

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Building a Graduate Culture: Setting Expectations, Providing Feedback, and Conducting Annual Reviews

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How many doctoral students are completing PhDs?

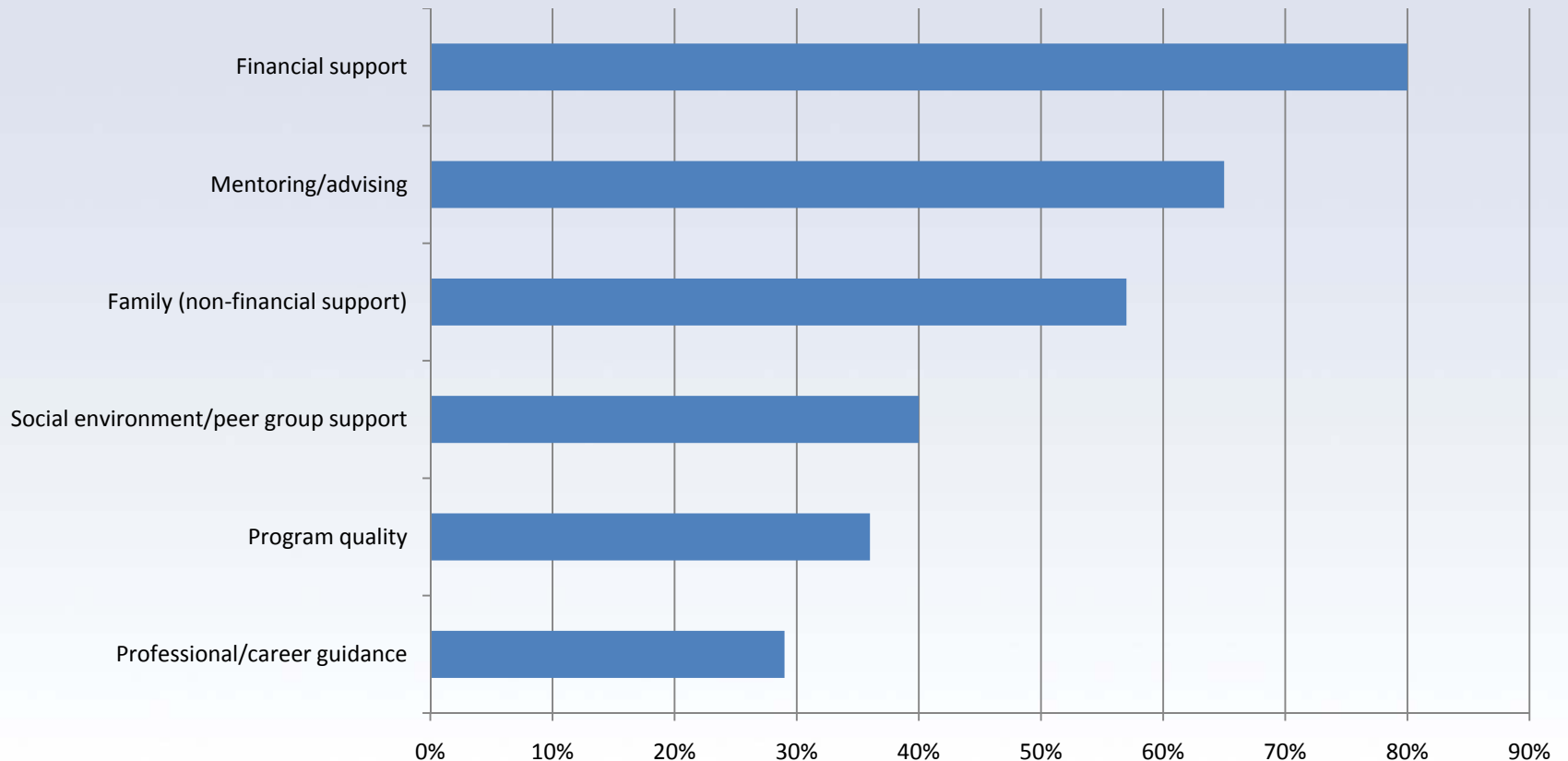
Nationally, 57% of doctoral candidates complete degree programs within 10 years.

