

NUI Galway – Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) Survey 2019 results

NUI Galway undertakes the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) annually and consistently performs well against other Irish universities in both our participation rates and student satisfaction rates as evidenced by the results of 2 key satisfaction questions below:

The ISSE is designed to focus on student engagement, namely the amount of time and effort that students put into meaningful and purposeful educational activities and the extent to which institutions provide such opportunities and encourage students to engage with them. **Research shows that students who engage more frequently in educationally purposeful activities both in and outside the classroom get better grades, are more satisfied, and are more likely to persist and graduate.** NUI Galway is committed to interpreting and utilising ISSE data to enhance the experiences of our students.

3,892 of NUI Galway students responded to ISSE survey in 2019. This number yields a response rate of **37.1%** (compared to **33.9%** - NUIG 2018 or to **25.1%** Other Unis 2019). Of these 1,718 were First Year students (Y1), 1,057 were Final Year students (YF) and 1,117 were Postgraduate Taught students (PGT) (response rate 41.0%, 34.7% and 34.3% respectively). Post Graduate research Students are survey and their responses analysed separately.

Results: Overall Satisfaction

Table 1 below demonstrates that overall satisfaction amongst NUI Galway students is high, with 87.8% stating they would come to NUI Galway if they had to start over again, and 83.4% rating their educational experience at NUI Galway as good or excellent. Both of these results are slightly down on the prior year but above the average for the 6 other Universities in Ireland.

Table 1.

“How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?” (Percentage of students who responded positively [^])					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
NUI Galway (%)	80.2	86.3	84.7	84.7	83.4
Other Irish Universities (%)	79.8	85.1	84.9	83.8	83.3
“If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?” (Percentage of students who responded positively [*])					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
NUI Galway (%)	85.1	87.3	88.6	88.6	87.8
Other Irish Universities (%)	85.5	87.9	88.4	87.9	86.8

[^] Percentage of students who responded as good or excellent

^{*} Percentage of students who responded probably or definitely

In terms of the data, the percentage results for all 67 questions are detailed in the **Table 3**

To aid navigation, these questions are grouped under certain **engagement indicators** and the responses for individual questions are combined to create nine related indicator scores. These indicators scores act as “signposts” and are calculated on a scale from 0 to 60 (with the lowest response placed at 0, and the highest placed at 60) and weighted based on cohort and gender.

HO – Higher Order Learning

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9 Indicator Scores (out of max 60)

The following table (Table 2) provides the weighted calculated score (out of 60) for each of the 9 engagement indicators for both National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and the average calculated score for the remaining 6 other Irish Universities. The detailed percentage responses per question are detailed in **Table 3**.

Table 2.

Year	2019		2018		2017	
	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis
Higher Order Learning	38.48 ↓	38.25	38.76	37.9	38.44	38.01
Reflective and Integrative Learning	32.14 ↑	32.47	31.74	32.12	31.38	31.83
Quantitative Reasoning	21.03 ↑	20.77	20.07	20.07	20.29	20.04
Learning Strategies	32.27 ↑	32.12	32.08	31.68	31.77	31.22
Collaborative Learning	29.81 ↑	30.33	29.7	30.26	30.02	29.06
Student-Faculty Interaction	14.12 ↑	12.82	14.03	12.62	13.69	12.31
Effective Teaching Practices	35.28 ↑	34.00	35.25	33.77	35.1	34.1
Quality of Interactions	39.87 ↑	38.59	39.7	38.42	39.42	38.55
Supportive Environment	30.07 ↓	30.31	30.37	30.25	30.24	30.58

Overall NUI Galway improved in all indicators in 2019 aside from a slight drop in Higher Order Learning and Supportive Environment indices. We also perform well compared to the average of the other Irish Universities, scoring higher on all indicators aside from Reflective & Integrative Learning (as in 2017), Collaborative Learning and Supportive Environment.

However our cohort analysis (detailed in Appendix 1) shows that while both our YF and PGT cohort generally score better than other universities in the majority of the indices, our Y1 cohort underperforms other universities in 6 of the 9 indices, particularly in Quantitative Reasoning and Collaborative Learning. The responses to the specific questions, detailed in **Table 3**, show the following strengths and weaknesses

NUIG's relative strengths:

- **Quality of Interactions:** 91% reported positive interactions with other Students, 79% - Academic advisors, 82% - Academic staff, 75% - Support services and 75% - Other administrative staff and offices.
- **Effective Teaching Practices:** 72% reported that lecturers "Often"/ "Very Often" - Clearly explained course goals and requirements, 74% - Taught in an organised way, 75% - Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points. Overall NUI Galway compares favourably to other 6 Unis.

