



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

# Irish Survey of Student Engagement Report 2020 / 21

---

Quality Office

*9th November 2021*

# Table of Contents

1.	Introduction .....	2
1.1	The StudentSurvey.ie Structure .....	2
1.2	Participation in StudentSurvey.ie .....	3
2.	Executive Summary .....	6
2.1	STUDENTSURVEY.IE QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 EXPERIENCE .....	6
2.2	Students' Overall Online Experience in Trinity .....	7
3.	The Impact of COVID-19 .....	9
3.1	Across Trinity .....	10
3.2	Across Years of Study .....	10
3.3	Across Faculties .....	11
3.4	Qualitative Comments on COVID 19 Learning Experience (Page 12 in Table of Contents) .....	12
4.	Indicator Scores Across Trinity .....	18
4.1	Indicator Scores: Trinity versus Irish Universities .....	18
4.2	Indicator Scores: Years of Study .....	19
4.3	Indicator Scores: Across Faculties .....	20
4.4	Collaborative Learning .....	20
4.5	Effectiveness of Teaching Practices during COVID-19 .....	22
4.6	Supportive Environment During COVID-19 .....	26
	Appendix 1: StudentSurvey.ie Survey Instrument .....	29

# 1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the National StudentSurvey.ie fieldwork conducted in March 2021. The participation groups involved in the survey are First Year (YR1), Final Year (YRF) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) respondents. The survey, formerly known as the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE), was rebranded in 2018/19 as the National StudentSurvey.ie and has been running since 2012/13. The survey focuses on the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally beneficial activities, as well as how institutions deploy resources and organise curriculum and learning opportunities to encourage students to participate in meaningful activities linked to learning. The survey is run in partnership between the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

New to the established survey instruments in 2020/21 are five COVID-19 multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions. The five additional COVID-19 questions were piloted with 64 students across six participating HEIs, and their feedback informed the determination of the final questions added to the survey.

How much do you agree with the following statements about the impact COVID-19 has had on your experience (*Definitely agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Definitely disagree*)?

1. My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication;
2. My higher education institution provides me with adequate online learning opportunities;
3. I am able to access the online learning sufficiently to engage with my studies;
4. I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc.);
5. I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.

## Open Questions

- a) What are the positive elements of the online/ blended learning experience you want to keep when on-campus studies resume?
- b) In what way(s) could your higher education institution improve its support for you during the current circumstances?

## 1.1 The StudentSurvey.ie Structure

The survey instrument is comprised of nine indicators (outlined below), twenty-two non-indicator questions and two open comments' questions (Appendix 1):

1. Higher Order Learning (HOL);
2. Reflective and Integrative Learning (RIL);
3. Quantitative Reasoning (QR);
4. Learning Strategies (LS);
5. Collaborative Learning (CL);
6. Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI);
7. Effective Teaching Practices (ETP);
8. Quality of Interactions (QI);
9. Supportive Environment (SE).

## Interpreting Indicator Scores

Indicator scores are indicators of relative performance and are not percentages. Each Indicator is scored out of a **60-point scale**. Indicator scores are calculated for an individual student when they provide responses to all, or almost all, contributing questions. The exact number of responses required varies according to the indicator. All responses are required for Higher Order Learning (HOL), Quantitative Reasoning (QR), Learning Strategies (LS), Collaborative Learning (CL) and Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI). All but one response is required for Reflective and Integrative Learning (RIL), Effective Teaching Practices (ETP), Quality of Interactions (QI), and Supportive Environment (SE). The indicator score is calculated from the mean of (non-blank) responses given. Indicator scores for student cohorts among first years, for example, are calculated as the mean of individual indicator scores.

Indicator scores are weighted according to the population characteristics. Weighting is applied to all data other than demographic data. Indicator scores provide the greatest benefit when used as signposts to explore the experiences of different groups of respondents – internally within Trinity across the cohorts YR1, YRF, and PGT, across faculties or externally across all Irish Universities. Percentage scores are provided for the twenty-two Non-Indicator questions.

Those readers who are interested in the reliability of the Survey are referred to the following 2016 Report [Reliability- of-the-Irish-Survey-of-Student-Engagement-2016.pdf](#).

### 1.2 Participation in StudentSurvey.ie

Dates for the Trinity fieldwork took place from the 8<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> February 2021, this is the second administration of the survey under COVID-19 conditions. The Trinity response rate for 2020/21 was 33% (3,106) compared with 34% (3,156) in 2019/20.

*Table1: Trinity's participation in the StudentSurvey.ie at sectoral level (Irish Universities) 2020/21*

University Response Rates	2021	2020	2019
Trinity College Dublin	33%	34%	22%
University College Dublin	32%	34%	23%
National University of Ireland Galway	31%	38%	37%
Dublin City University	25%	28%	33%
Maynooth University	22%	25%	21%
University College Cork	20%	22%	18%
University of Limerick	17%	18%	22%

Fig 1. below provides further detail of Trinity’s participation by cohort in the National StudentSurvey.ie between 2015-2021. The participation rate in 2020/21 (33%) is consistent with 2019/20 (34%) and shows a slight decline of 1-3% across the years of study (2020/21: YR1, 1%↓,YRF, 3%↓ and PGT, 2%↓) when compared with 2019/20.

Figure. 1: Trinity’s participation in StudentSurvey.ie – population trend analysis 2015-2021 by years of study

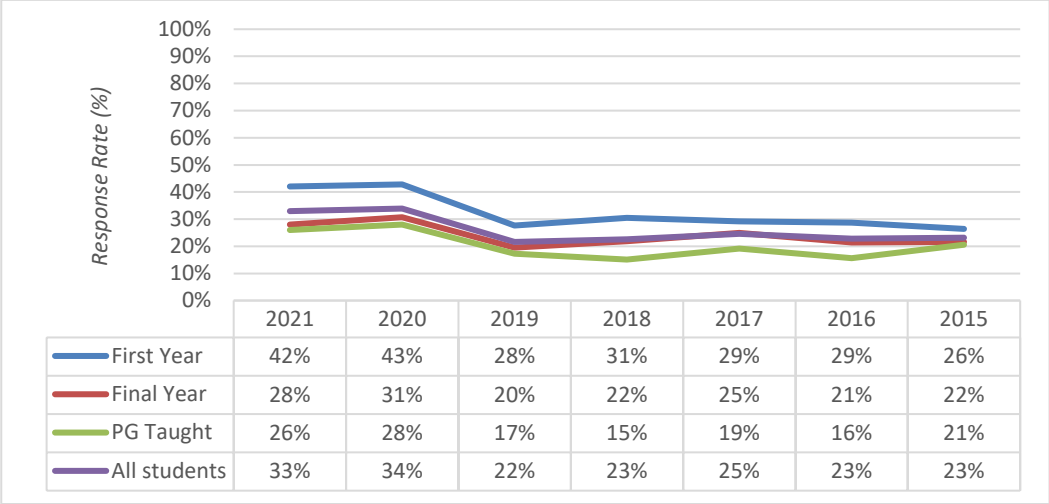


Fig. 2 below details the continuing growth in the profile of non-Irish respondents (766, 25%) in the 2021 survey due to the impact of Trinity’s *Global Relations Strategy 3*. The reader is reminded that the data overleaf refers only to the cohorts of respondents who participated in the StudentSurvey.ie (YR1, YRF and PGT and not all international respondents in College).

