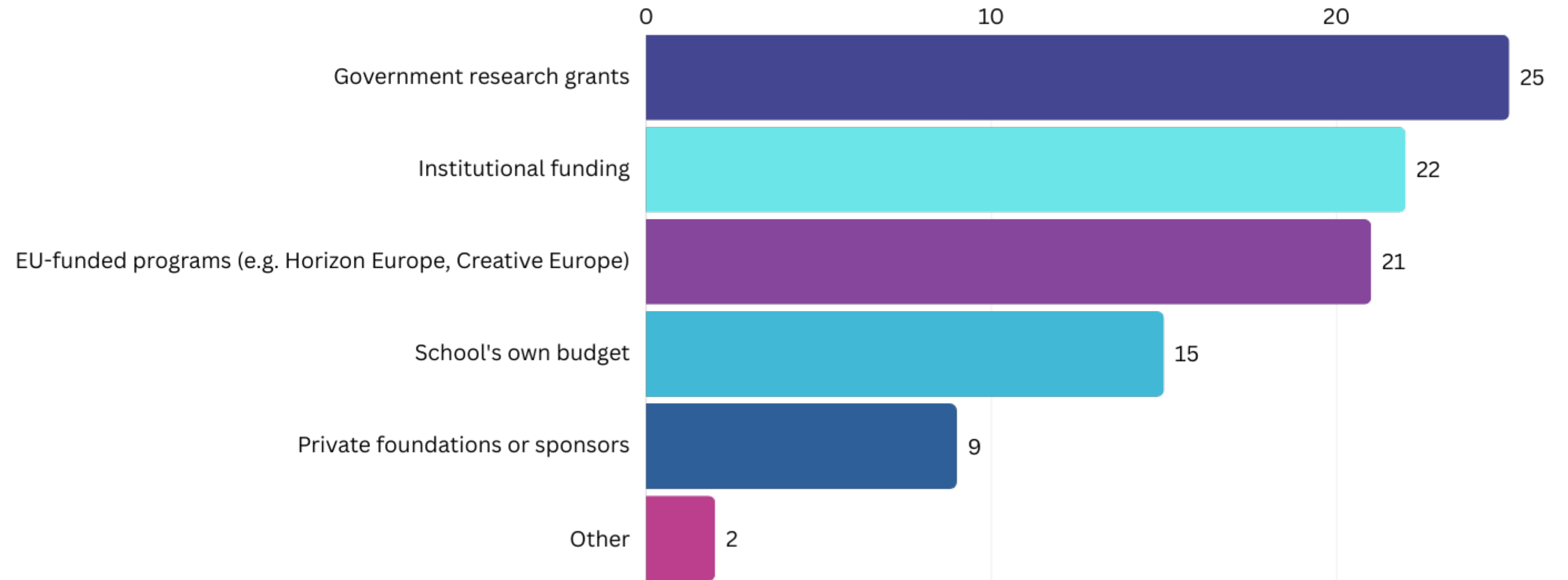
- Method introduced to students → fosters sensory thinking and **collaborative creation**
- Used progressively over the four years of study
- Encourages feedback loops and co-creation among students

Trajectory of the researcher:

- Initially **external** to the school → developed the method while making the film
- Later **integrated into teaching** (part-time faculty, ~25%)
- **Published** his research as an article initially titled “Not a Word” in a journal of artistic practice

