

2016 Student Experience Survey

National Report

MARCH 2017

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We are also very grateful to the students who took the time to provide valuable feedback about their student experience. The SES data will be used by institutions for continuous improvement and will assist prospective students to make informed decisions about future study.

Our thanks also go to the teams at ACER and GCA who made very important contributions to prior administrations of the UES.

The 2016 SES was led by Sonia Whiteley and the project team consisted of, Lisa Bolton, Daniela Iarossi, Jayde Grisdale, Natalie Ryan, Gimwah Sng, Charles Dove, Eric Skuja, Daniel Smith, Sebastian Misson, Kathrin Wolfinger, Andrew Ward, Brad Claney, Wendy Guo and Joe Feng.

For more information on the conduct and results of the 2016 SES see the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) website. The QILT team can be contacted by email at qilt@srcentre.com.au



Executive summary

The Student Experience Survey (SES) provides a national architecture for collecting feedback on key facets of the higher education student experience and, in doing so, obtain important data on the experience of current, on-shore commencing and later-year undergraduate students.

The SES measures five aspects of the student experience: Skills Development, Learner Engagement, Teaching Quality, Student Support, and Learning Resources. The SES also contains demographic and contextual items to facilitate data analysis and reporting, and two open-response items that allow students to provide textual feedback on the best aspects of their higher education experience and those most in need of improvement.

In 2016, the overwhelming majority of students, 80 per cent, rated the quality of their entire educational experience positively. The proportion of students rating different aspects of their student experience positively ranged from 85 per cent for Learning Resources, down to 62 per cent for Learner Engagement. A relatively large proportion, 81 per cent, of higher education students evaluated their experience with Teaching Quality positively, the same proportion as for Skills Development. Seventy two per cent of students rated their experience of Student Support favourably.

Commencing higher education students generally gave more positive ratings than students in the later years of study with regards to Teaching Quality, Student Support, Learning Resources and the quality of their entire educational experience. Those in the later years of their studies students rated Skills Development and Learner Engagement more highly.

Figure A 2016 SES Results

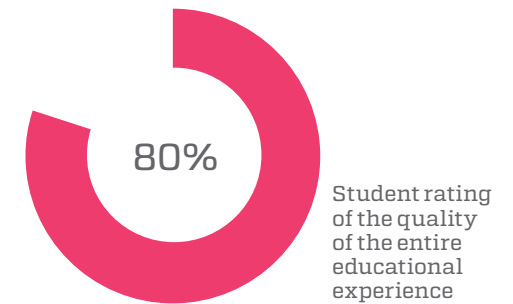
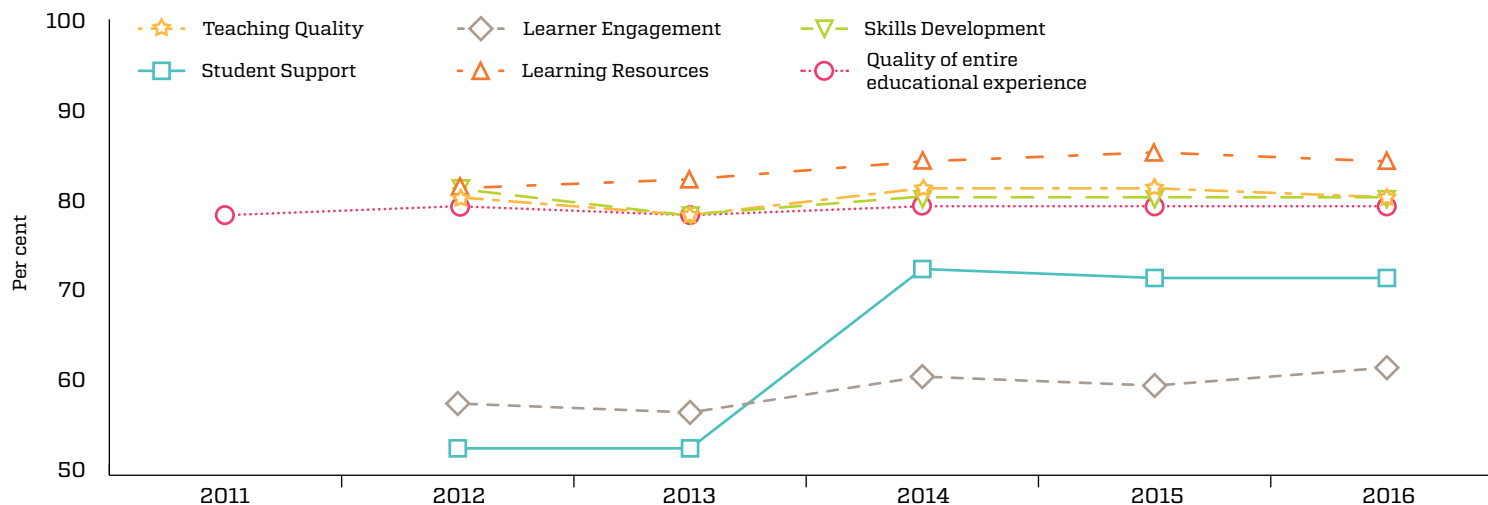


Table 1 The student experience 2016 – by stage of studies (% positive rating)

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
Commencing	80	61	83	75	88	82
Later year*	84	63	78	67	80	76
Total	81	62	81	72	85	80

* Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

Figure 1 The student experience 2011–2016 (% positive rating)



Student ratings of their entire educational experience have remained consistently high ... from 2011–2016

i) The 2011 University Experience Survey was a pilot survey administered among 24 universities.

ii) In 2013 results from the University Experience Survey were reported as percentage positive scores rather than average focus area scores. Results in these tables have been compiled on this basis, but may differ from results presented in the earlier 2011 and 2012 reports. See appendix 5 for further detail on score construction.

iii) In 2014, one item was removed from the student support focus area so results are not comparable with those from earlier surveys.

iv) Note that results for the 2015 and 2016 Student Experience Surveys include students attending both university and non-university higher education institutions and therefore are not directly comparable with results from earlier surveys which refer to university students only.

Survey results over time

Student ratings of the quality of their entire educational experience have remained consistently high, with around 80 per cent providing positive responses, across the entire survey period from 2011 to 2016 (2011 was a pilot survey in which 24 universities participated). There were no notable changes in the results for any SES focus area between 2015 and 2016. Note that because one survey item was removed from the Student Support focus area in 2014, results for this focus area are not directly comparable with those from earlier surveys.

Comparison of different groups of higher education students

In 2016, both university and non-university higher education institution (NUHEI) students rated the 'quality of the entire educational experience' highly with 80 per cent rating their experience positively, representing a rise for NUHEIs of two percentage points from 2015. The largest difference between NUHEI and university students across the five focus areas remains in Learning Resources, with NUHEI students rating this aspect 13 percentage points lower than university students. However, NUHEI students gave higher ratings than university students in other focus areas such as Student Support, Skills Development, and Teaching Quality. When comparing results for university and NUHEI students there are several important caveats to consider, including the narrower range of study areas for non-university providers, different population characteristics, and the fact that, while there has been a marked increase since 2015, not all eligible non-university providers chose to participate in 2016.

There are significant differences in scores between institutions, for both universities and NUHEIs, demonstrating there is scope for improvement among institutions where students are less likely to give positive responses in relation to their educational experience.

Table 2 The student experience, by type of institution, 2016 (% positive rating)

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
NUHEIs	82	62	84	76	73	80
Universities	81	62	81	72	86	80
All institutions	81	62	81	72	85	80

When comparing the higher education experience of different demographic groups of students, the largest variation within a focus area was that external/distance students were less likely to respond positively than internal/multi-mode students with Learner Engagement, 26 per cent and 65 per cent respectively. Older students also rated Learner Engagement less positively than younger students, but this difference is most likely associated with the prevalence of external or internal study modes in these age groups.

In 2016, both university and ... NUHEI students rated the 'quality of the entire educational experience' highly with 80 per cent rating their experience positively

Study area comparisons

The student experience varied considerably by study area. Ratings of the entire educational experience ranged from a high of 87 per cent for Rehabilitation, to a low of 73 per cent for Computing and Information Systems. The widest range in results was for Learner Engagement, with 29 percentage points separating the study areas with the highest and lowest results (Medicine at 83 per cent, and Psychology and Social Work both at 54 per cent). The narrowest range of results across study areas is seen in relation to Student Support, with 12 percentage points separating the study area with the highest and lowest scores (Rehabilitation at 78 per cent, and Architecture and built environment at 66 per cent).

International comparisons

Comparison of results from the 2016 SES with those from similar surveys in the United States of America (the National Survey of Student Experience, NSSE), and the United Kingdom (the National Student Survey, NSS), show that Australian students continue to rate their higher education experience lower than their counterparts in these countries. For example, in 2016:

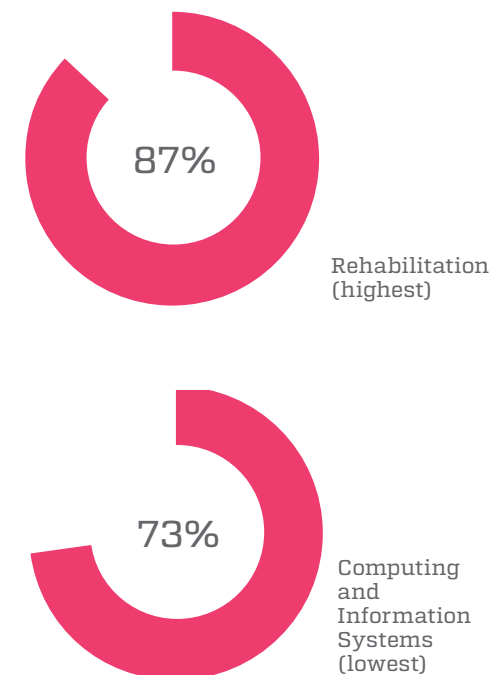
- 87 per cent of United States senior year students responded positively about their educational experience in comparison with 76 per cent of Australian later year students
- 85 per cent of United States first year students responded positively about their educational experience in comparison with 82 per cent of Australian commencing students
- 86 per cent of United Kingdom final year students expressed overall satisfaction with their course in comparison with 76 per cent of Australian later year students.

It is important to note, however, that these results do not account for potential differences in the composition of the respective student populations, nor methodological differences between the surveys.

Likelihood to consider departing higher education

In addition to questions on their higher education experience, students were also asked to indicate whether they had seriously considered leaving higher education in 2016. Consistent with 2015 results, 18 per cent of students indicated that they had considered leaving in 2016. Notably, students who reported low grades were most likely to have considered early departure, including around 30 per cent of those with grades between 50 and 59 per cent and nearly 45 per cent of those averaging below 50 per cent, considering early departure. Indigenous students (28 per cent) and students with a disability (24 per cent) were also relatively likely to consider early departure, as were older students (23 per cent). The most common reasons given for considering early departure were situational in nature, including health or stress, difficulties relating to finances and workload, and study/life balance.

Figure B Student rating of the quality of the entire educational experience by study area



Methodology

Originally developed as the University Experience Survey (UES) in 2011, the SES was renamed in 2015 to facilitate the inclusion of students from non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs). Other than minor changes in wording to ensure the survey instrument was relevant to all higher education students, the Student Experience Questionnaire remains relatively unchanged from the 2014 UES.

All 40 Australian universities (37 Table A and 3 Table B) participated in the 2016 SES, as well as 55 NUHEIs, increasing from 39 in 2015. The online fieldwork period ran from August to September 2016. As in 2015, the in-scope survey population for the 2016 SES consisted of commencing and later-year onshore undergraduate students currently enrolled in Australian higher education institutions. For the 95 institutions participating in the 2016 SES, the initial population approached consisted of 401,939 students (comprising, 370,847 university students and 31,092 NUHEI students). This reduced to a total sample of 391,052 (361,422 university and 29,630 NUHEI) students once opt-outs, disqualified and out of scope records were removed.

Responses were received from a total of 178,459 students, which equated to 192,737 valid surveys once combined and double degrees were taken into account. The response rate for universities in the 2016 SES was 45.6 per cent, up from 37.6 per cent in 2015 and 30.1 per cent in 2014. In 2016, the NUHEIs achieved a response rate of 46.2 per cent, up from 37.7 per cent in 2015. Individual university response rates ranged from 60.8 per cent to 35.1 per cent and NUHEI response rates ranged from 79.7 per cent to 15.5 per cent.

In 2016, the sample of secured responses continues to closely match the in-scope population on most characteristics, but as was the case in previous years, males continue to be notably under-represented, though this gap has narrowed somewhat. As in previous years, post-stratification weighting to correct the gender imbalance in the sample of secured responses did not have a substantial impact on the results at the national level, so the previous practice of analysing data without applying weights has been retained for 2016. As in 2015, a stratified sampling approach was employed, with strata defined on the basis of institution and study area.

Figure C 2016 SES
Response Rates



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1 Introduction and overview

1.1 Background to the 2016 SES

The Student Experience Survey (SES), originally known as the University Experience Survey (UES), was created to provide a national framework for collecting feedback on the higher education student experience. The SES focuses on aspects of the student experience that are measurable, linked with learning and development outcomes, and potentially able to be influenced by institutions.

A consortium commissioned by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) designed the UES in 2011. The UES consists of a survey instrument, the University Experience Questionnaire (UEQ), and a survey methodology (Radloff, Coates, James, & Krause, 2011). The instrument and survey approach was refined in 2012 by the same consortium. From 2013 and 2014 Graduate Careers Australia and the Social Research Centre assumed responsibility for continuous improvement in the administration of the UES.

In mid-2014, the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) federal budget measure was introduced. The Social Research Centre administered the 2015 SES on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training as part of the QILT initiative. QILT includes the deployment of a survey research program aimed at collecting student feedback from undergraduate students (the SES), graduates (the Graduate Outcomes Survey) and employers of graduates (the Employer Satisfaction Survey). Further information can be found on the QILT website, www.qilt.edu.au, where survey results are published in an interactive format.

In 2015, the UES was renamed the 'Student Experience Survey' (SES) to be inclusive of students enrolled at non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs) who still offered undergraduate level degree courses.

1.2 Scope of this report

This report presents an overview of the 2016 SES. A summary of the conduct and administration of the survey is available in Appendix 1. All thirty seven Table A and three Table B universities participated in the 2016 SES. Fifty-five NUHEIs elected to take part in the 2016 SES, compared with thirty-nine in 2015.

As in 2015, the in-scope survey population for the 2016 SES consisted of commencing and later-year onshore undergraduate students currently enrolled in Australian higher education institutions.

Results for university students and NUHEI students separately are included in appendices to assist with time-series comparisons and interpretation of the data.

Focus areas in the SES comprise related items representing feedback from students about their higher education experience, regarding outcomes, behaviours and satisfaction. In order to report meaningfully on these varied aspects of the student experience, each student is adjudged to have rated their experience either positively or negatively for each item and, based on the item responses, each focus area. Scores presented in this report for both items and focus areas represent the proportion of students responding positively. For detailed information on the how the scores are calculated please refer to appendix 5. To see the items that comprise each focus area, please refer to the survey items and response frames in appendix 2.

2 Results from the 2016 SES

The overwhelming majority of higher education students, 80 per cent, rated the quality of their entire educational experience in 2016 favourably. The percentage of positive results for the five SES focus areas and a key questionnaire item are presented by stage of studies in Table 3 overleaf. Considering first the overall results, positive ratings ranged from 85 per cent for the Learning Resources focus area, down to 62 per cent for the Learner Engagement focus area. A relatively large proportion of higher education students gave favourable ratings of both the Teaching Quality provided by their institution and their Skills Development, at 81 per cent. In terms of the Student Support provided by their institution, 72 per cent of survey respondents reported positive experiences.

2.1 The higher education experience by stage of studies

Commencing higher education students were generally more positive than later year students with respect to Teaching Quality, Student Support, Learning Resources and the quality of their entire educational experience. Those in the later years of their studies rated Skills Development more highly and Learner Engagement slightly more highly. The Student Support experienced by later year students may not necessarily reflect the same types of services or activities as those available to commencing students so this result should be interpreted with caution.

2.2 The higher education experience over time

There were no notable changes in the results for any SES focus area between 2015 and 2016, with the largest movement an increase of 2 percentage points for student experiences of Learner Engagement. Slight decreases in scores were recorded for the Teaching Quality and Learning Resources focus areas.

When the results from the 2011 UES through to the 2016 SES collections are compared (see Table 4), the largest difference in terms of focus area results was seen in relation to Student Support between 2013 and 2014, with a difference of 20 percentage points. This difference, however, was due to modifications to the questionnaire and sampling method in 2014. Results in other focus areas have been fairly stable, with the largest increase in the Learner Engagement area, rising 4 percentage points from 2012 to 62 per cent in 2016, and Learning Resources, rising 3 percentage points to 85 per cent over the same period. Student ratings of the quality of their entire educational experience have remained consistently high, at around 80 per cent, across the entire survey period from 2011 to 2016.

Table 3 The student experience, by stage of studies, 2016 (% positive rating)

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
Commencing	80	61	83	75	88	82
Later year*	84	63	78	67	80	76
Total	81	62	81	72	85	80

*Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population –Later Year Students)

Table 4 The student experience, 2011–2016 (% positive rating)

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
2011 ⁱ	–	–	–	–	–	79
2012	82	58	81	53	82	80
2013 ⁱⁱ	79	57	79	53	83	79
2014	81	61	82	73 ⁱⁱⁱ	85	80
2015 ^{iv}	81	60	82	72	86	80
2016	81	62	81	72	85	80

i) The 2011 University Experience Survey was a pilot survey administered among 24 universities.

ii) In 2013 results from the University Experience Survey were reported as percentage positive scores rather than average scale scores. Results in these tables have been compiled on this basis, but may differ from results presented in the earlier 2011 and 2012 reports. See appendix 5 for further detail on score construction.

iii) In 2014, one item was removed from the student support focus area so results are not comparable with those from earlier surveys.

iv) Note that results for the 2015 and 2016 Student Experience Surveys include students attending both university and non-university higher education institutions and therefore are not directly comparable with results from earlier surveys which refer to university students only.

2.3 The higher education experience of specific student groups

In general, students from a non-English speaking background and International students rated their overall educational experience at 6 percentage points below English speakers and domestic students. Also of note, is that students aged between 25 and 29 years had lower ratings than other groups, with 5 percentage points between that group and those over 39, who had the highest positive ratings of their overall educational experience.

2016 SES results by student demographic and contextual groups are presented in Table 5. It should be noted that the results presented in this section are based on a series of separate analyses and thus do not reflect interactions between any of the characteristics.

Most differences in student ratings of experience by gender are fairly marginal, with female students slightly more likely to be positive about their educational experience than male students. A difference between males and females of four percentage points was observed in relation to the Skills Development focus area, however this result may be influenced by differences in the courses undertaken by male and female students. No substantive difference between males and females was observed with respect to Learner Engagement. With respect to study mode, internal or mixed mode students were far more likely to provide positive ratings of their level of learner engagement than those studying externally, with 39 percentage points between the groups.¹ The differences between internal/mixed mode and external/distance study mode students in relation to the other four focus areas were relatively small. Large differences in results by study mode for Learner Engagement suggests this scale may be performing differently for internal/mixed mode students and external mode students. The Department of Education and

¹ Note that analysis of SES results by study mode has indicated that responses from multi-modal study students are more like those of internal mode than external mode students. For this reason, multi-modal responses are grouped with internal mode response for analysis in the 2016 SES National Report. This marks a change in reporting conventions from the 2015 SES National Report.

Training is undertaking a review of the Learner Engagement scale prior to the 2017 SES. As an interim measure, the QILT website, which reports SES results at institution by study area level, currently excludes external mode responses for the Learner Engagement focus area. This report, however, which reports SES results at national and aggregate levels, includes external mode responses in all Learner Engagement results.

There is also a clear negative association between age and Learner Engagement, with young students (aged under 25) much more likely to respond positively in relation to their level of engagement than students in the three older age groups, and students aged 40 and over in particular. This result is consistent with the fact that older students are more likely to be undertaking their studies in an external study mode which are, as previously mentioned, characterised by lower results for the Learner Engagement focus area. Older students are also presumably more likely to be balancing their studies with their work and family lives, which would further limit Learner Engagement activities (as measured by the SEQ). Interestingly, though, older students were more likely to respond positively in relation to the Student Support provided by their institution and Teaching Quality.

Indigenous students were less likely than non-Indigenous students to rate Learner Engagement positively, which may be due to the fact that there is a higher proportion of Indigenous students studying externally in 2016, compared to non-Indigenous students. Indigenous students were, however, somewhat more likely to positively rate the Student Support provided by their institution. Differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in relation to the other three focus areas were smaller in magnitude and may not be statistically significant.

