The Higher Education Academy
Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

PTES 2011 report

Pam Wells

Foreword

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is a development tool provided by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to any of our subscribing higher education institutions (HEIs) that wish to participate. Along with the HEA's well-established and longer-running Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), PTES allows participating HEIs to collect information from their postgraduate students about their learning experiences in a confidential, comprehensive and user-friendly way.

The HEA's postgraduate surveys have become an increasingly valued tool across the UK higher education sector and are unique data sources on the postgraduate experience. The March 2010 Department of Business, Innovation and Skills report by Adrian Smith stated that they are "the main source of information about students' motivations" (*One Step Beyond*, p. 37).

This report presents the results of the third national administration of PTES, which has run every year since 2009. These trend data can therefore provide valuable insights into the nature of the taught postgraduate student experience over time. The results for any individual year can now be examined within the context of a broader and more robust sample of responses.

Participation in PTES has increased considerably since 2009, when 30 institutions and approximately 15,000 taught postgraduate students took part, with 80 institutions and close to 40,000 students taking part in 2011. Between them, PRES 2011 and PTES 2011 have collected the views of almost 70,000 students, meaning that the surveys are unparalleled within Europe, in their scope and breadth.

PTES will run again in the academic year 2011-12, when participating institutions will have the opportunity to seek their taught postgraduate students' opinions. PTES runs on an annual cycle so as to give all students taking one-year full-time programmes (the majority of both the sample and the postgraduate population as a whole) the opportunity to be heard via their host HEI. The survey will run on a flexible period between February and May 2012, and a call for participation will be circulated throughout the sector in the Autumn of 2011.

The HEA is committed to the ongoing development of PTES and will continue to provide support to the sector in the form of events, resources, and bespoke consultancy to institutions to make best use of the findings. The HEA looks forward to continuing to work with HEIs to improve the experience of taught postgraduate students.

Thanks are due to all HEA and sector colleagues who have helped to contribute to this report. In particular, to Gosia Turner for data analysis, Dr Rachel Segal for guidance, Professor Adrian Randall for chairing the PTES advisory group and offering helpful comments on the intended scope and content of the report, and Katherine Gent and Professor Chris Park for input into an early draft of the report.

Any colleagues wishing to know more about PTES can contact the team at surveys@heacademy.ac.uk or keep up to date via the HEA's website at http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ptes.

Craig Mahoney
Chief Executive
Higher Education Academy

Executive summary

The Higher Education Academy's Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) collects feedback on the experiences of current taught postgraduate students in a systematic, user-friendly and comparative way. This is a key component of the HEA's work in the postgraduate arena alongside the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), which is run biennially. Both surveys were run during 2010-11. PTES will run again in the coming academic year, 2011-12.

2011 saw the third full administration of PTES with responses from a total of 38,756 students from 80 UK higher education institutions (HEIs), a national response rate of 17.8%. This is a substantial increase from 2010, when there were responses from 32,638 students from 76 HEIs, a national response rate of 14.8%. The demographic profile of 2011 respondents is broadly similar to that of 2010 respondents and of the taught postgraduate population overall, evidenced by HESA statistics.

In 2011 survey access control was mandatory for all participating HEIs. This ensures that each respondent can only complete the survey once, and the survey can only be completed by the targeted population. It further increases the robustness of PTES, giving increased confidence that the results genuinely and accurately reflect the population being surveyed.

The questionnaire included all of the questions that were asked in PTES 2010, along with five new questions that were specifically intended to investigate depth of learning. Additional questions were also added to the demographic section.

Key findings

The general trend towards more positive responses has continued in 2011. The numbers in square brackets below show 2010 figures, for comparison.

Motivations

There has been no change in the rank order of students' main motivations for taking their postgraduate programme since PTES 2010. The most frequently selected motivation in PTES 2011 was 'to improve my employment prospects'.

Overall satisfaction

The extent to which taught postgraduate students' expectations have been met or exceeded has increased by 3-4% on all of the areas surveyed by PTES since 2009, the first year it was run. 88% of students stated that the overall experience of their programme met or exceeded their expectations, an increase of 4% from 2009 and 3% from 2010.

Quality of teaching and learning

Responses to these scales ranged between 69% [68%] and 84% [83%] with the largest number of students in 2011 agreeing with question 4c 'Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching'. There has been a slight increase in the ratings of teaching quality. The vast majority of respondents (92%) rated this positively, with only 1% [2%] of respondents rated the quality of teaching on their programme as being consistently poor.

Assessment and feedback
Nearly three-quarters of respondents agreed that assessment arrangements and marking had been fair (73%) [72%], and that the criteria used in marking had been made clear in advance (73%) [71%]. They were least positive about the timing of feedback and the extent to which feedback helped clarify things they did not understand.

Dissertation and supervision
Almost three-quarters of respondents (74%) [75%] stated that they needed to write a dissertation as part of their programme. Those students were then asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about the dissertation and supervision. Those students rated all items in this scale in PTES 2011 more positively than in PTES 2010, and more positively than most items in PTES 2009.

Organisation and management
Half (52%) of the students thought that the workload for their programme was more or less what they expected (the same as in 2009 and 2010), and most (77%) [77%] agreed that the timetable fitted well with their other commitments. Students were positive about the effective communication of changes in the programme or teaching (74%) [72%], the balance of core modules and options (71%) [70%], and the balance between scheduled contact time and private study (71%) [70%].

Learning resources
Learning resources were rated highly with students' responses on this scale being between 1% and 3% higher in PTES 2011 than in PTES 2010. The largest increase was on item 16a 'The library resources and services are good enough for my needs'.

Skills and personal development
There was quite a variation in responses for this area, with students rating most highly the ways in which their programme had developed their research skills (81%) [78%] and transferable skills (80%) [78%] and had helped them to become more confident about independent learning (78%) [75%]. However, fewer agreed that their communication skills had improved (68%) [64%]. Agreement ratings in PTES 2011 were between 2% and 4% higher than in PTES 2010, and ratings on all items were higher than those in PTES 2009.

Career and professional development
As in previous years, students were most positive about having better employment prospects as a result of the programme (78%) [78%]. Ratings increased for feeling better prepared for future employment (74%) [72%] and having been encouraged to reflect on their professional development needs (71%) [69%].

Relationship between scale scores and experience against expectation
Multiple regression analysis was used to determine which factors affect overall experience the most. The eight scales in PTES combined account for 42.5% of the variation in students' evaluations of the whole programme. This is lower than in previous years, which may be the result of a greater number of participating institutions and survey respondents, a greater diversity in both institutions and respondents, and a larger sample. It indicates that the factors included in the survey

explain or account for less than half of the variation in the postgraduate taught experience. The rest is explained by other factors, such as personal circumstances, campus facilities, etc.

Pilot questions to address depth of learning
These new items were added in order to explore depth of learning on postgraduate taught degree courses, where this means such things as analysing and synthesising ideas, and applying theories in new situations. In very broad terms, the results suggest that taught postgraduate students are commonly expected to analyse ideas, cases or situations in depth, and judge and evaluate information, arguments, or methods. They are less likely to be required to synthesise information or organise ideas or experiences into more complex relationships, or apply theories to practice in new situations.

Discipline
Disciplinary analysis reveals some interesting variations. The most positive overall experience was for students of medicine and dentistry, of whom only 9.3% reported their experience as below expectations, and 75.6% said that their expectations were exceeded. There were also very positive responses from students on agriculture and related subjects and business and administrative studies courses. The disciplines in which most students found their course to be below their expectations were veterinary science (15.3%), biological sciences (15.0%) and creative arts and design (14.9%).

Domicile
While the differences between domicile groups are not large, some interesting variations are apparent. Home students gave the highest mean scale scores for teaching and learning, staff, assessment and feedback, and career and professional development. They gave the lowest mean scale score for learning resources. International (Non EU) students gave the highest mean scale scores for dissertation, organisation and management, learning resources, and skills and personal development. They gave the lowest mean scale scores for teaching and learning, and staff.

Disability
This is the first year that detailed analysis has been done to explore the associations between disability and how students rate aspects of their taught postgraduate programmes. There is a wide range of ratings depending on the type of disability. Students with a social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder were, on average, the most positive. Just 6.9% of those students found that their programme was below their expectations, and 86.2% said that their expectations were exceeded. Students with a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder tended to be the least satisfied, with only 59.3% recording that their experience exceeded their expectations, and 22.8% stating that their programme was below their expectations.

Section 1: The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

Introduction

This report summarises the results of the third national administration of the Higher Education Academy's Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), which is run by the HEA in conjunction with participating higher education institutions (HEIs). PTES collects the views of taught postgraduate students about various aspects of their experience of their degree programme, and the aggregated results provide a useful snapshot of the taught postgraduate student experience in the UK as a whole. These results have implications for policy and practice both within individual higher education institutions (HEIs) and across the sector.

The report is presented in seven sections:

- Section 1 describes the operation and aims of the survey.
- Section 2 outlines the profile of survey respondents.
- Section 3 summarises the main findings of the survey.
- Section 4 analyses the new pilot questions about depth of learning.
- Section 5 compares results between different disciplines.
- Section 6 presents a preliminary analysis based on domicile.
- Section 7 focuses on students with disabilities.
- Section 8 deals with developing and using PTES for enhancing the taught postgraduate student experience.

Operation and aims of PTES

PTES is an online survey that has been designed to collect direct feedback from current taught postgraduate students in a systematic, user-friendly and comparative way. The main aim of the survey is to help enhance the quality of taught postgraduate degree provision in participating HEIs by providing evidence-informed feedback to inform decision-making.

PTES is offered to all HEIs in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on an opt-in basis. Participation is voluntary for both HEIs and their taught postgraduate students. PTES offers participating HEIs the opportunity to find out what their taught postgraduate students think about their experiences. It also offers them the opportunity to benchmark the views of their own students with the national aggregate and six smaller 'benchmarking club' aggregates of similar institutions; these benchmarking clubs are also constituted on an opt-in basis.

The ongoing development of PTES reflects the ever-increasing interest in the quality of the student experience in the UK. It demonstrates the Higher Education Academy's ongoing commitment to listen and respond to the student voice. Along with the HEA's Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)[1], which gathers the views of postgraduate research students, and the National Student Survey (NSS)[2], which operates at undergraduate level, PTES helps to provide a

[1] http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/pres
[2] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/nss/

comprehensive picture of the student learning experience throughout the United Kingdom.

Survey dates

Following the successful introduction of a flexible survey period in the 2010 PTES administration, this year's participating institutions were permitted to open their PTES survey for any period of three weeks or longer between 1 February and 31 May, with the last permitted survey start date being 5 April 2011[3].

Methodology

PTES uses the same methodology as the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)[4] and PRES. These surveys are based on questionnaires that are delivered via the Bristol Online Surveys (BOS)[5] website.

All HEIs in the United Kingdom were invited to take part in PTES 2011, and 81 institutions from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland took up the offer to participate[6]. This represents half of all HEIs in the UK.

All participating institutions were given an electronic template of the core questionnaire before the survey went live, along with a comprehensive manual containing information for running the survey and analysing the results. Each participating HEI could add as many institution-specific questions as they wished, for local analysis, in addition to the non-editable core survey questions.

Participating institutions were responsible for identifying and contacting their taught postgraduate students to invite them to take part in PTES. The HEA provided a collaborative agreement, signed by all participating HEIs, and a code of practice, to ensure the confidentiality of survey results at both the student and institutional level. No results are to be published that will identify any student, either directly or by implication, and no participating HEI can access the results of any other institution[7].

Survey access control

Following a successful pilot by six participating HEIs in the 2010 administration of PTES, the use of survey access control was made mandatory for all participating institutions in PTES 2011.

---

[3] This date was chosen in order that late-launching HEIs could run their survey for up to eight weeks if they wished to increase their response rates and also because it is not technically possible to set up the benchmarking aggregates until all participating institutions had launched their surveys.

[4] http://www.cros.ac.uk

[5] http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk

[6] Despite the early provision of a comprehensive user manual this year, unfortunately a clerical error within one institution meant that it was not possible to include their results in the 2011 dataset, so this report is based on the results of 80 participating institutions. Further steps will be taken to minimise the risk of such errors in future years.

[7] Although participating institutions can view aggregated results in BOS, no individual HEI's results can be identified by any other HEI.

Survey access control is a service provided by BOS that ensures each respondent can only complete the survey once, and the survey can only be completed by the targeted population. This further increases the robustness of PTES, giving increased confidence in an increasingly competitive sector that the results genuinely and accurately reflect the population being surveyed. Although there is no reason to suspect that previous years' PTES results are unreliable in any way, the introduction of survey access control across the whole sample has ensured that the PTES (and PRES) methodology is as robust as possible, making it among the 'gold standard' of surveys of this type.

In addition to the basic survey access control module, BOS also offer a 'passing parameters' module, which was optional for participating HEIs this year. This module allows respondents to access PTES via an institution's existing web portal or by clicking on a personalised URL, instead of being required to enter a username and password into the standard screen presented via the basic version of survey access control before being taken to the survey itself.

The questionnaire

PTES is based on a core set of questions that seek the views of taught postgraduate students on a range of aspects of their student experience. After these questions, participating HEIs may, if they wish, add as many questions as they would like to. For example, they may wish to collect feedback on particular services, initiatives, policies or practices in order to assess the impact of a recent or proposed change; or to ask which department, school or faculty the student belongs to.

The core PTES 2011 questionnaire is included as an Appendix to this report, and a copy can be downloaded from the PTES website[8]. A Welsh language version of the questionnaire is also made available for any participating Welsh institutions that wish to use it.

The questions were structured in ten main sections:

Section A: Motivations.
Section B: Quality of teaching and learning.
Section C: Assessment and feedback.
Section D: Dissertation.
Section E: Organisation and management.
Section F: Learning resources.
Section G: Skills and personal development.
Section H: Career and professional development.
Section I: Overall satisfaction.
Section J: Further comments.

The PTES 2011 questionnaire included all of the questions that were asked in PTES 2010, along with five new questions in Section B, which were specifically intended to investigate depth of learning. The results of these pilot questions are presented in section 4 of this report.

[8] http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ptes

This report only presents aggregate-level results from the quantitative questions in the core survey. No content analysis of the text-box responses has been undertaken at a national level.

In the tables and text throughout this report, question numbers are those in the PTES 2011 questionnaire, as shown in the Appendix. With the addition of the pilot questions about depth of learning, some of the question numbers differ from the equivalent questions in the PTES 2010 questionnaire.

A series of demographic questions were included to allow analysis of response patterns for different types of student[9]. As in previous years, students were asked about the degree they were registered for, their age and gender, their discipline (using 41 JACS codes), the date they started their course, mode of study, mode of delivery, domicile, employment situation, main source of funding for their course, and highest qualification on entry. This year they were also asked to select the country in which they normally reside, to allow a more fine-grained analysis by domicile, and whether they regarded themselves as having a disability (and, if so, to select the most appropriate description from a drop-down list). The 'disability' question was added between the 'gender' and 'discipline' questions, and the 'country' question was added between the 'domicile' and 'employment' questions.

Benchmarking

As with PRES, PTES was designed to allow participating institutions to benchmark their results in comparison with the aggregated results of all participating HEIs, and also (optionally) in comparison with aggregated results for smaller groups of similar HEIs (i.e., Russell Group, 1994 group, Post-92 institutions, Pre-92 institutions, Small and/or specialist institutions, and Scottish institutions). All participating HEIs can compare their results with the national aggregate, and any institution that chooses to share its data with one or more of the smaller 'benchmarking clubs' for which it qualifies can also compare its results to any or all of those smaller aggregates as well.

It should be stressed that participating HEIs can only see aggregated results for the rest of the sector. No participating institution has direct access to the results for any other participating HEI, and it is not possible to download aggregate datasets for independent analysis.

Ownership and confidentiality

Each participating HEI owns all the survey response data for that institution, and has access to those data throughout the survey period and beyond, for as long as they continue to own a BOS licence. Institutions that download their data from BOS can retain them in perpetuity. The HEA owns the survey instrument itself and is responsible for the survey administration process. A full download of the aggregated dataset is received by the HEA after the survey has closed in order for analyses to be undertaken at the national level.

[9] See sections 2, 5, 6, and 7.

Institutional results remain confidential to that institution. The list of participating HEIs remains confidential to those institutions and the HEA.

