HDR Candidature Management Project:  
International HDR Student Experience 2007

International students are about one quarter of MQ’s HDR students, supporting MQ’s strategy of the internationalisation of HDR. Given the planned continuing growth in international HDR students, this study is focused on the MQ research experience of international students from China and India, as the two largest non-Western cohorts. Recommendations from their survey and focus group feedback (3 focus groups, 31 participants) are presented below and the findings detailed in the following report.

**Recommendations**

**Why HDR at Macquarie University?**

1. Maintenance of regular web updates to highlight the research activity of individual researchers, research groups and Divisions. [Divisions, RO]
2. Maintain level of MQRES scholarships to continue to support international HDR students. [DVC-R, MI Director HDR]
3. Increase research partnerships and networking with overseas universities to raise MQ profile on the international level. [DVC-R, MI Director HDR]

**Supervisor Selection and Supervision**

4. Continued promotion of MQ’s cotutelle PhD strategy within MQ. [MI Director HDR, HDRO]
5. Maintenance of Central Commencement Program focus on the MQ Code of HDR Practice (including the Code of Supervisory Practice) as well as Divisional Commencement Program discussion of supervision and research expectations and practices. [Dean HDR, Directors HDR]

**Research Expectations and Research Culture**

6. Maintain and improve departmental and divisional research cultures in terms of encouraging research networks, both internal and external to the department. [ADRs, Directors HDR]
7. Ensure adequate provision of sessions on academic writing and thesis formatting at divisional level. [ADRs, Directors HDR]

**Resource and Skill Support**

8. Ensure good access for all HDR students to a work space which is conducive to research. [Deans, ADRs, Directors HDR]
9. Develop alternative solutions to hot desk arrangements for HDR students such as provision of work space where there is access to wireless server connection. [Deans, ADRs, Directors HDR]
10. Higher priority in ELS for technical support and training in the use of equipment for HDR students. [Dean ELS, ADR, Director HDR]

**English and Academic Writing**

11. More active promotion of the range of academic and conversational MQ English language courses available to HDR students, including appropriate HDRO and divisional web links. [Manager HDRO, Directors HDR]
12. Increase the availability of academic writing sessions for HDR students at Divisional level. [Directors HDR]
**Financial Support**

13. Review the maximum level of the PGRF in view of the increasing conference and travel expenses for HDR students. [DVC-R, Dean HDR]

14. Examine the perceived negative impact for HDR students of changed ICS Divisional funding arrangements after 2005. [Dean ICS, Director HDR]

15. Maintain HDRO/RO and Divisional website HDR student funding information with appropriate links. [Manager HDRO, Directors HDR]

**International HDR Student Accommodation and Social Support Issues**

16. Expand information on accommodation processes to assist international HDR students. [MI Director HDR, Manager HDRO]

17. MI to investigate the provision of some short term accommodation which is suitable for HDR students with dependents. [MI Director HDR]

18. Additional social events for international and domestic HDR students. [President MUPRA]

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Ruth Neumann  
Leah Boucher  
September 2007
1. Introduction

In recent years there has been a steady increase in the numbers of international Higher Degree Research (HDR) students enrolling at MQ; from 121 enrolled international HDR students in 2000 to 341 in 2005 (DEST, SHES Students 2001 and 2006). International students represent around one quarter of MQ’s HDR students. This reflects an important part of MQ’s strategy of increasing its number of commencing HDR students and the internationalisation of HDR at MQ. International HDR students also form a key component of the Macquarie University Research Strategic Plan 2006-2008:

Research Goal 3: To maximise research outcomes by increasing the number of high quality higher degree research commencing candidates and completions.

MQ is also committed to providing a strong and supportive research culture for HDR students. The Improving the First Year Research Experience Projects 2003-2006 sought feedback from commencing students on their transition into research in their Divisions and at MQ. The feedback received from students each year was instrumental in many of the changes made during this time: http://www.research.mq.edu.au/structure_staff/deanhdr/hdr_surveys/yr1project/issues_outcomes.

International HDR students participated in these commencing HDR student studies. However, with the continued growth in the internationalisation of HDR, a more specific study focussed on the MQ research experience of international students was undertaken.

