Understanding and meeting the needs of PGT and PGRs: the Academy's Postgraduate Surveys

Rachel Segal
Assistant Director, Research & Evaluation

The Higher Education Academy

Postgraduate Surveys

- **Promoting evidence-informed practice by giving access to the evidence, and opportunity to explore and discuss the evidence**

- **Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)**
- **Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)**

Survey Backgrounds

- PRES
  - Full launch in 2007
  - Steady growth in numbers
  - 2009:
    - 82 HEIs
    - 18,644 research students
- PTES
  - Launch in 2009
    - 30 HEIs
    - 14,421 taught postgraduate students
  - 2010
    - 80 HEIs

PTES – Students' Motivations

- Progression in current career path (53%)
- Improvement of employment prospects (50%)
- Personal interest (45%)
- Progression to higher level qualification (32%)
- Change current career (18%)
- Professional requirement (16%)
- Current job requirements (9%)
- Other (3%)

PTES – Motivations for study at HEI

- Reputation
  - Institutional (39%)
  - Institution's reputation in chosen subject area (33%)
  - Departmental (23%)
- Location (36%)
- Flexibility of programme delivery (26%)

PRES – Students' Motivations

- Interest in the subject (34%)
- Improving career prospects for an academic/research career (32%)
- 'Natural step' (14.1%)
- Improving career prospects outside an academic /research career (7.4%)
- Encouragement by tutor/supervisor
- Funding
- Other
- Inspired to work with a particular academic

PRES – Career aspirations

- Academic career in HE (44.2%)
- Research career outside HE (14.0%)
- Research career in HE (13.9%)
- Any other professional career (11.1%)
- Other (7.6%)
- Returning to sponsor (4.6%)
- Self-employment (3.2%)
- Non-HE Teaching (1.4%)

Survey Scales

PRES	PTES
Supervision	Teaching
Skills development	Staff
Infrastructure	Assessment & Feedback
Intellectual climate	Dissertation
Goals and standards	Organisation & Management
Thesis examination	Learning Resources
Professional development and career	Skills & Personal Development
Supervision	Career and Professional Development

PRES Skills development

- Confidence in managing a research project (70.6%)
- Improvement in analytical skills (78.3%)
- Helped to develop a range of communication skills (69.3%)
- Improvement in ability to learn independently (80.8%)
- Opportunities further to develop research skills (69.8%)
- Opportunities further to develop transferable skills (64.9%)

PTES – Skills and personal development

	% agree
The programme has developed my research skills	79%
The programme has developed my transferable skills	77%
As a result of the programme I am more confident about independent learning	75%
As a result of the programme, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems	66%
The programme has helped me to present myself with confidence	65%
As a results of the programme my communication skills have improved	61%

PRES – Professional Development

	% agree
Encouragement to consider range of career opportunities	37.1%
Encouragement to reflect on professional development needs	43.3%
Encouragement to reflect on career development needs	39.9%

PTES – Assessment and Feedback

	% agree
The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance	74%
Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair	74%
I have received detailed comments (written or oral) on my work	68%
Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand	58%
Feedback on my work has been prompt	57%
I received feedback in time to allow me to improve my next assignment	57%

Highest and lowest scales

- PRES
  - Supervision
  - Skills development
  - Thesis examination

  -Infrastructure
  -Intellectual climate
  -Professional development and career

- PTES
  - Staff
  - Learning resources
  - Career and professional development

  -Assessment & Feedback

PTES Multiple Regression summary

Scales	Beta	Significant?	Rank
Teaching	.346	Y (.000)	1
Skills and personal development	.211	Y (.000)	2
Organisation and management	.120	Y (.000)	3
Career and professional development	.117	Y (.000)	4
Assessment and feedback	.050	Y (.000)	5
Dissertation	.017	N (.078)	6
Learning resources	-.003	N (.076)	7

Predictors

- PRES
  - Supervision
  - Intellectual climate
- PTES
  - Teaching
  - Skills and personal development

Overall satisfaction

PRES & PTES: ‘The overall experience of my course met or exceeded my expectations’ – 84%

PTES: ‘Quality of learning and teaching met or exceeded my expectations’ – 82%

Examples of Academy work re postgraduate students/provision

- Park, C. (2007) *Redefining the Doctorate* (York: Higher Education Academy)
- Teaching International Students (TIS) project
  - PMI Programme Board, UKCISA, Academy
  - Research & Staff Development
- Brown, T. et al (2010) *The Doctorate: Stories of Knowledge, Power and Becoming* (Bristol: The Higher Education Academy)
- Stuart, M., Lido, C., Morgan, S., Solomon, L. and Akroyd, K. (2008) *Widening participation to postgraduate study: Decisions, deterrents and creating success.* (York: Higher Education Academy)

Academy resources and publications: Postgraduates

- http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingresearch/postgraduatework

(includes PTES and PRES reports and results; 'Redefining the Doctorate' (Park)

- http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/evidencenet

(range of learning and teaching evidence)

- Email:
  - **surveys@heacademy.ac.uk** (PRES and PTES)
  - **Rachel.segal@heacademy.ac.uk**