



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) 2010

Aggregate Report

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Office of Graduate Education Research
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Summary

The University of Toronto takes pride in being a leader in education and scholarship in Canada. We are committed to maintaining and improving the quality of our graduate programs and participation in the **Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS)** provides us with feedback to assess our strengths and helps us identify areas for improvement.

The University of Toronto conducted the 2010 CGPSS in February/March 2010 (G13 and other Canadian universities also participated in the survey). This report summarizes, without statistical analysis, responses from 4,815 registered graduate students at U of T (36.5% of the graduate student population). Results from 2010 are compared with our 2005 and 2007 GPSS results. Where questions are comparable, comparisons are also made to the 2002 results from the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium graduate student survey and to CGPSS results from G13 universities.

Administration and Response Rates:

In 2010, the CGPSS was administered as two versions. The 'Regular' version was essentially identical to the 2007 survey instrument and was sent only to doctoral stream students. The 'Professional' version excluded a number of research-focused questions and included several new questions geared towards professional skills. The response rates for the Regular and Professional versions of the CGPSS were 39.3% and 32.1%, which exceed those observed at the national level and for the G13 universities.

Email invitations to participate in the CGPSS were sent to 13,209 graduate students; these students were registered in Fall 2009 and Winter 2010 and had valid email addresses on ROSI. Of those invited, 36.5% completed the survey. The highest number of responses came from doctoral students (2,086; 43.3% of all survey participants), followed by professional master's students (1,655; 34.4%), and then by research master's students (1,074; 22.3%). Compared to 2007, a higher proportion of professional master's students but fewer doctoral and research master's students responded to the survey.

Highlights of Survey Results:

Overall, results from 2010 have not changed drastically from those in 2007 and our areas of strength remain well-regarded:

- In evaluating their program, quality of interactions and coursework, students show the highest levels of satisfaction with the intellectual quality of faculty members and their fellow students.
- Doctoral stream students' participation in conducting independent research exceeds that of 2007, with 95.3% having conducted research since the start of their graduate program and rate the experience positively.
- On an array of questions regarding behaviours of their thesis advisors, doctoral students report levels of satisfaction consistently above 80%; thesis advisors' ability to advocate for their students and to provide constructive feedback on their work received particularly high ratings.
- Student debt levels in 2010 remain consistent with 2007 levels and the proportion of doctoral stream students with graduate debt is lower than that reported for G13 universities.

- Library facilities remain the highest rated university resource in terms of use and satisfaction. Food services still receive the lowest rating in terms of satisfaction.
- Our students continue to report high levels of satisfaction with their academic experience, their overall experience and their graduate programs and lower levels of satisfaction with their student life experience.

As in previous years, some differences are observed in responses from students in different types of programs. For instance, professional master's students report higher satisfaction than doctoral stream students with opportunities for student collaboration or teamwork and the quality of instruction in their courses. On the other hand, doctoral and research master's students are more satisfied with opportunities to take coursework outside their departments and the quality of academic advising and guidance.

There have also been some notable changes in 2010:

- *Professional skills development*
 - o Doctoral stream students reported higher levels of satisfaction with advice on academic writing standards, intellectual property issues, publishing their work, and writing grant proposals.
 - o Professional master's students expressed relatively high levels of satisfaction with their skills development, particularly in opportunities to interact with practicing professionals.
 - o However, students from all program types report less satisfaction with advice and workshops regarding career options.
- *Presentation and publication activities*
 - o Doctoral students' participation in publication activities has stayed level with 2007 results, while their involvement in presentation activities has increased.
 - o Though fewer research master's students participate in presentation and publication activities, the proportion of these students participating in co-authoring journal articles, delivering papers and attending conferences grew in 2010.

Finally, the 2010 report includes benchmark scores derived from a recent analysis conducted on doctoral student data by the G13 Data Exchange. Four benchmarks were identified from students' responses to questions in Sections 3 to 7 of the CGPSS: 'Quality of Teaching', 'Research Training and Career Orientation', 'Opportunities to Present and Publish,' and 'Supportive Dissertation Advisor'. For all four measures, U of T received higher benchmark scores than its G13 peers in 2010 at levels higher than in 2007.

Conclusions:

With overall results showing little change from 2007, we are encouraged that students continue to show a high level of satisfaction with their academic experience. This is particularly positive in light of recent graduate enrolment expansion. Students are participating in independent research at the highest levels since 2002 and ratings of support from thesis advisors remain high. Increased satisfaction and participation in professional skills development activities suggest our recently launched Graduate Professional Skills program is being received positively. At the same time, the results renew our resolve to improve in other areas, such as the student life experience. Some results may be influenced by external factors; students' dissatisfaction with advice about career options may relate more widely to the state of the

economy and the labour market at present. We value the student feedback received from the CGPSS and look forward to building on our strengths and assessing our response to challenges in the next administration of the survey in 2013.

I. Introduction

In the spring of 2010, the University of Toronto's School of Graduate Studies, along with the G13 and other Canadian universities¹ conducted the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS). This was the third time U of T has participated in the survey and the second time the survey was hosted in Canada. The initial survey was conducted in 2005 (GPSS) in tandem with other Canadian and US universities². In 2002, some of the questions were asked of students as part of the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium graduate student survey.

The survey questionnaire was initially developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Duke University, and is based on three pre-existing surveys from Rutgers, the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium, and the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE). Some questions were revised in the development of a Canadian version. Following the 2005 administration of the tool, the survey was shortened and the wording of some questions was changed.

In 2010, two versions of the CGPSS were created to address differences between doctoral stream and professional programs. With the exception of some minor wording changes, the 'Regular' version of the CGPSS was identical to the 2007 CGPSS instrument and was distributed only to doctoral stream (i.e., doctoral and research master's) students. The 'Professional' version of the survey was only sent to professional master's students. This version excluded a number of research-related questions (e.g., presenting at conferences, satisfaction with thesis advisor) from the 2007 survey instrument and added several questions regarding professional skills development (e.g., opportunities for internships, practicum and experiential learning).

This report presents a selection of results collected through the survey and provides a general descriptive summary at the institutional level. To facilitate comparisons with previous survey results, the structure of the report is similar to that produced in 2007 with the addition of a section on professional skills development and G13 results for four benchmark scores recently produced by the G13 data exchange (G13DE)³.

For some questions, information is disaggregated by type of degree program (i.e., doctoral program, research master's program and professional master's program). Where possible, 2010 results are compared with results from the 2002 HEDS survey, the 2005 and 2007 CGPSS, and G13 data. While we make comparisons with HEDS 2002 and the 2005 GPSS cautiously, most questions have remained the same since 2007 and valid comparisons can be drawn in those cases to the 2010 data⁴.

¹ The other G13 universities include: Alberta, British Columbia, Calgary, Dalhousie, Laval, McGill, McMaster, Montreal, Queen's, Ottawa, Waterloo and Western. An invitation to participate in the CGPSS survey was sent to G13 universities and member institutions of the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies and Council of Ontario Universities, several of whom chose to participate.

² Other Canadian universities participating in the 2005 GPSS included: British Columbia, Laval, McMaster, McGill, Waterloo, Western, and York. Some US participating institutions in 2005 included: Brown, Duke, Florida, MIT, North Carolina – Chapel Hill, Rice, and Stanford.

³ Analysis of benchmark scores for the G13 Data Exchange was conducted by the G13 CGPSS data caretaker, University of Laval, and the University of Ottawa. These benchmarks provide an overview of various aspects of the graduate student experience by combining responses to similar questions in Sections 3 to 7 of the CGPSS.

⁴ The CGPSS survey was revised after 2005 (i.e., the number of questions decreased and the wording was refined, new filters were applied to the data analysis), which means that 2007 and 2010 values are not exact comparators to

We present no statistical analysis in this report, and summaries at the Faculty and department/program levels will follow. This report represents a first look at a rich source of information, as reported by a substantial proportion of our registered graduate students.

This report is structured around the sections of the CGPSS and covers several important aspects of graduate education:

- Respondent profile
- Satisfaction with program, quality of interactions, coursework
- Professional skills development
- Program/department support
- Financial support
- University resources and student life
- General assessment

the 2002 and 2005 values. Demographic shifts at U of T also affect comparisons (since 2002, the proportion of professional master's students relative to doctoral stream students has increased).

II. Respondent Profile

In February 2010, degree-seeking students who were registered in both the fall 2009 term and winter 2010 term were invited by email to participate in the CGPSS. Because the distribution of invitations and other information about the survey was web-based, it was necessary that each student have a valid email address recorded on ROSI⁵. Students completed the survey online and 37% of those invited submitted their responses. Overall, 4,815 (36.5%) valid responses were collected and these responses form the basis of this report. The highest number of responses came from doctoral students (2,086; 43.3% of all survey participants), followed by professional master's students (1,655; 34.4%), then by research master's students (1,074; 22.3%). Compared to 2007, a higher proportion of professional master's students and a lower proportion of doctoral and research master's students participated in the survey.

Response rates were 39.3% for the Regular version and 32.1% for the Professional version of the CGPSS. These response rates are higher than response rates at the national level (Regular: 31.8%, Professional: 26.5%) and for the G13 universities (Regular: 31.4%, Professional: 26.8%). Table 1 displays response rates for each Faculty.

Table 1. Response rates by Faculty, from largest to smallest.

