



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO  
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

# **JYU.Well** **interdisciplinary** **group peer mentoring**

Staff Week workshop 2026

Thursday 11.6.2026

# What are we talking about today



- Some history and principles of interdisciplinary peer mentoring
- Learnings from the earlier mentoring activities
- Good practices of mentoring
- Experiences from participants
  - Mentors: Dave Sayers and Jutta Viinikainen
  - Mentees: Patti Nijhuis,
- Discussion and questions



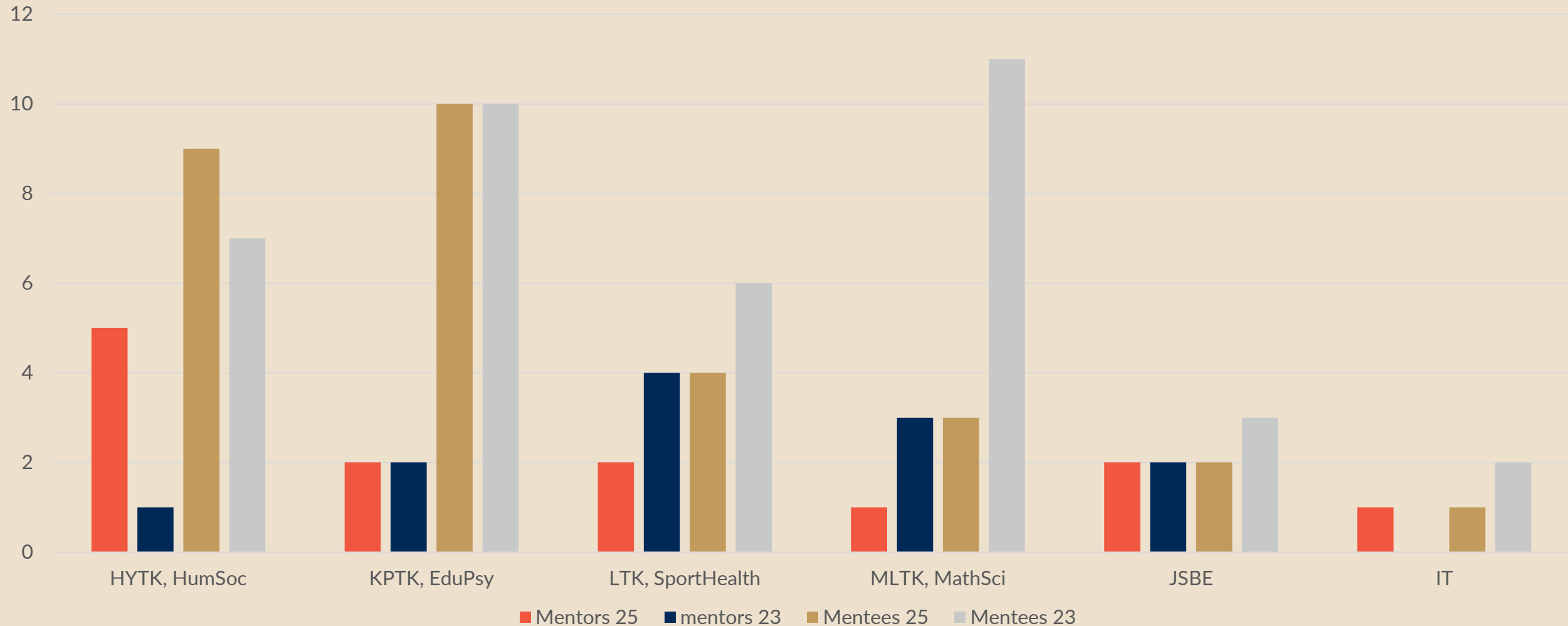
# Hieman historiaa / Short history



- **2015:** Idea and from University pedagogical studies (APO, Johanna Kiili & Terhi Nokkala) with first trial group
- **2017-2018:** Steps to multidisciplinary
  - Mentoring linked to University's strategy
  - 4 mentors, 8 doctoral students => 2 groups
- **2020-2021:** Larger and more effective
  - 10 mentors, 17 doctoral students => 5 groups
- **2023-2024:** JYU.Well and post doctoral researchers as target group
  - 14 mentors, 35 (28) mentees => 7 groups
- **2024-2025:** Open discussion events about popular themes from mentoring:
  - Future planning and requirements that researchers have to live with
  - Balance between work and personal life
  - Uncommon topics and disappointments
  - Integration and sense of community in the university
- **2025-2026:** JYU.Well post-doctoral mentoring
  - 12 mentors, 29 mentees = 6 groups



# Mentors and mentees in the programme



# JYU.Well peer mentoring principles

## GUIDELINES

- Each small group has
  - **two mentors**, who are more experienced research and teaching staff
  - **5-7 mentees** / post-doctoral researchers from various faculties.
- The mentors will not be not be supervisors, project leaders or line managers for any of the mentees in the group.
- Formed groups are be supported by
  - an **orientation meeting**
  - by providing help at the start of the mentoring groups
  - a joint **mid-term meeting** of mentors in January
  - and whenever asked!
- Mentors will be able to allocate around 20 hours/year to their workplans to this task.
- Minimum of 4 group meetings during the academic year



