

NUI Galway – Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) Survey 2018 results

From its inception in 2013, NUI Galway has been a champion of ISSE and its potential to drive positive change in Irish higher education. The University 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.

In 2018, over **3,440** students took the survey representing 10,157 student, giving us a response rate of **34%**. This was split **between 2,143 females and 1,297 males** across

- 1,457 First Year students,
- 1,019 Final Year students and
- 964 Postgrad Taught students.

Results: Overall Satisfaction

Table 1 below demonstrates that overall satisfaction amongst NUI Galway students is high, with 88.6% stating they would come to NUI Galway if they had to start over again, and 84.7% rating their educational experience at NUI Galway as good or excellent. Both of these results are 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
NUI Galway (%)	80.2	86.3	84.7	84.7
Other Irish Universities (%)	79.8	85.1	84.9	83.8
“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
NUI Galway (%)	85.1	87.3	88.6	88.6
Other Irish Universities (%)	85.5	87.9	88.4	87.9

[^] 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

RI – Reflective and Integrative Learning

QR – Quantitative Reasoning

LS – Learning Strategies

CL – Collaborative Learning

SF – Student-Faculty Interaction

ET – Effective Teaching Practices

QI – Quality of Interactions

SE – Supportive Environment

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.

	2018		2017		
	stats	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	stats	Mean NUIG
Higher Order Learning	38.76*↑	37.9	Higher Order Learning	38.44*	38.01
Reflective and Integrative Learning	31.74↑	32.12	Reflective and Integrative Learning	31.38	31.83
Quantitative Reasoning	20.07↓	20.07	Quantitative Reasoning	20.29*	20.04
Learning Strategies	32.08↑	31.68	Learning Strategies	31.77	31.22
Collaborative Learning	29.70*↓	30.26	Collaborative Learning	30.02	29.06
Student-Faculty Interaction	14.03*↑	12.62	Student-Faculty Interaction	13.69	12.31
Effective Teaching Practices	35.25*↑	33.77	Effective Teaching Practices	35.1	34.1
Quality of Interactions	39.70*↑	38.42	Quality of Interactions	39.42	38.55
Supportive Environment	30.37↑	30.25	Supportive Environment	30.24*	30.58

Overall NUI Galway improved in all indicators in 2018 aside from Collaborative Learning and Quantitative Reasoning. 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) and Collaborative Learning.

The responses to the specific questions, detailed in **Table 3**, show the following strengths and weaknesses

NUIG's relative strengths:

- **80%** of students rated their **Quality of Interactions** with other Students as Good/Very Good/Excellent (higher than other Unis average).
- **Higher Order learning** – we perform above the average of the 6 other Universities on all 4 questions in this Indicator, with over **71%** of students engaged (Quite a bit/ Very much) in “Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations” and **72%** of students engaged (Quite a bit/ Very much) in “Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information”.
- **Effective Teaching Practices** – **71%** of students indicated that lecturers “Clearly explained course goals and requirements” (Quite a bit/ Very much); **74%** of students indicated that lecturers “Taught in an organised way” (Quite a bit/ Very much) and **75% of students indicated** that lecturers - “Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points” (Quite a bit/ Very much).

NUIG's areas for improving:

- **Collaborative Learning:** In both 2017 and 2018, NUI Galway performs lower than the average for other Universities on this Indicator. Specifically only 45% of students indicated they Often/Very Often “explained course material to one or more students” and only 52% indicated they Often/Very Often “worked with other students on projects or assignments”
- **Reflective and Integrative Learning** – NUI Galway score is lower than the average for the other Irish universities on this indicator. Specifically only **46%** of students indicated they (Often/Very Often) “Connected your learning to problems or issues in society”.

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:

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- **Student-Faculty Interactions** – only **17%** of students Often/Very Often “*Talked about career plans with academic staff*” and/or “*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.

Indicator Categories/Questions	Answers Collated	NUIG	Other 6 Unis
Higher Order Learning		%	%
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	Quite a bit/ Very much	71	68
Analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	Quite a bit/ Very much	68	63
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	Quite a bit/ Very much	69	63
Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information	Quite a bit/ Very much	72	68
Reflective and Integrative Learning			
Combined ideas from different subjects / modules when completing assignments	Often/ Very Often	58	59
Connected your learning to problems or issues in society	Often/ Very Often	46	47
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in discussions or assignments		33	34
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	Often/ Very Often	49	50
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective	Often/ Very Often	55	55
Connected ideas from your subjects / modules to your prior experiences and knowledge	Often/ Very Often	68	68
Quantitative Reasoning			
Reached conclusions based on your analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	Often/ Very Often	34	33
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	Often/ Very Often	26	24
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	Often/ Very Often	21	20
Learning Strategies			
Identified key information from recommended reading materials	Often/ Very Often	57	50
Reviewed your notes after class	Often/ Very Often	52	50
Summarised what you learned in class or from course materials	Often/ Very Often	51	48
Collaborative Learning			
Asked another student to help you understand course material	Often/ Very Often	40	41
Explained course material to one or more students	Often/ Very Often	45	47
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	Often/ Very Often	47	46
Worked with other students on projects or assignments	Often/ Very Often	52	54
Student-Faculty Interaction			
Talked about career plans with academic staff	Often/ Very Often	17	15
Worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	Often/ Very Often	12	10
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class	Often/ Very Often	20	18
Discussed your performance with academic staff		17	16
Effective Teaching Practices			
Clearly explained course goals and requirements	Quite a bit/ Very much	71	70
Taught in an organised way	Quite a bit/ Very much	74	71
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	Quite a bit/ Very much	75	74
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	Quite a bit/ Very much	45	41
Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	Quite a bit/ Very much	45	42
Quality of Interactions			
Students	Good/Excellent	80	79
Academic advisors	Good/Excellent	60	56
Academic staff	Good/Excellent	66	62
Support services staff (career services, student activities, accommodation, etc.)	Good/Excellent	58	57
Other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance, etc.)	Good/Excellent	57	55
Supportive Environment			
Providing support to help students succeed academically	Quite a bit/ Very much	62	60
Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)	Quite a bit/ Very much	59	59
Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	Quite a bit/ Very much	44	43
Providing opportunities to be involved socially	Quite a bit/ Very much	59	59
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)	Quite a bit/ Very much	58	57
Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	Quite a bit/ Very much	30	27
Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)	Quite a bit/ Very much	52	53
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	Quite a bit/ Very much	42	45

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