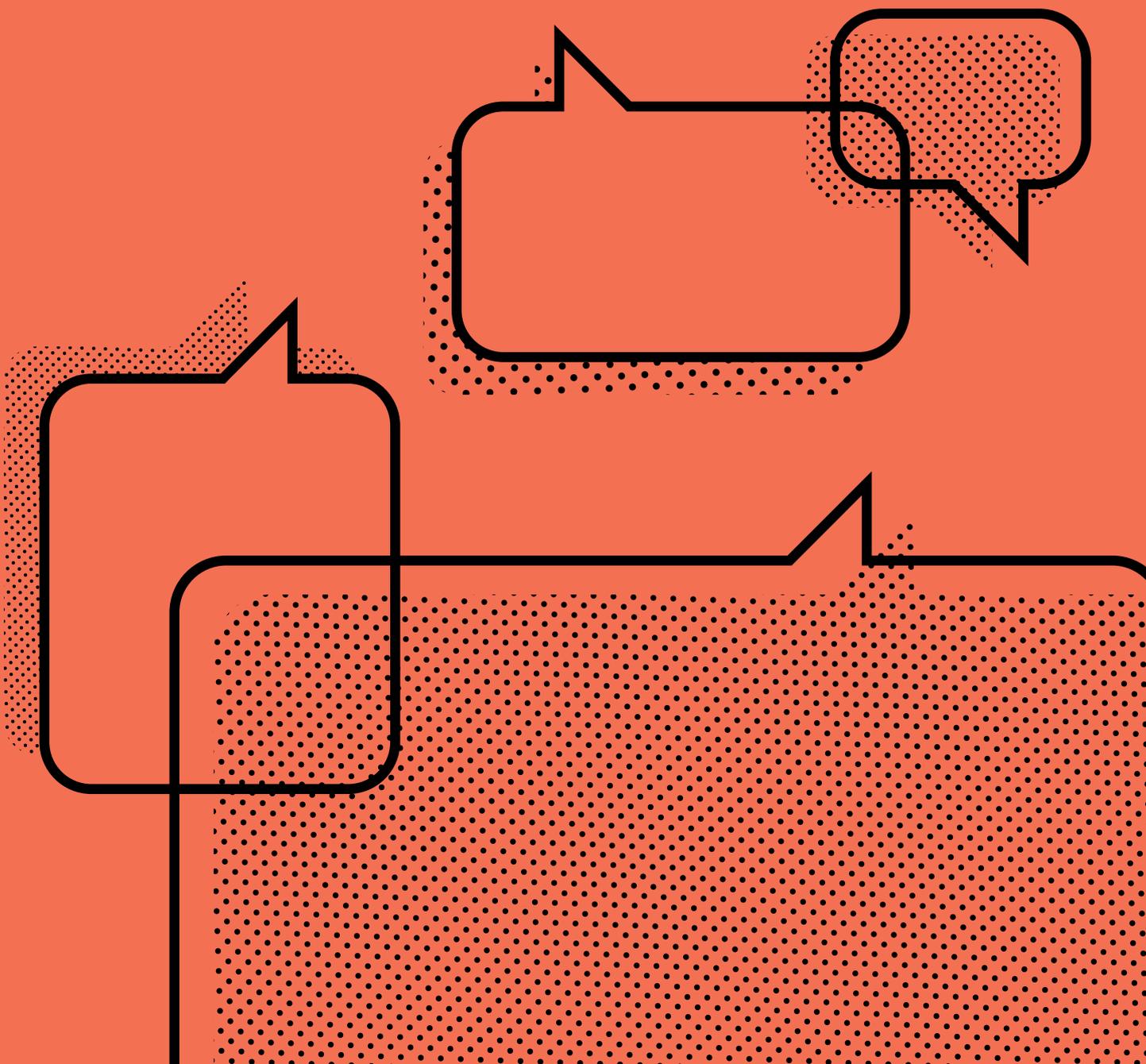




Irish Survey of Student Engagement National Report 2021





Irish Survey of Student Engagement National Report 2021

Suirbhé na hÉireann
ar Rannpháirtíocht na
Mac Léinn

Glossary

Respondent

Any student who began the survey

Cohort

Respondents categorised by course year, i.e., first year undergraduate, final year undergraduate, or taught postgraduate

Institution type

Respondents categorised by type of higher education institution, i.e., University, Technological Higher Education Institution (Institutes of Technology and Technological Universities), or Other Institution

Mode of study

Respondents categorised by nature of enrolment, i.e., full-time or part-time/ remote

Field of study

Respondents categorised by broad ISCED field of study, i.e., Generic programmes and qualifications; Education; Arts and humanities; Social sciences, journalism, and information; Business, administration, and law; Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics; Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs); Engineering, manufacturing, and construction; Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary; Health and welfare; or Services

Programme type

Respondents categorised by type of qualification being pursued, i.e., Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma, Undergraduate Ordinary Degree, Undergraduate Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate/ Diploma, Masters Taught

Country of domicile

Respondents categorised by country of permanent address prior to entry to their programme of study, i.e., Irish domiciled students (students for whom Ireland, including Northern Ireland, is their country of permanent address) or internationally domiciled students (students for whom another country is their country of permanent address)

Effect size

Any measure of the strength of a relationship between two variables. Large numbers of respondents make it more likely that any small difference will be statistically significant. Effect size attempts to measure real-world significance. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) proposed reference values for the interpretation of effect sizes from benchmark comparisons¹:

➔ Small	0.1
➔ Medium	0.3
➔ Large	0.5
➔ Very Large	0.7

1. NSSE (2007). Contextualizing NSSE Effect Sizes: Empirical Analysis and Interpretation of Benchmark Comparisons. Available from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/35a1/604af3043e9347e8238f10a403d24f3ceab6.pdf>

Acknowledgements

The StudentSurvey.ie National Report Editorial Group is grateful for the strong partnership of the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) in steering the project, in conjunction with the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group, the StudentSurvey.ie Communications Group, the StudentSurvey.ie Analysis and Impact Group, the StudentSurvey.ie PGR Working Group, and the StudentSurvey.ie Survey Review Group. The group thanks the lead staff and student representatives in each of the participating higher education institutions who champion the survey in their institution, and whose determination and creativity in running the survey in 2021 was especially appreciated. The group is grateful for the effort and support of all staff, faculty, and senior management in the participating institutions, whose support continues to be instrumental to the success of StudentSurvey.ie and its positive impact on the higher education landscape in Ireland.

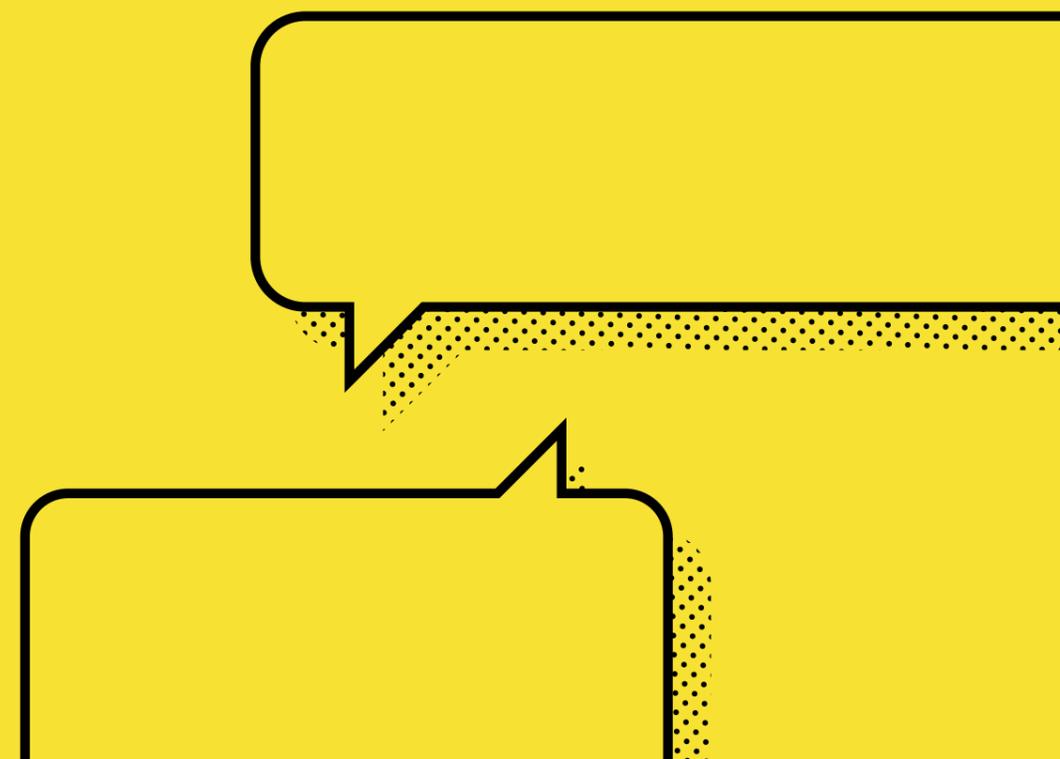
Finally, and most significantly, the StudentSurvey.ie National Report Editorial Group wishes to thank the 43,791 students who gave their valuable time and insights in their participation in the 2021 StudentSurvey.ie, without whom this report would not exist.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

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What students said

What does your institutions do best to engage students in learning?

These quotes have been randomly selected to give an insight into the number of students who provide a response to this question, and the types of activities they value. Qualitative data analysis has not been carried out, and the quotes were not chosen deliberately to represent the most common themes in the results.

- Messages of support and great module leaders.
- All the lectures are well planned and we have frequent breakout rooms to practice what we have learned which makes it more interesting and engaging.
- All the new strategies , learning using Teams, Sulis and Moodle are great to engage students in learning.
- Many questions regarding the course during lectures and tutorials. They make it very easy to get help if you need it.
- Mental health awareness.
- All staff are encouraging, friendly and welcoming.
- Career services are good. I did the CV course and meet up with a careers counsellor which was very helpful.
- Career Opportunities for students.
- Menti, padlet, etc (interactive online features).
- Because of Covid there is only so much you can do so breakout rooms really help to get students going.
- Meetings with course director in semester 1.
- Moodle.
- MQC instead of types exams during this time.

- All the work we do is based on real life experience. It is practical and applicable in a work environment. All the teachers provide feedback to assignments which for me is a major way to learn and grown from my academic experience.
- Classes are smaller usually so better attention to students from the academic staff.
- So many activities on even with Covid still in the air.
- Modules were engaging, varied including traditional style lectures but also TED talks, videos, practical worked examples, field trips etc.
- As we are online some lectures try to use quizzes to engage students which is helpful.
- Doing the polls and quizzes in the zooms have definitely helped a lot this semester compared to semester 1 as I feel like I can tell where I need to do more work and what I'm good at.
- Mixture of lab and lecture classes.
- Academic writing centre and library resources are excellent and very well promoted and marketed to students. Online tutorial are very helpful and informative.
- The provision of the best material available, for our assignments.
- Flexibility with recorded classes.
- Doing small assignments to help you learn or recap on a class.
- MS Teams is good.
- Evaluates learning through end of year exams, which push you to study.
- Zoom, Breakout rooms to interact with students and work together.
- Calling Zoom meetings outside of college time to catch up with students.
- Mixture of assignments and online learning providing written documents alongside videos etc.
- Work from home.
- Very approachable, friendly environment.
- Work provided after lectures to improve knowledge and understanding. Introduce modern examples for better understanding. Introducing us to our class mates via assignments .Blended learning of pre recorded and live lectures.

- Blackboard.
- Access to a wide range of material online through library resources and LinkedIn Learning.
- A good mix of social and learning activities such as long library hours and hosting social events.
- A very good library/resources.
- Classes on zoom and messaging on microsoft teams.
- Smaller workshops, hands on practical experiences.
- As the representatives of the University who we come into contact the most, lectures being flexible, approachable and understanding of the challenges faced by students is essential.
- A very balanced program is provided that addresses the whole mix of issues that could and can arise across the student life.
- Always asking us do we have questions or engage with us individually.
- Academic environment where knowledge is very sharp collected and opportunities are provided for student engagement.
- Uses a real life approach.
- Group activities.
- As a student, the institute have given us the opportunity(s) to expressed ourselves and use these to bring us all in equal opportunity(s) in learning.
- Always ask us to contact them privately or get class reps to contact them if having problems.
- Material format like videos.
- Module size supports interaction with the lecturer.
- Form a good rapport with students.
- As a new remote student, well structured and informative modules is a crucial part of engaging students in learning. Lecture enthusiasm is fundamental, being taught be someone who is passionate about what they teach is the best form of encouragement to learn.
- All staff have experience working in the arts and provide extremely valuable, genuine and constructive criticism / advice. They have adapted well to workshops / studio sessions in the online learning space.

Executive Summary

Purpose

StudentSurvey.ie (the Irish Survey of Student Engagement; Suirbhé na hÉireann ar Rannpháirtíocht na Mac Léinn) asks students directly about their experiences of higher education in Ireland, including their academic, personal, and social development. In 2021, 43,791 students in 25 higher education institutions participated. For the purposes of StudentSurvey.ie, student engagement reflects two key elements. The first is the amount of time and effort that students put into their studies and other educationally beneficial activities. The second is how institutions deploy resources and organise curriculum and learning opportunities to encourage students to participate in meaningful activities linked to learning.

A unique partnership was established between the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) to manage, direct, and implement the survey project. The partnership was extended through the national

StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group, which maintains strategic direction for the survey project and consists of the aforementioned organisations, participating institutions, and the statutory quality assurance and qualifications agency, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

Interpretation of detailed results requires contextualising the results with information from each individual institution and understanding what the students in that institution are saying. Institutions are committed to interpreting and utilising StudentSurvey.ie data to enhance the experiences of their students and do not support the use of student engagement results for any overly simplistic purpose that could be perceived as ranking institutions.

COVID-19 and Irish higher education institutions

Early evidence from reports by organisations such as QQI (2020)², USI (2020)³, and AHEAD (2020)⁴ suggested that the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of students in higher education was significant and far-reaching. This and institutional evidence led the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group to include additional specific COVID-19 questions

in StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2021. The results serve as a powerful measure of the national taught and research student experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and should inform local and national efforts to mitigate the negative impacts on students.

Method

The focus of the survey is on student engagement with learning, rather than student satisfaction. Student engagement with college life is important in enabling them to develop key capabilities, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, writing skills, team-work, and communication skills (Kuh, 2001⁵; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005⁶). The comprehensive survey consists of 67 questions, grouped by the

engagement ‘indicator’ to which they relate. There is an additional body of questions that do not directly relate to a specific indicator, but that are included in the survey because of their contribution to a broad understanding of student engagement. Each indicator score is calculated from responses to the multiple questions that relate to that indicator. The indicators are:

- ➔ Higher-Order Learning
- ➔ Reflective and Integrative Learning
- ➔ Quantitative Reasoning
- ➔ Learning Strategies
- ➔ Collaborative Learning
- ➔ Student-Faculty Interaction
- ➔ Effective Teaching Practices
- ➔ Quality of Interactions
- ➔ Supportive Environment

The COVID-19 questions consist of five multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions. The development of the additional COVID-19 questions involved significant consultation across all of the participating HEIs and stakeholder organisations. The questions were piloted with 64 students across six participating HEIs, and their feedback informed determination of the final questions.

There is a second survey, which is designed for postgraduate research (PGR) students (Masters by research and PhD students). PGR StudentSurvey.ie runs every two years. The results for 2021 are available in the PGR StudentSurvey.ie National Report 2021.

2. QQI (2020). *The Impact of COVID-19 Modifications to Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Irish Further Education and Training and Higher Education*. A report prepared by Quality and Qualifications Ireland.
 3. USI (2020). *National Report on Students and COVID-19*. A report prepared by the Union of Students in Ireland.
 4. AHEAD (2020). *Learning from Home During COVID-19: A Survey of Irish FET and HE Students with Disabilities*. A report prepared by the Association for Higher Education Access & Disability.
 5. Kuh, G.D. (2001). Assessing what really matters to student learning: Inside the National Survey of Student Engagement. *Change*, 33, 10-13.
 6. Pascarella E. & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Summary of 2021 results

A total of 43,791 students responded to StudentSurvey.ie 2021, which represents a national response rate of 28.4%. The average indicator score for each indicator is presented below. The reader is directed to pages 13-14 for further information about how to interpret indicator scores. The key points to remember are a) indicator scores are scored out of a maximum of 60, b) indicator scores are

NOT percentages and, c) due to the way they are calculated, it is not possible to compare indicator scores across different indicators, but d) it is possible to compare indicator scores for different groups within the same indicator.

Table 0.1 Indicator scores for all indicators by cohort

	All students	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught
<i>Higher-Order Learning</i>	34.7	33.5	34.1	38.6
<i>Reflective and Integrative Learning</i>	30.2	28.6	30.2	33.9
<i>Quantitative Reasoning</i>	19.2	17.5	20.3	21.6
<i>Learning Strategies</i>	31.3	30.6	30.4	34.4
<i>Collaborative Learning</i>	25.4	23.6	28.8	24.6
<i>Student-Faculty Interaction</i>	10.2	8.1	12.2	12.3
<i>Effective Teaching Practices</i>	32.5	32.9	30.6	34.7
<i>Quality of Interactions</i>	30.2	29.5	30.3	31.7
<i>Supportive Environment</i>	24.1	24.8	23.5	23.2

Looking to the individual questions, the percentage of students agreeing with each statement is lower than 2020 for nearly every single question, which suggests a lower perception of engagement by respondents in 2021 compared to 2020.

experience than their predecessors. This chapter seeks to create a strong evidence base for that belief and to quantify the impact of COVID-19 on first year undergraduate students.

Particular attention is drawn to Chapter 4. The public health measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic meant that first year undergraduate students who entered higher education in the 2020-2021 academic year are believed to have had a substantially different

A summary of the results for the COVID-19 specific questions can be found in the StudentSurvey.ie Interim Results Bulletin 2021.

Achoimre Feidhmiúcháin

Cuspóir

Cuireann StudentSurvey.ie (Suirbhé na hÉireann ar Rannpháirtíocht na Mac Léinn) ceisteanna díreacha ar mhic léinn faoina n-eispéireas san earnáil ardoideachais in Éirinn, agus san áireamh leis sin tá a bhforbairt acadúil, phearsanta agus shóisialta. Ghlac 43,791 mac léinn in 25 institiúid ardoideachais páirt in 2021.

Chun críocha StudentSurvey.ie, léiríonn rannpháirtíocht na mac léinn dhá phríomheilimint. Ar an gcéad dul síos, léirítear an méid ama agus dua a chaitheann mic léinn lena gcuid staidéir agus le gníomhaíochtaí tairbheacha oideachais eile. Ar an dara dul síos, léirítear conas a bhaineann institiúidí feidhm as acmhainní agus conas a eagraíonn siad deiseanna curaclaim agus foghlama chun mic léinn a spreagadh páirt a ghlacadh i ngníomhaíochtaí fiúntacha atá nasctha leis an bhfoghlaim.

Cuireadh comhpháirtíocht uathúil ar bun idir an tÚdarás um Árd-Oideachas, Cumann Ollscoileanna na hÉireann, an Cumann Árd-Oideachais Teicneolaíochta agus Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn chun an tionscadal suirbhé a bhainistiú, a stiúradh agus a chur chun feidhme. Rinne Grúpa Stiúrtha náisiúnta StudentSurvey.ie tuilleadh forbartha ar an gcomhpháirtíocht. Is é an Grúpa Stiúrtha a thugann stiúir straitéiseach don tionscadal suirbhé agus is iad na heagraíochtaí atá luaite cheana atá páirteach ann, mar aon leis na hinstiúidí rannpháirteacha agus an ghníomhaireacht reachtúil um dhearbhu cáilíochta agus cáilíochtaí, Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann.

Nuair atáthar i mbun léirmhíneithe ar thorthaí mionsonraithe, ní mór féachaint ar na torthaí i gcomhthéacs faisnéise ó gach ceann de na hinstiúidí astu féin chomh maith le tuiscint a fháil air sin atá á rá ag na mic léinn san institiúid sin. Tá na hinstiúidí tiomanta na sonraí ó StudentSurvey.ie a léirmhíniú agus a úsáid chun feabhas a chur le heispéiris a gcuid mac léinn, agus ní thacaíonn siad le haon úsáid róshimplí a bhaint as torthaí na rannpháirtíochta mac léinn a d'fhéadfadh a thabhairt le fios go bhfuiltear i mbun rangaithe ar na hinstiúidí.

The q&a session for students after the lecture.

Flipped class room where we do the research first ...

Events and social media.

Medical issues are tied to the Irish population and the patients we will be seeing.

Doing quizzes/debates online.

Engaging, enthusiastic lecturers.

Responding to emails and explaining what they can during lessons, providing information and extra readings.

Always addresses the students during online class allowing for online learning to run smoothly and effectively.

A variety of teaching tools and interactive exercises.

You can email or call anyone if you need any help.

Material was relevant and interesting and helpful for later employment. Lecturers were engaged, tried to connect on a personal level despite the circumstances.

Simplifying material and providing support.

The smaller class sizes definitely help compared to a university with hundreds in a lecture hall. I know everyone in my course which makes it easier.

Flexible learning due to current situation, recording live classes so you can go back and review the topic as many times as you want. Support from lecturers.

A big emphasis on working and playing together.

Be open, interactive and friendly. Act like human beings and not information robots.

Encourages group participation.

Big lectures with hundreds of students. We have breakouts within lectures often to explain our experiences and gain insight from our peers. Lectures are always fun and engaging. The environment is always comfortable.

A variety of methods.

Break out rooms on zoom.

Microsoft Teams is the most user friendly platform and I think NCI have made the right choice in their system approach in this respect.

Classes, workshops.

Zooms and also canvas messages.

Marks for attendance.

Both synchronous and asynchronous work to ensure good engagement in the topic.

Material is often challenging and requires further thought.

Engineering student so always have to be engaged or its impossible to pass. The uni just puts up the work and you do it its not really that complicated. Lots of assignments and tutorials also, to get all of us engaged in all modules.

Always asking questions to ensure students are listening and understand the material being taught.

Choice of tutors really good.

The societies host online mixers.

Slack interaction, assignments instead of exams.

As the class numbers are small you actually get one on one time with the lecturers which really helps in certain situations.

Allow access to Jstor and online library.

Arrange zoom events and activities.

Monitors students attendance. This provides some students with the push they need to attend class.

Class split into smaller more interactive groups.

Material and lecturers - amazing people teaching in Maynooth.

The professors ask you to contribute and provide group based exercises that allow you to physically connect with other students while learning in smaller groups.

Attempts to help us engage with our subjects as best as possible and help with any difficulties we face.

Messaging between students and lecturers.

Most of the lecturers are really nice people who seem easy to talk to.

Flexibility through learning and engagement.

By communicating effectively with us, taking the time to know us personally.



Microsoft teams.

Bring students on campus if they can.

Academic reps, supportive lecturers, interesting modules, flexible modules.

Academic material.

Allow both way communication between lecturer and student rather than just the lecturer speaking.

Formulates interesting discussions which encourage everyone to get involved. They make the lectures fun and engaging. Even in big lecture halls (which would have scared me previously!) I felt I could answer the lecturers questions without being judged. The academic staff in the school of nursing are amazing at what they do.

Very best, on online tutorials, chat session and emails.

Motivation plan thanks to individual tutors.

The provide as much help as they can under the circumstances.

Class Discussion.

Best universities could do, marathon, events, walks all are helping in some way.

Messaging groups in Teams.

By carrying all students along with explanations of concepts and ideas.

Challenging assignments.

Calm and easy-going lecturers who know the material, and are able to explain it effectively.

Wonderful tutors/lecturers.

Attempt to utilize a range of academic teaching tools.

Accessibility to resources and support/ opportunities to get involved.

Forums, Google hangouts, tutorials.

Many opportunities to ask questions and have discussions in seminars.

Engaging students to use chat to interact with lecturer and students by asking questions or giving your opinion.

Brilliant lecturers.

COVID-19 agus na h-institiúid trí leibhéal in Éirinn

De réir luathfhianaise tuarascálacha le heagraíochtaí amhail Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann (QQI) (2020)⁷, Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (USI) (2020)⁸, agus an Cumann um Rochtain Ardoideachais agus Míchumas (AHEAD) (2020)⁹ bhí tionchar COVID-19 ar shaol mac léinn san ardoideachas suntasach agus leitheadach. Thug an méid sin agus fianaise institiúideach ar an nGrúpa

Stiúrtha de chuid StudentSurvey.ie ceisteanna breise sainiúla maidir le COVID-19 a áireamh i StudentSurvey.ie agus PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2021 Feidhmíonn na torthaí mar thomhas cumhachtach ar eispéireas náisiúnta na mac léinn múinte agus taighde le linn phaindéim COVID-19 agus ba chóir go gcuirfidís bonn eolais faoi iarrachtaí áitiúla agus náisiúnta leis na hiarmhairtí diúltacha ar mhic léinn a mhaolú.

Cur chuige

Is ar rannpháirtíocht mac léinn leis an bhfoghlaim atá an suirbhé dírithe, agus ní díreach ar shástacht na mac léinn. Tá sé tábhachtach go mbeidh mic léinn rannpháirteach i saol an choláiste chun go ndéanfar éascaíocht dóibh bunchumais a fhorbairt cosúil le smaointeoireacht chriticiúil, réiteach fadhbanna, scileanna scríbhneoireachta, obair foirne agus scileanna cumarsáide (Kuh, 2001¹⁰; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005¹¹). Tá 67 ceist sa suirbhé

cuimsitheach seo, agus déantar iad a ghrúpáil de réir an 'táscaire' rannpháirtíochta a mbaineann siad leis. Tá sraith bhreise ceisteanna nach mbaineann go díreach le táscaire faoi leith agus atá curtha sa suirbhé mar go gcabhraíonn siad tuiscint níos leithne a fháil ar rannpháirtíocht mac léinn. Déantar an scór do gach táscaire a ríomh ó na freagraí a tugadh ar raon ceisteanna a bhain leis an táscaire sin. Seo a leanas na táscairí:

➔ Foghlaim Ardoird

➔ Foghlaim Mhachnamhach agus Chomhtháiteach

➔ Réasúnú Cainníochtúil

➔ Straitéisí Foghlama

➔ Foghlaim Chomhoibríoch

➔ Teagmháil idir an Mac Léinn agus an Dámh

➔ Cleachtais Teagaisc Éifeachtacha

➔ Caighdeán na gCaidreamh

➔ Timpeallacht Thacúil

Tá cúig ceist ilrogha agus dhá cheist neamhiata bainteach le COVID-19 sa suirbhé. Bhain a lán comhairliúcháin leis na h-institiúid agus na páirtithe leasmhara le forbairt na ceisteanna seo. Déanadh tástáil fhíolótach le 64 mac léinn i sé institiúid rannpháirtíochta, agus tógadh san áireamh a gcuid aiseolais leis an gcinneadh faoina ceisteanna a roghnóidh ar deireadh.

Tá an dara suirbhé ann ar dearadh é do mhic léinn taighde iarchéime (Mic léinn mháistreachta trí thaighde agus dochtúireachta). Reáchtáiltear PGR StudentSurvey.ie PGR gach dhá bhliain. Is féidir teacht ar an torthaí do 2021 i dTuairisc Náisiúnta PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2021.

7. QQI (2020). *The Impact of COVID-19 Modifications to Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Irish Further Education and Training and Higher Education*. Tuarascáil arna hullmhú ag Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann.

8. USI (2020). *National Report on Students and COVID-19*. Tuarascáil arna hullmhú/réiteach ag Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn.

9. AHEAD (2020). *Learning from Home During COVID-19: Suirbhé ar Mhic Léinn Oiliúna Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais faoi Míchumas in Éirinn*. Tuarascáil arna hullmhú ag an gCumann um Rochtain Ardoideachais agus Míchumas.

10. Kuh, G.D. (2001). Assessing what really matters to student learning: Inside the National Survey of Student Engagement. *Change*, 33, 10-13.

11. Pascarella E. & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Achoimre ar thorthaí 2021

D'fhreagair 43,791 mac léinn san iomlán StudentSurvey.ie 2021, agus is ionann sin agus ráta freagartha náisiúnta 28.4%. Cuirtear i láthair thíos an meánscór do gach táscaire. Moltar don léitheoir féachaint ar leathanaigh 14-15 chun tuilleadh eolais a fháil faoin gcaoi na scóir táscaire a léirmhíniú. Seo a leanas na príomhphointí: a) is é 60 an t-uas-scór do

tháscaire, b) ní céatadán atá i gceist le scóir táscaire agus, c) ní féidir comparáid a dhéanamh idir scóir táscaire agus táscairí éagsúla eile i ngeall ar an gcaoi a ríomhtar iad, ach d) is féidir comparáid a dhéanamh idir scóir táscaire i gcás grúpaí éagsúla laistigh den táscaire céanna.

Tábla 0.1 Scóir táscaire do gach táscaire de réir cohóirt

	Gach mac léinn	An Chéad Bhliain	An Bhliain Deiridh	Mic Léinn Mhúinte larchéime
<i>Foghlaim Ardoird</i>	34.7	33.5	34.1	38.6
<i>Foghlaim Mhachnamhach agus Chomhtháiteach</i>	30.2	28.6	30.2	33.9
<i>Réasúnú Cainníochtúil</i>	19.2	17.5	20.3	21.6
<i>Straitéisí Foghlama</i>	31.3	30.6	30.4	34.4
<i>Foghlaim Chomhoibríoch</i>	25.4	23.6	28.8	24.6
<i>Teagmháil idir an Mac Léinn agus an Dámh</i>	10.2	8.1	12.2	12.3
<i>Cleachtais Teagaisc Éifeachtacha</i>	32.5	32.9	30.6	34.7
<i>Caighdeán na gCaidreamh</i>	30.2	29.5	30.3	31.7
<i>Timpeallacht Thacúil</i>	24.1	24.8	23.5	23.2

I gcomhthéasc na ceisteanna aonair, bhí an céatadán mic léinn a d'aontaigh le nach mór gach ráiteas níos ísle i 2021 i gcomparáid le 2020, rud a dtugann le fios léibhéal rannpháirtíochta níos ísle i 2021 i comparáid le 2020.

Tarraingítear aird faoi leith air seo i gCaibidil 4. Chiollaigh na bearta sláinte poiblí a cuireadh i bhfeidhm mar fhreagra ar phaindéim COVID-19 go bhfuiltear den tuairim? go raibh an t-eispéireas a bhí ag mic léinn fochéime na chéad bhliana a

chuaigh isteach san ardoideachas sa bhliain acadúil 2020-2021 an-éagsúil leis an gceann a bhí ag na mic léinn a tháinig rompu. Sa chaibidil sin féachtar le fianaise láidir a thabhairt leis an tuairim úd agus le tionchar COVID-19 ar mhic léinn fochéime na chéad bhliana a chainníochtú.

Tá teacht ar achoimre ar thorthaí na gceisteanna a bhaineann go sainiúil le COVID-19 i mBileog Eolais 2021 StudentSurvey.ie maidir le Torthaí Eatramhacha.



Academic writing centre, very good organized library, interesting lectures, help with assignments or coursework.

Assigning interesting problems for tutorials.

A good mixture of lectures and hands on practical work.

All the support that lectures give us and the support groups outside of classes in different subjects.

Classes are interactive, breakout rooms help students of varying backgrounds to collaborate.

Work load is reasonable.

Attempt to share opinions of students among themselves.

Attempting breakout rooms and group sessions.

