



2022 Australian **Student** **Wellbeing** Survey

Research carried out by YouthInsight
January 2022

Contents

Foreword.....	3
Introduction	5
Background.....	5
Research objectives	5
Methodology & Sample.....	5
Executive summary	6
Key findings	7
Study findings	9
Student Profile.....	9
Other commitments alongside studies	10
Grade achievement and aspirations	11
Transition to university	13
Feelings of stress	14
Procrastination	16
Cheating	18
Feelings about the future.....	20
International student experiences	25
Conclusion	26

Foreword



Dear Colleagues in Higher Education,

We have pivoted, quarantined, adapted, vaccinated, and persevered, and now returned to campus. In prior years in this space I observed that the sector has advanced in ways that may otherwise have taken us years. While students have faced enough risk to-date, there is a new risk – that in a rush to return to normal, we lose that which we have learned and has been progressed.

This report contains the results of the seventh annual independent survey to over 1,000 Australian university students, intended to help better understand student attitudes and feelings towards study, their study patterns, and their expectations and experiences at university.

If the sector is in the middle of a bridge, having come halfway but needing to move forward, then students report facing similar thresholds. Stress is down this year but still remarkably high. Fewer international students are stressed but the vast majority feel lonely. Almost a quarter of students are aware of cheating. Students benefit from peer support, confidence, and sense of belonging, but are unwilling to give up newfound flexibility, with three quarters also now employed while studying. Notably, but unsurprisingly, women share the greatest concern over study, stress, and balancing commitments, yet fortunately two thirds of students are optimistic about their study and career prospects.

Overall, this year's survey points to many positive indicators for students in 2022, 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judyth Sachs".

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



Well done to Studiosity for commissioning this survey to monitor and better understand students' wellbeing.

Stress levels amongst students are still alarmingly high. Living through a pandemic, geo-political conflicts and natural disasters is stressful enough, let alone coupled with the ongoing challenges our young people have in discovering their purpose and career pathway, furthering their studies and balancing this all with working and managing their personal lives.

Helping support young people through these challenges is one of the reasons why we founded Student Edge; we're determined to continue be the safe place where young people can turn to for support. We also applaud Studiosity for the pivotal work which they do in helping young people, particularly with academic pressures. We hope this report will help our Educational Institutions (and other relevant stakeholders) in continuing to build and tailor services to support young people too.

It's refreshing to see the optimism from our students and it's important that we help underpin this and empower them to fulfil their potential.

Jeremy Chetty

Co-Founder & Chief Product Officer,
Student Edge



Introduction



Background

Universities and colleges around the world partner with Studiosity to provide academic writing and core skills support 24/7, connecting students to help when they need it. They currently work with 75% of universities in Australia.

For six years, Studiosity has run an annual Student Wellbeing Survey with Australia's university students. In January 2022, YouthInsight, the full service research arm of Student

Edge, was commissioned by Studiosity to conduct the seventh wave of this research among university students in Australia.



Research objectives

This annual survey seeks to better understand, and then support, 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, motivation and procrastination, cheating, feelings towards the future, loneliness among international students, and the transition to university.

In addition, we benchmarked the results with previous survey waves to better understand how behaviours and attitudes have changed over time, in particular how these things have shifted after another year of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Methodology & Sample

Studiosity produced the questions for this survey, and YouthInsight gathered the responses from Australian students via an online survey. Sample was sourced from the Student Edge Panel as well as trusted panel partners.

The survey ran from January 24th to February 4th and gained a total of 1,008 responses.

All Australian universities were represented in the sample. The students were 18–51 years old and consisted of a mix of both domestic (88%) and international (12%) students.

Data has been weighted to match a nationally representative profile of students by gender and state/territory.

Executive summary

Student stress has declined in 2022, but it is vital that universities continue to support students and their wellbeing.



Positively, the proportion of students feeling stressed at least once a month has declined since 2021

with 74% of students feeling stressed at least monthly, down from 91%. However, the overall level of stress is still extremely high, and one in three students claim to be in a constant state of stress with 34% feeling stressed at least once daily (higher among females).

The survey found that the majority of students are managing their study alongside other responsibilities.

Eight in ten (78%) respondents were employed in some capacity in 2021, while 13% were caring for a child or family member. Balancing time with other responsibilities and commitments was the number one source of stress reported (61%). This rises to 67% for those students who are working in addition to studying.

Six in ten students aspire to high grades,

saying this is very important to them (57%). The most common grade among surveyed students was a distinction, with two in five achieving this grade on average. Average grades in 2021 are comparable to the results of the 2020 survey.

Stress is a key trigger for procrastination

with eight in ten students (78%) claiming they struggle with procrastination, and females significantly more likely to agree they struggle than males (86% vs. 69% respectively). Around three in ten students who struggle with procrastination could be better equipped with strategies to deal with it.

This year, we also found that one in four respondents (24%) reported knowing of another student who cheated in 2021,

with most saying they thought this was because of Covid-19. This is a reduction from the 30% who reported knowledge of cheating in the 2020 survey.

Thinking to the future, nine in ten students (89%) believed that their course will be relevant to their career,

with 44% saying their course will be highly relevant. Sixty three percent of students are optimistic about the future and their ability to get a job related to their degree after they graduate.

Three in five (58%) international students in the survey planned to return to an Australian campus in 2022.

We saw many differences when compared to domestic students, for instance, international students are less likely to struggle with stress or procrastination. Despite this, eight in ten international students have felt lonely or homesick while studying at an Australian university.

Key findings

Study stress is often caused by struggles to balance responsibilities and commitments

Eight in ten respondents were employed in some capacity in 2021. When considering study load, this highlights that only 2 in 10 university students can completely focus on their studies, with the majority are managing their study along with other responsibilities. These other responsibilities are not only work related, with 13% of students caring for a child or family member.

As found in previous waves of the Student Wellbeing Survey, balancing time with other responsibilities and commitments is a huge source of stress among students (61% say this causes them stress). This rises to 67% for those students who are working in addition to studying.

More than ever due to the pandemic, students are struggling with motivation and procrastination

While the majority (57%) aspire to get high grades, not all students are aiming for this. Among those for whom high grades were not a key motivation, they feel they would be more motivated to achieve higher grades if they were clearer about their study/career path (31%) or if they had more study support available to them outside of uni hours (25%).

Procrastination is often related to lapses in motivation. Of those who struggle with procrastination, 30% don't use any strategies to deal with it. Given the high proportion of students who struggle with procrastination, there is an opportunity for educators and student support services to help students develop strategies to overcome their procrastination.

Students want more support from their universities to improve their future prospects, but careers support is more sought after than study support

Sixty three percent of students are optimistic about the future and their ability to get a job related to their degree after they graduate. However, the remaining 37% feel less optimistic.

Students believe the best support their university can offer them, to help them be more optimistic about their future job prospects, is more internships and practical work experience (57%), followed by careers counselling and careers seminars (18%). Few believe additional study support to improve their grades is the best way to improve their job prospects (13%).





Perceptions of course relevance and optimism for the future are driven by a clear connection between course and industry; more could be done to strengthen this connection

Nine in ten students (89%) reported that what they study day-to-day will be relevant to the career they want to pursue, however, only 44% believe their course is highly relevant. Both perceptions of relevance and feelings of optimism for the future often related to clear links between course content and industry, and the type of work tasks that students expect to be doing in their career.

Universities could be doing more to work with employers in relevant sectors to ensure students are taught practical and clearly applicable skills for the workplace. It's also important for students that course content is seen as relevant and up to date, and that they can make connections between course content and real-life to understand how the information can be applied. Students also wish for more work experience opportunities, for instance via partnerships between universities and employers.

