



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

PRES 2022 BRIEFING NOTE

What you said and what we did following the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2021

WELCOME

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2022, is an annual UK national survey of Research Degree students, organised by AdvanceHE.

The Briefing Note provides some details of key outcomes of the previous (2021) PRES survey, and summarises the actions taken since then. Over 39,855 postgraduate research (PGR) students from 94 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) took part in the previous survey, with 55% of eligible University of Portsmouth PGR students responding (compared to 36% nationwide). Most of the 42 questions asked in the PRES 2021 survey were rated on a 1–5 scale, with 5 indicating strong agreement.



SUMMARY OF PRES 2021

In PRES 2021, our PGR students reported an average score of 82% for overall satisfaction with their research degree programme, which placed the University of Portsmouth in the top 25% of all UK universities. In addition, 82% of students agreed or strongly agreed they were confident they would complete their research degree on time, placing us well above the sector average. In a new initiative, PRES summary scores are now incorporated into the formal annual quality review procedures for all schools, departments and faculties across the University, further confirming that your responses to the PRES really do matter!

RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The PRES 2021 survey asked eight questions about skills development relating to research techniques, critical analysis, creativity, research integrity, project management, communication, networking and self-management. Overall ratings for these questions were well above the sector average.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2021

- The Graduate School Development Programme continues to underpin much of the research and professional skills training across the University and is very highly rated. Further and repeat workshops were added according to student demand this year.
- During the COVID pandemic all 79 highly rated Graduate School workshops (190 sessions in total) were moved online and the Graduate School's full-time e-Learning Coordinator continues to develop and bring together online sessions and resources for all PGR students.
- The UEA Tuesday research methods webinars remain very popular across the whole of the University.





PROGRESS AND ASSESSMENT

The 2021 PRES survey asked four questions about progress and assessment, relating to induction, deadlines and annual review, thesis standards and assessment procedures. Responses from Portsmouth students placed the University significantly above the HEI sector average. During 2020-21, our PGRs were often significantly affected by the COVID pandemic; the Graduate School, supervisors and the wider University provided online, IT and financial support, including non fee extensions, for those students who were affected.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2021

- Despite having to switch to a wholly online format in 2020-21, the University of Portsmouth continues to have one of the highest ratings in the UK for its research degree induction events. The University-wide Graduate School inductions take place in October and February each year and incorporate specific information about PGR wellbeing.
- In the PRES 2021 ratings, all four progress and assessment questions were found to be significantly higher than the sector average.
- During the COVID pandemic the Graduate School produced dedicated support pages for our PGRs, provided regular updates, and widely advertised the financial support that had been arranged in the form of COVID-related extensions and hardship funds for PGRs.

RESOURCES

The PRES 2021 survey asked four questions about resources relating to working space, computing resources and facilities, the library, and specialist resources. The overall resources rating for Portsmouth students is higher than the sector average.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2021

- The University has one of the highest ratings for provision of library facilities in the sector (including online and physical resources) and satisfaction with this aspect of the University is significantly above the sector average.
- As we come out of the pandemic, faculties are continuing to consult students on how to make PGR offices and open plan spaces work best for students.
- Ratings of specialist resources needed for research when studying remotely were higher than the sector average.





RESEARCH CULTURE

The PRES 2021 survey asked four questions about research culture relating to seminar programmes, opportunities to discuss research, becoming involved in the wider research community and research ambience. The University of Portsmouth average is 2% lower than the sector average in this area.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2021

- Improving research culture across the University is now a University strategic target.
- In 2021 the Graduate School successfully bid for £25,000 of extra investment to encourage and enhance research culture initiatives at University, faculty and departmental level. The first of these initiatives have already been funded.
- The Graduate School PGRS Facebook Community now has over 520 members.
- The 2021 wholly online 'Festival of Doctoral Research' was a great success with over 200 attendees celebrating our Doctoral researchers through events such as our three minute thesis presentations, research image and Tweet your thesis competitions. The 2022 Doc Fest will take place on 7 July 2022 in the Eldon building and online.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The 2021 PRES survey asked four questions about responsibilities, relating to institutional feedback, understanding of responsibilities of students and supervisors and knowing who to approach if they had problems. The average University of Portsmouth ratings for three of the four questions, and overall, were higher than the sector mean. Scores for knowing who to contact other than your supervisor were slightly below the sector mean.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2021

- A new leaflet and MyPort webpage has been developed and will be published in the Spring 2022 to let students know who they should contact other than their supervisors if they are concerned about any aspect of their degree programme.
- All departments/schools now have Departmental Research Degree Coordinators and PGR student representatives, whose role it is to help students and supervisors, and to pass along any feedback or concerns as appropriate.



SUPERVISION

The 2021 PRES survey asked four questions about supervision relating to supervisory skills, regular contact, feedback and help with training needs.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2021

- Overall, 89% of students agreed they had a good supervision experience, compared to 88% for the whole HEI sector.
- Our PGR students were especially satisfied with the help that supervisors provided on training and development and these were significantly higher than the whole sector.

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

The PRES 2021 survey asked three questions about teaching opportunities. Ratings of training for teaching were some of the highest in the sector and significantly higher than the sector mean, but responses were lower than the sector for the proportion who had undertaken paid (or equivalent) teaching work.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2021

- Students across the University report a significantly greater rate of formal training for their teaching at 83%, compared to the whole HEI sector of 66%.
- On average 34% of students say they have undertaken paid teaching compared to 37% across the sector. Faculties where this is less than the average have been investigating what support and procedures can be put in place to raise this figure to at least the sector average.
- The GProf teacher training programme for PGRs remains popular and highly rated.

PLANS FOR THE NATIONAL POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES) 2022

In 2022 the University will again take part in the national PRES survey, along with nearly 100 other higher education institutions.

The PRES 2022 survey will be launched on 5 April 2022 and run until 12 May 2022. Eligible students (students with a live registration, in their research phase who were registered before February 2022) will receive an email inviting them to complete the online survey.

Supervisors will also receive emails informing them about the survey and asking them to encourage their students to participate.

More information about PRES 2022, what it is and how the data will be used can be found out at port.ac.uk/pres. If you have questions about the PRES or how it will be distributed, please contact us at uopsurveys@port.ac.uk.

TAKE PART IN PRES 2022 - HAVE YOUR SAY!

All survey respondents will be entered into a prize draw and a randomly selected student will win £1,000 to be used to support their studies.

The PRES survey is extremely important to research students and their supervisors, as it allows the University to gauge how successful any changes have been and also helps us to identify areas that might require further attention. The data collected will be anonymised once the survey has closed but, during the survey, students who do not respond will be sent multiple reminders. We are proud that the University of Portsmouth usually has one of the highest PRES response rates in the whole of the UK.

Our 2021 winner, Sarah Davis (pictured below), is a PhD researcher specialising in strain distribution patterns in healthy and arthritic bones. Sarah plans to spend her prize on an international conference in her 3rd year.

So, if you are a postgraduate research student, please take part in the survey so that the University is aware of your views. If you are a Supervisor, please encourage your students to participate.



Contact us

If you require further information about the PRES 2022 survey, please contact the Graduate School.

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