Are research outputs always the outcomes academics desire?
A case study

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UJ

- *4 Campuses*
- *9 Faculties*
- *82 departments*
- *60 494 students in Whole subsidised, Non subsidised programmes and SLP's*
- *Comprehensive*
- *Contact and distance from 2017*

DIPEM
Institutional planning, evaluation and monitoring

Data, Research and support

3 Units

- *Academic planning*
- *Institutional research*
- *Data governance*

Presentation Outline

Background
- National Higher Education context
- Institutional context
- The case study approach

Results
- Key results
- Further insights

Conclusion
- Key findings
- Recommendations

Future work
- Problems opened up by the case study

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Background of study

Given the national focus on **masters and doctoral graduates** and **research outputs,** outputs are driven by a number of **policy and funding initiatives**.

Despite this and the fact that the current funding framework for higher education highly funds the enrolment and graduation of doctoral and master's graduates, **output targets are not met.**

ASSAf report – " there is evidence that funding incentives are boosted by focusing on **quicker to obtain publication units**".

The **funding framework** is the most important initiative affecting both publication output and specifically doctoral graduate output, with clear indications that these two entities are in **"competition"** with each other.

Background –National and Institutional contexts
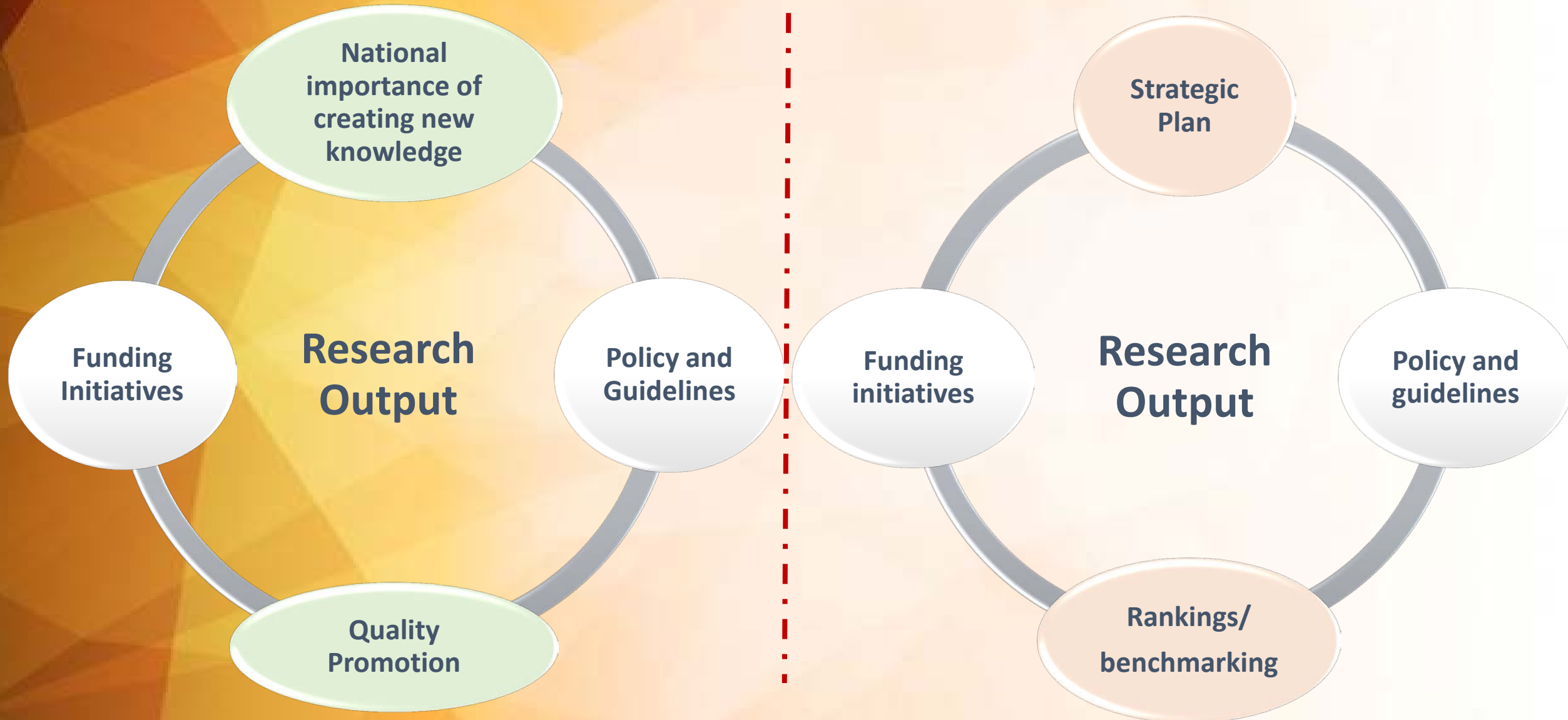
Background – Driving mechanisms

Enrolment plan

Strategy and targets

Monitoring and evaluation

Rationale for the case study

Originated from standard reporting and evaluation of PG efficiencies and targets at MEC level

A Dean pinpointed a possible issue in a specific department in terms of Masters and Doctoral graduate output

The Dean required evidence to make a decision

The focus was to highlight changes/shifts in research outputs, masters and doctoral graduate output, graduation rates and time to completion as well as supervisory capacity

Background - Case study approach

- **Decision making process is supported by reporting**
  - Time to completion and graduate output
  - Research outputs
  - Achievements/concerns or risk areas
- **This case study is quantitative in nature**

- **Use of empirical data (HEMIS) – 2010 to 2015**
  - Student data (Enrolments, graduates, graduation rates)
  - Staff data
  - Research output data
- **Use of the HEDA (Higher Education Data Analyzer) cohort module**
  - Cohort data - 2007 to 2013 cohorts
  - Time to completion

