

Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS)

Report on the Responses of Graduate Students, 2007

University of Toronto
School of Graduate Studies
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Summary

The University of Toronto aspires to provide high-quality graduate programs and a supportive environment in which the leaders of tomorrow can develop the knowledge that they want and need. Regular participation in the **Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey** (CGPSS) allows our graduate students to tell us about our strengths and challenges and directs our efforts to improve graduate programs.

The University of Toronto conducted the 2007 CGPSS in February/March 2007 (G13 and other Ontario universities also participated in the survey). This report summarizes, without statistical analysis, responses from 5,182 registered graduate students at U of T (43.1% of the graduate student population). The report compares U of T results on key questions to CGPSS results from other Canadian universities. At a more general level, the report compares the 2007 results with our 2005 GPSS results and with the 2002 results from the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium graduate student survey.¹

Administration and Response Rates:

Requests to complete the CGPSS were sent by email to 11,333 graduate students (94.3% of all registered graduate students) who had valid email addresses on ROSI. This compares with 82% of graduate students who could be contacted in 2005. The highest number of responses came from doctoral students (2,377; 45.9% of all survey participants), followed by professional master's students (1,595; 30.8%), and then by research master's students (1,210; 23.4%). Compared to 2005, a higher proportion of doctoral students and fewer research master's students responded to the survey.

Highlights:

Graduate students report considerable satisfaction with their academic programs and their overall experience: 88.0% rate the quality of their overall experience as "Excellent", "Very good" or "Good". This value is slightly higher than the 2005 figure. Relative to other G13 graduate respondents, our graduate students indicate high satisfaction with their academic experience and their graduate programs. As in 2002 and 2005, U of T

¹ Note that the CGPSS survey was revised after 2005 (the number and wording of questions were refined and the manner of student classification was changed), which means that these are not exact comparators. 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).

graduate students are less satisfied with their student life experience as compared to the average of the other G13 schools, but U of T's ratings in this area rose slightly in 2007 while our Canadian peers' average rating did not show a comparable change.

Responses from students enrolled in professional degrees differ in various ways from those of doctoral stream students. Students seeking professional degrees express stronger concerns about funding and about conflicting responsibilities, but are generally satisfied with their programs. This level of satisfaction has improved since 2005; nevertheless, the general assessments of professional master's students are slightly lower than the assessments of doctoral stream students.

A number of other results stand out:

- Among the fourteen questions about various dimensions of program delivery, many show high levels of satisfaction. Items receiving high ratings (“Excellent”, “Very good” or “Good”) from at least 90% of respondents include the intellectual quality of the faculty and the intellectual quality of fellow students.
- Only one item – the query about advice on the availability of financial support – yielded ratings of “Poor” from more than 10% of respondents.
- Compared to 2002 HEDS and 2005 GPSS results for questions related to departmental support for academic activities, respondents in 2007 report more activity conducting independent research and publishing in journals.
- An array of questions about the advisor-student relationship indicates that over 80% of doctoral respondents “Strongly agree” or “Agree” with all of the positive statements.
- Detailed questions about financial support indicate reported levels of student debt that are better than 2005 GPSS data and better or similar to 2002 HEDS data.
- As in 2005, graduate students report participating in social activities within their departments and advisory research groups, but less commonly in university-wide social activities.
- Graduate students use – and rate highly – many university resources (e.g. library, university bookstore). Others are used less commonly but nonetheless

ranked highly by users (e.g. international office). Dining services and campus transportation services received the lowest ratings from graduate students.

In summary, graduate students report considerable satisfaction with their programs and there are indications of strong scholarship, mentoring and good relationships among faculty and students. The survey also points out areas where we could focus our energy to make improvements, including information about financial support, support for interdisciplinarity, and the broad domain of “student experience.” Several ongoing projects – such as the renovations to the Grad Room on the St. George campus and the Graduate Student Initiative (<http://www.studentservices.utoronto.ca/gsi.aspx>) – focus on improving the graduate student experience by fostering a greater sense of community among students. We are pleased to have been able to contact over 90% of registered graduate students with our request to participate in the 2007 CGPSS. Availability of so many valid email addresses confirms the value of the University’s recent emphasis on establishing electronic communication with all students (<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/studentemail.html>), and gives us another venue for dialogue with students. Survey responses regarding the need for more information on financial support demonstrate the timeliness of a very recent initiative to post online the funding arrangements for each doctoral stream program (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current/financial/>).

The CGPSS will continue to provide important information, biannually, on the views and experiences of our graduate students. We thank graduate students for participating in the survey, and we continue to work to respond to the results and to provide an even stronger experience for graduate students at the University of Toronto.

I. Introduction

In the spring of 2007, the School of Graduate Studies, along with the G13 and other Ontario universities² conducted the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS). This was the second time U of T has participated in the survey and the first time the survey was hosted in Canada. The initial survey was conducted in 2005 (GPSS) in tandem with other Canadian and US universities³.

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. These changes will be highlighted in the report, where applicable.

This report summarizes the information collected through the survey and provides a general descriptive summary of the results at the institutional level. To facilitate comparisons with the 2005 survey results, the structure of the report is similar to that produced in 2005. For some questions, information is disaggregated by type of degree program; i.e., doctoral program, research master's program and professional master's program. Some survey questions are compared with those generated in a similar survey (HEDS) conducted at U of T in 2002 as well as the 2005 GPSS. We make comparisons with HEDS and the 2005 GPSS cautiously, because of differences in the wording of questions, the classification of students, and the proportional growth in professional master's degree students between 2002 and 2007. We present no statistical analysis in this report, and summaries at the Faculty and department/program levels are still to come. 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 six sections of the CGPSS survey and covers several important aspects of graduate education:

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

II. Respondent Profile

At the time the survey was administered, there were 12,021 graduate students registered in degree programs at U of T. Because the survey was web-based, including the distribution of invitations and other information about the survey, it was necessary that each student have a valid email address recorded on ROSI⁴. Valid email addresses were not available for 688

² The other G13 universities include: Alberta, British Columbia, Calgary, Dalhousie, Laval, McGill, McMaster, Montreal, Queen's, Ottawa, Waterloo and Western. The CGPSS survey was made available to all Ontario universities, several of whom chose to participate.

³ 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.

⁴ Repository of Student Information.

students but 94.3% (11,333 students) of the population were sent an invitation to participate. By the end of the survey, 45.7% of those invited had submitted their responses. In total, 5,182 (43.1%) valid responses were collected and these responses form the basis of this report. This marks an improvement from 2005, where only 82.1% of graduate students could be invited to participate and 41.0% of graduate students participated. The highest number of responses came from doctoral students (2,377; 45.9% of all survey participants), followed by professional master's (1,595; 30.8%), then by research master's (1,210; 23.4%). Compared to 2005, this is a higher proportion of doctoral students and fewer research master's students.

