



האקדמיה הצעירה הישראלית  
الأكاديمية الشابّة الإسرائيليّة  
THE ISRAEL YOUNG ACADEMY

**Afik In Academia**  
Israeli Women University  
Professors' Forum



**אפיק באקדמיה**  
פורום הפרופסוריות  
באוניברסיטאות

Survey of Academic  
Faculty at Universities:

# Contending with the Global Academic Arena During and After the War

April 2024





Survey of Academic Faculty at Universities:

## **Contending with the Global Academic Arena During and After the War**

Academia in Israel has been affected dramatically by the “Swords of Iron” War that began on October 7, 2023, and is still raging. The war has harmed many faculty members and students, directly and indirectly. Many of them are active in the military reserves and as civilian volunteers. In addition, it seems that another front has emerged in the form of anti-Semitism and an anti-Israeli climate, particularly in academic institutions around the world.

This document summarizes the results of a survey conducted on behalf of the “Israel Young Academy” and “Afik in Academia: Israeli Women University Professors’ Forum”. The survey aims to identify the challenges currently facing Israeli academia (particularly faculty members) and to use the findings to guide the policies of university leaders and regulatory bodies – both in wartime and in post-war efforts to return to routine.

In this condensed report, we present the key survey findings. First, we present the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Next, we present the types of harm to academic work that faculty members have experienced and that they anticipate in the future. Finally, we present the solutions that faculty members believe should be promoted to minimize the harm to academic work in Israel.

## Demographic data

1,015 senior faculty members responded to the survey questionnaire, which was disseminated by the rectors of all the universities. The survey was open for responses from December 19 through 28, 2023. In the following sections, the number of respondents is 1,015 unless noted otherwise. In the breakdown according to various criteria (academic institution, academic rank, etc.), the numbers of respondents are reported in each category, followed (in parentheses) by their percentage of the total sample.

At Tel Aviv University, 210 faculty members (20.7%) responded to the survey; at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 151 (14.9%); at Bar-Ilan University, 144 (14.2%); at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 143 (14.1%); at the University of Haifa, 188 (11.6%); at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, 79 (7.8%); at Ariel University, 60 (5.9%); at the Weizmann Institute of Science, 55 (5.4%); at the Open University, 34 (3.4%); and at Reichman University, 21 (2.1%). In terms of academic rank, 136 (13.3%) respondents are lecturers; 356 (35.1%) are senior lecturers; 273 (26.9%) are associate professors; and 251 (24.7%) are professors. As these numbers reflect, faculty members of various ranks are duly represented.

The respondents include a disproportionately high number of women relative to the general population of university faculty members.

In terms of their academic fields, 228 (22.5%) of the respondents defined themselves as engaged in the social sciences, 195 (19.2%) in the life sciences and medicine, 333 (32.8%) in the natural sciences and engineering, 191 (18.8%) in the humanities and arts, and 68 (6.7%) in law, management, and economics.

Regarding the type of research, 310 respondents (30.5%) engage in research of mixed experimental-theoretical methodology, 380 (37.4%) in experimental research and 325 (32.0%) in theoretical research. Of the respondents, 541 (53.3%) identified as men, 471 (46.6%) as women and 3 (0.3%) as other. The respondents included 623 (61.4%) tenured faculty members and 392 (38.6%) non-tenured faculty members. 874 (86.7%) are married, 54 (5.4%) are single, 65 (6.4%) are separated/divorced and 15 (1.5%) are widowed.

The respondents were permitted more than one response to the question about their children's ages. Of the respondents to this question, 104 (10.2%) have children aged 0–2; 173 (17.0%) have children aged 3–5; 380 (37.4%) have children aged 6–11; 376 (37.0%) have children aged 12–18; 284 (28%) have children in military service; and 258 (27.8%) have adult children (over the age of 18) who are not currently in military service. Of the respondents for which this is relevant, 649 (93.1% of n=697) noted that their children's school systems stopped operating in their regular format for various periods in the wake of the war's outbreak. Moreover, 319 (48.3% of n=660) said that their children's school systems operated irregularly for more than a month.

