PGR Experience Survey 2023 Report

Mikaila Jayaweera Bandara (PGR Policy & Enhancement Adviser)

Ramatu Umar Baku (PGR Survey Intern)

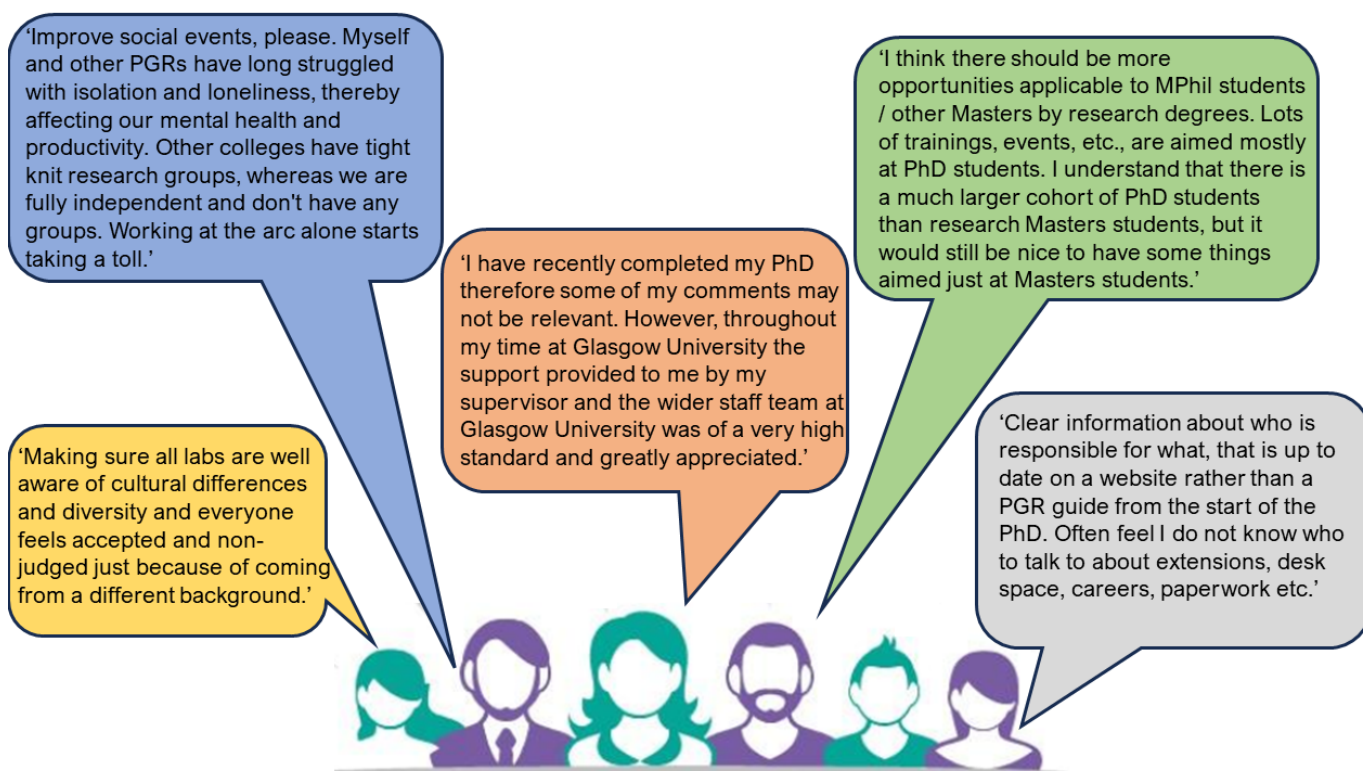**Mary Beth Kneafsey (Head of Research Governance, Policy & Integrity)**
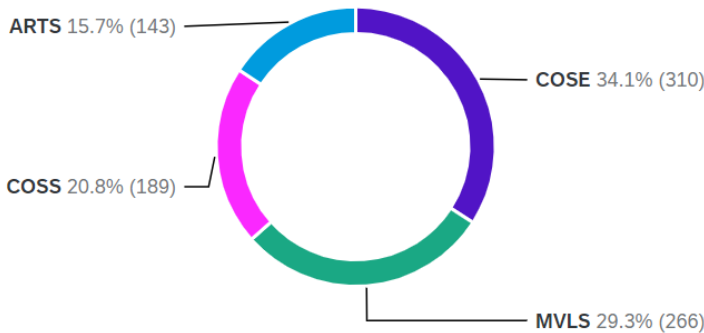
Contents:

COMMENTS

- The PGR Experience Survey 2023 was launched on 17th May 2023 and closed on the 19th June 2023. The response rate is slightly lower compared to last year, which may be due to the survey being launched later in the month than the previous year.
- The overall satisfaction rate (81%) across the University is higher than 2022, with feedback about PGR's experience being more optimistic.
- Encouragingly, satisfaction levels for students that identified as other, unknown or intersex/unspecified is 35% higher in comparison to last year.
- There has been a great recovery in services in the past 2 years post COVID-19, and there are smaller amounts of delays in PGR research or thesis submission.
- However, the need for a PGR community still endures. 11.5% of respondents expressed the desire of social events with PGRs, not only from their field of research, but also from different Schools and Colleges.
- For this year's survey, students were asked to answer a few questions concerning PGR communications. Results suggested that PGRs are generally well informed and rely mainly on emails as a form of communication. However, students mostly agreed that they can receive too many emails which may subsequently lead to them missing out on information. General PGR communication and communication regarding PGR policies & processes were extensively mentioned by students when asked for improvement feedback.

