2024 Australian Student Wellbeing Survey

Research carried out by YouGov

Studiosity

Contents

Cover image: Ashutosh Gupta, Macquarie University
Above: Xinyue Shao, University of Sydney
With thanks to our Student Advisory Group pictured throughout this report.

YouGov®

The education sector has the greatest potential to change the world - students become future researchers, teachers, business owners, leaders, carers, and more, contributing to the rich societal fabric that the world needs. To protect and grow the education sector, listening and responding to the feedback, concerns, and recommendations of college students is a necessary challenge.

It is evident that students are navigating a changing academic terrain. Personalised support, a heightened sense of belonging, and rapid adaptation to AI supports are paramount .

This survey captures the voices of students, to support education leaders in their ongoing efforts to offer students an educational experience that aligns with both their study expectations and aspirations for the future.

Image obove: Hillary Namirimu, University of Canberra
Michaela Bono, Western Sydney University

Message from CEO

To all our partners in education and life chances:

It is evident that higher education across the world is undergoing, or being forced to undergo, significant change. This annual Student Wellbeing survey is a pragmatic guide for leaders in higher education to celebrate strengths, address gaps, and ensure our critical societal institutions remain agile and responsive to the evolving needs of the student body and deliver credible and valuable credentials.

In partnership with your institution and others, the Studiosity team continues our core mission of increasing life chances for students. In this spirit we are committed to making this contribution to the sector and putting the spotlight on student wellbeing again this year.

Michael Larsen
Chief Executive Officer, Studiosity

Studiosity

Foreword

Dear colleagues in education,

It feels as though the world has been turned on its head again, after a year of transformative generative AI launches. It comes on the heels of COVID, now in the not-too-distant past, changing legislation, and changing student demographics. If leaders in the postsecondary sector are looking for a moment to breathe, it isn't coming.

Funding, competition, academic integrity, artificial intelligence, and institutional risk are top of mind for HE leadership the world over. Students can see where institutions have made a commitment – for instance, we can see around two thirds happy with sense of belonging. Let us remember the other third, whether this is the 70 million students the world over, or the additional 6000 undergraduates enrolled just with your institution. Students are telling us where there is room for improvement – accessibility, personalisation, and connection.

Whether addressing belonging, establishing more accessible mental health support and peer connection, or accelerating AI for learning - the answer can be summed up as continual investment in *quality teaching and learning*. This year's report makes necessary actions clear.

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

Introduction

Background

YouGov

YouGov is a global public opinion and data company, international market research and data analytics firm headquartered in the UK with operations in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific.

Studiosity

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 eight years, Studiosity has run an annual Student Wellbeing Survey with Australia's university students. In November 2023, YouGov was commissioned by Studiosity to conduct the eighth wave of this global research.

Objectives

The survey investigates key areas of student wellbeing in 2024. This annual report seeks to better understand and discuss the motivations, emotions, and demands of Australian students in tertiary education, to provide the data and findings to higher education leadership, to support initiatives and solutions.

This year, the survey focused on topics such as experiences of artificial intelligence in a university context, connection to other students, stress, importance of rankings, experiences of cheating, optimism for the future, and institutional belonging. In addition, some of the results were benchmarked with previous survey waves to understand how behaviours and attitudes have changed over time.

Methodology

Data collection method	Online survey
Target population	University students 18+
Sample source	YouGov panel
Sample size	N=1,212
Pilot dates	13 November – 22 November 2023
Fieldwork dates	23 November – 29 December 2023

All Australian public universities were represented in the Australian sample. The students were 18 – over 50 years old and consisted of a mix of both domestic (82%) and international (18%) students.

Sample & Target Group:

This survey was collected on the YouGov Panels, where each member has accepted to participate in online interviews and has received an email invitation with a link to the survey. The sample definition is created in order to provide a representative cross-section of the Australia population, based on the target group and the purpose of the survey.

Weighting:

The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Australian adults aged 18+. Data was weighted according to the dimensions of gender, level of university studies finished and geography on the basis of an ideal weighting from Statistics Australia, so that the results are representative of the population in relation to the aforementioned target group.

*Image: Aleksandra Domchenko, Macquarie University
Dang Son Nam Ho, Macquarie University*

Key findings

Demographics: Diversity and study-life pressures

To accommodate the increasingly diverse experience of students, university leaders can look to equal-access to programming, resources, and support structures to ensure access and wellbeing for all.

The students (n=1,212) represented a mix of males (48%) and females (50%), domestic (82%, n = 993) and international (18%, n=219) students.

Of respondents, 81% report English as their first language; of those for whom it is not, 12% record Nepali, and 8% Mandarin.

Additionally, 7% (n=82) of student respondents are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The 18-26 year old age group (n=648, 54%) were the largest group of respondents, and 20% of respondents had just finished their first year of study.

More students are living in metro locations (67%) compared to regional/rural (33%), and 70% have a full-time study load. 25% are STEM students and 13% are studying Business.

Survey respondents report a mix of average grades, 38% with a Credit or Pass, and 59% of students reporting Distinction or High Distinction.

25% are carers - people who provide unpaid care or other support to family members and friends at the same time as study. This is an increase on the previous wave, where only 14% of respondents claimed to be carers.

Compared to the prior year, the same amount of university students in Australia are working while studying (86%), with an uplift in full time work (4 pp up), but a significant drop (8 pp) in casual work during study. International students are more likely to be in part-time work (37%) but draw on a smaller base of respondents.

Compared to average global responses (79%), Australian students reported higher rates of employment (86%) - similar to New Zealand university students (88%), higher than the UK (70.6%) and the United States (78%).

Image: Hernan Alarcon Rodarte, Western Sydney University
Susan Napper, University of Tasmania

Demographics: Employment status during study

Legend:
- **Yes, full-time** (yellow)
- **Yes, part-time** (orange)
- **Yes, casual/temporary work** (dark orange)
- **No, Not currently employed** (teal)

Year	Yes, full-time	Yes, part-time	Yes, casual/temporary work	No, Not currently employed	Yes
2018	4%	23%	45%	28%	72% Yes
2019	5%	25%	44%	26%	74% Yes
2020	5%	24%	42%	29%	71% Yes
2021	5%	21%	42%	32%	68% Yes
2022	15%	24%	40%	22%	79% Yes
2023	17%	26%	43%	14%	86% Yes
2024	21%	30%	35%	14%	86% Yes
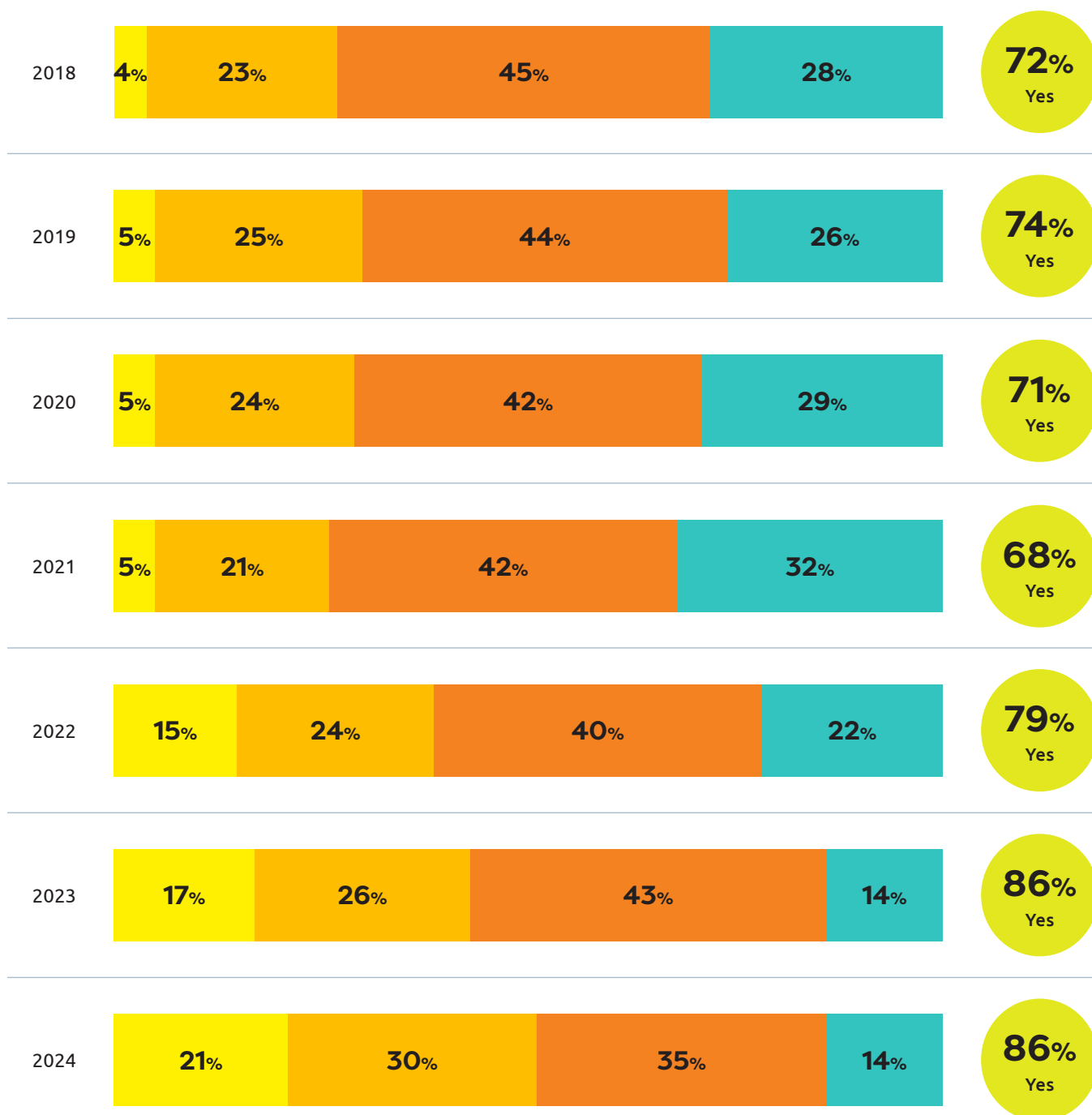
Connection to other students

A growing number of students would like a peer mentor. Being able to connect with peers and be part of the academic community is a critical part of university life, and a known contributor to student success and wellbeing.

The availability of peer mentoring is mixed in the Australian tertiary sector, with room to support additional cohorts. In this year's survey, the diversity of student experiences is revealed, with large cross-sections of the cohorts both happy and also needing more support in the form of a peer mentor. Two thirds of students did not have a peer mentor available, this was exacerbated for students studying remotely or in hybrid modes. Yet, even for students in an 'on campus' only mode, 50% were neutral or negative about the ease of asking questions of other students.

The survey highlights the varied nature of student experiences at their university and points to a need for meeting students 'on their own terms', in their own spaces and schedules. Specifically, leadership should equalise access to peer mentoring regardless of a students' study mode.

Image: Jessica Finch, University of New England
Aleksandra Domchenko, Macquarie University

Q. Did you have a student mentor (for example – a student in a senior year who could provide study advice anytime you needed it)?

Notably, students studying remotely or off-campus were significantly less likely to report having a mentor available (24%). Men were more likely to report having a mentor available (39%), as were younger students under 35. Students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin were much more likely to have had a student mentor, with 55% reporting that they did.

DID YOU HAVE A STUDENT MENTOR?

