

2019 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 2019, 170 U.S. institutions elected to append these items to the core survey. Of these, 158 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 2019 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 2019	U.S. ^b	FY/SR Module	NSSE 2019	U.S. ^b
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Carnegie Basic Classification^c						
Doctoral Universities – Very high research activity	8	6	7	26	20	27
Doctoral Universities - High research activity	8	10	6	11	18	14
Doctoral/Professional Universities	13	13	7	18	17	11
Master's Colleges and Universities - Larger programs	23	26	25	26	25	28
Master's Colleges and Universities - Medium programs	16	15	13	8	8	7
Master's Colleges and Universities - Smaller programs	5	6	9	2	3	3
Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus	14	12	15	5	5	4
Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields	12	12	18	3	4	5
Control						
Public	47	42	35	68	62	67
Private	53	58	65	32	38	33
Undergraduate enrollment						
Fewer than 1,000	14	12	21	3	3	2
1,000 – 2,499	31	33	32	12	14	10
2,500 – 4,999	22	21	17	15	14	11
5,000 – 9,999	16	17	14	19	20	18
10,000 – 19,999	9	10	9	21	21	23
20,000 or more	8	7	6	30	29	35

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 2018 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics file.

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

NSSE 2019 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	%
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	831	3	528	5	1,363	4
		Sometimes	8,318	34	4,443	40	12,769	37
		Often	9,161	38	4,008	36	13,181	37
		Very often	5,750	24	2,169	20	7,931	22
		Total	24,060	100	11,148	100	35,244	100
b. Find additional information for course assignments when you don't understand the material	FYSfy01b	Never	563	2	305	3	868	3
		Sometimes	6,649	27	3,530	31	10,186	29
		Often	11,168	46	5,102	46	16,289	46
		Very often	5,648	24	2,193	20	7,851	22
		Total	24,028	100	11,130	100	35,194	100
c. Participate in course discussions, even when you don't feel like it	FYSfy01c	Never	1,449	6	808	7	2,257	7
		Sometimes	8,874	37	4,278	38	13,160	37
		Often	9,166	38	4,218	37	13,400	38
		Very often	4,535	19	1,834	17	6,381	18
		Total	24,024	100	11,138	100	35,198	100
d. Ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments	FYSfy01d	Never	1,942	9	1,114	11	3,060	9
		Sometimes	9,872	41	4,636	42	14,518	41
		Often	7,968	33	3,774	34	11,757	33
		Very often	4,229	18	1,612	14	5,848	16
		Total	24,011	100	11,136	100	35,183	100
e. Finish something you have started when you encounter challenges	FYSfy01e	Never	164	1	116	1	280	1
		Sometimes	4,064	17	2,171	20	6,238	18
		Often	11,905	49	5,513	49	17,434	49
		Very often	7,859	33	3,339	30	11,215	32
		Total	23,992	100	11,139	100	35,167	100
f. Stay positive, even when you do poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	Never	878	4	406	4	1,284	4
		Sometimes	7,843	32	2,993	27	10,843	30
		Often	9,843	41	4,773	43	14,632	42
		Very often	5,440	23	2,959	27	8,412	25
		Total	24,004	100	11,131	100	35,171	100
2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?								
a. Learning course material	FYSfy02a	Not at all difficult	975	4	615	6	1,597	5
		2	3,676	15	1,745	16	5,425	15
		3	7,645	32	3,460	31	11,115	31
		4	8,244	34	3,792	34	12,047	34
		5	2,645	11	1,186	11	3,834	11
		Very Difficult	820	3	355	3	1,176	3
		Total	24,005	100	11,153	100	35,194	100
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	Not at all difficult	1,268	6	674	6	1,945	6
		2	3,353	14	1,429	13	4,787	13
		3	5,769	24	2,540	23	8,317	23
		4	6,839	28	3,159	28	10,007	28
		5	4,350	18	2,141	19	6,497	19
		Very Difficult	2,427	10	1,195	11	3,627	11
		Total	24,006	100	11,138	100	35,180	100

