



NSSE 2020 Topical Module Report

First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions

University of Kentucky

This page intentionally left blank.

About This Topical Module

This module includes a set of items only for first-year students and a set only for seniors, with questions adapted from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement and the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, respectively. The first-year items focus on academic perseverance, help-seeking behaviors, and institutional commitment, while the senior items explore post-graduation plans, links between the academic major and future plans, and confidence with skills developed during college.

Comparison Group

This section summarizes how this module's comparison group was identified, including selection criteria and whether the default option was taken. This is followed by the resulting list of institutions represented in the 'Nat'l Public R1/R2s' column of this report.

Group label	Nat'l Public R1/R2s
Date submitted	6/2/20
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution customized this group by selecting institutional characteristics as follows: Basic Classification (Doc/Very High, Doc/High); Sector (Pub)
Group description	National Public R1s & R2s

Nat'l Public R1/R2s (N=33)

Cleveland State University (Cleveland, OH)	University of Texas at El Paso, The (El Paso, TX)
Colorado State University (Fort Collins, CO)*	University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, The (Edinburg, TX)
East Tennessee State University (Johnson City, TN)*	Washington State University (Pullman, WA)*
Florida A&M University (Tallahassee, FL)	
Florida International University (Miami, FL)	
Georgia Southern University (Statesboro, GA)	
Georgia State University (Atlanta, GA)	
Kansas State University (Manhattan, KS)*	
Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS)	
New Jersey Institute of Technology (Newark, NJ)*	
New Mexico State University (Las Cruces, NM)	
Ohio State University, The (Columbus, OH)*	
Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR)*	
Rowan University (Glassboro, NJ)*	
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (Syracuse, NY)	
University at Buffalo, State University of New York (Buffalo, NY)	
University of Georgia (Athens, GA)	
University of Maine (Orono, ME)	
University of Montana (Missoula, MT)*	
University of New Hampshire at Durham (Durham, NH)	
University of New Orleans, The (New Orleans, LA)*	
University of North Carolina at Charlotte (Charlotte, NC)	
University of North Dakota (Grand Forks, ND)*	
University of North Texas (Denton, TX)*	
University of Rhode Island (Kingston, RI)*	
University of South Carolina Columbia (Columbia, SC)*	
University of South Florida (Tampa, FL)	
University of Southern Mississippi (Hattiesburg, MS)*	
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, The (Knoxville, TN)*	
University of Texas at Arlington, The (Arlington, TX)	

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a		Statistical Comparisons ^b	
				UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s
1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?							
a. Studied when there were other interesting things to do	FYSfy01a	1	Never	43	3	623	4
		2	Sometimes	518	34	6,008	37
		3	Often	589	38	6,223	37
		4	Very often	386	25	3,651	22
			Total	1,536	100	16,505	100
b. Found additional information for course assignments when you didn't understand the material	FYSfy01b	1	Never	23	2	354	2
		2	Sometimes	378	25	4,474	27
		3	Often	741	48	7,842	47
		4	Very often	388	25	3,812	24
			Total	1,530	100	16,482	100
c. Participated in course discussions, even when you didn't feel like it	FYSfy01c	1	Never	74	5	1,372	9
		2	Sometimes	558	37	6,688	40
		3	Often	636	42	5,869	35
		4	Very often	265	17	2,553	16
			Total	1,533	100	16,482	100
d. Asked instructors for help when you struggled with course assignments	FYSfy01d	1	Never	123	8	2,032	13
		2	Sometimes	650	43	7,184	44
		3	Often	522	34	4,988	30
		4	Very often	239	15	2,270	14
			Total	1,534	100	16,474	100
e. Finished something you have started when you encountered challenges	FYSfy01e	1	Never	6	0	142	1
		2	Sometimes	266	17	3,040	19
		3	Often	765	51	8,158	49
		4	Very often	496	32	5,110	31
			Total	1,533	100	16,450	100
f. Stayed positive, even when you did poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	1	Never	49	3	717	5
		2	Sometimes	507	33	5,190	31
		3	Often	650	43	6,723	41
		4	Very often	328	21	3,845	24
			Total	1,534	100	16,475	100
2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?							
a. Learning course material	FYSfy02a	1	Not at all difficult	51	3	615	4
		2	2	213	14	2,299	14
		3	3	489	32	5,013	30
		4	4	564	37	5,921	36
		5	5	171	11	1,994	12
		6	Very difficult	43	3	632	4
			Total	1,531	100	16,474	100
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	1	Not at all difficult	66	4	798	5
		2	2	201	13	2,065	13
		3	3	408	26	3,863	23
		4	4	480	32	4,733	28
		5	5	261	17	3,145	19
		6	Very difficult	117	8	1,854	12
			Total	1,533	100	16,458	100

