REPORT ON THE 2016
NMMU STUDENT EXPERIENCES SURVEY

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

Authors: Manager: Leadership Training and Development:
Ms. D. Potgieter (Student Governance and Development, NMMU)
Ms. N. Nkosi

Assisted by:
Associate Professor M. Wawrzynski, (Michigan State University)

Senior Manager: Leadership Training and Development: Ms. K. Elliott (Student Governance and Development, NMMU)

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES SURVEY

1. INTRODUCTION

A vast number of researchers have highlighted the importance student engagement in student development (Hu and Kuh, 2002; Shernoff, Csiksentmihalyi, Schneider, and Shernoff, 2003; Hazeur, 2008 amongst others). Defined as participation in educationally effective practices both inside and outside the classroom, leading to a range of desirable outcomes (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek, 2007), student engagement not only highlights the importance of academic activities, but also activities outside the classroom, or student development (co-curricular) activities. Research has found that co-curricular or student development programmes are a necessary and integral component of student engagement and the university experience. The value of these activities has unfortunately not been measured consistently nor appropriately communicated to students and staff at NMMU. In order for student development programs to be perceived as experiences that promote student learning, it is vital to assess student development programs with methods of evaluation comparable to those used to evaluate curricular courses.

Student feedback on co-curricular learning and satisfaction is important as it will contribute to an educational experience that is relevant and responsive to students' 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.

1.1. The impact of #feesmustfall on student engagement

In October of 2015, university students all over the country took to the streets to protest fee increases in universities. These protests halted after the president of the country, Jacob Zuma announced a 0% fee increase. However, in 2016 protests resurged after the minister of higher education and training, Blade Nzimande, announced fees would increase in 2017 by no more than 8%. NMMU was one of the universities actively involved in the #feesmustfall protests. The demands of NMMU students' #feesmustfall

movement was a "socially responsible, fee-free and decolonized NMMU" (NMMUFMF, 2016). The #feesmustfall movement affected all students. It is therefore important to consider the potential influence of #feesmustfall. Incidents such as student arrests, police presence on campus, student violence and the impact of the movement on academic activities resulted in psychological trauma for many students. As a result, many students took to social media to voice their frustrations and distrust of the institution and the higher education sector as a whole. As a result of this loss of trust, it is possible that student perceptions of the NMMU as well as willingness to engage with the institution may be greatly affected.

1.2. Structure of the report

This is the third and final year the Department of Student Governance and Development (SGD) has engaged in the Student Experiences Survey, the purpose of which 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, administered annually from 2014-2016 will provide the institution 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 are 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:

- Student perceptions of the NMMU were generally high.

- More than half of students participate in student life activities and most spend 1-5 hours a week on these activities.

- The major student life activities that students partake in differed for Port Elizabeth and George campuses.

- The major learning outcomes identified by student life participants were the same in Port Elizabeth and George campuses.

- Overall, self-awareness and development, appreciating diversity, effective communication and meaningful interpersonal relationships were the learning outcomes non-participants felt they would receive if they participated in student life activities.

- The major constraint regarding student participation in campus life activities is the day or time that activities are held.

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 were 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	*Student' perceptions of life at NMMU*
2	*Types of co-curricular involvement* – a range of activities are listed varying from society involvement to sport club participation
3	*Time spent per week on co-curricular experiences/ activities*
4	*For students participating*: Learning outcomes linked to their participation
5	*For students not participating*: Perceived learning outcomes linked to their participation
6	*Interferences* with involvement in co-curricular experiences/ activities

7	*Biographical information*
	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, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." This was chosen in order to determine the perceptions and level of participation of survey respondents.

SECTION 2: INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The total number of respondents to the Student Experiences Survey was 4726 students. This represents 17.9% of the 26 306 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 1.4%.

Registered NMMU students on the North, South, 2nd 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 are 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 beings 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 and analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests.

The annual analysis of data has enabled action research based on the information received. After the three-year period, we will be able to analyse trends in co-curricular learning outcomes.

Port Elizabeth and George campuses have been analysed separately 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 4726 students who participated in the survey, 4533 were from Port Elizabeth and 193 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
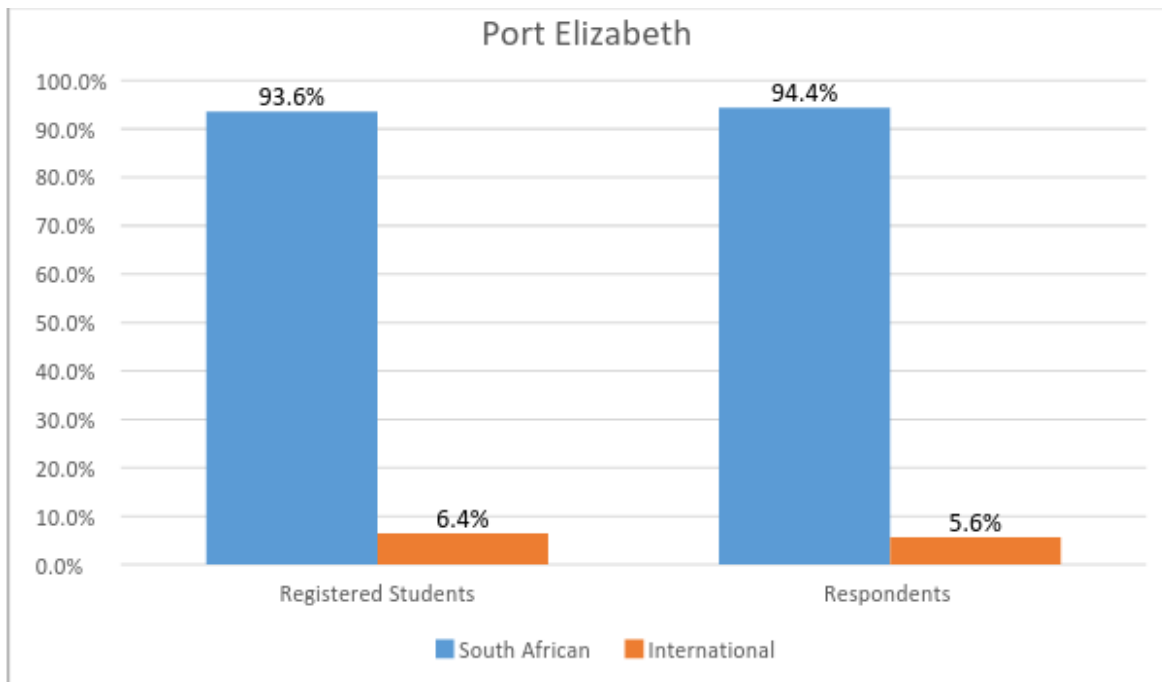
Graph 1: Registered students vs. respondents according to nationality - Port Elizabeth
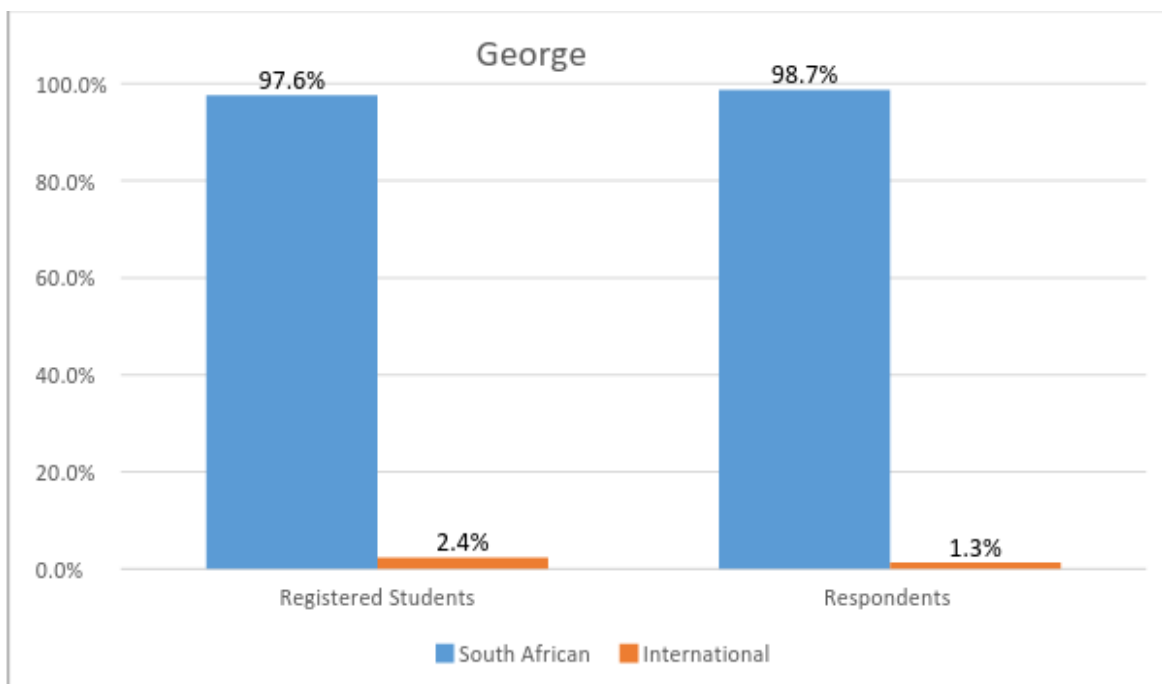
Graph 2: Registered students vs. respondents according to nationality - George

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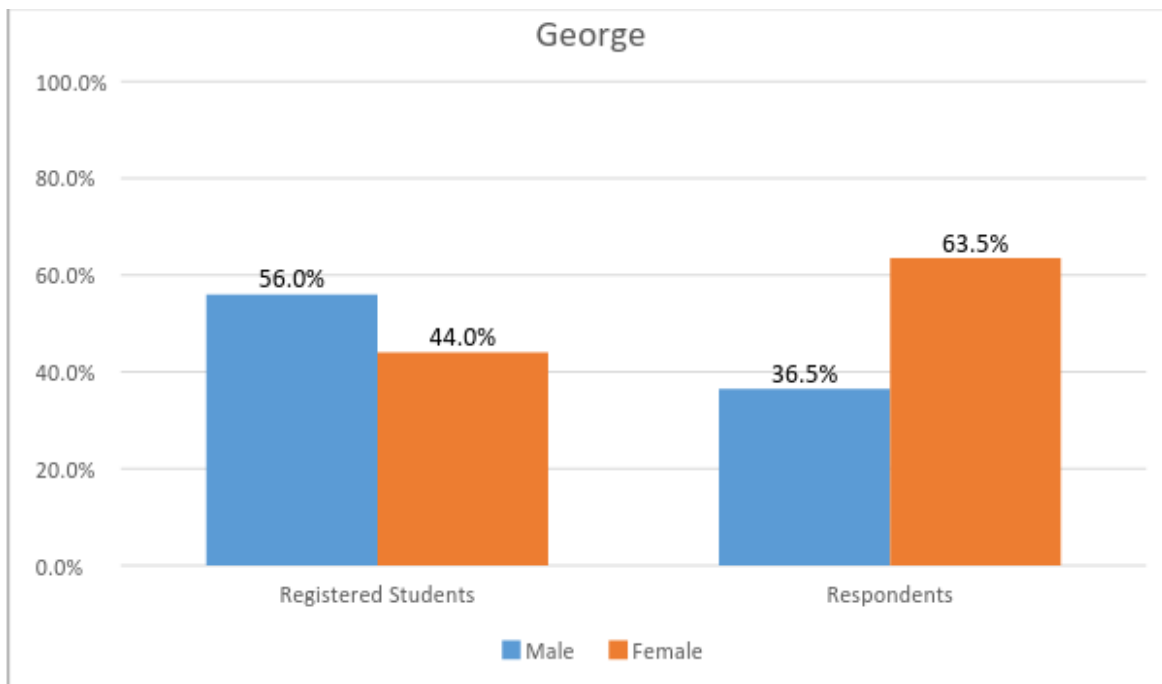
Graph 4: Registered students vs. respondents according to gender – George

Graphs 3 and 4 demonstrate 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 had a predominantly male student population, more respondents were female.

3.1.3. Race[1]

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

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[1] Race groups are tallied according to main race groups set by NMMU DHET according to Home Affairs specifications

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

Graphs 5 and 6, which demonstrate a comparison of the race classification of respondents with registered students in Port Elizabeth and George respectively, indicate that relatively more black students responded to the survey. Fewer white students responded to the survey.

3.1.4. Age

As indicated by graphs 7 and 8 below, most respondents are younger than 25 (91.9% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 85% of respondents in George are between ages 18-24). Nearly two-thirds of all respondents fall within the 21 – 24 age range in both Port Elizabeth (60.4%) and George (55.7%), followed by 18-20 (31.5% in Port Elizabeth and 40.3% in George).
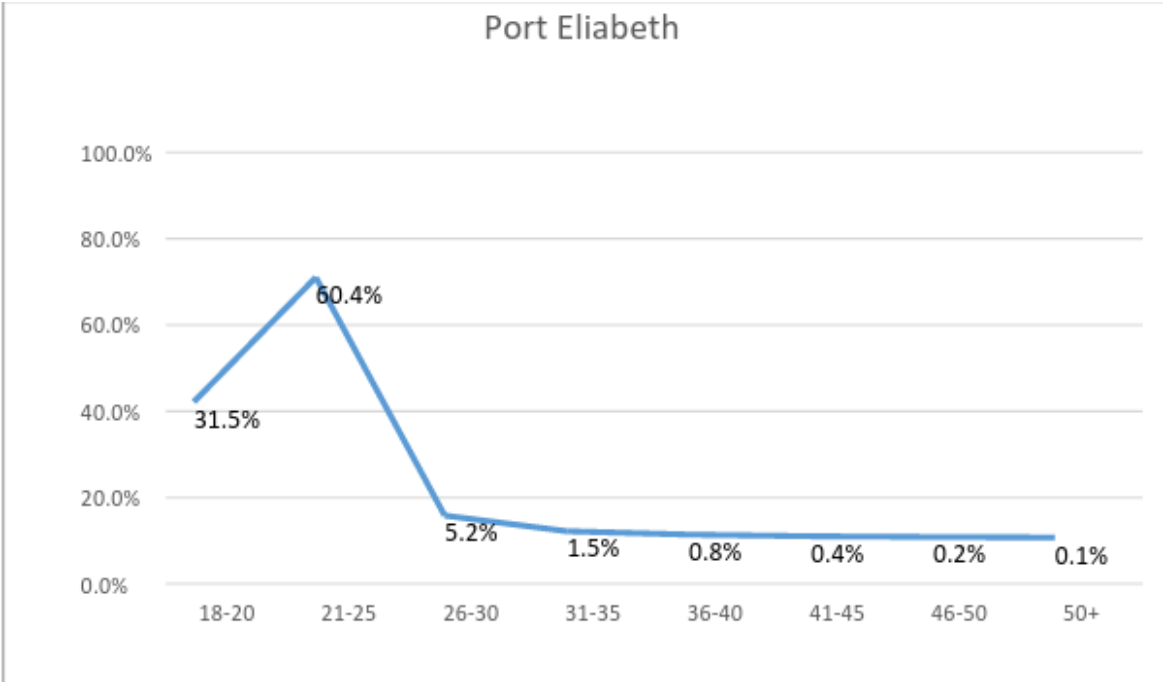
Graph 7: Age range of respondents - Port Elizabeth
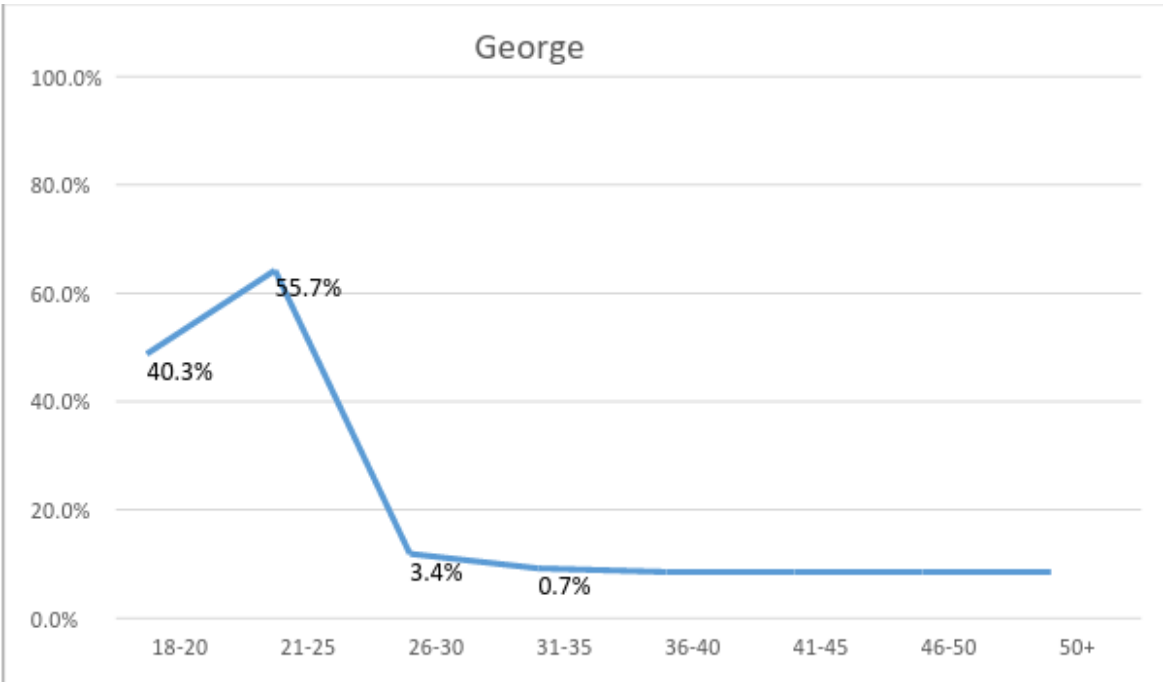
Graph 8: Age range of respondents - George