NUIG's areas for improving:

- **First Year Students:** Overall NUI Galway Y1 students perform lower than their peers at other Universities across 6 of the 9 indices, in particular in Quantitative Reasoning and Collaborative Learning. This should be further explored at a college level to determine if there are any specific issues which need to be addressed.
- **Collaborative Learning:** In all the last 3 years, NUI Galway performs lower than the average for other Universities on this Indicator. 41% of NUI Galway's students "Often"/ "Very Often" Asked another student to help you understand course material, 45% - Explained course

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material to one or more students, **46%** - Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students, **52%** - Worked with other students on projects or assignments.

- **Supportive Environment** – NUI Galway score is below other 6 Unis average and lower percentage of students responded positively compared to 2018 and other 6 Unis. **51%** reported “Often”/“Very Often” Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.), **41%** - Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues. This can be explained by the fact that only **57%** - Providing opportunities to be involved socially.
- **Non-Index:** Only **31%** “Often”/“Very Often” Made a presentation in class or online; **43%** - Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities, which are below 6 Other unis average.

Although NUI Galway performed above the other Irish Universities on the following Indicators, there are some results for specific questions within these indicators that could be improved:

- **Student-Faculty Interactions** – only **16%** of students Often/Very Often “Talked about career plans with academic staff” and/or **18%** “Discussed your performance with academic staff”.
- **Learning Strategies** – only slightly more than **50%** of students indicated they Often/Very Often “Reviewed your notes after class” and/or “Summarised what you learned in class or from course materials”.

Table 3 Shows the percentage of student responding positively to questions in each indicator category for NUIG and the average for the 6 Other Unis.

Table 3.

Question	2019	2018	Other Unis 2019	Difference 2019-2018	Difference 2019 NUIG-Other
Higher-Order Learning					
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	72.3	71.1	71.3	1.3	1.0
Analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	67.3	67.9	67.8	-0.6	-0.5
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	67.9	69.1	67.4	-1.1	0.5
Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information	70.8	72.1	70.4	-1.3	0.4
Reflective and Integrative Learning				0.0	0.0
Combined ideas from different subjects / modules when completing assignments	58.2	57.5	58.7	0.7	-0.5
Connected your learning to problems or issues in society	47.7	45.7	48.5	2.0	-0.8
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in discussions or assignments	32.8	33.3	34.6	-0.5	-1.8
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	51.7	49.5	51.0	2.2	0.7
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective	56.5	55.2	55.7	1.2	0.7
Reflective and Integrative Learning					
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept?	64.8	62.2	64.7	2.7	0.1
Connected ideas from your subjects / modules to your prior experiences and knowledge	68.9	67.8	68.7	1.1	0.2
Quantitative Reasoning					

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Reached conclusions based on your analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	35.9	33.5	34.7	2.3	1.1
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	27.0	25.7	27.0	1.3	-0.1
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	24.7	21.5	23.0	3.2	1.7
Learning Strategies					
Identified key information from recommended reading materials	56.4	56.6	56.1	-0.2	0.3
Reviewed your notes after class	52.6	51.6	51.3	1.1	1.3
Summarised what you learned in class or from course materials	50.5	51.2	51.1	-0.7	-0.7
Collaborative Learning					
Asked another student to help you understand course material	41.3	40.0	41.8	1.4	-0.4
Explained course material to one or more students	44.7	44.8	46.2	0.0	-1.4
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	46.2	46.7	45.2	-0.4	1.0
Worked with other students on projects or assignments	52.1	51.7	54.0	0.3	-1.9
Student-Faculty Interaction					
Talked about career plans with academic staff	16.4	16.9	15.1	-0.5	1.4
Worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	12.2	12.4	10.4	-0.1	1.9
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class	19.9	19.7	18.6	0.3	1.3
Discussed your performance with academic staff	17.9	17.0	16.0	0.8	1.8
Effective Teaching Practices					
Clearly explained course goals and requirements	72.2	71.2	69.7	1.1	2.5
Taught in an organised way	74.4	73.6	72.3	0.8	2.0
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	74.9	75.2	74.2	-0.3	0.7
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	44.5	45.3	41.5	-0.8	3.0
Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	44.3	45.5	43.5	-1.1	0.8
Quality of Interactions					
Students	90.8	91.0	91.1	-0.2	-0.3
Academic advisors	79.0	77.0	75.4	1.9	3.6
Academic staff	82.3	81.5	80.4	0.8	2.0
Support services staff (career services, student activities, accommodation, etc.)	74.8	75.3	74.7	-0.4	0.1
Other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance, etc.)	75.1	75.2	73.0	-0.1	2.1
Supportive Environment					
Providing support to help students succeed academically	62.5	62.1	60.6	0.4	1.9
Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)	58.2	59.3	59.9	-1.0	-1.6
Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	44.8	44.3	43.0	0.4	1.8
Providing opportunities to be involved socially	57.0	58.5	58.7	-1.5	-1.7
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)	57.6	57.9	57.1	-0.4	0.5
Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	31.4	29.6	27.8	1.8	3.6
Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)	50.6	52.4	52.0	-1.8	-1.3
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	40.6	42.3	44.2	-1.6	-3.6