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
			UK		Nat'l Public R1/R2s		UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	Effect size ^d
			Count	%	Count	%			
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	1 2 3 4 5 6 Total	212 400 455 329 103 33 1,532	14 26 30 22 7 2 100	2,130 4,112 4,702 3,480 1,386 647 16,457	13 25 28 21 8 4 100		2.9	3.0 ** -.07 ▼
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	1 2 3 4 5 6 Total	225 447 425 294 108 33 1,532	15 29 27 19 7 2 100	2,633 4,186 4,402 3,040 1,471 725 16,457	17 26 26 18 9 4 100		2.8	2.9 ** -.07 ▼
3. During the current school year, about how often have you sought help with coursework from the following sources?									
a. Faculty members	FYSfy03a_16	1 2 3 4 Total	213 831 384 97 1,525	14 55 25 6 100	3,208 8,819 3,459 951 16,437	20 53 21 6 100		2.2	2.1 *** .14 △
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	1 2 3 4 Total	504 644 285 90 1,523	33 43 19 6 100	7,248 6,279 2,251 642 16,420	45 37 14 4 100		2.0	1.8 *** .25 △
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	1 2 3 4 Total	408 584 357 178 1,527	27 39 23 11 100	6,589 5,875 2,701 1,244 16,409	41 36 16 7 100		2.2	1.9 *** .30 ▲
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	1 2 3 4 Total	37 320 603 570 1,530	3 22 39 37 100	709 4,194 6,625 4,894 16,422	5 26 40 29 100		3.1	2.9 *** .19 △
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	1 2 3 4 Total	603 526 293 108 1,530	40 34 19 7 100	6,990 5,218 2,892 1,316 16,416	44 31 17 8 100		1.9	1.9 .05
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	1 2 3 4 Total	823 475 177 52 1,527	54 31 12 3 100	9,837 4,544 1,484 537 16,402	60 28 9 3 100		1.6	1.5 *** .13 △

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a		Statistical Comparisons ^b	
				UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s
4a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution? ^j							
	FYSfy04a	No		1,198	78	11,937	73
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		Yes		331	22	4,501	27
		Total		1,529	100	16,438	100
						22%	27% *** -.11 ▼
4b. [If answered "yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)							
	FYSfy04b_1_16	—	Academics are too difficult	65	21	904	22
	FYSfy04b_2_16	—	Academics are too easy	8	3	231	6
	FYSfy04b_3_16	—	Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)	36	10	653	14
	FYSfy04b_4_16	—	Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)	139	43	1,859	40
	FYSfy04b_5_16	—	To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)	55	18	797	19
	FYSfy04b_6_16	—	Difficulty managing demands of school and work	48	15	753	17
	FYSfy04b_7_16	—	Too much emphasis on partying	17	5	322	8
	FYSfy04b_8_16	—	Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun	36	11	663	14
	FYSfy04b_9_16	—	Relations with faculty and staff	27	8	380	9
	FYSfy04b_10_16	—	Relations with other students	68	20	907	20
	FYSfy04b_11_16	—	Campus climate, location, or culture	81	23	1,233	27
	FYSfy04b_12_16	—	Unsafe or hostile environment	15	4	273	7
	FYSfy04b_13_16	—	Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)	161	47	2,037	43
	FYSfy04b_14_16	—	A reason not listed above, please specify:	32	10	535	13
5. How important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?							
	FYSfy05	1	Not important	23	2	716	5
		2	2	33	2	540	3
		3	3	70	5	988	6
		4	4	152	10	2,029	13
		5	5	251	17	2,539	16
		6	Very important	987	64	9,529	57
		Total		1,516	100	16,341	100
						5.3	5.0 *** .20 △