Background - Case study approach

Institutional data

Faculty data

Departmental data

Programme data
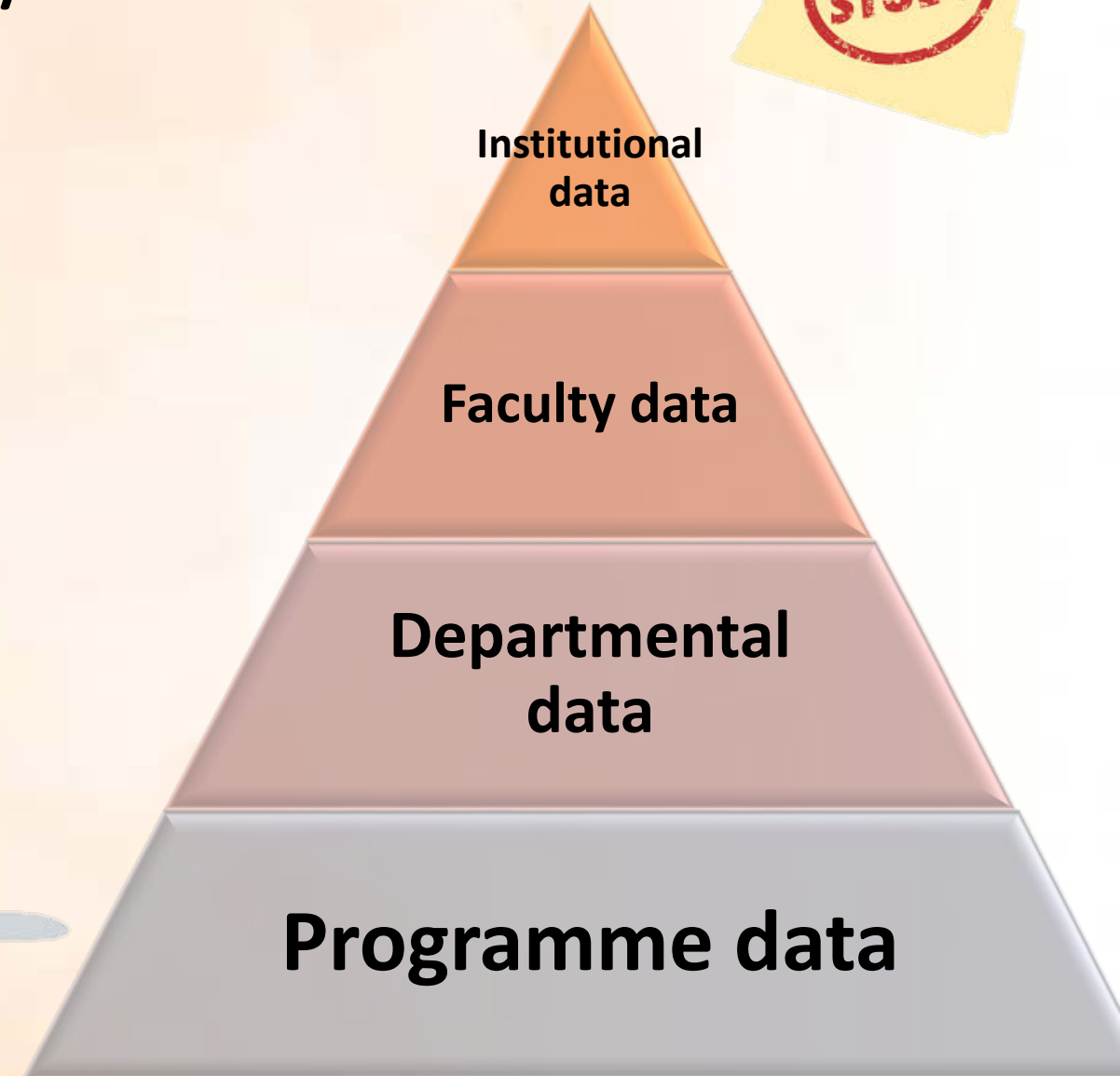
CASE STUDY

Case study Department A
Key indicators as part of the reason for the case study

CASE STUDY

Input indicators

