

**FACULTY OF VETERINARY SCIENCE**  
**STUDENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SREQ)**  
**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**  
**ANALYSIS OF OPEN RESPONSE COMMENTS: 2005**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Student Research Experience Questionnaire (SREQ), which evaluates the quality of research higher degree students' experiences, was introduced in 2002. As part of the questionnaire students are asked to provide comments on the best aspects of their university experience and those that could be improved.

Based on the responses to these questions, this document seeks to provide an analysis of the areas of best practice, and opportunities for improvement, in the experiences of postgraduate research students in the Faculty of Veterinary Science in 2005.

### **Degree experience: areas of best practice**

The aspects of degree experience which attracted most positive comments from postgraduate research students in 2005 were:

	% of comments received	
	2005	2004
Generic skills: working independently	38%	30%
Overall satisfaction: satisfaction with research	28%	11%
Quality of supervision: supervisor	25%	32%
Generic skills: graduate attributes	22%	11%
Generic skills: research skills	9%	7%
Generic skills: technical skills	9%	5%

### **Degree experience: opportunities for improvement**

The areas of degree experience which postgraduate research students considered most in need of improvement in 2005 were:

	% of comments received	
	2005	2004
Quality of supervision: supervisor	16%	30%
Quality of infrastructure: funding: other (not scholarships/ PRSS)	16%	16%
Administration and organisation: general comments	13%	3%
Quality of infrastructure: physical facilities: equipment	13%	
Quality of infrastructure: physical facilities: Computing facilities and resources	13%	
Quality of infrastructure: physical facilities: workspace, buildings, office	10%	30%

*Rachel Symons  
Special Projects Officer and Executive Assistant  
Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)*

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## **1 Introduction**

The Student Research Experience Questionnaire (SREQ), which evaluates the quality of research higher degree students' experiences, was introduced in 2002. As part of the questionnaire postgraduate research students are asked to provide comments on the following:

- What are the best aspects of your research higher degree experience?
- What aspects are most in need of improvement?

Based on the responses to these questions, this document seeks to provide an analysis of the areas of best practice, and opportunities for improvement, in the experiences of postgraduate research students in the Faculty of Veterinary Science in 2005.

In 2005 64% of students who responded to the SREQ provided comments on the best aspects of their degree experience, and on those that were considered to be in need of improvement.

## **2 Arrangement**

1. Analysis of comments referring to best aspects of the degree course
2. Analysis of comments referring to aspects that could be improved

Within each section, responses are ranked according to the percentage of comments received for each aspect. Sample comments are provided for the six aspects that received the highest percentage of comments. For comparison, results for the previous years qualitative analysis (2002 – 2004) are provided in brackets after the 2005 results.

Only aspects that received more than 5% of comments in 2005 are included in this report. To preserve student confidentiality, sample comments are only provided if there are six or more comments relating to that aspect in the responses. Comments that may possibly identify the student are not been included in the sample comments. Comments are transcribed exactly as they appear in the original documents.

## **3 Analysis of the comments: taxonomy and process**

The manual analysis and evaluation method used by the University is based on an in-house taxonomy which allows for standardisation of reporting across the university and ease of comparison with the SREQ quantitative analysis reports. Within the taxonomy, categories used for the SREQ are identical to the SREQ factor scales, with the addition of Administration and organisation, Ethics Administration, Academic Board policies, International Office, and other administrative areas and support services. This taxonomy is under constant revision as the need to sub-divide categories and create new ones becomes apparent.

Each comment received is analysed according to the SREQ Taxonomy, with those including more than one aspect being counted in each aspect mentioned.

It should be noted, however, 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 that the students are happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on commenting on areas in need of improvement.

