



2022 - 2023 Australian and New Zealand **Student Wellbeing Survey.**

Research carried out by YouthInsight
November – December 2022

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Foreword



Dear Colleagues in Higher Education,

This eighth annual Studiosity Student Wellbeing report contains the results of our independent survey of 1,137 students at universities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The large-scale survey and report seeks to add another avenue for students to share their voice, thoughts, feelings, and expectations of study and university life.

Restrictions have been gradually lifted domestically and internationally, but 39% of students still prefer to undertake their study in a hybrid mode, in their words “so I can meet other students ... but prefer lectures to be online as it’s more flexible and allows me to work at my own pace.”

The profile of the ‘typical’ student has changed forever. More students than ever are juggling other responsibilities like work and family alongside their academic commitments (86% in 2022 up from 78% in 2021) and the sector must plan at the policy level for student experiences, plural. Macro changes in the ANZ region and the world - mean that university leaders are also acting on national benchmarks for student satisfaction (like that of Australia’s Quality Indicators for Teaching and Learning, QILT) as a matter of institutional and national urgency.

We will look at 2023 as a historical moment for academic integrity - with university leaders deciding whether to prioritise detection or integration, or a third path - to use this seismic social and technological shift as an opportunity to act, to fundamentally change the student experience for the better. This will inevitably look like an investment in students’ sense of belonging and satisfaction with the university and their learning experience.

Nevertheless, the findings show a disparity between the level of peer connection students experience, versus what they would ideally like. Preferences for online or in-person connection are heavily dependent on demographic, showing the key need for flexibility in support as well as delivery, for institutions.

Overall, this year’s survey points to many positive indicators for students in 2023, reflecting new student expectations and how the sector has risen to meet them with more support, more inclusive treatment, care for a student’s personal circumstances - and also how we will need to in coming years.

Professor Judyth Sachs

Chief Academic Officer, Studiosity

Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Provost Macquarie University and
Former Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching at Sydney University

Studiosity



We're so glad to have partnered up with Studiosity again this year to develop our understanding of students' wellbeing in 2023. With COVID-19 Restrictions having eased over the past year, focusing on Student wellbeing as they return to campuses and classrooms is as important as it's ever been.

Student Edge was founded on the principles of supporting and empowering young people, and with the information contained within this report, we can continue to do so. Our thanks go out to Studiosity for their work in assisting students with issues like academic and social pressures, and all that they do to support young people across the country.

With this report, it's our hope that schools, universities and other tertiary learning institutions will build the skills and tools to support young people in 2023. Students have such unlimited potential, and we feel it's crucial to empower them and support their wellbeing.

Jeremy Chetty

Co-Founder & Chief Product Officer,
Student Edge



Introduction



Background

Universities around the world partner with Studiosity to grow student success at scale, via 24/7 Formative writing feedback, discussion about core skills, and peer-to-peer connection.

For seven years, Studiosity has run an annual Student Wellbeing Survey with Australia's university students. In November 2022, YouthInsight, the full-service research arm of Student Edge, was commissioned by Studiosity to conduct the eighth wave of this research among university students in Australia and New Zealand.



Research objectives

This annual survey seeks to better understand and discuss the motivations, emotions, and demands of university students, and how to better tailor initiatives and solutions. The survey investigates key areas of student wellbeing.

This year, the survey focused on topics such as experiences of stress, importance of grades, experiences of cheating, optimism for the future, peer connection and institutional support.

In addition, results were benchmarked with previous survey waves to understand how behaviours and attitudes have changed over time.



Methodology & Sample

Studiosity produced the questions for this survey, and YouthInsight gathered the responses from students in Australia and New Zealand via an online survey. Australian sample was sourced from the Student Edge Panel as well as trusted panel partners. In 2022, the sample also included students from universities in New Zealand.

The survey ran from 14th November to the 6th December 2022 and gained a total of 1,137 responses, of which 995 were in Australia, while 142 were in New Zealand.

All Australian public universities were represented in the Australian sample. In New Zealand, all universities were represented. The students were 18 – 51 years old and consisted of a mix of both domestic (90%) and international (10%) students.

Australian data has been weighted to match a nationally representative profile of students by gender and state/territory, while the New Zealand data was not weighted given the small sample size.

Executive summary

Students desire a university experience that is flexible and meets their individual needs for community and support.



In 2022 as COVID-19 restrictions eased there was a return to on-campus study, however a hybrid approach continues to be the most common study mode.

Only 54% of students are currently studying using their preferred study mode. A blended approach is most popular overall, with 39% of students preferring this approach, just slightly preferred over campus only at 35%. Students feel the best way to make them feel supported in their preferred study method is for universities to offer flexible timetables that allow them to study on or off campus.

The proportion of students managing additional responsibilities on top of their study increased in the most recent wave.

86% of Australian survey respondents are working in some capacity (up from 78% in the previous survey). There is also an increase in those caring for a child or other family member (from 13% to 15% in the most recent survey).

Average grades in 2022 are in line with results from 2021 with no statistically significant differences.

In Australia and New Zealand, a distinction remains the most common grade among surveyed students (39%), followed by a credit (31%) and high distinction (17%).

71% of students report being stressed by their studies weekly or more often.

This is in line with the results from the 2021 survey (74%). Balancing study time with other responsibilities and commitments such as employment, social and extracurricular commitments is again the #1 source of stress (66%, up from 61% in the previous study).

Two thirds (68%) agree that there is a sense of community at their university, and 72% say they feel connected to their peers at least sometimes.

Despite this, most students have an appetite for greater connection with peers, with 2 in 3 students selecting that they would like to connect more with other students.

3 in 10 students have made use of their university's peer support program.

Of those students who didn't take part in a peer support program, 1 in 3 would have liked to.



1 in 3 students have made use of their university's academic support services.

Speaking with a teacher/lecturer is by far the most common support service used.

The proportion of Australian respondents who claim they are aware of other people cheating is trending down from a high of 30% in 2020, to 24% in 2021 and now 15% in 2022.

Lecturers or other university staff are the #1 source of information for academic integrity (50%).

1 in 4 students are very confident in their future post-graduation.

Students would like to see more internships and practical work experience provided within their courses and/or by their university.

Finally, it's important to consider there are differing needs for school-leavers and more mature students.

The insights show that expectations of these student populations, and the support resources they require, are very different. The report also seeks to provide a snapshot of the opinions and needs of international students and students in New Zealand, who were surveyed for the first time in 2022.

Key findings

Below are the key themes to help you understand current students in Australia and New Zealand and their wellbeing in 2023.



The survey identified two major student cohorts with different needs and experiences, which universities should consider

Throughout the survey results there is consistent statistical difference across multiple demographics. The first cohort is younger students, 18-23 years old, who typically enter undergraduate courses, primarily in metro areas, who are looking for a traditional university experience. While flexibility is important, they prioritise the on-campus experience. They are best positioned to devote themselves to full-time study and immerse themselves in university life and are therefore looking to their university to provide an exceptional overall experience.

Outside of this cohort, flexibility is crucial for a range of reasons explored more fully in the detailed

findings later in the report. Parents and carers, full-time workers, people living in regional/rural locations, those completing post-grad studies and those studying wholly online, approach their university studies differently to the younger on-campus cohort. Their need for flexibility is of utmost importance. Arguably, this cohort is under more pressure than the first (they have a larger number of competing responsibilities and/or stressors), however the results also suggest they have developed greater resilience and life skills to help manage this pressure.

The overall take-out of these results is that expectations of these student populations, and the support resources they require, are very different. Universities typically have a strong focus on high school graduates, but there may be opportunity to provide other student audiences with an equally exceptional education experience.

Average grades and stress levels remain the same as the previous year, despite more students having additional responsibilities such as work and caring. Levels of stress were found to be related to sense of community.

Average grades in 2022 are in line with results from 2021, with no statistically significant differences. A distinction remains the most common grade among surveyed students (39%), followed by a credit (31%) and high distinction (17%).

Similarly, levels of stress have not changed; seventy one percent of students report being stressed by their studies weekly or more often, in line with the results from the 2021 survey (74%).

Levels of stress were found to be related to a sense of community, with those who felt they had a strong sense of community slightly less likely to be stressed weekly or more (69%) than those who did not have this community sense (77%).

We observed some differences in the proportion of students managing additional responsibilities on top of their study. Eighty six percent of Australian survey respondents are working in some capacity (up from 78% in the previous survey). This may be due to the increased cost of living, or perhaps due to the increased availability of employment after the COVID-19 pandemic.

With average grades and levels of stress remaining consistent, universities must consider that students are often managing additional responsibilities alongside their studies and therefore have a variety of support and flexibility needs.



All students are online students

Irrespective of study method, flexibility is important to a wide range of students. A flexible, online approach is expected and also desired by all students from all types of backgrounds and demographics in 2023. Universities who do not provide easy access to flexible learning options are likely to receive push back and lower ratings from students, even those studying on-campus full time.

Flexibility is also important as stress levels have increased from the previous year. The number one cause of stress is “balancing study time with other responsibilities and commitments” which us up from 61% in the previous study to 66% in 2022. The difficulty of balancing multiple responsibilities is higher for women (72%), part-time students (76%), CALD students (70%) and those who are working (70%).

Students want more connections and peer to peer support

A potential negative of increased remote learning and fewer on-campus experiences is the gap between the level of peer connection that students have vs. their ideal with 2 in 3 students saying they would like greater interaction with their peers.

This is an opportunity for universities to implement and promote programs designed to foster peer relationships. While universities already have some programs in place, many students are unaware of these programs. Of those who did not participate in a peer support program, 30% said they are unaware of any at their university. Latent demand for these services also exists, with 34% of those who did not participate claiming they would be interested in joining a peer support program.

Confidence in future opportunities is variable

Two in three students are confident they will be able to obtain a job in their field of study within 6 months of graduation. Those studying nursing, medicine, business and law are most confident in their employability. At the other end of the scale, fewer than half of psychology, languages, or creative arts students are confident in finding a job within 6 months of completing their degree.

The number one way students believe their university can help their future opportunities is by increasing the number of internships and practical work experience opportunities available to them. This option was selected by 65% of respondents. Networking events are also considered important, with 48% selecting these as a way for them to meet people in industry and build professional connections that could help them find a job.

Study findings

The survey achieved a diverse sample of students while maintaining consistency with previous waves

Enrolment

Participants in this year's research are a mix of currently enrolled university students (82%) and those who completed their studies in 2022 (18%), a slight shift from the previous years' sample profile of 86% and 14% respectively.

In the most recent survey there is also a larger proportion of post-graduate students, with an increase from 15% to 20% from 2021 to 2022. However, the bulk of survey respondents (73%) were undergraduate students, with a further 7% studying a certificate or diploma.

Demographics

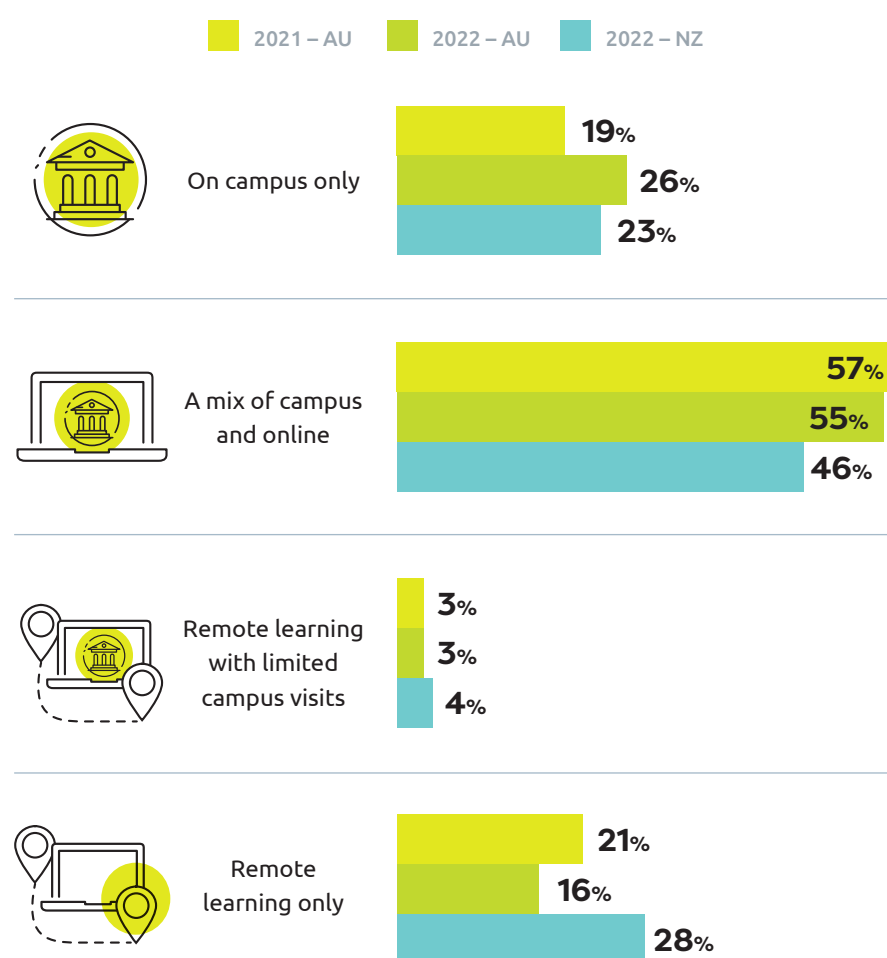
In line with the previous year, students in the survey are more likely to live in affluent areas (reflecting the urban location of most universities but also reflecting the financial position of those attending university). Only 28% of Australian students live in postcodes in the bottom 5 deciles for socio-economic position while 72% live in postcodes in the top 5 deciles.