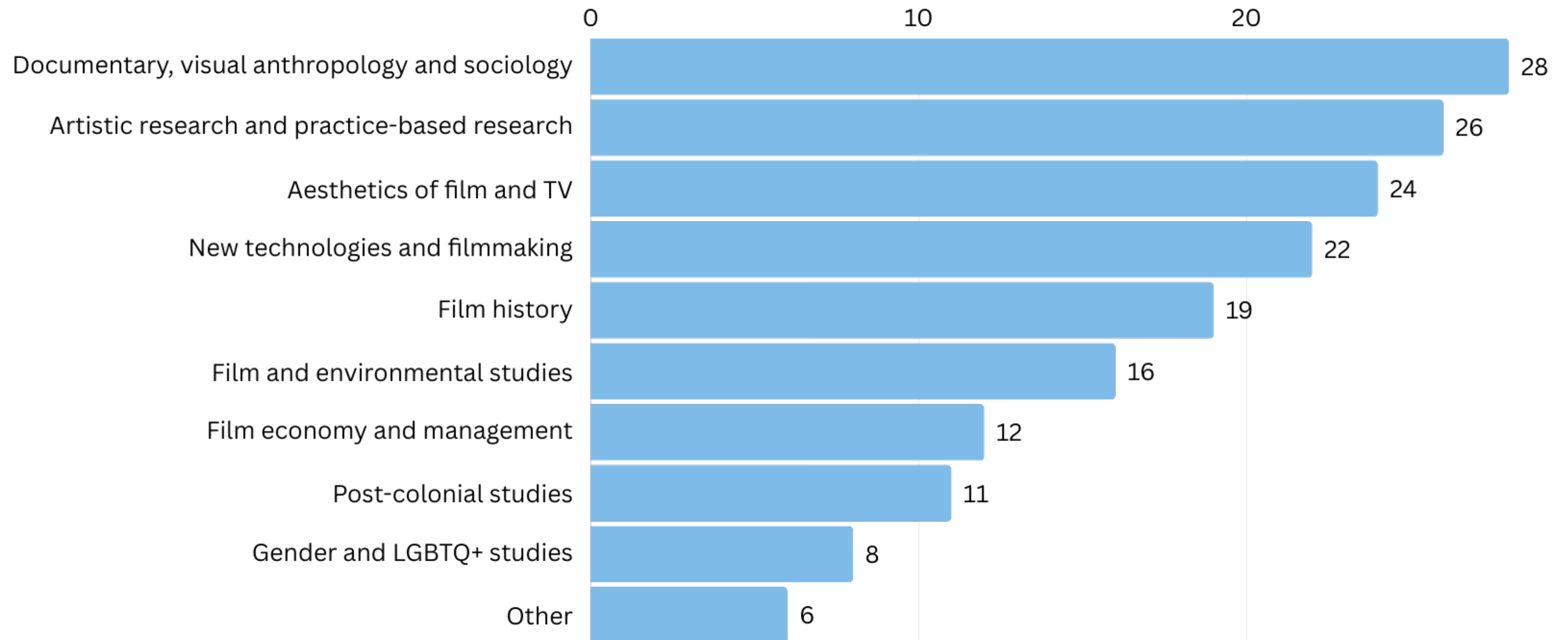
Types of funding

Most funding is project-based.
Private funding is surprisingly low.



Typology of research fields

Which fields are covered by research activities carried out in your school? (multiple choice)



Example of a research specific Master's program: Master's in Creative technologies - University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF

Origin/ Focus

- Rooted in **technologies**, designed for artists
- Emphasis on **industry collaboration** from early project stages
- Opportunities for research-driven work during classes and dedicated modules

Participants

- **Master's students** and **active researchers**
- Academic staff in funded projects
- **Collaboration** across artists, technologists & industry professionals

Activities/ Opportunities

- **Small-scale research**: audience studies, surveys, statistics
- **Independent modules**: develop topics and write papers
- Larger initiatives in emerging media and technology

Goal

- Foster **research-driven artistic innovation**
- Equip students with skills in research, production and industry collaboration

Comparative Results – 2015 vs. 2025

2015

- Artistic research gaining **recognition**, especially in **Northern Europe**
- New **PhD / Doctoral** formats emerging (often practice-based, experimental)
- National policies and programmes still funding and supporting **artistic research**
- Stronger links between research and pedagogy: labs, workshops, innovation projects
- Main challenges: **lack of staff/time, sometimes unclear funding models, academic validation**

