

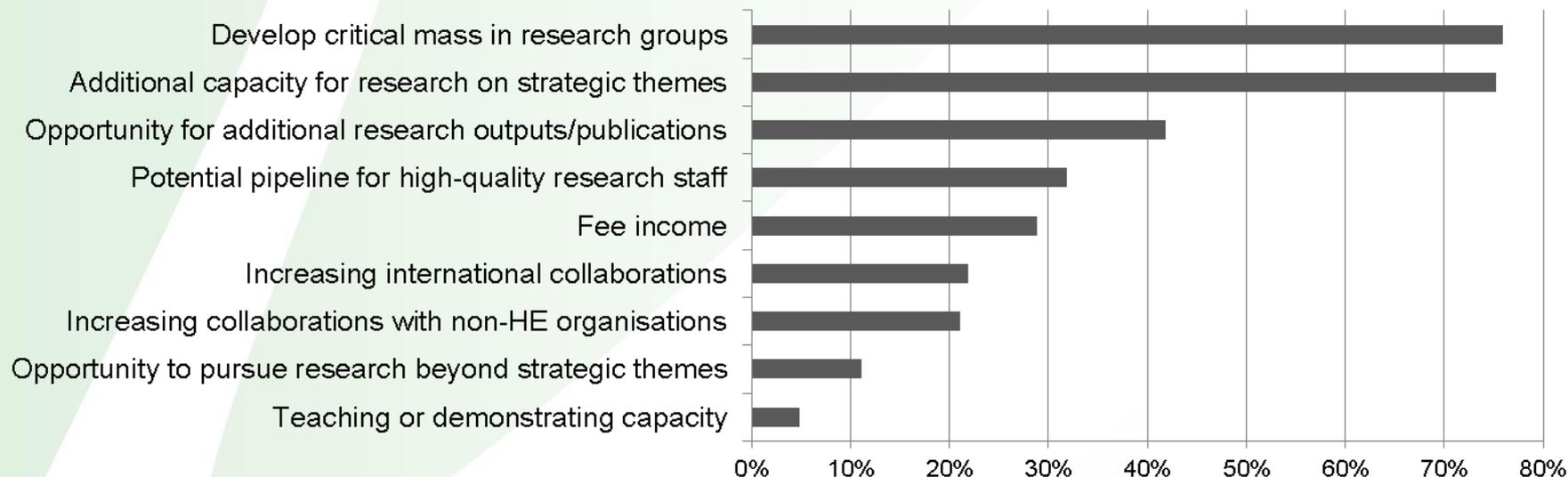
# Understanding the recruitment and selection of PGRs

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# Research

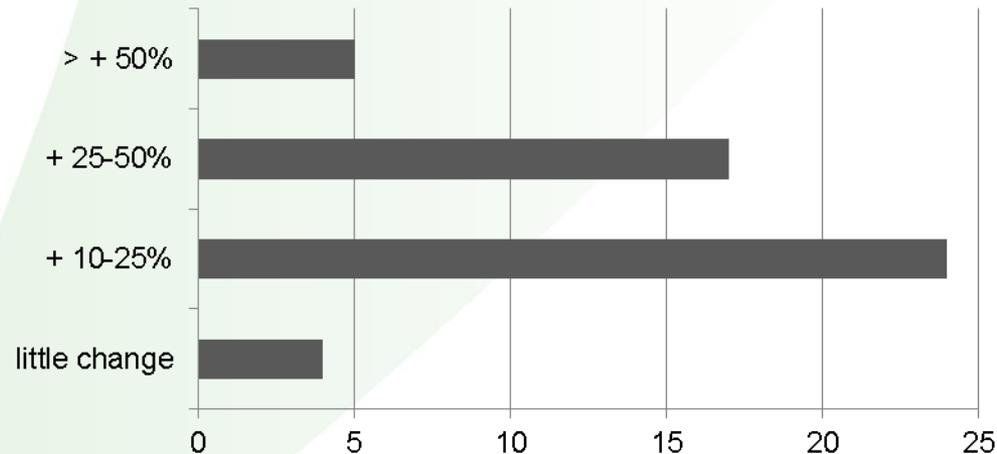
- ✔ Strategic - why do (English) HEIs recruit PGRs?
  - what are their aspirations/plans?
  - national trends?
- ✔ Practical - how do HEIs market programmes and attract PGRs?
  - how do they select between applicants?
  - what constitutes “high quality”?
- ✔ Themes - commonalities across disciplines/structures?
  - impact of recent policy developments (CDT/DTP)?
  - impact on participation? (and ‘widening’?)
- ✔ Evidence - 60 English ‘institutional’ survey responses
  - 11 in-depth case studies
    - 13/20 Russell Group
    - participating HEIs have about 2/3 of all active PGRs

