
NSSE 2021 Topical Module Report

First-year Experiences and Senior Transitions

University of New Hampshire at Durham

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.

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First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UNH		all module ppts		UNH	all module ppts	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
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	32	7	663	5	2.6	2.8 ***	-0.21
		2	Sometimes	215	44	4,768	36			
		3	Often	165	33	4,663	36			
		4	Very often	77	16	2,846	22			
		Total		489	100	12,940	100			
b. Found additional information for course assignments when you didn't understand the material	FYSfy01b	1	Never	12	2	345	3	2.8	2.9 **	-0.11
		2	Sometimes	153	31	3,826	30			
		3	Often	250	51	5,794	44			
		4	Very often	74	15	2,933	23			
		Total		489	100	12,898	100			
c. Participated in course discussions, even when you didn't feel like it	FYSfy01c	1	Never	25	5	587	5	2.7	2.8 ***	-0.21
		2	Sometimes	195	40	4,136	32			
		3	Often	192	40	5,163	39			
		4	Very often	77	15	3,031	24			
		Total		489	100	12,917	100			
d. Asked instructors for help when you struggled with course assignments	FYSfy01d	1	Never	71	15	1,376	11	2.4	2.5 *	-0.11
		2	Sometimes	201	41	5,497	43			
		3	Often	157	32	4,027	30			
		4	Very often	59	12	2,008	16			
		Total		488	100	12,908	100			
e. Finished something you have started when you encountered challenges	FYSfy01e	1	Never	3	1	118	1	3.0	3.1 ***	-0.16
		2	Sometimes	98	20	2,353	18			
		3	Often	269	56	6,187	47			
		4	Very often	118	24	4,239	34			
		Total		488	100	12,897	100			
f. Stayed positive, even when you did poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	1	Never	17	4	618	5	2.7	2.8 ***	-0.19
		2	Sometimes	202	41	4,305	32			
		3	Often	192	40	5,066	39			
		4	Very often	77	15	2,923	24			
		Total		488	100	12,912	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	8	2	556	5	3.6	3.6	.06
		2	2	55	11	1,751	14			
		3	3	155	32	3,692	28			
		4	4	180	37	4,375	34			
		5	5	70	14	1,727	14			
		6	Very difficult	21	4	808	6			
		Total		489	100	12,909	100			
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	1	Not at all difficult	19	4	661	6	3.8	3.8	-0.06
		2	2	62	13	1,629	12			
		3	3	113	23	2,842	22			
		4	4	156	32	3,524	27			
		5	5	95	19	2,387	19			
		6	Very difficult	44	9	1,864	14			
		Total		489	100	12,907	100			