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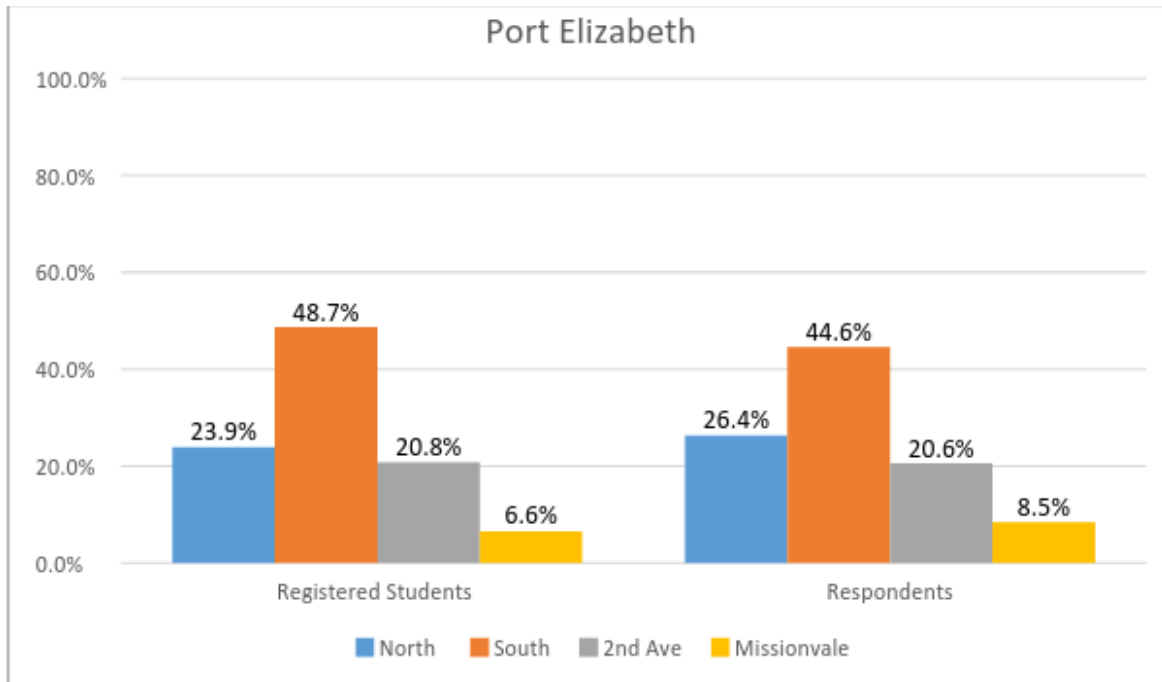
Graph 9: Registered students vs. respondents according to campus attended - Port Elizabeth

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

3.2.2. Registration status

Graphs 10 and 11 convey 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, when compared to the NMMU population, there were more full-time students who responded to the survey.
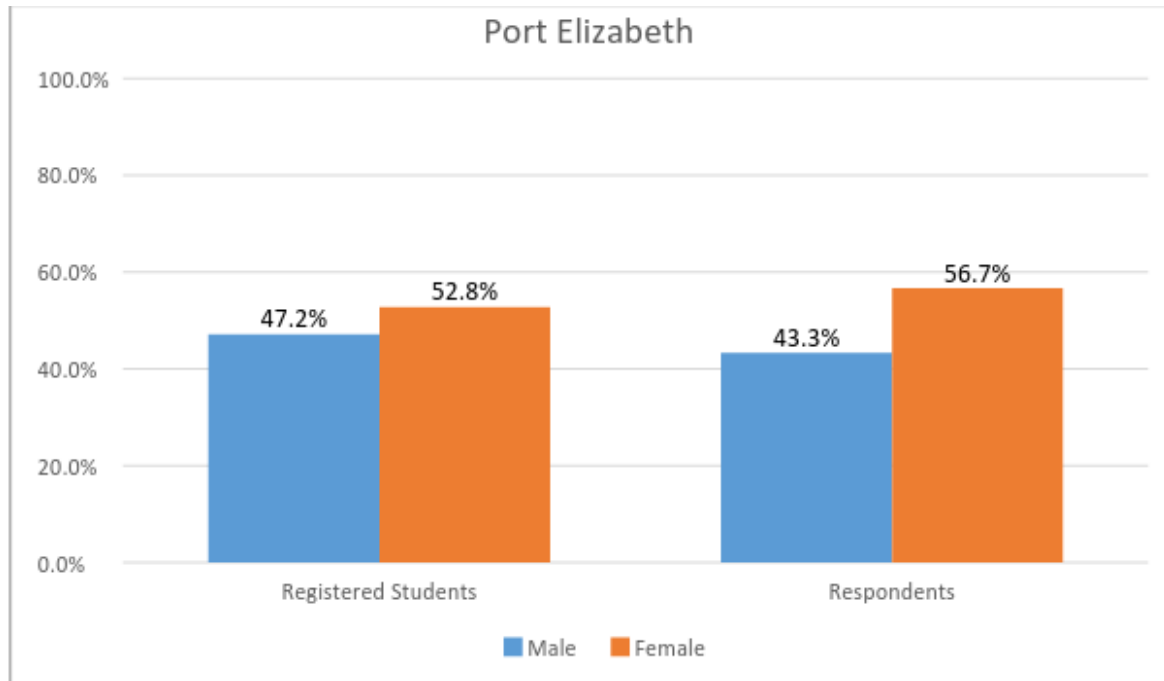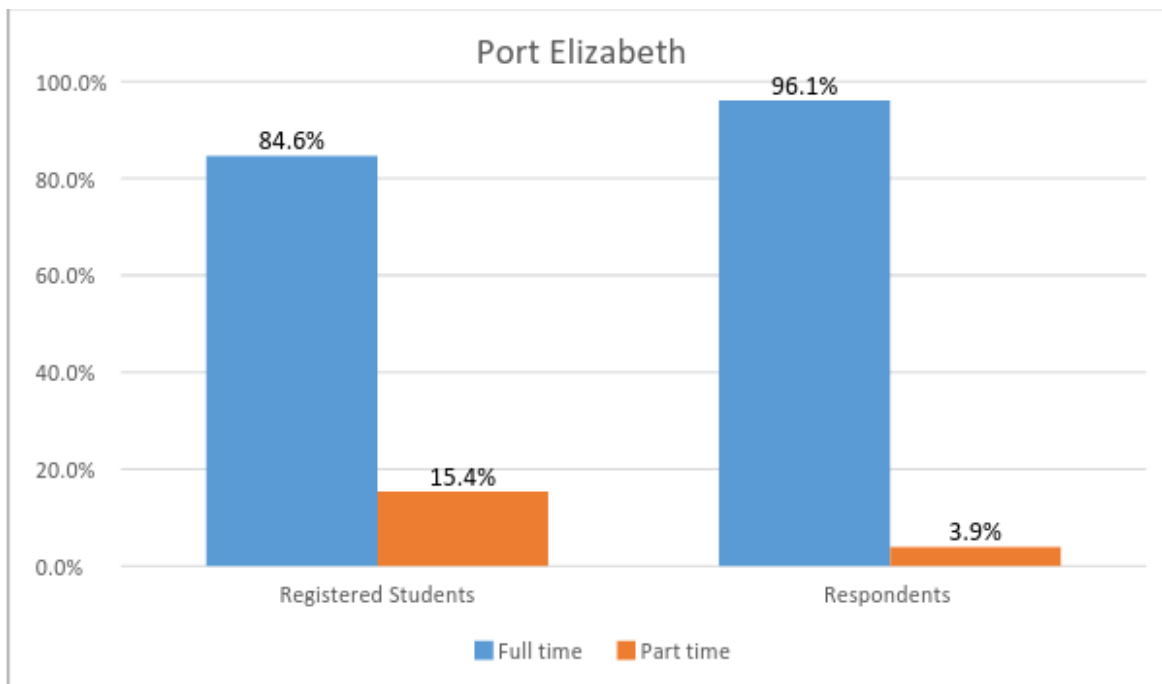
Graph 10: Registered students vs. respondents according to registration status- Port Elizabeth
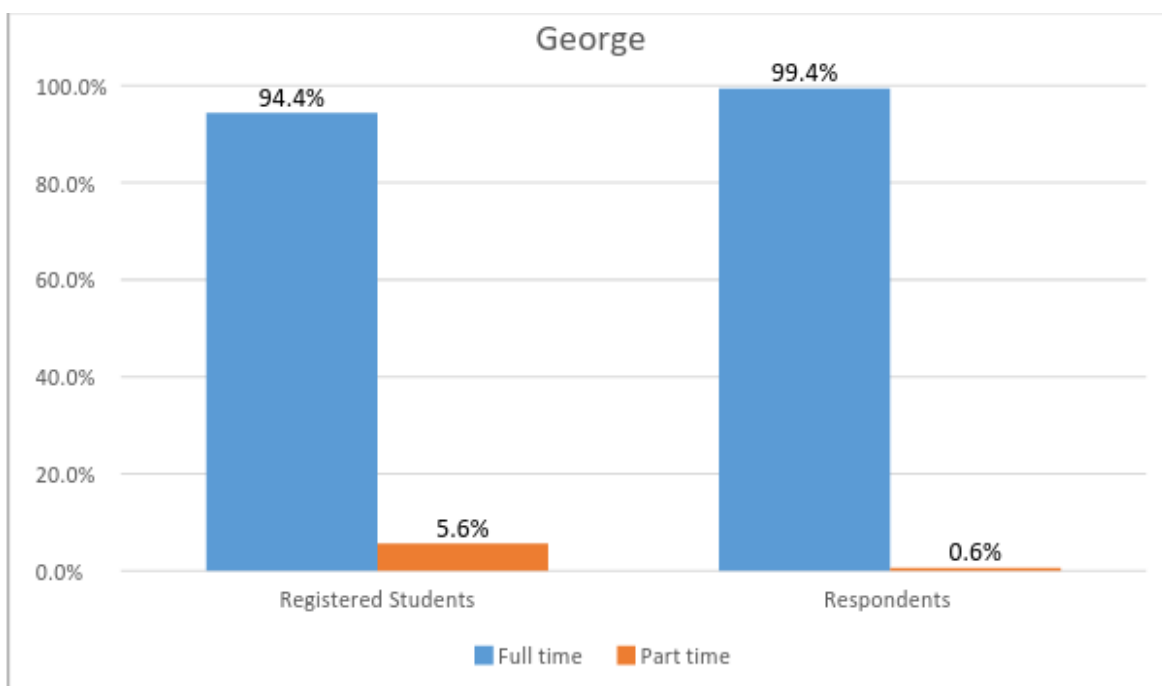
Graph 11: Registered students vs. respondents according to registration status – George

3.2.3. Academic level

Academic level refers to whether students are undergraduate or postgraduate students.
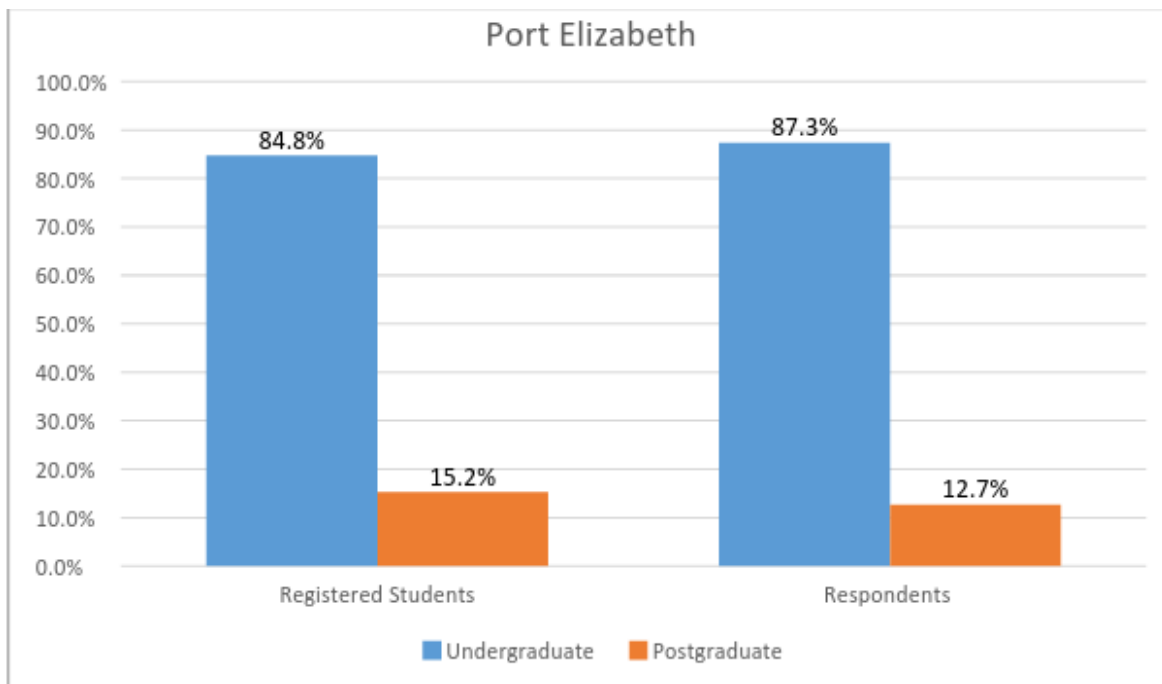
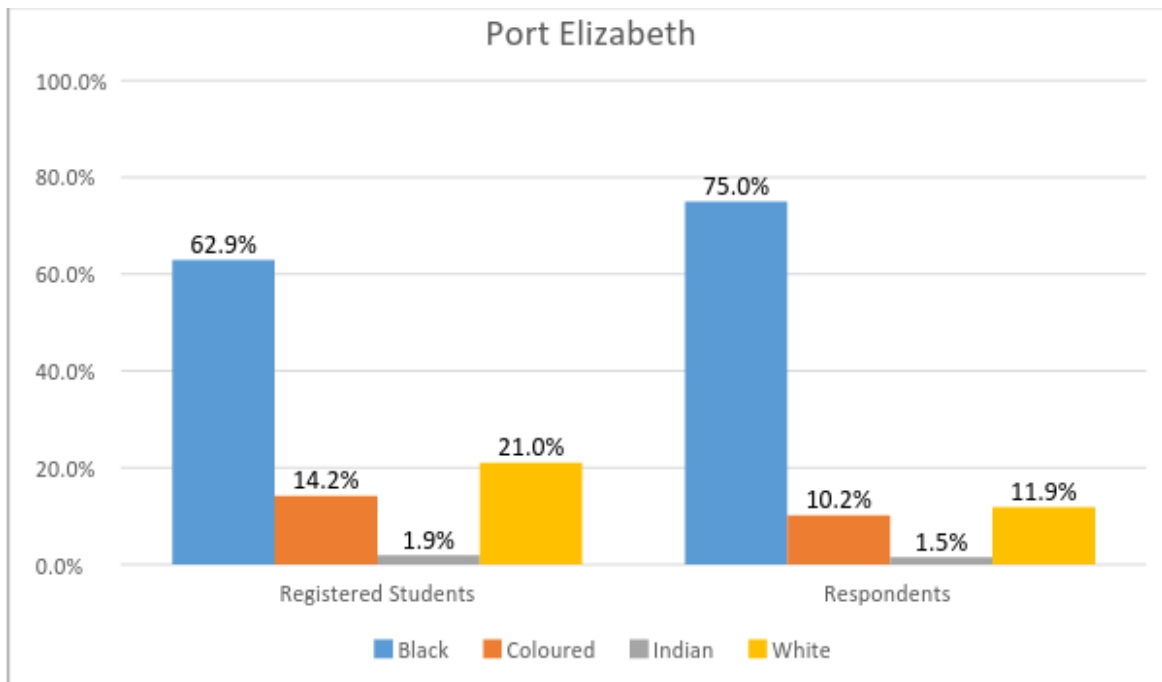*Graph 12: Registered students vs. respondents according to academic status - Port Elizabeth*