The core PTES 2011 survey instrument included a 'Data Protection' page that was fully editable by each participating HEI before launching their survey. This page is viewed by the student respondent immediately before he or she goes on to complete the survey questions, and is designed to reassure the student about the confidentiality of his or her survey responses. The wording was as follows:

> *All data collected in this survey will be held securely.*
>
> *Individual results are confidential to your institution.*
>
> *All participating institutions have agreed not to identify any individuals when reporting their results, and to use their best efforts to ensure that no individuals can be identified by implication.*
>
> *Aggregated institutional results will feed into an anonymised national aggregate which will be available to all institutions taking part in PTES for benchmarking purposes only. Some institutions may also wish to share their results to create smaller anonymised aggregates – benchmarking clubs – with similar institutions (e.g. Russell Group, Post-92).*
>
> *The full PTES dataset will be available to the Higher Education Academy in order to conduct national level analysis, and all results will be reported in an aggregated and anonymised form.*

Academy support

The HEA provided an increased range of support to institutions that participated in PTES 2011 administration, in response to feedback from previous years. This support included:

- A 'starter pack', which included a collaborative agreement and code of practice, the PTES 2011 questionnaire, a comprehensive manual on how to administer and analyse PTES, suggestions for additional institutional questions, a guide to increasing response rates, and a guide to working with the students' union.
- A private 'group space' on the HEA website, where participating PTES officers could read news items about PTES, download PTES-related documents and information, and contribute to PTES-related discussions.
- Ad-hoc support by telephone and email whenever necessary.
- A meeting for PTES officers in York on 7 April 2011, to share good practice and collect feedback from participating institutions.

The HEA also worked with the BOS team to provide technical support for participating institutions, and BOS provided a high level of technical support direct to institutions via telephone and email[10].

In addition, the HEA held PTES-related sessions at the Surveys for Enhancement Conference in Nottingham in May 2011 and a PTES session at the HEA's Annual Conference in July 2011. Institutions are also represented on the PTES Advisory Group, which provides advice, guidance, feedback and support on the PTES survey and related processes.

[10] Institutions that purchase a new BOS licence may attend the BOS offices in Bristol for a free initial training session, by arrangement with BOS.

Section 2: Profile of respondents

Institutions

All HEIs in the United Kingdom were invited to join the 2011 administration of PTES, and take-up of the survey was voluntary, on an opt-in basis. Therefore, as with previous administrations of PTES, all of the institutions that participated in PTES 2011 were self-selecting.

In total, 80 HEIs took part in PTES 2011, compared with 76 in 2010 and 30 in 2009. The participating institutions were located across the UK, with 61 institutions from England, ten from Scotland, eight from Wales, and one from Northern Ireland.

In addition to the national aggregate, each participating institution could also join one or more smaller benchmarking groups, if they were eligible to do so. Again, institutions were only added to those benchmarking groups that they explicitly opted to join. Some HEIs chose to be in more than one benchmarking group, and some chose not to join any.

As with PRES, six benchmarking groups were offered for PTES 2011: Russell Group, 1994 group, Pre-92 institutions, Post-92 institutions, Small and/or specialist institutions, and Scottish institutions.

Response rate

As well as greater participation at the institutional level, PTES 2011 also saw increases in the number of students who were invited to complete it, the number of students who did so, and the overall response rate.

A total of 38,756 students responded to PTES 2011, compared with 32,638 in 2010. The national response rate was 17.8%, compared with 14.8% in 2010. This is particularly reassuring as the response rate in 2010 was lower than that for PTES 2009, despite the increased numbers of both participating institutions and student respondents[11].

The HEA provided an enhanced level of support to participating institutions in PTES 2011 compared with previous years, with an explicit aim of increasing response rates. It had been suggested that making survey access control mandatory for all participating institutions in 2011 might jeopardise response rates, so it was particularly heartening to see such an increase this year. The participating HEIs that were able to achieve the highest response rates are to be congratulated, making their own internal PTES data highly usable in an area where it is traditionally difficult to engage students to respond. While the average national response rate for PTES remains lower than that for PRES, the PTES 2011 response rate has reached its highest level to date. The scale of responses, both in relation to participating institutions and students, is sufficiently large to allow useful conclusions to be drawn at a national level.

[11] The response rate for the first national administration of PTES in 2009, in which 14,421 students from 30 institutions took part, was 17.7%.

Before presenting the overall results for the survey questions, this report will present the demographic profile of the respondents to PRES 2011, comparing with the most recent HESA profiling information where possible, to demonstrate as far as possible that the PTES 2011 sample is broadly representative of taught postgraduate students in the UK.

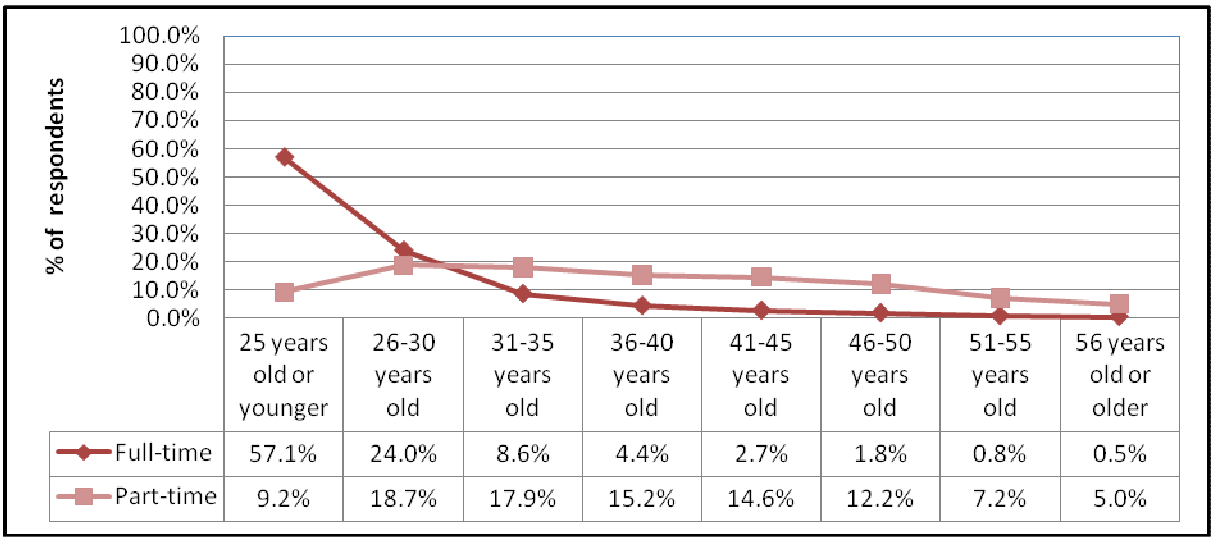
Profile of respondents

Table 1 presents a summary of the national results for each of the demographic questions asked in the PTES 2011 questionnaire. Comparisons with HESA data are presented in Tables 2 to 5.

Table 1: Summary profile of respondents

	Summary
Age	Just over a third of respondents (39%) were 25 years old or younger, nearly two-thirds (61%) were 30 or younger, and 6% were over 50. These proportions are very similar to those for PTES 2010.
Gender	Just over half (57%) were female and just under half (43%) male, as in PTES 2010 (Table 2).
Mode of study	Nearly two-thirds (62%, compared with 61% in 2010) were registered as studying on a full-time basis, and just over a third (35%, compared with 37% in 2010) were part-time (Table 3). The remainder had just completed their programme and were not currently registered.
Mode of delivery	Just over three-quarters (77%, compared with 76% in 2010) were primarily face-to-face learners, and just under a quarter (23%, compared with 24% in 2010) were primarily distance learners.
Domicile	Just under two-thirds (62%, compared with 63% in 2010) were registered for fees purposes as Home students, 11% were registered as students from Other EU countries (the same as in 2010), and more than a quarter (28%, compared with 24% in 2010) as international (Non EU) (Table 4).
Disability	The PTES 2011 questionnaire contained a new question asking students whether they considered themselves to have a disability, and 1,818 respondents (less than 5% of the sample) said yes. A supplementary question asked them to select the most appropriate description of their disability, and most respondents selected specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D (39%).
Year of study	Just under three-quarters (72%, compared with 74% in 2010) had started their taught postgraduate programme within the current academic year, and 19% (compared with 17% in 2010) had started in the previous year.
Degree registered for	Just over three-quarters (79%, compared with 78% in 2010) were registered for a taught Masters, 10% (as in 2010) for a Postgraduate Certificate (including PGCE) and 8% (as in 2010) for a Postgraduate Diploma.
Discipline	As in previous administrations of PTES, the three most common disciplines of respondents were business and administrative studies (23.1%), education (10.0%) and social studies (8.9%). The remaining respondents were widely distributed between many other disciplines (Table 5).
Source of funding	Two-thirds (66%, compared with 63% in 2010) were self-funded, 14% (compared with 16% in 2010) were funded by their employer, and 7% (compared with 8% in 2010) were funded by their institution.
Employment	Just under half (49%, as in PTES 2010) were in paid employment. Of those, almost two-thirds (61%, compared with 63% in 2010) worked more than 30 hours in a typical week during term time, and 12% (compared with 8% in 2010) worked between one and ten hours a week.
Highest qualification on entry	Three-quarters (75%, as in 2010) had an undergraduate degree or equivalent. Nearly a fifth (16%, compared with 17% in 2010) already had a postgraduate degree.

Figure 1 presents a comparison of full-time and part-time modes of study in relation to age, and the pattern of results for PTES 2011 is similar to that found in previous years.



	25 years old or younger	26-30 years old	31-35 years old	36-40 years old	41-45 years old	46-50 years old	51-55 years old	56 years old or older
Full-time	57.1%	24.0%	8.6%	4.4%	2.7%	1.8%	0.8%	0.5%
Part-time	9.2%	18.7%	17.9%	15.2%	14.6%	12.2%	7.2%	5.0%

Figure 1: Variation in mode of study by age

The darker line in Figure 1 refers to the age groups of all full-time students in the sample, and the lighter line refers to the age groups of all part-time students in the sample. As in previous years of PTES, many more students under 26 were studying their taught postgraduate programmes full-time, and more students over the age of 31 were studying part-time.

Further analyses with respect to discipline are presented in section 5, domicile in section 6, and disability in section 7.

Representativeness of respondents

In order to demonstrate the representativeness of the PTES 2011 sample, comparisons have been made, where possible, with the most recently available HESA data (2009-10). These comparisons are presented in Tables 2 to 5.

Table 2: Profile of respondents, by gender

	PTES 2011	HESA 09-10
Male	43.3%	49.3%
Female	56.7%	50.7%

The gender profile in PTES 2011 is very similar to that in previous years. It is common for a lower proportion of males than females to respond to surveys of this type.

Table 3: Profile of respondents, by mode of study

	PTES 2011	HESA 09-10
Full-time	63.3%	55.3%
Part-time	36.0%	44.7%

A slightly greater proportion of respondents to PTES 2011 were studying full-time compared with previous years, but the difference between the PTES and HESA figures is slightly smaller this year than in 2010.

Table 4: Profile of respondents, by domicile

	PTES 2011	HESA 09-10
UK	60.3%	55.5%
Other EU	10.4%	8.8%
International (Non-EU)	27.3%	35.6%

Home students are slightly over-represented in the PTES sample and international (Non EU) students are slightly under-represented. These differences are smaller than in previous years.

Table 5: Profile of respondents, by discipline[12]

	PTES 2011	HESA 09-10
1 Medicine and dentistry	2.8%	2.5%
2 Subjects allied to medicine	8.2%	9.8%
3 Biological sciences	7.9%	4.1%
4 Veterinary science	0.3%	0.1%
5 Agriculture and related subjects	0.3%	0.5%
6 Physical sciences	2.4%	1.8%
7 Mathematical sciences	1.1%	0.7%
8 Computer science	3.6%	4.1%
9 Engineering and technology	7.2%	6.5%
10 Architecture, building and planning	2.8%	3.0%
11 Social studies	8.9%	7.9%
12 Law	4.4%	4.2%
13 Business and administrative studies	23.1%	23.4%
14 Mass communications and documentation	3.1%	2.1%
15 Languages	3.2%	2.4%
16 Historical and philosophical studies	3.0%	2.1%
17 Creative arts and design	6.0%	3.6%
18 Education	10.0%	20.8%
19 Combined	1.6%	0.4%

Overall the PTES 2011 sample closely reflects the HESA profile, although biological sciences and creative arts and design are over-represented and education is under-represented.

These comparisons suggest that the national sample of respondents to PTES 2011 broadly reflects the total population of taught postgraduate students across the UK. In overall terms, it can therefore be said that the findings of PTES 2011 reflect the

[12] 2009-10 students by subject, level and gender (student FPE).

views of taught postgraduates in the UK as a whole. These findings will be presented throughout the remainder of this report.

Section 3: Summary of main findings

This section presents the results for students' responses to the core questions in PTES 2011. In each case, results are presented alongside the equivalent results for previous years. The analysis begins by examining students' motivations for taking their postgraduate programme, then moves on to the scale questions, and then considers experience against expectations. New questions about depth of learning are analysed in section 4 of this report.

The scales in this report contain items that offer five-point response scales ('Likert' scales), where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The items themselves are positively worded statements about an aspect of the student's learning experience.

Because the labels for certain points on the Likert scale include emotive terms ('agree' and 'disagree'), the five options on this response scale cannot necessarily be treated as being equally spaced. For instance, the difference in experience that prompts responses of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' may not be as large as that which prompts responses of 'neutral' and agree'. Thus it is not usually appropriate to report Likert scale responses as mean scores[13].

Responses to individual survey questions are presented throughout this section as the percentage of students who agreed with the statement (i.e., who chose either point 4 or 5 on the Likert scale). These are presented alongside the percentage of students who disagreed (points 1 and 2) and the percentage of neutral responses (point 3).

This report presents scale scores using mean calculations. For these purposes the report makes the assumption that the items on the Likert scale are equally spaced, which is a common practice in reporting survey data. As the calculation of scale scores is already one level of abstraction away from the individual items in the survey, mean scores can be a helpful way of exploring the data at this level. A review of the way in which PTES data are analysed will be undertaken before the results of the next national administration of PTES are reported.

Motivations

Students were asked about their main motivations for taking their postgraduate programme, and their reasons for studying at that particular institution. These results are presented in Tables 6 and 7. In each case, comparisons are presented for the first three years of PTES. Respondents were able to select as many options as they wished, so the totals add up to more than 100%.

[13] For background about this common issue in statistical reporting, see Knapp, T.R. (1990) Treating ordinal scales as interval scales: an attempt to resolve the controversy. *Nursing Research*. 39 (2), 121-123.

Table 6: Students' main motivations for taking their postgraduate programme

	PTES 2009	PTES 2010	PTES 2011
To improve my employment prospects	50%	53%	56%
To progress in my current career path (i.e. a professional qualification)	53%	52%	55%
For personal interest	45%	44%	45%
To enable me to progress to a higher level qualification (e.g. PhD)	32%	33%	34%
To change my current career	18%	18%	18%
As a requirement to enter a particular profession	16%	17%	17%
To meet the requirements of my current job	9%	8%	9%
Other	3%	4%	3%

There has been no change in the rank order of motivations since PTES 2010, though some changes in rank order occurred between 2009 and 2010. The most frequently selected motivation in PTES 2011 was 'To improve my employment prospects'. The popularity of this item increased by 3% between 2009 and 2010 and a further 3% between 2010 and 2011. The second most frequently selected motivation in PTES 2011 was 'To progress in my current career path (i.e. a professional qualification)'. Although this item also increased by 3% between 2010 and 2011, this followed a decrease from 53% in 2009. These two results, taken together, indicate that taught postgraduate students are becoming more focused on employability and career development.

Figure 2 presents a comparison of the two most frequently selected motivations in relation to age, and the pattern of results for PTES 2011 is similar to that found in previous years.

