

# THE USER EXPERIENCE LANDSCAPE OF SOUTH AFRICA 2015

**A report by J. Hobbs, Dr. M. Pretorius & T. Fenn**

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# 1. ABOUT THE STUDY

## About the study

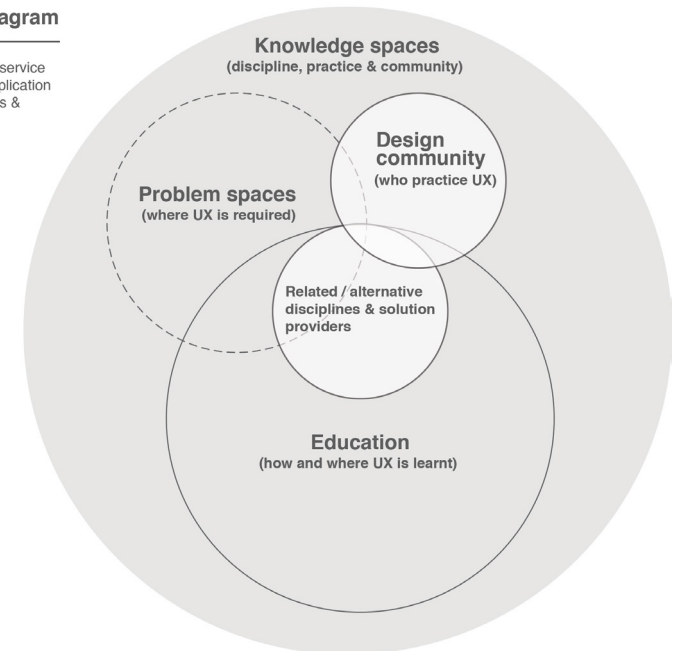
Early in 2014 the authors (Dr. M. Pretorius, J. Hobbs and T. Fenn) began discussing the relative maturity of the User Experience (UX) community in South Africa. Through this dialogue the idea emerged to explore the local field in greater depth with the aim of baselining its level of maturity.

The authors conceptualised the field as combining:

- Those who require UX for the effective delivery of their products or services. These could include businesses, government, non-governmental or not-for-profit organisations, etc.
- Those organisations or individuals providing UX capability and skills. This includes UX practitioners, UX design firms, organisations with internal UX competence, related service providers (such as management and business consultancies, IT or software companies, marketing agencies and so on).
- The spaces where UX plays out, including the above, but also extending to educational, knowledge and community spaces.

### Draft UX ecosystem diagram

National level, where UX includes service design & design thinking or the application of human centered design methods & techniques



Over the course of 2014 and early into 2015 the authors decided to conduct a survey to gather data, analyse and develop the first baseline study of a landscape of UX in South Africa.

# Its ambition?

**To provide a body of knowledge about the field from which discussion and recommendations could emerge to help move the field forward in an informed, positive and pro-active manner. Further, the study would be repeated over time to start mapping and observing maturation.**

## Why is this study necessary?

Industry in South Africa has become increasingly aware, and desiring of, the application of user experience design in the development and delivery of products and services. However, no professional bodies (associations, councils, regulators, etc.) exist for the field in South Africa, the practice itself takes many forms and names and while demand, and the community itself grows, little knowledge exists about the field locally.

In fact, the last similar effort to understand the field locally, took place in 2003 by Wesson and van Greunen, who conducted a study into the status of Human Computer Interaction in South Africa. You can find their study in Wesson, J. and van Greunen, D. 2003. New Horizons for HCI in South Africa. INTERACT2003. Pp. 1091-1092.

12 years on and the field of UX in South Africa is at a critical point: while day-on-day it grows in acknowledgement as a valuable and viable approach to designing products and services and the demand for these skills increases, there is still no specific, formal tertiary education route to becoming a UX designer. Practitioners (and educators) continue to arrive at a UX career from a variety of backgrounds.

The community is largely self-organised and arranged around informal 'meet-ups', and user-groups such as the South African User Experience (SAUX) forum. And, increasingly formalised practitioner-oriented events, such as the User Experience South Africa (UXSA) conference and World Information Architecture Day, are emerging and are well attended. Academic conferences such as INTERACT, SAICSIT, the Design Educators Forum South Africa (DEFSA) and Design, Development and Research (DDR) have also been known to engage with UX at times. Social media has also contributed to an increase in informal UX communities in South Africa, with Facebook, Twitter, Google and LinkedIn groups. UX job opportunities are regularly posted on these groups. Practitioners, from novice to expert, share advice on these informal groups.

Nonetheless, very little definitive information regarding the state of UX in South Africa has existed until now.

# About the authors:

**Jason Hobbs** is a director of both Firma and Human Experience Design. He lectures and conducts his academic research through the University of Johannesburg, frequently presents internationally and founded the SAUX Forum. He has been practicing IA, UX and service design since 1997 and currently lives in Johannesburg.

**Dr Marco Pretorius** is the User Experience Lead at Global Logistics Internet and former User Experience and Design Manager at the Western Cape Government. His current areas of interest include user research in rural areas, service design and lean UX. He has a PhD from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, where he is currently a Research Associate.

**Terence Fenn** is a director at Firma and is also a full time lecturer in interaction and multimedia design at the University of Johannesburg. He gained his Masters in Art and Design Education from the University of New South Wales and is currently completing his second Masters at the University of Cape Town.

# Notes and acknowledgements:

The authors have conducted this study in their academic capacities: Dr. Pretorius through the Department of Computing Sciences in the faculty of Science at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University; and Hobbs and Fenn through the Multimedia Department in the Faculty of Fine Art, Design and Architecture at University of Johannesburg.

Together they co-wrote “The User Experience Landscape of South Africa” for SAICSIT 2015 which was presented at the conference by Dr. Pretorius. The paper was published in the conference proceedings.

This report however has a less academic leaning and has been prepared for a broader audience whom we hope will benefit from its findings, insights and recommendations.

The authors would also like to thank the Western Cape Government and Firma for financial and other support in making the findings of the study publishable and available to its many readers.

Lastly, to **Tasmin Jade Donaldson** for her assistance prior to the start of the study, for the information design work, specifically on the findings of the project, and for compiling the final report - thanks!

## 2. Executive summary

## Executive summary

The aim of this study has been to examine the landscape of User Experience (UX) in South Africa in the hope of providing information and insights that go some way to assessing the current maturity of the field and assisting in its positive, ongoing development. This study provides the UX landscape of South Africa as it stands in 2015, based on a survey conducted with South African UX practitioners.

The UX field in South Africa has certainly grown. Several large organisations have created UX teams; a variety of agencies now offer UX work as part of their services; and more organisations specialising in UX services are emerging. Additionally, the UX community in South Africa is growing with informal UX meet-ups, social media UX groups and UX conferences.

Three, interrelated themes have emerged in this study:

- The need for awareness and advocacy
- The need for educational support
- The need for professionalisation

The field of UX in South Africa stands in something of a paradox: on the one hand demand for practitioners and skills is high and on the other, those in the field are still struggling to gain organisational buy-in. In either case, awareness and advocacy of and for UX is required.

In particular, a feeder-base of graduates and junior practitioners is lacking and current practitioners appear to be advancing through the ranks at an exponential rate (while contradictory evidence suggests that they lack the skills associated with such advancement).

Nonetheless, while UX struggles to manage in its current position, it still requires growth: the practice is focused around certain geographic regions (Johannesburg and Cape Town) and within specific verticals (in particular financial, healthcare, telecommunications and government) while the majority of practitioners work in companies which provide UX services to industry (be they from the design, marketing or IT sectors). Again, for a broad maturing of the practice the field needs to reach out beyond the spaces in which it currently operates through awareness and advocacy.

Growing the base of practitioners needs to occur in tandem with answering the immediate need for more skilled practitioners and broadening the reach of the field.



## Executive summary

More short-courses that can rapidly upskill individuals will help. Of those that currently exist increased, close collaboration with industry to determine which skills are required is recommended...followed by the effective marketing of these offerings.

However, our view should be towards growing a robust and professional community over the next decade (and beyond).

A broad feeder-base requires tertiary institutions to develop a stronger focus on UX as a vocational and academic discipline. At an undergraduate level this should entail the incorporation of hard skills, technique and UX values into curricula. In particular, however, is the need for post-graduate UX programmes where tertiary education focused expertise is developed. Industry with mature UX expertise and practices can contribute by introducing internship programmes where future UX professionals can learn. Internship partnerships between industry and academia should also be developed.

Lastly, growth of the field requires its professionalisation. Although South Africa certainly does not stand alone with these challenges (UX being a relatively young field world-wide), shared language, standards and definitions will help educators, practitioners, organisations conducting UX, industry and other sectors to mature.

Specifically, shared indicators of skill-level, skill requirements, roles, titles and remuneration would help. In parallel, developing knowledge that supports practitioners, organisations and educational institutions in achieving their individual goals is also required. This would take the form of ongoing industry research, best practice, case studies and the like. In turn, this knowledge needs to become the bridge between education and industry, academic and practitioner development.

Updates to the UX landscape of South Africa can be followed at

**[uxlandscape.com](http://uxlandscape.com)**

## 3. Methodology

## Methodology

For the purposes of this study an online survey (using Survey Monkey) was conducted. The aim was to obtain 100 responses within a one-month timeframe however the survey was extended to six weeks and a 105 responses were gathered in total.

Awareness of the survey was generated via the SAUX Forum (on Facebook and Google Groups), LinkedIn UX groups and the Twitter accounts of the authors. Email invitations to complete the survey were also sent directly to academic institutions and UX professionals in the authors' networks.

The target audiences for the survey included:

- UX practitioners in South Africa;
- Organisations offering UX services and / or conducting UX in South Africa;
- Educators in the field of UX in South Africa.

Key questions addressed by the survey included (but were not limited to):

- What is the understanding of UX by South African practitioners and organisations?
- What is their approach to UX?
- How mature is UX in South African organisations?
- What educational and professional background do UX practitioners in South Africa have?
- What local UX communities exist?
- What are the challenges that practitioners face in their day-to-day practice of UX?

The survey consisted of five sections:

1. About you (demographics; industry; education);
2. Practicing UX (experience; understanding of UX; challenges);
3. Institutionalising UX (size of the organisation; executive support; methods used);
4. Educators (what UX courses are taught; size of classes); and
5. Any other comments.

Survey Monkey provides both the raw data from the survey as well as their own analysis of question data. Both were used by the researchers in analysis.

Individual questions were removed from their original categorisations, as presented in the survey, and re-categorised into the sections presented in the findings of this report, namely: Demographics, UX practitioners, Institutional UX and Education and knowledge building.

The results presented in this report are a combination of qualitative and quantitative research and analysis. Summaries for each section have been provided as well as question-by-question reporting and analysis. In some cases, questions presented in the original survey have been excluded from this report due to lack of sufficient responses.

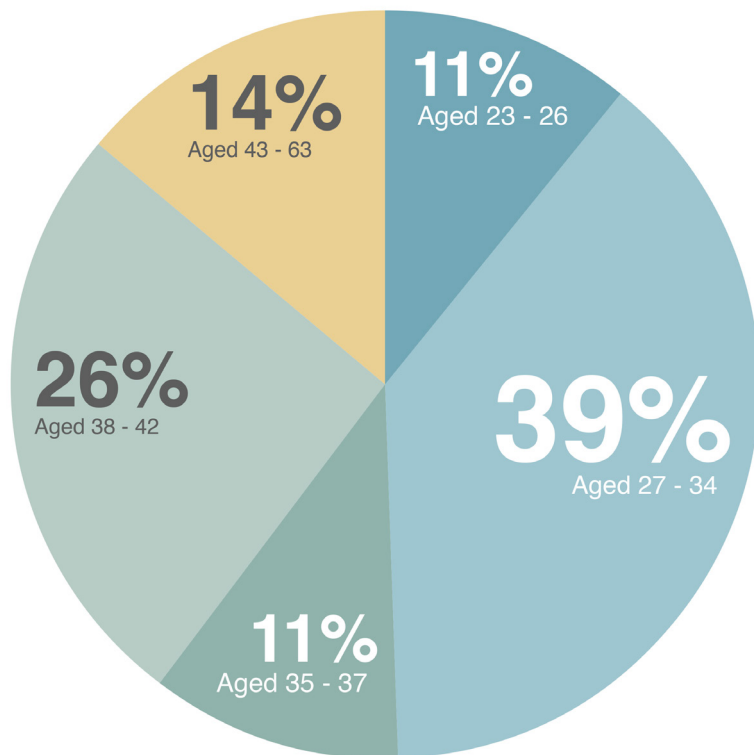
## 4. Findings

## Part 1: Demographics

# SUMMARY

## Demographics | Summary

Of the age groups represented in the sample, the largest age group lies between 27 and 33 years of age (39%) followed by those between 38 and 42 (26%). Those under 27 constitute just 11% while an additional 14% are over 43 years old. The concern is clearly the lack of young, new entrants into the field which is corroborated by challenges outlined in following sections regarding the lack (and need for) junior practitioners in the field.



Certainly a positive outcome of the report is the high ratio of women to men in our findings: 43% constitute women and 57% constitute men. A further positive finding is the high rate of employed people in the field at 92%.

Both these findings support South Africa's ambitions of building equality and creating jobs. With just under 50% of companies outsourcing UX and 29% (of general practitioners) and 40% (of corporate practitioners) including challenges to conducting UX in the workplace as being a lack of capacity and capability, there is strong indication that the field has large growth potential and new entrants with appropriate skills stand a high chance of finding employment.

The clear majority of respondents, 81%, live and work in either Johannesburg (45%) or Cape Town (36%). Regardless of the high population densities that these areas represent, more could be done to increase participation in the field of UX across the country as a whole and in particular our other metros (Durban, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Stellenbosch, etc.).

## Demographics I Summary

### Looking ahead:

- Increased awareness, advocacy and support should be offered to locales other than Johannesburg and Cape Town if we desire broad-based uptake of UX.
- Further, the field needs to attract new entrants at junior levels. This too stresses the need for increased awareness, advocacy and support.
- Findings indicate an extremely high rate of employment for both men and women and this should be emphasized in efforts to attract new entrants across the country.

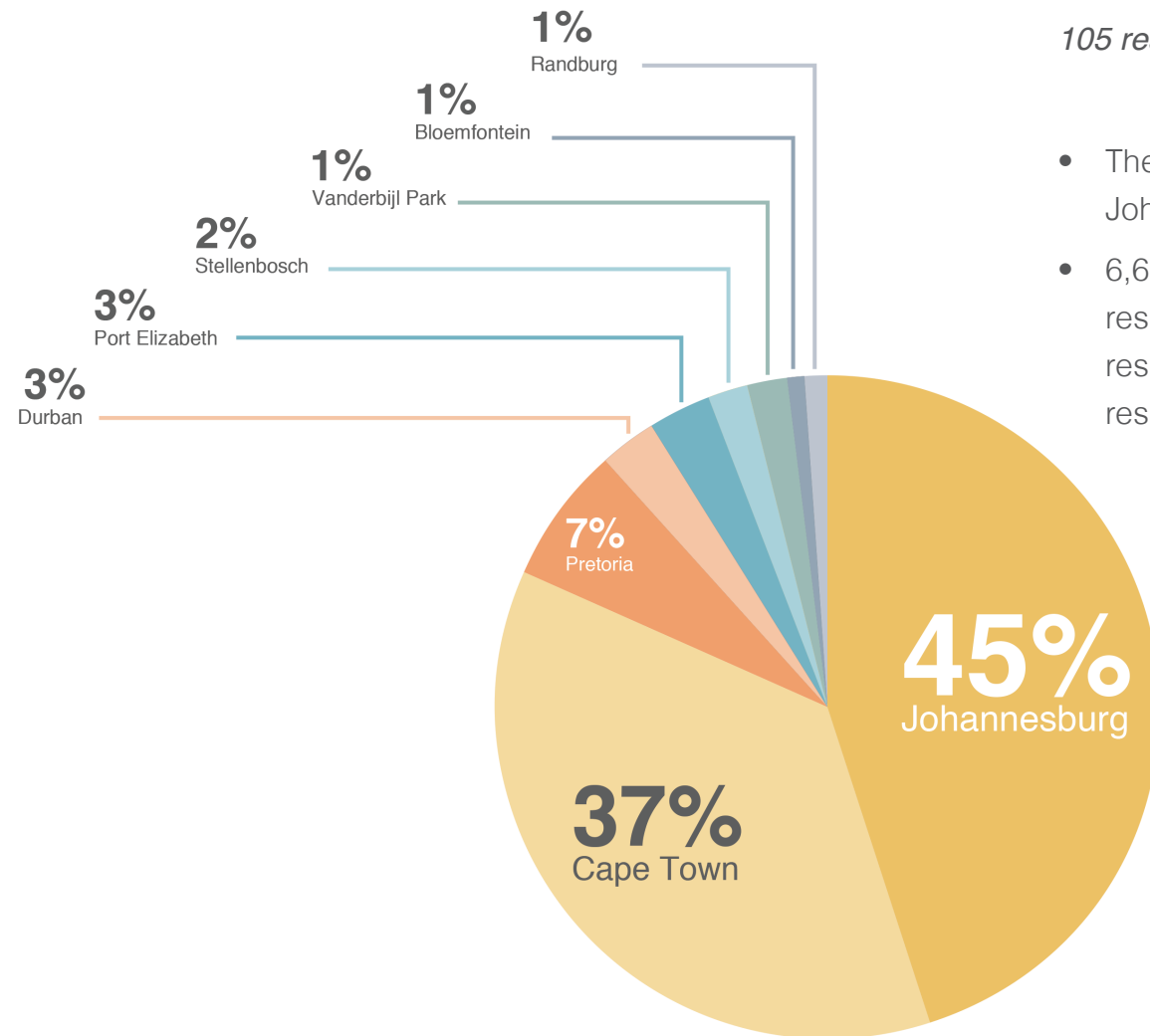
## Part 1: Demographics

# ANALYSIS



## Demographics | Analysis

Which city or town do you live in?



105 respondents

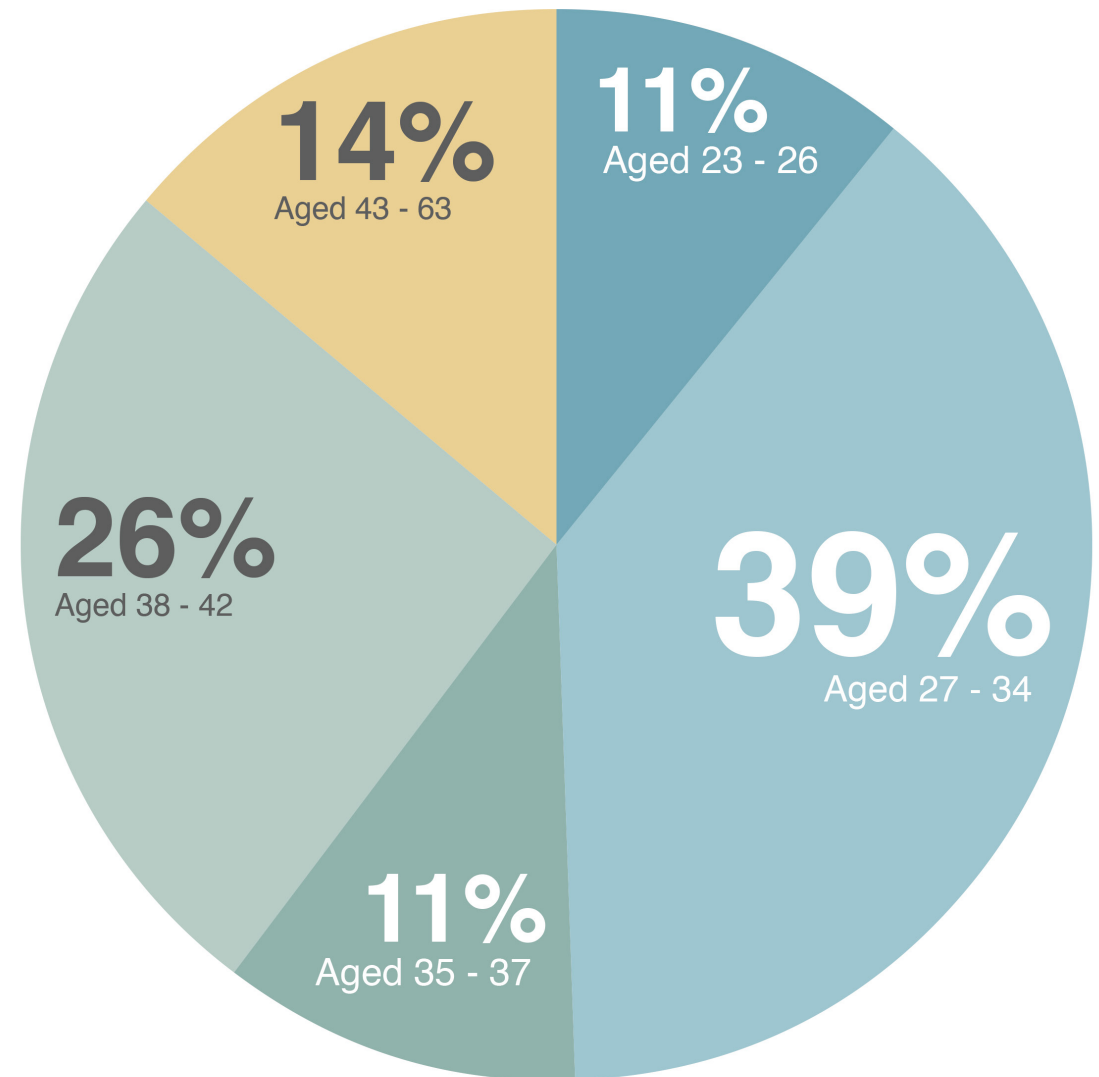
- The majority (80,95%) of respondents reside in Johannesburg (44,76%) and Cape Town (36,19%).
- 6,67% reside in Pretoria, 2,86% in Durban and Port Elizabeth respectively, 1,9% in Vanderbijl Park and Stellenbosch respectively and 0,95% in Bloemfontein and Randburg respectively.

