

## **Introduction**

The Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) is a survey undertaken annually by students enrolled in higher education institutions in Australia and New Zealand. It is closely linked to the North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In 2010, a pilot study was also undertaken with students at New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs).

Student engagement is an idea focused on students and their interactions with their institution. It rests on the premise that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities, and on how institutions and staff generate conditions to stimulate involvement.

The AUSSE is important because it provides an indication of students' involvement in activities and experience of conditions that research has linked with high-quality student outcomes. As such, it provides data for framing conversations about quality and a stimulus for guiding policy to improve the educational experiences and outcomes.

The AUSSE collects information about:

- the experiences and activities of students in relation to their studies;
- the experiences and activities of students outside of their formal education;
- the personal interactions students have with staff and fellow students at their institution;
- the future study intentions of students;
- students' perceptions of the values and quality of their institution; and
- socio-demographic information about students.

The AUSSE is managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in close collaboration with participating institutions. The results of the AUSSE are discussed in a variety of reports. Each institution receives a detailed Institution Report that includes a range of results and benchmarks. The Australasian Student Engagement Report provides a high-level public discussion of findings, and the AUSSE Research Briefings provide more detailed discussion and analysis of the engagement of specific groups of students.

This Executive Summary Report complements the more detailed Institution Report. Each institution-specific report provides information relating specifically to the engagement of students at the institution who took part in the 2010 AUSSE. The reporting shows the outcomes for this institution in relation to students from a number of aggregated groupings, including Australasia, North America and selected 'like' institutions within Australia and New Zealand.

Student engagement measures at the institutional level are generally divided into two groups – first-year students and later-year students. Subgroup information is also provided in this Executive Summary Report and in the more detailed Institution Report.

Further information about the AUSSE and the publications that result from this annual collection can be found at the following website: <http://ausse.acer.edu.au>

## Population and sample summary

In 2010, 54 institutions participated in the AUSSE, up from 35 in 2009, 29 in 2008 and 25 in 2007. The AUSSE 2010 population includes 144,425 first-year and 176,823 later-year on-shore bachelor degree students. Comparisons are made in this report with the results from the North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In 2010, 603 institutions from the USA and Canada took part in the NSSE.

Based on instructions provided by Australasian University in early 2010, a systematic random sample of 1500 first-year and 1500 later-year on-shore students was drawn from the total population. This sample was designed to yield 600 responses. As shown in Table 1, 1000 students responded in total, giving an overall institutional response rate of 33 per cent. For the results that follow in this Executive Summary Report and the more detailed Institutional Report the response sample has been weighted to ensure that results reflect the institution's population as a whole.

**Table 1: Response statistics**

	Australasian University		All institutions	
	First year	Later year	First year	Later year
Respondents	500	500	21437	18082
Sample size	1500	1500	92251	83700
Response rate	33	33	23	22

## Areas of performance scores

Around 100 specific learning activities and conditions are measured in the AUSSE. Table 2 summarises the areas in which Australasian University's students score above the Australasian average, and areas in which scores are below the Australasian average. It is important to note that a below average score is not necessarily a negative finding, similarly an above average score is not necessarily a positive finding.

