



# Uni Student Wellbeing Survey Summary Report 2025

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This report presents key findings from the 2025 *Uni Student Wellbeing (USW)* Survey of undergraduate students across six Australian universities. Drawing on 11,391 complete responses, it examines students' psychological distress and wellbeing alongside their academic experiences, perceptions of institutional climate, academic engagement, and course satisfaction. The 2025 Survey builds on the 2023-2024 (Year 1) study at 11 universities and extends the national evidence base on student mental health and wellbeing.

## Student mental health and wellbeing in 2025 at a glance

### **A majority of students report positive wellbeing, yet high levels of psychological distress remain.**

Most students (56.2%) reported generally positive wellbeing, including 18.9% classified as 'Thriving'. However, a substantial minority were experiencing significant mental health difficulties:

- 25.1% reported high levels of psychological distress
- 33.6% reported low levels of psychological wellbeing
- 14.8% were classified as experiencing 'Poor MHWB' (both high distress and low wellbeing)

### **Mental health and wellbeing (MHWB) are strongly associated with persistence intentions, confidence and course satisfaction.**

Compared to students with positive MHWB, those experiencing Poor MHWB were:

- Four to five times more likely to have seriously considered dropping out
- Substantially less confident in completing their course
- Over three times more likely to be dissatisfied with the quality of their course

### **Students experiencing Poor MHWB face substantial unmet support needs.**

Students experiencing Poor MHWB were less likely to access formal support and less likely to perceive available services as accessible, trustworthy, or adequate:

- 62.4% were not receiving any treatment or therapy
- Compared with students with Positive MHWB, they were over 40% less likely to report:
  - Feeling informed about wellbeing supports
  - Trusting available support services
  - Having someone to turn to for support
  - Feeling their university supports their wellbeing

### **Academic experiences and institutional climate are closely linked to MHWB.**

Academic and institutional experiences remain strong predictors of psychological distress and wellbeing, even after accounting for personal and situational factors. In particular, Academic stress, Academic resilience, Academic self-efficacy, Peer engagement, perceived Course value, Sense of belonging at uni and experiences of Everyday discrimination were strongly associated with students' MHWB.

### **Student voices highlight curriculum, teaching practices and support systems as key levers for improving MHWB.**

In an open-response question on what would most improve student wellbeing, students prioritised improvements to curriculum design and teaching practices, alongside enhanced services and supports.

Together, the 2025 findings reinforce that student mental health and wellbeing are closely linked to curriculum design, teaching practices, belonging, inclusion, and the visibility and credibility of support systems. These are all areas within institutional influence.

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# 1. About the Survey

The Uni Student Wellbeing (USW) Survey is designed to equip Australian universities with robust and timely insights into the psychological wellbeing and associated academic experiences of their undergraduate students.<sup>1</sup> The Survey forms part of a larger research project exploring ways to improve university students' mental health, led by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at The University of Melbourne and funded by the Australian Research Council.<sup>2</sup>

## Survey purpose and design

The Survey aims to build an evidence base to inform universities' policy, programming and resourcing decisions related to student mental health and wellbeing (MHWB). Participating institutions receive a customised report identifying the specific needs and experiences of students with varying levels of psychological distress and wellbeing.

The Survey uses validated measures to investigate students' psychological and subjective wellbeing, as well as levels of psychological distress.<sup>3</sup>

The Survey also investigates two psychological resources for study that support students' capacity to manage academic challenges (Academic self-efficacy and Academic resilience) and seven common academic (course and university) experiences that are associated with students' MHWB<sup>4</sup>:

- *Academic stress*
- *Course value*
- *Teacher support*
- *Peer engagement*
- *Sense of belonging at uni*
- *Uni climate*
- *Everyday discrimination.*

Together these resources and experiences are conceptualised as dimensions of, or necessary conditions for, 'academic wellbeing': that component of students' overall psychological, social and emotional health that universities are uniquely well-positioned to influence through policy, teaching practices and institutional settings.

In researching academic wellbeing, we focus on aspects of student experiences that universities can modify – through policy settings, teaching and learning practices, curriculum design and resourcing decisions. We also focus on experiences that are common to all university students so that institutional actions to improve these experiences are likely to have the widest possible reach (see Figure 1).

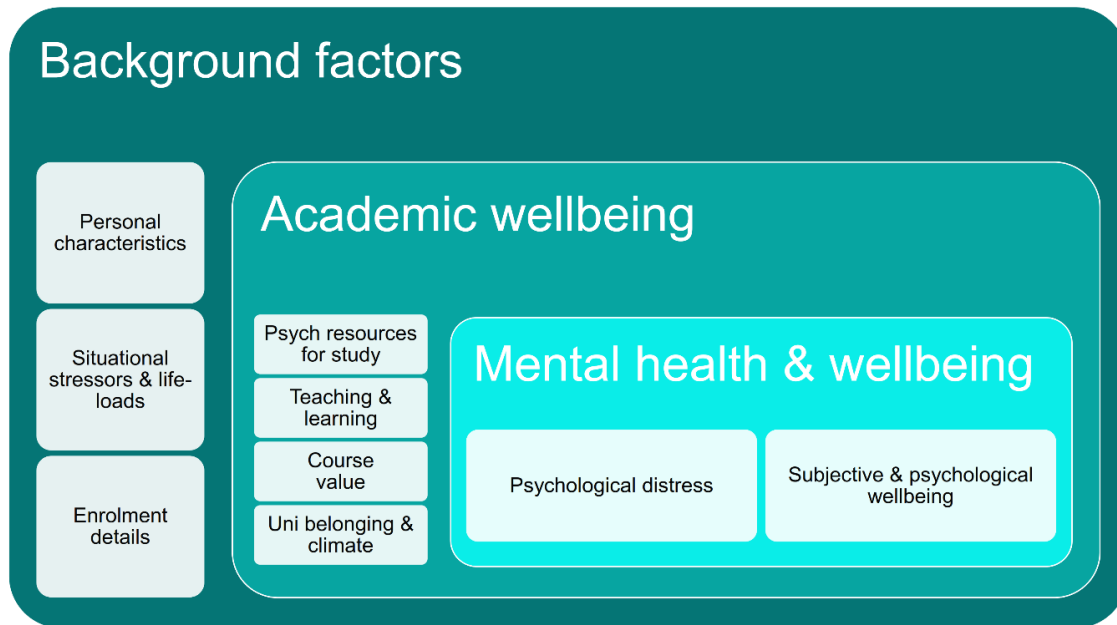
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<sup>1</sup> The design of the initial survey instrument and data analysis plan were led by Associate Professor Wendy Larcombe as part of a broader research program led by Professor Chi Baik.

<sup>2</sup> <https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/research-projects/the-student-experience/unistudentwellbeing>

<sup>3</sup> Psychological wellbeing was assessed using the Flourishing scale (Diener et al., 2009), which assesses the presence of positive emotions, positive functioning and social wellbeing. Psychological distress was assessed using the Kessler-6 (Kessler et al., 2002), which assesses symptoms associated with negative emotional states such as low mood, stress, anxiety, and depression.

<sup>4</sup> Larcombe, W., Baik, C., & Finch, S. (2022) Exploring course experiences that predict psychological distress and mental wellbeing in Australian undergraduate and graduate coursework students, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 41 (2), 420-435. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1865284>



**Figure 1. Uni Student Wellbeing Survey: Exploring factors associated with student mental health and wellbeing (MHWB)**

In this report, students' MHWB is examined in relation to a range of outcomes relevant to university policy decisions. The Survey captures factors relating to systems for supporting students' MHWB, including rates of mental health care utilisation and students' perceptions of the quality and availability of university support services. The Survey also assesses a range of outcomes relating to students' academic persistence, performance and course satisfaction.

## Participation

Across its first two years, the USW Survey has received responses from close to 20,000 students across 17 Australian universities. During 2025, the Survey was administered at six universities (see Table 1 for details). A total of 16,131 students participated (response rate: 11.5%), with 11,391 providing complete responses (complete response rate: 8.1%).

**Table 1. Participating institutions and response rates**

Institution <sup>5</sup>	I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL
Institution Type <sup>6</sup>	Medium Metro	Medium Metro	Large Regional	Medium Metro	Large Metro	Large Metro	
Survey Observations	403	210	3,915	216	8,218	3,169	16,131
Complete Cases	220	155	2,930	169	6,095 <sup>7</sup>	1,832	11,391
Survey Response Rate (%)	3.8	0.8	15.0	2.3	26.1	8.6	11.5
Complete Case Response Rate (%)	2.1	0.6	11.4	1.8	19.3	5.0	8.1

<sup>5</sup> Findings for institutions A-H are reported in the 2024 report: [https://unistudentwellbeing.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2024-Summary-Report\\_Uni-Student-Wellbeing-Survey\\_FINAL.pdf](https://unistudentwellbeing.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2024-Summary-Report_Uni-Student-Wellbeing-Survey_FINAL.pdf)

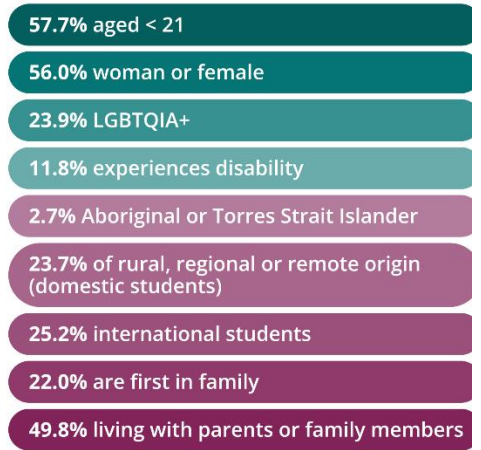
<sup>6</sup> Institution size was determined based on total student enrolments (i.e. undergraduate and graduate): Small = ≤14,999; Medium = 15,000-39,999; Large = ≥ 40,000.