Now

- Formal PhD programmes established in several countries, **practice-based but institution-driven**
- National funding schemes reduced/ ended (i.e. Norway) → institutions finance their own doctoral tracks
- **Arts research categories downgraded** in funding systems (less per-student support i.e. Denmark)
- **Internationalisation** growing: Nordic alliances, Erasmus, AI & virtual production projects
- Tension between packed curricula / industry needs and research time for staff

Trend: **Shift from nationally supported experimentation to institutional autonomy and international networks, with both new opportunities and tighter resource constraints.**

Example of the Norwegian Film School

Film School Pedagogy – Then and Now

2015

- Fine Arts 3rd cycle (not considered PhD)
- National funding for artistic research
- 4-year renewable contracts → more stability
- Arts in top funding categories

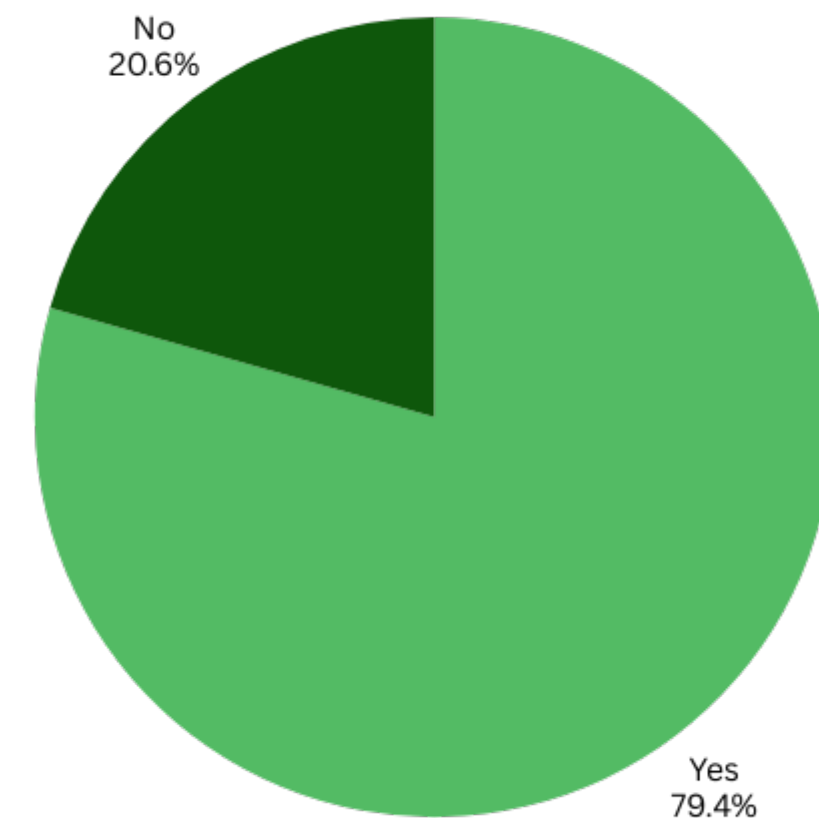
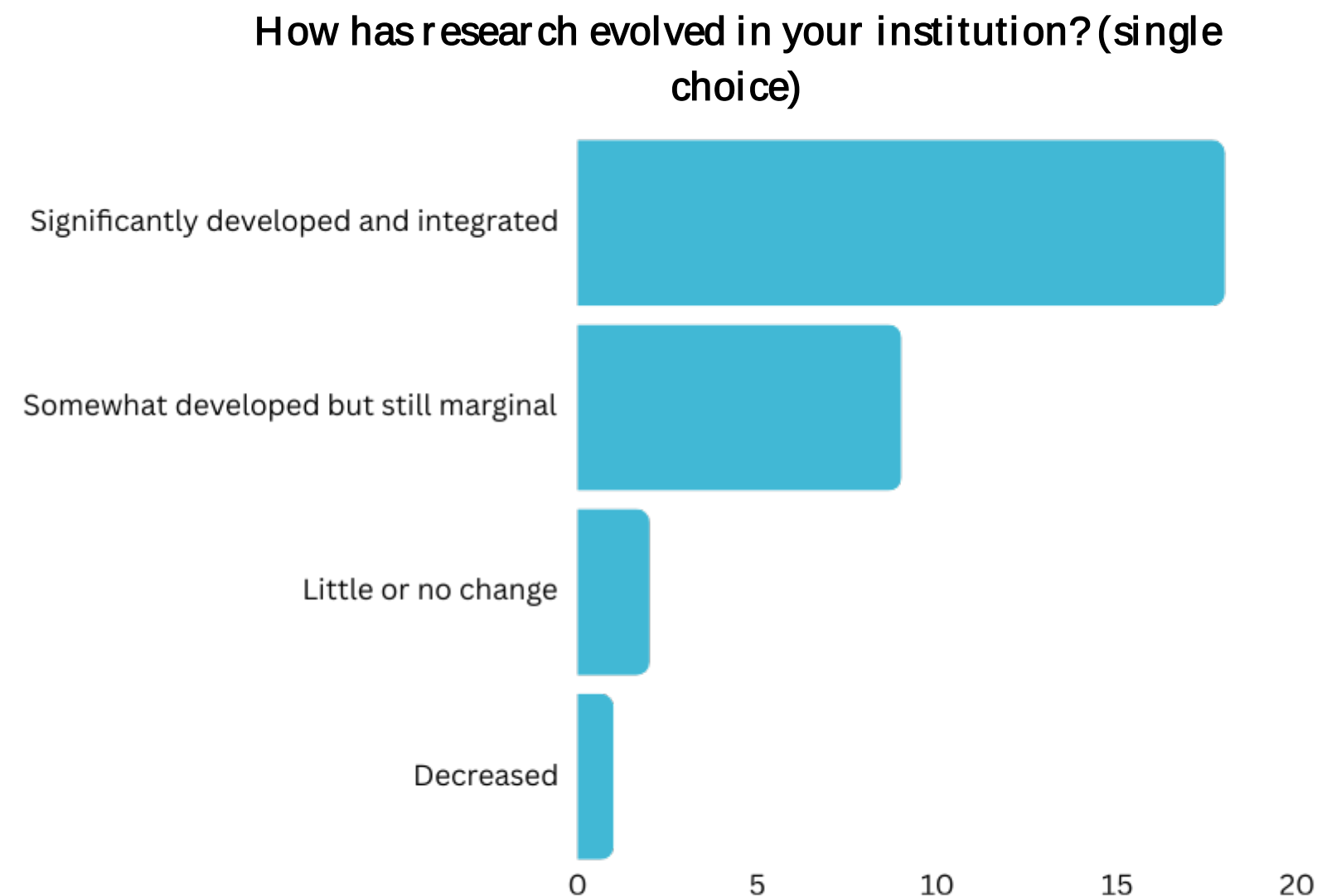
Now

