

Deakin University

Report on the outcomes of the Higher Degrees by Research Candidate Survey conducted in September 2006

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, the 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 been reflected 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. Figure 1 and Table 4 show the results for the nine surveys conducted to date.

The September 2006 survey

A total of 849 research candidates were invited to complete an online survey at the same time that they completed their online annual review of progress. 250 responded, representing a response rate of 29%. This was similar to the response rate in 2005 (28%) but significantly down on the response rate of 48% in 2004. 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.

Possible reasons for the decline in the response rate period could be:

- over surveying
- candidates may not feel that direct action results from their comments.

The number of responses by Faculty and School is shown in Table 2. Figure 2 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 issues such as funding support, 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. 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 (87%), 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:

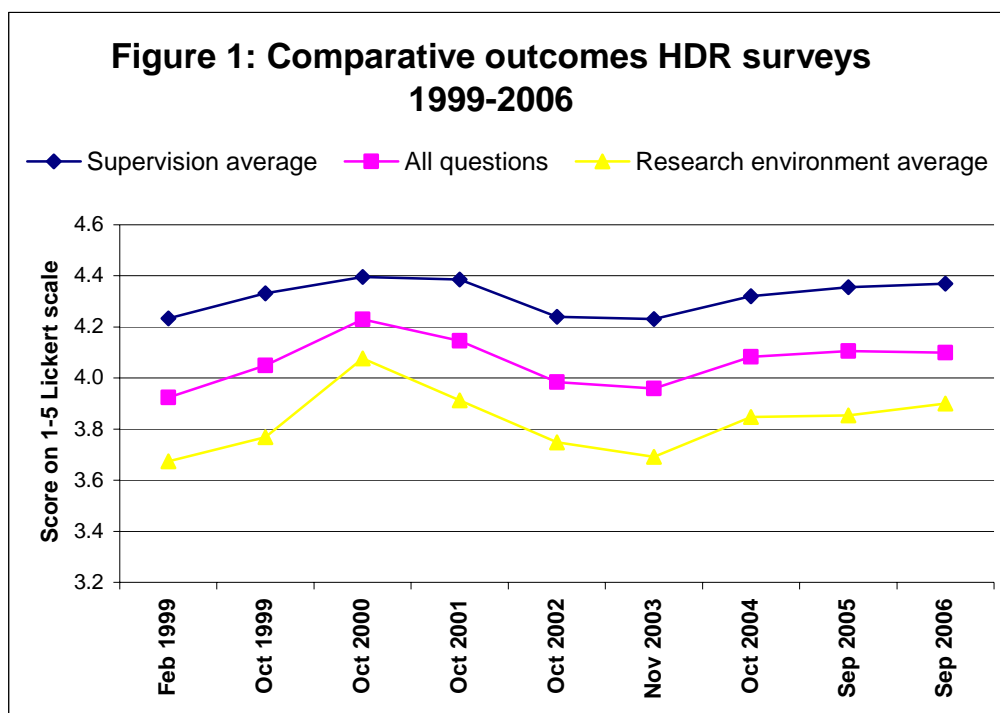
- requires them to think independently (mean of 4.6);
- promotes opportunities for self direction (mean of 4.6);
- encourages them in their research (mean of 4.4);
- provides constructive criticism (mean of 4.4).

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.

All of the above results are virtually identical to the 2004 and 2005 surveys.

In all of the 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 (Table 4 and Figure 1).



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). 73% of respondents scored the overall research environment 4 or 5; 11% scored it 1 or 2.

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 4.2);
- were encouraged to participate in seminars, etc. (mean of 4.2).

This is virtually identical to the results obtained in the 2004 and 2005 surveys.

As in most previous surveys (except 2004 and 2005), the extent to which respondents felt part of the University academic community was the area with which they were least satisfied (3.5). 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 3.6)
- the financial assistance available to support candidates' research was explained to them (mean of 3.6).

In all of the surveys conducted, the average for all the questions relating to the research environment has remained in the range of 3.7 to 4.1 (Table 4 and Figure 1).

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 3.9 to 4.8.

