

Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning

Student Research Experience Questionnaire Report

Trends and key issues: 2006 - 2010

June 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Data on research higher degree students' perceptions of their research training experiences are gathered each year using the Student Research Experience Questionnaire (SREQ). The purpose of the SREQ is to provide the University community with a basis for strategic, faculty level academic development and curriculum review to further enhance the quality of research higher degrees. Analysis of this data provides a comprehensive picture of trends in the student experience, and the performance of the Faculty in relation to two of the University's Key Performance Indicators for Research: Supervision, and Overall Satisfaction with the research higher degree; and other related areas: Infrastructure; Research Climate; and Generic Skills.

Written observations, from respondents to the survey, about their experiences provide evidence to support the Faculty SREQ quantitative data results (percentage agreement scores), and provide detailed information about key issues in the Areas of best practice and Areas needing improvement, during their research training experience. The results are directly aligned with the scales and survey items used in the SREQ, with the addition of items that occur frequently in student comments.

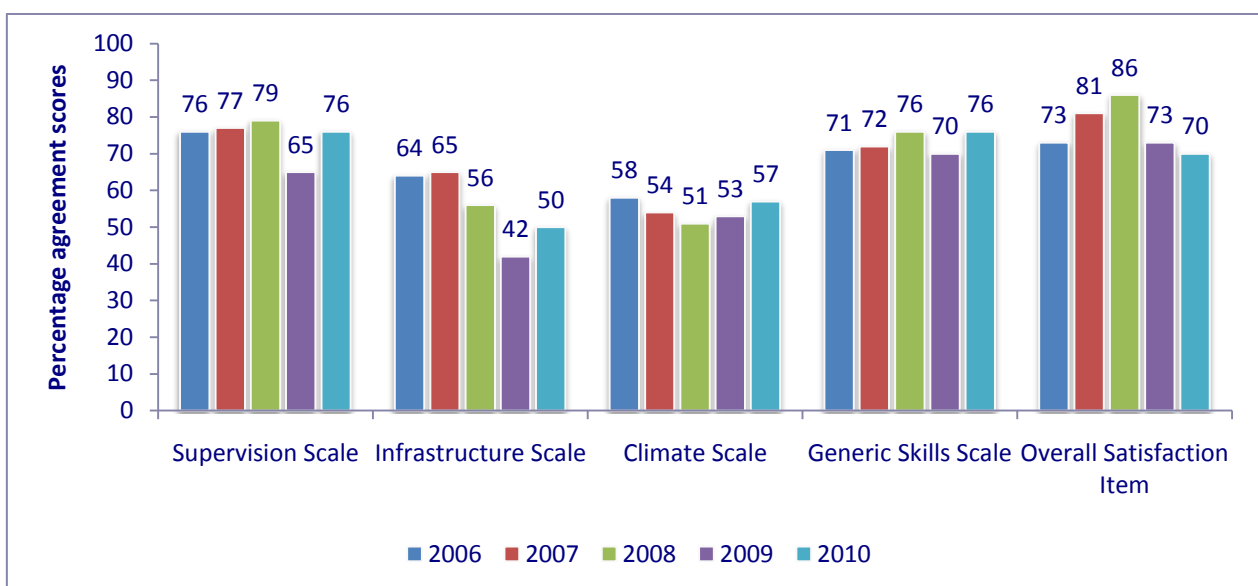
The analysis of qualitative data received between 2006 and 2010, and reported in this document, is based on written observations received from **all** respondents who answered the open questions in the SREQ.

COMPARATIVE DATA: 2006 – 2010¹

Quantitative data

The following chart provides a comparison of the results of the SREQ percentage agreement results (i.e. respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the survey items relating to each scale) for the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning since 2006.

Figure 1: Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning: Percentage agreement results: SREQ 2006 - 2010



Qualitative Data

Comparative data: 2006 – 2010

The charts on the following page provide an indication of those areas of the research higher degree student experience that respondents considered to be either of best practice or in need of improvement in their responses to the open questions in the SREQ 2006 – 2010. An average of 80% of respondents provided written observations, indicating a high level of engagement with their research higher degree student experience.

¹ More detailed data, i.e. comparing the results from domestic and international students is available in the individual sections of the report. Statistical data regarding the number of students who responded to the SREQ, together with data on those who answered the open questions, can be found at Attachment One.

Figure 2: Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning: Areas of best practice: SREQ 2006 - 2010

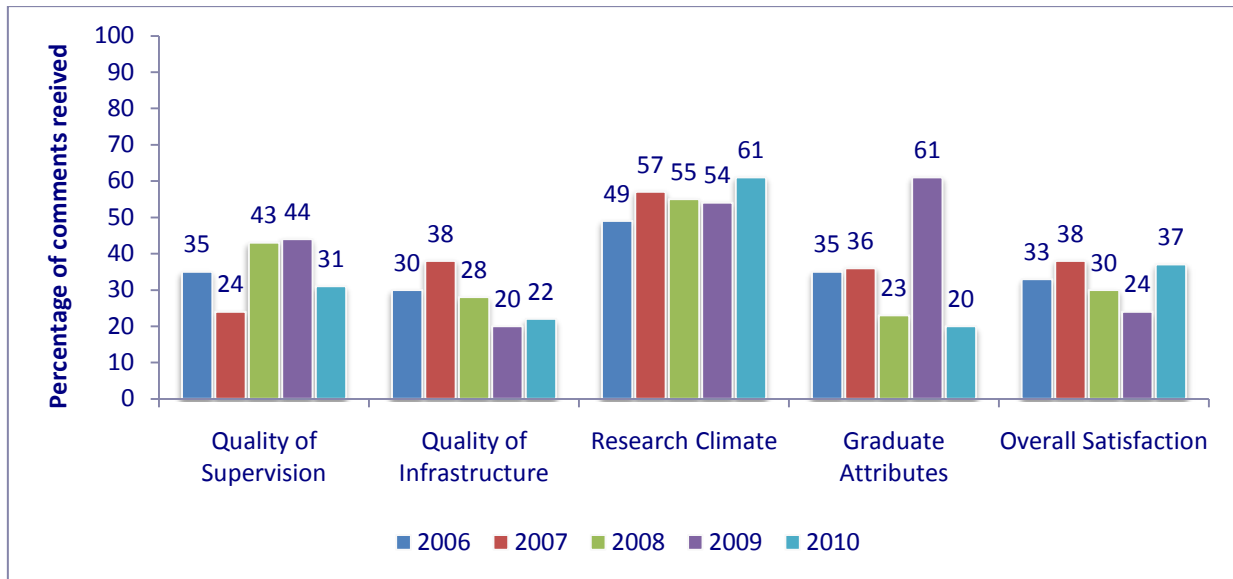
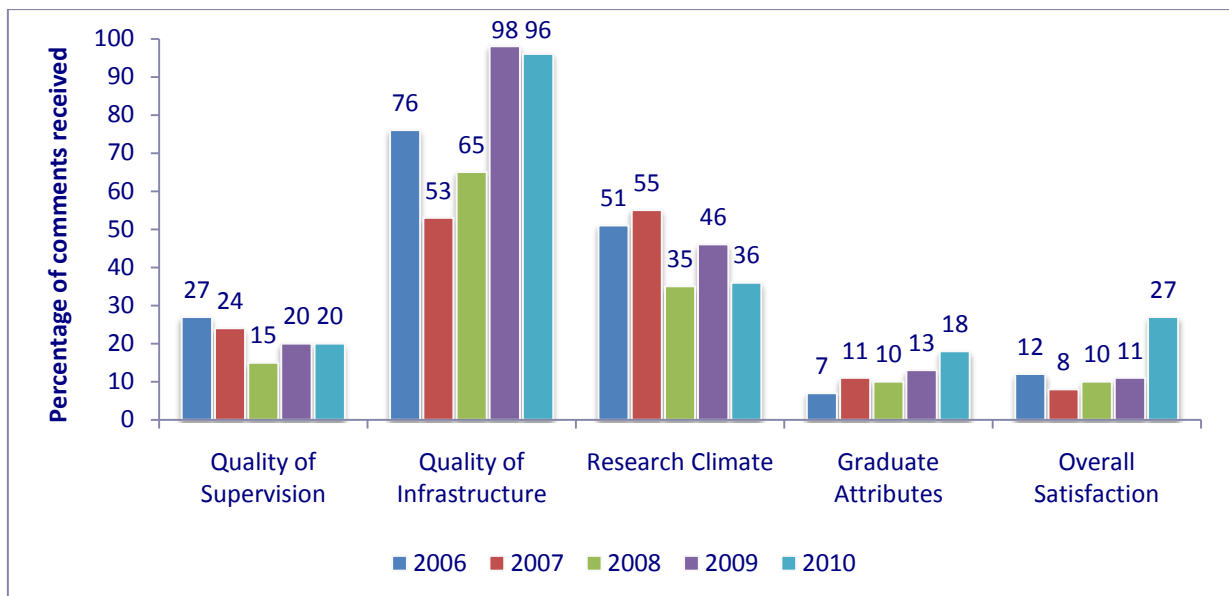


Figure 3: Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning: Areas needing improvement: SREQ 2006 - 2010

