



2023 Middle Eastern Student Wellbeing Survey

CHAPTER 2: Awareness of
cheating & academic integrity issues

Research carried out by TGM Research
January 2023

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 commissioned an annual Student Wellbeing Survey with Australia's university students (via research partner YouthInsight), for three years with the UK's university students (via RedBrick), and for two years with Canada's university students (via Angus Reid).

In late 2022, Studiosity expanded its services in the Middle East region, adding a few pilot partnerships at local UAE universities to its existing partnerships.

TGM Research was commissioned by Studiosity to help better understand local students in the region.



Research objectives

This study aims to explore university students' general attitudes, needs, and behavior in the Middle East, to better understand the landscape around students' general wellbeing as it relates to their studies.

This report's focus is specifically university students in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The specific objectives of the study were:

- to measure levels of stress and its causes related to studying;
- to understand students' time management;
- to recognize universities' current level of support and potential areas for improvement;
- to understand the level of confidence in practical skills needed at university (eg. avoiding plagiarism, preparing references, etc.);
- to understand the relevance of English communication and writing skills;
- to understand students' perceptions of academic integrity.



Methodology & Sample

Studiosity produced the questions for this survey, and TGM Research gathered the responses from university students in UAE and KSA via an online survey.

The survey ran from December 21st, 2022, to January 19th, 2023, and gained a total of 1,054 responses [523 respondents from UAE and 531 respondents from KSA].

All responses were gathered from university students aged 18 to 40 years old who speak English and consisted of a mix of both domestic (33% for UAE and 40% for KSA) and international (67% for UAE and 60% for KSA) students.

Data has been weighted to match a nationally representative profile of students by gender.

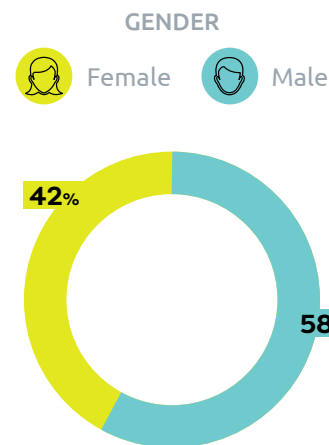
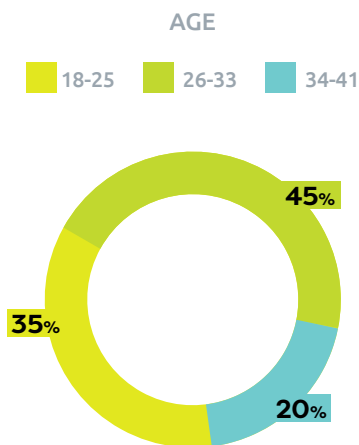
Study findings

Student profiles - UAE



Demographics

The majority of the respondents were males aged 26-33 years old (28%) followed by males aged 18-25 years old (18%) and females aged 18 – 33 years old (17% for 16-25 years old and 16% for 26-33 years old). The 34-40 year old age group recorded the lowest number of students.



Enrolment

Among the respondents, only 30% are currently studying and 70% just finished their studies in 2022. Of those that have just completed their studies in 2022, 60% completed postgraduate studies and 40% were undergraduates.

80% of the students were enrolled at a local university in the UAE and 20% of them study at an international university. Among the local students, 41% studied at 19 different universities in Abu Dhabi, and 37% of the students were enrolled at 42 different universities in Dubai. Fujairah was the region with the lowest number

of respondents with only 1% enrolled at 2 different universities there.

Among the 88 local universities in UAE, respondents to this survey were mostly enrolled at Abu Dhabi University, followed by Al Ain University, Khalifa University of Science and Technology and the University of Sharjah.



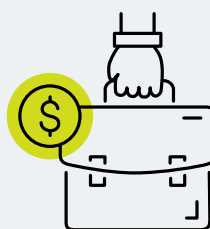
67% of respondents were full time students, and almost half of them were studying via a mix of both on-campus and remote study modes.