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Non-indicator items					
Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online	47.4	48.0	46.8	-0.5	0.6
Come to class without completing readings or assignments*	20.5	21.1	24.5	0.6	4.0
Made a presentation in class or online	31.0	33.4	32.3	-2.4	-1.3
Improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to your employability	63.0	61.7	62.4	1.3	0.6
Explored how to apply your learning in the workplace	44.4	43.0	41.8	1.3	2.6
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	42.8	43.8	45.3	-0.9	-2.5
Blended academic learning with workplace experience	41.7	40.9	38.7	0.8	3.0
Worked on assessments that informed you how well you are learning	39.6	39.0	35.9	0.6	3.7
Memorising course material	47.5	49.2	47.7	-1.7	-0.2
Work with academic staff on a research project	47.4	48.9	45.1	-1.6	2.2
Community service or volunteer work	56.3	54.8	52.7	1.5	3.6
Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	74.6	75.7	73.4	-1.0	1.3
Writing clearly and effectively	59.5	59.4	57.9	0.1	1.6
Speaking clearly and effectively	55.3	56.0	53.3	-0.7	2.0
Thinking critically and analytically	78.1	77.4	77.8	0.7	0.3
Analysing numerical and statistical information	51.8	49.7	48.3	2.0	3.5
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	57.6	57.7	55.6	-0.1	2.1
Working effectively with others	65.8	67.1	66.2	-1.3	-0.4
Solving complex real-world problems	54.3	52.1	51.8	2.1	2.5
Being an informed and active citizen (societal / political / community)	46.5	45.8	46.3	0.7	0.2
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	83.4	84.7	83.3	-1.4	0.1
If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	87.8	88.6	86.8	-0.8	1.0
* Reversed sign as the positive difference has negative meaning					

APPENDIX 1:

	NUI Galway				Other Unis				Difference				NUIG diff 2019- 2018
	Y1	YF	PG	ALL	Y1	YF	PG	ALL	Y1	YF	PG	ALL	
Higher-Order Learning (HO)	35.93	38.63	41.97	38.48	36.58	37.47	42.23	38.25	-0.65	1.16	-0.26	0.23	-0.27
Reflective and Integrative Learning (RI)	29.47	31.92	36.45	32.14	30.32	32.17	37.01	32.47	-0.85	-0.25	-0.56	-0.33	0.40
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	18.20	23.50	22.92	21.03	19.29	21.72	22.50	20.77	-1.09	1.79	0.42	0.26	0.96
Learning Strategies (LS)	30.92	31.69	34.83	32.27	31.30	31.08	34.90	32.12	-0.38	0.61	-0.07	0.15	0.19
Collaborative Learning (CL)	28.14	31.77	30.52	29.81	30.00	31.80	29.23	30.33	-1.86	-0.03	1.29	-0.52	0.11
Student-Faculty Interaction (SF)	10.12	16.44	17.91	14.12	9.62	15.13	16.24	12.82	0.50	1.31	1.67	1.30	0.09
Effective Teaching Practices (ET)	34.39	33.61	38.08	35.28	33.57	31.98	37.16	34.00	0.81	1.63	0.92	1.27	0.03
Quality of Interactions (QI)	38.82	38.50	42.70	39.87	38.10	36.61	41.95	38.59	0.72	1.89	0.75	1.28	0.17
Supportive Environment (SE)	32.07	28.28	28.93	30.07	32.87	27.87	28.41	30.31	-0.80	0.42	0.52	-0.24	-0.30

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