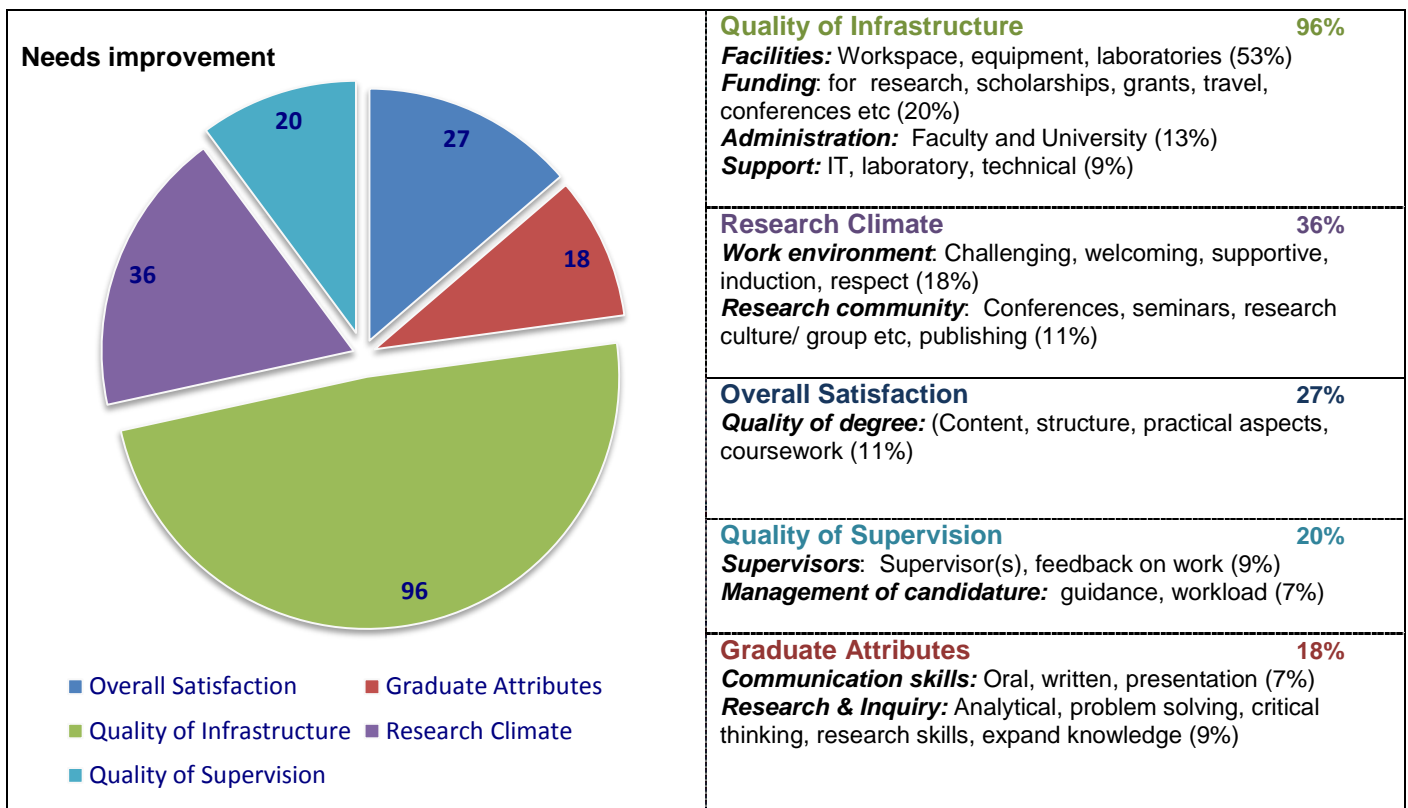
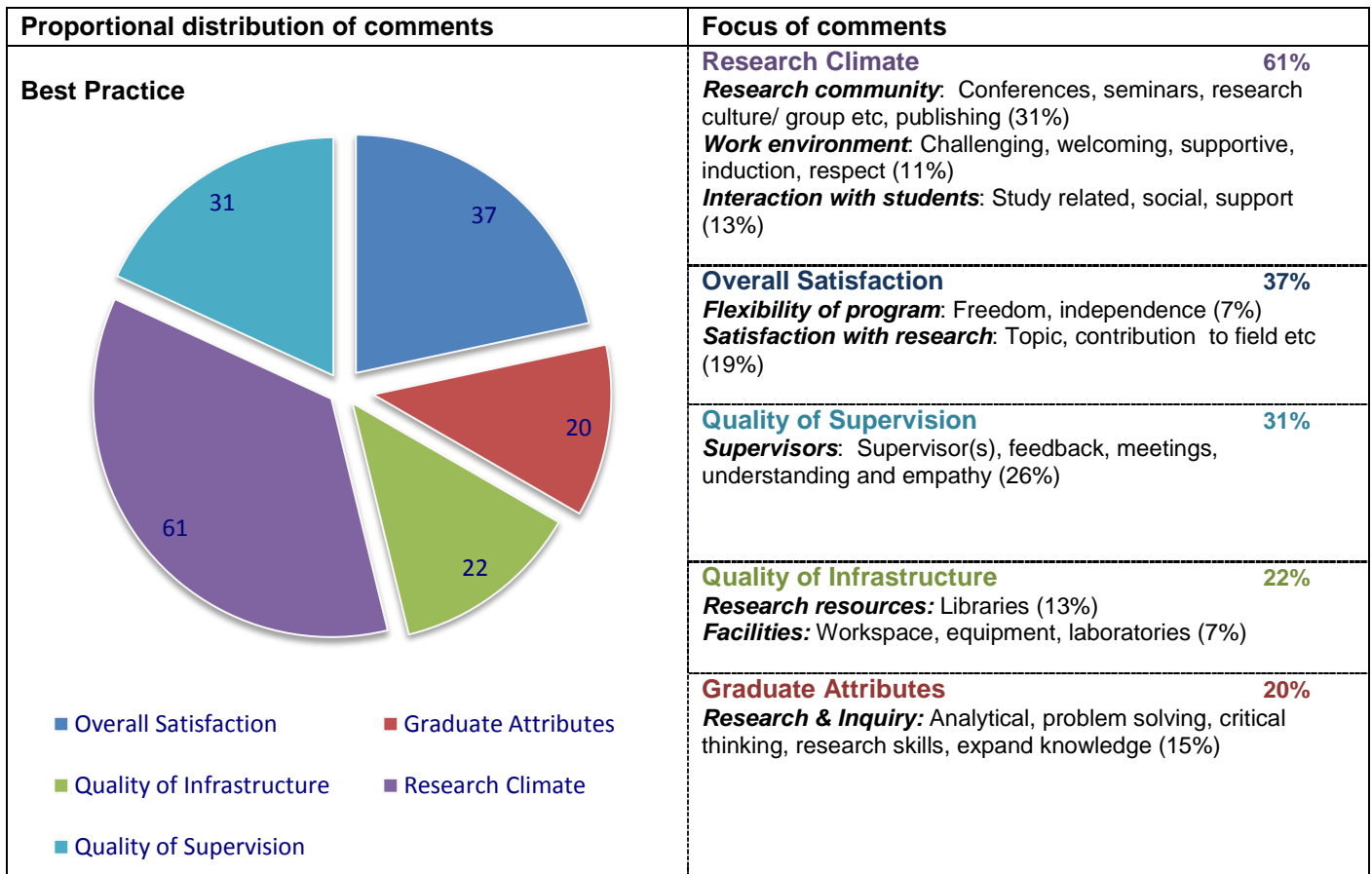


Key issues: 2010

The charts on the following page provide an overview of the issues that were of importance to research higher degree students in the Faculty in 2010.

Narrative and proportional chart data show the percentage of the total number of comments received from respondents for each of the main categories of the research higher degree student experience, together with an indication of those components that were mentioned most frequently. The statistical data indicates the distribution within each scale and category. Further detail is provided in Sections 1 – 6 of this report.

NB: the numbers in each of the pie slices add up to more than 100% because students often mention more than one aspect of their experience in their answers, each of which is counted once. (see Attachment Two for explanation on analysis and counting of comments)



FOR MORE INFORMATION

On the analysis and reporting of qualitative data

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SREQ Faculty reports are at:
http://sydney.edu.au/learning/evaluating/research_higher_degree_reports.shtml

On SREQ and how to interpret results

Staff of the ITL are available to provide support to faculties in the interpretation of the SREQ data and the development of strategic responses to address any issues identified
Phone: + 61 2 9351 3725
Email: itl@sydney.edu.au

SREQ results and reports are at <http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/sreq/>

INTRODUCTION

STUDENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SREQ)

In 2002 the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) began collecting data for The University community on research higher degree students' perceptions of their research training experiences. This data is gathered each year using a survey specifically developed for this task, the "Student Research Experience Questionnaire" (SREQ). The purpose of the SREQ is to provide the University community with a basis for strategic, faculty level academic development and curriculum review to further enhance the quality of research higher degrees. The SREQ is based on a national survey of research higher degree students, the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ). Some of the information gathered by the SREQ survey also contributes to two of the University's Key Performance Indicators for research. These KPIs are the quality of Supervision, and Overall Satisfaction with the research higher degree.