Faculty	Number of Registered Students	Number of Survey Participants	Response Rate
Physical Education & Health	47	28	59.6%
Pharmacy	123	57	46.3%
Information	545	246	45.1%
Social Work	382	163	42.7%
Arts & Science	3725	1477	39.7%
Forestry	56	22	39.3%
Applied Science & Engineering	1521	588	38.7%
Medicine	2607	978	37.5%
Dentistry	117	43	36.8%
Law	94	34	36.2%
Nursing	350	120	34.3%
OISE	2077	669	32.2%
Architecture, Landscape & Design	339	99	29.2%
Music	122	33	27.0%
UTM Professional Graduate Programs Centre	123	30	24.4%
Management	981	228	23.2%
Total	13209	4815	36.5%

⁵ Repository of Student Information.

The survey participants are reasonably representative of the population of U of T graduate students in terms of gender, legal status, degree type, enrolment category, and discipline (Figures 1 through 5, Table 2). Among respondents, 38.2% are in the first year of study, 28.0% in the second, 14.0% in the third, and 19.8% are in the fourth year of study or above.

Figure 1. Distribution of survey participants by gender

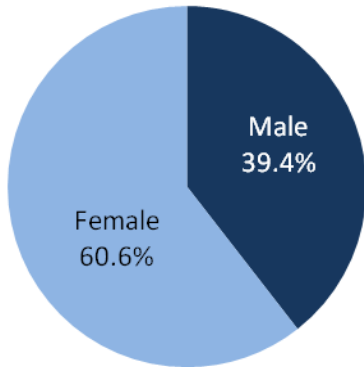


Figure 2. Distribution of survey participants by legal status

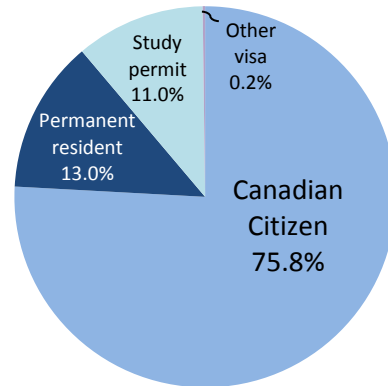


Figure 3. Distribution of survey participants by degree type

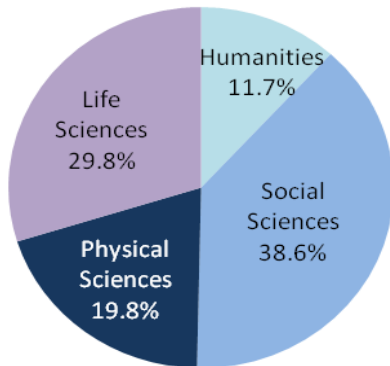


Figure 4. Distribution of survey participants by enrolment category

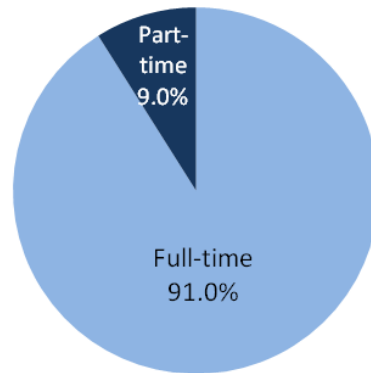


Figure 5. Distribution of survey participants by discipline

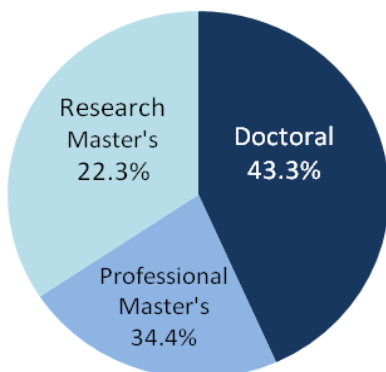


Table 2. Comparison of student characteristics between survey participants and the graduate student population

Characteristic	Category	Survey Participants	Graduate Student Population
Gender	Male	1899 (39.4%)	5736 (43.4%)
	Female	2916 (60.6%)	7473 (56.6%)
Legal status	Canadian citizen	3652 (75.8%)	9808 (74.3%)
	Permanent resident	624 (13.0%)	1895 (14.3%)
	Study permit	528 (11.0%)	1457 (11.0%)
	Other visa	10 (0.2%)	45 (0.3%)
Type of program	Doctoral	2086 (43.3%)	5296 (40.1%)
	Research Master's	1074 (22.3%)	2754 (20.8%)
	Professional Master's	1655 (34.4%)	5159 (39.1%)
Enrolment category	Full-time	4383 (91.0%)	11722 (88.7%)
	Part-time	432 (9.0%)	1487 (11.3%)
Discipline	Humanities	565 (11.7%)	1451 (11.0%)
	Social sciences	1859 (38.6%)	5505 (41.7%)
	Physical sciences	955 (19.8%)	2501 (19.0%)
	Life sciences	1436 (29.8%)	3752 (28.4%)

III. Satisfaction with Program, Quality of Interactions, and Coursework

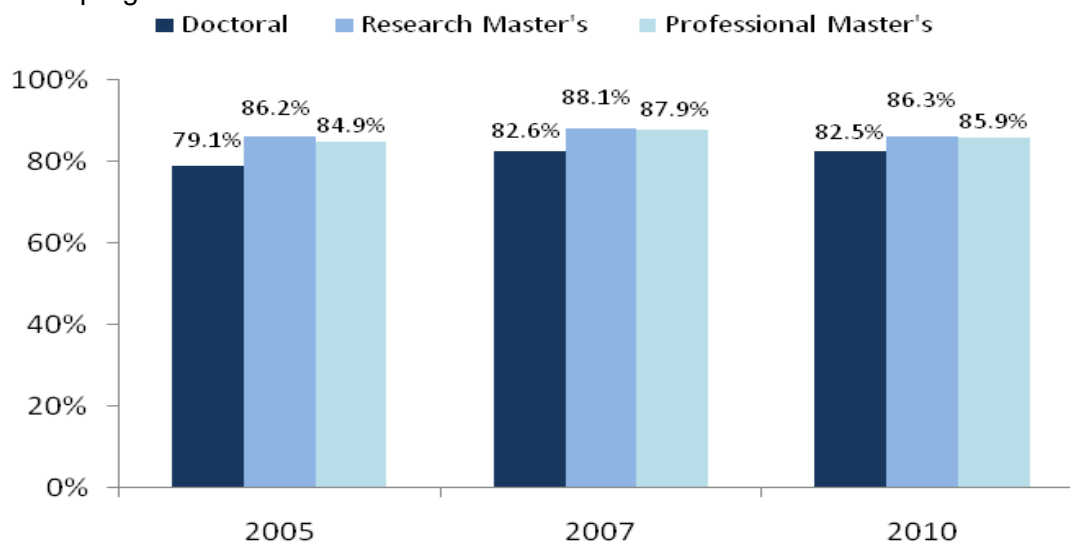
Results in this section focus on various dimensions of academic programs, such as academic quality, intellectual environment, program content, and program structure. Table 3 summarizes students' positive responses to six questions that were asked in 2005, 2007 and 2010. In all years, students reported the greatest satisfaction with the intellectual quality of the faculty and the intellectual quality of their fellow students, with satisfaction levels for both above 90%. Levels of student satisfaction with graduate level teaching and the helpfulness of staff members remained roughly level with 2007 data, but slight decreases were observed in satisfaction with other program dimensions.

Table 3. Satisfaction with various program dimensions: Students who responded 'Excellent', 'Very Good', or 'Good'

Dimension of program	2005		2007		2010	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
The intellectual quality of the faculty	4576	97.0%	4971	97.5%	4605	97.1%
The intellectual quality of my fellow students	4449	94.5%	4822	94.7%	4420	93.4%
The relationship between faculty and graduate students	3889	82.8%	4353	85.5%	3993	84.5%
Overall quality of graduate level teaching by faculty	4014	85.6%	4444	87.4%	4124	87.4%
Quality of academic advising and guidance	3433	73.5%	3747	74.4%	3422	73.2%
Helpfulness of staff members in my program	4008	85.2%	4350	85.8%	4039	85.8%

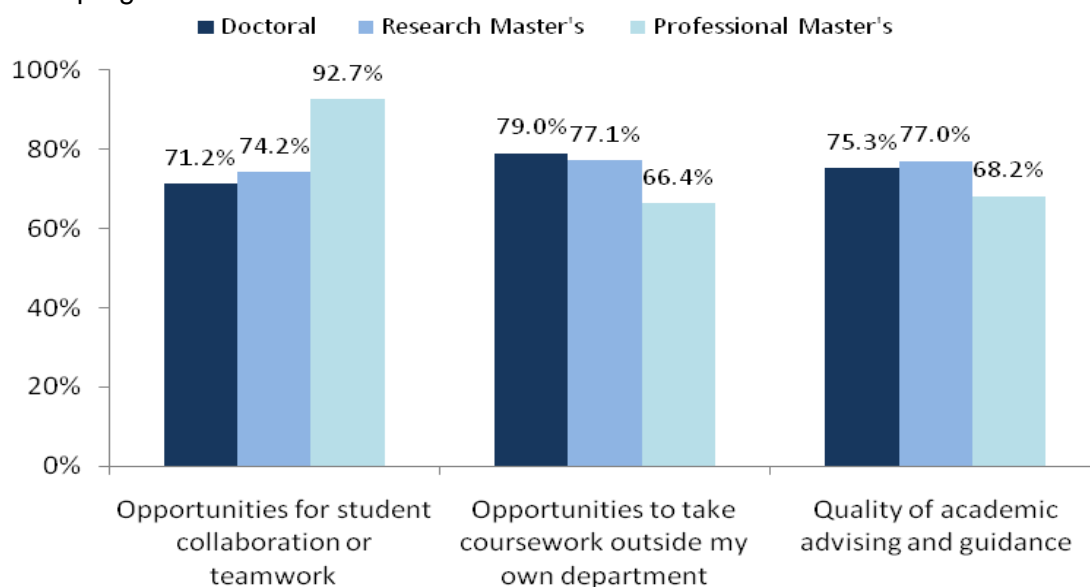
Student satisfaction with the relationship between faculty and graduate students varies somewhat with their program type. In a pattern consistent since 2005, both professional and research master's students report greater satisfaction with their relationships with faculty than do doctoral students (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Rate the relationship between faculty and graduate students: Proportion of respondents who answered "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good" by type of program