By breaking us up into groups and discussing what we just did.

Skills page on Instagram is very informative.

Although there are very few, group projects are the best way of engaging students with work, as online classes can be quite difficult to engage with.

A few engaging lecturers.

By doing many group work projects.

Academic writing centre and tutorial/ CEIM sessions.

Small breakout rooms.

Do activities based on work during online classes.

Allow access to recorded lectures for those who miss lectures or have bad internet connectivity.

A good regular amount of interesting guest speakers per week.

Classes are engaging.

Skills Centre is brilliant.

Allow scope to explore topics that are of personal interest to students.

Academic workshops.

Work is divided into smaller projects and we often do group work, keeping us engaged.

Before Covid student interactions with group work.

Classes are small so lecturers know student name and personality and strengths and weakness through out the term of the class.

Classes are always on.

Assignments, presentations, group work.

Clarity of what is expected from students.

Career based practicalities.

Marks for attendance and contribution.

Being supportive, giving good feedback.

A wide variety of exercises that cater to all students no matter their learning type.

Classes are pretty interactive which encourages students to engage.

Great faculty and teaching methods! best I have come across.

A very supportive website for e learning.

As an international student the ridiculous tuition fees keep me engaged to learn since I would not want that money to have gone to waste.

Doing tasks that require interaction-coursework.

Céim is a good way to engage students in learning.

Class support such as supervisors and class coordinator.

Bongo.

Change outdated structure of assignments.

Acceptance of all students regardless.

Flexible learning options and very detailed course notes and reading.

Very big fines for repeat exams and limited access to the financial aid fund does motivate to study more.

Work in groups for assignments.

All staff are very good at what they do.

You make students think you care. I have not experienced this on other colleges.

Challenging us with 'real-world' case studies and asking for our opinions/ approaches etc.

The staff are always available. The lines of communications, such as emails, are very active. Materials and notes are always uploaded on time and exams are explained well.

Asks student provide feedback to each other and work together on certain problems.

A weekly student update is emailed to all students to inform them of upcoming social and academic events linked with the college and the wider community. This helps keep as all informed.

Assigning faculty that are passionate about the subjects with which they are engaged.

Chemistry labs in groups with TA.

A clear communication of expectations from the school staff.

Access to zoom premium to allow for meeting with fellow classmates to discuss study.

Checks in with students regularly whether it is class or peer tutors.

Multi discipline.

Attempts to do it through blackboard.

Match theory with relevant modern examples and host tutorials for discussion.

A zoom or teams meeting to discuss with them, if they have problems or queries.

Mixture of theory and practice, lab work as well as placements / internship, meetings for help and support.

Arranging talks related to the major. Speakers are real life practitioner.

A friendly approach and understanding of our needs and feelings.

Doing questions as you go to help see where you are at as you are learning.

Fore front of new developments in teaching - always ahead of the game.

Wide range of supports for working parents.

Wonderful tutors, couldn't praise them enough, very relatable, very approachable, very engaging.

Chapter 1

Context for the Irish Survey of Student Engagement

StudentSurvey.ie (Irish Survey of Student Engagement; Suirbhé na hÉireann ar Rannpháirtíocht na Mac Léinn) invites responses from first year undergraduate, final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate students in 25 higher education institutions in Ireland.

There is a second survey, which is designed for postgraduate research (PGR) students (Masters by research and doctoral degree students). PGR StudentSurvey.ie runs every two years.

1.1 What is student engagement in learning?

The term ‘student engagement’ is used in educational contexts to refer to a range of related, but distinct, understandings of the interaction between students and the higher education institutions they attend. Most, if not all, interpretations of student engagement are based on the extent to which students actively avail of opportunities to involve themselves in ‘educationally beneficial’ activities and the extent to which institutions enable, facilitate, and encourage such involvement. StudentSurvey.ie focuses on students’ engagement with their learning and their learning environments. It does not directly explore, for example, students’ involvement in quality assurance or institutional decision-making.

Accordingly, for the purposes of StudentSurvey.ie, student engagement reflects two key elements. The first is the amount of time and effort that students put into their studies and other educationally beneficial activities. The second is how higher education institutions deploy resources and organise curriculum and other learning opportunities to encourage students to participate in meaningful activities that are linked to learning.

1.2 COVID-19 and Irish higher education institutions

Early evidence from reports by organisations such as QQI (2020)¹², USI (2020)¹³, and AHEAD (2020)¹⁴ suggested that the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of students in higher education was significant and far-reaching. This and institutional evidence led the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group to include additional specific COVID-19 questions in StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2021.

The consideration of the experiences of undergraduate and postgraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic offers the opportunity to learn from the unique circumstances. Institutions can be more informed about which aspects of the online/ blended experience could be retained and reflect on the practices that require change. The results serve as a powerful measure of the national taught and research student experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and should inform local and national efforts to mitigate the negative impacts on students.

It was noted in the StudentSurvey.ie Interim Results Bulletin 2021 that there was a common thread through the responses of taught and research students in Irish HEIs to the additional questions specifically addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students’ experience of higher education. It is that they want their HEI to recognise the impact COVID-19 has had on them and to show compassion in their response. Everyone has suffered due to the

impact of COVID-19, and students are no exception. They have also shown tremendous resilience, with many respondents to StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2021 showing positivity and strength in their responses, along with recognising the efforts being made by their HEI to support them in difficult circumstances. They recognise that they are members of a community that includes themselves, as well as academic staff, support staff, and a diverse student body with a diversity of needs.

The results of StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie 2021 are valuable because they provide standardised data from nearly 50,000 students across 25 HEIs in Ireland. The results were all generated during national fieldwork carried out in February–March 2021, during which time Ireland was in Level 5 lockdown. These students included full-time and part-time students, Irish domiciled and internationally domiciled students, students from across a range of fields of study and undertaking a range of programme types (among other student and course characteristics). The StudentSurvey.ie Interim Results Bulletin 2021 on the results for these specific additional questions brings a new and comprehensive evidence base into public view. These results are now being integrated into the analysis of responses to the complete surveys to shed light on further wide-ranging aspects of students’ experiences.

12. QQI (2020). *The Impact of COVID-19 Modifications to Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Irish Further Education and Training and Higher Education*. A report prepared by Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

13. USI (2020). *National Report on Students and COVID-19*. A report prepared by the Union of Students in Ireland.

14. AHEAD (2020). *Learning from Home During COVID-19: A Survey of Irish FET and HE Students with Disabilities*. A report prepared by the Association for Higher Education Access & Disability.

1.3 The Union of Students in Ireland perspective

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) was delighted to see 43,791 students from 25 higher education institutions across the country participate in StudentSurvey.ie 2021.

The fieldwork period of this research was undertaken in February–March of 2021, when Ireland was in Level 5 lockdown. For StudentSurvey.ie to receive 43,791 responses with no on-campus presence is testament to the importance of the survey and reflects students’ desire for their voices to be heard. Receiving feedback directly from students amid such unprecedented times offers an invaluable insight into the student experience, offering a comprehensive overview of both undergraduate and postgraduate experiences in the Irish higher education system.

As outlined in the report, the pandemic has had a far-reaching impact on the student experience, eliminating some vital aspects of student life. The inclusion of specific questions relating to this experience during the pandemic was welcome.

Over the past year, the landscape of the higher education sector has changed dramatically, with many institutions making a swift transition to an online, virtual learning environment. It has been challenging for educators and learners to adapt over such a brief period and some cohorts were affected more than others. Students have been denied the holistic college experience, with first year students disproportionately disadvantaged by the lack of on-campus activities. The *Quality of Interactions* data also shows evidence of a significant level of impact among first year students and part-time students in particular.

That said, students have shown an admirable level of strength, positivity, and resilience, considering the obstacles they faced, with 87.6% of students agreeing that they were able to sufficiently engage with their studies online. It is fantastic to see the innovative approaches and continued collaboration employed between institutions and Students’ Unions throughout this time and in the promotion of the survey. This successful partnership should be continued from the fieldwork stage and integrated into the development of institutions, with students being fully and actively engaged in closing the feedback loop, using the existing committees and structures.

There is now an opportunity for institutions to improve and reform teaching and learning practices by retaining elements that perform well and discarding approaches that may have been ineffective. Moving forward, USI encourages transparent use and implementation of the data gathered by the survey and retaining the aspects of flexibility seen across the sector.

USI is committed to ensuring that the feedback received from StudentSurvey.ie continues to be examined at both national and local level, working alongside student representatives and the wider sector to promote and support the enhancement of the student experience. We are committed to working in partnership with stakeholders to ensure that students are actively engaged in the process and the student experience is at the heart of quality enhancement in higher education institutions.



1.4 Structure of the survey

The survey consists of 67 questions, grouped by the engagement ‘indicator’ to which they relate. The indicators are presented in Fig. 1.1 below. Most questions relate to a specific engagement indicator. There are also questions that do not directly relate to a specific indicator, but that are included in the survey because of their contribution to a broad

understanding of student engagement. Each indicator score is calculated from responses to the multiple questions that relate to that indicator. These results are summarised in Chapter 2 and responses to all questions are available in Appendix 3 (supplied in the digital version of the report only).

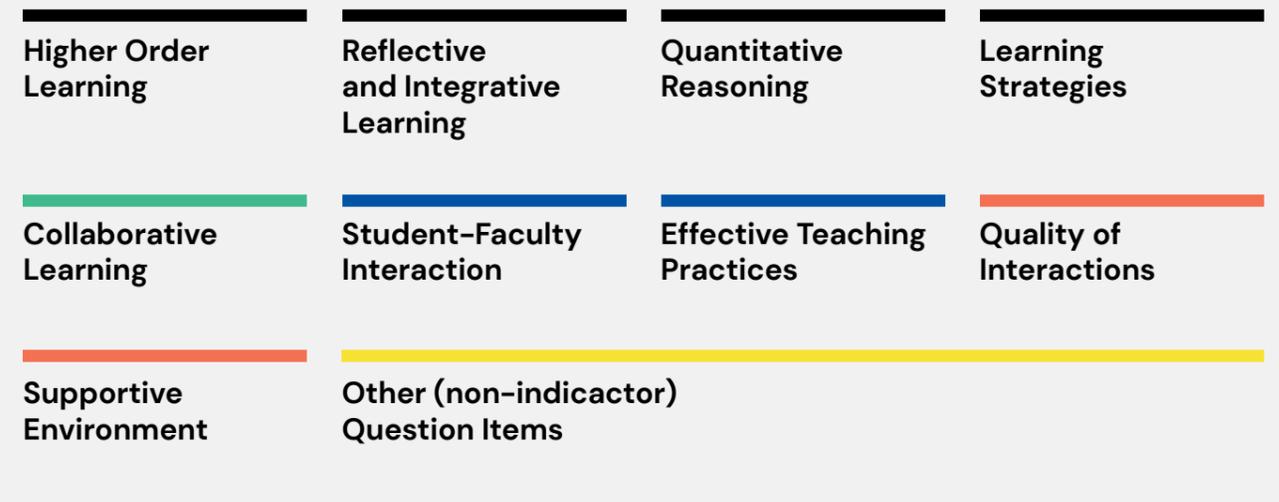


Fig 1.1 StudentSurvey.ie indicators

This report presents results from the 2021 StudentSurvey.ie fieldwork. The same set of questions has been used since 2016. For further information about the statistical testing of the reliability and validity of the StudentSurvey.ie data, visit www.studentsurvey.ie.

COVID-19 questions

The COVID-19 questions consist of five multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions. The development of the additional COVID-19 questions involved significant consultation across all of the participating HEIs and stakeholder organisations. The questions were piloted with 64 students across six participating HEIs, and their feedback informed determination of the final questions.

Periodic Review

The StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group agreed in 2015 that the StudentSurvey.ie survey instrument should undergo thorough periodic review. The StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group initiated the current periodic review of the StudentSurvey.ie survey instrument in early 2021. A StudentSurvey.ie Survey Review Group was formed for the 2021 review. This group will operate for a fixed term of March–December 2021 and the primary deliverable will be an appropriately revised survey instrument for fieldwork 2022. The StudentSurvey.ie Survey Review Group membership reflects the needs and expectations of the survey respondents and the users of StudentSurvey.ie data, and harnesses the experience and expertise of the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group, Communications Group, and Analysis and Impact Group.

1.5 Notes for interpreting the data

Q: How is the indicator score for each indicator calculated?

Indicator scores are NOT percentages but rather represent relative performance. They are calculated scores to enable interpretation of the data at a higher level than individual questions, i.e., to act as signposts to help the reader to navigate the large

data set. Responses to questions are converted to a 60-point scale, with the lowest response placed at 0 and the highest response placed at 60. The following question is used to illustrate this point.

Question	Responses			
	Very little ⊕	Some ⊕	Quite a bit ⊕	Very much ⊕
During the current year, how much has your coursework emphasised evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source?				
Responses converted to 60-point scale	0	20	40	60

If a respondent selects “Quite a bit” as their response choice, their response converts to 40.

Indicator scores are calculated for a respondent when they answer all or almost all related questions. The exact number of responses required varies according to the indicator, based on psychometric testing undertaken for the North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)¹⁵. All responses are required for *Higher-Order Learning*, *Quantitative Reasoning*, *Learning Strategies*, *Collaborative Learning*, and *Student-Faculty Interaction*. All responses but

one are required for *Reflective and Integrative Learning*, *Effective Teaching Practices*, *Quality of Interactions*, and *Supportive Environment*. The indicator score is calculated from the mean of (non-blank) responses given. Indicator scores for any particular student group – for example, the first year undergraduate cohort – are calculated as the mean of individual indicator scores.

Consequently, and crucially, indicator scores cannot be combined across indicators to calculate an average overall indicator score in any meaningful or statistically sound way.

Q: How can I best understand indicator scores for different groups?

Indicator scores provide greatest benefit when used as signposts to explore the experiences of different groups of students – for example, first year undergraduate students and final year undergraduate students, or Irish domiciled students and internationally domiciled students.

Indicator scores also provide an insight into the experiences of comparable groups over multiple datasets – for example, the experiences of 2021 first year undergraduate students relative to 2020 first year undergraduate students.

15. NSSE (www.nsse.indiana.edu)

Q: How can I best understand indicator scores for different indicators?

Different indicators should not be compared to each other. For example, there is no simple, direct link between indicator scores for *Higher-Order Learning* and indicator scores for *Reflective and Integrative Learning*. Fig. 1.2 is used to illustrate this point. No useful interpretation can be drawn from the fact that indicator scores for *Higher-Order Learning* are generally higher than indicator scores for *Reflective and Integrative Learning*.

However, the following differences could usefully be explored: *Higher-Order Learning* indicator scores for final year undergraduate students are higher than *Higher-Order Learning* indicator scores for first year undergraduate and taught postgraduate students; *Reflective and Integrative Learning* indicator scores appear notably lower for first year undergraduate students than *Reflective and Integrative Learning* indicator scores for final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. These results can be displayed visually, such as in Fig. 1.2, to communicate these comparisons.

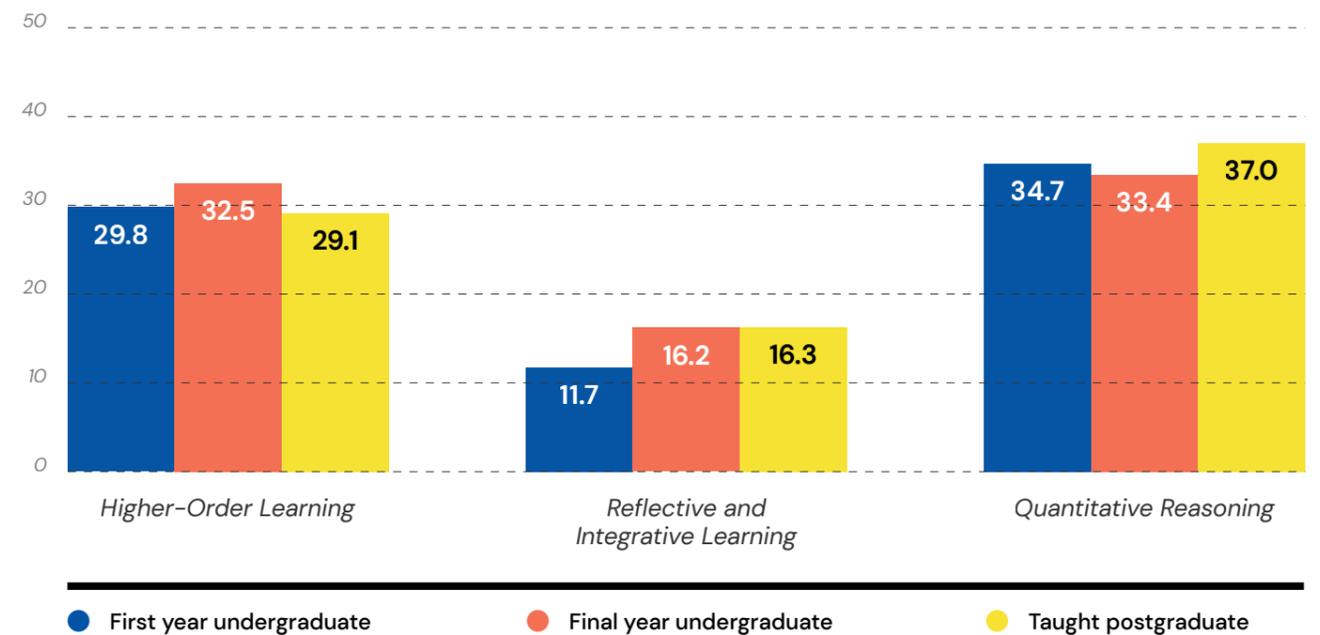


Fig 1.2 Graph of results for demonstration purposes only



CAs were good way to get feet wet into studies or a topic especially pre Covid when lecturers come around checking progress and helping as opposed to correcting stuff immediately.

Aside from scheduled lectures, there are always optional talks or masterclasses you can attend; which are great!

Mixture of online and live classes, we also have teams in labs- engaging with other students makes it more fun. There's also a bunch of competitions which require us to gain a further insight into certain aspects.

Assignments, labster, YouTube videos.

The provide voluntary work that you can get involved with at home. And some groups or societies host activities online to engage with us.

Mixture of knowledgeable lectures on site and encouraging interaction.

Focus on applying my learning to real world situations; emphasis on active learning.

Great facilities, library, laboratories. Effective and approachable lecturers. Good coordination for the most part. Good supports for students.

A we are all in this together campaign by the students union.

Classroom discussions on relevant topics including new topics that have been explored in class.

Break out rooms on zoom. You get a chance to meet people and it encourages you to do work.

Allow for group work/projects.

All the lecturers are up front about what is expected of us in the sector and in collage and showing us how it all fits together really helps.

A good mix of theory and practical application of the information.

All the informations are given clearly.

Motivational vocal teacher.

Events and workshops.

Yes powerpoints and videos.

Events and end engagement of entertainment/ study programs.

Attempts at some levels by some lecturers to apply real-world evidence and anecdotes to promote understanding and engagement with course materials.

The promotion of future opportunities.

At times yes, it depends on the module.

Academic ability.

Attempt at getting us in groups for some assignments and projects.

Challenging course work.

Smaller tutorial groups to allow for social interaction.

By doing examples and explaining clearly the questions asked.

You engage if the topic is interesting for you.

At the moment, mixing live lectures with pre-recorded content to engage us with our learning.

By doing Teams calls.

Class sizes are small.

Mixture of methods in lectures.

As best it knows as its new to them also.

Brilliant staff.

Small Break out rooms.

Challenging assessment and examination.

Classes.

Classes and course.

Slides uploaded ahead of them, lecturers always available via email.

Meetings.

Classes are small, Lecturer knows each student. Time is given to discuss queries.

Engaging with the students.

A good library and various study areas.

Single platform for everything.

A combination of live sessions and recorded lectures helps.

Multiple avenues to facilitate the online learner.

Modules include practical learning, I got involved in an internship through my college also, study abroad which was excellent.

Cheer up and so on.

A friendly yet professional staff.

Academic supports online.

Attend as much lectures and classes as possible so as to gain more beneficial information.

Motivation to learn- emphasises the real life importance of a concept.

Mentimeter questions, breakout rooms, assignments, extra materials.

Challenging content and learning outcomes.

Very approachable lecturers.

Bringing in guest speakers.

Do assignments.

A few lecturers ask questions in class.

A variety of topics to meet specific learning outcomes.

Motivation.

Because of lockdown they email us but some teachers talk to us during our online lectures.

Do breakout rooms when in class and the PASS sessions.

Bring outside speakers for microsoft teams calls, to talk about new topics needed for our course.

Group work and activities.

Social activities, learning programs etc.

Attempts have been made to keep smaller structured labs occurring in some online capacity, with smaller groups so questions can be asked easier. Some lectures are still being recorded and streamed live allowing for questions in real time.

All the lecturers are very proactive with students in getting them involved eg. breakout rooms, projects etc.

Yes 100% group projects and assignments are a brilliant way of keeping the social aspect while at home.

Allow lecturers to teach in their own ways so they're at full capability of connecting and fully expressing their capabilities.

Chapter 2

Results of the 2021 StudentSurvey.ie

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results from 2021 fieldwork for StudentSurvey.ie. The first section provides an overview of response rates for different groups of students and of the demographic profile of respondents. The second section summarises responses to the questions for each engagement indicator, along with the responses for the non-indicator items. Tables containing the results for all questions are provided in Appendix 3 (supplied in the digital version of the report only).

2.2 Response rates and demographics

A total of 43,791 students responded to the 2021 survey, which represents a national response rate of 28.4%. The respondents consisted of 21,095 first year undergraduate students, 13,653 final year undergraduate students, and 9,043 taught postgraduate students. Table 2.1 presents the demographic profile of the national student population. The profile of the 2021 StudentSurvey.ie respondents is also presented. It closely matches the national student population profile, as it has done in previous years.

All results presented in this report, other than the demographic data presented in Tables 2.1 and 4.2 have been weighted by gender, mode of study, and cohort. The use of weighting is regarded as standard practice with survey data because it improves the extent to which respondents match the national student population profile.

It is significant that 19 of the 25 participating higher education institutions achieved response rates of 25% or greater (20 achieved this in 2020), and that

13 institutions achieved response rates greater than 30% (14 in 2020). This is very positive, particularly in light of the additional challenges brought on by COVID-19 for promoting the survey in 2021.

The average response rate for Universities decreased from 29% in 2020 to 26% in 2021. The response rate for Technological Higher Education Institutions (Institutes of Technology and Technological Universities) decreased from 35% in 2020 to 32% in 2021. The response rate for Other Institutions stayed the same, at 27%, from 2020 to 2021.

The response rates for any one year should not be taken as a direct indication of the effort expended to promote participation within individual higher education institutions in that year. Factors such as timing of the fieldwork or other major events within the institution (or even a global pandemic) can influence the response rate. Nevertheless, any institution that notes consistently low response rates should reflect on the nature, tone, and visibility of feedback activities.

Some higher education institutions may find it challenging to continue to increase response rates on an annual basis and may observe a plateau in their response rate. The co-sponsoring organisations leave to the discretion of individual institutions the decision to continue to focus on increasing response rates or, possibly, to sustain this plateau while increasing the emphasis on interpretation of the data and decision-making based on this analysis. A realistic aim may be to ensure that the number of responses is sufficient to enable reliable analysis of the subsets of the data that correspond to the institutional structures that are likely to make greatest use of this analysis.

It is important that all institutions continue to act meaningfully on the data they have available, rather than “wait” for some target response rate. Students will respond to the survey when it is clear to them that their institution as a whole and the staff they encounter on a regular basis value the resulting data and do something or intend to do something with it. Communication of analysis undertaken, results considered, and actions taken are essential for continued participation in StudentSurvey.ie by students.

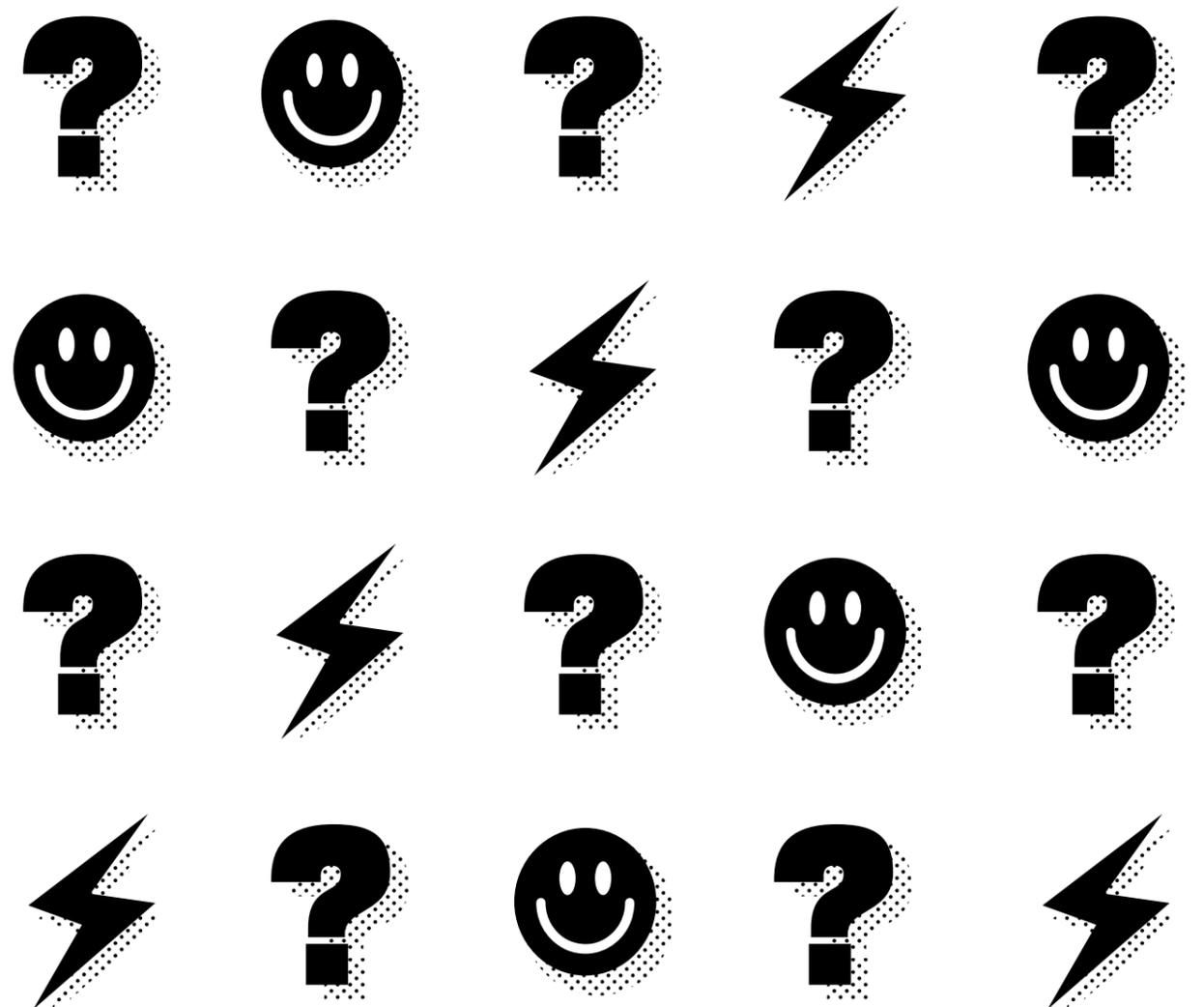


Table 2.1 Demographic profile

Characteristic	National student population		All respondents		Response rate
	154,080		43,791		28.4%
Cohort					
First year undergraduate	59,017	38.3%	21,095	48.2%	35.7%
Final year undergraduate	52,235	33.9%	13,653	31.2%	26.1%
Taught postgraduate	42,828	27.8%	9,043	20.7%	21.1%
Institution type					
Universities	81,011	52.6%	20,990	47.9%	25.9%
Technological Higher Education Institutions (IoTs and Technological Universities)	58,907	38.2%	18,993	43.4%	32.2%
Other institutions	14,162	9.2%	3,808	8.7%	26.9%
Mode of study					
Full-time	116,621	75.7%	37,547	85.7%	32.2%
Part-time/ remote	37,459	24.3%	6,244	14.3%	16.7%
Programme type					
Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma	12,719	8.3%	2,313	5.3%	18.2%
Undergraduate Ordinary Degree	13,351	8.7%	4,084	9.3%	30.6%
Undergraduate Honours Degree	85,182	55.3%	28,351	64.7%	33.3%
Graduate Certificate/ Diploma	13,735	8.9%	2,176	5.0%	15.8%
Masters Taught	29,093	18.9%	6,867	15.7%	23.6%
Field of study					
Generic programmes and qualifications	695	0.5%	92	0.2%	13.2%
Education	10,891	7.1%	2,768	6.3%	25.4%
Arts and humanities	19,681	12.8%	5,889	13.4%	29.9%
Social sciences, journalism, and information	9,909	6.4%	2,843	6.5%	28.7%

Characteristic	National student population		All respondents		Response rate
Business, administration, and law	36,597	23.8%	9,797	22.4%	26.8%
Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics	13,172	8.5%	4,470	10.2%	33.9%
Information and Communication Technologies	13,488	8.8%	3,736	8.5%	27.7%
Engineering, manufacturing, and construction	16,698	8.8%	4,600	10.5%	27.5%
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary	2,175	10.8%	885	2.0%	40.7%
Health and welfare	25,309	1.4%	6,978	15.9%	27.6%
Services	5,465	16.4%	1,733	4.0%	31.7%
Gender					
Female	82,362	53.5%	26,479	60.5%	32.1%
Male	71,448	46.4%	17,211	39.3%	24.1%
Undeclared	270	0.2%	150	0.3%	55.6%
Age group					
23 and under	82,867	53.8%	27,651	63.1%	33.4%
24 and over	71,213	46.2%	16,140	36.9%	22.7%
Country of domicile					
Irish domiciled	136,675	88.7%	38,814	88.6%	28.4%
Internationally domiciled	17,405	11.3%	4,977	11.4%	28.6%

2.3 Responses to individual questions

The StudentSurvey.ie Results 2021 pull-out presents responses to the questions for each engagement indicator, along with the responses for the non-indicator items.

The indicators are:

- ➔ Higher-Order Learning
- ➔ Reflective and Integrative Learning
- ➔ Quantitative Reasoning
- ➔ Learning Strategies
- ➔ Collaborative Learning
- ➔ Student-Faculty Interaction
- ➔ Effective Teaching Practices
- ➔ Quality of Interactions
- ➔ Supportive Environment

Additionally, percentage responses to each question for all respondents nationally are presented in Appendix 3 (supplied in the digital version of the report only). They also display disaggregated results by cohort (first year undergraduate, final year undergraduate, and taught postgraduate).

