



**Nelson Mandela  
Metropolitan  
University**

*for tomorrow*

**REPORT ON THE 2014  
NMMU STUDENT EXPERIENCES SURVEY**

**Developed by the Department of Student Governance and  
Development and the Department of Educational Administration  
(MSU)**

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## **SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES SURVEY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

According to Hu and Kuh (2002), student engagement is an important factor in student development that contributes to desired outcomes. Student engagement, which is the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities, not only refers to activities inside the classroom, but also those outside the classroom in the form of co-curricular activities. Student development theories suggest that the benefits and involvement of co-curricular activities make it an integral part of university experience. This value has not been measured consistently nor appropriately communicated to students and staff at NMMU. For student development programs to be perceived as co-curricular experiences that promote student learning, assessing student development programs with methods of evaluation that are comparable to those used to evaluate curricular courses is vital.

Research reveals that student evaluations are the most widely used source of information for assessing course and instructor effectiveness (Seldin, 1993). Student feedback on co-curricular learning and belongingness will contribute to an educational experience that is relevant and responsive to their holistic development as fully engaged citizens. This type of assessment and evaluation is necessary to ensure that the university is achieving the desired standard of quality in students' co-curricular activities.

This is the first year the Department of Student Governance and Development (SGD) has engaged in the Student Experiences Survey. The purpose of the survey is to assess and analyse co-curricular learning of NMMU students. The objectives of the study were to identify:

1. the top competencies of student life activities
2. if there is a difference in participation and interest in co-curricular activities by student demographic variables
3. challenges affecting students' participation in co-curricular activities

The survey will be administered three times, from 2014 to 2016. The institution will be provided with confidential detailed annual reports on co-curricular learning.

The report will:

1. Identify if co-curricular learning is linked to the identified learning outcomes
2. Identify areas where more focused interventions is needed
3. Inform the planning of co-curricular activities to enhance the quality of student experiences.

The results of the previous surveys highlighted the following:

- Major constraints regarding student participation in campus life activities are transport, time and financial constraints.
- Activities were predominantly supported by black and the on-campus students.
- Students preferred communicating via NMMU e-mail, and the use of social media was increasing.

### **1.1. Structure of the report**

The report comprises four sections. Section one discusses the design and data collection, section two contains an interpretation of the data results and section three discusses the major findings and recommendations. Section four provides the appendix, which includes a copy of the survey.

## **2. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY**

A two-pronged approach to data collection was employed. First, we used a census approach. Survey notification, a link to the survey, and reminder messages was forwarded to all students. The rationale for choosing such an approach was that all NMMU students have access to the portal. The second means of recruitment used convenience sampling by placing student volunteers strategically around campus (e.g., cafeterias and public transportation areas) to ask students to complete an online version of the SES if they had not already completed it. Five senior students were equipped with tablets to enhance response rates. Tablet computers, which have recently become popular in face to face survey data collection, were used. Several

studies indicate that survey respondents are more willing to complete surveys using tablets because of what they deem “the cool factor” of using this technology (Bhaskaran, 2010; Horovitz, 2010; Jones & Sinclair, 2011).

Tacit consent is given once the participant reads the written information and clicks on the link to access the survey. The respondents were assured anonymity.

## 2.1. Survey Design

The survey was developed through a consultative process with members of the Co-Curricular Forum at the NMMU and included various campus stakeholders as well as Michigan State University faculty and doctoral students who conduct student engagement and student learning outcomes research. The survey was submitted to the NMMU Research Ethics Committee (Human) for final approval.

The 68-item questionnaire is divided into the following sections and categories;

Sections	Categories
1	<i>Student' perceptions of life at NMMU</i>
2	<i>Types of co-curricular involvement</i> – a range of activities are listed varying from society involvement to sport club participation
3	<i>Time spent per week on co-curricular experiences/ activities</i>
4	<i>For students participating:</i> Learning outcomes linked to their participation
5	<i>For students not participating:</i> Perceived learning outcomes linked to their participation
6	<i>Interferences with involvement in co-curricular experiences/ activities</i>
7	<i>Biographical information</i> E.g.: Race, Gender, Age, Year of Study, Faculty, Campus, Living Community

A Likert-type rating scale with an unequal 1-5 agreement format was selected. There is an argument against having a mid-point being that people usually hold opinions or judgements one way or the other. The support for the idea of neutrality is its representativeness of a genuine alternative judgement and so does not express their opinions if they have no genuine position.

## **SECTION 2: INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS**

The total number of respondents to the Student Experiences Survey is 2011 students. This represents 7.7 % of the 26 241 students who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The estimated sampling error based on the survey sample size, the total number of respondents, and the overall response rate is 1.2%.

Registered NMMU students on the North, South, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Missionvale and George campuses were offered the opportunity to participate in the study. The responses for individual items are presented in tabular form as mean scores. The number of respondents who answered each question (*n*) is indicated in a separate column after the mean scores in the tables.

The mean scores represent the aggregate of the responses on the range from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). In the interpretation of the individual items, mean scores are interpreted in the following manner:

- A score of 4.2 and more indicates a high level of belongingness or identified learning;
- A score of between 3.4 and 4.2 indicates an acceptable level of belongingness or identified learning;
- A score of between 2.6 and 3.4 indicates room for improvement; and
- A score of 2.6 and less signals a problem that is in need of urgent attention.

The data were coded and analysed with the assistance of a statistician. The statistical techniques used in the analysis, based on the relevance to the research questions is frequency, cross-tabulation, and correlation analyses. Frequency analysis produces frequency counts and percentages for the value of an individual variable. Cross-tabulation enabled researchers to see if there is a relationship between two variables,

while correlation analysis was used to test the existence of relationships between the variables being studied. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies, tables, percentages, and correlation tests were used in the data analysis and summaries. Relationships between variables were identified, using frequencies, chi-square tests for independence, independent sample t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests.

Data will be analysed per annual intake. This will enable action research based on information received. After the three year period, we will be able to analyse trends in co-curricular learning outcomes.

Port Elizabeth and George campus have been analysed separately in order to highlight unique trends from each campus with regards to student life activities and student perceptions.

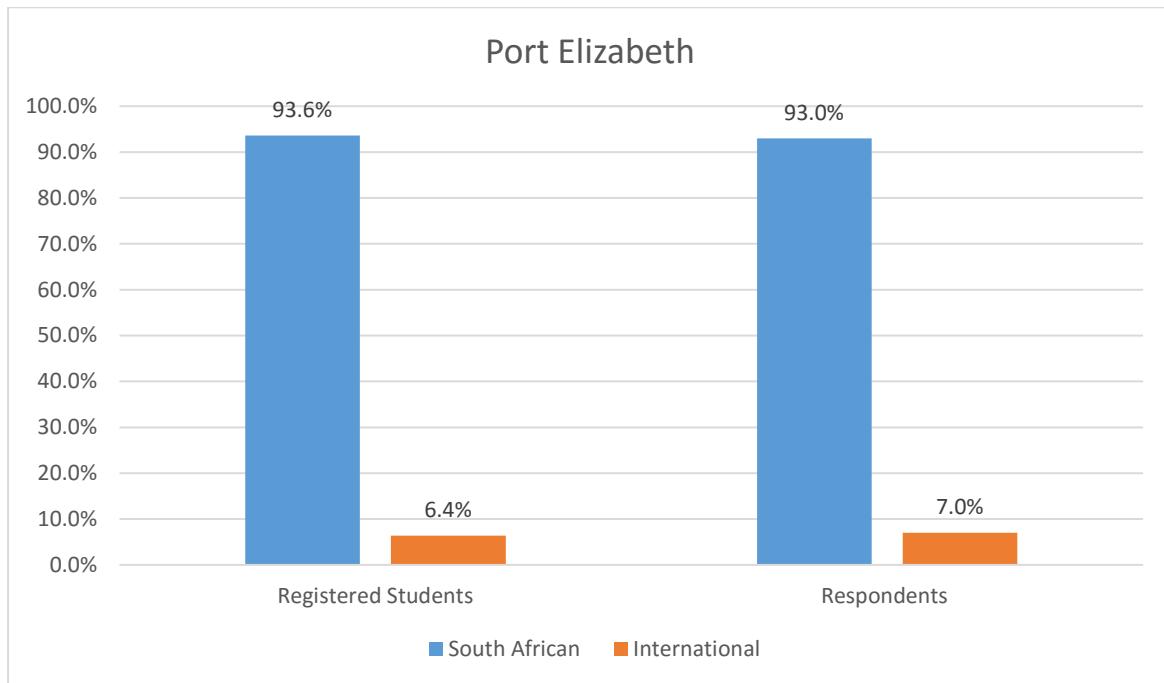
### **3. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO THE SURVEY**

Of the 2011 students who participated in the survey, 1924 were from Port Elizabeth and 87 from George. Comparisons of demographic information between registered students and respondents show that the respondents are generally representative of the student population in both Port Elizabeth and George.

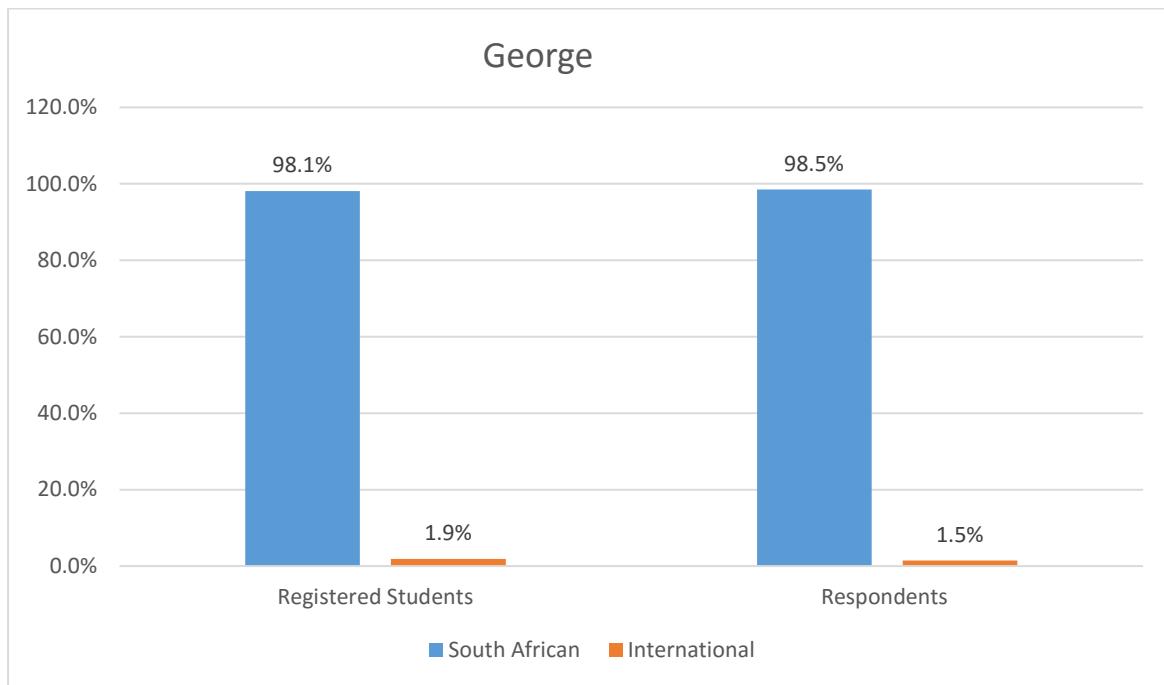
#### **3.1. Participant information**

In this section, respondents are described according to specific biographical variables, namely nationality, gender, race and age range.

### 3.1.1. Nationality



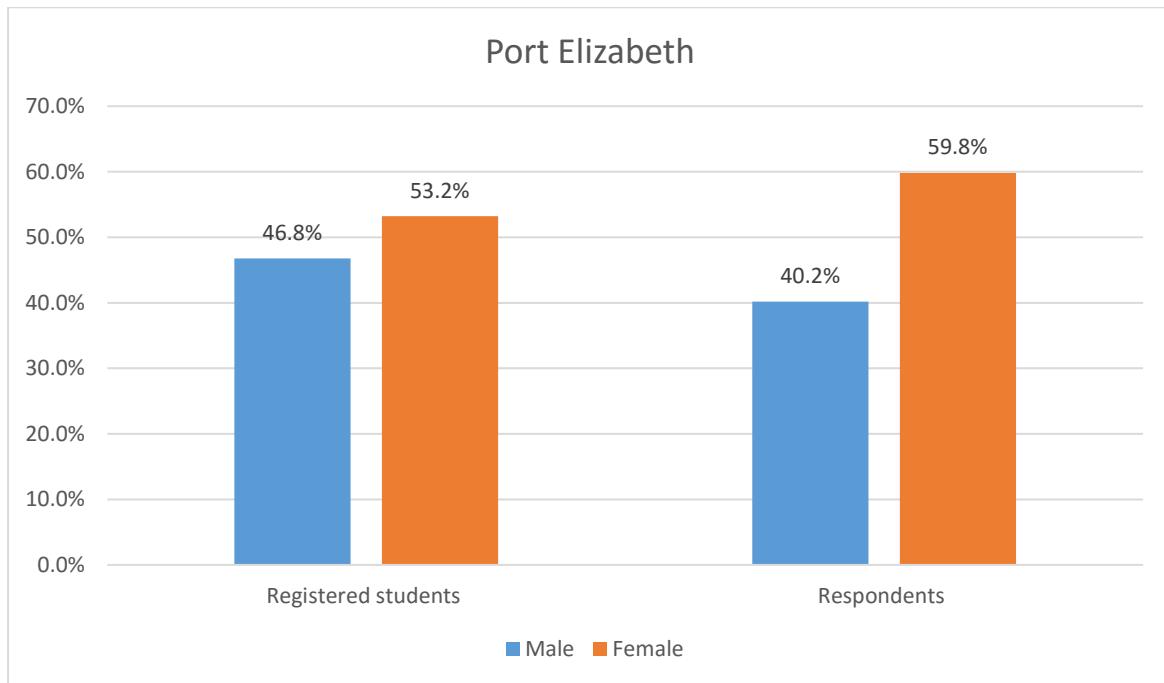
Graph 1: Registered students vs respondents according to nationality - Port Elizabeth



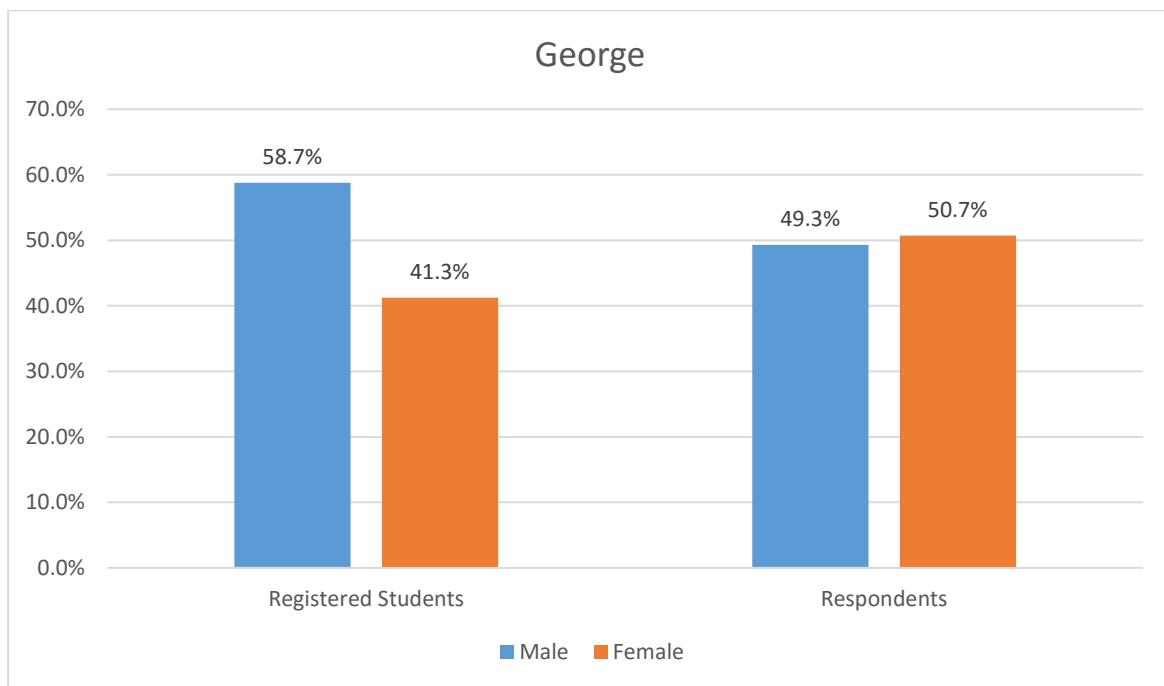
Graph 2: Registered students vs respondents according to nationality - George

Graph 1 and 2 demonstrate the nationality breakdown of the students compared to the general student population in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.

