

## **Introduction**

The Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) is a survey undertaken annually by students enrolled in higher education institutions in Australia and New Zealand as well as New Zealand Institutes of Technology, Polytechnics and Private Training Establishments. It is closely linked to the North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Student engagement is an idea focused on students and their interactions with their institution. It rests on the premise that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities, and on how institutions and staff generate conditions to stimulate involvement.

The AUSSE is important because it provides an indication of students' involvement in activities and experience of conditions that research has linked with high-quality student outcomes. As such, it provides data for framing conversations about quality and a stimulus for guiding policy to improve the educational experiences and outcomes.

The AUSSE collects information about:

- the experiences and activities of students in relation to their studies;
- the experiences and activities of students outside of their formal education;
- the personal interactions students have with staff and fellow students at their institution;
- the future study intentions of students;
- students' perceptions of the values and quality of their institution; and
- socio-demographic information about students.

The AUSSE is managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in close collaboration with participating institutions. The results of the AUSSE are discussed in a variety of reports. Each institution receives a detailed Institution Report that includes a range of results and benchmarks. The Australasian Student Engagement Report provides a high-level public discussion of findings, and the AUSSE Research Briefings provide more detailed discussion and analysis of the engagement of specific groups of students.

This Executive Summary Report complements the more detailed Institution Report. Each institution-specific report provides information relating specifically to the engagement of students at the institution who took part in the 2012 AUSSE. The reporting shows the outcomes for this institution in relation to students from a number of aggregated groupings, including Australasia, North America and selected 'like' institutions within Australia and New Zealand.

Student engagement measures at the institutional level are generally divided into two groups – first-year students and later-year students. Subgroup information is also provided in this Executive Summary Report and in the more detailed Institution Report.

Further information about the AUSSE and the publications that result from this annual collection can be found at the following website: <http://www.acer.edu.au/research/ausse>

## Population and sample summary

In 2012, 31 institutions participated in the AUSSE or related surveys. In 2011, 44 institutions participated, 54 institutions participated in 2010, 35 took part in 2009, 29 in 2008 and 25 participated in 2007. The AUSSE 2012 population includes 91,757 first-year and 129,398 later-year on-shore students. Comparisons are made in this report with the results from the North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In 2012, 584 institutions from the USA and Canada took part in the NSSE.

Based on instructions provided by Australasia University in mid 2012, a systematic random sample of 2000 first-year and 2000 later-year on-shore students was drawn from the total population. This sample was designed to yield 800 responses. As shown in Table 1, 1000 students responded in total, giving an overall institutional response rate of 25 per cent. For the results that follow in this Executive Summary Report and the more detailed Institutional Report the response sample has been weighted to ensure that results reflect the institution’s population as a whole.

**Table 1: Population and response statistics**

	Australasia University		All institutions	
	First year	Later year	First year	Later year
Respondents	500	500	21390	25464
Target population size	2000	2000	87594	120369
Response rate	25	25	24	21

The institutions included in the benchmark groups are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Benchmark groups**

Benchmark Group 1	Benchmark Group 2	Benchmark Group 3

### Areas of performance scores

Around 100 specific learning activities and conditions are measured in the AUSSE. Table 3 summarises the areas in which Australasia University's students score above the Australasian average, and areas in which scores are below the Australasian average. It is important to note that a below average score is not necessarily a negative finding, similarly an above average score is not necessarily a positive finding.

