# REPORT ON THE 2019
# NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY STUDENT
# EXPERIENCES SURVEY

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

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**February 2020**

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# SECTION 1:  OVERVIEW OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES SURVEY

## 1.  INTRODUCTION

A vast number of researchers have highlighted the importance of 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 been measured and reported consistently over the past decade through the Student Experiences Survey, though assessment of co-curricular programmes should be ongoing. For student development programs to be perceived as experiences that promote student learning, student development programs must be continuously assessed 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 Structure of the report

This is a continuation of the Student Experience Survey administered by the Department of Student Governance and Development (SGD). The purpose of the survey is to assess and analyse co-curricular learning of Nelson Mandela University students. The objectives of the study were :

1.      To conduct a survey to assess student co-curricular experiences.
2.      To investigate and identify student learning outcomes.

3.    To identify the top learning outcomes associated with student life activities.

The survey provides 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 Nelson Mandela University were generally high.

- Approximately 50% of first-year students are involved in cocurricular experiences.

- More than 15% of students are involved in cocurricular activities for between 1-5 hours per week.

- Overall, participants identified growth in independence, meaningful interpersonal relationships, appreciating diversity, self-awareness and development, and values exploration due to cocurricular participation.

- The Nelson Mandela University Shuttle is the most used method of transportation.

- The major barriers to involvement in campus life activities are the day or time that activities are held and lecture or class commitments.

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 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 Nelson Mandela University 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 Nelson Mandela University 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* Nelson Mandela University |
| 2 | *Types of co-curricular involvement* – a range of activities are listed varying from society involvement to sport club participation |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | *For students participating*: Learning outcomes linked to their participation |
| 4 | *For students not participating*: Perceived learning outcomes linked to their participation |
| 5 | *Interferences* with involvement in co-curricular experiences/ activities |
| 6 | *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 4306 students. This represents 14.5 % of the 29 603 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 1.38%.

Registered Nelson Mandela University 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 needs 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 4306 students who participated in the survey, 4113 were from Port Elizabeth and 166 from George (27 respondents did not list a campus). 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, home language, and age range.

### 3.1.1. Nationality
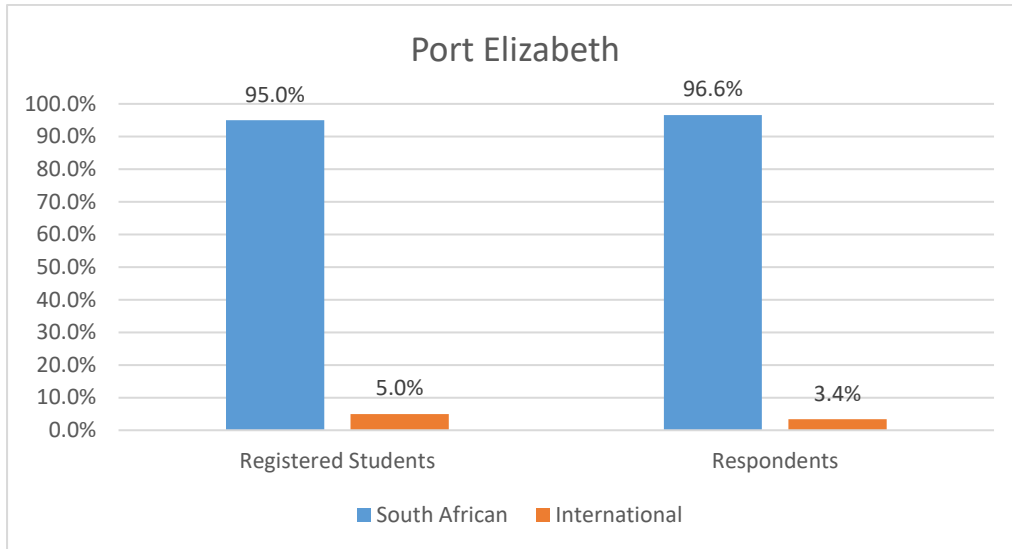


*Graph 1: Registered students vs. respondents according to nationality - Port Elizabeth*
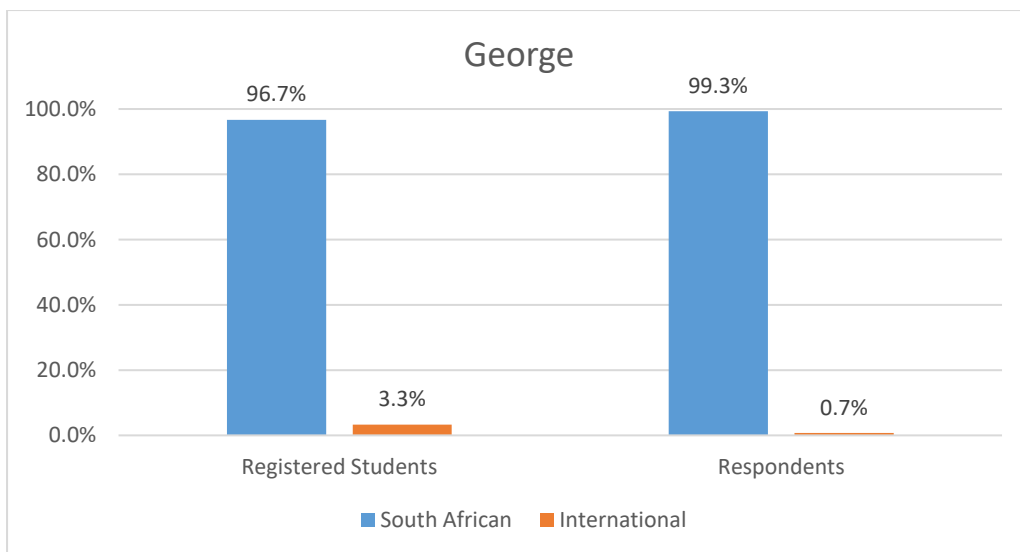


*Graph 2: Registered students vs. respondents according to nationality – George*

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. Sex
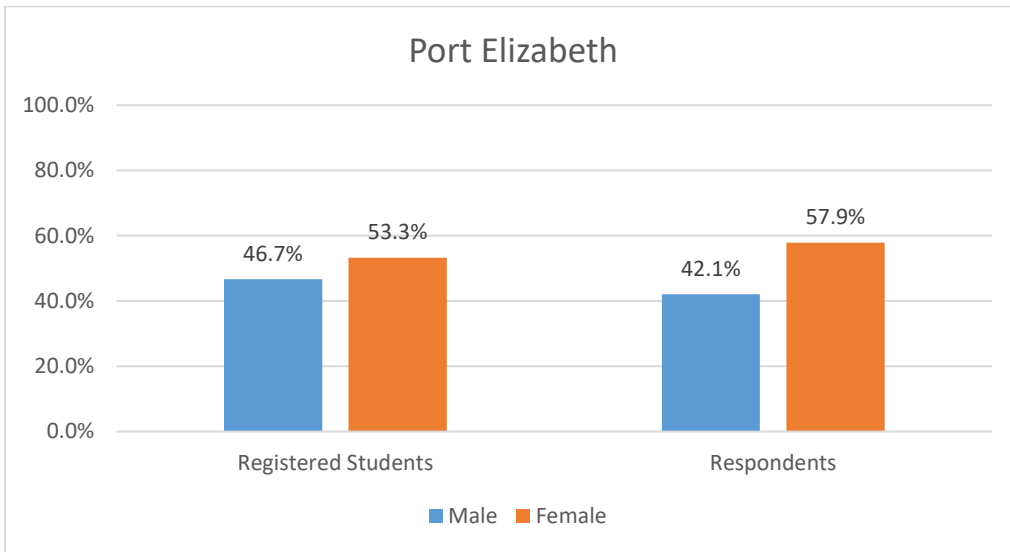


*Graph 3: Registered students vs. respondents according to sex - Port Elizabeth*
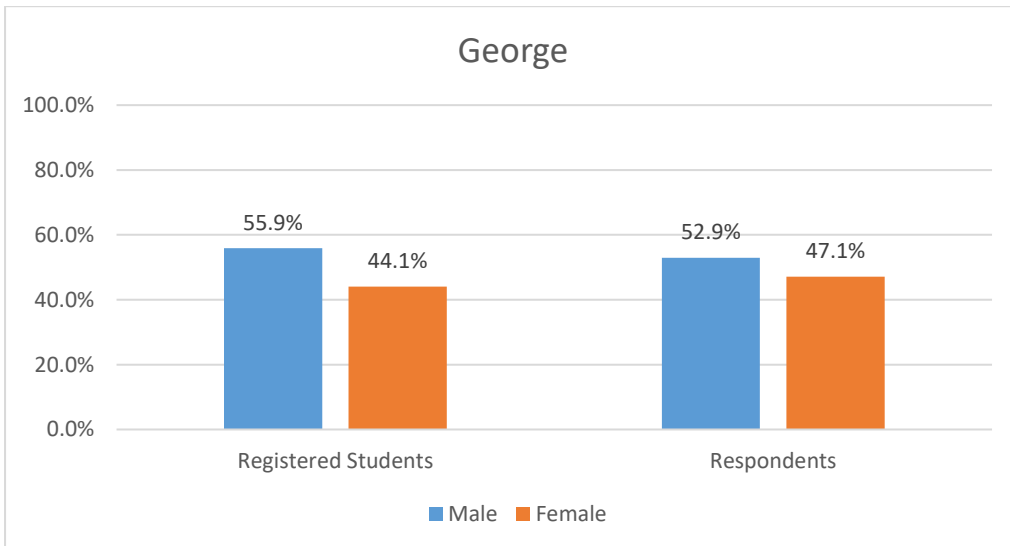


*Graph 4: Registered students vs. respondents according to sex – George*

Graphs 3 and 4 demonstrate the breakdown of respondents according to sex compared to the general student population. The survey attracted a higher percentage of female respondents than males in Port Elizabeth but a slightly larger percentage of male respondents in George. While George campus had a predominantly male student population, proportionately more respondents were female than the proportion of females in the student population.

