

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) Briefing

June 2021

Introduction

PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey) is a national survey, co-ordinated by the national body for improving teaching and learning in Universities, the [Advance HE](#). The survey is the chance for the research student community to provide feedback on their experience and allows UCL to benchmark against the wider HE sector. The survey is coordinated by [UCL doctorate school](#).

Who takes the PRES, and when?

The survey is open to all Postgraduate Researchers who are normally Registered or in Thesis Awaited Status, excluding Visiting Research Students. The PRES 2019 was open from mid-February until end of April 2019. This was the third time that UCL had run the survey.

Why does UCL take part in the survey?

The PRES is a rich source of insights on what UCL postgraduate research students feel is working well, and what could be improved. The survey combines multiple-choice questions for quantitative data with open comments for postgraduate research students to give their views more freely.

What does the PRES cover?

The survey focuses on students' experiences of:

- supervision
- resources
- research community
- progress and assessment
- skills and professional development
- wellbeing

It also considers students' motivations for taking their programme.

In 2019 UCL questioned students in the following key areas:

- Supervision
- Responsibilities
- Research skills
- Professional development
- Skills training & advice
- Development opportunities
- Teaching
- Overall experience and completion
- Code of practice
- English language support

Where can I find PRES results?

You can find results for PRES 2017 and 2019 at UCL-wide, departmental, faculty and programme levels on the [results webpage](#).

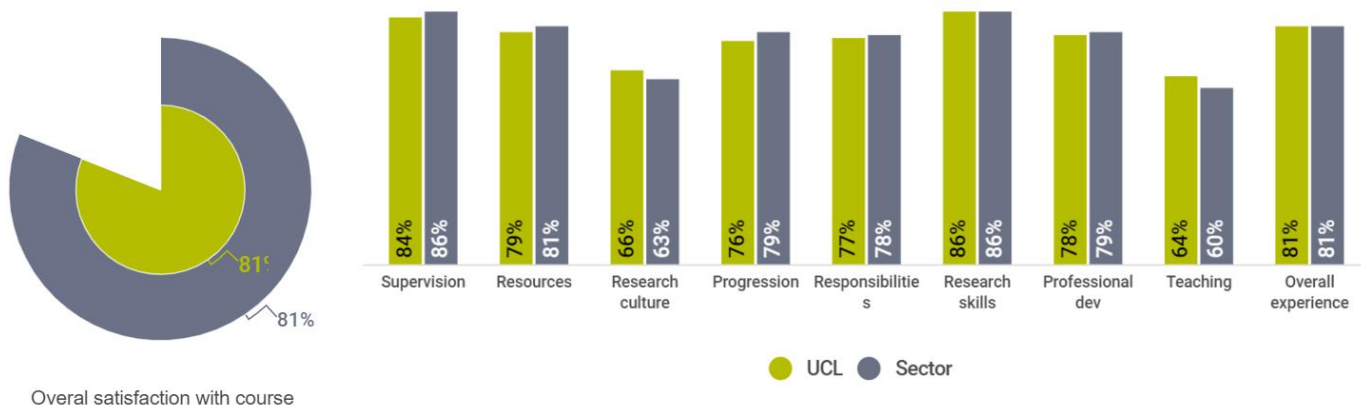
How did UCL perform in this year's PRES?

UCL's 2019 PRES scores showed a modest improvement year-on-year. Overall satisfaction stayed the same as last year at 81%.

- The most noticeable rises were in Supervision and English language support, as both sections showed an increase of 10% compared to the 2017 PRES.
- Another notable area of increase was seen in the Teaching section of the survey which over all rose by 8%.
- There was a small decline in Development opportunities which we saw fall by 1% compared to that of the 2017 PRES.
- The sample size for UCL's 2019 results was 43%, down 4% from the 2017 PRES and below the sector average of 53%.

Headline results by broad topic

UCL's headline results compared to Sector benchmark.



Main areas for consideration

The results suggest that **Supervision** remains a key area of priority for research students at UCL, which similarly echoes the feedback from the 2017 PRES. Although we have seen an improvement in this area in this year's survey, UCL still lags slightly behind the sector average of 86% satisfied with supervision (compared with 84% at UCL). The question: 'My supervisor/s help me to identify my training and development needs as a researcher', rose to 72% 'agree' this year, just 4 percentage points behind the Russell Group average.

Teaching also remains a high priority for students. There was an impressive 12% increase in the number of students who received formal training for their teaching. However, in the same area we also saw a 3% decline in the number of students who had taught during their research degree programme, showing that perhaps teaching opportunities were not as prevalent as in previous years.

Note that these are blended averages across UCL, with a good deal variance in scores between departments and faculties.