**Table 3: Results above and below average**

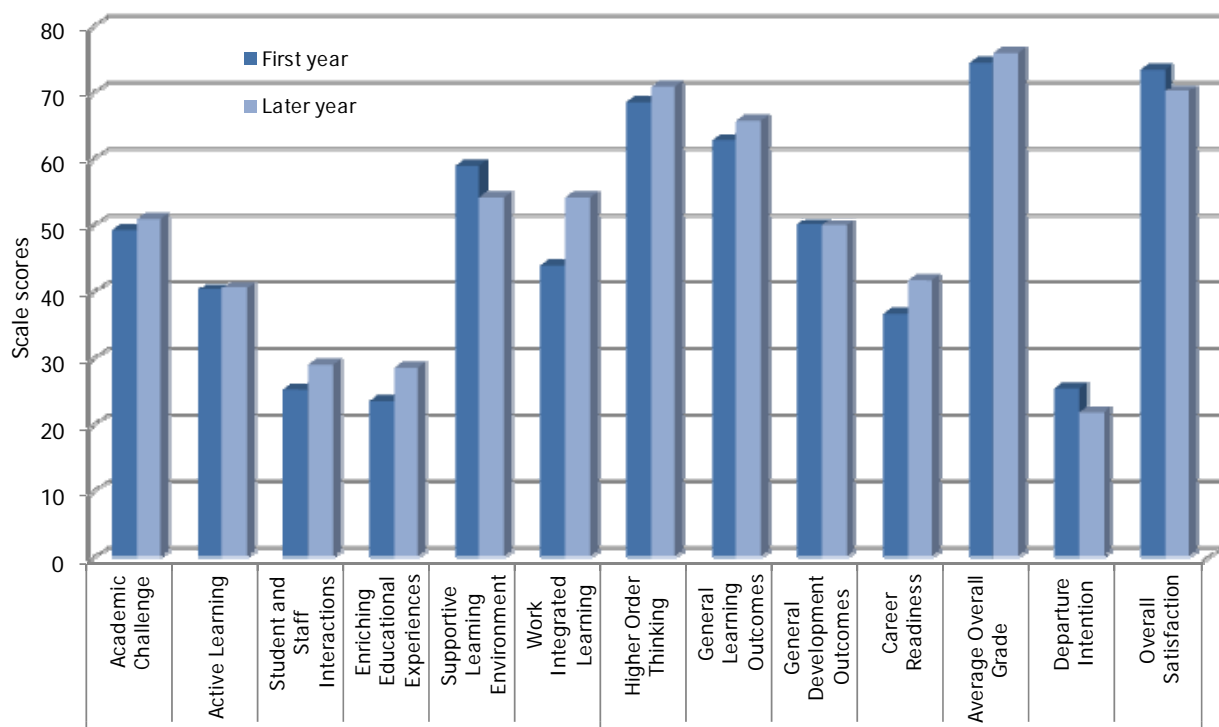
Performance below average	Performance above average
Being on campus, including time spent in class	Providing care for dependents
Travelling to campus	Relationships with administrative personnel and services
Made presentation	Relationships with teaching staff
Worked with students outside class	Relationship of paid work to field of study
How to present to potential employers	Prepared two or more drafts
Used library resources on campus or online	Managing personal business
Being on campus, excluding time spent in class	Understanding yourself
Worked with students during class	Examinations challenged to do best work
Asked questions	Relationships with student support services staff
Relaxing and socialising	Blended academic learning with workplace experience
Attending campus events and activities	Able to keep up to date with study
Discussed ideas from your classes with others	Developing a personal code of values and ethics

## Engagement scale scores

This Executive Summary Report provides information about the responses to the 2010 AUSSE at Australasia University. It shows the engagement and outcomes of students as measured on a number of core scales. Scale scores are reported using a metric that runs from 0 to 100.

The engagement scales measured by the AUSSE include: Academic Challenge, Active Learning, Student and Staff Interactions, Enriching Educational Experiences, Supportive Learning Environment and Work Integrated Learning.

Figure 1 displays the differences in both the engagement and outcomes scales for first-year and later-year student respondents from Australasia University. It is interesting to compare the outcomes of students at these two points in time in order to identify areas of gain and decline.