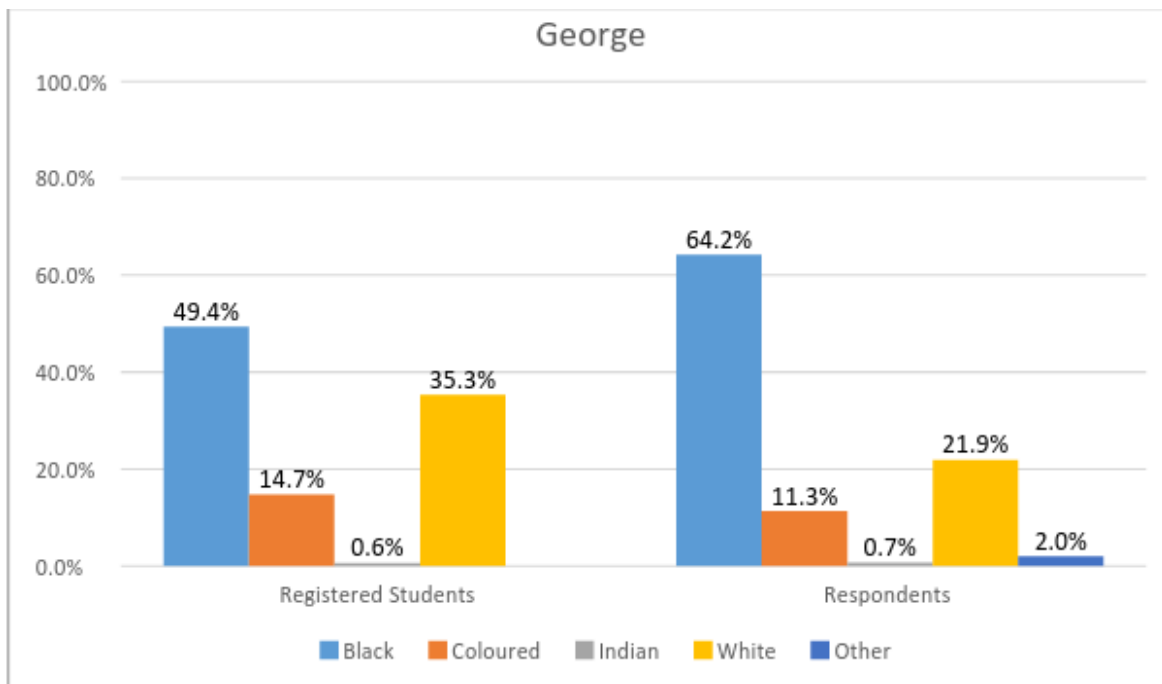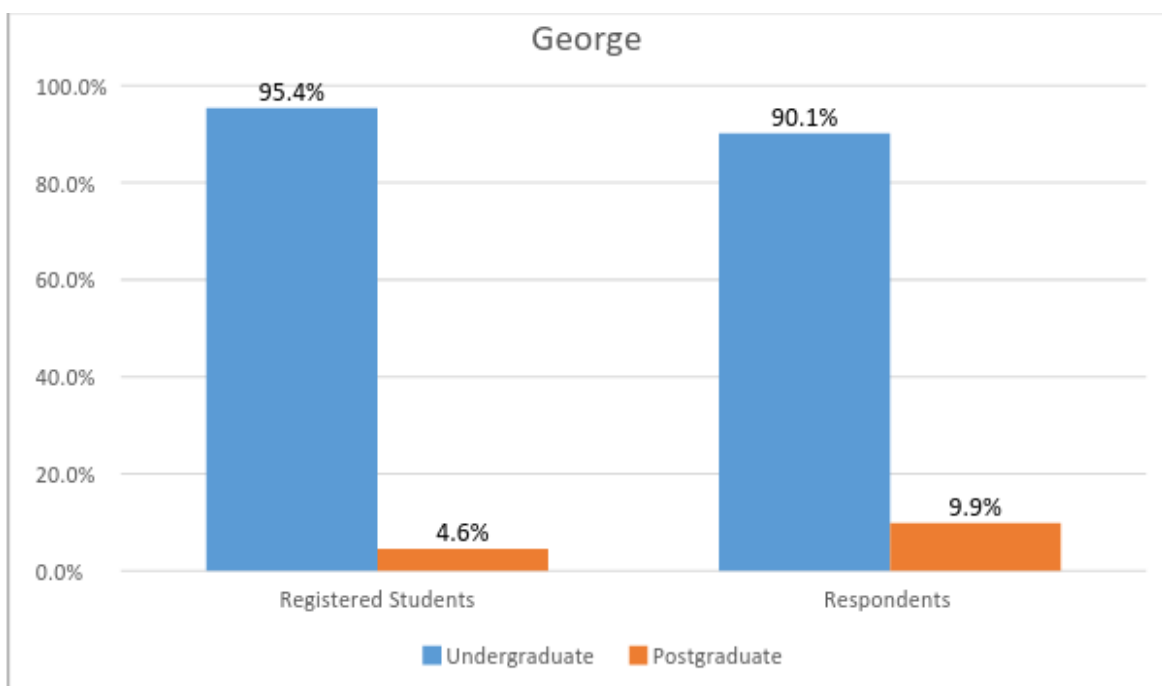*Graph 13: Registered students vs. respondents according to academic status – George*

Graph 12 shows that the academic level ratio of respondents in Port Elizabeth is like the registered university population.

Graph 13 shows that with regards to the academic level ratio in George, slightly more postgraduate students responded to the survey when compared to registered students.

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, 27.6% of respondents are in their first year, and 28.3% are in their second year.

In George, 45.1% are in their first year, and 32.1% are in their second year.
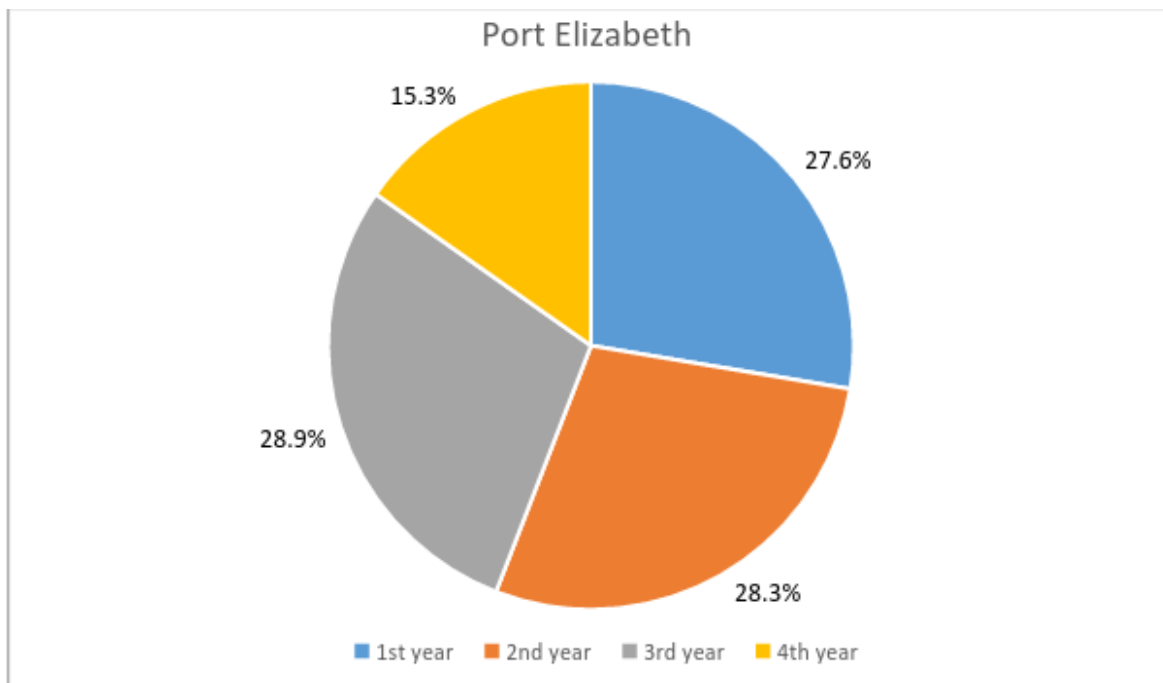
Graph 14: Year of study - Port Elizabeth
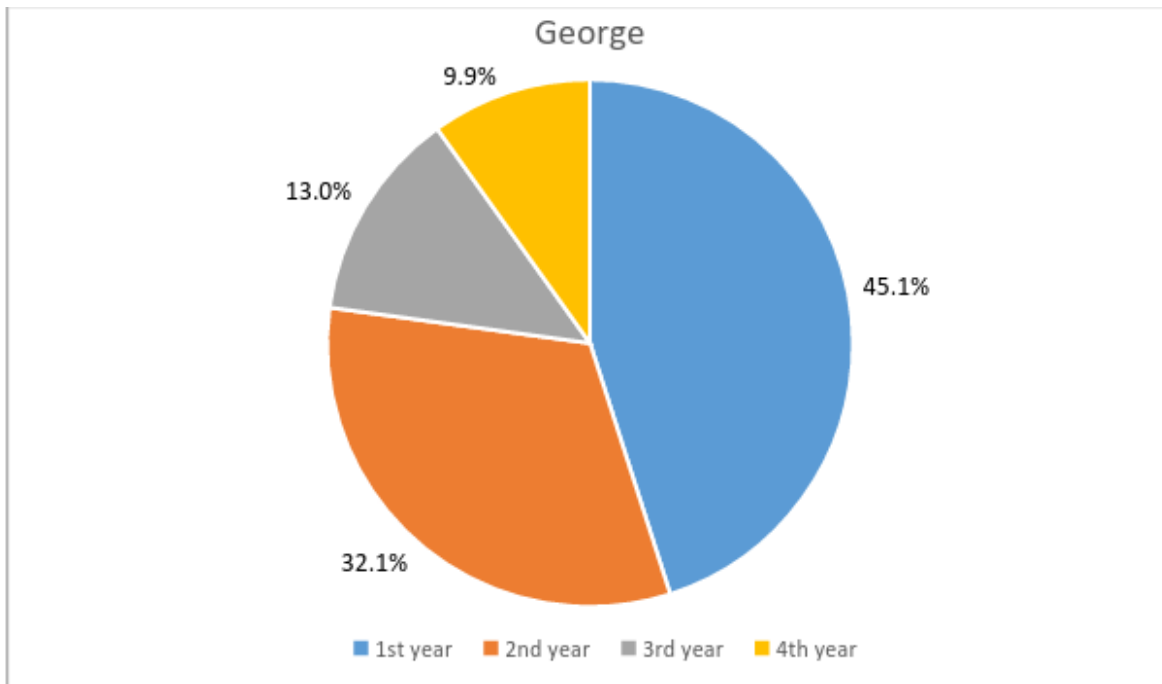
Graph 15: Year of study – George

3.2.5. Faculty

Graphs 16 and 17 reflect the breakdown of respondents according to the faculties in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. Overall, respondents are generally representative of the NMMU population with regards to faculty in Port Elizabeth. In George, over half of respondents are from the science faculty (50.7%). The other half are from the business and economic sciences faculty (48%).
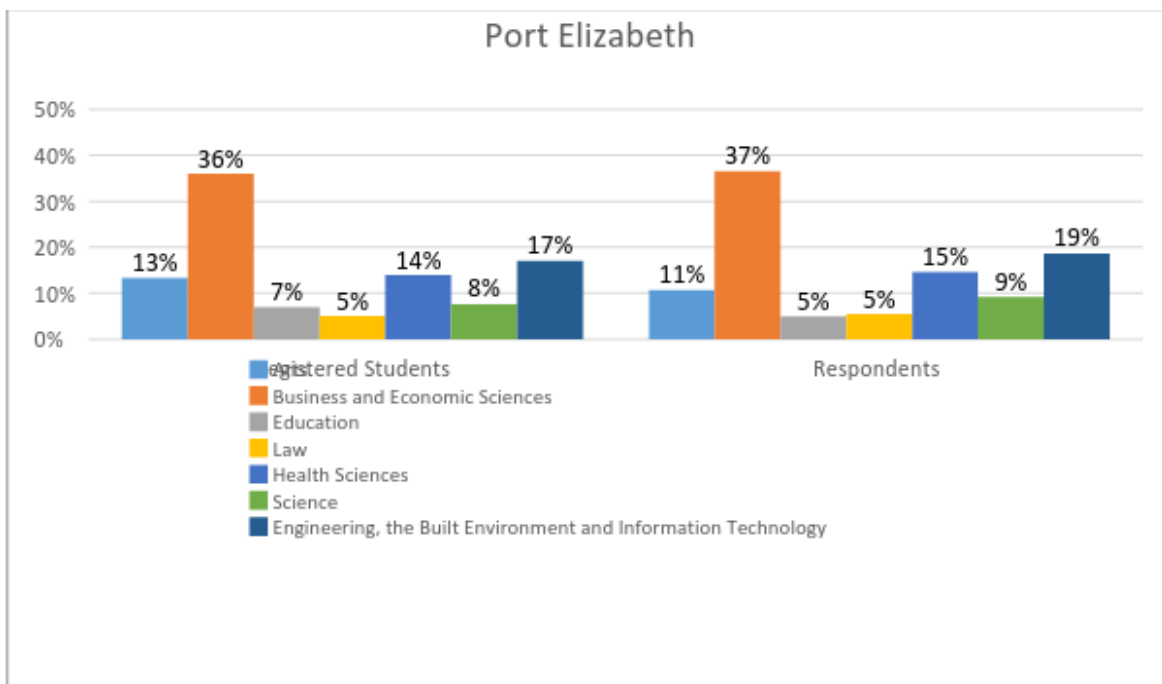
Graph 16: Registered students vs. respondents by faculty – Port Elizabeth
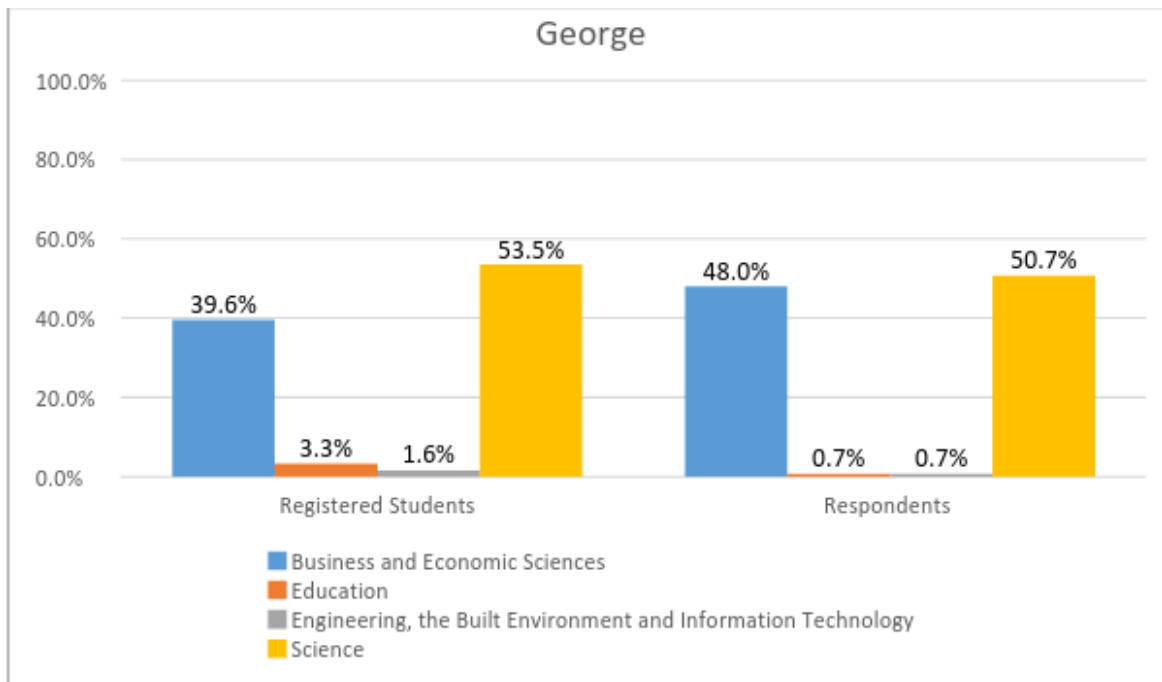
Graph 17: Registered students vs. respondents by faculty – George