### 3.1.3. Race[1]



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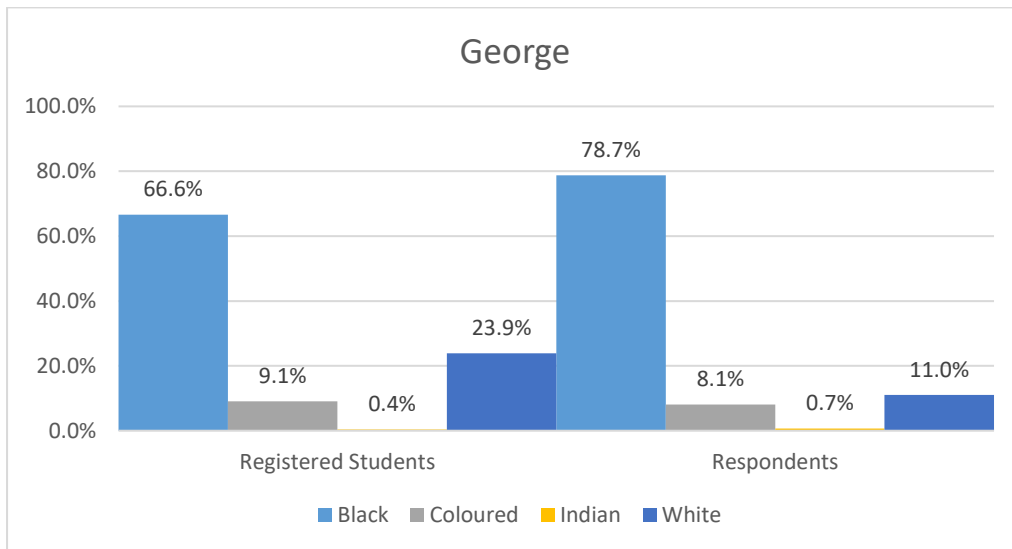


*Graph 6: Registered students vs. respondents according to race – George*

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.

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

### 3.1.4. Home language

Previous scholarship indicates students' primary language, or the language they speak at home, has a major influence on their college experience. The Student Experiences Survey therefore began asking students what language they spoke at home this year. The most common home languages among Port Elizabeth respondents were isiXhosa (49.7%), English (22.1%), and Afrikaans (7.8%). For George, the most common home languages were isiXhosa (48.1%), Afrikaans (14.8%), and isiZulu (13.3%).
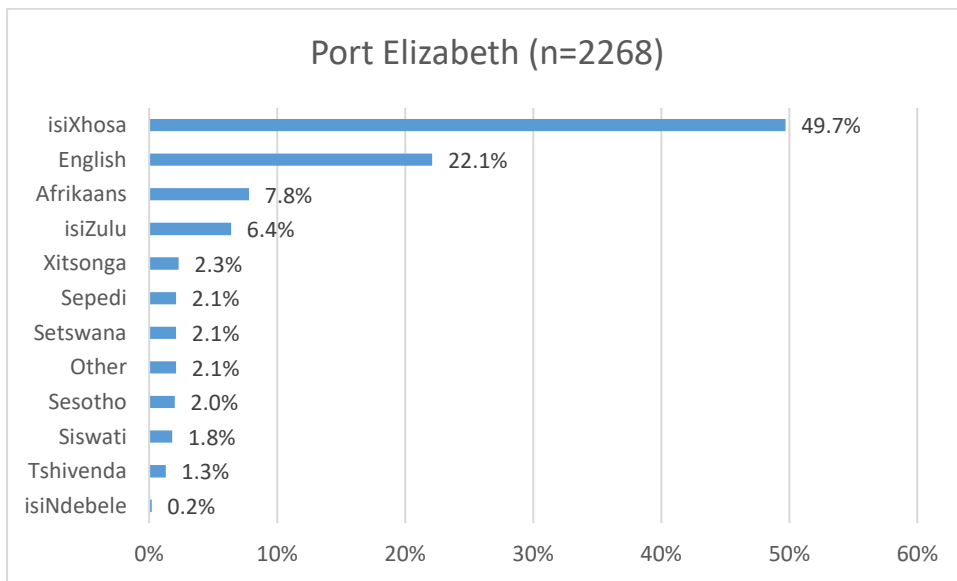


*Graph 7: Home language – Port Elizabeth*
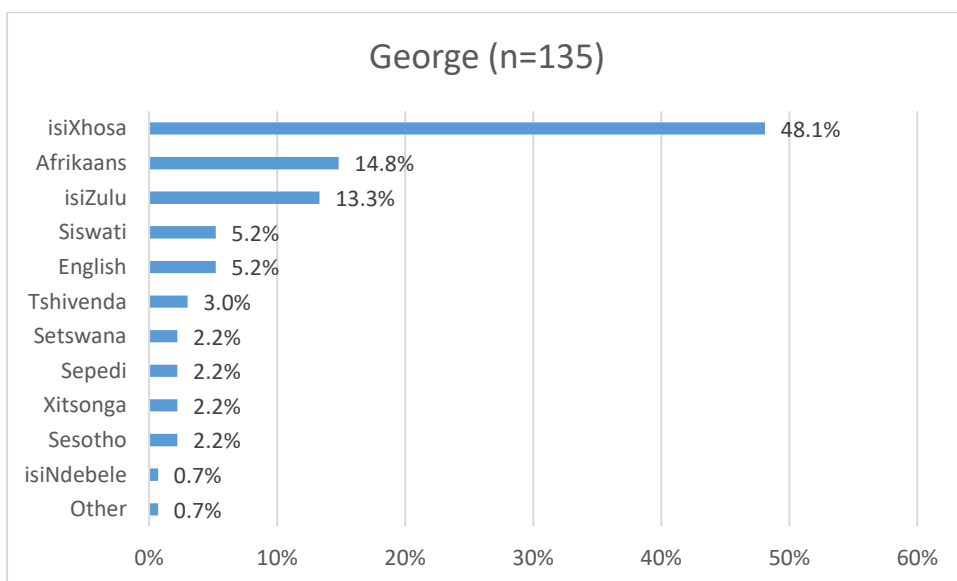


*Graph 8: Home language - George*

### 3.1.5.  Age

As indicated by graphs 9 and 10 below, most respondents are younger than 26 (92% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 88.6% of respondents in George are between ages 18-25). More than half of all respondents fall within the 21 – 25 age range in both Port Elizabeth (57.3%) and George (62.1%), followed by 18-20 (34.7% in Port Elizabeth and 26.5% in George).
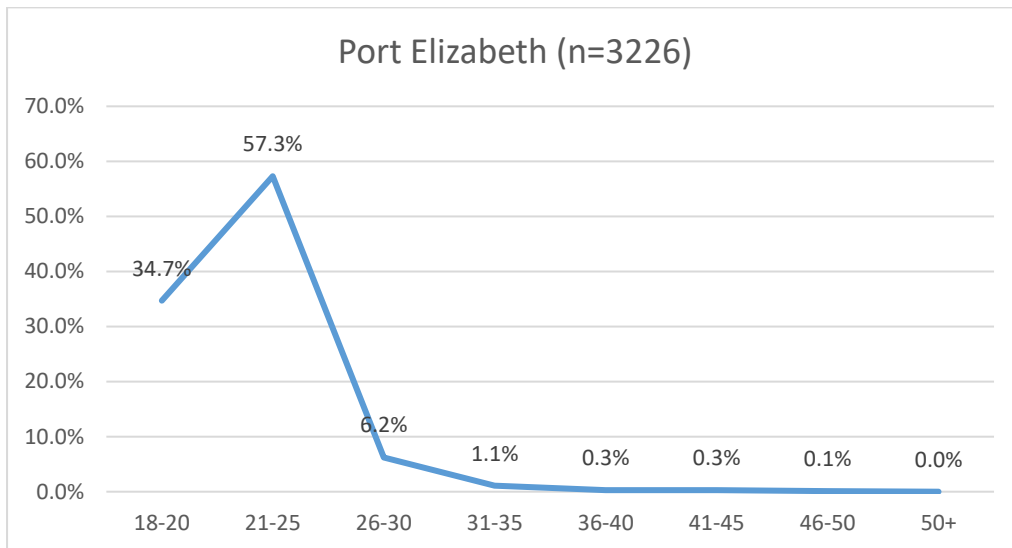


*Graph 9: Age range of respondents - Port Elizabeth*
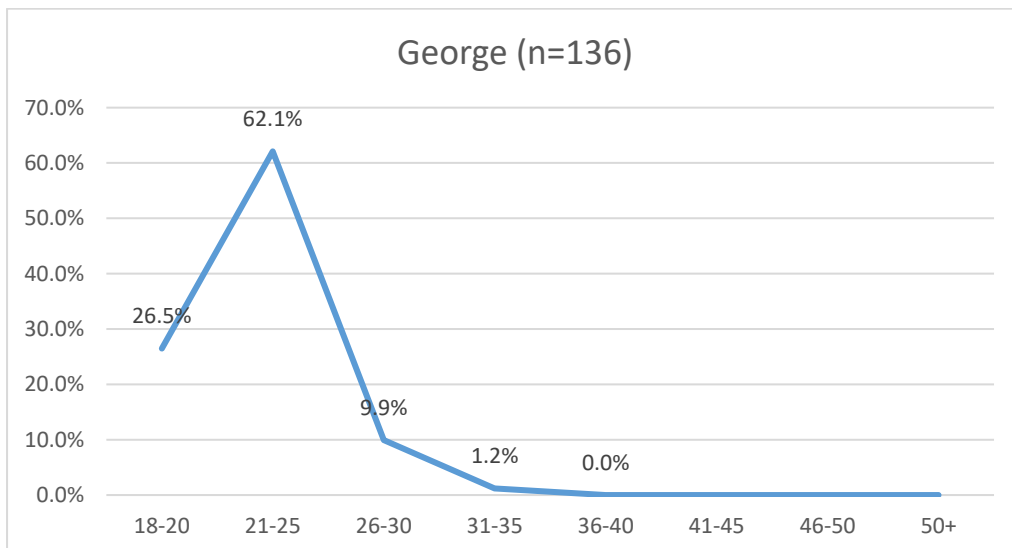


*Graph 10: Age range of respondents - George*

### 3.2. Faculty information

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

### 3.2.1. Campus attended
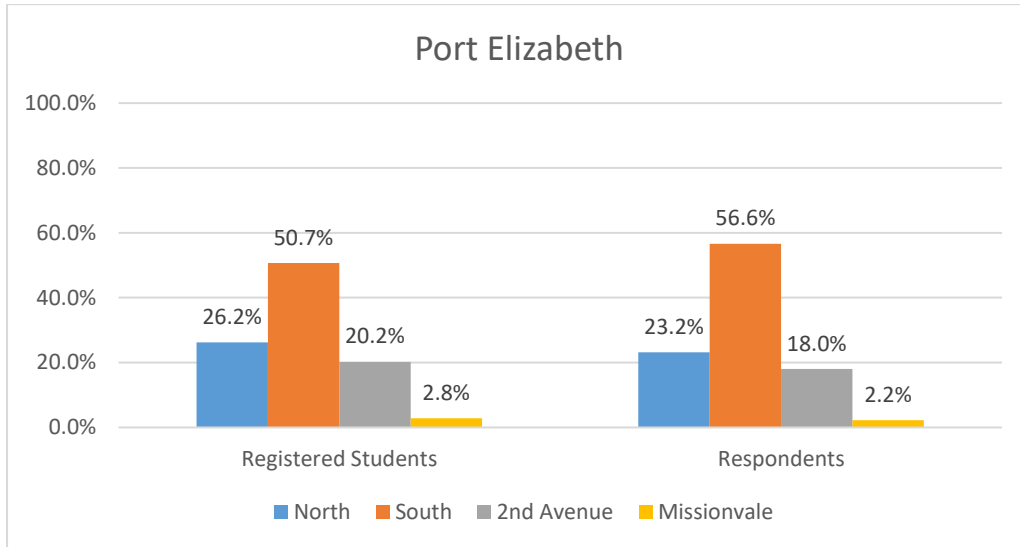


*Graph 11: Registered students vs. respondents according to campus attended - Port Elizabeth*