Higher-Order Learning 2021

62.6%

of students believed that their coursework emphasised quite a bit/ very much applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations

56.3%

of students believed that their coursework emphasised quite a bit/ very much analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts

58.7%

of students believed that their coursework emphasised quite a bit/ very much evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source

66.0%

of students believed that their coursework emphasised quite a bit/ very much forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information

Reflective and Integrative Learning 2021

54.5%

of students often/ very often combined ideas from different subjects / modules when completing assignments

42.5%

of students often/ very often connected their learning to problems or issues in society

28.5%

of students often/ very often included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ ethnic, gender, etc.) in discussions or assignments

47.5%

students often/ very often examined the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue

53.0%

of students often/ very often tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective

58.5%

students often/ very often learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept

63.7%

of students often/ very often connected ideas from their subjects / modules to their experiences and knowledge

Quantitative Reasoning 2021



33.0%

of students often/ very often reached conclusions based on their analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)

24.8%

of students often/ very often used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)

19.5%

of students often/ very often evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information

Learning Strategies 2021

51.9%

of students often/ very often identified key information from recommended reading materials

54.9%

of students often/ very often reviewed their notes after class

46.7%

of students often/ very often summarised what they learned in class or from course materials

Collaborative Learning 2021

36.6%

of students often/ very often asked another student to help them understand course material

38.8%

of students often/ very often explained course material to one or more students

31.8%

of students often/ very often prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students

44.9%

of students often/ very often worked with other students on projects or assignments

Student-Faculty Interaction 2021

11.1%

students often/ very often talked about career plans with academic staff

7.4%

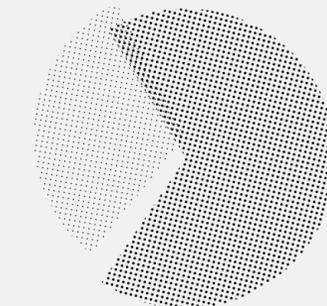
of students often/ very often worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)

13.0%

of students often/ very often discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class

12.9%

of students often/ very often discussed their performance with academic staff



Effective Teaching Practices 2021

66.6%

of students believed that lecturers/ teaching staff clearly explained course goals and requirements

68.9%

of students believed that lecturers/ teaching staff taught in an organised way

67.5%

of students believed that lecturers/ teaching staff used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points

34.7%

of students believed that lecturers/ teaching staff provided feedback on a draft or work in progress

39.6%

of students believed that lecturers/ teaching staff provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments



Quality of Interactions 2021

29.6%

of students indicated as excellent (6/7 or 7/7) the quality of interactions with students

20.2%

of students indicated as excellent (6/7 or 7/7) the quality of interactions with academic advisors

29.1%

of students indicated as excellent (6/7 or 7/7) the quality of interactions with academic staff

22.1%

of students indicated as excellent (6/7 or 7/7) the quality of interactions with support services staff (career services, student activities, accommodation, etc.)

25.6%

of students indicated as excellent (6/7 or 7/7) the quality of interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance, etc.)

Supportive Environment 2021

55.3%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much providing support to help students succeed academically

50.7%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support, etc.)

32.2%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ ethnic, religious, etc.)

37.1%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much providing opportunities to be involved socially

46.5%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much providing support for their overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)

20.0%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much helping them manage their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)

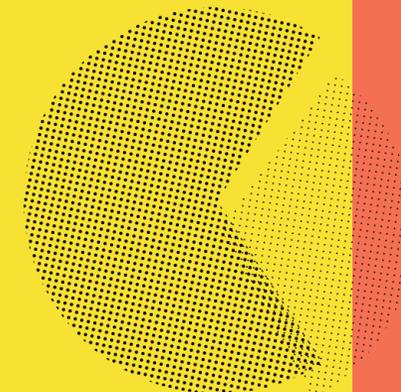
Supportive Environment 2021 (cont.)

29.8%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)

27.9%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues



Non-Indicator items 2021

48.9%

of students often/ very often asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs, or online

21.0%

of students often/ very often came to class without completing readings or assignments

32.8%

of students often/ very often made a presentation in class or online

59.3%

of students often/ very often improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to their employability

40.1%

of students often/ very often explored how to apply their learning in the workplace

41.0%

of students often/ very often exercised or participated in physical fitness activities

30.2%

of students often/ very often blended academic learning with workplace experience

38.7%

of students often/ very often worked on assessments that informed them how well they were learning

41.9%

of students often/ very often memorised course material

37.6%

of students plan to do/ have done/ were in process of working with academic staff on a research project

41.1%

of students plan to do/ have done/ were in process of doing community service or volunteer work

Non-Indicator items 2021

62.7%

of students believed that their institution emphasised quite a bit/ very much spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work

60.0%

of students believed that their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit/ very much in writing clearly and effectively

51.2%

of students believed that their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit/ very much in speaking clearly and effectively

71.8%

of students believed that their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit/ very much in thinking critically and analytically

46.7%

of students believed that their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit/ very much in analysing numerical and statistical information

56.4%

of students believed that their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit/ very much in acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills

59.1%

of students believed that their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit/ very much in working effectively with others

50.1%

of students believed that their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit/ very much in solving complex real-world problem

38.6%

of students believed that their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit/ very much in being an informed and active citizen (societal/ political/ community)

72.3%

of students would evaluate their entire educational experience at their institution as good/ excellent

86.1%

of students, if they could start over again, would probably/ definitely go to the same institution they are now attending





Responding to queries and always being there to support students throughout the semester.

So much online support.

Work based on reviewing the contents of lectures.

Smallest classes.

Flexibility, contact.

Classroom quizzes.

Microsoft teams is helpful with the chat part where students can solve problems for each other or the lecturer solves it. And the recorded lectures.

Better ways of teaching and practical examples based on person's job profile.

Flexible scheduling of online lectures.

Allow extra classes, recordings.

Career fairs, emails for learning opportunities.

MCQs and asking students questions.

Responding to students questions even if the lecturers are not in real life class with us.

You are really made feel a part of the class with discussions and your not a number.

Very approachable lecturers, interactive classes.

Camera and mics on.

By email.

As little as possible. The best engagement comes from some lecturers that want us to understand and succeed.

Classes/PowerPoints/notes.

At zoom lectures, we are reminded to have our cameras on and discuss different views on topics in breakout rooms.

Calls.

Enhanced support throughout the course.

Allocates assignments and course work.

Mini assignments and discussions.

Classes are roughly around 40 or 20 people depending on how many classes are present during a lecture. Either way, lecturers engage with us and help us. It builds a strong lecture, student relationship which in turn motivates learning because we know if we needed help with something we can turn to the lecturers. Lecturers are very nice and ask us how we are and genuinely care about our wellbeing. They create a positive and fun environment for learning.

As my course is online, having access to a regularly updated moodle page is essential.

World class lecturers, leaders in their field.

Career emails every week, feedback and support on projects.

As a first year the current times have limited the ability of the school and disengaged students from learning. Myself, and many others students are struggling however the school is not at fault.

Class sizes are small allowing for a "family-like" bond to be created with classmates.

Classes are interactive not just information being thrown at us we are involved.

You can contact the lecturer and arrange a zoom meeting when you need help.

Modules with a strong practical focus.. staff desire that students do well and succeed.

Modules and lectures are mostly well structured and presented in interesting and practical way.

Smartbook Assignments and Tutorials.

Be proactive and support us.

Arrange online treasure hunt and coffee mornings where we can talk with our fellow classmates.

Do group work in certain subjects.

At the moment, the live lecture discussions help to engage in learning.

Do check up sessions for assignments.

Active group learning.

Choices of watching live and recorded lectures and extra content on blackboard to ensure engagement.

Forum posts.

Forums on Moodle.

Bringing in guests who have long established experience to run mini group assignments.

Accessible academic support.

Mental health consultancy service.

Class activities and group discussions in tutorials.

Memento is emails.

Classes are interesting when covering non research topics.

A giving Assignment is the best.

By emphasising the importance of it.

Minor social interactions, such as breakout rooms for working together on designated problems.

Multiple choice quizzes that require students to pay attention.

Chooses the right lecturers. A good lecturer is a well learnt subject.

Allow practical courses to take place on campus and provide ample PPE to students.

Call upon students when doing questions.

Do group assignments or presentations which allow us to communicate and work well together.

As in now, breakout rooms on Teams or another platform.

Flexibility of choosing the subjects.

Doing their best at the moment in relation to the pandemic, nothing much more they can do.

A balanced amount of peer work/group work, learning from others.

Even amount of laboratory work and little CA's to keep you on track with the course work.

Active group work amongst modules.

Focus on in class discussions and keeping the students engaged in the content by using online forms or week to week talks.

The professors interact with the students.

Best lecturers.

By continuously asking for opinion and thoughts.

Chapter 3

Engagement indicators at national level

3.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the national results of StudentSurvey, ie presented in Chapter 2 by exploring the differences between the groups of students by the following characteristics:

- ➔ Cohort
- ➔ Mode of study
- ➔ Institution type
- ➔ Programme type
- ➔ Field of study
- ➔ Gender
- ➔ Age group
- ➔ Country of domicile

Selected results are presented in the following pages, and all results are available in Appendix 4 (supplied in the digital version of the report only).



Notes for interpreting the data

- Indicator scores provide signposts to the experiences of students.
- These are NOT percentages.
- Please refer to notes for interpreting the data on pages XX-XX.
- Compare scores WITHIN each indicator and NOT between indicators.

Effect Size

Effect size = any measure of the strength of a relationship between two variables. Large numbers of respondents make it more likely that any small difference will be statistically significant. Effect size attempts to measure real-world significance. The NSSE-proposed reference values for the interpretation of effect sizes from NSSE benchmark comparisons are:

➔ Small	0.1
➔ Medium	0.3
➔ Large	0.5
➔ Very Large	0.7

3.2 Cohort

A profile of steadily increasing indicator scores across the cohorts from first year undergraduate to final year undergraduate to taught postgraduate was evident for *Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, Student-Faculty Interaction* and *Quality of Interactions*. There was a significant increase in indicator score for *Learning Strategies* from undergraduate to postgraduate responses, though the difference between first year undergraduate and final year undergraduate was not statistically significant.

For *Effective Teaching Practices*, the indicator score was significantly lower for final year undergraduate respondents compared to first year undergraduate and taught postgraduate respondents, though indicator scores were significantly higher for taught postgraduate than first year undergraduate.

For *Collaborative Learning*, final year undergraduate respondents had the highest indicator scores, and had indicator scores that were significantly higher than first year undergraduate and taught postgraduate respondents. The scores for taught postgraduate respondents were significantly higher than for first year undergraduate respondents.

For *Supportive Environment*, the indicator score for first year undergraduate respondents was significantly higher than both final year undergraduate respondents and taught postgraduate respondents, and there was no significant difference between the latter two cohorts.

3.3 Mode of study

There was a statistically significant difference between the full-time respondents and the part-time/ remote respondents for nearly all indicators. Full-time respondents had higher indicator scores for *Collaborative Learning*, and *Supportive Environment*. Part-time/ remote respondents had higher indicator scores for *Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, Learning Strategies, Effective Teaching Practices*, and *Quality of Interactions*. There were no statistically significant differences for *Student-Faculty Interaction*.

A medium effect size was found for *Collaborative Learning* (0.35), indicating that the biggest differences between these groups was for this indicator. For all other significant differences, the effect size was small.

3.4 Institution type

Respondents from institutions categorised as Other Institutions (including private colleges, colleges of education and RCSI) had higher scores than Universities and Technological Higher Education Institutions (THEIs) for *Higher-Order Learning* (difference between Other Institutions and Universities not significant), *Reflective and Integrative Learning*, *Learning Strategies*, *Effective Teaching Practices* (difference between Other Institutions and THEIs not significant), *Quality of Interactions* and *Supportive Environment* (difference between Other Institutions and THEIs not significant).

Within these indicators, Universities had significantly higher scores than THEIs for *Higher-Order Learning*, *Reflective and Integrative*

Learning, *Learning Strategies*, while THEIs had significantly higher scores than Universities for *Effective Teaching Practices*, *Quality of Interactions* and *Supportive Environment*.

Respondents from THEIs had higher indicator scores than Universities and Other Institutions for *Collaborative Learning* and *Student-Faculty Interaction*, and for both indicators, the average indicator score for Other Institutions was significantly higher than Universities. For *Quantitative Reasoning*, the difference between Universities and THEIs was not significant, but both were significantly higher than Other Institutions. Fig 6.3 is reproduced from Appendix 4 (supplied in the digital version of the report only) to display these patterns.

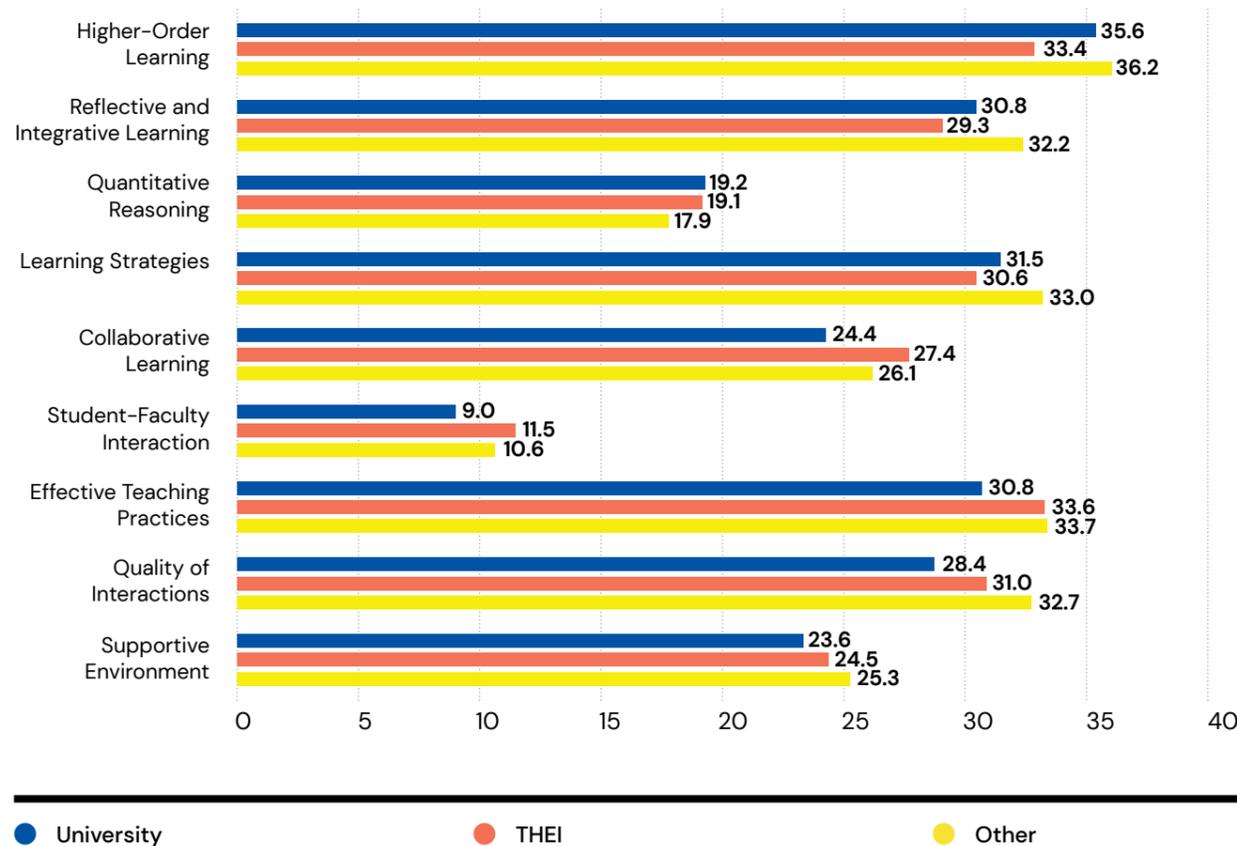


Fig. 6.3 Indicator scores by institution type [reproduced from Appendix 4]

3.5 Programme type

Readers interested in this aspect of the analysis are invited to view the full results, including all of the tests of statistical significance, in Appendix 4 (supplied in the digital version of the report only). Below is a summary of the results and an attempt to draw attention to the patterns in the results.

Three patterns appear evident from these results. The first is for the grouping of *Higher-Order Learning*, *Reflective and Integrative Learning*, *Quantitative Reasoning*, and *Learning Strategies*. For these indicators, the score for respondents pursuing a Masters Taught Degree was the highest, followed by respondents pursuing a Graduate Certificate/ Diploma. The exception was for *Learning Strategies*, where these two groups were reversed. Next, the scores for respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Honours Degree were higher than those of respondents pursuing Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma, and the lowest scores were for those pursuing an Undergraduate Ordinary Degree. The exceptions to this pattern were for *Quantitative Reasoning*, where respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Honours Degree had the lowest scores, and *Learning Strategies*, where respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma had higher scores than respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Honours Degree.

The results for *Student-Faculty Interaction* share some of this pattern but do not align directly with any other indicator. Here, respondents pursuing a Masters Taught Degree remained the highest-scoring, and those pursuing an Undergraduate Honours Degree had the lowest scores, similar to *Quantitative Reasoning*. However, for *Student-Faculty Interaction*, respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma had the second-highest score, followed by respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Ordinary Degree, followed by respondents pursuing a Graduate Certificate/ Diploma.

This pattern merges with elements of the pattern for *Effective Teaching Practices* and *Quality of Interactions*, which is the second discernible pattern. Here, the scores for respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma were the highest, followed by respondents pursuing a Graduate Certificate/ Diploma. The lowest scores were for those pursuing an Undergraduate Honours Degree. The middle scoring group for *Effective Teaching Practices* was respondents pursuing a Masters Taught Degree, followed by those pursuing an Undergraduate Ordinary Degree. For *Quality of Interactions* this middle section order reversed, and those pursuing an Undergraduate Ordinary Degree had higher scores than respondents pursuing a Masters Taught Degree.

The final pattern was for *Collaborative Learning* and *Supportive Environment*. For these indicators, the scores for respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Ordinary Degree were the highest, and the scores for respondents pursuing a Graduate Certificate/ Diploma were the lowest. Respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Honours Degree fell in the middle. What differed between these two indicators was that, for *Collaborative Learning*, respondents pursuing a Masters Taught Degree had the second-highest score and respondents pursuing an Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma had the second-lowest. For *Supportive Environment*, this was reversed. Fig 6.4 is reproduced from Appendix 4 (supplied in the digital version of the report only) to display these patterns.

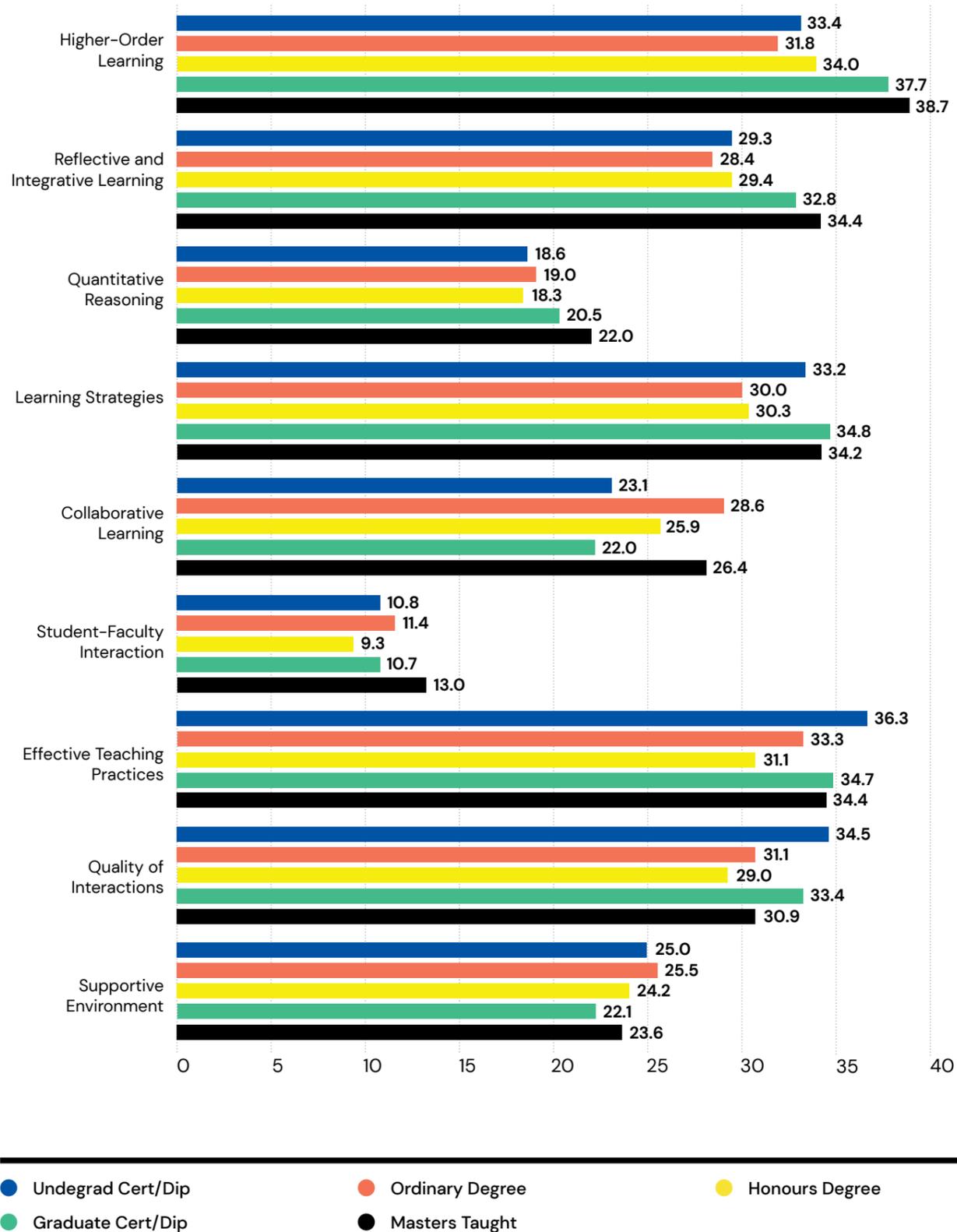


Fig. 6.4 Indicator scores by programme type [reproduced from Appendix 4]

3.6 Field of study

As suggested in relation to programme type, readers interested in seeing the full sets of results for this aspect of the analysis are directed to Appendix 4 (supplied in the digital version of the report only). Below is a summary and an attempt to draw attention to the patterns in the results.

For *Higher-Order Learning*, Social sciences, journalism, and information students had significantly higher indicator scores than all groups. Health and welfare students and Education students had the next highest indicator scores for this indicator. Nearly all remaining fields of study form a cluster. Arts and humanities students, and Business, administration, and law students were in the upper end of scores for the cluster, and Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students, ICT students, Engineering, manufacturing, and construction students were in the lower range of scores for the cluster. Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary students, and Services students and Education students had the lowest scores for *Higher-Order Learning*.

A similar pattern emerged for *Reflective and Integrative Learning*. Social sciences, journalism, and information students had significantly higher indicator scores than all other groups. Education students, Arts and Humanities students, and Health and Welfare students had the next highest indicator scores and they differed from all other fields of study. Business, administration, and law students' and Services students' indicator scores were significantly lower than this cluster, but also significantly higher than the remaining fields of study. Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students, ICT students, Engineering, manufacturing, and construction students, Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary students, and Services students made up the lowest scoring cluster for this indicator.

Indicator scores differed substantially for *Quantitative Reasoning*. Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students had the highest indicator scores, and they were significantly higher than all other groups except Engineering, manufacturing, and construction

students had the second-highest indicator scores of all fields of study, but only in some instances were their indicator scores significantly higher than a cluster formed by Social sciences, journalism, and information students, ICT students, and Business, administration, and law students. Services students clustered with Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary students and Health and welfare students, as they had indicator scores in the middle of the range of indicator scores for this indicator. Education students had lower indicator scores and they were significantly lower than all other groups, with the exception of Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary students. Arts and Humanities students had the lowest indicator scores, and they were significantly lower than all other groups.

For *Learning Strategies*, Health and welfare students had significantly higher indicator scores than nearly all groups. Education students had the next highest indicator scores. Arts and Humanities students, Social sciences, journalism, and information students, Business, administration, and law students, Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students, ICT students, Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary students, and Services students clustered together and did not tend to differ significantly from each other. For most of these fields of study, their scores were significantly higher than the Engineering, manufacturing, and construction students.

For *Collaborative Learning*, Services students had significantly higher indicator scores than nearly all groups. Education students, Business, administration, and law students and Engineering, manufacturing, and construction students all scored nearly the same and did not differ significantly from each other. Education students, Business, administration, and law students and Engineering, manufacturing, and construction students all scored nearly the same and did not differ significantly from each other. Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students, ICT students, Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary students, and Health and welfare students all scored nearly the same, lower than the previously mentioned cluster but not always significantly lower. Arts and Humanities students and Social sciences,

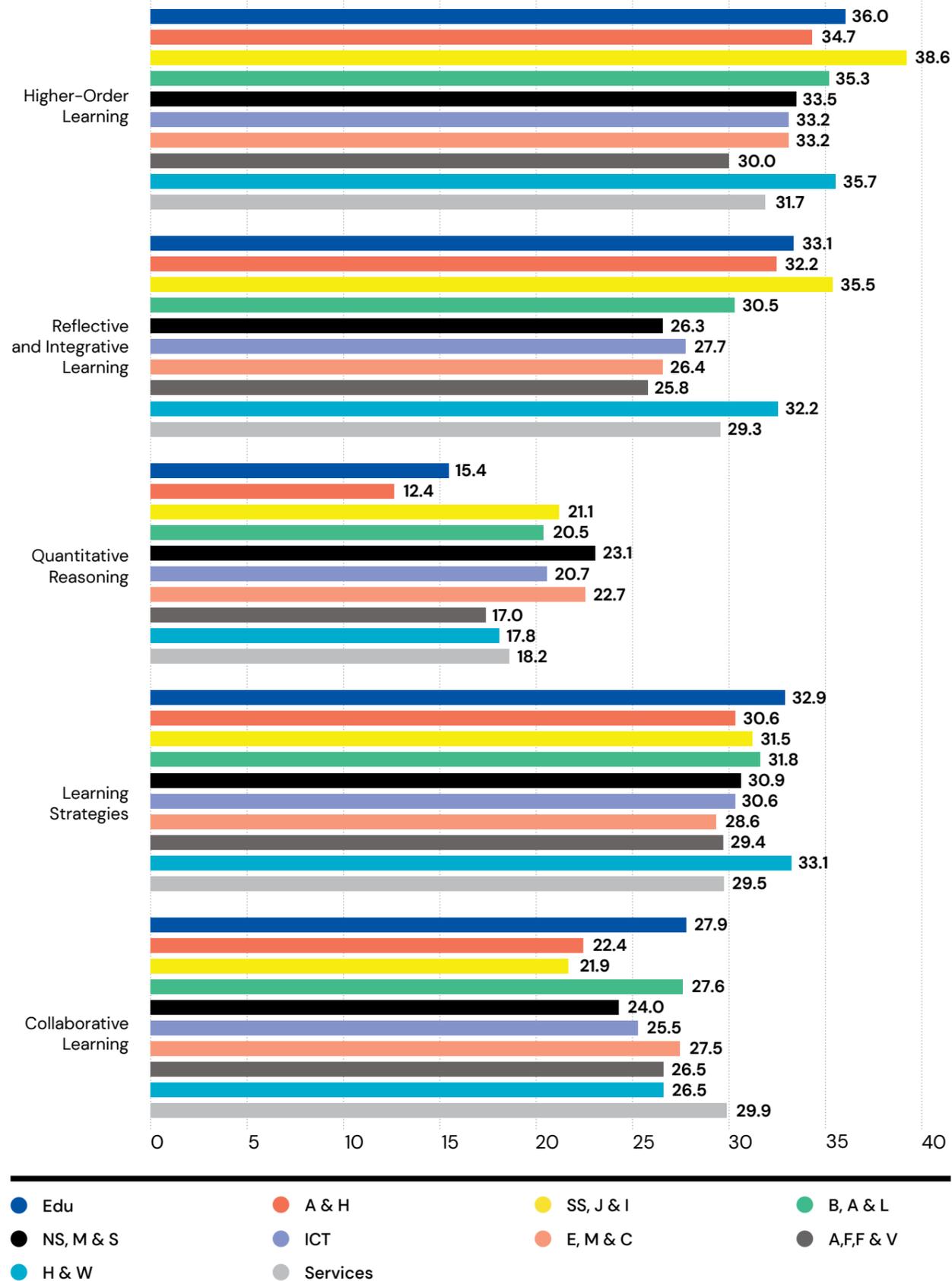


Fig. 6.5a Indicator scores by field of study [reproduced from Appendix 4]

journalism, and information students had significantly lower indicator scores than nearly all other groups. Fig 6.5a is reproduced from Appendix 4 (supplied in the digital version of the report only) to display these patterns.

- Edu - Education
- A & H - Arts and humanities
- SS, J & I - Social sciences, journalism, and information
- B, A & L - Business, administration, and law
- NS, M & S - Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics
- ICT - Information and Communication Technologies
- E, M & C - Engineering, manufacturing, and construction
- A, F, F & V - Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary
- H & W - Health and welfare
- Services - Services

The remaining four indicators had similar response patterns by field of study group. For *Student-Faculty Interaction*, most fields of study clustered together, with Arts and humanities students at the higher end of the cluster of scores and Social sciences, journalism, and information students at the lower end of the cluster. The exceptions were the significantly higher indicator scores for Services students compared to all other groups, and the significantly lower indicator scores for Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students compared to nearly all other groups.

Similarly, for *Effective Teaching Practices*, all fields of study clustered together. Within the cluster, the indicator scores for Services students were again the highest, and they were significantly higher than Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students and Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary students, whose indicator scores were in the lower range of the cluster.

For *Quality of Interactions*, ICT students had significantly higher indicator scores than nearly all groups, followed by Services students, whose scores were significantly higher than some of the fields of study that made up the lower scoring cluster. At the lowest scoring end of that cluster were Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary students, and their scores were significantly lower than those of ICT students and Services students only.

Finally, and similarly, for *Supportive Environment*, ICT students had significantly higher indicator scores than nearly all groups, followed by Services students, but for the latter their scores were rarely significantly higher than the fields of study that made up the lower scoring cluster. All other fields of study clustered together and only the highest scoring end of the cluster, the Health and welfare students, differed significantly from the lowest scoring end of the cluster, the Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students. Fig 6.5b is reproduced from Appendix 4 (supplied in the digital version of the report only) to display these patterns.

