



IRU Information Report

Institutional Research Unit

Postgraduate Coursework Students Rate AUT

Postgraduate Coursework Student Experience Survey 2005

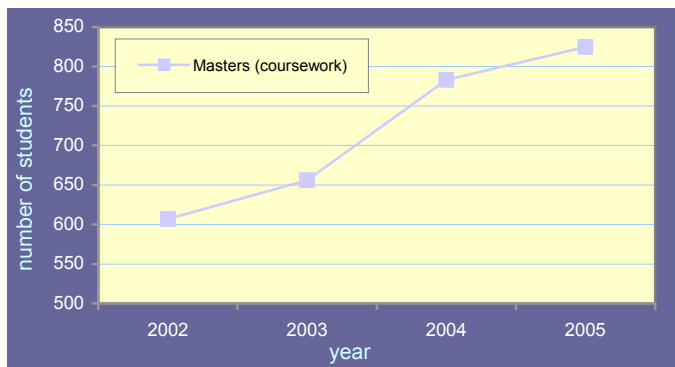
January 2006

This report presents a summary of the findings from the inaugural Postgraduate Coursework Student Experience Survey, undertaken in September/October 2005. Postgraduate Coursework students rated various aspects of their postgraduate coursework study including; resources and facilities, the Faculty Postgraduate Office, programme organisation, quality of teaching, programme workload, assessment on their programme, motivation and stimulation, capability and skill development, preparation for research and the quality of student services provided at AUT.

Profile of Postgraduate Coursework Students: 2002 – 2005

The number of postgraduate coursework students studying at AUT has increased from 629 students in 2002 to 1166 in 2005. There continues to be a yearly increase of Masters students undertaking coursework, from 607 in 2002 to 825 in 2005, representing a growth rate of 36%.

Figure 1. Coursework masters students at AUT: 2002 to 2005



In 2005, twice as many postgraduate coursework students were studying part-time (69%) as full-time (31%). There were many more female postgraduate coursework students (713, 61%) than male (453, 39%). Most students were domestic (86%) with only a small group of international students (14%).

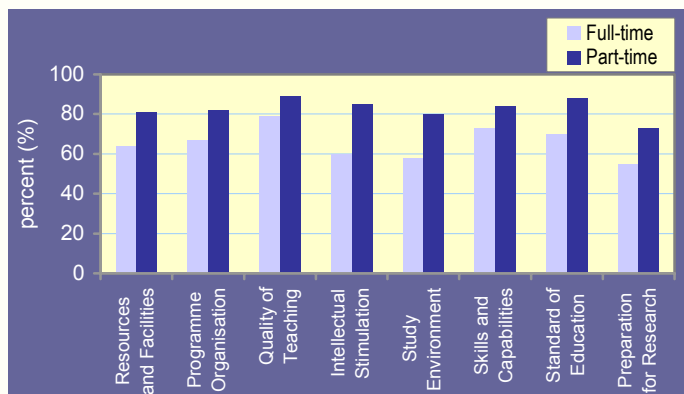
Overall Satisfaction with Postgraduate Study

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with 11 areas of the postgraduate coursework experience: resources and facilities, programme organisation, teaching on programme, programme workload, assessment, intellectual stimulation, study environment at AUT, skills and capabilities, standard of education, preparation for research and student services.

- The quality of teaching was rated very highly by respondents, with a mean of 5.83 out of 7. Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the teaching quality, and only 5% were dissatisfied.
- Feedback showed high satisfaction levels overall for the *standard of education* (mean 5.46, 83% satisfied, 7% dissatisfied) and the respondents were also positive in relation to the *development of skills and capabilities while undertaking postgraduate courses at AUT* (mean 5.41, 81% satisfied, 5% dissatisfied).
- Respondents were the least satisfied with their *preparation for research*. At 4.96, this was the only mean given below 5, on the 7-point scale. A comparatively lower two-thirds of students (66%) were satisfied with how they felt they had been prepared for later research within their postgraduate study and 14% were dissatisfied.

- Full-time students were less satisfied than part-time students in all areas relating to postgraduate coursework (see figure 2).
- Design and Creative Technologies students were comparatively less satisfied with the *study environment at AUT* (56% satisfied, 20% dissatisfied and 20% neutral) *assessment* (54% satisfied, 27% neutral and 19% dissatisfied) and *programme workload* (58% satisfied, 17% dissatisfied, 25% neutral) at AUT.
- The sub-group with the lowest ratings comparatively were 20-24 year olds with only 47% satisfied with their *preparation for research* (20% dissatisfied, 33% neutral) 59% satisfied with *programme workload* (22% dissatisfied, 29% neutral) and 61% satisfied with the *study environment at AUT* overall (17% dissatisfied, 22% neutral).