**Table 2: Performance above and below average**

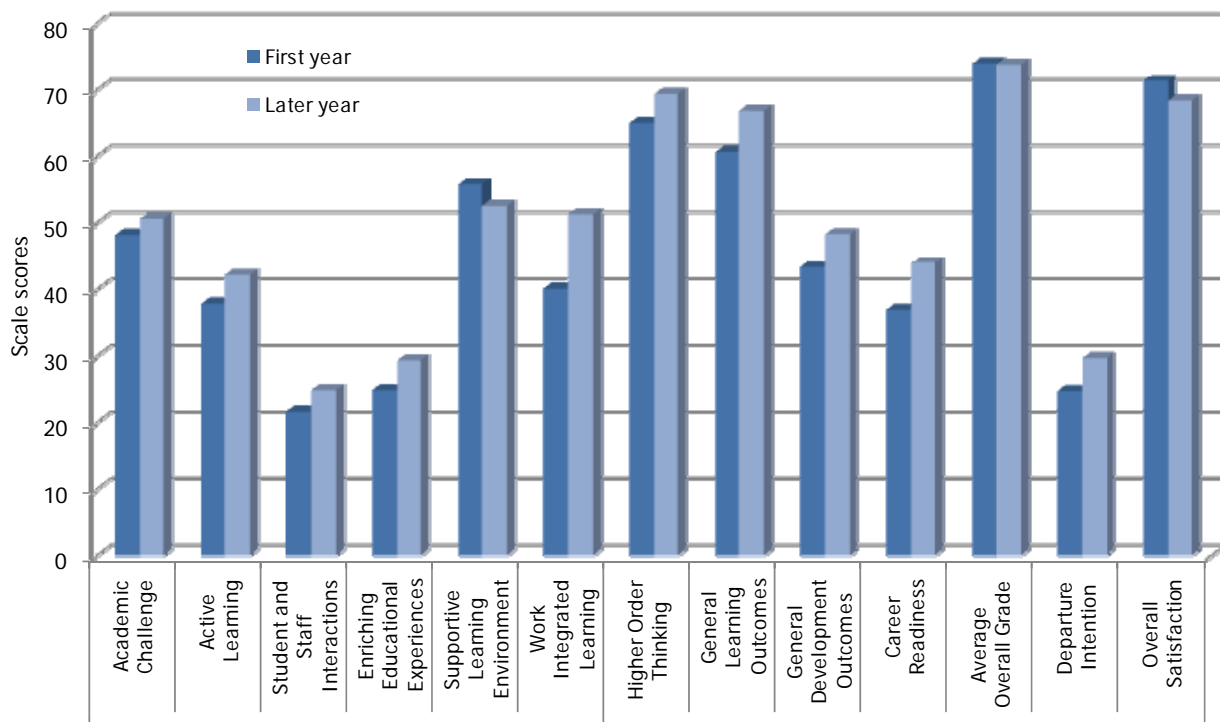
Performance above average	Performance below average
Examinations have challenged to do best work	Working for pay off campus
Study group/learning community	Travelling to campus
Attend same institution if starting over	Discussed grades with teaching staff
Being on campus, excluding time spent in class	Analysing quantitative problems
Searched online for resources relevant to studies	Culminating final-year experience
Used library resources on campus or online	Made presentation
Overall rating: Educational experience	Discussed ideas from your classes with teaching staff
Being on campus, including time spent in class	Providing care for dependents
One hour or less to complete	Communicated or worked with other students online
More than one hour to complete	Securing relevant work after graduation
Explored where to look for jobs relevant to your interests	Asked questions
Spending significant time on academic work	Speaking clearly and effectively

## Engagement scale scores

This Executive Summary Report provides information about the responses to the 2010 AUSSE at Australasian University. It shows the engagement and outcomes of students as measured on a number of core scales. Scale scores are reported using a metric that runs from 0 to 100.

The engagement scales measured by the AUSSE include: Academic Challenge, Active Learning, Student and Staff Interactions, Enriching Educational Experiences, Supportive Learning Environment and Work Integrated Learning.

Figure 1 displays the differences in both the engagement and outcomes scales for first-year and later-year student respondents from Australasian University. It is interesting to compare the outcomes of students at these two points in time in order to identify areas of gain and decline.



**Figure 1: Engagement and outcome scores for Australasian University by year level**

Engagement of first-year students is crucial for a range of reasons. It is important that new students adjust to university life so that their chances of success, likelihood of completing and contribution to the institution can be enhanced. Figure 2 displays the engagement scores of first-year students from this institution alongside those from a number of benchmark groups.

