

STUDENT SURVEY.IE

The Irish Survey
of Student
Engagement (ISSE)
Results from 2015

**STUDENT
SURVEY.IE**

**WE'RE
LISTENING
WE'RE
LEARNING**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project team continues to appreciate the importance of the national collaborative partnership in implementing the Irish Survey of Student Engagement in 2015. In particular, the team notes the improved response rate which is a result of the commitment of students who responded to the survey, and of students' union officers and institutions' staff who supported and promoted the survey locally. Project working groups continue to provide strategic direction and appropriate action. This national report is possible only because of the contribution of all partners.

www.studentsurvey.ie

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This report presents results from the 2015 Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE). 2015 saw the second 'full' iteration of survey fieldwork, following a successful national pilot survey with twenty six institutions in 2013 and full implementation with thirty institutions in 2014. A detailed online survey was offered to first year undergraduates, final year undergraduates and postgraduate students pursuing taught programmes. More than 27,300 students (from thirty institutions) responded to the survey which was undertaken in February – March 2015.

The survey seeks to collect information on student engagement in order to provide a more valuable and informed insight into students' experiences than is possible from other information sources. The survey collects information on how students engage with their learning environments. Students' engagement with college life is important in enabling them to develop key capabilities such as critical thinking, problem-solving, writing skills, team work and communication skills. The results of the survey are intended to add value at institutional level, and to inform national policy.

Overview of the report

CHAPTER 1 of the report outlines the reason for a focus on student engagement and provides the objectives for implementation of the ISSE. This chapter outlines some of the potential of using the resulting dataset to inform enhancement activities.

CHAPTER 2 of the report provides details of student responses to each of the questions asked. These are presented as percentages of students selecting each response. Results are provided for all participating students and for each of the year group / cohorts i.e. first year undergraduate, final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate. Questions are grouped together according to the index to which they contribute.

CHAPTER 3 presents an analysis of index scores relating to student **engagement** and student **outcomes**. Indices present an additional way to explore the data by signalling differences in results from different groups of students or from similar groups over multiple survey iterations.

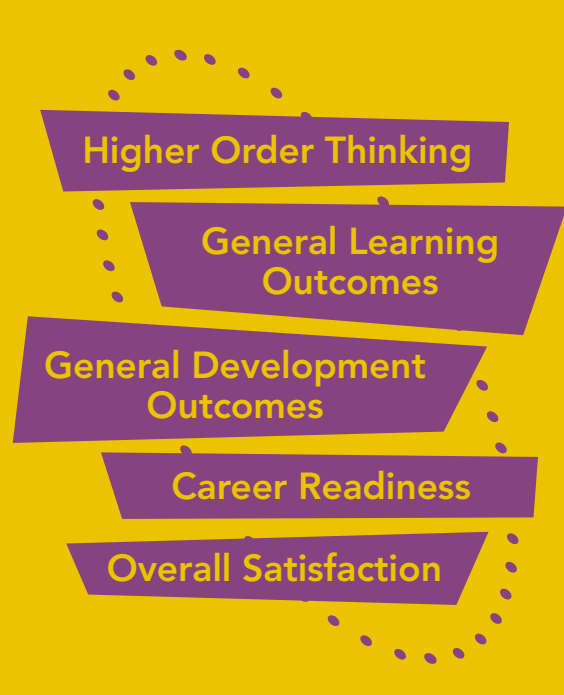
ENGAGEMENT INDICES



The chapter includes charts illustrating 2015 index scores for various student groupings i.e. index scores presented by each year group / cohort, by institution-type, by mode of study (full-time or part-time) and by field of study. Some key observations follow each chart. Fuller understanding of what the data may tell us requires consideration of influencing factors, including the local context.

CHAPTER 4 considers the results from ISSE 2015 in a wider context. This chapter presents main national results from 2015 alongside results from 2014 and from the 2013 national pilot. It also refers to the international context.

OUTCOMES INDICES



CHAPTER 5 provides a deeper insight into particular subsets of the data and is intended to illustrate the potential offered by further analysis of the rich dataset generated by this comprehensive survey. This chapter examines two of the indices in more depth, looking into responses to individual questions and exploring the experiences of different student groups. The analysis exemplifies the detail that can be explored for any index to inform discussion of local objectives or priorities. The indices explored are Active Learning and Student – Staff Interactions. Key points identified in this chapter, for these two indices, include:

- There was almost an even split in students' responses to asking questions or contributing to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online. Approximately half of the students report that they had 'never' or 'sometimes' engaged in such an activity while the other half report they have 'often' or 'very often' asked questions or contributed to discussions
- 34% of students have 'often' or 'very often' made a class or online presentation
- 54% of students report working regularly with students inside class to prepare assignments while 44% report that they work with other students outside class to prepare assignments
- Only 10% of students report tutoring or teaching other college students with the majority indicating that they 'never' (67%) or 'sometimes' (23%) participate in peer teaching
- 91% of students 'never' or 'sometimes' participate in a community-based project as part of their course, although the inclusion of the wording "as part of their course" may mask the number of such students who undertake these activities voluntarily
- 59% of students report that they 'often' or 'very often' discuss ideas from their coursework with others outside of their class
- 45% of students report that they have 'sometimes' discussed their grades or assignments with teaching staff and 23% selecting 'often' or 'very often'
- 12% of students report that they have 'often' or 'very often' talked about career plans with teaching staff or career advisors. Final year students report higher levels of interaction here with 17% choosing 'often' or 'very often'
- Half of all students have 'never' discussed ideas from their coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class. Postgraduate students report the greatest incidence of interaction (62% 'sometimes', 'often' or 'very often') compared to 49% 'sometimes', 'often' or 'very often' for first years. Postgraduate students also report more occasions of receiving timely feedback on academic performance (43% 'often' or 'very often') than first and final year students (33% and 36% respectively)

The deeper exploration of the data generated by the survey provides an indication of the potential value and additional benefits of implementing the ISSE over time. Individual institutions have gained an increasingly rich and detailed source of information on the experiences of their students and can choose to explore any relevant aspects of this to inform discussions on locally identified priorities.

CHAPTER 6 provides an outline of continuing actions being taken to support and encourage institutions to realise the potential of this increasingly valuable source of data on students' experiences. It refers to a series of workshops, organised in partnership with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, which explore the data from the perspective of different disciplines. This chapter also refers to the process to revise, update and improve the questionnaire for use in future years.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT FOR THE

IRISH SURVEY OF

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

1.1

WHAT IS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND IS IT IMPORTANT?

The term 'student engagement' can be used to describe a number of different aspects of students' interaction with higher education and with the institutions that provide this potentially transformative experience. Some of these aspects are under discussion at a national policy level. In the context of the ISSE, we explore student engagement with learning and with their learning environments. We do not directly address other elements of engagement such as student representation on committees at institution or faculty level.

Significant research¹ has been undertaken on student engagement with learning and the effects of this interaction. Previous reports from the ISSE have referred to research undertaken over several decades. Informed largely by development of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in the US and its implementation since 2000, system-wide surveys of engagement have been implemented in various forms in Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand and South Africa as well as Ireland.²

Engagement with college life is seen as important in enabling students to develop key capabilities such as critical thinking, problem-solving, writing skills, team work and communication skills. Coates (2005)³ notes that engagement necessitates the provision of an appropriate learning environment and action by students to engage with that environment:

...learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities. Learning is seen as a 'joint proposition'... however, it also depends on institutions and staff providing students with the conditions, opportunities and expectations to become involved.

Discussion on student engagement with learning recognises that students gain most when they invest time and energy in their learning; and that institutions and staff have key roles in providing an environment that both encourages and facilitates that engagement. Analysis and interpretation of data from a survey instrument that measures student engagement and, thereby seeks to investigate the reality of students' varied and rich experiences of higher education, offers significant potential to inform discussions and activities relating to quality assurance and enhancement.

1. Trowler V., Trowler P. (2010) Student Engagement Evidence Summary. Higher Education Academy. York
2. Coates, H., McCormick, A. (2014) Engaging University Students: International Insights from System-Wide Studies. Springer
3. Coates, H. (2005) The Value of Student Engagement in Higher Education Quality Assurance. Quality in Higher Education

Learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities. Learning is seen as a 'joint proposition'... however, it also depends on institutions and staff providing students with the conditions, opportunities and expectations to become involved.

Coates, H. (2005)

1.2 CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives for developing and implementing a national student survey were defined as:

- To increase transparency in relation to the student experience in higher education institutions
- To enable direct student input on levels of engagement and satisfaction with their higher education experience
- To identify good practice that enhances the student experience
- To assist institutions to identify issues and challenges affecting the student experience
- To serve as a guide for continual enhancement of institutions' teaching and learning and student engagement
- To document the experiences of the student population, thus enabling year on year comparisons of key performance indicators
- To facilitate comparison with higher education institutions and systems internationally.

The central aim of this project is to develop a valuable source of information about students' experiences of higher education in Ireland. The survey seeks to collect information on how students engage with their learning environments. The results of the survey are intended to add value at institutional level, primarily by enabling institutional leaders to consider the experiences of different groups of students within that institution and by demonstrating to students that their feedback is being heard and acted upon.

In addition, it is possible to consider local results in the larger context of similar institution-types, in the overall national context and relative to higher education systems in other countries that have implemented comparable surveys. Detailed results are also published in reports such as this one, providing findings from the national survey to a wide audience of partners and stakeholders.

It is increasingly clear that greatest value will be derived from consideration of multiple datasets. Analysis of these datasets will facilitate institutions to evaluate the impact of any specific initiatives or to identify local trends that may merit further exploration. For many institutions, the 2015 data represents the third dataset generated from the same question items. Therefore, many institutions will be able to collate data from multiple years' fieldwork to generate a larger dataset. This can facilitate more reliable analysis and interpretation of the experience of particular student groups. Similarly, this larger dataset offers increased potential for reliable analysis of the experiences of particular cohorts of the national student population. This may include, but is not limited to, students from specific subject disciplines; part-time and full-time students; Irish or international students.

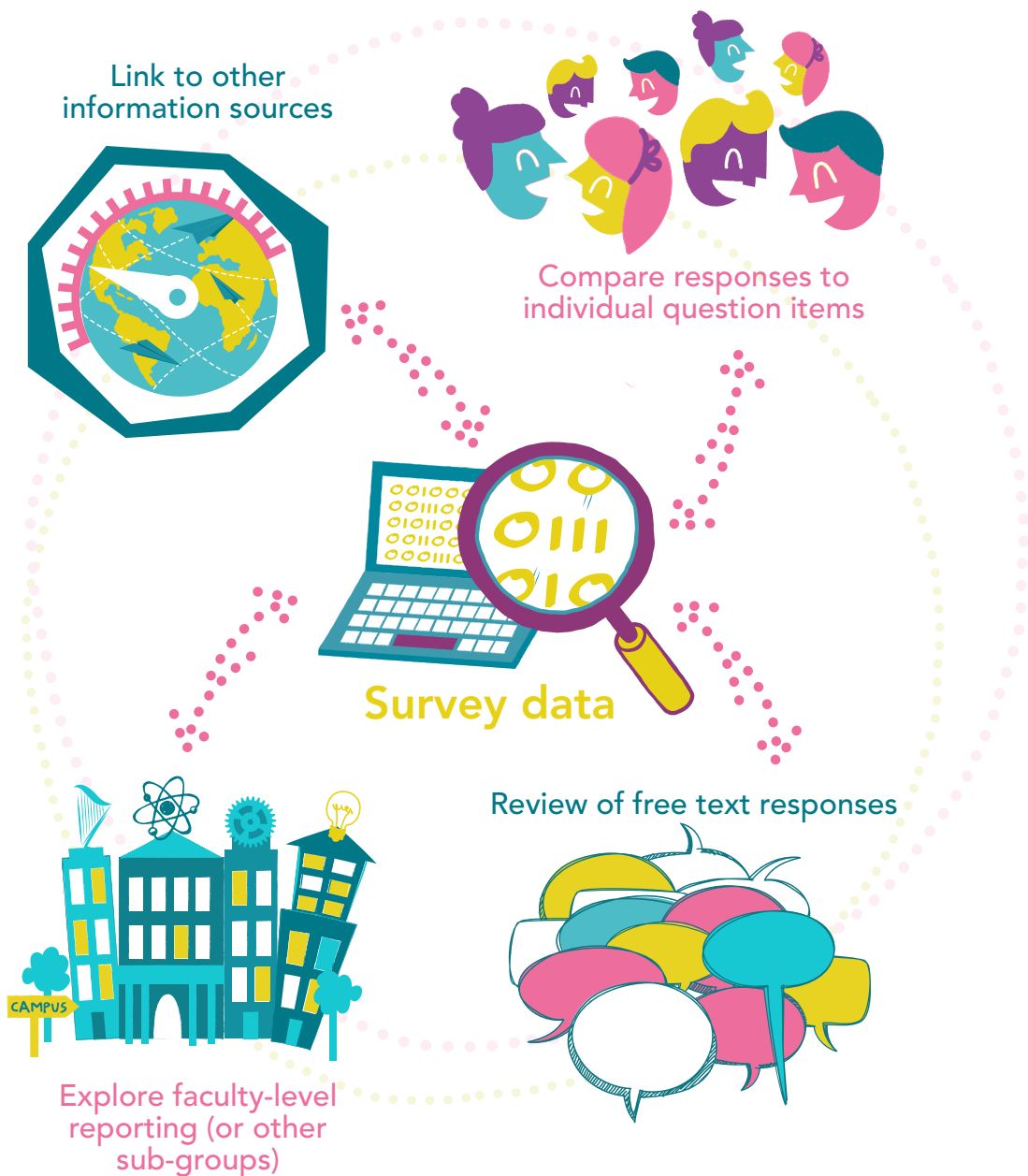
Of course, individual institutions utilise a range of information sources and instruments to review and evaluate the experiences of their students. ISSE data complements other sources of information and should be examined locally alongside other available information. Implementation of the ISSE can supplement existing practice by facilitating consideration of additional national and international contexts through the use of a consistent instrument.

1.3 USING ISSE TO SUPPORT ENHANCEMENT

Using ISSE data within institutions

2014 saw the first 'full' implementation of the ISSE following a successful large-scale national pilot in 2013. Participating institutions are committed to analysing and interpreting the resulting data to inform quality enhancement activities and discussions. In order to support such reflection and planning within institutions, and as one visible indication that these

interactions are taking place, a specific report was published in January 2015. Titled "*Effective feedback and uses of ISSE data: an emerging picture*"⁴, it provides examples of institutional practice and developing plans to utilise data from this survey, alongside existing information sources.



4. <http://studentsurvey.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/ISSE-Feedback-Report.pdf>

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT FOR THE IRISH SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Institutions explore and analyse ISSE data in a variety of ways. These include reviewing free text responses to the questions “*What are the BEST ASPECTS of how your institution engages students in learning?*” and “*What could be done to IMPROVE how your institution engages students?*”; comparing local responses to specific questions to responses from similar institution-types and nationally; comparing local index scores to similar institution-types, or nationally; comparing ISSE data to other information sources; and exploring the data for sub-groups such as faculties, full-time / part-time or Irish / non-Irish students. An increasing number of institutions are also collating data from multiple years of fieldwork. This approach can address issues of relatively low response rates by generating larger data sets for subgroups of the student population such as faculties or colleges and, thereby, increasing the reliability of such analysis. Twenty six of the thirty participating institutions have the potential to aggregate data from 2013, 2014 and 2015. This is somewhat different to gaining significantly higher response rates in one iteration of the survey but the approach offers potential for worthwhile analysis and interpretation in advance of securing notably higher participation.

Using ISSE data nationally

As implementation of the ISSE reaches a certain stage of maturity and stability, the resulting data is increasingly being used by national partners and stakeholders. The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning has facilitated a series of workshops exploring national data from the perspective of different subject disciplines. These workshops allow discipline specialists to reflect on what the data is telling them about their own discipline and, as such, act as a useful additional context to discussions that are taking place within institutions.

The Union of Students in Ireland is committed to assisting and encouraging its member organisations to use ISSE data as an evidence base for future initiatives and policy objectives. A number of workshops will be held, on a regional and sectoral basis, to consider how students’ unions can act to effectively utilise survey data.

In May 2015, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) hosted an inaugural quality enhancement seminar for higher education. The aim of the seminar was to enable higher education institutions to collectively share and discuss quality enhancement practices. Two institutions (DCU and AIT) presented on the topic of using of ISSE findings to improve teaching and learning, demonstrating the potential of the ISSE as an additional valuable information source.

The Higher Education Authority regards the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) as central to the implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, which called for data developments to ensure that the perspective of students informs development and refinement of higher education policy and practice at institutional and at national level. As an institutional survey it aims to achieve local impact and, as a national survey, the ISSE gives students a voice beyond their own institution that will impact on the future planning and development of teaching and learning across the higher education sector. Most importantly, the HEA is keen to ensure that student perspectives gathered through this instrument are actively used internally within institutions to inform programme development and delivery. It is also notable and welcome that many institutions are using the results as a basis for strategic planning and performance enhancement in the institutional compacts agreed with the HEA under the strategic dialogue process. The HEA and project partners are also discussing how to develop capacity across the system in utilising findings at institutional level.



NOTES FOR INTERPRETING THE DATA

Q: Are index scores percentages? How is each index calculated?

Index scores are **not** percentages. They are calculated scores to enable interpretation of the data at a higher level than individual questions i.e. to act as signposts to help the reader to navigate large data sets.

Each question in the survey has between 4 and 8 possible responses. These are converted to a 100 point scale. To illustrate, if response 3 is chosen from 4 possible responses, this converts to a score of 66.67 as in the example below:

Question	Responses			
Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Responses transformed to 100-point scale	0	33.33	66.67	100

Index scores are calculated for an individual student when he/ she provides responses to the majority of contributing questions. The exact number of responses required varies according to the index, based on psychometric testing undertaken by NSSE and AUSSE, but a majority is always required. For example, eleven questions contribute to the index *Academic Challenge*. Six of these must be answered in order to calculate the index score. Seven questions contribute to *Active Learning*. Four of these must be answered in order to calculate the index score. The index score is calculated from the mean of responses given, excluding non-responses.

Index scores for any particular student group, for example first years, are calculated as the mean of individual index scores.

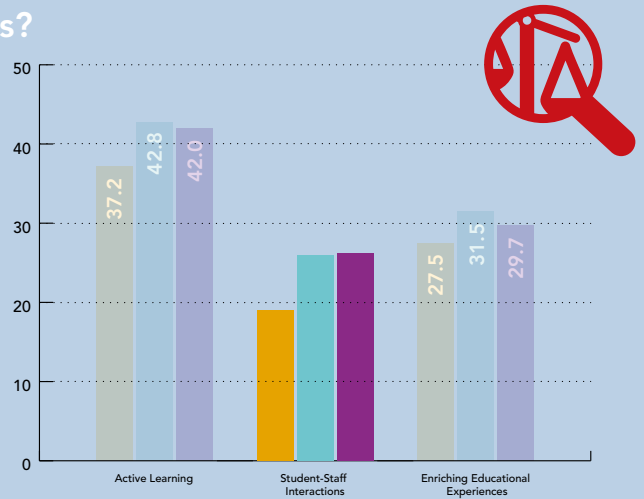
Q: How can I make best use of index scores?

Index scores provide greatest benefit when used as signposts to explore the experiences of different groups of students - for example, final year full-time students and final year part-time students. In particular, index scores provide greatest insight into the experiences of comparable cohorts over multiple datasets e.g. the experiences of 2014 first year students relative to 2013 first year students. If a particular index score prompts interest, it is most appropriate to investigate further by considering the number of responses (to check if the score can be regarded as representative of that group) and by reviewing the contributing questions.



Q: Should I compare scores for different indices?

Different indices should not be compared to each other. For example, there is no simple direct link between scores for *Active Learning* and scores for *Student-Staff Interactions*. This chart (right) is used to illustrate this point. **No useful interpretation can be drawn from the fact that scores for Active Learning are generally higher than the scores for Student-Staff Interactions.** However, the following differences may usefully be explored: *Active Learning* scores for final year students are higher than *Active Learning* scores for other cohorts; *Student-Staff Interactions* scores appear notably lower for first years than *Student-Staff Interactions* scores for other cohorts.



CHAPTER 2

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

OF THE 2015 ISSE

2.1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents results from implementation of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) in 2015. It provides an overview of response rates for different groups of the student population and of the demographic profile of respondents.

This is followed by national-level percentage responses for individual questions. Responses to individual questions are presented in groups corresponding to the Engagement or Outcomes index to which they contribute.

2.2

RESPONSE RATES AND DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 27,359 students responded to the 2015 survey. This produced an overall response rate of 21.9%. The sample includes 12,603 first year undergraduate students, 10,197 final year undergraduate students and 4,559 postgraduate students. Table 2.1 presents the demographic profile of respondents.

As in previous years, the profile of respondents closely matches the overall student population profile at national level. For clarity, other than the demographic data presented in table 2.1, results used in this report are weighted by sex, mode of study and year / cohort.

Once again, it is positive to note that the number of responses nationally has increased. Most participating institutions gained higher response rates in 2015 than in 2014, continuing the increased response rate from the previous year. For example, the response rate for Universities, overall, increased from 14.0% in 2014 to 17.8% in 2015. The response rate for Institutes of Technology, overall, increased from 15.6% in 2014 to 25.8% in 2015. The response rate for 'other institutions' increased from 26% in 2014

to 29.2% in 2015. These figures should not be taken as a direct indication of the effort expended to promote participation within individual institutions as experience demonstrates that a range of factors can influence the number of responses achieved in any given year.

The ISSE continues to contribute to a substantial dataset to inform discussion of the experiences of students in Irish higher education institutions. Since the national pilot in 2013, almost 60,000 students have responded to the survey. However, to realise the full potential of the data, institutions and other partners acknowledge that it is important to continue to increase response rates to support reliable analysis of the experiences of sub-groups of the student population within institutions, for example, at faculty or school level. This is critical to maximise the value of the survey as a tool for the enhancement of teaching and learning within each institution. Analysis of ISSE data to date demonstrates that, in common with other countries that have implemented comparable surveys, greatest variation is evident within institutions rather than between institutions.

Table 2.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Population		Responses		Response Rate (%)
National	124,660		27,359		21.9%
Age					
23 and Under	69,113	55.4%	16,759	61.3%	24.2%
24 and Over	55,547	44.6%	10,600	38.7%	19.1%
Gender					
Female	63,027	50.6%	15,816	57.8%	25.1%
Male	61,633	49.4%	11,543	42.2%	18.7%
Institution-type					
Universities	63,880	51.2%	11,380	41.6%	17.8%
Institutes of Technology	51,620	41.4%	13,307	48.6%	25.8%
Other institutions	9,160	7.3%	2,672	9.8%	29.2%
Mode of Study					
Full-time	101,197	81.2%	24,106	88.1%	23.8%
Part-time / remote	23,463	18.8%	3,253	11.9%	13.9%
Field of Study *					
Generic Programmes & Qualifications	58	0.0%	9	0.0%	15.5%
Education	7,791	6.2%	1,688	6.2%	21.7%
Arts & Humanities	19,932	16.0%	4,239	15.5%	21.3%
Social Sciences, Journalism & Information	7,202	5.8%	1,526	5.6%	21.2%
Business, Administration & Law	27,176	21.8%	5,491	20.1%	20.2%
Natural Sciences, Mathematics & Statistics	10,158	8.1%	2,700	9.9%	26.6%
Information & Communication Technologies	9,708	7.8%	2,367	8.7%	24.4%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	13,382	10.7%	2,931	10.7%	21.9%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries & Veterinary	2,030	1.6%	442	1.6%	21.8%
Health & Welfare	20,437	16.4%	4,385	16.0%	21.5%
Services	6,786	5.4%	1,581	5.8%	23.3%
Year/Cohort					
Undergraduate – First Year	52,924	42.5%	12,603	46.1%	23.8%
Undergraduate – Final Year	45,383	36.4%	10,197	37.3%	22.5%
Postgraduate (taught)	26,353	21.1%	4,559	16.7%	17.3%

* A revised ISCED classification was used in 2015 leading to different field of study categories from those used in previous ISSE reports.

2.3 RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

Each individual question contributes to a specific engagement or outcomes index. The scores for each index are calculated from responses to multiple questions

that contribute to that index. Percentage responses to each question are presented in the following section and are grouped under the relevant index title.

2.3.1 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO **ACADEMIC CHALLENGE**

Academic Challenge reflects the extent to which expectations and assessments challenge students to learn.

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet a teacher's/ tutor's standards or expectations (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	13.0	17.2	10.0	8.5
	<i>Sometimes</i>	42.1	45.3	40.9	36.1
	<i>Often</i>	33.2	28.9	36.2	38.1
	<i>Very often</i>	11.7	8.6	12.9	17.3
Analysing the basic elements of an idea, problem, experience or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components (During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?)	<i>Very little</i>	4.0	5.0	3.6	2.2
	<i>Some</i>	23.6	26.9	23.0	16.2
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	42.9	42.3	43.9	42.3
	<i>Very much</i>	29.5	25.8	29.5	39.3
Organising and synthesising ideas, information or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships (During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?)	<i>Very Little</i>	7.9	9.5	7.6	4.2
	<i>Some</i>	30.0	33.7	29.9	20.4
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	39.2	37.9	39.9	41.5
	<i>Very much</i>	22.9	19.0	22.6	34.0
Making judgements about the value of information, arguments or methods, (e.g. examining how others gather and interpret data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions) (During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?)	<i>Very Little</i>	9.0	11.0	8.7	4.3
	<i>Some</i>	29.8	34.6	28.1	20.6
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	37.2	35.7	38.1	39.3
	<i>Very much</i>	24.0	18.7	25.0	35.8

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations (During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?)	<i>Very little</i>	6.6	7.3	6.8	4.4
	<i>Some</i>	25.1	28.3	24.0	19.2
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	37.3	36.7	37.9	37.5
	<i>Very much</i>	31.0	27.8	31.3	38.9
Assigned textbooks, books, book-length packs or journal articles of subject readings have you read (During the current academic year approximately how many?)	<i>None</i>	10.2	14.2	8.5	3.3
	<i>1 to 4</i>	33.2	42.2	29.1	17.8
	<i>5 to 10</i>	20.8	22.4	20.6	16.9
	<i>11 to 19</i>	12.0	10.6	12.8	13.8
	<i>More than 20</i>	23.8	10.6	29.0	48.3
Assignments of fewer than 1,000 words or equivalent have you completed (During the current academic year approximately how many?)	<i>None</i>	26.7	18.4	32.0	37.3
	<i>1 to 4</i>	43.5	47.9	41.1	36.7
	<i>5 to 10</i>	18.4	20.2	17.2	16.4
	<i>11 to 19</i>	7.2	8.4	6.6	5.5
	<i>More than 20</i>	4.1	5.1	3.1	4.0
Assignments of between 1,000 and 5,000 words or equivalent have you completed (During the current academic year approximately how many?)	<i>None</i>	13.4	20.9	7.5	6.5
	<i>1 to 4</i>	49.5	49.5	49.5	49.5
	<i>5 to 10</i>	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5
	<i>11 to 19</i>	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7
	<i>More than 20</i>	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
Assignments of more than 5,000 words or equivalent have you completed (During the current academic year approximately how many?)	<i>None</i>	62.5	83.5	43.9	47.5
	<i>1 to 4</i>	31.0	12.2	47.9	43.9
	<i>5 to 10</i>	4.4	2.6	5.5	6.5
	<i>11 to 19</i>	1.4	1.1	1.8	1.4
	<i>More than 20</i>	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.7
Preparing for class (e.g. studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analysing data, rehearsing and other academic activities) (About how many hours do you spend in a typical seven-day week doing each of the following?)	<i>None</i>	3.0	3.2	3.2	1.9
	<i>1 to 5</i>	34.7	38.8	33.2	26.5
	<i>6 to 10</i>	23.4	25.8	21.3	21.8
	<i>11 to 15</i>	15.1	15.4	13.9	16.7
	<i>16 to 20</i>	10.2	8.2	11.2	13.1
	<i>21 to 25</i>	5.6	4.2	6.2	8.1
	<i>26 to 30</i>	3.3	2.0	4.4	4.6
	<i>Over 30</i>	4.7	2.2	6.6	7.2

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work (To what extent does your institution encourage each of the following?)	<i>Very little</i>	3.3	3.7	3.1	2.4
	<i>Some</i>	21.0	24.3	19.6	15.3
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	46.9	48.6	46.0	44.3
	<i>Very much</i>	28.8	23.3	31.3	38.1

2.3.2 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO ACTIVE LEARNING

Active Learning reflects students' efforts to actively construct knowledge

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	5.6	7.6	4.7	2.3
	<i>Sometimes</i>	43.6	50.2	41.2	31.0
	<i>Often</i>	30.1	28.0	32.0	32.0
	<i>Very often</i>	20.6	14.3	22.1	34.8
Made a class or online presentation (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	20.7	27.1	13.2	20.0
	<i>Sometimes</i>	45.1	47.5	44.4	40.0
	<i>Often</i>	24.3	19.9	28.6	26.7
	<i>Very often</i>	9.9	5.6	13.8	13.3
Worked with other students inside class to prepare assignments (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	12.2	11.0	11.8	16.8
	<i>Sometimes</i>	32.9	34.0	31.4	33.2
	<i>Often</i>	36.4	38.2	36.6	31.0
	<i>Very often</i>	18.5	16.9	20.2	19.1
Worked with other students outside class to prepare assignments (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	22.4	22.2	20.5	27.0
	<i>Sometimes</i>	33.5	35.3	32.0	32.1
	<i>Often</i>	28.8	29.9	29.5	24.2
	<i>Very often</i>	15.3	12.6	18.1	16.7

