2023 HEDS Returning Student Survey

This is a PDF representation of the online version of the survey. It includes all questions and response options, as well as notes (in italics) about how questions will display to survey takers.

[Institution name] is using this survey to get a better understanding of the experiences, goals, and concerns of its students. Faculty and staff at [Institution Name] will use the information from this survey to see how they can help you get the most out of college.

The questions on this short survey will help you think about your reasons for completing your degree, what you're worried about, what your long-term goals are, and how your experiences at [Institution Name] are preparing you for those goals. In addition, this survey will give you the opportunity to set up a follow-up conversation with someone at [Institution Name] about your goals and strategies for success. We hope you take advantage of this opportunity to have a conversation about your goals for college and the future.

The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete. When you're done, you’ll be able to see a summary of how other students at [Institution Name] responded to the survey.

Your responses to this survey will be shared with a handful of people at [Institution Name] who work to help [Institution Name] students succeed and improve teaching and learning. They are, of course, obligated to keep your responses confidential.

By clicking “Next,” you acknowledge that you are at least 18 years old, have read the information about the survey we just reviewed, and agree to participate in the survey. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. We appreciate it.

(Students see a “Next” button here.)
We have “[Student’s First and Last Name]” as your name in our records. We apologize if this isn’t right. If you’d like to revise your name for this survey, please enter the name you prefer here: ________________

1. For you, what are the most important reasons to stay in college and complete your degree? (Check all that apply)
   - To get a job that provides financial security
   - To get a job that helps me start a meaningful career
   - To learn new things and expand my horizons
   - To become a more thoughtful and better-informed citizen
   - To make life-long friendships
   - To prepare for post-graduate education
   - To make my family proud
   - To build a good life for my children and/or family
   - To improve my ability to give back to my community
   - To be better prepared to make a positive impact on the world
   - Other:__________

2. How often do you worry about the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doing well academically in college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial concerns (e.g., finding ways to pay for college, questions about my financial aid or on-campus jobs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about what I’m going to do immediately after college (employment, graduate school, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting the right courses, internships, and experiences in college to set me up for my career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting into the graduate school I need to build my career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying off my student loans after college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a job that’s meaningful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a job that gives me the resources I need to be comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling for a job I don’t enjoy because it pays the bills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National/global issues that impact society at large (e.g., climate change, the political environment, social inequality, COVID-19)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining my mental health and well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating balance between work, family, friends, and my personal interests/hobbies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to do “life stuff” (e.g., managing my finances, finding a good place to live, getting the right kinds of insurance)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having enough to eat day-to-day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a safe and secure place to sleep every night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What could [Institution Name] faculty and staff do this year to support you and help you be successful?
If a student previously took the New Student Survey or Returning Student Survey and responded to the open-ended question about a successful life, they will see the following:

You’ve taken this survey before. When you did, we asked you the following question: “Imagine some point in the future, after you’re done with school and you’re leading a successful life. What does your life look like? What are you doing? How are you living? Don’t be afraid to think big!” You said:

“[Student’s response to this question from a prior New or Returning Student Survey shown here]”

4. Looking at your response, are you still thinking about a successful life the same way? Has anything changed?

If a student did not previously take the New Student Survey or Returning Student Survey, or did not respond to the open-ended question about a successful life in a previous survey, they will see the following:

4. Imagine some point in the future, after you’re done with school and you’re leading a successful life. What does your life look like? What are you doing? How are you living? Don’t be afraid to think big!

Question 5 asks students to identify high-impact programs and/or experiences at your institution that have moved them toward their vision of a successful life. We’ve designed this question so that you can ask students about the impact of up to nine high-impact programs/experiences at your institution. If you’re unsure what programs or experiences you might ask about, consider the following categories of high-impact programs developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the National Survey of Student Engagement:

- First-year seminar and/or experiences
- Required set of common courses or experiences
- Learning communities
- Research opportunities with faculty
- Service learning/community-based learning programs
- Courses and programs focusing on diversity
- Internships/field experiences/practicums
- Short- or long-term study abroad/study away
- Culminating senior experiences

We’ll ask you to provide your institution’s names for your high-impact practices/experiences so that your students will know which programs/experiences the survey refers to. You may add up to nine institutional programs to Question 5 that you think have an impact on students. In addition to the programs that you list for your institution, Question 5 includes three programs/experiences that cannot be changed: “What I’ve learned in my major(s) and minor(s),” “Support from key faculty and staff at [Institution Name],” and “Another experience at [Institution Name] that’s helping me prepare for success: (fill-in).”

---

1 See https://www.aacu.org/trending-topics/high-impact and https://nsse.indiana.edu/nsse/survey-instruments/high-impact-practices.html
The high-impact programs/experiences in Question 5 are shown in randomized order.