■ Yes ■ No

33%

67%
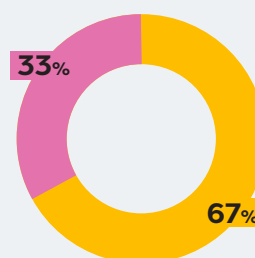
Chapter 1: Connection to other students

Q. Would you have liked to have a senior student mentor?

Around half of the students surveyed who didn't have a mentor said they would have liked to have a peer mentor (51%, n=412). This is an increase on last year, when 34% of students said the same.

For students from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, this desire increases to 73%.

This trend is the same for all students under 40 years old, and then desire for a mentor decreases as they get older. However it is slightly higher among full time students vs part time, and significantly higher among international students (66%), compared to domestic (49%).

Desire for a student mentor also correlates closely with frequency of stress - the less frequently students felt stressed, the less they wanted a mentor and vice versa.

STRESS FREQUENCY COMPARED TO DESIRE FOR A PEER MENTOR

- ■ Wanted a student mentor
- ■ Did not want a mentor

	Wanted a student mentor	Did not want a mentor
Constantly *(more than twice a day)*	60%	40%
Daily	61%	39%
Weekly	49%	51%
Monthly	48%	52%
A few times per term/semester	38%	62%
A few times a year	24%	76%
Less often than a few times a year	29%	71%
Never		100%

Q. When you started your degree, how easy was it to ask other students questions, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is very easy and 1 is very hard?

Around half of the students surveyed who didn't have a mentor said they would have liked to have a peer mentor (51%, n=412). This is an increase on last year, when 34% of students said the same.
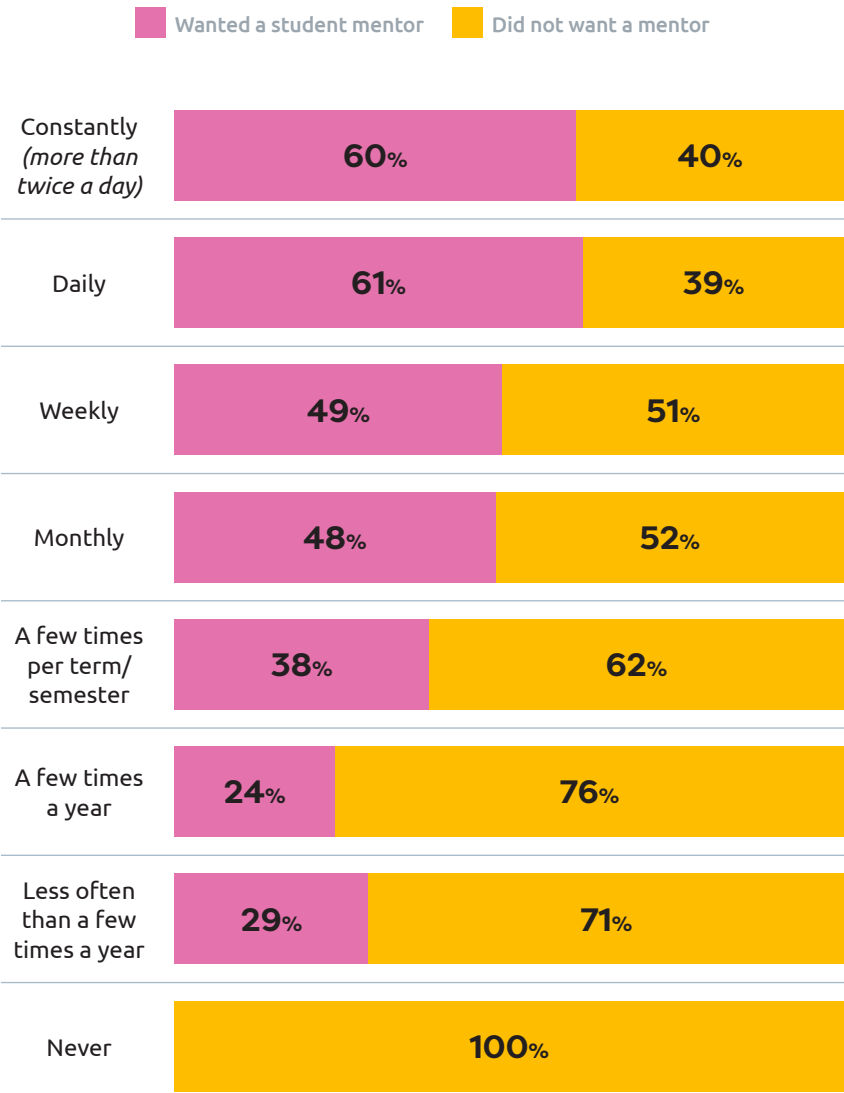
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- ■ Easy
- ■ Hard
- ■ Neutral

44%
23%

Chapter 1: Connection to other students

EASE OF ASKING QUESTIONS TO OTHER STUDENTS

Legend: Very hard | Hard | Neutral | Easy | Very easy

Study Mode	Very hard	Hard	Neutral	Easy	Very easy
International student	4%	10%	31%	40%	16%
Domestic student	8%	17%	33%	30%	12%
Away from campus/distance only	14%	11%	36%	26%	13%
On campus only	6%	16%	28%	34%	15%
Mix of both campus/away from campus	5%	17%	33%	35%	10%
Away from campus/visits on campus	10%	23%	34%	20%	15%

BY STUDY MODE
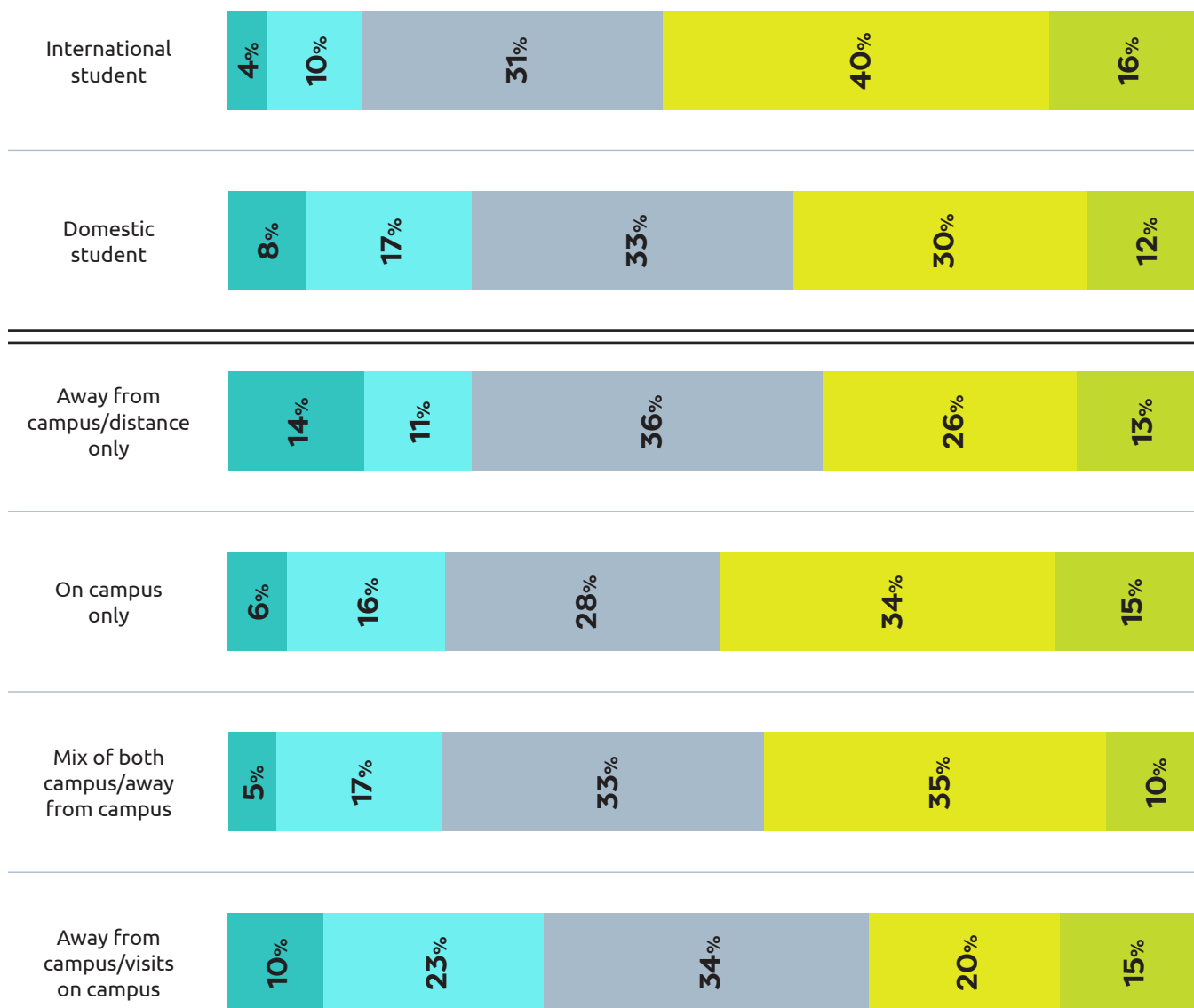
"I feel like the only way to feel like you belong is by attending the University on campus and being able to meet your lecturers and fellow peers in person. Although working online has been great in allowing me to work full time too, I do not feel connected to my University."

"The mixed teaching mode of in person and online is both helpful for staying engaged with coursework and also not helpful for bonding with peers due to frequency of peers choosing different modes each week."

Artificial Intelligence

Australian university students expect AI support

"Generative AI" was the buzz-phrase of the last year - now, 2024 should see that year of planning turn to a year of action in higher education, as student expectations shift with the rapidly changing technology landscape. Most (56% n=674) Australian students expect their university to adopt AI-based support, with only 44% agreeing that their university is 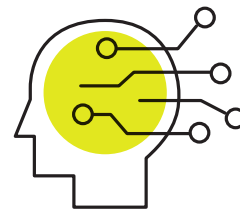moving fast enough to provide those tools. Students' reasons for using AI include confidence, speed of return, improving confidence, and to avoid being a burden on others.

Q. Do you expect your university to offer AI (artificial intelligence) support tools to students? *AI or artificial intelligence refers to a trained, digital helper that gives personal feedback and other 24/7 study help.*

The majority of students (56%, n=674) expect their university to offer AI support tools in 2024. More international students expect AI support (71% n=156), and men expect it more (61% compared to only 51% of women).

26 out of Australia's 41 universities (63%), saw a majority of students expecting AI-based study support from their institution. Students studying at universities in the Australian Technology Network of universities (ATN) had the highest rate of expectation of AI support (61%), and those studying in the Regional Universities Network (RUN) had the lowest (37%). Australia's Group of Eight (Go8) and Innovative Research Universities (IRU) networks had around the same majority (59% and 57% respectively).

All faculties reported a majority expecting AI-based support, except Medicine (44%, 'Yes'), Law (40%, 'Yes') and Journalism and Communications students (48%, 'Yes'), with STEM students having the highest expectations of AI support at 66%.

EXPECT UNIVERSITY TO OFFER AI SUPPORT TOOLS

Legend: Yes / No

- **MALE STUDENTS** — 61% Yes / 39% No
- **FEMALE STUDENTS** — 51% Yes / 49% No
- **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS** — 71% Yes / 29% No
- **DOMESTIC STUDENTS** — 52% Yes / 48% No
- **RUN UNIVERSITIES** — 37% Yes / 63% No
- **IRU UNIVERSITIES** — 57% Yes / 43% No
- **ATN UNIVERSITIES** — 61% Yes / 39% No
- **Go8 UNIVERSITIES** — 59% Yes / 41% No
- **OTHER UNIVERSITIES** — 54% Yes / 46% No

Chapter 2: Artificial intelligence

EXPECT UNIVERSITY TO OFFER AI SUPPORT TOOLS

■ Yes   ■ No

BY STUDY AREA

Study Area	Yes	No
STEM	66%	34%
Medicine	44%	56%
Nursing	51%	49%
Psychology	58%	42%
Business	57%	43%
Law	39%	61%
Languages	55%	45%
Humanities	51%	49%
Journalism / communications	48%	52%
Creative Arts	50%	50%
Other	53%	47%
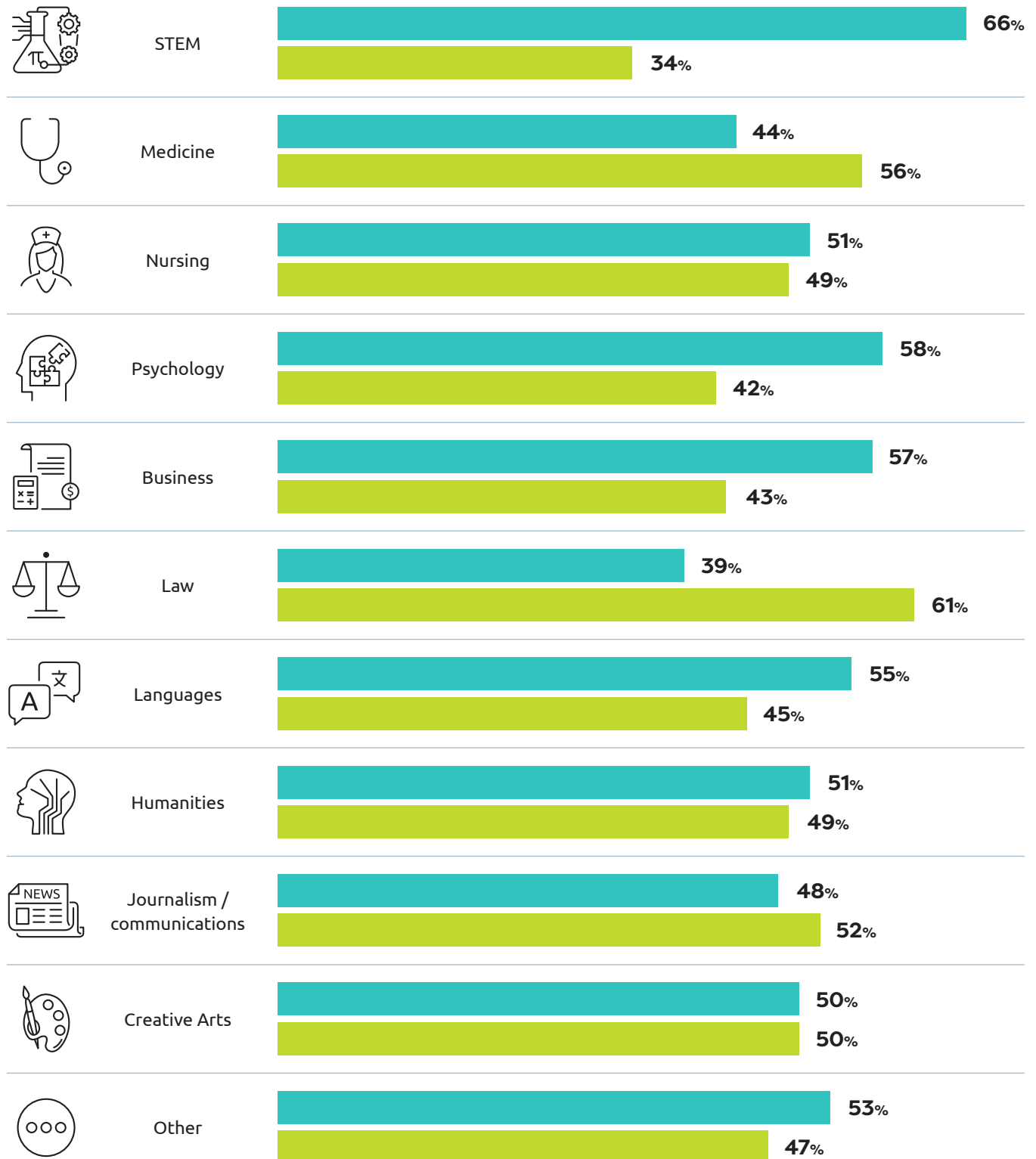
Q. What is the main reason you would use the university's AI (artificial intelligence) support or feedback?

Australian students would use AI support because it is fast (return time of feedback), increases their confidence, and helps improve their grades.

Australian tertiary students prioritised 'Speed' (26%) as the top reason for wanting to use AI support and feedback tools. This is in line with the rest of the world, where 'Speed - only waiting minutes, not a day or several days for feedback' was the main reason students would look to AI-based support. This is followed in Australia by 'Confidence' (20%) and then 'to improve grades' (13%).

The top reasons differ between International students and domestic. International students cite 'confidence' as a stronger reason than 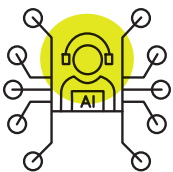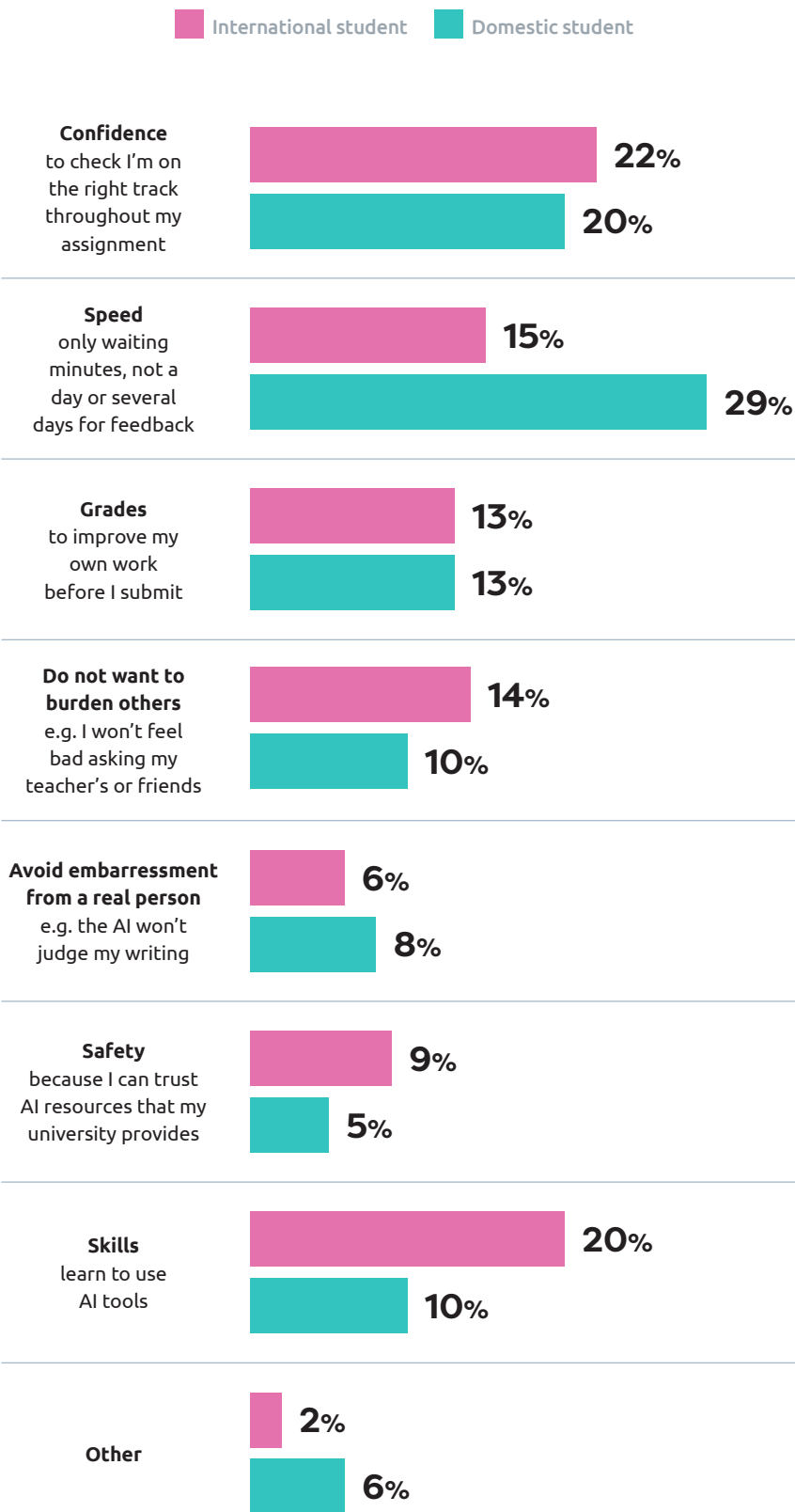'speed' (22% cited this as the top reason) and much more commonly selected 'Skills - learn to use AI tools' as a top reason (20%) for using AI support. Domestic students on the other hand overwhelmingly chose 'Speed' as their key reason for getting AI feedback (29%) - and only 10% chose 'Skills'.

REASON FOR USING UNIVERSITY'S AI SUPPORT OR FEEDBACK

- International student
- Domestic student

Confidence to check I'm on the right track throughout my assignment
- International: 22%
- Domestic: 20%

Speed only waiting minutes, not a day or several days for feedback
- International: 15%
- Domestic: 29%

Grades to improve my own work before I submit
- International: 13%
- Domestic: 13%

Do not want to burden others e.g. I won't feel bad asking my teacher's or friends
- International: 14%
- Domestic: 10%

Avoid embarressment from a real person e.g. the AI won't judge my writing
- International: 6%
- Domestic: 8%

Safety because I can trust AI resources that my university provides
- International: 9%
- Domestic: 5%

Skills learn to use AI tools
- International: 20%
- Domestic: 10%

Other
- International: 2%
- Domestic: 6%

Chapter 2: Artificial intelligence

MAIN REASON FOR USING UNIVERSITY'S AI SUPPORT OR FEEDBACK

Legend: ■ Australia ■ New Zealand ■ Singapore ■ UK ■ KSA ■ UAE ■ Canada ■ USA

Speed – only waiting minutes, not a day or several days for feedback
Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	
26%	21%	23%	26%	16%	14%	21%	19%	**22%**

Confidence – to check I'm on the right track throughout my assignment
Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	
20%	26%	15%	17%	19%	21%	17%	18%	**18%**

Grades – to improve my own work before I submit
Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	
12%	13%	18%	12%	16%	13%	17%	14%	**14%**

Skills – learn to use AI tools
Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	
12%	8%	13%	11%	18%	21%	12%	14%	**13%**

Don't want to burden others – e.g. I won't feel bad asking for teacher's or friend's time
Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	
10%	16%	13%	10%	9%	8%	10%	12%	**11%**

Avoid embarrassment from a real person – e.g. the AI won't judge my writing
Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	
8%	7%	9%	7%	10%	10%	10%	9%	**9%**

Safety – because I can trust AI resources that my university provides
Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	
5%	7%	8%	5%	12%	13%	8%	8%	**7%**

Other
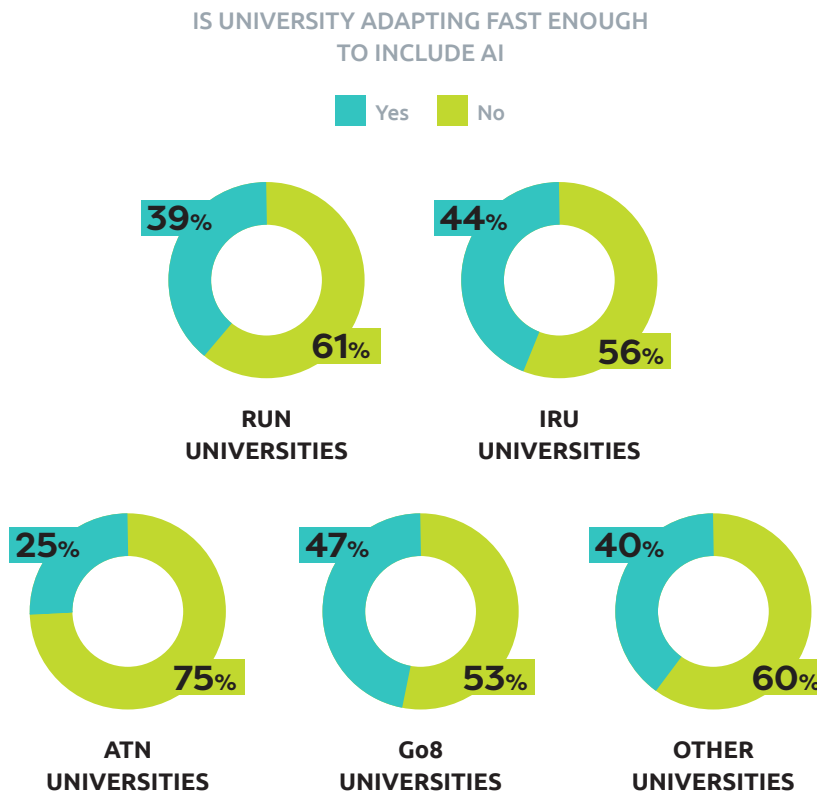| Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	
6%	4%	1%	13%	0.4%	1%	5%	6%	**6%**

Q. Is your university adapting quickly enough to include AI (artificial intelligence) support tools to help with your study?

Most Australian university students (55%, n=662) think their university could be moving faster to adapt to changing and emerging AI technologies, and incorporating them into their studies.

Domestic students are more likely to think that their university is not moving quickly enough with only 43% saying yes, whereas 55% of international students agreed that universities are moving fast enough to keep up with emerging technologies.

Across all the various university network groups, the majority of students do not think their universities are moving fast enough to include AI, and this is most prominent among the ATN Universities (75%, 'No').

Students with lower grades, Pass (68%) and Non-Pass (82%) do not believe their university is adapting fast enough to provide AI study support.

IS UNIVERSITY ADAPTING FAST ENOUGH TO INCLUDE AI

■ Yes ■ No

39% **61%**
RUN UNIVERSITIES

44% **56%**
IRU UNIVERSITIES

25% **75%**
ATN UNIVERSITIES

47% **53%**
Go8 UNIVERSITIES

40% **60%**
OTHER UNIVERSITIES

Students' qualitative comments reflect the diversity of students and student experiences in 2024 across the sector and within institutions.

Some students indicate that their universities are resistant to AI, while others suggest that their institutions are adapting to the technology. Additionally, there are comments highlighting the need for responsible AI usage and ethical considerations. Students expressed their fear that other students might misuse AI and a desire for human support.

Overall, comments seem to reflect the need for balance - to underpin the provision of innovative AI technology with trust, ethics, and human connection.

"AI is mentioned but not heavily"

"AI is part of the university environment. The sooner Universities sort out how to use AI and integrate it into curriculum the better we will all be."

"AI use is banned for assignments. Risk of plagiarism"

"AI was strongly discouraged"

"I think their needs to be more information about AI tools available"

"I feel universities are still trying to discourage the use of AI"

"It's really tough to adapt quickly to AI and all of the ethical concerns around plagiarism there. I think they're doing their best."

"They are seeing it as more of a threat, which isn't preparing students to use it in their careers"

"They aren't offering their own AI tools, instead allowing use of ChatGPT and the like in an ethical way."

Study stress

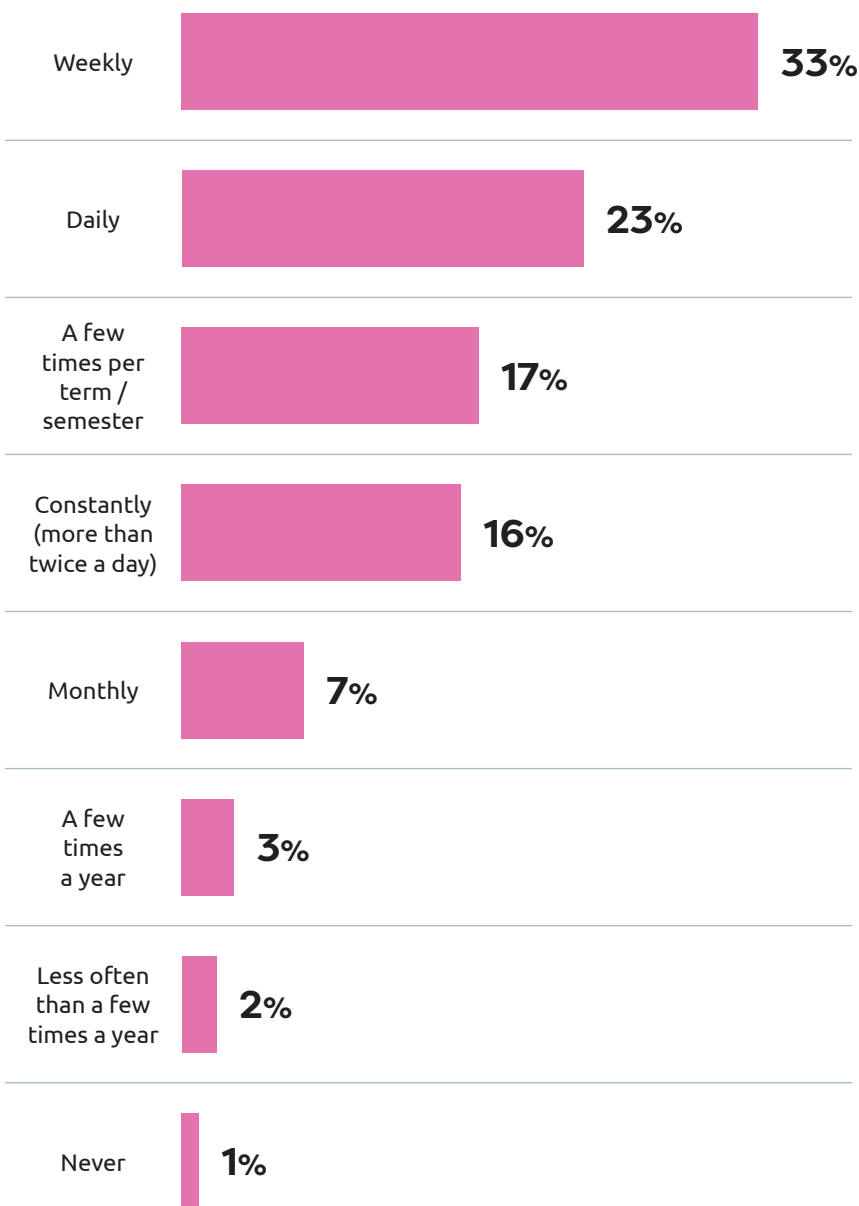### Nearly a quarter of students feel stressed daily (▲)

While regular stress remains steady, constant and daily stress are rising since the post-COVID stress downturn. Cost of living pressures and the increase in students' workloads while studying may be contributing.

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

72% of students report being stressed by their studies weekly or more often. This is in line with the results from the 2023 survey (71%), and trending downwards over time (78% in 2021 and 77% in 2019). However, the number of students expressing that they feel stress daily has increased by 3% since last year. Women are still more likely to report feeling stressed "constantly" than men. The 18% of women who reported feeling constantly stressed is higher than the 13% of men who feel the same way. 75% of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students report feeling stressed weekly or more often.

Older students are also more likely to feel stressed more frequently, stating constantly or daily at a higher rate than students under 33 years old.
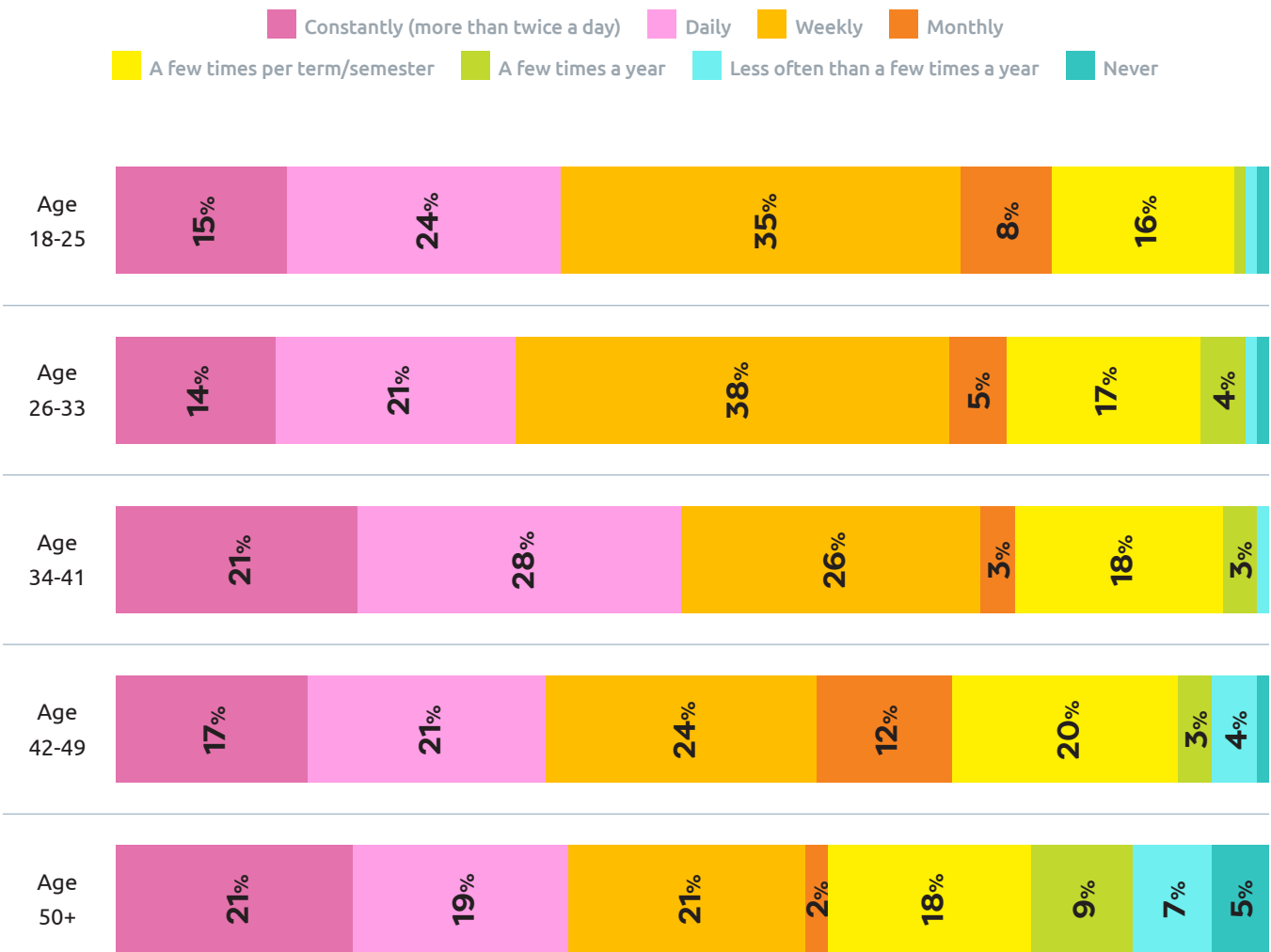
FREQUENCY OF STUDY STRESS

Category	Percentage
Weekly	**33%**
Daily	**23%**
A few times per term / semester	**17%**
Constantly (more than twice a day)	**16%**
Monthly	**7%**
A few times a year	**3%**
Less often than a few times a year	**2%**
Never	**1%**

Chapter 3: Study Stress

FREQUENCY OF STUDY STRESS - YOY COMPARISON

Legend: ■ Constantly (more than twice a day) ■ Daily ■ Weekly ■ Monthly ■ A few times a year ■ Never

Year	Constantly	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year	Never	Summary
2019	12%	27%	38%	13%	9%		77% Weekly or more
2021	13% ▲	25% ▼	40%	13%	8% ►		78% ▲ Weekly or more
2022	15% ▲	19% ►	31% ►	8% ►	23% ▲	3% ▲	65% ▼ Weekly or more
2023	16% ◄	20% ▲	35% ▲	7%	19% ►	3% ▲	71% ▲ Weekly or more
2024	16% ◄	23% ▲	33% ►	7%	20% ▲	2% ►	72% ▲ Weekly or more

Image: Hillary Namirimu, University of Canberra

Chapter 3: Study Stress

FREQUENCY OF STUDY STRESS - BY AGE

Legend:
- Constantly (more than twice a day)
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times per term/semester
- A few times a year
- Less often than a few times a year
- Never

Age group	Constantly	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times per term/semester	A few times a year	Less often than a few times a year	Never
Age 18-25	15%	24%	35%	8%	16%			
Age 26-33	14%	21%	38%	5%	17%	4%		
Age 34-41	21%	28%	26%	3%	18%	3%		
Age 42-49	17%	21%	24%	12%	20%	3%	4%	
Age 50+	21%	19%	21%	2%	18%	9%	7%	5%

Time management still number 1 cause of stress for students

Q. Out of the following options, what makes you feel the most stressed about studying? *Please select your top 3*

The top reasons for study stress remain time management - with not having enough time to balance other commitments as #1 again, closely followed by not having enough time to prepare for exams, and 'difficult course content' coming in third. This is in keeping with previous years.

International students are much more likely to rank "paying for my degree/ study" as their number one source of stress (19%) compared to domestic students (8%).

TOP 3 REASONS FOR STUDY STRESS

Reason	Percentage
Not enough time to prepare for exams & assessments	31%
Not enough time to balance other commitments	20%
Difficult course content	15%
Paying for degree / study	10%
Managing more responsibility on my own	10%
Sticking to integrity & plagiarism rules *(i.e referencing & AI use)*	5%
Finding study help	4%
Meeting new friends	4%
Other	2%
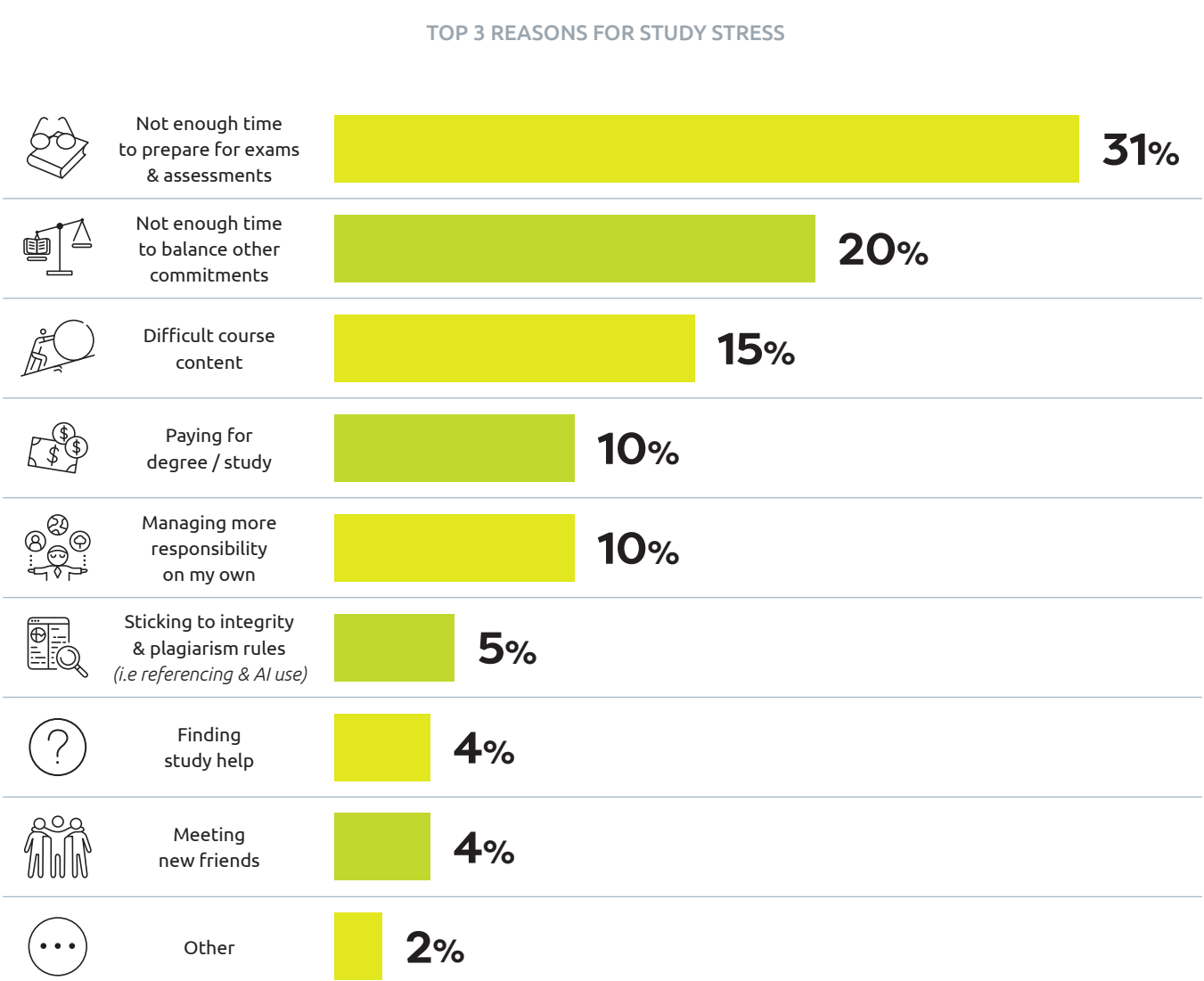
What students said

Based on qualitative comment, varied stressors faced by university students in Australia include: financial stress, time constraints, personal challenges, and the pressure to excel academically. It is clear that university leadership should focus on providing targeted support, enhancing mental health resources, providing supports around academic skills, and enabling support that is accessible anytime, allowing students to balance learning with life.

"The end of semesters where assignments end up clumped together as they want to give as much time as possible to complete them and so they end up due around the same weeks(s)"

"Stress about finding a job after"

"feels like there is a lack of teacher support in university compared to high school. don't really know who to ask if I'm having problems."

"Just overall financial stress from the current cost of living crisis as to work and study full time it is quite difficult"

"Juggling demanding job and study can be a real struggle"

"Studying online can be stressful because it's often hard to understand if you're on the right track with [your] school work"

Academic Integrity

A quarter of students unaware of academic integrity

There is room to improve visibility and awareness of information and support services around academic integrity and how to avoid plagiarism, with around one quarter of students not aware of what academic integrity is.

A small proportion of students (6%) report that they don't know about any of the information and services or don't remember hearing about them.

Q. In 2023, did you hear about the following from your university? *Please select all that apply.*

Around three quarters of students have good awareness of scaffolds around academic integrity, and its definition. Business students are less aware of the resources and information, STEM and Nursing students slightly more likely to have heard of them.

An explanation of what 'academic integrity' is	**75%**
Where to get referencing help	**74%**
How to avoid plagiarism	**73%**
Workshops to improve your referencing skills	**60%**
I didn't hear about these things or don't remember	**6%**

Q. When you are unsure about plagiarism or your referencing, how would you prefer to get help? *Please rank the following in order of preference.*

Students were asked to rank the most useful supports for improving academic integrity skills. Perhaps concerningly, 'Search engine' was first ranked most often, with 27% of students choosing this option. University-sanctioned feedback was first for 26% of students, and 'ask my teacher/lecturer' was first choice for around one quarter.

On the whole Australian students are much more likely to use a search engine for referencing support than students in other countries.

