Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students 2023

The national survey for postgraduate research students opens every second year during February to March for a three-week period, and runs on a biennial cycle, with the next survey happening in Spring 2025.

The survey was piloted in 2018 and implemented in full in Spring 2019. The 2023 PGR survey opened in University of Galway on the 7th February 2023 and closed on the 27th February 2023.

The University of Galway response rate for the PGR StudentSurvey.ie in 2023 was 42.3%, compared to a national response rate of 38%.

The focus of the survey is on student engagement with learning, rather than student satisfaction. PGR StudentSurvey.ie addresses each of the following engagement aspects:

Research Infrastructure and Facilities

- Research Culture
- Research Skills
- Responsibilities and Supports
- Funding
- Motivations
- •Overall Experience

- Supervision
- Progress and Assessment
- Other Transferable Skills
- Personal Outlook
- Development Opportunities
- Career Aspirations
- Withdrawing from degree

Demographic data is provided in Tables 1 and 2. Table 3 presents

- response for all University of Galway students compared to response for other respondents in 2023. Significant differences (i.e. >=5%) are highlighted. The University of Galway response in 2021 is also provided for comparison.
- response for University of Galway students by College compared to response for all University of Galway students. Significant differences (i.e. >=5%) are highlighted.

University of Galway students indicated a significantly more positive response for 15 questions, and a significantly more negative response for 3 questions compared to other respondents. Overall, compared to all respondents, our PGR students report having received an appropriate induction / orientation, knowing who to approach if they are concerned about academic aspects or to talk to about day-to-day problems, participate more in development opportunities, and are more likely to be funded through a scholarship and stipend. They, however, report lower agreement than other respondents with the statement that the institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students.

It is generally recognised that there are more significant differences within institutions than there are between institutions.

University of Galway responses are therefore also presented at College level in Table 3. School level data is available to vice-Deans of Graduate Studies.

School level actions plans are required to be developed and submitted to Graduate Studies Board, in response to the survey findings.

Graduate Studies wishes to acknowledge the expert assistance of Dr Aksana Chyzheuskaya in the Institutional Research Office in the preparation of the data presented in this report.

Table 1: Demographic profile of University of Galway Respondents

	Population	Responses	Response Rate
Total	1054	446	42.3%
Gender			
Male	464	177	38.1%
Female	587	268	45.7%
Other	3	1	33.3%
Programme Type			
Masters	37	15	40.5%
PhD	1017	431	42.4%
Year of Study			
1	256	128	50.0%
2	230	121	52.6%
3	177	72	40.7%
4	169	76	45.0%
5	9	3	33.3%
6	9	2	22.2%
Master's 3+	6	2	33.3%
FT PhD 5+	178	42	23.6%

	Univer	sity of Galwa	y 2023	Univer	sity of Galwa	y 2021	All PGR StudentSurvey	
	All Students	NFQ 9	NFQ 10	All Students	NFQ 9	NFQ 10	All Students	
Population								
Survey Population	1,054	37	1,017	1,060	57	1,003	11,406	
Respondents	446	15	431	426	27	399	4,350	
Response Rate	42.3	40.5	42.4	40.2	47.4	39.8	38.1	
Gender (Number)								
Male	177	9	168	180	9	171	1,769	
Female	268	6	262	246	18	228	2,566	
Gender (%)								
Male	39.8	60.0	39.1	42.3	33.3	42.9	40.8	
Female	60.2	40.0	60.9	57.7	66.7	57.1	59.2	
Domicile (Number)								
Irish domiciled	206	13	193	253	20	233	2,313	
Internationally domiciled	240	2	238	173	7	166	2,037	
Domicile (%)								
Irish domiciled	46.2	86.7	44.8	59.4	74.1	58.4	53.2	
Internationally domiciled	53.8	13.3	55.2	40.6	25.9	41.6	46.8	

Table 2: Response for Colleges and Schools

College	Population	Responses	Response Rate
ASSCS	253	106	41.9%
BPPL	86	34	39.5%
MNHS	178	75	42.1%
SE	537	231	43.0%
Inter College	0	0	
Total	1054	446	42.3%