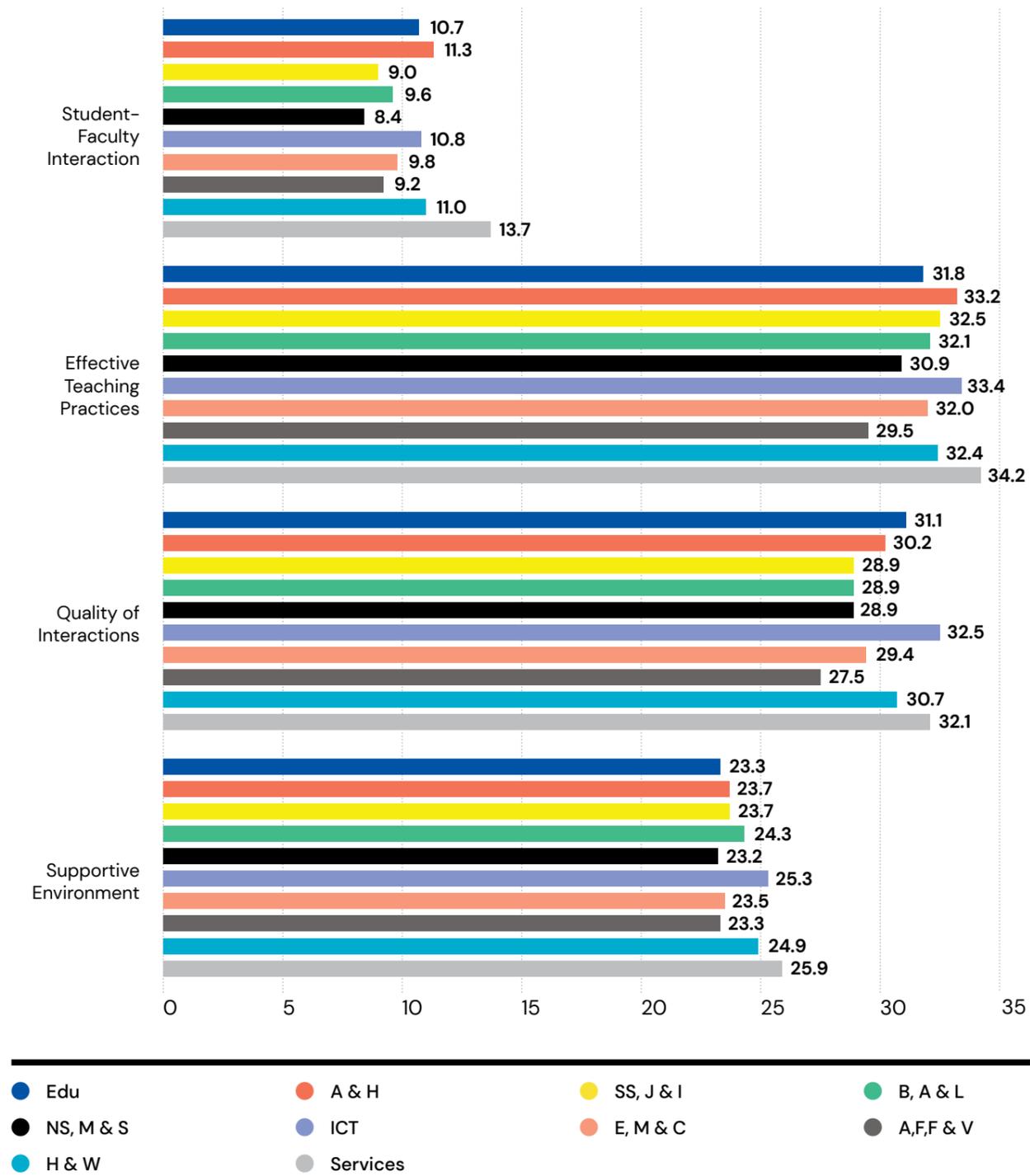


Fig. 6.5b Indicator scores by field of study [reproduced from Appendix 4]

3.7 Gender

For the purposes of StudentSurvey.ie, gender is coded as male, female, prefer not to say, or gender non-binary. Due to the relatively very low numbers in the latter two categories compared to the large number in the former two categories, they are grouped into one category named 'Undeclared'. As the number of respondents in this category in 2021 made up less than 1% of the total, it is inadvisable to include them in the following statistical analyses and the very small number of respondents are therefore excluded from this section of analyses. However, it remains beneficial to capture these responses in the survey to enable collation of data over multiple fieldwork periods and potential future analysis.

Indicator scores for female students were higher than those for male students for *Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Learning Strategies*. Indicator scores for male students were higher for *Quantitative Reasoning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Effective Teaching Practices* and *Quality of Interactions*. For all significant differences, the effect size was small. There were no statistically significant differences for *Collaborative Learning* or *Supportive Environment*.

3.8 Age group

There was a statistically significant difference between the respondents aged 23 and under and the respondents aged 24 and over for all indicators. Respondents aged 24 and over had higher indicator scores for *Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, Learning Strategies, Student-Faculty Interaction, Effective Teaching Practices, and Quality of Interactions*. Respondents aged 23 and under had higher indicator scores for *Collaborative Learning* and *Supportive Environment*. A medium effect size was found for *Reflective and Integrative Learning* (0.32) and *Student-Faculty Interaction* (0.33), indicating the biggest differences between these cohorts. For all other significant differences, the effect size was small.

3.9 Country of domicile

There was a statistically significant difference between the Irish domiciled respondents and the internationally domiciled respondents for all indicators. In all cases, the internationally domiciled respondents had higher indicator scores than the Irish domiciled students. For all significant differences, the effect size was small.



Work in teams.

As much as they can.

The smaller class sizes allow the students to get to know the lecturers, this means the students can share their feelings and opinions regarding the work to be completed. The students have some input.

Both assignments, in-class test and exams are the best effective mode to engage students in learning.

Academic learning centre.

Material is usually available before class so you can look over and have questions ready for class. Practice exams are readily available. We are encouraged to participate in class and in breakout rooms in discussions.

Since shifting to remote learning, lecturers have been doing a great job at keeping classes engaging and relevant, which has helped a lot.

Zoom video.

At the start of 1st year they assign mentors who watch over 3-4 students each. If the students are unsure of anything they help them.

Better virtual examples.

Be there for these students.

Foster a nice community among the university community, make lots of resources and learning opportunities available.

A variety of learning opportunities. Independent work as well as live lectures and webinars.

Module options.

Arrange groups to talk in.

Assigning online group meetings for students to share ideas together.

By emailing students to get them occupied in learning.

Brain games before class.

Writing centre support.

Flexibility.

All the staff are approachable, if you do have any questions they are always eager to help for the most part.

Bring interesting situations and debates.

The Professors are very welcoming and helpful.

Academics are very swift to respond to any queries and questions. The lectures and seminars are very engaging in that they are often very active and require participation and discussion on part of the students.

Break out rooms on zoom, online quiz and lecturers' email guidance.

Slides on powerpoint.

Multi-faceted approach, i.e., practical tuition, clinical experience, lectures, presentation skills.

As most of my classes are recorded and there are hundreds of people attending live classes at the same time, I can't really think of anything to say in praise of these, sorry!

Work placement.

Be supportive.

Enjoyable assignments.

Work industry relevant projects.

Evaluation.

Class calls that allow students to work with one another with the lecturer during the day help to keep me focused and productive.

MCQs and provide many examples on topics they teach.

Use real life stories or examples.

Motivation practical help.

Small activities within are classes to do with coursework.

Events (online) and competitions.

Mics on engagement.

As a part time student who has been out of education for over 20 years, I find it refreshing that the lecturers are open to explaining and answering more than once, until the student understands.

Biweekly testing, tutorials on difficult concepts, group work.

Case studies analysed in the class; encouragement to join the discussion.

Material recommendations.

Bonds with the students.

Engaging with students.

Care about them.

Checks in with students regularly, replies to emails promptly, passionate about the subjects the lecturers are teaching.

By doing short fun quizzes at the end of class.

Allow interaction and allow students to group tasks.

Very approachable encouraging tutors.

Bringing in guest speakers, learning activities.

So far group projects and online polls.

A very good library available.

Great facilities, especially the science building.

Ask after lecture did we understand it, give plenty of time to ask questions for assignments.

Academic writing classes.

By communication.

Class sizes are smaller therefore more engagement from lecturer to student.

A big emphasis is put on teamwork and group projects which makes learning more enjoyable. A diverse range of modules can be taken as electives.

Branches of communication.

Module coordinators very approachable.

Access to academic learning centre.

Always allowing us to ask questions if confused.

Variety of modules.

Big exams.

Career opportunities through effective learning.

Very approachable staff.

Choice of electives is quite broad.

Chapter 4 Looking Deeper: Return to the first year experience

4.1 Introduction

The public health measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic meant that first year undergraduate students who entered higher education in the 2020–2021 academic year are believed to have had a substantially different experience than their predecessors. This chapter seeks to create a strong evidence base for that belief and to quantify the impact of COVID-19 on first year undergraduate students.

This chapter focuses on two key cohorts:

➔ **2021:**
This consists of first year undergraduate respondents in the 2021 survey.

➔ **Baseline:**
First year undergraduate respondents over the previous three fieldwork years the survey was conducted (2018, 2019, 2020)¹⁶ in order to create a baseline for comparison with the results for 2021. In total, there are 59,984 first year undergraduate responses to the survey over these years, which represents a significant evidence base.

Table 4.1, as supported by Fig. 4.1, demonstrates that there was a statistically significant difference between 2021 and at baseline for all indicators, except *Learning Strategies*. Effect sizes are also provided in Table 4.1 below.

16. The data pools together three cross-sectional fieldwork years. Hence, the results for 2018–2020 are pooled averages across three fieldwork years. Furthermore, the results are weighted in each fieldwork year by gender, mode of study, and cohort. The results in this chapter can be interpreted as weighted pooled averages.

Table 4.1 Results of statistical analyses, including effect size, by indicator

Indicator Score	Statistically significance difference	Effect Size
Higher-Order Learning	Yes	Small (0.105)
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Yes	Negligible (0.061)
Quantitative Reasoning	Yes	Negligible (0.099)
Learning Strategies	No	Negligible (0.015)
Collaborative Learning	Yes	Large (0.543)
Student-Faculty Interaction	Yes	Medium (0.336)
Effective Teaching Practices	Yes	Small (0.138)
Quality of Interactions	Yes	Very Large (0.707)
Supportive Environment	Yes	Medium (0.450)

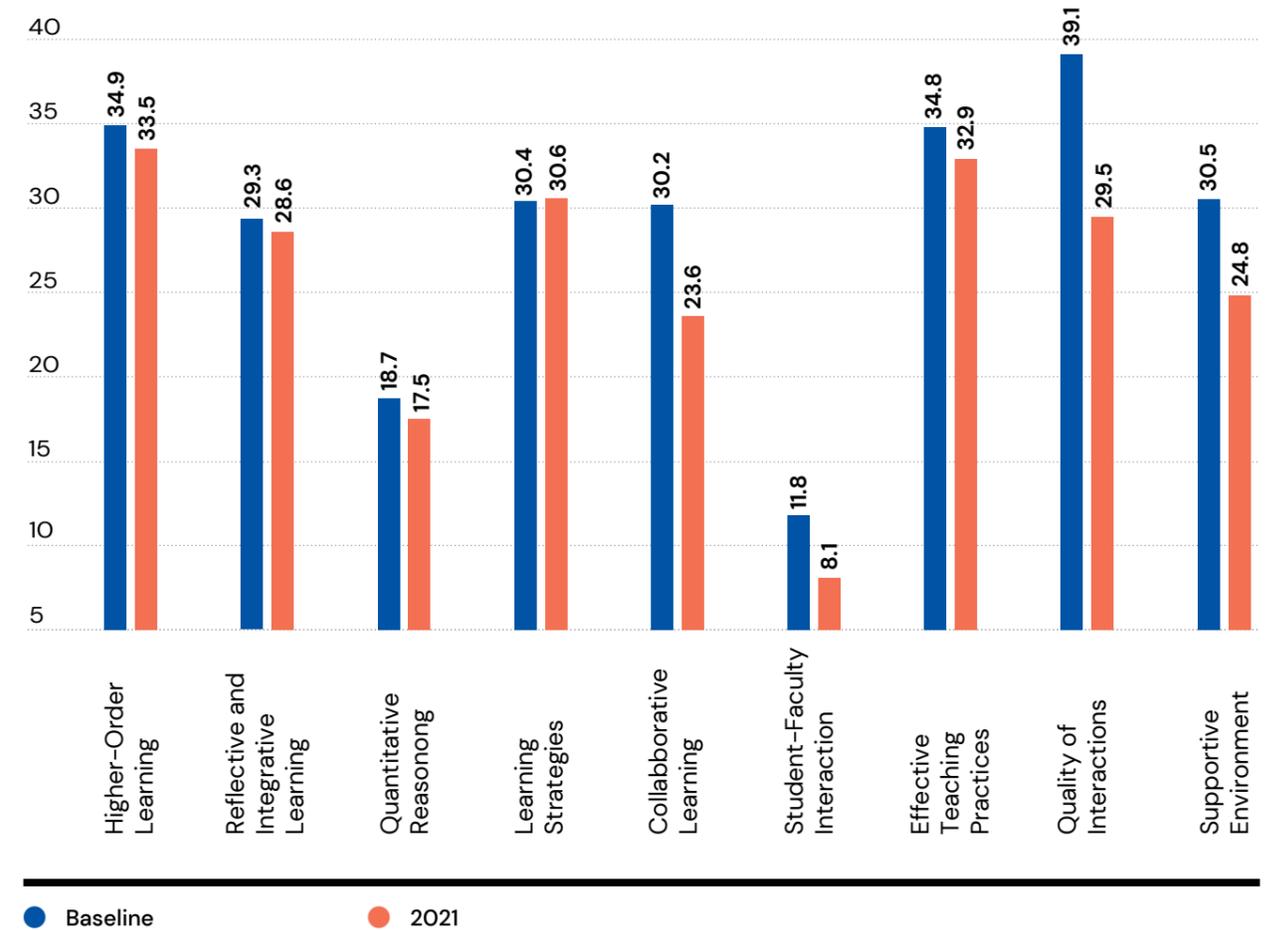


Fig. 4.1 Indicator scores for 2021 respondents and Baseline respondents

The purpose of this chapter is to compare the experiences of first year undergraduate students in higher education in Ireland in the 2020–2021 academic year to the experiences of first year undergraduate students over the past three fieldwork years (2018, 2019, and 2020). Thus, this chapter will focus on the factors deemed by the statistical analyses to have been most affected by necessitated changes to the traditional on-campus higher education model. These are:

- ➔ Collaborative Learning
- ➔ Student–Faculty Interaction
- ➔ Quality of Interactions
- ➔ Supportive Environment

These indicators all had medium, large, or very large effect sizes. Although statistically significant differences were observed, the effect size was small or negligible for *Higher-Order Learning*, *Reflective and Integrative Learning*, *Quantitative Reasoning*, and *Effective Teaching Practices*.

Note on comparing full-time, part-time, and remote respondents

Public health guidance related to COVID-19 has necessitated a move away from the traditional on-campus higher education model towards a remote and blended/ hybrid model in the 2020–2021 academic year. Thus, it is important to note that the data examined at baseline relate to previous years of first year undergraduate

The four indicators with medium, large or very large effect sizes will be examined by exploring the differences between first year undergraduate respondents in 2021 and at baseline, across their mode of study, term-time residence type, undergraduate programme type, institution type and field of study. In addition, respondents' demographic characteristics of gender, age, and country of domicile will be examined.

In addition to analysing indicators, the StudentSurvey.ie dataset allows for a detailed analysis of the individual questions that relate to each indicator. The sections that follow will present the responses to selected questions that comprise each indicator to further investigate the results.

A detailed analysis of the questions for each indicator is provided in the bespoke and interactive dashboard here. This dashboard is the first public dashboard of its kind for StudentSurvey.ie and all readers are strongly encouraged to interact with it.

students who had chosen their mode of study. This contrasts with first year undergraduate students in 2020–2021, for whom public health measures played a large role in determining their attendance patterns. When interpreting findings, this must be taken into consideration.

Demographic profile of first year undergraduate respondents

Table 4.2 shows the programme and demographic characteristics for the population and sample of first year undergraduate respondents in the 2021 survey and the 2018–2020 baseline. In total, 21,095 first year undergraduate students responded to the survey in 2021. The response rate for first year undergraduate respondents is 35.7%.

The profile of first year undergraduate respondents in the 2021 survey was similar to the profile of first year undergraduate respondents across the three fieldwork years included as baseline (2018, 2019, 2020). Comparing the profile of 2021 first year undergraduate respondents to first year undergraduate respondents at baseline:

- In 2021, 46.9% of first year undergraduate respondents attended Universities, 44.7% attended THEIs (Technological Higher Education Institution), and 8.4% attended Other Institutions. At baseline, 46.8% attended Universities, 46.5% attended THEIs, and 6.7% attended Other Institutions.
- By mode of study, in 2021, there were 92.9% full-time first year undergraduate respondents, 5.4% part-time, and 1.7% remote respondents. At baseline, this was 94.7% full-time, 4.6% part-time, and 0.7% remote first year undergraduate respondents.
- In 2021, 82.2% of first year undergraduate respondents were pursuing Undergraduate Honours Degree, 10.3% Undergraduate Ordinary Degree and 7.5% Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma. At baseline, this was 79.9% for Undergraduate Honours Degree, 13.0% for Undergraduate Ordinary Degree, and 7.2% for Undergraduate Certificate/Diploma.
- By field of study, in comparing the profile of 2021 first year undergraduate respondents to first year undergraduate respondents at baseline, there were fewer Arts and Humanities respondents (14.9% in 2021; 17.5% at baseline), and more Health and Welfare (17.2% in 2021; 16.1% at baseline) first year undergraduate respondents.
- The proportion of males and females were similar in 2021 and at baseline. In 2021, 60.5% were female, 39.2% were male, and 0.3% were undeclared. At baseline, 58.9% were female, 41.1% were male, and 0.3% were undeclared.
- In 2021, 84.1% of first year undergraduate respondents were aged 23 and under, while 15.9% were aged 24 and over. At baseline, 85.4% were aged 23 and under, while 14.6% were aged 24 and over.
- Country of domicile breakdowns were the same in 2021 and at baseline. Irish domiciled students made up 93.1% of all respondents and internationally domiciled students made up 6.9% of all respondents at both timepoints.
- In 2021, a slightly higher proportion of first year undergraduate respondents lived with parents, while a slightly lower proportion lived in rented accommodation or on campus. By term-time residence, 28.4% of first year undergraduate respondents lived with parents, 11.6% in rented accommodation, 7.9% on campus, and 3.0% in their own home. At baseline, 25.4% of first year undergraduate respondents lived with parents, 13.9% in rented accommodation, 10.9% on campus, and 2.3% in their own home.

Table 4.2 Demographic profile of first year undergraduate respondents 2021 and baseline (2018-2020)

2021					2018 - 2020					
Characteristic	National Y1 student population		All Y1 respondents		Re-sponse rate	National Y1 student population		All Y1 respondents		Re-sponse rate
ALL	59,017		21,095		35.7%	167,802		59,984		
Fieldwork year										
2021	59,017		21,095		35.7%					
2020						56,491	33.7%	21,873	36.5%	38.7%
2019						54,778	32.6%	19,557	32.6%	35.7%
2018						56,533	33.7%	18,554	30.9%	32.8%
Institution type										
Universities	29,220	49.5%	9,889	46.9%	33.8%	83,385	49.7%	28,072	46.8%	33.7%
Technological Higher Education Institutions (IoTs and Technological Universities)	24,834	42.1%	9,424	44.7%	37.9%	72,310	43.1%	27,879	46.5%	38.6%
Other Institutions	4,963	8.4%	1,782	8.4%	35.9%	12,107	7.2%	4,033	6.7%	33.3%
Mode of study										
Full-time	50,828	86.1%	19,594	92.9%	38.5%	145,466	86.7%	56,780	94.7%	39.0%
Part-time	6,328	10.7%	1,149	5.4%	18.2%	19,205	11.4%	2,771	4.6%	14.4%
Remote	1,861	3.2%	352	1.7%	18.9%	3,131	1.9%	433	0.7%	13.8%
Undergraduate Programme type										
Certificate/Diploma	8,258	14.0%	1,576	7.5%	19.1%	23,820	14.2%	4,301	7.2%	18.1%
Ordinary Degree	5,935	10.0%	2,177	10.3%	36.7%	20,454	12.2%	7,785	13.0%	38.1%
Honours Degree	44,824	76.0%	17,342	82.2%	38.7%	123,528	73.6%	47,898	79.9%	38.8%
Field of study										
Generic programmes and qualifications	573	1.0%	82	0.4%	14.3%	748	0.4%	125	0.2%	16.7%
Education	3,053	5.2%	1,212	5.7%	39.7%	8,111	4.8%	3,163	5.3%	39.0%
Arts and humanities	9,542	16.1%	3,144	14.9%	32.9%	29,930	17.8%	10,479	17.5%	35.0%
Social sciences, journalism, and information	3,431	5.8%	1,168	5.5%	34.0%	8,782	5.2%	2,901	4.8%	33.0%

Characteristic	National Y1 student population		All Y1 respondents		Re-sponse rate	National Y1 student population		All Y1 respondents		Re-sponse rate
Business, administration, and law	12,630	21.4%	4,199	19.9%	33.2%	35,609	21.2%	11,868	19.8%	33.3%
Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics	6,298	10.7%	2,490	11.8%	39.5%	16,780	10.0%	6,913	11.5%	41.2%
Information and Communication Technologies	4,020	6.8%	1,440	6.8%	35.8%	11,035	6.6%	4,204	7.0%	38.1%
Engineering, manufacturing, and construction	6,782	11.5%	2,407	11.4%	35.5%	19,680	11.7%	6,662	11.1%	33.9%
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary	992	1.7%	487	2.3%	49.1%	2,932	1.7%	1,043	1.7%	35.6%
Health and welfare	9,273	15.7%	3,630	17.2%	39.1%	26,121	15.6%	9,683	16.1%	37.1%
Services	2,423	4.1%	836	4.0%	34.5%	8,074	4.8%	2,943	4.9%	36.5%
Gender										
Female	27,466	46.5%	12,760	60.5%	46.5%	86,716	51.7%	35,327	58.9%	40.7%
Male	31,391	53.2%	8,265	39.2%	26.3%	81,044	48.3%	24,642	41.1%	30.4%
Undeclared	160	0.3%	70	0.3%	43.8%	42	0.03%	15	0.03%	35.7%
Age group										
23 and under	46,569	78.9%	17,741	84.1%	38.1%	132,462	78.9%	51,213	85.4%	38.7%
24 and over	12,448	21.1%	3,354	15.9%	26.9%	35,340	21.1%	8,771	14.6%	24.8%
Country of domicile										
Irish domiciled	54,586	92.5%	19,645	93.1%	36.0%	155,278	92.5%	55,838	93.1%	36.0%
Internationally domiciled	4,431	7.5%	1,450	6.9%	32.7%	12,524	7.5%	4,146	6.9%	33.1%
Term-time residence										
With parents	17,124	29.0%	5,986	28.4%	35.0%	42,669	25.4%	15,255	25.4%	35.8%
Rented accommodation	6,545	11.1%	2,450	11.6%	37.4%	21,933	13.1%	8,343	13.9%	38.0%
On-campus	4,781	8.1%	1,658	7.9%	34.7%	18,182	10.8%	6,514	10.9%	35.8%
Own home	2,019	3.4%	634	3.0%	31.4%	5,208	3.1%	1,400	2.3%	26.9%
Other	635	1.1%	221	1.0%	34.8%	1,812	1.1%	624	1.0%	34.4%
Not Specified	27,913	47.3%	10,146	48.1%	36.3%	77,998	46.5%	27,848	46.4%	35.7%

4.2 First year undergraduate respondents' collaborative learning with their peers

The StudentSurvey.ie National Report Editorial Group is returning to the same questions explored in the StudentSurvey.ie National Report 2020 to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 public health measures on first year undergraduate respondents. For most of these students, the 2020-2021 academic year will have been their only experience in higher education.

This section focuses on the extent to which respondents collaborate with their peers to solve problems or learn material by focusing on the *Collaborative Learning* indicator.

Fig. 4.2 shows the *Collaborative Learning* indicator scores for first year undergraduate respondents across a wide range of student characteristics.

2021 Cohort

Looking at the 2021 cohort alone, the analysis shows that, for *Collaborative Learning*, no statistically significant differences were evident between first year undergraduate respondents in relation to their gender, domicile, or term-time residence.¹⁷ However, there were significant differences between other groups of first year undergraduate respondents, which include mode of study, age group, institution type, programme type, and field of study¹⁸:

- Full-time respondents reported higher scores than part-time/ remote respondents.
- Respondents aged 23 years and under reported working collaboratively with their peers more frequently compared to those aged 24 and older.

Significant differences were observed between the 2021 cohort and at baseline for *Collaborative Learning*. In all variables examined (gender, mode of study, age group, domicile, residence, institution type, programme type and field of study), the 2021 cohort had lower *Collaborative Learning* scores than at baseline (see Figure 4.2). Of the variables examined for differences between first year undergraduate students in 2021 and the baseline group, the largest effect sizes were for students living in college accommodation (0.641), for Social sciences, journalism and information students (0.642), and for Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics students (0.688).

- First year undergraduate respondents at Universities reported lower scores for *Collaborative Learning* than their peers in Technological Higher Education Institutions and Other Institutions.
- First year undergraduate respondents pursuing a Certificate/ Diploma were much less likely to report working with their peers compared to respondents pursuing an Ordinary Degree or Honours Degree.
- Services students reported the highest *Collaborative Learning* scores, while Social sciences, journalism and information students had the lowest scores.

17. T-statistics were computed to determine whether the difference between two groups (such as domicile group and age group) was statistically significant. ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether the difference between more than two groups (such as institution type) was statistically significant. For these characteristics, pairwise significance between each group was then tested.

18. Some pairwise differences between fields of study were not statistically significant.

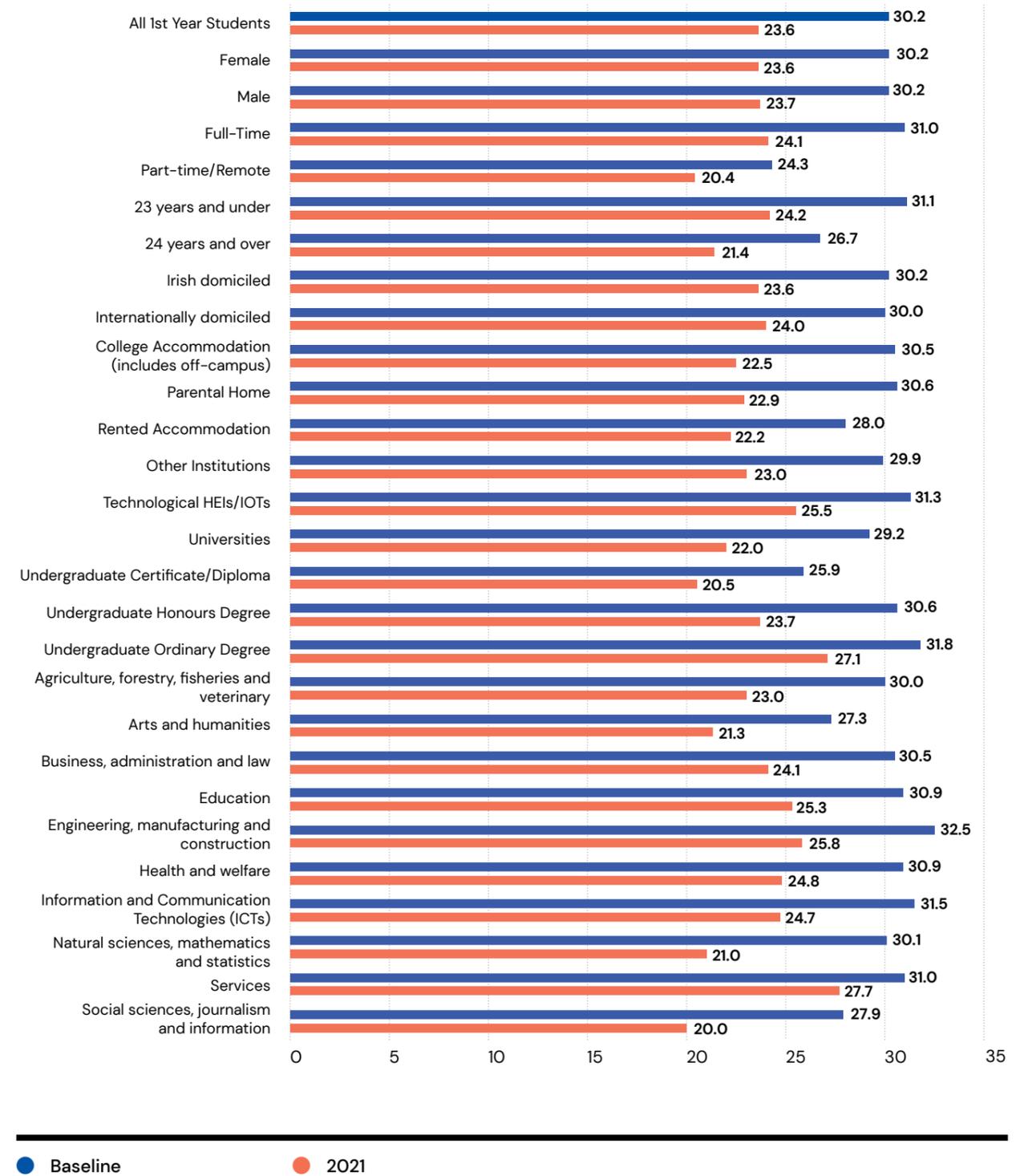


Fig. 4.2 *Collaborative Learning* scores for first year undergraduate respondents (Baseline vs 2021)

The following sections will present the responses to a selection of questions that comprise each indicator to further investigate the results. To investigate these findings further, the following sections will select two of the questions that contribute to the *Collaborative Learning* indicator. These are:

Q1: How often have you worked with other students on projects or assignments?

One-fifth (20.8%) of 2021 respondents "Never" worked with other students on projects or assignments. At baseline, this was 10.1%. Two-fifths (39.5%) of the 2021 cohort worked with others on projects or assignments "Often" or "Very Often". At baseline, this was 53.7%.

Of the 2021 part-time/ remote respondents, 37.8% reported "Never" working with other students on projects. At baseline, this was 22.9%. For full-time respondents, this was 18.3% in 2021 and 8.2% at baseline.

By age group, the group with the largest percentage point difference between baseline and 2021 were students aged 24 years and over (30.9% responding "Never" in 2021; 16.5% at baseline). For students aged 23 years and under, this was 18.2% and 8.4%, respectively.

By term-time residence, students living with their parents saw the largest increase in students reporting "Never" working with other students on projects, at 21.1% in 2021 and 10.4% at baseline.

- **Q1:** How often have you worked with other students on projects or assignments?
- **Q2:** How often have you prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students?

Detailed figures for both the 2021 cohort and the baseline are provided in the Dashboard [here](#).

In THEIs, 17.4% of respondents "Never" worked with other students on projects or assignments in 2021. At baseline, this was 6.4%. In Universities, 23.1% responded "Never" in 2021. At baseline, this was 13.3%. For Other Institutions, 26.7% "Never" worked with other students on projects or assignments in 2021. At baseline, this was 12.3%.

One in five (19.5%) Honours Degree students reported "Never" working with other students on projects in 2021. At baseline, this was 9.6%. For Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma, this was 37.2% and 18.9%, respectively. For Ordinary Degrees, this was 11.9% and 4.8%, respectively.

By field of study, the group with the largest difference between 2021 and at baseline was Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics students. In 2021, 33.0% "Never" worked with other students on projects. At baseline, this was 13.9%. Moreover, in 2021, Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics students had the highest proportion of students responding "Never", followed by Arts and humanities students. Business, administration and law students had the lowest difference between 2021 (9.9%) and at baseline (7.4%).

Q2: How often have you prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students?

Two-fifths (40.2%) of the 2021 cohort "Never" prepared for exams with other students. At baseline, this was 17.0%. Meanwhile, 26.4% prepared for exams with other students "Often" or "Very Often". At baseline, this was 44.5%.

Full-time respondents saw the largest increase in students reporting "Never" preparing with other students (40.3% in 2021; 15.8% at baseline). Meanwhile, 39.5% of part-time/ remote respondents responded "Never" in 2021. At baseline, this was 25.7%.

Students living in college accommodation saw the largest increase in students reporting "Never" working with other students on projects, at 42.6% in 2021, and 13.8% at baseline.

University students saw the largest increase in students "Never" preparing for exams with others (45.1% in 2021; 19.0% at baseline).

