

# 2015 Student Experience Survey National Report

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The 2015 SES was led by Sonia Whiteley and the project team consisted of Rebecca Bricknall, Brad Claney, Lisa Bolton, Eric Skuja, Daniel Smith, Andrew Ward, Daniela Iarossi, Jayde Grisdale and Charles Dove.

For more information on the conduct and results of the 2015 SES see the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) website. The QILT team can be contacted by email at [qilt@srcentre.com.au](mailto:qilt@srcentre.com.au)

# Executive summary

The Student Experience Survey (SES) was originally developed as the University Experience Survey (UES) in 2011, to provide a national architecture for collecting feedback on key facets of the higher education student experience and, in doing so, obtain important data on the levels of engagement and satisfaction 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.

The UES was renamed the Student Experience Survey (SES) 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.

As was the case since 2012, all forty Australian universities (thirty seven Table A and three Table B) participated in the 2015 SES but unlike previous years, thirty nine NUHEIs also elected to participate in the survey. The online fieldwork period ran from August to September 2015. The in-scope population consisted of 391,405 students, comprising 368,698 university students and 22,707 NUHEI students. As in 2014, a stratified sampling approach was employed, with strata defined on the basis of institution and study area.

Responses were received from a total of 145,382 students, which equated to 157,195 valid surveys once combined and double degrees were taken into account. The response rate for universities in the 2015 SES was 37.6 per cent, up from 30.1 per cent in 2014. In 2015, the NUHEIs achieved a response rate of 39.2 per cent. Individual university response rates ranged from 55.2 per cent to 27.0 per cent and NUHEI response rates ranged from 100 per cent to 11.1 per cent.

The sample of secured responses closely matched the in-scope population on most characteristics, but as was the case in previous years, males were notably under-represented. 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 2015.

## Basic national results

In 2015, the overwhelming majority of students, 80 per cent, expressed satisfaction with the quality of their entire educational experience. Student satisfaction with different aspects of their student experience ranged from 86 per cent for Learning Resources, down to 60 per cent for Learner Engagement. Encouragingly, a relatively large proportion, 82 per cent, of higher education students indicated satisfaction with Teaching Quality. 81 per cent of students expressed satisfaction with Skills Development, and 72 per cent expressed satisfaction with Student Support.

Commencing higher education students were generally more satisfied 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 are more satisfied with Skills Development and Learner Engagement.

Table A – Satisfaction with the student experience 2015 – stratified by stage of studies

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
Commencing	80	59	84	75	89	82
Later year	84	62	78	68	81	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>80</b>

**“ In 2015, the overwhelming majority of students... expressed satisfaction with the quality of their entire educational experience ”**

## Survey results over time

Student satisfaction with the quality of their entire educational experience has remained consistently high, at around 80 per cent, across the entire survey period from 2011 to 2015 (2011 was a pilot survey in which 24 universities participated). There were no notable changes in the results for any SES focus area between 2014 and 2015. Note, however, that because one 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.

Table B – Satisfaction with the student experience 2015 – stratified by stage of studies

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

**“ Student satisfaction with the quality of their entire educational experience has remained consistently high... from 2011 to 2015 ,”**

## Satisfaction of different groups of higher education students

In 2015, university students were more satisfied with the quality of their entire educational experience than NUHEI students, at 80 per cent and 78 per cent respectively. The largest difference between NUHEI and university students across the five focus areas was observed in relation to Learning Resources, with NUHEI students expressing lower satisfaction by 12 percentage points. NUHEI students expressed higher satisfaction than university students in the other focus areas of Student Support, Skills Development, Learner Engagement 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 not all eligible non-university providers chose to participate in 2015.

When comparing satisfaction in focus areas among different demographic groups of students, the largest variation observed was that external students were more dissatisfied than internal students with Learner Engagement, 43 per cent and 64 per cent respectively. Older students were also less satisfied with Learner Engagement than younger students, but this difference is most likely associated with the prevalence of external or internal study modes in these age groups.

The Student Support focus area recorded the smallest variation in satisfaction levels across study areas, with 10 percentage points separating the highest and lowest study area, which may reflect the whole of experience nature of this focus area. The widest range in satisfaction was observed in relation to Learner Engagement, with 25 percentage points separating the highest and lowest study areas.

There are significant differences between institutions in satisfaction with the entire educational experience (which) demonstrates there is scope for improvement among institutions where students state they are less satisfied with their educational experience.

Table C – 2015 SES university student response characteristics and population parameters by study area

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
NUHEIs	83	61	83	76	74	78
Universities	81	60	82	72	86	80
All institutions	81	60	82	72	86	80

## International comparisons

Comparison of results from the 2015 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 be less satisfied with their higher education experience than their counterparts in these countries. For example, in 2015:

- 86 per cent of United States senior year students expressed satisfaction with their educational experience in comparison with 76 per cent of Australian later year students
- 85 per cent of United States first year students expressed satisfaction with 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 78 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 2015. Overall, 18 per cent indicated that they had considered leaving compared with 17 per cent in 2014. Older students, Indigenous students and students with a disability were the most likely to consider early departure, as were those who reported low grades to date. The most common reasons given for considering early departure are situational in nature, including health or stress, difficulties relating to finances and workload, and study/life balance.

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# 1: Introduction and overview

## 1.1 Background to the 2015 Student Experience Survey

The Student Experience Survey (SES), originally 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 contributing to the continuous improvement of the execution 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](http://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 providers in the higher education sector that were not accredited as universities (non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs)) but still offered undergraduate level degree courses.

## 1.2 Scope of this report

This report presents an overview of the 2015 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 2015 SES. In 2015, for the first time, non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs) were provided with the opportunity to participate in the SES. Thirty-nine NUHEIs elected to take part.

The in-scope survey population for the 2015 SES consisted of commencing and later-year onshore undergraduate students currently enrolled in Australian higher education institutions. For the seventy nine institutions participating in the 2015 SES, the in-scope population consisted of 391,405 students.

Key results presented in this report are based on the national SES data file which consists of 157,195 responses from 145,382 students representing 40 universities and 39 NUHEIs, providing an overview of the higher education sector. This differs from reporting in previous reports which focused exclusively on universities only. Data for university students and NUHEI students are reported separately to assist with time-series comparisons and interpretation of the data.

All statistics relating to SES focus areas and their constituent items reflect the percentage of students who indicated that they were satisfied with aspects of the report.

## 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 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 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 2015 cycle of data collection. Detailed information about the administration of the survey in the context of TSE can be found in the appendices to the current report, and in the accompanying 2015 SES Methodological Report.

### 2.1 The Student Experience Questionnaire

#### 2.1.1 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 university 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**.

## 2.1.2 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 administered to a sample of later-year students across all participating institutions 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  $\pm 2.2$  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 2014 and continued for the 2015 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 2015 SES is presented in **Appendix 3**.

## 2.1.3 Institution-specific items

As was the case for the 2013 and 2014 UES, institutions were offered the option of including non-standard, institution-specific items as part of the 2015 SES. In total, 24 universities and NUHEIs chose to do so, up from 15 institutions who added institution-specific items to their 2014 UES. Frequent inclusions were the Workplace Relevance Scale, originally developed for (but not incorporated into) the CEQ, and an item to monitor students at risk of discontinuing their studies.

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.

## 2.2 Data collection

In 2015, 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 an incentive strategy.

As had been the case with the UES, a key focus of the 2015 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 notifications on learning management systems, emails from the Vice-Chancellor, social media posts, institutional websites and internal staff emails.

**“As had been the case with the UES, a key focus of the 2015 SES was working collaboratively with institutions, wherever possible, to maximise participation rates in the survey...”**

# 3: Data quality

## 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. Institutions were given targets for each study area and encouraged to promote student engagement and participation at this level (see 2015 SES Methodological Report).

In spite of the often challenging response rate targets by study area for each institution, all institutions improved upon their response rate from 2014, yielding a national response rate of 37.6 per cent (up from 30.1 per cent in 2014). On average, each institution improved its overall response rate by 7.6 percentage points.

This 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 a targeted social media campaign. While the QILT website had not been launched for the 2015 collection, it will be live for the 2016 SES and the increased visibility of the SES data is likely to contribute to further, incremental improvements in the SES response rate.

Non-university higher education providers participating in their inaugural SES recorded a solid response rate of 39.2 per cent. Response rates by institution are available in **Appendix 4**.

## 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 university and NUHEI students are presented alongside population parameters in Tables 1 & 2 (subgroup) and Tables 3 & 4 (study area).

It is evident that many of the characteristics of the respondents match those of the in-scope population, especially with respect to stage of studies, Indigenous status, disability status, first in family to attend university 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 was the case in 2012, 2013 and 2014, 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.

Table 1 – 2015 SES response characteristics and population parameters by subgroup – university students<sup>a</sup>

Group/subgroup	SES respondents		In-scope population	
	n	%	n	%
Stage of studies – Commencing	84,425	61.7	219,805	59.6
Stage of studies – Later year	52,405	38.3	148,893	40.4
Male	46,408	33.9	157,544	42.7
Female	90,411	66.1	211,134	57.3
Indigenous	1,779	1.3	4,762	1.3
Non-Indigenous	132,512	96.8	356,743	96.8
Home language – English	105,545	77.8	275,884	74.8
Home language – Other	30,160	22.0	89,452	24.3
Disability reported	7,479	5.5	17,116	4.6
No disability reported	129,351	94.5	351,582	95.4
Internal Study mode	114,436	83.6	310,988	84.3
External/multi-modal Study mode	22,392	16.4	57,710	15.6
Domestic student	121,063	88.5	318,000	86.2
International student	15,767	11.5	50,698	13.8
First in family	36,587	48.2	93,813	48.2
Not first in family	39,292	51.8	100,710	51.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>136,830</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>368,698</b>	<b>100</b>

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

“The largest potential source of nonresponse bias is in relation to gender, with male students substantially under-represented in the sample of secured responses...”

Looking at Table 2 and NUHEI students, respondents' characteristics match those of the in-scope population, especially with respect to stage of studies, Indigenous status, disability status and study mode. Language spoken at home and citizenship status are less consistent than was observed in relation to university students, with international students and those who did not speak English at home being much less likely to participate in the SES. As is the case with respect to university students, gender appears to present a large source of non-response bias, with male students substantially under-represented.

**“ International students and those who did not speak English at home [were] much less likely to participate in the SES... than was observed in relation to university students... ”**

**Table 2 – 2015 SES response characteristics and population parameters by subgroup – NUHEI students<sup>a</sup>**

Group/subgroup	SES respondents		In-scope population	
	n	%	n	%
Stage of studies – Commencing	2,944	34.4	8,092	35.6
Stage of studies – Later year	5,608	65.6	14,615	64.4
Male	3,149	36.8	10,250	45.1
Female	5,401	63.2	12,455	54.9
Indigenous	55	0.7	142	0.6
Non-Indigenous	8,386	99.3	22,219	97.9
Home language – English	6,181	81.1	14,622	64.4
Home language – Other	1,441	18.9	4,831	21.3
Disability reported	391	4.6	870	3.8
No disability reported	8,161	95.4	21,837	96.2
Internal Study mode	6,685	78.2	18,277	80.5
External/multi-modal Study mode	1,867	21.8	2,042	19.5
Domestic student	7,034	82.2	16,706	73.6
International student	1,518	17.8	6,001	26.4
First in family	908	55.6	2,207	55.6
Not first in family	726	44.4	1,762	44.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,552</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22,707</b>	<b>100</b>

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



The sample also closely matches the in-scope population in terms of study area (see Table 3). The largest difference between the sample and population was observed in relation to the Business and management study area (4.5 percentage points). Smaller differences were observed between the population and respondents for Nursing (1.2 per cent). This similarity may be attributable to targeted engagement and follow-up of students in under-performing study areas undertaken during data collection fieldwork. The largest study areas in the sample were Business and management (16.3 per cent), Humanities, culture and social sciences (12.1 per cent) and Science and mathematics (11.7 per cent). These three study areas together constitute around 40 per cent of the entire sample.

**Table 3 – 2015 SES university student response characteristics and population parameters by study area**

Study area	SES respondents		In-scope population	
	n	%	n	%
Science and mathematics	16,490	11.1	45,179	10.7
Computing and Information Systems	4,648	3.1	13,655	3.2
Engineering	9,014	6.1	26,355	6.3
Architecture and built environment	3,057	2.1	9,828	2.3
Agriculture and environmental studies	2,436	1.6	5,454	1.3
Health services and support	10,616	7.1	29,541	7.0
Medicine	1,943	1.3	5,849	1.4
Nursing	13,194	8.9	32,278	7.7
Pharmacy	1,247	0.8	2,905	0.7
Dentistry	568	0.4	1,269	0.3
Veterinary science	661	0.4	1,712	0.4
Rehabilitation	2,330	1.6	5,465	1.3
Teacher education	12,505	8.4	31,554	7.5
Business and management	24,236	16.3	87,329	20.8
Humanities, culture and social sciences	17,946	12.1	48,156	11.5
Social work	2,818	1.9	6,627	1.6
Psychology	6,632	4.5	15,241	3.6
Law and paralegal studies	6,533	4.4	19,163	4.6
Creative arts	6,332	4.3	17,066	4.1
Communications	4,945	3.3	14,494	3.4
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	423	0.3	1,349	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>148,574</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>420,469</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows that the NUHEI student sample does not as closely match the in-scope population in terms of study area, when compared with university students. As was the case with the university students, the largest difference between the sample and population was observed in relation to the Business and management study area (9.3 percentage points). Much smaller differences were observed between the population and respondents for the Creative arts (3.0 percent), Health services and support (1.5 per cent), Humanities, culture and social science (1.2 per cent) and Social work (1.2 per cent). The largest study areas in the sample were Health services and support (19.8 per cent), Creative arts (18.9 per cent) Business and management (14.1 per cent) and Humanities, culture and social sciences (11.7%). These four study areas together constitute nearly 65 per cent of the entire sample.

