Identifying Graduate Coursework Student Satisfaction

Monash University 2024

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Executive summary

In April and May 2024, the Monash Graduate Association (MGA) conducted a survey of graduate students at Monash and nine other Australian universities.

Students were asked to rate the importance of various aspects of a graduate educational experience, and then to rate the satisfaction of those same aspects according to their own experiences at their university.

The main findings as they relate to graduate coursework students enrolled at Monash are summarised below:

Support services at Monash are appreciated

In relation to their course experience, respondents at Monash were most satisfied in relation to *support services*. Likewise, the gap between how important students found it and how satisfied they were with what was delivered was narrowest for *support services*.

Library resources and IT support both ranked particularly well.

Dissatisfaction with job readiness is high

Of the six themes included in the survey, students ranked *job readiness* second for importance, but last for satisfaction. Meanwhile, the distance between importance and satisfaction was the widest.

Of the twenty-six individual areas surveyed, the three areas where dissatisfaction was highest were the three that make up *job readiness* - internship/placement opportunities, networking and being ready to enter the workforce.

Nevertheless, Monash respondents were still more satisfied than non-Monash respondents.

Relatively wide gap between importance and satisfaction in regard to academic quality

Of most importance to Monash graduate coursework students is academic quality. Compared to the other themes, satisfaction was high with *academic quality* ranking second. However, the gap between importance and satisfaction was the fifth widest, indicating that there is still room for improvement.

Feedback from students with a disability an area of concern

One of the general trends to emerge from the survey is that students who identified as having a disability tend to place great importance on the specifics of their course, but are less satisfied with the delivery. This led to consistently wide gaps between importance and satisfaction.

Furthermore, students with a disability at Monash were almost twice as likely as students without a disability to say that their course did not represent value for money, while they were also more likely to have considered leaving their course in the last 12 months.

Monash results better than across the other universities

Satisfaction was, on average, higher among Monash respondents than non-Monash respondents. This contributed to narrower gaps and a general feeling that Monash was better at matching students' expectations.

It is important to note, however, that the demographic make-up of respondents differed significantly. International students, who tend to be more satisfied, made up a greater proportion of Monash respondents than they did among non-Monash respondents.

The importance of academic quality to the domestic student experience cannot be overstated

Academic quality was the only theme in which the average level of importance was higher among domestic full-time and domestic part-time students than international students.

For every other theme, the average level of importance across the theme was noticeably higher for international students than their domestic counterparts. This was particularly true of *culture*.

Value for money linked to satisfaction with job readiness

The average satisfaction score for *job readiness* was substantially higher among those who thought their course represented value for money than those who did not. This was true of the other themes, too, but not to the same extent.

Domestic part-time and online students most likely to consider leaving

Domestic part-time and online students were most likely to have considered leaving their course in the last 12 months, while students studying face-to-face and international students were the least likely have considered leaving.

Problems with academic quality and academic delivery the primary reasons graduate coursework students consider leaving

Perceptions of a lack of academic quality were the primary reason Monash respondents gave for why they had considered leaving their course.

Issues with the academic delivery of the course were also prevalent. Among those who had considered leaving, the gaps between importance and satisfaction were substantial in relation to class times and submission dates.

MGA engagement and satisfaction better among those who attend campus

Students were most-likely to have a neutral opinion of the Monash Graduate Association (MGA).

Engagement was minimal among online and domestic part-time students, while dissatisfaction was highest amongst Parkville respondents and domestic part-time students. Engagement was relatively good among international and face-to-face students, while satisfaction was highest among face-to-face, students with a disability and respondents based at Caulfield.

Introduction

The Monash Graduate Association (MGA) ran a survey of graduate students in April and May 2024 across nine Australian universities. In relation to graduate coursework students, the aim of the MGA's *National Postgraduate Student Satisfaction Survey* was to better understand what students' value in their courses and how their experiences measure up against their expectations.

This report provides data and findings specifically for respondents enrolled at Monash University. At Monash, a total of 1,153 Monash graduate coursework students completed the survey (see *Appendix 1: Demographics*), which we estimate to be between 5-7% of enrolled graduate coursework students at the University.

The survey was advertised in the MGA newsletter, on the MGA website, through MGA social media channels and through contacts with Monash faculty groups and associate deans, many of whom agreed to forward the advertising of the survey to their students. Participants were self-selecting, so an incentive scheme (comprising the opportunity to win one of 100 gift cards worth $50 in value) was used to assist in attracting a representative sample.

With the support of colleagues at student associations across Australia, this survey was offered to postgraduate students at nine other universities. Respondents from the University of Queensland, Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology, Southern Cross University, University of Sydney, University of New South Wales, University of Technology Sydney, Victoria University and Federation University are all represented in this survey. A total of 395 graduate coursework students across these universities completed the survey.

Where appropriate, comparisons between Monash and non-Monash respondents, faculties and demographic groups have been made.

Part 1 of this report presents quantitative data relating to the importance Monash graduate coursework students place on specific course components and their satisfaction with the delivery of these components.

Respondents were asked to give a rating from 0 to 10 on a *LIKERT*-scale for how much importance they placed on a specific area relating to their course experience and then again for how satisfied they were with Monash's delivery of that area. A total of twenty-six areas were covered in this survey (see *Appendix 2: Wording of course experience questionnaire).*

The twenty-six areas were grouped into six themes: commencement (3), academic quality (6), academic delivery (6), support services (5), culture (3) and job preparation (3).

Areas and themes were ranked by the average level of importance, satisfaction and the distance between importance and satisfaction (gap).

The gap was calculated as below:

$$\text{Gap} = \frac{(\text{Satisfaction - Importance})}{\text{Importance}} \ (\%)$$

A narrow gap indicates that students are content with the offering, whereas a wide gap indicates the opposite.

The average collective importance, satisfaction and gap scores of each theme were calculated and ranked. The ranking of each of these (1st to 6th) are outlined at the start of each section.

Each area within the relevant theme is then individually explored through a comparison of select demographic groups. The average importance score of each demographic group is colour-coded from highest (green) to lowest (red). This is repeated for both satisfaction and gap (narrowest = green, widest = red).

Please note that other than "Non-Monash," every demographic group mentioned encompasses Monash University students only.

Part 2 of this report provides quantitative and qualitative insights into perceptions of course value and retention considerations.

Respondents were asked whether they believed their course represented value for money and if they had considered leaving their course in the last 12 months. If they had considered leaving their course, they were asked to elaborate on their reasons.

They were also asked if there was anything in relation to their course that they wanted their student association to know.

Part 3 of this report highlights the engagement and satisfaction of Monash graduate coursework students with the Monash Graduate Association (MGA) and includes respondents' suggestions for how the MGA could better support the university's students.

This research has been approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project ID: 41520).

Limitations

While this report provides valuable insight into graduate student satisfaction, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that may impact the interpretation of results. Two such limitations are outlined below.

Over- and under-representation of demographic groups

When considering results, it is important to acknowledge that the response rate is not consistent across demographic groups.

For example, according to the Department of Education, international students accounted for 48% of total graduate coursework enrolment at Monash University in 2022.[1] In this survey, international students accounted for 82% of total responses at Monash. As a result, international students are greatly over-represented and domestic students are greatly under-represented. This is true also of full-time (over-represented) and part-time (under-represented) students.

To account for these imbalances, effort has been made to isolate demographic groups where possible and analyse and report on each group's results. However, these over- and under-representations do impact the demographic analysis when they are not specifically isolated e.g. in the faculty comparisons (see *1.7 Faculty comparisons*).

Furthermore, when comparing Monash and Non-Monash results, the demographic make-up of respondents varied. International students made up 82.1% of Monash respondents, while they made up only 64.7% of Non-Monash respondents.

Positive-negative asymmetry (PNA) effect

Across the entire report, the responses of students have been taken at face-value. As such, it is important to reflect on the positive-negative asymmetry (PNA) effect. The PNA effect is two-part: firstly, it incorporates the positivity bias, which refers to an individual's inclination towards favourable perceptions of phenomena that are novel or do not directly impact them,[2] and, secondly, it incorporates the negativity bias which, in part, relates to how individuals are more curious about negative than positive stimuli and therefore are more mobilised by negative events.[3] In the context of this report, this may mean that answers to the quantitative questions in the survey are disproportionately positive, while the responses to the qualitative (open-ended) questions are disproportionately negative, given that graduate students were not required to provide a response.

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[1] "Student Enrolment Pivot Table 2022," Department of Education (Federal Government of Australia), published 18 December 2023, https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/student-enrolments-pivot-table-2022.

[2] Maria Lewicka, Janusz Czapinski and Guido Peeters, "Positive-negative asymmetry or 'When the heart needs a reason'," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 22 (1992): 426.

[3] Reanna M. Poncheri, Jennifer T. Lindberg, Lori Foster Thompson and Eric A. Surface, "A comment on employee surveys: negativity bias in open-ended responses," *Organizational Research Methods* 11, no. 3 (2008): 615-16.

Part 1: Importance and satisfaction

Question	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Commencement			
Pre-enrolment	8.41	7.31	-13.1%
Enrolment	8.26	7.62	-7.7%
Orientation	7.67	7.51	-2.1%
Academic quality			
Clear criteria	8.61	7.45	-13.5%
Quality teaching	8.89	7.45	-16.2%
Engaging lectures	8.45	7.30	-13.6%
Academic access	8.57	7.88	-8.1%
Timely feedback	8.51	7.55	-11.3%
Academic feedback	8.66	7.45	-14.0%
Academic delivery			
Mixed delivery*	8.06	7.70	-4.5%
Balance of units	7.88	7.33	-7.0%
Elective variety	7.80	7.07	-9.4%
Class times	8.14	6.94	-14.7%
Assignment no.	8.42	7.21	-14.4%
Submission dates	8.59	7.04	-18.0%
Support services			
Facilities	8.49	7.69	-9.4%
Language support**	7.95	7.74	-2.6%
Library resources	8.59	8.05	-6.3%
IT support	7.92	7.84	-1.0%
Learning support	8.08	7.73	-4.3%
Culture			
Grad community	7.52	6.99	-7.0%
Academic community	7.60	6.95	-8.6%
Sense of belonging	7.97	7.11	-10.8%
Job readiness			
Internship	8.40	6.42	-23.6%
Networking	8.42	6.59	-21.7%
Workforce entry	8.73	6.75	-22.7%
Overall average	8.25	7.33	-11.0%

*Only asked of students who selected their course attendance involved a "mix of on-campus and online study."
**Only asked of students who indicated that their proficiency in English was not "fluent."

1.1   Commencement

Of the six themes included in the survey, respondents ranked *commencement* fifth for importance and third for satisfaction, while the distance between importance and satisfaction was the second tightest.

Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
5th	3rd	2nd

The *commencement* section comprised of three areas on which respondents provided feedback. These areas were worded as below:

Pre-enrolment -   *Having clear information about the course prior to my enrolment.*

Enrolment -   *A user-friendly enrolment process.*

Orientation -   *The orientation experience.*

1.1.1   Pre-enrolment

Q.   Having clear information about the course prior to my enrolment.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash (n.1060)	8.41	7.31	-13.1%
Non-Monash (n. 375)	8.53	7.09	-16.9%
HASS (n. 688)	8.44	7.30	-13.5%
STEM (n. 369)	8.38	7.33	-12.5%
Domestic – Full-time (n. 110)	9.01	6.98	-22.5%
Domestic – Part-time (n. 80)	8.64	7.00	-19.0%
International (n. 874)	8.31	7.37	-11.3%
Women (n. 694)	8.43	7.29	-13.5%
Men (n. 348)	8.35	7.37	-11.7%
Face-to-face (n. 618)	8.36	7.40	-11.5%
Multi-modal (n. 390)	8.42	7.20	-14.5%
Online (n. 52)	8.88	6.87	-22.6%
Disability (n. 38)	9.24	6.74	-27.1%
Not value for money (n. 252)	8.13	5.92	-27.2%
Considered leaving (n. 402)	8.16	6.43	-21.2%

- While marginally less important to them, Monash respondents were more satisfied with their pre-enrolment experience than were students from other universities.
- The gap between importance and satisfaction was particularly wide for students with a disability and also for online, domestic full-time and domestic part-time students.

