

Sydney Conservatorium of Music

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.

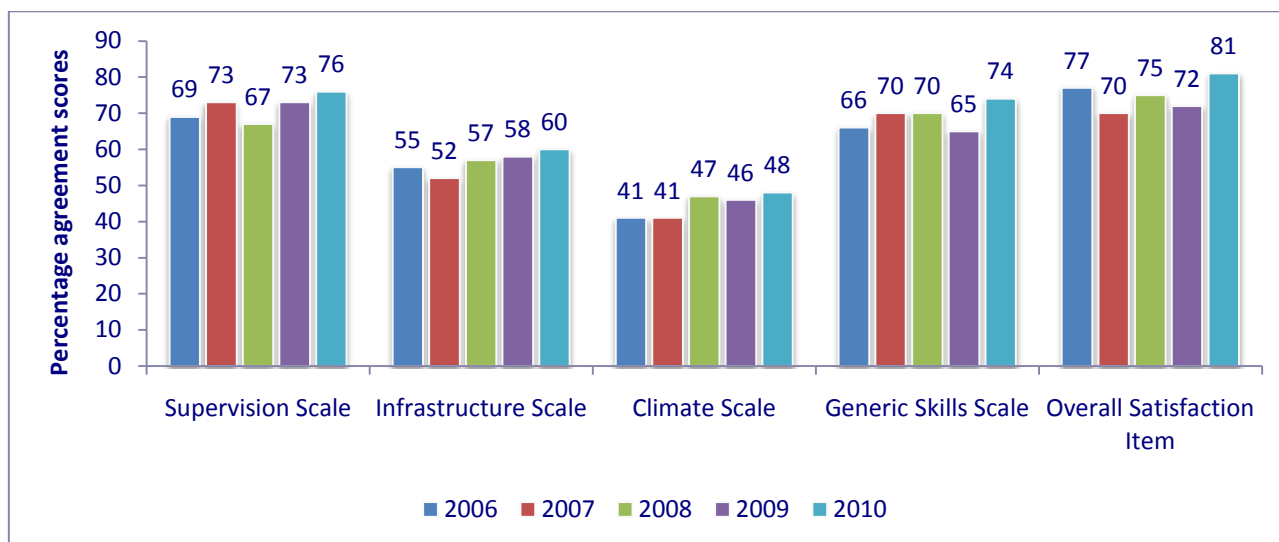
The analysis of qualitative data received between 2006 and 2010, and reported in this document, is based on written observations received from **all** respondents who answered the open questions in the SREQ. Results of the analysis of the 2010 data is further divided into Academic Studies (Conserv.) and Conservatorium of Music (as indicated in the SREQ Department field).

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 Sydney Conservatorium of Music since 2006.

Figure 1: Sydney Conservatorium of Music: 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 86% of respondents provided responses

¹ More detailed data, i.e. comparing the results by area of study, 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.

to the open question on areas of best practice; and 72% on areas in need of improvement, thereby indicating a high level of engagement in the process. (See Attachment One)

Figure 2: Sydney Conservatorium of Music: Areas of best practice: SREQ 2006 - 2010

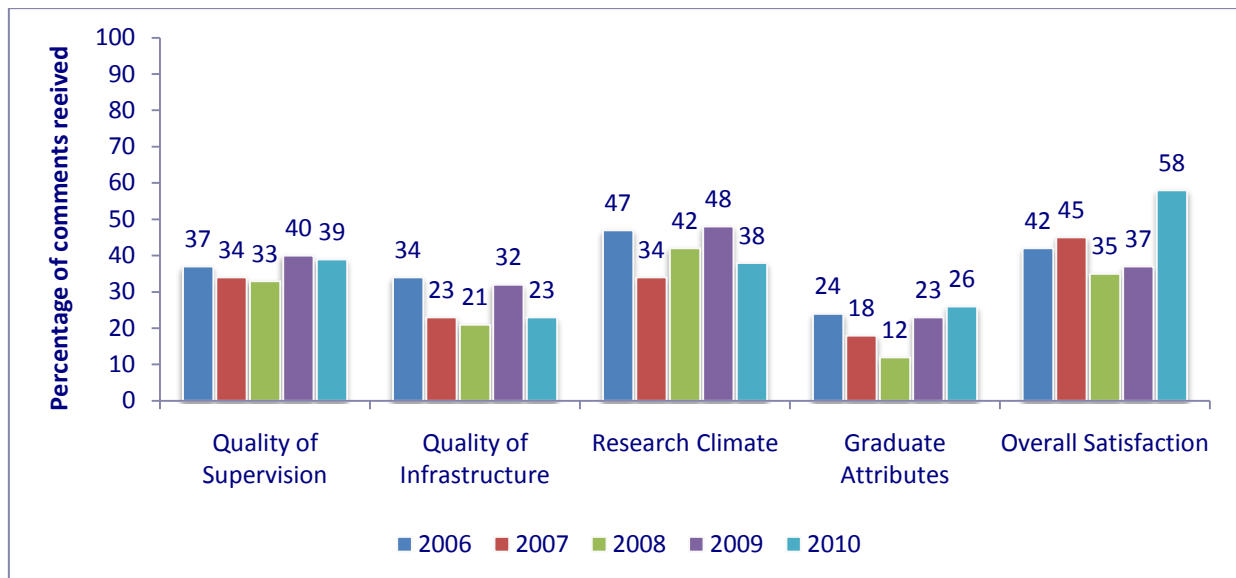
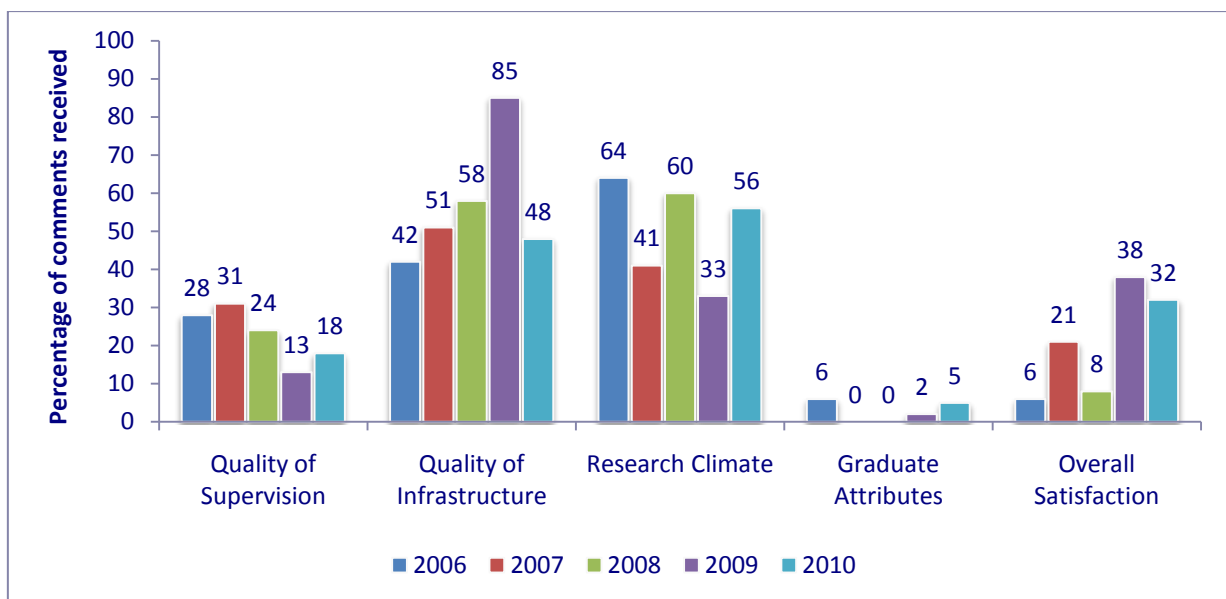