Broad Field	% completing in 10 years
Engineering	64
Life Sciences	63
Social Sciences	56
Mathematics & Physical Sciences	55
Humanities	49



Source: *PhD Completion and Attrition: Analysis of Baseline Demographic Data from the PhD Completion Project, 2008*

Main Factors Contributing to Respondents' Ability to Complete the Doctoral Degree



% of Graduates Reporting that Mentoring was a Main Factor Contributing to Completion

- **70 % in Engineering**
- **70% in Social Sciences**
- **67% in Mathematics & Physical Sciences**
- **61 % in Life Sciences**
- **59% in Humanities**



Source: *Ph.D. Completion and Attrition: Findings from Exit Surveys of Ph.D. Completers, 2009*

Acclimation Survey Information

- 34% happy with their adviser
- 39% adviser does not provide information on progress
- 30% not adequate information on review process
- 25% annual review not applicable



Survey Respondents

Programs

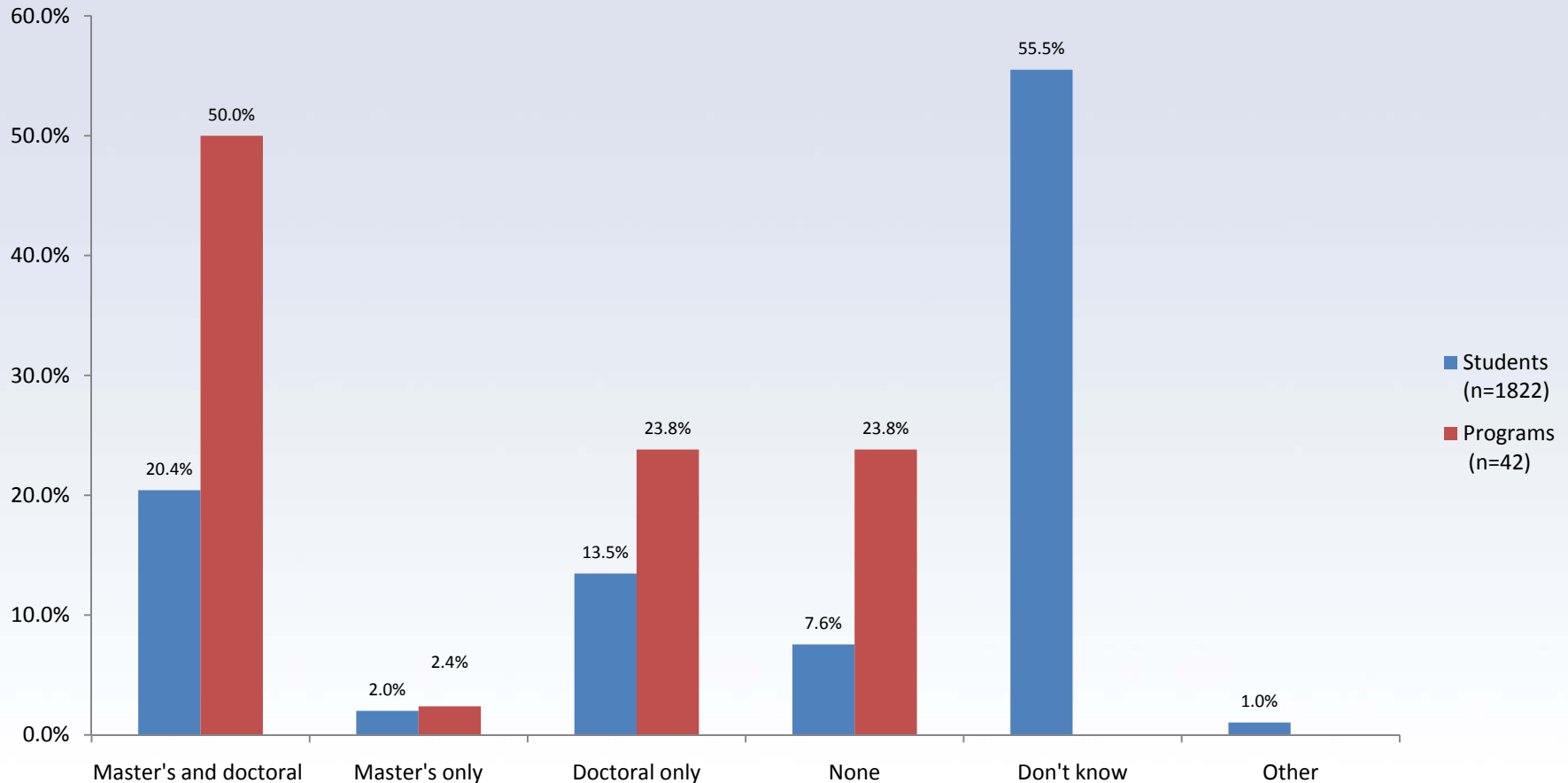
- 140 Programs on campus
- 50 programs responded
- 32 have a formal review process = 64%
- Programs represent a variety of disciplines

