

**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE**  
**STUDENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SREQ)**  
**ANALYSIS OF OPEN RESPONSE COMMENTS 2004**

***Introduction***

The following document provides an analysis of the comments received in answer to the SREQ open response comments from postgraduate research students in the Faculty of Architecture in 2004.

Students were asked to provide comments on the following:

- *What are the best aspects of your research higher degree experience? Please explain why these aspects are good.*
- *What aspects are most in need of improvement? Please explain why.*

Each comment received was analysed for subject content and categorised into aspects which are closely aligned with the following SREQ Scales and their characteristics:

- *Quality of Supervision*
- *Quality of Infrastructure*
- *Research Climate*
- *Generic Skills*
- *Overall satisfaction*

Comments which included more than one aspect (e.g. quality of supervision and infrastructure) were counted in all aspects mentioned.

***Arrangement***

1. Analysis of comments referring to the best aspects of the degree course
2. Analysis of comments referring to aspects that could be improved

Responses are ranked according to the percentage of comments received for each aspect. Sample comments have been provided for the aspects that received the most number of comments. Results from the previous years qualitative analysis are provided as a percentage. Only aspects that received 5% or more comments in 2004 are included in this report. To preserve student confidentiality, sample comments are only provided if there are five or more comments relating to that aspect in the responses. Comments which may possibly identify the student are not included in sample comments.

***Attachment One:*** Categories and sub-categories for the analysis of SREQ Open Response comments

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**1 Analysis of comments referring to the best aspects of the degree course<sup>1</sup>**

**Students are happy with their supervision** (2004: 22%)  
(2003: 30%; 2002: 27%)

- Very good supervisor in terms of research knowledge and availability.
- My supervisor is really supportive and helpful to my research work
- I have frequent face to face meetings with my supervisor in which I can discuss the problem I met in detail
- My current supervisor has been understanding and supportive. Good to know some academics will support new researchers

**Students are satisfied with the research resources/ library services** (2004: 22%)  
(2003: 16%; 2002: 17%)

- Services accessible i.e. library collections are more than satisfactory
- Library services and online databases – unlimited borrowing of library books and the extensive databases are very useful for my research
- The inter-library loan service through the faculty of Architecture librarian Michelle Harrison. Prompt, conscientious service, very good
- Very good library service

**Students appreciate the physical resources/ facilities available** (2004: 22%)  
(2003: 11%; 2002: 3%)

- Support facilities – good work space and computer facilities and services
- The computing facilities were good that was provided
- Good working environment: work space, work culture, facilities etc
- I am more fortunate than some in my room and been very happy with computing and other resources.

**Students appreciate the independent nature of research** (2004: 14%)  
(2003: 16%; 2002: 13%)

- Establishing own topic and time schedule will be very valuable in future projects
- I was allowed to be self-motivated without excessive supervision, self-study I believe, is the best way to develop research skills
- The best aspects are working independently with very strong support from my supervisor and although there is no one in the faculty who knows anything about my thesis subject my supervisor trusts me to chase up relevant people and information
- The uni provides the support and resources to allow me to work autonomously and effectively. I feel part of a supportive research environment

**Other aspects mentioned included:**

- |  |             |                        |
|--|-------------|------------------------|
| • Satisfaction with research project   | (2004: 11%) | (2003: 16%; 2002: 20%) |
| • Supportive faculty/ department       | (2004: 11%) | (2003: 11%; 2002: 10%) |
| • Feel part of the faculty/ department | (2004: 5%)  |                        |
| • Teaching/ tutoring opportunities     | (2004: 5%)  |                        |

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<sup>1</sup> Number of comments received: 2004: 37; 2003: 44; 2002: 30)

## 2 *Analysis of comments referring to aspects that could be improved*<sup>2</sup>

**Students are unhappy with some aspects of financial support** (2004: 24%)  
(2003: 19%)

- Access to resource support and finance to support research
- Financial support: although satisfactory, I feel that both more opportunities to attend OS conferences i.e. no of PRSS should be increased, as well as the amount provided i.e. \$\$\$.
- Advertisement and availability of research grants for conference attendance where I may have had an abstract accepted and will be presenting
- Better and more ready access to travel funds

**Students are dissatisfied with their supervision** (2004: 18%)  
(2003: 19%; 2002: 19%)

- There doesn't seem to be a consistency in regards to supervision. I have changed supervisors and the different between my first and my current supervisor in terms of feedback, support and guidance is huge
- The service given by my supervisor has been extremely disappointing. His attitude was completely unfair and unacceptable
- I need to work more effectively with my supervisor and associate supervisor
- Environment and supervisors network needs to be worked on