Figure. 2: Participation Irish vs Non-Irish cohort trend analysis

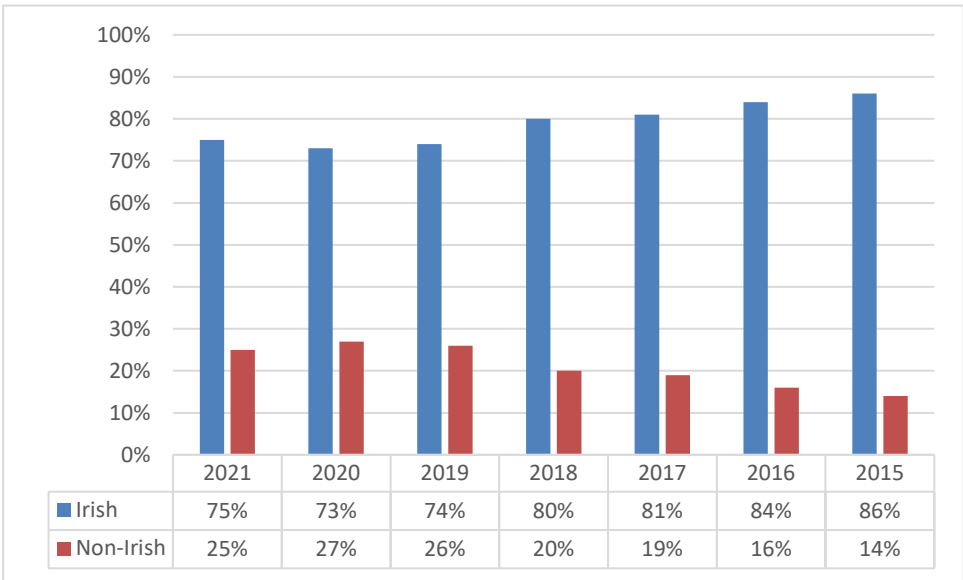


Table 2: Demographic Profile of Participants involved in the StudentSurvey.ie 2019/20 and 2020/21

	Trinity College Dublin 2021				Trinity College Dublin 2020			
	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All students	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All students
<b>Population</b>								
Survey Population	3,599	2,543	3,373	9,515	3,217	2,627	3,476	9,320
Respondents	1,519	718	869	3,106	1,376	806	974	3,156
Response Rate	42.2	28.2	25.8	32.6	42.8	30.7	28.0	33.9
<b>Age (Number)</b>								
23 years and under	1,417	534	139	2,090	1,271	595	163	2,029
24 years and over	102	184	730	1,016	105	211	811	1,127
<b>Age (%)</b>								
23 years and under	93.3	74.4	16.0	67.3	92.4	73.8	16.7	64.3
24 years and over	6.7	25.6	84.0	32.7	7.6	26.2	83.3	35.7
<b>Sex (Number)</b>								
Male	488	216	304	1,008	453	259	337	1,049
Female	1,025	502	565	2,092	923	547	637	2,107
<b>Sex (%)</b>								
Male	32.3	30.1	35.0	32.5	32.9	32.1	34.6	33.2
Female	67.7	69.9	65.0	67.5	67.1	67.9	65.4	66.8
<b>Domicile (Number)</b>								
Irish	1,341	615	384	2,340	1,197	716	386	2,299
Non-Irish	178	103	485	766	179	90	588	857
<b>Domicile (%)</b>								
Irish	88.3	85.7	44.2	75.3	87.0	88.8	39.6	72.8
Non-Irish	11.7	14.3	55.8	24.7	13.0	11.2	60.4	27.2
<b>Mode of Study (Number)</b>								
Full-time	1,503	718	704	2,925	1,372	806	732	2,910
Part-time/Remote	16	0	165	181	4	0	242	246
<b>Mode of Study (%)</b>								
Full-time	98.9	100.0	81.0	94.2	99.7	100.0	75.2	92.2
Part-time/Remote	1.1	0.0	19.0	5.8	0.3	0.0	24.8	7.8
<b>Programme Type (%)</b>								
Undergraduate Certificate/Diploma	1.4	0.7	0.0	0.8	1.4	1.2	0.0	0.9
Undergraduate Ordinary Degree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.3
Undergraduate Honours Degree	98.6	99.3	0.0	71.2	98.2	98.1	0.0	67.9
Graduate Certificate/Diploma	0.0	0.0	7.6	2.1	0.0	0.0	11.2	3.5
Masters Taught	0.0	0.0	92.4	25.9	0.0	0.0	88.8	27.4

## 2. Executive Summary

This report provides the detail of responses to the National Student Survey.ie 20/21 including on the indicators for student engagement and outcomes from a variety of perspectives, including by Trinity overall, by year/cohort, and by faculty. 2020/21 is the first full academic year to experience higher education under COVID-19 conditions. The consideration of the experiences of undergraduate and postgraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic offers the opportunity to learn from the unique circumstances that prevailed. The impact of COVID-19 modifications on teaching, learning and assessment in Trinity could be used to inform aspects of the online/blended experience and the retention of arrangements introduced to mitigate the impact on the overall student experience.

### 2.1 STUDENTSURVEY.IE QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

It has been an extraordinarily challenging academic year, and exceptional efforts on the part of all staff and students to support the transition to online can be seen from the results of the five additional COVID-19 multiple-choice and two open-ended questions: (refer to Section 3 for more details).

- i. **85%** of respondents somewhat/ definitely agree that they had access to sufficient online learning.
- ii. **84%** of respondents somewhat/ definitely agree that they had adequate online learning opportunities.
- iii. **77%** of respondents somewhat/ definitely agree they felt supported in terms of ongoing effective and timely communication.
- iv. **76%** of respondents indicated that they had a suitable study environment at home.

Of note is that:

- i. More than 70% of first year undergraduate respondents reported that they were supported by Trinity in terms of ongoing effective and timely communication, provision of online opportunities and ease of access to learning online throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ii. Across cohorts, **final year undergraduate respondents had the lowest level of agreement with the Covid questions.**
- iii. At Faculty level, **Health Science respondents reported a more positive experience than AHSS and STEM** respondents in terms of:
  - a. ongoing effective and timely communication (AHSS 75%, STEM 77%, HS 79%);
  - b. the provision of adequate online learning opportunities (AHSS 80%, STEM 83%, HS 88%);
  - c. sufficient access to online learning to engage with their studies (AHSS 84%, STEM 86%, HS 88%).

Also, of note in the final question, regarding how connected respondents felt to Trinity despite the restricted access to campus, approximately two-thirds of respondents 'definitely' or 'somewhat' disagreed with the question (TCD 66%; YR1 69%; YRF 69%; PGT 60%). The postgraduate taught respondents reported the strongest connection to College (40% somewhat/ definitely agree), while the first and final year undergraduates recorded a lower sense of connection (YR1 31%, YRF 31% somewhat/ definitely agree).

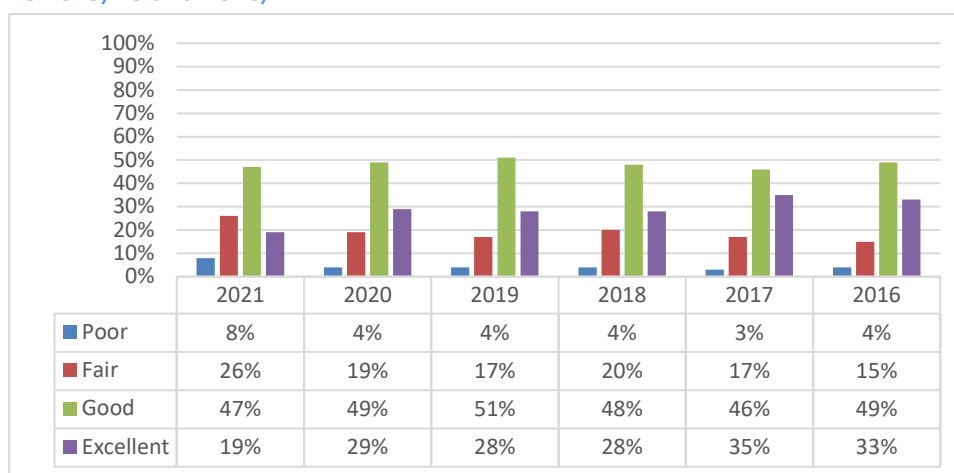
This trend also followed across the faculties (AHSS 32%, STEM 29%, HS 44%). Refer to Section 3 for more information on the impact of COVID-19 on respondents.

## 2.2 Students' Overall Online Experience in Trinity

Two non-indicator questions are used to evaluate respondents' overall experience in Trinity.