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

The lowest means for individual questions about supervision, although still satisfactory, were:

- the extent to which Science and Technology supervisors provide timely feedback on written work (3.9).
- the extent to which Business and Law supervisors demonstrate expertise in the respondents' research topic (4.0).
- the extent to which Science and Technology supervisors direct candidates to resources useful for starting their project (4.0).
- the extent to which Science and Technology supervisors effectively communicate their expertise (4.0).

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 also shows how candidates rated various aspects of their research environment.

Respondents from Arts were the most satisfied (mean of 4.1) with their research environment. As in 2005, respondents from Business and Law were the least satisfied (mean of 3.7).

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 an average score below 3 for one question, the extent to which respondents felt part of the University academic community (2.8).

There was a reduction in the satisfaction of Science and Technology respondents with their workspace and facilities between 2005 and 2006, which may relate to the building works at the Geelong Waurin Ponds campus:

- satisfaction with workspace decreased from 3.9 to 3.6.
- satisfaction with facilities decreased from 3.8 to 3.3.

At the upper end of the range, Arts and Education respondents gave an average score of 4.4 to the question about the extent to which they are aware of the standards expected for their degree.

Mode of enrolment and study

Table 1 below shows the enrolment and study modes of the respondents.

Table 1: Enrolment and study modes

	On campus	Off campus	Total
Part-time	13%	36%	49%
Full-time	43%	8%	51%
Total	56%	44%	100%

Mode of enrolment

Supervision

There was virtually no difference between the responses of part-time and full-time candidates to questions about supervision (Table 11): The overall average rating for both groups was 4.4. This is consistent with previous surveys.

Research Environment

Table 11 also shows that the overall average rating was the same for both groups in the case of the research environment (3.9). In terms of individual questions, the greatest difference was in satisfaction with their workspace: 4.1 for part-time and 3.6 for full-time candidates.

Full-time candidates (3.8) were more satisfied than part-time candidates (3.5) with the financial support to attend conferences.

Mode of study

Supervision

The overall level of satisfaction with supervision was the same for both on-campus and off-campus respondents (4.4). The results are shown in Table 12. There was virtually no difference in the results for individual questions relating to supervision.

Research environment

On and off campus respondents had similar levels of satisfaction with the research environment, the mean being 3.8 for on campus and 4.0 for off campus candidates (Table 12). There were very few differences between the average scores given by on and off campus candidates to individual questions. The greatest difference related to satisfaction with facilities: 3.6 for on campus and 4.2 for off campus candidates. The off campus library service, which has attracted favourable comments in every survey, may be a contributory factor.

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 36% of the positive comments from the 190 respondents to this question. The research experience and research environment were also commented upon by a considerable number.

Least satisfactory aspects of research experience

A summary of the comments is given in Table 14. Concerns relating to resources and facilities, and isolation and distance received the greatest number of comments. Together they made up 36% of the least satisfactory aspects mentioned. Both of these aspects have featured prominently in all previous surveys.