1.1.2 Enrolment

Q.   A user-friendly enrolment process.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.26	7.62	-7.7%
Non-Monash	8.31	7.66	-7.8%
HASS	8.31	7.62	-8.3%
STEM	8.18	7.62	-6.8%
Domestic – Full-time	8.39	7.44	-11.3%
Domestic – Part-time	8.25	6.96	-15.6%
International	8.24	7.70	-6.6%
Women	8.31	7.60	-8.5%
Men	8.13	7.69	-5.4%
Face-to-face	8.29	7.68	-7.4%
Multi-modal	8.22	7.54	-8.3%
Online	8.23	7.58	-7.9%
Disability	8.61	7.16	-16.8%
Not value for money	7.92	6.47	-18.3%
Considered leaving	7.88	6.80	-13.7%

- Monash respondents were as satisfied as non-Monash respondents in regard to the user-friendly enrolment process.
- Satisfaction was relatively consistent across demographics; however, domestic part-time and students with a disability were noticeably less satisfied. This contributed to a wide gap between importance and satisfaction for these cohorts.

1.1.3 Orientation

Q.   The orientation experience.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	7.67	7.51	-2.1%
Non-Monash	7.73	7.45	-3.6%
HASS	7.61	7.39	-2.9%
STEM	7.79	7.74	-0.6%
Domestic - Full-time	6.45	7.22	11.9%
Domestic - Part-time	6.67	6.65	-0.3%
International	7.93	7.63	-3.8%
Women	7.73	7.52	-2.7%
Men	7.58	7.50	-1.1%
Face-to-face	7.80	7.59	-2.7%
Multi-modal	7.60	7.49	-1.4%
Online	6.71	6.77	0.9%
Disability	7.00	6.71	-4.1%
Not value for money	7.25	6.36	-12.3%
Considered leaving	7.14	6.78	-5.0%

- Compared to other areas, orientation ranked quite low for importance; however, the gap between importance and satisfaction was generally low and the second tightest across all 26 areas.
- Monash respondents were marginally more satisfied with their orientation experience than were non-Monash students.
- Domestic full-time students placed the least importance on orientation, but were relatively satisfied with the experience. As such, satisfaction comfortably outranked importance for this group. In the 2023 *MGA Survey on Health, Family and Finances,* 51% of domestic full-time graduate coursework students had previously studied at Monash, which may explain why the importance score for these students was lower than other cohorts.

1.2   Academic quality

Of the six themes included in the survey, respondents ranked *academic quality* first for importance and second for satisfaction, while the distance between importance and satisfaction was the fifth tightest.

Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
1st	2nd	5th

The *academic quality* section comprised of six areas on which respondents provided feedback. These areas were worded as below:

Clear criteria   *Clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria.*

Quality teaching   *High quality teaching.*

Engaging lectures   *Lectures are engaging.*

Academic access   *Lecturers are accessible for answering my questions/having a discussion.*

Timely feedback   *Timely feedback on assessments/assignments.*

Academic feedback   *Constructive feedback on assessments/assignments.*

1.2.1   Clear criteria

Q.   Clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.61	7.45	-13.5%
Non-Monash	8.73	7.27	-16.7%
HASS	8.64	7.49	-13.3%
STEM	8.60	7.39	-14.1%
Domestic - Full-time	9.19	7.01	-23.7%
Domestic - Part-time	8.80	7.47	-15.1%
International	8.52	7.51	-11.9%
Women	8.72	7.49	-14.1%
Men	8.40	7.40	-11.9%
Face-to-face	8.62	7.42	-13.9%
Multi-modal	8.57	7.48	-12.7%
Online	8.94	7.57	-15.3%
Disability	9.33	6.86	-26.5%
Not value for money	8.31	6.08	-26.8%
Considered leaving	8.37	6.65	-20.5%

- Monash students were generally more satisfied than students from other universities that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria were clear.
- The wide gap between importance and satisfaction for domestic full-time students is an area of some concern.

1.2.2   Quality teaching

Q.   High quality teaching.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.89	7.45	-16.2%
Non-Monash	9.09	7.39	-18.7%
HASS	9.02	7.57	-16.1%
STEM	8.68	7.21	-16.9%
Domestic - Full-time	9.49	7.30	-23.1%
Domestic - Part-time	9.16	7.41	-19.1%
International	8.80	7.47	-15.1%
Women	8.97	7.49	-16.5%
Men	8.73	7.35	-15.8%
Face-to-face	8.92	7.56	-15.2%
Multi-modal	8.81	7.25	-17.7%
Online	9.24	7.55	-18.3%
Disability	9.83	6.69	-31.9%
Not value for money	8.68	6.01	-30.8%
Considered leaving	8.72	6.67	-23.5%

- Quality teaching ranked as the most-important area for both Monash and non-Monash students. However, Monash students ranked it equal eleventh of twenty-five areas for satisfaction.
- HASS students were noticeably more satisfied than STEM students with the quality of teaching.
- The gap was particularly wide among students with a disability and domestic full-time and, to a lesser degree, domestic part-time students.

1.2.3 Engaging lectures

Q.   Lectures are engaging.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.45	7.30	-13.6%
Non-Monash	8.63	7.07	-18.1%
HASS	8.53	7.35	-13.8%
STEM	8.33	7.21	-13.4%
Domestic - Full-time	8.68	6.91	-20.4%
Domestic - Part-time	8.41	7.14	-15.1%
International	8.43	7.36	-12.7%
Women	8.54	7.31	-14.4%
Men	8.29	7.27	-12.3%
Face-to-face	8.44	7.43	-12.0%
Multi-modal	8.44	7.13	-15.5%
Online	8.61	6.92	-19.6%
Disability	8.97	6.61	-26.3%
Not value for money	8.12	5.92	-27.1%
Considered leaving	8.13	6.43	-20.9%

- Monash students were more satisfied that their lectures were engaging than were non-Monash students.
- Face-to-face students were more satisfied that their lectures were engaging than were multi-modal and online students.
- The gap between importance and satisfaction was particularly wide for domestic full-time and online students.

1.2.4   Academic access

Q.   *Lecturers are accessible for answering my questions/having a discussion.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.57	7.88	-8.1%
Non-Monash	8.65	7.75	-10.4%
HASS	8.62	7.90	-8.4%
STEM	8.49	7.84	-7.7%
Domestic - Full-time	8.58	7.81	-9.0%
Domestic - Part-time	8.64	7.91	-8.4%
International	8.56	7.89	-7.8%
Women	8.67	7.89	-9.0%
Men	8.33	7.82	-6.1%
Face-to-face	8.49	7.94	-6.5%
Multi-modal	8.62	7.76	-10.0%
Online	8.96	8.00	-10.7%
Disability	8.67	8.03	-7.4%
Not value for money	8.08	6.72	-16.8%
Considered leaving	8.30	7.10	-14.5%

- Access to academics achieved the second highest average satisfaction score among Monash respondents across the survey.
- It was noticeably important to online students and, although the gap was wider, they were more satisfied with this area than face-to-face and multi-modal students.

1.2.5 Timely feedback

Q.   Timely feedback on assessments/assignments.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.51	7.55	-11.3%
Non-Monash	8.58	7.35	-14.3%
HASS	8.61	7.59	-11.8%
STEM	8.33	7.46	-10.4%
Domestic - Full-time	8.69	7.25	-16.6%
Domestic - Part-time	8.55	7.45	-12.9%
International	8.49	7.59	-10.6%
Women	8.60	7.56	-12.1%
Men	8.35	7.50	-10.2%
Face-to-face	8.47	7.62	-10.0%
Multi-modal	8.51	7.38	-13.3%
Online	8.90	7.76	-12.8%
Disability	8.67	6.67	-23.1%
Not value for money	8.24	6.43	-22.0%
Considered leaving	8.27	6.80	-17.8%

- Monash students were marginally more satisfied that they received timely feedback than were non-Monash respondents.
- The gap between importance and satisfaction was particularly wide among students who identified as having a disability.

1.2.6 Academic feedback

Q. *Constructive feedback on assessments/assignments.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.66	7.45	-14.0%
Non-Monash	8.71	7.15	-17.9%
HASS	8.74	7.56	-13.5%
STEM	8.52	7.25	-14.9%
Domestic - Full-time	8.98	7.08	-21.2%
Domestic - Part-time	8.66	7.11	-17.9%
International	8.61	7.53	-12.5%
Women	8.75	7.47	-14.6%
Men	8.50	7.41	-12.8%
Face-to-face	8.62	7.54	-12.5%
Multi-modal	8.66	7.28	-15.9%
Online	9.00	7.49	-16.8%
Disability	8.81	7.00	-20.5%
Not value for money	8.44	6.25	-25.9%
Considered leaving	8.44	6.69	-20.7%

- Monash students were noticeably more satisfied than non-Monash students that they received constructive feedback on assignments.
- Students with a disability and domestic full-time students were less satisfied than most other groups and had a wide gap between importance and satisfaction.

1.3   Academic delivery

Of the six themes included in the survey, respondents ranked *academic delivery* fourth for importance and fourth for satisfaction, while the distance between importance and satisfaction was the fourth tightest.

Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
4th	4th	4th

The *academic delivery* section comprised of six areas on which respondents provided feedback. These areas were worded as below:

Mixed delivery*	*Appropriate mix of online and in-person course delivery.*
Balance of units	*Appropriate balance of compulsory units and electives.*
Elective variety	*Appropriate variety of electives to choose from.*
Class times	*Acceptable variety of tutorial/studio/lab times to choose from.*
Assignment no.	*The number of assessments/assignments for the course is appropriate.*
Submission dates	*Assessments/assignments submission dates are appropriately spaced.*

* Only asked of students who selected that their course attendance involved a "mix of on-campus and online study."

1.3.1 Mixed delivery

Q.   *Appropriate mix of online and in-person course delivery.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.06	7.70	-4.5%
Non-Monash	8.04	7.52	-6.5%
HASS	8.07	7.66	-5.1%
STEM	8.06	7.77	-3.6%
Domestic - Full-time	7.74	7.28	-5.9%
Domestic - Part-time	8.39	7.61	-9.3%
International	8.07	7.76	-3.8%
Women	8.16	7.82	-4.2%
Men	7.80	7.47	-4.2%
Face-to-face			
Multi-modal	8.06	7.70	-4.5%
Online			
Disability	7.81	7.56	-3.2%
Not value for money	7.93	6.41	-19.2%
Considered leaving	7.87	7.05	-10.4%

- Face-to-face and Online students were not asked this question.
- Multi-modal Monash respondents were marginally more satisfied than non-Monash respondents that their course had an appropriate mix of online and in-person classes.
- Domestic part-time students placed the greater importance on this area than most and, although they were more satisfied than domestic full-time students, they had a noticeably wide gap.

