



# Faculty of Economics and Business

## Student Research Experience Questionnaire Report

### Trends and key issues: 2006 - 2010

June 2011

*NB: Since this report covers the period prior to the transfer of the School of Economics to the Faculty of Arts, the name of the Faculty will be that in use in 2010. Future reports will refer to the Faculty as the Sydney Business School.*

*In Sections 1 – 5, at a departmental level, qualitative data is divided into a) departments which remained with the Sydney Business School on its formation in 2011, and b) those that were transferred to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.*

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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.

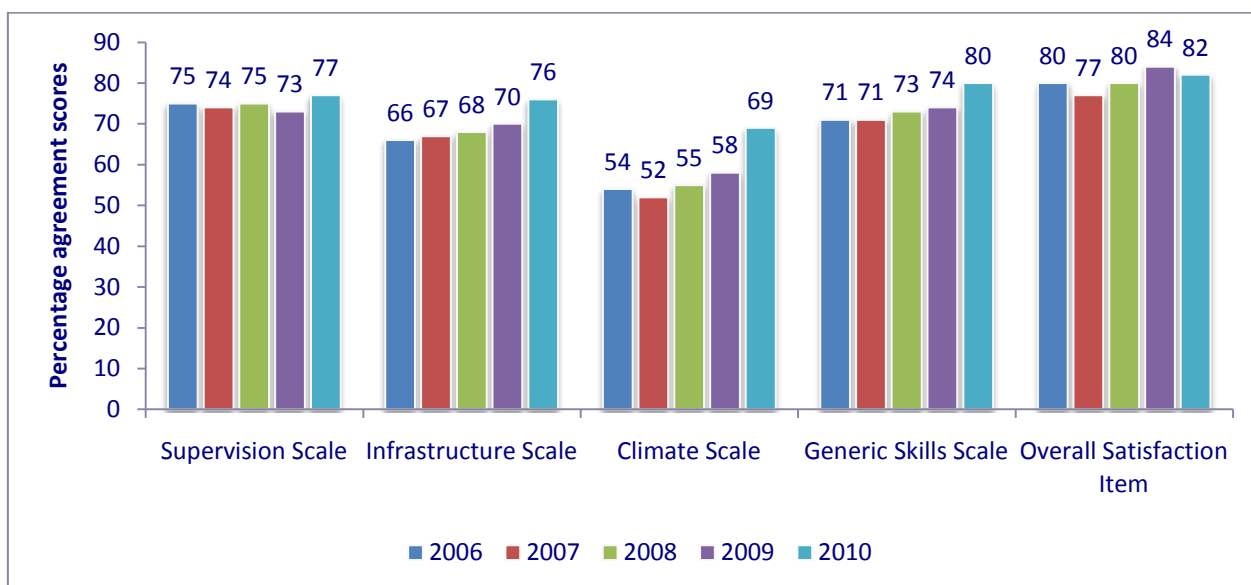
The analysis of qualitative data received between 2006 and 2009, and reported in this document, is based on written observations received from **all** respondents who answered the open questions in the SREQ. Results of the analysis of the 2010 data is further divided by Department (as indicated in SREQ Department fields).

### COMPARATIVE DATA: 2006 – 2010<sup>1</sup>

#### 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 Economics and Business since 2006.

Figure 1: Faculty of Economics and Business: 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. In 2010, 77% of respondents provide written observations about areas of best practice and 70% areas of improvement.

<sup>1</sup> More detailed data, i.e. comparing the results by Department, and 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 Economics and Business: Areas of best practice: SREQ 2006 - 2010

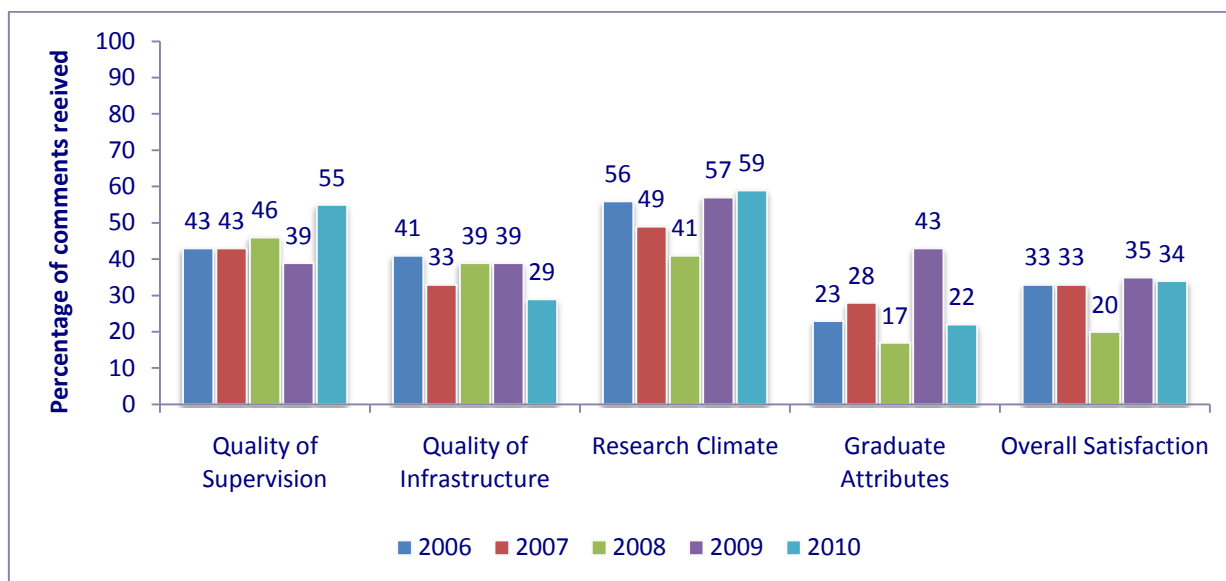
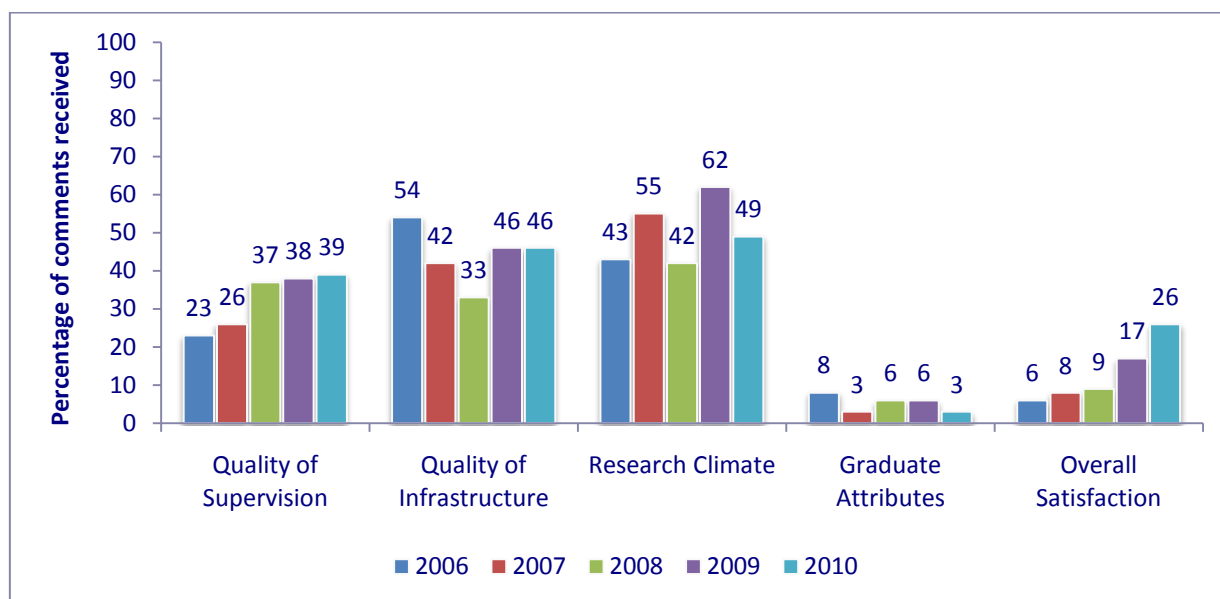