### 3.1.2. Gender



Graph 3: Registered students vs respondents according to gender - Port Elizabeth

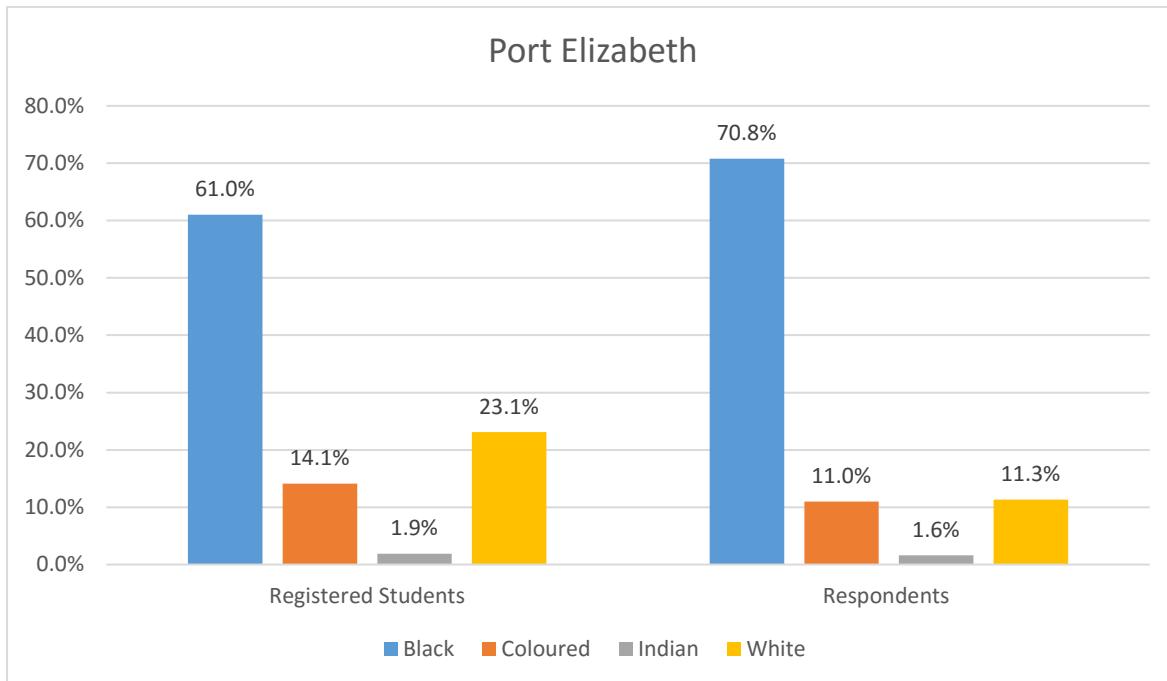


Graph 4: Registered students vs respondents according to gender – George

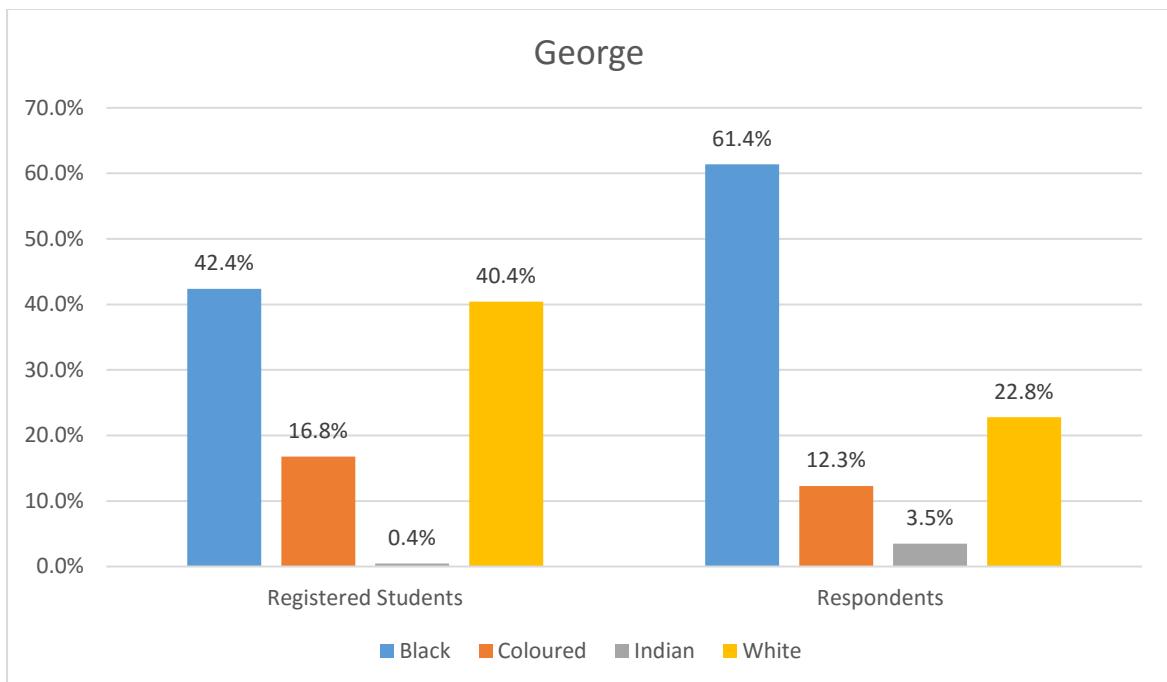
Graph 3 and 4 demonstrates the breakdown of respondents according to gender compared to the general student population. Both graphs indicate that the survey attracted a higher percentage of female respondents than males in both Port Elizabeth

and George. While George campus has a predominantly male student population, respondents were more or less equal in terms of gender.

### 1.1.3. Race<sup>1</sup>



Graph 5: Registered students vs respondents according to race - Port Elizabeth



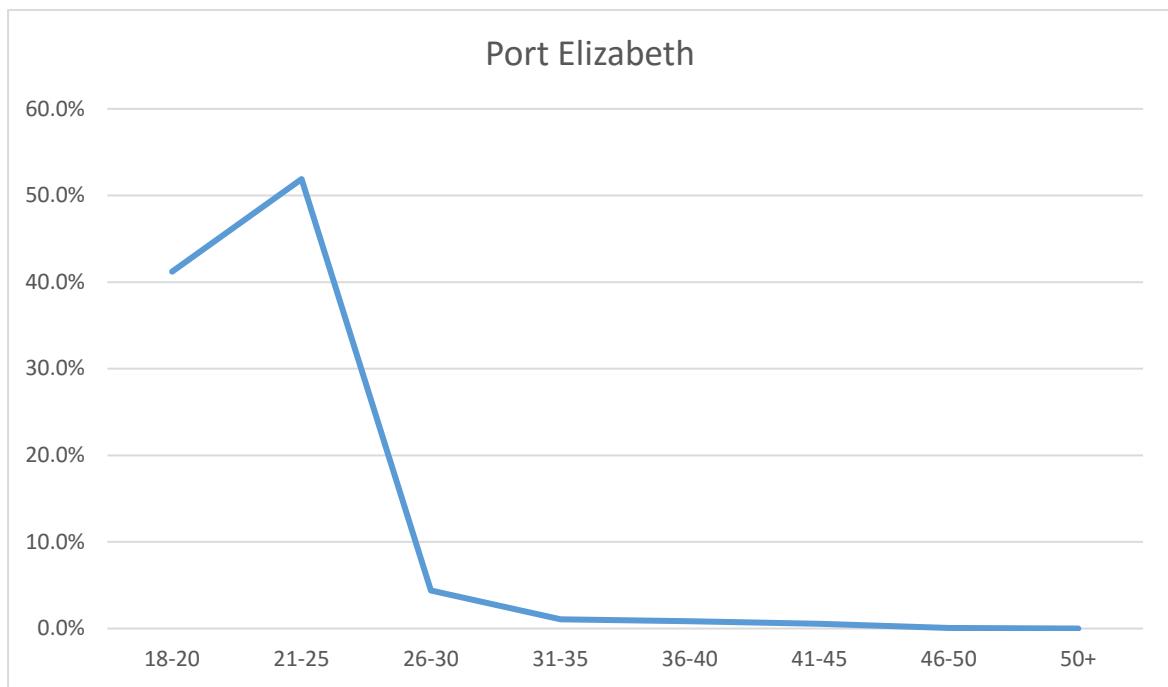
Graph 6: Registered students vs respondents according to race - George

<sup>1</sup> Race groups are tallied according to main race groups set by NMMU DHET according to Home Affairs specifications

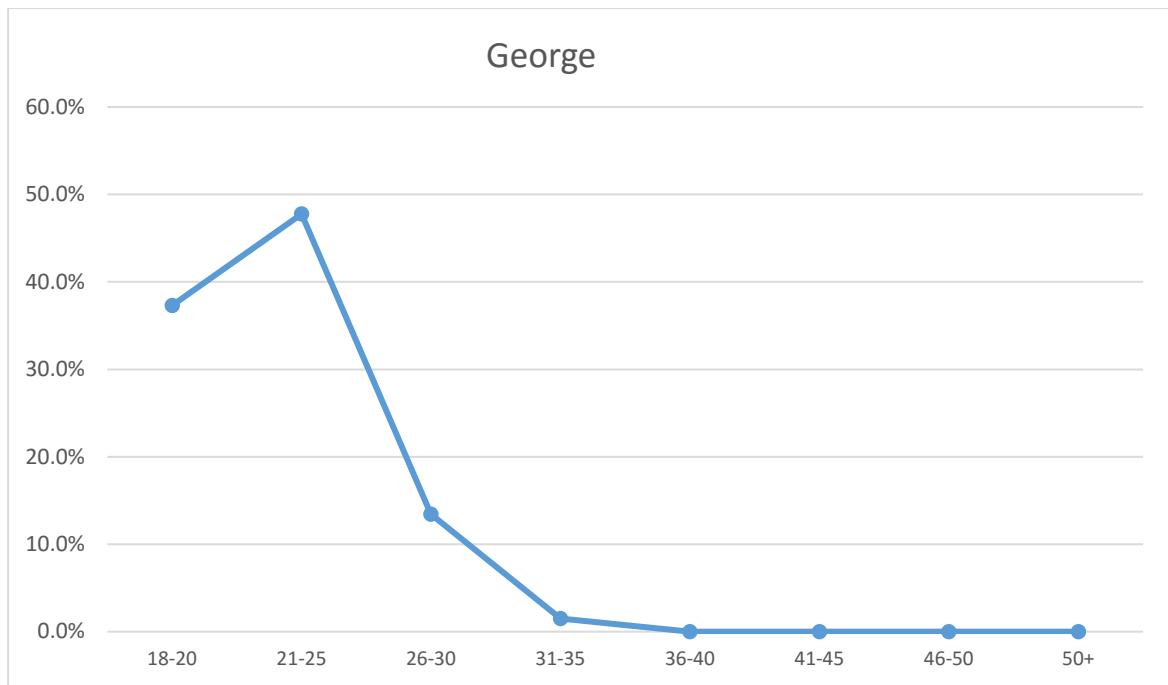
Graph 5 and 6, which demonstrate a comparison of the race classification of respondents with registered students in Port Elizabeth and George respectively, indicates that relatively more Black students responded to the survey. Far fewer White students (almost 10% and 18% respectively) responded to the survey.

### 3.1.4. Age

As indicated by graphs 7 and 8 below, most respondents are younger than 25 (93% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 85% of respondents in George are between ages 18-24). More than half of all respondents fall within the 21 – 24 age range in both Port Elizabeth (52%) and George (48%), followed by 18-20 (41.2% in Port Elizabeth and 37.3% in George).



Graph 7: Age range of respondents - Port Elizabeth

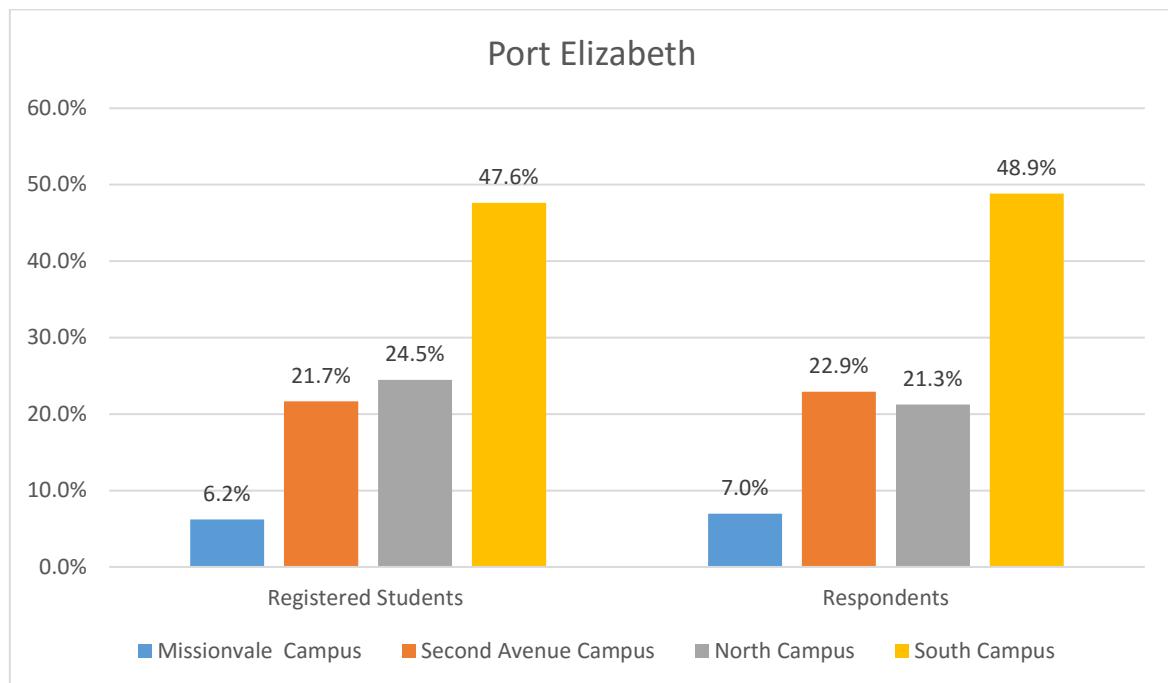


Graph 8: Age range of respondents - George

### 3.2. Faculty information

This section describes respondents according to their faculty and campus information compared to the general NMMU student population.

#### 3.2.1. Campus attended

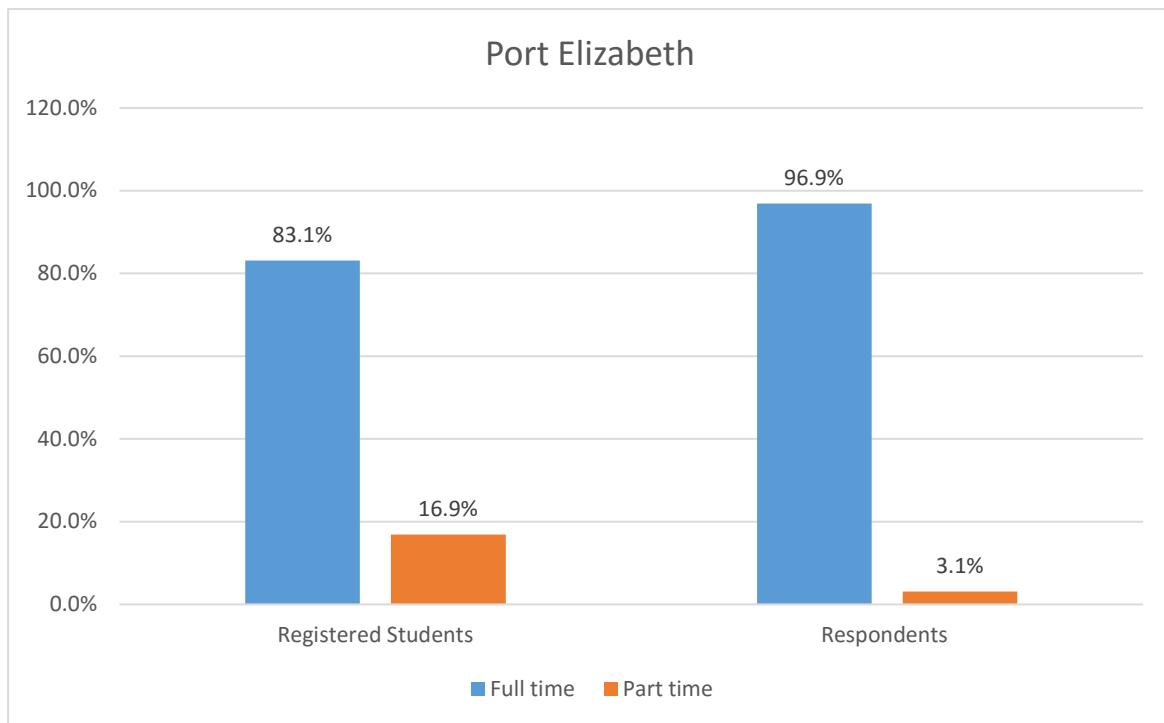


Graph 9: Registered students vs respondents according to campus attended - Port Elizabeth

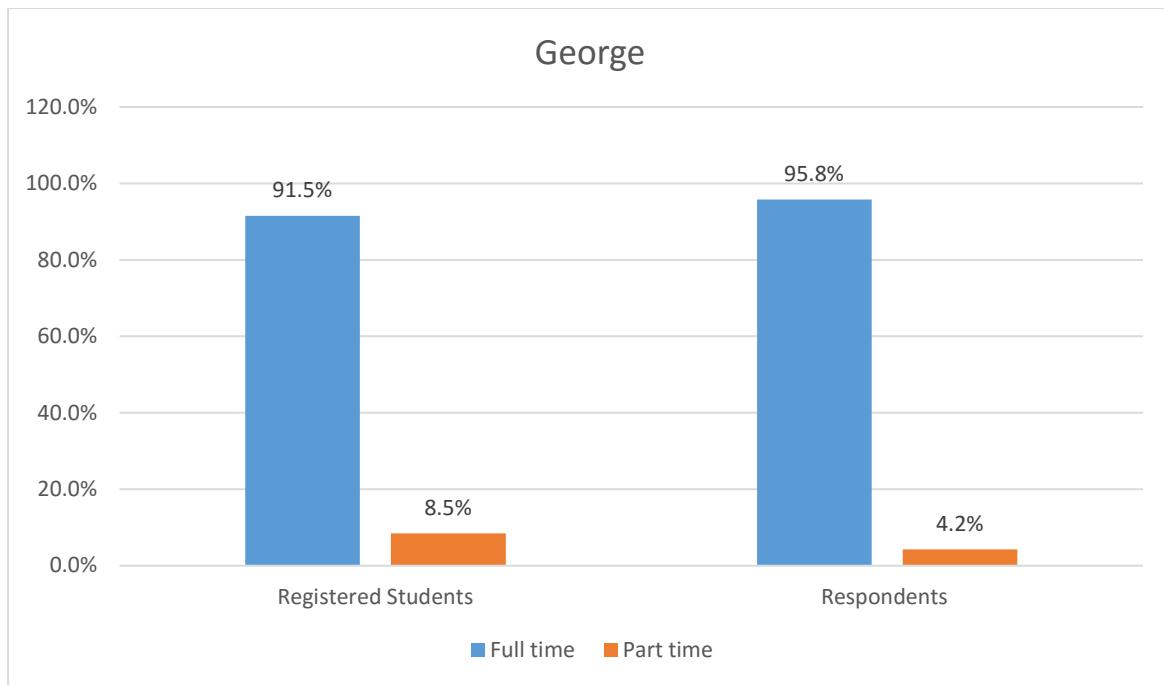
As shown by graph 9, the number of respondents was proportionate to the student population. The highest proportion of respondents were from South campus, which has the highest proportion of registered students.

