

PRES 2025

BRIEFING NOTE

What you said and what we did following the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2024

WELCOME

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2025, is an annual UK national survey of all Research Degree students, organised by AdvanceHE.

This Briefing Note provides details of some of the key outcomes from the previous (2024) PRES survey, and summarises the actions taken since then. In PRES 2024, 12,123 postgraduate research (PGR) students from 61 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) took part in the survey, (a response rate of 28%), compared with 381 eligible University of Portsmouth PGR students who responded (a response rate of 48%). Most of the 43 questions asked in the PRES 2024 survey were rated on a 1–5 scale, with 5 indicating strong agreement.

SUMMARY OF PRES 2024

For the fifth PRES survey in a row, Portsmouth PGR students reported they had higher overall satisfaction than the sector average, with 85% of our students responding this year that they either agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied overall with their research degree programme, compared to 81% for the whole sector. This is the highest Portsmouth PRES overall satisfaction score since 2017.

In addition, 85% of our PGR students agreed or strongly agreed they were confident they would complete their research degree on time, placing us in the top quartile of all universities. The average University of Portsmouth rating for the question 'My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students' was significantly higher than the sector mean. You may be interested to know that summary scores from the annual PRES are now used in the formal quality review procedures for all schools, departments and faculties across the University, further confirming that your responses to the PRES really do matter!

RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The PRES 2024 survey asked eight sets of questions about skills development relating to research techniques, critical analysis, creativity, research integrity, project management,

communication, networking and self-management. Overall ratings for these questions for our University were all above the sector average.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2024

- Our online evening provision aimed at part-time and distance learning students - the Professional and Distance Learning Online Community (PaDLOC) - continues to be popular, with more of our tutors volunteering to host interesting and varied workshops.
- The University has again subscribed to the online research methods evening classes from the University of East Anglia for all UoP PGRs, and these continue to get very good feedback.
- The highly rated Graduate School Development Programme (GSDP) continues to underpin much of the research and professional skills training for PGRs across the University. We have added eleven new sessions this year including 'Philosophy and Qualitative Research', 'The Research Excellence Framework for beginners' and 'Strategies for Challenging research' all of which have been extremely popular!

PROGRESSION

The 2024 PRES survey asked four questions about progression through your PGR degree, including inductions, annual reviews, thesis standards and assessment procedures.

Responses from Portsmouth students placed the University significantly above the HEI sector average. In 2024 the University of Portsmouth once again had one of the highest ratings in the UK for its research degree induction events, significantly higher than the sector.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2024

- In addition to the traditional October and February University-wide PGR inductions, we have now added an April and June event for the growing numbers of Doctoral students joining at these points in the year. Following PRES 2024, we've added even more interactive sessions to the induction giving the new PGRs more opportunities to network and undertake interdisciplinary work.
- In response to your feedback, we now run 'Re-Induction' events for 2nd and later year PGRs. The event enables PGRs to meet up with colleagues from their first inductions, and to ask questions of the Doctoral College and Research Degrees teams. This initiative has proven to be very popular both in person and in online formats.

RESOURCES

The PRES 2024 survey asked seven questions about campus and off-campus resources relating to working space, computing resources and facilities, the Library, and specialist resources. The overall resources rating for Portsmouth students is higher than the sector average, with ratings of specialist resources needed for research when studying remotely being significantly higher than the sector average.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2024

- Since the last PRES, all of the key information that you need to succeed in your research degree, including forms and guidance, have been added to the [MyPort web pages](#), making the information, advice and the forms all much easier to access for PGR students and their supervisors.
- In response to your feedback we have worked with the Library to create a dedicated space with computers, screens and docking stations for PGRs.

SUPPORT

The PRES 2024 survey asked three questions about the general support and resources available to PGRs. The questions asked about support for academic skills, online support including library and IT systems, and about support for health and wellbeing. Portsmouth students in 2023 rated all three of these questions higher than the sector average, with support for academic skills being rated significantly higher.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2024