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.
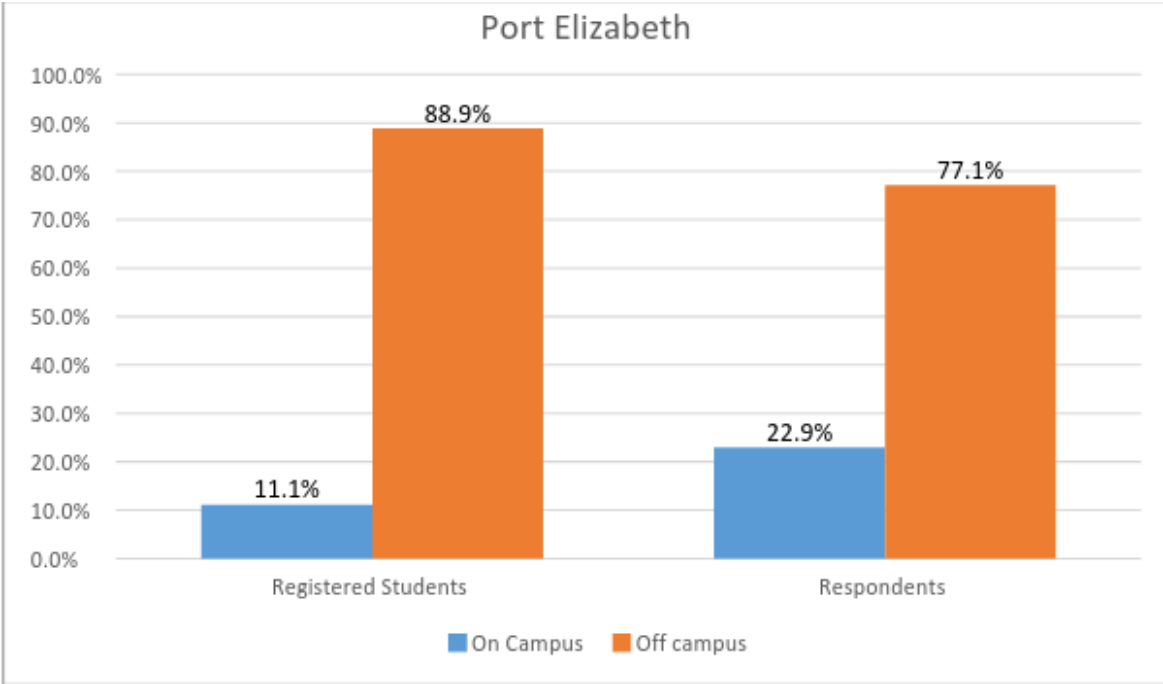
Graph 18: On vs. off campus breakdown - Port Elizabeth
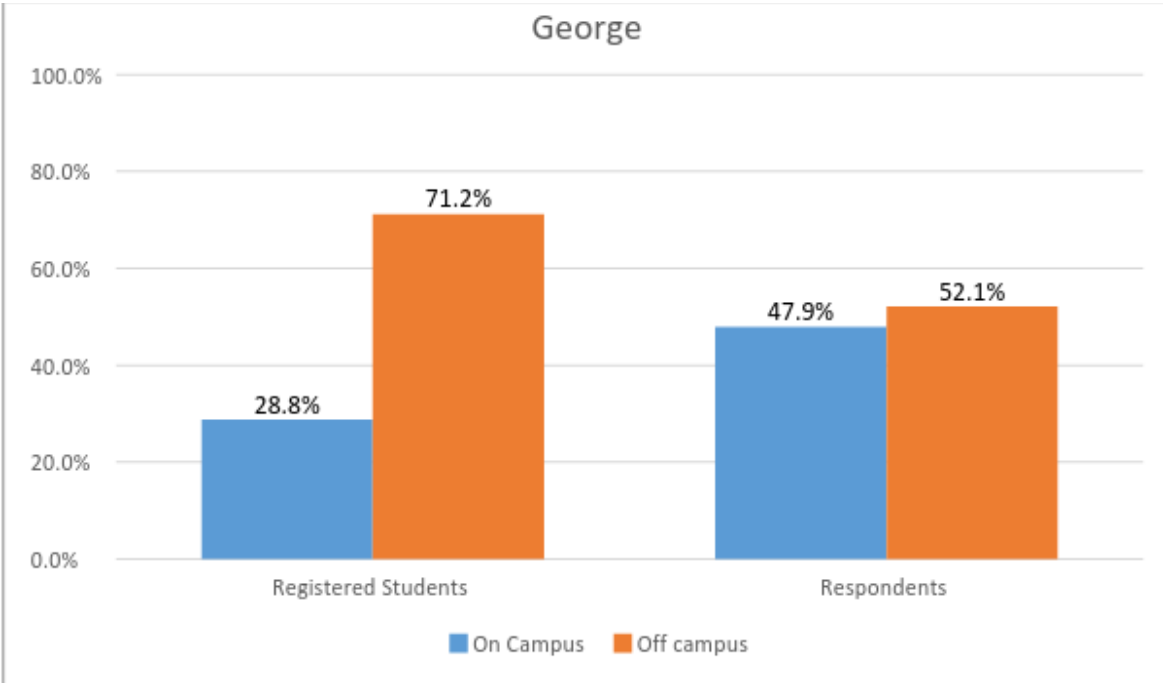
Graph 19: On vs. off campus breakdown - George

When compared to the general NMMU student population, the survey attracted a greater number of students who reside on campus in Port Elizabeth.

In George, the survey attracted a comparatively high number of on-campus students, with 47.9% of respondents residing on campus compared to 28.8% of the proportion of registered students.

3.3.2. Off campus type of living

Of the respondents who live off campus in Port Elizabeth, 32.9% reside in an accredited off-campus residence, 33.8% live in private accommodation, and 33.3% live at home or with extended family.

No data is available for George with regards to off-campus type of living.

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.
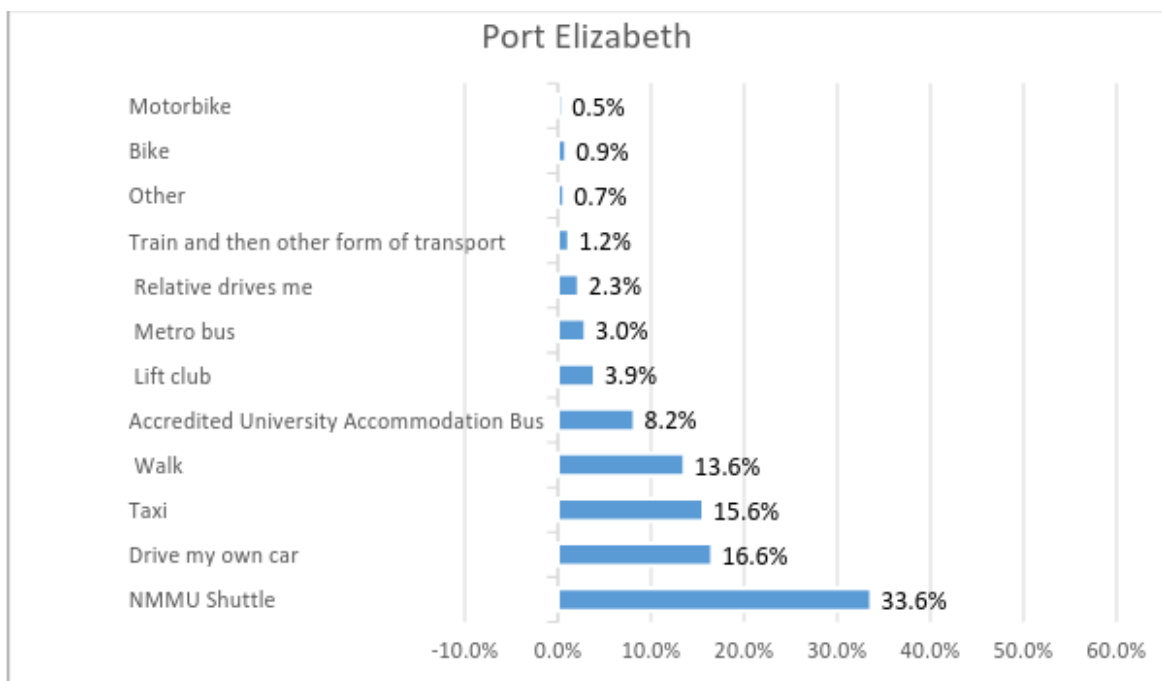
Graph 20: Primary commute to campus - Port Elizabeth
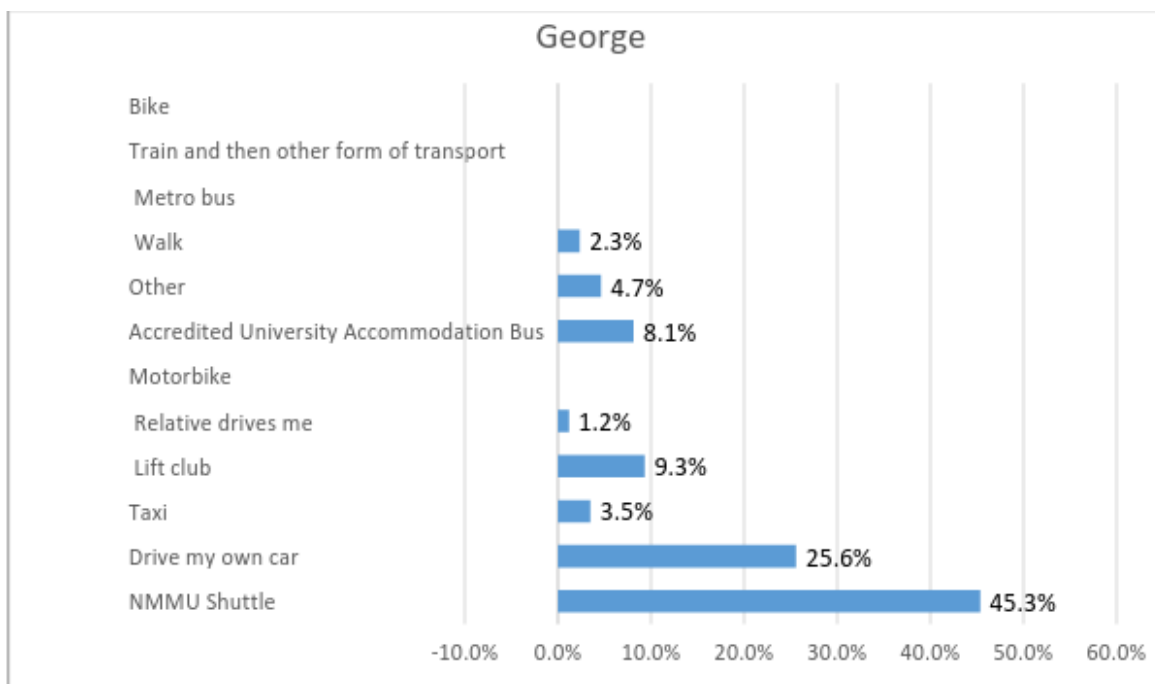
Graph 21: Primary commute to campus – George

As shown by graph 20, the top five modes of commuting to campus by respondents in Port Elizabeth are the NMMU shuttle (33.6%), driving own car (16.6%), taxi (15.6%), walking (13.6%), and accredited university accommodation bus (8.2%).

In George, as highlighted by graph 21, the top five modes of commute are the NMMU Shuttle (45.3%), drive own car (25.6%), lift club (9.3%), accredited university accommodation bus (8.1%), and other forms of transportation such driving a parent or relative's car, a lift from a friend or a combination of more than one mode of transportation (e.g. taxi then shuttle) (4.7%).

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.
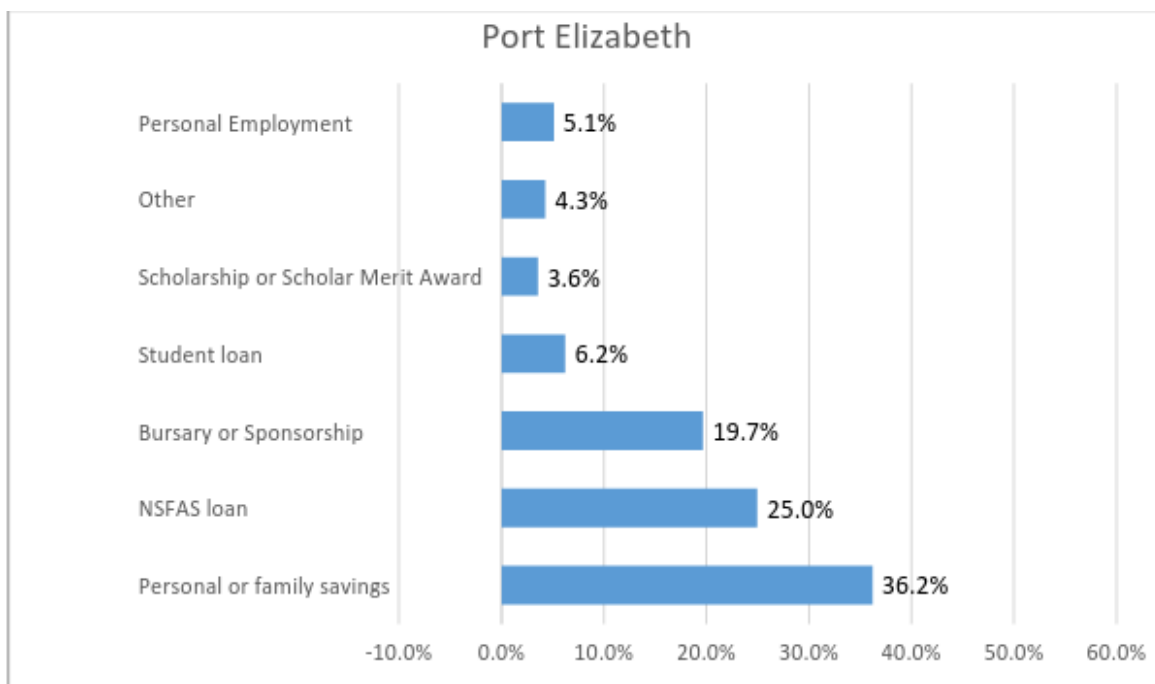
Graph 22: Method of financing education - Port Elizabeth
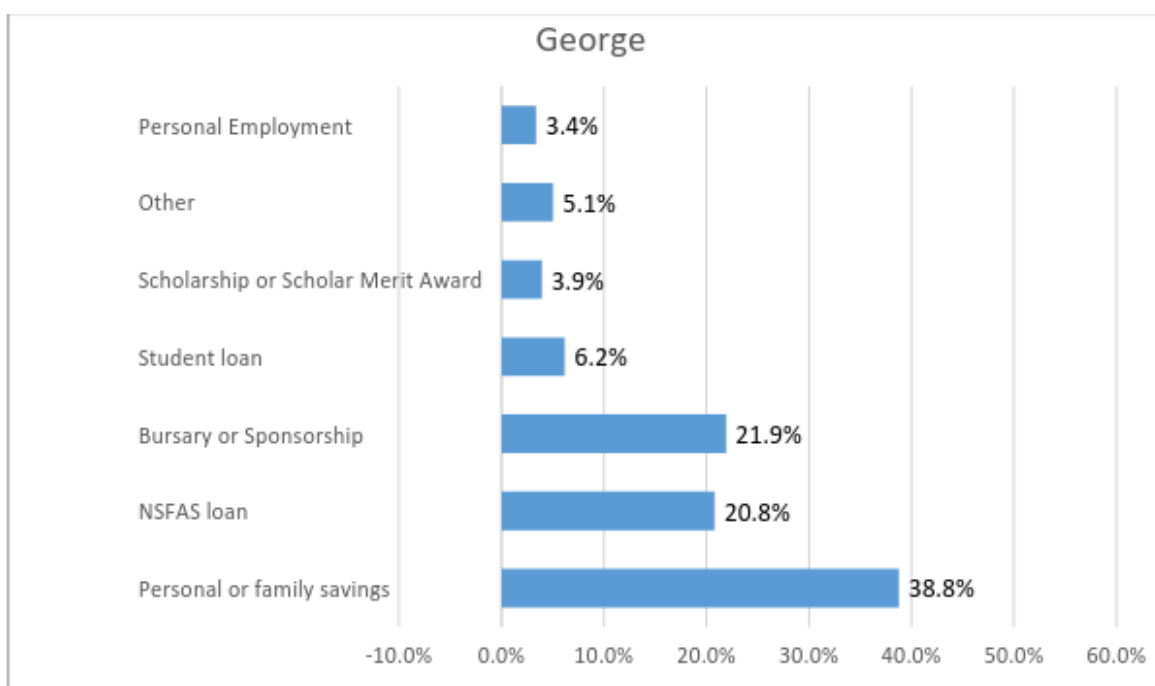
Graph 23: Method of financing education – George

As indicated by graph 22, most respondents in Port Elizabeth finance their education through personal or family savings (36.2%) followed by NSFAS loans (25%) and bursary or sponsorship (19.7%).