Table 1. Response rates by Faculty. The response rate is based on the number of registered students.

Faculty	# of Registered students	# of Survey participants	Response rate
Forestry	78	47	60.3%
Physical Ed. & Health	51	27	52.9%
School of Graduate Studies	179	86	48.0%
Information Studies	439	207	47.2%
Arts and Science	3109	1455	46.8%
Pharmacy	127	59	46.5%
Social Work	365	169	46.3%
Medicine	2566	1161	45.2%
Applied Science & Engineering	1298	566	43.6%
Dentistry	121	49	40.5%
Nursing	419	159	37.9%
OISE/UT	1861	703	37.8%
Architecture, Landscape & Design	274	97	35.4%
Management	880	310	35.2%
Music	144	50	34.7%
Law	110	37	33.6%
Total	12021	5182	43.1%

The survey participants are reasonably representative of the population of U of T graduate students in terms of gender, legal status, type of program, enrolment category, and discipline (Figures 1 through 4, Table 2). Among respondents, 36.9% are in the first year of study, 26.6% in the second, 14.6% in the third, and 21.9% are in the fourth year of study or above.

Figure 1. Distribution of survey participants by gender

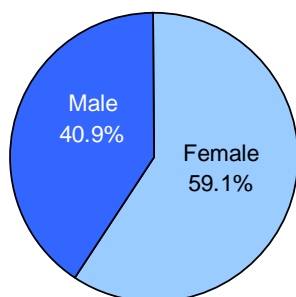


Figure 2. Distribution of survey participants by degree type⁵

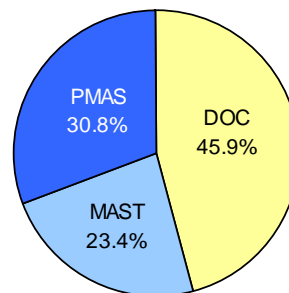


Figure 3. Distribution of survey participants by enrolment category

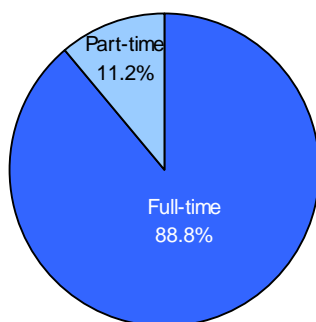


Figure 4. Distribution of survey participants by discipline

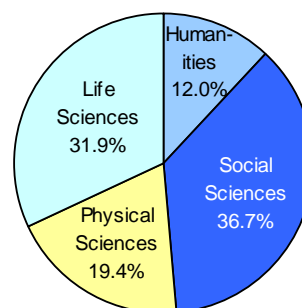


Table 2. Comparison of some characteristics between survey participants and graduate student population

Characteristic	Category	Survey Participants	Graduate Student Population
Gender	Male	2121 (40.9%)	5132 (42.7%)
	Female	3061 (59.1%)	6888 (57.3%)
Legal status	Canadian citizen	3665 (70.7%)	8709 (72.4%)
	Permanent resident	701 (13.5%)	1631 (13.6%)
	Study permit	750 (14.5%)	1530 (12.7%)
	Other visa	66 (1.3%)	150 (1.2%)
Type of program	Doctoral	2377 (45.9%)	4962 (41.3%)
	Research Master's	1210 (23.4%)	2759 (23.0%)
	Professional Master's	1595 (30.8%)	4300 (35.8%)
Enrolment category	Full-time	4601 (88.8%)	10316 (85.8%)
	Part-time	581 (11.2%)	1705 (14.2%)
Discipline	Humanities	623 (12.0%)	1367 (11.4%)
	Social sciences	1900 (36.7%)	4670 (38.8%)
	Physical sciences	1005 (19.4%)	2222 (18.5%)
	Life sciences	1654 (31.9%)	3762 (31.3%)

⁵ DOC: Doctoral students; MAST: Research master's students; PMAS: Professional master's students.

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

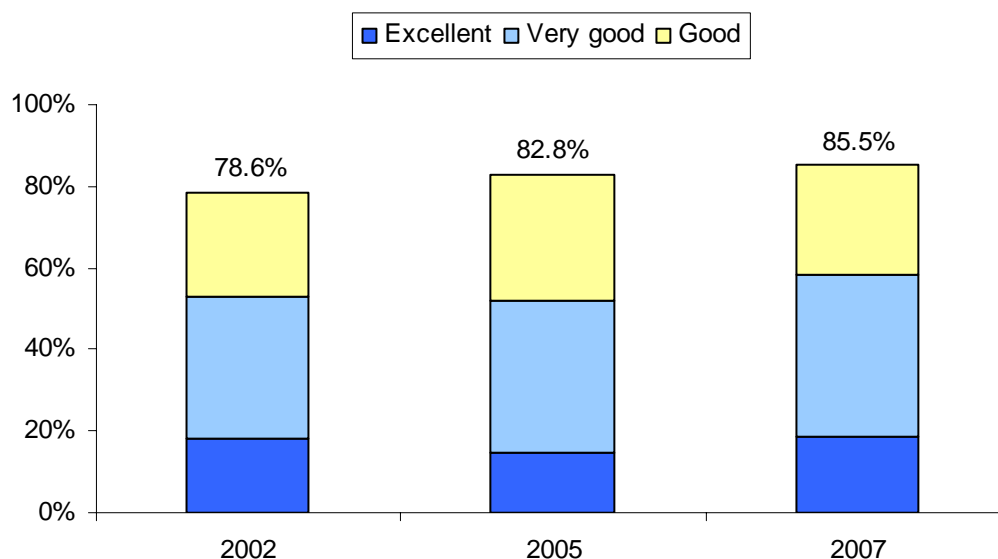
Questions in this section of the survey focus on various dimensions of academic programs, such as academic quality, intellectual environment, program content, and program structure. Table 3 summarizes students' responses to the six questions in this section that were asked in both 2005 and 2007. Levels of student satisfaction in 2007 for these program dimensions were very similar to those in 2005. Students reported the greatest satisfaction with the intellectual quality of the faculty and the intellectual quality of their fellow students. The largest improvement occurs in students' satisfaction with their relationship with faculty, which is consistent with the trend from the 2002 HEDS and the 2005 GPSS results (Figure 5).