- Our new PGR Snapshot sessions continue to go from strength to strength, with sessions covering a number of specialist topics in-depth, such as Using AI to create a CV, Getting started with NVivo, and Creative techniques for presenting your research.
- A new PGR Wellbeing and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group has been established with representatives from each faculty. This group will make recommendations and design actions to improve accessibility at all stages of the PGR experience.
- The Doctoral College's summer writing retreats continued in both online and in-person formats, and provided a supportive environment for PGRs to move forward with their writing.
- A new set of guidelines applying a universal design approach to the PGR experience is being co-created by PGRs, ASDAC, academics and the Doctoral College. This has been introduced to make learning and access to support for everyone.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The 2024 PRES survey asked four questions about responsibilities, relating to institutional feedback, understanding of responsibilities of students and supervisors and knowing who to approach if they had problems. The average University of Portsmouth rating about responding to institutional feedback from research degree students was significantly higher than the sector mean. Scores for knowing who to contact other than your supervisor was above the sector mean.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2024

- The 'I'm a PGR student who do I ask about...' leaflet and [MyPort webpage](#) has been updated to provide information to students about who they should contact other than their supervisors for a number of issues, including wellbeing, and concerns about their degree programme.
- All Schools now have an academic acting as their Deputy Director of Postgraduate Research (DDPGR), as well as having a PGR student representative on each Faculty Research Degree Committee. The role of the DDPGR is to help students and supervisors, and to pass along any feedback or concerns as appropriate.

RESEARCH CULTURE

The PRES 2024 survey asked four questions about research culture and four relating to a sense of community amongst research students. The University of Portsmouth research culture average is 3% higher than the sector average in this area, and the community average is 5% higher.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2024

- In each of the last three years, the Doctoral College has invested £25,000 to fund PGR research culture initiatives at University, faculty and departmental levels. In the last year these have paid for writing retreats, specific research culture events and remote meetings equipment so that students not able to attend campus can also attend meetings and events.
- The 2024 hybrid 'Festival of Doctoral Research' was a great success with over 140 attendees celebrating our doctoral researchers through events such as our Five by Five, research image, elevator pitch and even a craft your thesis competitions. The 2025 Doc Fest will take place on 10 July 2025 in the Portland building and online.
- Our PGR-led Elevate U series was run for the first time and it brought together PGRs from across the University to help develop postgraduate researcher resilience.

- We have a new webpage for [PGR Research Culture](#), for easy access to information about the events and support we have University wide for PGR research culture.

SUPERVISION

The 2024 PRES survey asked four questions about supervision relating to supervisory skills, regular contact, feedback and help with training needs.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2024

- Our PGR students were satisfied with the help that supervisors provided on training and development and these were higher than the average for the sector.
- The Doctoral College now offers 20 training sessions for Supervisors each year, many of which are repeated and/ or online. All of these sessions are very highly rated.

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

The PRES 2024 survey asked three questions about teaching opportunities for PGRs. Ratings of PGR teacher training were some of the highest in the sector and significantly higher than the sector mean, but responses were slightly lower than the sector for the proportion who had undertaken paid (or equivalent) teaching work.

UPDATE SINCE PRES 2024

- The GProf teacher training programme for PGRs remains popular and very highly rated.
- Students across the University reported a significantly greater rate of formal training for their teaching at 85%, compared to the whole HEI sector of 56%.
- On average 36% of students say they have undertaken paid teaching compared to 35% for the sector as a whole.

PLANS FOR THE NATIONAL POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES) 2025

In 2025 the University will again take part in the national PRES survey, along with approximately 100 other higher education institutions.

The PRES 2025 survey will be launched on 8 April 2025 and run until 9 May 2025. Eligible students (students with a live registration, in their research phase who started their studies before February 2025) will receive an email inviting them to complete the online survey.

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

More information about PRES 2025, what it is and how the data will be used can be found on our [website](#).

If you have questions about the PRES or how it will be distributed, please contact us at studentsurveys@port.ac.uk.

TAKE PART IN PRES 2025 - HAVE YOUR SAY!

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

The PRES survey is extremely important to research students and their supervisors, as it allows the University to gauge how successful any changes have been and also helps us to identify areas that might require further attention. During the survey, students who have yet to respond will be sent reminders, and the data collected will be anonymised once the survey has closed. We are proud that the University of Portsmouth usually has one of the highest PRES response rates in the whole of the UK.

We asked the 2024 PRES Prize draw winner Kieran Graham about his win. Kieran said “I honestly wasn't expecting to win, I just filled in the survey and got on with my life. When I found out that I had won the prize money, I was so surprised but very grateful for the opportunities it would give me. I am currently researching how various groups of stars can tell us more about galaxy evolution at the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation. So far, I have really enjoyed my research because I get to analyse data collected from telescopes around the world. I plan to use the PRES money to attend a symposium on massive galaxies in Naples, Italy, and therefore learn more about these interesting structures in our universe.”

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