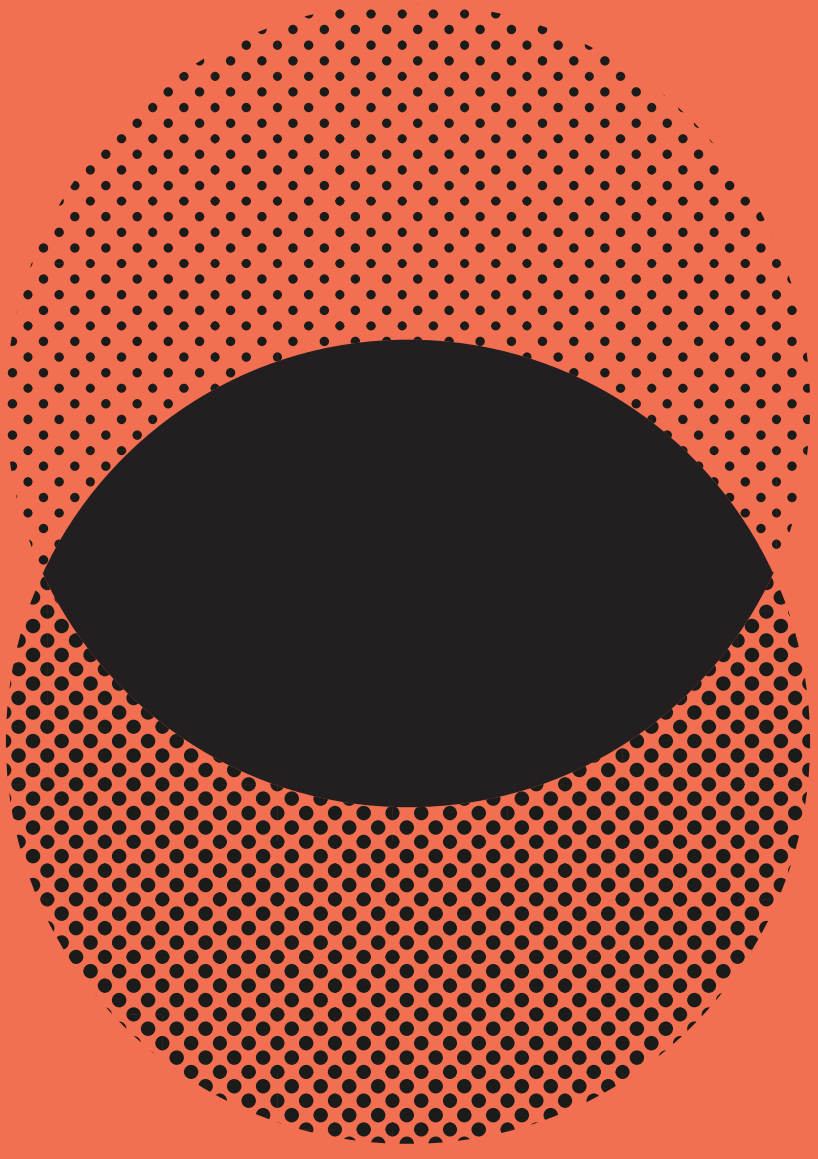
Student Survey.ie

# The Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students National Report 2019

Executive Summary
Achoimre Feidhmiúcháin



# Executive Summary

## Introduction

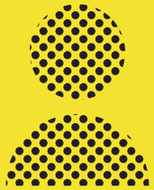
PGR StudentSurvey.ie (Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students) 2019 invited responses from postgraduate research (PGR) students in 22 higher education institutions in Ireland. There is a second survey, StudentSurvey.ie, which is designed for first year undergraduate, final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, and runs annually.

*Innovation 2020*, Ireland's strategy for research and development, science and technology, positions Ireland to be a Global Innovation Leader, driving a strong sustainable economy and a better society. The higher education research system is core to this strategy, both through fundamental research as well as through dynamic partnerships and interactions with enterprise, state agencies and civil society. As research plays such a crucial role in developing a knowledge society, it is vital that we have a vibrant research community.

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.

**Irish Survey of Student Engagement**

First Year Undergraduate



Final Year Undergraduate

Taught Postgraduate

**Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students**

Research Postgraduate

**29.9%**

**Overall national response rate to the first full implementation of the survey.**

## Structure of the survey

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 www.studentsurvey.ie.

The survey responses are collected for each individual institution. The data are aggregated to national results and it is these national-level results that are presented in this report. Responses for each individual institution are returned to that institution for local analysis at the level of the institution/ faculty/ school/ college/ department, etc.

## Response rates and demographics

A total of 2,721 postgraduate research students responded to the 2019 PGR StudentSurvey.ie. This represents an overall national response rate of 29.9%. This is regarded as a very positive response to the first full implementation of the survey.