In Figure 3, the engagement scale scores of later-year students are compared with the benchmark group and overall scores for Australasia and North America. Examining these responses can provide further insight into the relative levels of engagement of students in this institution. These later-year figures are important because they provide an indication of the perceptions and experiences of students accumulated over the years they have spent at the institution.

Comparing institutional results against a range of other measures enables universities to assess their relative level of student engagement for this student cohort. It is best to compare results across groups within each scale, rather than make comparisons across scales. In general, a difference of five scale points may be considered a meaningful educational effect. Note that the Work Integrated Learning scale is not administered in the NSSE and therefore there are no comparisons with the USA results for this scale.

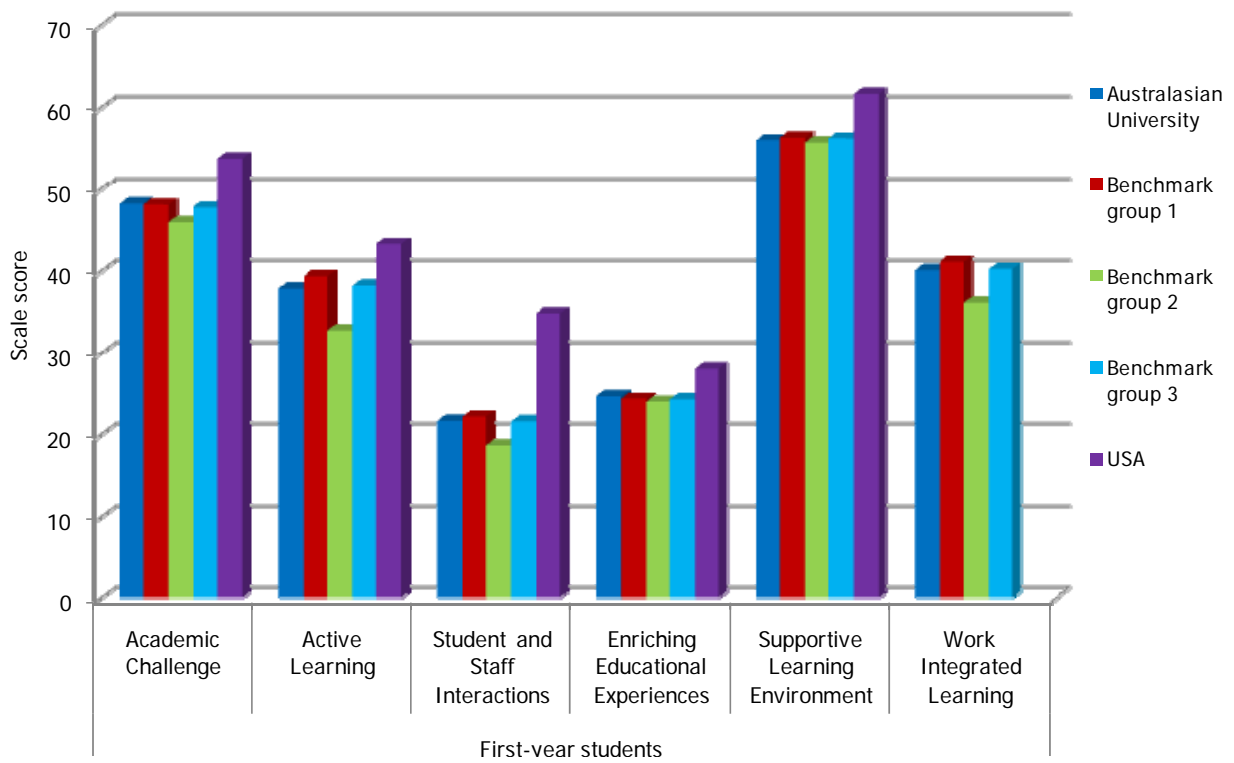


Figure 2: First-year student engagement scale scores

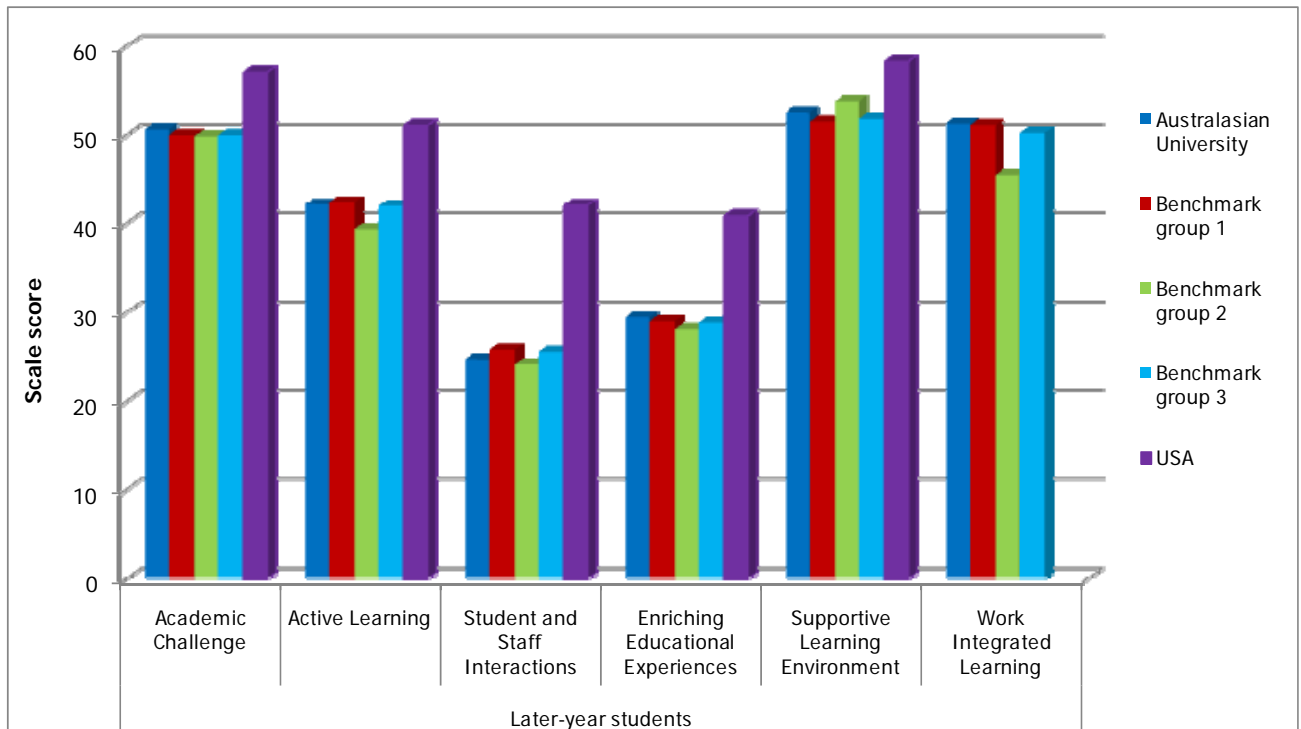
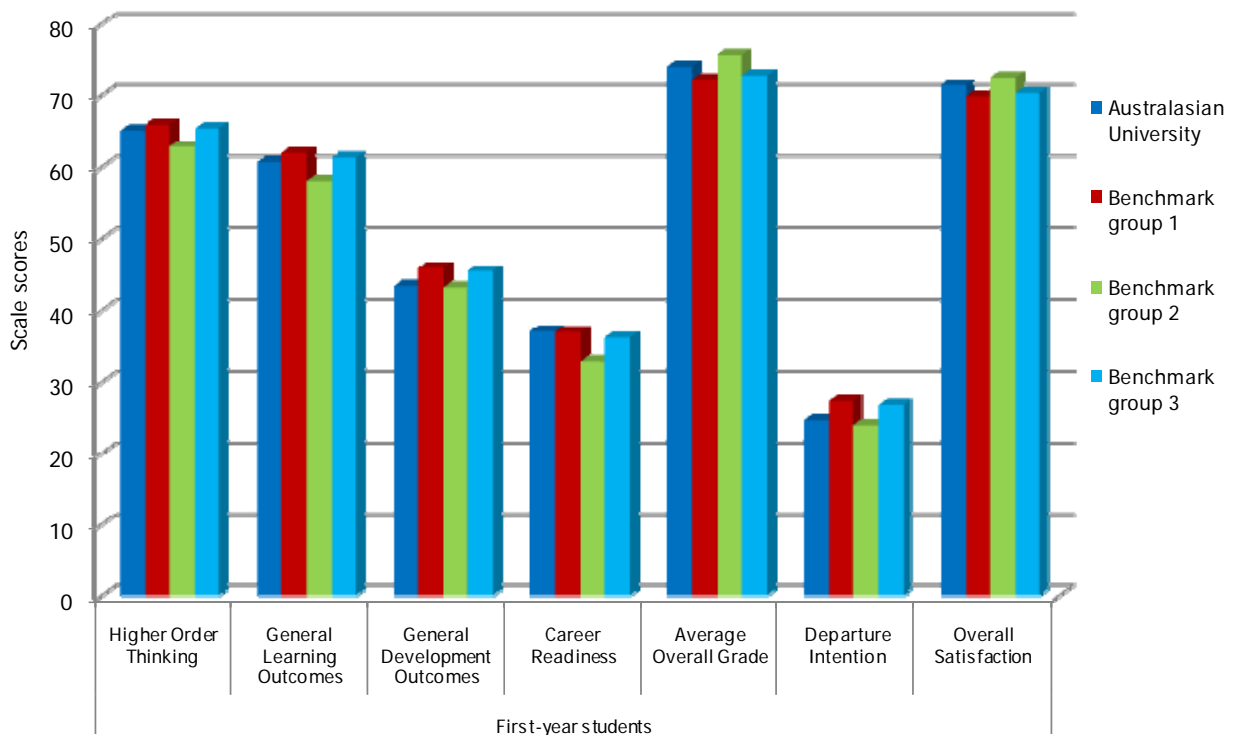