## Demographics I Analysis

### What is your age?

105 respondents

- Respondents between 27 and 33 years of age constitute the largest segment at 39%, followed by those between 38 and 42 at 26%.
- This indicates a low feeder base of student entrants into the field (only 11% is constituted by those between 23 and 26).

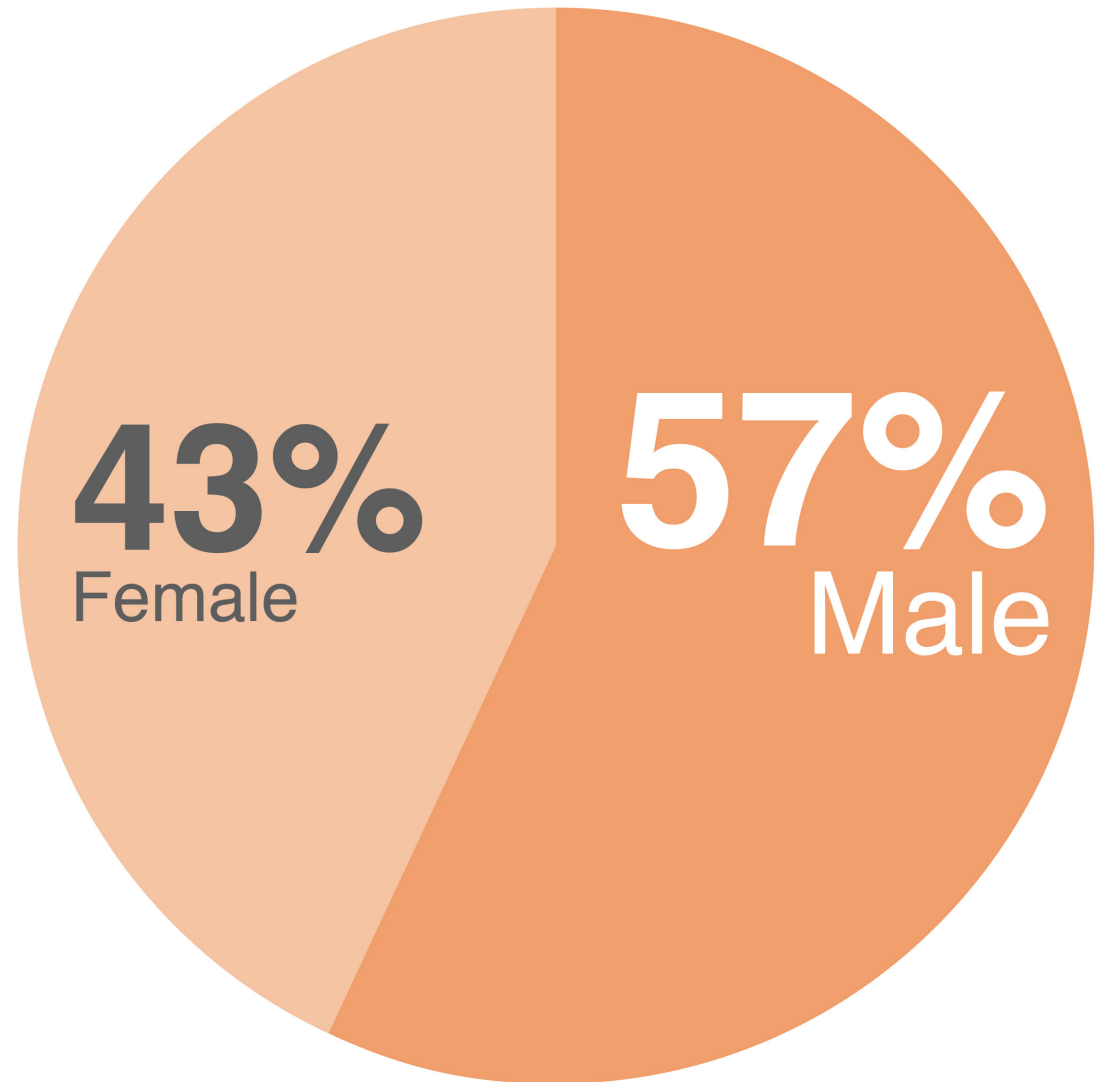


## Demographics I Analysis

What is your gender?

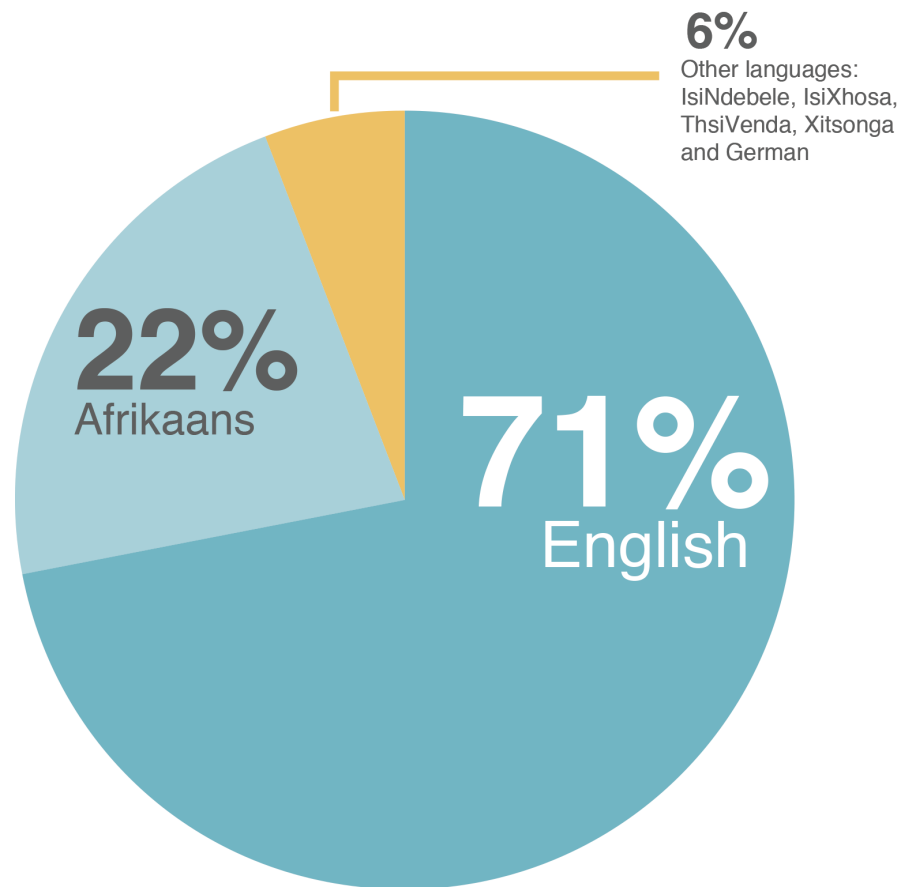
*105 respondents*

- 57,14% of respondents were male and 42,86% female.



## Demographics | Analysis

### Primary language spoken at home?



*105 respondents*

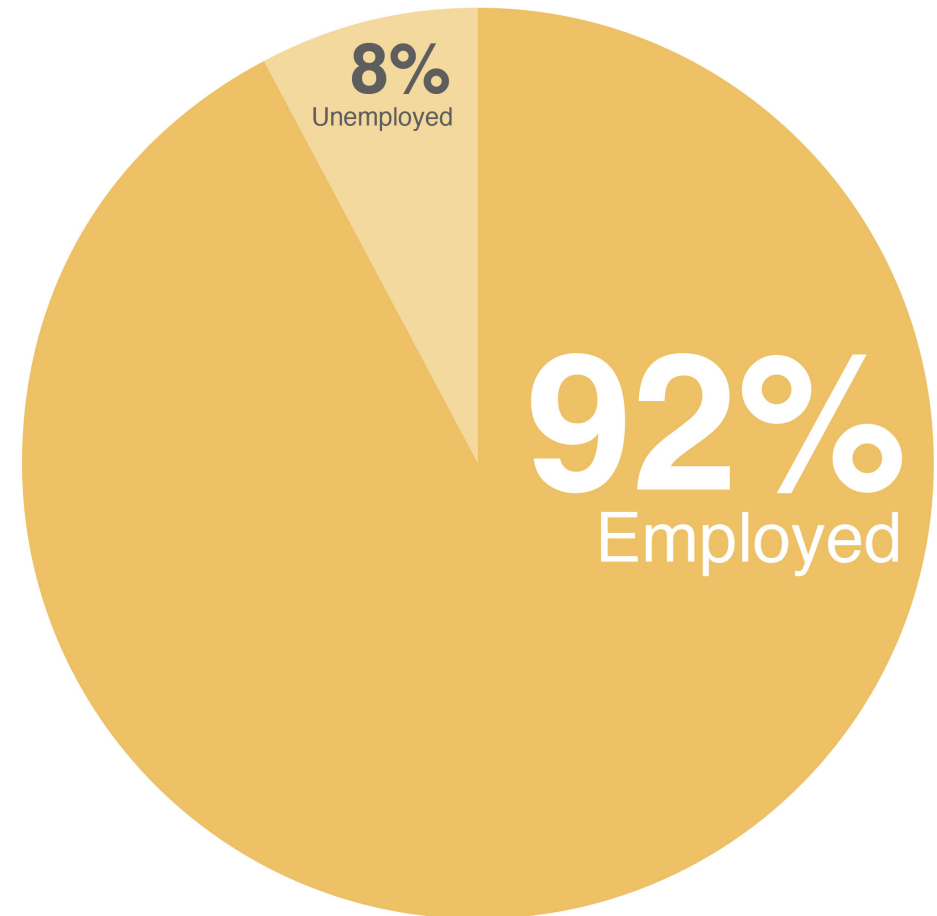
- The majority of respondents speak English at home (71,43%).
- Afrikaans is the second most spoken language at home at (21,9%).
- One respondent indicated that both English and Afrikaans (0,95%) were spoken at home.
- Other languages recorded, all at 0,95%, included: IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, ThsiVenda, Xitsonga and German.

## Demographics I Analysis

### Are you currently employed?

105 respondents

- 92,38% of respondents are currently employed, while 7,62% are unemployed.
- With just under 50% of companies outsourcing UX and 29% (of general practitioners) and 40% (of corporate practitioners) citing challenges to conducting UX in the workplace as being a lack of capacity and capability, there is strong indication that the field has large growth potential and new entrants with appropriate skills stand a high chance of finding employment.



## Part 2: UX Practitioners

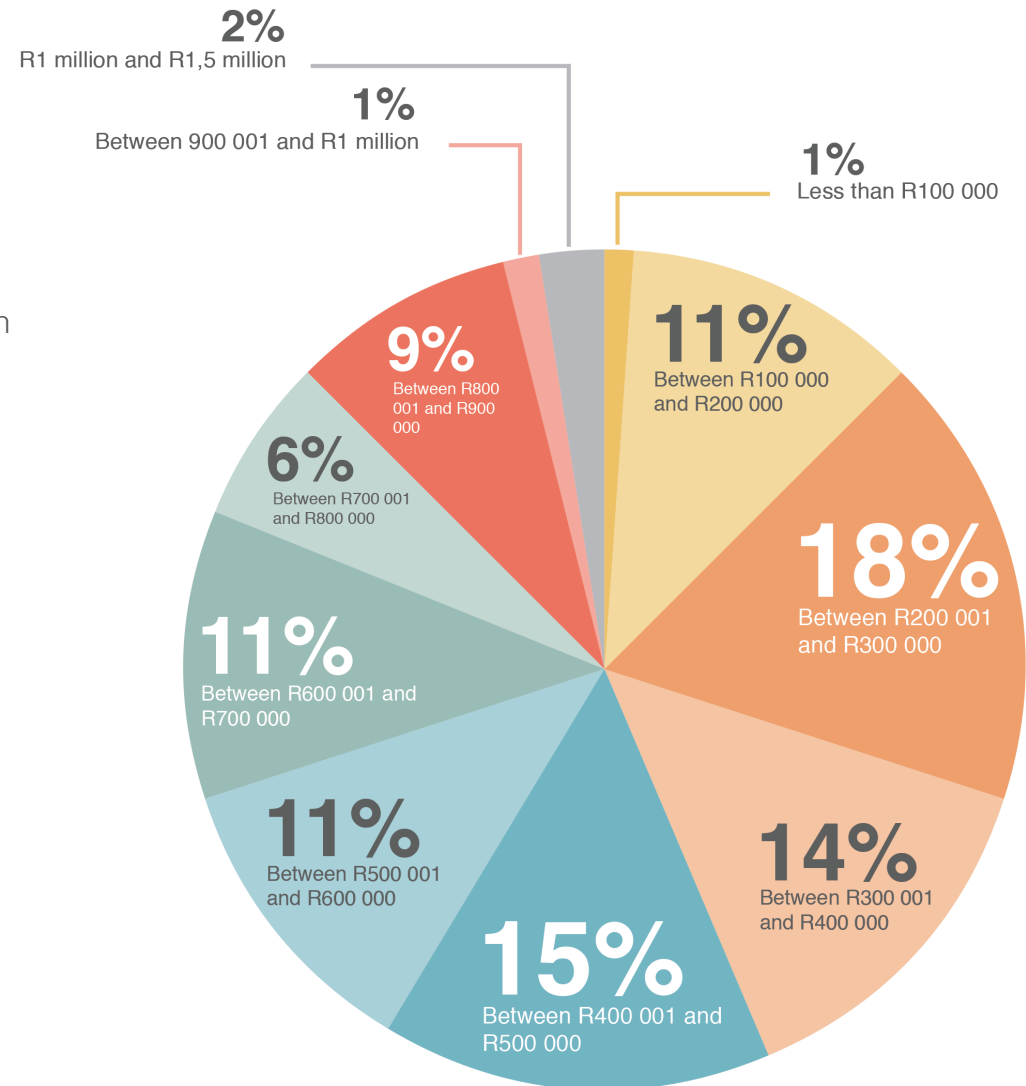
# SUMMARY

## UX Practitioners | Summary

The UX practitioner space appears dominated by three themes which impact one another to varying degrees:

1. The high demand for practitioners
2. A shortage of skills
3. A lack of field-wide professionalisation

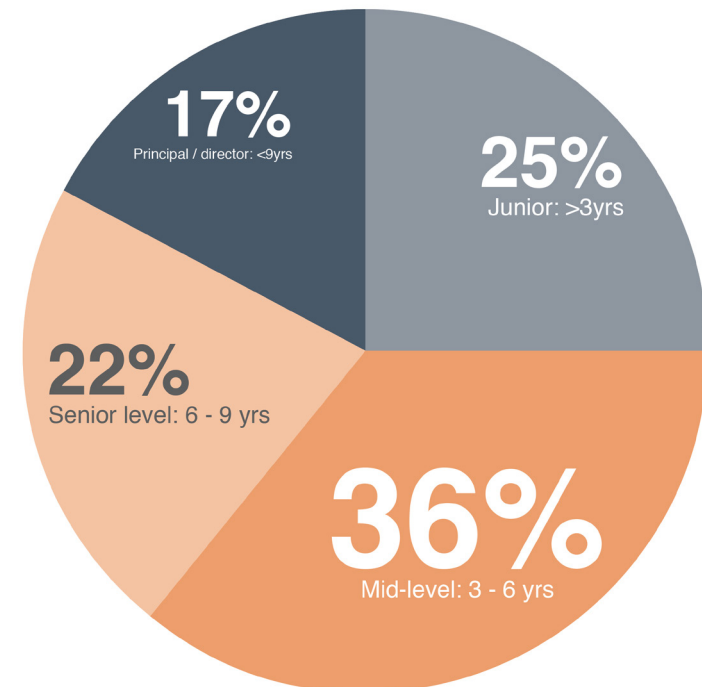
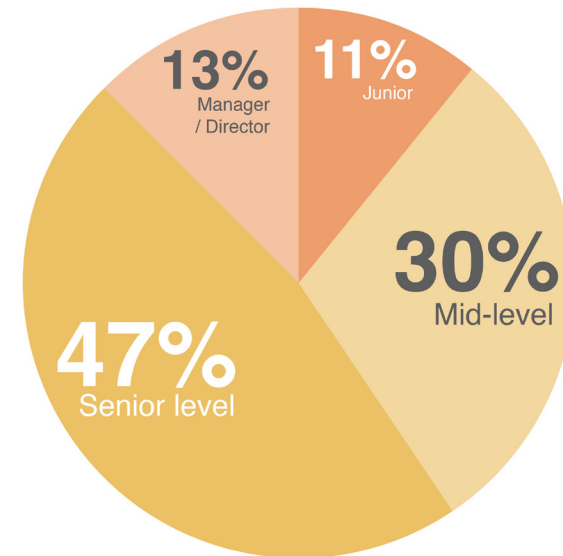
The demand for resource presents (as noted in the section above) as a low number of entry level or junior practitioners (25% of respondents indicated that they had less than 3-years experience) and relatively high salaries (46% of the sample earn between R200 000.00 – R500 000.00 per annum and 42% earn above this range).



## UX Practitioners | Summary

36% of respondents have between 3 and 6 years experience, 22% have between 6 and 9-years experience and 17% have over 9-years experience and yet when asked what top challenges were faced in day-to-day work life 29% of responses included the lack of skilled UX staff, finding skilled staff or a lack of sufficient resource. Furthermore, when asked what level practitioners believed they sat at, a massive 47% indicated their level as senior; in contrast to the 39% that indicated only 6 years or more on-the-job where 11% have between 6 and 7 years of experience).

If time on-the-job were the only criteria of experience, notwithstanding the high number of hard skills required in the field and equally important soft skills, respondents' self-identification of experience vs. time in the field appears at odds. The graphs at right compare self-identified skill level (top) and a rough guide to experience by time-in-the-field based on the authors personal opinion and experience (bottom).





## UX Practitioners | Summary

73% of respondents indicated that their companies rate them at the same level as that which they rate themselves<sup>2</sup>. In the context of a market with a high demand for practitioners and the authors' above assessment that practitioner's are likely to be less experienced and skilled than they either consider themselves to be or are being told by their employers, our field stands in a predicament with potentially negative consequences.

Lastly, the apparent lack of professionalisation of the field in South Africa could be exacerbating the above points. In the experience of the authors, South Africa is not alone in this, with UX, in its current form, being a relatively young field with much debate surrounding it. Nonetheless, we believe this remains a problem which requires a solution.

Examples of the lack of professionalisation include:

- A remarkable array of job titles
- Multiple definitions of and for the field itself
- The lack of consistent, industry-wide, indicators of skill level, skill requirements and relative or associated remuneration
- A lack of support for practitioners to assist in building advocacy both within companies and beyond

### Looking ahead:

A view to the sustainable growth of the field would include:

- Resisting quick fix responses to the high demand for skilled practitioners and investing in the potential of the field: the Internet and 'digital' isn't going anywhere and as a field there is a deep need for educational institutions and industry to work individually and together to support a feeder-base that will provide a broad base of middle and senior weight practitioners over the next decade
- The professionalisation of the field to assist its maturation and support both practitioners and institutions conducting, offering or requiring UX.

<sup>2</sup> A further 9 respondents (14%) answered that their companies do not rate them at the same level and 8 respondents (13%) said it did not apply to them (perhaps because they did not have a level, are freelance or self-employed)

Part 2: UX Practitioners

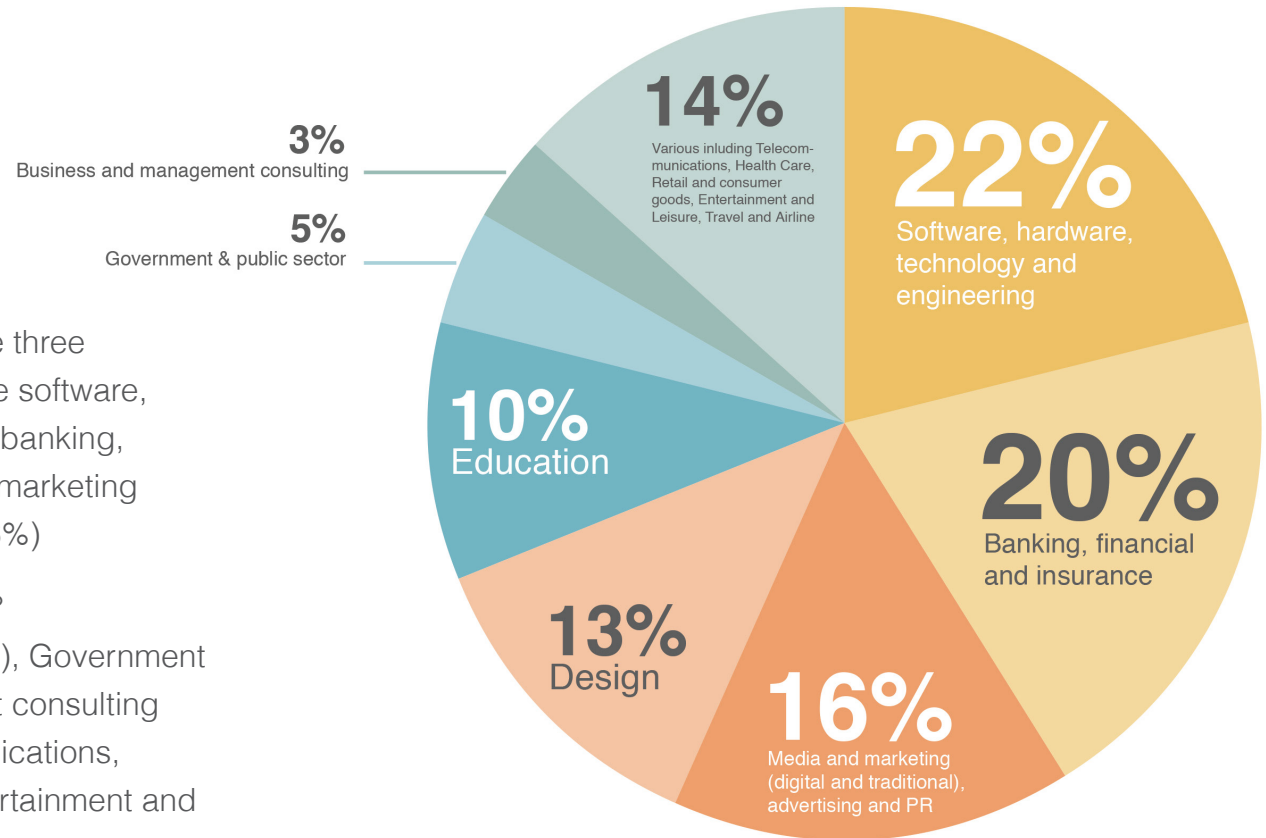
# ANALYSIS

## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What kind of organisation do you work in?