<sup>7</sup> Institution M recorded a substantially higher response rate than any other institution in the 2025 sample and contributes 53.5% of the total respondents. As a result, overall sample estimates are likely to be biased towards students from Institution M.

## Students' characteristics and circumstances

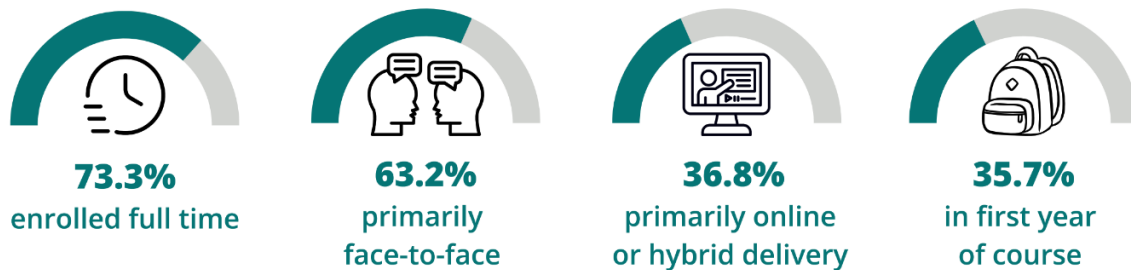
Key information about students' personal characteristics is provided in Figure 2 (for full participant details are presented in Appendix A, Tables A1-A4).

The 2025 sample reflects the diversity of students enrolled at the participating universities, and includes students from regional and remote areas, LGBTQIA+ identities, first-in-family, Indigenous, and students with disability.



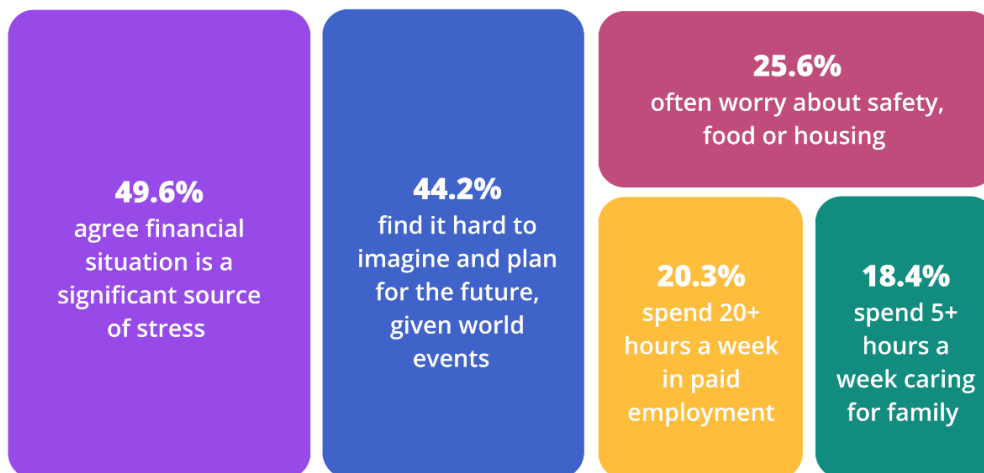
**Figure 2. Key information about the personal characteristics of the student sample**

As Figure 3 shows, students' enrolment characteristics were also diverse, with part-time, and students studying primarily online or through hybrid delivery well represented in the weighted sample.<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 3. Selected enrolment characteristics of the student sample**

Many students also faced significant challenges balancing university with situational stressors and life loads, including financial pressures and personal commitments (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Overall agreement with situational stressor and life load items**

<sup>8</sup>The weighting process was only applied to institutions K, M and N. See Appendix F for further information.

## 2. Student mental health and wellbeing in 2025

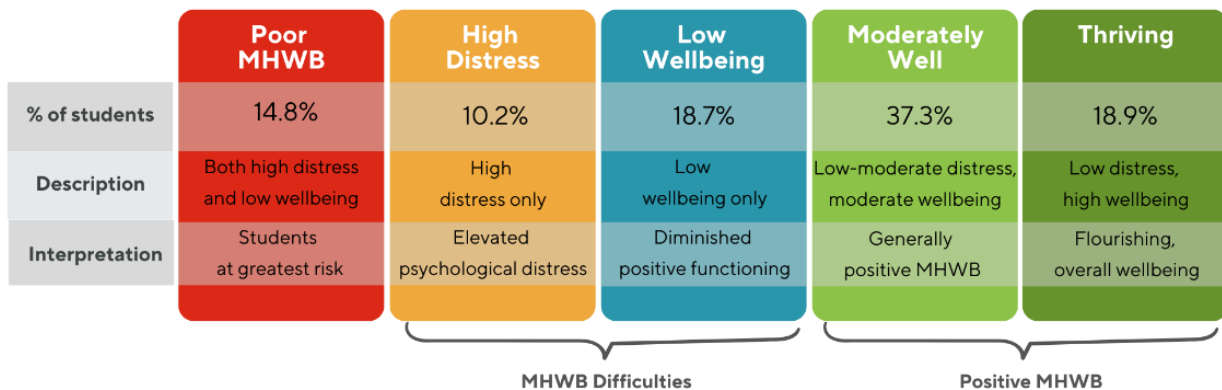
### Levels of psychological distress and wellbeing

A substantial proportion of students (25.1%) reported high levels of distress.<sup>9</sup> In each of the six participating universities, the prevalence of high distress was greater than that reported among young adults aged 18 – 24 years in the general Australian population (20.0%).<sup>10</sup> This suggests that university students may represent a population at higher risk for clinically relevant psychological distress. At the same time, one third of students (33.3%) reported high levels of psychological wellbeing. Rates of distress and wellbeing varied slightly across institutions (see Appendix B, Figures B1 and B2).

Consistent with the dual continua model of mental health,<sup>11,12,13</sup> psychological distress and psychological wellbeing were examined as related but distinct dimensions.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, both high levels of distress and low levels of wellbeing were considered as distinct ‘mental health difficulties’ that university students may experience.

To further understand students’ MHWB, we examined the *co-occurrence* of high distress and low wellbeing. Students reporting both high distress and low wellbeing were classified as experiencing ‘Poor MHWB’. Conversely, students reporting low distress and high wellbeing were classified as ‘Thriving’.

As shown in Figure 5, in 2025, 14.8% of students were classified as experiencing Poor MHWB, 28.9% were classified as experiencing MHWB difficulties (either High distress or Low wellbeing) and 56.2% were classified as have Positive MHWB (of which, 18.9% were Thriving).



**Figure 5. Overall mental health and wellbeing profile of students in 2025 (N = 11,391)**

The prevalence of Poor MHWB and Thriving varied among institutions (see Appendix B, Table B1), with a relatively narrow range for the proportion of students reporting Poor MHWB (14.2% - 16.8%), and a slightly wider range for Thriving (18.1% - 26.5%).

<sup>9</sup> High psychological distress was defined as a score of 19-30 on the Kessler 6 (K6) scale (possible range: 6-30)

<sup>10</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *National Health Survey*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/health-conditions-and-risks/national-health-survey/latest-release>.

<sup>11</sup>Huppert, F.A., & Whittington, J.E. (2003). Evidence for the independence of positive and negative well-being: Implications for quality of life assessment. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 8(1), 107–122.

<sup>12</sup>Keyes, C.L.M. (2002). The mental health continuum: from languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 43, 207-222.

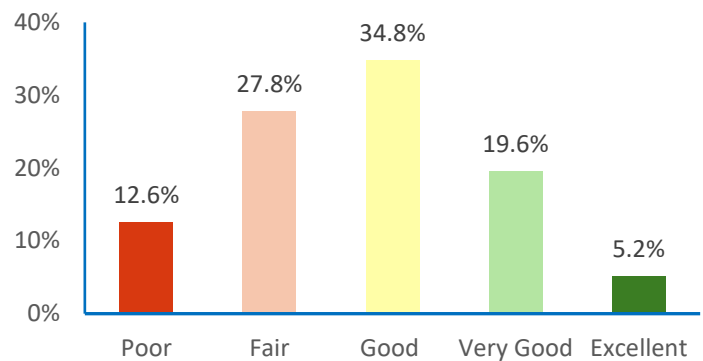
<sup>13</sup>Keyes, C.L.M. (2007). Promoting and protecting mental health as flourishing: A complementary strategy for improving national mental health. *American Psychologist*, 62(2), 95–108.

<sup>14</sup> The dual continua model of mental health (Keyes, 2002; 2007) has established that mental ill-health and positive wellbeing are semi-autonomous. This means that the absence of mental ill-health is not the same as the presence of positive wellbeing and vice versa. For example, people may report strong positive wellbeing while experiencing negative emotional states, such as anxiety or stress. Similarly, people may lack resources for flourishing, and so experience de-motivation, apathy and numbness, without reporting mental ill-health (Keyes, 2007).

## Students' self-ratings of mental health and wellbeing

The Survey also asked students to rate their overall mental health and wellbeing currently. Students' self-ratings (see Figure 6) were broadly consistent with results on the validated measures used in the Survey.

Notably, the proportion of students rating their overall mental health and wellbeing as 'Poor' (12.6%), was similar to the proportion (13.5%) in the Poor MHWB category (see Figure 5), indicating consistency between self-appraisal and scale-based classification.



**Figure 6. Overall responses to the item 'How would you rate your overall mental health and wellbeing currently?'**

## Satisfaction with life as a whole

Students were also asked to rate their satisfaction with life as a whole, a widely-used indicator of subjective wellbeing<sup>15</sup>. In 2025, most students (60.2%) reported generally positive life satisfaction, and more than a third (33.9%) reported very high satisfaction (score of 8 or above on a 10-point scale).