### 3.2.2. Registration status

Graph 10 and 11 conveys the number of respondents who are registered full-time versus those who are registered part time compared to the general population in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. Overall, there were more full time students who responded to the survey.



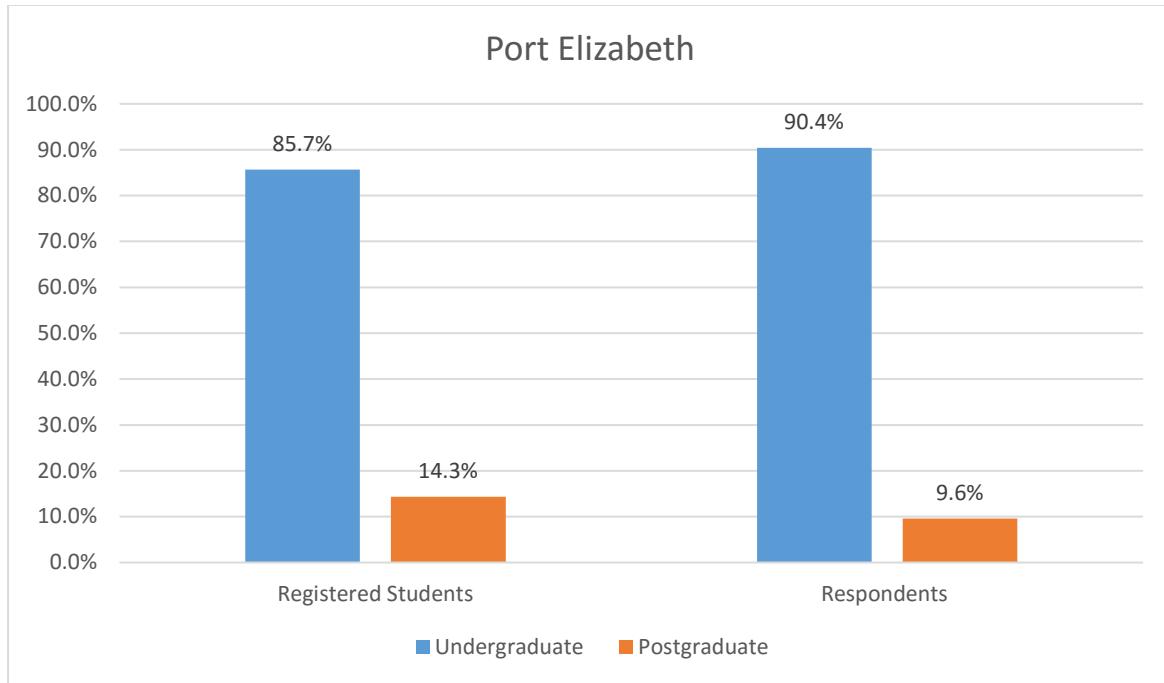
Graph 10: Registered students vs respondents according to registration status- Port Elizabeth



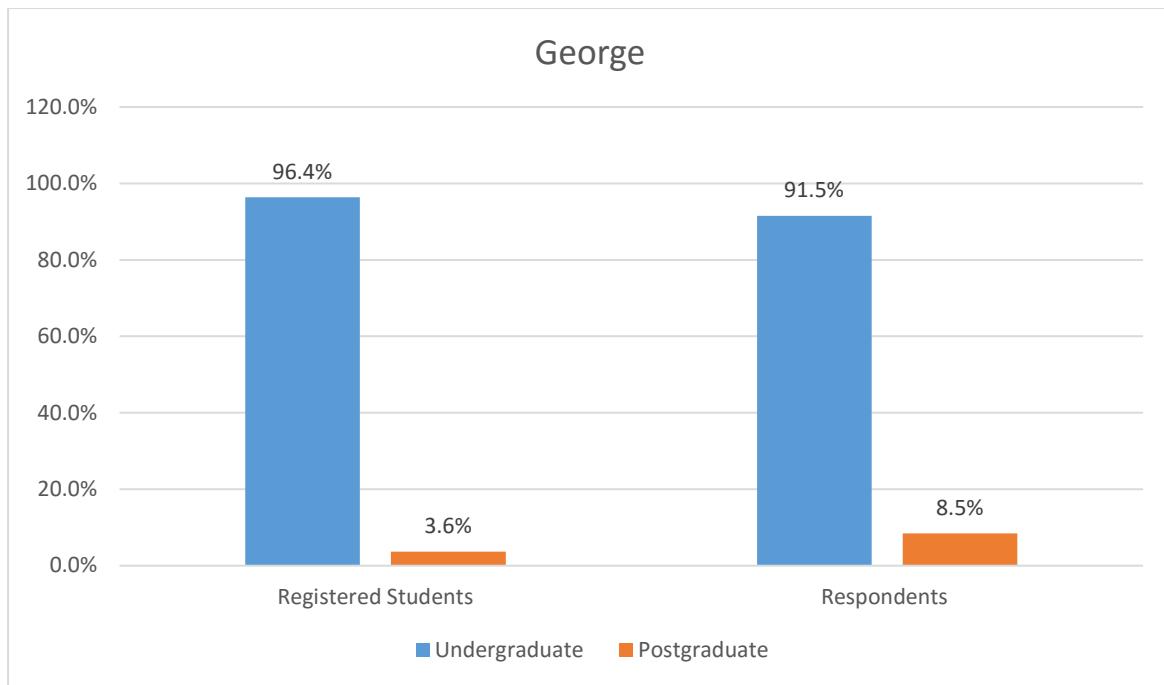
Graph 11: Registered students vs respondents according to registration status – George

### 3.2.3. Academic level

Academic level refers to whether students are undergraduate or postgraduate students.



Graph 12: Registered students vs respondents according to academic status - Port Elizabeth



*Graph 13: Registered students vs respondents according to academic status – George*

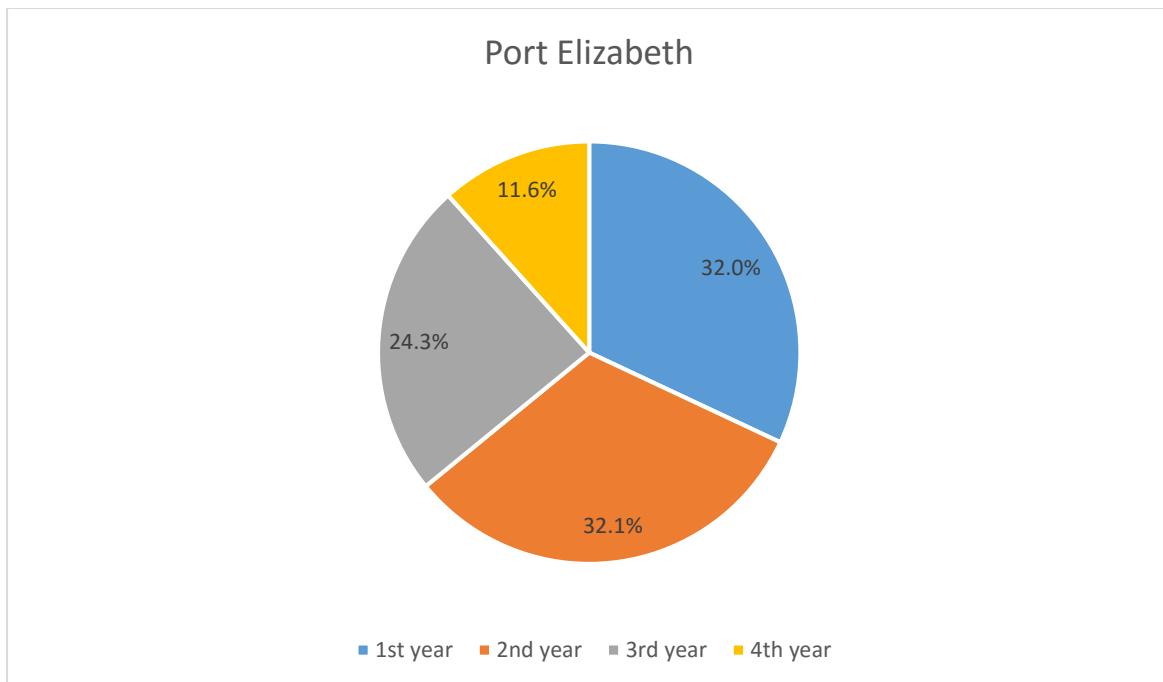
Graphs 12 and 13 demonstrate that in both Port Elizabeth and George respectively, the proportion of respondents who are postgraduate students is relatively representative of the general population, having only a slight variation. In Port Elizabeth, the proportion of postgraduate respondents is slightly lower than the proportion of the general population, and in George, is the inverse.

### 3.2.4. Academic year of study

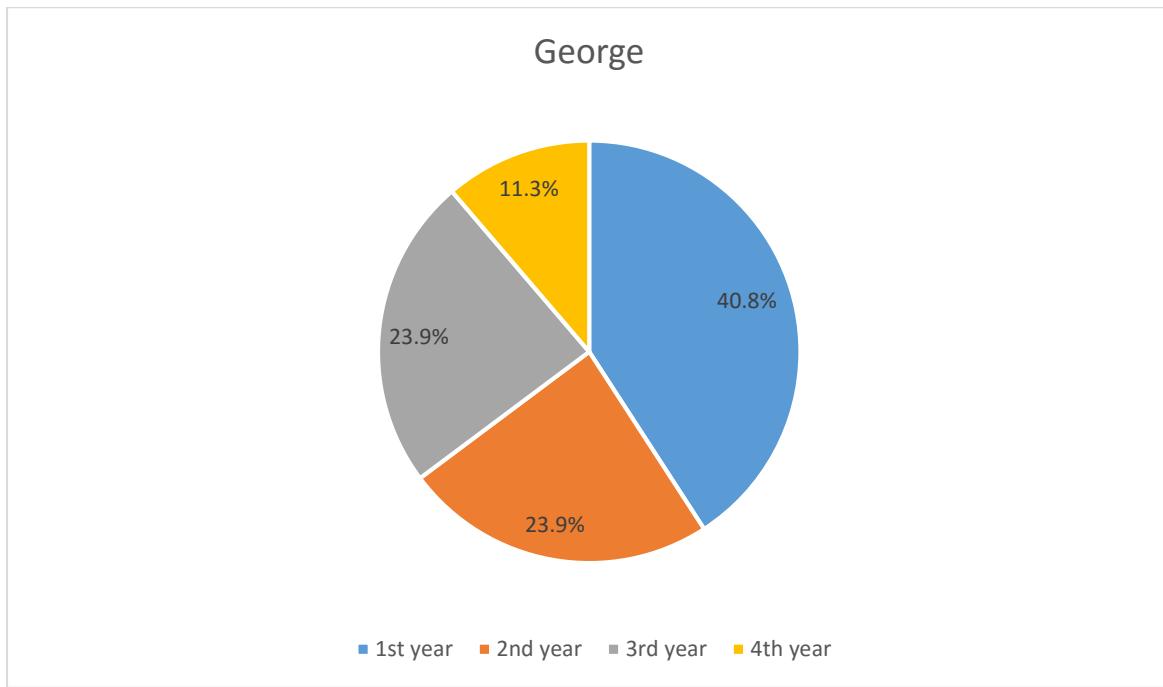
Academic year of study refers to the year of study of the course that a student is in.

In Port Elizabeth as shown by graph 14 below, 32% of respondents are in their first year and 32.1% are in their second year.

In George, 40.8% are in their first year and 23.9% are in their second year (shown in graph 15).



Graph 14: Year of study - Port Elizabeth

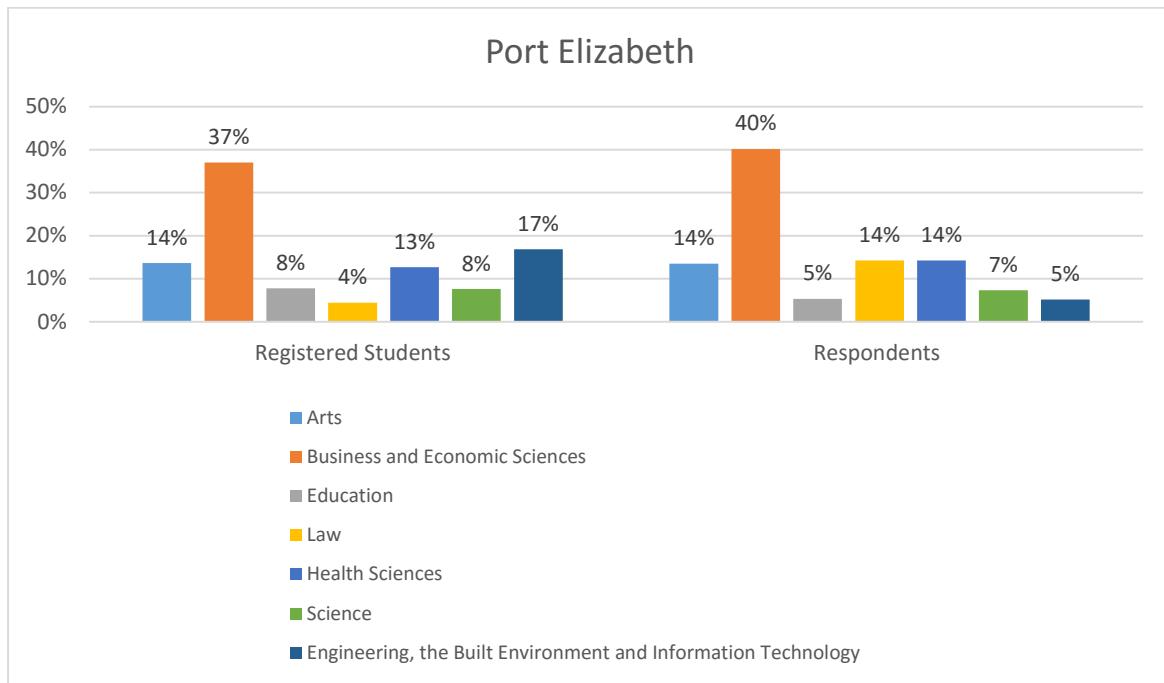


Graph 15: Year of study – George

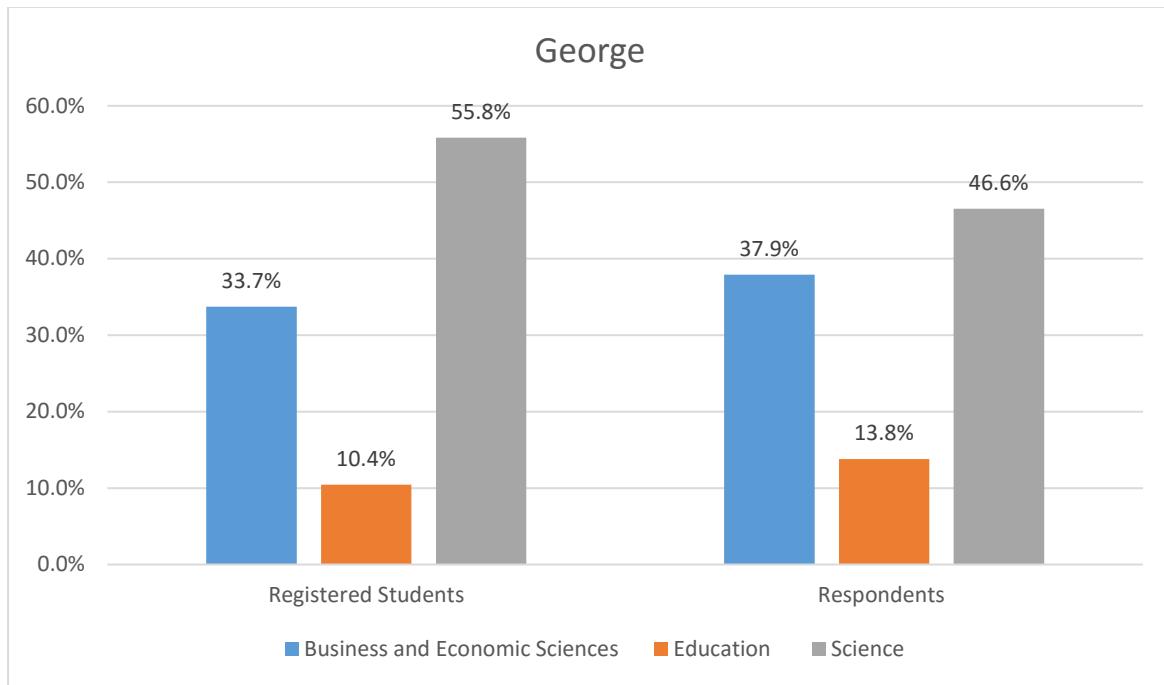
### 3.2.5. Faculty

Graph 16 and 17 reflect the breakdown of respondents according to the faculties in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. Overall, respondents are representative of the NMMU population with regards to faculty (although we do note a slightly smaller number of Port Elizabeth student participants in the law and engineering, the built

environment, and information technology faculty and on the George campus with the science students).