'Improve social events, please. Myself and other PGRs have long struggled with isolation and loneliness, thereby affecting our mental health and productivity. Other colleges have tight knit research groups, whereas we are fully independent and don't have any groups. Working at the arc alone starts taking a toll.'

'I think there should be more opportunities applicable to MPhil students / other Masters by research degrees. Lots of trainings, events, etc., are aimed mostly at PhD students. I understand that there is a much larger cohort of PhD students than research Masters students, but it would still be nice to have some things aimed just at Masters students.'

'I have recently completed my PhD therefore some of my comments may not be relevant. However, throughout my time at Glasgow University the support provided to me by my supervisor and the wider staff team at Glasgow University was of a very high standard and greatly appreciated.'

'Making sure all labs are well aware of cultural differences and diversity and everyone feels accepted and non-judged just because of coming from a different background.'

'Clear information about who is responsible for what, that is up to date on a website rather than a PGR guide from the start of the PhD. Often feel I do not know who to talk to about extensions, desk space, careers, paperwork etc.'

A few feedback comments expressed by PGRs.

RESPONSE RATES

College Level Response Rates `908`

College	% of College Population
ARTS	21.1%
MVLS	22.5%
COSE	20.8%
COSS	21.4%

- The PGR Experience Survey 2023 had 908 respondents which equated to 21.4% in a total population of 4236 PGR students at the time the survey was distributed.
- This is slightly lower than 2022, which had a 23.6% response rate.
- Respondent's academic load were predominantly full-time (76%).
- 54.2% of respondents were female and 44.4% male. Respondents that identified as other, unknown or intersex/unspecified collectively made up 1.4% of students.
- 49% of respondents were international.
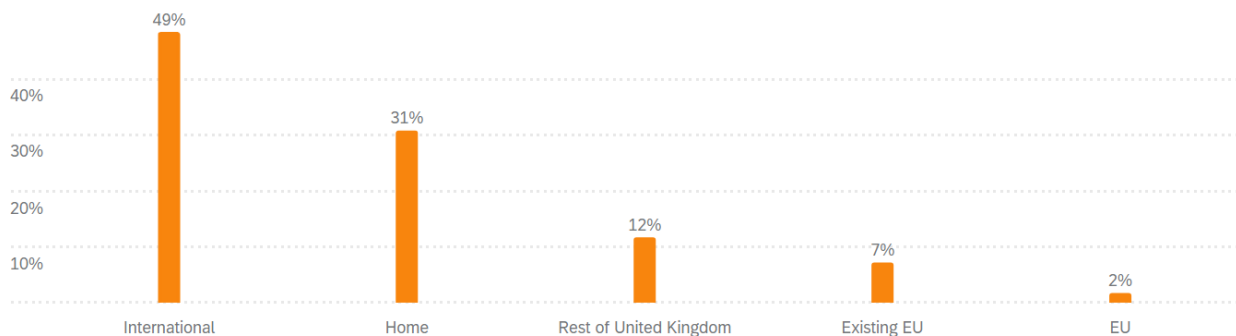- The James Watts School of Engineering (14%) had the highest response rate at School level.

Academic Load Response Rates `908`
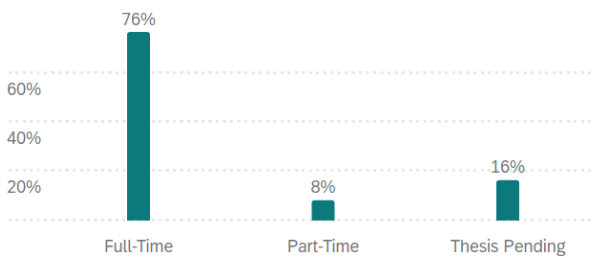
Gender Response Rates `908`
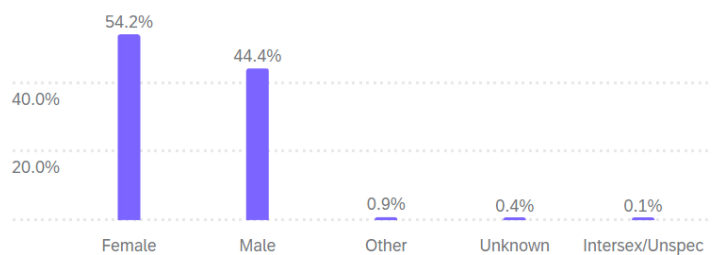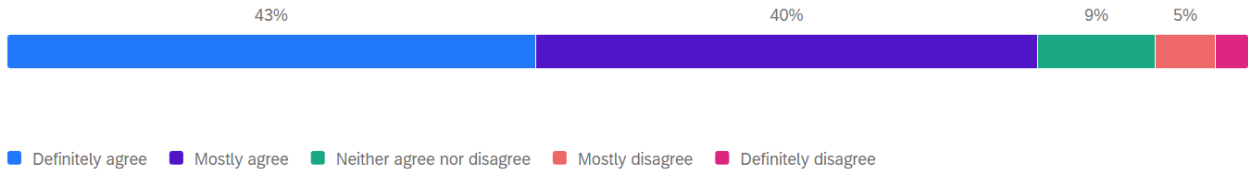

