

## **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 as well as New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics. It is closely linked to the North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In 2011, a pilot study was also undertaken with students at New Zealand Private Training Establishments (PTEs).

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 2011 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 2011, 41 institutions participated in the AUSSE or related surveys. In 2010, 54 institutions participated, up from 35 in 2009, 29 in 2008 and 25 in 2007. The AUSSE 2011 population includes 68,010 first-year and 79,748 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 2011, 751 institutions from the USA and Canada took part in the NSSE.

Based on instructions provided by Australasia University in early 2011, a systematic random sample of 2004 first-year and 1996 later-year on-shore students was drawn from the total population. This sample was designed to yield 800 responses. As shown in Table 2, 1000 students responded in total, giving an overall institutional response rate of 25 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.

The institutions included in the benchmark groups are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Benchmark groups**

<b>Benchmark Group 1</b>	<b>Benchmark Group 2</b>	<b>Benchmark Group 3</b>
Australian Catholic University	AIS St Helens	AIS St Helens
Bond University	AMES IT Academy	AMES IT Academy
Charles Darwin University	Avonmore Tertiary Institute	Australian Catholic University
Charles Sturt University	Bay of Plenty Polytechnic	Avonmore Tertiary Institute
Edith Cowan University	Bethlehem Tertiary Institute	Bay of Plenty Polytechnic
Flinders University	Catholic Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand	Bethlehem Tertiary Institute
Griffith University	Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology	Bond University
James Cook University	Computer Power Institute	Catholic Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand
La Trobe University	Eastern Institute of Technology	Charles Darwin University
Macquarie University	ITTI	Charles Sturt University
Murdoch University	Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology	Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology
Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE	New Zealand Institute of Education	Computer Power Institute

Polytechnic West	Open Polytechnic of New Zealand	Eastern Institute of Technology
Queensland University of Technology	Otago Polytechnic	Edith Cowan University
Southern Cross University	South Pacific College of Natural Therapies	Flinders University
University of Newcastle	Victoria University of Wellington	Griffith University
University of Notre Dame	Wellpark College of Natural Therapies Limited	ITTI
University of Queensland		James Cook University
University of South Australia		La Trobe University
University of Southern Queensland		Macquarie University
University of Tasmania		Murdoch University
University of the Sunshine Coast		Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology
University of Wollongong		New Zealand Institute of Education
		Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE
		Open Polytechnic of New Zealand
		Otago Polytechnic
		Polytechnic West
		Queensland University of Technology
		South Pacific College of Natural Therapies
		Southern Cross University
		University of Newcastle
		University of Notre Dame
		University of Queensland
		University of South Australia
		University of Southern Queensland
		University of Tasmania
		University of the Sunshine Coast
		University of Wollongong
		Victoria University of Wellington
		Wellpark College of Natural Therapies Limited

**Table 2: Population and response statistics**

	Australasia University		All institutions	
	First year	Later year	First year	Later year
Respondents	501	499	10818	10912
Target population size	2004	1996	48242	55275
Response rate	25	25	22	20

## Areas of performance scores

Around 100 specific learning activities and conditions are measured in the AUSSE. Table 3 summarises the areas in which Australasia 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 3: Performance above and below average**

