

Sydney Nursing School

Student Research Experience Questionnaire Report

Trends and key issues: 2006 - 2010

April 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.

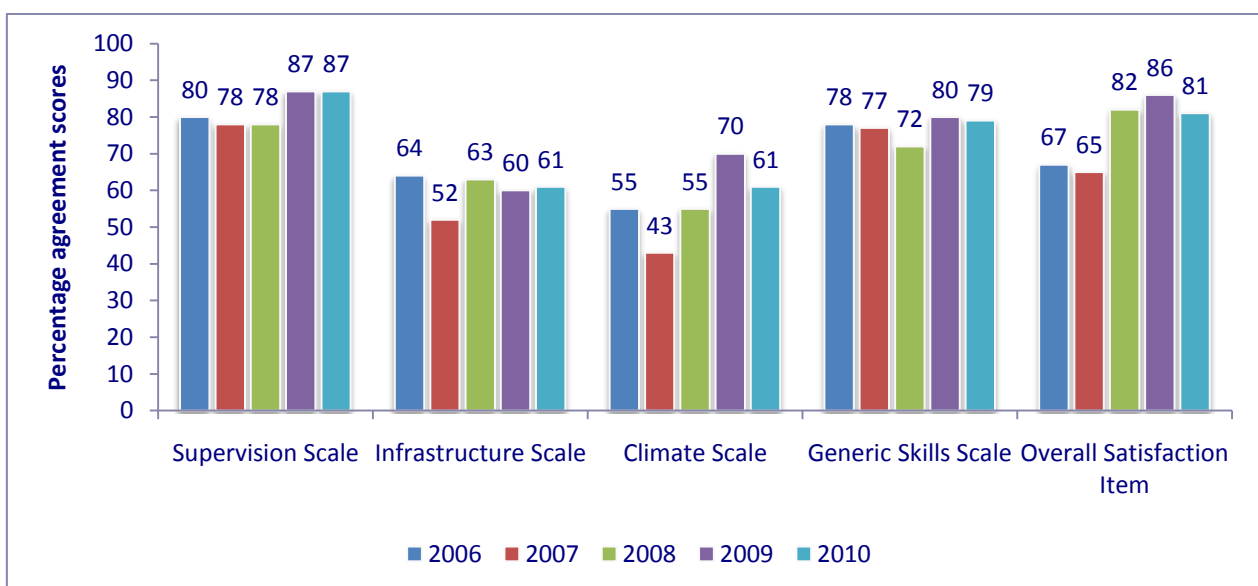
The analysis of qualitative data received between 2006 and 2009, and reported in this document, is based on written observations received from all respondents who answered the open questions in the SREQ.

COMPARATIVE DATA: 2006 – 2010¹

Quantitative data

The following chart provides a comparison of the results of the SREQ percentage agreement results (i.e. respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the survey items relating to each scale) for the Sydney Nursing School.

Figure 1: Sydney Nursing School: 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. 87% of respondents answered the open question on areas best practice; whilst 77% suggested improvements, indicating a high level of student engagement.

¹ More detailed data on the SREQ Factors and sub-categories 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: Sydney Nursing School: Areas of best practice: SREQ 2006 - 2010

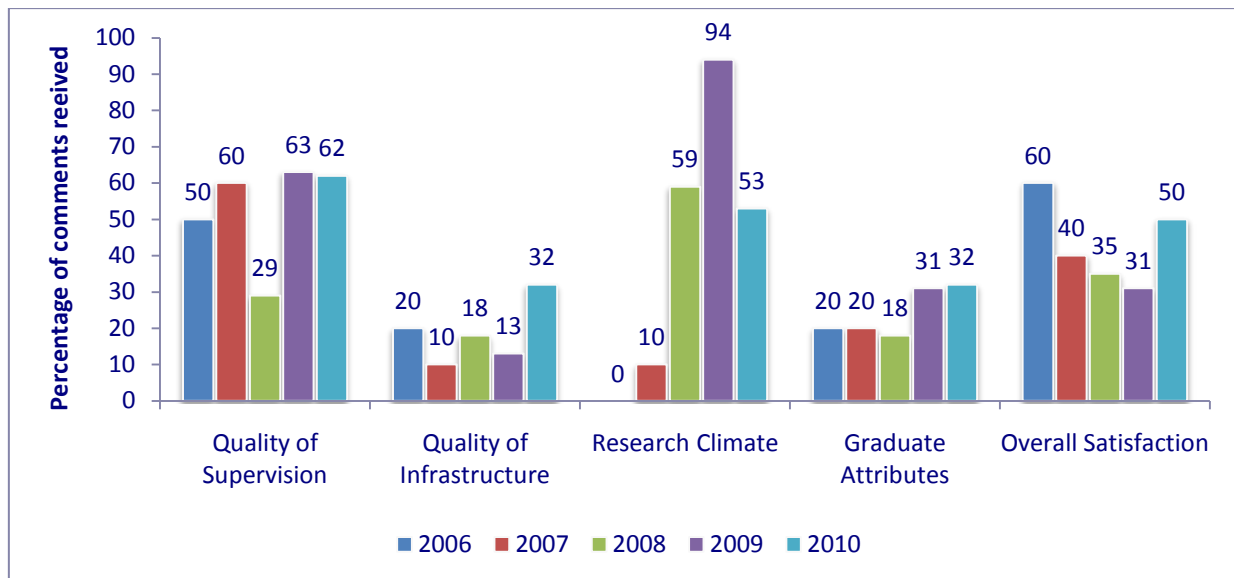
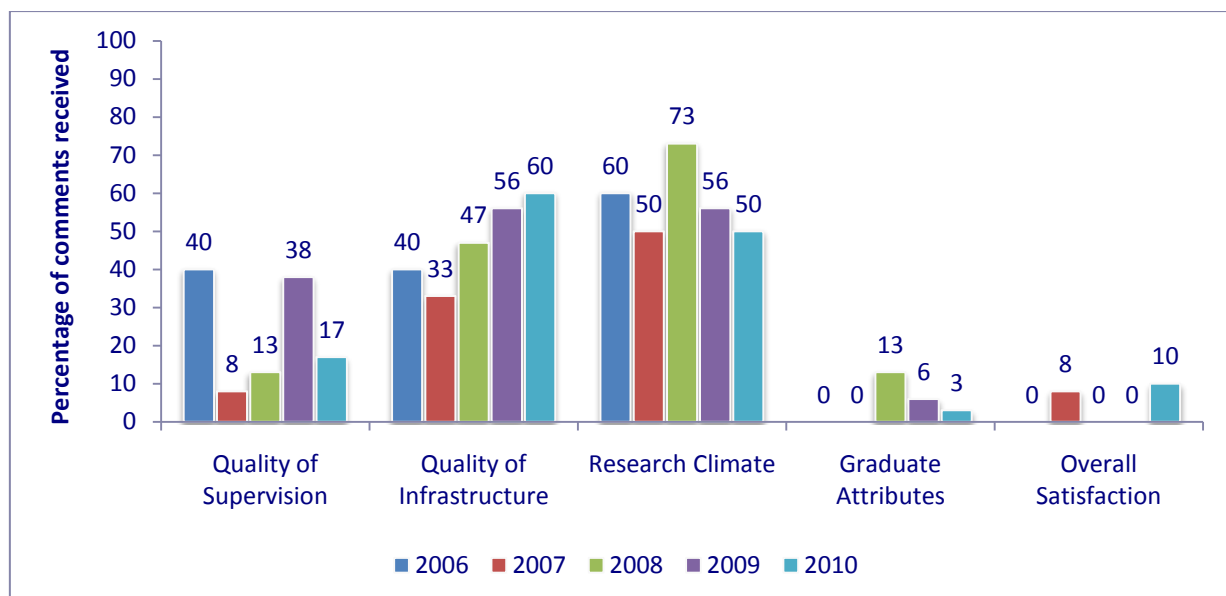