## Analysis of the data

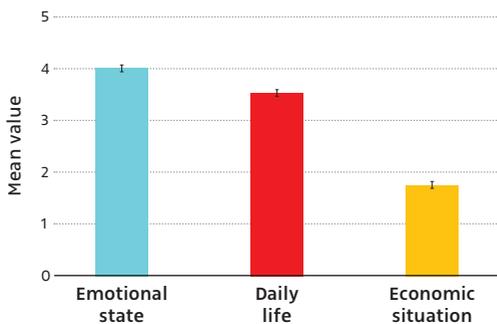
In order to examine whether there were differences among the various groups of faculty members in the types of harm they experienced to their academic work and in their support for different solutions, we conducted a series of non-parametric tests, since the results did not meet the conditions for conducting linear analyses. The tests were performed on the following dependent variables: the extent of harm to daily life, emotional harm, economic harm, and general harm to the quality of their research. The following explanatory variables were examined in this analysis: gender, academic institution, academic rank, academic field (e.g., social sciences), tenure (yes/no), type of research (theoretical/experimental/mixed method), the operation of the children's school system and the presence of children at home. We categorized respondents with more than one child at home according to the age of the youngest child, assuming that families with young children were the most adversely affected.

In addition, we examined the impact of gender, tenure, and children's age on the three harm variables and general harm to the quality of research (by constructing dummy variables to create several groups – e.g., women and men with or without tenure). We performed Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon tests for binary variables (gender or tenure), Kruskal-Wallis tests for variables with more than two categories (and a Wilcoxon test as a post-hoc analysis between the variables) and chi-squared tests for binary dependent variables (was there harm? yes/no). Given the considerable number of tests, we applied the Benjamini-Hochberg correction to all tests that examined differences in harm between distinct groups of faculty members. In addition, we

examined the extent to which there were gender-related differences and differences between academic fields in the researchers' support for various proposed solutions in the non-parametric tests described above. Finally, we used a Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test to examine whether the likelihood of the respondents emigrating from Israel had increased in the wake of the war. All the statistical analyses were performed using R software. Only statistically significant results are presented in the report.

## Harm to academic work

In general, about 5% of the researchers reported direct harm to themselves or family members related to the war, and about 11% reported that members of their research group were directly harmed. In addition to assessing the extent of direct harm, we presented three questions to examine the extent of harm to daily life and its impact on the emotional and economic states of the faculty members. It seems that they felt significant harm to their emotional state and daily life, and lesser harm to their economic situation (Figure 1).



**Figure 1**  
Impact of harm to university faculty members' emotional state, daily life and economic situation.

The respondents assessed the harm on a scale of 1 to 5. The diagram reports the mean harm and standard error.

Statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) were found between men and women in relation to all three types of harm, with women reporting more severe harm. Lecturers and senior lecturers reported greater harm in all three measures in comparison to associate professors and professors; non-tenured faculty members reported significantly greater harm to their economic situation and daily life in comparison to their tenured colleagues; and theoreticians reported less economic harm than experimental researchers or faculty members engaged in mixed-method research (Table 1).

**Table 1**

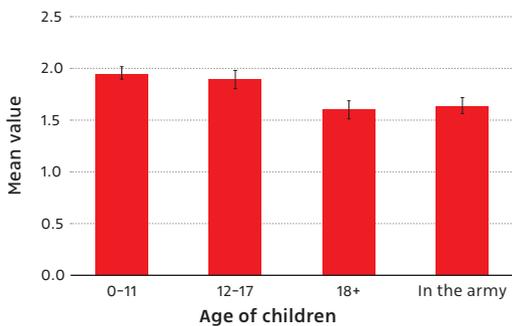
**Reports on war-related harm to daily life, emotional state and economic situation.**

The respondents assessed the harm on a scale of 1 to 5. The table reports the mean harm and the standard error of the mean.

