

## Status of the study

This spring, we conducted the monitoring survey with the CTC-19, CTC-20, and CTC-21 cohorts. A total of 1379 individuals participated, and we extend our sincere gratitude to each participant. Concurrently, we have been finalizing the datasets and documentation for all the surveys conducted in 2023, preparing them for publica-

tion. Researchers interested in accessing the scientific use files can apply through [SWISSUBase](#). For more updates, please see our news on the [CTC website](#). Additionally, the SNSF has launched a [fundamental review](#) of funding for early-career scientists for which findings from the CTC study are used.

## Changes in working conditions during and after the pandemic

### Aim and data basis of this newsletter

In 2021, we introduced new questions to our monitoring survey to better understand how the pandemic-induced measures have impacted working conditions over time. In this newsletter, we delve into these survey items, offering descriptive analyses on various aspects. We explore the evolving dynamics of working from home, the shifting landscape of workplace environments, and the trends in academic mobility. By examining these critical areas, we aim to provide valuable insights into how the pandemic has reshaped the professional lives of our respon-

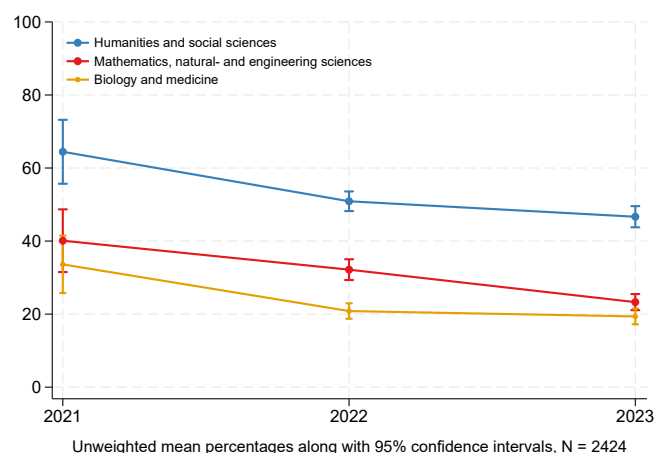
dents. The following analyses are based on survey data from 2021, 2022, and 2023. All cohorts (CTC-18, CTC-19, CTC-20, CTC-21) are included in the analyses. It should be noted that the data from fall 2021 only covers one cohort (CTC-18; N = 200-255), whereas all study cohorts are considered in 2022 and 2023. The most drastic changes probably took place immediately during and after the introduction of the pandemic measures in spring 2020, such as travel restrictions, prioritizing work from home, and limited social gatherings.

### Trends in remote work post-pandemic

In fall 2021, approximately one and a half years into the pandemic, survey participants reported spending an average of 41% of their work time at home. By 2023, this percentage decreased to 29%. During this period, women (2021: 45%; 2023: 31%) consistently worked from home more frequently than men (2021: 44%; 2023: 27%) and parents (2021: 46%; 2023: 31%) more often than those without children in the household (2021: 44%; 2023: 27%). The differences are statistically significant between men and women ( $p < 0.001$ ) and parents versus those without children ( $p < 0.001$ ) in 2023. Differences were also observed across research domains. Researchers in the humanities and social sciences had the highest percentage of remote work in 2021 (64%), compared to those in mathematics, natural and engineering sciences (40%), and biology and medicine (34%). This is possibly due to differences in workplace infrastructure