The survey gathers data on students' perceptions of the quality and frequency of supervision, intellectual and social climate, infrastructure, approaches to research, and generic skills development in their research higher degree, as well as their perceptions of the administration and student support services. The ITL analyses this data and provides a range of reports to staff and students of the university through this web site.

Students are asked to respond to statements using a five point Likert Scale to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. As part of the questionnaires, students are also asked to comment on the following questions:

- *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*

Quantitative and qualitative data from the SREQ provide evidence of the success of University and Faculty initiatives to improve the overall student experience in general and the student experience of research training in particular.

FOCUS OF THE REPORT

Based on the answers to the SREQ, this report seeks to provide an analysis of observable trends in the postgraduate research student experience in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning between 2006 and 2010. The report also provides detailed information on the key issues highlighted in the analysis of the 2010 SREQ qualitative data.

Information is arranged by the following areas of the research higher degree student experience: Quality of Supervision, Quality of Infrastructure, Research Climate, Graduate Attributes, and Overall Satisfaction, which, taken together, comprise the student experience of research training within the Faculty.

FOCUS OF WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS FROM RESPONDENTS

By examining the foci of the students' comments in the 2010 SREQ, this report seeks to highlight areas that were of best practice in the students' experience, together with those that have been suggested as areas of improvement. The views of the research higher degree students, on their overall experience at the University, as received through the open response comments, are a valuable insight into what is important to them; what they consider to be areas of best practice; and what they consider are in need improvement.

It is important to remember, when looking at the results of the analysis of this data, that the absence of favourable comments on a particular aspect of research training does not reflect that this is not an area of best practice. Rather, it could be interpreted that the students were happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on commenting about areas in need of improvement.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (PREQ) 2006-2008

Faculty scores from the 2009 and 2010 Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ); together with a list of comments received in answer to the open response questions in the 2010 survey, are provided as an attachment to this report. The broad area(s) by which each comment has been analysed are indicated alongside each comment.

GLOSSARY

The following terms and phrases are used throughout the report

SREQ	Student Research Experience Questionnaire Administered to postgraduate research students annually, during second semester
Supervision Scale Infrastructure Scale Climate Scale Generic Skills Scale Overall Satisfaction Item	The University of Sydney Student Research Experience Questionnaire (SREQ) is based upon the items included in the nationally administered Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ). These items have been shown to cluster together to form factor scales: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervision• Infrastructure• Climate• Generic Skills• Overall Satisfaction Item Within the report, this naming convention is used to identify information relating to the analysis of the quantitative data (survey items)
Faculty Scores Percentage agreement	SREQ item responses are combined and reported in terms of the proportions of students who agreed or disagreed that their research higher degree experience was positive in the areas of: Supervision; Generic Skills; Infrastructure; Climate; and Overall Satisfaction
Quality of Supervision Quality of Infrastructure Research Climate Graduate Attributes Overall Satisfaction	The University of Sydney Student Research Experience Questionnaire (SREQ) is based upon categories used in the SREQ Taxonomy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of Supervision• Quality of Infrastructure• Research Climate• Graduate Attributes• Overall Satisfaction Within the report, this naming convention is used as headings for each section of the report, and to identify information relating to the analysis of the qualitative data (written observations).
Qualitative data Focus of written observations	Students' written observations received in response to open ended questions in the SREQ: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
Percentage of comments received	The number of times an aspect is mentioned within written observations of respondents received from respondents is presented as a percentage of the total number of comments received from respondents to the SREQ in any particular year.
Key issues	As a general rule, only those aspects which receive over 5% of comments from the <u>whole</u> cohort (i.e. domestic and international combined; all respondents per degree) are considered significant enough to be included as key issues in the report.

ATTACHMENTS

The following attachments are provided at the end of the report:

- 1 Statistical data: number of respondents to the SREQ by Faculty and by School
- 2 Analysis and counting of comments
- 3 SREQ Factors
- 4 PREQ 2010 comments

1 QUALITY OF SUPERVISION

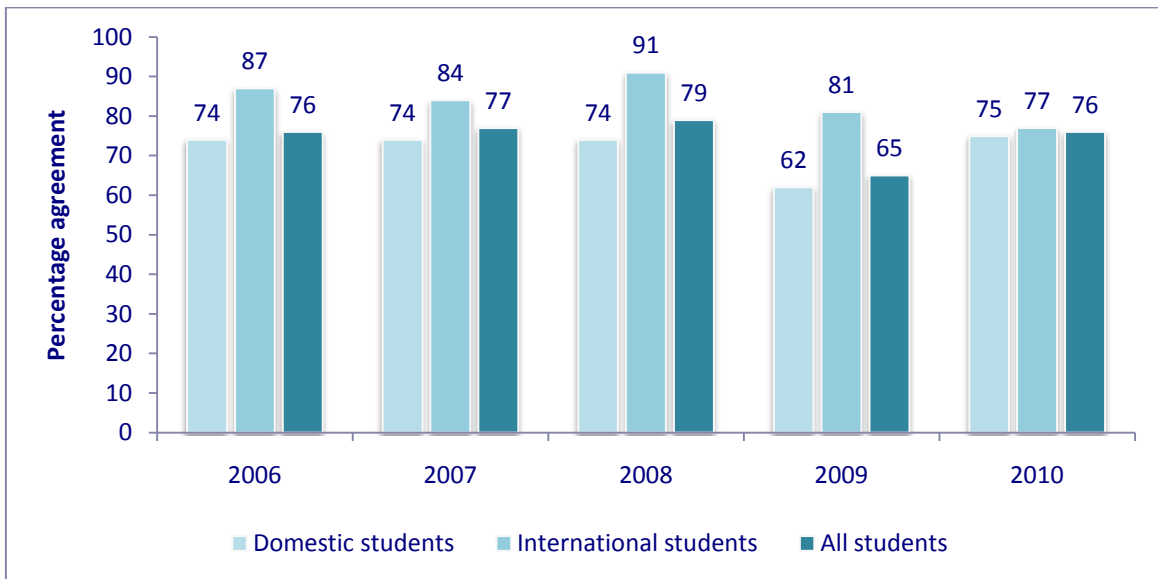
1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Supervision Scale* covers aspects of supervision including: supervision being available when needed; understanding by the supervisor(s) of difficulties; provision of additional information relevant to the thesis topic by the supervisor; provision of guidance in topic selection and refinement; provision of helpful feedback on progress; provision of good guidance in literature search; and overall satisfaction with quality of supervision.

1.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA: 2006 - 2010

The following graph shows the proportion of students who either agreed or strongly agreed with relevant Supervision Scale survey items in the SREQ between 2006 and 2010.

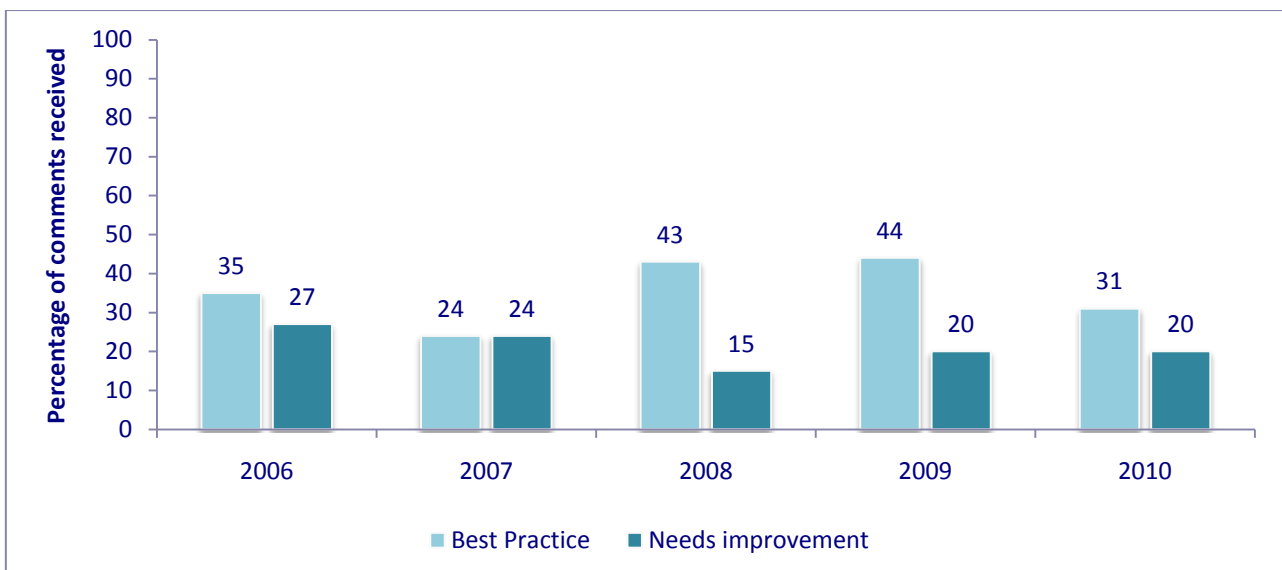
Figure 4: SREQ Supervision Scale: Percentage agreement results: 2006 - 2010



1.3 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: FOCUS OF WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS: 2006 – 2010

The following chart provides an indication of trends in the research higher degree student experience of the Quality of Supervision, as indicated in their responses to the open questions in the 2006 - 2010 SREQ. It demonstrates the relationship between areas of best practice, and areas in need of improvement. Results are reported as a percentage of the total number of comments received from all respondents who supplied written observations.

