Background

1. The 2008 MUSEQ-R survey of all enrolled HDR students is the third annual HDR student satisfaction survey. The survey was developed in 2006 to provide MQ HDR students with a confidential feedback instrument.

2. The survey is based on the annual national Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ) for completed HDR students, thus allowing comparison with previous MQ HDR feedback and national ratings. It has 3 sections: the national PREQ items, MQ specific items and 3 overall satisfaction ratings. (See Attachments A and B). The survey is administered by the Management Information Unit (MIU).

3. The discussion highlights findings based on rating differences of 5 points or more based on GCA advice in relation to PREQ that “differences of around 5 points or more may be of interest as they represent a difference of at least a fifth of a standard deviation” \( \text{(Postgraduate Research Experience 2005 Report GCA, 2006:3).} \)

Response Rate

4. The response rate to MUSEQ-R 2008 was 39% (n=604). This response is slightly lower than in 2007 but represents more respondents. The response in 2007 was 41% (n=577) and 29% (n= 376) in 2006. By comparison the national response rate to the PREQ is 50-55% and MQ’s 2006 graduate response rate to the PREQ was 56% (n=109).


6. Divisional student participation was generally proportional with MQ’s HDR population. Divisional response rates ranged from 91% (ASAM) to 23% (MGSM).

   Recommendation 1: Increase the MUSEQ-R response rate to 50% in 2010. Improve each Faculty response rate to 40-50% of their enrolment for 2009. [A/Professor Neumann; Associate Deans HDR].

   Recommendation 2: Raise later year HDR student response rates by an additional 10% of enrolment in 2009. [A/Professor Neumann; Associate Deans HDR].

Findings [see also Attachment C: Tables 1-6]

Overall Satisfaction

1. The highest overall satisfaction rating was for supervision (Q33) (2008: 82% / 2007: 86% / 2006: 81%) and the lowest for MQ support services (Q32) (68% 70% / 71%).

2. MUSEQ-R students rated their overall satisfaction with their research experience (Q34) to date lower (77%) than 2006 MQ graduates (81%) and national graduates (86%). First year students rated their 2008 experience (81%) more highly than later year HDR students (75%). This rating pattern is generally consistent with the ratings of 2007 and 2006.

3. Respondent ratings on the PREQ scales have remained stable over 2008-2006. The trend has been for MUSEQ-R respondents to record similar ratings to MQ graduates and also the national graduate ratings.

4. Highest levels of overall satisfaction on all items of the MUSEQ-R survey are among first-year HDR students and the lowest generally among professional doctorate students.

   Recommendation 3: All Faculties and Schools to review the support provided to later year HDR students to improve satisfaction ratings on all MUSEQ-R PREQ scales and MQ specific items by 5 points in 2009 and in 2010. [Associate Deans HDR]
Recommendation 4: The Faculty of Human Sciences and MGSM to examine ways of improving the satisfaction of professional doctorate students in relation to Supervision, Intellectual Climate and Skill Development. [AD HDR FHS, Director HDR, MGSM]

5. In 2008 ASAM respondents rated the highest level of satisfaction on all scales as well as the overall satisfaction rating, with ratings 8-22 points higher than the MQ rating.

**Intellectual Climate**

6. Consistent with the national rating trend, Intellectual Climate (IC) receives the lowest rating (2008: 59% / 2007: 60% / 2006: 56%). This rating is similar to MQ graduates (58% / 52% / 57%) and the national rating (63% / 63% / 58%). First year students consistently rate the highest satisfaction with IC (65% / 69% / 66%) while professional doctorate students consistently rate the lowest levels of satisfaction (53% / 55% / 43%). Respondents from ASAM (81%) and from ACES (69% / 75% / 57%) expressed the highest rating with IC while respondents from ICS (48% / 55% / 48%) and MGSM (53% / 49% / 64%) recorded the lowest ratings.

