
NSSE 2021 Topical Module Report

First-year Experiences and Senior Transitions

Wright State University

This module includes a set of items only for first-year students and a set only for seniors, with questions adapted from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement and the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, respectively. The first-year items focus on academic perseverance, help-seeking behaviors, and institutional commitment, while the senior items explore post-graduation plans, links between the academic major and future plans, and confidence with skills developed during college.

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First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				Wright State		Great Lakes Public		Wright State	Great Lakes Public	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?										
a. Studied when there were other interesting things to do	FYSfy01a	1	Never	11	5	107	5	2.7	2.7	.03
		2	Sometimes	73	38	919	39			
		3	Often	69	36	848	36			
		4	Very often	43	21	471	20			
		Total		196	100	2,345	100			
b. Found additional information for course assignments when you didn't understand the material	FYSfy01b	1	Never	3	2	73	3	2.8	2.8	-.02
		2	Sometimes	70	36	737	32			
		3	Often	86	43	1,070	45			
		4	Very often	37	19	461	20			
		Total		196	100	2,341	100			
c. Participated in course discussions, even when you didn't feel like it	FYSfy01c	1	Never	13	8	101	4	2.6	2.8 *	-0.18 ▽
		2	Sometimes	77	40	830	35			
		3	Often	71	36	938	40			
		4	Very often	34	17	471	21			
		Total		195	100	2,340	100			
d. Asked instructors for help when you struggled with course assignments	FYSfy01d	1	Never	21	10	225	10	2.4	2.5	-.10
		2	Sometimes	92	48	997	43			
		3	Often	62	30	760	32			
		4	Very often	21	12	363	15			
		Total		196	100	2,345	100			
e. Finished something you have started when you encountered challenges	FYSfy01e	1	Never	3	1	14	1	3.1	3.1	-.04
		2	Sometimes	38	20	418	18			
		3	Often	89	46	1,155	49			
		4	Very often	66	33	749	32			
		Total		196	100	2,336	100			
f. Stayed positive, even when you did poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	1	Never	10	6	117	5	2.6	2.8 *	-0.18 ▽
		2	Sometimes	84	43	791	34			
		3	Often	70	35	933	39			
		4	Very often	32	16	499	22			
		Total		196	100	2,340	100			
2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?										
a. Learning course material	FYSfy02a	1	Not at all difficult	3	1	82	3	3.8	3.5 **	.24 △
		2	2	26	14	334	14			
		3	3	50	27	726	30			
		4	4	66	33	833	36			
		5	5	26	13	272	12			
		6	Very difficult	24	12	92	4			
		Total		195	100	2,339	100			
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	1	Not at all difficult	6	3	124	5	4.0	3.8	.14
		2	2	27	12	304	13			
		3	3	41	22	500	21			
		4	4	50	25	680	29			
		5	5	37	19	455	20			
		6	Very difficult	35	19	281	12			
		Total		196	100	2,344	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				Wright State		Great Lakes Public		Wright State	Great Lakes Public	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	1	Not at all difficult	21	10	287	12	3.2	3.1	.14
		2	2	51	27	611	26			
		3	3	43	23	624	27			
		4	4	36	19	489	21			
		5	5	24	11	212	9			
		6	Very difficult	20	10	120	5			
		Total		195	100	2,343	100			
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	1	Not at all difficult	26	13	424	17	3.3	2.9 **	.23 ▲
		2	2	41	22	573	24			
		3	3	50	25	593	26			
		4	4	36	19	427	18			
		5	5	20	11	215	10			
		6	Very difficult	22	11	110	5			
		Total		195	100	2,342	100			
3. During the current school year, about how often have you sought help with coursework from the following sources?										
a. Faculty members	FYSfy03a_16	1	Never	32	16	378	16	2.2	2.2	.02
		2	Sometimes	105	53	1,254	54			
		3	Often	45	23	532	23			
		4	Very often	14	8	174	7			
		Total		196	100	2,338	100			
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	1	Never	89	47	1,071	46	1.8	1.7	.02
		2	Sometimes	76	35	843	36			
		3	Often	21	11	340	14			
		4	Very often	10	6	85	3			
		Total		196	100	2,339	100			
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	1	Never	122	62	1,182	51	1.6	1.7 *	-.17 ▼
		2	Sometimes	45	23	742	31			
		3	Often	21	11	300	13			
		4	Very often	8	4	114	5			
		Total		196	100	2,338	100			
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	1	Never	44	23	209	10	2.2	2.7 ***	-.49 ▼
		2	Sometimes	81	41	752	33			
		3	Often	48	24	872	36			
		4	Very often	23	11	504	21			
		Total		196	100	2,337	100			
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	1	Never	79	38	927	40	1.9	2.0	-.03
		2	Sometimes	70	36	796	34			
		3	Often	35	19	398	17			
		4	Very often	12	7	218	10			
		Total		196	100	2,339	100			
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	1	Never	144	71	1,486	64	1.4	1.5 *	-.14 ▼
		2	Sometimes	37	21	608	26			
		3	Often	13	7	181	8			
		4	Very often	1	1	60	3			
		Total		195	100	2,335	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				Wright State		Great Lakes Public		Wright State	Great Lakes Public	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
4. During the current school year, have you participated in a first-year seminar or other course that introduces students to expectations of the academic community and college success skills (goalsetting, study skills, campus resources, etc.)?^j (Comparison data are limited to NSSE 2021.)										
	FYSfy06_21	Yes		64	33	585	50	33%	50% ***	-0.36
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		No	98	52	437	35				
		Unsure	30	16	193	15				
		Total	192	100	1,215	100				
5a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?^j										
	FYSfy04a	No		136	69	1,680	73	31%	27% 0.0	.07
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		Yes	59	31	655	27				
		Total	195	100	2,335	100				
5b. [If answered "yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)										
	FYSfy04b_1_16	—	Academics are too difficult	13	25	105	17			
	FYSfy04b_2_16	—	Academics are too easy	3	8	26	5			
	FYSfy04b_3_16	—	Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)	12	18	98	15			
	FYSfy04b_4_16	—	Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)	17	29	222	33			
	FYSfy04b_5_16	—	To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)	12	21	130	20			
	FYSfy04b_6_16	—	Difficulty managing demands of school and work	17	31	131	19			
	FYSfy04b_7_16	—	Too much emphasis on partying	0	0	45	9			
	FYSfy04b_8_16	—	Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun	23	39	141	22			
	FYSfy04b_9_16	—	Relations with faculty and staff	12	23	74	12			
	FYSfy04b_10_16	—	Relations with other students	8	12	130	19			
	FYSfy04b_11_16	—	Campus climate, location, or culture	10	16	157	25			
	FYSfy04b_12_16	—	Unsafe or hostile environment	2	4	40	7			
	FYSfy04b_13_16	—	Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)	25	45	289	43			
	FYSfy04b_14_16	—	A reason not listed above, please specify:	15	23	111	17			