Other questions in this section of the survey also highlight the different experiences of students in doctoral stream and professional programs (Figure 7). Professional master's students report higher levels of satisfaction with the opportunities for student collaboration or teamwork than do doctoral and research master's students, and this difference has increased in magnitude since 2007. While overall levels of satisfaction have decreased slightly since 2007, doctoral and research master's students still report greater satisfaction than professional master's students with the opportunities to take coursework outside their own department in 2010. Doctoral stream students also continue to report the highest satisfaction with the quality of academic advising and guidance.

Figure 7. Rate the following dimensions of your program:
Proportion of respondents who answered "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good" by type of program

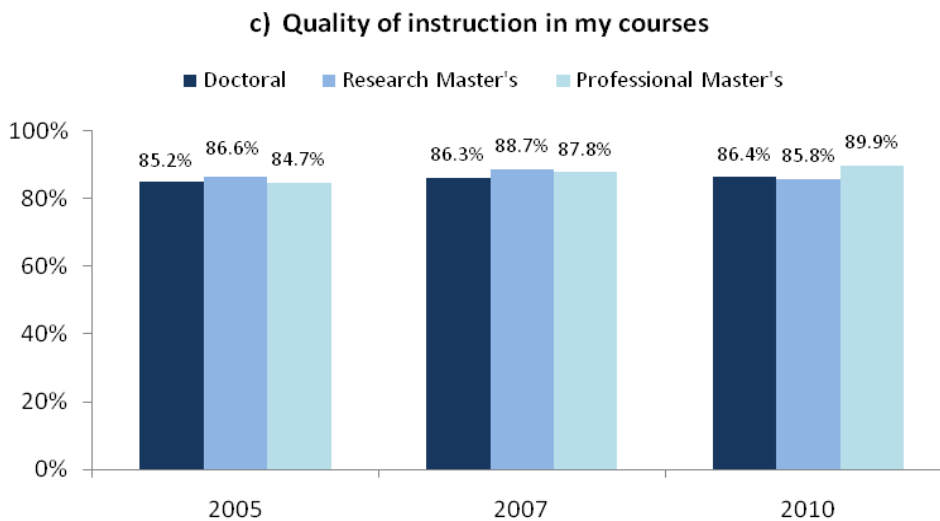
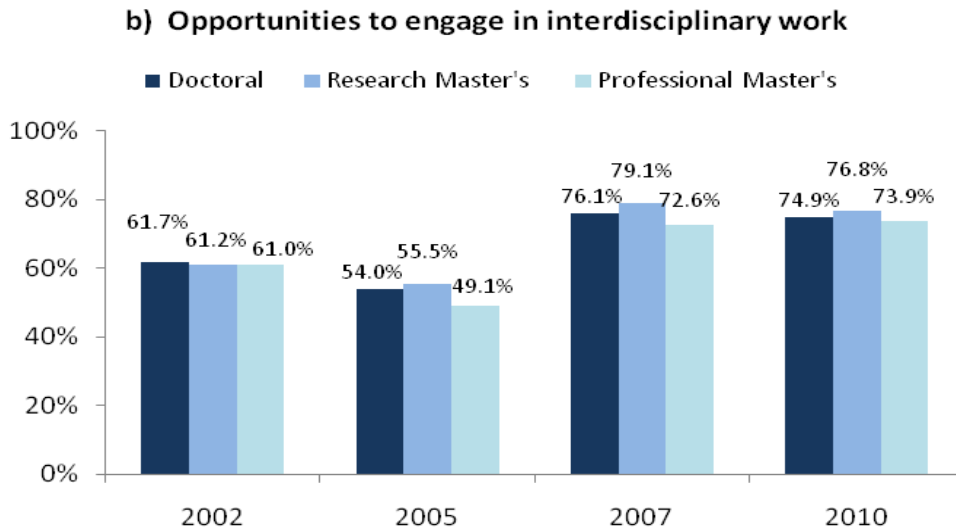
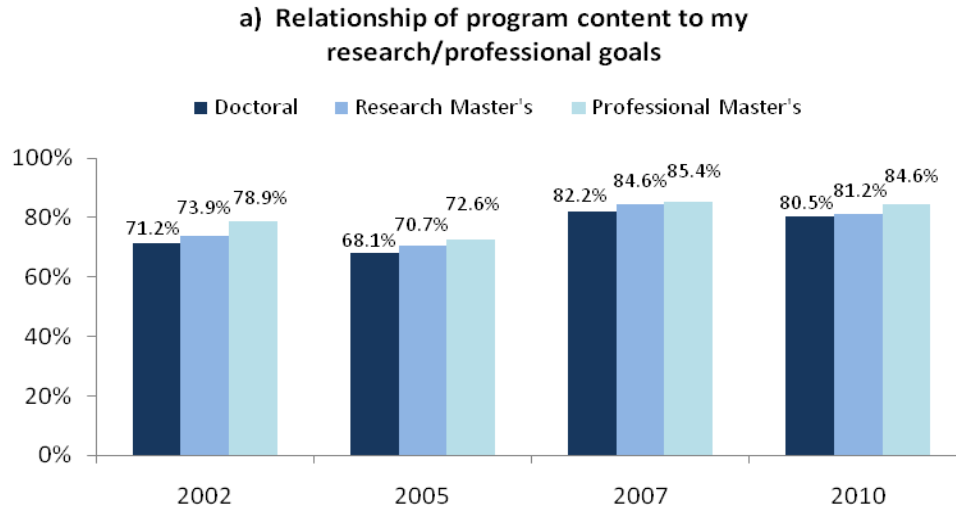


Compared to 2007 results, students in 2010 generally report similar levels of satisfaction with the three aspects of their programs shown in Figure 7, though the relative satisfaction between students in different program types changed. In 2010, professional master's students reported slightly higher satisfaction with the relationship of their program content to their research and professional goals than did doctoral stream students (Figure 8a). There was an increase in the proportion of professional master's students reporting satisfaction with opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work, but satisfaction for doctoral stream students decreased slightly in 2010 (Figure 8b). Unlike previous years, professional master's students reported higher satisfaction with the quality of instruction in their courses in 2010 than doctoral stream students and at higher levels than in 2005 or 2007 (question not asked in 2002; Figure 8c). In looking at results from 2002 and 2005, comparisons should be treated with caution as the wording for some of the questions and for the response options changed with the 2007 version of the survey⁶.

⁶ The 2002 HEDS and 2005 GPSS framed questions in this section in terms of agreement, so students chose one of "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" to the question "to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?" The 2007 and 2010 CGPSS ask students to rate various dimensions of their program by choosing one of "Excellent", "Very Good", "Good", "Fair" or "Poor."

Also, the questions were worded differently. In 2002 and 2005, students were asked to rate their agreement to the statements "Program content supports my research/professional goals" and "Program structure provides opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work".

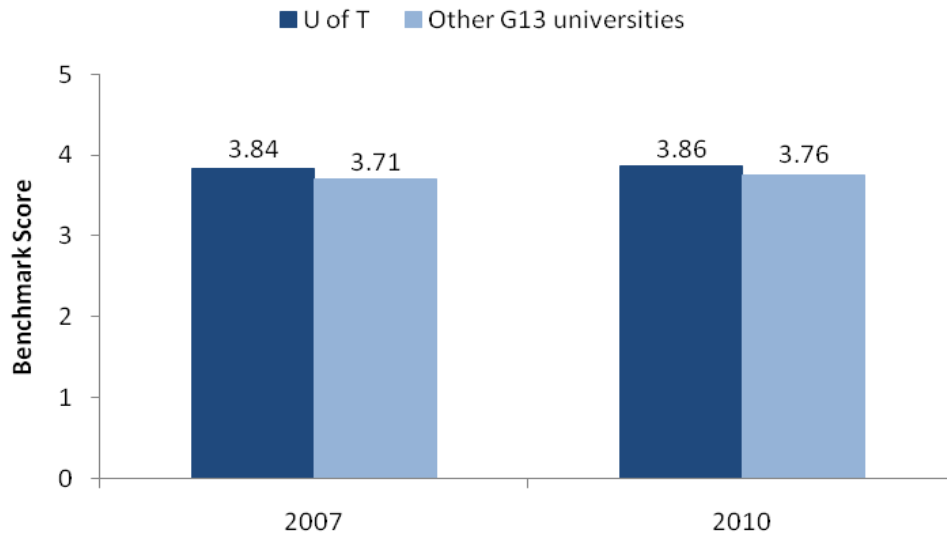
Figure 8. Rate the following dimensions of your program:
 Proportion of respondents who answered “Excellent”, “Very Good” or “Good”/”Strongly Agree” or “Agree” by program type