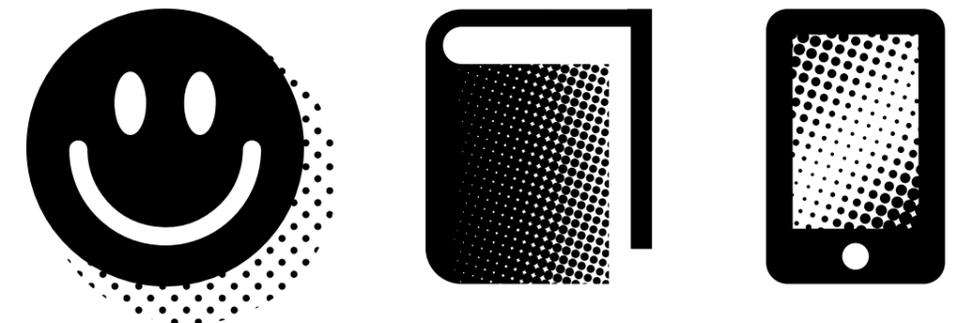
Two-fifths (41.2%) of Honours Degree students reported "Never" preparing with other students in 2021. At baseline, this was 16.5%. For Certificate/ Diploma students, 40% "Never" prepared with other students in 2021. At baseline, this was 23.3%. For Ordinary Degrees, this was 32.7% and 14.3%, respectively.

By field of study, the field with the largest difference between baseline and 2021 were Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics students. In 2021, 45.4% "Never" prepared with other students for exams. At baseline, this was 17.5%.

Results for the COVID-19 questions and *Collaborative Learning*

One in five (20.8%) first year undergraduate respondents in 2021 "Never" worked with other students on projects or assignments. At baseline, this was 10.1%. Furthermore, 40.2% "Never" prepared for exams with other students. At baseline, this was 17.0%. Despite this, it should be noted that 87.3% of first year undergraduate respondents agreed that higher education institutions provided adequate

online learning opportunities, and 87.6% were able to access online learning sufficiently to engage with their studies. Thus, first year undergraduate respondents seemed to agree that they received sufficient opportunities and resources to complete their studies, yet interaction with other students was more limited for 2021 first year undergraduate respondents than previous cohorts.



4.3 First year undergraduate respondents' relationship with academic staff

This section focuses on how respondents view their relationship with academic staff by focusing on a selection of questions from the *Student-Faculty Interaction* indicator.

Fig. 4.3 shows the *Student-Faculty Interaction* scores for first year undergraduate respondents across a wide range of student characteristics.

Significant differences were observed between the 2021 cohort and at baseline for *Student-Faculty Interaction* scores.

2021 Cohort

The analysis shows that the *Student-Faculty Interaction* indicator was not statistically different for first year undergraduate respondents living in different types of term-time accommodation. However, there were significant differences between all other groups of first year undergraduate respondents, which includes their gender, mode of study, age, country of domicile, institution type, programme type, and field of study¹⁹:

- Male first year undergraduate respondents had higher indicator scores than female respondents.
- Full-time respondents had lower indicator scores compared to part-time/ remote respondents.
- Respondents aged 24 and over had higher indicator scores compared to their peers aged 23 and under.
- Internationally domiciled respondents had higher indicator scores for interacting with faculty compared to their Irish domiciled counterparts.

Faculty Interaction. In all variables examined (gender, mode of study, age group, domicile, residence, institution type, programme type and field of study), the 2021 cohort had lower *Student-Faculty Interaction* scores than at baseline. Of the variables examined for differences between first year undergraduate students in 2021 and the baseline group, the largest effect sizes were for students living in other accommodation (0.484), for Engineering, manufacturing and construction students (0.447), and for Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students (0.444).

- First year undergraduate respondents at Universities had lower scores in relation to interacting with faculty members than their peers in Technological Higher Education Institutions and Other Institutions.
- First year undergraduate respondents pursuing an Ordinary Degree had the highest scores for interacting with faculty, while respondents pursuing an Honours Degree had the lowest scores. The difference in the indicator scores was not statistically different between respondents pursuing a Certificate/Diploma and an Ordinary Degree.
- Services was the field of study where first year undergraduate respondents reported the highest *Student-Faculty Interaction* scores, while Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics students had the lowest scores.

19. Some pairwise differences between programme type and fields of study are not statistically significant.

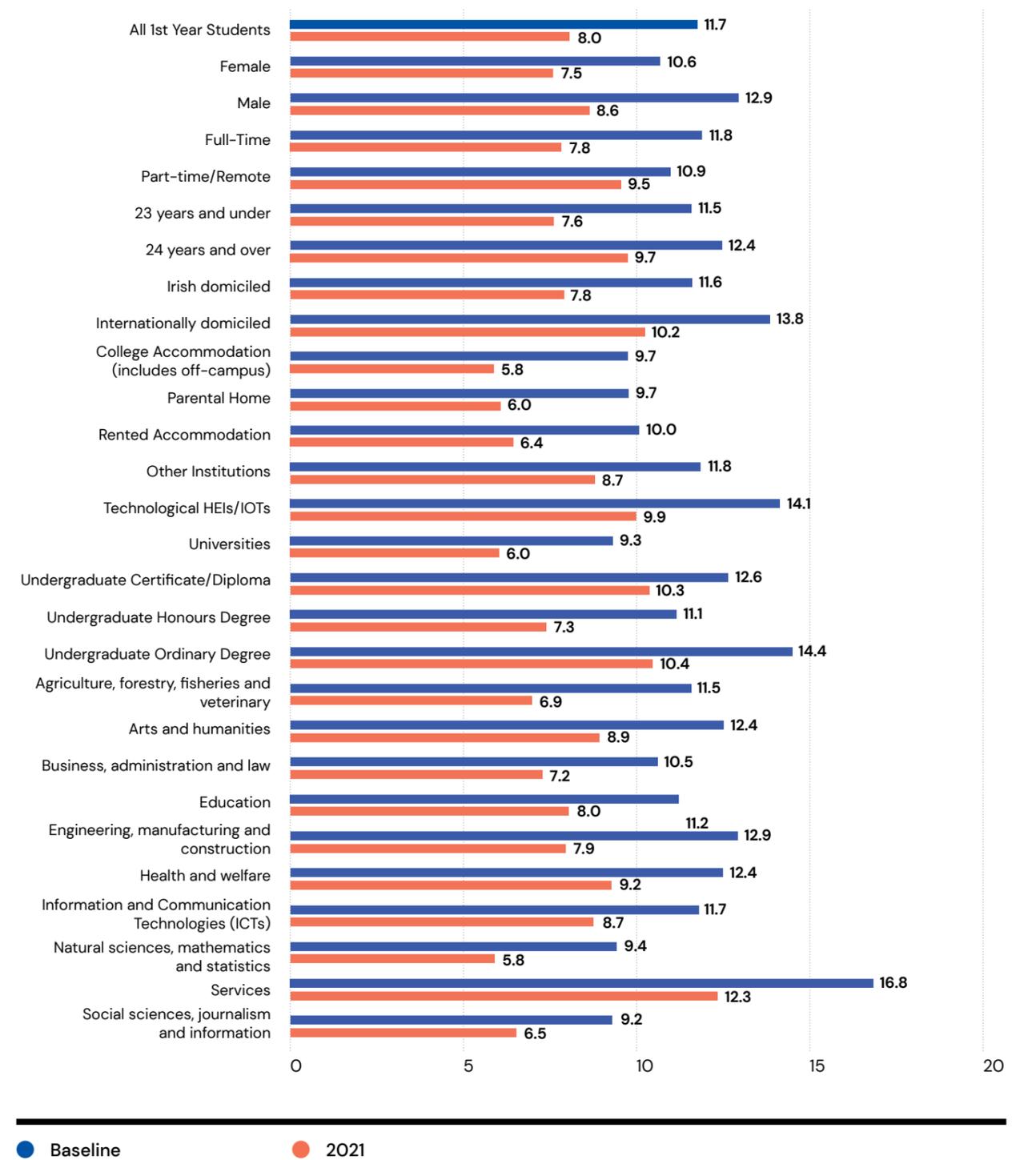


Fig. 4.3 *Student-Faculty Interaction* indicator scores for first year undergraduate respondents (Baseline vs 2021)

The two questions explored in detail from the *Student-Faculty Interaction* indicator are those that may be more affected by moving away from the traditional on-campus model:

- **Q1:** During the current academic year, how often have you discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class?
- **Q2:** During the current academic year, how often have you worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)?

Q1: How often have you discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class?

Of the 2021 respondents, 66.3% “Never” discussed course topics and ideas outside of class with academic staff. At baseline, this was 51.2%.

Amongst females, 69.2% responded “Never”. At baseline, this was 56.2%. For males, this was 63.0% and 45.8%, respectively.

Full-time respondents saw the largest increase in students reporting “Never” (67.2% in 2021; 51.5% at baseline). Meanwhile, 61.0% of part-time/ remote respondents responded “Never” in 2021. At baseline, this was 48.8%.

Approximately 58.7% of internationally domiciled respondents “Never” discussed course topics or ideas with academic staff in 2021. At baseline, this was 42.4%. For Irish domiciled respondents, this was 66.9% and 51.8%, respectively.

Detailed figures for both the 2021 cohort and at baseline are provided in the Dashboard [here](#).

Students in THEIs showed the largest increase in students “Never” discussing course topics with academic staff outside of class (60.7% for the 2021 cohort, 43.9% at baseline). In Universities, this was 72.2% and 58.5%, respectively. In Other Institutions, this was 64.3%, and 51.6%, respectively.

Of the Honours Degree students, 68.3% responded “Never” in 2021. At baseline, this was 53.5%. For Certificate/ Diploma students, this was 60.1% and 45.6%. For Ordinary degree students, this was 58.9% and 42.6%.

By field of study, Services students had the largest difference between baseline and 2021. In 2021, 54.0% reported “Never” discussing course topics with academic staff outside of class. At baseline, this was 36.2%. This was followed by Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students, and Engineering, manufacturing and construction students.

Q2: How often have you worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)?

Of the 2021 respondents, 80.9% “Never” worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework. At baseline, this was 70.7%.

Male respondents saw the larger increase in students reporting “Never” working with academic staff on other activities (79.4% in 2021; 66.5% at baseline). For females, 82.1% responded “Never” in 2021. At baseline, this was 74.7%.

By mode of study, full-time respondents saw the largest difference between baseline and 2021. In 2021, 80.7% “Never” worked with academic staff outside of coursework. At baseline, this was 69.5%. For part-time/ remote respondents, this was 81.7% and 79.3%, respectively.

Approximately 73.2% of internationally domiciled respondents in 2021 “Never” worked with academic staff outside of coursework. At baseline, this was 60.5%. For Irish domiciled respondents, 81.4% responded “Never” in 2021. At baseline, this was 71.5%.

Students in THEIs showed the largest increase in students “Never” discussing course topics with academic staff outside of class (78.0% for the 2021 cohort; 65.1% at baseline). In Universities, this was 84.4% and 76.4%, respectively. In Other Institutions, this was 77.3% and 62.8%, respectively.

Of the Honours Degree students, 81.6% responded “Never” in 2021. At baseline, this was 71.7%. For Certificate/ Diplomas, this was 79.6% and 73.1%, respectively. For Ordinary Degrees, this was 62.8% and 72.8%.

By field of study, Services students had the largest difference between baseline and 2021. In 2021, 73.7% reported “Never” working with academic staff outside of coursework. At baseline, this was 53.7%. This was followed by Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students, and Engineering, manufacturing and construction students.

Results for the COVID-19 questions and *Student-Faculty Interaction*

In 2021, 66.3% of first year undergraduate respondents “Never” discussed course topics, ideas or concepts with academic staff outside of class. This was up from 51.2% at baseline. Moreover, 80.9% “Never” worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework in 2021. This was up from 70.7% at baseline. Nonetheless, 87.3% of first year undergraduate respondents

in 2021 agreed that their higher education institution provided adequate online learning opportunities and 87.6% agreed that they were able to access online learning sufficiently to engage with their studies. Thus, although 2021 first year undergraduate students perceived that they had adequate online learning opportunities, they seemed to have fewer interactions with academic staff, in comparison to their predecessors.

4.4 First year undergraduate respondents' quality of interactions with others

This section focuses on respondents' scores for the *Quality of Interactions* with a range of other people on campus.

Fig. 4.4 shows the *Quality of Interactions* indicator scores for first year undergraduate respondents across a wide range of student characteristics.

Significant differences were observed between the 2021 cohort and at baseline for *Quality of Interactions*. In all variables examined (gender, mode of study, age group, domicile, residence, institution type, programme type and field of study), the 2021 cohort had lower *Quality of Interactions* scores than the baseline. The largest effect sizes found of all the indicators examined in this chapter were for

Quality of Interactions. Of the variables examined for differences between first year undergraduate students in 2021 and the baseline group, the largest effect sizes were for Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students (1.025), for students living in other accommodation (0.802), and for students living in their own home (0.811). Within variables, the difference was larger for students in Universities (0.797) than Technological Higher Education Institutions (0.669) or Other Institutions (0.494). Full-time students (0.731) showed a bigger difference than part-time/remote students (0.448), while Irish domiciled students (0.718) showed a bigger difference than internationally domiciled students (0.582).

2021 Cohort

There were significant differences between groups on all characteristics for first year undergraduate respondents, except for respondents' term-time accommodation.²⁰

- Male respondents had slightly higher indicator scores compared to females.
- Part-time/ remote respondents had higher indicator scores compared to those studying full-time.
- Respondents aged 24 and over had higher indicator scores compared to those aged 23 and under.
- Internationally domiciled respondents had higher indicator scores compared to their Irish domiciled counterparts.

- Respondents from Other Institutions had the highest indicator scores, followed by Technological Higher Education Institutions and Universities.
- First year undergraduate respondents pursuing a Certificate/ Diploma also had higher scores compared to respondents pursuing an Ordinary Degree, who in turn had higher scores compared to respondents pursuing an Honours Degree.
- The fields of study where first year undergraduate respondents had the highest *Quality of Interactions* scores were Services students and ICT students, while Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students had the lowest scores.

20. Some pairwise differences between fields of study are not statistically significant.

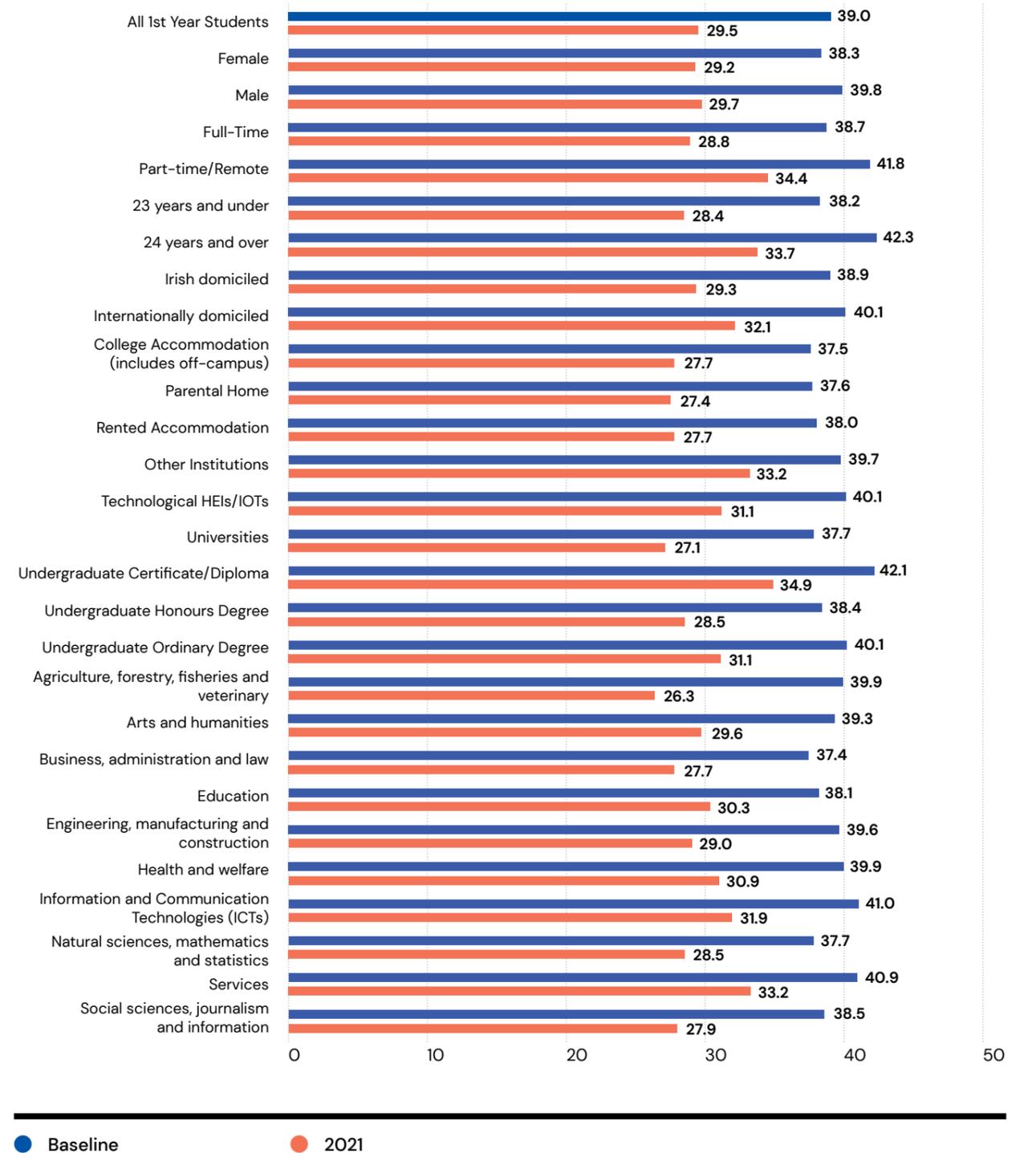


Fig. 4.4 *Quality of Interactions* indicator scores for first year undergraduate respondents (Baseline vs 2021)

The questions explored in this section are:

- **Q1:** At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with: Academic staff
- **Q2:** At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with: Students

Q1: At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with: Academic staff

Less than two-fifths of 2021 respondents (37.2%) rated the *Quality of Interactions* with academic staff as 5 or above (with the maximum being 7, "Excellent") in 2021. At baseline, this was 64.1%. Of 2021 respondents, 46.7% rated their interactions as 3 or below (with the minimum being 1, "Poor"). At baseline, this was 18.0%.

Part-time/ remote respondents had the larger decrease in students reporting "Excellent" quality of interaction with academic staff (20.5% in 2021; 35.2% at baseline). Meanwhile, 9.1% of full-time respondents in 2021 rated quality of interactions as "Excellent". At baseline, this was 17.7%.

Respondents aged 24 years and over had the larger decrease in "Excellent" rating (19.4% in 2021; 34.5% at baseline). For respondents aged 23 years and under, 8.2% considered interactions "Excellent" in 2021. At baseline, this was 15.9%.

Detailed figures for both the 2021 cohort and at baseline are provided in the Dashboard [here](#).

Students in THEIs showed the largest decrease in students rating their quality of interactions with academic staff as "Excellent" (13.2% for the 2021 cohort, 24.2% at baseline). In Universities, this was 7.3% and 15.0%, respectively. For Other Institutions, this was 14.0% and 19.6%, respectively.

Of the Honours Degree students, 8.7% responded "Excellent" in 2021. At baseline, this was 16.6%. For Certificate/ Diploma students, this was 21.3% and 35.6%, respectively. For Ordinary Degree students, this was 12.5% and 24.1%, respectively.

By field of study, Services students had the largest difference between baseline and 2021. In 2021, 14.8% rated the quality of interactions as "Excellent". At baseline, this was 28.0%. This was followed by Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students.



Q2: At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with: Students

Of the 2021 respondents, 47.0% rated their interactions with students as 5 or above (with the maximum being 7, "Excellent"). At baseline, this was 80.3%.

Part-time/ remote respondents had the larger decrease in students reporting "Excellent" quality of interaction with students (17.7% in 2021; 41.8% at baseline). For full-time respondents, this was 10.7% and 33.8%, respectively.

One in ten (10.5%) respondents aged 23 years and under rated the quality of interactions as "Excellent" in 2021. At baseline, this was 33.7%. For those aged 24 years and over, this was 15.9% and 38.6%, respectively.

Universities saw the largest decrease in the proportion of students rating their quality of interactions with students as "Excellent" (8.4% for the 2021 cohort; 32.8% at baseline). In THEIs, this was 14.4% and 36.4%, respectively. For Other Institutions, this was 13.5% and 35.6%, respectively.

Of the Honours Degree students, 10.2% responded "Excellent" in 2021. At baseline, this was 33.8%. For Certificate/ Diploma students, this was 18.9% and 40.2%. For Ordinary Degree students, this was 14.1% and 35.5%, respectively.

By field of study, Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students had the largest difference between baseline and 2021. In 2021, 8.5% rated the quality of interactions as "Excellent". At baseline, this was 35.9%. This was followed by Health and welfare students.

Results for the COVID-19 questions and *Quality of Interactions*

Of the 2021 first year undergraduate respondents, 46.7% rated the quality of interactions with academic staff as 3 or below. From the *Student-Faculty Interaction* scores above and the *Quality of Interactions* scores here, it is evident that the quantity and the quality of interactions with academic staff has been negatively impacted. Nonetheless, it should be noted that 84.7% of first year undergraduate respondents agreed that their institution had provided ongoing, effective, and timely communication. Thus, although first year undergraduate respondents received communications from their institutions, it is apparent that the quality and quantity of interactions with academic staff has declined.

On the quality of interaction with students, 1 in 3 first year undergraduate respondents (34.6%) rated the quality as 3 or below. More than half (53.3%) of first year undergraduate respondents in 2021 did not feel that they were connected to their institution. Thus, despite the efforts made by institutions to support online learning, additional support is required to improve students' interaction with other students, and to have social opportunities to feel more connected to their institution.

4.5 First year undergraduate respondents' perception of their institutions' emphasis on activities that support their learning and development

This section focuses on respondents' perceptions of how much their higher education institution emphasises services and activities that support their learning and development by focusing on a selection of questions from the *Supportive Environment* indicator.

Fig. 4.5 shows the *Supportive Environment* indicator scores for first year undergraduate respondents across a wide range of student characteristics.

Some significant differences were observed between the 2021 cohort and at baseline for *Supportive Environment*. In most²¹ variables examined (gender, age group, domicile, residence, institution type, programme type and field of study), the 2021 cohort had lower *Supportive Environment* scores than the baseline. Of the variables examined for differences between first year undergraduate students in 2021 and the baseline group, the largest effect sizes were for students living in college accommodation (0.645), for students in Universities (0.610), and for Arts and humanities students (0.611).

2021 Cohort

There were significant differences between groups for gender, mode of study, residence, institution type, programme type and field of study, for first year undergraduate respondents.²² No significant differences were observed for age group.

- Female respondents had slightly higher scores than males.
- Full-time respondents had slightly higher scores compared to part-time/ remote respondents.
- Internationally domiciled respondents had higher scores compared to Irish domiciled respondents.
- Respondents living with their parents had slightly higher scores compared to those living on college accommodation and those living in rented accommodation. The difference was not significant between those living with their

parents and in college accommodation, and between those living in rented accommodation and in college accommodation.

- First year undergraduate respondents at Universities had the lowest scores compared to their peers in Technological Higher Education Institutions and Other Institutions.
- First year undergraduate respondents pursuing an Ordinary Degree had higher scores compared to their peers pursuing a Certificate/Diploma or Honours Degree.
- The fields of study where first year undergraduate respondents reported the highest *Supportive Environment* scores were Services and ICT, while Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students reported the lowest scores.

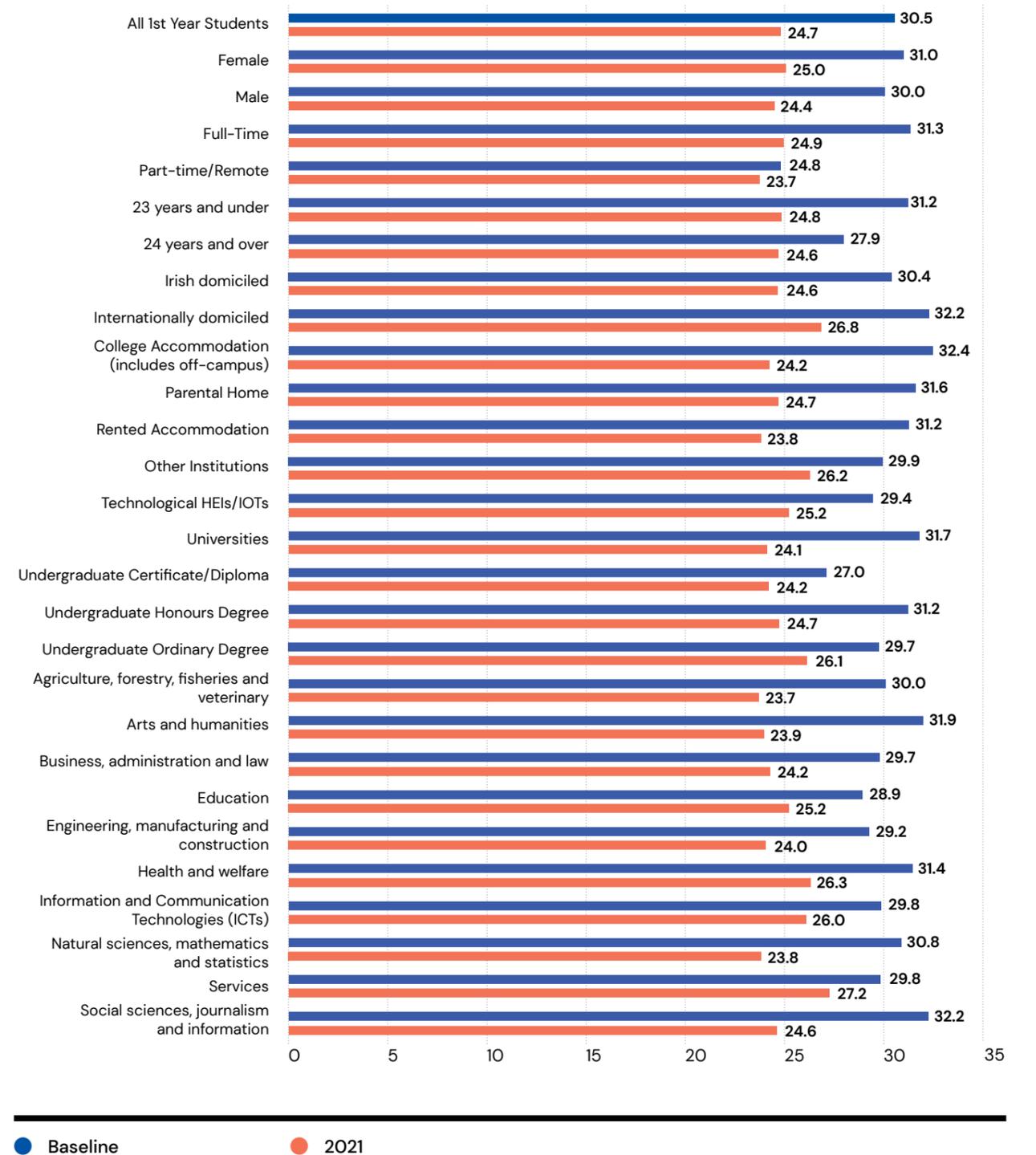


Fig. 4.5 *Supportive Environment* indicator scores for first year undergraduate respondents (Baseline vs 2021)

21. For mode of study, no significant difference was observed for part-time/ remote respondents between 2021 and at baseline.

22. Some pairwise differences between groups of term-time residence, programme type, and field of study are not statistically significant.

The questions explored in this section are those that may be more affected by moving away from the traditional full-time on-campus model:

- **Q1:** How much does your institution emphasise providing support to help students succeed academically?
- **Q2:** How much does your institution emphasise using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support, etc.)?
- **Q3:** How much does your institution emphasise providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)?
- **Q4:** How much does your institution emphasise providing opportunities to be involved socially?

Q1: How much does your institution emphasise providing support to help students succeed academically?

Of the 2021 respondents, 8.6% believed their institution emphasised providing support “Very little”. At baseline, this was 6.9%. In 2021, 20.8% believed their institution emphasised providing learning support services “Very much”. At baseline, this was 23.0%.

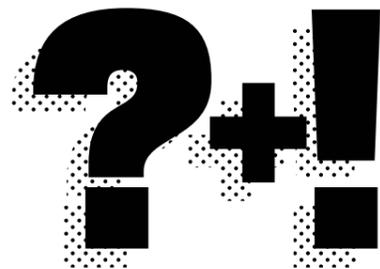
By mode of study, 10.0% of part-time/remote respondents believed their institution emphasised providing support “Very little” in 2021. At baseline, this was 8.2%. For full-time respondents, this was 8.4% and 6.7%, respectively.

Detailed figures for both the 2021 cohort and at baseline are provided in the Dashboard [here](#).

By age group, 9.5% of respondents aged 24 years and over responded “Very little”. At baseline, this was 7.2%. For those aged 23 years and under, this was 8.4% and 6.7%, respectively.

Universities had the largest difference between 2021 and at Baseline for the percentage of students selecting “Very little” as their response, at 9.5% and 6.9%, respectively.

By field of study, Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students had the largest difference between 2021 and at baseline for the percentage of students selecting “Very little” as their response (11.2% in 2021; 5.5% at baseline). Education students had the smallest difference (6.9% in 2021; 6.8% at baseline).



Q2: How much does your institution emphasise using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support, etc.)?

Of the 2021 respondents, 16.2% believed their institution emphasised providing learning support services “Very little”. At baseline, this was 12.8%. In 2021, 19.9% believed their institution emphasised providing learning support services “Very much”. At baseline, this was 26.4%.

By mode of study, 15.7% of full-time respondents responded “Very little”. At baseline, this was 12.3%. For part-time/remote respondents, this was 19.6% and 16.9%, respectively.

Of the 2021 Universities respondents, 14.4% believed their institution emphasised learning support services “Very little”. At baseline, this was 11.0%. For THEIs, this was 17.0% and

14.3%, respectively. For Other Institutions, this was 21.1% and 14.7%, respectively.

Of Honours Degree students, 15.6% responded “Very little”. At baseline, this was 12.1%. For Certificate/ Diploma students, this was 19.7% and 16.1%, respectively. For Ordinary Degree students, this was 16.6% and 14.2%, respectively.

By field of study, Arts and humanities students saw the largest decrease in the percentage of students selecting “Very little” as their response (19.2% in 2021; 12.9% at baseline). Services students reported the lowest decrease (16.3% in 2021; 16.1% at baseline).

Q3: How much does your institution emphasise providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)?

Of the 2021 respondents, 16.1% believed their institution emphasised well-being supports “Very little”. At baseline, this was 11.5%. Of the 2021 respondents, 18.2% believed that their institution emphasised well-being supports “Very much”. At baseline, this was 23.7%.

In 2021, 15.1% of female respondents believed that their institution emphasised well-being supports “Very little”. At baseline, this was 11.6%. For males, this was 17.2% and 11.3%, respectively.

By mode of study, 15.3% of full-time students responded “Very little”. At baseline, this was 9.4%. In contrast, fewer part-time respondents responded “Very little” in 2021 than at baseline (21.1% in 2021; 26.6% at baseline).

Approximately 15.5% of 2021 respondents aged 23 years and under believed their institution emphasised well-being supports “Very little”. At baseline, this was 9.6%. In contrast, fewer respondents aged 24 years

and over responded “Very little” in 2021 than at baseline (18.1% in 2021; 18.3% at baseline).