## Results of the survey

Chapter 2 presents responses to question items grouped according to different engagement aspects of postgraduate research experience. Results are presented for all respondents nationally, followed by responses from students on research degree programmes leading to National Framework of Qualification (NFQ) Level 9 degrees compared to NFQ Level 10 degrees. Results are also provided for PGR students based in institutions with a PGR cohort of greater than 250 students and those with a PGR cohort of fewer than 250 students.

The results presented in Chapter 3 represent a curated exploration of variance between groups that the PGR StudentSurvey.ie national report editorial group deemed to be noteworthy for a multitude of reasons. These include the importance of the result for national policy, the magnitude and nature of the statistically significant differences between groups, or the consistency with which groups varied (or, indeed, did not vary).

**PGR cohort size**
Where significant differences emerged, it was more frequent for respondents in institutions with a PGR cohort of fewer than 250 students to agree with the engagement statements than respondents in institutions with a PGR cohort of greater than 250.

**Mode of study**
Where they differed, full-time students tended to indicate more engagement than part-time students.

**Research degree programme type**
This did not emerge as the most influential variable in accounting for differences in experience and engagement of PGR students. For many questions, the groups did not differ significantly.

**Field of study**
Overall, significant differences emerged for each of the engagement aspects of PGR StudentSurvey.ie by field of study. *Research Infrastructure and Facilities* and Funding were chosen for further analysis.

**Gender**
The variable that generated the fewest differences between groups was gender.

**Country of domicile**
The variable that revealed the most differences between groups was country of domicile, hence the more granular examination of differences included in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 examines career development and preparation for life after the PGR degree. This goal is achieved by focusing on the questions that can be mapped to the following aspect of the PGR StudentSurvey.ie:

- *Motivations*
- *Career Aspirations*
- *Development Opportunities*

Experience of developing *Research Skills* and *Other Transferable Skills* during the PGR degree was also examined within the context of investigating differences between Irish domiciled students, internationally domiciled students whose country of permanent domicile is within the EU/EEA/Switzerland, and internationally domiciled students whose country of permanent domicile is outside EU/EEA/Switzerland.

## Next steps

PGR StudentSurvey.ie is a valuable addition to the Irish higher education sector and has the power to improve the lived experience of current and future postgraduate research students. Such improvements would then contribute to an improved research environment and benefits for all members of the research community in higher education institutions.

There are more avenues and possibilities for further analysis of the data than can be pursued by individual institutions, the central StudentSurvey.ie project management function. Third-party researchers/ organisations and other interested parties are encouraged to contact the Project Manager at info@studentsurvey.ie to discuss these possibilities or to propose ideas for future research. Additionally, the StudentSurvey.ie datasets are archived with the Irish Social Sciences Data Archive annually and may be accessed by request.

This year, 2019, was the first year of full implementation of PGR StudentSurvey.ie following the pilot in 2018. Considerable efforts have been made by those who implement the survey in the institutions, including staff and students, to make the survey an operational success. The next period of PGR StudentSurvey.ie fieldwork will take place in spring 2021. In the meantime, the next steps for the survey are necessarily focused on efforts to interrogate and draw meaning from the results.



# Achoimre Feidhmiúcháin

## Réamhrá

D'iarr PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2019 (Suirbhé na hÉireann ar Rannpháirtíocht na Mac Léinn do Mhic Léinn Taighde Iarchéime) ar mhic léinn taighde iarchéime (PGR) in 22 institiúid ardoideachais in Éirinn an suirbhé a líonadh. Tá suirbhé eile a dhéantar gach bliain, StudentSurvey.ie, atá dírithe ar mhic léinn fochéime sa chéad bhliain, sa bhliain deiridh agus ar iarchéimithe ar chláir mhúinte.

Tá sé mar aidhm le Nuálaíocht 2020, straitéis na hÉireann do thaighde agus forbairt, eolaíocht agus teicneolaíocht, go mbeadh Éire ina Ceannródaí Nuálaíochta Domhanda, agus geilleagar inbhuanaithe láidir agus sochaí níos fearr faoina stiúir. Tá an córas taighde ardoideachais mar chuid lárnach den straitéis seo, trí thaighde bunúsach agus trí chomhpháirtíochtaí agus idirghníomhaíochtaí le fiontair, le gníomhaireachtaí stáit agus leis an tsochaí shibhialta. Ós rud é go bhfuil ról ríthábhachtach ag taighde i bhforbairt sochaí eolais, tá sé ríthábhachtach go mbeadh pobal taighde bríomhar againn.