Figure 3: Faculty of Economics and Business: Areas needing improvement: SREQ 2006 - 2010

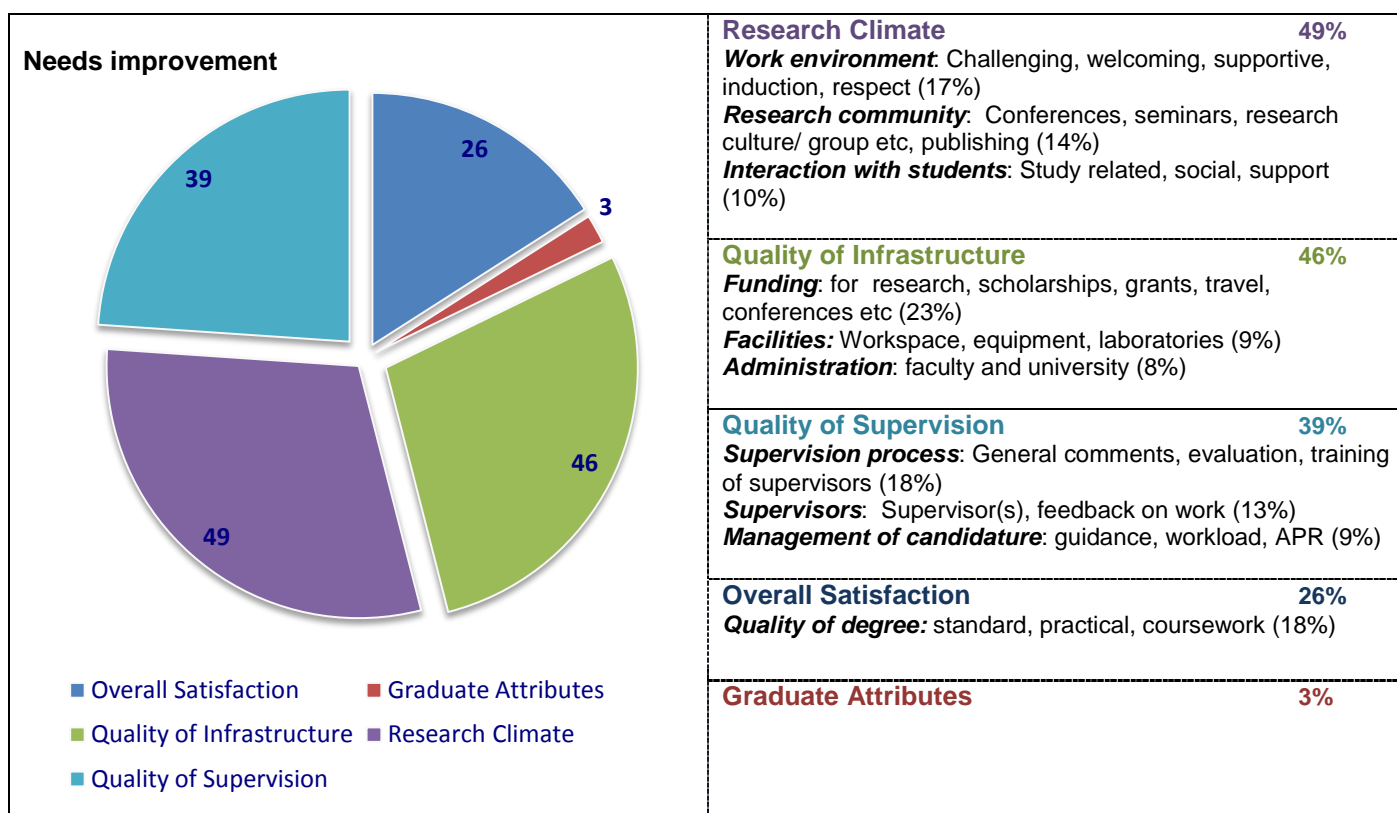
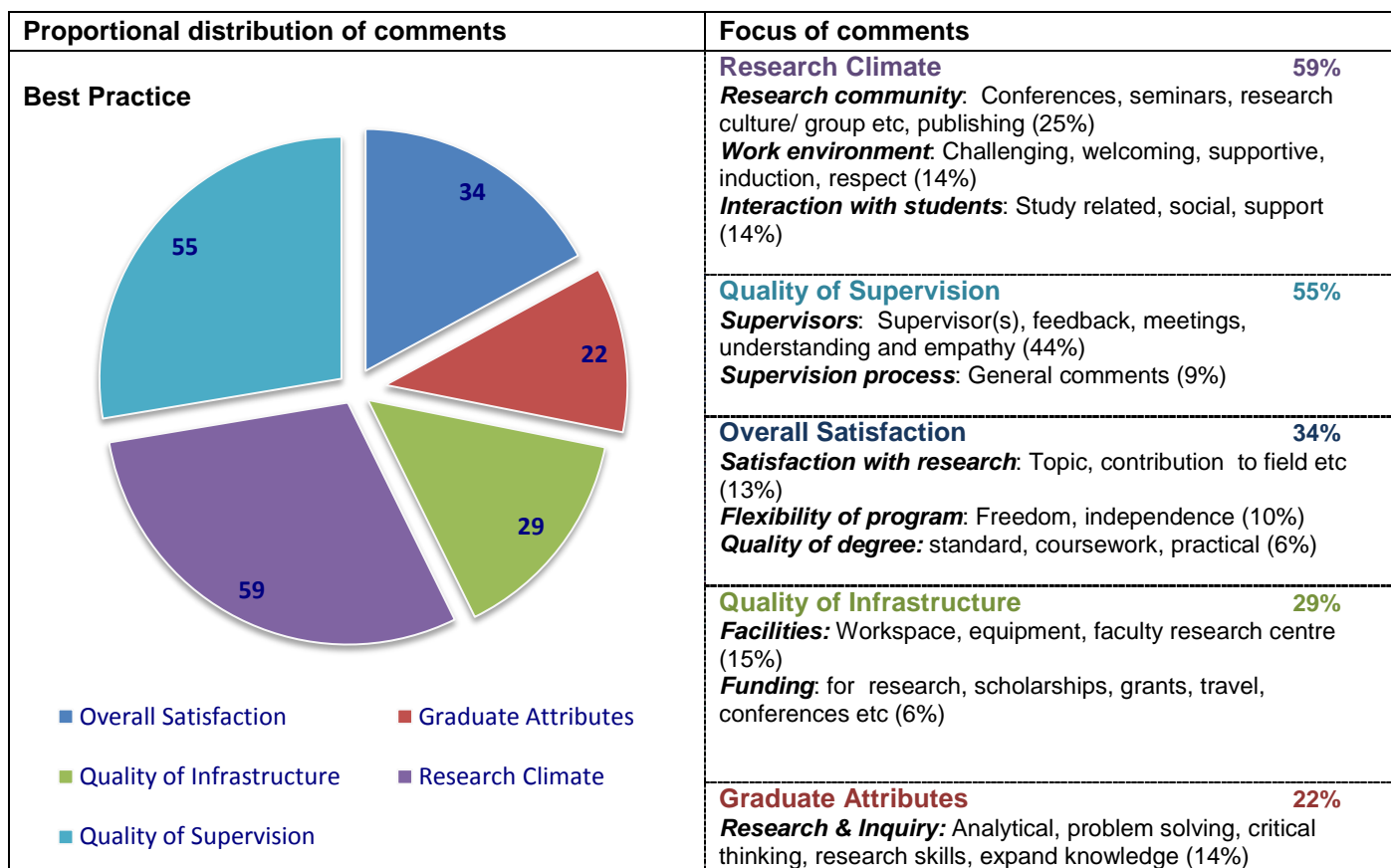


**Key issues: 2010**

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)



**NB:** 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.

## 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](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](mailto: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 Economics and Business between 2006 and 2010. The report also provides detailed information on the key issues highlighted in the analysis of the 2010 SREQ qualitative data: by whole of Faculty and by Department (as indicated in the SREQ Department fields<sup>2</sup>).

**NB:** *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. Therefore within the report, results are only recorded where the total for the faculty is over 5% of comments received. Similarly, Departmental results below 6% are not included within the report.*

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.

**Within each section**, departmental level data is divided into a) departments that remained with the School of Business on its formation in 2011, and b) departments that transferred to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

**NB:** *Applying the guidelines on reliability of statistical data used by ITL in the analysis of quantitative data, since the number of international respondents, from individual departments, who answered the open questions is below 5, results of the analysis are expressed for the whole cohort (domestic and international combined). Faculty results are provided for both domestic and international students.*

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<sup>2</sup> See Attachment One for a list of Departments and number of respondents per Department

## 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:
- 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:
- 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:
- 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 whole cohort (i.e. domestic and international combined; all respondents per degree) are considered significant enough to be included as key issues in the report.

