

Deakin University

Report on the outcomes of the Higher Degrees by Research Candidate Survey conducted in September 2005

The terms of reference for the Higher Degrees by Research Committee include a requirement to monitor the quality of supervision of candidates and the research training environment across the University.

As one step towards this objective, Research Services Division introduced an annual, anonymous survey of all postgraduate research candidates in February 1999 to determine attitudes to research supervision and the research environment. Since then, surveys have been conducted to coincide with the time of the annual review of progress.

A consistent pattern which has shown in all surveys is that HDR candidates consider the performance of their supervisors to be very good. They are a little less satisfied with their research environment, but it still scores well on average. Table 4 shows the results for the eight surveys conducted to date.

The September 2005 survey

A total of 839 research candidates were invited to complete an online survey at the same time that they completed their online annual review of progress. 239 responded, representing a response rate of 28%. This was a significant decrease from the response rate in 2004 of 48%. The highest response rates achieved were in the 1999-2001 period when approximately 60% of candidates completed the survey. The lowest response rate was 21% in 2003 when no candidates from the Faculty of Education responded. The circumstances relating to this are described in Table 8.

There are no obvious reasons for the lower response rate in 2005 compared with previous years. It may be that candidates simply feel they have been surveyed too much. Apart from the annual HDR surveys, all of the HDR courses have been reviewed during the last few years. Other possible factors could be that candidates feel the annual survey requires a revamp, or that they feel the University needs to be seen to be doing more with the results.

The number of responses by School and Faculty is shown in Table 2. Figure 1 shows the response rate by Faculty.

Survey format

The survey questions included:

1. Brief candidature details - School, commencement year, mode of enrolment and study, and location of off-campus research.
2. Supervision details - A set of 11 questions concerning supervisory interactions with responses captured using the 5-point Likert scale in the range 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).
3. Research environment - A set of 12 questions addressing School funding support and encouragement to conduct research, and the induction process. Responses were captured using the 5-point Likert scale in the range 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

4. A comments section canvassing the positive and negative aspects of the research experience at Deakin. An opportunity was provided to comment on the questionnaire structure and suggest ways of improving the quality of research training at Deakin.

Candidate Responses

Supervision

As shown in Table 3, supervision arrangements were perceived to be highly satisfactory with an overall average of 4.4. Based on comments about the report on the 2004 survey, the percentage of respondents who gave a score at each level of the 1-5 scale has been provided. As can be seen, the responses were heavily concentrated at the 4-5 end of the scale (88%), with only 5% of respondents giving a score of 1 or 2 for their supervision.

Respondents were most satisfied with the extent to which their supervisor:

- requires them to think independently (mean of 4.7);
- promotes opportunities for self direction (mean of 4.5);
- encourages them in their research (mean of 4.4);
- provides constructive criticism (mean of 4.4).

These results are virtually identical to the 2004 survey.

The areas of least satisfaction (albeit still a good rating of 4.2) were:

- requirements by supervisors for students to plan work and meet deadlines;
- the extent to which supervisors provide timely feedback on written work.

These areas have shown up in previous surveys as the areas where candidates are least satisfied.

In all of the eight surveys conducted to date, the average of all the questions relating to supervision has remained in the narrow range of 4.2 to 4.4.

Research Environment

Respondents were less satisfied with their research environment than with their supervision, a pattern which has shown up in every previous survey. The overall average was 3.9 (see Table 3).

Respondents were most satisfied with the extent to which they:

- were aware of the standards expected for their degree (mean of 4.2);
- have opportunities to develop their presentation skills (mean of 4.1);
- were encouraged to participate in seminars, etc (mean of 4.1).

This is identical to the results obtained in the 2004 survey.

In most previous surveys, the extent to which respondents felt part of the University academic community was the area with which they were least satisfied, but in 2004 and 2005 the area of least satisfaction was the lack of explanation of the financial assistance available to support candidates' research (mean of 3.4).