Table 4 – 2015 SES NUHEI student response characteristics and population parameters by study area

Study area	SES respondents		In-scope population	
	n	%	n	%
Science and mathematics	59	0.7	127	0.6
Computing and Information Systems	277	3.2	709	3.1
Engineering	238	2.8	699	3.1
Architecture and built environment	38	0.4	90	0.4
Agriculture and environmental studies	149	1.7	236	1.0
Health services and support	1,708	20.0	4,199	18.5
Nursing	281	3.3	627	2.8
Veterinary science	16	0.2	41	0.2
Teacher education	590	6.9	1,155	5.1
Business and management	1,215	14.1	5,346	23.3
Humanities, culture and social sciences	1,011	11.7	2,504	10.9
Social work	528	6.1	1,131	4.9
Psychology	298	3.5	788	3.5
Law and paralegal studies	110	1.3	315	1.4
Creative arts	1,631	18.9	3,646	15.9
Communications	437	5.1	1,130	5.0
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	35	0.4	109	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,621</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22,972</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.3 Weighting

In the 2012 UES, weighting 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. Given the ongoing under-representation of male respondents in the 2014 UES and the 2015 SES (see Table 1), the notion of corrective weighting was revisited. Post-stratification weights by gender, study area and stage of studies were computed separately for each institution.<sup>1</sup> This resulted in a total of 276 non-zero weighting strata.<sup>2</sup> Weights ranged in size from 0.5 to 49. The mean weight was 2.86 and the median 2.55.

Raw (unweighted) and weighted percentage satisfied results were compared to establish the utility of weighting the SES data. 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 5 (subgroup) and Table 6 (study area).<sup>3</sup>

1 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.

2 When calculating the weights, 77 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 Tables 5 and 6.

3 This analysis was conducted using the Weight option in SAS, which gives cases different weights by simulated replication for statistical analysis. As such, the value of the weighting variable should indicate the number of observations represented by single cases in the data file.

Table 5 – Comparison of university raw and weighted percentage satisfied scores by subgroup

Group/subgroup	Quality of entire educational experience		Quality of teaching	
	Raw	Weighted	Raw	Weighted
Stage of studies – Commencing	82	82	83	82
Stage of studies – Later year	76	76	77	76
Male	78	78	79	78
Female	81	81	82	81
Indigenous	80	79	82	82
Non-Indigenous	80	79	81	80
Home language – English	81	81	82	81
Home language – Other	75	74	76	76
Disability reported	77	77	79	79
No disability reported	80	80	81	80
Internal Study mode	80	80	81	80
External/multi-modal Study mode	78	77	79	78
Domestic student	81	80	81	80
International student	74	74	76	75
First in family	83	83	84	83
Not first in family	82	82	83	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>

It is evident from Tables 5 and 6 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 and 2014 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 Tables 6 and 7, are based on unweighted data.

**“ Post stratification weighting... does not significantly affect the results at a national level... ”**

**Table 6 – Comparison of university raw and weighted percentage satisfied scores by study area**

Study area	Quality of entire educational experience		Quality of teaching	
	Raw	Weighted	Raw	Weighted
Science and mathematics	83	82	85	84
Computing and Information Systems	75	75	74	73
Engineering	76	76	74	73
Architecture and built environment	77	77	76	76
Agriculture and environmental studies	84	83	84	83
Health services and support	82	82	83	82
Medicine	81	80	77	76
Nursing	78	78	79	79
Pharmacy	82	82	83	84
Dentistry	74	73	70	70
Veterinary science	82	80	85	83
Rehabilitation	87	86	88	86
Teacher education	80	80	79	79
Business and management	77	76	76	75
Humanities, culture and social sciences	82	82	85	85
Social work	80	80	80	81
Psychology	83	83	86	87
Law and paralegal studies	81	80	82	81
Creative arts	82	81	82	82
Communications	82	81	83	82
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	81	81	78	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>

### 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 more intense and targeted response maximisation activities. This approach was also pursued for the 2015 SES.

While the national response rate increased in 2015 relative to 2014, gender bias did not decrease (see Section 3.2). 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 7 shows that a combined total of 143 additional strata achieved the desired level of precision across the five focus areas in 2015.

Table 7 – Strata meeting desired level of precision for university students<sup>a</sup>, 2014 & 2015

Focus area	2014		2015		Change p.p.
	n	%	n	%	
Learner Engagement	424	69.4	465	75.7	6.3
Teaching Quality	499	81.7	517	84.2	2.5
Learning Resources	484	79.2	515	83.9	4.7
Student Support	410	67.1	441	71.8	4.7
Skills Development	494	80.9	516	84.0	3.2
<b>Total strata</b>	<b>611</b>		<b>614</b>		

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

**“ 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 ”**

### 3.5 Precision of national estimates

As the 2015 SES data constitute 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, Tables 8 and 9 present percentage satisfied results for 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**.

Table 8 – Percentage satisfied scores by university student subgroup with 90 per cent confidence intervals

Group/subgroup	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teachings
Stage of studies – Commencing	82.3 (82.2, 82.5)	83.0 (82.8, 83.1)
Stage of studies – Later year	76.2 (76.0, 76.5)	76.7 (76.5, 77.0)
Male	78.2 (77.9, 78.5)	78.5 (78.3, 78.8)
Female	80.9 (80.8, 81.1)	81.7 (81.5, 81.8)
Indigenous	79.7 (78.5, 80.9)	82.0 (80.9, 83.2)
Non-Indigenous	80.0 (79.9, 80.2)	80.6 (80.4, 80.7)
Home language – English	81.5 (81.3, 81.6)	81.8 (81.7, 82.0)
Home language – Other	74.8 (74.4, 75.1)	76.2 (75.9, 76.5)
Disability reported	76.7 (76.1, 77.3)	79.4 (78.9, 80.0)
No disability reported	80.2 (80.1, 80.3)	80.7 (80.5, 80.8)
Internal Study mode	80.4 (80.3, 80.6)	81.0 (80.8, 81.1)
External/multi-modal Study mode	77.7 (77.4, 78.1)	78.6 (78.2, 78.9)
Domestic student	80.8 (80.6, 80.9)	81.2 (81.0, 81.3)
International student	73.8 (73.3, 74.2)	75.8 (75.3, 76.2)
First in family	83.3 (83.1, 83.6)	83.8 (83.6, 84.1)
Not first in family	82.5 (82.2, 82.7)	83.0 (82.7, 83.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>80.0 (79.9, 80.1)</b>	<b>80.6 (80.5, 80.7)</b>

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

As expected in this large national sample, the confidence intervals are generally narrow. At a national level, for example, the one-sided width of the 90 per cent confidence interval is around 0.2 percentage points for both items (see bottom row of Tables 8 or 9), although the confidence intervals tend to be wider when the sample is subdivided. The study area with the widest confidence interval was Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation with one-sided widths of 2.6 and 2.8 percentage points observed in relation to the entire experience and teaching quality items, respectively. This is 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.

**“ Confidence intervals are generally narrow... ”**

**Table 9 – Percentage satisfied scores by university student study area with 90 per cent confidence intervals**

<b>Study area</b>	<b>Quality of entire educational experience</b>	<b>Quality of teaching</b>
Science and mathematics	82.7 (82.3, 83.1)	84.7 (84.3, 85.1)
Computing and Information Systems	75.3 (74.5, 76.2)	73.9 (73.0, 74.8)
Engineering	76.3 (75.7, 76.9)	73.7 (73.0, 74.3)
Architecture and built environment	76.8 (75.8, 77.8)	75.9 (74.8, 76.9)
Agriculture and environmental studies	83.6 (82.7, 84.5)	83.6 (82.6, 84.5)
Health services and support	82.1 (81.6, 82.6)	82.7 (82.2, 83.2)
Medicine	80.7 (79.5, 81.9)	76.8 (75.5, 78.1)
Nursing	78.1 (77.7, 78.6)	79.1 (78.7, 79.6)
Pharmacy	82.1 (80.8, 83.5)	83.4 (82.1, 84.8)
Dentistry	73.8 (71.5, 76.0)	69.8 (67.5, 72.2)
Veterinary science	81.7 (79.8, 83.6)	85.3 (83.5, 87.1)
Rehabilitation	87.0 (86.2, 87.9)	88.2 (87.3, 89.0)
Teacher education	79.8 (79.3, 80.2)	79.4 (78.9, 79.9)
Business and management	76.5 (76.1, 76.9)	75.6 (75.2, 76.0)
Humanities, culture and social sciences	82.2 (81.8, 82.5)	85.2 (84.9, 85.6)
Social work	79.6 (78.7, 80.6)	80.1 (79.2, 81.0)
Psychology	83.2 (82.6, 83.8)	86.4 (85.8, 86.9)
Law and paralegal studies	80.9 (80.3, 81.6)	82.5 (81.8, 83.1)
Creative arts	81.6 (80.9, 82.2)	82.5 (81.8, 83.1)
Communications	81.7 (81.0, 82.5)	82.8 (82.1, 83.6)
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	81.0 (78.4, 83.6)	78.4 (75.7, 81.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>80.0 (79.9, 80.1)</b>	<b>80.6 (80.5, 80.7)</b>

Tables 10 and 11 (on the following page) shows that, in relation to NUHEI students, the overall confidence intervals are generally narrow but show more variation than those obtained in relation to university students. At a national level, for example, the one-sided width of the 90 per cent confidence interval is between 0.6 and 0.5 percentage points for the quality of the entire educational experience and the quality of teaching items (see bottom row of Table 10 or 11). The confidence intervals are substantially wider when the sample is subdivided. For example, the confidence interval for the quality of teaching item for Indigenous NUHEI students is between 7 and 6 percentage points.

As was the case in relation to university students, the study area with the widest confidence interval was Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation with one-sided widths of 10.7 and 10.1 percentage points observed in relation to the entire experience and teaching quality items, respectively. This suggests that numbers of students in this study area are comparatively small for both university and NUHEI students.

Table 10 – Percentage satisfied scores by NUHEI student subgroup with 90 per cent confidence intervals

Group/subgroup	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teaching
Stage of studies – Commencing	83.5 (82.6, 84.4)	84.8 (83.9, 85.7)
Stage of studies – Later year	75.0 (74.3, 75.8)	79.0 (78.3, 79.7)
Male	77.5 (76.5, 78.6)	80.4 (79.4, 81.4)
Female	78.2 (77.5, 78.9)	81.3 (80.7, 82.0)
Indigenous	80.0 (73.0, 87.0)	87.0 (81.1, 93.0)
Non-Indigenous	77.9 (77.3, 78.5)	81.0 (80.4, 81.5)
Home language – English	78.8 (78.2, 79.5)	82.4 (81.8, 83.0)
Home language – Other	74.7 (73.1, 76.3)	76.2 (74.6, 77.8)
Disability reported	74.0 (71.3, 76.8)	78.9 (76.4, 81.4)
No disability reported	78.1 (77.5, 78.7)	81.1 (80.5, 81.7)
Internal Study mode	78.0 (77.3, 78.6)	80.7 (80.1, 81.4)
External/multi-modal Study mode	77.9 (76.7, 79.1)	81.9 (80.8, 83.1)
Domestic student	78.9 (78.2, 79.5)	82.3 (81.7, 82.9)
International student	73.7 (72.1, 75.3)	74.8 (73.2, 76.5)
First in family	85.4 (83.9, 86.9)	86.2 (84.8, 87.7)
Not first in family	86.5 (84.9, 88.1)	87.4 (85.8, 88.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.0 (77.4, 78.5)</b>	<b>81.0 (80.4, 81.5)</b>

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



Table 11 – Percentage satisfied scores by NUHEI student study area with 90 per cent confidence intervals

Study area	Quality of entire educational experience	Quality of teaching
Science and mathematics	76.3 (69.6, 83.0)	86.2 (80.7, 91.7)
Computing and Information Systems	74.7 (71.4, 78.1)	79.7 (76.5, 82.9)
Engineering	69.7 (65.8, 73.7)	73.0 (69.1, 76.9)
Architecture and built environment	63.2 (53.3, 73.0)	59.5 (49.2, 69.7)
Agriculture and environmental studies	90.6 (88.2, 93.0)	96.0 (94.4, 97.6)
Health services and support	75.2 (73.9, 76.5)	80.9 (79.7, 82.1)
Nursing	84.7 (82.1, 87.3)	87.5 (85.1, 89.9)
Veterinary science	100.0 (100.0, 100.0)	100.0 (100.0, 100.0)
Teacher education	84.2 (82.4, 86.0)	82.9 (81.1, 84.8)
Business and management	73.3 (71.4, 75.1)	73.1 (71.2, 75.0)
Humanities, culture and social sciences	89.4 (88.2, 90.6)	92.0 (90.9, 93.1)
Social work	78.4 (76.3, 80.6)	83.4 (81.4, 85.3)
Psychology	76.2 (73.0, 79.4)	79.1 (76.1, 82.2)
Law and paralegal studies	82.7 (77.9, 87.5)	85.5 (81.0, 89.9)
Creative arts	74.0 (72.7, 75.3)	77.4 (76.2, 78.7)
Communications	80.5 (78.1, 83.0)	82.2 (79.8, 84.6)
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	68.6 (57.9, 79.3)	74.3 (64.2, 84.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.0 (77.4, 78.5)</b>	<b>81.0 (80.4, 81.5)</b>

# 4: Results from the 2015 SES

## 4.1 Headline results

Results are presented showing the experience of students across the higher education sector since this is the first deployment of the Student Experience Survey. University and NUHEIs results are then presented separately to highlight the different experience of students attending those institutions. This will also allow time series comparisons across universities with previous editions of the University Experience Survey.