Study circumstances



The most common courses students were enrolled in are Business at 33%

followed by STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics) at 28% and Medicine at 9% where 64% of the students who participated in this survey record distinction and high distinction grades (above 75% grade), and only 1% of the students reported failing.



90% of all the respondents are currently working

as most of the respondents (70%) finished their studies in 2022. Of those in employment now, 40% work on a full-time basis.

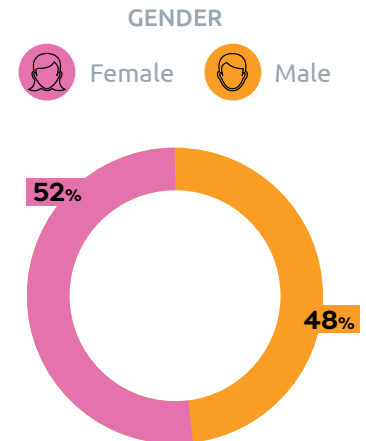
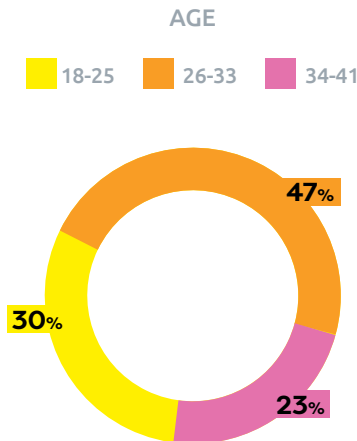


67% of the respondents were international students

and 71% of the international students are carers of a child or other family member. The majority - 93% - of the international students were working in some capacity, either casually, part-time or full-time.

Demographics

The majority of the respondents were females aged 26-33 years old (25%) followed by males aged 26-33 years old (22%) and females aged 18 – 25 years old (18%). Males aged 18-25 years old and females aged 34-41 years old recorded the lowest number of responses at 12% and 9% respectively.



Enrolment

Among the participants, 40% are currently studying and 60% finished their studies in 2022. Of those that have just completed their studies in 2022, 61% completed a postgraduate degree, and 39% completed their undergraduate studies.

89% of the students were enrolled at a local university in KSA and 11% of them study with overseas institutions. Among the local students, 54% were enrolled at 17 different universities in Riyadh, and 20% of were enrolled at 17 different universities in Jeddah. For smaller areas such as Al Kharj, Buraydah, Ha'il, Najran, Qatif, Sakakah and Yanbu there was only 1 recorded response

for each.

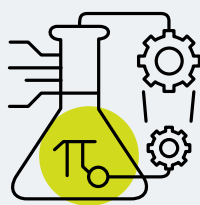
Among the 69 local universities in KSA, King Saud University recorded the highest number of students in this survey, followed by King Abdulaziz University, Princess Nora bint Abdul Rahman University and Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University.



76%

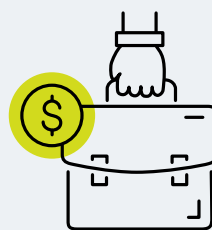
of the respondents were full time students and almost half of them (46%) studied in a mix of both on-campus and remote study modes.

Study circumstances



The most common courses students were enrolled in are STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics) at 27%

Followed by Business (19%) and Medicine (13%). 61% of the students who participated in this survey reported distinction and high distinction grades (above 75% grade), and only 2% of the students reported failing.



87% of all the respondents are currently working

as more than half of the respondents (60%) finished their studies in 2022, 32% of them are now working on a full-time basis.



60% of the respondents are international students

and 80% of the international students are carers of a child or other family members. The majority - 94% - of the international students were working in some capacity, either casually, part-time or full-time.

More than half of respondents know a student who cheated in 2022

In the UAE, 52% of students were aware of fellow students who engaged in cheating in 2022. However, the survey results indicate that the percentage is even higher in KSA, with 60% of KSA students reporting knowledge of individuals who cheated.

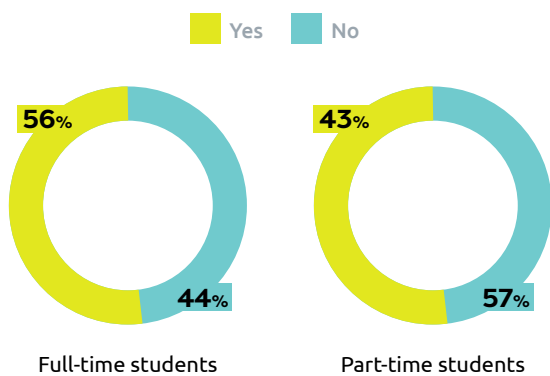
In addition, it was found in both countries that local students had less knowledge of others cheating in 2022 than their international counterparts. It can be concluded that international students are either more likely to know of, or more likely to report, incidents of cheating.

UAE Results Awareness of cheating

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

The prevalence of cheating among students is concerning, as reflected in these survey results. In the UAE, 52% of students acknowledged being aware of their peers engaging in cheating during 2022. These findings highlight the need for proactive measures and educational interventions to address academic integrity and promote ethical behavior within universities.

DO YOU KNOW A STUDENT WHO HAS CHEATED?



When considering the students' enrollment status, it becomes evident that full-time students demonstrated a higher level of awareness regarding cheating incidents, with 56% reporting knowledge of others who cheated in 2022. Conversely, among part-time students in the UAE, a notable portion (57%) claimed to have no awareness of anyone involved in cheating during the same period.

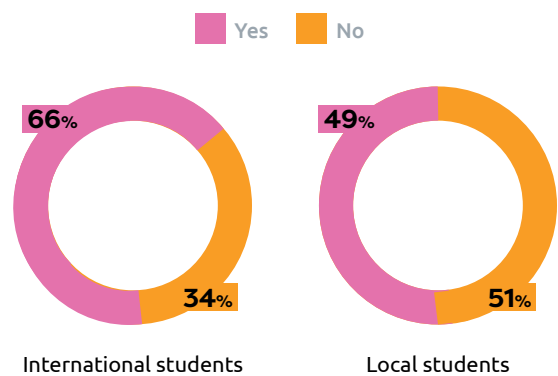
KSA Results Awareness of cheating

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

Similar to the UAE results, 60% of students in KSA say they know at least one other student who has cheated in 2022.

Across the students' enrollment status, there are differences where international students are more familiar with students having cheated.

DO YOU KNOW A STUDENT WHO HAS CHEATED?



“Sometimes, when doing homework, some students faced some problems that they did not understand, so they discussed them with each other.”



Academic Integrity awareness among university students

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

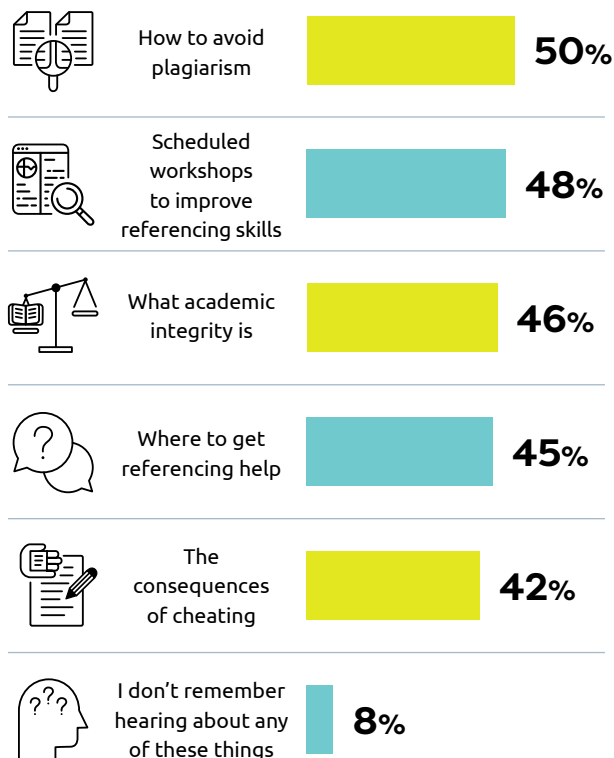
The term 'academic integrity' is widely used as a proxy for the conduct of students, in relation to authentic learning, and the avoidance of plagiarism and cheating. Without academic integrity, there can be no trust or reliance on the effectiveness, accuracy, or value of a university's teaching, learning, research, or public service activities. It is therefore key that students understand these issues. These findings shed light on the areas where educational institutions can focus their efforts to promote a deeper understanding of academic integrity among students.