Figure 2. % Satisfaction with postgraduate coursework experience by study method (full-time and part-time)



Postgraduate Services

Respondents were asked to answer a number of questions about the Faculty Postgraduate Offices, the seminar programme and events provided for them.

- Awareness of the Faculty Postgraduate Offices was high (85% aware) and most considered this an important service (82% Yes, 18% No).
- Maori students gave comparatively low satisfaction ratings both to the usefulness of the service (43% satisfied, 30% dissatisfied, and the quality of the service (57% satisfaction, 23% dissatisfaction, mean 4.57) provided by the Faculty Postgraduate Offices.
- Most postgraduate coursework students were aware of the seminar programme and events offered by the university postgraduate office (86% aware) but rated these as important, rather than very important, and barely satisfactory.

Positive Highlights

Postgraduate coursework students as a whole indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with most aspects of postgraduate coursework study.

- Students were the most satisfied with the *quality of teaching* (86% satisfied) and were particularly satisfied with the *small classes* and *opportunities for student input into sessions*.
- Postgraduate coursework students agreed that their programme of study had led to the development of a range of research skills and capabilities. 89% agreed (4% disagreed) they were developing an *ability to think critically* and 87% overall confirmed (5% disagreed) they were improving their *written communication skills*.
- Postgraduate coursework students from the faculty of Applied Humanities stood out as being *very satisfied* with their preparation for research.
- Feedback showed that postgraduate coursework students were very satisfied with all specific aspects relating to the assessment of their programme, including the *clarity of assessment criteria* and *promptness of feedback*.

Areas of Dissatisfaction

There were a number of specific issues which were considered very important but barely satisfactory by particular sub-groups of students. These concerns warrant some attention.

- Within the faculty of Design and Creative Technologies, the *availability of necessary specialist equipment* was one issue that students indicated needed targeting for future improvement. Students from this faculty also raised concerns with *measure taken within their faculty/department to ensure that students do not feel isolated*.
- Overall only two thirds of all respondents (67%) indicated they had developed their *oral communication skills*. Applied Humanities students felt their *ability to work collaboratively with others* and their *ability to learn independently* were less developed than other skills.
- Many postgraduate coursework students felt that *opportunities to contribute to staff research programmes* and *opportunities to go on programme placements/work experience* need targeting for future improvement.
- The postgraduate room in the library* was rated as not at all important, while several other resources and facilities including the *postgraduate room in the faculty*, the *availability of adequate library resources at AUT* and the *availability of adequate computer resources at AUT* was rated as important rather than very important.
- Postgraduate coursework students continuing on to research were not convinced they had been adequately prepared during their coursework year. This was particularly so for students aged 20-24, Asian domestic students, those studying full-time, business faculty students and those aged 30-39, who were less than 60% satisfied with their preparation for research.

Table 1. Overall postgraduate coursework experience at AUT

Item	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %
Quality of Teaching	86	5
Quality of Standard of Education	83	7
Acquisition of Skills and Capabilities	81	5
Level of Assessment	79	8
Programme Organisation	78	9
Intellectual Stimulation	78	8
Quality of Resources & Facilities	77	6
Programme Workload	77	9
Study Environment at AUT	74	9
Preparation for Research	66	4
Quality of Student Services	61	4

Conclusions

Overall the findings of the survey indicated that postgraduate coursework students were very positive about their experience at AUT. There were only a small number of specific issues by particular sub-groups which management may wish to address.

Feedback indicated that postgraduate coursework students would be interested in greater involvement with staff research projects, and opportunities to go on programme placements or work experience.

Management within the faculty of Design and Creative Technologies could check that students have the specialised equipment they require and that measures are taken within the faculty to ensure students don't feel isolated. Concerns regarding assessment of their programmes may also need to be addressed.

Research methodology training may need to be adapted to ensure that coursework students moving on to postgraduate research feel they are adequately prepared.

**The full report
'The Postgraduate Coursework Student Experience at AUT 2005'
is available on the IRU website
www.aut.ac.nz/staff/iru/**

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