### 4.1.1 The higher education student experience

Percentage satisfied results for the five SES focus areas and a key questionnaire item are presented in Table 12 below by stage of studies. Considering first the overall results, there is much variation in percentage satisfied results between focus areas. These ranged from 86 per cent in relation to the Learning Resources focus area, down to 60 per cent for the Learner Engagement focus area. Encouragingly, a relatively large proportion of higher education students indicated satisfaction with the Teaching Quality provided by their institution

and their Skills Development (82 and 81 per cent, respectively). In terms of the Student Support provided by their institution, 72 per cent of survey respondents expressed satisfaction. The overwhelming majority of students, 80 per cent, expressed satisfaction with the quality of their entire educational experience.

Commencing higher education students are generally more satisfied than those in the later years with Teaching Quality, Student Support, Learning Resources and the quality of the entire educational experience. Those in the later years of their studies are more satisfied with Skills Development and Learner Engagement. 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. Commencing students, for example, should be provided with services to 'transition into' higher education whereas those completing their studies are more likely to be seeking support to an effective 'transition out'.

Table 12 – Overall satisfaction with the higher education student experience

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
Commencing	80	59	84	75	89	82
Later year	84	62	78	68	81	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>80</b>

When the results from the 2011 UES to the 2015 SES collections are compared (see Table 13), 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 appears to have been due to modifications to the questionnaire<sup>1</sup> and sampling method in 2014. There were no notable changes in the results for any SES focus area between 2014 and 2015. Student satisfaction with the quality of their entire educational experience has remained consistently high, at around 80 per cent, across the entire survey period from 2011 to 2015.

Table 13 – Satisfaction with the student experience 2011-2015

	Focus areas					Questionnaire items
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
2011 <sup>i</sup>	–	–	–	–	–	79
2012	82	58	81	53	82	80
2013 <sup>ii</sup>	79	57	79	53	83	79
2014	81	61	82	73	85	80
2015 <sup>iii</sup>	81	60	82	72	86	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 satisfaction 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) Note that results for the 2015 Student Experience Survey 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.

**“ There were no notable changes in the results for any SES focus area between 2014 and 2015 ”**

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

#### 4.1.2 Universities and NUHEIs compared

When comparing results for university and NUHEI students there are several important caveats to consider. First, only 39 of the 129 Tertiary Education Qualifications Standards Authority (TEQSA) registered non-university providers opted to participate in the 2015 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.

As shown in Table 14 University students rated satisfaction with the quality of their entire educational experience more highly than NUHEI students by 2 percentage points.

The largest difference between NUHEI and university students across the five focus areas was observed in relation to Learning Resources with NUHEI students being more likely to express lower satisfaction with this focus area by 12 percentage points. NUHEI students seemed slightly more satisfied with Student Support with four percentage points separating them from university students. Minor differences were evident for Skills Development (2 percentage points favouring NUHEIs), Learner Engagement, and Teaching Quality (both with 1 percentage point favouring NUHEIs).

Table 14 – Overall satisfaction with the student experience: NUHEI students & university students

	Focus areas					Questionnaire item
	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources	Quality of entire educational experience
NUHEIs	83	61	83	76	74	78
Universities	81	60	82	72	86	80
<b>All institutions</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>80</b>

### 4.1.3 The higher education student experience of specific groups

Percentage satisfied results for all five focus areas are presented in Table 15. Overall results for all groups are presented in the bottom row and data is also provided for a number of important demographic and contextual variables. 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. This approach was first adopted for the 2013 UES Report in the interest of parsimony of reporting and explanation, and is maintained here for consistency.

In relation to male and female students, most differences in percentage satisfied results were fairly marginal, with female students generally more likely to be satisfied with their educational experience than male students. A difference between males and females of five 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.

Table 15 – Percentage satisfied scores by subgroup

Group/subgroup	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources
Stage of studies – Commencing	80	59	84	75	89
Stage of studies – Later year	84	62	78	68	81
Male	78	61	80	71	85
Female	83	60	83	73	86
Age group – under 25	82	64	82	72	86
Age group – 25 to 29	81	53	79	72	82
Age group – 30 to 39	80	46	81	75	83
Age group – 40 and over	80	43	84	77	84
Indigenous	82	54	83	76	87
Non-Indigenous	81	60	82	72	86
Home language – English	82	61	83	73	86
Home language – Other	79	59	78	69	85
Disability reported	77	56	79	74	83
No disability reported	81	61	82	72	86
Internal Study mode	82	64	82	72	86
External/multi-modal Study mode	80	43	80	73	84
Domestic student	81	61	82	73	86
International student	79	57	78	70	85
First in family	81	58	85	77	90
Not first in family	79	62	84	75	88
Previous university experience – current	80	58	84	74	88
Previous university experience – another	79	53	84	76	87
New to higher education	80	62	84	75	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>

With respect to study mode, internal students were vastly more likely to be satisfied with their level of engagement than those studying externally or by mixed mode, with over 20 percentage points between the groups. The differences in relation to the other four focus areas were relatively small.

There is a clear negative association between age and Learner Engagement, with young students (aged under 25) much more likely to be satisfied with 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 study either externally or by mixed-mode delivery, which are, as previously identified, study modes characterised by relatively low levels of student engagement as compared with internal delivery. Older students are also presumably more likely to be balancing their studies with their work and family lives, which would further limit their Learner Engagement opportunities (as measured by the SEQ). Interestingly, though, older students were more likely to express satisfaction with the Student Support provided by their university.

Indigenous students, while only constituting a small proportion of the higher education population, were less likely than their non-Indigenous classmates to be satisfied with Learner Engagement, a result which is of some concern. They were, however, somewhat more likely to be satisfied with 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.

Students who spoke English as their main language at home were more likely than those from a non-English speaking background to be satisfied with every aspect of their educational experience. A similar pattern is observed in relation to domestic students, who were more likely than international students to be satisfied with every aspect of their educational experience. These differences were largest in relation to Learner Engagement and Teaching Quality.

Students who reported having a disability were slightly more likely to be satisfied with Student Support, than students who did not report any disability. The opposite is observed in relation to the four other focus areas; however, with the exception of Skills Development, these differences were relatively small.

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 be satisfied with Learner Engagement. Considering whether students had previous university experience, it is interesting to note that students who had previously been enrolled at a university were less likely to be satisfied with Learner Engagement, especially in relation to students new to higher education. There were no other notable differences on the basis of this characteristic.

Looking now at study area (see Table 16), there is considerable variation in percentage satisfied results both across and within study areas. The narrowest range of results across study areas is seen in relation to Student Support, with 11 percentage points separating the study areas (Rehabilitation and Veterinary science with the highest results and Architecture and built environment with the lowest), followed by the Learning Resources (13 percentage points), Skills Development (14 percentage points) and Teaching Quality (15 percentage points) focus areas. The widest range is observed for Learner Engagement, with 25 percentage points separating the two study areas with the highest and lowest results (Medicine and Psychology, respectively). It should be noted that broad disciplinary aggregations hide much of the detail that is relevant to schools, faculties and academic departments.

Additional information relating to 45 study area results are listed in Appendix 8 – Percentage satisfied scores by study area (45).

While confidence intervals are not shown in Tables 15 and 16, it is important to interpret the results with respect to the remarks made in Section 3.4 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.

Table 16 – Percentage satisfied scores by study area

Study area	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources
Science and mathematics	81	63	85	74	89
Computing and Information Systems	76	60	78	74	86
Engineering	78	67	77	69	86
Architecture and built environment	80	66	79	66	77
Agriculture and environmental studies	84	65	85	73	89
Health services and support	82	61	84	74	86
Medicine	87	77	80	75	82
Nursing	86	60	80	76	87
Pharmacy	84	71	84	71	87
Dentistry	87	65	74	69	82
Veterinary science	85	70	87	77	88
Rehabilitation	90	75	89	77	90
Teacher education	83	59	80	72	86
Business and management	77	56	77	70	84
Humanities, culture and social sciences	80	54	86	72	85
Social work	85	53	83	74	85
Psychology	82	52	86	75	88
Law and paralegal studies	82	55	83	70	86
Creative arts	81	68	83	71	79
Communications	83	67	83	72	87
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and Recreation	82	63	82	70	87
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>

#### 4.1.4 Early departure of higher education students

In addition to the items asking students to rate their level of satisfaction with different aspects of their educational experience, students were also asked to indicate whether they had seriously considered leaving their institution during 2015. The results of this question are presented by student subgroup in Table 17. Overall, 18 per cent of respondents indicated that they had considered leaving.

As might be expected, commencing students were more likely than later-year students to have considered leaving their institution; however the difference between these two groups was only two percentage points. This unusually small difference 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.

Students who spoke English as their main language at home were more likely to consider leaving their institution than those who spoke a language other than English at home. A similar pattern is observed in relation to domestic and international students.

Students who reported having a disability were more likely to have considered leaving their institution than students who did not report having a disability. As was the case with Indigenous students, students with a disability were more likely to express satisfaction with the level of support provided by their institution (see Table 15). No substantial differences in departure intentions were observed in relation to study mode, gender or previous university experience.

Table 17 – Percentage of higher education students who considered early departure by subgroup

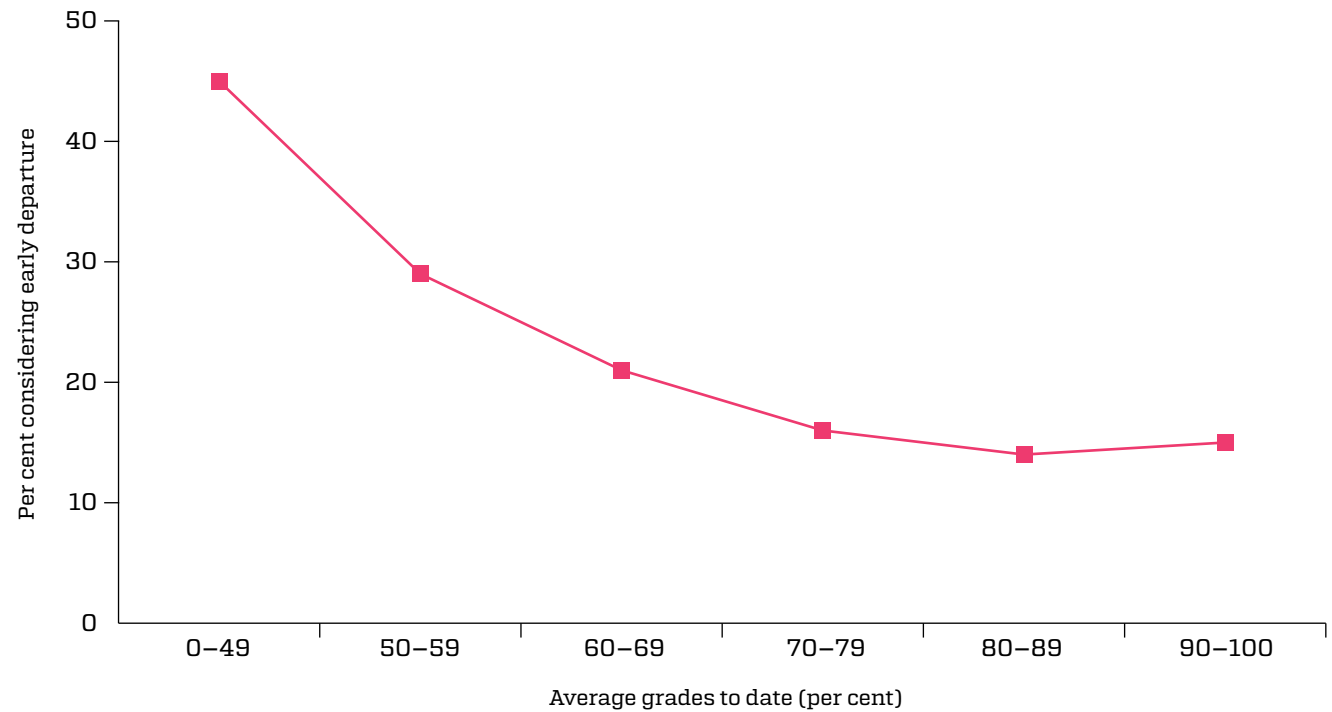
Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure	Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure
Stage of studies – Commencing	19	Disability reported	26
Stage of studies – Later year	17	No disability reported	18
Male	18	Internal Study mode	18
Female	19	External/multi-modal Study mode	21
Age group – under 25	17	Domestic student	19
25 to 29	21	International student	15
30 to 39	22	First in family	20
40 and over	22	Not first in family	17
Indigenous	27	Previous university experience – Current	20
Non-Indigenous	18	Previous university experience – Another	19
Home language – English	19	New to higher education	19
Home language – Other	16	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>



The percentage of students who had considered leaving their institution in 2015 is plotted against (self-reported) average grades in Figure 1. The expected relationship is observed, with students achieving lower grades 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 more than 40 per cent considered early departure.

