

PHD SURVEY - FINAL DESIGN

Survey Logic

- Randomize questions within matrix question blocks.
- **OPT**: optional question
- **INT**: only for internationals

[WELCOME]

PAGE 1

Dear fellow PhD student,

Welcome to our survey on study conditions at TU Graz. This survey is conducted by the PhD Union. The PhD Union is the official student representation of all registered PhD students regardless of whether they are or are not employed at our university. Our aim is to advise students, as well as to structurally improve their situation by collaborating with various units such as the Curricula Commission, the Senate, or the Rectorate.

To make our work even more effective and to get a good overview of the current situation of PhD students at TU Graz, we are conducting this survey. Specifically, we are interested in how you navigate administrative processes, your working conditions, your relationship with your supervisor, and your well-being. Those insights will help us to identify things that are already going well, but also things that can be improved.

This survey will take approximately **xx** minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers, we are solely interested in your personal perception. Do not spend too much time on any question, rather answer intuitively. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time without any negative consequences.

Your answers will be anonymous, however, we will ask for some demographic information at the beginning and end of this survey. Please read in the following, which steps we take to ensure your anonymity:

Data protection is of utmost importance to the PhD Union. We will store your answers on the servers of HTU (Hochschüler:innenschaft of TU Graz) in a protected folder. The raw data can only be accessed by the PhD Union member responsible for the survey and the PhD Union chair (see below). Other members of the PhD Union will have access to a reduced form of the data, where we blacken information such that each group of (Doctoral School, employment status, age, gender, and nationality) will have at least five instances. **We will never share the raw data outside of the PhD Union**, such as the university leadership, university service units, or any other staff including professors. We will always only distribute our findings on an aggregate and completely anonymized level.

For more transparency, we stored a copy of our analysis plan at the Coordination Office for Doctoral Studies, which we will release to the public on our website immediately after data collection is finished.

If you have further questions regarding this survey please contact Alina Herderich under alina.herderich@tugraz.at (responsible member of the PhD Union).

The chair of the PhD Union is Michael Reichelt (michael.reichelt@tugraz.at).

This survey is conducted by the PhD Union of TU Graz (<https://phdunion.htugraz.at/>).

- ☐ I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the purpose of this survey and the PhD Union's data protection regulations.

[MODULE 0: DEMOGRAPHICS & CONTEXT I]

First, please provide us with some basic demographic information.

How old are you?

- ☐ [free form text, two digit integers only]
☐ Prefer not to say

With which gender do you identify?

- ☐ Man
☐ Woman
☐ Non-binary
☐ Prefer to self-describe: ...
☐ Prefer not to say

What's your country of origin?

- ☐ [drop down list]
☐ Prefer not to say

[MODULE 1: ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM]

PAGE 2

In the following section, we will ask you about your handling of and satisfaction with administrative processes concerning your PhD, and help offered by the university.

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
I am familiar with the content of the curriculum of my doctoral study program.						
I am familiar with the content of the statutes of my Doctoral School.						
When I search for information about my PhD on the websites of TU Graz, I can quickly find what I am looking for.						
I find that there are many interesting classes that I can choose from for my PhD.						
I was satisfied with the onboarding process within the first six months of my PhD.						

PAGE 3

OPT We would like to know more about your personal onboarding process. For example: Who was involved? What information was transmitted? Were there social events involved? Please specify. This question is optional.

[free text form]

PAGE 4

Did you sign an educational agreement?

(Note: An educational agreement is a short description of your PhD project, usually completed within six months to one year from the start of your PhD that is uploaded in TU Graz Online and signed by your supervisor. It is a requirement for graduation.)

- ☐ Yes, I signed an educational agreement within one year from the start of my PhD.
- ☐ Yes, I signed an educational agreement more than one year into my PhD.
- ☐ No, I am only in my first year and plan to sign the educational agreement in a timely manner.
- ☐ No, I prepared an educational agreement, but my supervisor hasn't signed (yet).

- ☐ No, I didn't know I needed it for graduation.
- ☐ No, I didn't know what an educational agreement was.

Do you have a mentor?

- ☐ Yes, I have a mentor.
- ☐ No, I don't know what a mentor is.
- ☐ No, I didn't know I could have a mentor.
- ☐ No, I am afraid of conflicts arising with my supervisor.
- ☐ No, I don't feel the need for a mentor.