The student population continues to be a diverse one, reflective of the broader Australian and New Zealand populations, with 3 in 10 speaking a language other than English in the home. The proportion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) students is higher in the 18-23 year old cohort (34% vs. 27% for 24+) and in metro areas (35% vs. 13% for regional/rural).

Study methods

There has been a return to on-campus study in 2022, however a hybrid approach continues to be the most common study mode.

TYPICAL STUDY MODE

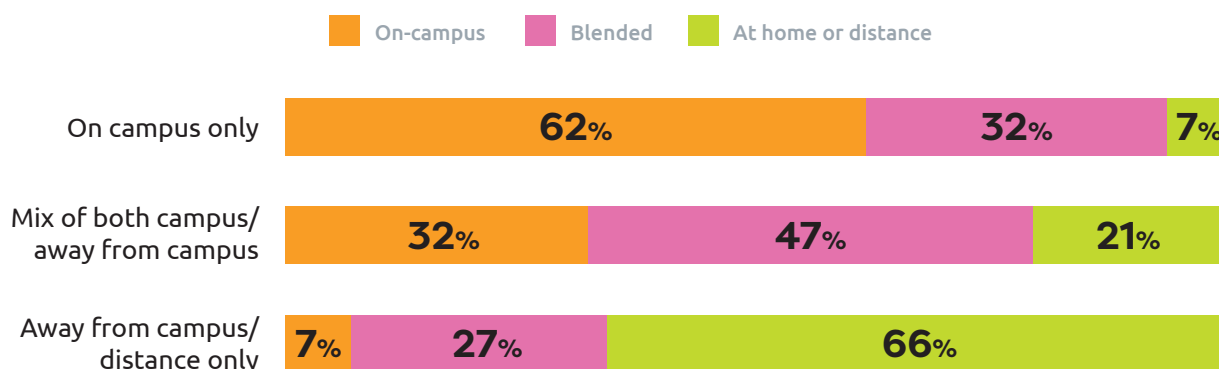


Only 54% of students are currently studying using their preferred study mode, i.e. students who are studying on-campus who prefer to study on-campus, or students using a mix of campus and online who prefer this mixed approach.

This presents both an opportunity and challenge to universities to develop their

courses and offer them in a variety of formats to enable students to study and engage using their preferred method. While a mixed approach may appear to deliver the best of both worlds, students in purely online or purely on-campus courses have a higher incidence of alignment with their preferred study method.

PREFERRED STUDY MODE BY CURRENT STUDY MODE



Looking at the total student cohort, a blended approach is most popular overall, with 39% of students preferring this approach, just slightly preferred over campus only at 35%. Purely online learning is least popular but still preferred by 25% of students. Younger students have a stronger preference towards on-campus study (40% of 18-23 year olds vs. 27% of those aged 24+). Conversely, older students have a stronger preference for online study (36% vs. 19% of 18-23 year olds).

There is also alignment between study mode and study weight with those studying full-time more preferable to on-campus learning (40% vs. 18% part-time students) while part-time students strongly prefer online (43%) or hybrid (40%) approaches. Online only learning is the preferred approach for parents/carers with 48% preferring an online only approach over hybrid (28%) or campus only (24%).

Open ended comments highlight common themes regarding study methods as well as the external factors that make a study method more or less appealing:

- Commute time being wasteful/inefficient for those who don't live close to campus.

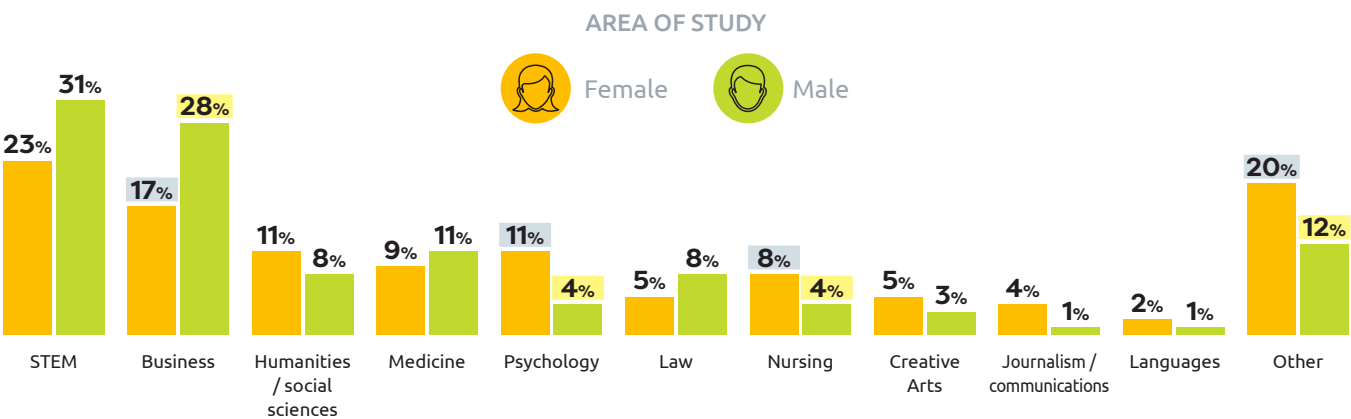
- Online learning is seen by some as more affordable as they are not spending money on commuting, petrol, parking, eating out etc.
- Introverts prefer the comfort of home while extroverts enjoy the socialisation aspect of campus and the ability to engage with teaching staff in-person.
- Campus is better for practical, hands-on learning, but online is better for lectures: Can watch at a convenient time, better audio quality vs. large auditorium with poor speakers, plus the ability to pause and rewind to go over complex concepts.
- On-campus learning provides better opportunities for discussion, exchanging ideas and learning from peers, which they view as integral to the university experience.
- Some feel they are more focussed on their studies when they are on-campus vs. at home where they can be easily distracted.
- Others place high importance on the flexibility of online learning and the ability to fit their study around work and/or family responsibilities.



The survey achieved a diverse sample of students while maintaining consistency with previous waves

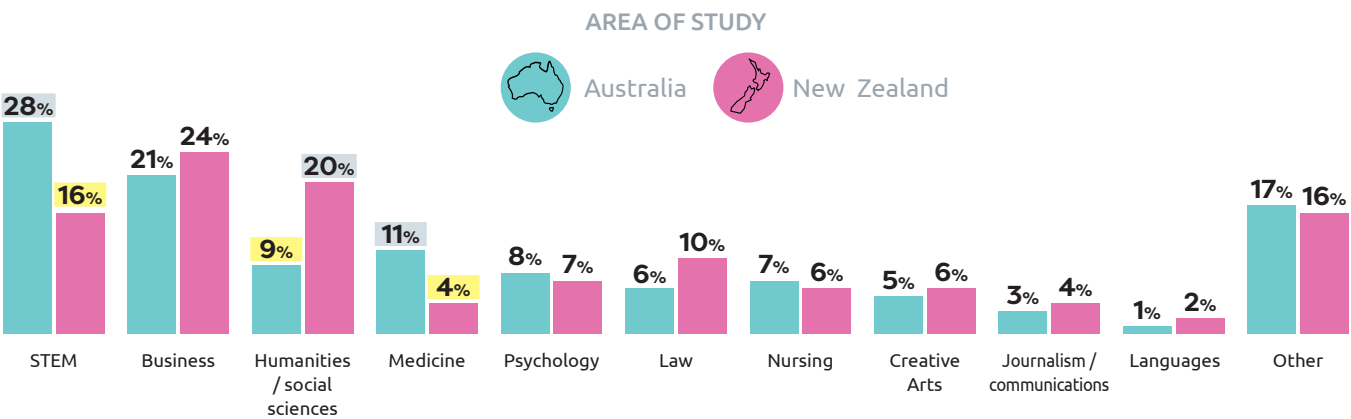
Study areas

Enrolments by study area are consistent year on year as are the strong gender skews observed in the previous survey. STEM, Business, Humanities and Medicine maintain their top positions.



Coloured boxes represent significant differences at 95% confidence.

While subject popularity is broadly consistent across Australia and New Zealand, there are some significant differences between study areas across the two countries. Based on our sample, we observed that humanities is much more commonly studied in New Zealand than Australia. Conversely, STEM and Medicine attract a larger proportion of students in Australia than New Zealand.



Coloured boxes represent significant differences at 95% confidence.

Most students balance full-time study with paid employment

86%

Working in AU
(up from 78%)

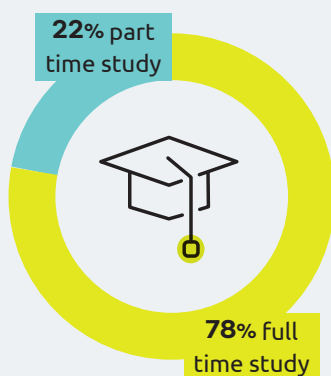
Q. What was your student status in 2022?

Eight in ten (78%) respondents to the survey are full-time students, with the remaining 22% studying part-time.

Full-time study trends downwards as the age of respondents increases.

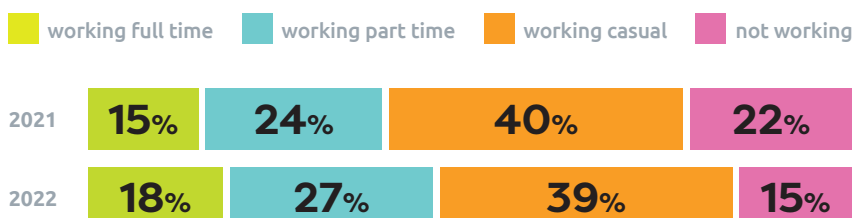
The New Zealand cohort of students included in the study this year are less likely to be studying full-time than their Australian counterparts (67% vs. 79%).

STUDENT SELF-REPORTED STUDY STATUS



Q. Were you employed in 2022?

EMPLOYMENT



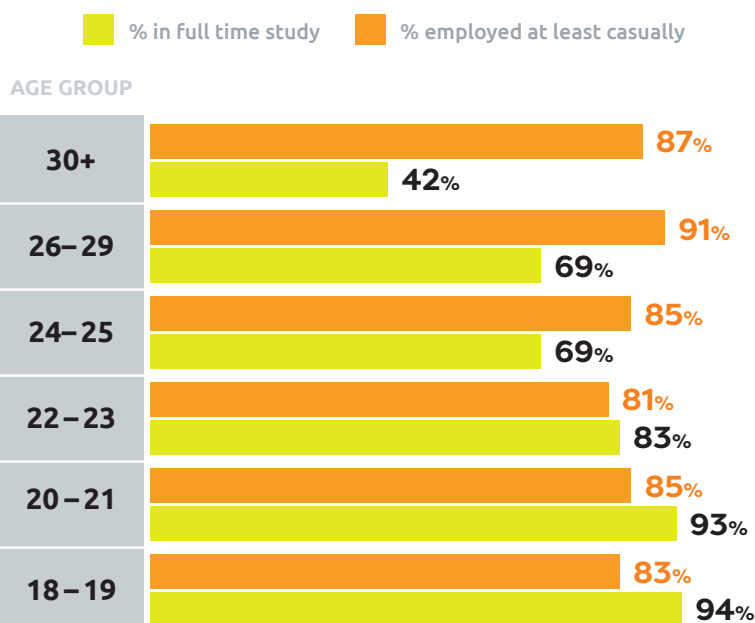
The proportion of students managing additional responsibilities on top of their study increased in the most recent wave. Eighty six percent of Australian survey respondents are working in some capacity (up from 78% in the previous survey). Of those working, 46% are casual, 32% are part-time and 22% are full-time.