Higher education students who expressed a serious consideration of leaving their university in 2015 were then asked to indicate, from a list of 30 possible reasons, why they considered doing so. These are summarised in Table 18. Students could select as many reasons as applied, so the percentages do not total 100.

Figure 1 – Percentage of higher education students who had considered early departure by average grades to date



**“ Students achieving lower grades [were] much more likely to consider early departure ”**

It is evident from the table that some of the most common reasons relate to situational factors, such as health or stress (42 per cent), study/life balance (29 per cent), the need to do paid work (26 per cent), unspecified personal reasons, difficulties relating to finances and workload (each with 25 per cent). The fact that these reasons were indicated by such a large percentage of students underscores the importance of student support in terms of allowing students to continue with their studies.

The most common (arguably) institutional factor indicated by students was that their expectations had not been met (22 per cent), which may indicate that further analysis of student expectations of their higher education experience would be beneficial in discussions around attrition and retention. Other institutional factors were indicated much less frequently (e.g. academic support, administrative support, institutional reputation). Several dispositional factors were also relatively common, including boredom/lack of interest or a need to take a break (each with 22 per cent), career prospects (20 per cent), and a change in direction (18 per cent).

Table 18 – Selected reasons for considering early departure

Departure reason	Per cent considering departure – 2015	Departure reason	Per cent considering departure – 2015
Health or stress	42	Other	13
Study/life balance	29	Commuting difficulties	11
Need to do paid work	26	Gap year / deferral	10
Financial difficulties	25	Fee difficulties	10
Workload difficulties	25	Academic exchange	10
Personal reasons	25	Social reasons	9
Need a break	22	Administrative support	8
Boredom/lack of interest	22	Travel or tourism	8
Expectations not met	22	Institution reputation	8
Career prospects	20	Other opportunities	8
Change of direction	18	Standards too high	6
Family responsibilities	17	Moving residence	6
Academic support	16	Graduating	5
Paid work responsibilities	16	Received other offer	5
Quality concerns	15	Government assistance	3

**“ It is evident that some of the most common reasons relate to situational factors... [which] underscores the importance of student support ”**

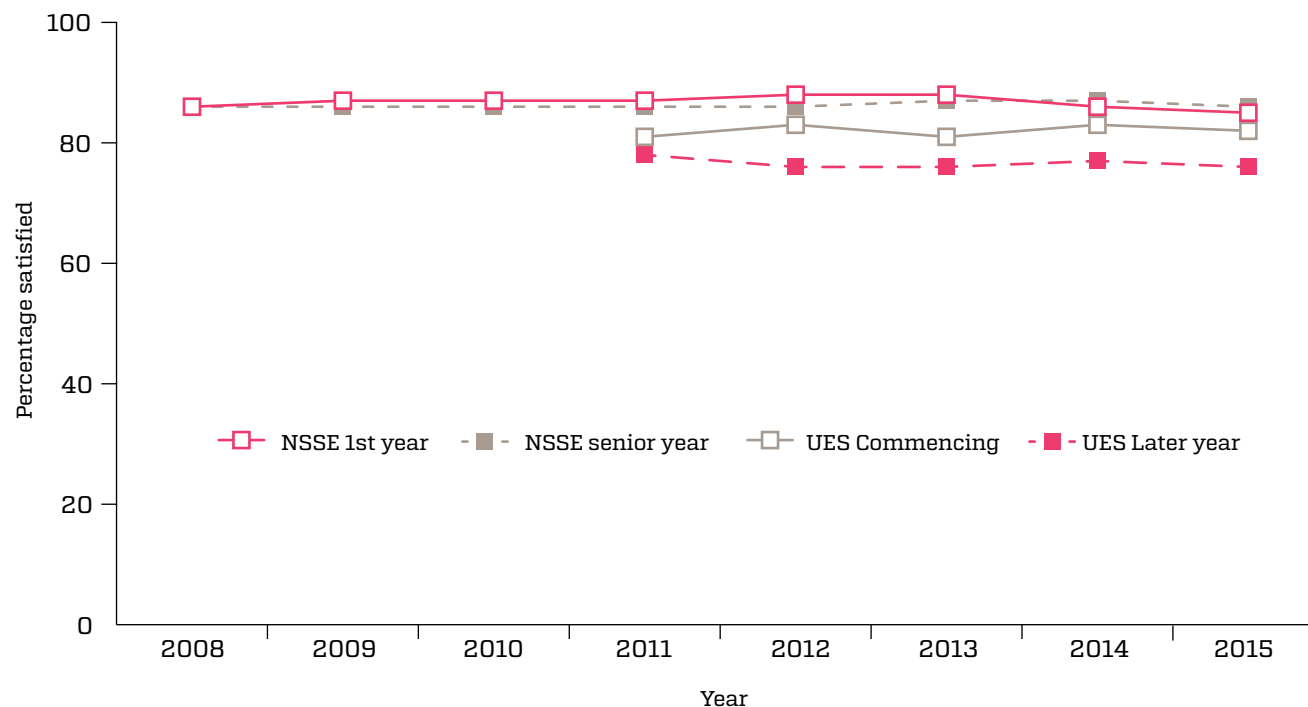
## 4.2 International comparisons of higher education students

One consideration in the early stages of developing the UES was to ensure the ability to use the data for benchmarking against similar student satisfaction surveys conducted in other national contexts. The “overall satisfaction” 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 and Canada, with 323,801 students from 587 colleges and universities completing the 2015 NSSE.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 2 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.

Note that by way of comparison, NSSE is only administered to a subset of universities and colleges in the USA and Canada, which number more than 2,700 in total. If the institutions that participate in NSSE differ from those that do not, the results will not necessarily

Figure 2 – Overall higher education student satisfaction with course quality, UES/SES CEQ and NSS, 2008 to 2015



reflect an unbiased estimate of student satisfaction at the overall sector level. If, for example, the NSSE is administered to students of “better” institutions, the results will be biased upward.

Bearing these caveats in mind, Figure 3 shows that respondents to the NSSE are more likely to be satisfied with their educational experience than respondents to the UES/SES, especially amongst later-year students.

It is also interesting to note that the percentage satisfied results 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.

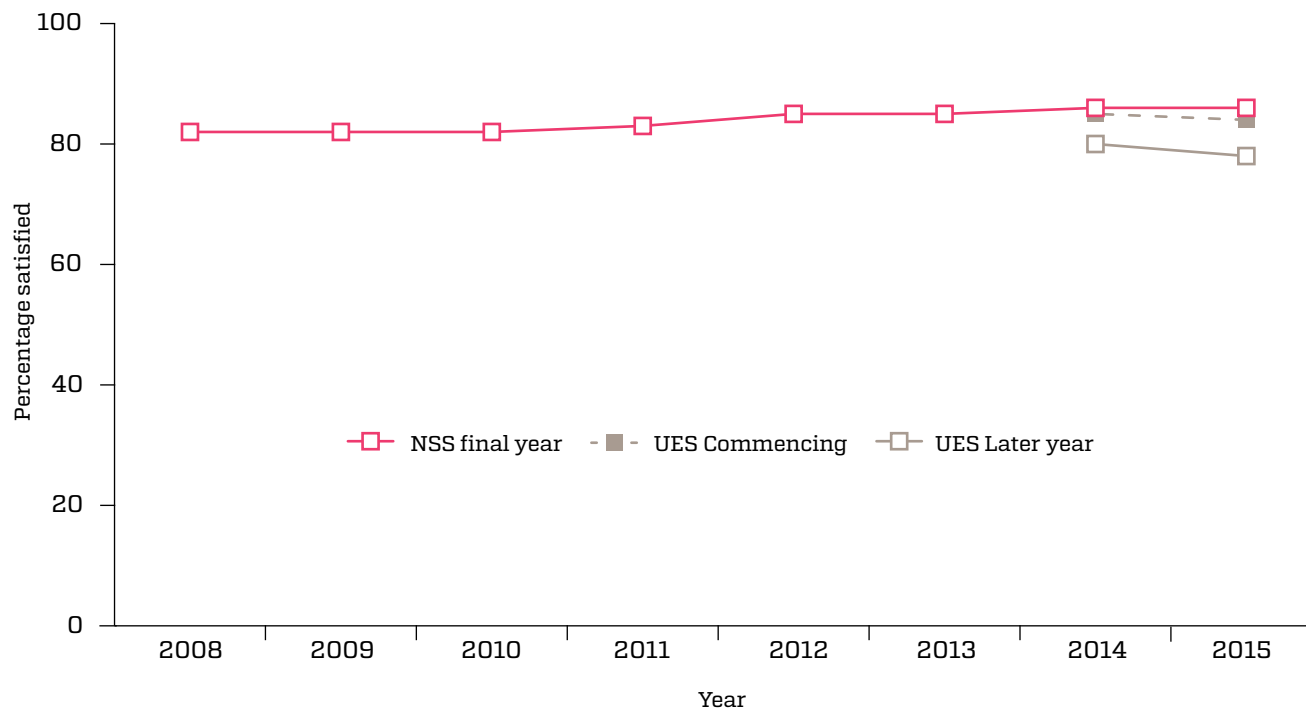
<sup>2</sup> “How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?”

<sup>3</sup> Indiana University. (2015). About NSSE. Retrieved 22 Nov., 2015, from <http://nsse.iub.edu/html/about.cfm>

In 2014 and 2015, 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,<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> reducing the potential for non-random selection inherent in the NSSE.

Figure 2 presents the percentage of NSS and UES/SES CEQ respondents who were satisfied with the quality of their course. Comparing final/after-year students, it can be seen that UK students are more likely to express satisfaction with the quality of their course, with around eight percentage points separating the two groups in 2015 (86 per cent and 78 per cent respectively), a slight increase from 2014. Given the large number of responses to both surveys,<sup>6</sup> 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.

Figure 3 – Entire educational experience rated positively by higher education students, UES/SES and NSSE, 2008 to 2015



It is interesting, however, that both the SES and CEQ surveys show Australian-enrolled students to be less likely to be satisfied with their higher education

experience than their overseas counterparts. Also of interest in this figure is the extent to which the NSS overall satisfaction results are consistent over time.

**“ The NSS, administered mostly to final year undergraduates, is run across all publicly funded higher education institutions in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland ”**

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](http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/the_nss.html)

6 In all, 3,057 and 2,506 commencing and later-year students, respectively, responded to the CEQ item. The level of statistical precision achieved for this item was  $\pm 1.1$  and  $\pm 1.3$  percentage points at a 90 per cent confidence level for commencing and later-year students, respectively, at the national level.

### 4.3 The university student experience of specific groups

Percentage satisfied results for all five focus areas for university students are presented in Table 19. Overall results for all sub-groups are presented in the bottom row and data is also provided for a number of important demographic and contextual variables. As noted previously, the results presented are based on a series of separate analyses and do not reflect interactions between the characteristics.

Looking at the overall results, there is a great deal of variation in percentage satisfied results. The results range from 86 per cent for the Learning Resources focus area, down to 60 per cent for the Learner Engagement focus area. A comparatively large proportion of students reported satisfaction with the Teaching Quality (82 per cent) provided by their university and their Skills Development (81 per cent). In relation to the Student Support provided by their university, 72 per cent of survey respondents expressed satisfaction.

Table 19 – Percentage satisfied scores by subgroup

Group – Subgroup	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources
Stage of studies – Commencing	80	59	84	75	89
Stage of studies – Later year	84	62	78	67	82
Male	78	61	80	70	86
Female	83	60	83	73	87
Age group – under 25	81	64	82	71	87
Age group – 25 to 29	81	53	79	71	83
Age group – 30 to 39	80	45	81	75	84
Age group – 40 and over	80	42	84	77	85
Indigenous	82	54	83	76	87
Non-Indigenous	81	60	82	72	86
Home language – English	82	61	83	73	87
Home language – Other	79	59	78	69	85
Disability reported	77	55	79	74	83
No disability reported	81	61	82	72	86
Internal Study mode	81	63	82	72	87
External/multi-modal Study mode	80	43	80	73	85
Domestic student	81	61	82	72	86
International student	79	56	78	70	86
First in family	81	58	84	77	90
Not first in family	79	62	84	74	88
Previous university experience – current	80	58	84	74	88
Previous university experience – another	79	53	84	76	88
New to higher education	80	62	84	75	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>

As per the combined analysis of university and non-university respondents, those who recently commenced their studies were less likely to be satisfied with their Skill Development compared with those who were in their later years, and were marginally less likely to be satisfied with Learner Engagement. They were, on the other hand, more likely than later years students to indicate their satisfaction with the Teaching Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources provided by their university.

In relation to male and female students, there were few differences in percentage satisfied results, with male students generally less likely to be satisfied with their educational experience than female students. A difference between males and females of five percentage points was observed in relation to the Skills Development focus area. As commented on in relation to the overall results for higher education students, this result may be affected by the types of courses undertaken by male and female students. No substantive difference between males and females was observed for Learner Engagement.