Other aspects at the lower end of the satisfaction scale were the extent to which:

- candidates were offered financial support to attend conferences (mean of 3.5)
- candidates felt part of the University academic community (mean of 3.5).

In all of the eight surveys conducted, the average for all the questions relating to the research environment has remained in the range of 3.9 to 4.2.

Differences in Faculty perceptions

Supervision

The overall satisfaction with supervision for individual faculties was generally close to the University average of 4.4 (Table 5). All faculty averages for individual questions were in the relatively narrow range of 4.0 to 4.8.

The Faculty of Arts had the highest overall mean: 4.5. The lowest mean was 4.2 in the Faculties of Business and Law and Science and Technology.

The lowest mean for individual questions about supervision was 4.0:

- the extent to which Business and Law supervisors demonstrate expertise in the respondents' research topic
- the extent to which Business and Law supervisors promote opportunities for self-direction (Business and Law's mean of 4.3 for the question about supervisors requiring candidates to think independently was also lower than the other faculties whose means were in the range 4.6 to 4.8)
- the extent to which Science and Technology supervisors provide timely feedback on written work.

Time series data on the satisfaction of respondents in the five faculties with their supervision are shown in Tables 6 to 10.

Research environment

Table 5 shows how candidates rated various aspects of their research environment.

Respondents from Business and Law were the least satisfied (mean of 3.4) with their research environment which is a reversal of the result in 2004. Respondents from Education were the most satisfied (mean of 4.1).

There was a greater variation between averages in the research environment category than in supervision, the range being 2.8 to 4.4.

Business and Law had average scores below 3 for two questions:

- the extent to which candidates feel they are offered financial support to attend conferences (mean of 2.8)
- the extent to which they feel part of the University academic community (2.9).

Business and Law respondents also gave an average score of 3.2 for the question about adequate workspace.

Respondents in Arts gave an average score of 3.2 to the question about feeling part of the University academic community.

At the upper end of the range, Arts respondents gave an average score of 4.3 to two questions which relate to adequate workspace and facilities. Education respondents gave an average score of 4.4 to the question about the extent of their awareness of the standards expected for their degree and a score of 4.3 to the question about being given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities.

Mode of enrolment and study

Table 1 below shows the enrolment and study modes of the respondents, which is almost exactly the same breakdown as the total student population.

Table 1: Enrolment and study modes

	On campus	Off campus	Total
Part-time	30%	83%	53%
Full-time	70%	17%	47%
Total	58%	42%	100%

Mode of enrolment

Supervision

There were no significant differences between the responses of part-time and full-time candidates to questions about supervision (Table 11): The overall average rating by full-time candidates was 4.3 whereas it was 4.4 for part-time candidates. This is the same result as in 2004.

Research Environment

The overall average rating was also very similar in terms of the research environment: 3.9 for full-time and 3.8 for part-time respondents (Table 11). There was no significant difference between the average scores given by full- and part-time candidates to individual questions.

Mode of study

Supervision

Overall levels of satisfaction with supervision were very similar for both on-campus (average of 4.3) and off-campus respondents (4.4). The results are shown in Table 12. The differences in the results for individual questions relating to supervision were very small.

Research environment

On and off campus respondents had the same level of satisfaction with the research environment, the mean being 3.9 for both categories (Table 12). There was no significant difference between the average scores given by on and off campus candidates to individual questions.

Candidate Comments

Most positive aspects of research experience

As in previous surveys, the support of supervisors was acknowledged by the largest number of respondents (Table 13). Supervisor support, knowledge, availability and overall supervision made up 33% of the positive comments from the 185 respondents to this question. The research experience, collegial atmosphere and networking were also commented upon by a considerable number. This is the same result as in 2004.

Least satisfactory aspects of research experience

A summary of the comments is given in Table 14. Concerns relating to office space, and isolation and distance received the greatest number of comments making up 37% of the least satisfactory aspects mentioned. Both of these aspects have featured prominently in all previous surveys.