Figure 3: Sydney Nursing School: Areas needing improvement: SREQ 2006 - 2010



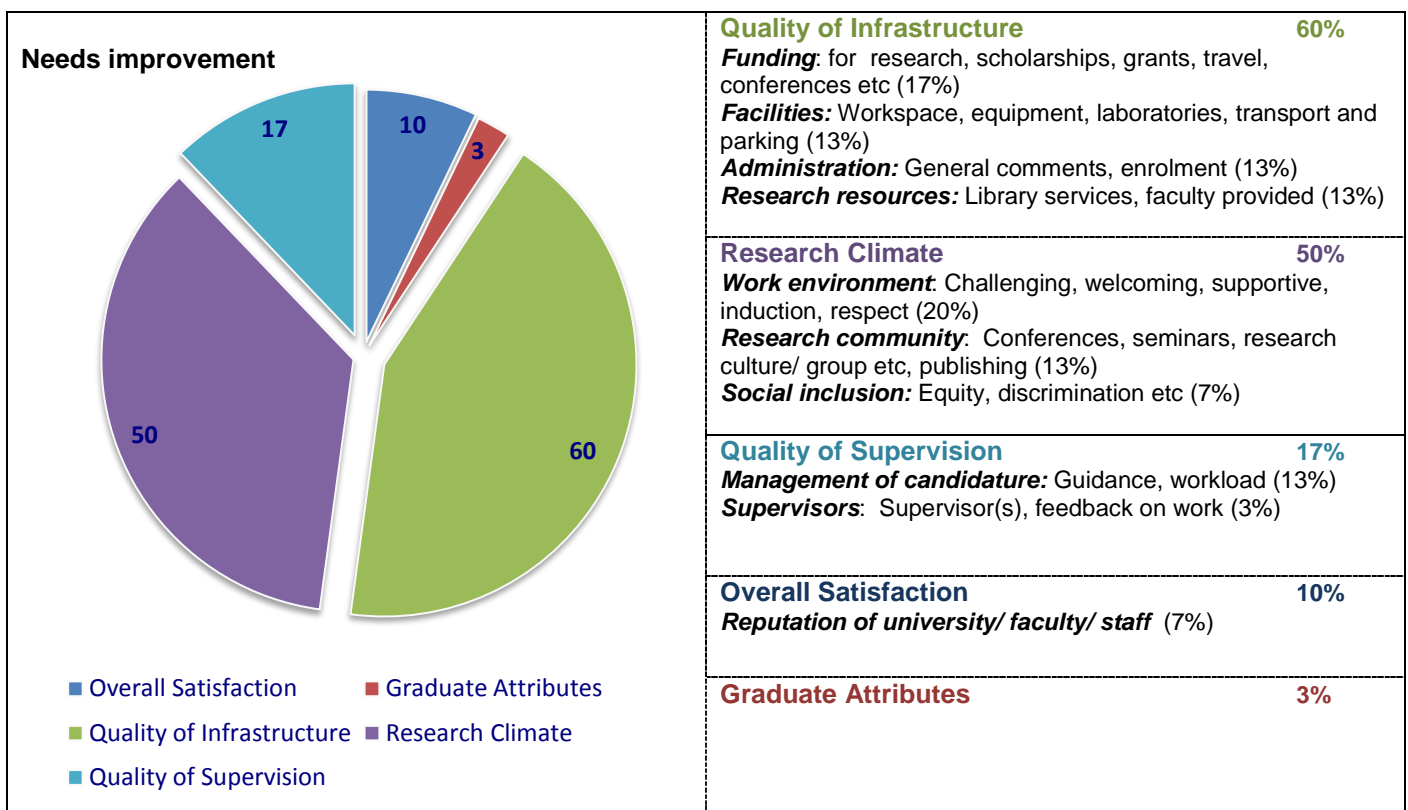
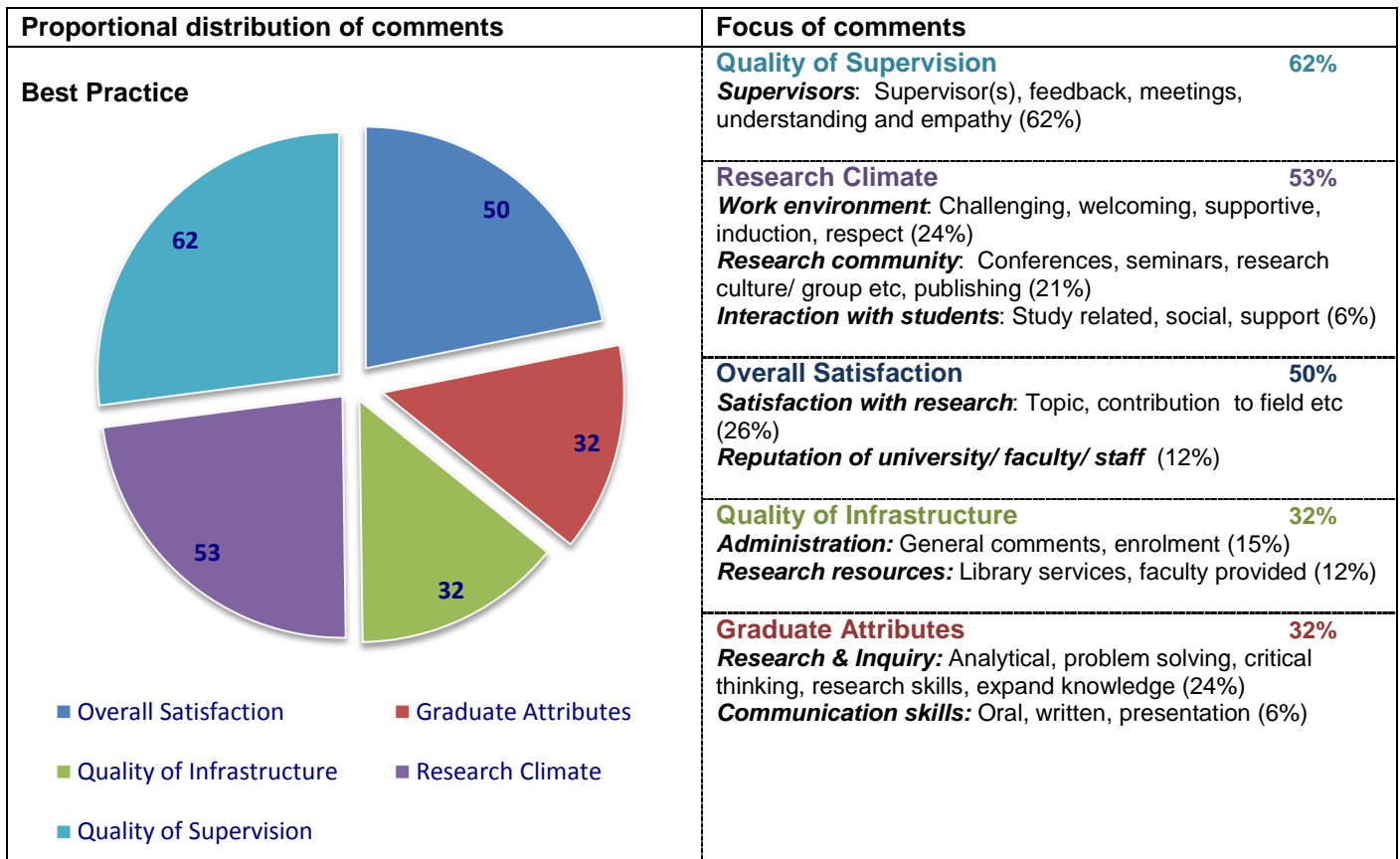
NB: Prior to 2010, less than 20 research higher degree students in the Faculty provided written observations in their responses to the SREQ. Since the minimum number required for statistical reliability is 20, the above results for 2006 – 2009 should be interpreted with caution. In 2010, 34 students provided written observations in their responses.

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 Nursing School between 2006 and 2010. The report also provides detailed information on the key issues highlighted in the analysis of the 2010 SREQ qualitative data.

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 SREQ is below 5, results of the analysis are expressed for the whole faculty (domestic and international combined).

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.