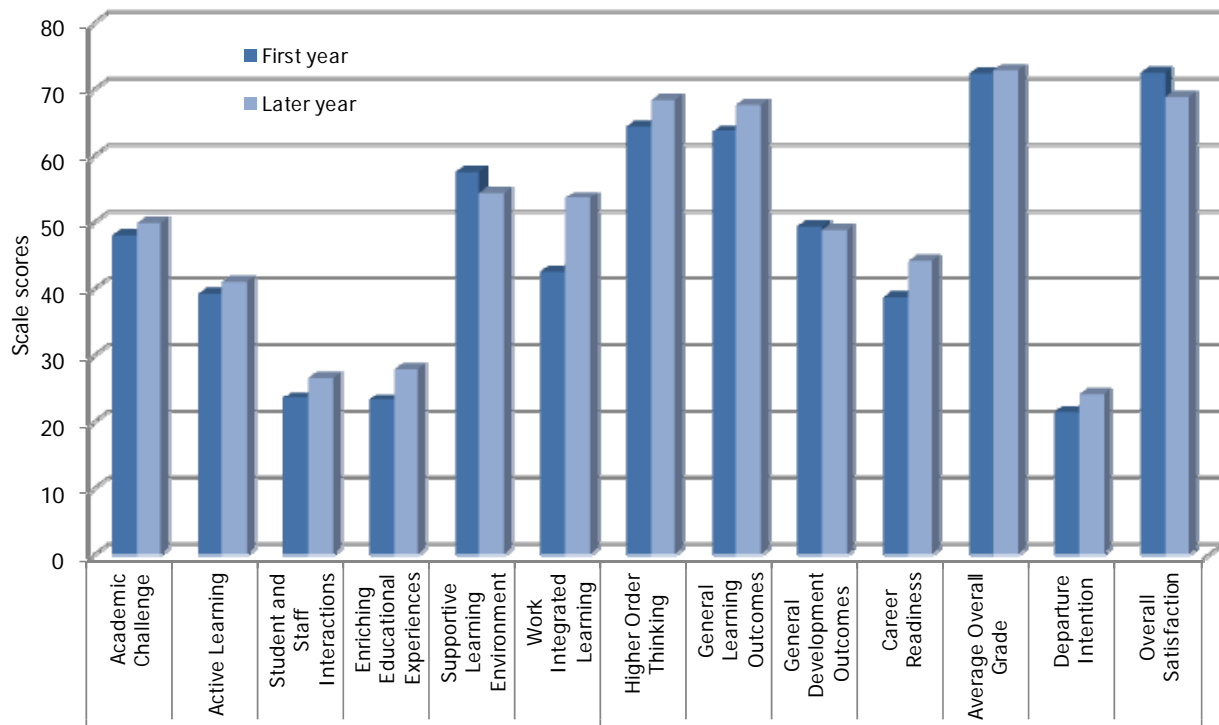
Performance below average	Performance above average
Need to do paid work	Made presentation
Used networking to source information on job opportunities	Exercise participation
Attend same institution if starting over	Conversations with students who are very different
Examinations have challenged to do best work	Being on campus, excluding time spent in class
Explored how to apply learning in the workplace	Prepared two or more drafts
Providing support to succeed academically	Worked hard to master difficult content
Study group/learning community	Prepared two or more drafts
Overall rating: Educational experience	Asked questions
Solving complex, real-world problems	Applying theories or concepts
Explored where to look for jobs relevant to your interests	Personal reasons
Attending campus events and activities	Analysing basic elements
Contributing to the welfare of your community	Being on campus, including time spent in class

## Engagement scale scores

This Executive Summary Report provides information about the responses to the 2011 AUSSE at Australasia 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 Australasia 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.



