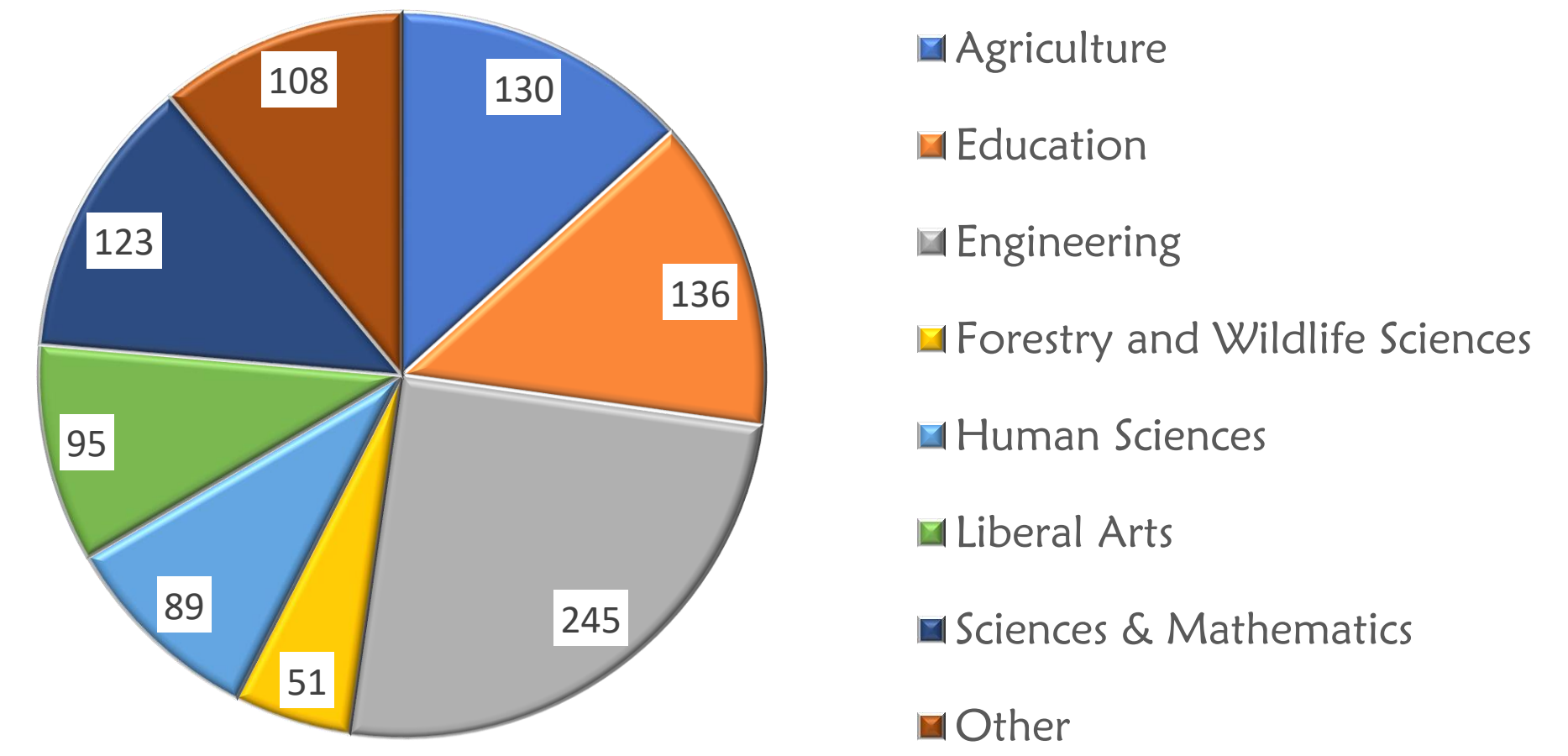# Skills for Success: Tailoring Research Boot Camps to Graduate Student Needs

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AUBURN UNIVERSITY Libraries

As they prepare for academic and professional careers, graduate students must acquire skills needed to conduct scholarly research, organize and work with information sources, and effectively communicate research findings. These are skills that are often not addressed by the curricular content of their graduate programs. To help bridge this gap, library faculty at Auburn University organized a one-day research boot camp. Student response to the weekend boot camp has been overwhelmingly positive, and boot camps are now held once each semester. Since February 2019, nearly 1,000 students have attended the boot camps.

Attendance by College

Pie chart values: 130, 136, 245, 51, 89, 95, 123, 108

- Agriculture
- Education
- Engineering
- Forestry and Wildlife Sciences
- Human Sciences
- Liberal Arts
- Sciences & Mathematics
- Other

What was most useful?

data_management
learning_activities
finding_sources   intro_to_library_services
zotero   multiple_sessions
networking   mendeley
how_to_read_scholarly_articles
lit_review_class
endnote   my_professional_self
lunch_speaker   systematic_reviews
everything   meeting_librarian
publishing_your_work   learning_about_new_tools
boolean_searching

(From student feedback)

How Do We Assess Boot Camp?

Macro

- Qualtrics survey sent to all participants after boot camp.
- 10 questions (both closed & open-ended) including one that asks how to improve boot camp & one that solicits suggestion for new workshops.
- Responses to open-ended questions are coded and analyzed to identify themes.

Micro

- Additional feedback sought for new classes.
- 6 Likert-type & 1 open-ended question related to teaching effectiveness including alignment of content and learning outcomes.

To what extent do you feel you learned from the Savvy Researcher Boot Camp workshops?

Scale = 1 to 6 (highest)

Average ranges from 4.25 to 5.5 over 10 camps

Partners and Collaborators

- University Writing
- SoTL Center
- Academic Support
- Quantitative Methods in Educational Research Group
- Graduate School

Promotion

Outreach to grad students' academic circle:

- Graduate School
- Departmental graduate program officers
- Graduate Student Council reps & Grad student advisory councils
- Grad student professional & special interest organizations

In-person outreach

- Orientations & open houses
- Colloquia

Direct marketing

- Library & Grad School social media
- Grad student List-servs & newsletters
- Signage & QR codes
- Campus events calendar

aub.ie/bootcamp

Best Practices

- Solicit grad student input about research needs
- Align workshop content with the research lifecycle
- Clearly communicate workshop format & learning outcomes
  - Hands-on practice? Discussion? Lightning session?
- Offer a mix of theory- and tool-based sessions
- Keep it fresh! Try out new offerings

More ideas: aub.ie/srbcideas

SAVVY RESEARCHER BOOT CAMP