However, 13.5% reported low life satisfaction, representing a substantial minority who may be at heightened risk of poor wellbeing.

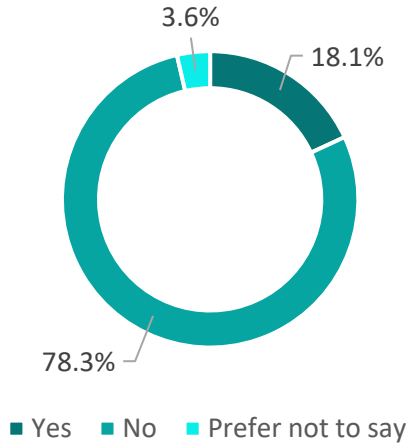
These findings complement the mental health and wellbeing measures reported earlier, suggesting that while many students feel broadly positive about life, there remains a significant group experiencing MHWB difficulties that warrant institutional attention and support.



<sup>15</sup> Diener, E., Emmons, R.A., Larsen, R.J. & Griffen, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71-75. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13)

### 3. Supports for students' mental health and wellbeing

Access to effective mental health resources and services plays an important role in mitigating the impact of mental health difficulties. Universities therefore have a critical role in ensuring that supports are accessible, trusted and responsive to students with different levels of MHWB.



**Figure 7. Overall responses to the item 'Are you currently receiving treatment or therapy for a mental health issue?'**

The Survey asked students whether they were currently receiving treatment or therapy for a mental health issue from a health professional. As shown in Figure 7, the majority of students (78.3%) responded 'No'.

Notably, among students experiencing Poor MHWB, 62.4% reported not receiving treatment or therapy. This suggests that a substantial proportion of students experiencing high levels of distress may not be accessing formal support, highlighting a potential unmet need.

#### Perceptions of university support

The Survey also examined students' perceptions of the availability and quality of university support services (see Figure 8). Concerningly, a sizeable minority of students (23.4%-43.8%) did not agree that adequate supports were available.

Furthermore, students experiencing Poor MHWB were considerably less likely to endorse the quality and availability of university support. Compared to students experiencing Positive MHWB, those experiencing Poor MHWB were over 40% less likely to report they:

- felt adequately informed about MHWB
- had at least one person they could turn to for support
- had access to support services they would trust
- felt their university generally supports their wellbeing.

These results suggest that students most in need of support have the lowest levels of confidence in institutional resources, highlighting the importance of strengthening communication, accessibility and trust in mental health services.



**Figure 8. Overall agreement with university support items**

See Appendix C, Tables C1-C2 for detailed results on supports for student MHWB across institutions.

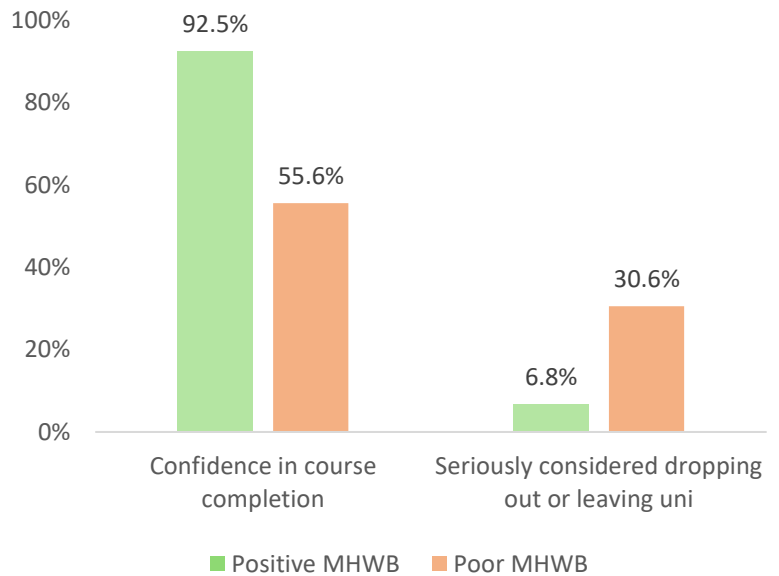
## 4. Academic persistence, performance and satisfaction

Students experiencing Poor MHWB reported higher risk of academic attrition (non-completion of their course or ‘dropping out’ of university) and poorer academic outcomes. Relatedly, they also reported lower satisfaction with their courses.

### Persistence and risk of attrition

Overall, 82.1% of all students reported confidence that they would be able to complete their course, while 13.4% had seriously considered dropping out or leaving university in the past year.

As shown in Figure 9, these outcomes were markedly worse among students with Poor MHWB compared to those with Positive MHWB.



**Figure 9. Rates of agreement for persistence and attrition items for students with Positive MHWB and Poor MHWB**



**Figure 10. Students’ (N = 1,473) most frequently cited reasons for seriously considering dropping out or leaving university**

### Reasons for considering university dropout

Of the students who had seriously considered dropping out or leaving uni, 1,473 provided open-text responses explaining their reasons, which were analysed and thematically coded (see Appendix D, Tables D2-D3 for additional details). The four most frequently cited reasons for considering university dropout are presented in Figure 10<sup>16</sup>.

Students experiencing Poor MHWB were more likely to cite health and wellbeing concerns as a reason for considering university dropout (38.4% of responses). Taken together, these findings highlight the interplay between academic demands and personal circumstances in shaping students’ confidence and persistence.

#### IN THE WORDS OF STUDENTS: REASONS FOR CONSIDERING DROP OUT

"A combination of stress and feeling overwhelmed with having to balance the demands of university and my life outside of education. In addition, every piece of assignment and exam goes towards the final grade of a subject, so everything feels very high stakes and it's easy to feel like a disappointment or failure over a single mark "

**Student experiencing Poor MHWB**  
INSTITUTION M (LARGE METRO)

<sup>16</sup> Some students provided multiple reasons; therefore, the percentages add to more than 100%.

## Academic performance

Most students (85.9%) reported average marks between 60-89%, while 5.4% reported average marks higher than 90%, and 8.7% reported average marks below 60%.

As Figure 11 shows, there was a clear linear relationship between self-reported academic performance and MHWB, with higher levels of psychological distress and lower wellbeing associated with lower marks. These results reinforce the association between students' MHWB and their academic success.

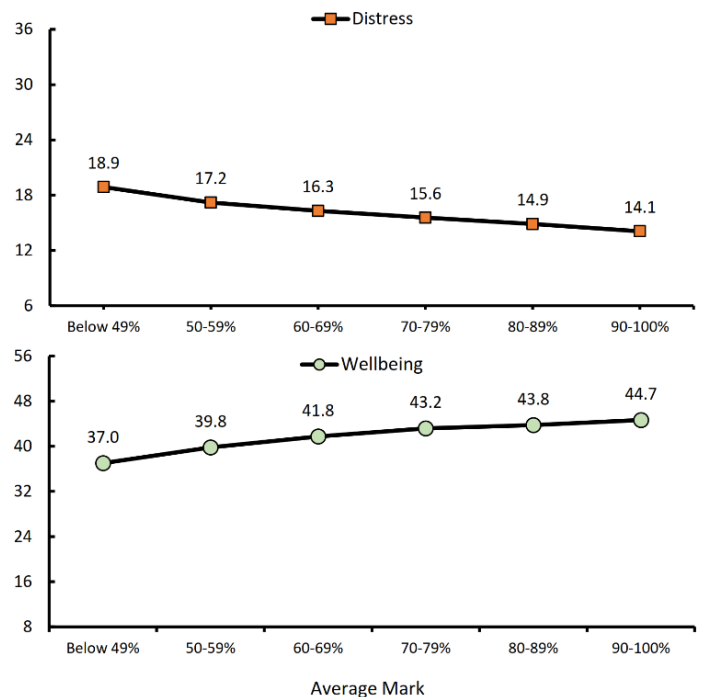
## Course and university satisfaction

A substantial minority of students reported dissatisfaction with aspects of their course and university experiences. Across the whole sample:

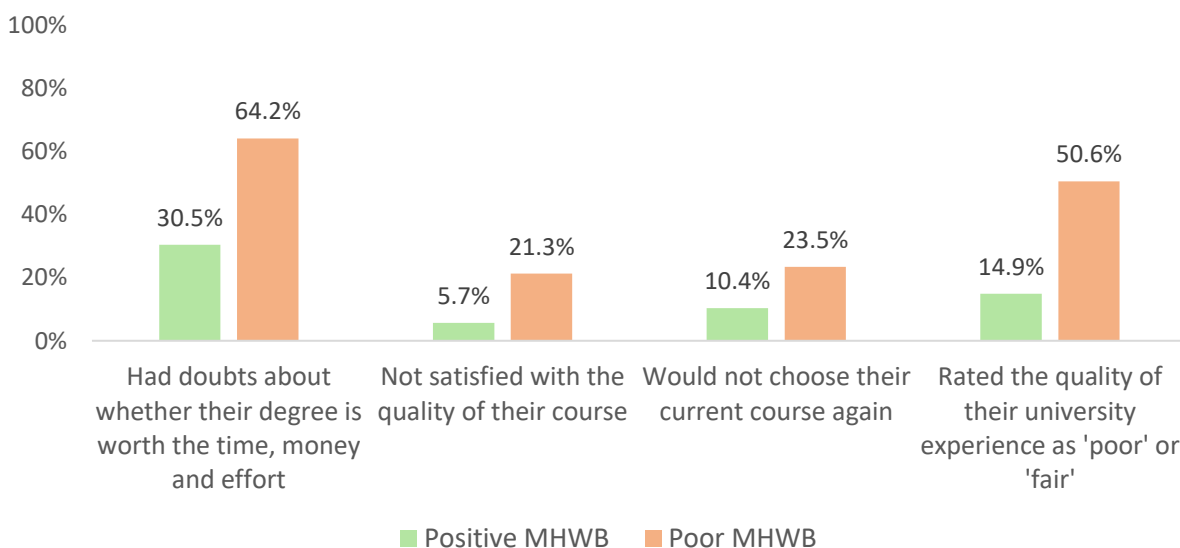
- 9.9% were dissatisfied with the quality of their course
- 40.2% had doubts about whether their degree was worth the time, money and effort
- 14.7% would not choose the same course if they could start their time at university again
- 26.2% rated the quality of their university experience as either poor or fair.