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Tutored or taught other college students (paid or voluntary) (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	Never	67.4	69.4	63.6	70.4
	Sometimes	23.1	22.5	25.5	19.3
	Often	6.9	6.3	7.8	6.3
	Very often	2.7	1.9	3.1	3.9
Participated in a community-based project (e.g. volunteering) as part of your course (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	Never	76.7	80.1	70.9	80.1
	Sometimes	14.2	12.2	17.6	11.9
	Often	6.0	5.1	7.5	5.1
	Very often	3.2	2.6	4.0	2.9
Discussed ideas from your coursework with others outside class (e.g. students, family members, co-workers, etc.) (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	Never	6.8	7.6	6.4	5.4
	Sometimes	35.0	35.6	35.1	32.9
	Often	36.7	35.9	37	38.0
	Very often	21.6	20.9	21.5	23.7

2.3.3

QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENT-STAFF INTERACTIONS

Student - Staff Interactions reflects the level and nature of students' contact and interactions with teaching staff

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Discussed your grades or assignments with teaching staff / tutors (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	Never	32.3	38.7	25.3	30.4
	Sometimes	44.9	42.6	47.4	45.5
	Often	16.6	14.0	19.8	16.7
	Very often	6.3	4.8	7.5	7.5
Talked about your career plans with teaching staff or career advisors (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	Never	55.4	67.4	42.7	51.1
	Sometimes	31.8	24.4	39.8	34.4
	Often	9.4	6.0	13.0	10.7
	Very often	3.3	2.2	4.5	3.8

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Discussed ideas from your coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	49.8	61.2	41.1	38.2
	<i>Sometimes</i>	36.5	30.0	41.6	42.9
	<i>Often</i>	10.5	6.7	13.4	14.6
	<i>Very often</i>	3.2	2.1	3.9	4.3
Received timely written or oral feedback from teachers/tutors on your academic performance (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Very little</i>	18.1	20.6	16.2	15.3
	<i>Some</i>	46.3	46.6	47.7	42.6
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	27.1	25.1	27.9	30.6
	<i>Very much</i>	8.5	7.7	8.2	11.6
Worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework (e.g. committees, orientation, student organisations etc.) (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	73.6	77.6	68.1	74.8
	<i>Sometimes</i>	18.2	15.8	21.5	17.1
	<i>Often</i>	6.2	5.2	7.7	5.8
	<i>Very often</i>	2.0	1.4	2.7	2.2
Work on a research project with a staff member outside of coursework requirements (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	24.2	28.6	21.3	18.8
	<i>Have not decided</i>	22.0	29.0	16.2	15.9
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	32.8	20.8	43.1	42.2
	<i>Plan to do</i>	15.3	19.0	10.2	16.5
	<i>Done</i>	5.7	2.5	9.1	6.5

2.3.4 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Enriching Educational Experiences reflects students’ participation in broadening educational activities

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Used an online learning system to discuss or complete an assignment e.g. Moodle, Blackboard (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	14.0	12.9	14.3	16.7
	<i>Sometimes</i>	22.8	21.5	24.2	22.9
	<i>Often</i>	26.2	26.7	26.3	24.4
	<i>Very often</i>	37.0	38.8	35.2	36.0

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Had conversations with students of a different ethnicity/ nationality than your own (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	10.4	9.3	10.4	13.3
	<i>Sometimes</i>	31.6	30.0	34.1	30.2
	<i>Often</i>	30.9	30.9	31.6	29.5
	<i>Very often</i>	27.1	29.8	23.9	26.9
Had conversations with students who are very different to you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	13.3	12.4	13.6	15.2
	<i>Sometimes</i>	37.5	36.3	38.5	38.3
	<i>Often</i>	28.1	28.2	28.5	27.0
	<i>Very often</i>	21.1	23.1	19.4	19.4
Community service or volunteer work (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	11.8	11.5	11.5	13.0
	<i>Have not decided</i>	21.0	25.6	17.7	15.8
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	21.5	12.6	25.9	36.1
	<i>Plan to do</i>	23.6	34.3	14.7	14.3
	<i>Done</i>	22.1	15.9	30.2	20.8
Internship, fieldwork or clinical placement (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	15.5	16.7	15.0	13.5
	<i>Have not decided</i>	17.8	21.6	16.0	11.6
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	22.3	12.3	27.3	38.4
	<i>Plan to do</i>	30.2	44.1	17.5	20.6
	<i>Done</i>	14.2	5.3	24.2	15.9
Participate in a study group or learning community (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	15.1	14.9	15.6	14.4
	<i>Have not decided</i>	20.8	27.5	15.4	14.7
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	26.3	16.0	34.6	35.7
	<i>Plan to do</i>	18.2	25.3	10.7	15.8
	<i>Done</i>	19.6	16.4	23.7	19.3
Study a foreign language (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	10.1	9.0	11.0	11.0
	<i>Have not decided</i>	13.9	17.2	11.6	10.1
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	41.6	34.6	45.7	51.3
	<i>Plan to do</i>	17.2	20.5	14.5	14.1
	<i>Done</i>	17.2	18.7	17.2	13.5

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Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Study abroad or student exchange (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	10.8	9.4	11.7	12.3
	<i>Have not decided</i>	17.6	25.7	12.4	7.3
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	44.1	27.9	55.3	63.2
	<i>Plan to do</i>	20.3	34.0	9.9	6.3
	<i>Done</i>	7.2	3.0	10.7	10.9
Culminating final-year experience (e.g. honours thesis, final year project, comprehensive exam, etc.) (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	13.1	19.5	7.8	7.5
	<i>Have not decided</i>	14.0	19.7	9.7	7.7
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	9.5	5.9	11.8	14.2
	<i>Plan to do</i>	54.0	53.6	52.3	59.2
	<i>Done</i>	9.4	1.3	18.3	11.4
Independent study e.g. outside your course (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	8.8	11.4	7.0	6.0
	<i>Have not decided</i>	20.3	26.5	16.2	12.8
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	19.9	12.7	26.0	25.9
	<i>Plan to do</i>	33.5	35.4	30.4	35.3
	<i>Done</i>	17.5	14.0	20.5	20.1
Participating in extracurricular activities (e.g. organisations, campus publications, student associations, clubs and societies, sports, etc.) (About how many hours do you spend in a typical seven-day week doing each of the following?)	<i>None</i>	46.2	40.4	48.6	56.2
	<i>1 to 5</i>	33.1	36.8	30.6	28.7
	<i>6 to 10</i>	12.6	14.0	12.3	9.6
	<i>11 to 15</i>	4.5	5.2	4.4	3.1
	<i>16 to 20</i>	2.0	2.3	2.1	1.1
	<i>21 to 25</i>	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.7
	<i>26 to 30</i>	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2
	<i>Over 30</i>	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.4

2.3.5 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Supportive Learning Environment reflects students' feelings of support within the college community.

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Relationships with other students (Which box represents the quality of relationships with people at your institution?)	<i>Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation</i>	1.0	0.9	1.2	0.7
	2	2.0	2.1	2.0	1.5
	3	4.2	4.5	4.1	3.5
	4	10.3	10.5	9.9	10.4
	5	19.7	19.3	19.5	21.2
	6	24.0	23.4	24.4	24.5
	<i>Friendly, supportive, sense of belonging</i>	38.9	39.3	38.9	38.2
Relationships with teaching staff (Which box represents the quality of relationships with people at your institution?)	<i>Unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic</i>	1.4	1.2	1.6	1.4
	2	4.0	3.9	4.4	3.2
	3	8.8	9.8	8.5	6.6
	4	17.9	19.2	17.7	14.7
	5	26.1	27.3	25.3	24.5
	6	20.4	18.9	20.7	23.9
	<i>Available, helpful, sympathetic</i>	21.5	19.7	21.9	25.7
Relationships with administrative personnel (Which box represents the quality of relationships with people at your institution?)	<i>Unavailable, inconsiderate, rigid</i>	4.0	3.4	5.1	3.4
	2	8.9	8.4	10.6	6.7
	3	14.3	14.5	15.5	11.3
	4	24.0	25.6	22.9	21.9
	5	21.7	23.0	20.6	20.6
	6	12.8	11.5	12.7	16.8
	<i>Available, considerate, flexible</i>	14.2	13.7	12.6	19.3

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically (To what extent does your institution encourage each of the following?)	<i>Very little</i>	6.9	5.5	8.6	6.8
	<i>Some</i>	30.7	28.5	33.1	30.9
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	41.5	42.2	40.9	40.6
	<i>Very much</i>	21.0	23.7	17.3	21.6
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, etc.) (To what extent does your institution encourage each of the following?)	<i>Very little</i>	41.5	35.3	46.0	47.9
	<i>Some</i>	33.6	35.3	32.7	31.0
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	17.8	20.9	15.1	15.3
	<i>Very much</i>	7.2	8.5	6.2	5.8
Providing the support you need to socialise (To what extent does your institution encourage each of the following?)	<i>Very little</i>	33.1	24.2	38.8	44.6
	<i>Some</i>	35.4	36.2	34.9	34.3
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	22.7	28.0	19.5	15.9
	<i>Very much</i>	8.7	11.6	6.8	5.2

2.3.6 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Work Integrated Learning reflects the integration of employment-focused work experiences into study.

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Blended academic learning with workplace experience (In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	35.4	47.9	27.4	18.7
	<i>Sometimes</i>	29.1	28.5	30.2	28.0
	<i>Often</i>	21.4	15.7	25.6	27.8
	<i>Very often</i>	14.2	8.0	16.8	25.4
Improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to your employability (During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	6.4	8.2	5.5	3.4
	<i>Sometimes</i>	30.9	34.6	30.3	22.1
	<i>Often</i>	40.9	38.8	41.9	44.4
	<i>Very often</i>	21.8	18.3	22.3	30.1

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Explored how to apply your learning in the workplace (During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	15.7	20.8	12.8	8.7
	<i>Sometimes</i>	32.9	34.9	33.0	27.1
	<i>Often</i>	33.4	30.1	35.0	38.4
	<i>Very often</i>	18.0	14.2	19.3	25.9
Industry placement or work experience (Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?)	<i>Do not know about</i>	11.3	11.2	11.3	11.8
	<i>Have not decided</i>	11.9	14.1	10.5	9.1
	<i>Do not plan to do</i>	13.6	5.1	17.3	28.4
	<i>Plan to do</i>	36.1	57.1	16.6	22.3
	<i>Done</i>	27.1	12.6	44.3	28.4
Acquiring job-related or work-related knowledge and skills (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	11.7	14.5	9.6	8.9
	<i>Some</i>	30.5	35.0	28.2	23.9
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	34.1	32.5	35.5	35.1
	<i>Very much</i>	23.7	18.0	26.8	32.0

2.3.7 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO HIGHER ORDER THINKING

Higher Order Thinking reflects students' participation in higher order forms of thinking.

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Organising and synthesising ideas, information or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships (During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?)	<i>Very little</i>	7.9	9.5	7.6	4.2
	<i>Some</i>	30.0	33.7	29.9	20.4
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	39.2	37.9	39.9	41.5
	<i>Very much</i>	22.9	19.0	22.6	34.0
Making judgements about the value of information, arguments or methods, (e.g. examining how others gather and interpret data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions) (During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?)	<i>Very little</i>	9.0	11.0	8.7	4.3
	<i>Some</i>	29.8	34.6	28.1	20.6
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	37.2	35.7	38.1	39.3
	<i>Very much</i>	24.0	18.7	25.0	35.8

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations (During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?)	Very little	6.6	7.3	6.8	4.4
	Some	25.1	28.3	24.0	19.2
	Quite a bit	37.3	36.7	37.9	37.5
	Very much	31.0	27.8	31.3	38.9
Analysing the basic elements of an idea, problem, experience or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components (During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?)	Very little	4.0	5.0	3.6	2.2
	Some	23.6	26.9	23.0	16.2
	Quite a bit	42.9	42.3	43.9	42.3
	Very much	29.5	25.8	29.5	39.3

2.3.8 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO GENERAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

General Learning Outcomes reflects the development of general competencies.

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Acquiring job-related or work-related knowledge and skills (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	Very little	11.7	14.5	9.6	8.9
	Some	30.5	35.0	28.2	23.9
	Quite a bit	34.1	32.5	35.5	35.1
	Very much	23.7	18.0	26.8	32.0
Writing clearly and effectively (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	Very little	10.5	13.9	7.6	7.6
	Some	29.4	33.9	26.1	24.9
	Quite a bit	38.1	36.3	39.8	39.0
	Very much	22.0	16.0	26.4	28.5
Speaking clearly and effectively (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	Very little	12.1	14.8	9.3	11.2
	Some	30.5	33.1	27.4	30.1
	Quite a bit	36.8	35.4	38.7	36.3
	Very much	20.6	16.7	24.6	22.4

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Thinking critically and analytically (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	3.7	4.5	2.8	3.3
	<i>Some</i>	19.7	22.8	17.3	16.8
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	41.9	43.0	41.4	40.2
	<i>Very much</i>	34.7	29.6	38.5	39.6
Analysing quantitative problems (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	10.3	11.1	8.9	11.2
	<i>Some</i>	29.5	32.2	27.1	27.8
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	37.2	36.9	38.2	35.8
	<i>Very much</i>	23.0	19.8	25.8	25.3
Using computing and information technology (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	10.6	10.3	9.1	14.6
	<i>Some</i>	24.5	24.6	24.0	25.1
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	32.8	33.9	32.8	29.8
	<i>Very much</i>	32.2	31.2	34.1	30.5
Working effectively with others (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	6.5	6.2	5.7	9.0
	<i>Some</i>	24.7	25.1	22.8	27.7
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	39.7	41.2	39.7	36.0
	<i>Very much</i>	29.1	27.5	31.7	27.2
Learning effectively on your own (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	6.2	7.0	5.0	6.7
	<i>Some</i>	23.7	27.3	20.2	22.0
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	40.3	40.4	40.7	39.2
	<i>Very much</i>	29.8	25.3	34.1	32.1

2.3.9 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

General Development Outcomes reflects the development of general forms of individual and social development.

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Voting in local, or national elections or referenda (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	53.8	50.0	51.4	69.6
	<i>Some</i>	24.0	25.8	25.1	16.6
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	13.7	15.1	14.5	8.3
	<i>Very much</i>	8.4	9.0	9.0	5.4
Understanding yourself e.g. self-reflection (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	14.3	16.2	12.9	11.9
	<i>Some</i>	28.5	30.6	26.8	26.6
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	33.0	32.3	33.5	33.6
	<i>Very much</i>	24.3	20.9	26.7	27.9
Understanding people of other racial, ethnic and national backgrounds (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	20.5	19.2	20.1	25.0
	<i>Some</i>	31.6	32.2	31.1	30.9
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	28.3	29.1	28.5	25.9
	<i>Very much</i>	19.6	19.6	20.3	18.2
Solving complex, real-world problems (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	15.3	17.0	13.9	13.9
	<i>Some</i>	32.8	35.1	31.4	29.9
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	32.8	30.9	34.0	35.4
	<i>Very much</i>	19.1	17.0	20.8	20.9
Developing a personal code of values and ethics (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	19.6	20.7	17.3	21.6
	<i>Some</i>	31.5	33.0	30.1	30.7
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	30.1	29.6	31.7	27.6
	<i>Very much</i>	18.8	16.6	20.8	20.0
Contributing to the welfare of your community (Has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?)	<i>Very little</i>	33.3	33.4	31.5	36.7
	<i>Some</i>	34.5	35.7	34.2	32.1
	<i>Quite a bit</i>	21.2	21.3	21.9	19.3
	<i>Very much</i>	11.1	9.6	12.4	12.0

2.3.10 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO CAREER READINESS

Career Readiness reflects students' preparation for participation in the professional workforce.

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Spent time keeping your CV up-to-date (During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	32.7	38.9	25.8	31.3
	<i>Sometimes</i>	37.7	35.4	40.5	37.4
	<i>Often</i>	19.8	17.5	22.2	20.6
	<i>Very often</i>	9.9	8.3	11.5	10.7
Thought about how to present yourself to potential employers (During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	17.0	21.1	12.1	17.0
	<i>Sometimes</i>	35.9	38.3	33.8	34.6
	<i>Often</i>	31.8	28.3	36.0	31.9
	<i>Very often</i>	15.3	12.4	18.2	16.5
Explored where to look for jobs relevant to your interests (During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	18.6	24.0	11.8	19.4
	<i>Sometimes</i>	35.7	37.8	33.8	34.3
	<i>Often</i>	29.4	25.9	33.8	29.0
	<i>Very often</i>	16.3	12.3	20.6	17.3
Used networking to source information on job opportunities (During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	30.5	36.8	23.1	29.7
	<i>Sometimes</i>	34.1	34.0	34.0	34.5
	<i>Often</i>	23.3	19.6	27.5	23.8
	<i>Very often</i>	12.2	9.5	15.4	12.0
Set career development goals and plans (During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?)	<i>Never</i>	24.7	30.7	19.9	19.3
	<i>Sometimes</i>	35.9	35.1	35.9	37.8
	<i>Often</i>	25.0	21.8	27.8	27.4
	<i>Very often</i>	14.4	12.3	16.4	15.5

2.3.11 QUESTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO OVERALL SATISFACTION

Overall Satisfaction reflects students' overall satisfaction with their educational experience.

Question and percentage response		All Students	Undergraduate Year 1	Undergraduate Final Year	Postgraduate
Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advice that you have received?	<i>Poor</i>	6.0	4.8	7.8	5.2
	<i>Fair</i>	24.3	24.4	26.1	19.9
	<i>Good</i>	50.9	52.0	49.6	50.9
	<i>Excellent</i>	18.8	18.8	16.5	24.0
Overall, how would you evaluate your entire educational experience at your institution?	<i>Poor</i>	4.1	2.7	5.7	4.1
	<i>Fair</i>	17.4	16.0	19.2	17.1
	<i>Good</i>	51.0	51.6	50.6	50.0
	<i>Excellent</i>	27.6	29.7	24.5	28.7
If you could start all over again, would you go to the same institution?	<i>Definitely no</i>	4.1	2.7	6.0	3.6
	<i>Probably no</i>	13.4	11.2	16.8	11.9
	<i>Probably yes</i>	41.4	40.3	42.5	42.0
	<i>Definitely yes</i>	41.0	45.7	34.7	42.5

CHAPTER 3

NATIONAL-LEVEL

ANALYSIS OF

ENGAGEMENT AND

OUTCOMES INDICES

3.1

INTRODUCTION

Having provided detail of responses to individual questions in the previous chapter, this chapter presents an analysis of indices for students' engagement and outcomes from a variety of perspectives, including:

- By year/cohort
- By institution-type
- By mode of study
- By field of study

Results of the testing of reliability and validity are published on www.studentsurvey.ie rather than being included in this report which is intended for a wider audience. Results presented in this, and the following chapters, have been tested for statistical significance and the commentary that accompanies each chart refers only to those differences that can be proven with 95% confidence or greater. A single asterisk (*) is included on those charts where this is not the case.

NOTES FOR INTERPRETING THE DATA



Index scores provide signposts to the experiences of students. These are NOT percentages.

Please refer to notes for interpreting the data on page 11



Compare scores WITHIN each index and NOT between indices.

3.2 YEAR/COHORT

3.2.1 Engagement - Year/Cohort (Overall)

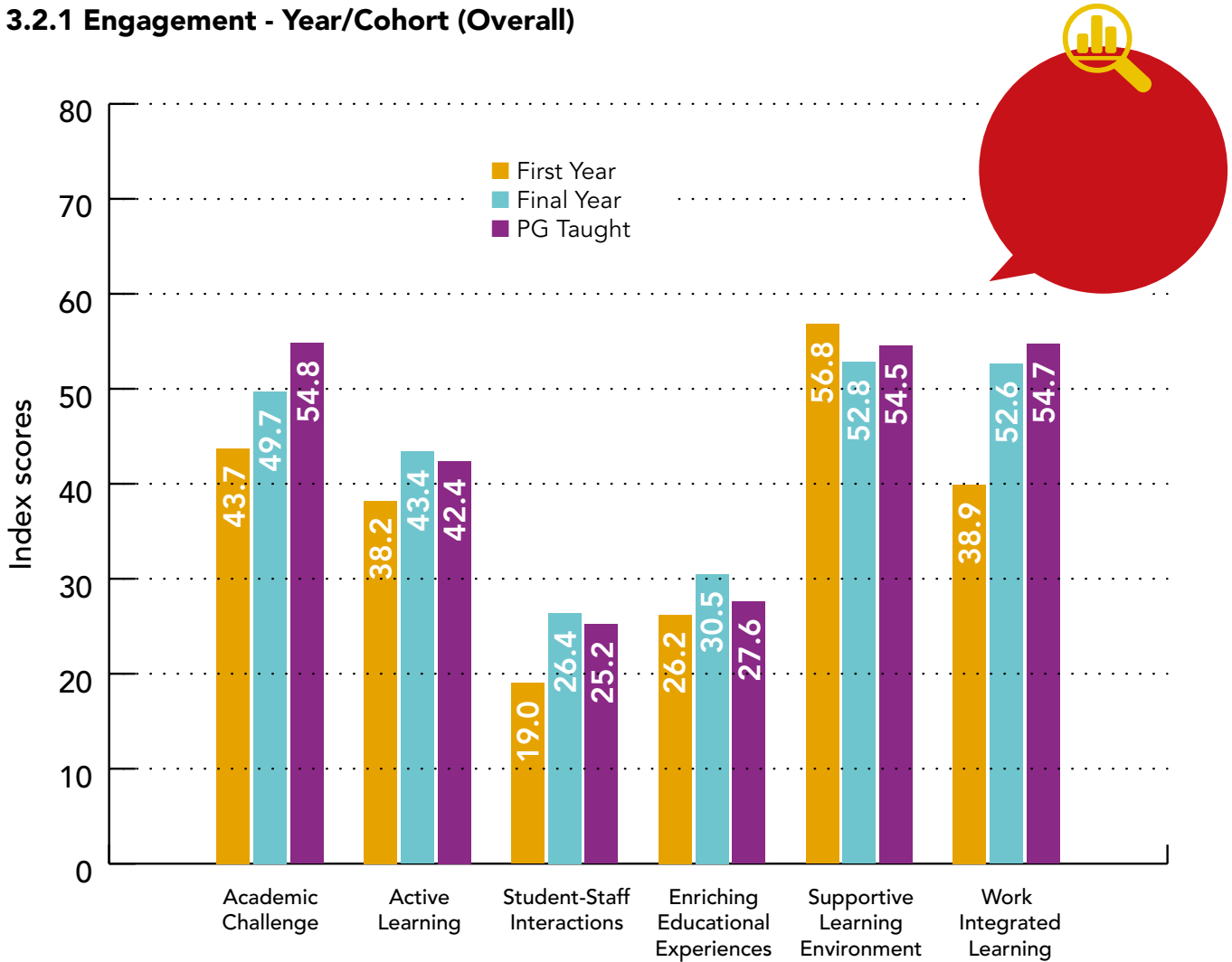


Figure 3.2.1 presents scores for engagement indices for all students from each year of study. It demonstrates that scores for *Academic Challenge* and *Work Integrated Learning* increase with each stage of study. The score for *Student-Staff Interactions* is lowest for first year students whereas these students generate the highest score for *Supportive Learning Environment*.



3.2.2 Outcomes - Year/Cohort

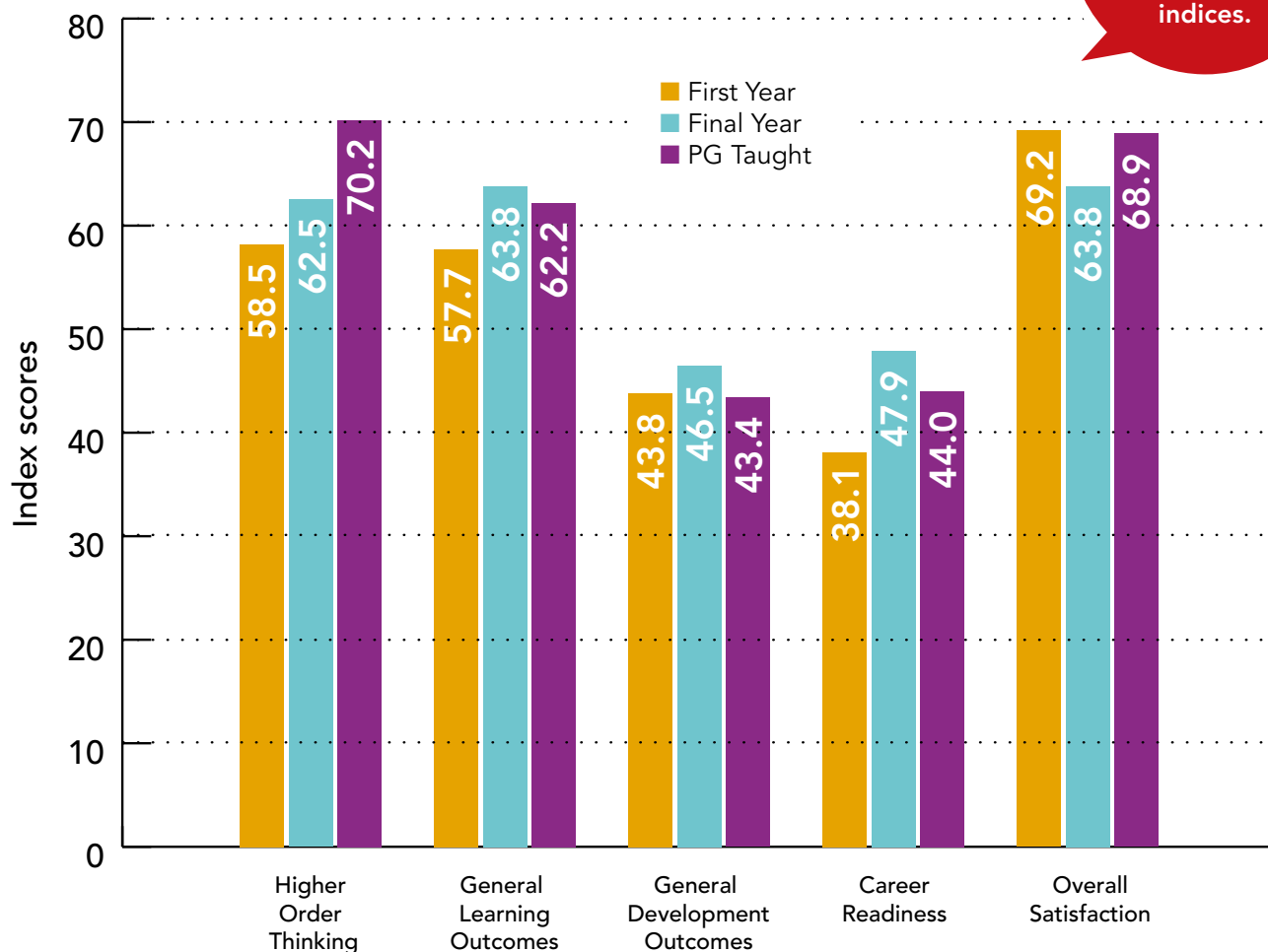


Figure 3.2.2 presents scores for outcomes indices for all students from each year of study. It illustrates that index scores for *Higher Order Thinking* increase with each stage of study. Index scores for *General Learning Outcomes*, *General Development Outcomes* and *Career Readiness* are higher for final year students than for other cohorts.

3.3 INSTITUTION-TYPE

This section examines the national engagement and outcomes indices by institution-type. The institution-types are: Universities, Institutes of Technology and

Other Institutions. Participating institutions are listed under these groupings in appendix 3. The results are presented for the full cohort of students.