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				Wright State		Great Lakes Public		Wright State	Great Lakes Public	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
6. How important is it to you that you graduate from <i>this institution</i>?										
	FYSiy05	1	Not important	12	6	124	5	4.8	4.9	-.12
		2		6	3	81	4			
		3		9	4	152	7			
		4		42	23	321	14			
		5		41	22	394	17			
		6	Very important	81	42	1,247	54			
			Total	191	100	2,319	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
		Wright State	Great Lakes Public	Wright State	Great Lakes Public	Wright State	Great Lakes Public			
								<i>Comparisons with:</i>		
								Great Lakes Public		
FYSfy01a	197	2.73	2.71	.061	.018	0.85	0.84	2,319	.705	.03
FYSfy01b	197	2.79	2.81	.055	.017	0.77	0.78	2,317	.754	-.02
FYSfy01c	196	2.62	2.77	.061	.018	0.85	0.82	2,313	.014	-.18
FYSfy01d	197	2.43	2.52	.059	.019	0.83	0.86	2,318	.160	-.10
FYSfy01e	197	3.10	3.13	.054	.016	0.76	0.72	2,311	.636	-.04
FYSfy01f	197	2.62	2.77	.059	.018	0.82	0.84	2,316	.013	-.18
FYSfy02a	196	3.80	3.52	.088	.024	1.24	1.11	2,314	.001	.24
FYSfy02b	197	4.02	3.83	.098	.029	1.38	1.35	2,319	.053	.14
FYSfy02c	196	3.25	3.05	.106	.029	1.48	1.33	225	.080	.14
FYSfy02d	196	3.26	2.94	.108	.030	1.51	1.40	228	.005	.23
FYSfy03a_16	197	2.23	2.21	.058	.017	0.81	0.80	2,314	.757	.02
FYSfy03b_16	197	1.76	1.74	.062	.018	0.87	0.82	2,313	.838	.02
FYSfy03c_16	197	1.57	1.72	.061	.019	0.85	0.87	2,313	.026	-.17
FYSfy03d_16	197	2.24	2.69	.067	.020	0.94	0.91	2,312	.000	-.49
FYSfy03e_16	197	1.94	1.96	.065	.021	0.91	0.97	2,314	.718	-.03
FYSfy03f_16	196	1.39	1.50	.049	.016	0.69	0.75	241	.050	-.14
FYSfy06_21 ^k	193	.327	.502	.0338	.0140	--	--	--	.000	-.36
FYSfy04a ^k	196	.308	.275	.0331	.0097	--	--	--	.317	.07
FYSfy05	191	4.77	4.95	.103	.032	1.43	1.45	2,288	.106	-.12