Universities saw the largest increase in respondents believing that their institution emphasised well-being supports “Very little” (17.1% in 2021; 10.4% at baseline). For THEIs, this was 15.7% and 12.3%, respectively. For Other Institutions, this was 12.4% and 13.1%, respectively.

Of Honours Degree respondents, 15.5% responded “Very little”. At baseline, this was 10.0%. For Certificate/ Diploma respondents, this was 21.4% and 20.8%, respectively. For Ordinary Degree respondents, this was 14.1% and 11.7%, respectively.

By field of study, Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students saw the largest increase between 2021 and at baseline. In 2021, 20.0% believed their institutions emphasised well-being supports “Very little”. At baseline, this was 10.9%. Services students saw the smallest decrease (13.4% in 2021; 11.5% at baseline).

Q4: How much does your institution emphasise providing opportunities to be involved socially?

More than 1 in 4 respondents (25.7%) believed their institution emphasised social opportunities “Very little” in 2021. At baseline, this was 11.4%. Of the 2021 respondents, 12.2% believed that their institution emphasised social opportunities “Very much”. At baseline, this was 23.2%.

By mode of study, 24.6% of full-time students responded that their institution emphasised social opportunities “Very little”. At baseline, this was 9.0%. For part-time respondents, this was 32.9% and 28.5%, respectively.

For respondents aged 24 years and over, 30.5% believed there was “Very little” emphasis on social opportunities. At baseline, this was 20.3%. For respondents aged 23 years and under, this was 24.4% and 9.0%, respectively.

Universities saw the largest increase in respondents believing that their institution emphasised social opportunities “Very little” (27.1% in 2021; 9.7% at baseline). For THEIs, this was 25.0% and 12.6%, respectively. For Other Institutions, this was 22.1% and 13.9%, respectively.

Of Honours Degree respondents, 25.1% responded “Very little”. At baseline, this was 9.6%. For Certificate/ Diploma respondents, this was 31.7% and 22.0%, respectively. For Ordinary Degree respondents, this was 23.5% and 11.7%, respectively.

By field of study, Social sciences, journalism and information students had the largest increase in the proportion of respondents believing there was “Very little” emphasis on social opportunities (27.5% in 2021; 9.4% at baseline). This was followed by Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (28.9% in 2021; 11.1% at baseline).

Results for the COVID-19 questions and Supportive Environment

Of the questions explored in this chapter, a higher proportion of first year undergraduate respondents believed that their institution emphasised various types of support “Very little” than at baseline. The various types of support explored were supports to help students succeed academically, learning support services, well-being services, and social opportunities. For example, 25.7% of first year undergraduate respondents believed that their institution emphasised social opportunities “Very little”. At baseline, this was 11.4%. Despite this, 84.7% of first year undergraduate respondents agreed that their higher education institution provided ongoing

effective and timely communication. The majority (87.6%) of first year undergraduate respondents agreed that they were able to access online learning sufficiently to engage with their studies, and 77.0% had a suitable study environment at home (e.g., space to work, internet access, computer). Thus, although institutions are providing sufficient communication and online learning opportunities, supports for first year undergraduate respondents in other areas, such as social opportunities, could be improved. This is similarly observed in the *Quality of Interactions* section.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the experience of first year undergraduate respondents in higher education in 2021 and has explored how this has been potentially impacted by the necessitated changes to the traditional on-campus education model, due to public health measures put in place in response to COVID-19. The aim of this chapter was to compare the previous three fieldwork years of first year undergraduate respondents (2018–2020 baseline) with the experiences of first year undergraduate respondents in 2021.

There were statistically significant differences between 2021 first year undergraduate respondents and at baseline for all characteristics explored for *Collaborative Learning*, *Student-Faculty Interaction*, and *Quality of Interactions*.

For *Supportive Environment*, there were significant differences observed across most characteristics. The only exception was that there was no significant difference for part-time respondents between 2021 and at baseline. In relation to *Collaborative Learning*, Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics students seemed most impacted amongst the questions examined in this chapter, but also overall. For *Student-Faculty Interaction*, amongst the questions examined in this chapter, full-time respondents, students in Technological Higher Education Institutions, and Services students were most impacted. However, looking across all questions relating to the *Student-Faculty Interaction* indicator, Engineering, manufacturing and construction respondents and students living in Other accommodation were most impacted. In relation to *Quality of Interactions*, amongst the questions examined in this chapter, part-time/ remote respondents were most heavily impacted. Looking at all questions relating to this indicator, Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary students' *Quality of Interactions* was most impacted. For *Supportive Environment*, within the questions examined, University students were most impacted by the changes. On the question around institutional support for overall student well-being, part-time/ remote respondents and respondents aged 24 years and

over saw increases in scores between 2021 and at baseline, contrary to what was observed with other indicators. Looking across all questions that relate to *Supportive Environment*, those living in College accommodation were most impacted.

To view each question related to each of the indicators in more detail, visit the dashboard here.

The StudentSurvey.ie Interim Results Bulletin 2021, addressing seven COVID-19-specific questions, enabled an early look into the experiences of first and final year undergraduate and taught and research postgraduate students during the 2020–2021 academic year. Despite these students indicating that they had sufficient learning opportunities and received communications from their institutions, for the first year undergraduate respondents examined more closely in this Chapter, interactions with academic staff and other students have suffered compared to previous years. As mentioned in the StudentSurvey.ie Interim Results Bulletin, “first year undergraduate students tended to mention things that have been missing from their student experience”, such as “people”, “events”, and “activities”.

Overall, it is evident that the changes necessitated by COVID-19 have had an impact on the experiences of first year undergraduate responses. It should be further noted that this impact varies by indicator examined, with *Quality of Interactions* showing the largest decline in scores between 2021 and the baseline of 2018–2020. Moreover, different cohorts experience differing levels of impact, with this also varying by indicator examined.



The software interface offered to the students is really helpful and easily accessible...

Marks for online attendance or weekly quiz's on lectures.

Mass emails.

The lectures video call students regularly to see how they are getting on and for feedback to improve the course, which is especially useful now.

Group work and assignments.

Be realistic about what people can comfortably achieve with out excessive stress.

A broad range of Moodle.

The professors regularly ask us questions in order to keep up engaged.

Small breakout rooms in some classes that we can communicate with other students on what is learnt.

So many activity and society choices.

Bring academia into real world issues and ask for real world solutions.

Writing reports forces students to understand the material.

Flexible fun learning.

Mentors.

Best is when lecturers are organised and communicate.

Your Lectures are always there whenever you may need advice our help with your subject or an issue you may be having, they are simply just an email away and are always happy to help you wherever you may need it. I find that this helps in making sure that you know you are not alone in your learning journey and if you do find that you are struggling it is okay to ask for help and you will receive it.

Ethos of academia throughout all years.

Very approachable and helpful, genuinely interested in our experience and did everything they could to help when I did run into problems.

Big blue button polls and breakout rooms.

All the mandatory coursework.

Foster a good learning culture and environment.

At this point it seems mostly through emails.

Smaller workshops worked well. Group assignments worked when on campus. A range of different assignments, not all essays.

Meetings with head tutors.

Asks students questions during lectures.

Classes are very impractical, they are all concepts and foundations, not for work.

Group work and assigning groups to get everyone involved.

Bring guest speakers into class.

Meet with staff one on one.

Mixture of both live lectures and pre recorded.

Class tests and group work.

Carrying out student surveys, bringing in guest speakers (especially past students) and encouraging wider reading on topics.

Work in small groups quiet often and provides a good line of communication with lecturers.

E-textbooks.

Break classes up into small groups allowing students to learn and achieve better.

The sports clinic allows us to put our knowledge into practice.

All the extra support services available.

Multiple Continuous assessments.

A good balance of tutorials and lectures; provides a supportive and social learning environment.

Access to academic help, lectures.

Class & lab recordings.

Better online services.

Wide range of module and progression choices available.

Academic knowledge.

Meetings with head of department.

The staff and lecturers send us emails everyday that include learning resources and other information.

Attempts project work but fails to guide in the correct way.

Bringing in interesting Guest Speakers during non Covid times.

Wonderful teacher.

As we are studying a form of therapy, students emotional needs are very well catered for. I feel very held in classes and our lecturers/facilitators are receptive to our sharing.

Calling our names.

Bring academic into real situations etc.

Simulation teaching.

Many possible career paths and connections.

Checks in with students regularly.

The smaller tutorial groups.

All teachers are very open to questions.

Be understanding.

Uses a combination of interesting assignments and material (when on-campus).

Evaluating the course content against real-world applicability.

Marks for participation in certain discussions and tutorials.

Multi-interactive guest lecturers.

Flipped classrooms.

Engineering is cool.

Assignments, mixed live and recorded lectures, other practical work.

A combination of live and pre recorded lectures. This gives us material to revise with before an exam.

Models active learning.

Classes are small so it is much easier to understand and get help if needed.

Always active to be able to get in contact with help if needed.

A Good online page with many additional readings.

Chapter 5 Reflections

5.1 Introduction

In previous years, the StudentSurvey.ie National Reports have aimed to present the results of StudentSurvey.ie as they are in a given year and have encouraged the interpretation of the meaning of the results to occur within the participating institutions. In the StudentSurvey.ie National Report 2021, given how exceptional the academic year 2020–2021 has been, the Editorial Group chose to invite reflections on the results of 2021 from student representatives (in collaboration with USI), a university, a Technological Higher Education Institution, a teaching college and a private college. The final reflection offered is from the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group.

5.2 Reflections

The StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group remains Student representatives (Education Officers in collaboration with USI)

This survey took place during Level 5 lockdown and shows not only the resilience of students over the past academic year, but also what needs to be prioritised moving forward towards a more flexible approach to learning and teaching. This report highlights how students have missed out on group work and interactive learning.

COVID-19 has highlighted some of the systemic flaws within the sector, including the lack of utilisation of lecture recording and online resources. This survey has shown us that students find benefit from online learning, and it should continue to be utilised alongside and complementary to in-person teaching. Where blended and flexible learning is implemented, it is important that students still have the opportunity to spend the majority of their time learning on campus. This is so that they can learn from each other, collaborate, socialise, and ensure that the cost of accommodation is considered worthwhile. If lectures are to be in a blended approach, it is crucial that there are policies in place that would allow for lectures to be recorded if required, so that no student is left disadvantaged.

Due to the limitations of the survey, creative students were omitted from the report. With little to no information or support available for students in studio based or practice-based courses, creative students suffered immeasurably during the pandemic. Due to the lack of access to resources, equipment and materials, the arts have been left behind in the pandemic and left with very little chance to build upon their education in a fruitful and engaging manner. Unlike many other courses, blended learning does not support the arts and it is necessary for creative students to gain access to their campus.

The results of the Student Survey 2021 were overall very surprising, given the year that it was, and COVID-19 presented many challenges for

students. It is crucial that, no matter what happens, higher education institutions remain open with as much on-site activity as possible, inclusive of library access, engagement with staff, student collaboration, and social engagements.

Dublin City University (Aisling McKenna, Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research)

The 2021 StudentSurvey.ie results are the first cycle of the national survey to be entirely conducted during the current COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and campus closures. In anticipating the results, I had expected significant drops across all nine StudentSurvey.ie indicators, potentially painting a bleak picture of student engagement during the first global pandemic in a century. However, listening to what students are telling us through the survey tells a more complex story about student engagement in 2021.

When I compared the scores across the nine StudentSurvey.ie indicators between 2021 and the results in the StudentSurvey.ie National Report 2019, which reflect the last fully pandemic-free fieldwork period, I was interested to note that scores did not significantly change, with any variance in scores within the margin of error for the sample. Characteristics of a higher education curriculum, such as student engagement in reflective learning on complex ideas and concepts and real-world problems, remained relatively stable. Similarly, students indicated strong personal learning strategies in their engagement with learning materials, readings, and reviewing the content from timetabled classes.

In contrast, other StudentSurvey.ie indicators suggest significant changes in how students interact with their institution and with each other. Perceptions on the quality of interactions have fallen, most strikingly in the perceived quality of peer interactions with other students, particularly

for first year undergraduate students. There are significant decreases in peer collaborative learning opportunities, and significant decrease in the opportunities for peer engagement with students from different and diverse backgrounds, for social engagement, and to attend events, which hope to provide a supportive environment for students.

These changes in patterns of engagement are an unfortunate consequence of campus closures as part of the global response to contain the spread of COVID-19 and save the lives of the most vulnerable in our society. In reflecting on the results, I am struck by the ongoing positive learning engagement by a resilient and committed higher education community. However, the results also point to significant deficits in the richness of student life as a result of campus closures, particularly in peer-to-peer learning and social engagement. If one single statistic from the report speaks to this, it is that only 47%, less than half of respondents, somewhat or strongly agree with a statement that they 'feel connected to their higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus'. Beyond conversations about how high-quality online learning will evolve in the future, the challenge of connectedness between students and their institutions will also require careful attention.

Waterford Institute of Technology (Dr. Derek O'Byrne, Registrar)

StudentSurvey.ie is increasingly valuable as a catalyst for HEIs to ask, of society and themselves, key questions about the value and scope of the educational experience. This year the data are particularly unique as they capture the experiences of learners within an exceptional societal event and provide a stark contrast given different environments between the comparative years. It is not surprising that the first year experience appears less connected and less engaged, although for the Technological Higher Education Sector, it is still somewhat energising to see the sector's scores on collaborative working and accessibility to staff tend to remain above the average. These are key values of the sector. The experience of final year students generally reflects a progressive experience and a controlled transition to the digital world they experienced.

To me, the report highlights some key thematic challenges that lie ahead. It is clear that the appetite for new and novel modes of delivery and consumption of education is both strong and capable of being satisfied. Higher education will, over the coming years, reflect strongly on previously tried and tested assumptions, and we can expect high demand for the provision of

new models within assessment and delivery of education. This will necessitate not only the HEIs but also the professional bodies and the employers to re-evaluate assumptions about learning and attainment. Secondly, I think the data highlight a real challenge of modern society: that information, experience, and identity are personal. We must communicate with large cohorts of learners but deliver a personalised message that is relevant to the unique circumstances of the individual. Communication remains an area for improvement in successive student surveys and particularly throughout the pandemic, as multiple messages often missed the specific individual needs of the student. We must continue to design new interfaces that personalise the student message and enable more ownership and engagement. Our Students' Unions can play a significant role here as well.

Finally, I think this year's data reflect positively for the educational partners whose agility and flexibility were tested beyond the maximum. Perhaps a hidden benefit of that challenge is captured in this year's StudentSurvey.ie results, in so far as it highlights the elements of positive experience upon which new and emerging models for higher education may ripen.

Marino Institute of Education (Dr. Seán Delaney, Registrar, and Dr. Luciana Lolich)

Many topics can be discussed as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education as evident in StudentSurvey.ie data. In this reflection, I focus on three salient areas: a) teaching and learning b) relationships and c) support and care for students.

Teaching and learning activities have been heavily impacted by COVID-19. With the move online and the constraints experienced by faculty and students, flexibility was needed. One solution was asynchronous online instruction. This was seen as a good option that offered students the opportunity to engage with material in their own time. This was welcomed by some students, especially more experienced students, who felt empowered by taking control of their learning.

However, for some students the lack of direct contact with lecturers was experienced as isolating.

Remote learning hindered opportunities to build relationships with other students and lecturers. Although some students welcomed aspects of online learning, (e.g., using the chat function to ask questions), online learning can be a lonely experience due to the lack of direct interaction and communication between peers and teachers. First year students in particular missed the social relationships and peer support of face-to-face lessons. These are key to their well-being and engagement with education.

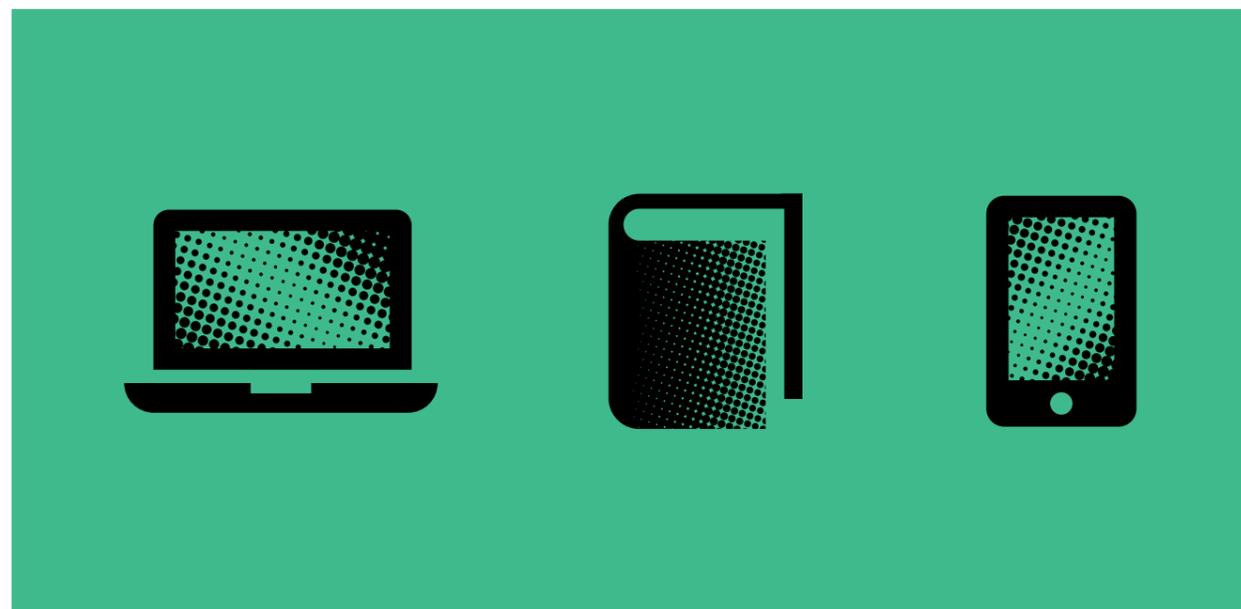
Finally, the pandemic highlighted the importance of care in higher education. Some students were dealing with loss of jobs, anxiety or illness. Survey responses indicated that students appreciated the understanding, care, and support shown by their institution and lecturers.

Lessons can be learned from COVID-19. Hybrid-flexible models might be favoured by mature or graduate students with work and care commitments. Consideration needs to be given to how learning communities of practice can be developed and maintained in an online environment. Colleges will need to consider how they can design virtual spaces to foster collaborative action and social bonds. Finally, faculty require guidance in looking after their own well-being and in supporting students in this new environment.

National College of Ireland (Karen Jones, Registrar-Designate)

For NCI, as an independent, not-for-profit HEI, focused upon delivering our mission of 'changing lives through education', the 2021 National Report provides compelling evidence for consideration and prioritisation.

Accessibility, approachability, and student-centredness are key features of the NCI student experience. As we plan for multiple delivery modes in 2021-2022, this Report will be used to help inform decision-making to ensure that NCI remains proactive and attuned to the evolving



needs of our students. The National Report provides a stark reminder that the first-year experience throughout the pandemic has been not only logistically challenging but also isolating.

As we embark upon the delivery of blended, online and face-to-face teaching, learning, assessment, and support services for new and returning students in 2021–2022, NCI will be reviewing our holistic approach to the student journey. We will use the Report findings to enhance our ability to be student-centred and make investments as needed to maximise opportunities for our students to engage with faculty, peers, and support services in a variety of ways.

The data presented in the Report will help us to pay particular attention to ensuring that students who wish or need to undertake a largely blended or full-online learning throughout 2021–2022 have a wide range of opportunities available to them for online social interactions and faculty engagements to build up vital peer and academic support networks and support structures. Furthermore, for those who are able to join us again on campus in 2021–2022, we will ensure that physical and online services, structures, and classes maximise chances to interact and engage with peers and staff. Emphasis will be placed upon increasing interactions for incoming first year students as well as the second-year students to actively participate in and contribute to our vibrant, inclusive, and impactful community.

StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group

Student engagement and the enhancement of the experiences of students in higher education is a priority for many people across the higher education sector in Ireland. The StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group strives to support and participate in the efforts of these people. The StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group has representatives from the HEA,

IUA, THEA, QQI, the participating institutions, and the voice of students through their representative from USI, thereby offering a forum for the discussion of some of these priorities. We believe that the comprehensive nature of the survey questions, and the reliable and valid data generated annually, serve the purposes of a multitude of these people and priorities.

The StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group is pleased with the response rate achieved in 2021, with nearly 44,000 students taking part across 25 higher education institutions, representing nearly 30% of first and final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. Naturally, this means that about 70% of students did not take the survey. We acknowledge the concern that the results may represent the views of only some students as a consequence. However, the profile of students who respond to the survey closely matches the overall profile of students who are invited to take the survey. Furthermore, we do not assume that those who do not take the survey are not engaged. Some students, engaged with and by their institution or otherwise, don't like taking surveys. Nevertheless, we continue to strive to collect feedback from as many students as possible through StudentSurvey.ie and support other organisations providing alternative feedback mechanisms to students in any way we can, such as through data sharing, promotion, and consultation.

The results of StudentSurvey.ie presented in this report build on those already published earlier this year in the StudentSurvey.ie Interim Results Bulletin 2021 and align closely with the results of the IUA Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning report "Your Education, Your Voice, Your Vision".²³ We hope you will read these results, listen to what the students in your institution are saying, and act upon their feedback.

23. IUA Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning (2021). *Your Education, Your Voice, Your Vision*. Available from: <https://edtl.blog/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IUA-EDTL-Your-Education-Your-Voice-Your-Vision-Full-Report.pdf>.

5.3 The value of StudentSurvey.ie for enhancement and impact

Development and implementation of StudentSurvey.ie is driven by the intention to inform, support, and encourage enhancement discussions and activities throughout institutions, and to inform national policy.

At a national level, there is a risk of important differences between groups, specific to one institution, being somewhat averaged out. However, within institutions, given the range of curriculum requirements and learning experiences across individual higher education institutions and different fields of study, the results are much more varied. The survey is comprehensive, and it seeks to explore many aspects of the student experience of higher education. Accordingly, greatest benefit is realised when those exploring the data, both students and staff, have a deep understanding of the local context. Prioritisation of specific uses of the data is an institutional decision. Higher education institutions have multiple sources of data about their students. The StudentSurvey.ie dataset is a valuable component of these sources, which are used in varying and increasingly sophisticated ways to identify good practice and plan for enhancement. The capacity to interpret the StudentSurvey.ie data in a timely manner remains variable between institutions.

One example of the StudentSurvey.ie initiative's commitment to continued enhancement of the experiences of students, alongside increasing transparency with regard to the data generated by the survey, is the establishment of the StudentSurvey.ie Analysis and Impact Group. The objectives of the Analysis and Impact Group include investigating ways of achieving a baseline level of analysis of the StudentSurvey.ie data within all participating institutions and finding effective ways of disseminating the results of the analyses in order to better close the feedback loop. This enables understanding of the short-term and ongoing impacts of changes and new practices

24. Irish Social Sciences Data Archive (www.ucd.ie/issda)

brought in in response to the survey data. The aims of the Group are to ensure that the results are used to enhance the student experience, and that the students who completed the survey know that their feedback is being listened to, is important, and is bringing about positive change.

Some examples of the work undertaken by this group includes the production of the StudentSurvey.ie Report Templates and Guide, to encourage greater analysis of the results by Programme Directors and Heads of School (download [here](#)). They also include five funded research projects to analyse the qualitative data emerging from StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie (access all five [here](#)), and the StudentSurvey.ie Time Series Research 2016–2020. The Group is now focused on developing report automation and data visualisation tools for data analysts within the participating institutions, as well as creating corresponding PGR StudentSurvey.ie Report Templates and Guide.

At sectoral level, there is an increasing number of examples of effective uses of StudentSurvey.ie data, e.g., in Annual Institutional Quality Reports to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), in strategic dialogue with the Higher Education Authority (HEA), by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and in National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) activities. Finally, the results of StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie are considered by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in a number of fora.

There are many more possibilities for further analysis of the data than can be carried out by participating institutions and/ or the central StudentSurvey.ie project management function. Contact the Project Manager at info@studentsurvey.ie to discuss these possibilities or to propose ideas for future research. Additionally, the anonymised StudentSurvey.ie dataset (anonymised at the level of individual respondent and individual institution) is archived with the Irish Social Sciences Data Archive²⁴ annually and may be accessed by request.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Participation in the 2021 StudentSurvey.ie

The following higher education institutions participated in the 2021 StudentSurvey.ie. Percentage figures represent the respondents as a percentage of the student population invited to take the survey in each institution, i.e., the response rate.

Universities	Response rate	Technological Higher Education Institutions (Institutes of Technology and Technological Universities)	Response rate	Other Institutions	Response rate
Dublin City University	25%	Athlone Institute of Technology	65%	Dublin Business School	26%
Maynooth University	22%	Dundalk Institute of Technology	31%	Marino Institute of Education	50%
National University of Ireland Galway	31%	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	33%	Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	36%
Trinity College Dublin	33%	Institute of Art, Design and Technology	31%	National College of Art and Design	34%
University College Cork	20%	Institute of Technology Carlow	31%	National College of Ireland	20%
University College Dublin	32%	Institute of Technology Sligo	18%	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	23%
University of Limerick	17%	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	29%	St. Angela's College, Sligo	20%
		Limerick Institute of Technology	44%		
		Munster Technological University – Cork Campus	36%		
		Munster Technological University – Kerry Campus	29%		
		Technological University Dublin	29%		
		Waterford Institute of Technology	27%		

Appendix 2

Membership of the StudentSurvey.ie National Report Editorial Group 2021

Lisa Bennett	➔ University College Dublin and StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group representative
Sue Hackett	➔ Quality and Qualifications Ireland and StudentSurvey.ie Analysis and Impact Group
Seán Lacey	➔ Munster Technological University and StudentSurvey.ie Analysis and Impact Group
Janice Lau	➔ Higher Education Authority
Jim Murray	➔ Technological Higher Education Association and StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group
Siobhán Nic Fhlannchadha	➔ StudentSurvey.ie Project Manager
Megan O'Connor	➔ Union of Students in Ireland and StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group

Appendix 3

Tables to accompany Chapter 2

Questions relating to *Higher-Order Learning*

These questions explore the extent to which students' work emphasises challenging cognitive tasks, such as application, analysis, judgement, and synthesis.

Table 6.1 *Higher-Order Learning*

During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised...		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	Very little	8.3	9.1	8.5	6
	Some	29.2	31.1	29.9	23.6
	Quite a bit	39.1	38.1	39.2	41.2
	Very much	23.5	21.7	22.5	29.3
Analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	Very little	9.9	11.4	10.2	5.9
	Some	33.8	35.9	35.4	26.6
	Quite a bit	37.8	37.1	37	40.8
	Very much	18.5	15.5	17.5	26.7
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	Very little	8.9	10.3	8.9	5.4
	Some	32.4	35.3	32.7	25.4
	Quite a bit	39.7	38.6	39.5	42.7
	Very much	19	15.8	18.9	26.5
Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information	Very little	5.5	5.7	6.4	3.6
	Some	28.5	29.3	31	22.8
	Quite a bit	43.6	44.3	42.1	44.3
	Very much	22.4	20.7	20.5	29.3

Questions relating to *Reflective and Integrative Learning*

These questions explore the extent to which students relate their own understanding and experiences to the learning content being used.

Table 6.2 *Reflective and Integrative Learning*

During the current academic year, about how often have you...		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
Combined ideas from different subjects/ modules when completing assignments	Never	8.5	10.6	6.9	5.9
	Sometimes	37	40.6	36.1	29.7
	Often	37.6	35.5	38.2	41.7
	Very often	16.9	13.3	18.8	22.7
Connected your learning to problems or issues in society	Never	18.7	21.9	18	11.9
	Sometimes	38.9	41.1	39	33.6
	Often	29.5	27	29.8	34.7
	Very often	13	9.9	13.2	19.8
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ ethnic, gender, etc.) in discussions or assignments	Never	36.8	40.3	36.2	29.6
	Sometimes	34.6	34.6	35.1	34
	Often	19.9	18.2	19.7	24.6
	Very often	8.6	7	9	11.8
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	Never	12.7	15.2	12.3	7.6
	Sometimes	39.8	41.8	39.7	35.2
	Often	35.2	32.6	35.6	40.6
	Very often	12.3	10.4	12.3	16.7
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective	Never	10.3	12	9.7	7.2
	Sometimes	36.6	37.9	36.3	34
	Often	37.1	35.6	37.8	39.7
	Very often	15.9	14.5	16.2	19.1
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	Never	5.7	6.1	6.5	3.5
	Sometimes	35.8	35.8	40.2	29.1
	Often	41.5	41.9	39.3	44
	Very often	17	16.2	14	23.4
Connected ideas from your subjects/ modules to your prior experiences and knowledge	Never	4.6	5.3	4.3	3.1
	Sometimes	31.7	34.8	32.7	23.2
	Often	41.4	40.8	41.6	42.4
	Very often	22.3	19.1	21.4	31.3

Questions relating to *Quantitative Reasoning*

These questions explore students’ opportunities to develop their skills to reason quantitatively – to evaluate, support, or critique arguments using numerical and statistical information.

Table 6.3 *Quantitative Reasoning*

During the current academic year, about how often have you...		All Students	Undergraduate – Year 1	Undergraduate – Final Year	Postgraduate
Reached conclusions based on your analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	Never	27.6	30.5	25.5	24.1
	Sometimes	39.4	40.6	38.4	38
	Often	23.7	21.6	25.4	25.9
	Very often	9.3	7.2	10.8	12
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	Never	39.1	42.6	37.3	33.6
	Sometimes	36.1	36.4	36.4	34.8
	Often	18.2	16.1	19	22.1
	Very often	6.6	4.9	7.3	9.5
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	Never	42.1	45.5	39.6	38
	Sometimes	38.4	38.4	38.4	38.4
	Often	15.6	13.2	17.4	18.4
	Very often	3.9	2.8	4.7	5.2

Questions relating to *Learning Strategies*

These questions explore the extent to which students actively engage with and analyse course material, rather than approaching learning passively.

Table 6.4 *Learning Strategies*

During the current academic year, about how often have you...		All Students	Undergraduate – Year 1	Undergraduate – Final Year	Postgraduate
Identified key information from recommended reading materials	Never	10.3	12.7	10.3	4.4
	Sometimes	37.8	41.2	38.4	29
	Often	37.1	34.6	37.1	43.1
	Very often	14.8	11.5	14.3	23.6
Reviewed your notes after class	Never	8.3	7.9	9.9	6.8
	Sometimes	36.9	36.9	38.9	33.6
	Often	36.3	36.2	34.8	38.9
	Very often	18.6	19	16.4	20.7
Summarised what you learned in class or from course materials	Never	11.7	11.8	12.9	9.7
	Sometimes	41.6	42.2	42.7	38.3
	Often	33.8	33.1	33	36.7
	Very often	12.9	12.9	11.5	15.2

Questions relating to Collaborative Learning

These questions explore the extent to which students collaborate with peers to solve problems or to master difficult material, thereby deepening their understanding.