3.3.1 Engagement - Institution Type

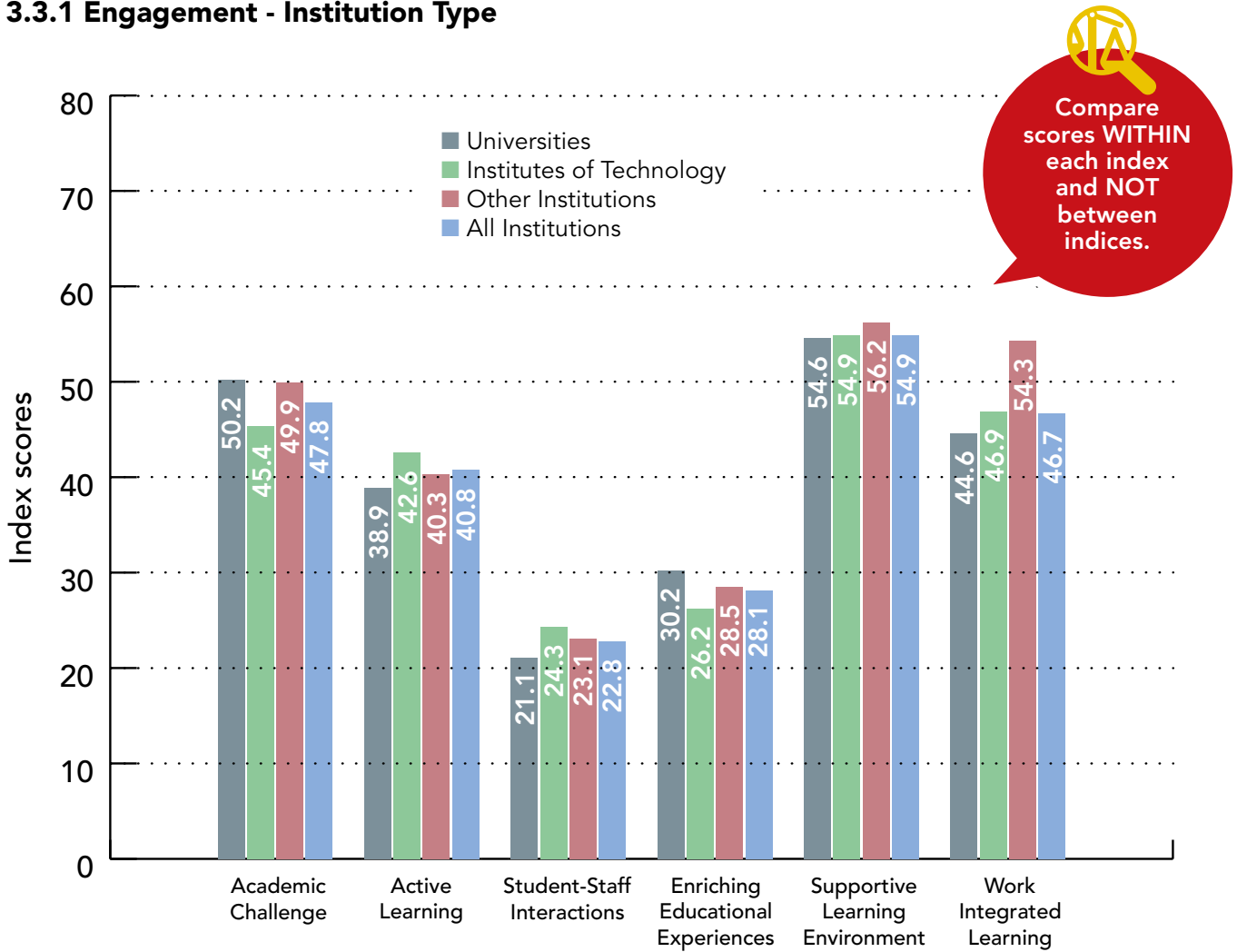
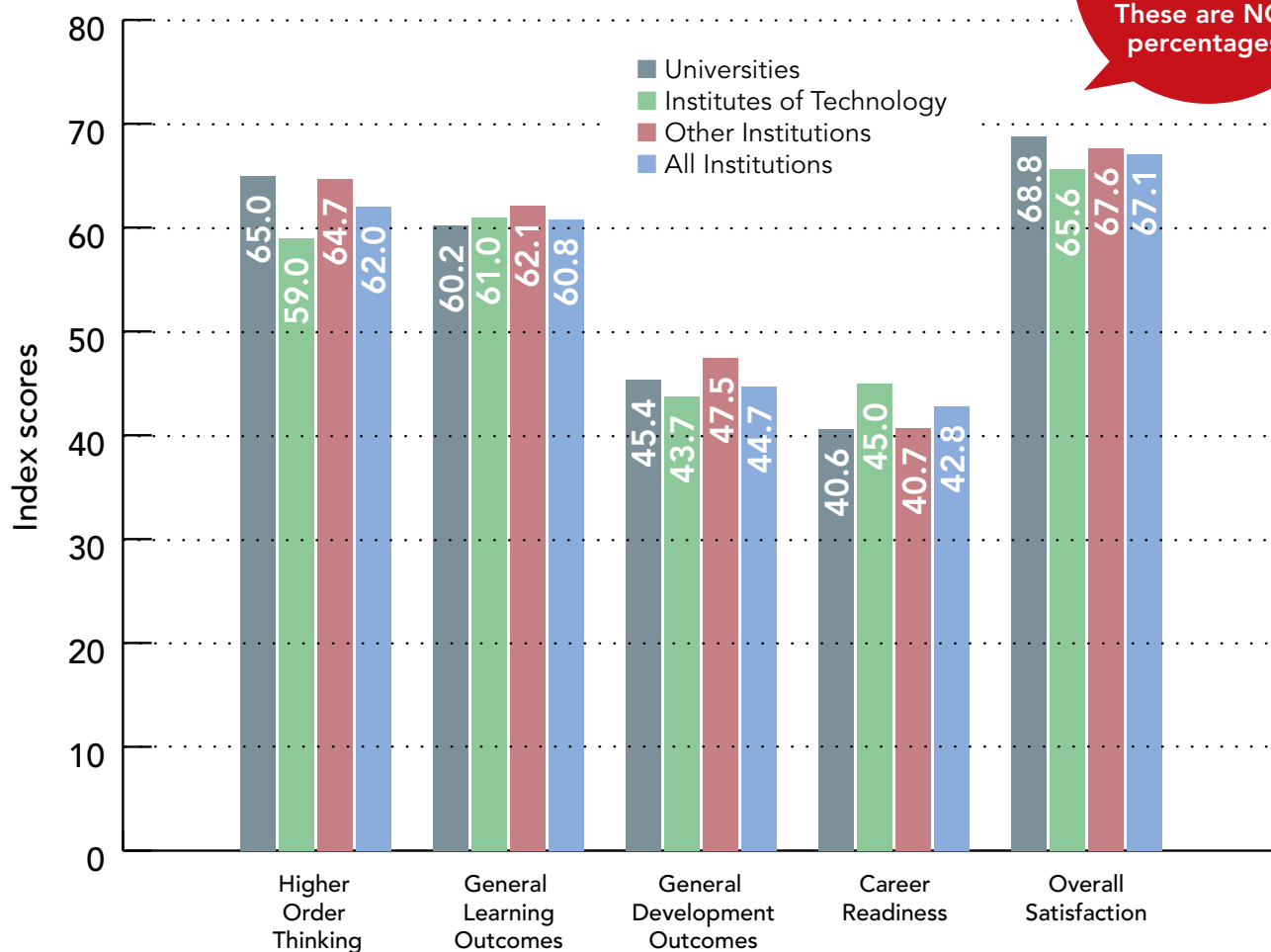


Figure 3.3.1 presents scores for engagement indices for all students in each institution-type. It illustrates that index scores are broadly similar for each institution-type. Scores for *Work Integrated Learning* are highest in ‘other institutions’ which include colleges of education and other relatively specialised institutions. The index score for *Enriching Educational Experience* is highest for Universities, whereas the score for *Active Learning* is highest in Institutes of Technology.

3.3.2 Outcomes - Institution Type



Index scores provide signposts to the experiences of students. These are NOT percentages.

Figure 3.3.2 presents scores for outcomes indices for all students in each institution-type. It illustrates that scores for these indices are broadly comparable for institution-types. The score for *Career Readiness* is highest for Institutes of Technology whereas the score for *Overall Satisfaction* is highest for Universities.

3.4 MODE OF STUDY

This section outlines engagement and outcome index scores by mode of study for all institution-types and all cohorts.



3.4.1 Engagement - Mode of Study

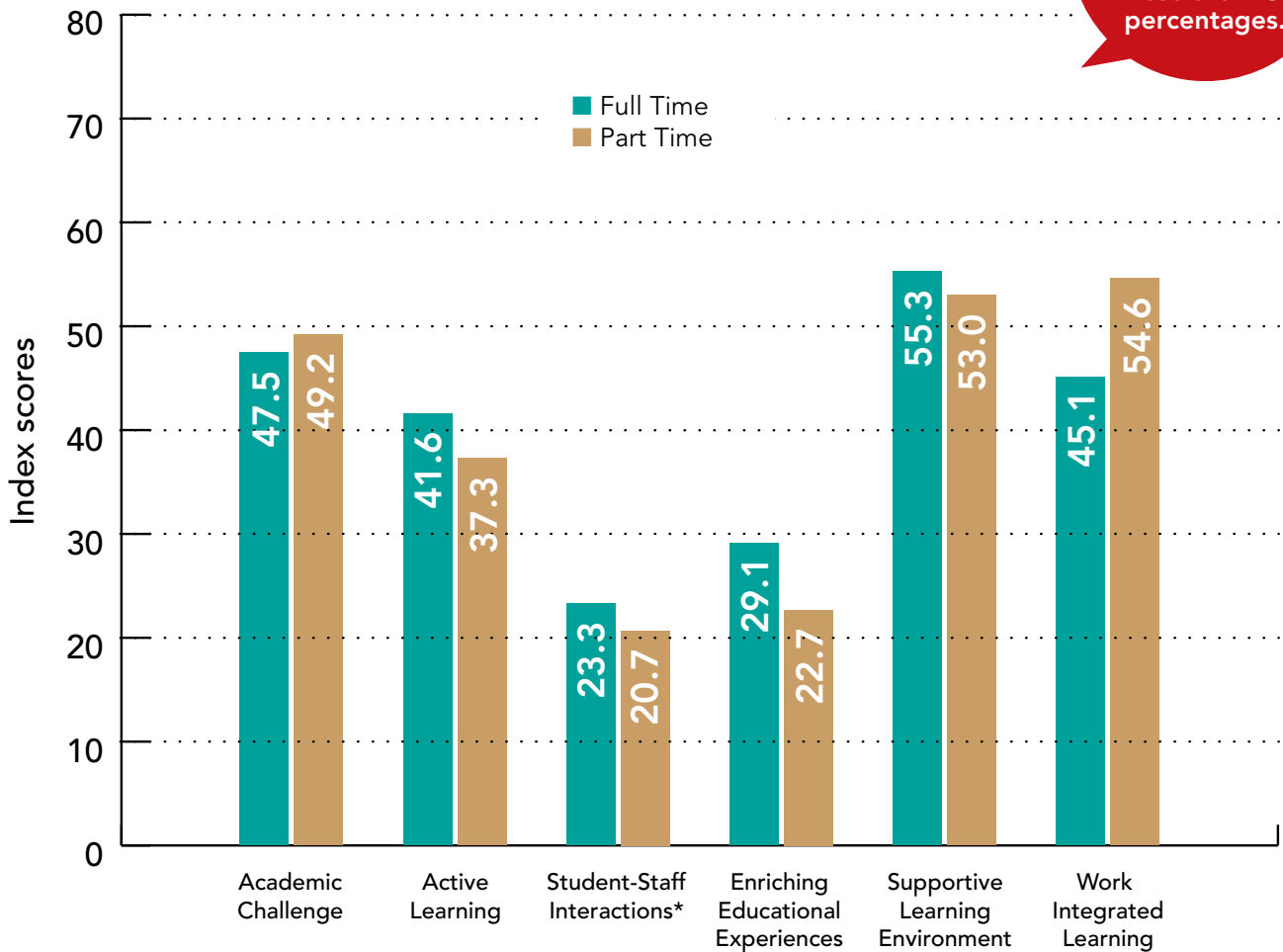
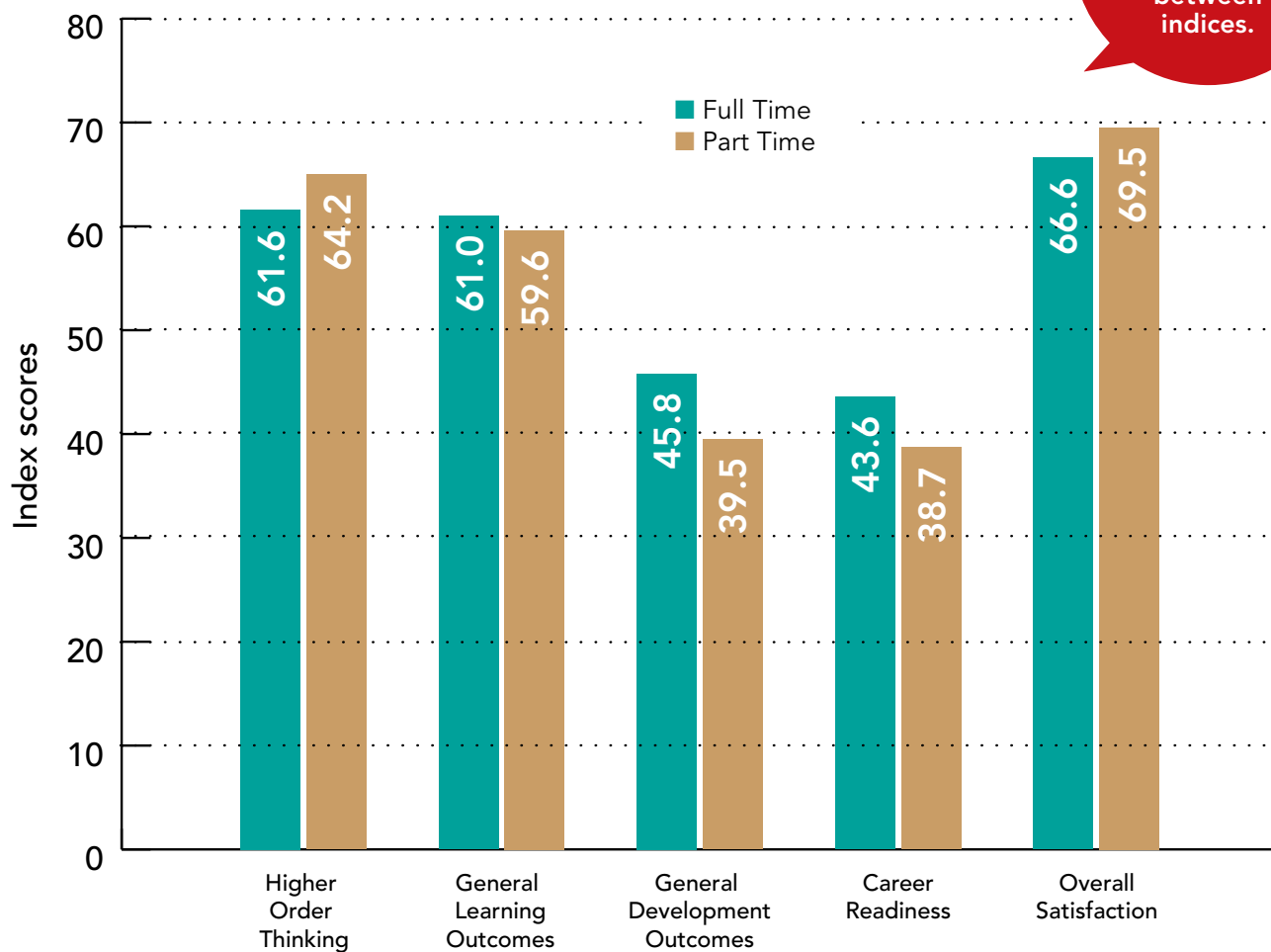


Figure 3.4.1 presents scores for engagement indices for full-time and part-time students. It illustrates that the index score for *Work Integrated Learning* is notably higher for part-time or remote students than for full-time students. The score for *Enriching Educational Experiences* is higher for full-time students, who also report a more *Supportive Learning Environment*.

3.4.2 Outcomes - Mode of Study (Overall)



Compare scores WITHIN each index and NOT between indices.

Figure 3.4.2 presents scores for outcomes indices for full-time and part-time students. It demonstrates that index scores for *General Development Outcomes* and for *Career Readiness* are higher for full-time students whereas the score for *Overall Satisfaction* is highest for part-time or remote students.

3.5 PROGRAMME TYPE

This section provides scores for engagement and outcomes indices by programme-type (i.e. programmes leading to Higher Certificate, Ordinary Bachelor Degree, Honours Bachelor Degree /

Higher Diploma, Masters Degree / Postgraduate Diploma, qualifications at levels 6 to 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications) for all cohorts, modes of study and institution-types.

3.5.1 Engagement - Programme Type

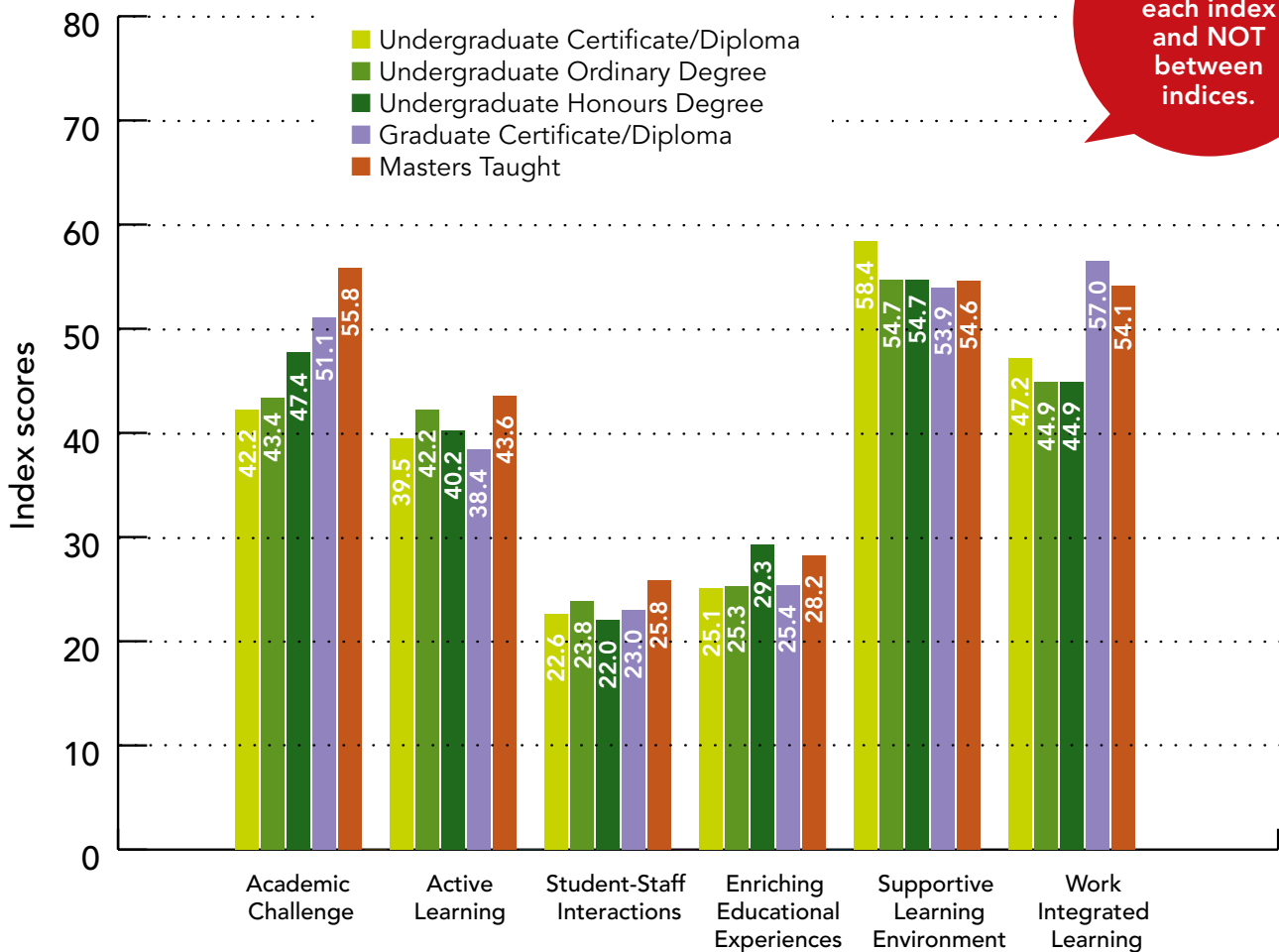
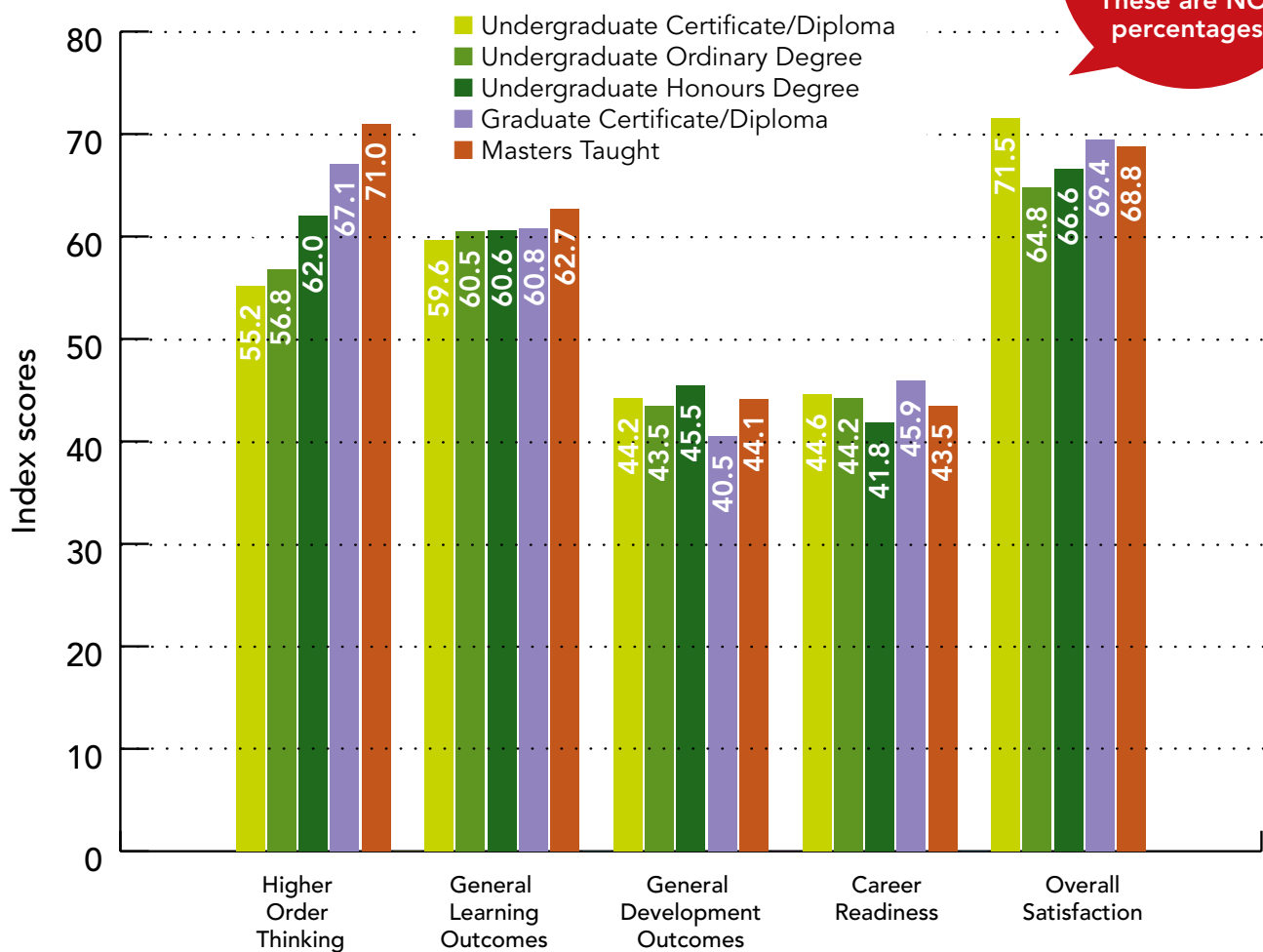


Figure 3.5.1 presents scores for engagement indices for different programme types. It demonstrates that scores for *Academic Challenge* and *Student-Staff Interactions* are highest for students pursuing taught Masters programmes. The scores for *Work Integrated Learning* are notably higher for postgraduate students than for undergraduate students. Students undertaking Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma programmes report the highest score for *Supportive Learning Environment*.

3.5.2 Outcomes - Programme Type (Overall)



Index scores provide signposts to the experiences of students. These are NOT percentages.

Figure 3.5.2 presents scores for outcomes indices for different programme types. It illustrates that the score for *Higher Order Thinking* is highest for students pursuing taught Masters programmes and that the index score for *Overall Satisfaction* is highest for students taking programmes leading to an Undergraduate Certificate/ Diploma.

3.6.1 FIELD OF STUDY

3.6.1 Engagement - Field of Study

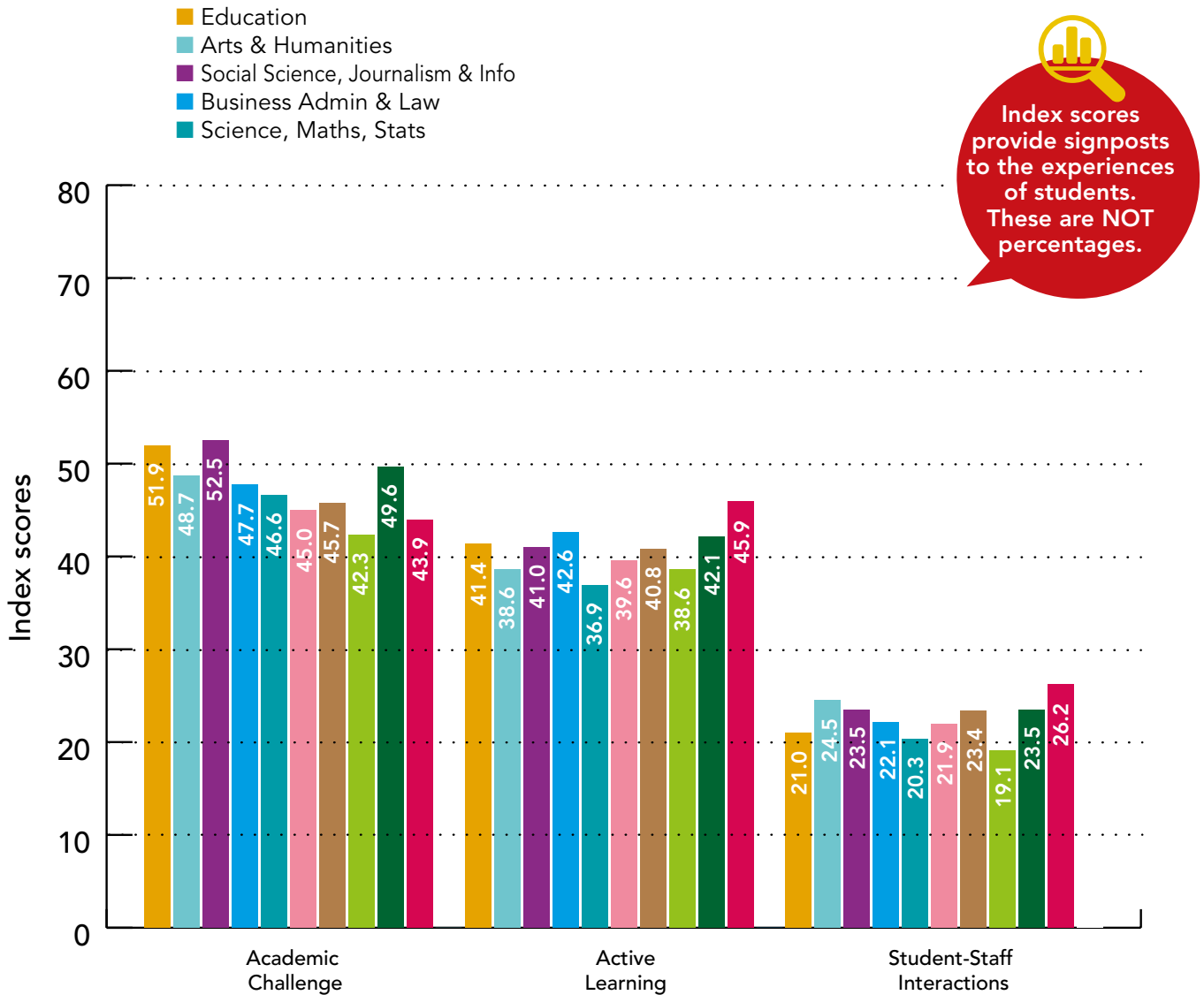
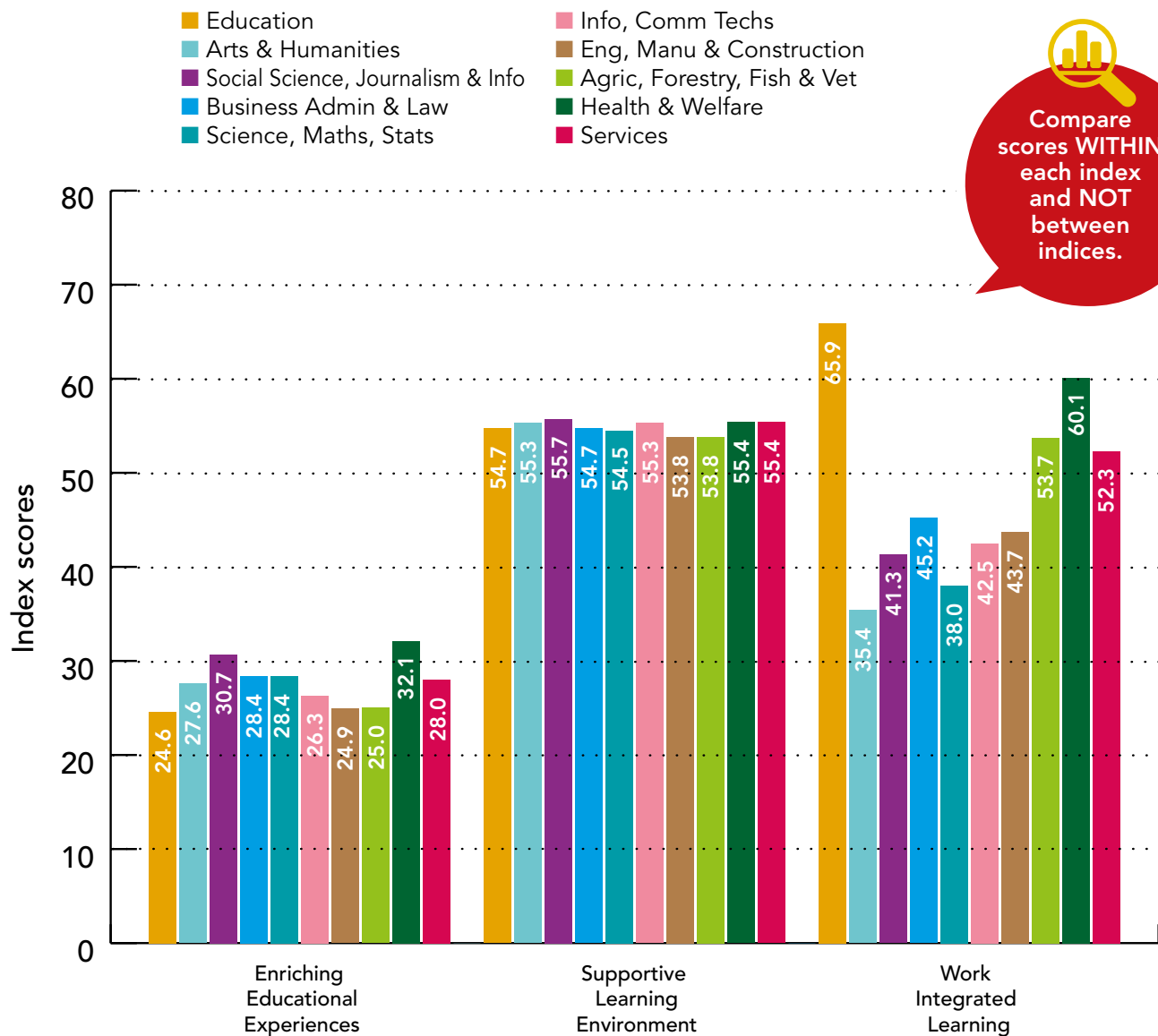


Figure 3.6.1 presents scores for engagement indices for different fields of study. It demonstrates that the score for *Work Integrated Learning* is much higher for students on Education programmes or Health & Welfare and lowest for Arts & Humanities. Scores for *Supportive Learning Environment* are very similar for all fields of study. The score for *Active Learning* is highest for the Services field.