Figure 3: Sydney Conservatorium of Music: Areas needing improvement: SREQ 2006 - 2010

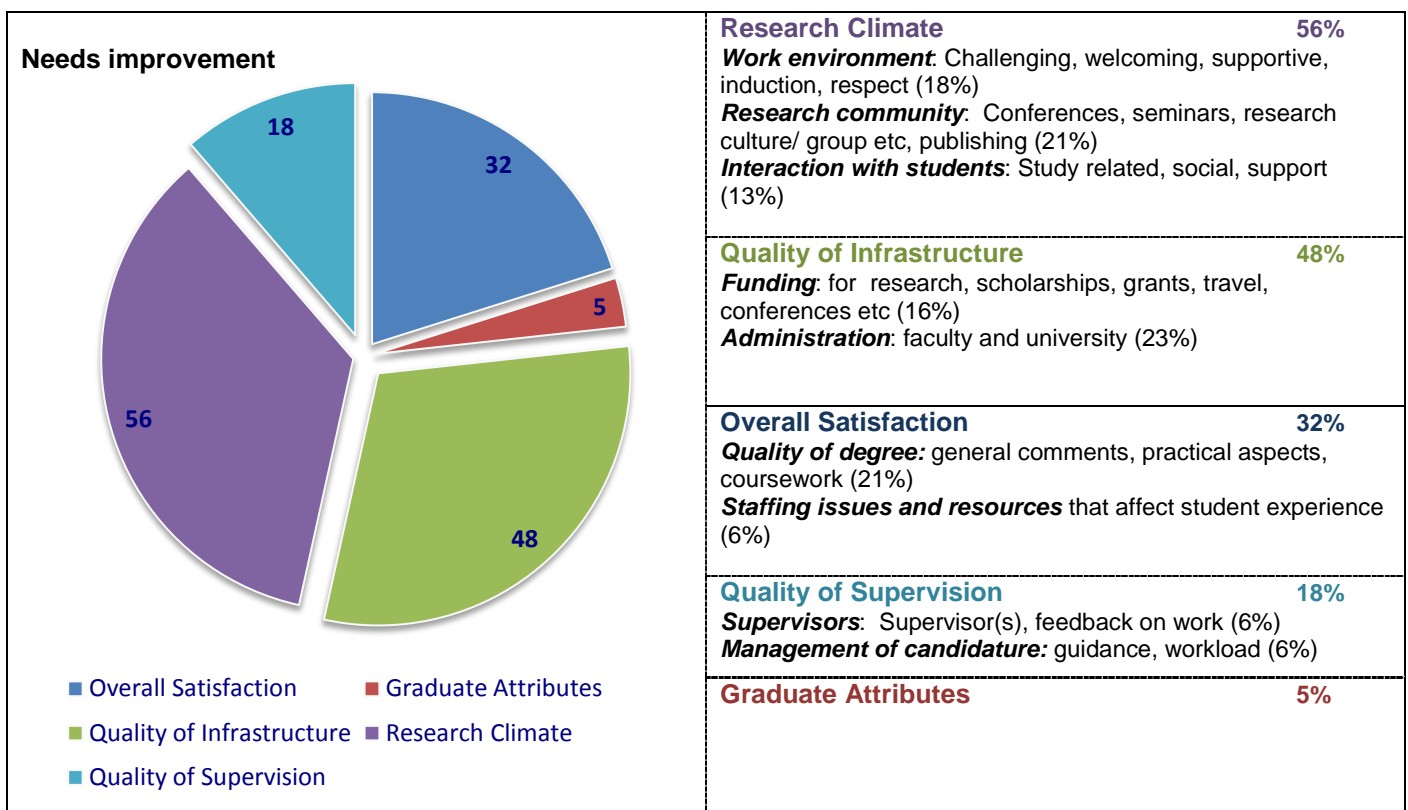
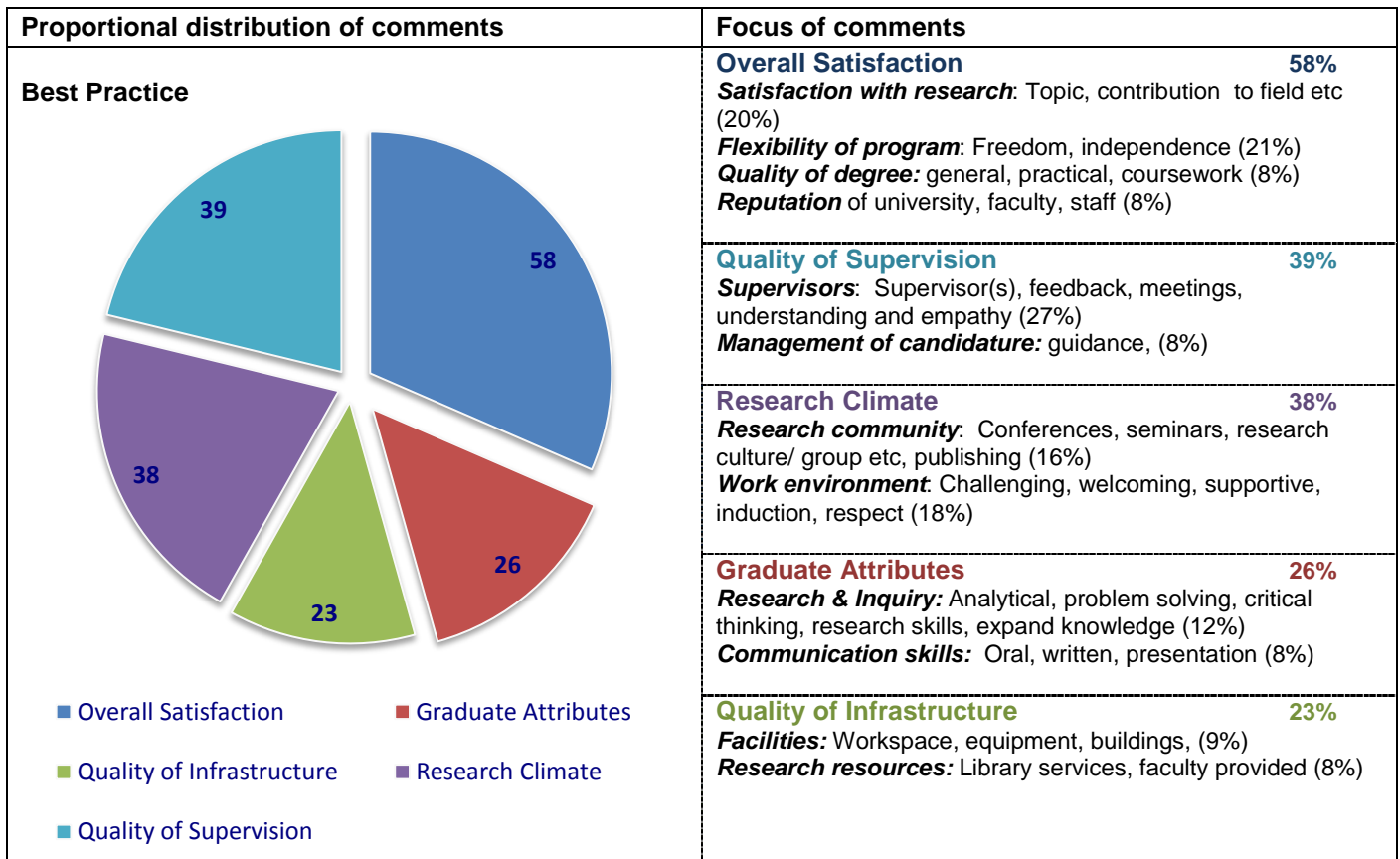


Key issues: 2010

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 Sydney Conservatorium of Music 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 Faculty and by Department (Academic Studies (Conserv.) and Conservatorium of Music)

NB: Applying the guidelines on reliability of statistical data used by ITL in the analysis of quantitative data, since the number of international respondents to the 2006-2010 SREQ is between 3 and 7, and therefore either unreliable or in the lower end of data to be interpreted with caution, results of the analysis are expressed for the whole faculty (domestic and international combined). (See Attachment Two for statistical information)

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 learning and teaching 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.