In George, graph 23 shows most respondents' education was funded by personal or family savings (38.8%) followed by bursary or sponsorship (21.9%) and NSFAS (20.8%).

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.	4.3	4307	50.1%	33.0%	12.6%	2.5%	1.9%
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.7	4300	21.9%	40.1%	29.9%	5.7%	2.4%
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.3	4293	51.6%	35.4%	9.6%	1.9%	1.6%
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.1	4286	39.1%	35.7%	20.3%	3.1%	1.8%
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.6	4279	22.0%	35.1%	30.1%	9.5%	3.3%
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	3.0	4294	10.0%	21.1%	34.3%	23.5%	11.0%

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.	4.3	190	57.9%	27.9%	7.9%	1.6%	4.7%
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.8	189	23.3%	47.1%	22.2%	4.8%	2.6%
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.3	190	53.7%	34.2%	5.8%	2.1%	4.2%
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.2	189	48.7%	34.4%	7.9%	4.8%	4.2%
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.6	189	22.2%	36.0%	27.0%	8.5%	6.3%
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.8	188	10.1%	14.9%	32.4%	30.9%	11.7%

Student perceptions were overall positive on both campuses, as evident in the relatively low mean score of students who feel excluded (mean score = 3 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 (3.7 in Port Elizabeth; 3.8 in George)
- I feel like NMMU is a community (3.6 in both Port Elizabeth and 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. Analysis of variance tests (ANOVAS) 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 there was no significant difference in student perceptions between males and females in both Port Elizabeth and George.

4.2. Student perceptions according to race

Tables 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=2444)	Chinese (N=8)	Coloured (N=331)	Indian (N=48)	White (N=380)	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.2	No difference
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.8	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.5	Small
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.3	4.0	4.4	4.4	4.3	No difference
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.1	4.4	4.1	4.2	3.8	Small
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.3	Small
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	3.0	2.6	2.9	2.8	3.0	No difference

Table 4: Student perceptions by race – George

Question	Black (N=97)	Coloured (N=17)	White (N=33)	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.3	4.5	4.4	No difference
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.9	3.8	3.6	No difference
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.4	4.4	4.2	No difference
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.3	4.2	3.8	Small
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.7	3.6	3.3	No difference
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.8	3.4	3.0	No difference

For Port Elizabeth, the overall ANOVA found a statistically significant difference between races amongst some of the perceptions.

Black and white students' perceptions differed when it comes to the statement "I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU." The magnitude or effect size of the difference

is small (eta squared = 0.01). The scores indicated that black students (M=3.8, SD=0.91) had a slightly higher mean score than white students (M=3.5, SD=0.96).

White students had different perceptions from both black and coloured students when it comes to the statements "I am proud to be attending the NMMU" and "I feel like the NMMU is a community." When it comes to the NMMU pride perception, white students (M=3.8, SD=0.92) had a lower mean score than black (M=4.1, SD=0.91) and coloured (M=4.1, SD=0.93). The magnitude or effect size of the difference is small (eta squared = 0.01). For the NMMU community perception, white (M=3.3, SD=1.03) and black (M=3.7, SD=1.02) and white and coloured (M=3.6, SD=0.9) students had statistically significant differences of small magnitude (eta squared = 0.01). Inspection of the mean scores indicates there is room for improvement regarding this statement for white students.

In George, the ANOVA found no statistically significant differences amongst the races with regards to perceptions, except for the statement "I am proud to be attending the NMMU." Black (M=4.3, SD=1.04) and white (M=3.8, SD=1.14) had a statistically significant difference of small magnitude (eta squared = 0.004). Closer inspections of the mean scores indicate the black students had a slightly higher score

5. STUDENT LIFE ACTIVITIES

Graphs 24 and 25 show the number of respondents who participate in student life activities versus those who do not in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.
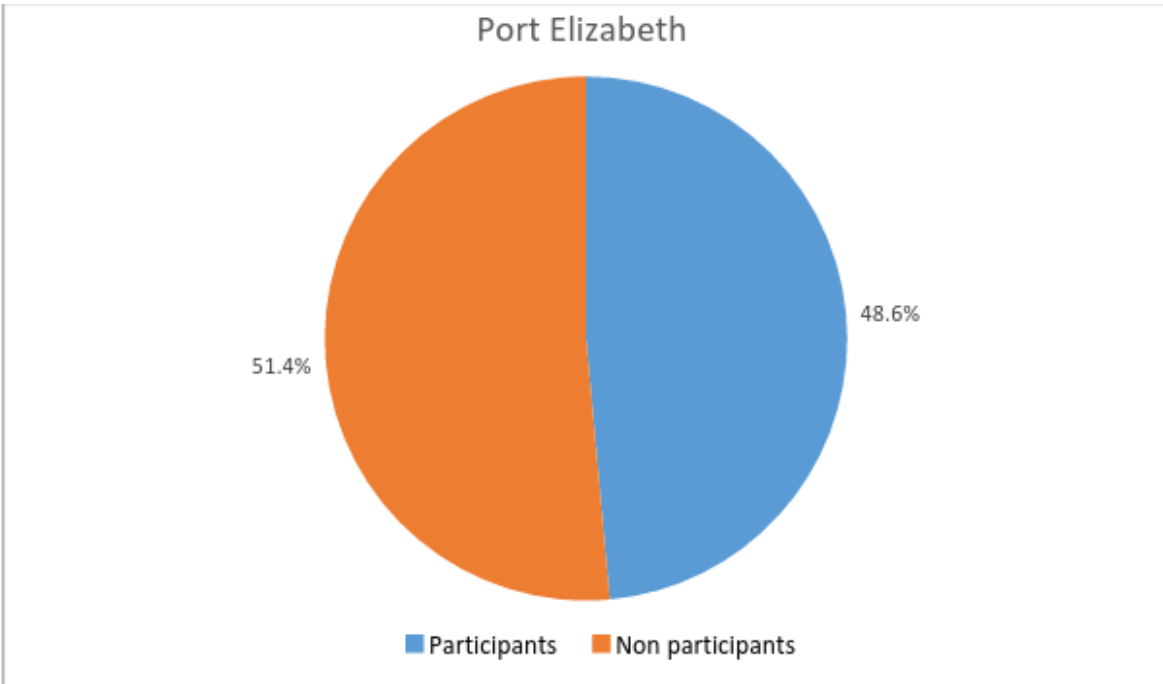
Graph 24: Respondents who participate in student activities vs. non-participants - Port Elizabeth
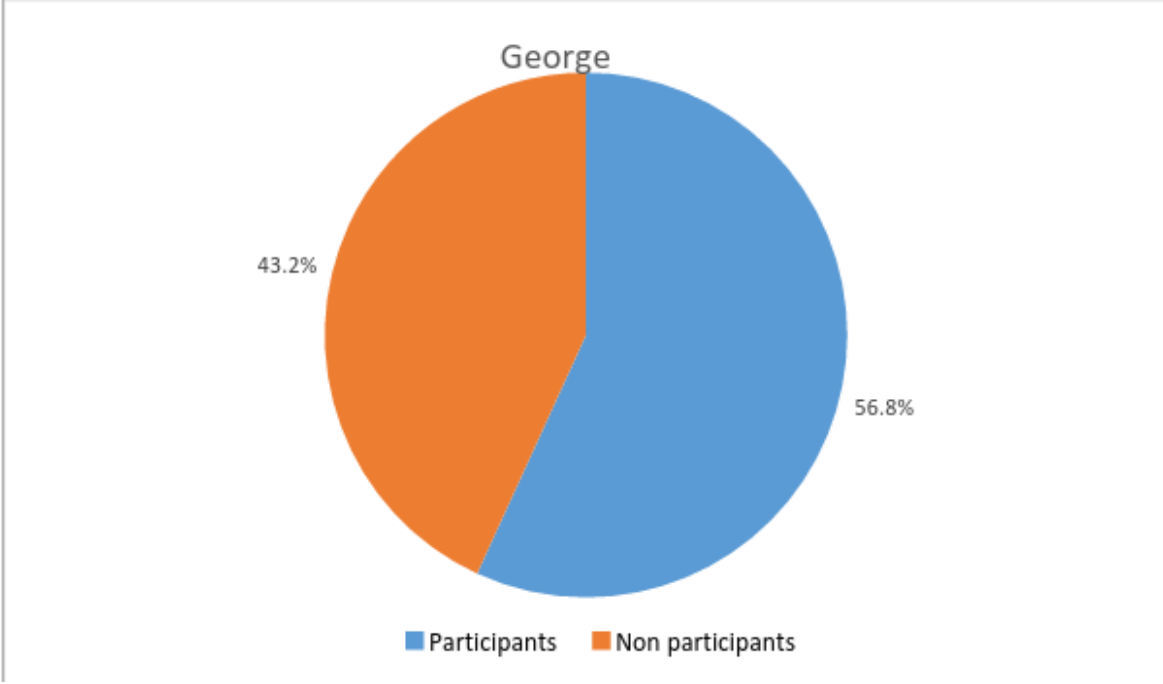
Graph 25: Respondents who participate in student activities vs. non-participants - George

The survey attracted a greater number of students who do not participate in student life activities in Port Elizabeth, with 48.6% of respondents being student life participants. In contrast, more respondents are student life participants in George (56.8%).

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 Port Elizabeth and George respectively as well as time spent on student life activities.

5.1.1. Overall time spent on student life activities
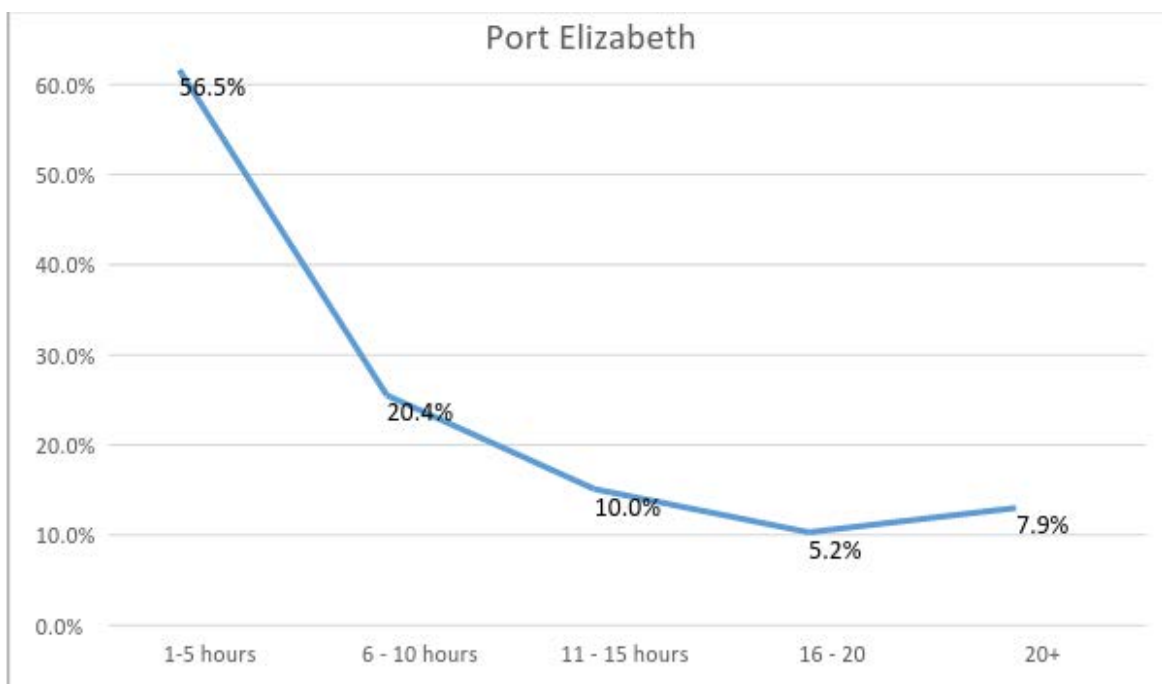
Graph 26: Overall time spent on student life activities – Port Elizabeth
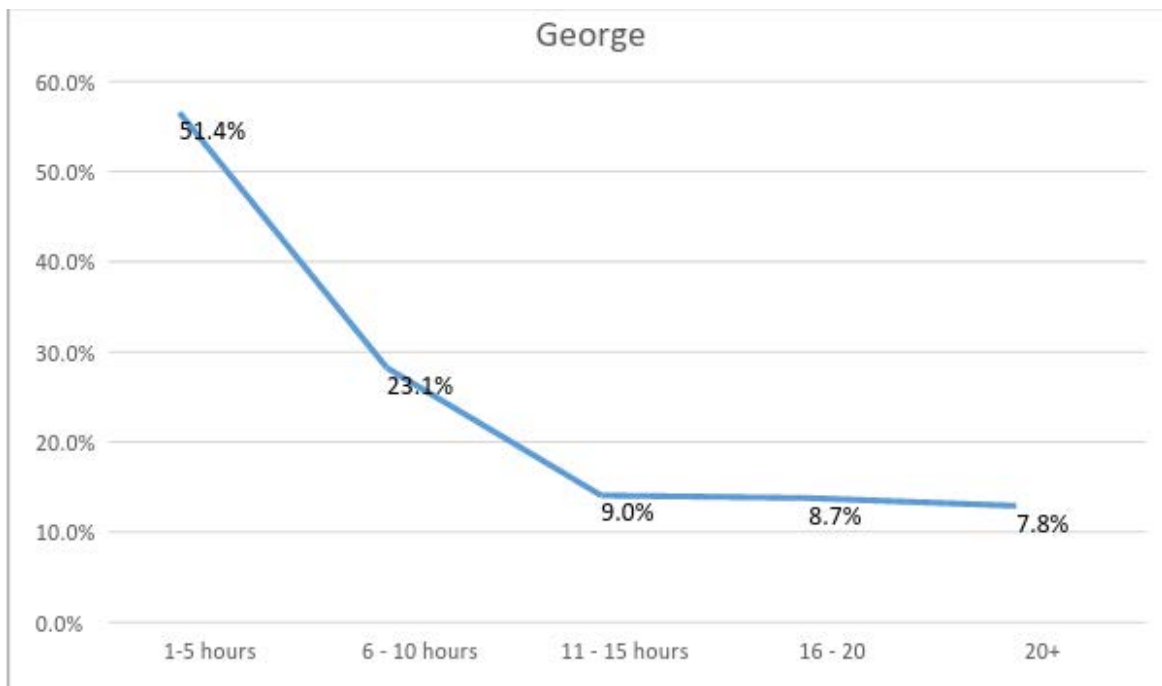
Graph 27: Overall time spent on student life activities – George

As highlighted by graphs 26 and 27, more than half of respondents dedicate 1-5 hours per week on student life activities (56.5% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 51.4% in George).