I am aware of the services that the following units offer to PhD students. Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Registrar's Office (German: Studienservice)
- ☐ Dean's Office (German: Dekanat)
- ☐ The Doctoral School Coordination Team
- ☐ PhD Coordination Office
- ☐ International Office
- ☐ Welcome Center
- ☐ PhD Union
- ☐ Staff Development
- ☐ F&T House

[MODULE 2: SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIP]

PAGE 5

The following statements describe some of the ways a person may feel about their supervisor. Please refer to the person you would consider your primary point of contact regardless of the person being your official or unofficial supervisor.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your relationship with your supervisor? Please tick the column which matches your opinion most closely.

	strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
My supervisor is respectful of my views and ideas.						

My supervisor treats me with respect.						
My supervisor has a collaborative approach in supervision.						
My supervisor is non-judgemental in supervision.						
I feel able to discuss my concerns with my supervisor openly.						
My supervisor is available to me.						
My supervisor appears interested in my development as a professional.						
My supervisor is approachable.						
My supervisor is reliable.						
My supervisor acknowledges the power differential between supervisor and supervisee.						
I learn a great deal from observing my supervisor.						
My supervisor fosters an environment where students can succeed in their work.						
I respect my supervisor as a researcher.						
My supervisor gives me practical support.						
I respect my supervisor as a person.						
My supervisor's feedback on my performance is constructive.						
My supervisor gives me regular feedback on my performance.						

PAGE 6

Which of the following statements applies to your PhD supervision?

(Note: Your official supervisor is the person who signed your supervision agreement.)

- ☐ Most of my actual supervision is provided by my *official* supervisor.
- ☐ Most of my actual supervision is provided by my *unofficial* supervisor(s).
- ☐ All my supervisors contribute equally to my supervision.

OPT Is there anything else you would like to let us know about your current supervision condition? Your answer to this question will stay confidential. This question is optional.

[free text form]

[MODULE 3: WORK ENVIRONMENT]

In the next section, we will ask you about the work environment in which you are conducting your research.

PAGE 7

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
I often get projects assigned from a superior (e.g., supervisor, head of institute, senior researcher) that are not relevant for my PhD thesis.						
I collaborate with researchers outside of TU Graz.						
My supervisor encourages me to collaborate with other researchers and institutions.						

PAGE 8

How much do you agree with the following statements?

In my primary research group, ...

	strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree

... we offer kind words to members who are going through a tough time.						
... we leverage each member's expertise to overcome individual research challenges.						
... we celebrate the successes of our members.						
... working often feels like a competition.						
... one member's success feels like another's loss.						
... members tend to keep their insights and discoveries to themselves.						

PAGE 9

How much do you agree with the following statements?

At TU Graz, I feel integrated in ...

	strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
... my primary research group.						
... my institute.						
... my Doctoral School.						
... the PhD community.						
... the university in general.						

[MODULE 4: TEACHING & WORKING CONDITIONS]

PAGE 10

In the next section, we will ask you about your teaching duties and working hours.

How many hours do you spend on teaching on average during one week?

(Note: This includes preparing and giving lectures, as well as grading and student communication.)

[free form text, integers only, value range: 0 to 60]

I give lectures on a regular basis.

(Note: This does not include guest lectures.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How many working hours are specified in your contract?

- ☐ 20 hours or less
- ☐ Between 21 and 30 hours
- ☐ Between 31 and 40 hours
- ☐ I am not employed at TU Graz or any of their competence centers.

How many hours do you *actually* work on average during one week?

(Note: This encompasses all tasks related to your employment or PhD studies at TU Graz, both within and outside of working hours, whether on university premises or elsewhere.)

[free form text, two digit integers only]

Which personal circumstances affect your PhD progress? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Care work (own children)
- ☐ Care work (excluding own children)
- ☐ Health condition
- ☐ Financial situation
- ☐ Difficulties concerning social relationships (e.g., partnership)
- ☐ Change in living conditions (e.g., moving)
- ☐ Other, please specify: ...
- ☐ Prefer not to say

[MODULE 5: WELL-BEING]

PAGE 11

In the next section, we would like to ask you about your personal well-being. Therefore, we ask you to answer some standardized questions about your mental health.

Please read each statement and indicate how much the statement applied to you over the past six months.