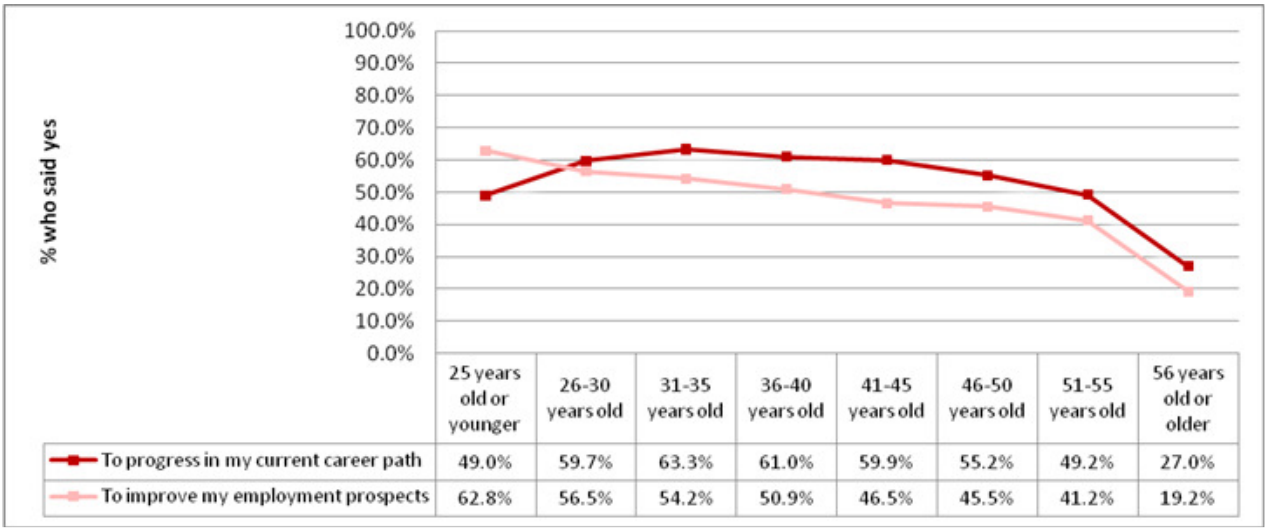


Figure 2: Variations in the top two motivations by age

The figure shows that, while improving employment prospects is more important than progressing in their current career path for students younger than 26, the two motivations are similar for the 26-30 year olds, but progression in current career path remains more important thereafter. It also shows, unsurprisingly, that for students

after their mid-50s both career path and employment prospects drop markedly in importance as motivations.

In addition to asking students why they chose to study for a particular degree, PTES also asked why they chose to study at a particular institution. These results are presented in Table 7, rank order from most to least selected.

Table 7: Reasons why students chose to study at that institution

	PTES 2009	PTES 2010	PTES 2011
The location of the institution	36%	39%	38%
The overall reputation of the institution	39%	39%	37%
The institution's reputation in my chosen subject area	33%	36%	36%
Delivery of the programme is flexible enough to fit around my life	23%	23%	23%
The reputation of the department	26%	23%	23%
It was recommended to me	20%	20%	21%
I have studied at this institution before	15%	16%	17%
Funding was available to me to study this particular programme	17%	16%	16%
It is the only institution offering this programme	13%	13%	14%
Graduates from this institution have good career and employment prospects	13%	14%	13%
The cost of the programme compared to other institutions	11%	12%	13%
My employer advised or encouraged me to do it	9%	8%	8%
The way the programme is assessed	7%	6%	7%
Other	7%	7%	7%

The relative position and strengths of factors have remained very stable between the three surveys, with both location and reputational (particularly institutional reputation) factors dominant. Flexibility of delivery, and recommendations from others, are also clearly very relevant. Factors that emerge as less important than might be expected include cost relative to other similar programmes, availability of funding, and career and employment prospects.

Overall satisfaction

PTES asks students about the extent to which their experience reflects their expectations, using a seven-point scale from -3 to +3, with 0 indicating that their expectations have been met. Table 8 presents a summary of these results for PTES 2011.

Table 8: Experience against expectations, PTES 2011

	Below my expectations	Met my expectations	Exceeded my expectations	N
19.a Quality of teaching and learning	14.7%	14.4%	70.9%	38,396
19.b Assessment and feedback	22.2%	19.7%	58.1%	38,291
19.c Organisation and management	20.5%	19.0%	60.5%	38,346
19.d Learning resources	10.6%	19.4%	70.0%	38,328
19.e Skills and personal development	8.0%	20.4%	71.6%	38,240
19.f Career and professional development	10.8%	22.6%	66.6%	38,129
19.g Overall experience of my course	12.2%	14.7%	73.0%	38,272

The results reported in the first column represent the first three points (-3 to -1), the second column represents the mid-point (0), and the third column represents the final three points (1-3).

For comparison purposes, the results reported in Table 9 reflect a combination of the second and third columns in Table 8. When looking at the extent to which students' expectations have been exceeded (Table 8), the highest area is their overall experience of their course, followed by skills and personal development and quality of teaching and learning. However, when considering the extent to which students' expectations have been met or exceeded (Table 9), the highest area is skills and personal development, followed by learning resources, and career and professional development. By either measure, the lowest-ranking area is assessment and feedback.

The extent to which students rate their expectations as having been 'met or exceeded' has increased consistently since PTES began in 2009. Table 9 presents these results, rounded to the nearest whole percentage, for each of these questions over the three years of PTES.

Table 9: Experience that met or exceeded expectations, trend data

	PTES 2009	PTES 2010	PTES 2011	Increase 2009-2011
19.a Quality of teaching and learning	82%	83%	85%	3%
19.b Assessment and feedback	74%	75%	78%	4%
19.c Organisation and management	76%	76%	80%	4%
19.d Learning resources	86%	87%	89%	3%
19.e Skills and personal development	89%	90%	92%	3%
19.f Career and professional development	86%	88%	89%	3%
19.g Overall experience of my course	84%	85%	88%	4%

Table 9 shows that the extent to which taught postgraduate students' expectations have been met or exceeded has increased by 3-4% on all of the areas surveyed by PTES since 2009. In most cases the largest increase occurred between 2010 and 2011, especially in relation to organisation and management. The only item on which the increase between 2009 and 2010 was greater than that between 2010 and 2011

was career and personal development, which showed an increase of just 1% between 2010 and 2011.

Scale scores

Quality of teaching and learning

Students were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of questions about the teaching and learning (Q3) and staff (Q4) on their programme. Their ratings in these areas were generally slightly more positive than those in previous years. The results are reported in Table 10 in relation to agreement/disagreement, and mean scale scores are presented in Figures 3 and 4.

Table 10: Students' views on teaching and learning, and staff

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	N
3.a The teaching and learning methods are effective for this type of programme	10.6%	9.2%	80.2%	38,481
3.b There is sufficient contact time (face to face and/or virtual/online) between staff and students to support effective learning	17.8%	12.9%	69.3%	38,277
3.c I am happy with the teaching support I received from staff on my course	14.0%	12.6%	73.3%	38,323
3.d The course is intellectually stimulating	8.2%	9.0%	82.8%	38,203
4.a Staff are good at explaining things	8.9%	9.8%	81.3%	38,327
4.b Staff made the subject interesting	9.1%	13.8%	77.1%	38,191
4.c Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching	6.7%	9.4%	83.8%	38,023

In PTES 2010 responses to questions on the teaching and learning and staff scales ranged between 68% and 83%, so the results for 2011 are approximately 1% higher on average. The rank order is also very similar, with the largest number of students in 2011 agreeing with question 4c 'Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching' and the largest number of students in 2010 agreeing with question 3d 'The course is intellectually stimulating'. All other questions appear in the same rank order in PTES 2011 as they did in 2010.

Institutional variations in the mean scores for items in the teaching and learning and staff scales are shown in Figures 3 and 4, ranked from lowest to highest.

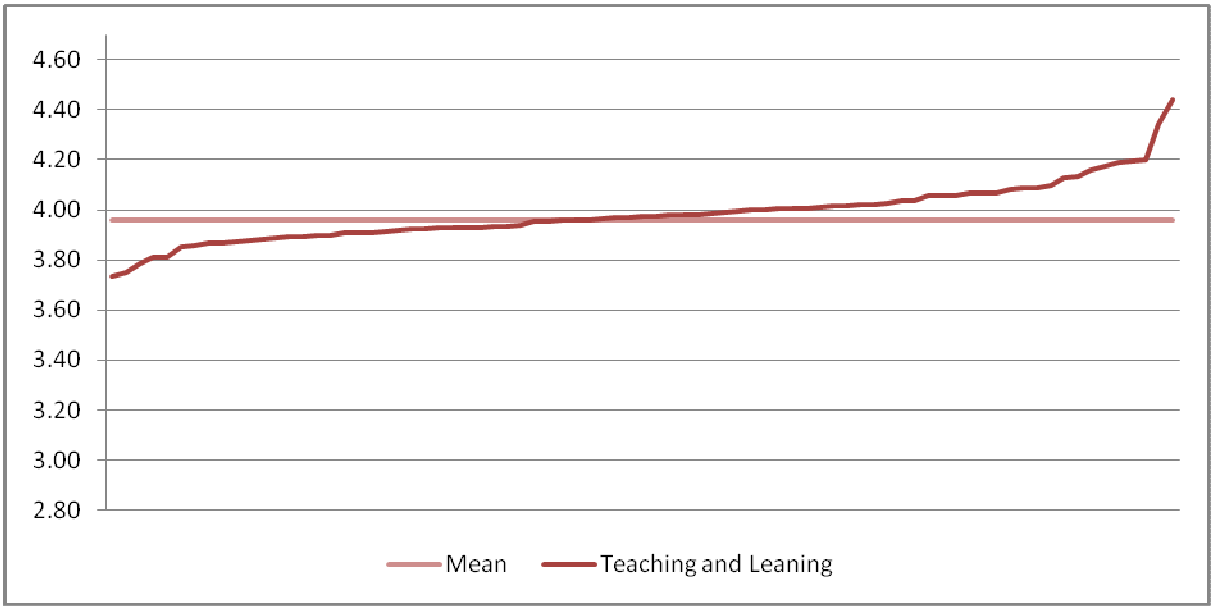


Figure 3: Institutional variations in mean scale scores for teaching and learning scale

Clearly the mean scale scores for teaching and learning in most HEIs are very similar (between about 3.9 and 4.1), with a handful of HEIs falling below 3.9 and slightly more rising above 4.1.

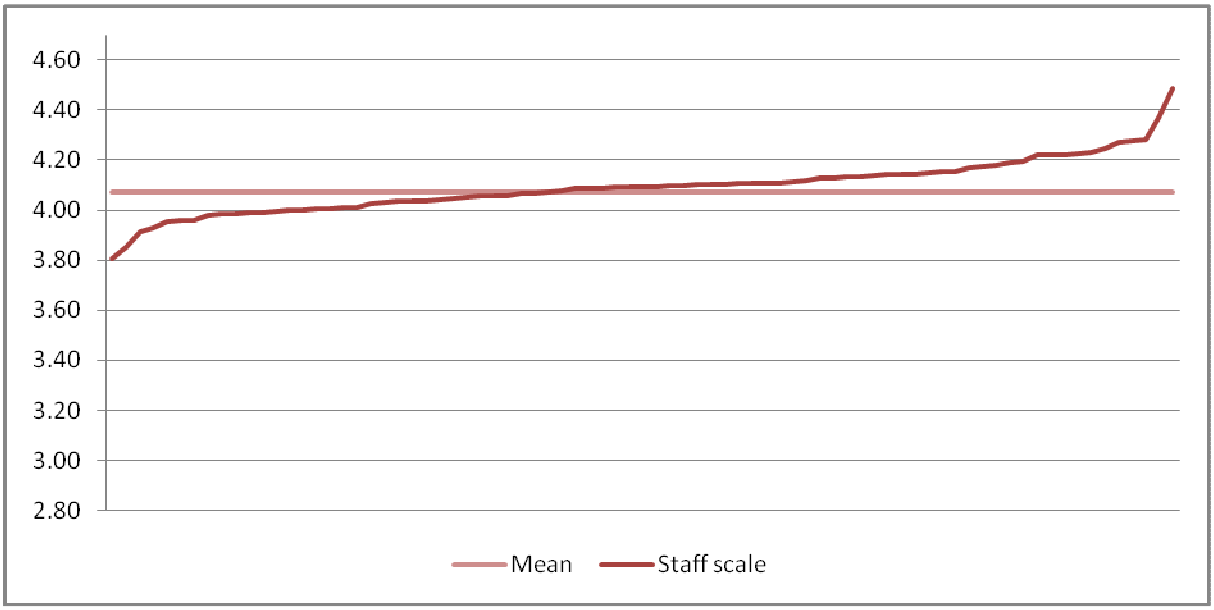


Figure 4: Institutional variations in mean scale scores for staff scale

The variations in institutional mean scores for the staff scale are at least as small as those for teaching and learning, with most bunched in the range 4.0 to 4.2. This does not mean that the HEIs that fall well below or above the mean are the same ones in each figure.

Students were also asked how they would rate the teaching quality on their programme. The vast majority of respondents (92%) rated this positively, with 37% rating it as consistently good and 55% variable but generally good. Only 1% of respondents rated the quality of teaching on their programme as being consistently poor. These results are very similar to previous years: in both PTES 2009 and PTES 2010, 38% rated it as consistently good, 53% variable but generally good, and 2% consistently poor. There has thus been a slight increase in the ratings for this item in PTES 2011.

Assessment and feedback

Students were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about assessment and feedback on their programme (Q11). Their ratings on this scale for PTES 2011 were more positive on average than in previous years. The results are reported in relation to agreement/disagreement in Table 11 and mean scale scores are presented in Figure 5.

Table 11: Students' views on assessment and feedback

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	N
11.a The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance	14.5%	12.7%	72.8%	38,055
11.b Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair	10.6%	16.6%	72.8%	37,116
11.c Feedback on my work has been prompt	22.6%	17.2%	60.2%	37,272
11.d I received feedback in time to allow me to improve my next assignment	24.2%	16.5%	59.3%	36,701
11.e I have received detailed comments (written or oral) on my work	16.8%	14.5%	68.7%	37,099
11.f Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand	18.3%	20.9%	60.8%	36,826

Students' agreement responses to the questions on the assessment and feedback scale in PTES 2010 ranged between 56% and 72%. In 2011 their responses on this scale were between 1% and 3% higher than in PTES 2010. The highest increases were on the feedback-related items, which all increased by approximately 3%. Despite these differential increases, the rank order of items in this scale has remained the same as in PTES 2010.

Institutional variations in the mean scores for items in the assessment and feedback scale are shown in Figure 5.

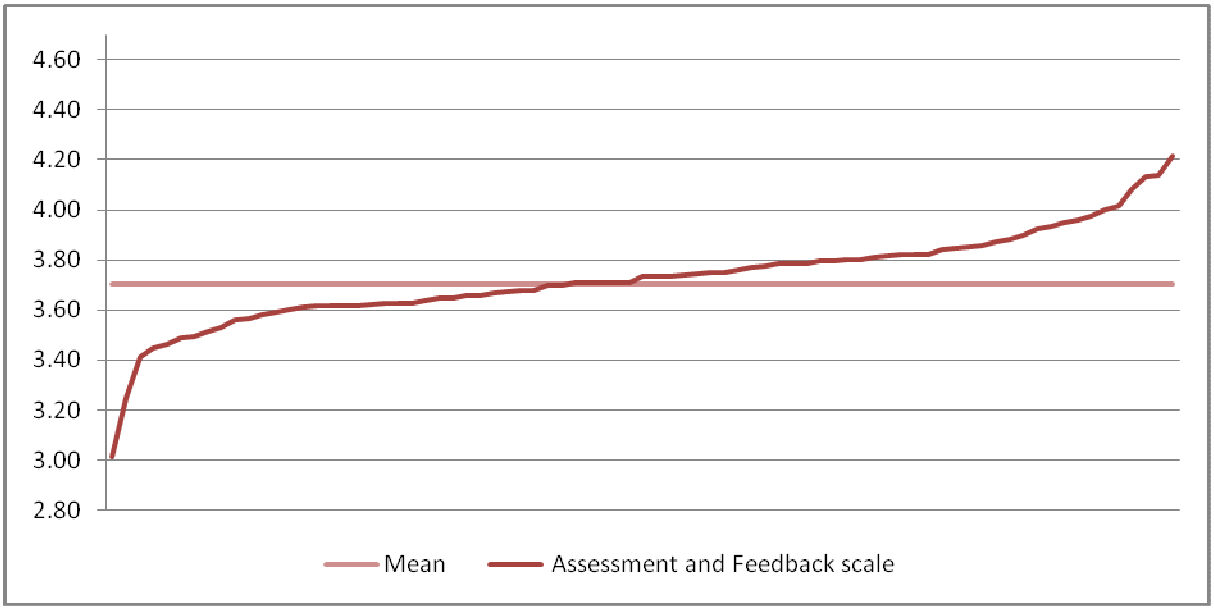


Figure 5: Institutional variations in mean scale scores for assessment and feedback scale

There is a much wider range of mean scale scores for assessment and feedback between participating institutions than was the case with teaching and learning (Figure 3) or staff (Figure 4), and participating HEIs are much less bunched around the mean. In a few HEIs postgraduate taught students are clearly very unhappy about assessment and feedback (with mean scores in several falling below 3.4); the lower tail of the distribution in Figure 5 drops much lower and faster than those in Figures 3 and 4. The upper tail, showing HEIs with the better mean scale scores, climbs no higher in Figure 5 than it does in Figures 3 and 4, and it climbs more slowly and progressively; there are no participating HEIs in which assessment and feedback are judged significantly better than the next ones down.