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
		UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s			
FYSfy01a	1,539	2.84	2.78	.021	.004	0.83	0.84	36,875	.002	.08
FYSfy01b	1,530	2.96	2.92	.019	.004	0.75	0.77	1,673	.013	.06
FYSfy01c	1,536	2.70	2.58	.020	.005	0.80	0.85	1,690	.000	.14
FYSfy01d	1,537	2.56	2.45	.022	.005	0.84	0.88	1,684	.000	.12
FYSfy01e	1,536	3.13	3.11	.018	.004	0.70	0.72	36,742	.255	.03
FYSfy01f	1,537	2.81	2.84	.020	.004	0.80	0.84	1,687	.137	-.04
FYSfy02a	1,534	3.47	3.50	.027	.006	1.06	1.12	1,686	.345	-.02
FYSfy02b	1,536	3.68	3.79	.032	.007	1.24	1.35	1,697	.001	-.08
FYSfy02c	1,535	2.89	2.98	.031	.007	1.22	1.30	1,689	.006	-.07
FYSfy02d	1,535	2.81	2.90	.031	.007	1.23	1.36	1,700	.005	-.07
FYSfy03a_16	1,529	2.23	2.13	.019	.004	0.76	0.79	36,724	.000	.14
FYSfy03b_16	1,526	1.97	1.76	.022	.004	0.86	0.82	1,649	.000	.25
FYSfy03c_16	1,530	2.19	1.91	.024	.005	0.96	0.93	1,657	.000	.30
FYSfy03d_16	1,532	3.10	2.93	.021	.005	0.82	0.86	36,687	.000	.19
FYSfy03e_16	1,533	1.93	1.88	.024	.005	0.92	0.95	1,676	.066	.05
FYSfy03f_16	1,530	1.65	1.55	.021	.004	0.81	0.79	1,656	.000	.13
FYSfy04a ^k	1532	.218	.265	.0106	.0024	--	--	--	.000	-.11
FYSfy05	1,520	5.32	5.04	.029	.008	1.13	1.41	1,729	.000	.20

