

Simon Fraser University

2011 Graduate Student Exit Survey
Institutional Report
(Completers)

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Simon Fraser University's Office of Graduate Studies wished to obtain insights into graduate student experience across a number of fields including: overall satisfaction, quality of education (e.g. instruction, advising, opportunities for collaborative team work, availability of cross-discipline opportunities, course work), quality of support (e.g. advice/workshops on teaching, standards for academic writing, publishing work, writing grant proposals, etc.), financial support, university resources, student life, etc.

A total of 1,315 invitations were sent out to SFU graduates who had completed the requirements for their degree—the “completers” in 2011. In all, 561 completed surveys were received; this represents a 42.7% response rate. Many of the responses were also examined across Faculties, disciplines and credential.

Qualitative analysis of the 142 comments submitted by survey respondents focused on four lines of inquiry: major trends in comments; trends in comments related to particular programs; emerging problem areas; and student feeling toward the university and potential as alumni. Students most frequently commented on the following five themes:

- a) Program structure
- b) Support for students (including campus life)
- c) Career relevance
- d) Supervision
- e) Instruction/Course appropriateness

Highlights

Quality of Overall Graduate Experience

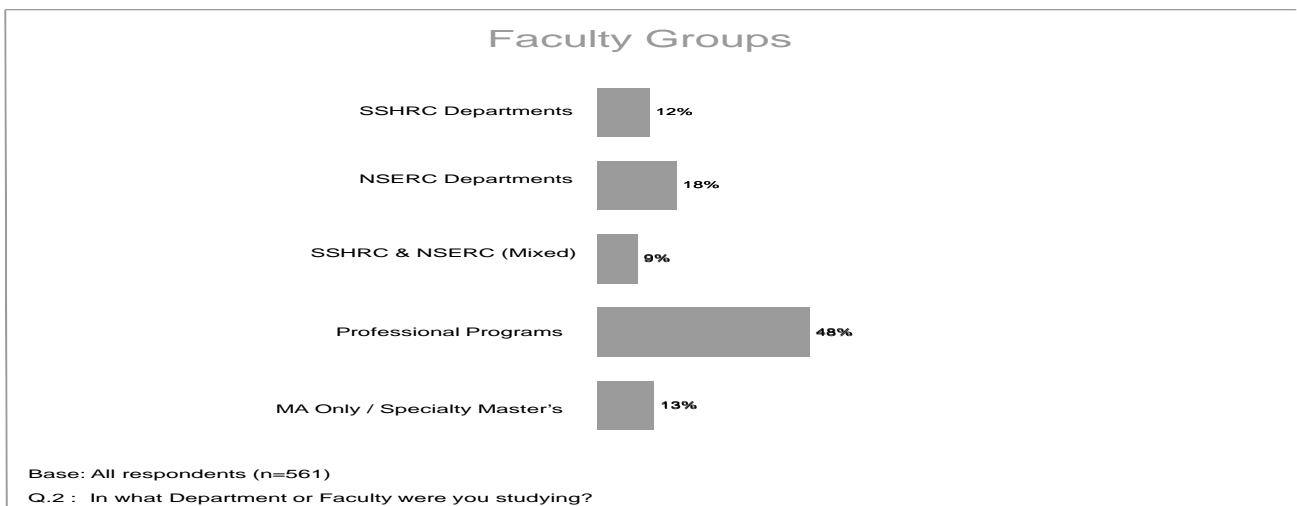
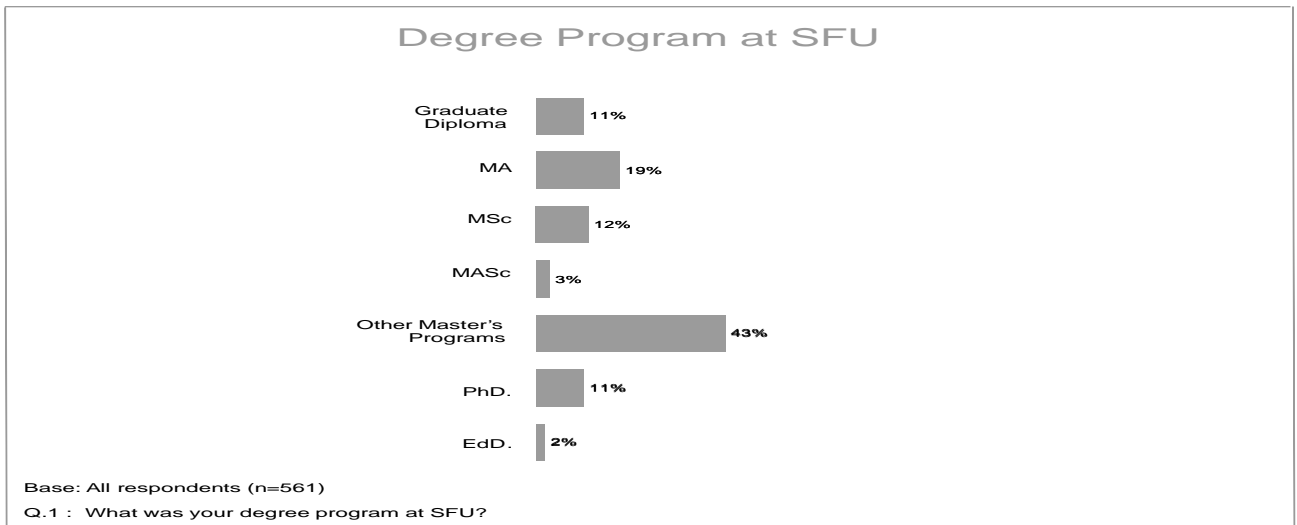
- x The vast majority of Simon Fraser University graduate students who completed their program – 81% feel positively about their graduate experience at the university.
- x Overall, 83% of those surveyed stated that their experience at least somewhat met their expectations; impressively, half of graduate students felt it fully met or exceeded expectations.
- x Fully three-quarters of graduates would also recommend SFU to someone who was considering their program; 45% would “definitely” do so.
- x Between three-quarters and close to eight-in-ten graduate students surveyed were satisfied they had made the right investment.
- x Fully two-thirds expect the degree to be of high value, including one-fifth who place the degree in the “very high” category. Comparatively fewer (one-fifth) think the degree will have low value in the labour market.
- x If they were to start their graduate career again, a solid majority of SFU graduates or more—would choose SFU, the same academic program, and the same faculty supervisor. In particular, more than four-in-ten say they would “definitely” choose the same program and supervisor.