- How would you evaluate your entire Education Experience in this institution? (NIQ 21)*
- If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending? (NIQ 22)*

*Figure 3: Respondents Overall Satisfaction with their entire education experience before and after the move to remote instruction.ie 2019/20 and 2020/21*



Respondents rated their satisfaction with their overall educational experience after moving fully online. It is evident from fig. 3, above, that, with the exception of the response option 'Good', there is a marked discrepancy with the results from previous years. The proportion of respondents choosing the option 'Poor' doubles from 4% to 8%; there is an increase of 9% in the proportion of respondents choosing the 'Fair' response option and a reduction of 9% in the proportion of respondents selecting 'Excellent'. **It remains to be seen if this was a true deterioration in respondents' overall experience or if it is attributable to the disruption caused by COVID-19. This will not be known until the data from future years becomes available to ascertain if the downward trend continues or results return to pre-pandemic levels.**

*Table 3: Student Characteristics—How would you evaluate your entire Education Experience (Non-Indicator Q 21)?*

	Age		Gender		Domicile		Mode of Study	
	<23yrs	23yrs+	Female	Male	Irish	Non-Irish	Full-time	Part-time
<b>Poor</b>	8%	9%	12%	7%	8%	10%	8%	6%
<b>Fair</b>	27%	25%	29%	25%	26%	28%	26%	22%
<b>Good</b>	49%	44%	41%	50%	48%	45%	48%	41%
<b>Excellent</b>	16%	22%	18%	15%	19%	17%	18%	31%

Older (23yrs +), Irish, male, part-time and final year of study respondents report a more positive overall experience. The widest disparity in educational experience was reported across the mode of study groups, where

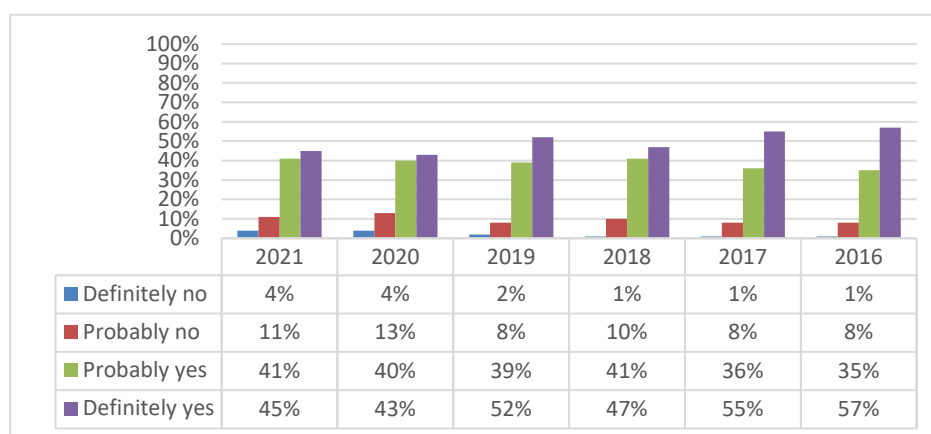
72% of part-time respondents perceived their education experience as good/excellent compared with 66% of full-time respondents.

*Table 4: Year of Study – How would you evaluate your entire Education Experience (Non-Indicator Q 21)?*

	Univ	TCD	YR 1	YRF	PGT
<i>Poor</i>	7%	8%	8%	6%	10%
<i>Fair</i>	24%	26%	29%	20%	26%
<i>Good</i>	48%	47%	48%	54%	40%
<i>Excellent</i>	21%	19%	15%	20%	24%

Over 70% of final year respondents (74%) reported that they valued their entire educational experience as good/excellent compared with 63% first year and 64% postgraduate taught respondents.

*Figure. 4: Start again in same institution (Non-Indicator Q.22)?*



The survey also asked respondents to rate their likelihood of returning to the same institution if they were to start over again. The proportion of respondents who reported 'definitely yes' was 45% in 2021, a 2% increase from 2019/20 (refer to fig 4 above).

*Table 5: If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?*

	Age		Gender		Domicile		Mode of Study	
	<23yrs	23yrs+	Female	Male	Irish	Non-Irish	Full-time	Part-time
<i>Poor</i>	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%	6%	4%	4%
<i>Fair</i>	9%	14%	10%	12%	10%	14%	11%	12%
<i>Good</i>	42%	41%	41%	42%	41%	43%	41%	38%
<i>Excellent</i>	46%	40%	45%	42%	46%	37%	44%	46%

Higher levels of mature, female, Irish and part-time respondent groups stated that they would 'definitely' return to Trinity if they were to start over again (refer to Table 5 above). Overall satisfaction at year of study and faculty levels are further discussed in section 3 and 4 respectively.

### 3. The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 questions consist of 5 multiple-choice and two open-ended questions, starting with 'How much do you agree with the following statements about the impact COVID-19 has had on your experience?'. The analysis presented in this section addresses the overall experience of Trinity respondents, the experience by cohort and the experience by Faculty. Univ 2021 refers to 'Other Irish Universities' scores, and acts as a comparator for Trinity scores.

Over 80% report they have access to online learning and recognise remote learning as providing opportunities.

*Table 6: COVID-19 Specific Questions (Univ, TCD and across Years of Study)*

**My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication.**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	YR1	YRF	PGT
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	7%	7%	4%	12%	9%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	15%	16%	14%	23%	14%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	45%	47%	52%	46%	39%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	33%	30%	30%	19%	38%

**My higher education institution provides me with adequate online learning opportunities.**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	YR1	YRF	PGT
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	5%	4%	3%	6%	6%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	13%	14%	12%	19%	13%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	46%	48%	48%	53%	42%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	36%	34%	37%	23%	39%

**I am able to access the online learning sufficiently to engage with my studies.**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	YR1	YRF	PGT
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	4%	4%	3%	5%	7%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	11%	10%	8%	14%	10%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	37%	40%	38%	44%	40%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	48%	45%	51%	37%	43%

**I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc.).**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	YR1	YRF	PGT
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	9%	8%	5%	12%	11%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	18%	16%	13%	18%	17%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	33%	33%	34%	33%	33%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	41%	43%	48%	37%	39%

## I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	YR1	YRF	PGT
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	30%	33%	34%	38%	30%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	31%	34%	34%	31%	30%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	28%	25%	25%	25%	27%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	11%	8%	7%	6%	13%

### 3.1 Across Trinity

The outcomes report **85% of respondents having sufficient access to online learning to engage with their studies**, 82% reporting that their higher education institution provides them with adequate online learning opportunities and 76% having a suitable study environment at home. Approximately two-thirds of all respondents report a lack of connection to their University due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Univ 61%; TCD 67%).

*85% have access to sufficient online learning to engage them with their studies.*

### 3.2 Across Years of Study

Across the years of study, 77% of respondents perceive Trinity as providing effective and timely communication, particularly evident at first year level (82%), followed by postgraduate taught (77%) and final year (65%) cohorts. Over 80% of first year (85%) and postgraduate taught (81%) respondents 'somewhat agree/definitely agree' that their University provides sufficient online learning engagement and opportunities. This drops slightly to 76% with final year respondents. Final year (70%) and postgraduate taught (72%) respondents report a less suitable study environment at home compared with first year respondents (82%). The survey findings show that **two-thirds of respondents felt disconnected from Trinity during the Covid-19 pandemic due to restricted access to campus (YR1 68%, YRF 69%, PGT 60%)**.

*'The level of kindness and community shown by staff to students has been so engaging and positive.'*  
(YR1, AHSS, Social Work and Social Policy)

### 3.3 Across Faculties

Table 7: COVID-19 Specific Questions (Univ, TCD, across Years of Study and Faculties)

**My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication.**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	7%	7%	8%	6%	5%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	15%	16%	17%	16%	16%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	45%	47%	45%	50%	48%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	33%	30%	30%	28%	31%

**My higher education institution provides me with adequate online learning opportunities**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	5%	4%	5%	4%	3%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	13%	14%	15%	13%	9%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	46%	48%	47%	50%	48%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	36%	34%	33%	33%	40%

**I am able to access the online learning sufficiently to engage with my studies.**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	4%	4%	6%	4%	3%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	11%	10%	11%	9%	9%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	37%	40%	42%	39%	35%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	48%	45%	41%	48%	53%

**I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc.).**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	18%	16%	13%	14%	14%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	33%	33%	34%	35%	33%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	41%	43%	45%	43%	45%

**I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.**

	Univ 2021	TCD 2021	AHSS	STEM	HS
<i>Definitely disagree</i>	30%	33%	36%	24%	39%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	31%	34%	35%	32%	33%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	28%	25%	23%	34%	21%
<i>Definitely agree</i>	11%	8%	6%	10%	7%

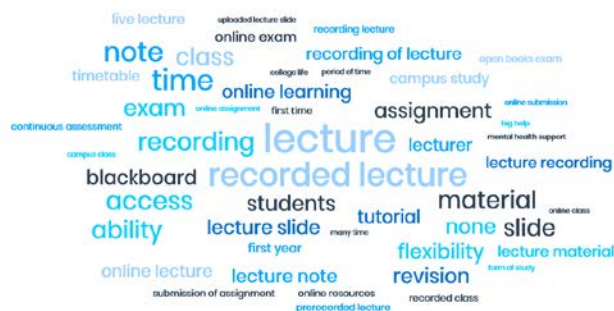
Online learning is perceived as providing respondents with opportunities and connectivity with their studies which is evident across all faculties, particularly in HS (AHSS 80%, STEM 83%, HS 88%). As in the open comments, STEM (78%) and HS (79%) report more effective and timely communication compared with AHSS (75%). **STEM respondents felt more connected (44%) with their studies compared with AHSS (29%) and HS (28%) reflecting local efforts to**

Refer to tables above.

