

Report on CSU's performance on the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) 2008

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AUSSE is a survey of students in Australian and New Zealand universities managed by the ACER. It assesses students' interactions with their university, on the premise that student learning is influenced by purposeful student engagement and the institution's fostering of student involvement.

CSU took part in the first AUSSE survey in 2007 and was one of 29 participating institutions in 2008. A total of 821 students responded, from both a first year and a later year cohort, giving CSU an institutional response rate of 23%. An innovation in this year's survey was the opportunity for CSU to benchmark against a group of selected universities. CSU chose to benchmark results against Deakin University, Swinburne University of Technology, University of New England, University of Tasmania and University of Wollongong.

The survey measures six key areas of student engagement: Academic Challenge, Active Learning, Student and Staff Interactions, Enriching Educational Experiences, Supportive Learning Environment and Work Integrated Learning. On the first five scales CSU students were within ± 1 point out of 100 of the composite scale means for benchmarked institutions on all but Active Learning (-2). However, on the Work Integrated Learning scale, one of CSU's strategic priority areas, CSU scored 10 points higher than the mean for benchmarked institutions. Our students report significantly higher blending of academic experience with workplace learning, improved knowledge and skills that contribute to employability, greater application of learning to the workplace and a greater proportion having undertaken an industry placement or work experience. Moreover, segmented data indicated that this happened across the range of fields of education (with the exception of Education which is the field most linked to work-integrated learning across the sector)

In CSU's other strategic priority area, flexible learning, the data does not demonstrate above average performance. There are, however, some changes from 2007 which may reflect the impact of the introduction of CSU Interact. CSU continues to have a large majority of its students (87% up 3%) who report undertaking some or all their study online (compared to sector 82% and benchmarked institutions 83%). The percentage of students reporting often using an online learning system to discuss or complete an assignment at CSU rose in 2008 from 17% to 33% (compared with sector 36% and benchmark group 45%).

Overall our students rated their educational experience as good (in line with our benchmark partners). Level of course satisfaction was high 67/100 but with a slightly bigger decline from first to later years (71 to 63) than for our benchmark partners. CSU's younger (<20), on-campus students are more satisfied than our DE students.