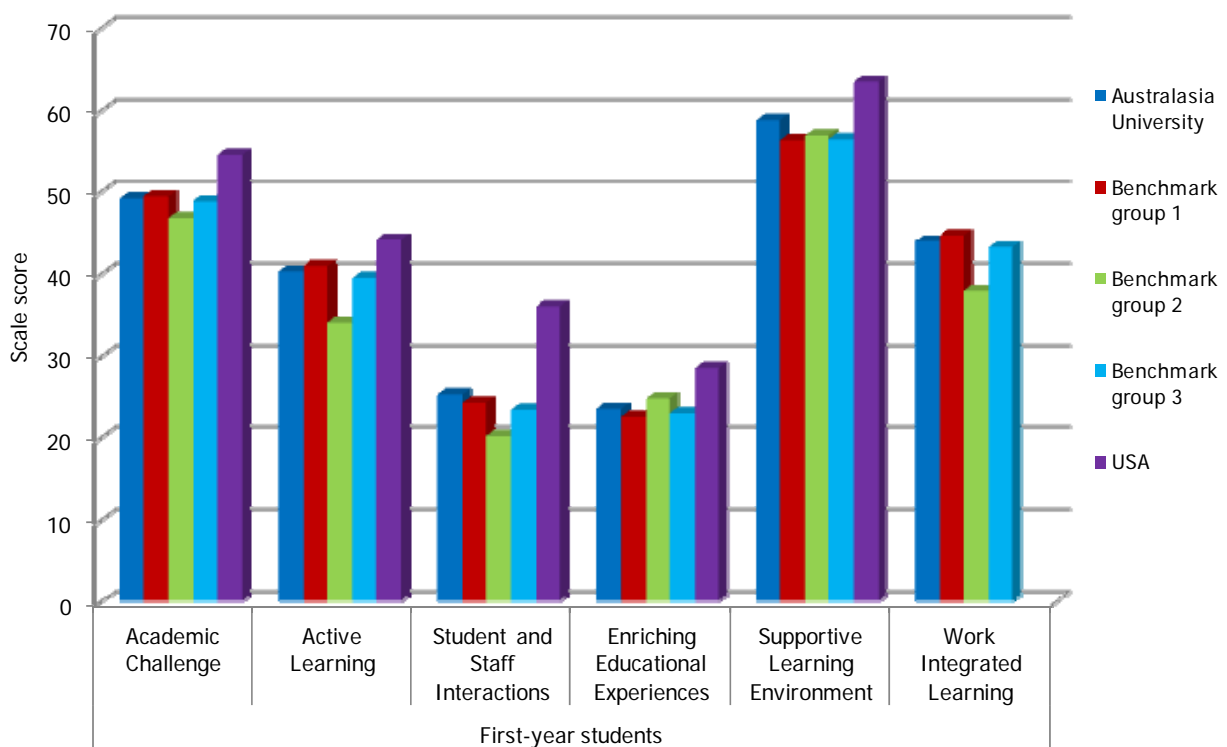
**Figure 1: Engagement and outcome scores for Australasia University by year level**

Engagement of first-year students is crucial for a range of reasons. It is important that new students adjust to study so that their chances of success, likelihood of completing and contribution to the institution can be enhanced. Figure 2 displays the engagement scores of first-year students from this institution alongside those from a number of benchmark groups.

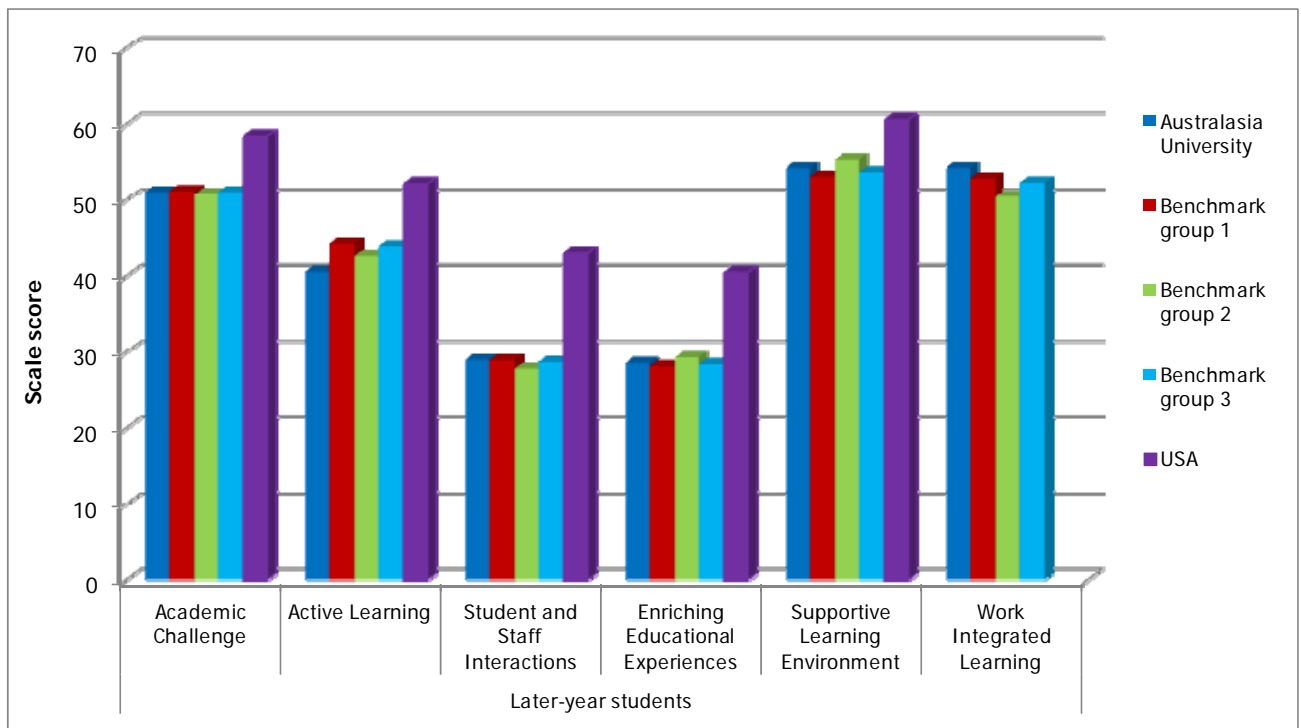
In Figure 3, the engagement scale scores of later-year students are compared with the benchmark group and overall scores for Australasia and North America. Examining these responses can provide further insight into the relative levels of engagement of students in