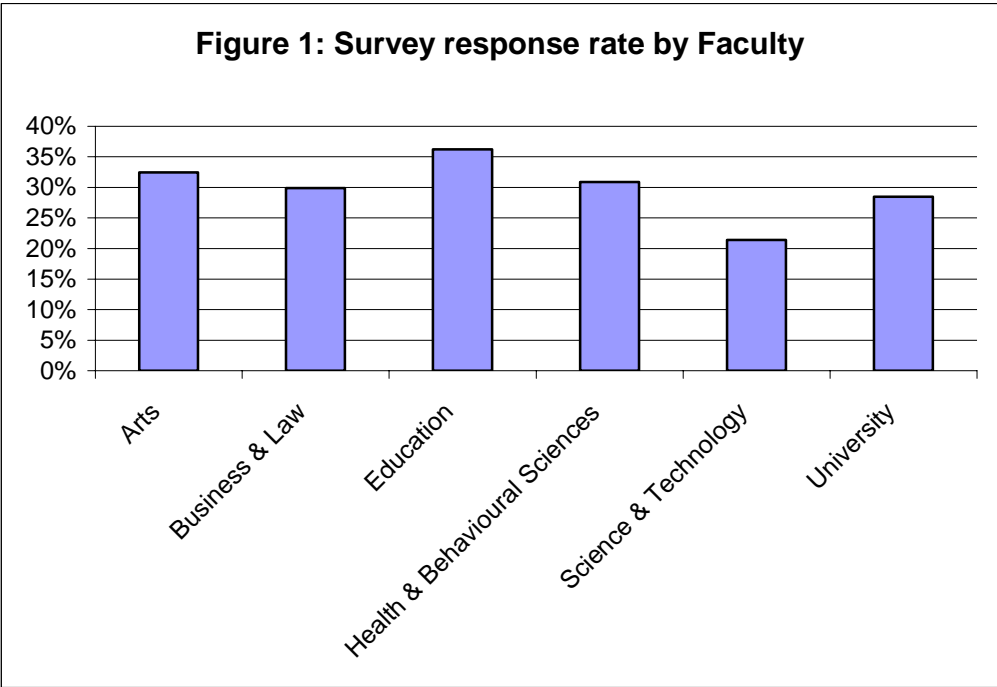
Suggested improvements to the quality of research training

Table 15 shows a summary of the suggested improvements to the quality of research training. The most common suggestion was that there should be more courses on aspects such as data analysis, research methodology, software use and thesis writing. In 2004, however, the most common suggestion was improved research resources, facilities and workspace. While only the third most common suggestion in 2005, it still appears to be in keeping with the least satisfactory aspect identified in the section above. The second most common suggestion in 2005 was for more seminars and workshops (including for off campus students and after hours), which may relate to the concerns about isolation and distance identified in the section above.

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Research Services
17 March 2006

Table 2: Number of responses by faculty and school (September 2005)

Faculty of Arts – 48 responses	
Communication & Creative Arts	33
History, Heritage and Society	7
International and Political Studies	8
Faculty of Business & Law – 26 responses	
Accounting, Economics & Finance	5
Deakin Business School	10
Information Systems	6
Law	3
Management & Marketing	2
Faculty of Education – 46 responses	
Scientific & Development Studies	14
Social & Cultural Studies	32
Faculty of Health & Behavioural Sciences – 55 responses	
Exercise & Nutrition Sciences	10
Health & Social Development	9
Nursing	7
Psychology	29
Faculty of Science & Technology – 64 responses	
Architecture & Building	6
Biological & Chemical Sciences	9
Ecology & Environment	27
Engineering & Technology	11
Information Technology	11
University – 239 responses	



