

# UK TRIAL MANAGERS' NETWORK

Enabling excellence for trial management professionals through learning and knowledge sharing



University of  
**Nottingham**  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA



## JOB FAMILY SURVEY

As part of UKTMN's ongoing commitment to improving professional development opportunities for trial managers, we investigated people's views on the current career pathways / job families for trial management professionals based in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The specialist role of a trial manager is hybrid and doesn't naturally fit with either the professional services or research job family.

We conducted two online surveys in June 2022: (i) to all UKTMN members who work in an HEI, and (ii) to all UKCRC-registered Clinical Trials Units (CTUs), via Directors. Not all UKTMN members in HEIs are based in CTUs.

Job titles vary hugely across institutions. We chose to define trial management roles in the following way:

### Trial Assistant / Administrator

Provides admin support to the trial

### Trial Coordinator

Provides support to trial manager(s)

### Trial Manager

Day-to day management of  $\geq 1$  trials, possibly with line management responsibility

### Senior Trial Manager

Oversees activities across portfolio of trials, provides guidance, manages trial manager(s)

Job family/pathways vary in name across HEIs. For the survey, we defined as follows:

- Professional Services/Administrative/Managerial
- Research and Teaching/Academic
- Unknown
- Other



[www.tmn.ac.uk](http://www.tmn.ac.uk)



[uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk)



[@UKTMN](https://twitter.com/UKTMN)

# UK TRIAL MANAGERS' NETWORK



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA



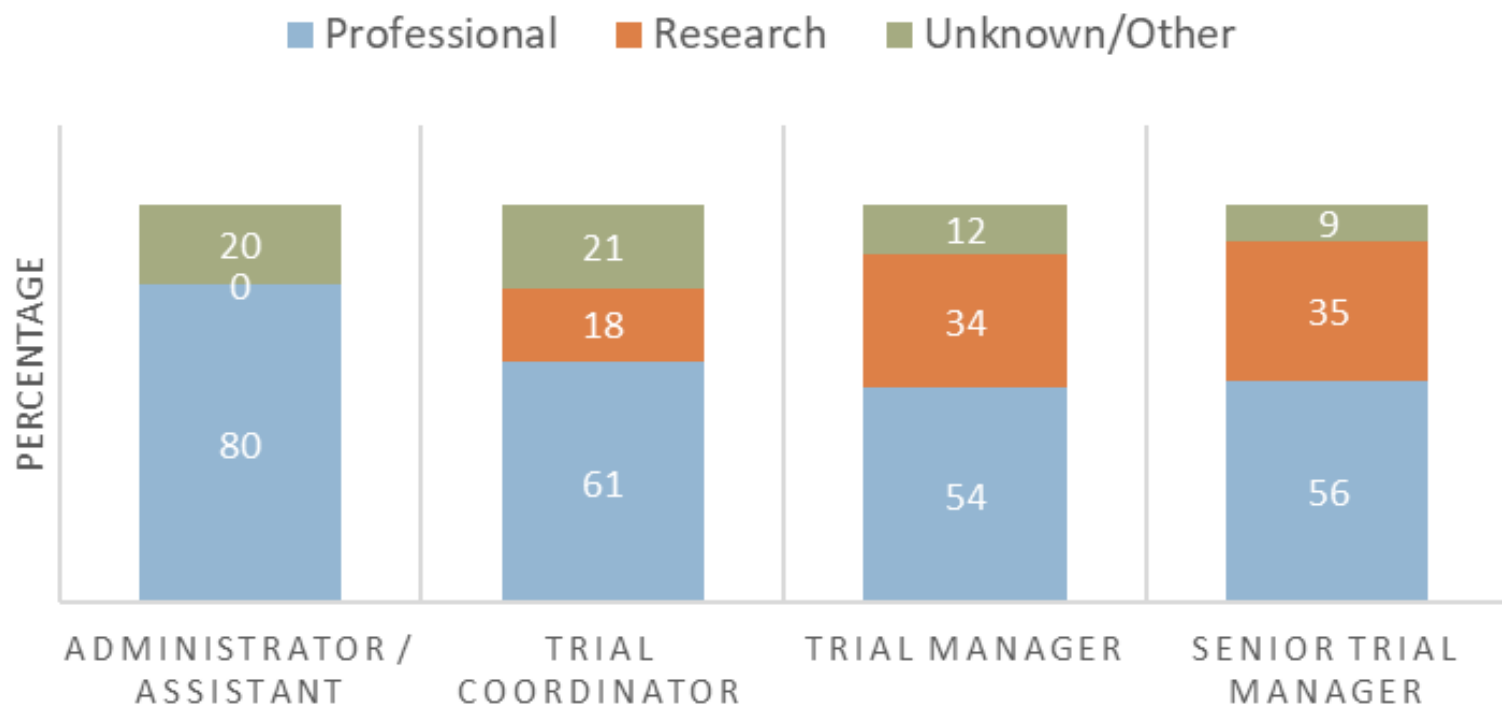
## What did we find?

