



National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2021:
What Students Are Saying About Their UMass Dartmouth Experience
Comparisons with Peer Institutions, Carnegie Class Institutions, and UMassD Participants
from the 2017 NSSE Administration

Overview:

At UMass Dartmouth, 413 first-year (FY) students and 264 senior (SR) students participated in the Spring 2021 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (i.e., an overall response rate of 23%). This report is a comparison of select responses on NSSE from the 677 student participants at UMass Dartmouth (UMassD) to the responses of students from UMass Dartmouth's peer institutions (Peer)¹, members of UMass Dartmouth's Carnegie class (Carnegie), and from the 395 UMassD student participants from the 2017 NSSE administration (UMassD NSSE 2017). NSSE is organized into four engagement themes: Academic Challenge; Learning with peers; Experience with Faculty; Campus Environment; and a group of high-impact practices (note: only select survey items are grouped into a theme). Ten engagement indicators (EIs) are organized within the four engagement themes.

The NSSE items highlighted in this report are those discussed in the *NSSE 2021 Pocket Guide* for UMass Dartmouth. This report follows the structure of the *Pocket Guide* and, as such, is organized loosely around the four engagement themes. Some of the survey items displayed under a particular theme relate to the theme but are not specifically grouped under it by NSSE (note: survey items grouped under a particular theme are tagged as "TH"). Mean scores for each of the ten EIs, which are computed on a 60-point scale, are also shown grouped under their respective themes. Additionally, the report displays the 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2017 UMassD response data for these items to facilitate longitudinal comparisons.

Key Findings:

The ten NSSE items that exhibited the largest response differences (i.e., 8 or more percentage points) for UMass Dartmouth and members of its peer group reflected the following:

- *More students indicate involvement in a culminating senior experience:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth who had done (or were doing) a culminating senior experience was 56%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 44% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Students estimate they are expected to complete longer writing assignments at UMass Dartmouth:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth estimated they are expected to complete on average of 87 pages on writing assignments; the corresponding estimation for UMass Dartmouth peers on the average number of pages on writing assignments was 75 pages (a difference of 12 pages).
- *More students help each other understand course material:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth who "frequently"³ explained course material to one or more students was 42%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 31% (a difference of 11 percentage points).
- *More students include diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who "frequently"³ include diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments was 51%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 41% (a difference of 10 percentage points).

- *Students spend more time working with their peers on projects and assignments:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”³ worked with other students on course projects or assignments was 50%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 41% (a difference of 9 percentage points).
- *Students spend more time having discussions with people who have different political views:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”³ had discussions with people with different political views was 55%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 46% (a difference of 9 percentage points).
- *More Students indicated UMass Dartmouth emphasizes the use of support services:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who reported that UMassD “substantially”⁵ emphasized the use of learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.) was 64%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 55% (a difference of 9 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicate their quality of interactions with academic advisors as “high”⁴:* The percentage of SR students who rated their quality of interactions with academic advisors as “high”⁴ was 55%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth’s peers was 65% (a difference of 10 percentage points).
- *Fewer students reached conclusions based upon their own analysis of numerical information...:* The percentage of SR students reporting they “frequently”³ reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.) was 46%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth’s peers was 55% (a difference of 9 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicated their courses included community based service learning projects:* The percentage of SR students indicated that “at least some”⁶ of their courses at UMass Dartmouth included a community-based service learning project was 39%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth’s peers was 47% (a difference of 8 percentage points).

Key Findings from 2021 UMassD Students Compared to 2017:

The fifteen NSSE items that exhibited the largest response differences (i.e., 8 or more percentage points) for 2021 UMass Dartmouth students compared to UMass Dartmouth students in 2017 reflected the following:

- *More students indicate their quality of interactions with academic advisors as “high”⁴:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 who rated their quality of interactions with academic advisors as “high”⁴ was 55%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 40% (a difference of 15 percentage points).
- *More students include diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”³ include diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments was 51%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 43% (a difference of 8 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicate involvement in practical, real-world experiences through internships or field experiences:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who had participated in some form of internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement by the spring of their senior year was 39%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 58% (a difference of 19 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD Students help each other understand course materials:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth in 2021 who “frequently”³ explained course material to one or more students was 42%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 60% (a difference of 18 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD students indicate they frequently gave course presentations:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that they “frequently”³ gave course presentations

was 46%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 61% (a difference of 15 percentage points).

- *Students spend less time having discussions with people from different economic backgrounds:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”³ had discussions with people from different economic backgrounds was 63%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 77% (a difference of 14 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicated UMassD emphasizes the use of support services:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that UMassD “substantially”⁵ emphasized the use of learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.) was 64%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students from 2017 was 77% (a difference of 13 percentage points).
- *Fewer students reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information...:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 from UMass Dartmouth reporting they “frequently”³ reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.) was 46%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 58% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *UMassD FY Students spend less time working with their peers on projects and assignments:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”³ worked with other students on course projects or assignments was 42%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 54% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Students spend less time having discussions with people with different political views:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”³ had discussions with people with different political views was 55%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 67% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD students work together to prepare for exams:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that they “frequently”³ prepared for exams by discussing or working through course materials with other students was 39%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 51% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD students are working research projects with faculty members:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that they worked on a research project with a faculty member was 18%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 30% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *UMassD SR Students spend less time working with their peers on projects and assignments:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”³ worked with other students on course projects or assignments was 50%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 61% (a difference of 11 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD students reported that instructors gave prompt and detailed feedback:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that instructors “substantially”⁵ gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments was 49%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 59% (a difference of 10 percentage points).
- *Students spend less time having discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”³ had discussions with people of a different race or ethnicity was 65%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 73% (a difference of 8 percentage points).

Engagement Theme: Academic Challenge

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>UMassD NSSE 2017</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
Mean EI Score: Higher-Order Learning					
<i>FY Students</i>	36.9	36.6	37.4	37.1	+0.3
<i>SR Students</i>	38.2	37.5	39.4	38.8	+0.7
Mean EI Score: Reflective & Integrative Learning					
<i>FY Students</i>	33.4	32.9	34.7	32.9	+0.5
<i>SR Students</i>	34.8	35.7	37.4	36.4	-0.9
Mean EI Score: Learning Strategies					
<i>FY Students</i>	36.5	36.5	37.5	37.6	0.0
<i>SR Students</i>	37.1	37.0	37.9	35.4	+0.1
Mean EI Score: Quantitative Reasoning					
<i>FY Students</i>	28.0	28.1	28.0	26.4	-0.1
<i>SR Students</i>	28.8	28.8	30.1	29.7	0.0
How much time do students spend studying each week?					
<i>Average hours per week FY students spend preparing for class...</i>	16	16	15	14	0%
<i>Average hours per week SR students spend preparing for class...</i>	16	16	16	16	0%
Do courses challenge students to do their best?					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that their courses “highly” challenged them to do their best work²...</i>	43	43	45	39	0%
How much writing is expected?					
<i>Average estimated number of pages of writing assigned to FY students...</i>	49	50	51	53	-1
<i>Average estimated number of pages of writing assigned to SR students...</i>	87	75	75	86	+12
How much reading is expected?					
<i>Average estimated number of hours per week FY students spend on assigned reading...</i>	3	3	3	6	0%
<i>Average estimated number of hours per week SR students spend on assigned reading...</i>	3	3	3	8	0%
How often do students make course presentations?					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” gave course presentations³...</i>	21	27	29	26	-6%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” gave course presentations³...</i>	46	46	49	61	0%
Do class discussions and assignments include the perspectives of diverse groups of people? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who “frequently” included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments³...</i>	51	41	51	43	+10%
Are students expected to use numbers or statistics throughout their coursework? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who “frequently” used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue³...</i>	37	38	40	34	-1%
<i>Percentage of SR students who “frequently” reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information³...</i>	46	55	55	58	-9%

Engagement Theme: Learning with Peers

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>UMassD NSSE 2017</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
Mean EI Score: Collaborative Learning					
<i>FY Students</i>	27.6	30.0	29.2	32.3	-2.4
<i>SR Students</i>	26.4	39.1	38.3	32.5	-12.7
Mean EI Score: Discussions with Diverse Others					
<i>FY Students</i>	35.6	39.0	37.1	39.3	-3.4
<i>SR Students</i>	36.0	39.1	38.3	38.9	-3.1
How often do students work together on class projects and assignments? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” worked with their peers on course projects and assignments³...</i>	42	37	37	54	+5%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” worked with their peers on course projects and assignments³...</i>	50	41	39	61	+9%
Do students help each other learn? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” explained course material to one or more students³...</i>	42	31	29	60	+11%
How often do students work together to prepare for exams? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students³...</i>	39	34	36	51	+5%
How often do students interact with others who have different viewpoints or who come from different backgrounds? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people with different political views³...</i>	55	46	49	67	+9%
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people from a different economic background³...</i>	63	57	59	77	+6%
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity³...</i>	65	63	66	73	+2%