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

NSSE 2019 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	3,734	16	1,879	17	5,626	17
		2	6,517	27	2,993	27	9,518	27
		3	6,701	28	3,064	27	9,771	27
		4	4,568	19	2,111	19	6,682	19
		5	1,766	7	780	7	2,549	7
		Very Difficult	717	3	316	3	1,036	3
		Total	24,003	100	11,143	100	35,182	100
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	Not at all difficult	4,868	21	2,496	23	7,377	21
		2	6,620	27	3,119	28	9,743	27
		3	5,951	25	2,752	24	8,714	25
		4	3,971	17	1,803	16	5,779	16
		5	1,818	8	681	6	2,500	7
		Very Difficult	765	3	290	3	1,056	3
		Total	23,993	100	11,141	100	35,169	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	3,622	16	1,736	16	5,362	16
		Sometimes	12,923	54	6,028	54	18,973	54
		Often	5,549	23	2,615	23	8,173	23
		Very often	1,890	8	749	6	2,640	7
		Total	23,984	100	11,128	100	35,148	100
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	Never	9,994	42	4,673	43	14,679	43
		Sometimes	9,477	39	4,480	39	13,974	39
		Often	3,406	14	1,524	14	4,934	14
		Very often	1,085	4	441	4	1,528	4
		Total	23,962	100	11,118	100	35,115	100
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	Never	8,992	38	4,412	41	13,423	39
		Sometimes	8,668	36	4,046	36	12,724	36
		Often	4,113	17	1,861	16	5,981	17
		Very often	2,169	9	793	7	2,962	8
		Total	23,942	100	11,112	100	35,090	100
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	Never	1,199	6	694	7	1,902	7
		Sometimes	6,153	26	3,344	31	9,508	28
		Often	9,480	39	4,347	38	13,839	38
		Very often	7,136	29	2,736	24	9,876	27
		Total	23,968	100	11,121	100	35,125	100
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	Never	8,860	37	5,016	46	13,892	41
		Sometimes	7,984	33	3,616	32	11,611	33
		Often	4,749	20	1,809	16	6,566	18
		Very often	2,376	10	684	6	3,061	8
		Total	23,969	100	11,125	100	35,130	100
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	Never	14,308	60	6,328	58	20,659	59
		Sometimes	6,754	28	3,376	30	10,140	29
		Often	2,065	9	1,082	9	3,150	9
		Very often	815	3	327	3	1,142	3
		Total	23,942	100	11,113	100	35,091	100

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

NSSE 2019 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	%
4a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?								
	FYSfy04a	No	16,545	70	8,198	74	24,772	72
		Yes	7,423	30	2,931	26	10,361	28
		Total	23,968	100	11,129	100	35,133	100
4b. [If answered "yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)								
	FYSfy04b_1_16	Academics are too difficult	1,174	16	563	20	1,737	18
	FYSfy04b_2_16	Academics are too easy	344	5	224	7	568	6
	FYSfy04b_3_16	Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)	1,209	16	453	15	1,663	16
	FYSfy04b_4_16	Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)	3,121	42	1,157	39	4,282	41
	FYSfy04b_5_16	To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)	1,191	16	617	22	1,809	18
	FYSfy04b_6_16	Difficulty managing demands of school and work	1,116	16	505	18	1,623	16
	FYSfy04b_7_16	Too much emphasis on partying	450	6	206	7	656	7
	FYSfy04b_8_16	Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun	1,312	17	508	16	1,820	17
	FYSfy04b_9_16	Relations with faculty and staff	643	9	296	11	942	10
	FYSfy04b_10_16	Relations with other students	1,798	24	515	17	2,314	21
	FYSfy04b_11_16	Campus climate, location, or culture	2,116	28	783	25	2,900	27
	FYSfy04b_12_16	Unsafe or hostile environment	448	6	133	5	581	6
	FYSfy04b_13_16	Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)	3,480	47	1,051	36	4,533	43
	FYSfy04b_14_16	A reason not listed above, please specify:	881	12	518	18	1,402	15
5. How important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?								
	FYSfy05	Not important	1,013	4	570	5	1,585	5
		2	755	3	437	4	1,192	3
		3	1,391	6	689	6	2,082	6
		4	2,766	12	1,416	13	4,187	12
		5	3,469	14	1,876	17	5,347	15
		Very important	14,388	61	6,078	55	20,490	58
		Total	23,782	100	11,066	100	34,883	100