# Hieman oppeja / What we have learnt



- Effective enhancement of multidisciplinary perspectives
  - New places on campus, new people from different scientific fields, similarities in academic work
  - Methodological tips, techniques, tactics
- Practical tips, and new viewpoints, learning from each other's experiences
  - Funding, work-life balance, networking, planning of researcher's career, time management, teaching tips
  - Disappointments and tough times as part of everyone's career and how to deal with them
- Worklife in (Finnish) academia
  - Things that are not often said out loud, tacit knowledge, communication in various forms within and outside work.
  - Goal setting and career options in the future
- Relaxed atmosphere
  - No competition, no supervision or needs to present results, inclusivity
  - Friends, fun and free flowing discussions
- Cultural integration
  - Get to know researchers from Finland and other exotic countries
  - Created ties also outside University community (off campus life)



# Variety of topics – decided among the groups members

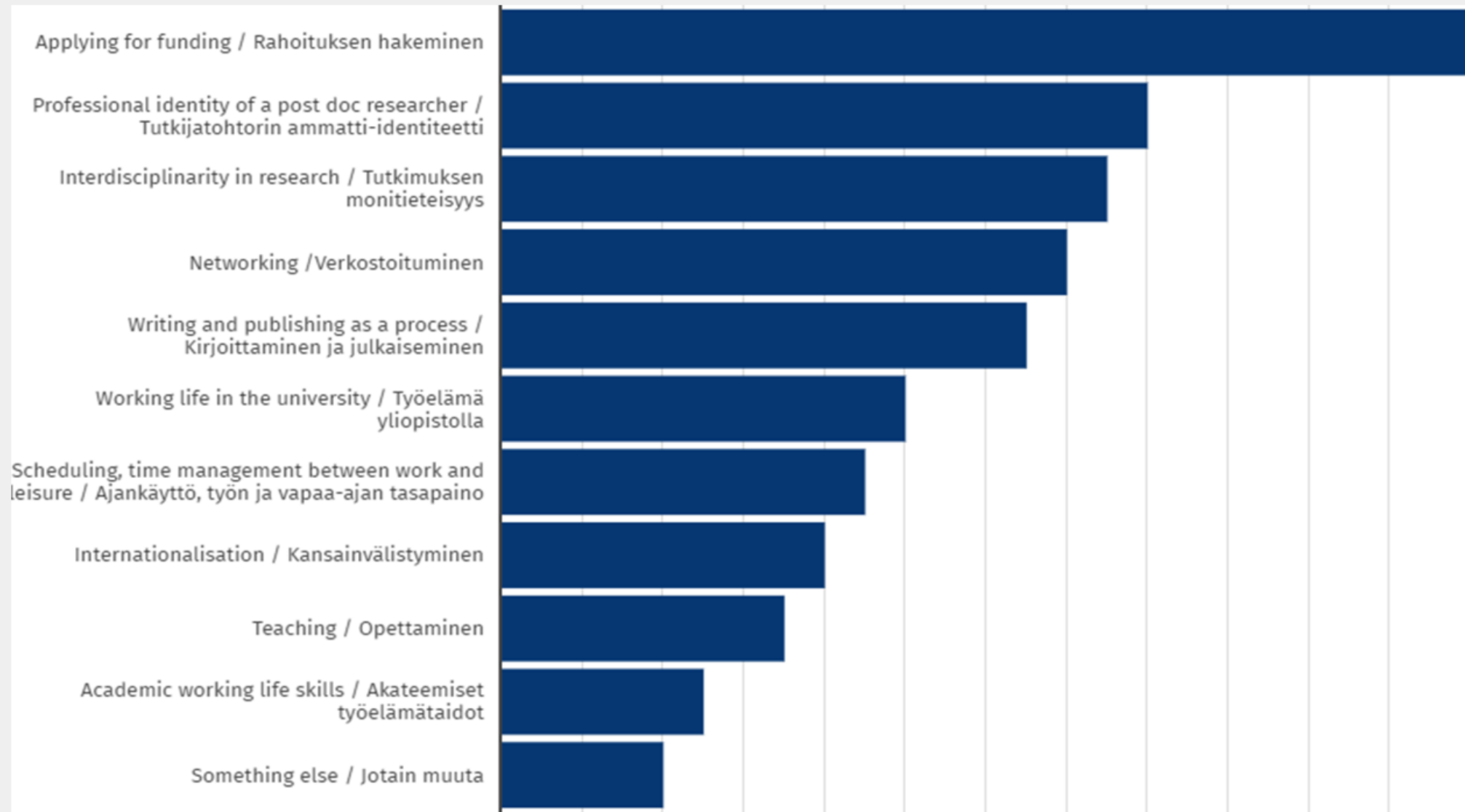


- Funding
- Research skills
- Guidance skills
- Leadership
- Network skills
- Career guidance
- Academia
- Wellbeing
- Communal impact
- Professional identity
- Interdisciplinarity
- Writing and publishing
- Scheduling, time management
- Internationalisation
- Teaching
- Academic working life skills
- Disappointments
- Artificial Intelligence and its usage
- Balance between work and leisure / recovery
- and whatever you choose!!