324/890 (36%) of UKTMN members based in HEIs responded and 30/52 (58%) of UKCRC-registered CTUs responded.

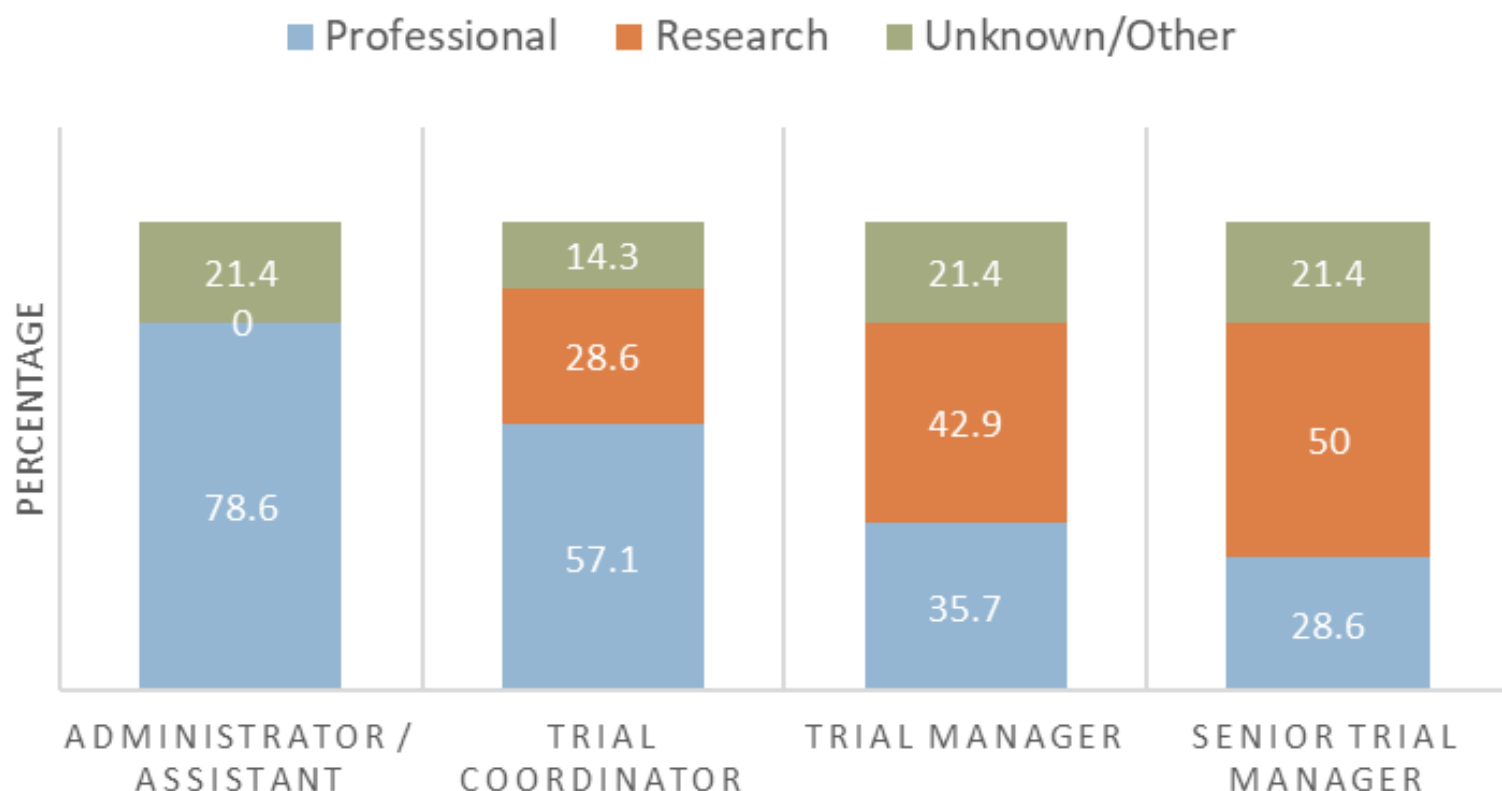
Figure 1 reports the job family self-reported by UKTMN members, presented by role.