There is also an increase in those caring for a child or other family member (from 13% to 15% in the most recent survey). The incidence of caring for others while also studying is significantly higher in New Zealand than Australia with 3 in 10 New Zealand students also managing parent /

carer responsibilities (27% NZ vs. 14% AU). This may possibly explain why students in New Zealand are more likely to be studying part-time.

Carer responsibilities are more likely to fall on those aged over 30 (60%), postgraduate students (31%), part-time students (39%), regional/rural students (23%) and those studying remotely (38%). Given these additional responsibilities these cohorts may require additional support and flexibility from their university while completing their studies compared with full-time, on-campus students.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY AGE



Students continue to aim high and achieve their grade aspirations

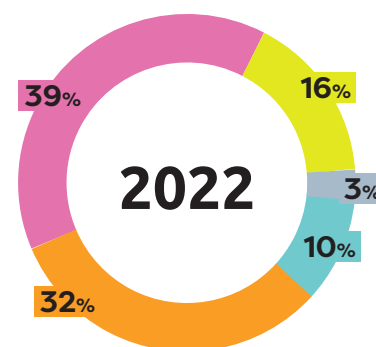
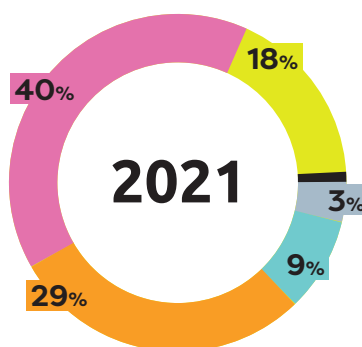
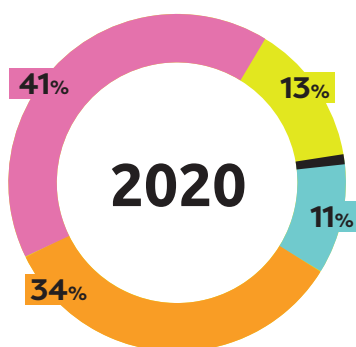
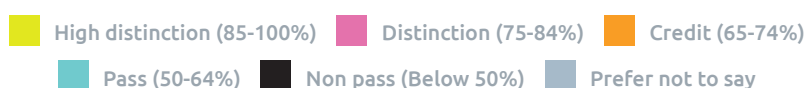
Q. What was your average grade in 2022?

Use the closest % range.

Average grades in 2022 are in line with results from 2021 with no statistically significant differences. In Australia and New Zealand, a distinction remains the most common grade among surveyed students (39%), followed by a credit (31%) and high distinction (17%).

Those aged over 24 are significantly more likely to achieve a high distinction (22%) than those aged 18-23 (14%). Those who are not working, are also significantly more likely to achieve a high distinction than those who are working (28% vs. 15% respectively).

AVERAGE GRADES



The survey also found that there is a relationship between average grades and confidence in being able to approach their university about getting help with assignments. Three quarters of those with a Credit, Distinction or High Distinction (76%) felt confident in being able to ask for help, compared 66% of those who achieved a Pass or Non-Pass.

There was also a relationship between average grades and experiences of stress. Those who achieved a Credit, Distinction or High Distinction were significantly less likely to feel stress weekly or more (70%) than those who achieved a Pass or Non-Pass (79%).

Those who achieved higher grades were less likely than those who achieved a Pass or Non-Pass to feel stressed by feeling the content hard to grasp, but were more likely to feel stressed by the high workload.



Seven in 10 students report being stressed at least once per week

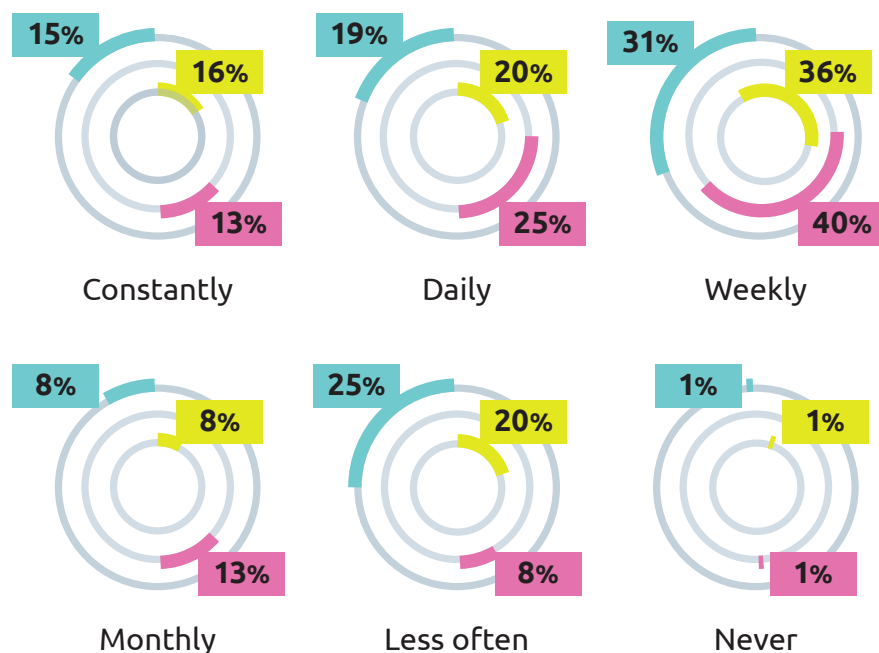
Q. On average, how often do you feel stressed by studying?

Seventy one percent of students report being stressed by their studies weekly or more often. This is in line with the results from the 2021 survey (74%) but slightly lower than in the 2019 survey (77%).

At the acute end of the scale, women are significantly more likely to report feeling stressed "constantly". The 20% of women who claim they are constantly stressed is nearly double the 11% of men who feel the same way.

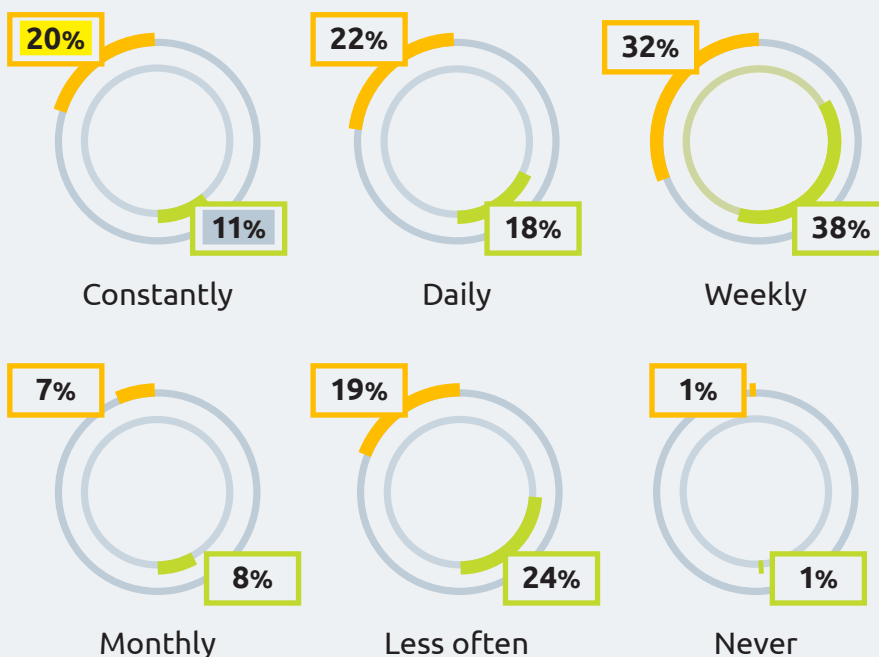
2020
2021
2022

FREQUENCY OF FEELING STRESSED BY YEAR



FREQUENCY OF FEELING STRESSED BY GENDER

Male
Female



Coloured boxes represent significant differences at 95% confidence.

Seven in 10 students report being stressed at least once per week

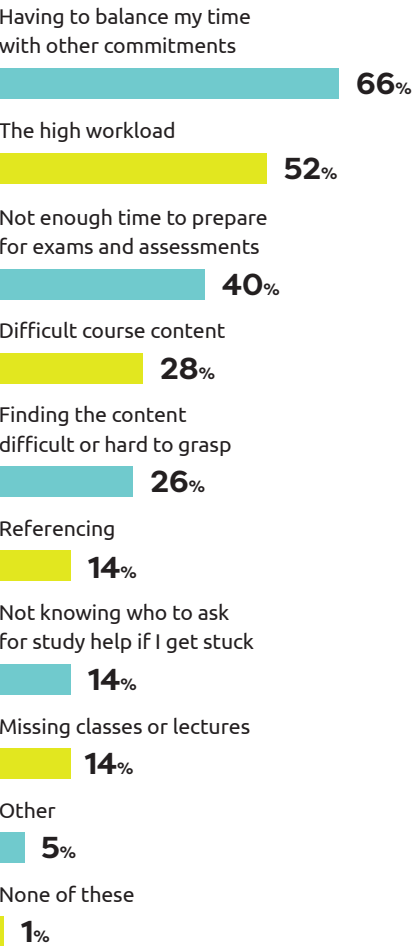
Q. Out of the following options, what makes you feel the most stressed about studying?

Balancing study time with other responsibilities and commitments such as employment, social and extracurricular commitments is again the #1 source of stress (66%, up from 61% in 2021). Balancing study time with other responsibilities is particularly stressful for women (72%), part-time students (76%), CALD students (70%) and those who are working (70%).

The high workload of studying is the next most common source of stress (52% of students, up from 49% in 2021). This has changed since 2018, where the workload or amount of study was the number one source of stress, followed by balancing workload at number two.

Younger students are more likely to be stressed by the high workload (56% of 18-23 year olds vs. 46% of those aged 24 or older). Younger students are also more likely to be stressed by difficult course content (32% vs. 21% of older students). Conversely, younger students were less stressed by referencing with only 10% of 18-23 year olds selecting referencing as a source of stress. Of those aged 30+, 23% selected referencing as a source of stress, placing it in the #3 position for older students.

CAUSES OF STRESS



Additional feedback about stress frequently mentioned time, study workload and other commitments.

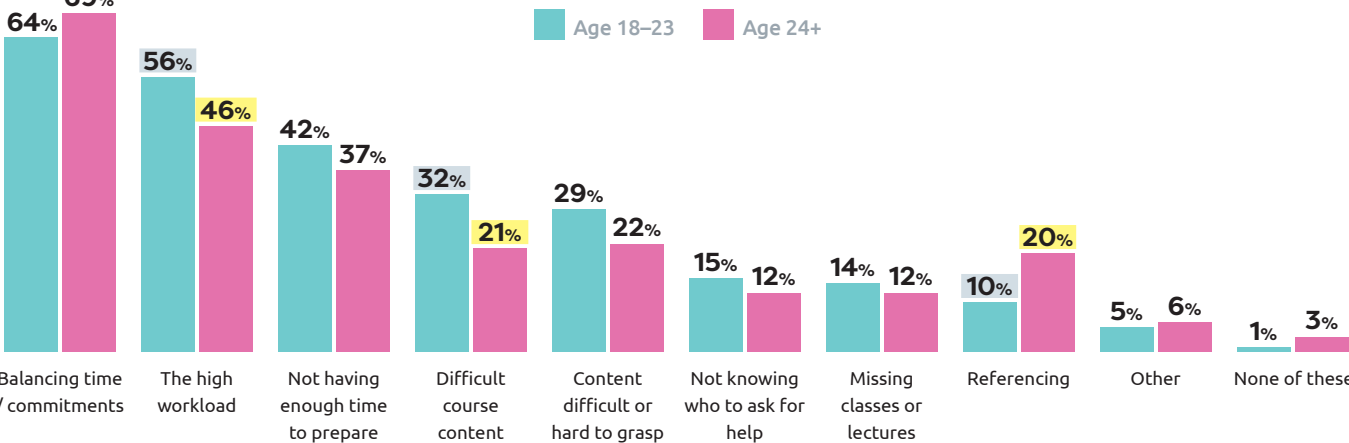
“With having to work to support myself financially and being a full-time student, the workload of my university assessments and the amount those assessments needed for a minimal pass mark, is what I found the most stressful.”