Residency Response Rates `908`

School Level Response Rates 908

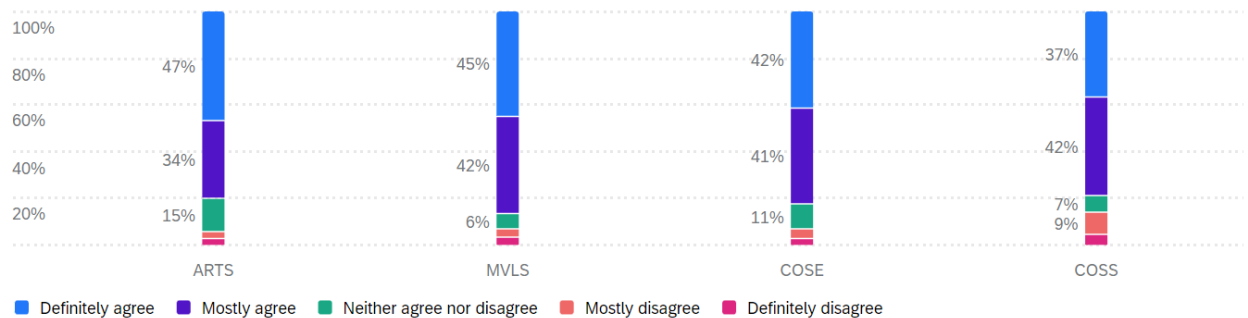| School	Count	↓ Count
James Watt School of Engineering	123	14%
Adam Smith Business School	64	7%
Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine	59	6%
Education	58	6%
Critical Studies	54	6%
Computing Science	54	6%
Humanities	46	5%
Physics & Astronomy	42	5%
Social & Political Sciences	40	4%
Health & Wellbeing	40	4%
Cancer Sciences	38	4%
Infection & Immunity	30	3%
Geographical & Earth Sciences	30	3%
Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health	30	3%
Psychology & Neuroscience	27	3%
Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing	27	3%
Culture & Creative Arts	27	3%
Chemistry	27	3%
Mathematics & Statistics	26	3%
Molecular Biosciences	21	2%
Law	16	2%
Modern Languages & Cultures	14	2%
Interdisciplinary Studies	10	1%
Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre	3	0%

TIMELY COMPLETION

Q1: *'I am confident that I will be able to complete my research degree programme within the agreed timescale, including any additional time added for changes I needed to make to my project due to the pandemic disruption and any agreed extensions.'*
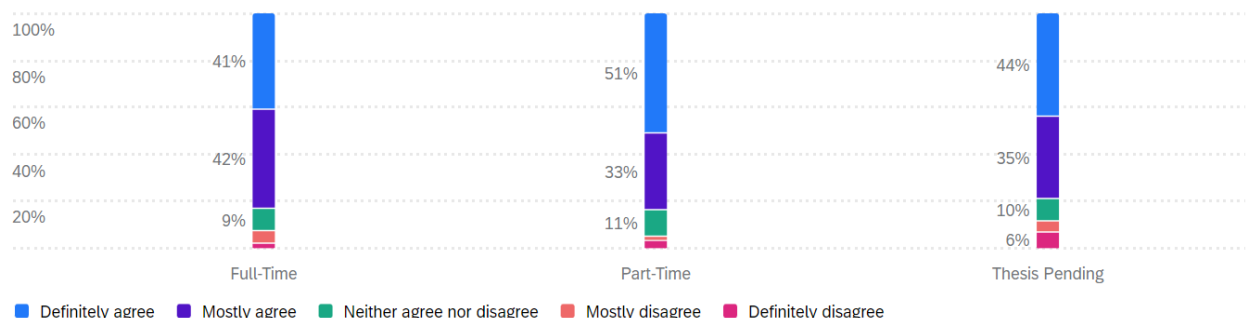
Timely Completion (Overall) 908

| 43% | 40% | 9% | 5% | |

- Definitely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Definitely disagree

Timely Completion (College Level)

- Definitely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Definitely disagree

- Overall, 83% of respondents agreed they could complete their research degree within the agreed timescale.
- PGRs in MVLS (87%) were most likely to feel they will complete in time compared to ARTS, COSE & COSS, which were 81%, 83% & 79%, respectively.
- Part-time students had the highest agreement (84%) followed closely by full-time students (83%).