Results from the G13DE analysis indicate that doctoral students rate the quality of teaching at U of T more positively than do their counterparts at other G13 universities. Benchmark scores for the 'Quality of Teaching' were higher at U of T than at G13 peer institutions and this pattern is observed both in 2007 and 2010 (Figure 9). Ratings from the following three survey items were included in the benchmark scores (where 1 = 'Poor' and 5 = 'Excellent'):

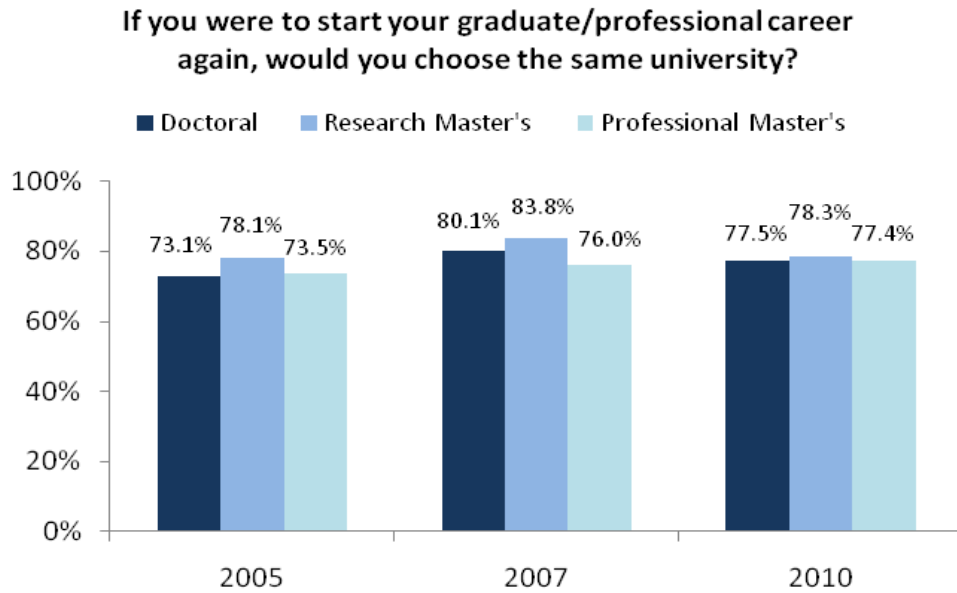
1. The intellectual quality of the faculty
2. Overall quality of graduate level teaching by faculty
3. Quality of instruction in my courses

Figure 9. G13 Benchmarks Scores: Quality of Teaching (doctoral students only).

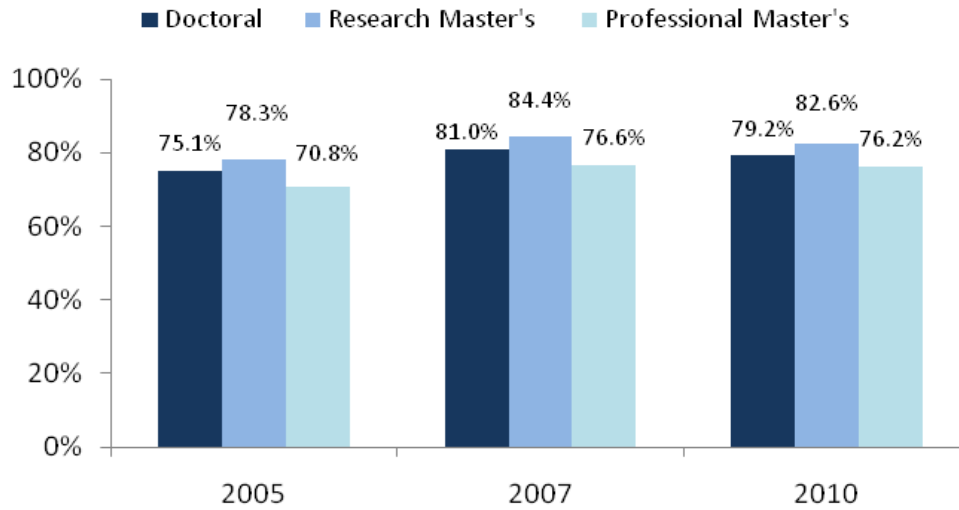


Students were asked to give a general assessment of their experiences with academic programs by answering four overall questions (Figure 10). Responses from 2010 generally remain similar to those from 2007 in both level of satisfaction and pattern of responses across type of program, with the exception of results for the question "If you were to start your graduate/professional career again, would you choose the same university?" In previous years, research master's students responded more favourably than doctoral and professional master's students to this question. In 2010, responses were similar across all program types and at a somewhat lower level of satisfaction than in 2007 for doctoral stream students. However, despite the decrease, our students' level of satisfaction remains higher than those reported across the G13 universities (G13: 69.4% doctoral, 70.8% research master's, 74.2% professional master's) on this question.

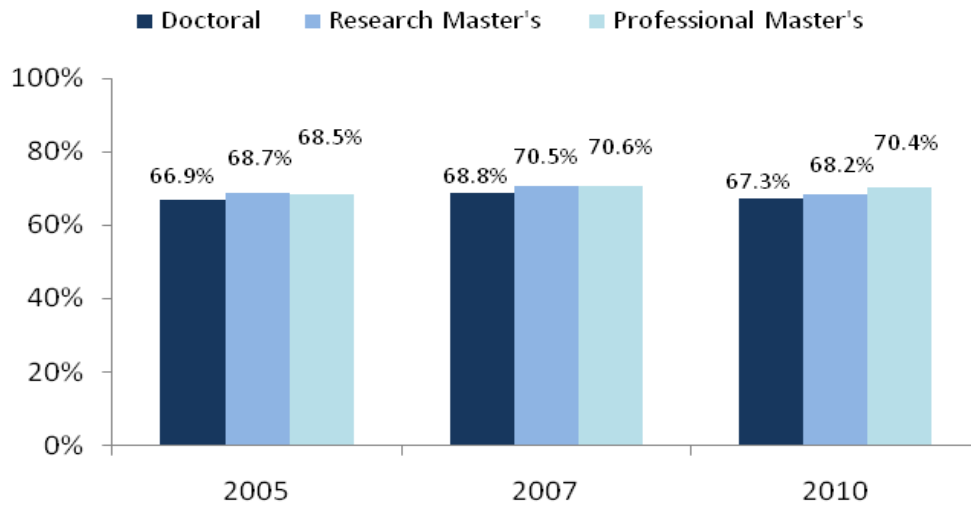
Figure 10. General satisfaction: Answer the following questions:
 Respondents who answered “Definitely” or “Probably” by program type



Would you recommend this university to someone considering your program?



Would you recommend this university to someone in another field?



IV. Professional Skills Development

The survey asked students to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their professional skills development. Given the distinct nature of doctoral stream and professional programs, the questions in this section were tailored for each of these audiences, and the results are reported separately below. Given the research-focused nature of the questions in the Regular version of the survey, the doctoral stream results summarized below are limited to a subset of students who indicated that their program includes a thesis, dissertation or research paper (n=2,847), of which doctoral students make up 69.5%. The results for professional master's students' are unfiltered and include all respondents' data.

Doctoral stream students' satisfaction with a number of activities promoting the development of professional skills has increased since 2007 (Table 4). The majority of students were satisfied with advice and workshops on academic writing standards; in 2010, ratings of 'Excellent', 'Very Good' or 'Good' were given by 72.9% of doctoral students and 82.4% of master's students compared to 68.8% and 73.5%, respectively, in 2007. Several other activities also received higher ratings of satisfaction from doctoral stream students in 2010: advice and workshops for writing grant proposals (73.9% in 2010, 65.6% in 2007); advice and workshops for publishing their work (63.8% in 2010, 59.8% in 2007); and advice on intellectual property issues (57.5% in 2010, 54.5% in 2007). A large proportion of students reported satisfaction with courses, workshops and orientation on teaching; while satisfaction levels in 2010 are high, there has been an increase for doctoral students (76.3% in 2010, 74.9% in 2007) and a decrease for research master's students (81.9% in 2010, 84.5% in 2007) since 2007.

The lowest levels of satisfaction were related to career and job preparations. All doctoral stream students were least satisfied with information provided about career options both within and outside academia, as well as research positions. In particular, doctoral students reported the lowest levels of satisfaction regarding information about career options outside of academia.

Participation levels for doctoral stream students in these activities students range from 57.9% for 'advice/workshops on preparing for candidacy examinations' to 79.8% for 'courses, workshops or orientation on teaching.'