1.3.2   Balance of units

Q.   *Appropriate balance of compulsory units and electives.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	7.88	7.33	-7.0%
Non-Monash	8.02	7.17	-10.6%
HASS	7.93	7.38	-6.9%
STEM	7.80	7.23	-7.3%
Domestic - Full-time	6.86	6.91	0.7%
Domestic - Part-time	7.39	7.28	-1.5%
International	8.05	7.38	-8.3%
Women	7.91	7.33	-7.3%
Men	7.80	7.30	-6.4%
Face-to-face	7.92	7.32	-7.6%
Multi-modal	7.92	7.35	-7.2%
Online	7.18	7.39	2.9%
Disability	7.42	6.67	-10.1%
Not value for money	7.63	5.96	-21.9%
Considered leaving	7.60	6.53	-14.1%

- The satisfaction of domestic and online students in regard to the balance of units, on average, exceeded the level of importance they placed on this area. As such, they achieved the rare feat of a positive gap – albeit their importance scores were quite low compared to their colleagues.
- Students with a disability were generally less satisfied with this area than other groups were.

1.3.3 Elective variety

Q.   Appropriate variety of electives to choose from.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	7.80	7.07	-9.4%
Non-Monash	8.01	6.94	-13.4%
HASS	7.87	7.15	-9.1%
STEM	7.68	6.92	-9.9%
Domestic - Full-time	6.63	6.50	-2.0%
Domestic - Part-time	7.08	6.77	-4.4%
International	8.01	7.17	-10.5%
Women	7.77	6.98	-10.2%
Men	7.85	7.22	-8.0%
Face-to-face	7.85	7.09	-9.7%
Multi-modal	7.79	7.04	-9.6%
Online	7.22	6.96	-3.6%
Disability	7.39	6.69	-9.5%
Not value for money	7.59	5.88	-22.5%
Considered leaving	7.61	6.28	-17.5%

- Compared to other groups, elective variety was not overly important to domestic students or online students.
- Men, international and Hass students were most satisfied with the variety of electives.

1.3.4 Class times

Q. *Acceptable variety of tutorial/studio/lab times to choose from.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.14	6.94	-14.7%
Non-Monash	8.21	6.85	-16.6%
HASS	8.19	6.97	-14.9%
STEM	8.08	6.89	-14.7%
Domestic - Full-time	7.90	5.87	-25.7%
Domestic - Part-time	7.49	6.40	-14.6%
International	8.23	7.13	-13.4%
Women	8.10	6.85	-15.4%
Men	8.21	7.11	-13.4%
Face-to-face	8.14	7.03	-13.6%
Multi-modal	8.25	6.87	-16.7%
Online	7.31	6.61	-9.6%
Disability	8.72	5.92	-32.1%
Not value for money	7.92	5.77	-27.1%
Considered leaving	7.94	5.99	-24.6%

- Monash respondents were marginally more satisfied with the variety of tutorial times to choose from than were non-Monash students.
- Domestic full-time students were particularly less satisfied than most other cohorts of students, as were students with a disability.

1.3.5 Assignment numbers

Q. *The number of assessments/assignments for the course is appropriate.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.42	7.21	-14.4%
Non-Monash	8.50	7.18	-15.5%
HASS	8.49	7.35	-13.4%
STEM	8.30	6.95	-16.3%
Domestic - Full-time	8.42	7.05	-16.3%
Domestic - Part-time	8.53	7.31	-14.3%
International	8.41	7.23	-14.0%
Women	8.47	7.21	-14.9%
Men	8.30	7.19	-13.4%
Face-to-face	8.34	7.20	-13.7%
Multi-modal	8.51	7.20	-15.4%
Online	8.57	7.47	-12.8%
Disability	9.11	7.36	-19.2%
Not value for money	8.21	6.19	-24.6%
Considered leaving	8.27	6.45	-22.0%

- STEM respondents were less satisfied than HASS students in regard to the number of assignments being appropriate.
- Online students were the most satisfied.

1.3.6 Submission dates

Q.   Assessment/assignments submission dates are appropriately spaced.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.59	7.04	-18.0%
Non-Monash	8.67	6.82	-21.3%
HASS	8.66	7.09	-18.1%
STEM	8.47	6.94	-18.1%
Domestic - Full-time	8.83	6.21	-29.7%
Domestic - Part-time	8.68	7.52	-13.4%
International	8.55	7.11	-16.8%
Women	8.68	6.96	-19.8%
Men	8.41	7.18	-14.6%
Face-to-face	8.53	7.07	-17.1%
Multi-modal	8.61	6.87	-20.2%
Online	9.10	7.86	-13.6%
Disability	9.14	6.17	-32.5%
Not value for money	8.46	5.99	-29.2%
Considered leaving	8.47	6.16	-27.3%

- Appropriately spaced assignment submission dates was, on average, the most important area within *academic delivery* and the fifth most important overall.
- Students with a disability and domestic full-time students were the least satisfied groups in regard to submission dates, while online and domestic-part time students were the most satisfied.

1.4 Support services

Of the six themes included in the survey, respondents ranked *support services* third for importance and first for satisfaction, while the distance between importance and satisfaction was the tightest.

Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
3rd	1st	1st

The *support services* section comprised of five areas on which respondents provided feedback. These areas were worded as below:

Facilities	*Adequate facilities for your field of study.*
Language support**	*English language support.*
Library resources	*Easily accessible books and journals (online or hard copy).*
IT support	*IT support.*
Learning support	*Learning skills support e.g. academic writing, referencing, time management.*

** Only asked of students who indicated that their proficiency in English was not "fluent".

1.4.1 Facilities

Q.   Adequate facilities for your field of study.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.49	7.69	-9.4%
Non-Monash	8.38	7.55	-9.9%
HASS	8.52	7.67	-10.0%
STEM	8.43	7.72	-8.4%
Domestic - Full-time	8.26	7.52	-9.0%
Domestic - Part-time	7.97	7.35	-7.8%
International	8.56	7.74	-9.6%
Women	8.51	7.70	-9.5%
Men	8.43	7.70	-8.7%
Face-to-face	8.50	7.75	-8.8%
Multi-modal	8.60	7.69	-10.6%
Online	7.54	7.14	-5.3%
Disability	8.50	7.42	-12.7%
Not value for money	8.14	6.46	-20.6%
Considered leaving	8.15	6.92	-15.1%

- Monash respondents were marginally more satisfied than non-Monash students that the facilities for their fields of study were adequate.
- Online students did not find facilities as important as other groups of students and were also the least satisfied.

1.4.2 Language support

Q. *English language support.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	7.95	7.74	-2.6%
Non-Monash	7.85	7.44	-5.2%
HASS	8.01	7.67	-4.2%
STEM	7.86	7.89	0.4%
Domestic - Full-time	8.13	7.94	-2.3%
Domestic - Part-time	5.88	7.12	21.1%
International	8.00	7.76	-3.0%
Women	8.04	7.65	-4.9%
Men	7.81	7.90	1.2%
Face-to-face	7.97	7.80	-2.1%
Multi-modal	7.99	7.73	-3.3%
Online	6.27	6.09	-2.9%
Disability	8.77	7.92	-9.7%
Not value for money	7.39	6.75	-8.7%
Considered leaving	7.53	7.10	-5.7%

- Monash respondents tended to be more satisfied with language support than non-Monash respondents.
- The gap between importance and satisfaction was relatively narrow (fourth shortest overall); however, it tended to get wider the less fluent in English a student indicated they were (not shown).

1.4.3   Library resources

Q.   *Easily accessible books and journals (online or hard copy).*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.59	8.05	-6.3%
Non-Monash	8.65	8.07	-6.7%
HASS	8.66	8.07	-6.8%
STEM	8.47	8.01	-5.4%
Domestic - Full-time	8.52	8.53	0.1%
Domestic - Part-time	8.82	7.82	-11.3%
International	8.57	8.01	-6.5%
Women	8.65	8.17	-5.5%
Men	8.45	7.81	-7.6%
Face-to-face	8.49	8.10	-4.6%
Multi-modal	8.69	7.96	-8.4%
Online	8.94	8.12	-9.2%
Disability	8.72	8.08	-7.3%
Not value for money	8.19	7.21	-12.0%
Considered leaving	8.37	7.53	-10.0%

- On average, Monash respondents were more satisfied with library resources than any other area tested in this survey, while it ranked equal fifth overall for importance.
- The gap between importance and satisfaction was generally low compared to other areas; however, within this context, the gap was wide for domestic part-time and online students.

1.4.4 IT support

Q.   IT support.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	7.92	7.84	-1.0%
Non-Monash	7.86	7.90	0.5%
HASS	7.88	7.81	-0.9%
STEM	7.99	7.90	-1.1%
Domestic - Full-time	7.11	7.58	6.6%
Domestic - Part-time	7.11	7.34	3.2%
International	8.09	7.92	-2.1%
Women	7.97	7.88	-1.1%
Men	7.86	7.79	-0.9%
Face-to-face	8.01	7.87	-1.7%
Multi-modal	7.92	7.85	-0.9%
Online	6.86	7.60	10.8%
Disability	6.89	7.67	11.3%
Not value for money	7.37	6.90	-6.4%
Considered leaving	7.65	7.25	-5.2%

- Across all twenty-six areas, the gap between importance and satisfaction was narrowest for IT support.
- It was the was one of the few times in which non-Monash respondents were more satisfied than Monash students; however, this was only marginal.
- Satisfaction was relatively consistent across the groups identified here; however, domestic part-time students were the least satisfied.

1.4.5   Learning support

Q.   *Learning skills support e.g. academic writing, referencing, time management.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.08	7.73	-4.3%
Non-Monash	7.81	7.73	-1.0%
HASS	8.11	7.70	-5.1%
STEM	8.04	7.80	-3.0%
Domestic - Full-time	7.20	7.93	10.1%
Domestic - Part-time	7.47	7.49	0.3%
International	8.25	7.73	-6.3%
Women	8.16	7.78	-4.7%
Men	7.96	7.63	-4.1%
Face-to-face	8.14	7.70	-5.4%
Multi-modal	8.05	7.76	-3.6%
Online	7.80	7.84	0.5%
Disability	6.92	7.50	8.4%
Not value for money	7.36	6.65	-9.6%
Considered leaving	7.84	7.09	-9.6%

- While other groups found it more important, domestic full-time students were the most satisfied when it came to learning skills support.
- Domestic part-time students and students with a disability were the least satisfied; however, both groups' satisfaction scores were higher than their importance score.

1.5   Culture

Of the six themes included in the survey, respondents ranked *culture* last for importance and fifth for satisfaction, while the distance between importance and satisfaction was the third tightest.

Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
6th	5th	3rd

The *culture* section comprised of three areas on which respondents provided feedback. These areas were worded as below:

Grad community   *Feeling part of a postgraduate social community.*

Academic community   *Feeling part of an academic community.*

Sense of belonging   *Feeling a sense of belonging to my university.*

1.5.1   Graduate community

Q.   Feeling part of a postgraduate social community.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	7.52	6.99	-7.0%
Non-Monash	7.39	6.70	-9.3%
HASS	7.54	6.85	-9.2%
STEM	7.45	7.25	-2.7%
Domestic - Full-time	6.01	6.58	9.5%
Domestic - Part-time	5.95	5.54	-6.9%
International	7.86	7.19	-8.5%
Women	7.50	6.95	-7.3%
Men	7.55	7.10	-6.0%
Face-to-face	7.67	7.12	-7.2%
Multi-modal	7.53	6.94	-7.8%
Online	5.66	6.04	6.7%
Disability	6.36	6.22	-2.2%
Not value for money	6.96	5.64	-19.0%
Considered leaving	7.11	6.07	-14.6%

- This was, on average, the least important of the twenty-six areas, while it ranked twenty-first for satisfaction.
- The gaps for HASS and international students were relatively wide compared to other groups.