Figure 2 reports the job family reported by CTUs, presented by role.

### Figure 1: Job family self-reported by UKTMN members



### Figure 2: Job family reported by CTUs



[www.tmn.ac.uk](http://www.tmn.ac.uk)



[uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk)



@UKTMN

# UK TRIAL MANAGERS' NETWORK



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

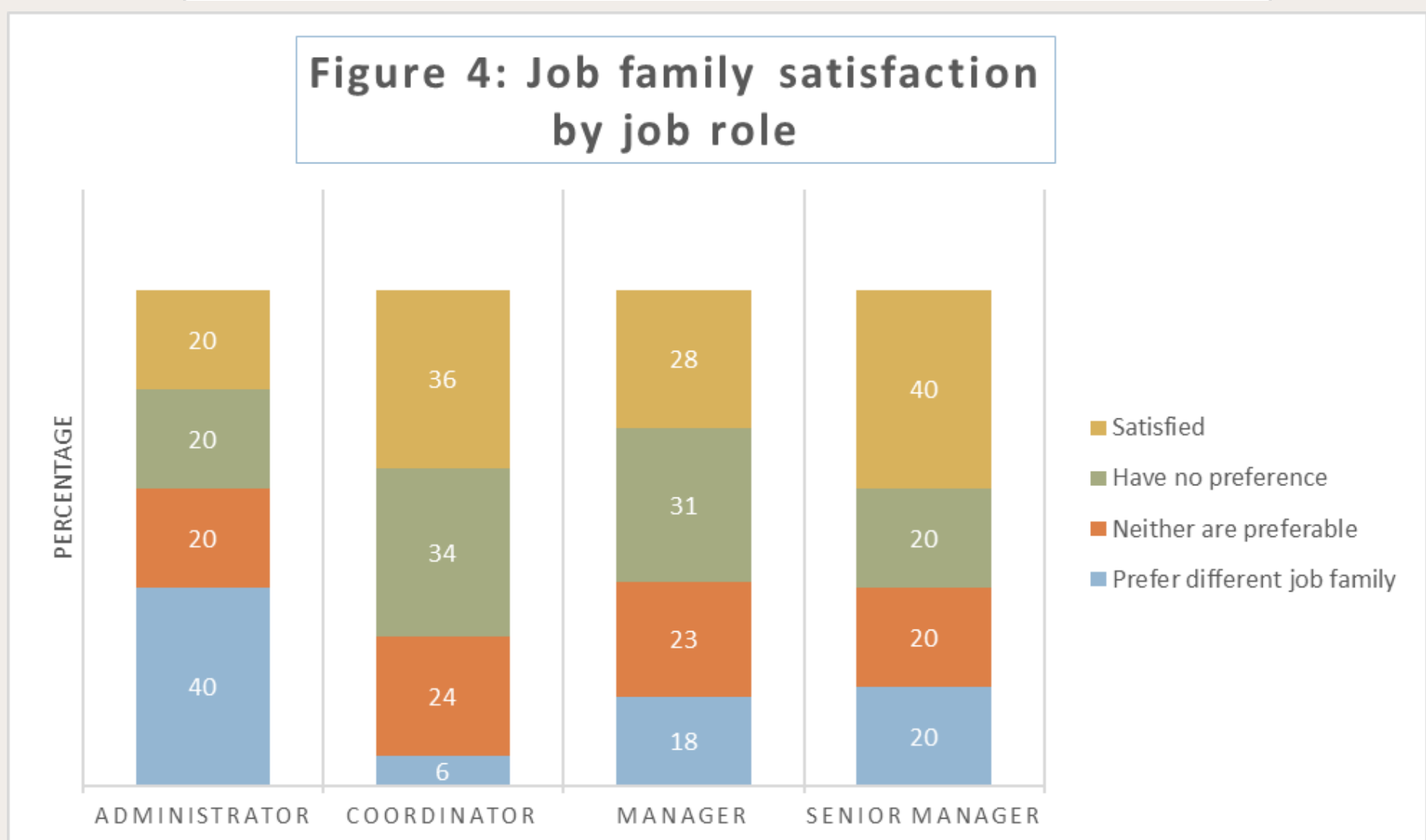
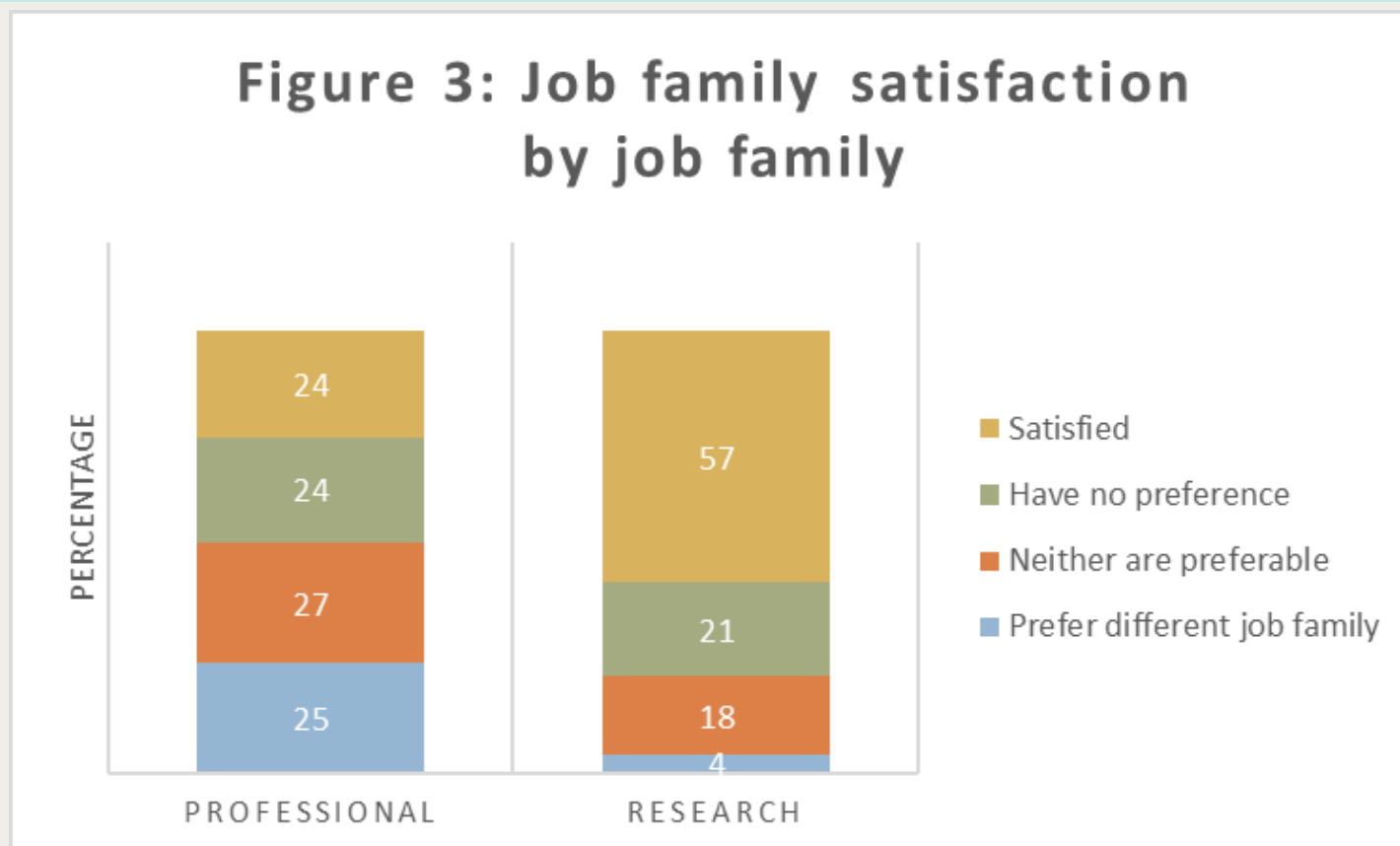