Graph 16: Registered students vs respondents by faculty – Port Elizabeth



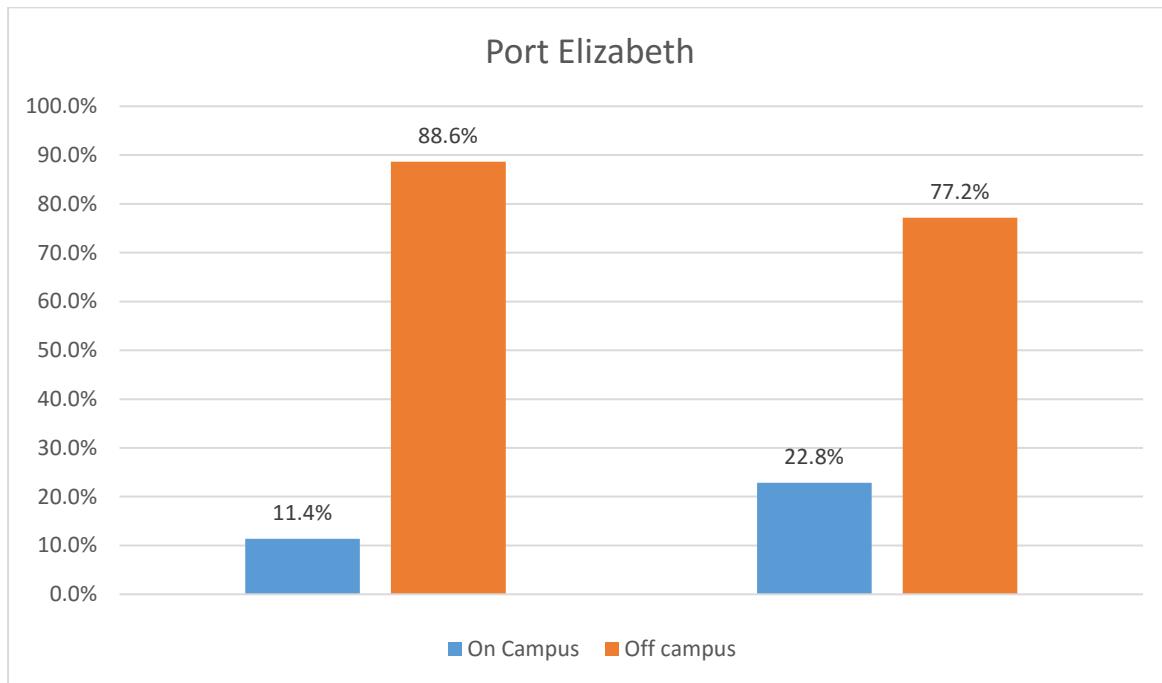
Graph 17: Registered students vs respondents by faculty – George

### **3.3. Living and commuting**

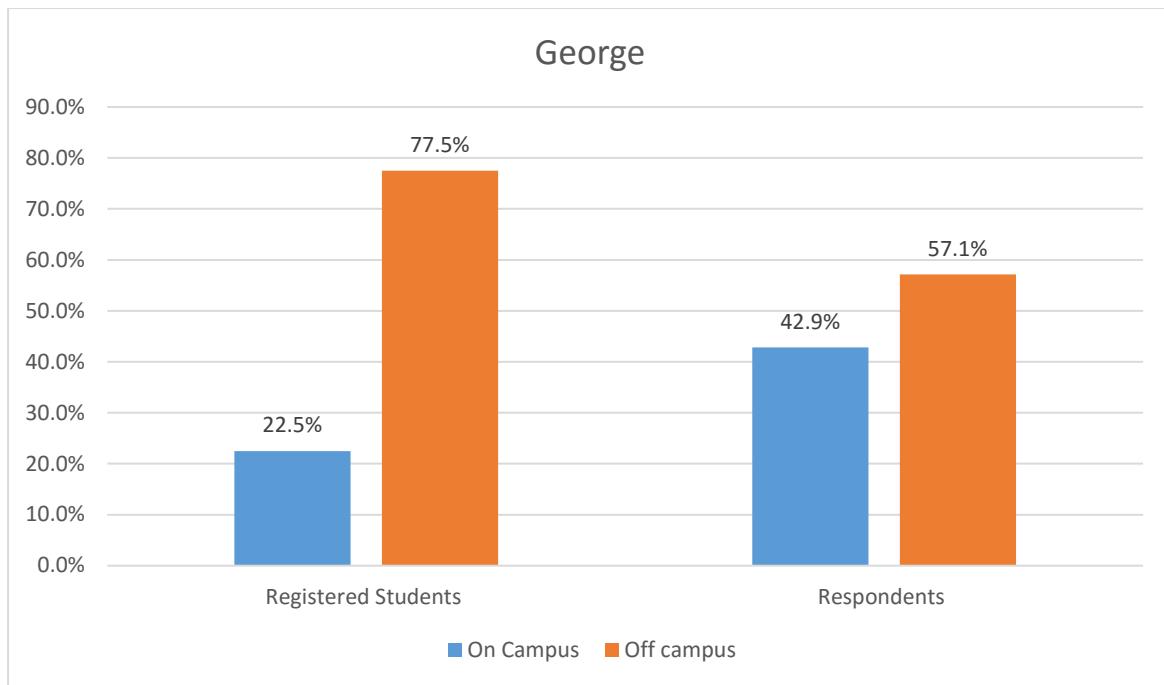
This section will describe respondents according to on and off campus variables, how respondents commute and how they finance their studies.

#### **3.3.1. On vs off campus breakdown**

Graphs 18 and 19 demonstrate the on and off campus breakdown of respondents compared to the registered NMMU students.



Graph 18: On vs off campus breakdown - Port Elizabeth



*Graph 19: On vs off campus breakdown - George*

While most respondents reside off campus in Port Elizabeth, a higher proportion of respondents reside on campus as compared to the general student population.

In George, the survey attracted a comparatively high number of on campus students, with 42.9% of respondents residing on campus students compared to 22.5% of the proportion of registered students.

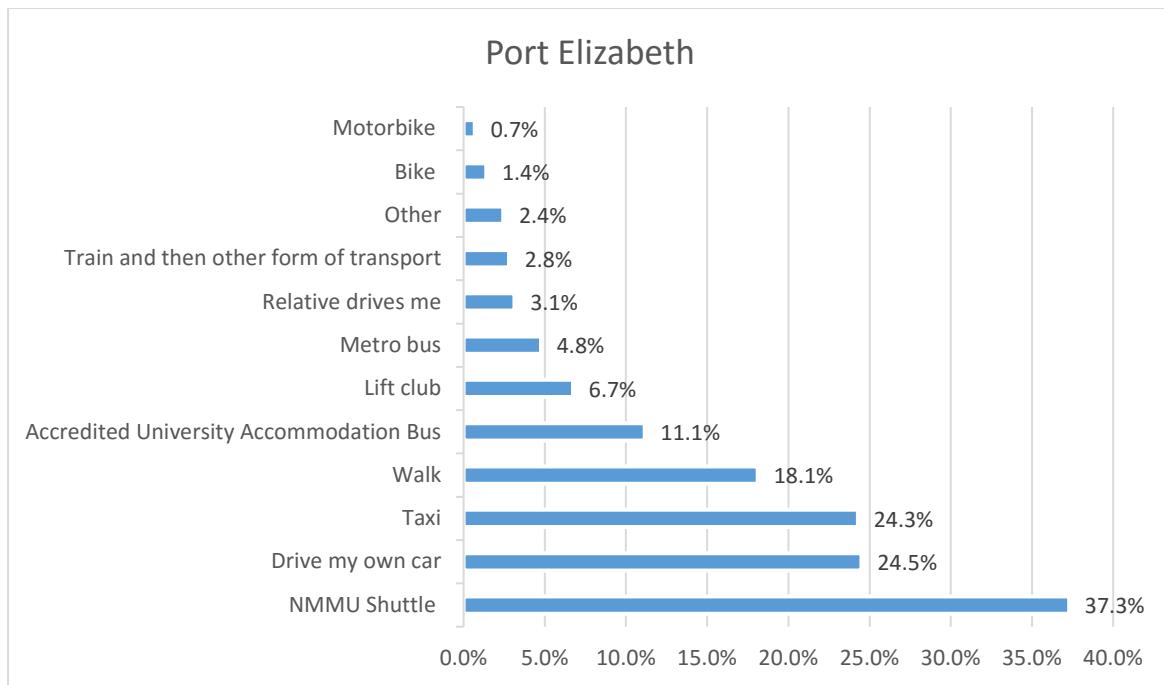
### **3.3.2. Off campus type of living**

Of the respondents who live off campus in Port Elizabeth, 22.2% reside in an accredited off campus residence, 36.7% live in private accommodation, 41.1% live at home or with extended family.

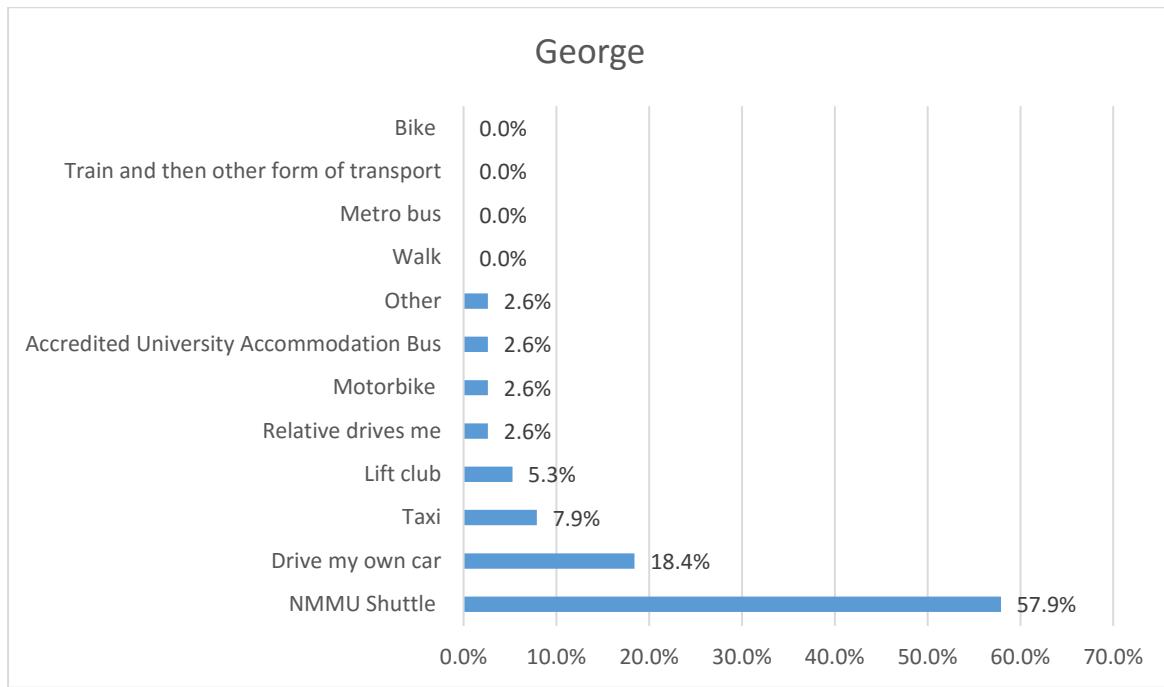
Of the respondents who live off campus in George, 25% reside in an accredited off campus residence or house, 42.5% live in private accommodation, 32.5% live at home or with extended family.

### **3.3.3. Primary commute to campus**

The following graphs indicate the top primary way to commute to campus on both campuses is the NMMU shuttle service.



Graph 20: Primary commute to campus - Port Elizabeth



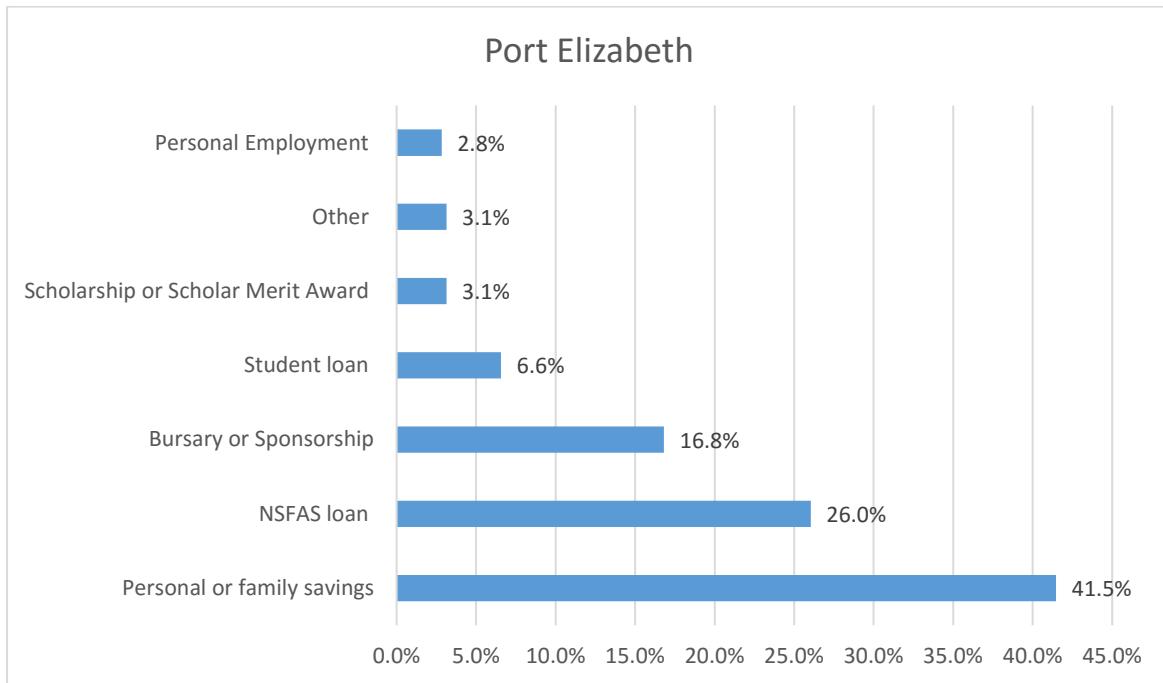
Graph 21: Primary commute to campus – George

As shown by graph 20, the top five modes of commuting to campus by respondents in Port Elizabeth are the NMMU shuttle (37.3%), taxi (24.5%), driving own car (24.3%), walking (18.1%), and accredited university accommodation bus (11.1%)

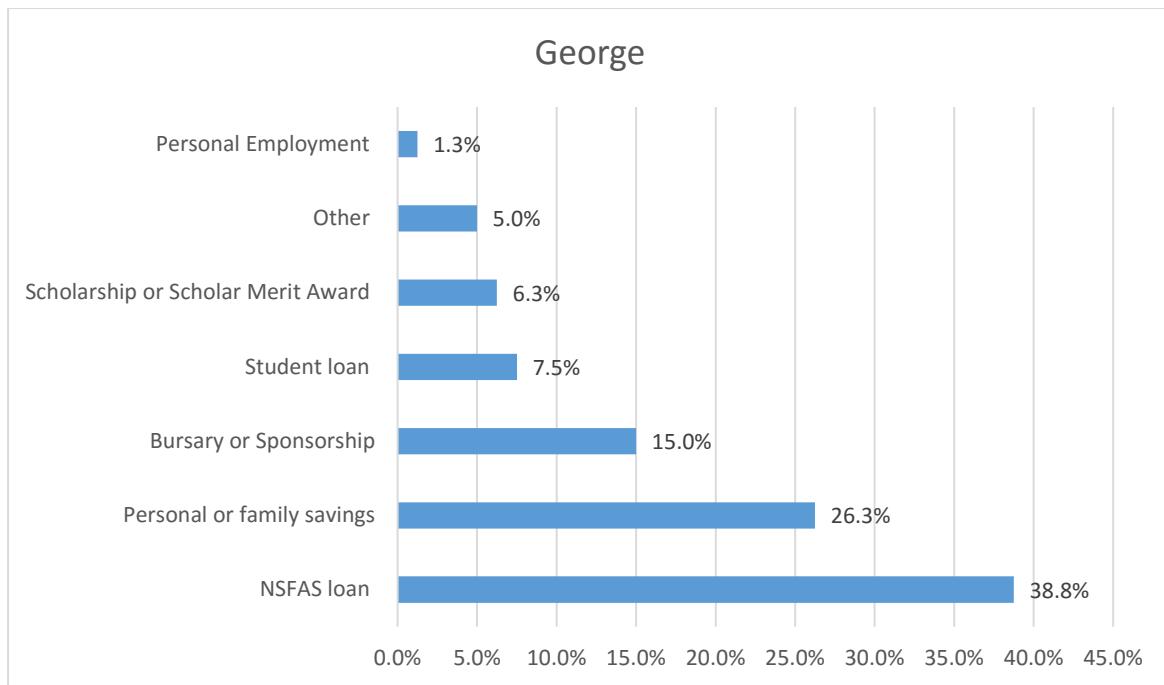
In George, as highlighted by graph 21, the top five modes of commute are the NMMU Shuttle (57.9%), drive own car (18.4%), taxi (7.9%), lift club (5.3%), and being driven by a relative (2.6%).