Table 4. Professional skills development activities: Satisfaction of doctoral stream students. Proportion of participating respondents who rated the activity as "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good"

Professional skills development activity	2007			2010		
	DOC	MAST	ALL	DOC	MAST	ALL
Courses, workshops or orientation on teaching	74.9%	84.5%	77.6%	76.3%	81.9%	77.9%
Advice/workshops on preparing for candidacy examinations	57.1%	72.7%	60.3%	56.2%	72.0%	59.5%
Advice/workshops on the standards for academic writing in your field	68.8%	73.5%	70.1%	72.9%	82.4%	75.6%
Advice/workshops on writing grant proposals	64.0%	70.0%	65.6%	73.1%	76.1%	73.9%
Advice/workshops on publishing your work	58.5%	63.8%	59.8%	62.1%	68.6%	63.8%
Advice/workshops on career options within academia	59.2%	61.7%	59.9%	56.5%	62.1%	58.1%
Advice/workshops about career options outside academia	43.3%	55.2%	46.6%	40.0%	56.9%	45.1%
Advice/workshops about research positions	49.6%	60.4%	52.5%	47.3%	57.3%	50.2%
Advice on intellectual property issues	50.8%	62.3%	54.5%	53.2%	66.6%	57.5%

On the whole, levels of satisfaction for professional master's students with their professional skills development activities (Table 5) were higher than those observed for doctoral stream students. Professional master's students were most satisfied with the opportunities for contact with practicing professionals. They joined doctoral stream students in being least satisfied with the information they received about career options (61.7%), but still reported a higher level of satisfaction compared to doctoral stream students.

Table 5. Professional skills development activities (2010 data): Participation and satisfaction of professional master's students.

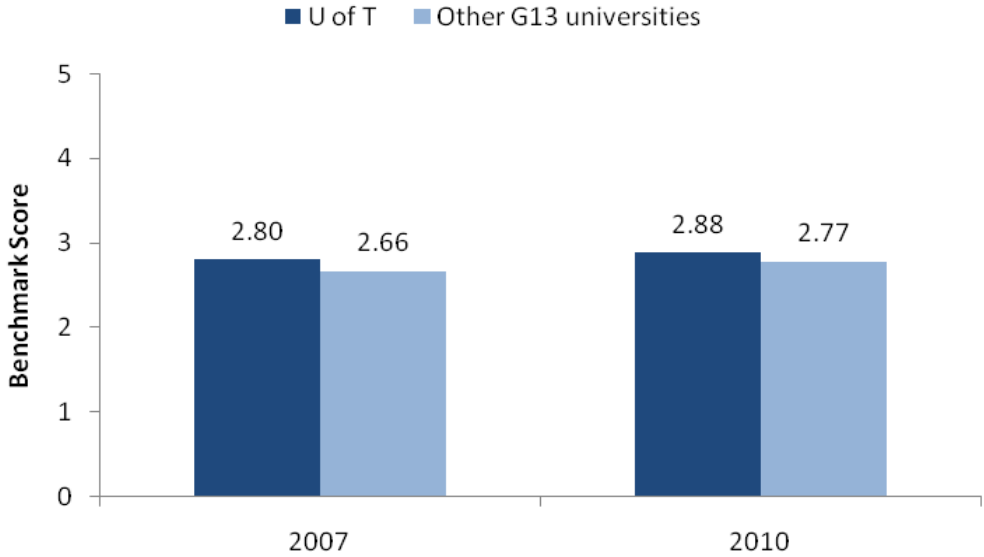
Professional skills development activity	Participated	Satisfied
Advice/workshops on preparing for professional practice	81.6%	74.7%
Advice/workshops on the standards for writing in your profession	76.3%	71.1%
Advice/workshops on career options	79.2%	61.7%
Advice/workshops on professional ethics	76.8%	71.2%
Advice/workshops on job preparation and professional practice	78.6%	65.1%
Opportunities for internships, practicum, and experiential learning as part of the program	86.6%	70.6%
Opportunities for contact (lectures, seminars, discussion) with practicing professionals	92.9%	82.1%

Note: 'Satisfied' indicates the proportion of students participating in the activity that rated it as 'Excellent', 'Very Good' or 'Good'.

The G13DE results suggest that U of T doctoral students are, on the whole, more satisfied with training in research activities and career information than doctoral students at other G13 institutions. Figure 11 shows benchmark scores for 2007 and 2010 for 'Research Training and Career Orientation'. In both years, ratings for U of T were higher than for G13 peer institutions. Data from nine CGPSS items were included in calculations for these benchmark scores ("Quality of the support/training received in...):

1. Advice/workshops on the standards for academic writing in your field
2. Advice/workshops on writing grant proposals
3. Advice/workshops on publishing your work
4. Advice/workshops on career options within academia
5. Advice/workshops on career options outside academia
6. Advice/workshops about research positions
7. Advice/workshops about research ethics in human subject research
8. Advice/workshops about research ethics in the use of animals
9. Advice/workshops on intellectual property issues

Figure 11. G13 Benchmark Scores: Research Training and Career Orientation (doctoral students only).



V. Program/Department Support

This section of the report combines results regarding students' involvement in research, presentations, and publications and their satisfaction with thesis advisors. As in the preceding section and in line with previous years' analyses, the following data summary is limited to respondents who have indicated that their program includes a thesis, dissertation or research paper and includes only research master's and doctoral students' responses⁷.

Levels of reported research experience have increased since 2007. In 2010, 95.3% of all doctoral stream students reported that they have conducted independent research since starting their graduate programs. This shows continued growth in comparison to 94.5% and 74.7% participation from doctoral stream students in 2007 and 2005, respectively. Students also evaluate the experience very positively, with 83.8% rating it as 'Excellent', 'Very Good' or 'Good' in 2010. Similarly, high proportions of doctoral (92.4%) and research master's students (93.3%) report that they have received training before beginning their own research. Most students (83.3% of doctoral students, 80.8% of research master's students) also report that they have conducted research in collaboration with one or more faculty members and 74.9% of these students rate the experience positively. More doctoral stream students are also participating in collaborations with faculty to write grant proposals (56.5% in 2007, 58.6% in 2010 for all doctoral stream students) and rate the experience more favourably than before (60.7% satisfied in 2007, 61.9% satisfied in 2010).

Table 7. Research experience by program type (2010 data):
Proportion of respondents indicating they have participated at least once in the following activities and satisfaction with each research activity.

Research activity	Participated			Satisfied		
	DOC	MAST	ALL	DOC	MAST	ALL
Conducting independent research since starting your graduate program	95.4%	95.0%	95.3%	84.2%	83.0%	83.8%
Training in research methods (before beginning your own research)	92.4%	93.3%	92.7%	64.8%	64.7%	64.8%
Research collaboration with one or more faculty members	83.3%	80.8%	82.5%	74.3%	76.2%	74.9%
Collaboration with faculty in writing grant proposals	60.6%	53.8%	58.6%	60.6%	65.4%	61.9%

Note: 'Satisfied' indicates the proportion of students participating in the activity that rated it as 'Excellent', 'Very Good' or 'Good'

Table 7 shows student participation in publication and presentation activities. Although most students who indicate involvement in these activities are doctoral students, research master's students showed increased participation in 2010. The proportion of research master's students who reported co-authoring publications increased to 40.1% in 2010 from 34.2% in 2007. A greater proportion of master's students also reported delivering papers or posters at and attending national scholarly meetings. Doctoral students show an increase in attendance at (80.2% in 2010, 78.8% in 2007) and dissemination of research through (79% in 2010, 77.7% in 2007) national scholarly meetings in 2010. However, rates of participation in publication activities for doctoral students in 2010 are slightly lower than those observed in 2007.

⁷ In 2007, 12% of the respondents in this section consisted of professional master's students who indicated that their program had a research requirement. The 2010 Professional version of the CGPSS did not include a question about research requirements and thus, no professional master's students are included in this section of the 2010 report. As a result, any comparisons to data from the 2007 aggregate report should be made with caution.

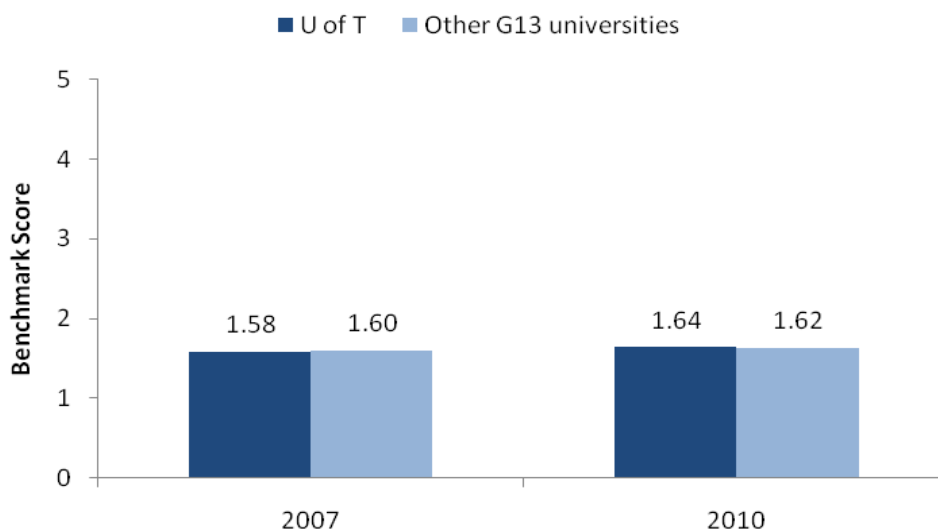
Table 7. Publications and presentations, by program type (doctoral stream students only): Proportion of respondents indicating they have participated at least once in the following activities.