Figure D Student ratings of entire educational experience by language background

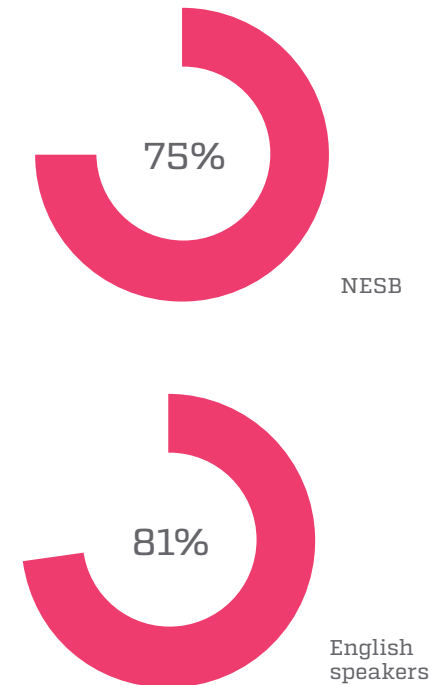


Table 5 The student experience, by demographic and contextual group, 2016 (% positive rating)

	Group/subgroup	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Gender	Male	79	62	80	71	84	78
	Female	83	62	82	72	85	81
Age	under 25	81	65	81	71	85	80
	25 to 29	81	55	80	71	81	77
	30 to 39	80	47	82	74	82	79
	40 and over	81	44	85	77	84	82
Indigenous	Indigenous	81	57	81	76	86	80
	Non-Indigenous	81	62	81	72	85	80
Home language	English	82	63	83	73	85	81
	Other	79	60	77	69	84	75
Disability	Disability reported	79	58	80	74	82	78
	No disability reported	81	62	81	72	85	80
Study mode**	Internal/Mixed	81	65	81	71	85	80
	External	78	26	82	76	82	81
Residence status	Domestic student	82	63	82	72	85	81
	International student	79	58	78	71	84	75
First in family status*	First in family	81	61	84	77	89	83
	Not first in family	79	64	84	74	88	82
Previous higher education experience*	Previous experience – current institution	81	60	83	73	87	82
	Previous experience – another institution	79	55	84	76	86	82
	New to higher education	80	64	83	75	89	83
Total		81	62	81	72	85	80

* Previous higher education experience and First in family status include commencing students only

** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. 'Internal mode' also includes mixed mode students in 2016, whereas previously mixed mode students were included in the 'external mode' category.

Students who spoke English as their main language at home were more likely than those from a non-English speaking background to rate every aspect of their educational experience positively. These differences were largest in relation to Teaching Quality (6 percentage points) and Student Support (4 percentage points). A similar pattern is observed in relation to international and domestic students, where domestic students were more likely than international students to provide positive responses to every aspect of their educational experience, especially in relation to Learner Engagement, which they rated more positively by 5 percentage points.

Students who reported having a disability were slightly more likely to provide positive ratings of Student Support, than students who did not report any disability. The opposite is observed in relation to the four other focus areas; most notably Learner Engagement by 4 percentage points.

Few noteworthy differences were observed based on whether the student was the first in their family to attend university, with the largest difference being that students who were the first in their family to attend university were less likely to rate Learner Engagement positively. Considering whether students had Previous higher education experience, it is interesting to note that students who had previously been enrolled at the current or another higher education institution were less likely to report positively in terms of Learner Engagement experiences, especially in relation to students new to higher education (by 4 and 9 percentage points respectively). This may be related to the fact that students who had been enrolled at another institution were more likely to be studying externally in 2016 (15 per cent compared with three per cent for those who were new to higher education and 8 per cent for those who were previously enrolled at the current institution). There were no other notable differences on the basis of this previous higher education experience.

2.4 The higher education experience by study area

Looking now at SES results for different study areas (see Table 6), there is considerable variation in student ratings across study areas. Student ratings of their entire educational experience ranged from a high of 87 per cent for Rehabilitation, to a low of 73 per cent for Computing and information systems representing a difference of 14 percentage points. In general, results relating to the quality of the entire educational experience remained relatively static across the larger study areas. Social work saw a marked increase in positive ratings of four percentage points from 79 per cent in 2015 to 83 per cent in 2016. Pharmacy saw a decrease in the ratings of the entire educational experience from 2015 to 2016 of three percentage points (coupled with a drop of five percentage points for Learner Engagement despite low numbers of external student responses and smaller decreases of two percentage points in Teaching Quality and Learning Resources). All study areas with decreased ratings of the quality of the entire educational experience were also accompanied by a decrease in Teaching Quality scores.

The widest range in focus area results was for Learner Engagement, with 29 percentage points separating the study areas with the highest and lowest results (Medicine at 83 per cent, and Psychology and Social Work both at 54 per cent).

The narrowest range of results across study areas is seen in relation to Student Support, with 12 percentage points separating the study area with the highest and lowest scores (Rehabilitation at 78 per cent, and Architecture and built environment at 66 per cent). This possibly reflects the fact that student support services are often provided by the institution rather than a particular faculty.

Figure E Learner Engagement Focus Area

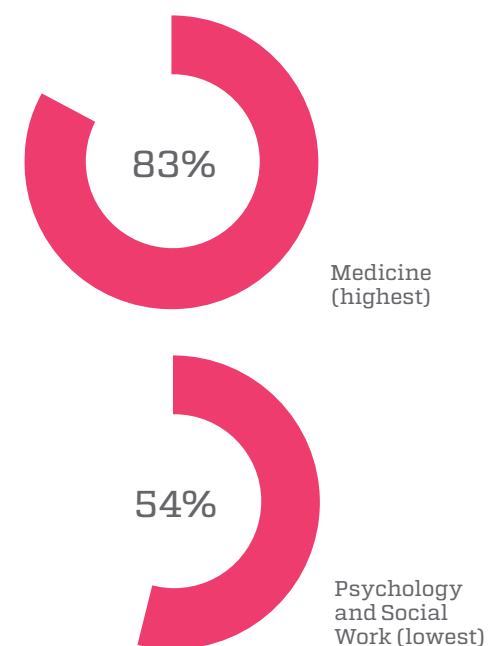


Table 6 The student experience, by study area, 2015 and 2016 (% positive rating)

Study area	2015: SD	2015: LE	2015: TQ	2015: SS	2015: LR	2015: OEE	2016: SD	2016: LE	2016: TQ	2016: SS	2016: LR	2016: OEE
Science and mathematics	81	63	85	74	89	83	81	65	84	73	89	82
Computing and Information Systems	76	60	78	74	86	75	75	60	76	69	85	74
Engineering	78	67	77	69	86	76	78	67	75	68	84	75
Architecture and built environment	80	66	79	66	77	77	80	68	78	66	76	76
Agriculture and environmental studies	84	65	85	73	89	84	82	66	84	73	88	83
Health services and support	82	61	84	74	86	81	82	61	83	73	85	81
Medicine	88	79	79	75	81	81	90	83	80	75	80	82
Nursing	86	60	80	76	87	78	85	61	78	73	86	77
Pharmacy	84	71	84	71	87	82	84	66	82	74	85	79
Dentistry	87	65	74	69	82	74	87	68	76	70	81	75
Veterinary science	85	70	87	77	88	82	84	73	85	70	87	81
Rehabilitation	90	75	89	77	90	87	89	75	89	78	89	87
Teacher education	83	59	80	72	86	80	83	61	80	73	84	80
Business and management	77	56	77	70	84	76	77	59	77	70	83	77
Humanities, culture and social sciences	80	54	86	72	85	83	81	58	86	72	85	84
Social work	85	53	83	74	85	79	86	54	85	74	83	83
Psychology	82	52	86	75	88	83	82	54	86	76	87	84
Law and paralegal studies	82	55	83	70	86	81	84	58	83	70	84	81
Creative arts	81	68	83	71	79	80	82	70	84	73	81	80
Communications	83	67	83	72	87	82	83	68	83	71	86	81
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and Recreation	82	63	82	70	87	80	85	67	82	74	87	82
Total	81	60	82	72	86	80	81	62	81	72	85	80

SD = Skills Development, LE = Learner Engagement, TQ = Teaching Quality, SS = Student Support, LR = Learning Resources. OEE = Overall Educational Experience

While the student ratings for each of the focus areas have remained relatively consistent across 2015 and 2016, there are a few notable differences at a national level where the rating of student support has decreased for Veterinary science and Computing and information systems students, by 7 and 5 percentage points respectively. The other notable decrease was for Pharmacy students in the Learner Engagement focus area with a drop of 5 percentage points.

While confidence intervals are not shown in Table 7, it is important to interpret the results with respect to the remarks made in Appendix 1.3.4 Stratum-level precision concerning the precision of estimates in the SES. It is possible that some of the differences in this table, especially those seen in relation to study areas containing small numbers of observations, may not be statistically significant.

It also should be noted that broad disciplinary aggregations hide much of the detail that is relevant to schools, faculties and academic departments. More detailed SES results disaggregated by 45 study areas are available in Appendix 8.4 Higher Education Student Experience: 45 Study Areas.

2.5 Universities and NUHEIs compared

When comparing results for university and NUHEI students there are several important caveats to consider. First, while the number of non-university institutions participating in the SES has increased markedly, only 55 of the 129 Tertiary Education Qualifications Standards Authority (TEQSA) registered non-university providers opted to participate in the 2016 SES collection. These NUHEIs may differ in key respects from the providers that elected not to take part. Second, NUHEIs tend to teach a narrower range of study areas than universities. Finally, the demographic characteristics of the two groups differ

in several important respects. NUHEI students are more likely than their peers from universities to be international students and be the first in their family to enrol in higher education. Any differences in results between NUHEI and university students may be attributable, at least in part, to these factors.

While in the 2015 SES university students rated the quality of their entire educational experience more highly than NUHEI students by 2 percentage points, in 2016 university and NUHEI scores relating to the quality of their entire educational experience was identical at 80 per cent. As shown in Table 7, the largest difference between NUHEI and university students across the five focus areas remained in relation to Learning Resources with NUHEI students being 13 percentage points less likely to express positive responses in this focus area, consistent with a 12 percentage point difference in 2015. NUHEI students rated Student Support slightly more positively, with four percentage points separating them from university students. Minor differences were evident for Skills Development (one percentage points favouring NUHEIs) and Teaching Quality (with three percentage points favouring NUHEIs).

In 2016, university and NUHEI student ratings of the quality of their entire educational experience was identical at 80 per cent

Table 7 The student experience, NUHEI students & university students, 2016 (% positive rating)

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
NUHEIs	82	62	84	76	73	80
Universities	81	62	81	72	86	80
All institutions	81	62	81	72	85	80

The total percentage of students who indicated that they had considered leaving in 2016 remained steady at 18 per cent

2.6 Early departure of higher education students

In addition to the items asking students to rate different aspects of their educational experience, students were also asked to indicate whether they had seriously considered leaving their institution during 2016. The results of this question are presented by student subgroup in Table 8. Overall, the total percentage of students who indicated that they had considered leaving in 2016 remained steady at 18 per cent of respondents.

As might be expected, commencing students were more likely than later-year students to have considered leaving their institution. However in 2016 the difference between these two groups has narrowed from two percentage points in 2015 to one percentage point. This remains an unusually small difference and may be due to the fact that many commencing students who considered leaving had already done so by the time the SES was conducted in August, well into Semester 2. Differences between male and female students is also very slight at 1 percentage point.

Indigenous students were more likely than non-indigenous students to indicate that they had considered leaving in 2016 by 10 percentage points. While this is of concern, it should be noted that the relatively low number of responses from this cohort

could mean that these results are not statistically significant. Students who reported having a disability were also more likely to have considered leaving their institution than students who did not report having a disability by 7 percentage points. Students who spoke a language other than English as their main language at home were more likely to consider leaving their institution than those who spoke English at home by 3 percentage points. These findings are despite the fact that Indigenous students, those who did not speak English as their main language at home and students with a disability were more likely to provide positive ratings of the level of support provided by their institution (see Table 5). International students, on the other hand, were slightly less likely to respond positively about the level of support compared with domestic students, but were also less likely to consider departure.

Students over forty years of age were more likely to have considered leaving than those under 25 by 5 percentage points, which may reflect increasing financial and care responsibilities of older students which can affect their study/life balance.

Table 8 Percentage of higher education students who considered early departure by subgroup

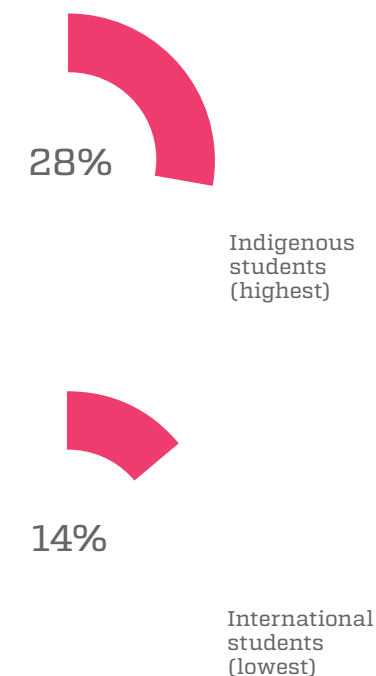
	Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure
Stage of Studies	Commencing	19
	Later Year**	18
Gender	Male	18
	Female	19
Age	under 25	17
	25 to 29	20
	30 to 39	21
	40 and over	22
Indigenous	Indigenous	28
	Non-Indigenous	18
Home language	English	19
	Other	16
Disability	Disability reported	25
	No disability reported	18
Study mode***	Internal/Mixed study mode	18
	External study mode	21
Residence status	Domestic student	19
	International student	14
First in family status*	First in family	20
	Not first in family	17
Previous higher education experience*	Previous experience – current institution	21
	Previous experience – another institution	18
	New to higher education	19
Total		18

* Previous higher education experience and First in family status include commencing students only

**Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Figure F Percentage of higher education students who considered early departure



The percentage of students who had considered leaving their institution in 2016 is plotted against (self-reported) average grades in Figure 2. As would be expected, students who reported achieving lower grades were much more likely to consider early departure than students achieving high grades. This is most apparent for students achieving a grade of less than 50 per cent, of whom 44 per cent considered early departure.

Higher education students who considered leaving their university in 2016 were then asked to indicate, from a list of 30 possible reasons, why they considered doing so. These are summarised in Table 9. Students could select as many reasons as applied, so the percentages do not total 100. The most common reasons for considering departure relate to situational factors, such as health or stress (41 per cent), study/life balance (27 per cent), the need to do paid work (25 per cent), difficulties relating to workload

(25 per cent), finances and unspecified personal reasons (both with 24 per cent). The fact that these reasons were indicated by such a large percentage of students in both the 2015 and 2016 SES underscores the importance of student support in terms of assisting students to continue with their studies.

As in 2015, in 2016, the most common (arguably) institutional factor indicated by students was that their expectations had not been met (22 per cent) and career prospects (20 per cent), which may indicate that further analysis of student expectations and the goals of their higher education experience would be beneficial in discussions around attrition and retention. Several dispositional factors were also relatively common, including boredom/lack of interest or a need to take a break (each with 22 per cent), and a change in direction (17 per cent).

The most common reasons for considering departure relate to situational factors... (which) underscores the importance of student support...

Figure 2 Percentage of higher education students who had considered early departure by average grades to date

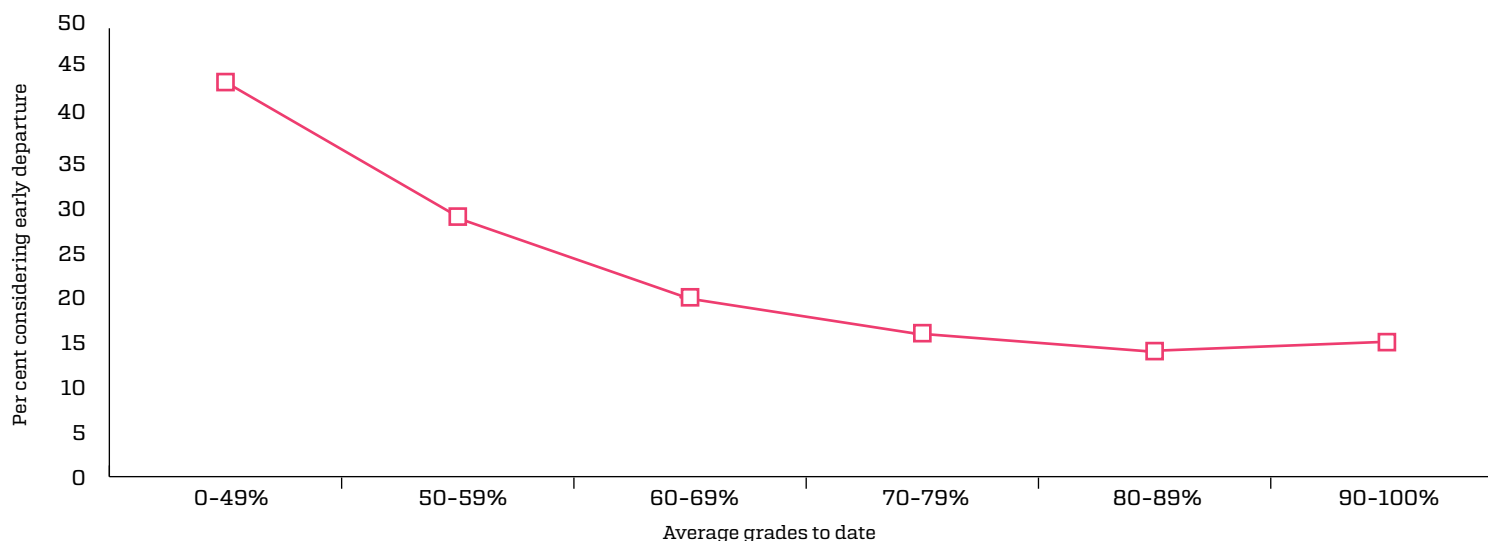


Table 9 Selected reasons for considering early departure, 2015 and 2016, for higher education students

Departure reason	Per cent considering departure 2015	Per cent considering departure 2016
Health or stress	42	41
Study life balance	29	27
Workload difficulties	25	25
Need to do paid work	26	25
Financial difficulties	25	24
Personal reasons	25	24
Need a break	22	22
Expectations not met	22	22
Boredom/lack of interest	22	22
Career prospects	20	20
Family responsibilities	17	17
Academic support	16	17
Change of direction	18	17
Paid work responsibilities	16	16
Quality concerns	15	15
Other	13	13
Commuting difficulties	11	11
Fee difficulties	10	10
Gap year/deferral	10	10
Academic exchange	10	9
Administrative support	8	8
Social reasons	9	8
Institution reputation	8	8
Travel or tourism	8	7
Other opportunities	8	7

Departure reason	Per cent considering departure 2015	Per cent considering departure 2016
Standards too high	6	6
Moving residence	6	6
Graduating	5	5
Received other offer	5	5
Government assistance	3	3

2.7 International comparisons of higher education students

One consideration in the early stages of developing the UES was to ensure the ability to use the data for benchmarking against similar student surveys conducted in other national contexts. The “overall experience” question on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), for example, is highly similar to the quality of the entire educational experience item on the UES and SES.² The NSSE collects information on student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their personal development. It is administered widely in the USA, with 292,000 students from 512 institutions completing the 2016 NSSE.³

Figure 3 presents the percentage of surveyed students who rated their entire educational experience positively. Data from the 2011 UES should be treated with caution, as this was a pilot administration in which only 24 universities participated. It is also important to note that the 2012, 2013 and 2014 UES collections included every Australian university while data for the 2015 SES collection refers to all 40 universities and 39 NUHEIs and data from the 2016 SES refers to 40 universities and 55 NUHEIs.

² “How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?”