### 3.3.4. Method of financing education

The top methods respondents use overall to finance their education are personal or family savings, NSFAS loans, and bursary or sponsorship.



Graph 22: Method of financing education - Port Elizabeth



*Graph 23: Method of financing education – George*

As indicated by graph 22, most respondents in Port Elizabeth finance their education are through personal or family savings (41.5%) followed by NSFAS loans (26%) and bursary or sponsorship (16.8%).

In George, graph 23 shows most respondents' education is funded by NSFAS (38.8%), followed by personal or family savings (26.3%) and bursary or sponsorship (15%).

#### **4. PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT LIFE AT NMMU**

The first section of the survey was completed by all respondents in order to get an idea of their perceptions of student life at NMMU. Participants were required to rate the level at which they agree with the following statements from strongly agree to strongly disagree:

- My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU
- I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU
- I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU
- I am proud to be attending the NMMU
- I feel like NMMU is a community
- I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus

The overall results are as follows:

Table 1: Perceptions of student life - Port Elizabeth

Question	Mean	Number	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.4	1912	62.8%	24.4%	8.5%	1.6%	2.7%
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.8	1909	24.5%	45.5%	21.8%	5.3%	2.9%
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.4	1907	56.8%	33.3%	6.8%	0.9%	2.3%
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.3	1903	51.8%	34.7%	9.4%	1.9%	2.2%
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.8	1898	28.2%	40.3%	21.6%	6.5%	3.5%
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.9	1899	8.6%	22.8%	31.8%	24.2%	12.6%

Table 2: Perceptions of student life - George

Question	Mean	Number	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.2	87	50.6%	29.9%	13.8%	2.3%	3.4%
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.9	87	29.9%	43.7%	14.9%	6.9%	4.6%
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.5	87	59.8%	32.2%	4.6%	1.1%	2.3%
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.4	87	58.6%	25.3%	12.6%	2.3%	1.1%
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.8	86	31.4%	36.0%	18.6%	9.3%	4.7%
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.8	86	7.0%	23.3%	26.7%	29.1%	14.0%

Student perceptions are overall positive on both campuses, as evident in the low mean score of students who feel excluded (mean score = 2.9 and 2.8 in Port Elizabeth and George respectively). The mean scores of other perceptions indicate an acceptable level of belongingness overall.

Although student perceptions are overall positive, the following variables scored the lowest mean scores on both campuses:

- I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU (3.8 in Port Elizabeth; 3.9 in George)
- I feel like NMMU is a community (3.8 in Port Elizabeth; 3.8 in George)

The results were further analysed using multivariate analysis techniques. T-Tests were conducted on student perceptions according to gender in order to determine whether there were any significant differences in perceptions between males and females. Multiple analysis of variance tests (MANOVAS) were then used to determine the differences between the race groups.

The results of the analyses follow.

#### **4.1. Student perceptions according to gender**

Further analysis of the student perceptions according to gender found that in Port Elizabeth, there was no significant difference in student perceptions between males and females, with the exception of “NMMU pride” (I am proud to be attending the NMMU). The difference between males and females was statistically significant, with males having a slightly higher score; however, the magnitude of the differences or effect size was small ( $\eta^2 = 0.003$ ).

In George, there was no significant difference in student perceptions between males and females; however, there was a statistically significant difference in the variable “My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU,” between males and females of a moderate magnitude or effect ( $\eta^2 = 0.07$ ). Female respondents had a slightly higher score.

#### **4.2. Student perceptions according to race**

Table 3 and 4 highlight student perceptions by race in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.

Table 3: Student perceptions by race - Port Elizabeth

Question	Black (N=861)	Chinese (N=4)	Coloured (N=133)	Indian (N=20)	White (N=181)	Other (N=25)	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.4	4.8	4.5	4.3	4.5	4	Small effect
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	4	4	3.9	3.8	3.6	3	Small effect
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.4	4.8	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.2	Small effect
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.4	4.8	4.5	4.1	4.1	3.6	Small effect
I feel like the NMMU is a community	4	4.5	4	3.6	3.4	3	Moderate effect
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.8	2	3.2	2.8	2.9	3.6	Small effect

F (30, 6085) =4.19, p=0.00; Pillai's trace = 0.99; partial eta squared = 0.02

Table 4: Student perceptions by race - George

Question	Black (N=33)	Chinese (N=1)	Coloured (N=7)	Indian (N=2)	White (N=12)	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.2	5	4.4	4.5	4	No difference
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	4.1	4	3.6	4.5	3.6	No difference
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.4	4	3.6	4.5	3.6	No difference
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.4	5	4.6	5	4.1	No difference
I feel like the NMMU is a community	4.1	5	3.7	4.6	3.4	No difference
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.5	2	2.6	2.5	3.2	No difference

F (24, 158.2) = 0.864, p=0.65; Wilk's Lambda = 0.65; partial eta squared = 0.1

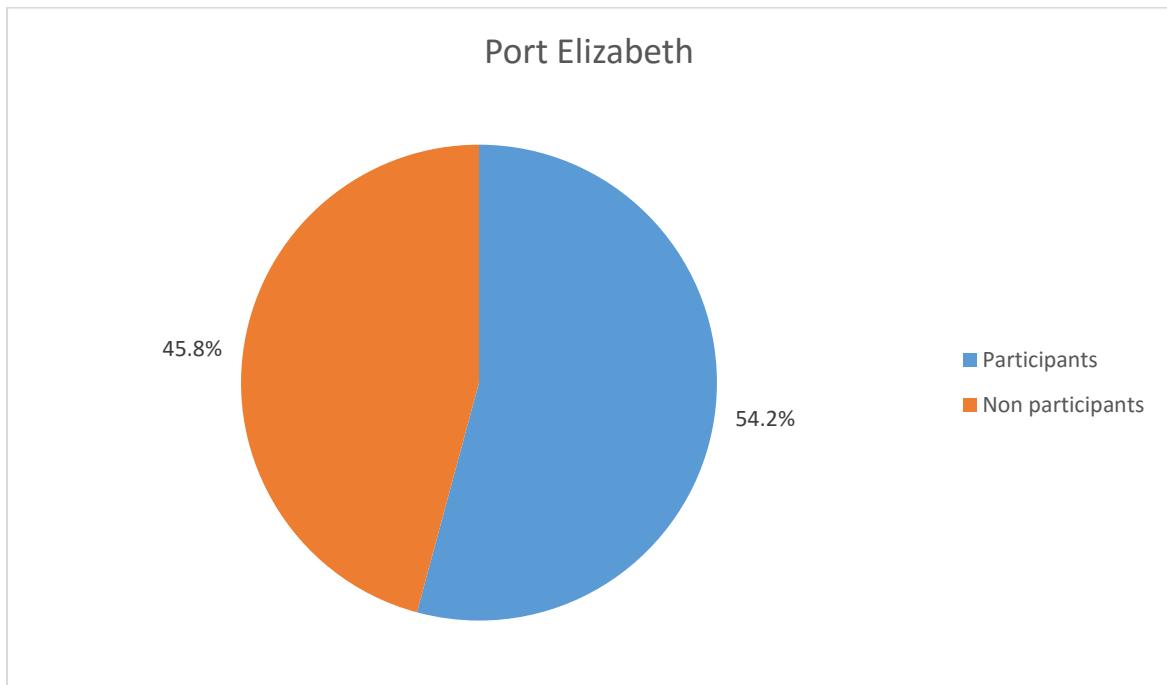
For Port Elizabeth, the overall MANOVA found a statistically significant difference between races. When the statements were examined separately, the magnitude or

effect size of the difference is small, with the exception of “I feel like NMMU is a community,” which has a moderate effect size (partial eta squared = 0.6). An inspection of the mean scores indicated that Indian ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=1.05$ ), White ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ) and students who identified themselves as “Other” ( $M=3$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ) had the lowest level of agreement with the statement. White and “Other” students have a score of between 2.6 and 3.4, which indicates room for improvement.

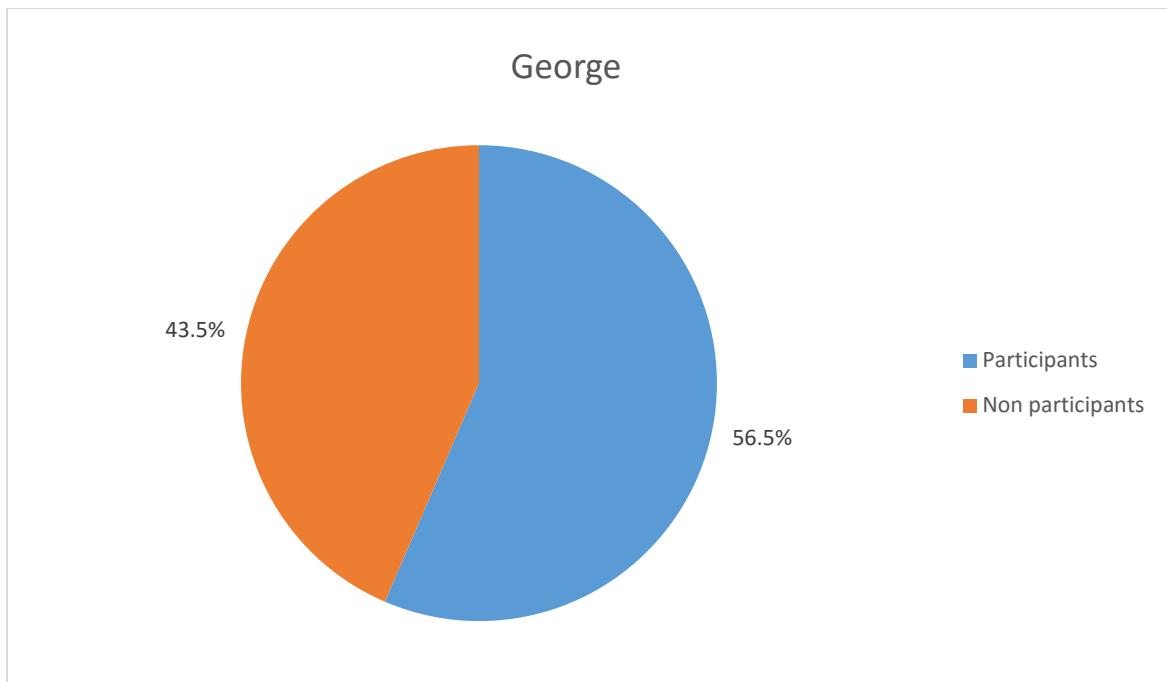
In George, the MANOVA found that there is no statistically significant difference between the races.

## 5. STUDENT LIFE ACTIVITIES

Graph 24 and 25 show the number of respondents who participate in student life activities vs those who do not in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. The survey attracted a greater number of students that participate in student life activities over students who do not participate both in Port Elizabeth (53%) and George (55.2%).



Graph 24: Respondents who participate in student activities vs non participants - Port Elizabeth

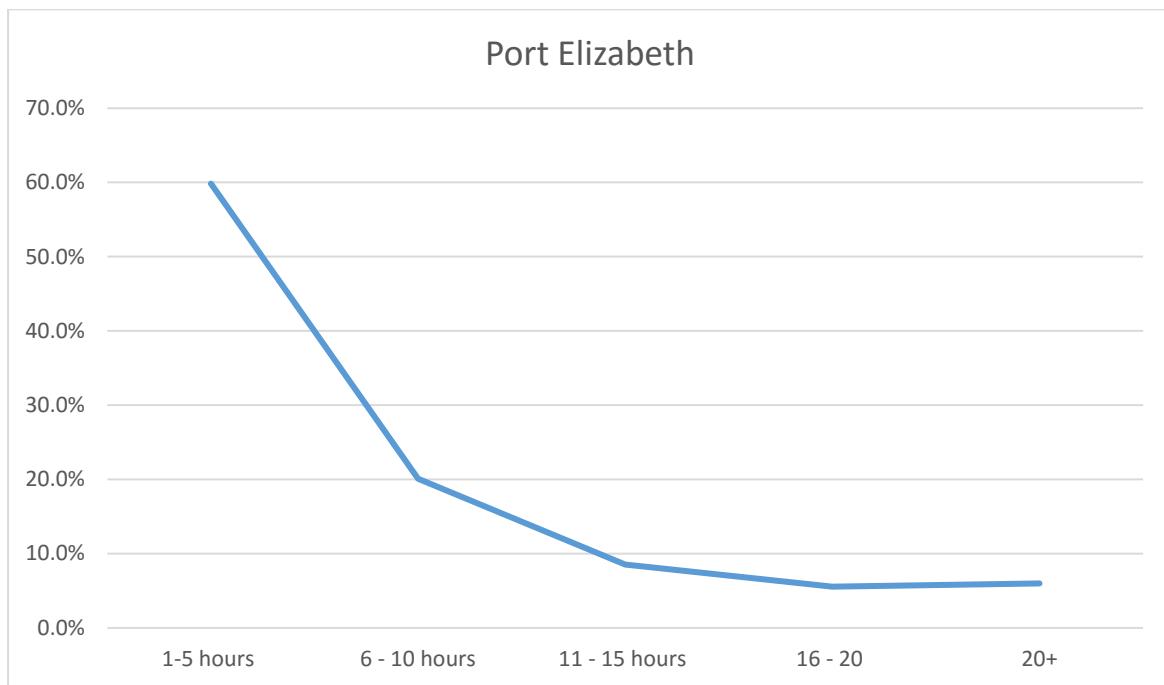


Graph 25: Respondents who participate in student activities vs non participants - George

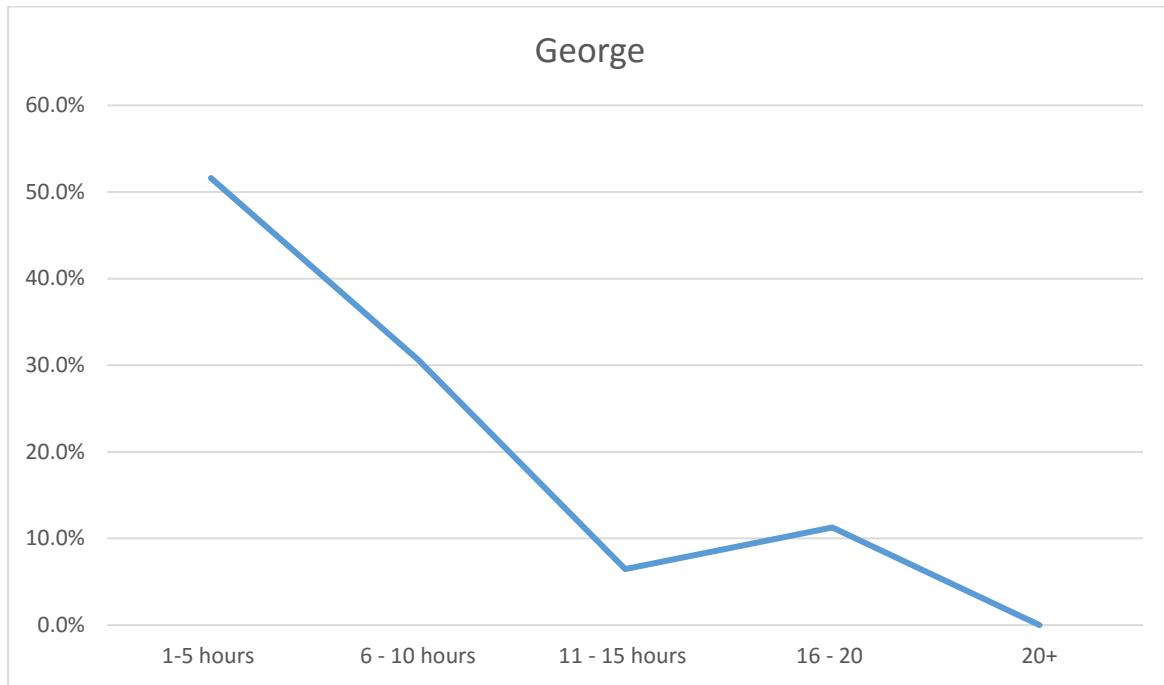
### 5.1. Participation and time spent on student life activities

Student life activities are divided into Societies (which are broken down to four types: academic, developmental, religious, and political), Arts and Culture activities, Sports Clubs, and Residence Leagues and Events. The following section demonstrates a breakdown of the number of participants of each student life activity according to the type of student life activity for both Port Elizabeth and George respectively as well as time spent on student life activities.