Figure 5: Quality of Supervision: Focus of written observations: 2006 - 2010



1.4 KEY ISSUES FOR RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE STUDENTS (SREQ 2010)

1.4.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=43)	International (n=11)	All (n=54)
Quality of Supervision	35%	18%	31%
- Supervisor(s)	28%	18%	26%

Sample comments

- Supervisors are excellent in providing guidance
- My supervisors are terrific - with the perfect mix of carrot and stick!
- The best aspects are the freedom as well as guidance that has been allowed by my research supervisors
- My supervisor helps me a lot to focus my research topic. He is very open to everyone's study pace which helps a lot too
- I think my supervisor is very good!

1.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	Domestic (n=44)	International (n=11)	All (n=55)
Quality of Supervision	23%	9%	20%
- Supervisor(s)	9%	9%	9%
- Management of candidature	9%	0%	7%

Sample comments

- Supervisors who take on students but are not qualified sufficiently to actually supervise the topic and try to bluff their way through at the students expense, denying them a good education and the achievement of a good piece of research. Financial reward tied to numbers of students or completion at any standard has to be a contributor
- Better inter-faculty collaboration to permit supervisors from other faculties within the university itself. This improvement would stop the 'silo' mentality existing
- It is sometimes difficult to arrange access to my supervisor - and feedback, while generally good and useful, is often a bit slow
- Quality of supervision- very difficult to get an appointment with supervisor
- Supervisory indication of my progress. Supervisors suggesting additional leads to follow

2 QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

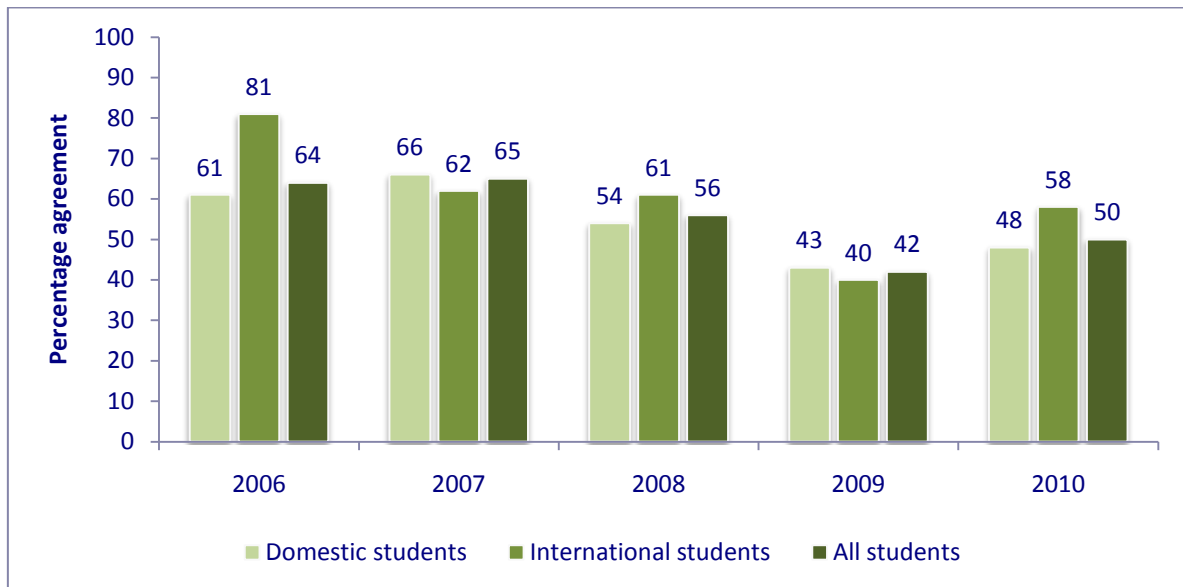
2.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Infrastructure Scale* covers aspects of the infrastructure available to research students, including: access to a suitable working space; access to technical support; access to a common room; access to necessary equipment; access to computing facilities and resources; appropriate financial support; and overall satisfaction with the quality of services and facilities.

2.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA: 2006 - 2010

The following graph shows the proportion of students who either agreed or strongly agreed with Infrastructure Scale survey items in the SREQ between 2006 and 2010.

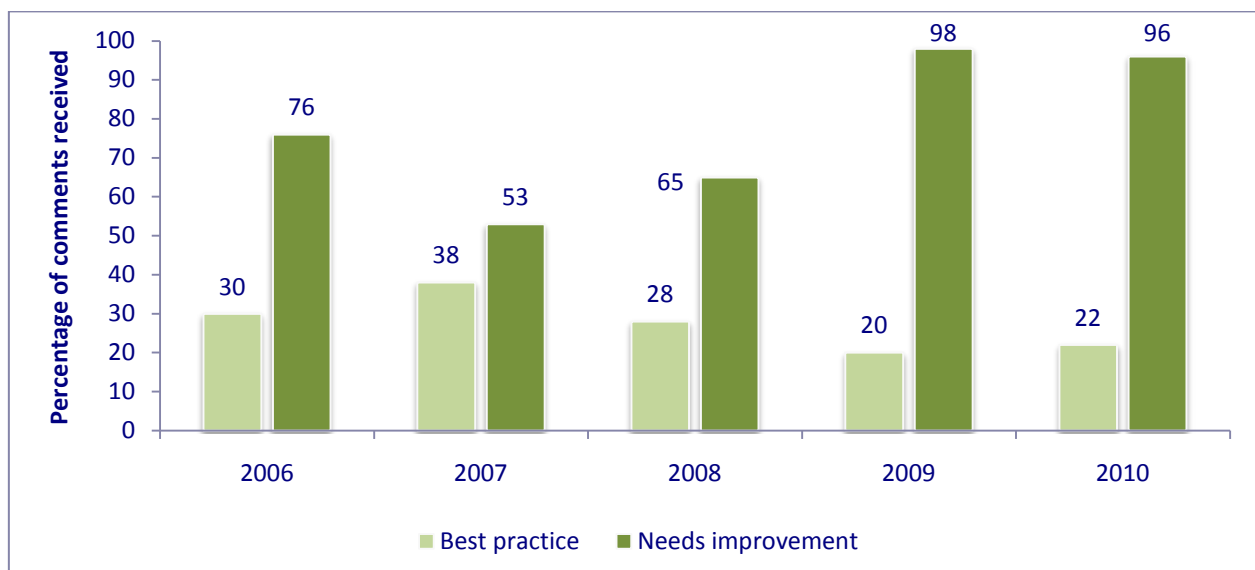
Figure 6: Quality of Infrastructure: Percentage agreement results: SREQ 2006 - 2010



2.3 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: FOCUS OF WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS: 2006 – 2010

The following chart provides an indication of trends in the research higher degree student experience of the Quality of Infrastructure, as indicated in their responses to the open questions in the 2006 – 2010 SREQ. It demonstrates the relationship between areas of best practice and areas in need of improvement. Results are reported as a percentage of the total number of comments received from all respondents who supplied written observations.

Figure 7: Quality of Infrastructure: Focus of written observations: SREQ 2006 - 2010



2.4 KEY ISSUES FOR RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE STUDENTS (SREQ 2010)

2.4.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=43)	International (n=11)	All (n=54)
Quality of Infrastructure	19%	36%	22%
- Research resources	9%	27%	13%
- Facilities	7%	9%	7%

Sample comments

- Laboratory facilities
- A shared office space to store my research related work, books, papers etc, and discuss issues and questions with my roommates
- Access to the library as it enables me to find relevant research and information I would otherwise need to pay for
- Library service- DOC. delivery very efficient. Excellent faculty librarian

2.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	Domestic (n=44)	International (n=11)	All (n=55)
Quality of Infrastructure	98%	91%	96%
- Facilities	52%	55%	53%
- Finance and funding	20%	18%	20%
- Administration	14%	9%	13%
- Support	9%	9%	9%

Sample comments

- The faculty's physical facilities are a disgrace, and do not provide an atmosphere or ambience for learning and contribution to knowledge. E.g. the research rooms and workspaces are nothing more than purely basic; IT support is unresponsive and irregular; the postgraduate common room is no more than an extension of the lift lobby with random and poor quality furniture; the publications strewn in the bookcase in the lift lobby are irrelevant, outdated and "unmanaged"; the cleaning and building maintenance is non-existent; the lift is regularly out of order; there has been no OH&S or safety briefings for the building; and no consideration to an individual's need for ergonomically appropriate furniture. All this is a sad indictment of this Faculty, which is concerned with workspace and environmental comfort, and the proper management, operation and maintenance of the built environment
- Additional funding for conferences - I was left out of pocket for a paper I gave this year. Additional funding for equipment - I need a desktop screen to plug my laptop into
- A proper workspace which is permanently mine would markedly improve the experience. I am a part time Masters of Philosophy student, so as such do not qualify for a permanent space. A temporary desk in a computer lab is a very different proposition and doesn't really work for me, and I suspect for most part time students. You need your own space, with your own reference material that is available whenever you need it. As a result, I am not regularly working at the faculty, and therefore miss out on most informal opportunities to engage with others and don't feel as much part of the faculty as I thought I would
- IT is very slow. Still haven't got a computer after seven weeks in the course. Even worse I still haven't managed to get internet access. Getting necessary equipment can be slow or non-existent. It is frustrating when you know funds are available but it takes a million forms to fill from staff that sometimes are unwilling or do not have the time to do it
- effective/supportive faculty administration needed. I hadn't been provided with proper working space and computer for the first 2 month

