

**A focus on students' engagement**

The Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) is a quality enhancement activity managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

Student engagement is an idea focused on learners and their interactions with university. It rests on the premise that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities, and on how institutions and staff generate conditions to stimulate involvement.

Assessing students' involvement with activities and conditions that research has linked with high-quality student outcomes provides data for framing conversations about quality, and a stimulus for guiding new thinking about best practice.

**Population and sample summary**

29 institutions participated in the 2008 AUSSE, growing from 25 in 2007. 769 institutions took part in the 2008 USA National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The AUSSE 2008 population includes

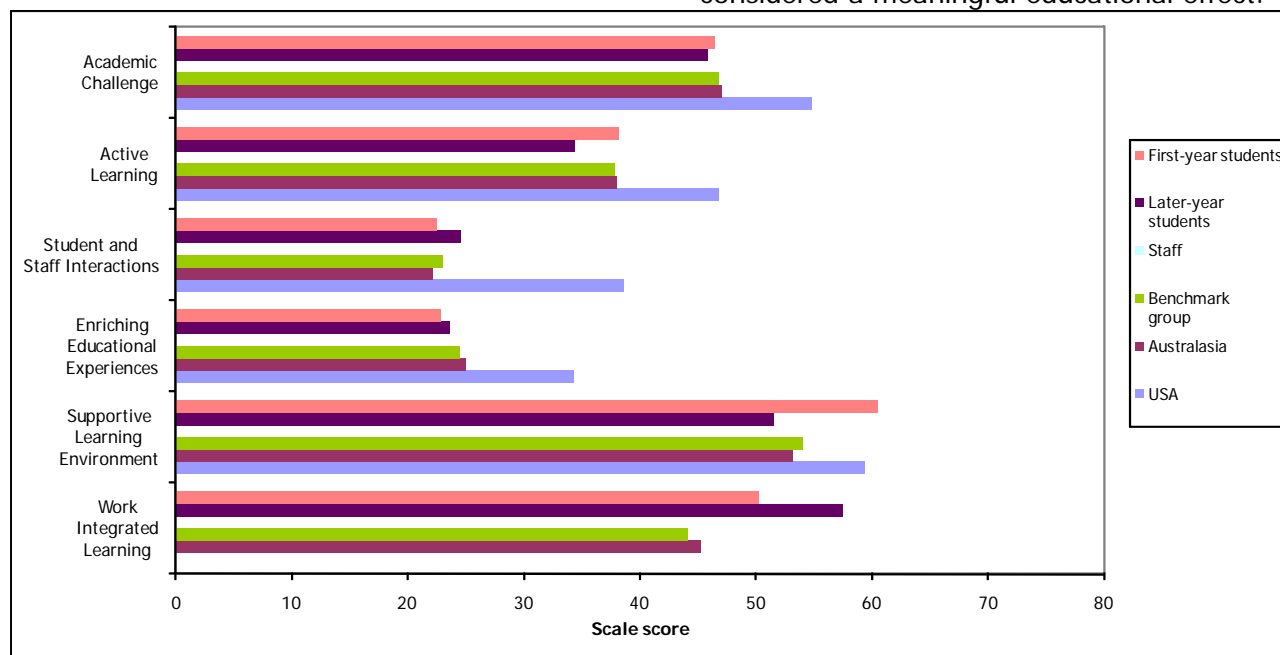
83,720 first-year and 83,736 third-year on-shore bachelor degree students.

A systematic random sample of 1750 first-year and 1750 later-year students was drawn at Charles Sturt University. 821 students responded in total, giving an overall institutional response rate of 23 per cent. The response sample was weighted to ensure that results reflect your institutions' population as a whole.

**Key results**

Six key areas of student engagement are measured by the AUSSE survey instrument, the Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ): Academic Challenge, Active Learning, Student and Staff Interactions, Enriching Educational Experiences, Supportive Learning Environment, and Work Integrated Learning. Scale scores are reported using a metric that runs from 0 to 100.

Figure 1 presents results for first- and later-year students at Charles Sturt University, for your benchmark group, for Australasia, and for the USA. It is best to compare results across groups within each scale, rather than make comparisons across scales. In general, a difference of five scale points may be considered a meaningful educational effect.