Table 3. Satisfaction with various program dimensions:
Rate the following dimensions of your program

Dimension of program	"Excellent", "Very Good" or "Good"				"Fair" or "Poor"			
	2005		2007		2005		2007	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
The intellectual quality of the faculty	4576	97.0%	4971	97.5%	141	3.0%	107	2.5%
The intellectual quality of my fellow students	4449	94.5%	4822	94.7%	262	5.6%	269	5.3%
The relationship between faculty and graduate students	3889	82.8%	4353	85.5%	809	17.2%	736	14.5%
Overall quality of graduate level teaching by faculty	4014	85.6%	4444	87.4%	677	14.4%	640	12.6%
Quality of academic advising and guidance	3433	73.5%	3747	74.4%	1242	26.5%	1286	25.6%
Helpfulness of staff members in my program*	4008	85.2%	4350	85.8%	697	14.8%	720	14.2%

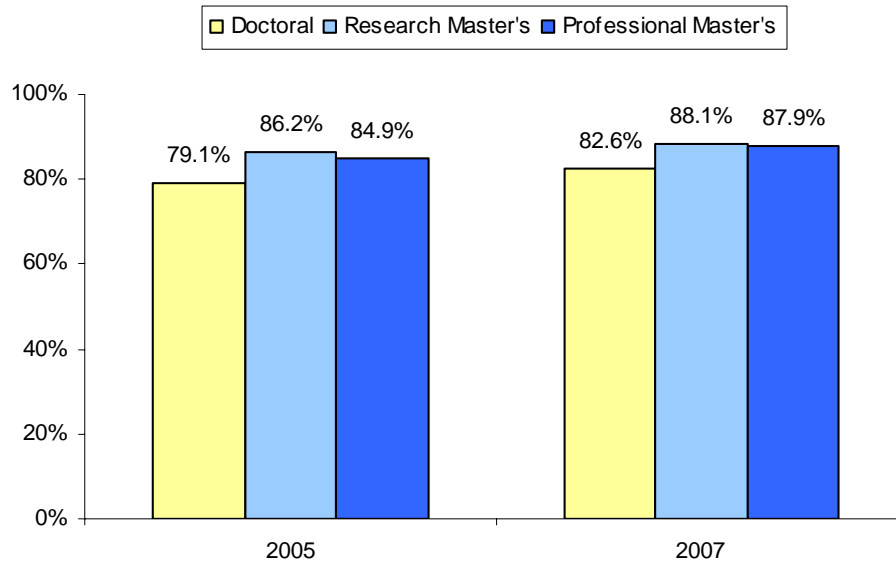
Note: * In 2005, students were asked to rate "Helpfulness of staff members in my department or program"

Figure 5. Rate the relationship between faculty and student:
Respondents who answered, "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good"



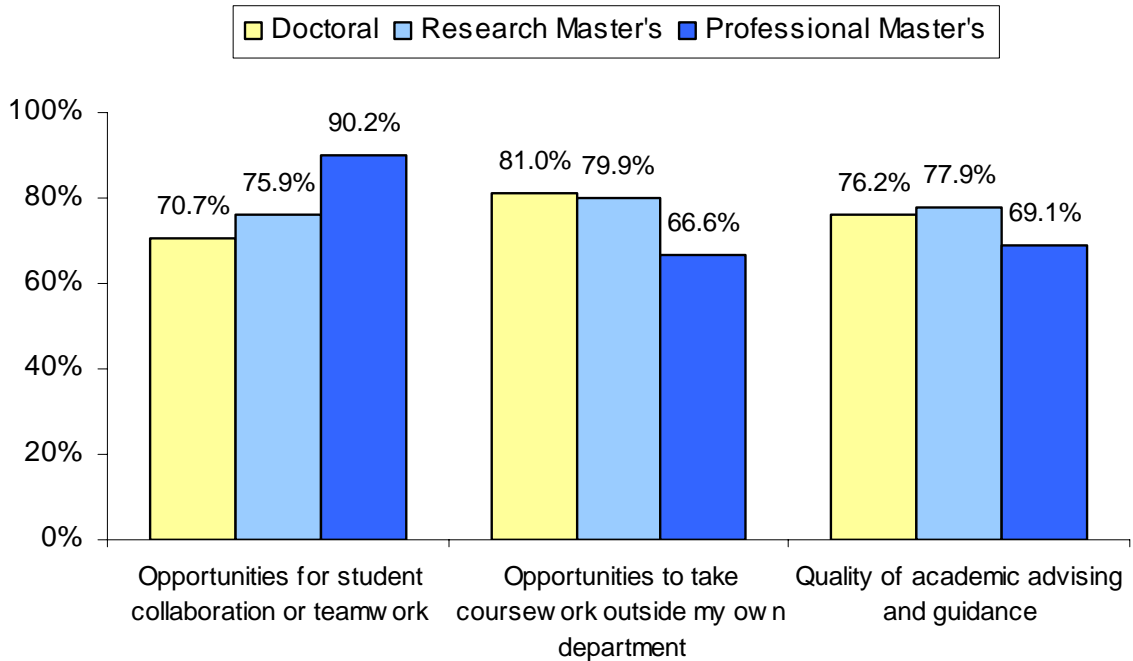
In general, students from all program types report higher levels of satisfaction with their relationships with faculty than did students in 2005 (Figure 6). However, as in 2005, students' satisfaction varies somewhat with their type of program. Both professional and research master's students report greater satisfaction with their relationships with faculty than do doctoral students.

Figure 6. Rate the relationship between faculty and student:
Respondents who answered "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good" by type of program