**Recommendation 5:** Faculties and Schools to examine ways of improving student satisfaction with Intellectual Climate by an additional 10% rating on the MUSEQ-R PREQ Intellectual Climate scale in 2009, noting particularly the strong variations in satisfaction among different categories of HDR students. [Associate Deans HDR/ Director HDR, MGSM]

**Skill Development**

7. The ratings on the Skill Development scale have remained consistent from 2008-2006 (80% / 82% / 84%) but they are also consistently lower than MQ graduate ratings (86% / 90% / 90%) and the national graduate ratings (91% / 91% / 91%). In 2008 professional doctorate students rated lower (73% / 78% / 81%) on this scale. See also below discussion on Q11 (research methods) and Q28 (learning to budget for research) of the MQ specific items

**Recommendation 6:** Faculties and Schools review the provision of skill development opportunities for all categories of student, in particular in relation to research methods and learning to budget in order to increase HDR student satisfaction by 5 points by 2010. [Associate Deans HDR/Directors HDR, MGSM]

**Infrastructure**

8. There has been no change in satisfaction on the Infrastructure scale (65% / 66% / 61%) and it is still below the National PREQ Infrastructure rating (74% / 72% / 70%). There are some variations across Divisions and student groups. Analysis of the items within the scale indicates that across MQ all items rate under 70% with the exception of ICS and ASAM where respondents expressed strong satisfaction. Of particular concern: appropriate financial support for research (MGSM 27%, LAW 44%, ACES 48%), access to equipment (ELS 56%), access to technical support (ELS 57%, HUM 45%, LAW 52%).

**Recommendation 7:** Faculties and MGSM to review the financial, equipment and technical support provided in all departments in order to remove any perceived inequities and increase HDR student satisfaction to 70% on all infrastructure and budget items by 2009/2010. [Associate Deans HDR/ Director HDR, MGSM]

**Ratings on MQ specific items**

9. MQ ratings for 2008 have remained stable on all items except in relation to research methods training (Q11 – 2008: 52% / 2007: 58% / 2006: 53%) where there is a lower rating than in 2007. International HDR students rate lowest on Q11 (46% / 54% / 43%) while professional doctorate students record the highest level of satisfaction (67% / 88% / 70%). Across the Divisions in 2008 respondents from MGSM (64%), ACES (59%) and EFS (58%) express higher levels of satisfaction. However, students from ASAM (40%), ELS (44%) and ICS (49%) express lower levels of satisfaction on this item.

10. Compared with 2006 respondents, 2008 respondents express less agreement in having learnt to prepare a budget for their research (Q28 - 54% / 55% / 62%) and this perception is shared in particular by professional doctorate (36% / 52% / 49%), part time (38% / 40% / 55%) and first year
students (41% / 54% / 52%). In 2008 later year students expressed most satisfaction on Q 28 (60% / 56% / 66%). Across the Divisions in 2008 respondents from ACES (27%), MGSM (35%) and ASAM (44%) held lower perceptions on research budgeting Q28. Respondents from EFS (69%), SCMP (67%) and ELS (60%) rated more highly on Q28.

**Student Services**

11. The lowest levels of overall satisfaction by all HDR students are for MQ support services (Q32) (68% /70%/71%).

**Recommendation 8:** Improve overall satisfaction with MQ support services by 5 points in 2009 and by another 5 points in 2010. [*DVC Administration*]

12. Satisfaction with the Library (Q30) is lower in 2008 than in 2006 (64% / 66% / 70%) but has improved since 2007 in relation to specific student categories (see Recommendation 8 Finding 11 Report on HDR Student Survey MUSEQ-R 2007 Executive Summary). However respondents from SCMP (55% / 60% / 69%) continue to rate lower satisfaction as well as in 2008 Law respondents (56% / 72% / -). ACES respondents rate high levels of satisfaction with Q30 (96% / 82% / 88%) as do ASAM respondents (70%).

**Recommendation 9:** The Librarian to continue to improve satisfaction levels among the different HDR student categories and the Faculty of Arts (SCMP and Law in particular). [*Librarian, AD/HDR Arts*]

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*Ruth Neumann*  
*March, 2009*