### 3.4.1 Qualitative Comments across Trinity

- i. What are the positive elements of the online/ blended learning experience you want to keep when on-campus studies resume?
- ii. In what way(s) could your higher education institution improve its support for you during the current circumstances?

*Fig 5: What are the positive elements of the online/ blended learning experience you want to keep when on-campus studies resume?*



Themes of the positive elements of online/blended learning		
Added flexibility	568	65%
Better time management	108	12%
Refined skills	103	12%
Cost savings	92	11%
<i>Total</i>	871	

- Added flexibility and self-paced learning (568, 65%): the **flexibility of reviewing recorded lectures online or revisiting past material** as reported by respondents. This allowed respondents to work at their own speed and get the most out of their programme. This was a key benefit highlighted by respondents.

- **Better time management** (108, 12%): respondents report having the flexibility of setting their own schedules and aiding time management skills.

- **New technical skills** (103, 12%): respondents noted that, as part of their course work, they enhanced their

digital learning skills by using communication tools such as Blackboard, Skype, teams etc.

*‘Develop technical skills for online interactions.’ (YRF, AHSS, Busines)*

- **Cost savings** (92, 11%): respondents stated that money was saved by not commuting.

*'Easier to manage a work-study balance and no time is wasted travelling to and from campus, for just one or two lectures spaced out across a day. Saves money from not having to avail of transport or food on campus.'*  
(YRF, STEM, Computer Science and Statistics)

*Fig 6: In what way(s) could your higher education institution improve its support for you during the current circumstances?*



Themes in Improvements of Supports of online/blended learning		
Lack of communication	461	53%
Improve support environment	175	20%
Provide more resources	154	18%
Provision of social engagement	75	9%
<i>Total</i>	<i>865</i>	

**Q: In what way(s) could your higher education institution improve its support for you during the current circumstances?**

Qualitative data indicates levels of concern about the lack of communication, large online classes, the need to increase opening hours for the library and the element of uncertainty that surrounds them.

- **Lack of communication** (461, 53%): barriers in communication were seen as the most negative aspect experienced by respondents. Increased communication on the status of COVID regulations, clearer assessment guidelines, more engagement from lecturers and greater use of communication tools.

*'Offer more guidance in overall situation, clear communication, plans for the summer to make up for loss of on-campus time' (PGT, AHSS, Law)*

- **Better support structures for students** (175, 20%): respondents are looking for increased support for students in the organisation of their programme, looking for speedier communication of timetables, improved understanding of student technical skill levels and taking student-centered approaches into account during the pandemic.

*'Letting us know that they are understanding and supportive of students through their actions rather than just stating it in an email.'* (YRF, STEM, Multi-School)

- **Resources** (154, 18%): increased opening hours for resources such as the library and counselling services and more communication on the supports available to them. Respondents are looking for wider access to a range of resources and advice to help their mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

*'I think the university are doing the best that they can, yet it is still extremely difficult to focus and find motivation during this difficult period. Perhaps more frequent communication about mental health services would be useful, particularly for first year students who aren't familiar with SCS and*

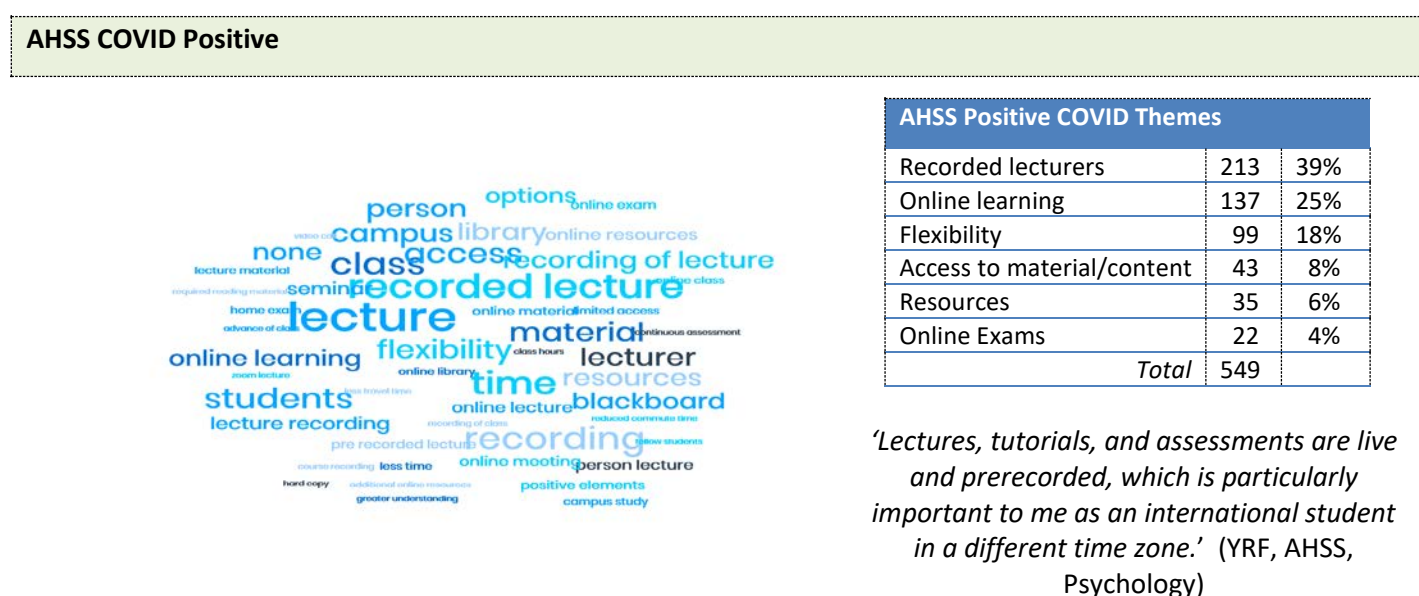
*other services.*' (YRF, AHSS, Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies)

- **Lack of social interaction** (75, 9%): online learning was criticised as lacking social presence leading to difficulties in self-motivation, providing a sense of isolation and lacking well-being. Respondents have indicated that the method of delivery of online learning and the overall student experience have impacted on the quality of their overall student experience.