1.5.2 Academic community

Q.   Feeling part of an academic community.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	7.60	6.95	-8.6%
Non-Monash	7.41	6.54	-11.7%
HASS	7.59	6.81	-10.3%
STEM	7.62	7.19	-5.6%
Domestic - Full-time	6.32	6.47	2.4%
Domestic - Part-time	6.27	5.61	-10.5%
International	7.90	7.14	-9.6%
Women	7.60	6.92	-8.9%
Men	7.60	7.04	-7.4%
Face-to-face	7.77	7.09	-8.8%
Multi-modal	7.53	6.87	-8.8%
Online	6.18	6.02	-2.6%
Disability	6.83	6.06	-11.3%
Not value for money	6.81	5.47	-19.7%
Considered leaving	7.19	5.94	-17.4%

- This was, on average, the second least important of the twenty-six areas for importance, while it ranked twenty-second for satisfaction.
- Monash respondents were more likely to be satisfied than non-Monash respondents.
- Domestic part-time and online students expressed the least amount of satisfaction in regard to academic community.

1.5.3   Sense of belonging

Q.   Feeling a sense of belonging to my university.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	7.97	7.11	-10.8%
Non-Monash	7.67	6.82	-11.1%
HASS	7.97	7.04	-11.7%
STEM	7.98	7.23	-9.4%
Domestic - Full-time	6.93	6.53	-5.8%
Domestic - Part-time	6.43	5.84	-9.2%
International	8.24	7.29	-11.5%
Women	7.94	7.05	-11.2%
Men	8.03	7.22	-10.1%
Face-to-face	8.02	7.18	-10.5%
Multi-modal	8.11	7.17	-11.6%
Online	6.40	6.02	-5.9%
Disability	7.11	6.47	-9.0%
Not value for money	7.33	5.46	-25.5%
Considered leaving	7.60	6.08	-20.0%

- A sense of belonging to the university was very important to international students, but not as important for domestic students.
- While international students were more satisfied than domestic students, the gap between importance and satisfaction was wider among international students.
- Compared to the other groups, online students generally found sense of belonging less important and were less satisfied; however, the gap between the two was narrower than in most other groups.

1.6 Job readiness

Of the six themes included in the survey, respondents ranked *job readiness* second for importance and last for satisfaction, while the distance between importance and satisfaction was the widest.

Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
2nd	6th	6th

The *job readiness* section comprised of three areas on which respondents provided feedback. These areas were worded as below:

Internship	*Placement/internship opportunities.*
Networking	*Links to industry/professional networking.*
Workforce entry	*Being ready to enter the workforce when I graduate.*

1.6.1 Internships

Q.   Placement/internship opportunities.

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.40	6.42	-23.6%
Non-Monash	7.94	5.82	-26.7%
HASS	8.38	6.27	-25.2%
STEM	8.43	6.67	-20.9%
Domestic - Full-time	8.32	6.62	-20.4%
Domestic - Part-time	6.80	5.27	-22.5%
International	8.56	6.50	-24.1%
Women	8.46	6.32	-25.3%
Men	8.29	6.59	-20.5%
Face-to-face	8.48	6.46	-23.8%
Multi-modal	8.58	6.40	-25.4%
Online	6.16	6.06	-1.6%
Disability	8.33	5.75	-31.0%
Not value for money	8.25	5.02	-39.2%
Considered leaving	8.19	5.44	-33.6%

- Of the twenty-six areas, Monash respondents ranked internships last for satisfaction.
- The gap between importance and satisfaction was widest for internships.
- Although finding it less important than most groups, domestic part-time students were particularly dissatisfied with internship or placement opportunities.

- STEM respondents were the most satisfied group, although there was still a large gap between importance and satisfaction.

1.6.2 Networking

Q. *Links to industry/professional networking.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.42	6.59	-21.7%
Non-Monash	8.13	6.00	-26.2%
HASS	8.38	6.46	-22.9%
STEM	8.50	6.82	-19.8%
Domestic - Full-time	8.05	6.64	-17.5%
Domestic - Part-time	7.51	5.78	-23.0%
International	8.55	6.66	-22.1%
Women	8.43	6.46	-23.4%
Men	8.39	6.82	-18.7%
Face-to-face	8.50	6.67	-21.5%
Multi-modal	8.50	6.55	-22.9%
Online	7.08	5.98	-15.5%
Disability	8.47	6.17	-27.2%
Not value for money	8.12	5.23	-35.6%
Considered leaving	8.17	5.62	-31.2%

- Of the twenty-six areas, Monash respondents ranked networking second-last for satisfaction.
- Networking opportunities were more important for international students than domestic students. However, domestic part-time and online students were particularly less satisfied than other groups.
- Monash respondents tended to place greater importance on networking opportunities than non-Monash respondents, and they were largely more satisfied with what was provided to them.

1.6.3 Workforce entry

Q. *Being ready to enter the workforce when I graduate.*

	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Monash	8.73	6.75	-22.7%
Non-Monash	8.47	6.25	-26.2%
HASS	8.72	6.58	-24.5%
STEM	8.77	7.07	-19.4%
Domestic - Full-time	8.73	6.66	-23.7%
Domestic - Part-time	8.16	6.33	-22.4%
International	8.78	6.80	-22.6%
Women	8.75	6.62	-24.3%
Men	8.69	7.02	-19.2%
Face-to-face	8.80	6.80	-22.7%
Multi-modal	8.77	6.71	-23.5%
Online	7.70	6.52	-15.3%
Disability	9.08	6.42	-29.3%
Not value for money	8.52	5.17	-39.3%
Considered leaving	8.59	5.82	-32.2%

- Monash respondents felt that they would be more prepared to enter the workforce upon completion of their studies than did non-Monash respondents.
- Of the twenty-six areas, Monash respondents ranked workforce entry second for importance and third-last for satisfaction. The gap between the two was the second widest recorded.
- In relation to importance and satisfaction, domestic full-time and international students recorded similar average scores. Domestic part-time students recorded lower importance and satisfaction scores, but had a similar gap to the other two groups.
- STEM respondents recorded higher satisfaction than HASS students, despite indicating a similar level of importance.

1.7 Faculty comparisons

Every faculty's average importance and satisfaction score, and average gap differential, for each theme, is included and compared in this section.

Please note, an important consideration here is the demographic over- and under-representations (see *Limitations*). Factors such as study load, citizenship etc., across which average responses can vary significantly, have not been dissected or considered. Such factors are broken down and analysed in each faculty's individual report.

1.7.1 Importance

The following table details the average importance score for each theme recorded in every faculty – excluding the Faculty of Law, where responses were insufficient to justify analysis.

Theme	MADA	Arts	BusEco	Edu	Eng	IT	MNHS	Pharm	Sci
Commencement	7.88	8.19	8.14	8.22	7.85	7.98	8.25	8.35	8.75
Academic quality	8.55	8.87	8.59	8.76	8.09	8.48	8.64	8.82	8.71
Academic delivery	7.94	8.25	8.36	8.03	7.82	8.19	8.00	8.50	8.32
Support services	7.71	8.32	8.34	8.27	8.04	7.85	8.30	8.64	8.39
Culture	7.46	7.71	7.97	7.41	7.81	7.84	7.48	7.21	8.33
Job readiness	8.34	8.49	8.57	8.47	8.30	8.63	8.72	8.64	8.43
Overall	8.02	8.36	8.36	8.25	7.98	8.18	8.26	8.44	8.49

1.7.2 Satisfaction

The following table details the average satisfaction score for each theme recorded in every faculty – excluding the Faculty of Law.

Theme	MADA	Arts	BusEco	Edu	Eng	IT	MNHS	Pharm	Sci
Commencement	7.21	7.35	7.68	7.41	7.51	7.26	7.65	7.76	8.29
Academic quality	7.42	7.64	7.71	7.44	7.37	6.79	7.77	7.40	8.43
Academic delivery	6.75	7.19	7.59	7.07	7.17	6.60	7.43	6.97	8.11
Support services	7.47	7.69	7.95	7.81	7.76	7.43	8.18	7.93	8.57
Culture	6.45	6.78	7.26	6.81	7.28	7.11	7.37	6.55	7.87
Job readiness	5.68	6.66	6.59	6.39	7.14	5.93	7.34	6.91	7.25
Overall	6.94	7.30	7.54	7.23	7.38	6.86	7.62	7.29	8.17

1.7.3 Gap

The following table details the average gap score for each theme recorded in every faculty – excluding the Faculty of Law.

Theme	MADA	Arts	BusEco	Edu	Eng	IT	MNHS	Pharm	Sci
Commencement	-8.5%	-10.2%	-5.7%	-9.9%	-4.3%	-9.0%	-7.2%	-7.1%	-5.3%
Academic quality	-13.3%	-13.9%	-10.2%	-15.1%	-8.9%	-19.9%	-10.1%	-16.1%	-3.2%
Academic delivery	-15.0%	-12.9%	-9.2%	-11.9%	-8.3%	-19.5%	-7.1%	-17.4%	-2.6%
Support services	-3.2%	-7.5%	-4.7%	-5.6%	-3.6%	-5.4%	-1.4%	-8.2%	2.1%
Culture	-13.5%	-12.0%	-8.9%	-8.2%	-6.8%	-9.2%	-1.5%	-9.1%	-5.5%
Job readiness	-32.0%	-21.6%	-23.1%	-24.5%	-14.0%	-31.3%	-15.8%	-20.0%	-14.0%
Overall	-13.2%	-12.6%	-9.7%	-12.0%	-7.5%	-15.7%	-7.3%	-13.4%	-3.7%

Part 2: Evaluating perceptions of course value and retention considerations

This section provides insight into perceptions of course value and retention considerations.

In the survey, participants were asked whether they believed their course represented value for money and if they had considered leaving their course in the last 12 months. If they had considered leaving their course, they were asked to elaborate on their reasons.

Participants were also asked if there was anything in relation to their course that they wanted their student association to know.

2.1   Value for money

Respondents were asked to respond to the question *how satisfied are you that your course provides value for money?*

Below is a graph of how they responded:
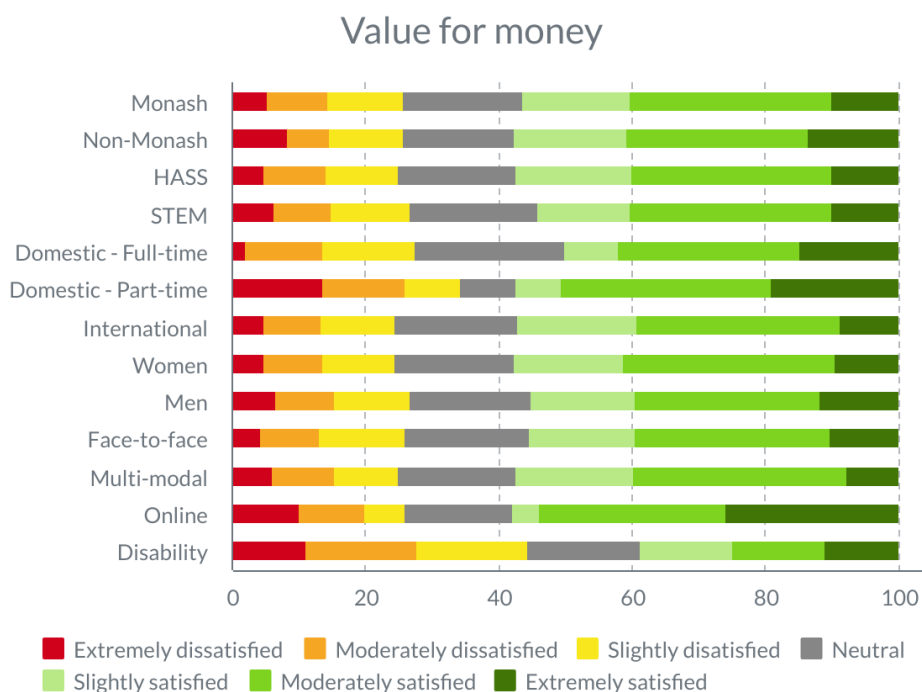
The likelihood of Monash and non-Monash respondents being positively or negatively satisfied that their course provided value for money was essentially the same; however, non-Monash respondents were more likely to answer in the extreme at both ends of the scale.