### 5.1.1. Overall time spent on student life activities



Graph 26: Overall time spent on student life activities – Port Elizabeth



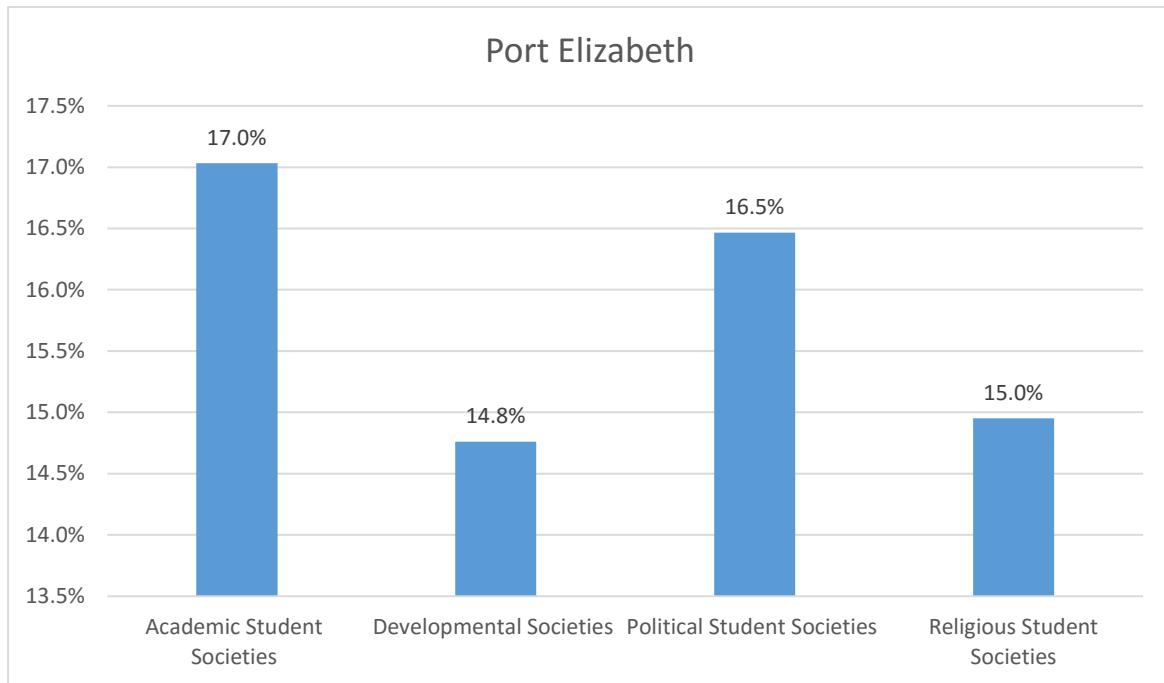
Graph 27: Overall time spent on student life activities – George

As highlighted by graphs 26 and 27, more than half of the respondents dedicate 1-5 hours per week on student life activities (59% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 52% in George). Although the amount of time gradually decreases, George campus does see a spike in 16 – 20 hours, with 11.6% as compared to 5.6% in Port Elizabeth.

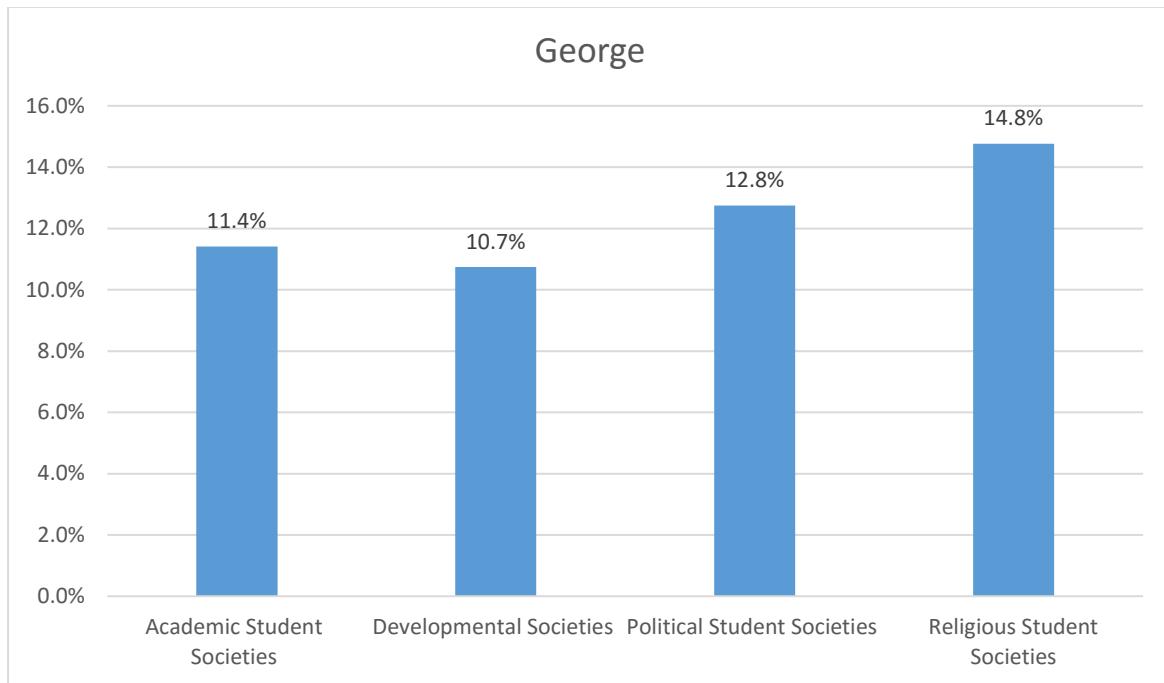
However, no respondents in George spend 20 hours or more a week on student activities, while 6% of Port Elizabeth respondents reported doing so.

### 5.1.2. Societies

#### Participation in Societies



Graph 28: Society participation – Port Elizabeth



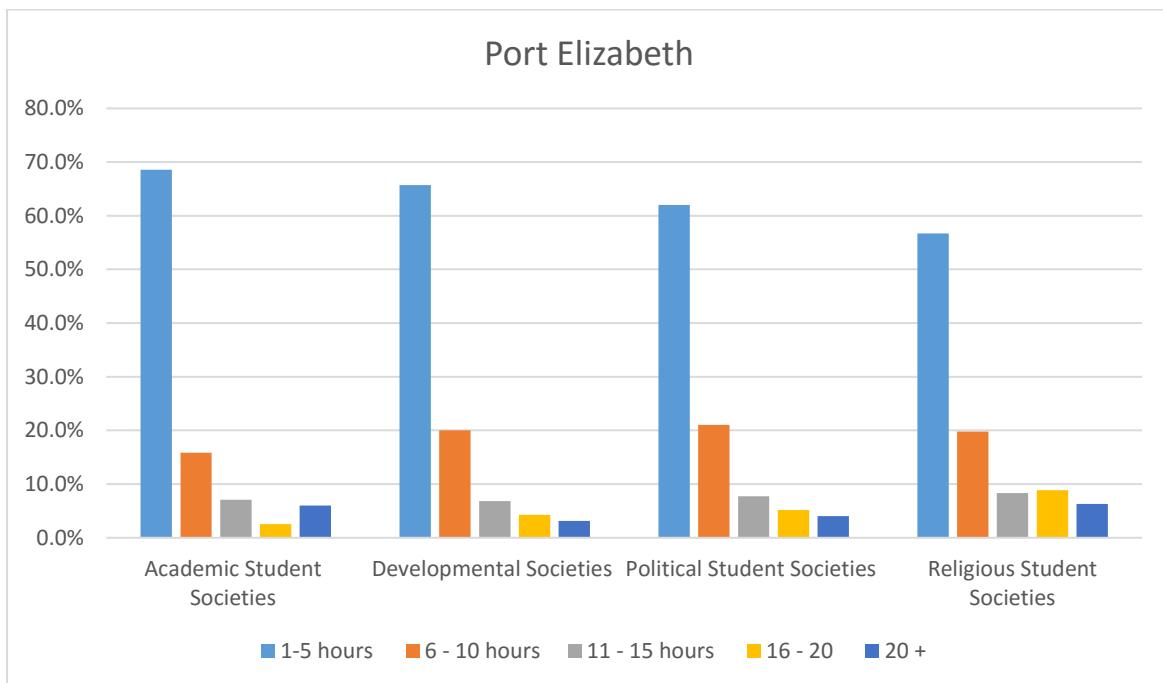
Graph 29: Society participation - George

Graph 28 shows that most respondents in Port Elizabeth participated in societies participated in academic societies, followed by political societies then religious and developmental societies.

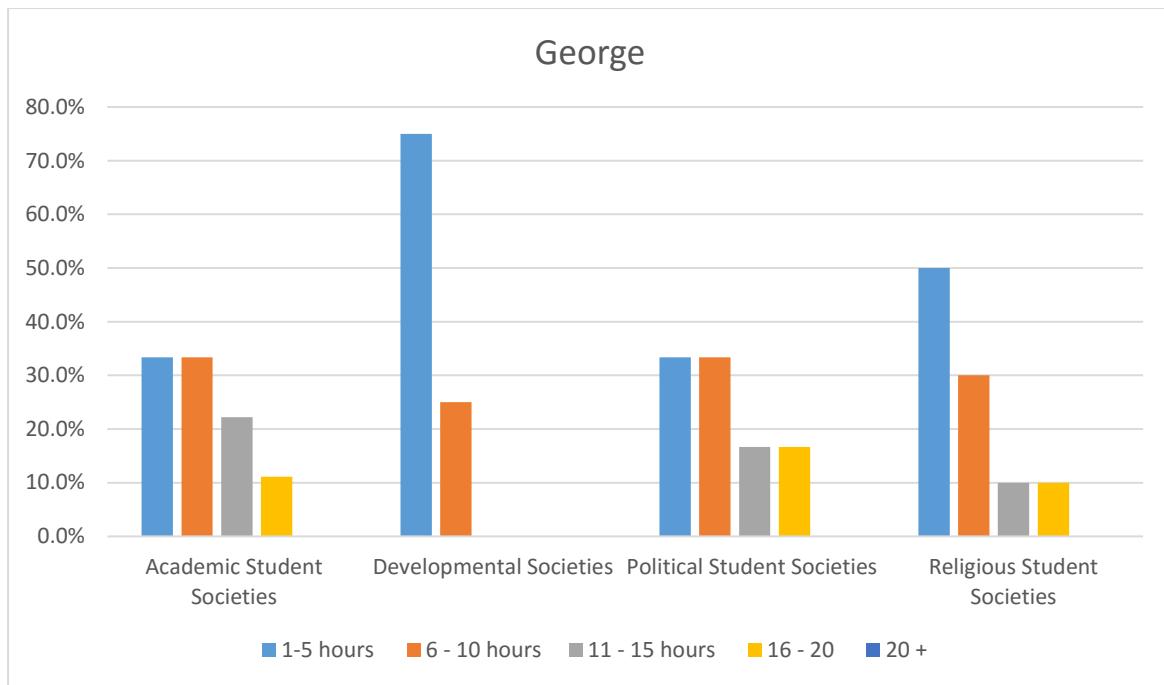
Graph 29 shows that in George, religious society participation was the highest, followed by political, then academic and developmental societies.

### Time Spent on Societies

Graphs 30 and 31 indicate that George respondents dedicate more time to society participation as compared to respondents in Port Elizabeth.



Graph 30: Time spent on societies - Port Elizabeth



*Graph 31: Time spent on societies - George*

Graph 30 shows that respondents dedicate 1-5 hours a week overall to society participation in Port Elizabeth.

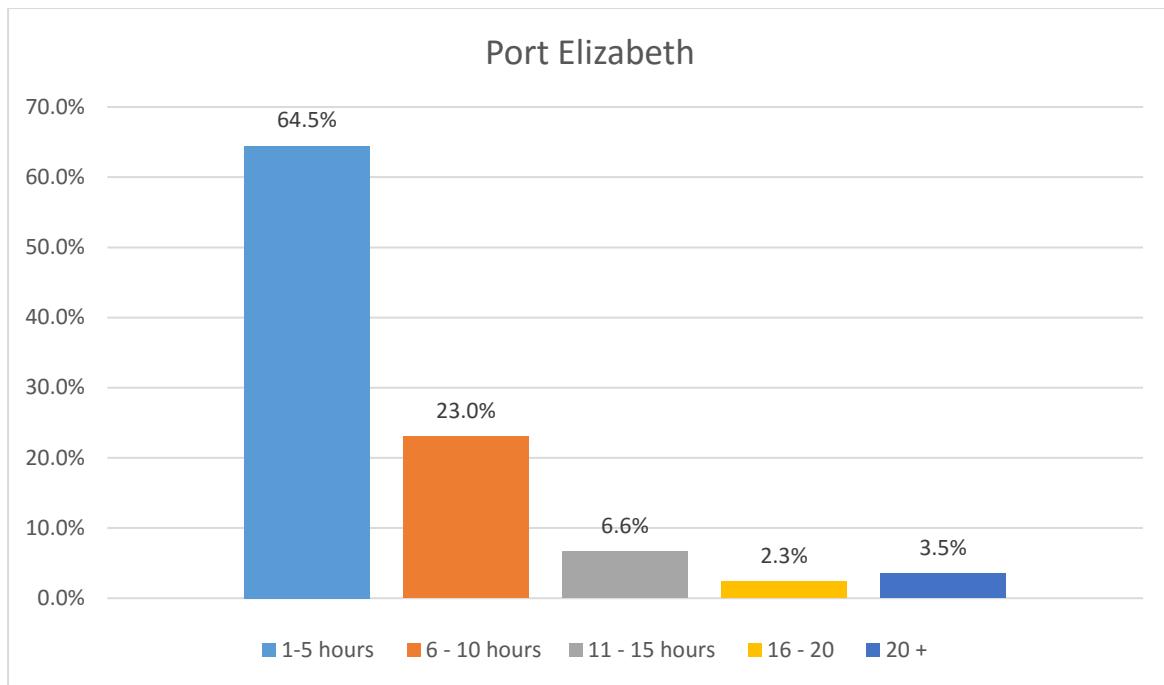
In George, as indicated by graph 31, time spent on academic and political societies is between 1 and 10 hours for most society respondents.

### 5.1.3. Arts and Culture

#### Arts and Culture participation

9.3% of Port Elizabeth respondents reported participating on an Arts and Culture activity. 18.8% of George respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activity.

#### Time spent on Arts and Culture activities



*Graph 32: Time spent on Arts and Culture activities - Port Elizabeth*

Graph 32 shows that In Port Elizabeth, most Arts and Culture participants (64.5%) spent 1-5 hours a week on Arts and Culture activities.

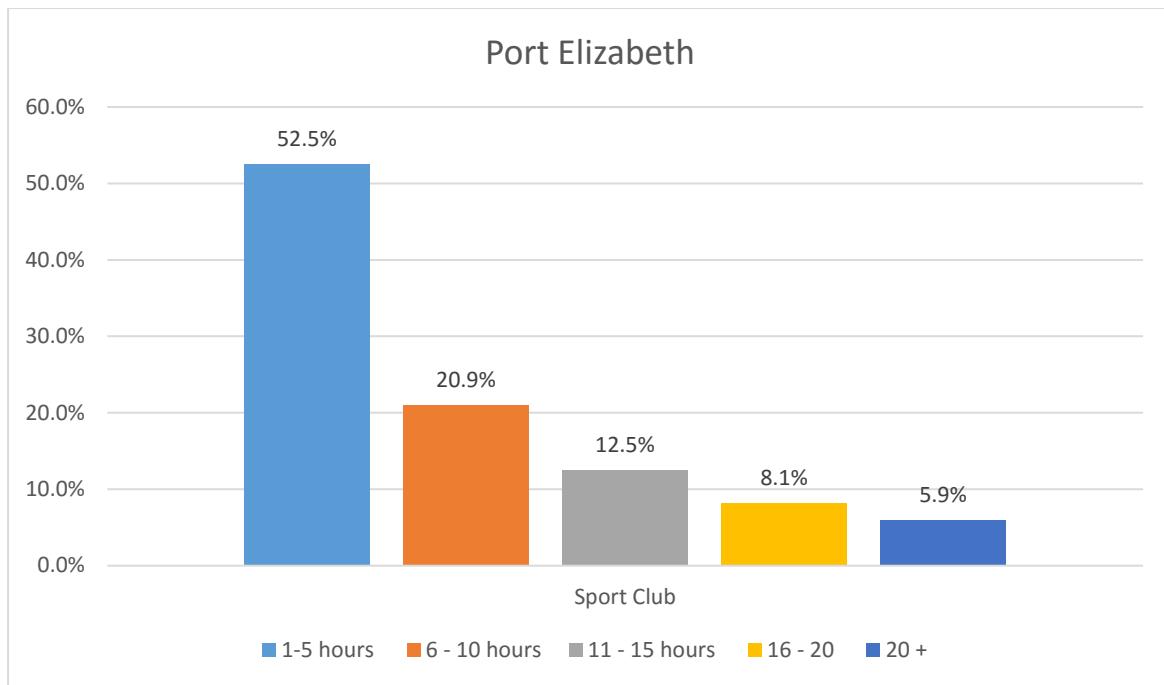
In George campus, all respondents who participated in Arts and Culture activities dedicated 1-5 hours a week on them.