**Table 3: Candidate satisfaction with supervisor and research environment
(September 2005)**

	Average	Percentage for each score				
	<i>n</i> =239	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor						
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.3	3%	2%	6%	40%	49%
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.3	3%	3%	7%	37%	49%
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	2%	3%	6%	35%	53%
encourages me in my research	4.4	3%	2%	6%	26%	63%
requires me to think independently	4.7	1%	0%	2%	26%	71%
is available for discussion when needed	4.3	2%	3%	7%	36%	52%
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.3	2%	4%	8%	29%	57%
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.2	1%	5%	12%	34%	47%
provides timely feedback on written work	4.2	4%	5%	10%	31%	50%
provides constructive criticism	4.4	1%	4%	9%	27%	59%
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.5	2%	2%	4%	31%	61%
Supervision average	4.4	2%	3%	7%	32%	56%
Research environment						
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.8	5%	12%	13%	42%	29%
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.8	5%	9%	11%	50%	25%
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.9	8%	6%	10%	40%	37%
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	4.0	5%	5%	11%	44%	35%
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.2	2%	2%	15%	39%	42%
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.1	2%	5%	12%	41%	40%
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.1	5%	4%	10%	40%	41%
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.0	5%	6%	14%	37%	37%
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.9	6%	7%	15%	36%	37%
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.5	10%	10%	23%	37%	20%
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.5	8%	10%	26%	34%	22%
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.4	10%	16%	16%	39%	19%
Research environment average	3.9	6%	7%	15%	40%	32%
All questions	4.1	4%	5%	11%	36%	44%

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 4: Comparative outcomes of the 1999-2005 higher degree by research candidate surveys

	Feb 1999 <i>n</i> =253	Oct 1999 <i>n</i> =461	Oct 2000 <i>n</i> =529	Oct 2001 <i>n</i> =515	Oct 2002 <i>n</i> =331	Nov 2003 <i>n</i> =180	Oct 2004 <i>n</i> =453	Sep 2005 <i>n</i> =239
My supervisor								
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.3
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.3
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.3
encourages me in my research	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4
requires me to think independently	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.7
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.3
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.3
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.2
provides timely feedback on written work	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.2
provides constructive criticism	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.5
Supervision average	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.4
Research environment								
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.6	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.8	3.8
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.4	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.8	3.8
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.9
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	3.8	3.9	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.0
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	3.8	4.0	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.1
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	3.8	3.9	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.3	3.8	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.9
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.5
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.3	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.1	3.5	3.5
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.3	3.4	3.8	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4
Research environment average	3.7	3.8	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.9
All questions	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1

Table 5: Candidate satisfaction with supervisor and research environment by faculty (September 2005)

	Average Arts <i>n = 48</i>	Average Bus & Law <i>n = 26</i>	Average Educ <i>n = 46</i>	Average Health & Beh <i>n = 55</i>	Average Sci & Tech <i>n = 64</i>	Average Uni <i>n = 239</i>
My supervisor						
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.3
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.3
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.1	4.3
encourages me in my research	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.4
requires me to think independently	4.7	4.3	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.7
is available for discussion when needed	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.3
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.3
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.2
provides timely feedback on written work	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.2
provides constructive criticism	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.4
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.7	4.0	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.5
Supervision average	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.4
Research environment						
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.7	3.4	4.3	3.8	3.6	3.8
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.8	3.6	4.2	3.7	3.8	3.8
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	4.3	3.2	3.9	4.1	3.9	3.9
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	4.3	3.6	4.2	3.9	3.8	4.0
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.2	3.8	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.2
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.1	3.8	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.1
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	3.8	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	3.7	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.0
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.7	3.4	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.4	2.8	3.8	3.4	3.7	3.5
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.2	2.9	3.8	3.5	3.7	3.5
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.5	3.0	3.7	3.4	3.4	3.4
Research environment average	3.8	3.4	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.9
All questions	4.2	3.8	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.1

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 6: Comparison over time of satisfaction with supervisor and research environment: Faculty of Arts