“Workload is extremely difficult to manage with other life commitments.”

“Juggling full-time work while trying to graduate with a high GPA is a struggle.”

“I think it is important to understand that many students need to work to pay their way, while at the same time keeping a full-time study load to be eligible for Centrelink benefits.”

CAUSES OF STRESS BY AGE



Coloured boxes represent significant differences at 95% confidence.

Others focussed on the competitive pressure placed on them, often by themselves.

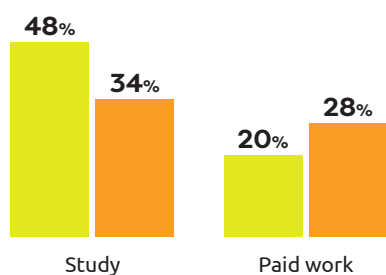
“I have high aims and often feel anxiety and doubt in achieving them in an efficient an effective manner.”

“My degree is fairly small so I constantly felt like I was being pitted against my peers and stressed that it was obvious I was struggling when it seemed like most weren’t.”

“Being a music student, your fellow students were competition which did not help.”

“I’m a single mum, work full-time, high study load and set high expectations for myself.”

Interestingly, the data showed a correlation between feelings of stress and connection with other students. Those who said that they would like to connect with students more were stressed more often (74% feel stressed weekly or more, compared to 66% who are happy with their level of connection with other students).



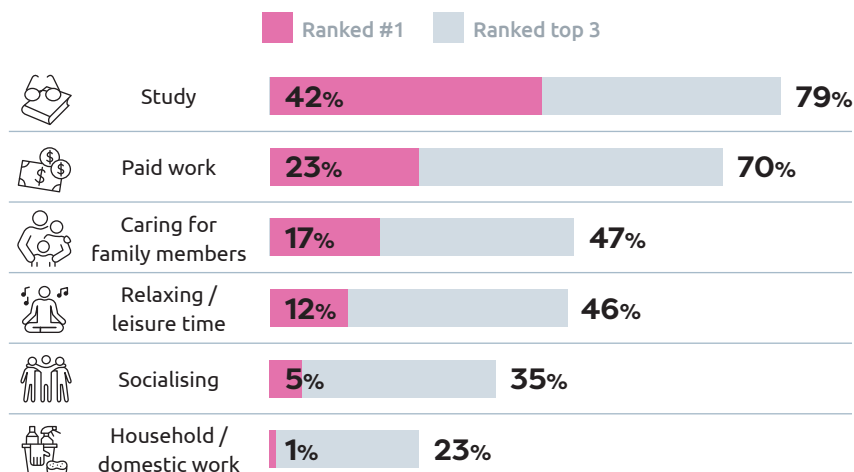
Q. If you could choose, how would you prioritise the following, in terms of how you would spend your time?

Please rank your answers from highest preference (1) to lowest (6).

Students would prefer to prioritise their study time if they were able to, with 8 in 10 selecting this as their number one priority. This is followed by paid work, which 7 in 10 selected as one of their top 3 priorities, highlighting the importance to many of generating an income while studying.

Surprisingly, only half of students listed socialising in their top three priorities (46%). While caring for family members was only ranked as a top three priority by half of students (47%), among those with caring responsibilities, 89% placed this in their top three, while 47% said this was their number one priority.

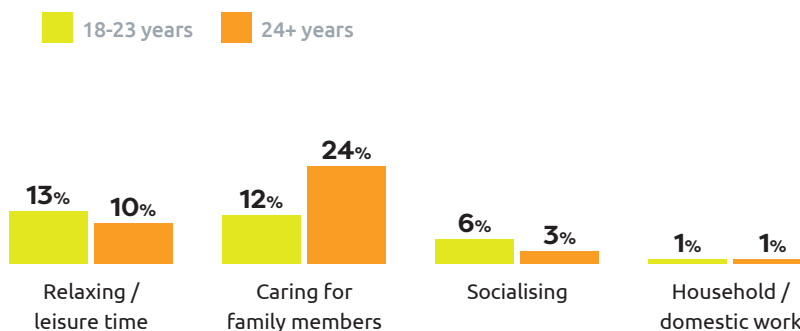
PRIORITY PREFERENCES



The challenges faced balancing study time and other responsibilities are more evident for older students who have greater variability in the items they rank as their #1 priority. Paid work is also of relatively higher priority for:

- Part-time students (35% vs. 19% of full-time students)
- Regional and rural students (32% vs. 21% of metro students)
- Non-CALD students (25% vs. 17% of CALD students)

#1 PRIORITY



Students want flexibility and a greater sense of community

Q. What was the main factor you considered when selecting your degree / university?

Course offerings are the primary driver of degree / university selection (37%), followed by location (20%) and the option for flexibility in study methods, i.e. online vs. on-campus (14%). Course offerings are particularly important to women (41% vs. 32% of men).

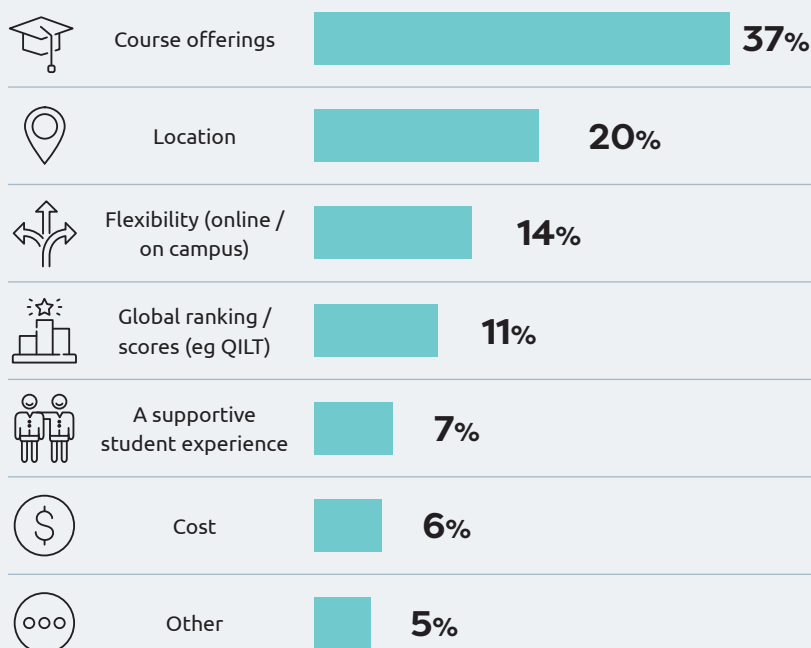
Flexibility in study modes (online / on-campus) rises into position #2 for a range of audiences who value the ability to take a flexible approach to study:

- **Students aged 24 or older**
(24% vs. 9% 18-23 years)
- **Part-time students**
(30% vs. 10% full-time students)
- **Regional students**
(23% vs. 13% metro students)
- **Parents / carers**
(31% vs. 11% non carers)

While not a primary driver of university selection, global rankings do have an influence over some applicants. They are significantly more important to:

- **Men**
(14% vs. 9% of women)
- **18-23 year olds**
(14% vs. 7% of older students)
- **Full-time students**
(13% vs. 6% of part-time students)
- **Metro students**
(13% vs. 4% of regional/rural students)
- **CALD students**
(16% vs. 9% of non-CALD students)

DEGREE/UNIVERSITY SELECTION FACTOR



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement "There is a strong sense of community at my university"?

Two thirds (68%) agree that there is a sense of community at their university. This is in line with the 66% of students who felt they were part of a learning community in 2019.

As shown in the chart on the next page, those who agreed they had a strong sense of community were most likely to be:

- 1st year students
- 18-23 year olds
- Those studying on-campus or mixed mode
- Full-time students
- Those studying in a metro areas.

Many factors contribute to a sense of community at university, but it is clear from the results that the on-campus experience and full-time engagement correlate strongly with feelings of community.

The challenge for universities, as the student population and their study methods diversify, is how to engage audiences other than the full-time, on-campus, undergrad cohort with the university community and provide a sense of place and connection.

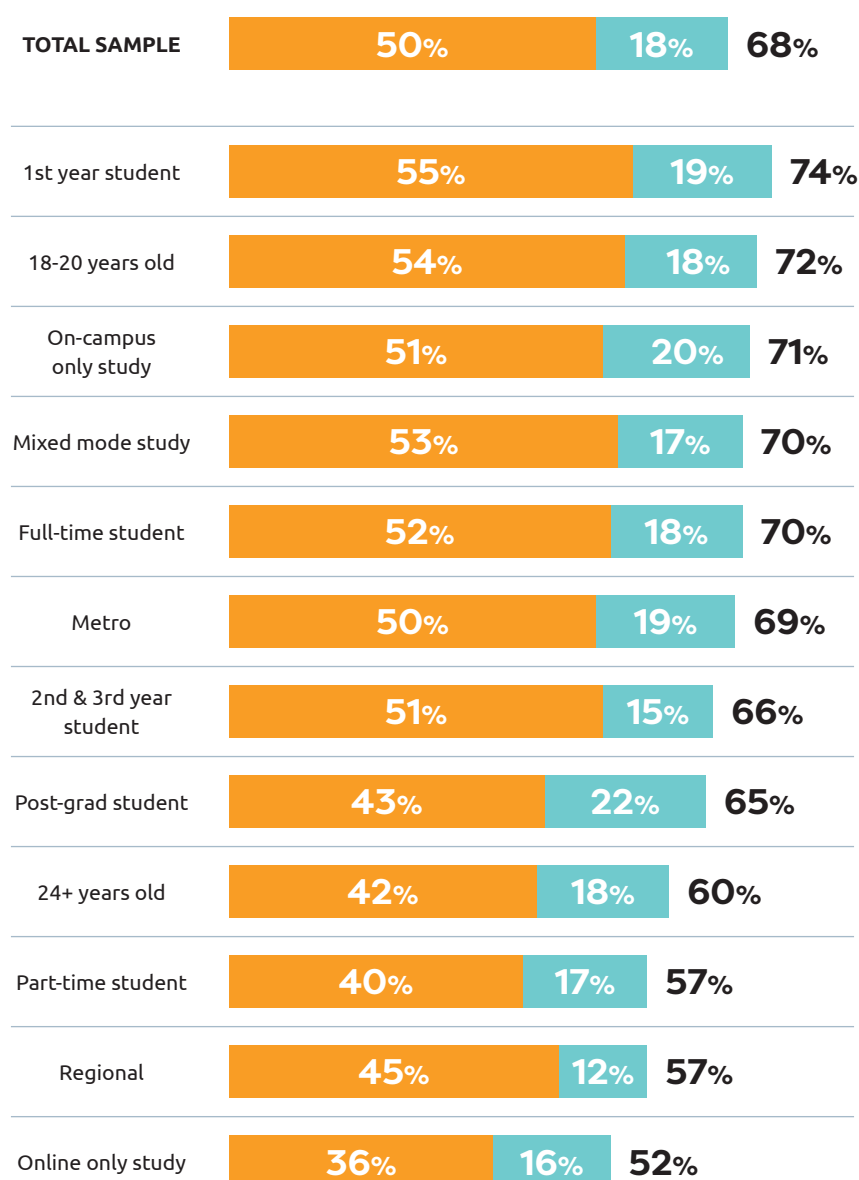
Students were more likely to feel a greater sense of community if they also felt that their university makes it easy to connect with other students. Sense of community was also higher for those with a greater sense of support, in particularly mental health support, 24/7 study support and also scheduled workshops to improve referencing skills.

Sense of community was also found to be related to levels of stress, with those who felt they had a strong sense of community slightly less likely to be stressed weekly or more (69%) than those who did not have this community sense (77%).



AGREE "STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY"

■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Total agree



Q. What would make you feel like there is a greater sense of community at your university?

Students were asked an open-ended question about what would make them feel a greater sense of community at university. The most common suggestion related to on-campus events and activities, or encouraging students to visit campus more often (46%).

"If there was more participation in clubs and uni-wide events."