Figure 3: Later-year student engagement scale scores

## Outcome scale scores

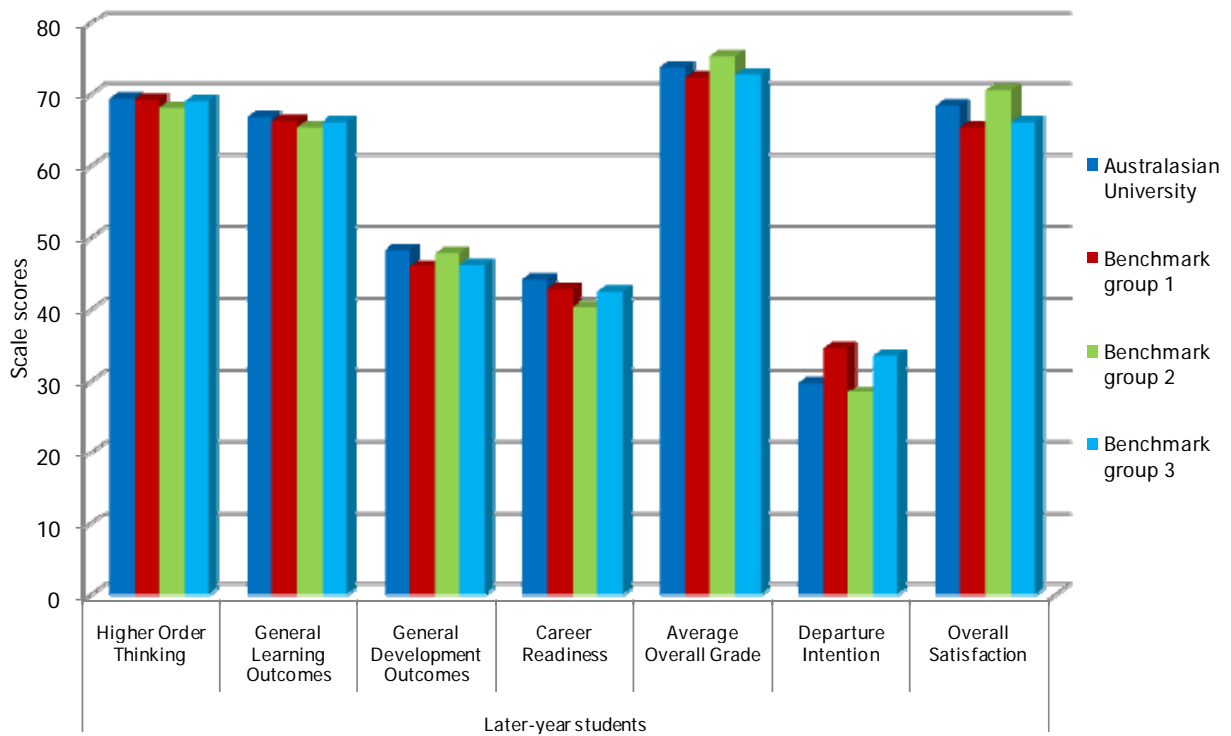
Several educational outcomes are measured in the AUSSE. The outcomes scales are: Overall Satisfaction, Departure Intention, Average Overall Grade, General Development Outcomes, Career Readiness, General Learning Outcomes, and Higher-order Thinking.