# 1 QUALITY OF SUPERVISION

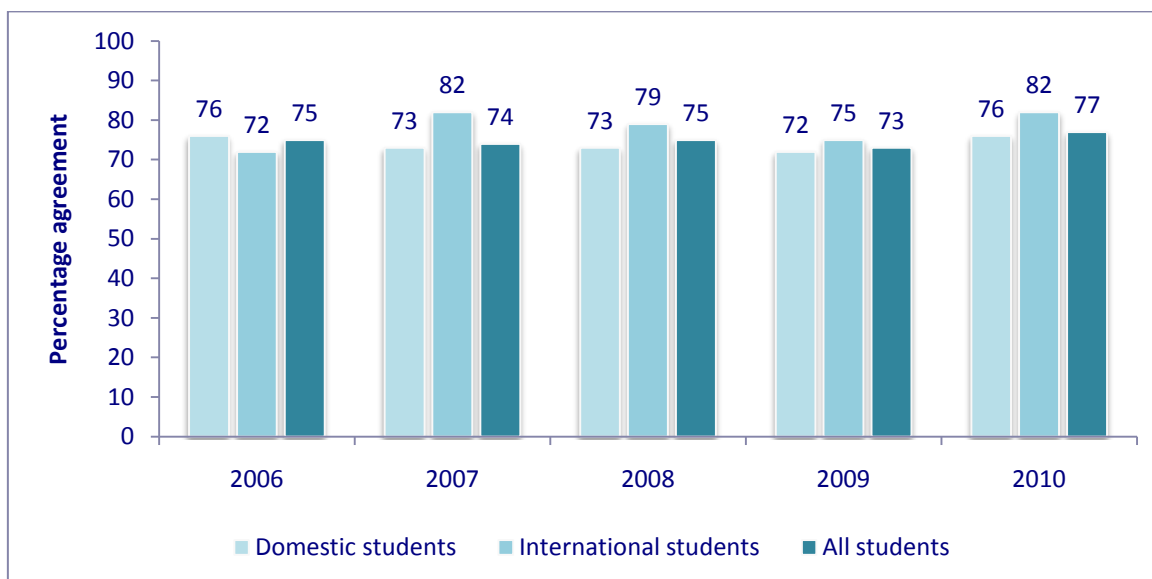
## 1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

<b>Quality of Supervision</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			79%
Finance			12%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			85%
Work and Organisational Studies			60%
Others Business			56%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			86%
Others Arts Social Sciences			36%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>55%</b>

<b>- Supervisor(s)</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			71%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			62%
Work and Organisational Studies			60%
Others Business			56%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			50%
Others Arts Social Sciences			21%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>44%</b>

<b>- Supervision process</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			7%
Finance			12%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			15%
Others Business			6%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			14%
Others Arts Social Sciences			14%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>

#### Sample comments

- I receive excellent feedback and comprehensive advice from my supervisors and this enables me to work independently for extended periods between, meetings which are infrequent because I live interstate
- Supervision is very good and the supervisor is very knowledgeable and knows how to teach each student
- The supervision and Mentoring from supervisor. Because supervisor allows to student to choose research areas as well as continuous guiding to a good conclusion
- My supervisors are very supportive and very reachable. We have regular meeting every week, and they gave me very useful feedback on my work
- My supervisor is helpful, encouraging, always available even though he is busy and never makes me feel like he doesn't have time regardless how petty the issue is, and most importantly always encouraging. These are the qualities that make my experience so good as a research student it can be difficult and you can often feel like it's an uphill struggle but with a great supervisor the task is not so daunting

### 1.4.2 Areas needing improvement

<b>Quality of Supervision</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			38%
Finance			64%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			8%
Work and Organisational Studies			46%
Others Business			31%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			38%
Others Arts Social Sciences			43%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>39%</b>

<b>- Supervision process</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			8%
Finance			36%
Work and Organisational Studies			8%
Others Business			23%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			25%
Others Arts Social Sciences			29%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>18%</b>

<b>- Supervisor(s)</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			15%
Finance			14%
Work and Organisational Studies			23%
Others Business			8%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			25%
Others Arts Social Sciences			7%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>13%</b>

<b>- Management of candidature</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			15%
Finance			14%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			8%
Work and Organisational Studies			15%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Others Arts Social Sciences			7%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>9%</b>

**Sample comments**

- My supervisor is not readily available. She gives little useful feedback. On occasion, has not read material provided. I rarely see my co-supervisor (not at all this year)
- Often all the paper work for the annual reviews are cumbersome and in some ways are too general and do not allow for minor issues to be discussed
- More support is required in letting students know about how the relationships between supervisor and student is very important. I have spoken to a few too many students who have had trouble with their supervisors, and are too afraid to do anything about it. Letting students know that it is common, how to manage supervision, and how they can change supervisors (and not be afraid of bureaucracy) at the beginning of their candidature will be very useful and makes them more efficient in completing their thesis in time. Also, perhaps identifying these problem earlier and helping the student will also make it a better experience for both schools and student
- I need to consult my supervisors when I need. This is not the case when my associated supervisor had half a year's sabbatical last year. My research progress was delayed due to this because I couldn't get sufficient guidance during this time. So I hope this kind of thing never happen again. When an academic is going to have a sabbatical, make the arrangement for supervision of PhD students in advance. Don't leave the potential gap
- My previous supervisor really bullied me by asking me to do some things unrelated (directly) to my research, blaming my writing in a bad possible way from day one, targeting my confidence and misbehaving (bossy attitude and behave me like I am a high school student). I didn't find such an approach from other faculty members of our department when I asked other PhD student. Finally I made my decision and asked PG coordinator to resolve my issue. Fortunately, our PG coordinator was very helpful and helped me to come back on the track. Now everything is fine and I am very happy with my supervisory arrangements. I think, university must ask the staff to behave their PhD students like peer research fellow and give them encouragement. What I received from my former supervisor was all discouragement. I did not need motivation, I just wanted to receive some encouragement. I never forgive my former supervisor. I think the university must set up some rules to avoid the supervisors from any discrimination act and bullying behaviour. Then perhaps few staffs that enjoys by misbehaving students correct themselves