2. Aims and Outcomes of the Study

The aims of the study were to:

1. investigate the experiences of selected groups of international HDR students in undertaking their research degree at Macquarie University
2. examine the satisfaction of these international HDR students with the support and guidance provided by the University, Division and Department
3. provide recommendations for the improvement of the international research degree experience at Macquarie University
4. provide feedback to the University to assess and measure change in student experience and satisfaction as a result of implemented changes.

3. Approach

To explore the quality of the MQ research environment for international (HDR) students from selected countries and to examine areas for increased support, focus groups and a short survey were undertaken. The feedback from the focus groups and survey was contextualised with the analysis of regular surveys collecting feedback from the international HDR student orientation sessions from semester 2, 2006 and semesters 1 and 2 (to end July) 2007.
There were 314 international students enrolled in May 2007. The countries with the greatest representation were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that the majority of the Hong Kong students are enrolled in the DBA taught in Hong Kong and that English is the main language of the USA, UK and Canada, it was decided to focus on the experiences of those HDR students from China and India. Thus, a letter of invitation to provide feedback through a focus group session was sent to all HDR students from China and India from Professor Jim Piper (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research).

Out of 43 contactable students 31 participated in providing feedback through focus groups and a survey. This was a response rate of 72%. The feedback provided by these students formed the major data source for this report.

In addition, the feedback of 83 commencing international HDR students from 2006 and 2007 orientation sessions was included to provide additional information on commencing and pre-arrival issues.

### 4. Profile of Cohort and Participants

#### Table 1: 2007 Enrolled International HDR Student Cohort and Participant Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACES</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUM</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L&amp;P</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGSM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCMP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90% of participants held a scholarship and the majority of these were on an MQ scholarship while three held an E-IPRS.
5. Discussion of Findings

Detailed discussion of findings is presented in the sections below in five key areas:

1. Student reasons for electing to undertake HDR at MQ
2. Supervisor selection and supervision
3. Research expectations and research culture
4. Resource and skill support
5. International HDR student support issues

5.1 Why HDR at Macquarie University?

1. Key information sources on research activity and supervisors are personal experience and knowledge of individuals/groups, as well as careful internet searching for research areas, projects and prospective supervisors.

2. The most frequently mentioned reasons for electing to undertake HDR at Macquarie University were:
   1. Prestige of a particular academic, research area or department through their reputation in the field [20/31]
   2. Macquarie University made a scholarship offer for HDR [15/31]
   3. Macquarie University/supervisor research areas matched their research interests [15/31]
   4. Australia/MQ is a good place to study [14/31]
   5. Personal knowledge of or previous supervision experience with a particular academic [13/31]
   6. Australian PhDs take less time than doing one in China, India, the USA or Canada [8/31]

3. Many participants commented on MQ responsiveness to their enquiries, both from the individual supervisors and from the Higher Degree Research Office (HDRO).

Recommendations

1. Maintenance of regular web updates to highlight the research activity of individual researchers, research groups and Divisions. [Divisions, RO]

2. Maintain level of MQRES scholarships to continue to support international HDR students. [DVC-R, MI Director HDR]

3. Increase research partnerships and networking with overseas universities to raise MQ profile on the international level. [DVC-R, MI Director HDR]

5.2 Supervisor Selection and Supervision

1. Nearly half (n=14) of the focus group participants had personally selected their principal supervisor including continuing with a previous supervisor.

2. Participants noted that in selecting their principal supervisor they considered both expertise in the field as well as future career connections and potential for career development.
3. More than half of the participants (52% n=16) had had a lot of contact with their principal supervisor before formal application for enrolment. Only 19% (n=6) had had no prior contact with their principal supervisor.

4. Nearly all participants were satisfied with the quality of their supervision, although there can be differing expectations about the degree of guidance and level of independence in Australian HDR candidature (see section 5.3).

5. For those who may have needed to change supervisor, it was noted that there were clear processes and support mechanisms for making changes. Participants indicated that in their countries, a change of supervisor would create difficulties.