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
			UK		Nat'l Public R1/R2s		UK		Nat'l Public R1/R2s
			Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
1. Do you expect to graduate this spring or summer?									
	FYSsr01_16	No	671	40	9,660	41			
		Yes	1,046	60	15,062	59			
		Total	1,717	100	24,722	100			
1a. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?									
	FYSsr01a	— Full-time employment	561	54	8,898	59			
		— Part-time employment	35	3	589	4			
		— Graduate or professional school	333	30	3,456	23			
		— Military service	13	1	144	1			
		Service or volunteer activity (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, etc.)	5	0	121	1			
		— Internship (paid or unpaid)	35	3	738	5			
		— Travel or gap year	39	4	602	4			
		— No plans at this time	27	3	432	3			
		— Other, please specify:	13	1	276	2			
		Total	1,061	100	15,256	100			
1b. [If immediate plans included full- or part-time employment] Do you already have a job for after graduation? ^j									
	FYSsr01b	No	308	52	5,014	52			
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		Yes, I will start a new job	181	31	2,389	26			
		Yes, I will continue in my current job	104	17	2,051	22	48%	48%	.00
		Total	593	100	9,454	100			
2. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] To what extent have courses in your major(s) prepared you for your post-graduation plans?									
	FYSsr02	1 Very little	58	6	1,037	7			
		2 Some	219	21	3,543	23			
		3 Quite a bit	385	36	5,745	37	3.0	2.9 ***	.11
		4 Very much	397	37	4,901	32			
		Total	1,059	100	15,226	100			
3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)? ^j									
	FYSsr03	Yes	1,480	85	21,559	86			
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		No	97	6	1,068	5	85%	86%	-.02
		Unsure	155	9	2,166	9			
		Total	1,732	100	24,793	100			
4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday? ^j									
	FYSsr04	Yes	308	18	5,283	22			
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		No	1,017	57	12,947	50	18%	22% ***	-.10
		Unsure	403	24	6,582	27			
		Total	1,728	100	24,812	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a		Statistical Comparisons ^b	
				UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s
5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?							
	FYSsr05	Yes		381	23	6,263	26
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No		877	49	11,432	44
		Unsure		472	28	7,138	29
		Total		1,730	100	24,833	100
6. How much confidence do you have in your ability to complete tasks requiring the following skills and abilities?							
a. Critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information	FYSsr06a	1	Very little	16	1	177	1
		2	Some	117	7	1,966	8
		3	Quite a bit	633	37	9,401	37
		4	Very much	962	56	13,246	55
		Total		1,728	100	24,790	100
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b	1	Very little	15	1	169	1
		2	Some	133	8	1,907	8
		3	Quite a bit	643	37	9,116	36
		4	Very much	934	54	13,561	55
		Total		1,725	100	24,753	100
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c	1	Very little	33	2	527	2
		2	Some	290	17	4,277	17
		3	Quite a bit	706	41	9,845	39
		4	Very much	698	40	10,127	41
		Total		1,727	100	24,776	100
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d	1	Very little	30	2	356	2
		2	Some	212	13	3,246	13
		3	Quite a bit	726	43	10,047	40
		4	Very much	761	43	11,110	45
		Total		1,729	100	24,759	100
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e	1	Very little	71	4	1,041	4
		2	Some	406	23	6,076	24
		3	Quite a bit	670	39	9,330	37
		4	Very much	583	34	8,310	35
		Total		1,730	100	24,757	100
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f	1	Very little	43	2	752	3
		2	Some	376	21	5,205	20
		3	Quite a bit	675	39	9,877	39
		4	Very much	634	38	8,922	38
		Total		1,728	100	24,756	100
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g	1	Very little	234	13	3,837	15
		2	Some	627	36	8,746	35
		3	Quite a bit	520	31	7,368	30
		4	Very much	346	21	4,813	21
		Total		1,727	100	24,764	100

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a		Statistical Comparisons ^b	
				UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSSr06h	1	Very little	364	20	5,806	23
		2	Some	651	37	9,267	37
		3	Quite a bit	422	25	5,829	24
		4	Very much	292	18	3,864	16
		Total		1,729	100	24,766	100
i. Leadership skills	FYSSr06i	1	Very little	37	2	779	3
		2	Some	245	15	4,123	17
		3	Quite a bit	638	37	8,916	36
		4	Very much	807	46	10,944	44
		Total		1,727	100	24,762	100
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSSr06j	1	Very little	70	4	1,373	6
		2	Some	333	20	5,798	24
		3	Quite a bit	676	39	9,008	36
		4	Very much	647	37	8,599	35
		Total		1,726	100	24,778	100
7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?							
a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming	FYSSr07a	1	Very little	46	3	959	4
		2	Some	309	18	5,008	21
		3	Quite a bit	718	42	9,770	39
		4	Very much	653	37	8,993	36
		Total		1,726	100	24,730	100
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSSr07b	1	Very little	397	23	5,795	24
		2	Some	510	29	7,341	30
		3	Quite a bit	469	28	6,401	26
		4	Very much	349	20	5,188	21
		Total		1,725	100	24,725	100
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSSr07c	1	Very little	57	3	1,143	5
		2	Some	331	19	5,186	21
		3	Quite a bit	692	41	9,551	38
		4	Very much	642	37	8,803	36
		Total		1,722	100	24,683	100
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSSr07d	1	Very little	184	11	2,984	13
		2	Some	495	29	7,331	30
		3	Quite a bit	580	34	7,942	32
		4	Very much	459	26	6,343	26
		Total		1,718	100	24,600	100

8. Is there anything your institution could have done better to prepare you for your career or further education? Please describe.