Table 6.5 Collaborative Learning

During the current academic year, about how often have you...		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
Asked another student to help you understand course material	Never	22.9	24.2	18	26.9
	Sometimes	40.6	40.8	38.6	43.1
	Often	24.1	23.5	27.3	20.5
	Very often	12.5	11.4	16	9.6
Explained course material to one or more students	Never	19.2	21.7	14.2	21
	Sometimes	42.1	43.1	39.6	43.5
	Often	26.3	24.3	30.3	24.8
	Very often	12.5	11	15.9	10.7
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	Never	34.9	40.2	26.7	35
	Sometimes	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.4
	Often	20.8	18.3	24.3	21.2
	Very often	11	8.1	15.8	10.4
Worked with other students on projects or assignments	Never	19.9	20.8	17.6	21.5
	Sometimes	35.2	39.6	31.4	30.4
	Often	26.6	26	27.7	26.1
	Very often	18.3	13.5	23.3	22.1

Questions relating to Student-Faculty Interaction

These questions explore the extent to which students interact with academic staff. Interactions with academic staff can positively influence students' cognitive growth, development, and persistence.

Table 6.6 Student-Faculty Interaction

During the current academic year, about how often have you...		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
Talked about career plans with academic staff	Never	63.9	72.4	53.8	59.1
	Sometimes	25	19.7	31.8	27.1
	Often	8	5.8	10.3	9.7
	Very often	3.1	2.1	4.1	4.1
Worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	Never	76.8	80.9	73	73.1
	Sometimes	15.8	13.6	18	17.3
	Often	5.5	4.1	6.9	6.9
	Very often	1.9	1.4	2.2	2.7
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class	Never	57.9	66.3	51.4	48
	Sometimes	29	24	33.2	34.7
	Often	9.6	7.2	11.8	12.3
	Very often	3.4	2.5	3.7	5.1
Discussed your performance with academic staff	Never	51.7	59.1	44.4	45.6
	Sometimes	35.3	31.1	39.9	38
	Often	10.1	7.8	12.2	12.5
	Very often	2.8	2	3.5	3.8

Questions relating to *Effective Teaching Practices*

These questions explore the extent to which students experience teaching practices that contribute to promoting comprehension and learning.

Table 6.7 *Effective Teaching Practices*

During the current academic year, to what extent have lecturers / teaching staff...		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
Clearly explained course goals and requirements	Very little	6.8	6.2	8.7	5.6
	Some	26.6	25.8	29.9	23.2
	Quite a bit	38.3	38.7	38.4	37.3
	Very much	28.3	29.2	23.1	33.9
Taught in an organised way	Very little	5.1	4.1	7	4.5
	Some	26	23.9	31.9	22.1
	Quite a bit	41.8	43.3	40.5	40.4
	Very much	27.1	28.7	20.6	33
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	Very little	6.2	5.4	7.8	5.8
	Some	26.2	24.7	30	23.9
	Quite a bit	39.3	39.7	39.5	38.3
	Very much	28.2	30.3	22.6	32
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	Very little	31.6	34.4	29.2	28.9
	Some	33.7	32.9	35.6	32.6
	Quite a bit	22.4	21.3	23.3	23.3
	Very much	12.3	11.3	11.8	15.2
Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	Very little	24.4	23.5	28.3	20.9
	Some	36	37.2	36.3	32.7
	Quite a bit	25.2	25.4	23.8	26.8
	Very much	14.4	13.9	11.7	19.6

Questions relating to *Quality of Interactions*

These questions explore student experiences of supportive relationships with a range of other people and roles on campus, thereby contributing to students' ability to find assistance

when needed and to learn from and with those around them. While 'Not applicable' is available as a response option, such responses have been removed from these results.

Table 6.8 *Quality of Interactions*

At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with...		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
Students	1=Poor	7.2	8.2	5.6	7.3
	2	10.3	11.5	8.6	9.9
	3	13.9	14.9	12.1	14.3
	4	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3
	5	20.7	19.6	22.2	21
	6	17	15.9	18.7	17.1
	7=Excellent	12.6	11.5	14.5	12.1
Academic advisors	1=Poor	11.1	11.7	11.3	9.5
	2	16.9	17.9	16.9	14.2
	3	15.9	17	16.1	13.1
	4	19.4	20.2	18.9	17.9
	5	16.6	15.7	17.1	18
	6	12	10.3	12	15.9
	7=Excellent	8.2	7.1	7.6	11.4
Academic staff	1=Poor	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.3
	2	10	10	10.6	8.9
	3	14.3	14.7	15.2	12.1
	4	20.1	20.7	19.9	18.9
	5	22.1	22.3	22.1	21.5
	6	18.1	17.1	17.7	20.8
	7=Excellent	11	10.5	10	13.4

At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with...		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
Support services staff (career services, student activities, accommodation, etc.)	1=Poor	17.2	16.9	17.8	16.9
	2	14.9	15.1	14.8	14.7
	3	14.1	14.7	14.2	12.4
	4	16.2	16.1	16.6	15.7
	5	15.5	15.3	15.4	16.2
	6	12.1	11.8	11.5	13.9
	7=Excellent	10	10.1	9.7	10.2
Other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance, etc.)	1=Poor	15.4	15.3	17	13.5
	2	15.1	14.9	15.6	14.6
	3	13.1	13.3	13.3	12.1
	4	16.6	16.7	16.6	16.4
	5	14.1	14.3	14.1	13.9
	6	14.1	13.6	13.1	16.9
	7=Excellent	11.5	12	10.1	12.5

Questions relating to *Supportive Environment*

These questions explore students' perceptions of how much their higher education institution emphasises services and activities that support their learning and development.

Table 6.9 *Supportive Environment*

How much does your institution emphasise...		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
Providing support to help students succeed academically	Very little	10.9	8.6	13.4	12.6
	Some	33.8	31.6	37.3	33.8
	Quite a bit	37	39	34.1	36.4
	Very much	18.3	20.8	15.2	17.2
Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support, etc.)	Very little	17.6	16.2	17.9	20.5
	Some	31.7	29.5	34	33.4
	Quite a bit	32.9	34.5	32.2	30.1
	Very much	17.8	19.9	15.9	15.9
Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ ethnic, religious, etc.)	Very little	32.7	30.6	34.4	35.3
	Some	35.1	35.5	35.9	33.1
	Quite a bit	22.1	22.8	21.2	21.7
	Very much	10.1	11.2	8.5	9.9
Providing opportunities to be involved socially	Very little	27.1	25.7	25.8	32.3
	Some	35.9	35.3	37.3	35.1
	Quite a bit	25.8	26.8	26	23
	Very much	11.3	12.2	11	9.6
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)	Very little	18.1	16.1	19.8	20.1
	Some	35.4	33.7	37.3	36.5
	Quite a bit	30.4	32	28.9	28.8
	Very much	16.1	18.2	14	14.6
Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	Very little	48.3	46.8	51.6	46.9
	Some	31.7	32.8	30.2	31.3
	Quite a bit	14.6	14.8	13.6	15.6
	Very much	5.4	5.6	4.6	6.2
Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)	Very little	40.6	44.7	32.4	43.6
	Some	29.6	27	33.9	29.1
	Quite a bit	20.9	19.7	24	18.9
	Very much	8.9	8.6	9.7	8.4
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	Very little	35.8	36.6	35	35.4
	Some	36.3	35.8	37.9	34.9
	Quite a bit	20.6	20.4	20.4	21.3
	Very much	7.3	7.3	6.7	8.4

Questions not relating to specific engagement indicators

These questions do not directly relate to a specific engagement indicator but are included in the survey because of their contribution to a broad understanding of student engagement.

Table 6.10 Non-indicator items

		All Students	Undergraduate – Year 1	Undergraduate – Final Year	Postgraduate
During the current academic year, about how often have you asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs, or online?	Never	8.8	9.9	9.4	5.3
	Sometimes	42.4	45.4	42.1	35.6
	Often	30.5	29.2	30.2	34
	Very often	18.4	15.6	18.3	25.1
During the current academic year, about how often have you come to class without completing readings or assignments?	Never	31.5	32.8	28	34
	Sometimes	47.4	46.9	47.9	48
	Often	14.9	14.3	17.1	13
	Very often	6.1	6	7	5
During the current academic year, about how often have you made a presentation in class or online?	Never	27.5	32.2	21.4	25.6
	Sometimes	39.7	41.7	39.6	35.2
	Often	21.8	18.4	25.7	23.9
	Very often	11	7.7	13.3	15.2
During the current academic year, about how often have you improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to your employability?	Never	8.5	10.6	7.9	4.4
	Sometimes	32.2	34.6	33.1	25.1
	Often	38.5	36.8	39.1	41.6
	Very often	20.8	17.9	19.9	28.9
During the current academic year, about how often have you explored how to apply your learning in the workplace?	Never	25.6	32.6	22.5	13.9
	Sometimes	34.3	34.4	35.7	32
	Often	26.6	22.7	28.2	33.5
	Very often	13.5	10.3	13.6	20.6
During the current academic year, about how often have you exercised or participated in physical fitness activities?	Never	30.9	33	25.7	34
	Sometimes	28.1	27.7	29.8	26.5
	Often	20.6	19.5	22.3	20.3
	Very often	20.4	19.8	22.1	19.3
During the current academic year, about how often have you blended academic learning with workplace experience?	Never	43.3	54.5	36.2	27.5
	Sometimes	26.5	25	28.6	27
	Often	18.9	14	21.8	26
	Very often	11.3	6.5	13.5	19.4

		All Students	Undergraduate – Year 1	Undergraduate – Final Year	Postgraduate	
During the current academic year, about how often have you worked on assessments that informed you how well you are learning?	Never	21.4	19.4	26.7	18.2	
	Sometimes	39.9	40.9	40.5	36.8	
	Often	28.9	29.8	25.1	32.4	
	Very often	9.8	10	7.6	12.6	
During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised memorising course material?	Very little	21.6	16	22.2	33.8	
	Some	36.5	37.1	35.4	36.9	
	Quite a bit	29.5	32.8	29.4	21.9	
	Very much	12.4	14.1	13	7.5	
	Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution: Work with academic staff on a research project?	Have not decided	37.3	50.3	25.4	25.2
		Do not plan to do	25.1	17.3	36.4	26.4
Plan to do		25.2	30.5	13.3	30.8	
Done/ in progress		12.4	2	24.8	17.6	
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution: Community service or volunteer work?	Have not decided	33.1	37.5	29.1	28.9	
	Do not plan to do	25.8	15.3	35.8	35.1	
	Plan to do	28.1	38.7	16.1	21.6	
	Done/ in progress	13	8.5	19	14.4	
How much does your institution emphasise spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work?	Very little	7.2	7	6.5	8.9	
	Some	30.1	32.3	27.5	28.8	
	Quite a bit	42.4	42.9	42.2	41.5	
	Very much	20.3	17.8	23.7	20.8	
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas: Writing clearly and effectively?	Very little	11.4	14.4	8.6	8.7	
	Some	28.5	32.2	25.4	24.7	
	Quite a bit	37.4	35.5	39.8	38.4	
	Very much	22.6	18	26.2	28.2	
	How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas: Speaking clearly and effectively?	Very little	17.8	21.9	12.4	16.2
		Some	31	32.7	29.1	30
Quite a bit		33.2	30.4	37	33.9	
	Very much	18	15	21.4	19.9	
	How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas: Thinking critically and analytically?	Very little	5.1	6.3	4.2	3.9
		Some	23	26.9	20	18.4
Quite a bit		41.6	41.9	42.4	39.8	
Very much		30.2	24.9	33.3	37.9	

		All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Year	Postgraduate
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas: Analysing numerical and statistical information?	Very little	21.7	23.7	18.7	21.4
	Some	31.7	33.8	29.6	29.6
	Quite a bit	30.1	29.1	31.9	29.5
	Very much	16.6	13.4	19.7	19.5
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas: Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills?	Very little	14.6	18.6	11.1	10.5
	Some	29	31.8	27.1	25.1
	Quite a bit	33.2	31	35.6	34.9
	Very much	23.2	18.6	26.2	29.4
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas: Working effectively with others?	Very little	12.7	15.9	7.6	12.9
	Some	28.2	31	23.8	28.3
	Quite a bit	36.3	34.4	40.1	35
	Very much	22.8	18.7	28.6	23.8
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas: Solving complex real-world problems?	Very little	16.1	19.6	13.5	11.8
	Some	33.8	36.7	32.5	29.2
	Quite a bit	33.2	30.4	35	36.9
	Very much	16.9	13.3	19	22
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas: Being an informed and active citizen (societal / political / community)?	Very little	25.8	28.9	22.3	23.9
	Some	35.5	37	35.1	32.9
	Quite a bit	26	24	28.5	27.2
	Very much	12.6	10.1	14.1	16
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	Poor	5.4	5.7	4.8	5.7
	Fair	22.4	25.4	19.5	19.7
	Good	48.2	47.8	49.9	46.4
	Excellent	24.1	21.1	25.8	28.3
If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	Definitely no	3.1	1.5	5.2	3.7
	Probably no	10.8	7.8	14.8	11.7
	Probably yes	44.4	45.9	42.9	43.3
	Definitely yes	41.7	44.9	37	41.3

Appendix 4 Figures to accompany Chapter 3

Cohort

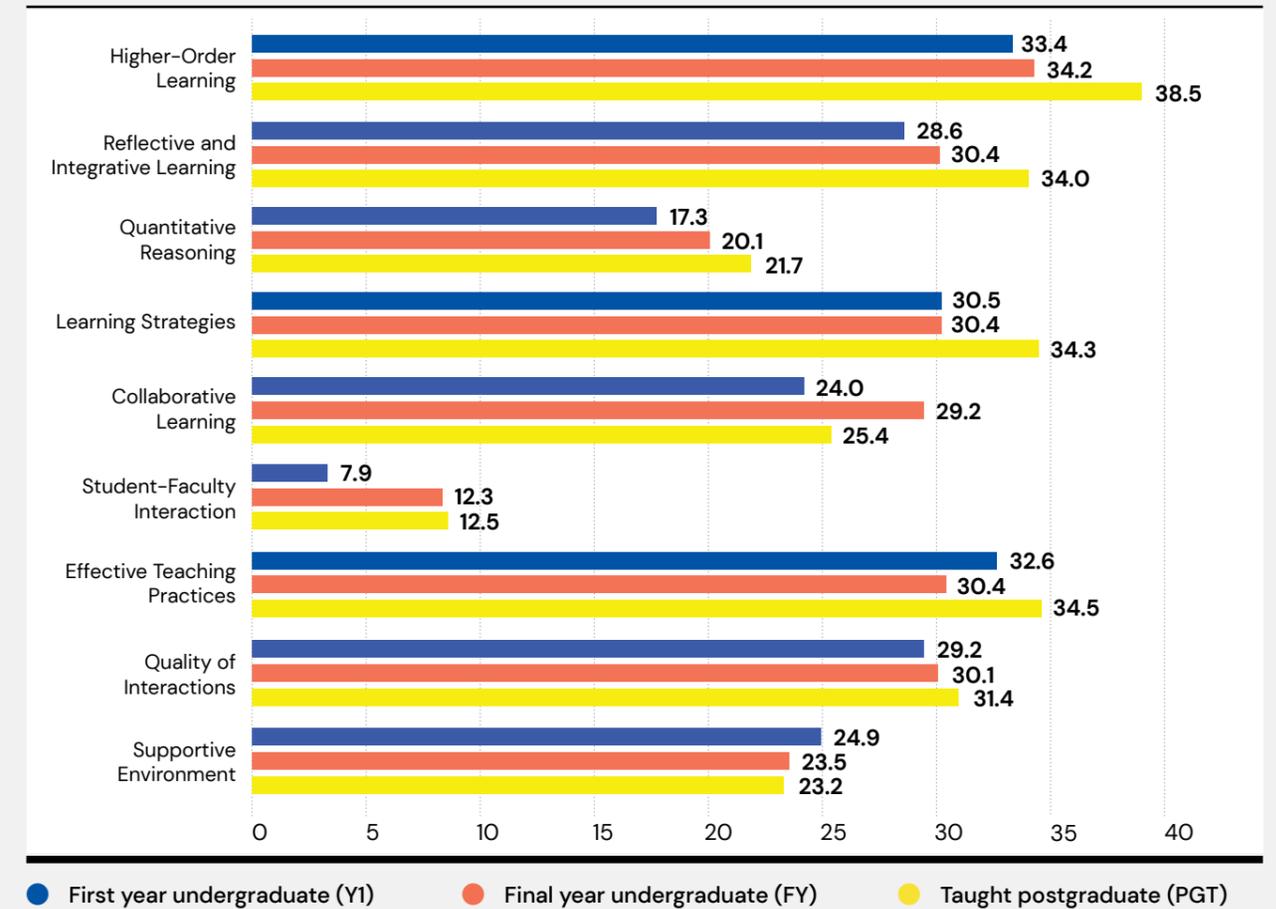


Fig. 6.1 Indicator scores by cohort

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Higher-Order Learning, $F(2, 36078) = 365.64, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 < FY; FY < PGT; Y1 < PGT

Learning Strategies, $F(2, 38049) = 257.33, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 = FY; FY < PGT; Y1 < PGT

Effective Teaching Practices, $F(2, 35892) = 209.47, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 > FY; FY < PGT; Y1 < PGT

Reflective and Integrative Learning, $F(2, 40871) = 651.26, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 < FY; FY < PGT; Y1 < PGT

Collaborative Learning, $F(2, 40686) = 532.09, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 < FY; FY > PGT; Y1 < PGT

Quality of Interactions, $F(2, 27045) = 45.02, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 < FY; FY < PGT; Y1 < PGT

Quantitative Reasoning, $F(2, 38042) = 300.62, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 < FY; FY < PGT; Y1 < PGT

Student-Faculty Interaction, $F(2, 38026) = 765.5, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 < FY; FY = PGT; Y1 < PGT

Supportive Environment, $F(2, 35323) = 54.4, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Y1 > FY; FY = PGT; Y1 > PGT

Mode of study

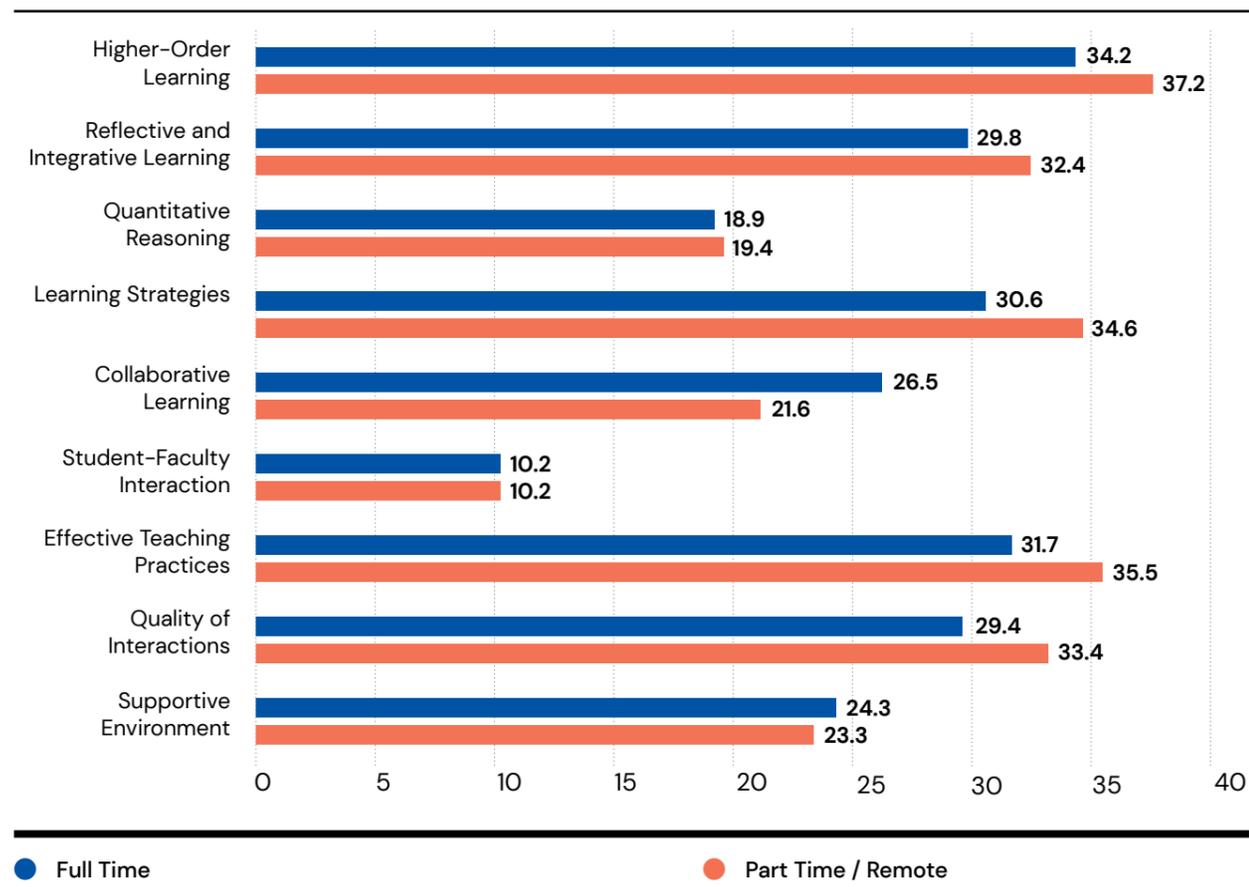


Fig. 6.2 Indicator score by mode of study

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Higher-Order Learning , $t(36079) = 14.36, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.216 (small)	Learning Strategies , $t(38050) = 20.37, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.298 (small)	Effective Teaching Practices , $t(6804) = 17.88, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.279 (small)
Reflective and Integrative Learning , $t(7725) = 14.94, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.216 (small)	Collaborative Learning , $t(40687) = 24.29, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.345 (medium)	Quality of Interactions , $t(4161) = 14.01, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.274 (small)
Quantitative Reasoning , $t(7269) = 2.36, p < .05$; Effect size = 0.035 (small)	Student-Faculty Interaction , $t(7400) = .25, p = .803$; difference not significant	Supportive Environment , $t(6690) = 6.16, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.1 (small)

Institution type

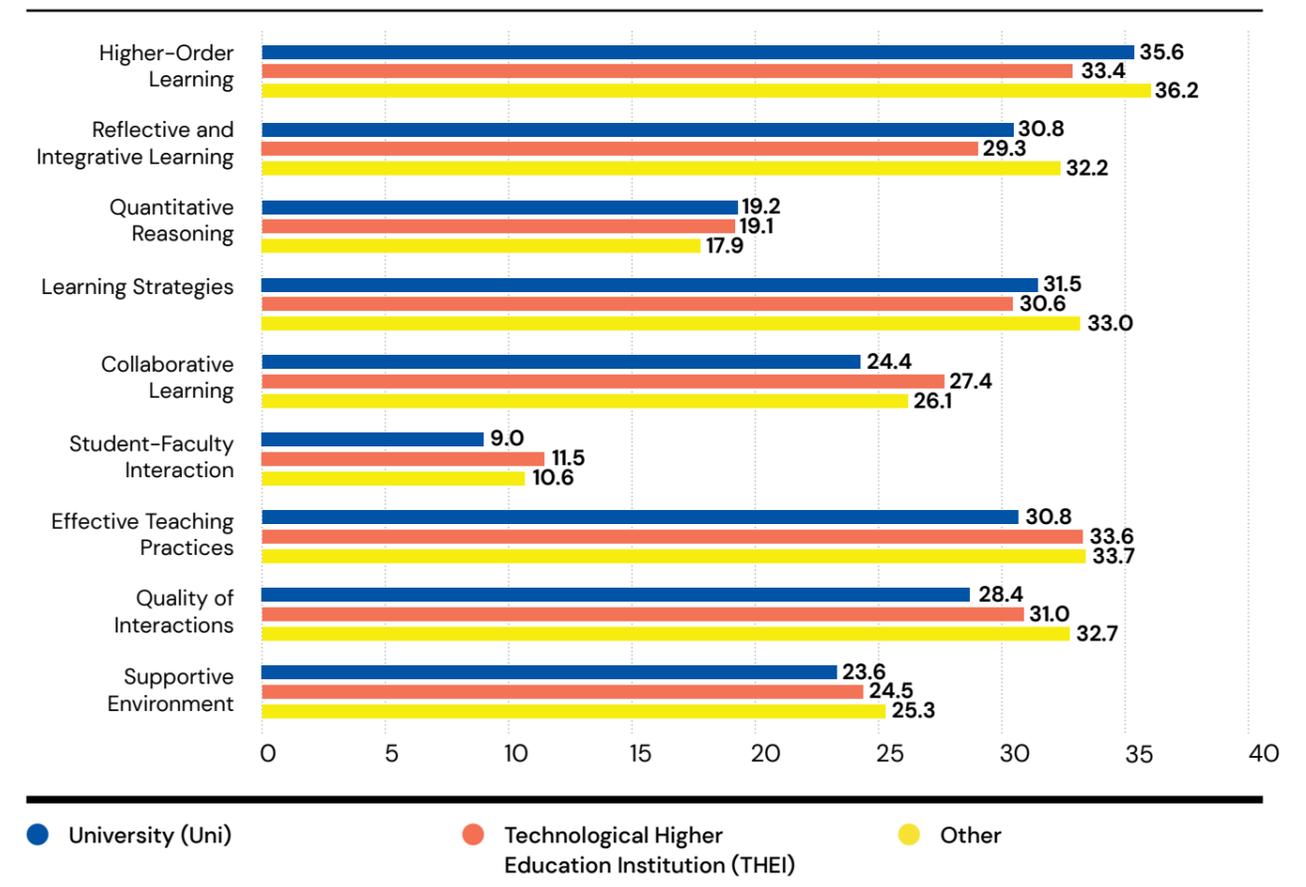


Fig. 6.3 Indicator scores by institution type

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Higher-Order Learning , $F(2, 36078) = 127.03, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni > THEI; THEI < Other; Uni = Other	Learning Strategies , $F(2, 38049) = 49.22, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni > THEI; THEI < Other; Uni < Other	Effective Teaching Practices , $F(2, 35892) = 179.73, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni < THEI; THEI = Other; Uni < Other
Reflective and Integrative Learning , $F(2, 40871) = 133.05, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni > THEI; THEI < Other; Uni < Other	Collaborative Learning , $F(2, 40686) = 214.74, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni < THEI; THEI > Other; Uni < Other	Quality of Interactions , $F(2, 27045) = 155.67, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni < THEI; THEI < Other; Uni < Other
Quantitative Reasoning , $F(2, 38042) = 11.88, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni = THEI; THEI > Other; Uni > Other	Student-Faculty Interaction , $F(2, 38026) = 229.26, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni < THEI; THEI > Other; Uni < Other	Supportive Environment , $F(2, 35323) = 26.64, p < .001$; Scheffe Post-hoc, where $p < .001$: Uni < THEI; THEI = Other; Uni < Other

Programme type

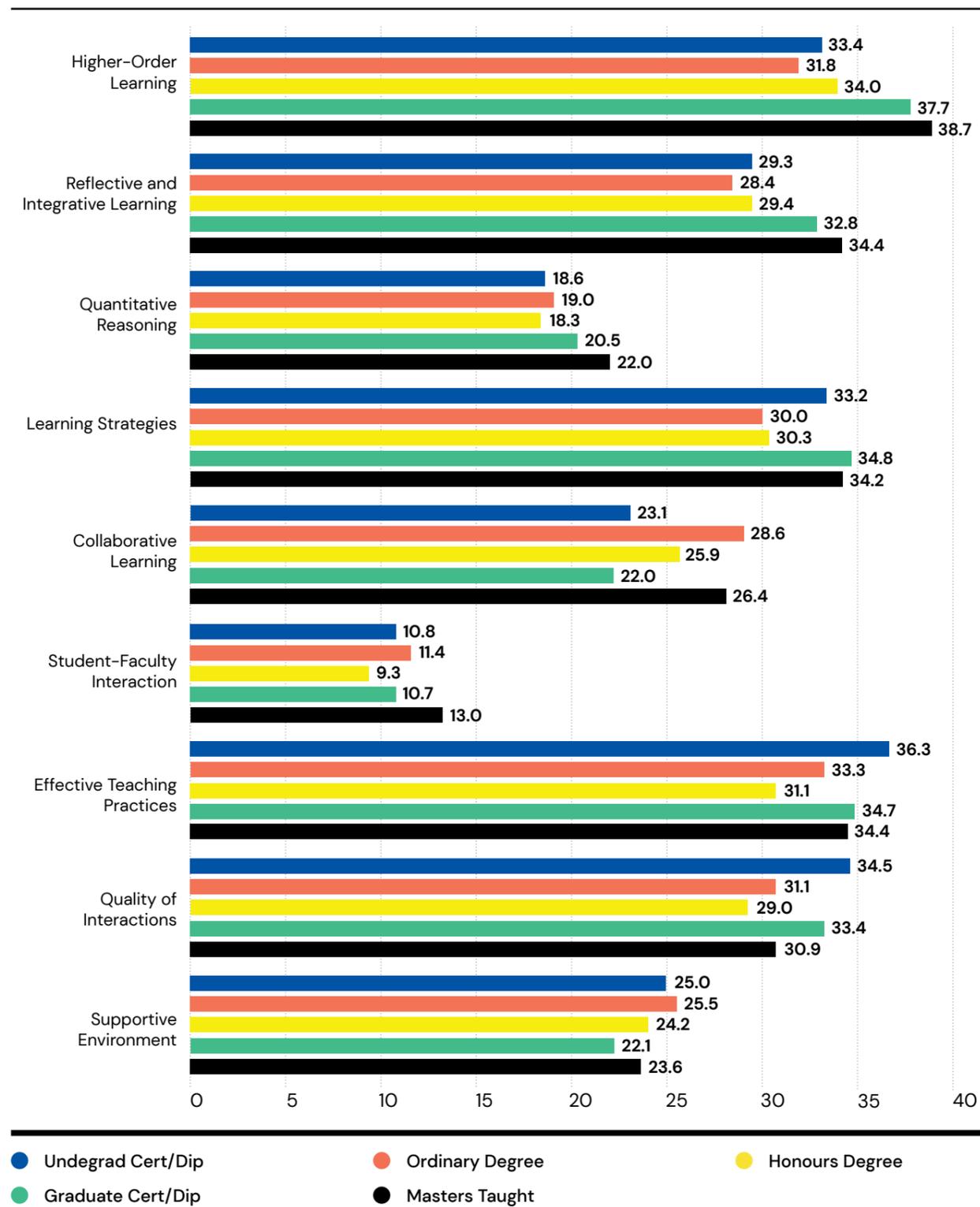


Fig. 6.4 Indicator scores by programme type

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Higher-Order Learning, $F(4, 36076) = 197.06, p < .001$ **Learning Strategies**, $F(4, 38047) = 154.55, p < .001$ **Effective Teaching Practices**, $F(4, 35890) = 135.49, p < .001$

Reflective and Integrative Learning, $F(4, 40869) = 292.23, p < .001$ **Collaborative Learning**, $F(4, 40684) = 91.56, p < .001$ **Quality of Interactions**, $F(4, 27043) = 78.74, p < .001$

Quantitative Reasoning, $F(4, 38040) = 87.32, p < .001$ **Student-Faculty Interaction**, $F(4, 38024) = 143.55, p < .001$ **Supportive Environment**, $F(4, 35321) = 21.63, p < .001$

The combinations of significant paired differences in the Scheffe post-hoc analyses are presented in the table below.