3.6.1 Engagement - Field of Study *continued*



Compare scores WITHIN each index and NOT between indices.

3.6.2 Outcomes - Field of Study

Index scores provide signposts to the experiences of students. These are NOT percentages.

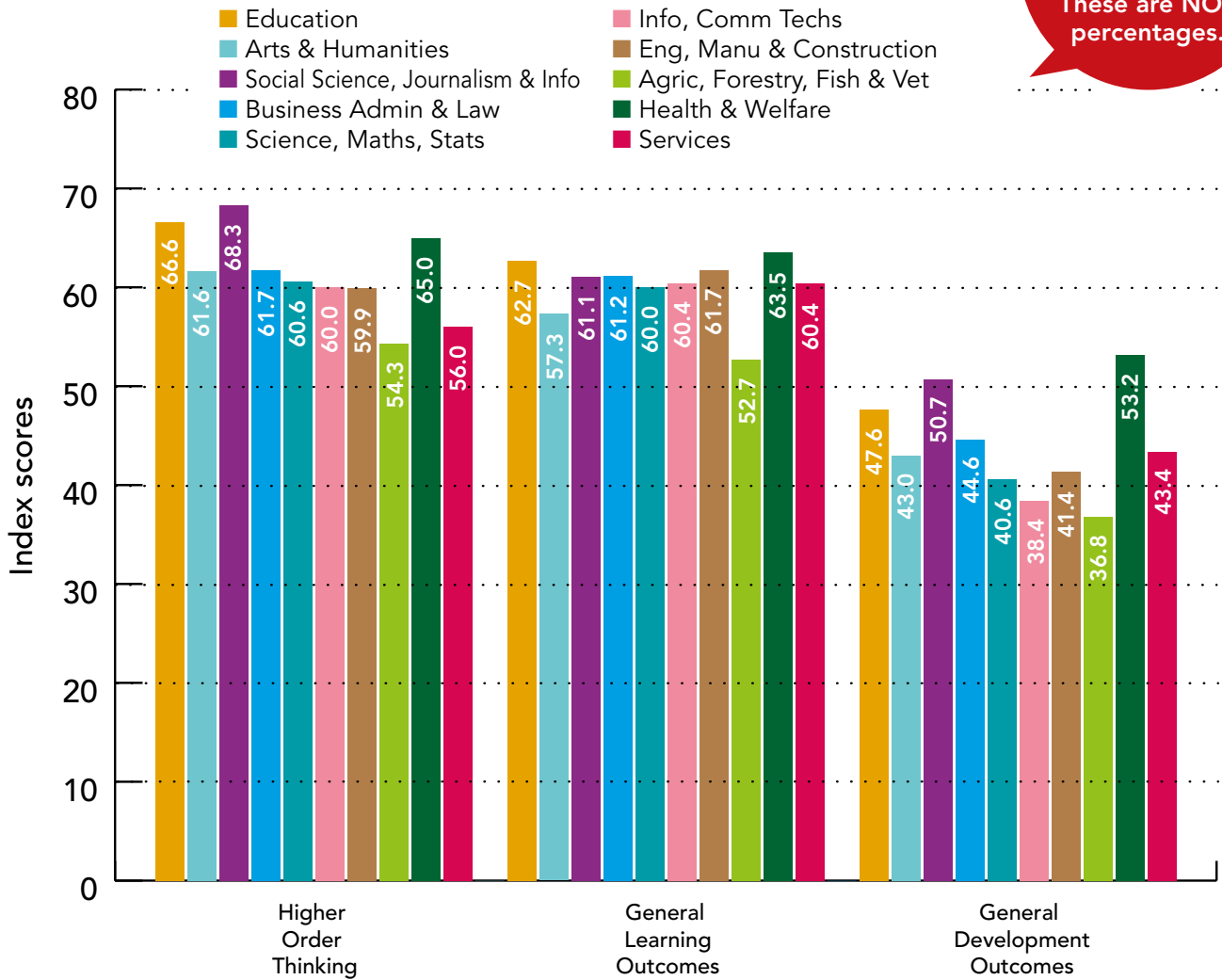
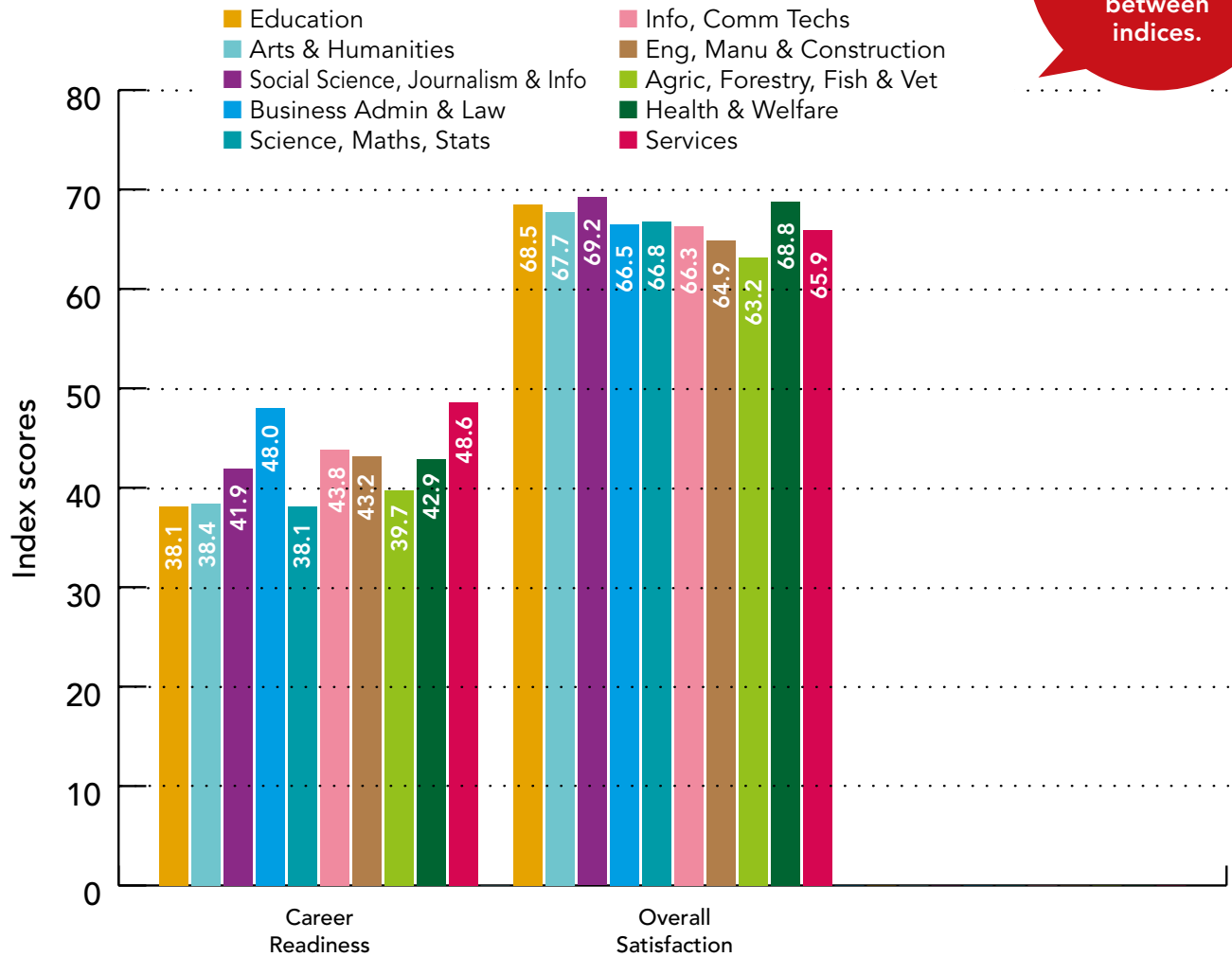


Figure 3.6.2 presents scores for outcomes indices for different fields of study. It demonstrates that scores for Career Readiness are highest for Services and for Business, Administration & Law. Index scores for General Development Outcomes vary most between fields of study, with the relatively low scores for Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries & Veterinary (but also the lowest number of respondents) and ICTs and notably higher scores for Health & Welfare, and for Social Sciences, Journalism & Information.



3.6.2 Outcomes - Field of Study *continued*



3.7 STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The final section of this chapter presents scores for engagement and outcomes indices according to the following selected student characteristics:

- Gender
- Age Group
- Domiciliary

Additional analysis of these data may be helpful to explore the extent to which particular modes of study or gender may be over- or under-represented in specific fields of study. For example, specific fields of study generate quite different results for *Work Integrated Learning*.

3.7.1 Gender

3.7.1.1 Engagement - Gender (Overall)

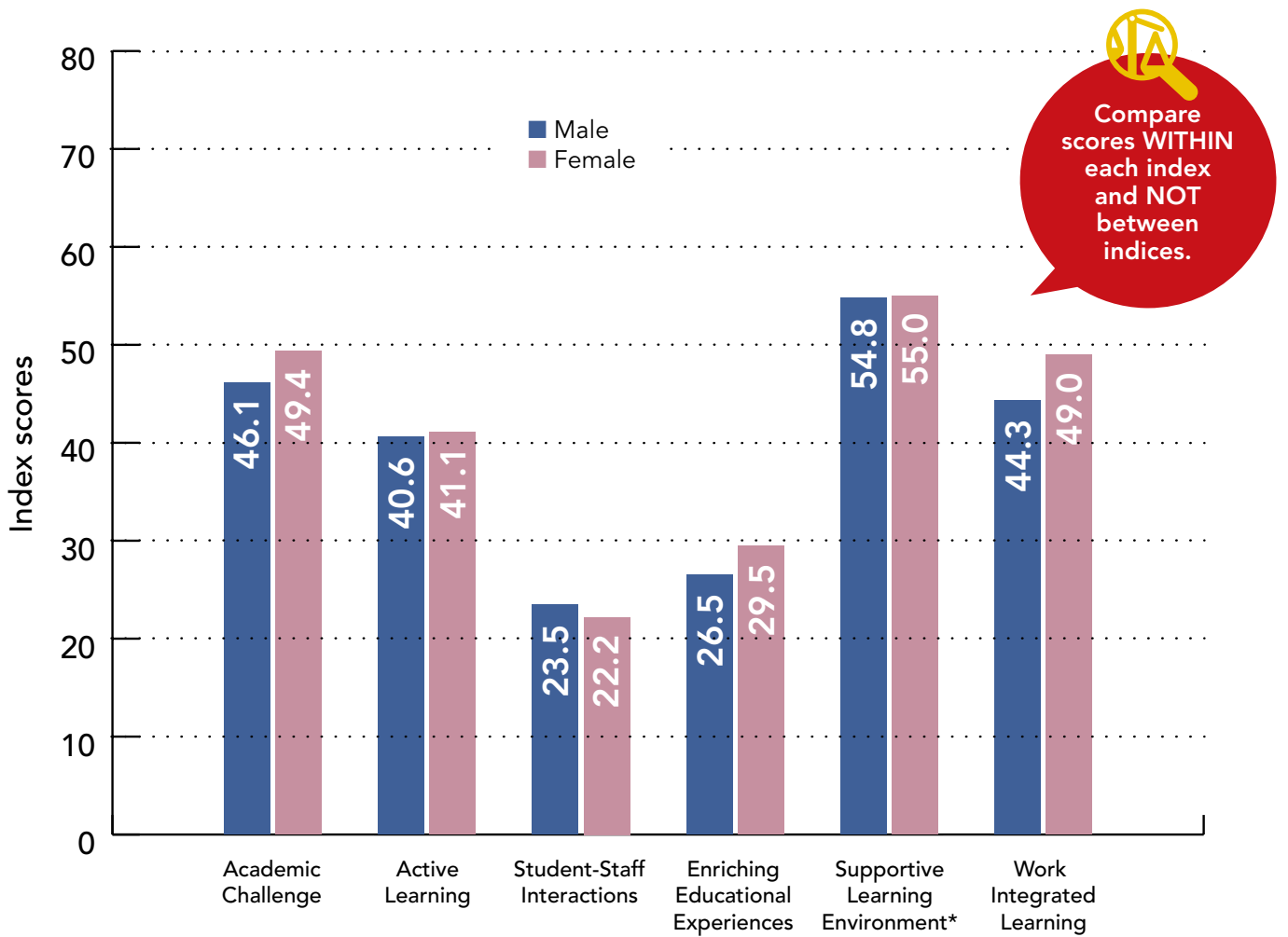


Figure 3.7.1.1 presents scores for engagement indices for male and female students. It demonstrates that index scores are broadly similar for male and female

students. The scores for *Academic Challenge* and for *Enriching Educational Experiences* are higher for female students.

* Statistical difference not proven to 95% confidence or greater.

3.7.1.2 Outcomes - Gender

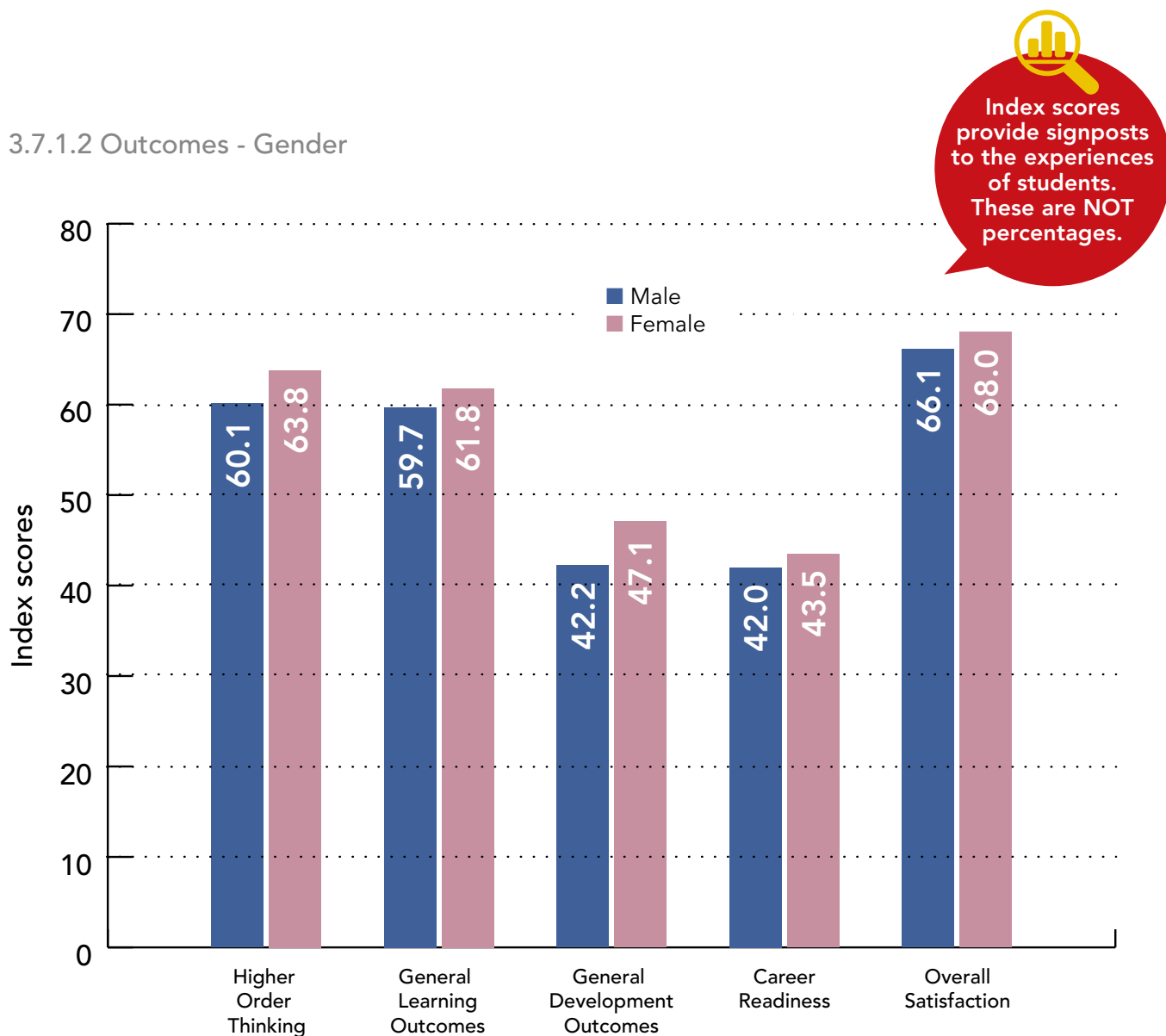


Figure 3.7.1.2 presents scores for outcomes indices for male and female students. It illustrates that index scores are broadly similar for male and female students, with the greatest difference being seen for *General Development Outcomes*.

3.7.2 Age Group

3.7.2.1 Engagement - Age group

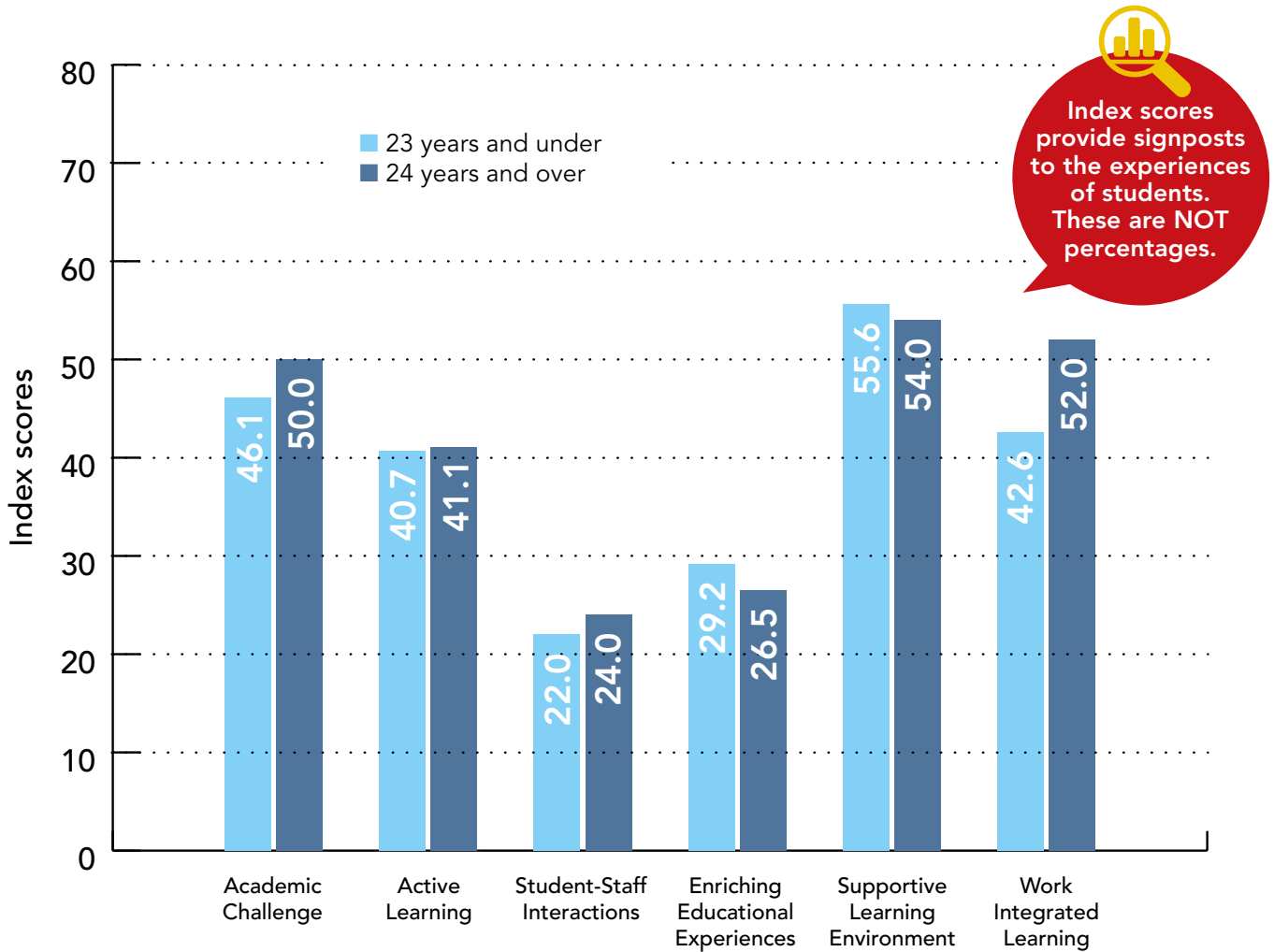


Figure 3.7.2.1 presents scores for engagement indices for students 23 years and under and for students aged 24 years and over. It demonstrates that, while many index scores are very similar nationally, older students generate higher scores for *Academic Challenge*, *Student-Staff Interactions* and *Work Integrated Learning*.



3.7.2.2 Outcomes - Age Group

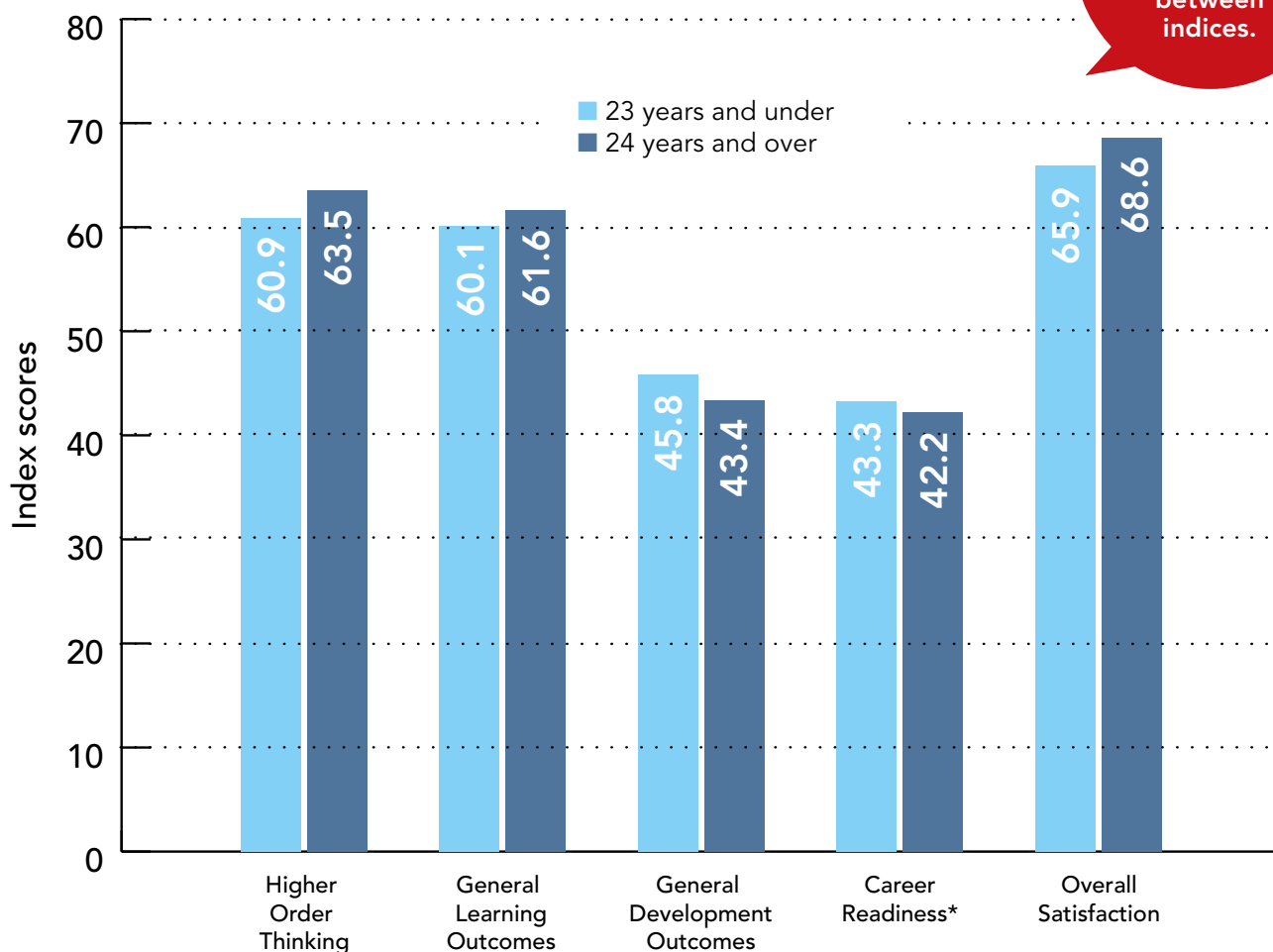


Figure 3.7.2.2 presents scores for outcomes indices for students 23 years and under and for students aged 24 years and over. It demonstrates that index scores for *Higher Order Thinking*, *General Learning Outcomes* and *Overall Satisfaction* are higher for older students.