88 respondents

- After analysis and grouping by the authors, the three dominant domains in which UX is practiced are software, hardware, technology and engineering (22%), banking, financial and insurance (20%) and media and marketing (digital and traditional), advertising and PR (16%)
- Design specific organisations constitute 12,5%
- Remaining groupings include: Education (10%), Government & public sector (5%), Business & management consulting (3%), various industries including Telecommunications, Health Care, Retail and consumer goods, Entertainment and Leisure, Travel and airline (14%)



## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What kind of organisation do you work in? (continued)

A full breakdown of responses follows:

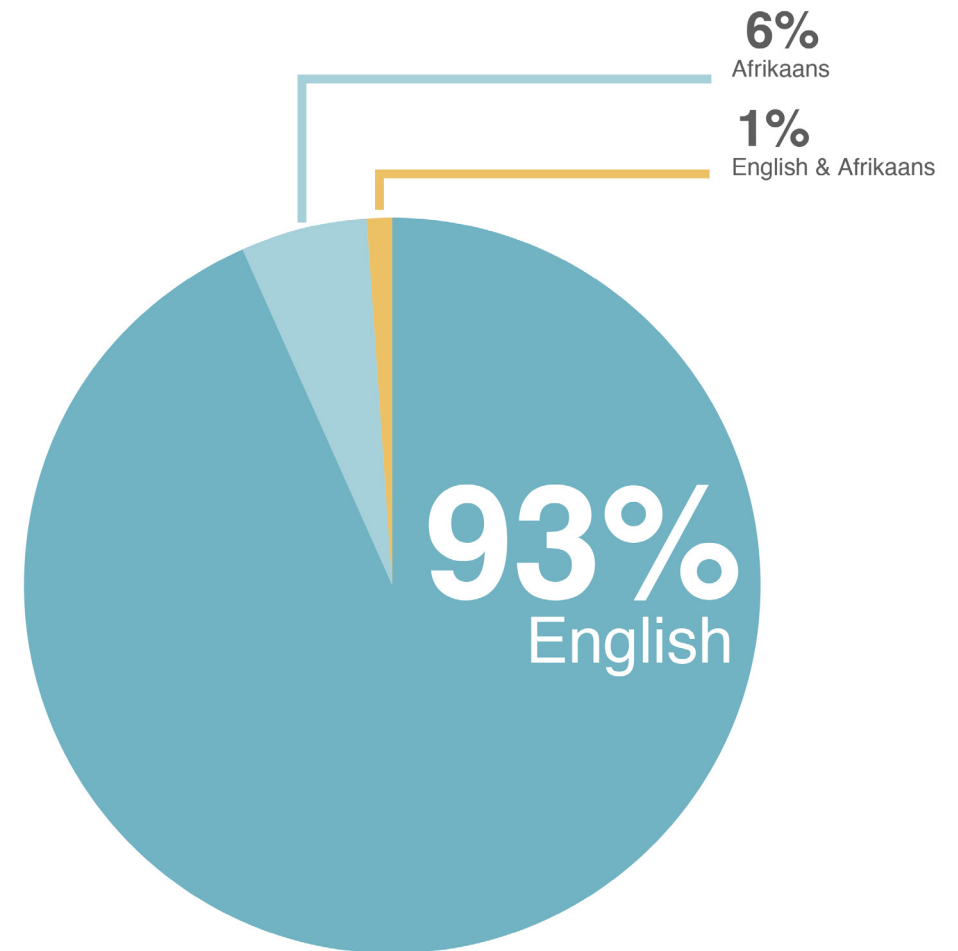
- Advertising and PR (5.68%)
- Broadcasting and television (2.27%)
- Computer hardware and technology (4.55%)
- Consulting: business and management (3.41%)
- Design: Design thinking, service design, UX (9.09%)
- Design: other (3.41%)
- Education (10.23%)
- Engineering (1.14%)
- Entertainment and Leisure (1.14%)
- Financial: Banking (9.09%)
- Financial: Other (7.95%)
- Government and public sector (4.55%)
- Health Care (3.41%)
- Internet Publishing (1.14%)
- Insurance (3.41%)
- Software, hardware, techno-engineering (22%)
- Banking, financial and insurance
- Media and marketing (digital advertising and PR (16%)
- Design (12,5%)
- Education (10%)
- Marketing: digital and online (6.82%)
- Retail and consumer goods (2.27%)
- Software (15.91%)
- Telecommunications (3.41%)
- Travel and airline (1.14%)
- 0% responses include: Automotive, Call centers, Hospitality and leisure, Marketing: other, Motion Picture and Video, Publishing: Digital and online, Publishing: other, Real Estate

## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### Primary language spoken at work?

105 respondents

- English is the primary language spoken in the workplace (93,3%)
- 5,71% of respondents indicated that Afrikaans was their primary language used at work
- One respondent indicated that a combination of English and Afrikaans were spoken in the workplace (0,95%)



## UX Practitioners | Analysis

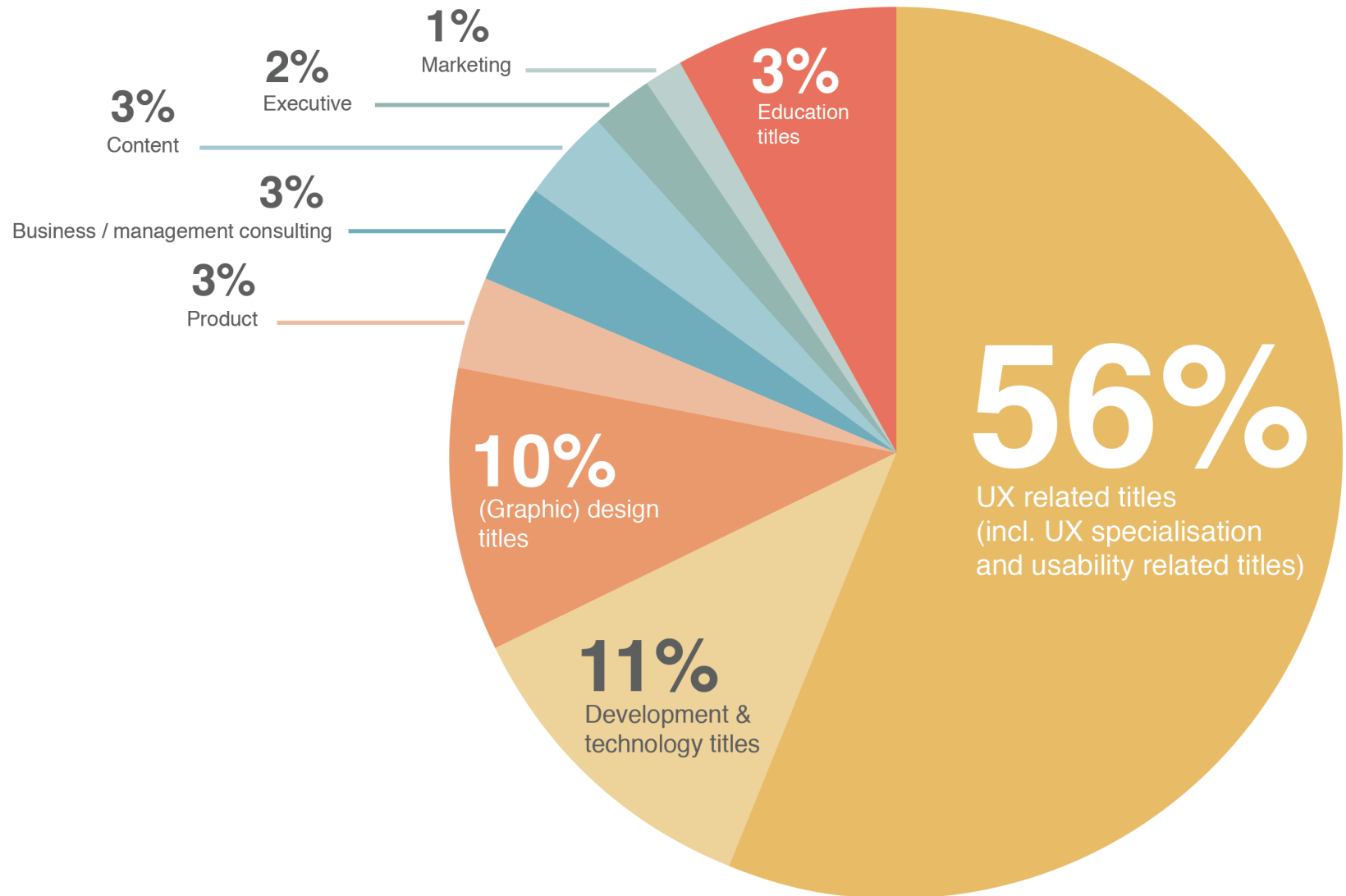
### What is your job title?

A breakdown of titles follows:

- Mainstream UX titles (40,22%):  
Head or lead of UX; Manager of UX; senior, mid, junior and intern UX; UX - specialist, researcher, analyst, architect, consultant, tester;
- Development & technology related titles (11,49%):  
Development manager; software engineer; web developer (incl. front-end developer); tech mentor; video producer; technical specialist;
- (Graphic) design titles (10,34%):  
Design lead; head of design; graphic designer; web designer; art director
- UX specialisation titles (9,19%):  
Experience design consultant; interaction designer; information architect; innovation officer; strategist; researcher; user interface specialist
- Usability related titles (6,89%):  
Usability - analyst, specialist, architect, engineer; HCI co-ordinator; HCI co-ordinator
- Content related titles (3,44%):  
Content – strategist, analyst / architect
- Business / management consulting related titles (3,44%);  
Business analyst; consultant; project manager
- Product related titles (3,44%):  
Chief product officer; product manager
- Executive titles (2,29%):  
Director; vice president
- Marketing titles (1,14):  
Marketing manager
- Education titles (6,89%):  
Research professor; Professor; Lecturer

## UX Practitioners | Analysis

What is your job title? (continued)



## UX Practitioners I Analysis

### What is your job title? (continued)

#### *88 respondents*

Titles and overlap of activities across adjacent fields have been a complex and long standing issue in the generalised field of UX. As a term, UX or UXD only began taking mainstream form in the mid 2000's and prior to this, titles such as usability analyst, information architect and interaction designer proliferated. Issues include whether UX is an 'umbrella' term for specialisations that sit within or whether specialisations are distinct. Four further issues for a study such as this are that:

- Many people conducting UX related activities may not self identify or even be aware of the field and thus would not have participated
- Where definitions conflict (for example, an interaction designer who feels that UX relates only to the digital aspects of what they are concerned with) may not have completed the survey or even have been aware of the survey
- Fields where some people are actively attempting to disassociate with the term UX (such as information architecture) may not have participated with the survey
- Emerging fields, such as content strategy, are attempting to be both aligned and distinct from UX and their titles may not accurately reflect some or all activities that they perform (from that view point)



## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What is your job title? (continued)

The corollary of the above point is demonstrated in the findings from this question where we see a very broad array of titles being used by those sampled:

- 56% of respondents have titles that sit within what we are calling mainstream UX titles (including those from the adjacent field of usability and what we are referring to as 'specialist' titles such as interaction designer or information architect);
- Development and technology, (graphic) design, and content related titles constitute 11%, 10% and 3% of the sample respectively;
- Business related titles such as business or management consulting, product, marketing and executive level constitute 10% of the sample;
- And education related titles constitute 7%;
- In total, 43% of titles are not within 'mainstream UX' and thus one could also deduct from these responses that UX is a field that touches upon and is touched by multiple disciplines

## UX Practitioners I Analysis

### How many years experience do you have practising UX?

*64 respondents*

- 25% of respondents have less than 3 years experience, 36% have between 3 and 6 years experience, 22% have between 6 and 9 years and experience and 17% have over 9 years experience
- In short, our local industry is top heavy with 39% having 6 or more years experience.

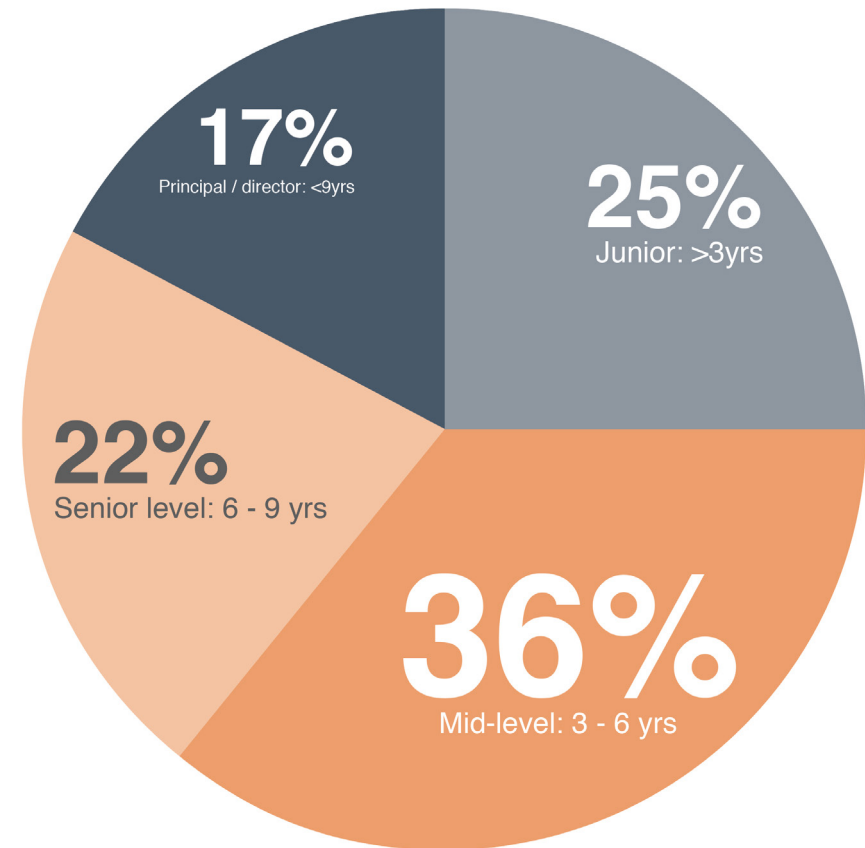
Detailed breakdown:

- < 1 years: 3,125%
- 1 to 2 years: 14,0625%
- 2 to 3 years: 7,8125%
- 3 to 4 years: 17,1875%
- 4 to 5 years: 9,375%
- 5 to 6 years: 9,375%
- 6 to 7 years: 10,9375%
- 7 to 8 years: 7,8125%
- 8 to 9 years: 3,125%
- 9 to 10 years: 7,8125%
- 10 to 15 years: 6,25%
- > 15 years: 3,125%

## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### How many years experience do you have practising UX? (continued)

Of course there are many factors that may influence how one judges the ability of an individual; however, and for the sake of illustration, if we considered time in the field as a measure of maturity the following may be presented:



## UX Practitioners | Analysis

What is your annual salary including bonus?

*80 respondents*

Analysis by the authors identified five broad groupings of salary densities:

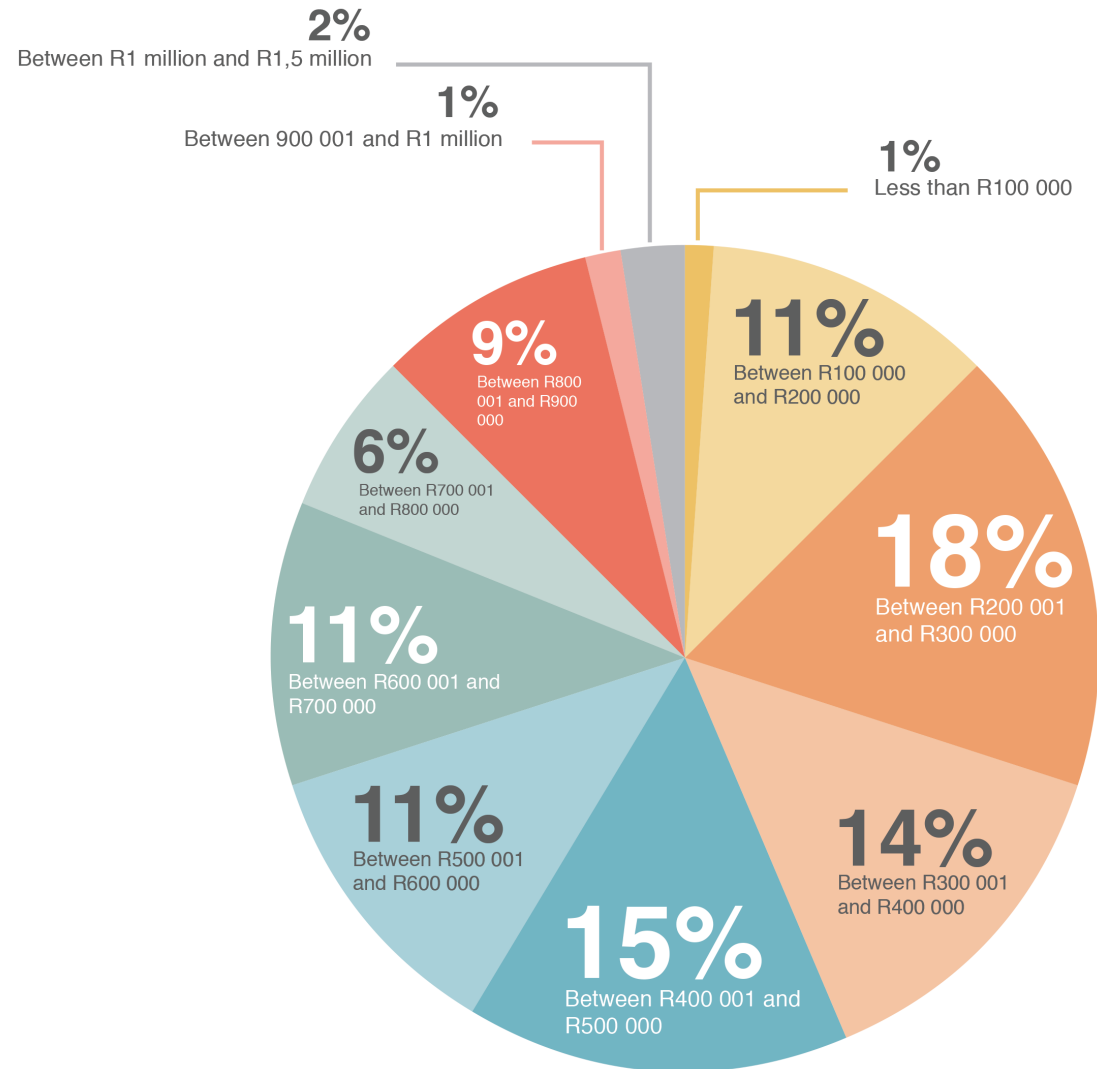
- Less than R200 000 (13%)
- Between R200 000 and R500 000 (46%)
- Between R500 001 and R700 000 (23%)
- Between R700 001 and R900 000 (15%)
- And greater than R900 001 (4%)

## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What is your annual salary including bonus? (continued)

A precise breakdown of responses follows:

- Less than R100 000 (1,25%)
- Between R100 000 and R200 000 (11,25%)
- Between R200 001 and R300 000 (17,5%)
- Between R300 001 and R400 000 (13,75%)
- Between R400 001 and R500 000 (15%)
- Between R500 001 and R600 000 (11,25%)
- Between R600 001 and R700 000 (11,25%)
- Between R700 001 and R800 000 (6,25%)
- Between R800 001 and R900 000 (8,75%)
- Between 900 001 and R1 million (1,25%)
- Between R1 million and R1,5 million (2,5%)
- Greater than R1,5 million (0%)

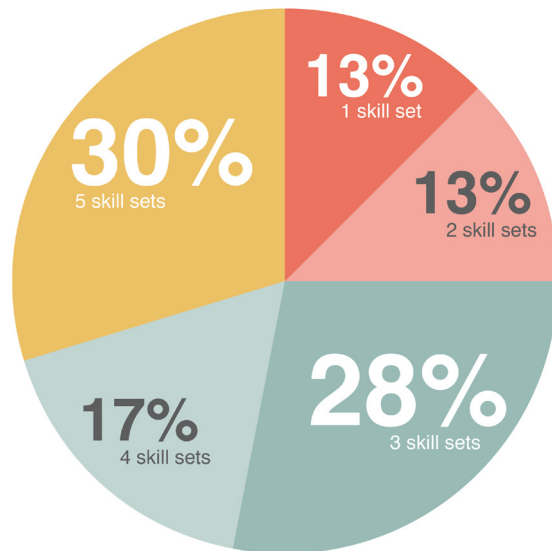


## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What areas of UX do you have experience working in?

64 respondents

- The results here show the high number of practitioners with a broad range of experience across skill sets.
- Perhaps it is worth noting that 22% of participants have no UX research experience.



- Definitions and proportions:
  - 78% of participants have experience in UX Research (e.g. user research; interviews; focus groups; usability testing; etc.)
  - 61% of participants have experience in UX Strategy (e.g. defining UX strategies for products and services to take to market or those already in the marketplace)
  - 94% of participants have experience in UX Design (e.g. wireframing; prototyping; conceptual design; visual/ graphic design; etc.)
  - 56% of participants have experience in UX management (e.g. advocating user-centred design; defining the SDLC; product scoping and discovery; team management; recruiting; mentoring; etc.)
  - 50% of participants have experience in UX Consulting (e.g. advising clients or internal departments on things like UX institutionalization, exec-level management; etc.)