Tá sé riachtanach do chóras taighde náisiúnta na hÉireann go bhfaigheann na daoine a dhéanann taighde anseo, ó thús a ngairme, taithí oideachasúil a thugann an cumas agus an mhuinín dóibh a gcuid taighde a dhéanamh ar an gcaighdeán is airde agus is féidir. Ag tacú le cáilíocht an tsoláthair iarchéime taighde tá Creat Náisiúnta d'Oideachas Dochtúireachta na hÉireann. Sheol Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann (QQI) Creat Dea-Chleachtais do Chláir Chéime Taighde chun dul leis seo agus tá sé bunaithe ar phríomhphrionsabail an Chreata Náisiúnta d'Oideachas Dochtúireachta. Cuirfidh an t-eolas a bhailítear i suirbhé PGR StudentSurvey.ie cuspóirí na bpolasaithe seo chun cinn go mór, agus cuirfear príomhfhianaise ar fáil do na hinstitiúidí ardoideachais agus don chóras ardoideachais agus taighde agus nuálaíochta níos leithne freisin chun cáilíocht sholáthar na n-iarchéimeanna taighde in Éirinn a fheabhsú.

**Suirbhé na hÉireann ar Rannpháirtíocht na Mac Léinn**

Mic léinn fochéime sa chéad bhliain

Mic léinn fochéime sa bhliain deiridh

Mic léinn iarchéimithe

**Suirbhé na hÉireann ar Rannpháirtíocht na Mac Léinn do Mhic Léinn Taighde Iarchéime**

Mic léinn taighde iarchéime

**29.9%**

**Ráta freagartha san iomlán go náisiúnta don chéad uair a cuireadh an suirbhé i bhfeidhm go hiomlán**

## Struchtúr an tsuirbhé

Tugann PGR StudentSurvey.ie aghaidh ar gach ceann de na gnéithe rannpháirtíochta seo a leanas:

- *Infreastruchtúr agus Áiseanna Taighde*
- *Stiúradh*
- *An Cultúr Taighde*
- *Forchéimniú agus Measúnú*
- *Deiseanna Forbartha*
- *Scileanna Taighde*
- *Scileanna Inaistrithe Eile*
- *Freagrachtaí agus Tacaíocht*
- *Dearcadh Pearsanta*
- *Spreagadh*
- *Aidhmeanna Gairme*
- *Taithí ar an iomlán*

Iarrtar orthu siúd ar spéis leo na ceisteanna ar fad a léamh dul chuig www.studentsurvey.ie.

Bailíodh freagraí an tsuirbhé do gach institiúid aonair. Déantar na sonraí a chomhbhailiú le torthaí náisiúnta agus is iad na torthaí ar leibhéal náisiúnta a chuirtear i láthair sa tuarascáil seo. Cuirtear freagraí as gach institiúid aonair ar ais chuig an institiúid sin chun anailís áitiúil a dhéanamh orthu ag leibhéal na hinstitiúide/na dáimhe/na scoile/an choláiste/na roinne, etc.

## Rátaí freagartha agus déimeagrafaic

D'fhreagair 2,721 mac léinn taighde iarchéime san iomlán PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2019. Is ionann é seo agus ráta freagartha 29.9% san iomlán go náisiúnta. Meastar gur freagra an-dearfach é seo ar an gcéad uair a cuireadh an suirbhé i bhfeidhm go hiomlán.

## Torthaí an tsuirbhé

I gCaibidil 2 tugtar freagraí ar cheisteanna a cuireadh i ngrúpaí de réir gnéithe rannpháirtíochta éagsúla de thaithí taighde iarchéime. Cuirtear na torthaí i láthair ó gach freagróir go náisiúnta, agus ina dhiaidh sin freagraí ó mhic léinn ar chláir chéime taighde as a leanann céimeanna ag Leibhéal 9 den Chreatoibre Náisiúnta Cáilíochta (NFQ) i gcomparáid le céimeanna NFQ Leibhéal 10. Cuirtear torthaí ar fáil freisin maidir le mic léinn PGR in institiúidí le cohórt PGR níos mó ná 250 mac léinn agus iad siúd le cohórt PGR níos lú ná 250 mac léinn.

Is éard atá sna torthaí a chuirtear i láthair i gCaibidil 3 ná iniúchadh coimeádaithe ar na difríochtaí idir grúpaí a mheas grúpa eagarthóireachta tuarascála náisiúnta PGR StudentSurvey.ie a bheith suntasach ar go leor cúiseanna. Ina measc seo tá tábhacht an toraidh do pholasaí náisiúnta, méid agus cineál na ndifríochtaí suntasacha staitistiúla idir grúpaí, nó an chomhsheasmhacht lena raibh grúpaí éagsúil (nó, go deimhin, nach raibh siad éagsúil).