- x Most SFU graduate students were not aware that the university's Alumni Association provided some specific benefits to alumni. Among the known benefits, the largest proportion of alumni knew about the BMO Master Card and the Manulife Financial insurance benefits.

Qualitative Analysis

- x Across the University, academic units are struggling to deliver programs that meet their own expectations for timely completion. Course requirements, field and lab work, lack of available supervisors all slow student progress. So does insufficient student funding that forces students to work while they pursue studies full time. Given the economic realities for students, especially the cost of living in Vancouver, we cannot expect our students not to work. Academic units need to adjust their program delivery models if they want to prioritize timely completion.
- x The demand for career services, internships, placements and other 'real world' applications for students is clear across the board.
- x There were consistent concerns about the quality of courses and instruction.

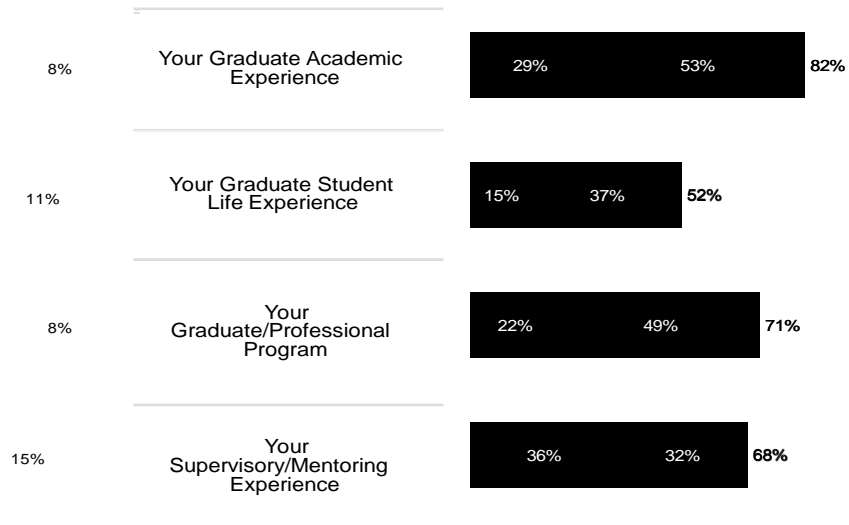
Detailed Survey Data



Gender:	
Male	46%
Female	54%
Age:	
22 to 25	14%
26 to 30	31%
31 to 35	20%
36 to 40	11%
41 to 45	8%
Over 45	15% 15%

