

# Do Postgraduate Students Agree with the Academic Auditors?

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*G. Elizabeth Bean, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand*

# OUTLINE

## **Results of Three Quality Assurance Processes:**

- Academic Audit
- Postgraduate Student Satisfaction Survey
- Unstructured Interviews

## **What Do Students Really, Really Want?**

- International Research Findings
- How Seriously Is Feedback Taken?
- How Should Quality Assurance Processes Be *Used*?

# THE POSTGRADUATE STUDENT OF TODAY

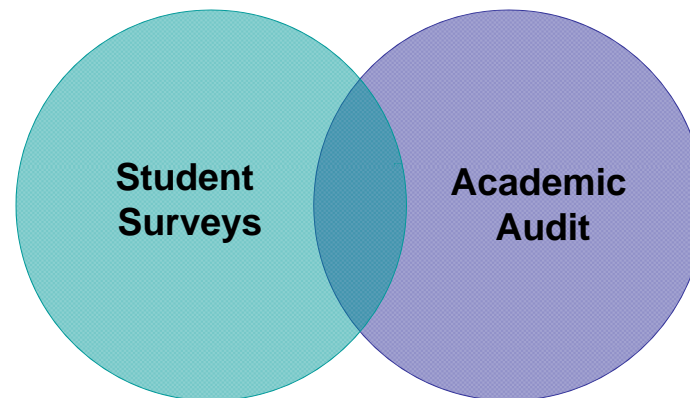


# QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS 1

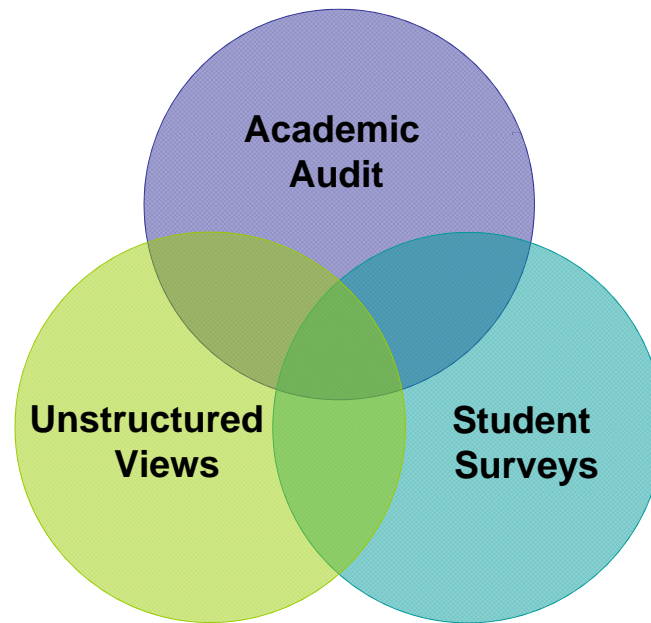


**Academic  
Audit**

# QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS 2



# QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS 3



# BENEFITS OF MULTI-METHOD ANALYSIS

- ❖ Enables the perspectives or “voice” of different stakeholders to be heard.
- ❖ Culture of monitoring and evaluation.
- ❖ The processes complement each other.
- ❖ Opportunity for verification and triangulation of results.

# METHODOLOGY

- ❖ Three methods of analysis (academic audit, student survey and unstructured interviews)
- ❖ Sorting by key-word.
- ❖ Enables the “voice” of the auditor or student to be heard.
- ❖ Sorted twice for verification.
- ❖ Each recommendation or comment allocated to one domain.

# DOMAINS AND SUB-DOMAINS FOR SORTING BY KEY WORD

Domain	Sub Domain
Management	Communication and support Maori Quality assurance Administration and policy Examinations
Supervision	Mutual expectations Student progress and monitoring Supervisor Training
Support	Information Services Student input and culture Resources

# ACADEMIC AUDITORS' RECOMMENDATIONS 1

- ❖ New Zealand Academic Audit Unit
- ❖ 8 New Zealand universities 2000 – 2001.
- ❖ 85 recommendations concerned with “Provision and support for postgraduate students”.
- ❖ Recommendations spread evenly across the 3 domains.
- ❖ Single largest category – “Communication and support”.