Dissertation and supervision

Three-quarters of respondents (74%) stated that they needed to write a dissertation as part of their programme, compared with 75% in PTES 2010. Students who did not need to write a dissertation were asked not to respond to the questions about dissertation and supervision, so the sample size for these questions is much smaller. The students who did need to write a dissertation as part of their taught postgraduate programme were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about the dissertation and supervision (Q13). Students' ratings on all items in this scale in PTES were more positive than in PTES 2010, and most items in PTES 2009. The results are reported in relation to agreement/disagreement in Table 12 and mean scale scores are presented in Figure 6.

Table 12: Students' views on dissertation and supervision

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	N
13.a I understand the required standards for the dissertation	11.1%	13.3%	75.6%	26,108
13.b My supervisor has the skills and subject knowledge to adequately support my dissertation	6.4%	14.2%	79.5%	22,837
13.c My supervisor makes a real effort to understand any difficulties I face	9.2%	20.1%	70.7%	21,702
13.d I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my supervisor	13.0%	19.7%	67.3%	21,889
13.e I have received good guidance in my literature search from my supervisor	13.4%	23.4%	63.2%	21,092
13.f My supervisor provides helpful feedback on my progress	10.1%	22.1%	67.8%	20,612

Students' agreement responses to the questions on the dissertation and supervision scale in PTES 2010 ranged between 58% and 77%, and in 2009 they ranged between 60% and 80%. Agreement ratings in PTES 2011 were between 3% and 5% higher than in PTES 2010, and ratings on all items except 13a 'I understand the required standards for the dissertation' were as high as or higher than those in PTES 2009. Despite differential percentage changes in agreement ratings on this scale, the rank order of items has remained the same as in previous years.

Students' mixed views about the dissertation and supervision could in part be explained by the timing of the questionnaire relative to their experience of working on their dissertation.

Institutional variations in the mean scores for items in the dissertation and supervision scale are shown in Figure 6.

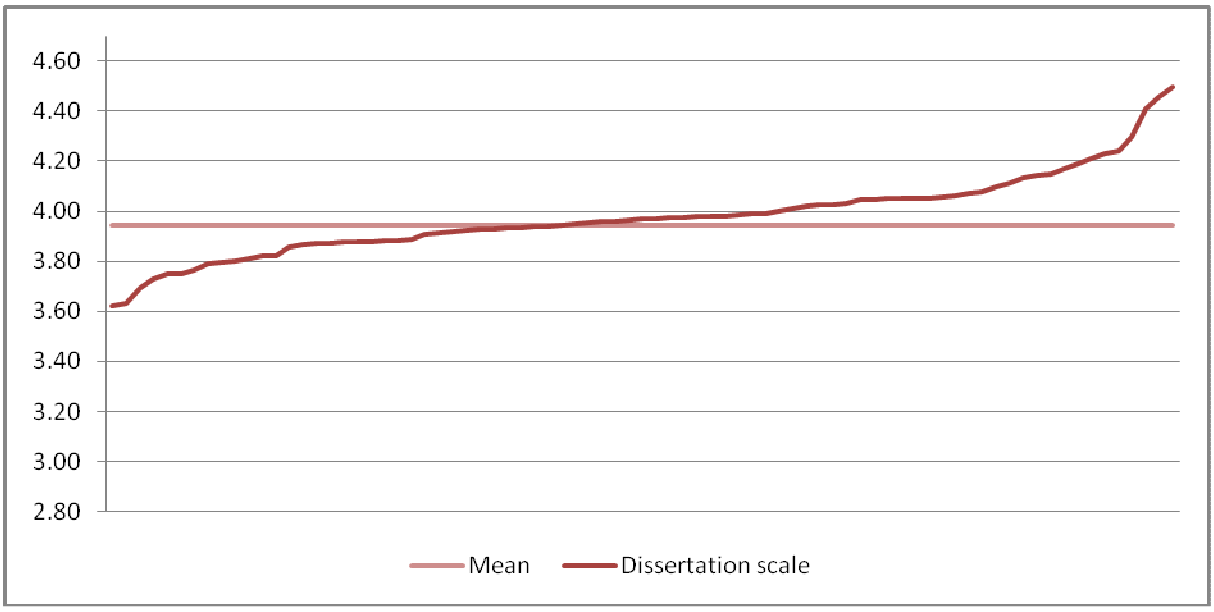


Figure 6: Institutional variations in mean scale scores for the dissertation and supervision scale

The range of institutional mean scale scores for dissertation and supervision is wider than for teaching and learning (Figure 3) and staff (Figure 4), but narrower than for assessment and feedback (Figure 5), with more than half falling relatively close to the mean (between about 3.9 and 4.1). As with the other distributions of institutional scores, a few HEIs have scale scores for dissertation and supervision that fall some way below the overall average, and some lie some way above it.

Organisation and management

Students were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about organisation and management on their programme (Q14). Their ratings on this scale in PTES 2011 were slightly more positive, on average, than in previous years. The results are reported in relation to agreement/disagreement in Table 13 and mean scale scores are presented in Figure 7.

Table 13: Students' views on organisation and management

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	N
14.a The timetable fits well with my other commitments	11.1%	12.1%	76.8%	37771
14.b Any changes in the programme or teaching have been communicated effectively	14.4%	11.7%	73.9%	37226
14.c The programme is well organised and is running smoothly	14.9%	14.3%	70.8%	38144
14.d The balance of core modules and options is appropriate	13.4%	15.9%	70.7%	33980
14.e The balance between scheduled contact time and private study is appropriate	13.2%	15.7%	71.1%	36936

Agreement responses in PTES 2010 to questions on the organisation and management scale ranged between 69% and 77%, so the results for 2011 are similar to or slightly higher than those results. The rank order is also very similar, with the two lowest-scoring items in this scale changing places between 2010 and 2011. Item 14d 'The balance of core modules and options is appropriate' received the lowest agreement rating in PTES 2011, whereas item 14c, 'The programme is well organised and is running smoothly' received the lowest agreement rating in PTES 2010.

Institutional variations in mean scores for items in the organisation and management scale are shown in Figure 7.

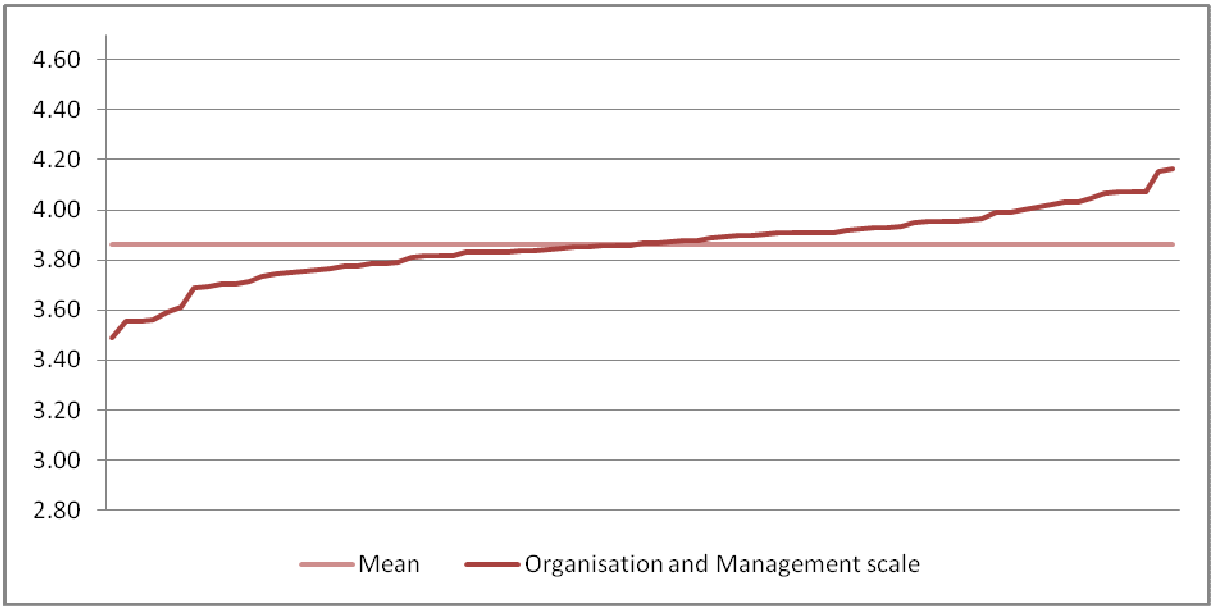


Figure 7: Institutional variations in mean scale scores for organisation and management scale

The range of institutional mean scores for organisation and management is relatively small, with most HEIs falling between 3.8 and 4.0. As with assessment and feedback (Figure 5), quite a number of HEIs fall some way below the overall mean.

Students were also asked about the workload on their programme. The majority of respondents (52%) rated this as being more or less as they expected. However, 31% rated it as higher than expected, and 10% much higher. Only 7% of respondents rated their workload as lower than they expected, with just 1% rating it as much lower. These results are identical to those in both PTES 2009 and PTES 2010.

Learning resources

Students were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about learning resources on their programme (Q16). Their ratings on this scale in PTES 2011 were more positive on average than in PTES 2010. (Changes were made to items in the learning resources scale between 2009 and 2010, so a direct comparison of results for PTES 2011 with those for PTES 2009 would be unreliable.) The results are reported in relation to agreement/disagreement in Table 14 and mean scale scores are presented in Figure 8.

Table 14: Students' views on learning resources

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	N
16.a The library resources and services are good enough for my needs	13.8%	11.5%	74.7%	37,359
16.b The library resources and services are easily accessible	10.3%	10.4%	79.3%	37,332
16.c I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to	9.5%	11.2%	79.3%	36,038
16.d I have been able to access social learning spaces (e.g. for group working) on campus when I needed to	9.9%	18.7%	71.3%	29,699
16.e I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities, or rooms when I needed them	9.8%	22.5%	67.7%	26,910
16.f I am satisfied with the quality of learning materials available to me (Print, online material, DVDs, etc.)	10.0%	13.8%	76.2%	36,796

Students' responses on this scale were between 1% and 3% higher in PTES 2011 than in PTES 2010, and the rank order of items in this scale has remained the same. The highest increase was on item 16a 'The library resources and services are good enough for my needs', and the lowest increase was on item 16c 'I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to'.

Institutional variations in the mean scores for items in the learning resources scale are shown in Figure 8.

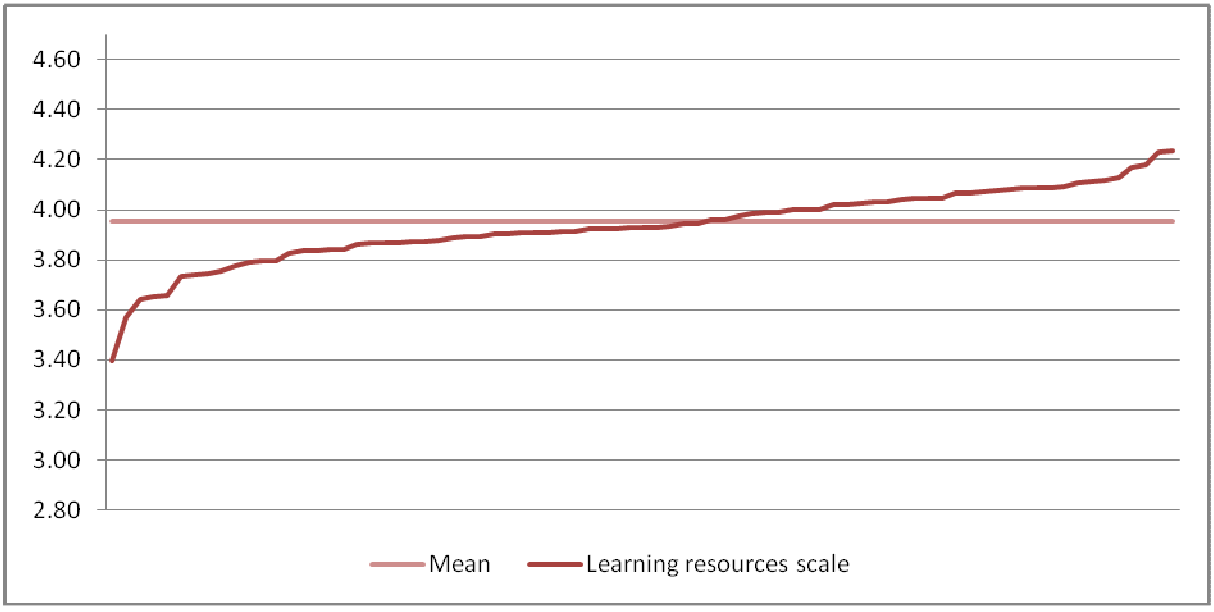


Figure 8: Institutional variations in mean scale scores for learning resources scale

The overall distribution of mean scores for learning resources is similar to that for organisation and management (Figure 7), but the lower tail drops quite sharply; there are handful of HEIs in which taught postgraduate students rated learning resources quite poorly.

Skills and personal development

Students were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about skills and personal development on their programme (Q17). Their ratings on all items in this scale PTES 2011 were more positive than in previous years. The results are reported in relation to agreement/disagreement in Table 15 and mean scale scores are presented in Figure 9.

Table 15: Students' views on skills and personal development

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	N
17.a The programme has developed my research skills	7.4%	11.6%	81.0%	37,686
17.b The programme has developed my transferable skills	6.0%	13.7%	80.4%	37,765
17.c As a result of the programme I am more confident about independent learning	7.1%	15.1%	77.8%	37,730
17.d The programme has helped me to present myself with confidence	8.8%	21.6%	69.6%	37,485
17.e As a results of the programme my communication skills have improved	9.0%	23.2%	67.8%	37,476
17.f As a result of the programme, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems	7.8%	21.4%	70.8%	37,515

Students' agreement responses to the questions on the skills and personal development scale in PTES 2010 ranged between 64% and 78%, and in 2009 they ranged between 61% and 79%. Agreement ratings in PTES 2011 were between 2% and 4% higher than in PTES 2010, and ratings on all items were higher than those in PTES 2009. Despite differential percentage changes in agreement ratings on this scale, the rank order of items has remained the same as in previous years.

Institutional variations in mean scores for items in the skills and personal development scale are shown in Figure 9.

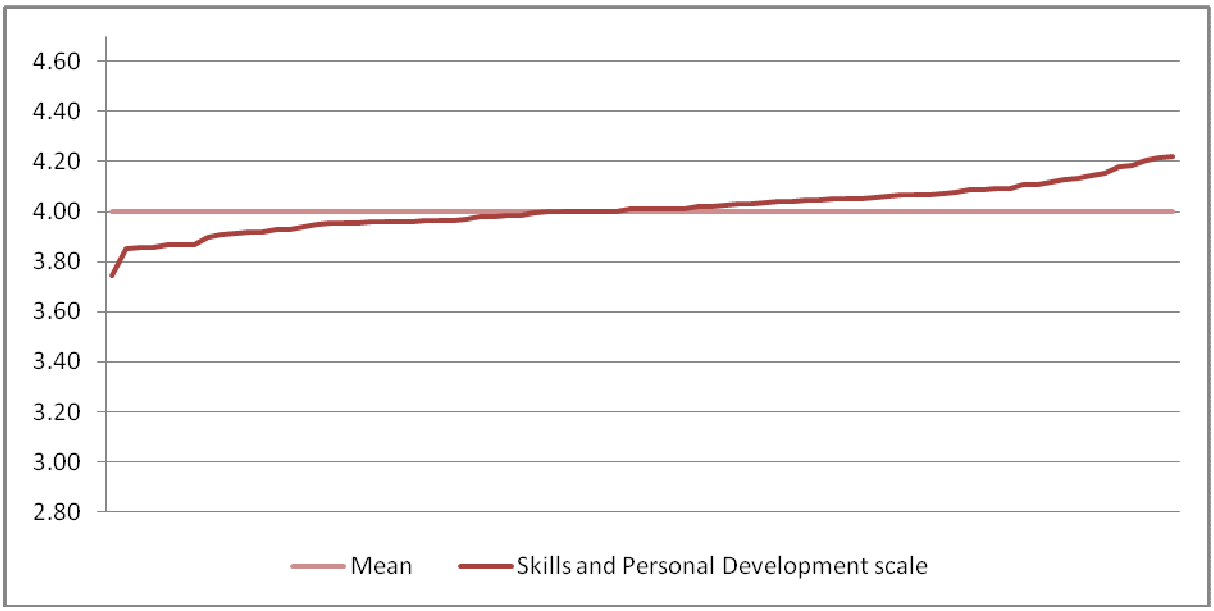


Figure 9: Institutional variations in mean scale scores for skills and personal development scale

The range of institutional mean scores for skills and personal development is much smaller than for the other scales described above: almost all lie between 3.8 and 4.2. Most lie very close to the overall mean.