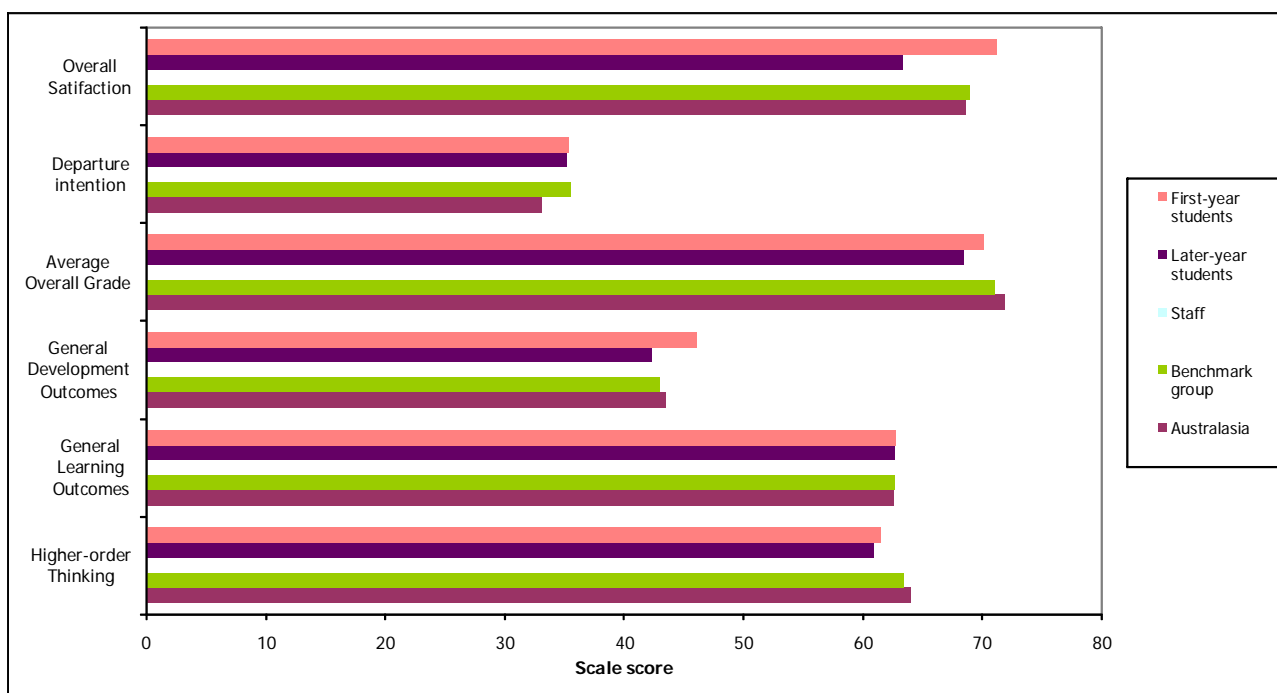
**Figure 1 Summary student engagement report**

The Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ) measures six key outcomes: overall

satisfaction, student retention intentions, average overall grades, general development

outcomes, general learning outcomes, and higher-order thinking outcomes. Figure 2

reports average scores on the 0 to 100 point metric.



**Figure 2 Summary student outcomes report**

Around 100 specific learning activities and conditions are measured in the AUSSE. Table 1 summarises the areas in which Charles

Sturt University is performing above and below the national average. These items are not ordered.

**Table 1 Performance above and below national average**

Performance below national average
Travelling to campus
Conversations with students of different ethnic group
Foreign language
Assignments fewer than 1,000 words
Careers advice
Completed readings
Conversations with students who are very different
Spent on campus including classes
Used library resources on campus or online
Made presentation

Performance above national average
Spent on campus excluding classes
Working for pay off campus
Practicum/internship
Blended academic learning with workplace experience
Relationships with administrative personnel and services
Providing care for dependents
Industry placement or work experience
Explored how to apply your learning in the workforce
Acquiring job-related or work-related knowledge and skills
Subject related assigned texts

### Summary subgroup results

Engagement varies across groups of students. The average age of respondents in Charles Sturt University's sample was 23. 76 per cent were female, 4 per cent were international, 2 per cent were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin and 1 per cent were of Maori or Pacific Islander, 5 per cent spoke a language other than English at

home, and 65 per cent were the first in their immediate family to attend higher education.

Most students in Charles Sturt University's sample studied in the Health and Education fields of education. In total, 56 per cent studied on campus and 71 per cent were mainly full time. 87 per cent reported doing more than half of their study online, and 25 per cent living on campus.

While only 11 per cent of students worked for pay on campus, 43 per cent spent more than 15 hours in off-campus paid work per week. Charles Sturt University students spent on

average 3 hours per week travelling to campus, 10 hours preparing for class, 16 hours on campus, and 4 hours participating in 'extracurricular' activities.

Table 2 and Table 3 report engagement scale and outcomes measure average scores for key subgroups

**Table 2 Summary engagement scales by subgroup**

Engagement scale	Charles Sturt University	Over 20	Equity student	Part time or external	International	First in family
Academic Challenge	46	46	45	45	48	46
Active Learning	36	34	36	30	42	35
Student and Staff Interactions	24	24	23	21	37	23
Enriching Educational Experiences	23	23	23	21	28	22
Supportive Learning Environment	55	52	54	51	58	55
Work Integrated Learning	54	57	55	55	44	55

**Table 3 Summary outcomes measures by subgroup**

Outcomes measures	Charles Sturt University	Over 20	Equity student	Part time or external	International	First in family
Higher-order Thinking	61	60	60	61	64	60
Learning Outcomes	63	63	60	62	66	62
Development Outcomes	44	43	44	42	52	43
Average Overall Grade	69	69	68	69	67	69
Departure Intention	35	36	38	32	34	37
Overall Satisfaction	67	64	64	64	51	67

### Opportunities for change

AUSSE results provide a foundation of evidence for planning and monitoring change.

A range of resources are available to assist individual institutions, including:

- AUSSE 2008 Institution Report, which includes a copy of your institutions' unit-record data file
- student engagement enhancement guides.

So far, institutions have used their data to:

- run seminars with students, managers and teachers
- benchmark results between institutions
- prepare reports for specific divisions
- run student focus groups and interviews
- enhance teaching practices and learning space designs
- hold institution-wide meetings to address problem areas
- integrate student management activities.