Timely Completion (Academic Load)

- Definitely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Definitely disagree

RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Q2: *'I understand my responsibilities as a research student to adhere to the principles of good practice in research and research integrity.'*

Understanding Research Integrity (College Level)
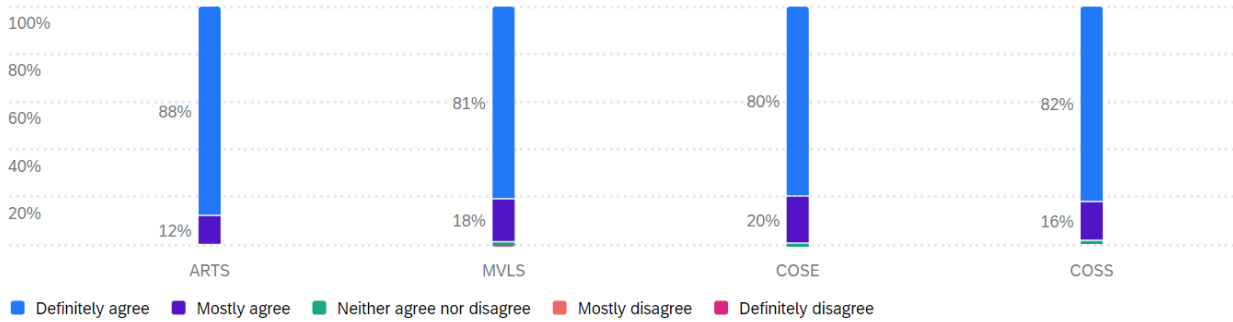
- Understanding of research integrity was very high across all four Colleges, with agreement ranging from 98 – 100%
- There were slight variations at School level, with a minute number of respondents showing disagreement or neutrality.
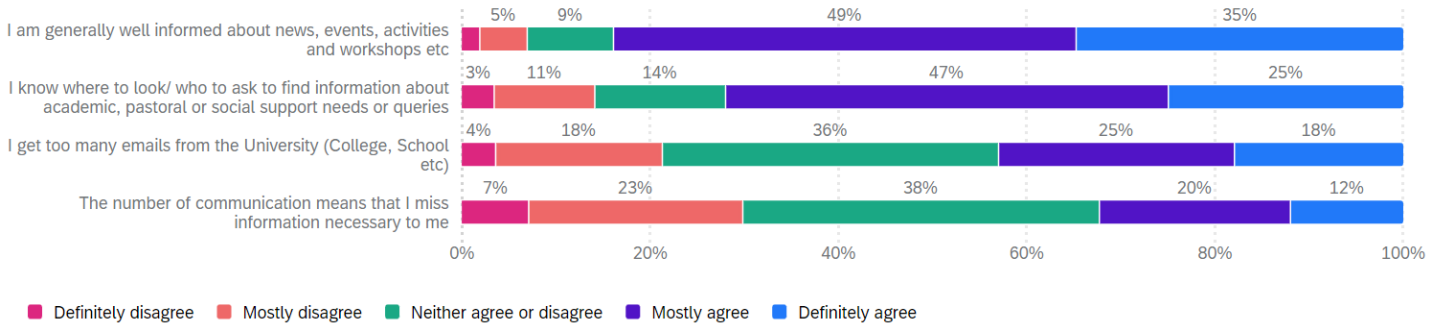
Understanding Research Integrity (School Level)
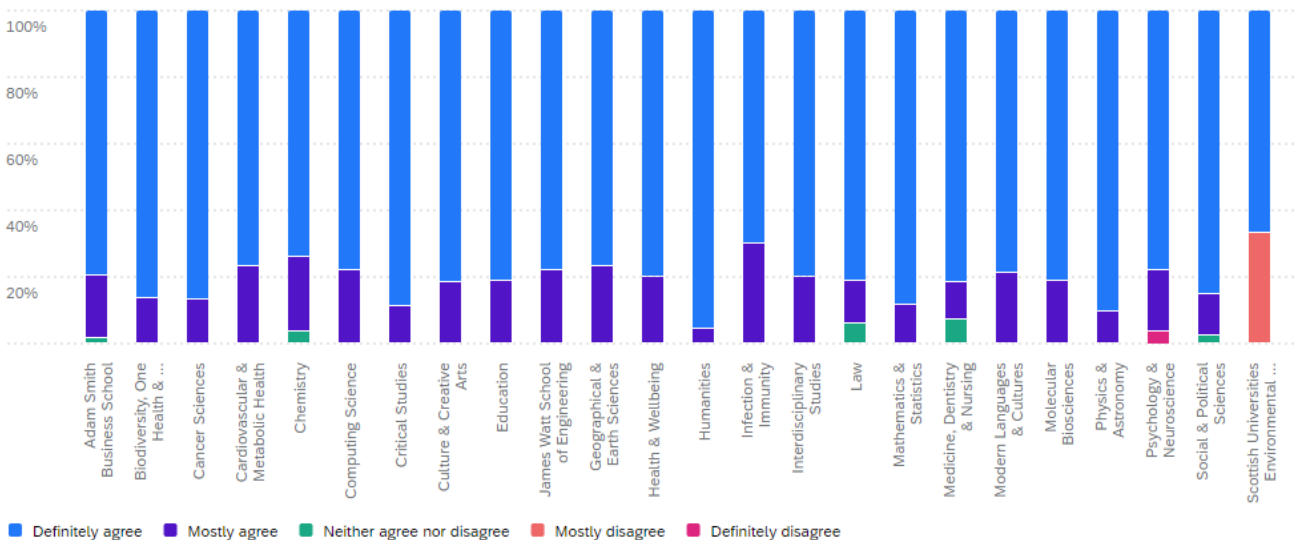
COMMUNICATION

