



2014 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) Report Summary

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the results of the SAS PTES 2014 survey of current postgraduate taught students, held between 29 April and 19 June 2014. The PTES is held annually each spring and 2014 is the third survey that SAS has participated in.

The PTES questionnaire was redesigned for 2014 to reflect the sector's increasing focus on student engagement, information provision and widening participation. Its structure was simplified and the number of questions overall reduced, while options for making qualitative comments were enhanced. Some continuity has also been preserved, but PTES 2014 also sets a new baseline for the sector.

Summary of results

- **The School received a much higher response rate than the national average.** 51 respondents completed the survey representing a 47.2% response rate. The national response rate was 28.3% (67,580 students from 100 HEIs) and the top response rate for a single institution was 87%. This places SAS well into the top 25% of institutions for response rate (the upper quartile starts at 38%). However, 2014 did represent a drop in the School's response rate from the previous year (the School's response rates for 2013 and 2012 were 55% and 45% respectively).
- **Responses were received from students of all five institutes offering postgraduate taught degrees.** The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (33.3%) and the Warburg Institute (25.5%) reported the highest response rates. The Institute of English Studies (3.9%) and the Institute of Historical Research (13.7%) reported the lowest.
- **The majority of respondents are UK-domiciled:** 53.2% UK, 21.3% other EU and 25.5% overseas.
- **The majority of respondents hold full-time status (66.0%), with over a third (41.3%) in paid employment. Of those working, almost half are working more than 30 hours a week in paid employment while studying (47.1%).** Different levels of support and flexible study arrangements are important to working students, a growing trend among postgraduate students, especially in the humanities.
- **The overall level of satisfaction experienced by respondents was higher than the national average, with 90% of respondents reporting that they were satisfied with their course (the national average was 83%).** Areas where SAS scored particularly high in comparison with the national results were in quality of teaching and learning and engagement (a new area of focus for the survey in 2014). However, SAS reported lower than average satisfaction rates with assessment and feedback (67%), dissertation or major project (another new focus area for 2014) (67%), organisation and management (68%), and resources and services (77%).
- **Overall, satisfaction levels were generally higher than those reported in 2013 and 2012.** Most notably, students reported a significant increase in satisfaction with their overall experience at 90% and with the quality of teaching and learning at 93%, compared to the 2013 survey where students reported 81% and 79% satisfaction levels respectively. Both

results are significantly higher than the national average. The only area where satisfaction levels were reported to have fallen was with resources and services, which fell from 81% in 2013 to 77% in 2014.

Conclusion

Overall satisfaction levels are high at 7% above the national average and the School shows continued increases in satisfaction rates reported since it first participated in the PTES in 2012. Student reported particularly high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning and engagement at 11% and 8% higher than the national average respectively. However, there are a number of areas where SAS reports satisfaction levels below the national average and these should be the focus of continued course development and improvement. The two areas where the lowest satisfaction was reported – assessment and feedback and dissertation or major project – are below the national average at 5% and 9% respectively.

This is a high level summary of the reports, benchmarked against the [national report](#) which was published on 2 October 2014. Deeper analysis will be undertaken and a full detailed report submitted to the next Academic and Quality Standards Committee meeting.