Mean harm on a scale of 1 to 5 ( $\pm$ standard error)						
Sub-population	Daily life		Emotional state		Economic situation	
	p-value	Mean $\pm$ SE	p-value	Mean $\pm$ SE	p-value	Mean $\pm$ SE
Women	0.009	3.70 $\pm$ 0.04	<0.001	4.27 $\pm$ 0.03	0.237	1.86 $\pm$ 0.05
Men		3.46 $\pm$ 0.05		3.83 $\pm$ 0.04		1.77 $\pm$ 0.04
Non-tenured	0.005	3.45 $\pm$ 0.05	0.052	4.12 $\pm$ 0.05	<0.001	2.00 $\pm$ 0.05
Tenured		3.71 $\pm$ 0.04		3.99 $\pm$ 0.04		1.70 $\pm$ 0.04
Lecturer	0.003	3.74 $\pm$ 0.10	0.003	4.25 $\pm$ 0.07	<0.001	2.16 $\pm$ 0.10
Senior Lecturer		3.70 $\pm$ 0.05		4.10 $\pm$ 0.05		1.93 $\pm$ 0.05
Associate Professor		3.54 $\pm$ 0.06		4.05 $\pm$ 0.07		1.73 $\pm$ 0.06
Professor		3.35 $\pm$ 0.07		3.84 $\pm$ 0.06		1.57 $\pm$ 0.05
Theoretical research	0.273	3.44 $\pm$ 0.06	0.744	3.97 $\pm$ 0.05	0.001	1.62 $\pm$ 0.05
Experimental research		3.67 $\pm$ 0.05		4.11 $\pm$ 0.05		1.91 $\pm$ 0.05
Mixed-method research		3.59 $\pm$ 0.06		4.01 $\pm$ 0.05		1.91 $\pm$ 0.06
<b>Mean</b>		<b>3.57<math>\pm</math>0.03</b>		<b>4.04<math>\pm</math>0.03</b>		<b>1.81<math>\pm</math>0.03</b>

An examination of the population of survey respondents by groups according to gender and tenure (yes/no) showed that the sense of emotional and economic harm, harm to daily life and harm to research was generally strongest among non-tenured female researchers and weakest among male tenured researchers ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $p = 0.003$ , respectively). That is, non-tenured female researchers reported being harmed more by the war in comparison to other faculty members.

In addition, faculty members with young children reported a more severe level of economic harm (statistically significant differences) in comparison to faculty members without young children (Figure 2).



**Figure 2**  
 The impact of economic harm among faculty members with children in four age groups.  
 The respondents assessed the harm on a scale of 1 to 5. The diagram reports the mean harm and standard error.

In addition, on the question of general harm to the quality of research, the survey results indicate that the greatest harm was among female researchers with children of kindergarten and elementary school age. Significant disparities were also found between female and male researchers with or without tenure ( $p < 0.001$ ). Tenured faculty members reported the least harm in relation to most of the children's age groups, and non-tenured female faculty members reported more severe harm in

comparison to other faculty members (Figure 3). Note that the number of non-tenured respondents with children above the age of eighteen was low (18 out of a total of 1,015 respondents).

**Figure 3**  
**The impact of harm to the quality of research among faculty members with children in four age groups, by gender and tenures.**

The respondents assessed the harm on a scale of 1 to 5. The diagram reports the mean harm and standard error.