As shown by graph 11, 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 12 and 13 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 Nelson Mandela University population, there were more full-time students who responded to the survey.
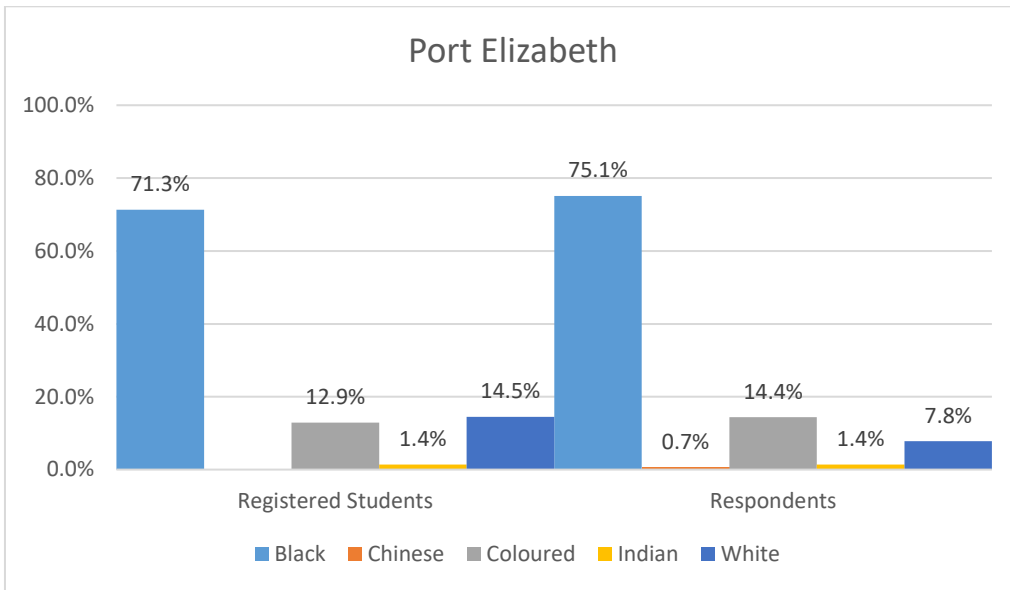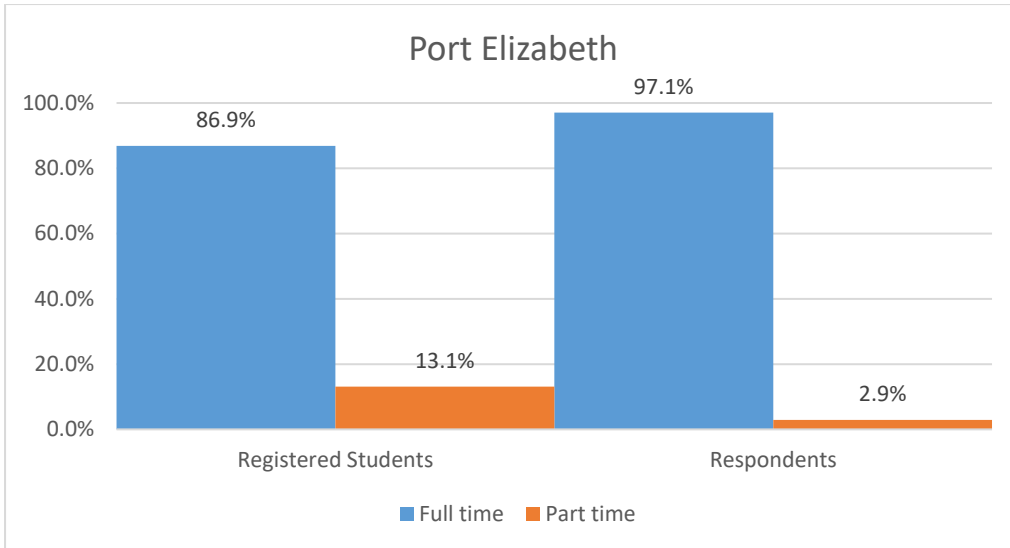
*Graph 12: Registered students vs. respondents according to registration status - Port Elizabeth*
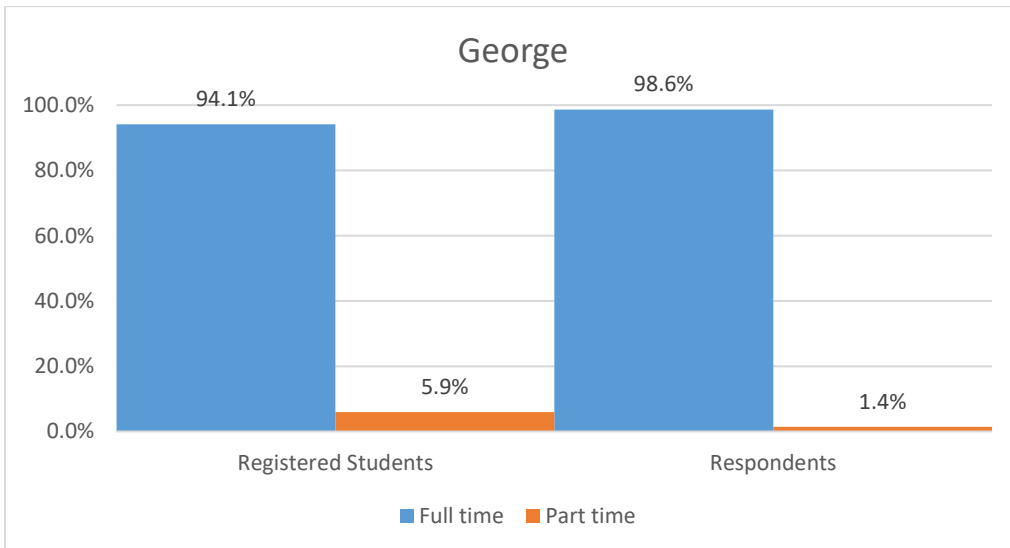


*Graph 13: Registered students vs. respondents according to registration status – George*

### 3.2.3. Academic level

Academic level refers to whether students are undergraduate or postgraduate students.
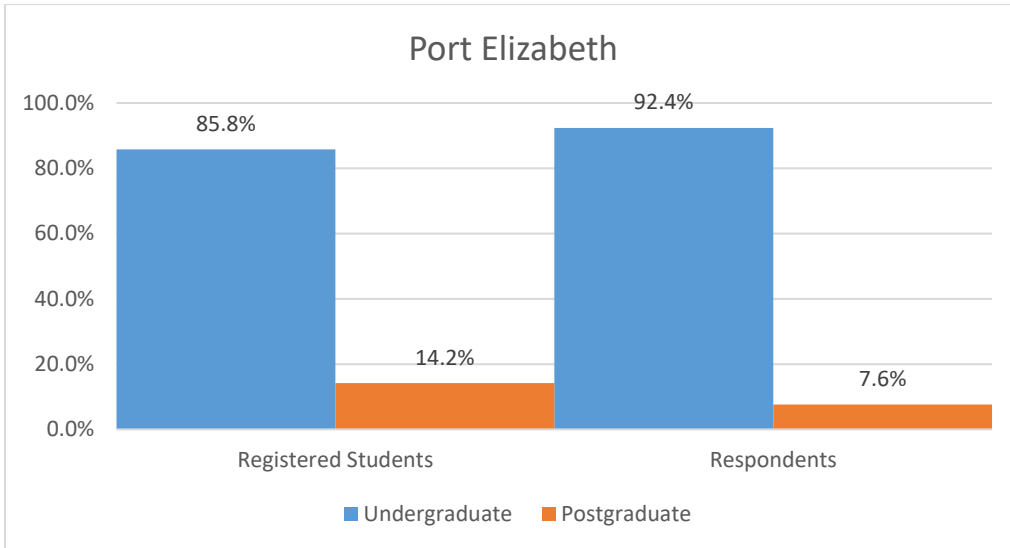
*Graph 14: Registered students vs. respondents according to academic status - Port Elizabeth*
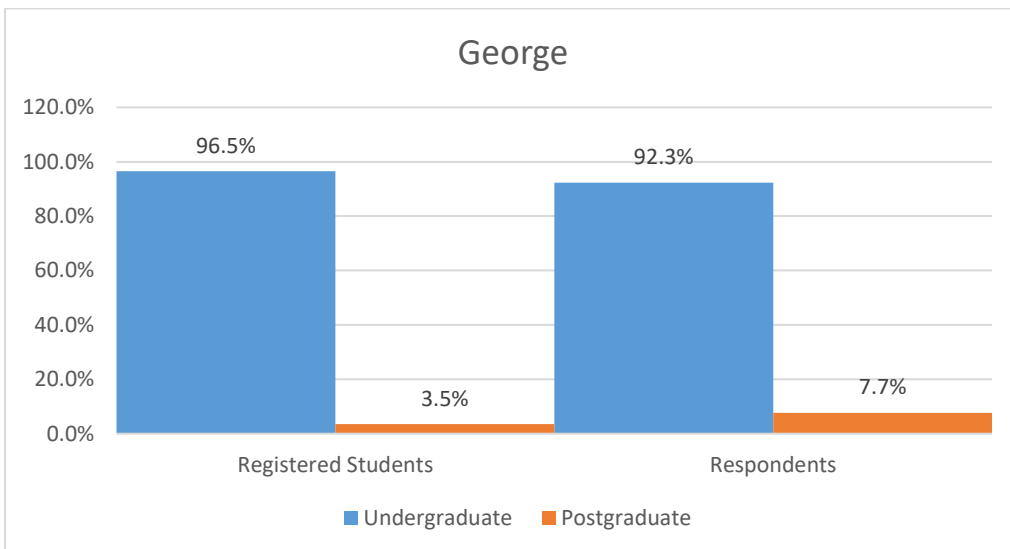


*Graph 15: Registered students vs. respondents according to academic status – George*

Graph 14 shows that the academic level ratio of respondents in Port Elizabeth is like the registered university population.