Within Monash, satisfaction and dissatisfaction were similar across the groups. Students with a disability and domestic part-time students were most likely to indicate that they were not satisfied

that their course represented value for money; however, within these groups, most were still satisfied that it did.

2.1.1 Value for money – Importance and Satisfaction

To gain further insight into what students' value in their course, a comparison was run of the average results of those who were satisfied that their course represented value for money (Value) and those who were not satisfied (No Value).

For Value, the average satisfaction score across the 26 areas was 7.96 and the gap between importance and satisfaction was -6.7%. For No Value, the average satisfaction score was 5.99 and the gap was -23.7%.

The table below breaks down average scores by theme:

Theme	Importance			Satisfaction			Gap	
	Value	No Value		Value	No Value		Value	No Value
Commencement	8.43	7.73		8.13	6.19		-3.6%	-20.0%
Academic quality	8.94	8.34		8.18	6.08		-8.5%	-27.1%
Academic delivery	8.42	7.93		7.83	5.96		-7.0%	-24.9%
Support services	8.55	7.68		8.38	6.75		-1.9%	-12.2%
Culture	7.99	7.02		7.65	5.48		-4.3%	-21.9%
Job readiness	8.63	8.20		7.21	4.91		-16.4%	-40.1%
Overall	8.54	7.88		7.96	5.99		-6.7%	-23.7%

In regard to *job* readiness, the average satisfaction score of No Value (4.91) was substantially lower than Value (7.21), which indicates that satisfaction within this theme may be most critical to ensuring students feel that their course represents value for money.

Academic quality and, in particular, clear criteria, quality teaching and engaging lectures – was also an area where the difference between satisfaction from Value and No Value were most pronounced.

The differences in the average gap score between Value and No Value was widest for *job readiness* – followed by academic quality, academic delivery, culture, commencement and support services.

2.2   Considered leaving in the last 12 months

Participants were asked to respond to the question *have you considered leaving your course in the last 12 months?*

Below is a graph of how they responded:
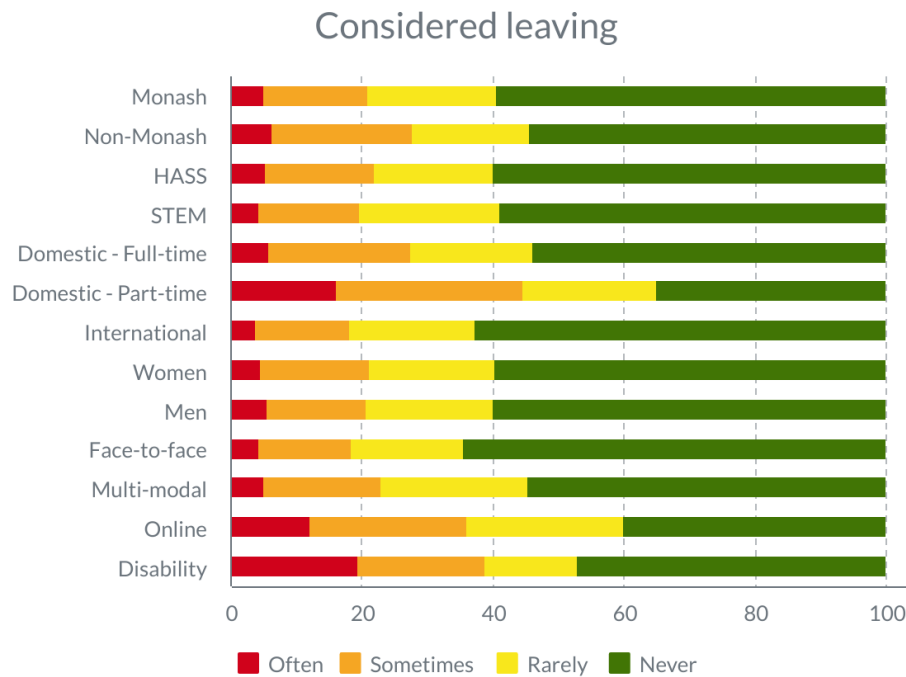
Non-Monash respondents were more marginally more likely than Monash respondents to have considered leaving their course in the last 12 months.
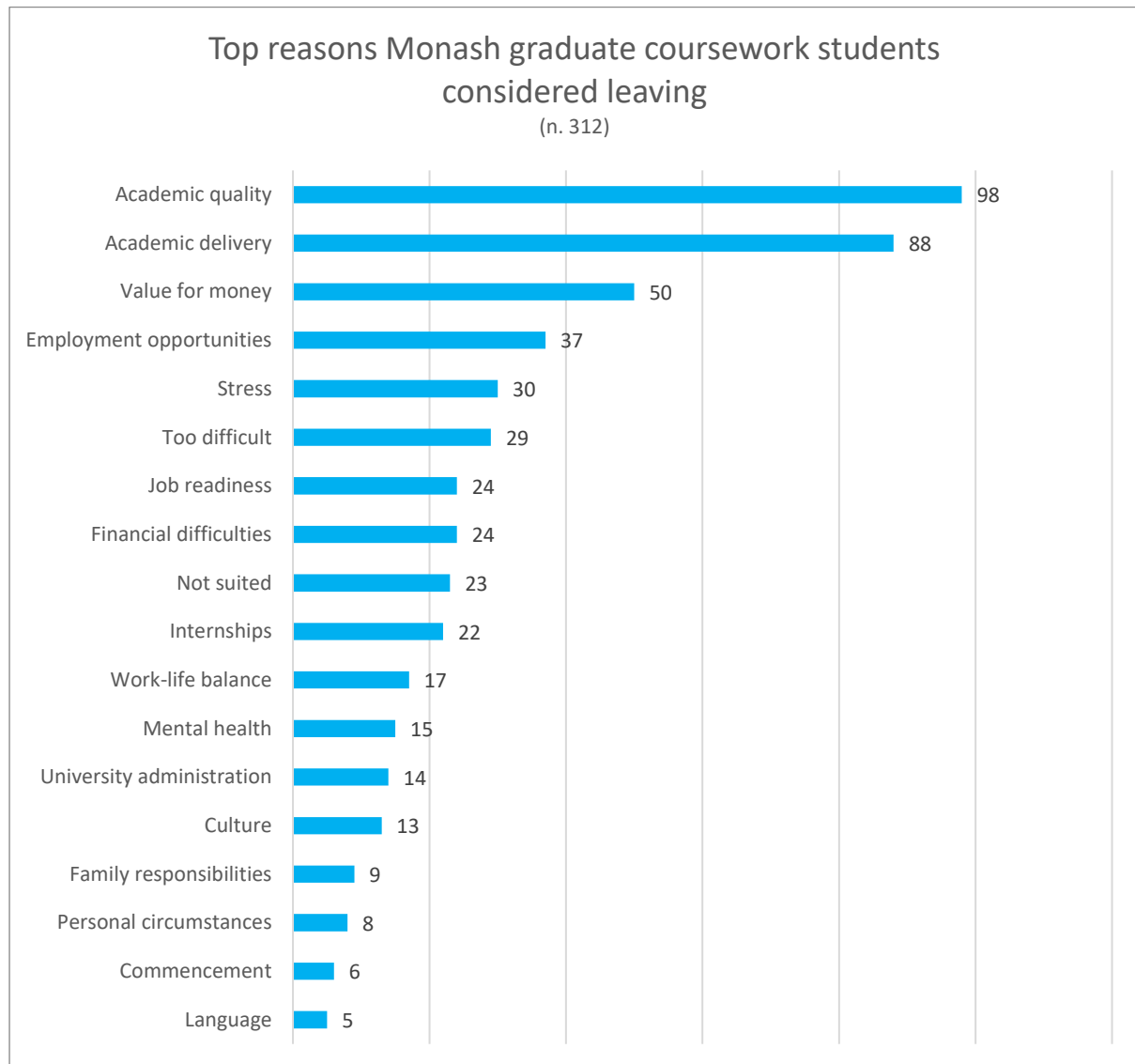
Within Monash, domestic part-time and online students were the two groups who were most-likely to have considered leaving. Meanwhile, students with a disability were the most-likely to often consider leaving.

Students studying face-to-face and international students were the groups most-likely to have never considered leaving.

2.2.1 Reasons for considering leaving in the last 12 months

In order to gather direct insight into why graduate coursework students consider leaving their course, participants who had indicated that they had considered it in the last 12 months were asked the question, *in 2-3 sentences, why did you consider leaving your course?*

Below is a summary of their responses:

Top reasons Monash graduate coursework students considered leaving
(n. 312)

Reason	Count
Academic quality	98
Academic delivery	88
Value for money	50
Employment opportunities	37
Stress	30
Too difficult	29
Job readiness	24
Financial difficulties	24
Not suited	23
Internships	22
Work-life balance	17
Mental health	15
University administration	14
Culture	13
Family responsibilities	9
Personal circumstances	8
Commencement	6
Language	5

The primary reason Monash graduate coursework students considered leaving their course in the last 12 months was perceptions of a lack of academic quality. Comments included:

> *"Most of the learning happens on my own time rather than in class. If I wanted to learn that way, I could do it myself without paying the ridiculously high fees for grad school. I can find a much cheaper program to just get the degree; I went with Monash for the full package experience. Monash has terrible communication and overall is not meeting my expectations. I'm having a hard time justifying the high price for what I'm getting."*

"Class is too big in size. Lecturers are lacking personal connection with students. Grading system is extremely lacking. Teaching Assistant's marking is different to the grading criteria. Feedback given to different students if compared can be contrasting and confusing. There was instance when team assignment gave different marks for team members although same document was submitted."

"The instructions from the lectures are not clear. They do not tell us what they want from us but want results. That's not how things work. Not everyone comes from a professional background. You need to tell students what you expect and how we can deliver it. Pathetic communication skills."

"Course materials are recycled, feedback from tutors are often unhelpful, we spend a lot of class time going over things that just end up being uploaded online which makes me feel like we should be more focused on getting feedback or having class discussions instead … We can all just watch the tutorial videos at home by ourselves."

The other common reference was to academic delivery. Comments included:

"Full-time study load is a bit overwhelming, deadlines are all pretty close to each other for assignments."

"I prefer lectures offline and it was not made clear that all lectures would be delivered online."

"The compulsory units are subject topics that I am already familiar with and am an expert on since I have almost 10 years of work experience. I could have used those units to study other subject topics that I do not know of yet."

"The lectures are online so I'm extremely disengaged. The lecturers don't know how to engage the class generally either. I flew all the way from home just for 90% of the course to be taken from my laptop."

Perceptions that the course did not represent value for money was also common among responses. These included:

"Because it was too expensive and even though Monash is a top ranked university, in the eyes of an Australian employer University background rarely matters."

"The quality of teaching I received from Uni cannot meet my expectation regarding the high tuition fees I have paid."

"It's too expensive in comparison to what domestic students pay."

Other interesting comments included:

"I was overwhelmed with the amount of assignments and readings. Maybe it was because I haven't been in school for a decade. So, I need time to adjust myself."

"Lack of opportunities to connect with like-minded people in my course. All are international students that don't speak English and aren't willing to socialise."

"Working full-time and studying full-time is too much."

"I feel completely cheated and lied to, frankly. The course has been an embarrassment from an academic and professional perspective, and the culture at the university is miserable, isolating, and frankly I feel that coming here has been nothing but a mistake with ruinous consequences for my life and career."