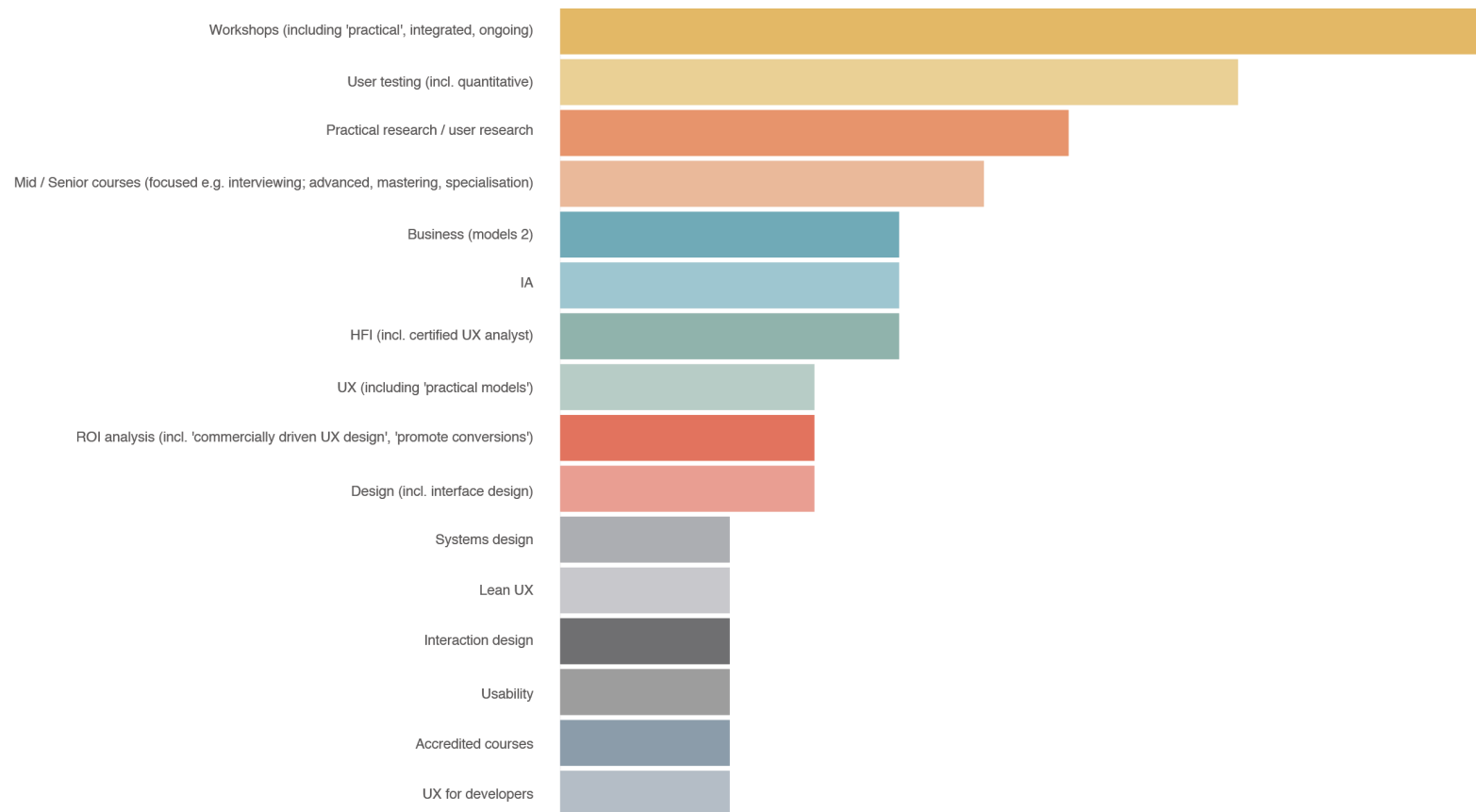
## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What areas of UX do you have experience working in? (continued)

- 12,5% have experience in one domain of UX:
  - UX design (7,8%)
  - UX research (4,6%)
- 12,5% have experience across two areas:
  - UX research and UX design (10,9%)
  - UX research and UX strategy (1,5%)
- 28% have experience across three areas:
  - UX research, UX design and UX consulting (6,2%)
  - UX research, UX strategy and UX design (7,8%)
  - UX research, UX design and UX management (3,1%)
  - UX strategy, UX design and UX management (10,9%)
- 17% have experience across four areas UX research, UX design, UX management and UX consulting (6,2%):
  - UX research, UX strategy, UX design and UX consulting (4,6%)
  - UX strategy, UX design, UX management and UX consulting (3,1%)
  - UX research, UX strategy, UX design and UX management (3,1%)
- 30% have experience across five areas:
  - UX research, UX strategy, UX design, UX management and UX consulting (29,6%)

## UX Practitioners | Analysis

What areas of UX do you have experience working in? (continued)



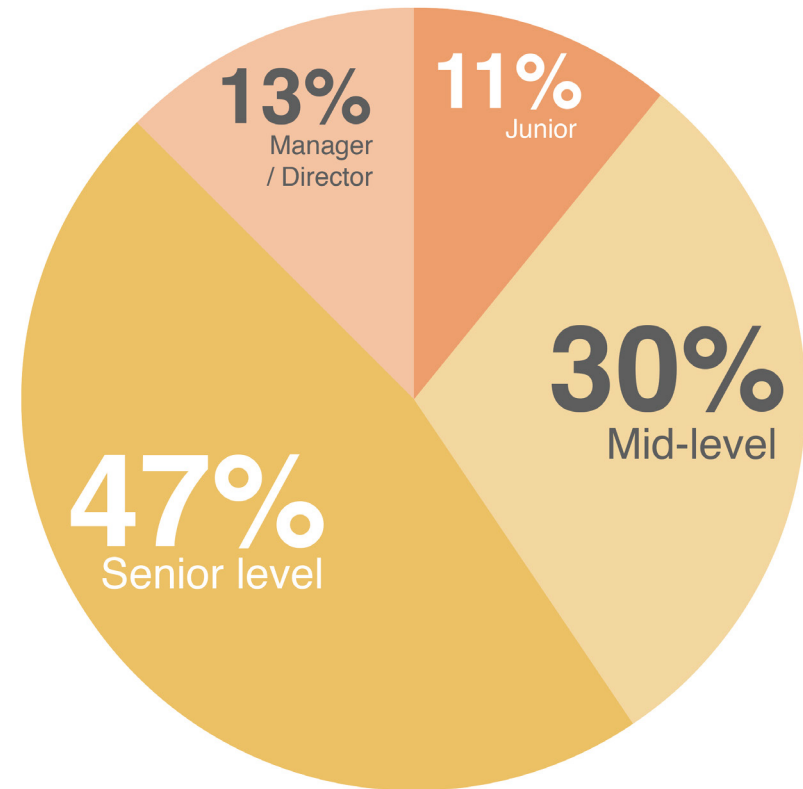


## UX Practitioners | Analysis

In your opinion, what is your current skill level?

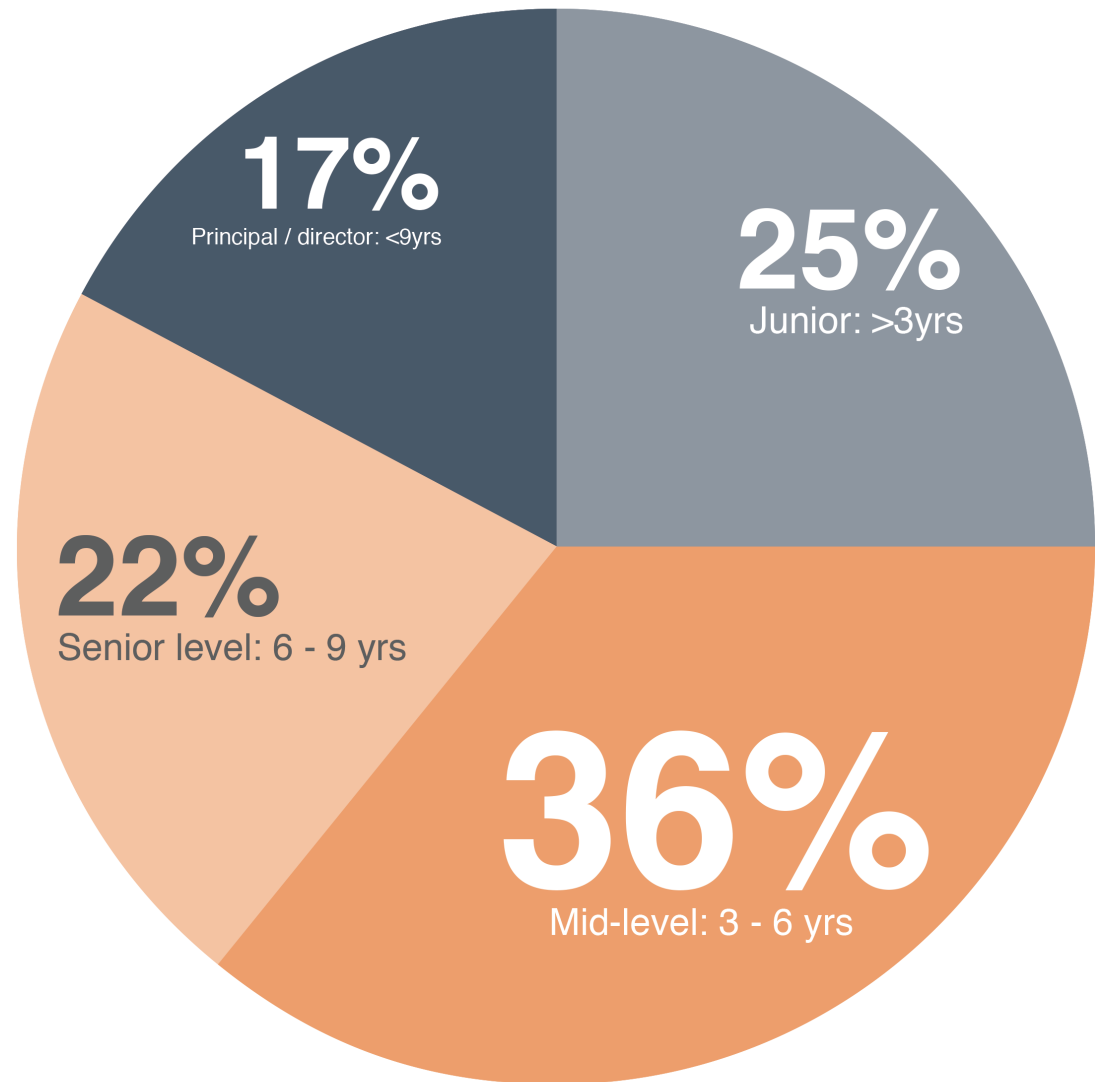
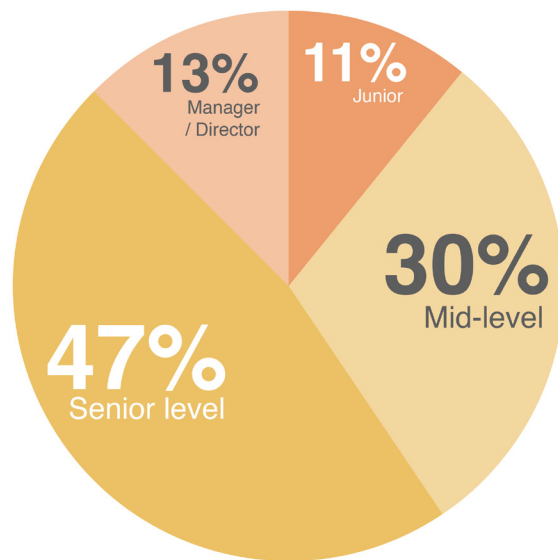
*64 respondents*

- 11% consider themselves of a Junior level, 30% of mid-level, 47% of senior level and 13% at the manager / director level
- In question 32 (“Does your company rate you at the same level?”) 47 respondents (73%) answered that their companies rate them at the same level as that which they rate themselves, 9 respondents (14%) answered that their companies do not rate them at the same level and 8 respondents (13%) said it did not apply to them (perhaps because they are freelance or self-employed)
- Compared with question 29, where ‘senior level’ was defined as between 6 and 9 years of experience (at 22%), self identification with that level in this question (at 47%) seems too high. See the graphical comparison below.



## UX Practitioners | Analysis

In your opinion, what is your current skill level? (continued)



## UX Practitioners I Analysis

### In your opinion, what is your current skill level? (continued)

It appears that junior and mid-level practitioners are being 'bumped-up' levels into mid and senior respectively.

This makes sense on various counts:

- People may be inclined to present themselves as more experienced than they really are (due, possibly, to a lack of experience)
- Companies may define their staff as more experience than they are (due, possibly, either to a lack of resource in the industry or the opportunity to sell the services of staff at a higher rate to clients in the case of commercialised UX service offerings)

## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What would you define UX as including?

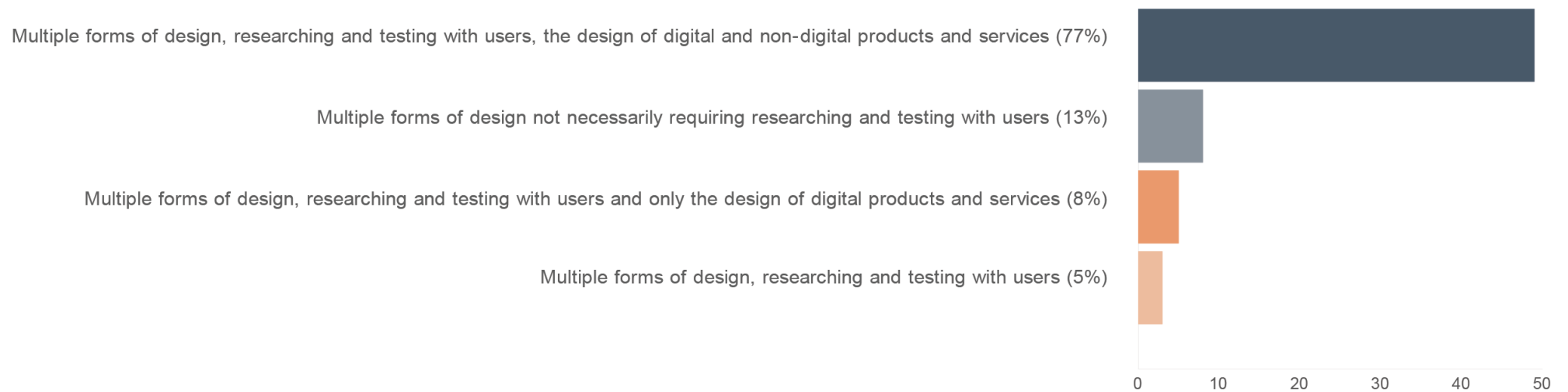
*64 respondents*

Definitions and proportions:

- 100% of respondents answered that UX involves multiple forms of design (like Interaction design, information design, interface design, information architecture, usability, etc.)
- 88% of respondents answered that UX involves researching and testing with users
- 83% of respondents answered that UX involves the design of digital products and services
- 75% of respondents answered that UX involves the design of NON-digital products and services
- 25% of respondents feel that UX is a digitally related field that does not apply to the design of non-digital products and services
- 13% of respondents feel that UX does not require researching and testing with users

## UX Practitioners I Analysis

What would you define UX as including? (continued)

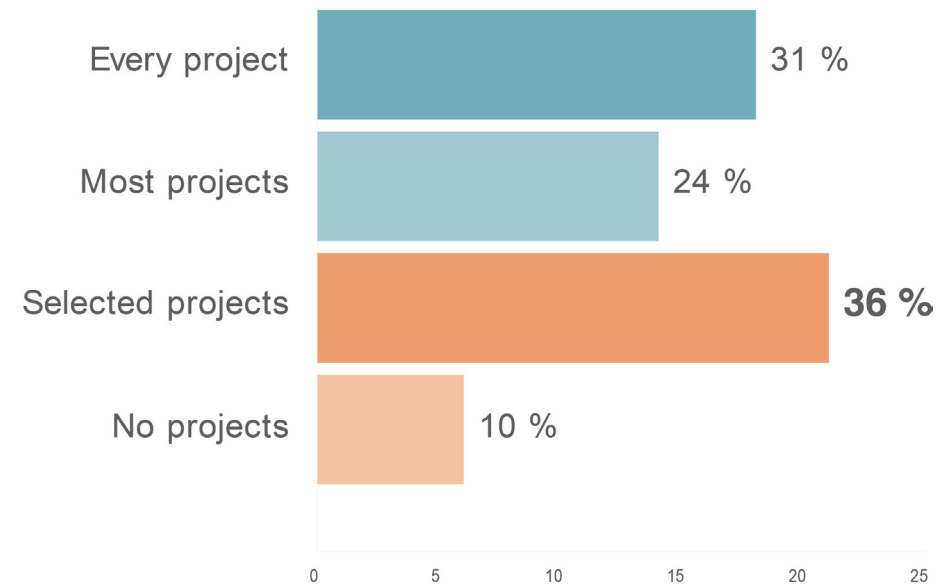


## UX Practitioners | Analysis

How frequently do you or your team conduct UX research on your projects (e.g. user research; interviews; focus groups; usability testing; etc.)?

*59 respondents*

- 36% of respondents answered that they conducted UX research on only selected projects
- 31% responded that they conducted UX research on every project
- 24% responded that they conducted UX research on most projects
- And 10% responded that they never conduct user research

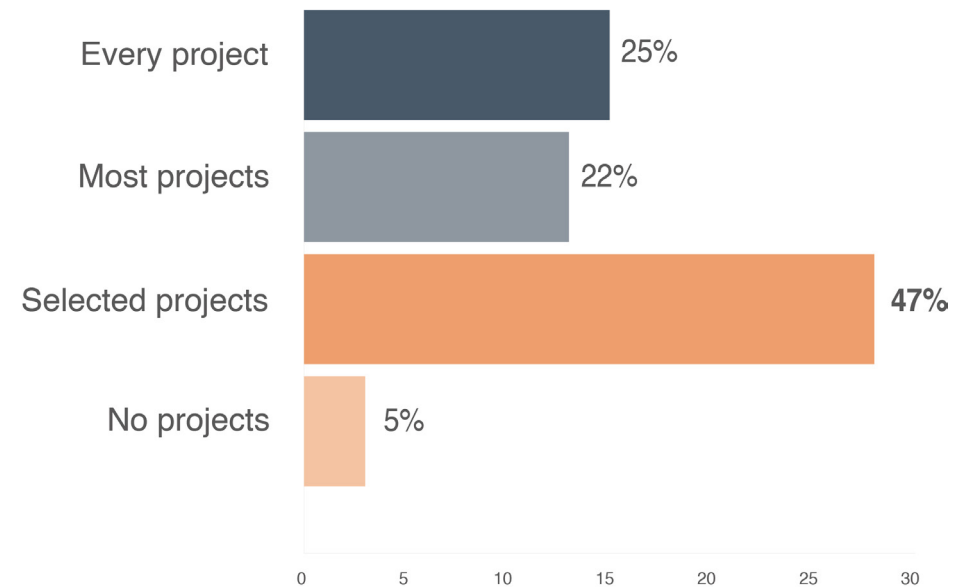


## UX Practitioners | Analysis

How frequently do you or your team conduct usability testing on your prototypes as part of your design process?

*59 respondents*

- 47% of respondents answered that they conducted UX research on only selected projects
- 25% responded that they conducted UX research on every project
- 22% responded that they conducted UX research on most projects
- And 5% responded that they never conduct user research



## UX Practitioners | Analysis

What are the top 3 challenges you experience in your day-to-day work as they relate to your practice of UX?

*59 respondents*

The following were recognised as the top challenges perceived by participants:

	TOP CHALLENGES	PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS (NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN BRACKETS)
1.	UX buy-in and promoting UX in the organisation.	61.01% (36)
2.	Time constraints during projects. Not enough time for UX methods (such as usability testing) and not enough time to implement recommendations.	35.59% (21)
3.	Lack of skilled UX staff. UX teams do not have enough staff members; and it is difficult to find skilled UX staff.	28.81% (17)
4.	Process challenges. UCD and UX activities are not included in the SDLC. UX activities are ignored. UX is not involved from the start.	22.03% (13)
5.	Lack of budget. There is not enough budget for UX activities in a project. Or enough budget to employ more UX resources.	18.64% (11)



## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What are the top 3 challenges you experience in your day-to-day work as they relate to your practice of UX? (continued)

The following were the key challenges listed when a project is in progress:

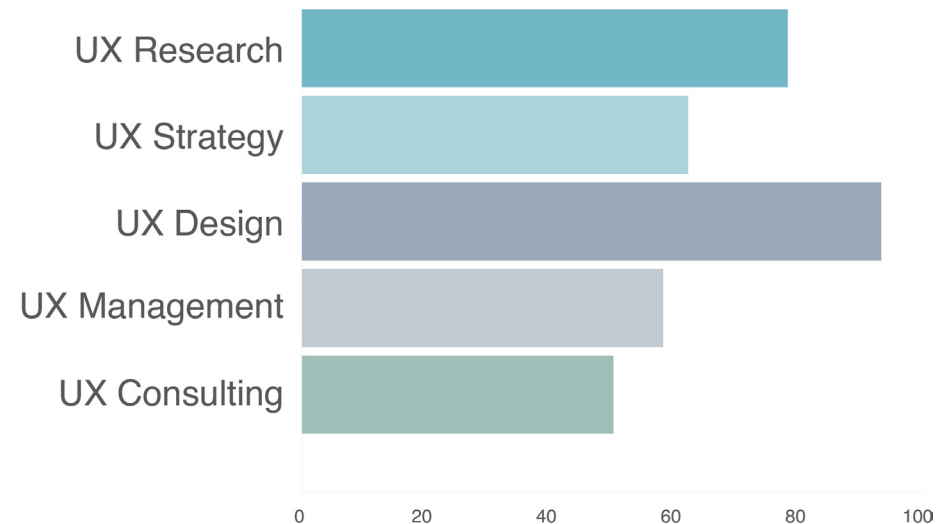
- Time constraints, as described above;
- Usability testing is still seen as slowing down the project;
- A lack of user research and usability testing;
- Recruiting users and finding the correct users to conduct studies with;
- Content not provided early in the project;
- Lack of collaboration and poor communication in project teams;
- Balancing organisational goals versus user requirements; and
- System constraints.