Current Marital Status:	
Single	39%
Common Law	12%
Married	45%
Divorced, Widowed, Separated	4%
Current Employment Status:	
Employed full -time	66%
Employed part -time or self- employed	11%
Unemployed	12%
Student/Other	12%

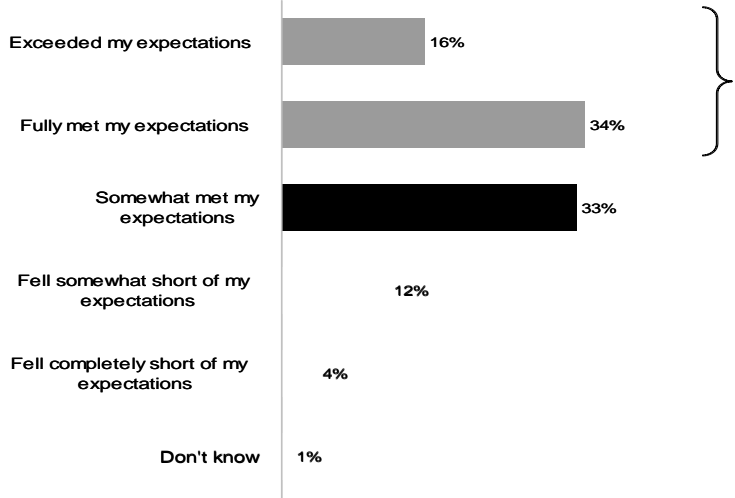
Evaluation of Quality of Specific Aspects of SFU Graduate Experience



Base: n=varies between 548 and 552

Q.7 : Overall, how would you rate the quality of each of the following at SFU?

Education & Learning Experience at SFU Meet Expectations

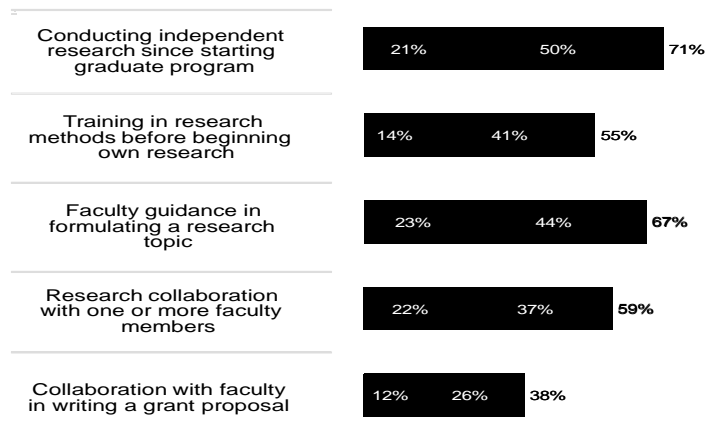


Base: All respondents (n=561)

Q.6: Overall, did your education and learning experience in graduate studies at SFU meet, exceed, or fall short of your expectations?

Neither Good Nor Poor

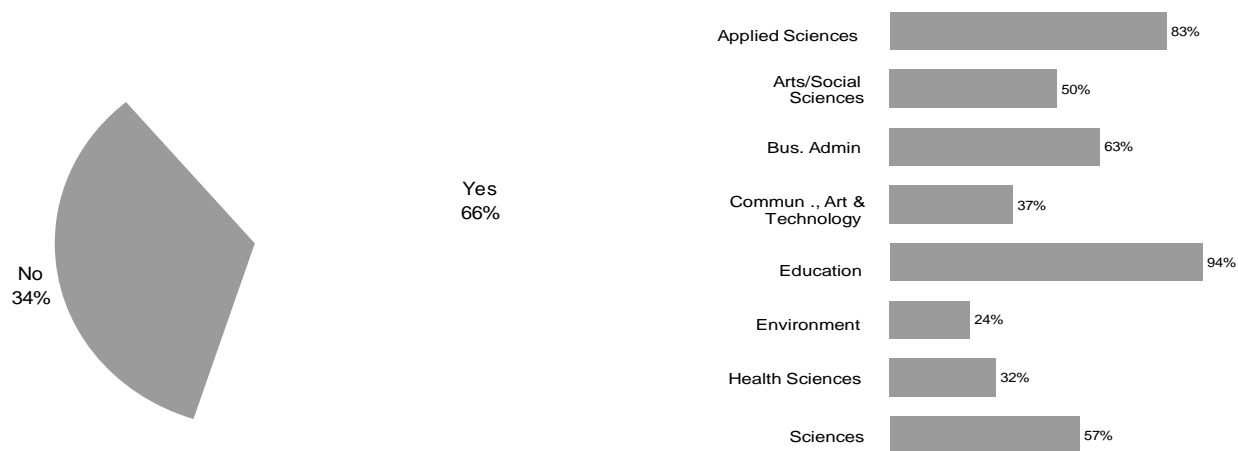
Rating Quality of Research Support & Opportunities Received at SFU in Certain Areas



