

2017 Topical Module: First-Year Experiences & Senior Transitions

Profile of Participating Institutions and Respondents and All Bachelor's-Granting U.S. Institutions and Students

Topical modules are short sets of questions on a topic related to current issues in higher education and student engagement that may be appended to the core survey. The **First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions** module examines class-specific issues. 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 in skill development. In 2017, 175 U.S. institutions elected to append these items to the core survey. Of these, 168 belonged to one of the eight Carnegie classifications shown in the table below.^a

The institutions and respondents participating in a given module are only a subset of all NSSE participating institutions and respondents. The table below displays the characteristics for module participants alongside NSSE 2017 participants as well as all bachelor's-granting U.S. institutions and students (all limited to the eight indicated Carnegie Classification categories).

	Institutions			Students		
	FY/SR Module	NSSE 2017	U.S. ^b	FY/SR Module	NSSE 2017	U.S. ^b
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Carnegie Basic Classification^c						
R1: Doctoral Universities - Highest research activity	2	5	7	8	18	26
R2: Doctoral Universities - Higher research activity	7	6	6	14	13	14
R3: Doctoral Universities - Moderate research activity	3	7	7	7	9	11
M1: Master's Colleges and Universities - Larger programs	29	29	24	40	32	28
M2: Master's Colleges and Universities - Medium programs	12	13	13	8	8	7
M3: Master's Colleges and Universities - Smaller programs	14	8	9	9	5	3
Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus	17	16	15	9	8	4
Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields	16	15	19	5	7	5
Control						
Public	40	44	35	62	67	66
Private	60	56	65	38	33	34
Undergraduate enrollment						
Fewer than 1,000	20	15	21	5	3	2
1,000 – 2,499	33	32	33	16	14	10
2,500 – 4,999	17	18	17	14	14	11
5,000 – 9,999	17	19	14	22	21	19
10,000 – 19,999	5	9	9	14	18	24
20,000 or more	8	7	6	28	30	34

a. All numbers are unweighted and based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees and belong to one of the eight Carnegie Classification categories in the table. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

b. U.S. percentages are based on the 2015 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics file.

c. For information on the Carnegie Foundation's Basic Classification, see carnegieclassifications.iu.edu

First-Year Students

<i>Item wording or description</i>	<i>Variable name</i>	<i>Response options</i>	Female		Male		Total	
			<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
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	Never	726	4	524	6	1,250	6
		Sometimes	7,001	32	3,760	38	10,761	35
		Often	7,767	37	3,598	37	11,365	37
		Very often	5,138	27	1,835	20	6,973	24
		Total	20,632	100	9,717	100	30,349	100
b. Find additional information for course assignments when you don't understand the material	FYSfy01b	Never	574	3	348	4	922	3
		Sometimes	6,112	28	3,178	33	9,290	30
		Often	9,416	45	4,421	44	13,837	45
		Very often	4,459	24	1,728	19	6,187	22
		Total	20,561	100	9,675	100	30,236	100
c. Participate in course discussions, even when you don't feel like it	FYSfy01c	Never	1,448	8	700	8	2,148	8
		Sometimes	7,542	35	3,746	38	11,288	36
		Often	7,848	37	3,779	37	11,627	37
		Very often	3,762	20	1,475	16	5,237	19
		Total	20,600	100	9,700	100	30,300	100
d. Ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments	FYSfy01d	Never	1,641	8	879	10	2,520	9
		Sometimes	8,227	40	3,989	41	12,216	40
		Often	7,101	33	3,398	34	10,499	34
		Very often	3,637	19	1,428	15	5,065	17
		Total	20,606	100	9,694	100	30,300	100
e. Finish something you have started when you encounter challenges	FYSfy01e	Never	160	1	138	2	298	1
		Sometimes	3,809	18	1,961	20	5,770	19
		Often	10,195	48	4,834	49	15,029	48
		Very often	6,432	33	2,759	30	9,191	32
		Total	20,596	100	9,692	100	30,288	100
f. Stay positive, even when you do poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	Never	766	4	404	4	1,170	4
		Sometimes	6,347	29	2,469	25	8,816	28
		Often	8,636	41	4,183	42	12,819	42
		Very often	4,830	26	2,630	28	7,460	27
		Total	20,579	100	9,686	100	30,265	100
2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?								
a. Learning course material	FYSfy02a	Not at all difficult	968	6	535	6	1,503	6
		2	3,229	16	1,583	17	4,812	17
		3	6,540	31	2,977	30	9,517	31
		4	6,935	32	3,293	33	10,228	33
		5	2,275	11	1,025	10	3,300	11
		Very Difficult	652	3	294	3	946	3
		Total	20,599	100	9,707	100	30,306	100
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	Not at all difficult	1,116	6	621	7	1,737	7
		2	2,789	13	1,218	13	4,007	13
		3	4,868	23	2,158	22	7,026	23
		4	5,742	27	2,700	28	8,442	27
		5	3,686	18	1,807	18	5,493	18
		Very Difficult	2,391	12	1,199	12	3,590	12
		Total	20,592	100	9,703	100	30,295	100