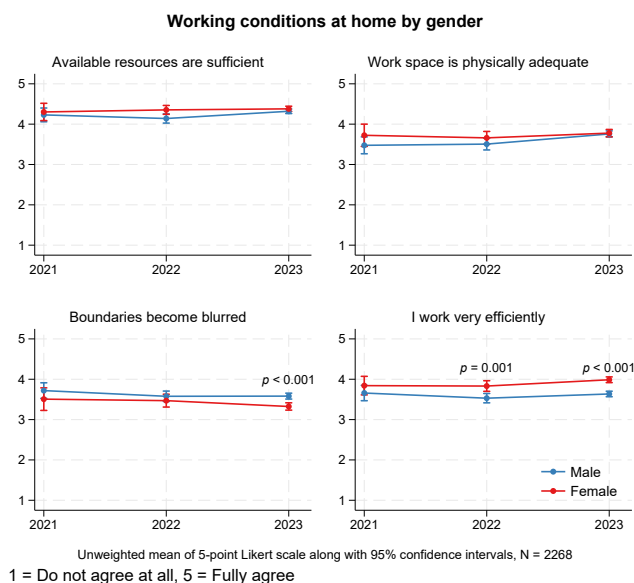
and requirements. While the share of remote work decreased overall in the subsequent two years, the gap between disciplines remained.

Mean percentage of working at home



## High satisfaction with working conditions at home

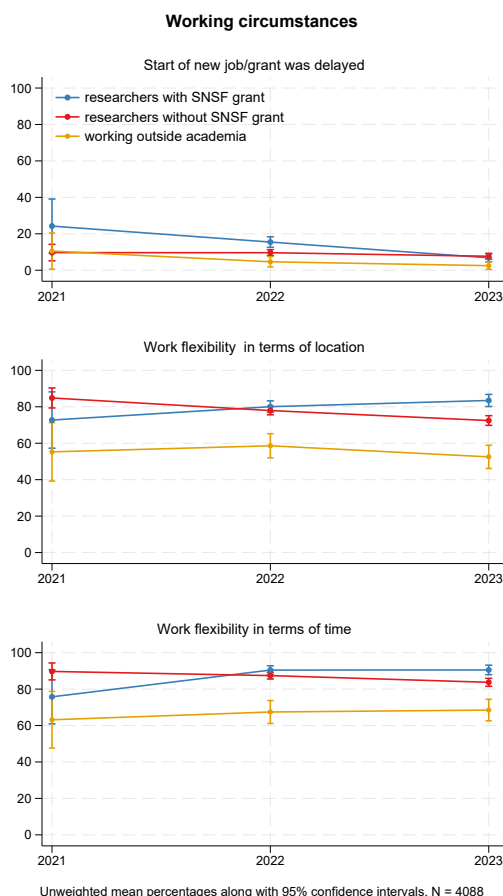
Analyses of participants' assessments of their working conditions while working from home reveal a high level of satisfaction with the equipment (e.g., phone, internet) already in 2021. The physical adequacy of their workspaces slightly – but statistically insignificantly – improved, such as space and ergonomics (2021: 3.6; 2023: 3.8). Over the observed period, women are slightly more able than men to maintain boundaries between work and private life when working from home (2021: 3.5; 2023: 3.3). In 2023, the difference of 0.26 points is statistically significant. At the same time, women (2021: 3.8; 2023: 4.0) report a higher efficiency working from home compared to men (2021: 3.7; 2023: 3.6). From 2022, the gender difference is statistically significant.



## Working circumstances over time

In 2021, 24% of participants with an SNSF grant reported delays at the start of a new job or grant, and the share fell to 7% by 2023. In comparison, only 10% of researchers without an SNSF grant or working outside academia reported such delays in 2021. The overall work flexibility in terms of time has remained relatively constant, with 84% of respondents indicating they could work flexibly in terms of time in 2021 and 83% in 2023. On the other hand, the percentage of participants reporting that they could work flexibly in terms of location decreases from 77% in 2021 to 72% in 2023. This overall trend, however, does not apply to researchers with an SNSF grant, who report increasingly higher work flexibility in terms of time and location. For people working outside academia, flexibility in terms of time increases slightly and in terms of location decreases slightly.