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

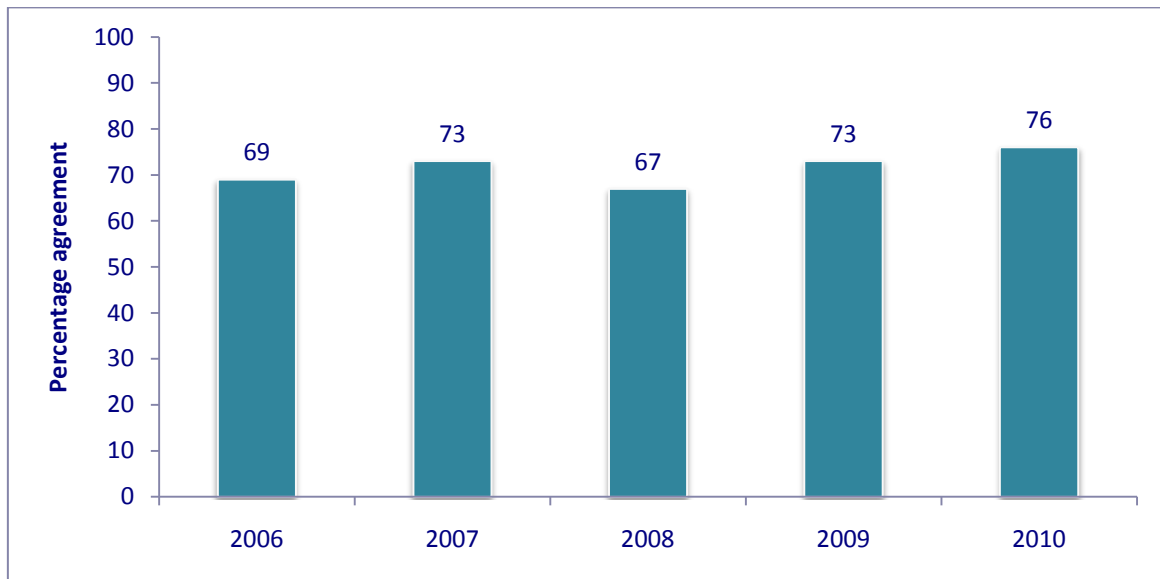
1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 206 - 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

Quality of Supervision	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	36%
Conservatorium of Music	40%
Faculty	39%
- Supervisor(s)	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	21%
Conservatorium of Music	28%
Faculty	27%
- Management of candidature	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	7%
Conservatorium of Music	8%
Faculty	8%

Sample comments

- The quality of supervision has been outstanding and clear guidance has been given throughout the ethics approval process
- Support from supervisor - guidance when asked for, and when needed, trust that I am being supported
- My supervisor. She is incredible and has made my experience so enthusiastic, fun and interesting. I feel very lucky compared to many people I know
- My supervisor is also great, with lots of expertise

1.4.2 Areas needing improvement

Quality of Supervision	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	22%
Conservatorium of Music	33%
Faculty	24%
- Supervisor(s)	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	10%
Conservatorium of Music	6%
Faculty	6%
- Management of candidature	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	10%
Conservatorium of Music	6%
Faculty	6%

Sample comments

- I kind of would like, even though the supervision is good I think it'd be great to have more of it, there's not a lot face to face time. Yeah more face to face time
- I desperately need regular meetings and feedback from my supervisor. So far in 2010 I have only had 5 supervisor sessions as my supervisor is so busy
- More active role of supervisor
- Consistency of supervision over candidature. Too many changes, in-fighting reliability. Research centres axed during time. Changes of venue. Changes of supervision

2 QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

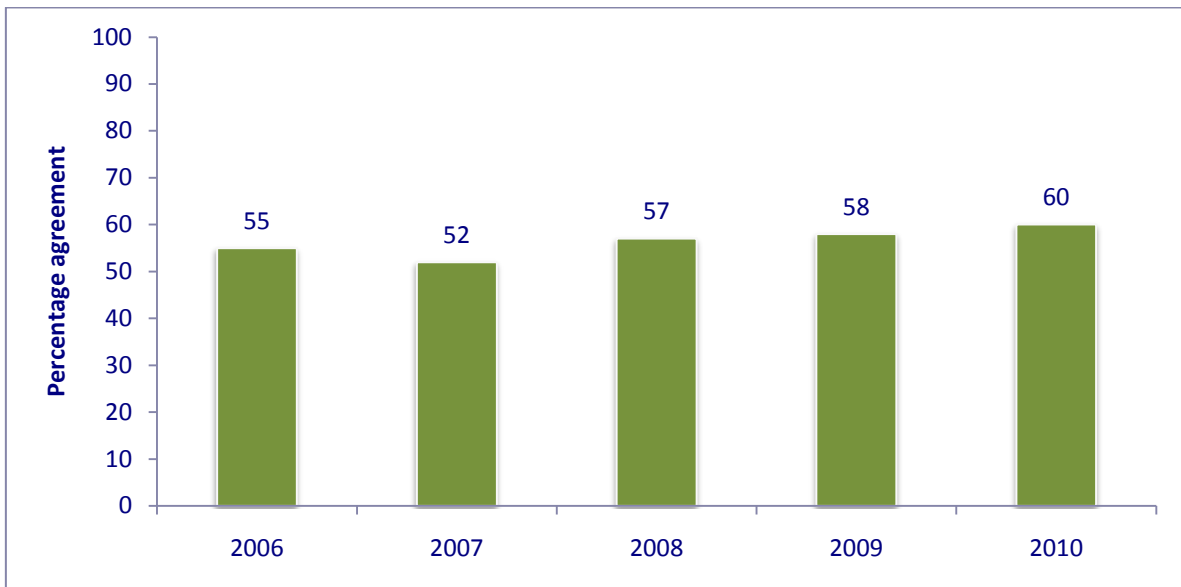
2.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 – 2009 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

Quality of Infrastructure	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	21%
Conservatorium of Music	23%
Faculty	23%
- Research resources	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	14%
Conservatorium of Music	7%
Faculty	8%
- Facilities	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	7%
Conservatorium of Music	10%
Faculty	9%

Sample comments

- Library at the con. Friendly helpful staff and great facilities
- with regards to my particular course, I'm looking into areas of performance practice. I think the facilities and the instruments available for me are best
- funding to travel for research and to present at conferences, good library and internet resources (NB I live in regional NSW, not Sydney, so these are especially important)
- Access to computer facilities