International students would like more networking opportunities provided by their university to tackle loneliness and homesickness

While international students seem to struggle less with multiple aspects of tertiary education, such as the transition, stress and procrastination, they are likely to experience loneliness or homesickness. Around 8 in 10 international students feel this way, made up of 50% who felt isolated from friends and family back home and just under a third who found it difficult to make new friends. To help them feel less lonely, international students would like to see greater support provided from their universities. This support could be in the form of networking events (42%), peer support programs (33%) or a buddy system (20%).

Study findings

The survey achieved a diverse sample of students

Enrolment

In this wave of the survey YouthInsight were able to obtain a broad mix of respondents across the tertiary education sector. Eighty six percent of respondents were current university students who are studying in 2022, with the other 14% who recently completed their studies in 2021. Within this context, there were a mix of undergraduate (80%) and postgraduate students (15%) as well as those completing a certificate or diploma (4%).

Demographics

The students in the survey were more likely to be living in affluent areas (reflecting the urban location of most universities but also reflecting the financial position of those attending university). Only 27% of students were living in postcodes in the bottom 5 deciles for socio-economic position while 73% were living in postcodes in the top 5 deciles.

Reflecting the diversity of the Australian population, the survey found that 3 in 10 Australian students speak a language other than English in the home. This rises to 6 in 10 for the 12% of international students that completed the survey.

Study methods

In 2022, students reported studying in the following ways:



19%

On campus only



57%

A mix of campus & online



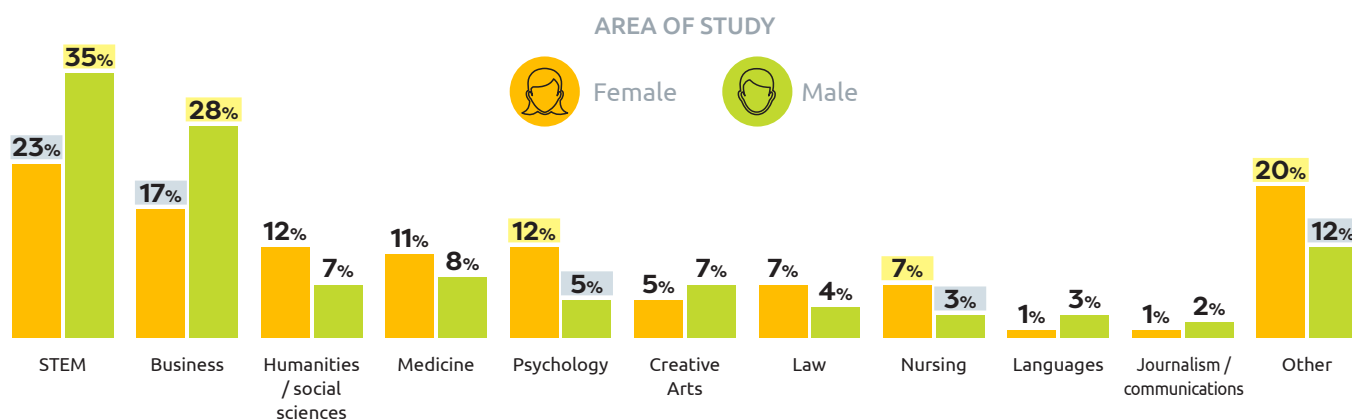
3%

Remote learning with limited campus visits



21%

Remote learning only



The top areas of study were STEM (29%), Business (22%) and Humanities (10%), with strong gender skews within these subjects.

Coloured boxes represent significant differences at 95% confidence.

The majority of students balance both full time study and paid employment

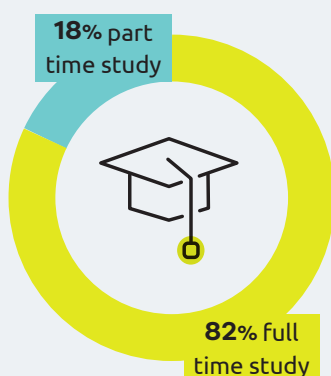
78%
Working

Q. What was your student status in 2021?

Eight in ten (82%) respondents to the survey were full time students, with the remaining 18% studying part time. Full time study trends downwards as the age of respondents increases.

There is also a correlation between study load and employment, with students studying part time being more likely to be working (91%) than students who are studying full-time (76%).

STUDENT SELF-REPORTED STUDY STATUS



Q. Were you employed in 2021?

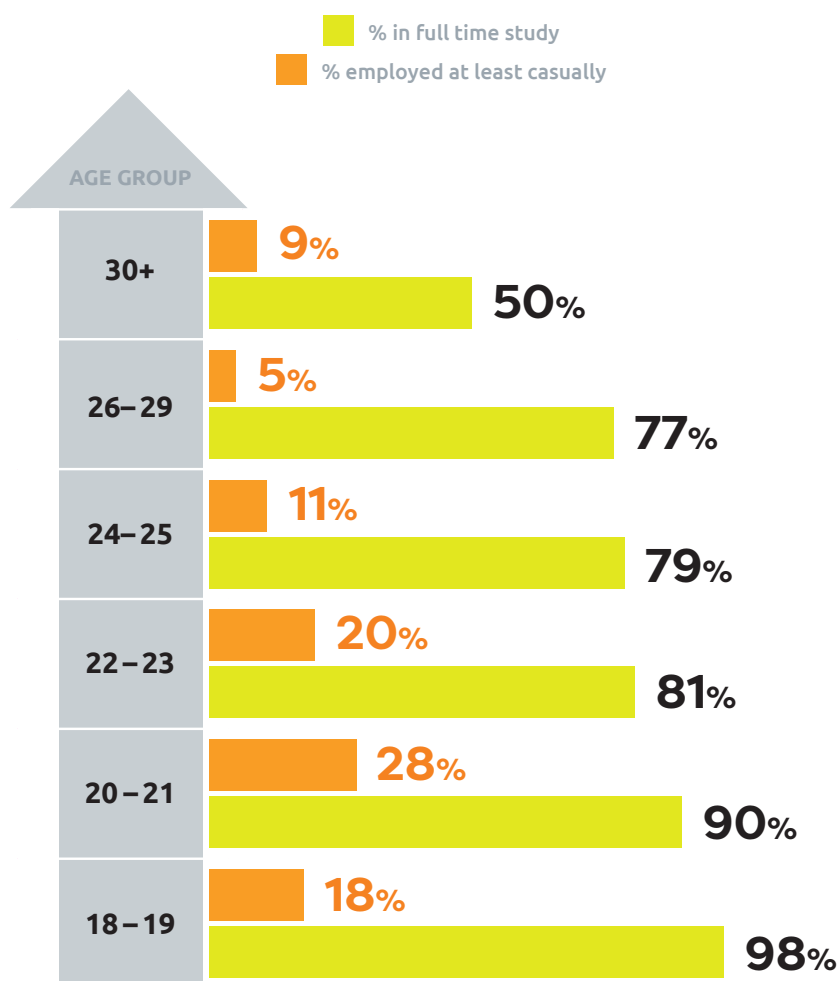
Please select the option most relevant to you.



The majority are managing their study along with other responsibilities. Eight in ten (78%) respondents were employed in some capacity in 2021, which included 15% working full time, 24% working part time and 40% working casually. Of those who are studying full time, three quarters (76%) are in paid employment.

Other than paid work, the survey found that 13% of students are also caring for a child or family member. These students were more likely to be mature students, those studying postgraduate degrees or certificates/diplomas and international students.