	Did not apply at all	Applied some of the time	Applied a good amount of time	Applied most of the time
I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all.				
I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things.				
I felt that I had nothing to look forward to.				
I felt down-hearted and blue.				
I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything.				
I felt I wasn't worth much as a person.				
I felt that life was meaningless.				
I was aware of dryness of my mouth.				
I experienced breathing difficulty (e.g., excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion).				
I experienced trembling (e.g., in the hands).				
I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself.				
I felt I was close to panic.				
I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (e.g., sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat).				
I felt scared without any good reason.				
I found it hard to wind down.				
I tended to over-react to situations.				
I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy.				
I found myself getting agitated.				
I found it difficult to relax.				

I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing.				
I felt that I was rather touchy.				

[MODULE 6: HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCE]

PAGE 12

In the next section, we would like to ask you about any experiences of harassment or discrimination that you might have encountered or witnessed. Your answers will be anonymous and you will have the option to not answer those questions.

During the past six months, have you *experienced* any form of harassment in your interactions with other members of TU Graz? Please rely on your personal impression without considering what other people think might be objectively true.

(Note: **Harassment is unwelcome behavior, conduct or communication based on personal characteristics such as ethnicity or gender. Harassment can include, but is not limited to, verbal remarks, physical actions, or visual displays. Some examples are unwelcome jokes or slurs, or unwanted sexual advances.**)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

ONLY IF YES What do you think is the main reason for these experiences? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Your Ancestry or National Origins
- ☐ Your gender
- ☐ Your race
- ☐ Your age
- ☐ Your religion
- ☐ Your height
- ☐ Your weight
- ☐ Some other aspect of your physical appearance
- ☐ Your sexual orientation
- ☐ Your education or income level
- ☐ A physical disability
- ☐ Prefer not to say

During the past six months, have you *witnessed* any form of harassment in your interactions with other TU Graz members?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Have you ever been threatened with job loss or loss of supervision in the past?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

INT Has your international background ever been used by your supervisor to put you under pressure?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

[MODULE 7: DEMOGRAPHICS & CONTEXT II]

PAGE 13

In the last section, please provide us with some additional demographic information.

When did you enroll in your PhD?

[month, year]

When do you anticipate graduating?

[month, year]

Which doctoral school are you enrolled in?

- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Biomedical Engineering
- ☐ Chemical and Process Engineering
- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Civil Engineering Sciences
- ☐ Computer Science
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Geosciences
- ☐ Information and Communications Engineering

- ☐ Mathematics and Scientific Computing
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Molecular Biosciences and Biotechnology
- ☐ Physics
- ☐ Techno-Economics
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What's your current employment status?

- ☐ I am employed as a university assistant by TU Graz.
- ☐ I am employed as a project assistant by TU Graz directly.
- ☐ I am employed as a project assistant by one of TU Graz' competence centers.
- ☐ I am self-sustained through academic scholarships.
- ☐ I am self-sustained through a second, non-academic job.
- ☐ I am self-sustained through personal funds.
- ☐ Prefer not to say

[THANK YOU & FEEDBACK]

PAGE 14

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

[free form text]

PAGE 15

Thank you for participating in the PhD Union's survey on study conditions at TU Graz. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

If you are struggling with mental health, you can get in touch with the following institution:

The Psychological Counseling Center for Students

The center offers psychological counseling and psychotherapy free of cost and anonymously, if needed.

Dreihackengasse 1, 8020 Graz

Phone: +43 316 814 748

Email: psych.ber@uni-graz.at

Website: <https://www.studierendenberatung.at/en>

If you experience conflict, harassment, or discrimination in your PhD at TU Graz, you can contact the following units or people:

The PhD Union

Email: doktorat@htugraz.at

Website: <https://phdunion.htugraz.at/>

The Coordination Office for Doctoral Studies

Sabine Vogl

Brockmannngasse 29/I, 8010 Graz

Phone: +43 316 873 8558

Email: sabine.vogl@tugraz.at

TU Graz' Ombudsperson

Lothar Fickert

Rechbauerstraße 12, 8010 Graz

Phone: +43 316 873 7564

Email: ombudsstelle@tugraz.at

Website:

<https://www.tugraz.at/en/tu-graz/organisational-structure/representative-bodies-for-members-of-tu-graz/tu-graz-student-ombudsperson>

Thank you!