

# DESIGN WORK



SUMMARY

'24

# Introduction

Below is a summary of the results of Ornamo ry's labour market survey. This summary presents the main characteristics and trends in our survey about the Finnish labour market for designers. We surveyed the level of earnings and its development in the design industry, as well as working time, well-being at work, corporate responsibility and employee side jobs.

The Ornamo labour market survey was conducted in January to February 2024 and answered by 236 employees, students and unemployed designers within the specified time-limit. Entrepreneurs (including freelancers) and pensioners who responded to the survey, 82 in total, are not under close inspection.

TEXT: DESIGN AND SURVEY SERVICES PEKKA LITH

EDITING: EMMI PUTKONEN

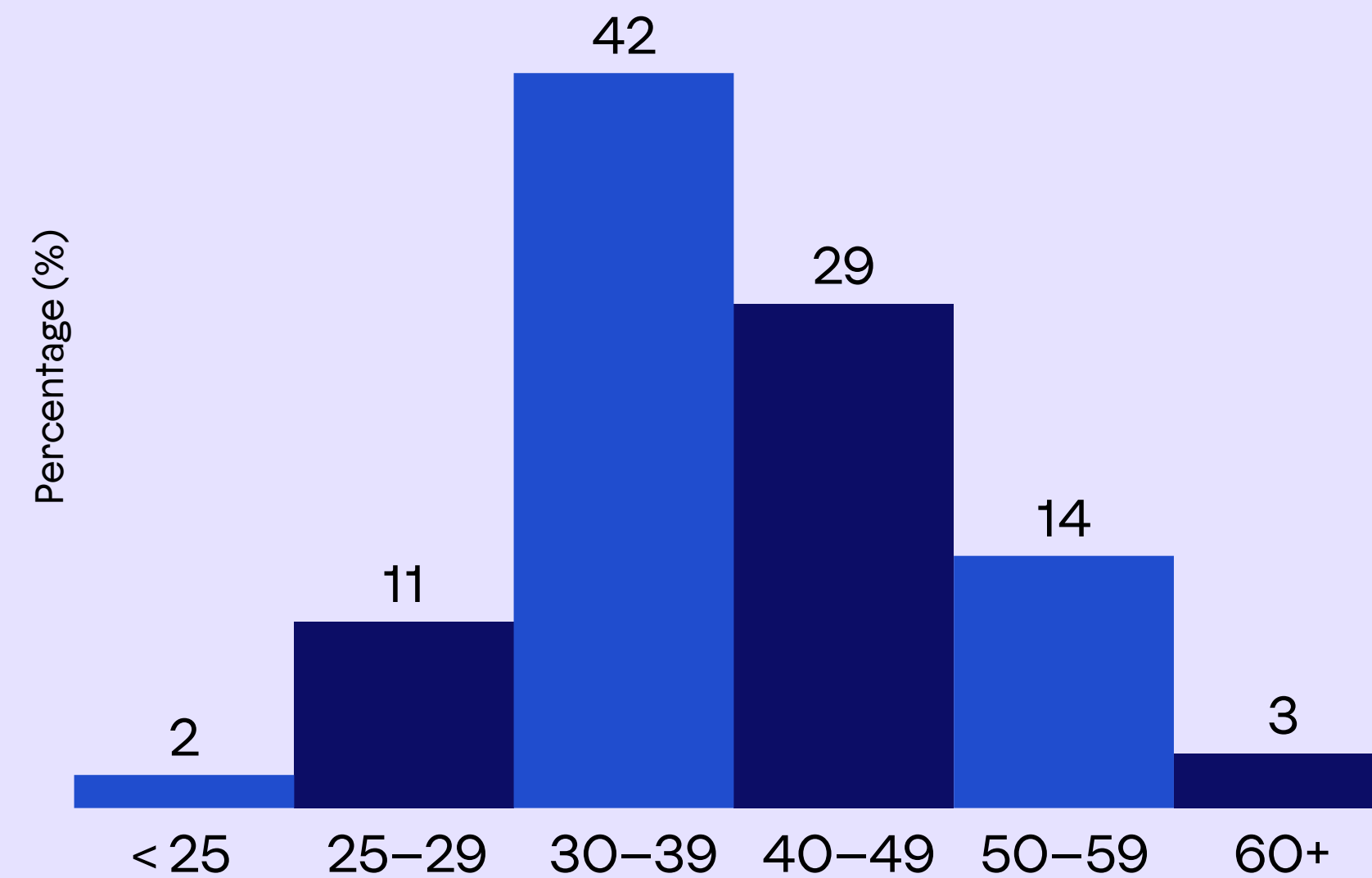
LAYOUT: OLLI KORPELA

# Designers are highly educated

20% of the 161 employees who responded to the survey work as interior architects or designers. 15% work as service designers and 12% as digital designers. Other job titles were designer, director and industrial designer. 82% of the respondents were women and 16% men.

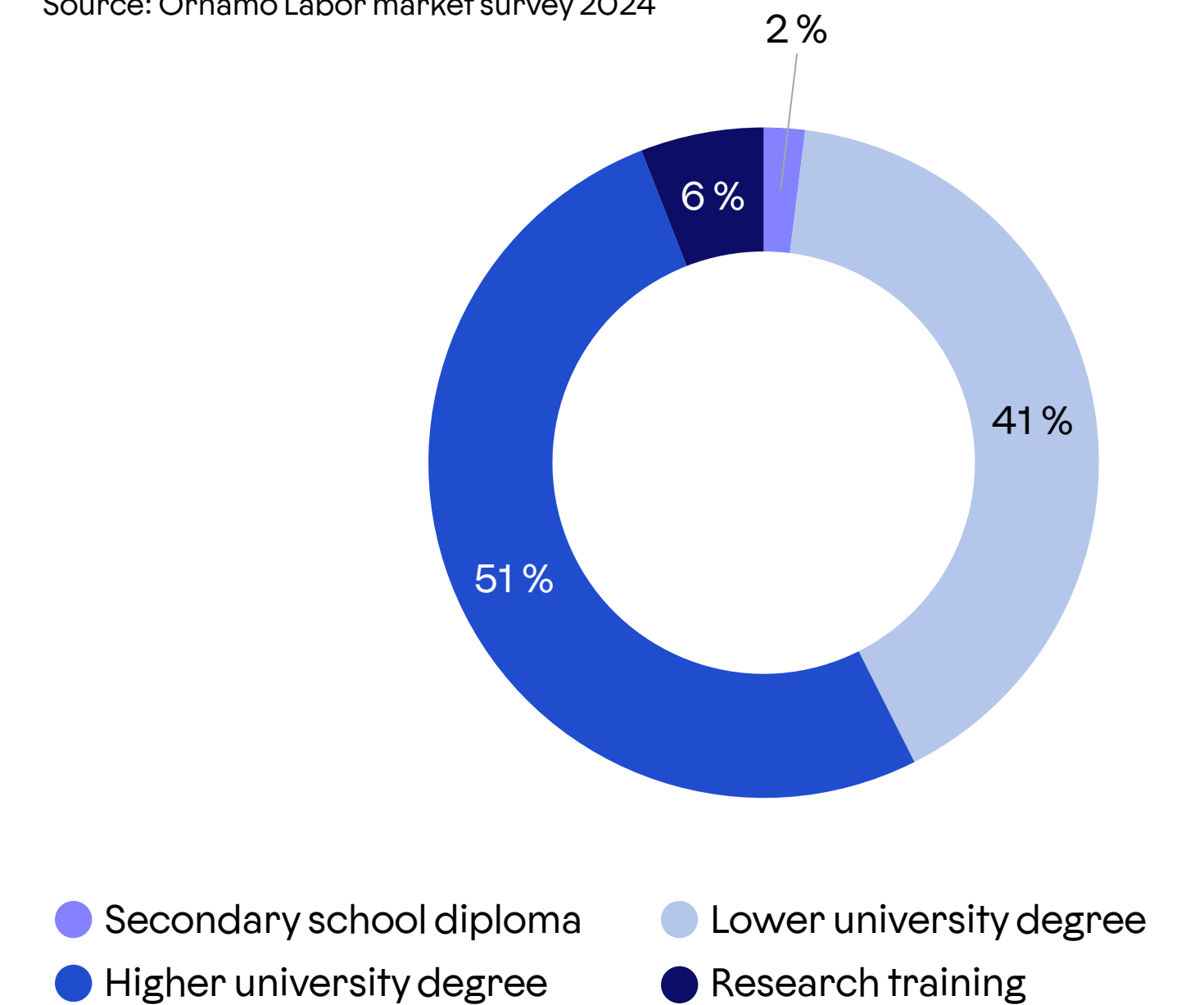
### Age structure of wage earners who responded to Ornamo's survey