*'Better interaction and communication with students. An improved understanding of students' difficulties, lack of motivation and struggles with assignments by educators and administration.'*  
(YR1, History and Political Science)

### 3.4.2 Qualitative Comments across Faculties

*Fig 7: Breakdown of student feedback across Faculties*



## STEM COVID Positive



STEM Positive COVID Themes		
Lecture recording	235	39%
Accessibility	112	18%
Communications/Email	105	17%
Library	95	16%
Resources	62	10%
Total	609	

*'As a disabled student it was easier to attend classes when I was sick or watch the recorded lectures later once, I felt better'.  
(YRF, EMS, Multi-School)*

## HS COVID Positive



HS Positive COVID Themes		
Online learning	190	41%
Recorded lectures	181	39%
Flexibility	75	16%
Resources	15	4%
Total	461	

*'There is much more communication between lecturers and students'  
(YF, HS, Nursing and Midwifery)*

*Fig 8: Breakdown of student feedback across Faculties*

## AHSS COVID Improve Suggestions



AHSS Improve COVID Themes		
Student support	235	39%
Access to campus, student services, e-books, mental health and resources	112	18%
Communications/Email	105	17%
Library	95	16%
Cost of fees	62	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>609</i>	

*'If a formal timetable could be followed to allow for better structure and organisation in our day.'*  
(YR1, EMS, Multi-School)

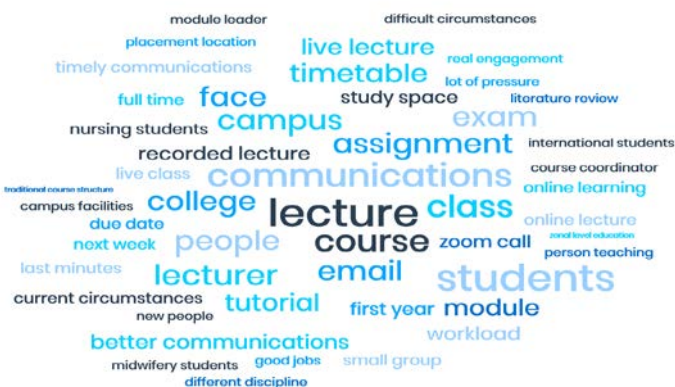
## STEM COVID Improve Suggestions



STEM Improve COVID Themes		
Students/Interaction/social	121	40%
Communication	63	20%
Workload/assign/deadline	55	17%
Timetable/Exam	58	16%
Lecture/lecturer	25	7%
<i>Total</i>	322	

*'Workload is extremely high  
so perhaps longer deadlines.'*  
(YR1, EMS, Multi-School)

## HS COVID Improve Suggestions



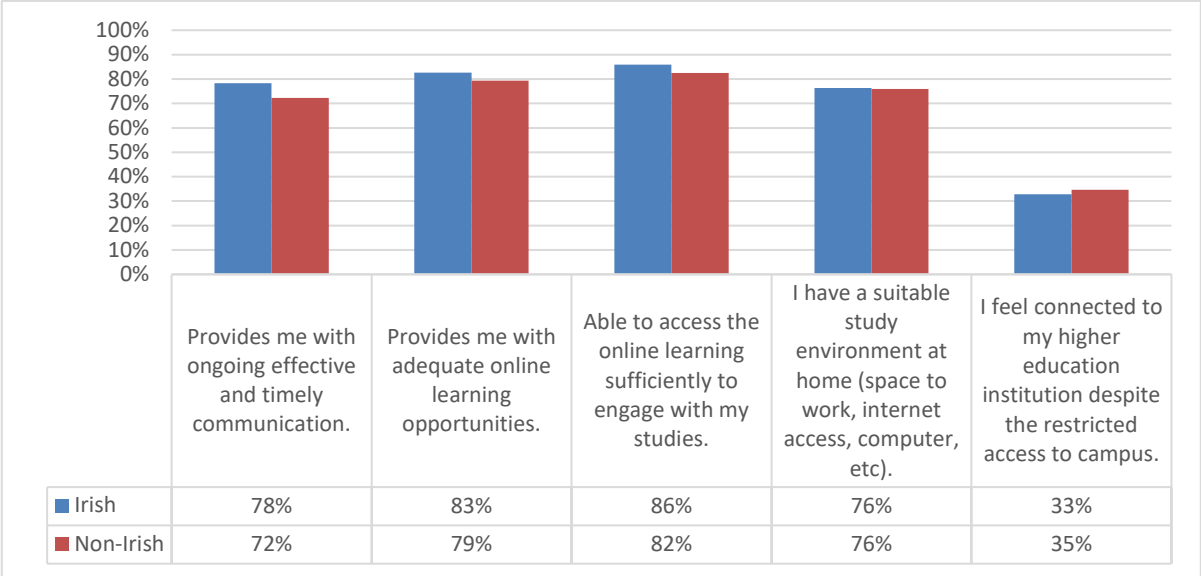
HS Improve COVID Themes		
Lectures	75	34%
Communications	53	24%
Students	59	27%
Exams	16	8%
Campus	15	7%
<i>Total</i>	<b>218</b>	<b>100%</b>

*'Lecturers to be more approachable online.'*  
(PGT, HS, Medicine)

### 3.5 Irish versus Non-Irish Online Learning Experience

This survey allows for the exploration of online learning experience opinions at domicile level. The results suggest that there is a significant difference between the perception of provision of effective and timely communication (Irish 78%, Non-Irish 72%) and access to online learning (Irish 86%, Non-Irish 82%).

Fig 9: COVID-19 Specific Questions (Irish v Non-Irish)



The widest disparity relates to the ongoing effective and timely communication where Irish respondents (78% ) view COVID-19 support more positively compared with non-Irish respondents (72%),

## 4. Indicator Scores Across Trinity

The StudentSurvey.ie survey is comprised of nine indicators with **each indicator scored out of a 60-point scale**. Indicator scores are averaged means and are not percentages. There are 22 individual non-indicator questions that are scored on a 100-point scale (percentage).

### 4.1 Indicator Scores: Trinity versus Irish Universities

Table 8 below indicates how Trinity's performance compared with other Irish Universities for the academic year from 2020/21 to 2016/17. **A key focus of attention in this will be how Trinity compares with other Irish Universities and whether this can be fully attributable to the impact of COVID-19 due to College shutdowns and the transition to online teaching and learning.**

*Table 8: Indicators 2020/21 (Trinity and Irish Universities)*

Indicators	2020/21		Trinity v Irish Universities				
	Irish Univ	Trinity	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Higher-Order Learning	35.7	36.2	+0.5	+0.3	+0.3	+6.0	+0.8
Reflective and Integrative Learning	30.8	31.7	+0.9	+1.1	+1.5	+0.5	+1.0
Quantitative Reasoning	19.3	18.6	-0.7	+0.8	+1.5	+0.8	+1.0
Learning Strategies	31.5	31.3	-0.2	+0.5	0.0	-0.9	-0.5
Collaborative Learning	24.1	22.0	-2.1	+0.2	-0.3	-1.9	-1.5
Student-Faculty Interaction	9.0	7.9	-1.1	-0.1	-0.7	-0.6	-0.1
Effective Teaching Practices	31.1	30.2	-0.9	-1.4	-1.8	-3.3	-2.2
Quality of Interactions	28.7	27.9	-0.8	-1.2	-2.6	-3.1	-2.3
Supportive Environment	23.6	23.1	-0.5	-0.7	-1.6	-3.1	-0.6

Key:   difference is >-1;   difference is < -1;   difference is ≥ + 0.0.

In 2020/21 Trinity scored higher in two and lower in seven of the nine indicators when compared with other Irish Universities. This represents a deterioration in performance since 2016/17 as outlined in Table 8 above. The Higher Order Learning (HOL) and Reflective and Integrative Learning (RIL) indicators continue to differentiate the Trinity teaching and learning experience from that of other Irish universities. **Given that the COVID -19 restrictions impacted all Universities equally, Trinity experienced the sharpest decline in the 'Collaborative Learning' indicator (TCD 22/60 vs Irish Univ 24.1/60) and in the Student Faculty Interaction indicator (TCD 7.9/60 compared with other Irish Universities 9.0/60). A reduction of -2.1 and -1.1 respectively.**

## 4.2 Indicator Scores: Years of Study

Table 9 below compares indicator scores at cohort level with those of other Irish Universities.

*Table 9: Indicators by Year of Study (Trinity v Irish Universities 2020-21)*

Indicators	Trinity v Irish Universities 2020/21							
			YR1		YRF		PGT	
	Irish Univ	Trinity	Irish Univ	Trinity	Irish Univ	Trinity	Irish Univ	Trinity
Higher-Order Learning	35.7	36.2	34.2	35.1	35.3	36.5	38.9	38.0
Reflective and Integrative Learning	30.8	31.7	28.7	29.8	30.9	32.5	34.6	34.5
Quantitative Reasoning	19.3	18.6	17.6	17.7	20.3	18.6	21.4	20.4
Learning Strategies	31.5	31.3	30.3	30.3	30.9	30.9	34.2	33.4
Collaborative Learning	24.1	22.0	22.0	20.3	27.5	23.8	24.7	23.4
Student-Faculty Interaction	9.0	7.9	6.0	4.4	10.9	10.8	12.4	11.6
Effective Teaching Practices	31.1	30.2	30.7	29.7	28.5	28.3	34.3	32.5
Quality of Interactions	28.7	27.9	27.1	26.6	28.9	27.7	31.0	30.2
Supportive Environment	23.6	23.1	24.1	23.5	23.1	22.7	23.0	22.5

The findings show that:

- Trinity final-year cohort (YRF) respondents were stronger across 'Higher Order Learning' and 'Reflective and Integrative Learning' indicators when compared with the YRF cohort across the university sector. For example, in the 'Reflective and Integrative Learning Indicator', the result was driven by the response to, 'connected their learning to problems or issues in society' (TCD 55% vs Irish Univ 48%).
- Final-year respondents show the largest negative differentiation in learning collaboratively when compared with other Irish Universities (YRF: TCD: 23.8, Irish Univ: 27.5). This was motivated by more final-year respondents across Irish Universities reporting that they 'often or very often' worked with other students on projects compared with Trinity (TCD 36% vs Irish Univ 49%).
- Engaging with academic staff was particularly challenging across first-year respondents (YR1: TCD: 4.4, Univ: 6.0). 74% 'never' discussed their performance with academic staff compared with 61% in other Universities.