## UX Practitioners | Analysis

### What areas of UX do you have experience working in?

#### 64 respondents

- The majority of participants (93.75%) have experience in UX Design (wireframing, prototyping, conceptual design; visual / graphic design).
- This was followed by 78.13 % of participants indicating experience in UX Research (user research, interviews, focus groups, usability testing).
  - 15.62% difference in UX Design and UX Research
  - 14 participants (21.88%) had UX Design experience, but not UX Research as experience. Many UX experts proclaim that unless a UX professional has done UX Research, they should not call themselves a UX professional
- 56.25% of participants indicated experience in UX Management (advocating user-centred design; defining the SDLC; product scoping and discovery; team management; recruiting; mentoring).
  - This may have a correlation with “a UX team of one” – how UX teams typically start in an organisation
- 29.69% of participants have experience in all fields.



## Part 3: Institutional UX

# SUMMARY

## Institutional UX | Summary

A number of UX methods, tools and guidelines exist that can guide UX practitioners in creating solutions, such as:

- Institutionalization of UX: A Step-by-Step Guide to a User Experience Practice (<http://www.amazon.com/Institutionalization-UX-Step-Step-Experience/dp/0321884817>)
- Institutionalise UX Methodology (<http://uxstrategy.co.za/institutionalise-ux-methodology>)
- A Project Guide to UX Design: For user experience designers in the field or in the making (<http://www.amazon.com/Project-Guide-Design-Experience-Designers/dp/0321607376>)
- [www.usability.gov/](http://www.usability.gov/)
- [www.uie.com/](http://www.uie.com/)
- [www.nngroup.com/](http://www.nngroup.com/)

However, their effectiveness depends enormously on the profiles of the individuals on a team and on an organisation's understanding of UX.

UX professionals are typically left unsupported in large organisations and institutionalisation of UX is a must if an organisation needs to move from an ad hoc user-centred design (UCD) approach to a sustained and managed UX practice.

A 2003 South African study listed these challenges:

- A shortage of qualified practitioners and educators;
- A lack of awareness and implementation at industry level;
- Isolation, fragmentation and a lack of collaboration between

academia, industry, private research, development and government;

- A lack of resources and inadequate training can result in inappropriate guidelines being adopted from literature; and
- A lack of knowledge of standards for usability and UCD exists in industry

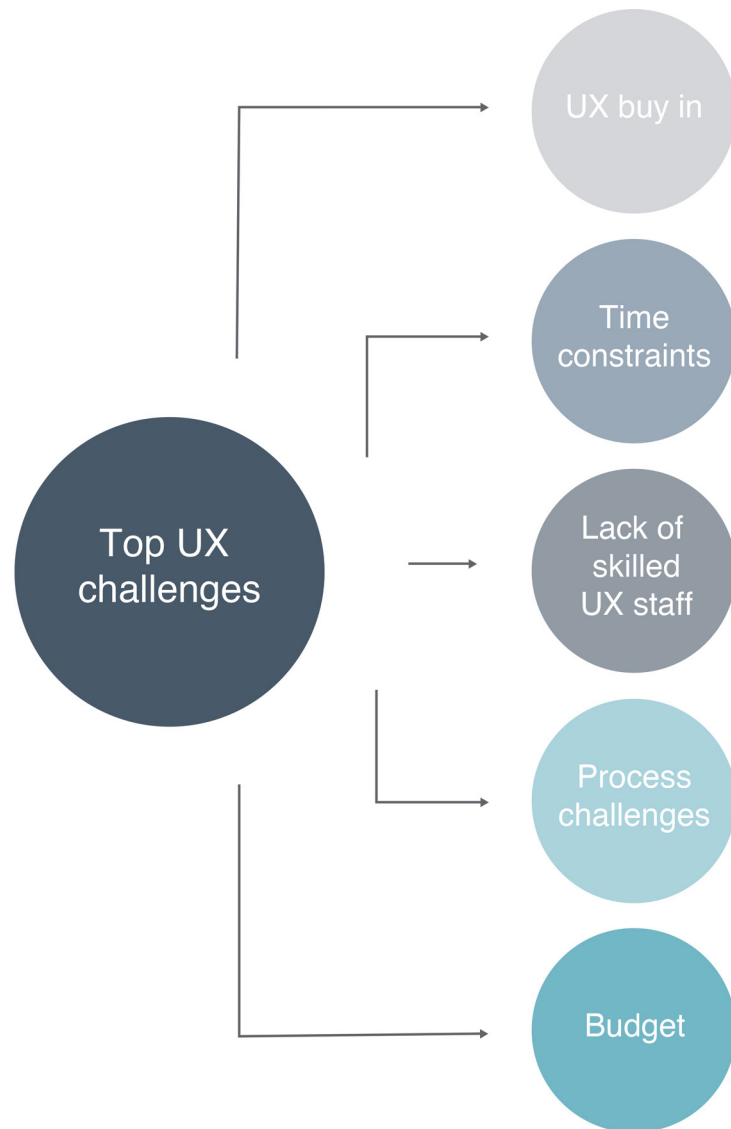
Even though the industry has seen growth, the results illustrated below shows that many of these challenges still exist in 2015.

- Thirty-six percent of respondents answered that they conducted UX research on only selected projects; 31% on every project; 24% on most projects; and 10% never conduct user research
- Forty-seven percent of respondents answered that they conducted usability testing on only selected projects; 25% on every project; 22% on most projects; and 5% never conduct usability testing

Respondents were asked to provide the top challenges they experience in their day-to-day work as it relates to practicing UX. The top challenges included:

- UX buy-in and promoting UX in the organisation;
- Time constraints during projects. Not enough time for UX methods (such as usability testing) and not enough time to implement recommendations;
- Lack of skilled UX staff. UX teams do not have enough staff members; and it is difficult to find skilled UX staff;
- Process challenges. UCD and UX activities are not included in the SDLC. UX activities are ignored. UX is not involved from the start;

## Institutional UX | Summary



- Lack of budget. There is not enough budget for UX activities in a project. Or enough budget to employ more UX resources;
- UX buy-in and promoting UX in the organisation;
- Time constraints during projects. Not enough time for UX methods (such as usability testing) and not enough time to implement recommendations

### Looking ahead:

It appears that there is certainly scope for growth in maturation of UX within South African organisations which would include, amongst other things:

- The establishment of routine practice,
- The use of best practices,
- And the supply of tools, methods and resources to people

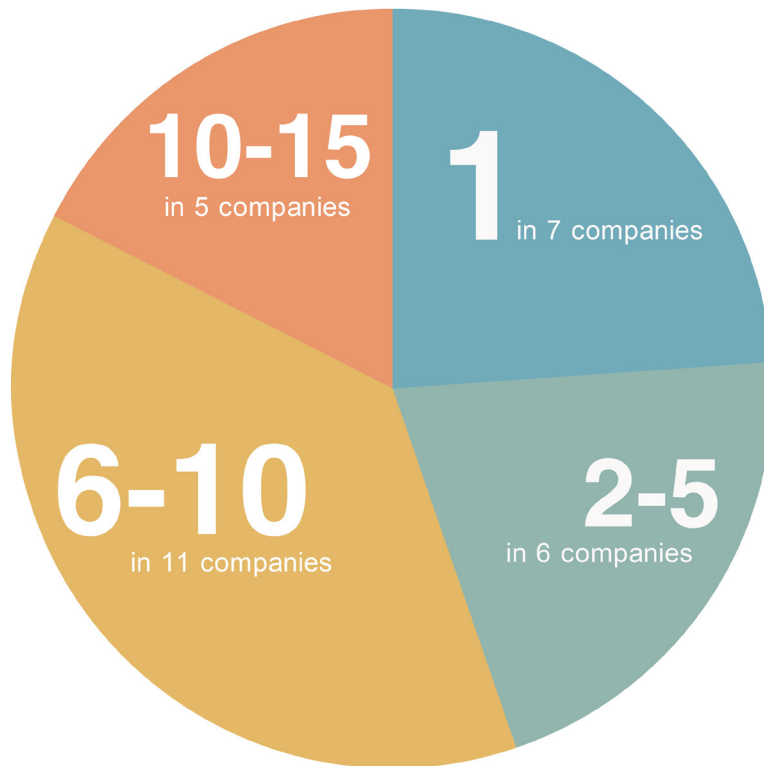
## Part 3: Institutional UX

# ANALYSIS

## Institutional UX | Analysis

How many UX professionals are employed in your company?

*29 participants*



Is UX a valued and unique skillset in your company?

*29 participants*

- Yes: 55.17% (16)
- Somewhat: 37.93% (11)
- No: 6.90% (2)
- Only 2 (6.90%) participants noted that UX is not a valued and unique skillset in their organisations
- 37.93% of participants noted that UX is somewhat of a valued and unique skillset, indicating that UX is still maturing in their organisations

## Institutional UX I Analysis

### How would you say your company defines UX?

*29 participants*

Question 33 asked participants to select options defining their understanding of UX, while question 51 asked participants to select options defining their organisation's understanding of UX

- 76.56% (49) of individuals included all items as part of the definition, while for organisations, that number dropped to 17.24% (5) participants. This signifies that participants feel that their organisations do not understand UX to its full extent.
- 25% (16) of individuals viewed UX as digital only. This number grew to 82.21% (25) for organisations – indicating that UX is not yet seen as influencing offline services
- 89.06% (57) of individuals believed UX to include user research and testing, while for organisations, the number was 89.66% - hence, a good understanding that UX includes user research and testing

### Is there executive level support for UX in your company?

*29 participants*

- Yes: 48.28% (14)
- Somewhat: 41.38% (12)
- No: 10.34% (3)



## Institutional UX I Analysis

Does your company (or the area in which you work) have a defined and documented UX strategy?

*29 participants*

- Yes: 41.38% (12)
- No: 58.62% (17)

The majority of participants (58.62%) indicated that their organisations do not have a defined and documented UX strategy.

Is UX integrated into formal processes in your company? (e.g. the software development life cycle)?

*29 participants*

- Yes: 44.83% (13)
- Somewhat: 41.38% (12)
- No: 13.79% (4)

Only 44.83% (13) of participants indicated that UX is integrated into the formal process of their organisations.

## Institutional UX I Analysis

### What UX activities are conducted in your company?

*29 participants*

100% of participants noted that their organisations conduct UX Design (wireframing, prototyping, conceptual design; visual / graphic design)

### Is there formal management reporting on the UX capability in your company?

*24 participants*

- Yes: 50% (12)
- No: 50% (12)

### Does your company ever outsource UX activities required on projects?

*29 participants*

- Yes: 48.28% (14)
- No: 51.72% (15)

### Is UX training made available to UX staff?

*24 participants*

- Yes: 67.67% (16)
- No: 33.33% (8)

## Institutional UX I Analysis

### What are the top 5 skills you require of graduates coming into your UX team?

#### *24 participants*

The majority of participants (41.38%) listed UX methods and hard skills as the top requirement. Hard skills listed, included:

- Prototyping skills (incl. wireframing)
- User research skills
- Design skills (incl. visual)
- IA skills
- User testing
- Usability (incl. evaluation)
- Communication skills (incl. comm. ideas, technical writing, negotiating)
- Conceptual design
- Process design (incl. modelling)

This was followed by personality traits (17.24%), such as people skills, team player, empathetic, confident, fast learner, curious and open to feedback.

This was followed by related domain knowledge (16.09%) and thinking skills (13.79%).

Only 3.45% listed certification as important (certification does not equal degree).

## Part 4: Education & knowledge building

# SUMMARY

## Education and knowledge building | Summary

UX as a field of practice requires a diverse range of abilities and skills in order to be practiced successfully. In practice UX teams often comprise individuals with many diverse skills. For these reasons, and because UX is a relatively new field in South Africa, UX practitioners in South Africa report a wide variety of degrees obtained across the humanities, sciences and professional degrees. This variance is not unique to South Africa as much of the literature suggest an absence of a definitive view of the boundaries of knowledge that make up the emerging discipline of UX.

Amongst those currently employed in the field there is a very high number of university graduates (96%); however, the majority of degrees obtained are at a undergraduate or honours level (50%), in comparison with the UX industry in North America in which the majority of practitioners hold a Masters degree or higher. The lack of progression towards advanced qualifications could be a result of an academic glass ceiling due to the lack of expertise and specialised courses focusing on UX design in South African tertiary institutions or lucrative offers being made to promising graduate and honours students.

The spread of institutions is widespread with over 36 different institutions reported. The largest provider of UX practitioners is the University of Cape Town (13%) closely followed by the Universities of Pretoria (11%).

This trend of practicing UX without formally studying UX, specifically, is echoed in relation to short-courses, where nearly half of the respondents report to have never studied a formal UX course. Furthermore, the majority of respondents that have attended a short course have only completed two or less.

When asked what types of UX courses or training practitioners would like to receive, respondents overwhelmingly advocated the need for improving their UX skills and techniques (60%). Evaluation techniques such as usability testing were ranked as most required (23%) followed by user research (17%) and information architecture (11%).

Respondents advocated the need for focused, high-level courses (71%) within a workshop format (55%). It is perhaps worth noting that respondents viewed the format of learning i.e. workshops as more important than the accreditation of the course. South African practitioners further noted that they need more application and applied knowledge. The need for specific usability testing and user research skills and techniques were highlighted.

## Education and knowledge building | Summary

Skills most required of graduates include: hard skills such as communication skills, traditional design skills and user research skills were the most valued (41%) followed by positive personality traits such as people skills, empathy and the ability to engage with learning in a mature manner (17%). Domain related skills at (16%) were rated as third most important followed by thinking skills (14%). The lowest ranked categories are UX / UCD knowledge (8%) and certification (3%).

Personality traits (17%)	Thinking skills (14%)	UX / UCD knowledge / experience (8%)	Hard skills (41%)	Related domain knowledge (16%)	Certification (3%)
PEOPLE SKILLS (INCL. 'TEAM PLAYER') 8%; FAST LEARNER / OPEN TO FEEDBACK / CURIOSITY 6%; EMPATHETIC 2%; CONFIDENCE 1%	CREATIVE THINKING (INCL. INNOVATION, IDEATION) 6%; LOGICAL THINKING (INCL. PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS, REASONING) 5%; CRITICAL THINKING 2%; ANALYTIC THINKING 1%	UCD KNOWLEDGE 5%; UXD EXPERIENCE 3%	COMMUNICATION SKILLS (INCL. COMM. IDEAS, TECHNICAL WRITING, NEGOTIATING) 9%; DESIGN SKILLS (INCL. VISUAL) 8%; USER RESEARCH SKILLS 7%; PROTOTYPING SKILLS (INCL. WIREFRAMING) 6%; USABILITY (INCL. EVALUATION) 5%; USER TESTING 3%; CONCEPTUAL DESIGN 1%; PROCESS DESIGN (INCL. MODELLING) 1%; IA SKILLS 1%	PROGRAMMING KNOWLEDGE / SKILLS 2%; MULTI-DISCIPLINARITY 2%; COMMUNICATION DEGREE 1%; AGILE SKILLS 1%; ANTHROPOLOGY 1%; BUSINESS MODELLING 1%; PSYCHOLOGY 1%; COMPUTER SCIENCE DEGREE 1%; INFORMATION MANAGEMENT 1%; BUSINESS ACUMEN 1%; INFORMATION SCIENCE 1%; TOOLS (INCL. AXURE) 1%	HFI CERTIFICATION 2%; UX CERTIFICATION 1%

## Education and knowledge building | Summary

### Knowledge production and distribution

In terms of knowledge production, nearly a third of the respondents speak at conferences and publish articles about UX. 65% of those that speak at conferences only speak locally, while 15% speak only at international conferences. 20% reported speaking both in South Africa and abroad. Those that contribute written articles tend to publish in non-academic contexts (73%). Methods of publication include websites (23%), Blogs (67%), academic conferences (46%), journals (29%), PDFs (8%), Bulletins (4%), Newspapers 94% and books (4%).

46% of those publishing do so at least four times a year (where the range spans from 8% publishing every week; to 15% publishing 'once in a while' – less than once a year)

While it is commendable that such a large portion of community members do write on the subject, the quality, number and impact of publications could (always) be improved through better distribution, rigour and technique. This point, it can be argued, refers back to the need for more practitioners to pursue advanced degrees and advance the quality of discourse in the field.

The majority of UX training takes place in the workplace. Nearly 63% of respondents indicated that they are involved in training, the majority of those involved (60%) do so internally within the companies that they work for. 14% offer training to external companies while 27% offer training at their place of work and externally.

## Education and knowledge building | Summary

### Knowledge sourcing

In terms of independent learning, respondents reported frequently sourcing content related to 'skills and technique', 'best practice and thought leadership', 'peer opinion', 'theoretical information', 'information of methodology and methods', and 'scientific research'.

Respondents indicated a high level of involvement (69%) in community groups, however, besides the SAUX Forum (39%) not many other groups reported had widespread membership.

Other groups include: UX Craft Cape Town and the Information Architecture (IA) Institute each constitute 7%; the User Experience Professionals Association (UXPA, previously known as the Usability Professionals Association), Certified Usability Analyst (CUA) and Human Factors International (HFI) each constitute 6%; the Interaction Design Association, Durban UX Community, LinkedIn UXSA and UX Masterclass Meet-ups each constitute 4%; and the remainder all constitute 2% including UX South Africa, SGI-SA, UX Bookclub (London), Johannesburg UX Forum, TEI, Mobile UX Johannesburg, UX Alliance, TELIT-SA and UX Meet-up Johannesburg.

Community events are generally very popular with nearly 75% of those surveyed attending UX conferences or events. These events are nearly all local with the most popular being World IA Day and the UXSA Conferences.

Nearly 37% of the respondents received some form of mentorship. This mentorship derives, equally, from both the respondent's work place and / or external sources.

The prevalence of self-motivated learning and the recognition of, and engagement with, community and peer-to-peer learning activities suggests a strong and healthy community keen to engage with the discourse of UX in South Africa.



## Education and knowledge building | Summary

### Looking ahead:

In terms of formalised education, two key insights emerge:

- Firstly, there is a strong need for tertiary institutes to develop a stronger focus on UX as a vocational and academic discipline. At an undergraduate level, hard skills, technique and UX values should be incorporate into the curriculum. However, what is particularly evident is the need for UX programmes, at the post-graduate level as this is where tertiary education focused expertise is developed.
- Secondly, short-courses could be targeted to meet needs of South African practitioners. There is a need for application and applied knowledge, as well as the need for specific usability testing and user research skills and techniques.

As a community, we need to play a stronger role in creating awareness and advocating the value of UX to stakeholders in the educational sector.

With regards to community activities and work based learning, the data suggests that these activities are integral and popular in the community. In order to build on the existing positives, it is recommended that the following could take place:

- Formal support for mentorship programmes internally within UX focused companies.
- Establishment of platforms for compiling, archiving and distributing local UX content, in addition to and in support of, the numerous local conferences and events.
- The continued promotion of and participation in community conferences and events

It is worth noting that this study failed to secure adequate feedback from many of those directly involved with teaching UX. While over 60 educators were directly contacted response was at best low. While the reasons for the poor response were not always forthcoming, we acknowledge that the design of the research enquiry may have been disproportionately focused on practitioners, and the authors regard this as a key area of concern to remedy in future studies.