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024



### Education level of employees

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024

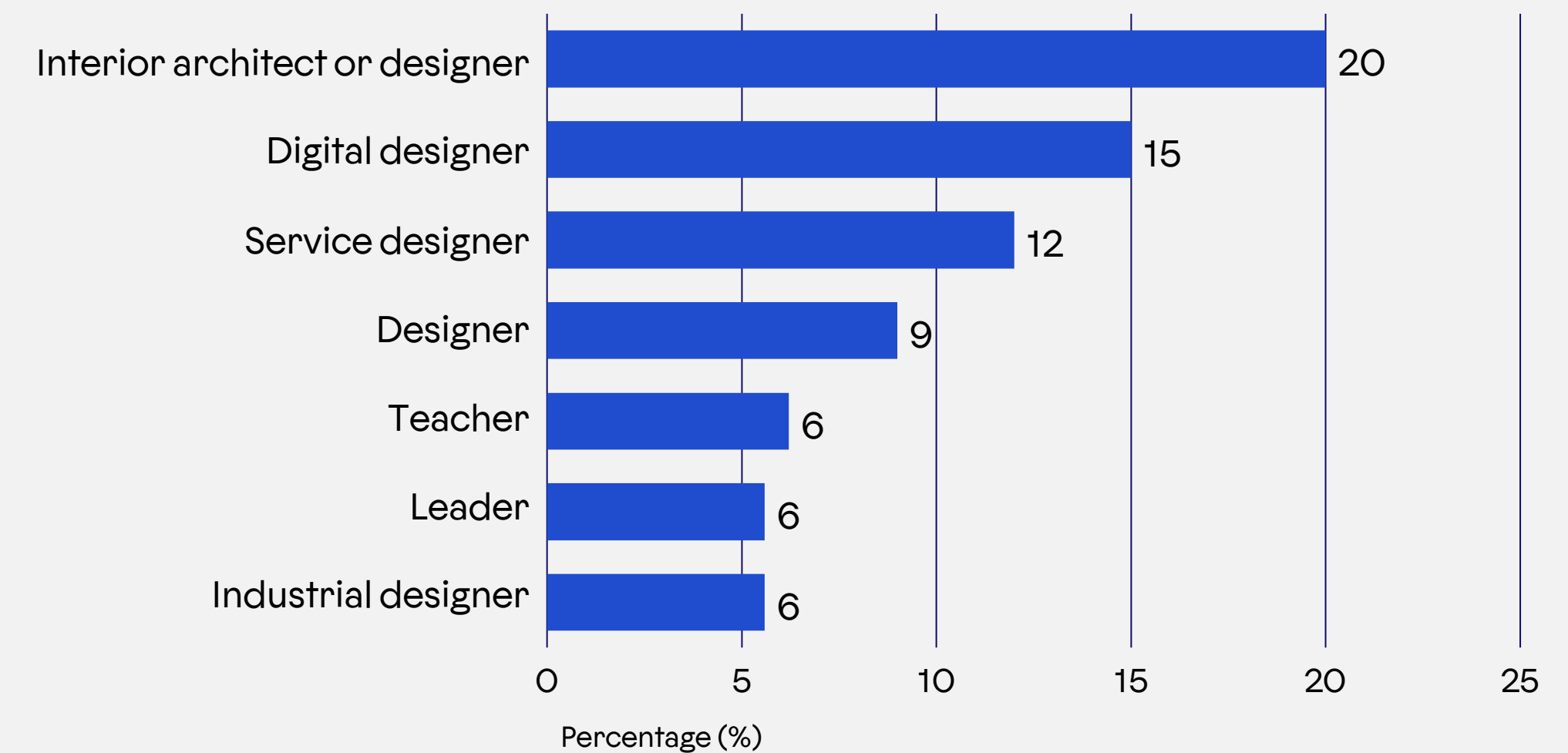


# 82%

of employees in the design industry are women

### The most common job titles of designers who responded to the survey

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024



WORKPLACES

# Designers work at large companies

Designers work for large employers (with more than 250 employees). In the recent years, the proportion of people employed by large employers has continued to increase, while the proportion employed by small employers has decreased.

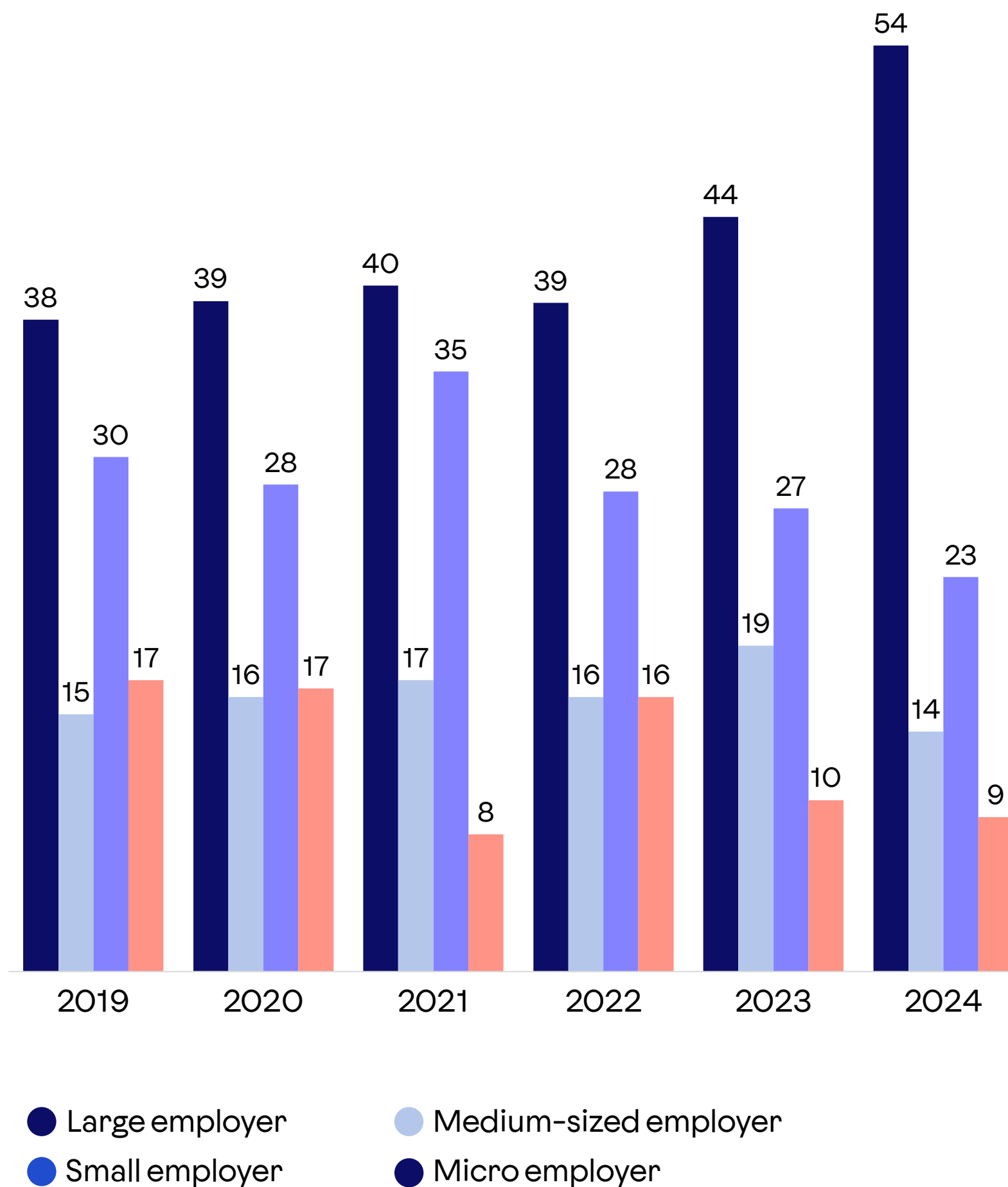
About half of the large employers are private companies and the rest operate in the public sector. More than 70% of employees in the design industry work at private companies of different sizes, and 16% work in the public sector.

## TOP EMPLOYER INDUSTRIES:

- Higher education
- Software and information services
- Engineering, Architectural or Interior Design Office

Number of employees of designers' employers in 2019–2024

Source: Ornamo Labor market surveys 2019–2024



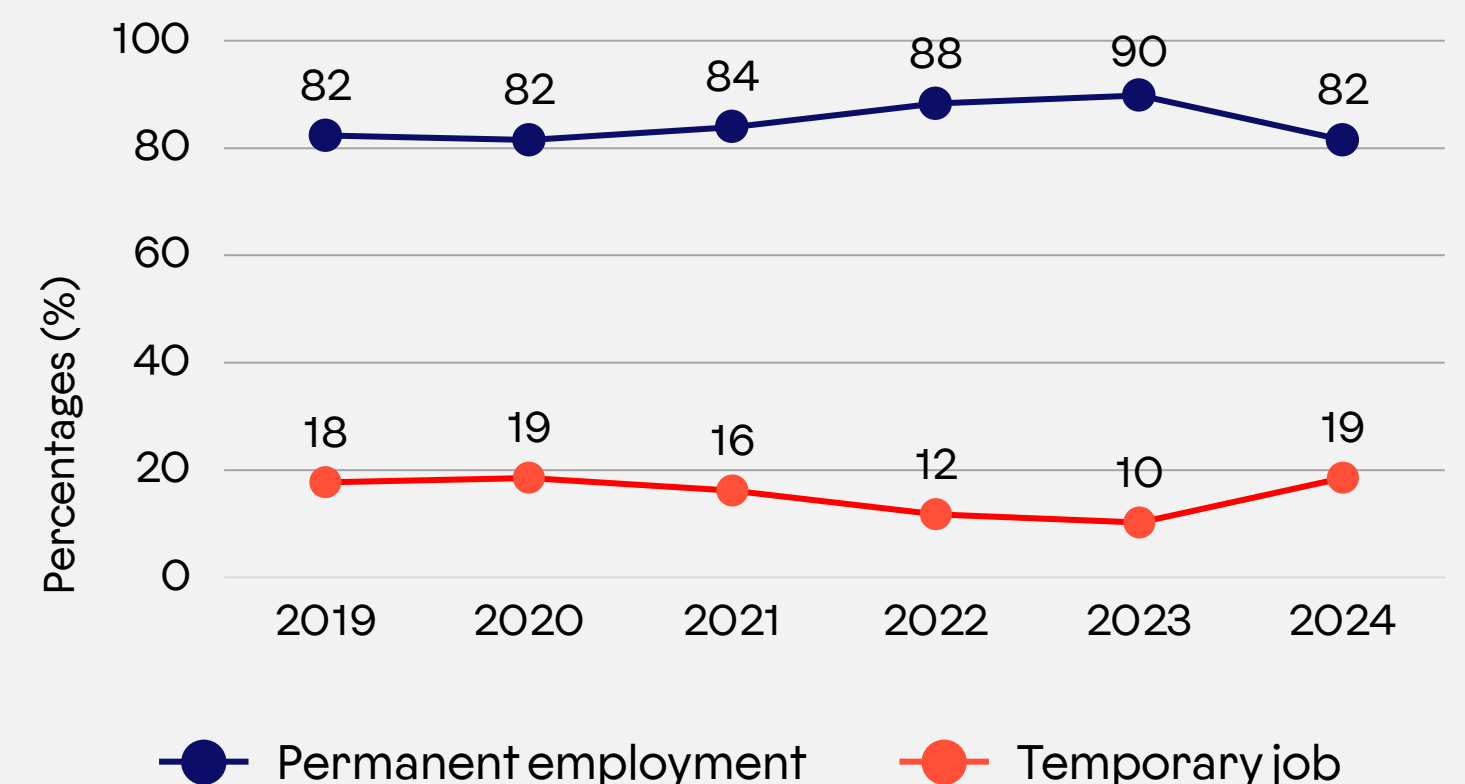
## Fixed-term employment on the rise

In early 2024, 74% of employees in the design sector had permanent full-time employment and 15% had fixed-term full-time employment. Workers in the design industry differ from all wage earners in that the proportion of part-time employees with permanent and fixed-term contracts is smaller than among all wage earners in Finland. In contrast, the design sector has a slightly higher proportion of permanent and full-time employees than the national average.