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UNH		all module ppts		UNH	all module ppts	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	1	Not at all difficult	51	11	1,663	14	3.1	3.1	.02
		2	2	103	21	3,006	23			
		3	3	152	31	3,429	26			
		4	4	112	23	2,663	20			
		5	5	41	8	1,316	10			
		6	Very difficult	27	6	832	7			
Total				486	100	12,909	100			
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	1	Not at all difficult	60	12	2,227	18	3.1	3.0 *	.11 △
		2	2	113	23	2,910	22			
		3	3	134	28	3,251	25			
		4	4	91	18	2,461	19			
		5	5	55	11	1,224	9			
		6	Very difficult	36	7	832	7			
Total				489	100	12,905	100			
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	Never	94	19	2,442	20	2.1	2.1 *	-.10 ▽
		2	Sometimes	284	58	6,917	53			
		3	Often	93	19	2,709	21			
		4	Very often	17	3	835	7			
		Total				488	100			
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	1	Never	209	43	5,411	42	1.7	1.8	-.07
		2	Sometimes	205	41	5,103	39			
		3	Often	63	13	1,811	14			
		4	Very often	11	2	561	4			
		Total				488	100			
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	1	Never	293	61	6,192	49	1.5	1.7 ***	-.25 ▽
		2	Sometimes	137	28	4,309	33			
		3	Often	46	9	1,661	13			
		4	Very often	11	2	715	5			
		Total				487	100			
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	1	Never	34	8	1,727	16	2.7	2.5 ***	.19 △
		2	Sometimes	172	35	4,457	35			
		3	Often	191	39	4,274	31			
		4	Very often	91	19	2,437	17			
		Total				488	100			
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	1	Never	192	40	5,056	40	1.9	1.9	-.08
		2	Sometimes	183	37	4,406	34			
		3	Often	88	18	2,372	18			
		4	Very often	26	5	1,067	8			
		Total				489	100			
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	1	Never	322	65	8,365	65	1.4	1.5	-.04
		2	Sometimes	122	26	3,225	25			
		3	Often	38	8	933	7			
		4	Very often	5	1	355	3			
		Total				487	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	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b			
				UNH		all module ppts		UNH	all module ppts		
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d	
4. During the current school year, have you participated in a first-year seminar or other course that introduces students to expectations of the academic community and college success skills (goalsetting, study skills, campus resources, etc.)?^j (Comparison data are limited to NSSE 2021.)											
	FYSfy06_21	Yes		269	54	6,576	50	54%	50%	0.0	.09
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		No		156	32	4,257	34				
		Unsure		64	13	2,011	16				
		Total		489	100	12,844	100				
5a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?^j											
	FYSfy04a	No		342	70	9,536	75	30%	25% *	△	.10
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		Yes		146	30	3,301	25				
		Total		488	100	12,837	100				
5b. [If answered "yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)											
	FYSfy04b_1_16	—	Academics are too difficult	20	15	564	17				
	FYSfy04b_2_16	—	Academics are too easy	10	7	123	4				
	FYSfy04b_3_16	—	Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)	19	14	463	14				
	FYSfy04b_4_16	—	Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)	42	28	1,330	40				
	FYSfy04b_5_16	—	To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)	25	17	598	19				
	FYSfy04b_6_16	—	Difficulty managing demands of school and work	22	16	710	23				
	FYSfy04b_7_16	—	Too much emphasis on partying	10	6	167	6				
	FYSfy04b_8_16	—	Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun	55	38	801	23				
	FYSfy04b_9_16	—	Relations with faculty and staff	14	10	350	11				
	FYSfy04b_10_16	—	Relations with other students	31	22	500	14				
	FYSfy04b_11_16	—	Campus climate, location, or culture	45	31	731	22				
	FYSfy04b_12_16	—	Unsafe or hostile environment	5	3	154	5				
	FYSfy04b_13_16	—	Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)	54	38	1,473	43				
	FYSfy04b_14_16	—	A reason not listed above, please specify:	33	24	608	20				

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UNH		all module ppts		UNH	all module ppts	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
6. How important is it to you that you graduate from <i>this institution</i>?										
	FYSiy05	1	Not important	13	3	456	4	5.0	5.1	-.06
		2	2	15	3	387	3			
		3	3	34	7	768	6			
		4	4	74	15	1,601	12			
		5	5	80	18	1,930	15			
		6	Very important	263	54	7,626	60			
		Total		479	100	12,768	100			

*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
	UNH	UNH	all module ppts	UNH	all module ppts	UNH	all module ppts			
FYSfy01a	489	2.58	2.76	.038	.007	0.83	0.86	16,305	.000	-.21
FYSfy01b	489	2.79	2.88	.032	.006	0.72	0.79	526	.007	-.11
FYSfy01c	489	2.65	2.83	.036	.007	0.80	0.85	16,274	.000	-.21
FYSfy01d	488	2.41	2.50	.040	.007	0.88	0.89	16,262	.018	-.11
FYSfy01e	488	3.02	3.14	.031	.006	0.68	0.73	523	.000	-.16
FYSfy01f	488	2.67	2.83	.035	.007	0.78	0.85	16,268	.000	-.19
FYSfy02a	489	3.63	3.56	.047	.010	1.05	1.20	529	.147	.06
FYSfy02b	489	3.77	3.85	.057	.011	1.26	1.40	526	.178	-.06
FYSfy02c	486	3.13	3.10	.059	.011	1.30	1.41	521	.653	.02
FYSfy02d	489	3.14	2.98	.064	.012	1.41	1.45	16,257	.016	.11
FYSfy03a_16	488	2.07	2.14	.033	.006	0.72	0.80	526	.019	-.10
FYSfy03b_16	488	1.74	1.80	.035	.007	0.77	0.84	16,234	.113	-.07
FYSfy03c_16	487	1.53	1.75	.035	.007	0.76	0.88	526	.000	-.25
FYSfy03d_16	488	2.69	2.50	.039	.008	0.86	0.96	525	.000	.19
FYSfy03e_16	489	1.88	1.95	.040	.008	0.88	0.95	16,250	.094	-.08
FYSfy03f_16	487	1.45	1.48	.031	.006	0.69	0.75	16,223	.364	-.04
FYSfy06_21 ^k	489	.544	.501	.0225	.0040	--	--	--	.060	.09
FYSfy04a ^k	488	.296	.251	.0207	.0035	--	--	--	.024	.10
FYSfy05	478	5.05	5.12	.059	.011	1.30	1.34	16,067	.224	-.06

