

Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students 2023



Purpose

PGR StudentSurvey.ie (Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students; Suirbhé na hÉireann ar Rannpháirtíocht na Mac Léinn do Mhic Léinn Taighde Iarchéime) invites responses from postgraduate research (PGR) students on a biennial survey cycle. PGR StudentSurvey.ie asks students directly about their experiences of higher education in Ireland, including their academic, personal, and social development. In 2023, 4,350 students in 17 higher education institutions participated.

Postgraduate research students are a vital group in the context of the National Research and Innovation Strategy for Ireland and any strategy must include supporting and empowering these early career researchers. When Innovation 2020¹ was being developed, enterprise agencies forecasted that the number of research and development personnel needed in the enterprise sector alone would increase and Project Ireland 2040² also highlighted the development of skills, talent and innovation capacity as a key strategic pillar.

It is essential for Ireland's national research system that those who carry out research here, from the very beginnings of their career, receive an educational experience that equips them with the capability and confidence to conduct their research to the highest possible standards. Underpinning the quality of postgraduate research degree provision is Ireland's *National Framework for Doctoral Education*. A complementary *Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes* was launched by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and is organised around the key principles in the *National Framework for Doctoral Education*. The information gathered in PGR StudentSurvey.ie will greatly advance the objectives of these policies, in providing key evidence for both HEIs themselves but also the broader higher education and research and innovation system to enhance the quality of postgraduate research degree provision in Ireland.

1 DBEI (2015) Innovation 2020. Available from: <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Innovation-2020.pdf>

2 Government of Ireland (2018), Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework, p. 145. Available from: <https://npf.ie/project-ireland-2040-national-planning-framework/>

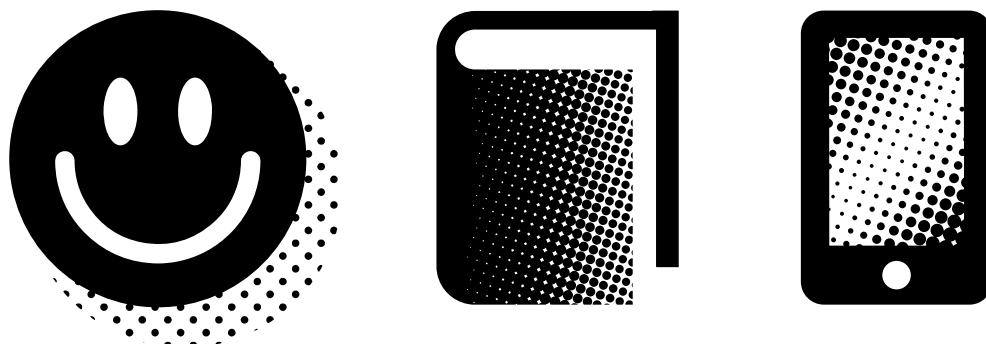
Structure of the survey

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*
- ➔ *Supervision*
- ➔ *Research Culture*
- ➔ *Progress and Assessment*
- ➔ *Development Opportunities*
- ➔ *Research Skills*
- ➔ *Other Transferable Skills*
- ➔ *Responsibilities and Supports*
- ➔ *Personal Outlook*
- ➔ *Motivations*
- ➔ *Career Aspirations*
- ➔ *Overall Experience*

Those interested in consulting the full set of questions are directed to <https://studentsurvey.ie/survey-questions>.

There is a second survey, StudentSurvey.ie (the Irish Survey of Student Engagement; Suirbhé na hÉireann ar Rannpháirtíocht na Mac Léinn), designed for first and final year undergraduate students and taught postgraduate students, and it runs annually. The results for 2023 are contained in the StudentSurvey.ie National Report 2023.



Summary of 2023 results

A total of 4,350 students responded to the 2023 survey, which represents a national response rate of 38.1%.

Chapter 2 presents responses to question items grouped according to different engagement aspects of postgraduate research experience.

The results presented in Chapter 3 represent a curated exploration of variance between groups. The PGR StudentSurvey.ie Dashboard, which can be found [here](#), allows for a full examination of the results.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the changing landscape of Post Graduate Research in Ireland by spotlighting key findings from this year's results and drawing comparisons with data from 2021.

Reflections

In Chapter 5 will we present the perspectives of the Co-Sponsors of PGR StudentSurvey.ie and the Chair of the PGR Working Group, offering insights into this year's report and the survey's future.



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