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

NSSE 2019 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	9326	33	5415	38	14812	36
		Yes	20662	67	9903	62	30643	64
		Total	29988	100	15318	100	45455	100
1a. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation]								
After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?								
	FYSsr01a	Full-time employment	11,717	56	6,287	63	18,049	59
		Part-time employment	930	4	307	3	1,238	4
		Graduate or professional school	4,932	23	1,942	19	6,889	22
		Military service	170	1	312	3	495	2
		Service or volunteer activity (e.g., AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America)	188	1	48	0	237	1
		Internship (paid or unpaid)	945	4	379	4	1,325	4
		Travel or gap year	849	4	253	3	1,102	3
		No plans at this time	672	3	298	3	971	3
		Other, please specify:	452	2	174	2	628	2
		Total	20,855	100	10,000	100	30,934	100
1b. [If immediate plans included full- or part-time employment] Do you already have a job for after graduation?								
	FYSsr01b	No	6,771	53	3,248	49	10,027	51
		Yes, I will start a new job	2,764	22	1,784	28	4,554	25
		Yes, I will continue in my current job	3,084	25	1,548	23	4,664	24
		Total	12,619	100	6,580	100	19,245	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	1,032	5	669	7	1,705	6
		Some	4,210	20	2,309	24	6,532	22
		Quite a bit	7,846	38	3,816	38	11,685	38
		Very much	7,738	37	3,194	31	10,970	35
		Total	20,826	100	9,988	100	30,892	100
3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)?								
	FYSsr03	Yes	26,343	87	13,080	85	39,547	86
		No	1,127	4	728	5	1,860	4
		Unsure	2,566	9	1,520	10	4,103	9
		Total	30,036	100	15,328	100	45,510	100
4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday?								
	FYSsr04	Yes	5,162	17	3,812	25	9,005	20
		No	17,726	59	7,033	46	24,854	53
		Unsure	7,195	24	4,525	30	11,743	26
		Total	30,083	100	15,370	100	45,602	100
5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?								
	FYSsr05	Yes	6,013	20	4,319	28	10,366	23
		No	16,085	54	6,246	41	22,418	48
		Unsure	8,003	27	4,798	31	12,830	29
		Total	30,101	100	15,363	100	45,614	100

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

NSSE 2019 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	182	1	86	1	269	1
		Some	2,632	9	862	6	3,507	7
		Quite a bit	11,858	39	5,150	33	17,049	37
		Very much	15,363	51	9,237	60	24,695	55
		Total	30,035	100	15,335	100	45,520	100
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b	Very little	140	0	93	1	233	1
		Some	2,140	7	945	6	3,100	7
		Quite a bit	11,304	38	5,330	35	16,673	36
		Very much	16,434	55	8,942	58	25,471	56
		Total	30,018	100	15,310	100	45,477	100
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c	Very little	560	2	239	2	800	2
		Some	4,898	17	2,182	15	7,098	16
		Quite a bit	12,043	40	6,061	39	18,148	40
		Very much	12,538	42	6,852	44	19,476	43
		Total	30,039	100	15,334	100	45,522	100
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d	Very little	324	1	214	1	538	1
		Some	3,348	11	2,131	14	5,494	13
		Quite a bit	12,050	40	6,191	40	18,286	40
		Very much	14,312	48	6,785	44	21,187	46
		Total	30,034	100	15,321	100	45,505	100
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e	Very little	1,110	4	471	3	1,584	4
		Some	7,302	25	3,177	22	10,513	23
		Quite a bit	11,720	39	5,751	37	17,515	38
		Very much	9,894	33	5,935	38	15,897	35
		Total	30,026	100	15,334	100	45,509	100
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f	Very little	1,021	3	315	2	1,340	3
		Some	7,264	24	2,510	16	9,802	21
		Quite a bit	12,631	42	5,880	38	18,562	40
		Very much	9,108	30	6,619	44	15,794	36
		Total	30,024	100	15,324	100	45,498	100
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g	Very little	5,264	18	1,474	10	6,746	14
		Some	10,917	36	5,035	33	15,990	35
		Quite a bit	8,664	29	4,964	32	13,686	30
		Very much	5,180	17	3,855	25	9,080	21
		Total	30,025	100	15,328	100	45,502	100
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSsr06h	Very little	7,427	25	2,555	18	10,002	22
		Some	11,417	38	5,560	37	17,027	37
		Quite a bit	6,950	23	4,157	27	11,152	25
		Very much	4,207	14	3,062	19	7,304	16
		Total	30,001	100	15,334	100	45,485	100
i. Leadership skills	FYSsr06i	Very little	701	2	389	3	1,092	3
		Some	4,533	15	2,258	15	6,810	15
		Quite a bit	10,708	36	5,255	34	16,010	35
		Very much	14,079	47	7,437	48	21,598	47
		Total	30,021	100	15,339	100	45,510	100
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSsr06j	Very little	1,317	5	746	5	2,069	5
		Some	6,536	22	3,304	22	9,868	22
		Quite a bit	11,285	38	5,473	35	16,806	37
		Very much	10,877	36	5,813	37	16,758	36
		Total	30,015	100	15,336	100	45,501	100