5.1.2. Societies

Participation in Societies
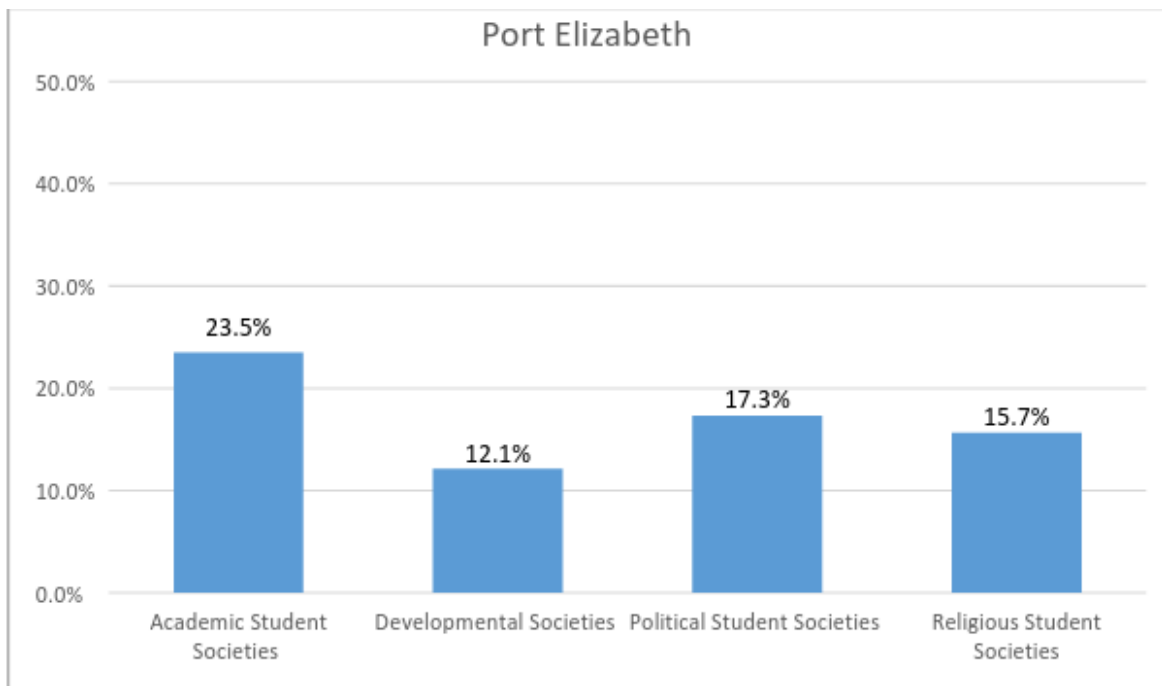
Graph 28: Society participation – Port Elizabeth
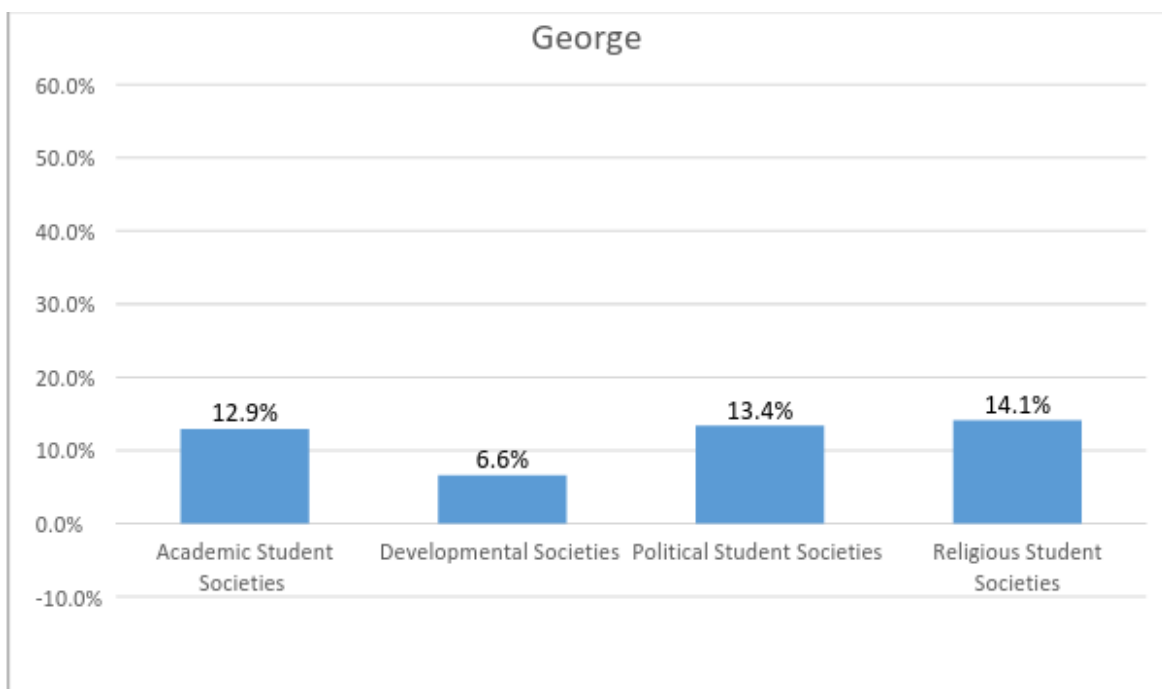
Graph 29: Society participation - George

Graph 28 shows that most society participants in Port Elizabeth 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
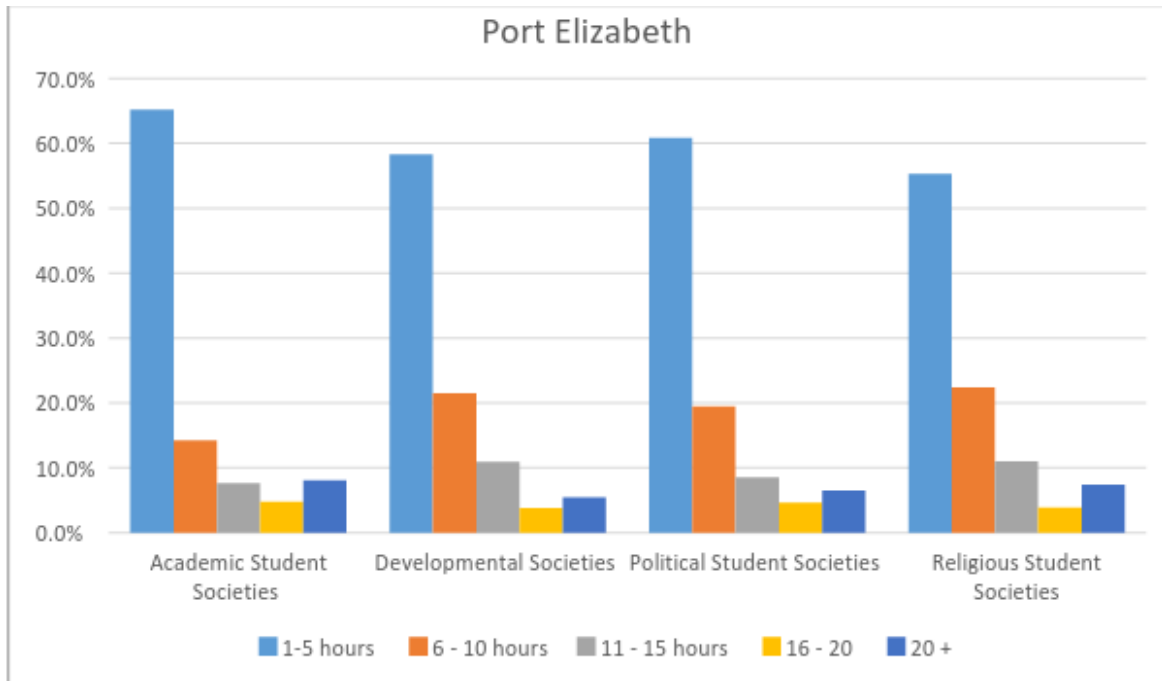
Graph 30: Time spent on societies - Port Elizabeth
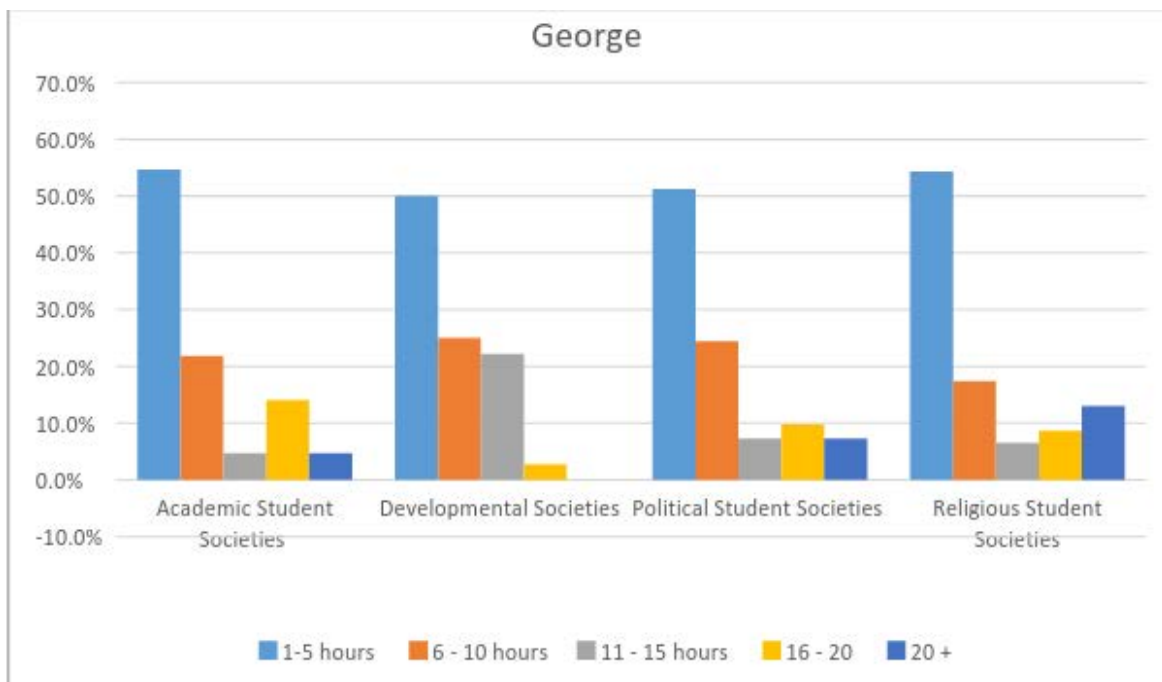
Graph 31: Time spent on societies – George

Graphs 30 and 31 show that most respondents dedicate 1-5 hours a week overall to society participation in Port Elizabeth and in George

5.1.3. Arts and Culture

Arts and Culture participation

9% of Port Elizabeth respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activity.
20.5% of George respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activities.

Time spent on Arts and Culture activities

Graphs 32 and 33 show that in both Port Elizabeth and George, almost two thirds of respondents who participated in Arts and Culture activities dedicate 1-5 hours a week on Art and Culture activities.
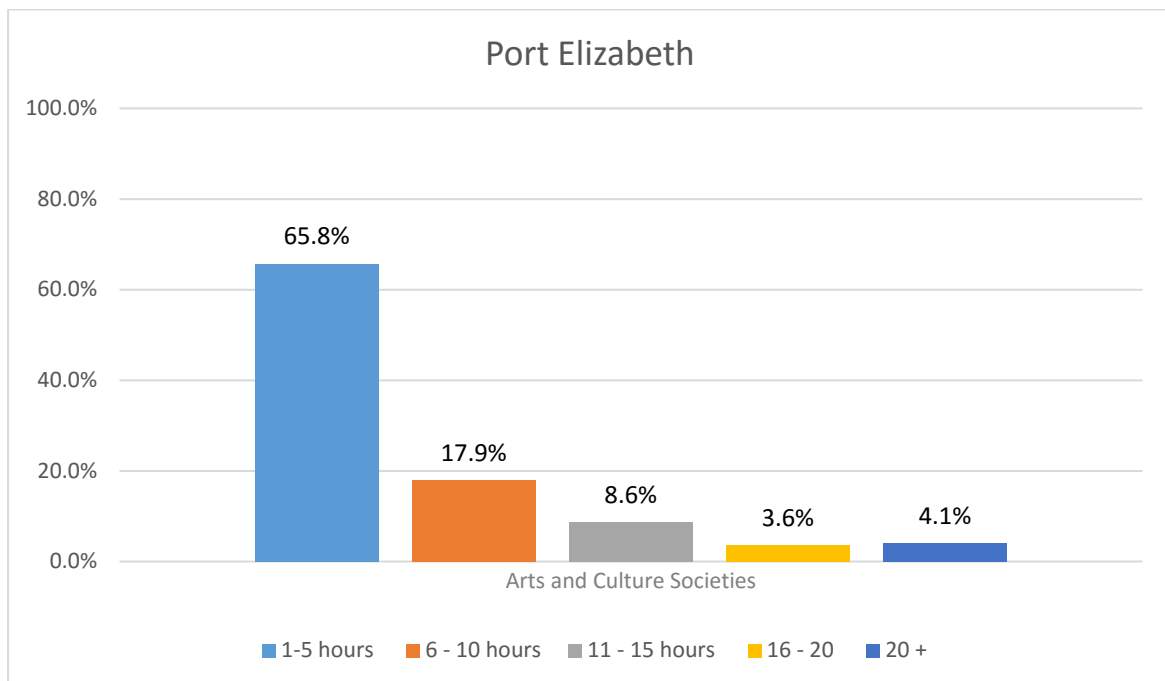
Graph 32: Time spent on Arts and Culture activities - Port Elizabeth
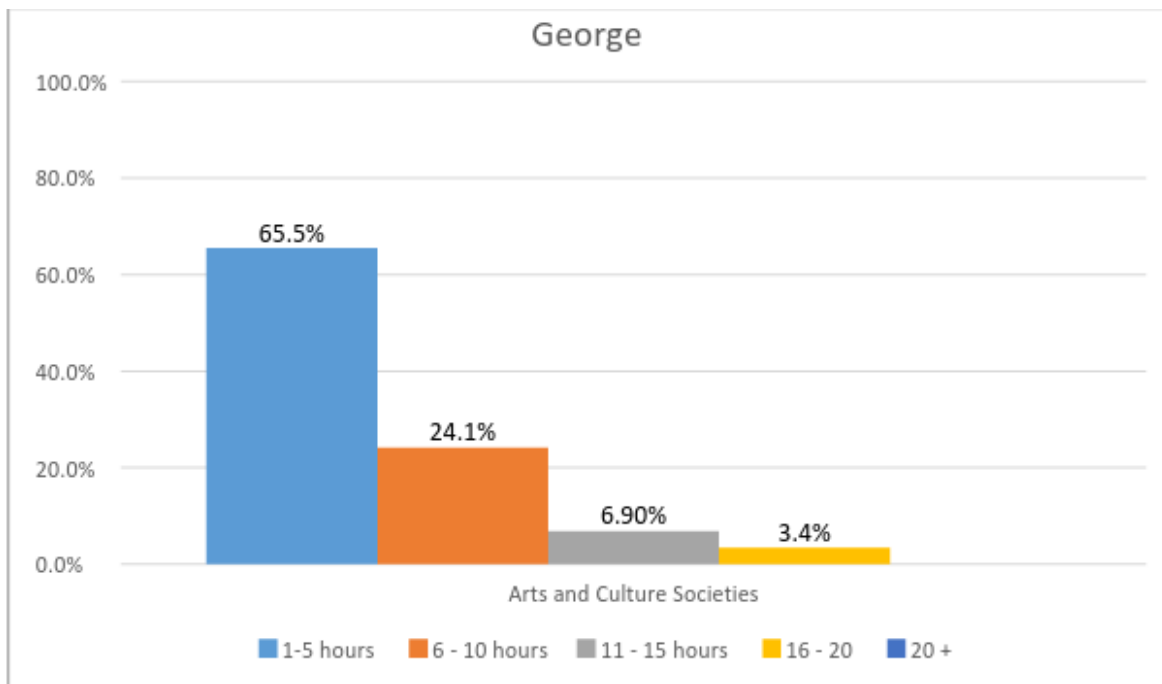
Graph 33: Time spent on Arts and Culture activities - George

5.1.4. Sports Club

Sports Club participation

12.8% of Port Elizabeth respondents participate in a sport club. In George, the highest participation was in sports, with almost a quarter of respondents 23.8% being part of a sports club.