Journalism and medicine students would prefer to use a 24/7 writing feedback tool (41% and 36% respectively) and psychology students were least likely to ask a teacher (17%), while students studying Humanities and Social Sciences were most likely to use a search engine (35%).
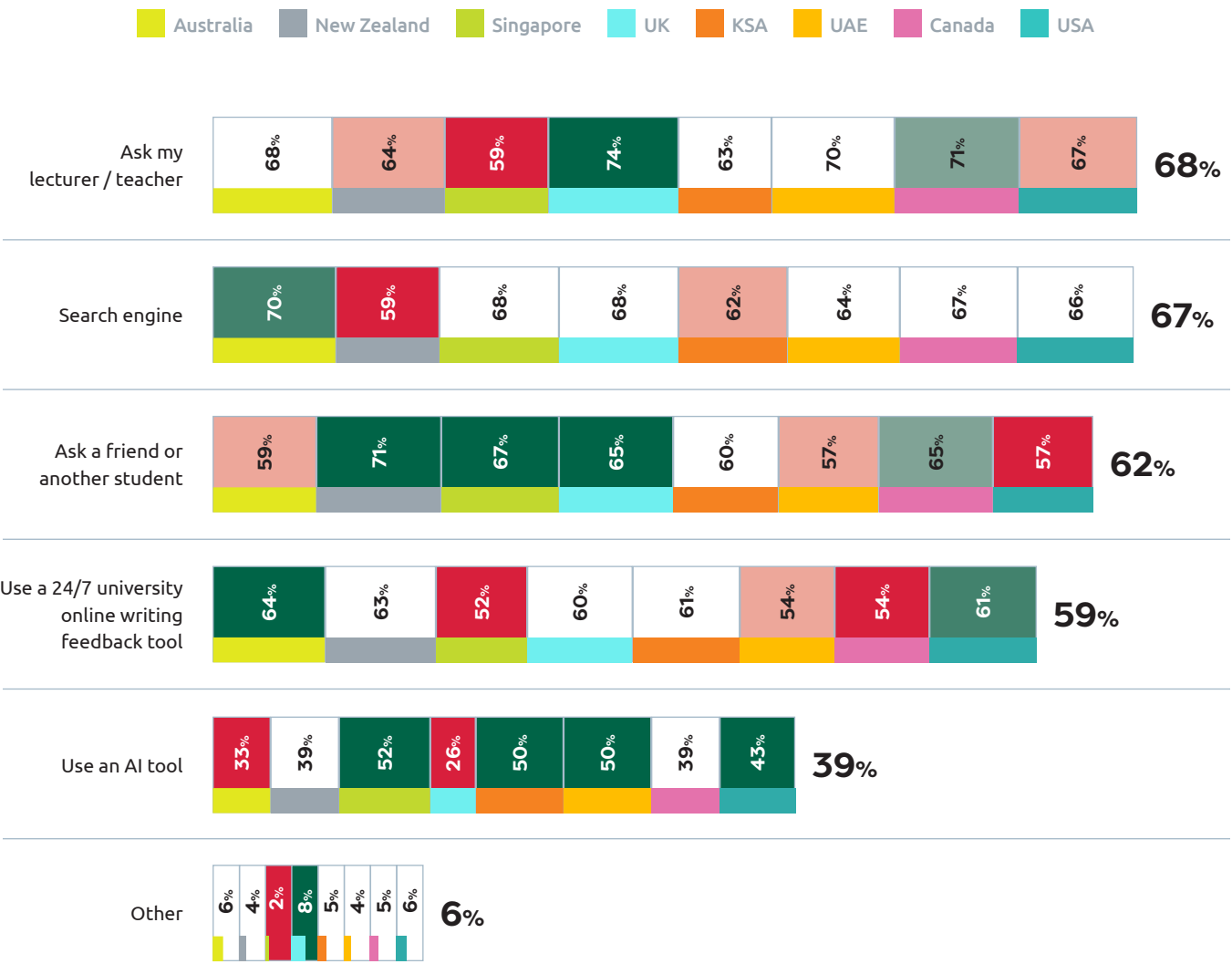
Only 12% of students would prefer to ask a friend or a peer for help; however, 57% of students who chose this option did not have a peer mentor (See 'Connection to other students' survey data).

FIRST PREFERENCE FOR HELP WITH PLAGIARISM OR REFERENCING

Search engine		**27%**
Studiosity — Use a 24/7 university feedback tool		**26%**
Ask my lecturer/teacher		**24%**
Ask a friend or another student		**12%**
Use an AI tool		**9%**
Other		**2%**
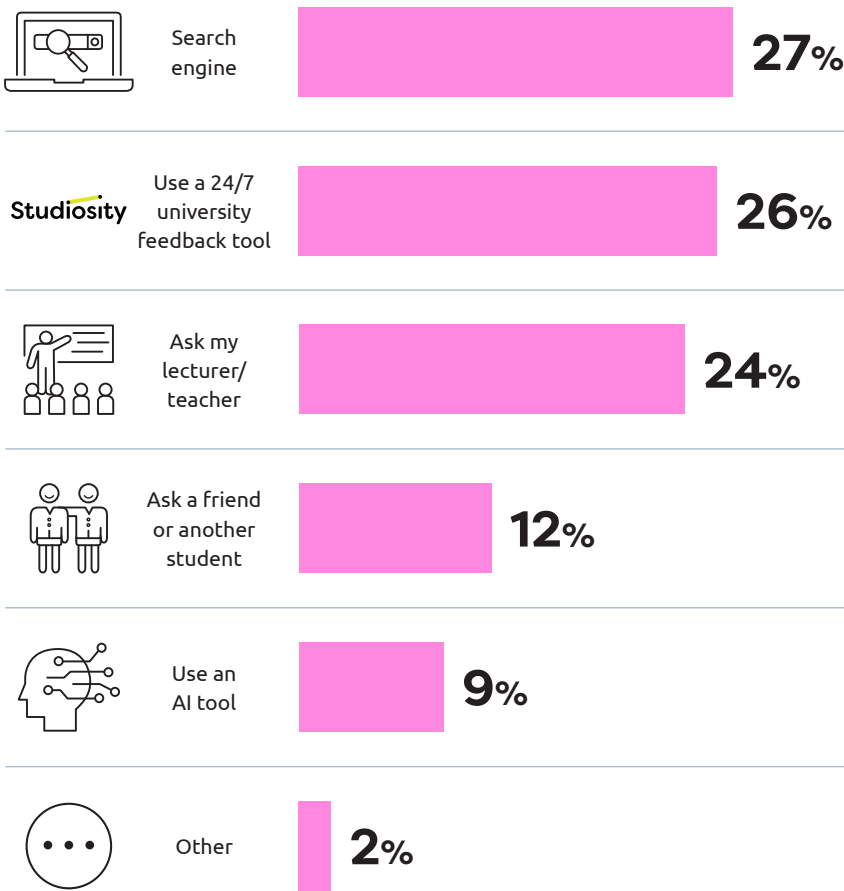
TOP 3 PREFERENCES FOR HELP WITH PLAGIARISM OR REFERENCING

Legend: Australia | New Zealand | Singapore | UK | KSA | UAE | Canada | USA

Ask my lecturer / teacher — Australia 68%, New Zealand 64%, Singapore 59%, UK 74%, KSA 63%, UAE 70%, Canada 71%, USA 67% — **68%**

Search engine — Australia 70%, New Zealand 59%, Singapore 68%, UK 68%, KSA 62%, UAE 64%, Canada 67%, USA 66% — **67%**

Ask a friend or another student — Australia 59%, New Zealand 71%, Singapore 67%, UK 65%, KSA 60%, UAE 57%, Canada 65%, USA 57% — **62%**

Use a 24/7 university online writing feedback tool — Australia 64%, New Zealand 63%, Singapore 52%, UK 60%, KSA 61%, UAE 54%, Canada 54%, USA 61% — **59%**

Use an AI tool — Australia 33%, New Zealand 39%, Singapore 52%, UK 26%, KSA 50%, UAE 50%, Canada 39%, USA 43% — **39%**

Other — Australia 6%, New Zealand 4%, Singapore 2%, UK 8%, KSA 5%, UAE 4%, Canada 5%, USA 6% — **6%**

What students said

Awareness and take up of services and scaffolding around academic integrity is varied. Many students are very positive and find their university's services helpful, others express disinterest. Normalisation and upfront communication about using services routinely would help bridge this gap.

"We completed an Academic Integrity Unit - it basically summed up what I knew from studying at uni and High School teachings"

"We had special documents and videos on our uni portal to help us. Teachers briefly when over these things in first year."

"Referencing was difficult because different classes require different referencing systems and its hard to keep track of which is which."

"Academic integrity has been a huge issue this year. Heaps of students getting pulled up for it - some wrongfully so! It scares me that even though I do things correctly this could be me one day."

"Online help has been fantastic I am appreciative of the amount of support whilst studying online"

"The supporting services are easy to access and are free"

Student experience and belonging

In an increasingly globalised higher education landscape, university leaders are committed to learning about what students value and expect from their degree and making competitive and ethical changes.

In this study, slightly fewer Australian students value the student experience over university ranking and most students were pragmatic in their decision, citing that the institution offered the right course 'for me' and that they were most influenced by advertising, over family and friends' influence.

Most students choose their uni based on the courses offered.

Q. Thinking about the factors you considered when selecting your degree / university, *please rank the following in order of importance.*

Q. Thinking about what influenced your decision when selecting your degree / university, *please rank the following in order of importance.*

The majority of Australian students said that the main reason they chose their university was because it offered the right course for them (69%), and only 13% chose primarily based on cost. Additionally, students were mostly influenced by a university's advertising (61%), rather than having a friend who went to that university (24%) or a family member (16%).

Nearly half of Australian university students (49%) consider the global ranking or a university's reputation most important, however 40% of students consider 'activities, ways to make friends, and support' or the overall student experience as more important than global rankings.

Over a third of students don't feel that they belong at university.

While most students feel like they belong (60%), 40% of students were neutral or negative about belonging to their university community.

Leaders can ensure all students feel a stronger sense of belonging starting with students' top preferred improvements: flexibility, 24/7 study and assignment support, and peer mentoring.

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU 'BELONG' IN YOUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY?
(FOR EXAMPLE DO YOU FEEL SUPPORTED AND INCLUDED?)

Not much at all · Not much · Neutral · Somewhat · Very much

6% ▲ 18% ▼ 12% ▲ 22% ▲ 42%
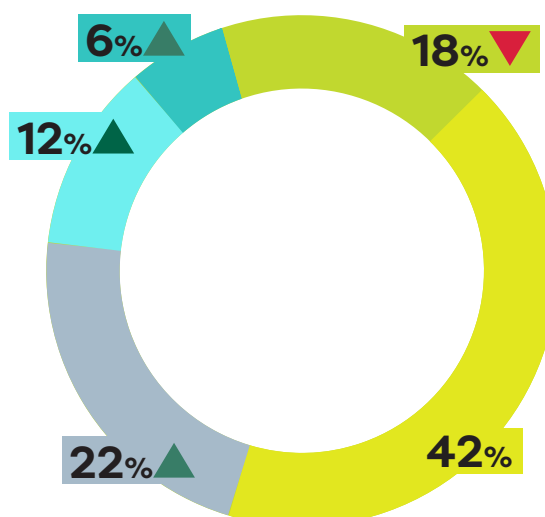
Chapter 5: Student experience and belonging