2.4.2 Areas needing improvement

Quality of Infrastructure	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	40%
Conservatorium of Music	50%
Faculty	48%
- Administration	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	20%
Conservatorium of Music	23%
Faculty	23%
- Funding	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	10%
Conservatorium of Music	17%
Faculty	16%

Sample comments

- Furthermore, I've heard that photocopying of important journal articles or other relevant documents is supposedly freely available to PhD students, but I've never found that to be the case
- The student administration at the Conservatorium is a bit third-world. Important deadlines are never advertised, things are not done and blame is usually shifted elsewhere
- Maybe, access to more resources for students. Yeah I mean I actually live a fair distance away so I don't come in that much, so maybe there's more available I don't know about. Other than that I've been pretty happy, possibly some more grants for research travel and that sort of thing
- Space provided for HDR students

3 RESEARCH CLIMATE

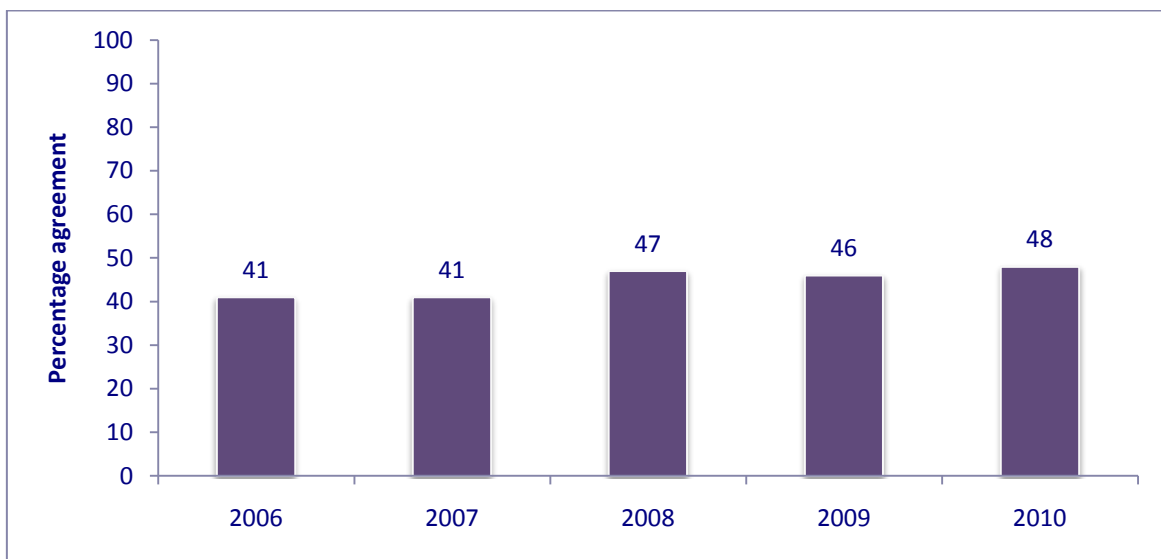
3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

Research Climate	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	71%
Conservatorium of Music	30%
Faculty	38%
- Research community/ culture	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	29%
Conservatorium of Music	13%
Faculty	16%
- Work environment	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	43%
Conservatorium of Music	12%
Faculty	18%

Sample comments

- The opportunity to be inspired by other student's research and ideas, to network and discover the breadth of talent and skill which is gathered in the faculty - both students and teachers
- the support for my research, for future international projects has been really positive and the foreign universities embracing my research has been exciting too, that's been quite motivating. and the general level of support from all areas of the con has been great
- I think it's good that we have a support network of people who are all contributing actively to the field, and that these people are generally always available for consultation
- The professor are top! So far I've only good things to say about them. Every time I've had an issue I'd like to discuss they were supportive and always offered some solutions

3.4.2 Areas needing improvement

Research Climate	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	20%
Conservatorium of Music	63%
Faculty	56%
- Work environment	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	0%
Conservatorium of Music	21%
Faculty	18%
- Research community/ culture	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	10%
Conservatorium of Music	23%
Faculty	21%
- Interaction with other research higher degree students	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	10%
Conservatorium of Music	13%
Faculty	13%

Sample comments

- I still think that the conservatorium being out of the main campus is a bad thing. there's no communication with other faculties and departments and it seems as if there's no multidisciplinary research being done. For example, the Con has at least two opera productions each year and there's no student from the art departments involved such as scenography, lighting, costumes or dressing or theatre direction
- More of a sense of community for research students, opportunities for presenting research direction in a group session. Fortnightly or even monthly meetings of composition research students could foster an exchange of ideas between students... the possibility for students to work together on projects could also help alleviate the sense of isolation felt by some. More information sent to composition research students regarding conferences, performances and workshops, locally and internationally
- I think it would need more hands on and face to face support to research students instead of done by WebCT and internet. I mean there's that with some of the classes but if I didn't take that I wouldn't know what to do, and I had to find out my supervisor myself and some of my friends still haven't found theirs. More face to face communication is needed, like an orientation kind of class for research students
- I think they need to think about scheduling outside of full time working hours, 99% of the desk lectures and seminars are between nine and five and some of us work full time