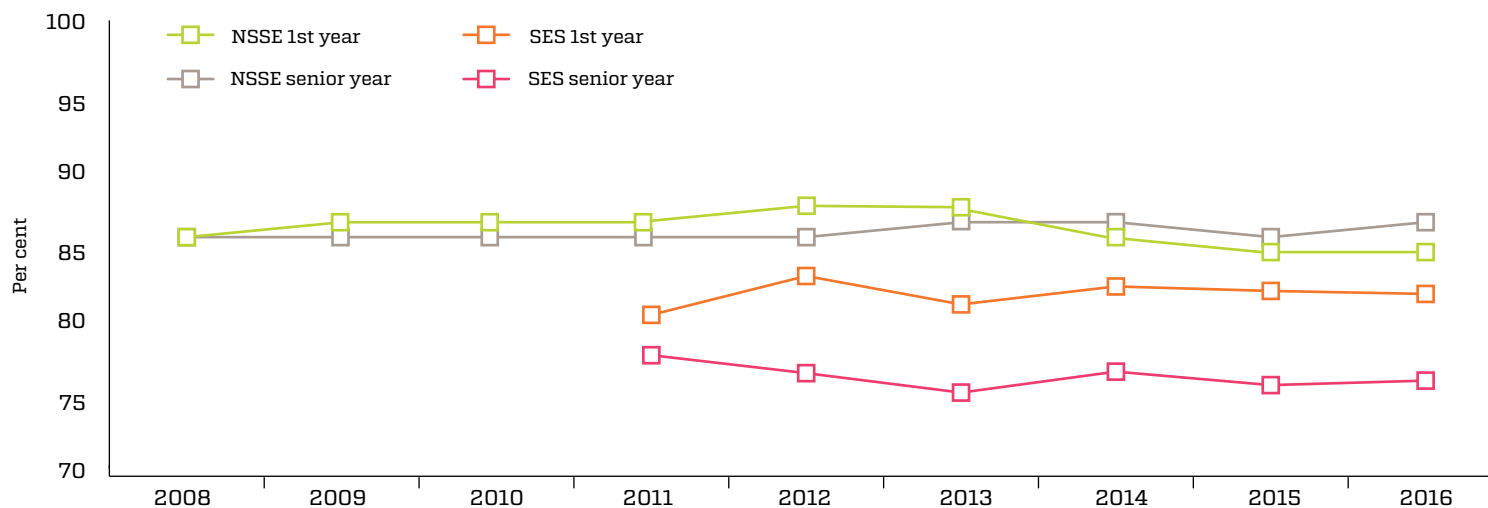
³ Indiana University. (2016). NSSE 2016 Overview. Retrieved 19 Dec., 2016, from nsse.indiana.edu/html/summary_tables.cfm

Note that by way of comparison, NSSE is only administered to a subset of institutions in the USA, which number more than 2,500 in total. If the institutions that participate in NSSE differ from those that do not, the results will not necessarily reflect an unbiased estimate of student ratings at the overall sector level. If, for example, the NSSE is administered to students of “better” institutions, the results may be biased upward.

Bearing these caveats in mind, Figure 3 shows that respondents to the NSSE are consistently more likely to rate their educational experience positively than respondents to the UES/SES. In particular, it is notable that 87 per cent of United States senior year students rated the overall education experience positively, compared with 76 per cent of Australian later year students.

It is also interesting to note that the student ratings of NSSE first and senior-year students are much closer together than those of commencing and later-year students from the UES/SES. The reason for this is not clear, but could relate to non-random participation in NSSE, in terms of both students and institutions, fundamental differences between the Australian and North American higher education sectors, or other methodological differences between the two surveys.

Figure 3 Student ratings of the quality of overall educational experience, SES (Australia) and NSSE (USA), 2008 to 2016 (% positive rating)



Australian enrolled students are less likely to rate their higher education experience positively than their overseas counterparts

In 2014 to 2016, four CEQ scales were administered to a small sample of UES/SES respondents to facilitate benchmarking with the UK National Student Survey (NSS), which contains several questions with similar wording. Most notably, both the CEQ and NSS have an overall satisfaction item with near-identical wording,⁴ measured on a five-point Likert-type response scale. The NSS, administered mostly to final year undergraduates, is run across all publicly funded higher education institutions in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland,⁵ reducing the potential for non-random selection inherent in the NSSE.

Figure 4 presents the percentage of NSS and UES/SES CEQ respondents who were satisfied with the quality of their course. Comparing final/late-year students, it can be seen that UK

students are more likely to express satisfaction with the quality of their course, with around ten percentage points separating the two groups in 2016 (86 per cent and 76 per cent respectively), with the gap in satisfaction increasing since 2014. Given the large number of responses to both surveys,⁶ this difference is likely to be statistically significant; however it does not account for potential differences in the composition of the respective undergraduate student populations, nor methodological differences between the two surveys.

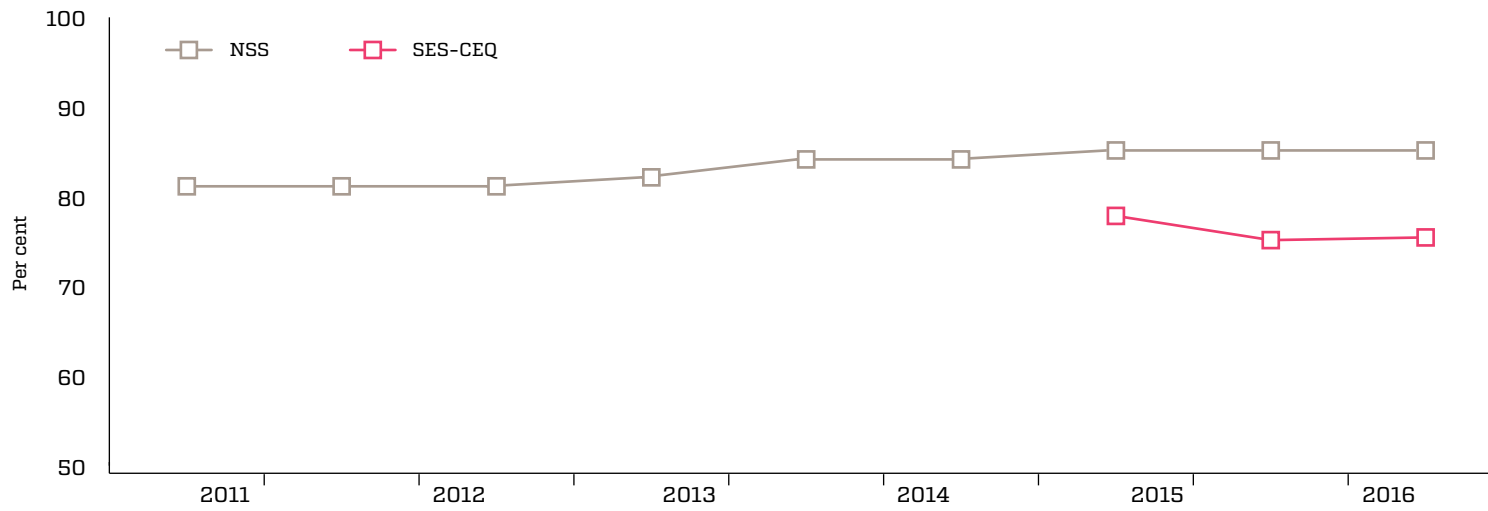
It is interesting, however, that both the SES and CEQ surveys show Australian-enrolled students are likely to rate their higher educational experience lower than their overseas counterparts. Also of interest in this figure is the extent to which the NSS overall satisfaction results are consistent over time.

4 "Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the [this] course."

5 HEFCE. (2013). The National Student Survey. Retrieved 16 Dec., 2014, from http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/the_nss.html

6 1,376 later-year students, were included in the analysis of the CEQ item in 2016.

Figure 4 Satisfaction with the quality of overall educational experience, later year students, SES-CEQ (Australia) and NSS (UK), 2008 to 2016 (%)





Appendices

Appendix 1 Methodology

1.1 Methodological Summary

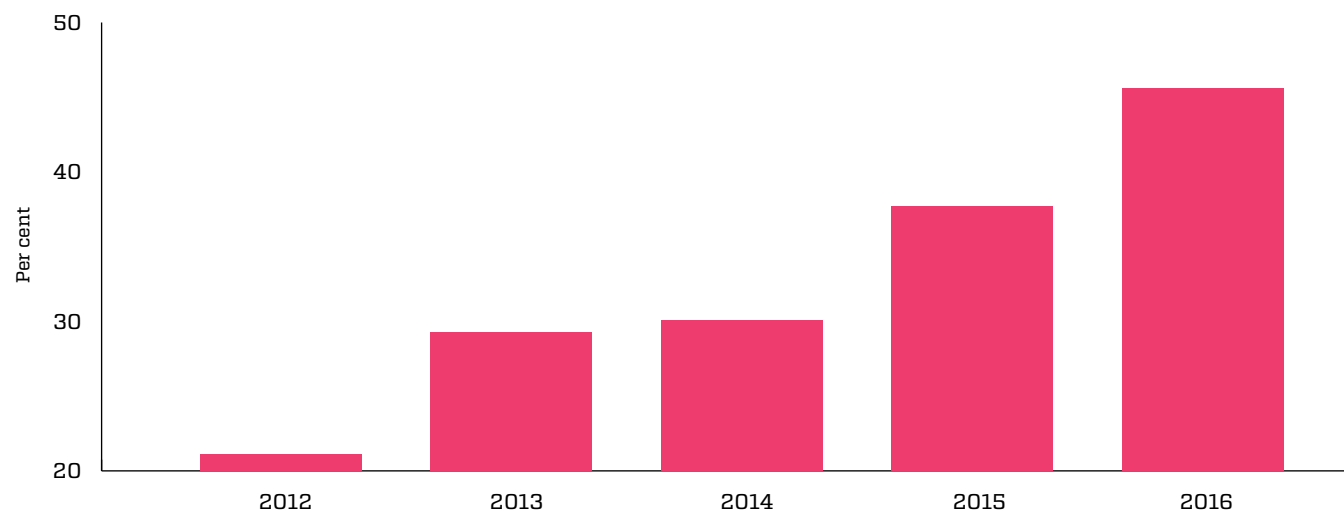
1.1.1 Operational overview of the SES

A national approach to data collection has been in place since 2012. From 2013, this methodology was extended to a centralised sampling strategy based on administrative data from the Higher Education Management System (HEIMs) and from 2014, this included a fixed, centralised deployment schedule.

Table 10 contains an overview of the relevant collections from 2012 to 2016. The in-scope population definition for 2016 was unchanged from previous implementations of

the survey and consisted of commencing and later-year onshore undergraduate students. In 2015, the number of institutions almost doubled to 79 and the in-scope population increased as private providers were invited to take part in the SES for the first time. This trend has continued in 2016 with fifty five NUHEIs taking part in the SES, taking the total to 95 institutions across Australia. A refreshed approach to student engagement was implemented that resulted in a dramatic increase in the overall response rate for university students from 37.6 per cent in 2015 to 45.6 per cent in 2016 (see Appendix 1.1.1 Operational overview of the SES).

Figure 5 Rise in response rates 2012–2016



In 2016 ... 55 NUHEIs (took) part in the SES, taking the total to 95 institutions across Australia

Table 10 SES operational overview: 2012–2016

Project element	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016
Number of participating institutions	40 unis	40 unis	40 unis	40 unis	39 NUHEIs	79 institutions	40 unis	55 NUHEIs	95 institutions
Number of students approached ⁱⁱⁱ	445,332	342,404	330,772	368,698	22,707	391,405	370,847	31,092	401,939
Data collection period	July-October	August-November	August-October	August-October	August-October	August-October	August-October	August-October	August-October
Primary data collection mode	Online	Online	Online	Online	Online ⁱⁱ	Online	Online	Online	Online
Overall response rate	21.1%	29.3%	30.1%	37.6%	39.2%	37.7%	45.6%	46.2%	45.6%
Number of completed surveys (students)	96,102	100,225	99,112	136,830	8,552	145,382	164,764	13,695	178,459
Number of completed surveys (courses)	n/a	108,940	108,322	148,574	8,621	157,195	178,941	13,796	192,737
Analytic unit	Student	Course	Course	Course	Course	Course	Course	Course	Course

i) In 2014, 15 NUHEIs participated in a trial of the then UES, but were not included in the in-scope population for reporting purposes, see 2014 University Experience Survey National Report.

ii) To maintain consistency with methodology used for the Graduate Outcomes Survey, institutions were able to access Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing to top-up underperforming strata. This data is not included in the 2016 SES National Report.

iii) This figure includes total population including students who later opted out, were disqualified or later found to be out of scope.

1.1.2 Interpreting the results

Reporting metrics

Since its introduction, UES/SES data have been reported in two metrics: average scores and percentage positive results. Average scores are based on a rescaling of the response scales, with the four-point scales recoded onto a scale that runs 0, 33.3, 66.6 and 100, and five-point scales recoded onto a scale that runs 0, 25, 50, 75 and 100. Scores for each focus area are then computed as the mean of the constituent item scores. Percentage positive results reflect the percentage of students who report a focus area score of 55 or greater. This specific value was chosen because it is clearly above the midpoint of the response scale and reflects the maximum percentage of graduates who have responded positively to aspects of their higher education experience. At the individual response level, a positive response is represented by a binary variable taking

the value of one if the student indicates a positive response with a particular facet of their higher education experience and zero otherwise. (See Appendix 5: Production of scores).

Extensive consultation with the higher education sector indicated a near-universal preference for the reporting of percentage positive results over focus area average scores. Percentage positive results were seen as being a more understandable measure, especially for less expert users of the SES data, and are straightforward for institutions to replicate and benchmark against. As such, percentage positive results are presented throughout this report. One consequence of this is that the results presented in the 2013 and 2014 UES reports and the 2015 and 2016 SES reports are not directly comparable to those presented in the 2011 and 2012 reports.

Response representativeness

The SES is administered consistently across the higher education sector with a focus on best practice and the minimisation of survey error (see Appendix 1.3 Data quality). However, there are a number of relevant issues to note in relation to the interpretation of the SES results and the use of this data to support evidence-based decision making.

It is possible that the results are biased as not all members of the target population completed a survey. If non-respondents differ systematically from those who did respond to the SES, the results will not reflect the true experiences of students in the broader higher education student population. If, for example, students who are more engaged with their institution tend to be more likely to respond to the SES than those who are less engaged, the estimates relating to Learner Engagement may be upwardly biased relative to the true population parameter, or vice-versa. Readers are also asked to consider the possible existence of bias resulting from unobservable respondent characteristics when interpreting the results in this report. For more detail, please see 1.3.2 Response characteristics

Post-stratification weighting is a common method employed to ensure that the sample of responses reflects the survey population in terms of key demographic and enrolment characteristics. As suggested in Appendix 1.3.3 Weighting, corrective weighting does not provide any significant advantage for the 2016 SES. Similar analysis undertaken for the 2013 and 2014 UES and 2015 SES reports resulted in the same conclusion. As such, all results presented in this report are based on unweighted data.

1.1.3 Survey population

With the exception of the expansion of the scope to NUHEIs, the definitions used for commencing and later-year students in the SES have been essentially unchanged from 2013.

In 2016, records conforming to the agreed definition of commencing student and later year students were extracted from the national HEIMS Submission 1 Student File. Individual institutions were asked to confirm, where possible, that the selected students were still enrolled.

Commencing students

For the 2016 SES collection, commencing students were defined as first year higher education students who were enrolled in an undergraduate course, were studying onshore, had commenced study in the relevant target year; and had been enrolled for at least one semester. This definition is unchanged from the 2015 SES and also identical to that used for the 2013 and 2014 UES. In 2012 the 'UES' definition was provided to participating institutions and relevant records were extracted by the institution and provided to the data collection agency. It is unknown if this definition was operationalised in the same way by each institution.

Later year students

For all SES and UES collections, later year students have been defined narratively as final year students who were enrolled in an undergraduate course, generally in their third year of study, and studying onshore.

As was the case for commencing students, in 2012, institutions were responsible for extracting in-scope later year student records based on this loose definition. In 2013, two options for defining 'completing' were trialled as there is no indicator in HEIMS which can be used to identify a final year student. The main difference

between the two options consists of a correction for the duration of the course. This approach using the course length correction appears to appropriately identify the majority of completing students for most institutions. As such, this option was used in 2015 and in 2016 to identify completing students, with specific adjustments required to accommodate the idiosyncrasies of a small number of universities with less typical course structures.

The 2012 definition of final year students noted that these students should have commenced study prior to the target year. This component of the definition was problematic for courses that are 12 months in duration. From 2013, students who were enrolled in these shorter courses were included in the sample as completing students.

In order to meet the sampling requirements to support representativeness for smaller non-university providers and also those who did not provide data through HEIMS, most NUHEIs undertook the SES as a census of all in-scope higher education students. “Later Year” for these students was defined as “not a commencing student”.

1.1.4 Sampling design

Sample frame

As with the 2013 and 2014 UES, and 2015 SES, the sample frame for the 2016 SES was based on a “top-down” approach using population data from HEIMS to create the sample frames for most institutions. Compared with the “bottom-up” approach utilised for the 2012 UES, whereby institutions provided extracts from their student data systems to the survey administrators to serve as a basis for the sample frame, the approach adopted for the 2013 and 2014 UES and the 2015 and 2016 SES implementations reduces the likelihood of accidental bias being introduced due to the sample selection process and ensures a nationally consistent

approach to sampling. While it would have been ideal to use validated Submission 2 data for this purpose, this was not possible due to the timeline for data collection. To address any potential sample quality issues resulting from this time lag, each institution was asked to confirm, where possible, whether or not the selected students were still enrolled. For institutions which did not submit a valid Submission 1 file to HEIMs, a comparable, alternative method was employed to collect sample data.

Approach to sampling

For the 2012 and 2013 UES, the approach to sampling was broadly consistent whereby number of students for each stratum was calculated using the approach described in the 2012 UES National Report.¹ All students were selected for strata, up to 1,333 students, effectively a census of these strata. For strata larger than 1,333 students, a random sample of 1,333 students was drawn in the hope that this would yield at least 200 responses. According to the report, this value was derived from a desire for error bands of ± 5 per cent at a 95 per cent level of confidence.²

An analysis of this approach suggested that it had a number of shortcomings. In general, large strata were substantially oversampled and often achieved completed surveys well in excess of the target of 200, with the result that students from large strata were substantially over-represented. This had the flow-on effect of increasing the gender imbalance in the sample of secured responses, as many of the large strata consisted of course offerings where males are traditionally under-represented, such as nursing and education. Lastly, the sampling approach did not take into consideration the differential response rates across strata.

1 Radloff, A., Coates, H., Taylor, R., James, R. & Krause, K. (2012). 2012 University Experience Survey National Report. Retrieved 15 Dec., 2014, from <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ues2012nationalreport.pdf>

2 These error bands were calculated on the basis of average scores, not percentage positive results.

In 2014, the approach taken to sampling was refined, with strata defined on the basis of institution and study area.³ In 2015 and again in 2016, required sample sizes were calculated at the stratum level taking into account the number of records available and the goal of reporting stratum-level results at a level of precision of ± 7.5 percentage points at a 90 per cent level of confidence.⁴ In order to establish the required sample sizes, a target number of completed surveys was calculated for each stratum in order to achieve the desired level of precision. The number of students to be sampled from each stratum to achieve this target was estimated using the response rate for that stratum from the 2015 SES, or the overall response rate for the institution if no stratum-level response rate was available (i.e. no in-scope students fell into the stratum in the 2015 collection).

The sample selection was validated against population parameters to ensure that appropriate proportions of gender, qualification, mode of attendance, study area and citizenship characteristics were present in the sample (see Appendix 1.3).

Additional populations

Institutions are provided with the opportunity to include additional populations to the SES. In 2016, 13 institutions chose to survey additional populations, including postgraduate, middle-year, offshore and enabling students. Responses from students in these populations are not included in the national data file and therefore do not appear in any of the results presented in this report.

³ Study area definitions are presented in Appendix 7: Study Area Definitions.

⁴ The original precision target was ± 5 percentage points at a 90 per cent level of confidence; however it became apparent that, when the required sample sizes were compared with the response rates achieved in 2013, it would not be possible to achieve the required number of responses for a substantial proportion of the strata.

1.1.5 Data processing

Definition of the analytic unit

The analytic unit for the 2012 UES was the student. The data file contained one record for each respondent to the survey. For the 2013 UES, changes to the instrument allowed students in double degrees to respond separately for each course element, which were treated as two separate responses for analytical purposes. The analytic unit for the 2015 and 2016 SES, as well as the 2013 and 2014 UES, is the course.

From 2013, a response was defined as valid and complete if the student had completed units in the course, there was a minimum of one valid SES focus area score, and, in the case of double degrees for which the student had at least one valid SES focus area score for each course and the courses were in two different study areas. When double degree students had completed units in both components and they were in the same study area, the first record was selected for analysis. Where the two components of a double degree fell into different study areas, the study area with the lowest population was selected for primary analysis but both study areas are included in analysis of study areas. Of the 178,459 university and non-university students who completed the 2016 SES, 14,278 (8 per cent) provided a valid response for their second course element, resulting in 192,737 valid responses.

Institutions are provided with the opportunity to include additional populations in the SES...

Data cleaning and preparation

To ensure consistency in the cleaning process, records were first merged from all separate institution level files (as collected on the online platform) into one master file. Sample variables were merged from the original population file for checking and to fill any sample data missing from the online collection platform as a result of students prematurely exiting the online questionnaire.