ATTACHMENTS

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

- 1 Statistical data: number of respondents to the SREQ
- 2 Analysis and counting of comments
- 3 SREQ Factors

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

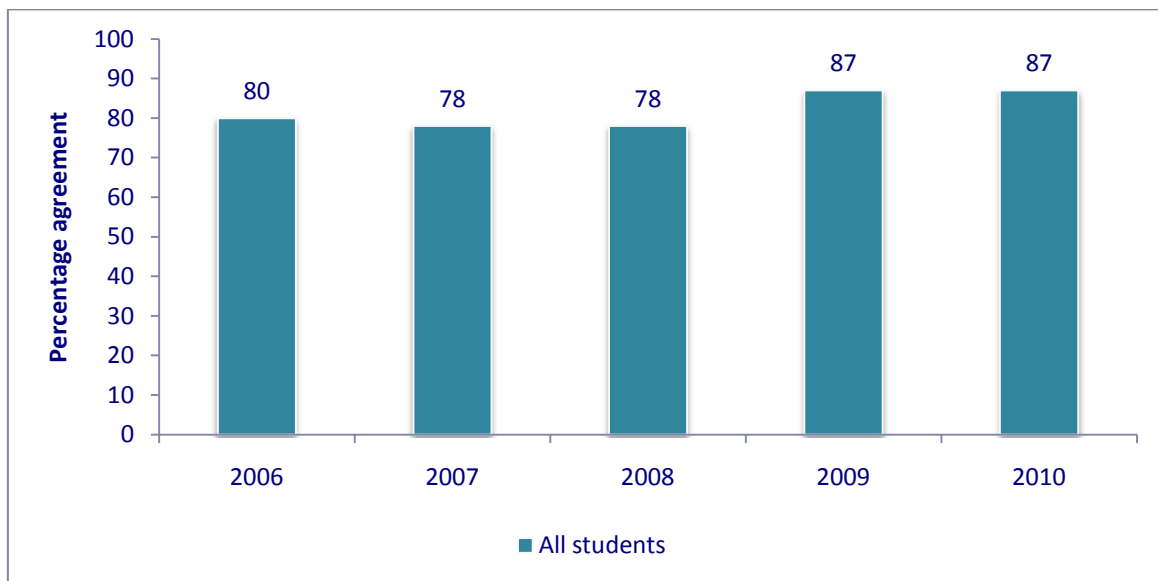
1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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.

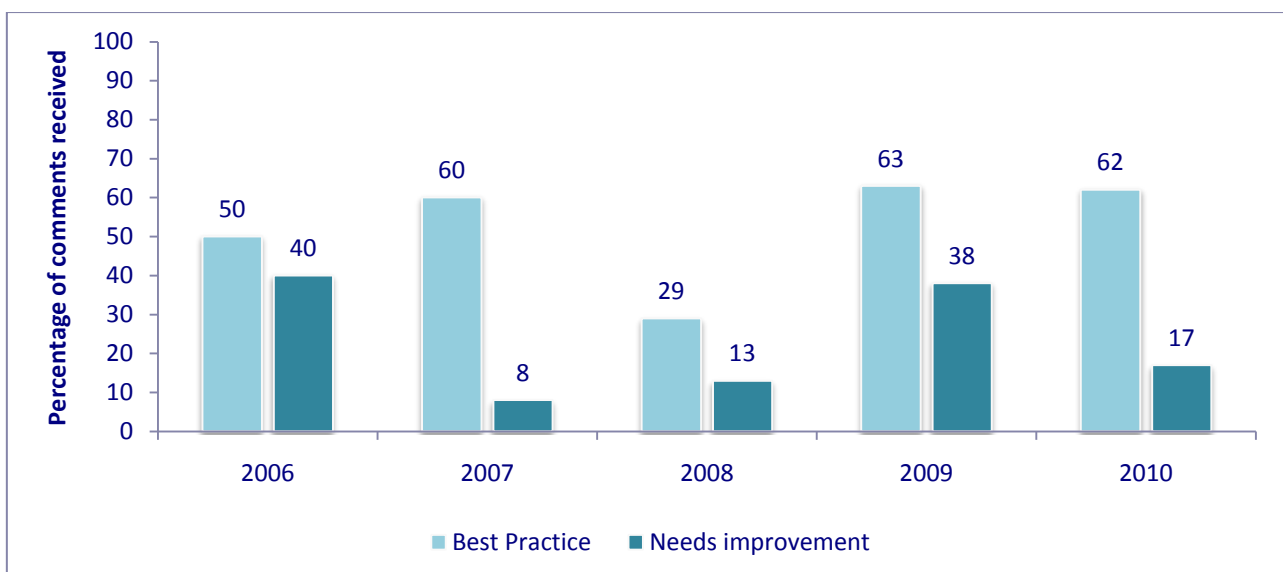
Figure 4: SREQ Supervision Scale: Percentage agreement results: 2006 - 2010



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

	All (n=34)
Quality of Supervision	62%
- Supervisor(s)	62%

Sample comments

- My supervisor is very supportive, understanding and actively tries to encourage my work. she sees my research as being valuable
- Developing a relationship with academic Supervisors which is a different sort of working relationship to other types within the organisational world, yet is also collaborative, constructive and intellectually stimulating and challenging
- Particularly enjoying my supervision which is stimulating my thinking and encouraging me in my project
- My supervisor, I appreciate her approach and her ideas they are profoundly important to the development of my thinking and research skills

1.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	All (n=30)
Quality of Supervision	17%
- Management of candidature (workload)	13%
- Supervisor(s)	7%

Sample comments

- Supervisor/student relationship
- I would just like more time in my day
- As a clinician and novice in this area, I find the lack of structure difficult to work within
- Working full time combined with the high demands of the PhD is very stressful and lead to social isolation