See Appendix D, Table D4 for further information.

As shown in Figure 12, dissatisfaction was much higher among students with Poor MHWB compared to those with Positive MHWB. These findings show a strong relationship between students' mental health and wellbeing and their course/university satisfaction, and perceived value of their degree.



**Figure 11. Relationship between students' self-reported average mark and their psychological distress and wellbeing**



**Figure 12. Rates of agreement for course and university satisfaction items for students with Positive MHWB and Poor MHWB**

## 5. Course experiences and psychological resources for study

Students' psychological resources for study and their course experiences are closely associated with both wellbeing and academic success. The 2025 Survey measured two key psychological resources (Academic self-efficacy and Academic resilience) and four course experience dimensions (Academic stress, Course value, Teacher support, and Peer engagement). Figure 13 presents key findings relating to psychological resources for study and course experiences (see Appendix E, Tables E3-E4 for the full list of % item agreement).



### ● Psychological resources for study

**Self-efficacy is strong but resilience weaker:**

- 80% felt academically capable
- Under a half (49%) said they recover quickly from stressful situations at uni
- 37% feel they take a long time to recover from setbacks in their studies



### ● Course experiences

**Academic stress is widespread but support is uneven:**

- 60% felt overwhelmed by workload; 46% struggled to keep up; 30% experienced exam / performance anxiety
- 41% did not feel that their teachers understood their study difficulties
- 35% lacked close peer connections

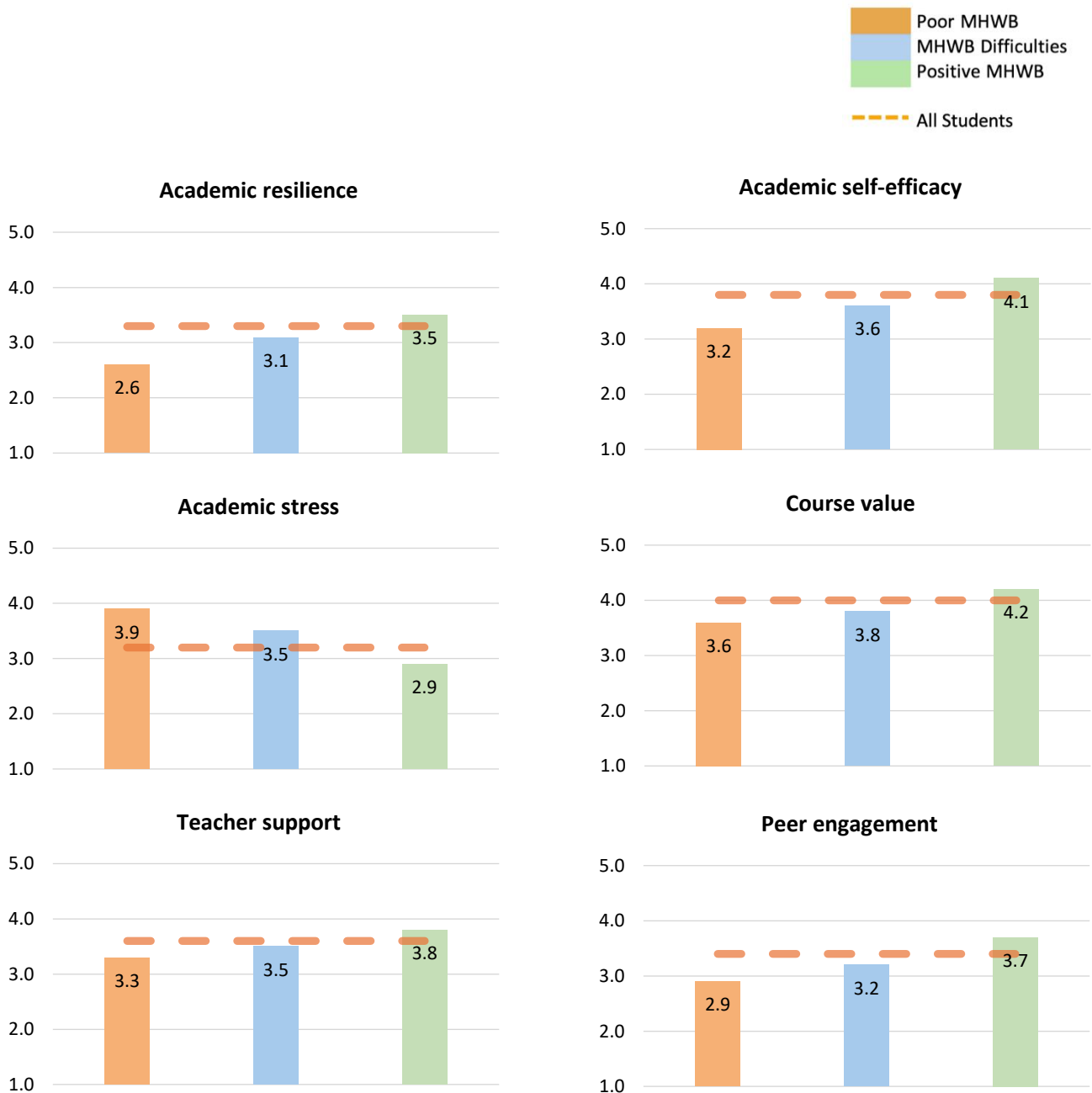
**Figure 13. Psychological resources for study and course experiences**



## Association with mental health and wellbeing

Psychological resources for study and course experiences were strongly associated with students' MHWB. As Figure 14 shows, students experiencing Poor MHWB reported the lowest mean scores across all psychological resources and course experience measures.

These patterns highlight the close relationship between students' MHWB and their capacity to navigate academic challenges. While causal direction cannot be inferred, the findings suggest that strengthening psychological resources and improving course experiences may play an important role in supporting student wellbeing.



**Figure 14. Mean scores on psychological resources for study and course experiences by for study by MHWB category and overall**

## 6. University belonging and climate

Beyond academic experiences, students' broader sense of belonging, perceptions of university climate, and experiences of discrimination are closely associated with their wellbeing. The Survey examined these aspects to understand how connected, supported, and respected students feel within the university environment. Figure 15 present key findings relating to Belonging, University climate and Everyday discrimination (see Appendix E, Table E5 for the full list of % item agreement).

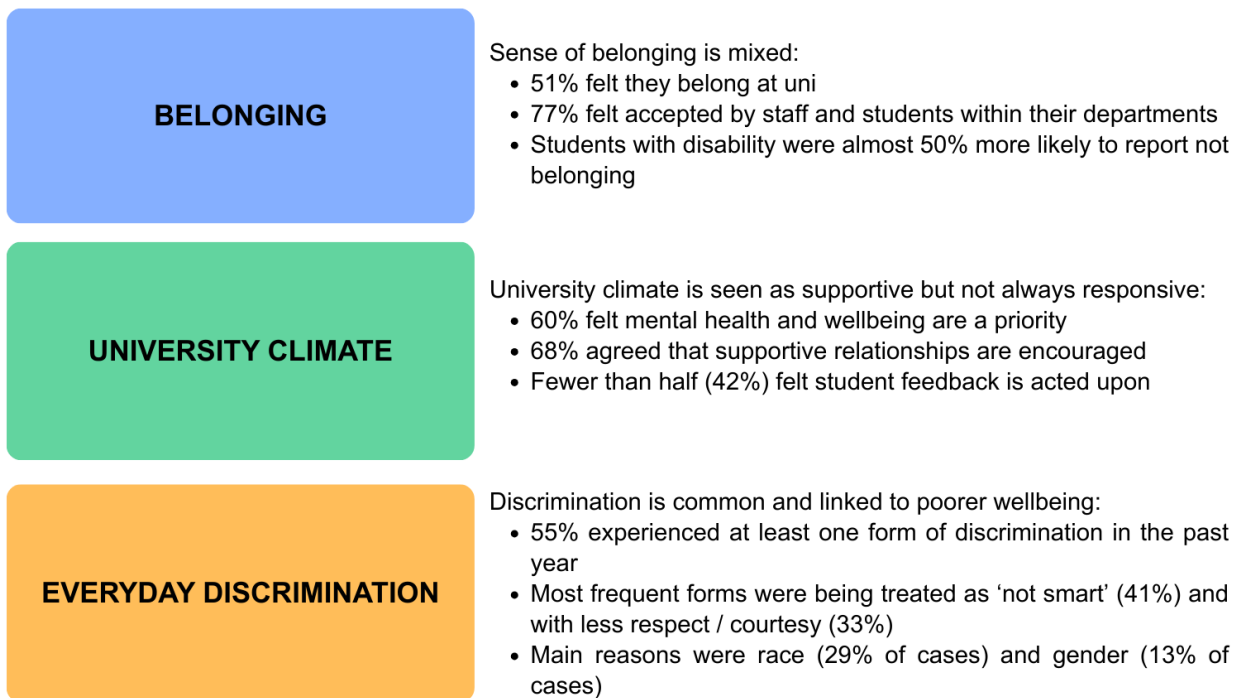
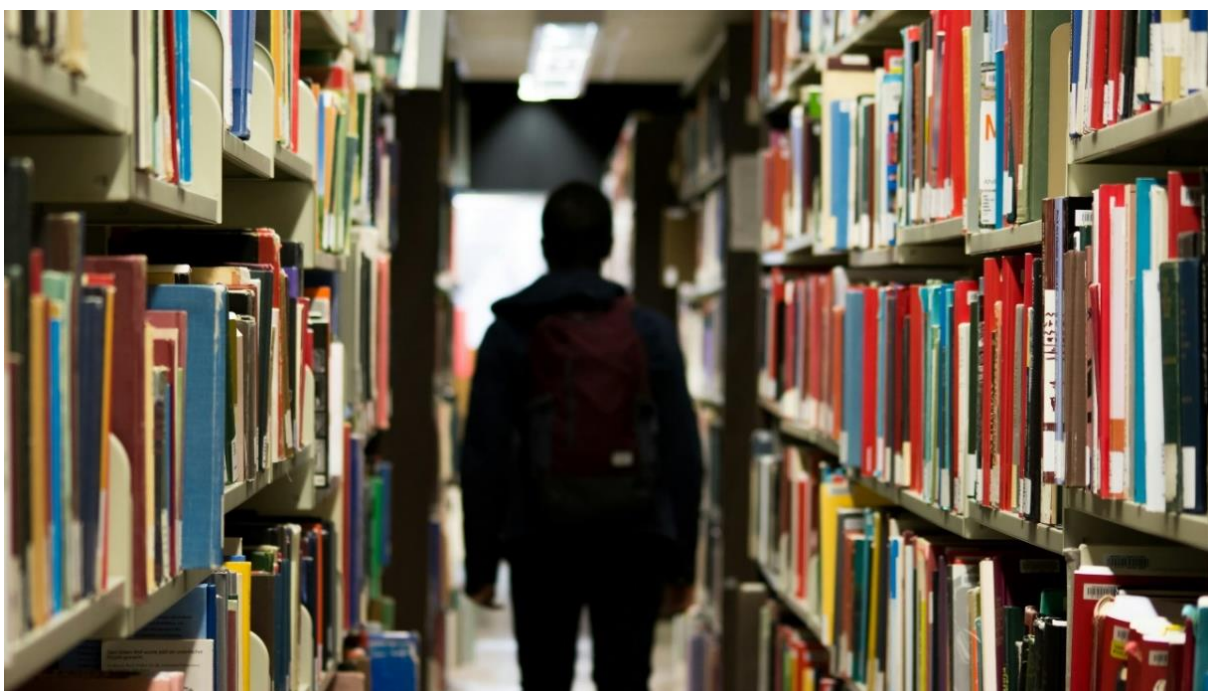