Revised course names were entered by students using predictive text from a master course list for specific institutions and then checked manually using a similar process as in 2015. Where a course name matched multiple course codes, the student was assigned to the course with the highest enrolment where no conflicts between the different courses existed. Where an appropriate course code for the course name supplied by the student could not be found, queries were sent to the Survey Manager of the relevant institution. In cases where the Survey Manager advised that a combined course did not exist for two degrees listed by a student, they were treated as two unrelated concurrent degrees.

A new checking process was introduced in 2016, using the interim data file distribution to allow institutions to review course changes made by students from original HEIMs data, should they wish to do so. This was undertaken in order to ensure that institutions agreed that the changes and subsequent coding as derived above were correct and also whether those responses should remain in scope for the SES (for example that they had been enrolled in the new course for more than one semester) and/or whether commencing or later year status was maintained. The Social Research Centre is currently reviewing this practice and will work with the sector to streamline this process going forward.

Following this process, the scope status of the student (i.e. whether they were enrolled in a degree eligible for the SES) was re-derived based on revised course level data. Students who had switched from an eligible undergraduate course to an ineligible course, such as postgraduate coursework or research, were excluded. All items in the body of the questionnaire were re-filtered to their respective bases to ensure there were no errant responses. After cleaning, normalised SES variables, SES scale variables and consolidated demographic variables were derived. In the case of double degrees, SES focus area variables were derived separately for each course. After the data were finalised, the student level file was split to course level.

- Where a student was enrolled in a single degree, the student level record became the course level record.
- Where a student was enrolled in a double degree and had completed units in only one course, the student level record became the course level record.
- Where a student was enrolled in a double degree (including two concurrent unrelated degrees) and had completed units in both courses, two course level records were created: the student level record minus course-specific items completed for the second degree, and the student level record with course-specific items completed for the first degree replaced with those completed for the second degree.

1.2 Methodology

The SES is undertaken within the Total Survey Quality framework, with a focus on the operational aspects of the process or Total Survey Error (TSE) (Biemer & Lyberg, 2003). The TSE approach identifies key potential sources of error in the design, collection, processing and analysis of survey data and provides a framework for optimising survey quality within given design and budget

A new checking process was introduced in 2016... to allow institutions to review course changes made by students from original HEIMS data...

parameters. TSE is typically broken down into sampling error, referred to as errors of representation, and non-sampling error, errors of measurement. Errors of representation occur as part of the sample specification and the selection of the cases from the sample frame. Non-sampling error, or errors of measurement, is a much broader concept encompassing systematic and random errors (McNabb, 2014).

The approach to conducting the 2015 and 2016 SES, as well as the UES for the 2013 and 2014 cycles, was based on a careful consideration of potential sources of survey error, tempered by an appreciation of the compressed timeline for both cycles of data collection. TSE was used to provide a theoretical and conceptual framework for evaluating the design of the SES, a structured approach to making decisions about modifying the SES to support continuous improvement, and to determine an optimal research design that offered good value for money.

The following sections summarise key aspects of the SES methodology for the 2016 cycle of data collection. Detailed information about the administration of the survey in the context of TSE can be found in the accompanying 2016 SES Methodological Report.

1.2.1 The Student Experience Questionnaire

Core instrument

The construct model underpinning the SES, as a conceptualisation of the student experience, is based on five conceptual domains including Teaching Quality, Learner Engagement, Student Support, Learning Resources, and Skills Development.

The instrument used to collect data for the SES, the Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ), focuses on aspects of the higher education experience that are measurable; linked to learning and

development outcomes; and potentially able to be influenced by institutions. These focus areas are operationalised by means of summated rating scales, underpinned by forty six individual questionnaire items. These items are supplemented by two open-response items that allow students to provide textual feedback on the best aspects of their higher education experience and those most in need of improvement. The SES also contains two additional sets of items, demographic and contextual, to facilitate data analysis and reporting. A full list of SEQ items is presented in Appendix 2.

Course Experience Questionnaire

As part of the 2013 UES, six scales from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) were administered on a trial basis to students from 14 institutions. This trial resulted in a recommendation that the Good Teaching Scale (GTS), Generic Skills Scale (GSS), Clear Goals and Standards Scale (CGS) and Overall Satisfaction Item (OSI) be to facilitate international benchmarking. It was further recommended that the CEQ scales should only be presented to a small sample of students of a sufficient size to yield national-level estimates that are precise within ± 2.2 percentage points of the true population value at a 95 per cent confidence level. This national approach to administering the CEQ for benchmarking purposes was implemented in the 2014 UES and the 2015 and 2016 SES.

As with the UEQ, sampled students in double degrees were provided with the opportunity to complete the CEQ for each course element individually. A list of CEQ items administered in the 2016 SES is presented in Appendix 3.

The construct underpinning the SES... is based on five conceptual domains including Teaching Quality, Learner Engagement, Student Support, Learning Resources and Skills Development

Institution-specific items

As has been the case since 2013, institutions were offered the option of including non-standard, institution-specific items as part of the 2016 SES. In total, 25 institutions chose to do so, up from 24 in the 2015 SES and 15 in the 2014 UES. Frequent inclusions were the Workplace Relevance Scale which was included by 12 institutions, an item to monitor students at risk of discontinuing their studies which was added by five institutions and a Net Promoter Score item which was added by four institutions.

These institution-specific items were only presented to students after they had completed the SEQ, resulting in a clear demarcation between the two survey modules.

1.2.2 Data collection

In 2016, the primary mode for the SES was online, with the addition of an option for institutions to 'top-up' with telephone surveying. This additional telephone data is not included in the current report in order to maintain methodological consistency over time. The online survey was programmed and hosted by the Social Research Centre. Students were provided with a unique login to complete the survey.

A broad range of promotional methods and materials were developed to build awareness of QILT and the SES in the higher education sector and encourage participation amongst the student population. There were two main phases of student engagement. The first was an awareness-building campaign focusing on pre-survey engagement, which ensured that students were aware of the survey well in advance of the start of fieldwork. The response maximisation phase commenced after the survey was deployed and centred on scheduled invitation and reminder correspondence encouraging completion of the survey, and a national incentive strategy.

A change in 2016 involved the "retirement" of hard copy non-response letters and postcards and a shift of resources to in-field telephone reminder calls. This strategy had proved successful as an optional response "top up" strategy in the 2016 Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) where it was employed after the main online collection period had closed. In 2016, telephone reminders were employed while the survey was in-field targeting study areas and institutions with the aim to improve representativeness. Institutions were also able to "top up" with optional telephone reminders after the field work period had closed. One benefit of the telephone reminders is that responses are still undertaken fully online and so are able to be included in national reporting without undermining methodological consistency.

As had been the case in previous years, a key focus of the 2016 SES was working collaboratively with institutions, wherever possible, to maximise participation rates in the survey. Many institutions undertook supplementary activities to promote the SES and encourage student participation. The most commonly employed methods were pre-awareness letters and emails, notifications on learning management systems, emails from the Vice-Chancellor, social media posts, institutional websites and internal staff emails.

Additional Populations

As has been the case since 2013, institutions were offered the option of including out of scope populations to the SES for use in their internal benchmarking and continuous improvement processes. In total 13 institutions chose to include extra populations in their 2016 SES collection, with nine adding postgraduate students, four including middle year students, three off shore cohorts and two institutions adding other enabling courses.

Institutions were offered the option of including non-standard, institution specific items as part of the 2016 SES ... 25 institutions chose to do so

Data from these populations are provided to institutions through their institutional data files and Tableau reports for analysis. However, these responses are not included in national reporting.

1.3 Data quality

1.3.1 Response rates

While the overall institutional response rate remains a relevant measure of survey administration effectiveness, there was a shift in the 2014 UES from overall response rates to stratum-level response rates in 2015 and 2016. Institutions were given targets for each study area and encouraged to promote student engagement and participation at this level (see also 2016 SES Methodological Report).

Despite the often ambitious study area response rate targets for each institution, most institutions improved upon their response rate from 2015, yielding a national response rate of 45.6 per cent which marked a substantial improvement from 37.6 per cent in 2015 and 30.1 per cent in 2014. In general, all but one university improved their response rate by margins ranging from one up to almost 16 per cent. Of the 34 NUHEIs who participated in both 2015 and 2016, eight had lower response rates in 2016 than in the previous year, but four institutions improved response rates by more than 20 per cent. It should be noted, that some of these institutions have quite small populations which can mean that a relatively small shift in the number of responses can translate into large shifts in response rates.

This continuing improvement in response rates can be attributed to a number of factors including a consolidated administration and promotion period, excellent promotion of the survey by most institutions and improvements in response maximisation strategies such as the move to telephone reminders. We hope that

the increased visibility of SES and GOS data on the QILT website will contribute to further, incremental improvements in the SES response rate.

Response rates by institution are available in Appendix 4: Response rates by institution.

1.3.2 Response characteristics

In terms of minimising Total Survey Error, response rates are less important than the representativeness of the respondent profile. To investigate the extent to which those who responded to the SES are representative of the in-scope population, respondent characteristics of higher education students are presented alongside population parameters in Table 11. University and NUHEI students are also presented alongside population parameters in Table 12 and Table 13.

As was the case in 2015, it is evident that many of the characteristics of respondents in 2016 very closely match those of the in-scope population, especially with respect to stage of studies, Indigenous status, disability status, first in family to attend a higher education institution and study mode. Language spoken at home and citizenship status are also surprisingly similar, given that students who speak a language other than English at home and international students are traditionally less likely to participate in similar surveys. As is still the case since 2012, the largest potential source of non-response bias is in relation to gender, with male students substantially under-represented in the sample of secured responses by 6.2 percentage points, with similar differences for university and NUHEIs responses (6.3 and 5.9 percentage points respectively).

Table 11 2016 SES response characteristics and population parameters by subgroup – Higher Education students ^a

	Group/subgroup	SES respondents: n	SES respondents: %	In-scope population: n	In-scope population: %
Stage of Studies	Commencing	105,503	59.1	231,807	57.7
	Later year**	72,956	40.9	170,132	42.3
Gender	Male	65,413	36.7	172,372	42.9
	Female	112,991	63.3	229,470	57.1
Age	under 25	137,818	77.2	316,151	78.7
	25 to 29	15,990	9.0	38,307	9.5
	30 to 39	13,672	7.7	28,092	7.0
	40 and over	10,974	6.1	19,380	4.8
Indigenous	Indigenous	2,246	1.3	5,223	1.3
	Non-Indigenous	176,213	98.7	396,716	98.7
Home language	Home language – English	134,696	75.5	300,460	74.8
	Home language – Other	43,763	24.5	101,479	25.2
Disability	Disability reported	9,815	5.5	19,761	4.9
	No disability reported	168,644	94.5	382,178	95.1
Study mode***	Internal Study mode	163,625	91.7	367,987	91.6
	External/multi-modal Study mode	14,834	8.3	33,952	8.4
Residence status	Domestic student	151,984	85.2	339,251	84.4
	International student	26,475	14.8	62,688	15.6
First in family status*	First in family	44,345	48.1	96,811	48.3
	Not first in family	47,798	51.9	103,426	51.7
	Total	178,459	100.0	401,939	100.0

a) Some subgroups may not add to 100 per cent due to missing data.

* First in family status includes commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 12 2016 SES response characteristics and population parameters by subgroup – university students ^a

	Group/subgroup	SES respondents: n	SES respondents: %	In-scope population: n	In-scope population: %
Stage of Studies	Commencing	100,215	60.8	220,155	59.4
	Later year**	64,549	39.2	150,692	40.6
Gender	Male	60,015	36.4	158,288	42.7
	Female	104,698	63.6	212,470	57.3
Age	under 25	130,249	79.1	298,436	80.5
	25 to 29	13,788	8.4	32,763	8.8
	30 to 39	11,702	7.1	23,817	6.4
	40 and over	9,025	5.5	15,831	4.3
Indigenous	Indigenous	2,161	1.3	5,019	1.4
	Non-Indigenous	162,603	98.7	365,828	98.6
Home language	Home language – English	124,323	75.5	277,785	74.9
	Home language – Other	40,441	24.5	93,062	25.1
Disability	Disability reported	9,191	5.6	18,527	5.0
	No disability reported	155,573	94.4	352,320	95.0
Study mode***	Internal	151,344	91.9	340,235	91.7
	External/multi-modal	13,420	8.1	30,612	8.3
Residence status	Domestic student	141,712	86.0	317,271	85.6
	International student	23,052	14.0	53,576	14.4
First in family status*	First in family	42,888	48.0	93,782	48.2
	Not first in family	46,546	52.0	100,890	51.8
	Total	164,764	100.0	370,847	100.0

a) Some subgroups may not add to 100 per cent due to missing data.

* First in family status includes commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 13 2016 SES response characteristics and population parameters by subgroup – NUHEI students ^a

	Group/subgroup	SES respondents: n	SES respondents: %	In-scope population: n	In-scope population: %
Stage of Studies	Commencing	5,288	38.6	11,652	37.5
	Later year**	8,407	61.4	19,440	62.5
Gender	Male	5,398	39.4	14,084	45.3
	Female	8,293	60.6	17,000	54.7
Age	under 25	7,569	55.3	17,715	57.0
	25 to 29	2,202	16.1	5,544	17.8
	30 to 39	1,970	14.4	4,275	13.8
	40 and over	1,949	14.2	3,549	11.4
Indigenous	Indigenous	85	0.6	204	0.7
	Non-Indigenous	13,610	99.4	30,888	99.3
Home language	Home language – English	10,373	75.7	22,675	72.9
	Home language – Other	3,322	24.3	8,417	27.1
Disability	Disability reported	624	4.6	1,234	4.0
	No disability reported	13,071	95.4	29,858	96.0
Study mode***	Internal	12,281	89.7	27,752	89.3
	External/multi-modal	1,414	10.3	3,340	10.7
Residence status	Domestic student	10,272	75.0	21,980	70.7
	International student	3,423	25.0	9,112	29.3
First in family status*	First in family	1,457	53.8	3,029	54.4
	Not first in family	1,252	46.2	2,536	45.6
	Total	13,695	100.0	31,092	100.0

a) Some subgroups may not add to 100 per cent due to missing data.

* First in family status includes commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

The sample also closely matched the in-scope population in terms of study area (see Table 14). Again, consistent with 2015, the largest difference between the sample and population was observed in relation to the Business and management study area (3.7 percentage points). This trend is consistent across the university and NUHEI populations with a difference of 3.7 percentage points and 4.3 percentage points respectively. Much smaller differences were observed in other study areas for both universities and NUHEIs, with all other areas recording differences of less than 1.4 percentage points. For NUHEIs all areas other than Creative arts and Teaching differed by less than 0.7 percentage points. This very high level of correspondence may be attributable to improvements in the targeted engagement and follow-up of students in under-performing study areas undertaken during data collection fieldwork. (See Table 14 to Table 16).

Overall, the largest study area in the higher education sample was Business and management with 21.8 per cent. Business and management students represent 21.7 per cent of the sample for universities but 31.5 per cent of the NUHEI population. Humanities, culture and social sciences with 11.4 per cent was the second highest overall with 11.4 per cent for universities and 10.9 per cent for NUHEIs. Science and mathematics was third with 10.2 per cent overall and 11 per cent for universities but only 0.3 per cent for NUHEIs.

In total, these three study areas constitute 43.5 per cent of the entire SES higher education sample. Creative Arts represented the second highest population group amongst NUHEIs comprising 15 per cent of their sample, compared with only 3.8 per cent in the universities, and this area coupled with Business and management, and Humanities, culture and social sciences constitute more than 57.4 per cent of the NUHEI sample (down from 65 per cent in 2015).

... the largest difference between the sample and population was in relation to the Business and Management study area ... (which was) the largest study area in the higher education sample

Table 14 2016 SES Higher education student response characteristics and population parameters by study area

Study area	SES respondents: n	SES respondents: %	In-scope population: n	In-scope population: %
Science and mathematics	20,285	10.5	46,947	10.2
Computing and Information Systems	6,652	3.5	15,567	3.4
Engineering	11,851	6.1	27,160	5.9
Architecture and built environment	4,218	2.2	10,273	2.2
Agriculture and environmental studies	2,899	1.5	5,482	1.2
Health services and support	14,392	7.5	34,966	7.6
Medicine	2,325	1.2	5,112	1.1
Nursing	15,296	7.9	35,224	7.7
Pharmacy	1,496	0.8	2,837	0.6
Dentistry	739	0.4	1,359	0.3
Veterinary science	880	0.5	2,031	0.4
Rehabilitation	3,015	1.6	5,848	1.3
Teacher education	14,935	7.7	32,967	7.2
Business and management	34,949	18.1	100,006	21.8
Humanities, culture and social sciences	22,188	11.5	52,175	11.4
Social work	3,999	2.1	7,961	1.7
Psychology	8,030	4.2	16,171	3.5
Law and paralegal studies	7,768	4.0	18,128	4.0
Creative arts	9,580	5.0	20,976	4.6
Communications	6,566	3.4	15,387	3.4
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	674	0.3	1,690	0.4
Total	192,737	100.0	458,267	100.0

Table 15 2016 SES university student response characteristics and population parameters by study area

Study area	SES respondents: n	SES respondents: %	In-scope population: n	In-scope population: %
Science and mathematics	20,246	11.3	46,863	11.0
Computing and Information Systems	6,191	3.5	14,595	3.4
Engineering	11,653	6.5	26,746	6.3
Architecture and built environment	3,969	2.2	9,813	2.3
Agriculture and environmental studies	2,761	1.5	5,283	1.2
Health services and support	12,276	6.9	30,021	7.0
Medicine	2,325	1.3	5,112	1.2
Nursing	14,931	8.3	34,548	8.1
Pharmacy	1,496	0.8	2,837	0.7
Dentistry	721	0.4	1,336	0.3
Veterinary science	844	0.5	1,954	0.5
Rehabilitation	3,015	1.7	5,848	1.4
Teacher education	14,033	7.8	31,339	7.3
Business and management	31,200	17.4	90,107	21.1
Humanities, culture and social sciences	20,631	11.5	48,752	11.4
Social work	3,298	1.8	6,551	1.5
Psychology	7,790	4.4	15,581	3.7
Law and paralegal studies	7,675	4.3	17,869	4.2
Creative arts	7,319	4.1	16,274	3.8
Communications	6,030	3.4	14,031	3.3
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	537	0.3	1,391	0.3
Total	178,941	100.0	426,851	100.0

Table 16 2016 SES NUHEI student response characteristics and population parameters by study area

Study area	SES respondents: n	SES respondents: %	In-scope population: n	In-scope population: %
Science and mathematics	39	0.3	84	0.3
Computing and Information Systems	461	3.3	972	3.1
Engineering	198	1.4	414	1.3
Architecture and built environment	249	1.8	460	1.5
Agriculture and environmental studies	138	1.0	199	0.6
Health services and support	2,116	15.3	4,945	15.7
Medicine	0	0.0	0	0.0
Nursing	365	2.6	676	2.2
Pharmacy	0	0.0	0	0.0
Dentistry	18	0.1	23	0.1
Veterinary science	36	0.3	77	0.2
Rehabilitation	0	0.0	0	0.0
Teacher education	902	6.5	1,628	5.2
Business and management	3,749	27.2	9,899	31.5
Humanities, culture and social sciences	1,557	11.3	3,423	10.9
Social work	701	5.1	1,410	4.5
Psychology	240	1.7	590	1.9
Law and paralegal studies	93	0.7	259	0.8
Creative arts	2,261	16.4	4,702	15.0
Communications	536	3.9	1,356	4.3
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	137	1.0	299	1.0
Total	13,796	100.0	31,416	100.0

1.3.3 Weighting

In the 2012 UES, weighting analysis was undertaken to ensure that reported results were representative of the overall population. In 2013, weighting was trialled to correct the serious gender imbalance in the sample of secured responses, but was found to have no substantial impact on the results at a national level. There was ongoing under-representation of male respondents in the 2014 UES and the 2015 and 2016 SES. However, it is evident that post-stratification weighting as undertaken does not significantly affect the results at a national level. This observation suggests that the under-representation of male respondents to the SES has not introduced any serious bias at a national level. This finding is consistent with the results obtained in 2013, 2014 and 2015 and is presumably related to the fact that the respondents are consistent with the in-scope population on most characteristics and study area in particular. To minimise complexity for the reader, it was decided to analyse the SES data without applying weights. All results presented in this report, aside from those in Table 17 and Table 18, are based on unweighted data.