Base: n=varies between 548 and 552

Q.10 : How would you rate the quality of support and opportunities you received at SFU in the following areas?

Regularly Employed Majority of Time While Doing Degree (More than 20 hours/week)



Base: All respondents (n=561)

Q.4 : Do you consider yourself to have been regularly employed (more than 20 hours per week) the majority of time while you were doing your degree?

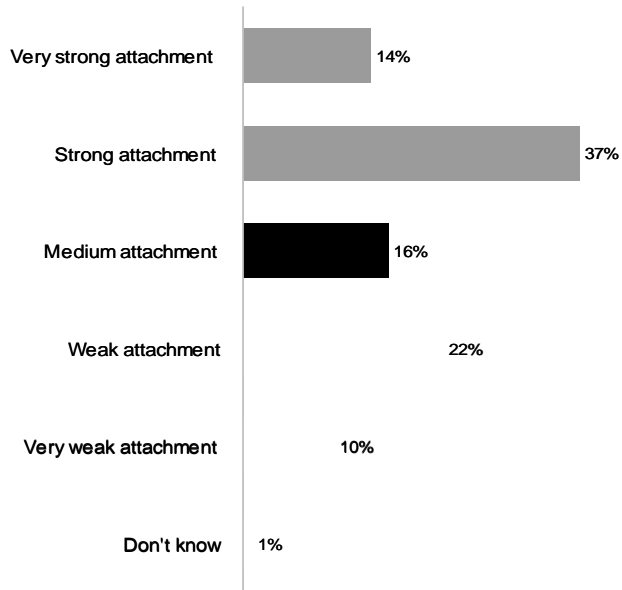
Sources of Financial Support During Graduate Program

- Personal savings
- Teaching assistantship
- University funded award
- Employment outside academic program
- Family assistance
- Research assistantship
- University funded bursary

Base: All respondents (n=561)

Q.13 : Which of the following forms of financial support did you receive during the time you were enrolled in your graduate program at SFU?

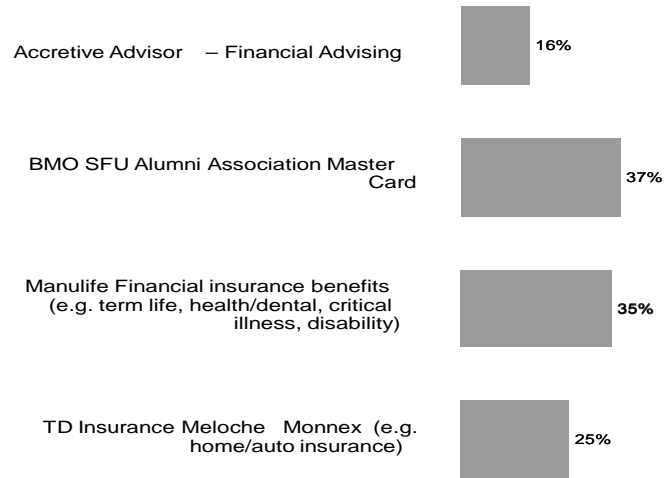
Degree of Personal Attachment to Simon Fraser University



Base: n=548

Q.16: What is the degree of attachment you have currently to Simon Fraser University? Please use a 7-point scale where 1 means you have a very weak personal attachment to SFU, and 7 means you have a very strong personal attachment to SFU. "Very strong"=7 out of 7; "strong"=5,6; "medium"=4; "weak"=2,3; "very weak"=1.

Awareness of Alumni Benefits



Base: All respondents (n=548)

Q.17 : Did you know that SFU's Alumni Association has each of the following benefits for SFU alumni/alumnae?