

NUI Galway – StudentSurvey.ie¹ 2021 results

NUI Galway undertakes the StudentSurvey.ie 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 StudentSurvey.ie 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 StudentSurvey.ie data to enhance the experiences of our students.

3,415 of NUI Galway students responded to StudentSurvey.ie (formerly known as ISSE) survey in 2021. This number yields a response rate of 30.7% (38.3% in 2020 or 26% Other Unis in 2021 (28.8% Other Unis in 2020)).

Of these 1,689 were First Year students (Y1), 922 were Final Year students (YF) and 804 were Postgraduate Taught students (PGT) (response rate 39%, 28%, 22 respectively).

Results: Overall Satisfaction

Table 1 below demonstrates that overall satisfaction amongst NUI Galway students is not as high as expected, with 81.4% (87% in 2020, 86% Other Unis 2021) stating they would come to NUI Galway if they had to start over again, and 65.7% (82.1% in 2020, 69.3% Other Unis 2021) rating their educational experience at NUI Galway as good or excellent. Both of these results are down on the prior year, and below the other 6 Universities for the first time since 2015.

Table 1.

“How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?”							
(Percentage of students who responded positively [^])							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
NUI Galway (%)	80.2	86.3	84.7	84.7	83.4	82.1	65.7
Other Irish Unis (%)	79.8	85.1	84.9	83.8	83.3	81.8	69.3
“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	2020	2021
NUI Galway (%)	85.1	87.3	88.6	88.6	87.8	87.0	81.4
Other Irish Unis (%)	85.5	87.9	88.4	87.9	86.8	86.5	86.0

[^] 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.

¹ StudentSurvey.ie was formerly known as the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

HO – Higher Order Learning

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StudentSurvey.ie 2021 included five COVID related questions (see table below for percentage of students responding Somewhat or Definitely AGREE):

- 74% of NUIG students vs (78.4% of Other Unis) agreed that they received timely and effective communications.
- 72% of NUIG students vs (74.5% of Other Unis) agreed that they “a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc)”
- 37% of NUIG students vs (39.1% of Other Unis) felt connected despite the restricted access to campus.
- YF students felt worse affected than the other two cohorts in both NUIG and Other Unis. Note that YF cohort had the lower proportion of students that indicated that they had “a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc)” than other cohorts, 6% less NUIG students that Other Unis average (62.8% and 68.6% respectively) agreed with this statement.

	NUI Galway 2021				StudentSurvey.ie Universities				Difference			
	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All
My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication.	77.6	64.0	77.4	73.9	81.7	70.3	80.3	78.4	-4.2	-6.3	-2.9	-4.5
My higher education institution provides me with adequate online learning opportunities.	83.9	74.2	84.0	81.3	85.1	76.7	83.8	82.6	-1.1	-2.5	0.2	-1.2
I am able to access the online learning sufficiently to engage with my studies.	87.0	80.1	86.4	85.0	87.0	82.0	86.0	85.5	0.0	-1.9	0.4	-0.4
I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc).	76.7	62.8	71.4	71.7	78.3	68.6	73.6	74.5	-1.6	-5.8	-2.2	-2.8
I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.	37.4	30.5	44.8	37.3	36.7	35.0	47.5	39.1	0.7	-4.5	-2.7	-1.9

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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	2021		2020		2019		2018		2017	
	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis
Higher-Order Learning	35.20	35.84	37.29	37.81	38.48	38.25	38.76	37.9	38.44	38.01
Reflective and Integrative Learning	30.23	30.94	31.86	32.88	32.14	32.47	31.74	32.12	31.38	31.83
Quantitative Reasoning	19.3*	19.34	21.55	21.57	21.03	20.77	20.07	20.07	20.29	20.04
Learning Strategies	31.4*	31.55	32.26	32.66	32.27	32.12	32.08	31.68	31.77	31.22
Collaborative Learning	23.99*	24.16	30.26	30.53	29.81	30.33	29.70	30.26	30.02	29.06
Student-Faculty Interaction	9.48	8.89	13.50	12.39	14.12	12.82	14.03	12.62	13.69	12.31
Effective Teaching Practices	30.16	31.29	34.64	34.46	35.28	34	35.25	33.77	35.10	34.1
Quality of Interactions	27.73	28.85	38.14	38.09	39.87	38.59	39.70	38.42	39.42	38.55
Supportive Environment	22.47	23.79	28.45	29.19	30.07	30.31	30.37	30.25	30.24	30.58

Note: The colour coding highlights comparison with ‘Mean Other Unis’, and shows that NUI Galway is below the average score of the other Irish Universities in 8 out of 9 indices in 2021 (*orange colour – statistically INSIGNIFICANT difference), scoring higher on Student-Faculty Interactions. This compares to 2020 when we were below in only 6 of the 9 Indices (3/9 in 2019).

However our cohort analysis (detailed in Appendix 1) shows that the differences were mostly in Y1 and YF cohorts while PG cohort indices exceeded Other unis in almost all but one – Quality of Interactions – indices.

COVID pandemic although called “great equaliser” have proven to have the most detrimental effect on less affluent member of society. Considering the fact that NUIG’s students come in higher proportions than other unis from these less affluent backgrounds, it is unsurprising that these students were negatively affected to a higher degree.

- While 6/9 indices were below national averages for Y1 and YF cohorts, PGT cohort had only 3/9 below.
- Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment are below the national benchmark for all three cohorts – Y1, YF and PG. Appendices 2 and 3 provide more details on Supportive Environment Indicator. Specifically, if in 2020 over 60% of NUI Galway students stated their university “Providing support to help students succeed academically”, less than 50% indicated the same in 2021.

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

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.

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Table 3.

Question	2021	2020	Other Unis 2021	Difference 2021-2020	Difference 2021 NUIG-Other
Higher-Order Learning					
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	64%	71%	64%	-7%	0%
Analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	59%	66%	60%	-7%	-1%
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	61%	63%	61%	-2%	0%
Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information	66%	69%	68%	-3%	-2%
Reflective and Integrative Learning					
Combined ideas from different subjects / modules when completing assignments	55%	57%	54%	-2%	1%
Connected your learning to problems or issues in society	44%	49%	47%	-5%	-3%
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in discussions or assignments	31%	31%	32%	0%	-1%
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	46%	51%	48%	-5%	-2%
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective	55%	58%	53%	-3%	2%
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept?	59%	63%	60%	-4%	-1%
Connected ideas from your subjects / modules to your prior experiences and knowledge	63%	68%	65%	-5%	-2%
Quantitative Reasoning					
Reached conclusions based on your analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	33%	36%	33%	-3%	0%
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	33%	29%	26%	4%	7%
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	20%	23%	20%	-3%	0%
Learning Strategies					
Identified key information from recommended reading materials	53%	55%	55%	-2%	-2%
Reviewed your notes after class	54%	52%	54%	2%	0%
Summarised what you learned in class or from course materials	46%	54%	46%	-8%	0%
Collaborative Learning					
Asked another student to help you understand course material	35%	43%	34%	-8%	1%
Explained course material to one or more students	36%	46%	35%	-10%	1%
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	30%	47%	29%	-17%	1%
Worked with other students on projects or assignments	40%	53%	44%	-13%	-4%

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Student-Faculty Interaction					
Talked about career plans with academic staff	10%	17%	9%	-7%	1%
Worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	8%	11%	7%	-3%	1%
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class	13%	20%	12%	-7%	1%
Discussed your performance with academic staff	11%	16%	10%	-5%	1%
Effective Teaching Practices					
Clearly explained course goals and requirements	64%	73%	66%	-9%	-2%
Taught in an organised way	67%	74%	69%	-7%	-2%
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	65%	77%	66%	-12%	-1%
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	27%	41%	27%	-14%	0%
Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	32%	42%	36%	-10%	-4%
Quality of Interactions					
Students	62%	92%	64%	-29%	-2%
Academic advisors	52%	75%	53%	-23%	-1%
Academic staff	64%	79%	66%	-16%	-3%
Support services staff (career services, student activities, accommodation, etc.)	49%	72%	52%	-23%	-3%
Other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance, etc.)	50%	72%	53%	-22%	-3%
Supportive Environment					
Providing support to help students succeed academically	49%	58%	52%	-9%	-3%
Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)	49%	56%	51%	-7%	-2%
Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	26%	41%	30%	-15%	-4%
Providing opportunities to be involved socially	35%	55%	36%	-20%	-1%
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)	43%	51%	44%	-8%	-1%
Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	17%	26%	18%	-9%	-1%
Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)	28%	47%	29%	-19%	-1%
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	26%	37%	30%	-11%	-4%
Non-indicator items					
Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online	43%	44%	46%	-1%	-3%
Come to class without completing readings or assignments*	27%	21%	25%	-6%	-2%
Made a presentation in class or online	28%	33%	29%	-5%	-1%
Improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to your employability	56%	62%	55%	-6%	1%
Explored how to apply your learning in the workplace	36%	44%	35%	-8%	1%
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	49%	44%	44%	5%	5%

