MACQUARIE
University

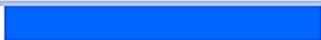# BPhil/MRes survey 2020: response to feedback

2021

BPhil/MRes Year 1 Candidate Feedback and University Responses for Action

Population: 140
Respondent: 59
Response rate: 42%

Faculty		count	%
Arts		32	54%
Business & Economics		4	7%
Human Sciences		5	9%
Medicine & Health Sciences		6	10%
Science & Engineering		12	20%
Grand Total		59	100%

Type of attendance		count	%
Full-time		44	75%
Part-time		15	25%
Grand Total		59	100%

Mode of study		count	%
On-campus		51	86%
Off-campus		8	14%
Grand Total		59	100%

Domestic/International status		count	%
Domestic		57	100%
International		0	0%
Grand Total		57	100%

Gender		count	%
Female		31	61%
Male		16	31%
Other		4	8%
Grand Total		51	100%

Main language spoken at your home		count	%
English		50	98%
Other		1	2%
Grand Total		51	100%

In general, the feedback for Year 1 of the BPhil/MRes program was positive with a few comments requiring action from the University and have been detailed below. We first detail feedback to and responses from the Office of Higher Degree Research Training and Partnerships (OHDRTP), followed by Faculty specific actions. It is important to consider these comments in light of COVID-19 and the restriction placed on candidates and staff during 2020.

OHDRTP specific comments on MRes Year 1

Feedback	Response
Most Faculties were satisfied with their transition to MRes Year 1 and University Services, except for FSE	OHDRTP are working together with FSE to identify these issues.
Usefulness of the OHDRTP website has increased across all Faculties, however satisfaction is generally low.	OHDRTP are routinely updating the website based on student and supervisor feedback.
Orientation to degree program for MRes Year 1 needs to be improved.	OHDRTP have a Central Commencement Program (CCP) for the MRes and note that this predominantly focuses on Year 2. We will be revising the CCP and will be working on a central 'what to expect' document for MRes Year 1.
In some cases, processes or paperwork were unclear or delayed.	OHDRTP are aiming to streamline our administrative processes and we have now provided clear guidelines on leave provision on-line. https://students.mq.edu.au/study/hdr/managing-candidature/changes
Access to information regarding research integrity	Each Faculty has a number of research integrity advisors that you may contact for any research integrity matters that you would like to discuss. In collaboration with the Research Office, OHDRTP will be providing workshops on research integrity and ethics in the future.
Communication from Accessibility service is lacking.	OHRDTP have provided this feedback to the Accessibility service for their attention.
Students would like to link in with supervisors during MRes Year 1	OHDRTP are currently reviewing the MRes program and will consider this feedback.
Drop-in clinic to answer questions	OHRDTP currently has a booking system to drop-in to ask the relevant personnel a question regarding their candidature. https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/HDRO@mq.edu.au/bookings/

Faculty of Arts (FoA) specific comments on MRes Year 1

Feedback	Response
Difficult to access BPhil/MRes information	FoA are working on improving this by aiming to increase website visibility, increase promotion in undergraduate classes and introducing research pathways into undergraduate capstone units. They will also clarify the outcomes expected for Year 1 of the program to allow students to understand the value of this first year.

Difficulties in selection of research topic	Research Frontiers 1 has been revised to provide scaffolded workshops that are designed specifically for topic and supervisor selection.
Workload in units is unbalanced	FoA will audit their current suite of units to determine any major disparities to workloads.
Rubrics should be available for all assessments	FoA will ensure that rubrics are available for all assessments.
Students new to Macquarie are unfamiliar with on-line learning platforms	FoA will consider providing training on Macquarie on-line learning platforms. Candidates should also be made aware that resources for our on-line platforms exist at: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/systems/ilearn

Faculty of Science & Engineering (FSE) specific comments on MRes Year 1

Feedback	Response
Workload in units is unbalanced	FSE notes that these comments were in relation to specific units which are currently being reviewed.
Improvement in on-line units	FSE are considering post-COVID strategies for teaching, advanced units for BPhil/MRes Year 1 in particular, such as online HelpDesk/consultation sessions where a small group of students can have opportunities to meet lecturers or even one-to-one meetings are arranged.

Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences (FMHHS) specific comments on MRes Year 1

Feedback	Response
Increase in communication among peers	FMHHS are working towards building a cohort and supporting events for peers to interact

Macquarie Business School (MQBS) specific comments on MRes Year 1

Feedback	Response
Research methods units are not discipline specific	MQBS recognises this and aims to improve students' exposure to various disciplinary specific content/method, UC of MQBS7030 and MQBS7035 by ensuring that examples, cases and assignment tasks (e.g., assignment questions, data set used for assignment) do not gravitate toward a single discipline and are applicable across disciplines
Lack of alignment of content and the assessment tasks	In MQBS, all units will review the assessment tasks and ensure the alignment of the content delivered in class, assessment tasks and learning outcome of the unit.
High workload in units	MQBS will inform the relevant units and request a revision of the workload.
Insufficient interaction with Year 2 supervisor	Unit Convenors should specify and advise students the **consultation hours** when they will be available

	for one-on-one or small group consultation/meeting with students who wish you interact with the lecturer outside the class. For interaction among students, **study groups or social events** should be organized to facilitate students in (1) get to know each other and (2) help each other in their study (e.g., exchange ideas, experience and knowledge) where possible. Allocation of supervisor could start in Year 1. There might be difficulties due to workload implications in MQBS. The department suggest that the work could start in October/November, so that the students and supervisors can start working together earlier already. However, the issue is then that the students entering through Year 1 effectively have 2-3 more months of supervision and support than Direct entry Year 2 students, which could create problems for us.

BPhil/MRes Year 2 Candidate Feedback and University Responses for Action

Population: 348
Respondent: 131
Response rate: 37.6%

Faculty	count	%
Arts	40	31%
Business & Economics	15	11%
Human Sciences	17	13%
Medicine & Health Sciences	13	10%
Science & Engineering	46	35%
Grand Total	131	100%

Type of attendance	count	%
Full-time	106	82%
Part-time	24	18%
Grand Total	130	100%

Mode of study	count	%
On-campus	102	78%
Off-campus	28	22%
Grand Total	130	100%

Domestic/International status	count	%
Domestic	90	76%
International	28	24%
Grand Total	118	100%

Gender	count	%
Female	66	56%
Male	50	42%
Other	2	2%
Grand Total	118	100%

Main language spoken at your home	count	%
English	81	69%
Other	36	31%
Grand Total	117	100%

In general, the feedback for Year 2 of the BPhil/MRes program was greatly positive with a few comments requiring action from the University and have been detailed below. We first detail feedback to and responses from the Office of Higher Degree Research Training & Partnerships (OHDRTP), followed by Faculty specific actions. It is important to consider these comments in light of COVID-19 and the restriction placed on candidates and staff during 2020.

OHDRTP specific comments for MRes Year 2

Feedback	Response
OHDRTP administration and website support was reduced across all Faculties, to approx. 70% satisfaction	OHDRTP are routinely updating their processes to streamline administration and to increase the usefulness of the website based on student and supervisor feedback.
An increase in cohort experience is needed	OHDRTP agree with this statement, and as part of the review of the MRes program will be making recommendations to help increase the cohort experience.
It can be difficult to obtain information or answers from OHDRTP	OHDRTP have dedicated Contact Care Ambassadors (CCAs) that are available for consultation and have also developed an on-line booking service to enable candidates to drop-in and chat with relevant personnel as needed. https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/HDRO@mq.edu.au/bookings/
Supervisors take on too much workload to adequately supervise candidates	OHDRTP have developed a new Foundations in Supervision module and workshops for our supervisors that will address issues such as these.
Workshops that are offered are outstanding	OHDRTP will continue to provide and develop the workshops for research training and employability.
Cross-disciplinary research for MRes should be encouraged.	OHDRTP agree with this sentiment and it will be considered as we make recommendations for the review of the MRes.
International students lack support more than domestic candidates	OHDRTP and Faculties are working to encourage engagement with our international cohort through on-line participation, and providing offsite commencement for their research.
HDR writing retreats are great	We will continue to provide these as they provide great value to our candidates.
It is difficult to access assistance for mental health and wellbeing	OHDRTP are working together with Wellbeing services to provide resources that are specific to the needs of HDR candidates.