Schools with responses<10 are redacted

Schools	Population	Responses	Response Rate
Business & Economics	50	19	38.0%
Biological & Chemical Sciences	147	61	41.5%
Computer Science	74	28	37.8%
Education	22	14	63.6%
Engineering	167	76	45.5%
English & Creative Arts	33	14	42.4%
Geography, Archaeology & Irish Studies	57	24	42.1%
Health Sciences	27	14	51.9%
History & Philosophy	13	<10	N/A
Languages, Literatures & Cultures	22	10	45.5%
Law	36	15	41.7%
Mathematical & Statistical Sciences	74	24	32.4%
Medicine	145	56	38.6%
Natural Sciences	75	42	56.0%
Nursing & Midwifery	6	<10	N/A
Political Science & Sociology	26	10	38.5%
Psychology	78	31	39.7%
Other	2	0	0.0%

Table 3: Responses for University of Galway in 2023 and 2021, with deviation of equal to or greater than 5% between University of Galway in 2023 and responses for all Universities (including University of Galway) highlighted. Responses also for the Colleges with deviation of equal to or greater than 5% between response and the University of Galway 2023 response highlighted.

		Galway	Galway	Other				
Questions	Responses	2023	2021	Unis 2023	ASSCS	BPPL	SE	MNHS
		ch Infrastru	ucture & Fa	cilities				
I have a suitable working space	Definitely/Mostly Agree	83.2%	62.0%	77.4%	80.4%	82.4%	81.7%	91.9%
There is adequate provision of	Definitely/Mostly							
computing resources / facilities	Agree	66.0%	55.0%	70.4%	49.5%	66.7%	69.7%	76.0%
There is adequate provision of								
library facilities (including physical /	Definitely/Mostly							
online resources	Agree	81.1%	55.0%	82.6%	82.5%	73.5%	81.3%	81.9%
I have access to the specialist								
resources and facilities necessary for my research	Definitely/Mostly Agree	74.5%	55.0%	72.6%	74.8%	62.5%	75.3%	76.7%
iny research	Agree			72.0%	74.8%	02.5%	75.3%	70.7%
Supervision Lam being supervised		Super	vision					
Supervision I am being supervised by	1 Supervisors	47.9%	57.0%	39.7%	51.9%	58.8%	47.4%	38.7%
Supervision I am being supervised	_ = 3,90,73015	.7.370	07.070		21.370	00.070		001170
by	2 Supervisors	39.3%	36.0%	45.3%	34.9%	38.2%	39.1%	46.7%
Supervision I am being supervised								
by	3 or more Supervisors	12.8%	7.0%	15.0%	13.2%	2.9%	13.5%	14.7%
My supervisor(s) provides the								
appropriate level of support for my	Definitely/Mostly							
research	Agree	81.7%	84.0%	85.0%	85.1%	90.9%	78.1%	84.0%
I have regular contact with my supervisor(s), appropriate for my								
needs	Definitely/Mostly Agree	84.3%	87.0%	87.5%	85.1%	87.9%	82.7%	86.7%
My supervisor(s) provides feedback	1.8.00	01.370	07.070	07.370	03.1/0	67.570	02.770	00.770
that helps me to direct my research	Definitely/Mostly							
activities	Agree	83.4%	88.0%	86.4%	88.1%	87.5%	80.5%	83.8%
My supervisor(s) help me to identify								
my training and development needs as a researcher	Definitely/Mostly	72.8%	76.0%	76.0%	76.0%	78.8%	71.8%	68.9%
	Agree			70.0%	70.0%	70.070	/1.0%	08.9%
		Research	Culture					
My department provides access to a relevant seminar programme	Definitely/Mostly	71.2%	71.0%	68.8%	70.1%	84.8%	68.3%	75.3%
The research ambience in my	Agree	/1.270	/1.0%	00.0%	70.1%	04.0%	00.3%	13.3%
department stimulates my work	Definitely/Mostly Agree	63.2%	61.0%	61.7%	66.3%	64.7%	58.4%	73.2%
I have frequent opportunities to	0							
discuss my research with other	Definitely/Mostly							
research students	Agree	62.6%	47.0%	62.4%	63.3%	50.0%	61.5%	71.2%
I have opportunities to become								
involved in the wider research community, beyond my department	Definitely/Mostly	54.8%	47.0%	52.7%	EC 70/	EO 00/	EC 20/	EQ 00/
community, beyond my department	Agree				56.7%	50.0%	56.2%	50.0%
I received an appropriate induction /	Pr	rogress and	Assessmer	nt				
orientation to my research degree	Definitely (Marst)							
programme	Definitely/Mostly Agree	69.1%	68.0%	62.4%	75.0%	67.6%	64.9%	74.3%
I understand the requirements and								
deadlines for formal monitoring of	Definitely/Mostly							
my progress	Agree	82.4%	83.0%	79.9%	83.0%	85.3%	82.7%	79.5%
I understand the required standard	Definitely/Mostly							
for my thesis	Agree	73.1%	75.0%	73.2%	71.0%	82.4%	73.7%	69.9%