The proportion of wage earners with permanent employment in the design sector has increased in the years after the Covid-19 pandemic, but then turned downwards. Correspondingly, the share of fixed-term full-time and part-time contracts has increased by almost 10% from the previous year.

Development of full-time and fixed-term employment 2019–2024

Source: Ornamo Labor market surveys 2019–2024



# Many turn hobbies into side jobs

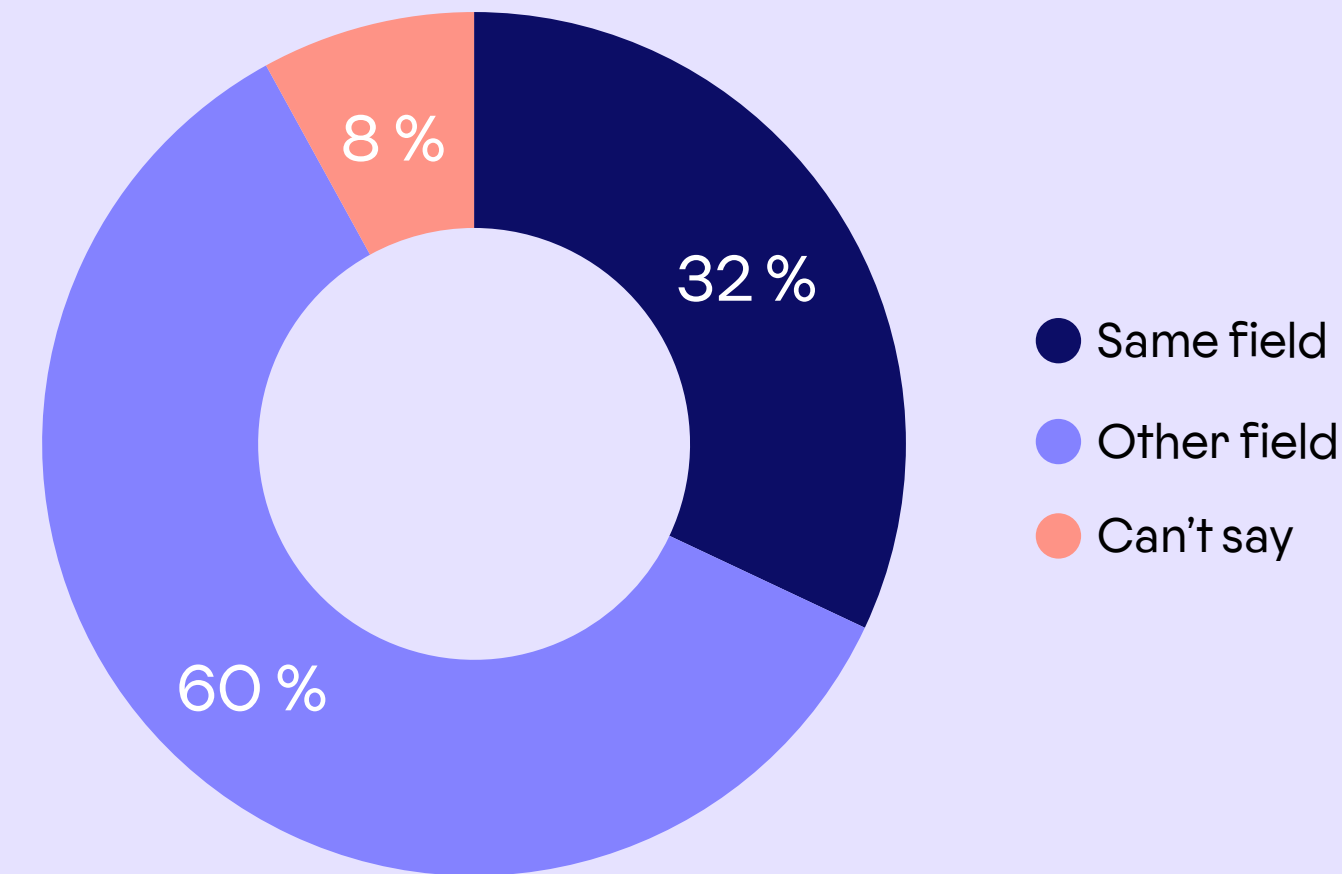
Approximately 40% of employees in the design sector had side jobs. Of these, 20% were also working as entrepreneurs, 14% as freelancers without having a company and the rest as wage earners for other employers. The majority do side jobs in a different field than their current main job.

A side job gives the majority of people an opportunity to try new things and a break from their day work, but is usually of little financial significance. This is illustrated by the fact that the most common motive for having a side job is a fun hobby.

Although the economic importance of side jobs has increased slightly compared to the previous year, the income from side jobs still accounted for less than 10% of the total earnings for 70% of the respondents.