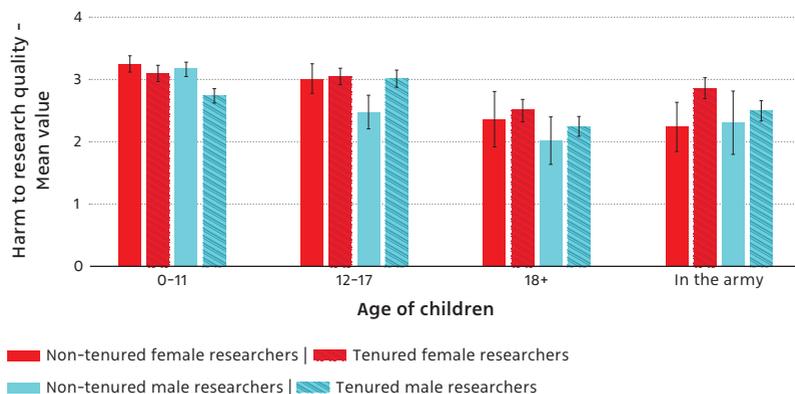
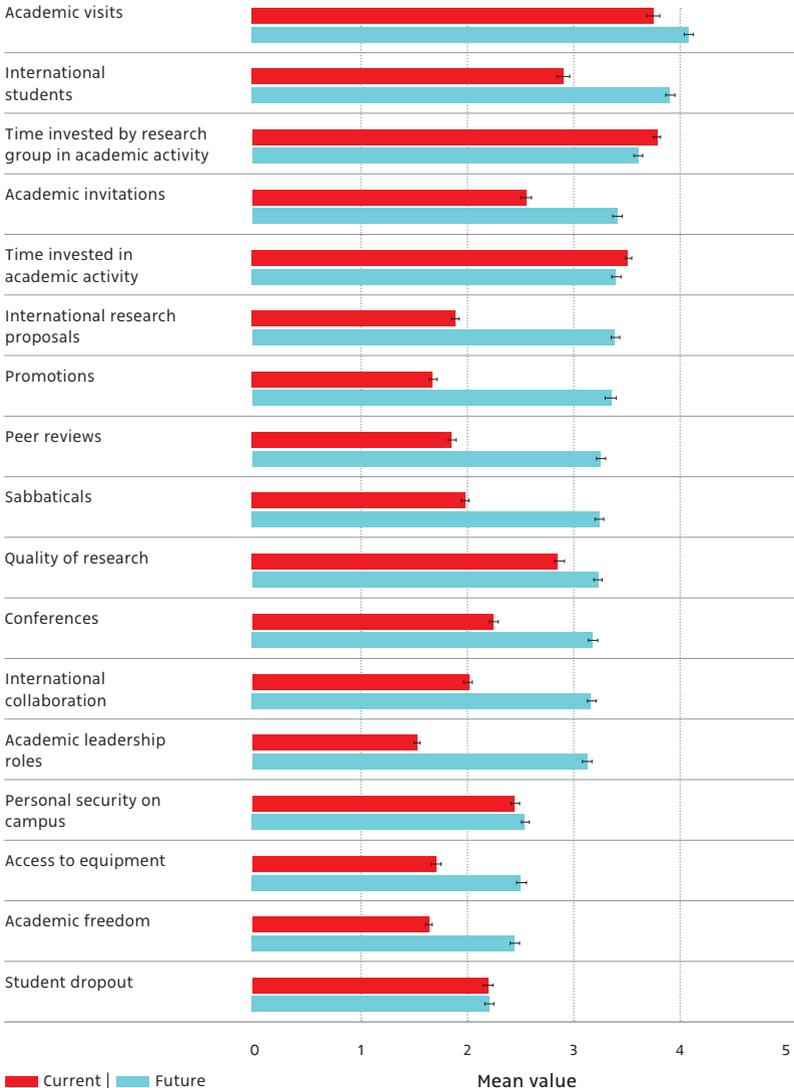


Figure 4 below presents the extent of harm reported in various parameters, as experienced at the time of response to the survey, and as anticipated in the future. Significant reported harm to international visits and research work in general is already observable, both for the researchers themselves and for research groups. Furthermore, the researchers anticipate significant future harm in many other parameters, including peer review by their international scientific community and letters of recommendation for promotion. The expectation of future harm appears to be particularly high in parameters that include an international component (e.g., collaboration, peer review of articles and research proposals, and sabbaticals).

**Figure 4**  
**Reports on current harm and anticipated future harm in the various parameters.**

The respondents assessed the harm on a scale of 1 to 5. The length of the bars indicates the mean harm among the respondents, and the error bars denote the standard error.