UAE Results Academic Integrity



In the UAE, the top three issues with the highest awareness among students include how to avoid plagiarism (50%), scheduled workshops to improve inferencing skills (48%), and the definition of academic integrity (46%). Gender-wise, male students exhibit a higher level of awareness regarding referencing workshops, while female students show greater familiarity with the concept of avoiding plagiarism. Interestingly, there are no discernible differences in awareness between local and international student statuses.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AWARENESS

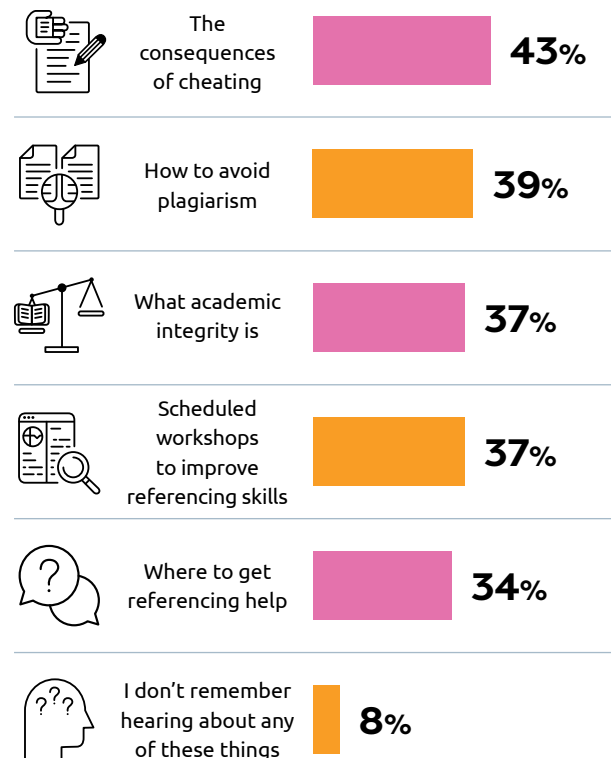


KSA Results Academic Integrity



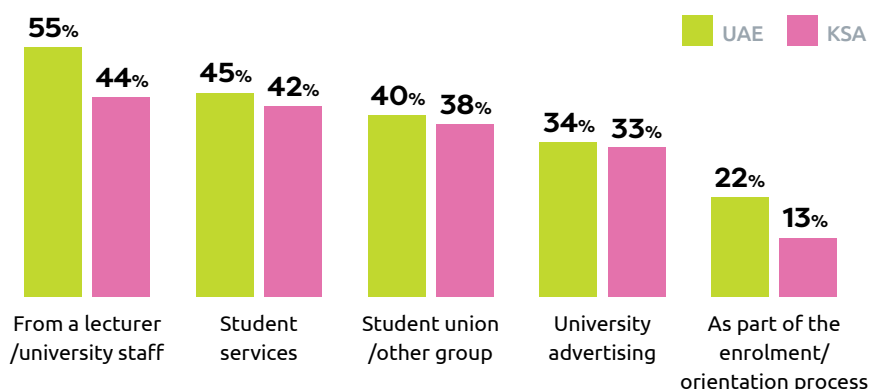
In KSA, the top 3 academic-integrity issues with the highest awareness are the consequences of cheating (43%), how to avoid plagiarism (39%) and what academic integrity is (37%). When examining age groups, it becomes apparent that 18-to-33-year-olds exhibit a greater familiarity with the consequences of cheating, while students over 33 years old demonstrate a stronger understanding of the definition of academic integrity.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AWARENESS