2 QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

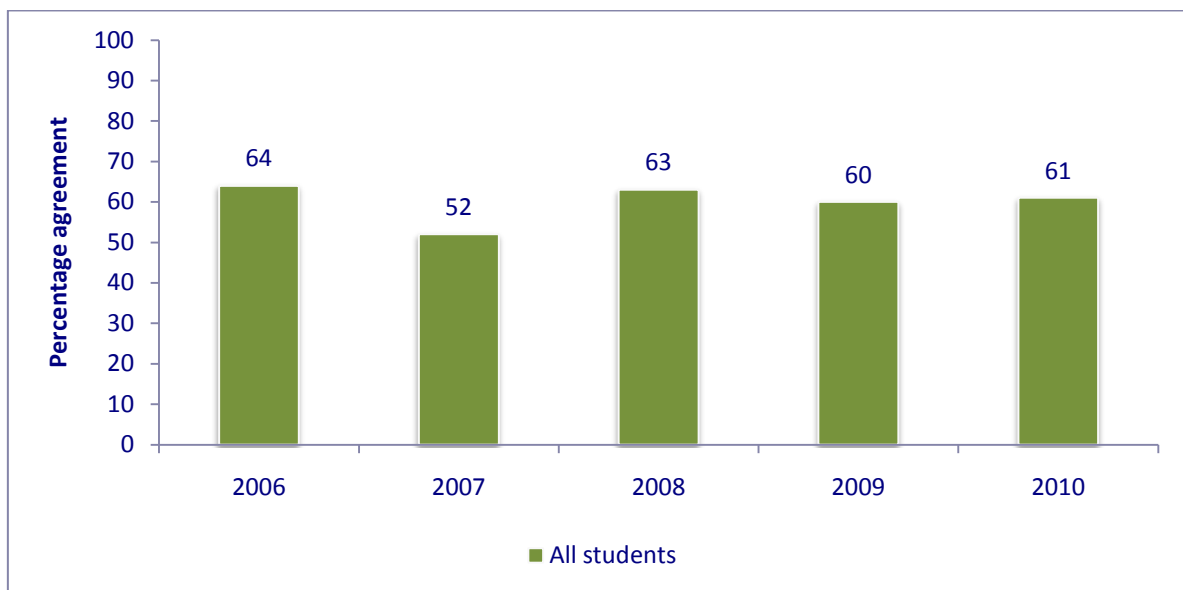
2.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

	All (n=34)
Quality of Infrastructure	32%
- Administration	15%
- Research resources	12%

Sample comments

- Ease of application and acceptance experience (other unis' acceptance processes were very delayed and no communication re progress of application).
- excellent communication by faculty (live in NZ) via electronic means
- Sufficient electronic library resources have made the literature search easier
- Excellent access to online services i.e. library resources etc

2.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	All (n=30)
Quality of Infrastructure	60%
- Facilities	13%
- Finance and funding	17%
- Administration	13%
- Research resources	13%

Sample comments

- The refurbishment of the Nursing School this year while cosmetically appealing does not meet the needs of qualitative researchers. Writing is a constant in qualitative research and the refurbishments do not seem to have taken into account the needs of all students. In addition, internet, intranet and specifically wireless access for students in the newly created open space was not finally all in place until July 2010. This coupled with problems with both hardware and software and difficulty coordination with IT to fix these problems has significantly impacted on my ability to make progress this year with my PhD and is extremely frustrating. As I only have wireless access at home and no wireless capability on the Faculty supplied laptop that meant I have had no access to my data analysis program for months! Every attempt to work at Uni in the Faculty has resulted in incredible amounts of time wasted trying unsuccessfully to resolve IT problems
- The university and faculty's administration for people in my situation - living and working (as research assistant for PhD study project) and studying from outside of Australia. Both levels of administration have made very poorly informed and often incorrect decisions, without seeking advice as to the appropriate set of actions. This has been costly and very time consuming for me, as well as extremely stressful at times. I would strongly recommend that the University gets its act together if it is to employ people on overseas projects and enrol overseas students
- The availability of scholarship for part time students. I work 4 days per week and study part time. If I could apply for scholarships to reduce my work hours then I could have more dedicated time for my research. Too hard
- Library services: the services overall are good. It would be beneficial if I was able to request articles even if they are held in the library. Working mainly from home it is difficult to make frequent trips to the library to obtain articles. There are many older papers relevant to my research and therefore many are not available online

3 RESEARCH CLIMATE

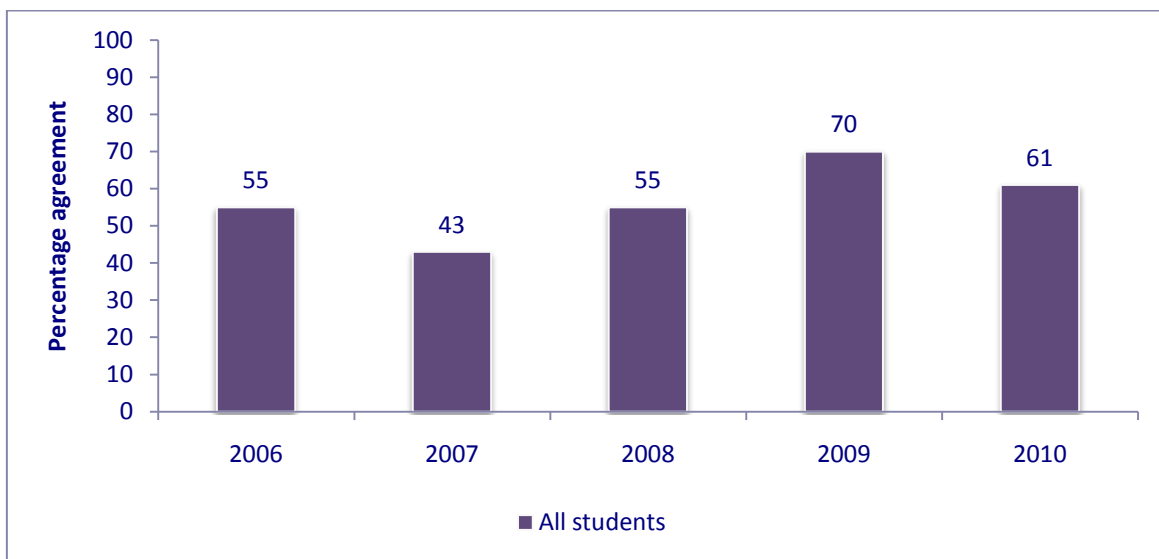
3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