	Feb. 1999 <i>n</i> =84	Oct. 1999 <i>n</i> =135	Oct. 2000 <i>n</i> =133	Oct. 2001 <i>n</i> =116	Oct. 2002 <i>n</i> =44	Nov. 2003 <i>n</i> =57	Oct. 2004 <i>n</i> =107	Sep. 2005 <i>n</i> =48
My supervisor:								
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.3
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.3
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.5
encourages me in my research	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.6
requires me to think independently	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.7
is available for discussion when needed	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.5
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.3
provides timely feedback on written work	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.4
provides constructive criticism	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.5
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7
Supervision average	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
Research environment:								
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.3	3.5	3.9	3.8	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.7
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.3	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.4	3.4	3.8	3.8
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.7	3.9	4.6	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.3
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	3.7	3.8	4.2	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.0	4.3
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.2
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	3.5	3.9	4.3	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.9	4.1
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	3.4	4.0	4.3	3.9	3.6	3.3	3.7	3.8
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	3.5	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.7
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.0	3.6	4.1	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.7
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.1	3.2	4.0	3.6	3.3	3.1	3.6	3.4
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	2.9	3.2	3.6	3.3	2.7	2.6	3.1	3.2
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.2	3.1	4.0	3.6	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.5
Research environment average	3.8	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.8

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 7: Comparison over time of satisfaction with supervisor and research environment: Faculty of Business and Law

	Feb. 1999 <i>n</i> =17	Oct. 1999 <i>n</i> =36	Oct. 2000 <i>n</i> =39	Oct. 2001 <i>n</i> =33	Oct. 2002 <i>n</i> =8	Nov. 2003 <i>n</i> =17	Oct. 2004 <i>n</i> =42	Sep. 2005 <i>n</i> =26
My supervisor:								
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.1	4.0	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.1	4.4	4.2
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.4	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.0	4.4	4.0
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.4	4.2
encourages me in my research	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.2
requires me to think independently	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.3
is available for discussion when needed	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.8	4.2	4.4	4.2
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.5	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.3
provides timely feedback on written work	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.8	3.9	4.3	4.2
provides constructive criticism	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.3
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.0
Supervision average	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.4	4.2
Research environment:								
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.6	3.8	4.4	4.1	4.5	3.7	4.2	3.4
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.0	3.5	3.7	3.6
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.7	4.2	4.4	4.2	5.0	4.2	4.3	3.2
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	3.8	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.2	4.3	3.6
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.3	3.8
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.1	4.0	4.4	4.4	4.8	3.9	4.4	3.8
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.5	3.7
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	3.9	3.9	4.4	4.5	4.5	3.9	4.3	3.8
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.0	3.8	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.3	3.4
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.2	3.3	3.9	3.6	3.0	4.2	3.7	2.8
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.4	3.3	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.7	4.0	2.9
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.8	4.5	4.1	3.6	3.0
Research environment average	4.0	3.8	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.1	3.4

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 8: Comparison over time of satisfaction with supervisor and research environment: Faculty of Education

	Feb. 1999 <i>n</i> =49	Oct. 1999 <i>n</i> =87	Oct. 2000 <i>n</i> =92	Oct. 2001 <i>n</i> =92	Oct. 2002 <i>n</i> =53	Nov. 2003* <i>n</i> =0	Oct. 2004 <i>n</i> =79	Sep. 2005 <i>n</i> =46
My supervisor:								
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3		4.2	4.5
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.2		4.3	4.3
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4		4.4	4.4
encourages me in my research	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6		4.5	4.4
requires me to think independently	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7		4.7	4.6
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4		4.3	4.5
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.4		4.5	4.5
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1		4.1	4.2
provides timely feedback on written work	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.3		4.3	4.3
provides constructive criticism	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5		4.5	4.5
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6		4.6	4.6
Supervision average	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4		4.4	4.4
Research environment:								
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	4.0	4.0	4.3	3.9	4.2		4.1	4.3
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.7	3.8	4.3	4.0	4.2		4.0	4.2
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.9	4.1	4.6	4.4	4.3		3.9	3.9
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	4.0	4.1	4.4	4.2	4.2		4.1	4.2
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2		4.4	4.4
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	3.9	3.8	4.2	4.1	4.0		4.0	4.1
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.2	4.1		4.1	4.2
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.1		3.8	4.0
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.1	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.0		3.9	4.1
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.4	3.5	4.0	3.6	3.6		3.5	3.8
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.5	3.4	3.8	3.7	3.4		3.4	3.8
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.3	3.4	3.9	3.4	3.3		3.4	3.7
Research environment average	4.0	3.8	4.2	4.0	4.0		3.9	4.1