4 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

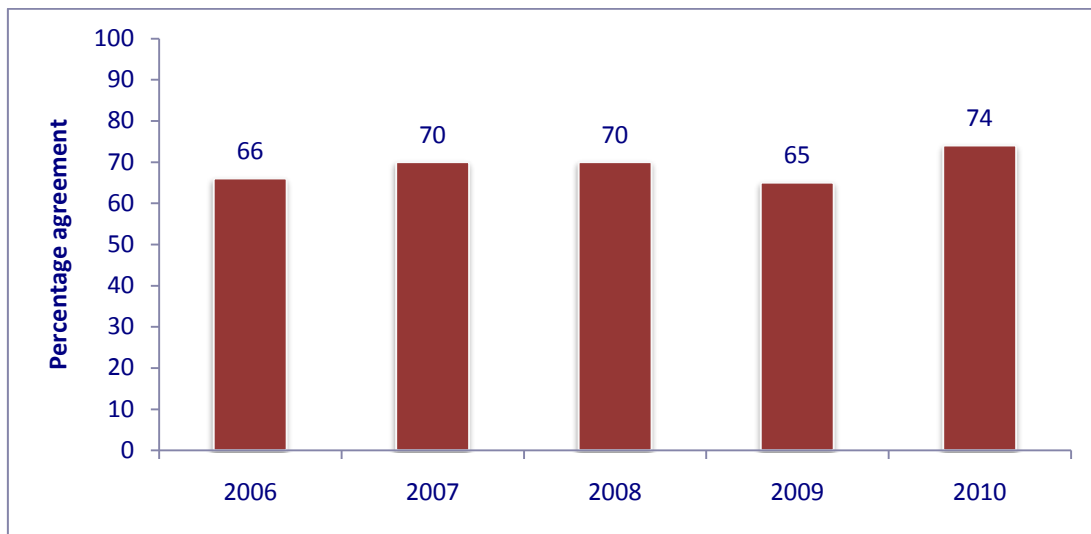
4.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

Graduate Attributes	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	29%
Conservatorium of Music	25%
Faculty	26%
- Research and Inquiry	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	7%
Conservatorium of Music	13%
Faculty	12%
- Communication Skills	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	14%
Conservatorium of Music	7%
Faculty	8%

Sample comments

- The best aspects, I suppose developing a writing style, a particular one which is precise and... yes it's the whole aspect of standard of enquiry, that has been very beneficial, is to find out about how to achieve that. The learning of the academic style has been valuable, ideas, and the presentation of papers has been very valuable, a test of patience with all the detail too, I guess that's beneficial although sometimes you wonder
- Well I suppose first of all I need to go out and look for appropriate literature and material and then, as well computer skills and using things like endnote and PowerPoint which I must say before as an undergrad student we never had anything like that, and writing in different styles, yes
- Firstly I've learned how to research, I didn't know that before. I think I just developed the ability to think more critically and asked a lot more critically
- I guess the analytical thinking, and yeah overall I guess enhance my verbal and writing and communication skills in writing, yeah

4.4.2 Areas needing improvement

Graduate Attributes	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	0%
Conservatorium of Music	6%
Faculty	5%

Sample comments

- I really have to master some computer programs. I already know quite a few programs, but need to get better at Endnote(seems so easy, but when I do it I seem to bungle it). Also I know Finale music program but want to use Sibelius Music program as it seems better. Have to improve at Sibelius which I don't think will be hard for me. I also need to feel more confident and not be self-conscious about being older. Learning is a life-long experience and I have as much right to develop my brain and talent as the younger ones. Hard not to feel like grandma sometimes, though when surrounded by beautiful young smart students
- I am not confident enough to organise my day in an ideally balanced structure. But I am confident that I will get there

5 OVERALL SATISFACTION

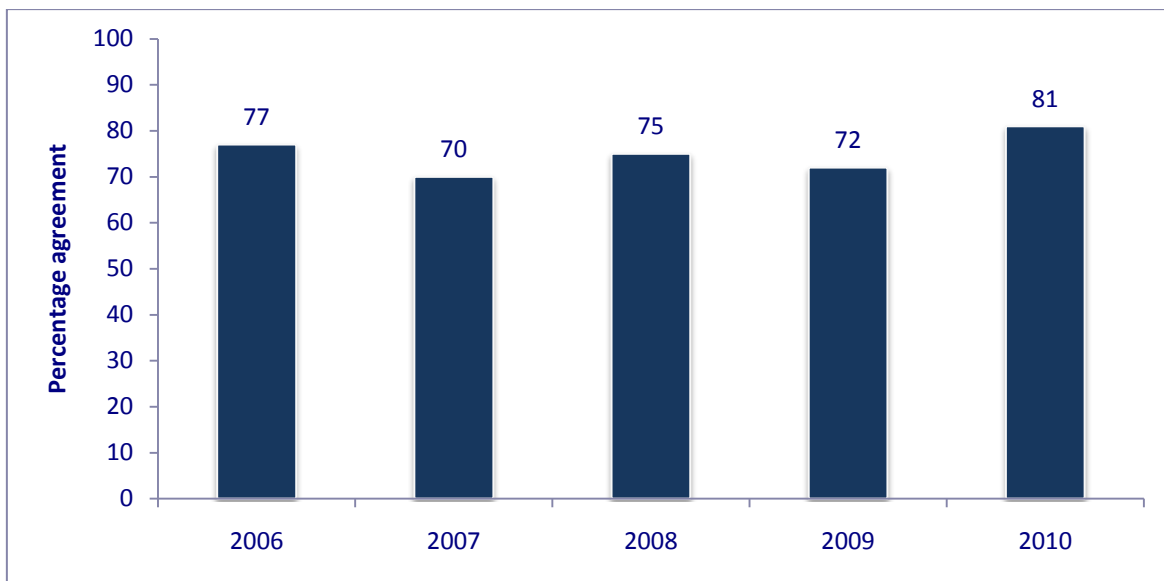
5.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