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Blended academic learning with workplace experience	29%	39%	27%	-10%	2%
Worked on assessments that informed you how well you are learning	40%	40%	38%	0%	2%
Memorising course material	40%	52%	39%	-12%	1%
Work with academic staff on a research project	44%	49%	40%	-5%	4%
Community service or volunteer work	49%	56%	45%	-7%	4%
Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	62%	74%	64%	-12%	-2%
Writing clearly and effectively	55%	58%	59%	-3%	-4%
Speaking clearly and effectively	44%	53%	47%	-9%	-3%
Thinking critically and analytically	70%	78%	74%	-8%	-4%
Analysing numerical and statistical information	47%	52%	45%	-5%	2%
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	50%	57%	52%	-7%	-2%
Working effectively with others	53%	66%	55%	-13%	-2%
Solving complex real-world problems	48%	54%	50%	-6%	-2%
Being an informed and active citizen (societal / political / community)	38%	46%	41%	-8%	-3%
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	66%	82%	69%	-16%	-3%
If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	81%	87%	86%	-6%	-5%
No, I have not seriously considered withdrawing	53%	65%	N/A	-12%	-
Yes, for financial reasons (considered withdrawing)	8%	12%	N/A	-4%	-
Yes, for personal or family reasons(considered withdrawing)	10%	13%	N/A	-3%	-
Yes, for health reasons(considered withdrawing)	6%	6%	N/A	0%	-
Yes, for employment reasons(considered withdrawing)	5%	5%	N/A	0%	-
Yes, to transfer to another institution(considered withdrawing)	8%	6%	N/A	2%	-
COVID questions					
My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely co	74%	N/A	78%	-	-4%
My higher education institution provides me with adequate online learning opport	81%	N/A	83%	-	-2%
I am able to access the online learning sufficiently to engage with my studies.	85%	N/A	85%	-	0%
I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, com	72%	N/A	75%	-	-3%
I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted acces	37%	N/A	39%	-	-2%
* Reversed sign as the positive difference has negative meaning					

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APPENDIX 1:

2021	NUI Galway				Other Unis				Difference				NUIG diff 2020-2019	Other Unis 2020-2019
	Y1	YF	PG	ALL	Y1	YF	PG	ALL	Y1	YF	PG	ALL		
Higher-Order Learning	33.39	34.66	39.46	35.20	34.32	35.42	38.79	35.84	-0.93	-0.75	0.67	-0.64	-2.09	-1.97
Reflective and Integrative Learning	28.21	29.85	34.88	30.23	28.76	31.14	34.52	30.94	-0.55	-1.29	0.35	-0.71	-1.63	-1.94
Quantitative Reasoning	16.92	20.95	22.11	19.27	17.77	20.19	21.25	19.34	-0.85	0.76	0.86	-0.07	-2.28	-2.23
Learning Strategies	30.34	30.72	34.32	31.40	30.34	30.95	34.19	31.55	0.00	-0.23	0.13	-0.15	-0.86	-1.11
Collaborative Learning	22.10	26.62	24.86	23.99	21.97	27.68	24.68	24.16	0.14	-1.05	0.18	-0.18	-6.27	-6.37
Student-Faculty Interaction	6.00	11.65	14.09	9.48	6.04	10.74	12.07	8.89	-0.04	0.91	2.01	0.59	-4.02	-3.50
Effective Teaching Practices	29.88	27.40	33.82	30.16	30.85	28.71	34.40	31.29	-0.97	-1.31	-0.58	-1.13	-4.48	-3.17
Quality of Interactions	26.36	28.13	29.95	27.73	27.31	29.10	31.20	28.85	-0.95	-0.96	-1.25	-1.12	-10.41	-9.24
Supportive Environment	23.01	21.42	22.58	22.47	24.35	23.53	23.10	23.79	-1.33	-2.11	-0.51	-1.32	-5.98	-5.40

APPENDIX 2

2021 results		NUI Galway 2021	StudentSurvey.ie Universities
Question	Responses	All Students	All Students
Providing support to help students succeed academically		49.4	52.4
Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)		49.1	51.3
Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)		25.7	30.4
Providing opportunities to be involved socially		34.9	35.8
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)		53.9	54.6
Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)		16.6	17.8
Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)		27.6	28.7
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues		26.5	29.5

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APPENDIX 3

	NUI Galway 2021				NUI Galway 2020				StudentSurvey.ie Universities							
	All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Yr	Postgraduate	All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Yr	Postgraduate	All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Yr	Postgraduate	All Students	Undergraduate - Year 1	Undergraduate - Final Yr	Postgraduate
Providing support to help students succeed academically	49	53	41	52	58	61	51	62	55	60	49	54	-6	-7	-9	-1
Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)	49	53	45	46	56	62	48	55	51	56	49	45	-2	-3	-4	1
Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	26	25	24	29	41	41	36	48	32	34	30	32	-6	-9	-6	-2
Providing opportunities to be involved socially	35	36	36	32	55	59	51	50	36	37	38	32	-1	-1	-3	0
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)	43	47	37	44	51	54	48	49	44	47	42	42	-1	-1	-5	1
Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	17	16	13	21	26	26	22	31	18	18	16	20	-1	-2	-2	1
Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)	28	27	29	28	47	48	45	48	29	26	34	28	-1	0	-5	0
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	26	25	26	30	37	37	33	41	30	29	29	31	-3	-3	-4	-2

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