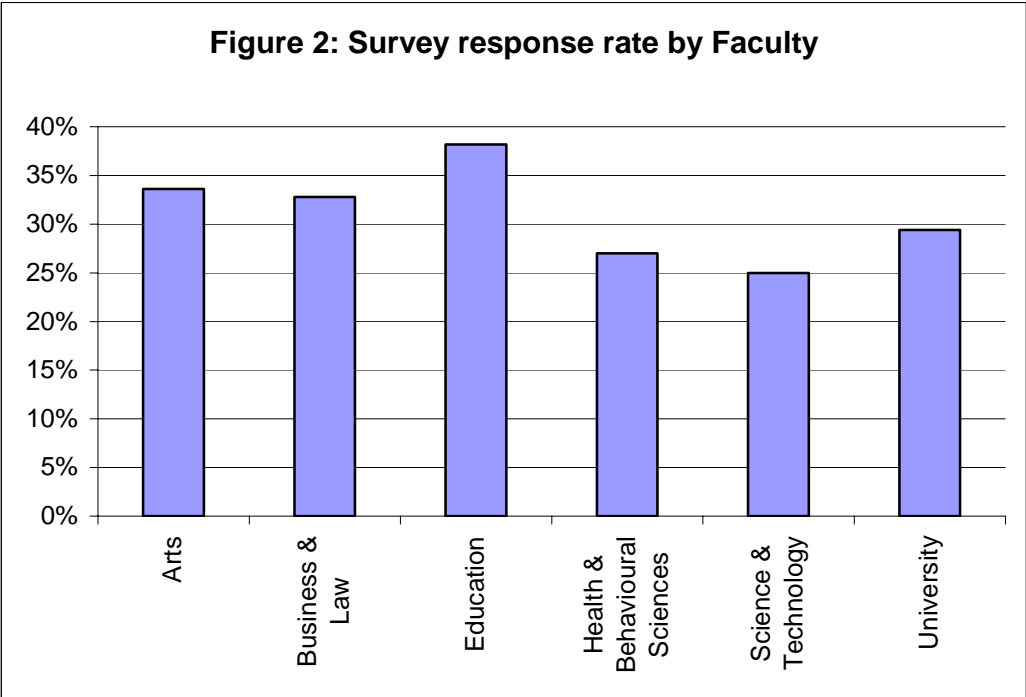
Suggested improvements to the quality of research training

Table 15 shows a summary of the suggested improvements to the quality of research training. As in 2004, the most common suggestion was improved research resources, facilities and workspace. In 2005 the most common suggestion was that there should be more courses on aspects such as data analysis, research methodology, software use and thesis writing. The fact that this suggestion has moved down the list could be a reflection of the very positive comments made in the survey about Professor Richard Ingleby's workshop series. The second most common suggestion was that there should be more interaction between staff and students. There are many aspects to this but it is being addressed, in part, through initiatives such as the annual HDR conference, the first of which was held very successfully in February 2007.

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8 March 2007

Table 2: Number of responses by faculty and school (September 2006)

Faculty of Arts – 48 responses	
Communication & Creative Arts	32
History, Heritage and Society	9
International and Political Studies	7
Faculty of Business & Law – 25 responses	
Accounting, Economics & Finance	3
Deakin Business School	8
Information Systems	4
Law	3
Management & Marketing	7
Faculty of Education – 45 responses	
School of Education	45
Faculty of Health & Behavioural Sciences – 56 responses	
Exercise & Nutrition Sciences	19
Health & Social Development	15
Nursing	7
Psychology	15
Faculty of Science & Technology – 76 responses	
Architecture & Building	7
Engineering & Information Technology	30
Life & Environmental Sciences	39
University – 250 responses	



**Table 3: Candidate satisfaction with supervisor and research environment
(September 2006)**

	Average <i>n=250</i>	Percentage for each score				
		1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor						
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.3	3%	4%	8%	36%	50%
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.3	2%	4%	10%	32%	53%
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	1%	4%	8%	34%	54%
encourages me in my research	4.4	1%	2%	7%	31%	58%
requires me to think independently	4.6	0%	1%	3%	27%	69%
is available for discussion when needed	4.3	2%	4%	10%	27%	57%
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.3	0%	4%	10%	32%	54%
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.2	2%	3%	12%	35%	47%
provides timely feedback on written work	4.2	4%	3%	11%	30%	51%
provides constructive criticism	4.4	2%	2%	7%	33%	57%
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.6	0%	1%	6%	29%	64%
Supervision average	4.4	2%	3%	8%	31%	56%
Research environment						
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.9	4%	8%	15%	45%	28%
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.9	2%	8%	18%	44%	28%
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.9	5%	9%	12%	40%	35%
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	3.8	5%	10%	15%	40%	30%
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.2	0%	3%	12%	44%	41%
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.2	2%	3%	12%	44%	40%
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.2	1%	3%	12%	41%	42%
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.0	3%	7%	11%	41%	37%
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.9	5%	6%	17%	35%	37%
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.6	9%	9%	20%	33%	29%
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.5	9%	11%	26%	32%	22%
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.6	6%	14%	20%	35%	25%
Research environment average	3.9	4%	7%	16%	40%	33%
All questions	4.1	3%	5%	12%	36%	44%