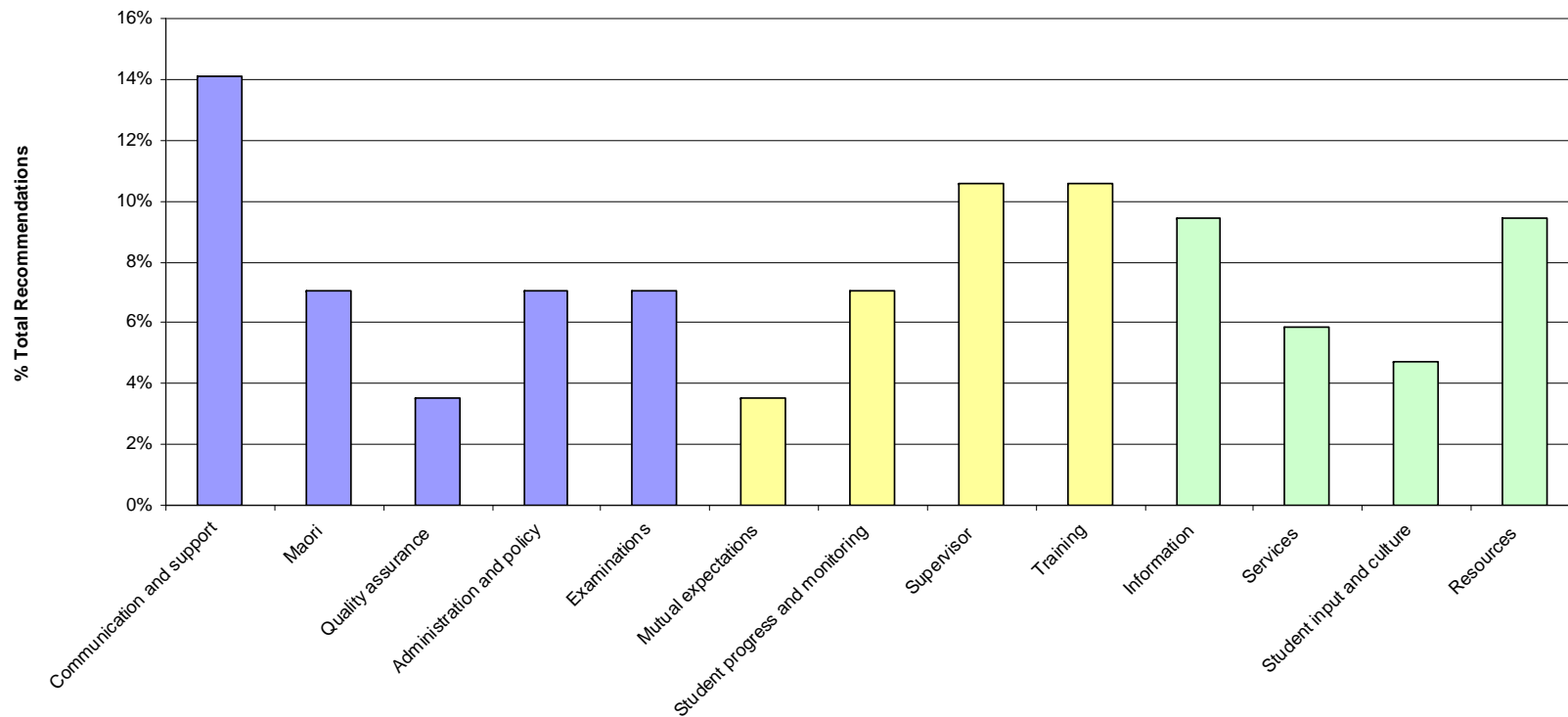
# ACADEMIC AUDITORS' RECOMMENDATIONS 2

## Auditors' Recommendations for Improvement, All Universities

<b>Management</b>			
	Communication and support	12	
	Maori	6	
	Quality assurance	3	
	Administration and policy	6	
	Examinations	6	
<b>Management Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Supervision</b>			
	Mutual expectations	3	
	Student progress and monitoring	6	
	Supervisor	9	
	Training	9	
<b>Supervision Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Support</b>			
	Information	8	
	Services	5	
	Student input and culture	4	
	Resources	8	
<b>Support Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>100%</b>