Part 4: Education & knowledge building

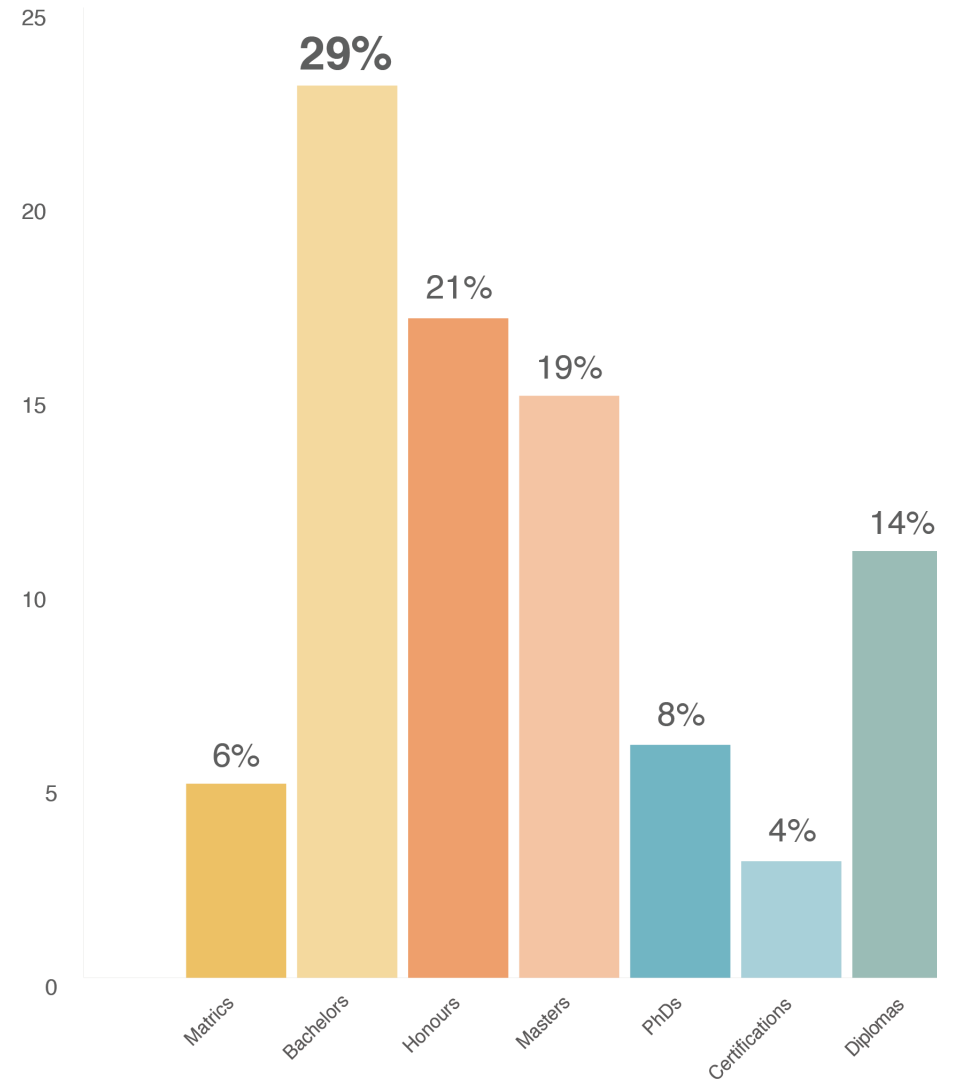
# ANALYSIS

## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

### What is your highest level of education?

*81 respondents*

- 6% matric qualifications
- 4% certifications
- 14% diplomas
- 29% bachelors
- 21% degrees
- 19% masters degrees
- 8% Ph.D's



## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

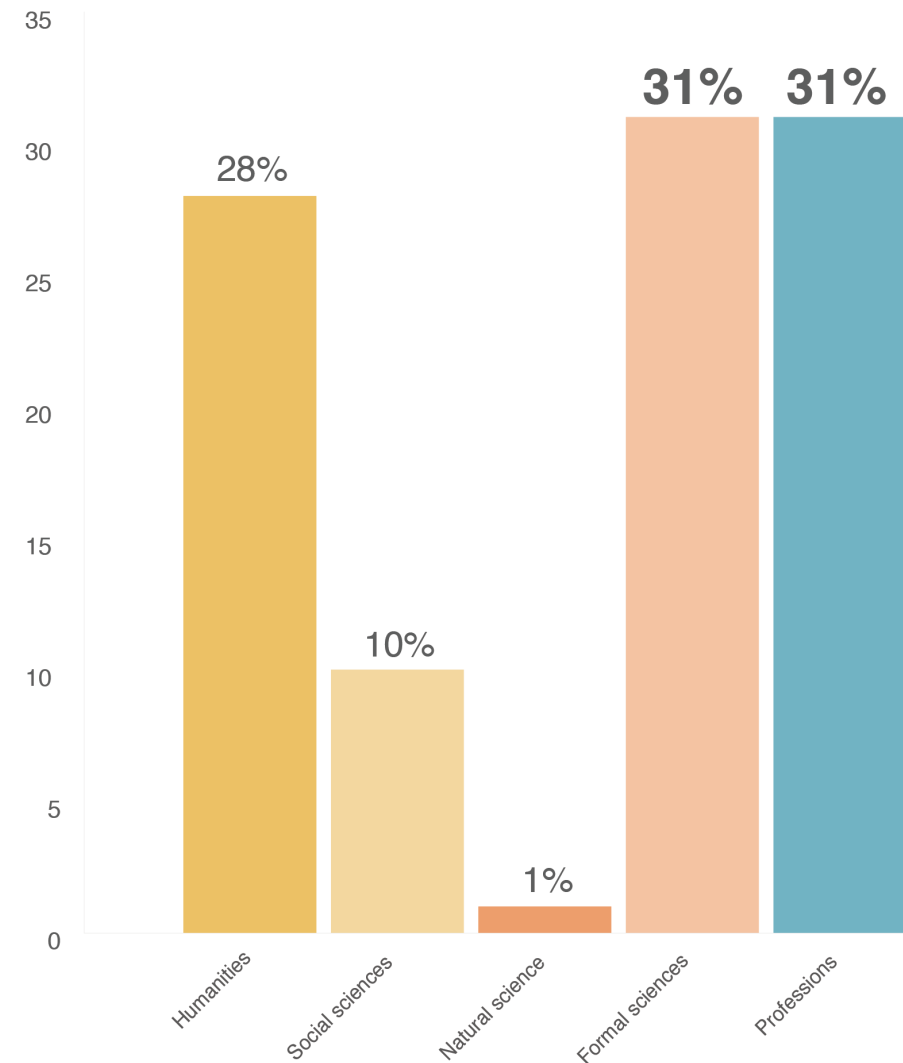
In which field [did you study]?

*81 respondents*

31% of respondents studied in the 'Professions' and in the 'Formal sciences', 28% in the 'Humanities', 10% in the 'Social sciences' and 1% in the 'Natural sciences'.

Description of options:

- Humanities e.g. the arts, philosophy, literature, etc.
- Social sciences e.g. anthropology, economics, politics, psychology, sociology, etc.
- Natural sciences e.g. biology, chemistry, physics, etc.
- Formal sciences e.g. mathematics, computer science, statistics, systems science, etc.
- Professions e.g. architecture, design, business, education, engineering, journalism, law, library studies, etc.



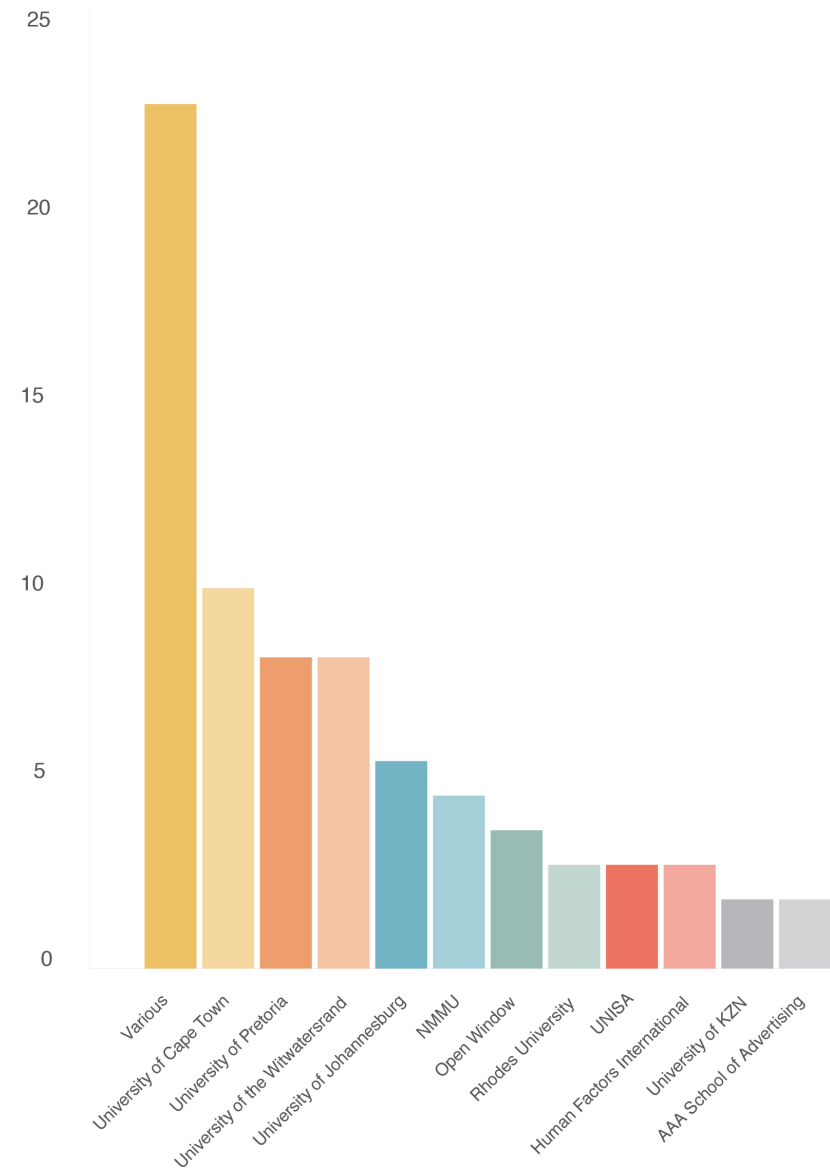
## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

### Where [did you study]?

#### 81 respondents

(Some responded with more than one institution)

- 13% of respondents attended the University of Cape Town;
- 11% the Universities of Pretoria and the Witwatersrand;
- 7% attended the University of Johannesburg, 6% the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University;
- 5% the Open Window;
- 4% attended Rhodes University, UNISA and Human Factors International;
- 2% attended the AAA School of Advertising



## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

### In which field [did you study]? (continued)

The following list of institutions each had one respondent (1%) marked as 'Various' in the associated graph (previous page):

- Central Johannesburg College
- University of New South Wales
- Natal Technicon
- AFDA
- CPUT
- Boston Media House
- Schools
- Goldsmiths
- North West University
- UNISYS
- Microfast
- WS&L
- School of Computing
- Vega
- Vaal Triangle Technicon

- University of Port Elizabeth
- University of Luzerne
- Allenby / Damelin
- Damelin
- Durban University of Technology
- Sussex University
- Port Elizabeth Technicon
- Hirt & Carter
- Mediatech
- University of Stellenbosch

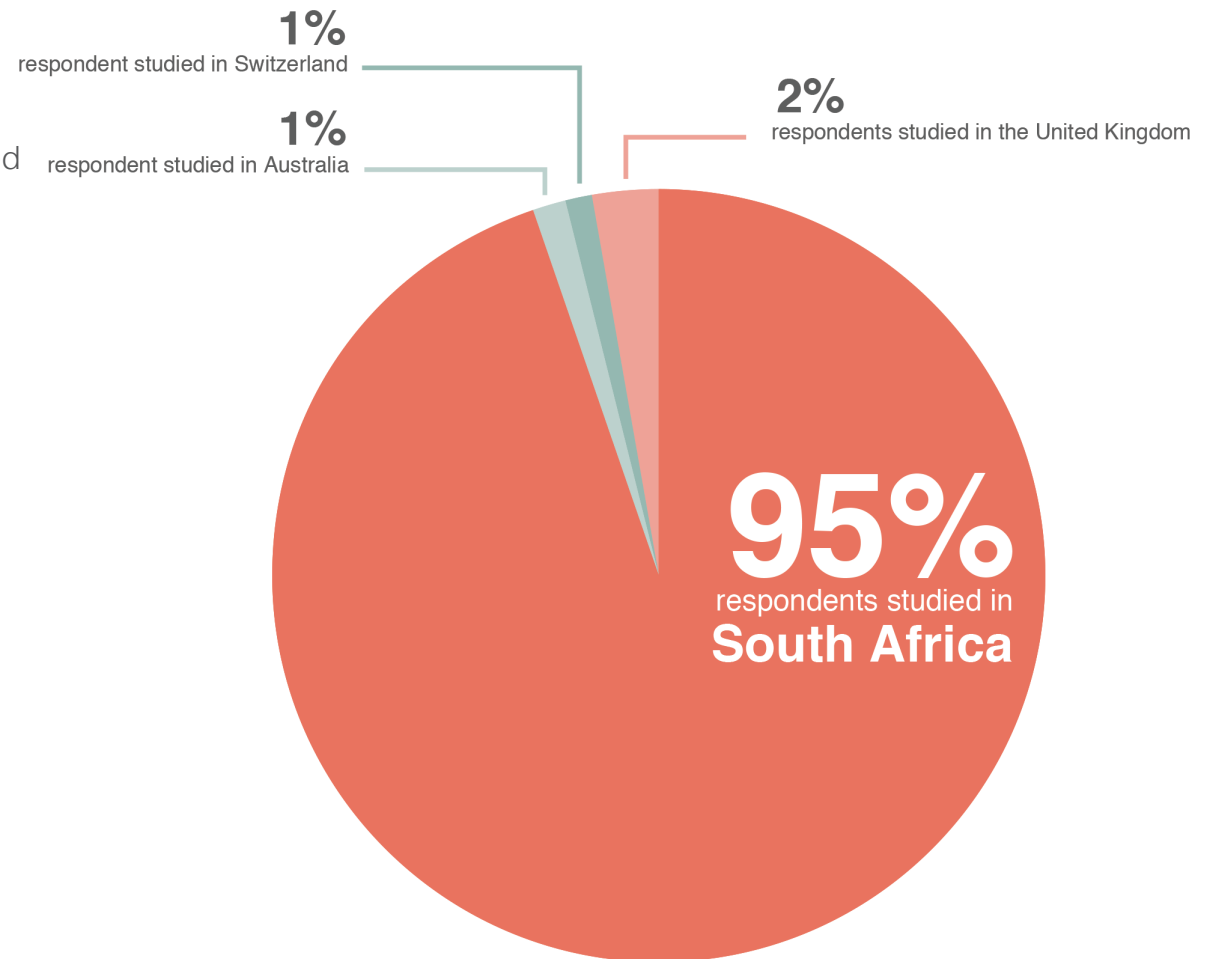
Departments and faculties noted were too inconclusively answered to report on.

## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

In which country [did you study]?

*81 respondents*

95% of respondents studied in South Africa, 2% studied in the UK and 1% studied in Australia and Switzerland respectively.



## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

Are you currently studying and if so, what are you studying and where?

81 respondents

### where?

University of Cape Town  
UNISA  
Human Factors International  
North-West University  
UDEMY (Red & Yellow)  
University of Johannesburg  
COAPE  
NMMU  
Friends of Design  
University of the Witwatersrand  
Microsoft Virtual Academy  
Online

**27%**  
are currently  
studying

### what?

Education Technology  
Fine Art  
Editing (and other software programmes)  
Information technology  
Canine Behavioural Psychology  
UX Design  
Business Administration  
User Experience Analyst Certification  
Mobile App Design Principles & UX  
Inclusive innovation (specialising in design thinking)  
Multimedia design  
Interaction design  
Computer science  
UX (online)  
Design  
Interactive Media  
Web Development  
Information architecture



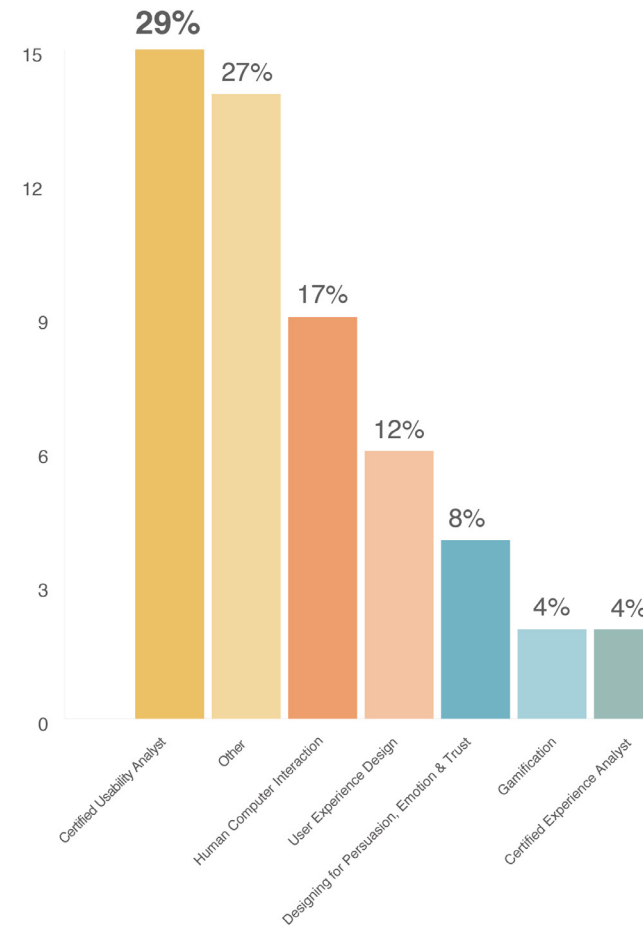
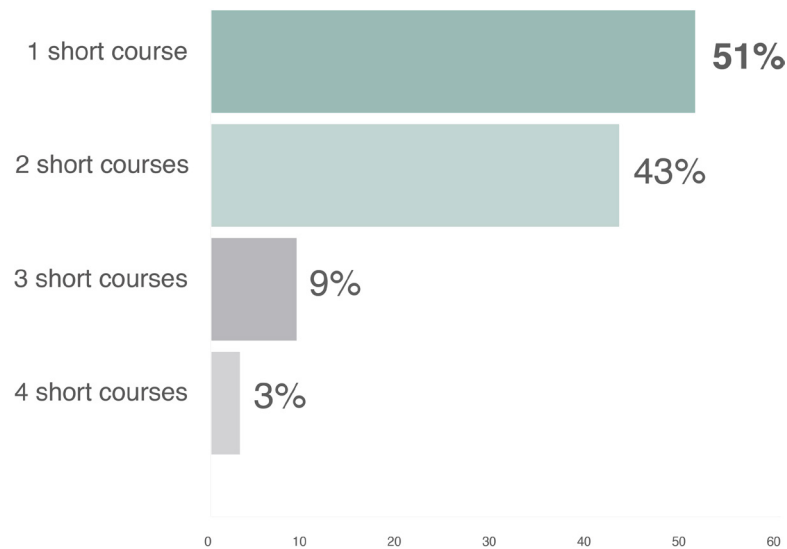
## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

Have you completed any UX specific courses as part of your education (including short courses)?

69 respondents

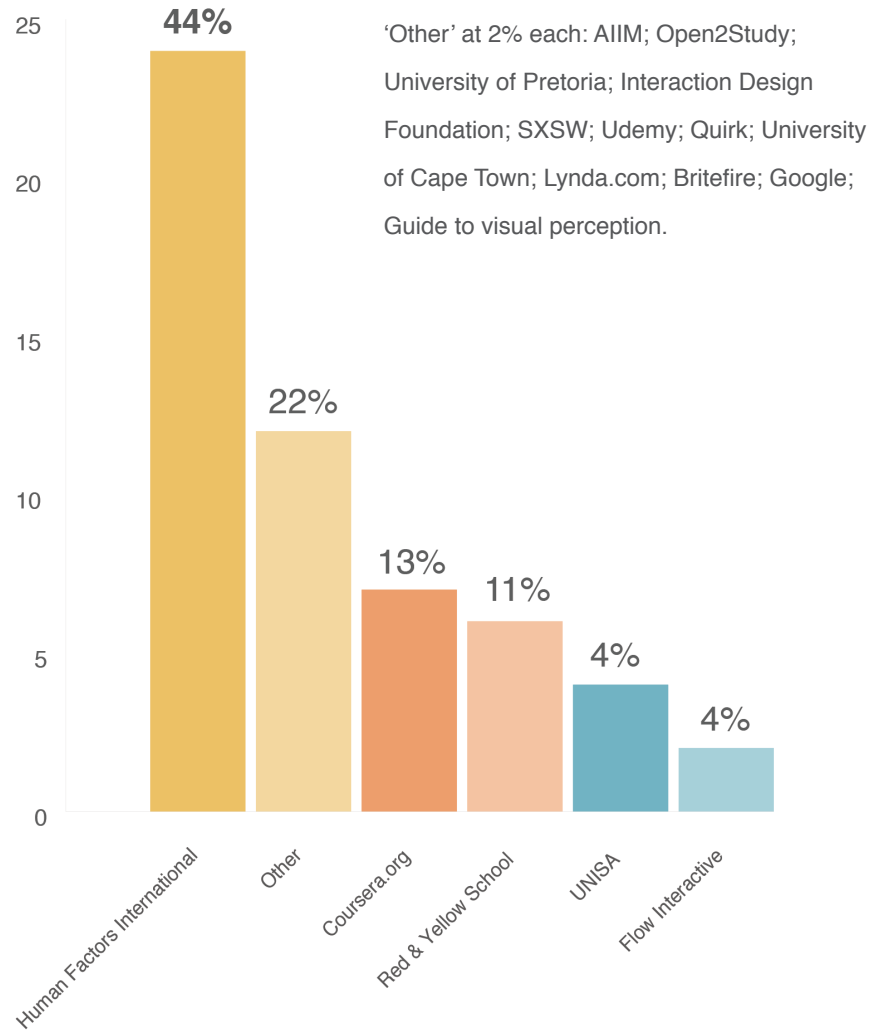
51% of participants have completed other UX specific courses (and 49% not). Of those, 43% have taken a further two courses, 9% have taken a further three and 3% have taken a further four.