3 RESEARCH CLIMATE

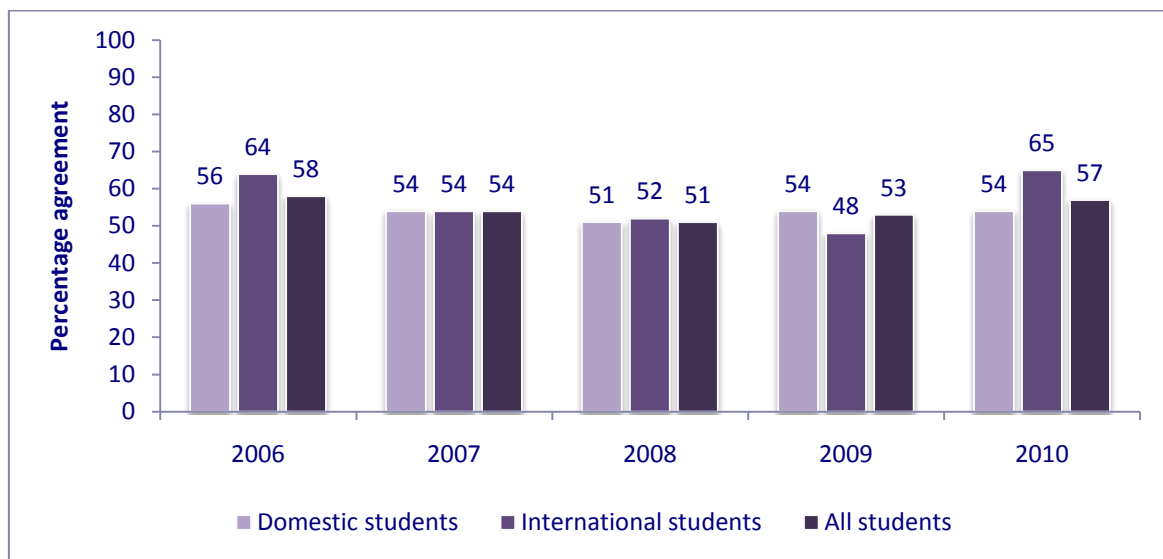
3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Climate Scale* covers aspects of the prevailing research climate in a students' school/ department, including: opportunities for social contact with other postgraduate students; integration into the school/ department community; opportunities to become involved in the broader research culture; perception of other research students as supportive; feelings of isolation within the school/ department; encouragement of interaction with other research students; provision of a good seminar programme; stimulation of personal work by the prevailing research ambience; provision of a supportive work environment; and feeling respected as a fellow researcher.

3.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA: 2006 - 2010

The following graph shows the proportion of students who either agreed or strongly agreed with Climate Scale survey items in the SREQ between 2006 and 2010.

Figure 8: Climate Scale: Percentage agreement results: SREQ 2006 - 2010



3.3 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: FOCUS OF WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS: 2006 – 2010

The following chart provides an indication of trends in the research higher degree student experience of Research Climate, as indicated in their responses to the open questions in the 2006 – 2010 SREQ. It demonstrates the relationship between areas of best practice and areas in need of improvement. Results are reported as a percentage of the total number of comments received from all respondents who supplied written observations.

Figure 9: Research Climate: Focus of written observations: SREQ 2006 - 2010



3.4 KEY ISSUES FOR RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE STUDENTS (SREQ 2010)

3.4.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=43)	International (n=11)	All (n=54)
Research Climate	60%	64%	61%
- Research community/ culture	30%	36%	31%
- Interaction with other research higher degree students	16%	0%	13%
- Work environment	9%	18%	11%

Sample comments

- Meeting other research students at conferences who are working on topics more closely related to my own. This is lacking in my faculty, so the opportunities to meet others beyond this university is very important for my continued motivation.
- We have a weekly seminar to present, discuss and critique the latest work of a wider group of people working in the discipline- in this case Urban Design related. This has been very useful for setting deadlines to work to, having a relatively informal but regular feedback program. Having time to discuss ideas and research them is a great luxury and privilege and has provided me with a stronger and broader framework in which to continue my professional work
- The overall faculty environment is very supportive and research focused
- different people have different backgrounds and topics, but sit together. I'm really excited about this. you can always learn from others. it's also good for my own research, since a practical research is always based on multidisciplinary knowledge
- All faculty members in my discipline are very helpful, from technical staff to my supervisor and lecturers

3.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	Domestic (n=44)	International (n=11)	All (n=55)
Research Climate	39%	27%	36%
- Work environment	20%	9%	18%
- Research community/ culture	11%	9%	11%
- Career preparation	6%	7%	6%

Sample comments

- Conferences - It is very difficult to find suitable conferences for my subject. A newsletter with upcoming conferences in the various research fields would be very helpful (which is common on other universities such as RMIT) and additional support in preparing and submitting papers would be very much appreciated
- Support and structured guidance for all research students in this faculty during the initial months of candidature is highly unsuitable. The faculty needs to seriously reconsider how the seminar series for research students is conducted, because at present it is entirely unproductive and in no way prepares students to conduct independent research to a high standard. It is a shame that the modes of inquiry course offered to research students was previously (until 3 or 4 years ago) a rigorous and thorough course preparing students for their own research, but is now of such poor quality
- There is lack of regular interaction with faculty members and fellow students in the faculty. I am not aware of such activities initiated by the faculty
- My research area is a very topical one - but beyond my supervisors I sense there is little interest in / awareness of the potentially public relevance of my research within the faculty
- No flexibility for part time researchers. Feel isolated

4 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

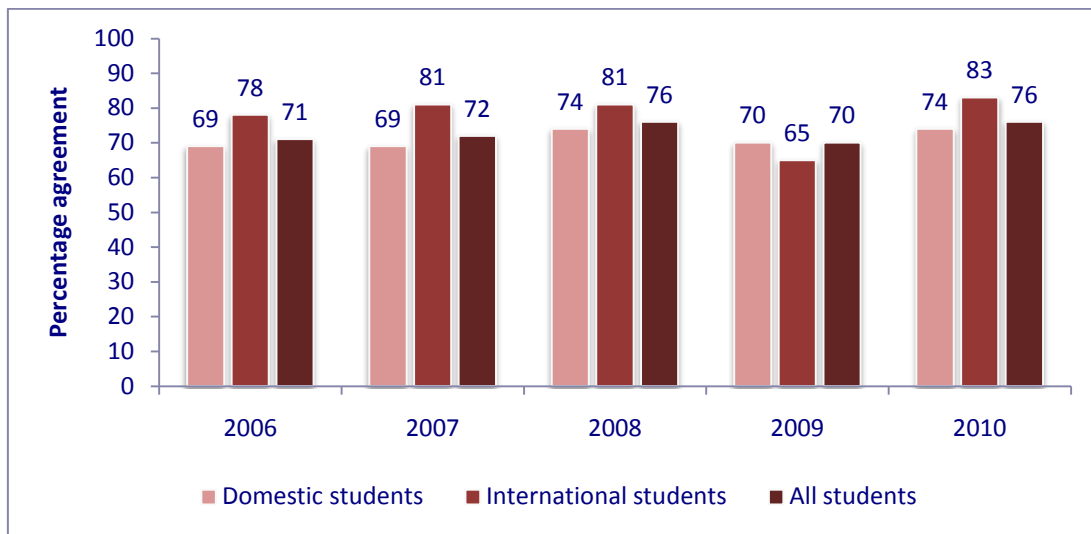
4.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Generic Skills* scale reflects the extent to which students perceive their studies to have fostered the development of the generic skills recognised by the university as being a valuable outcome of university education, in addition to discipline specific skills and knowledge. Skills include problem solving; oral and written communication; development of ideas and their written presentation; collaboration with other researchers; analytical skills; planning; confidence in tackling unfamiliar problems; and ability to learn independently

4.3 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA: 2006 - 2010

The following graph shows the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with Generic Skills Scale survey items in the SREQ between 2006 and 2010.