**Méid chohórt PGR**
San áit a raibh difríochtaí suntasacha le sonrú, ba mhinice a d'aontaigh freagróirí in institiúidí a bhfuil cohórt PGR níos lú ná 250 mac léinn iontu leis na ráitis rannpháirtíochta ná freagróirí in institiúidí a bhfuil cohórt PGR níos mó ná 250 iontu.

**Modh staidéir**
Nuair a bhí siad difriúil, bhí claonadh ag mic léinn lánaimseartha níos mó rannpháirtíochta a léiriú ná mic léinn pháirtaimseartha.

**An cineál cláir céime taighde**
Níorbh é seo an athróg ba thábhachtaí chun cur síos a dhéanamh ar na difríochtaí i dtaithí agus i rannpháirtíocht na mac léinn iarchéime. I gcás go leor ceisteanna, ní raibh difríocht shuntasach idir na grúpaí.

**Réimse staidéir**
Ar an iomlán, tháinig difríochtaí suntasacha chun cinn maidir le gach gné rannpháirtíochta de PGR StudentSurvey.ie de réir réimse staidéir. Roghnaíodh *Infreastruchtúr agus Áiseanna Taighde*, agus Maoiniú le haghaidh anailís bhreise.

**Inscne**
Ba é inscne an athróg a chruthaigh na difríochtaí ba lú idir na grúpaí.

**Tír chónaithe**
Ba í an athróg a léirigh na difríochtaí ba mhó idir na grúpaí ná an tír ina raibh cónaí orthu, agus dá bhrí sin rinneadh scrúdú níos géire ar na difríochtaí i gCaibidil 4.

Scrúdaíodh sa chaibidil seo forbairt ghairme, agus ullmhúchán don saol i ndiaidh a gcéime taighde iarchéime. Baintear an sprioc seo amach trí dhíriú ar na ceisteanna is féidir a mhapáil chuig an ngné seo a leanas den PGR StudentSurvey.ie:

- *Spreagadh*
- *Aidhmeanna Gairme*
- *Deiseanna Forbartha*

Scrúdaíodh taithí ar fhorbairt *Scileanna Taighde* agus *Scileanna Inaistrithe Eile* freisin le linn a n-iarchéime taighde laistigh de chomhthéacs na ndifríochtaí idir mic léinn a bhfuil cónaí orthu in Éirinn a imscrúdú, mic léinn a bhfuil cónaí orthu go hidirnáisiúnta ach a bhfuil a cónaí buan orthu laistigh den AE/LEE/an Eilvéis, agus mic léinn a bhfuil cónaí buan orthu i dtír taobh amuigh den AE/LEE/an Eilvéis.

## Na chéad chéimeanna eile

Cuireann PGR StudentSurvey.ie go mór le hearnáil ardoideachais na hÉireann agus d'fhéadfadh sé feabhas a chur ar thaithí na mac léinn taighde iarchéime reatha agus amach anseo. Chuideodh feabhsuithe dá leithéid le timpeallacht taighde níos fearr a chruthú agus rachadh sé sin chun sochair do gach duine sa phobal taighde in institiúidí ardoideachais.

Tá níos mó bealaí agus féidearthachtaí ann chun anailís bhreise a dhéanamh ar na sonraí ná mar is féidir le hinstitiúidí aonair, feidhm bhainistíochta tionscadail lárnach StudentSurvey.ie agus/nó taighdeoirí/eagraíochtaí tríú páirtí a dhéanamh. Iarrtar ar pháirtithe leasmhara teagmháil a dhéanamh leis an mBainisteoir Tionscadail ag info@studentsurvey.ie chun na féidearthachtaí seo a phlé nó chun smaointe a mholadh le haghaidh taighde amach anseo. Ina theannta sin, cuirtear tacair shonraí StudentSurvey.ie i gcartlann le Cartlann Sonraí Eolaíochtaí Sóisialta na hÉireann gach bliain agus is féidir rochtain a fháil orthu ach iarratas a dhéanamh.

I mbliana, 2019, ba é an chéad bhliain é PGR StudentSurvey.ie a bheith curtha i bhfeidhm go hiomlán i ndiaidh an phíolóta in 2018. Tá iarrachtaí suntasacha déanta ag na daoine a chuireann an suirbhé i bhfeidhm sna hinstitiúidí, an fhoireann agus na mic léinn ina measc, chun go n-éireoidh leis an suirbhé. Beidh an chéad tréimhse eile d'obair allamuigh PGR StudentSurvey.ie ar siúl in earrach 2021. Idir an dá linn, tá an bhéim ar fad sa suirbhé ar na torthaí a dhiancheistiú agus ciall a bhaint astu.

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AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

iua IRISH UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION

thea TECHNOLOGICAL HIGHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

USI Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn