

What Students Are Saying About Their ECU Experience in 2012



Each year the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks students at hundreds of colleges and universities to reflect on the time they devote to various learning activities. The topics explored are linked to previous research on student success in college.

Eastern Kentucky University participated in NSSE in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2012.

The following responses were provided by 1,145 ECU students on the 2012 NSSE survey.



Academic Challenge

To what degree is studying and spending time on academic work emphasized?

85% of FY and 88% of SR students feel that this institution places substantial¹ emphasis on academics.

Do faculty hold students to high standards?

61% of FY and 65% of SR students frequently² work harder than they thought they could to meet faculty expectations.

How much time do students spend on homework each week?

35% of FY and 42% of SR students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class; 14% of FY and 15% of SR students spend 5 hours or less.

What types of thinking does coursework require?

The percentages of FY and SR students who report substantial emphasis on the following activities:

- Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods: 75% FY/68% SR
- Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory: 82% FY/87% SR
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas: 73% FY/82% SR
- Making judgments about value of information: 76% FY/79% SR
- Applying theories or concepts: 79% FY/86% SR

How much writing is expected?

33% of FY and 43% of SR students write more than four papers between 5 and 19 pages and 16% of FY and 47% of SR students write at least one paper of at least 20 pages.

How much reading is expected during the school year?

32% of FY and 27% of SR students read more than 10 assigned books or packs of course readings; 22% of FY and 31% of SR students read fewer than 5.

Do exams require students to do their best work?

53% of FY and 60% of SR students report that their exams strongly challenge³ them to do their best work.

Active Learning

How often are topics from class discussed outside of the classroom?

51% of FY and 65% of SR students frequently discuss readings or ideas from courses outside of class.

Do students work together on projects – inside and outside of class?

44% of FY and 59% of SR students frequently work with other students on projects in class, and 36% of FY and 78% of SR students frequently work with peers on assignments outside of class.

How often do students make class presentations?

31% of FY and 64% of SR students frequently make presentations in class.

How many students participate in community-based projects as part of their courses?

17% of FY and 22% of SR students frequently participate in service-learning or community-based projects; 64% of FY and 50% of SR students never take part in such activities.

How many students apply their classroom learning to real life through internships or off-campus field experiences?

By spring of their senior year, 47% of students participate in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

Do students have opportunities to tutor or teach other students?

15% of FY and 21% of SR students frequently assist their fellow students by tutoring or teaching.

Student-Faculty Interaction

Are faculty members accessible and supportive?

76% of FY and 82% of SR students say their faculty are available, helpful and sympathetic.⁴

How many students work on research projects with faculty?

By spring of their senior year, 15% of students do research with a faculty member.

Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?

65% of FY and 75% of SR students frequently get prompt verbal or written feedback from faculty members.

Note: FY= First-Year SR=Senior

How often do students talk with advisors or faculty members about their career plans?

85% of seniors at least occasionally⁵ discuss career plans with faculty; 15% never talk with faculty members about career plans.

Do students and faculty members work together on committees and projects outside of course work?

51% of FY and 55% of SR students at least occasionally spend time with faculty members on activities other than coursework.

Enriching Educational Experiences

What types of distinctive programs are offered?

During their first year, 22% of students participate in a learning community. By spring of their senior year, 11% of students have done independent study.

How often do students interact with peers who have different viewpoints than their own?

54% of FY and 52% of SR students frequently have serious conversations with students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal beliefs.



How often do students interact with peers from different racial or ethnic backgrounds?

45% of FY and 46% of SR students frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race or ethnicity.

How many students study in other countries?

By their senior year, 7% of students have studied abroad.

Do students participate in activities that enhance their spirituality?

32% of FY and 34% of SR students frequently engage in spiritually enhancing activities such as worship, meditation, or prayer.

What percentage of students participates in community service?

By the time they are seniors, 51% of students participate in community service or volunteer work.

Supportive Campus Environment

How well do students get along with other students?

81% of FY and 85% of SR students report that their peers are friendly, supportive, and give them a sense of belonging.⁶

Are students satisfied with their overall educational experience?

89% of FY students rate their experience as good or excellent; 88% of seniors would choose this school again if they could start their college career over.

How much time do students devote to co-curricular activities?

27% of FY and 20% of SR students spend at least 5 hours a week participating in co-curricular activities; 44% of FY and 59% of SR students do not participate in such activities.

How well do students get along with administrators and staff?

63% of FY and SR students find the administrative personnel and offices helpful, considerate, and flexible.⁷

How much does the school help students with their academic and social needs?

77% of FY and 73% of SR students feel that this institution provides substantial support for their academic success; 54% of FY and 38% of SR students perceive substantial support for their social needs.

To what extent does the school help students deal with their non-academic responsibilities?

44% of FY and 31% of SR students feel well-supported by the institution regarding their non-academic responsibilities.

Notes:

1. 'Substantial' emphasis is defined by combining responses of 'Very much' and 'Quite a bit.'
2. 'Frequently' is defined by combining responses of 'Very often' and 'Often.'
3. 'Strongly challenge' is defined by combining responses of '6,' and '7' on a seven-point scale where 1 is 'Very little' and 7 is 'Very much.'
4. 'Available, helpful, sympathetic' is defined by combining responses of '5,' '6,' and '7' on a seven-point scale.
5. 'Occasionally' is defined by combining the responses 'Very often,' 'Often,' and 'Sometimes.'
6. 'Friendly, supportive, and sense of belonging' is defined by combining responses of '5,' '6,' and '7' on a seven-point scale.
7. 'Helpful, considerate, and flexible' is defined by combining responses of '5,' '6,' and '7' on a seven-point scale.



Data source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2011

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