Graph 15 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, most of the respondents were in their first or second year. More specifically, 33.8% (n=1209) were in their first year, 31.1% (n=1113) were in their second year, and 23.7% (n=850) were in their third year.

Most respondents in George were first year students (51.1%, n=71) with an equal amount of second and third year students (19.4%, n=27).
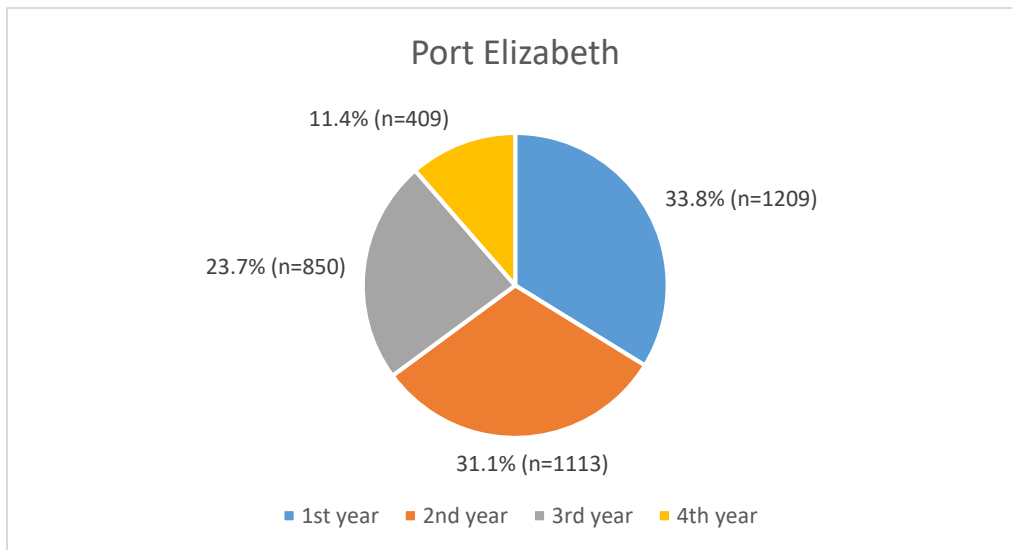


*Graph 16: Year of study - Port Elizabeth*
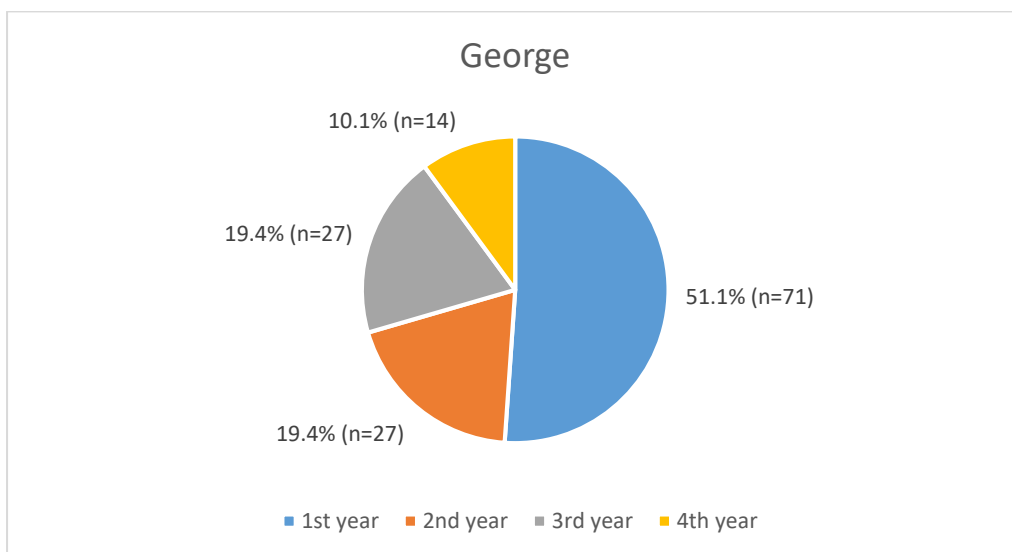


*Graph 17: Year of study – George*

### 3.2.5. Faculty

Graphs 18 and 19 reflect the breakdown of respondents according to the faculties in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. Overall, respondents are generally representative of the Nelson Mandela University population with regards to faculty in Port Elizabeth. In George, more than half of respondents are from the science faculty (52.9%), and a third are from the business and economic sciences faculty (34.1%).
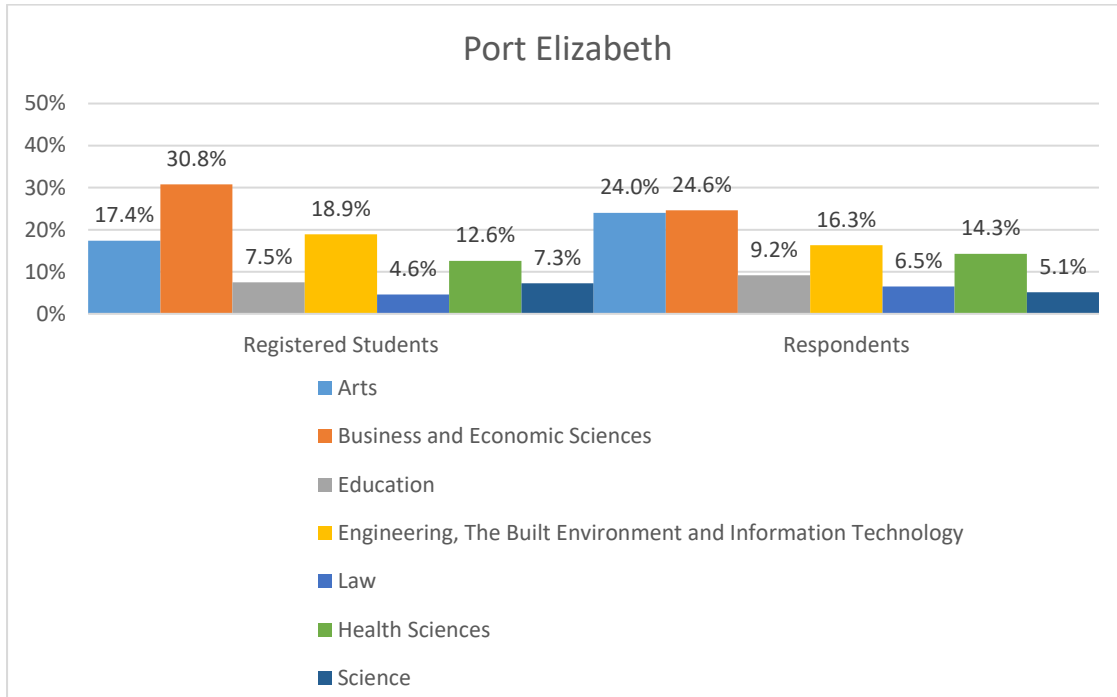


*Graph 18: Registered students vs. respondents by faculty – Port Elizabeth*
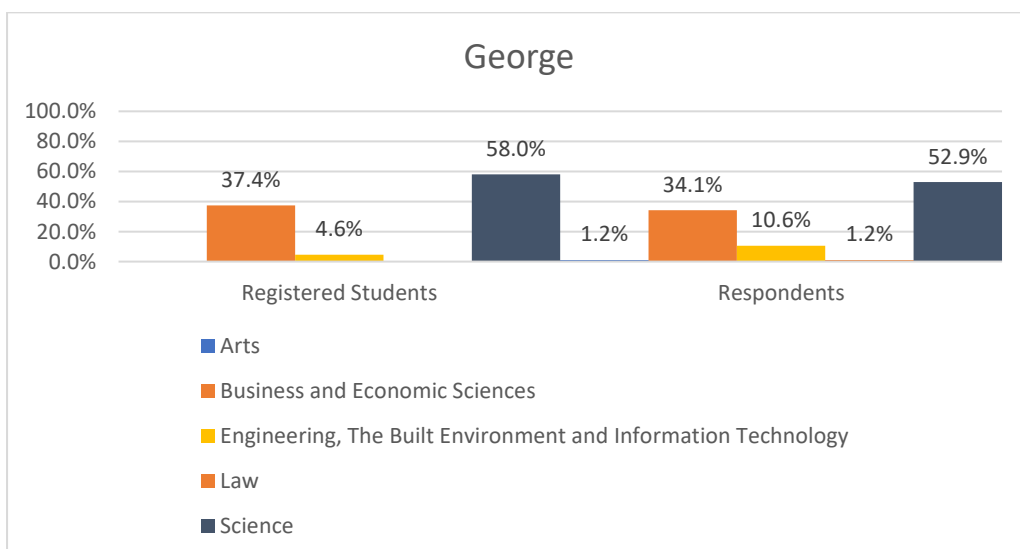


*Graph 19: Registered students vs. respondents by faculty – George*

## 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 20 and 21 demonstrate the on- and off-campus breakdown of respondents compared to the registered Nelson Mandela University students.
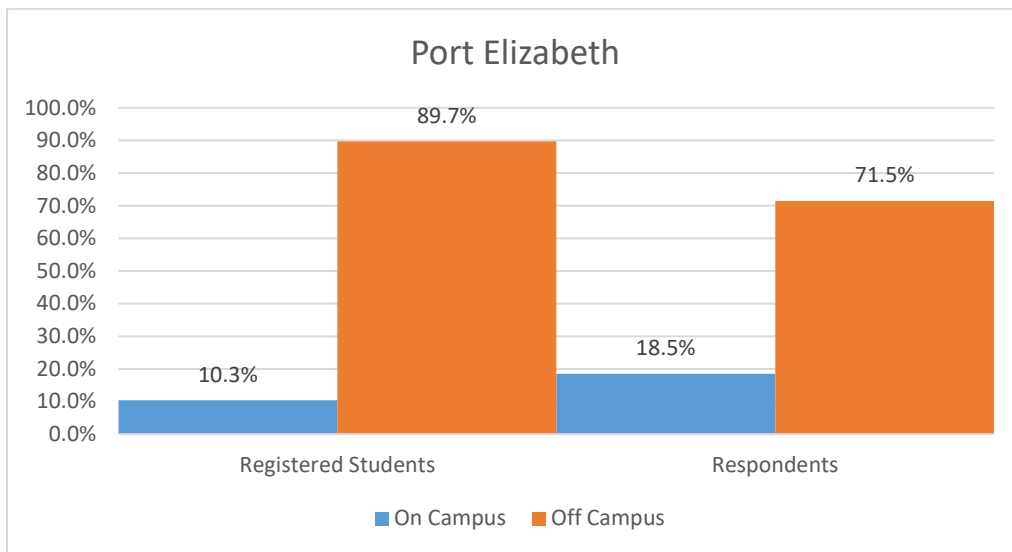