Publication or presentation activity	Doctoral			Research Master's		
	2005	2007	2010	2005	2007	2010
Published as sole or first author in a refereed journal	63.1%	64.5%	64.0%	26.0%	27.9%	25.6%
Co-authored in refereed journals with your program faculty	64.1%	65.7%	64.9%	39.2%	34.2%	40.1%
Delivered any papers/present a poster at national scholarly meetings	77.2%	77.7%	79.0%	46.9%	45.6%	48.2%
Attended national scholarly/professional meetings	75.6%	78.8%	80.2%	51.1%	48.0%	51.3%

The G13DE results for 2010 show that doctoral students at U of T rate the opportunities for publication and presentation at slightly higher levels than do students at other G13 institutions. This is an improvement from 2007, when U of T levels were lower than G13 averages. In general however, benchmark scores for the 'Opportunities to Publish and Present' are low at all G13 universities (Figure 12). Five items focusing on involvement in publication and presentation activities were included in the calculations for these benchmark scores:

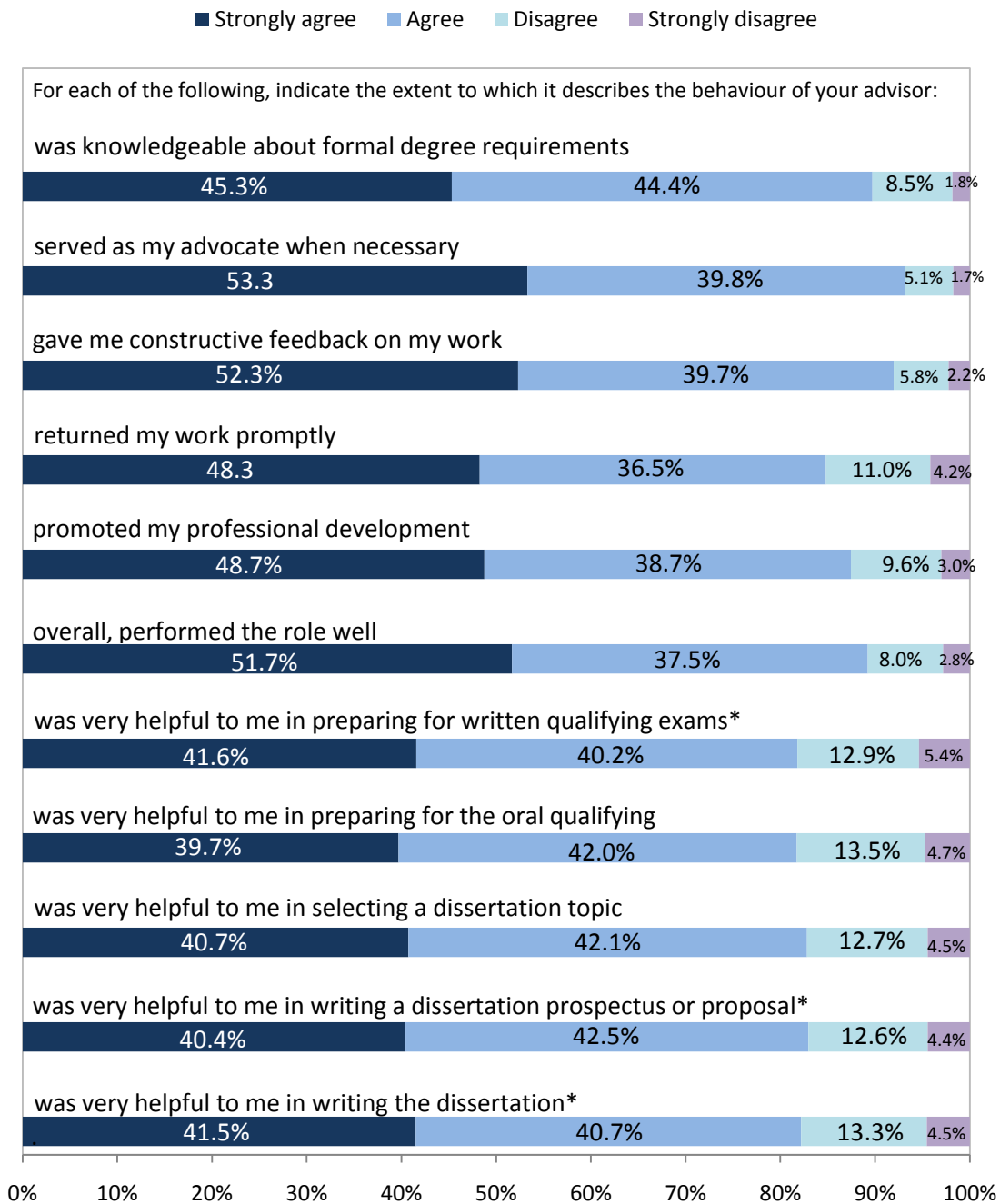
1. Departmental funding for students to attend national or regional meetings
2. Attend national scholarly meetings
3. Deliver a paper or presented a poster at national scholarly meetings
4. Co-authored in refereed journals with your program faculty
5. Published as sole of first author in a refereed journal

Figure 12. G13 Benchmarks Scores: Opportunities to Publish and Present (doctoral students only).



Consistent with previous results, doctoral students gave very positive assessments to the performance of their dissertation supervisor in a variety of mentoring activities (Figure 13). Doctoral students were most satisfied with how their thesis advisor acted as an advocate for them and with the feedback provided on their work. Of those surveyed, 89.2% of doctoral respondents "Strongly agree" or "Agree" that overall, their advisor performed the role well.

Figure 13. Advisor and Dissertation: Responses of Doctoral Students.

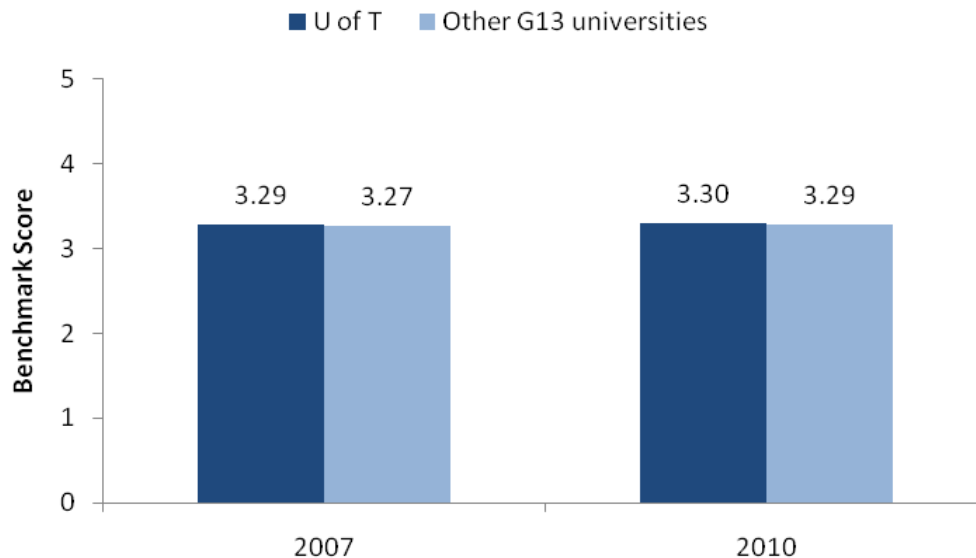


Note: * There was an 'NA/No Opinion' option that was excluded in calculating the percentages above. This 'NA/No Opinion' response option was chosen at higher levels for the questions marked with *. The proportion of doctoral students answering 'NA/No Opinion' ranged from 31.3% for 'was very helpful to me in writing a dissertation prospectus or proposal' to 55.3% for 'was very helpful in writing the dissertation.' This may indicate that a large proportion of students only began their doctoral programs recently.

Results from the G13DE analysis indicate that U of T's doctoral students are slightly more satisfied with the support they receive from their dissertation advisor compared to doctoral students at other G13 institutions in both 2007 and 2010. Benchmark scores for 'Supportive Dissertation Advisor' are displayed in Figure 14 and consist of 12 items from the CGPSS:

1. Served as my advocate when necessary
2. Gave me constructive feedback on my work
3. Returned my work promptly
4. Promoted my professional development
5. Overall, performed the role well
6. Was available for regular meetings
7. Was very helpful to me in preparing for written qualifying exams
8. Was very helpful to me in preparing for the oral qualifying exam
9. Was very helpful to me in selecting a dissertation topic
10. Was very helpful to me in writing a dissertation prospectus or proposal
11. Was very helpful to me in writing the dissertation
12. Was very helpful to me in selecting the dissertation committee

Figure 14. G13 Benchmark Scores: Supportive Dissertation Advisor (doctoral students only).



VI. Financial Support

Several survey questions inquire about the kinds of financial support that have been received by graduate students, the amount of undergraduate and graduate educational debt, and student satisfaction with advice on the availability of financial support. Among doctoral students, 31.2% have received federal granting council scholarships/fellowships, compared to 15.9% of research master's students and 5.5% of professional master's students. Similarly, 24.2% of doctoral students have received provincial government scholarships/fellowships, compared to 10.5% of research master's students and 13.0% of professional students. Other major forms of financial support include university funded fellowships (58.7% for doctoral students, 39.8% for research master's students and 11.4% for professional master's students); graduate teaching assistantships (53.1% for doctoral and 29.6% for research master's students); and graduate research assistantships (41.5% for doctoral and 28.1% for research master's students.) Professional master's students report the highest reliance on university-funded bursaries, off-campus employment, employee benefit/employer funding, and loans, savings or family assistance.