Career and professional development

Students were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about career and professional development on their programme (Q18). Their ratings in these areas were generally slightly more positive than those in previous years. The results are reported in relation to agreement/disagreement in Table 16 and mean scale scores are presented in Figure 10.

Table 16: Students' views on career and professional development

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	N
18.a I am encouraged to reflect on my professional development needs	11.0%	18.1%	70.9%	37,301
18.b I feel better prepared for my future employment	9.3%	17.2%	73.5%	37,222
18.c As a result of this programme, I believe my future employment prospects are better	6.4%	15.4%	78.3%	37,290

Students' agreement responses to the questions on the skills and personal development scale in PTES 2010 ranged between 68% and 78%, and in 2009 they ranged between 69% and 78%. Agreement ratings on item 18c 'As a result of this programme, I believe my future employment prospects are better' have remained at 78% since PTES 2009. Agreement ratings on both other items on this scale have increased by 2% since PTES 2010. The rank order of items on this scale has remained the same as in previous years.

Institutional variations in mean scores for items in the career and professional development scale are shown in Figure 10.

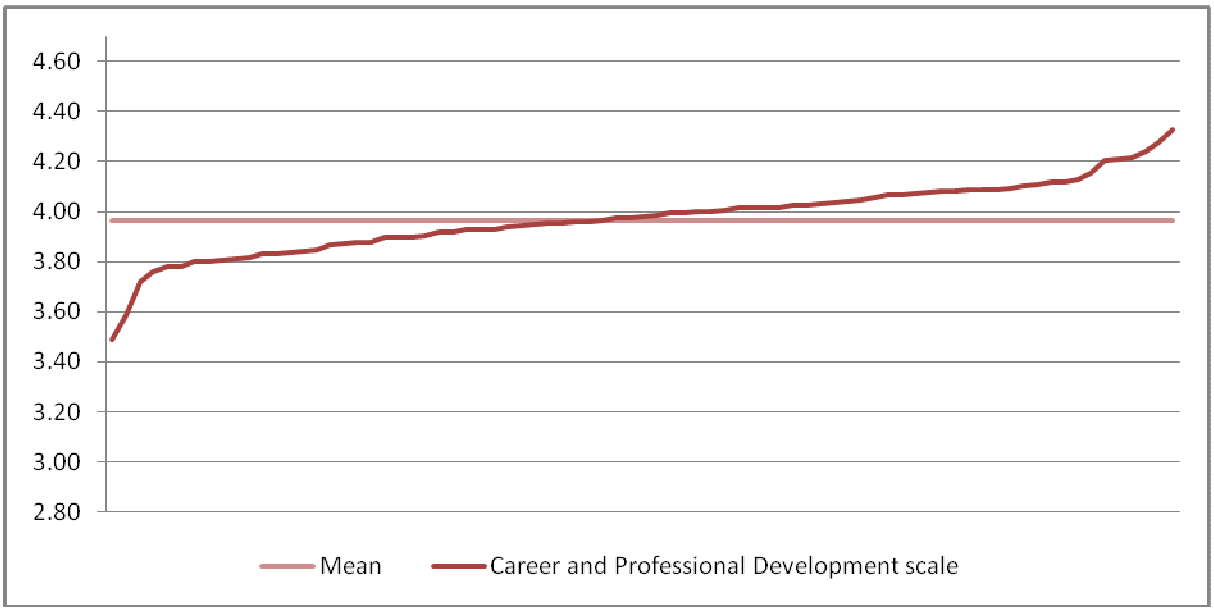


Figure 10: Institutional variations in mean scale scores for career and professional development scale

The range of institutional mean scores for career and professional development is slightly higher than for skills and personal development (Figure 9), and the distribution is relatively smooth except for a few HEIs in which the score drops some way below the overall mean.

Scales

Most of the questions in PTES are grouped into scales, and mean scores for each scale have been presented above (Figures 3 to 10). Means and standard deviations (SD) for all scales are presented in Table 17, in rank order from highest to lowest mean scale score.

Table 17: Mean scale scores

	Questions	N	Mean	SD
Staff	4a;4b;4c	37,886	4.07	.874
Skills and personal development	17a;17b;17c;17d;17e;17f	37,418	4.00	.833
Career and professional development	18a;18b;18c	36,482	3.97	.887
Teaching and learning	3a;3b;3c;3d	38,411	3.96	.881
Learning resources	16a;16b;16c;16d;16e;16f	30,442	3.96	.839
Dissertation	13a;13b;13c;13d;13e;13f	20,967	3.95	.931
Organisation and management	14a;14b;14c;14d;14e	37,177	3.86	.865
Assessment and feedback	11a;11b;11c;11d;11e;11f	36,914	3.70	.924

As in previous years, the staff scale achieved the highest mean score and the assessment and feedback scale achieved the lowest. The rank order of scales by mean score is very similar to PTES 2010; the only change is that the skills and personal development and career and professional development scales have changed places in the rank order. Students in PTES 2011 rated skills and personal development, on average, more highly than career and professional development. All other scales are in the same rank order as in PTES 2010. Due to changes in the questionnaire between PTES 2009 and 2010, it is not appropriate to make a direct comparison of mean scale scores with the results for PTES 2009.

Correlations between the PTES scales are presented in Table 18.

Table 18: Correlations between the PTES scales[14]

	Staff	Assessment	Dissertation	Organisation	Learning resources	Skills	Career
Teaching	0.779	0.578	0.541	0.630	0.386	0.588	0.557
Staff		0.534	0.496	0.549	0.351	0.524	0.496
Assessment			0.531	0.591	0.386	0.501	0.482
Dissertation				0.506	0.413	0.520	0.474
Organisation					0.471	0.566	0.535
Learning resources						0.464	0.412
Skills							0.697

All of the scales in PTES 2011 have moderate positive correlations with all of the other scales. The strongest correlation is between teaching and staff (0.779) and the

[14] All correlations are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$, 2-tailed).

second strongest is between skills and career (0.697). The weakest correlation is between learning resources and staff (0.351), and the next-weakest correlations are between learning resources and teaching (0.386) and learning resources and assessment (0.386). In PTES 2010 the strongest correlation was between skills and learning resources and the weakest was between assessment and learning resources[15].

Relationship between scale scores and experience against expectation

Multiple regression analysis[16] was used to determine which factors affect overall experience the most (Table 19). The eight scales in PTES combined account for 42.5% (r^2 x 100) of the variance in students' evaluations of the whole programme (compared with 48% in 2010 and 52% in 2009). This means that the factors included in the survey explain or account for less than half of the variation in the postgraduate taught experience. The rest is explained by other factors, such as personal circumstances, campus facilities, etc. Possible reasons for the level of explanation being lower in PTES 2011 than in previous years include the greater number of participating institutions and survey respondents, a greater diversity in both institutions and respondents, and a larger overall sample.

Table 19: Summary of multiple regression analysis

Scale	Beta	Statistical significance	Rank 2011	Rank 2010	Rank 2009
Teaching and learning	0.261	$p < 0.001$	1	1	1
Skills and personal development	0.166	$p < 0.001$	2	2	2
Career and professional development	0.161	$p < 0.001$	3	3	4
Organisation and management	0.147	$p < 0.001$	4	4	3
Assessment and feedback	0.119	$p < 0.001$	5	5	5
Learning resources	-0.092	$p < 0.001$	6	6	7
Dissertation	-0.020	$p < 0.05$	7	7	6

Table 19 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis in order of the importance of each scale: that is, in relation to the strength of each scale in explaining the variance in students' evaluations. Higher beta coefficient values indicate greater importance, and lower values indicate less importance.

As in both PTES 2010 and 2009, the two most important scales in relation to overall satisfaction are the teaching and learning and skills and personal development scales. The career and professional development and organisation and management scales are also important. The assessment and feedback, learning resources, and dissertation scales are relatively less important.

It should be noted that two of the scales, learning resources and dissertation, have a significant negative relationship with overall experience. This means that higher scores on those scales are associated with lower ratings on the extent to which students' experiences have been met or exceeded, and vice versa. However, these

[15] Correlations for the staff scale were not reported in PTES 2010.
[16] http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/multiple-regression

scales have the lowest beta coefficient values in this multiple regression model, so they are the least important scales in relation to the extent to which they contribute to students' evaluations of their overall experience.

Results for the staff scale are not shown in Table 19 as they did not have a statistically significant impact on the level of explanation achieved in the multiple regression model.

Section 4: Pilot questions to address depth of learning

The PTES 2011 questionnaire included five new items that were intended to explore depth of learning on postgraduate taught degree courses. The first four of these questions used a five-point response scale, from 'never' to 'most of the time', and the results for these items are presented in Table 20.

Table 20: Students' views on depth of learning

	Never	Hardly ever	Some-times	Frequ-ently	Most of the time	N
6. To what extent have you been expected to analyse ideas or examine a particular case or situation in depth?	0.5%	3.1%	25.1%	44.2%	27.0%	38,310
7. To what extent have you been expected to synthesise information or organise ideas or experiences into more complex relationships?	1.2%	5.4%	33.5%	40.5%	19.5%	37,911
8. To what extent have you been expected to judge and evaluate information, arguments, or methods?	0.7%	4.0%	23.9%	43.0%	28.5%	38,039
9. To what extent have you been expected to synthesise information or organise ideas or experiences into more complex relationships?	1.9%	7.8%	30.1%	36.8%	23.5%	38,171

As can be seen in Table 20, most students are expected to perform these learning methods at least some of the time. In very broad terms, the results suggest that taught postgraduate students are expected to analyse ideas or examine a particular case or situation in depth and judge and evaluate information, arguments, or methods more than to synthesise information or organise ideas or experiences into more complex relationships and synthesise information or organise ideas or experiences into more complex relationships. Each question has a significantly different profile of responses, which suggests that they are measuring different aspects of the student learning experience.

The remaining question (Q10. Please outline any other key learning skills you have developed or been expected to practise on your programme) used an open text box for students' comments, and these results have not been analysed at the national level. It is hoped that participating institutions will obtain valuable information at local level from these comments.

Scale analysis for depth of learning questions

In order to explore whether these new questions work together as a scale, a series of statistical analyses were performed. A scale variable was constructed to contain the four quantitative questions in aggregated form, and the mean for this scale was 3.83 (SD 0.724). Examination of skewness and kurtosis values indicate that the scale is considered to be normally distributed, although it is slightly positively skewed. This scale, labelled depth of learning, has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.833, indicating that the four new questions do work well together as a scale. Analysis of item-total statistics shows that the alpha value would be 0.836 (an improvement of

0.003) if question 9 were removed, but this difference is so small that removal of that item would not be justified.

Recalculation of relationship between scale scores and experience against expectation

Because the reference descriptors for each point on the response scale for these new questions differ from all the other questions in PTES, it is not appropriate to compare the means of these questions with the means of the other PTES scales. However, it is possible to include this new scale in a multiple regression analysis model, and the results of this are presented in Table 21. These results should be compared with those reported in section 3, which included the results of a multiple regression analysis that did not include this new scale.

A new multiple regression analysis was performed on all nine scales in PTES, in order to determine which factors affect overall experience the most. These nine scales combined account for 43.3% of the variance (r^2 x 100), compared with the model reported in Table 19, which accounted for 42.5% of the variance. A small amount (less than 1%) of the variance that was not accounted for in the model reported in Table 19 is thus accounted for by the depth of learning questions.

Table 21: Summary of multiple regression analysis including depth of learning scale

Scale	Beta	Statistical significance
Teaching and learning	0.247	$p < 0.001$
Career and professional development	0.150	$p < 0.001$
Organisation and management	0.148	$p < 0.001$
Skills and personal development	0.147	$p < 0.001$
Assessment and feedback	0.115	$p < 0.001$
Depth of learning	0.099	$p < 0.001$
Learning resources	-0.084	$p < 0.001$
Dissertation	-0.021	$p < 0.01$

In this revised multiple regression model, the teaching and learning scale remains the most important in relation to students' overall experience of their course. However, including the new depth of learning scale in the multiple regression analysis has changed the rank order of the remaining scales, with career and professional development moving up from third to second place, organisation and management from fourth to third, and skills and personal development falling from second to fourth place. As the beta coefficient values for these three scales are very similar, with only a difference of 0.003 between all of them, it could be argued that each of these three scales are similarly important in practical terms.

The new depth of learning scale has a significant positive correlation with overall experience, and is more important than the learning resources and dissertation scales, but less important than the five other scales included in this model.

Results for the staff scale are not shown in Table 21 as they did not have a statistically significant impact on the level of explanation achieved in the multiple regression model.

Analysis of non-responses

One way of exploring whether the questions in the new depth of learning scale are worded effectively and able to be answered by survey respondents is to compare the extent of 'missing data' (i.e. non-responses) between these questions and the rest of the survey. So in order to explore whether the new depth of learning questions were as effective as the other questions in PTES, a comparative analysis was undertaken. Non-responses to the four questions in the depth of learning scale were compared with non-responses to other questions in PTES, and the results are reported below.

Because a 'not applicable' response option was not offered for the depth of learning questions, the most valid comparisons are with the other ten questions in PTES for which this was also not offered as a response option. These are:

- Q5 Overall, how would you rate the teaching quality on your programme? (four response options).
- Q12 Do you need to write a dissertation as part of your programme? (yes/no).
- Q15 Overall, the workload on the programme is: (five response options).
- Q19 Please rate the following broad aspects of your postgraduate taught programme in terms of how your experience of those aspects has met with your expectations (seven questions, each with a seven-point response scale):
    - a Quality of teaching and learning.
    - b Assessment and feedback.
    - c Organisation and management.
    - d Learning resources.
    - e Skills and personal development.
    - f Career and professional development.
    - g Overall experience of my course.

The results of this analysis are presented in Table 22.

Table 22: Non-responses for questions without a 'Not Applicable' option

Question	Missing N (%)	Rank
5. Overall, how would you rate the teaching quality on your programme?	347 (0.9%)	1
19.a Quality of teaching and learning	360 (0.9%)	2
19.c Organisation and management	410 (1.1%)	3
19.d Learning resources	428 (1.1%)	4
6. To what extent have you been expected to analyse ideas or examine a particular case or situation in depth?	446 (1.2%)	5
19.b Assessment and feedback	465 (1.2%)	6
19.g Overall experience of my course	484 (1.2%)	7
19.e Skills and personal development	516 (1.3%)	8
9. To what extent have you been expected to apply theories to practice in new situations?	585 (1.5%)	9
19.f Career and professional development	627 (1.6%)	10
8. To what extent have you been expected to judge and evaluate information, arguments, or methods?	717 (1.9%)	11
7. To what extent have you been expected to synthesise information or organise ideas or experiences into more complex relationships?	845 (2.2%)	12
15. Overall, the workload on the programme is:	1,027 (2.6%)	13
12. Do you need to write a dissertation as part of your programme?	1,585 (4.1%)	14

Examination of non-response data on all 14 of these questions in the PTES 2011 survey shows that the four questions on the depth of learning scale rank in positions 5, 9, 11, and 12 (Table 22). The most similar question – the only other question in the PTES 2011 survey with a five-point response scale that does not include a 'not applicable' response option – is Q15, which ranks in position 13. In other words, question 15, which has been asked in PTES since its inception, had more non-responses in PTES 2011 than any of the items in the new depth of learning scale.

For comparison purposes, non-responses to questions in PTES where respondents were offered a 'not applicable' option, excluding questions in the dissertation scale, ranged from 198 (0.5%) for question 3.a 'The teaching and learning methods are effective for this type of programme' to 685 (1.8%) for question 14.e 'The balance between scheduled contact time and private study is appropriate'. Combining the non-responses and not applicable responses for these questions resulted in a range from 275 (0.7%) for question 3.a 'The teaching and learning methods are effective for this type of programme' to 11,846 (30.6%) for question 16.e 'I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities, or rooms when I needed them'[17].

Inclusion of the depth of learning questions in future administration of PTES is supported by the analyses presented here. The response profiles for each of the depth of learning questions are significantly different, scale analysis suggests that the questions are normally distributed, and non-responses to these questions fall within the range for other questions in PTES. Continuing to include these questions would provide valuable trend data for examination in future years.

[17] Questions in the dissertation scale were not included.

Section 5: Discipline

This section begins by presenting selected demographic analyses for each discipline at JACS level 1[18], whereby disciplinary disaggregations are presented in relation to mode of study, mode of delivery, domicile, and disability. Different motivational profiles are then presented for students studying in these different disciplines, and mean scale scores are presented for all scales in PTES for all disciplines at JACS level 1. Finally, differences in overall experiences are compared between disciplines.

