

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK**  
**STUDENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SREQ)**  
**ANALYSIS OF OPEN RESPONSE COMMENTS**  
**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**

## **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 Education and Social Work in 2003.

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 2003 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.

**SREQ 2003 OR Q 43<sup>1</sup>**  
**experience?**

**What are the best aspects of your research higher degree**

**Students are happy with their supervision**

**(2003: 38%)**

(2002: 40%)

- My supervisor makes a serious effort to meet with me regularly and provides useful and timely feedback on my writing
- Access to supervisor and advice and support given by supervisor. They return my calls quickly, provide excellent support and have been understanding and supportive of any difficulties I have experienced
- I am impressed with the supervision I have as every time when I meet with my supervisor I feel comfortable. They are very supportive and understanding. When I face difficulties they will give valuable feedback so it leads me to continue my research study. Undoubtedly their supervision will reflect on my future career as a supervisor.

**Students appreciate the independent nature of research**

**(2003: 15%)**

(2002: 10%)

- Having an independence to do work on my own, yet getting help when I need it
- The level of independence I have and the way it has forced me to depend on my own resources and find my own research community (internationally)
- Topic freedom and the independence to follow my own interests

**Students are happy with their research/ project**

**(2003: 14%)**

(2002: 13%)

- I enjoyed the opportunity to research in an area within my work environment
- The opportunity to do research on a topic which really interests me and to which I feel that I can contribute a great deal
- I have loved the satisfaction of articulating a problem and then doing everything I can to understand the complex eco system of the issue and then postulating improvements. I have loved the discipline required to achieve a mammoth goal

**Students are happy with the research resources/ library**

**(2003: 10%)**

(2002: 10%)

- The inter-library loan system is excellent and has been very supportive in locating requested material. A wonderful service
- Resources in the library are sufficient
- Good research resource arranged by Fisher Library, because it is easy and convenient for looking for some resources related to my research

**Students feel part of the research community**

**(2003: 9%)**

(2002: 4%)

- Meeting with other fellow researchers (e.g. in cluster meetings), because I can learn a lot from them and Because I can gain lots of ideas from the meetings which will be useful for my research
- Opportunity to meet other researchers and learn about their work
- Being involved in a research community which has a broad cross section of skills and knowledge. This helps to provide a balanced view to my research activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Number of comments received: 2003 – 72; 2002 – 118

**SREQ 2003 OR Q 44<sup>2</sup>****What aspects are most in need of improvement?****Students are unhappy with their supervision****(2003: 26%)**

(2002: 25%)

- Poor supervisory arrangements. Supervisors do not have enough time to meet students' needs. My supervisor is only interested in their own work, and how I can contribute to it. They are not interested in my PhD, or my own work
- I would appreciate specific times during the year to visit my supervisor, say, once per month – where more help and guidelines could be established. I am desperately lonely in this area and I know my work would improve greatly if this were to happen.
- Relationship between researcher and supervisor needs to be better. I feel they should have kept a file on my work rather than just keeping it in their head.

**Students are dissatisfied with the physical facilities provided****(2003: 26%)**

(2002: 21%)

- Post grads are scattered throughout the Faculty building in whatever dodgy broom closets they can find for us – it would be much more welcoming and supportive to put us in decent rooms, all on the one floor with a common room or something
- Availability of desk space/ office space in department – none for part-time students I was told even though I know of a number of empty desks in post grad rooms. NO apple computers in computer centres. No access to any PC facilities for part-time students
- The working space that was made available for me to use this year was unsuitable. I felt like I was working in a pantry. If the Dept is really committed to developing a research community, this needs addressing

**Students are unhappy with some aspects of financial support****(2003: 18%)**

(2002: 12%)

- I think that scholarships should be given on the base of equality depending on each country and on percentage rates of different national background students, rather than on the English ability
- Access to small amounts of funds for specific research related needs e.g. funds to do research, writing up – if you don't have a scholarship
- Lacking financial support for those students who do not fit the profile for a grant

**Students would appreciate more interaction with other postgraduate research students****(2003: 15%)**

(2002: 15%)

- Fellow research students' regular meeting would be helpful if arranged properly. It is good to know and share the research experience with others, so you would feel like be left alone.
- I would have appreciated some opportunity to meet other PhD candidates socially/ professionally and have been precluded from doing so as the only time I was informed of an appropriate seminar it was placed on a Friday evening and I could not attend on religious grounds
- Perhaps more informal gatherings of small groups of people in similar stages of research would enable more discussion of concerns and sharing of items than the more formal seminars allow

**Students do not feel part of the Faculty/ department****(2003: 13%)**

(2002: 4%)

- The school should provide chances for students to be included academically and socially into the community
- Feeling integrated into the department and the university
- Apart from the contact I have with my supervisors and with other postgraduate students through my faculty's student association I feel invisible in my faculty. I could be gone for a month and no one would notice or care.

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<sup>2</sup> Number of comments received: 2003 – 67; 2002 – 82