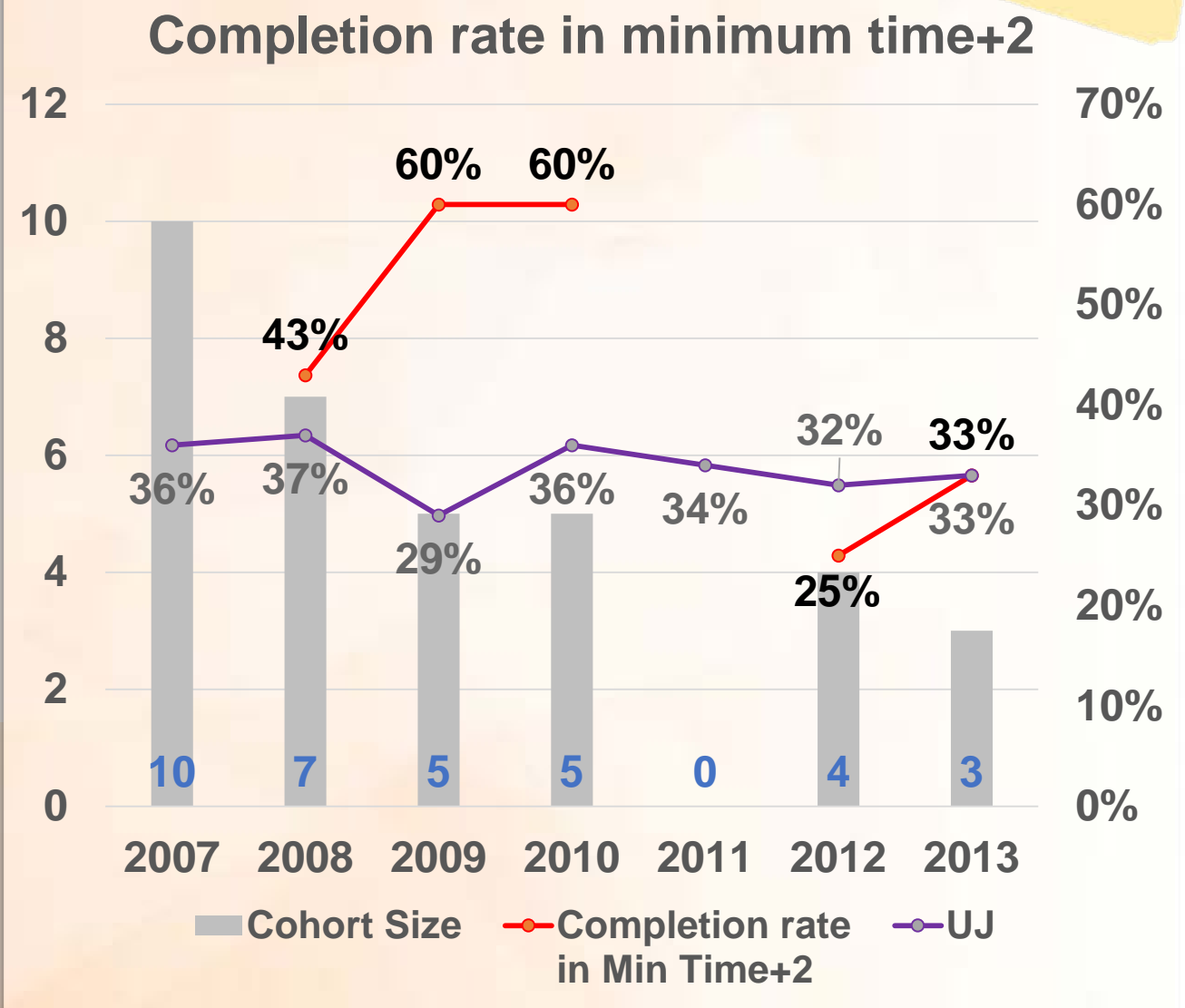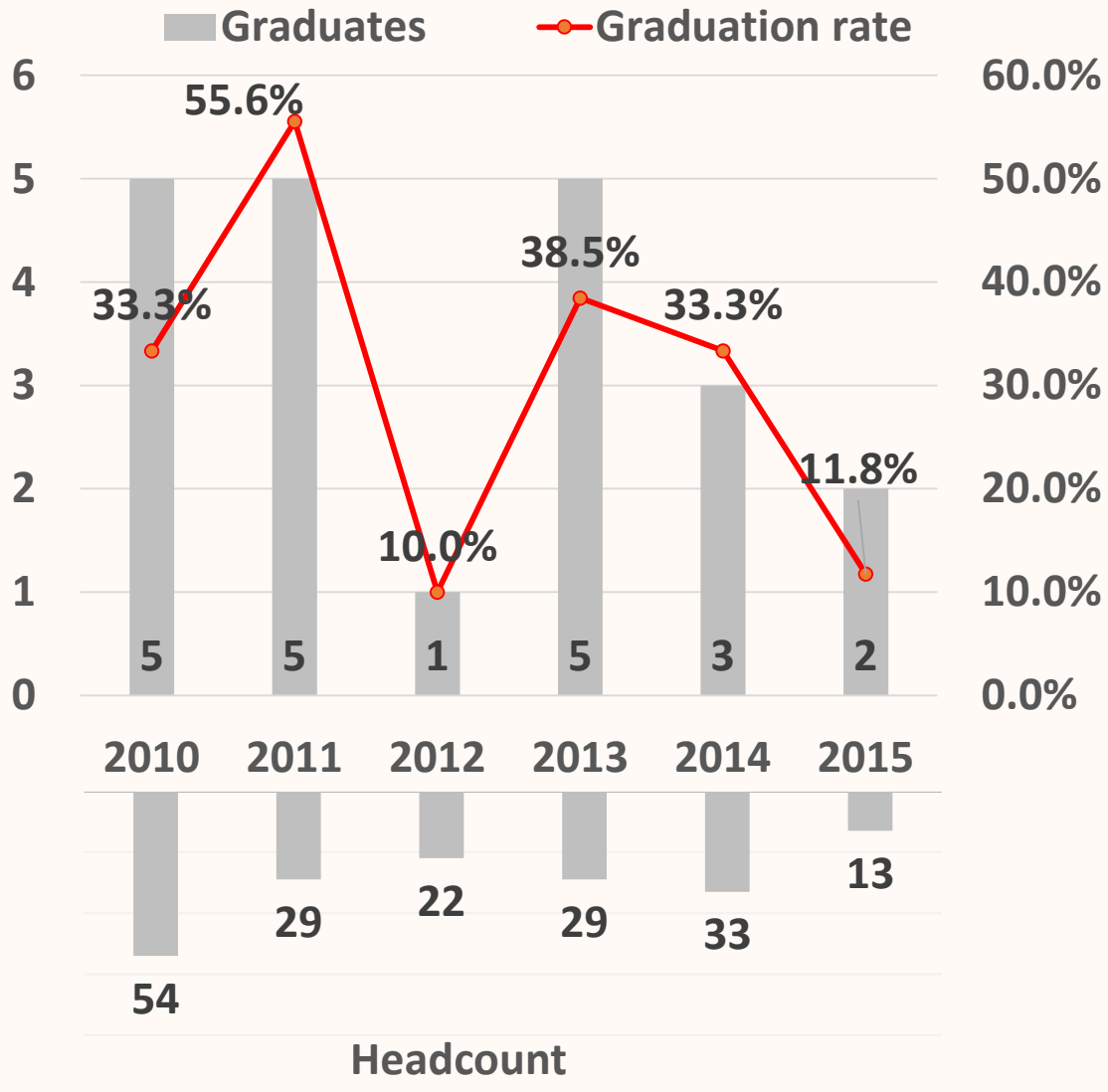|	2010	2015
Total Headcount	1 846	1 718
UG:PG Ratio	78:22	82:18
PG Mix (Hons:M:D)	49:30:21	50:37:13
CW Masters to RD Masters mix	88:12	85:15
PE Instruction research staff (headcount)	30	29
PE Instruction research staff with PhD	18	27