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b			
				Wright State		Great Lakes Public		Wright State	Great Lakes Public	Effect size ^d	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean		
1. Do you expect to graduate this spring or summer?											
	FYSsr01_16	No		144	38	956	35				
		Yes		242	62	1,682	65				
		Total		386	100	2,638	100				
1a. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?											
	FYSsr01a	—	Full-time employment	146	60	1,095	64				
		—	Part-time employment	9	4	43	2				
		—	Graduate or professional school	65	26	312	20				
		—	Military service	2	1	12	1				
		—	Service or volunteer activity (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, etc.)	1	0	13	1				
		—	Internship (paid or unpaid)	6	2	62	3				
		—	Travel or gap year	5	2	49	3				
		—	No plans at this time	4	2	76	5				
		—	Other, please specify:	5	2	33	2				
		Total		243	100	1,695	100				
1b. [If immediate plans included full- or part-time employment] Do you already have a job for after graduation?^j											
	FYSsr01b	No		92	57	637	56	43%	44%	0.0	-.03
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	Yes, I will start a new job		22	15	306	28				
		Yes, I will continue in my current job		39	28	188	16				
		Total		153	100	1,131	100				
2. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] To what extent have courses in your major(s) prepared you for your post-graduation plans?											
	FYSsr02	1	Very little	18	8	98	6	2.9	3.0	-.10	
		2	Some	61	25	376	22				
		3	Quite a bit	91	37	685	40				
		4	Very much	73	30	530	32				
		Total		243	100	1,689	100				
3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)?^j											
	FYSsr03	Yes		332	86	2,299	86	86%	86%	0.0	-.01
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No		10	3	107	5				
		Unsure		44	12	231	9				
		Total		386	100	2,637	100				
4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday?^j											
	FYSsr04	Yes		61	16	391	16	16%	16%	0.0	.00
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No		224	57	1,568	57				
		Unsure		102	27	681	27				
		Total		387	100	2,640	100				