"Increase use of uni organised social events and promotions (e.g., free food)."

Many comments related to greater access to social groups, clubs and societies.

"More accessible extra-curricular activities and social events. More opportunities specific to the degree for students."

"If there was more participation in clubs and uni-wide events."

Some comments related to greater peer and study support (10%).

"More social clubs and school wide events to foster a sense of community and connection between students."

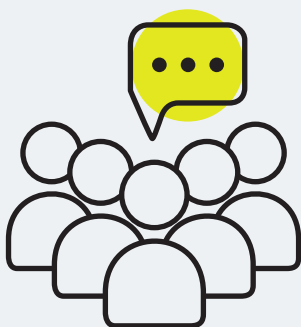
Students want flexibility and a greater sense of community

“If there was more participation in clubs and uni-wide events.”

Lastly, some mentioned they would like their university environment to be a place that naturally facilitates friendships, socialising or community (8%).

“Less cliquey / easier to make friends rather than having everyone already in groups.”

“[I would like it] if others were more willing to make friends.”



Q. What would make you come to campus more often?

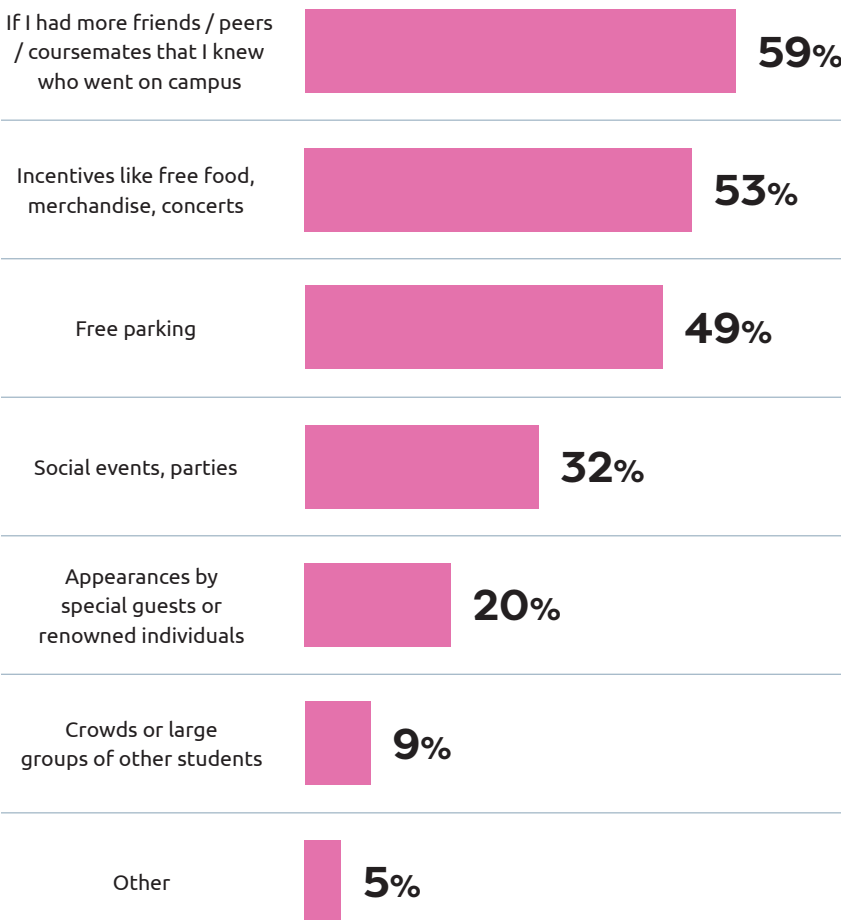
Having a social network on-campus is the number one incentive to encourage students to come to campus more often, which presents universities with a chicken / egg conundrum. Students don't want to come to campus without a social network to tap into but they are less likely to form that social network if they're not on-campus.

Secondly, free food, merchandise and concerts are also an attraction for many. In third position, reflecting some of the open-ended feedback received earlier in the survey, free parking is an attractor for half of students.

Some key differences in attractors between sub-groups are evident in the survey:

- Younger students (18-23 year olds) have a stronger preference for the options “if I had more friends who went on-campus”, “free food, merchandise, concerts” and “social events/parties” than older students.
- Men have a stronger preference than women for the options “social events/parties”, “appearances by special guests” and “crowds or large groups of other students”.

CAMPUS ATTRACTORS



Most feel supported by their university in their chosen study method but there is room to grow awareness of support services

Q. You said your preferred uni experience is being on-campus/blended/online-only. Do you think your university supports you to study this way?

Eight in ten feel their university supports their preferred study mode (while also noting that only 2 in 3 are currently studying using their preferred study mode).

Those currently studying online, whose preference is also to study online, are more likely to feel their university supports online study (85% agree) than those currently studying at campus or in a mixed approach who would prefer to study online (only 68% of this group agree their university supports online study). This suggests that there is a subset of students who would like to study online but don't feel supported to do so by their university.



85%

Feel supported
On-campus



78%

Feel supported
Blended



76%

Feel supported
Online-only

Q. In which of the following ways, if any, has your university made you feel supported to learn in the way you want to?

Those studying online are more likely to claim that their university supports them by making it easy to study online and offers flexible schedules. Those studying on-campus are more likely to agree their university makes it easy to connect with other students and provides mental health support.

These differences reflect the strengths and weaknesses of each study method.

Open ended comments in response to this question highlight the importance of making lecture materials available online, even for those attending campus full-time, as well as the difficulty of engaging with inflexible course structures.

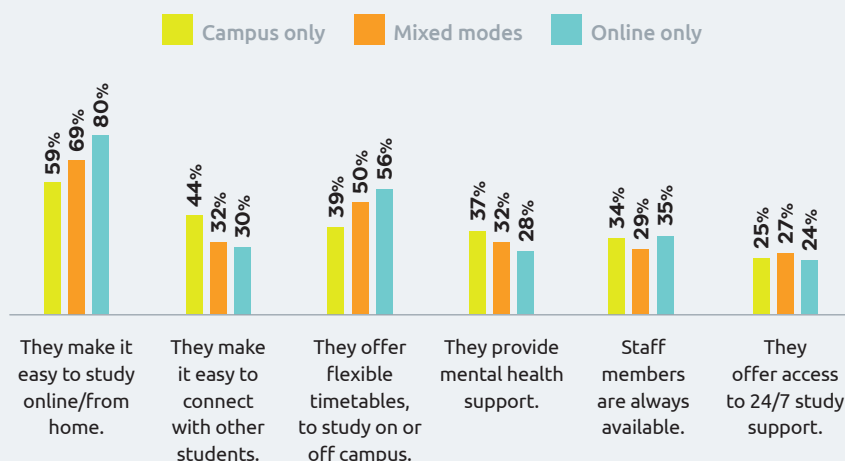
"They have stopped providing online options for some classes which makes it difficult when you are sick or can't come in. They should always have an online option each week for students who are sick so they don't feel they have to come in to keep up."

"Online content is entirely dependent on the lecturer/course coordinator."

"[My university's] medical degrees are highly inflexible, rigid and unforgiving. Flexibility is not an option, missing any class time is not an option."

"When I started my degree in 2020 the online learning wasn't great quality but this has improved as a result of COVID."

SUPPORT BY CURRENT STUDY MODE



Most feel supported by their university in their chosen study method but there is room to grow awareness of support services

Q. What would make you feel more supported by your uni to study in your preferred way?

Students feel the best way to make them feel supported in their preferred study method is for universities to offer flexible timetables that allow them to study on or off campus. Making it easy to study at home and making staff members more available are also important. These results are consistent across demographics, irrespective of current study mode.

Open ended comments cited frustration with the rolling back of online learning options with on-campus students wanting to take up flexible learning approaches when it suits them.

“Uni has been going backward since COVID. Back then, online options were readily available for students. Now, if you choose to be an on-campus student, certain online options are blocked off.”

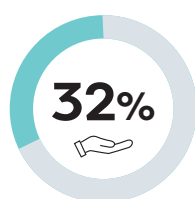
“While I do prefer in-person learning, I would like additional support online as well (allow flexible delivery for on-campus students than restricting the online delivery to external students only)”

Others cited difficulties with timetabling.

“Often a lot of the days and times are really limited to choose from when registering in a class. Makes it difficult around my work timetable.”

“There needs to be subjects that actually run outside the 10 am to 3 pm time slots so that people working can undertake them.”

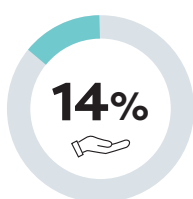
HOW TO MAKE THEM FEEL MORE SUPPORTED TO STUDY



Flexible timetables, to study on or off campus



Make it easy to study online or from home



Staff members being more available



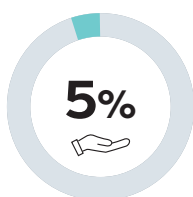
Make it easy to connect with other students



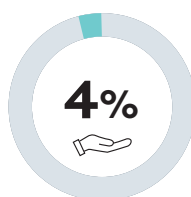
Access to 24/7 study support



Access to mental health support



Other



None of these



Q. Have you ever used one of your university's academic support services?

One in three students have made use of their university's academic support services. Use of these services is higher for:

- Students in New Zealand (46% vs. 33% in Australia)
- Students aged 24 or older (41% vs. 32% 18-23 year olds)
- Women (37% vs. 32% men)
- Parents and/or carers (47% vs. 33% non carers)

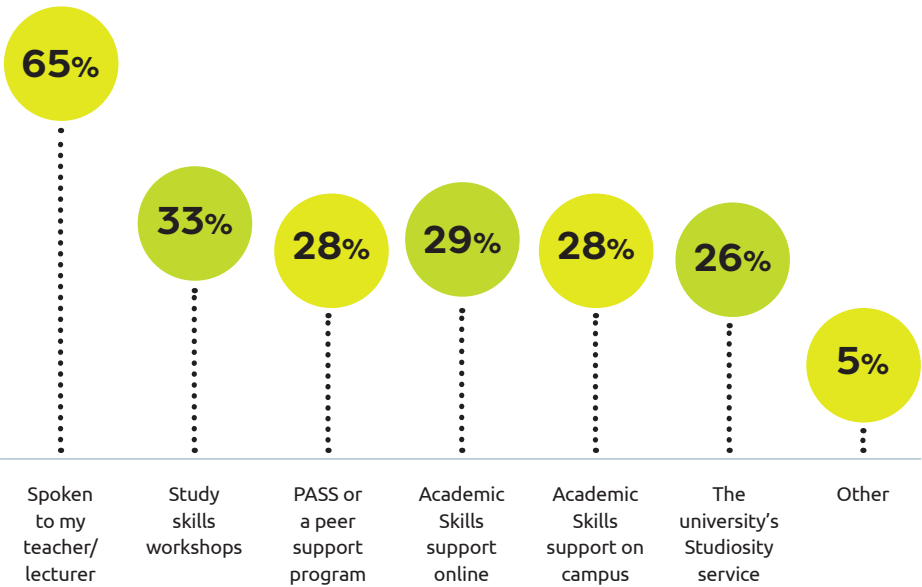


Q. Which of the following have you used before?

Speaking with a teacher/lecturer is by far the most common support service used, likely because of the ease of accessing these staff, the existing relationship between teacher and student, and the closeness of teachers/lecturers to the course material. There are no demographic differences in the types of support services accessed.

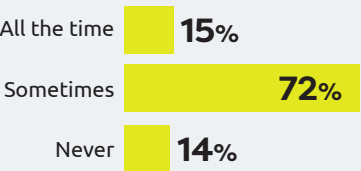


ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES ACCESSED



There are opportunities to grow feelings of peer connection as well as awareness and appeal of peer support programs

Q. How much do you connect with other students?



While only 15% of students feel heavily connected to their peers, the majority do feel some level of connection with only 14% feeling completely disconnected. Connection is highest for:

- **18-19 year olds** (20% all the time) and lowest for those aged 30+ (20% never)
- **Full-time students** (89% all the time / sometimes vs. 74% for part-time students)
- **Metro students** (88% all the time / sometimes vs. 78% for regional/rural students)
- **On-campus students** (94% all the time / sometimes for mixed mode students (89% all the time / sometimes vs. 64% for online only students)
- **CALD students** (92% all the time / sometimes vs. 83% for non-CALD students).