Output indicators

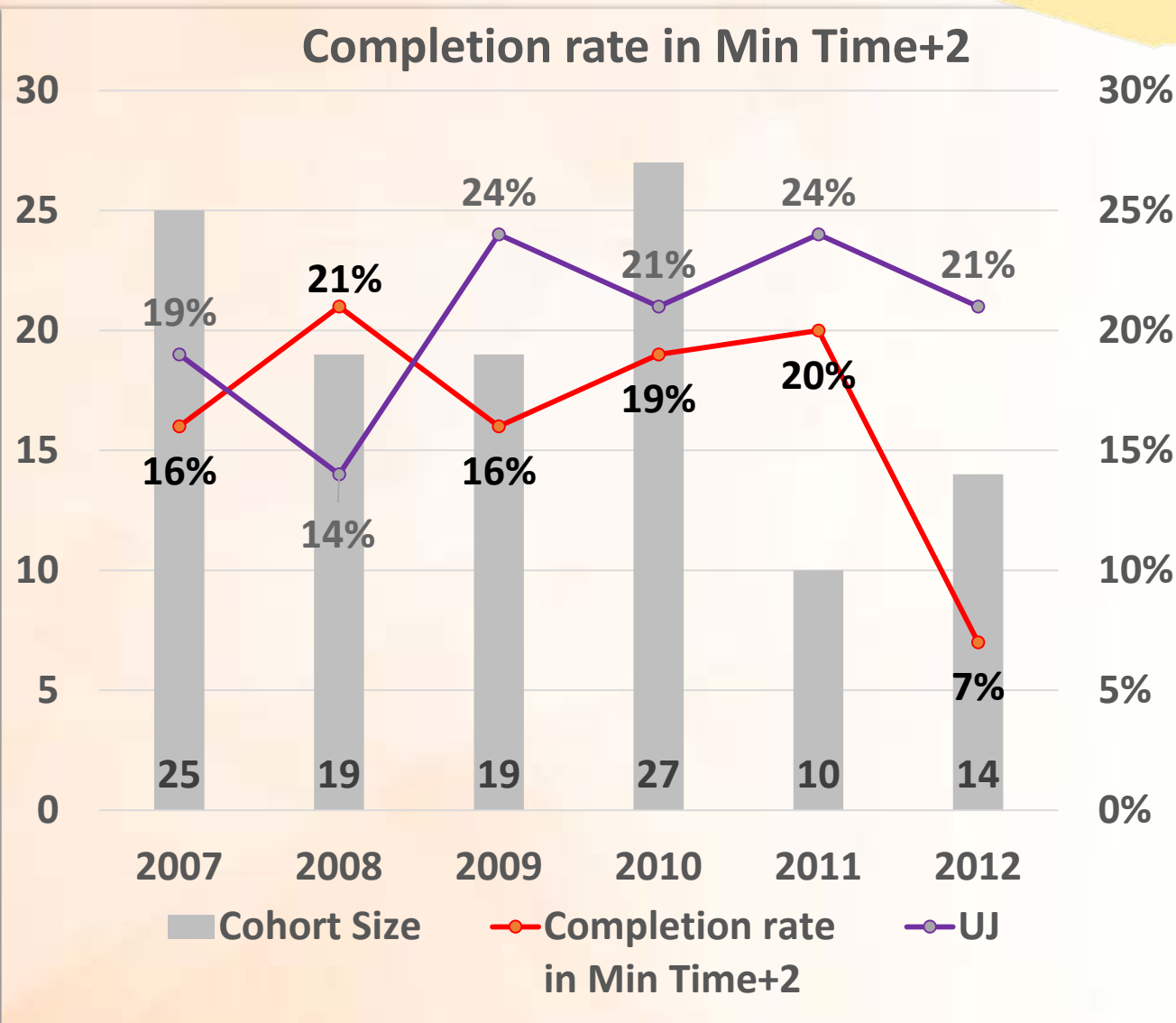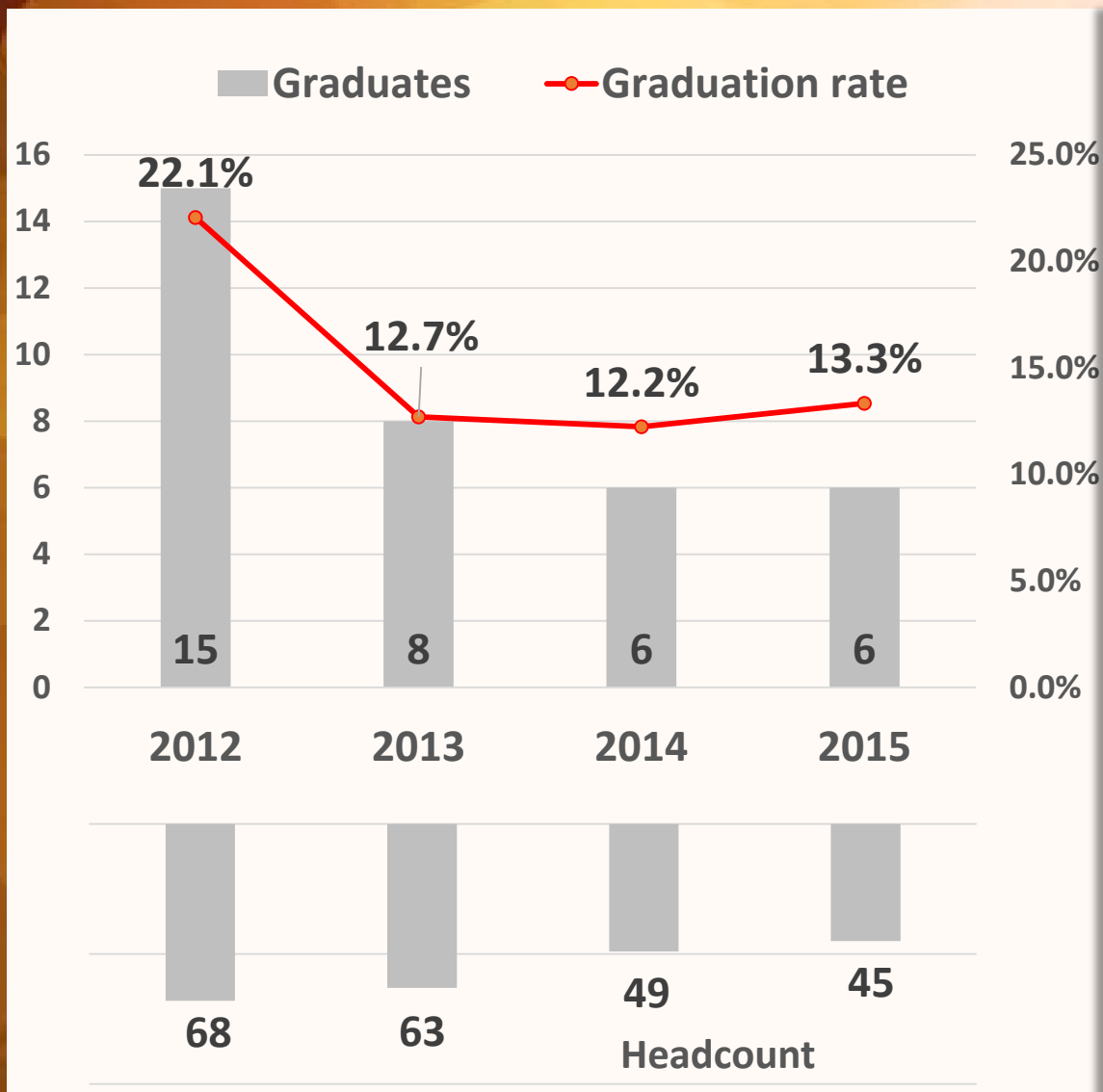|	2010	2015
Graduation rate masters		
• Course work masters (CW)	45%	13%
• Dissertation masters (RD)	33%	12%
Completion rate by year 3 - masters		
• Course work masters (CW)	40%	59%
• Dissertation masters (RD)	43%	33%
Graduation rate Doctoral	22%	13%
Completion rate by year 4 - doctoral	16%	7%
Graduate research output units	53.5	21.0
Research publication output units	18.7	99.6