Demographics

Table 23 presents an analysis of full-time and part-time students for all disciplines at JACS level 1.

Table 23: Profile of students, by discipline and mode of study

	Full-time	Part-time	Not reg, was f-t	Not reg, was p-t
1 Medicine and dentistry	27.4%	67.6%	1.0%	4.0%
2 Subjects allied to medicine	38.6%	56.2%	1.6%	3.6%
3 Biological sciences	67.5%	28.9%	2.0%	1.6%
4 Veterinary science	42.9%	52.9%	3.4%	0.8%
5 Agriculture and related subjects	69.1%	27.6%	3.3%	0.0%
6 Physical sciences	70.9%	26.8%	1.2%	1.0%
7 Mathematical sciences	68.9%	29.9%	0.5%	0.7%
8 Computer science	73.1%	23.9%	2.0%	1.0%
9 Engineering and technology	68.3%	28.4%	1.9%	1.3%
10 Architecture, building and planning	57.7%	35.4%	2.6%	4.3%
11 Social studies	71.4%	25.9%	1.7%	1.1%
12 Law	71.0%	25.4%	2.3%	1.3%
13 Business and administrative studies	63.0%	33.3%	2.0%	1.7%
14 Mass communications and documentation	74.2%	23.3%	1.4%	1.1%
15 Languages	63.9%	32.9%	1.9%	1.3%
16 Historical and philosophical studies	51.9%	44.5%	1.7%	1.9%
17 Creative arts and design	71.6%	26.8%	1.1%	0.5%
18 Education	52.3%	44.2%	0.6%	2.9%
19 Combined	65.4%	32.4%	0.7%	1.5%

The discipline with the highest proportion of full-time students in the PTES 2011 sample was mass communications and documentation (74.2%), followed by computer science (73.1%) and creative arts and design (71.6%). Social studies, law, and physical sciences also had more than 70% full-time students. The discipline with the highest proportion of part-time students was medicine and dentistry (67.6%), followed by subjects allied to medicine (56.2%) and veterinary science (52.9%).

Table 24 presents an analysis of face-to-face and distance learners for all disciplines at JACS level 1.

[18] http://www.liv.ac.uk/tqsd/national_student_survey_results/JACS_Hierarchy.pdf

Table 24: Profile of students, by discipline and mode of delivery

	Face-to-face	Distance
1 Medicine and dentistry	43.5%	56.5%
2 Subjects allied to medicine	64.8%	35.2%
3 Biological sciences	84.9%	15.1%
4 Veterinary science	59.7%	40.3%
5 Agriculture and related subjects	81.5%	18.5%
6 Physical sciences	82.4%	17.6%
7 Mathematical sciences	73.2%	26.8%
8 Computer science	86.8%	13.2%
9 Engineering and technology	79.7%	20.3%
10 Architecture, building and planning	74.8%	25.2%
11 Social studies	84.2%	15.8%
12 Law	85.6%	14.4%
13 Business and administrative studies	79.6%	20.4%
14 Mass communications and documentation	85.2%	14.8%
15 Languages	83.0%	17.0%
16 Historical and philosophical studies	73.6%	26.4%
17 Creative arts and design	91.5%	8.5%
18 Education	60.3%	39.7%
19 Combined	78.2%	21.8%

The overall average for the PTES 2011 sample was 77.4% face-to-face and 22.6% distance learners. The discipline with the highest proportion of face-to-face learners was creative arts and design (91.5%), followed by computer science (86.8%) and law (85.6%). Mass communications and documentation also had more than 85% face-to-face learners. The discipline with the highest proportion of distance learners was medicine and dentistry (56.5%), followed by veterinary science (40.3%) and education (39.7%).

Table 25 presents an analysis of domicile for fees purposes for all disciplines at JACS level 1.

Table 25: Profile of students, by discipline and domicile

	Home	Other EU	Non EU
1 Medicine and dentistry	66.3%	5.3%	28.3%
2 Subjects allied to medicine	79.3%	5.9%	14.8%
3 Biological sciences	71.8%	11.1%	17.1%
4 Veterinary science	57.6%	10.2%	32.2%
5 Agriculture and related subjects	56.0%	14.4%	29.6%
6 Physical sciences	71.5%	9.6%	18.9%
7 Mathematical sciences	55.9%	9.9%	34.2%
8 Computer science	45.7%	13.7%	40.7%
9 Engineering and technology	45.4%	14.0%	40.6%
10 Architecture, building and planning	69.5%	9.9%	20.6%
11 Social studies	57.9%	12.7%	29.4%
12 Law	60.4%	14.2%	25.3%
13 Business and administrative studies	45.6%	11.1%	43.3%
14 Mass communications and documentation	53.6%	13.8%	32.6%
15 Languages	67.7%	12.4%	19.8%
16 Historical and philosophical studies	79.4%	6.3%	14.3%
17 Creative arts and design	62.0%	15.8%	22.1%
18 Education	85.9%	4.8%	9.3%
19 Combined	54.7%	15.1%	30.3%

Regarding domicile, the overall average for the PTES 2011 sample was 61.4% Home students, 10.7% from the rest of the EU, and 27.9% international (Non EU) students. The discipline with the highest proportion of Home students was education (85.9%), followed by historical and philosophical studies (79.4%) and subjects allied to medicine (79.3%). The discipline with the highest proportion of students from the rest of the EU was creative arts and design (15.8%), followed by combined (15.1%) and agriculture and related subjects (14.4%). The discipline with the highest proportion of international (Non EU) students was business and administrative studies (43.3%), followed by computer science (40.7%) and engineering and technology (40.6%).

Table 26 presents an analysis of students with disabilities for all disciplines at JACS level 1.

Table 26: Profile of students, by discipline and disability

	Students with disabilities
1 Medicine and dentistry	2.4%
2 Subjects allied to medicine	5.0%
3 Biological sciences	5.6%
4 Veterinary science	5.1%
5 Agriculture and related subjects	3.2%
6 Physical sciences	6.2%
7 Mathematical sciences	3.0%
8 Computer science	4.5%
9 Engineering and technology	2.1%
10 Architecture, building and planning	3.4%
11 Social studies	5.3%
12 Law	5.5%
13 Business and administrative studies	2.6%
14 Mass communications and documentation	5.8%
15 Languages	6.8%
16 Historical and philosophical studies	9.8%
17 Creative arts and design	9.6%
18 Education	5.5%
19 Combined	5.7%

The discipline that had the highest proportion of students with disabilities in the PTES 2011 sample was historical and philosophical studies (9.8%), followed by creative arts and design (9.6%) and languages (6.8%).

The most commonly mentioned disability in the PTES 2011 sample as a whole was specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D. For all disciplines except languages and veterinary science, this was the most commonly mentioned disability. The national sample size for veterinary science was very small, so further analyses are not reported. For languages the most commonly mentioned disability was mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder (25.0%), followed by long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy (16.3%) and specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D (13.8%).

Motivations

Each of the main motivation options for students to take their postgraduate programme that were offered in the questionnaire were analysed in relation to the disciplines for which the most and the fewest students chose that particular motivation in the PTES 2011 cohort. The motivations are presented in the order of most selected to least selected, on average.

Table 27: Summary profile of motivations, by discipline

Motivation (average)	Summary
To improve my employment prospects (55.8%)	This motivation was chosen most often by computer science students (65.2%), followed by business and administrative studies (64.4%) and agriculture and related subjects (64.3%). It was chosen least often by students of education (38.3%), historical and philosophical studies (43.9%) and medicine and dentistry (44.8%).
To progress in my current career path (i.e. a professional qualification) (54.8%)	Students of medicine and dentistry chose this motivation most frequently (71.2%), followed by architecture, building and planning (70.0%) and veterinary science (68.1%). Students of historical and philosophical studies chose it least frequently (28.4%), followed by languages (34.4%) and mathematical sciences (39.9%).
For personal interest (45.2%)	This motivation was chosen most often by students of historical and philosophical studies (72.6%), followed by languages (68.2%) and veterinary science (62.2%). It was chosen least often by students of engineering and technology (36.0%), education (36.5%) and law (37.0%).
To enable me to progress to a higher level qualification (e.g. PhD) (33.9%)	This motivation was chosen most often by students of historical and philosophical studies (51.9%), followed by biological sciences (49.9%) and veterinary science (47.9%). It was chosen least often by students of education (24.4%), business and administrative studies (27.3%) and law (27.7%).
To change my current career (18.4%)	This motivation was chosen most often by students of physical sciences (24.7%), followed by mass communications and documentation (21.7%) and creative arts and design (21.2%). It was chosen least often by students of medicine and dentistry (9.4%), law (13.9%) and architecture, building and planning (14.2%).
As a requirement to enter a particular profession (17.2%)	This motivation was chosen most often by students of education (32.4%), followed by architecture, building and planning (27.1%) and law (26.3%). It was chosen least often by students of medicine and dentistry (7.0%) followed by veterinary science (10.1%) and business and administrative studies (10.6%).
To meet the requirements of my current job (8.6%)	Students of subjects allied to medicine chose this motivation most frequently (19.6%), followed by medicine and dentistry (15.2%) and education (11.6%). Students of historical and philosophical studies chose it least frequently (2.6%), followed by creative arts and design (3.2%) and languages (3.7%).

These preliminary data suggest widely differing motivational profiles within different disciplines and further analysis may provide a greater insight into the reasons why taught postgraduates choose to study their particular degree programmes. However, small cell sizes in some cases mean that analysis at a more fine-grained level would not be meaningful for all disciplines.

Mean scale scores

Tables 28 to 30 present the mean scale scores in PTES 2011 for each discipline at JACS level 1.

Table 28: Mean scale scores for teaching, staff, and assessment, by discipline

	Teaching	Staff	Assessment
1 Medicine and dentistry	4.02	4.14	3.72
2 Subjects allied to medicine	4.05	4.14	3.82
3 Biological sciences	3.97	4.13	3.61
4 Veterinary science	4.05	4.22	3.35
5 Agriculture and related subjects	4.03	4.03	3.47
6 Physical sciences	3.99	4.10	3.55
7 Mathematical sciences	3.98	3.98	3.74
8 Computer science	3.96	4.01	3.69
9 Engineering and technology	3.88	3.96	3.50
10 Architecture, building and planning	3.91	3.99	3.60
11 Social studies	3.94	4.03	3.65
12 Law	4.02	4.13	3.65
13 Business and administrative studies	3.90	3.98	3.66
14 Mass communications and documentation	3.93	4.09	3.71
15 Languages	4.06	4.25	3.84
16 Historical and philosophical studies	4.07	4.29	3.81
17 Creative arts and design	3.89	4.13	3.79
18 Education	4.04	4.19	3.98
19 Combined	3.92	4.08	3.87

The sample mean for the teaching scale was 3.96, and the mean scores for disciplines at JACS level 1 ranged between 3.88 and 4.07. The highest-scoring disciplines were historical and philosophical studies (4.07), languages (4.06) and veterinary science (4.05). The lowest-scoring disciplines were engineering and technology (3.88), creative arts and design (3.89) and business and administrative studies (3.90).

The sample mean for the staff scale was 4.07, and the mean scores for disciplines at JACS level 1 ranged between 3.96 and 4.29. The highest-scoring disciplines were historical and philosophical studies (4.29), languages (4.25) and veterinary science (4.22). The lowest-scoring discipline was engineering and technology (3.96), followed by business and administrative studies and mathematical sciences (both 3.98).

The sample mean for the assessment scale was 3.70, and the mean scores for disciplines at JACS level 1 ranged between 3.35 and 3.98. The highest-scoring disciplines were education (3.98), combined (3.87) and languages (3.84). The lowest-scoring disciplines were veterinary science (3.35), agriculture and related subjects (3.47) and engineering and technology (3.50).

Table 29: Mean scale scores for dissertation, organisation, and learning resources, by discipline

	Dissertation	Organisation	Learning resources
1 Medicine and dentistry	3.85	3.93	3.89
2 Subjects allied to medicine	3.93	3.90	3.96
3 Biological sciences	4.04	3.85	3.95
4 Veterinary science	4.16	3.94	4.05
5 Agriculture and related subjects	4.03	3.82	3.97
6 Physical sciences	3.95	3.80	3.93
7 Mathematical sciences	3.94	3.92	4.02
8 Computer science	4.06	3.90	4.14
9 Engineering and technology	3.97	3.83	4.08
10 Architecture, building and planning	3.96	3.78	3.85
11 Social studies	3.90	3.87	3.89
12 Law	3.92	3.91	3.95
13 Business and administrative studies	3.87	3.87	4.02
14 Mass communications and documentation	3.94	3.82	3.90
15 Languages	4.05	3.94	3.89
16 Historical and philosophical studies	4.14	3.94	3.79
17 Creative arts and design	3.91	3.71	3.89
18 Education	4.00	3.92	3.89
19 Combined	3.87	3.76	3.89

The sample mean for the dissertation scale was 3.95, and the mean scores for disciplines at JACS level 1 ranged between 3.85 and 4.16. The highest-scoring disciplines were veterinary science (4.16), historical and philosophical studies (4.14) and computer science (4.06). The lowest-scoring discipline was medicine and dentistry (3.85), followed by business and administrative studies and combined (both 3.87).

The sample mean for the organisation scale was 3.86, and the mean scores for disciplines at JACS level 1 ranged between 3.71 and 3.94. The highest-scoring disciplines were veterinary science, languages and historical and philosophical studies (all 3.94). The lowest-scoring disciplines were creative arts and design (3.71), combined (3.76) and architecture, building and planning (3.78).

The sample mean for the learning resources scale was 3.96, and the mean scores for disciplines at JACS level 1 ranged between 3.79 and 4.14. The highest-scoring disciplines were computer science (4.14), engineering and technology (4.08) and veterinary science (4.05). The lowest-scoring disciplines were historical and philosophical studies (3.79) and architecture, building and planning (3.85). Six disciplines had a mean scale score of 3.89, which was the next-lowest mean score on this scale.

Table 30: Mean scale scores for skills and career, by discipline

	Skills	Career
1 Medicine and dentistry	3.96	4.00
2 Subjects allied to medicine	4.06	4.12
3 Biological sciences	4.01	3.92
4 Veterinary science	4.13	3.97
5 Agriculture and related subjects	4.08	3.92
6 Physical sciences	3.94	3.86
7 Mathematical sciences	3.86	3.90
8 Computer science	4.03	3.95
9 Engineering and technology	4.02	3.94
10 Architecture, building and planning	3.97	3.90
11 Social studies	3.97	3.87
12 Law	4.01	3.94
13 Business and administrative studies	4.03	3.98
14 Mass communications and documentation	3.94	3.87
15 Languages	3.96	3.75
16 Historical and philosophical studies	4.01	3.63
17 Creative arts and design	3.96	3.83
18 Education	4.00	4.29
19 Combined	3.91	3.85

The sample mean for the skills scale was 4.00, and the mean scores for disciplines at JACS level 1 ranged between 3.86 and 4.13. The highest-scoring disciplines were veterinary science (4.13), agriculture and related subjects (4.08) and subjects allied to medicine (4.06). The lowest-scoring disciplines were mathematical sciences (3.86), combined (3.91), and mass communications and documentation and physical sciences (both 3.94).

The sample mean for the career scale was 3.97, and the mean scores for disciplines at JACS level 1 ranged between 3.63 and 4.29. The highest-scoring disciplines were education (4.29), subjects allied to medicine (4.12) and medicine and dentistry (4.00). The lowest-scoring disciplines were historical and philosophical studies (3.63), languages (3.75) and creative arts and design (3.83).

The analyses reported in Tables 28 to 30 suggest markedly different profiles between disciplines, with some discipline areas achieving high mean scores on some scales and low mean scores on others. A detailed analysis of all survey questions for all disciplines may be beneficial, in order to further understand some of these differences. However, due to small cell sizes in some cases, this could not be undertaken at a more fine-grained level than JACS level 1, and in some cases this would not provide sufficient granularity for the data to be meaningful.

Overall experience against expectations

A detailed analysis of variations in response to question 19.g ‘Overall experience of my course’ by discipline was undertaken, and the results are reported in Table 31.