## 2 QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

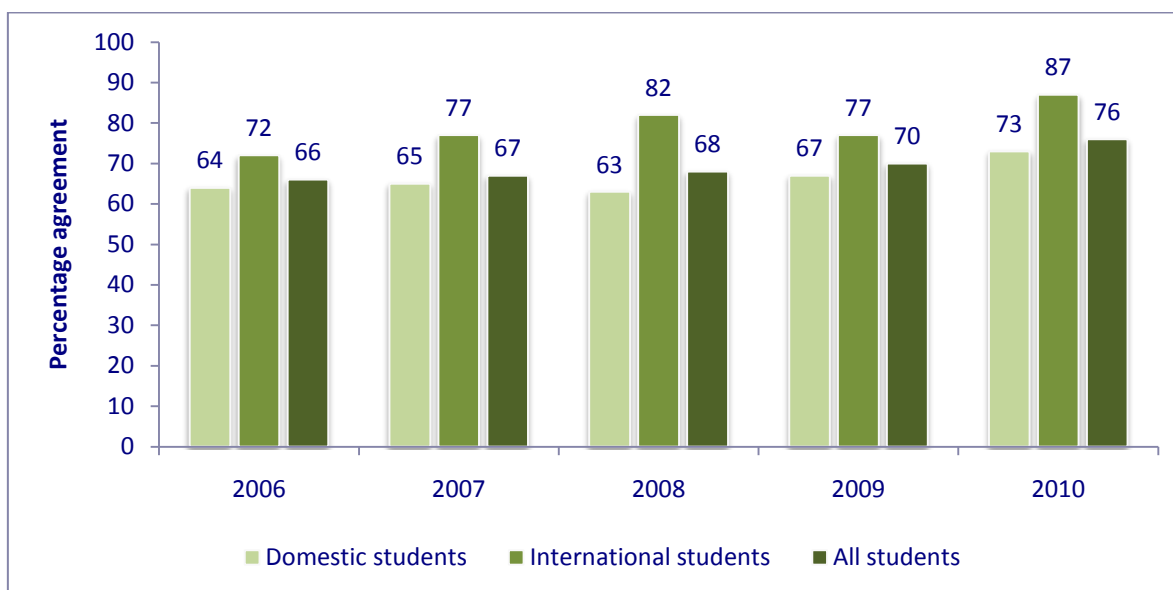
### 2.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

<b>Quality of Infrastructure</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>50%</b>
Finance			<b>24%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>15%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>13%</b>
Others Business			<b>38%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>14%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>43%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>29%</b>

<b>- Facilities</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>14%</b>
Finance			<b>18%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>8%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>7%</b>
Others Business			<b>13%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>14%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>21%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>15%</b>

<b>- Financial and funding</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>14%</b>
Finance			<b>6%</b>
Others Business			<b>13%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>

#### Sample comments

- great access to computers and the library, and they can get me books that I need that the library doesn't have, I get to meet people from other countries. also, we have a good funding for conferences (as a member of staff as well), and I am able to participate. the faculty is very supportive of my research
- Support to research with free access to databases, journals, software and seminars. The provision of a quiet , clean and organised work place for the PhD students. The availability of financial support for students to travel to conferences. When the faculty provides the facilities for the student's it gives more time for the student to concentrate on the research and make a good progress
- Having adequate resources for the research; ICT, academic and other; provided through the faculty and my scholarship
- IT Services in the Faculty of Economics and Business are fantastic, they reply promptly to inquiries and helped me access software necessary for my research
- The PhD Research Centre on level 2, H69 building, is excellent in regards to its facilities and promoting a supportive and collegial atmosphere for PhD students

## 2.4.2 Areas needing improvement

<b>Quality of Infrastructure</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>46%</b>
Finance			<b>36%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>83%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>46%</b>
Others Business			<b>54%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>13%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>36%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>46%</b>

- <b>Financial and funding</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>38%</b>
Finance			<b>14%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>25%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>23%</b>
Others Business			<b>23%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>13%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>21%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>23%</b>

- <b>Facilities</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>8%</b>
Finance			<b>14%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>17%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>8%</b>
Others Business			<b>8%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>7%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>9%</b>

- <b>Administration</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Finance			<b>7%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>25%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>8%</b>
Others Business			<b>8%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>7%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>8%</b>

### **Sample comments**

- What can be claimed as research funding can be very limiting. I have found, to date, that I am self-funding most of the outlays that are directly related to my PhD studies, much to my own financial detriment. This aspect significantly clouds my otherwise happy PhD experience thus far. For example, \* it seems unfair that students whose supervisors have recommended more tailored research methods units from another university have to 'foot' the HECS bill for these units. \* certain data analysis software, like NVivo, is readily made available to staff but not to PhD students (unlike at other universities, e.g. Macquarie University). Instead students are required to purchase the software and then claim this expenditure, thereby depleting the limited funding available to them. Further, NVivo training is not provided, and again needs to be personally organised (through an external training company) by the student and then claimed against their funding allocation. However, anecdotally there are several PhD students who are using this software, and it would be appreciated if centralised training could be organised for us. \* Aspects of conducting a pilot project, for example, providing remuneration for student participants (in order to encourage student response rate) are not claimable
- The administration at this university is below par, sometimes this can be quite frustrating
- Research funding schemes. Current scheme is unfair for students making big progress at the later stage of the research. Due to the characteristics of research and the time frame, students should be funded and rewarded for the contribution made during the RHD experience and should not be limited by the time frame
- My workspace (I am a staff member) does not allow me private quiet time to write and research. My office is shared and used by other staff members (not officially located in that room) and their casuals when they in fact have their own individual offices that could be used
- as a part time student I don't have a dedicated workspace, it impacts the interaction. I don't have specific work station

### 3 RESEARCH CLIMATE

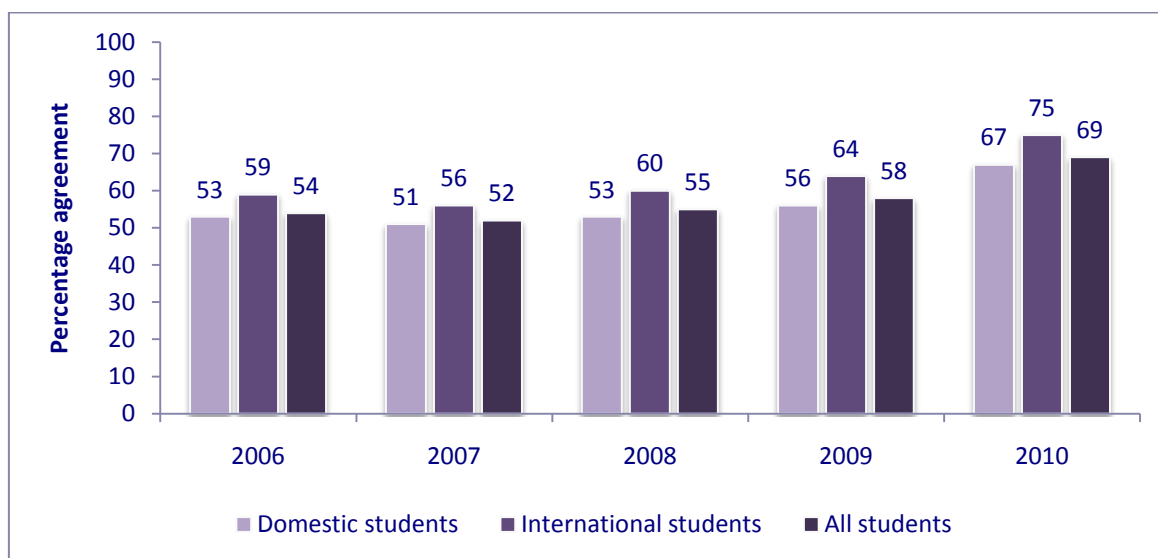
#### 3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