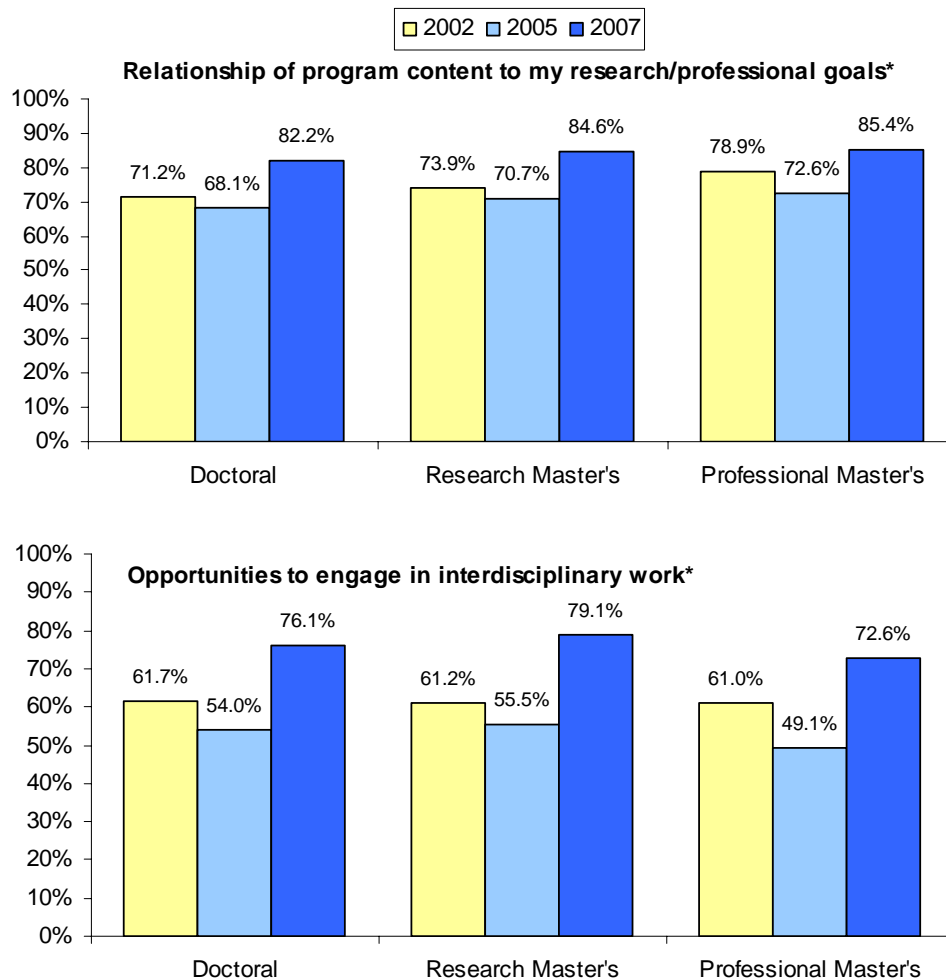
Other questions in this section also provide insight into the different experience of students in doctoral stream and professional programs (Figure 7). Professional master's students are more satisfied with the opportunities for student collaboration or teamwork than are doctoral and research master's students. At the same time, doctoral and research master's students report higher levels of satisfaction with the opportunities to take coursework outside their own department and with the quality of academic advising and guidance they receive than do professional master's students.

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



In general, students appear to be more satisfied with two aspects of their programs in 2007 than 2005 (Figure 8). Students from all program types reported higher satisfaction with the relationship of their program content to their research and professional goals. Students' satisfaction with opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work showed substantial improvement in 2007, although professional master's students are still slightly less satisfied than doctoral stream students with this aspect of their program. These differences should be interpreted with caution however, as the 2007 wording of response options was slightly different from that used in past surveys.⁶

Figure 8. Rate the following dimensions of your program:
 Respondents who answered "Excellent", "Very Good" or "Good"/"Strongly Agree" or "Agree" by program type (see Footnote 6)