Q3: *'To what extent do you agree or disagree with following statements regarding PGR internal communications?'*

Comms (Overall) 908

- Overall, 84% of respondents agreed they were well informed and 72% knew where to look and who to ask to find information. Comparable results were also reflected at College level.
- 43% agreed that they get too many emails from the University and 21% disagreed. At College level, MLVS had the highest agreement (49%) and ARTS the lowest (38%).
- Results were more spread-out concerning students missing information necessary to them. PGRs in MVLS agreed with this statement the most (38%) in comparison with ARTS (31%), COSE (31%), & COSS (28%).
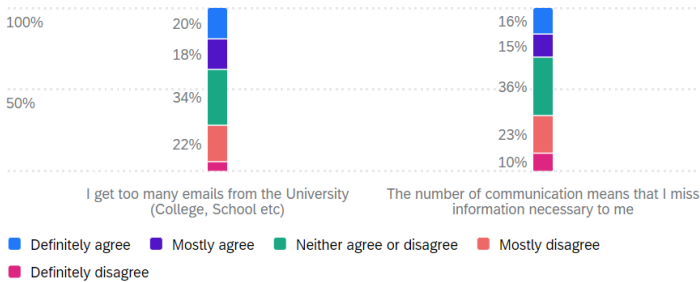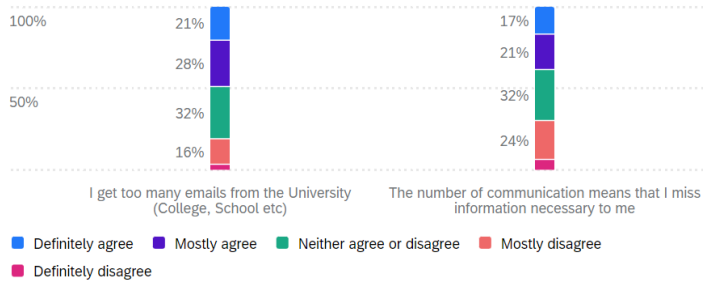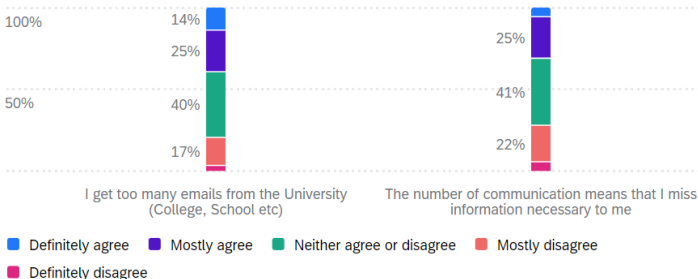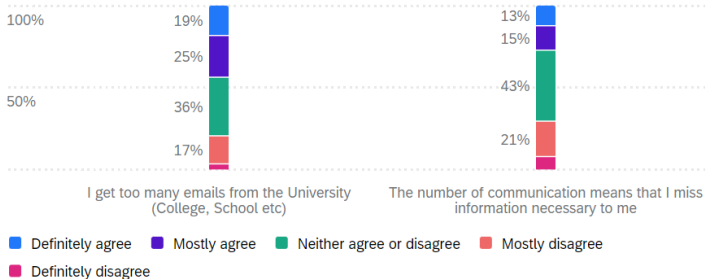
Q4: *'What communication channels do you rely on most for information about your experience at the University? (Please try to be specific, for example: Graduate School Emails, University Emails, Twitter, Student Newsletter, Moodle etc.)'*