Levels of reported indebtedness have stayed level with 2007 results; these are measured in categories that have not been adjusted for inflation in Table 8. In 2010, 34.1% and 50.9% of students reported having undergraduate and graduate debt, respectively. These levels of indebtedness are similar to those observed in 2007 (34.2% and 49.8% of undergraduate and graduate debt, respectively). While 2007 and 2010 levels of undergraduate debt are closer to those of 2002, levels of graduate debt have shown a gradual, slight decrease since 2002. The proportion of students in 2010 in the highest debt category remains identical to that in the 2007 results.

Debt levels differ for doctoral stream and professional master's students (Table 9). While proportions of students carrying undergraduate debt are similar between students in different program types, the proportion of students reporting graduate debt are much lower for doctoral stream students; 59.7% of doctoral stream students report having no graduate debt, while only 29.7% of professional master's students report the same. The proportion of U of T students with graduate debt (40.3%) compares favourably to the G13 average for doctoral stream students (45.3%). However, more of our professional master's students (70.3%) seem to be carrying graduate debt compared to the G13 professional student average (66.1%).

Professional master's students and doctoral stream students have slightly different levels of satisfaction with the advice they receive on the availability of financial support. Professional master's students report the lowest satisfaction with only 59.5% rating it as "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good". Doctoral and research master's students are more satisfied, with 67.3% and 68.2% of doctoral and research master's students giving favourable ratings, respectively.

Table 8. Educational debts upon graduation from U of T

Debt amount	2002		2005		2007		2010	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Undergraduate debt								
\$0	1142	67.3%	2234	61.2%	3051	65.8%	6427	65.9%
\$1 - \$19,999	340	20.0%	823	22.5%	801	17.3%	682	15.7%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	164	9.7%	434	11.9%	566	12.2%	578	13.3%
\$40,000 - more	50	3.0%	162	4.5%	219	4.7%	226	5.2%
Graduate debt								
\$0	861	47.6%	1817	48.5%	2390	50.2%	2185	49.1%
\$1 - \$19,999	654	36.2%	1161	31.0%	1400	29.4%	1313	29.5%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	191	10.6%	390	10.4%	543	11.4%	548	12.3%
\$40,000 - more	103	5.6%	382	10.2%	426	9.0%	402	9.0%

Table 9. Educational debts upon graduation reported in 2010: U of T vs. G13 values

Debt amount	U of T		All G13	
	Doctoral stream	Professional	Doctoral stream	Professional
Undergraduate debt				
\$0	65.8%	66.1%	66.7%	66.1%
\$1 - 19,999	15.7%	15.5%	18.4%	15.9%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	13.7%	12.4%	11.0%	12.4%
\$40,000 - more	4.8%	6.0%	4.0%	5.6%
Graduate debt				
\$0	59.7%	29.7%	54.7%	33.9%
\$1 - 19,999	25.8%	36.4%	30.4%	35.9%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	9.4%	17.7%	10.1%	19.0%
\$40,000 - more	5.1%	16.2%	4.8%	11.2%

Note: G13 values in Table 8 include U of T data.

VII. University Resources and Student Life

Students rated their satisfaction with 18 specific university facilities and services (Table 10). Some University resources are used frequently and are rated highly by graduate students (e.g. library, university bookstore). Others are used less commonly, but are evaluated positively by the students who use them (e.g. international office). Facilities and services that rate the lowest in terms of satisfaction are food services and campus transportation service.

The levels of participation and satisfaction below are similar to 2007 results, with the exception of graduate student work/study space. In 2010, this item had a 92.1% participation rate and a 74.9% satisfaction level. Named 'graduate student office space' in 2007, it only received a participation rate of 78.8% and a satisfaction level of 61.1%. Though some of the difference may be due to increased recognition of the new item name, the large increase suggests that student work/study spaces may have seen marked improvements since 2007.

Students were also asked about their attendance at social functions linked to their graduate studies. Students are more likely to participate in department-organized and advisor/research-group-organized social activities, with 89.0% and 94.4% of students frequently or occasionally attending them, respectively. Almost two-thirds of advisor/research groups are reported to organize social activities (62.4%), a greater proportion than observed in 2007 (58.9%). Many students also attend social activities within their residence (75.3%) but express less interest in university-wide activities, which are attended frequently or occasionally by only 47.4% of students.

Table 10. University facilities and services: Participation and satisfaction with quality of experience.

Facility or service	Participation rate*	Quality of Experience: "Excellent", "Very Good" or "Good"
Library facilities	96.7%	95.4%
Graduate student work/study space	92.1%	74.9%
University bookstore	88.2%	76.1%
Information technology services	81.8%	80.3%
Registrarial processes	80.5%	72.7%
Athletic facilities	69.6%	90.5%
Food services	65.8%	41.2%
Health care services	60.9%	76.8%
Research laboratories	51.7%	85.8%
Financial aid office	44.1%	60.6%
Career services	43.8%	64.8%
Student counselling and resource center	36.9%	69.2%
Student government office	30.4%	72.1%
Housing assistance	23.5%	67.6%
Campus transportation service	21.1%	55.8%
International office	20.5%	81.5%
Child care services	9.0%	60.0%
Ombudsperson's office	8.5%	71.1%

VIII. General Assessment

The final section of the survey asks questions about students' general satisfaction with their graduate school experience and about obstacles to their academic progress. Students from all program types alike rated work/financial commitments as the largest obstacle to their academic progress, but this was particularly so for professional master's students. Family obligations were noted as the second largest obstacle for doctoral stream students; professional master's students indicated difficulty with course scheduling. Several other factors are also regarded as 'a major obstacle' to students' academic progress (Table 11). Note that 8.4% of respondents indicate that all the suggested factors are "not an obstacle" to their academic progress.

Table 11. Major obstacles to students' academic progress.

Rate the extent to which the following factors are an obstacle to your academic progress.					
Respondents who rate the factors as "a major obstacle" to their academic progress.					
Doctoral students		Research master's students		Professional master's students	
Work/financial commitments	25.8%	Work/financial commitments	22.9%	Work/financial commitments	38.7%
Family obligations	14.0%	Family obligations	10.8%	Course scheduling	17.1%
Availability of faculty	10.4%	Program structure or requirements	10.5%	Family obligations	15.5%
Program structure or requirements	9.4%	Availability of faculty	10.2%	Program structure or requirements	13.2%
Course scheduling	6.6%	Course scheduling	7.4%	Availability of faculty	6.0%
Immigration laws or regulations	3.8%	Immigration laws or regulations	2.2%	Immigration laws or regulations	1.8%

Students also rated their satisfaction with the quality of their academic experience, student life experience, graduate program, and overall experience at the university (Figure 15). Though ratings are slightly lower than 2007, students continue to rate their experiences very positively. As in previous years, doctoral stream students generally report higher levels of satisfaction than do professional master's students. Students show the highest levels of satisfaction with the academic experience; 90% of students consider this to have been 'Excellent', 'Very Good' or 'Good'. The majority of students are also satisfied with their graduate/professional program (86.7%) and their experience overall (87.2%), but as in previous years, rate their student life experience less favourably. Nevertheless, in 2010, there was a slight increase in the proportion of doctoral students satisfied with their student life experience (79.6% in 2010, 78.8% in 2007).

With respect to satisfaction with the academic experience, graduate program and overall experience, U of T graduate students responded more positively than students at other G13 institutions (Figure 16). Similar to our results, levels of satisfaction reported by our G13 peers decreased from 2007 to 2010 for all general assessment questions. It is only in the area of "student life" that our graduate students responded less favourably than students in other G13 institutions. These results are similar to those from previous survey results; only 75.5% in 2005, 77.4% in 2007 and 77.1% in 2010 rated their "student life" experience at U of T as "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good". In comparison, a higher proportion of students in the 2005 survey (90%), 2007 survey (91.4%) and 2010 survey (90%) gave the same rating to their "academic experience". It should be noted that while U of T students' satisfaction with student life has increased since 2005, results for Canadian peer institutions have not shown comparable improvement.

Figure 15. General assessment.