this institution. These later-year figures are important because they provide an indication of the perceptions and experiences of students accumulated over the years they have spent at the institution.

Comparing institutional results against a range of other measures enables institutions to assess their relative level of student engagement for this student cohort. It is best to compare results across groups within each scale, rather than make comparisons across scales. In general, a difference of five scale points may be considered a meaningful educational effect. Note that the Work Integrated Learning scale is not administered in the NSSE and therefore there are no comparisons with the USA results for this scale.



**Figure 2: First-year student engagement scale scores**

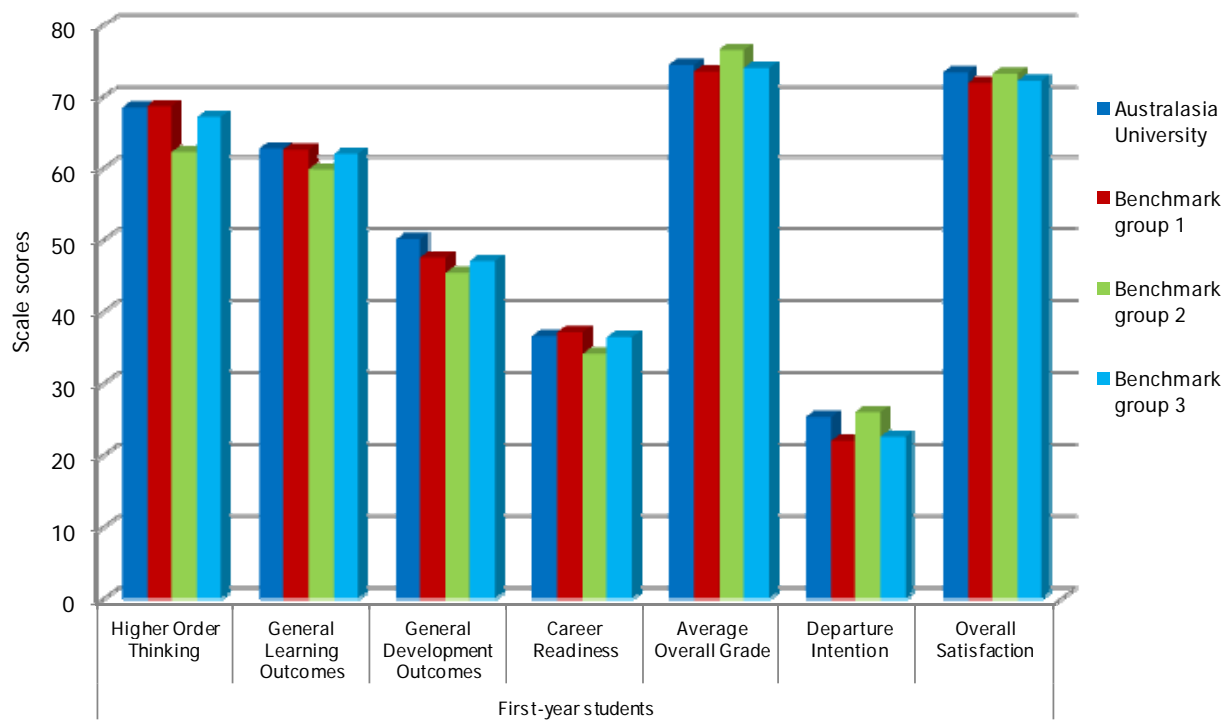