The outcomes measures from the first-year cohort of AUSSE respondents are displayed alongside several benchmarks in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: First-year student outcome scale scores**

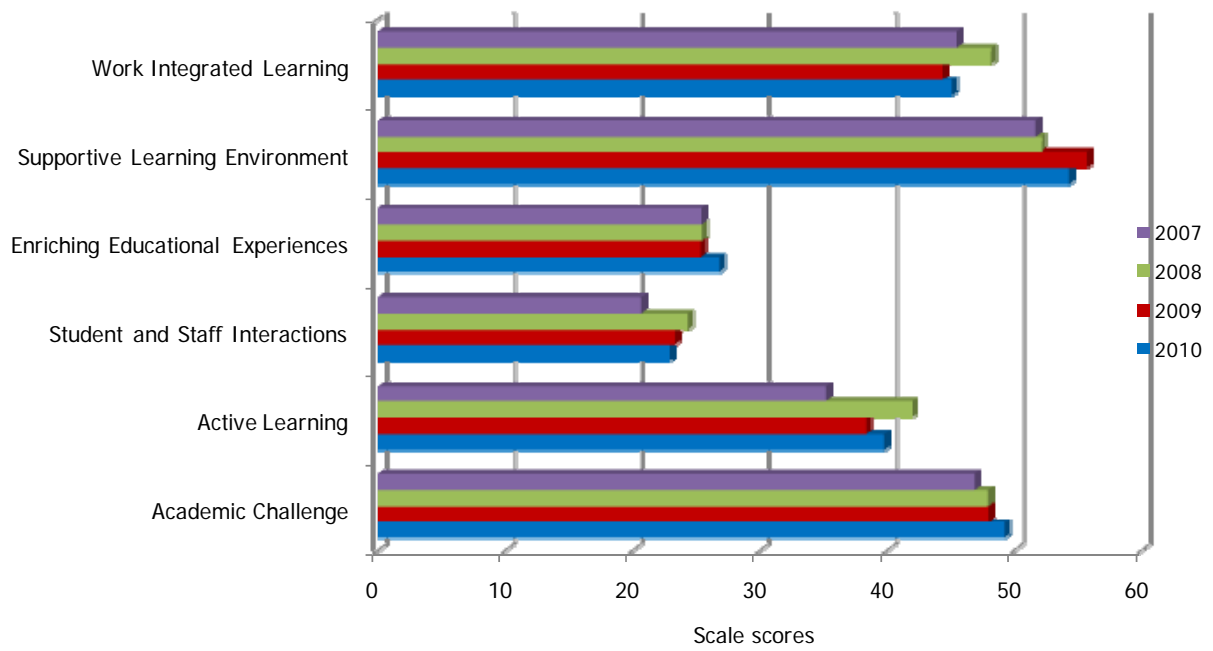
Similarly, Figure 5 shows the outcomes scale scores for the final-year cohort of this university, with scores from the institution's benchmark group and the overall Australasian score providing contexts for the institution-level results.