#### **4 Analysis of comments referring to the best aspects<sup>1</sup>**

**Generic skills: working independently** (2005: 38%)  
(2004: 30%; 2003: 30%; 2002: 17%)

- The freedom my supervisor gives me to develop my experiments and to plan and carry out my work in my own time. It's good because I don't feel pressured... but also requires amazing amounts of self discipline which I don't have all the time
- Have learnt to work independently, communicate effectively independently and be more proactive and self motivating
- My developed ability to work independently to solve problems in my area of research
- The ability to define your own project and to work through self motivation towards the outcome, such that there is a feeling of accomplishment and ownership of your work.

**Overall satisfaction: satisfaction with research** (2005: 28%)  
(2004: 11%; 2003: 31%; 2002: 38%)

- I'm undertaking a surveillance project - the interaction I have with local producers has been very beneficial and rewarding - you have to work hard and provide a lot of support to these people to gain their trust, but in doing so, they've started to open up and let you into their lives - while this is essential to achieve many of our objectives, it has been very self-satisfying.
- Being a student again, and working for something that will benefit me, rather than for other people. Being able to control my work load and working times.
- Its really great to work on Molecular aspects of genetics. I was never exposed to such type of work earlier. Hence, its very exiting to undertake research.
- The project itself I find really interesting.

**Quality of supervision: supervisor** (2005: 25%)  
(2004: 32%; 2003: 29%; 2002: 34%)

- The supervision I receive is excellent.
- supervision. My supervisor help me a lot.
- My supervisors put a lot of effort into supporting me and my work which helps to stay motivated.
- Supportive supervisor who gives good guidance

**Generic skills: graduate attributes** (2005: 22%)  
(2004: 11%; 2003: 4%; 2002: 17%)

- Developed confidence in working as a team while also tackling the day to day challenges independently.
- Working my way through problems that arise improves my problems solving abilities.
- I am enjoying the demonstrating I am doing for the Department of Biological Sciences. It has allowed me to improve my communication skills and given me some teaching experience.
- Have learnt to work independently, communicate effectively independently and be more proactive and self motivating

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<sup>1</sup> Number of comment received: 2005: 32; 2004: 44; 2003: 48; 2002: 29

**Faculty of Veterinary Science: Analysis of student experience:  
Postgraduate research students: 2005**

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**Other aspects mentioned included:**

*NB: all the aspects mentioned below were mentioned in less than six comments*

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>
Generic skills: research skills	9%	7%	6%	14%
Generic skills: technical skills	9%	5%		7%
Research climate: networking: Australian	9%			
Research climate: interaction with other postgraduate research students (Study related)	6%	20%	6%	17%
Research climate: part of research community: general comments	6%	11%	2%	7%
Generic skills: expanding knowledge base	6%	5%		3%
Research climate: challenging, stimulating	6%	2%	4%	
Research climate: part of research community: faculty/department	6%			
Overall satisfaction: general comments	6%			

## **5 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements<sup>2</sup>**

NB: *No aspects in this section of the report were mentioned in more than five comments. Therefore, to preserve student confidentiality, no sample comments have been provided. The following aspects were mentioned in 6-16% of comments received.*

	2005	2004	2003	2002
Quality of supervision: supervisor	16%	30%	24%	17%
Quality of infrastructure: funding: other (not scholarships/ PRSS)	16%	16%	11%	17%
Administration and organisation: general comments	13%	3%	9%	
Quality of infrastructure: physical facilities: equipment	13%			
Quality of infrastructure: physical facilities: Computing facilities and resources	13%			
Quality of infrastructure: physical facilities: workspace, buildings, office	10%	30%	22%	21%
Research climate: isolation: affiliated campuses	10%	8%	4%	7%
Generic skills: technical skills	10%	5%	4%	10%
Research climate: student support: distance education/ external students	10%	5%		
Quality of infrastructure: technical support	6%	5%	17%	10%
Quality of supervision: management of candidature: guidance	6%	3%	4%	10%
Research climate: interaction with industry: support	6%			

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<sup>2</sup> Number of comment received: 2005: 31; 2004: 37; 2003: 46; 2002: 29