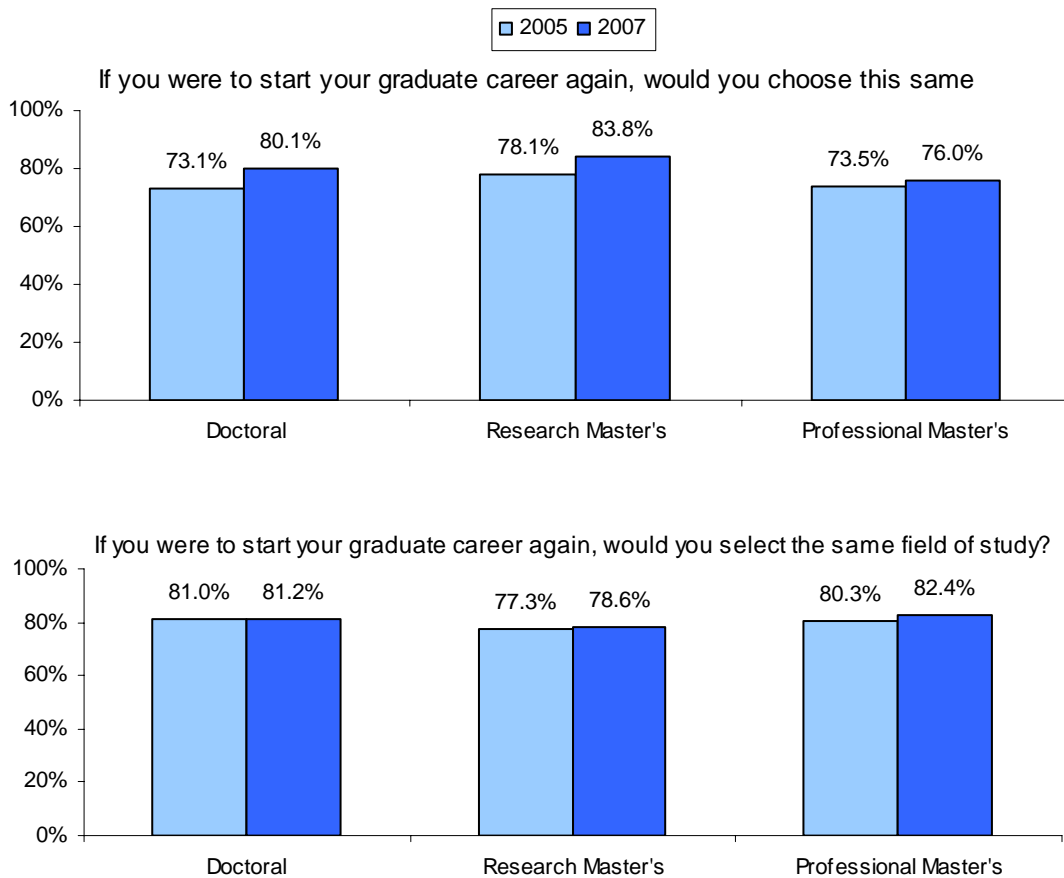


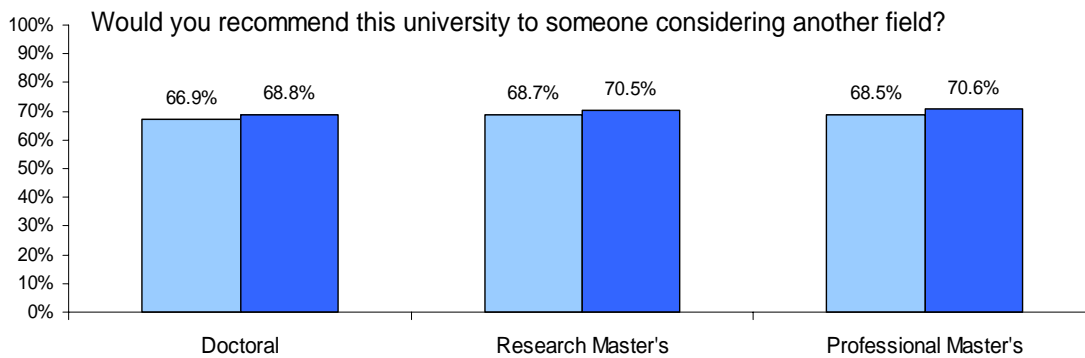
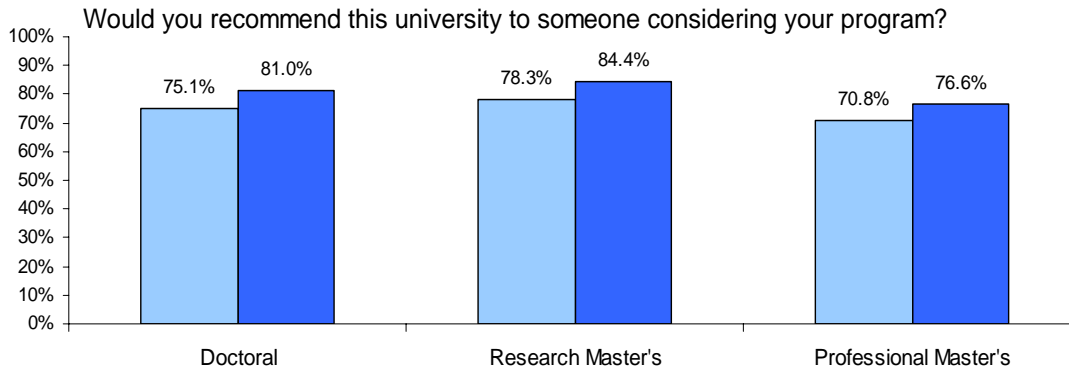
Note: * In 2002 and 2005, students were asked to rate their agreement to the statements "Program content supports my research/professional goals" and "Program structure provides opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work".

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 CGPSS asks students to rate various dimensions of their program by choosing one of "Excellent", "Very Good", "Good", "Fair" or "Poor."

Students were asked to give a general assessment of their experiences with academic programs by answering four overall questions (Figure 9). Responses from 2007 generally compare favourably to those from 2005. A higher proportion of students in 2007 (especially doctoral stream students) reported that they would definitely or probably choose U of T again if they were to restart their graduate careers. Across all program types, there was also an increase in the proportion of students in 2007 who reported that they would definitely or probably recommend U of T to someone in their program.

Figure 9. General satisfaction: Answer the following questions:
 Respondents who answered “Definitely” or “Probably” by program type





IV. Program/Department Support

Questions regarding program/department support of graduate students focus on areas such as research, presentations/publications, and advising. The results reported in this section reflect only a subset of respondents who indicated that their program includes a thesis, dissertation or research paper (n=3,722)⁷. Doctoral students make up the majority of respondents who report research to be part of their program (61.4%), followed by research master's students (26.7%) and professional master's students (11.9%)

Ninety-two percent of these respondents report that they have conducted independent research since starting their graduate programs, compared to 72% in 2005 and 61% in 2002. This is a substantial change in reported student research activity. High proportions of doctoral students (92.2%) and research master's students (92.3%) report that they have received training before beginning their own research. Of those who received research training, over half (63.1% of doctoral students and 64.2% of master's students) rated that training as "Excellent", "Very Good" or "Good". Most students (84.0% of doctoral and 79.3% of research master's students) also report that they have conducted research in collaboration with one or more faculty members. Reports of the experience as "Excellent", "Very good" or "Good:" come from 73.6% of doctoral

⁷ Excluding students who do not undertake a thesis, dissertation or research paper in their program creates a rough division of doctoral stream programs from professional master's programs. However, it should be noted that this division is not firm. A small number of doctoral stream master's programs are course-based and some professional master's programs require students to undertake substantial research.

and 77.3% of master's students. These results concerning research are generally higher than in 2005, although it should be noted that the framing of questions differs from the 2005 GPSS⁸.

Table 4 shows student participation in publication and presentation activities. Values in 2007 are generally consistent with those in 2005, with the exception of professional master's students. Professional master's students show over 10.0% increase in the percentage who report they have co-authored in refereed journals with program faculty and delivered papers or presented posters at national scholarly meetings and over 5.0% increase in their attendance at these meetings.

Most students who indicate involvement in publication and presentation activities are doctoral students, with 42.6% to 56.8% indicating participation in the activities listed. While significant research engagement is not normally a part of professional master's programs, nevertheless almost 2% of professional master's students indicate participation in the last three publication and presentation activities listed in Table 4. This is more than double the level of participation reported in 2005.

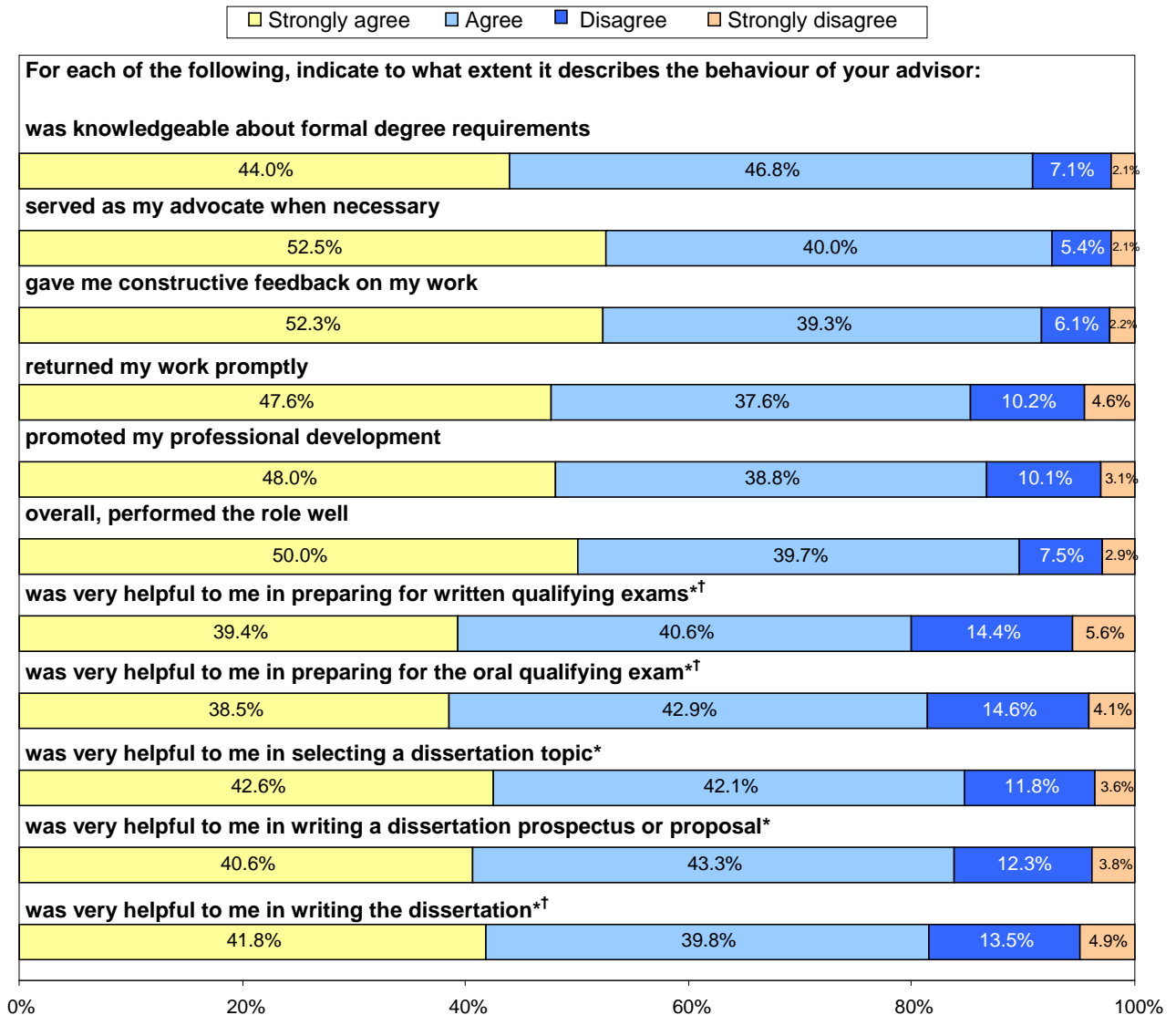
Table 4. Publications and presentations:
Respondents indicating they have participated at least once in the following activities

