



Executive Summary

University of Huddersfield Quality of Working Life survey (May, 2015)

What is Quality of Working Life?

Quality of Working Life (QoWL) is ***a measure of how good your work is for you.***

Quality of Working Life is more than just job satisfaction or work happiness, but the widest context in which an employee would evaluate their job.

The QoWL Survey and Data Set

The QoWL survey tool encompasses three questionnaires:

1. The **WRQoL scale**, which looks at the six core factors associated with Quality of Working Life, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and working conditions.
2. The **QoWL Workplace Outcome** scale, which provides data related to a variety of specific outcomes related to Quality of Working Life such as intention to stay, organisational communication, and pride in the organisation.
3. The **HSE Work-related stress scale**, which provides feedback on the stressor categories included in HSE's Management Standards, such as demands, management support, and relationships.

The overall response rate was 74%. 1377 staff responded (86 on paper) out of 1869 employees. Some responses were discarded due to less than half the questions being answered, giving a valid response rate of approximately 65%.

In addition, in response to an open question, approximately 50% of respondents took the opportunity to suggest ways the University could improve Quality of Working Life for staff.

This report provides an indicative summary and broad overview of the results found.

Benchmarks Used

Two benchmarks were used in the preparation of this report. A university-sector QoWL benchmark was used for both the QoWL Core and QoWL Workplace Outcome Scales and HSE's working population benchmark was used for the HSE Stress Scale.

The QoWL Quality of Working Life survey was distributed to staff at the University of Huddersfield during April 2015. The survey incorporated the QoWL Work-Related Quality of Life and Workplace Well-being Outcome Scales and the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Work-Related Stress scale. The key findings from the survey appear below.

WRQoL scale

The table below compares summary scores for the current, 2015 survey (N = 1210), 2013 survey (N = 833), 2011 survey (N = 890), 2009 survey (N= 972) with the survey from 2007 (N=751) and the QoWL University Benchmark sample which is derived from a sample of 5963 employees from across the UK University sector.

Descriptive Statistics for WRQoL Subscales and Overall question	2007 Survey %Agree	2009 Survey %Agree	2011 Survey %Agree	2013 Survey %Agree	2015 Survey %Agree	QoWL BMARK %Agree
General Well Being (GWB) How much you agree you feel generally content with life as a whole.	58	61	58	57	59	55
Home-Work Interface (HWI) How far you agree the organisation understands and tries to help you with pressures outside of work.	64	63	64	64	65	58
Job Career Satisfaction (JCS) How far you agree that you are happy with your ability to do your work.	60	64	60	60	63	56
Control at Work (CAW) How far you agree you feel you are involved in decisions at work.	54	57	57	58	59	54
Working Conditions (WCS) The extent you agree that you are happy with the conditions you work in	74	72	75	74	74	66
Stress at Work (SAW)* How far you feel you agree you experience stress at work.	38	41	40	42	39	45
Overall Quality of Working Life (Q65) I am satisfied with the overall quality of my working life.	66	69	65	66	65	60

Notes: %Agree: The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to this factor. **Green** at least 5% higher satisfaction than the QoWL Benchmark value. **Red** at least 5% lower satisfaction than the QoWL Benchmark value.*Negatively phrased factor, where higher agreement indicates less quality of working life.

Summary Comments

WRQoL factors, all staff:

1. University of Huddersfield employees indicated higher QoWL than the university benchmark sample for all six factors.
2. 65% of University of Huddersfield employees agree that they have a good QoWL.
3. Employees report lower levels of Stress at Work compared to benchmark data.
4. University of Huddersfield employees continue to report substantially greater levels of satisfaction with Working Conditions than the benchmark sample.
5. Overall, University of Huddersfield employees continue to report a higher quality of working life than the university benchmark sample.

Further analyses were carried out to look at: differences between general staff categories; gender differences within staff categories; differences between Non-Academic departments, and; differences between Academic Schools (including staff categories). The main findings from these analyses can be found below.

Staff Analysis: General staff categories

1. Results for Academic Staff indicated lower QoWL than the university benchmark sample for all six factors. There is some positive change on several subscale scores compared to 2013.
2. Stress at Work scores for Researchers and Support Staff were lower than the benchmark.
3. The highest scores for General Well-Being were found among Support Staff, these being higher than the benchmark sample.
4. Support Staff report higher or equivalent experience of QoWL than the benchmark on all subscales.
5. Researchers' response showed substantial change in comparison with 2013 survey findings on JCS,CAW and SAW subscales, and a large difference is noted in between 2013 and 2015 scores on the overall QoWL question responses.

Staff Analysis: Staff-gender categories

This analysis looked at gender differences within staff categories. Academic and Research groups were combined for this analysis. Some interesting findings emerged:

1. With the exception of the CAW subscales, female staff reported higher QoWL than male staff. This appeared to reflect, in particular, differences between the reported experience of male and female support staff.
2. Male and female Academics and Researchers reported similar experience of QoWL across the subscales.
3. The highest gender differences were to be found in Job Career Satisfaction and satisfaction with Working Conditions.

Staff Analyses: Academic Schools and Professional Services

In general, and in keeping with the findings of other university QoWL surveys, generally higher QoWL scores were found across non-academic departments, with very high positive scores in several departments.

1. The picture across the Academic Schools was mixed, with some substantial variations between schools, as well as within schools in relation to QoWL subscales and staff groups.

QoWL Workplace Outcome scale

This scale includes questions related to specific well-being outcomes. In line with previous surveys, the 2015 results generally show a positive picture of workplace well-being across the University. Some results and changes from previous years are worth noting however:

1. Responses relating to Job security indicate continued improvement from 2011, when only 26% felt their job was secure through 2013 (55%) such that in this survey 68% of staff agreed that their job was secure. This figure is higher than the benchmark.
2. Responses in 2015 were generally similar to those of 2013, although some variations were noted in relation to some questions in particular.
3. When compared with the 2013 results, a higher level of agreement was shown in response to; "I am paid fairly for the job I do, given my experience".
4. When compared with the 2013 results, a lower level of agreement was shown in response to; "The organisation communicates well with its employees".

HSE Management Standards Analysis

1. On the whole, survey results have shown little change through 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015. Scores are mainly similar to the QoWL University benchmark with indication of consistent relative strength in the University around the management of change.
2. However, care should be taken with interpreting these results given the differences found between staff groups and within some of the Schools (see above).

Open questions

Approximately 50% of respondents took the opportunity to provide comments in response to the open question: "How could the quality of working life be improved in your University?"

These 2015 survey responses yielded some interesting results and some changes from 2013:

1. There was a marked increase in comments associated with requesting further opportunity for flexi-time/home working.
2. There were fewer negative comments than in 2013 about Accommodation/facilities.

3. Inspection of results across the four years shows wide variation in certain response categories, and some caution is appropriate when interpreting the findings.

Conclusions

The 2015 survey again indicated that the University of Huddersfield has an exceptionally good quality of working life for most staff, when compared with a benchmark sample from other UK Universities. There is indication that experience of QoWL, as measured across the WRQoL subscales, has shown marginal positive change for a majority of staff since 2013.

Lower QoWL and higher stress are again noted in Academic Staff, which finding reflects data from other surveys of this employee group in the UK. There is, however, some indication that experience of this group is improving in some areas.

Darren Van Laar and Simon Easton, May 2015

**Quality of Working Life Research
Department of Psychology
University of Portsmouth
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO1 9DY
United Kingdom**

<http://www.qowl.co.uk/>

+ (0) 44 2392 846306

enquiries@qowl.co.uk