Comms Feedback (Overall)
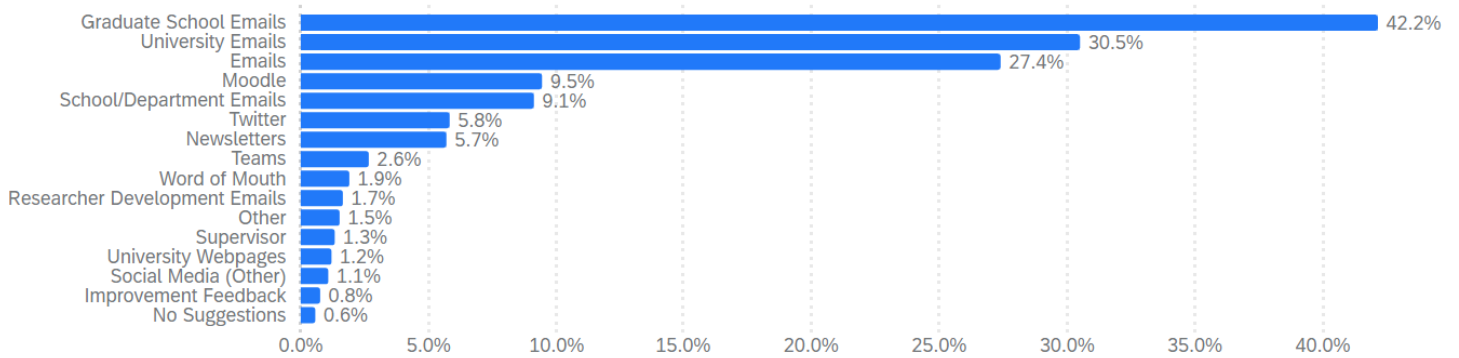
- Emails as a whole were predominantly mentioned by PGRs overall and at College level, with Graduate School emails being the most relied on for communication.
- Although not as prevalent, other forms of communication relied on by students included Moodle (especially for ARTS), Twitter and newsletters.
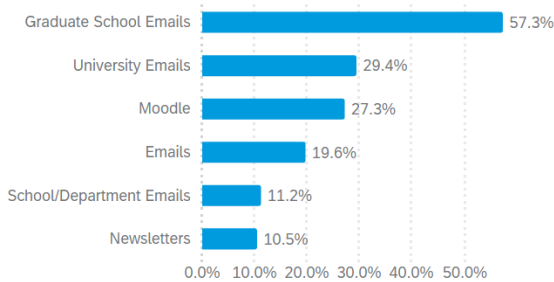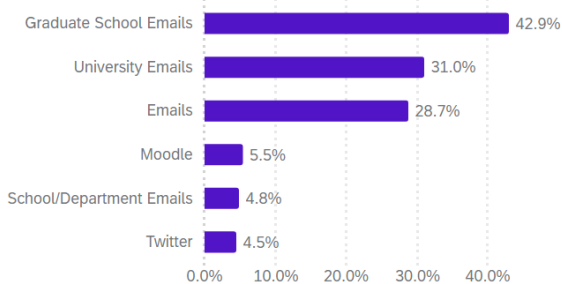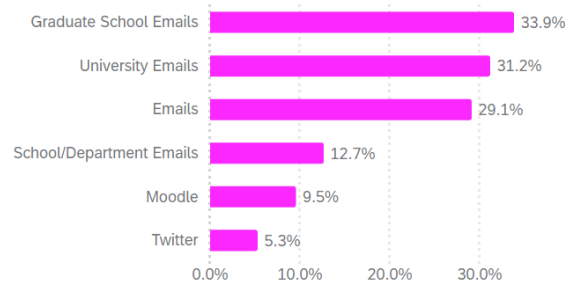
IMPROVEMENT FEEDBACK

Q5: *'How could the Graduate School in your College improve your experience as a postgraduate researcher at Glasgow?'*

Graduate School Improvement Feedback (Overall)

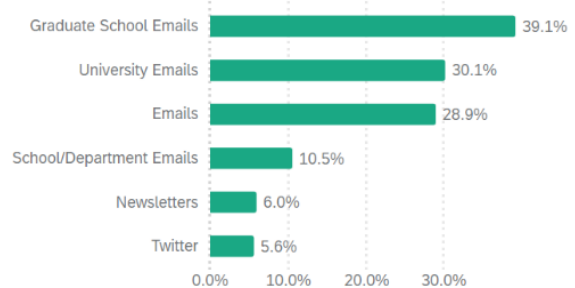| Topic	Percentage
Communication (general)	15.5%
No Suggestions	14.4%
Good Support/Positive Experience	12.9%
PGR Community & Social Events	11.5%
Training/Courses/Workshops	10.6%
Seminars/Networking/Conferences	8.5%
Communication (policies & processes)	6.7%
Support (general)	6.2%
Work Space	5.1%
Resources/Facilities	4.8%
Financial Support/Funding	4.0%
Flexibility/Hybrid/Remote Support	3.3%
Annual Progress Review	3.0%
Supervision	2.4%
Mental Wellbeing & Health	2.4%
Moodle	1.8%
GTA & Internship Opportunities & Support	1.7%
Career Development	1.7%
IT & Technical Support	1.5%
Culture	1.5%
Garscube & Dumfries Inclusion	1.4%
UCU/Strike Impact	1.3%
Part Time Inclusion	1.1%
Delays/Extension Support	1.0%
Accommodation Crisis	0.9%

- The top improvement feedback topic (15.5%) from respondents was regarding general PGR communications. This was also mirrored at College level, apart from MVLS which had no suggestions. This may have been influenced by the focus on communications in the survey.
- It should be noted the following two top feedback topics were that PGRs had no suggestions, or they were already having a positive experience and receiving necessary support.
- Similar to last years' survey, a need for a PGR community and to interact with other students via social events was evident, especially for COSS and ARTS.

Qualtrics bubble chart provides a way to visualise the sentiment breakdown for each of the feedback topics.

ARTS Improvement Feedback Top 10 ▽

Category	Percentage
Communication (general)	21.0%
PGR Community & Social Events	16.1%
Good Support/Positive Experience	13.3%
No Suggestions	11.9%
Work Space	9.1%
Training/Courses/Workshops	8.4%
Communication (policies & processes)	7.7%
Support (general)	7.0%
Moodle	6.3%
Flexibility/Hybrid/Remote Support	6.3%

COSE Improvement Feedback Top 10 ▽   •••

Category	Percentage
Communication (general)	17.1%
Good Support/Positive Experience	15.2%
No Suggestions	12.9%
PGR Community & Social Events	11.0%
Seminars/Networking/Conferences	10.6%
Training/Courses/Workshops	7.4%
Support (general)	6.1%
Resources/Facilities	6.1%
Financial Support/Funding	5.2%
Communication (policies & processes)	4.5%