# ACADEMIC AUDITORS' RECOMMENDATIONS 3

Academic Auditors Recommendations for Improvement



# ACADEMIC AUDITORS' RECOMMENDATIONS 4

## Auditors' Recommendations for Improvement, Lincoln University

<b>Management</b>			
	Communication and Support	1	
	Maori	1	
	Quality assurance	0	
	Administration and policy	0	
	Examinations	2	
Management Total		4	33%
<b>Supervision</b>			
	Mutual expectations	1	
	Student progress and monitoring	2	
	Supervisor	1	
	Training	1	
Supervision Total		5	42%
<b>Support</b>			
	Information	2	
	Services	0	
	Student input and culture	0	
	Resources	1	
Support Total		3	25%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

# POSTGRADUATE STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 1

- ❖ 419 Masters and PhD Students, response rate of 43%.
- ❖ 96 items – supervision, research environment, programme organisation, library, computing and university environment – using satisfaction approach.
- ❖ Open-ended questions about the overall evaluation of postgraduate experience.
- ❖ 254 comments “apart from reducing fees, what three things could the University do to provide better value for money to its postgraduate students?”

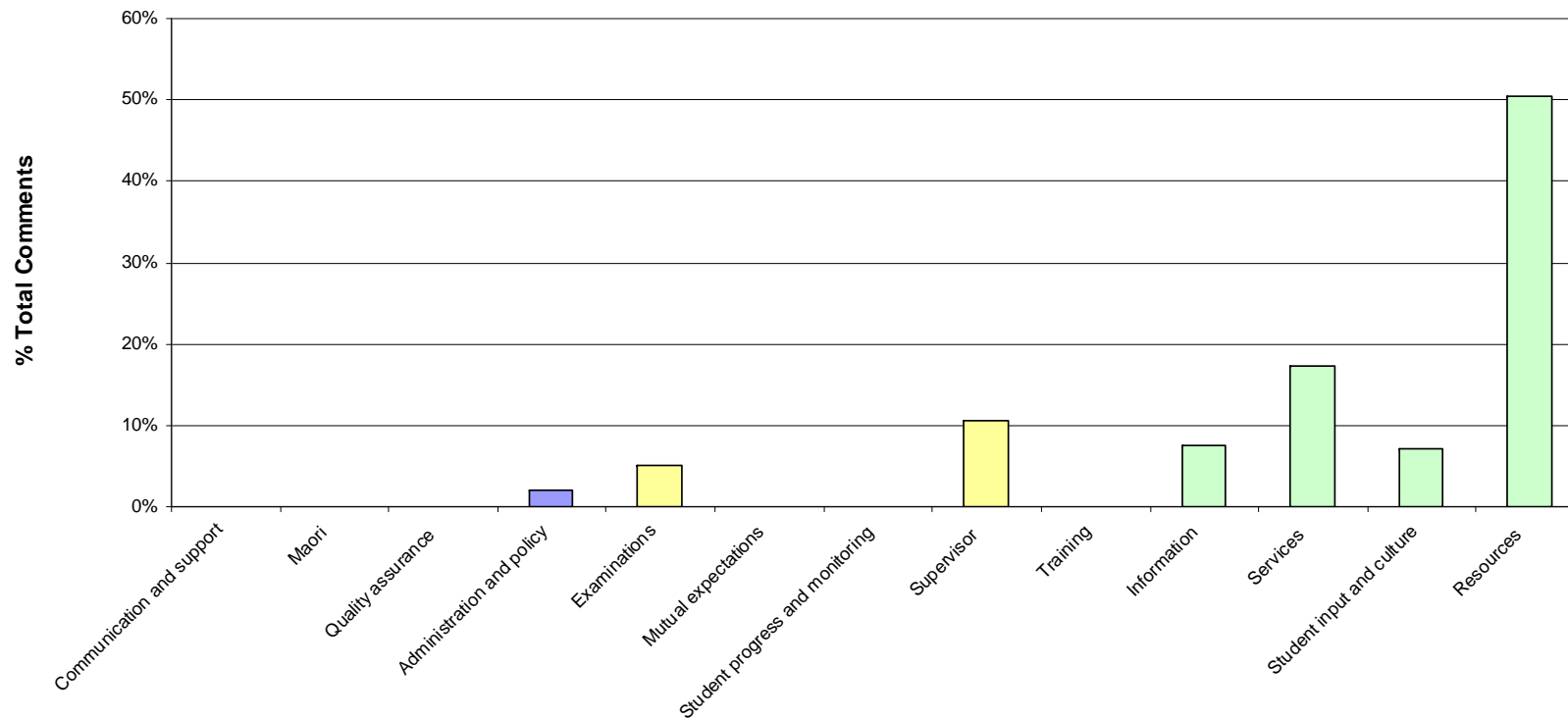
# POSTGRADUATE STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2

## Postgraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

<b>Management</b>		
Communication and support	0	
Maori	0	
Quality assurance	0	
Administration and policy	5	
Examinations	13	
<b>Management Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Supervision</b>		
Mutual expectations	0	
Student progress and monitoring	0	
Supervisor	27	
Training	0	
<b>Supervision Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Support</b>		
Information	19	
Services	44	
Student input and culture	18	
Resources	128	
<b>Support Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100%</b>

# POSTGRADUATE STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 3

Student Survey Comments, 2003



# POSTGRADUATE STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 4

Items ranked in order of importance are:

- ❖ Computer reliability and performance.
- ❖ Range of serials, periodicals, journals.
- ❖ Range of database and electronic resources.
- ❖ Availability of computers.
- ❖ Usefulness of feedback from postgraduate supervisor.

# UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS 1

- ❖ Unstructured Interviews (informal discussions) with postgraduate students.
- ❖ Part of process of developing Postgraduate Satisfaction Survey.
- ❖ Generated 253 comments.

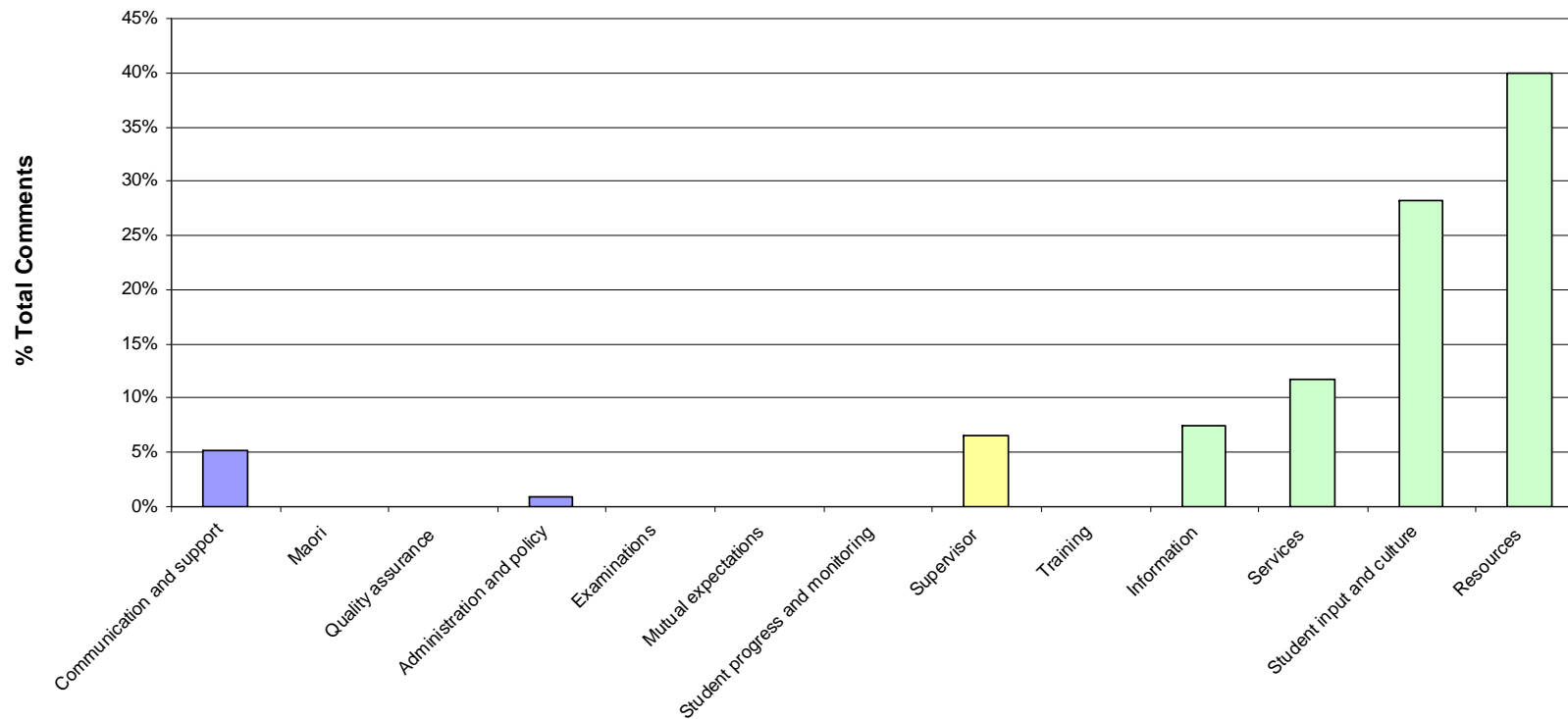
# UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS 2