Students

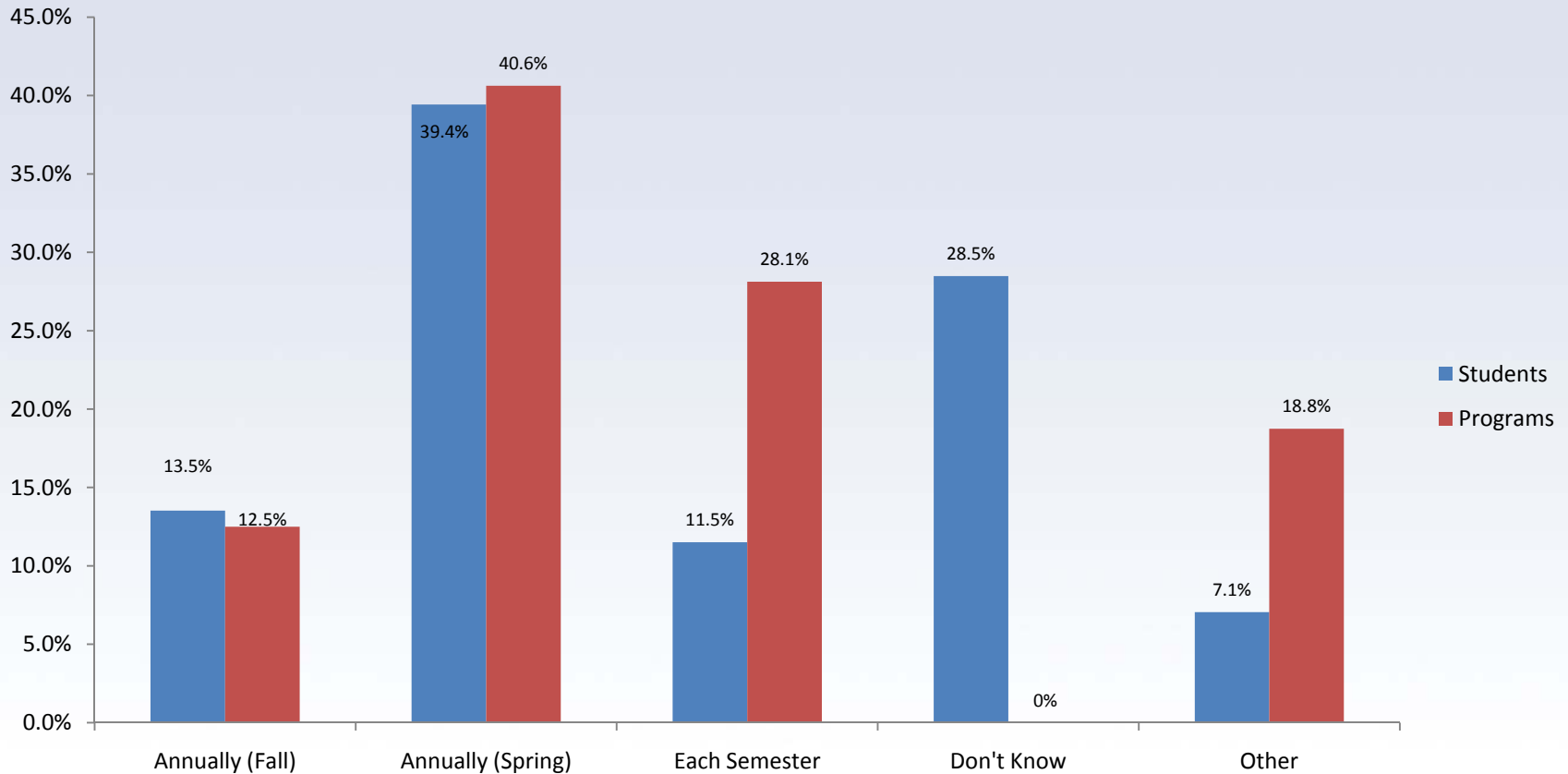
- Approx. 10,000 Graduate Students on campus
- 1,962 students responded
- 680 were certain that there is a review process = 34.7%
- Students represent a variety of disciplines