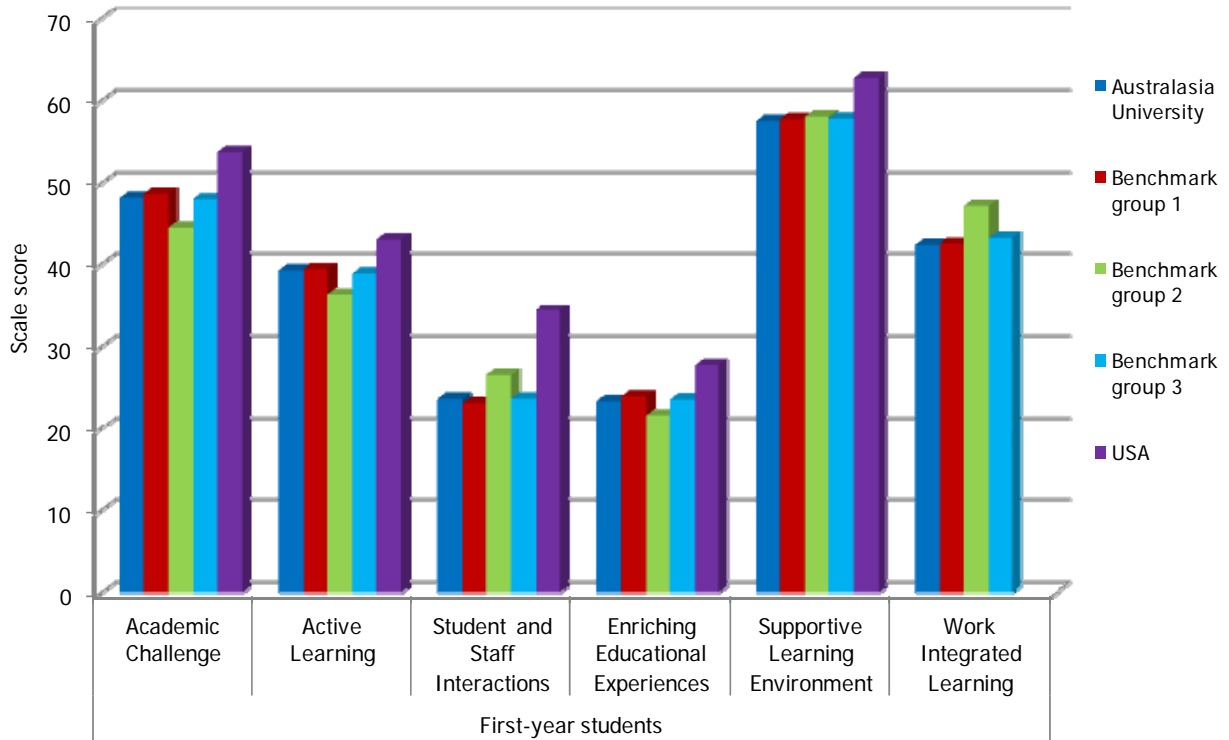
**Figure 1: Engagement and outcome scores for Australasia University by year level**

Engagement of first-year students is crucial for a range of reasons. It is important that new students adjust to study 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.

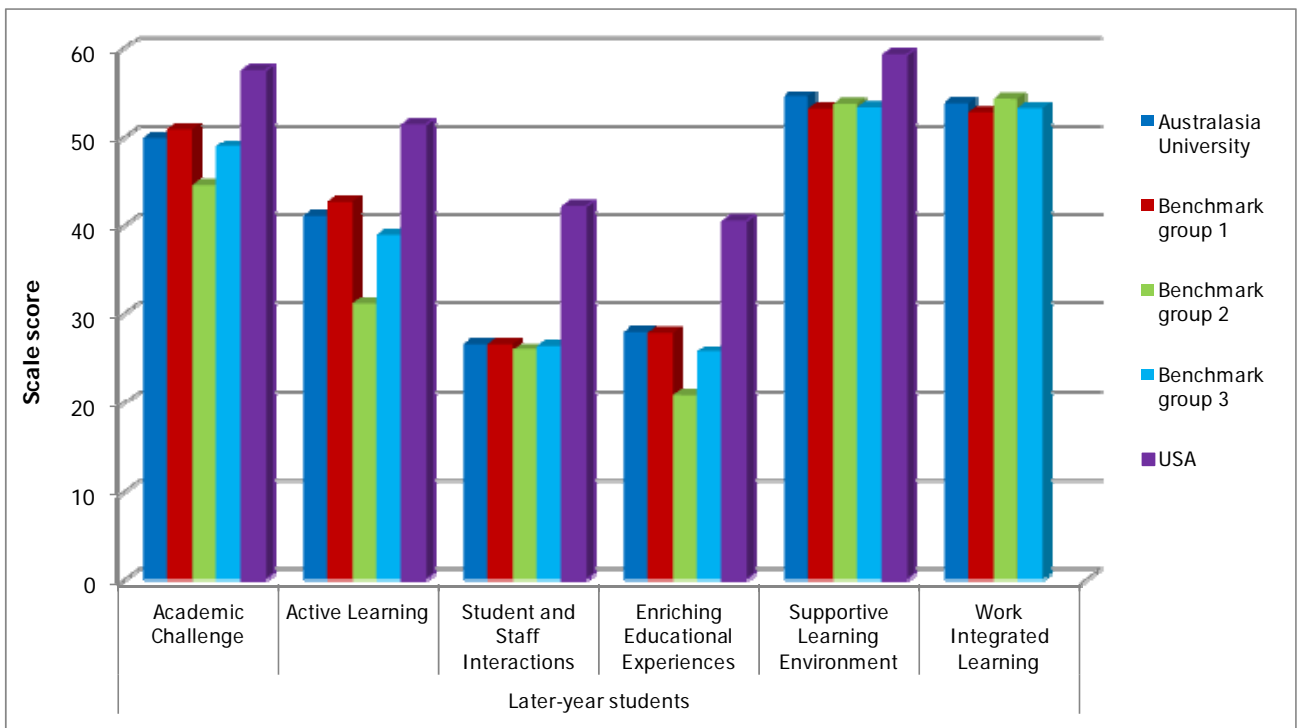
In Figure 3, the engagement scale scores of later-year students are compared with the benchmark group and overall scores for Australasia and North America. Examining these responses can provide further insight into the relative levels of engagement of students in this institution. These later-year figures 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 institutions 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**