*Graph 20: On vs. off campus breakdown - Port Elizabeth*
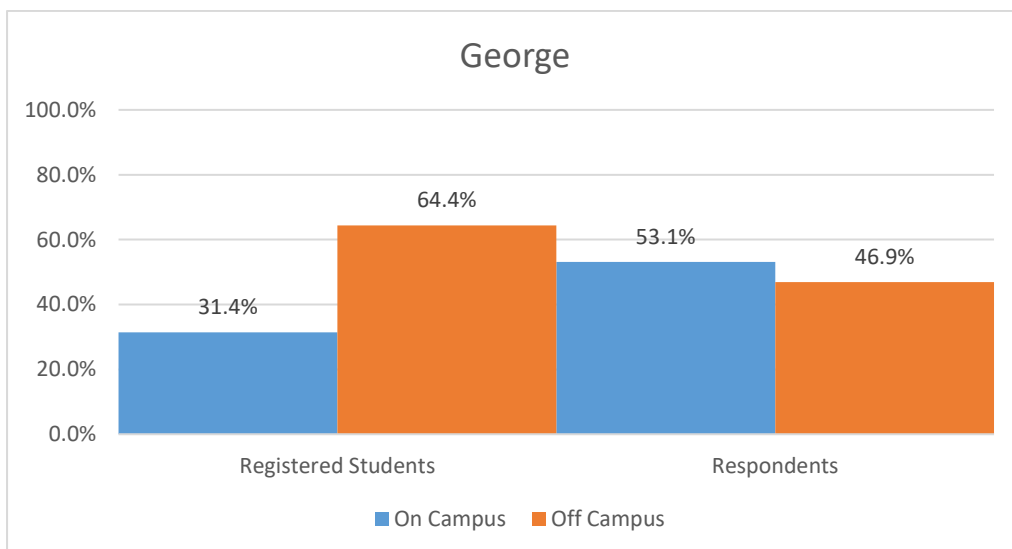


*Graph 21: On vs. off campus breakdown - George*

When compared to the general 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 53.1% of respondents residing on campus compared to 31.4% of the proportion of registered students.

### 3.3.2. Off campus type of living

Of the 2956 respondents who live off campus in Port Elizabeth, 46.6% reside in an accredited off-campus residence, 21.7% live in a private accommodation, and 31.8% live at home or with extended family.

Of the 67 respondents who live off campus in George, 41.8% live in an accredited university residence or house, 29.9% live in a private accommodation, and 28.4% live at home with family or 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 Nelson Mandela University shuttle service.
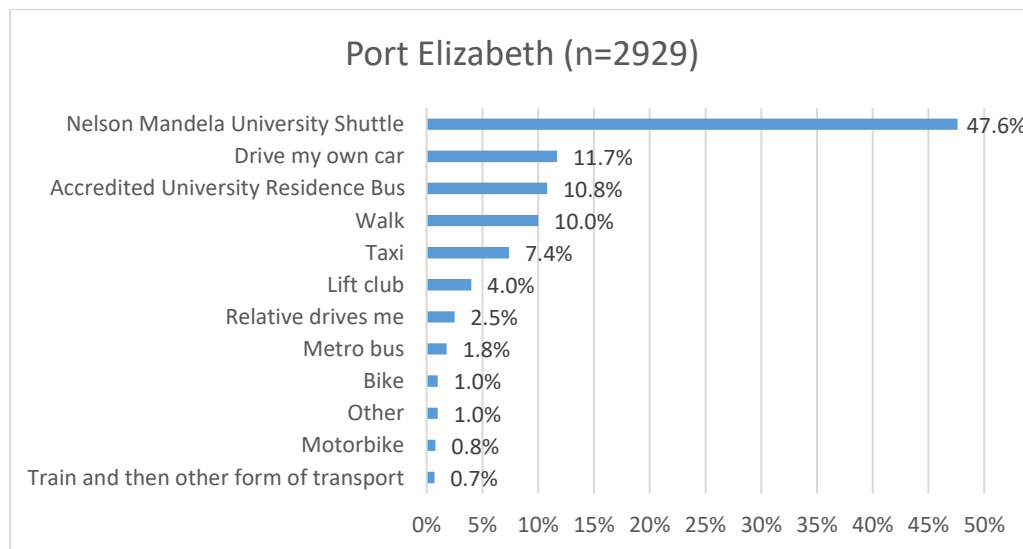


*Graph 22: Primary commute to campus - Port Elizabeth*
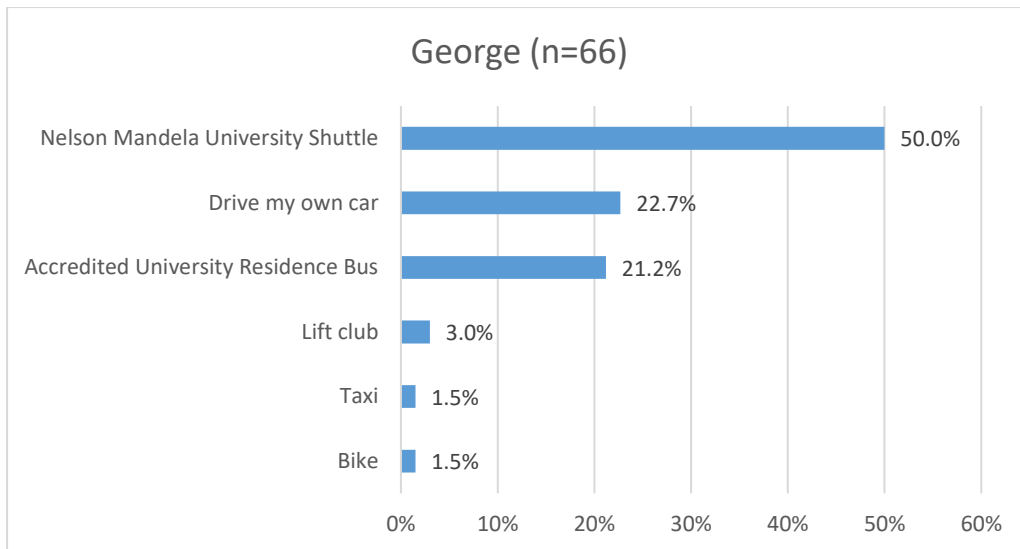
*Graph 23: Primary commute to campus – George*

As shown by Graph 22, the top five modes of commuting to campus by respondents in Port Elizabeth are the Nelson Mandela University shuttle (47.6%), driving own car (11.7%), accredited university residence bus (10.8%), walking (10%), and taxis (7.4%).

In George, as highlighted by Graph 23, the top modes of commute are the Nelson Mandela University Shuttle (50%), drive own car (22.7%), and accredited university residence bus (21.2%).

### 3.3.4. Primary method of financing education

The top methods respondents use overall to finance their education are NSFAS loans, personal or family savings, and bursary or sponsorship.
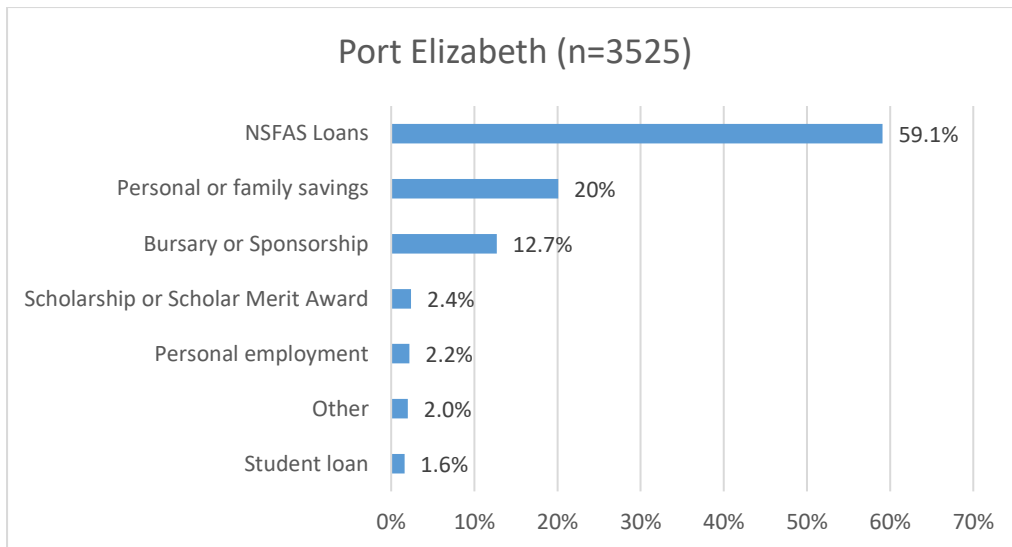
*Graph 24: Primary method of financing education - Port Elizabeth*
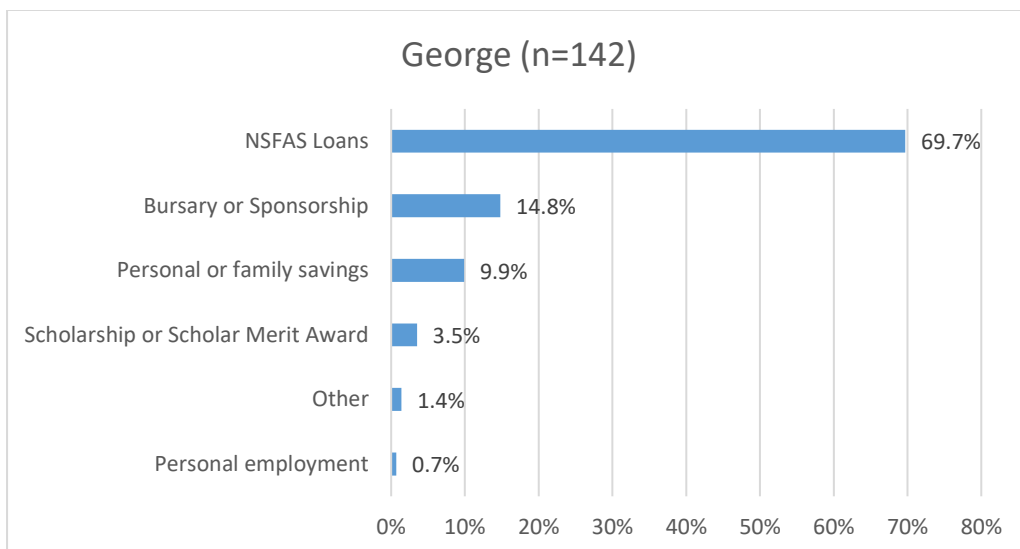


*Graph 25: Primary method of financing education – George*

As indicated by Graph 24, most respondents in Port Elizabeth finance their education through NSFAS loans (59.1%) followed by personal or family savings (20%) and bursary or sponsorship (12.7%).