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

* There was a zero response from Education students in 2003. A new online annual review system was introduced that year and candidates were also invited to complete the HDR candidate survey online. The Faculty of Education did not participate in the online annual review process (a paper-based process was used), but their candidates were invited to complete the survey online. Unfortunately none took up this opportunity.

Table 9: Comparison over time of satisfaction with supervisor and research environment: Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences

	Feb. 1999 <i>n=48</i>	Oct. 1999 <i>n=89</i>	Oct. 2000 <i>n=107</i>	Oct. 2001 <i>n=114</i>	Oct. 2002 <i>n=77</i>	Nov. 2003 <i>n=36</i>	Oct. 2004 <i>n=88</i>	Sep. 2005 <i>n=55</i>
My supervisor:								
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.2
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.5
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.5
encourages me in my research	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.6
requires me to think independently	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.8
is available for discussion when needed	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	3.6	4.2	4.3
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.3
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.1
provides timely feedback on written work	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.2	3.6	4.0	4.1
provides constructive criticism	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.3	4.4
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.5
Supervision average	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.4
Research environment:								
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.8
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.2	3.5	3.7
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.7	3.8	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.1
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.9
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.1	3.8	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.0	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.3
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.2
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.6	3.6	4.0	4.0	4.1	3.7	3.8	4.1
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.9	3.4	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.4	3.7	3.4
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.3	3.1	2.9	3.4	3.5
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.4
Research environment average	4.0	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.9

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 10: Comparison over time of satisfaction with supervisor and research environment: Faculty of Science and Technology

	Feb. 1999 <i>n</i> =55	Oct. 1999 <i>n</i> =108	Oct. 2000 <i>n</i> =144	Oct. 2001 <i>n</i> =152	Oct. 2002 <i>n</i> =87	Nov. 2003 <i>n</i> =70	Oct. 2004 <i>n</i> =137	Sep. 2005 <i>n</i> =64
My supervisor:								
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.2
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1
encourages me in my research	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
requires me to think independently	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.7
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.2
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.2
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.1
provides timely feedback on written work	3.9	4.2	4.4	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.0
provides constructive criticism	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.3
Supervision average	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2
Research environment:								
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.6
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.3	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.8
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.8
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.2
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.1
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.2
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.7
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.5	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.7
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.4	3.5	3.9	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.4
Research environment average	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 11: Satisfaction with supervisor and research environment by enrolment mode (September 2005)