3.7.3 Domicile

3.7.3.1 Engagement - Domicile

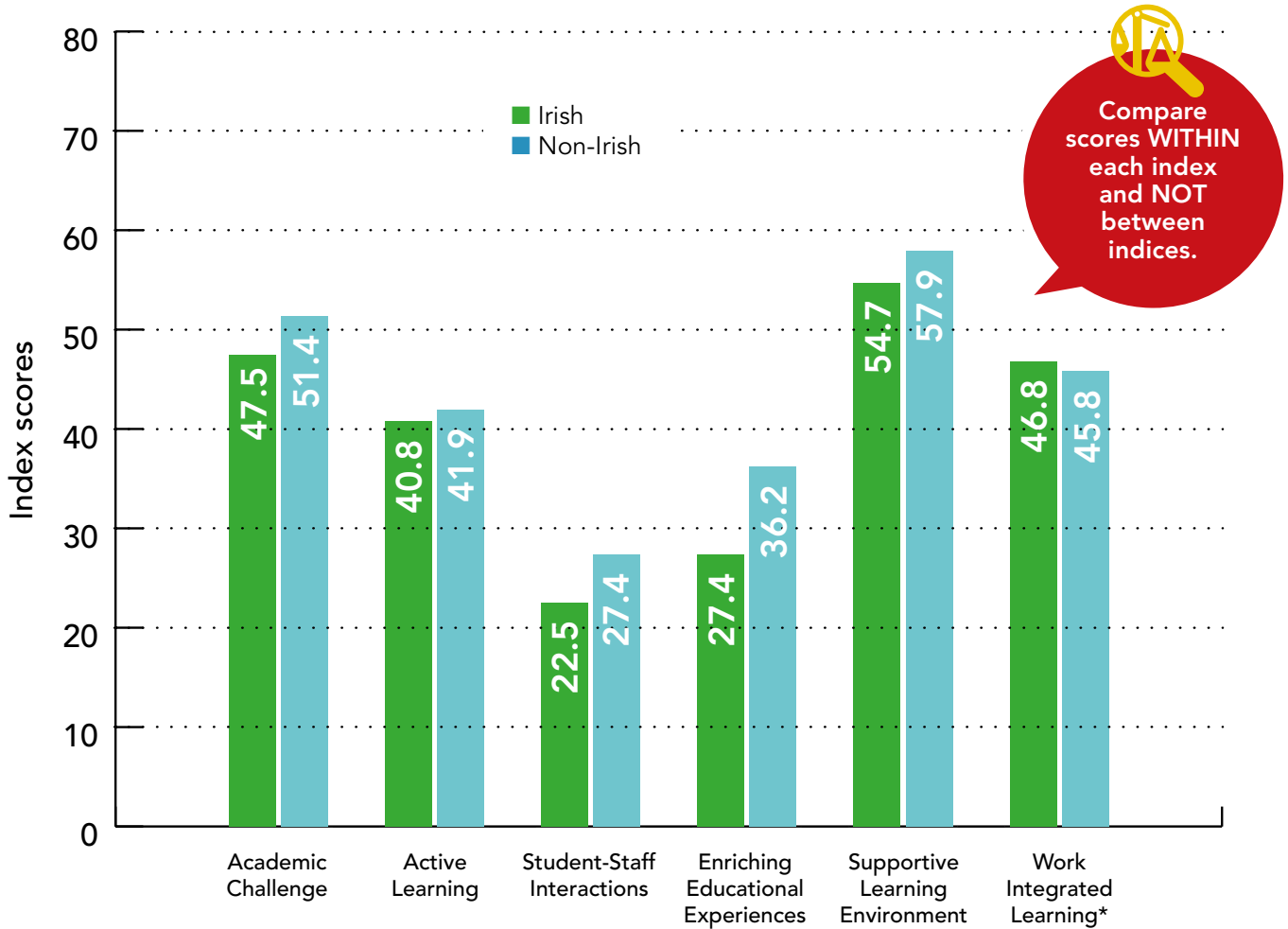
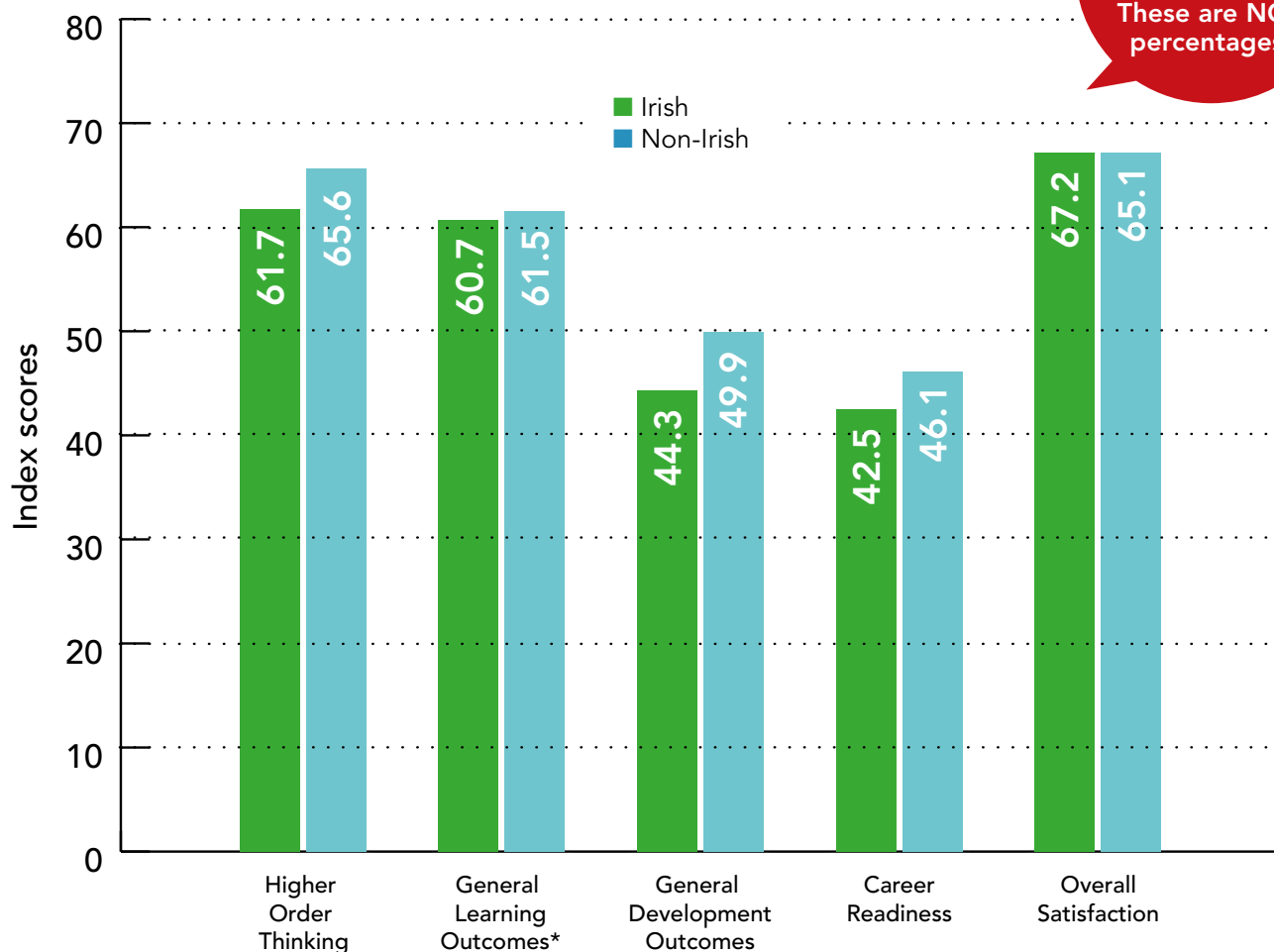


Figure 3.7.3.1 presents scores for engagement indices for Irish and non-Irish students. It demonstrates that index scores are higher for non-Irish students for engagement indices apart from *Work Integrated Learning* which is not proven to be statistically different for these groups.

* Statistical difference not proven to 95% confidence or greater.

3.7.3.2 Outcomes - Domicile



Index scores provide signposts to the experiences of students. These are NOT percentages.

Figure 3.7.3.2 presents scores for outcomes indices for Irish and non-Irish students. It demonstrates that scores for *Higher Order Thinking*, *General Learning Outcomes**, *General Development Outcomes* and *Career Readiness* are higher for non-Irish students, whereas the index score for *Overall Satisfaction* is higher for Irish students.

* Statistical difference not proven to 95% confidence or greater.

CHAPTER 4

NATIONAL RESULTS

IN CONTEXT

4.1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, results from ISSE 2015 are presented alongside results from 2014 and from the national pilot survey in 2013. Note that twenty six institutions participated in the 2013 national pilot whereas the same thirty institutions took part in the 2014 and 2015 surveys. Over the three years, a total of 59,965 responses have been collected.

NOTES FOR INTERPRETING THE DATA



Index scores provide signposts to the experiences of students. These are NOT percentages.

Please refer to notes for interpreting the data on page 11

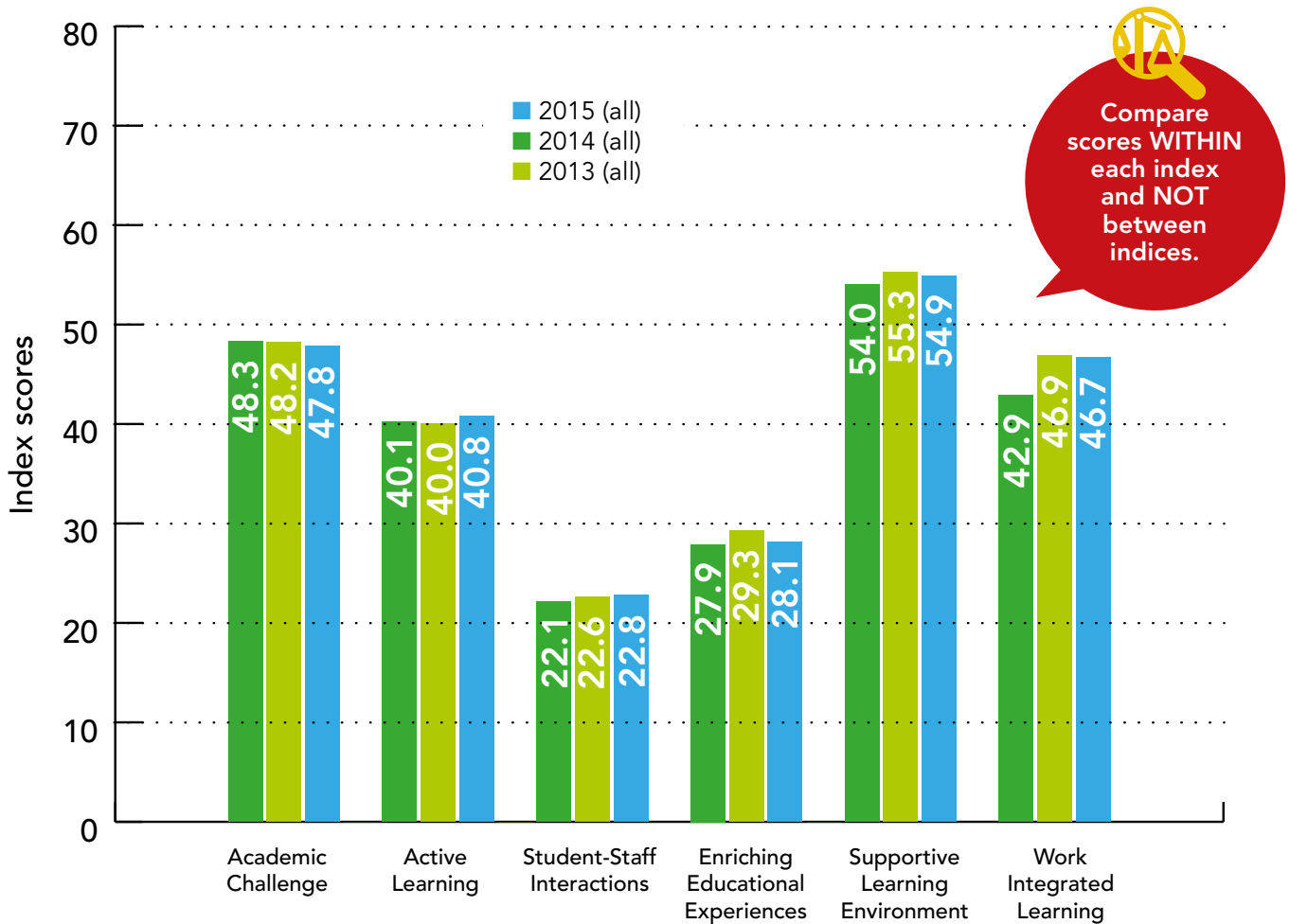


Compare scores WITHIN each index and NOT between indices.

4.2 ISSE 2013, 2014 AND 2015

The following charts present scores for student engagement and outcomes indices for the entire cohort of students participating in 2015 alongside index scores for 2014 and for 2013.

4.2.1 Engagement: 2013 to 2015 (national)

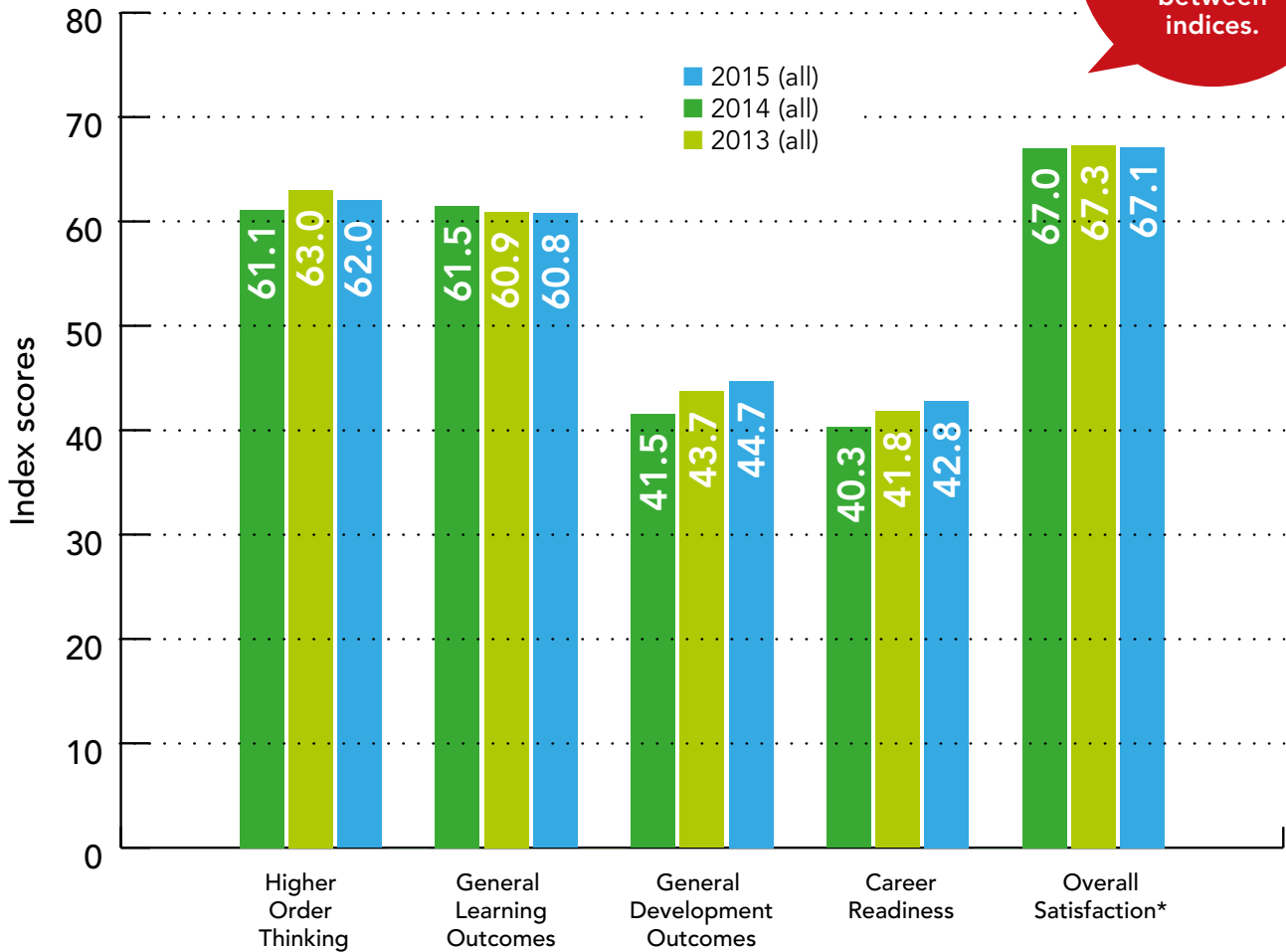


There is very limited difference between national index scores from year to year, which supports the view that the results are reliable given that there is limited change in the “system” overall from year to year at national level. The relatively large increase in the score for *Work Integrated Learning* from 2013 to 2014 corresponds to four additional institutions participating

in the 2014 survey. The additional institutions are relatively specialised with, for example, a specific focus on education, health and work-oriented programmes. Chart 3.6.1 illustrates the higher *Work Integrated Learning* scores associated with these specific fields of study. The same thirty institutions participated in 2014 and 2015.



4.2.2 Outcomes: 2013 to 2015 (national)



Index scores for *General Development Outcomes* and *Career Readiness* show small increases in each year of fieldwork. Scores for *Higher Order Thinking* and *Overall Satisfaction* remain very similar from 2013 to 2015.

Further analysis of index scores demonstrates similar consistency from 2013 to 2015 for many sub-groups of the national student population. For example, index scores display very limited differences year on year when considered by year / cohort or by institution-type.

* Statistical difference not proven to 95% confidence or greater.

4.3 ISSE 2015 IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Comparison with similar surveys, undertaken internationally, formed part of the national reports from implementation of the ISSE in 2013 and 2014. As noted in the 2014 report, it is not possible to consider direct comparisons of ISSE results with findings from the US (NSSE) or from Australia and New Zealand (AUSSE) later than 2012. The NSSE instrument has been revised, with a significantly updated questionnaire being used from 2013. The Australian government commissioned a new survey instrument, which is different in nature to the AUSSE, and use of the new survey is mandatory for state-funded higher education institutions. This development has significantly reduced, or effectively eliminated, continued use of the AUSSE questionnaire on which the ISSE is based.

Work is ongoing throughout 2015 to review and update the ISSE questionnaire. Further details of the revision are included in Chapter 6. It is planned to use the revised questionnaire in 2016 and future years. The revised ISSE questions take account of experience gained from three years' fieldwork in Ireland and of international developments. Based on the review progress to date, it is anticipated that the revised ISSE questionnaire will facilitate comparison with similar international surveys in 2016 and beyond.

It is noted that, although it will not be possible in future to consider Irish survey results in the context of the Australian or New Zealand higher education systems, the UK Engagement Survey (UKES)⁵ completed its second pilot year in 2014 and was implemented as a 'full (non-pilot)' voluntary survey in 2015. Although participation in UKES is voluntary and the ISSE is system-wide, it potentially offers an interesting additional comparative set of results for the future as the UKES questionnaire is significantly based on the latest revision of questions used in the NSSE.

5. <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/consultancy-services/surveys/ukes>

CHAPTER 5

LOOKING DEEPER - WHAT DOES ISSE TELL US ABOUT ACTIVE LEARNING AND STUDENT-STAFF INTERACTIONS?

Responses to survey questions can be combined to create indices relating to student engagement or outcomes. These indices provide an overview of the student experience, such as the extent to which students are actively engaged in their learning in the *Active Learning* index, and the level and nature of students' contact with teaching staff in the *Student-Staff Interactions* index. In this chapter, we explore

these two indices in greater detail as they demonstrate notable differences in students' experiences of aspects that are widely regarded as important influences on student success. It is important to note that the analysis that follows is intended to illustrate the richness of the overall data and to act as examples of the detail that can be explored for any index to inform discussion of local objectives or priorities.

KEY POINTS

Students report a variety of active learning experiences. Just over half of students (54%) work with other students within class time to prepare assignments, while 59% discuss ideas from their coursework with others (e.g. students, family members, co-workers etc.) outside of their class time. Students report working less frequently with other students outside class to prepare assignments (44%). They report that tutoring other students is not an activity experienced by the majority of students with 67% choosing 'never' in response to this question. There was almost an even split in students' responses to asking questions or contributing to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online. Approximately half of the students report that they had 'never' or 'sometimes' engaged in such an activity while the other half report they have 'often' or 'very often' asked questions or contributed to discussions.

- 34% of students have 'often' or 'very often' made a class or online presentation
- 54% of students report working regularly with students inside class to prepare assignments while 44% report that they work with other students outside class to prepare assignments
- Only 10% of students report tutoring or teaching other college students with the majority indicating that they 'never' (67%) or 'sometimes' (23%) participate in peer teaching
- 91% of students 'never' or 'sometimes' participate in a community-based project as part of their course, although the inclusion of the wording "as part of their course" may mask the number of such students who undertake these activities voluntarily

- 59% of students report that they 'often' or 'very often' discuss ideas from their coursework with others outside of their class.

Students report relatively low levels of student-staff interaction overall. Almost one third (32%) of students 'never' discuss their grades or assignments with teaching staff/tutors while 23% responded 'often' or 'very often' to this question. Over half of students (55%) report that they have 'never' talked about their career plans with teaching staff or career advisors. Only 14% of all students report 'often' or 'very often' discussing ideas from their coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class. Students report more favourably on the timeliness of feedback provided to them with 38% reporting 'often' or 'very often' receiving timely feedback on their academic performance. Three quarters of students report 'never' having worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework.

- 45% of students report that they have 'sometimes' discussed their grades or assignments with teaching staff and 23% selecting 'often' or 'very often'
- Students report low levels of talking about career plans, with 12% of students reporting that they have 'often' or 'very often' talked about career plans with teaching staff or career advisors. Final year students report higher levels of interaction here with 17% choosing 'often' or 'very often'
- Half of all students have 'never' discussed ideas from their coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class. Postgraduate students report the greatest incidence of interaction (62% 'sometimes', 'often' or 'very often') compared to 49% 'sometimes', 'often' or 'very often' for first years. Postgraduate students also report more occasions of receiving timely feedback on academic performance (43% 'often' or 'very often') than first and final year students (33% and 36% respectively)

NOTES FOR INTERPRETING THE DATA



Index scores provide signposts to the experiences of students. These are **NOT** percentages.

Please refer to notes for interpreting the data on page 11



Compare scores **WITHIN** each index and **NOT** between indices.

In this chapter, we consider two indices in greater detail. These are 'Active Learning', which measures students' efforts to actively construct knowledge and 'Student-Staff Interactions' which measures the level and nature of students' contact and interactions with teaching staff. This should provide the reader with a greater understanding of the indices and how different groups of students respond to the component questions for each index.

The analysis that follows breaks down all of the questions asked under each index, and summarises the answers given by different groups of students. In doing so, it identifies areas in which institutions are providing students with positive experiences, and areas where a focus on improvement may be beneficial.

Exploration of specific indices in this manner offers one of many potential lenses through which the data may be examined in order to inform consideration of the experience of students.

5.1 ACTIVE LEARNING

"Active learning is anything course-related that all students in a class session are called upon to do other than simply watching, listening and taking notes" (Felder & Brent, 2009⁶).

Active learning is becoming a widespread form of teaching and learning across all levels of education including higher education. It can occur in many forms such as asking questions, posing a problem, issuing some type of challenge and working individually or in small groups to come up with a response. There are many advantages, outlined by the research, for students in engaging in active learning such as:

- Better student attitudes and improvements in students' thinking skills
- Much higher levels of energy and participation
- More and better questions and answers from students
- Surpasses traditional modes of instruction for retention of material
- Some research has shown that academic achievement improves when active learning is used⁷

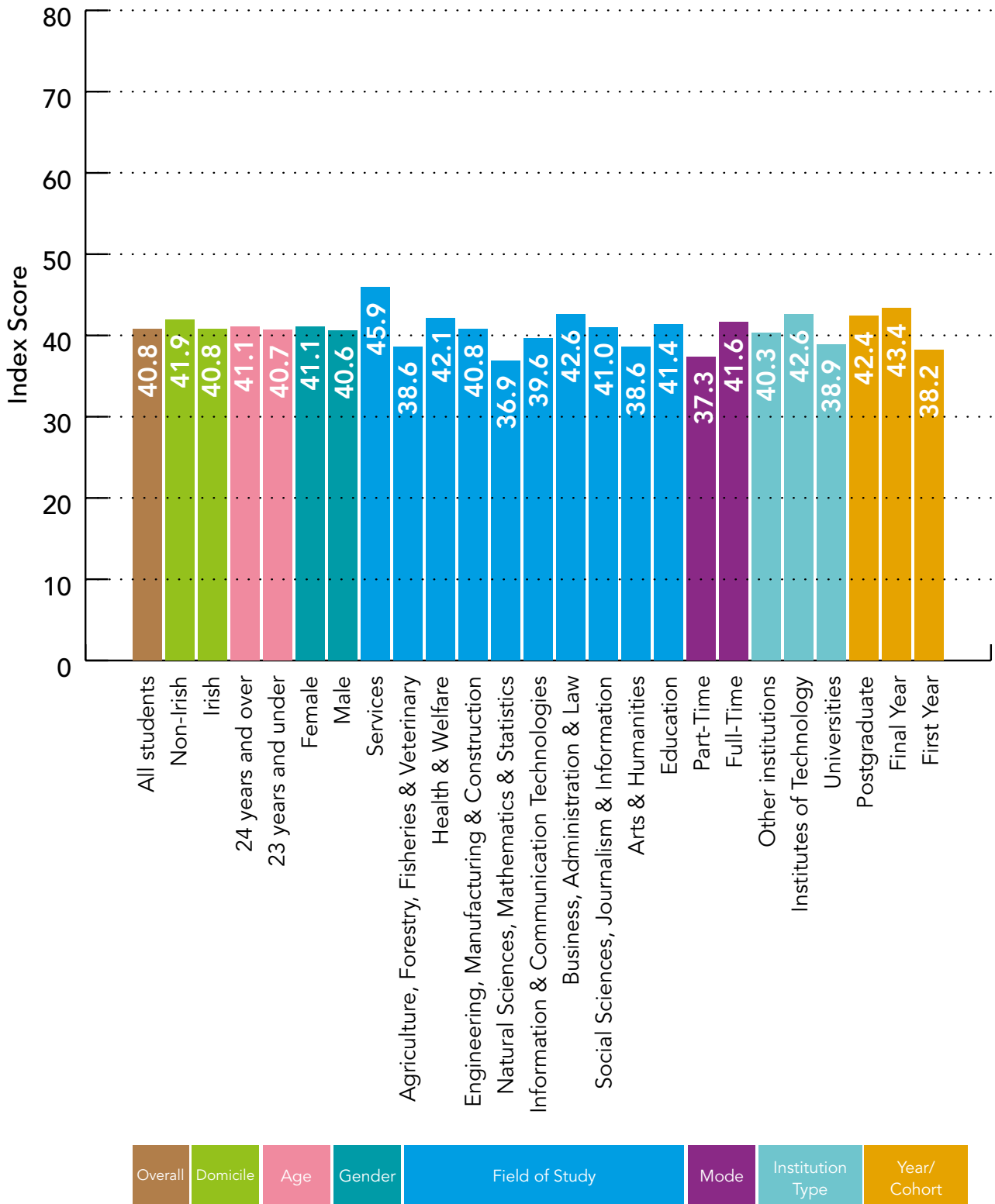
There can be difficulties in assessing how an active learning methodology impacts on learning outcomes such as knowledge, skills and attitudes. In addition, creating effective opportunities for such activities may be time-consuming in terms of planning and resources. Notwithstanding these challenges, there is broad support for the elements of active learning.⁸

The engagement index of *Active Learning* reflects students' experience of actively constructing their knowledge. It examines their engagement in class, the extent of their collaboration with others both inside and outside class as well as investigating the opportunities they receive, through their college course, to participate in community-based projects such as volunteering.

The results for *Active Learning* are given across different types of institutions, programmes and students in Chapter 3. The results can also be combined as follows.

6. Felder, R.M and Brent, E (2009) Active Learning: An Introduction, ASQ Higher Education Brief, no. 2.
7. Ruhl, K.L, Hughes, C.A. and Schloss, P.J.(1987) Using the Pause Procedure to Enhance Lecture Recall, Teacher Education and Special Education, no. 10.
8. Prince, M (2004) Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research, Journal of Engineering Education, no. 93.

5.1 Overview of Active Learning



The overall index score (for all respondents) is 40.8. The highest index scores for sub-groups are for final year students (43.4), Institutes of Technology (42.6) and postgraduate students (42.4). When considering field of study, students studying Services programmes report the highest level of *Active Learning* (45.9) with Business, Administration and Law students and Health and Welfare students reporting scores of 42.6 and 42.1 respectively. The lowest active learning index score in the field of study category are reported by students studying Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (36.9).

Lowest index scores are also reported by University students (38.9), first year students (38.2), and part-time students (37.3).

Index scores for *Active Learning* are calculated from responses to seven particular questions in the survey.

Students were asked:

- In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following;
 - Asked questions or contributed to discussion in class, tutorials, labs or online;
 - Made a class or online presentation;
 - Worked with other students inside class to prepare assignments;
 - Worked with other students outside class to prepare assignments;
 - Tutored or taught other college students (paid or voluntary);
 - Participated in a community-based project (e.g. volunteering) as part of your course;
 - Discussed ideas from your coursework with others outside class (e.g. students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

They could give answers on a scale from 'never', 'sometimes', 'often' and 'very often'.

5.1.1 Summary of results for *Active Learning*

Half of the students report that they have asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online. The majority of students report not having made a class or online presentation.

More than half of the students have worked with students inside class to prepare assignments while under half of the students have worked with students outside class to prepare assignments. Students, in general, have little experience tutoring other college students or taking part in community-based projects as part of their coursework. The majority of students have discussed ideas from their coursework with others outside class.

First year students report lower levels of experiencing active learning methodologies such as asking questions, contributing in class and making presentations, than final year students and postgraduate students. First year students also report a greater tendency to work with other students inside class than outside class to prepare assignments. About half of postgraduate students appear to work more independently of others both inside and outside the class. This compares with

final year students who report working more regularly with others, both inside and outside the class, than first year students and postgraduate students. Postgraduate students also appear to have relatively high levels of discussion of ideas from their coursework with others outside the class. Final year students report the most experience participating in community-based projects as part of their course as well as reporting greater levels of tutoring other college students than first year students and postgraduate students.

Interestingly, students in Institutes of Technology report more frequent use of active learning when compared with Universities and other institutions. This was the case in most instances with the exception of discussing ideas from your coursework with others outside of class.