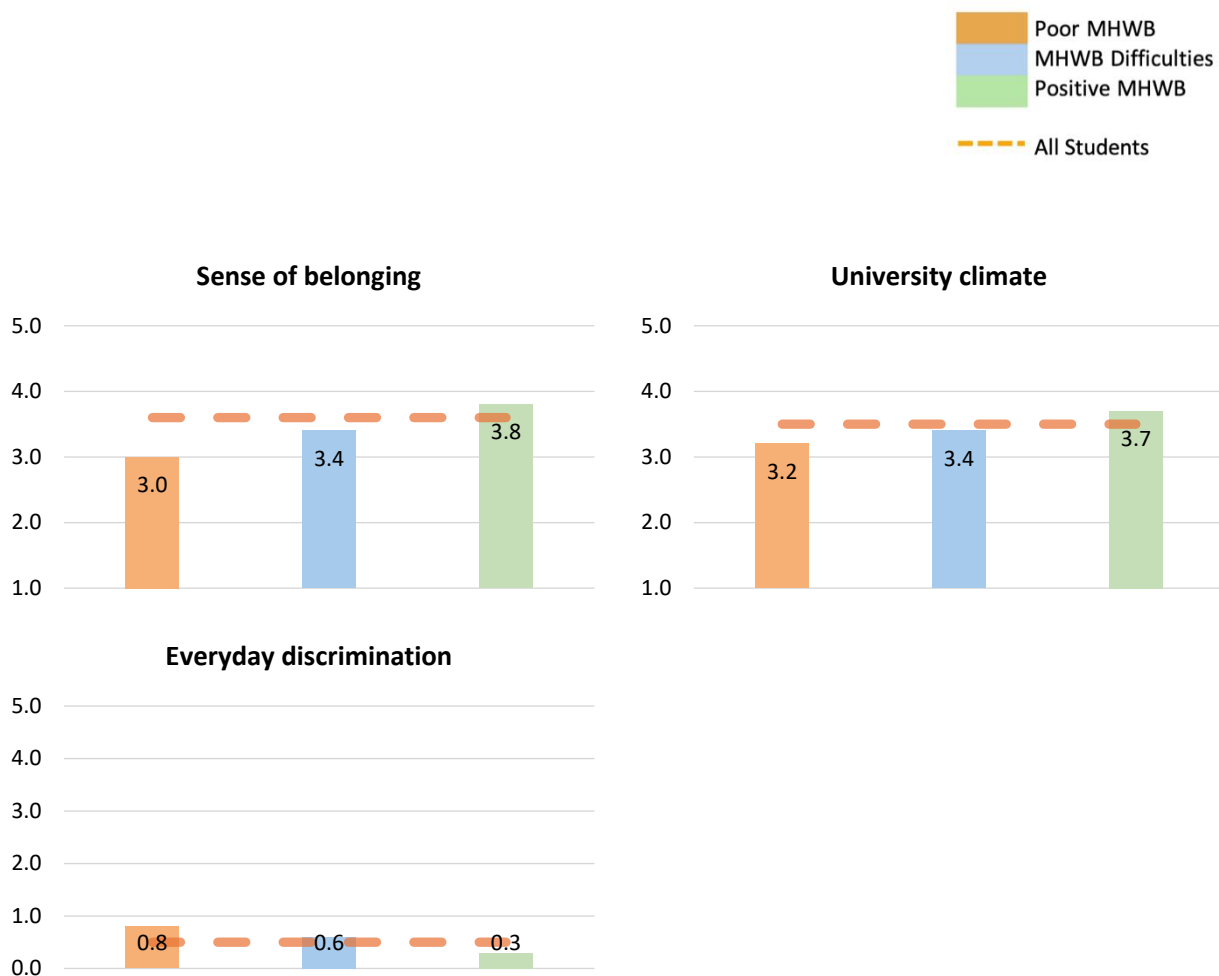
Figure 15. Key findings relating to university belonging and climate



## Association with mental health and wellbeing

University belonging, climate and experiences of discrimination were strongly associated with students' MHWB. As shown in Figure 16, students experiencing Poor MHWB reported the lowest mean scores on belonging and climate measures and the highest levels of reported discrimination.

These findings reinforce the close relationship between students' mental health and their experiences within the wider university environment. They also underscore the importance of fostering belonging, institutional responsiveness and inclusion, and reducing everyday discrimination.

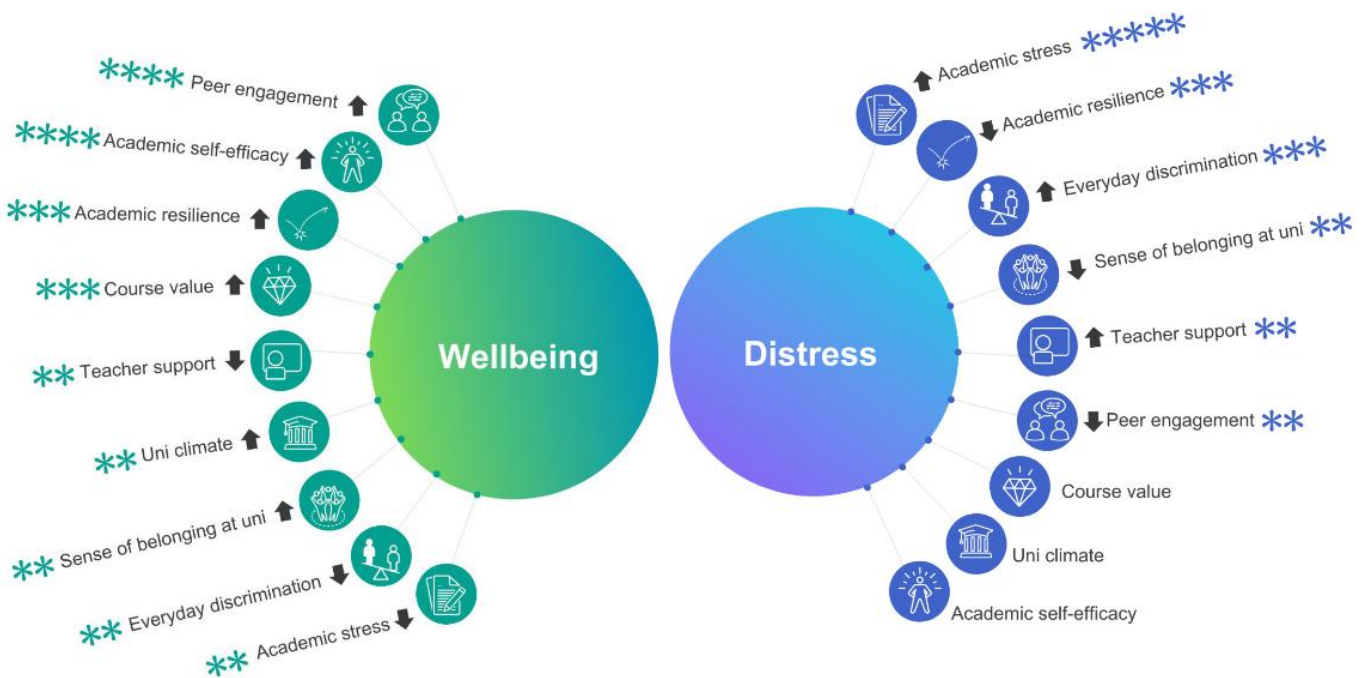


**Figure 16. Mean scores on university experiences by MHWB category and overall**

## 7. What academic experiences are most impactful?

Regression analysis indicates that academic and university experiences are strong predictors of both psychological distress and wellbeing, even after controlling for personal and situational factors. Figure 17 presents the academic experiences most strongly associated with students’ mental health and wellbeing outcomes<sup>17</sup>.