Q. Where did you hear about academic integrity?

In both countries surveyed, around half of the students learn about issues related to academic integrity from their lecturer or university staff, as reported by 55% of UAE students and 44% of KSA students. Comparatively, not many students (22% in UAE and 13% in KSA) learn about academic integrity issues as part of their orientation.



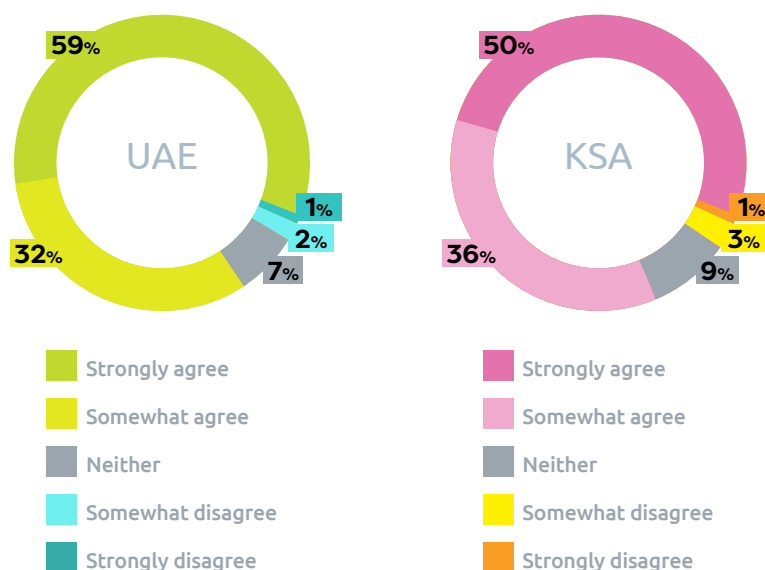
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: I feel confident that I can avoid plagiarism/unintentional cheating.

Not all incidences of plagiarism are rooted in dishonesty or the intention to cheat. Many are inadvertent. Often, students plagiarize because they're unclear on what constitutes plagiarism, in addition to errors like missed citations or incorrect referencing in their writing. Differences in language ability and cultural definitions of plagiarism may also make recognizing mistakes more challenging.

Unfortunately, even unintentional plagiarism can have a negative impact on academic performance and students' confidence in the long run. It doesn't reflect well on institutions either, as plagiarism can drive up academic violations and unsuccessful course completions.

Among the UAE and KSA students surveyed, an average of 89% agree that they're confidently able to avoid plagiarism/unintentional cheating. These data also shown no significant differences across the profile groups.

CONFIDENCE IN AVOIDING PLAGIARISM / UNINTENTIONAL CHEATING



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: I feel confident that I can approach my university any time about getting help with my assignment.

Building confidence can take time, as can building enough self-awareness to know when you need support. Universities can play a role in ensuring that there is a culture of support and openness among their

student cohorts. In this survey, nearly 90% feel confident that they can approach their university any time about getting help with their assignment, showing that this culture largely exists in the UAE and KSA today.

CONFIDENCE IN APPROACHING UNIVERSITY FOR HELP





Acknowledgments

Research report: Studiosity Australia and TGM Research

For further details about this report please contact:

Sarah Crossing | Global Director, Student Experience & Social Responsibility
studentexperience@studiosity.com

studiosity.com