

NSSE Benchmarks 101



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Overview

- ◆ Introduction to NSSE Benchmarks
- ◆ Using Your Benchmarks
- ◆ The New Benchmark Process
- ◆ Ideas for Using Student-Level Scores

Introduction to NSSE Benchmarks

- ◆ Good starting points for discussions of collegiate quality
- ◆ Indicators of effective educational practice
- ◆ Key activities related to desired student learning outcomes
- ◆ Derived for first-year and senior students
- ◆ Permit comparisons against peers and national norms
- ◆ Best interpreted together

Five NSSE Benchmarks

- ◆ Level of Academic Challenge
- ◆ Active and Collaborative Learning
- ◆ Student Interactions with Faculty Members
- ◆ Enriching Educational Experiences
- ◆ Supportive Campus Environment

Level of Academic Challenge

- ◆ Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality.
- ◆ Institutions promote high levels of achievement by setting high expectations for student performance.

11 items include:

- ◆ Preparing for class
- ◆ Reading and writing
- ◆ Using higher-order thinking skills
- ◆ Institutional environment that emphasizes academic work

Active and Collaborative Learning

- ◆ Students learn more when they are more intensely involved in their education.
- ◆ Collaborating with others prepares students to handle practical, real-world problems.

7 items include:

- ◆ Asking questions in class
- ◆ Making presentations
- ◆ Working with other students on projects
- ◆ Discussing ideas from readings or classes with others

Student Interactions with Faculty

- ♦ Interacting with experts shows student first-hand how to think about and solve practical problems.
 - ♦ Teachers become role models and mentors for learning.
- 6 items include:
- ♦ Discussing assignments with a professor
 - ♦ Taking about career plans with faculty member or advisor
 - ♦ Getting prompt feedback on academic performance
 - ♦ Working with a faculty member on a research project

Enriching Educational Experiences

- ♦ Learning opportunities that complement the goals of the academic program.
 - ♦ Provide opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge.
- 11 items include:
- ♦ Experiencing diversity
 - ♦ Using technology
 - ♦ Participating in internships
 - ♦ Culminating senior experience

Supportive Campus Environment

- ♦ Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success.
 - ♦ Does institution cultivate positive working and social relationships among different groups on campus?
- 6 items include:
- ♦ Helping students achieve academically
 - ♦ Helping students cope with non-academic responsibilities
 - ♦ Promoting supportive relationships between students and peers, faculty, and administrative personnel

Calculating Benchmark Scores

- ♦ Create comparable response sets
- ♦ Weight for gender and enrollment status by class
- ♦ Adjust for part-time student respondents
- ♦ Aggregate benchmarks at the institutional level

3 Components of the Benchmark Report

SCORE SUMMARY

Item	College	Peer Group	Score
Level of Academic Challenge	62.0	58.1	3.9
Active and Collaborative Learning	47.5	44.8	2.7
Supportive Faculty Interaction	68.1	64.4	3.6
Enriching Educational Experiences	71.3	67.3	4.0
Supportive Campus Environment	70.8	66.0	3.5

DECILES

Item	First-Year					Senior				
	25th	50th	75th	90th	95th	25th	50th	75th	90th	95th
Level of Academic Challenge	58.4	62.0	65.7	71.3	76.9	59.9	63.5	67.2	72.8	78.4
Active and Collaborative Learning	38.1	41.7	45.3	48.9	52.5	39.6	43.2	46.8	50.4	54.0
Supportive Faculty Interaction	63.6	67.2	70.8	74.4	78.0	65.1	68.7	72.3	75.9	79.5
Enriching Educational Experiences	67.8	71.4	75.0	78.6	82.2	69.3	72.9	76.5	80.1	83.7
Supportive Campus Environment	66.3	69.9	73.5	77.1	80.7	67.8	71.4	75.0	78.6	82.2

ENGAGEMENT INDEX

Benchmark	First-Year			Senior			
	Actual ^a	Peer Group ^b	Standardized Peer Group ^c	Actual ^a	Peer Group ^b	Standardized Peer Group ^c	
Level of Academic Challenge	62.0	58.1	3.9	1.4	62.9	63.9	-1.0
Active and Collaborative Learning	47.5	44.8	2.7	0.8	57.1	54.6	2.5
Supportive Faculty Interaction	68.1	64.4	3.6	0.9	68.6	67.3	1.3
Enriching Educational Experiences	71.3	67.3	4.0	1.0	61.9	64.9	-3.1
Supportive Campus Environment	70.8	66.0	3.5	0.9	66.1	65.5	-0.6

Using Benchmark Scores

- Used to stimulate conversation on campus:
- ♦ How does your institution compare to your peers/nationally?
 - ♦ Have your scores changed from prior years?
 - ♦ Are scores aligned with your institutional mission?
 - ♦ Do scores make sense in light of recent institutional initiatives?
 - ♦ Do scores mirror impressions of your institution on campus and in your community?

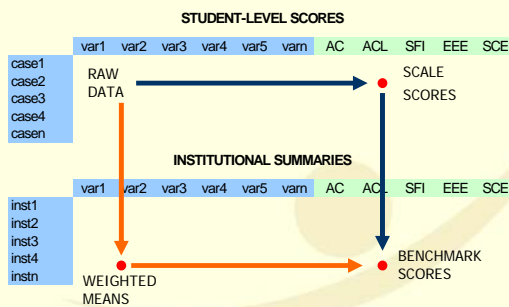
The *NEW* Benchmark Process

- ♦ Change in PROCESS versus change in Benchmarks
 - ♦ Institutional feedback
- 3 Goals of new process:
- ♦ Continuous improvement
 - ♦ Transparency
 - ♦ Increased flexibility to conduct intra-institutional analysis

Technical Changes in New Process

- ♦ All items are converted to a 100-point scale
- ♦ Part-time student adjustments are based on national averages
- ♦ Weights applied at benchmark level rather than item level
- ♦ Student-level scale scores are calculated in addition to institutional benchmarks

Generating Benchmark Scores



Implications of New Changes

- ♦ Meaningful intra-institutional analysis now possible
- ♦ Higher power of analysis is available
- ♦ Institutions who serve part-time students well will notice an increase in Level of Academic Challenge
- ♦ Benchmark scores for this year are not directly related to those calculated in prior years
- ♦ Decile positions will remain stable

Using Student Level Scale Scores

- Institutions may use student-level scale scores to:
- ♦ Investigate differences in key institutional subgroups (Program, departments, colleges, etc.)
 - ♦ Investigate difference in key student sub-groups (gender, major, etc.)
 - ♦ Incorporate scale scores into predictive models of student outcomes
 - ♦ Investigate what groups are served better than others on your campus.

Summary

- ♦ NSSE calculates five benchmarks of effective educational practice that are linked to ideal student learning outcomes.
- ♦ Benchmarks are useful indicators of collegiate quality.
- ♦ To permit student-level analysis, NSSE is changing the benchmark calculation process this fall.
- ♦ New benchmark scores are not directly comparable to prior years although decile position should remain stable.
- ♦ Institutions are masters of their own intra-institutional analysis.

For More Information

- ◆ Email: rgonyea@indiana.edu
- ◆ NSSE website: <http://www.iub.edu/~nsse>



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