EMPLOYMENT



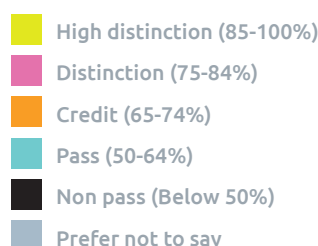
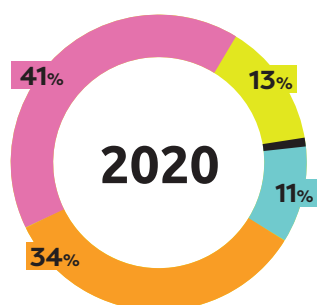
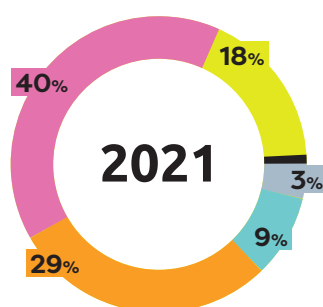
Most students are aiming high and achieving their grade aspirations

Q. What was your average grade in 2021?

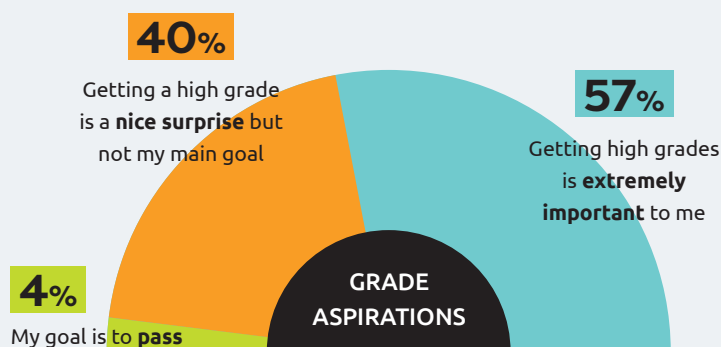
Use the closest % range.

The most common grade among surveyed students was a distinction, with two in five achieving this grade on average. A further 29% achieved a credit and 18% achieved a high distinction. Average grades in 2021 are comparable to the results of the 2020 survey, although we saw a slight increase in the proportion of students achieving a high distinction, from 13% to 18% (not significant).

AVERAGE GRADES



Q. Do you feel motivated to achieve high grades at university (e.g. HD's)? Which of the below options best reflects how you feel?



Six in ten students aspire to high grades (57%), saying getting high grades is extremely important to them. A further 40% said that getting a high grade is a nice surprise, but not their main goal. A minority of 4% say that their goal is to pass rather than achieving high grades.

Although not significant, indicatively we saw that females were more likely to say that getting high grades is important to them (59% vs. 55%).

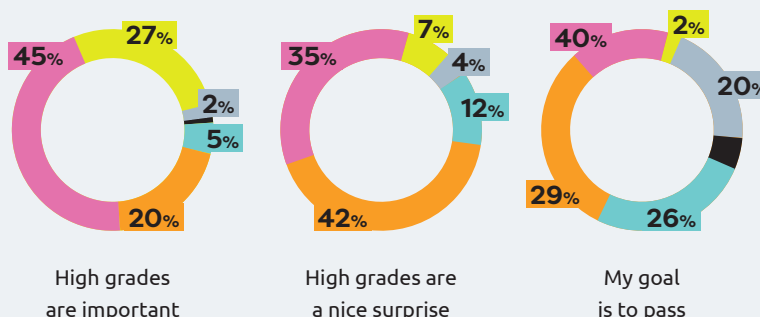
There seems to be a gap between student aspirations and the grades they are achieving. Of those students aiming for high grades, 72% of them are achieving this with a distinction

or high distinction average. An additional 20% are achieving a credit average with only 5% of this cohort achieving a pass or lower.

Of those only aiming to pass their subjects, nearly half (49%) are outperforming their expectations with an average credit grade or higher.

Within this cohort 1 in 5 chose not to answer the question, a much higher proportion than those students who are more motivated to achieve high grades. One possible reason for this is that there may be potential shame or embarrassment about the grades they are achieving.

AVERAGE GRADES BY GRADE ASPIRATIONS



Most students are aiming high and achieving their grade aspirations

Q. Why is getting high grades important to you?

Please select the option most relevant to you.

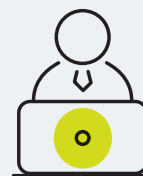
Those who are aiming for high grades do so for a range of reasons. The most common reasons were being a natural high achiever, to help them get a job and to make their family proud.

However, international students were twice as likely as Australian students to aim for high grades because they "want to make their family proud" (24% vs. 12% respectively) suggesting that culture plays a role in grade aspirations.



42%

I'm a natural high achiever



32%

To help me get a job



14%

To make my family proud



5%

I'm on a scholarship so I have to

Q. Which of the following do you think would help improve your motivation to achieve high grades? Please select the option most relevant to you.

Of those who are less motivated to achieve high grades, they feel they would be more motivated to achieve higher grades if they were clearer about their study/career path (31%) or if they had more study support available to them outside of uni hours (25%).

Being clearer about their study/career path was a stronger driver for younger students with 40% of 18-21 year olds selecting this option.

Fifteen percent of those who are not motivated to achieve high grades say that nothing would motivate them to improve.

WHAT WOULD MOTIVATE THEM TO ACHIEVE HIGHER GRADES?

If I was clearer about my study/career path



More study support outside of uni hours



More peer support



Changing my degree



Other



None of these



The transition to university is a good experience for most

Q. Did you find the transition to university easy?

Three quarters of university students said they found the transition to university easy. The majority said this was because of their university providing support and resources (62%). A further one in ten (11%) said the transition was easy for other reasons. Qualitatively, these reasons related to:

- Taking steps to prepare, such as visiting open days, orientation
- Understanding the transition of learning styles and delivery modes
- Prior independent study experiences, such as in Year 12
- Studying online in high school prepared them for studying online at university.

These comments highlight the importance of both the preparation work done by students themselves as well as the specific support provided by their high school specially designed to aide their transition to university.

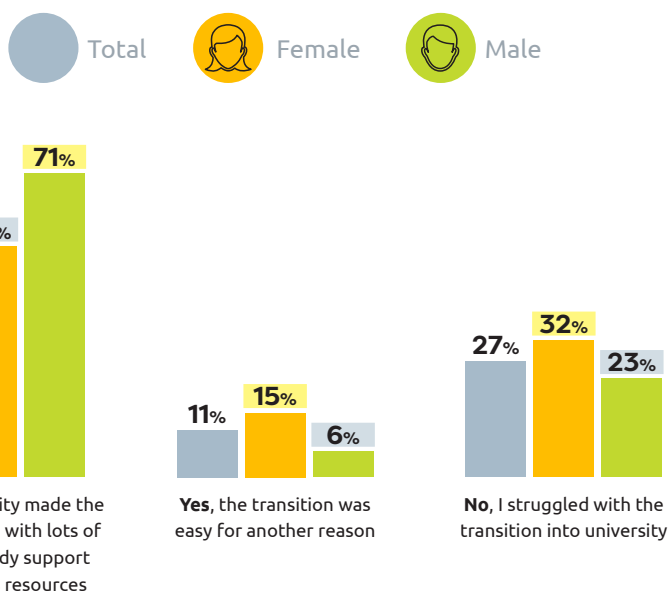
73%
Easy

"I prepared with open days and orientation sessions."

"I had done a uni extension subject in year 12 so knew what uni was like."

"I spent a lot of time planning my study year before beginning study."

EASE OF TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY



The remaining quarter of students (27%) struggled with the transition to university. Females were significantly more likely to report struggling than males (32% vs. 23%).

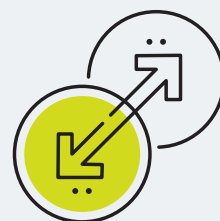
Q. If you struggled with the transition, why do you think this was?

Please select the option most relevant to you.

The most common reason that students struggled with the transition was they did not have their usual friends or support network around them (35%). Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) students were more likely than non-CALD students to report this experience (43%).

The second most common reason was a lack of study support from their university (23%). Those who act as a carer for a child or other family member were the most likely to say that they didn't have enough study support from their university (48%).

Adapting to online learning at university was the main cause of struggles transitioning to university for 20% of students, while a further 10% said they didn't like their coursework and/or felt like they had chosen the wrong degree.



Feelings of stress are declining overall, but still one third of students feel stress at least daily...

74%
Monthly

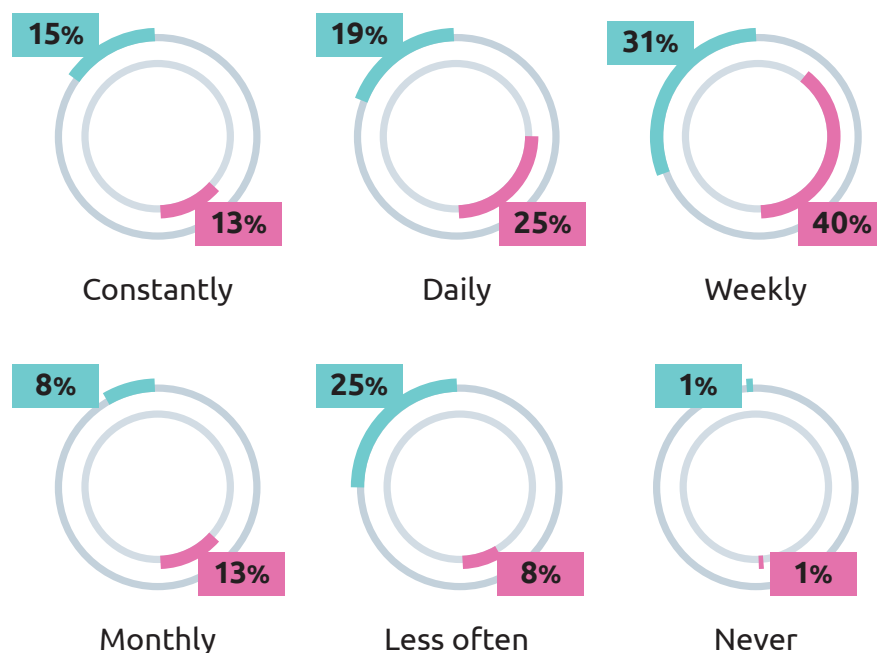
Q. On average, how often do you feel stressed by studying?

While stress remains high overall, the proportion of students feeling stressed at least once a month has reduced from the previous wave of the survey. Most recently, 74% of students reported feeling stressed at least once a month or more (down from 91% in the 2021 survey).

Of concern are the 1 in 3 who claim to be in a constant state of stress with 34% feeling stressed at least once daily.

■ Current survey
■ Previous survey

FREQUENCY OF FEELING STRESSED



Delving into the results further, females were significantly more likely to report feeling stressed than males; they are more than twice as likely to claim they are in a constant state of stress.

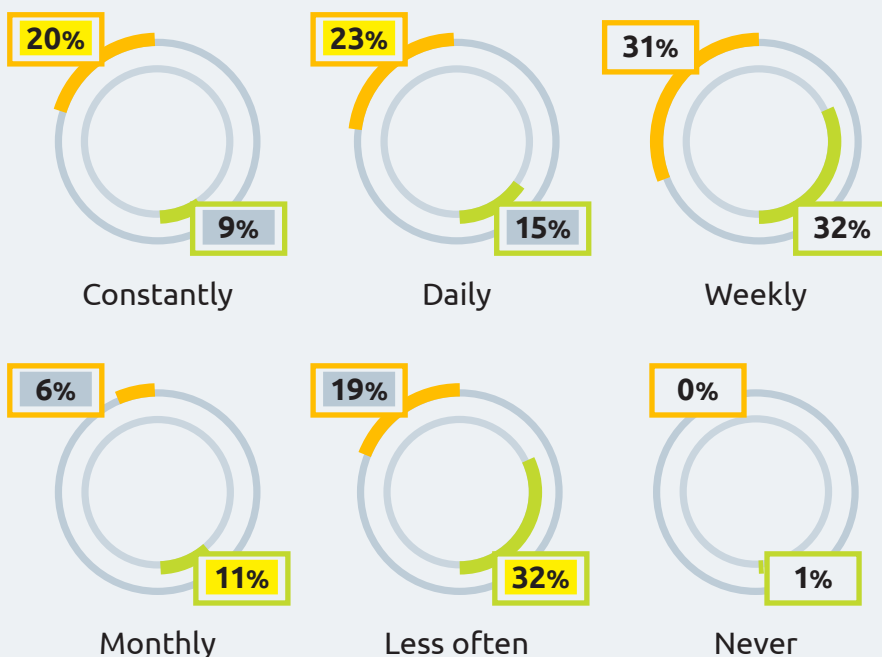


Male



Female

FREQUENCY OF FEELING STRESSED



Coloured boxes represent significant differences at 95% confidence.

Feelings of stress are declining overall, but still one third of students feel stress at least daily...

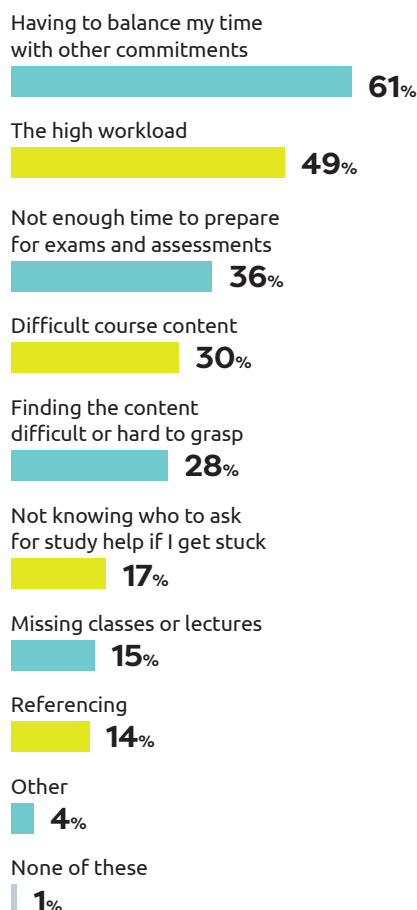
Q. Out of the following options, what makes you feel the most stressed about studying?

Please select your top 3.

Balancing time with other responsibilities and commitments such as employment, social and extracurricular commitments was the #1 source of stress reported (61%). This rises to 67% for those students who are working in addition to studying.

The high workload of studying is the next most common source of stress (49% of students, up from 22% in 2021). The high workload causing stress is more prevalent in younger students with a clear split between those aged under 24 and those aged 24 and older. 55% of those aged 24 and under selected the high workload as a stress trigger while only 38% of those aged 24 or older selected this.

CAUSES OF STRESS



"Covid-19 made things harder and less personal with our teachers as we had to adapt with at home, online learning for example, zoom meetings."

"Not being able to appropriately learn content in the environment that it would be applied in with online learning distorting how we learn the content but being assessed as if it weren't."

"Covid-19 not helping. Going mostly online meant loss of motivation. Less help and less connection."

As mentioned, the survey found that females reported higher frequency of feeling stressed than males. When asked about their triggers, females were significantly more likely to report feeling stressed about balancing their other commitments (66% vs. 55% of males) and the high workload (55% vs. 44%). Although not significant, indicatively we saw that females were more likely to say that getting high grades is important to them, and therefore these high expectations they are placing on themselves in their education could be leading to higher levels of stress.

When asked to further elaborate on their stress, many of the open-ended responses focussed on the impacts of Covid-19 and the difficulties of learning remotely.