Items	DOC		MAST		PMAS		ALL	
	2005	2007	2005	2007	2005	2007	2005	2007
Published as sole or first author in a refereed journal	63.1%	64.5%	26.0%	27.9%	14.7%	17.6%	51.8%	54.0%
Co-authored in refereed journals with your program faculty	64.1%	65.7%	39.2%	34.2%	15.8%	32.5%	55.2%	55.7%
Delivered any papers/present a poster at national scholarly meetings	77.2%	77.7%	46.9%	45.6%	23.9%	35.7%	67.7%	68.1%
Attended national scholarly meetings	75.6%	78.8%	51.1%	48.0%	28.2%	33.3%	68.1%	69.5%

Doctoral students were asked to assess the performance of their dissertation supervisor in a variety of mentoring activities. As in 2005, most questions receive very positive responses. Of those surveyed, 89.7% of respondents "Strongly agree" or "Agree" that overall, their advisor performs the role well. Figure 10 presents opinions of doctoral students on their advisors' performance in various activities and advising behaviour.

⁸ In 2005, the questions on research experience were posed in two parts (e.g., "Have you conducted independent research since starting your graduate program?" and "If 'Yes', how satisfied were you?") and the responses to the second part addressed the level of satisfaction (i.e., "Very satisfied", "Generally satisfied", "Generally dissatisfied", "Very dissatisfied"). In 2007, students were only asked one question about quality (e.g., "Please rate the quality of support and opportunities you received in these areas: Conducting independent research since starting your graduate program") and asked to choose from "Excellent", "Very good", "Good", "Fair", "Poor", "Did not participate" and "Not applicable". Participation rates in 2007 were calculated by excluding those respondents who answered "Did not participate" and "Not applicable".

Figure 10. Advisor and Dissertation: Responses of Doctoral Students



Note: * In 2005, these questions were framed differently (e.g., “How helpful was your advisor for each of the following activities?”) and students chose from the responses, “Very helpful”, “Somewhat helpful”, “Not very helpful” and “Not at all helpful”.

† In 2007, the “NA/No Opinion” response option was chosen at higher levels for these questions. The proportion of doctoral students indicating “NA/No Opinion” ranged from 46.9% for “was very helpful to me in preparing for the oral qualifying exam” to 56.2% for “was very helpful in writing the dissertation.” This may indicate that they have begun their programs recently.

V. Financial Support

The survey uses several questions to investigate what kinds of financial support have been received by graduate students, the amount of both undergraduate and graduate educational debt, and student satisfaction with the clarity and availability of information regarding the criteria for eligibility for receiving various forms of financial support. Among doctoral students, 31.1% have received federal granting council scholarships/fellowships, compared to 18.4% of research master's students and 4.7% of professional master's students. A similar proportion of doctoral students (28.8%) have received provincial government scholarships/fellowships, followed by research master's students (11.5%) and professional master's students (9.7%). Other major forms of financial support include university funded fellowships (70.8% for doctoral students, 50.7% for research master's students and 16.7% for professional master's students); graduate teaching assistantships (58.7% for doctoral and 37.7% for research master's students); and graduate research assistantships (46.5% for doctoral and 32.6% for research master's students.) As in 2005, professional master's students report the highest reliance on off-campus employment, employer funding, and loans, savings or family assistance.

Levels of reported indebtedness, measured in categories that have not been adjusted for inflation, have improved since 2005 with proportions of students reporting undergraduate and graduate debt at 38.9% and 51.6% respectively in 2005, compared to 34.2% and 49.8% respectively in 2007 (Table 5). While 2007 levels of undergraduate debt are similar to those of 2002, levels of graduate debt have shown a gradual, slight decrease since 2002. The proportion of students in 2007 in the highest debt category remains at levels consistent with 2005 results. Most students who report both undergraduate and graduate debt in the highest categories are working towards professional credentials in master's programs.

Professional master's students and doctoral stream students have different opinions about the advice they receive on the availability of financial support. Professional master's students report the lowest satisfaction with only 56.5% rating it as "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good". Doctoral and research master's students are more satisfied, with 70.6% and 71.3% of doctoral and research master's students respectively giving favourable ratings.

Table 5. Educational debts upon graduation from U of T

Debt amount	2002 (n=1,883)		2005 (n=4,726)		2007 (n=5,182)	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Undergraduate debt						
\$0	1142	67.3%	2234	61.2%	3051	65.8%
\$1 - \$19,999	340	20.0%	823	22.5%	801	17.3%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	164	9.7%	434	11.9%	566	12.2%
\$40,000 - more	50	3.0%	162	4.5%	219	4.7%
Graduate debt						
\$0	861	47.6%	1817	48.5%	2390	50.2%
\$1 - \$19,999	654	36.2%	1161	31.0%	1400	29.4%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	191	10.6%	390	10.4%	543	11.4%
\$40,000 - more	103	5.6%	382	10.2%	426	9.0%

VI. University Resources and Student Life

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with 18 specific university facilities and services. The evaluations of quality range broadly (Table 6). Some University resources are used frequently and are ranked highly by graduate students (e.g. library, university bookstore). Others are used less commonly, but are ranked highly by the students who use them (e.g. international office). Facilities and services that rank the lowest are food services and campus transportation service.