Overall Satisfaction	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	57%
Conservatorium of Music	58%
Faculty	58%
- Satisfaction with research	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	29%
Conservatorium of Music	18%
Faculty	20%
- Flexibility of programme	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	7%
Conservatorium of Music	22%
Faculty	19%
- Quality of degree	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	0%
Conservatorium of Music	10%
Faculty	8%
- Reputation of University, Faculty, staff	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	14%
Conservatorium of Music	7%
Faculty	8%

Sample comments

- Allowing me the opportunity to research and develop upon ideas that I would otherwise be unable to pursue
- Students are given considerable freedom to develop and research their topic in their own manner. This independence is very important I think
- Best aspect is the incorporation of a portfolio of works together with a thesis. This allows me to continue and build on a professional network and practical career next to the academic research
- The conservatorium offers highly skilled mentors and practitioners in a stimulating environment. The presence of professional engaged in music practice gives students an important understanding of how things work

5.4.2 Areas needing improvement

Overall Satisfaction	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	50%
Conservatorium of Music	29%
Faculty	32%
- Quality of degree	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	10%
Conservatorium of Music	23%
Faculty	21%

- Staffing issues and resources	
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	20%
Conservatorium of Music	4%
Faculty	6%

Sample comments

- Well communicating to students exact requirements of course structures, that if there are year to year updates of course protocols that students are informed. And if there's more of a consensus among all boards to decide course structures, having a clear consensus of how each course works
- I think they probably need a broader understating of what students are currently interested in in terms of research areas and sort of contemporary though. I think the there needs to be more flexibility in subject choices, more subjects available. I know all the reasons why they're not, that's just pie in the sky.
- At the moment within the portfolio section of the PhD in music composition, performances and recordings of all works are required. I think this may not always be realistic and some consideration should be given to the idea that a portfolio may contain one or two works not yet performed, but where a professional performance has been scheduled for a time, outside the framework of the study period. This is because as a student one does not have complete control over the planning of external professional bodies. This is a quite specific comment and not really applicable to the PhD research programme in general, which I find to be excellent
- The distinction between instrumental lesson and supervisor. Thesis work is hard to make when the supervisor is also instrumental teacher

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	88	117	123	143	137

Number of respondents to the SREQ 2006 – 2010					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	41	45	65	65	79
International students	3	3	3	4	7
Total	44	48	68	69	86
<i>% who responded</i>	50%	41%	55%	48%	63%

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 Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

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	36	42	55	57	68
	International students	2	2	2	3	6
	Total	38	44	57	60	74
	<i>% who provided comments</i>	86%	92%	84%	87%	86%

<i>Areas of improvement</i>	Domestic students	34	37	49	47	56
	International students	2	2	1	1	6
	Total	36	39	50	48	62
	<i>% who provided comments</i>	82%	81%	74%	70%	72%

2.2 Department level: 2010

The analysis of the qualitative data is based on responses to the open questions received from respondents to the SREQ from each Department² within the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

The tables on the following pages show the distribution of comments received from research higher degree students who provided written observations in the SREQ.

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

² This information was provided by the ITL with the SREQ qualitative data and is taken from FlexSis. It refers to the Department in which the student is enrolled.

2.2.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic	International	All
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	14	0	14
Conservatorium of Music	54	6	74

2.2.2 Areas needing improvement

	Domestic	International	All
Academic Studies (Conserv.)	10	0	10
Conservatorium of Music	46	6	62

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:

Quantitative and qualitative data

Where the number of respondents is less than 5, results are excluded from the report as they are likely to be unreliable. In 2006-2009 written observations (qualitative data) received for both open questions is shown as a total.

Quantitative and qualitative data

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.

NB Since the number of international students who responded to the SREQ in 2010 is at the lower end of that recommended for reliable statistical data, the results have been subsumed into the faculty total.

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:

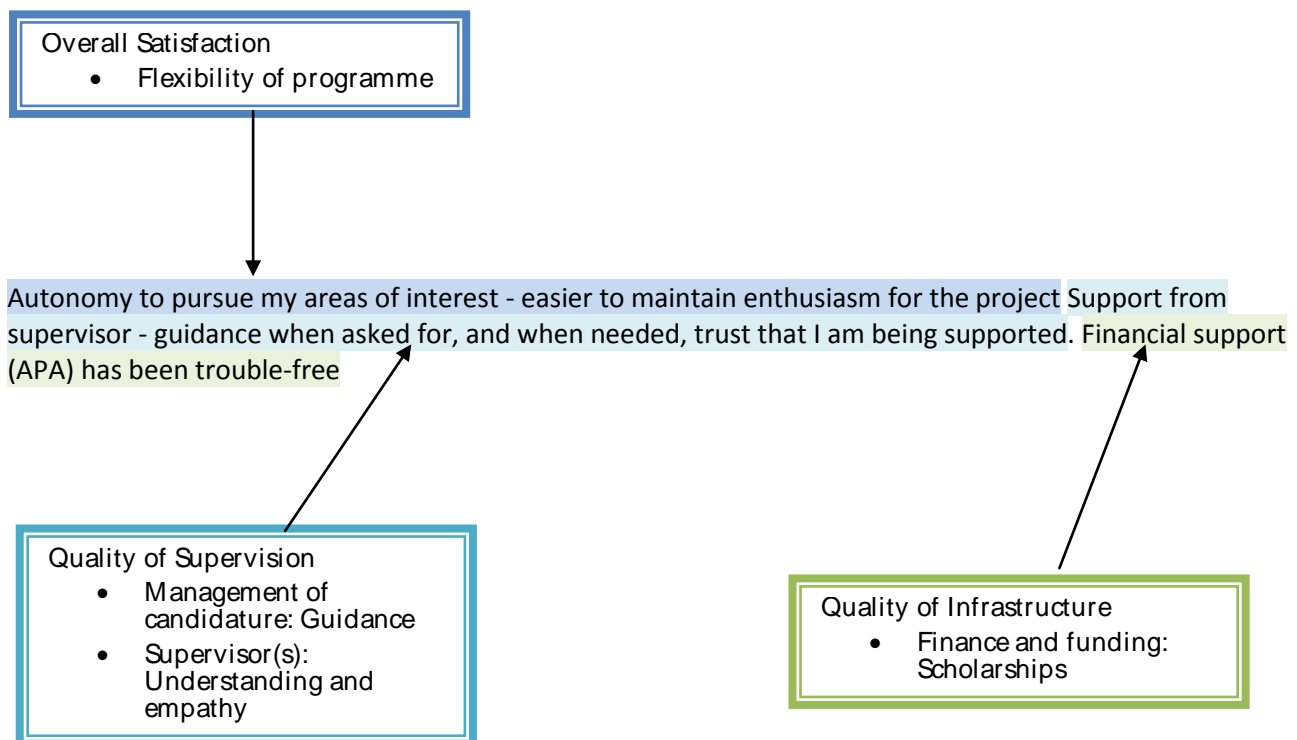
- Characteristics that define the area of the student experience
- SREQ survey items
- recurring themes in students' comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students' surveys.