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institution nowadaysAgree60.0%47.0%62.0%66.7%64.7%55.3%62.9%I am satisfied with my work-lifeDefinitely/MostlyII </th <th></th> <th></th> <th>63.2%</th> <th>56.0%</th> <th>64.7%</th> <th>73.2%</th> <th>64.7%</th> <th>59.2%</th> <th>61.4%</th>			63.2%	56.0%	64.7%	73.2%	64.7%	59.2%	61.4%
			60.0%	47.0%	62.0%	66.7%	64.7%	55.3%	62.9%
balance Agree 51.8% 45.0% 53.2% 54.6% 47.1% 49.5% 57.1%	I am satisfied with my work-life balance		51.8%	45.0%	53.2%	54.6%	47.1%	49.5%	57.1%

There is someone in my institution I										
can talk to about my day-to-day problems	Definitely/Mostly Agree	59.6%	43.0%	53.6%	61.3%	50.0%	57.9%	67.1%		
I feel that my research degree	-	59.0%	43.0%	53.0%	01.3%	50.0%	57.9%	07.1%		
programme is worthwhile	Definitely/Mostly Agree	79.6%	77.3%	79.4%	82.3%	76.5%	80.6%	74.3%		
programme is worthwine	, ,				02.570	70.570	00.070	74.570		
My research is funded by Scholarship YES 74.4% 72.9% 61.8% 50.9% 85.3% 83.9% 73.3%										
Scholarship	YES		72.9%		50.9%					
Scholarship (fees only) Self-funded	YES	2.9% 13.7%	19.2%	5.6% 16.8%	7.5% 34.9%	N<5 14.7%	2.2%	N<5 9.3%		
Grant	YES	13.7%	14.6%	16.8%	8.5%	14.7% N<5	5.2% 16.1%	9.3%		
Employer-funded	YES	7.2%	12.2%	8.0%	13.2%	N<5 N<5	5.2%	20.0% N<5		
Linpioyer-funded	125		7.4%	0.070	13.270	N×J	J.270	11<5		
	2/50	My fundi	-	0.4.40/	0.4.50/	100.0.0/	00.00/	04.50/		
Fees	YES	94.1%	97.5%	94.1%	94.5%	100.0.%	93.0%	94.5%		
Stipend	YES	84.7%	82.7%	79.5%	68.1%	81.8%	92.5% 62.6%	82.2%		
Research materials	YES	56.1%	55.7%	56.6% 58.0%	38.5% 41.8%	33.3% 42.4%	68.3%	68.5%		
Travel to conferences Other travel (labs / other	163	58.0%	50.9%	30.0%	41.0%	42.470	00.5%	53.4%		
institutions)	YES	35.1%	28.1%	30.3%	19.8%	18.2%	44.5%	32.9%		
Specialist training	YES	32.3%	28.1%	27.2%	17.6%	15.2%	38.8%	38.4%		
	Dev	velopment	Opportunit	ies			-			
Agreeing a personal training or development plan	YES	58.3%	44.0%	48.3%	60.2%	50.0%	59.6%	55.6%		
Receiving training to develop my										
research skills	YES	81.3%	79.0%	77.4%	82.7%	79.4%	78.5%	88.9%		