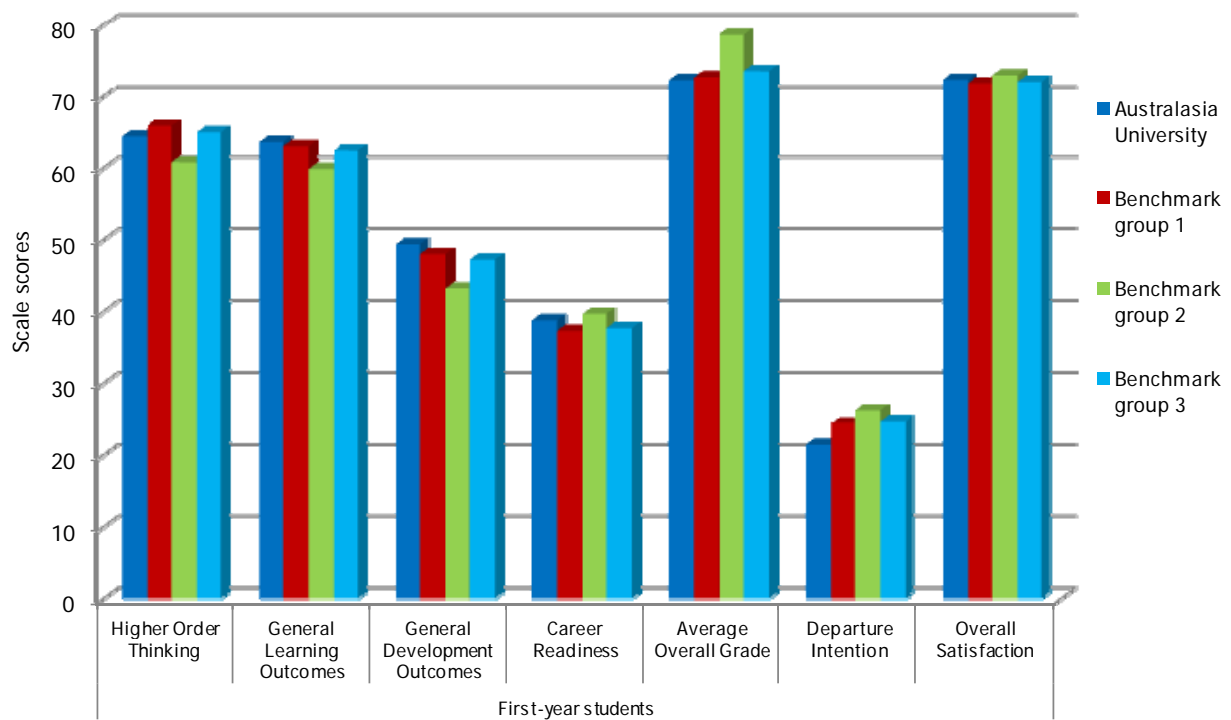


**Figure 3: Later-year student engagement scale scores**

### 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.

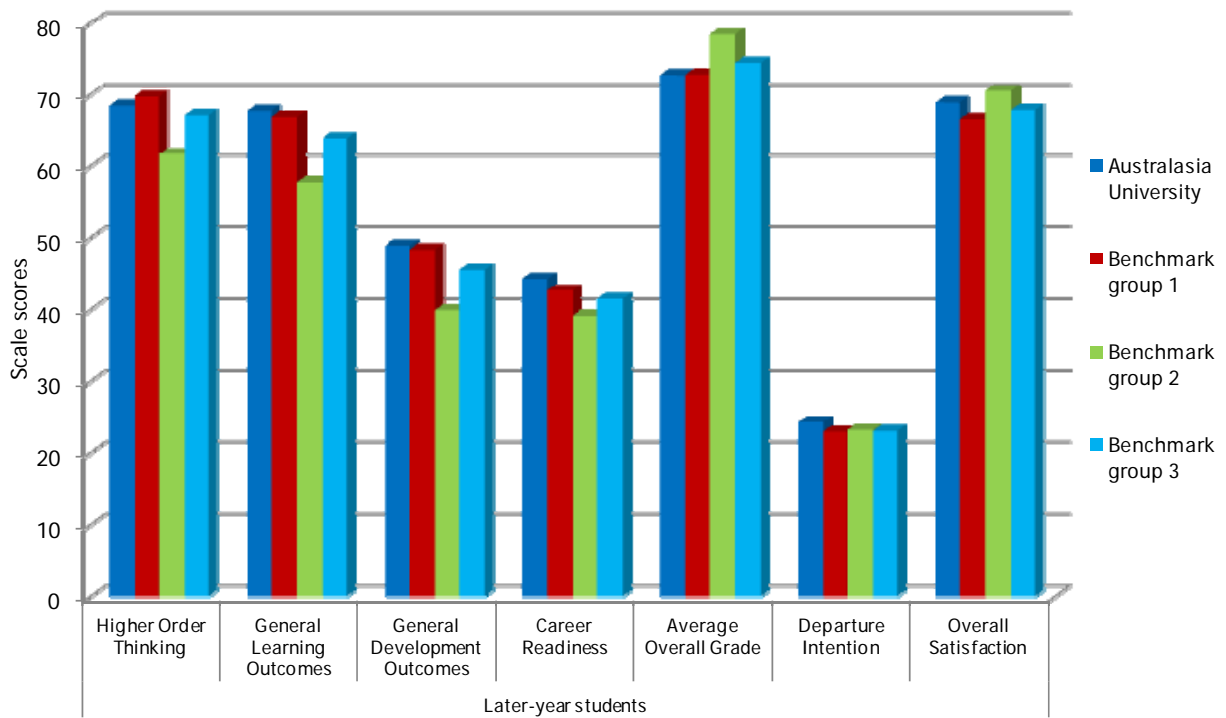
The outcomes measures from the first-year cohort of AUSSE respondents are displayed alongside several benchmarks in Figure 4.