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

Table 4: Comparative outcomes of the 1999-2006 higher degree by research candidate surveys

	Feb 1999 n=253	Oct 1999 n=461	Oct 2000 n=529	Oct 2001 n=515	Oct 2002 n=331	Nov 2003 n=180	Oct 2004 n=453	Sep 2005 n=239	Sep 2006 n=250
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	4.3
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.3	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	4.3
encourages me in my research	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	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	4.6
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.3	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	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	4.2
provides timely feedback on written work	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2
provides constructive criticism	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	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	4.6
Supervision average	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.4	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	3.9
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.4	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.9
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.9	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	3.8
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	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	4.2
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	3.8	4.0	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.1	4.2
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	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	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	3.6
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	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	3.6
Research environment average	3.7	3.8	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9
All questions	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1

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

Table 5: Candidate satisfaction with supervisor and research environment by faculty (September 2006)

	Average Arts <i>n</i> = 48	Average Bus & Law <i>n</i> = 25	Average Educ <i>n</i> = 45	Average HMNBS <i>n</i> = 56	Average Sci & Tech <i>n</i> = 76	Average Uni <i>n</i> = 250
My supervisor						
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.3
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.6	4.0	4.5	4.4	4.1	4.3
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.7	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.0	4.3
encourages me in my research	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.4
requires me to think independently	4.7	4.5	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.6
is available for discussion when needed	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.3
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.3
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.2
provides timely feedback on written work	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.3	3.9	4.2
provides constructive criticism	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.4	4.2	4.4
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.6
Supervision average	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.4
Research environment						
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.9	3.9	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.9
I have been advised about School supervision practices	4.1	3.8	4.2	3.7	3.7	3.9
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	4.3	3.6	4.1	4.1	3.6	3.9
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	4.2	3.8	4.2	4.0	3.3	3.8
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.2
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.0
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.9	3.5	3.8	3.9	4.1	3.9
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	4.0	3.2	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.6
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.5	2.8	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.5
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	4.0	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6
Research environment average	4.1	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.9
All questions	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.0	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	Sep. 2006 <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	4.4
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.6
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.7
encourages me in my research	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.6
requires me to think independently	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.7	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	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	4.6
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	4.4
provides timely feedback on written work	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.3
provides constructive criticism	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.5
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7
Supervision average	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	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	3.9
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.3	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.4	3.4	3.8	3.8	4.1
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.7	3.9	4.6	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.3	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	4.2
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	4.4
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	3.5	3.9	4.3	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.9	4.1	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	4.2
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	4.1
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	3.9
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	4.0
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	3.5
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	4.0
Research environment average	3.4	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.1
All questions	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.3

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=17</i>	Oct. 1999 <i>n=36</i>	Oct. 2000 <i>n=39</i>	Oct. 2001 <i>n=33</i>	Oct. 2002 <i>n=8</i>	Nov. 2003 <i>n=17</i>	Oct. 2004 <i>n=42</i>	Sep. 2005 <i>n=26</i>	Sep. 2006 <i>n=25</i>
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	4.2
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.4	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.0	4.4	4.0	4.0
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.4	4.2	4.3
encourages me in my research	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.2	4.4
requires me to think independently	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.5
is available for discussion when needed	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.8	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.3
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.5	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.6
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	4.3
provides timely feedback on written work	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.8	3.9	4.3	4.2	4.4
provides constructive criticism	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.6
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.5
Supervision average	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4
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	3.9
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.0	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.8
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.7	4.2	4.4	4.2	5.0	4.2	4.3	3.2	3.6
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	3.8
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	4.3
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.1	4.0	4.4	4.4	4.8	3.9	4.4	3.8	4.0
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.5	3.7	4.0
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	4.0
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	3.5
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	3.2
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	2.8
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	3.2
Research environment average	3.7	3.8	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.1	3.4	3.7
All questions	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.3	3.8	4.0