"The classmates are inactive, discussions are far from lively."

"The workload as a master's student was very high specially having to work to manage high living costs. Furthermore, this degree does not even guarantee a job role so I am wondering if 100,000 dollars has a good ROI."

"Did not really enjoy what I was studying and could not see it being applied to my future career."

"I pay over 3 times the cost of an Australian to receive the education from the same professors, in the same infrastructure. But I never feel in place in the country, where jobs are unavailable and people can be plain hostile. I'm trying to settle in but I keep regretting my decision of being an international student."

"Complete ABSENCE of placement opportunities (mandatory) in first year outside of the eastern suburbs (I live 2+ hours away), interactions with my supervisor, lack of options for class times (most are morning or night, few midday options), major assessments being due within two days of each other, just general lack of kindness and consideration shown to us."

"It was a little too hectic for me initially because the teaching methods are quite different from what I have encountered. But now I feel better."

"It's very frustrating to find your own placements. Finding placement is crucial for my degree but Monash University does not help with it, which makes it impossible to find."

"External pressures, raising young family while study poses many challenges as a solo parent."

2.2.2 Considered leaving – Importance and Satisfaction

To gain further insight into what may cause a student to consider leaving their course, a comparison was run on the average results of those who had considered leaving their course in the last 12 months (Exit) and those who had never considered leaving (Stay).

For Exit, the average satisfaction score across the 26 areas was 6.53 and the gap between importance and satisfaction was -18.0%. For Stay, the average satisfaction score was 7.89 and the gap was -6.7%.

The table below details the average scores by theme:

Theme	Importance		Satisfaction		Gap	
	Exit	Stay	Exit	Stay	Exit	Stay
Commencement	7.73	8.39	6.67	8.03	-13.7%	-4.3%
Academic quality	8.37	8.84	6.72	8.06	-19.7%	-8.7%
Academic delivery	7.96	8.33	6.41	7.79	-19.5%	-6.5%
Support services	7.91	8.41	7.18	8.24	-9.2%	-2.1%
Culture	7.30	7.98	6.03	7.68	-17.4%	-3.8%
Job readiness	8.32	8.65	5.63	7.23	-32.3%	-16.5%
Overall	7.98	8.46	6.53	7.89	-18.0%	-6.7%

As with value for money, the difference between satisfaction was most pronounced in *job readiness*; however, the differences among the gap scores in academic delivery and, in particular, class times and submission times, stood out for Exit and Stay. Exit respondents, on average, registered substantially wider gap scores in these two areas than did Stay respondents. For class times, the difference in the gap score between Exit and Stay was -15.8% and for submission dates, it was -15.0%.

2.3   Anything you want your student association to know about your course

Participants were asked *is there anything about your course that you want your student association to know?*

Below is a summary of the main responses:
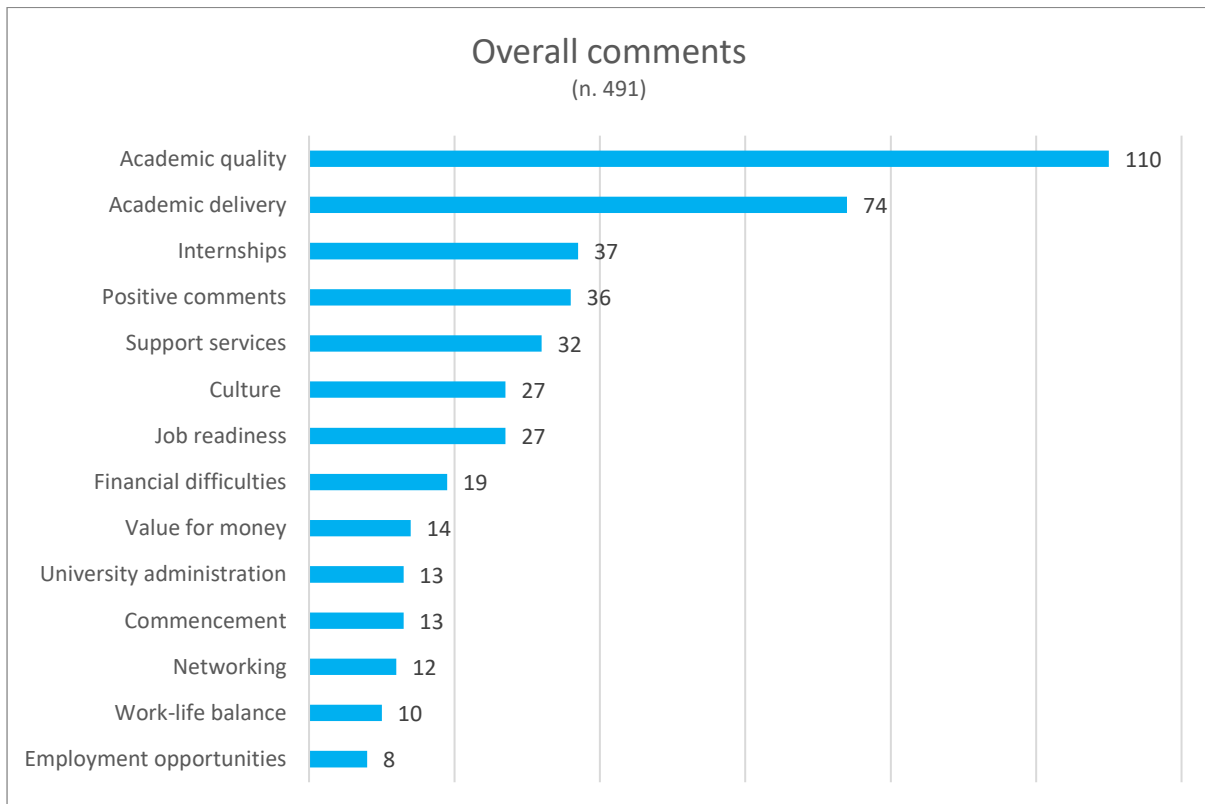
As with *2.2.1 Reasons for considering* leaving, the primary response theme related to perceptions of a lack of academic quality within their course. These included:

> "I would appreciate having more practical experiences, case studies that expose me to deals and cases faced in the job market. I would like to receive better connections in my field through university."

> "TA should help teaching and facilitate class but should not be giving grades. If allowed then should have unanimous understanding of the grading criteria to reduce bias. Lecturers lacking personal connection with each student. I believe 99% of the lecturers cannot mention 10 names in each cohort."

> "I want it to be more engaging. Some of my unit professors don't really teach anything in classroom it is all homework and work in our own time."

> "All I want is more interaction between the professors and the students. I had a good time learning last semester, but this semester I feel like less interactions."

Likewise, as with *2.2.1,* issues with the academic delivery were common among those who responded to the question. Comments included:

> "I would truly wish if the assignments that are given have a bit more detailed information on what is required of us. I also would wish if the assignments given are spaced out a bit more. As it is getting a bit overwhelming due all assignments aligning closely in this course."

> "The time given for assignments are too small. Our classes are at unreasonable times."

> "The feedback for the assignments sometimes released quite late before the next assignment, which made me received feedback quite late too. They should be released before the next assignment deadline so that we know what to improve."

> "I would appreciate more classes/tutorials happening on campus instead of online. Also more guaranteed clarity on placements might be helpful as it is still a little ambiguous currently."

Comments relating to internships or placements were also common. These included:

> "Would love to have Paid placement."

> "I have been applying for placements and I keep getting rejected. If I don't find a placement by semester 2, I'll have to take intermission for a semester."

> "I would like more placement opportunities while studying for the degree, ideally paid placements, especially considering the cost of living pressure for some student while studying."

> "I think there needs to be more give and take when it comes to placement. I was placed a long way away from home, and it had a very considerable impact on me given I already couldn't work to earn an income through that placement period."

Several respondents took this opportunity to leave a positive comment about their course experience. These included:

> "My classes are lively and the teachers are very good."

> "Everything runs exceptionally. [It is] exceeding my expectations."

> "My course is extremely engaging and the lecturers are reachable, which makes my academic life to be extremely fun. Not only the lecturers, the TAs are chosen carefully, which gives the sense of a 'big family'."

Other interesting comments included:

> "A large portion of students in my course are doing part-time, and/or have family or other engagement outside uni, so I don't have much chance to communicate or socialise with them."

> "The uni has become too commercial and it doesn't feel like an education institution anymore."

"I wish there were more events that were less intimidating to go to by yourself to meet people from the course."

"It is difficult to engage with other students on zoom, the teachers are great but when doing group work the students don't contribute."

"We want more scholarships instead of events every other day. Convince Monash to use money to help students and not just entertain them."

"Events like Free Food Handout could be held more frequently, at different times. As it is held always at the same time, for those who cannot come, they cannot come for the entire semester."

"I love MGA and MGA study lounge provides a 24/7 study place, which I really appreciated."

"Because my English is poor, so I wish I can get more help about the course in our native language, that I can learn this knowledge more easily."

"I think my course is too general I want to learn something that can get a job for me."

"Would be great if master students can have myki concession fee or voucher/support from Monash."

"The course is way too expensive. More scholarship opportunities for regionally-based, mature students would be great."

"The treatment to allegations against cheating is very rapid and unfair."

"The graduation time is not appropriate since the student visa expire in August but the graduation ceremony is in September."

"It feels as though Monash does not care about its students. Through lack of amenities and through lack of time given to both teachers and lecturers to be able to do their best."

"I wish more information was provided in handbooks for all units. It will help make better selection for units."

"Please have clearer information regarding placement support prior to enrolment."

"I'd love more opportunities to connect as well as network."

"I want more help with getting real life work experience, exposure and opportunity."

"Nah, the course itself is great, life just sometimes gets in the way which makes it difficult."

"Mature student like me have a life, family and work. The number of assignments and quizzes that is expected to complete within a short period of time is ridiculous. This course is tailored for young people just freshly out of college. Know your market segment a bit better and tailor flexibility accordingly."

