

Brock University

Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey, 2010

A Summary Report

Background

The Canadian version of the Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) was modeled after a survey originally developed at MIT and Duke University. In the winter of 2010, 37 Canadian universities (up from 28 in 2007) participated in the survey, 17 of which were from Ontario. Comparative data has been provided for both the Ontario and Canadian groups.

The purpose of the survey is to gather information about the graduate school experience: satisfaction with programs and services as well as support and opportunities for research. At Brock, the survey was conducted from January 22nd to March 5th with e-mail invitations sent to all 1,572 registered graduate students. In all, across Canada 126,138 students received an invitation to participate and 38,618 (31%) accepted the invitation. In Ontario, the response rate was 34% (19,199 of 55,999 students).

This year, for the first time, the survey was divided into two parts: Professional and Regular programs. Further, within the Regular Masters Programs, there was a distinction made between “with thesis” and “without thesis.”

Brock Results

Respondent Characteristics: Of the 1,572 Brock graduate students invited to participate, **46%** (718) completed the survey. This compares very favourably with the national and provincial rates and is over double the Brock rate from 2007. This dramatic improvement is due to the diligent efforts of the Associate Deans and the Graduate Program Directors in encouraging students to participate.

The response rates by survey type were:

Professional Programs	177/433	(41%)
Regular Programs	541/1,139	(48%)
Doctoral	64/110	(58%)
Masters	464/1,029	(45%)

Full-time students represented **73%** of the respondents (vs. 60% of the population) and male respondents were at **34%**, the same as in the population. International students were not over represented at **23%** of the respondents overall, but they constituted 43% of respondents in the Professional Programs.

A Note about Comparisons: In making comparisons with the Ontario and all-Canada groups, it should be noted that there are significant differences in the proportions of programs represented in the various samples. For example, Humanities respondents were 8% of Brock's group but 12% of the Ontario group and 13% of the Canada sample. Education students constituted 34% of the Brock group but only 6% of both Ontario and Canada. Engineering students were 17% of both Ontario and Canada but Brock does not offer Engineering. For the Professional Survey, Brock's sample includes students from only two areas (Faculty of Business and the Centre for Applied Disability Studies) while Ontario and Canada have significant representation from a number of disciplines (including Education, Library Studies, Social Work and, again, Engineering).

General Satisfaction

A. Regular Programs

When asked if they would select the same university, **67%** said "Definitely" or "Probably" and, **80%** responded "Definitely" or "Probably" when asked if they would select the same field of study (comparable to both Ontario and Canada). Asked if they would choose the same faculty supervisor, **76%** said "Definitely" or "Probably" (higher than both Ontario and Canada at 72%).

B. Professional Programs

When asked if they would select the same university, **61%** said "Definitely" or "Probably" (lower than both Ontario, at 74%, and Canada, at 73%) and asked if the same field of study, **80%** responded "Definitely" or "Probably" (comparable to both Ontario and Canada). Asked if they would recommend Brock to someone considering their program, **65%** said "Definitely" or "Probably" (lower than both Ontario, at 76%, and Canada at 77%).

Satisfaction with Program, Quality of Interactions and Coursework:

A. Regular Programs

When asked to rate the relationship between graduate students and faculty, **90%** indicated "Good" to "Excellent" (compared to 87% for the national and 86% of the Ontario samples). Concerning the overall quality of graduate level teaching, **88%** of the Brock respondents said "Good" to "Excellent" (vs. 87% of Canada and 86% of Ontario). More challenging were opportunities to take courses outside the department (**66%** said good to excellent vs. 71% in Ontario and 73% in Canada).

B. Professional Programs

When asked to rate the relationship between graduate students and faculty, **78%** indicated "Good" to "Excellent" (compared to 88% for both the national and Ontario samples). Concerning the overall quality of graduate level teaching, **81%** of the Brock respondents said "Good" to "Excellent" (vs. 88% of Canada and Ontario). As with the Regular Programs, more challenging were opportunities to take courses outside the department (49% said good to excellent vs. 63% in both Ontario and Canada).

Professional Skills Development:

A. Regular Programs

Asked to rate the quality of the support and training they received in terms of courses, workshops and orientation on teaching, **86%** said good to excellent (vs. 80% for Ontario and 81% for Canada). On feedback received on their research, **86%** said good to excellent (compared to 80%/78% for Canada/Ontario). However, when it came to advice/workshops on career options within academia, only **49%** said good to excellent (vs. 53%/51% for Ontario/Canada) and on advice/workshops on career options outside academia, only **37%** said good to excellent (vs. 45%/44% for Ontario/Canada)

B. Professional Programs

Asked to rate the quality of the support and training they received in terms of advice/workshops on job preparation and professional practice, **64%** said good to excellent (similar to the results for both Ontario and Canada). On opportunities for internships, practicum and experiential learning, **58%** said good to excellent (compared to 68%/69% for Canada/Ontario). When it came to opportunities for contact with practicing professionals, **63%** said good to excellent (vs. 79%/77% for Ontario/Canada).

University Resources and Student Life

A. Regular Programs

When asked to rate certain university resources based on the quality they had experienced while using them, Brock respondents indicated good to excellent scores (with the Ontario/Canada comparison scores) as follows:

	Brock	Ontario	Canada
Library	89%	90%	91%
Student Work/Study Space	68%	68%	71%
Financial Aid Office	66%	63%	68%
Student Counselling	75%	74%	73%
Food Services	49%	51%	54%
ITS	80%	79%	81%

B. Professional Programs

The results from the Professional Survey for the same services were:

	Brock	Ontario	Canada
Library	89%	91%	91%
Student Work/Study Space	75%	71%	71%
Financial Aid Office	51%	62%	62%
Student Counselling	71%	69%	70%
Food Services	52%	51%	56%
ITS	80%	77%	80%

General Assessment – Quality

A. Regular Programs

Asked to rate the quality of the academic experience at their university, **91%** of Brock respondents said good to excellent (compared to 88% for Canada and 89% for Ontario). On the quality of their student life experience, **80%** said good to excellent (vs. 79% for Canada and 78% for Ontario). On the quality of their overall experience, **89%** said good to excellent (vs. 85%/87% for Canada/Ontario).

B. Professional Programs

Asked to rate the quality of the academic experience at their university, **91%** of Brock respondents said good to excellent (compared to 88% for Canada and 89% for Ontario). On the quality of their student life experience, **72%** said good to excellent (vs. 78% for Canada and 76% for Ontario). On the quality of their overall experience, **80%** said good to excellent (vs. 86% for both Canada and Ontario).

Next Steps

The data from the survey will be reviewed first by Graduate Council, and then by the Senate Graduate Studies Committee. Further analysis, including comparisons of the results for Doctoral vs. Masters, With Thesis vs. Without Thesis, and Professional vs. Regular will take place under the direction of SGSC. This further analysis will also include a close look at the ten Brock-specific questions.

October 13, 2010

/pb