This final question asked students to respond in an open text box. Comments were recorded for 499 seniors. Responses are provided in your "NSSE20 Student Comments" report and in a separate SPSS data file.

These open-ended responses appear exactly as respondents entered them and may not be suitable for distribution without prior review.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
		UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s	UK	Nat'l Public R1/R2s			
FYSSr01b ^k	592	.481	.481	.0206	.0035	--	--	--	.993	.00
FYSSr02	1,046	3.04	2.94	.028	.005	0.90	0.92	34,159	.000	.11
FYSSr03 ^k	1732	.854	.861	.0085	.0015	--	--	--	.362	-.02
FYSSr04 ^k	1727	.184	.224	.0093	.0018	--	--	--	.000	-.10
FYSSr05 ^k	1730	.230	.265	.0101	.0019	--	--	--	.001	-.08
FYSSr06a	1,729	3.47	3.46	.016	.003	0.66	0.67	57,291	.300	.03
FYSSr06b	1,724	3.44	3.46	.016	.003	0.67	0.67	57,207	.295	-.03
FYSSr06c	1,727	3.19	3.20	.019	.003	0.78	0.80	57,251	.801	-.01
FYSSr06d	1,729	3.27	3.28	.018	.003	0.75	0.75	57,205	.397	-.02
FYSSr06e	1,730	3.03	3.02	.021	.004	0.85	0.87	57,216	.768	.01
FYSSr06f	1,729	3.12	3.12	.020	.004	0.82	0.83	57,234	.963	.00
FYSSr06g	1,727	2.60	2.56	.023	.004	0.95	0.98	57,230	.175	.03
FYSSr06h	1,729	2.40	2.34	.024	.004	1.00	1.00	57,240	.009	.06
FYSSr06i	1,727	3.28	3.21	.019	.004	0.79	0.83	1,849	.000	.08
FYSSr06j	1,726	3.09	2.99	.020	.004	0.85	0.90	1,849	.000	.11
FYSSr07a	1,726	3.14	3.07	.019	.004	0.80	0.85	1,849	.001	.08
FYSSr07b	1,725	2.45	2.44	.025	.005	1.05	1.07	57,143	.662	.01
FYSSr07c	1,721	3.11	3.05	.020	.004	0.83	0.87	57,034	.005	.07
FYSSr07d	1,717	2.76	2.71	.023	.004	0.96	0.99	1,831	.042	.05

Endnotes

- a. Column percentages are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Counts are unweighted; column percentages cannot be replicated from counts.
- b. All statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Unless otherwise noted, statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent *t*-tests. Items with categorical response sets are left blank.
- c. These are the values used to calculate means. For the majority of items, these values match the codes in the data file and codebook.
- d. Effect size for independent *t*-tests uses Cohen's *d*; *z*-tests use Cohen's *h*.
- e. Statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Categorical items are not listed.
- f. The 95% confidence interval for the population mean is equal to the sample mean plus or minus 1.96 times the standard error of the mean.
- g. A measure of the amount individual scores deviate from the mean of all the scores in the distribution.
- h. Degrees of freedom used to compute the *t*-tests. Values differ from Ns due to weighting and whether equal variances were assumed.
- i. Statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent *t*-tests or *z*-tests. Statistical significance represents the probability that the difference between your students' mean and that of the students in the comparison group is due to chance.
- j. Statistical comparison uses *z*-test to compare the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes" with all who responded otherwise.
- k. Mean represents the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes."

Key to symbols:

- ▲ Your students' average was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.
- △ Your students' average was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▼ Your students' average was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▼ Your students' average was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

Note: It is important to interpret the direction of differences relative to item wording and your institutional context.