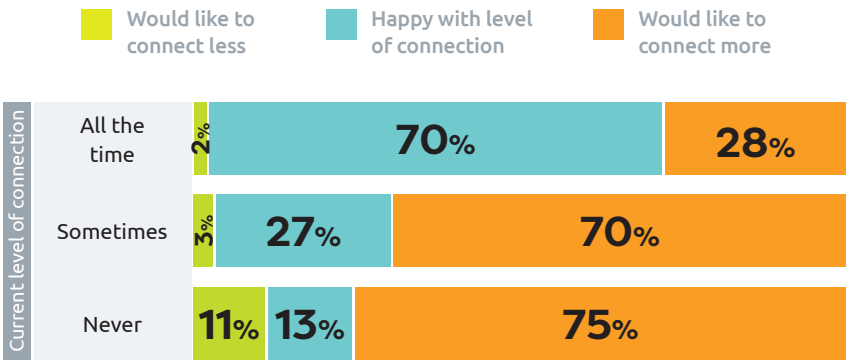


Q. Do you connect with other students as much as you would like?

Most students have an appetite for greater connection with peers, with 2 in 3 students selecting that they would like to connect more with other students. Universities should look to implement more opportunities for connection for those groups who currently over-index on “never” connecting with others i.e. those over 30, part-time students, online only students

and regional/rural students. Interest in greater connection is strongest in the 18-23 year old age group (70% want more). As mentioned earlier in the report, there is a correlation between level of connection and feelings of stress; students who said that they would like to connect with students more were stressed more often.

INTEREST IN CONNECTING MORE BY CURRENT LEVEL OF PEER CONNECTION

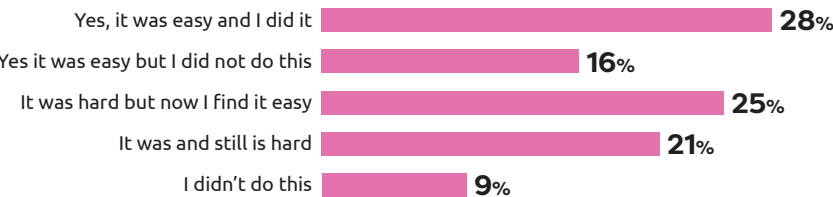


Q. Was it easy to ask other students questions when you started your degree?

Students are near evenly split on whether they found asking questions of other students easy or hard when they first started their degree. One in four women still find asking questions of others difficult, significantly higher than the 14% of men who claim they still find this difficult. Younger students (18-23 year olds) are also significantly more likely to struggle with this than their older

counterparts (25% vs. 15% respectively). Combining age and gender, 29% of women aged 18-23 years old continue to find asking questions of others difficult. Increasing the engagement of young women with their peers and education by increasing their confidence and creating a safe space for asking questions is an area that universities could place greater investment into.

EASE OF ASKING OTHER STUDENTS QUESTIONS



Q. How would you prefer to connect with another student?

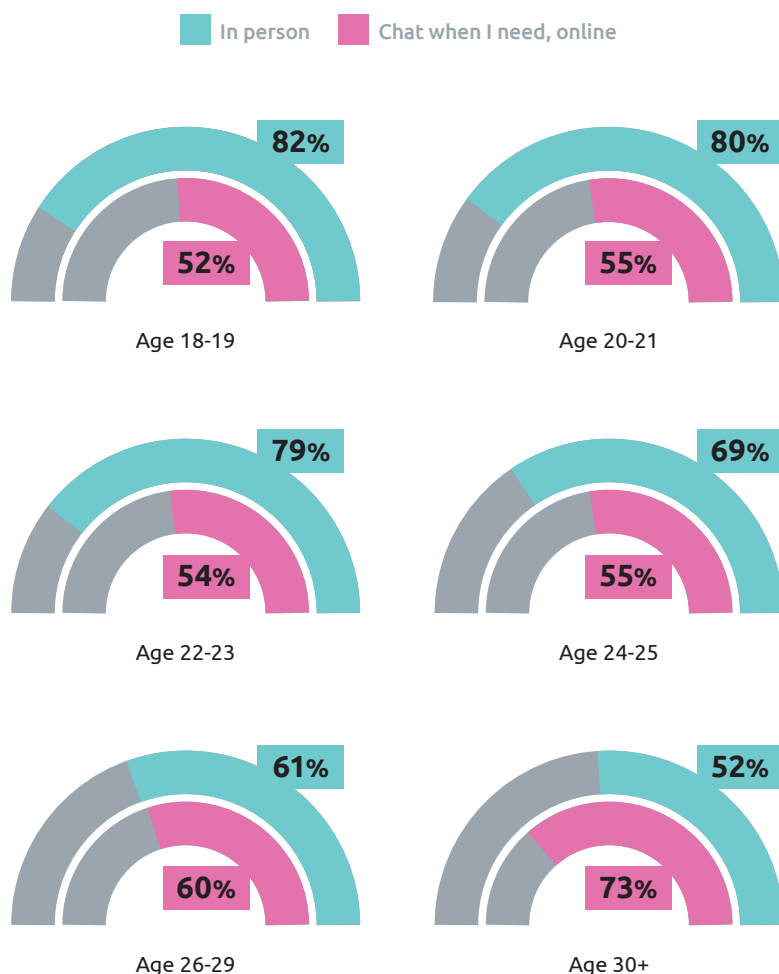
There is a negative correlation between a preference for in-person connection and age. Younger respondents have a stronger preference for in-person connection while older respondents prefer online. This potentially reflects older students' limited time and need for greater flexibility as they fit study around their other commitments.

A similar skew towards connection in-person vs. online is seen in those who are studying full-time vs. part-time, on-campus vs. online, in a metro area vs.

regional/rural area and in those who are parents/carers vs. not.

However, given both connection types score above 50% for all age groups, universities need to foster a range of different peer connection methods to maximise the opportunity for students to connect with others in a way that best suits them through their education journey (noting that this preference may change over time and in different circumstances).

PEER CONNECTION PREFERENCE



28%

used peer support services

Q. Did you use Peer Support in your first year? Why not?

Three in ten students have made use of their university's peer support program. Use of these services is higher for those attending campus full-time (33%) or using mixed study modes (30%). Only 17% of students who study completely online/remotely have engaged with these type of services.

Intuitively, those who used peer support had a greater preference for face-to-face connection with other students. The main reasons for not engaging with this type of program is lack of need (47%) and lack of awareness (30%). 19% were too self-conscious to engage and a further 19% were not sure how to reach out. Eighteen percent claimed they were too busy.

These results highlight that universities have an opportunity to better promote these programs generally, while also specifically developing messages to normalise access to these services and highlight the benefits of taking part.

There are opportunities to grow feelings of peer connection as well as awareness and appeal of peer support programs



Q. Would you have liked a senior student mentor?

Of those students who didn't take part in a peer support program, 1 in 3 would have liked to, showing there is latent demand for this type of service. Given this latent demand, awareness of these services should be raised among students. Interest in these programs is particularly strong for CALD audiences with 43% saying they would have liked to have taken part.

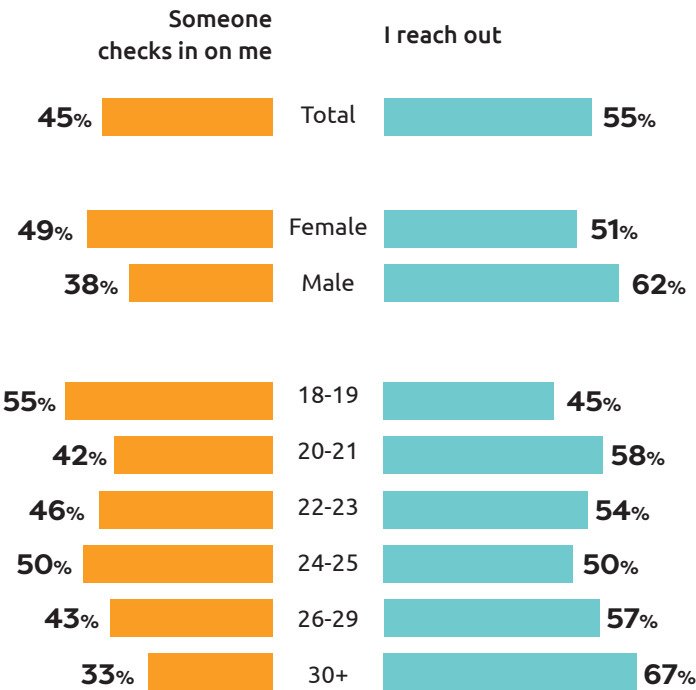
Three quarters of those who would have liked a senior student mentor said they prefer to connect with other students in-person.

Q. Would you prefer to reach out to someone for peer support, or they reach out to you first?

Students are relatively evenly split in their preferred approach for engaging with peer support programs, with 55% preferring to reach out when they need it

and 45% preferring someone to check in on them. Differences in age and gender preferences are highlighted below.

PEER CONNECTION INSTIGATION PREFERENCE

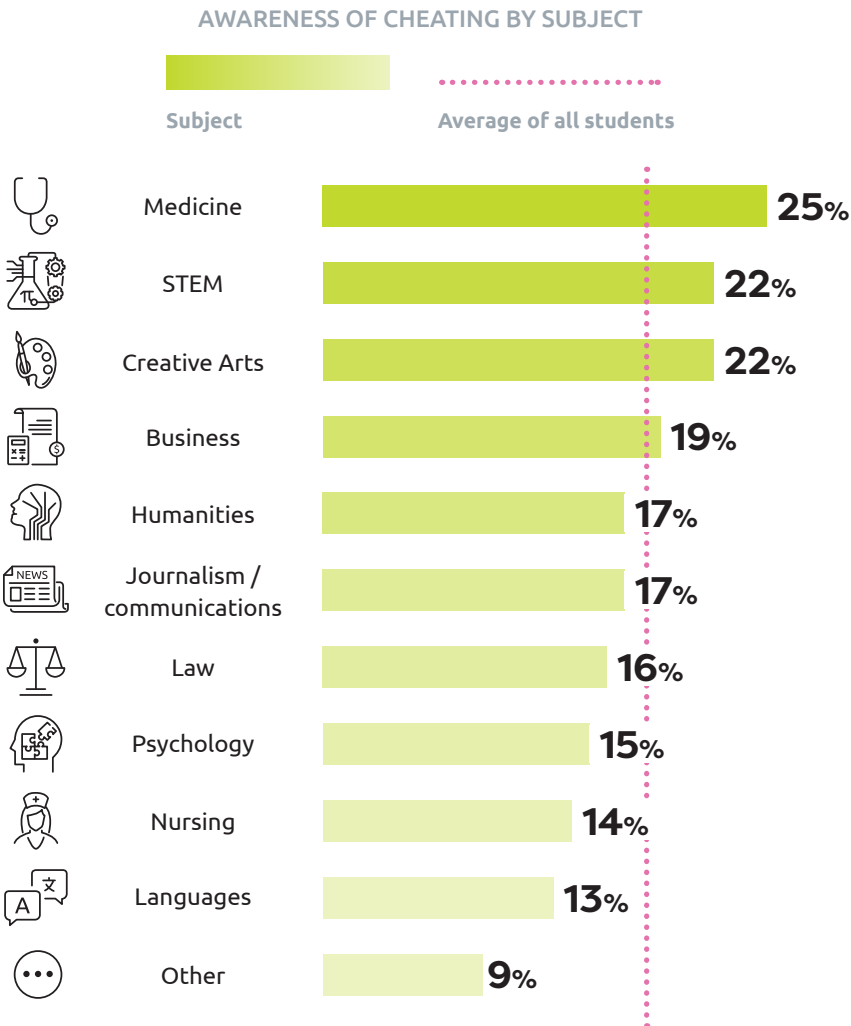
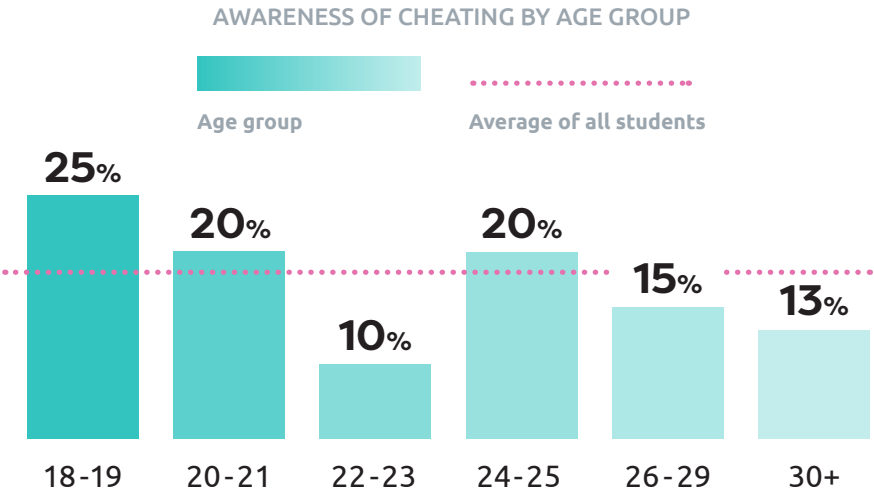


Cheating and academic integrity remain well publicised within the university environment with student awareness of specific cheating incidents decreasing over time

Q. Do you know a university student who has cheated in 2022?

Cheating as a self-reportable topic can have limitations and these are recognised. A truly anonymous survey seeks to overcome some of these. With a focus on self-reported awareness rather than own behaviour, this data and survey seeks to contribute additional perspectives on this critical issue for the Higher Education sector.