Other feedback spoke of the pressure to achieve high grades and the stress this adds to their education. When asked specifically about this (Q. Is trying to achieve high grades causing you to feel stressed at uni?), 79% agreed that trying to achieve high grades is a cause of their stress at university.

"If I don't get high grades then I feel like my career development worsens permanently."

"Constantly striving for good grades means that a lot of time that could be spent with family and socialising is sacrificed, which increases the stress placed upon myself."

"I can never tell if I have to put all of my effort into studying or if I can take some stuff a little easier. It's like having to be on 130% study effort all trimester which is quite draining."

"It has been difficult transitioning to uni in 2021 and trying to build social connections that I had in high school which allowed me to study with others and learn off others."

Procrastination is an issue experienced by eight in ten students

Q. Do you struggle with procrastination?

Eight in ten students (78%) claim they struggle with procrastination with females significantly more likely to agree they struggle than males (86% vs. 69% respectively).



69%
Male

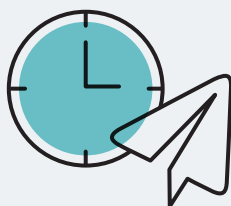


86%
Female

The struggle with procrastination is one which some students are able to overcome as they get older, with those aged under 26 more likely to agree they struggle with procrastination (80%) than those who are aged 26 years or older (70%).

This correlates with differences in procrastination between students studying at different levels, with postgraduate students less likely to struggle with procrastination (67%) than undergraduates (81%).

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students may potentially require more support in this area, as the proportion of these students struggling with procrastination is 8 percentage points higher than non-CALD students (83% vs. 75%).



8 in 10 (78%)
struggle with procrastination

Q. Why do you think that is?

Please select the option most relevant to you.

The most common trigger for procrastination is feelings such as “stress, anxiety and loneliness”. This was selected by 1 in 3 students who struggle with procrastination (33%). The next most common reason selected is that students believe they are “natural procrastinators”; this was the lead trigger for 1 in 4 students (26%).

While stress is the leading trigger across both cohorts, students from CALD backgrounds were significantly more likely to select “I have too many distractions in my study space” (22% vs. 11% of non-CALD students). Conversely, non-CALD students are significantly more likely to view themselves as natural procrastinators (30% vs. 18% CALD students).

PROCASTINATION TRIGGERS

Feelings like stress, anxiety and loneliness are making me feel unmotivated



I'm just a natural procrastinator



I have too many distractions in my study space



I feel like I work better under pressure



I find my course work too hard so I always put off studying or doing assignments



Other



Procrastination is an issue experienced by eight in ten students

Q. Which is the strategy you most commonly use to help you procrastinate less?

Please select the option most relevant to you.

Of those who struggle with procrastination, 30% don't use any strategies to deal with it. Given the high proportion of students who struggle with procrastination, there is an opportunity for educators and student support services to help students develop strategies to overcome their procrastination.

Those students who have enacted strategies to combat their procrastination take the following approaches:



32%

Turn off social media



31%

Setting timers



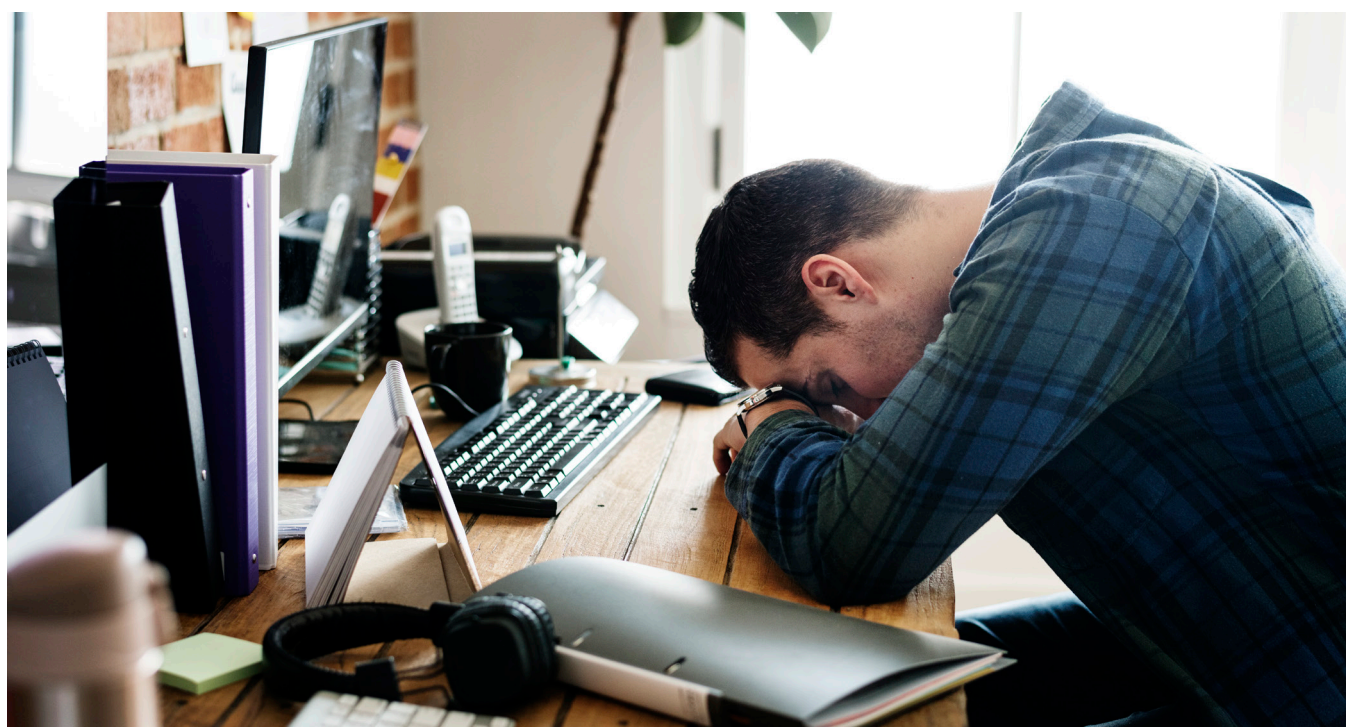
14%

Other method

Other strategies mentioned in their extended open-ended feedback include:

- writing to-do lists
- using apps/online tools
- using screen time limits
- taking regular breaks
- breaking tasks into chunks
- using rewards (such as spending time on social media or playing a game) for completing parts of their work

Universities could do more to recognise this issue and that a large proportion of them are not using any techniques to overcome it. Universities could better equip students with strategies to reduce or manage their procrastination.



A quarter of respondents know a student who cheated in 2021, a decrease since 2020

Q. Do you know a university student who has cheated in 2021?

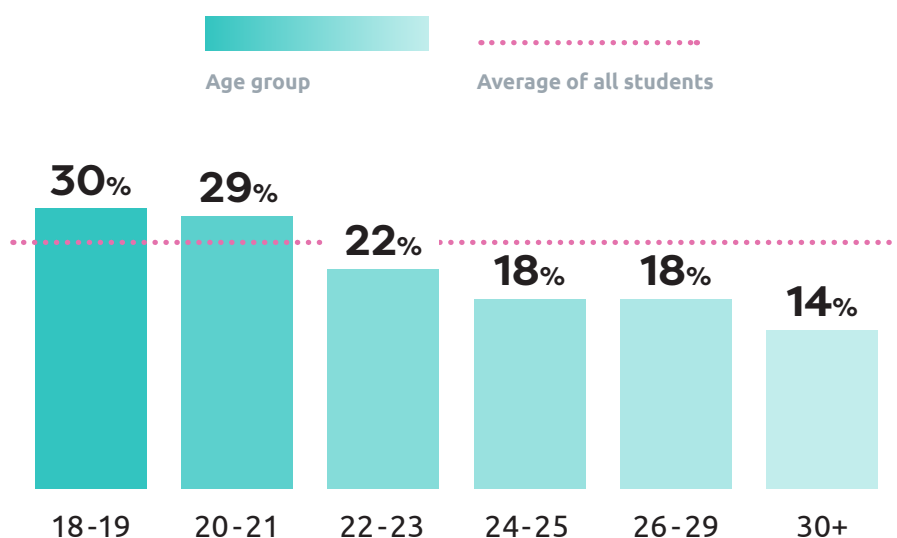
Cheating as a self-reportable topic can have limitations and these are recognised. A truly anonymous survey seeks to overcome some of these. With a focus on self-reported awareness rather than own behaviour, this data and survey seeks to contribute additional perspectives on this critical issue for the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

One in four respondents (24%) reported knowing of another student who cheated

in 2021. This is a reduction from the 30% who reported knowledge of cheating in the 2020 survey.