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

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

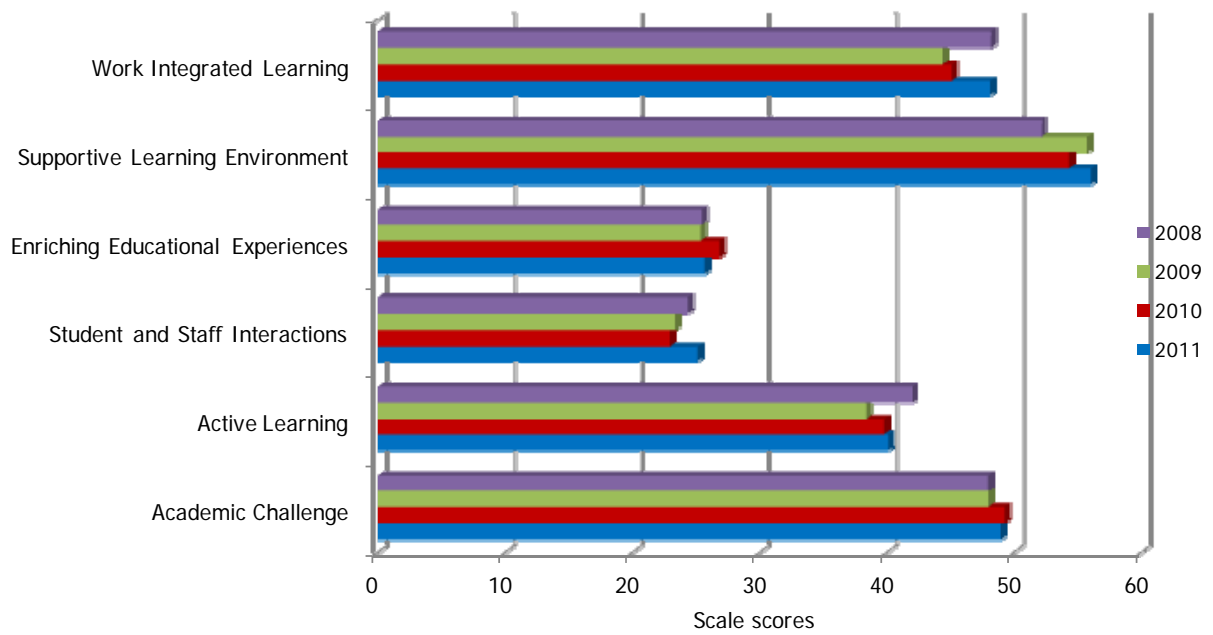




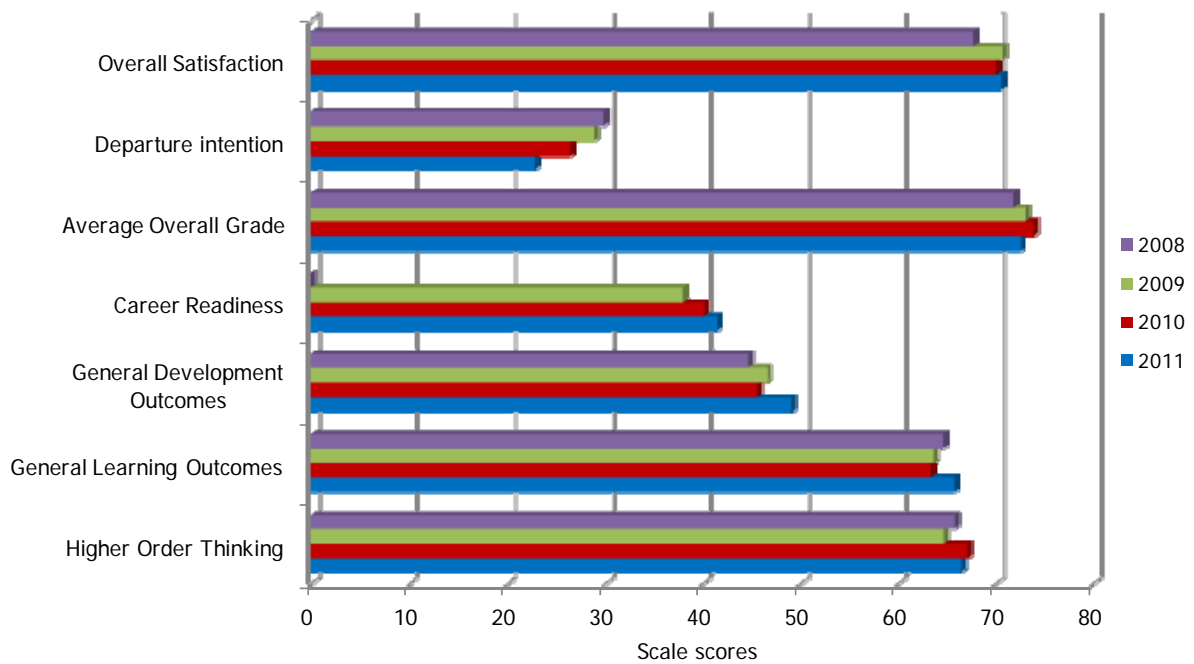
**Figure 5: Later-year student outcome scale scores**