These findings reinforce that student wellbeing is not separate from the learning experience; it is shaped by it. Strengthening students’ academic self-efficacy, reducing unnecessary academic stress, and fostering supportive and connected learning environments can make a measurable difference to mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Universities have clear opportunities to enhance student wellbeing through curriculum design, teaching practices, and support strategies.



**Figure 17. Key predictors of student mental health and wellbeing 2025**

<sup>17</sup> In Figure 17, the asterisks indicate the relative strength of association based on hierarchical regression models (five = strongest significant predictor, zero = non-significant relationship). Arrows pointing upward indicate a positive relationship between the predictor variable and the outcome, while arrows pointing downward indicate an inverse relationship.

## 8. Student voice: priorities and valued supports

Two open-text questions invited students to provide qualitative feedback on their experiences of mental health and wellbeing (MHWB) at university.

### Student priorities for improvement

The first question asked students to complete the sentence: *“In my view, the single most important thing my university could do to support student mental health and wellbeing is...”*.

Across more than 8,100 open-text responses, two themes stood out as clear priorities:

- Services and support – mentioned by 26.5% of all students, and 30.5% of those with Poor MHWB
- Curricula, teaching, and learning – mentioned by 22.3% of all students, and 21.4% of those with Poor MHWB

These findings indicate that students see both institutional support systems and everyday academic experiences as central to their MHWB.

### Valued programs and supports

The second question asked students to *“identify the programs, activities and/or supports provided by their university”* which they had found most useful in the past year. Among more than 7,900 responses, students most frequently highlighted:

- Programs that foster student engagement, connection, and belonging (25.4%)
- Programs or services that promote health, wellbeing and/or safety (11.4%)
- Experiences relating to their course, teaching, and learning (9.9%)

Notably, 12.0% of all responses indicated that students had not used, or could not identify, any useful supports in the past year. This proportion rose to 21.4% among students with Poor MHWB, suggesting a significant gap in the reach, awareness, or perceived relevance of available supports, particularly among those who may need them most.

#### IN THE WORDS OF STUDENTS: PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

**“Ensuring academic workloads are realistic and balanced, through greater support, flexibility, and understanding, so students aren’t forced to sacrifice their mental health or personal lives to keep up ”**

Student experiencing MHWB Difficulties  
INSTITUTION K (LARGE REGIONAL)

#### IN THE WORDS OF STUDENTS: PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

**“Increase the accessibility and availability of mental health services, including offering more drop-in counselling options and proactive outreach programs, so students feel supported before reaching a crisis point. ”**

Student experiencing MHWB Difficulties  
INSTITUTION M (LARGE METRO)

#### IN THE WORDS OF STUDENTS: PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

**“Ensure teaching staff understand that student’s poor academic performance may be impacted by events out of their control, and take every effort not to demean or discourage them from their studies. ”**

Student experiencing MHWB Difficulties  
INSTITUTION N (LARGE METRO)



**21% of students with Poor MHWB reported that they had not used, or could not identify, any useful supports**

## 9. Concluding note

The 2025 findings reinforce a key message for the higher education sector: student mental health and wellbeing are integral to the university experience. While most students report generally positive wellbeing, a substantial minority experience significant distress, with clear implications for persistence, performance, and satisfaction. Those most at risk are also the least confident in available supports.

The evidence identifies meaningful institutional levers. Academic stress, teaching practices, peer connections, belonging and the accessibility and credibility of support systems all play a measurable role in shaping student outcomes. Strengthening these areas is not only a wellbeing initiative; it is fundamental to educational quality, equity, and student success.

In 2026, the Uni Student Wellbeing Survey will expand to an additional six to eight universities, bringing the total number of participating institutions to approximately half of all Australian universities. As the study grows, it will contribute to the development of a robust national evidence base and support sector-wide benchmarking and shared learning to strengthen student mental health and wellbeing across Australian higher education.

## Acknowledgements

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## Appendix A: Participant details

**Table A1. Students' demographic characteristics, by institution and overall**

Institution		I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
		Medium Metro	Medium Metro	Large Regional	Medium Metro	Large Metro	Large Metro	n	%
<b>Total Observations</b>		<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11,391</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Age</i>	<=20	46.4	45.2	37.8	13.6	66.8	65.9	6578	57.7
	21-24	40.5	31.0	31.0	17.2	30.3	27.9	3637	31.9
	>=25	13.2	23.9	24.2	69.2	2.8	6.2	1176	10.3
<i>Gender descriptor</i>	Women, female	75.5	74.8	59.2	85.2	53.9	51.2	6376	56.0
	Man, male	20.0	19.4	23.8	12.4	43.4	45.2	4678	41.1
	Non-binary, other term	4.5	5.8	2.8	2.4	2.7	3.6	337	3.0
<i>International student</i>	Yes	32.7	18.7	12.4	0	32.4	23.9	2871	25.2
<i>Identify as LGBTIQ+</i>	Yes	35.3	30.3	21.2	26.2	24.4	24.4	2694	23.9
<i>Identify as Indigenous</i>	Yes	3.2	1.3	3.9	4.8	2.0	3.0	305	2.7
<i>English is native or preferred language</i>	No	32.1	19.4	15.2	8.9	27.6	22.3	2628	23.2
<i>Have a disability</i>	Yes	13.6	20.9	17.9	20.0	8.6	11.1	1285	11.8
<i>Disability notified to university*</i>	Yes	74.1	68.6	75.9	54.8	56.6	69.6	948	65.5
<i>First in family to attend university</i>	Yes	23.9	28.4	31.5	44.0	17.5	18.7	2482	22.0
<i>Receiving government payment</i>	Yes	23.9	27.7	39.8	56.5	25.5	26.3	3359	29.8
<i>Living situation</i>	Uni residential college or apartment	47.7	11.6	7.1	0.6	17.3	19.0	1711	15.2
	With parent/s or family members	25.5	57.4	51.7	33.9	48.1	50.1	5488	48.8
	Sharing with friends / flatmates	19.4	11.6	18.3	10.7	20.3	19.5	2177	19.4
	Living alone	8.7	5.2	6.2	11.3	10.8	6.1	974	8.7
	With domestic partner	6.2	11.6	14.0	34.5	2.4	3.9	701	6.2
	Other	1.7	2.6	2.7	8.9	1.1	1.4	192	1.7
<i>Country of Birth</i>	Australia	53.5	69.7	70.5	83.9	48.9	58.0	56.8	6413
<i>From a regional background**</i>	Yes	28.1	26.2	24.5	38.7	21.9	24.9	1998	23.6

Note: \* Percentage reported for 'Disability notified to university' is based on the number of respondents who reported that they have a disability. \*\* Percentage reported for 'From a regional background' refers to the percentage of domestic students who indicated they came from a regional background, as international students were not asked this question.

**Table A2. Students' enrolment and course details, by institution and overall**

Institution		I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
<b>Total Observations</b>		<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11,391</b>	
Survey item	Answers	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
<i>Stage in current course</i>	First year	52.3	45.2	33.2	39.1	33.3	44.9	4071	35.7
	Later year	47.7	54.8	66.8	60.9	66.7	55.1	7320	65.3
<i>Course load</i>	Full-time	88.1	86.5	83.6	53.0	92.3	93.6	10114	89.5
	Part-time	11.0	11.0	15.1	45.8	6.4	5.7	1047	9.3
	Other/not sure	0.9	2.6	1.4	1.2	1.3	0.7	136	1.2
<i>Broad Field of Study</i>	Humanities and social sciences	56.4	46.4	47.4	30.9	47	32.9	5039	44.7
	Health	8.3	34.6	29.7	53.9	8.3	25.6	1979	17.6
	STEM	35.3	19.0	22.9	15.2	44.8	41.5	4240	37.7
<i>Class format</i>	Wholly or mainly online	6.5	11.0	17.0	69.0	4.0	3.7	949	8.4
	Hybrid - half online, half face-to-face	18.9	26.5	34.8	20.8	26.9	25.4	3211	28.4
	Wholly or mainly face-to-face (in person)	63.2	62.6	48.3	10.1	69.1	70.9	7135	44.5

**Table A3. Students' situational stressors, by institution and overall**

Institution		I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
<b>Total Observations</b>		<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11,391</b>	
Survey item	Answers	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
<i>My financial situation is a significant source of stress</i>	Agree	49.1	56.5	64.8	65.7	43.0	45.3	5644	49.6
<i>I often worry about safety, food or housing</i>	Agree	27.8	27.9	32.1	31.9	22.8	23.3	2908	25.6
<i>Given world events, I find it hard to imagine and plan for the future</i>	Agree	48.2	44.5	43.5	42.6	44.8	42.9	5023	44.2