Note: Results weighted by institution-reported sex, enrollment status, and institution size. Counts are not weighted.

NSSE 2017 Topical Modules

U.S. Summary Frequencies by Class and Sex

First-Year Experiences

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Response options	Female		Male		Total	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	Not at all difficult	3,442	19	1,616	18	5,058	18
		2	5,413	25	2,507	26	7,920	26
		3	5,812	27	2,775	28	8,587	27
		4	3,898	18	1,828	18	5,726	18
		5	1,401	7	658	7	2,059	7
		Very Difficult	611	3	318	3	929	3
		Total	20,577	100	9,702	100	30,279	100
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	Not at all difficult	4,425	24	2,244	24	6,669	24
		2	5,531	26	2,599	26	8,130	26
		3	5,067	23	2,409	25	7,476	24
		4	3,414	16	1,534	15	4,948	16
		5	1,502	7	590	6	2,092	7
		Very Difficult	648	4	315	3	963	4
		Total	20,587	100	9,691	100	30,278	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	Never	3,182	16	1,515	16	4,697	16
		Sometimes	10,945	53	4,997	51	15,942	52
		Often	4,790	23	2,500	25	7,290	24
		Very often	1,644	8	675	7	2,319	8
		Total	20,561	100	9,687	100	30,248	100
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	Never	8,770	42	3,967	41	12,737	42
		Sometimes	8,026	39	3,879	40	11,905	39
		Often	2,782	14	1,425	15	4,207	14
		Very often	966	5	406	4	1,372	5
		Total	20,544	100	9,677	100	30,221	100
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	Never	7,609	37	3,692	39	11,301	38
		Sometimes	7,611	37	3,656	37	11,267	37
		Often	3,557	17	1,614	16	5,171	17
		Very often	1,777	9	703	8	2,480	8
		Total	20,554	100	9,665	100	30,219	100
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	Never	1,323	10	746	10	2,069	10
		Sometimes	5,687	29	2,921	31	8,608	30
		Often	8,095	36	3,754	37	11,849	36
		Very often	5,447	25	2,261	22	7,708	24
		Total	20,552	100	9,682	100	30,234	100
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	Never	7,705	37	4,202	43	11,907	39
		Sometimes	6,955	34	3,201	34	10,156	34
		Often	4,003	19	1,628	17	5,631	18
		Very often	1,893	10	646	7	2,539	9
		Total	20,556	100	9,677	100	30,233	100
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	Never	12,302	60	5,404	56	17,706	59
		Sometimes	5,857	28	2,966	31	8,823	29
		Often	1,765	9	980	10	2,745	9
		Very often	594	3	313	3	907	3
		Total	20,518	100	9,663	100	30,181	100

Note: Results weighted by institution-reported sex, enrollment status, and institution size. Counts are not weighted.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Response options	Female		Male		Total	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
4a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?								
	FYSfy04a	No	13,848	67	6,820	71	20,668	69
		Yes	6,702	33	2,860	29	9,562	31
		Total	20,550	100	9,680	100	30,230	100
4b. [If answered "yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)								
	FYSfy04b_1_16	Academics are too difficult	903	13	406	14	1,309	14
	FYSfy04b_2_16	Academics are too easy	434	6	232	8	666	7
	FYSfy04b_3_16	Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)	1,167	17	505	17	1,672	17
	FYSfy04b_4_16	Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)	2,759	41	1,100	38	3,859	40
	FYSfy04b_5_16	To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)	1,068	16	595	21	1,663	18
	FYSfy04b_6_16	Difficulty managing demands of school and work	929	16	397	15	1,326	16
	FYSfy04b_7_16	Too much emphasis on partying	477	7	161	6	638	7
	FYSfy04b_8_16	Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun	1,323	17	588	18	1,911	18
	FYSfy04b_9_16	Relations with faculty and staff	640	11	292	12	932	11
	FYSfy04b_10_16	Relations with other students	1,542	20	435	15	1,977	18
	FYSfy04b_11_16	Campus climate, location, or culture	1,862	25	798	26	2,660	25
	FYSfy04b_12_16	Unsafe or hostile environment	404	6	144	5	548	5
	FYSfy04b_13_16	Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)	2,722	40	822	29	3,544	36
	FYSfy04b_14_16	A reason not listed above, please specify:	991	16	569	22	1,560	18
5. How important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?								
	FYSfy05	Not important	923	5	633	7	1,556	6
		2	767	4	432	4	1,199	4
		3	1,367	7	728	7	2,095	7
		4	2,416	11	1,313	13	3,729	12
		5	2,946	13	1,510	15	4,456	14
		Very important	11,993	60	5,013	53	17,006	58
		Total	20,412	100	9,629	100	30,041	100

Note: Results weighted by institution-reported sex, enrollment status, and institution size. Counts are not weighted.

NSSE 2017 Topical Modules

U.S. Summary Means and Standard Deviations by Class and Sex

First-Year Experiences

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Female		Male		Total	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
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	2.88	.85	2.71	.85	2.81	.85
b. Find additional information for course assignments when you don't understand the material	FYSfy01b	2.90	.79	2.79	.79	2.85	.79
c. Participate in course discussions, even when you don't feel like it	FYSfy01c	2.70	.88	2.61	.85	2.66	.87
d. Ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments	FYSfy01d	2.62	.88	2.55	.86	2.59	.87
e. Finish something you have started when you encounter challenges	FYSfy01e	3.13	.73	3.07	.75	3.10	.74
f. Stay positive, even when you do poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	2.89	.83	2.94	.84	2.91	.83
2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?							
a. Learning course material	FYSfy02a	3.34	1.16	3.34	1.15	3.34	1.16
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	3.72	1.39	3.74	1.41	3.73	1.40
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	2.79	1.31	2.82	1.31	2.80	1.31
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	2.69	1.38	2.63	1.35	2.67	1.37
3. During the current school year, about how often have you sought help with coursework from the following sources?							
a. Faculty members	FYSfy03a_16	2.22	.81	2.24	.81	2.23	.81
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	1.82	.86	1.82	.84	1.82	.85
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	1.98	.95	1.92	.92	1.95	.94
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	2.76	.94	2.72	.92	2.74	.93
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	2.01	.97	1.88	.93	1.96	.96
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	1.54	.77	1.60	.80	1.57	.78
5. How important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?							
	FYSfy05	5.06	1.44	4.85	1.56	4.97	1.49

Notes: Results weighted by sex, enrollment status, and institution size. See codebook for variable ranges. Categorical items are not listed.