### **Other aspects mentioned included:**

- |   |             |                        |
|---|-------------|------------------------|
| • University/ Faculty administration      | (2004: 12%) | (2003: 11%; 2002: 19%) |
| • Management of candidature               | (2004: 12%) | (2003: 3%; 2002: 11%)  |
| • Physical facilities/ resources          | (2004: 9%)  | (2003: 31%; 2002: 22%) |
| • Opportunities to present at conferences | (2004: 9%)  |                        |
| • Supportive faculty/ department          | (2004: 6%)  | (2003: 14%; 2002: 22%) |
| • Isolation from other PhD students       | (2004: 6%)  | (2003: 3%; 2002: 30%)  |
| • Part of faculty                         | (2004: 6%)  |                        |
| • Teaching/ tutoring opportunities        | (2004: 6%)  | (2003: 5%)             |

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<sup>2</sup> Number of comments received: 2004: 34; 2003: 37; 2002: 27)

**Attachment One Categories and Sub categories used in analysis of SREQ open response comments<sup>3</sup>**

Category	Sub category	Includes
<b>Quality of Supervision</b>	Supervision	Supervisor Supervision in general, including processes in place for feedback regarding satisfaction/ dissatisfaction with supervisor
	Management of candidature	Guidance on management of candidature; steps in the process
	Progress reports	Progress reports/ processes in place Value of the reporting process Structure of reporting process
	Flexibility of program	Compared to undergraduate/ postgraduate coursework Working hours etc
	Pressure to complete	Pressure to complete on time (i.e. within time frame set by APA). Workload
	Feedback from supervisor	Feedback on drafts, papers, presentations, seminars; final thesis
<b>Quality of Infrastructure</b>	Funding/ Scholarships	APA, UPA and other scholarships; PRSS Funding for research within faculty/ department etc
	Physical resources	Physical facilities available to postgraduate research students including workplace, computers – provided by University/ Faculty Building maintenance
	Industry facilities	Physical facilities provided by industry partner/ CRC etc
	IT support	Support available for computer hardware and software
	Research resources/ library	Electronic resources such as databases, online journals Interlibrary loan for hard-copy resources Services provided by library
	Technical and Lab support	Support available in laboratories; technician availability for experiments etc
	Resource issues	Issues which affect experience e.g. staffing and funding within department which may reduce face to face time with supervisor, or lack of supervisor due to retirement etc
<b>Overall satisfaction</b>	Satisfaction with research	Comments on research projects; benefits of research etc
	General comments	With university, location, etc

<sup>3</sup> NB: Not all categories appear in responses for individual faculties.

Category	Sub category	Includes
<b>Research climate</b>	Challenging and stimulating	Is the research stimulating, challenging Do they feel motivated by supervisor etc
	Induction/ orientation program	Induction/ orientation program for new students, particularly those who start mid year or who come from another university
	Cultural diversity	Part of a culturally diverse student group
	Isolation: off main campus	Issues relating to students situated off main campus/ at training hospitals
	Interaction with other postgraduate research students	Opportunities to interact with other postgraduate research students Feelings of isolation from other students
	Collaboration and networking	Provision of opportunities to collaborate and network with other researchers, academics etc (university, national, international)
	Conference presentations	Opportunities to present at international and national conferences
	Research community	Part of research community/ culture within faculty/ school/ department Part of research community outside university
	Part of faculty/ school/ department	Acceptance by faculty/ department/ school Inclusion in meetings, social events etc Part of communication cycle
	Support of faculty/ school/ department	Support of faculty/ department/ school for their research etc
	Seminars, workshops	Presence of, frequency of seminar or workshop program for postgraduate research students Cross faculty involvement in seminars
	Field work, practical aspects	Field work – help with collecting data etc Practical aspects e.g. in hospitals
	Interaction with industry	Industry partnerships Support from industry in research
	Teaching opportunities/ preparation for academia	Teaching and/or tutoring opportunities offered/ available
	Location/ physical environment	Does not include buildings – location of campus, university etc
	Relevance to future/ current work/ career	Will the research be useful in the future to their careers Is it useful in their present work environment
	Support for part-time/ distance education/ external students	Support for students studying externally or part-time; recognition of difficulties faced/ access to resources etc
	International student experiences	Experiences, support for international students
Coursework component	Issues relating to coursework component of some research degrees e.g. Research Methods	

Category	Sub category	Includes
<b>Generic skills</b>	Graduate attributes, skills	Development of Graduate attributes e.g. communication, analytical, problem-solving skills
	Technical skills	Development of technical skills e.g. statistical skills, thesis/ academic writing, subject specific skills; use of laboratory equipment
	Research skills	Training in research methods; Development of research skills
	Expand knowledge base	Acquisition of new knowledge
	Work independently	Ability to work independently on project compared to structured work of undergraduate degree
	English language for NESB students	Development of English language proficiency Help in academic writing Specific support e.g. proof reading of thesis etc
<b>Administration and organisation</b>	Administration and organisation	Administration and organisation of research higher degree program
	Communication	Between administration and faculty; between support services; between staff and students
	Enrolment	Enrolment process
<b>Other</b>	Ethics administration	
	Equity	Harassment, discrimination etc
	Academic Board policies	Academic Honesty; Intellectual Property