   “Help is on hand if things go wrong in the supervisor-student relationship. In India, it is much more rigid if you get on the wrong side of the supervisor you are more or less stuck but here there is an opportunity to change things.” [ES0107j]

6. Nearly half (48% n=15) of the participants did not know of cotutelle PhD options. 16% (n=5) stated that they would not be interested in such an option, while 32% (n=10) were unsure if a cotutelle PhD arrangement would suit them.

7. All participants perceive a PhD from MQ / Australia to be of higher quality than from their own country.

8. Many participants also maintained that there was greater independence and creativity in doctoral research here than in their own country. However, it was acknowledged that there is a period of transition for all students into a PhD:

   “Both local and international students have the same problem of transition. At the undergraduate level you are used to relying on the teacher and even in honours there is more guidance. When you are doing research in a PhD, you are independent… You're on your own and you need to discover. At the start of the PhD students are not used to being independent and it takes time to adjust to this.” [A307j]

**Recommendations**

4. **Continued promotion of MQ’s cotutelle PhD strategy within MQ.** [MI Director HDR, HDRO]

5. **Maintenance of Central Commencement Program focus on the MQ Code of HDR Practice (including the Code of Supervisory Practice) as well as Divisional Commencement Program discussion of supervision and research expectations and practices.** [Dean HDR, Directors HDR]

### 5.3 Research Expectations and Research Culture

1. HDR students felt welcome in their Divisions but the perceived strength of the research culture was variable across Divisions.

2. There was acknowledgement that there were differing cultural expectations in relation to research processes and methods in some disciplines which needed to be understood at an early stage. A key difference was the importance in Australian HDR of attribution of correct sources of information, e.g. citations.

3. The majority of participants (84% n=26) stated that they attended regular departmental / divisional research seminars and 72% (n=21) attended regular divisional / departmental social functions.

4. Over half (57% n=16) of the participants perceived that their department encouraged research networking within the Division, and beyond MQ (61% n=17).
5. As in *Improving the First Year Research Experience* Projects 2003-2006, participants commented on barriers to interdisciplinary research and research interactions beyond the immediate student-supervisor or specific research group.

“During my candidature I went overseas to America, to UCLA, and I saw there [and also in Sweden] a completely different supervision style to what I was experiencing here. The benefit was that there was far more regular interaction between the professors and supervisors and the members of their group, which of course comprised other PhD students. The regular meeting and interaction enabled a greater level of feedback and guidance to be given to research students in a way that is missing here in my department... There does not seem to be any formal mechanism in the department that will allow this type of communication to happen.” [A507i]

6. There was a perceived need to understand the different writing styles between countries of origin and Australia.

“I know a student from China who submitted his work to his supervisor, the ideas and content were very good but his writing was not. The student used big flowery words and ... [we] really need help in understanding the difference in writing style.” [A207i]

7. A number of participants had expected more guidance in undertaking their research. The degree of independence expected was greater than anticipated:

“Actually doing a Ph.D. is more like what I expected a postdoc would be. It's more like having a job than getting an education. There is a lower level of guidance and a greater degree of independence than I expected.” [A507i]

**Recommendations**

6. **Maintain and improve departmental and divisional research cultures in terms of encouraging research networks, both internal and external to the department.** [ADRs, Directors HDR]

7. **Ensure adequate provision of sessions on academic writing and thesis formatting at divisional level.** [ADRs, Directors HDR]

5.4 **Resource and Skill Support**

5.4.1 **Availability of Physical and Technical Resources**

1. The majority of students (87% n=27) said that they had an allocated work space within their department. However, the allocated space met the needs of only half of these students (n=14).

2. Space difficulties were primarily that rooms were too crowded, or that there was a hot desk arrangement which meant uncertainty that a space would be available on a particular day. Such difficulties were reported in some parts of ELS, L&P and ICS, and were seen as particularly unconducive for research:

“There are 10 students working in one room. It’s good to make friends but not to research.” [A607i]

“We should at least have fixed seating and a laptop.” [B1007i]

3. Students from L&P commented that in some areas there was insufficient lockable storage space:

“The number of students is more than the number of lockers.” [B407i]

4. Participants from ELS commented on the variability, between labs and areas of the Division, in the quality of equipment. With no common facilities available to all HDR students they noted that arrangements for sharing of equipment and access to better resourced labs were ineffective. Several of these participants had undertaken HDR previously at either another
Australian university or a university in Europe. All observed better equipment available at their prior universities.