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UNH		all module ppts		UNH	all module ppts	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
1. Do you expect to graduate this spring or summer?										
	FYSsr01_16	No		95	15	5,347	36			
		Yes		559	85	10,246	64			
		Total		654	100	15,593	100			
1a. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?										
	FYSsr01a	—	Full-time employment	301	55	5,651	56			
		—	Part-time employment	33	5	482	5			
		—	Graduate or professional school	129	22	2,476	23			
		—	Military service	3	1	88	1			
		—	Service or volunteer activity (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, etc.)	1	0	63	1			
		—	Internship (paid or unpaid)	31	5	492	5			
		—	Travel or gap year	32	5	410	4			
		—	No plans at this time	31	5	418	4			
		—	Other, please specify:	3	1	219	2			
		Total		564	100	10,299	100			
1b. [If immediate plans included full- or part-time employment] Do you already have a job for after graduation?^j										
	FYSsr01b	No		224	67	3,483	56	33%	44% ***	-0.21
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	Yes, I will start a new job		80	24	1,277	21			
		Yes, I will continue in my current job		30	9	1,321	22			
		Total		334	100	6,081	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	26	4	628	7	3.0	3.0	.04
		2	Some	126	23	2,289	23			
		3	Quite a bit	225	40	3,846	37			
		4	Very much	187	33	3,512	33			
		Total		564	100	10,275	100			
3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)?^j										
	FYSsr03	Yes		563	86	13,383	85	86%	85%	0.0
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No		27	4	672	5			
		Unsure		67	10	1,512	10			
		Total		657	100	15,567	100			
4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday?^j										
	FYSsr04	Yes		123	20	3,228	22	20%	22%	0.0
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No		360	53	7,986	50			
		Unsure		176	27	4,347	29			
		Total		659	100	15,561	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			
				UNH		all module ppts		UNH	all module ppts		
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d	
5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?^j											
	FYSsr05		Yes	142	23	3,831	26	23%	26%	0.0	-.07
			No	295	44	7,172	44				
			Unsure	222	34	4,587	30				
			Total	659	100	15,590	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	3	1	102	1	3.5	3.4	.05
			2	Some	48	7	1,329	8			
			3	Quite a bit	259	38	5,906	38			
			4	Very much	348	55	8,228	53			
				Total	658	100	15,565	100			
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b		1	Very little	3	1	98	1	3.4	3.5	-.03
			2	Some	58	9	1,149	8			
			3	Quite a bit	246	37	5,759	37			
			4	Very much	350	54	8,541	55			
				Total	657	100	15,547	100			
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c		1	Very little	10	1	331	2	3.2	3.2	-.06
			2	Some	124	18	2,560	16			
			3	Quite a bit	283	43	6,259	40			
			4	Very much	240	37	6,405	41			
				Total	657	100	15,555	100			
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d		1	Very little	10	1	194	1	3.3	3.3	.03
			2	Some	84	13	2,066	14			
			3	Quite a bit	257	40	6,259	40			
			4	Very much	306	46	7,026	45			
				Total	657	100	15,545	100			
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e		1	Very little	35	5	570	4	3.0	3.0	-.07
			2	Some	160	24	3,666	23			
			3	Quite a bit	256	39	6,043	39			
			4	Very much	206	32	5,270	34			
				Total	657	100	15,549	100			
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f		1	Very little	25	4	454	3	3.0	3.1 *	-.08
			2	Some	153	22	3,339	21			
			3	Quite a bit	277	42	6,281	40			
			4	Very much	202	32	5,470	36			
				Total	657	100	15,544	100			
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g		1	Very little	124	18	2,433	15	2.5	2.5	-.08
			2	Some	229	35	5,617	36			
			3	Quite a bit	192	30	4,487	30			
			4	Very much	112	18	3,005	20			
				Total	657	100	15,542	100			
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSsr06h		1	Very little	175	25	3,584	22	2.2	2.4 ***	-.13
			2	Some	254	39	5,633	36			
			3	Quite a bit	149	23	3,729	24			
			4	Very much	79	13	2,592	17			
				Total	657	100	15,538	100			