COSS Improvement Feedback Top 10 ▽

Category	Percentage
Communication (general)	14.3%
PGR Community & Social Events	13.2%
No Suggestions	12.2%
Seminars/Networking/Conferences	10.6%
Good Support/Positive Experience	10.6%
Training/Courses/Workshops	10.1%
Work Space	8.5%
Communication (policies & processes)	6.9%
Support (general)	6.3%
Resources/Facilities	5.8%

MVLS Improvement Feedback Top 10 ▽

Category	Percentage
No Suggestions	19.2%
Training/Courses/Workshops	15.8%
Good Support/Positive Experience	11.7%
Communication (general)	11.7%
Communication (policies & processes)	8.6%
PGR Community & Social Events	8.3%
Seminars/Networking/Conferences	7.1%
Support (general)	5.6%
Garscube & Dumfries Inclusion	4.5%
Financial Support/Funding	4.5%

OVERALL STUDENT SATISFACTION

Q6*: 'Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of my research degree programme.'*

Overall Satisfaction 908

Definitely disagree 2%
Mostly disagree 6%
Neither agree nor disagree 11%
Mostly agree 47%
Definitely agree 34%
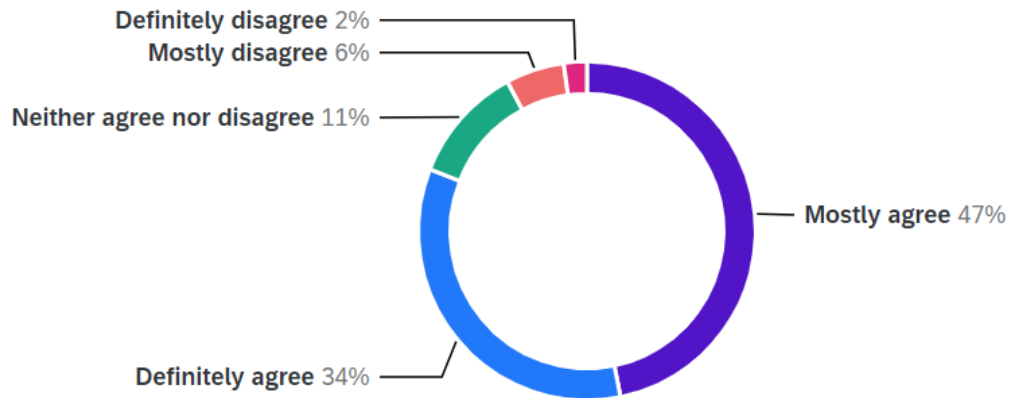
- Overall, 81% of respondents agreed that they were satisfied with their PGR experience. This outcome is higher than last year's student satisfaction rate of 78%.
- At College level, MVLS & COSE had the highest agreement of 84% compared to ARTS & COSS, which were 80% and 72%, respectively.
- At School level, results show some variability across the University. School of Health & Wellbeing and School of Molecular Biosciences both had the highest satisfaction rate of 90%. Eight schools had a dissatisfaction rate of 10% or higher, which is lower than the previous year which amounted to 13 schools.
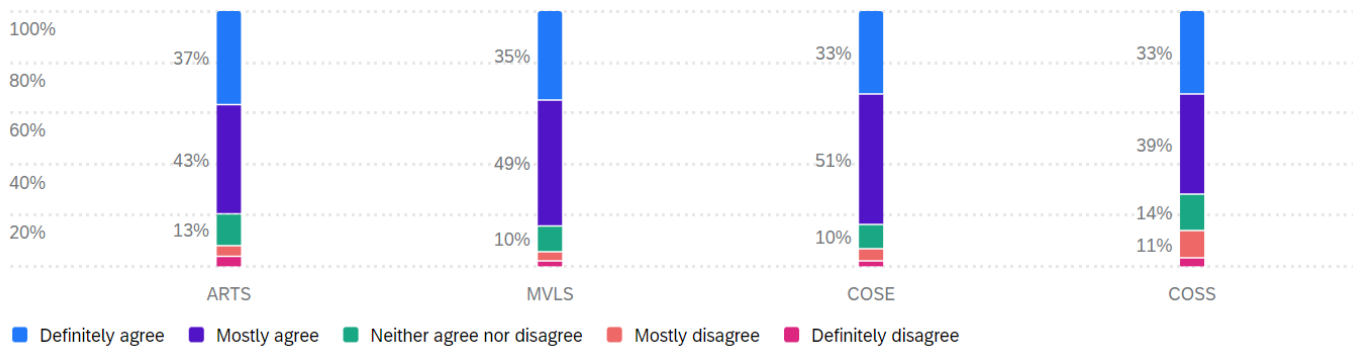- Part-time students had the highest satisfaction rate and thesis pending students were the most neutral about their experience.
- Male students were marginally more satisfied (81%) with their PGR experience compared to female students (80%).
- Very small numbers of PGRs in the survey identified as other, unknown or intersex/unspecified together but they expressed a much higher satisfaction rate of 85% compared to last year's 50%.
- International and home students had high satisfaction rates of 84% and 83%, respectively.

