



NSSE 2017 Topical Module Report

First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions

The University of Texas at Arlington

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About This Topical Module

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.

Comparison Group

This section summarizes how this module's comparison group was identified, including selection criteria and whether the default option was taken. This is followed by the resulting list of institutions represented in the 'FY Exp / Sr Transitn' column of this report.

Group label	FY Exp / Sr Transitn
Date submitted	5/10/17
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution customized this group by selecting institutional characteristics as follows: Basic Classification (Doc/Highest)
Group description	All other current- and prior-year NSSE institutions who administered module "First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions" and share Carnegie Classification (Doc/Highest)

FY Exp / Sr Transitn (N=7)

Florida State University (Tallahassee, FL)
 Kansas State University (Manhattan, KS)*
 Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR)*
 University of Alabama at Birmingham (Birmingham, AL)*
 University of Delaware (Newark, DE)
 University of Tennessee, Knoxville, The (Knoxville, TN)*
 Washington State University (Pullman, WA)

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b			
				FY Exp / Sr		Transitn		FY Exp / Sr		Effect size ^d	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean		
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			112	3	2.9	-0.12		
		2	Sometimes			1,346	34				
		3	Often			1,588	38				
		4	Very often			1,038	26				
		Total				4,084	100				
b. Found additional information for course assignments when you didn't understand the material	FYSfy01b	1	Never			84	2	2.9	-0.02		
		2	Sometimes			1,113	27				
		3	Often			1,943	48				
		4	Very often			922	23				
		Total				4,062	100				
c. Participated in course discussions, even when you didn't feel like it	FYSfy01c	1	Never			310	8	2.5 **	-0.33	▼	
		2	Sometimes			1,805	45				
		3	Often			1,373	33				
		4	Very often			585	15				
		Total				4,073	100				
d. Asked instructors for help when you struggled with course assignments	FYSfy01d	1	Never			460	12	2.4 **	-0.32	▼	
		2	Sometimes			1,845	46				
		3	Often			1,252	30				
		4	Very often			507	13				
		Total				4,064	100				
e. Finished something you have started when you encountered challenges	FYSfy01e	1	Never			27	1	3.1	-0.22		
		2	Sometimes			720	18				
		3	Often			2,007	49				
		4	Very often			1,309	32				
		Total				4,063	100				
f. Stayed positive, even when you did poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	1	Never			152	4	2.8	-0.01		
		2	Sometimes			1,265	31				
		3	Often			1,747	43				
		4	Very often			901	23				
		Total				4,065	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	3	148	4	3.8	3.5 *	.25
		2	2		8	10	600	15			
		3	3		20	26	1,224	30			
		4	4		29	35	1,458	36			
		5	5		17	23	506	12			
		6	Very difficult		4	4	138	3			
		Total			81	100	4,074	100			
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	1	Not at all difficult		1	1	175	5	4.0	3.8	.14
		2	2		11	14	530	13			
		3	3		13	16	933	23			
		4	4		30	37	1,164	28			
		5	5		14	17	790	19			
		6	Very difficult		12	16	478	13			
		Total			81	100	4,070	100			
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	1	Not at all difficult		13	14	527	13	3.1	2.9	.16
		2	2		12	16	1,060	27			
		3	3		23	28	1,170	29			
		4	4		24	30	830	20			
		5	5		7	11	342	8			
		6	Very difficult		2	2	139	3			
		Total			81	100	4,068	100			