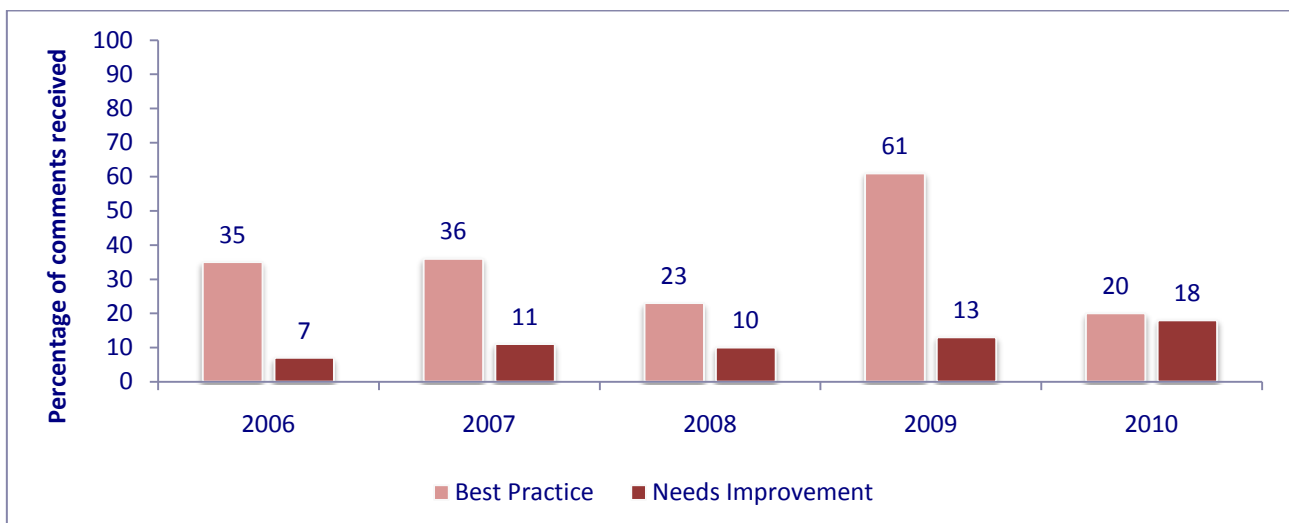
Figure 10: Generic Skills: Percentage agreement results: SREQ 2006 - 2010



4.4 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: FOCUS OF WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS: 2006 – 2010

The following chart provides an indication of trends in the research higher degree student experience relating to the enhancement of University Graduate Attributes, as indicated in their responses to the open questions in the 2006 – 2010 SREQ. It demonstrates the relationship between areas of best practice and areas in need of improvement. Results are reported as a percentage of the total number of comments received from all respondents who supplied written observations.

Figure 11: Graduate Attributes: Focus of written observations: 2006 - 2010



4.4 KEY ISSUES FOR RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE STUDENTS (SREQ 2010)

4.4.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=43)	International (n=11)	All (n=54)
Graduate Attributes	21%	18%	20%
- Research and Inquiry	14%	18%	15%

Sample comments

- First of all, I have learned a lot about my topic and met many people specialised in my discipline. Secondly, my problem solving skills, analytical skills and self-learning skills have been significantly improved
- being critical, this sort of view is not very welcome back home, thus the critical view towards, I would say, any subject open up a new windows
- Learning how to motivate your own work, learning how to produce a finished work, learning academic rigour, learning about the research community and; finishing. They are good because they are useful far beyond this research project, for whatever I do afterwards, and especially if I go on to become an academic which is the plan. (Aside from finishing which is good simply because the alternative is not finishing)
- I have gained lots of confidence in doing research
- Opportunity to read widely and to develop on critical thinking

4.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	Domestic (n=44)	International (n=11)	All (n=55)
Graduate Attributes	16%	27%	18%
- Research and Inquiry	9%	9%	9%
- Communication skills	5%	18%	7%

Sample comments

- Although I have made obvious improvement in my oral and written communication skills, I believe that these still need to be more improved
- As I am not native English speaker, it is very difficult to write a thesis in English. The university should provide an editor that is free of charge in order to help an international student
- Skills training- research analysis methods
- If someone could help me with my academic English in my thesis, that would be great
- How to write thesis in English correctly and effectively because for international student, the expectation for good English from supervisor is high

5 OVERALL SATISFACTION

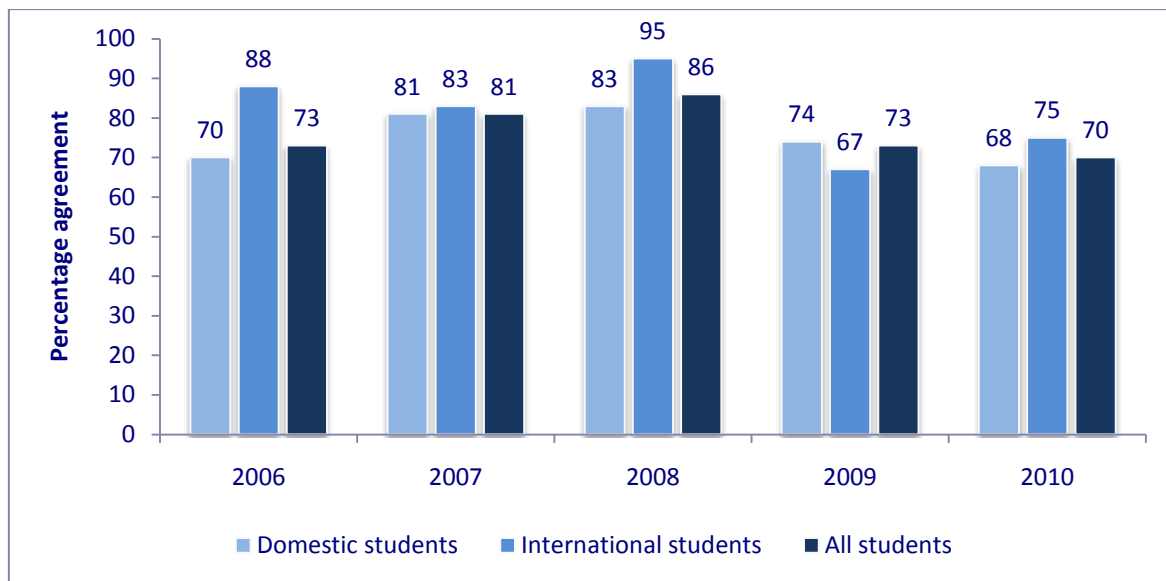
5.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This single item asks students about their overall level of satisfaction with their research higher degree experience. In the analysis of the qualitative data, additional aspects, which are not covered in other areas of the survey, but which contribute to the overall satisfaction of the research higher degree student experience area included e.g. satisfaction with research, flexibility of programme, quality of degree (pressure to complete, coursework, field work, overseas research), and reputation of the university/ faculty.

5.3 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA: 2006 - 2010

The following graph shows the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with the Overall Satisfaction item in the SREQ between 2006 and 2010.

Figure 12: Overall Satisfaction Item: Percentage agreement results: SREQ 2006 - 2010



5.4 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: FOCUS OF WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS: 2006 – 2010

The following chart provides an indication of trends in the research higher degree student experience aspects which fall within the remit of Overall Satisfaction, as indicated in their responses to the open questions in the 2006 – 2010 SREQ. It demonstrates the relationship between areas of best practice and areas in need of improvement. Results are reported as a percentage of the total number of comments received from all respondents who supplied written observations.

Figure 13: Overall Satisfaction: Focus of written observations: SREQ 2006 - 2010



5.4 KEY ISSUES FOR RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE STUDENTS (SREQ 2010)

5.4.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=43)	International (n=11)	All (n=54)
Overall Satisfaction	40%	27%	37%
- Flexibility of program	9%	0%	7%
- Satisfaction with research	19%	18%	19%

Sample comments

- The level of autonomy. Able to pursue my desired direction. Being given encouragement and support by my supervisors to do so
- I am researching an area that I am particularly interested in. The work is meaningful to me and I hope/believe useful in my field. I look forward to making a valid contribution
- The ability to explore an idea from a number of 'angles'. My research has allowed me to explore my original idea in great depth. This has led to an understanding of the complexity of the original question that has developed over a significant period
- Excitement of producing original research
- Most of the academic staff has a great deal of experience in the topic area

5.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	Domestic (n=44)	International (n=11)	All (n=55)
Overall Satisfaction	30%	18%	27%
- Quality of degree, incl. coursework	11%	9%	11%

Sample comments

- As a new researcher, the support from faculty on research skill and research methods is very poor. Faculty only provided one research methods course which is the introduction of research methods, a very basic one. However, the advance research courses are not provided, students have to find help by themselves from their supervisor, colleagues or other faculty. Sometimes we feel helplessness because the support is not provided by faculty education system
- Also as a masters student, I thought I would be engaging with a lot more students who had significant experience in the field, rather than people straight out of an undergraduate degree. This is perhaps a problem created by the system, but it seems to me to undermine the value of a masters degree and the potential for the program to develop a stronger reputation if the majority of students are not bringing experience into the mix upon which they and the broader faculty can build new approaches and ideas, but instead it seems many are just aiming for a higher degree to start their career
- Lack of good management practices wrt research/research degrees, lack of interest by 'research deans' in actually doing a good job, maintaining high ethical and academic standards, and having the interests of the students at heart, and lack of courage by faculty deans and leaders in addressing rogue elements and underhand practices amongst supervisors and students. Last year I was asked by very unacademic people whether I was embarrassed on behalf of Sydney University after a dreadful conference presentation by a person who had been recently appointed as an honorary associate. There is so much poor and unscrupulous work being done, I sometimes wonder whether a higher degree from Sydney University is worth much at all.
- Some additional coursework to support the research process would be beneficial particularly in the final stages and write up periods
- Facilities and support are getting progressively worse. All staff, academic or general, are more interested in furtherance of their career rather than in the provision of a valuable learning/research experience

ATTACHMENT ONE: STATISTICAL DATA

1 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Number of research higher degree students surveyed/ enrolled 2006 – 2010					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Total	81	80	82	92	94

Number of respondents to the SREQ 2006 – 2010					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	43	34	46	49	52
International students	8	13	19	9	16
Total	51	47	65	58	68
<i>% who responded</i>	63%	59%	79%	63%	72%

2 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

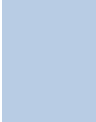
The analysis of the qualitative data is based on responses to the open questions received from **ALL** respondents to the SREQ from the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning.