"Just that being an international student, it feels more like surviving the day. Sometimes the pressure of covering pre-tutorial study and deadlines for submissions along with part-time/casual work, top up with household chores takes a toll on your mental health. It continuously feels like lacking behind something or the other. So maybe, reduce the workload a bit."
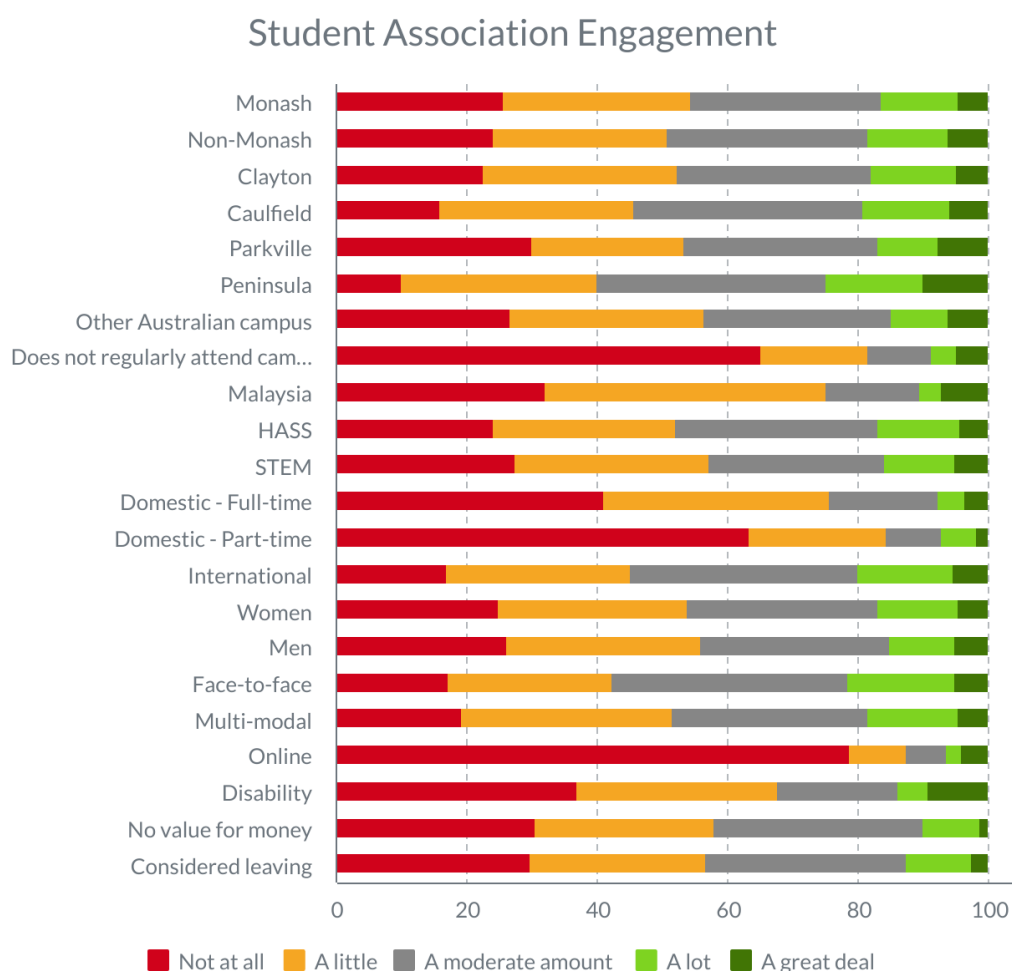
Part 3: Engagement and satisfaction with the Monash Graduate Association (MGA)

This section highlights the engagement levels that Monash graduate coursework students have with their representative body - the Monash Graduate Association (MGA) – as well as their satisfaction with the MGA. It also includes respondents' suggestions for how the MGA or equivalent student body could better support the university's students.

3.1   Student association engagement

Participants were asked to respond to the question *how engaged do you feel with your student association or union or guild?*

Below is a summary of how key groups responded:

Student Association Engagement

Legend: Not at all (red), A little (orange), A moderate amount (grey), A lot (light green), A great deal (dark green)
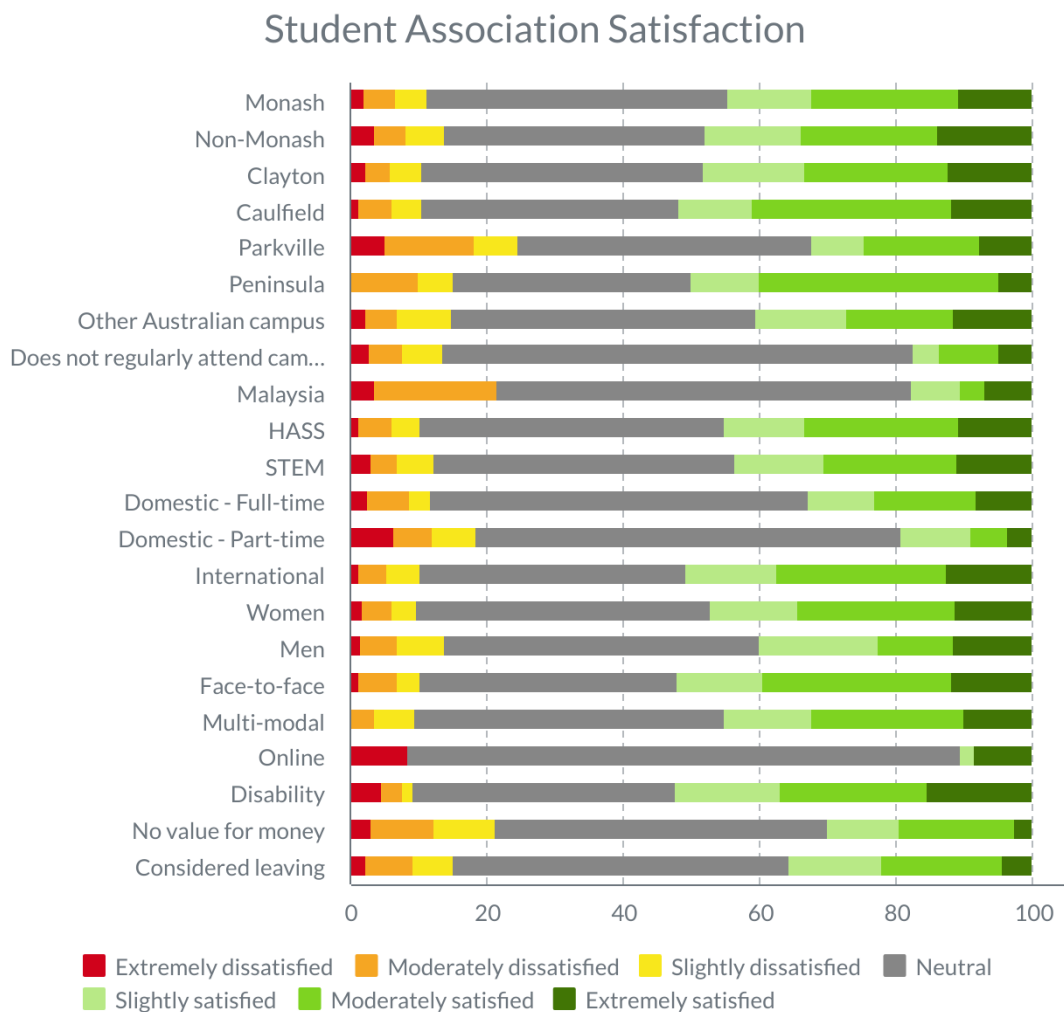
Online students were the most likely to have not engaged with their student association – followed by students who do not regularly attend campus and domestic part-time students.

Students with a disability and students from Peninsula campus were most likely to have engaged a great deal.

3.2   MGA satisfaction

Participants were asked to respond to the question *how satisfied are you with your student association/union/guild?*

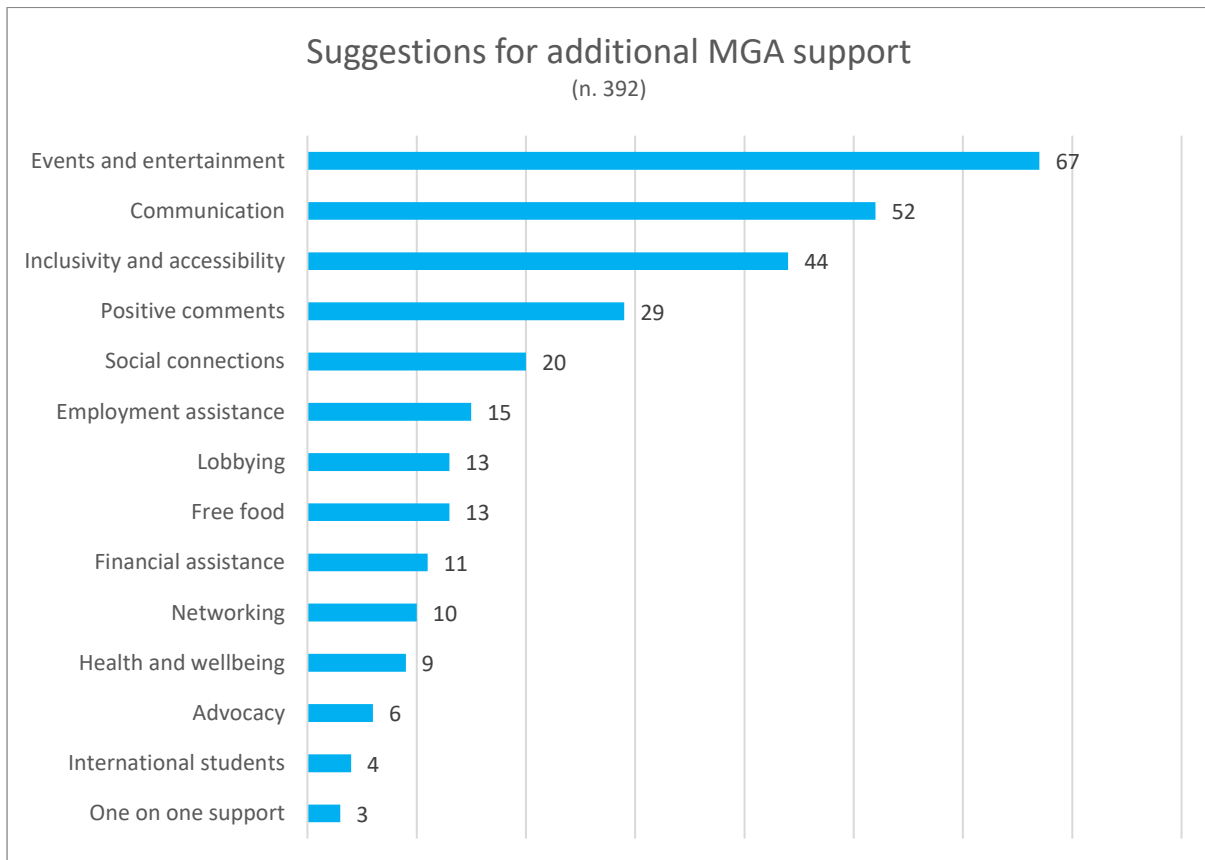Below is a summary of how key groups responded:

Students were most-likely to have a neutral opinion of their student association.

In regard to the MGA, dissatisfaction was highest amongst Parkville respondents, students who thought their course did not represent value for money and domestic part-time students, while satisfaction was highest among face-to-face students, students with a disability, those based at Caulfield and international respondents.

3.3 Suggestions for additional support

Participants were given the opportunity to respond to the question *how could your student association better support you?*

Below is a summary of responses:

Suggestions for additional MGA support
(n. 392)

Category	Count
Events and entertainment	67
Communication	52
Inclusivity and accessibility	44
Positive comments	29
Social connections	20
Employment assistance	15
Lobbying	13
Free food	13
Financial assistance	11
Networking	10
Health and wellbeing	9
Advocacy	6
International students	4
One on one support	3

The primary additional service that Monash graduate coursework students wanted more of were events and entertainment opportunities. These comments included:

> *"Host more events like movie nights for us to just chill and relax."*

> *"More interesting events to enrich our spare time."*

> *"There are lot of free food events but I think it's also important to conduct social activities that enable domestic and international students to know each other."*

> *"Weekly meetups would help to connect people more and make friends."*

Another popular suggestion was improving communication and contact. Comments included:

> *"Physical interaction instead of just through social media."*

> *"A weekly or monthly forum with our representatives would go a long way."*

"They seem to work well however I rarely hear of what they're doing. I think they need more of a presence, I didn't even know there was an association until Masters when I made a friend that was in it."

"I do not know much about the association purely because I haven't seen much or heard much about them. But the little interaction that I have had has been quite satisfactory. Maybe working on visibility, a bit more so more students could actually know what is happening with the association would be helpful."

"They should be more visible to us student. To let us know that they are there for us. I really don't know where I should so to consult with them."

"More engagement. While I understand that I missed my orientation, some students join late and not appropriate communication is there."

"I hope to provide more channels for us to know more about the Student Union. Since I entered the school in February, I don't know much about this club and I don't know what you have done."

"Listen to our opinions more."

Several students wanted to see a greater focus on inclusivity and accessibility. These comments included:

"More food events and grocery pop up across the weeks. Fixing the event for one day only might be difficult for students that have class on that day to attend."