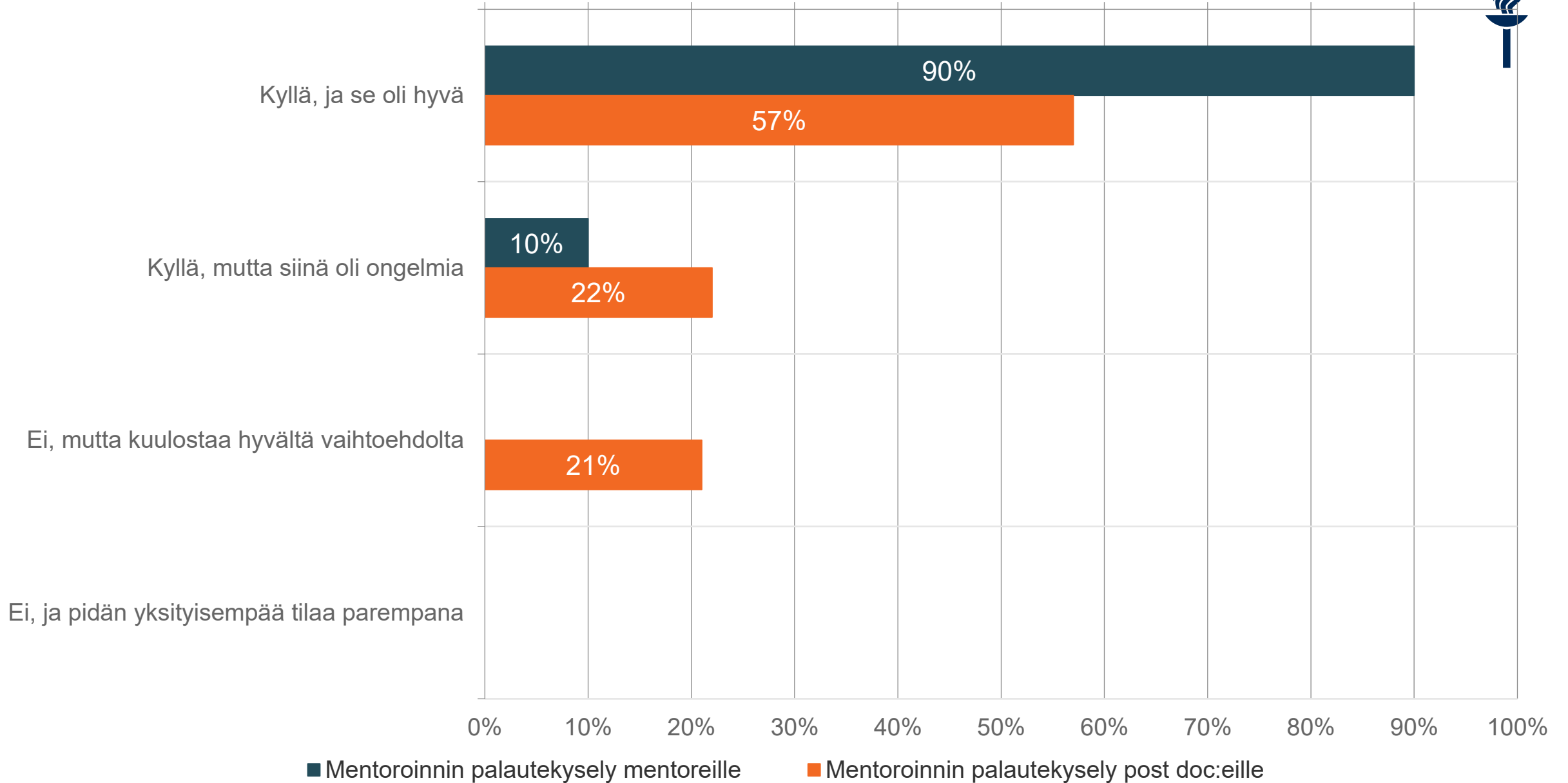




# Themes of interest among the mentees



## Did you have meetings in variable places / faculties?



## POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

The group support and guidance

Sharing and learning new ideas and expertise

Making a positive impact, giving back to the academic community

Interesting and useful

Multidisciplinary and different career stages

Universal & important topics

Support and encouragement

New perspectives and ideas

## CHALLENGING ISSUES

Group's bonding was difficult, not everyone was committed

Usage of time equally among participants

Variety of expectations concerning mentoring

Hard to relate on some of the topics that were important to some group members

Hard not find concrete solutions to the problems addressed



# Group discussion

- Have you participated in mentoring?
- Would mentoring be valuable for you in supporting your work?
- How to make sure that everyone is heard equally in the group?
- How to deal with issues and topics that do not have one or correct answer?
- What issues would you like to discuss in a confidential group, consisting of people from variety backgrounds in academia?
  - Researchers from variety of faculties
  - Administrational staff from variety of teard
- How about combining researchers and administrational staff?

