Reasons for Undertaking a PhD

96% of students cited enthusiasm for the subject/research as being an important reason for undertaking a PhD.

78% of students wanted to do research in a first rate research group.

63% of students wished to pursue a career in academia/research.

40% of students wanted to enhance general career prospects.

8% did not know what else to do (i.e. had no career plans at the time).

6% of students could not find any suitable alternative employment.

A. Supervisory Arrangements

15% of students have daily contact with their supervisor, whilst 55% have weekly contact, 15% have fortnightly contact and 6% have monthly contact.

82% of students received help/advice from a second supervisor or other people.

55% of students have the opportunity to attend group/departmental seminars several times per week, whilst 39% attend at least one per week.

20% of CASE students have contact with their CASE partner on a monthly basis, 10% fortnightly and 40% weekly.
• 51% of students rate the supervision they receive as excellent, 33% very good, 9% good, 2% satisfactory and 5% rate the supervision received as unsatisfactory/very poor.

B. Training Programme

• 8% of universities, 53% of departments and 33% of both provide a formal training programme in the student's first year. 6% of students said neither the university nor the department provided this.

• 91% of students have undertaken training in technical, transferable/personal skills and other disciplinary/knowledge based areas. For 68% of these students, attendance was compulsory.
• 61% of the students rated the training given on these courses as good/excellent, 7% rated it as satisfactory, whilst 4% rated it as poor.

• 52% of training programme units have assessment by course work, whilst only 26% have assessment by examination.

• 18% of students have not given a research talk within their department to date, 56% have given 1-3 talks and 24% have given in excess of 4 talks.

• 15% of students have not given a research talk at a conference or other department to date, 50% have given 1-3 talks and 34% have given in excess of 4 talks.

• On average, 24% of students have attended a STFC funded course, 10% plan to attend a course, whilst 66% said they have no intention of attending.
• 56% of students have not attended a conference, either within the UK or overseas, whilst 31% have attended 1-3 conferences and 1% have attended in excess of 4 conferences.

• 84% of students said their department has a nominated Postgraduate tutor.

C. Monitoring

• 72% of students were required to produce a written report in the current year. Of these, 21% were assessed by interview with their supervisor, 63% by interview with another member of staff, whilst 16% had some other arrangement.

• 77% of students rate their overall training as good, whilst 21% rate it as adequate and 2% rate their overall training as inadequate.

D. Future Career

• 52% of students rated the career guidance available to them during the studentship as good, 39% rated it as adequate and 9% rated it inadequate.
65% of students said they would wish to work in an HEI, 8% would wish to work in Government/public sector, 14% would wish to work in the private sector and 12% said something else or they did not know.

60% of students said they intend to work in a research role, 27% said they intend to work in a role that requires a scientific background, 11% one that a scientific background would be useful and just 2% don’t want to work in a role that requires a scientific background at all.

56% of students thought their PhD would prove essential for obtaining a job, 29% thought it would be very helpful, 13% thought it would be of some help and 2% thought it would be of little/no use.