<b>Research Climate</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			50%
Finance			47%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			69%
Work and Organisational Studies			73%
Others Business			31%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			71%
Others Arts Social Sciences			86%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>59%</b>

- <b>Research community/ culture</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			21%
Finance			6%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			15%
Work and Organisational Studies			47%
Others Business			13%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			43%
Others Arts Social Sciences			43%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>25%</b>

- <b>Work environment</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			7%
Finance			6%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			31%
Work and Organisational Studies			20%
Others Business			6%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			14%
Others Arts Social Sciences			14%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>

- <b>Interaction with other research higher degree students</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			14%
Finance			12%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			23%
Work and Organisational Studies			7%
Others Business			13%

- <b>Interaction with other research higher degree students</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Economics			14%
Others Arts Social Sciences			14%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>14%</b>

### Sample comments

- Getting to know smart fellow research students. I learned a lot from discussing problems with them
- Regular contact with my supervisors and fellow research students (facilitated by sharing a research centre and common room) helps me enormously to stay on track; to bounce of ideas; to learn from what others are doing; and to stay motivated and confident
- The discipline provides a productive working environment. I have many opportunities to meet other academic staff and talk with other research students
- My fellow research students provide me with constant reinforcement that the university is full of good people doing fascinating work. I have gained special pleasure from helping to organise social events with them
- Having people I can discuss the research with and get constructive and supportive feedback

### 3.4.2 Areas needing improvement

<b>Research Climate</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			31%
Finance			36%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			58%
Work and Organisational Studies			54%
Others Business			46%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			38%
Others Arts Social Sciences			79%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>49%</b>

- <b>Work environment</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			15%
Finance			14%
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			25%
Work and Organisational Studies			15%
Others Business			15%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Others Arts Social Sciences			29%
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>17%</b>

- <b>Research community/ culture</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			15%
Work and Organisational Studies			8%
Others Business			23%
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			13%

- <b>Research community/ culture</b>	Domestic	International	All
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>36%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>

- <b>Interaction with other research higher degree students</b>	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Finance			<b>14%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>17%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>8%</b>
Others Business			<b>8%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>13%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>14%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>

### Sample comments

- PhD students are generally quite isolated. Even within the Faculty of Economics and Business, where facilities and space are good, students are separated from staff for the most part unless they are involved in teaching activities. This might be partially addressed by including PhD students within the disciplines and their running. At least then, students can feel as if they are a part of the discipline rather than sitting on the outside
- efforts to integrate students within disciplines (not just faculty) e.g. once a year meeting of all Finance students to discuss ideas (not present ideas) --> find out who else is working in a similar field
- More opportunities to meet with other students and researchers in my department under the guidance of the department. The opportunity to participate or present seminars on my research topic would also be good
- I don't live in Sydney, and the isolation of doing a PhD has been absolutely crushing. I have had major and prolonged periods of depression because of this. There should be someone in the faculty who can provide some counselling or pastoral care for students. Online support groups for students should also be set up
- I would like to have more interaction with students from other disciplines. Our building is isolated from the rest of the university

## 4 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

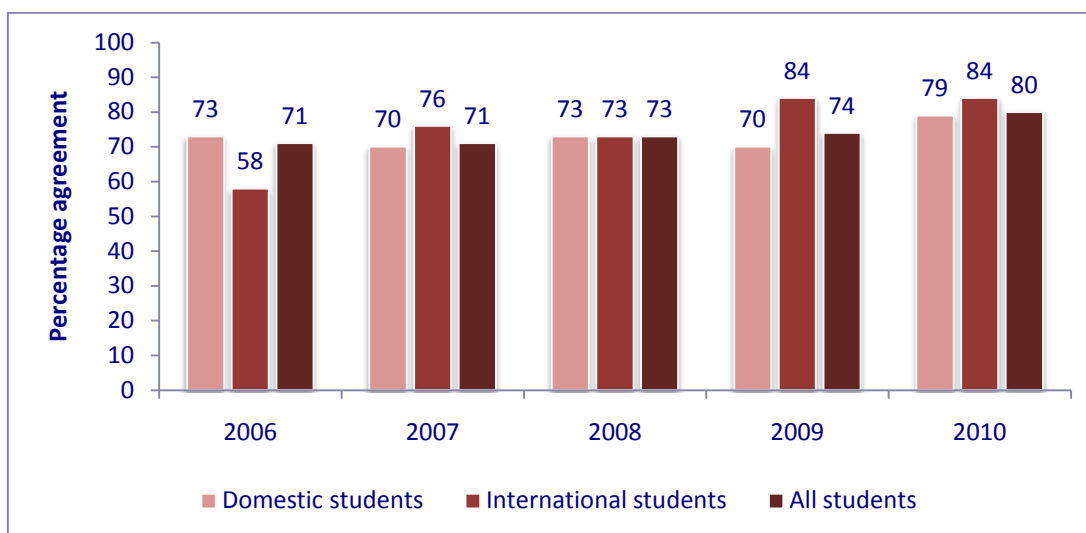
### 4.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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.