With respect to study mode, those studying internally were substantially more likely to express satisfaction with their level of engagement than those studying externally or by mixed mode, with over 20 percentage points between the groups. The differences in relation to the other four focus areas were relatively small.

There is a clear association between age and Learner Engagement, with younger students (aged under 25) much more likely to be satisfied with their level of engagement than students in the three older age groups. This is particularly the case for students

over 40. Older students were more likely than younger students to express satisfaction with the Student Support provided by their university.

While Indigenous students only constituted 1.3 per cent of the university sample (see Table 1) they were less likely than non-Indigenous students to be satisfied with Learner Engagement, which is concerning. Indigenous students were somewhat more likely to be satisfied with the Student Support they received. Differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in relation to the other three focus areas were smaller in magnitude and, given the width of the confidence intervals associated with the percentage agreement results for Indigenous students (see Table 19), may not be statistically significant.

Students from a non-English speaking background were less likely than those who spoke English at home to be satisfied with every aspect of their educational experience. A similar pattern was observed with respect to international students, who were less likely than domestic students to report satisfaction across the five focus areas. These differences were greatest in relation to Learner Engagement and Teaching Quality.

Students who reported having a disability were slightly more likely to be satisfied with Student Support, than students who did not report any disability. The opposite is observed in relation to the four other focus areas; however, with the exception of Skills Development, these differences were relatively small.

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 be satisfied with their level of engagement. Considering whether students had previous university experience, it is interesting to note that students who had previously been enrolled at another university were less likely to be satisfied with Learner Engagement, especially in relation to students new to higher education. There were no other notable differences with respect to this characteristic.

**“ There is a clear association between age and Learner Engagement, with younger students [aged under 25] much more likely to be satisfied with their level of engagement than students in the three older age groups ”**

In relation to study area (see Table 20), there is substantial variation in reported satisfaction both across and within study areas. The narrowest range of results across study areas is seen in relation to Student Support, with 11 percentage points separating the study areas (Rehabilitation with the highest results and Architecture and built environment with the lowest), followed by the Learning Resources (13 percentage points), Skills Development (14 percentage points) and Teaching Quality (15 percentage points) focus areas. The widest range is observed for Learner Engagement, with 24 percentage points separating the two study areas with the highest and lowest results (Medicine and Psychology, respectively). It should be noted that broad disciplinary aggregations hide much of the detail that is relevant to schools, faculties and academic departments.

As noted in relation to the results for the higher education sector as a whole, it could be the case that some of the observed differences, especially those in relation to study areas containing small numbers of observations, may not be statistically significant.

Table 20 – Percentage satisfied scores by study area

Study area	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources
Science and mathematics	81	63	85	74	89
Computing and Information Systems	76	59	78	74	87
Engineering	78	67	77	69	86
Architecture and built environment	80	66	79	66	77
Agriculture and environmental studies	83	64	85	72	88
Health services and support	83	63	84	74	88
Medicine	87	77	80	75	82
Nursing	86	60	80	75	87
Pharmacy	84	71	84	71	87
Dentistry	87	65	74	69	82
Veterinary science	85	70	87	76	88
Rehabilitation	90	75	89	77	90
Teacher education	82	59	80	72	86
Business and management	77	56	77	69	85
Humanities, culture and social sciences	80	55	85	71	85
Social work	84	54	83	74	85
Psychology	82	53	86	75	88
Law and paralegal studies	82	55	82	70	86
Creative arts	81	67	84	71	83
Communications	83	66	83	71	87
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and Recreation	81	63	81	70	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>

## 4.4 University experience perceptions over time

Table 21 compares results from the 2015 SES with those from the 2014 UES. When reading the results in this table it should be noted that confidence intervals are not shown in Table 21 and it is important to consider the precision of the estimates, especially in relation to study areas based on small numbers of observations.

At the national level, when compared with 2014 very similar percentage satisfied results were observed across all five focus areas in 2015. Only one percentage point separated the Learner Engagement, Student Support and Learning Resources focus areas from 2014 to 2015. The overall results were identical for both years with respect to the Skills Development and Teaching Quality focus areas. The stability of the instrument, the approach to sampling and the consistency of administration across the sector are likely to have contributed to the consistency of these results.

Table 21 – Percentage satisfied scores by study area, 2014 and 2015

Study area	2014					2015				
	SD	LE	TQ	SS	LR	SD	LE	TQ	SS	LR
Science and mathematics	81	65	86	76	89	81	63	85	74	89
Computing and Information Systems	75	58	75	71	83	76	59	78	74	87
Engineering	79	68	76	70	84	78	67	77	69	86
Architecture and built environment	81	67	77	67	75	80	66	79	66	77
Agriculture and environmental studies	81	63	84	75	87	83	64	85	72	88
Health services and support	83	63	83	74	88	83	63	84	74	88
Medicine	88	77	80	73	81	87	77	80	75	82
Nursing	86	61	80	75	86	86	60	80	75	87
Pharmacy	84	67	80	72	85	84	71	84	71	87
Dentistry	85	57	75	70	76	87	65	74	69	82
Veterinary science	84	75	85	73	86	85	70	87	76	88
Rehabilitation	90	75	88	78	90	90	75	89	77	90
Teacher education	82	59	81	73	86	82	59	80	72	86
Business and management	78	57	78	70	85	77	56	77	69	85
Humanities, culture and social sciences	80	57	86	73	85	80	55	85	71	85
Social work	85	53	84	76	84	84	54	83	74	85
Psychology	83	56	87	76	89	82	53	86	75	88
Law and paralegal studies	85	55	84	70	85	82	55	82	70	86
Creative arts	80	66	83	71	80	81	67	84	71	83
Communications	83	66	84	71	87	83	66	83	71	87
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and Recreation	82	64	83	69	88	81	63	81	70	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>

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



## 4.5 Results for individual questionnaire items

Table 22 presents percentage satisfied results for the 46 individual survey items underpinning the five SES focus areas, stratified by stage of studies. Results from the 2014 UES are presented to facilitate comparisons over time.

Table 22.1 – Percentage satisfied scores for SEQ items for university students by stage of studies, 2014 and 2015

Focus area	Item	2014			2015		
		C	LY	T	C	LY	T
SD	Developed critical and analytical thinking	68	76	71	68	73	70
	Developed ability to solve complex problems	57	67	61	58	66	61
	Developed ability to work effectively with others	59	67	62	60	67	63
	Developed confidence to learn independently	69	77	72	71	77	73
	Developed written communication skills	58	71	63	59	70	63
	Developed spoken communication skills	50	61	54	49	60	53
	Developed knowledge of field studying	78	80	79	78	79	79
	Developed work-related knowledge and skills	62	65	63	63	63	63

SD = Skills Development, C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 22.2 – Percentage satisfied scores for SEQ items for university students by stage of studies, 2014 and 2015

Focus area	Item	2014			2015		
		C	LY	T	C	LY	T
LE	Felt prepared for your study	63	69	66	65	69	66
	Had a sense of belonging to your university	54	50	53	54	50	52
	Participated in discussions online or face-to-face	57	63	59	55	60	57
	Worked with other students as part of your study	62	67	64	63	69	65
	Interacted with students outside study requirements	46	48	46	46	49	47
	Interacted with students who are very different from you	55	53	55	51	50	50
	Been given opportunities to interact with local students	58	57	58	57	57	57

LE = Learner Engagement, C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 22.3 – Percentage satisfied scores for SEQ items for university students by stage of studies, 2014 and 2015

Focus area	Item	2014			2015		
		C	LY	T	C	LY	T
TQ	Study well structured and focused	71	64	68	71	63	68
	Study relevant to education as a whole	74	70	72	74	70	72
	Teachers engaged you actively in learning	65	62	64	67	64	66
	Teachers demonstrated concern for student learning	61	59	60	62	58	60
	Teachers provided clear explanations on coursework and assessment	66	62	65	68	63	66
	Teachers stimulated you intellectually	70	67	69	70	67	69
	Teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn	51	52	52	51	51	51
	Teachers seemed helpful and approachable	73	71	72	72	69	71
	Teachers set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn	79	75	77	79	75	77
	Quality of teaching	83	77	81	83	77	81
	Quality of entire educational experience	83	77	80	82	76	80

TQ = Teaching Quality, C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

In relation to these individual items, “percentage satisfied” relates to the percentage of responses in the top two response categories. It is interesting to observe that many of the highest percentage satisfied results relate to the items constituting the Learning Resources focus area, with the quality of library resources and facilities especially highly rated (89 per cent), along with the quality of teaching spaces and online learning materials (87 per cent). It is also reassuring to see a large percentage of responses expressing satisfaction with the quality of teaching (81 per cent) and the entire educational experience (80 per cent), which were also amongst the highest-rated items. Many of the lowest results were associated with the Student Support and Learner Engagement focus areas, which may be of some concern to the universities. In relation to Student Support, only 38 per cent of respondents indicated that they received appropriate English language support, whilst fewer than half believed that they had been offered support relevant to their circumstances (47 per cent), and that careers advisors were available (48 per cent) and helpful (47 per cent). In relation to Learner Engagement, only 47 per cent reported interacting with students outside of study requirements.

As would be expected, some of the largest differences in percentage satisfied results between commencing and later-year students were observed in relation to the Skills Development focus area, specifically written communication skills (11 percentage points), spoken communication skills (11 percentage points) and the ability to solve complex problems (8 percentage points).

Commencing students, on the other hand, were much more likely than later-year students to indicate satisfaction with the support they received to settle into study, with 11 percentage points separating them. Given that this experience would still be fresh in the minds of commencing students, it is not a surprising result. In general, commencing students were more likely to indicate satisfaction with the items relating to Teaching Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources, whereas later-year students were more likely to indicate satisfaction with the items relating to Skills Development and Learner Engagement.

Table 22.4 – Percentage satisfied scores for SEQ items for university students by stage of studies, 2014 and 2015

Focus area	Item	2014			2015		
		C	LY	T	C	LY	T
SS	Experienced efficient enrolment and admissions processes	73	70	72	72	69	71
	Induction/orientation activities relevant and helpful	60	50	56	60	51	57
	Received support from university to settle into study	62	50	58	62	51	58
	Administrative staff or systems: available	65	60	63	64	58	62
	Administrative staff or systems: helpful	62	56	60	61	55	59
	Careers advisors: available	49	45	47	50	45	48
	Careers advisors: helpful	49	44	47	50	44	47
	Academic or learning advisors: available	63	59	62	63	58	61
	Academic or learning advisors: helpful	66	62	64	65	60	63
	Support services: available	56	53	55	55	52	54
	Support services: helpful	57	55	56	55	53	54
	Offered support relevant to circumstances	48	43	46	49	43	47
	Received appropriate English language skill support	38	31	35	41	34	38

SS = Student Support, C = Commencing, LY = Later year, T = Total

Table 22.5 – Percentage satisfied scores for SEQ items for university students by stage of studies, 2014 and 2015

Focus area	Item	2014			2015		
		C	LY	T	C	LY	T
LR	Quality of teaching spaces	88	82	86	89	83	87
	Quality of student spaces and common areas	80	73	78	82	74	79
	Quality of online learning materials	88	83	86	88	84	87
	Quality of computing/IT resources	85	79	83	85	80	84
	Quality of assigned books, notes and resources	82	77	80	83	78	81
	Quality of laboratory or studio equipment	87	80	84	87	80	84
	Quality of library resources and facilities	89	87	88	90	87	89

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

Table 22 also demonstrates the extent of the variation in percentage satisfied results between items in the same focus area. The smallest variation is observed in relation to the Learning Resources focus area, with ten percentage points separating the lowest and highest results. Conversely, 33 percentage points separated the lowest and highest percentage satisfied results in the Student Support focus area. In general, however, there was more variation in percentage satisfied results between the items in different focus areas than within the same focus area.