**Figure 3: Later-year student engagement scale scores**

### Outcome scale scores

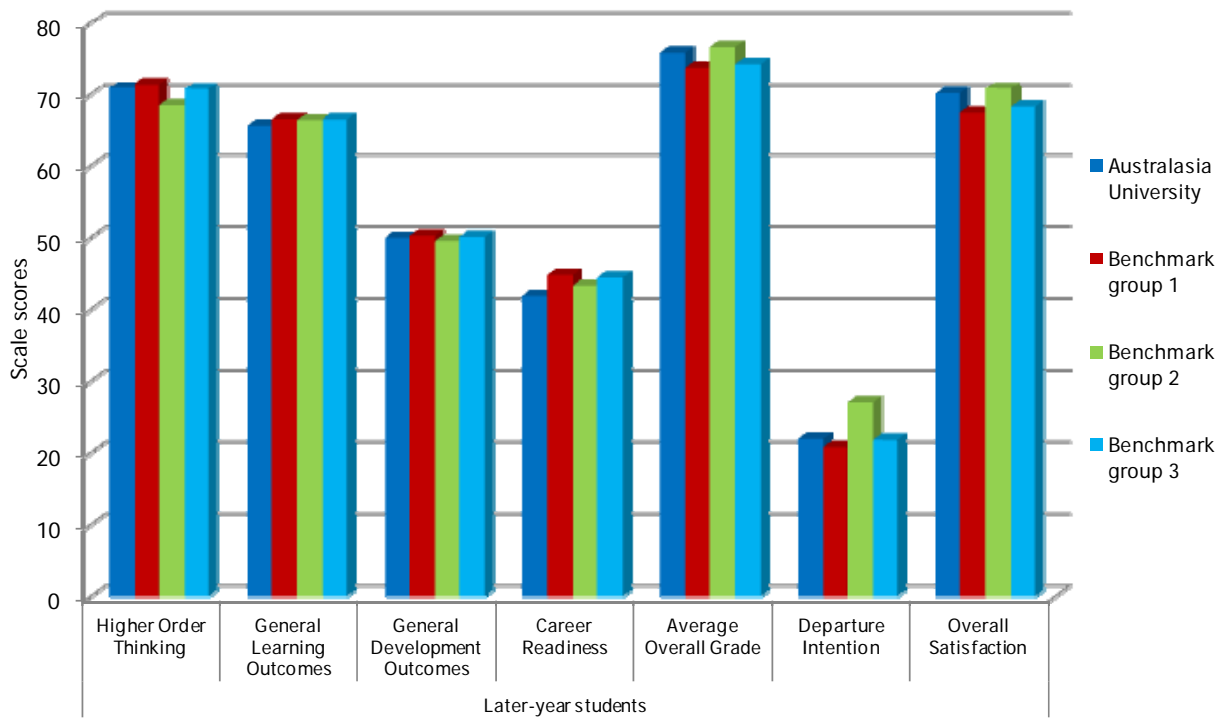
Several educational outcomes are measured in the AUSSE. The outcomes scales are: Overall Satisfaction, Departure Intention, Average Overall Grade, General Development Outcomes, Career Readiness, General Learning Outcomes, and Higher-order Thinking.

The outcomes measures from the first-year cohort of AUSSE respondents are displayed alongside several benchmarks in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: First-year student outcome scale scores**

Similarly, Figure 5 shows the outcomes scale scores for the final-year cohort of this institution, with scores from the institution's benchmark group and the overall Australasian score providing contexts for the institution-level results.