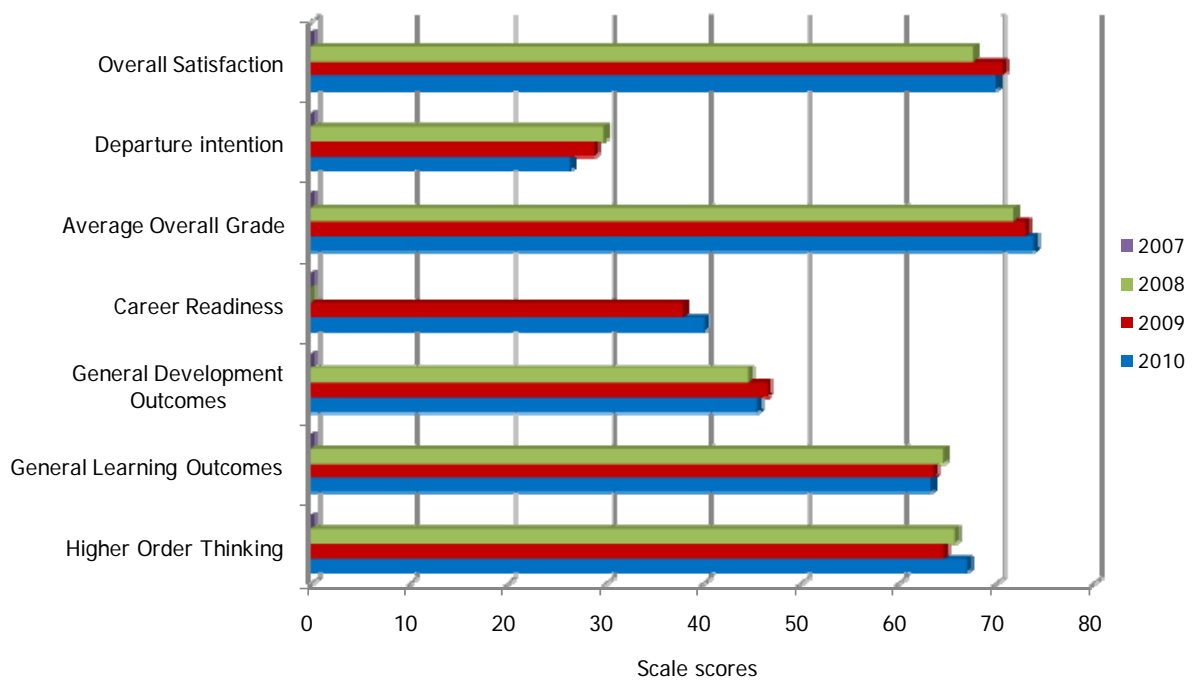
**Figure 5: Later-year student outcome scale scores**

### Cross-year comparisons

Looking at how the AUSSE results change over time helps identify areas for improvement, set targets to improve outcomes and monitor the impact of improvements. Figure 6 and Figure 7 show the scale scores for student engagement and student outcomes respectively at Australasian University for each year of participation in the AUSSE.