The proportion of Australian respondents who claim they are aware of other people cheating is trending down from a high of 30% in 2020, to 24% in 2021 and now 15% in 2022.



As per previous waves, awareness of cheating tends to be higher in the younger student cohorts. It is not clear from the data if this reflects a reduction in cheating as students progress through their education or if older students are less likely to have discussions where cheating comes to light. Likely reflecting the higher incidence in younger students, awareness of others cheating is also more prevalent for those studying full-time vs. part-time (20% vs. 10%).

The reported rate of cheating was highest for Medicine (25%) and lowest for Languages (13%).

Follow-up verbatim comments highlight a range of issues from understanding exactly what constitutes cheating, use of online study assist websites, the impact of open book exams, sophisticated anti-cheat technology and changes to evaluation methods because of COVID-19.

This research could be continued with a next survey over 2023, to determine any correlation between reduction in cheating and students' changing perceptions and understanding of integrity. Notably, with the growing prominence of AI, one hypothesis within the sector is that the normalised use of large language model tools may

Cheating and academic integrity remain well publicised within the university environment with student awareness of specific cheating incidents decreasing over time

make students less aware that using a machine/tool to write your work for you could constitute cheating. With technology and behaviours changing at a rapid pace, it is more important than ever to partner with students to develop robust teaching and learning practices, and to improve the student experience.

"I do know students who used sites for quiz answers, which unsure if that's an academic integrity issue."

"Don't think people need to cheat in assignments anymore since exams are online, they probably think they can do well there, so assignments matter less. Also never heard of anyone cheating in exams, seems quite impossible unless they have a twin."

"I mean pretty much everyone who was told to do a close book exam at home, found some way to cheat. And honestly, I don't blame them. In the real world you aren't set to do tasks with nothing but your brain to assist you. You have access to research and peers to help with your work tasks."

"My university does open book, online exams only. So cheating is not particularly applicable. However, there are very strict rules around essays and how they are to be conducted. I am not sure how cheating would occur."

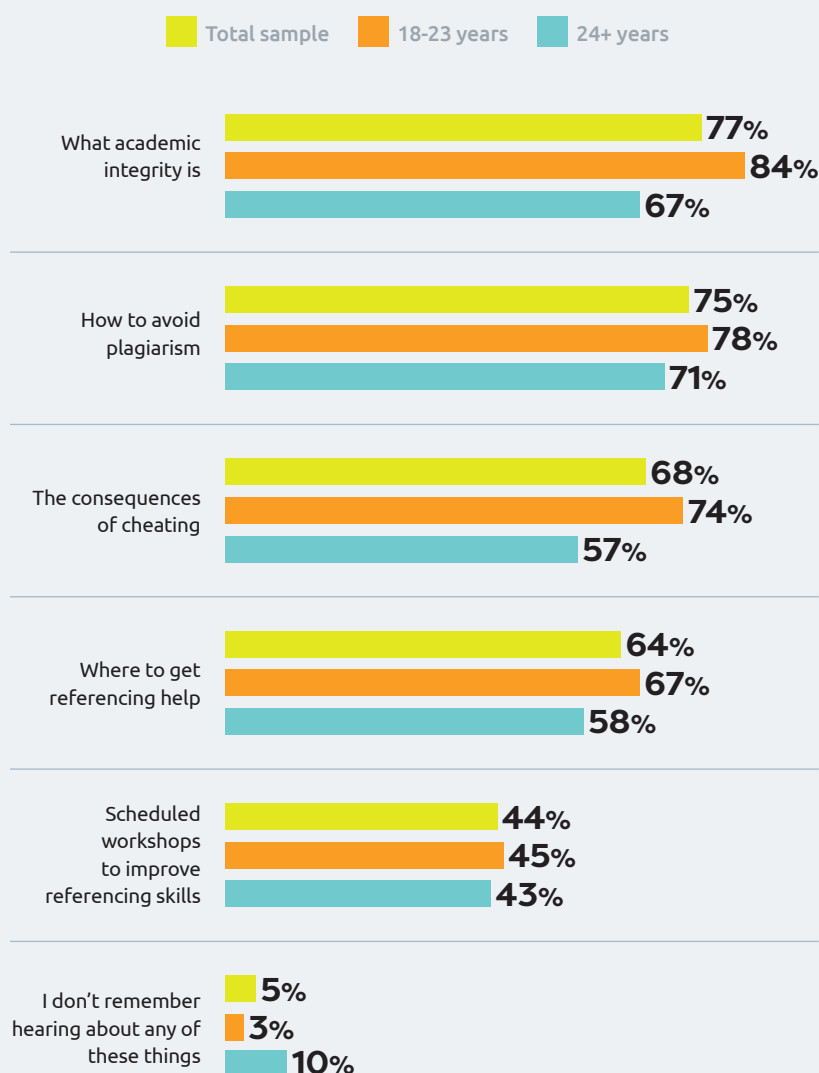
Q. In 2022, did you recall hearing about any of these from your university?

Content covering academic integrity and how to avoid plagiarism has been seen by most students, with many also being aware of the consequences of cheating and where to get referencing help. There is less engagement with scheduled workshops to improve

referencing skills, with only 44% recalling these available at their university.

Women and those aged 18-23 are significantly more likely to be aware of these topics than men and those aged 24 or older.

TOPICS PROMOTED BY UNIVERSITIES



Q. Where did you hear about these things?

Lecturers or other university staff are the #1 source of information for academic integrity (50%), well ahead of the next most common source as part of the orientation process (19%) and student services (16%). Advertising on-campus and the student union are rarely used as an information source for academic integrity, selected only by 11% and 2% respectively.

Those who left open ended comments regarding academic integrity highlight that messaging about the topic is near constant in first year and that many universities require students to complete an academic integrity unit in their first year of study. Typically, the heavy focus on academic integrity by the university in a student's first year wanes as their course progresses (based on the open-ended feedback provided).

"Posters were always around regarding these subjects and information was all readily available to read and easily accessed on the university's website which was convenient."

"It was only really mentioned in first year, and we only had two attempts to submit to Turn It In. We only needed to write essays and do research in first year and fourth year, which was a big gap. Academic integrity is difficult to measure for graphic design and art though."

"We had a no-credit course we had to complete in T1 on academic integrity and plagiarism."

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements:



92%

Agree

"I feel confident that I can avoid plagiarism or unintentional cheating."

- 88% CALD vs 94% Non-CALD



75%

Agree

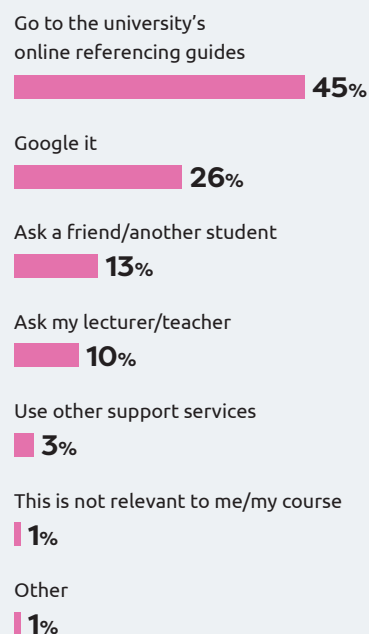
"I feel confident that I can approach my university any time about getting help with my assignment."

- 69% CALD vs 77% Non-CALD
- 71% 18-23 years vs 80% 24+ years
- 86% parents or carers vs 73% others

Q. Imagine you are unsure how to reference something, or paraphrase, when doing work. What would you do first, in this instance?

If they had difficulty with referencing, most students would go to the university's online referencing guides (45%) or search Google (26%). A further 1 in 4 would ask for assistance, be that from a friend (13%) or a lecturer (10%). Women are much more likely than men to refer to their university's online referencing guides (51% vs. 37%).

FIRST CHOICE FOR HELP WITH REFERENCING



Confidence in future opportunities is variable

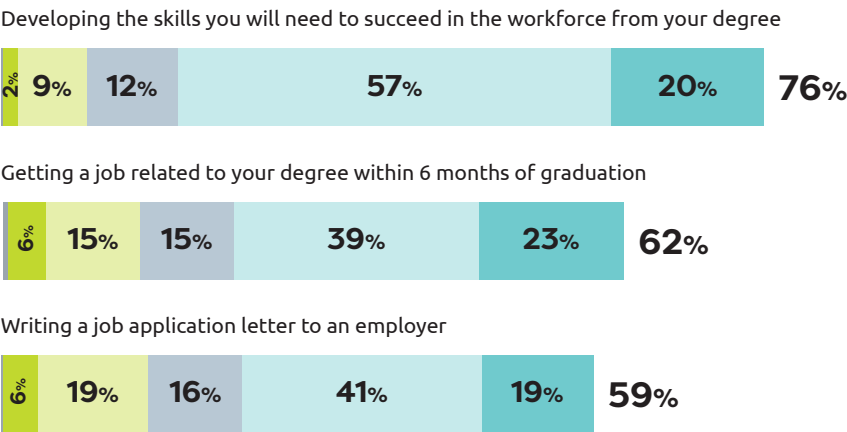
Q. Please rate how confident you feel about the following.

When asked about their confidence towards various elements of their future, the confident cohort is larger than the not confident cohort. However, fewer than 1 in 4 students are very confident; there is a large proportion of students who have some hesitations.

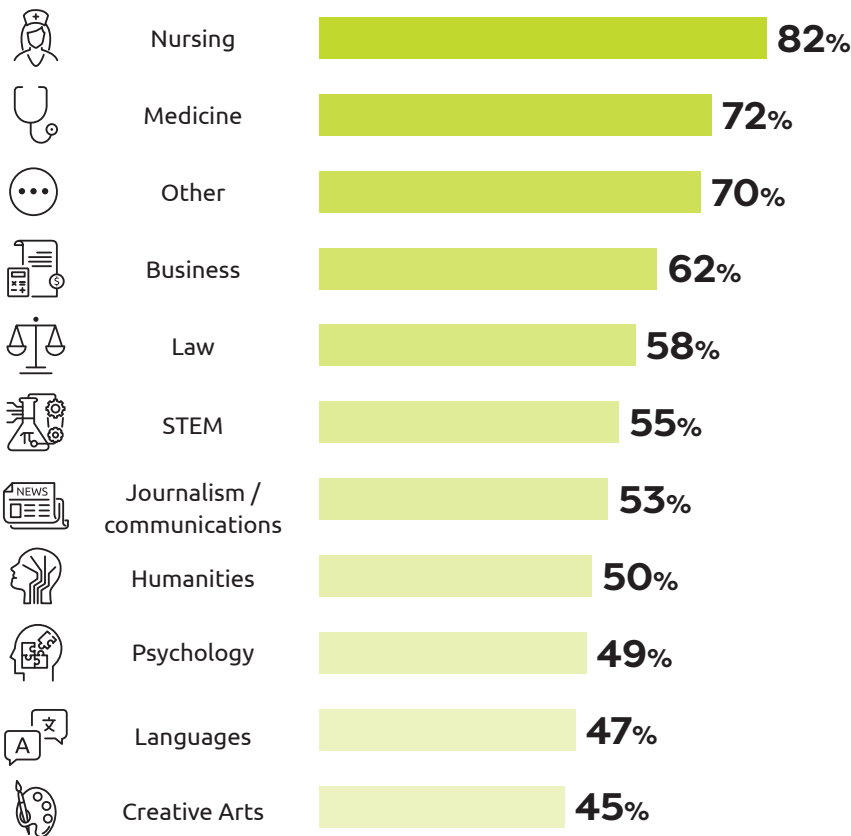
Confidence is highest for developing the skills you will need to succeed in the workforce, with 76% of students claiming they are confident with this. Confidence with this attribute is highly consistent with no statistically significant differences across demographics.

