Background

1. The 2009 MUSEQ-R survey of all enrolled HDR students is the fourth 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 B and C). The survey is administered by MQ Analytics.

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” (Postgraduate Research Experience 2005 Report GCA, 2006:3).

4. From 2009 Faculties were created in a University restructure. The previous 9 Divisions were collapsed into 4 Faculties (plus MGSM). It should be noted that where comparisons are made with ratings prior to 2009, respondents to the MUSEQ-R were in the previous Divisional structure but are here reported in the new Faculty structure.

5. Department-specific results have been produced for Faculty-level reporting where there were more than 12 student respondents from the Department. This is important to maintain student anonymity.

Response Rate [see also Attachment A: Tables 1 & 2]

6. The response rate to MUSEQ-R 2009 was 27% (n=438). This response is lower compared to previous years. The response in 2008 was 39% (n=604), 41% (n=577) in 2007 and 29% (n= 376) in 2006. By comparison the national response rate to the PREQ is 50-55% and MQ’s 2007 graduate response rate to the PREQ was 41% (n=68).

7. Faculty student participation was generally proportional with MQ’s HDR population. Faculty response rates ranged from 37% (Human Sciences) to 14% (MGSM).

Recommendation 1: Increase the MUSEQ-R response rate to 50% by 2011. Improve each Faculty response rate to 40-50% of their enrolment by 2011. [A/Professor Neumann; Associate Deans HDR Director HDR, MGSM].

Recommendation 2: Raise later year HDR student response rates by an additional 10% of enrolment by 2011. [A/Professor Neumann; Associate Deans HDR Director HDR, MGSM].

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

1. The lower response rate for 2009 should be considered when interpreting the findings. However, the rating trends remain consistent since 2006. In general first year, PhD, full time and international HDR respondents are more satisfied on most MUSEQ-R PREQ scales and MQ specific items.

Recommendation 3: All Faculties and Schools to review the support provided to later year HDR students, MPhil and part time students to improve satisfaction ratings on all MUSEQ-R PREQ scales and MQ specific items by 5 points in 2011. [Associate Deans HDR Director HDR, MGSM]

Overall Satisfaction

2. The highest overall satisfaction rating was for supervision (Q33) (2009: 85% / 2008: 82% / 2007: 86% / 2006: 81%) and the lowest for MQ support services (Q32) (72% / 68% 70% / 71%).
3. MUSEQ-R students rated their overall satisfaction with their research experience (Q34) to date lower (80%) than 2007 MQ graduates (90%) and national graduates (86%).

4. Respondent ratings on the PREQ scales have remained stable over 2009-2006. The trend has been for MUSEQ-R respondents to record similar ratings to MQ graduates on the Supervision and Intellectual Climate scales but to rate lower levels of satisfaction on Skill Development, Infrastructure, Goals and Expectations and Overall Satisfaction compared with MQ and national graduates.

**Supervision**

2. The highest rating in Supervision is Item 1 (availability of supervision) 87% (see also Q. 2 MQ Specific Items) followed by Item 21 (feedback on progress) 84%. The lowest ratings are for Item 24 (the guidance on literature search) 68% and Item 17 (guidance in topic selection and refinement) 74%.

**Recommendation 4:** Faculties and Schools to examine ways of improving student satisfaction with literature search and topic selection and to report to 30 July HDRC. [Associate Deans HDR/ Director HDR, MGSM]

**Intellectual Climate**

1. Consistent with the national rating trend, Intellectual Climate (IC) receives the lowest rating (2009: 61% / 2008: 59% / 2007: 60% / 2006: 56%). Item 23 (department research ambience) receives the lowest rating, 54% with respondents from the Faculty of Arts 46% holding the lowest perception. Item 9 (integrated into the Department community) is rated 56% with lowest perceptions held by respondents from MGSM (47%) and Arts (50%).

**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 by 2011, noting particularly the strong variations in satisfaction among different categories of HDR students. [Associate Deans HDR/ Director HDR, MGSM]

**Skill Development**

2. The ratings on Skill Development have remained consistent since 2006 (2009:83%; 2008:80%; 2007: 82%; 2006:84%). In line with Recommendation 6 from the “Report on HDR Student Survey, MUSEQ-R 2008” to HDRC April 2009 there has been an improvement in ratings of 5-20 points on some items in the Skill Development scale across MQ and all Faculties and MGSM with the exception of Item 26 (confident about tackling problems) from MGSM where there has been a decline of 7 points.

**Recommendation 6:** Faculties and Schools to continue to 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 2011. [Associate Deans HDR/Directors HDR, MGSM]

**Infrastructure**

3. There has been consistency in respondent ratings on the Infrastructure scale since 2006 (2009: 68%; 2008: 65%; 2007: 67%; 2006: 61%). Respondents from FBE (74%) and FHS (74%) express highest satisfaction. MGSM respondents (46%) are least satisfied followed by Arts (54%) respondents. In general respondents from MGSM rate 7-46 points lower than MQ respondents on all Infrastructure items. Such a low rating pattern has been consistent since 2006.

**Recommendation 7:** Faculties to continue 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 2010/2011. [Associate Deans HDR]
**Recommendation 8:** MGSM to examine the reasons for continued low levels of satisfaction on Infrastructure and report recommendations to 30 July HDRC in order to achieve a 10 point improvement by 2011. *[Director HDR, MGSM]*

**Ratings on MQ specific items**


2. There has been an improvement in the ratings on Item 11 (research methods training) 57% (2008: 52%) in line with Recommendation 6 (“Report on HDR Student Survey, MUSEQ-R 2008” to HDRC April 2009) and also for FBE (84% / 53%) and FS (57% / 46%).

3. There has been an improved rating in 2009 on the item learnt to prepare a research budget (Q. 28) 64% (2008:54%). This improvement is also reflected in ratings for the Faculties where there has been an improvement of 9-23 points, with the exception of Arts.

**Student Services**

1. The lowest levels of overall satisfaction by all HDR students are for MQ support services (Q32) (72%/68% /70%/71%).

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

4. 70% of MQ respondents perceive that the Library meets their needs (Q. 30) compared with only 64% in 2008. However, respondents from Arts (58%) and Science (62%) are less satisfied. Respondents from all other areas rated 8-22 points higher than in 2008. Part time students are least satisfied with Library support (62%).

   **Recommendation 9:** The Librarian to continue to improve satisfaction levels among the different HDR student categories and the Faculty of Arts and Science. *[Librarian, AD/HDR Arts & Science]*

*Ruth Neumann  
June, 2010*