Awareness of cheating trends downwards as students mature. It is not clear from the data if this reflects a reduction in cheating as students progress through their education or if cheating incidence remains stable and students are simply less likely to discuss cheating as they age.

AWARENESS OF CHEATING BY AGE GROUP



The reported rate of cheating was consistently in the range of 20-25% across most subjects, with the exception of Law and Languages which stood out from the other subjects with reported cheating rates of 39% and 52% respectively.

Follow-up verbatim comments about cheating highlighted that while students don't always have proof of cheating, they assume it is occurring because most exams have been delivered online during Covid.



"I don't personally know anyone who cheated but I have heard rumours that with online learning, cheating in exams are on the rise."

"I knew a couple of people in my class who bragged about doing their final quiz together (multiple choice done online). They got found out because they did it at the exact same time and had the exact same answers."

"I know multiple, and it's frustrating. I work so hard, and to hear people talk openly about cheating makes me so mad."

"Online exams are VERY easy for people to cheat on. For example, my uni did not have cameras or computer tracking at all so I could easily have had notes right next to me to copy. Someone I worked with stated that he and his mates facetimed during their uni exam and shared answers, and that for a maths exam, they split up the questions so each guy only did like 20% of the exam themselves."

A quarter of respondents know a student who cheated in 2021, a decrease since 2020

Q. Do you think more students cheated in 2021 due to COVID or lockdowns?

Echoing these unprompted comments, when directly asked about the impact of Covid on cheating in 2021, 2 in 3 students (67%) believed that students cheated in 2021 because of Covid and the lockdowns.

Based on the survey results, knowing that another student has cheated is not an instigator for other students to cheat. Only 16% claimed they would be more likely to cheat if they knew another student in their class had cheated. These results are consistent with the 2020 survey where 17% of students claimed they would be more likely to cheat if they found out others had done so.

WAS CHEATING DUE TO COVID?

Yes – easier to get away with



Yes – studying alone reduces your confidence



Yes – other reasons



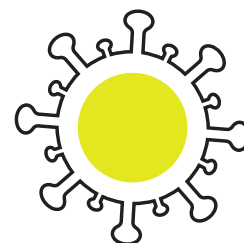
No



Not sure



67%
Yes



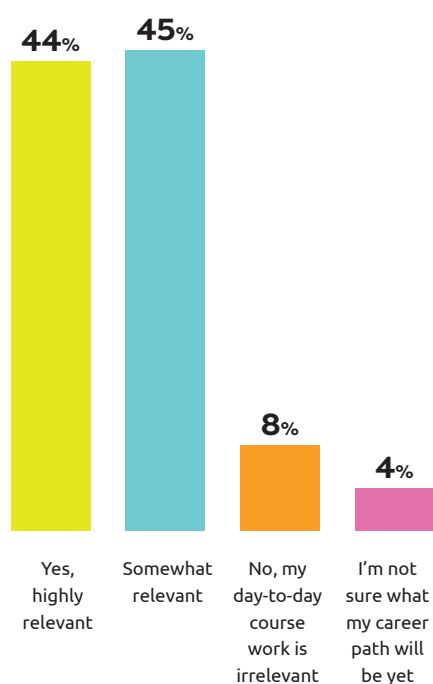
Perceptions of course relevance and optimism for the future are driven by a clear connection between course and industry

Q. Do you feel like what you're studying day-to-day is relevant to the career you want to pursue?

Nine in ten students (89%) reported that what they study day-to-day will be relevant to the career they want to pursue, with 44% saying their course will be highly relevant.

Mature students (aged 30+) were the most likely to believe that their course was highly relevant to their career (54%).

RELEVANCE OF COURSE
TO FUTURE CAREER



89%
Relevant

In the additional open-ended feedback students gave about course relevance, perceptions of relevance often related to:

- The clear links between the content of the course and the type of work tasks they expect to be doing in their career
- The practical elements of their coursework that prepare them for work
- Work placements and on the job learning which they are already experiencing through partnerships between their university and employers.

"I feel like the study I do is relevant to what I will be practicing as a registered nurse."

"Every unit I have taken so far has been very relevant to the career I want to pursue. With real-life clients and case studies which demonstrates/highlights the usefulness of the content we are learning."

"I'm studying music composition for media and most of our assignments are essentially practicing for future work (being given a brief and writing for it)."

"Being on placement is literally what I'll be doing when I graduate, and the theory backs up what I'm doing on placement."

"This is by far the most hands-on course imaginable. it has really built my confidence for what is to come."

Just under half (45%) of students said their course was only somewhat relevant to their future career. This perception was often driven by:

- Theoretical knowledge gained (rather than practical)
- Broad/general content taught rather than specific content/specific job-related content
- Being taught important skills such as time management, working to deadlines, presentation skills, etc. no matter what job they end up choosing
- A lack of work experience or understanding of how to apply skills/knowledge to a job
- A concern that the content being taught is already or will become out of date in the rapidly changing market and world of work.

Perceptions of course relevance and optimism for the future are driven by a clear connection between course and industry

“It is difficult to create direct links between what I’m learning and the workplace. However, it contributes to a broader understanding which can be useful when navigating future employment prospects.”

“Somewhat relevant however a lot of the content is also on a broader scale so some stuff seems irrelevant or not of my niche personally.”

“The course content was often out of date and not relevant. However, completing work within tight deadlines is relevant and will assist in my current and future jobs.”

“I feel like it might be relevant, but I worry that it’ll lose its relevance by the time I graduate.”

“As I have not done any work experience in the marketing field, I don’t know how to apply what I am learning to real life.”

Universities could be doing more to work with employers in relevant sectors to understand practical and clearly applicable skills for the workplace. It’s also important for students that course content is seen as relevant and up to date, and that they can make connections between it and real-life to understand how the information can be applied.

Q. Thinking about the future, how optimistic or pessimistic are you about getting a job related to your degree after graduation?

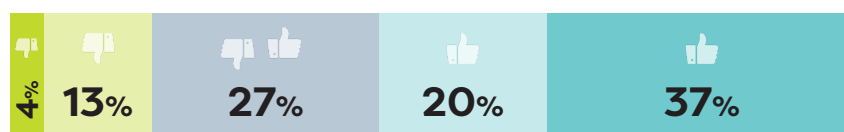
63%
Optimistic

Sixty three percent of students are optimistic about the future and their ability to get a job related to their degree after they graduate. Optimism for future career opportunities is driven by student perceptions about the industry they are planning to work in, how their current skills and understanding fit within that industry,

and the trajectory for that industry within the broader cultural/economic context.

This context takes in short term impacts on employability such as health which is in high demand because of Covid as well as broader/long term trends such as increasing demand for skills relating to technology.