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 n=49	Oct. 1999 n=87	Oct. 2000 n=92	Oct. 2001 n=92	Oct. 2002 n=53	Nov. 2003* n=0	Oct. 2004 n=79	Sep. 2005 n=46	Sep. 2006 n=45
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	4.4
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.2		4.3	4.3	4.5
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4		4.4	4.4	4.5
encourages me in my research	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6		4.5	4.4	4.5
requires me to think independently	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7		4.7	4.6	4.8
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4		4.3	4.5	4.5
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.4		4.5	4.5	4.4
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1		4.1	4.2	4.1
provides timely feedback on written work	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.3		4.3	4.3	4.3
provides constructive criticism	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5		4.5	4.5	4.7
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6		4.6	4.6	4.6
Supervision average	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4		4.4	4.4	4.5
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	4.1
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.7	3.8	4.3	4.0	4.2		4.0	4.2	4.2
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.9	4.1	4.6	4.4	4.3		3.9	3.9	4.1
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	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	4.4
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	3.9	3.8	4.2	4.1	4.0		4.0	4.1	4.1
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.2	4.1		4.1	4.2	4.1
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.1		3.8	4.0	3.8
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.1	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.0		3.9	4.1	3.8
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.4	3.5	4.0	3.6	3.6		3.5	3.8	3.6
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	3.6
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	3.5
Research environment average	3.7	3.8	4.2	4.0	4.0		3.9	4.1	4.0
All questions	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.2		4.1	4.3	4.2

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, Medicine, Nursing 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>	Sep. 2006 <i>n=56</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	4.3
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.4
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.4
encourages me in my research	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.5
requires me to think independently	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.8	4.6
is available for discussion when needed	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	3.6	4.2	4.3	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	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	4.3
provides timely feedback on written work	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.2	3.6	4.0	4.1	4.3
provides constructive criticism	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.4
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5
Supervision average	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.4	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	3.9
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.2	3.5	3.7	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	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	4.0
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	4.3
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.0	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.3	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	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	4.0
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	3.9
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	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	3.4
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	3.6
Research environment average	3.7	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.9	3.9
All questions	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.1

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 n=55	Oct. 1999 n=108	Oct. 2000 n=144	Oct. 2001 n=152	Oct. 2002 n=87	Nov. 2003 n=70	Oct. 2004 n=137	Sep. 2005 n=64	Sep. 2006 n=76
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	4.0
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0
encourages me in my research	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.3	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	4.6
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.2	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	4.1
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	4.1
provides timely feedback on written work	3.9	4.2	4.4	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.9
provides constructive criticism	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4
Supervision average	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.2	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	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	3.7
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.6
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	3.3
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	4.0
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.3
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.3
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	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	4.1
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	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	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	3.5
Research environment average	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.8
	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0

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

Table 11: Satisfaction with supervisor and research environment by enrolment mode (September 2006)