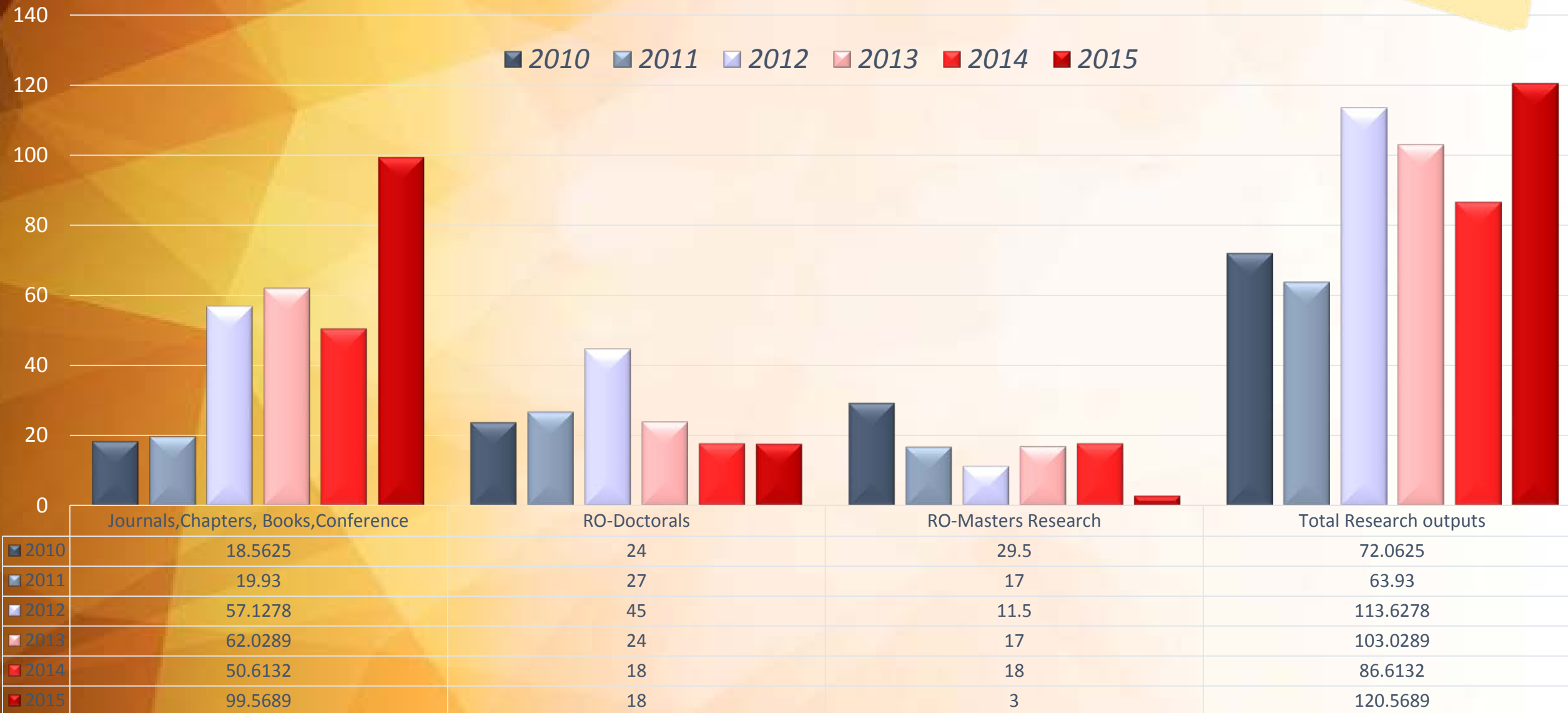# Case study Department A – CW masters
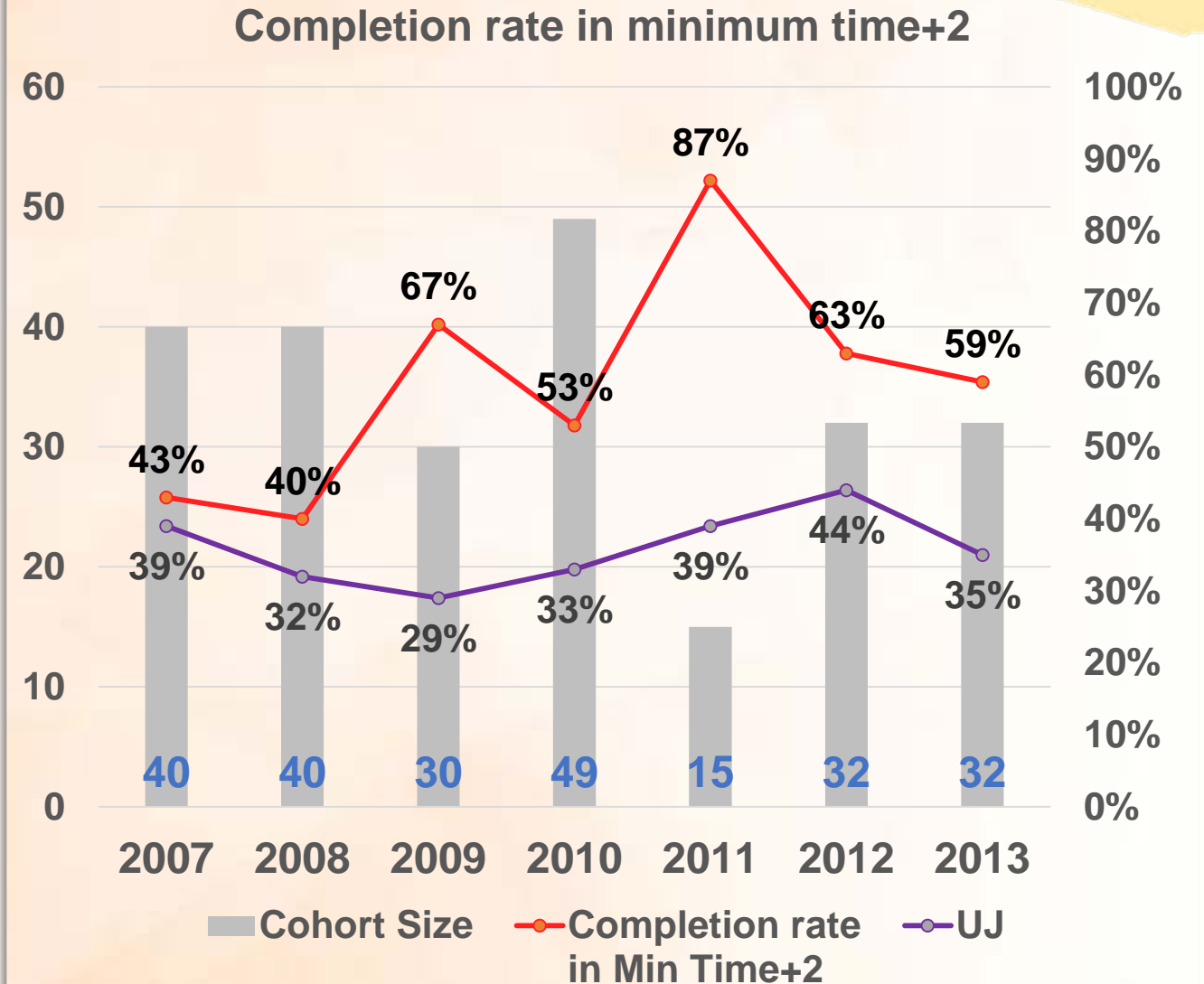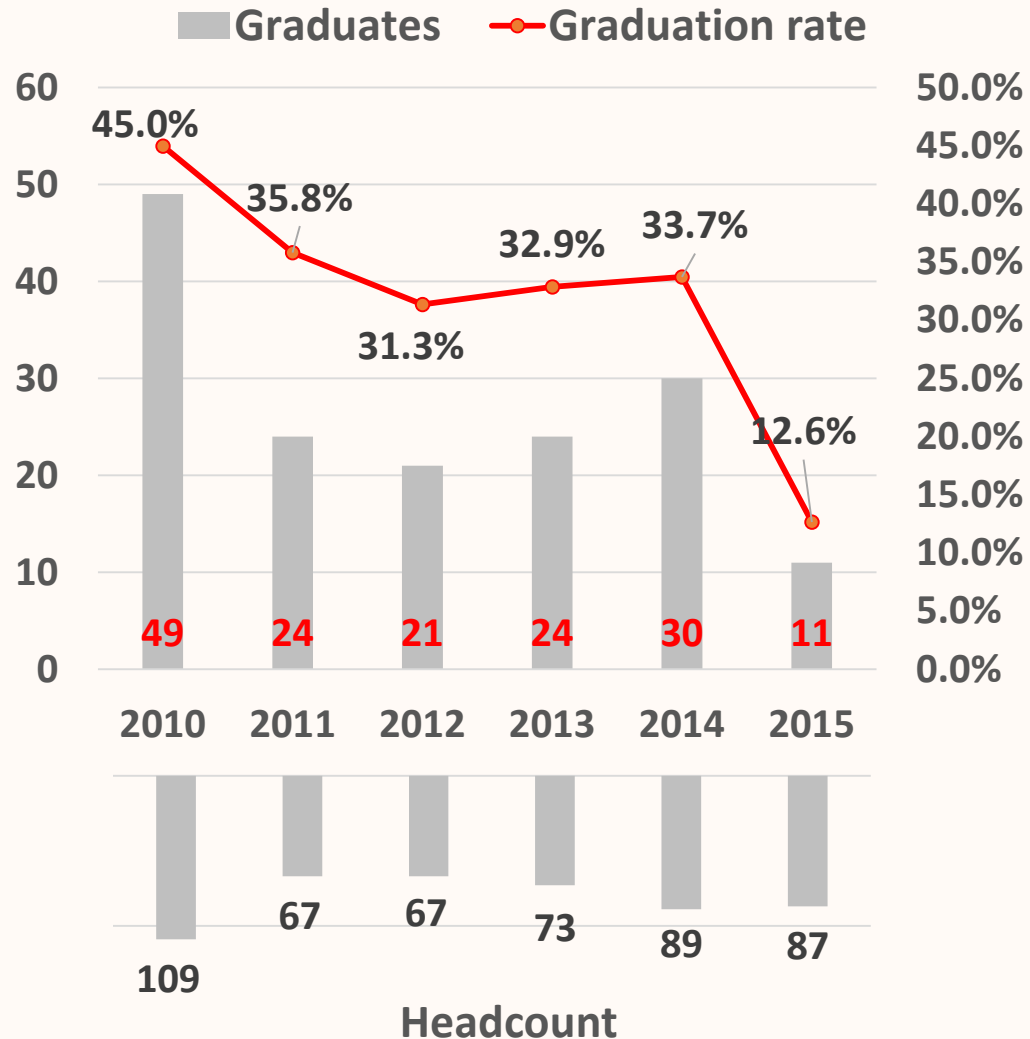
Case study Department A – RD masters