- Formal PhD program (Film/ TV/ Games), practice-based
- Institutions must self-fund research (national scheme ended)
- Move towards permanent positions, but fewer with PhD background
- Arts downgraded in funding system (–60–70%)
- Curriculum more packed (3-year vs 4-year Danish model), less time for research

Trend: From nationally supported to open to institution-driven to resource-limited

2025 : Perception of 10-year evolution of research

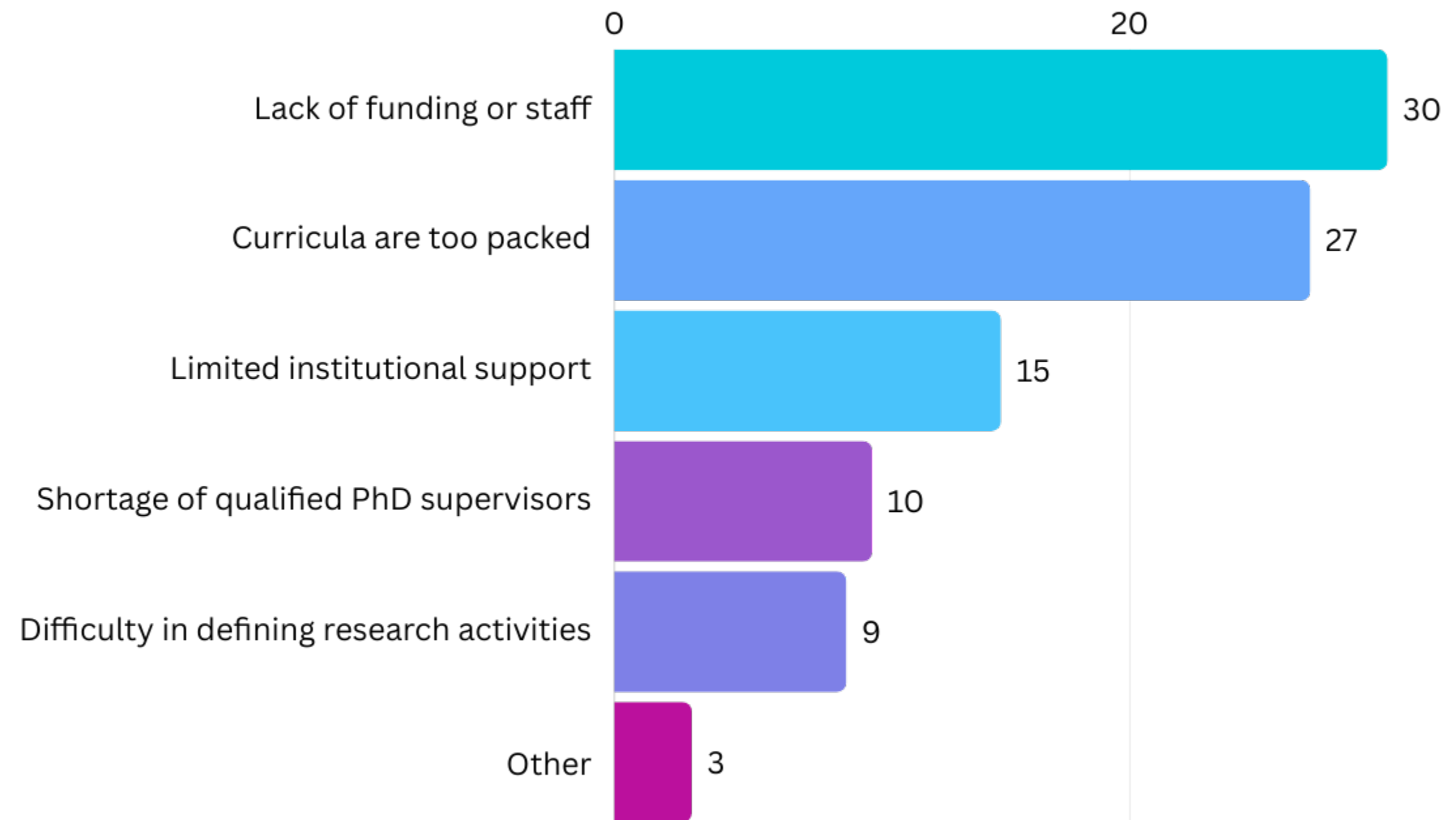
Does your institution currently lead research projects? (single choice)



