



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

PRES 2024 BRIEFING NOTE

What you said and what we did following the
Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2023

WELCOME

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2024, is an annual UK national survey of all Research Degree students, organised by AdvanceHE.

This Briefing Note provides details of some of the key outcomes from the previous (2023) PRES survey, and summarises the actions taken since then. In PRES 2023, 37,661 postgraduate research (PGR) students from 105 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) took part in the survey, (an overall response rate of 30%), whilst 408 eligible University of Portsmouth PGR students responding (a response rate of 47%). Most of the 43 questions asked in the PRES 2023 survey were rated on a 1–5 scale, with 5 indicating strong agreement.



SUMMARY OF PRES 2023

Portsmouth PGR students yet again reported they had higher overall satisfaction than the sector average, with 81% of our students responding this year that they either agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied overall with their research degree programme, compared to 79% for the whole sector.

In addition, 85% of our PGR students agreed or strongly agreed they were confident they would complete their research degree on time, placing us in the top quartile of all universities. The average University of Portsmouth rating for the question 'My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students' was significantly higher than the sector mean. You may be interested to know that summary scores from the PRES 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!

RESOURCES

The PRES 2023 survey asked seven questions about campus and off-campus resources relating to working space, computing resources and facilities, the library, and specialist resources. The overall resources rating for Portsmouth students was higher than the sector average, with ratings of specialist resources needed for research when studying remotely being significantly higher than the sector average.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2023

- Since the previous PRES, all of the key information that you need to succeed in your research degree, including forms and guidance, have been added to the MyPort web pages, making the information, advice and the forms all much easier to access for PGR students and their supervisors. See: myport.port.ac.uk/resources-for-pgrs
- The University continues to have high ratings for the provision of library facilities compared to the rest of the sector (including online and physical resources).



TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

The PRES 2023 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 2023

- The University of Portsmouth Graduate School GProf teacher training programme for PGRs remains popular and very highly rated.
- Students across the University reported a significantly greater rate of formal training for their teaching at 82%, compared to the whole HEI sector of 63%.
- On average 38% of students say they have undertaken paid teaching compared to 41% for the sector as a whole. Faculties where this rate is lower than the sector average have been investigating the support and procedures that can be put in place to raise this figure.
- An initiative launched in 2023 now enables PGR students to use their teaching experiences to apply for registration as an Associate Fellow of Advance HE.

"THIS PROGRAMME HAS ENABLED ME TO GAIN VALUABLE TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND LEADERSHIP." PRES 2023.

RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The PRES 2023 survey asked eight questions about skills development relating to research and communication. Ratings for these questions for our University were all above the sector average.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2023

- In addition to our blend of in-person and online training, 2023 was the first year in which we ran the popular new evening provision aimed at part-time and distance learning students: Professional and Distance Learning Online Community (PaDLOC).
- The Graduate School Development Programme (GSDP) continues to be very highly rated and underpins much of the research and professional skills training for PGRs across the University.

SUPPORT

The PRES 2023 survey asked three questions about the general support and resources available to PGRs. The questions asked about support for academic skills, digital support and health and wellbeing. Portsmouth students in 2023 rated all three of these questions higher than the sector average, with academic skills being rated significantly higher.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2023

- The Graduate School Research Culture Fund provided support across both faculties and University-wide, and funded many sessions including mini-conferences, wellbeing workshops and writing retreats.
- The monthly PGR Catch-Up sessions continue to be very popular, with sessions covering a number of specialist topics.
- The Graduate School's writing retreats were offered in both online and in-person formats, helping PGRs to move forward with their writing.





RESPONSIBILITIES

The 2023 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 rating about responding to institutional feedback from research degree students was significantly higher than the sector mean. Scores for knowing who to contact other than your supervisor was above the sector mean.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2023

- The 'I'm a PGR student who do I ask about...' leaflet and linked MyPort webpage continues to be popular and to provide information to students about who they should contact other than their supervisors for a number of issues, including wellbeing, and concerns about their degree programme.
- All departments/schools have an academic acting as their Departmental Directors of Postgraduate Research (DDPGR), as well as having a PGR student representative on each Faculty Research Degree Committee. The role of the DDPGR is to help students and supervisors, and to pass along any feedback or concerns as appropriate.