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UTA		FY Exp / Sr Transitn		UTA	FY Exp / Sr Transitn	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	1	Not at all difficult	8	10	615	15	3.1	2.9	.12
		2	2	20	23	1,058	26			
		3	3	24	34	1,081	27			
		4	4	15	18	777	19			
		5	5	10	11	393	9			
		6	Very difficult	4	4	145	4			
		Total		81	100	4,069	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	23	28	718	18	2.0	2.1 *	-0.25
		2	Sometimes	42	52	2,243	55			
		3	Often	14	17	873	21			
		4	Very often	2	3	236	6			
		Total		81	100	4,070	100			
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	1	Never	65	79	1,772	44	1.2	1.7 ***	-0.65
		2	Sometimes	14	18	1,621	40			
		3	Often	1	1	542	13			
		4	Very often	1	1	128	3			
		Total		81	100	4,063	100			
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	1	Never	45	57	1,521	39	1.7	1.9 *	-0.24
		2	Sometimes	21	26	1,519	38			
		3	Often	8	8	689	16			
		4	Very often	7	10	326	7			
		Total		81	100	4,055	100			
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	1	Never	6	7	155	4	2.9	3.0	-0.04
		2	Sometimes	15	21	1,007	26			
		3	Often	36	45	1,669	41			
		4	Very often	23	27	1,236	30			
		Total		80	100	4,067	100			
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	1	Never	44	55	1,773	45	1.6	1.8 *	-0.28
		2	Sometimes	26	33	1,306	32			
		3	Often	9	10	685	16			
		4	Very often	2	2	299	7			
		Total		81	100	4,063	100			
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	1	Never	59	72	2,547	63	1.3	1.5	-0.20
		2	Sometimes	17	22	1,084	27			
		3	Often	4	5	324	8			
		4	Very often	1	1	93	2			
		Total		81	100	4,048	100			
4a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?^j										
	FYSfy04a		No	63	78	3,016	75	22%	25%	-0.08
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		Yes	19	22	1,053	25			
			Total	82	100	4,069	100			
4b. [If answered "yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)										
	FYSfy04b_1_16	—	Academics are too difficult	4	22	182	18			
	FYSfy04b_2_16	—	Academics are too easy	0	0	55	6			
			Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)	2	9	126	12			
	FYSfy04b_3_16	—		2	9	126	12			
	FYSfy04b_4_16	—	Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)	3	17	458	43			

NSSE 2017 First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons: First-Year Experiences

The University of Texas at Arlington

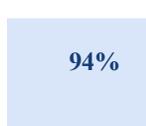
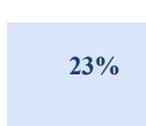
First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UTA		FY Exp / Sr Transiti		UTA	FY Exp / Sr Transiti	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
	FYSfy04b_5_16	—	To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)	5	30	160	15			
	FYSfy04b_6_16	—	Difficulty managing demands of school and work	6	30	145	14			
	FYSfy04b_7_16	—	Too much emphasis on partying	0	0	135	14			
	FYSfy04b_8_16	—	not enough opportunities to socialize and have	4	22	134	13			
	FYSfy04b_9_16	—	Relations with faculty and staff	0	0	78	8			
	FYSfy04b_10_16	—	Relations with other students	3	13	235	22			
	FYSfy04b_11_16	—	Campus climate, location, or culture	4	22	331	32			
	FYSfy04b_12_16	—	Unsafe or hostile environment	1	4	46	5			
	FYSfy04b_13_16	—	Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)	8	35	494	45			
	FYSfy04b_14_16	—	A reason not listed above, please specify:	2	9	146	14			
5. How important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?										
	FYSfy05	1	Not important	5	8	114	3	4.6	5.3 **	-0.51
		2		8	9	99	2			
		3		7	9	201	5			
		4		8	10	379	9			
		5		14	16	584	15			
		6	Very important	40	48	2,682	66			
			Total	82	100	4,059	100			

First-Year Students

Variable name	N		Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	UTA		UTA	FY Exp/Sr Transiti	UTA	FY Exp/Sr Transiti	UTA	FY Exp/Sr Transiti			
	Comparisons with: FY Exp/Sr Transiti										
FYSfy01a	78		2.76	2.86	.11	.02	0.96	0.83	85	.376	-.12
FYSfy01b	77		2.91	2.92	.09	.02	0.75	0.76	1,283	.897	-.02
FYSfy01c	77		2.27	2.54	.10	.02	0.89	0.83	1,286	.005	-.33
FYSfy01d	77		2.16	2.44	.10	.02	0.86	0.86	1,284	.006	-.32
FYSfy01e	77		2.96	3.13	.09	.02	0.76	0.72	1,284	.058	-.22
FYSfy01f	77		2.83	2.84	.09	.02	0.83	0.82	1,283	.923	-.01
FYSfy02a	77		3.75	3.48	.13	.03	1.13	1.10	1,287	.036	.25
FYSfy02b	77		4.02	3.83	.14	.04	1.27	1.34	1,286	.224	.14
FYSfy02c	77		3.13	2.94	.14	.04	1.27	1.27	1,286	.186	.16
FYSfy02d	77		3.08	2.92	.14	.04	1.27	1.32	1,287	.316	.12
FYSfy03a_16	77		1.95	2.14	.09	.02	0.76	0.77	1,286	.037	-.25
FYSfy03b_16	77		1.24	1.74	.06	.02	0.53	0.79	99	.000	-.65
FYSfy03b_16	77		1.70	1.92	.11	.03	0.98	0.91	1,282	.042	-.24
FYSfy03b_16	76		2.92	2.96	.10	.02	0.88	0.85	1,284	.753	-.04
FYSfy03e_16	77		1.59	1.84	.09	.03	0.75	0.93	1,285	.016	-.28
FYSfy03f_16	77		1.35	1.49	.07	.02	0.62	0.74	91	.055	-.20
FYSfy04a ^k	79		.218	.252	.0467	.0125	--	--	--	.488	-.08
FYSfy05	79		4.62	5.27	.19	.04	1.70	1.25	84	.001	-.51

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UTA		FY Exp / Sr Transitn		UTA	FY Exp / Sr Transitn	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
1. Do you expect to graduate this spring or summer?										
	FYSsr01_16	No		162	42	1,557	30			
		Yes		223	58	3,593	70			
		Total		385	100	5,150	100			
1a. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?										
	FYSsr01a	—	Full-time employment	160	69	1,963	54			
		—	Part-time employment	7	3	118	3			
		—	Graduate or professional school	34	15	893	25			
		—	Military service	2	1	31	1			
		—	Service or volunteer activity (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, etc.)	1	0	45	1			
		—	Internship (paid or unpaid)	7	3	226	6			
		—	Travel or gap year	1	0	163	5			
		—	No plans at this time	5	2	98	3			
		—	Other, please specify:	11	6	75	2			
		Total		228	100	3,612	100			
1b. [If immediate plans included full- or part-time employment] Do you already have a job for after graduation?^j										
	FYSsr01b	No		41	26	1,168	56		44% *** .63 	
		(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	Yes, I will start a new job	22	14	557	27			
			Yes, I will continue in my current job	102	60	351	17			
			Total	165	100	2,076	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	14	6	190	6		3.0 .12	
		2	Some	44	20	795	22			
		3	Quite a bit	73	33	1,416	39			
		4	Very much	96	41	1,202	33			
		Total		227	100	3,603	100			
3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)?^j										
	FYSsr03	Yes		365	94	4,388	84		84% *** .33 	
		(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No	5	1	264	6			
			Unsure	17	5	498	10			
			Total	387	100	5,150	100			
4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday?^j										
	FYSsr04	Yes		73	20	981	20		20% .00	
		(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No	243	60	2,697	50			
			Unsure	72	19	1,477	29			
			Total	388	100	5,155	100			
5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?^j										
	FYSsr05	Yes		82	23	1,129	23		23% .00	
		(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No	219	54	2,423	45			
			Unsure	87	23	1,603	32			
			Total	388	100	5,155	100			
6. How much confidence do you have in your ability to complete tasks requiring the following skills and abilities?										
a. Critical thinking and analysis	FYSsr06a	1	Very little	1	0	22	1			

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UTA		FY Exp / Sr Transitn		UTA	FY Exp / Sr Transitn	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
of arguments and information		2	Some	20	5	364	7	3.6	3.5 *	.13
		3	Quite a bit	128	33	1,945	36			
		4	Very much	238	62	2,821	56			
		Total		387	100	5,152	100			
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b	1	Very little	3	1	28	1	3.6	3.5 *	.11
		2	Some	11	3	345	6			
		3	Quite a bit	140	36	1,883	36			
		4	Very much	232	60	2,895	57			
Total		386	100	5,151	100					
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c	1	Very little	7	2	114	2	3.3	3.2	.09
		2	Some	54	14	914	17			
		3	Quite a bit	162	41	2,080	40			
		4	Very much	166	43	2,039	40			
Total		389	100	5,147	100					
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d	1	Very little	0	0	68	1	3.4	3.3 *	.11
		2	Some	44	12	698	14			
		3	Quite a bit	156	40	2,042	39			
		4	Very much	189	49	2,341	45			
Total		389	100	5,149	100					
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e	1	Very little	14	4	222	4	3.0	3.0	.06
		2	Some	82	21	1,297	25			
		3	Quite a bit	166	43	1,978	38			
		4	Very much	126	33	1,655	33			
Total		388	100	5,152	100					
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f	1	Very little	10	2	157	3	3.2	3.1 **	.18
		2	Some	65	17	1,224	23			
		3	Quite a bit	155	39	2,071	39			
		4	Very much	159	42	1,698	35			
Total		389	100	5,150	100					
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g	1	Very little	44	11	826	16	2.7	2.5 **	.15
		2	Some	140	36	1,873	36			
		3	Quite a bit	115	29	1,493	29			
		4	Very much	90	24	956	19			
Total		389	100	5,148	100					
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSsr06h	1	Very little	83	21	1,226	23	2.4	2.3	.08
		2	Some	153	39	1,988	39			
		3	Quite a bit	86	23	1,260	24			
		4	Very much	65	17	667	14			
Total		387	100	5,141	100					
i. Leadership skills	FYSsr06i	1	Very little	9	2	144	3	3.3	3.2	.04
		2	Some	54	14	849	17			
		3	Quite a bit	149	39	1,814	35			
		4	Very much	177	45	2,345	46			
Total		389	100	5,152	100					
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSsr06j	1	Very little	24	6	256	5	3.0	3.0	-.08
		2	Some	83	22	1,158	23			
		3	Quite a bit	162	41	1,836	35			
		4	Very much	121	31	1,884	37			
Total		390	100	5,134	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	23	6	198	4	3.1	3.1	.00
		2	Some	69	18	1,102	21			
		3	Quite a bit	149	39	1,982	38			

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UTA		FY Exp / Sr Transitn		UTA	FY Exp / Sr Transitn	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
		4	Very much	147	37	1,859	36			
			Total	388	100	5,141	100			
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSsr07b	1	Very little	102	27	1,327	26	2.4	2.3	.06
		2	Some	101	26	1,591	31			
		3	Quite a bit	96	25	1,290	25			
		4	Very much	83	22	929	18			
			Total	382	100	5,137	100			
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSsr07c	1	Very little	27	8	243	5	3.0	3.0	-.02
		2	Some	68	18	1,154	22			
		3	Quite a bit	160	42	1,959	38			
		4	Very much	129	33	1,764	35			
			Total	384	100	5,120	100			
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSsr07d	1	Very little	72	20	667	14	2.6	2.7	-.06
		2	Some	95	25	1,630	31			
		3	Quite a bit	122	32	1,579	31			
		4	Very much	94	24	1,218	24			
			Total	383	100	5,094	100			

8. 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 114 seniors. Responses are provided in your "NSSE17 Topical Module - Senior Transitions 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.

Seniors

Variable name	N		Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^e		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	UTA		UTA	FY Exp/Sr Transiti	UTA	FY Exp/Sr Transiti	UTA	FY Exp/Sr Transiti			
	Comparisons with:									FY Exp/Sr Transiti	
FYSsr01b ^k	162		.741	.438	.0345	.0129	--	--	--	.000	.63
FYSsr02	226		3.09	2.99	.06	.02	0.92	0.89	2,789	.094	.12
FYSsr03 ^k	387		.940	.840	.0121	.0061	--	--	--	.000	.33
FYSsr04 ^k	388		.203	.203	.0205	.0067	--	--	--	.984	.00
FYSsr05 ^k	388		.230	.229	.0214	.0069	--	--	--	.978	.00
FYSsr06a	387		3.57	3.49	.03	.01	0.60	0.64	485	.013	.13
FYSsr06b	386		3.56	3.49	.03	.01	0.58	0.65	490	.025	.11
FYSsr06c	389		3.26	3.19	.04	.01	0.76	0.79	4,039	.104	.09
FYSsr06d	389		3.37	3.29	.03	.01	0.69	0.75	4,040	.042	.11
FYSsr06e	388		3.05	2.99	.04	.01	0.82	0.87	4,041	.235	.06
FYSsr06f	389		3.20	3.06	.04	.01	0.80	0.83	4,041	.001	.18
FYSsr06g	389		2.66	2.52	.05	.02	0.96	0.97	4,039	.005	.15
FYSsr06h	387		2.36	2.29	.05	.02	1.00	0.97	4,031	.143	.08
FYSsr06i	389		3.26	3.23	.04	.01	0.79	0.83	4,041	.457	.04
FYSsr06j	390		2.96	3.04	.04	.01	0.88	0.90	4,032	.118	-.08
FYSsr07a	388		3.06	3.06	.05	.01	0.89	0.87	4,033	.997	.00
FYSsr07b	382		2.41	2.35	.06	.02	1.11	1.06	458	.311	.06
FYSsr07c	384		3.00	3.02	.05	.01	0.90	0.88	4,015	.684	-.02
FYSsr07d	383		2.60	2.66	.05	.02	1.06	0.99	456	.311	-.06

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.
- 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.