In George, Graph 25 shows most respondents' education was funded by NSFAS loans (69.7%) followed by bursary or sponsorship (14.8%) and personal or family savings (9.9%).

## 4. PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT LIFE AT NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

The first section of the survey was completed by all respondents in order to get an idea of their perceptions of student life at Nelson Mandela University. Participants were asked 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 Nelson Mandela University
- I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University
- I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University  I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University
- I feel like Nelson Mandela University is a community
- I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus

The overall results are as follows:

| Question | Mean (sd) | n | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University | 4.3 (0.9) | 4079 | 55.4% | 28.3% | 11.0% | 3.0% | 2.3% |
| I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University | 3.7 (1.0) | 4064 | 23.0% | 38.0% | 29.9% | 6.0% | 3.1% |
| I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University | 4.4 (0.8) | 4058 | 55.7% | 33.5% | 8.3% | 1.1% | 1.4% |
| I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University | 4.1 (0.9) | 4059 | 40.8% | 37.1% | 17.8% | 2.2% | 2.1% |
| I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community | 3.7 (1.0) | 4049 | 24.7% | 37.7% | 26.9% | 7.6% | 3.1% |
| I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus | 2.9 (1.2) | 4049 | 12.3% | 18.8% | 30.9% | 22.5% | 15.5% |

*Table 1: Perceptions of student life - Port Elizabeth*

| Question | Mean (sd) | n | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University | 4.5 (0.7) | 164 | 65.9% | 23.8% | 9.1% | 1.2% | 0% |
| I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University | 4.2 (0.9) | 162 | 44.4% | 34.6% | 16.0% | 4.3% | 0.6% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University | 4.7 (0.6) | 162 | 73.5% | 22.8% | 1.9% | 1.2% | 0.6% |
| I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University | 4.5 (0.7) | 161 | 63.4% | 27.3% | 7.5% | 1.9% | 0% |
| I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community | 4.1 (1.1) | 159 | 40.9% | 37.1% | 11.3% | 7.5% | 3.1% |
| I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus | 2.7 (1.4) | 161 | 13.0% | 15.5% | 24.8% | 19.3% | 27.3% |

*Table 2: Perceptions of student life – George*

Student perceptions were overall positive on both campuses, as evident in the relatively low mean score of students who feel excluded (mean score=2.9, sd=1.2 and mean=2.7, sd=1.4 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 Nelson Mandela University (mean=3.7, sd=1 in Port Elizabeth; mean=4.2, sd=0.9 in George)
- I feel like Nelson Mandela University is a community (mean=3.7, sd=1 in Port Elizabeth; mean=4.1, sd=1.1 in George).

The results were further analysed using multivariate analysis techniques. T-tests were conducted on student perceptions according to sex 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 sex

Table 3 shows that in Port Elizabeth, male and female respondents differed significantly on three perceptions.

| Question | Sex | Mean | n | Difference | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University | Female | 4.4 | 2014 | Significant difference | Small |
| | Male | 4.2 | 1458 | | |
| I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University | Female | 3.7 | 2011 | Significant difference | Small |
| | Male | 3.8 | 1448 | | |
| I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University | Female | 4.4 | 2006 | No significant difference | N/A |
| | Male | 4.4 | 1448 | | |
| I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University. | Female | 4.1 | 2008 | Significant difference | Small |
| | Male | 4.2 | 1445 | | |
| I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community | Female | 3.7 | 2000 | No significant difference | N/A |
| | Male | 3.8 | 1447 | | |
| I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus | Female | 2.9 | 2003 | No significant difference | N/A |
| | Male | 2.9 | 1443 | | |

*Table 1: Student Perceptions according to sex - Port Elizabeth*

In Port Elizabeth, male and female respondents had statistically significant differences, with female respondents reporting slightly higher mean scores and a small magnitude or effect size for "My family encourages me to continue with my education at the Nelson Mandela University" (eta squared = 0.004). However, female respondents reported slightly lower mean scores for the following perceptions: "I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University" (eta squared = 0.004), and "I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University" (eta squared = 0.001). All three perceptions had a small effect size.

| Question | Sex | Mean | n | Difference | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University | Female | 4.6 | 64 | No significant difference | N/A |
| | Male | 4.5 | 74 | | |
| I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University | Female | 4.2 | 64 | No significant difference | N/A |
| | Male | 4.2 | 73 | | |
| I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University | Female | 4.5 | 64 | Significant difference | Moderate |
| | Male | 4.8 | 73 | | |
| I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University. | Female | 4.6 | 63 | No significant difference | N/A |
| | Male | 4.5 | 73 | | |

| | | | | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community | Female | 4.2 | 62 | | significant | |
| | Male | 3.9 | 72 | | difference | N/A |
| I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus | Female | 2.6 | 63 | | No significant | |
| | Male | 2.7 | 73 | | difference | N/A |

*Table 4: Student perceptions according to sex - George*

Further analysis of the student perceptions according to sex found the only significant difference in student perceptions between males and females in George was in "I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University." Males reported a higher mean with a moderate effect size (eta squared = 0.07).

## 4.2. Student perceptions according to race

Tables 5 and 6 highlight student perceptions by race in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.

| Question | Black (n=2472) | Chinese (n=21) | Coloured (n=475) | Indian (n=46) | White (n=255) | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University | 4.3 (sd=0.9) | 4.1 (sd=1.2) | 4.2 (1.0) | 4.3 (1.0) | 4.1 (1.1) | S |
| I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University | 3.8 (1.0) | 3.8 (sd=1.1) | 3.6 (0.9) | 3.5 (0.8) | 3.5 (1.0) | S |
| I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University | 4.5 (0.8) | 4.2 (sd=1.0) | 4.3 (0.7) | 4.2 (0.8) | 4.2 (0.8) | S |
| I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University | 4.2 (0.9) | 4.3 (sd=0.7) | 4.0 (0.8) | 3.9 (0.8) | 3.9 (0.9) | S |
| I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community | 3.8 (1.0) | 3.8 (1.0) | 3.7 (0.9) | 3.6 (1.1) | 3.5 (1.0) | S |
| I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus | 2.8 (1.3) | 3.6 (1.1) | 3.1 (1.1) | 3.0 (1.2) | 3.1 (1.1) | S |

*Table 5: Student perceptions by race - Port Elizabeth*

| Question | Black (n=106) | Coloured (n=11) | White (n=14) | Effect |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University. | 4.6 (0.7) | 4.4 (0.7) | 4.3 (0.7) | No difference |
| I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University | 4.3 (0.9) | 4.1 (0.7) | 3.5 (0.9) | Medium |
| I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University | 4.7 (0.5) | 4.6 (0.5) | 4.7 (0.5) | No difference |
| I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University | 4.6 (0.7) | 4.5 (0.7) | 4.2 (0.8) | No difference |
| I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community | 4.2 (0.9) | 4.0 (0.9) | 3.1 (1.1) | No difference |
| I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus | 2.5 (1.4) | 3.3 (1.2) | 2.9 (1.4) | No difference |

*Table 6: Student perceptions by race – George*

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

White students reported lower agreement (m=4.1, sd=1.1) than Black students (m=4.3, sd=0.9) with the statement, "My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University" (eta squared = 0.01). White students (m=3.5, sd=1) also reported lower perceptions of Nelson Mandela University as a community than Black students (m=3.8, sd=1) with a small effect size (eta squared=.01).

White students' perceptions also differed from Black and Coloured students when it comes to the statement "I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University." The magnitude or effect size of the difference is small (eta squared = 0.01). The scores indicated that Black students (m=3.8, sd=1) and Coloured students (m=3.6, sd=0.9) had slightly higher mean scores than White students (m=3.5, sd=1). White students additionally had different perceptions from both Black and Coloured students in the statements "I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me," and "I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University." When it comes to meeting people with different backgrounds, White students (m=4.2, sd=0.8) had a lower mean score than Black (m=4.5, sd=0.8) and Coloured (m=4.3, sd=0.7). The magnitude or effect size of the difference is small (eta squared = 0.02). White students' pride in attending Nelson Mandela University (m=3.9, sd=0.9) differed from Black (m=4.2, sd=0.9) and Coloured (m=4, sd=0.8) students' perceptions with a small effect size (eta squared=0.01). Finally, Coloured (m=3.1, sd=1.1) and White students

(m=3.1, sd=1.1) reported higher feelings of exclusion compared to Black students (m=2.8, sd=1.3). Inspection of the mean scores indicates there is room for improvement regarding this statement for White and Coloured students.

In George, the ANOVA found statistically significant differences by race with regards to perceptions for the statement "I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University." Black (m=4.3, sd=0.9) and White (m=3.5, sd=0.9) students had a statistically significant difference of medium magnitude (eta squared = 0.08) in perceptions of connection with the university.