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b			
				Wright State		Great Lakes Public		Wright State	Great Lakes Public		
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d	
5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?^j											
	FYSsr05		Yes	71	19	433	18	19%	18%	0.0	.03
			No	200	51	1,436	52				
			Unsure	115	31	769	30				
			Total	386	100	2,638	100				
6. How much confidence do you have in your ability to complete tasks requiring the following skills and abilities?^j											
a. Critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information	FYSsr06a		1	Very little	2	1	16	3.4	3.4	-.06	
			2	Some	45	12	212				7
			3	Quite a bit	143	36	1,072				40
			4	Very much	197	52	1,336				52
				Total	387	100	2,636				100
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b		1	Very little	2	1	11	3.4	3.5	-.05	
			2	Some	38	11	183				7
			3	Quite a bit	137	34	1,030				38
			4	Very much	210	55	1,409				54
				Total	387	100	2,633				100
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c		1	Very little	16	4	38	3.2	3.2	-.06	
			2	Some	64	17	439				16
			3	Quite a bit	149	38	1,146				43
			4	Very much	157	41	1,014				39
				Total	386	100	2,637				100
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d		1	Very little	7	2	24	3.3	3.3	.05	
			2	Some	46	11	336				13
			3	Quite a bit	152	40	1,101				42
			4	Very much	182	47	1,173				44
				Total	387	100	2,634				100
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e		1	Very little	17	4	109	3.0	3.0	.02	
			2	Some	98	26	699				26
			3	Quite a bit	146	37	1,037				39
			4	Very much	126	33	790				31
				Total	387	100	2,635				100
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f		1	Very little	11	2	69	3.1	3.1	.03	
			2	Some	88	23	572				21
			3	Quite a bit	141	36	1,111				42
			4	Very much	146	39	880				35
				Total	386	100	2,632				100
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g		1	Very little	61	15	426	2.5	2.5	.01	
			2	Some	152	39	1,058				39
			3	Quite a bit	114	30	701				27
			4	Very much	58	16	447				18
				Total	385	100	2,632				100
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSsr06h		1	Very little	104	26	675	2.2	2.2	-.07	
			2	Some	159	42	1,063				40
			3	Quite a bit	80	21	562				22
			4	Very much	43	12	334				14
				Total	386	100	2,634				100

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b			
				Wright State		Great Lakes Public		Wright State	Great Lakes Public		
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d	
i. Leadership skills	FYSSr06i	1	Very little	14	4	44	2	3.1	3.3 **	-0.17 ▽	
		2	Some	73	19	426	16				
		3	Quite a bit	143	37	985	37				
		4	Very much	155	40	1,179	45				
		Total		385	100	2,634	100				
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSSr06j	1	Very little	30	8	130	5	2.9	3.0	-0.08	
		2	Some	103	27	648	25				
		3	Quite a bit	121	31	1,007	38				
		4	Very much	132	34	850	33				
		Total		386	100	2,635	100				
7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?											
a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming	FYSSr07a	1	Very little	21	6	60	3	3.0	3.1 *	-0.12 ▽	
		2	Some	77	21	534	21				
		3	Quite a bit	157	41	1,081	40				
		4	Very much	128	33	955	36				
		Total		383	100	2,630	100				
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSSr07b	1	Very little	97	25	562	21	2.4	2.5	-0.09	
		2	Some	121	33	822	31				
		3	Quite a bit	87	22	744	28				
		4	Very much	78	19	507	20				
		Total		383	100	2,635	100				
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSSr07c	1	Very little	21	6	96	4	3.0	3.1	-0.10	
		2	Some	85	21	535	20				
		3	Quite a bit	151	40	1,091	41				
		4	Very much	127	33	909	35				
		Total		384	100	2,631	100				
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSSr07d	1	Very little	56	15	289	11	2.6	2.7	-0.11	
		2	Some	129	36	809	30				
		3	Quite a bit	103	25	920	35				
		4	Very much	94	25	600	24				
		Total		382	100	2,618	100				
8. Have you been creating an ePortfolio or other collection that includes samples of your work over time, shows your progress, and helps you reflect on the knowledge and skills you have gained?^j (Comparison data are limited to NSSE 2021.)											
	FYSSr09_21	Yes		107	27	342	26	27%	26%	0.0	.02
		No		243	65	881	66				
		Unsure		33	8	103	8				
		Total		383	100	1,326	100				

9. Is there anything your institution could have done better to prepare you for your career or further education? Please describe.

