

## Getting involved with university

### What can I do to be more engaged with university?

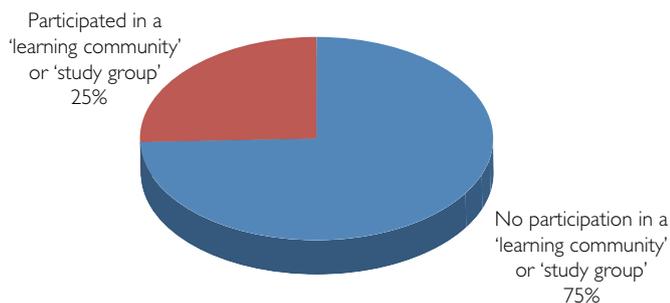
Student engagement is an idea focused on how learners interact with university. Student engagement is increasingly seen as being important for high quality learning and education.

There are a number of ways that you can become more engaged with learning, and get more out of your university experience, both in and out of the classroom. There are also many ways that your university can help you get more engaged.

### Seek help and advice

Your lecturers, tutors and other university staff want you to succeed and get the most out of university. If you're struggling with classes, or want to improve on the results you've been getting, don't be afraid to ask for help. Your teachers are there to provide you with feedback and advice, and there are also many other staff who you can turn to for assistance. Student services staff can help you in many ways. Learning skills staff can help you improve your writing skills, the counselling service can teach you ways to manage your time better and deal with exam stress, and librarians can help teach you ways to use library resources more effectively.

#### Participation in a 'learning community' or 'study group'



A great way to help you learn and get more out of your classes, while meeting new people, is to participate in a study group. If there's not a study group for the unit or programme that you're studying, it's easy enough to start one – just speak with your lecturer or tutor and they can help you organise one, or if you use an online forum, put an ad up there. The graph above uses information from the 2008 Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) to show the large proportion of students who have not yet participated in a study group or learning community.

### Enhance your educational experience

Although it seems that most of what you learn at university takes place within a lecture or tutorial or lab, there are many experiences outside the classroom that enhance your learning. Taking part in study abroad or student exchange programs, volunteering for your community, doing

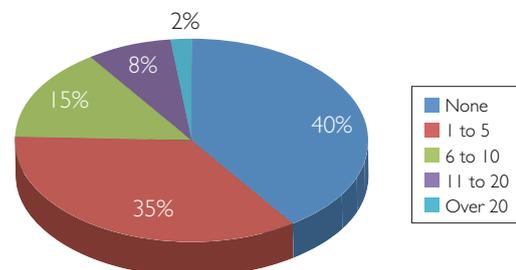
an industry placement or work experience, and even working on- or off-campus all have been shown to enhance learning.

### Strike a balance between study and fun

There's more to uni than studying all the time and it's important to get the balance between studying and having fun. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in extracurricular activities at uni.

There are heaps of clubs and events that you can join and with clubs for people interested in everything from mountain climbing to chocolate to musical theatre, there's really something for everyone. Joining a club gives you a chance to meet other students outside your classes, and can be a lot of fun.

#### Hours per week spent participating in extracurricular activities



University sports are another way to get involved and have fun while keeping fit too. You don't have to be a gym nut to take part – there are plenty of fun activities from yoga to ultimate frisbee to hockey to dance that you can get involved with. You'll have fun, meet new people and keep fit while doing it. The pie chart above uses data from the 2008 AUSSE to show the number of hours students spend each week participating in extracurricular activities. How many hours do you spend per week?

### What can your university do?

There's plenty that your uni can do to help increase students' engagement. The following are suggestions from students who've taken part in the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) that ACER runs in collaboration with universities from Australia and New Zealand:

- include interactive activities in lectures and tutorials;
- ensure lecturers and tutors are engaged teachers;
- link learning with current industry trends;
- provide more support for first-year students;
- ensure students know how and where to access student services;
- have clear learning outcomes for units and provide lots of feedback to students;
- lecturers and tutors should let students know of their availability; and
- encourage students to get involved in extracurricular activities.

### About this guide

This AUSSE Enhancement Guide forms part of the suite of resources developed by ACER and the broader AUSSE community to enhance students' engagement in effective educational practices. Visit [www.acer.edu.au/ausse](http://www.acer.edu.au/ausse) for further information about the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement.