

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects information from first-year and senior students about the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate experience. Since the inception of the survey, more than 1,600 bachelor's-granting colleges and universities in the United States and Canada have used it to measure the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices that are empirically linked with learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, and graduation.

NSSE data are used by faculty, administrators, researchers, and others for institutional improvement, public reporting, and related purposes. Launched in 2000 with the support of a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, NSSE has been fully sustained through institutional participation fees since 2002. The NSSE questionnaire was substantially updated in 2013, including new customization options. This document provides an overview of NSSE 2017, including administration details, response rates, participating institutions, and respondent characteristics.

## Survey Data and Methodology

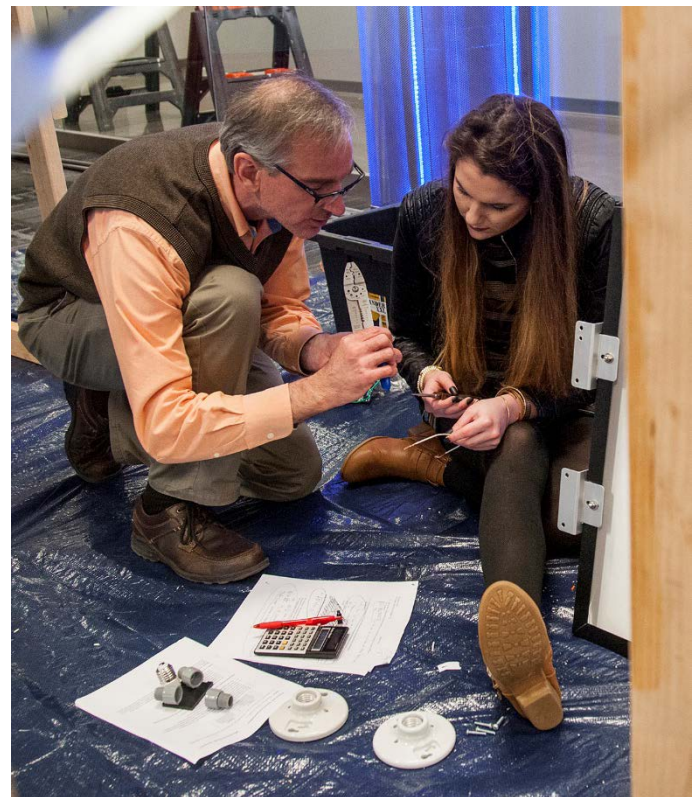
Approximately 2 million first-year and senior students from 725 institutions (650 in the US, 72 in Canada, and 3 in other countries) were invited to participate in NSSE 2017. Of this population, 517,850 students responded to the survey. Less than half (47%) of these were first-year students and 53% were seniors.

NSSE's sampling methodology calls for either a census of all first-year and senior students or a random selection of an equal number of students from each group, with the sample size based on total undergraduate enrollment. Census administration is available only via the email recruitment method, in which students receive a survey invitation and up to four reminders by email. In 2017, all but four participating institutions opted for this method. Sampled students at the four remaining institutions received up to three messages by postal mail and up to two reminders by email.

Unless noted otherwise, the results presented below are from 708 institutions—636 in the US and 72 in Canada—that participated in NSSE 2017. Due to nonstandard details of their participation, 17 institutions are not represented. In these summary tables, as in each *Institutional Report 2017*, only data for census-administered and randomly sampled students are included.

## U.S. Participating Institutions

NSSE 2017 U.S. respondents profiled here include 382,530 first-year (44%) and senior (56%) respondents from 636 institutions. NSSE 2017 participating institutions and students reflect the diversity of bachelor's-granting colleges and universities in the US with respect to institution type, public or private control, size, region, and locale (Table 1). A searchable list of participating institutions is on the NSSE website: [nsse.indiana.edu/html/participants.cfm](https://nsse.indiana.edu/html/participants.cfm)



William Jewell College

## Institutional Response Rates

The average response rate for U.S. NSSE 2017 institutions was 30%. The highest institutional response rate among U.S. institutions was 76%, and three out of five institutions achieved a response rate of 25% or higher. Higher average response rates were observed for smaller institutions and for institutions that offered incentives (Table 2).

Institutions had the option to use their learning management system or student portal to recruit students. In 2017, 92 U.S. institutions chose this option, and the average percentage of students who accessed the survey this way was 24%.

**Table 1****Profile of NSSE 2017 U.S. Institutions and Respondents and Bachelor's-Granting U.S. Institutions and Their Students**

Institution Characteristics	Institutions (%)		Students (%)	
	NSSE	U.S. <sup>a</sup>	NSSE	U.S. <sup>a</sup>
<b>Carnegie Basic Classification<sup>b</sup></b>				
Doc/Highest: Doctoral Universities (Highest Research Activity)	5	7	18	26
Doc/Higher: Doctoral Universities (Higher Research Activity)	6	6	13	14
Doc/Moderate: Doctoral Universities (Moderate Research Activity)	7	7	9	11
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	29	24	32	28
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	13	13	8	7
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	8	9	5	3
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences Focus	16	15	8	4
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields	15	19	7	5
<b>Control</b>				
Public	44	35	67	66
Private	56	65	33	34
<b>Undergraduate Enrollment</b>				
Fewer than 1,000	15	21	3	2
1,000–2,499	32	33	14	10
2,500–4,999	18	17	14	11
5,000–9,999	19	14	21	19
10,000–19,999	9	9	18	24
20,000 or more	7	6	30	34
<b>Region</b>				
New England	9	8	8	6
Mid East	18	18	15	16
Great Lakes	15	15	16	14
Plains	10	10	7	8
Southeast	25	25	25	24
Southwest	9	8	10	12
Rocky Mountains	2	3	6	5
Far West	11	10	13	13
Outlying Areas	<1	2	<1	2
<b>Locale</b>				
City	44	47	53	62
Suburban	24	26	23	22
Town	26	21	20	14
Rural	6	6	3	2

Notes: Percentages are unweighted and based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award baccalaureate degrees and belong to one of the eight Carnegie classifications in the table. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

a. U.S. percentages are based on the 2015 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics data.

b. For information on the Carnegie Foundation's 2015 Basic Classification, see [carnegieclassifications.iu.edu](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu)

**Table 2****NSSE 2017 U.S. Participation and Response Rates by Undergraduate Enrollment and Use of Incentives**

Institution Characteristics	Number of Institutions	Average
		Institutional Response Rate (%)
<b>Undergraduate Enrollment</b>		
2,500 or fewer	302	36
2,501 to 4,999	124	29
5,000 to 9,999	114	23
10,000 or more	96	22
<b>Use of Incentives<sup>a</sup></b>		
Offered incentives	360	33
No incentives	276	26
<b>All Institutions</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>30</b>

a. Some institutions used recruitment incentives, such as small gifts or raffles, to encourage students to complete the survey.

## Survey Customization

Participating institutions may append up to two additional question sets in the form of NSSE Topical Modules or consortium questions (for institutions sharing a common interest and participating as a NSSE consortium) (Table 3). Of the nine modules available in 2017, the most widely adopted module was Academic Advising, followed by First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions (Table 4).

**Table 3****Summary of NSSE 2017 Participation in Additional Questions Sets**

Selection of Additional Question Sets	Number of Institutions	Percentage of Institutions
None	78	11
One module only	141	19
Two modules	287	40
Consortium items only	25	3
Consortium items plus one module	194	27

Notes: Includes U.S., Canadian, other international institutions, and institutions with nonstandard population files or administrations. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 4****NSSE 2017 Participation in Topical Modules**

Topical Module	Number of Institutions	Percentage of Institutions
Academic Advising	225	31
First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions	208	29
Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity	133	18
Development of Transferable Skills	88	12
Experiences with Writing	65	9
Civic Engagement	59	8
Global Learning	54	7
Experiences with Information Literacy	44	6
Learning with Technology	33	5

Notes: Includes U.S., Canadian, other international institutions, and institutions with nonstandard population files or administrations. Percentages sum to more than 100 because many institutions selected two modules.

## U.S. Respondent Profile

Table 5 displays selected demographic and enrollment characteristics of NSSE 2017 U.S. respondents alongside all U.S. bachelor's degree-seeking students for comparison. NSSE reports use weights as appropriate to correct for disproportionate survey response related to institution-reported sex and enrollment status at each institution. Table 6 provides additional details about U.S. respondents.

## Canadian Respondent Profile

Canadian respondents profiled here include 130,291 students (54% first-year, 46% fourth-year) from 72 institutions in 10 provinces, including 26 institutions in Ontario; 13 in Quebec; 8 in Alberta; 7 in British Columbia; and 18 others from either Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, or Prince Edward Island. Female students and full-time students accounted for about 65% and 89% of Canadian respondents, respectively. The average response rate for Canadian NSSE 2017 institutions was 37%, with the highest institutional response rate being 75%. Nine in ten achieved a response rate of 25% or higher.

About 17% of Canadian respondents were at least 24 years old. The majority of students providing ethnocultural information identified as White (63%), while 12% identified as Chinese; 8% South Asian; 5% Black; 4% Arab; and about 2% from each of five other categories.

**Table 5****Characteristics of NSSE 2017 U.S. Respondents and Undergraduate Population at All U.S. Bachelor's Degree-Granting Institutions**

Student Characteristics <sup>a</sup>	NSSE 2016 Respondents <sup>b</sup> (%)	U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Population <sup>c</sup> (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	36	45
Female	64	55
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
African American/Black	10	12
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1
Asian	6	7
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Isl.	<1	<1
Caucasian/White	63	57
Hispanic/Latino	13	15
Multiracial/multiethnic	4	4
Foreign/nonresident alien	4	4
<b>Enrollment Status</b>		
Full-time	88	84
Not full-time	12	16

Note: Percentages are unweighted and may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- Institution-reported, using categories provided in IPEDS. Race/ethnicity excludes students whose classification was unknown or not provided.
- The NSSE 2017 sampling frame consists of first-year and senior undergraduates. Data were provided by participating institutions.
- U.S. percentages are based on data from the 2015 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics and Enrollment data. Includes all class years.

**Table 6****Additional Characteristics of NSSE 2017 U.S. Respondents**

Student Characteristics	%
At least 24 years old	23
First-generation <sup>a</sup>	44
Transfer	30
Expects to complete a master's degree or higher	62
Living on campus <sup>b</sup>	39
Taking all classes online	8

Note: Percentages are unweighted.

- No parent (or guardian) holds a bachelor's degree.
- Dormitory or other campus housing, fraternity, or sorority.

## Meet the NSSE Team

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