	All (n=34)
Research Climate	53%
- Research community/ culture	24%
- Work environment	24%
- Interaction with other research higher degree students	6%

Sample comments

- Overall support and encouragement from SNS research community
- Being respected and guided at the same time by staff within the Faculty of enrolment.
- Being able to discuss my research with like minded people who understand the importance of my research and how it will contribute to existing knowledge
- Meeting with other research students: the opportunities provided to get together with the other research students, provides a good opportunity to network and share ideas. It is nice to know there are others going through what you are, the experience is supportive and motivational

3.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	All (n=30)
Research Climate	50%
- Work environment	20%
- Research community/ culture	13%
- Social inclusion	7%

Sample comments

- More opportunities to meet with researchers (including within faculty and outside faculty) would be great
- The way the faculty views research students- really poor. I can only say that students may get twice yearly research workshops etc to make the faculty look good, but the day to day way that students are treated is generally pretty poor.
- Opportunities to attend regular seminars and financial support to support research activities, dissemination of research and attendance at research conferences
- Connectedness in the school, with other students, and feeling supported by administration

4 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

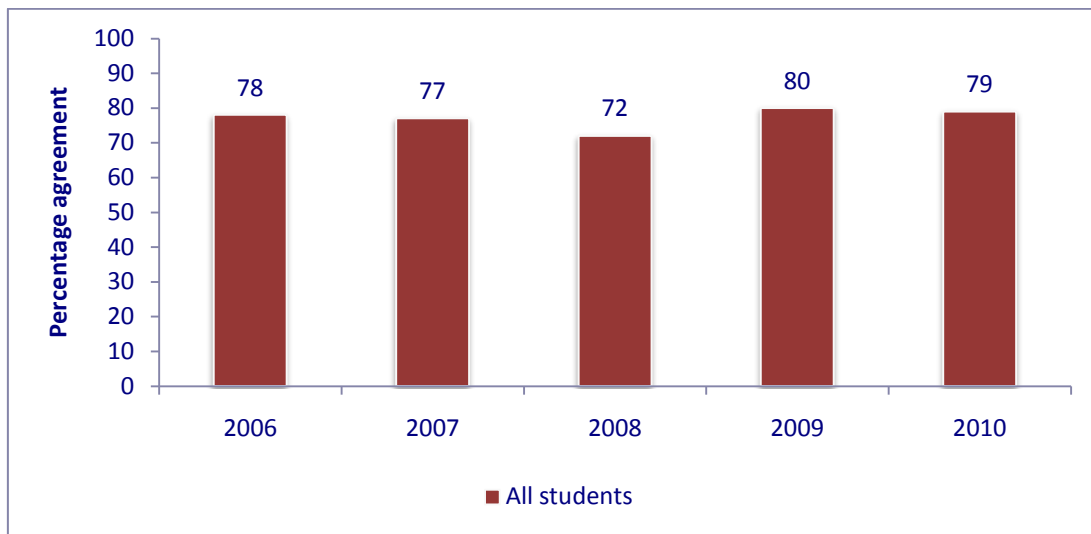
4.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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.

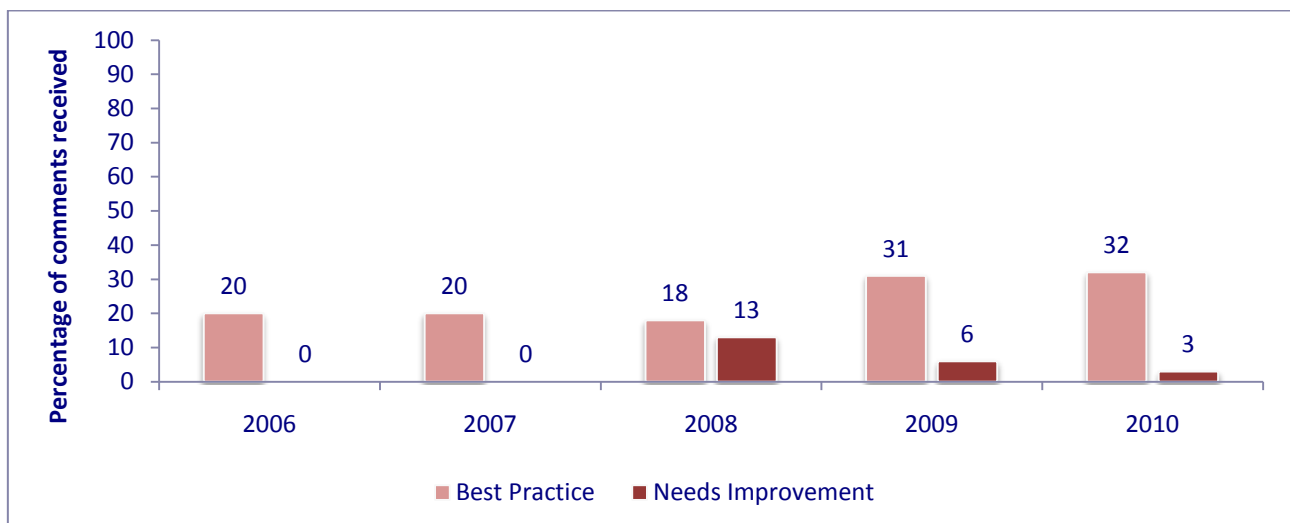
Figure 10: Generic Skills: Percentage agreement results: SREQ 2006 - 2010