Faculty of Arts (FoA) specific comments for MRes Year 2

Feedback	Response
Candidates feel disconnected from cohort.	FoA have introduced HDR/MRes Drop-in Sessions, which are already proving successful. FoA may also provide more informal, social events for students to form a sense of peer support and collegiality without

	the formal expectations of networking or giving feedback (e.g. a Trivia night).
There were many positive comments about supervision, however there were a couple of comments that provided negative feedback in relation to understanding independent study and access to supervisors.	FoA have introduced specific training workshops as part of Research Frontiers in Year 1 that aim to help students better understand the student-supervisor relationship and begin receiving support from their supervisor early, so that they already know what to expect by the time they enter Year 2. The aforementioned HDR/MRes Drop-in sessions should also help students feel that there is wider support available to them beyond their supervisor. The resumption of Department Research Seminars in 2021 will also help students feel more connected to their Departments.

Faculty of Science & Engineering (FSE) specific comments on MRes Year 2

Feedback	Response
Some Faculty MRes advisors could be more helpful.	Together with OHDRTP, Faculties will work to improve the knowledge base of advisors, providing support to help them support you.
Information relevant to part-time students	FSE will work to increase information about the expectations for part-time students in future handbooks
Lack of integration into Department/Faculty	FSE will investigate the usefulness of other online collaboration/meeting tools, such MS Teams and Gather to help facilitate interaction and when face to face is not possible.
The length of the MRes thesis is too restrictive/research period is too short.	This will be considered as part of the MRes review.
Access to lab space/facilities takes too long.	FSE will determine if these processes can be fast-tracked for MRes candidates.

Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences (FMHHS) specific comments on MRes Year 2

Feedback	Response
Increase in communication among peers	FMHHS are working towards building a cohort and supporting events for peers to interact.
The Research Frontiers 2 assessment is unnecessary	As part of the MRes review we are examining the assessments for Year 2.
More internship opportunities from OHDRTP	FMHHS provide internships in the first year of the program and the MRes review is considering similar possibilities for Year 2 of the program.
Clear guidelines around copyright and use of materials.	FMHHS and OHDRTP will work with the library to provide this resource.

Macquarie Business School (MQBS) specific comments on MRes Year 2

Feedback	Response
Increase interaction between candidate and supervisor	MQBS suggests that the student representative may organise some activities via zoom or catch-up, especially for new research students. The department HDR Director organise open meetings for HDR students on weekly/fortnightly basis to allow students to communicate with each other, HDR Director and other staff members and be able to voice their concerns. Supervisors organize more Zoom sessions (or at least once per fortnight) to discuss progress, issues and feedback etc. physically, so that students feel supported and connected. Students and supervisors are also encouraged to contact HDR director/MRes advisor on the issues/concerns they have in regard to their progress or relationship with supervisor sooner than later.
Lack of engagement with department or school.	To resolve the concern, MQBS suggest that MRes students be aware of all seminars in the school. Another possible way is to open the MRes Year 2 protocols (confirmation of candidature) to all academic staff and other MRes students who are interested to join. This gives students an opportunity to know each other's research and learn the process of research presentation, taking feedback/criticism. This will also be a good opportunity to learn from each other's strengths and areas for improvement.
Increase practical skills	MQBS suggest that workshops on relevant research skills (e.g., conduct interview professionally, design the survey professionally) should be conducted at the department/school level for both MRes and PhD students. This could be incorporated in an existing workshop series that the Department of Marketing is running for the PhD students.

Endorsed by HDRMC, April 2021