Time spent on Sports Club participation
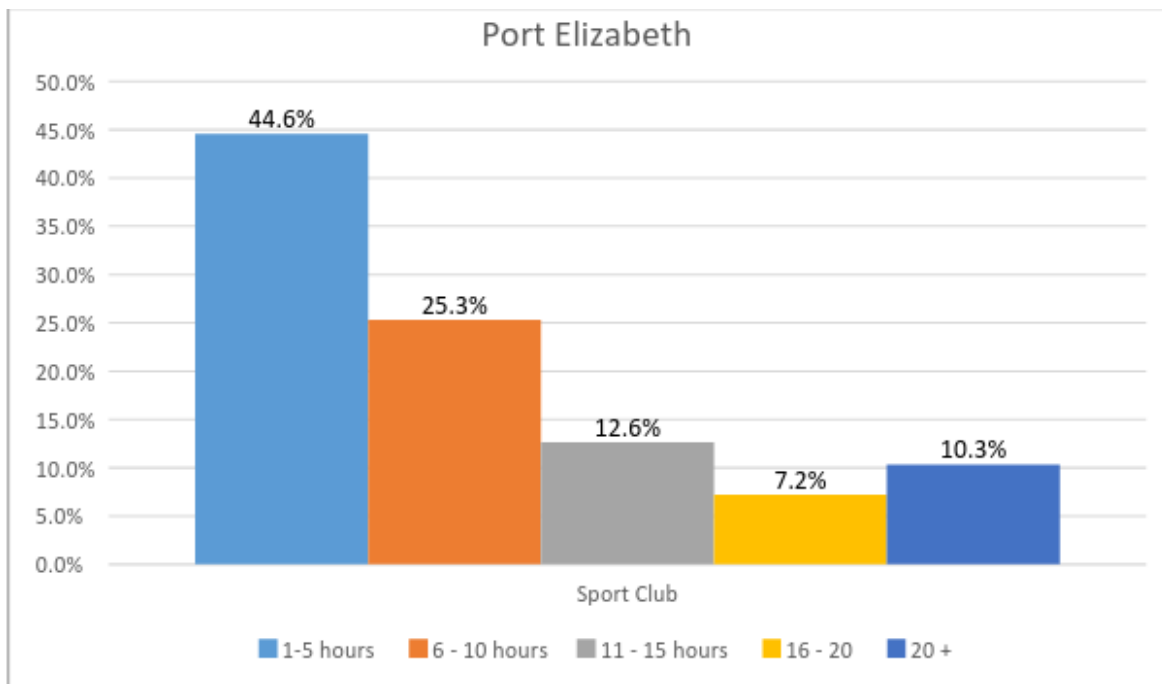
Graph 34: Time spent on sports clubs - Port Elizabeth
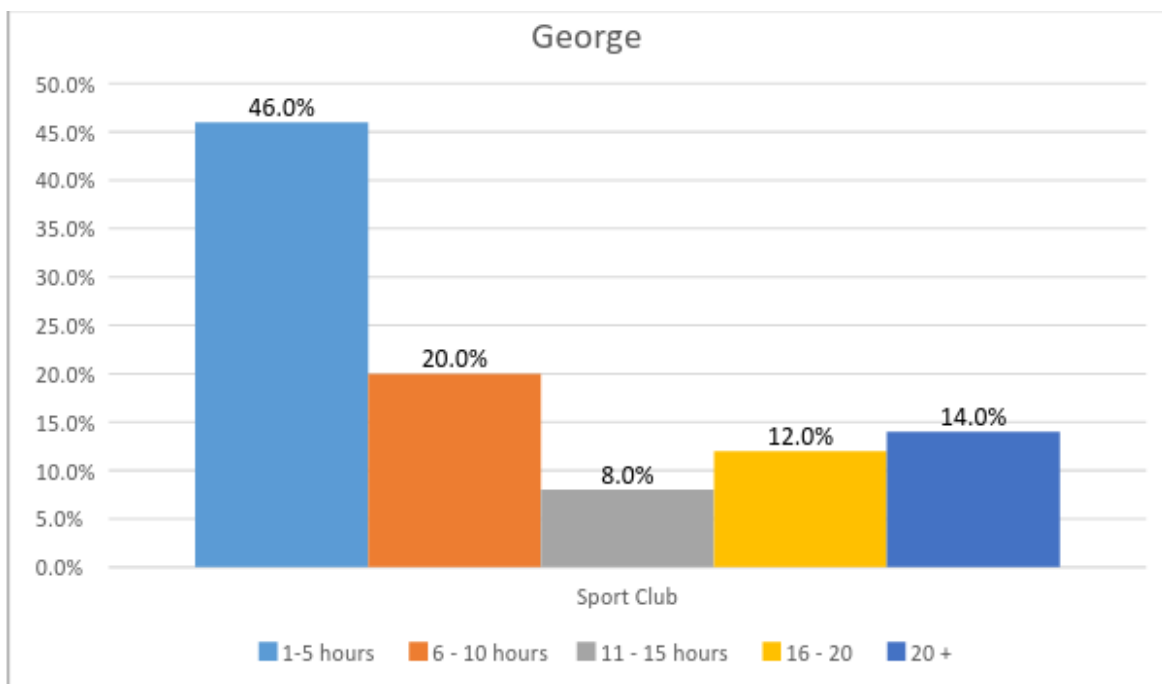
Graph 35: Time spent on sports clubs - George

In Port Elizabeth, most respondents who participate in sport clubs (44.6%) dedicate 1-5 hours per week to sports clubs as indicated by graph 34.

Graph 35 indicates that 46% of George sports club participants spend 1-5 hours a week on sports club participation.

5.1.5. Residence League

Residence league participation

8.6% of Port Elizabeth and 6.4% of George respondents reported participating in residence league activities.

Time spent on residence league activities
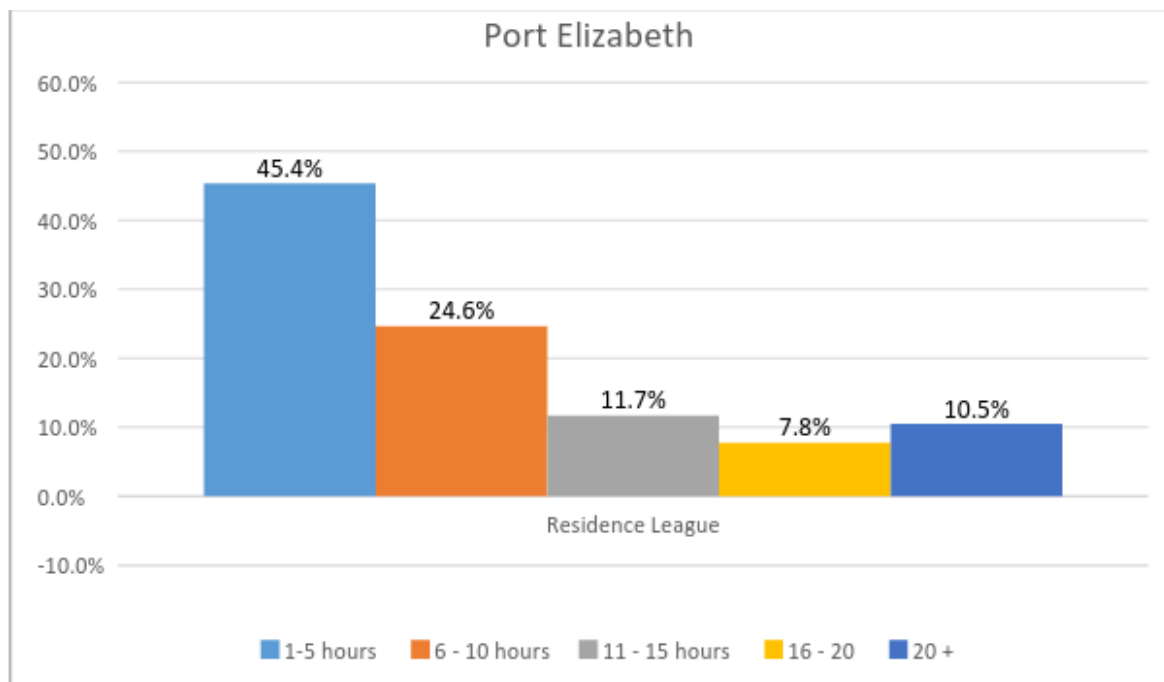
Graph 36: Time spent on residence league activities - Port Elizabeth
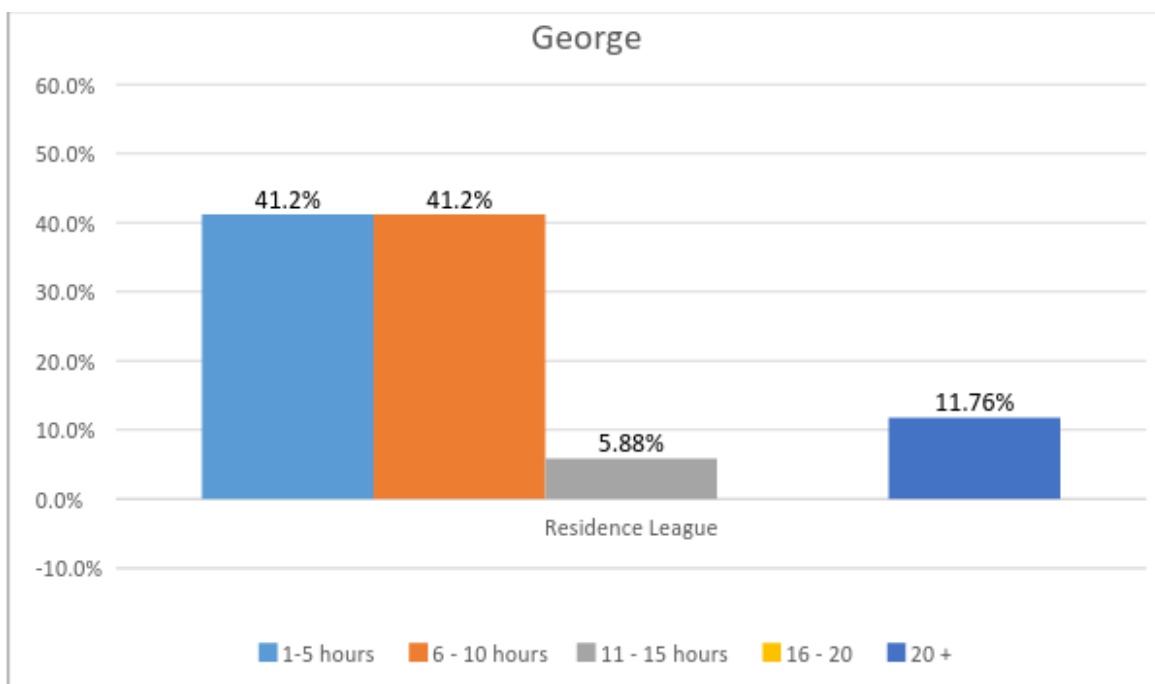
Graph 37: Time spent on residence league activities - George

45% of Port Elizabeth respondents dedicate 1-5 hours a week on residence league activities. In George, an equal number of respondents spend 1-5 hours and 6-10 hours a week on residence league activities.

5.1.6. Residence Events

.Many respondents reported spending time on residence related events. Of the 17.6% of respondents who partook in residence events in Port Elizabeth, 52.3% spend 1-5 hours a week on residence events. In George, 26.9% of respondents participate in residence events, and 53.8% of them spend 1-5 hours a week on residence events.
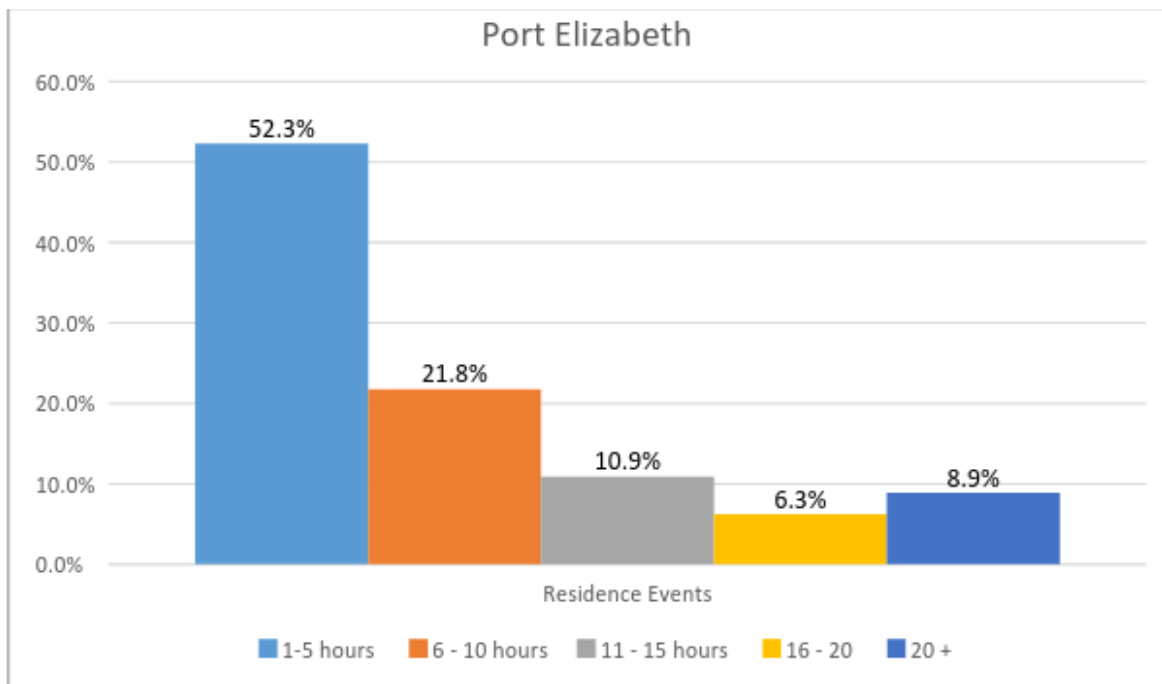
Graph 38: Time spent on residence events - Port Elizabeth
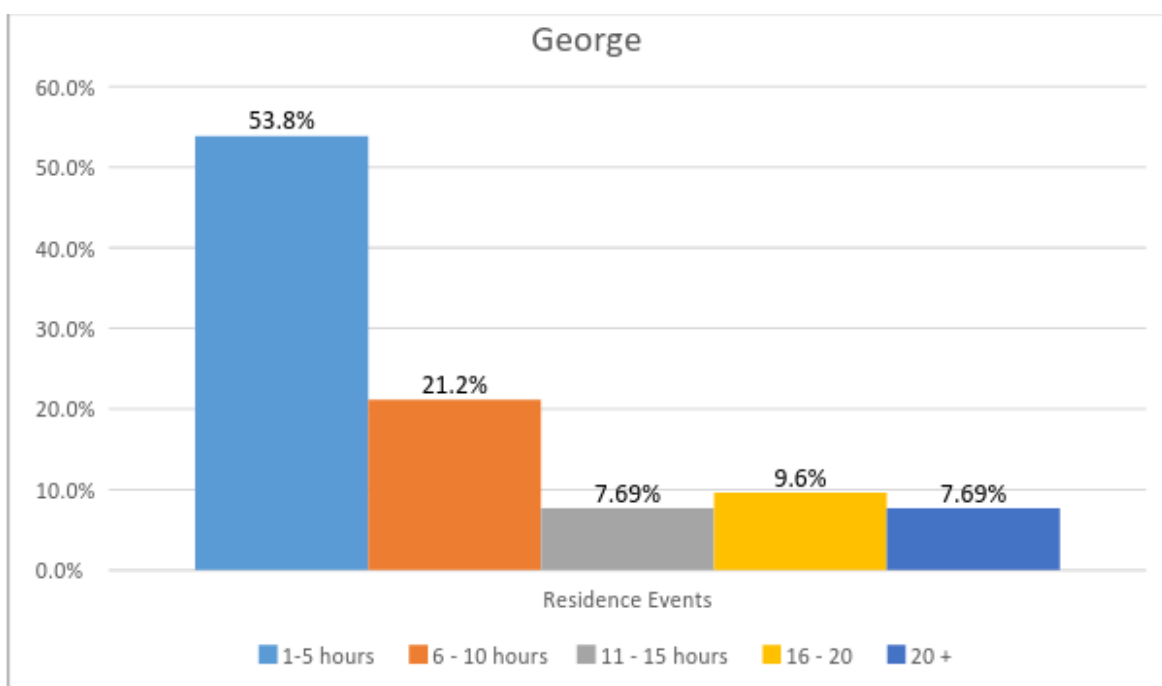
Graph 39: Time spent on residence events - George

5.1.7. "Other" student life activities

Student life activities listed by respondents as "other" included community outreach or volunteer work, peer helping, NMMU pageants, mentoring, tutoring, chess, choir and sports such as soccer and netball.