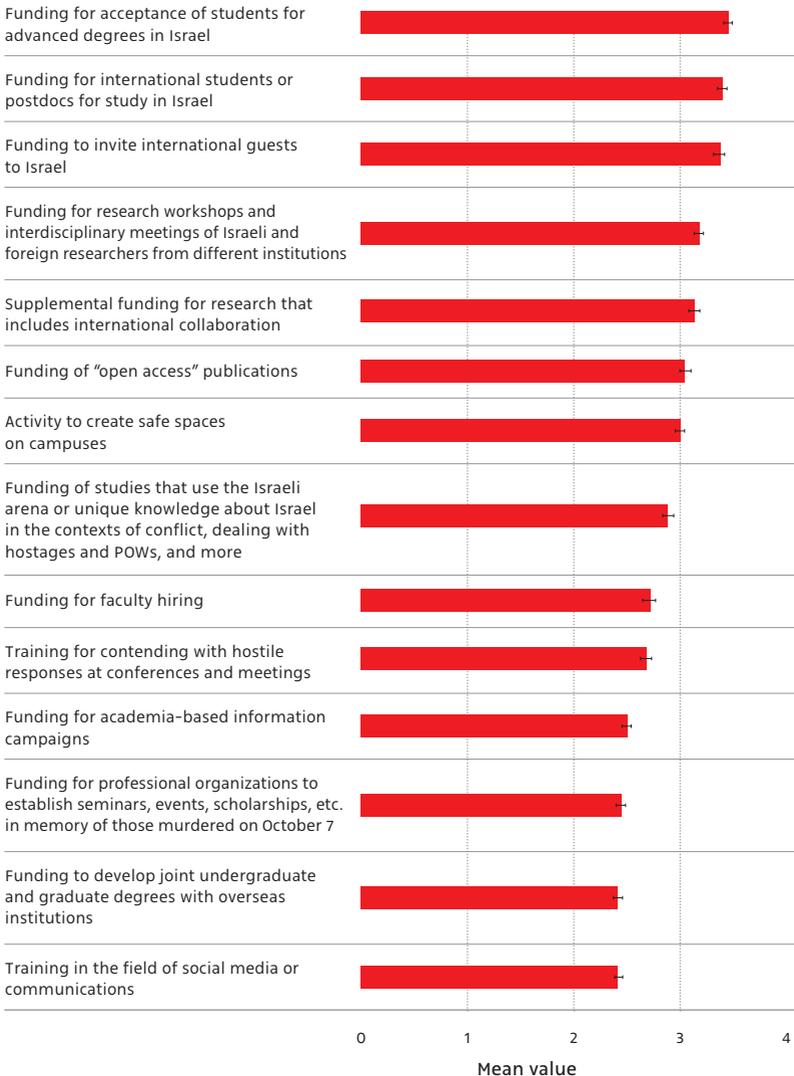
## Possible solutions

Figure 5 presents the faculty members' views on the need for various solutions proposed in the questionnaire. They report a great need for assistance in funding international activities, including the recruitment of students, as well as funding for visits by colleagues and for collaborative research with colleagues overseas.

Statistically significant differences were found among the different fields of study in the perceived need for various solutions: Researchers from the social sciences felt a greater need to fund “open access” publication ( $p\text{-value}<0.001$ ) and unique research on Israel as a test case (i.e., within the Israeli arena or using Israeli knowledge in the contexts of conflict, hostage and POW situations, etc.;  $p\text{-value}=0.03$ ) and to create safe spaces on campuses ( $p\text{-value}=0.008$ ), while researchers from the natural sciences, law, economics and business administration felt a greater need to fund the hiring of faculty ( $p\text{-value}=0.007$ ). In addition, women faculty members supported the following solutions significantly more than their male colleagues: activity to create safe spaces on campuses ( $p\text{-value}<0.001$ ), funding for unique research on Israel as a case study ( $p\text{-value}<0.001$ ), funding for international research workshops ( $p\text{-value}<0.002$ ), assistance in funding “open access” publication ( $p\text{-value}<0.001$ ), training to contend with hostile responses at conferences and meetings ( $p\text{-value}<0.001$ ) and training in the field of social media and communication ( $p\text{-value}=0.001$ ).

**Figure 5**  
**Assessment of the need for the various suggested solutions.**

The respondents assessed the need on a scale of 1 to 5. The length of the bar indicates the need for the solution as perceived by the respondents, and the error bars denote the standard error.



## The likelihood of faculty emigration

The chances that faculty members might emigrate from Israel rose substantially following the outbreak of the war: Respondents reported that, prior to the war, their chances of emigrating would have been on average,  $2.93 \pm 0.07$  (on a scale of 1 to 10); this number rose to  $3.30 \pm 0.08$  after the war broke out. The disparity is statistically significant ( $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ).

A previous survey conducted in March 2023 to gauge how academia might be affected by the current government's legislative initiatives at the time included the same question: The mean value for the chance of emigrating from Israel was 0.91 (on a scale of 0 to 10) before the legislative initiatives were announced, and 3.39 after their announcement.