NSSE 2017 Topical Modules

U.S. Summary Frequencies by Class and Sex

Senior Transitions

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Response options	Female		Male		Total	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1. Do you expect to graduate this spring or summer?								
	FYSsr01_16	No	8018	31	4561	33	12579	32
		Yes	18551	69	9143	67	27694	68
		Total	26569	100	13704	100	40273	100
1a. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation]								
After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?								
	FYSsr01a	Full-time employment	10,719	60	5,784	64	16,503	62
		Part-time employment	894	5	295	3	1,189	4
		Graduate or professional school	4,038	20	1,727	18	5,765	19
		Military service	99	0	198	2	297	1
		Service or volunteer activity (e.g., AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America)	239	1	75	1	314	1
		Internship (paid or unpaid)	901	4	372	4	1,273	4
		Travel or gap year	690	3	260	3	950	3
		No plans at this time	685	4	285	3	970	3
		Other, please specify:	510	3	243	3	753	3
		Total	18,775	100	9,239	100	28,014	100
1b. [If immediate plans included full- or part-time employment] Do you already have a job for after graduation?								
	FYSsr01b	No	6,079	46	3,125	47	9,204	46
		Yes, I will start a new job	2,006	15	1,330	20	3,336	17
		Yes, I will continue in my current job	3,480	39	1,603	33	5,083	36
		Total	11,565	100	6,058	100	17,623	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	Very little	921	5	617	7	1,538	6
		Some	4,013	21	2,099	23	6,112	22
		Quite a bit	6,808	35	3,511	38	10,319	36
		Very much	7,003	38	2,975	33	9,978	36
		Total	18,745	100	9,202	100	27,947	100
3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)?								
	FYSsr03	Yes	23,332	88	11,624	85	34,956	87
		No	972	3	670	5	1,642	4
		Unsure	2,378	8	1,444	10	3,822	9
		Total	26,682	100	13,738	100	40,420	100
4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday?								
	FYSsr04	Yes	4,888	18	3,599	26	8,487	22
		No	15,294	58	5,968	44	21,262	52
		Unsure	6,500	23	4,171	30	10,671	26
		Total	26,682	100	13,738	100	40,420	100
5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?								
	FYSsr05	Yes	5,462	21	4,096	30	9,558	24
		No	14,180	54	5,318	39	19,498	48
		Unsure	7,078	25	4,331	31	11,409	28
		Total	26,720	100	13,745	100	40,465	100

Note: Results weighted by institution-reported sex, enrollment status, and institution size. Counts are not weighted.

NSSE 2017 Topical Modules

U.S. Summary Frequencies by Class and Sex

Senior Transitions

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Response options	Female		Male		Total	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
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	Very little	167	1	71	1	238	1
		Some	2,471	9	814	6	3,285	8
		Quite a bit	10,392	38	4,766	34	15,158	36
		Very much	13,640	53	8,080	60	21,720	56
		Total	26,670	100	13,731	100	40,401	100
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b	Very little	126	0	77	1	203	1
		Some	1,982	7	853	6	2,835	7
		Quite a bit	9,972	36	4,704	33	14,676	35
		Very much	14,598	56	8,101	60	22,699	58
		Total	26,678	100	13,735	100	40,413	100
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c	Very little	472	2	183	1	655	2
		Some	4,259	15	1,961	14	6,220	15
		Quite a bit	10,660	39	5,549	40	16,209	40
		Very much	11,283	43	6,049	45	17,332	44
		Total	26,674	100	13,742	100	40,416	100
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d	Very little	294	1	220	2	514	1
		Some	3,235	12	1,973	14	5,208	12
		Quite a bit	10,527	39	5,543	40	16,070	39
		Very much	12,632	48	6,011	45	18,643	47
		Total	26,688	100	13,747	100	40,435	100
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e	Very little	967	4	424	3	1,391	3
		Some	6,430	24	2,761	20	9,191	22
		Quite a bit	10,474	39	5,141	37	15,615	38
		Very much	8,815	34	5,412	40	14,227	36
		Total	26,686	100	13,738	100	40,424	100
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f	Very little	976	3	323	2	1,299	3
		Some	6,847	25	2,365	17	9,212	21
		Quite a bit	11,155	42	5,171	37	16,326	40
		Very much	7,699	30	5,877	44	13,576	36
		Total	26,677	100	13,736	100	40,413	100
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g	Very little	4,593	16	1,424	10	6,017	13
		Some	9,549	35	4,330	31	13,879	33
		Quite a bit	7,687	30	4,459	33	12,146	31
		Very much	4,849	20	3,517	26	8,366	22
		Total	26,678	100	13,730	100	40,408	100
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSsr06h	Very little	6,603	23	2,224	16	8,827	20
		Some	10,069	38	4,873	35	14,942	37
		Quite a bit	6,232	24	3,787	28	10,019	26
		Very much	3,733	15	2,841	21	6,574	17
		Total	26,637	100	13,725	100	40,362	100
i. Leadership skills	FYSsr06i	Very little	681	3	329	2	1,010	2
		Some	4,129	15	2,086	15	6,215	15
		Quite a bit	9,307	35	4,751	34	14,058	35
		Very much	12,548	47	6,562	48	19,110	48
		Total	26,665	100	13,728	100	40,393	100
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSsr06j	Very little	1,203	5	646	5	1,849	5
		Some	5,815	22	2,961	22	8,776	22
		Quite a bit	9,904	37	5,043	36	14,947	37
		Very much	9,729	37	5,083	37	14,812	37
		Total	26,651	100	13,733	100	40,384	100