## 5. STUDENT LIFE ACTIVITIES

Graphs 26 and 27 show the number of respondents who participate in student life activities versus those who do not in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.
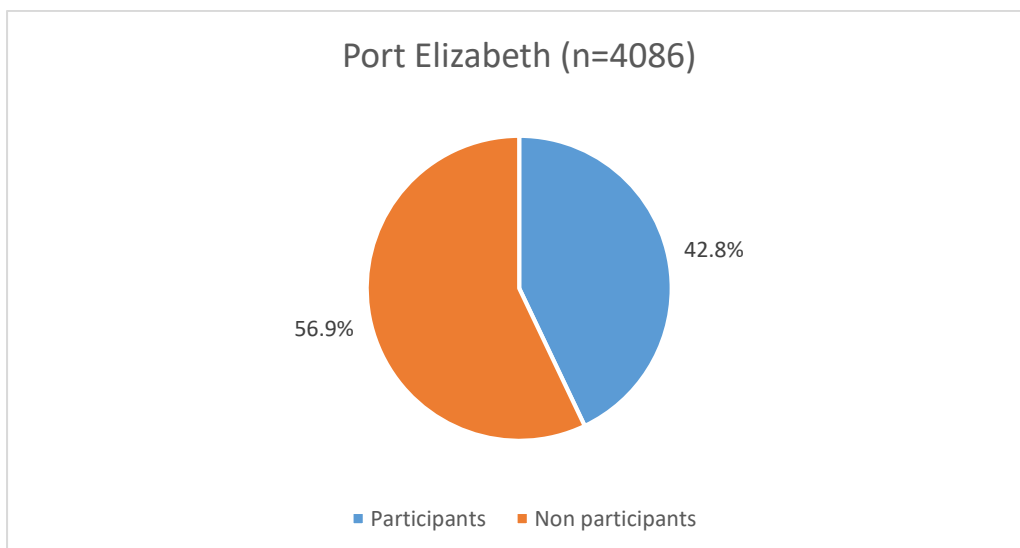


*Graph 26: Respondents who participate in student activities vs. non-participants - Port Elizabeth*
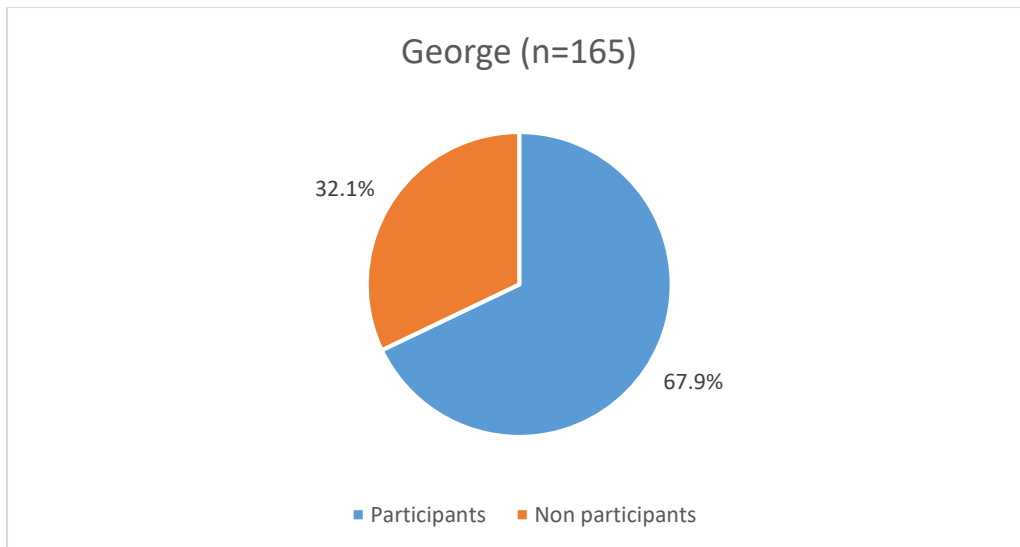
*Graph 27: Respondents who participate in student activities vs. non-participants - George*

The survey attracted a greater number of students who do not participate in student life activities in Port Elizabeth, with 42.8% of respondents being student life participants. In contrast, more respondents are student life participants in George (67.9%).

## 5.1. Participation in 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 the amount of time per week participants devoted to these societies.

### 5.1.1. Societies

Participation in Societies
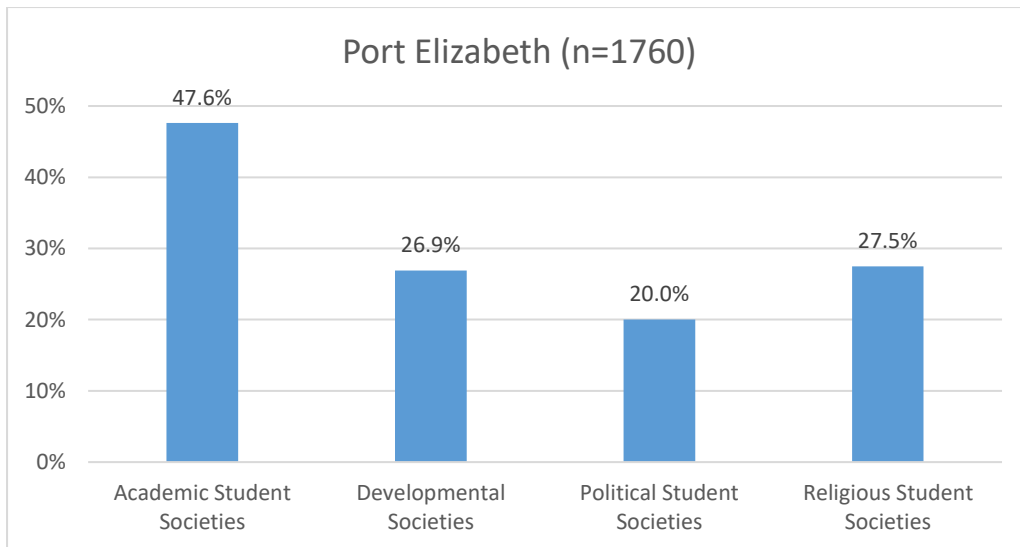
*Graph 26: Society participation – Port Elizabeth*
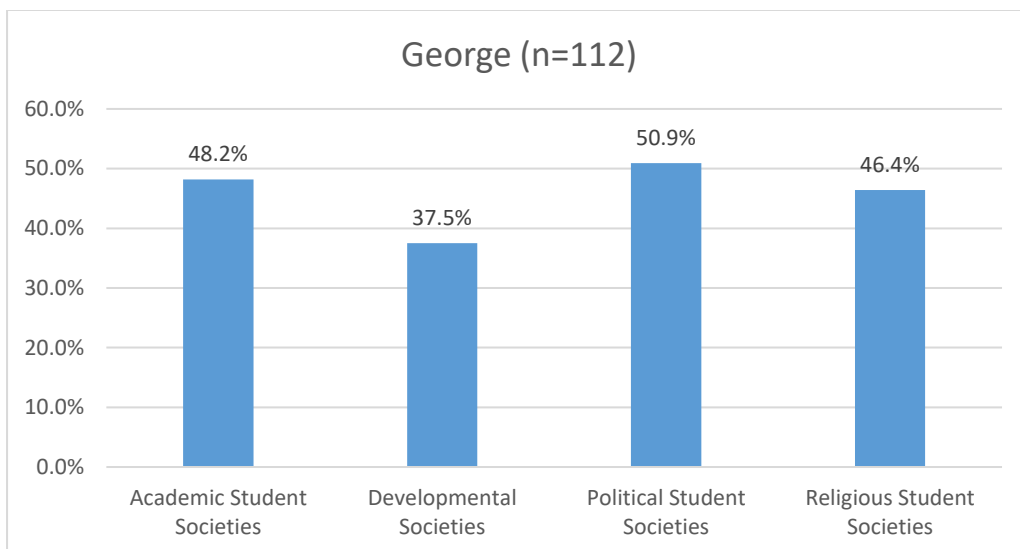


*Graph 27: Society participation - George*

Graphs 26 and 27 are the percentages of students involved in each type of society, with the overall population here being those who indicated they participated in some form of co-curricular activity. Graph 26 shows that most society participants in Port Elizabeth participated in academic societies, followed by religious societies, then political and developmental societies.

Graph 27 shows that in George, political society participation was the highest, followed by academic, then religious and developmental societies.
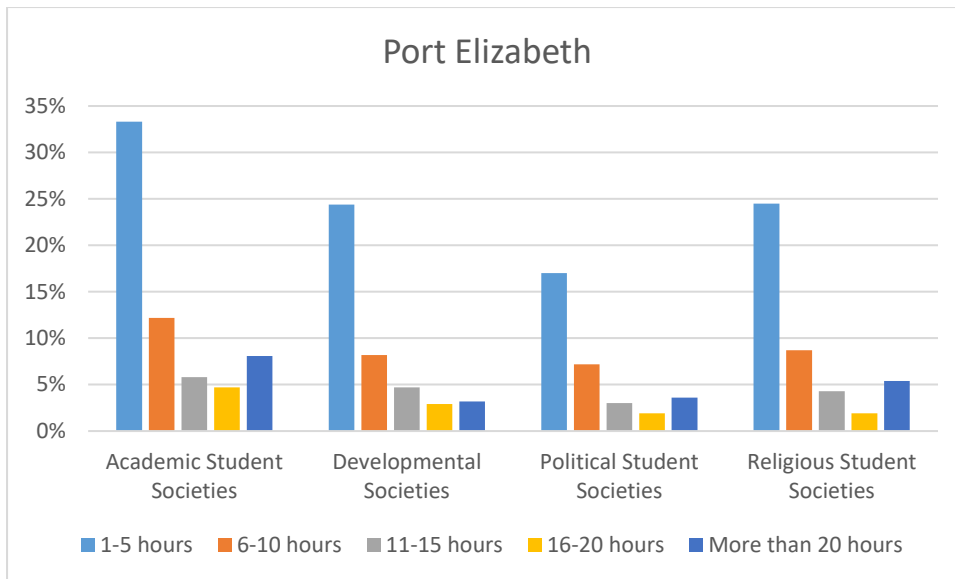
Graph 28: Time spent on societies – Port Elizabeth
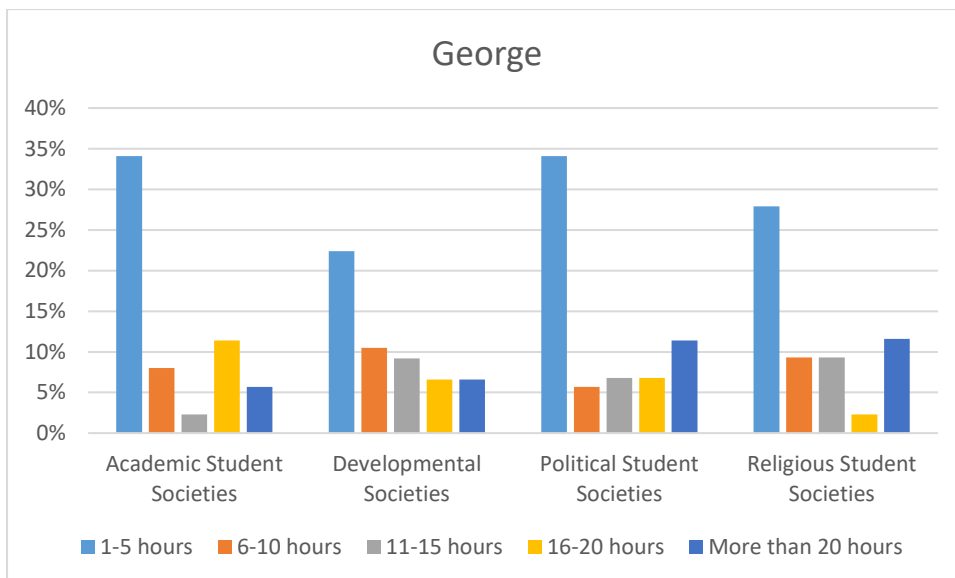


Graph 29: Time spent on societies – George

Graphs 28 and 29 show most students involved in a society spend between 1 to 5 hours a week on the society.