Q. Do you feel that you 'belong' in your university community
(for example, do you feel supported and included)?

In 2024, nearly two thirds (60%) of students feel that they 'belong' in their university community. This can be compared to the previous year's data about whether students felt a sense of community at their university (68% yes), although direct compari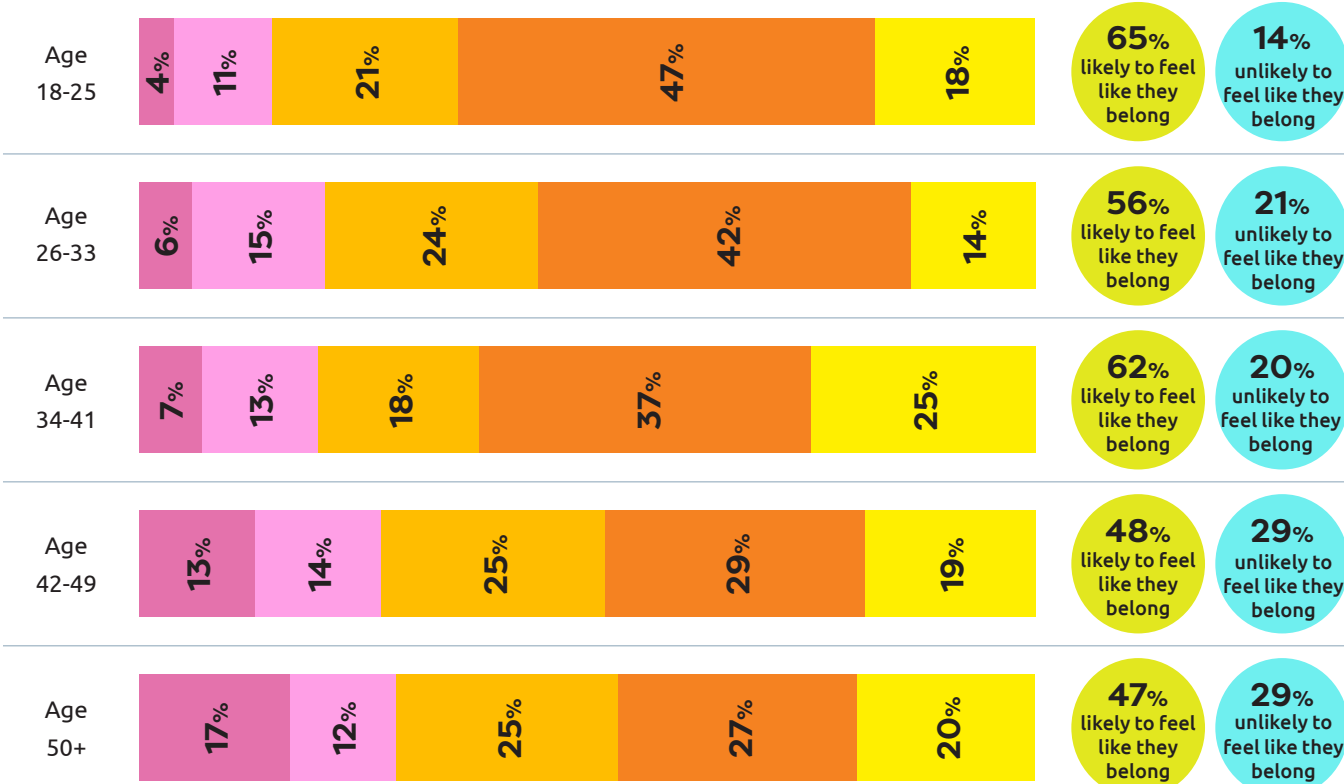son isn't possible with two differing questions. Male students were more likely to feel that they belong (66%) than females (55%) and non-binary students (33%). Younger students generally were more likely to feel that they belong than those in older age groups.

Students enrolled in Go8 Universities and ATN Universities felt a higher overall sense of belonging (54% and 67% respectively), compared to those enrolled in RUN or IRU network institutions (27% and 32% respectively). Interestingly, students who were living in rural or remote areas (non-metropolitain) reported very similar levels of feeling like they 'belong' to those based in capital city locations.

BELONGING BY AGE GROUP

Legend: Not much at all | Not much | Neutral | Somewhat | Very much

Age group	Not much at all	Not much	Neutral	Somewhat	Very much	likely to feel like they belong	unlikely to feel like they belong
Age 18-25	4%	11%	21%	47%	18%	65%	14%
Age 26-33	6%	15%	24%	42%	14%	56%	21%
Age 34-41	7%	13%	18%	37%	25%	62%	20%
Age 42-49	13%	14%	25%	29%	19%	48%	29%
Age 50+	17%	12%	25%	27%	20%	47%	29%

BY LOCATION

Location	Not much at all	Not much	Neutral	Somewhat	Very much	likely to feel like they belong	unlikely to feel like they belong
AU Metro	6%	12%	22%	44%	16%	61%	18%
AU Regional	6%	12%	24%	38%	21%	59%	18%

Chapter 5: Student experience and belonging

Flexibility and connection are key to belonging.

Q. Which of the following would make you feel like you belong at your university? *Please rank your Top 3.*

For those students who said they didn't feel that they belong to their university community, the top suggestion for improvement was having "a flexible schedule that lets me balance work and study" (24% ranked first, 66% ranked in top 3), followed by being "able to feel confident to reach out to my teachers" (20% ranked first, 53% ranked in top 3), and being "able to study online / remotely when I need to" (17% ranked first, 45% ranked in top 3), indicating a greater need for flexibility and connection to the university among those students.

"I studied full time online, so connection options were limited. University emails did help me feel like I belonged".

"I feel like I always struggled to make friends at university because a lot of my classes would change and I wouldn't see the same people all the time."

Q. In which of the following ways, if any, has your university made you feel like you belong? *Please rank your Top 3.*

For those who felt that they did belong to their university, the top reasons given were "I can study online / remotely when I need to" (68% ranked in top 3), followed by "I feel confident to reach out to my teachers" (64% ranked in top 3), and then "I have a flexible schedule that lets me balance work and study" (58% ranked in top 3).

"As an online student, the social media groups relevant to my course are amazing. They make you feel part of the group even though we are all in different areas."

"I've done numerous university courses. One with 600 students in the cohort, and one with 40 students. No surprise I felt like I belonged in the course with 40 students. Small cohort size meant I was actually a person and not just an anonymous number."

Image: Student (name withheld), Macquarie University
Rina Retno Wati, University of New South Wales

Chapter 5: Student experience and belonging

Students increasingly access support, international students moreso.

Recognising the diversity of student experiences in 2024, universities could look to serving all students regardless of location or academic literacy, with a focus on scaled, online study supports for the most frequent use, in addition to peer mentoring access, and scaling teacher capacity to respond to student enquiries.
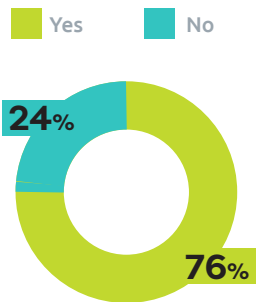
Q. Have you ever used one of your university's academic support services?

There has been a sharp increase in students stating that they accessed their university's academic support services this year (58%) compared to last year (33%). Particularly international students appear to access support services at a much higher rate than domestic students, with 76% of international students admitting they have accessed services, and just 54% of domestic students stating the same.

Q. Which of the following have you used before?

The most common way students seek support is by asking their teacher directly, though this is much more prevalent for domestic students (65%) compared to international students (55%). Another interesting difference is that international students are connecting with a peer mentor at a much higher rate (43%) than domestic students, of whom only 27% have asked a peer mentor for support.

ACCESSED UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Yes
- No

24%
76%

UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES USED

- International student
- Domestic student

Service	International student	Domestic student
Asked my teachers directly	55%	65%
University's 24/7 feedback service (Studiosity)	34%	31%
Asked a Learning Support officer	31%	29%
Asked a student mentor	43%	27%
Joined a peer support program	26%	21%
Attended a study workshop	41%	40%
Mental health support	32%	26%
Online/remote study option	47%	41%
Other		2%
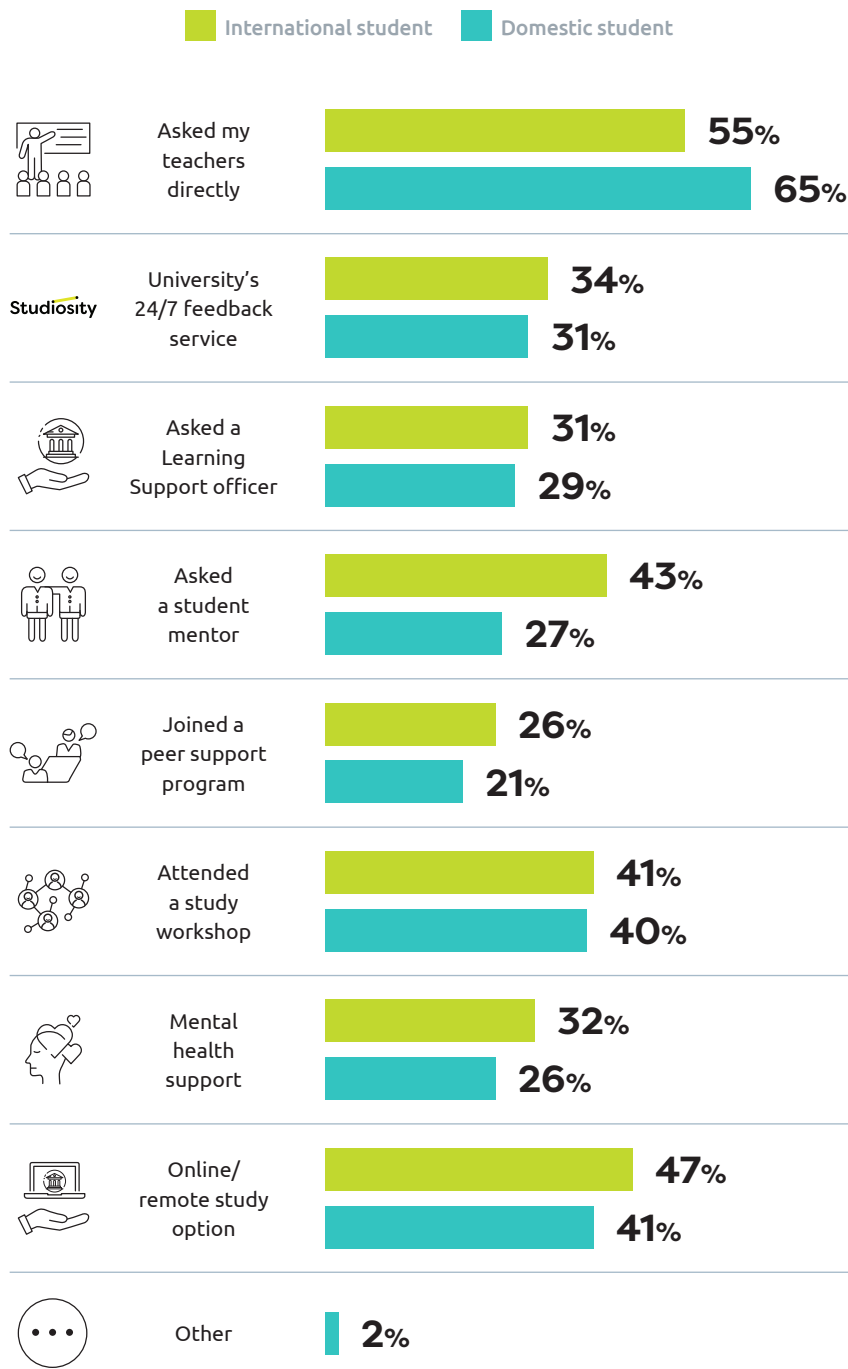
Chapter 5: Student experience and belonging

Those with average grades of Credit or above were much more likely to have accessed their university's 24/7 study and writing feedback service, whereas those who obtained a Pass or Non-Pass were much less likely to.

Males were more likely to have asked a student mentor for support (35% compared to 27% of females), as were international students (41% compared to 27% of domestic students).

In terms of frequency, students more often use an online/remote study option (59% report doing this once a week); and more rarely ask a learning support officer (58% report doing this once a semester).

Students with a Non-pass grade are also more likely to have accessed university support programs (90%), however, this may be skewed as a support mechanism, where a grade prompts the intervention.

GRADES COMPARED TO ACCESSING 24/7 FEEDBACK

Non-pass (below 50%)
14% ▼

Pass (50-64%)
24%

Credit (65-74%)
36%
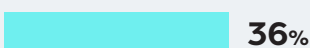
Distinction (75-84%)
29%

High distinction (85-100%)
38% ▲
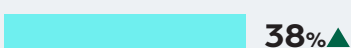
ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES USED

■ AU Metro   ■ AU Regional

Service	AU Metro	AU Regional
Asked my teachers directly	61%	65%
University's 24/7 feedback service	31%	31%
Asked a Learning Support officer	27%	34%
Asked a student mentor	29%	33%
Joined a peer support program	20%	28%
Attended a study workshop	42%	35%
Mental health support	26%	30%
Online/ remote study option	35%	57%
Other	2%	1%

Studiosity
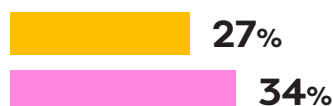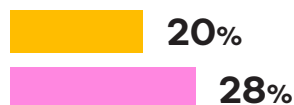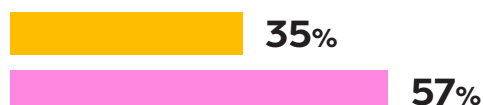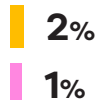
Chapter 5: Student experience and belonging

Leaders can look to normalising key supports that have the greatest impact, ensuring students engage as routine rather than based on intervention triggered by an already poor grade.