#### **5.1.4. Sports Club**

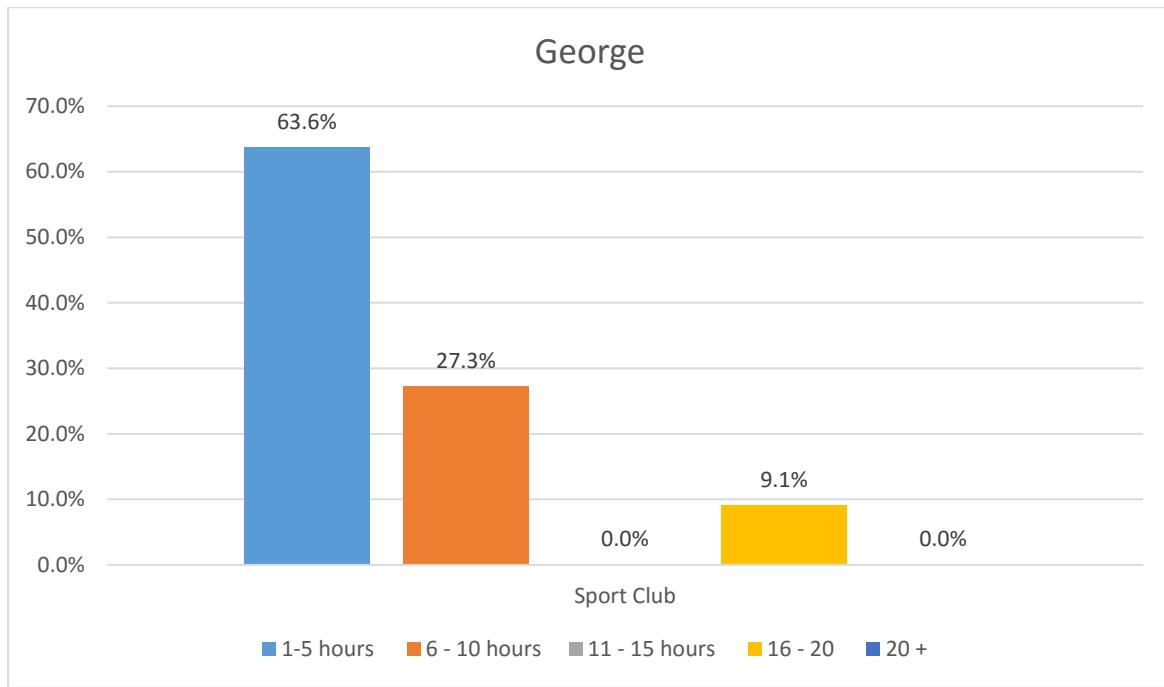
Sports Club participation

13.3% of Port Elizabeth respondents participate in a sport club. In George, the highest participation is in sports, with almost a quarter of respondents 23.5% being part of a sports club.

Time spent on Sports Club participation



Graph 33: Time spent on sports clubs - Port Elizabeth



Graph 34: Time spent on sports clubs - George

In Port Elizabeth, most respondents who participate in sport clubs (52.5%) dedicate 1-5 hours per week to sports clubs as indicated by graph 33.

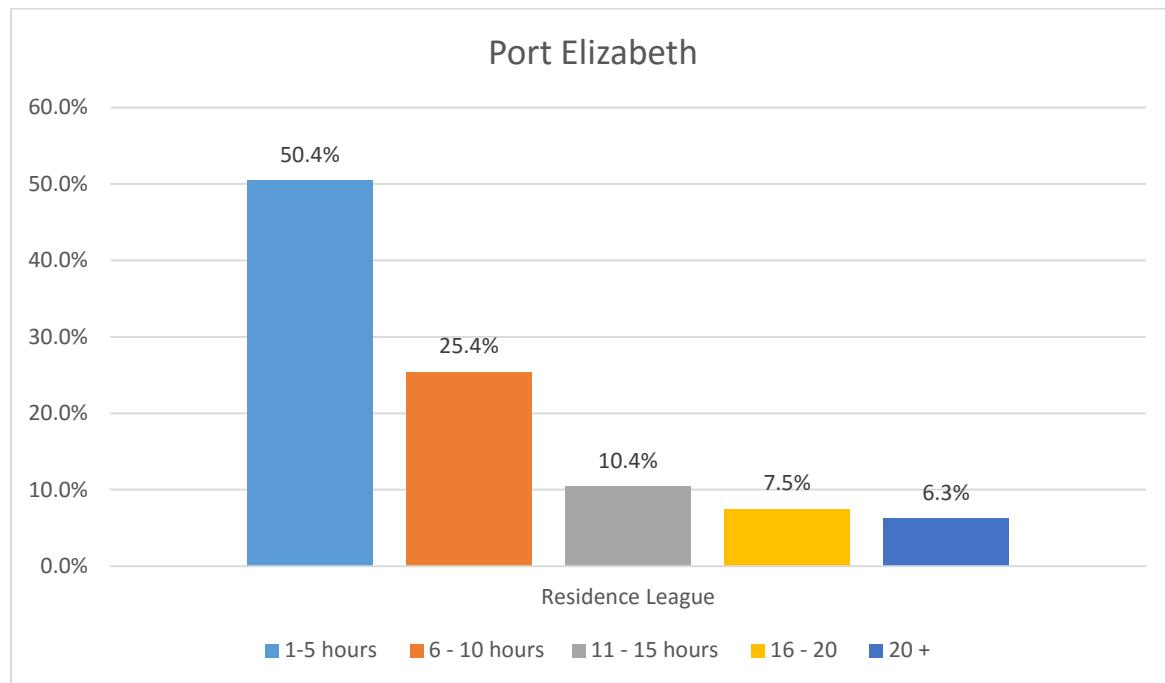
Graph 34 indicates that 63.6% of George sports club participants spend 1-5 hours a week on sports club participation.

### 5.1.5. Residence League

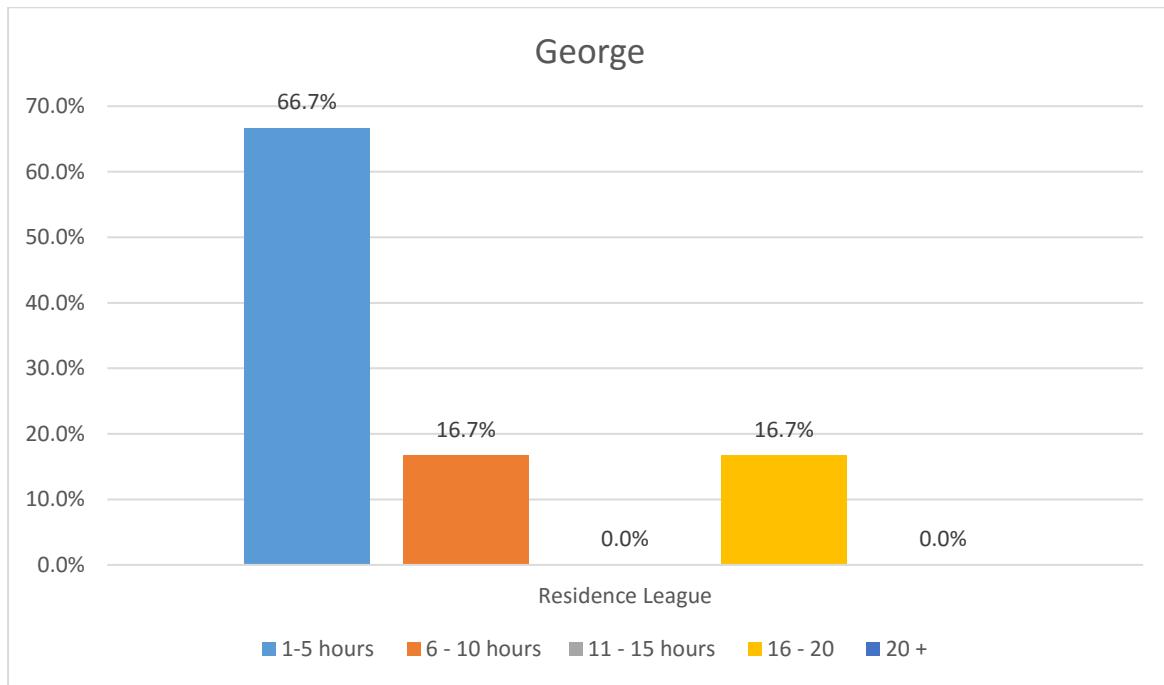
Residence league participation

7.8% of Port Elizabeth and 8.1% of George respondents reported participating in residence league activities.

Time spent on residence league activities



Graph 35: Time spent on residence league activities - Port Elizabeth

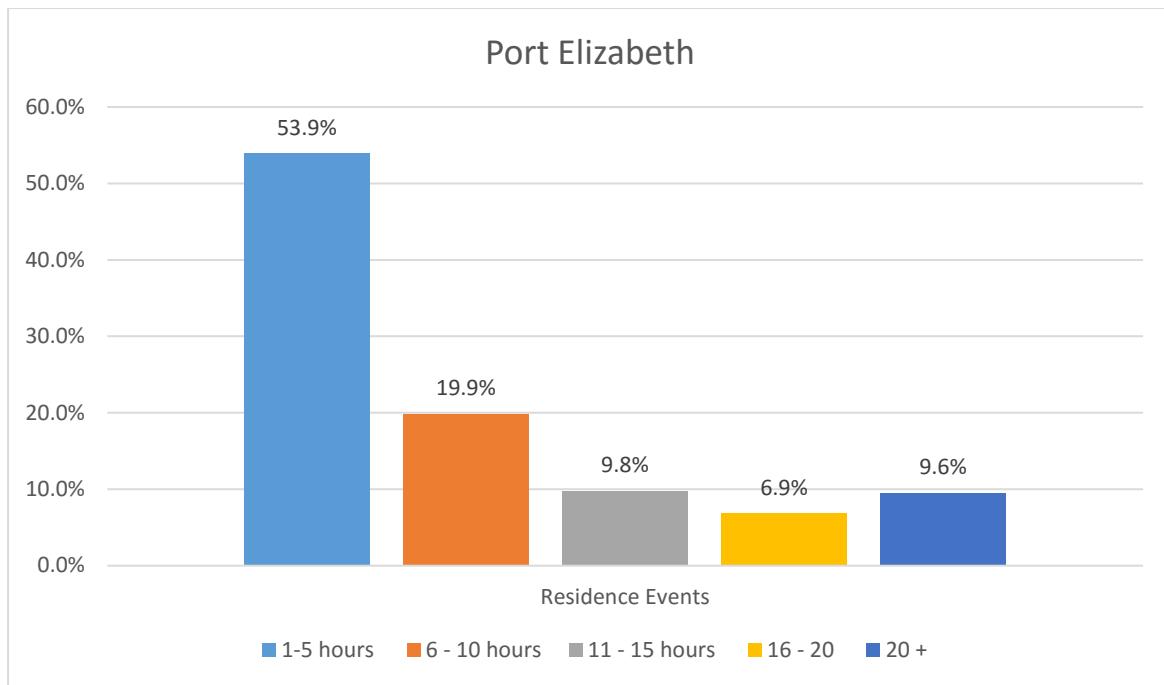


Graph 36: Time spent on residence league activities - George

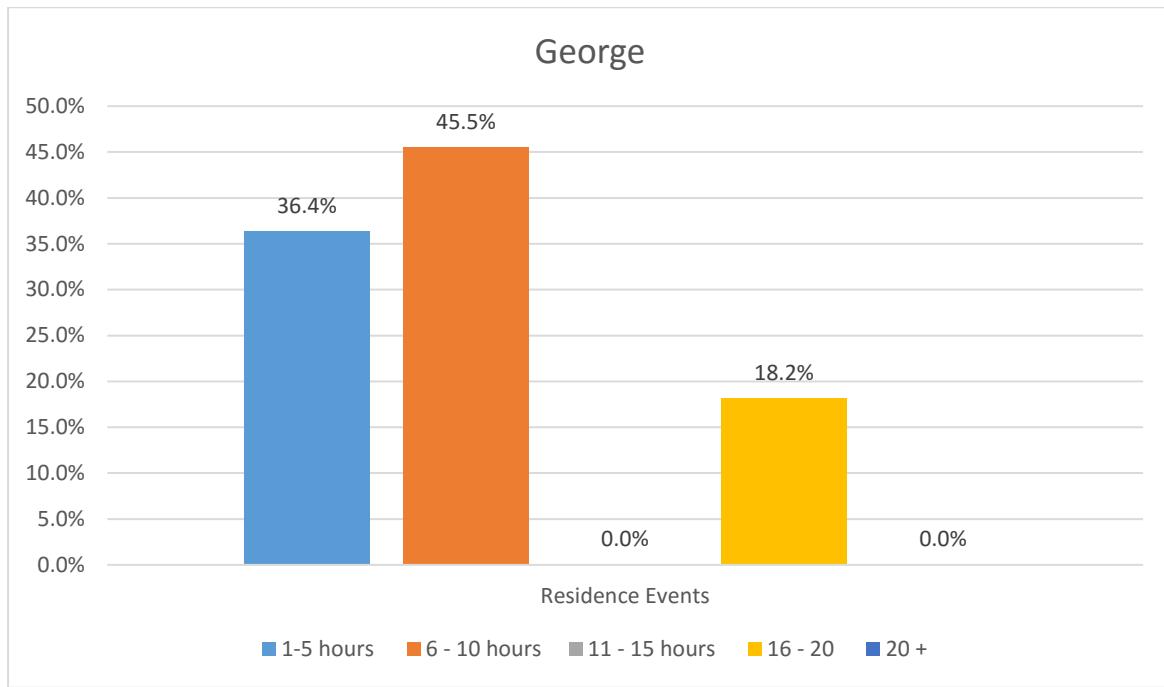
More than half of Port Elizabeth respondents and a majority of George respondents (66.7%) dedicate 1-5 hours a week on residence league activities.

### 5.1.6. Residence Events

Many respondents reported spending time on residence related events. Of the 21% of respondents who partook in residence events in Port Elizabeth, 53.9% spend 1-5 hours a week on residence events. In George, 13% of respondents participate in residence events, and more than 45% of them spend 6-10 hours a week on residence events.



Graph 37: Time spent on residence events - Port Elizabeth



Graph 38: Time spent on residence events - George

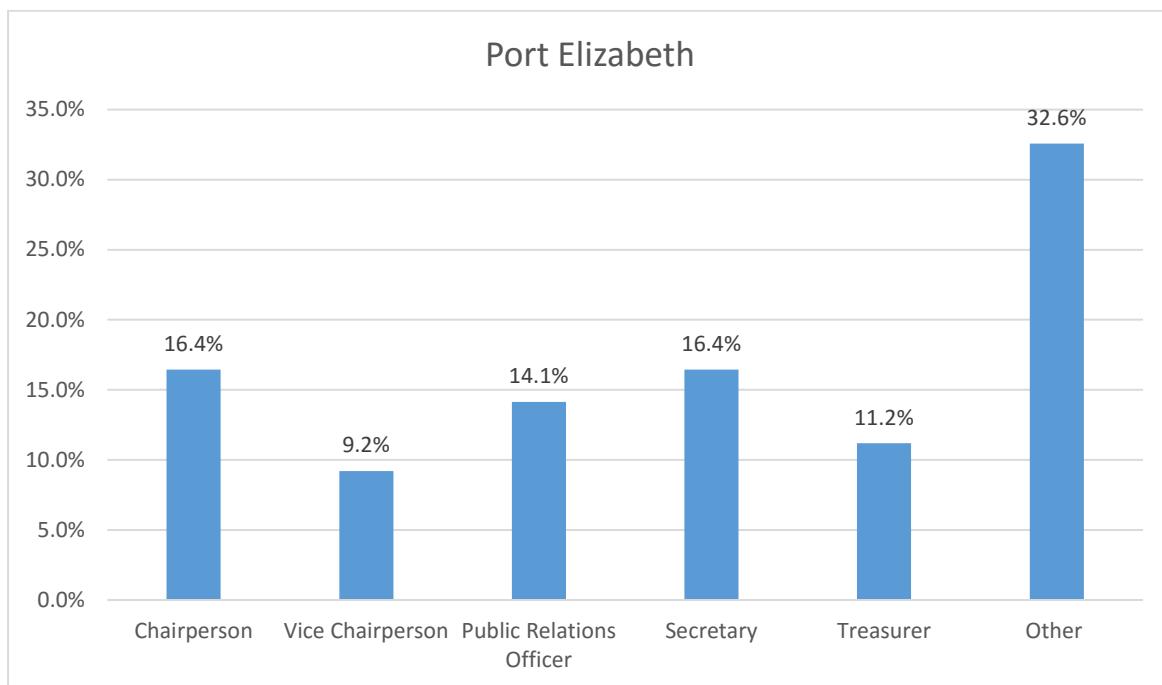
### 5.1.7. “Other” student life activities

Student life activities that were listed by respondents as “other” included Golden Key membership, societies such as, EFFSC (EFF Student Command), Unity in Africa,

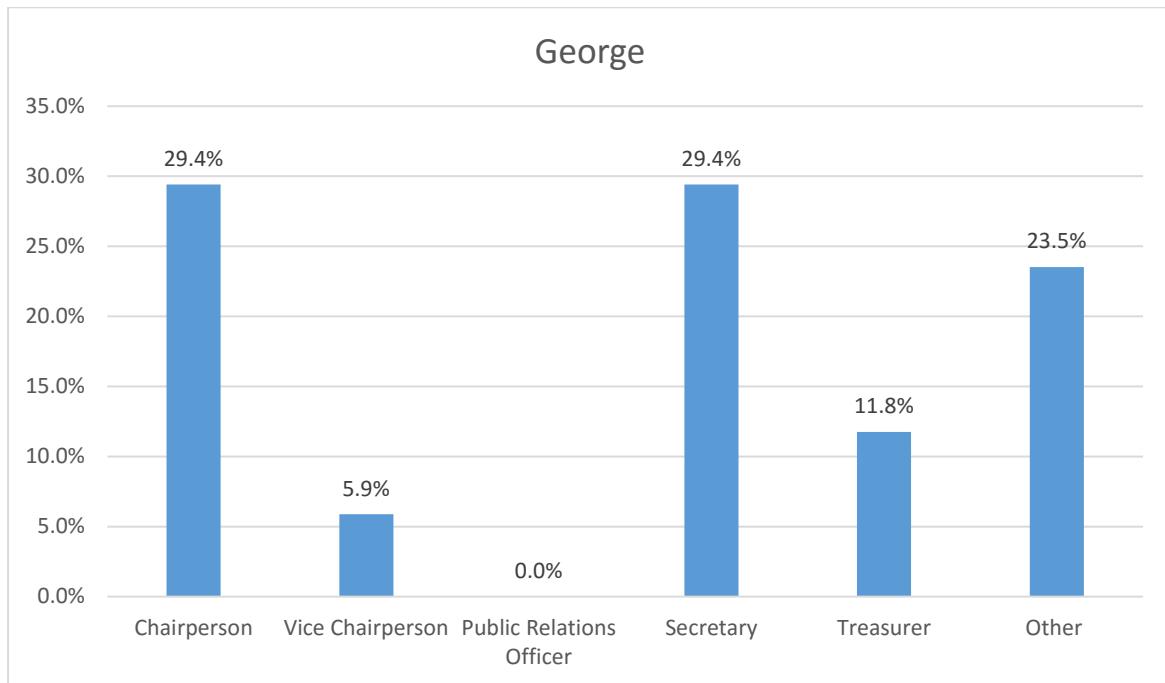
WELA (Women in Engineering Leadership Association), NMMU SAICE (South African Institute of Civil Engineering), NMMU ISACA (Information Systems Audit and Control Association), NMMU ISA (International Student Association), Rotaract NMMU, ANSOC (Anglican Society), and the following Arts and Culture activities: Choir participation (NMMU Choir, or in a residence or society), Two Tone Band, and Braveworld Hip Hop Society.