Regarding social interactions that are linked to graduate school, students are more likely to attend department-organized and advisor/research-group-organized social activities, with 88.7% and 94.9% of students frequently or occasionally attending them, respectively. Students express less interest in university-wide activities, which are attended frequently or occasionally by only 45.9% of students. Over half of advisor/research groups are reported to frequently or occasionally hold social activities (58.9%). These results closely resemble those obtained in 2005.

Table 6. University facilities and services:

Rate the following university resources based on the quality you have experienced while using them.

Facility or service	Participation rate*	Quality of Experience: "Excellent", "Very Good" or "Good"
Library facilities	97.8%	94.2%
University bookstore	89.6%	77.1%
Information technology services	81.2%	80.6%
Registrarial processes	80.4%	73.9%
Graduate student office space	78.8%	61.1%
Athletic facilities	69.3%	90.6%
Food services	64.5%	36.0%
Health care services	60.9%	76.4%
Research laboratories	50.2%	81.8%
Career services	45.5%	73.7%
Financial aid office	42.3%	62.7%
Student counselling and resource center	36.2%	74.9%
Housing assistance	29.2%	69.2%
Student government office	28.0%	75.1%
International office	25.4%	85.7%
Campus transportation service	20.8%	54.4%
Child care services	9.6%	58.4%
Ombudsperson's office	8.9%	74.2%

Note: * Participation rate was calculated by excluding the percentage of students that answered "Did not participate" or "Not applicable".

VII. General Assessment

The survey ends with questions about graduate students' general satisfaction with the quality of their academic experience, student life experience, graduate program, and overall experience at the university. All students who identify obstacles from the list provided choose work/financial commitments and family obligations as the largest obstacles to their academic progress, with work/financial commitments making things particularly difficult for professional master's students. Several other factors are also regarded as major obstacles by some students (Table 7). Approximately 8.5% of respondents indicate that all the suggested factors are "not an obstacle" to their academic progress.

Table 7. 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	27.0%	Work/financial commitments	22.9%	Work/financial commitments	39.7%
Family obligations	15.0%	Family obligations	12.1%	Family obligations	17.9%
Availability of faculty	9.1%	Course scheduling	9.0%	Course scheduling	16.3%
Program structure or requirements	8.9%	Program structure or requirements	8.4%	Program structure or requirements	13.6%
Course scheduling	5.9%	Availability of faculty	7.3%	Availability of faculty	5.1%
Immigration laws or regulations	5.0%	Immigration laws or regulations	4.6%	Immigration laws or regulations	3.2%

As in 2005, responses to the four summary questions show most students rating their experiences very positively (Figure 11). When responses from the categories of "Excellent", "Very Good" and "Good" are pooled for the overall quality of experience, the 2007 figure of 88.0% compares favourably against the 2005 result (87.4%). As in 2005, doctoral and research master's students report higher levels of satisfaction than professional master's students do. However, in 2007, a higher proportion of professional master's students rank their academic experience, graduate programs, and overall experience as excellent or very good. Indications of an excellent or very good "graduate program" characterize 60.5% of professional master's responses in 2007, compared to 55.3% in 2005.

With respect to their "academic experience" "graduate program" and "overall experience", U of T graduate students responded as positively as other G13 institutions in aggregate. Only in the area of "student life" did our graduate students respond less favourably than students in other G13 institutions (Figure 12). These results are similar to those from the 2002 HEDS and the 2005 GPSS surveys. Only 75% of students in 2002, 75.5% in 2005 and 77.4% in 2007 rate their "student life" experience at U of T as "Excellent", "Very good", or "Good"; in comparison, a higher proportion of students in the 2002 survey (91%), 2005 survey (90%) and 2007 survey (91.4%) give the same rating to their "academic experience". Nevertheless, it should be noted that U of T students' satisfaction with student life has improved since 2005, while results for Canadian peer institutions have not shown comparable improvement.