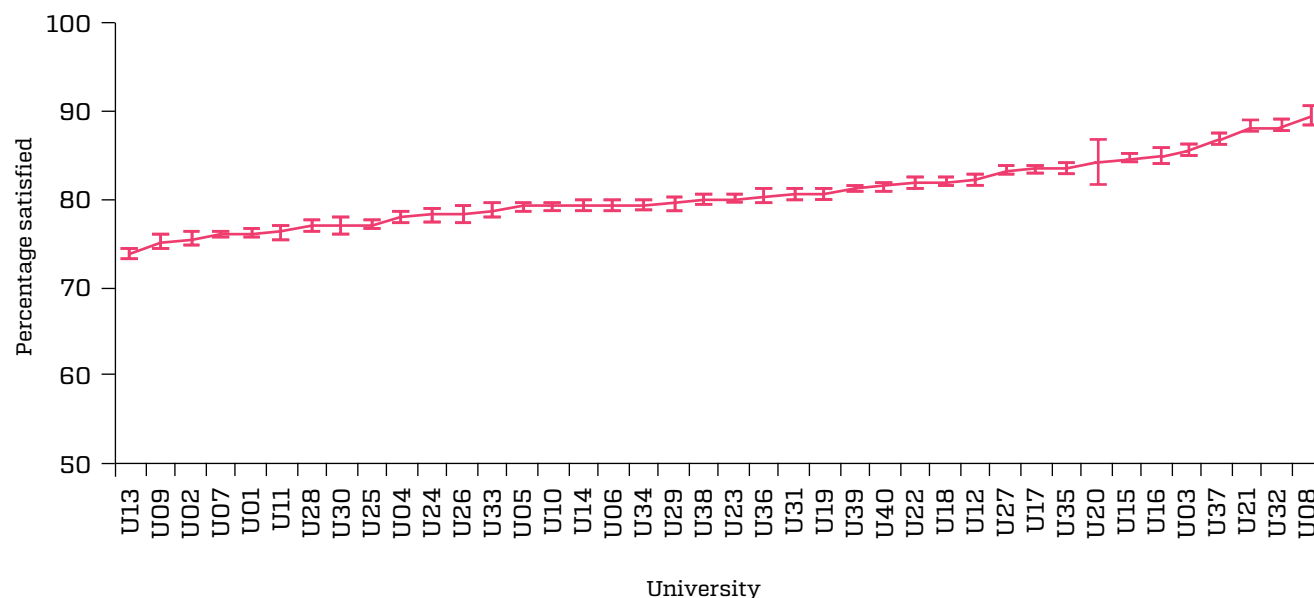
As mentioned previously, the results in 2014 and 2015 were very similar. This trend was also reflected at an item level. The largest difference was observed in relation to satisfaction with the Learner Engagement item 'Interacted with students who are very different from you'. A decrease of five percentage points overall was observed with declines for both commencing and later years students. In 2015 there was a small increase of two percentage points in relation to the Student Support item 'Received appropriate English language skill support' with an upwards trend observed for both student groups. It is unclear the extent to which these changes reflect genuine changes in practice.

## 4.6 The experience of students from different universities

Percentage satisfied results on the entire educational experience item is given in Figure 4, for students from different university providers. 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 bodies. To avoid creating a simplistic “league table” of higher education institutions, university names have been replaced with randomly-assigned numerical identifiers in Figure 4.<sup>7</sup>

Due to the relatively small number of students at the institutional level, 90 per cent confidence intervals have been included in Figure 4. 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.

Figure 4 – Percentage satisfied results on the quality of entire educational experience for university students



When institutional percentage satisfied 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 4, 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.

<sup>7</sup> For example, “U01” represents the same institution in Figure 4. Moreover, it also represents the same institution in the 2013 and 2014 editions of the UES report.

## 4.7 Early departure of university students

As mentioned previously, students were also asked to indicate whether they had seriously considered leaving their university during 2015. Table 23 contains the results to this question by student subgroup. Overall, 18 per cent of respondents indicated that they had considered leaving, up one percentage point from 2014 and 2013.

Commencing students were more likely than later-year students to consider leaving their university which is not unexpected. The difference between commencing and completing students was comparatively small at only three percentage points.

Students aged over 40 were more likely than their younger classmates to have thought about discontinuing their studies. Indigenous students were more likely to consider early departure than non-Indigenous students. This finding should be considered in light of the fact that Indigenous students reported higher levels of satisfaction with the support provided by their university (see Table 19).

Students who spoke English as their main language at home were more likely to consider leaving their university than those who spoke a language other than English at home. A similar pattern is observed in relation to domestic and international students.

Table 23 – Percentage of university students considering early departure by subgroup

Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure	Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure
Stage of studies – Commencing	19	Disability reported	26
Stage of studies – Later year	16	No disability reported	17
Male	17	Internal Study mode	17
Female	18	External/multi-modal Study mode	20
Age group – under 25	17	Domestic student	18
25 to 29	21	International student	14
30 to 39	21	First in family	20
40 and over	22	Not first in family	17
Indigenous	27	Previous university experience – Current	20
Non-Indigenous	18	Previous university experience – Another	19
Home language – English	19	New to higher education	19
Home language – Other	15	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

Those who indicated that they had a disability were more likely to have thought about discontinuing their studies than students who did not report having a disability. As was evident in relation to Indigenous students, those with a disability were more likely to report satisfaction with the level of support provided by their university (see Table 19).

Students who were the first in their family to attend university were more likely than their peers to have considered leaving their university. This result is logical, considering that these students would generally know less about what to expect at university than those with a family history of higher education. No substantial differences in departure intentions were observed in relation to study mode, gender or previous university experience.

Figure 5 plots the percentage of students considering leaving their university in 2015 against self-reported average grades. Students reporting lower grades were, not surprisingly, much more likely to consider early departure than those reporting higher grades. This relationship is most evident for students reporting grades below 50 per cent, with more than 40 per cent of this group considering early departure.

If students indicated that they had seriously considered discontinuing their studies in 2015 they were asked to indicate why they had thought about leaving, from a list of 30 reasons. Table 24, summarises the reasons for considering departure, along with comparable data from the 2014 UES. Students could choose multiple reasons, so the percentages do not add to 100. The table shows that frequently nominated reasons appear to be situational factors, such as health or stress (42 per cent), study/life balance (29 per cent), the need to do paid work (26 per cent), unspecified personal reasons (26 per cent) and difficulties relating to finances and workload (each with 25 per cent). The large proportion of students reporting situational reasons for considering early departure highlights the need to provide a wide range of student support services. In relation to the 2014 results, the key difference appears to be the increase of 11 percentage points for 'health or stress' reasons. It is unclear whether the stress reported by students relates to their course or to their personal situation.

Figure 5 – Percentage of university students considering early departure by average grades to date

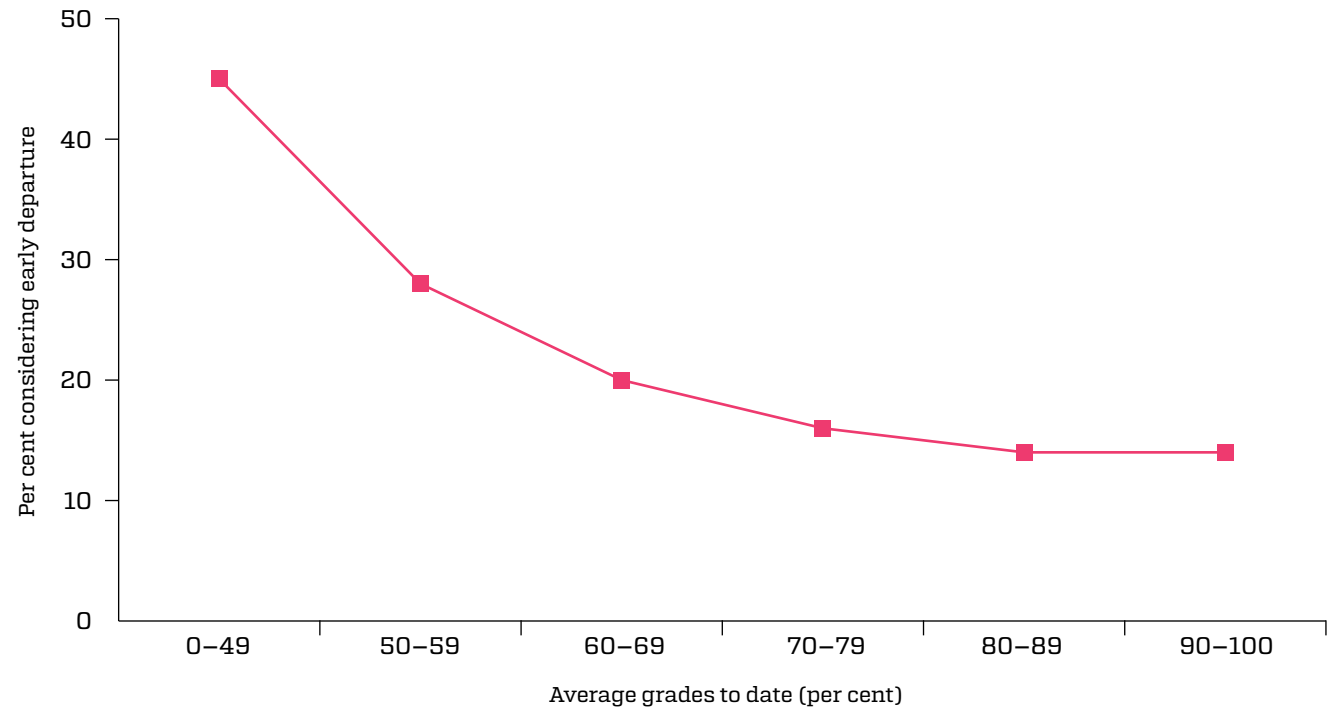


Table 24 – Selected reasons for considering early departure, 2014 and 2015

Departure reason	Per cent considering departure		Departure reason	Per cent considering departure	
	2014	2015		2014	2015
Health or stress	31	42	Other	15	13
Study/life balance	28	29	Commuting difficulties	11	11
Personal reasons	24	26	Gap year/deferral	11	11
Need to do paid work	23	26	Academic exchange	10	10
Workload difficulties	27	25	Social reasons	8	9
Financial difficulties	28	25	Fee difficulties	9	9
Need a break	19	22	Administrative support	6	8
Boredom/lack of interest	21	22	Travel or tourism	7	8
Expectations not met	25	22	Institution reputation	7	8
Career prospects	21	20	Other opportunities	9	8
Change of direction	20	19	Moving residence	5	7
Family responsibilities	18	17	Standards too high	5	6
Academic support	15	16	Graduating	5	5
Paid work responsibilities	15	16	Received other offer	3	5
Quality concerns	15	14	Government assistance	3	3

As for the overall higher education results, the most frequent (arguably) institutional factor reported by students was that their expectations had not been met (22 per cent) which may indicate that further analysis of student expectations of students' university experience would be beneficial in discussions around attrition and retention. Other institutional factors that were seen as contributing to potential early departure were selected much less frequently (e.g. academic support, administrative support, institutional reputation). Several personal factors were also somewhat common, including boredom/lack of interest or a need to take a break (each with 22 per cent), career prospects (20 per cent), and a change in direction (19 per cent). These results are broadly consistent with the 2014 UES.

## 4.8 Results for NUHEI students

The following section contains results from the first administration of the Student Experience Survey to non-university providers in the higher education sector. Thirty nine institutions opted into the 2015 SES collection. As the students attending these institutions may not be representative of NUHEI students overall, the results should not be interpreted as reflecting the overall experience of these students. It should also be noted that as the NUHEIs tend to have smaller numbers of current students than the universities, some differences observed in the data may not be significant.

#### 4.8.1 The NUHEI student experience of specific groups

Percentage satisfied results for all five focus areas are presented in Table 25. Overall results for all subgroups are presented in the bottom row and data is also provided for a number of important demographic and contextual variables. As was the case with respect to the data presented for university students, it should be noted that the results presented in this section are based on a series of separate analyses and thus do not reflect any interactions between any of the characteristics.

Looking initially at the overall results, there is substantial variation in percentage satisfied results. These ranged from 83 per cent for the Skills Development and Teaching Quality focus area, down to 61 per cent for the Learner Engagement focus area. Encouragingly, a relatively large proportion of students indicated satisfaction with the Student Support provided by their institution (76 per cent) and 74 per cent were satisfied with the Learning Resources that were available to them.

Table 25 – Percentage satisfied scores for NUHEI students by subgroup

Group/subgroup	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources
Stage of studies – Commencing	83	64	86	82	83
Stage of studies – Later year	82	60	81	73	69
Male	82	65	83	77	76
Female	83	59	83	76	73
Age group – under 25	84	70	83	77	75
Age group – 25 to 29	81	58	81	76	70
Age group – 30 to 39	79	46	81	72	70
Age group – 40 and over	82	47	85	79	77
Indigenous	88	73	88	80	80
Non-Indigenous	83	61	83	76	74
Home language – English	83	60	84	77	74
Home language – Other	79	61	78	73	72
Disability reported	76	63	79	73	75
No disability reported	83	61	83	76	74
Internal Study mode	84	67	83	77	74
External/multi-modal Study mode	79	41	84	74	75
Domestic student	83	61	84	77	74
International student	78	61	77	72	72
First in family	84	67	89	86	84
Not first in family	85	68	88	85	79
Previous university experience – current	79	60	82	76	80
Previous university experience – another	81	58	87	82	80
New to higher education	85	69	87	83	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>74</b>



Later-year NUHEI students were generally less satisfied than those who had recently commenced their studies across all of the focus areas. Both later years and commencing students expressed high levels of satisfaction with their Skills Development (82 per cent and 83 per cent respectively).

In relation to male and female students, most differences in percentage satisfied results were fairly marginal, with male students generally more likely to be satisfied with their educational experience than female students. A difference between males and females of six percentage points was observed in relation to the Learner Engagement 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 Teaching Quality.

In relation to study mode, internal students were vastly more likely to be satisfied with Learner Engagement than those studying externally or by mixed mode, with more than 26 percentage points between the groups. The differences in relation to the other four focus areas were comparatively small.

Unlike the findings in relation to university students, there is no clear, linear association between age and reported satisfaction with any of the five focus areas, with the exception of Learner Engagement. Young students (aged under 25) were much more likely to be satisfied with Learner Engagement. On the other hand, older students were essentially just as likely as younger students to be satisfied with Teaching Quality. Some of this variation is likely to be due to the comparatively small numbers of students in each age group.