Receiving training to develop my other transferable skills	2456	CC 20/	c2.0%	C1 20/	75.00/	C 4 70/	c2 20/	CC 20/		
	YES	66.3%	62.0%	61.3%	75.8%	64.7%	62.3%	66.2%		
Receiving advice on career options	YES	42.3%	38.0%	37.9%	45.4%	38.2%	41.3%	43.1%		
Taking part in a placement or										
internship	YES	27.0%	20.0%	19.3%	22.7%	17.6%	30.9%	25.0%		
Attending an academic research										
conference	YES	80.8%	72.0%	76.6%	78.8%	82.4%	78.0%	91.7%		
Presenting a paper or poster at an academic research conference	YES	69.3%	64.0%	68.2%	72.4%	76.5%	65.9%	72.2%		
	TES	09.376	04.076	08.270	72.478	70.576	03.976	/2.2/0		
Submitting a paper for publication in										
an academic journal or book	YES	53.4%	54.0%	52.0%	47.4%	54.5%	54.3%	58.3%		
Communicating your research to a										
non-academic audience	YES	52.1%	45.0%	47.3%	49.5%	41.2%	56.5%	47.2%		
Receiving training in										
entrepreneurship and innovation	YES	21.8%	21.0%	18.1%	21.6%	N<5	24.2%	19.4%		
Putting training in entrepreneurship										
and innovation into practice e.g.										
submittin	YES	10.4%	9.0%	9.2%	6.2%	N<5	13.0%	8.3%		
Working as part of a team Working collaboratively with	YES	71.6%	67.0%	65.6%	60.8%	55.9%	73.1%	88.9%		
industry	YES	25.2%	24.0%	24.8%	15.6%	20.6%	29.3%	27.8%		
Working collaboratively with a civil	115	23.270	27.0/0	27.070	19.070	20.070	20.070	27.070		
society organisation or public										
organisation	YES	25.1%	26.0%	23.2%	31.6%	41.2%	20.6%	22.2%		
Spending time abroad as part of your										
research degree	YES	30.6%	20.0%	25.0%	28.9%	32.4%	32.4%	26.4%		
Please indicate whether you have										
taught (or demonstrated) at your										
institution during your research										
deggree programme	YES	75.5%	70.0%	66.4%	61.6%	75.0%	82.5%	72.7%		
Do you agree or disagree that the										
teaching / demonstration you delivered enhanced your overall										
research experience?	Definitely/Mostly Agree	65.4%	57.0%	67.0%	74.6%	70.4%	63.3%	59.0%		
research experience:	Agiee	00.7/0	57.070	07.070	74.070	70.470	03.370	- 39.070		