	Full-time						Part-time					
	Ave	Percentage for each score					Ave	Percentage for each score				
	n=127	1	2	3	4	5	n=123	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor												
has directed me to resources useful for starting my project	4.3	2%	6%	8%	30%	54%	4.3	3%	3%	7%	42%	46%
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.3	2%	2%	9%	30%	56%	4.2	2%	5%	10%	34%	49%
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	1%	4%	10%	32%	54%	4.4	2%	3%	6%	36%	54%
encourages me in my research	4.5	1%	1%	8%	32%	59%	4.4	2%	3%	6%	31%	58%
requires me to think independently	4.6	0%	0%	3%	29%	68%	4.6	0%	2%	3%	25%	70%
is available for discussion when needed	4.2	2%	6%	13%	27%	53%	4.4	2%	3%	7%	26%	61%
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.3	1%	5%	13%	30%	52%	4.4	0%	3%	7%	34%	55%
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.3	0%	4%	13%	34%	49%	4.1	5%	3%	12%	36%	45%
provides timely feedback on written work	4.1	5%	3%	14%	29%	49%	4.3	3%	3%	8%	32%	54%
provides constructive criticism	4.3	2%	2%	10%	33%	53%	4.5	1%	2%	3%	33%	61%
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.6	1%	0%	6%	30%	63%	4.5	0%	2%	6%	28%	64%
Supervision average	4.4	2%	3%	10%	31%	55%	4.4	2%	3%	7%	32%	56%
Research environment												
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.8	5%	11%	17%	39%	29%	4.0	2%	6%	14%	52%	26%
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.8	2%	11%	19%	39%	29%	4.0	2%	4%	17%	50%	27%
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.8	6%	10%	12%	37%	34%	4.0	4%	6%	11%	44%	36%
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	3.6	7%	14%	18%	39%	23%	4.1	2%	6%	11%	42%	39%
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.2	0%	2%	17%	41%	40%	4.3	1%	3%	7%	46%	43%
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.3	1%	2%	10%	42%	45%	4.1	3%	3%	14%	46%	34%
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.3	1%	2%	12%	39%	46%	4.1	2%	4%	13%	44%	37%
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.1	2%	7%	11%	40%	41%	4.0	4%	7%	12%	43%	34%
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	4.0	5%	3%	15%	35%	41%	3.8	6%	9%	19%	35%	31%
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.8	6%	10%	15%	38%	30%	3.5	13%	7%	26%	26%	27%
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.6	9%	7%	25%	33%	26%	3.3	9%	14%	27%	32%	18%
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.6	5%	16%	16%	37%	26%	3.5	7%	13%	25%	32%	23%
Research environment average	3.9	4%	8%	15%	38%	34%	3.9	4%	7%	16%	41%	31%
All questions	4.1	3%	6%	13%	35%	45%	4.1	3%	5%	11%	37%	44%

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

Table 12: Satisfaction with supervisor and research environment by study mode (September 2006)

	On campus					Off campus						
	Ave n=139	Percentage for each score					Ave n=111	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	4.3	1%	6%	7%	37%	49%	4.3	4%	2%	9%	34%	51%
demonstrates expertise in my research topic	4.3	1%	3%	10%	32%	53%	4.3	3%	5%	8%	32%	52%
effectively communicates his/her expertise	4.3	1%	4%	7%	36%	52%	4.4	1%	3%	9%	31%	56%
encourages me in my research	4.4	1%	1%	7%	35%	56%	4.4	2%	3%	6%	27%	62%
requires me to think independently	4.6	0%	1%	2%	28%	69%	4.7	0%	0%	5%	25%	70%
is available for discussion when needed	4.3	1%	7%	10%	25%	57%	4.4	2%	2%	10%	28%	58%
gives competent advice on research methodology when asked	4.3	1%	6%	12%	27%	54%	4.4	0%	2%	7%	38%	53%
requires me to plan my work and meet deadlines	4.2	1%	4%	13%	34%	47%	4.2	5%	2%	11%	36%	46%
provides timely feedback on written work	4.1	4%	3%	14%	31%	47%	4.3	4%	4%	7%	30%	56%
provides constructive criticism	4.4	1%	2%	7%	35%	54%	4.5	2%	1%	6%	31%	61%
promotes opportunities for self direction	4.6	0%	2%	4%	32%	63%	4.5	1%	0%	8%	26%	64%
Supervision average	4.4	1%	4%	9%	32%	55%	4.4	2%	2%	8%	31%	57%
Research environment												
I have been given an adequate introduction to the School and facilities	3.7	6%	10%	16%	40%	27%	4.0	0%	5%	14%	52%	29%
I have been advised about School supervision practices	3.7	4%	11%	19%	43%	23%	4.1	0%	3%	16%	46%	35%
I have adequate workspace to conduct my research	3.8	7%	10%	12%	38%	33%	4.1	1%	6%	10%	45%	37%
I have adequate access to the facilities I need for my research	3.6	7%	13%	16%	40%	23%	4.2	0%	5%	13%	41%	42%
I am aware of the standards expected for my degree	4.1	1%	4%	14%	45%	36%	4.4	0%	1%	9%	42%	48%
I have opportunities to develop my presentation skills	4.2	1%	3%	8%	45%	43%	4.1	2%	2%	18%	42%	36%
I am encouraged to participate in seminars etc	4.2	1%	4%	9%	41%	44%	4.2	1%	1%	17%	41%	39%
I am encouraged to write papers or regular research reports	4.1	3%	7%	9%	44%	37%	4.0	3%	6%	15%	38%	38%
I am encouraged to present my work at major conferences	3.9	7%	4%	15%	36%	38%	3.9	3%	8%	20%	34%	35%
I am offered some financial support to attend conferences	3.6	9%	11%	16%	39%	26%	3.6	10%	5%	27%	23%	34%
I feel that I am part of the University academic community	3.5	9%	10%	25%	31%	24%	3.4	10%	11%	27%	34%	19%
The financial assistance to support my research has been explained to me	3.6	6%	14%	19%	37%	24%	3.6	6%	15%	21%	31%	26%
Research environment average	3.8	5%	8%	15%	40%	32%	4.0	3%	6%	17%	39%	35%
All questions	4.1	3%	6%	12%	36%	43%	4.2	3%	4%	12%	35%	47%