## Field of side job

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024

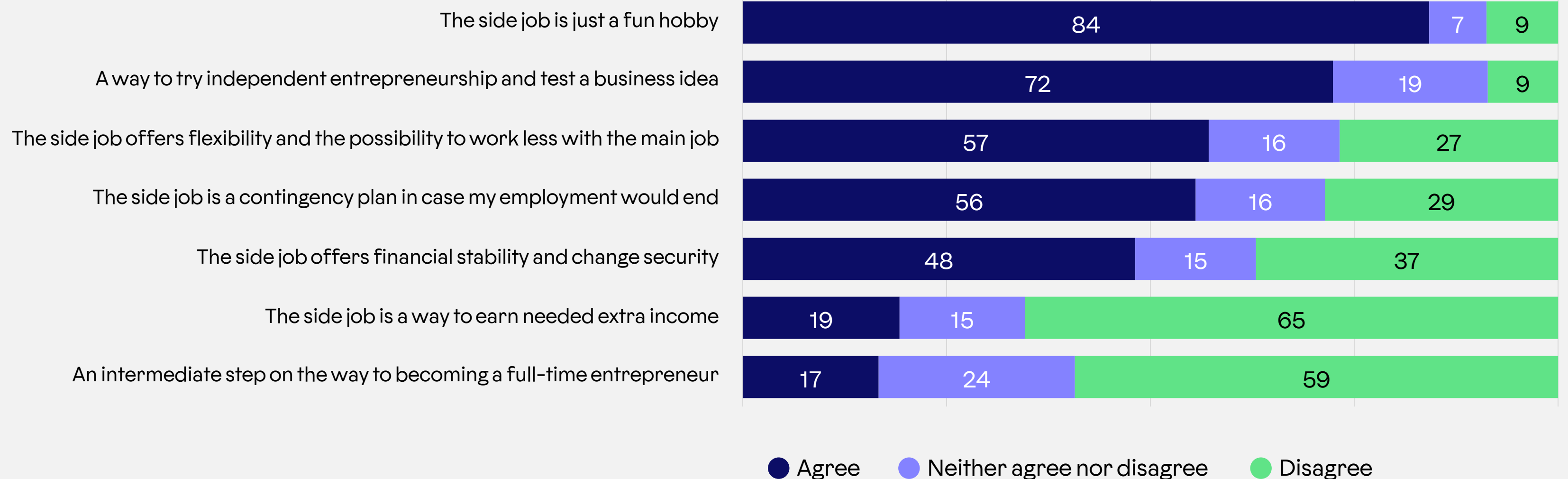


# 40%

of wage earners has some kind of side job

## What's the status of the side job for you?

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024

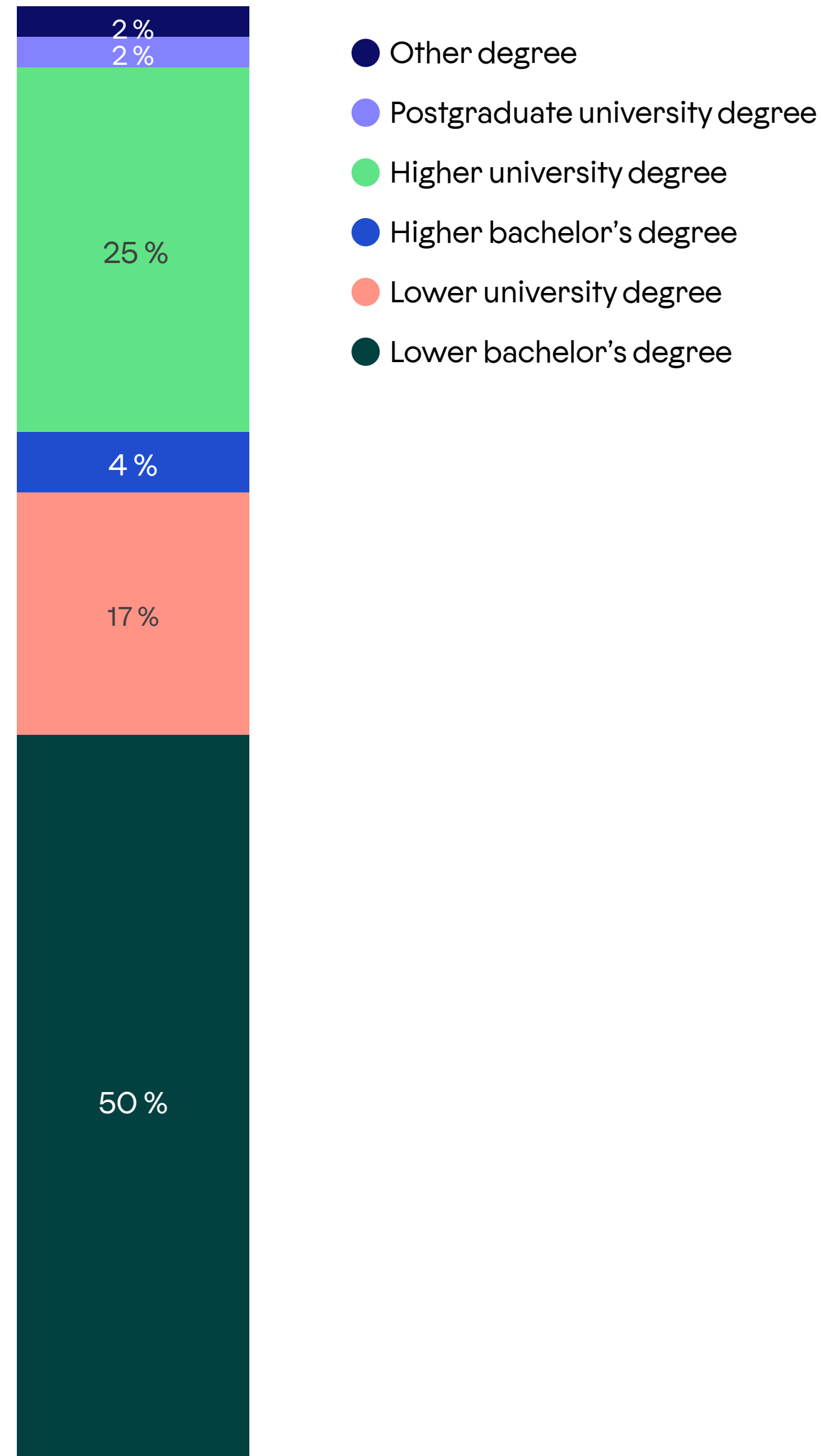


# Student employment on the rise

15% of Ornamo's 2024 survey respondents were full-time design students at a university. 58% of them were over 30 years old, and many had several years of work experience. Of these, 50% were studying for a lower academic degree and 42% for a bachelor's or master's degree at a university.

## Target degrees for design students in 2024

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024

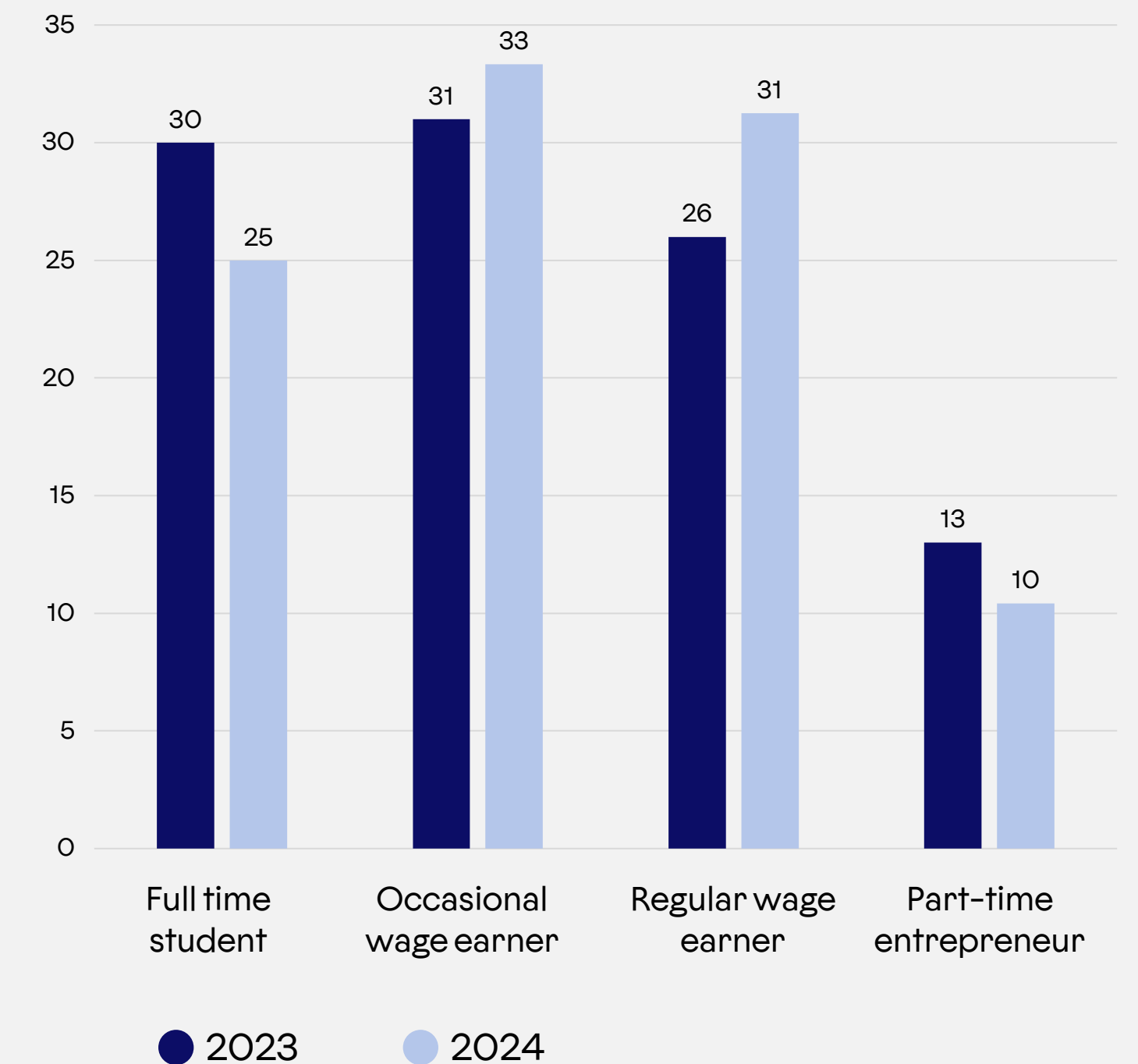


# Many students working on the side

74% of students worked regularly or occasionally as employees or entrepreneurs. The number of part-time jobs has slightly increased compared with the previous year.

## Do you work alongside your studies during the semesters?

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024



# Increased uncertainty in working life

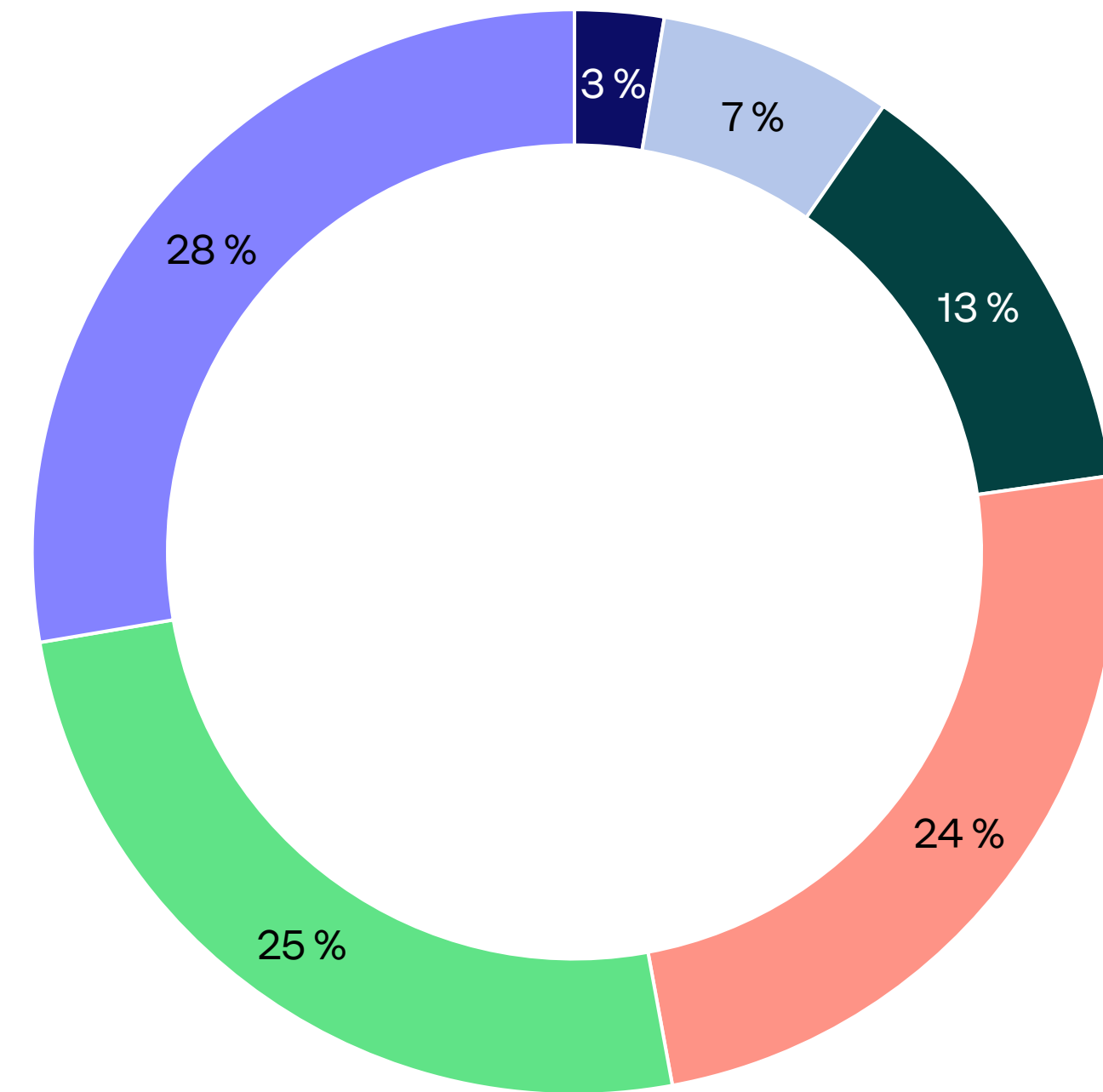
Ornamo's labour market survey 2024 shows that the optimism of employees in the design sector has decreased for two years in a row, although 77% considered their job to be secure. Less than a quarter experience job insecurity. The number of employees had also increased from only 31% in the previous year, but decreased at 34% of workplaces.