## 5.2. Participants in leadership positions

29.4% of Port Elizabeth and 34% of George respondents reported being in leadership positions. Graphs 39 and 40 highlight the types of leadership positions respondents that respondents reportedly hold.



Graph 39: Leadership positions held by participants - Port Elizabeth



*Graph 40: Leadership positions held by participants George*

In both Port Elizabeth and George, most respondents held the position of chairperson and secretary. The survey attracted an equal number of chairpersons and secretaries in both Port Elizabeth and George. While the second highest position held in Port Elizabeth is that of public relations officer, there were no respondents who reported being public relations officers in George.

The table below lists the positions that respondents reported as “other” in the overall survey.

*Table 5: Leadership position reported as "Other"*

Position	Percentage
Society officer / leader	19.%
Captain	16.4%
Class/site rep	16.4%
Events co-ordinator / organiser	13.4%
Committee/council member	11.9%

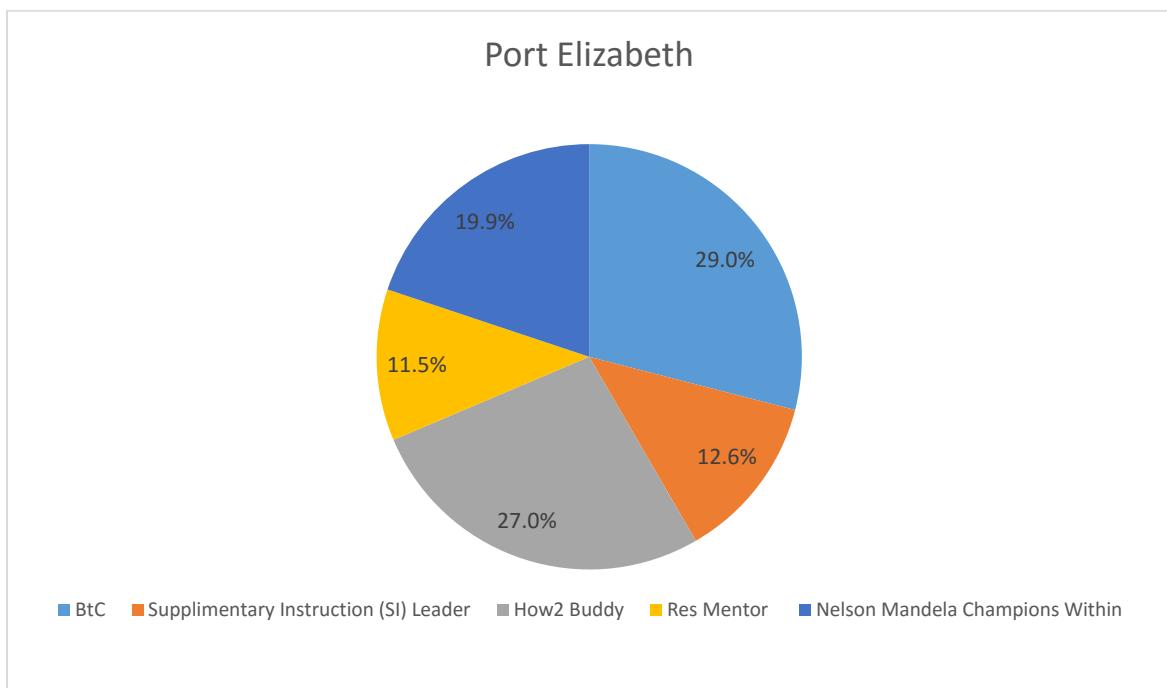
House committee	10.4%
Subcommittee member	9.0%
Vice-Captain	3.0%

### 5.3. Co-curricular participation

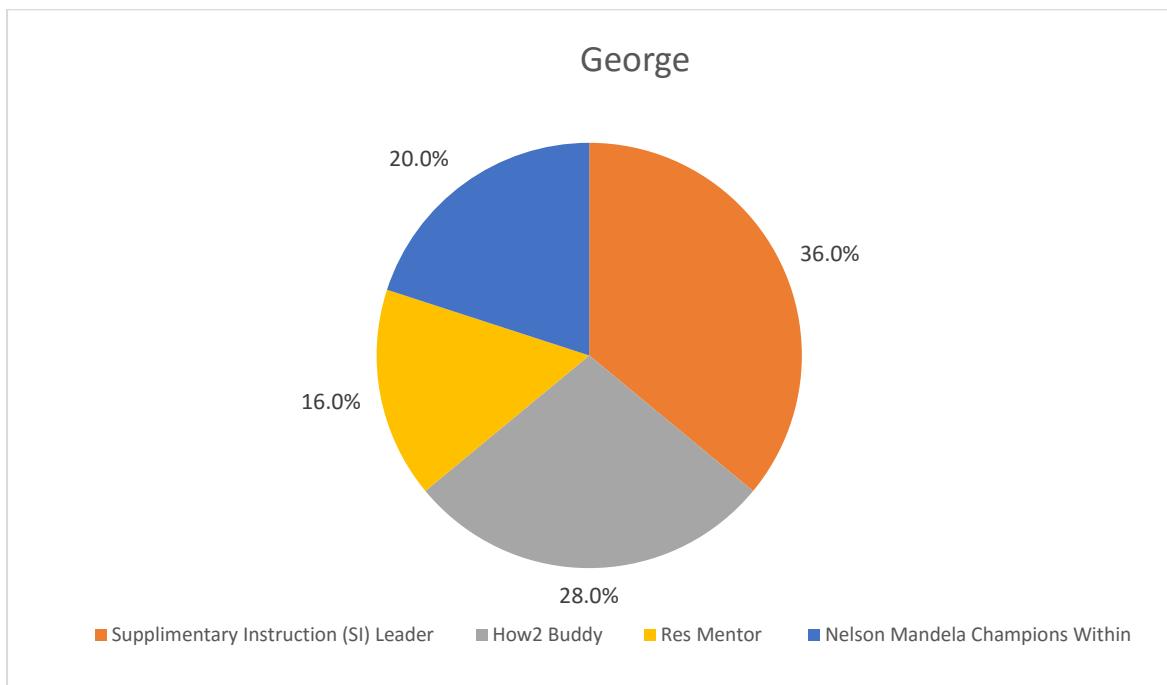
Co-curricular activities refer to the following activities: Beyond the Classroom, Supplementary Instruction (SI) leader, How2Buddy, Residence Mentor, and Nelson Mandela Champions Within. Participation in these activities result in a co-curricular record (CCR) (an official record recognising involvement in NMMU co-curricular activities) that enables students to record their learning and involvement and allows them to plan their growth and development.

Overall, almost a third of all respondents participate in co-curricular activities (33% of Port Elizabeth and 29% of George respondents).

Graphs 41 and 42 demonstrate a breakdown of respondents according to co-curricular participation in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.



Graph 41: Co-curricular participation - Port Elizabeth



*Graph 42: Co-curricular participation – George*

Of the respondents who participate in co-curricular activities in Port Elizabeth, most participate in the Beyond the Classroom (BtC) programme (29%), followed by How2Buddy (27%) then Nelson Mandela Champions Within (19.9%), supplementary instruction (SI) leader (12.6%) and residence mentoring (11.5%).

In George, most respondents were SI leaders (36%), followed by How2Buddies (28%) then Nelson Mandela Champions Within (20%) and residence mentors (16%). The BtC programme was not available in George in 2014.

## **6. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES**

This section focuses on the competencies of student life activities. Respondents who participate in student life activities were asked to identify the learning they gained from participating in student life activities. Non-participants were also asked what they felt they would gain from participating in student life activities.

These competencies were adapted from the development indicators of the learning outcomes of co-curricular activities as set by the NMMU.<sup>2</sup> Although there are 17 competencies, only those learning outcomes most likely to be identified among a majority of the array of co-curricular activities were included on the survey (the learning outcome from which each competency is derived from is listed next to the competency).

This section also compares the perceived learning outcomes of BtC participants with those set out by the programme in order to determine whether their participants' perceived views correlate with those set out by the programme.

### **6.1. Perceived competencies by students who participate in student life activities**

The tables below show the perceived learning outcomes by students who participate in student life activities ranked from highest to lowest by mean score for Port Elizabeth and George respectively.

*Table 6: Perceived competencies of student life activity participants - Port Elizabeth*

<b>Competency and corresponding learning outcome</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.3
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.3
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.3
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.3
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.2
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.2
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.2
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.2
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.2
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4.1
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.1
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	4.1
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.1
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.1

<sup>2</sup> NMMU learning outcomes and development indicators are attached to this report as an appendix

Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	34
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	3.9
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	3.9
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.8

*Table 7: Perceived competencies of student life activity participants - George*

<b>Competency and corresponding learning outcome</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.4
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.4
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.3
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.3
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.3
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.2
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.2
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.2
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.1
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	4.1
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.1
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.1
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4.1
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	3.9
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.9
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.8
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	3.8
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.8

Table 6 and 7 show that participants rated all competencies on an acceptable level of belongingness or higher.

For participants in Port Elizabeth, the top competencies are:

- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)

For participants in George, the top competencies are:

- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)

## **6.2. Perceived competencies by non-participants**

Table 8 and 9 show the perceived learning outcomes of student life participation by non-participants.

*Table 8: Perceived competencies by non- participants - Port Elizabeth*

<b>Competency and corresponding learning outcome</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.2
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.1
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.1
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.1
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.1
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.1

Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making	4
Commit to personal morals and ethics	4
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument	4
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations	4
Explore career fields and workplace options	3.9
Effectively facilitate group discussions	3.9
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem	3.9
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution	3.9
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly	3.8
Implement ways to manage stress effectively	3.8
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change	3.8
Manage my time effectively	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight	3.7

Table 9: Perceived competencies by non-participants - George

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.3
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.2
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.2
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.2
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	4.2
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.2
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4.1
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.1
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	4.1
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.1
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.04
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4.04
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	3.96
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	3.96
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	3.96
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	3.93
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	3.92
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	3.89
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	3.89

Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.81
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	378
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.67

For non-participants the competencies are also ranked at an acceptable level of belongingness or identified learning and higher.

The top perceived competencies for Port Elizabeth non-participants are:

- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)
- Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)

The top perceived competencies for George non-participants are:

- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)

### **6.3. Perceived learning outcomes of co-curricular activities –BtC**

The BtC leadership programme is designed to help students understand and develop themselves with a comprehensive focus on leadership. Members are required to be actively engaged in sessions that expose them to new perspectives, foster reflection, and encourage action in their daily lives.

The learning outcomes of BtC as indicated in the CCR are:

- Intellectual growth
- Appreciating diversity
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships

According to BtC participants, the major competencies they receive from participating in the programme are:

- Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)

Based on these top competencies, the learning outcomes identified by BtC participants can be highlighted. Table 10 compares the learning outcomes as outlined by the programme with those identified by participants.

*Table 10: BtC learning outcomes, vs learning outcomes according to participants*

BtC learning outcomes	Learning outcomes according to BtC participants
Intellectual growth	Values exploration
Appreciating diversity	Appreciating diversity
Meaningful interpersonal relationships	Independence
	Self-awareness and development

## 7. INTERFERENCE

This section highlights the top reasons likely to interfere with participation in co-curricular activities or experiences in Port Elizabeth vs George.

Table 11: Top interferences in student life activities - Port Elizabeth vs George

<b>Port Elizabeth</b>	<b>George</b>
Day/time the activity is held (55.1%)	Day/time the activity is held (63.2%)
Lectures/class (52%)	Lectures/class (52.9%)
Transport (difficulty getting to activities) (42.7%)	Time (involvement in other activities) (48.3%)
Finances, lack of money (40.1%)	Finances, lack of money (42.5%)
Time (involvement in other activities) (38%)	Transport (difficulty getting to activities) (35.6%)

As indicated by table 11, the top interference in student life participation for all respondents is the day or time that activities are held.

### **SECTION 3: CONCLUSIONS**

#### **8. MAJOR FINDINGS**

Overall the biographical characteristics of respondents is similar to the general NMMU population. Some exceptions include that there were more female respondents in George, which comprises of a predominantly male student population. The survey also attracted comparatively more Black students and more on campus students, especially in George. 90% of respondents are less than 24 years old.

The NMMU shuttle is the primary means of commuting to campus for respondents followed by driving and taxis on both campuses.

There were notable differences in how Port Elizabeth and George respondents finance their education. In Port Elizabeth, most respondents finance their education with personal or family savings and in George, most students finance their education with NSFAS.

With regards to student perceptions, there was an overall acceptable level of satisfaction. The lowest rated perceptions on both campuses were "I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU" and "I feel like NMMU is a community." Perceptions were the same across genders, with the minor exception that there was statistically significant difference between males and females for the statement "I am proud to be attending the NMMU" (with a small effect size, males scoring slightly higher) in Port

Elizabeth and “My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU” in George (of moderate effect size, females scoring higher).

MANOVAs found the perceptions of White and students who identified as “Other” have room for improvement based on their mean scores in Port Elizabeth. In George, student perceptions according to race were an acceptable level of satisfaction.

Overall, 55% of respondents participate in student life activities, most of whom spend 1-5 hours per week on student life activities. In Port Elizabeth the student life activities with the most participants are academic societies (17%) followed by political societies (16.5%) then religious societies (15%). In George, sports clubs (23.5%) has the most participants followed by arts and culture activities (18.8%) and religious societies (14.8%).

George respondents dedicate more time per week on residence events than Port Elizabeth students (most George respondents dedicate 6-10 hours a week on residence events compared to 1-5 hours per week for Port Elizabeth respondents).

Overall, more than one-third of participants are in leadership positions (29.4% of Port Elizabeth and 34% of George respondents) and in co-curricular programmes (33% of Port Elizabeth and 29% of George respondents).

Based on the top rated competencies according to respondents who participate in student life activities in both Port Elizabeth and George (although ranked differently on each campus) the top learning outcomes of student life participation are:

- Independence
- Appreciating diversity
- Self-awareness and development
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships
- Effective communication

The learning outcomes that non-participants believed they would gain by participating in student life activities differed for each campus. Based on the top ranked

competencies, the learning outcomes non-participants in Port Elizabeth feel they would benefit from participating are:

- Self-awareness and development
- Appreciating diversity
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships
- Effective communication

Based on the top ranked competencies, the learning outcomes that non-participants in George feel they would benefit from participating are;

- Appreciating diversity
- Leadership development
- Effective communication
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships
- Social responsibility

With regards to BtC participants, participants identified values exploration, independence, appreciating diversity and self-awareness and development as learning outcomes that they receive from participating in the programme. Although these learning outcomes differ from those set out by the programme, with the exception of one, these findings highlights that the programme teaches participants to understand how values and ethics affect decision making and appreciate human and cultural differences, take responsibility for their actions and the programme also increases their self-confidence and assists them in identifying and pursuing individual goals.

The major interference in participating in student life activities overall is the day or time the activity is held.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this survey highlight the benefits of co-curricular student engagement cannot be overlooked and seem to indicate from participating in student life activities, students achieve the following learning outcomes: independence, self-awareness and

development, appreciating diversity, effective communication and meaningful interpersonal relationships.

The survey also highlights that students who do not participate also recognise the benefits of student engagement. Non-participants believe that from participating in student life activities, they would achieve the following learning outcomes: self-awareness and development, appreciating diversity, meaningful interpersonal relationships, effective communication, leadership development and social responsibility.

It is recommended that these findings receive consideration as a follow-up to the survey and to:

- Communicate the findings of the student life survey with relevant staff
- Intensify marketing and communication strategies to students. This will increase student awareness of programmes on offer that will assist them to be more employable graduates
- Use the results of the survey to enhance the current offerings to inform the development of future programmes to best meet the needs of NMMU students

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