“Each lab is different with different resources. You don't know that when you are applying, regarding instruments. Some labs are fully equipped and others may have none and no access even.” [C507i]

5. A major gap noted by ELS participants was the lack of technical staff to maintain existing equipment and to assist in training HDR students in the use of the equipment:

“Another problem that I have come across in my area is that there is not enough technical support. The technical support person is only part time and does not have the time to support and teach HDR students to use the instruments and the equipment. I need a short course or tutorial on the machines and there is no one to give it. You are on your own and it takes up too much of your research time.” [A407i]

“The levels of technical support and instrumentation are much lower than I expected. There is actually no one in charge of most of the instrumentation. Students have to maintain and repair the instruments. The efficiency of carrying out a task is very low. This year our department ran out of dry ice after Christmas and this condition lasted several weeks.” [ES0407i]

“I expected better lab facilities and instruments. Where I did my Masters, they had better equipment. The equipment is not so bad but it is very badly maintained because there is no designated staff member to do it. Instead, students are expected to maintain the equipment which eats into research time.” [B907i]

6. None of the issues raised by these international HDR students is different from feedback reported by commencing HDR students in the Improving the First Year Research Experience Projects 2003-2006. Clearly not all HDR students experience the same difficulties, but there is a contrast between areas within and across Divisions where students have good work space, sufficient storage space, access to technical support and good equipment.

Recommendations

8. Ensure good access for all HDR students to a work space which is conducive to research. [Deans, ADRs, Directors HDR]

9. Develop alternative solutions to hot desk arrangements for HDR students such as provision of work space where there is access to wireless server connection. [Deans, ADRs, Directors HDR]

10. Higher priority in ELS for technical support and training in the use of equipment for HDR students. [Dean ELS, ADR, Director HDR]

5.4.2 Skill Development

1. Participants were positive and appreciative of MQ support for skill development.

2. The most common courses undertaken for skill development by participants were their divisional and/or departmental commencement programs and other research methods courses required within their Division.

3. Participants commented positively on the helpfulness of the research method courses and support available through their Divisions.

4. Just over one third of participants (n=11) had undertaken skill courses offered by the Library to support their HDR.

5. Writing or English language skill courses had been taken by 9 participants. (See 5.4.3)
5.4.3 English and Academic Writing

1. The standard of spoken English among participants was good but varied from near native speaker competence to needing third party assistance in expressing ideas.

2. There was acknowledgement that HDR students needed to function in English at a number of levels: the academic English standard required for receipt of scholarships; academic English for research and publication in their discipline; and conversational English to assist in socialisation and integration into the broader community.

3. Many participants maintained that while they had no issues with achieving the level of English required for a scholarship and HDR entry, they did need to learn more about academic writing both for their thesis and for publication. Further, participants felt that academic writing in their discipline was an issue that they shared with native speakers of English.

   “Learning to write in a scholarly format is very important. In India we are not taught to write at the international level for scientific scholarship.” [B807i]

   “It is the same with publishing papers; it is the writing skill that I need help with, not the content or the research.” [A507i]

4. Only about one-third (n=9) of participants had undertaken a writing skills course through their Division or the University. Participants from EFS, Law and SCMP commented very positively about the English support available to HDR students through their Division.

5. Participants maintained that HDR students, both international and domestic, would welcome academic writing courses. These, they felt, should be: offered or related to their discipline; be available from early in their HDR candidature; be between 1-3 days in duration.

6. A number of students had attended English conversation courses/classes at MQ presented by NCELTR. They commented positively on these but felt that they were not sufficiently promoted or known among HDR students.

Recommendations

11. More active promotion of the range of academic and conversational MQ English language courses available to HDR students, including appropriate HDRO and divisional web links. [Manager HDRO, Directors HDR]

12. Increase the availability of academic writing sessions for HDR students at Divisional level. [Directors HDR]

5.4.4 Financial Support

1. The availability of MQ scholarships for international HDR students is a major factor in deciding to undertake HDR at MQ. Nearly all participants held a scholarship and most held a MQRES/IMURS scholarship.