Figure 11. General assessment

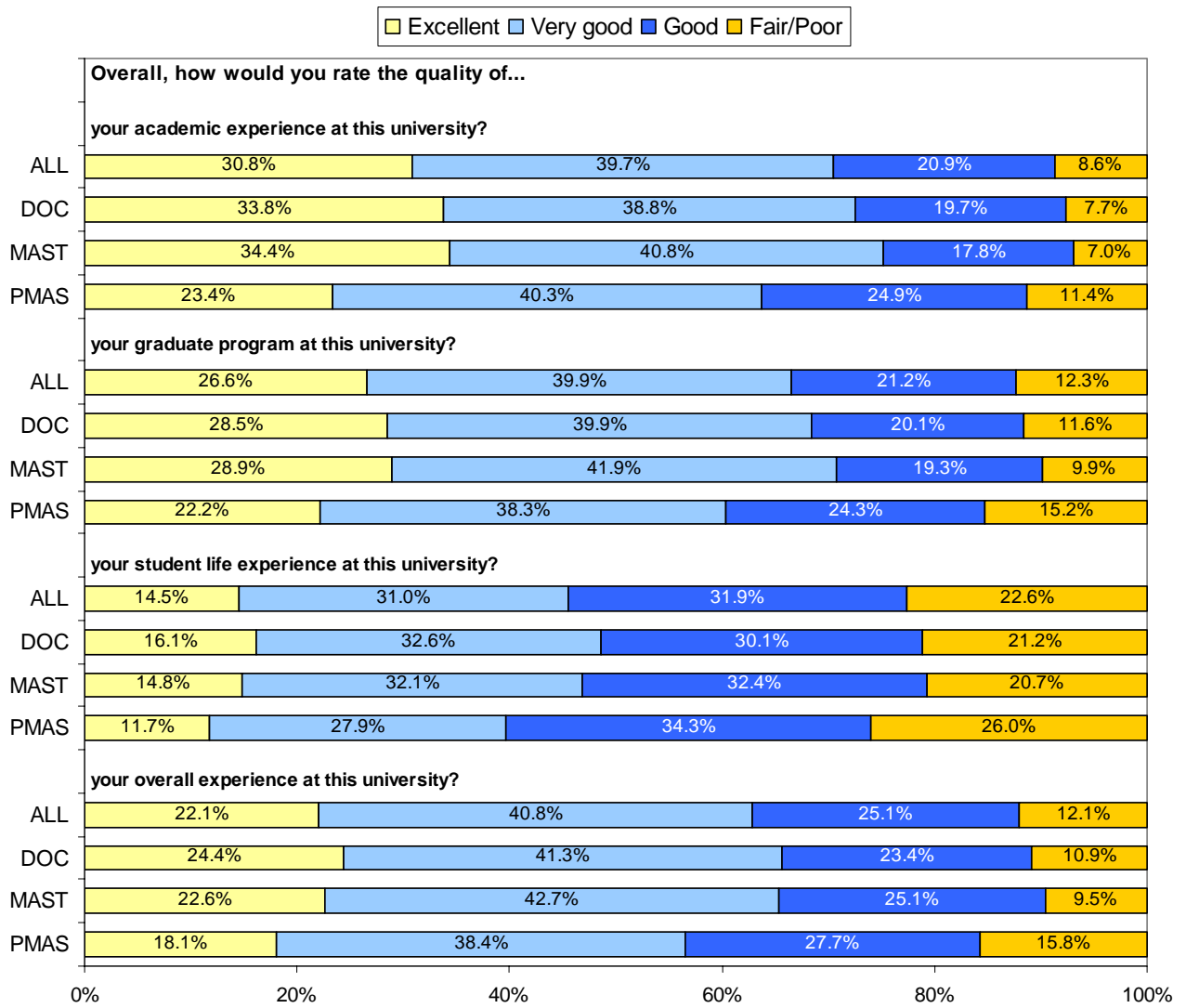
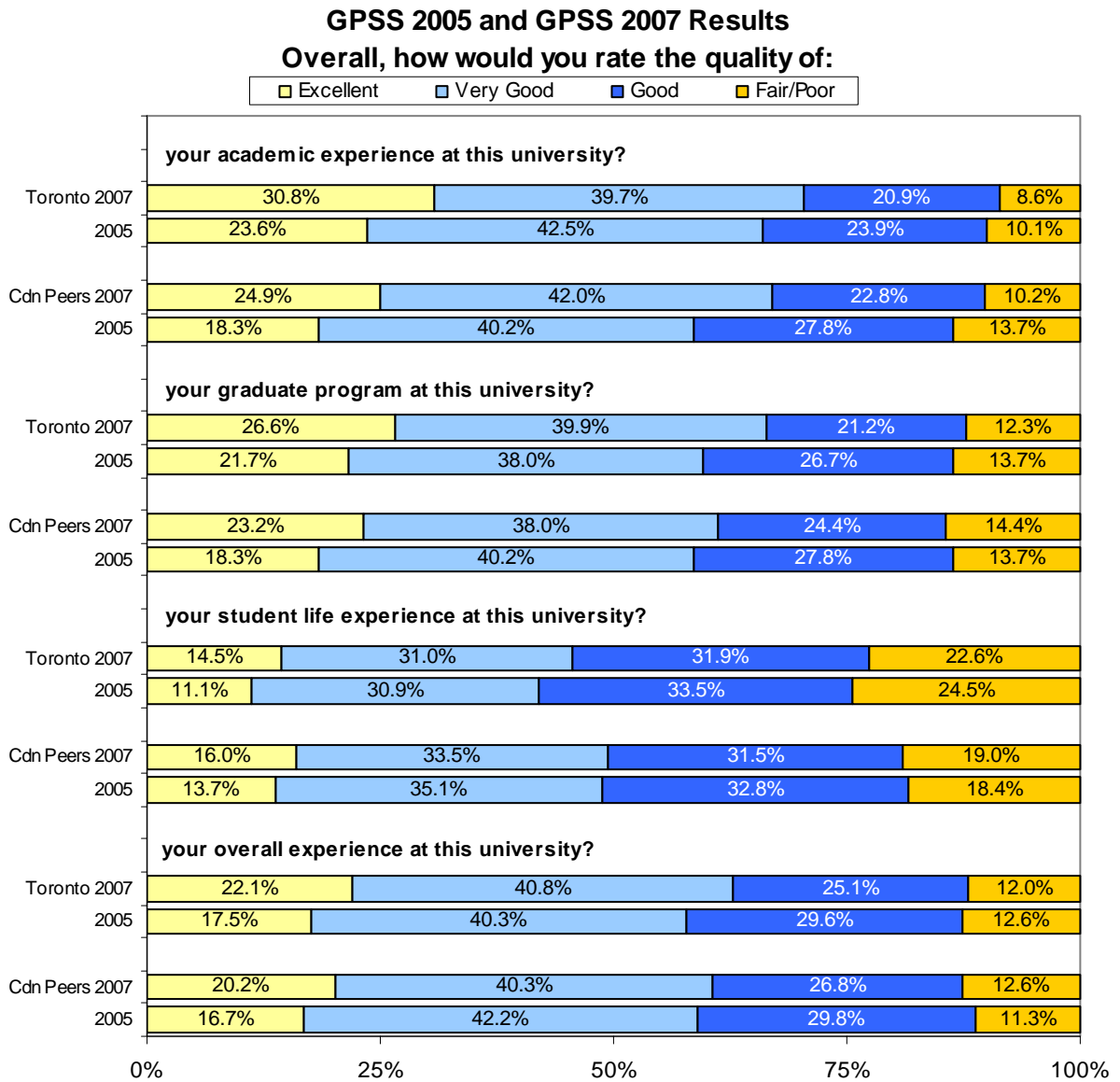


Figure 12. General assessment: Comparison with averages from Canadian peer universities*



Note: * Canadian peer universities are the other G13 universities: Alberta, British Columbia, Calgary, Dalhousie, Laval, McGill, McMaster, Montreal, Queen's, Ottawa, Waterloo and Western. Averages for Canadian peer universities exclude U of T data.

VIII. Conclusions

The responses from the 2007 CGPSS have been summarized across all degree types and all programs, placed in a framework of comparison with the 2005 GPSS and the 2002 HEDS survey. The chronological comparisons are of only general value, since the number and wording of questions vary somewhat from one tool to another. It is possible that the wording of requests to rate the respondent's satisfaction in the 2007 CGPSS may have elicited slightly different responses from the previous agree/disagree wording. An encouraging feature of the 2007 CGPSS is the improvement in the satisfaction expressed by professional master's students in their assessment of their graduate program, compared to 2005.

The views of 43.1% of all registered graduate students on these "big questions" deserve our full attention. Most respondents report at least a "good" experience in their studies and life with us, and about one third rate their academic experience as excellent. This should be a source of pride. At the same time, there are things we can do better. We have initiated some improvements in response to our 2005 GPSS experience. Availability of so many valid email addresses this year confirms the value of the recent emphasis on establishing electronic communication with all students (<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/studentemail.html>). Student responses regarding their need for more information on financial support affirm a very recent initiative to post the funding arrangements for each doctoral stream program (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current/financial/>). The fact that 'student life experience' lags behind academic experience renews our commitment to projects like the renovations to the Grad Room on the St. George campus and the Graduate Student Initiative (<http://www.studentservices.utoronto.ca/gsi.aspx>). We will look for additional and various ways that the responses of our students can stimulate institution-wide improvements.

The CGPSS will continue to provide important information, biannually, on the views and experiences of our graduate students.