The notion of corrective weighting has been revisited each year. Post-stratification weights by gender, study area and stage of studies were computed separately for each institution.⁵ This resulted in a total of 4799 non-zero weighting strata.⁶ Weights ranged in size from 0.3 to 27. The mean weight was 2.40 and the median 2.23.

Raw (unweighted) and weighted percentage positive results were compared to establish the utility of weighting higher education SES data. As in 2015, two questionnaire items were selected for this analysis: the quality of the entire educational experience and quality of teaching items, given they represent core areas of focus for the SES. The results are presented in Table 17 and Table 18.⁷

⁵ For each institution, the post-stratification weights equal the in-scope population frequency of each stratum, defined on the basis of gender, study area and stage of studies, divided by the frequency of the corresponding stratum in the sample of responses. When weights are applied, the weighted total of the sample approximates the total of the population.

⁶ When calculating the weights, 237 cases in the response file were found to belong to strata that had no corresponding strata in the population file. Because weights could not be calculated for these strata, the cases were excluded from the analysis presented in Table 17 to Table 18.

... it is evident that post-stratification weighting... does not significantly affect the results at a national level

Table 17 Comparison of 2016 higher education students' raw and weighted percentage positive ratings by subgroup

		Quality of entire educational experience		Quality of teaching	
	Group/subgroup	Raw	Weighted	Raw	Weighted
Stage of Studies	Commencing	82	82	83	82
	Later year**	76	76	77	77
Gender	Male	78	77	78	78
	Female	81	81	82	81
Indigenous	Indigenous	80	80	82	82
	Non-Indigenous	80	79	80	80
Home language	English	81	81	82	81
	Other	75	75	76	76
Disability	Disability reported	78	78	80	79
	No disability reported	80	79	80	80
Study mode***	Internal/Mixed	80	79	80	80
	External/Distance	81	81	81	81
Residence status	Domestic student	81	80	81	80
	International student	75	75	77	76
First in family status*	First in family	83	83	83	83
	Not first in family	82	82	83	82
	Total	80	79	80	80

* First in family status includes commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 18 Comparison of higher education raw and weighted percentage positive ratings by study area

Study area	Quality of entire educational experience		Quality of teaching	
	Raw	Weighted	Raw	Weighted
Science and mathematics	82	82	84	84
Computing and Information Systems	74	73	72	72
Engineering	75	74	72	71
Architecture and built environment	76	76	75	75
Agriculture and environmental studies	83	83	84	83
Health services and support	81	81	82	82
Medicine	82	81	76	76
Nursing	77	76	78	77
Pharmacy	79	79	81	81
Dentistry	75	74	71	68
Veterinary science	81	79	82	81
Rehabilitation	87	86	88	88
Teacher education	80	79	80	80
Business and management	77	77	77	76
Humanities, culture and social sciences	84	83	86	86
Social work	83	83	84	84
Psychology	84	84	86	86
Law and paralegal studies	81	80	83	82
Creative arts	80	80	83	83
Communications	81	80	82	82
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	82	83	81	81
Total	80	79	80	80

1.3.4 Stratum-level precision

One of the major methodological improvements for the 2014 UES was the change in focus from the institution level to the stratum level (study areas within institutions) for both sampling and response maximisation. The original intention of these methodological refinements was to reduce gender bias by targeting male-dominated study areas for response maximisation activities. This approach was also employed for the 2015 and 2016 SES.

While the national response rate increased in 2016 relative to 2014 and 2015, gender bias did not discernibly decrease (see Appendix 1.3.2 – Response characteristics). The main positive outcome from the stratum-level response maximisation was a general increase across all focus areas in the number of strata that met the desired level of precision. Table 19 shows that a combined total of 314 additional strata achieved the desired level of precision across the five focus areas in 2016 compared with 2015. This is in part due to the increase in the number of NUHEIs participating in 2016 as compared with 2015 (55 compared with 39) but also strongly reflects the overall increase in response rate coupled with the more effective, targeted response maximisation strategies employed in 2016. If we look at universities alone, we can see that for the same number of institutions in 2015 and 2016, there is an increase of 164 strata reaching the desired level of precision, compared with 143 from 2014-2015. Overall, the desired level of precision is harder to achieve for the typically smaller non-university institutions, because the smaller populations mean that generally higher response rates are required in each study area compared with larger Institutions (see Table 20).

1.3.5 Precision of national estimates

As the 2016 SES data constituted a representative sample of the in-scope student population, it is reasonable to use statistical methods to analyse the sample of secured responses to make inferences about the population. To gauge the variability of the estimated results from both university and NUHEI students due to sampling variation, Table 21 and Table 22 present student ratings of the quality of the entire educational experience and the quality of teaching items by subgroup and study area, respectively, with 90 per cent confidence intervals around the point estimates. These confidence intervals have been calculated as 1.645 times the standard error. Because the number of responses constitutes more than 10 percent of the student population, standard errors have been adjusted by a finite population correction. This correction reduces the size of the confidence intervals surrounding the estimates. The calculation of these confidence intervals is detailed in Appendix 6: Construction of confidence intervals.

As expected in a large national sample, the confidence intervals are generally narrow. At a national level for all higher education students, for example, the one-sided width of the 90 per cent confidence interval is around 0.2–0.3 percentage points for quality of entire educational experience and quality of teaching respectively (see bottom row of Table 21 and Table 22).

Table 19 Strata meeting desired level of precision for higher education students^a, 2015 to 2016 – 21 study areas

Focus area	2015: n	2015: %	2016: n	2016: %	Change p.p.
Learner Engagement	511	73.2	581	79.0	5.8
Teaching Quality	581	83.2	640	87.1	3.8
Learning Resources	565	80.9	613	83.4	2.5
Student Support	495	70.9	579	78.8	7.9
Skills Development	583	83.5	636	86.5	3.0
Total strata	698		735		

a) ±7.5 percentage points at a 90 per cent level of confidence.

Table 20 Strata reportable at a minimum precision of +/-7.5%: 21 Study Areas by institution type

Scale	2016 Overall		2016 Uni		2016 NUHEI	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Learner engagement	581	79.0	513	84.7	68	52.7
Teaching quality	640	87.1	552	91.1	88	68.2
Learning resources	613	83.4	540	89.1	73	56.6
Student support	579	78.8	498	82.2	81	62.8
Skills development	636	86.5	549	90.6	87	67.4
Total Strata	735		606		129	

Although the confidence intervals tend to be wider for smaller cohorts such as indigenous students, external/distance students, international students and those who reported a disability. Likewise, confidence intervals for NUHEI cohorts, which are a smaller population, are generally higher than for the larger university sector with a one-sided width of 0.8 percentage points for both the quality of entire educational experience and quality of teaching, with a gap of 11 and 11.1 percentage points respectively for indigenous, and over three for students with a reported disability, and those studying in external/distance mode.

Similarly, confidence intervals tend to be wider when responses are broken down into the 21 study areas (see Table 22). The study area with the widest confidence interval was Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation, Dentistry, and Veterinary Science with one-sided widths of more than 3.2–3.9 percentage points overall (and from 3.4 to 4.2 for universities – Table 23 and Table 24) observed in relation to both the quality of the entire educational experience and teaching quality items.

Confidence intervals for study areas in NUHEIs (Table 26) are also substantially wider overall with a one sided width of 9.5 percentage points for both the quality of the entire educational experience and teaching. These widths were most pronounced for Veterinary science, Science and Mathematics, Teacher education with gaps in excess of 15 percentage points. This is again, not surprising, given that the point estimates are based on a small number of observations, even at the national level.

It is important to note that greater variability would likely be observed if this same exercise was performed on the data of a single institution; regardless, this analysis has given evidence that the results presented in this report are likely to be close to the unknown population parameters.

Table 21 Higher education student percentage positive ratings with 90 per cent confidence intervals

	Group/subgroup	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teachings
Stage of Studies	Commencing	82.2 (82.1, 82.3)	82.6 (82.5, 82.8)
	Later year**	76.4 (76.2, 76.6)	77.2 (77.0, 77.4)
Gender	Male	77.7 (77.5, 77.9)	78.3 (78.1, 78.5)
	Female	81.1 (81.0, 81.2)	81.7 (81.5, 81.8)
Indigenous	Indigenous	80.2 (79.2, 81.3)	82.5 (81.5, 83.5)
	Non-Indigenous	79.8 (79.7, 80.0)	80.4 (80.3, 80.5)
Home language	Home language – English	81.4 (81.2, 81.5)	81.8 (81.6, 81.9)
	Home language – Other	75.1 (74.9, 75.4)	76.2 (76.0, 76.5)
Disability	Disability reported	78.0 (77.6, 78.5)	80.0 (79.5, 80.5)
	No disability reported	80.0 (79.8, 80.1)	80.5 (80.3, 80.6)
Study mode***	Internal/Mixed Study mode	79.8 (79.7, 79.9)	80.4 (80.2, 80.5)
	External/Distance Study mode	80.8 (80.3, 81.2)	81.2 (80.7, 81.7)
Residence status	Domestic student	80.6 (80.5, 80.7)	81.0 (80.9, 81.1)
	International student	75.4 (75.0, 75.7)	76.8 (76.5, 77.2)
First in family status*	First in family	83.0 (82.8, 83.2)	83.5 (83.3, 83.7)
	Not first in family	82.4 (82.2, 82.6)	82.6 (82.4, 82.8)
	Total	79.9 (79.7, 80.0)	80.4 (80.3, 80.5)

* First in family status includes commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 22 Percentage positive ratings by higher education student study area with 90 per cent confidence intervals

Study area	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teaching
Science and mathematics	82.4 (82.1, 82.8)	84.1 (83.8, 84.4)
Computing and Information Systems	73.5 (72.8, 74.2)	72.2 (71.5, 72.9)
Engineering	74.9 (74.4, 75.4)	71.9 (71.4, 72.5)
Architecture and built environment	76.0 (75.2, 76.9)	75.0 (74.1, 75.9)
Agriculture and environmental studies	83.3 (82.5, 84.1)	84.0 (83.1, 84.8)
Health services and support	81.4 (81.0, 81.8)	82.3 (81.9, 82.7)
Medicine	81.6 (80.6, 82.6)	76.3 (75.3, 77.4)
Nursing	76.6 (76.2, 77.0)	77.8 (77.4, 78.3)
Pharmacy	79.1 (77.9, 80.4)	80.7 (79.5, 81.9)
Dentistry	74.8 (73.0, 76.7)	70.6 (68.6, 72.5)
Veterinary science	80.9 (79.2, 82.5)	82.1 (80.5, 83.7)
Rehabilitation	87.3 (86.6, 88.0)	88.4 (87.8, 89.1)
Teacher education	79.6 (79.2, 80.0)	79.9 (79.5, 80.3)
Business and management	77.4 (77.0, 77.7)	76.5 (76.2, 76.8)
Humanities, culture and social sciences	83.7 (83.3, 84.0)	86.2 (85.9, 86.4)
Social work	82.5 (81.8, 83.3)	84.1 (83.3, 84.8)
Psychology	84.2 (83.7, 84.7)	86.0 (85.6, 86.5)
Law and paralegal studies	80.8 (80.2, 81.4)	82.8 (82.2, 83.3)
Creative arts	80.4 (79.9, 80.9)	83.0 (82.5, 83.5)
Communications	80.6 (80.0, 81.2)	82.2 (81.5, 82.8)
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	82.3 (80.4, 84.3)	80.7 (78.7, 82.6)
Total	79.9 (79.7, 80.0)	80.4 (80.3, 80.5)

Table 23 Percentage positive ratings by university student subgroup with 90 per cent confidence intervals

	Group/subgroup	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teachings
Stage of Studies	Commencing	82.2 (82.1, 82.3)	82.6 (82.5, 82.7)
	Later year**	76.2 (76.0, 76.4)	76.9 (76.6, 77.1)
Gender	Male	77.7 (77.5, 77.9)	78.2 (77.9, 78.4)
	Female	81.1 (81.0, 81.2)	81.6 (81.5, 81.8)
Indigenous	Indigenous	80.2 (79.1, 81.2)	82.5 (81.5, 83.5)
	Non-Indigenous	79.9 (79.8, 80.0)	80.3 (80.2, 80.4)
Home language	English	81.4 (81.3, 81.5)	81.7 (81.5, 81.8)
	Other	75.1 (74.9, 75.4)	76.3 (76.0, 76.5)
Disability	Disability reported	77.9 (77.4, 78.4)	79.9 (79.4, 80.4)
	No disability reported	80.0 (79.9, 80.1)	80.4 (80.3, 80.5)
Study mode***	Internal/Mixed	79.8 (79.7, 79.9)	80.3 (80.2, 80.4)
	External/Distance	80.7 (80.2, 81.3)	81.1 (80.6, 81.6)
Residence status	Domestic student	80.5 (80.4, 80.7)	80.8 (80.7, 81.0)
	International student	75.5 (75.1, 75.9)	77.2 (76.8, 77.5)
First in family status*	First in family	83.0 (82.7, 83.2)	83.4 (83.2, 83.6)
	Not first in family	82.3 (82.1, 82.5)	82.5 (82.3, 82.7)
	Total	79.9 (79.8, 80.0)	80.4 (80.2, 80.5)

a) Results are presented as estimate (lower confidence limit, upper confidence limit).

* First in family status includes commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 24 Percentage positive ratings by university student study area with 90 per cent confidence intervals

Study area	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teaching
Science and mathematics	82.4 (82.1, 82.8)	84.1 (83.8, 84.5)
Computing and Information Systems	73.5 (72.8, 74.3)	72.2 (71.5, 73.0)
Engineering	74.9 (74.4, 75.4)	71.9 (71.3, 72.4)
Architecture and built environment	76.2 (75.3, 77.1)	75.3 (74.4, 76.2)
Agriculture and environmental studies	83.0 (82.2, 83.9)	83.6 (82.7, 84.4)
Health services and support	82.2 (81.8, 82.7)	82.6 (82.1, 83.0)
Medicine	81.6 (80.6, 82.6)	76.3 (75.3, 77.4)
Nursing	76.5 (76.0, 76.9)	77.6 (77.2, 78.1)
Pharmacy	79.1 (77.9, 80.4)	80.7 (79.5, 81.9)
Dentistry	74.8 (72.9, 76.6)	70.1 (68.1, 72.1)
Veterinary science	80.8 (79.1, 82.5)	82.3 (80.6, 83.9)
Rehabilitation	87.3 (86.6, 88.0)	88.4 (87.8, 89.1)
Teacher education	79.3 (78.9, 79.7)	79.6 (79.1, 80.0)
Business and management	77.7 (77.3, 78.0)	76.7 (76.3, 77.0)
Humanities, culture and social sciences	83.2 (82.9, 83.5)	85.7 (85.4, 86.0)
Social work	82.8 (82.0, 83.6)	84.2 (83.5, 85.0)
Psychology	84.2 (83.7, 84.7)	86.0 (85.5, 86.5)
Law and paralegal studies	80.8 (80.2, 81.3)	82.7 (82.2, 83.3)
Creative arts	80.1 (79.5, 80.7)	82.7 (82.1, 83.3)
Communications	80.6 (79.9, 81.3)	82.1 (81.4, 82.7)
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	84.9 (82.9, 86.9)	82.8 (80.7, 84.9)
Total	79.9 (79.7, 80.0)	80.4 (80.2, 80.5)

a) Results are presented as estimate (lower confidence limit, upper confidence limit).

Table 25 Percentage positive ratings by NUHEI student subgroup with 90 per cent confidence intervals

	Group/subgroup	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teaching
Stage of Studies	Commencing	82.5 (81.9, 83.2)	83.6 (82.9, 84.2)
	Later year**	77.8 (77.2, 78.3)	80.0 (79.5, 80.6)
Gender	Male	77.8 (77.1, 78.6)	79.7 (78.9, 80.4)
	Female	80.8 (80.2, 81.3)	82.5 (82.0, 83.0)
Indigenous	Indigenous	81.4 (75.9, 86.9)	82.1 (76.6, 87.7)
	Non-Indigenous	79.6 (79.2, 80.0)	81.4 (81.0, 81.8)
Home language	English	80.9 (80.5, 81.4)	83.2 (82.8, 83.7)
	Other	75.5 (74.5, 76.4)	75.6 (74.6, 76.5)
Disability	Disability reported	80.8 (78.8, 82.7)	81.5 (79.6, 83.4)
	No disability reported	79.5 (79.1, 80.0)	81.4 (80.9, 81.8)
Study mode***	Internal/Mixed	79.4 (79.0, 79.9)	81.3 (80.8, 81.7)
	External/Distance	81.0 (79.4, 82.5)	82.5 (81.0, 84.0)
Residence status	Domestic student	81.4 (80.9, 81.8)	83.6 (83.2, 84.1)
	International student	74.3 (73.3, 75.3)	74.6 (73.6, 75.6)
First in family status*	First in family	84.7 (83.6, 85.8)	86.4 (85.4, 87.4)
	Not first in family	87.3 (86.1, 88.5)	88.4 (87.2, 89.6)
	Total	79.6 (79.2, 80.0)	81.4 (81.0, 81.8)

a) Results are presented as estimate (lower confidence limit, upper confidence limit).

* First in family status includes commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 26 Percentage positive ratings by NUHEI student study area with 90 per cent confidence intervals

Study area	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teaching
Science and mathematics	82.1 (74.0, 90.1)	73.7 (64.2, 83.1)
Computing and Information Systems	73.8 (71.3, 76.2)	72.0 (69.4, 74.5)
Engineering	77.3 (73.5, 81.1)	75.3 (71.3, 79.2)
Architecture and built environment	72.7 (69.3, 76.0)	71.1 (67.7, 74.5)
Agriculture and environmental studies	88.4 (85.9, 90.9)	92.0 (89.9, 94.1)
Health services and support	76.8 (75.6, 77.9)	80.9 (79.8, 82.0)
Nursing	82.7 (80.5, 85.0)	85.7 (83.6, 87.8)
Veterinary science	77.8 (67.4, 88.1)	88.9 (81.1, 96.7)
Teacher education	83.3 (75.8, 90.9)	77.8 (69.4, 86.2)
Business and management	84.5 (83.1, 85.8)	85.8 (84.5, 87.1)
Humanities, culture and social sciences	74.8 (73.8, 75.7)	75.2 (74.3, 76.2)
Social work	90.0 (89.0, 90.9)	92.2 (91.4, 93.1)
Psychology	81.3 (79.4, 83.2)	83.3 (81.4, 85.1)
Law and paralegal studies	85.0 (81.7, 88.3)	86.6 (83.4, 89.7)
Creative arts	83.9 (78.5, 89.3)	88.2 (83.4, 92.9)
Communications	81.2 (80.2, 82.3)	83.9 (83.0, 84.9)
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	80.4 (78.1, 82.7)	83.1 (80.8, 85.3)
Total	72.3 (67.5, 77.0)	72.3 (67.5, 77.0)

a) Results are presented as estimate (lower confidence limit, upper confidence limit).