"Outside of reminders to vote in student elections, as an Online student there has been low / no communication from the student association that I can recall."

"Since I am off campus it might be good to have some online events."

"A lot of the messaging from the student association makes me feel like I'm not part of the target audience. Perhaps a more universally inclusive environment would feel more approachable and supportive."

"I know they run free groceries and they are amazingly helpful for students who aren't working. However, I can never get to those events on time because I'm not on campus, and I have to stay at the hospital."

"Nothing. They are engaging unfortunately being a parent, working and student I don't have the time to attend."

"Ways for mature age students to relate better to student union."

Other interesting comments included:

"Maybe hold meetings about the issues that students face and have a discussion on how to tackle them. A survey would be good to understand their problems or even face to face. And also plan more programs and events because that is kind of our escape from all the stressful events going on in our lives and where we can connect with people."

"I have no interest in the student association. I avoid people as much as possible so engaging is unappealing. There was an offer to get a box of fruit and veggies delivered which I got and loved that. It was the only part I was involved in."

"Bigger MGA lounge at Clayton Campus and more frequent welfare activities."

"Organise more intellectual and networking activities perhaps as well as discussions and forums for all post-grad students where they can share their insights on how to further improve the overall student experience at Monash."

"MSA seems to hold a lot more events than MGA, which provides more opportunities to make social connections. It's great that MGA cares about advocating for us, but it's hard to feel like part of a community when there are very few opportunities to actually meet/interact with other graduate students."

"Help in finding part time jobs."

"Offering part-time and casual career fairs! This is something that RMIT did, it is just so important for students to get that connection to find a job while they are studying."

"I don't mind switching the alternate milk in the MGA lounge to Supermarket band, but since this semester there is rarely time when I open the refrigerator and find milk. I need sustained oat milk support! Can you understand my disappointment? Can you?"

"Better lighting in 24h study spaces."

"Have an emergency helpline or help option for cases when they're needed to help students. The wait time on response sometimes is very anxiety inducing for critical cases where the university directly is not able to help. I understand everyone is busy and has their days planned but some form of resource like a chat bot can bring attention for extreme cases to the right channels."

"I don't really need full support all the time but I hope they will be there when in need."

"Information or community support for pregnant women."

"Organise events for student parents, access for children into the lounge when parents need to study late or over the weekends."

"I don't feel that there really is support available other than food pop ups here and there. It always feels daunting to reach out because most issues international students experience are not the local student association are familiar with. The biggest problem I have is issues with visa and they are unable to support with. It often feels that there is not much support beyond "here is a free snag for your week" unfortunately."

"Give me grocery vouchers."

Conclusion

The results of the MGA's *National Postgraduate Student Satisfaction Survey* have provided valuable insights into what graduate coursework students at Monash value in regard to their educational experience, as well as how satisfied they are with the structure and delivery of their degrees.

Key findings

Job readiness satisfaction is an area of concern

The three areas encompassing the theme of job readiness – internships, networking and workforce entry – had the three lowest average satisfaction ratings across the survey.

Collectively, students ranked *job readiness* second for importance, but last for satisfaction, while the distance between importance and satisfaction was the widest.

The gap between satisfaction and importance was exaggerated among those who had considered leaving their course or indicated that their course did not represent value for money.

This appears to be a wider trend in graduate coursework education within Australia with students from other universities reporting similar satisfaction levels.

Monash respondents were more satisfied with *job readiness* than non-Monash respondents.

Clash between expectation and reality of class times and submission times important factors in why graduate students consider leaving

Domestic part-time and online students were most likely to have considered leaving their course in the last 12 months, while students studying face-to-face and international students were the least likely have considered leaving.

Those who had considered leaving (Exit), on average, generally recorded wider gap scores than those who had not considered leaving (Stay). The gap scores of both groups tended to follow a similar pattern, i.e. when you rank the gap scores among Exit from smallest to largest, it closely replicates the ranking of the gap scores of Stay.

However, the results recorded for both groups within *academic delivery* partially go against this trend. For class times, the difference in the gap score between Exit and Stay was -15.8% and for submission dates, it was -15.0%.

These were the two areas that stood out as somewhat unique across the survey when it came to why students consider leaving.

Students with a disability tended to be less satisfied

Students who identified as having a disability placed greater importance across the areas surveyed and tended to be less satisfied with the delivery than those who didn't register as having a disability. This led to consistently wide gaps between importance and satisfaction.

Furthermore, students with a disability at Monash were almost twice as likely as students without a disability to say that their course did not represent value for money, while they were also more likely to have considered leaving their course in the last 12 months.

Academic quality is paramount to the domestic student experience

Academic quality was the only theme in which the average level of importance was higher among domestic full-time and domestic part-time students than international students.

For every other theme, the average level of importance across the theme was noticeably higher for international students than their domestic counterparts.

MGA engagement and satisfaction better among those who attend campus

Students were most-likely to have a neutral opinion of the Monash Graduate Association (MGA).

Engagement was minimal among online and domestic part-time students, while dissatisfaction was highest amongst Parkville respondents and domestic part-time students. Engagement was relatively good among international and face-to-face students, while satisfaction was highest among face-to-face students, students with a disability and respondents based at Caulfield.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the MGA's *National Postgraduate Student Satisfaction Survey*, the MGA has recommended actions for the University and ourselves that would potentially improve the graduate coursework student experience, increase satisfaction and improve retention rates.

Renewed focus on graduate students' perceptions of preparedness to enter the workforce

- Bi-annual or annual industry graduate job fair.
- Guest lectures and workshops with industry professionals.
- Career counselling and support.
  - Annual group information sessions (by course) with **Career Connect** representative.
  - **Faculty** to keep grads informed about the job market specific to their course. Sessions to include: How to stay updated in your field? What are the job trends in your field? What is the current job climate?
- Working on enhancing emotional intelligence/resilience of our graduate students. Students have high expectations about job opportunities post-course completion, but the market can be competitive and students need to be skilled in self-reflection and stress management.
- Alumni mentoring program.
- Career resource hub, by course, accessible through Moodle.

Action: Faculties; Career Connect; MGA

Greater flexibility with class times and submission dates for part-time and online students

- Where appropriate, offer a fortnightly "catch-up" class that covers course content that time-poor students may have missed owing to overloaded personal and professional schedules.
- Where possible, design assignment tasks so that feedback can be provided on submissions before everyone has submitted.
- Assign part-time/online students a quota of extensions to use as necessary and without the need for extension request/special consideration e.g. each student is given a one-week and two-week extension token to use if and when necessary.

Action: Faculties

Investigate greater dissatisfaction levels among graduate students with a disability

- Work with Disability Support Services (DSS) and Monash's Disability Project Group to better comprehend the lower levels of course satisfaction among students with a disability.
- Consider surveys and focus groups.

Action: DSS, Monash Disability Project Group, MGA

MGA to investigate ways to improve engagement with domestic part-time and online students

- Improve outreach with domestic part-time and online students.
- Work with faculties and course coordinators to interact with traditionally difficult to reach cohorts.

Action: MGA

Appendix 1: Demographics

Faculty	Respondents
Art, Design and Architecture	97 (8%)
Arts	142 (12%)
Business and Economics	275 (24%)
Education	217 (19%)
Engineering	92 (8%)
Information Technology	116 (10%)
Law	8 (1%)
Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	135 (12%)
Pharmacy	37 (3%)
Science	24 (2%)
other	11 (1%)

Campus	Respondents
I do not regularly attend campus	69 (6%)
Clayton	500 (40%)
Caulfield	435 (35%)
Peninsula	12 (1%)
Parkville	33 (3%)
Malaysia	8 (1%)
Alfred Hospital	5 (0%)
Box Hill Hospital	1 (0%)
Hudson Institute of Medical Research	3 (0%)
Notting Hill	2 (0%)
Law Chambers	8 (1%)
Suzhou	152 (12%)
other	21 (2%)

Domestic/International	Respondents
Local student (Australian or New Zealand citizen/permanent resident)	203 (18%)
International student	913 (82%)

Study load	Respondents
Full-time	1056 (92%)
Part-time	96 (8%)
On leave from study	2 (0%)

Study location	Respondents
Entirely on-campus	648 (58%)
Multi-modal	408 (37%)
Entirely online	55 (5%)
Other	5 (0%)

Time since last degree	Respondents
Less than 1 year	417 (37%)
1-5 years	525 (47%)
6-10 years	98 (9%)
11+ years	76 (7%)

Course progress	Respondents
First year	778 (70%)
Second year	287 (26%)
Third year	51 (5%)

Study hours	Respondents
Less than 5	43 (4%)
6-10	212 (19%)
11-20	317 (28%)
21-30	259 (23%)
31-40	154 (14%)
Over 40 hours	131 (12%)

English proficiency	Respondents
Fluent	440 (39%)
Advanced	305 (27%)
Intermediate	309 (28%)
Elementary	58 (5%)
Beginner	4 (0%)

Gender	Respondents
Woman	729 (65%)
Man	362 (32%)
Non-binary/gender diverse	9 (1%)
Prefer to self-describe	3 (0%)
Prefer not to say	13 (1%)

LGBTIQA+	Respondents
Yes	111 (10%)
No	900 (81%)
Prefer not to disclose	98 (9%)

Indigenous (domestic students only)	Respondents
Yes	1 (1%)
No	198 (98%)
Prefer not to disclose	3 (1%)

Disability	Respondents
Yes	40 (4%)
No	1,039 (94%)
Prefer not to disclose	28 (3%)

Registered disability with DSS	Respondents
Yes	27 (68%)
No	13 (33%)

Age	Respondents
24 or under	557 (50%)
25-29	330 (30%)
30-39	169 (15%)
40 and over	53 (5%)

Employment status	Respondents
Full-time	91 (8%)
Part-time	199 (17%)
Casual	207 (18%)
Unemployed and looking for work	381 (33%)
Not employed and not looking for work	284 (24%)

Work hours	Respondents
Less than 5	81 (17%)
6-10	102 (21%)
11-20	126 (26%)
21-30	84 (18%)
31-40	63 (13%)
More than 40	21 (4%)

Appendix 2: Wording of course experience questionnaire

Question	Wording
Commencement	
Pre-enrolment	Having clear information about the course prior to my enrolment.
Enrolment	A user-friendly enrolment process.
Orientation	The orientation experience.
Academic quality	
Clear criteria	Clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
Quality teaching	High quality teaching.
Engaging lectures	Lectures are engaging.
Academic access	Lecturers are accessible for answering my questions/having a discussion.
Timely feedback	Timely feedback on assessments/assignments.
Academic feedback	Constructive feedback on assessments/assignments.
Academic delivery	
Mixed delivery*	Appropriate mix of online and in-person course delivery.
Balance of units	Appropriate balance of compulsory units and electives.
Elective variety	Appropriate variety of electives to choose from.
Class times	Acceptable variety of tutorial/studio/lab times to choose from.
Assignment no.	The numbers of assessments/assignments for the course is appropriate.
Submission dates	Assessments/assignments submission dates are appropriately spaced.
Support services	
Facilities	Adequate facilities for your field of study.
Language support**	English language support.
Library resources	Easily accessible books and journals (online or hard copy).
IT support	IT support.
Learning support	Learning skills support e.g. academic writing, referencing, time management.
Culture	
Grad community	Feeling part of a postgraduate social community.
Academic community	Feeling part of an academic community.
Sense of belonging	Feeling a sense of belonging to my university.
Job readiness	
Internship	Placement/internship opportunities.
Networking	Links to industry/professional networking.
Workforce entry	Being ready to enter the workforce when I graduate.

*Only asked of students who selected their course attendance involved a "mix of on-campus and online study"
**Only asked of students who indicated that their proficiency in English was not "fluent"