## Unstructured Interviews 2003

<b>Management</b>			
	Communication and Support	11	
	Maori	0	
	Quality assurance	0	
	Administration and policy	2	
	Examinations	0	
Management Total		13	6%
<b>Supervision</b>			
	Mutual expectations	0	
	Student progress and monitoring	0	
	Supervisor	14	
	Training	0	
Supervision Total		14	7%
<b>Support</b>			
	Information	16	
	Services	25	
	Student input and culture	60	
	Resources	85	
Support Total		186	87%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>213</b>	<b>100%</b>

# UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS 3

Student Informal Discussions, 2003



# THE STORY SO FAR

## **The Issues for Auditors**

- ❖ Opportunity for improvements needed across all three areas of management, supervision and support.

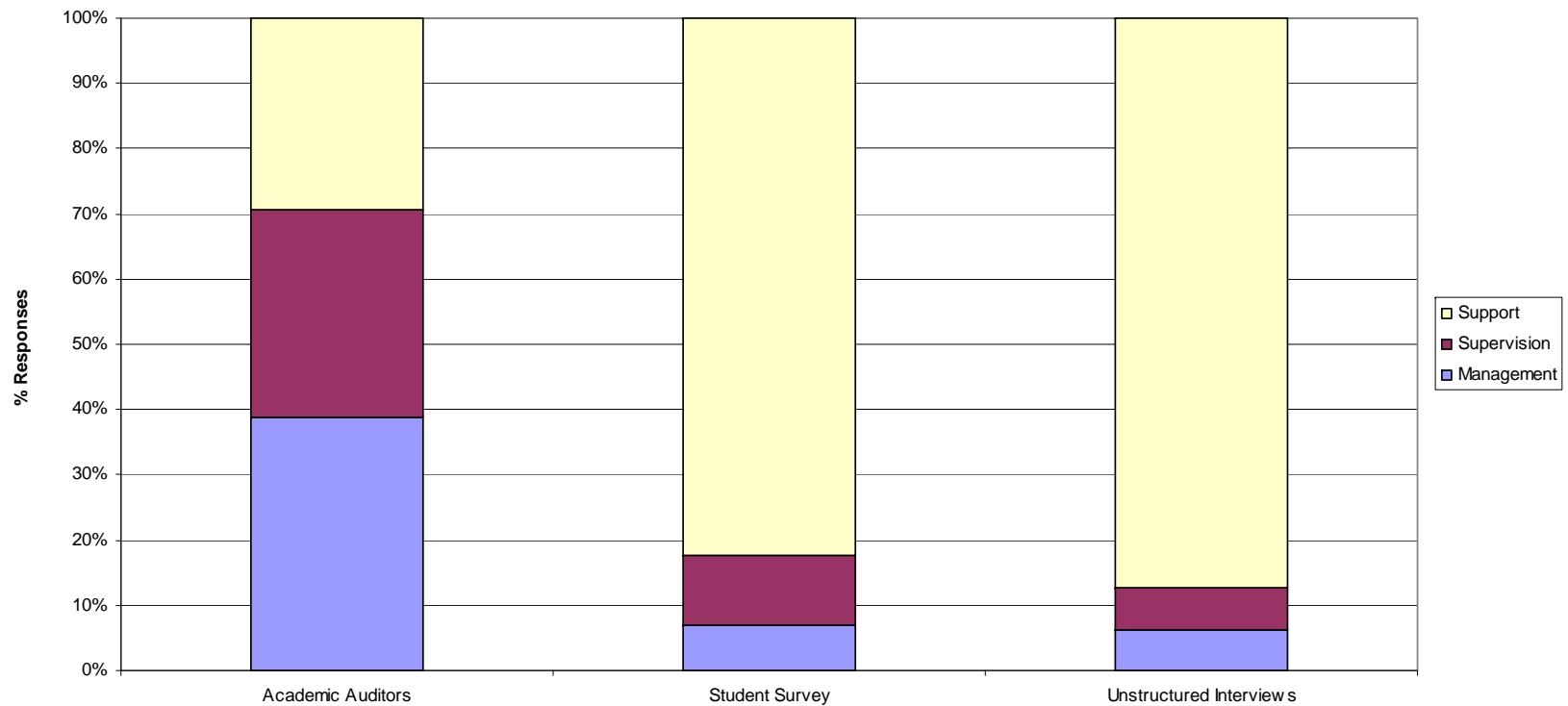
## **The Issues for Students**

- ❖ Satisfaction with supervision and overall management
- ❖ Opportunity for improvements in support and in particular resources
- ❖ More (and more and more) resources.

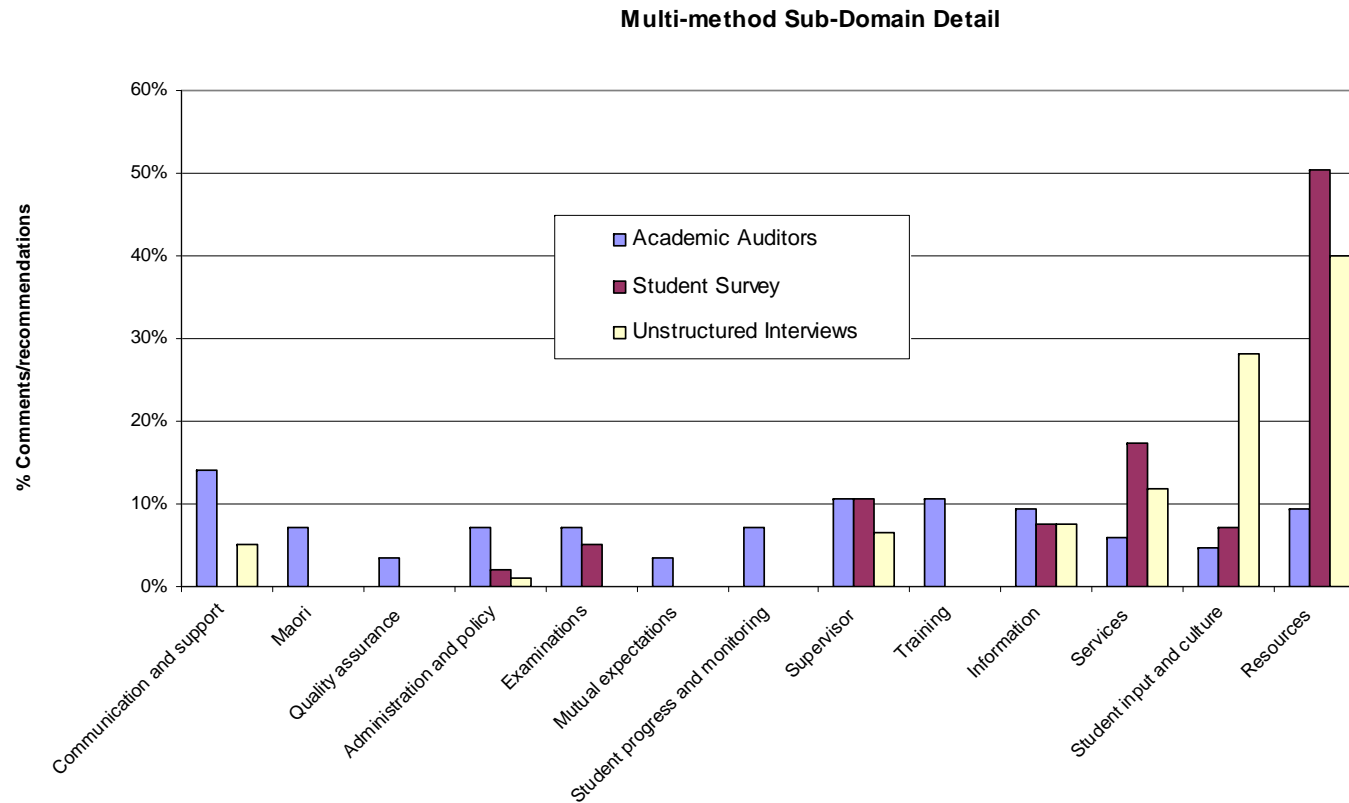
## **Importance of multi-method analysis**

