

Imperial College, London

Research Degree Programmes - Student Feedback

Obtaining reliable feedback from research students can be problematic for a number of reasons, not least because of the close relationship of the student with his/her supervisor and associated research team. Within Imperial we seek to obtain feedback through both central and departmentally-based mechanisms so as to identify and share best practice and to address any concerns/problems. An anonymous on-line evaluation process (ROLE) run by Registry identifies strengths and weaknesses across the College and at Campus and Department levels, but does not provide information specific to supervisors or laboratories. Further feedback is derived centrally from quinquennial departmental reviews of research training, through student representation on College committees and, more informally, via the student welfare system and the Student Union which has a full time sabbatical officer dedicated to education and student welfare.

Departmental mechanisms address student- and supervisor-specific issues as well as more general issues relating to the Department, Campus or College. The most effective are the six-monthly progress reports. These require the supervisor to make a brief written assessment of the student's performance; this is considered by the student who then makes a progress report to the departmental tutor which includes comment, positive and negative, on the quality of his/her supervision and research facilities. Departmental tutors are responsible for addressing any concerns that emerge and also communicating positive views to promote good practice. Feedback is also obtained through direct communication between the students and the departmental tutor and/or student mentors and by student representation on departmental committees.

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