2. 13% (n=4) of participants also received a top-up scholarship. Another 13 participants believed that they needed a top-up scholarship, primarily to support a partner/family.

3. Just over half the participants (52% n=16) maintained that their scholarship was sufficient to support their living costs in Sydney. The same number of participants also work part time and another 29% (n=9) were planning to look for part time work.

4. It was noted that the MQ PGRF upper limit of $4000 has not kept pace with the increasing cost of conferences. The maximum PGRF available is increasingly insufficient to meet student travel and conference costs, and supplementary funding is needed from Divisions.
5. Participants commented that MQ research funding arrangements, which have been devolved to the Divisions, have the advantage of teaching HDR students how to cost and plan their research.

“This whole thing is teaching us about how to budget and plan our research. It would be very good for the future as a researcher managing academic funds. ... I had no clue about budgeting before, now I have to learn.” [C207i]

6. Participants from ICS perceived a lack of transparency about accessing money to support their research. This issue was noted by ICS participants in the 2006 Improving the First Year Research Experience Project and represents a change from the very positive comments in 2003-2005 on ICS financial support for HDR research.

“But I don’t know how much we have. I may have some money left over but we never know how much we have. Usually requests for money get approved but we don't know. We were told we have to apply for the MQ PGRF before we apply for the ICS PGRF. I had to apply without knowing what or where.” [C307i]

7. Between one-half and two-thirds of participants report that they use the HDRO/RO (n=16) and their Department/Division (n=20) websites for funding options.

Recommendations

13. Review the maximum level of the PGRF in view of the increasing conference and travel expenses for HDR students. [DVC-R, Dean HDR]

14. Examine the perceived negative impact for HDR students of changed ICS Divisional funding arrangements after 2005. [Dean ICS, Director HDR]

15. Maintain HDRO/RO and Divisional website HDR student funding information with appropriate links. [Manager HDRO, Directors HDR]

5.5 International HDR Student Accommodation and Social Support Issues

1. Students commented positively on the range of pre-arrival support provided by HDRO.

2. Accommodation is the single biggest issue that international HDR students report as a difficulty in commencing their HDR. This issue arose in focus groups and was also reported in feedback from the Orientation meetings for international HDR students during 2006 and 2007. The difficulties experienced in locating accommodation are reported as a source of research delay. Some reported a gap of around 3 months in fully commencing their research due to time spent in arranging accommodation.

3. Only a small proportion of participants (20% n=6) had sought and received assistance from MI in finding accommodation. With the benefit of hindsight over half of those who had not sought MQ help (58% n=11) think they should have sought MQ / MI assistance with accommodation.

4. Students do not expect MQ to make accommodation arrangements for them, but an MQ guide on how to arrange accommodation in the vicinity of MQ is seen as a need in addition to the information on the MI and Student Services websites and publications.

5. International HDR students maintain that MQ accommodation is expensive, inflexible and is geared to single students and undergraduates.

6. There is a lack of short term (e.g. 2-3 months) MQ accommodation for HDR students with families.

7. Participants from China in particular noted the strong cultural difference from the communal living arrangements common in their home universities.
"In China there is a lot of communal living. There are common dormitories, showers and eating places; for students and for teachers. They all live together on campus. It is community living in China." [A107i]

8. Scholarship funding for HDR students is seen as sufficient if a student has no dependents.

9. The flexibility of HDR commencements throughout the year can create rental difficulties, in particular when rents are required for a full semester.

10. While most international HDR participants reported feeling welcome at MQ and included in their Divisions, a number of students commented on the need for more social opportunities across Divisions for HDR students. Similar comments were made in the Improving the First Year Research Experience Projects 2003-2006. Notably, aside from accommodation issues, a number of commencing international students report social isolation as a problem for them in the early stages of their candidature, although there are weekly MUPRA evenings for graduate students and other social activities.