Appendix 2

Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ)

Table 27 2016 SEQ Item Summary: Skill Development items

Stem	Item	Response scale
To what extent has your <course> developed your:	a) critical thinking skills? b) ability to solve complex problems? c) ability to work with others? d) confidence to learn independently? e) written communication skills? f) spoken communication skills? g) knowledge of the field(s) you are studying? h) development of work-related knowledge and skills?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much / Not applicable

Table 28 2016 SEQ Item Summary: Learner Engagement items

Stem	Item	Response scale
At your institution during 2016, to what extent have you:	a) felt prepared for your study? b) had a sense of belonging to <institution>?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much / Not applicable
Thinking about your <course> in 2015, how frequently have you:	a) participated in discussions online or face-to-face? b) worked with other students as part of your study? c) interacted with students outside study requirements? d) interacted with students who are very different from you?	Never / Sometimes / Often / Very often
At your institution during 2016, to what extent have you:	a) been given opportunities to interact with local students?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much / Not applicable

Table 29 2016 SEQ Item Summary: Teaching Quality items

Stem	Item	Response scale
Thinking about your <course>	a) overall how would you rate the quality of your entire educational experience this year?	Poor / Fair / Good / Excellent
Thinking of this year, overall at <institution>	a) how would you rate the quality of the teaching you have experienced in your <course>?	Poor / Fair / Good / Excellent
During 2016, to what extent have the lecturers, tutors and demonstrators in your <course>:	a) engaged you actively in learning? b) demonstrated concern for student learning? c) provided clear explanations on coursework and assessment? d) stimulated you intellectually? e) commented on your work in ways that help you learn? f) seemed helpful and approachable? g) set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much
In 2016, to what extent has [your study/your <course>] been delivered in a way that is...	a) well structured and focused? b) relevant to your education as a whole	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much

Table 30 2016 SEQ Item Summary: Student Support items

Stem	Item	Response scale
At <institution> during 2016, to what extent have you:	a) received support from your institution to settle into study? b) experienced efficient enrolment and admissions processes? c) felt induction/orientation activities were relevant and helpful?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much
During 2016, to what extent have you found administrative staff or systems (e.g. online administrative services, frontline staff, enrolment systems) to be:	a) available? b) helpful?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much / Not applicable
During 2016, to what extent have you found careers advisors to be:	a) available? b) helpful?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much / Not applicable
During 2016, to what extent have you found academic or learning advisors to be:	a) available? b) helpful?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much
During 2016, to what extent have you found support services such as counsellors, financial/legal advisors and health services to be:	a) available? b) helpful?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much / Not applicable
During 2016, to what extent have you...	a) been offered support relevant to your circumstance b) received appropriate English language skill support?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much / Not applicable

Table 31 2016 SEQ Item Summary: Learning Resources items

Stem	Item	Response scale
Thinking of this year, overall how would you rate the following learning resources provided for your <course>?	a) Teaching spaces (e.g. lecture theatres, tutorial rooms, laboratories) b) Student spaces and common areas c) Online learning materials d) Computing/IT resources e) Assigned books, notes and resources f) Laboratory or studio equipment g) Library resources and facilities	Poor / Fair / Good / Excellent / Not applicable

Table 32 2016 SEQ Item Summary: Open-response items

Stem	Item	Response scale
What have been the best aspects of your <course>?		Open response
What aspects of your <course> most need improvement?		Open response

Table 33 2016 SEQ Item Summary: Other items

Stem	Item	Response scale
In what year did you first start your current <course>?		Before 2012/ 2012 / 2013 / 2014 / 2015/ 2016
When do you expect to complete your current <course>?		2016 / 2017 or later
Where has your study been mainly based in 2016?		On one campus / On two or more campuses / Mix of external, distance and on-campus / External/ Distance
Thinking about your <course>, how much study do you do online?		None / About a quarter / About half / All or nearly all
Which number between 0 and 100 represents your average grade so far in 2016?		No results / 0-49% / 50-59% / 60-69% / 70-79% / 80-89% / 90-100%
At <institution> during 2016, to what extent have...	a) Your living arrangements negatively affected your study? b) Your financial circumstances negatively affected your study? c) Paid work commitments negatively affected your study?	Not at all / Very little / Some / Quite a bit / Very much / Not applicable
During 2016, have you seriously considered leaving <institution>?		Yes, I have seriously considered leaving / No, I have not seriously considered leaving

Stem	Item	Response scale
<p>Please indicate your reasons for seriously considering leaving your current university in 2016. Select all that apply.</p>		<p>Academic exchange / Academic support / Administrative support / Boredom/lack of interest / Career prospects / Change of direction / Commuting difficulties / Difficulty paying fees / Difficulty with workload / Expectations not met / Family responsibilities / Financial difficulties / Gap year/deferral / Government assistance / Graduating / Health or stress / Institution reputation / Moving residence / Need a break / Need to do paid work / Other opportunities / Paid work responsibilities / Personal reasons / Quality concerns / Received other offer / Social reasons / Standards too high / Study/life balance / Travel or tourism / Other reasons</p>

Appendix 3

Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)

Table 34 CEQ items administered in the 2016 SES

Stem	Item ^a
Good Teaching Scale	The staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work.
	The teaching staff normally gave me helpful feedback on how I was going.
	The teaching staff of this course motivated me to do my best work.
	My lecturers were extremely good at explaining things.
	The teaching staff worked hard to make their subjects interesting.
	The staff made a real effort to understand difficulties I might be having with my work.
Generic Skills Scale	The course helped me develop my ability to work as a team member.
	The course sharpened my analytic skills.
	The course developed my problem-solving skills.
	The course improved my skills in written communication.
	As a result of my course, I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems.
	My course helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work.
Overall Satisfaction Item	Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this course.
Clear Goals and Standards	It was always easy to know the standard of work expected.
	I usually had a clear idea of where I was going and what was expected of me in this course.
	It was often hard to discover what was expected of me in this course.
	The staff made it clear right from the start what they expected from students.

a) R = Reverse coded for scoring purposes.

Response scale: Strongly disagree / Disagree / Neither agree nor disagree / Agree / Strongly agree

Appendix 4

Response rates by institution

University response rates

Table 35 SES response rates, 2014–2016 Universities

University	2014	2015	2016
Australian Catholic University	20.9	46.1	44.0
Bond University	42.8	46.9	54.5
Central Queensland University	38.6	47.7	55.9
Charles Darwin University	37.3	45.2	51.7
Charles Sturt University	35.4	39.4	49.1
Curtin University	28.1	31.4	42.1
Deakin University	30.1	31.2	45.0
Edith Cowan University	33.4	39.8	45.2
Federation University Australia	29.3	36.4	42.2
Flinders University	32.9	40.3	49.4
Griffith University	26.8	38.1	46.9
James Cook University	36.5	41.2	48.8
La Trobe University	26.7	40.2	44.6
Macquarie University	29.5	38.4	39.4
Monash University	36.9	44.7	53.3
Murdoch University	35.6	45.6	47.6
Queensland University of Technology	25.0	37.0	41.4
RMIT University	25.0	30.3	46.2
Southern Cross University	32.4	36.8	44.5
Swinburne University of Technology	22.6	34.3	44.8
The Australian National University	33.5	38.8	46.2

University	2014	2015	2016
The University of Adelaide	38.4	46.1	56.3
The University of Melbourne	29.6	43.4	52.3
The University of Notre Dame Australia	27.1	39.8	52.7
The University of Queensland	38.6	42.9	52.4
The University of Sydney	29.6	36.2	45.5
The University of Western Australia	30.8	37.4	48.1
University of Canberra	27.8	36.4	44.6
University of Divinity	50.4	55.2	60.8
University of New England	37.0	41.2	46.0
University of New South Wales	27.7	37.5	42.4
University of Newcastle	30.3	37.8	40.2
University of South Australia	30.8	37.8	44.4
University of Southern Queensland	35.0	44.3	53.0
University of Tasmania	35.7	38.8	44.8
University of Technology, Sydney	25.7	31.0	40.5
University of Wollongong	29.3	36.6	42.5
University of the Sunshine Coast	37.3	48.1	53.5
Victoria University	26.8	27.0	35.1
Western Sydney University	24.2	29.1	42.2
Total	30.1	37.6	45.6

University institutional comparisons

Percentage positive results on the entire educational experience item is given in Figure 6, for students from different university providers. This demonstrates the extent to which the SES provides differentiation in institution level results for universities. While this analysis is useful in terms of measuring differences in quality between universities in the Australian higher education sector, it is important to note that this analysis does not account for differences in course offerings between providers and the composition of the student populations. To avoid creating a simplistic “league table” of higher education institutions, university names have been replaced with randomly-assigned numerical identifiers in Figure 6. Note that these unique identifiers do not persist between editions of the UES and SES National reports.

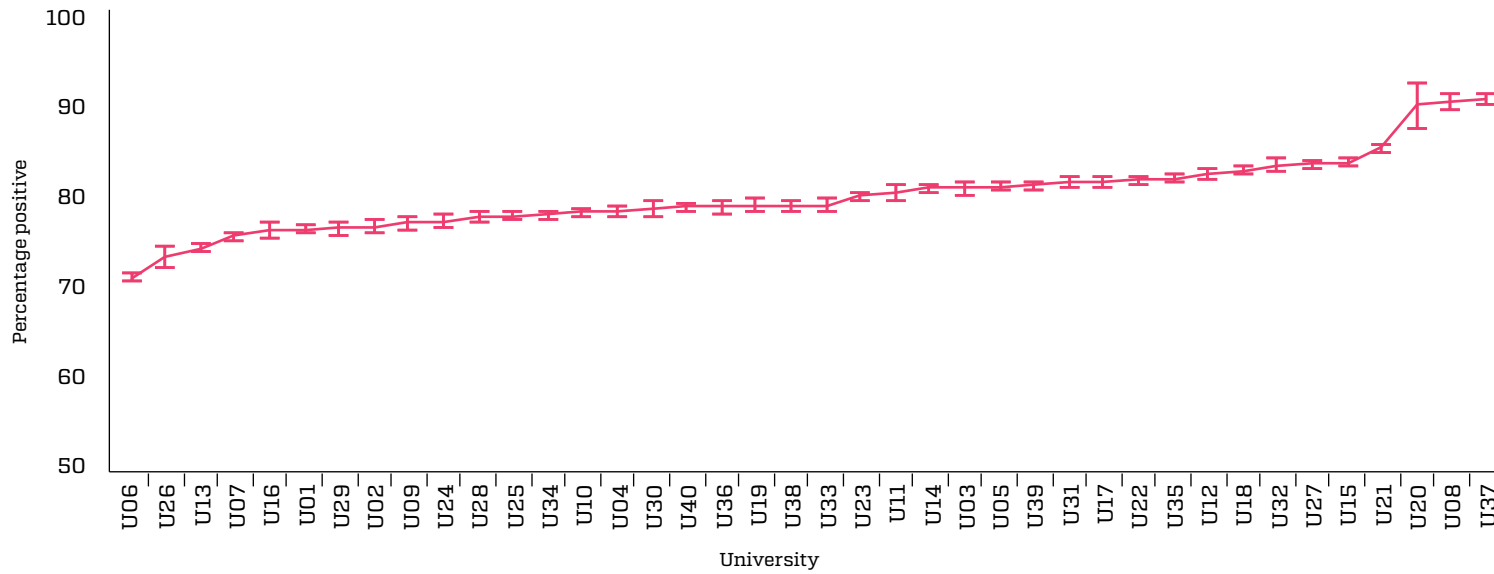
Due to the relatively small number of students at the institutional level, 90 per cent confidence intervals have been included in Figure 6. A wider confidence interval implies that there

is more variability in results. If the confidence intervals for two institutions overlap, this suggests that there may be no statistically significant difference between the results. If the confidence intervals do not overlap, then any difference between results is likely to be statistically significant.

When institutional percentage positive results are ordered for the quality of entire educational experience item, there is a fairly even, but modest, increase from the bottom of the distribution to near the top, with a few universities at the top of the distribution notably higher than the majority of institutions.

Looking at Figure 6, the majority of universities in the lower third of the distribution are significantly different to those in the higher third of the distribution, when confidence intervals are considered. While there do not appear to be many significant differences between providers in the middle of the distribution, there are institutions at both ends of the distribution that are significantly different to those in the middle.

Figure 6 2016 SES Percentage positive results on the quality of entire educational experience for university students



NUHEI Response Rates

Table 36 SES response rates, 2014–2016 NUHEI

Institution	2014	2015	2016
Academy of Design Australia	–	60.0	52.1
Academy of Information Technology	–	50.0	72.7
Adelaide Central School of Art	–	–	75.6
Adelaide College of Divinity	–	62.0	62.2
Alphacrucis College	60.5	48.6	47.3
Asia Pacific International College	–	–	63.6
Australian Academy of Music and Performing Arts	–	–	48.8
Australian College of Applied Psychology (Navitas Institute)	–	41.6	44.2
Australian College of Christian Studies	66.7	57.1	32.3
Australian College of Physical Education	–	29.2	40.3
Australian College of Theology	–	43.2	46.4
Australian Institute of Music	–	38.6	40.5
Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors	–	47.7	50.4
Australian Institute of Professional Education	–	100.0	15.5
Australian School of Management	–	31.3	43.9
Avondale College of Higher Education	48.5	44.1	54.2
Box Hill Institute	–	–	48.3
Cambridge International College	–	11.1	31.1
Campion College Australia	–	–	79.7
Central Institute of Technology	–	–	53.7
Chisholm Institute of TAFE	–	46.5	45.0

Institution	2014	2015	2016
Christian Heritage College	62.5	47.8	59.6
College of the Arts	–	–	59.9
Eastern College Australia	63.4	56.5	61.1
Endeavour College	–	44.6	45.1
Excelsia College	–	44.7	66.2
Holmes Institute	–	18.6	30.9
Holmesglen Institute	56.4	45.5	54.1
International College of Management, Sydney	–	–	42.7
Jazz Music Institute	–	43.5	44.4
Kaplan Business School	–	32.7	47.8
Kaplan Higher Education Pty Ltd trading as Murdoch Institute of Technology	–	71.7	69.7
Macleay College	–	–	64.7
Marcus Oldham College	64.1	69.6	73.9
Melbourne Institute of Technology	–	–	51.2
Melbourne Polytechnic	41.4	31.8	44.0
Montessori World Education Institute (Australia)	–	–	69.1
National Art School	–	56.8	59.2
Paramount College of Natural Medicine	–	45.5	64.9
Photography Studies College (Melbourne)	–	66.1	62.7
Raffles College of Design and Commerce	–	–	63.5
SAE Institute and Qantm College	–	42.6	40.8

Institution	2014	2015	2016
South Metropolitan TAFE	–	–	51.9
Study Group Australia	–	–	38.1
Sydney College of Divinity	–	–	49.0
Tabor College of Higher Education	64.3	55.4	63.0
TAFE NSW	–	–	55.3
TAFE Queensland	–	32.2	58.8
TAFE SA	–	37.1	55.3
Think Education Group	–	–	52.7
Torrens University Australia	–	–	39.6
Universal Business School Sydney	–	–	46.3
UOW College	–	29.7	43.4
West Coast Institute of Training	–	–	55.6
William Angliss Institute	–	–	45.5
Total	47.9	39.2	46.2

NUHEI Institutional comparisons

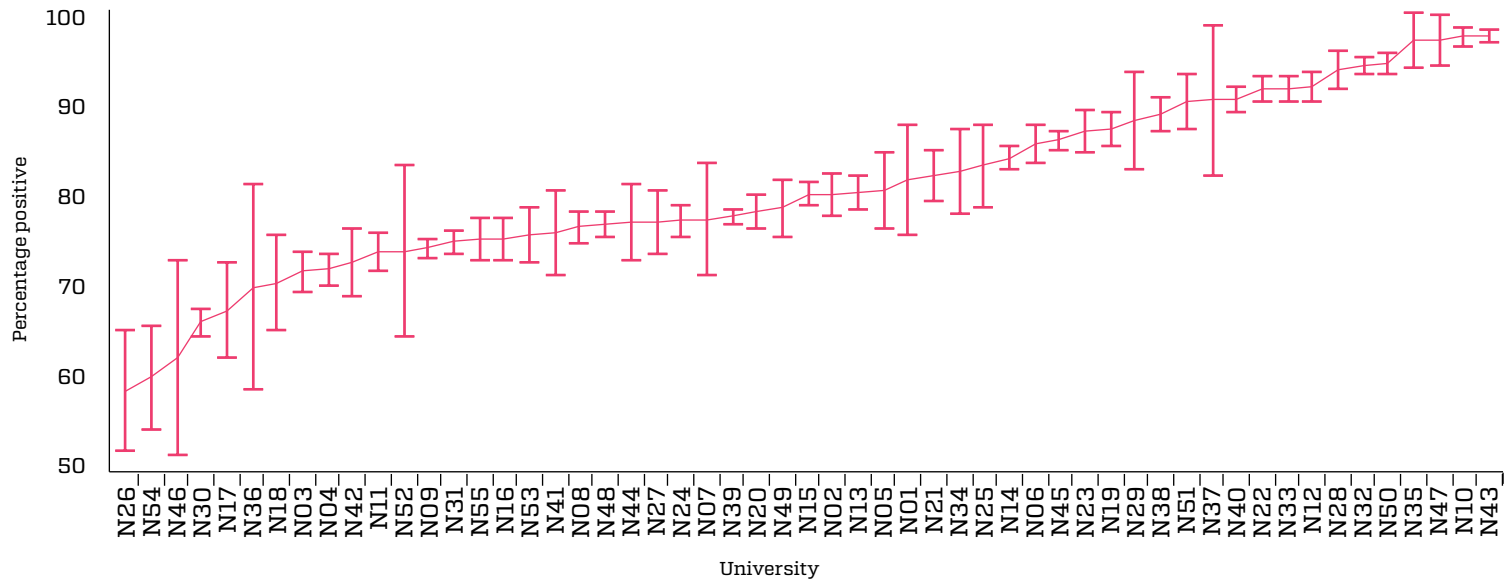
Figure 7 contains the student ratings of the quality of the entire educational experience item for students from non-university higher education institutions. This demonstrates the extent to which the SES provides differentiation in institution level results for NUHEIs. As is the case in relation to universities, the data presented in Figure 7 does not take differences in course offerings between institutions and the composition of the student populations into account. Institutional names have been replaced with randomly-assigned numerical identifiers in Figure 7 to avoid the creation of rankings. Note that these unique identifiers do not persist between editions of the UES and SES National reports.

Ninety per cent confidence intervals have been included in Figure 7 and generally wider confidence intervals imply that there is more variability in results. If the confidence intervals for two institutions overlap, this suggests that there may be no statistically significant difference between the results. If the confidence intervals do not overlap, then any difference between results is likely to be statistically significant.

From Figure 7 it is evident that when institutions are ordered for key items, there is a substantial increase from the bottom of the distribution to near the top, with a few institutions notably lower than the majority of institutions. Looking at Figure 7, which reports student ratings of the quality of the entire educational experience item, the majority of institutions in the lower third of the distribution are significantly different to those in the higher third of the distribution, when confidence intervals are considered.

Work is currently underway to work with NUEHIs in order to improve response rates in general and across relevant strata to narrow confidence intervals as much as possible, given the often small size of many providers.

Figure 7 2016 SES: Percentage of positive results on the quality of entire educational experience for non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs)



Appendix 5

Production of scores

A series of steps are taken to produce the focus area percentage positive results used in this report. A selection of the SPSS syntax used to produce these scores is presented below.

To begin, all SEQ items are rescaled into the conventional reporting metric. Four-point scales are recoded onto a scale that runs from 0, 33.3, 66.6 and 100, and five-point scales recoded onto a scale that runs from 0, 25, 50, 75 and 100. These rescaled items are denoted with an “r” suffix. The SPSS syntax to recode the SEQ items to the conventional reporting metric is shown in Figure 8.

Scores for each focus area are then computed as the mean of the constituent item scores. A focus area score is only computed for respondents who have a valid item score for at least six skill development items, five learner engagement items, eight teaching quality items, six student support items and five learning resources items respectively. The SPSS syntax used to generate focus area average scores is shown in Figure 9. The recoded item scores are not retained in the analysis file.

Because the reporting metric for the 2016 SES is percentage of students that rated their experience positively (See Appendix 1.1.2 Interpreting the results), calculated variables must be created for each focus area. The percentage of students that rated their experience positively reflects the percentage of students who achieve a threshold focus area score of 55 or greater. At the individual response level, a positive response is represented by a binary variable taking the value of one if the student gives a positive response to a particular facet of their higher education experience and zero otherwise. The SPSS syntax used to generate these variables is presented in Figure 10.

At the item level, a positive rating reflects a response in the top two categories of both the four- and five-point response scales. As with the focus area calculated variables discussed previously, a positive rating with a particular SEQ item is represented by a binary variable taking the value of one if the student provides a positive response and zero otherwise. An excerpt of the SPSS syntax used to generate these item variables is presented in Figure 11.