### 4.3 Indicator Scores: Across Faculties

Table 10: Indicator score breakdown across Faculties

Indicators	AHSS	STEM	HS	Multi-Fac	Trinity
Higher-Order Learning	38	35	34	36	36
Reflective and Integrative Learning	34	27	31	33	32
Quantitative Reasoning	18	24	17	13	19
Learning Strategies	32	30	33	31	31
Collaborative Learning	22	23	24	18	22
Student-Faculty Interaction	9	6	8	7	8
Effective Teaching Practices	31	28	30	30	30
Quality of Interactions	28	27	28	27	28
Supportive Environment	23	22	25	22	23

Indicator results are provided for the three Trinity Faculties as seen in Table 10 above. Note numbers are indicator scores out of 60 and not percentages. **‘Higher Order Learning’ continues to be the strongest indicator across all Faculties (AHSS 38/60, STEM 35/60, HS 34/60) and the weakest is ‘Student Faculty Interaction’ (AHSS 9/60, STEM 6/60, HS 8/60).** AHSS continues to lead in four of the nine indicators, and these include: Higher Order Learning (HOL), Reflective and Integrative Learning (RIL), Learning Strategies (LS), Student Faculty Interaction (SFI) and Effective Teaching Practices (ETP).

In the Supportive Environment indicator respondents across all faculties report ‘very little’ provision of support for non-academic responsibilities such as work, family (AHSS 40%, STEM 47%, HS 44%). Concerns about both of these domains would have featured strongly for students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 4.4 Collaborative Learning

The Collaborative Learning (CL) indicator reported the largest drop in 2020/21 over previous years (2021 22.0/60 vs 2020 24.0/60) when students had the benefit of almost two full semesters before the first College shutdown as the basis for their response. The impact by cohort is clearly outlined in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Collaborative Learning – TCD v Irish Universities 2020/21

	Trinity College Dublin 2021				Other Irish Universities 2021			
	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All
2020/21	20.3	23.8	23.4	22.0	22.0	27.5	24.7	24.1
2019/20	30.5	30.9	30.6	30.7	29.2	32.1	31.2	30.5
2018/19	31.0	29.1	29.0	29.9	29.6	31.8	29.5	30.2
2017/18	28.3	28.6	28.2	28.3	28.8	32.2	30.3	30.2
2016/17	27.1	29.5	26.6	27.7	28.0	31.4	29.3	29.2

The CL indicator is made up of four sub-questions. See Table 12:

*Table.12: Collaborative Learning – across years of study*

Questions		TCD	YR 1	YRF	PGT
Asked another student to help you understand course material	<i>Never</i>	29%	29%	28%	28%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	41%	40%	38%	45%
	<i>Often</i>	20%	20%	22%	19%
	<i>Very often</i>	10%	11%	12%	8%
Explained course material to one or more students	<i>Never</i>	24%	26%	23%	23%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	46%	46%	41%	46%
	<i>Often</i>	21%	19%	26%	22%
	<i>Very often</i>	9%	9%	10%	9%
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	<i>Never</i>	41%	44%	35%	38%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	33%	31%	32%	37%
	<i>Often</i>	17%	17%	20%	16%
	<i>Very often</i>	9%	8%	13%	9%
Worked with other students on projects or assignments	<i>Never</i>	28%	32%	26%	24%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	40%	45%	38%	30%
	<i>Often</i>	19%	17%	22%	22%
	<i>Very often</i>	13%	6%	14%	24%

While the pandemic provides more hybrid learning opportunities, the impact on first-year respondents who never established an on-campus experience or cohort networks is evident in the responses to questions in the CL indicator: first-year respondents (23%) in Trinity reported less ‘engagement with students on projects or assignments’ when compared with final-year (36%) and postgraduate taught respondents (46%). Fewer first-year respondents (28%) engaged with one student or more in explaining course material when compared with final-year respondents (36%).

*Table 13: Collaborative Learning – TCD Response Characteristics 2020/21*

	Total	Age		Gender		Domicile		Status	
		< 23 years	24 years +	Male	Female	Irish	Non-Irish	Full-Time	Part-time
<b>TCD</b>	22.0	21.9	22.2	21.67	22.5	24.4	24.2	22.3	19.2
<b>Univ</b>	24.1	24.9	23.9	24.27	24.9	21.4	25.6	25.1	21.5

The widest gaps between Trinity and Irish Universities exist in under 23 years and full-time respondents. The findings also report Irish domiciled respondents having a more positive collaborative learning experience compared with Irish Universities overall (TCD 24.4, Univ 21.4).

Table 14: Collaborative Learning – at Faculty level

Questions		AHSS	STEM	HS	Multi Faculty
Asked another student to help you understand course material	<i>Never</i>	31%	23%	21%	40%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	41%	42%	43%	36%
	<i>Often</i>	19%	23%	22%	15%
	<i>Very often</i>	8%	13%	13%	8%
Explained course material to one or more students	<i>Never</i>	24%	21%	21%	34%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	45%	48%	47%	38%
	<i>Often</i>	22%	21%	21%	21%
	<i>Very often</i>	9%	9%	12%	7%
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	<i>Never</i>	41%	39%	32%	55%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	34%	34%	35%	25%
	<i>Often</i>	16%	19%	20%	12%
	<i>Very often</i>	9%	8%	13%	7%
Worked with other students on projects or assignments	<i>Never</i>	21%	32%	30%	35%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	40%	36%	42%	43%
	<i>Often</i>	22%	18%	19%	16%
	<i>Very often</i>	17%	14%	10%	6%

The area of collaborative learning is strongest across HS (AHSS 22/60, STEM 23/60, HS 24/60) where HS respondents are more likely to prepare for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students (AHSS 25%, STEM 27%, HS 33%).

Respondents' comments in relation to collaborative learning during COVID-19:

*'Good levels of communication with students via email' (YR1, Multi-Faculty, Multi-School)*

***'The absolute best thing ever is when lecturers allow us to ask questions by writing on their slides in Blackboard Collaborate. The questions can be asked at any time and are fully anonymous. I wish we had that option in real life class.'*** (YRF, HS, Medicine)

*'Easier to have multiple meetings and share material etc. in group project.'* (YR1, STEM, Multi-School)

#### 4.5 Effectiveness of Teaching Practices during COVID-19

The 'Effective Teaching Practices' indicator includes five questions that are important in the context of the changed mode of delivery during COVID-19. They relate to organisation, communication of learning outcomes and meaningful and prompt feedback. **The domains covered in the ETP indicator are expected to be more challenging in an online/hybrid/blended environment where students may be engaging in asynchronous teaching and learning remotely from their peers.** This presents particular challenges in terms of organisation and also in respect of alternate assessment strategies ensuring that learning outcomes are explained and that they are met through online or hybrid modes of delivery.

Trinity put a range of measures in place to protect students, staff, and visitors during COVID-19. Due to the pandemic, most lectures were delivered through a variety of online methods hosted in Blackboard (virtual learning

environment used by Trinity) or via Zoom. Mandatory labs, practicals and some other sessions continued to be delivered face-to-face whilst complying with the COVID-19 guidance and teaching staff were available to answer student queries about lectures and labs via direct email to teaching staff.