We asked UKTMN members how satisfied they were with their current job family/pathway.

Figure 3 reports job family satisfaction, according to job family.

Figure 4 reports job family satisfaction, according to job role.

(Please note that the 'Administrator' category comprised a very small sample)



[www.tmn.ac.uk](http://www.tmn.ac.uk)



[uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk)



@UKTMN

# UK TRIAL MANAGERS' NETWORK



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA



## CHOICE OF PATHWAY BY CLINICAL TRIALS UNITS

CTUs reported using both pathways, with more senior staff tending to be employed on the research pathway. The reasons for CTUs selecting a specific career pathway broadly fell into four categories:

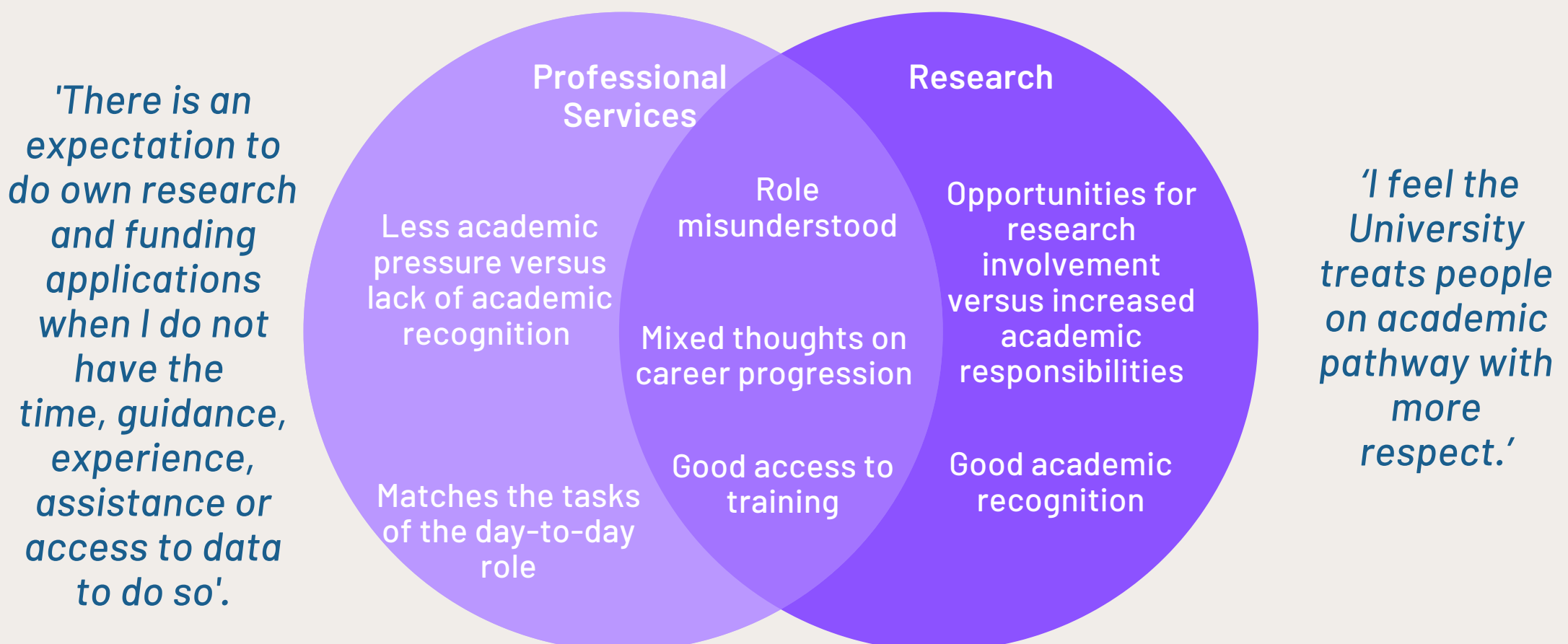
- it was a university requirement / precedence of previous similar posts,
- to enable career progression,
- the pathway fulfilled the requirements of the role of trial manager,
- financial considerations (e.g. research, but not professional services, pathway attracted institutional indirect costs in grant costings).