Engagement Theme: Experiences with Faculty					
NSSE Item	UMassD	Peer	Carnegie	UMassD NSSE 2017	UMassD -Peer
Mean EI Score: Student-Faculty Interaction					
<i>FY Students</i>	18.1	18.4	19.5	19.2	-0.3
<i>SR Students</i>	21.3	20.5	22.7	23.5	+0.8
Mean EI Score: Effective Teaching Practices					
<i>FY Students</i>	35.4	36.2	37.0	37.2	-0.8
<i>SR Students</i>	37.3	37.3	38.5	39.5	0.0
Are faculty members accessible and supportive?⁷ <i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with faculty as “high”⁴...</i>	41	46	48	37	-5%
How often do students talk with faculty members about their career plans? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” discussed career plans with faculty³...</i>	24	17	14	30	+7%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” discussed career plans with faculty³...</i>	38	41	36	43	-3%
Do faculty members clearly explain course goals and requirements? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who said instructors clearly explained course goals and requirements “quite a bit” or “very much”...</i>	69	64	64	72	+5%
Do students receive prompt and detailed feedback? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that instructors “substantially” gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments⁵...</i>	49	47	44	59	+2%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that instructors “substantially” gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments⁵...</i>	61	66	61	67	-5%
How often do students talk with faculty members outside class about what they are learning? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class³...</i>	21	21	19	21	0%
How many students work on research projects with faculty? <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they worked on a research project with a faculty member...</i>	4	7	4	1	-3%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they worked on a research project with a faculty member...</i>	18	22	22	30	-4%

Engagement Theme: Campus Environment

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>UMassD NSSE 2017</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
Mean EI Score: Quality of Interactions					
<i>FY Students</i>	39.6	41.7	41.8	38.8	-2.1
<i>SR Students</i>	40.5	41.2	42.0	38.9	-0.7
Mean EI Score: Supportive Environment					
<i>FY Students</i>	30.1	33.1	33.4	33.0	-3.0
<i>SR Students</i>	27.4	29.4	31.3	29.1	-2.0
Are students encouraged to use learning support services (tutors, writing center)? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who said the institution “substantially” emphasized the use of learning support services⁵...</i>	64	55	55	77	+9%
How satisfied are students with academic advising?⁷ (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with academic advisors as “high”⁴...</i>	48	46	43	48	+2%
<i>Percentage of SR students who rated the quality of their interactions with academic advisors as “high”⁴...</i>	55	65	60	40	-10%
How well do students get along with each other?⁷ (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with their peers as “high”⁴...</i>	45	40	41	41	+5%

High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>UMassD NSSE 2017</u>	<u>UMassD- Peer</u>
Participated in at least one HIP					
<i>FY Students</i>	47	52	53	51	-5.0%
<i>SR Students</i>	84	82	84	91	+2.0%
What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?					
<i>Percentage of FY students who participated in a learning community during their first year...</i>	7	5	1	4	+2%
<i>Percentage of SR students who had done (or were doing) a culminating senior experience...</i>	56	44	43	58	+12%
How many students study in other countries?					
<i>Percentage of SR students who have studied abroad...</i>	5	8	12	11	-3%
How many students get practical, real-world experience through internships or field experiences?					
<i>Percentage of SR students who participated in some form of internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement by spring of their senior year...</i>	39	47	46	58	-8%
How many courses include community-based service-learning projects?					
<i>Percentage of FY students who said that "at least some" of their courses included a community-based service-learning project⁶...</i>	44	45	47	48	-1%
<i>Percentage of SR students who said that "at least some" of their courses included a community-based service-learning project⁶...</i>	55	51	59	65	+4%

					Satisfaction			
	2008	2011	2014	2017	2021			
NSSE Item	UMassD	UMassD	UMassD	UMassD	UMassD	Peer	Carnegie	UMassD-Peer
Would students choose the same institution again? <i>Percentage of FY students who “definitely” or “probably” would attend this institution if they started over again...</i> <i>Percentage of SR students who “definitely” or “probably” would attend this institution if they started over again...</i>	72	75	71	76	82	83	84	-1%
	79	68	72	67	74	80	81	-6%
How satisfied are students with their educational experience? <i>Percentage of FY students who rated their entire educational experience at this institution as “excellent” or “good”...</i> <i>Percentage of SR students who rated their entire educational experience at this institution as “excellent” or “good”...</i>	77	75	78	67	72	79	82	-7%
	87	76	79	72	82	79	84	+3%

Notes:

- Members of UMass Dartmouth’s peer institutions (i.e., comparative and aspirant peers that participate in the 2020 and/or 2021 NSSE) included Binghamton University (State University of New York) (Binghamton, NY); Cleveland State University (Cleveland, OH); Marshall University (Huntington, WV); University of Idaho (Moscow, ID)*; The University of Texas at Dallas (Richardson, TX); University of North Dakota (Grand Forks, ND); University of South Dakota (Vermillion, SD); University of Southern Maine (Portland, ME); and Wichita State University (Wichita, KS)*
- "Highly" emphasis is defined by is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is “Not at all” and 7 is “Very much.”
- "Frequently" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often" and "Often."
- "High" is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is “Poor” and 7 is “Excellent.”
- "Substantially" is defined by combining the responses to values of “Very much” and “Quite a bit.”
- “At least some” is defined by combining the responses to values of “Some,” “Most,” and “All.”
- Percentages shown were calculated by NSSE on all responses, including response choice of “Not Applicable.”

Data source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, & 2021.