*Table 15: Effective Teaching Practices Results 2021 – across years of study*

Question	Responses	TCD	YR 1	YRF	PGT
Clearly explained course goals and requirements	<i>Very little</i>	8%	6%	11%	9%
	<i>Some</i>	26%	25%	28%	23%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	40%	42%	40%	39%
	<i>Very much</i>	26%	27%	21%	29%
Taught in an organised way	<i>Very little</i>	5%	4%	6%	5%
	<i>Some</i>	26%	25%	32%	25%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	44%	47%	45%	39%
	<i>Very much</i>	25%	24%	17%	31%
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	<i>Very little</i>	6%	5%	8%	7%
	<i>Some</i>	25%	23%	33%	25%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	41%	44%	39%	36%
	<i>Very much</i>	28%	28%	20%	32%
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	<i>Very little</i>	47%	58%	39%	35%
	<i>Some</i>	31%	26%	36%	34%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	15%	12%	17%	18%
	<i>Very much</i>	7%	4%	8%	13%
Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	<i>Very little</i>	32%	30%	40%	29%
	<i>Some</i>	37%	41%	34%	34%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	21%	22%	18%	22%
	<i>Very much</i>	10%	7%	8%	15%

The results of the survey show that over two-thirds of the respondents (69%) reported that their course was taught in an organised way and that course goals and requirements were explained clearly (66%). The final-year cohort perceived teaching practices at a lower rate compared with other years of study, especially in the explanation or illustration of difficult points (YR1 72%, YRF 59%, PGT 68%).

*Table 16: Effective Teaching Practices (2020/21 / 2019/20)*

Trinity College Dublin 2021				Trinity College Dublin 2020			
First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All	First Year	Final Year	PG Taught	All
29.7	28.3	32.5	30.2	32.2	31.9	35.3	33.1

A drop in scores in this indicator is evident across the academic year 2021/20 (30.2) and 33.1 in 2019/20. The widest gap across the years of study is in the final-year cohort of respondents (2021/20: 28.3; 2019/20: 31.9).

Table 17: Effective Teaching Practices – at Faculty level

During the current academic year, how often have you... (%)		Faculties			
		AHSS	STEM	HS	Multi-Fac
Clearly explained course goals and requirements	<i>Very little</i>	6%	9%	9%	8%
	<i>Some</i>	24%	30%	26%	23%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	41%	41%	37%	41%
	<i>Very much</i>	29%	20%	29%	28%
Taught in an organised way	<i>Very little</i>	4%	6%	5%	3%
	<i>Some</i>	26%	32%	24%	25%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	44%	44%	46%	46%
	<i>Very much</i>	26%	19%	25%	25%
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	<i>Very little</i>	7%	4%	5%	9%
	<i>Some</i>	26%	24%	27%	27%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	40%	42%	38%	42%
	<i>Very much</i>	27%	29%	30%	22%
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	<i>Very little</i>	43%	55%	49%	47%
	<i>Some</i>	32%	28%	31%	31%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	17%	12%	12%	15%
	<i>Very much</i>	8%	5%	8%	7%
Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	<i>Never</i>	30%	36%	37%	28%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	36%	40%	36%	40%
	<i>Often</i>	24%	17%	17%	23%
	<i>Very often</i>	11%	7%	10%	10%

Over 60% of respondents across the faculties reported clear explanations of course goals and requirements (AHSS 70%, STEM 61%, HS 66%). Organisation of courses was perceived as more effective across AHSS and HS compared with STEM (AHSS 70%, STEM 61%, HS 66%), however, across STEM explaining difficult points by using examples or illustrations was perceived as being more valuable when compared with AHSS and HS (AHSS 67%, STEM 71%, HS 68%).

Table 18: Effective Teaching Practices – Irish v Non-Irish

During the current academic year, how often have you... (%)		Faculties	
		Irish	Non-Irish
Clearly explained course goals and requirements	Very little	7%	8%
	Some	27%	23%
	Quite a bit	40%	42%
	Very much	27%	27%
Taught in an organised way	Very little	5%	5%
	Some	27%	26%
	Quite a bit	45%	44%
	Very much	24%	25%
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	Very little	6%	7%
	Some	26%	25%
	Quite a bit	41%	40%
	Very much	<b>27%</b>	29%
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	Very little	50%	39%
	Some	30%	32%
	Quite a bit	13%	20%
	Very much	6%	10%
Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	Very little	33%	30%
	Some	38%	35%
	Quite a bit	20%	22%
	Very much	9%	13%

Irish and Non-Irish respondents report similar experiences of effective teaching practices as evidenced in Table 18 above.

Respondent comments in relation to effective teaching practice include:

*'I understand that lecturers may have more demands on their time at the minute, but even sending an email informing us our assignments won't be returned within the 28 working day policy would relieve a lot of anxiety/stress around results.'* (YF, AHSS, Multi School)

*'Lack of organisation/structure. Some teachers are clearly unprepared for their classes, which is disheartening.'* (YR1, STEM, Engineering)

*'More communication between students and faculty members.'* (YRF, STEM, Multi-School)

*'Interesting content in the classes, mostly good and engaging lecturers, outline of coursework and learning outcomes etc generally very clear.'* (PGT, STEM, Natural Sciences)

## 4.6 Supportive Environment During COVID-19

COVID-19 presented specific challenges to the provision of a supportive environment (SE) to students in the context of public health, travel and social distancing restrictions that impeded physical access to supports and events that are addressed in this indicator.

The SE indicator is made up of eight questions and questions 1, 5 and 6 are of particular relevance given feedback from students to the COVID-specific open questions.

*Table 19: Supportive Environment – across years of study*

Questions	Responses	TCD	YR 1	YRF	PGT
1. Providing support to help students succeed academically	<i>Very little</i>	13%	10%	18%	13%
	<i>Some</i>	36%	35%	39%	37%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	35%	38%	33%	33%
	<i>Very much</i>	16%	17%	10%	17%
2. Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)	<i>Very little</i>	24%	22%	23%	25%
	<i>Some</i>	35%	34%	38%	33%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	29%	30%	28%	28%
	<i>Very much</i>	13%	14%	11%	14%
3. Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	<i>Very little</i>	34%	32%	36%	34%
	<i>Some</i>	36%	36%	38%	34%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	21%	22%	20%	21%
	<i>Very much</i>	9%	10%	6%	11%
4. Providing opportunities to be involved socially	<i>Very little</i>	28%	26%	25%	35%
	<i>Some</i>	37%	38%	36%	37%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	25%	26%	28%	20%
	<i>Very much</i>	10%	10%	11%	8%
5. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, healthcare, counselling, etc.)	<i>Very little</i>	19%	16%	20%	22%
	<i>Some</i>	38%	37%	38%	38%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	29%	32%	30%	25%
	<i>Very much</i>	14%	15%	12%	15%
6. Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	<i>Very little</i>	53%	52%	60%	50%
	<i>Some</i>	32%	33%	29%	34%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	11%	12%	9%	10%
	<i>Very much</i>	4%	3%	2%	6%
7. Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)	<i>Very little</i>	40%	45%	28%	43%
	<i>Some</i>	30%	28%	33%	29%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	21%	19%	28%	19%
	<i>Very much</i>	9%	8%	11%	9%
8. Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	<i>Very little</i>	29%	29%	25%	33%
	<i>Some</i>	38%	40%	38%	35%
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	24%	23%	30%	22%
	<i>Very much</i>	9%	8%	7%	10%

Over half of the respondents in the academic year 2020/21 (51%) and 2019/20 (57%) state that Trinity provides ‘quite a bit/very much’ support to help students succeed academically’. Over half of the respondents did not agree that College supported them in managing their non-academic responsibilities (YR1 52%, YRF 60%, PGT 50%).