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 Overall Satisfaction (Flexibility of programme), Quality of Supervision (Management of candidature; Supervisor(s)); and Quality of Infrastructure (Finance and funding the highlighted phrases within the comment are counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories i.e. 4 aspects in one comment.



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; 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.

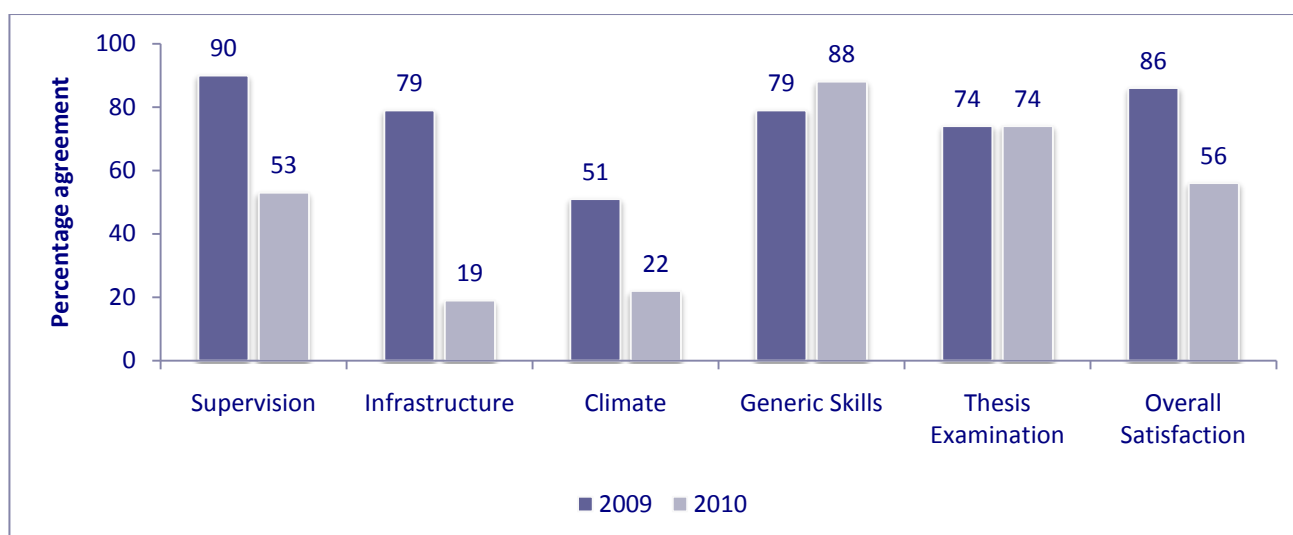
KEY RESULTS FOR 2010

The following results are an indication of those areas of the student experience that were of significance to research higher degree students in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music 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 2009 and 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. 7 graduates responded to the PREQ in 2009 and 9 in 2010.

Figure 14: Sydney Conservatorium of Music: Percentage agreement results PREQ 2009-2010



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
Meeting with my supervisor. Proving to myself that I could complete a very high quality piece of research. Immersing myself in my research field.	SUPERVISION OVERALL SATISFACTION
Comprehensive examination of subject matter.	THESIS EXAMINATION
Exchange program to Germany and the UK.	OVERALL SATISFACTION
Getting done. Learning to play well. Learning that I am independent.	OVERALL SATISFACTION GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES
Access to my supervisor. Access to library.	SUPERVISION INFRASTRUCTURE
Discussions with supervisor.	SUPERVISION
Satisfaction from work completed under my own initiative.	OVERALL SATISFACTION

Suggested improvements

COMMENT	AREAS OF RESEARCH TRAINING EXPERIENCE
Education in accessing appropriate reference materials. It's difficult to find them in the field of jazz.	GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES
Supervisor not involved with substance of thesis. Feedback not timely.	SUPERVISION
More performance opportunities.	OVERALL SATISFACTION
Practical opportunities for research-based work.	OVERALL SATISFACTION
I had a horrific experience with a supervisor. She is still causing difficulties for me even after an IP ruling in my favor and a new supervisor in my final 1 and half years. I am continually sadden at USYD's indifference in protecting or helping me, the student.	SUPERVISION
Procedure allowing prompt assessment - first submission of thesis took 12 months+ to be examined; resubmitted thesis work took 6 months+.	THESIS EXAMINATION