Case study Department A – Doctoral

Case study Department A – Research outputs

CASE STUDY

	Journals,Chapters, Books,Conference	RO-Doctorals	RO-Masters Research	Total Research outputs
2010	18.5625	24	29.5	72.0625
2011	19.93	27	17	63.93
2012	57.1278	45	11.5	113.6278
2013	62.0289	24	17	103.0289
2014	50.6132	18	18	86.6132
2015	99.5689	18	3	120.5689

Case study Department A – so this is important

Case study Department A – Research outputs

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2015	99.5689	18	3	120.5689
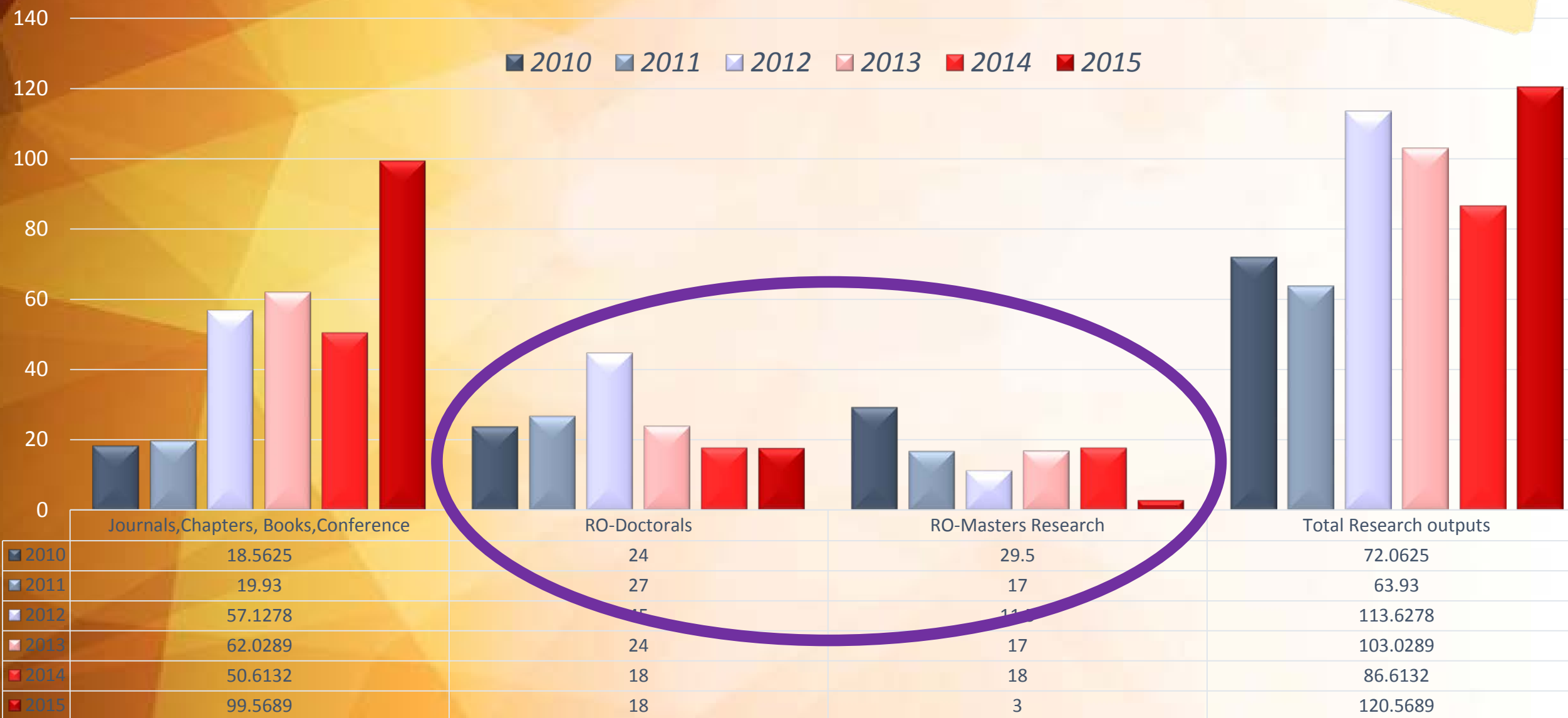
Case study Department A – Further insights