**Table A4. Students' life-loads, by institution and overall**

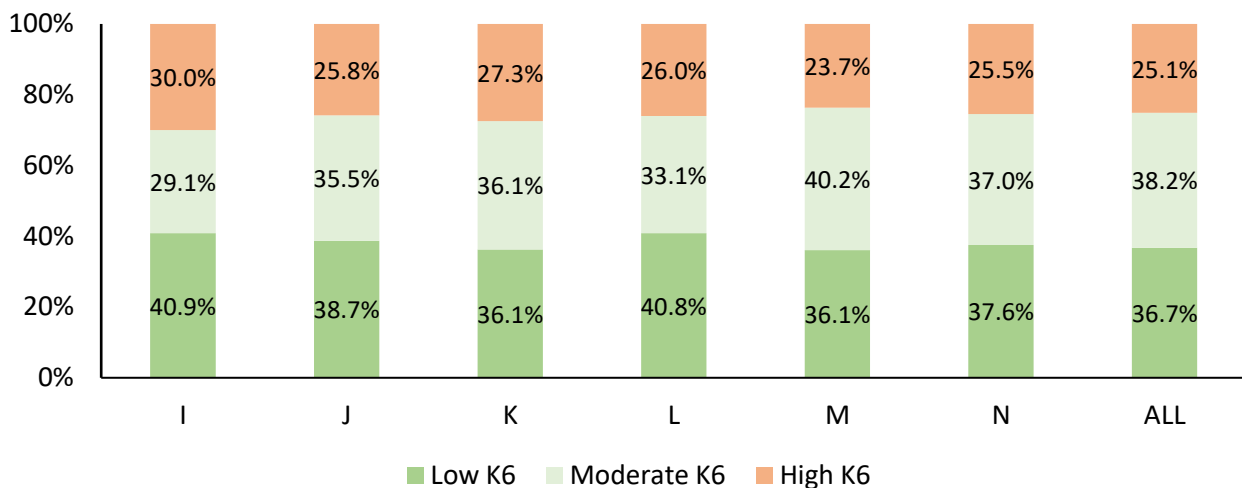
Institution		I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
<b>Total Observations</b>		<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11,391</b>	
Survey item	Answers	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
<i>On average, how many hours per week do you usually spend working in paid employment?</i>	0 - 4 hrs	50.0	42.9	27.8	34.9	48.8	41.1	4697	41.9
	5 - 19 hrs	29.8	32.5	34.4	17.5	20.9	42.0	4247	37.9
	20+ hrs	20.2	24.7	37.8	47.6	12.0	16.9	2275	20.3
<i>On average, how many hours per week do you usually spend directly caring for one or more family members?</i>	0 - 4 hrs	88.3	78.3	73.1	55.2	85.0	86.2	9092	81.7
	5 - 19 hrs	8.9	11.8	15.9	16.4	12.3	10.4	1435	12.9
	20+ hrs	2.8	9.9	11.0	28.5	2.8	3.3	608	5.5

## Appendix B: Student mental health and wellbeing in 2025

**Table B1. Mental Health and Wellbeing Categories – By Institution and Overall**

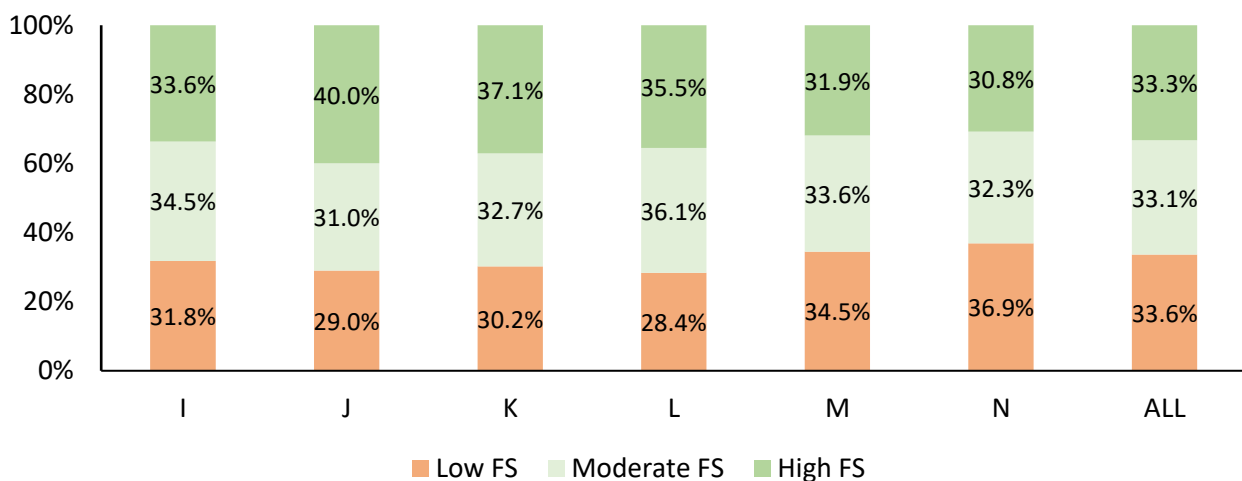
Institution	I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
	Medium Metro	Medium Metro	Large Regional	Medium Metro	Large Metro	Large Metro		
<b>Total Observations</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11390</b>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
Thriving	20.5	26.5	20.0	21.9	18.1	18.6	2150	18.9
Moderate MHWB	34.5	34.8	37.4	38.5	38.0	35.5	4251	37.4
High Distress Only	13.2	9.7	12.4	11.2	9.4	9.1	1167	10.2
Low Wellbeing Only	15.0	12.9	15.3	13.6	20.3	20.4	2131	18.7
Poor MHWB	16.8	16.1	14.9	14.8	14.2	16.4	1691	14.8

**Figure B1. Psychological distress (K6) response categories, by institution and overall sample**



Note: The Kessler 6 psychological distress scale (K6) has a possible range of 6-30 where higher scores indicate greater psychological distress. Scores between 6-13 are taken as indicating low distress, scores between 14-18 indicate moderate distress, and scores between 19-30 indicate high distress.

**Figure B2. Psychological wellbeing (FS) response categories, by institution and overall sample**



Note: The Flourishing scale (FS) has a possible range of 8-56 where higher scores indicate greater psychological wellbeing. Scores between 8-40 are taken as indicating low wellbeing scores between 41-47 indicate moderate wellbeing, and scores between 48-56 indicate high wellbeing.

## Appendix C: Support for students' mental health and wellbeing

**Table C1. Responses to the item 'Are you currently receiving treatment or therapy for a mental health issue', by institution and overall**

Institution	I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
	Medium Metro	Medium Metro	Large Regional	Medium Metro	Large Metro	Large Metro		
<b>Total Observations</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11391</b>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
Yes	19.6	23.2	22.1	29.0	15.3	19.5	2061	18.1
No	77.2	72.3	74.3	67.5	80.9	77.8	8916	78.3
Prefer not to say	3.2	4.5	3.6	3.6	3.8	2.7	408	3.6

**Table C2. Agreement with university support items, by institution and overall**

Institution	I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
<b>Total Observations</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11,391</b>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
<i>At university, I receive as much information about wellbeing and mental health as I need</i>	55.0	80.6	58.5	51.5	53.1	59.0	11375	56.2
<i>At university, I have access to student support services (on campus or online) that I would trust</i>	55.0	80.7	63.4	56.8	58.8	62.5	11358	60.8
<i>At university, I have at least one person (staff or student) who I can turn to for support</i>	54.1	74.8	64.1	57.1	58.3	63.3	11348	61.2
<i>At university, I know that academic support is available if I need it</i>	71.1	91.3	75.5	84.6	77.1	75.4	11356	76.6
<i>In general, I feel that this university supports my wellbeing as a student</i>	68.0	56.7	50.3	38.1	60.6	62.5	11349	58.1

## Appendix D: Academic persistence, performance and satisfaction

**Table D1. Agreement with completion/attrition items, by institution and overall**

Institution	I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
	Medium Metro	Medium Metro	Large Regional	Medium Metro	Large Metro	Large Metro		
<b>Total Observations</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11,391</b>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
<i>I am confident that I will be able to finish my course</i>	83.1	82.5	85.1	77.5	81.4	79.9	9336	82.1
<i>I have thought seriously about leaving uni or dropping out this year</i>	8.8	13.6	16.2	20.7	11.9	13.4	1527	13.4

**Table D2. Students' reasons for considering leaving or dropping out of uni**

What factors made you think seriously about leaving or dropping out of uni this year?
<b>Situational stressors</b> , including difficulty managing multiple commitments; financial pressures; and difficult personal circumstances.
<b>Health and wellbeing</b> , including stress or mental health difficulties.
<b>Motivation, engagement and sense of purpose</b> , including loss or lack of motivation, interest and engagement with the course.
<b>Course experiences and satisfaction</b> , including assessment stress and heavy workload; the course being more difficult, or performance lower, than expected; lack of academic support; and course satisfaction.
<b>University environment</b> , administration and support, including poor experiences with support services.
<b>Reasons not fitting under the categories listed above</b>

**Table D3. Analysis of students' reasons for thinking seriously about leaving or dropping out of university, by institution and overall**

Institution	I	J	K	L	M	N	ALL	
<b>Unique Respondents</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>1359</b>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
<i>Course experiences and satisfaction</i>	25.0	50.0	40.3	35.5	49.8	42.7	609	44.8
<i>Situational stressors</i>	28.6	37.5	43.5	41.9	27.9	33.5	489	36.0
<i>Motivation, engagement and sense of purpose</i>	25.0	12.5	24.1	41.9	35.0	30.3	414	30.5
<i>Health and wellbeing</i>	25.0	18.8	24.3	25.8	29.3	26.6	367	27.0
<i>University environment, administration and support</i>	21.4	0.0	8.6	3.2	6.9	7.8	105	7.7
<i>Reasons not fitting under the categories listed above</i>	0.0	6.3	1.4	0.0	0.2	0.9	10	0.7
<i>Unclear reason</i>	0.0	6.3	2.1	0.0	1.6	0.4	26	1.9