There were differences observed in full-time and part-time students' reporting of working with other students inside and outside class to prepare assignments: full-time students report that they work more collaboratively than part-time students. Part-time students report more frequently asking questions

or contributing to discussions in class than full-time students. Part-time students also report less experience participating in a community-based project as part of their course when compared to full-time students.

Mature students (age 24 years and over) report that they ask more questions or contribute to class discussions more regularly than traditional students (age 23 and under). Traditional students report working with students, inside and outside of class to prepare assignments, more regularly than mature students. There is little difference in male and female reporting although males tutor or teach other college students more often than females. Females report that they discuss ideas from their coursework more often than their male counterparts. Similarly, little difference was observed in terms of nationality. Irish students reported that they have not tutored other college students as often as non-Irish students.

Looking specifically at fields of study, students on Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics programmes report the least engagement in class when it comes to asking questions, contributing to discussion or making presentations. Students on Services programmes report the greatest incidence of collaboration with students, inside and outside of class, to prepare assignments. There is a low level of peer teaching reported across all fields of study with the highest in Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction, Services, and Information and Communication Technologies programmes. Students studying on Health and Welfare, and Services programmes report the most community-based experience. Education, Arts and Humanities, and Social Sciences, Journalism and Information students indicate the most favourable responses to the discussion of ideas from their coursework with others outside class, when compared to students in other fields.

The relatively low number of students that have made a class or online presentation may be regarded as one example of many discussion topics prompted by analysis of the rich data set.

There may be many differing perspectives (for example, different disciplines, different year groups, varying institutional ethos or priorities) on how often it is desirable for students to make presentations, given the associated requirement for preparation, overall class time for multiple presentations and potential impact on the time available for other desirable learning activities.

Interpretation of the data should take account of what is judged to be effective and appropriate practice and not be constrained by a superficial assumption that all questions should elicit the highest response options for all students.

5.1.2 Detailed results for Active Learning

Q.1: Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online

Approximately half of all students report that they 'often' or 'very often' engage in class, tutorials, labs or online by asking questions or contributing to discussions. This finding is relatively consistent with final year students (54%) and a little lower with first years (42%). 67% of postgraduate students regularly ask questions or contribute to discussions with over one third of postgraduate students indicating that they 'very often' do same.

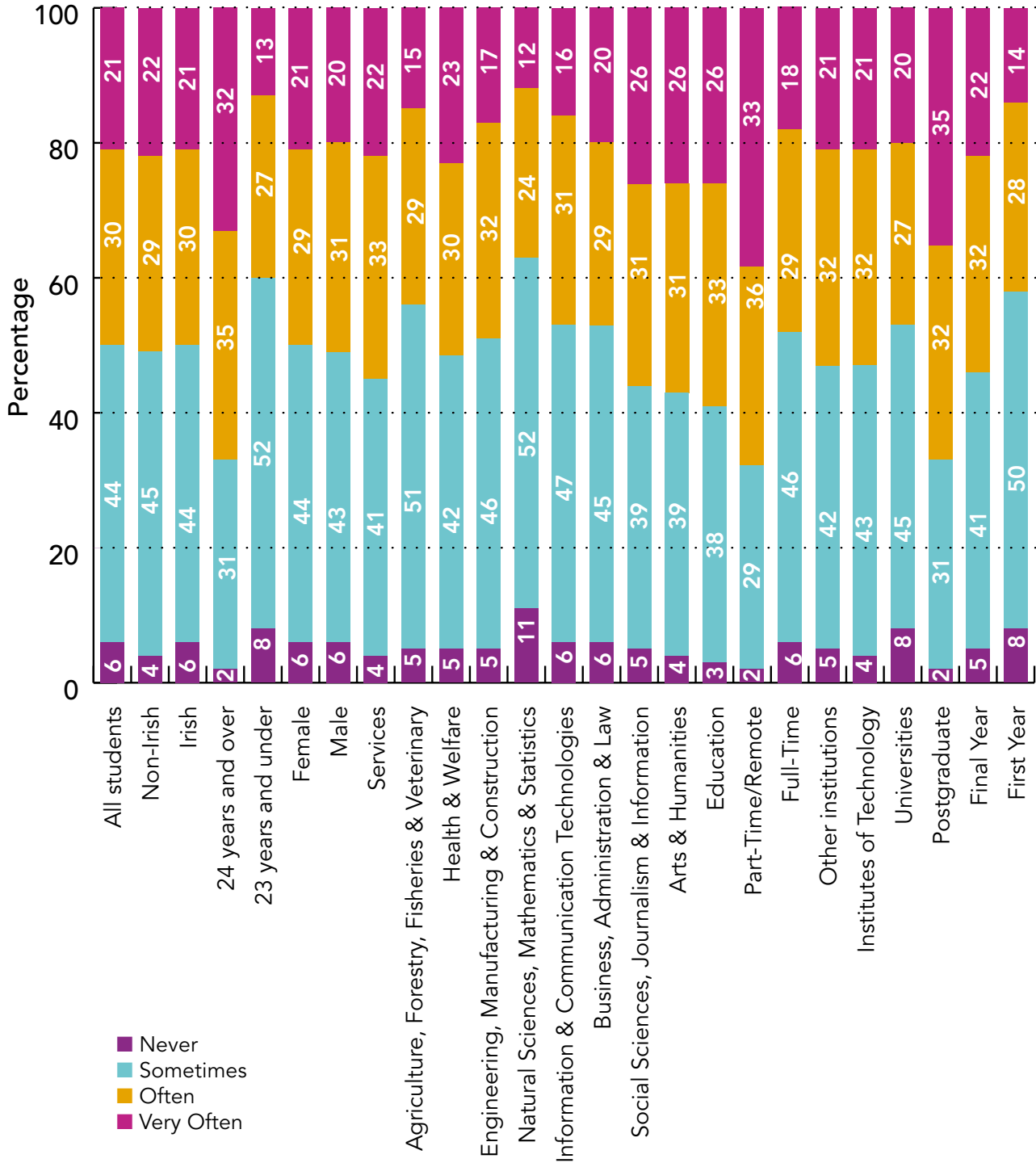
Similar findings are reported by institution-type with, again, approximately half of the students reporting that they 'often' or 'very often' ask questions or contribute to discussions in Universities, Institutes of Technology and other institutions.

Interestingly, part-time/remote students (69%) report asking questions and contributing to discussions more frequently than full-time students (47%).

67% of students aged 24 or above report asking questions and contributing to discussions while 40% of traditional students (23 or under) report the same.

Students pursuing Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics programmes report that they are the least likely to ask questions or contribute to discussions, with 63% indicating that they 'never' or 'sometimes' engage at this level. This compares to 41% of Education students who report that they 'never' or 'sometimes' ask questions or contribute to discussions.

Q.1: Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online



Q.2: Made a class or online presentation

The next chart suggests that, overall, there are relatively limited occasions where students are asked to make presentations in class or online. Only 10% of all students report presenting 'often'. This may be regarded as one of many discussion topics prompted by analysis of the rich data set. There may be many differing perspectives (for example, different disciplines, different year groups, varying institutional ethos or priorities) on how often is desirable for students to make presentations given the associated requirement for preparation, overall class time for multiple presentations and potential impact on the time available for other desirable learning activities.

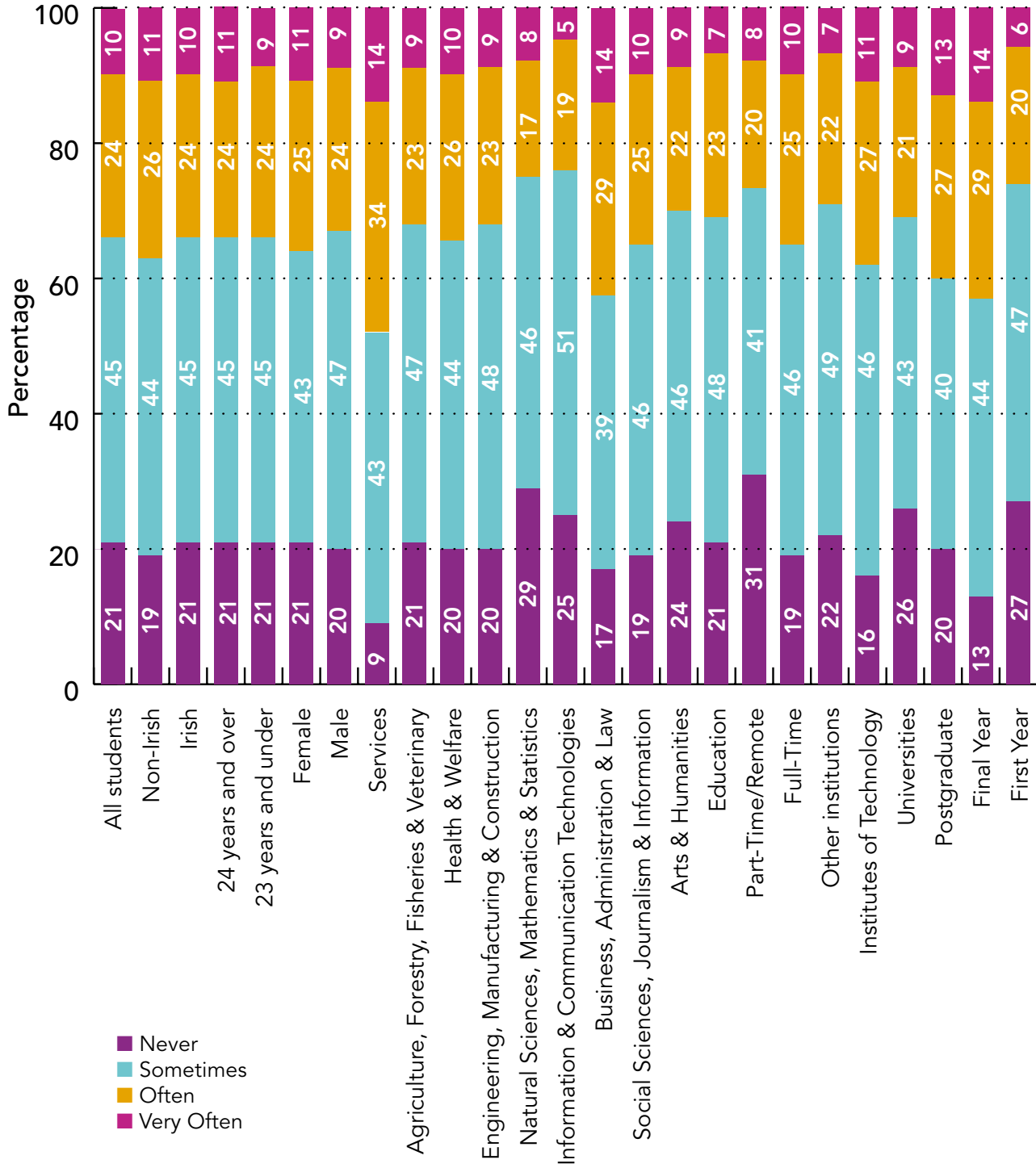
Final and postgraduate students have, unsurprisingly, had more experience presenting with 43% and 40%, respectively, reporting 'often' or 'very often' compared to 26% of first years.

38% of students from Institutes of Technology indicate that they 'very often' or 'often' made a class or online presentation which compares to 30% at Universities and 29% at other institutions.

There are little or no differences in presentations made across mode of study, gender, age or nationality.

There are differences across fields of study with three quarters of students from Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics reporting that they 'never' or 'sometimes' made a class or online presentation. Students from Services programmes report that highest incidence of presenting with 48% of these students indicating that they have done so 'often' or 'very often'.

Q.2: Made a class or online presentation



Q.3: Worked with other students inside class to prepare assignments

More than half of all students report that they collaborate with other students inside class to prepare assignments (54%). There is a difference with postgraduate students who report less collaboration with students inside class (50%) than first year students (55%) and final year students (57%).

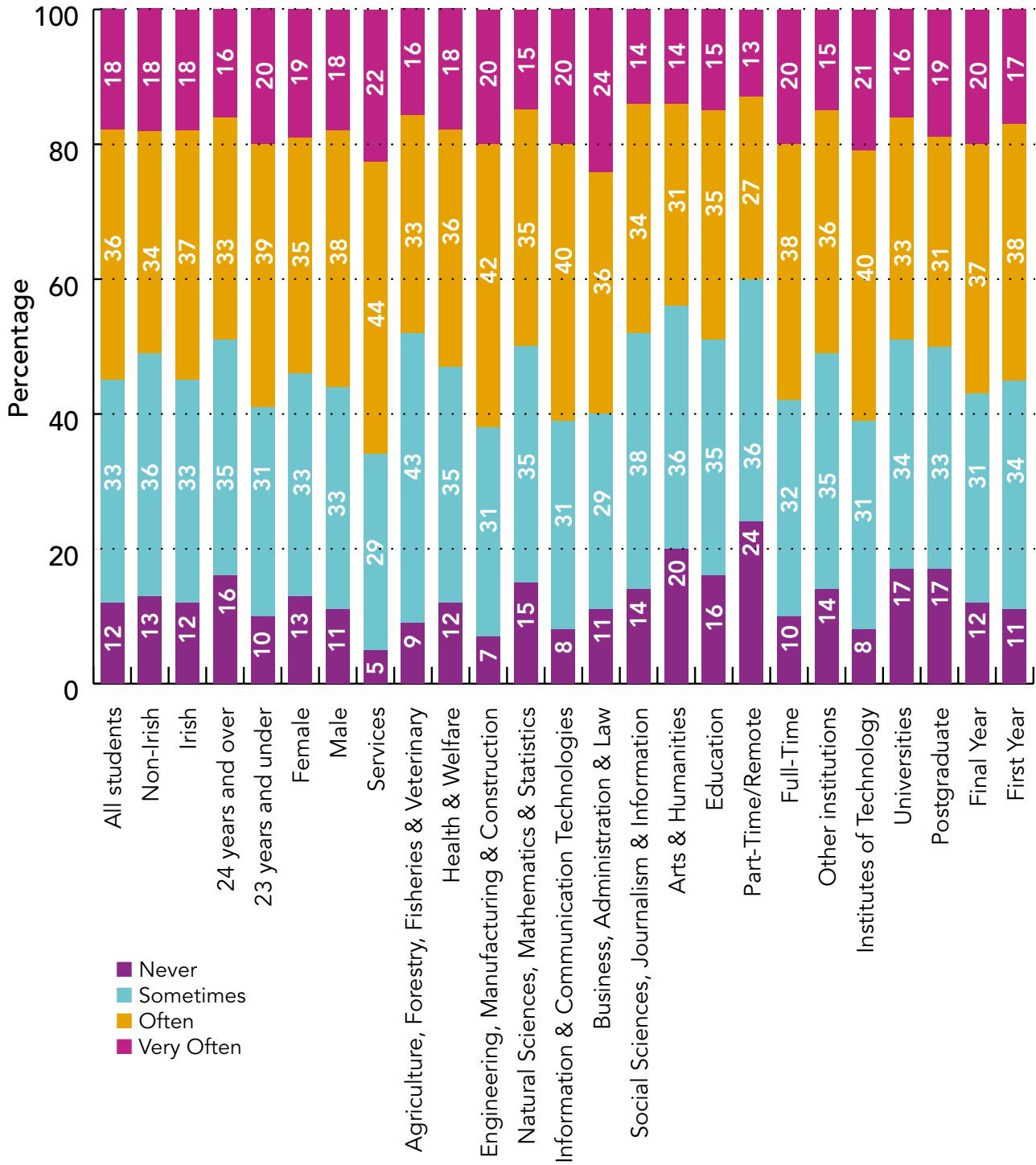
Differences are also observed between institution-types with 61% of Institute of Technology students reporting that they 'often' or 'very often' worked with other students inside class. This compares to 49% of students in Universities and 51% of students in other institutions.

There were also differences in students studying part-time/remote or full-time. 60% of part-time students have 'never' or 'sometimes' worked with other students inside class to prepare assignments compared to 42% of full-time students.

Just over half of the mature students (age 24 and above) have 'often' or 'very often' collaborated with other students inside class while 59% of students aged 23 and under report similar findings.

Students in the following fields of study report that they work most often with other students inside class to prepare assignments; Services (66%), Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (62%), Information and Communication Technologies (60%) and Business, Administration and Law (60%). Students studying Arts and Humanities programmes report the lowest level of collaboration with other students inside class at 45%.

Q.3: Worked with other students inside class to prepare assignments



Q.4: Worked with other students outside class to prepare assignments

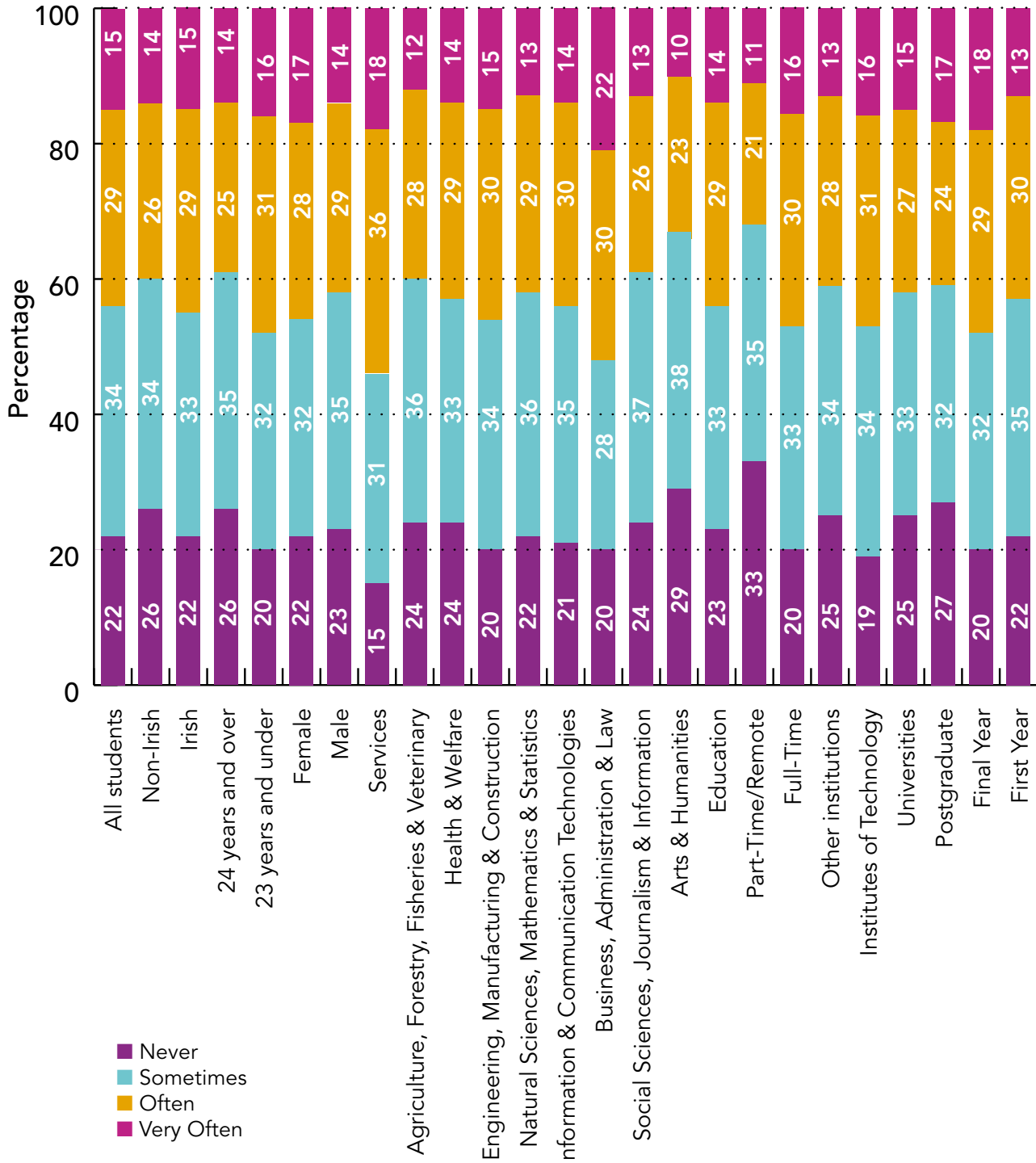
The next chart highlights the reporting of students in terms of their experience working with other students outside class to prepare assignments. 56% of all students have 'never' or 'sometimes' worked with students outside class. This figure is 59% for postgraduate students, 57% for first year students and 53% for final year students.

There is a notable difference between full-time and part-time students: 32% of part-time students report that they worked with other students outside class to prepare assignments compared with 47% of full-time students.

52% of traditional students have 'never' or 'sometimes' worked with others outside class to prepare assignments while 65% of students age 24 and above, report the same.

Students studying on Services and Business, Administration and Law programmes report the highest level of collaboration with students outside class with 54% and 52% respectively, indicating that they 'often' or 'very often' did so. Students studying in the field of Arts and Humanities report the lowest interaction in this area with 67% indicating that they 'never' or 'sometimes' work with other students outside class to prepare assignments.

Q.4: Worked with other students outside class to prepare assignments



Q.5: Tutored or taught other college students (paid or voluntary)

In general, students do not have much experience with tutoring or teaching other college students in a paid or voluntary capacity. There is a similar trend across all variables in the following chart where 69% of all students report that they have 'never' tutored or taught other college students (paid or voluntary), 22% have 'sometimes' tutored, 6% 'often' tutor and 2% 'very often' tutor.

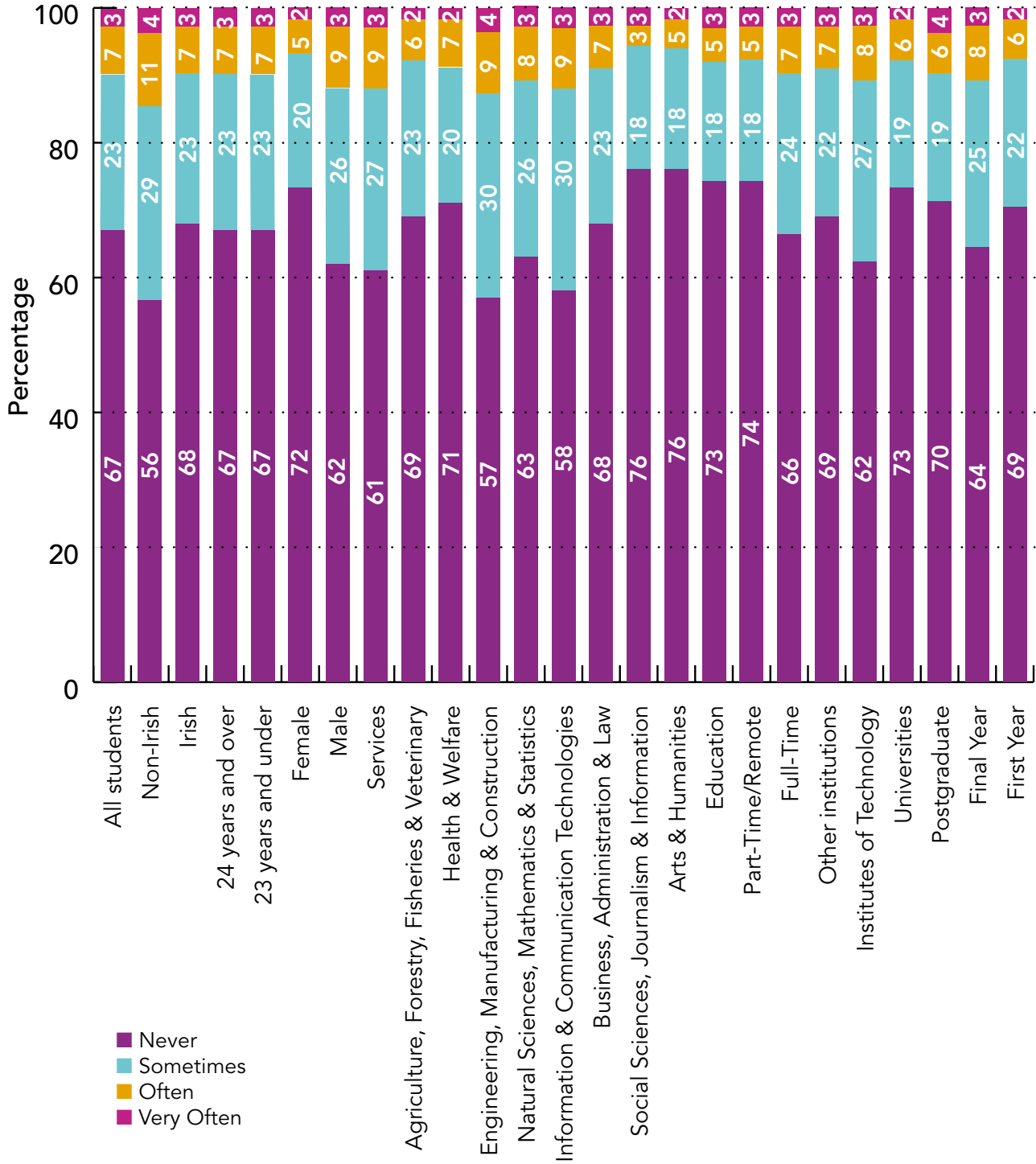
11% of final year students report that they tutor other students 'often' or 'very often' which compares to 10% of postgraduate students and 8% of first year students.

There is a slight difference in male and female students with 12% of males reporting that they have tutored or taught other college students compared to 7% of females.

68% of Irish students have 'never' tutored or taught other college students compared to 56% of non-Irish students.

Students in Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction programmes (13%), Service programmes (12%) and Information and Communication Technologies programmes (12%), report that they are the most experienced with tutoring. This compares to just 6% of students pursuing Social Sciences, Journalism and Information.

Q.5: Tutored or taught other college students (paid or voluntary)



Q.6: Participated in a community-based project (e.g. volunteering) as part of your course

There is little evidence of students, in general, participating in a community-based project such as volunteering, as part of their course. 77% of all students had 'never' participated in such a project. The inclusion of "as part of your course" in the question may mask the number of students who undertake such activities voluntarily.

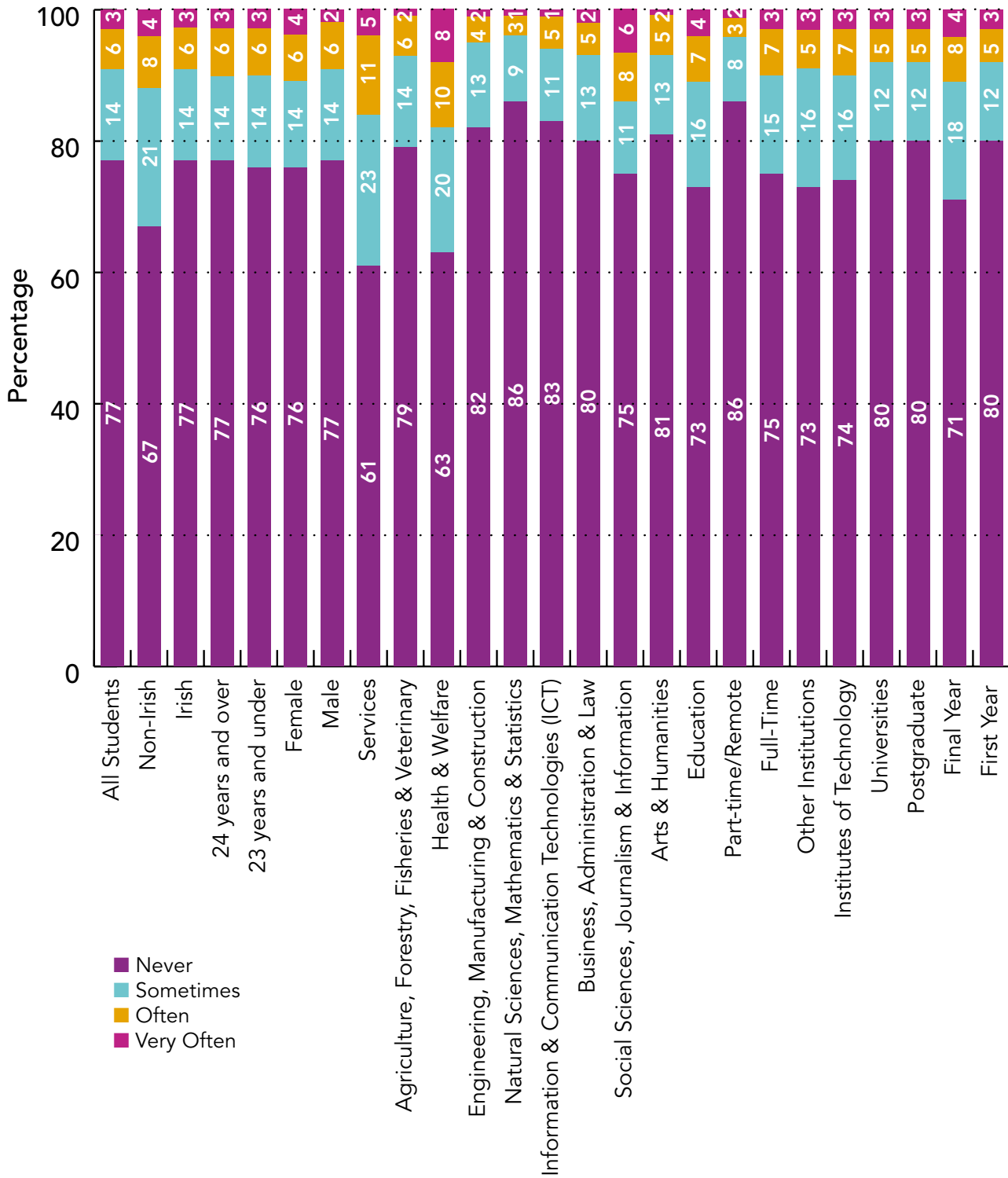
The breakdown for this question by year group indicates that most of the students in first year (80%) and at postgraduate level (80%) had 'never' participated in a community-based project as part of their course compared to 71% of final year students.