HAVE YOU EVER USED ONE OF YOUR UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES
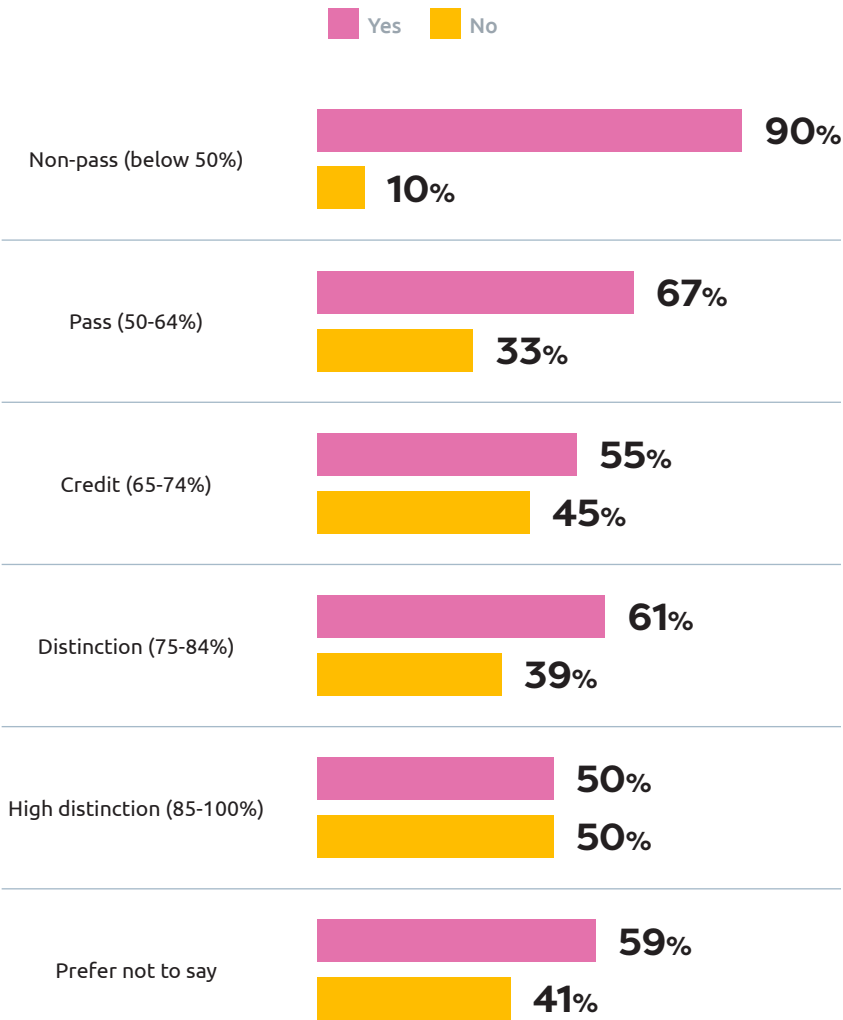
Yes   **No**

Non-pass (below 50%)
- **90%**
- **10%**

Pass (50-64%)
- **67%**
- **33%**

Credit (65-74%)
- **55%**
- **45%**

Distinction (75-84%)
- **61%**
- **39%**

High distinction (85-100%)
- **50%**
- **50%**

Prefer not to say
- **59%**
- **41%**

Image: Ashutosh Gupta, Macquarie University Nola Baire, Western Syndey University

Employability

Students split on employment prospects.

Whilst confidence was generally high when it comes to degrees developing skills to succeed in their future jobs, with a net confidence of 67%, this does not appear to translate into confidence in future employment, with only 53% of students feeling 'confident' or 'very confident' that they will be able to get a job related to their degree within 6 months of graduation. The levels of confidence were even lower in the responses from students studying Journalism, Creative Arts, or Languages.

Q. Please rate how confident you feel about the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is very confident and 1 is not confident at all.

Just under a third of students (32%) are very confident

'My degree is developing the skills I need to succeed in my future job'

but more (35%) were only 'somewhat confident' about this.

Almost half (46%) of students were 'somewhat confident' or 'neutral' about whether they

'have strong English writing and communication skills needed to apply for and get a job.'

Under a third (28%) of students were 'very confident' that they

'will be able to get a job related to my degree, within 6 months of graduation';

while 55% where 'somewhat confident' or 'neutral'.

"Arts are always shakey on whether or not you'll get a job in the field"

"Job applications are so hard and I feel constantly overlooked"

"I was working full time during most of my degree so job security was never a stressor."

"I study nursing and take placements which is very helpful to my degree!"
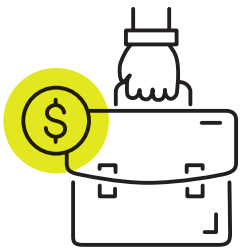
EMPLOYABILITY CONFIDENCE

■ 1 Not confident at all ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 Very confident

My degree is developing the skills I need to succeed in my future job
2% | 6% | 25% | 35% | 32%

I have strong English writing and communication skills needed to apply for and get a job
3% | 16% | 30% | 50%

I will be able to get a job related to my degree, within 6 months of graduation
6% | 11% | 30% | 25% | 28%

Students' recommendations to their education providers:

This year, students were asked to offer their qualitative comment on how to improve students' wellbeing, success, overall experience, and could offer an 'other' topic area of interest. Themes are grouped by frequency, and a real student comment is included.

Overall, students ask their institutions to consider providing more one-to-one connection, to prioritise mental health supports, improve communication and transparency and awareness of resources, reduce financial pressure, and offer more feedback mechanisms.

Students' recommendations for: Wellbeing

Facilitate peer connections and mentorship
"More check ins with how students are getting on"
"A dedicated mentor/support officer"
"More community atmosphere"
"A higher number of Student Advisers, Accessibility Advisers, and Learning Advisers. The ratio of students to available advisers is so unsustainable and students are waiting weeks-months to get the appointment they need."
"Help students to participate in student community."
"More human support"
"more workshops and events to meet other studying the same course as you"

Optimise study-life balance
"24/7 support for its students and staff whether it be online or in person."
"After hours counselling or support for mature students"
"Giving more time to complete assignments and explaining them thoroughly"
"More anonymous help, perhaps online, so that more people are willing to use any services provided."
"More flexibility regarding busy work,life,study balance"
"Help with deadlines"

Offer more feedback
"more critical feedback - how to directly improve work"
"Quicker feedback"
"More lecturer face-to-face contact."
"Have the university reaching out and doing check ups on students instead of students asking for the help"

Host and promote on-campus events
"More on campus activities which promote socialisation e.g. free coffee meetups for like minded groups to chat and get to know one another."
"More activities on campus supporting/ encouraging fitness and wellbeing"

Increase access to Mental health resources
"Free mental health supports for students, especially during exam period."
"Further advertisement for mental health support"
"Mental health support to all students"
"More help on managing stress"
"Need to make it more known on how to get wellbeing support"

Financial assistance/scholarships
"More financial support for placements"
"Offering paid work and/ free parking"
"Providing more support on how we can support ourselves financially and mentally during placements so we don't over stress ourselves."

Students' recommendations for: Success

Personalise support for students
"Provide more tailored learning resources to students (rather than centralising the support services)"
"allow more flexibility in studying options e.g. allow students to enrol in units in the term that they want to, allow students to have a choice in the places they go on placement"
"Access to individual support on content"
"More personalised and tailored feedback, fast feedback would be great too"
"To give students opportunity to choose variety of ways they think will help them learn better"

Incorporate more technology
"Incorporation of AI tools"
"Increased Use of Technology"
"Info and free workshops on emerging technologies"

Optimise responsiveness
"Quicker feedback"
"Faster feedback and more time to do work."
"Faster response times, or easier access to information"
"reply to questions about assessments more quickly"

Simplify and clarify assessment criteria
"Getting extensions, clearer rubrics, clearer feedback"
"Explaining the assessments better. At points I have felt that the assessment has not been properly outlined"
"I think we are set up for success. Less confusing assignment questions could help though 🙂"
"Making it super clear what is expected in all assignments across all courses."

Provide more career resources and support
"Additional career development resources would be useful - I've tried to get help from careers and employability before, but have never been able to make an appointment due to high demand for their services."
"Better understanding of the options after completing degree"
"Connecting with people in the career of study"
"More internship opportunities"

Improve assignment timetabling
"Collaborate with other units to ensure multiple assignments are not due at the same time."
"Flexible assignments due dates"

"Balance the assignments throughout the term more and have less due dates of the assignments clumped together."
"Greater emphasis on time management skills, more regular check-ins / staggered submissions (part by part)"

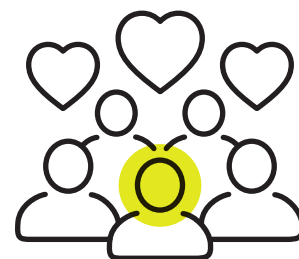**Recognise students when they succeed**
"More celebration of success"
"Need to promote the idea of success being not only about grades"
"being uplifting and being able to motivate the students"
"Celebrating more student successes"
"Acknowledging that credits are actually good grades. High distinctions are not the be all end all."

Students' recommendations for: Overall Experience

Promote mentorship
"More accessible peer mentor service"
"More student mentors"
"Provide student mentors for new students."
"Look to facilitate mentorship programs for interested students (not mandatory, but senior students could chose if they want to participate as could first years)"

Increase opportunities for connection
"Better student and campus culture to help build connections between students"
"Encourage student participation"
"More university activities that support connection."

Help students with time management
"High expectation of workload and how to manage time"
"Just an overall understanding that students are struggling to find the time to work and get by in life."
"Class clashes are annoying and hard to manage"

Support students through rising cost of living
"Cheaper fees"
"Cheaper food on campus - those cafes are expensive! Bring back a reasonable canteen style meal option."
"Financially it's almost impossible."

Create better comms strategies
"Just making support services more known"
"I think overall the thing my study provider is most lacking is the ability to let people know about services/communication channels. As I feel like a lot of information gets lost in emails"

Recommendations for Improvement: Other

Lastly, students were also given the opportunity to make suggestions on any other facet of university life.

Students used this opportunity to request financial assistance, more wellbeing and mental health support, a greater diversity of support options for students with a greater diversity of needs and preferences, more opportunities to make connections with peers, and better technology both in terms of infrastructure and support tools.

Additionally, students asked for enhanced career opportunities and increased transparency in university operations. Some students used this space to emphasise the importance of diverse and inclusive environments.

Despite the diversity of opinions in this last qualitative section of the survey, a recurring theme is the importance of creating a supportive and engaging learning environment for all students.

Image: Hernan Alarcon Rodarte, Western Sydney University

Studiosity

studiosity.com