Information & Knowledge of Who Departments Review



Information & Knowledge of When Reviews are Conducted

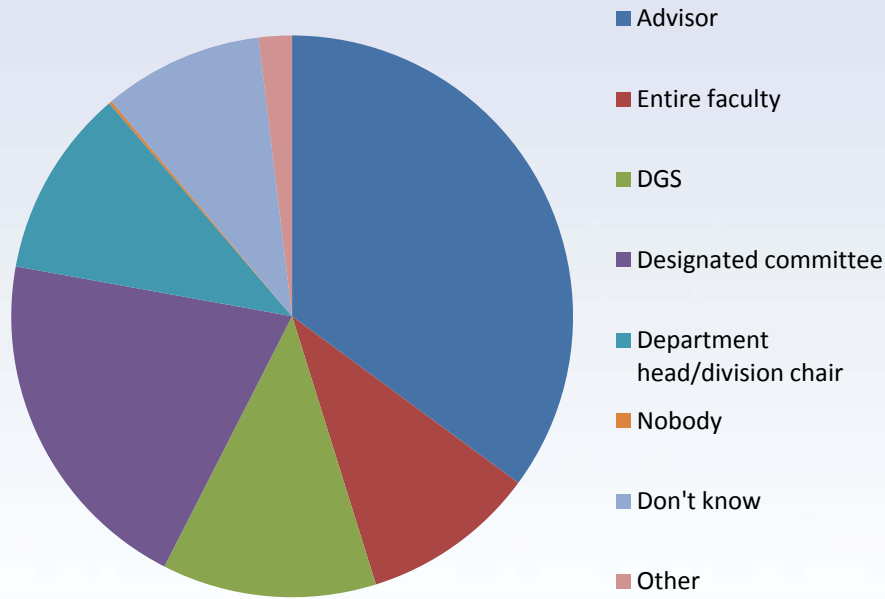


Criteria by which student performance is assessed

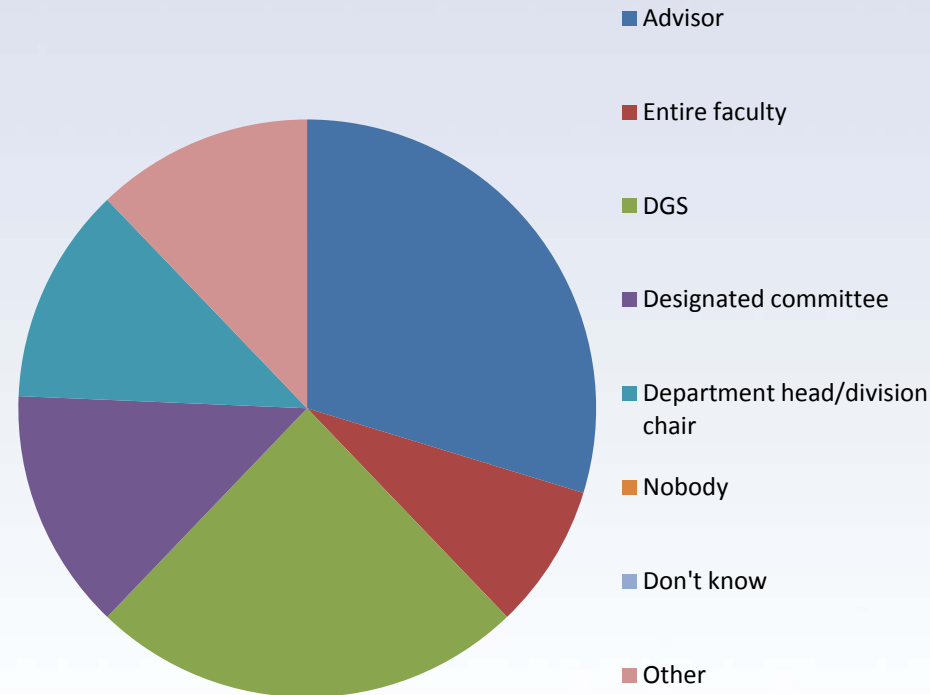
	# of Students	# of Programs	Student Rank	Program Rank
Progress toward completion of required coursework	444	not asked	1	
Coursework performance	442	29	2	1
Timely completion of qualifying, preliminary, or other required examinations	334	23	3	2
Papers and/or presentations	310	19	4	3
Publications (abstracts and full manuscripts)	304	15	5	4
Quality of research	296	15	6	4
Overall strengths	186	14	7	5
Honors/awards	177	11	8	7
Fellowship/grants	174	12	9	6
Teaching/Teaching performance	171	10	10	8
Goals for upcoming year	151	11	11	7
On and off-campus honors and awards	148	0	12	n/a
Areas for growth and improvement	123	14	13	5
Lab/clinical performance	86	6	14	9
Don't know	79	0	15	n/a
Professional and programmatic service	45	5	16	10
Membership in professional organizations	44	0	17	n/a
Other (please specify)	16	4	18	11
Progress toward completion of thesis or dissertation	not asked	23	n/a	2