## Summary

The survey results, which included responses from 1,015 university faculty members, indicate a sense of substantial harm to life in general and to various dimensions of academic work at Israel's universities in the wake of the war.

The respondents reported current harm related to international connections, including the cancellation of visits by colleagues, the departure of international students and difficulties in recruiting others, as well as harm to scientific work in general. In addition, the faculty members reported substantial fear of future harm in these areas and in other dimensions related to submitting research proposals to international foundations, objectivity in peer review of articles and

research proposals, evaluation of candidates for hiring or promotion, and maintaining international connections in general.

Women, non-tenured researchers, faculty members of lower rank, those with young children and researchers in the social sciences and humanities reported more severe harm in comparison to other faculty members.

It appears that the international aspect of higher education in all its dimensions will require a significant boost – both in funding and in institutional infrastructure and procedures. A need for the following solutions was reported:

- \* Funding to recruit international students and postdoctoral scholars
- \* Funding for students for advanced degrees
- \* Funding to invite international colleagues
- \* Encouragement of and funding for international research collaboration
- \* Funding for “open access” publication

These solutions must be adapted individually on a disciplinary basis. Some of the harm to international activity may be impossible to prevent, so the effect of this potential harm should be taken into account in evaluation of candidates for academic positions and promotion in the coming years.



## Appendix 1

This appendix displays the mean, median, standard deviation, and number of respondents for each closed question that was not reported in the main report. Unless stated otherwise, the answer range was between “1” and “5”. Some of the questions included an “irrelevant” option. According to the instructions, if the respondent did not respond to the question, we assumed that the leftmost option, “irrelevant” or “1” (when “irrelevant” was not an option) was selected. The data below are presented according to this logic.

Question	Mean	Median	SD	No. of respondents who did not select “irrelevant”
<b>Quantifying the harm</b>				
To what extent does the war adversely affect your daily life?	3.58	4	1.05	1,012
To what extent does the war adversely affect your emotional state?	4.04	4	0.93	1,011
To what extent does the war adversely affect your economic situation?	1.82	1	1.04	,1014
<b>Causes of harm</b>				
I or my family members have been displaced from our home	1.10	1	0.52	1,015
Members of my research group have been displaced from their homes	1.36	1	0.79	481
I or my spouse have been called up for military duty	1.38	1	1.10	1,015
My spouse works in an essential job (police, medical, etc.)	1.78	1	1.39	475

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Question	Mean	Median	SD	No. of respondents who did not select "irrelevant"
Members of my research group or their spouses have been called up for military duty	2.96	3	1.44	669
Members of my research group have left Israel because of the war [harm occurred]	2.19	1	1.53	468
Members of my research group have left Israel because of the war [fear of harm]	2.20	2	1.43	455
Investment of my time in academic activity [harm occurred]	3.45	4	1.17	1,015
Investment of my time in academic activity [fear of harm]	2.93	3	1.45	1,015
Investment of time by members of my research group in academic activity [harm occurred]	3.76	4	1.09	735
Investment of time by members of my research group in academic activity [fear of harm]	3.59	4	1.17	605
Sense of personal security of members of my research group when on campus [harm occurred]	2.44	2	1.34	589
Sense of personal security of members of my research group when on campus [fear of harm]	2.54	2	1.33	552
Objectivity in peer reviews (articles, books, research proposals, etc.) [harm occurred]	1.77	1	1.17	1,015
Objectivity in peer reviews (articles, books, research proposals, etc.) [fear of future harm]	3.09	3	1.49	1,015
Harm to academic freedom (e.g., the ability to publish on certain topics) [harm occurred]	1.58	1	1.13	1,015