FOR A SUMMARY OF THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO YOU VISIT:
[MYPORT.PORT.AC.UK/RESOURCES-FOR-PGRS](https://myport.port.ac.uk/resources-for-pgrs)

PROGRESSION

The 2023 PRES survey asked four questions about progression through your PGR degree, including inductions, annual reviews, thesis standards and assessment procedures. Responses from Portsmouth students placed the University significantly above the HEI sector average. In 2023 the University of Portsmouth once again had one of the highest ratings in the UK for its research degree induction events, significantly higher than the sector.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2023

- In addition to the traditional October and February University-wide Graduate School inductions, we have now added an April event for the growing numbers of PGRs joining at this time of the year.
- After following up comments from the PGR student reps, we have added more information in our inductions about how to find support to maintain your wellbeing as a PGR.
- In response to your feedback, we now offer induction follow-up sessions in the weeks after each induction to continue our support and enable PGRs to re-connect with people they met at the event.
- We have introduced for the first time a Re-Induction event for continuing PGRs. This ran in January and 43 2nd (or later) year PGRs attended (see photo on the right).
- In 2023 the Academic Services Research Degrees team was expanded and they now provide excellent response times to queries and issues.



SUPERVISION

The 2023 PRES survey asked four questions about supervision relating to supervisory skills, regular contact, feedback and help with training needs. Our PGR students were satisfied with the help that supervisors provided on training and development and these were higher than the average for the sector.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2023

- The Graduate School now offers 21 training sessions for Supervisors each year, many of which are repeated and / or online. All of these sessions are very highly rated.
- New sessions for supervisors including those supporting distance learning students and students with EDI backgrounds.

RESEARCH CULTURE

The PRES 2023 survey asked four questions about research culture and four relating to a sense of community amongst research students. The University of Portsmouth research culture rating was 3% higher than the sector average in this area, and the community average was 5% higher.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2023

- In each of the last three years, the Graduate School has invested £25,000 to fund PGR research culture initiatives at University, faculty and departmental levels. In the last year these have paid for writing retreats, specific research culture events and equipment for remote meetings so that students not able to attend campus can also take part in meetings and events.
- The 2023 'Festival of Doctoral Research' was a great success with over 140 attendees celebrating our doctoral researchers through events such as our Five by Five, research image, elevator pitch and even a bake your thesis competition (see photo on the right). The 2024 Doc Fest will take place on 9 July 2024 in the Eldon building and online.
- Our reinvigorated online and in-person Research Culture Drop-Ins regularly attract good numbers and enable PGRs from across the University to come together to discuss their research, their successes, and their ideas.
- A new Interdisciplinary Reading Group was launched and has become popular with students from across the University who wish to discuss tips and hints, and issues around conducting research in various disciplines.

TAKE PART IN PRES 2024 - HAVE YOUR SAY!

All respondents to PRES 2024 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.

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.

PLANS FOR THE NATIONAL POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES) 2024

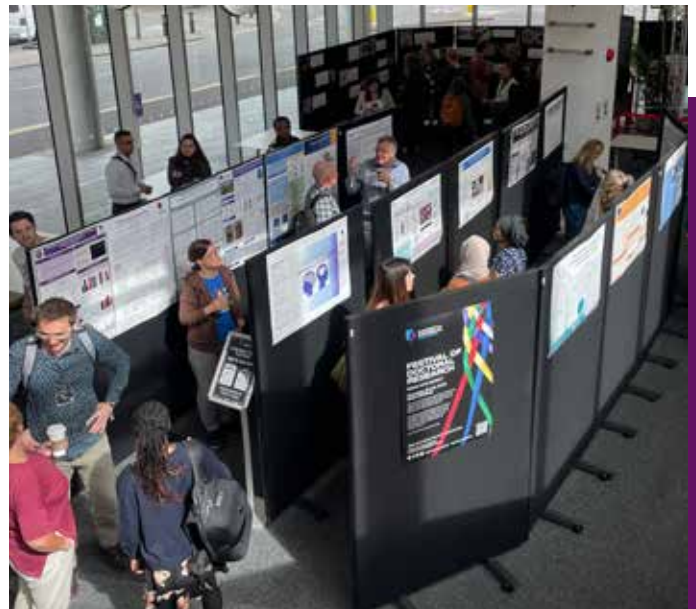
In 2024 the University will again take part in the national PRES survey, along with approximately 100 other higher education institutions.

The PRES 2024 survey will be launched on 9 April 2024 and run until 10 May 2024. Eligible students (students with a live registration, in their research phase who started their studies before February 2024) 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 2024, WHAT IT IS AND HOW THE DATA WILL BE USED CAN BE FOUND 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.



Contact us

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