Figure 8 SPSS syntax to recode SEQ items into the conventional reporting metric

```
RECODE qlovledu (1=0) (2=33.3) (3=66.6) (4=100)
(ELSE=SYSMIS) INTO qlovledur.

RECODE partidiscus (1=0) (2=33.3) (3=66.6) (4=100)
(ELSE=SYSMIS) INTO partidiscusr.

...

RECODE qllibres (1=0) (2=33.3) (3=66.6) (4=100)
(ELSE=SYSMIS) INTO qllibresr.

RECODE supsettle (1=0) (2=25) (3=50) (4=75) (5=100) (ELSE
= SYSMIS) INTO supsettler.

RECODE effenrolm (1=0) (2=25) (3=50) (4=75) (5=100) (ELSE
= SYSMIS) INTO effenrolmr.

...

RECODE englang (1=0) (2=25) (3=50) (4=75) (5=100) (ELSE =
SYSMIS) INTO englangr.
```

Figure 9 SPSS syntax used to compute SES focus area scores

```
COMPUTE DEVELOPMENT=MEAN.6(expthinkr, expprbslvr,
expwrkothr, expconfindr, expwritingr,
expspeakr, expknowlr, expwrkskillr).

COMPUTE ENGAGEMENT=MEAN.5(opplochr, sensebelongr,
feelpreparedr, partidiscusr, workothersr,
interactothr, interactdiff).

COMPUTE TEACHING=MEAN.8(qlteachr, qlovledur,
stdstrucr, stdreleivr, tchactivngr, tchconlrrr,
tchclexpecr, tchstimintr, tchfeedbckr, tchhelpappr,
tchasschlgr).

COMPUTE SUPPORT=MEAN.6(englangr, offsupr, indorienr,
supsettler, admavailr, admhelpr, caravailr, carhelpr,
acdavailr, acdhelpr, supavailr, suphelpr, effenrolmr).

COMPUTE RESOURCES=MEAN.5(qltchspcr, qlstdspcr,
qlonlmatr, qlcompitr, qltxtbookr, qlquipr, qllibresr).
```

Figure 10 SPSS syntax used to compute SES focus area scores

```
RECODE DEVELOPMENT (55 THRU 100=1)
(MISSING=SYSMIS) (ELSE=0) INTO DEVELOPMENT_SAT.

RECODE ENGAGEMENT (55 THRU 100=1)
(MISSING=SYSMIS) (ELSE=0) INTO ENGAGEMENT_SAT.

RECODE TEACHING (55 THRU 100=1) (MISSING=SYSMIS)
(ELSE=0) INTO TEACHING_SAT.

RECODE SUPPORT (55 THRU 100=1) (MISSING=SYSMIS)
(ELSE=0) INTO SUPPORT_SAT.

RECODE RESOURCES (55 THRU 100=1) (MISSING=SYSMIS)
(ELSE=0) INTO RESOURCES_SAT.
```

Figure 11 SPSS syntax used to compute item variables

```
RECODE qlovledu (1=0) (2=0) (3=1) (4=1) (ELSE=SYSMIS)
INTO qlovledu_sat.

RECODE partidiscus (1=0) (2=0) (3=1) (4=1) (ELSE=SYSMIS)
INTO partidiscus_sat.

RECODE qllibres (1=0) (2=0) (3=1) (4=1) (ELSE=SYSMIS)
INTO qllibres_sat.

RECODE supsettle (1=0) (2=0) (3=0) (4=1) (5=1)
(ELSE=SYSMIS) INTO supsettle_sat.

RECODE effenrolm (1=0) (2=0) (3=0) (4=1) (5=1)
(ELSE=SYSMIS) INTO effenrolm_sat.

RECODE englang (1=0) (2=0) (3=0) (4=1) (5=1)
(ELSE=SYSMIS) INTO englang_sat.
```

Appendix 6

Construction of confidence intervals

The 90 per cent confidence intervals presented in this report were calculated using the Finite Population Correction (FPC) to account for the relatively large size of the sample relative to the in-scope population. The FPC is generally used when the sampling fraction exceeds 5 per cent. In order to calculate the standard errors for the survey estimates, no non-response bias was assumed and thus simple random sample survey errors were used. This approach is similar to the one employed to construct confidence intervals for the UES estimates presented on the MyUniversity website.

Because percentage agreement scores are reported for the 2016 SES, the formula for the confidence interval of a proportion is used.

Where \hat{p} is the estimated proportion of positive responses (i.e. the top two response categories), N is the size of the population in the relevant subgroup, n is the number of valid responses in the relevant subgroup, FPC is the Finite Population Correction and $SE(\hat{p})$ is the standard error.

The 90 per cent confidence interval of each estimated proportion is then calculated as the proportion plus or minus its 90 per cent confidence interval bound.

The use of simple random sample survey errors assumes a simple random sample at the national level of estimation. Because the SES was conducted using stratified sampling at the institution by subject area level (see Appendix 1.1.5 Approach to sampling) standard errors calculated at the national level will be larger. As such, weighted stratified estimates would be more efficient and potentially more representative than those presented in this report. The confidence intervals presented in Table 21 to Table 26 are conservative and should be treated as indicative only.

Figure 12 Formula for the confidence interval of a proportion

$$90\% \text{ CI bound } (\hat{p}) = 1.645 \times FPC \times SE(\hat{p}) = 1.645 \times \sqrt{\frac{N-n}{N-1}} \times \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}}$$

Appendix 7

Study Area Definitions

Table 37 21 and 45 Study Areas concordance with ASCED field of education

Study Area (21)		Study Area (45)		ASCED Field of Education
0	Non-award	0	Non-award	000000
1	Science and mathematics	1	Natural & Physical Sciences	010000, 010300, 010301, 010303, 010500, 010501, 010503, 010599, 010700, 010701, 010703, 010705, 010707, 010709, 010711, 010713, 010799, 019900, 019999
		2	Mathematics	010100, 010101, 010103, 010199
		3	Biological Sciences	010900, 010901, 010903, 010905, 010907, 010909, 010911, 010913, 010915, 010999
		4	Medical Science & Technology	019901, 019903, 019905, 019907, 019909
2	Computing & Information Systems	5	Computing & Information Systems	020000, 020100, 020101, 020103, 020105, 020107, 020109, 020111, 020113, 020115, 020117, 020119, 020199, 020300, 020301, 020303, 020305, 020307, 020399, 029900, 029901, 029999
3	Engineering	6	Engineering – Other	030000, 030100, 030101, 030103, 030105, 030107, 030109, 030111, 030113, 030115, 030117, 030199, 030500, 030501, 030503, 030505, 030507, 030509, 030511, 030513, 030515, 030599, 031100, 031101, 031103, 031199, 031700, 031701, 031703, 031705, 031799, 039900, 039901, 039903, 039905, 039907, 039909, 039999
		7	Engineering – Process & Resources	030300, 030301, 030303, 030305, 030307, 030399
		8	Engineering – Mechanical	030700, 030701, 030703, 030705, 030707, 030709, 030711, 030713, 030715, 030717, 030799
		9	Engineering – Civil	030900, 030901, 030903, 030905, 030907, 030909, 030911, 030913, 030999
		10	Engineering – Electrical & Electronic	031300, 031301, 031303, 031305, 031307, 031309, 031311, 031313, 031315, 031317, 031399
		11	Engineering – Aerospace	031500, 031501, 031503, 031505, 031507, 031599

Study Area (21)		Study Area (45)		ASCED Field of Education
4	Architecture and built environment	12	Architecture & Urban Environments	040000, 040100, 040101, 040103, 040105, 040107, 040199
		13	Building & Construction	040300, 040301, 040303, 040305, 040307, 040309, 040311, 040313, 040315, 040317, 040319, 040321, 040323, 040325, 040327, 040329, 040399
5	Agriculture and environmental studies	12	Architecture & Urban Environments	040000, 040100, 040101, 040103, 040105, 040107, 040199
		13	Building & Construction	040300, 040301, 040303, 040305, 040307, 040309, 040311, 040313, 040315, 040317, 040319, 040321, 040323, 040325, 040327, 040329, 040399
6	Health services and support	16	Health Services & Support	060000, 060900, 060901, 060903, 060999, 061500, 061501, 061700, 061705, 061707, 061709, 061711, 061713, 061799, 061900, 061901, 061903, 061905, 061999, 069900, 069901, 069903, 069905, 069907, 069999
		17	Public Health	061300, 061301, 061303, 061305, 061307, 061309, 061311, 061399
7	Medicine	18	Medicine	060100, 060101, 060103, 060105, 060107, 060109, 060111, 060113, 060115, 060117, 060119, 060199
8	Nursing	19	Nursing	060300, 060301, 060303, 060305, 060307, 060309, 060311, 060313, 060315, 060399
9	Pharmacy	20	Pharmacy	060500, 060501
10	Dentistry	21	Dentistry	060700, 060701, 060703, 060705, 060799
11	Veterinary science	22	Veterinary Science	061100, 061101, 061103, 061199
12	Rehabilitation	23	Physiotherapy	061701
		24	Occupational Therapy	061703
13	Teacher education	25	Teacher Education – Other	070000, 070100, 070107, 070109, 070111, 070113, 070115, 070117, 070199, 070300, 070301, 070303, 079900, 079999
		26	Teacher Education – Early Childhood	070101
		27	Teacher Education – Primary & Secondary	070103, 070105

Study Area (21)		Study Area (45)		ASCED Field of Education
14	Business and management	28	Accounting	080100, 080101
		29	Business Management	080300, 080301, 080303, 080305, 080307, 080309, 080311, 080313, 080315, 080317, 080319, 080321, 080323, 080399
		30	Sales & Marketing	080500, 080501, 080503, 080505, 080507, 080509, 080599
		31	Management & Commerce – Other	080000, 080900, 080901, 080903, 080905, 080999, 089900, 089901, 089903, 089999
		32	Banking & Finance	081100, 081101, 081103, 081105, 081199
		40	Economics	091900, 091901, 091903
15	Humanities, culture and social sciences	33	Political Science	090100, 090101, 090103
		34	Humanities inc History & Geography	090000, 090300, 090301, 090303, 090305, 090307, 090309, 090311, 090313, 090399, 091300, 091301, 091303, 091700, 091701, 091703, 099900, 099901, 099903, 099905, 099999
		35	Language & Literature	091500, 091501, 091503, 091505, 091507, 091509, 091511, 091513, 091515, 091517, 091519, 091521, 091523, 091599
16	Social work	36	Social Work	090500, 090501, 090503, 090505, 090507, 090509, 090511, 090513, 090515, 090599
17	Psychology	37	Psychology	090700, 090701, 090799
18	Law and paralegal studies	38	Law	090900, 090901, 090903, 090905, 090907, 090909, 090911, 090913, 090999
		39	Justice Studies & Policing	091100, 091101, 091103, 091105, 091199
19	Creative arts	42	Art & Design	100000, 100300, 100301, 100303, 100305, 100307, 100309, 100399, 100500, 100501, 100503, 100505, 100599, 109900, 109999
		43	Music & Performing Arts	100100, 100101, 100103, 100105, 100199
20	Communications	44	Communication, Media & Journalism	100700, 100701, 100703, 100705, 100707, 100799
21	Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	41	Sport & Recreation	092100, 092101, 092103, 092199

Note: SES targets for collection are based on 45 study areas as above. The QILT Website and this report use 21 study areas as the basis of analysis.

Field of Education listings are available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics web site (ASCED Field of Education Broad, Narrow and Detailed fields).

Appendix 8 Additional Tables

8.1 Results for individual questionnaire items (Higher Education)

The tables below show the percentage scores for the underlying items for each focus area.

In relation to the underlying items for the skills development items, results have remained relatively unchanged between 2015 and 2016.

Between the items, the development of spoken communication skills is relatively low for commencing students (49 in 2015 and 52 per cent in 2016), and improves by 10 and 11 percentage points for later year students, which is encouraging. However this is the lowest rated item in this focus area overall and for later year students. Work related knowledge and skills also attracted relatively low overall

scores at 63 per cent for both 2015 and 2016. Notably, later year students do not report an increase in work related knowledge and skills over the course of their higher education qualification, whereas all other skillsets show increases of between 2 and 11 percentage points between commencing and later years.

As was the case in the Skills Development focus area, results for the underlying items in the Learner Engagement focus area remained remarkably consistent from 2015 to 2016. A slight increase was observed for commencing students for participation in online or face to face discussions and working with other students as part of their study, of 3 and 2 percentage points respectively.

Table 38 **Percentage positive scores for Skills Development items, by stage of studies, 2015 and 2016**

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Developed critical and analytical thinking	68	73	70	68	73	70
Developed ability to solve complex problems	58	66	61	59	66	62
Developed ability to work effectively with others	61	67	63	62	68	65
Developed confidence to learn independently	71	77	73	71	77	73
Developed written communication skills	59	70	63	60	70	64
Developed spoken communication skills	49	60	53	52	62	56
Developed knowledge of field studying	78	80	79	77	79	78
Developed work-related knowledge and skills	63	63	63	63	63	63

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 39 Percentage positive scores for Learner Engagement items, by stage of studies, 2015 and 2016

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Felt prepared for your study	65	70	67	66	69	67
Had a sense of belonging to your university	54	50	53	54	51	53
Participated in discussions online or face-to-face	55	60	57	58	63	60
Worked with other students as part of your study	63	68	65	65	70	67
Interacted with students outside study requirements	46	49	47	45	47	46
Interacted with students who are very different from you	51	50	51	53	52	52
Been given opportunities to interact with local students	57	56	57	58	57	58

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

In general, items relating to interaction with other students outside study or who are very different from themselves attracted the lowest scores in this focus area, of between 45 and 53 per cent respectively, and remained consistent between commencing and later year respondents in 2016. However, as mentioned previously working with other students as part of their study, attracted higher overall scores of 65 and 67 per cent in 2015 and 2016 respectively, which is an area which institutions arguably are better able to influence. This item also increased from commencing to later year by 5 percentage points in both 2015 and 2016, as did students reporting participation in online or face to face discussions (3 percentage points).

The highest scoring item in the Learner Engagement focus area indicated that 67 per cent of respondents felt prepared for their study. However, this implies that one third of students did not feel prepared for their study, and while this score increased somewhat for later year students, this increase it is only by 5 and 3 percentage points in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

Student ratings of the quality of teaching and the quality of the entire educational experience have remained consistently high at around 80 per cent. However, commencing students are more likely to rate these items positively, with a drop of 6 percentage points from commencing to later year ratings for both items in both 2015 and 2016. The score for study being well structured and focused likewise decreased by 8 and 7 percentage points between commencing and later year students in 2015 and 2016 respectively. Across 2015 and 2016 we also observe a decrease in 4 percentage points for the relevance to education as a whole, active learning, clear explanations on coursework and assessment, and challenging assessment tasks between commencing and later year students.

The item related to teachers commenting on work in ways that help students to learn continues to have the lowest overall rating for this focus area, although scores increased from 52 per cent in 2015 to 54 per cent in 2016, with no difference between commencing and later year respondents.

In terms of student support, the items in this focus area also exhibit remarkable consistency from 2015 to 2016 with most items increasing by 1 or 2 percentage points. Efficient enrolment and admissions processes had the highest score in this group with a slight increase from 71 to 72 per cent from 2015 to 2016. Item scores which decreased over this time were around the “helpfulness” of support services, specifically whether students were offered relevant support to their circumstances which decreased by 3 percentage points overall.

Many item scores decreased between commencing to later year participants, however some of these such as induction/orientation activities and support to settle into study, which have quite large differences of 7-9 percentage points, are unsurprising as these activities are most often targeted to commencing students. However many other support services such as academic support,

careers advisors etc. are less focussed around transition into higher education yet still show decreases between commencing and later year students of 4 to 5 percentage points.

Student ratings of learning resources generally remained consistently high between 2015 and 2016, with the lowest scoring item relating to the quality of student spaces and common areas (78%) In general lower figures were observed for NUHEIs, particularly in relation to the quality of laboratory or studio equipment and the quality of student spaces and common areas.

Again, the gaps between the ratings of commencing and later year students is quite pronounced with differences ranging from 5 to 9 percentage points. It is unclear whether these differences relate to differences in commencing and later year student expectations relating to learning resources, or the actual quality of these resources.

...teachers commenting on work in ways that help students to learn continues to have the lowest overall rating for (the Teaching Quality) focus area...

Table 40 Percentage positive scores for Teaching Quality items, by stage of studies, 2015 and 2016

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Study well structured and focused	71	63	68	70	63	67
Study relevant to education as a whole	74	70	72	74	70	72
Teachers engaged you actively in learning	67	65	66	68	64	66
Teachers demonstrated concern for student learning	62	59	61	62	59	61
Teachers provided clear explanations on coursework and assessment	68	64	66	68	64	66
Teachers stimulated you intellectually	70	68	69	70	67	69
Teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn	52	52	52	54	54	54
Teachers seemed helpful and approachable	72	70	71	72	70	71
Teachers set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn	79	75	77	79	75	77
Quality of teaching	83	77	81	83	77	80
Quality of entire educational experience	82	76	80	82	76	80

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 41 Percentage positive rating for Student Support items, by stage of studies, 2015 and 2016

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Experienced efficient enrolment and admissions processes	73	69	71	73	70	72
Induction/orientation activities relevant and helpful	60	52	57	61	54	58
Received support from university to settle into study	62	52	58	63	54	60
Administrative staff or systems: available	65	59	62	64	59	62
Administrative staff or systems: helpful	61	55	59	61	56	59
Careers advisors: available	50	46	48	52	48	50
Careers advisors: helpful	50	45	48	51	47	49
Academic or learning advisors: available	63	58	61	63	59	62
Academic or learning advisors: helpful	65	61	63	65	61	63
Support services: available	55	51	53	54	51	53
Support services: helpful	55	52	54	54	52	53
Offered support relevant to circumstances	50	44	47	46	41	44
Received appropriate English language skill support	41	35	39	44	39	42

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 42 Percentage positive rating for Learning Resources items, by stage of studies, 2015 and 2016

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Quality of teaching spaces	89	82	86	89	83	87
Quality of student spaces and common areas	81	73	78	82	73	78
Quality of online learning materials	88	83	86	88	83	86
Quality of computing/IT resources	85	79	83	84	79	82
Quality of assigned books, notes and resources	83	77	81	82	77	80
Quality of laboratory or studio equipment	87	79	84	85	78	82
Quality of library resources and facilities	90	86	88	89	84	87

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

In general lower figures were observed for NUHEIs (in the Learning Resources focus area), particularly in relation to the quality of laboratory or studio equipment and the quality of student spaces and common areas

8.2 The university student experience

Table 43 **The student experience, by demographic and contextual group, university students, 2016**
(% positive rating)

	Group/subgroup	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Stage of Studies	Commencing	80	61	83	75	88	82
	Later Years**	84	64	78	67	82	76
Gender	Male	79	62	79	70	85	78
	Female	83	62	82	72	86	81
Age	under 25	81	65	81	71	86	80
	25 to 29	81	54	79	71	83	77
	30 to 39	80	47	82	74	85	79
	40 and over	80	43	84	77	86	82
Indigenous	Indigenous	81	57	81	76	86	80
	Non-Indigenous	81	62	81	71	86	80
Home language	English	82	63	82	72	86	81
	Other	79	60	77	69	85	75
Disability	Disability reported	78	57	80	74	82	78
	No disability reported	81	62	81	71	86	80
Study mode***	Internal/Mixed	81	65	81	71	86	80
	External	78	26	82	76	83	81
Residence status	Domestic student	82	63	82	72	86	81
	International student	79	58	78	70	86	76

	Group/subgroup	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
First in family status*	First in family	80	60	84	76	89	83
	Not first in family	79	63	84	74	88	82
Previous higher education experience*	Previous experience – current institution	81	60	83	73	87	82
	Previous experience – another institution	79	55	84	76	87	82
	New to higher education	80	63	83	75	89	82
Total		81	62	81	72	86	80

* Previous higher education experience and First in family status include commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 44 The student experience, by study area, university students, 2016 (% positive rating)

Study area	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Science and mathematics	81	65	84	73	89	82
Computing and Information Systems	74	59	76	69	85	74
Engineering	78	67	75	68	84	75
Architecture and built environment	80	69	79	67	77	76
Agriculture and environmental studies	82	65	84	72	87	83
Health services and support	82	64	83	73	88	82
Medicine	90	83	80	75	80	82
Nursing	85	61	78	73	86	76
Pharmacy	84	66	82	74	85	79
Dentistry	87	68	75	70	81	75
Veterinary science	84	73	84	70	87	81
Rehabilitation	89	75	89	78	89	87
Teacher education	83	60	80	72	85	79
Business and management	77	59	77	69	85	78
Humanities, culture and social sciences	81	58	85	71	85	83
Social work	86	56	85	75	85	83
Psychology	82	54	86	76	88	84
Law and paralegal studies	84	58	83	70	84	81
Creative arts	81	68	84	71	83	80
Communications	82	67	83	70	87	81
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and Recreation	86	69	84	75	92	85
Total	81	62	81	72	86	80

Table 45 **Percentage positive rating for Skills Development items, by stage of studies, university students, 2015 and 2016**

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Developed critical and analytical thinking	68	73	70	68	73	70
Developed ability to solve complex problems	58	66	61	59	66	62
Developed ability to work effectively with others	60	67	63	62	68	65
Developed confidence to learn independently	71	77	73	71	77	73
Developed written communication skills	59	70	63	60	70	64
Developed spoken communication skills	49	60	53	52	62	55
Developed knowledge of field studying	78	79	79	77	79	78
Developed work-related knowledge and skills	63	63	63	63	62	63

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 46 **Percentage positive rating for Learner Engagement items, by stage of studies, university students, 2015 and 2016**

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Felt prepared for your study	65	69	66	66	69	67
Had a sense of belonging to your university	54	50	52	54	50	52
Participated in discussions online or face-to-face	55	60	57	58	63	60
Worked with other students as part of your study	63	69	65	66	70	67
Interacted with students outside study requirements	46	49	47	45	48	46
Interacted with students who are very different from you	51	50	50	52	52	52
Been given opportunities to interact with local students	57	57	57	58	58	58