### 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 Australasia University for each year of participation in the AUSSE.



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



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

## Subgroup summary results

Engagement varies across groups of students. For Australasia University, the distributions of the responses across a number of key demographic and context characteristics are shown in Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6.

**Table 4: Demographic subgroup scores for Australasia University**

	Australasia 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	49	49	49	50	49
Active Learning	40	40	41	40	35	42	41	39
Student and Staff Interactions	25	25	27	26	24	31	29	23
Enriching Educational Experiences	26	26	27	25	24	28	27	25
Supportive Learning Environment	56	56	55	55	52	58	57	54
Work Integrated Learning	48	50	52	49	52	43	42	50
Higher Order Thinking	66	68	68	66	66	66	66	65
General Learning Outcomes	66	66	68	66	65	64	64	66
General Development Outcomes	49	50	50	50	47	51	53	49
Career Readiness	42	43	43	40	41	43	44	41
Average Overall Grade	73	73	72	73	72	69	70	72
Departure Intention	23	22	24	25	25	24	24	23
Overall Satisfaction	71	72	70	71	70	64	66	70

**Table 5: Context subgroup scores for Australasia University**

	Australasia University	Internal mode	Full-time attendance	Living on campus	Government funded
Academic Challenge	49	49	49	50	49
Active Learning	40	42	41	41	40
Student and Staff Interactions	25	26	26	25	24
Enriching Educational Experiences	26	26	26	27	25

Supportive Learning Environment	56	57	57	63	56
Work Integrated Learning	48	47	48	41	49
Higher Order Thinking	66	67	67	66	67
General Learning Outcomes	66	66	66	64	66
General Development Outcomes	49	49	49	50	49
Career Readiness	42	41	43	40	41
Average Overall Grade	73	73	73	73	73
Departure Intention	23	23	23	21	23
Overall Satisfaction	71	71	70	75	71

**Table 6: Field of education subgroup scores for Australasia University**

	Sciences	IT	Engineering	Architecture	Agriculture	Health	Education	Business	Humanities	Creative Arts
Academic Challenge	47	40	49	45	47	50	51	49	51	48
Active Learning	37	35	40	37	36	41	45	40	37	44
Student and Staff Interactions	22	20	26	25	24	26	28	26	23	30
Enriching Educational Experiences	24	20	27	23	23	28	27	26	24	25
Supportive Learning Environment	58	49	57	56	60	57	58	55	55	56
Work Integrated Learning	37	39	52	37	46	56	61	46	42	47
Higher Order Thinking	65	54	68	60	62	68	67	67	68	66
General Learning Outcomes	63	59	72	56	58	66	72	66	65	64
General Development Outcomes	45	41	49	38	40	50	55	47	52	44
Career Readiness	38	42	43	37	45	43	42	48	38	42
Average Overall Grade	71	74	73	75	71	73	73	71	73	75
Departure Intention	30	28	19	50	7	21	24	21	23	25
Overall Satisfaction	74	63	72	65	71	70	73	67	74	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 2011. 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 2011 Institution Report, which includes a copy of your institutions' unit-record data file;
- 2011 Australasian Student Engagement Report (released in 2012); and
- AUSSE Enhancement Guides, available at <http://www.acer.edu.au/research/ausse>.