

Irish Survey of Student Engagement National Report 2023



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. 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 StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group 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).

The review of StudentSurvey.ie

There is an agreed schedule to periodically review question items that are included in the survey. The most recent comprehensive review of the StudentSurvey.ie survey instrument was carried out in 2021. The Survey Review Group considered international good practice, feedback from students, and recommendations from relevant stakeholders in revising the existing questions and considering where additional questions could add value. The outcomes are referenced in previous national reports.

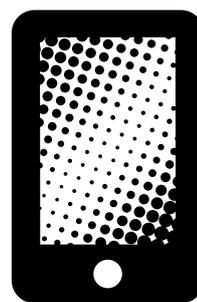
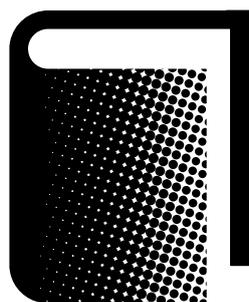
For 2023, the survey questions remained the same as in 2022 and the Topical Module questions continued to be an option for institutions. An additional 5th topical module on Academic Integrity was introduced.

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, teamwork, and communication skills. The comprehensive survey consists of 65 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*
- ➔ *Learning, Creative and Social Skills*

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, and took place in 2023 with the next fieldwork period scheduled for spring 2025.



Summary of 2023 results

A total of 39,403 students responded to StudentSurvey.ie 2023, which represents a national response rate of 25.7%. The average indicator score for each indicator is presented below.

The reader is directed to pages 12 and 13 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 O.1 Indicator scores for all indicators by cohort

	All students	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught
<i>Higher-Order Learning</i>	35.2	33.7	34.8	38.9
<i>Reflective and Integrative Learning</i>	32.3	30.7	32.1	36.2
<i>Quantitative Reasoning</i>	21.3	19.6	22.0	23.8
<i>Learning Strategies</i>	32.2	31.3	31.3	25.3
<i>Collaborative Learning</i>	30.2	29.9	31.5	29.1
<i>Student-Faculty Interaction</i>	14.0	11.8	15.7	16.5
<i>Effective Teaching Practices</i>	33.2	32.7	31.7	36.1
<i>Quality of Interactions</i>	40.6	40.6	39.0	42.6
<i>Supportive Environment</i>	29.3	31.0	26.4	29.6
<i>Learning, Creative and Social Skills</i>	33.3	31.9	33.9	35.5

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.