Table 31: Overall experience against expectations, by discipline

	Below my expectations	Met my expectations	Exceeded my expectations	N
1 Medicine and dentistry	9.3%	15.1%	75.6%	1,028
2 Subjects allied to medicine	12.2%	16.6%	71.2%	3,054
3 Biological sciences	15.0%	13.8%	71.2%	2,940
4 Veterinary science	15.3%	13.6%	71.2%	118
5 Agriculture and related subjects	12.9%	11.3%	75.8%	124
6 Physical sciences	12.4%	17.5%	70.0%	878
7 Mathematical sciences	10.7%	16.9%	72.4%	402
8 Computer science	11.1%	14.2%	74.7%	1,336
9 Engineering and technology	12.1%	14.2%	73.7%	2,687
10 Architecture, building and planning	12.9%	15.0%	72.1%	1,028
11 Social studies	12.4%	13.9%	73.7%	3,295
12 Law	11.2%	14.5%	74.3%	1,619
13 Business and administrative studies	10.5%	14.5%	75.0%	8,569
14 Mass communications and documentation	14.0%	15.9%	70.1%	1,164
15 Languages	13.1%	13.7%	73.2%	1,174
16 Historical and philosophical studies	15.8%	12.0%	72.2%	1,127
17 Creative arts and design	14.9%	14.1%	71.0%	2,233
18 Education	11.7%	15.5%	72.8%	3,736
19 Combined	13.6%	17.1%	69.3%	597

The analysis reveals some interesting disciplinary variations within the overall average PTES 2011 results for experience relative to expectations (Table 8), in which 12.2% of students reported that their experience was below their expectations, 14.7% said that it had met their expectations, and 73.0% said that it had exceeded their expectations. Taught postgraduate students of medicine and dentistry had, on average, the most positive overall experiences. Only 9.3% of those students reported their experience as below expectations, and 75.6% said that their expectations were exceeded.

Other students whose views on this scale were very positive were those in agriculture and related subjects, where the course exceeded the expectations of 75.8% of students, business and administrative studies, where the course exceeded the expectations of 75.0% of students and just 10.5% found the course below their expectations, and mathematical sciences, where only 10.7% found the course below their expectations.

The disciplines in which most students found their course to be below their expectations were veterinary science (15.3%), biological sciences (15.0%) and creative arts and design (14.9%).

Section 6: Domicile

The PTES 2011 questionnaire introduced a new question asking students to select their normal country of residence, in order to provide a more fine-grained analysis of domicile than in previous years. This section presents a preliminary analysis of those results.

The section starts by presenting an analysis by country and then by grouping individual countries into meaningful higher-order categories (based on HESA groupings). Demographic analyses are presented by mode of study and mode of delivery, both for country groups and domicile for fees purposes. Mean scale scores are presented for domicile for fees purposes. Finally, differences in overall experiences are presented.

Demographics

It is interesting to explore whether differences can be detected in how students from different countries rate their experiences on their current taught postgraduate programmes. To enable this, the PTES 2011 results can be analysed from two perspectives – the overall breakdown by domicile for fees purposes, and more detailed analysis based on normal country of residence. The demographic question about domicile for fees purposes has been asked in all three PTES surveys, and the 2011 breakdown (Table 4) is 60.3% UK, 10.4% Other EU, and 27.3% International (Non EU). PTES 2011 is the first year that a question (Q.32) about normal country of residence was asked, specifically to allow the more detailed type of analysis reported below.

A simple count of the number of students participating in PTES 2011 from different countries (Table 32) shows that just under half (43.7%) were from England, and the largest non-UK groups were from China (7.3%), India (5.1%) and Nigeria (2.4%).

Table 32: Countries with more than 1% of respondents

Country	Percentage	N
United Kingdom – England	43.7%	16,386
China	7.3%	2,740
United Kingdom – Scotland	6.2%	2,311
India	5.1%	1,917
United Kingdom – Wales	3.7%	1,385
United Kingdom – Northern Ireland	2.4%	895
Nigeria	2.4%	891
United States of America	1.9%	699
Germany	1.8%	674
Ireland	1.7%	654
Greece	1.7%	653
France	1.1%	401

To facilitate more detailed analysis, the students from individual countries were amalgamated into country groups following the HESA classification[19], producing the results shown in Table 33.

Table 33: Students in each country group

Country group	Percentage	N
United Kingdom	56.1%	21,025
Asia	18.9%	7,097
Other European Union	11.6%	4,364
Africa	4.7%	1,769
North America	3.4%	1,271
Middle East	2.4%	916
Other Europe	1.5%	553
South America	0.6%	211
Other	0.3%	107
Other EEA countries	0.3%	103
Australasia	0.2%	93

It was then possible to break down the three domicile groups by country group, to determine the composition of each (Table 34).

Table 34: Percentage of students in country group, by fee registration

Country group	Home	Other EU	Non EU
United Kingdom	88.0%	9.7%	3.8%
Asia	4.7%	2.3%	56.3%
Other European Union	4.3%	84.2%	0.3%
Africa	0.9%	0.4%	14.7%
Middle East	0.8%	0.3%	6.8%
North America	0.8%	0.5%	10.3%
Other Europe	0.2%	1.5%	4.2%
Other	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%
Australasia	0.1%	0.1%	0.6%
Other EEA countries	0.1%	0.4%	0.7%
South America	0.1%	0.2%	1.8%

The largest country group within Home students is the United Kingdom (88%), followed by Asia (4.7%) and Other European Union (4.3%). The largest country group within Other EU students for fees purposes is Other European Union (84.2%) followed by United Kingdom (9.7%) and Asia (2.3%). The largest country group within Non EU is Asia (56.3%), followed by Africa (14.7%) and North America (10.3%).

There are interesting variations between the three domicile groups in the proportion of taught postgraduate students who were studying on a full-time and a part-time basis (Table 35). Table 3 showed that, overall in PTES 2011, 63.3% of respondents were studying full-time and 36.0% part-time.

[19] For the purposes of country groups, the Channel Islands are included in 'United Kingdom', and both parts of Cyprus are included in 'other European Union'.

Table 35: Domicile by mode of study[20]

Mode of study	Home	Other EU	Non EU
Full-time	49.4%	78.6%	63.9%
Part-time	50.6%	21.4%	36.1%

Within the Home group (for fees purposes), students were evenly split between full-time and part-time registration. Predictably, a much higher proportion of the Other EU and Non EU students were registered as studying full-time; the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Just under a quarter of the Other EU students, and just over a third of the Non EU students, were registered as studying part-time.

Mean scale scores

The demographic data in PTES also make it possible to examine whether students from different backgrounds (defined in relation to domicile for fees purposes) rate different aspects of their taught postgraduate experience differently, based on mean scale scores. These results are presented in Table 36.

Table 36: Differences between scale scores, by domicile for fees purposes

Scale	Home	Other EU	Non EU	Overall average
Teaching and learning	4.00	3.91	3.90	3.96
Staff	4.12	4.04	3.98	4.08
Assessment and feedback	3.72	3.56	3.71	3.70
Dissertation	3.95	3.90	3.96	3.95
Organisation and management	3.86	3.81	3.89	3.86
Learning resources	3.92	3.99	4.02	3.96
Skills and personal development	3.99	3.95	4.04	4.00
Career and professional development	3.99	3.89	3.93	3.97

While the differences between domicile groups are not large, some interesting variations are apparent. Home students gave the highest mean scale scores for teaching and learning, staff, assessment and feedback, and career and professional development. They gave the lowest mean scale score for learning resources.

International (Non EU) students gave the highest mean scale scores for dissertation, organisation and management, learning resources, and skills and personal development. They gave the lowest mean scale scores for teaching and learning, and staff.

Other EU students did not give the highest mean scale score on any of the scales in PTES. They gave the lowest mean scale scores for assessment and feedback, dissertation, organisation and management, skills and personal development, and career and professional development.

[20] Excluding students not currently registered

Overall, these results suggest that international students from within the EU have less positive experiences of their postgraduate taught degree programmes than either international Non EU students or Home students.

A similar analysis can be performed to explore whether mean scale scores vary between the major country groups (Table 37), to provide some further detail on differences between major groups within the Non EU category.

Table 37: Differences between scale scores, by major country groups

Scale	United Kingdom	Other European Union[21]	Africa	Asia	North America	Overall average
Teaching and learning	4.00	3.94	4.15	3.86	3.84	3.97
Staff	4.14	4.06	4.12	3.95	4.01	4.09
Assessment and feedback	3.73	3.58	3.87	3.76	3.50	3.72
Dissertation	3.95	3.91	4.10	3.95	3.91	3.95
Organisation and management	3.86	3.86	4.12	3.86	3.79	3.87
Learning resources	3.92	4.01	4.16	4.02	3.74	3.96
Skills and personal development	3.99	3.98	4.31	4.00	3.89	4.00
Career and professional development	4.00	3.92	4.28	3.86	3.84	3.97

The North American students rated most aspects of their taught postgraduate experience the lowest of all five groups summarised in Table 37. Next lowest were the students from Asian countries, although on a number of scales (assessment and feedback; dissertation; organisation and management; skills and personal development) they rated their experiences the same as UK students did. Students from African countries gave the highest scores to each scale, higher than the overall average and higher than any other major country group. EU students from beyond the UK rated most scales reasonably high, with some (dissertation; organisation and management; skills and personal development) similar to the UK and the rest slightly lower.

Overall experience against expectations

As with the analysis of variations between disciplines in students' ratings of their experience against expectations (Table 31), it is also instructive to consider variations by domicile and major country group. Recall from Table 8 that overall 12.2% of the students who participated in PTES 2011 reported their experience was below their expectations, 14.7% said it met their expectations, and 73.0% said it had exceeded their expectations.

[21] These data refer to the country group that was derived from Q32 'Where is your normal place of residence?' Table 34 shows that 84.2% of the respondents who selected 'Other EU' for fees purposes also selected a country of residence that aggregated up into the 'Other European Union' category (Table 33). Thus the 'Other EU' category for fees purposes is similar to, but not identical to, the 'Other European Union' country group.

Table 38 presents the results of overall experience against expectations by domicile for fees purposes.

Table 38: Overall experience against expectations, by domicile for fees purposes

	Below my expectations	Met my expectations	Exceeded my expectations	N
Home	13.0%	15.2%	71.8%	23,183
Other EU	13.4%	15.3%	71.3%	3,996
Non EU	10.1%	13.4%	76.5%	10,477

These results suggest that international students from outside the EU are more satisfied with their overall learning experience than either Home students or students from elsewhere in the EU.

Table 39 presents the results for the major country groups.

Table 39: Overall experience against expectations, by major country groups[22]

	Below my expectations	Met my expectations	Exceeded my expectations	N
United Kingdom	13.6%	15.5%	70.9%	20,861
Other European Union	12.3%	14.3%	73.4%	4,318
Africa	5.0%	12.0%	82.9%	1,735
Asia	8.1%	13.1%	78.8%	7,027
North America	19.6%	15.0%	65.4%	1,255
Overall	12.1%	14.7%	73.2%	35,196

There are some interesting patterns in Table 39. The lowest overall level of satisfaction is shown by the students from North America, only two-thirds of whom rated their experience as having exceeded expectations and a fifth rating it as below expectation. The highest overall level is shown by students from Africa; more than four out of five said their experiences exceeded expectations, and only one in twenty said they were below expectation. Students from Asia tend to be much more satisfied with their experiences than students from North America and the UK. Levels of dissatisfaction (judged by experience relative to expectations) are highest among students from North America, the UK and Other European Union countries.

These statistical analyses demonstrate but do not explain differences in how students from different countries rate different aspects of their taught postgraduate programmes. Some of the observed differences suggest that further research on this topic could yield valuable information that would help HEIs to better understand what different groups of students expected of them, and to provide more appropriate information, guidance and support in order to further enhance the student experience. Potentially fruitful avenues of enquiry would include what expectations non-UK students have of taught postgraduate programmes in the UK (for example, in relation to teaching, learning and assessment styles, type and level of available support, and the balance between academic and vocational ingredients), where those expectations come from and what they are informed by. Some of the

[22] All differences statistically significant (chi-square, $p<0.001$).

differences might also reflect cultural variations in such things as willingness to voice opinions (particularly critical views) and attitudes towards the cost-effectiveness of higher education study.

Section 7: Disability

Information about disability has been collected in PRES since its inception, and in 2011 it was decided to also include a disability question in PTES. A range of detailed analyses have been performed in order to explore some of the associations between disability and how students rate aspects of their taught postgraduate programmes[23].

In the PTES 2011 sample as a whole, 1,818 students (4.7%) stated that they had a disability. A breakdown by category is presented in Figure 11.

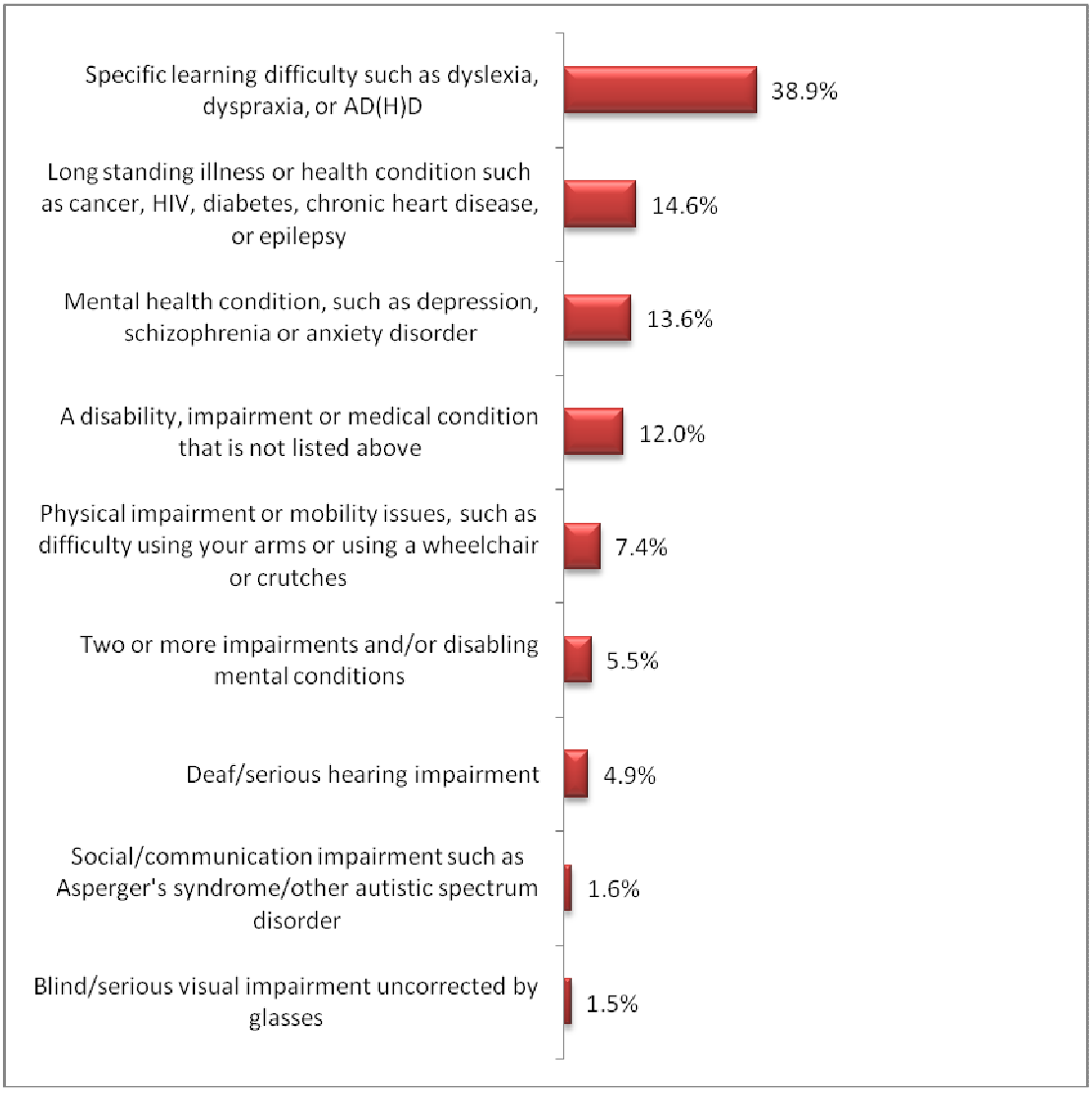


Figure 11: Students with disabilities, by disability type (N=1,818)

Regarding mode of study, 51% of students with disabilities were full-time and 44% part-time (compared with 62% full-time and 34% part-time students without disabilities). However, the difference between students with disabilities and without

[23] When interpreting these data it should be borne in mind that the sample size of students who said they had a disability is a great deal smaller than for students without disabilities.

for mode of delivery was not statistically significant: both groups had 77% face-to-face and 23% distance learners.

Regarding domicile, 87% of students with disabilities were registered as Home students for fees purposes, 5% as Other EU and 8% as international (Non EU), compared with 60%, 11% and 29%, respectively, for students who did not say that they had a disability.

