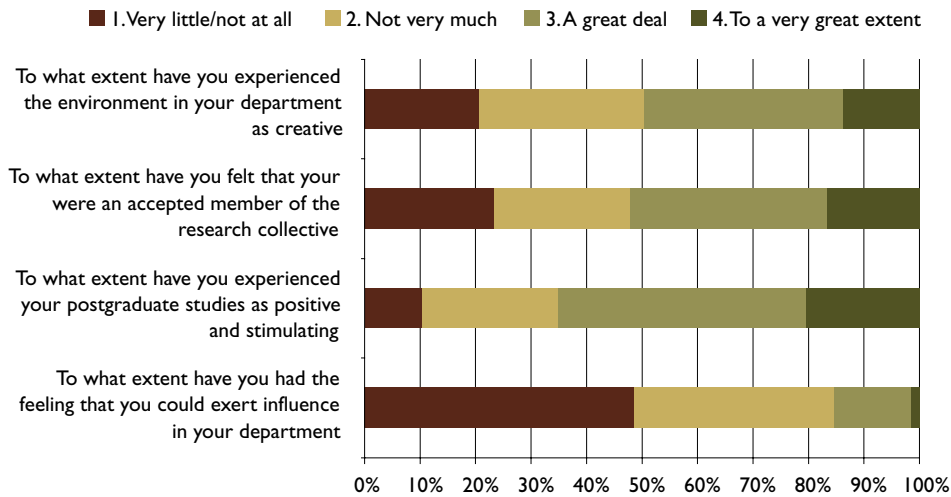


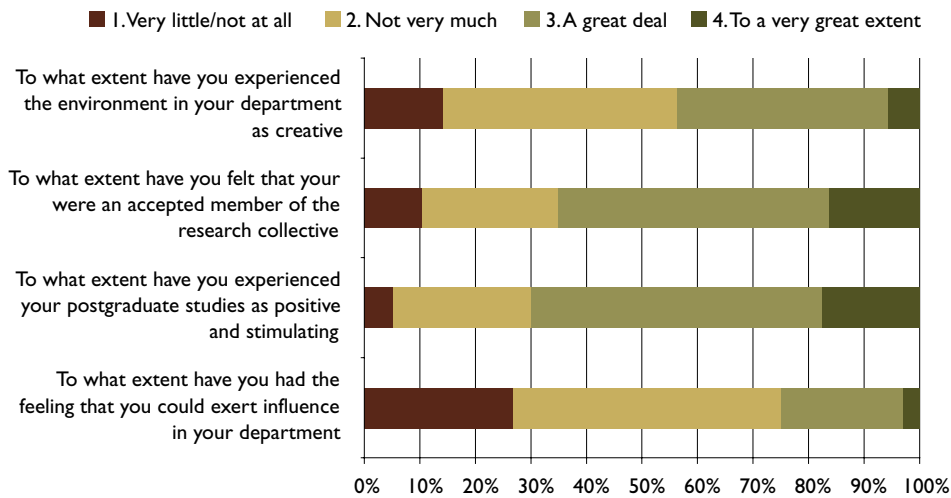
Study environments

The relationships between individuals sharing the same environment have a great deal of influence on how creative it will be considered as a workplace. A creative environment can in its turn provide a fertile and stimulating setting for postgraduate study. Influence can be a quality factor in many operational areas. The questions included in this dimensional index deal with the extent to which the postgraduate students experience their study environment as creative and feel accepted as members of the research community, whether their studies are positive and stimulating and how influence in their department functions (figure 32).

