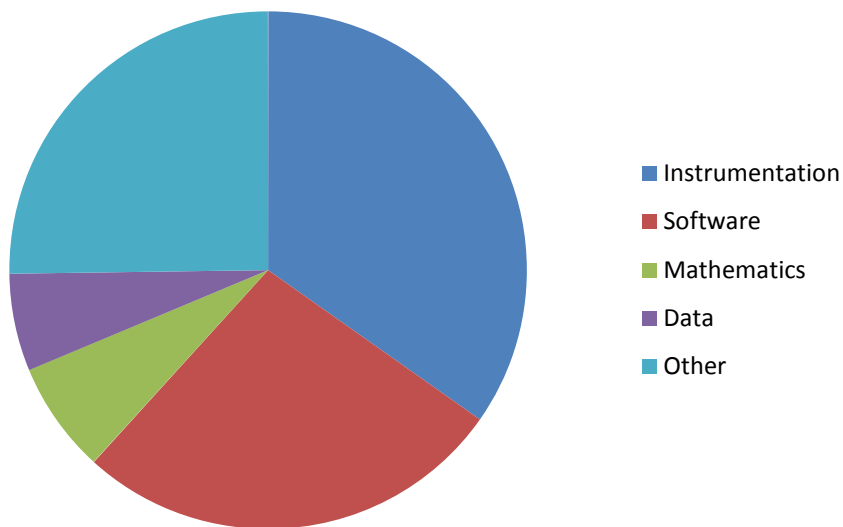


STFC survey of skills shortages

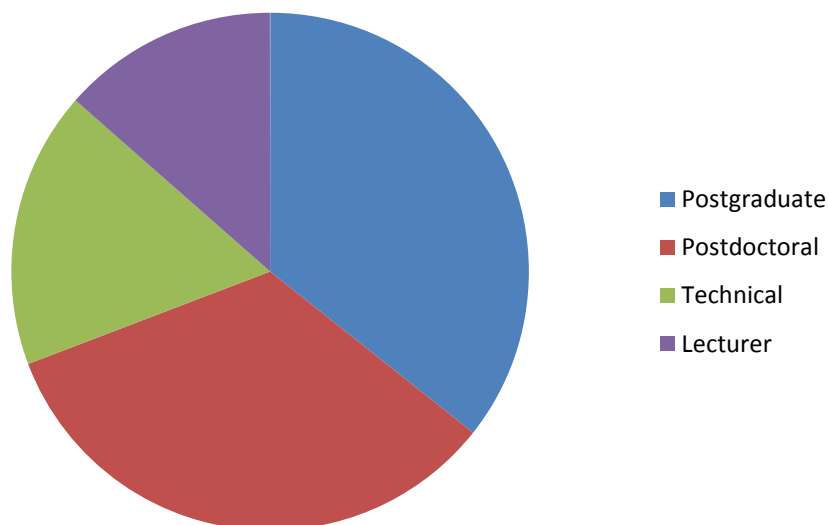
STFC carried out a survey of skills shortages in the STFC-funded community, and related industry, in May-June 2015. Many thanks to everyone who completed the survey.

We received 121 responses – 88 from universities, 18 from companies, 15 from other organisations.

Four main areas of skills shortage emerged. The chart shows the relative number of times each was mentioned:



The responses indicated that these four shortages impact on STFC-supported research principally at postgraduate and postdoctoral level. Again, the chart shows the relative number of times each was mentioned:



The main suggestions about what STFC can do to help address these shortages are summarised in the following table:

Skills area	Actions relating to studentships and fellowships	Actions relating to other grant funding	Actions relating to other STFC activities
Software engineering	<p>Courses for students, postdocs and academics.</p> <p>Extend eligibility for studentships to non-UK EU residents.</p>	<p>Fund professional software engineers, not necessarily linked to specific projects.</p>	<p>Encourage more emphasis on coding in undergraduate degrees.</p> <p>Joint projects between academics and teachers, through public engagement programme.</p> <p>Improve career paths for computing specialists and encourage a more professional approach to software development.</p>
Instrumentation	<p>More CASE studentships.</p> <p>Increase the amount of time CASE students spend working in industry.</p> <p>Targeted studentships/fellowships.</p> <p>Extend eligibility for studentships to non-UK EU residents.</p> <p>Fund summer internships for penultimate year undergraduates.</p> <p>Summer schools/workshops.</p> <p>Masters courses.</p>	<p>More funding for technical support in grants.</p> <p>KTP studentships made more attractive to SMEs.</p> <p>More use of grants for critical skill areas.</p>	<p>Support for apprenticeships.</p> <p>Help define a career path for technical staff.</p> <p>Create an equivalent to postdocs for young engineers.</p> <p>Exercise flexibility in salary scales (in STFC).</p> <p>STFC to train more apprentices and graduates than it needs.</p>
Mathematics /statistics	<p>Training events, summer schools.</p> <p>Extend studentship eligibility to non-UK EU residents.</p> <p>Extend duration of PhDs.</p>		<p>Help to popularise mathematics.</p>
Data skills	<p>Specialist studentships/fellowships.</p> <p>Summer schools and conferences.</p>	<p>More grant funding for computing experts.</p>	<p>Encourage programming skills development.</p>

What next?

The outcome of the survey has been discussed by STFC's Education, Training and Careers Committee and by the Skills and Engagement Advisory Board and possible actions to help address key shortages are currently being considered.