OPTIMISM FOR FUTURE JOB OPPORTUNITIES



Very pessimistic Neither Very optimistic
Somewhat pessimistic Somewhat optimistic

“My course and university is highly recognised in the ‘real world’, so employers are more likely to hire you.”

“I have been told that there is a shortage of people in my future industry at the moment.”

“Nursing is needed in this country. Hoping I get a good steady job.”

“Because teaching jobs are in demand at the moment.”

“I am completing post-grad studies after my undergrad and the post-grad degree basically guarantees a job.”

“I have completed job placements and practical learning. There are a lot of jobs available.”

Perceptions of course relevance and optimism for the future are driven by a clear connection between course and industry

The most optimistic students are those who are currently studying Medicine (47% "very optimistic"), Languages (40%) and Nursing (29%). Conversely, Psychology students and Journalism/Communications students are the least optimistic (17% and 8% respectively).

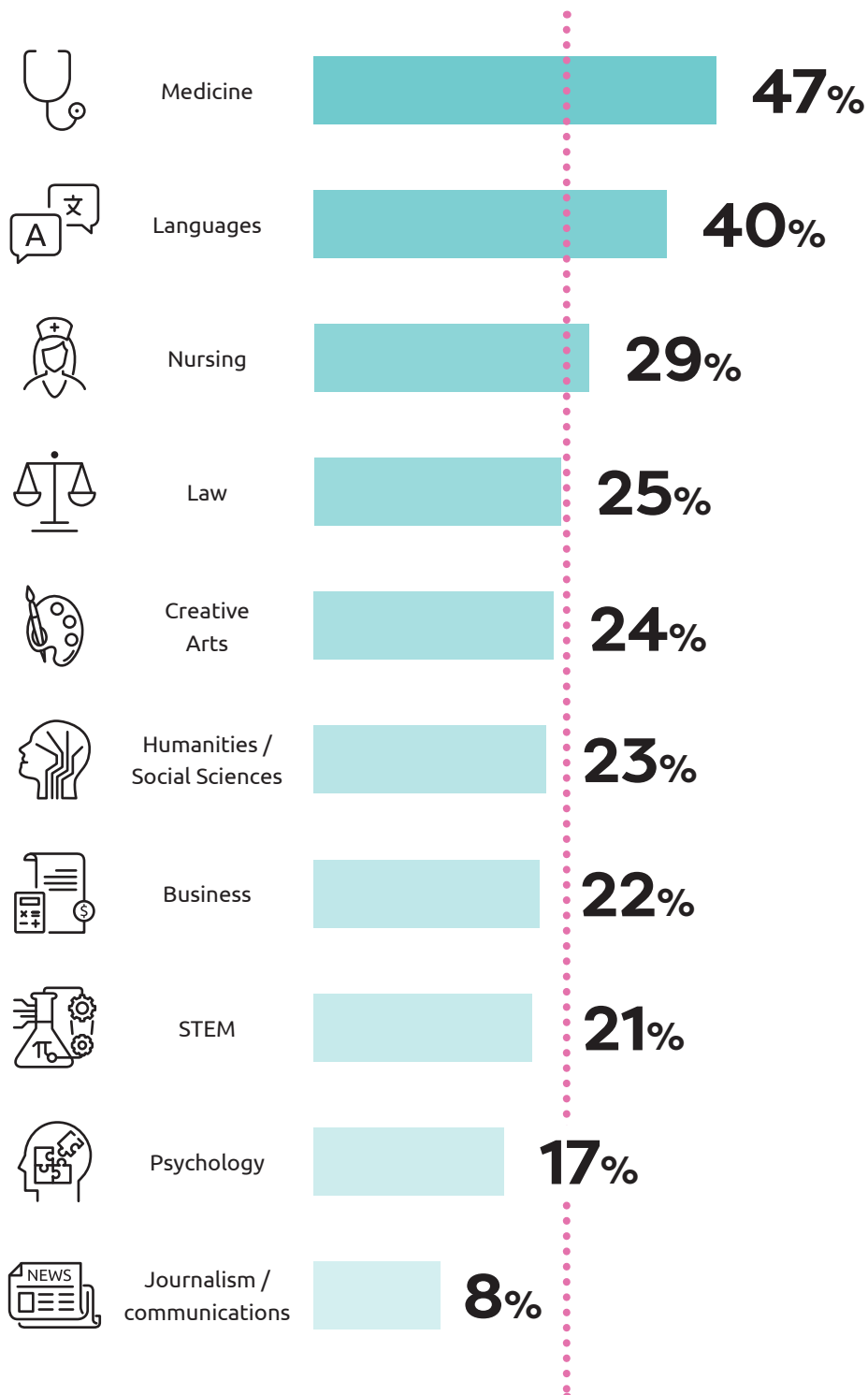


Very optimistic



Average of all students

'VERY OPTIMISTIC' BY AREA OF STUDY



Perceptions of course relevance and optimism for the future are driven by a clear connection between course and industry

Q. Please tell us more about why you feel this way.

When asked why they are pessimistic, students highlighted three key barriers to future employment:

- Too many graduates entering the industry who are competing for a limited number of graduate positions
- Difficulty networking and building their profile with employers due to Covid because most face to face graduate events with employers were cancelled (a barrier that universities may be able to help with)
- Entering an industry that has been negatively impacted by Covid, this is a particular concern for those in the creative industries.

“Too many graduates with the same degree competing for limited job opportunities.”

“It’s a competitive field to get a job. Lots of graduates and little opportunities.”

“The lack of networking or ability to make connections due to COVID.”

“Accounting is a saturated industry and it’s hard to stand out.”

“I regularly look for jobs to assess the market and I don’t see many jobs that I would be suitable for.”

“My subjects are very random and the arts industry has taken a big hit during Covid.”

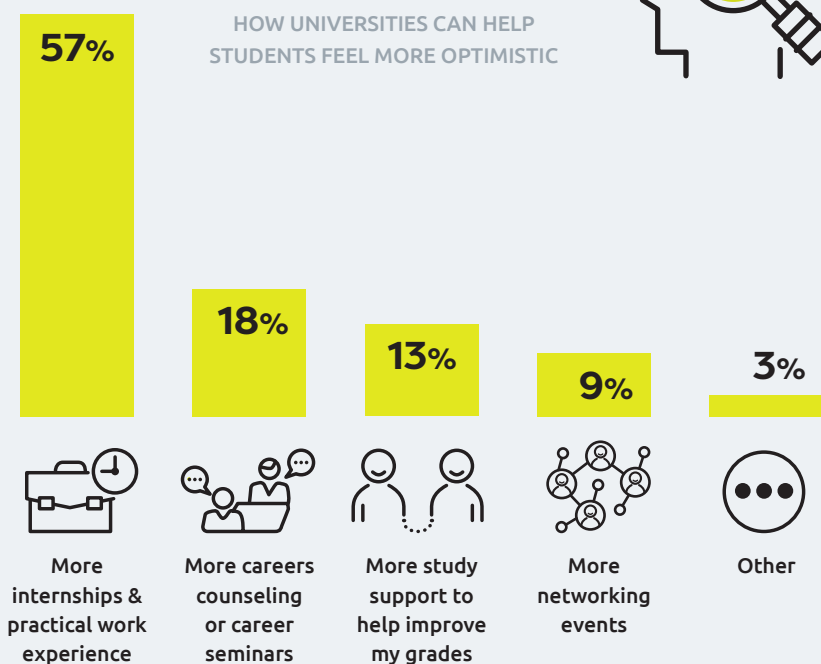


Perceptions of course relevance and optimism for the future are driven by a clear connection between course and industry