# MULTI-METHOD ANALYSIS SUMMARY

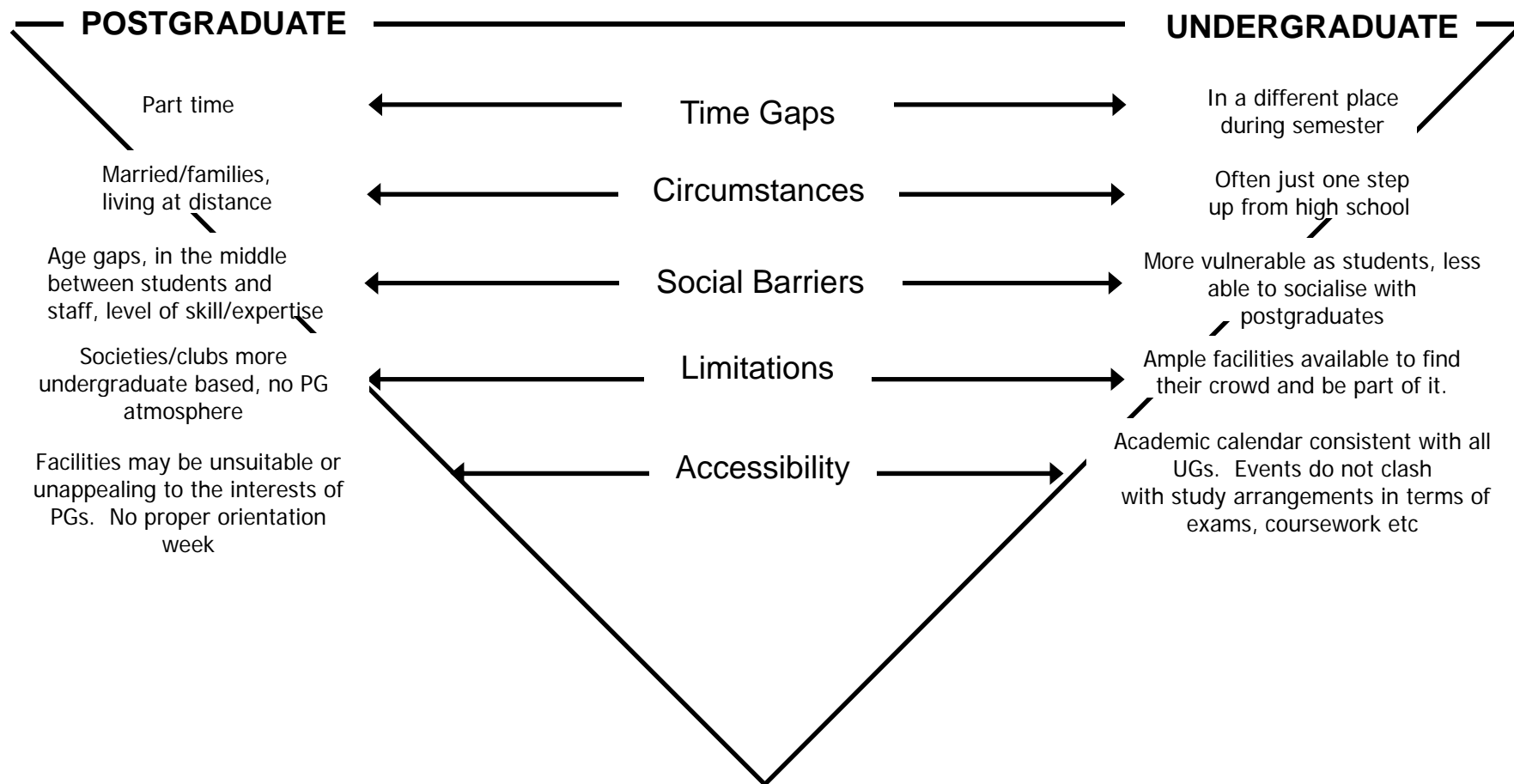
Multi-Method Analysis Summary



# MULTI-METHOD SUB-DOMAIN DETAIL



# WHAT DOES THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH SAY?



(adapted from - Brown, T. (2003), Providing for the postgraduate market: An Investigation into Exclusive Facilities For Postgraduates. National Postgraduate Committee, United Kingdom, p.23)

# WHAT DOES THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH SAY?

Richardson, J.T.E. (2003), Instruments for obtaining student feedback: A review of the literature: Collecting and using student feedback on quality and standards of teaching and learning in higher education. A Report to the Higher Education Funding Council for England, p 26.