Indigenous students, while constituting less than one per cent of the NUHEI sample (see Table 2), were more likely to be satisfied than their non-Indigenous classmates across all focus areas. They were much more likely to be satisfied with Learner Engagement however, given the width of the confidence intervals associated with the percentage agreement results for Indigenous students (see Table 10), this result may not be statistically significant.

As was seen with respect to university students, NUHEI students who spoke English as their main language at home were generally more likely than those from a non-English speaking background to be satisfied with different aspects of their educational experience. A similar pattern is observed in relation to domestic students, who were generally more likely than international students to be satisfied with different aspects of their educational experience. These differences were largest in relation to Teaching Quality, Skills Development and Student Support.

Students who reported having a disability were slightly less likely to be satisfied with Student Support, than students who did not report any disability, which is of concern. These students are also less likely to be satisfied with Skills Development and Teaching Quality.

Only minor differences were observed based on whether the student was the first in their family to attend a higher education institution, with the largest difference being that students who were the first in their family to attend higher education were more likely to be satisfied with Learning Resources. Considering whether students had previous higher education experience, it is interesting to note that students who had previously been enrolled at their current institution were generally less likely to be satisfied with different aspects of their student experience.

Looking now at study area (see Table 26), there is considerable variation in percentage satisfied results both across and within study areas for NUHEIs. Skills Development displayed the narrowest range of results across study areas, with 23 percentage points separating the study areas (Agriculture and environmental studies/Law and paralegal with the highest results and Architecture and built environment with the lowest), followed by the Teaching Quality (32 percentage points), Learning Resources (38 percentage points) and Learner Engagement (48 percentage points) focus areas. The widest range of satisfied responses was observed for Student Support, with 49 percentage points separating the two study areas with the highest and lowest results (Veterinary science and Architecture and the built environment, respectively). It should be noted that broad disciplinary aggregations hide much of the detail that is relevant to schools, faculties and academic departments, as well as the small number of responses that are present for some study areas.

As commented on in relation to Tables 19 and 20, while confidence intervals are not shown in Tables 25 and 26, it is important to interpret the results with respect to the remarks made in Section 3.4 concerning the precision of estimates in the SES. It is possible that many of the differences in this table, may not be statistically significant.

Table 26 – Percentage satisfied scores for non-university students by study area

Study area	Skills Development	Learner Engagement	Teaching Quality	Student Support	Learning Resources
Science and mathematics	87	73	88	79	87
Computing and Information Systems	82	74	85	81	77
Engineering	76	56	73	69	79
Architecture and built environment	71	50	62	51	58
Agriculture and environmental studies	94	77	93	92	96
Health services and support	79	50	83	73	70
Nursing	90	74	88	87	86
Veterinary science	88	88	94	100	94
Teacher education	88	71	87	80	72
Business and management	78	61	75	71	67
Humanities, culture and social sciences	86	53	93	89	87
Social work	88	49	86	74	82
Psychology	77	40	81	79	78
Law and paralegal studies	94	66	94	81	94
Creative arts	82	71	78	70	65
Communications	85	81	84	80	83
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and Recreation	88	69	83	79	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>74</b>

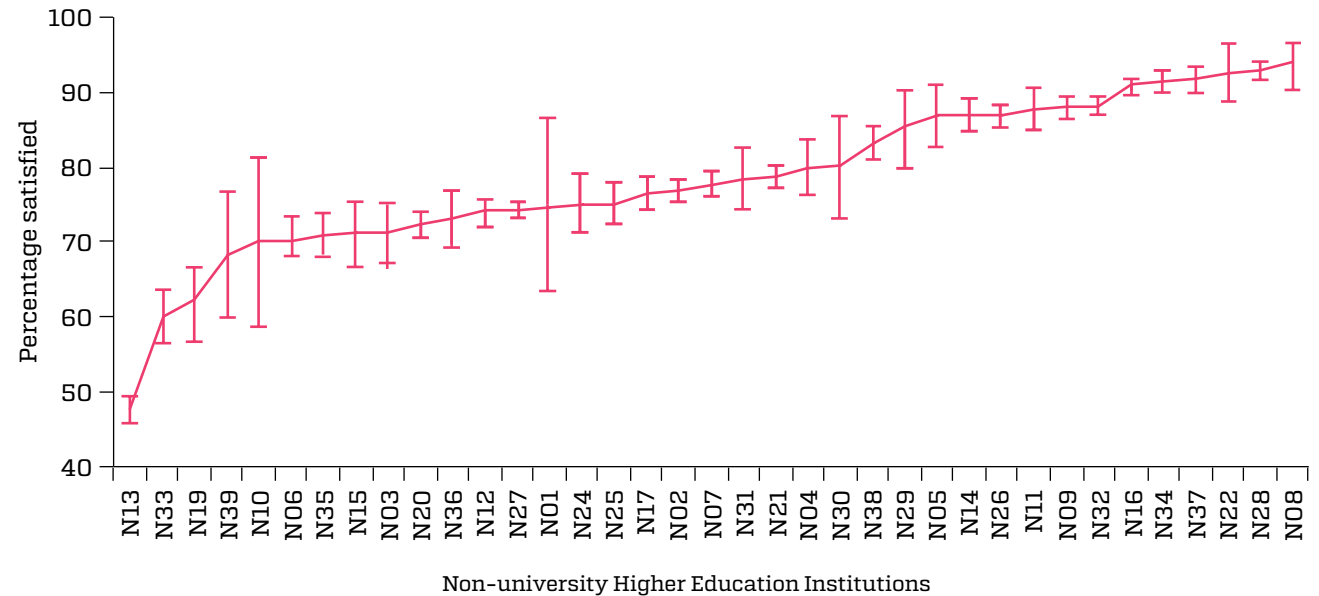
#### 4.8.2 Institutional comparisons

Figure 6 contains the percentage satisfied results on the quality of the entire educational experience item for students from non-university higher education institutions. As is the case in relation to universities, the data presented in this figure does not take differences in course offerings between institutions and the composition of the student bodies into account. Institutional names have been replaced with randomly-assigned numerical identifiers in Figure 6 to avoid the creation of rankings.

Ninety per cent confidence intervals have been included in Figure 6 and 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.

From Figure 6 it is evident that when satisfaction items 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 6, which reports percentage satisfied results on 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.

Figure 6 – Percentage of satisfied results on the quality of entire educational experience for non-university students



As was the case in relation to data reported from university students, while there do not appear to be many significant differences between institutions in the middle of the distribution, there are institutions at both ends of the distribution that are significantly different to those in the middle, taking into account some with very large confidence intervals.

### 4.8.3 Early departure of non-university students

As mentioned previously in relation to university students, non-university students were asked to indicate whether they had seriously considered leaving their institution during 2015. The results of this question are presented by student subgroup in Table 27. Overall, 24 per cent of respondents indicated that they had considered leaving, a higher figure than that reported by university students (18 per cent).

In contrast to university students, commencing non-university students were less likely than later-year students to have considered leaving their university; however the difference between these two groups was only four percentage points.

Young students aged under 25 were less likely than their classmates aged between 25 and 39 to have considered leaving their institution. Indigenous students were notably less likely to have considered early departure than non-Indigenous students. This is consistent with the observation that Indigenous students were more likely to be satisfied with the support provided by their institution (see Table 22). This pattern of responses is different from Indigenous university students who report higher levels of satisfaction with Student Support but increased consideration of discontinuing their studies.

Table 27 – Percentage of non-university students considering early departure by subgroup

Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure	Group/subgroup	Per cent considering departure
Stage of studies – Commencing	22	Disability reported	37
Stage of studies – Later year	26	No disability reported	24
Male	23	Internal Study mode	24
Female	25	External/multi-modal Study mode	25
Age group – under 25	24	Domestic student	25
25 to 29	26	International student	20
30 to 39	27	First in family	24
40 and over	23	Not first in family	23
Indigenous	18	Previous university experience – Current	26
Non-Indigenous	25	Previous university experience – Another	21
Home language – English	26	New to higher education	22
Home language – Other	21	<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

Students who spoke English as their main language at home were more likely to have considered leaving their institution than those who spoke a language other than English at home. A similar pattern is observed in relation to domestic and international students.

Students who reported having a disability were substantially more likely to have considered leaving their institution than students who did not report having a disability. This is consistent with the reported lower levels of satisfaction with the level of support provided by their institution (see Table 25). Again, this does not follow the response pattern of university students with a disability who indicated satisfaction with Student Support but had still thought about discontinuing.

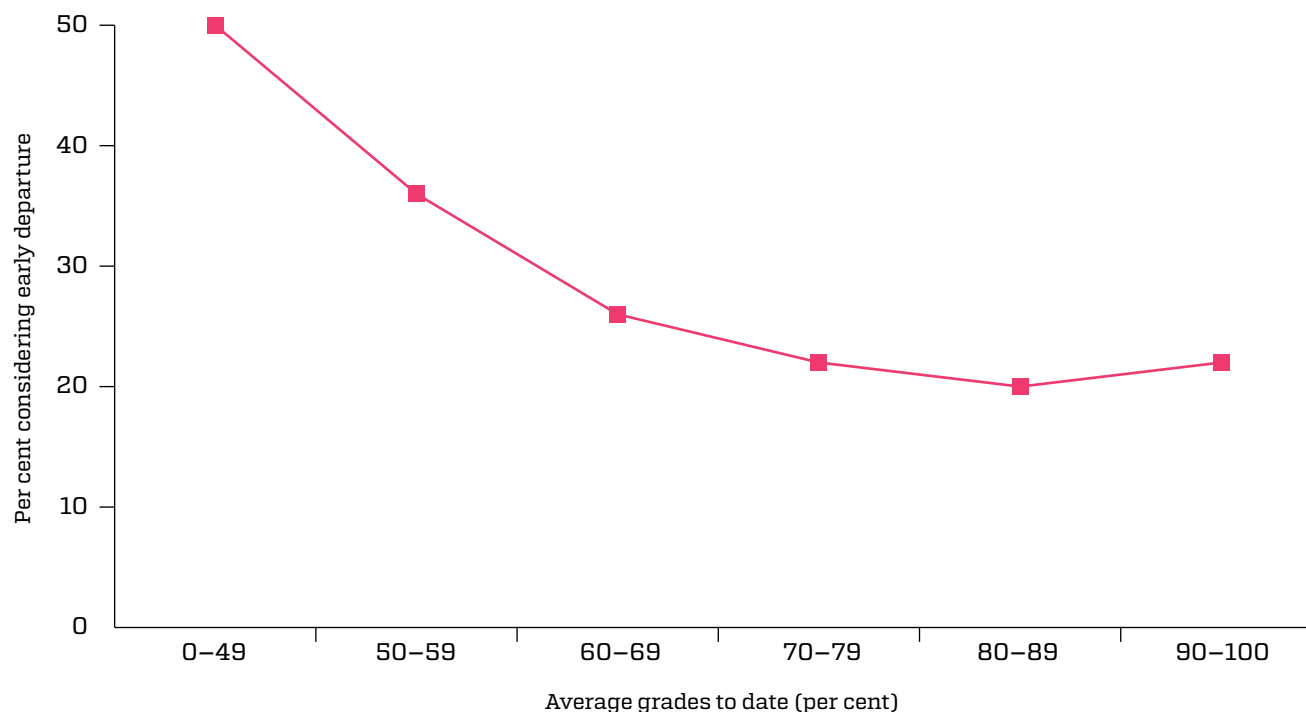
Students with previous higher education experience at the current institution appeared to be more likely to considering leaving. No substantial differences in departure intentions were observed in relation to study mode, gender or being the first in the family to attend higher education.

The percentage of students who had considered leaving their higher education institution in 2015 is plotted against (self-reported) average grades in Figure 7. As was the case in relation to university students, NUHEI students achieving lower grades are much more likely to consider early departure than students achieving high grades. NUHEI students achieving a grade of less than 50 per cent are most likely to be considering early departure (50 per cent).

Students who expressed serious consideration of leaving their institution in 2015 were then asked to indicate, from a list of 30 possible reasons, why they considered doing so. These are summarised in Table 28 on the following page. As mentioned previously in relation to university students, NUHEI students could select as many reasons as applied, so the percentages do not total 100.

It is evident that some of the most common reasons relate to situational factors, such as health or stress (43 per cent), study/life balance (27 per cent), the need to do paid work (26 per cent) and difficulties relating to finances (26 per cent) and workload (25 per cent). The importance of student support in terms of allowing students to continue with their studies is again highlighted.

Figure 7 – Percentage of non-university students considering early departure by average grades to date



As was the case for university student responses, the most common (arguably) institutional factor indicated by NUHEI students was that their expectations had not been met (26 per cent) which may indicate that further analysis of student expectations of their higher education experience would be beneficial in discussions around attrition and retention here also. Quality concerns were reported as a reason for having considered early departure by 24 per cent of NUHEI students which was higher than the 14 per cent recorded by university students. Institutions experiencing a

substantial number of students providing this reason for potential early departure are likely to benefit from further investigation of this area.

Other institutional factors were indicated less frequently (e.g. academic support, administrative support, institutional reputation). Several dispositional factors were also relatively common including a need to take a break (20 per cent), career prospects (17 per cent), boredom/lack of interest (15 per cent), and a change in direction (11 per cent).