Question	Mean	Median	SD	No. of respondents who did not select "irrelevant"
Harm to academic freedom (e.g., the ability to publish on certain topics) [fear of harm]	2.32	2	1.50	1,015
Visits by colleagues to Israel [harm occurred]	3.72	4	1.53	618
Visits by colleagues to Israel [fear of harm]	4.05	5	1.21	721
Invitations to visit/lecture/ conduct research work overseas [harm occurred]	2.55	2	1.65	683
Invitations to visit/lecture/ conduct research work overseas [fear of harm]	3.39	4	1.44	820
Ability to receive an invitation/ spend a sabbatical at overseas institutions [harm occurred]	1.99	1	1.47	431
Ability to receive an invitation/ spend a sabbatical at overseas institutions [fear of harm]	3.23	3	1.46	694
Access to research equipment/ labs/databases outside of Israel [harm occurred]	1.70	1	1.29	355
Access to research equipment/ labs/databases outside of Israel [fear of harm]	2.50	2	1.46	452
International collaboration (create, develop, maintain) [harm occurred]	2.02	1	1.32	776
International collaboration (create, develop, maintain) [fear of harm]	3.15	3	1.40	884
Recruiting international students [harm occurred]	2.89	3	1.67	499
Recruiting international students [fear of harm]	3.88	4	1.29	661

<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>No. of respondents who did not select "irrelevant"</b>
Submitting research proposals to international funding organizations [harm occurred]	1.89	1	1.31	533
Submitting research proposals to international funding organizations [fear of harm]	3.37	4	1.39	814
Possibility of presenting at international conferences [harm occurred]	2.25	1	1.54	740
Possibility of presenting at international conferences [fear of harm]	3.16	3	1.46	894
Receiving recommendations from international faculty for the purposes of promotion [harm occurred]	1.68	1	1.19	419
Receiving recommendations from international faculty for the purposes of promotion [fear of harm]	3.33	3	1.45	725
Chance of selection for academic leadership roles in professional organizations, editorial positions for journals/book publishers [harm occurred]	1.54	1	1.10	454
Chance of selection for academic leadership roles in professional organizations, editorial positions for journals/book publishers [fear of harm]	3.11	3	1.46	714
General quality of research [harm occurred]	2.74	3	1.34	1,015
General quality of research [fear of harm]	2.99	3	1.39	1,015

Question	Mean	Median	SD	No. of respondents who did not select “irrelevant”
<b>The institution’s response</b>				
To what extent is your academic institution aware of your difficulties and taking action to help? [aware of difficulties]	3.05	3	1.34	1,015
To what extent is your academic institution aware of your difficulties and taking action to help? [taking action to help]	2.51	3	1.27	1,015
<b>Responses</b>				
Funding faculty hiring	2.45	2	1.47	1,015
Funding the development of joint undergraduate and graduate degrees with international institutions	2.20	2	1.34	1,015
Funding for academia-based information campaigns – assistance in publishing assessments, op-eds, podcasts on academic platforms around the world, etc.	2.27	2	1.35	1,015
Activity to create a safe space on campuses	2.73	3	1.48	1,015
Funding for professional organizations in the various fields for establishing seminars, testimonial events, scholarships, etc. in the memory of those murdered on Oct. 7	2.21	2	1.29	1,015
Funding for international students or post-docs for study in Israel [level of support]	3.40	4	1.38	758
Funding for students pursuing advanced degrees in Israel [level of support]	3.45	4	1.36	765
Funding to invite academic guests to Israel [level of support]	3.38	4	1.37	766

Question	Mean	Median	SD	No. of respondents who did not select "irrelevant"
Funding for studies that use the Israeli arena or unique knowledge about Israel in the contexts of conflict, dealing with hostages and POWs, etc. [level of support]	2.89	3	1.39	548
Supplemental funding for research that includes international collaboration (similar to the ISF funding that was cancelled this year) [level of support]	3.14	3	1.44	704
Funding for research workshops and interdisciplinary meetings of Israeli and foreign researchers from different institutions (such as Academix) [level of support]	3.18	3	1.38	714
Funding of "open access" publication to broaden the exposure of Israeli research and citations [level of support]	3.05	3	1.51	748
Training to contend with hostile reactions at conferences and meetings [level of support]	2.69	3	1.41	778
Training in the field of social media or communication [level of support]	2.42	2	1.34	727
<b>Emigration</b>				
What is the likelihood that you will decide to emigrate? (1–10)	3.30	2	2.40	998
What is the likelihood that you would move abroad if offered an academic position at a leading institution? (1–10)	4.69	4	3.06	1,000
If you had been asked on October 6 about the likelihood of emigrating, how would you have responded? +2.62 (1–10)	2.92	2	2.30	1,003





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