Courses include:

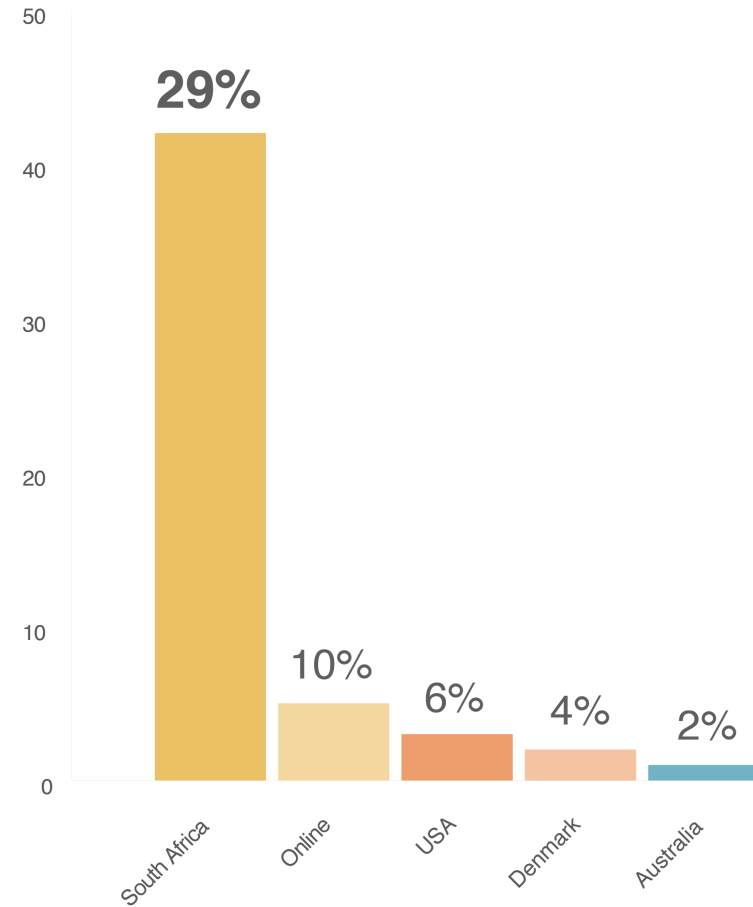


## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

Institutions include:



Locations include:



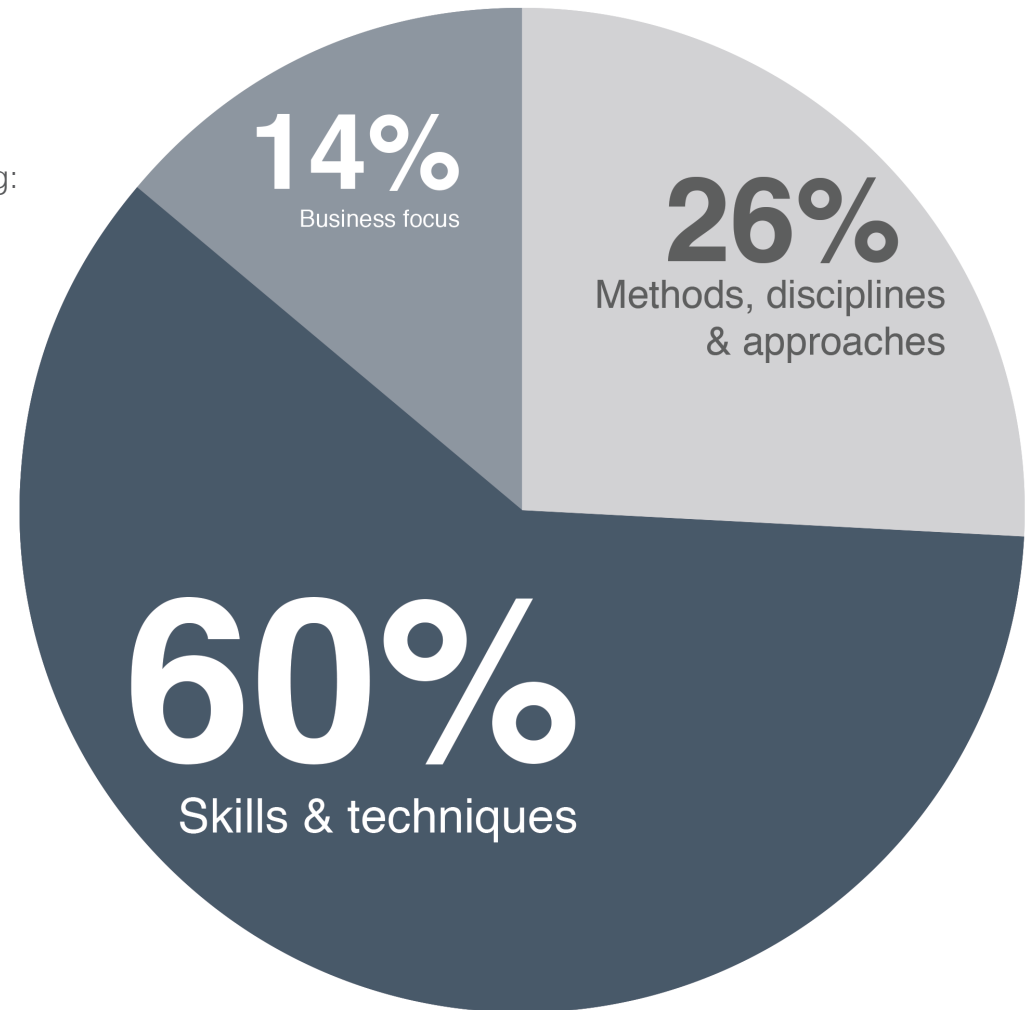
## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

What kind of UX or UX related courses or training would you find beneficial?

*69 respondents*

Respondents indicated that they would be interested in learning:

- a) Methods, disciplines and approaches (26%);
- b) Skills and techniques (60%); and
- c) Business skills (14%)



## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

What kind of UX or UX related courses or training would you find beneficial? (continued)

### Methods, disciplines & approaches (26%) include:

HFI (INCL. CERTIFIED UX ANALYST) (27%)  
 UX (INCLUDING 'PRACTICAL MODELS') (20%)  
 UCD (17%)  
 SYSTEMS DESIGN (13%)  
 LEAN UX (13%)  
 AGILE UX (7%)  
 PSYCHOLOGY (7%)  
 HCI (2%)

### Skills & techniques (60%) include:

USER TESTING (INCL. QUANTITATIVE) (23%)  
 PRACTICAL RESEARCH / USER RESEARCH (17%)  
 IA (11%)  
 ROI ANALYSIS (INCL. 'COMMERCIALY DRIVEN UX DESIGN', 'PROMOTE CONVERSIONS') (9%)  
 DESIGN (INCL. INTERFACE DESIGN) (9%)  
 INTERACTION DESIGN (6%)  
 USABILITY (6%)  
 COLLABORATIVE TEAM WORKING SKILLS (3%)  
 PET DESIGN (PERSUASION, EMOTION AND TRUST) (3%)  
 USER FEEDBACK (3%)  
 EYE TRACKING (3%)  
 PROTOTYPING (3%)  
 CONCEPT GENERATION (3%)  
 CONTENT ANALYSIS (3%)

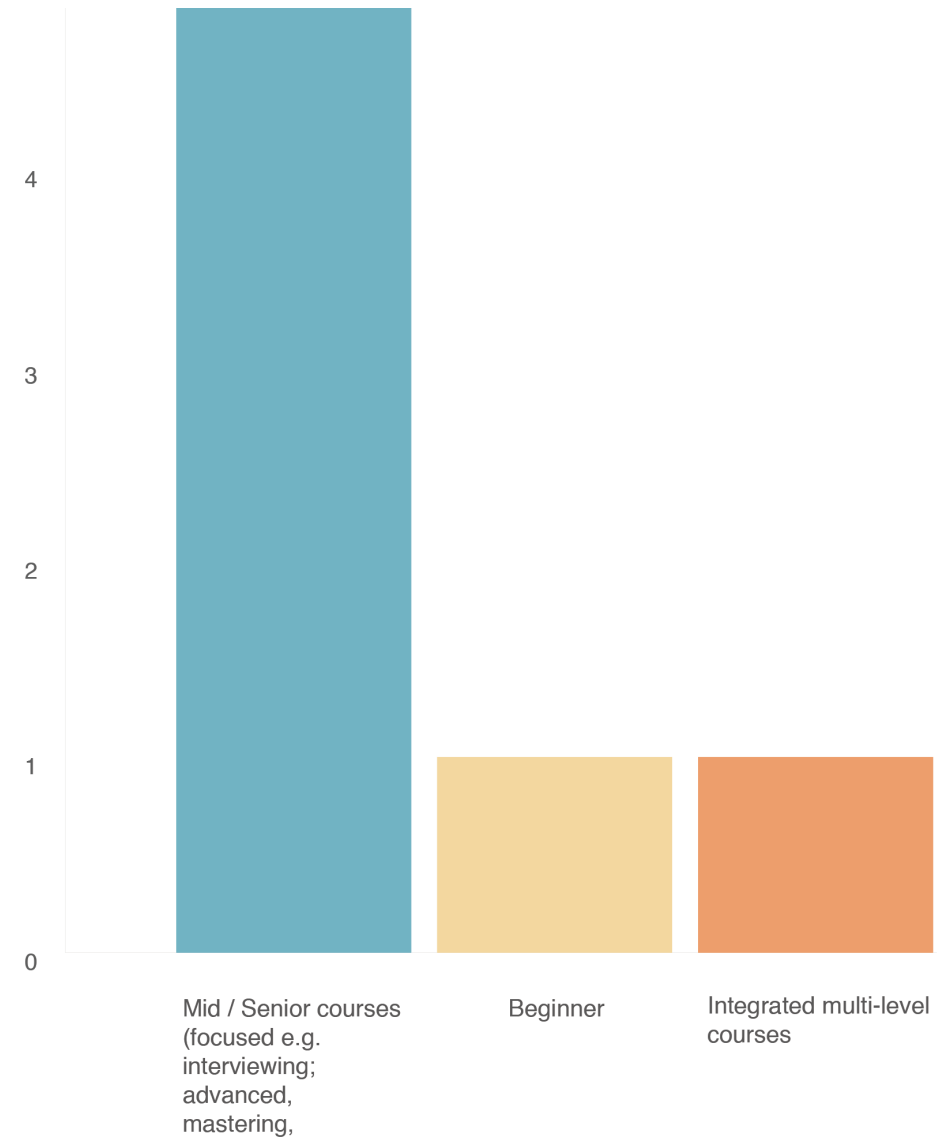
### Business focus (14%) includes:

BUSINESS (MODELS) (50%)  
 PRODUCT STRATEGY (12,5%)  
 UX ADVOCACY (12,5%)  
 CHANGE MANAGEMENT (12,5%)  
 PROJECT MANAGEMENT (12,5%)

## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

Levels of courses desired included:

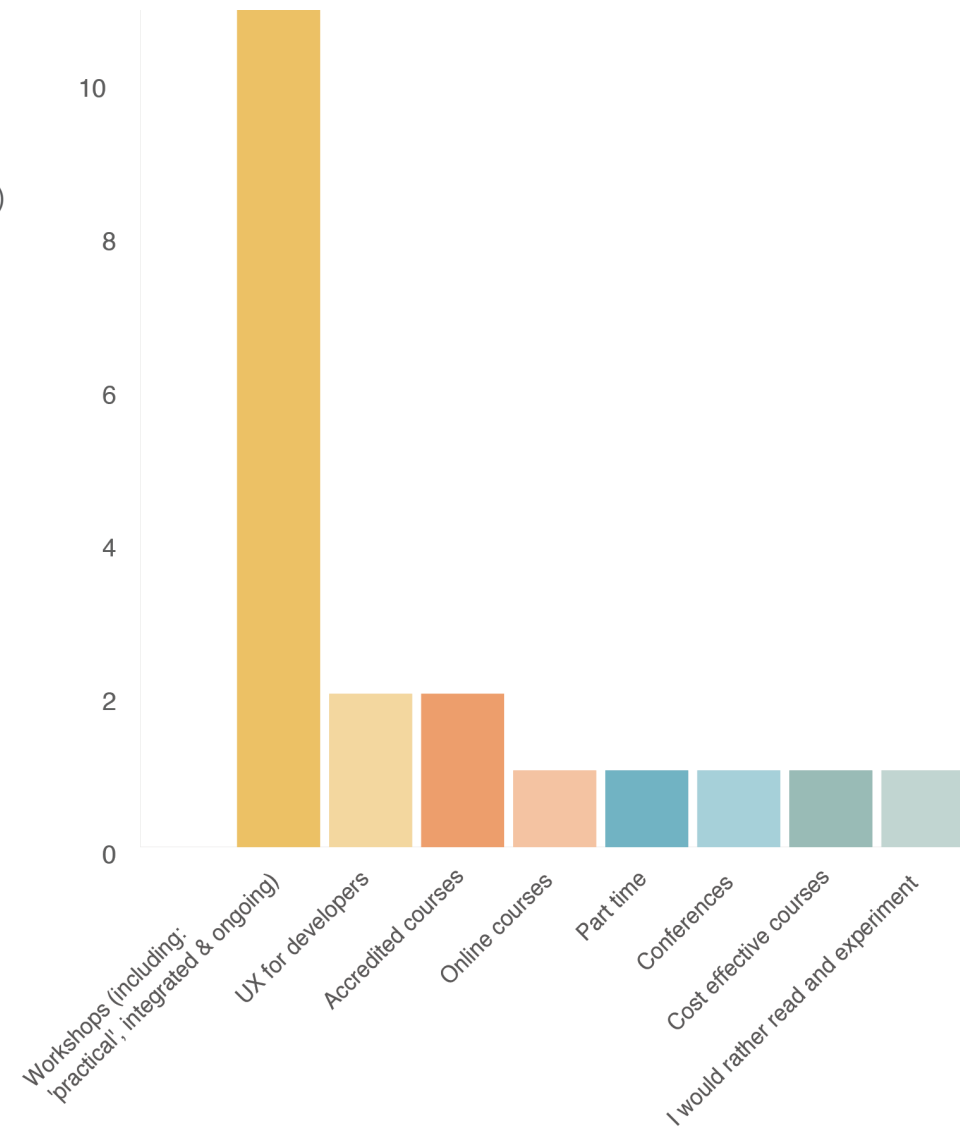
- Mid to senior level courses (focused courses e.g. interviewing; advanced, mastering, specialisation) (71%)
- Beginner level (14%)
- Integrated multi-level courses (14%)



## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

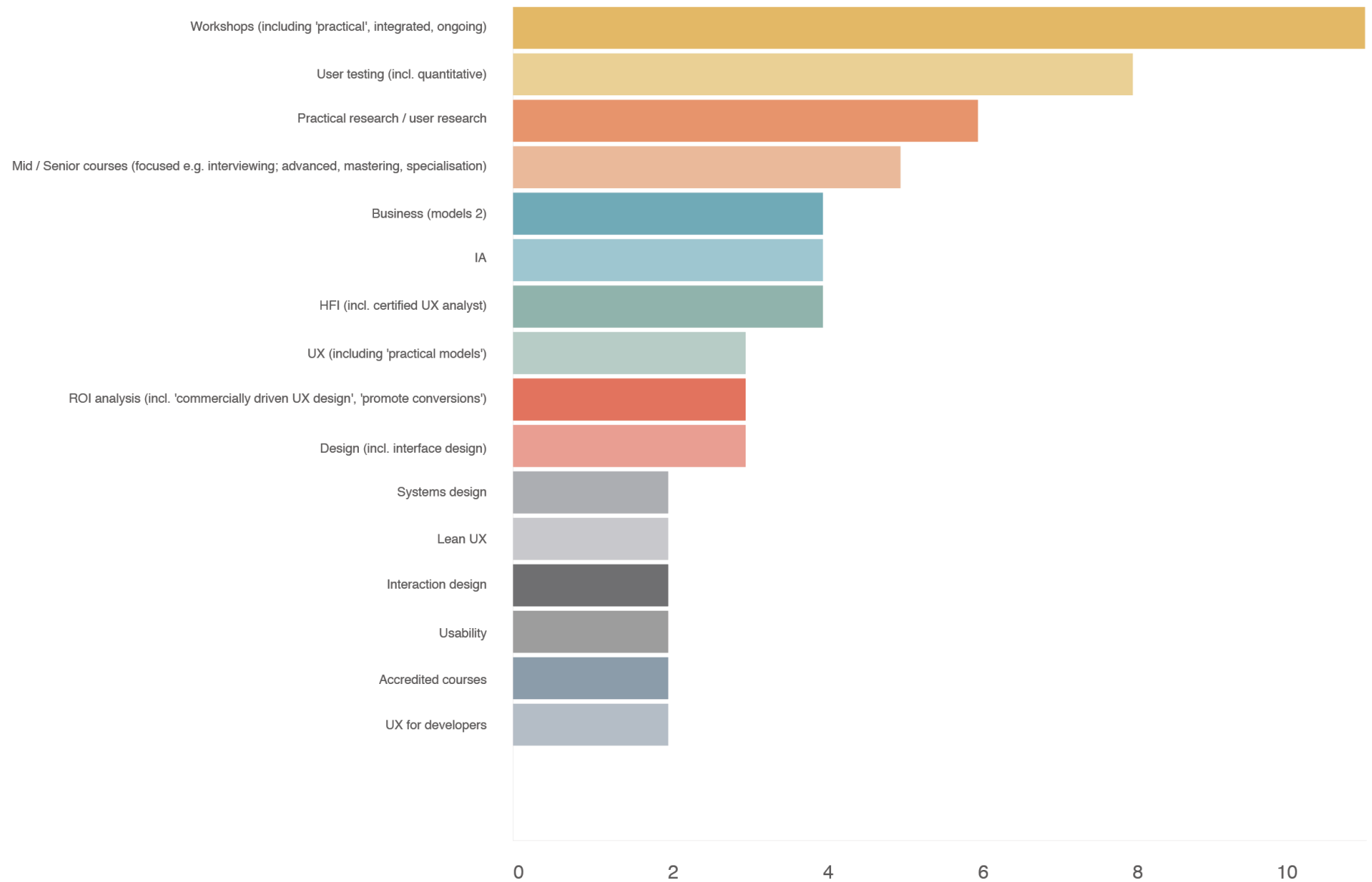
Types and styles of courses included:

- Workshops (including 'practical', integrated, ongoing) (55%)
- UX for developers (10%)
- Accredited courses (10%)
- Online courses (5%)
- Part time courses (5%)
- Conferences (5%)
- Cost effective courses (5%)
- I would rather read and experiment (5%)



## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

Most frequently cited:



## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

### Is UX training made available to your staff?

24 respondents

- 67% of respondents said that training was made available to staff (33% said it was not made available)

### What are the top five skills you require of graduates coming into your UX team?

24 respondents

Responses have been grouped as follows:

- Personality traits (17%)
- Thinking skills (14%)
- UX / UCD knowledge / experience (8%)
- Hard skills (41%)
- Related domain knowledge (16%)
- Certification (3%)





## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

### What are the top five skills you require of graduates coming into your UX team? (continued)

Categorisations break down as follows: (percentages are of the total for the question)

- Personality traits (17%)
  - People skills (incl. 'team player') - 8%
  - Fast learner / open to feedback / curiosity - 6%
  - Empathetic - 2%
  - Confidence - 1%
- Thinking skills (14%)
  - Creative thinking (incl. 'innovativity', ideation) - 6%
  - Logical thinking (incl. problem solving skills, reasoning) - 5%
  - Critical thinking - 2%
  - Analytic thinking - 1%
- UX / UCD knowledge / experience (8%)
  - UCD knowledge - 5%
  - UXD experience - 3%
- Hard skills (41%)
  - Communication skills (incl. comm. ideas, technical writing, negotiating) - 9%
  - Design skills (incl. visual) - 8%
  - User research skills - 7%
  - Prototyping skills (incl. wireframing) - 6%
  - Usability (incl. evaluation) - 5%
  - User testing - 3%
  - Conceptual design - 1%
  - Process design (incl. modelling) - 1%
  - IA skills - 1%

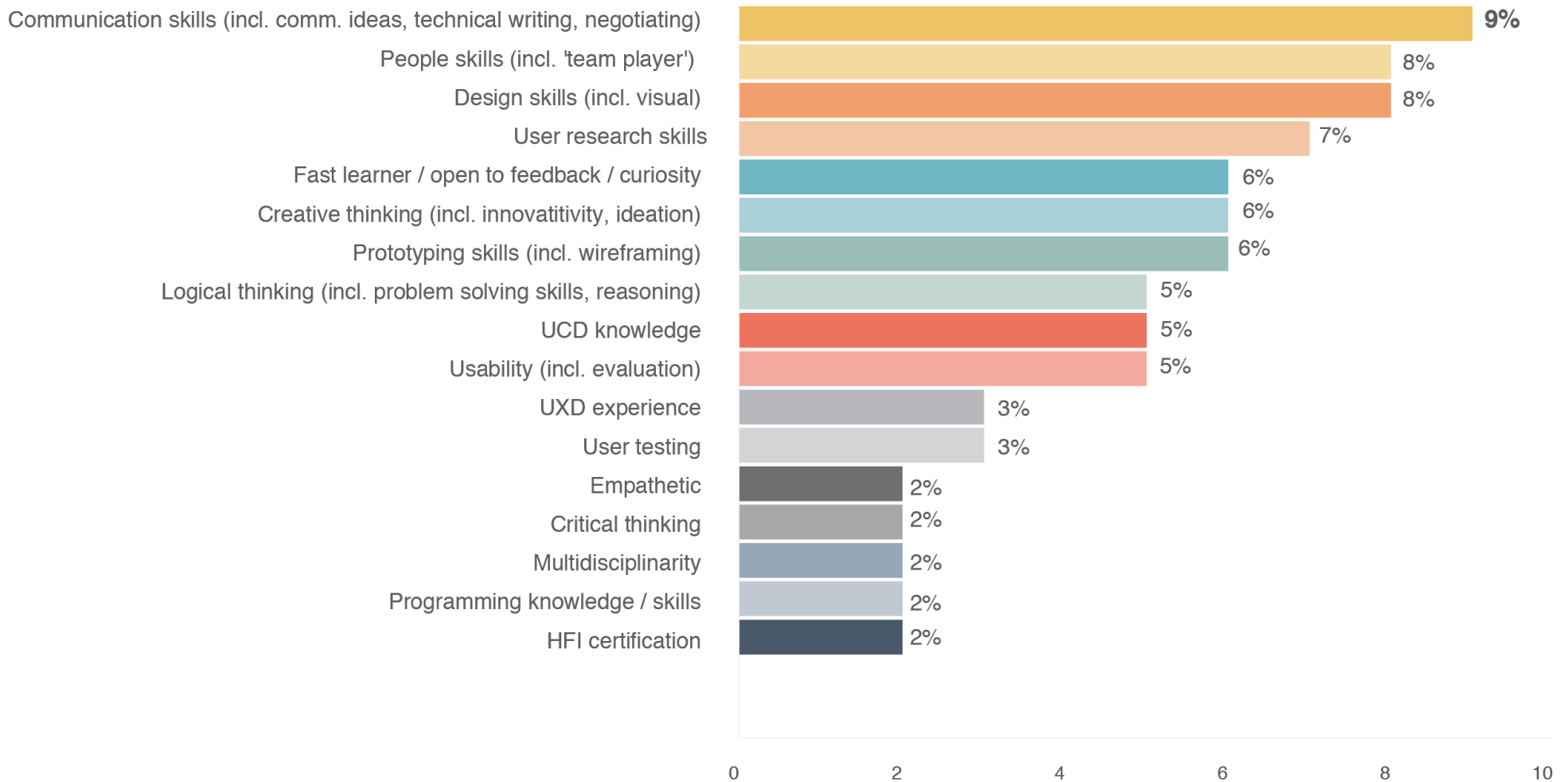
## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

### What are the top five skills you require of graduates coming into your UX team? (continued)

- Related domain knowledge (16%)
  - Programming knowledge / skills - 2%
  - Multidisciplinary - 2%
  - Communication degree - 1%
  - Agile skills - 1%
  - Anthropology - 1%
  - Business modelling - 1%
  - Psychology - 1%
  - Computer science degree - 1%
  - Information management - 1%
  - Business acumen - 1%
  - Information science - 1%
  - Tools (incl. Axure) - 1%
  - Certification (3%)
  - HFI certification - 2%
  - UX certification - 1%
- Most frequently cited:
  - Communication skills (incl. comm. ideas, technical writing, negotiating) - 9%
  - People skills (incl. 'team player') - 8%
  - Design skills (incl. visual) - 8%
  - User research skills - 7%
  - Fast learner / open to feedback / curiosity - 6%
  - Creative thinking (incl. innovatitvity, ideation) - 6%
  - Prototyping skills (incl. wireframing) - 6%
  - Logical thinking (incl. problem solving skills, reasoning) - 4%
  - UCD knowledge - 5%
  - Usability (incl. evaluation) - 5%
  - UXD experience - 3%
  - User testing - 3%
  - Empathetic - 2%
  - Critical thinking - 2%
  - Multidisciplinary - 2%
  - Programming knowledge / skills - 2%
  - HFI certification - 2%

## Education & knowledge building | Analysis

What are the top five skills you require of graduates coming into your UX team? (continued)



## Knowledge production and distribution | Analysis

Do you speak at UX conferences and where?