This final question asked students to respond in an open text box. Comments were recorded for 155 seniors. Responses are provided in your NSSE21 Student Comments Report and in a separate SPSS data file.

These open-ended responses appear exactly as respondents entered them and may not be suitable for distribution without prior review.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
		Wright State	Great Lakes Public	Wright State	Great Lakes Public	Wright State	Great Lakes Public			
FYSsr01b ^k	152	.426	.440	.0403	.0160	--	--	--	.740	-.03
FYSsr02	238	2.89	2.98	.060	.023	0.92	0.88	1,693	.153	-.10
FYSsr03 ^k	385	.857	.861	.0179	.0073	--	--	--	.830	-.01
FYSsr04 ^k	386	.160	.160	.0187	.0077	--	--	--	.987	.00
FYSsr05 ^k	384	.188	.178	.0200	.0081	--	--	--	.639	.03
FYSsr06a	386	3.39	3.43	.036	.014	0.71	0.65	505	.310	-.06
FYSsr06b	386	3.43	3.46	.036	.014	0.70	0.64	503	.350	-.05
FYSsr06c	385	3.16	3.20	.044	.016	0.85	0.75	492	.327	-.06
FYSsr06d	386	3.33	3.29	.038	.015	0.74	0.72	2,617	.393	.05
FYSsr06e	386	2.98	2.96	.044	.018	0.87	0.85	2,619	.686	.02
FYSsr06f	385	3.11	3.08	.043	.017	0.84	0.81	514	.614	.03
FYSsr06g	384	2.47	2.47	.047	.020	0.93	0.96	2,615	.890	.01
FYSsr06h	385	2.18	2.25	.048	.021	0.95	0.98	2,617	.196	-.07
FYSsr06i	384	3.13	3.26	.044	.017	0.86	0.78	2,615	.002	-.17
FYSsr06j	385	2.90	2.98	.049	.019	0.96	0.88	500	.154	-.08
FYSsr07a	382	3.00	3.11	.045	.017	0.87	0.82	2,610	.028	-.12
FYSsr07b	382	2.36	2.46	.054	.022	1.06	1.03	2,614	.096	-.09
FYSsr07c	383	2.99	3.08	.045	.018	0.88	0.83	2,612	.071	-.10
FYSsr07d	381	2.60	2.70	.052	.020	1.01	0.95	502	.056	-.11
FYSsr09_21 ^k	382	0.27	0.26	.0227	.0123	--	--	--	.749	.02

Endnotes

- a. Column percentages are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Counts are unweighted; column percentages cannot be replicated from counts. Comparison group details are in the *Selected Comparison Groups* report, linked in the Data & Reports table on the Institution Interface.
- b. All statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Unless otherwise noted, statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t -tests. Items with categorical response sets are left blank.
- c. These are the values used to calculate means. For the majority of items, these values match the codes in the data file and codebook.
- d. Effect size for independent t -tests uses Cohen's d ; z -tests use Cohen's h .
- e. Statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Categorical items are not listed.
- f. The 95% confidence interval for the population mean is equal to the sample mean plus or minus 1.96 times the standard error of the mean.
- g. A measure of the amount individual scores deviate from the mean of all the scores in the distribution.
- h. Degrees of freedom used to compute the t -tests. Values differ from N s due to weighting and whether equal variances were assumed.
- i. Statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t -tests or z -tests. Statistical significance represents the probability that the difference between your students' mean and that of the students in the comparison group is due to chance.
- j. Statistical comparison uses z -test to compare the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes" with all who responded otherwise.
- k. Mean represents the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes."

Key to symbols:

- ▲ **Your students' average** was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.
- △ **Your students' average** was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▽ **Your students' average** was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▼ **Your students' average** was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

Note: It is important to interpret the direction of differences relative to item wording and your institutional context.