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

	All (n=34)
Graduate Attributes	32%
- Research and Inquiry	24%
- Communication skills	6%

Sample comments

- Learning to think philosophically and to write and speak well. It has given me a new appreciation for the importance of research in practice
- Learning literature searching skills, access to uni library and electronic material, learning how to conduct research, improving writing skills
- The challenge of learning something totally new. Developing the skills to be a researcher. Could not have done this without my supervisors and they have taught me so much. Are inspiring and supportive
- Improvement in research methodologies. I can apply these in my workplace as well as in university research projects

4.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	All (n=30)
Graduate Attributes	3%

One student provided the following comment:

- Workshops/training in areas of writing doctoral thesis. Workshops/training in areas of planning/timelines etc. Above workshops will assist PhD students in writing and planning in order to submit thesis on line

5 OVERALL SATISFACTION

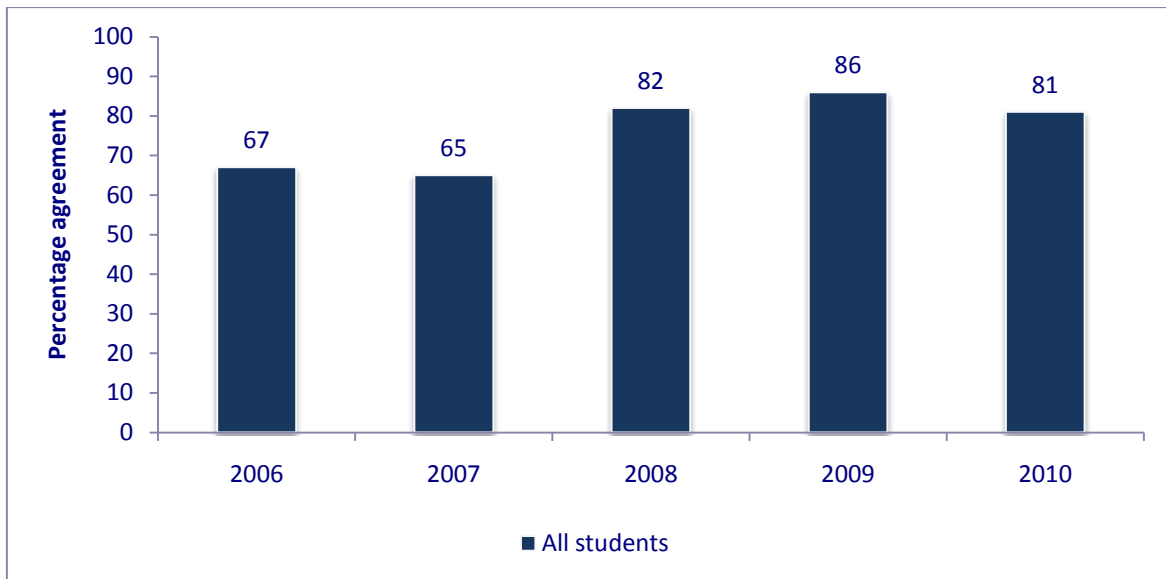
5.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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.

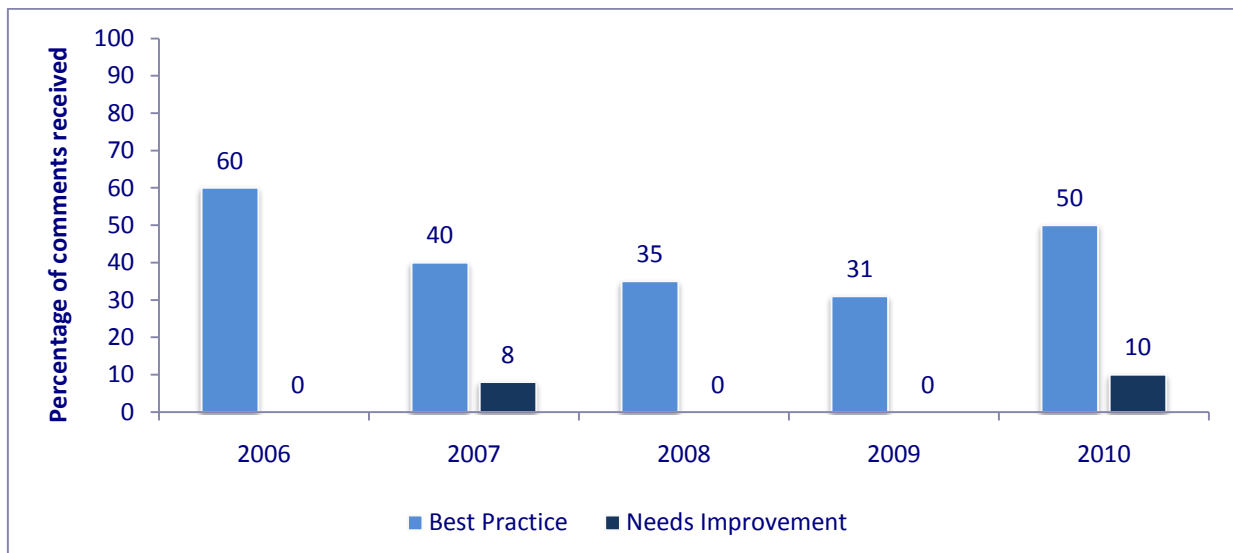
Figure 12: Overall Satisfaction Item: Percentage agreement results: SREQ 2006 - 2010