Interestingly, 80% of University students have 'never' participated in a community-based project as part of their course compared to 74% and 75% in Institutes of Technology and other institutions respectively.

There is a difference in full-time and part-time students here also. 10% of full-time students have 'often' or 'very often' participated in such a project compared to 5% of part-time students.

Students in Health and Welfare and Services programmes have the most community-based experience with 18% and 16% respectively, reporting that they have 'often' or 'very often' participated in such a project.

Q.6: Participated in a community-based project (e.g. volunteering) as part of your course



Q.7: Discussed ideas from your coursework with others outside class (e.g. students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

In general, students have discussed ideas from their coursework with others outside class. 59% of students report 'often' or 'very often' discussing such ideas while a further 35% have 'sometimes' done the same.

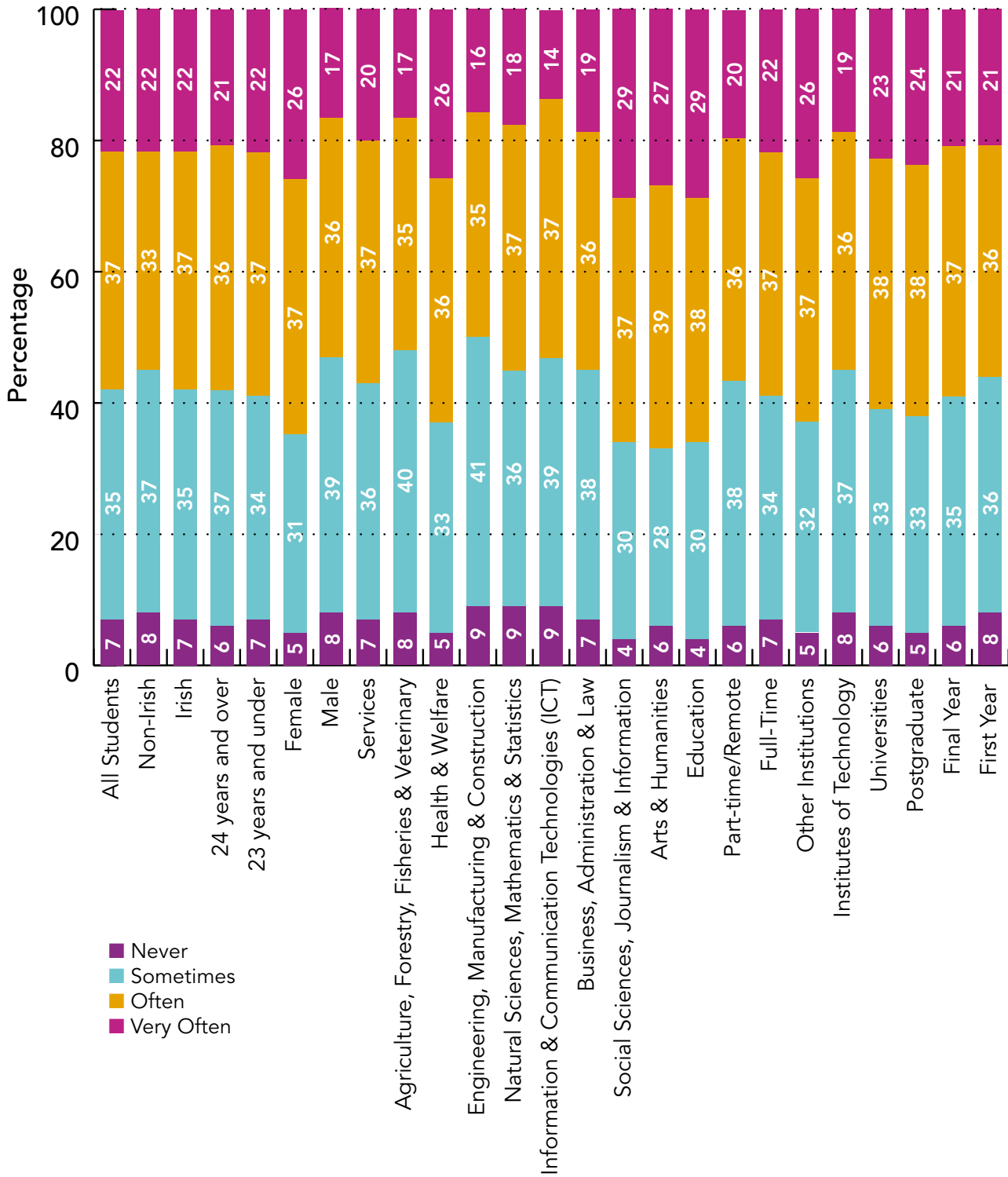
There is little difference in first year and final year students reporting here with 57% and 59% respectively, indicating that they 'often' or 'very often' discuss ideas from their coursework with others outside class. This compares to 62% of postgraduate students.

Students from Institutes of Technology report more frequent discussion of ideas from their coursework with others outside class than students in Universities or other institutions.

Females tend to have discussed ideas from their coursework with others outside class more often than males, with 26% of females reporting 'very often' compared to 17% of males reporting the same.

In relation to field of study, students in Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (50%), Information and Communication Technologies (48%) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary (48%) indicate that they 'never' or 'sometimes' discuss ideas from their coursework with others outside class. This compares with 34% from Education, Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, Journalism and Information, students respectively.

Q.7: Discussed ideas from your coursework with others outside class (e.g. students, family members, co-workers, etc.)



5.2 STUDENT-STAFF INTERACTIONS

The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* highlights the need for matching teaching and assessment methods that enable students to exploit and build on their strengths. It is also the vision of the national strategy to reaffirm the relationship between research, teaching and learning with students afforded opportunities to engage in research during their time in higher education.

Previous ISSE reports have referenced studies on the impact of student engagement on academic performance, persistence and retention. A number of studies have focussed specifically on the impact of student interactions with academic / teaching staff. In 1982, Endo and Harpel⁹ studied the effect of student interaction with teaching staff (referred to as 'faculty') after four year programmes, thereby extending previous work undertaken by Terenzini and Pascarella in 1980¹⁰ which studied the effect after one or two years. They concluded that the frequency and quality of student-faculty interactions had positive impacts on personal, intellectual and academic outcomes even when controlling for pre-enrolment student characteristics. In 2001, Kuh and Hu also found that:

"Educators at all levels believe that frequent, meaningful interactions between students and their teachers are important to learning and personal development.... In general, the more contact between students and faculty both inside and outside the classroom, the greater the student development and satisfaction" Kuh and Hu (2001)¹¹

Close interaction between students and academic staff is regarded as having positive impacts on learning as well as reducing the perceived impersonal environment of large institutions. Such interaction can affect students' ways of thinking and methods of problem-solving. Nevertheless, despite institutions seeking to address this aspect of the student experience, engagement surveys internationally consistently generate lower results for the index *Student-Staff Interactions* than for other indices. It is important, therefore, to examine these data as they apply to different student groups within this index and associated questions. This point, of course, applies to all indices but is worth repeating for an index whose scores are notably lower than most others.

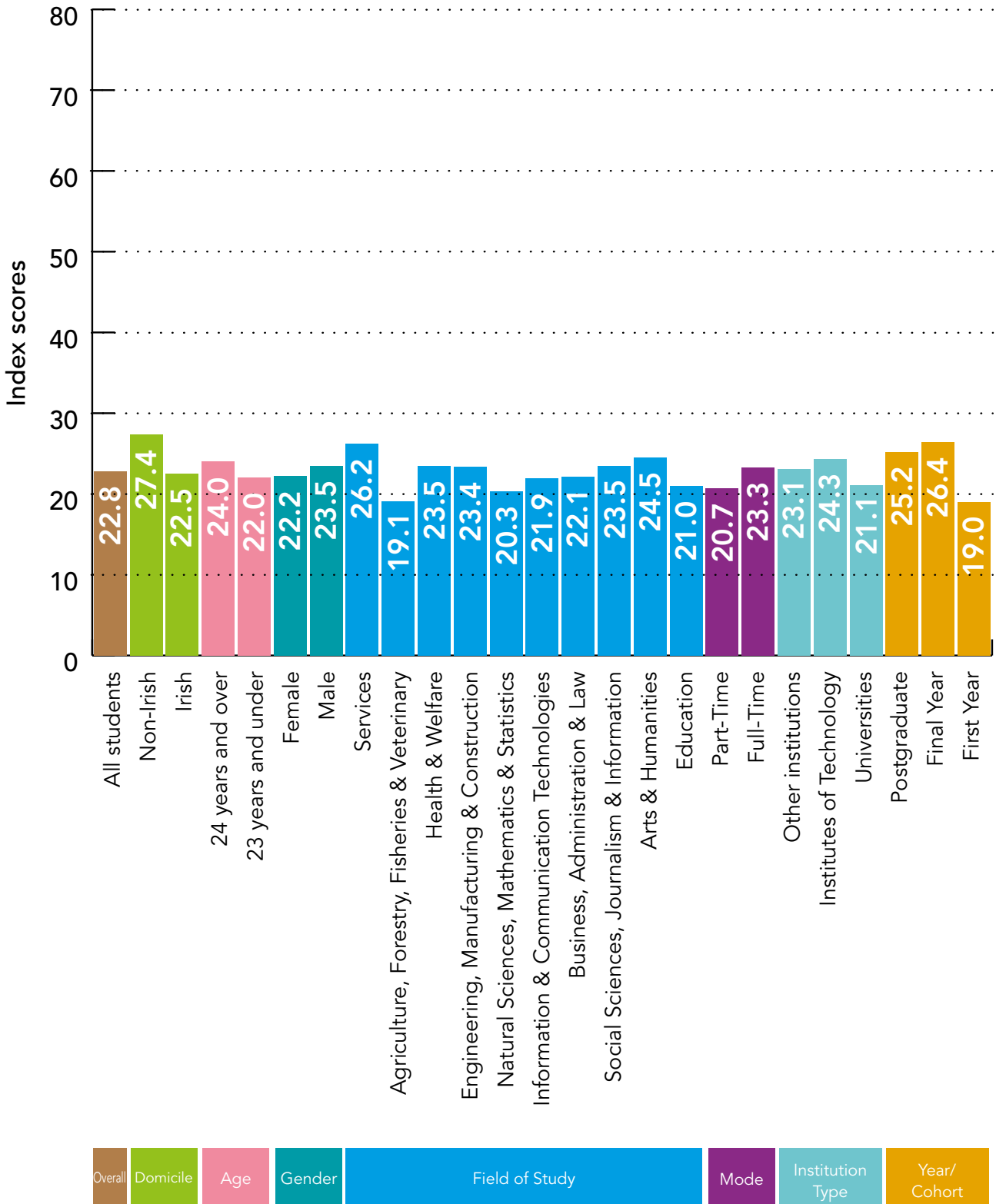
9. Endo, Jean & Harpel, Richard. (1982) The effect of student-faculty interaction on students' educational outcomes. Research in Higher Education vol 16

10. Terenzini, P., and Pascarella, E. (1980) Student/faculty relationships and freshman year educational outcomes: a further investigation. Journal of College Student Personnel

11. Kuh, G. D., & Hu, S. (2001). The effects of student-faculty interaction in the 1990s. The Review of Higher Education, 24

The results of the index *Student-Staff Interactions* are provided across different types of institutions, programmes and students in Chapter 3. The results can be combined as follows.

5.2 Overview of Student-Staff Interactions



CHAPTER 5 LOOKING DEEPER

The overall index score (for all respondents) for *Student-Staff Interactions* is 22.8. The scores for different groups of students vary. The highest scores are reported from Non-Irish students (27.4) followed by final year students (26.4), students on Services programmes (26.2), postgraduate students (25.2) and students from Arts and Humanities programmes (24.5). Despite being the highest scores reported, these scores show relatively low levels of interaction between students and staff. First year students report even lower scores (19.0) as do students on Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary programmes (19.1).

Index scores for *Student-Staff Interactions* are calculated from responses to the following six questions. Students were asked:

- In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you:
 - Discussed your grades or assignments with teaching staff/tutors;
 - Talked about your career plans with teaching staff or career advisors;
 - Discussed ideas from your coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class;
 - Received timely written or oral feedback from teachers/tutors on your academic performance;
 - Worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework;

with answers ranging from 'never', 'sometimes', 'often' to 'very often'; and

- Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?
 - Work on a research project with a staff member outside of coursework requirements;

with answers ranging from 'do not know about', 'have not decided', 'do not plan to do', 'plan to do', 'done'.

5.2.1 Summary Results for Student-Staff Interactions

Students report quite low interactions with academic staff across the board. This is particularly true when asked about talking about career plans with teaching staff or career advisors, discussing ideas from your coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class or working with teaching staff on activities other than coursework. Students are more positive in their response to receiving timely written or oral feedback from teachers/tutors on their academic performance with mixed views on discussion of grades or assignments with teaching staff. Unsurprisingly, it is not common for students to have worked with staff outside of coursework requirements on a research project.

Of each of the year groups, it appears that first year students have the lowest levels of interaction with academic teaching staff. These students selected 'very often' the least of all three groups for all questions asked. Perhaps surprisingly, postgraduate students report lower levels of interaction with academic staff on research projects outside of their coursework requirements when compared to final year students.

Students studying in Universities report less *Student-Staff Interactions* than those studying in Institutes of Technology. This was noticeable for almost all questions where University students selected 'never' more frequently than Institute of Technology students.

In general, full-time students report greater interaction with staff than part-time students with the exception of receiving timely feedback, where part-time students have more favourable responses. There are little differences observed between males' and females' interaction with staff, for most questions. The greatest difference is between males and females where 53% of females report that they have discussed ideas from their coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class compared to 46% of males.

A higher level of interaction is evident between non-Irish students and staff when compared to Irish students. Large differences are observed for almost all questions with non-Irish students indicating that they interact much more frequently with staff than Irish students.

In terms of field of study, students studying on Education programmes report the highest levels of 'never' discussing their grades with teaching staff/tutors and 'never' talking about career plans with teaching staff or career advisors. Services students, when compared to other fields of study, report that they interact most with staff when discussing ideas from their coursework outside of class as well as when working with teaching staff on activities other than coursework. Arts and Humanities students receive the timeliest feedback when compared to students in other programmes of study. Students in Health and Welfare programmes and in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics programmes report the highest incidence of working on a research project with staff outside of coursework.

5.2.1 Detailed Results for Student-Staff Interactions

Q.8: Discussed your grades or assignments with teaching staff/tutors

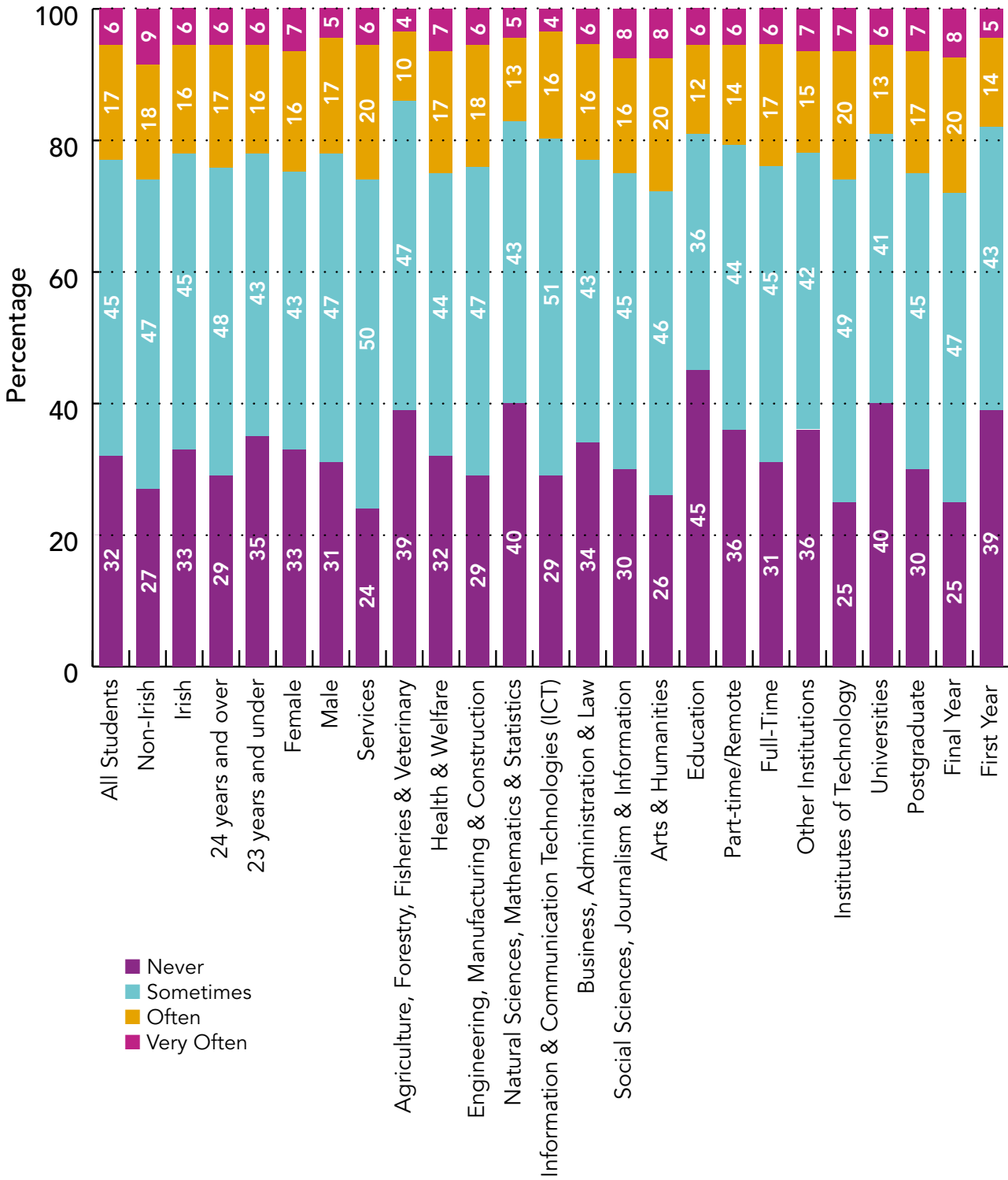
Overall, the discussion of grades or assignments with teaching staff is not something students report as happening frequently. This is particularly true of first years where only 19% of students report that they have discussed grades or assignments with teaching staff/tutors.

This interaction between students and staff occurs most often in Institutes of Technology (27%) compared to Universities (19%) and other institutions (22%). Non-Irish students also report more discussion of grades (27%) when compared to Irish students (22%).

Students on Education (45%), Natural Sciences, Journalism and Information (40%) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary (39%) programmes report most often that they 'never' discuss grades or assignments with teaching staff/tutors when compared to students in other programmes.

There were very little or no differences observed between males and females and between mature and traditional students. Non-Irish students report more incidence of interaction with staff here than Irish students with 27% of non-Irish students reporting that they 'often' or 'very often' discuss grades and assignments with staff compared to 22% of Irish students.

Q.8: Discussed your grades or assignments with teaching staff/tutors



Q.9: Talked about your career plans with teaching staff or career advisors

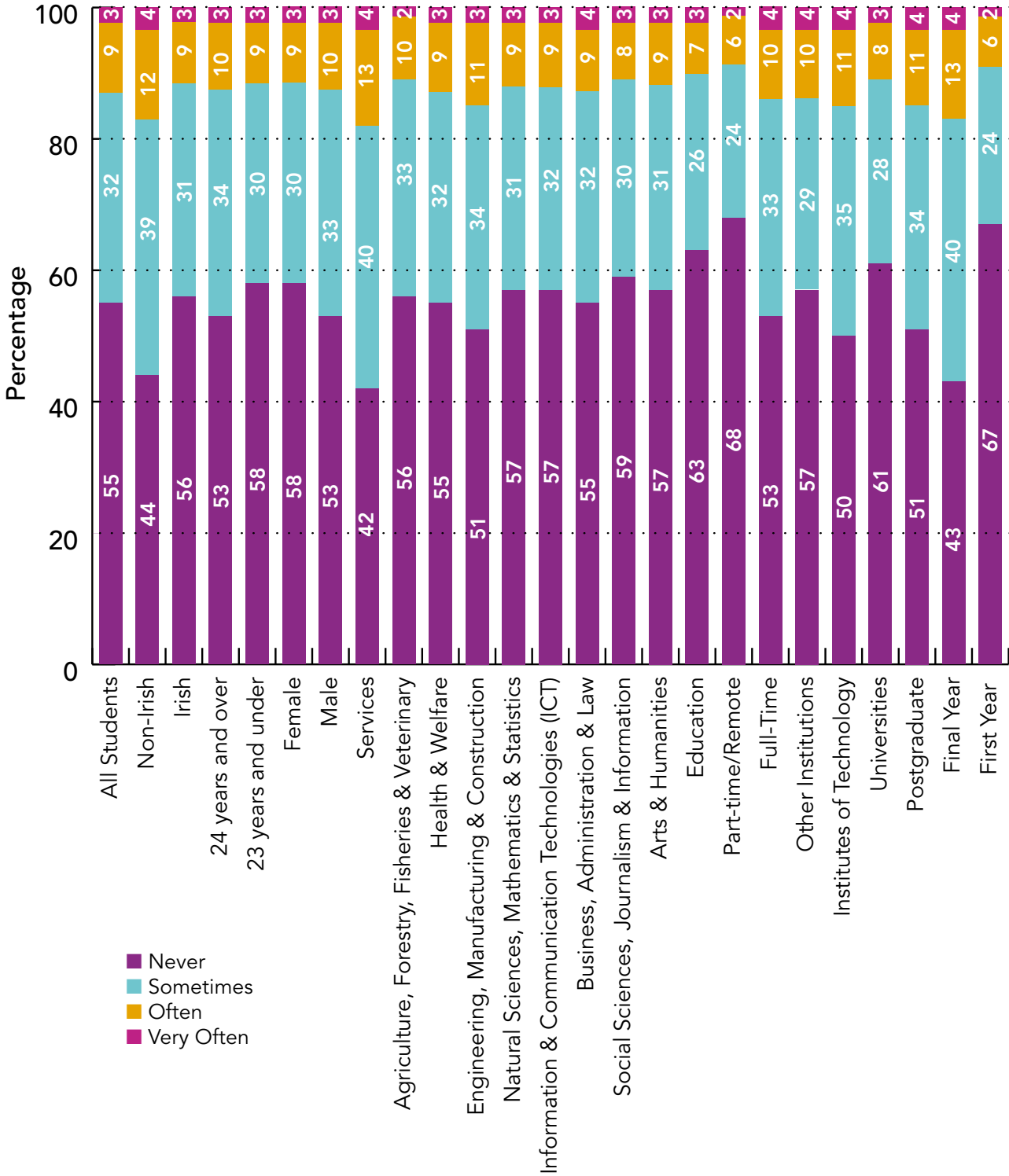
Talking about career plans with teaching staff or career advisors is not experienced by the majority of students. This is particularly the case amongst first years where two thirds of students report that they have 'never' had such a talk, compared to 51% of postgraduate students and 4% of final year students.

Findings differ between institution-types with 61% of University students reporting that they have 'never' talked about career paths with staff compared to 50% of students in Institutes of Technology and 57% of students in other institutions.

Full-time students report more favourable incidences of interaction with staff, in terms of talking about careers, when compared with part-time students. There are little, if any, differences reported by males and females and by mature and traditional students. Differences are reported by nationality with 16% of non-Irish students answering 'often' or 'very often' to the question, compared to 12% of Irish students.

There are differences seen in terms of field of study also. 63% of Education students report that they have 'never' talked about career plans with teaching staff or career advisors closely followed by Social Sciences, Journalism and Information (59%), Information and Communication Technologies (57%) and Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (57%). Students studying in Services programmes had the highest 'often' or 'very often' responses at 17%.

Q.9: Talked about your career plans with teaching staff or career advisors



Q.10: Discussed ideas from your coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class

Overall, half of all students have not discussed ideas from their coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class. This response is more prevalent among first year students (61%) compared to final year (41%) and postgraduate students (38%).

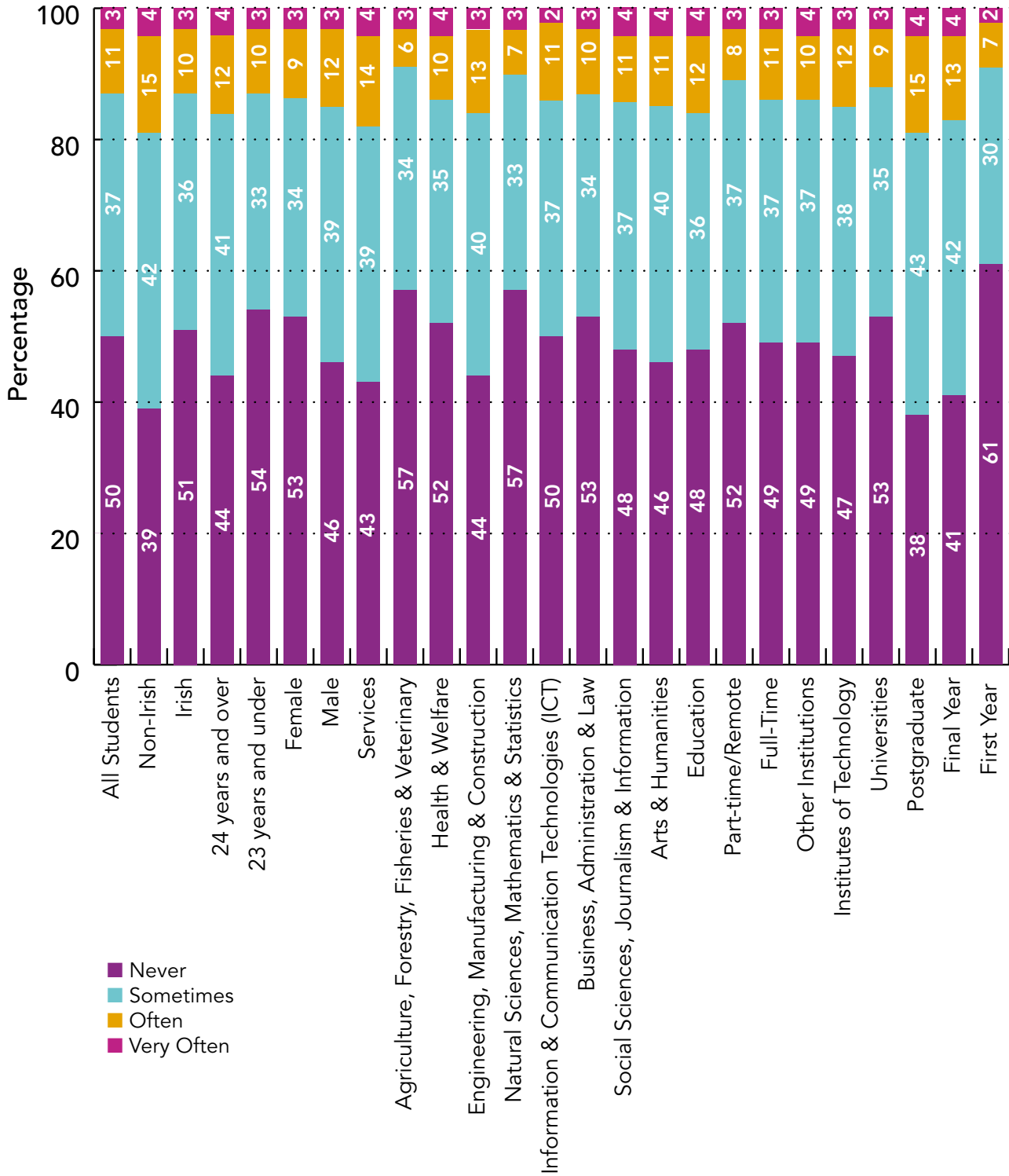
University students are less likely to discuss ideas with staff outside class than those in Institutes of Technology and other institutions.

Differences are also observed between males and females: 53% of females have discussed ideas from their coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class compared to 46% of males. The same is true for mature students where 44% have 'never' discussed ideas with staff compared to 54% of students age 23 and under.

In terms of nationality, a similar difference is reported where 51% of Irish students answered 'never' to the question compared with 39% of non-Irish students.

The students who study in Services programmes respond most favourably to this interaction with staff. 18% of these students answered 'often' or 'very often'. The least favourable responses are reported by students in Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary and students studying Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics: in both cases, 57% of students answered 'never'.