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 47 **Percentage positive rating for Teaching Quality items, by stage of studies, university students, 2015 and 2016**

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Study well structured and focused	71	63	68	70	63	67
Study relevant to education as a whole	74	70	72	74	69	72
Teachers engaged you actively in learning	67	64	66	68	63	66
Teachers demonstrated concern for student learning	62	58	60	61	58	60
Teachers provided clear explanations on coursework and assessment	68	63	66	68	63	66
Teachers stimulated you intellectually	70	67	69	69	67	68
Teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn	51	51	51	53	53	53
Teachers seemed helpful and approachable	72	69	71	72	69	71
Teachers set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn	79	75	77	79	74	77
Quality of teaching	83	77	81	83	77	80
Quality of entire educational experience	82	76	80	82	76	80

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 48 Percentage positive rating for Student Support items, by stage of studies, university students, 2015 and 2016

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Experienced efficient enrolment and admissions processes	72	69	71	73	70	72
Induction/orientation activities relevant and helpful	60	51	57	60	53	58
Received support from university to settle into study	62	51	58	63	53	59
Administrative staff or systems: available	64	58	62	64	58	62
Administrative staff or systems: helpful	61	55	59	61	55	59
Careers advisors: available	50	45	48	51	47	50
Careers advisors: helpful	50	44	47	50	46	49
Academic or learning advisors: available	63	58	61	63	58	61
Academic or learning advisors: helpful	65	60	63	65	60	63
Support services: available	55	52	54	54	51	53
Support services: helpful	55	53	54	54	52	53
Offered support relevant to circumstances	49	43	47	46	40	44
Received appropriate English language skill support	41	34	38	43	37	41

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 49 Percentage positive rating for Learning Resources items, by stage of studies, university students, 2015 and 2016

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Quality of teaching spaces	89	83	87	89	84	87
Quality of student spaces and common areas	82	74	79	82	74	79
Quality of online learning materials	88	84	87	88	84	86
Quality of computing/IT resources	85	80	84	85	80	83
Quality of assigned books, notes and resources	83	78	81	82	78	80
Quality of laboratory or studio equipment	87	80	84	86	80	83
Quality of library resources and facilities	90	87	89	89	86	88

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Figure 13 Percentage of university students considering early departure by average grades to date, 2016

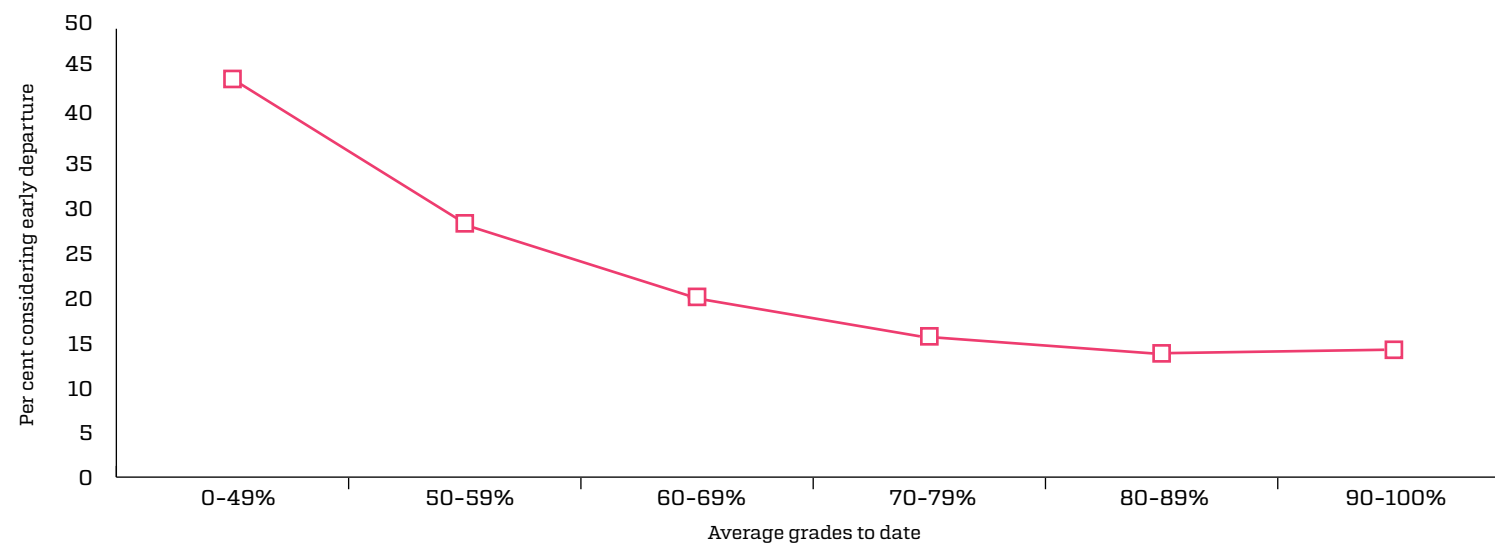


Table 50 Percentage of university students considering early departure by subgroup, 2016

	Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure
Stage of studies	Commencing	19
	Later year**	17
Gender	Male	17
	Female	18
Age Group	Age group – under 25	17
	25 to 29	20
	30 to 39	20
	40 and over	23
Indigenous	Indigenous	28
	Non-Indigenous	18
Home Language	English	19
	Other	15
Disability	Disability reported	24
	No disability reported	18
Study Mode***	Internal/Mixed Study mode	18
	External/Distance Study mode	20
Residence status	Domestic student	18
	International student	14
First in family status*	First in family	20
	Not first in family	17
Previous higher education experience*	Previous higher education experience – Current	21
	Previous higher education experience – Another	18
	New to higher education	18
	Total	18

* Previous higher education experience and First in family status include commencing students only

**Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 51 Selected reasons for considering early departure, university students, 2015 and 2016

Departure reason	Per cent considering departure 2015	Per cent considering departure 2016
Health or stress	42	41
Study / life balance	29	27
Need to do paid work	26	25
Personal reasons	26	25
Workload difficulties	25	25
Financial difficulties	25	24
Expectations not met	22	22
Need a break	22	22
Boredom/lack of interest	22	22
Career prospects	20	20
Change of direction	19	18
Family responsibilities	17	17
Academic support	16	17
Paid work responsibilities	16	16
Quality concerns	14	14
Other	13	12
Commuting difficulties	11	11
Gap year / deferral	11	11
Fee difficulties	9	10
Social reasons	9	9
Academic exchange	10	9
Administrative support	8	8
Institution reputation	8	8
Travel or tourism	8	7

Departure reason	Per cent considering departure 2015	Per cent considering departure 2016
Other opportunities	8	7
Standards too high	6	6
Moving residence	7	6
Graduating	5	5
Received other offer	5	5
Government assistance	3	3

8.3 The NUHEI student experience

Table 52 The student experience, by demographic and contextual group, NUHEI students, 2016 (% positive rating)

	Group/subgroup	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Stage of Studies	Commencing	81	63	86	79	79	83
	Later Years**	83	61	82	73	69	78
Gender	Male	81	66	82	77	74	78
	Female	83	59	85	75	72	81
Age	under 25	84	70	83	76	75	80
	25 to 29	80	58	82	73	68	76
	30 to 39	79	50	83	73	69	78
	40 and over	84	49	88	78	75	84
Indigenous	Indigenous	79	59	83	76	77	81
	Non-Indigenous	82	62	84	76	73	80
Home language	English	83	62	85	77	74	81
	Other	80	62	79	72	69	75
Disability	Disability reported	83	63	84	78	77	81
	No disability reported	82	62	84	76	73	80

	Group/subgroup	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Study mode***	Internal/Mixed	83	66	83	76	73	79
	External	80	28	84	75	78	81
Residence status	Domestic student	84	62	85	77	75	81
	International student	78	61	78	72	67	74
First in family status*	First in family	83	67	88	82	83	85
	Not first in family	83	72	88	85	82	87
Previous higher education experience*	Previous experience – current institution	83	62	84	72	80	80
	Previous experience – another institution	80	59	85	78	75	81
	New to higher education	82	68	87	82	82	84
Total		82	62	84	76	73	80

* Previous higher education experience and First in family status include commencing students only

**Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Table 53 The student experience, by study area, NUHEI students, 2016 (% positive rating)

Study area	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Science and mathematics	76	67	84	75	73	82
Computing and Information Systems	78	69	76	76	80	74
Engineering	84	69	81	73	77	77
Architecture and built environment	79	57	75	65	61	73
Agriculture and environmental studies	85	80	90	91	93	88
Health services and support	79	48	84	69	68	77
Nursing	89	72	88	77	88	83
Dentistry	89	67	94	75	67	78
Veterinary science	92	81	92	77	86	83
Teacher education	88	67	88	81	78	84
Business and management	79	61	77	71	66	75
Humanities, culture and social sciences	86	61	93	88	85	90
Social work	86	46	85	71	71	81
Psychology	83	42	86	78	70	85
Law and paralegal studies	84	63	87	82	89	84
Creative arts	84	74	85	78	74	81
Communications	88	83	85	85	83	80
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and Recreation	81	58	74	72	68	72
Total	82	62	84	76	73	80

Table 54 **Percentage positive rating for Skills Development items, by stage of studies, NUHEI students, 2015 and 2016**

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Developed critical and analytical thinking	70	72	72	70	72	71
Developed ability to solve complex problems	60	61	61	60	64	62
Developed ability to work effectively with others	63	62	63	63	66	65
Developed confidence to learn independently	73	75	74	73	76	75
Developed written communication skills	64	65	64	63	68	66
Developed spoken communication skills	57	59	58	58	62	60
Developed knowledge of field studying	82	83	83	80	82	81
Developed work-related knowledge and skills	72	70	71	71	71	71

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 55 **Percentage positive rating for Learner Engagement items, by stage of studies, NUHEI students, 2015 and 2016**

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Felt prepared for your study	72	70	71	72	73	73
Had a sense of belonging to your university	62	56	58	62	58	60
Participated in discussions online or face-to-face	62	63	62	64	63	64
Worked with other students as part of your study	61	59	60	63	63	63
Interacted with students outside study requirements	49	45	46	47	44	45
Interacted with students who are very different from you	57	53	54	57	54	55
Been given opportunities to interact with local students	56	48	51	54	51	52

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 56 Percentage positive ratings for Teaching Quality items, by stage of studies, NUHEI students, 2015 and 2016

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Study well structured and focused	73	65	67	72	67	69
Study relevant to education as a whole	79	74	75	79	75	77
Teachers engaged you actively in learning	74	70	72	75	72	73
Teachers demonstrated concern for student learning	72	66	68	71	68	69
Teachers provided clear explanations on coursework and assessment	72	68	70	71	70	70
Teachers stimulated you intellectually	74	71	72	74	71	72
Teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn	68	61	63	67	65	65
Teachers seemed helpful and approachable	79	75	76	78	76	77
Teachers set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn	83	78	80	82	80	81
Quality of teaching	85	79	81	84	80	81
Quality of entire educational experience	84	75	78	83	78	80

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 57 **Percentage positive ratings for Student Support items, by stage of studies, NUHEI students, 2015 and 2016**

Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
Experienced efficient enrolment and admissions processes	80	73	76	76	74	75
Induction/orientation activities relevant and helpful	71	62	66	71	65	68
Received support from university to settle into study	75	63	67	73	66	69
Administrative staff or systems: available	71	64	66	68	64	65
Administrative staff or systems: helpful	68	62	64	66	61	63
Careers advisors: available	58	49	52	57	53	54
Careers advisors: helpful	60	50	54	60	54	56
Academic or learning advisors: available	71	64	66	68	65	67
Academic or learning advisors: helpful	72	66	68	70	67	68
Support services: available	57	49	52	56	53	54
Support services: helpful	57	50	53	56	52	54
Offered support relevant to circumstances	63	52	56	57	53	55
Received appropriate English language skill support	57	45	50	57	52	54

C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 58 Percentage positive ratings for SEQ items, by stage of studies, NUHEI students, 2015 and 2016

Focus area	Item	2015: C	2015: LY	2015: T	2016: C	2016: LY	2016: T
LR	Quality of teaching spaces	85	73	77	81	75	77
	Quality of student spaces and common areas	76	63	67	73	66	69
	Quality of online learning materials	83	76	78	82	76	78
	Quality of computing/IT resources	78	70	73	78	70	73
	Quality of assigned books, notes and resources	83	75	78	80	74	77
	Quality of laboratory or studio equipment	81	66	71	75	66	69
	Quality of library resources and facilities	84	78	80	80	74	76

LR = Learning Resources, C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 59 Percentage of NUHEI students considering early departure by subgroup, 2016

	Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure
Stage of studies	Commencing	21
	Later year**	24
Gender	Male	20
	Female	24
Age	Age group – under 25	22
	25 to 29	22
	30 to 39	26
	40 and over	21
Indigenous	Indigenous	33
	Non-Indigenous	23
Home language	Home language – English	24
	Home language – Other	18
Disability	Disability reported	27
	No disability reported	23
Study mode***	Internal/Multi Study mode	23
	External/Distance Study mode	25
Residence status	Domestic student	24
	International student	17
First in family status*	First in family	21
	Not first in family	21
Previous higher education experience*	Previous higher education experience – Current	23
	Previous higher education experience – Another	19
	New to higher education	22
	Total	23

* Previous higher education experience and First in family status include commencing students only

** Later Year includes Middle Year students where for NUHEIs where census was conducted (see Methodological Summary, 1.1.3 Survey Population – Later Year Students)

*** Grouping of study mode categories has changed from previous years. Internal/Mixed mode and External/Distance/OUA in 2016

Figure 14 Percentage of NUHEI students considering early departure by average grades to date, 2016

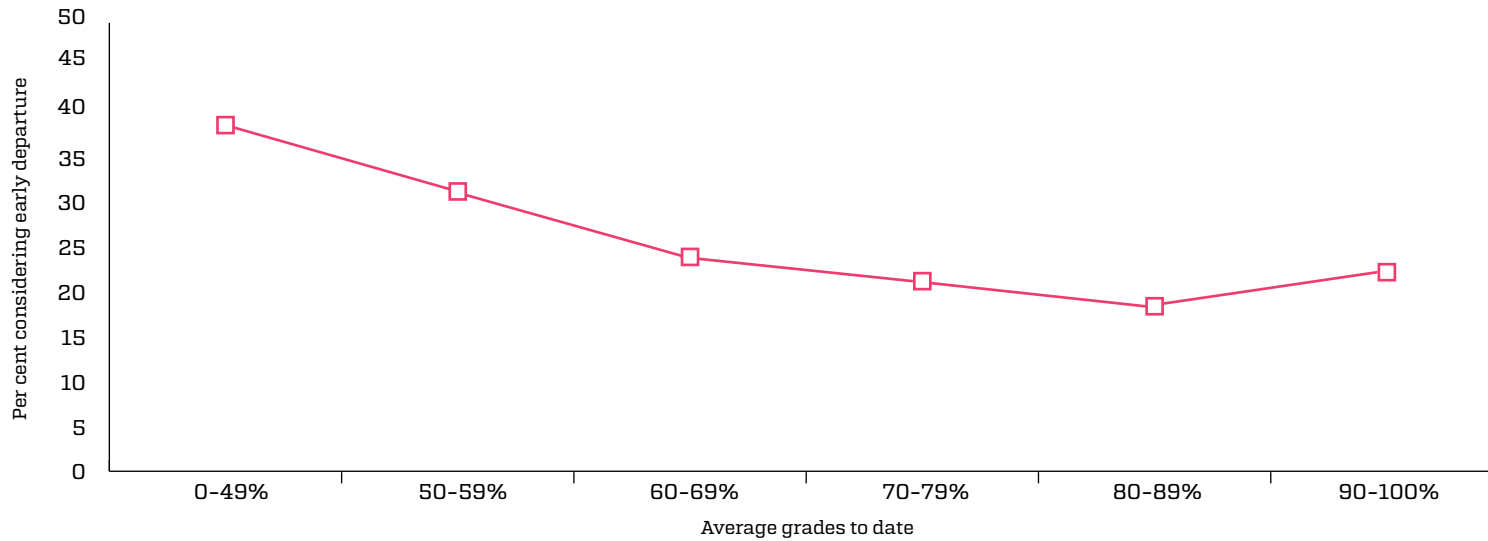


Table 60 Selected reasons for NUHEI students considering early departure, 2015 and 2016

Departure reason	Per cent considering departure 2015	Per cent considering departure 2016
Health or stress	43	41
Study / life balance	27	27
Expectations not met	26	26
Workload difficulties	25	25
Need to do paid work	26	25
Personal reasons	24	23
Financial difficulties	26	23
Academic support	20	21
Need a break	20	20
Quality concerns	24	20
Family responsibilities	17	18

Departure reason	Per cent considering departure 2015	Per cent considering departure 2016
Paid work responsibilities	16	17
Career prospects	17	17
Other	15	15
Administrative support	14	14
Boredom/lack of interest	15	14
Institution reputation	13	12
Fee difficulties	11	12
Commuting difficulties	10	10
Change of direction	11	10
Academic exchange	11	9
Gap year / deferral	6	7
Social reasons	5	6
Received other offer	5	6
Travel or tourism	5	5
Standards too high	5	5
Other opportunities	6	5
Moving residence	5	5
Government assistance	4	4
Graduating	3	4

8.4 Higher Education Student Experience: 45 Study Areas

Table 61 The student experience, by 45 study areas, 2016 (% positive rating)

Study area – 21 categories	Study area – 45 categories	SD	LE	TQ	SS	LR	OEE
Science and mathematics	Natural & Physical Sciences	80	63	84	73	88	82
	Mathematics	77	58	83	73	86	81
	Biological Sciences	84	66	86	74	90	85
	Medical Science & Technology	83	68	85	74	89	82
Computing and information systems	Computing & Information Systems	75	60	76	69	85	74
Engineering	Engineering – Other	78	66	75	69	85	75
	Engineering – Process & Resources	84	74	77	70	83	74
	Engineering – Mechanical	78	67	72	66	81	73
	Engineering – Civil	81	67	76	66	83	77
	Engineering – Electrical & Electronic	78	66	76	69	84	74
	Engineering – Aerospace	78	72	76	65	79	73
Architecture and built environment	Architecture & Urban Environments	81	70	80	67	74	76
	Building & Construction	77	61	73	65	81	75
Agriculture and environmental studies	Agriculture & Forestry	80	69	85	76	88	83
	Environmental Studies	84	64	84	70	87	83
Health services and support	Health Services & Support	82	61	84	73	84	82
	Public Health	80	61	80	73	88	78
Medicine	Medicine	90	83	80	75	80	82
Nursing	Nursing	85	61	78	73	86	77
Pharmacy	Pharmacy	84	66	82	74	85	79
Dentistry	Dentistry	87	68	76	70	81	75
Veterinary science	Veterinary Science	84	73	85	70	87	81

Study area – 21 categories	Study area – 45 categories	SD	LE	TQ	SS	LR	OEE
Rehabilitation	Physiotherapy	90	77	90	77	89	87
	Occupational Therapy	89	74	89	78	89	87
Teacher education	Teacher Education – Other	79	59	77	70	83	76
	Teacher Education – Early Childhood	86	56	82	75	83	81
	Teacher Education – Primary & Secondary	83	63	81	73	85	81
Business and management	Accounting	77	56	78	71	78	76
	Business Management	79	60	78	70	84	78
	Sales & Marketing	82	62	80	69	84	81
	Management & Commerce – Other	76	59	77	70	85	77
	Banking & Finance	71	53	73	66	83	75
	Economics	73	56	76	67	86	76
Humanities, culture and social sciences	Political Science	82	62	85	68	86	84
	Humanities inc History & Geography	81	58	86	73	85	84
	Language & Literature	80	59	90	72	82	86
Social work	Social Work	86	54	85	74	83	83
Psychology	Psychology	82	54	86	76	87	84
Law and paralegal studies	Law	86	60	83	69	84	81
	Justice Studies & Policing	79	51	80	75	84	79
Creative arts	Art & Design	81	67	84	72	82	80
	Music & Performing Arts	82	75	85	74	78	81
Communications	Communication, Media & Journalism	83	68	83	71	86	81
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	Sport & Recreation	86	69	85	76	89	83
	Tourism, Hospitality & Personal Services	82	63	78	71	84	81
Grand Total		81	62	81	72	85	80

SD = Skills Development, LE = Learner Engagement, TQ = Teaching Quality, SS = Student Support, LR = Learning Resources, OEE = Overall Educational Experience.

*All higher education providers. Includes responses to each component of a double degree where the response falls into different study areas at the 45 study area level.