Obstacles to conducting research activities

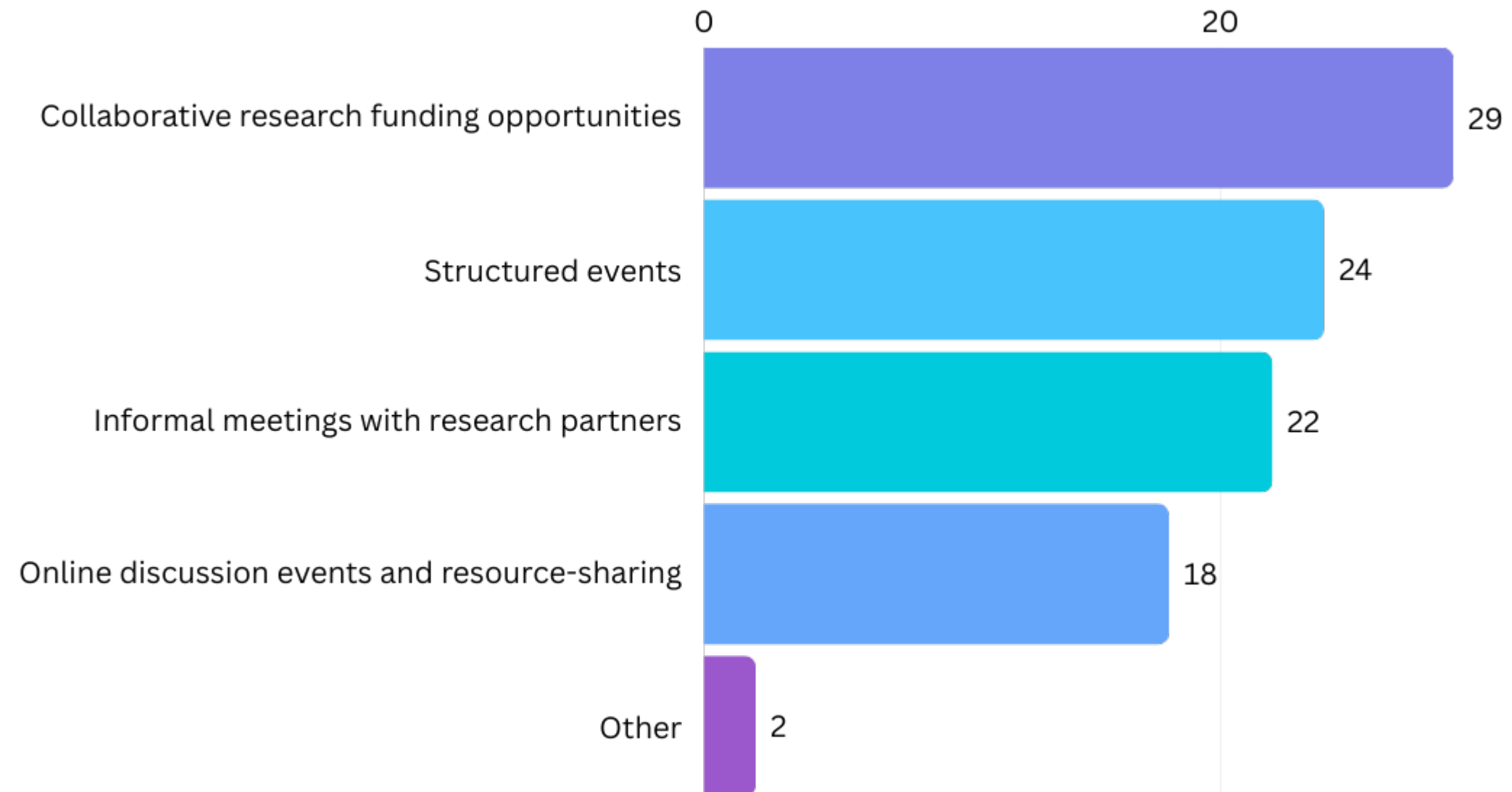
Available funding and staff are deemed insufficient. Practical training tends to come first in curricula.

What are the main obstacles you face in conducting research activities? (multiple choice)



Networking opportunities

What type of networking opportunities would you find most valuable? (multiple choice)



More international exchange in research and opportunities for networking are needed.
There is a strong desire for greater collaboration across institutions.

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Thank You