Q.10: Discussed ideas from your coursework or classes with teaching staff outside class



Q.11: Received timely written or oral feedback from teachers/tutors on your academic performance

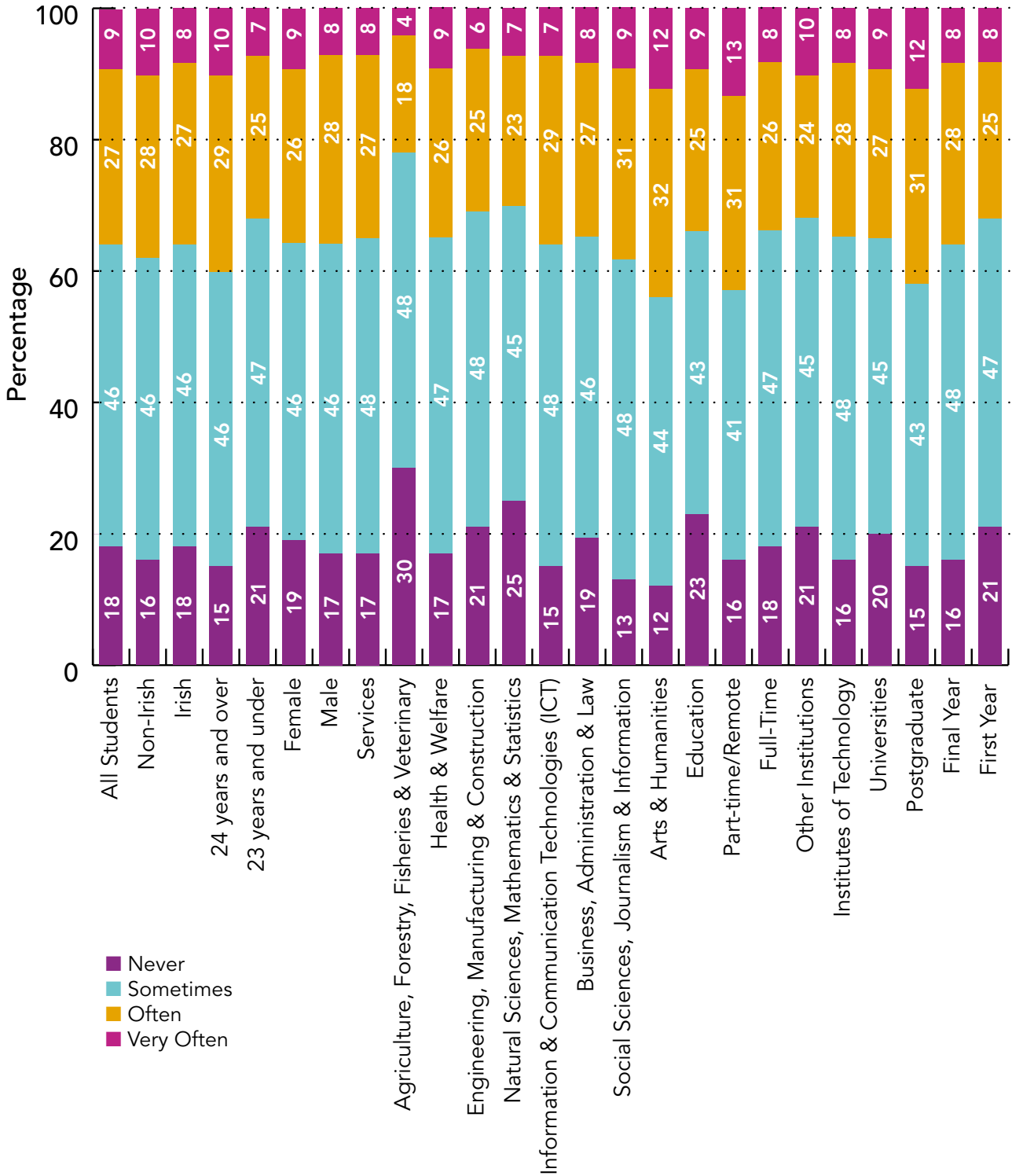
Of all questions that contribute to this index, students respond most positively to this one. 38% of all students report that they have 'often' or 'very often' received timely feedback from teachers on their academic performance. Responses vary between year groups with 43% of postgraduate students answering 'often' or 'very often', compared to 36% of final year students and 33% of first year students.

There were differences in full-time and part-time student responses with 43% of full-time students answering that they 'often' or 'very often' received timely feedback in comparison to 34% of part-time students.

Students aged 23 and under report less occurrence of timely feedback from teachers than students aged 24 and over. 68% of traditional students have 'never' or 'sometimes' received such feedback in comparison to 61% of mature students.

In terms of field of study, students studying Arts and Humanities programmes report that they receive feedback more frequently than students on other programmes: 44% answered 'often' or 'very often' to this question. Students on Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary programmes report the highest percentage (78%) of 'never' or 'sometimes' receiving timely feedback when compared to all other programmes.

Q.11: Received timely written or oral feedback from teachers/tutors on your academic performance



Q.12: Worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework (e.g. committees, orientation, student organisations)

Students, in general, report very low interaction with teaching staff on activities other than coursework with only 2% answering 'very often', 6% answering 'often', 18% answering 'sometimes' and 74% answering 'never'. A total of 11% of final year students answered 'very often' or 'often' compared to 8% of postgraduate students and 6% of final year students. This question, and its responses, can be used to inform consideration of wider aspects of student engagement with institutional structures and process in addition to providing an insight into student engagement with their learning.

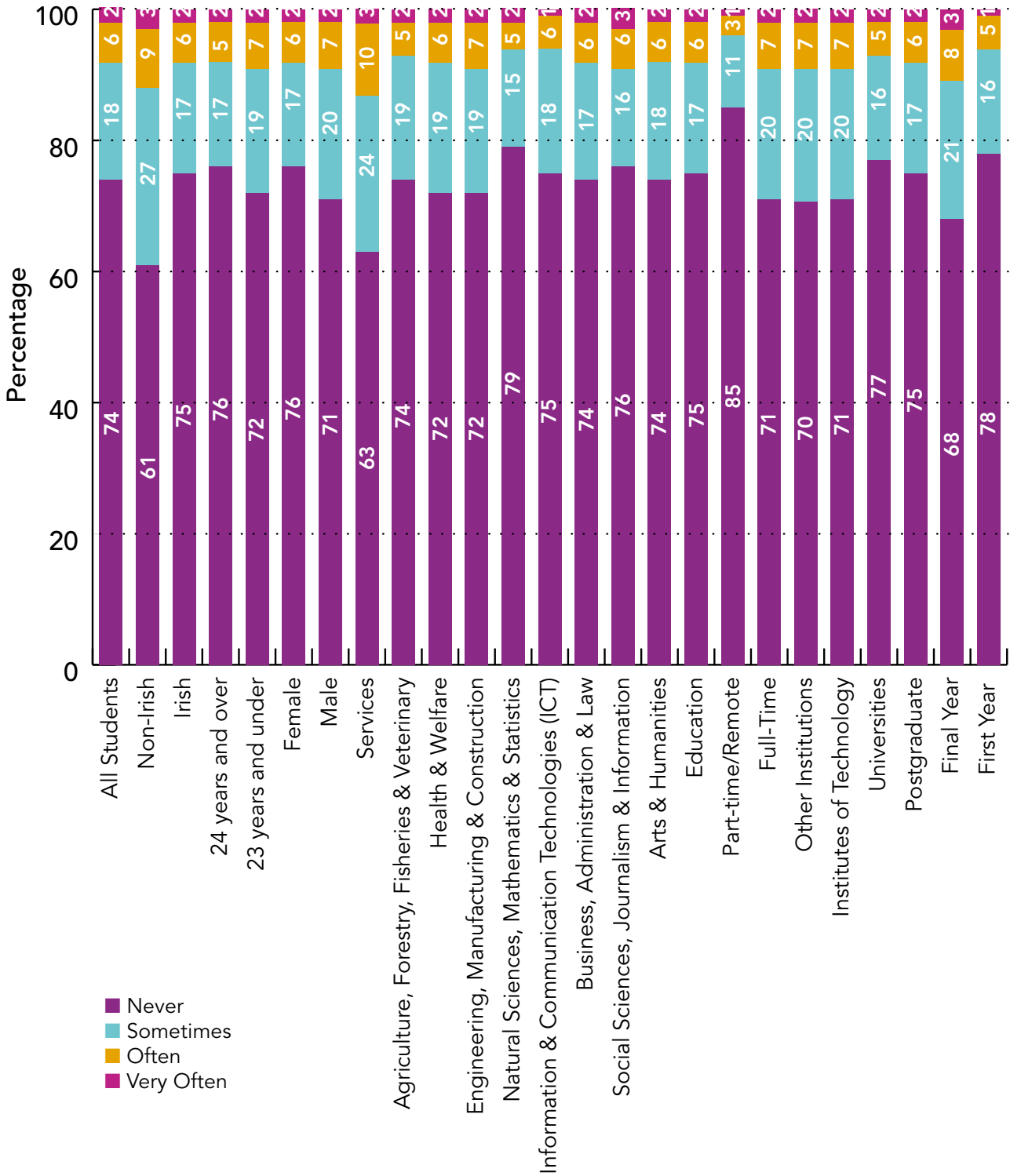
Figures vary slightly by institution-type with 77% of University students answering 'never', compared with 71% and 70% of Institute of Technology and other institutions' students, respectively. Full-time students report more experience in working with staff on activities other than coursework when compared with part-time students: 9% of full-time students answer 'often' or 'very often' while the same is true for 4% of part-time students.

Female students report a higher percentage of 'never' working with teaching staff on activities other than coursework than males (76% v 71%). Similarly, 76% of mature students answered 'never' to this question compared with 72% of traditional students.

In terms of nationality, non-Irish students report a greater likelihood of answering 'very often' or 'often' (12%) than Irish students (8%).

Differences are also observed between students on various programmes. 13% of students studying Services programmes answered 'often' or 'very often' working with teaching staff on activities other than coursework. Students on these programmes have the lowest frequency of answers of 'never' to this question (63%) with students from Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics reporting the highest frequency (79%).

Q.12: Worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework (e.g. committees, orientation, student organisations)



Q.13: Work on a research project with a staff member outside of coursework requirements

It is not surprising to note that relatively large proportions of students do not expect to work on research outside of coursework requirements, given the context nationally and competing demands on student and staff time. One third of students report that they 'do not plan' (33%) to work on a research project with a staff member outside of their coursework. 6% of all students have already worked with staff on such a project. There are interesting differences between year groups with final year students (9%) reporting the greatest frequency of answers of 'done' followed by postgraduate students (7%) and first year students (3%).

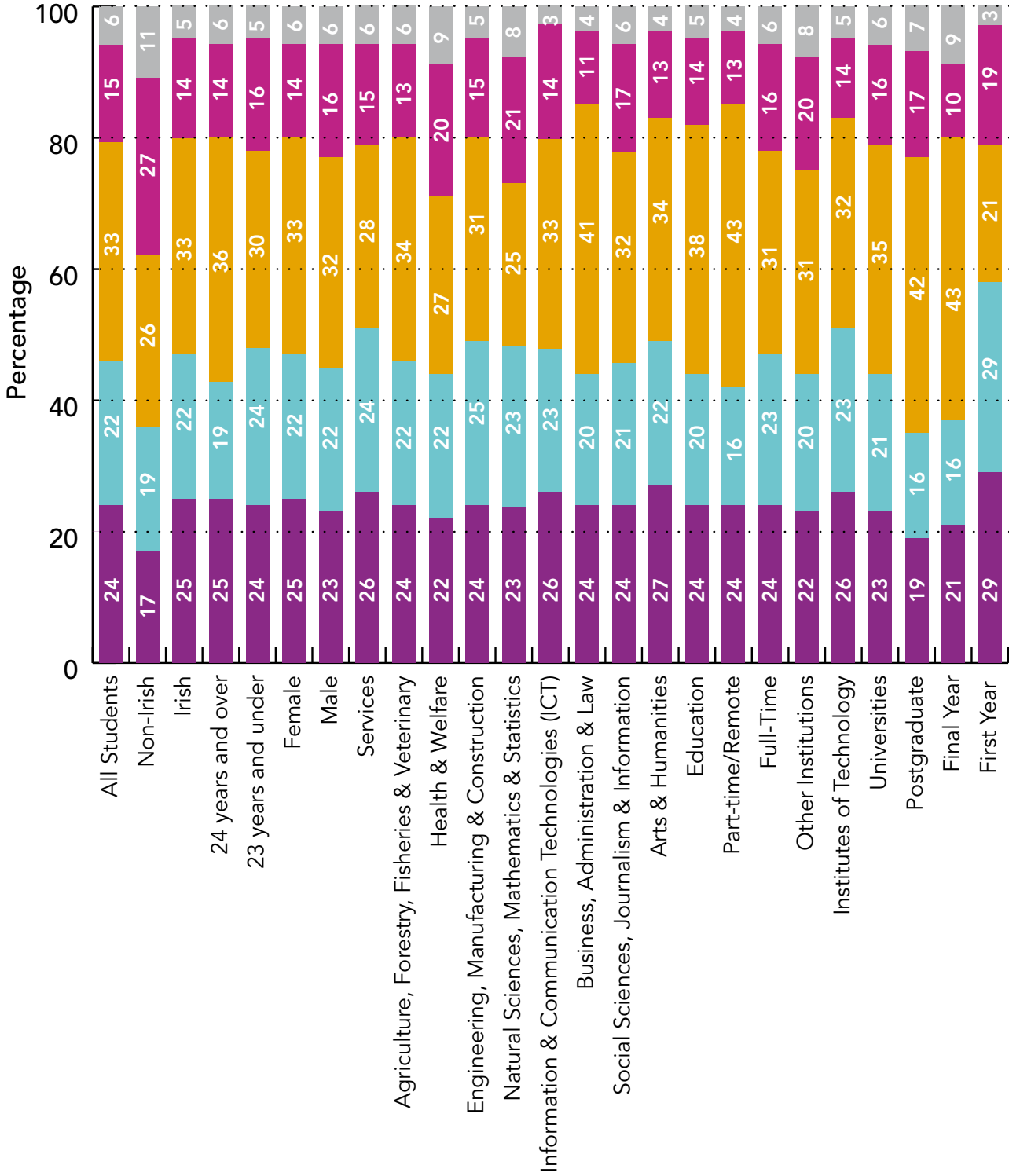
35% of 'University' students 'do not plan' to research with a staff member outside of coursework requirements compared with 32% and 31% of 'Institute of Technology' and 'other institutions' students. A greater percentage of part-time students (43%) than full-time (31%) 'do not plan' to research with a staff member outside of course work.

There is little or no differences in males' and females' reporting to this question while younger students indicate slightly more plans to carry out such research with 16% answering 'plan to do' compared with 14% of mature students.

Non-Irish students have the greatest frequency of students (11%) reporting that they have already 'done' a research project outside of coursework with a staff member than all other categories. It compares to 5% of Irish students.

Students in Health and Welfare programmes (9%) and in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics programmes (8%) report the highest incidence of working on a research project with staff outside of coursework. Business, Administration and Law students (41%) are most likely not to do a research project outside of coursework.

Q.13: Work on a research project with a staff member outside of coursework requirements



5.3 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FOR ACTIVE LEARNING AND STUDENT-STAFF INTERACTIONS

For *Active Learning*, we have seen that students report a range of experiences of learning in an active and constructive way. In particular, first year students report the lowest levels of interacting in class by way of questioning, contributing to discussion and making presentations. Final year students report working more regularly with others, both inside and outside of class, than first year students and postgraduate students. This suggests students may be encouraged to work more collaboratively as their undergraduate studies progress.

A number of areas can be identified for further exploration and/or possible improvement:

- Active learning experiences in institution-types: students from Institutes of Technology report more frequent use of active learning methodologies than those from Universities and other institutions. This was the case in most instances with the exception of discussing ideas from their coursework with others outside of class
- Mature versus traditional students: it may have been expected that mature students would work closely with their peers. However, students aged 24 years and over, while more likely to engage in class with staff, are less likely to work collaboratively with other students than those aged 23 and under. This is also the case with part-time or remote students when compared to full-time students. This suggests that institutions should consider how collaborative learning methodologies can be promoted for these cohorts of students who are more likely to have competing demands on their time than younger full-time students
- Some of the lowest levels of active learning are reported by students on Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics programmes, particularly in relation to asking questions, contributing to discussion or making presentations in class. In disciplines where building knowledge constructively is vitally important, this may require further consideration.

For *Student-Staff Interactions*, low levels of interactions are reported in general. Relatively low proportions of students discuss their grades or assignments with teaching staff 'often' or 'very often'. Large numbers of students had 'never' talked about their career plans with teaching staff or careers advisors when the survey was conducted. Half of students had 'never' discussed ideas from coursework with teaching staff outside class. Students who come from outside of Ireland report higher levels of interaction with academic staff than Irish students. While this may differ learning cultures, it also highlights the opportunities afforded to all students in higher education, whether they avail of these or not.

A number of areas can be identified for further exploration and/or possible improvement:

- Students in Universities report less *Student-Staff Interactions* when compared to Institutes of Technology, in particular. While this may reflect overall group sizes and staff-student ratios, Universities may wish to explore student perceptions and staff insights regarding this interaction
- Full-time students indicate greater interaction with staff than part-time students in almost all instances. While this finding may reflect the nature of the differences in modes of study, institutions may also wish to consider how staff-student communication and interaction can be enhanced for part-time students.

CHAPTER 6

NEXT STEPS

6.1

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF ISSE DATA

Availability of data from multiple iterations of ISSE fieldwork offers potential for further analysis and interpretation within institutions and nationally. A number of institutions have already indicated plans to aggregate data to create sample sizes that are large enough to enable reliable analysis of data at faculty level.

In addition to activity and discussions within institutions, as referenced in section 1.3, a series of workshops were held during 2014 in partnership with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching

and Learning. The workshops explored ISSE data for broad subject disciplines and encouraged exploration of data from the perspective of teaching and learning. Workshop participants examined responses to selected questions and indices to identify and begin to interpret aspects of interest. Feedback from the initial workshops was positive and we are committed to providing further similar opportunities during the 2015-2016 academic year. It is planned to aggregate data from three years' fieldwork in order to facilitate closer reliable analysis.

6.2

IMPROVING THE ISSE INSTRUMENT

The current question items have been used in fieldwork in 2013, 2014 and 2015. A detailed review of the questions is underway during 2015 and is ongoing at the time of writing this report. The key objective of the review is to provide an improved instrument to inform discussions and activities relating to enhancement, within institutions and at national level. The review seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To reflect the breadth and richness of the higher education experience
- To focus on aspects of student engagement that can be acted upon by institutions while taking account of the uses of data by other project partners; and
- To maintain the ability to interpret ISSE data in the context of equivalent international measures

The review takes account of experience gained from the first three years of the ISSE and of international developments relating to similar surveys. It builds on the strengths of the current questionnaire and maintains the focus on student engagement. Question items used in the current ISSE have been used as the foundation for the revised instrument, enabling trend data to be maintained into the future for a proportion of items.

Pretesting of the revised questionnaire will take place in autumn 2015, leading to deployment of updated ISSE question items in 2016 fieldwork and beyond. Question items in the draft updated survey can be compared to current questions used in the US and in the UK engagement surveys. The survey contains considerably fewer question items than the current ISSE and it is anticipated that this will facilitate promotion and further increases in response rates.

APPENDIX 1

PROJECT RATIONALE AND GOVERNANCE

The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, published in 2011, recommended that higher education institutions should put in place systems to capture feedback from students to inform institutional and programme management, as well as national policy. It also recommended that every higher education institution should put in place a comprehensive anonymous student feedback system, coupled with structures to ensure that action is taken promptly in relation to student concerns. This recommendation was informed by legislation (namely, reference to the involvement of students in evaluating the quality of their educational experience in the *Universities Act, 1997*, and the *Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999*) and other key policy drivers such as *Standards and Guidance for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, (ENQA 2005 and 2009)*, and *Common Principles for Student Involvement in Quality Assurance/Quality Enhancement (IHEQN 2009)*. The National Strategy report noted in 2011 that “substantial progress (in this area) has been made” but also stated that “students still lack confidence in the effectiveness of current mechanisms and there remains considerable room for improvement in developing student feedback mechanisms and in closing feedback loops.”

In 2012, a national project structure was established which was representative of all institutions, relevant agencies and the Union of Students in Ireland. This project team implemented a pilot national student survey in 2013 involving all Universities, Institutes of Technology and most Colleges of Education. The national pilot was regarded as successful,

with 12,732 students from twenty six institutions responding to the survey. It was agreed to proceed to first full implementation in 2014. A full report on implementation of the 2013 national pilot is published at www.studentsurvey.ie.

Implementation of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement is funded by the Higher Education Authority as a shared service for participating institutions. The project is co-sponsored by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI), the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

The governance and management structures for the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) were designed to ensure wide representation of partner higher education institutions and sponsoring organisations. A Project Plenary Advisory Group was established with representatives from Universities, Institutes of Technology, Quality and Qualifications Ireland¹², and the project co-sponsors (HEA, IOTI, IUA and USI). This Plenary Group is responsible for the overall management of the project. There are a number of working groups addressing specific aspects of the project. These include survey design, technical, communications and reporting. Each of the sub groups was chaired by a member of the Plenary Group and members were nominated by participating organisations. A full-time project manager was appointed to lead developments and to ensure coherence and consistency between the various elements of the project.

12. The statutory quality assurance agency, www.QQI.ie

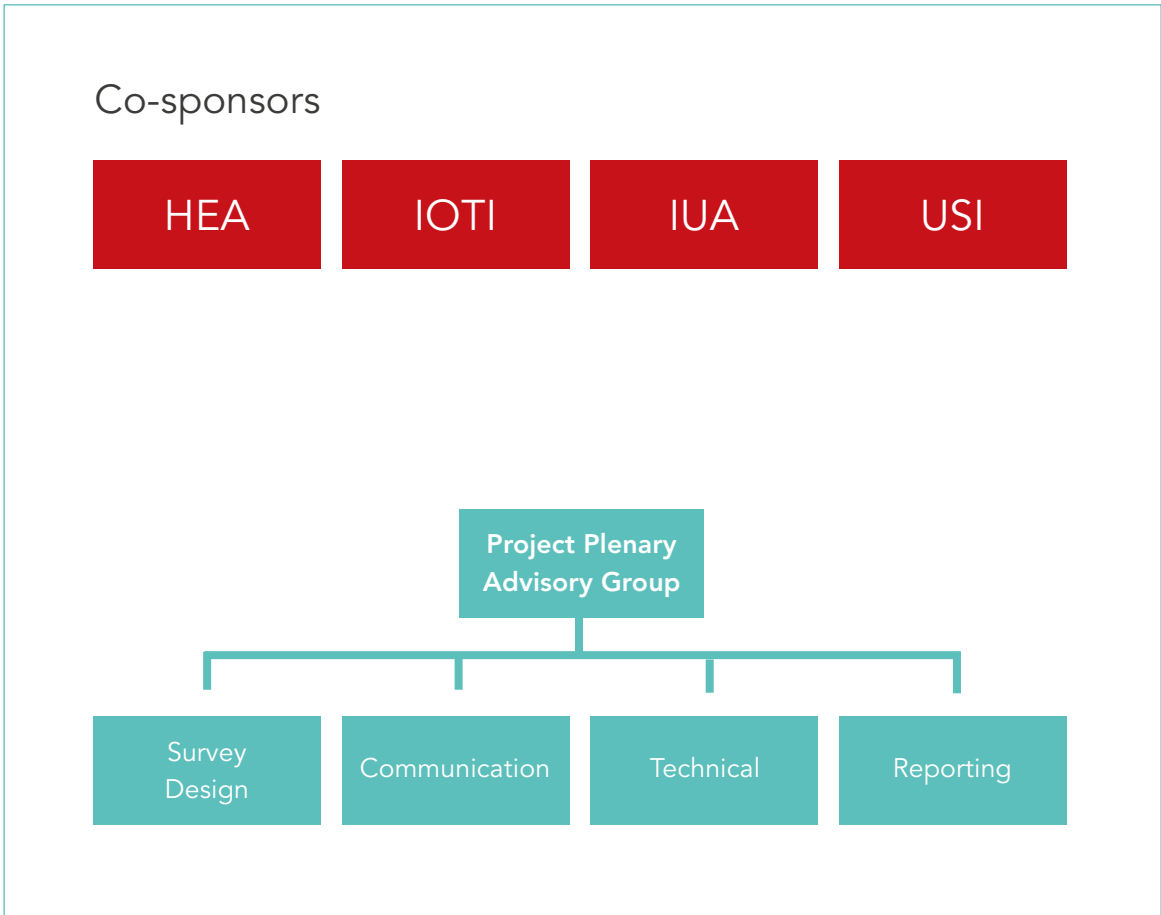


Figure: Project working group structures

APPENDIX 2

METHODOLOGY

A.2.1

DESIGN OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The working group tasked with survey design undertook research into international practice and determined that a survey of student engagement would be most appropriate to meet the objectives of the national partnership. The group also determined that the Irish national survey should be based on the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE). The AUSSE has been in use in Australia and New Zealand since 2007 and was based on the extensively-used National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) which has been used in the US, and beyond, since 2000. The use of these surveys as the foundation for the ISSE enabled the national project to learn from extensive research, experience and testing of comparable surveys. It also provided an international context in which to explore and consider data generated from the ISSE. This was particularly useful when considering the initial datasets. An insight into the international context of engagement surveys is given in

“Engaging University Students: International Insights from System-Wide Studies¹³”, in which ISSE features as one example of such studies.

Pre-testing of the ISSE questionnaire included student focus groups and cognitive interviews which were undertaken in nine Irish higher education institutions in late 2012 and early 2013. A series of amendments were approved in advance of fieldwork for the 2013 national pilot to ensure that the questions were appropriate to the national context. Comprehensive post-fieldwork testing of the validity and reliability of the 2013 and 2014 data informed the decision to retain the same substantive question items for fieldwork in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Reports from each iteration of the survey and details of validity and reliability testing are available at www.studentsurvey.ie. Further testing will be published on the website and in appropriate publications in due course.

13. Coates, H., McCormick, A (2014) *Engaging University Students: International Insights from System-Wide Studies*. Springer

A.2.2 STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY

The survey was delivered electronically to students from target cohorts. Students were asked to respond to more than one hundred questions¹⁴ about their experiences of higher education. In addition to question responses, further interpretation is possible. Each question contributes to specific indices relating to student engagement or student outcomes.

The Indices are:

Engagement Indices

- **Academic Challenge:** the extent to which expectations and assessments challenge students to learn
- **Active Learning:** students' efforts to actively construct knowledge
- **Student - Staff Interactions:** the level and nature of students' contact and interactions with teaching staff
- **Enriching Educational Experiences:** students' participation in broadening educational activities

- **Supportive Learning Environment:** students' feelings of support within the college community
- **Work Integrated Learning:** integration of employment-focused work experiences into study

Outcomes Indices

- **Higher Order Thinking:** participation in higher order forms of thinking
- **General Learning Outcomes:** development of general competencies
- **General Development Outcomes:** development of general forms of individual and social development
- **Career Readiness:** preparation for participation in the professional workforce
- **Overall Satisfaction:** students' overall satisfaction with their educational experience

A.2.3 TARGET STUDENT COHORT

The target student cohort for the ISSE is first year and final year undergraduate students and taught postgraduate students i.e. all first-year and final-year undergraduate students pursuing programmes leading to qualifications included in the National Framework of Qualifications¹⁵ (NFQ) at levels 6, 7 and 8, and students pursuing taught postgraduate programmes leading to qualifications included in the NFQ at levels 8 and 9. All modes of study are included (full-time, part-time, distance, e-learning or in-service). Fieldwork takes place during February and March. The intention is to ask students about their experiences at a stage when first years have sufficient experience to respond in an informed manner and other students have completed sufficient time to reflect on their

experiences while avoiding the significant demands on their time at the end of the academic year.

An extract from institutions' student records systems is used to provide certain limited contextual demographic data which are associated with student responses for high-level analysis. This approach means that students are not required to input these data when participating in the survey, but that these data could enable analysis of subgroups, for example by demographic and contextual factors such as gender, full-time or part-time, broad field of study. Data returned to institutions are cleaned to remove any content that could potentially identify individuals.

14. <http://studentsurvey.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ISSE-2014-questions-web.pdf>

15. www.nfq.ie

APPENDIX 3

PARTICIPATION IN

ISSE 2015

The following institutions participated in ISSE 2015. Percentage figures represent the proportion of target student cohorts that responded to at least some survey questions.

UNIVERSITIES

Dublin City University	26.0%
Maynooth University	15.4%
National University of Ireland Galway	25.3%
Trinity College Dublin	23.2%
University College Cork	8.9%
University College Dublin	20.1%
University of Limerick	7.2%

INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY

Athlone Institute of Technology	50.8%
Cork Institute of Technology	19.1%
Dublin Institute of Technology	23.4%
Dundalk Institute of Technology	21.7%
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	22.1%
Institute of Art, Design and Technology	24.0%
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	22.7%
Institute of Technology Carlow	36.6%
Institute of Technology Sligo	22.2%
Institute of Technology Tallaght	25.7%
Institute of Technology Tralee	35.4%
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	34.3%
Limerick Institute of Technology	29.5%
Waterford Institute of Technology	14.7%

OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Church of Ireland College of Education	21.3%
Marino Institute of Education	32.8%
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	25.8%
Mater Dei Institute of Education	50.1%
National College of Art and Design	39.5%
National College of Ireland	20.1%
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	30.7%
St. Angela's College, Sligo	21.4%
St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra	39.2%