Research Qualification Type	Year	Subject area 1	Subject area 2	Subject area 3	Subject area 4	Total Graduate Research Output Units
Doctoral	2010	-	9	15	-	24
Doctoral	2011	-	12	12	3	27
Doctoral	2012	6	6	30	3	45
Doctoral	2013	6	3	9	6	24
Doctoral	2014	3	3	9	3	18
Doctoral	2015	3	9	0	6	18
Masters	2010	4	18.5	4	3	29.5
Masters	2011	5	6	3.5	2.5	17
Masters	2012	1	7	0.5	3	11.5
Masters	2013	5	7.5	2	2.5	17
Masters	2014	2	12	1.5	2.5	18
Masters	2015	2	0	0.5	0.5	3

Case study Department A – Summary of key findings

Lower graduate output/ graduation rates

Lengthy time to completion

"Imbalance" between research graduate outputs and publication outputs

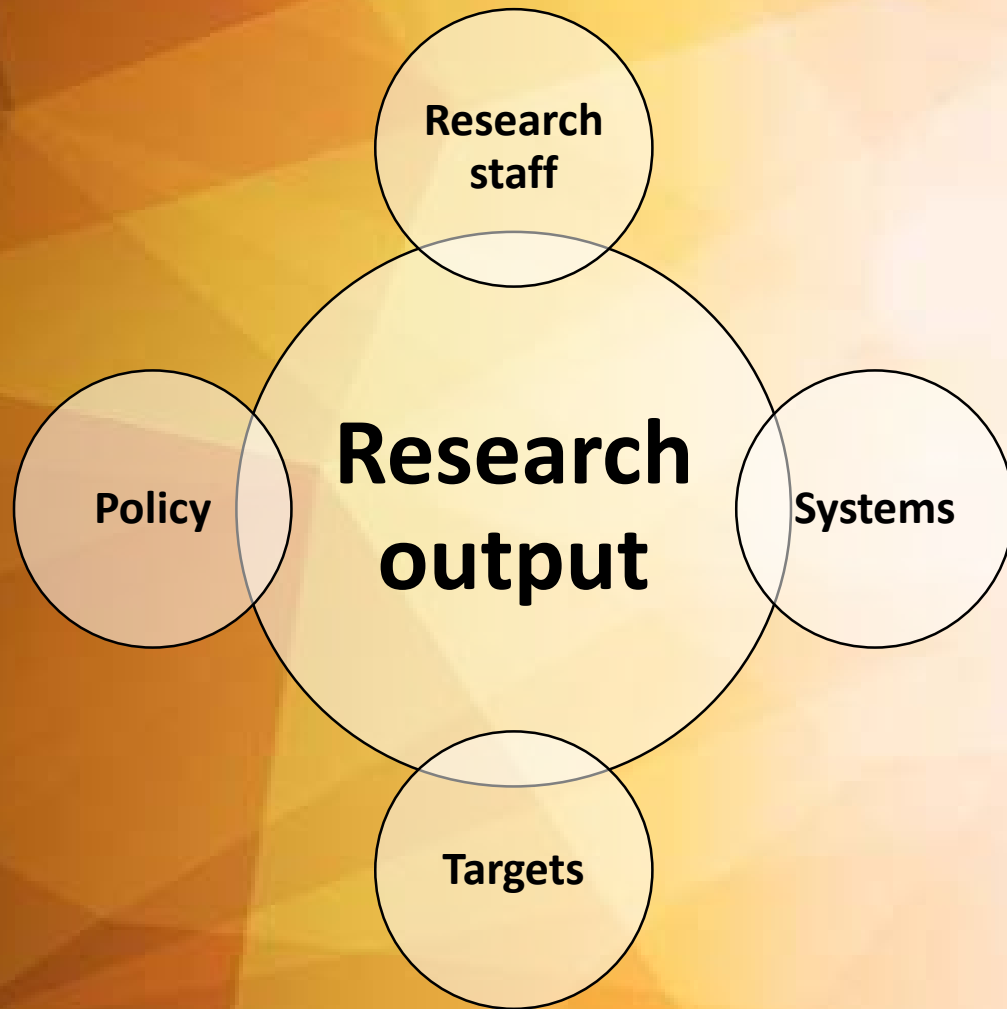**A high number of staff with PhD's**

New aspects were identified which gained importance in the minds of the department, institutional leadership, academics and postgraduate administrative staff