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

NSSE 2019 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	%
7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?								
a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming	FYSsr07a	Very little	778	3	619	4	1,401	3
		Some	5,282	18	3,051	20	8,358	19
		Quite a bit	12,011	40	6,364	41	18,425	41
		Very much	11,908	39	5,282	34	17,260	37
		Total	29,979	100	15,316	100	45,444	100
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSsr07b	Very little	5,656	20	3,106	22	8,782	21
		Some	8,724	29	4,365	29	13,125	29
		Quite a bit	8,544	28	4,445	28	13,040	28
		Very much	7,022	23	3,391	21	10,453	22
		Total	29,946	100	15,307	100	45,400	100
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSsr07c	Very little	984	4	686	5	1,676	4
		Some	5,847	20	3,016	20	8,891	20
		Quite a bit	11,921	40	6,030	39	18,002	39
		Very much	11,141	37	5,545	36	16,749	36
		Total	29,893	100	15,277	100	45,318	100
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSsr07d	Very little	2,970	10	1,679	12	4,668	11
		Some	8,944	30	4,513	30	13,490	30
		Quite a bit	9,988	33	5,055	33	15,097	33
		Very much	7,899	26	3,978	26	11,918	26
		Total	29,801	100	15,225	100	45,173	100

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

NSSE 2019 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	2.83	.84	2.71	.84	2.78	.84
b. Find additional information for course assignments when you don't understand the material	FYSfy01b	2.92	.78	2.83	.78	2.88	.78
c. Participate in course discussions, even when you don't feel like it	FYSfy01c	2.71	.85	2.64	.85	2.68	.85
d. Ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments	FYSfy01d	2.59	.88	2.51	.86	2.56	.87
e. Finish something you have started when you encounter challenges	FYSfy01e	3.15	.71	3.08	.73	3.12	.72
f. Stay positive, even when you do poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	2.83	.82	2.92	.83	2.87	.83
2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?							
a. Learning course material	FYSfy02a	3.43	1.11	3.38	1.15	3.41	1.13
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	3.71	1.34	3.75	1.37	3.72	1.36
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	2.85	1.29	2.81	1.29	2.83	1.29
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	2.74	1.35	2.64	1.31	2.70	1.33
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	2.19	.78	2.21	.80
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	1.81	.84	1.78	.82	1.80	.83
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	1.97	.95	1.89	.91	1.93	.94
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	2.91	.88	2.78	.89	2.85	.89
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	2.03	.98	1.83	.91	1.94	.96
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	1.55	.79	1.58	.78	1.56	.79
5. How important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?							
	FYSfy05	5.11	1.38	4.96	1.46	5.05	1.42

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

NSSE 2019 Topical Modules

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

Senior Transitions

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	.88	2.94	.91	3.01	.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	3.41	.67	3.53	.63	3.47	.66
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b	3.46	.65	3.51	.65	3.48	.65
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c	3.21	.78	3.26	.77	3.23	.78
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d	3.34	.72	3.27	.75	3.31	.73
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e	3.00	.85	3.10	.85	3.05	.85
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f	2.99	.83	3.23	.79	3.10	.82
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g	2.46	.97	2.71	.95	2.57	.97
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSsr06h	2.26	.98	2.48	.99	2.35	.99
i. Leadership skills	FYSsr06i	3.26	.80	3.27	.82	3.27	.81
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSsr06j	3.04	.87	3.04	.90	3.05	.88
7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?							
a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming	FYSsr07a	3.15	.81	3.05	.85	3.11	.83
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSsr07b	2.54	1.05	2.50	1.05	2.52	1.05
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	2.75	.96	2.72	.98	2.74	.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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