

FACULTY OF LAW

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 Law 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: 40%)**

(2002: 32%)

- My supervisor because of the depth of his knowledge and his position in the international community
- My supervisor is the best as he is a very helpful person, he is knowledgeable in his field and he has made time for me every week
- My relationship with my supervisor because he understands the nature of my research and he is very supportive

Students feel supported by their Faculty**(2003: 18%)**

- I am in a Faculty that supports young researchers so I have had mentoring from people who are academics not necessarily in my speciality
- Positive support and discussion from my supervisor and the research staff in the Faculty
- The Faculty is supportive and encouraging

Research skills / methodology are being developed**(2003: 16%)**

(2002: 18%)

- Faculty research classes for postgraduates – peer support, having to explain/ defend thesis, getting sense of what a thesis can be
- Legal Research 1 and 2 – great support and advice from academics and fellow students
- Gaining the experience in legal research which is different from my previous research experience (mainly social science)

Students gain satisfaction from their research**(2003: 13%)**

(2002: 32%)

- I am thoroughly enjoying the opportunity of researching
- Chance and time to develop own ideas – sense of creating something that is mine, deep learning
- I feel myself learning new things that is having drastic effects on how I see the world. I am applying some of this new knowledge to my teaching

Graduate attributes (analytical, writing skills etc) are being developed**(2003: 11%)**

(2002: 18%)

- Developing my research, analysis, written expression skills, as these are necessary skills for my employment, future writing and research skills
- I have been given opportunities to develop my written communication skills by keeping writing and getting feedback on my written work. This is a precious opportunity for an overseas student to improve and upgrade expression in English a lot, which is essential for completing a thesis
- The legal research subjects taught me additional analytical skills. When left to my own devices, I have more skills I can now use.

¹ Number of comments received: 2003 – 45; 2002 – 28

SREQ 2003 OR Q 44²**What aspects are most in need of improvement?****Students feel isolated****(2003: 18%)**

(2002: 23%)

- Postgraduate students have little contact with Faculty and fellow researchers and more could be done to bring people together in formed settings
- Student interaction – nothing really organised that students like myself can attend
- Socialising with other PhD students and having the opportunity to discuss ideas related to our work

Students are dissatisfied with the physical facilities provided**(2003: 13%)**

(2002: 27%)

- Access to common room, because we have no access to the kitchen and the fridge
- Facilities in the Law – the only room provided seats 15 people and is small and smelly with poor computer facilities and appalling printing facilities
- Research students are denied access to the Faculty building as are normal coursework students. Postgraduate research room is closed at 8.00pm weekdays, 4.45pm Saturday, and closed the whole day on Sunday. This creates a great inconvenience for me, because I think it is good to have full access to the building and postgraduate research room (with the computers and printers there) as any Faculty members

Students are unhappy with the administration/ organisation of their degree**(2003: 13%)**

- Department should communicate better e.g. telling students about conferences it organises
- Enrolment is often difficult, unhelpful (distance student)
- Administration set of mind – they do not behave like providers or facilitators for students needs. I feel like they are making a favour for me.

Students are unhappy with some aspects of their supervision**(2003: 11%)**

(2002: 35%)

- Perhaps a greater sense of shared enterprise with supervisor
- Perhaps supervisors should have to fill in a form each year asking questions such as turnaround time – I sometimes have waited more than 6 months for feedback on a chapter
- I believe my supervisor could be more proactive in encouraging my efforts as a part-time student

Students are dissatisfied with library services and research resources**(2003: 11%)**

(2002: 4%)

- Reliable and full remote access to databases/ articles especially full text. Training in endnote and capacity/ capability to insert databases accurately in the system
- The inter-library loan has not been working as efficiently as I would have liked them to work
- Book collection in the Law Library because some main textbooks are not in the collection of the Law Library

² Number of comments received: 2003 – 38; 2002 – 26