Note: Results weighted by institution-reported sex, enrollment status, and institution size. Counts are not weighted.

NSSE 2017 Topical Modules

U.S. Summary Frequencies by Class and Sex

Senior Transitions

Seniors

<i>Item wording or description</i>	<i>Variable name</i>	<i>Response options</i>	Female		Male		Total	
			<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?								
a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming	FYSsr07a	Very little	676	3	547	4	1,223	3
		Some	4,696	18	2,746	21	7,442	19
		Quite a bit	10,671	40	5,616	40	16,287	40
		Very much	10,569	39	4,799	35	15,368	38
		Total	26,612	100	13,708	100	40,320	100
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSsr07b	Very little	4,775	18	2,643	20	7,418	19
		Some	7,541	28	3,930	28	11,471	28
		Quite a bit	7,882	30	4,003	29	11,885	30
		Very much	6,380	24	3,110	23	9,490	24
		Total	26,578	100	13,686	100	40,264	100
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSsr07c	Very little	951	4	655	5	1,606	4
		Some	5,173	19	2,660	20	7,833	19
		Quite a bit	10,610	40	5,435	39	16,045	40
		Very much	9,815	37	4,903	36	14,718	37
		Total	26,549	100	13,653	100	40,202	100
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSsr07d	Very little	2,625	10	1,524	12	4,149	11
		Some	7,729	29	3,875	29	11,604	29
		Quite a bit	8,998	34	4,615	33	13,613	34
		Very much	7,131	27	3,574	26	10,705	27
		Total	26,483	100	13,588	100	40,071	100

Note: Results weighted by institution-reported sex, enrollment status, and institution size. Counts are not weighted.

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Female		Male		Total	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
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	3.06	.89	2.97	.91	3.03	.90
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	3.42	.68	3.53	.63	3.47	.66
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b	3.48	.65	3.53	.63	3.50	.64
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c	3.25	.77	3.29	.75	3.26	.76
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d	3.35	.72	3.28	.76	3.32	.74
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e	3.03	.85	3.14	.84	3.07	.84
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f	2.99	.83	3.23	.80	3.09	.83
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g	2.54	.98	2.76	.95	2.63	.97
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSsr06h	2.31	.99	2.54	.99	2.40	1.00
i. Leadership skills	FYSsr06i	3.27	.81	3.28	.80	3.28	.81
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSsr06j	3.06	.87	3.06	.88	3.06	.88
7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?							
a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming	FYSsr07a	3.16	.81	3.06	.85	3.12	.83
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSsr07b	2.60	1.04	2.55	1.05	2.58	1.04
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSsr07c	3.10	.84	3.06	.87	3.08	.85
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSsr07d	2.78	.96	2.74	.98	2.76	.97

Notes: Results weighted by sex, enrollment status, and institution size. See codebook for variable ranges. Categorical items are not listed.

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