STFC ANNUAL STUDENT SURVEY 2020

In February 2020, the Office contacted all current students and their supervisors to request them to complete the survey. The deadline for completion of the survey was 15 April 2020. A total of 1030 students responded out of the 1166 students who were contacted (88% response).

Percentages are based on the numbers of students that responded to the questions. Answers don’t always add up to 100% due to rounding.

The main points are as follows:

- 81% of students met with their supervisor at least once a week.
- 90% of students rated their supervision that they received as 4 or 5 (i.e. good/excellent).
- 91% of students had received formal training in the first year.
- 57% of students wished to pursue a career in academia.
- 98% of students rated their overall training as good/adequate.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

General Field of Research

- Accelerator Science 26 (3%)
- Astronomy 395 (38%)
- Global Challenge 3 (0%)
- Nuclear Physics 46 (4%)
- Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology 77 (7%)
- Particle Physics Experiment 242 (23%)
- Particle Physics Theory 123 (12%)
- Solar System Science 118 (11%)
Form of funding received

- Fully Funded by STFC: 869 (84%)
- Part Funded by STFC: 135 (13%)
- Fees only provided by STFC: 26 (3%)

Type of studentship

- Industrial CASE: 15 (1%)
- Global Challenge: 2
- Doctoral Training Partnership (Quota): 735 (71%)
- Centre of Doctoral Training (CDT): 207 (20%)
- Associated Studentship: 71 (7%)

Year of PhD

- First Year: 253 (22%)
- Second Year: 277 (25%)
- Third Year: 315 (28%)
- Fourth Year: 185 (16%)

1024 students were full time and just 6 part time.
Reasons for undertaking a PhD (1st year students only – 253 responses)

**FUNDING PERIOD**

95% of students confirmed their funding period was discussed and agreed with their supervisor at the beginning of their PhD.

**How long is funded period?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Also a factor</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Years</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Years</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PHD SUBMISSION - Questions asked of 3rd and 4th year students only**

There were 500 third and fourth year students who completed the questionnaire.

Do you think have sufficient time within the funded duration of your studentship to complete your PhD, including writing up?

- Yes: 323 (65%)
- No: 147 (29%)
- Other: 30 (6%)
Breakdown of third and fourth year submission question “Do you think you have sufficient time within the funded duration of your studentship to complete your PhD, including writing up?” by research area:

STFC expects student projects to be planned and supported such that they may be completed within the funded duration of the studentship. Do you consider your institution actively encourages students to complete their PhD, including writing up, within the funded duration of the studentship?

Breakdown of third and fourth year submission question “STFC expects student projects to be planned and supported such that they may be completed within the funded duration of the studentship. Do you consider your institution actively encourages students to complete their PhD, including writing up, within the funded duration of the studentship?” by research area:
83% of students stated that they received help/advice from a second supervisor or other people in their department.

Usefulness of Supervision

- 1 - Poor: 4 (0%)
- 2 - Satisfactory: 80 (8%)
- 3 - Satisfactory: 319 (31%)
- 5 - Excellent: 609 (59%)

Rating of Induction Programme (1st year students only – 253 responses)

- Good: 179, 71%
- Adequate: 72, 28%
- Inadequate: 2, 1%
Attendance at group/departmental seminars

86% of students attended group/departmental seminars once a week or more.

WELLBEING

Have you encountered problems or difficulties with your supervisory team, whether professional or personal?

Did you report this to your institution?
Of the 37 students that reported difficulties 27 students were satisfied with the way their problems were handled and 10 were not.

Have you encountered any problems or difficulties with other members of your department, whether professional or personal?

Did you report this to your institution?

Of the 26 students that reported the problems to their institution 20 were satisfied with the way their problems were handled and 6 were not.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Formal training (e.g. lectures) provided during first year
Take up of technical, transferable and other disciplinary skills

Usefulness of technical, transferable and other disciplinary skills training –

82% of students cited that their department had a nominated Postgraduate tutor with overall responsibility for co-ordinating their research training.

Astronomy students’ attendance at the Introductory to Astronomy Summer School
395 Astronomy students responded to questionnaire
Solar students’ attendance at Introductory to Solar System Science Summer School
118 Solar System students responded to questionnaire

- Attended: 37%
- Plan to attend: 53%
- Neither: 9%

Solar students’ attendance at the Advanced Solar System Science Summer School
118 Solar System students responded to questionnaire

- Attended: 28%
- Plan to attend: 64%
- Neither: 8%

Particle Physics students’ attendance at BUSSTEPP – British Universities Summer School in Theoretical Elementary Particle Physics
123 Particle Physics Theory students responded to questionnaire

- Attended: 25%
- Plan to attend: 55%
- Neither: 20%
Particle Physics students’ attendance at High Energy Physics Summer School (HEP)
242 Particle Physics Experimental students responded to questionnaire

- Attended: 66%
- Plan to attend: 28%
- Neither: 7%

Nuclear Physics students’ attendance at Nuclear Summer School
46 Nuclear Physics students responded to questionnaire

- Attended: 54%
- Plan to attend: 26%
- Neither: 20%

Other STFC Funded Summer Schools or Short Courses

- Attended: 17%
- Plan to attend: 8%
- Neither: 74%
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Communicated research to wider public audience

38% of students had communicated research to a wider public audience and many communicated to more than one audience.

‘Other’ forms of public engagement students mentioned were exhibitions, posters, blogs, podcasts, talks, debates, guided tours, written articles, press releases, radio, television and personal interactions.

Attendance at UK workshops or conferences by year

Attendance at overseas workshops or conferences by year
Average Number of Papers Published per student in each year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Students</th>
<th>No of Papers Published in year</th>
<th>Average per student per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total the current 4th year students have published 380 papers during their awards. This equates to an average of 2.05 papers each during their studentship.

**MONITORING**

Rating of overall training

67% of students were required to submit a written progress report on their PhD in 2020. 24% of students stated that their progress report was assessed by an interview with their supervisor, 62% stated that the assessment was by interview with other staff, 17% of which were with more than one person. Other forms of assessments included: research log, progression panel, poster presentation, presentation/seminar with Q&A, completion of thesis and viva.

**FUTURE CAREER**

Rating of career guidance available during PhD
Organisation wish to work for upon completion of PhD

- Higher Education Institution: 57%
- Other Government/Public Sector: 10%
- Private Sector Business/Company: 26%
- Other: 7%

Sort of role intend to work in upon completion of PhD

- Research: 59%
- One that requires a scientific background: 30%
- One for which a scientific background might be useful: 11%
- One that does not make use of my scientific background: 1%

To what extent do you think your PhD will help you get a job?

- Essential: 47%
- Very helpful: 37%
- Some help: 14%
- Not very helpful: 2%
- No use: 0%

INDUSTRIAL CASE STUDENTSHIPS

Frequency of contact with Industrial partner

15 Industrial CASE students responded to the survey
The CASE industrial students had varying amounts of contact with their CASE partner from a weekly contact to infrequent contact.

Time spent on premises of Industrial partner per year
14 Industrial CASE students responded to this question on the survey; 4 in their first year, 4 in their second year and 6 in their third year.

Students are expected to spend 3 months a year on average at their CASE Industrial Partner premises.