

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, pronounced “nessie”) collects information from first-year and senior students about the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate experience. Since the inception of the survey, nearly 1,700 bachelor’s-granting colleges and universities in the United States and Canada have used it to measure the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices that are empirically linked with learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, and graduation.

NSSE data are used by faculty, administrators, researchers, and others for institutional improvement, public reporting, and related purposes. Launched in 2000 with the support of a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, NSSE has been fully sustained through institutional participation fees since 2002. This document provides an overview of NSSE 2024, including administration details, response rates, participating institutions, and respondent characteristics.

NSSE changes in 2024 include modified end-of-survey open-text prompts, and additional updates to Greek-letter participation (made more inclusive of both social and service organizations in 2023) and gender identity items (which included new response options and were updated to a “select all that apply” format in 2023). We also substantially updated the Inclusiveness & Engagement With Cultural Diversity, Civic Engagement, Senior Transition, HIP Quality, and Information Literacy modules.

For more information and a complete list of changes by survey year, [visit our website](#).

Survey Data and Methodology

Approximately 1 million first-year and senior students from 373 institutions (362 in the US, 5 in Canada, and 6 in other countries) were invited to participate in NSSE 2024. Of this population, 187,229 students responded to the survey. First-year and senior students were about equally represented among the respondent population.

NSSE’s sampling methodology calls for either a census of all first-year and senior students or a random selection of an equal number of students from each group, with sample sizes based on total undergraduate enrollment. Census recruitment is available via email, in which students get a survey invitation and up to four reminders.

Unless noted otherwise, the results presented below are from 349 institutions—344 in the US and 5 in Canada—that participated in NSSE 2024. Due to nonstandard details of their participation, 24 institutions are not represented. In these summary tables, and in the *Institutional Report 2024*, only



Fort Lewis College

data for census-administered and randomly sampled students are included. NSSE 2024 U.S. respondents profiled here include 89,335 first-year (50%) and 89,254 senior (50%) respondents.

Lesson Learned, Problem Solved

As reported in last year’s Overview, some participating NSSE institutions experienced an unexpected disruption in recruitment email delivery. The root cause turned out to be the quarantining of an Indiana University server by an overly zealous email security organization. Fortunately, due to various steps taken in preparation for NSSE 2024, institutions did not experience any email delivery interruptions again. To achieve this, NSSE increased the number of email delivery servers from two to four, partnered with an email delivery expert, MXtoolbox, to monitor blocklists, and gradually increased email delivery volume to avoid triggering security systems. Additional steps to maximize response rates involved refining an early warning dashboard system to quickly detect delivery issues as well as allowing schools to send recruitment emails and text messages on their own.

Table 1
Profile of NSSE 2024 U.S. Institutions and Respondents and Bachelor's-Granting U.S. Institutions and Their Students

Institution Characteristics	Institutions (%)		Students (%)	
	NSSE	U.S.	NSSE	U.S.
Carnegie Basic Classification				
Doctoral Universities (Very high research activity)	9	9	24	35
Doctoral Universities (High research activity)	11	8	22	17
Doctoral/Professional Universities	13	11	11	11
Master's Colleges and Universities (Larger programs)	23	20	27	23
Master's Colleges and Universities (Medium programs)	11	11	4	5
Master's Colleges and Universities (Smaller programs)	9	9	3	3
Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences Focus	13	13	4	3
Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields	12	18	4	5
Control				
Public	43	34	61	66
Private	57	66	39	34
Undergraduate Enrollment				
Fewer than 1,000	7	26	2	3
1,000–2,499	34	31	12	10
2,500–4,999	23	16	13	10
5,000–9,999	14	13	15	18
10,000–19,999	13	7	21	20
20,000 or more	9	6	38	40
Region				
New England	7	8	5	7
Mid East	14	17	9	15
Great Lakes	16	15	13	13
Plains	9	10	6	7
Southeast	28	26	24	25
Southwest	10	8	16	12
Rocky Mountains	4	3	12	6
Far West	10	11	14	13
Outlying Areas	1	2	<1	1
Locale				
City	52	48	66	63
Suburban	21	25	22	23
Town	23	22	11	13
Rural	4	5	1	1

Notes: Percentages are unweighted and based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award baccalaureate degrees and belong to one of the eight Carnegie classifications in the table. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. U.S. percentages are based on the 2022 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics data. For information on the Basic Carnegie Classification, see carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu.

Large national survey providers face an increasingly challenging email delivery landscape as email service providers like Microsoft and Google continually improve their security systems to prevent spam and malicious activity. NSSE will continue to closely monitor these shifts in order to maximize student response.