Mean scale scores

Tables 40 to 42 present the mean scale scores in PTES 2011 for each disability type. The mean scale scores for all students with disabilities are noted separately for each scale.

Table 40: Mean scale scores for teaching, staff, and assessment, by disability type

	Teaching	Staff	Assessment
Social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	4.23	4.30	3.69
Blind/serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	4.09	4.11	3.73
Deaf/serious hearing impairment	4.18	4.30	3.97
Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	4.02	4.13	3.77
Mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	3.88	4.05	3.62
Specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D	3.87	4.06	3.59
Physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	4.09	4.27	3.74
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	3.95	4.11	3.77
Two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions	3.87	4.07	3.48

The overall mean score (Table 17) for the teaching and learning scale was 3.96, and the mean score for students with disabilities was 3.94. The highest-scoring disability type for this scale was social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder (4.23) and the lowest-scoring disability types were specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D and two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions (both 3.87).

The overall mean for the staff scale was 4.07, and the mean score for students with disabilities was 4.11. The highest-scoring disability types were social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder and deaf/serious hearing impairment (both 4.30) and the lowest scoring was mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder (4.05).

The overall mean for the assessment and feedback scale was 3.70, and the mean score for students with disabilities was 3.67. The highest-scoring disability type for this scale was deaf/serious hearing impairment (3.97) and the lowest scoring was two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions (3.48).

Table 41: Mean scale scores for dissertation, organisation, and learning resources, by disability type

	Dissertation	Organisation	Learning resources
Social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	4.13	3.97	3.88
Blind/serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	3.69	3.73	3.59
Deaf/serious hearing impairment	4.18	3.92	3.98
Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	4.03	3.90	3.93
Mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	3.89	3.73	3.85
Specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D	3.82	3.64	3.72
Physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	3.99	3.96	3.94
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	4.03	3.82	3.78
Two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions	3.77	3.60	3.56

The overall mean for the dissertation scale was 3.95, and the mean score for students with disabilities was 3.92. The highest-scoring disability type for this scale was deaf/serious hearing impairment (4.18) and the lowest-scoring disability type was blind/serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses (3.69).

The overall mean for the organisation and management scale was 3.86, and the mean score for students with disabilities was 3.75. The highest-scoring disability type for this scale was social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder (3.97) and the lowest scoring was two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions (3.60).

The overall mean for the learning resources scale was 3.96, and the mean score for students with disabilities was 3.79. The highest-scoring disability type for this scale was deaf/serious hearing impairment (3.98) and the lowest scoring was two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions (3.56).

Table 42: Mean scale scores for skills and career, by disability type

	Skills	Career
Social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	4.15	3.93
Blind/serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	4.05	4.01
Deaf/serious hearing impairment	4.04	3.95
Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	3.99	3.98
Mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	3.71	3.63
Specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D	3.88	3.90
Physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	4.14	3.99
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	4.03	3.98
Two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions	3.74	3.61

The overall mean for the skills and personal development scale was 4.00, and the mean score for students with disabilities was 3.92. The highest-scoring disability type for this scale was social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder (4.15) and the lowest scoring was mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder (3.71).

The overall mean for the career and professional development scale was 3.97, and the mean score for students with disabilities was 3.88. The highest-scoring disability type for this scale was blind/serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses (4.01) and the lowest scoring was two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions (3.61).

Overall experience against expectations

Table 43 presents a detailed analysis of responses to question 19.g 'Overall experience of my course' for students with disabilities. It shows that students with disabilities were, on average, less satisfied with their taught postgraduate course than non-disabled students[24].

[24] This pattern is also true for all of the other 'experience against expectations' questions in PTES (Q19a-f). All between-group differences on these questions are statistically significant ($p<0.001$).

Table 43: Overall experience against expectations, students with disabilities

	Below my expectations	Met my expectations	Exceeded my expectations	N
Disability	17.7%	13.5%	68.9%	1,795
No disability	11.9%	14.8%	73.3%	36,101
All students	12.2%	14.7%	73.1%	37,896

In order to further understand which students' expectations have been met to a greater or lesser extent, a disaggregation by disability type is presented in Table 44. Note that caution must be exercised in interpreting these results because of small cell sizes (there are often few students in each cell in the matrix).

Table 44: Overall experience against expectations, by disability type

	Below my expectations	Met my expectations	Exceeded my expectations	N
Social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	6.9%	6.9%	86.2%	29
Blind/serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	11.1%	14.8%	74.1%	27
Deaf/serious hearing impairment	9.2%	11.5%	79.3%	87
Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	16.7%	9.9%	73.4%	263
Mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	22.8%	17.9%	59.3%	246
Specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D	18.7%	14.2%	67.1%	702
Physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	15.4%	11.5%	73.1%	130
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	16.8%	9.3%	73.8%	214
Two or more impairments and/or disabling mental conditions	17.5%	21.6%	60.8%	97

Table 44 shows that there is a wide range of ratings between students with different types of disability. Students with a social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder were, on average, the most positive. Just 6.9% of those students found that their course was below their expectations, and 86.2% said that their expectations were exceeded. Students with a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder tended to be the least satisfied, with only 59.3% recording that their experience exceeded their expectations, and 22.8% stating that their course was below their expectations.

The results show that students with a wide variety of self-declared disabilities (Figure 11) study successfully on a wide variety of taught postgraduate programmes (Table 26). Perhaps inevitably, some face particular challenges in doing so, and HEIs do not always provide sufficient support that is appropriate for the particular needs of all of their students. This probably explains the lower levels of satisfaction (experience against expectations) of students with one or more disabilities compared to those without.

Section 8: Developing and using PTES for enhancing the taught postgraduate student experience

The findings from PTES 2011 demonstrate that taught postgraduate students rate their experience as a positive one. Nearly nine out of ten (88%) of the students who took part in the 2011 survey rated their experience as having met or exceeded their expectations. This is roughly in line with results from the National Student Survey (82% in 2010) and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (86% in 2011).

This national report is a useful tool for institutions to benchmark their own PTES results and to inform enhancement initiatives. It is recommended that HEIs use these top-level numbers, along with their own institutional results, as a starting point to explore the experiences of their own taught postgraduate students. Are they generally as positive as the national picture suggests about questions on the staff scale? Are they as positive overall – and, even if they are, what about those students whose experience was *below* their expectations? Are their motivations and career aspirations different, and what effect does that have on their perceptions of other aspects of their experience?

The Higher Education Academy will run PTES again in 2012, using a similar survey period (starting in February and ending in May). Survey access control will again be mandatory, to ensure that the survey is secure and its results are reliable. The HEA and HEIs will work together in order to maximise the number of participating institutions and the number of students responding. The HEA will also continue to provide support to institutions in analysing, interpreting and using their results for enhancement.

Information will be available on the HEA's website throughout the coming months http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/postgraduate-enhancement.

Appendix: The PTES 2011 questionnaire

SECTION A: MOTIVATIONS

1. My main motivations for taking this postgraduate programme were: *(select all that apply)*

   - To enable me to progress to a higher level qualification (e.g. PhD)
   - To progress in my current career path (i.e. a professional qualification)
   - To change my current career
   - To improve my employment prospects
   - As a requirement to enter a particular profession
   - To meet the requirements of my current job
   - For personal interest
   - Other *(Please specify…)*……..

2. I am studying for this qualification at this particular institution because of: *(select all that apply)*

   - The overall reputation of the institution
   - The institution's reputation in my chosen subject area
   - The reputation of the department
   - The location of the institution
   - I have studied at this institution before
   - It is the only institution offering this programme
   - It was recommended to me
   - My employer advised or encouraged me to do it
   - Delivery of the programme is flexible enough to fit around my life
   - The way the programme is assessed
   - Funding was available to me to study this particular programme
   - The cost of the programme compared to other institutions
   - Graduates from this institution have good career and employment prospects
   - Other *(Please specify…)*……..

SECTION B: QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding teaching and learning on your programme?

	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
a. The teaching and learning methods are effective for this type of programme	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. There is sufficient contact time (face to face and/or virtual/online) between staff and students to support effective learning	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I am happy with the teaching support I received from staff on my course	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. The course is intellectually stimulating	○	○	○	○	○	○

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding staff on your programme?

	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
a. Staff are good at explaining things	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Staff made the subject interesting	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. Overall, how would you rate the teaching quality on your programme?

- ✔ It is consistently good
- ✔ It is variable but generally good
- ✔ It is variable but generally poor
- ✔ It is consistently poor

6. To what extent have you been expected to analyse ideas or examine a particular case or situation in depth?

   - Never
   - Hardly ever
   - Sometimes
   - Frequently
   - Most of the time

7. To what extent have you been expected to synthesise information or organise ideas or experiences into more complex relationships?

   - Never
   - Hardly ever
   - Sometimes
   - Frequently
   - Most of the time

8. To what extent have you been expected to judge and evaluate information, arguments, or methods?

   - Never
   - Hardly ever
   - Sometimes
   - Frequently
   - Most of the time

9. To what extent have you been expected to apply theories to practice in new situations?

   - Never
   - Hardly ever
   - Sometimes
   - Frequently
   - Most of the time

10. Please outline any other key learning skills you have developed or been expected to practice on your programme:

……

……..

SECTION C: ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Feedback includes oral and written feedback given in both formal and informal contexts.

11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding assessment and feedback on your programme?

	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
a. The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Feedback on my work has been prompt	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I received feedback in time to allow me to improve my next assignment	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I have received detailed comments (written or oral) on my work	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION D: DISSERTATION

12. Do you need to write a dissertation as part of your programme?

- ✔ Yes
- ✔ No (If no, please go to the next section)

13. If yes, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your dissertation and supervisor?

	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
a. I understand the required standards for the dissertation	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. My supervisor has the skills and subject knowledge to adequately support my dissertation	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. My supervisor makes a real effort to understand any difficulties I face	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I have received good guidance in my literature search from my supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. My supervisor provides helpful feedback on my progress.	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION E: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

14. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding organisation and management of your programme?

	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
a. The timetable fits well with my other commitments	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Any changes in the programme or teaching have been communicated effectively	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. The programme is well organised and is running smoothly	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. The balance of core modules and options is appropriate	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. The balance between scheduled contact time and private study is appropriate	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. Overall, the workload on the programme is:

- ✔ Much higher than I expected
- ✔ Higher than I expected
- ✔ More or less as I expected
- ✔ Lower than I expected
- ✔ Much lower than I expected

SECTION F: LEARNING RESOURCES

16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding learning resources on your programme?

	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
a. The library resources and services are good enough for my needs	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. The library resources and services are easily accessible	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I have been able to access social learning spaces (e.g. for group working) on campus when I needed to	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities, or rooms when I needed them	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. I am satisfied with the quality of learning materials available to me (Print, online material, DVDs, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION G: SKILLS AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

17. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding skills gained on your programme?

	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
a. The programme has developed my research skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. The programme has developed my transferable skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. As a result of the programme I am more confident about independent learning	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. The programme has helped me to present myself with confidence	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. As a results of the programme my communication skills have improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. As a result of the programme, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION H: CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

18. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding professional development on your programme?

	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Not applicable
a. I am encouraged to reflect on my professional development needs	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I feel better prepared for my future employment	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. As a result of this programme, I believe my future employment prospects are better	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION I: OVERALL SATISFACTION

19. Please rate the following broad aspects of your postgraduate taught programme in terms of how your experience of those aspects has met with your expectations *(-3 it has definitely not met my expectations , 0 it has met my expectations, +3 it has definitely exceeded my expectations)*

	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
a. Quality of teaching and learning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Assessment and feedback	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Organisation and management	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Learning resources	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Skills and personal development	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Career and professional development	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Overall experience of my course	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION J: FURTHER COMMENTS

Looking back over your experience of your taught degree programme, are there any particularly positive or negative aspects you would like to highlight?

20. POSITIVE……..

……

21. NEGATIVE……

……

SPACE FOR INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

22. I am registered for the qualification of:

- Taught Master (e.g. MA, MSc, MBA, LLM)
- Postgraduate Certificate (including PGCE)
- Postgraduate Diploma
- Other *(Please specify…)*

23. What is your age?

- 25 years old or younger
- 26-30 years old
- 31-35 years old
- 36-40 years old
- 41-45 years old
- 46-50 years old
- 51-55 years old
- 56 years old or older

24. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

25. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please choose one from the following options:

- Social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder
- Blind/serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- Deaf/serious hearing impairment
- Long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- Mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder
- Specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D
- Physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
- A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above
- Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions

For the next question, please respond in relation to the taught postgraduate programme you are currently studying.

26. Please indicate, which of the following most closely matches your discipline:
    - ✔ Medicine and Dentistry
    - ✔ Medical Science and Pharmacy
    - ✔ Nursing
    - ✔ Other subjects allied to Medicine
    - ✔ Biology and related Sciences
    - ✔ Sports Science
    - ✔ Psychology
    - ✔ Veterinary Sciences
    - ✔ Agriculture and related subjects
    - ✔ Physical Science
    - ✔ Physical Geography and Environmental Science
    - ✔ Mathematical Sciences
    - ✔ Computer Science
    - ✔ Mechanically-based Engineering
    - ✔ Electronic and Electrical Engineering
    - ✔ Civil, Chemical and other Engineering
    - ✔ Technology
    - ✔ Architecture, Building and Planning
    - ✔ Economics
    - ✔ Politics
    - ✔ Sociology, Social Policy and Anthropology
    - ✔ Social Work
    - ✔ Human and Social Geography
    - ✔ Law
    - ✔ Business
    - ✔ Management
    - ✔ Finance and Accounting
    - ✔ Tourism, Transport, Travel and others in Business and Administrative studies
    - ✔ Media studies
    - ✔ Communications and Information studies
    - ✔ English-based studies
    - ✔ European Languages and Area studies
    - ✔ Other Languages and Area studies
    - ✔ History and Archaeology
    - ✔ Philosophy, Theology and Religious studies
    - ✔ Art and Design
    - ✔ Performing Arts
    - ✔ Other Creative Arts
    - ✔ Teacher Training
    - ✔ Education studies
    - ✔ Combined

27. *** Which Department do you belong to? *** *This is a question for each institution to map their departmental structure. The format of this question is a drop down list and question wording can be changed or deleted. If you wish to compare your results with previous years in BOS, please test your question wording carefully to make sure that you can access the information you need.*

28. When did you start your course?

- After 1 January 2011
- 1 September 2010 – 31 December 2010
- 1 September 2009 – 31 August 2010
- Before 1 September 2009

29. What are you currently registered as?

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Currently not registered (e.g. finished the course) was full-time
- Currently not registered (e.g. finished the course) was part-time

30. I am:

- Primarily a face to face learner [e.g., based at my institution]
- Primarily a distance learner [e.g. work based learner, OU student]

31. For fees purposes, is your normal place of residence registered as:

- Home
- Other EU
- Non EU

32. Where is your normal place of residence?

- Afghanistan
- Åland Islands
- Albania
- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia

- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia (Plurinational state of)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Brazil
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei Darussalam
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Channel Islands
- Chile
- China
- China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
- China, Macao Special Administrative Region
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt

- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Ethiopia
- Faeroe Islands
- Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Holy See
- Honduras
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran (Islamic Republic of)
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Lao People’s Democratic Republic

- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia (Federated States of)
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- Netherlands Antilles
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Norway
- Occupied Palestinian Territory
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines

- Pitcairn
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Republic of Korea
- Republic of Moldova
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russian Federation
- Rwanda
- Saint-Barthélemy
- Saint Helena
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint-Martin (French part)
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- Sao Tome and Principe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands
- Swaziland
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Tajikistan
- Thailand
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Turkey

- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom – England
- United Kingdom – Northern Ireland
- United Kingdom – Scotland
- United Kingdom – Wales
- United Republic of Tanzania
- United States of America
- United States Virgin Islands
- Uruguay
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
- Viet Nam
- Wallis and Futuna Islands
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe
- *Other (Please specify…)……*

33. Are you currently in paid employment?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many hours of paid employment do you undertake in a typical week (term time)?

- 1-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- More than 30 hours

34. What is your main source of funding for this course?

- Self-funded (e.g. loan, family)
- Charity
- Research council
- Institution (e.g. bursary, scholarship)
- Employer
- UK Government
- EU Government
- Overseas Government
- *Other (Please specify…)……*

35. Your highest qualification on entry:

- ✔ Qualifications below undergraduate degree
- ✔ Undergraduate degree or equivalent
- ✔ Postgraduate degree (e.g. MA)
- ✔ No academic qualifications but professional experience
- ✔ Other *(Please specify…)*……..