Student Satisfaction (College Level)

Legend: Definitely agree · Mostly agree · Neither agree nor disagree · Mostly disagree · Definitely disagree

	ARTS	MVLS	COSE	COSS
Definitely agree	37%	35%	33%	33%
Mostly agree	43%	49%	51%	39%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%	10%	10%	14%
Mostly disagree				11%

Student Satisfaction (School Level)

Legend: Definitely agree · Mostly agree · Neither agree nor disagree · Mostly disagree · Definitely disagree

Categories: Adam Smith Business School, Biodiversity, One Health & ..., Cancer Sciences, Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health, Chemistry, Computing Science, Critical Studies, Culture & Creative Arts, Education, James Watt School of Engineering, Geographical & Earth Sciences, Health & Wellbeing, Humanities, Infection & Immunity, Interdisciplinary Studies, Law, Mathematics & Statistics, Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing, Modern Languages & Cultures, Molecular Biosciences, Physics & Astronomy, Psychology & Neuroscience, Social & Political Sciences, Scottish Universities Environmental ...

Student Satisfaction (Academic Load)

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Thesis Pending
Definitely agree	33%	47%	31%
Mostly agree	49%	41%	39%
Neither agree nor disagree	10%	7%	17%
Mostly disagree			9%

Legend: Definitely agree · Mostly agree · Neither agree nor disagree · Mostly disagree · Definitely disagree
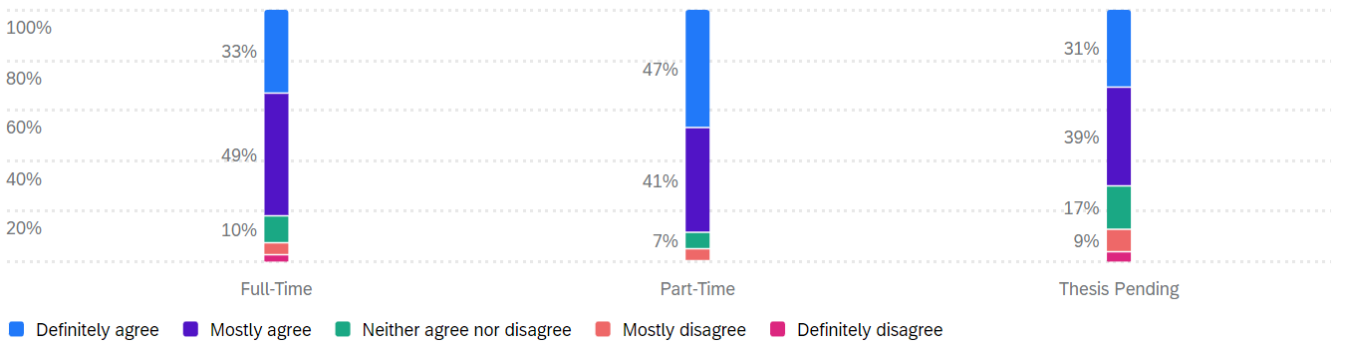
Student Satisfaction (Gender)

Female
- 31%
- 49%
- 13%

Male
- 37%
- 44%
- 10%
- 7%

Other
- 63%
- 13%
- 13%
- 13%

Unknown
- 25%
- 75%

Intersex/Unspec
- 100%

Legend: ■ Definitely agree ■ Mostly agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Mostly disagree ■ Definitely disagree
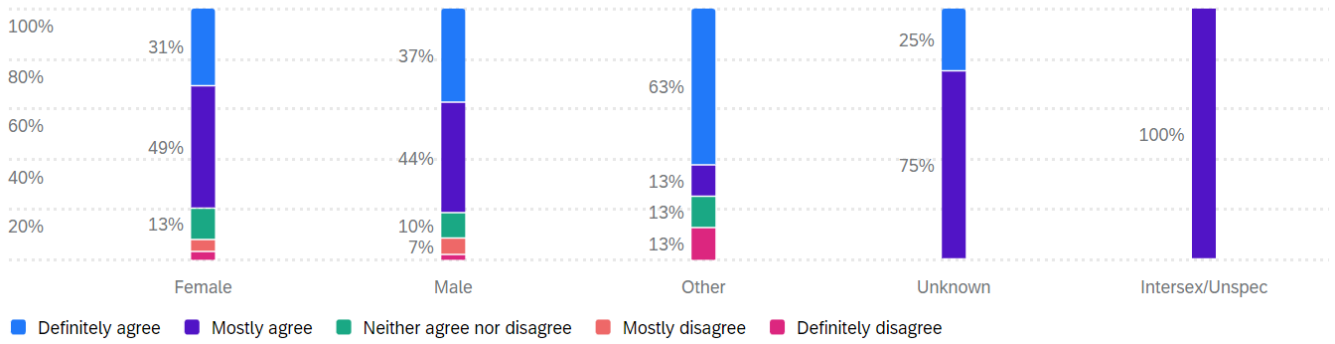
Student Satisfaction (Residency)

International
- 37%
- 47%
- 11%

Home
- 34%
- 49%
- 10%

Rest of United Kingdom
- 34%
- 47%
- 11%

Existing EU
- 30%
- 38%
- 20%
- 13%

EU
- 44%
- 38%
- 6%
- 6%

Legend: ■ Definitely agree ■ Mostly agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Mostly disagree ■ Definitely disagree

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