Do you agree or disagree that you								
have been given appropriate support								
and guidance for your teaching /	Definitely/Mostly		40.00/		E 4 10/	F7 10/	FF 00/	C1 70/
demonstration	Agree	56.5%	48.0%	55.5%	54.1%	57.1%	55.8%	61.7%
		Motiv	ations					
My interest in my subject	Priority 1	47.0%	47.0%	44.7%	49.0%	52.9%	47.9%	38.6%
Improving my career prospects for								
an academic / research career	Priority 1	21.5%	18.0%	21.6%	24.0%	14.7%	19.2%	28.6%
Improving my career prospects outside of an academic / research								
career	Priority 1	12.8%	12.0%	12.2%	7.3%	N<5	13.6%	20.0%
I was encouraged by a former								
academic tutor / supervisor	Priority 1	3.1%	4.0%	2.7%	N<5	N<5	3.8%	N<5
The funding was available	Priority 1	3.1%	4.0%	4.2%	N<5	N<5	3.3%	N<5
It felt like a natural step for me	Priority 1	5.6%	9.0%	7.1%	6.3%	N<5	5.2%	N<5
I felt inspired to work with a								
particular academic	Priority 1	0.7%	1.0%	1.3%	N<5	N<5	N<5	N<5
Drofossional development or tool	Del anitari 4	A 40/	F 00/	A 50/	NL -F	N JF	F 20/	NG
Professional development or training Other (Please specify)	Priority 1 Priority 1	4.4% 1.7%	5.0% 1.0%	4.5% 1.7%	N<5 N<5	N<5 N<5	5.2% N<5	N<5 N<5
Other (Flease specify)				1.7%	C ZVI	015	C/VI	C7VI
		Car	eer	1				
Academic career in higher education	Priority 1	35.4%	39.0%	37.9%	47.4%	48.5%	27.6%	37.1%
		33.170	33.070	57.570		10.570	27.070	57.170
Research career in higher education	Priority 1	15.5%	13.0%	12.6%	14.7%	N<5	17.8%	11.4%
Other career in higher education	Priority 1	1.0%	1.0%	1.3%	N<5	N<5	N<5	N<5
Research career outside higher								
education	Priority 1	28.9%	26.0%	23.9%	12.6%	15.2%	35.5%	37.1%
Teaching (at a level below higher								
education)	Priority 1	0.2%	0.3%	1.2%	N<5	N<5	N<5	N<5
Returning to, or remaining with,								
employer who is sponsoring your degree	Priority 1	3.4%	3.0%	3.6%	N<5	N<5	2.8%	N<5
Returning to, or remaining with,	Thomas I	5.470	5.070	5.070	1145	113	2.070	1115
employer who is not sponsoring your								
degree	Priority 1	1.5%	2.0%	1.9%	N<5	N<5	N<5	N<5
Self-employment (including setting								
up your own business)	Priority 1	2.4%	3.0%	3.3%	N<5	N<5	3.3%	N<5
Any other professional career	Priority 1	3.9%	5.0%	5.6%	5.3%	N<5	4.2%	N<5
Not sure or not decided yet	Priority 1	5.6%	8.0%	6.4%	5.3%	N<5	5.6%	N<5
Other (Please specify):	Priority 1	2.2%	2.0%	2.3%	N<5	N<5	N<5	N<5
		Overall E	kperience	r	r			
Overall Experience How would you								
evaluate your entire research								
experience at this institution?	Good/Excellent	70.4%	71.0%	72.8%	73.7%	78.8%	66.4%	74.3%
I am confident that I will complete								
my research degree programme								
within my institution's expected	Definitely/Mostly							
timescale:	Agree	71.2%	69.0%	74.5%	81.9%	78.8%	66.7%	67.1%
	seriously considere	ed withdrav	ving from y	our researc	h degree pr	ogramme?		
No, I have not seriously considered withdrawing	VEC	57.0%	68.0%	57.9%	55.8%	54.5%	58.8%	54.3%
Yes, for financial reasons	YES YES	57.0% 21.7%	68.0% 12.0%	23.7%	55.8% 25.3%	54.5% 15.2%	58.8% 19.9%	54.3% 25.7%
	115	21.7/0	12.0/0	23.770	23.370	19.270	10.070	23.770
Yes, for personal or family reasons	YES	17.1%	15.0%	16.5%	18.9%	21.2%	13.9%	22.9%
Yes, for health reasons	YES	11.4%	10.0%	9.9%	13.7%	N<5	10.2%	14.3%
Yes, for employment reasons	YES	8.0%	5.0%	6.6%	9.5%	N<5	6.9%	8.6%
Yes, to transfer to another								
institution	YES	3.4%	4.0%	3.8%	N<5	N<5	3.7%	N<5
Other (please state)	YES	9.7%	6.0%	6.8%	6.3%	15.2%	11.6%	N<5

What aspects / elements of your research degree experience are most valuable?



What aspects of your research degree experience could be improved?