# Why recruit PGRs?



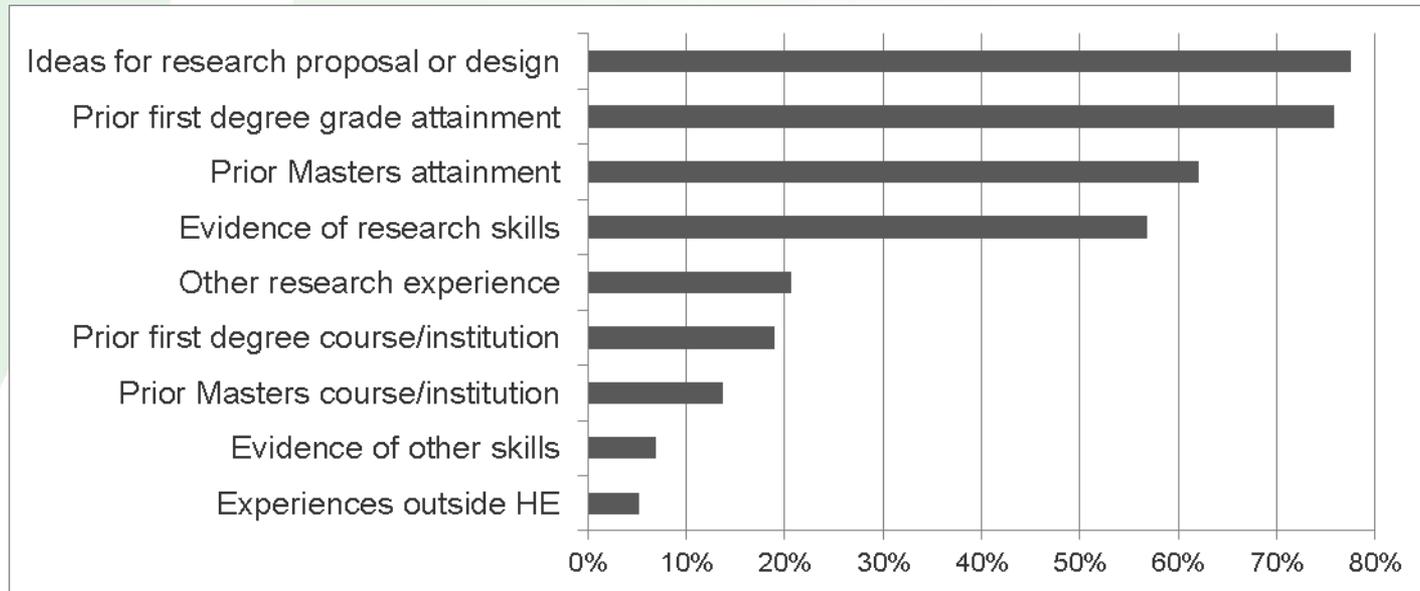
- Several of these rationales are REF-related factors
- >50 institutions (out of 60) explicitly mention PGRs within strategic priorities
- 'Engines of innovation' - industrial / collaborative research, higher risk projects

# Strategies for growth



- Most seek growth – approx. 5% per year overall – post-1992s most strongly
- Greatest growth expected in international (non-EU), but also UK, PGRs
- Few proactive/specific marketing strategies to deliver these intentions
- Internal constraints to growth:
  - funding (including issue of partial funding needs in CDT models)
  - supervisory capacity, accommodation, support
- Most expect *overall UK PGR provision to plateau or decrease*, as both UK and international PGR markets become more challenging

# Assessing quality



- Extremely diverse (devolved) landscape – most selection at dept/school level
- Increasing reliance upon PGT/masters as a differentiator, and evidence of research experience
- Personal attributes rarely assessed (*aptitude* for research?)
- (In some disciplines) importance of research idea and ‘supervisability’ may mitigate against those not currently in HE environment

# Emerging issues

## Funding and support

- Impact of CDT/DTP provision:
  - increases concentration of PGRs in research-intensive institutions
  - reduces ability for institutions to provide own PGR scholarships
- Some HEIs are tending to divert funds into PGT (to assure pipeline?)

## Growth and participation

- Expectations of individual growth within static/shrinking market – yet mostly reactive attraction strategies and little competitive intelligence
- Impact of UK HE policy changes
  - candidates at ‘later’ life stages?
  - more professional doctorates and ‘blended’ PGR study options?
  - possible ‘narrowing’ impact on participation?
- PGR experiences: stamina/resilience needed to get through recruitment processes, especially for those previously ‘unconnected’ to the HEI
- Few are collecting sufficient data on applicants to evaluate equity of access