Getting a job related to your degree within 6 months of graduation presents more variability in confidence levels. Men are more likely to claim they are confidence about this than women (67% vs. 59%), as

CONFIDENCE FOR THE FUTURE



CONFIDENCE IN GETTING A JOB WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF GRADUATION (net: somewhat/very confident)



are those completing postgraduate study (70% vs. 59% of undergrads). Those who are already working in some capacity are also more confident than those who are not working at all (64% vs. 51% respectively), demonstrating the confidence boost that already being in the workforce can provide.

Only 1 in 5 students are very confident writing a job application and there is potential to better support students to build their confidence with this task. Those least confident in this task include women (56% vs. 65% of men), those aged 18-23 (53% vs. 69% aged 24+), those who are not currently employed (47% vs. 61% employed) and CALD students (54% vs. 62% non-CALD students).

Nursing, Medicine, Business, Law, STEM, and Journalism/Communications students are most confident about their future employment opportunities, with more than half of students studying these subjects confident they will get a job in their field within 6 months of graduation.

Humanities, Psychology, Languages, and Creative Arts students are more pessimistic about their future employability with 50% or fewer confident that they will have a job in their field within 6 months of graduation.

Q. What could your uni offer to make you feel more optimistic about your job prospects?

Students would like to see more internships and practical work experience provided within their courses and/or by their university. This is particularly strong in:

- Australia (67% vs. 54% in New Zealand)
- With younger students aged 18-23 (68% vs. 60% of those aged 24+)

- With CALD students (72% vs. 62% non-CALD)
- And for metro students (67% vs. 54% regional/rural).

Students were also asked to elaborate on their responses in an open-ended question. Below are some quotes to support the needs above.

More internships & practical work experience (30% of responses)

“Gaining experience would improve my confidence about applying to graduate positions.”

“More paid work experience opportunities or shorter unpaid work experience.”

More networking events (13% of responses)

“More networking events for ALL areas as niche areas in science are frequently excluded e.g. medical science experience.”

“We do not often get the chance to network, and the only people we connect with are the students within our cohort and university.”

Connection to industry (10% of responses)

“Being able to connect with professionals to understand the needs of the job market at the moment.”

“Career nights would be helpful, ways to make connections in the industry..”

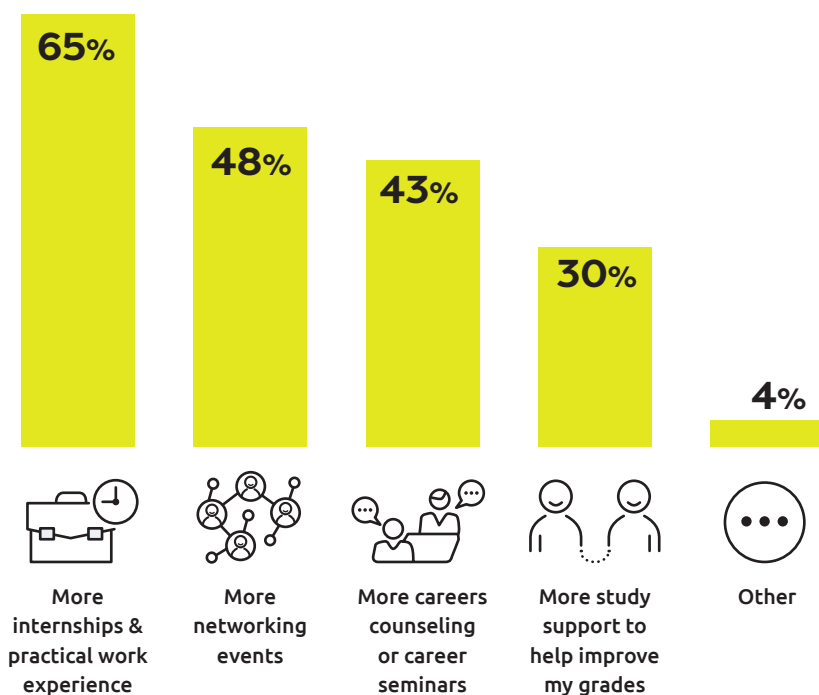
More information on careers, pathways and how to get a job (9% of responses)

“Advertising internships or more information on internships to first year students so they can plan their second year..”

“This is to let students know what it's like to apply for jobs and how to look for them..”

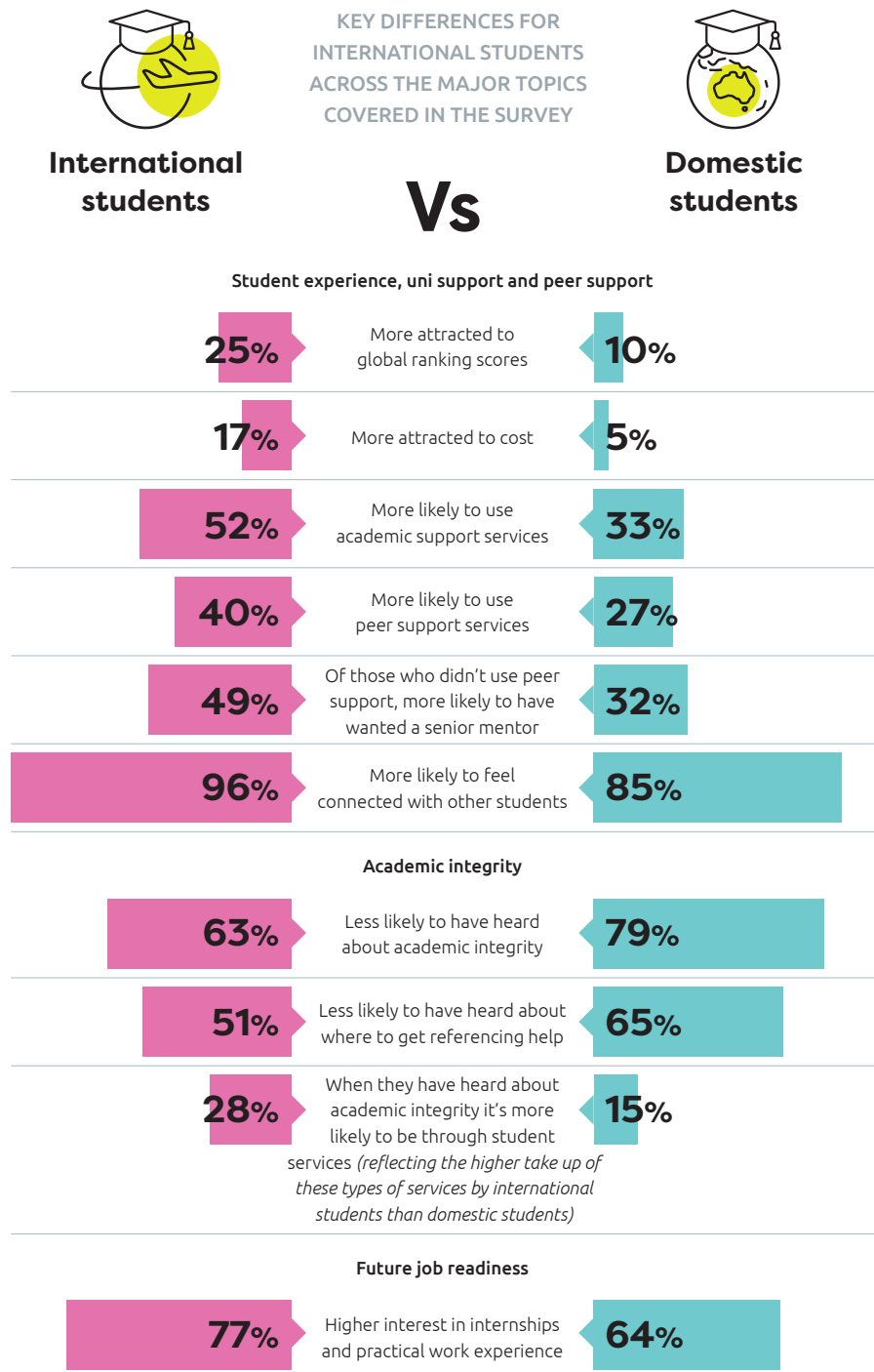
Other comments related to learning relevant workplace skills, having greater opportunities available and study support.

HOW TO IMPROVE OPTIMISM FOR JOB PROSPECTS

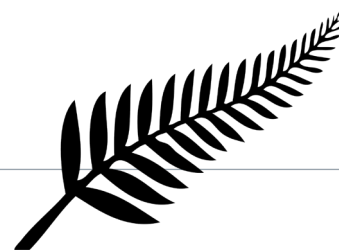


International students have higher engagement with support services and potentially feel more connected as a result

Ten percent of the survey sample are international students in the 2022 survey. Before understanding their attitudinal and experiential differences it is important to first understand how the international student cohort differs in their demographics and university engagement.



For the first time in 2022-23, students from New Zealand were included in the survey



University experience



67%

full-time students



33%

part-time students

80%

of students were employed in 2022



7 in 10

feel stressed by studying at least weekly, including 2 in 10 daily



TOP STRESS:

balancing time during studies



3 in 5

agree 'there is a strong sense of community at my university'

- **#1 factor encouraging more time on-campus** would be free parking, followed by incentives such as free food & events
- **Half of students would feel more optimistic about their job prospects** if they were offered more internships and work experience, as well as more networking events

Study flexibility and support



39%

prefer on-campus AND distance learning making blended learning the preferred study option



3 in 4

say their university has made it easier for them to study online or from home



1 in 2

(46%) have used their university's academic support services

Peer support



9 in 10

(86%) connect with other students



40%

would like to connect with other students more, both in-person (65%) and online (58%)



1 in 3

(35%) would like to have a senior student mentor

Academic integrity



13%

know someone who cheated at university in 2022



60%

recall hearing about what academic integrity is from their university



1 in 2

(54%) have heard about the consequences of cheating at university



1 in 10

are not confident they can avoid plagiarism or unintentional cheating



1 in 4

are not confident they can approach their university about assignment support

Sample note: New Zealand sample was sourced via Kantar Consumer Link Panel and via Studiosity student networks. The sample is not statistically representative of students in New Zealand, no quotas or weighting was applied. However, the sample size is robust (n=142).

Conclusion

With 2022 behind us now and the new academic year underway, the findings of this report can be useful for many institutions in Australia and New Zealand. Students clearly desire greater flexibility, more sense of community, support and outcomes, and in the face of a rapidly-changing technology landscape, universities will need to be more agile than ever before to stay relevant.

Positively, average grades remain high, and awareness of cheating is still trending downwards.

However, students are still dealing with challenging experiences as a result of the 'new normal', which their Higher Education providers could better support them with. For instance, stress levels are still high, with no change since 2021. Many students are lacking a sense of community and would often prefer greater connection, peer to peer support, and more facilitation of opportunities for next-steps after university.

There is a clear desire for hybrid study modes and flexible timetables. With the proportion of students managing additional responsibilities including employment and caring higher than previous years, this is something which universities must take seriously.

Listening to the experiences of students and how their perceptions change is of utmost importance as the world shifts rapidly around us. The implications of AI, machine learning, and the metaverse on higher education may change what it will mean to be a student in years to come.



For more information please contact
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Acknowledgments

Research report: Studiosity Australia & YouthInsight (Student Edge) 2023

This survey was conducted by YouthInsight, using the Student Edge Panel and trusted panel partners, among 1,137 current university students in Australia (n=995) and New Zealand (n=142). In Australia, the sample frame was balanced to ensure representation by gender, as well as to ensure statistically significant representation from each state/territory of the country. Due to sampling limitations, the sample of New Zealand students was not weighted and is not statistically representative of students in this country. For comparison purposes only, a sample of this size would yield a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The survey was conducted in English.

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