## Increased savings measures at companies

The harsher financial situation has resulted in a marked increase in layoffs and dismissals compared to the previous year. Both measures had been carried out at more than 20% of workplaces. The share of moderate measures, such as voluntary unpaid leave or leave in lieu of holiday bonus is at the same level as in the previous year.

Savings measures already taken at workplaces in early 2024

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024



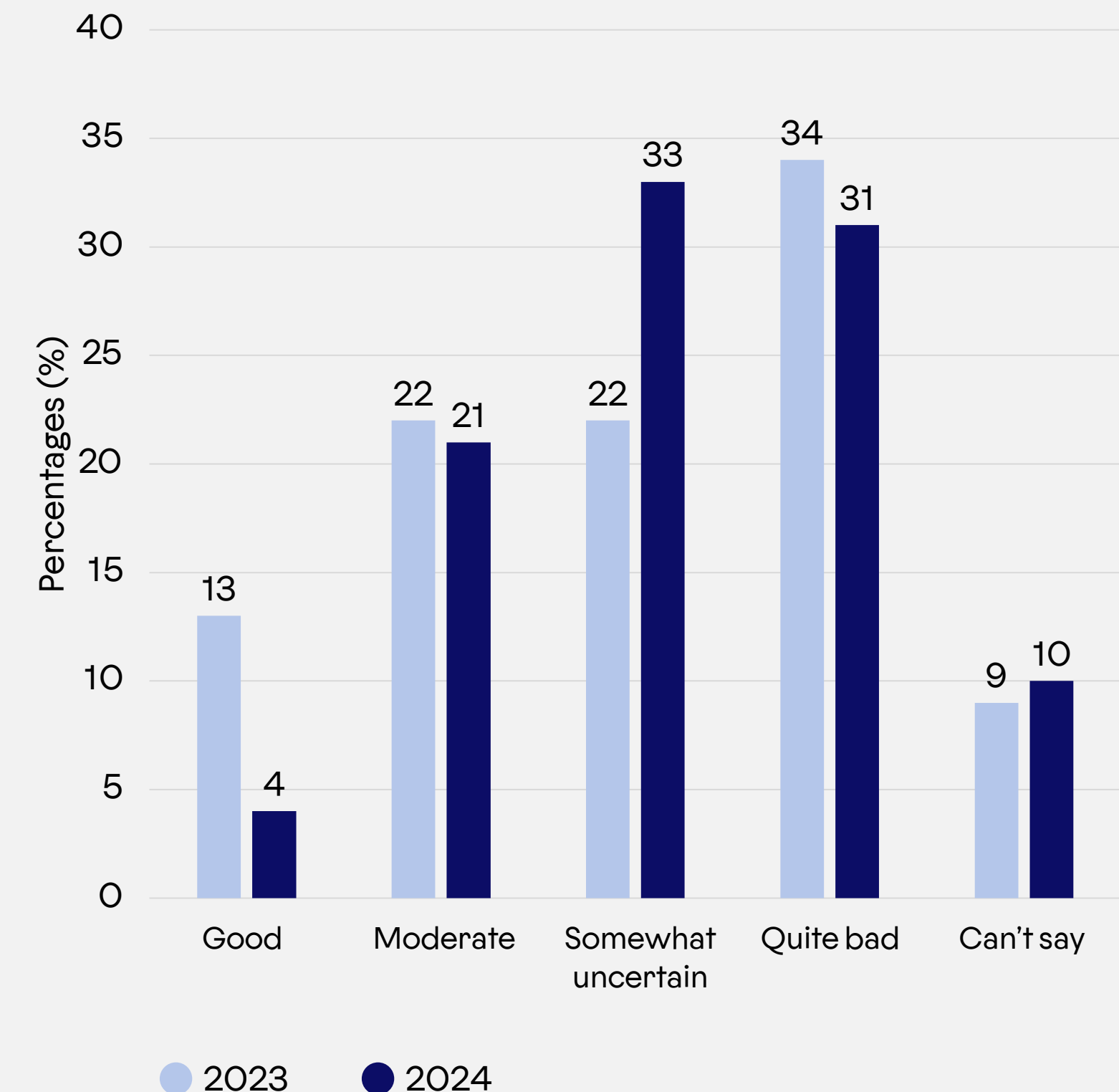
- Suspension of salary payment
- Advance annual leave and vacations
- Changes in work assignments
- Voluntary unpaid leave / change of holiday pay into free time
- Layoffs
- Notices

# Students concerned about labour market situation

Design students perceive the labor market situation in their field as less favorable. The majority (64%) of respondents feel the labour market situation is somewhat or rather bad. Only a small minority (4%) feel that the general labor market situation in their field is good, compared to 13% a year earlier.

How do you perceive the general labor market situation in the field of education you represent at the moment?

Source: Ornamo Labor market surveys 2023–2024





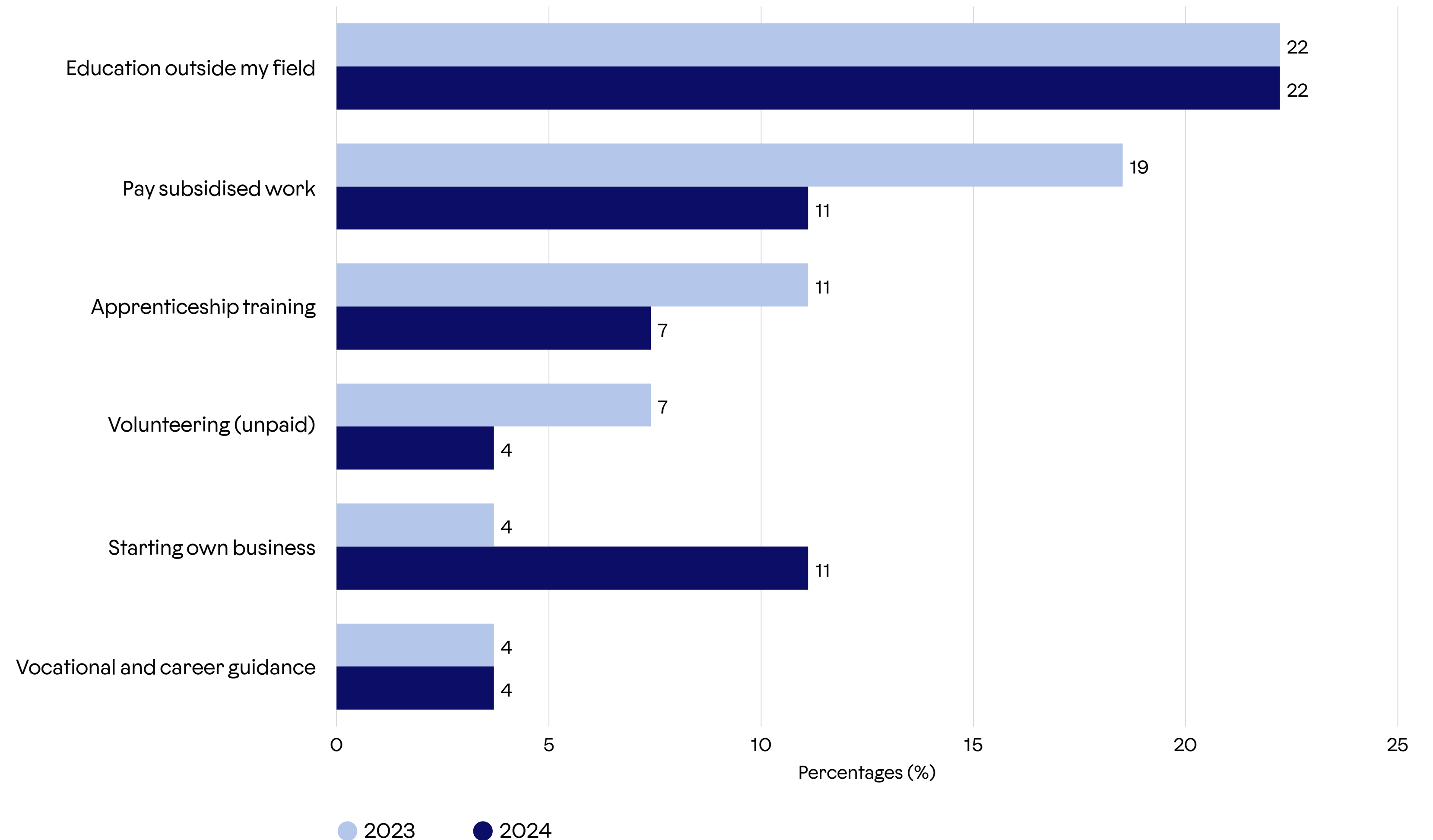
# Unemployed in the design industry actively seek jobs

Twelve% of the respondents were unemployed. Of these, 44% were entitled to earnings-related unemployment allowance. 41% received basic unemployment allowance or labour market subsidy from Kela. The rest received subsidiary social security benefits or were not covered by any social security benefit.