Case study Department A - Conclusion

Research Graduate outputs

Masters

Doctoral

Research publication outputs

Articles

Chapters/Books

Conference Proceedings
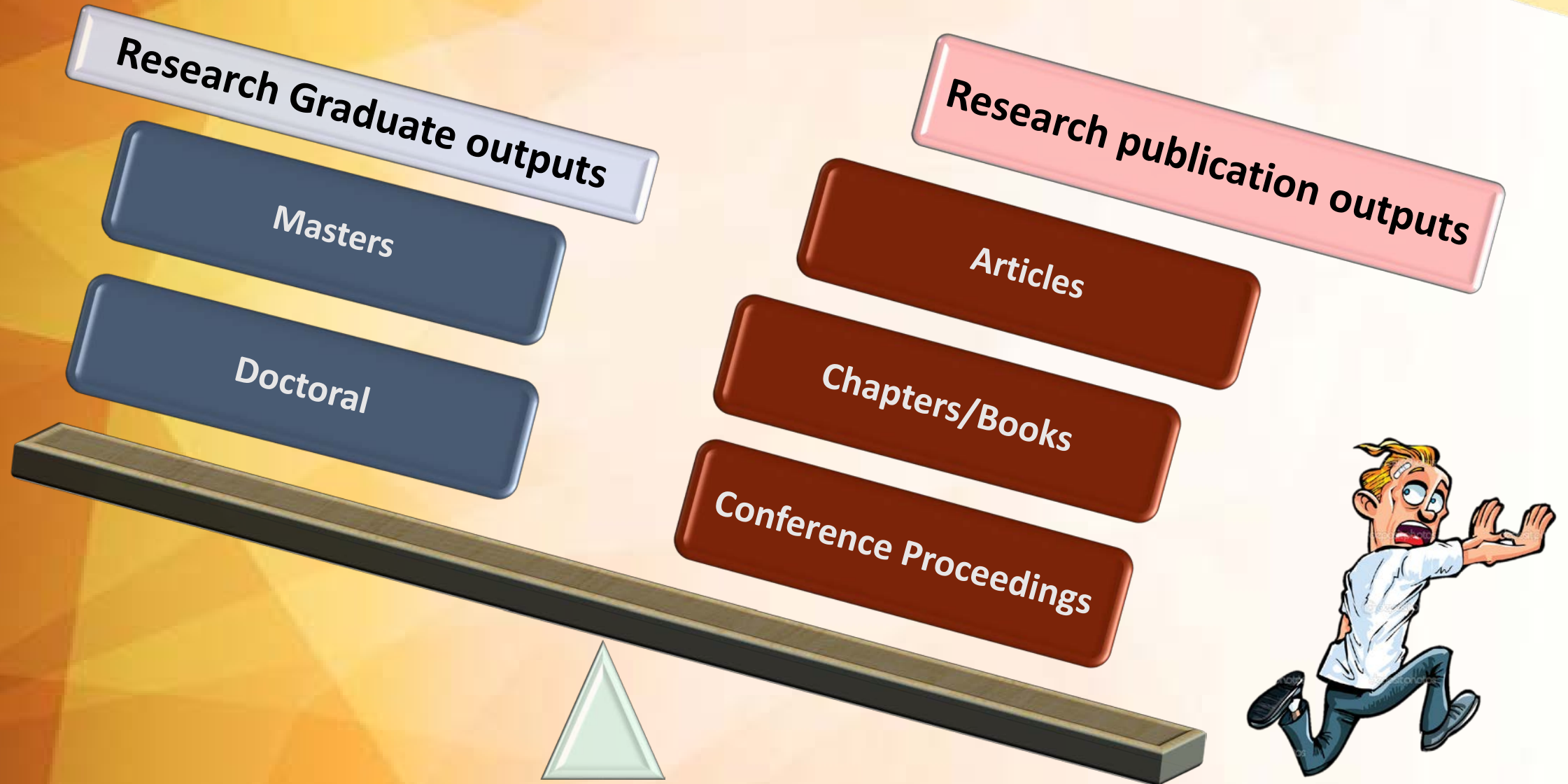
Case study Department A – Recommendations

Research staff

Policy

Research output

Systems

Targets

- Policies related research outputs
- Policies and practices linked to student support and student tracking systems
- Policies and practices linked to doctoral and master's enrolment
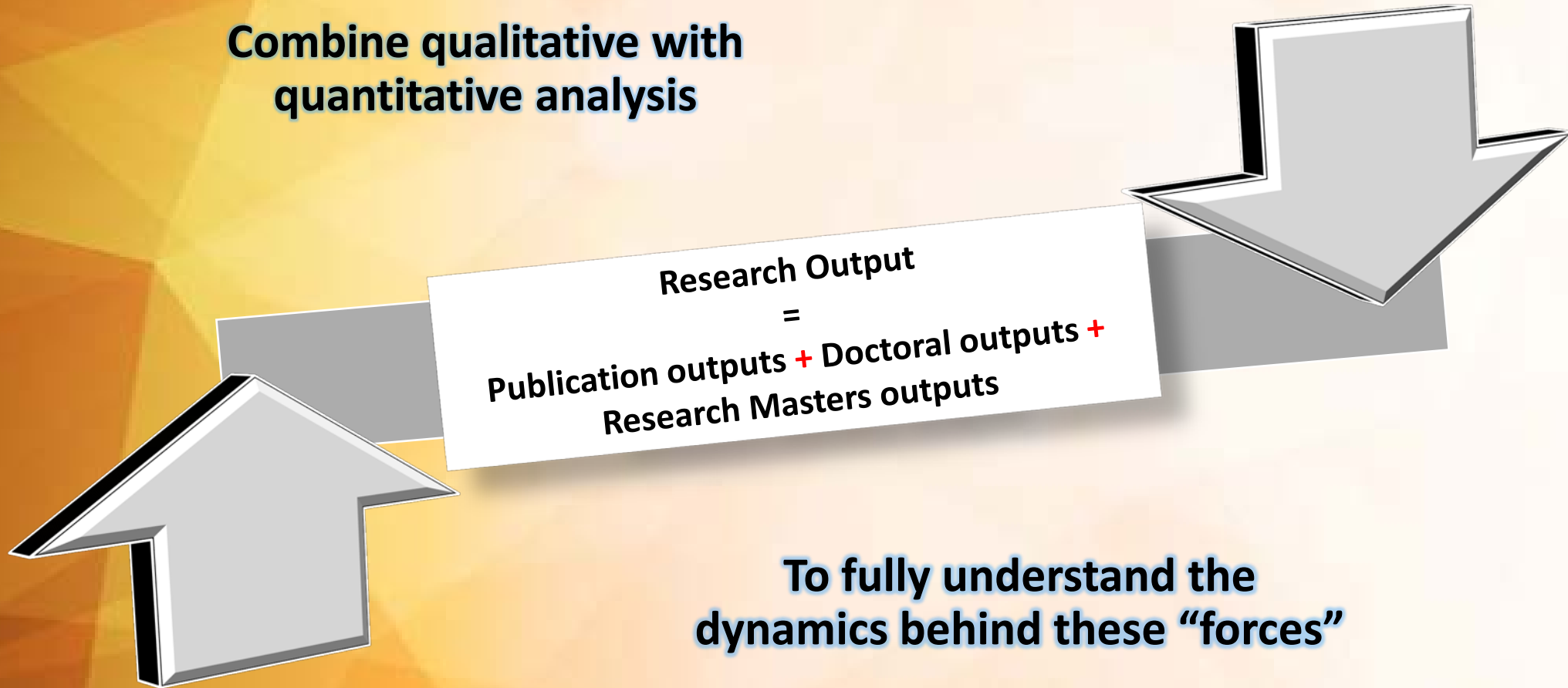- Policies and practices linked to enrolment pre-requisites
- Strategic targets set for enrolments versus outputs
- Strategic targets set for research outputs