	Full-time					Part-time						
	Ave n=113	Percentage for each score					Ave n=126	Percentage for each score				
		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor												
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.2	4%	5%	5%	45%	42%	4.4	3%	0%	7%	35%	56%
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.2	4%	4%	8%	43%	41%	4.4	2%	3%	7%	32%	57%
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	2%	3%	8%	38%	50%	4.4	2%	3%	5%	34%	56%
encourages me in my research	4.5	3%	2%	5%	25%	65%	4.4	3%	2%	7%	27%	61%
requires me to think independently	4.7	0%	1%	0%	28%	71%	4.6	2%	0%	4%	24%	71%
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	3%	5%	6%	39%	47%	4.4	2%	2%	7%	33%	56%
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.2	2%	8%	9%	25%	55%	4.5	2%	1%	7%	33%	58%
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.2	1%	5%	13%	35%	46%	4.2	2%	5%	12%	34%	48%
provides timely feedback on written work	4.1	4%	6%	12%	33%	45%	4.3	4%	4%	8%	29%	55%
provides constructive criticism	4.4	1%	4%	10%	29%	57%	4.4	2%	4%	9%	25%	60%
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.5	2%	2%	7%	28%	61%	4.5	2%	2%	2%	33%	60%
Supervision average	4.3	2%	4%	8%	33%	53%	4.4	2%	2%	7%	31%	58%
Research environment												
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.6	4%	18%	15%	38%	24%	3.9	5%	6%	11%	33%	44%
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.7	5%	13%	11%	51%	20%	3.9	5%	4%	14%	40%	38%
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	4.0	7%	7%	6%	43%	38%	3.9	7%	4%	15%	37%	37%
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	4.0	5%	5%	8%	48%	33%	4.0	5%	1%	13%	38%	43%
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.2	0%	3%	16%	41%	41%	4.2	4%	7%	12%	37%	40%
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.2	0%	3%	12%	43%	42%	4.0	5%	4%	26%	42%	23%
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.1	3%	6%	9%	42%	41%	4.0	7%	5%	24%	35%	28%
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.0	5%	8%	10%	42%	36%	3.9	7%	8%	27%	31%	26%
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	4.0	5%	7%	8%	42%	39%	3.8	8%	14%	36%	41%	0%
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.6	7%	7%	23%	41%	22%	3.3	29%	26%	45%	0%	0%
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.6	6%	9%	22%	42%	20%	3.4	42%	58%	0%	0%	0%
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.4	10%	16%	13%	44%	17%	3.4	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Research environment average	3.9	5%	8%	13%	43%	31%	3.8	9%	8%	19%	34%	29%
All questions	4.1	3%	6%	10%	38%	42%	4.1	5%	5%	12%	32%	46%

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 12: Satisfaction with supervisor and research environment by study mode (September 2005)

	On campus					Off campus						
	Ave n=138	Percentage for each score					Ave n=101	Percentage for each score				
		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor												
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.2	4%	5%	5%	45%	42%	4.4	3%	0%	7%	35%	56%
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.2	4%	4%	8%	43%	41%	4.3	2%	3%	7%	32%	57%
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	2%	3%	8%	38%	50%	4.4	2%	3%	5%	34%	56%
encourages me in my research	4.4	3%	2%	5%	25%	65%	4.5	3%	2%	7%	27%	61%
requires me to think independently	4.7	0%	1%	0%	28%	71%	4.6	2%	0%	4%	24%	71%
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	3%	5%	6%	39%	47%	4.5	2%	2%	7%	33%	56%
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.3	2%	8%	9%	25%	55%	4.5	2%	1%	7%	33%	58%
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.2	1%	5%	13%	35%	46%	4.2	2%	5%	12%	34%	48%
provides timely feedback on written work	4.0	4%	6%	12%	33%	45%	4.4	4%	4%	8%	29%	55%
provides constructive criticism	4.3	1%	4%	10%	29%	57%	4.5	2%	4%	9%	25%	60%
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.4	2%	2%	7%	28%	61%	4.6	2%	2%	2%	33%	60%
Supervision average	4.3	2%	4%	8%	33%	53%	4.4	2%	2%	7%	31%	58%
Research environment												
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.7	4%	18%	15%	38%	24%	4.0	5%	6%	11%	33%	44%
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.7	5%	13%	11%	51%	20%	4.0	5%	4%	14%	40%	38%
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.9	7%	7%	6%	43%	38%	4.0	7%	4%	15%	37%	37%
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	3.9	5%	5%	8%	48%	33%	4.1	5%	1%	13%	38%	43%
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.1	0%	3%	16%	41%	41%	4.2	4%	7%	12%	37%	40%
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.2	0%	3%	12%	43%	42%	4.0	5%	4%	26%	42%	23%
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.1	3%	6%	9%	42%	41%	3.9	7%	5%	24%	35%	28%
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.0	5%	8%	10%	42%	36%	3.9	7%	8%	27%	31%	26%
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	4.0	5%	7%	8%	42%	39%	3.9	8%	14%	36%	41%	0%
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.5	7%	7%	23%	41%	22%	3.4	29%	26%	45%	0%	0%
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.5	6%	9%	22%	42%	20%	3.5	42%	58%	0%	0%	0%
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.5	10%	16%	13%	44%	17%	3.3	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Research environment average	3.9	5%	8%	13%	43%	31%	3.9	9%	8%	19%	34%	29%
All questions	4.1	3%	6%	10%	38%	42%	4.2	5%	5%	12%	32%	46%