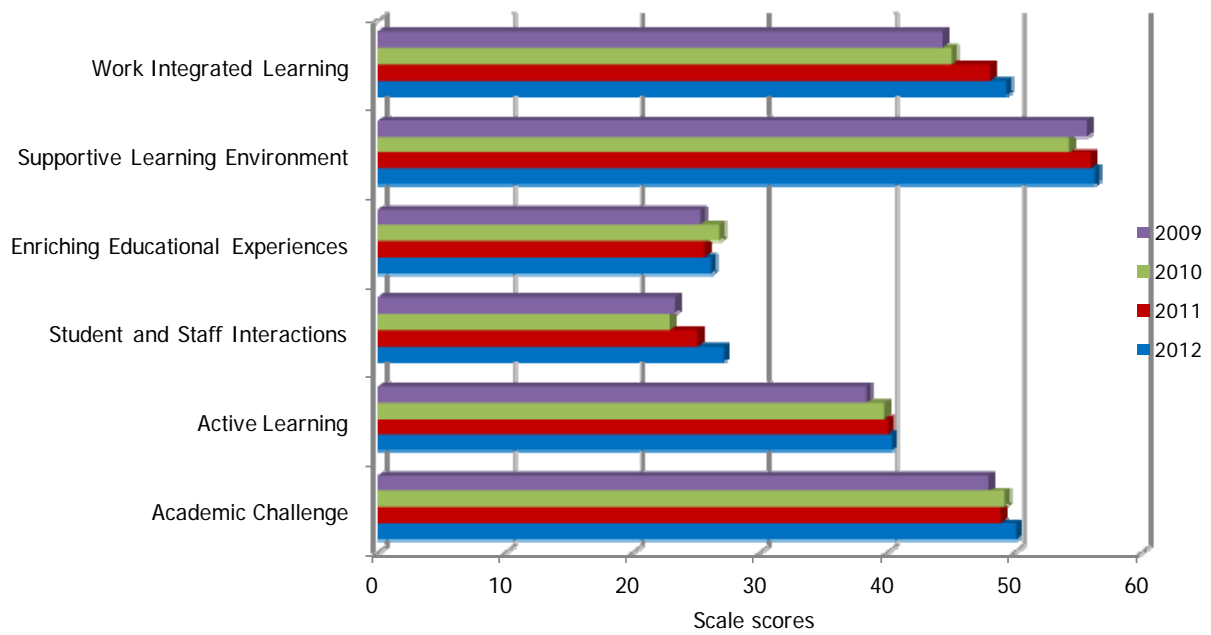


**Figure 5: Later-year student outcome scale scores**

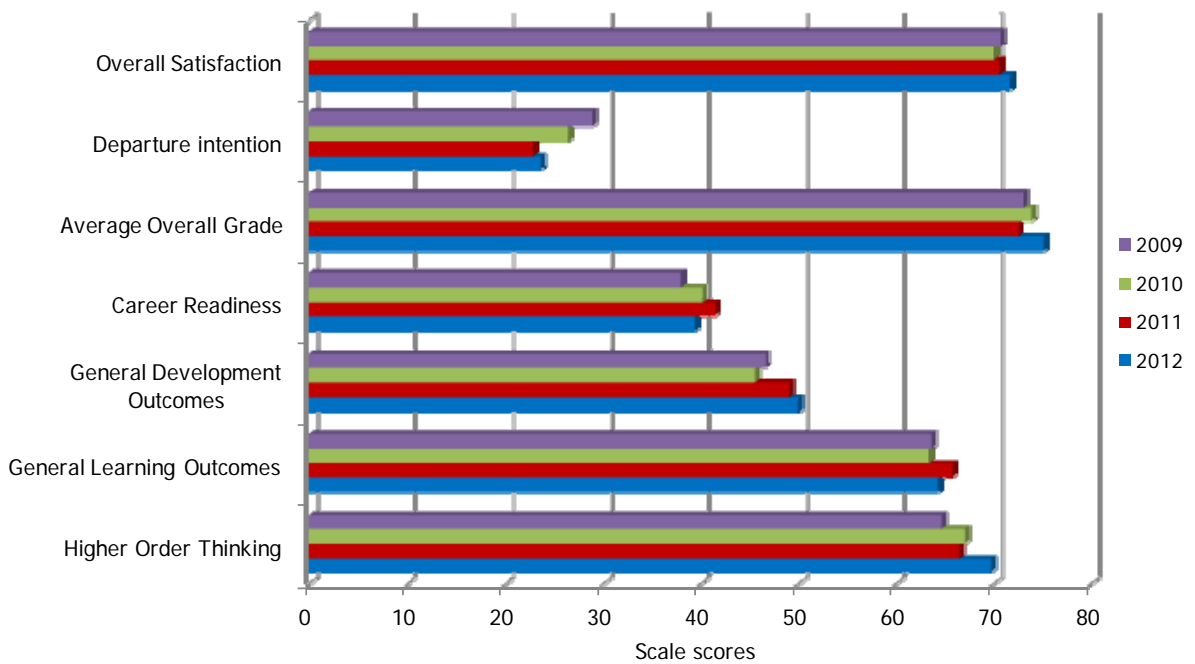
### Cross-year comparisons

Looking at how the AUSSE results change over time helps identify areas for improvement, set targets to improve outcomes and monitor the impact of improvements. Figure 6 and Figure 7 show the scale scores for student engagement and student outcomes respectively at Australasia University for each year of participation in the AUSSE.