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Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UNH		all module ppts		UNH	all module ppts	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
i. Leadership skills	FYSsr06i	1	Very little	19	3	484	3	3.2	3.2	-.01
		2	Some	106	17	2,609	17			
		3	Quite a bit	252	38	5,623	36			
		4	Very much	280	42	6,832	44			
		Total		657	100	15,548	100			
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSsr06j	1	Very little	45	7	971	6	2.9	3.0	-.06
		2	Some	155	24	3,630	24			
		3	Quite a bit	268	40	5,675	36			
		4	Very much	189	29	5,275	34			
		Total		657	100	15,551	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	27	4	465	3	3.1	3.1	-.05
		2	Some	121	19	2,821	19			
		3	Quite a bit	274	41	6,227	40			
		4	Very much	236	36	6,009	38			
		Total		658	100	15,522	100			
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSsr07b	1	Very little	149	23	3,244	21	2.4	2.5 *	-0.10 ▽
		2	Some	211	32	4,388	28			
		3	Quite a bit	167	25	4,310	28			
		4	Very much	128	20	3,577	23			
		Total		655	100	15,519	100			
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSsr07c	1	Very little	29	5	566	4	3.0	3.1	-.04
		2	Some	131	19	3,039	20			
		3	Quite a bit	277	43	6,166	39			
		4	Very much	220	34	5,732	37			
		Total		657	100	15,503	100			
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSsr07d	1	Very little	76	12	1,674	11	2.7	2.7	-.07
		2	Some	212	32	4,526	29			
		3	Quite a bit	219	33	5,066	32			
		4	Very much	151	23	4,184	27			
		Total		658	100	15,450	100			
8. Have you been creating an ePortfolio or other collection that includes samples of your work over time, shows your progress, and helps you reflect on the knowledge and skills you have gained?^j (Comparison data are limited to NSSE 2021.)										
	FYSsr09_21	Yes		140	22	4,516	28	22%	28% ***	-0.15 ▽
		No		461	70	9,620	63			
		Unsure		55	8	1,344	9			
		Total		656	100	15,480	100			

9. 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 177 seniors. Responses are provided in your NSSE21 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
		UNH	all module ppts	UNH	all module ppts	UNH	all module ppts			
FYSsr01b ^k	338	.334	.437	.0257	.0061	--	--	--	.000	-.21
FYSsr02	557	3.01	2.97	.036	.009	0.86	0.91	621	.297	.04
FYSsr03 ^k	656	.858	.854	.0137	.0027	--	--	--	.803	.01
FYSsr04 ^k	657	.198	.218	.0156	.0032	--	--	--	.220	-.05
FYSsr05 ^k	657	.227	.256	.0164	.0033	--	--	--	.096	-.07
FYSsr06a	656	3.47	3.43	.025	.005	0.65	0.68	17,670	.219	.05
FYSsr06b	656	3.44	3.46	.026	.005	0.67	0.67	17,647	.486	-.03
FYSsr06c	656	3.16	3.21	.030	.006	0.76	0.79	17,656	.128	-.06
FYSsr06d	656	3.30	3.28	.029	.006	0.74	0.75	17,646	.508	.03
FYSsr06e	656	2.97	3.03	.034	.007	0.87	0.85	17,654	.088	-.07
FYSsr06f	656	3.03	3.09	.032	.006	0.83	0.82	17,646	.034	-.08
FYSsr06g	655	2.47	2.55	.038	.007	0.98	0.97	17,642	.054	-.08
FYSsr06h	655	2.23	2.36	.038	.008	0.97	1.01	710	.001	-.13
FYSsr06i	655	3.19	3.20	.032	.006	0.82	0.84	17,648	.840	-.01
FYSsr06j	656	2.92	2.97	.035	.007	0.89	0.91	17,655	.125	-.06
FYSsr07a	656	3.09	3.13	.033	.006	0.84	0.83	17,625	.235	-.05
FYSsr07b	653	2.42	2.52	.041	.008	1.05	1.06	17,621	.015	-.10
FYSsr07c	656	3.05	3.09	.033	.007	0.84	0.85	17,603	.284	-.04
FYSsr07d	656	2.68	2.75	.037	.008	0.96	0.98	17,540	.072	-.07
FYSsr09_21 ^k	655	0.22	0.28	.0161	.0035	--	--	--	.000	-.15

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. Comparison group details are in the *Selected Comparison Groups* report, linked in the Data & Reports table on the Institution Interface.
- 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 N s 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.