Table 6.11 Post-hoc analyses for programme type

		Undergrad Cert/Dip	Ordinary Degree	Honours Degree	Grad/PG/Higher Dip	Taught Masters
Higher-Order Learning	Undergrad Cert/Dip				*	*
	Ordinary Degree			*	*	*
	Honours Degree		*		*	*
	Grad Cert/Dip	*	*	*		
	Masters Taught	*	*	*		
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Undergrad Cert/Dip				*	*
	Ordinary Degree			*	*	*
	Honours Degree		*		*	*
	Grad Cert/Dip	*	*	*		*
	Masters Taught	*	*	*	*	
Quantitative Reasoning	Undergrad Cert/Dip					
	Ordinary Degree					
	Honours Degree				*	*
	Grad Cert/Dip			*		
	Masters Taught			*		
Learning Strategies	Undergrad Cert/Dip		*	*		
	Ordinary Degree	*			*	*
	Honours Degree	*			*	*
	Grad Cert/Dip		*	*		
	Masters Taught		*	*		

		Undergrad Cert/Dip	Ordinary Degree	Honours Degree	Grad/PG/Higher Dip	Taught Masters
Collaborative Learning	Undergrad Cert/Dip		*	*		*
	Ordinary Degree	*		*	*	*
	Honours Degree	*	*		*	
	Grad Cert/Dip		*	*		*
	Masters Taught	*	*		*	
Student-Faculty Interaction	Undergrad Cert/Dip			*		*
	Ordinary Degree			*		*
	Honours Degree	*	*		*	*
	Grad Cert/Dip			*		*
	Masters Taught	*	*	*	*	
Effective Teaching Practices	Undergrad Cert/Dip		*	*		*
	Ordinary Degree	*		*		
	Honours Degree	*	*		*	*
	Grad Cert/Dip			*		*
	Masters Taught	*		*		
Quality of Interactions	Undergrad Cert/Dip		*	*		*
	Ordinary Degree	*		*		
	Honours Degree	*	*		*	*
	Grad Cert/Dip			*		*
	Masters Taught	*		*	*	
Supportive Environment	Undergrad Cert/Dip				*	
	Ordinary Degree			*	*	*
	Honours Degree		*		*	
	Grad Cert/Dip	*	*	*		
	Masters Taught		*			

* Denotes a significant difference, where $p < 0.001$.

Field of study

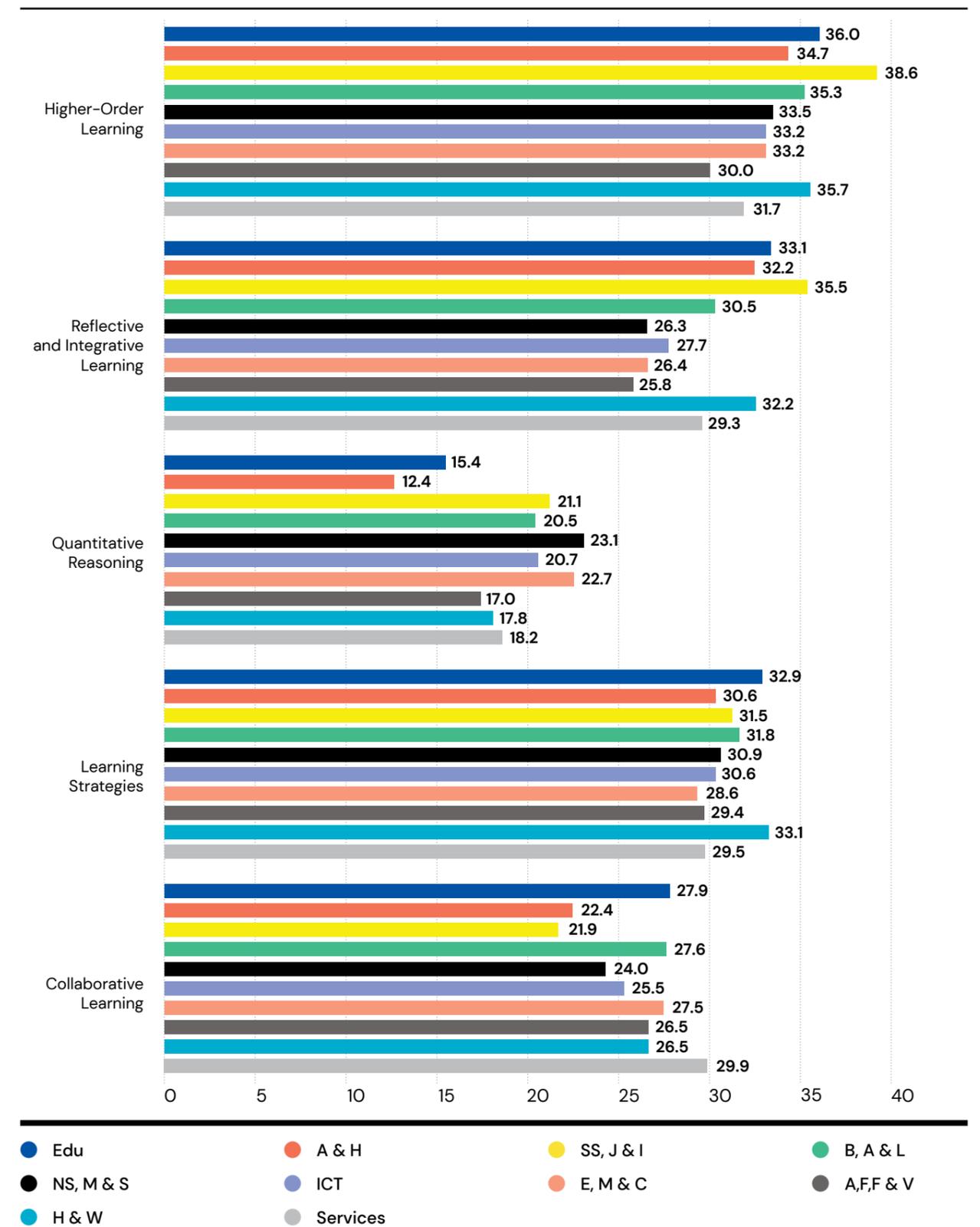


Fig. 6.5a Indicator scores by field of study

Edu	Education	ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
A & H	Arts and humanities	E, M & C	Engineering, manufacturing, and construction
SS, J & I	Social sciences, journalism, and information	A,F,F & V	Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary
B, A & L	Business, administration, and law	H & W	Health and welfare
NS, M & S	Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics	Services	Services

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Higher-Order Learning, $F(9, 35994) = 56.18, p < .001$

Quantitative Reasoning, $F(9, 37952) = 244.22, p < .001$

Collaborative Learning, $F(9, 40596) = 110.77, p < .001$

Reflective and Integrative Learning, $F(9, 40780) = 267.05, p < .001$

Learning Strategies, $F(9, 37959) = 43.57, p < .001$

The combinations of significant paired differences in the Scheffe post-hoc analyses are presented in the table on the following page.

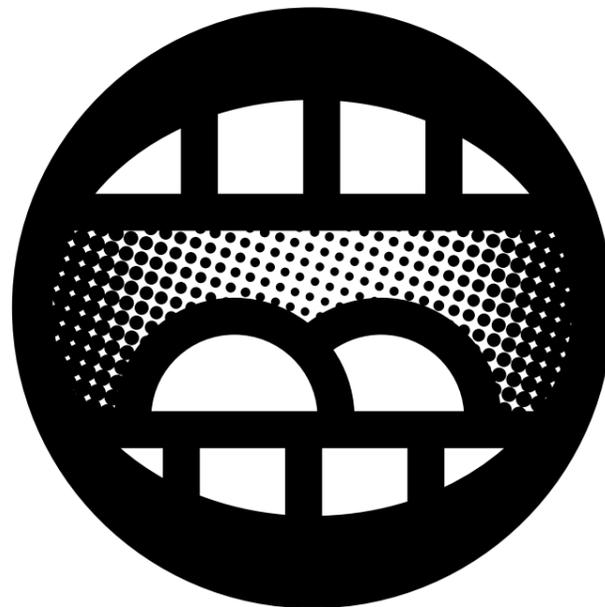


Table 6.12 Post-hoc analyses for Field of study (part 1)

		Edu	A&H	SS,J&I	B,A&L	NS,M&S	ICT	E,M&C	A,F,F&V	H&W	Services
Higher-Order Learning	Edu			*		*	*	*	*		*
	A & H			*					*		*
	SS, J & I	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	B, A & L			*		*	*	*	*		*
	NS, M & S	*		*	*				*	*	
	ICT	*		*	*				*	*	
	E, M & C	*		*	*				*	*	
	A,F,F & V	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	
	H & W			*		*	*	*	*		*
	Services	*	*	*	*					*	
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Edu			*	*	*	*	*	*		*
	A & H			*	*	*	*	*	*		*
	SS, J & I	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	B, A & L	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
	NS, M & S	*	*	*	*				*	*	*
	ICT	*	*	*	*				*	*	*
	E, M & C	*	*	*	*				*	*	*
	A,F,F & V	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*
	H & W			*	*	*	*	*	*		*
	Services	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quantitative Reasoning	Edu		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	A & H	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	SS, J & I	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	B, A & L	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
	NS, M & S	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*
	ICT	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*
	E, M & C	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*
	A,F,F & V	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*
	H & W	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*
	Services	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

		Edu	A&H	SS,J&I	B,A&L	NS,M&S	ICT	E,M&C	A,F,F&V	H&W	Services
Learning Strategies	Edu		*			*	*	*	*		*
	A & H	*						*		*	
	SS, J & I							*			
	B, A & L							*		*	*
	NS, M & S	*						*		*	
	ICT	*						*		*	
	E, M & C	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	
	A,F,F & V	*								*	
	H & W		*		*	*	*	*	*		*
	Services	*			*					*	
Collaborative Learning	Edu		*	*		*	*				
	A & H	*			*		*	*	*	*	*
	SS, J & I	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	B, A & L		*	*		*	*				*
	NS, M & S	*		*	*			*		*	*
	ICT	*	*	*	*			*			*
	E, M & C		*	*		*	*				*
	A,F,F & V		*	*							*
	H & W		*	*		*				*	*
	Services		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

* Denotes a statistically significant difference, where $p < 0.001$.

Field of study

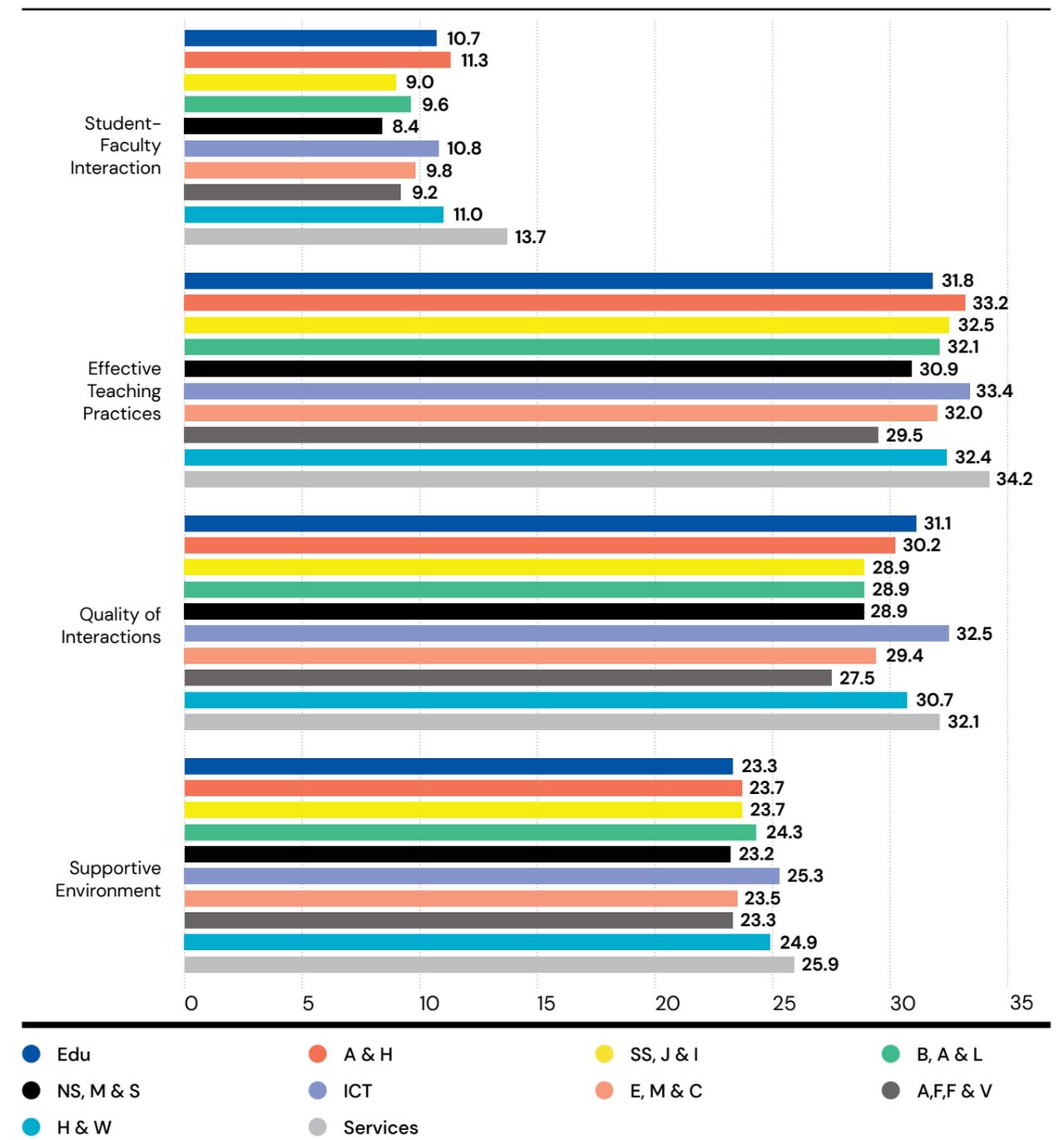


Fig. 6.5b Indicator scores by field of study

Edu	Education	ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
A & H	Arts and humanities	E, M & C	Engineering, manufacturing, and construction
SS, J & I	Social sciences, journalism, and information	A,F,F & V	Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary
B, A & L	Business, administration, and law	H & W	Health and welfare
NS, M & S	Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics	Services	Services

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Student-Faculty Interaction, $F(9, 37937) = 45.06, p < .001$ **Quality of Interactions,** $F(9, 26987) = 21.26, p < .001$

Effective Teaching Practices, $F(9, 35810) = 15.80, p < .001$ **Supportive Environment,** $F(9, 35244) = 12.03, p < .001$

The combinations of significant paired differences in the Scheffe post-hoc analyses are presented in the table on the following page.



Table 6.13 Post-hoc analyses for Field of study (part 2)

		Edu	A&H	SS,J&I	B,A&L	NS,M&S	ICT	E,M&C	A,F,F&V	H&W	Services	
Student-Faculty Interaction	Edu					*					*	
	A & H			*	*	*		*			*	
	SS, J & I		*				*			*	*	
	B, A & L		*							*	*	
	NS, M & S	*	*				*	*		*	*	
	ICT			*		*					*	
	E, M & C		*			*					*	
	A,F,F & V											*
	H & W			*	*	*					*	*
	Services	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Effective Teaching Practices	Edu											
	A & H					*			*			
	SS, J & I											
	B, A & L											
	NS, M & S		*			*	*				*	
	ICT					*			*			
	E, M & C						*					
	A,F,F & V		*				*				*	
	H & W										*	
	Services					*			*		*	
Quality of Interactions	Edu					*						
	A & H						*					
	SS, J & I						*				*	
	B, A & L	*				*	*			*	*	
	NS, M & S					*	*				*	
	ICT		*	*	*	*		*	*			
	E, M & C						*					
	A,F,F & V		*				*				*	
	H & W				*						*	
	Services			*	*	*			*		*	
Supportive Environment	Edu										*	
	A & H											
	SS, J & I											
	B, A & L											
	NS, M & S					*	*			*	*	
	ICT					*						
	E, M & C						*				*	
	A,F,F & V										*	
	H & W				*						*	
	Services	*				*		*			*	

* Denotes a statistically significant difference, where $p < 0.001$.

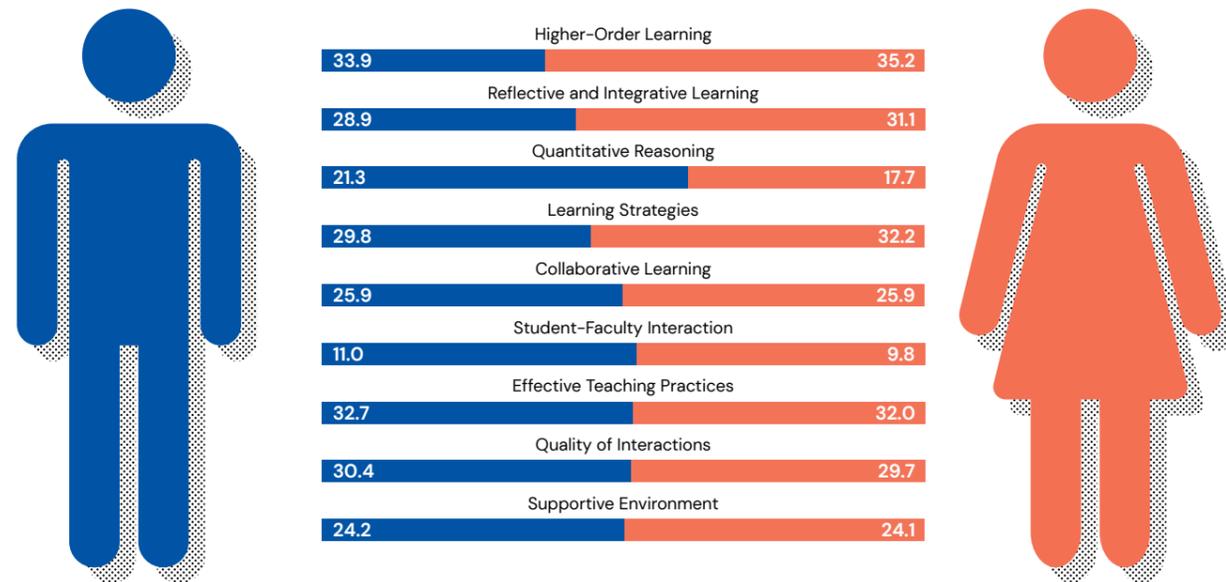


Fig. 6.6 Indicator scores by gender

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Higher-Order Learning, $t(30444) = 8.8, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.094 (small)	Learning Strategies, $t(37961) = 17.18, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.181 (small)	Effective Teaching Practices, $t(35807) = 4.64, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.051 (small)
Reflective and Integrative Learning, $t(34381) = 18.04, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.183 (small)	Collaborative Learning, $t(34003) = 0.087, p = .931$; difference not significant	Quality of Interactions, $t(26981) = 4.04, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.05 (small)
Quantitative Reasoning, $t(37954) = 24.25, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.255 (small)	Student-Faculty Interaction, $t(29195) = 10.36, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.111 (small)	Supportive Environment, $t(29402) = .34, p = .734$; difference not significant

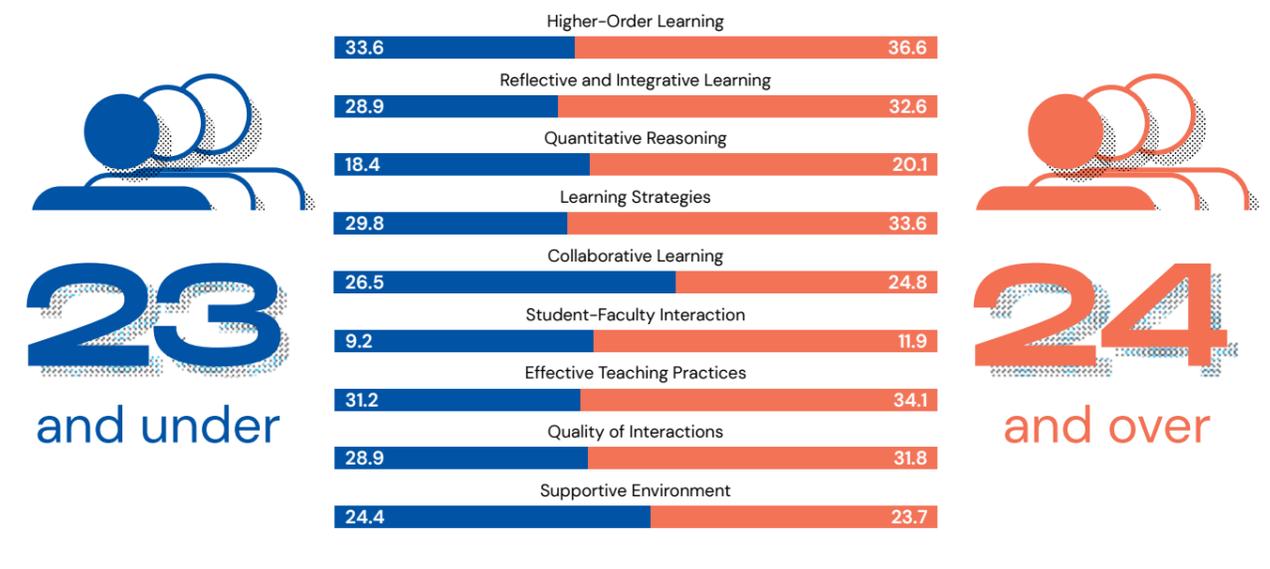


Fig. 6.7 Indicator scores by age group

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Higher-Order Learning, $t(27423) = 19.91, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.219 (small)	Learning Strategies, $t(29723) = 26.89, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.285 (small)	Effective Teaching Practices, $t(26128) = 18.43, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.206 (small)
Reflective and Integrative Learning, $t(30643) = 31.03, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.321 (medium)	Collaborative Learning, $t(40687) = 11.11, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.114 (small)	Quality of Interactions, $t(19191) = 15.67, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.202 (small)
Quantitative Reasoning, $t(28287) = 10.7, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.115 (small)	Student-Faculty Interaction, $t(27430) = 21.91, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.328 (medium)	Supportive Environment, $t(26295) = 4.39, p < .001$; Effect size = 0.05 (small)

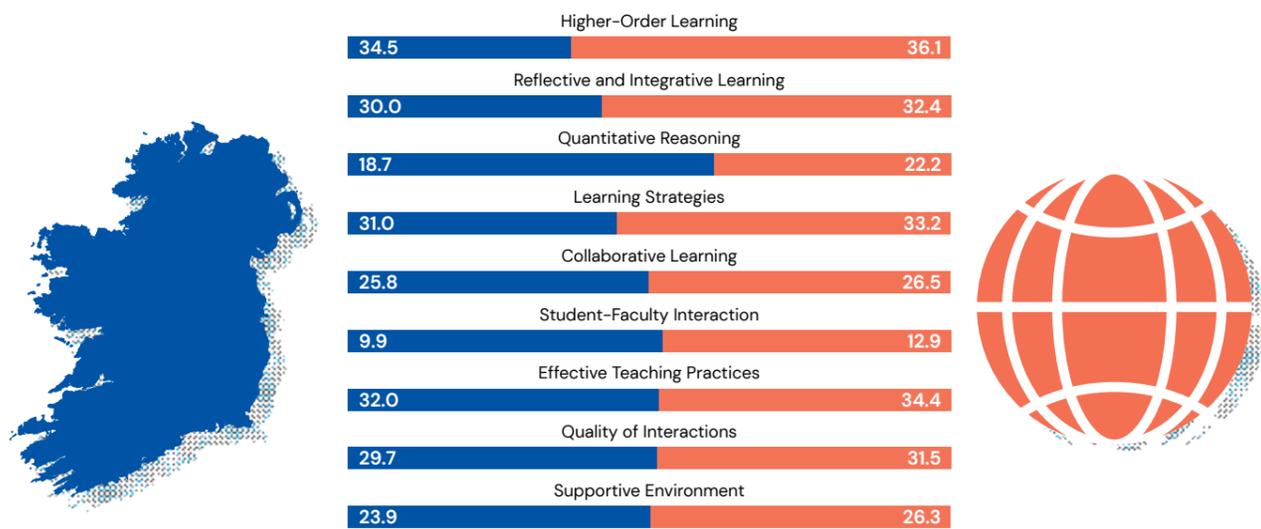


Fig. 6.8 Indicator scores by country of domicile

Results of tests of statistical significance of differences between groups

Higher-Order Learning, t(5086) = 6.65, p < .001; Effect size = 0.114 (small)	Learning Strategies, t(38050) = 9.99, p < .001; Effect size = 0.162 (small)	Effective Teaching Practices, t(4968) = 9.8, p < .001; Effect size = 0.174 (small)
Reflective and Integrative Learning, t(40872) = 13.42, p < .001; Effect size = 0.21 (small)	Collaborative Learning, t(5900) = 3.16 p < .05; Effect size = 0.048 (small)	Quality of Interactions, t(4177) = 6.59, p < .001; Effect size = 0.125 (small)
Quantitative Reasoning, t(5296) = 14.53, p < .001; Effect size = 0.246 (small)	Student-Faculty Interaction, t(5087) = 14.73, p < .001; Effect size = 0.27 (small)	Supportive Environment, t(4902) = 9.86, p < .001; Effect size = 0.18 (small)

Appendix 5 Project rationale and governance

The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*²⁵, published in 2011, recommended that higher education institutions put in place systems to capture feedback from students to inform institutional and programme management, as well as national policy. It also recommended that every higher education institution put in place a comprehensive anonymous student feedback system, coupled with structures to ensure that action is taken promptly in relation to student concerns. This recommendation was informed by legislation (namely, reference to the involvement of students in evaluating the quality of their educational experience in the *Universities Act, 1997*, and the *Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999*) and other key policy drivers, such as *Standards and Guidance for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*²⁶ and *Common Principles for Student Involvement in Quality Assurance/Quality Enhancement*²⁷. The National Strategy report noted in 2011 that “substantial progress (in this area) has been made” but also stated that “students still lack confidence in the effectiveness of current mechanisms and there remains considerable room for improvement in developing student feedback mechanisms and in closing feedback loops.”

In 2012, a national project structure was established, which was representative of higher education institutions and relevant organisations, including the Union of Students in Ireland. This project team implemented a pilot national student survey called the Irish Survey of Student Engagement in 2013, involving all Universities, Institutes of Technology, and most Colleges of Education. The national pilot was regarded as successful, leading to an agreement

to proceed to full implementation in 2014 and future years. A full report on implementation of the 2013 national pilot and other resources and results from subsequent years’ implementation are published on www.studentsurvey.ie.

A significant development was achieved in 2018 with the pilot Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students. This discrete question set was offered to the body of students enrolled on programmes leading to postgraduate research degrees. The questions draw extensively from the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) used in the UK. The StudentSurvey.ie PGR Working Group continues to oversee the bedding down of the survey.

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement and the Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students were rebranded in 2019 and are now known as StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie respectively.

Implementation of StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie is funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) as a shared service for participating institutions. The project is co-sponsored by the HEA, Irish Universities Association (IUA), Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), and Union of Students in Ireland (USI) (Fig. 6.9).

A representative national Steering Group maintains strategic direction for the project. In 2019, this group was reduced in number and the primary focus on strategic direction re-affirmed. It now consists of a representative of each of the co-sponsoring organisations, two representatives from the university sector,

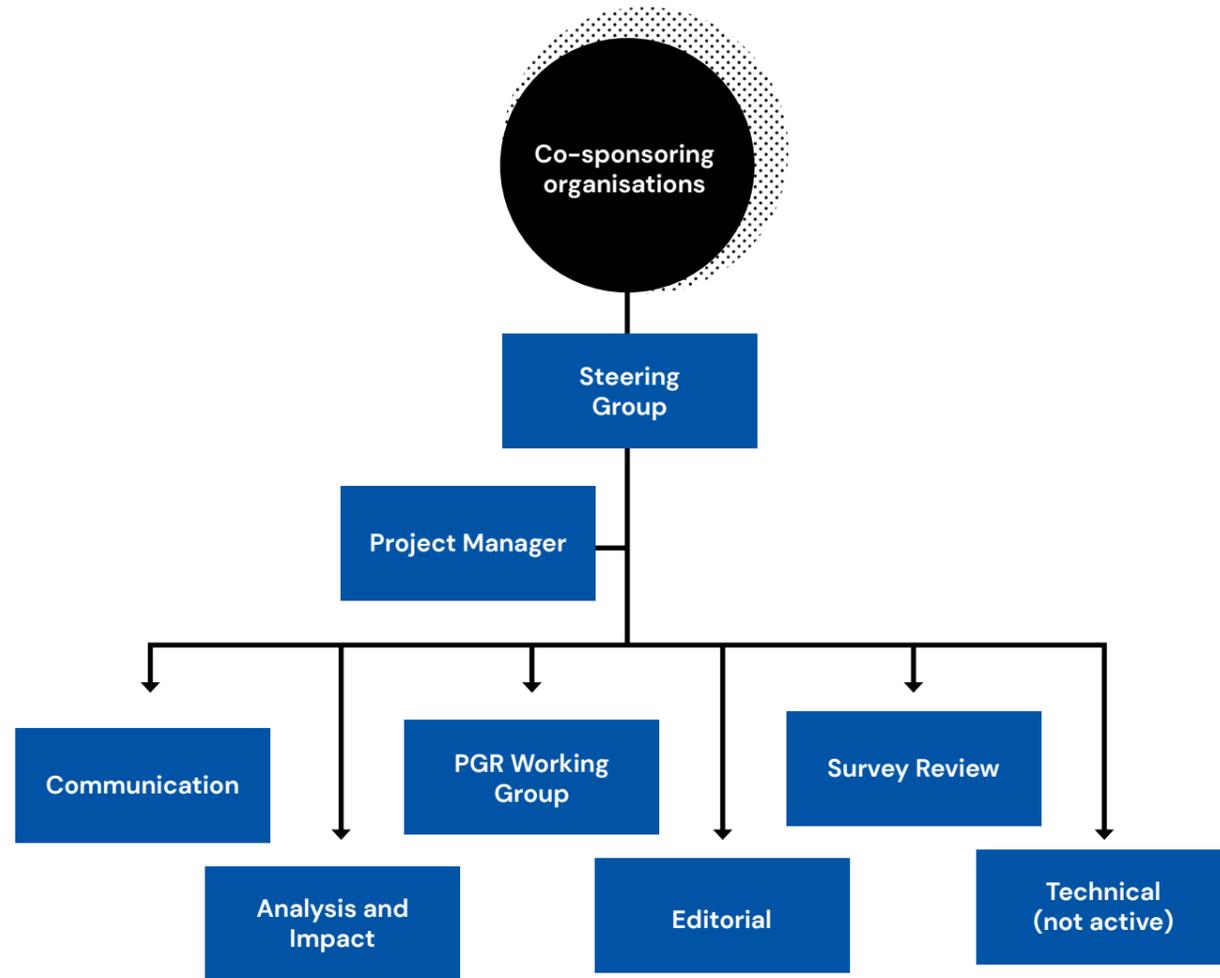
25. National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (www.heai.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/National-Strategy-for-Higher-Education-2030.pdf)

26. Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf)

27. Student Involvement in Quality Assurance/Quality Enhancement (<https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/iheqnccommonprinciplesstudentinvolvementdec2009.doc.pdf>)

two representatives from the technological higher education sector, one representative from Quality and Qualifications Ireland, and the StudentSurvey.ie Project Manager. The group is called the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group.

In addition, there are a number of Groups addressing specific elements of the project (Fig. 6.9). A full-time StudentSurvey.ie Project Manager leads developments and ensures coherence and consistency between the various elements of the project.



Co-sponsoring organisations



Fig. 6.9 Governance and management, including co-sponsoring organisations, of StudentSurvey.ie