Number of respondents who answered the open questions SREQ 2006 – 2010						
	<i>Date of survey</i>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
<i>Areas of best practice</i>	Domestic students	30	30	36	37	43
	International students	13	12	15	4	11
	Total	43	42	53	41	54
	<i>% who provided comments</i>	84%	89%	82%	71%	79%

<i>Areas of improvement</i>	Domestic students	28	28	35	41	44
	International students	13	10	13	5	11
	Total	41	38	48	46	55
	<i>% who provided comments</i>	80%	81%	74%	79%	81%

3 RELIABILITY OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

The following information on the reliability of statistical data in the above tables should be taken into consideration when reading this report:

 Where the number of respondents is less than 5, results are excluded from the report as they are likely to be unreliable.

 Where the number of respondents is between 5 and 20 results should be viewed with caution. The minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis is 20.

ATTACHMENT TWO: NOTES ON ANALYSIS AND COUNTING OF COMMENTS

1 ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS

The components of categories and sub-categories used in the analysis of qualitative data are based on:

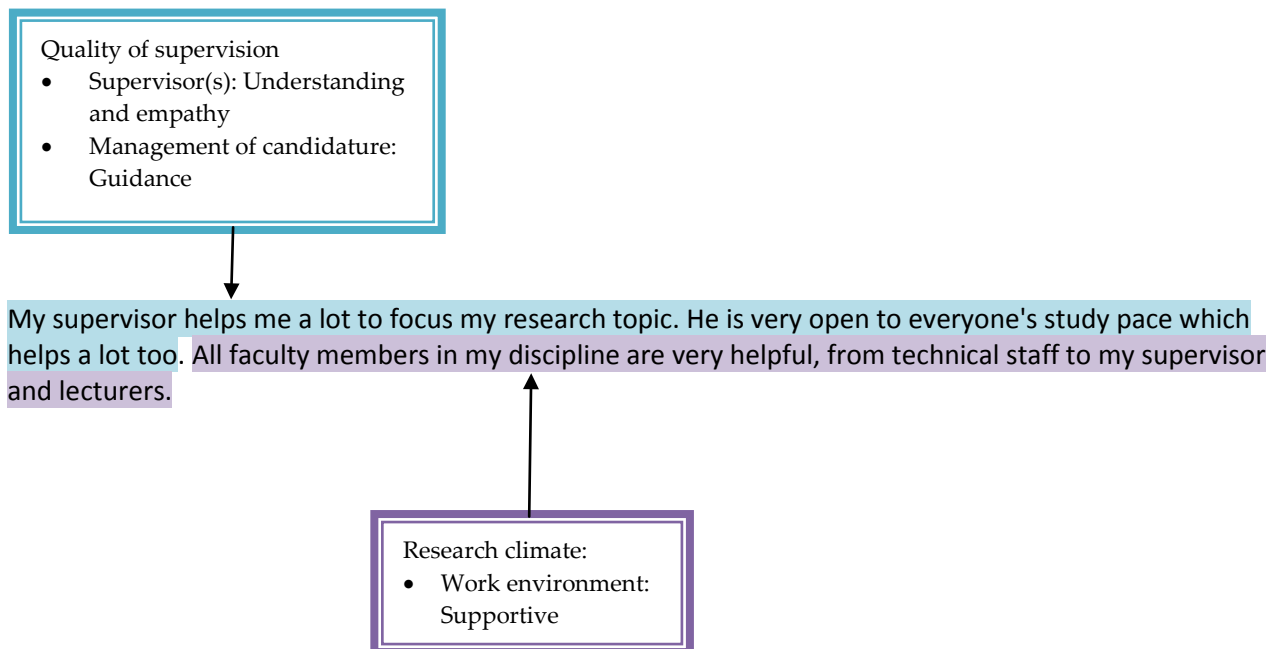
- Characteristics that define the area of the student experience
- SREQ survey items
- recurring themes in students' comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students' surveys.

Together, they represent the range of features of each aspect which are considered to be essential to student satisfaction with their research training experience

2 COUNTING OF COMMENTS

Each comment is analysed according to the *Taxonomy for analysing qualitative data from the SREQ*, which is based on the Factors used in the SREQ. Based on the premise that a comment is what is written by an individual respondent in response to one of the open response questions, and a tally in the statistics being a specific phrase or sentence referring to one aspect of the student experience, the total number of times an aspect is mentioned in any one set of comments is calculated as a percentage of comments received in the year of the survey. As a general rule, only those aspects which receive over 5% of comments from the whole cohort (i.e. domestic and international combined) are considered significant enough to be included as specific issues in the report.

For example, the following comment is counted as ONE COMMENT RECEIVED; but as it is mentioned in Quality of supervision (Supervisor(s): Understanding and empathy; and Management of candidature: Guidance); and Research climate (Work environment: Supportive) the highlighted phrases within the comment are counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories i.e. 3 aspects in one comment.



ATTACHMENT THREE: SREQ SCALES: COVERAGE OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

The University of Sydney Student Research Experience Questionnaire (SREQ) is based upon the items included in the nationally administered Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ). These items have been shown to cluster together to form factor scales: Supervision, Climate, Infrastructure, and Generic Skills. These items, together with recurring themes in students' comments are used as the basis for categories, sub-categories and components for the analysis of qualitative data. This attachment lists the relevant survey items and sub-categories and components used in the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from the SREQ.

1 SUPERVISION SCALE/ QUALITY OF SUPERVISION

1.1 SREQ Survey items

- 1 Supervision is available when I need it
- 5 My supervisor(s) make(s) a real effort to understand difficulties I face
- 13 My supervisor(s) provide(s) me with additional information relevant to my topic
- 18 I am given good guidance in topic selection and refinement
- 22 My supervisor(s) provide(s) helpful feedback on my progress
- 26 I have received good guidance in my literature search
- 36 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my supervision

1.2 Qualitative data analysis

There are 4 sub-categories within *Quality of Supervision*, against which students' comments are analysed. Each of these sub-categories may be further broken down into relevant aspects (or components) of the research student experience of Supervision. The components of these sub-categories are based on the SREQ survey items together with recurring themes in students' comments:

- Supervisor(s) (*supervisor/ associate supervisor; usefulness of sessions with; availability and frequency of meetings with; feedback on work; understanding and empathy*)
- Supervision processes within faculty (*general comments on supervision; evaluation of supervisors by faculty; training*)
- Management of Candidature (*guidance on thesis, literature review; topic etc; workload; progress reports*)
- IP and plagiarism

2 INFRASTRUCTURE SCALE/ QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

2.1 SREQ Survey items

- 2 I have access to a suitable working space
- 6 I have good access to the technical support I need
- 10 I have access to a common room or a similar type of meeting place
- 12 I am able to organise good access to necessary equipment
- 19 I have good access to computing facilities and services
- 28 There is appropriate financial support for research activities
- 35 Overall I am satisfied with the quality of the services and facilities

2.2 Qualitative data analysis

There are 7 sub-categories within *Quality of Infrastructure*, against which students' comments are analysed. Each of these sub-categories may be further broken down into relevant aspects (or components) of the research students' perceptions of the quality of infrastructure. The components of these sub-categories are based on the SREQ survey items together with recurring themes in students' comments.

- Administration (*enrolment and admission; communication between faculty and students; general comments on administration (faculty and university); postgraduate coordinator*)
- Facilities (*PGARC; common room; workspace, buildings, etc; computer hardware and software; equipment; transport and parking*)
- Finance and funding (*funding for resources, equipment etc; scholarships and grants; travel grants*)
- Research resources (*provided by faculty; provided by internal and external libraries and archive centres*)
- Student support services (*Ethics Office; Research Office; International Office etc*)
- Support (*IT; technical; laboratory*)

3 CLIMATE SCALE/ RESEARCH CLIMATE

3.1 SREQ Survey items

- 3 The department / school provides opportunities for social contact with other postgraduate students
8 I feel integrated into the department's / school's community
15 The department / school provides opportunities for me to become involved in the broader research culture
16 I feel that other postgraduate students in my department / school are supportive
20 I tend to feel isolated within this department / school
23 Interaction with other postgraduate students is actively encouraged in this department / school
24 A good seminar program for postgraduate students is provided
25 The research ambience in the department / school or faculty stimulates my work
29 I feel that this department / school provides a supportive working environment
31 I feel respected as a fellow researcher within my department / school

3.2 Qualitative data analysis

There are 7 sub-categories within *Research Climate*, against which students comments are analysed. Each of these sub-categories may be further broken down into relevant aspects (or components) of the student experience of the prevailing research climate within the faculty. The components of these sub-categories are based on the SREQ survey items together with recurring themes in students' comments.