As many as 77% would be willing to change professions to secure employment. The popularity of pursuing further training in one's field or starting a business as an alternative if work is not found in the near future has significantly decreased.

If you couldn't get a job in the near future, what would you consider to be the best option for you then?

Source: Ornamo Labor market surveys 2023–2024



**WAGES**

# Designer wages continue to climb

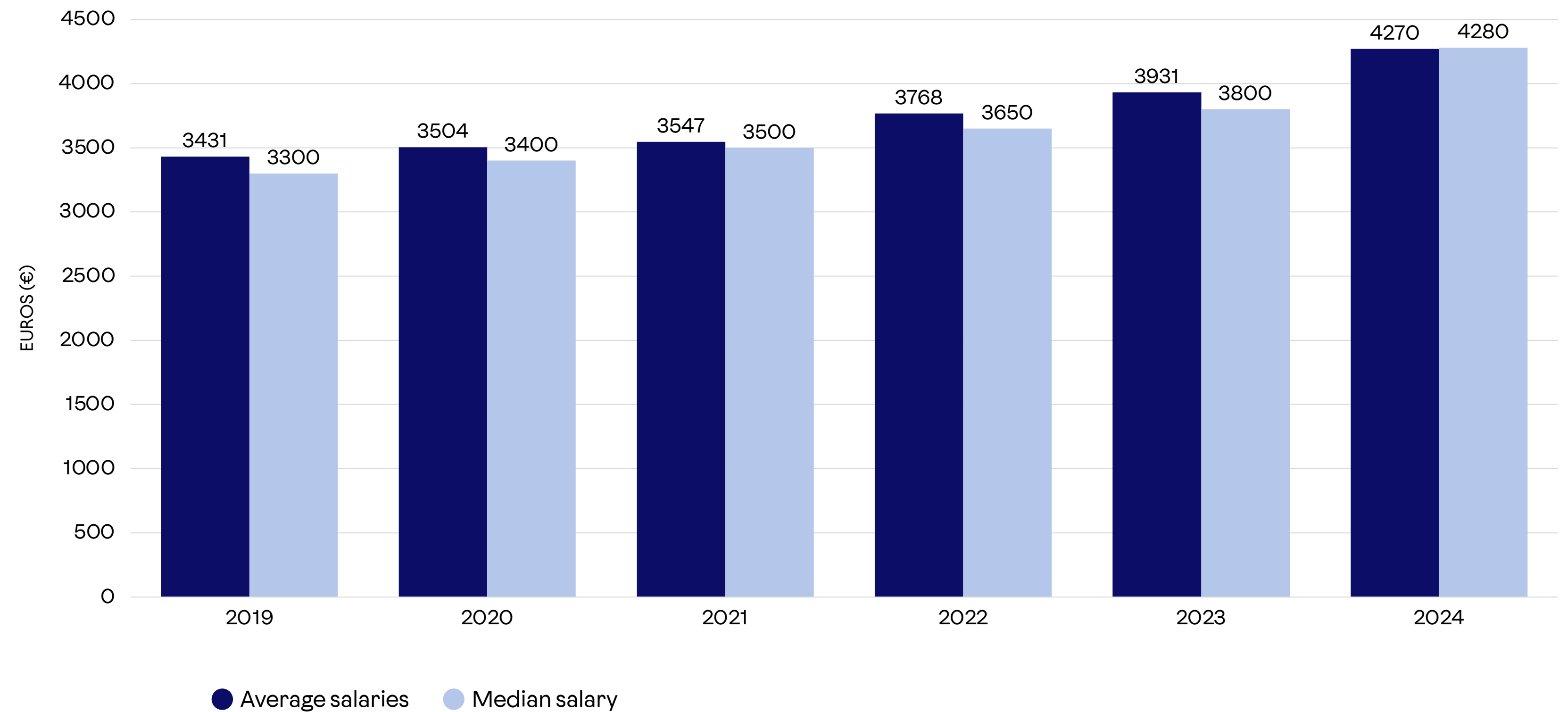
In early 2024, the average total earnings of design professionals amounted to EUR 4,270 and the median was EUR 4,280. Average wages increased by €330 compared to the previous year. The wage level exceeds the average monthly earnings of employees with a lower university degree in Finland but falls short of those with a higher university degree.

## Wage increases are driven by personal performance

In 2023–24, monthly earnings have remained nearly unchanged for 61% of design sector employees. Earnings have increased by at least €200 for one-third of respondents, while only 6% of employees have experienced a decrease. For those whose wages are rising, the increase is more often attributed to personal performance compared to previous years.

## Development of average and median salaries for designers in 2019–2024

Source: Ornamo Labor market surveys 2019–2024



### THE PRIMARY REASONS FOR WAGE INCREASES ARE:

1. Personal performance
2. General wage increase
3. Transfer to a new employer
4. Employer-specific increase
5. New position or job (at same employer)

# Directors receive the highest earnings

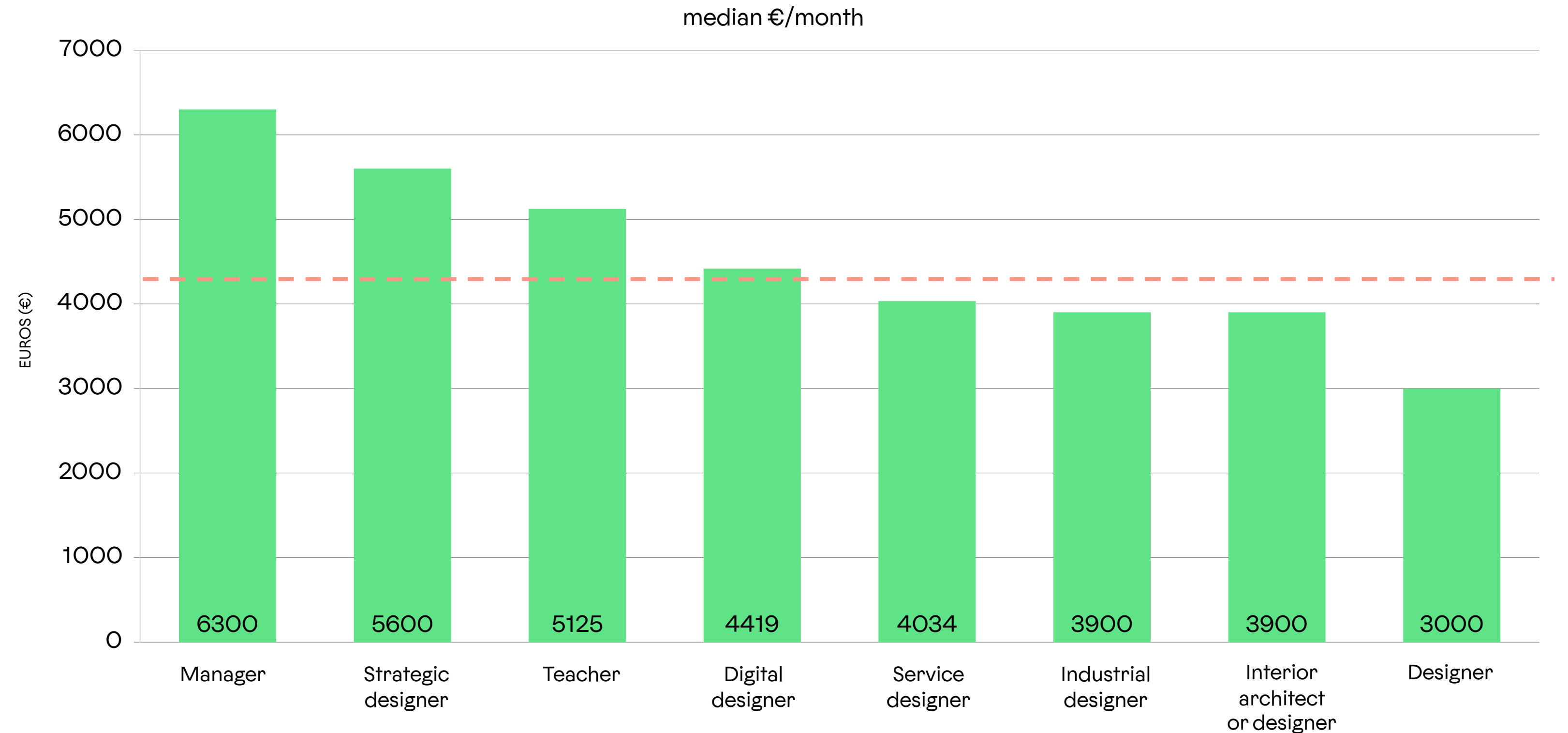
When analysed by job title, only the median earnings of executives, strategic planners, teachers, and digital designers surpass the median earnings of the majority of designers. In contrast, individuals with the title of Designer had the lowest earnings.\*

## Only a minority are fully satisfied with their wages

Only 48% are fully satisfied with their wages. 35% reported that their wages do not align with their job responsibilities. Additionally, 45% believe that good performance is not adequately rewarded, indicating further issues within the pay system. Moreover, 34% perceive the wage structure as unfair. Additionally, a similar proportion of respondents stated that the wages are un motivating and difficult to influence.

## Median salaries of designers by professional title

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024



--- 4 280 €/MONTH = MEDIAN EARNINGS OF ALL DESIGNERS

\* The low earnings may be due to Designers in the survey having less than one year of work experience on average. Conversely, strategic designers, for instance, typically had more extensive career experience.