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

Table 13: Summary of most positive comments about research experience (September 2006)

Most positive aspects of research experience	Number
Supervision	69
Research environment	27
Research experience (personal development/learning/research itself/skills)	27
Library support/services	13
Networking/interaction with relevant staff and/or students/friendly environment	12
Independence/freedom	11
Facilities/resources (incl. office space)	9
Supportive academic staff/School/admin staff	6
Opportunity to collaborate with external groups (e.g. industry)	5
Distance education opportunities	4
Flexibility of program	2
Opportunity to attend workshops	2
Opportunity to attend symposiums/conferences/seminars	1
Opportunity to develop other skills	1
Summer and Winter Schools	1
Total respondents	190

Table 14: Summary of comments relating to least satisfactory aspects of research experience (September 2006)

Least positive aspects of research experience	Number
Inadequate resources/facilities/access to (incl. office space)	26
Isolation/distance/off campus	25
Supervision	16
Administration/bureaucracy (various levels of university)	8
Lack of time for competing demands	8
Lack of networking/interaction between staff/students	5
Computing facilities	5
Financial support	5
IT services/facilities	5
Lack of School/Faculty support for HDR research	4
Library support/services/resources	3
Lack of opportunity/funding to attend symposiums/conferences/seminars	3
Scholarships - lack of or stipend rate too low	3
Insufficient advice on thesis writing	3
Being part-time	2
Academic/research environment/research culture	2
Lack of interaction with other groups (schools, faculties, universities)	2
Academic/School/Admin staff support - not enough for part-time students	1
Ethics administration	1
Insufficient computer training	1
Lack of respect from staff	1
Lack of technical support	1
Lack of encouragement/opportunity to publish	1
Online tutorials/discussion groups	1
Study load/pressure to complete course	1
Annual review process	1
Lack of theoretical orientation	1
No accommodation for international candidates	1
Support from Deakin	1
The way tutoring is given out	1
Time taken to achieve milestones in academia	1
Unexpected delays in research	1
Writing in English (second language) is difficult	1
Total respondents	141

Table 15: Suggested improvements to the quality of research training (September 2006)

Suggested improvements to the quality of research training	Number
Improved research resources, facilities, workspace	16
More interaction/communication - between staff/students	9
Supervision	7
More seminars/workshops (including for off-campus students, and after hours)	6
Improved supervisor training	5
More courses on data analysis/research methodology/software use/thesis writing	5
Improved computing facilities/training	4
Improved IT support/services/facilities	4
Improved opportunity/support for conference/seminar/symposium attendance	3
Improved procedure for progress reporting	2
Increased financial support	2
On-line discussion groups	2
Better induction	1
Improved administration	1
Improved Library services/facilities/resources	1
Improved technical support	1
Increased scholarship opportunities	1
More interaction/communication - with other research groups	1
On-line discussion groups - should not be compulsory	1
On-line discussion groups - timed to suit candidate's stage of research	1
Build regional campuses	1
Build up research community	1
Extend summer school	1
Hire more staff	1
Improve annual review process (seminar format)	1
More postdocs needed	1
Provide contact details of nearby students	1
Teaching relief for candidates who are staff	1
Time off for staff doing a PhD	1
On-line conferences	1
Training - more online training	1
Total respondents	84