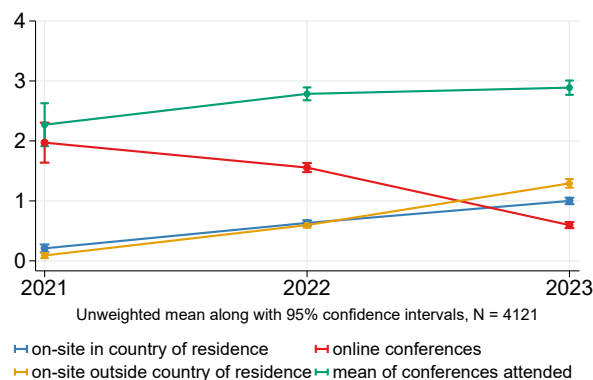
Further, incidents of delays and interruptions in research projects have decreased significantly, with 32% of participants reporting such incidents in 2021 compared to 17% in 2023. Additionally, fewer participants have reported shortages in material supply (20% in 2021 vs. 11% in 2023). The number of participants experiencing delays in the review process has remained stable, suggesting that these processes were not significantly impacted by the pandemic in 2021. These developments are not shown in the chart on the right.



## A shift back to on-site conferences

Over the past three years, the study participants have been asked about the types of conferences they attended in the previous year. In 2021, participants reported attending an average of two online conferences. By 2023, this number had dropped to less than one per year. Meanwhile, a resurgence in on-site conference attendance is apparent. In 2021, nearly no on-site conferences were attended, but by 2023 participants reported attending more than two on-site conferences. Notably, the number of conferences attended outside the country of residence has increased. Overall, the average number of conferences attended has slightly risen from an average of 2.3 in 2021 to nearly 2.9 in 2023.

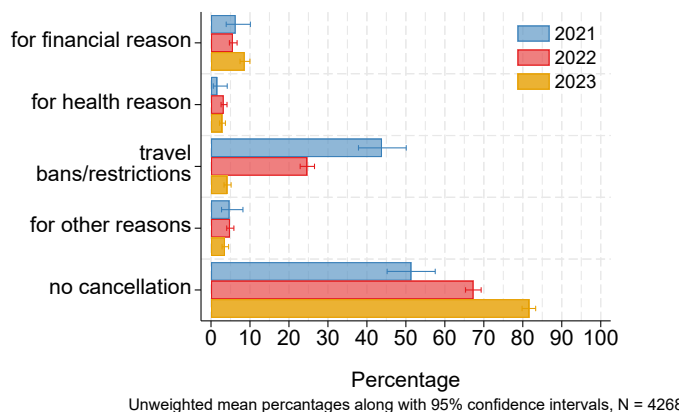
Average number of conference visits



## Decrease in research visit cancellations due to travel restrictions

The survey participants were also asked if they had to cancel any planned research visits and the reasons behind such cancellations. Data from 2021 to 2023 shows a marked drop in cancellations due to travel bans and restrictions: 44% of participants reported such cancellations of research visits in 2021, but only 4% experienced this in 2023. Cancellations of research visits due to financial reasons, health reasons, or other factors have remained relatively stable over the past three years. Consequently, the percentage of those who did not have to cancel any planned research visits has significantly increased from 51% in 2021 to 82% in 2023.

Reasons for cancellation of research visits



## Up next

In October, we will commence the next field phase and survey participants of the CTC-18, CTC-19, and CTC-20 cohorts. We highly appreciate all responses and thank our participants in advance. Currently we are exploring ways

to enrich CTC data with data from other sources. Additionally, we are creating a harmonised longitudinal data set to facilitate research on postdoctoral career pathways and obstacles therein.

## About

The Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC) project is hosted at the University of Bern and administered by the Interfaculty Centre for Educational Research (ICER) and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (ICFG). The CTC study is being conducted on behalf of the Swiss National Science

Foundation (SNSF). It is a longitudinal panel study with four cohorts (CTC-18 to CTC-21). It aims to track the career paths of researchers applying for SNSF career funding schemes at the postdoctoral level (Early Postdoc.Mobility, Postdoc.Mobility, Ambizione, Eccellenza, and PRIMA).

For more information see: <http://careertrackercohorts.ch/>

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