

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

STUDENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SREQ) ANALYSIS OF OPEN RESPONSE COMMENTS 2003

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 Health Sciences 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 43¹**What are the best aspects of your research higher degree experience?****Students are happy with their supervision****(2003: 36%)**

(2002: 33%)

- My supervision has been highly motivating, constructing and insightful. I put this down to the personal attribute of my supervisors.
- I have learnt a lot from one of my supervisors who has been flexible and understanding in dealing with difficult issues. A great role model for me
- A very good aspect of my research experience has been the support of my main supervisor this year. She has been helpful, encouraging, and enthusiastic and always seems to be looking out for me.

Graduate attributes/ skills are being developed**(2003: 17%)**

(2002: 11%)

- Developing my analytical skills, This has given me more ability to feel confident with my opinion and judgement
- I could further develop my problem solving skills. I have got unexpected problems during the course and I did have to solve those problems
- Helps develop better analytical skills. Develops better oral communication at a professional level

Students are satisfied with their actual research project**(2003: 15%)**

(2002: 23%)

- The opportunity to explore my chosen area in a scholarly way
- Having the opportunity to participate in research of a high quality that has application to health
- An opportunity to explore an interesting topic in depth

Research skills are being developed**(2003: 9%)**

(2002: 13%)

- Developing the ability, skills and confidence to undertake a research question, then going about analysing the problem, collecting data and trying to find/theorize the reason/s for the matter under research. These skills go further than just academic life, these skills are carried into all aspects of life
- I have a better grasp on research methods which will help me in my job as we will be doing our own in-house research in the future
- The best aspects so far have related to the development of individual research skills – such as refining the topic, conducting the research and preliminary presentation of the material.

Students appreciate the research resources/ library**(2003: 9%)**

(2002: 11%)

- I have learnt to access information via the internet and library a lot. The services from the Health Sciences Library is excellent, never be better. Staff are very friendly and very helpful. I am sure that this experience will be very useful when I return to work in my country
- The best aspect is access to knowledge. The library, databases and other facilities made it very easy and convenient to access information
- The availability of and access to online databases and journals – facilitates efficient use of time and resources

¹ Number of comments received: 2003 – 173; 2002 – 151

SREQ 2003 OR Q 44²**What aspects are most in need of improvement?****Students are unhappy with their supervision****(2003: 18%)**

(2002: 20%)

- It was evident that my supervisors were more interested in the time frame for completion rather than the experience of gaining knowledge. It was more 'finish on time or our reputations will be tarnished'!!
- Supervisor selection/ availability is very limited within my school. I was discouraged to select my own supervisor outside the university which I feel is better suited to my research
- Transparency in guidelines/support for dealing with a supervisor who is a) destructive with her criticisms of my writing (this comment is supported by independent tutors) - b)slow in returning my work (takes a lot of prompting for this to happen) c) inflexible in adapting to learning styles of students d) inflexible with writing styles. The process of completing my research since this person has become my main supervisor has been one of the most unpleasant experiences of my professional career. I should say that I have one supervisor who is excellent, however she is not the one who signs off on my final thesis

Students are dissatisfied with funding/ financial support**(2003: 15%)**

(2002: 12%)

- Financial support. I need to pay \$1,000 per month for the rent of the clinic which I am carrying out these trials. So far, no help in this regard
- Better allocation of funds on an individual basis. Some projects require more financial support than others, otherwise research goals may be compromised
- Lack of funds to cover services provided by hospitals and cover costs for patient transport etc. Small grants of \$5,000 - \$10,000 are scarce and competition is high to such funds

Students feel isolated**(2003: 10%)**

(2002: 17%)

- I have felt isolated from the other post graduate students from other schools/departments. The College of Health Sciences Research Conference provided the opportunity to meet and learn about other students in the university. I feel we need more similar events in which the opportunities of meeting students from other schools/departments are provided. This could be more of a problem in Cumberland than on the main campus because of the size and location of the Cumberland campus.
- There are no communication chances with other students who from different departments
- I have had very little contact with postgraduate students or the community. My supervisor has not encouraged contact with either other students, other research staff or the broader community

Students are dissatisfied with physical resources / infrastructure**(2003: 10%)**

(2002: 15%)

- No working space for research students in final year is provided by the school
- I never 'work' at work. I have an office because I am only 20% and when the other person is there she needs to use the office to see students etc. Plus we have to share a telephone and a computer.
It just doesn't work out for studying.
- Updated computer equipment including laptops for portability

² Number of comments received: 2003 – 153; 2002 – 143