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

	All (n=34)
Overall Satisfaction	47%
- Satisfaction with research	26%
- Reputation of university/ faculty/ supervisors	12%
- General comments	9%

Sample comments

- Being a Research Higher Degree Student at a reputed university is glorious itself and motivates me work hard
- Not experiencing any major setbacks along the way, thus far! There have been some anxious moments but all the pieces seem to have fit together. This is in part serendipitous but I also think it is largely due to my supervisors
- I feel that my research will contribute to the bigger picture of nursing advanced practice
- This is my 3rd post grad degree of enrolment at Sydney, and I value the institution highly. Very professional yet student friendly and efficient overall. Friendly service in dealing with enquiries (all departments, research office, scholarship office, admin offices etc)

5.4.2 Areas needing improvement

	All (n=30)
Overall Satisfaction	15%
- Reputation of university/ faculty/ supervisors	7%

Sample comments

- The almost complete lack of understanding of the impact of the re-branding exercise on the faculty's few midwifery students and its Professor of Midwifery - all of whom are now virtually invisible and have been re-labelled nurses. It is a real issue of visibility and identity, which is distressing. For example, your survey records me as being enrolled in a PhD in nursing, which I am not!! The Faculty has made it extremely clear that it does not want and has no interest in midwifery students.
- The politics within the faculty overspill to students, which is both unprofessional and unacceptable. I can only say that I can't wait to finish my studies so I can leave the faculty behind forever!
- The attitude of the Head of School/ Dean of the faculty (needs changing)

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	25	24	28	28	50

Number of respondents to the SREQ 2006 – 2010					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	18	16	20	23	36
International students	0	1	2	0	3
Total	18	17	22	23	39
<i>% who responded</i>	72%	71%	79%	82%	78%

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 Xxx.

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	10	9	16	16	31
	International students	0	1	1	0	3
	Total	11	10	17	16	34
	<i>% who provided comments</i>	61%	59%	77%	70%	87%

<i>Areas of improvement</i>	Domestic students	10	11	14	16	27
	International students	0	1	1	0	3
	Total	10	12	15	16	30
	<i>% who provided comments</i>	56%	71%	68%	70%	77%

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. For all years, written observations (qualitative data) received for both open questions are 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

ATTACHMENT TWO: NOTES ON ANALYSIS AND COUNTING OF COMMENTS

1 ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS

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

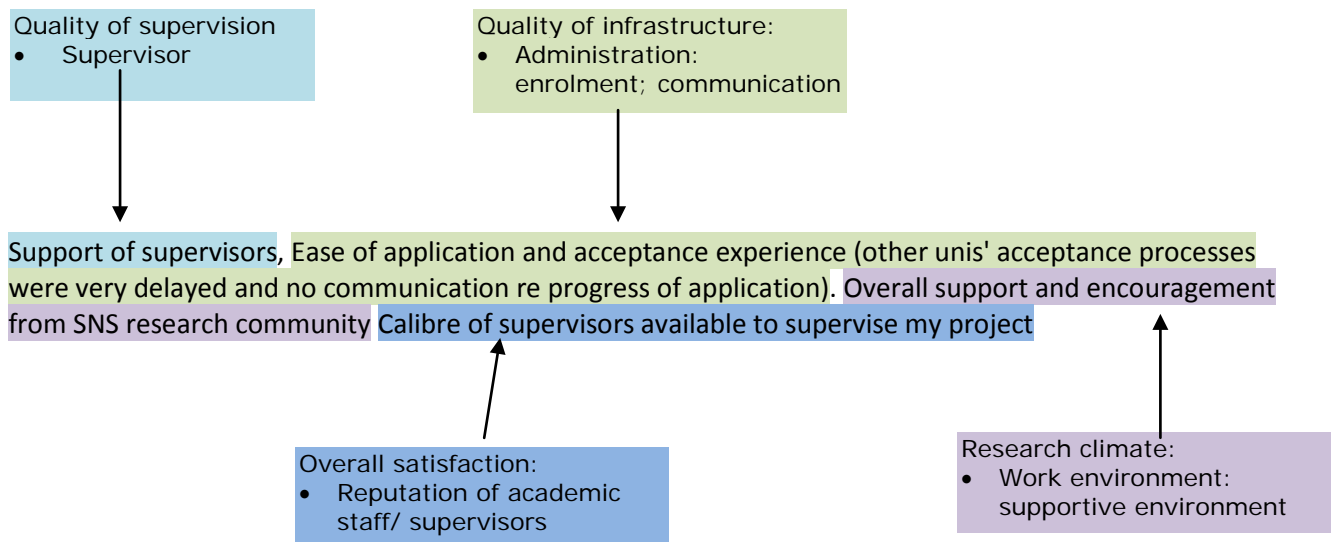
- Characteristics that define the area of the student experience
- SREQ survey items
- recurring themes in students' comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students' surveys.

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

2 COUNTING OF COMMENTS

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

For example, the following comment is counted as ONE COMMENT RECEIVED; but as it is mentioned in Quality of Supervision (Supervisor); Quality of Infrastructure (Administration: Enrolment *and* Communication); Research Climate (Work environment: supportive); and Overall Satisfaction (Reputation of university/ faculty/ academic staff), the highlighted phrases within the comment are counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories i.e. 5 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