5.2. Participants in leadership positions

26.7% of Port Elizabeth and 25% of George respondents reported being in leadership positions. Graphs 40 and 41 highlight the types of leadership positions respondents that respondents reportedly hold.
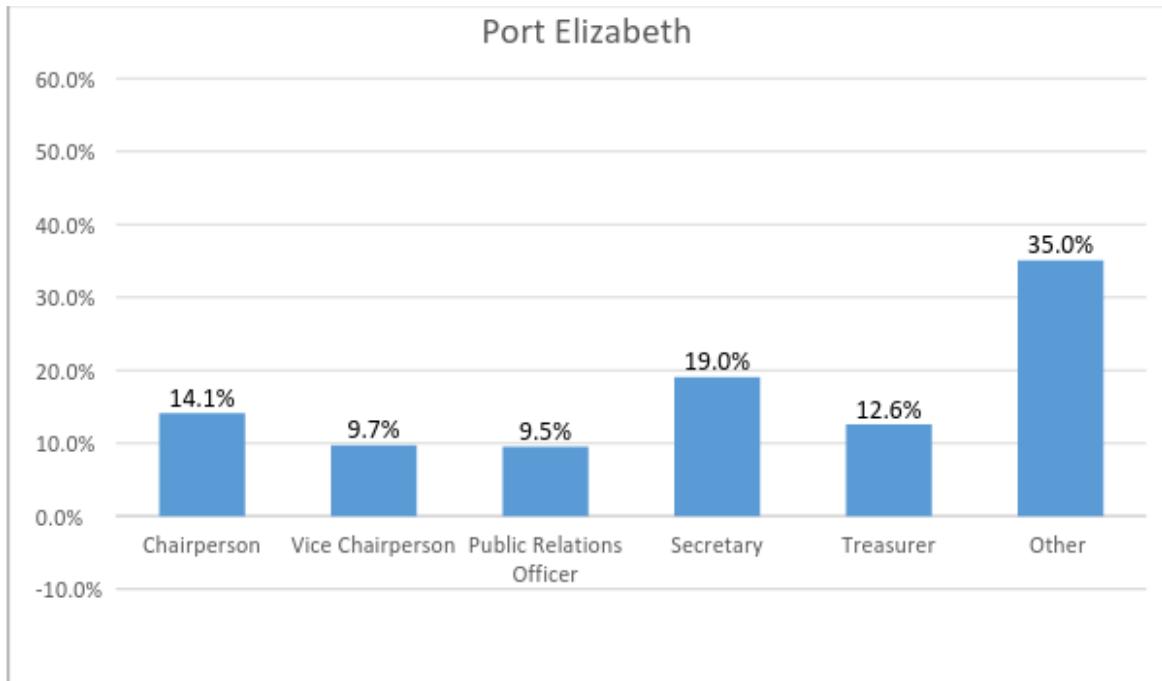
Graph 40: Leadership positions held by participants - Port Elizabeth
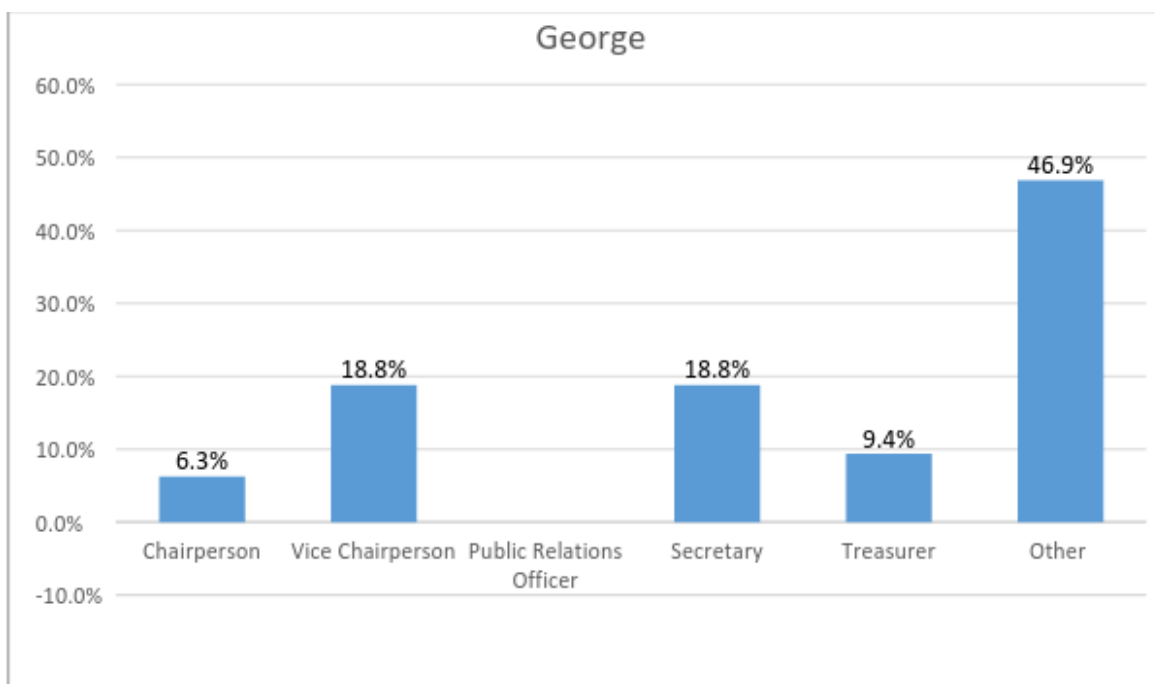
Graph 41: Leadership positions held by participants George

In Port Elizabeth, most respondents held the position of secretary, followed by chairperson. The survey attracted an equal number of chairpersons and secretaries in George. 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
Captain	26.3%
Society officer / leader	18.6%
Team /group leader / manager	15.3%
House committee	9.3%
Class/site rep	5.9%
Deputy	5.1%
Subcommittee member	4.2%
Events co-ordinator / organiser	4.2%
Assistant / RSA	3.4%

Editor	2.5%
Vice-Captain / chairperson / president	2.5%
Additional member	0.8%
Coach	0.8%
Committee/council member	0.8%

5.3. Co-curricular participation

Co-curricular activities refer to the following: 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, more than half of all respondents participate in co-curricular activities (48.6% of Port Elizabeth and 56.8% of George respondents).

Graphs 42 and 43 demonstrate a breakdown of respondents according to co-curricular participation in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.
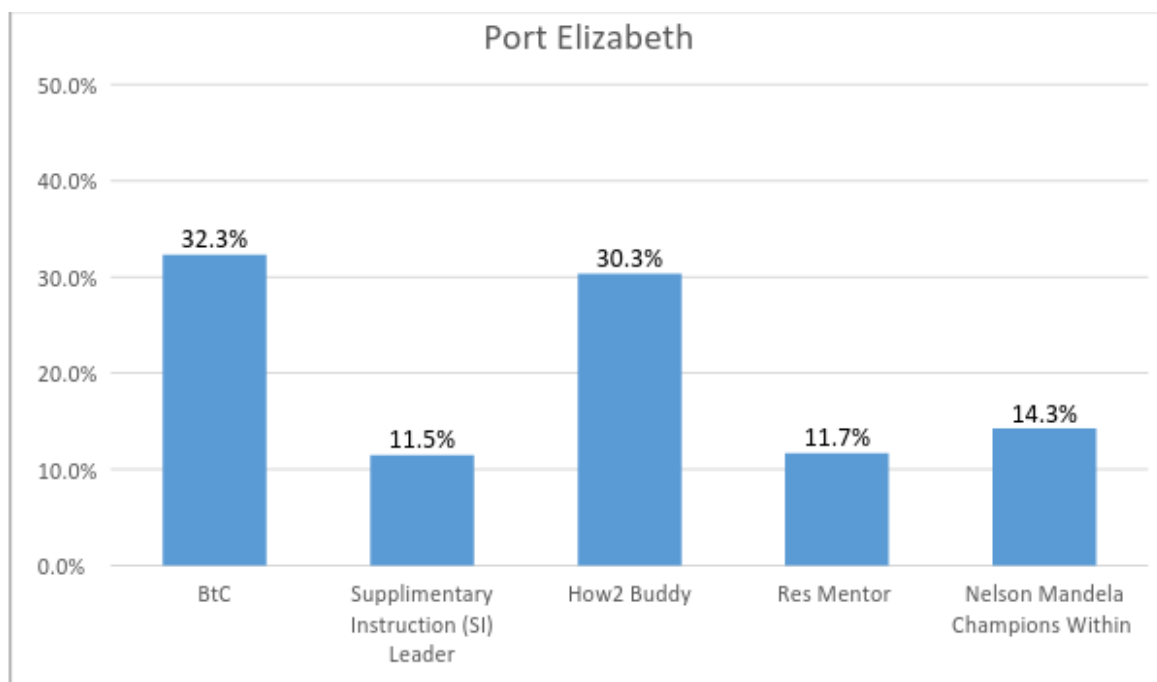
Graph 42: Co-curricular participation - Port Elizabeth
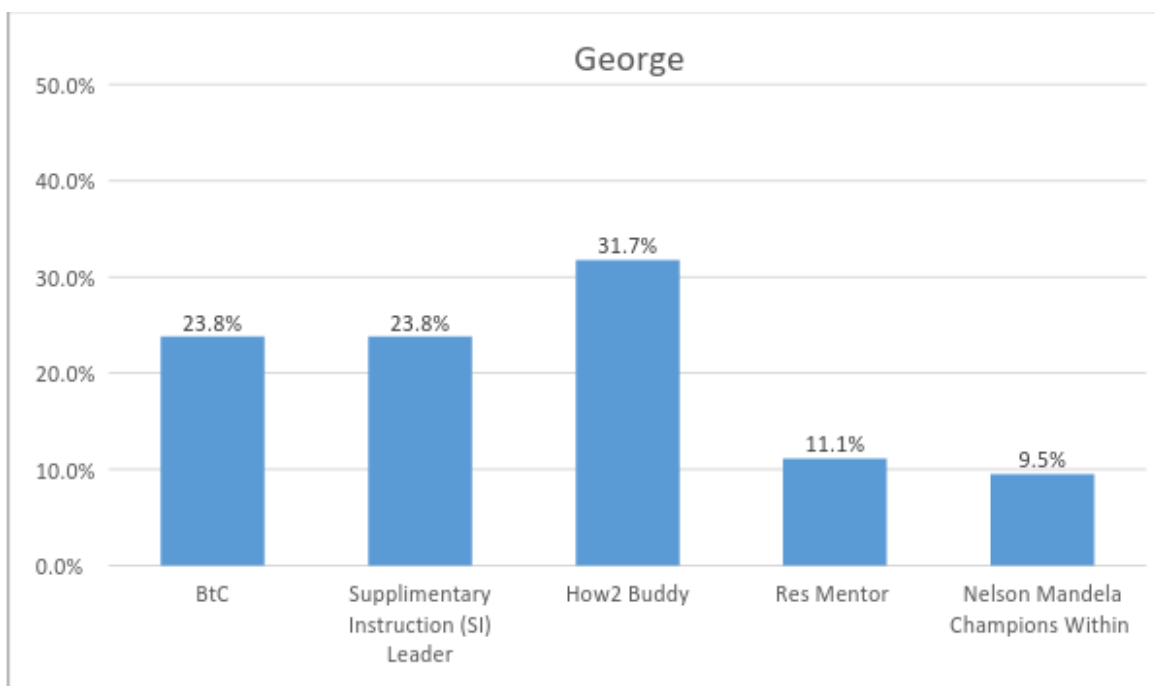
Graph 43: Co-curricular participation – George

Of the respondents who participate in co-curricular activities in Port Elizabeth, most participate in the Beyond the Classroom (BtC) programme (32.3%), followed by How2Buddy (30.3%) then Nelson Mandela Champions Within (14.3%), Residence Mentors (11.7%) and Supplementary Instruction (SI) Leader (11.5%).

In George, most respondents were How2Buddies (31.7%), followed by BtC and Supplementary Instruction (SI) Leader (both 23.8%), then Residence Mentors (11.1%) and Nelson Mandela Champions Within (9.5%).

6. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES

This section focuses on the competencies gained from student life activities. Respondents who participate in student life activities were asked to identify the learning they gain 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.[2] Although there are 17 competencies, only those learning outcomes most likely to be identified among most 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

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

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[2] NMMU learning outcomes and development indicators are attached to this report as an appendix

Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.1
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4.1
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.0
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4.0
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	4.0
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	4.0
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	4.0
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.9
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.9

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

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.3
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.2
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.2
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.2
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (self-awareness and development)	4.1
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.1
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.1
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
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.1
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (intellectual growth)	4.1
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.0
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.0
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.0
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	3.9
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	3.9
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	3.9
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	3.9
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.8
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.6

Tables 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)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)

For participants in George, the top competencies are

- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)

6.2. Perceived competencies by non-participants

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

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

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
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
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
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

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.1
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.1
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.1
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.1
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.0
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4.0
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4.0
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	4.0
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	4.0
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.0
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.0
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.0
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	3.9
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	3.9
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.8

Table 9: Perceived competencies by non-participants – George

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.3
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.2
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.2
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.2
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (self-awareness and development)	4.1
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.1
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.1
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
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.1
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.1
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.0
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.0
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.0
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	3.9

Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	3.9
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	3.9
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	3.9
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.8
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.6

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

The top 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)
- Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)

The top competencies for George non-participants are

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

Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)

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

The BtC leadership programme was 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 in Port Elizabeth, the major competencies they receive from participating in the programme are:

- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)
- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)

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

- Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)
- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)
- Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)
- Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)

Port Elizabeth and George respondents identified different competencies that they feel they receive from being part of the BtC programme. Table 10 identifies the learning outcomes identified by BtC participants in Port Elizabeth and in George.

Table 10: Top learning outcomes as identified by BtC participants - Port Elizabeth vs. George

Port Elizabeth	George
Independence	Meaningful interpersonal relationships
Appreciating diversity	Self-awareness and development
Self-awareness and development	Values exploration

Based on these top competencies, the overall learning outcomes identified by BtC participants can be highlighted. Table 11 compares the learning outcomes as out outlined by the programme with the top three identified by participants overall.

Table 11: BtC learning outcomes, vs. learning outcomes according to participants

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

Overall, the BtC programme meets one out of the three learning outcomes set out by the programme according to BtC participants on both campuses.

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 12: Top interferences in student life activities - Port Elizabeth vs. George

Port Elizabeth	George
Day/time the activity is held (46%)	Day/time the activity is held (50.3%)
Lectures/class (44.3%)	Feeling isolated, not fitting in (48.7%)
Transport (difficulty getting to activities) (36.2%)	Job/work (44%)
Finances, lack of money (33.2%)	Finances, lack of money (38.3%)
Time (involvement in other activities) (32.4%)	Family commitments (36.8%)

As indicated by table 12, 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

In 2016, the survey attracted more respondents compared to other years.

Overall the biographical characteristics of respondents are similar to the general NMMU population. Some exceptions include that there were more female respondents in George, which is comprised of a predominantly male student population. The survey also attracted comparatively more black students and more on-campus students. A majority of respondents were between the ages of 18 to 24 (91.9% in Port Elizabeth and 85% in George).

With regards to faculty information, slightly more respondents were registered full-time in Port Elizabeth (96.1%) as compared to the general student population (84.6%). In George, almost all respondents were full-time registered students (99.4%). In Port Elizabeth, most respondents were in their second academic year of study (28.3%) followed by first year students (27.6%). Almost half of all George participants were in their first academic year (45.1%) followed by second year students (32.1%). In George, half of respondents were from the science faculty (50.7%) and the other half from the business and economic sciences faculty (48%) which is not representative of the overall student population. In Port Elizabeth, respondents were generally representative of the general NMMU population when it comes to faculties attended.

The survey attracted more on-campus respondents when compared to the general student population, significantly so in George campus. In Port Elizabeth, off-campus living type was evenly divided between accredited off-campus residences, living at home and private accommodation. In George, off-campus accommodation data was not available. The NMMU shuttle is the primary commute to campus for respondents followed by driving their own cars on both campuses. On both campuses, personal or family savings were the main method that students used to finance their studies.

Although student perceptions were expected to be greatly affected by the #feesmustfall student movement, student perceptions are overall positive as mean scores indicate an acceptable level of belongingness. 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 and showed significant differences between races for some perceptions. ANOVAs found the perceptions of white and black students differed for the statement "I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU." Although the effect size or magnitude of the difference is small, mean scores indicate the black students have a slightly higher score than white students. White students had different perceptions from both black and coloured students when it comes to the statements "I am proud to be attending the NMMU" and "I feel like the NMMU is a community." For both statements, effect size was low, and white students had lower mean scores.

There were more respondents that do not participate in student life activities than those that do in Port Elizabeth. The inverse is true for George. Over half of participating students dedicate 1-5 hours per week overall (56.5% in Port Elizabeth, 51.4% in George). In Port Elizabeth, the top five student life activities were academic societies (23.5%), residence events (17.6%), political societies (17.3%), religious societies (15.7%) and sports club participation (12.8%). The top five student life activities in George were residence events (26.9%), sports clubs (23.8%), arts and culture activities (20.5%) and religious societies (14.1%).

Overall, most student life participants dedicate 1-5 hours a week on student life activities.

With regards to leadership positions, over a quarter of respondents reported being in leadership positions (26.7% of Port Elizabeth and 25% of George respondents)

Overall, more than half of respondents reported being in co-curricular activities (48.6% in Port Elizabeth and 56.8% in George). In Port Elizabeth, most were BtC participants, and most were How2Buddy participants in George.

With regards to learning outcomes and competencies, both student life participants and non-participants rated all competencies on an acceptable level of belongingness or higher.

Based on the top-rated competencies, the overall top learning outcomes of student life participation are the same according to participants and non-participants. These are
- Self-awareness and development
- Independence
- Appreciating diversity

Port Elizabeth and George respondents identified different competencies that they feel they received from being part of the BtC programme. Based on the top competencies, the overall learning outcomes identified by BtC participants are:

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

The major interference in participating in student life activities overall were the day or time the activity is held. The top 5 interferences differ for Port Elizabeth and George. In Port Elizabeth, the top 5 interferences were the day/time the activity is held, lectures/class, transport (difficulty getting to activities), finances, lack of money and time (involvement in other activities). In George, the top 5 were day/time the activity is held, feeling isolated, not fitting in, job/work, finances, lack of money and family commitments.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this survey support the claim that the benefits of co-curricular student engagement cannot be overlooked. The survey highlights that students who do not participate also recognise the benefits of student engagement. Both students who participate in student life activities and those who do not participate believe that from participating in student life activities, they would achieve the following learning outcomes: independence, self-awareness and development and appreciating diversity. Survey findings support student development theories as the positive benefits of participating in student life activities on students' lives is evident.

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

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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11. REFERENCES

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