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 13: Summary of most positive comments about research experience (September 2005)

Most positive aspects of research experience	Number
Supervisor - overall	53
Research experience (personal development/learning/research itself/skills)	27
Networking/interaction with relevant staff and/or students/friendly environment	23
Independence/freedom	15
Supportive academic staff/School/admin staff	11
Facilities/resources (office space)	10
Research environment	8
Supervisor - support	7
Distance education opportunities	6
Opportunity to attend symposiums/conferences/seminars	5
Library support/services	5
Opportunity to publish	4
Summer and Winter Schools	2
Opportunity to collaborate with external groups (industry)	2
Flexibility of program	2
Communication	2
Supervisor - knowledge of area	1
Relevance of research to professional practice	1
Financial support	1
Total respondents	185

Table 14: Summary of comments relating to least satisfactory aspects of research experience (September 2005)

Least positive aspects of research experience	Number
Isolation/distance/off campus	33
Inadequate resources/facilities/access to (office space)	19
Lack of time for competing demands	11
Financial support	8
Lack of communication/information/induction/orientation	7
Administration/bureaucracy (various levels of university)	6
Lack of networking/interaction between staff/students	6
IT services/facilities	5
Lack of opportunity/funding to attend symposiums/conferences/seminars	4
Supervisor slow feedback	4
Library support/services/resources	3
Supervision - contradictory advice from different staff	3
Supervision change	3
Supervisor workload	3
Lack of interaction with other universities	2
Lack of opportunity to develop presentation skills	2
Lack of respect from staff	2
Supervision - not enough guidance or monitoring	2
Supervisor non-supportive	2
Supervisor overall	2
Supervisor's lack of knowledge	2
Academic/research environment/research culture	1
Colloquium	1
Computing facilities	1
Ethics administration	1
Lack of deadlines	1
Other	1
Parking	1
Scholarships - lack of	1
Study load/pressure to complete course	1
Supervisor unavailable	1
Too many progress reviews	1
Total respondents	140

Table 15: Suggested improvements to the quality of research training (September 2005)

Suggested improvements to the quality of research training	Number
More courses on data analysis/research methodology/software use/thesis writing	16
More seminars/workshops (including for off-campus students, and after hours)	15
Improved research resources, facilities, workspace	11
Improved Library services/facilities/resources	6
More interaction/communication between staff/students	6
Better induction	5
Improved IT support/services/facilities	4
Supervisor - support	4
Improved opportunity/support for conference/seminar/symposium attendance	3
Improved Supervisor training	3
Improved academic research environment/research culture	2
On-line conferences	2
Other	2
Supervisor - better availability	2
Supervisor - better feedback	2
Better training (e.g. laboratory, use of equipment)	1
Greater level of communication/induction/orientation process for new candidates	1
Improved academic/school/administrative staff support	1
Improved computing facilities/training	1
Improved distance education opportunities	1
Improved Research Services administration/support	1
Increased financial support	1
Increased financial support for conference attendance	1
Increased scholarship opportunities	1
Supervisor - better continuity	1
Total respondents	93