

## Report on HDR Student Survey, MUSEQ-R 2007

### Executive Summary

HDRC April 2008

#### **Background**

1. The MUSEQ-R survey of all enrolled HDR students was developed in 2006 to provide MQ HDR students with a confidential feedback instrument as part of MQ's commitment to providing an evidence base for a strong and supportive research culture. The 2007 MUSEQ-R is the second annual HDR student satisfaction survey.
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" (*Postgraduate Research Experience 2005 Report GCA, 2006:3*).

#### **Response Rate**

4. The response rate for 2007 was 41% (n=577), an improvement from 29% (n= 376) in 2006. Proportionally more first year HDR students (55% n=201/35% n=121 in 2006) participated in MUSEQ-R 2007 than students at later stages (36% n=376/27% n=255 in 2006).
5. Divisional student response was generally proportional with MQ's HDR population. Divisional response rates ranged from 34% (EFS) to 51% (ICS).

**Recommendation 1:** Maintain the overall improvement in the MUSEQ-R response rate and increase to 50% by 2009. Improve each divisional response rate to 40-50% of their enrolment for 2008. [*A/Professor Neumann; Divisional Directors HDR/Associate Deans HDR*].

**Recommendation 2:** Raise later year HDR student response rates by an additional 10% of enrolment in 2008. [*A/Professor Neumann; Divisional Directors HDR/Associate Deans HDR*].

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

##### **Overall Satisfaction**

1. MUSEQ-R students rated their overall satisfaction with their research experience (Q34) (81% compared with 77% in 2006) lower than 2005 PREQ MQ graduates (87%) and graduates nationally (85%).
2. The highest overall satisfaction rating was for supervision (Q33) (86%/81% in 2006).
3. Highest levels of overall satisfaction on all items of the MUSEQ-R survey are among first-year HDR students and PhD students.
4. Professional doctorate students continue to experience lower levels of satisfaction than PhD students. The differences are apparent on the MUSEQ-R PREQ scales of *Supervision* (70%/79% in 2006), *Intellectual Climate* (55%/61%) *Skill Development* (78%/83%), and *Infrastructure* (51%/68%) scales as well as the *Overall Satisfaction* rating (69%/83%). On the MQ specific items professional doctorate students rate lower on Q. 2 time with supervisor (67%/85%), Q. 15 departmental support for research (70%/75%), Q. 25 respected as fellow researcher (50%/65%), Q. 28 learnt to prepare budget (52%/58%), Q. 31 HDRO support of candidature (51%/59%).

**Recommendation 3:** Establish an HDRC Working Party to review professional doctorate programs and recommend improvements to raise satisfaction levels by November HDRC. [*Dean HDR (Chair), MI Director HDR, A/Professor Neumann, Dean L&P/Delegate, Dean MGSM/ Delegate, Associate Dean HDR EFS*]

5. First year HDR students continue to express much higher satisfaction levels than later year HDR students, on *Supervision* (86%/72%), *Intellectual Climate* (69%/56%), *Infrastructure* (72%/63%) and

*Goals and Expectations* (88%/83%) and *Overall Satisfaction* (91%/75%). They also rate 10-17 points higher satisfaction on nearly all MUSEQ-R MQ specific questions.

**Recommendation 4:** All Divisions 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 2008 and in 2009. [Divisional Directors HDR/Associate Deans HDR]

6. There has been a clear improvement in ICS ratings on all MUSEQ-R scales and items: for example, ratings for *Supervision* (78%/60%), *Infrastructure* (79%/67%) and *Overall Satisfaction* (84%/65%).

### ***Intellectual Climate***

7. Respondent ratings on the MUSEQ-R PREQ scales have remained consistent over 2007 and 2006. However, the *Intellectual Climate* scale (60%/56% in 2006) continues to receive the lowest satisfaction rating although, compared with 2005 PREQ MQ graduates, 2007 MUSEQ-R respondents are more satisfied. On the MQ specific item ratings for 2007 have improved in relation to Q. 19 researcher interaction within Divisions (64%/56% in 2006)

**Recommendation 5:** Divisions 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. [Divisional Directors HDR/Associate Deans HDR]

### ***Infrastructure***

8. There has been some improvement in satisfaction on the *Infrastructure* scale (66% / 61% in 2006) but it is still below the National PREQ *Infrastructure* rating (72%). There are some variations within and across Divisions between 2007 and 2006. Analysis of the items within the scale indicates that across MQ key areas of dissatisfaction rating under 70% are: appropriate financial support for research (60%), access to equipment (63%), access to technical support (64%). On the MQ specific items 2007 respondents express less satisfaction on Q. 28 learning how to prepare a research budget (55%/62% in 2006).

**Recommendation 6:** Divisions to review the financial, equipment and technical support provided in order to increase HDR student satisfaction to 70% on all infrastructure and budget items by 2008. [Divisional Directors HDR/Associate Deans HDR]

### ***Student Services***

9. The lowest levels of overall satisfaction by all HDR students are for MQ support services (Q32) (70%/71% in 2006).

**Recommendation 7:** Improve overall satisfaction with MQ support services by 5 points in 2008 and by another 5 points in 2009. [DVC Administration]

10. On the MUSEQ-R MQ specific items ratings for 2007 have improved in relation to Divisional administrative support (Q.15, 74%/68% in 2006), and helpfulness of the HDRO website (Q. 29, 61%/54% in 2006).

11. Satisfaction with the Library in meeting HDR student needs (Q. 30) also shows some marked variations from 2006. Students in Humanities (51%/74% in 2006), MGSM (67%/72% in 2006) and SCMP (60%/69% in 2006) express lower levels of satisfaction. MPhil (59%/82% in 2006), part time (66%/ 82% in 2006), domestic (55%/74% in 2006), non first year (65%/ 71% in 2006) and external students (59%/73% in 2006) also express lower levels of satisfaction with the Library.

**Recommendation 8:** The Librarian to investigate reasons behind lower satisfaction levels among the different HDR student categories and also in Humanities and SCMP. Strategies for improvement to be reported to July HDRC for a 10% increase in ratings in 2009. [Librarian, Divisional Directors HDR Humanities and SCMP]

*Ruth Neumann, March, 2008*