**Table D4. Negative ratings of course and university satisfaction, by institution and overall**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>ALL</b>	
<b>Total Observations</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6,095</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>11,391</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course (*Disagree)</i>	10.4	5.1	9.4	7.1	10.4	9.3	1123	9.9
<i>I have doubts about whether the degree I am studying is worth the time, money and effort (*Agree)</i>	43.2	51.3	44.8	43.8	36.2	44.3	4563	40.2
<i>If I could start my time at university again, I would not choose my current course (*Agree)</i>	12.7	5.1	13.2	6.5	15.8	14.9	1666	14.7
<i>How would you rate the quality of your university experience so far? (*Poor or Fair)</i>	26.9	13.6	24.8	17.2	28.4	23.4	2989	26.2

## Appendix E: Psychological resources and academic experiences explored in the Survey

**Table E1. Internal consistency for psychological resource for study items**

Scale domain	Description	No. of items	Alpha
<b>Academic resilience</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> students' academic resilience regarding their ability to recover from challenges, stressors, or setbacks encountered in university life. This includes how quickly they regain motivation or emotional balance after academic disappointments, critical feedback, or missed opportunities. The scale reflects perceptions of personal coping and adaptability, which may influence students' overall engagement, wellbeing, and persistence in their studies.	3	.72
<b>Academic self-efficacy</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> beliefs that one is academically capable, and experiences of completing difficult tasks. Students are more likely to experience feelings of competence when they are appropriately challenged or stretched. Competency beliefs and experiences, in combination with perceptions of course value, drive autonomous motivation for study.	3	.79

**Table E2. Rates of agreement and disagreement with psychological resource for study items**

	Reflecting on experiences studying at [university name] so far this year...	% Disagree	% Agree
<b>Academic resilience</b>			
	I tend to bounce back quickly after academic disappointments	19.6	58.5
	It does not take me long to recover from a stressful situation / event at uni	27.3	48.8
	I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in studies or university life	39.1	36.6
<b>Academic self-efficacy</b>			
	I believe I am a capable student	6.1	80.4
	I feel I am successful completing difficult tasks	11.6	67.1
	I am certain I can master the concepts and skills being taught in my course	9.5	69.4

**Table E3. Seven key experiences that underpin university students' academic wellbeing**

Scale domain	Description	No. of items	Alpha
<b>Course Experiences</b>			
<b>Academic stress</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> emotional reactions, such as performance anxiety, prompted by assessment tasks and perceptions of the course workload as overly burdensome. These feelings of helplessness, insecurity or being overwhelmed often impair a student's ability to perform well on academic tasks.	5	.85
<b>Course value</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> intrinsic interest in the knowledge and skills taught in their course (intrinsic value), as well as beliefs that what they are learning will be beneficial for their lives and careers (utility value of course). Perceptions of course value drive autonomous motivation for study.	5	.82
<b>Teacher support</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> experiences of teacher 'autonomy support', including perceptions that teachers: understand and care about students, convey confidence in students' abilities to learn, and motivate and inspire students academically.	3	.85
<b>Peer engagement</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> a sense of connection with (or disconnection from) other students, and the extent to which peers provide social, emotional and academic support for the student.	4	.82
<b>University Experiences</b>			
<b>Sense of belonging at uni</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> a sense of connection and belonging at the University, which may be experienced as feeling 'I am in the right place' or at least feeling comfortable in the University environments. We understand 'Sense of belonging at uni' to be a multi-dimensional construct, influenced by (and influencing) students' course experiences and perceptions of the University climate. Our previous research indicates that Sense of belonging at university is strongly associated with Teacher support, Course value and Peer engagement.	3	.79
<b>University climate</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> perceptions that the University cares about or values students <i>as a group</i> , with a focus on measures to promote mental wellbeing and social inclusion across the student body. Experiences of Uni climate are influenced by perceptions of how well the University understands and responds to students and student concerns through policies, procedures, and practices. Perceptions of Uni climate, including the status and value of students in the University community, may not reflect students' individual course experiences.	6	.85
<b>Everyday discrimination</b>	<i>What the scale measures:</i> experiences of unfair or disrespectful treatment in students' day-to-day university life, either on campus or online. These experiences may reflect perceptions of bias, exclusion, or discrimination from others in the university community, including staff and peers. The scale captures how often students feel devalued, disrespected, or unsafe in their interactions, which may affect their sense of belonging and overall wellbeing, regardless of their academic engagement		.89

Note: Response options for all scales are from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

**Table E4. Rates of agreement and disagreement\* with course experience items**

	Reflecting on experiences studying at [university name] so far this year...	% Disagree	% Agree
<b>Course value</b>			
Including intrinsic and utility value items	I am positive about my post-graduation career prospects	19.0	55.0
	I feel that completing my course will really add value to my life	5.5	80.9
	I am really interested in what I am studying	5.2	83.3
	I believe that what I am learning is valuable and useful	4.8	84.2
	The curriculum I study reflects my interests and values	6.7	77.3
<b>Academic stress</b>			
Including assessment stress and workload pressures	I find it really hard to keep up with the volume of work in my course	24.0	45.6
	I frequently feel overwhelmed by everything I have to do	18.4	60.1
	When I work on assessment tasks I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students	34.4	44.1
	I feel helpless and out of control when I sit an exam or give a presentation	46.4	29.3
	I feel insecure about my academic abilities	37.9	41.5
<b>Teacher support</b>			
Perceptions that teachers care about and motivate students	My teachers convey confidence in my ability to do well in my studies	8.3	62.9
	My teachers make a real effort to understand difficulties students may be having with their work	14.7	58.9
	My teachers motivate me to do my best work	12.5	58.0
<b>Peer engagement</b>			
Including social and academic support items	There are people at uni that I feel close to	25.2	58.5
	I feel part of a group of friends at uni	30.2	48.2
	If I have questions about a topic I am studying, I ask other students for help	24.5	59.2
	I have a supportive peer group (face to face or online)	19.3	65.4

\*Throughout this report, 'Disagree' is a combination of 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree' responses, while 'Agree' is a combination of 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' responses.

**Table E5. Rates of agreement and disagreement\* with university experience items**

	Reflecting on experiences studying at [university name] so far this year...	% Disagree	% Agree
<b>Sense of belonging at uni</b>			
Specific to current university	I have a sense of belonging at this university	20.1	50.9
	I feel at home at this university	18.5	47.1
	I feel accepted by staff and students in my department	5.2	75.8
<b>Uni climate</b>			
Perceptions that the Uni cares about student wellbeing and inclusion	[At university name...] I feel that students' wellbeing and mental health is a priority	15.1	59.6
	[At university name ...] Students are encouraged to form healthy and supportive relationships	9.5	68.4
	[At university name ...] Students' suggestions and feedback are acted on	19.1	42.0
	[At university name ...] I feel that students' concerns are listened to	17.0	46.8
	[At university name ...] I feel that there is a strong commitment to combatting sexual harassment and assault	7.4	64.2
	[At university name ...] I feel that there is a strong commitment to combatting racism	11.5	57.2

## Appendix F: Technical notes

### Data collection and analysis

All undergraduate students enrolled at participating universities (except those studying offshore or in ELICOS programs) are invited to complete an anonymous, online survey. As an incentive, participants can enter a prize draw for one of several \$300 vouchers (individual institutions may also offer additional incentives). Survey responses are not linked to students' university records and no identifying information is collected. The Uni Student Wellbeing Survey has Human Research Ethics Committee approval from The University of Melbourne (Project ID: 22126)

Data analysis is being undertaken by the principal researchers from the CSHE in collaboration with an expert team based at the Melbourne Institute, The University of Melbourne. Only responses from completed surveys are analysed. A response is considered complete if more than three-quarters of questions are answered, including at least five of the six K6 items and seven of the eight FS items.

Quantitative data were analysed using summary descriptive statistics, hierarchical multiple regression models and tests of independence. A  $p$ -value of 0.05 is used as the threshold to determine statistical significance. Only results that are statistically significant are featured in the report commentary.

Open-text responses from the Survey were analysed and thematically coded using the generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool, SparkAI. This tool was iteratively trained on the university's dataset to achieve over 90% accuracy at the theme level, guided by an established coding framework. This framework, developed and regularly reviewed by the research team, was based on open response data from previous surveys. At least 5% of AI-generated codes were reviewed by a team member, and incorrect coding choices made by the AI tool were corrected

### Weighting

When population data for institutions is available, and the response rate allows, Survey responses are weighted for analysis. Weights are constructed by assuming all students had an equal chance of selection into the sample (i.e., all students were invited to take part in the Survey) and calibrating the responding sample to university provided totals for age (20 or less, 21-24, and 25 or older), gender descriptor (female or Woman, male or Man, or a different descriptor) and international/domestic enrolment status. If the university provided totals for these three variables do not agree with each other (as occurs very occasionally), the maximum value is used as the total and the remaining two variables are rescaled to match this total. Calibration is a method that ensures the weighted sample totals match the university totals. Only those students who reported age, gender and international/domestic status and whose response is considered complete were given a weight. Note that the gender totals have been revised: the proportion in the sample reporting a gender descriptor other than female or male is maintained for the revised (weighted) total (as this is vastly understated in the reported university totals). The proportion split between females and males in the reported university totals is then retained in the residual of the revised (weighted) totals for gender. In this report, weighting was not applied to responses from Institutions I, J and K, including in analyses focused on the overall sample. Integer scores have been reported for institutions with weighted responses.

### Missing values

Out of 16,131 Survey participants, this report uses information from 11,391 participants who provided valid information regarding age, gender, and international/domestic enrolment status and who provided valid responses to greater than 75% of the Survey items



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