*69 respondents*

71% of respondents stated that they did not speak at conferences

Of the 29% that do speak at conferences:

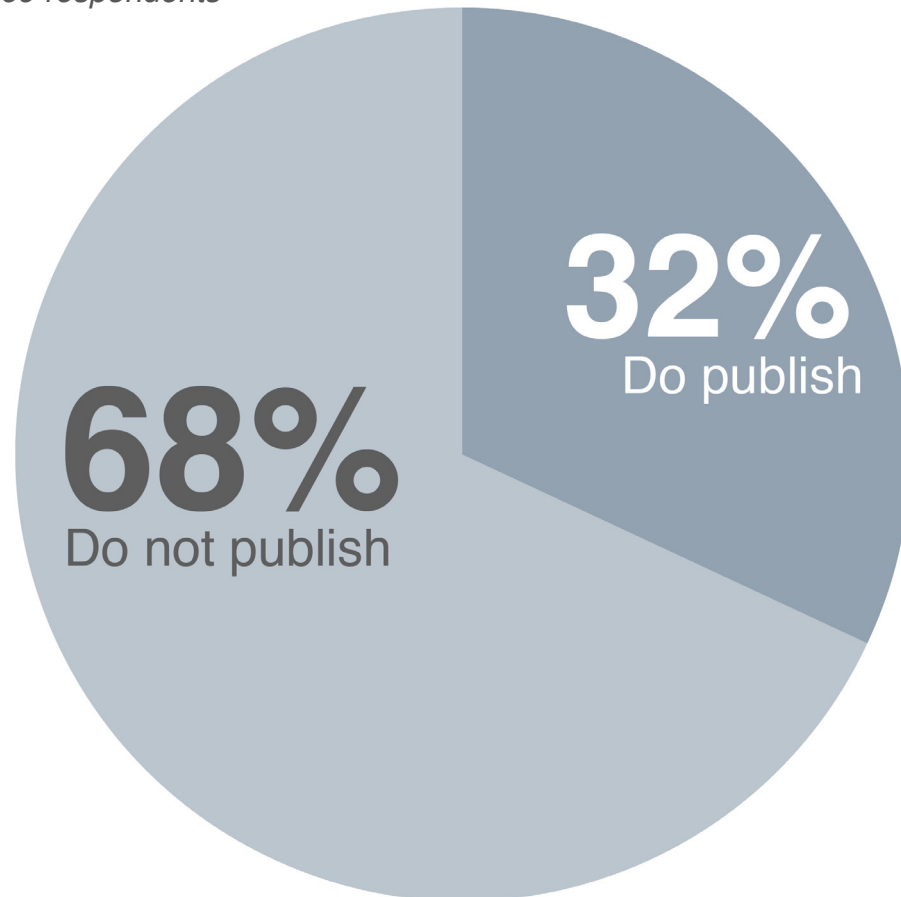
- 65% speak only in SA
- 15% speak only internationally
- and 20% speak both locally in SA and internationally



## Knowledge production & distribution | Analysis

Do you publish on the topic of UX?

*69 respondents*



If yes, are your publications ever academic?

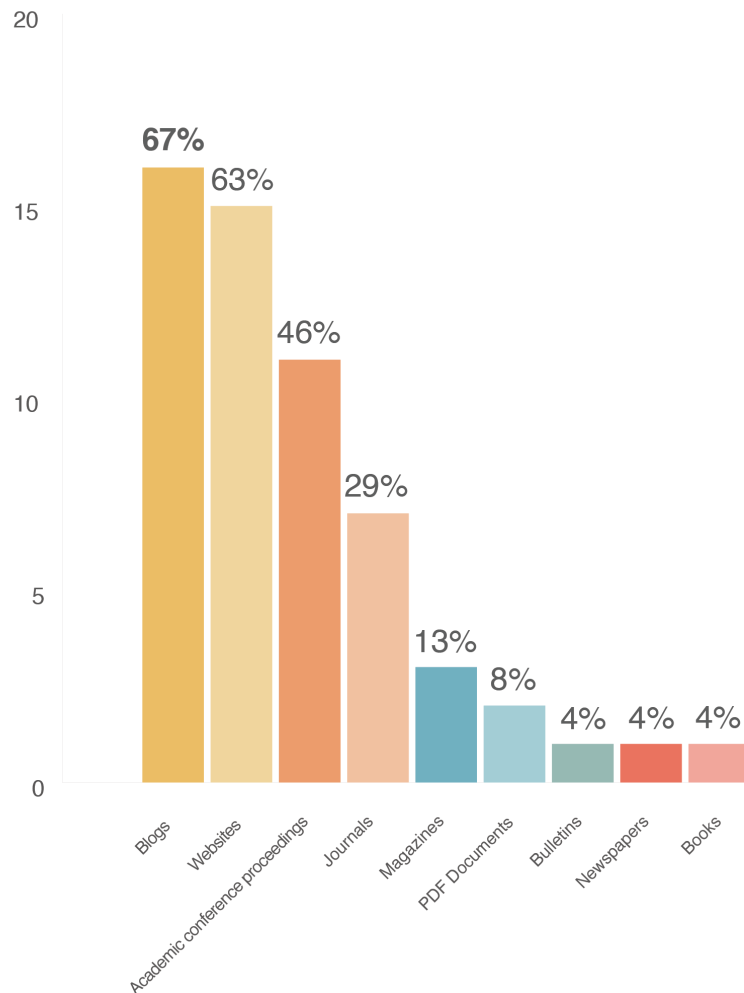
*35 respondents*

Of those publishing, 23% do publish academically and 73% do not publish academically.

## Knowledge production & distribution | Analysis

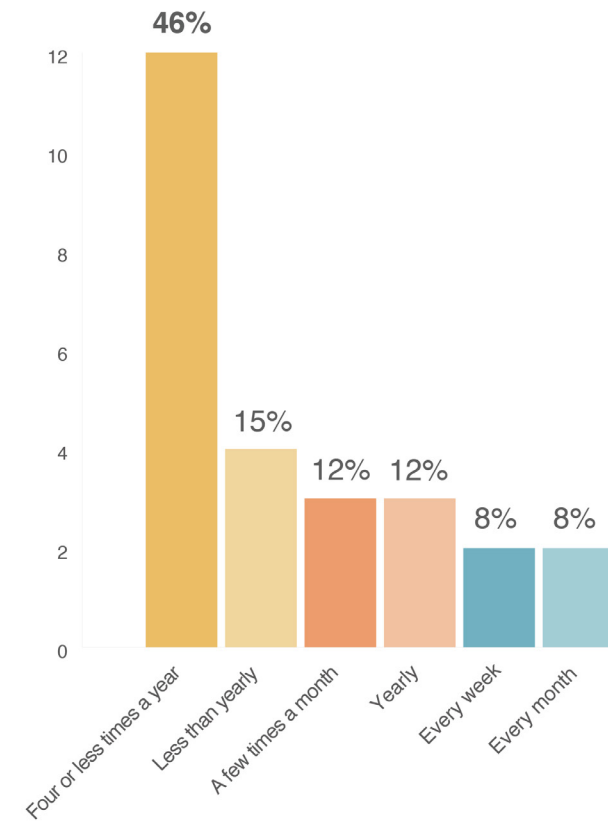
In general (of those publishing) where do you publish?

26 respondents



Frequency of publication?

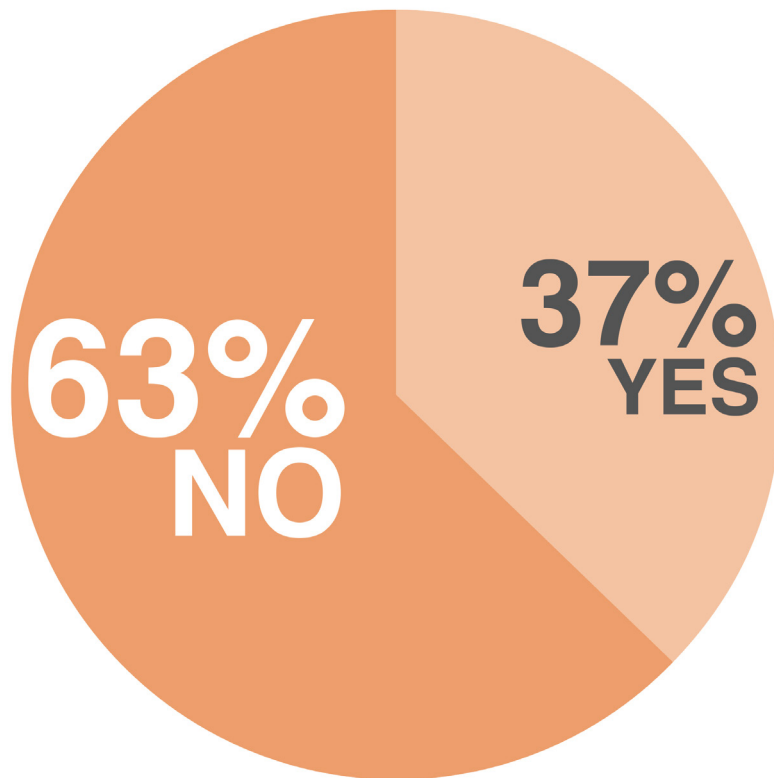
24 respondents



## Knowledge production & distribution | Analysis

Do you conduct UX training?

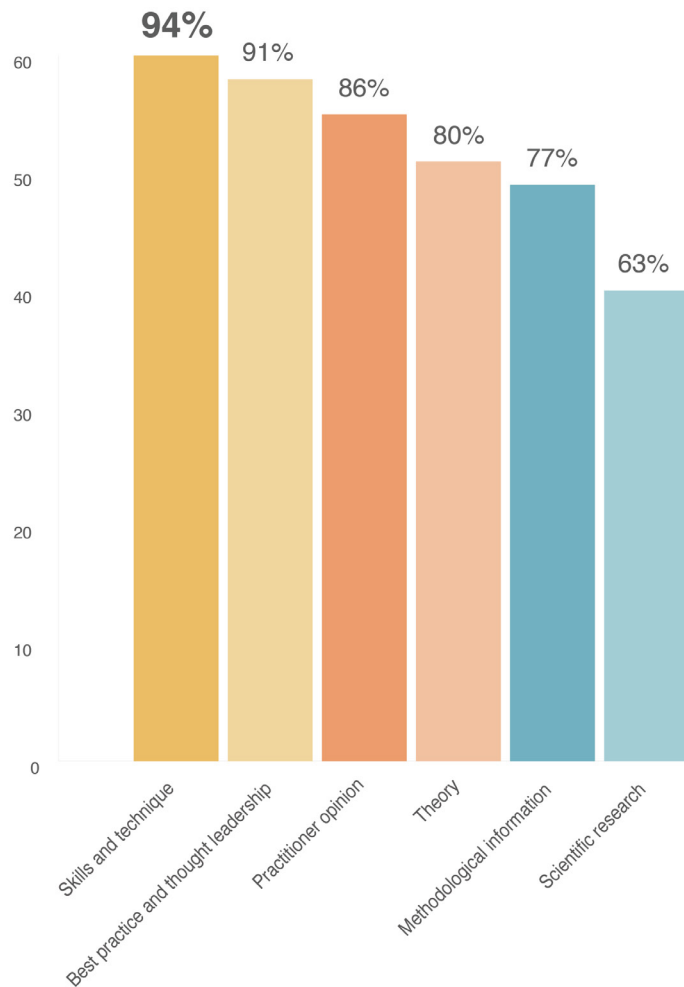
*59 respondents*



## Knowledge sourcing | Analysis

What kinds of reference material do you require to be successful at your job?

64 respondents



Are you a part of any UX communities or groups locally or internationally?

64 respondents

69% are part of a local or international UX group (31% are not).



## Knowledge sourcing | Analysis

### Are you a part of any UX communities or groups locally or internationally? (continued)

#### *39 respondents*

Of those who answered yes (and answered this follow on question) 36% are in more than 2 communities or groups and 10% are part of three (note: we only made provision for up to three communities or groups).

Named communities or groups included:

- The SA UX Forum (Facebook and Google Groups) constitute 39%
- UX Craft Cape Town and the IA Institute each constitute 7%
- The UPA, CUA and HFI each constitute 6%
- The Interaction Design Association, Durban UX Community, LinkedIn UX SA and UX Masterclass Meetups each constitute 4%
- The remainder all constitute 2%: UX South Africa, SGI-SA, UX Bookclub (London), Johannesburg UX Forum, TEI, Mobile UX Johannesburg, UX Alliance, TELIT-SA and UX Meetup Johannesburg

## Knowledge sourcing | Analysis

### Do you attend UX focused conferences or events?

*59 respondents*

75% do attend UX focused conferences or events (25% do not) and of these 93% attend local events and 36% attend international events.

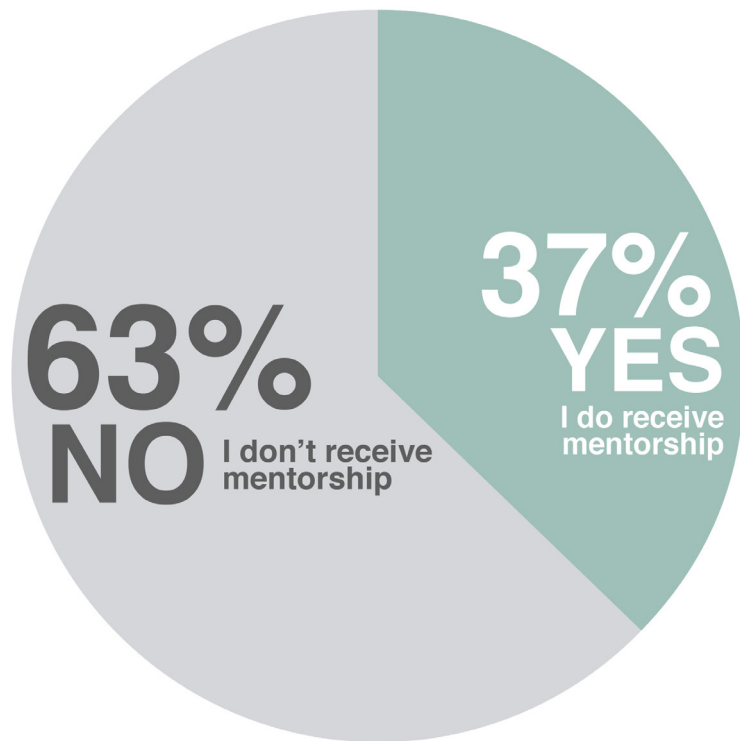
- Local events (93%) include:
  - World IA Day 35%
  - The UX SA Conference 12%
  - UX Craft meetups constitute 8%
  - SAICSIT and UX Masterclass each 5%
  - The remainder constitute 3% each: International events (36%) include: UX Joburg, Digify (Durban), UX Africa, UX CT Meetups, Mantaray Annual Conference.
- International events (36%) include:
  - EuroIA 21%
  - SXSW 14%
  - The remainder all constitute 7% each: IA Summit, Interact, Neilson Usability Week, UX Masterclass, UXPA, UI19, Webstock, BD Conference, Smashing conference.



## Knowledge sourcing | Analysis

Do you receive any UX mentorship?

*59 respondents*



Of the 37% who do receive mentorship, 50% receive it from within their companies and 50% from outside their companies.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

## Conclusion and recommendations

This study has endeavoured to provide a body of knowledge about the field of UX in South Africa from which discussion and recommendations could emerge to help move the field of UX forward in an informed, positive and pro-active manner. Building on this effort, learnings and feedback, the study will be repeated over time to start mapping and observing maturation.

Follow **uxlandscape.com** for future studies.

For the purposes of this study an online survey (using Survey Monkey) was conducted targeted at UX practitioners in South Africa, organisations offering UX services and / or conducting UX in South Africa and educators in the field of UX in South Africa.

Data and insights have been grouped into four areas (discussed previously in Section 4: Findings):

- Demographics
- UX Practitioners
- Institutional UX
- Education and knowledge building

Each of these sections contains a summary of the findings, considerations for future development (titled: 'Looking forward') and analysis of individual questions that featured in the survey. Together they offer significant amounts of information and knowledge that the authors believe contribute richly to an understanding of the current state of UX in South Africa.

It is hoped that the knowledge presented here will be built upon by other researchers and used by those practising UX, organisations offering UX services, educationalists and the community at large to push the field forward.

## The current state of UX in South Africa:

At present the field benefits from high demand, good remuneration, high levels of employment and equitable gender ratios. UX is predominantly practiced in Johannesburg and Cape Town and is niched in particular sectors which again suggests that there is much room to grow and continue to contribute to equitable employment. The community of practice and its platforms is also growing and new events and new platforms are emerging and establishing themselves rapidly.

If crawling, walking and running were a scale, it may be accurate to describe the field as crawling and being in the process of learning to walk. The evolution to the next phase of development is however presenting a variety of challenges that will need to be addressed.

On the one hand demand for practitioners and skills is high and on the other, those in the field are still struggling to gain organisational buy-in (with the related challenges of process integration into adjacent disciplines, competence and sufficient time and budget to perform UX activities).

## Conclusion and recommendations

A feeder-base of graduates and junior practitioners is lacking. Practitioners are currently weighted towards mid-weight and senior positions and many practitioners appear to be advancing through the ranks at an exponential rate with evidence to suggest that they lack the skills associated with such advancement.

A strong demand for short courses that could assist in filling the skills GAP exists while tertiary institutions are not succeeding in providing the much needed new entrants into the field.

Lastly, there is a clear lack of the shared language, standards and definitions that would otherwise help educators, practitioners, organisations conducting UX, industry and other sectors to mature. The field lacks shared indicators of skill-level, skill requirements, roles, titles and remuneration. Additionally, local industry knowledge required to grow the practice into both a discipline and a profession is lacking. This knowledge needs to be present if practitioners, organisations and educational institutions are to be supported in achieving their individual goals.

## Recommendations

### Increase awareness of and advocacy for the field of UX in South Africa:

- a. Particularly in areas and cities other than Johannesburg and Cape Town
- b. Within educational institutions offering short- and part-time courses, undergraduate and post-graduate degrees
- c. Broadly across all industry verticals

### Develop educational support:

- a. Short-term, to fill the existing skills GAP and
- b. Longer-term to provide work-ready graduate and post-graduate candidates
- c. Increase communication and collaboration between industry and educational institutions

### Professionalise the field:

- a. Develop shared, cross-sector language, standards and definitions
- b. Develop shared, cross-sector indicators of skill-levels, skill requirements, roles, titles and remuneration
- c. Build local knowledge to support practitioners, organisations offering and using UX and educational institutions

## 6. Next steps

## Next steps

The vision for the UX Landscape of South Africa report is to have it repeated in future such that ongoing analysis may track the maturation of the field with continuous assistance in the provision of information, analysis and recommendations.

The authors will learn from both the successes and failures of this first effort and add to and amend to the methodology as they progress. Thanks are given to all those who thus far have provided feedback and future feedback to this report is most welcome.

It is worth acknowledging a few limitations in this study which future efforts will, within reason, aim to address:

1. The UX community of practice is understood to be fragmented, dispersed and subjectively defined and while the authors made every effort to distribute the survey applying all known platforms available (as well as the author's own networks) the limitations of this are noted. Future attempts to re-run this survey will build on this work and hopefully extend reach further as new platforms and networks emerge.
2. There are limits to the nature of data that can be obtained through online surveys. Future research efforts to understand the landscape of UX in South Africa will likely include additional research methods (in particular, qualitative methods) that supplement the use of an online survey.
3. The education section in the survey received very low response rates. For this reason, no analysis and reporting has been possible on the current landscape of UX in the educational sector in South Africa (although many other questions asked have allowed for insight to be provided on the broader topic of 'education' in the field). Future research efforts will amend the methodology to better engage this audience.



## Contact us

Should you wish to provide feedback regarding this report, assist in future research efforts or participate in future research please email [contactus@uxlandscape.com](mailto:contactus@uxlandscape.com) or visit

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