**Figure 6: Annual engagement scale scores Australasia University**



**Figure 7: Annual outcome scale scores Australasia University**

## Subgroup summary results

Engagement varies across groups of students. For Australasia University, the distributions of the responses across a number of key demographic and context characteristics are shown in Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6.

**Table 4: Demographic subgroup scores for Australasia University**

	Australasia University	Female	Over 20 years of age	Equity group	Part-time or external	International	Non-English speaking background	First in family
Academic Challenge	50	51	50	51	48	53	51	49
Active Learning	40	40	40	42	31	46	44	37
Student and Staff Interactions	27	26	28	29	23	28	29	25
Enriching Educational Experiences	26	27	26	27	21	28	26	24
Supportive Learning Environment	56	56	55	59	54	56	55	58
Work Integrated Learning	49	50	52	51	53	39	43	49
Higher Order Thinking	70	70	70	71	65	71	69	67
General Learning Outcomes	64	65	64	66	61	63	64	64
General Development Outcomes	50	50	50	52	46	56	53	50
Career Readiness	39	39	40	42	36	40	45	37
Average Overall Grade	75	75	75	75	76	71	73	75
Departure Intention	24	24	24	29	24	26	25	23
Overall Satisfaction	72	72	70	73	70	65	68	73

**Table 5: Context subgroup scores for Australasia University**

	Australasia University	Internal mode	Full-time attendance	Living on campus	Government funded
Academic Challenge	50	51	51	48	51
Active Learning	40	45	44	42	42
Student and Staff Interactions	27	29	29	26	26
Enriching Educational Experiences	26	28	28	28	27

Supportive Learning Environment	56	57	57	62	57
Work Integrated Learning	49	48	49	41	49
Higher Order Thinking	70	71	71	67	72
General Learning Outcomes	64	65	66	63	66
General Development Outcomes	50	51	52	56	52
Career Readiness	39	41	41	37	40
Average Overall Grade	75	75	75	75	75
Departure Intention	24	25	24	22	24
Overall Satisfaction	72	72	72	71	72

**Table 6: Field of education subgroup scores for Australasia University**

	Sciences	IT	Engineering	Architecture	Agriculture	Health	Education	Business	Humanities	Creative Arts
Academic Challenge	47	49	54	48	51	49	52	50	51	53
Active Learning	35	42	44	41	33	43	42	38	39	49
Student and Staff Interactions	25	28	27	31	19	27	26	29	25	34
Enriching Educational Experiences	28	22	31	19	20	30	27	24	24	26
Supportive Learning Environment	51	58	59	57	54	58	58	53	58	55
Work Integrated Learning	39	49	52	50	49	55	61	48	43	50
Higher Order Thinking	65	64	75	66	69	69	71	68	71	77
General Learning Outcomes	59	70	71	56	58	66	65	63	65	64
General Development Outcomes	46	55	55	37	49	51	53	47	52	49
Career Readiness	34	55	43	37	47	39	36	40	36	46
Average Overall Grade	73	77	76	83	68	77	74	74	75	77
Departure Intention	25	21	21	14	31	24	21	24	27	31
Overall Satisfaction	66	76	74	71	69	72	76	70	73	69

## Using AUSSE data to promote change

AUSSE results provide a foundation of evidence for planning and monitoring change. This Executive Summary Report provides a broad outline of this institution's results for 2011. Using this report in conjunction with other resources and results from previous years will help to build evidence for identifying areas where improvement in engagement can be achieved.

For example, institutions have used their data to:

- run seminars with students, managers and teachers;
- benchmark results between institutions;
- prepare reports for specific divisions;
- run student focus groups and interviews;
- enhance teaching practices and learning space designs;
- hold institution-wide meetings to address problem areas; and
- integrate student management activities.

A range of resources are available to assist individual institutions, including:

- AUSSE 2012 Institution Report, which includes a copy of your institutions' unit-record data file;
- AUSSE Research Briefings and Reports; and
- AUSSE Enhancement Guides, available at <http://www.acer.edu.au/research/ausse>.