Some CTUs reported that trial managers could be hired on either pathway, depending on the individual's career aspirations, and that appointing on a professional services pathway enabled switching to an academic pathway at a later date, if desired.

Nine CTUs (9/37, 24%) reported that an alternative pathway was being investigated (n=6), implemented (n=1) or had been implemented (n=2). This is interesting to note as talk of an alternative career pathway that more accurately reflects the specialist and technical nature of trial management roles is gaining momentum.

## Advantages and disadvantages

We asked what trial management professionals thought are the advantages and disadvantages of being employed within the Professional Services and Research job families. Responses very clearly illustrated that there is no one-size-fits-all.



[www.tmn.ac.uk](http://www.tmn.ac.uk)



[uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk)



@UKTMN

# UK TRIAL MANAGERS' NETWORK



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA



## What does all this mean?

Everyone is an individual – some people are happy with their current pathway, others would prefer a different pathway. Both pathways have advantages and disadvantages, but what is an advantage to one person, is a disadvantage to another. What is clear, however, is that, many trial management professionals would prefer to be employed on the other currently available pathway or employed on an alternative 'third' pathway. This applied to between 30 and 60% of respondents, depending upon role.

Regardless of the job family, it is crucial that trial managers are recognised for the specialist skills they hold, and that opportunities are created to ensure their career development. UKTMN will continue to advocate for change and recognition of the vital role that these professionals play in the UK clinical research landscape.

We encourage ongoing discussion to help organisations make a considered choice when selecting career pathways for trial management professionals. If considered for promotion, we believe trial managers should be assessed against criteria that are fit for purpose for their role, as opposed to criteria developed for traditional academic roles.

In February 2023, The University of Liverpool launched an alternative career pathway that could be appropriate for trial managers, called The Research Technical Professional (RTP) career pathway. This is for people with specialist skills, from a research, technical or management perspective, but who are not academics nor lead investigators.

In addition, many universities are signatories to the Technician's Commitment, which "aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research across all disciplines". Many of the structural barriers to professional development faced by trial managers are consistent with those faced by technicians. We would therefore urge universities signed up to this Commitment to ensure this is translated across a wide range of specialist roles, including trial managers.

If you have a story to share about your own professional development or developments in your university, please get in touch!



[www.tmn.ac.uk](http://www.tmn.ac.uk)



[uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:uktmn@nottingham.ac.uk)



[@UKTMN](https://twitter.com/UKTMN)