Who Evaluates the Student?

Students



Programs



Time Spent Per Student

	Frequency	Percent
5 minutes	1	3.4%
10 minutes	4	13.8%
15 minutes	2	6.9%
30 minutes	9	31.0%
90 minutes	1	3.4%
1 hour	8	27.6%
2 hours	2	7.0%
3 hours	2	7.0%
Total	29	100

	Frequency	Percent
More time is spent on weak students	23	82.1
No difference	5	17.9
Total	28	100.0



Are results communicated to students?

	Frequency	Percent
Results are always communicated	17	56.7
Results are communicated only if there are concerns	6	20.0
Communication is up to advisor	4	13.3
Other	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0



Who communicates results to students (check all that apply)?

	Programs	Students
Advisor	20	237
Designated faculty member	1	41
Director of Graduate Study	14	115
Designated committee	1	77
Department head/division chair	6	64
Other	7	54
Results are not communicated	0	60



Purpose of the assessment

	Programs
Permission to continue, probation or dismissal	25
Determination of funding and fellowships	13
Need for mentoring students w/regard to professional development	15
Need for mentoring students toward degree completion	26
Identification of issues or concerns about progress	28
Checking on completion of milestones	21
Assignment of assistantship appointments	8
Other	2



Usefulness of Review (Programs)

Programs

	Extremely Useful	Very Useful	Moderately Useful	Slightly Useful	Not Useful	Don't know	Mean
Usefulness of Review process for faculty members (n=30)	26.7%	20.0%	40.0%	3.3%	3.3%	6.7%	2.3
Usefulness of Review process for motivational problems (n=30)	10.0%	40.0%	30.0%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	2.6
Usefulness of Review process for reaching milestones (n=30)	6.7%	50.0%	26.7%	10.0%	0.0%	6.7%	2.4



Usefulness of Review (Students)

How useful is the feedback in helping you reach degree objectives?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely useful	70	13.7
Very useful	151	29.5
Moderately useful	158	30.9
Slightly useful	60	11.7
Not at all useful	73	14.3
Total	512	100.0

Mean=2.8

2.8



Clarity of Review Process (Students)

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Extremely clear	45	8.3
Very clear	151	27.8
Moderately clear	182	33.5
Slightly clear	77	14.2
Not at all clear	88	16.2
Total	543	100.0

3.0

Mean=3.0



How Well are Expectations for Degree Progress Explained in your Department?

2.7

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely well	64	11.9
Very well	207	38.5
Moderately well	153	28.4
Slightly well	63	11.7
Not well at all	51	9.5
Total	538	100.0

Mean=2.7

□



Fairness of Assessment Process

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely fair	45	8.7
Very fair	232	44.6
Neither fair nor unfair	220	42.3
Very unfair	16	3.1
Extremely unfair	7	1.3
Total	520	100.0

Mean=2.4



How Much Stress Does the Review Process Cause You

	Frequency	Percent
A great deal	44	8.3
A lot	57	10.7
A moderate amount	164	30.8
A small amount	122	22.9
None	146	27.4
Total	533	100.0

