**Postgraduate Research Students, University of Galway**

**National Student Survey**

**School of Education**

**2024 Action Plan**

Overall, the School of Education is very pleased with the Postgraduate Research scores received. They suggest high to very high levels of satisfaction amongst Education PhD students.

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|  |  | **Actions** | **Responsible** | **Status\***  **March 2024** |
| 1 | **Research Infrastructure and Facilities** | Scores here are generally good (69-79%). As an aside, while we previously planned to make available a PhD ‘hotdesk’ in Nuns’ Island. Due to the expansion of our School and the incorporation of Children’s Studies, without the provision of any office space for staff, we are unable to provide this hot desk space at the moment. We will continue to keep this ‘on the table’. | **HoS** | **\*In progress**  **(Delayed due to inadequate office space for staff)** |
| **2** | **Supervision** | No actions are planned here as very high satisfaction rates were reported; 100% of Education PhDs responded that they a) were provided with the appropriate level of support by their supervisor, b) had regular and appropriate contact with their supervisor, c) received appropriate feedback on their research from their supervisor, and d) were helped by their supervisor to identify training and development needs. | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **3** | **Research Culture** | We are very pleased with the scores here (69-77%) which suggest significant satisfaction levels with the research culture in the School, including opportunities to discuss their research with other research students. This suggests that the initiatives developed in the last 2-3 years by the Director of Doctoral Studies (DDS), including the monthly Research in Progress meetings, and the social gatherings, are working very well.  There are ‘continued’ actions planned here; the DDS will continue to host monthly Research in Progress meetings and to organise social gatherings. The annual Postgraduate Research Symposium, now in its 12th year, also plays a key role here. | **DDS**  **DDS**  **DDS** | (marked as ‘complete’ as repeated /continued)  **Complete**  **Complete**  **Complete** |
| **4** | **Progress and Assessment** | Satisfaction scores in this area were 75-83% and, based on these results, we do not see a need for any actions in this domain.  However, given the new requirement of a mini-viva for 2023/2024 entrants and beyond, DDS is currently engaging with staff to develop School guidelines (in conjunction with University and College requirements) and, once finalised, with hold an information session for all relevant students to ensure they are all clear on requirements and guidelines. | **DSS**  **DSS** | **\*In Progress**  **\*In Progress** |
| **5** | **Research Skills** | Satisfaction scores in this area were 83-100% and, based on these results, we do not see a need for any actions in this domain | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **6** | **Other Transferable Skills** | Satisfaction scores in this area were 75-92% and, based on these results, we do not see a need for many actions in this domain. However, the item relating to developing contacts and professional networks was at 75% satisfaction. It would be good to see this improve further. The DDS will liaise with supervisors about this item and encourage them to more directly facilitate the development of professional networks amongst their PhD students. | **DDS & Supervisors** | **\*In Progress** |
| **7** | **Responsibilities and Supports** | Scores here were at 100% for the first three items, so no actions are planned in relation to these.  Awareness of student supports at university level was reported at N<5 so it would appear that this requires attention. Information was made available on all these supports to students via Blackboard and has now also been transferred to Canvas for the two first year Structured PhD modules (ED6167 and ED6182). This information has also been emailed to all PhD students to ensure those not currently enrolled in Structured PhD modules also receive the information.  For the item relating to perceptions of the extent to which the institution values and responds to feedback from research students (67%), the DDS will share a list of actions with PhD students via email. | **DDS**  **DDS**  **DDS** | **\*Complete March 2024**  **\*Complete March 2024**  **\*In progress** |
| **8** | **Personal Outlook** | With scores here from 75-92%, we do not foresee many necessary actions in this domain.  One necessary, however, relates to satisfaction with work-life balance (50% were satisfied). The DDS will discuss this with supervisors and supervisors will be asked to discuss the issue with their students to ascertain what key factor is leading to the imbalance and to explore some strategies to try to address it. However, this may be challenging; we are aware, for example, that unfunded PhDs are under pressure to work long hours, as well as completing their research, which results in work-life balance stress. Additionally, many School PhDs are working FT and doing a PhD PT which makes work-life balance very challenging. | **DDS**  **All SoE PhD supervisors** | **\*In Progress**  **\*In Progress** |
| **9** | **Funding** | Funding questions are information-based (e.g. how funded) and not satisfaction or issues-related. Many Education PhDs (43%) are PT as they work full-time as teachers, for example, so are not funded in any way. | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **10** | **Development Opportunities** | For 9 items, the scores range from 63-92% and no actions are planned.  For the remaining items scoring 55% and under, we note that several are not relevant for our School (for example, taking part in a placement or internship, receiving training in entrepreneurship and innovation and working with industry, spending time abroad etc.).  Some items do require our attention, including receiving advice on careers, and submitting a paper for publication. However, Education PhDs do actually receive training on these topics through the Structured PhD module ED6167 but these particular sessions take place each year in March and April, so the students had not yet had them when completing the questionnaire. School supports have again been highlighted to students by the DDS, and supervisors have been reminded to direct their students to the Careers Advisory Service as appropriate, and also to discuss publication possibilities with their students at appropriate junctures. | **DDS**  **All SoE PhD supervisors** | **\*Complete**  **\*In Progress** |
| **11** | **Motivations** | We are not identifying actions here as we do not see we have a role in evaluating (or changing) our students’ initial motivations to do a PhD. | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **12** | **Career** | As with the ‘Motivations’ section, we are not identifying actions here as we do not see we have a role in evaluating (or changing) our students’ future career aspirations in terms of the specific areas into which they plan to progress. Given that 67% report considering an academic career post-PhD, this will be reflected upon (as it usually is each year) during the relevant ED6167 session entitled ‘Working in Academia and Beyond’ which takes place in April. | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **13** | **Overall Experience** | We are very pleased with the score here, which shows that 92% of Education PhDs a) report a good-excellent research experiences, and b) report that they are confident about completion. We note that the score for a) is the highest for Schools across the College (and for b) is tied with 2 other Schools). We also note that 67% report not having considered withdrawing, again the highest across Schools in the College. | **N/A** | **N/A** |

**\*Not Started**

**\*In Progress**

**\*Complete**

Dr. Elaine Keane,

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