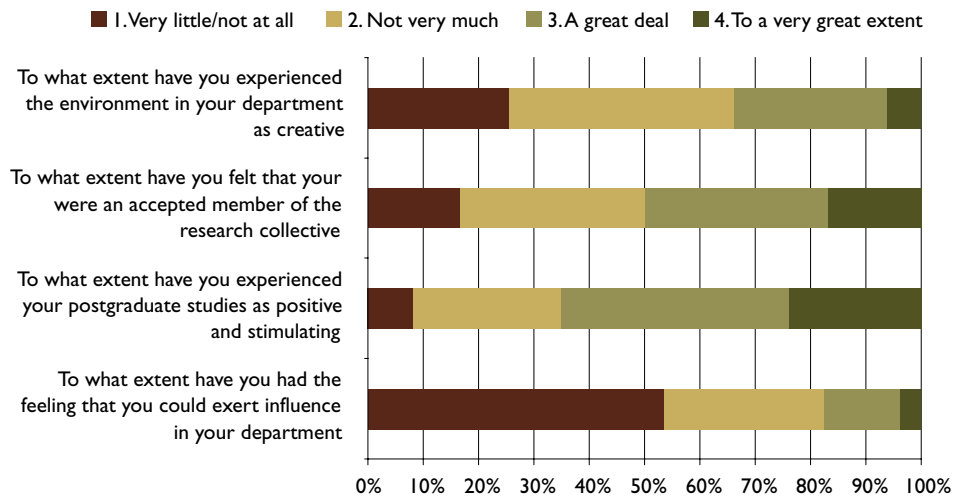
Catalonia



Finland



Ireland



Sweden

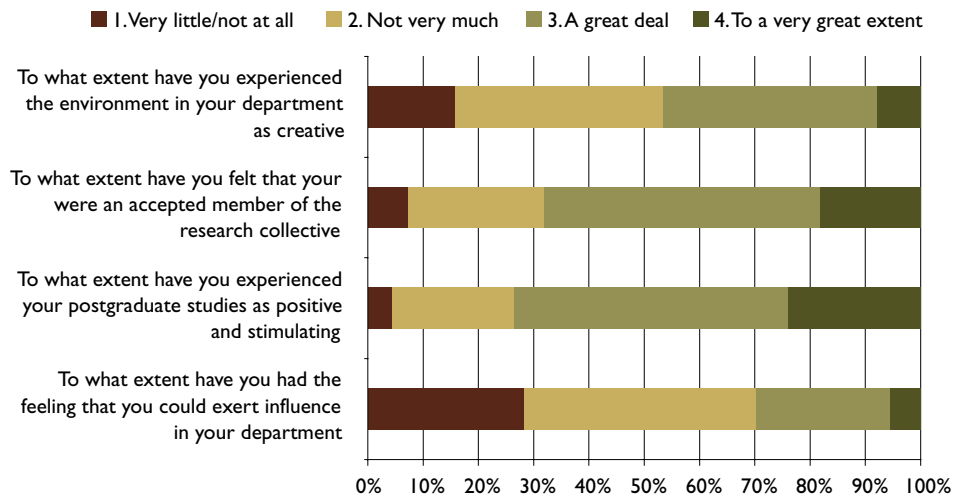


Figure 32. Study environments. Index items and distribution of responses by country.

The result shows that the majority of postgraduate students in all the countries feel that their studies are positive and stimulating and feel that they are accepted as members of the research collective (figure 33). The students in Catalonia and Ireland feel somewhat less accepted in this respect. Fewer than half of the postgraduate students experience the environment in their departments as creative, in Ireland the proportion is only one-third, even though doctoral students in Sweden and Finland report a markedly higher degree of influence.

In the Humanities and Art in Sweden and in Social sciences in Ireland the responses of the women tend to be somewhat less positive.

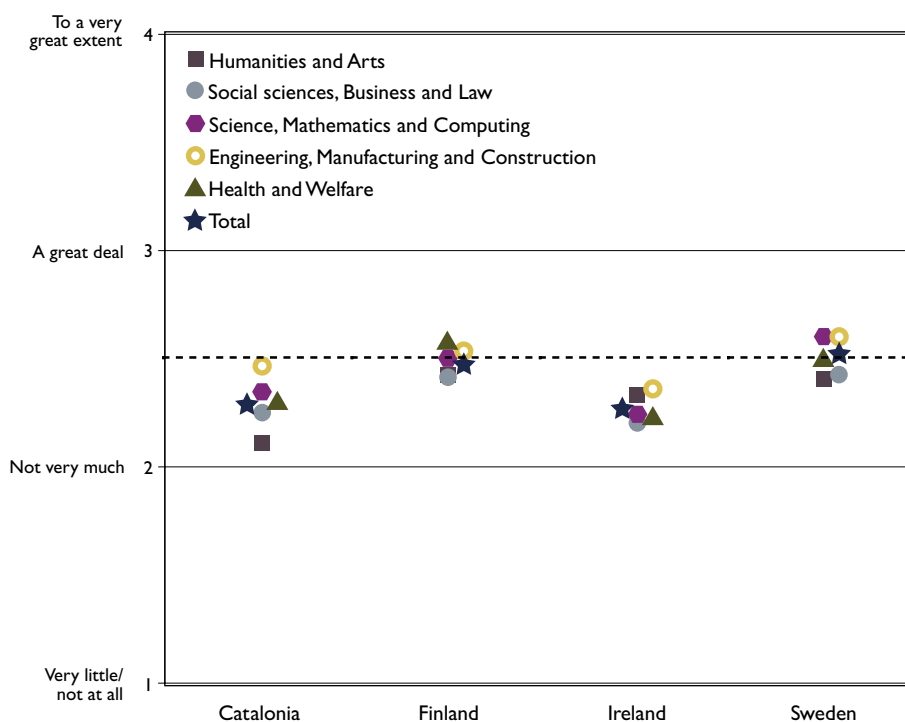


Figure 33. Study environments by country and subject field.

Ancillary questions

Stress, pressure and demands

Whether postgraduate students feel that the demands made of them are too high in relation to the length of the programme and whether they have negative experiences of stress and pressure were two questions that were posed in Sweden, Finland and Ireland. Three out of ten students in all three countries state that they have felt that postgraduate study has involved demands that were too high in relation to the length of their programmes. The proportion of affirmative responses to the question about negative experience of stress and pressure was particularly high in Sweden. Here nearly half of the students answered in the affirmative. In Finland the proportion is 33 % and in Ireland 38 %.

Comments

Even if the length of time students have been pursuing their postgraduate studies is taken into account, the same image emerges – the degree of influence they exert is felt to be low. Is this due to lack of opportunity, lack of interest from the students or is their position as students a real obstacle to genuine participation in the academic community?

Altogether the picture that develops of the conditions in which postgraduate students work gives rise to the feeling that their environment is demanding and that they are to some extent marginalised.