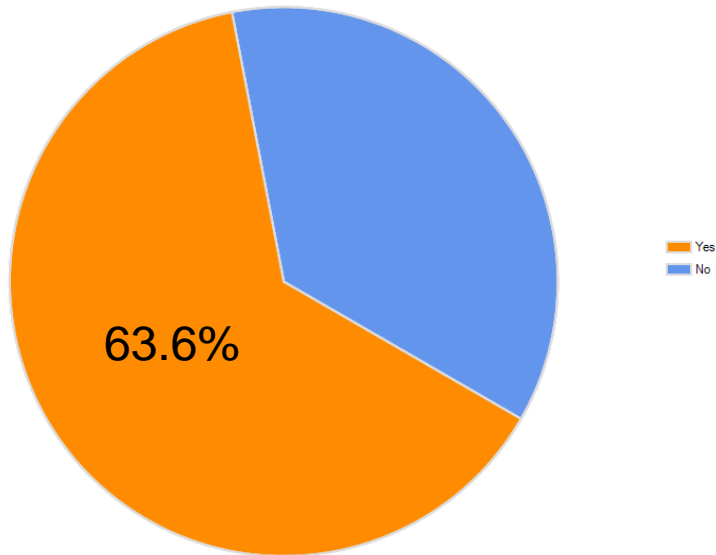
3.5

Mean=3.5

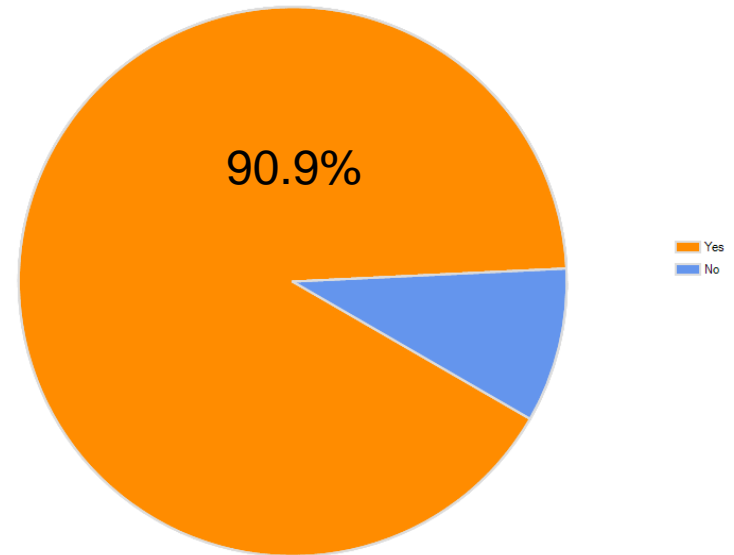


Programs Without a Review Process

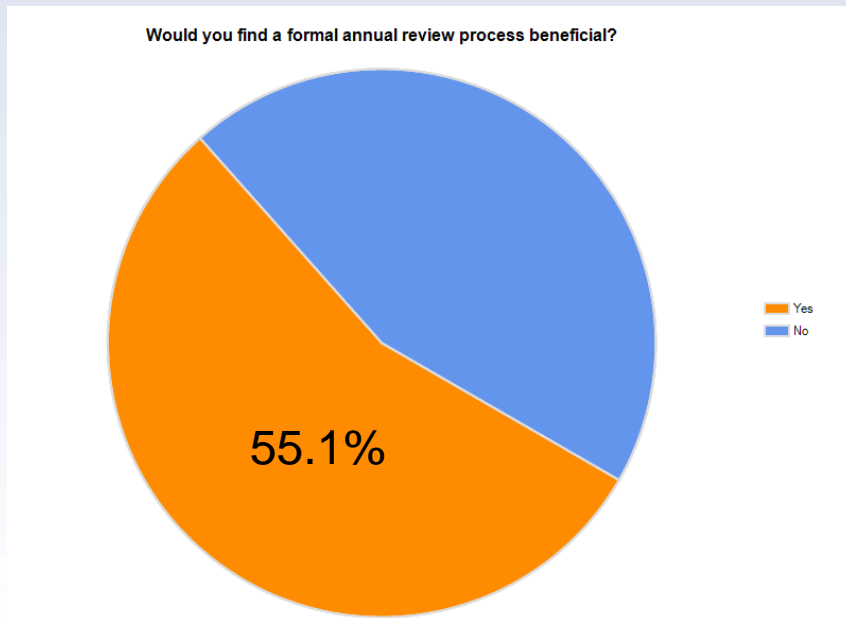
Would you find a formal review process beneficial?



Would you be interested in information about formal review processes?



Students in Programs Without a Review Process



- **There was no correlation between Annual Review Process and Time to Degree**



Benefits of Doing an Annual Review

- Transparency
- Fairness
- Equity
- Consistency
- Conflict Resolution
- Professional development
- Provides due notice



Recommendations

- Include in communications (website, handbooks, orientations, listservs, etc.)
- Explain purpose
- Develop a system
- Consistent procedures
- Communicate results to all students
- Keep records



Thank you!

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