

Overview

Each year the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) asks students at universities from Australia and New Zealand to reflect on the time they devote to various learning activities. The topics explored by the survey are linked to previous research on positive student learning outcomes. Results from the AUSSE can provide prospective students and university staff with insights into their university's performance.

The following responses reflecting students' engagement were provided by 800 randomly selected Australasian University first- and later-year students as part of the 2009 AUSSE survey.

Academic Challenge

Academic challenge can be defined as the extent to which expectations and assessments challenge students to learn.

76% of first-year and 80% of later-year students feel that their university places at least quite a bit of emphasis on spending significant amounts of time on academic work.

42% of first-year and 41% of later-year students spend more than 10 hours per week preparing for class, while 27% of first-year and 33% of later-year students spend five or less per week on homework.

Active Learning

Active learning is the extent of students' efforts to actively construct their knowledge, both inside the classroom and in the broader world.

41% of first-year and 53% of later-year students frequently ask questions or contribute to discussions in class or online.

49% of first-year students frequently work with other students during class and 46% on assignments with other students outside of class. 49% of later-year students frequently work with other students during class and 54% on assignments with other students outside.

20% of first-year students and 33% of later-year students have participated in a community-based project as part of their study during the current academic year.

Student and Staff Interactions

The student and staff interactions scale measures the level and nature of students' contact with teaching staff.

19% of first-year and 30% of later-year students often discuss their grades and assignments with teaching staff, while 33% of first-year and 45% of later year students frequently receive prompt feedback from teachers on their academic performance.

12% of first-year and 17% of later-year students frequently talk about career plans with teaching staff or advisors and 10% of first-year and 14% of later-year students often discuss ideas from classes or readings with teaching staff outside of class.

Enriching Educational Experiences

Enriching educational experiences indicates the level of students' participation in broadening activities.

By later-year, 34% of students have done a practicum or internship, 29% have done community service or volunteer work, 30% have participated in a study group or learning community, 19% have studied a foreign language and 7% have participated in study abroad or student exchange programs.

21% of first year and 26% of later year students spend more than five hours per week participating in extracurricular activities. 43% of first year and 37% of later year students do not participate in extracurricular activities.

11% of first-year and 8% of later-year students feel that their university very much encourages contact among students from different backgrounds.

Supportive Learning Environment

The supportive learning environment scale indicates a student's feelings of legitimation within the university community.

78% of first year and 78% of later year students report that they find other students friendly, supportive and help them feel belonged.

74% of first year and 74% of later year students find teaching staff available, helpful and sympathetic, and 58% of first year and 59% of later year students find administrative staff helpful, considerate and flexible.

Work Integrated Learning

Work integrated learning shows the level of integration of employment-focused work experiences into study.

36% of later year students frequently blend their academic learning with workplace experience.

By later year, 32% of students have taken part in industry placement or work experience and 74% of students feel that their experience at university has contributed at least quite a bit to their acquisition of work-related knowledge and skills.