- Social inclusion (*cultural diversity; equity, discrimination, and harassment*)
- Research community (*general comments; faculty seminars, workshops, and discussion groups; networking/ collaborating; participation in conferences; opportunities for and encouragement to publish*)
- Work environment (*challenging and stimulating; induction/ orientation programme; integration into faculty/ department/ school; isolation (emotional); respect as fellow researcher; supportive environment; support for part-time, distance, international students*)
- Interaction with other research higher degree students (*academic; social; support of peers*)
- Location and physical environment
- Interaction with industry partners e.g. ARC projects
- Career preparation (*academic (e.g. availability of tutoring, lecturing); general comments*)

4 GENERIC SKILLS SCALE/ GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

4.1 SREQ Survey items

- 4 My research has further developed my problem-solving skills
7 Doing my research has helped to develop my written communication skills
9 I have learned to develop my ideas and present them in my written work
11 As a result of my research, I have developed the ability to work collaboratively with other researchers
14 My research has sharpened my analytical skills
17 Doing my research has helped to develop my oral communication skills
21 Doing my research has developed my ability to plan my own work
27 As a result of my research I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems
30 As a result of my research I have developed the ability to learn independently

4.2 Qualitative data analysis

There are 5 sub-categories within Graduate Attributes, against which students comments are analysed. These match the five main University Generic Graduate Attributes. The components of these sub-categories are allied to the skills and abilities for each attribute provided in the University policy framework for Graduate Attributes.

- Communication (*oral communication; written communication*)
- Ethical, social, professional understanding (*collaboration/ team work; ethical, social, cultural understanding; professional skills including academic*)
- Information literacy (*retrieval and use of information; computing skills e.g. using endnote, searching databases etc; referencing*)
- Personal and intellectual autonomy (*independent learning; planning own work; intellectually curious; new ways of thinking, etc*)
- Research and inquiry (*analytical, critical, problem solving; expanding knowledge base; creativity and imagination; statistical skills; research skills*)

5 OVERALL SATISFACTION

5.1 SREQ Survey item

43 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my research higher degree experience.

5.2 Qualitative data analysis

There are 9 sub-categories within Overall Satisfaction. They represent the range of aspects of the postgraduate research student experience which are considered to have a major influence on the quality of the research degree experience, and which are not covered elsewhere.

- General comments
- Quality of degree/ program (*length; inclusion of coursework, practical aspects, including field work and visits to other institutions in Australia and overseas*)
- Pressure to complete (*i.e. within time frame set by APA conditions etc*)
- Satisfaction with research (*topic, contribution to field*)
- Flexibility of the program (*freedom to follow own research; choose own topics; compared to undergraduate degree; flexible working hours*)
- Reputation/ prestige of university/ faculty/ department/ academic staff
- Quality of students
- Staffing issues and resources (*i.e. that affect students overall experience*)
- Writing and completing the thesis

ATTACHMENT FOUR: POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (PREQ 2010)

INTRODUCTION

The PREQ is a national survey administered by the independent body, the Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCA). It is a survey of research higher degree *graduates* of all Australian universities. PREQ results are reported at least a year after the research higher degree graduates actually finish their courses i.e. students who completed their research higher degree in 2009 would have completed the PREQ in 2010, with results reported in 2011. The purpose of the PREQ is to provide the University community with a basis for strategic, faculty level academic development and curriculum review to further enhance the quality of research higher degrees. The PREQ also provides data for benchmarking between similar programmes in different universities.

Written observations, from respondents to the survey, about their experiences provide evidence to support the University PREQ quantitative data results (percentage agreement scores), and provide detailed information about key issues in the Areas of best practice and Areas needing improvement, during their research training experience. The results are directly aligned with the scales and survey items used in the PREQ, with the addition of items that occur frequently in student comments.

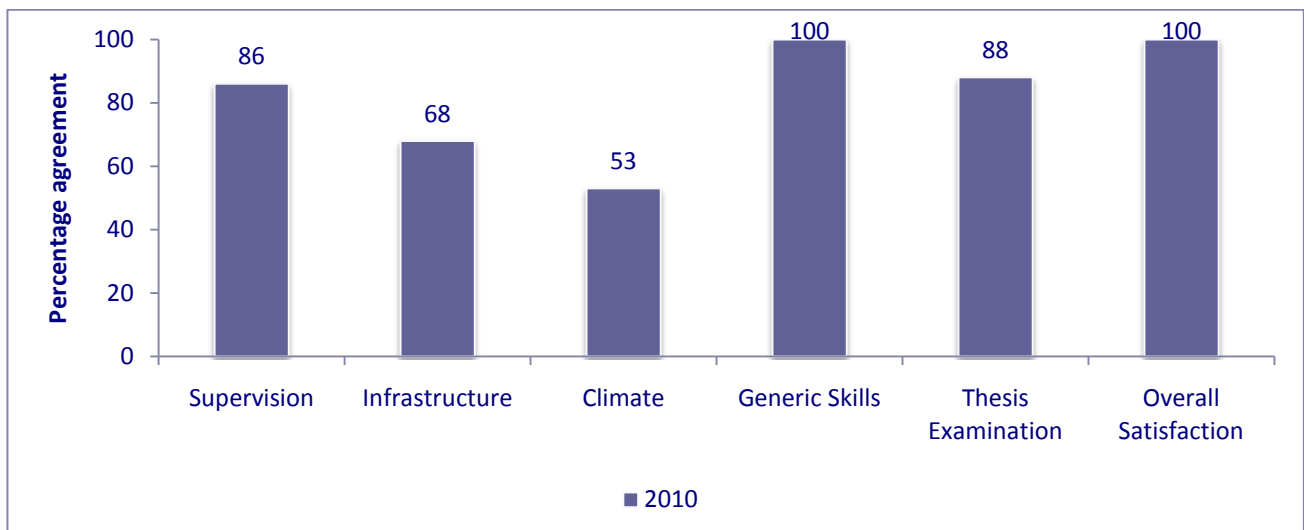
KEY RESULTS FOR 2010

The following results are an indication of those areas of the student experience that were of significance to research higher degree students in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning who completed their degree during 2009. The quantitative data (percentage agreement results) reflect the experiences of respondents in relation to specific items in the survey; the qualitative data reproduces verbatim the written observations provided by those respondents who answered the open ended questions on the best areas of their experience and those that were considered to be in need of improvement.

QUANTITATIVE DATA

The following chart shows the 2010 PREQ percentage agreement results (i.e. respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the survey items relating to each scale) for the Faculty.

Figure 14: Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning: Percentage agreement results: PREQ 2010



FOCUS OF WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS: 2010

In addition to PREQ survey items, graduates are asked to provide written observations on areas of best practice and areas in need of improvement during their studies at the University.

The following written observations were received from research higher degree graduates in response to the open questions in the 2010 PREQ. The broad area(s) by which each comment has been analysed is indicated in the second column

Areas of best practice

Domestic students

COMMENT	AREAS OF RESEARCH TRAINING EXPERIENCE
World class name of supervisor.	<i>SUPERVISION</i>
Support from PhD colleagues, especially Dr Jennifer Gamble. Partnership with Aboriginal community in Redfern. Working closely with IB Fell Housing Research Centre - Director Col James and Associate Sue Clarke - enriches my experience.	<i>RESEARCH CLIMATE</i>
having time to think and write.	<i>OVERALL SATISFACTION</i>
It enhanced my Communication and Presentation Skills, Teamwork or Interpersonal Skills, Managing/Organising and Planning Skills (including self-management skills) and finally Intellectual and Creative Skills.	<i>GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES</i>
Great supervisors. and excellent support from peer researchers/PhD students in the faculty.	<i>SUPERVISION RESEARCH CLIMATE</i>
Quality of supervision was very high. ITL involvement was very helpful i.e. exchange of ideas through seminars, workshops conferences etc.	<i>SUPERVISION RESEARCH CLIMATE</i>
Interesting literature, discussions with supervisor.	<i>INFRASTRUCTURE SUPERVISION</i>

Suggested improvements

COMMENT	AREAS OF RESEARCH TRAINING EXPERIENCE
Faculty management culture and academic politics.	<i>INFRASTRUCTURE RESEARCH CLIMATE</i>
Working space inadequate. More opportunity to publish.	<i>INFRASTRUCTURE RESEARCH CLIMATE</i>
coherence and linearity.	<i>OVERALL SATISFACTION</i>
Lack of opportunity to interact with PhD/research students in other departments within the faculty. Lack of opportunity to get involved in faculty's teaching/research works.	<i>RESEARCH CLIMATE</i>
As my research crossed disciplines i.e. Architecture and higher education, Architecture support in terms of exchange of ideas became very limited i.e. beyond scope of faculty.	<i>RESEARCH CLIMATE</i>
Difficult to really plug-in to the faculty as a part-time student.	<i>RESEARCH CLIMATE</i>