5. Which of the following experiences at [Institution Name] have most prepared you to accomplish your goals for living a successful life after college? (pick up to three)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #1] (designated by institution)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #2] (designated by institution)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #3] (designated by institution)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #4] (designated by institution)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #5] (designated by institution)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #6] (designated by institution)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #7] (designated by institution)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #8] (designated by institution)
   - [High-Impact Program/Experience #9] (designated by institution)
   - What I’ve learned in my major(s) and minor(s) (fixed response option, cannot be changed or deleted)
   - Support from key faculty and staff at [Institution Name] (fixed response option, cannot be changed or deleted)
   - Another experience at [Institution Name] that’s helping me prepare for success: _____________ (fixed response option, cannot be changed or deleted)

6. You said that [student’s answers from Question 5] have helped you move toward your vision of success in life. What made those experiences so beneficial?

7. Overall, how satisfied have you been with your undergraduate education at [Institution Name]?
   - Very satisfied
   - Satisfied
   - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
   - Dissatisfied
   - Very dissatisfied

8. If you had it to do all over again, would you choose to attend [Institution Name]?
   - Definitely
   - Probably
   - Not sure
   - Probably not
   - Definitely not

Question 9 asks students whether they would like to share their survey responses with someone on campus for a follow-up conversation. We’ve designed the survey so that a student will have the option of automatically forwarding their responses to up to three people/offices at your institution for a follow-up conversation. When you register for the survey, we will work with you to identify which people/offices at your institution students will have the option of sending their responses to. These options could include their academic advisor, class dean, coaches, the Career Services office, the chaplain, the Academic Support Center, the dean of student success, or other people/offices on your campus who play a role in helping your students consider their plans for college and beyond.

Students also have the option of writing in the name of someone on campus that they would like to speak with. When a student writes in a name, the survey liaison will receive an email with the student’s survey responses and the name of the person to forward those responses to. The survey liaison will be responsible for forwarding the email to the appropriate person.

Please note, while the system we’ve created to forward students’ survey responses to individuals at your institution is flexible, it is not infinitely flexible, and the range of options for forwarding your students’ responses must fit within the constraints of our survey administration tools.
We suggest that institutions give students the option of forwarding their survey results to their academic advisor. We’ve provided an example below, but you can add in any people/offices at your institution that you think students might benefit from talking to.

9. Is there anyone at [Institution Name] that you’d like to have a conversation with about your responses to this survey or your plans for the future? Below we list a few options for people and/or offices at [Institution Name] that would be happy to have a conversation with you. You can also write in the name of anyone at [Institution Name] that you’d like to speak with. Please select as many options as you want. We will forward your survey responses to the people you indicate that you’d like to speak with and ask them to contact you to set up a conversation.

- First person/office that the institution identifies (e.g., Jane Smith, your official academic advisor)
- Second person/office that the institution identifies (e.g., Career Services) – OPTIONAL RESPONSE
- Third person/office that the institution identifies (e.g., Academic Support Center) – OPTIONAL RESPONSE
- Write in the name and department or title of anyone at [Institution Name] that you’d like to have a conversation with: __________________________
- No, I don’t want to have a follow-up conversation with anyone at this time.

You’re almost done! Next, we ask a few questions about your identity and background to help us understand how students with different backgrounds and experiences are thinking about college.

10. What is your gender?
   - Man
   - Woman
   - Non-binary, please self describe: ____________
   - Prefer not to respond

11. What is your citizenship status?
   - U.S. citizen
   - U.S. permanent resident but not a U.S. citizen
   - Not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
   - Prefer not to respond

12. Which of the following racial or ethnic categories applies to your identity? (Check all that apply)
   - African
   - African American/Black
   - Alaska Native
   - Asian
   - Asian American
   - Caribbean/West Indian
   - Hispanic or Latino/a
   - Latin American
   - Middle Eastern
   - Native American/American Indian
   - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   - South Asian
   - Southeast Asian
   - White
   - Some other race or ethnicity: ____________
   - Prefer not to respond
13. What is the highest level of education completed by either of your parents (or those who raised you)?

- [ ] Did not finish high school
- [ ] High school diploma or G.E.D.
- [ ] Attended college but did not complete degree
- [ ] Associate’s degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
- [ ] Bachelor’s degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
- [ ] Master’s degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
- [ ] Doctoral or professional degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)
- [ ] Prefer not to respond

14. Have you received a Pell Grant?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Prefer not to respond

[The following message appears after students click the “Submit” button.]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We hope that your next year in college is rewarding and helps you move toward your goals for life.

We will forward your survey responses to the person(s) that you’ve identified for a conversation, and they will contact you to schedule a time to talk. If you do not hear from them in the next few weeks, please feel free to reach out to them to initiate a conversation. We’ve also sent you an email copy of your survey responses.

In the meantime, you can see how your answers compare to the responses of other students at [Institution Name]. These results will be updated as more students complete the survey. We’ll also include this link in the email with the summary of your survey responses, so you can check back as more students take the survey.