Table 28 – Selected reasons for non-university students considering early departure, 2014 and 2015

Departure reason	Per cent of those considering departure	Departure reason	Per cent of those considering departure
Health or stress	43	Administrative support	14
Study/life balance	27	Institution reputation	13
Expectations not met	26	Fee difficulties	11
Financial difficulties	26	Academic exchange	11
Need to do paid work	26	Change of direction	11
Workload difficulties	25	Commuting difficulties	10
Personal reasons	24	Gap year/deferral	6
Quality concerns	24	Other opportunities	6
Need a break	20	Travel or tourism	5
Academic support	20	Social Reasons	5
Family responsibilities	17	Standards too high	5
Career prospects	17	Received other offer	5
Paid work responsibilities	16	Moving residence	5
Boredom/lack of interest	15	Government assistance	4
Other	15	Graduating	3



# Appendices

# Appendix 1: Methodological summary

## 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).

Table A1 contains an overview of the relevant collections from 2012 to 2015. The in-scope population definition for 2015 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 and the in-scope population increased as private providers were invited to take part in the SES for the first time. A refreshed approach to student engagement strategy was implemented that resulted in a dramatic increase in the overall response rate for university students to 37.6 per cent (see Section 2.2).

Table 29 – SES operational overview: 2012–2015

Project element	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Number of participating institutions	40 universities	40 universities	40 universities	40 universities <sup>i</sup>	39 NUHEIs
Number of 'in-scope' students	445,332	342,404	330,772	368,698	22,707
Data collection period	July-October	August-November	August-October	August-October	August-October
Primary data collection mode	Online	Online	Online	Online	Online <sup>ii</sup>
Overall response rate	21.1%	29.3%	30.1%	37.6%	39.2%
Number of completed surveys (students)	96,102	100,225	99,112	136,764	8,552
Number of completed surveys (courses)	n/a	108,940	108,322	148,500	8,621
Analytic unit	Student	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 2015 SES National Report.



## Interpreting the results

### Reporting metrics

Since its introduction, UES/SES data have been reported in two metrics: average scores and percentage satisfied 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 satisfied 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 satisfied with their higher education experience. At the individual response level, satisfaction is represented by a binary variable taking the value of one if the student is satisfied 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 satisfied results over focus area average scores. Percentage satisfied 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 satisfied results are presented throughout this report. In relation to SES focus areas, “percentage satisfied” reflects the percentage of students who give a focus area score of 55 or greater

out of a possible 100. In cases where the results on individual SES items are reported, percentage satisfied reflects the percentage of responses in the top two response categories. One consequence of this is that the results presented in the 2013 and 2014 UES reports and the 2015 SES report are not directly comparable to those presented in the 2011 and 2012 reports.

### Weighting

The SES is administered consistently across the higher education sector with a focus on best practice and the minimisation of survey error (see Section 2). 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 so, 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.

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 Section 3.3, corrective weighting does not provide any significant advantage for the 2015 SES. Similar analysis undertaken for the 2013 and 2014 UES reports resulted in the same conclusion. As such, all results presented in this report are based on unweighted data.

## Institutional participation

Under the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003, Table A institutions are self-accrediting providers, eligible for funding under the Act. Table B institutions are also self-accrediting, but are not eligible for general Commonwealth funded places.

## Survey population

With the exception of the expansion of the scope to non-university higher education institutions, the definitions used for commencing and later-year students in the have been essentially unchanged from 2013.

In 2015, 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 2015 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 were enrolled for at least one semester. This definition was identical to that used for the 2013 and 2014 UES with the exception of the expansion of the scope from university students to include students enrolled with non-university higher education providers. 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 the 2015 SES and all 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.

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. In 2013, and in the subsequent 2014 collection, students who were enrolled in these shorter courses were included in the sample as completing students.

As was the case for commencing students, in 2012, institutions were responsible for extracting in-scope 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 to identify completing students, with specific adjustments required to accommodate the idiosyncrasies of a small number of universities with less typical course structures.

## Sampling design

### Sample frame

As with the 2013 and 2014 UES, the sample frame for the 2015 SES was based on a "top-down" approach using population data from HEIMS to create the sample frames for individual 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 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.

### Approach to sampling

In 2014, the approach taken to sampling was refined, with strata defined on the basis of institution and study area.<sup>1</sup> For the 2012 and 2013 UES, the approach to sampling was broadly consistent whereby number

<sup>1</sup> Study area definitions are presented in Appendix 7: Study Area Definitions.

of students for each stratum was calculated using the approach described in the 2012 UES National Report.<sup>2</sup> 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  $\pm 5$  per cent at a 95 per cent level of confidence.<sup>3</sup>

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.

In 2015, 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  $\pm 7.5$  percentage points at a 90 per cent level of confidence.<sup>4</sup> In order to establish the

<sup>2</sup> 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>

<sup>3</sup> These error bands were calculated on the basis of average scores, not percentage satisfied results.

<sup>4</sup> The original precision target was  $\pm 5$  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.

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 2014 UES, 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 2014 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.

### **Additional populations**

Institutions are provided with the opportunity to include additional populations to the SES. In 2015, 11 institutions chose to survey 15 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.

## **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 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. Of the 145,316 university and non-university students who completed the 2015 SES, 11,805 (8.1 per cent) provided a valid response for their second course element, resulting in 157,121 valid responses.

### **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 entered by students were manually looked up against a master course list for the relevant institution. 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.

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 scale 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.

# Appendix 2: Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ)

Table 30 – 2015 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

Learner Engagement items		
Stem	Item	Response scale
At your institution during 2015, 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 2015, 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

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 2015, 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 2015, 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

Student Support items		
Stem	Item	Response scale
At <institution> during 2015, 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 2015, 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 2015, 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 2015, 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 2015, 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 2015, 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

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

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

Other items		
Stem	Item	Response scale
In what year did you first start your current <course>?		Before 2011/ 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014/ 2015
When do you expect to complete your current <course>?		2015 / 2016 or later
Where has your study been mainly based in 2015?		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 2015?		No results / 0-49% / 50-59% / 60-69% / 70-79% / 80-89% / 90-100%
At <institution> during 2015, 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 2015, have you seriously considered leaving <institution>?		Yes, I have seriously considered leaving / No, I have not seriously considered leaving
Please indicate your reasons for seriously considering leaving your current university in 2015. Select all that apply.		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

# Appendix 3: Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)

Table 31 – CEQ items administered in the 2015 SES

Stem	Item <sup>a</sup>
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. <sup>R</sup>
	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

Table 32 – SES response rates, 2014 and 2015

## Universities

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

University	2014	2015
The University of Adelaide	38.4	46.1
The University of Melbourne	29.6	43.4
The University of Notre Dame Australia	27.1	39.8
The University of Queensland	38.6	42.9
The University of Sydney	29.6	36.2
The University of Western Australia	30.8	37.4
University of Canberra	27.8	36.4
University of Divinity	50.4	55.2
University of New England	37.0	41.2
University of New South Wales	27.7	37.5
University of Newcastle	30.3	37.8
University of South Australia	30.8	37.8
University of Southern Queensland	35.0	44.3
University of Tasmania	35.7	38.8
University of Technology, Sydney	25.7	31.0
University of Western Sydney	24.2	29.1
University of Wollongong	29.3	36.6
University of the Sunshine Coast	37.3	48.1
Victoria University	26.8	27.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>37.6</b>

Table 32 – SES response rates, 2014 and 2015 (continued)

**NUHEI**

Institution	2014	2015
Academy of Design Australia	–	60.0
Academy of Information Technology	–	50.0
Adelaide College of Divinity	–	62.0
Alphacrucis College	60.5	48.6
Australian College of Christian Studies	66.7	57.1
Australian College of Physical Education	–	29.2
Australian College of Theology	–	43.2
Australian Institute of Music	–	38.6
Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors	–	47.7
Australian Institute of Professional Education	–	100.0
Australian School of Management	–	31.3
Avondale College of Higher Education	48.5	44.1
Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School	29.4	23.5
Cambridge International College	–	11.1
Chisholm Institute of TAFE	–	46.5
Christian Heritage College	62.5	47.8
Endeavour College	–	44.6
Excelsia College	–	44.7
Holmes Institute	–	18.6
Holmesglen Institute	56.4	45.5

Institution	2014	2015
Jazz Music Institute	–	43.5
Kaplan Business School	–	32.7
Marcus Oldham College	64.1	69.6
Melbourne Polytechnic	41.4	31.8
Murdoch Institute of Technology	–	71.7
National Art School	–	56.8
Navitas Professional Institute	–	41.6
Paramount College of Natural Medicine	–	45.5
Photography Studies College (Melbourne)	–	66.1
SAE Institute	–	42.6
SP Jain School of Management	–	43.9
Sydney Inst. of Traditional Chinese Medicine	–	33.0
TAFE Queensland	–	32.2
TAFE SA	–	37.1
Tabor Adelaide	64.3	55.4
Tabor College Victoria	63.4	56.5
UOW College	–	29.7
UTS Insearch	–	32.5
Whitehouse Institute	–	68.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>39.2</b>

# Appendix 5: Production of scores

A series of steps are taken to produce the focus area percentage satisfied 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.

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.
```

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 2015 SES is percentage satisfied (see Section 1.3), satisfaction variables must be created for each focus area. Percentage satisfied results reflect the percentage of students who achieve a threshold focus area score of 55 or greater. At the individual response level, satisfaction is represented by a binary variable taking the value of one if the student is satisfied with a particular facet of their higher education experience and zero otherwise. The SPSS syntax used to generate these satisfaction variables is presented in Figure 10.

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(opplocr, sensebelongr, feelpreparedr, partidiscusr, workothersr,
interactothr, interactdiff).
COMPUTE TEACHING=MEAN.8(qlteachr, qlolvedur, stdstrucr, stdrelevr, tchactivengr, tchconlnr,
tchclexpecr, tchstimir, tchfeedbckr, tchhelpappr, tchasschlngr).
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.
```

At the item level, satisfaction reflects a response in the top two categories of both the four- and five-point response scales. As with the focus area satisfaction variables discussed previously, satisfaction with a particular SEQ item is represented by a binary variable

taking the value of one if the student is satisfied and zero otherwise. An excerpt of the SPSS syntax used to generate these item satisfaction variables is presented in Figure 11.

Figure 11 – SPSS syntax used to compute item satisfaction 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 2015 SES, the formula for the confidence interval of a proportion is used.

Where  $\hat{p}$  is the estimated proportion of satisfied 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 – 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 Tables 8 – 11 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 33 – 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: Percentage satisfied scores by study area (45)

Study area – 21 categories	Study area – 45 categories	SD	LE	TQ	SS	LR	OE
Science and mathematics	Natural & Physical Sciences	80	61	84	73	89	82
	Mathematics	78	58	80	76	88	77
	Biological Sciences	85	65	87	78	92	85
	Medical Science & Technology	83	69	86	77	90	84
Computing and information systems	Computing & Information Systems	76	60	78	74	86	75
Engineering	Engineering – Other	78	66	77	69	87	77
	Engineering – Process & Resources	81	70	75	68	80	74
	Engineering – Mechanical	76	67	72	66	82	73
	Engineering – Civil	79	69	76	67	85	76
	Engineering – Electrical & Electronic	77	66	80	71	89	77
	Engineering – Aerospace	79	69	76	67	79	75
Architecture and built environment	Architecture & Urban Environments	81	69	81	66	76	77
	Building & Construction	75	57	73	66	83	76
Agriculture and environmental studies	Agriculture & Forestry	81	65	85	77	90	84
	Environmental Studies	85	64	85	71	88	84
Health services and support	Health Services & Support	82	61	84	74	85	81
	Public Health	81	62	81	73	89	80
Medicine	Medicine	87	77	80	75	82	81
Nursing	Nursing	86	60	80	76	87	78
Pharmacy	Pharmacy	84	71	84	71	87	82
Dentistry	Dentistry	87	65	74	69	82	74
Veterinary science	Veterinary Science	85	70	87	77	88	82
Rehabilitation	Physiotherapy	91	75	89	75	90	86
	Occupational Therapy	90	75	89	79	90	88

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

Study area – 21 categories	Study area – 45 categories	SD	LE	TQ	SS	LR	OE
Teacher education	Teacher Education – Other	79	55	77	70	84	76
	Teacher Education – Early Childhood	86	55	83	74	86	81
	Teacher Education – Primary & Secondary	83	62	81	72	86	81
Business and management	Accounting	76	50	77	69	81	76
	Business Management	78	58	78	71	84	77
	Sales & Marketing	81	59	77	67	83	79
	Management & Commerce - Other	76	56	76	69	84	76
	Banking & Finance	72	51	76	69	85	74
	Economics	75	54	77	65	85	76
Humanities, culture and social sciences	Political Science	80	64	83	70	84	81
	Humanities inc History & Geography	81	54	86	72	85	83
	Language & Literature	77	49	89	73	83	83
Social work	Social Work	85	53	83	74	85	79
Psychology	Psychology	82	52	86	75	88	83
Law and paralegal studies	Law	83	57	83	69	85	82
	Justice Studies & Policing	81	49	82	75	89	79
Creative arts	Art & Design	81	66	83	71	80	80
	Music & Performing Arts	82	73	84	71	77	80
Communications	Communication, Media & Journalism	83	67	83	72	87	82
Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services, Sport and recreation	Sport & Recreation	82	66	82	72	88	80
	Tourism, Hospitality & Personal Services	81	56	81	67	84	79
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>80</b>

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

\*All higher education providers with single counting of double degrees in 45 study areas.