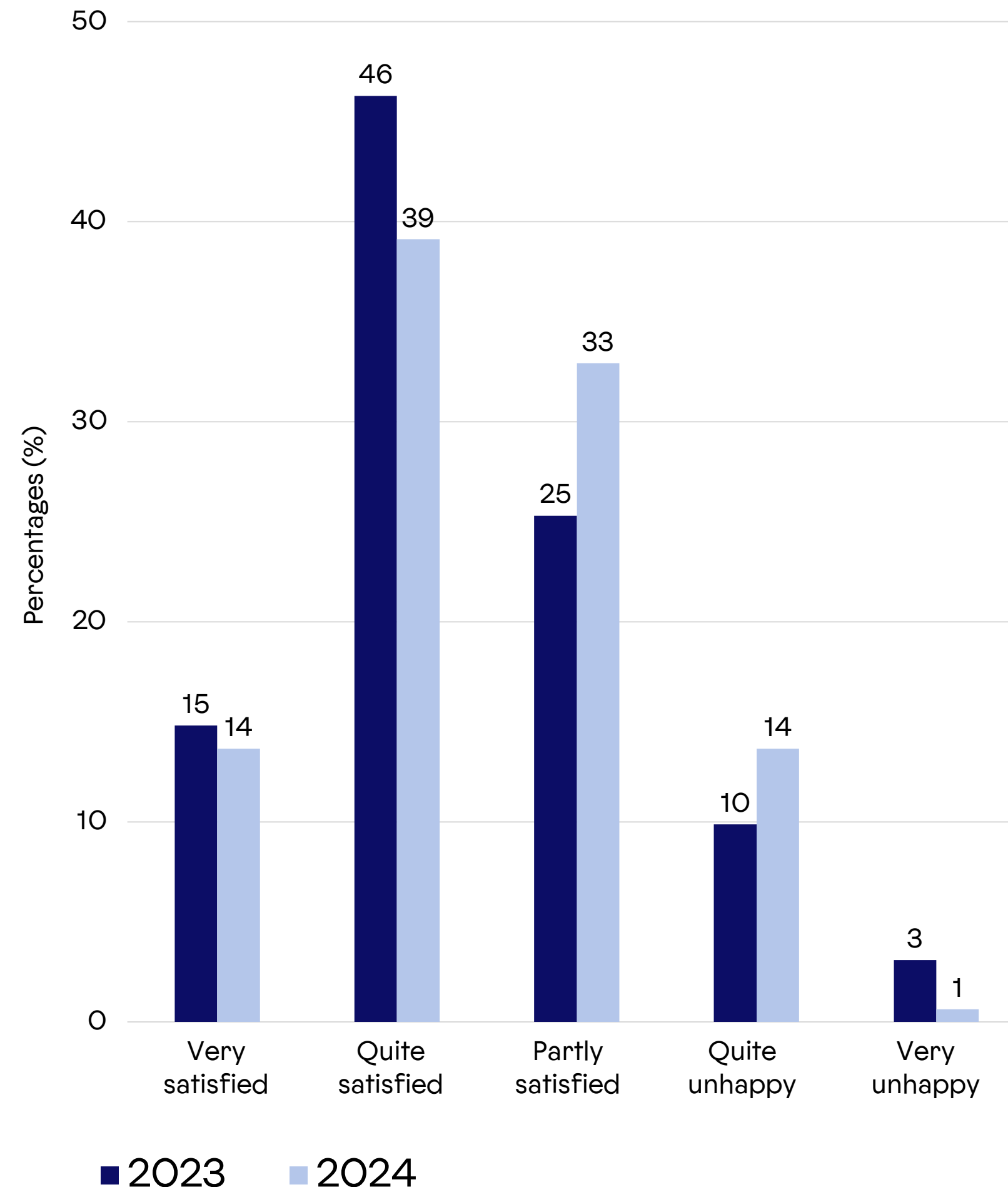
WORKPLACE  
WELL-BEING,  
WORKING HOURS  
& SKILLS

# Declining job satisfaction – shortcomings in management

Employee job satisfaction in the design industry has slightly declined compared to the previous year but remains generally high overall. Over 90% of employees reported that they perform well at work and have sufficient autonomy in their roles. Colleagues are eager to assist one another in succeeding with their tasks, indicating a positive and collaborative work atmosphere. Areas needing improvement include insufficient feedback from supervisors, the unequal allocation of work, and opportunities for employees to develop their skills in the workplace. These issues highlight a deficiency in effective leadership.

How satisfied are you with your current job overall?

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024



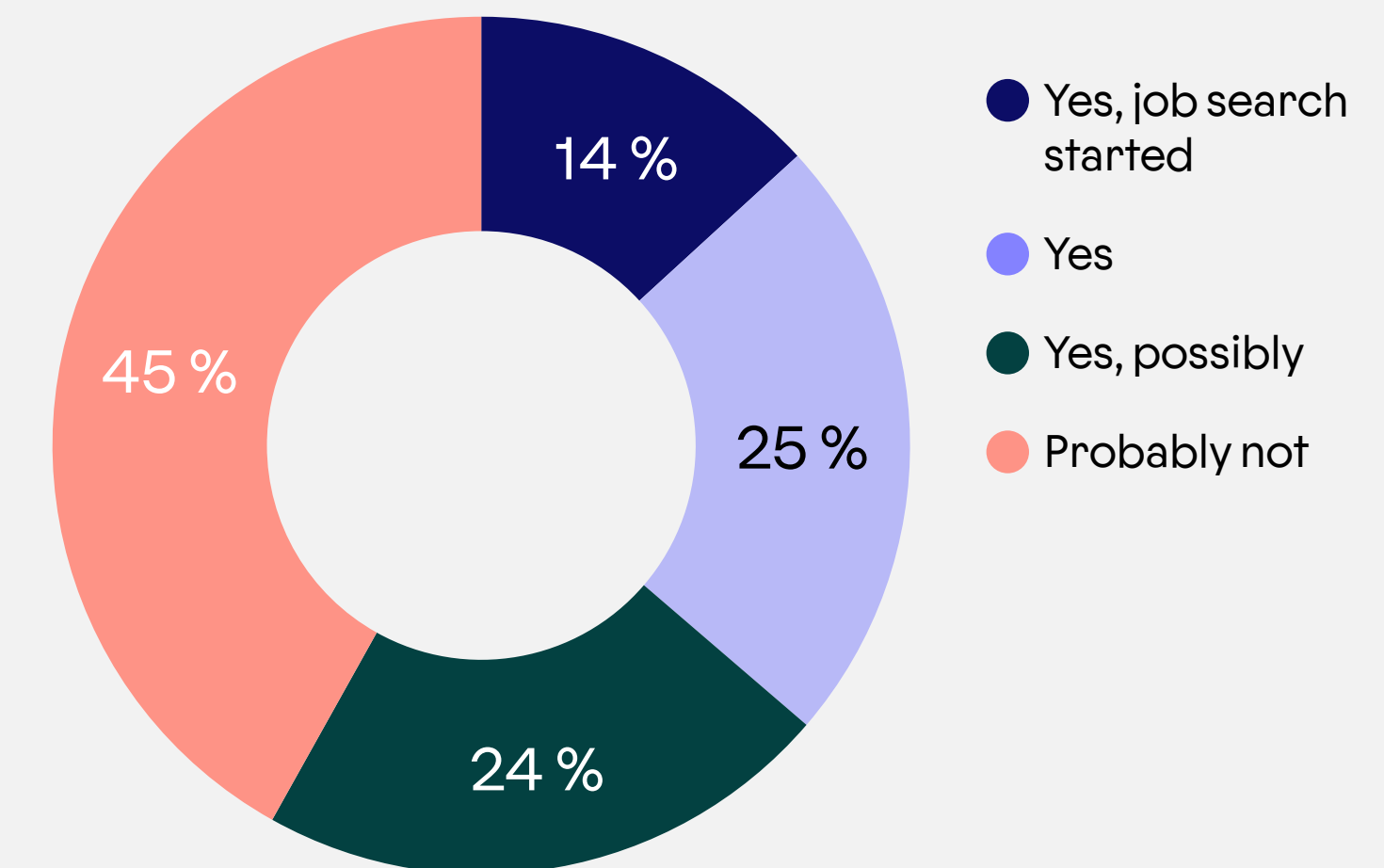
# Increased willingness to change jobs

Employee turnover is on the rise. According to the survey, 25% of employees expressed their intention to change jobs in 2024. The previous year, the corresponding figure stood at 15%. Moreover, 24% indicated the possibility of changing jobs.

Reasons for job changes include limited career advancement prospects, overwhelming workloads, job insecurity, and dissatisfaction with current roles and compensation.

Have you considered changing jobs in the next year (2024)?

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024



# The optimal workweek would be 2.7 hours shorter

According to Ornamo's labour market survey, employees in the design sector worked an average of 37.2 hours per week, with 16% clocking in at least 40 hours weekly.

However, the ideal working week would be 2.7 hours shorter than the average, equating to 34.5 hours. In an ideal scenario, the prevalence of individuals working long hours – specifically, at least 41 hours per week – would be virtually eradicated.

## Overtime contributes to longer workweeks

By the end of 2023, 35% of employees had engaged in paid overtime, while 12% had undertaken unpaid overtime. Increased overtime due to work demands prompts managerial intervention in line with their duties. The increasing adoption of remote work can also blur the boundary between work and leisure time.

Average working time

**37,2** H/WEEK

median 38 H/WEEK

Only 52% of wage earners who participated in the labour market survey indicated that they have significant or considerable influence over the overall length of their working hours.

# Designers rely on their know-how

The survey illuminates the designers' strong confidence in their abilities, their keen awareness of individual areas for growth, and their certainty in the market's demand for their expertise. 81% of surveyed employees expressed confidence in the continued demand for skilled workers like themselves in the labour market. An equally substantial proportion felt able to leverage their expertise in a versatile manner within their work.

## Designers are eager to invest in enhancing their competencies

According to the survey, the most effective methods for competence development include experiential learning through work, such as job rotation and exposure to new projects and work environments. This entails peer learning among colleagues at work, necessitating both the availability and willingness of colleagues to share their expertise. Conversely, workplace-specific personnel training and obtaining new qualifications did not garner significant support.

However, nearly one-fifth reported a lack of sufficient development opportunities in their current role. Moreover, 34% voiced that their employer does not allocate adequate resources towards competence development.