*'... many students and teachers believe that student feedback is useful and informative, but many teachers and institutions do not take student feedback seriously. The main issues are: the interpretation of feedback; institutional reward structures; the publication of feedback; and a sense of ownership of feedback on the part of both teachers and students.'*

Ramsden, P. (2003). *Student Surveys and Quality Assurance*. Proceedings of the Australian Universities Quality Forum.

*"...we should never consider CEQ and GDS results in isolation but always in association with other sources of information. For example, what do student (not graduate) surveys say? What do the open comments in the CEQ say? What do the open comments in the CEQ say? What do employers say about why they employ our graduates? What did accreditation bodies say? What is the feedback from overseas institutions about the standard of our students who go there to pursue further study?.....Do these sources tell a similar story and, if not, why not?"*

# HOW SERIOUSLY WAS FEEDBACK TAKEN AT LINCOLN?

	Academic Audit (2001 - )	Survey * (2004 - )
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Postgraduate student representation</li> <li>- Research Centres of Excellence</li> <li>- Information (web and in course information handbooks)</li> <li>- Annual postgraduate conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Processes for dissertations and thesis submission</li> </ul>
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revised content of Division handbooks.</li> <li>- Mutual expectations document finalised and promoted</li> <li>- Reviewed policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervisor training workshop and development of a programme for 'new supervisors'</li> </ul>
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in the number and value of postgraduate scholarships.</li> <li>- Infrastructure - discussions among Divisions about the access to resources e.g. an expectation that a PG should attend one national conference.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infrastructure – a 'minimum standard' is proposed for computing, library, workspace and supervision.</li> <li>- Culture - orientation programme; student association (networks social functions and newsletters) and annual postgraduate conference</li> <li>- Library – greater range of databases and electronic resources.</li> </ul>

\* reporting on the Survey incorporates follow-up to the unstructured interviews

# HOW SHOULD QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES BE USED?

## Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance:

- ❖ Obtain student input into the quality assurance processes;
- ❖ Ensure that quality assurance processes are supported by the Vice-Chancellor and embedded into central planning;
- ❖ Obtain academic staff buy-in to the quality assurance process;
- ❖ Triangulate the results using several sources; and
- ❖ Feedback the results of the quality assurance process and actions taken.

# HOW DID LINCOLN FARE?

	<b>Audit (2001 - )</b>	<b>Survey * (2004 -)</b>
Student Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited role in internal self-review activity</li> <li>- Met with academic auditors (10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Input into survey design (unstructured interviews)</li> <li>- Survey evaluations (180)</li> </ul>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responsibility for academic audit with Deputy Vice-Chancellor</li> <li>- Mandatory nature means embedded into academic quality framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responsibility for survey with Deputy Vice-Chancellor</li> <li>- Not totally embedded into academic quality framework</li> </ul>
Academic buy-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Major participants in self review activity and met with auditors</li> <li>- Academic staff not totally comfortable with the methodology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survey administered by management</li> <li>- Limited buy-in from academic staff who aren't totally comfortable with the methodology</li> </ul>
Triangulate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Auditors draw on wide experience</li> <li>- Interviews (with students, staff and externals) and paper audit of process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Able to interpret results alongside evaluations, focus groups, graduate surveys, academic audit etc.</li> </ul>
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide internal communication of report and follow-up action</li> <li>- Report publicly available</li> <li>- AUQA Good Practice Database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide internal communication of report and follow-up action</li> <li>- Hard to communicate with students, who are a transient population</li> </ul>

\* reporting on the Survey incorporates follow-up to the unstructured interviews

# WHAT SHOULD WE FOCUS ON TO IMPROVE POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION?

- ❖ Management – processes and structural.
- ❖ Supervision.
- ❖ Support and resources
  - “need” (computers, library, workspace)
  - “want” – social space, peer support, student culture and study experience.
- ❖ Multi-method analysis.
- ❖ *Use the results of feedback.*



# Lincoln University

*Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki*



*G. Elizabeth Bean, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand*