

# 2005 Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys

## Summary of University-wide Results

### Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

- University Support Service ratings are very good for libraries, teaching facilities, disabilities services and the campus and its facilities. Ratings are also good for most administrative and support services. Most previous areas of weakness show improvement, but access in matters of grievance is a possible area of concern.
- Course experience ratings are also good; compared to previous years there is not such marked improvement in these ratings, however most areas remain above Australian-wide averages.
- Postgraduate ratings are very high, particularly on supervision items. Support has shown overall improvement in both the student and graduate surveys.
- Course outcome analysis suggests that while graduates are developing skills at university, they need to apply these skills to an even greater degree in their post-University experiences. A willingness to learn was identified as the most needed attribute by graduates overall.

### Demographics

- There has been little change in the demographics of graduates and students who responded to the surveys, compared with recent years.
- The largest change saw less graduate respondents employed this year (78% c.f. 86% in 2004) and also proportionally more graduates in part-time work (15% c.f. 10% in 2004). This was undoubtedly linked to many more graduates being engaged in further study (40% c.f. 20%), although it is not clear to what degree the further study is responsible for lower employment or vice versa.
- Academic reputation continues to be the most identified reason for choosing to study at the University of Otago, identified by 41% of student respondents and 40% of graduate respondents as one of the reasons they came to Otago. Enjoying new people, places and increasing independence is the second most identified reason, cited by 38% of students and 34% of graduates.
- 97% of graduate respondents would recommend the University of Otago to others: this figure remains unchanged since 2002.

### University Support Services

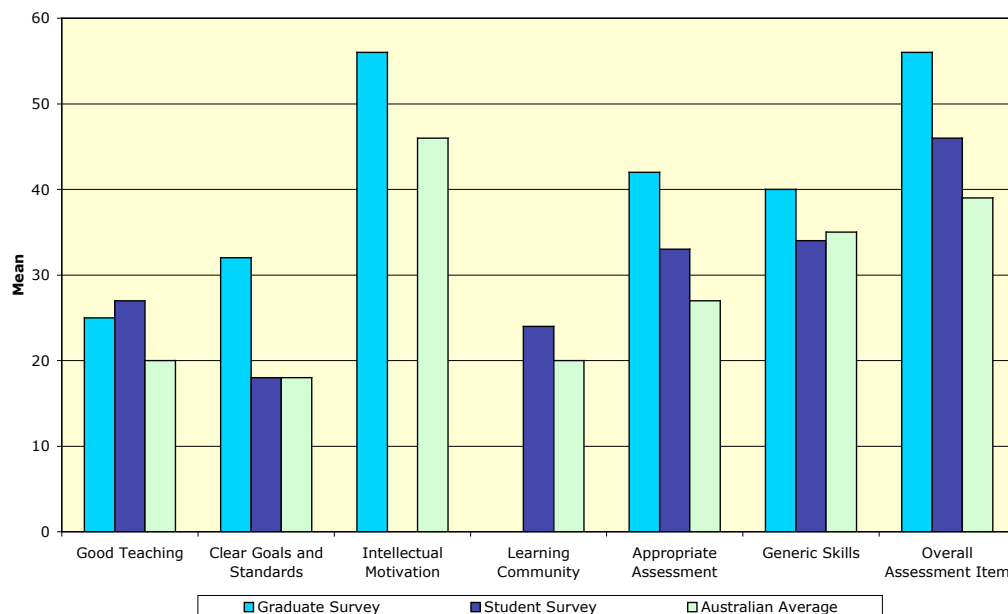
- Libraries, information technology and teaching facilities rated highly, up slightly on already good ratings from previous years. In particular, access to email and internet facilities, opening hours of the library during semester time, the library catalogue and helpfulness of library staff all rated particularly highly.
- Lower ratings in these areas showed similar patterns to previous years, with availability of study places in the library of most concern. The overdue system and the physical environment of the library were also of some concern and rated slightly lower than in 2004.

In the information technology area, training in the use of computers was the most lowly rated area.

- The campus environment and personal safety on campus rated very highly, and had improved slightly even compared to very high ratings in 2004.
- Many administrative and support services also rated reasonably well overall, with similar areas of strength to 2004: residential halls and colleges; the helpfulness of administrative staff in departments and in the Student Information Centre; the Guide to Enrolment and Undergraduate Prospectus booklets; clarity of enrolment forms; examination procedures; and the Student Health and Counselling service.
- Less well rated administrative and support services included support from the International Office for international students; the Pacific Islands centre; and career and course advice, particularly from academic staff. International Office and Pacific Islands Centre results had improved compared with 2004 however.
- As in previous surveys, access in matters of grievance (such as harassment and discrimination) rated relatively poorly. While this may be in part explained by large number of respondents having not had grievances, and so answering neutrally to the survey item, 14% of respondents were actively dissatisfied compared to 31% who were satisfied.
- Disabilities support ratings were high. Access to buildings, which was the lowest ranked item in 2004, was most improved, with only 4% of all respondents dissatisfied.

### Course Experiences

The chart below shows results for the Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys, compared to data from all Australian universities. Note that Australian graduates are surveyed relatively soon after graduation (approximately six months), while Otago graduates are surveyed 18 months to two years after graduation.



Ratings were again very positive, although they did not show improvement across all scales as they have in recent years. What changes there were from 2004 were very small, and may well be explained by differences in the cohorts of students and graduates surveyed.

### **Postgraduate Supervision and Support**

In terms of mean scores, Postgraduate Supervision and Support Results are generally very positive. Supervision ratings had improved overall in the student survey, while support ratings had improved for both graduate and student respondents. Interestingly, results tended to be quite polarised for this section of the survey – with many respondents very satisfied and a small number of respondents quite dissatisfied.

For supervision:

- Supervisor friendliness rated highest, followed by items relating to supervisor knowledge of, and interest in, the student's research area. Overall satisfaction with supervision also rated very highly.
- The only supervision item that rated truly lowly was 'My supervisor discussed the University's guidelines on supervision with me', although this was significantly higher for thesis-level students (Masters students – there were no PhD students surveyed).

For support:

- Ratings overall were higher compared to previous surveys.
- Highest rated were the provision of library services, necessary equipment and suitable working space.
- The lowest-rated items related to the University's provision of financial support, which was consistent with previous years. Induction into postgraduate study, including statement of the responsibilities of, and support available to, postgraduate students, also rated lower than other items, although graduate responses for these items were up compared to previous years.

### **Course Outcomes**

All measured attributes were applied more post-graduation than they were developed during study, with the exception of academic rigour. Graduates considered a willingness to learn, the ability to solve problems, and the skills to plan one's own work as the attributes most applied in post-graduation life.

The most developed attributes were:

- Written communication skills
- The ability to solve problems
- The skills to plan my own work
- Independent judgement.

The largest discrepancies between development and application were for:

- Teamwork skills
- Oral communication skills
- A willingness to learn
- Flexibility and adaptability.