# 91%

of respondents expressed satisfaction with their performance, feeling they are excelling or performing quite well at work

In which areas do designers seek to develop their expertise?

- New digital tools
- Leveraging artificial intelligence
- Facilitation
- Leadership
- Communications



**RESPONSIBILITY**

# Data protection, diversity and equality are key themes for responsibility

According to Ornamo's surveys, the significance of responsibility permeates the design sector's workplaces, particularly concerning matters of data protection, diversity, and equality. Sustainable consumption and ecology are slightly less important.

## National laws would promote corporate responsibility

There are many ways to promote the principles of responsibility. Of the respondents to Ornamo's 2024 survey, a significant 79% viewed national legislation as the best solution. Industry-specific commitments and EU-level regulations emerged as the second preferred options, with the Directive on corporate sustainability reporting, now incorporated into Finland's national legislation, as a good example. Voluntary initiatives from businesses or consumers were seen as the least efficient measures.

Five key corporate responsibility themes in design industry employment:

1. Data protection
2. Diversity and equality
3. Sustainable consumption
4. Human rights
5. Circular economy

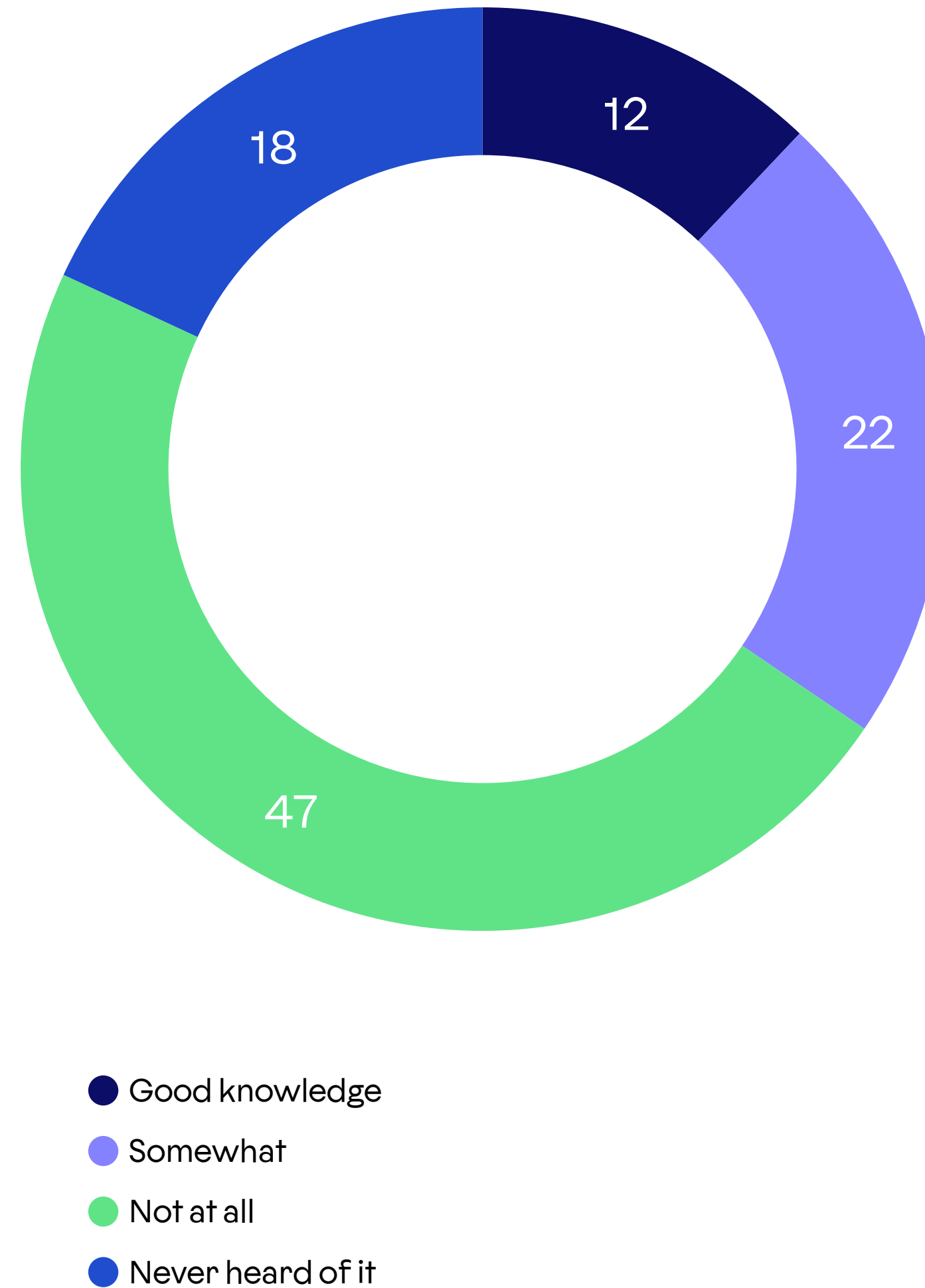
# The majority of designers have responsibility expertise

Design industry employees have environmental responsibility skills, but not all apply them at work. 77% of respondents affirmed their ability to apply their expertise in responsibility and environmental sustainability to some degree. Conversely, 17% indicated a lack of relevant expertise or difficulties in applying it effectively.

Moreover, the Directive on corporate sustainability reporting, set to become a crucial benchmark for employer accountability, remains largely unfamiliar to designers. Only 34% of respondents are acquainted with the directive to some degree or well.

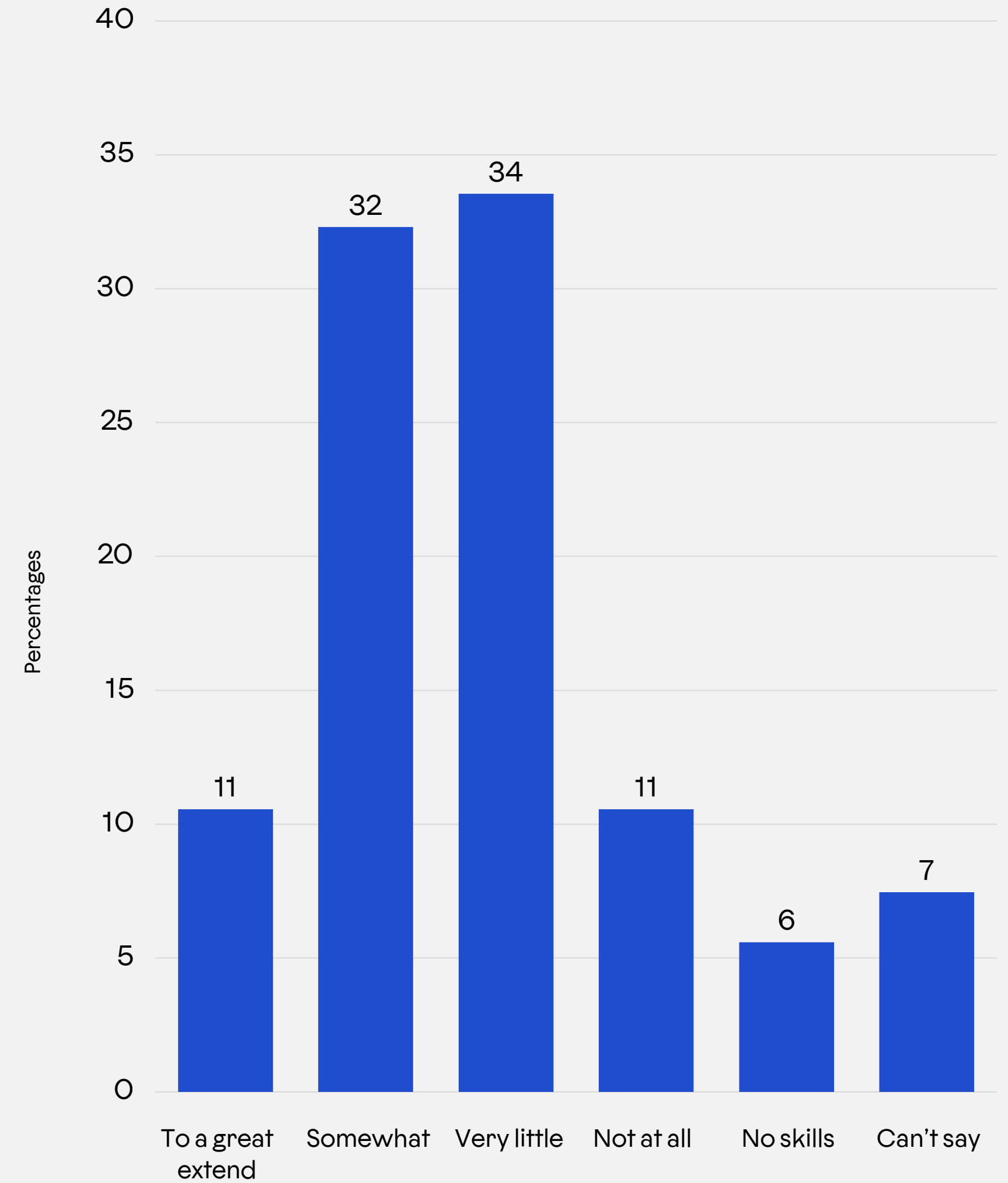
### Have you acquainted yourself with the European Directive on sustainability reporting?

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024



### Have you been able to leverage your expertise from a responsibility and sustainability perspective?

Source: Ornamo Labor market survey 2024





# ORNAMO

## ORNAMO

Finland's largest multidisciplinary design community Ornamo advances the profession of designers and promotes the role of design in society. Established in 1911, Ornamo has 3,000 members from various design disciplines and industrial arts.

Ornamo's members work within industrial design, textiles, furniture design, interior architecture, digital content, user interfaces, packaging design, service design, game design, artisanry, and the fine arts.