**Figure 6: Annual engagement scale scores Australasian University**



**Figure 7: Annual outcome scale scores Australasian University**



## Subgroup summary results

Engagement varies across groups of students. For Australasian University, the distributions of the responses across a number of key demographic and context characteristics are shown in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

**Table 3: Demographic subgroup scores for Australasian University**

	Australasian University	Female	Over 20 years of age	Equity group	Part-time or external	International	Non-English speaking background	First in family
Academic Challenge	49	50	50	50	49	48	50	50
Active Learning	40	40	41	40	36	40	41	39
Student and Staff Interactions	23	22	24	24	23	26	26	22
Enriching Educational Experiences	27	27	28	27	26	28	29	26
Supportive Learning Environment	54	54	53	56	53	57	55	54
Work Integrated Learning	45	46	50	47	52	41	40	46
Higher Order Thinking	67	68	68	68	67	64	67	67
General Learning Outcomes	63	64	65	66	65	61	64	65
General Development Outcomes	46	46	47	46	48	49	51	46
Career Readiness	40	40	42	40	41	43	46	40
Average Overall Grade	74	74	74	73	74	71	71	74
Departure Intention	27	28	28	30	33	19	19	28
Overall Satisfaction	70	71	69	70	69	64	66	70

**Table 4: Context subgroup scores for Australasian University**

	Australasian University	Internal mode	Full-time attendance	Living on campus	Government funded
Academic Challenge	49	49	50	48	49
Active Learning	40	41	41	39	40
Student and Staff Interactions	23	23	23	21	23
Enriching Educational Experiences	27	27	27	27	27
Supportive Learning Environment	54	55	55	59	54

Work Integrated Learning	45	44	45	40	45
Higher Order Thinking	67	67	67	65	67
General Learning Outcomes	63	63	63	61	64
General Development Outcomes	46	45	46	45	45
Career Readiness	40	40	40	35	39
Average Overall Grade	74	74	74	73	74
Departure Intention	27	26	26	23	27
Overall Satisfaction	70	70	70	75	71

**Table 5: Field of education subgroup scores for Australasian University**

	Sciences	IT	Engineering	Architecture	Agriculture	Health	Education	Business	Humanities	Creative Arts
Academic Challenge	48	41	49	49	49	49	52	48	51	51
Active Learning	38	36	41	41	41	41	45	39	37	43
Student and Staff Interactions	23	18	21	25	23	21	24	23	22	28
Enriching Educational Experiences	28	20	28	24	24	29	30	25	27	22
Supportive Learning Environment	56	48	54	48	58	54	53	54	55	55
Work Integrated Learning	35	35	46	43	47	53	58	46	38	43
Higher Order Thinking	63	55	69	63	65	68	68	64	70	70
General Learning Outcomes	65	56	67	61	67	63	66	64	62	65
General Development Outcomes	43	33	44	49	48	47	47	45	47	45
Career Readiness	37	29	42	36	36	38	39	47	39	46
Average Overall Grade	74	72	73	76	73	74	74	73	74	75
Departure Intention	27	20	16	54	13	30	22	23	29	29
Overall Satisfaction	76	63	67	65	74	69	68	68	73	71

## Using AUSSE data to promote change

AUSSE results provide a foundation of evidence for planning and monitoring change. This Executive Summary Report provides a broad outline of this institution's results for 2010. Using this report in conjunction with other resources and results from previous years will help to build evidence for identifying areas where improvement in engagement can be achieved.

For example, institutions have used their data to:

- run seminars with students, managers and teachers;
- benchmark results between institutions;
- prepare reports for specific divisions;
- run student focus groups and interviews;
- enhance teaching practices and learning space designs;
- hold institution-wide meetings to address problem areas; and
- integrate student management activities.

A range of resources are available to assist individual institutions, including:

- AUSSE 2010 Institution Report, which includes a copy of your institutions' unit-record data file;
- 2010 Australasian Student Engagement Report (released early 2011); and
- AUSSE Enhancement Guides, available at <http://ausse.acer.edu.au>.