“There should be more BBQs! More socialising opportunities since we don’t get to meet people because we are working so often; For example, once every three months or each semester.” [C307i]

“MQ could facilitate more forums for international students to interact.” [B707i]

Recommendations

16. Expand information on accommodation processes to assist international HDR students. [MI Director HDR, Manager HDRO]

17. MI to investigate the provision of some short term accommodation which is suitable for HDR students with dependents. [MI Director HDR]

18. Additional social events for international and domestic HDR students. [President MUPRA]

Ruth Neumann
Leah Boucher
September 2007
Appendices

6.1 Letter of Invitation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

2nd May 2007

Dear Macquarie International Research Student,

Over the past few years Macquarie University has doubled its intake of international higher degree research (HDR) students. International research students are an important part of the University’s strategic research direction.

Macquarie is committed to providing a supportive and high quality research environment for its HDR students. Student feedback is essential in enabling us to meet this goal. Thus, we will be undertaking a series of focus group interviews with selected groups of international students in May 2007.

I am writing to invite you to participate in one of these focus groups. The University is interested in your views on all aspects of your research experience at Macquarie. I would like to encourage you to take part and to feel free to be open with your views and suggestions. No comments that you make will be attributed to you as an individual.

The focus groups will be conducted by Associate Professor Ruth Neumann from the Dean Higher Degree Research Office and are planned for 15-17 May, 2007. The focus groups will be small (6-8 students) and will last approximately one hour. The sessions will be held in the in Room 311 in the Lincoln Building (C8A, Level 3).

I hope that you will be able to accept this invitation to provide the University with important feedback. Should you prefer to have an individual interview, please advise Ruth Neumann, either by telephone on 02 9850 6403 or by email highered@vc.mq.edu.au.

All participants in the focus groups will receive a report of the findings and recommendations to the University. Information on previous HDR reports and surveys can be found on the University website: http://www.research.mq.edu.au/structure_staff/deanhdr/hdr_surveys

I hope that you will be able to make time in your schedule to participate and help to improve the research environment for international students at Macquarie University.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Piper
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
6.2 MQ International HDR Questionnaire Results 2007

NB. More than one response per question may have been given. The first figure is the number of responses, the second figure is the number of responses expressed as a percentage of total responses to that question (given in parentheses after the question).

1. Is your principal supervisor: (31)
   a. Personally selected = 6 = 19%
   b. Previous supervisor = 8 = 26%
   c. Department/Division allocated = 13 = 42%
   d. Don’t yet have one = 0 = 0%
   e. Other = 4 = 13%

2. How much contact did you have with your principal supervisor before applying for candidature enrolment? (31)
   a. A lot = 16 = 52%
   b. Some = 7 = 23%
   c. Very little = 2 = 7%
   d. None = 6 = 19%

3. Do you know about Co-supervision (co-tutelle) enrolment options combining MQ and an OS University enrolment? (31)
   a. Yes = 9 = 29%
   b. No = 15 = 48%
   c. Not sure = 7 = 23%

4. Would you be interested in this option? (31)
   a. Yes = 16 = 52%
   b. No = 5 = 16%
   c. Not sure = 10 = 32%

5. Are you on a scholarship? (31)
   a. Yes = 28 = 90%
   b. No = 2 = 7%
   c. Not sure = 0 = 0%
   d. Personally Funded = 1 = 3%

5a. If you are on a scholarship, is it? (28)
   a. MQRES = 6 = 21%
   b. IMURS = 21 = 75%
   c. Divisional = 0 = 0%
   d. E-IPRS = 3 = 11%
   e. ARC = 0 = 0%
   f. Own Gov’t = 0 = 0%
   g. Other = 0 = 0%

6. Do you also receive a top-up scholarship? (31)
   a. Yes = 4 = 13%
   b. No = 23 = 74%
   c. Not sure = 4 = 13%

6b. If No, do you need a top-up scholarship? (25)
   a. Yes = 13 = 52%
   b. No = 4 = 16%
   c. Not sure = 8 = 32%

6bii. If yes do you need the top-up scholarship to: (14)
   a. Support your partner = 7 = 50%
   b. Support dependants = 4 = 29%
   c. Other = 3 = 21%
7. If you are on a scholarship, is the amount sufficient to support your living costs in Sydney? (31)
   a. Yes = 16 = 52%
   b. No = 10 = 32%
   c. Not sure = 2 = 6%
   d. Not on a scholarship = 3 = 10%