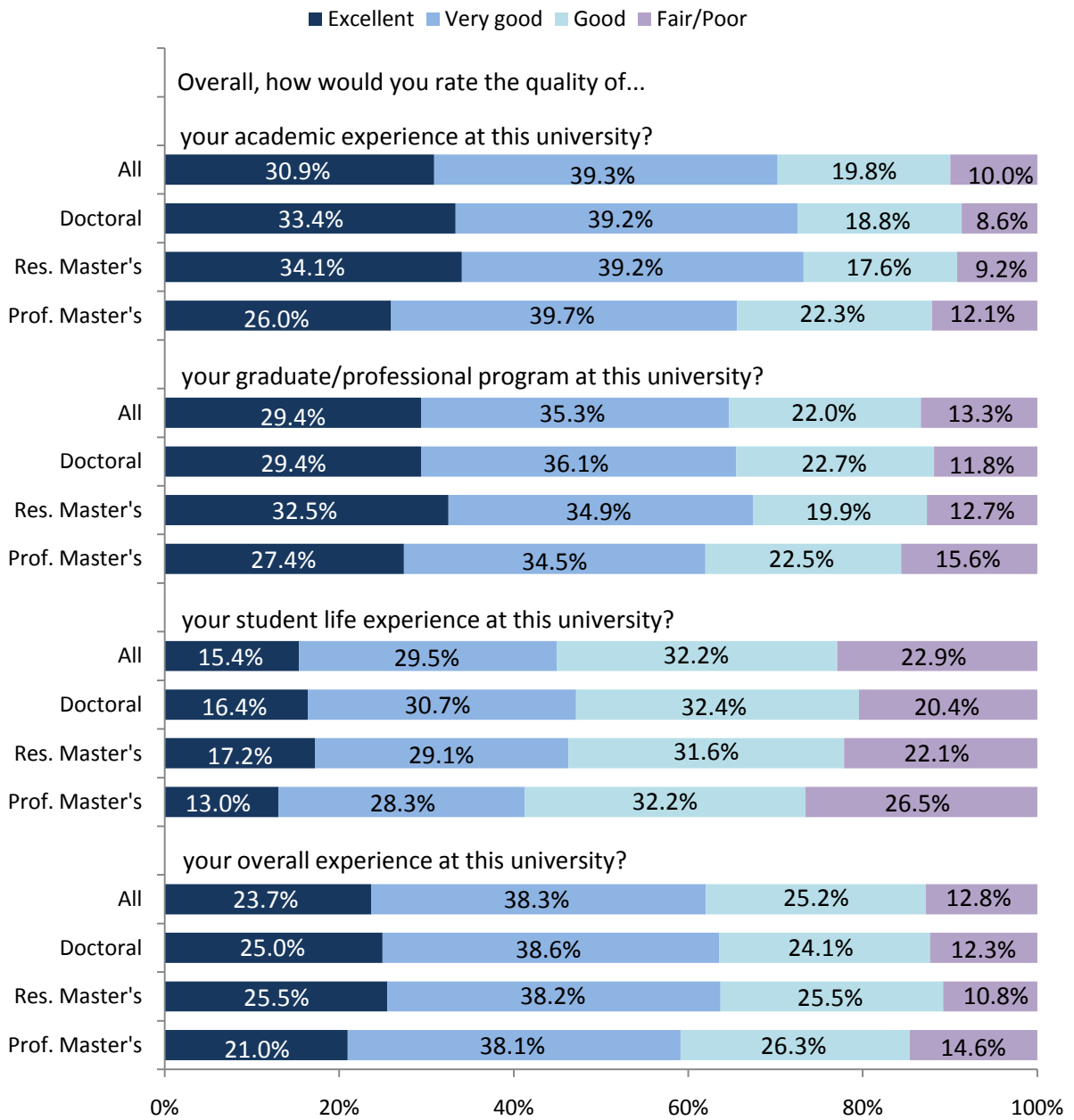
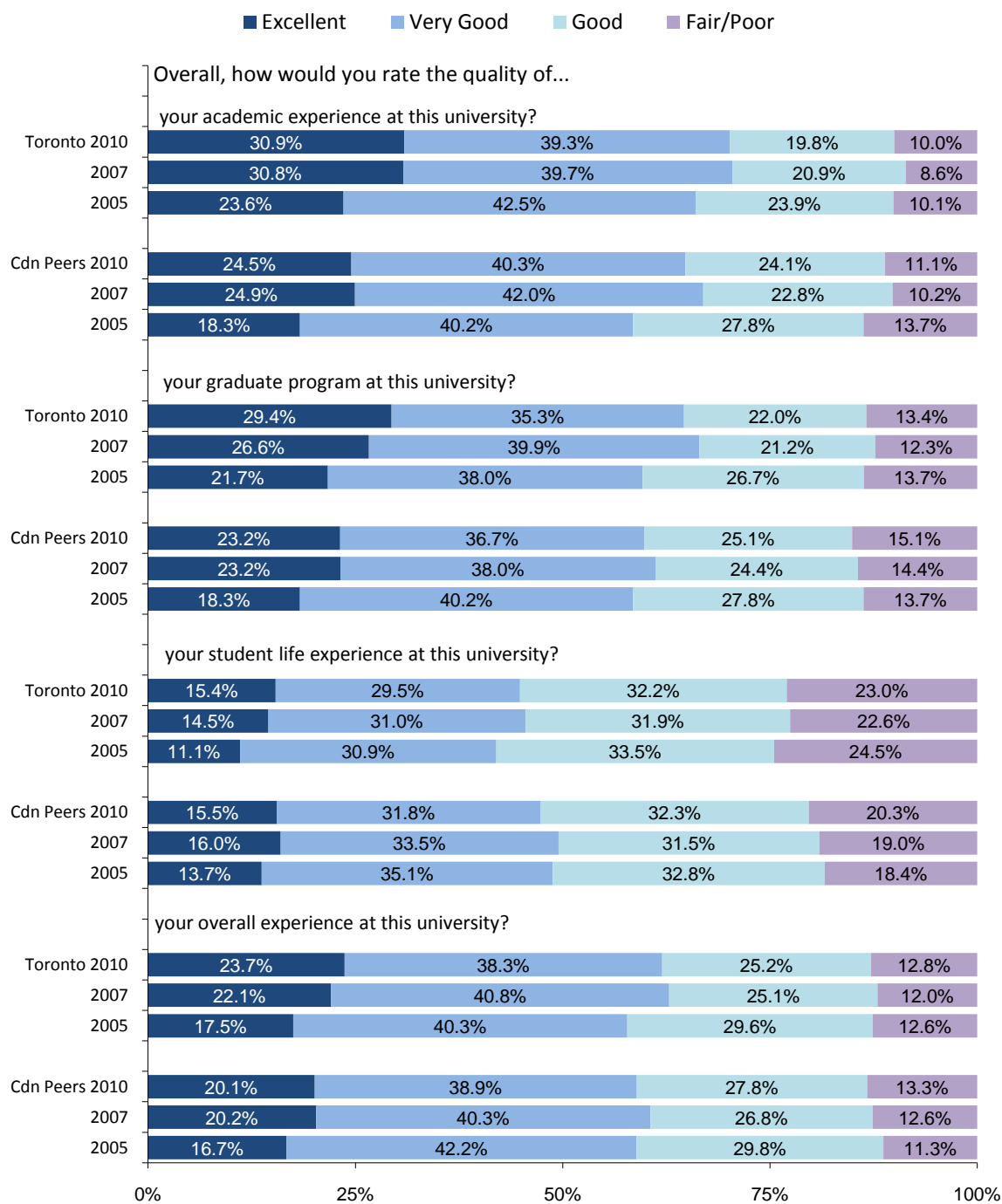


Figure 16. General assessment: Comparison with averages from Canadian peer universities.



Note: Canadian peer universities are the G13 universities (listed in Footnote 1). In 2005, only six of the 12 Canadian peer peers participated in the CGPSS (Alberta, Laval, McGill, McMaster, Waterloo, Western). In 2007 and 2010, all Canadian peers participated. Data for Canadian peers exclude U of T data.

IX. Conclusions

This reports places the 2010 CGPSS results into context with results from 2007. Comparisons for some questions were also possible with data from 2002 and 2005, but should be considered general due to changes in the wording of survey questions and classification of student responses. The new method of administering the survey as Regular and Professional versions introduced in 2010 has increased specificity for questions asked of our doctoral stream and professional master's students, but it has limited some comparisons to 2007 data.

Nevertheless, with current results showing few major changes since 2007, we are pleased to know that our students remain satisfied with their educational experience at U of T. We continue to perform better than our G13 peers in students' satisfaction with their academic experience, graduate program and overall experience. In 2010, we also receive higher ratings than do our G13 peers on all benchmark scores. Our students value highly the intellectual quality of faculty and their fellow students. The high proportion of doctoral stream students participating in independent research continues to grow and on the whole, doctoral students are very satisfied with the support they receive from their thesis advisors. We are also pleased to note that the recent graduate enrolment expansion appears to have had little effect on students' levels of satisfaction.

It is also encouraging to know that doctoral stream students, particularly research master's students, are expressing greater satisfaction with many professional skills development activities. It seems reasonable to attribute at least part of this increase to the initiation of the Graduate Professional Skills (GPS) program in fall 2009. The GPS allows doctoral stream students to participate in workshops that develop transferable skills for academia and beyond (e.g., writing grant proposals, delivering presentations, teaching). We look forward to seeing the positive effects of this program grow in future years.

Although the GPS program is primarily for doctoral stream students, the CGPSS results inform us that our professional master's students are highly engaged and satisfied with their professional skills development, particularly in opportunities for contact with practicing professionals. Satisfaction levels for professional master's students also exceed those from doctoral stream students in regards to the relationship of their program content to their professional goals and to opportunities for student collaboration and teamwork.

However, the survey results also identify a number of areas that still require improvement. While our students are satisfied with their scholastic experience, their satisfaction with their student life experience lags behind. This motivates us to renew our commitment to enhancing our student life initiatives, such as the establishment of the Grad Room work/study space and the Graduate Student Initiative (GSI). We will continue to look for new ways to improve our students' university experience outside the classroom.

Both doctoral stream and professional students also expressed lower levels of satisfaction with the advice they received about career options and information on the availability of financial support. With the recent economic downturn, it is plausible that some of this discontent may be related to pessimism about the labour market rather than the quality of career advice itself. In recent years, we have started to publish a summary of graduate funding structures on the SGS website and U of T's Gradschool website and will make a point to advertise its existence to students more widely. On a positive note regarding financial matters, it is reassuring to know that our doctoral stream students carry levels of graduate debt that are lower than the G13

average; this likely stems from our ongoing efforts to provide funding to most of our doctoral stream students, as outlined in the graduate funding structures document above.

With feedback from a substantial proportion of our graduate student population, we value the information we have received from the CGPSS 2010 and look forward to building on our strengths and assessing our response to challenges in the next administration of the survey in 2013.