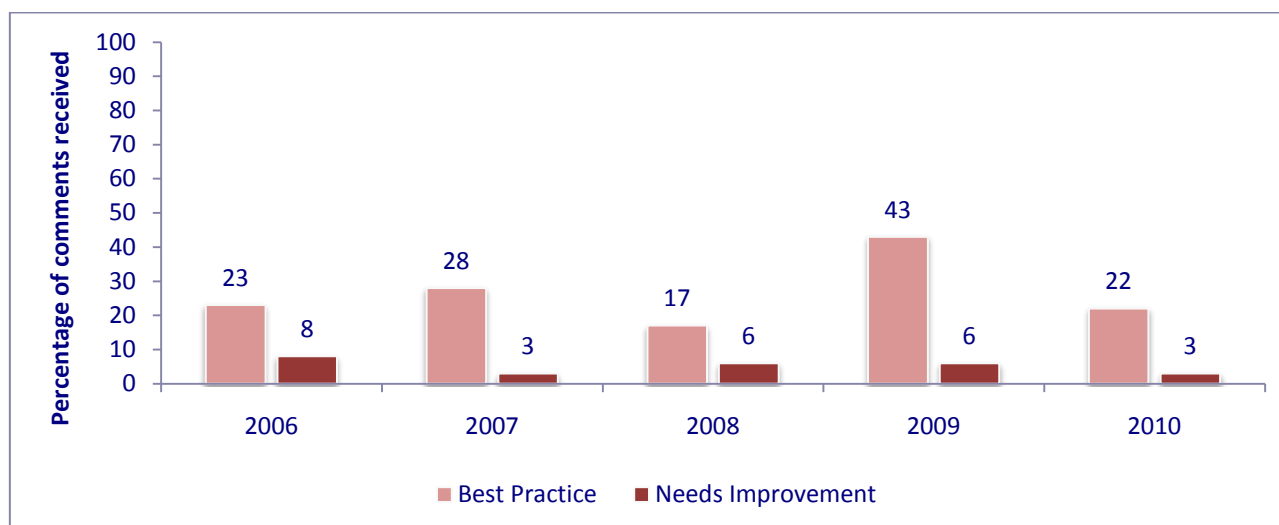
Figure 10: Generic Skills: Percentage agreement results: SREQ 2006 - 2010



### 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

<b>Graduate Attributes</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>21%</b>
Finance			<b>12%</b>
Others Business			<b>50%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>57%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>29%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>22%</b>

- <b>Research and inquiry</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>7%</b>
Finance			<b>12%</b>
Others Business			<b>31%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>43%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>14%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>14%</b>

##### Sample comments

- learn the method of researching, qualitative methods improvement of writing
- Learn more analytical skills. these are important for my future research career
- Learning how to make you own work as an academic. I think since you have the chance to create new things it will be a very good opportunity and a positive aspect of a research
- Improving my analytical, writing and oral skills as well as networking
- Help me improve my analytic skills and broaden my academic perspective. It's important because self-improvement and contribution to human beings are essential

##### 4.4.2 Areas needing improvement

<b>Graduate Attributes</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>15%</b>
Others Business			<b>8%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>

##### Sample comments

- we also need more formal training in software
- Further, NVivo training is not provided. However, anecdotally there are several PhD students who are using this software, and it would be appreciated if centralised training could be organised for us

## 5 OVERALL SATISFACTION

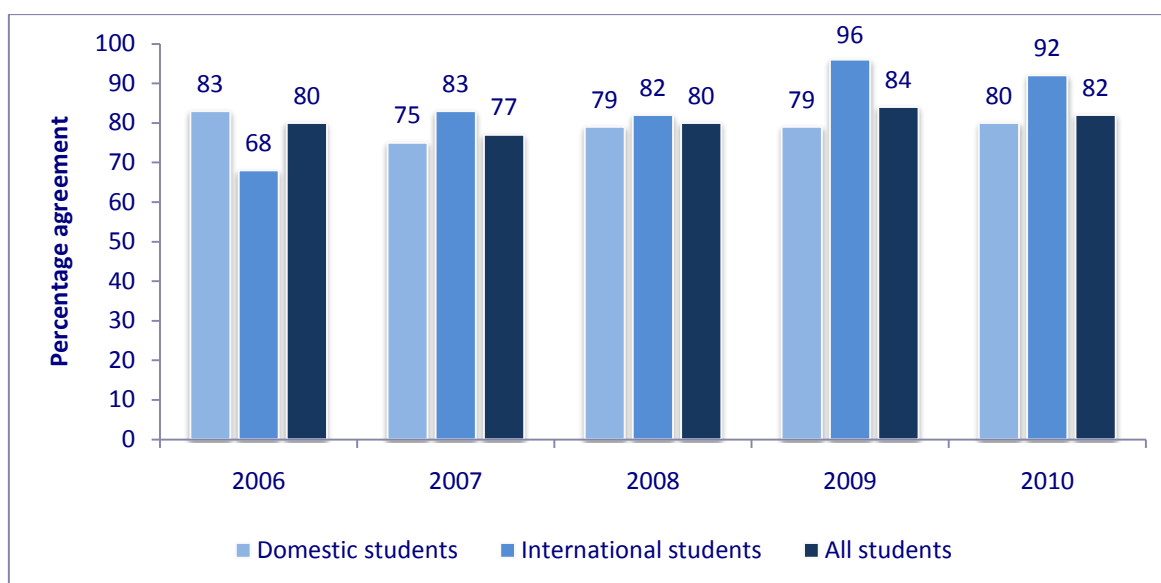
### 5.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>36%</b>
Finance			<b>24%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>23%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>53%</b>
Others Business			<b>31%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>29%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>43%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>34%</b>

- <b>Satisfaction with research</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>14%</b>
Finance			<b>6%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>8%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>13%</b>
Others Business			<b>19%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>21%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>

- <b>Flexibility of programme</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>21%</b>
Finance			<b>6%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>8%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>20%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>14%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>

- <b>Quality of degree</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Finance			<b>12%</b>
Others Business			<b>6%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>29%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>7%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>