8. Do you also work part-time? (31)
   a. Yes = 16 = 52%
   b. No = 6 = 19%
   c. Not yet, but I plan to = 9 = 29%

9. Do you have adequate Dep’t/Div resources to undertake your research? (30)
   a. Yes = 22 = 73%
   b. No = 6 = 20%
   c. Not sure = 2 = 7%

10. Do you have an allocated space (eg. desk, office, lab) to work in your department? (31)
    a. Yes = 27 = 87%
        (i) Does meet needs = 14 = 45%
        (ii) Does NOT meet needs = 5 = 16%
        (iii) Not sure = 1 = 3%
    b. No = 3 = 10%

11. Have you looked at the HDRO/RO website for funding options? (31)
    a. Yes = 16 = 52%
    b. No = 12 = 39%
    c. Not sure = 3 = 10%

12. Have you looked at your Dep’t / Div website for funding support options? (31)
    a. Yes = 20 = 65%
    b. No = 7 = 23%
    c. Not sure = 4 = 13%

13. Do you have clear information about funding for your research costs from your Dep’t / Div? (31)
    a. Yes = 20 = 65%
    b. No = 5 = 16%
    c. Not sure = 6 = 19%

14. Have you undertaken any of the following courses during your MQ research candidature? (30)
    a. Divisional Commencement Program = 26 = 87%
    b. Departmental Commencement Program = 18 = 60%
    c. Div / Dept Writing Skills Course = 8 = 27%
    d. Div / Dept Research Methods Course = 10 = 33%
    e. MQ English Language Course = 1 = 3%
    f. MQ Library Courses = 11 = 37%
    g. MQ Career Development Course = 2 = 7%
    h. Other = 4 = 13%

15. Do you attend regular research seminars in your Dep’t / Div? (31)
    a. Yes = 26 = 84%
    b. No = 2 = 6%
    c. N/A = 0 = 0%
    d. Not yet = 3 = 10%

16. Do you attend regular social functions in your Dep’t / Div? (29)
    a. Yes = 21 = 72%
    b. No = 5 = 17%
    c. N/A = 0 = 0%
    d. Not yet = 3 = 10%
17. Do you attend social functions in the University (eg MUPRA, MI)? (28)
   a. Yes = 8 = 29%
   b. No = 15 = 54%
   c. N/A = 0 = 0%
   d. Not yet = 5 = 18%

18. Does your Dep’t / Div encourage research networking in the Div? (28)
   a. Yes = 16 = 57%
   b. No = 6 = 21%
   c. N/A = 1 = 4%
   d. Not yet = 2 = 7%
   e. Not sure = 3 = 11%

19. Does your Dep’t / Div encourage research networking beyond MQ? (28)
   a. Yes = 17 = 61%
   b. No = 4 = 14%
   c. Not sure = 7 = 25%

20. Date of Commencement:
   a. 2003 = 0 = 0%
   b. 2004 = 3 = 10%
   c. 2005 = 14 = 45%
   d. 2006 = 4 = 13%
   e. 2007 = 10 = 32%

21. I am Living: (31)
   a. On my own = 4 = 13%
   b. With a partner = 12 = 39%
   c. With dependent children = 2 = 6%
   d. Boarding with a family = 0 = 0%
   e. Renting a room in a house / flat = 11 = 35%
   f. Sharing with other students = 6 = 19%
   g. Renting a house = 6 = 19%

22. Did MQ assist you in finding accommodation? (30)
   a. Yes = 6 = 20%
   b. No = 24 = 80%

22a. If yes, who helped you? (5)
   a. MI = 5 = 100%
   b. Student Services = 0 = 0%
   c. Other = 0 = 0%

22b. If No, would you have liked more assistance from the University? (19)
   a. Yes = 11 = 58%
   b. No = 8 = 42%

23. Has your HDR progress been slowed in the last 6-12 months due to any of the following? (28)
   a. Cost of living / financial pressures = 7 = 25%
   b. Family responsibilities = 5 = 18%
   c. Pressure of outside work = 2 = 7%
   d. Need for writing assistance = 2 = 7%
   e. Accommodation issues = 2 = 7%
   f. Other = 2 = 7%
   g. No = 13 = 46%