Table 20 Supportive Environment – at Faculty level

Questions		AHSS	STEM	HS	Multi-Faculty
1. Providing support to help students succeed academically	Very little	13%	14%	10%	13%
	Some	37%	38%	33%	40%
	Quite a bit	35%	33%	38%	35%
	Very much	15%	15%	19%	12%
5. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)	Very little	19%	19%	17%	20%
	Some	38%	39%	32%	40%
	Quite a bit	30%	30%	30%	28%
	Very much	13%	12%	21%	12%
6. Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	Very little	53%	55%	48%	60%
	Some	32%	33%	33%	32%
	Quite a bit	11%	9%	15%	7%
	Very much	4%	3%	4%	1%

Table 21: Supportive Environment – international respondents

Questions		Irish	Non-Irish
1. Providing support to help students succeed academically	Very little	12%	14%
	Some	38%	34%
	Quite a bit	35%	36%
	Very much	15%	16%
5. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)	Very little	18%	20%
	Some	38%	38%
	Quite a bit	30%	28%
	Very much	14%	14%
6. Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	Very little	55%	49%
	Some	31%	35%
	Quite a bit	11%	11%
	Very much	3%	5%

Table 21, above, illustrates the breakdown of how Irish and non-Irish respondents answered questions within the indicator. For instance, there is very little difference between those domiciled outside Ireland and Irish respondents in how they perceive Trinity as putting higher emphasis on providing supports to help students succeed academically (Irish 50%, non-Irish 52%).

The open comments provided mixed reviews about the supportive environment available to them. They include the following:

***'Extensions on assignments with COVID circumstances was very much welcomed in January. This was very supportive and helped reduce pressures and workload between balancing of everything i.e., pandemic, work, college, etc.'*** (PGT, AHSS, Education)

*'More information around self-care and support.'*  
(PGT, AHSS, Social Work and Social Policy)

***'Support students from lower socio-economic backgrounds more. It is extremely challenging to engage academically when you are worried about basic things like accommodation and food.'*** (PGT, AHSS, Business)

*'Undergraduate learning development and support is well publicised.'*  
(YF, AHSS, Multi-School)

*'I think in terms of outside the classroom, TCD heavily emphasises the extra learning supports that are available to students.'* (YF, STEM, Multi-School)

*'We have an extremely high student-academic staff ratio. This makes connecting with staff very accessible. We also have an Administrative coordinator who provides support for the group.'*  
(PGT, STEM, Physics)

## Appendix 1: StudentSurvey.ie Survey Instrument

### HIGHER-ORDER LEARNING

*During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised.... [very little, some, quite a bit, very much]*

- Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations?
- Analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts?
- Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source?
- Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information?

### REFLECTIVE AND INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

*During the current academic year, about how often have you... [never, sometimes, often, very often]*

- Combined ideas from different subjects/ modules when completing assignments?
- Connected your learning to problems or issues in society?
- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in discussions or assignments?
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue?
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective?
- Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept?
- Connected ideas from your subjects/modules to your prior experiences and knowledge?

### QUANTITATIVE REASONING

*During the current academic year, about how often have you... [never, sometimes, often, very often]*

- Reached conclusions based on your analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)?
- Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)?
- Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information?

### LEARNING STRATEGIES

*During the current academic year, about how often have you... [never, sometimes, often, very often]*

- Identified key information from recommended reading materials?
- Reviewed your notes after class?
- Summarised what you learned in class or from course materials?

### COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

*During the current academic year, about how often have you... [never, sometimes, often, very often]*

- Asked another student to help you understand course material?
- Explained course material to one or more respondents?
- Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other respondents?
- Worked with other respondents on projects or assignments?

## STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION

*During the current academic year, about how often have you... [never, sometimes, often, very often]*

- Talked about career plans with academic staff?
- Worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)?
- Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class?
- Discussed your performance with academic staff?

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

*During the current academic year, to what extent have lecturers/ teaching staff... [very little, some, quite a bit, very much]*

- Clearly explained course goals and requirements?
- Taught in an organised way?
- Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points?
- Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress?
- Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments?

## QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS

*At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with... [Poor, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Excellent, N/A]*

- Respondents
- Academic advisors
- Academic staff
- Support services staff (career services, student activities, accommodation etc.)
- Other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance etc.)

## SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

*How much does your institution emphasise... [very little, some, quite a bit, very much]*

- Providing support to help respondents succeed academically?
- Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)?
- Contact among respondents from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious etc.)?
- Providing opportunities to be involved socially?
- Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling etc.)?
- Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family etc.)?
- Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events etc.)?
- Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues?

## **Additional Questions 2020/21**

### **Non-Indicator Questions**

#### **COVID Questions**

- 1) Provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication.
  - 2) Provides me with adequate online learning opportunities.
  - 3) Access the online learning sufficiently to engage with my studies.
  - 4) Suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc).
  - 5) Connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.
1. Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online;
  2. Come to class without completing readings or assignments;
  3. Made a presentation in class or online;
  4. Improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to your employability;
  5. Explored how to apply your learning in the workplace;
  6. Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities;
  7. Blended academic learning with workplace experience;
  8. Worked on assessments that informed you how well you are learning;
  9. Memorising course material;
  10. Work with academic staff on a research project;
  11. Community service or volunteer work;
  12. Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work;
  13. Writing clearly and effectively;
  14. Speaking clearly and effectively;
  15. Thinking critically and analytically;
  16. Analysing numerical and statistical information;
  17. Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills;
  18. Working effectively with others;
  19. Solving complex real-world problems;
  20. Being an informed and active citizen (societal / political /community);
  21. How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?
  22. If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

Thank you for taking StudentSurvey.ie in 2021. Some of the questions may seem less relevant while your access to campus is limited but please answer them as accurately as possible, based on your experience of the academic year (to date). There are new questions in the survey this year that will ask you specifically about your experience engaging with your higher education institution during COVID-19 and they will appear at the beginning of the survey.

**Section A: How much do you agree with the following statements about the impact COVID-19 has had on your experience?**

		Definit ely disagre	Someh what disagr	Someh what agree	Definit ely agree
1	My higher education institution provides me with ongoing effective and timely communication.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	My higher education institution provides me with adequate online learning opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I am able to access the online learning sufficiently to engage with my studies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I have a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I feel connected to my higher education institution despite the restricted access to campus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6	What are the positive elements of the online/ blended learning experience you want to keep when on-campus studies resume?

7	In what way(s) could your higher education institution improve its support for you during the current circumstances?

**Question B: During the current academic year, about how often have you:**

		Never	Some- times	Often	Very often
1	Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Come to class without completing readings or assignments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Asked another student to help you to understand course material?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## StudentSurvey.ie 2021

4	Explained course material to one or more students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
5	Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
6	Worked with other students on projects or assignments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
7	Made a presentation in class or online?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
8	Combined ideas from different subjects / modules when completing assignments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
9	Connected your learning to problems or issues in society?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
10	Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in discussions or assignments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
11	Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
12	Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
13	Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
14	Connected ideas from your subjects / modules to your prior experiences and knowledge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often

**Question B (continued): During the current academic year, about how often have you:**

		Never	Some-times	Often	Very often
15	Talked about career plans with academic staff?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
16	Worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
17	Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
18	Discussed your performance with academic staff?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
19	Reached conclusions based on your analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
20	Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
21	Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
22	Identified key information from recommended reading materials?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
23	Reviewed your notes after class?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
24	Summarised what you learned in class or from course materials?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
25	Improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to your employability?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
26	Explored how to apply your learning in the workplace?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
27	Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
28	Blended academic learning with workplace experience?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
29	Worked on assessments that informed you how well you are learning?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Question C: During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised:**

	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
1 Memorising course material?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question D: During the current academic year, to what extent have lecturers / teaching staff:**

	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
1 Clearly explained course goals and requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Taught in an organised way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question E: Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution:**

	Have not decided	Do not plan to do	Plan to do	Done or in progress
1 Work with academic staff on a research project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Community service or volunteer work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question F: At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with:**

	<div> <div>Poor</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</div> <div>Excellent</div> </div>							NOT APPLICABLE
1 Students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2 Academic advisors	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3 Academic staff	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4 Support services staff (careers services, student activities, accommodation, etc.)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5 Other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance, etc.)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Question G: How much does your institution emphasise:**

	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
1 Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2 Providing support to help students succeed academically?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3 Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4 Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5 Providing opportunities to be involved socially?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
6 Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
7 Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
8 Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
9 Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Question H: How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas:**

	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
1 Writing clearly and effectively?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2 Speaking clearly and effectively?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3 Thinking critically and analytically?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4 Analysing numerical and statistical information?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5 Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
6 Working effectively with others?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
7 Solving complex real-world problems?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
8 Being an informed and active citizen (societal / political / community)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Question I: Final questions**

The following questions provide you with an opportunity to comment on the overall academic experience at your institution.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1 How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2 If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

3	What does your institution do best to engage students in learning?

4	What could your institution do to improve students' engagement in learning?

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.