**Sample comments**

- The personal satisfaction that my research will help 'roll back the frontiers' in chosen area of my topic. To date my hopes have been met - but strong personal push is now required to reach completion
- Doing some post graduate courses that enhance my general knowledge in the field
- My research is very industry relevant and will be instrumental in securing me a high level, high paying, high flying career
- The compulsory research methods units are a great addition to the PhD program, I know these will be vital in helping me compete in the highly competitive international academic market
- Autonomy of being able to conduct research in what I am passionate about and the supportive and conducive environment in the faculty. The relaxed lifestyle is a plus

**5.4.2 Areas needing improvement**

<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>38%</b>
Finance			<b>21%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>17%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>8%</b>
Others Business			<b>31%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>13%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>50%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>

- <b>Quality of degree</b>	Domestic	International	<b>All</b>
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting			<b>23%</b>
Finance			<b>7%</b>
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies			<b>17%</b>
Work and Organisational Studies			<b>8%</b>
Others Business			<b>31%</b>
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics			<b>13%</b>
Others Arts Social Sciences			<b>29%</b>
<b>Whole of Faculty</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>

**Sample comments**

- I think you have to look at the compulsory courses that students have to do, and really align them with what is really necessary. I did a lot of them last year and they seemed quite trivial
- It (CMCRC) does not provide for flexibility in topic choice
- Offer courses to help students to transform their work into publications and offer some financial assistance to pay the journals' submission fees
- During enrolment, subject choice matter. It may be better if there is a clear guidance to the alternative course I can take. For example, ECOF course can be changed by TPTM course for ITLS student. Previously I did not know that
- The coursework is most in need of improvement. Though the lecturers are fantastic, doing the work with people from so many diverse disciplines means that it is hard to find common ground or material that is useful to everyone in the class

## ATTACHMENT ONE: STATISTICAL DATA

### 1 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

<b>Number of research higher degree students surveyed/ enrolled 2006 – 2010</b>					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Total	196	205	193	192	182

<b>Number of respondents to the SREQ 2006 – 2010</b>					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	92	82	85	74	100
International students	19	18	29	24	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>125</b>
<i>% who responded</i>	57%	49%	59%	51%	69%

### 2 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

#### 2.1 Faculty level: 2006 - 2010

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 Health Sciences.

<b>Number of respondents who answered the open questions SREQ 2006 – 2010</b>						
	<i>Date of survey</i>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
<i>Areas of best practice</i>	Domestic students	68	69	61	53	76
	International students	14	14	22	19	20
	Total	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>96</b>
	<i>% who provided comments</i>	74%	83%	73%	73%	77%

<i>Areas of improvement</i>	Domestic students	68	65	66	52	69
	International students	15	13	20	17	18
	Total	<b>83</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>87</b>
	<i>% who provided comments</i>	65%	78%	75%	70%	70%

#### 2.2 Departmental level: 2010

The analysis of the qualitative data is based on responses to the open questions received from respondents to the SREQ from each Department<sup>3</sup> within the Faculty of Economics and Business.

The tables on the following pages show the distribution of comments received from research higher degree students who provided written observations in the SREQ. Where the number of comments received from any one Department is 6 or below for either areas of best practice or areas in need of improvement, the totals are combined to form the groups "Others Business" and "Others Arts Social Sciences" as indicated.

The tables should be read in conjunction with Note 3: Reliability of qualitative data.

<sup>3</sup> This information was provided by the ITL with the SREQ qualitative data and is taken from FlexSs. It refers to the Department in which the student is enrolled.

### 2.2.1 Areas of best practice

Department/ Institute	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting	14	0	14
Finance	13	4	17
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies	8	5	13
Work and Organisational Studies	14	1	15
Others Business	10	4	14
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics	6	1	7
Others Arts Social Sciences	11	5	16
<b>Total Faculty</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>96</b>

### 2.2.1 Areas needing improvement

Department/ Institute	Domestic	International	All
<u>School of Business departments</u>			
Accounting	13	0	13
Finance	10	4	14
Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies	8	4	12
Work and Organisational Studies	12	1	13
Others Business	10	4	14
<u>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences depts</u>			
Economics	7	1	8
Others Arts Social Sciences	9	4	13
<b>Total Faculty</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>87</b>

#### Departments included in "Others"

##### Others Business

Business Law

International Business

Marketing

Operations Management and Econometrics

##### Others Arts Social Sciences

Centre for International Security Studies

Government and International Relations

Graduate School of Government

Political Economy

### 3 RELIABILITY OF 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.

*NB: In all departments, the number of international students who responded to the open questions is less than 5, or close to 5. Therefore results for all departments are reported for the whole cohort (domestic and international combined)*

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 Research Climate (Research Community: Seminars; Interaction with other students: Support from peers); Quality of Infrastructure (Facilities: Faculty provided research centre) and Supervision (Supervisor(s): Supervisor; Availability and frequency of meetings; Feedback on work; Understanding and Empathy), as indicated in the highlighted column, each of the aspects mentioned is counted ONCE i.e. 7 aspects in one comment

#### Quality of Supervision:

- Supervisor(s)
  - Supervisor
  - Availability and frequency of meetings
  - Feedback on work
  - Understanding and empathy

Having supportive supervisors who make time to listen and provide advice is crucial to my happy experience so far. The PhD Research Centre on level 2, H69 building, is excellent in regards to its facilities and promoting a supportive and collegial atmosphere for PhD students. Notification (via the university student email account) and encouragement to attend a variety of research seminars throughout the Faculty and University are appreciated and help me identify with the wider USyd research community

#### Quality of Infrastructure:

- Facilities
  - Faculty provided research centre

#### Research Climate:

- Research community
  - Seminars
- Interaction with other students
  - Support from peers

## ATTACHMENT TWO: 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; external facilities; 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 6 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; networking/ collaborating; participation in conferences; web/video conferencing; 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 (*location of institute etc; location of student where this affects experience e.g. interstate; physical structure of buildings e.g. state of repair*)
- Career preparation (*academic or research (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