U.S. Participating Institutions

NSSE 2024 participating institutions and students reflect the diversity of bachelor's-granting colleges and universities in the US with respect to institution type, public or private control, size, region, and locale (Table 1). A searchable list of participating institutions is [on the NSSE website](#).

Institutional Response Rates

The average response rate for U.S. NSSE 2024 institutions was 23%, a three-point decline from last year. The highest response rate among U.S. institutions was 81%, and about 35% of institutions achieved a response rate of 25% or higher. Higher average response rates were observed for small-size institutions and at institutions that offered incentives for survey participation (Table 2).

Sixty-two-percent of institutions chose to offer a survey incentive. On average, these institutions had a 26% institutional response rate, eight percentage points higher than those who did not offer an incentive. Institutions also had the option to use their learning management system or student portal to recruit students. In 2024, 99 U.S. institutions chose this option, and the average share of respondents who accessed the survey this way was 38%.

Table 2
NSSE 2024 U.S. Participation and Response Rates by Undergraduate Enrollment and Use of Incentives

Institution Characteristics	Number of Institutions	Average Institutional Response Rate (%)
Undergraduate Enrollment		
2,500 or fewer	148	28
2,501 to 4,999	80	22
5,000 to 9,999	47	20
10,000 or more	69	16
Use of Incentives		
Some institutions used recruitment incentives, such as small gifts or raffles, to encourage students to complete the survey.		
Offered incentives	219	26
No incentives	125	18
All Institutions	344	23

Survey Customization

Participating institutions may append up to two additional question sets in the form of NSSE Topical Modules or consortium questions (for institutions sharing a common interest and participating as a NSSE consortium) (Table 3). Of the eleven modules available in 2024, the most widely adopted was Academic Advising (Table 4).

U.S. Respondent Profile

Table 5 displays selected demographic and enrollment characteristics of NSSE 2024 U.S. respondents alongside all U.S. bachelor's degree-seeking students for comparison using IPEDS-defined institutional and student characteristics. NSSE reports use weights as appropriate to correct for disproportionate survey response related to institution-reported sex and enrollment status at each institution. Note that in 2023, NSSE included new and updated questions pertaining to student identities. These expanded items are presented and available in institution data files and reports.

Student Characteristics	NSSE Respondents (%)	U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Population (%)
Sex		
Male	33	44
Female	66	56
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/Black	10	12
American Indian/Alaska Native	<1	<1
Asian	7	8
Native Hawaiian/other Pac. Isl.	<1	<1
Caucasian/White	55	52
Hispanic/Latino/Latine	19	19
Multiracial/multiethnic	5	4
Foreign/nonresident	4	4
Enrollment Status		
Full-time	89	83
Not full-time	11	17

Note: Percentages are unweighted and may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Institution-reported, using categories provided in IPEDS. NSSE percentages do not include students with "another" or "unknown" sex (1% of all respondents) or unknown race/ethnicity (6.1% of all respondents). The NSSE 2024 sampling frame consists of first-year and senior undergraduates. Data were provided by participating institutions. U.S. percentages are based on data from the 2022 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics and Enrollment data. Includes all class years.

Canadian Respondent Profile

Canadian respondents profiled here include 2,704 students (67% first-year, 33% senior) from 5 institutions in 4 provinces, including 2 institutions in Ontario and 1 each in Alberta, British Columbia, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Female students and full-time students accounted for about 63% and 90% of Canadian respondents, respectively. The average response rate for Canadian NSSE 2024 institutions was 26%, with the highest response rate being 33%. 3 institutions achieved a response rate of 28% or higher. About 21% of Canadian respondents were at least 24 years old. A plurality of students providing ethnocultural information identified as Caucasian or White (53%), while 9% were South Asian, 10% multiracial, 7% Black, 5% Chinese, and less than 4% from each of nine other categories.

Selection of Additional Question Sets	Number of Institutions	Percentage of Institutions
None	40	11
One module only	111	30
Two modules	187	50
Consortium items only	7	2
Consortium items plus one module	28	8

Notes: Includes U.S., Canadian, other international institutions, and institutions with nonstandard population files or administrations. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Topical Module	Number of Institutions	Percentage of Institutions
Academic Advising	113	30
Career & Workforce Preparation	92	25
First-Year Experiences & Senior Transitions	71	19
Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity	62	17
Mental Health & Well-Being	59	16
Development of Transferable Skills	29	8
Experiences with Online Learning	28	8
HIP Quality	27	7
Civic Engagement	13	3
Experiences with Information Literacy	11	3
Experiences with Writing	8	2

Notes: Includes U.S., Canadian, other international institutions, and institutions with nonstandard population files or administrations. Percentages sum to more than 100 because many institutions selected two modules.

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