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

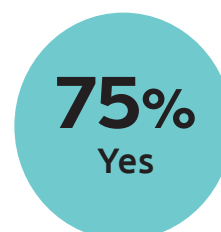
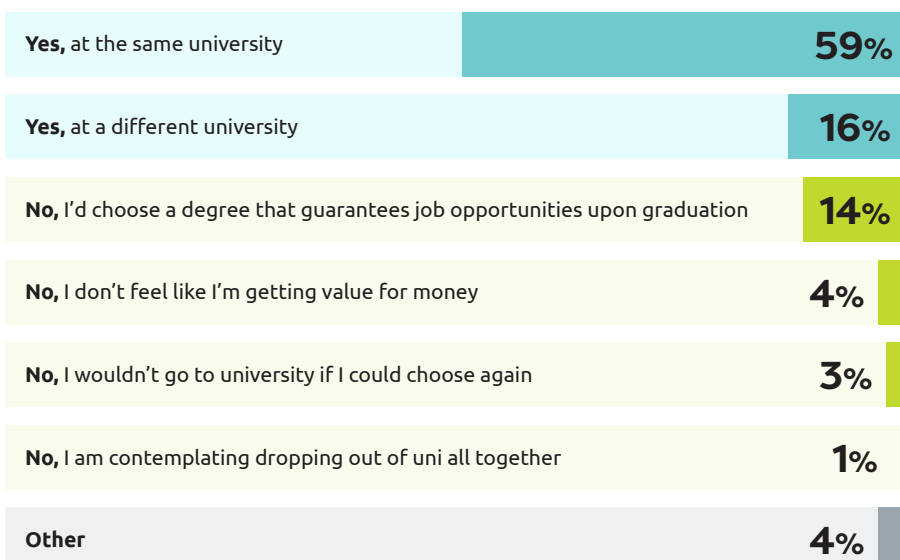
Above all, students believe the best support their university can offer them, to help them be more optimistic about their future job prospects, is more internships and practical work experience (57%). This was followed by careers counselling and careers seminars (18%). Few believe additional study support to improve their grades is the best way to improve their job prospects (13%).

This creates an interesting juxtaposition as students aiming for high grades do so because they believe it will improve their job prospects, while those who are not optimistic about their job prospects believe internships and practical work experience are significantly more important than grades.



Q. If you could choose your degree again, would you choose the same one? *Please select the option most relevant to you.*

WOULD YOU CHOOSE THE SAME DEGREE AGAIN?



Most students are happy with their degree, with 3 in 4 claiming they would choose the same degree again. Of those who reported being unhappy, most said they would instead choose a degree that offers better job opportunities upon graduation (14%).

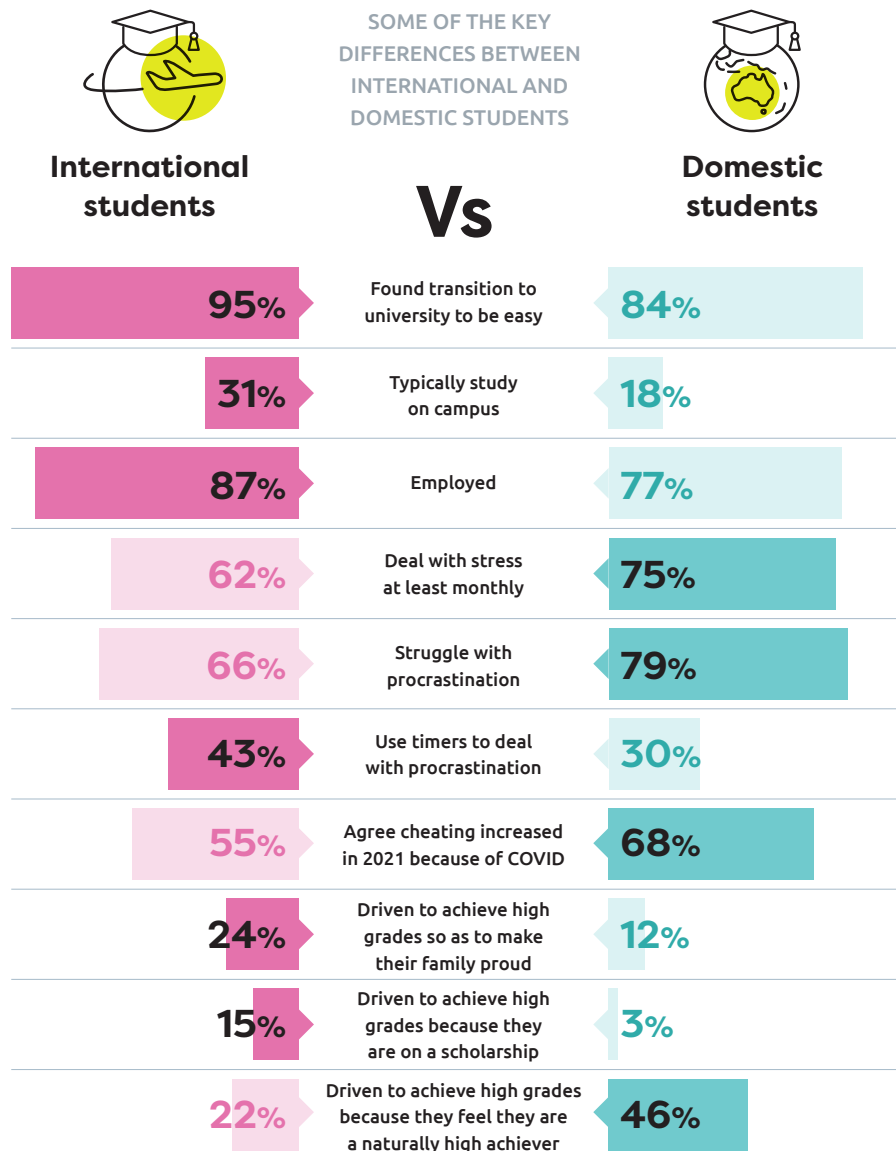
International students differ in their university experiences; less likely to experience stress and procrastination but more likely to experience loneliness

International students differ in their university experiences; less likely to experience stress and procrastination but more likely to experience loneliness.

Twelve percent of the survey sample were international students. The international students spoken to were more likely to be male and older than 24.

Three in five (58%) international students in the survey planned to return to an Australian campus in 2022. Of those not returning (29%), 41% are studying elsewhere and 49% completed their studies in 2021. The remaining 13% were undecided.

International students differed from local students in their motivations, attitudes and approach to study with many significant differences throughout the survey.



During their time studying abroad, 8 in 10 international students have felt lonely or homesick, made up of 50% who felt isolated from friends and family back home and 28% who found it difficult to make new friends. To help them feel less lonely, international students would like to see the following support provided from their universities:



42%
More networking events



33%
More peer support programs



20%
A 'buddy' system to help them transition to uni life in Australia

Conclusion

Given the experiences of students during the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years, it is more important than ever that the Higher Education sector must focus on student wellbeing, improving support and increasing student optimism for the future.

Despite many long-term effects of the pandemic on student experiences, we have seen some positive changes since the 2021 survey, such as declining student stress, lower reported levels of cheating and a slight increase in reported grades.

However, it is obvious that students are still dealing with many negative experiences which their Higher Education providers could better support them with. For instance, finding the transition to university difficult, experiences of high stress, struggling to balance study with other commitments, worries for future prospects and loneliness among international students.

It is important to continue to listen to the experiences of students and how their perceptions change as the world changes; with new concepts such as the metaverse becoming more of a reality and surely changing what it will mean to be a student in times to come.



For more information please contact
studentexperience@studiosity.com



Acknowledgments

Research report: Studiosity Australia & YouthInsight (Student Edge)

This survey was conducted by YouthInsight, using the Student Edge Panel and trusted panel partners, among 1,008 current university students 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. 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.

For further details about this report please contact:

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

studiosity.com