### 5.1.2. Arts and Culture

Arts and Culture participation

8.6% of Port Elizabeth respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activity. 23.5% of George respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activity.

Time spent on Arts and Culture activities

Graphs 30 and 31 show that approximately 18% of all participants in Port Elizabeth and George spend between 1 to 5 hours per week in Arts and Culture activities.
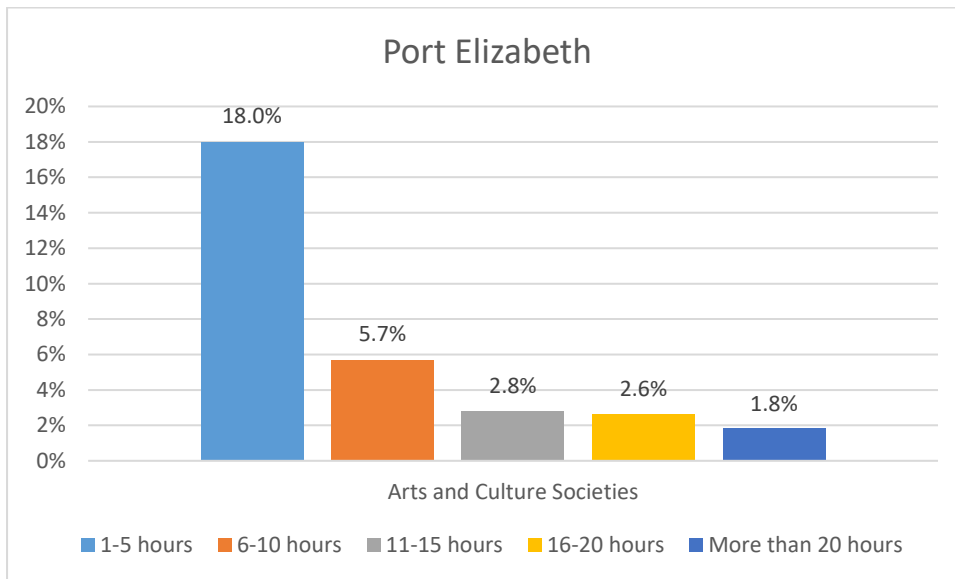


Graph 30: Time spent on Arts and Culture activities – Port Elizabeth
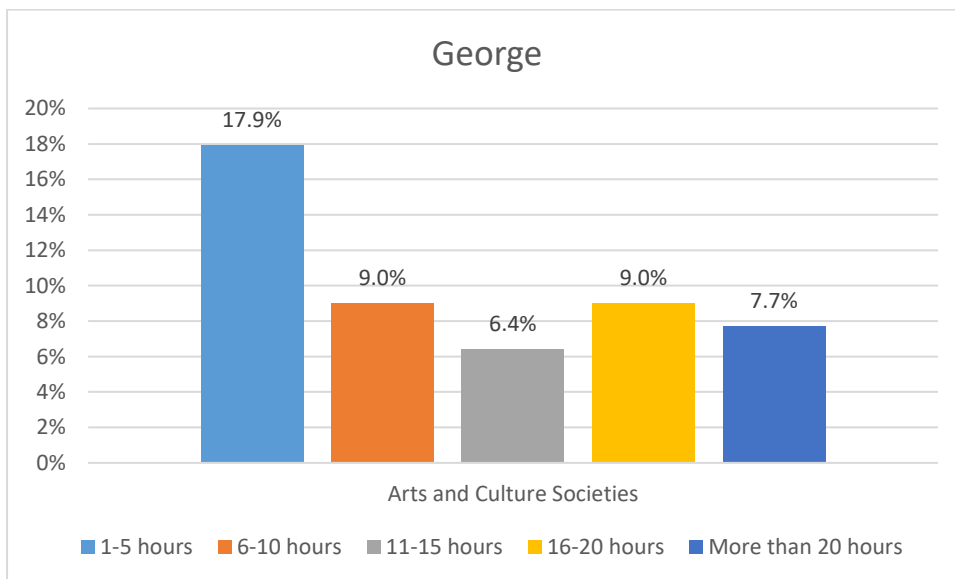


Graph 31: Time spent on Arts and Culture activities - George

### 5.1.3. Sports Club

Sports Club participation

9.3% of Port Elizabeth respondents participate in a sport club. In George, 37.3% of respondents were part of a sports club.

Time spent on Sports Club activities
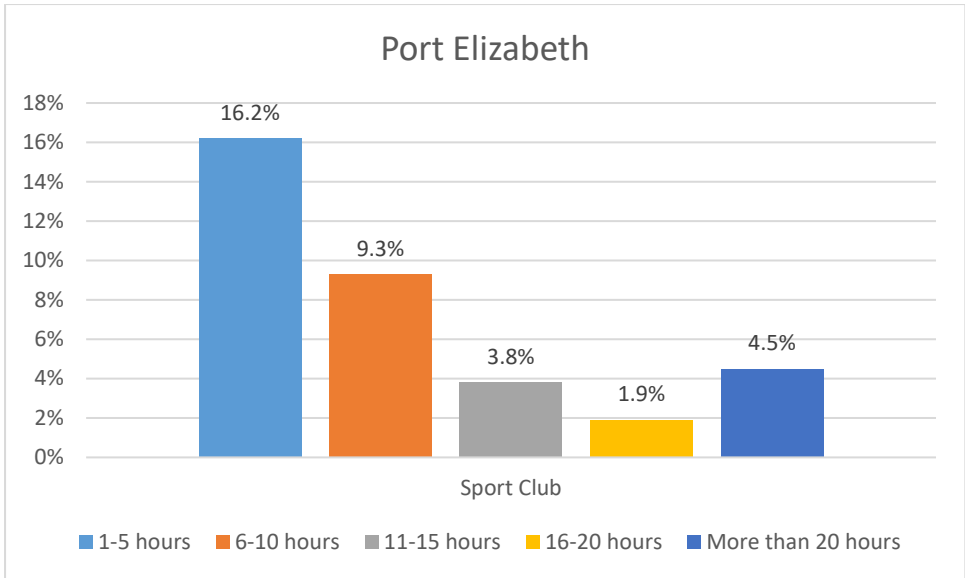
*Graph 32: Time spent on Sports Club activities – Port Elizabeth*
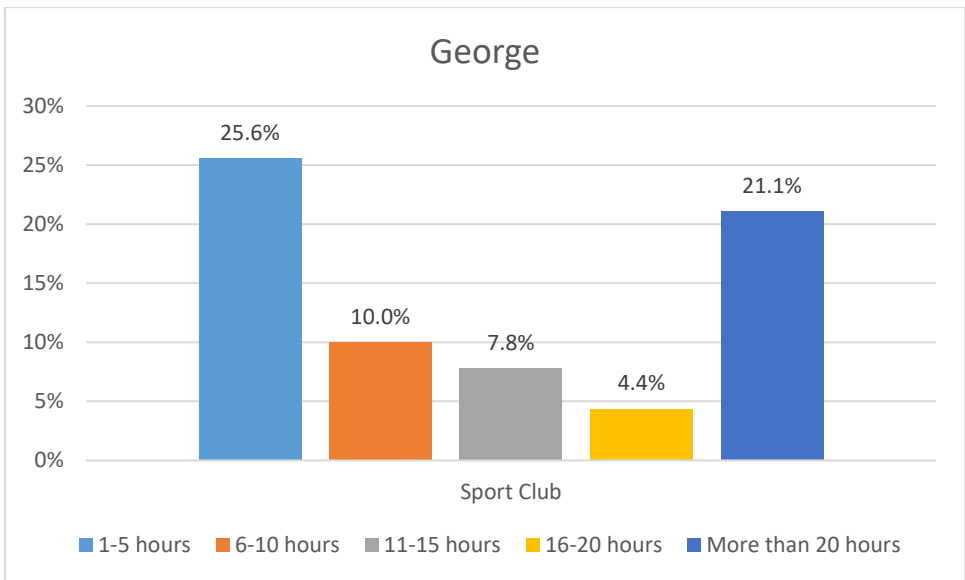


*Graph 33: Time spent on Sports Club activities – George*

In Port Elizabeth, 16.2% of participants dedicate 1-5 hours per week to sports clubs as indicated by graph 32.

Graph 33 indicates that 25.6% of George participants spend 1-5 hours a week on sports club participation.

### 5.1.4. Residence League

Residence league participation

8.7% of Port Elizabeth and 24.1% of George respondents reported participating in residence league activities.

Time spent on Residence League activities
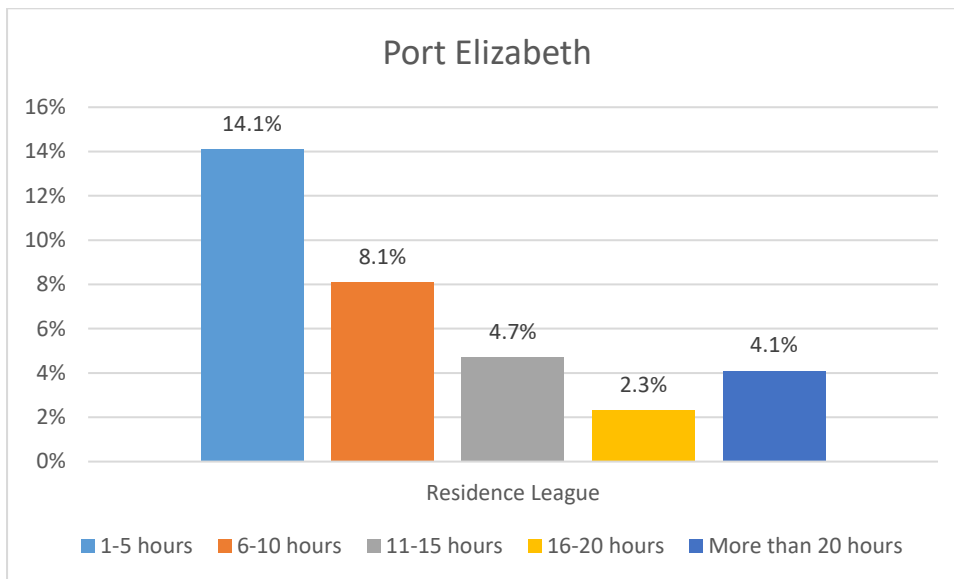


Graph 34: Time spent on Residence League activities – Port Elizabeth
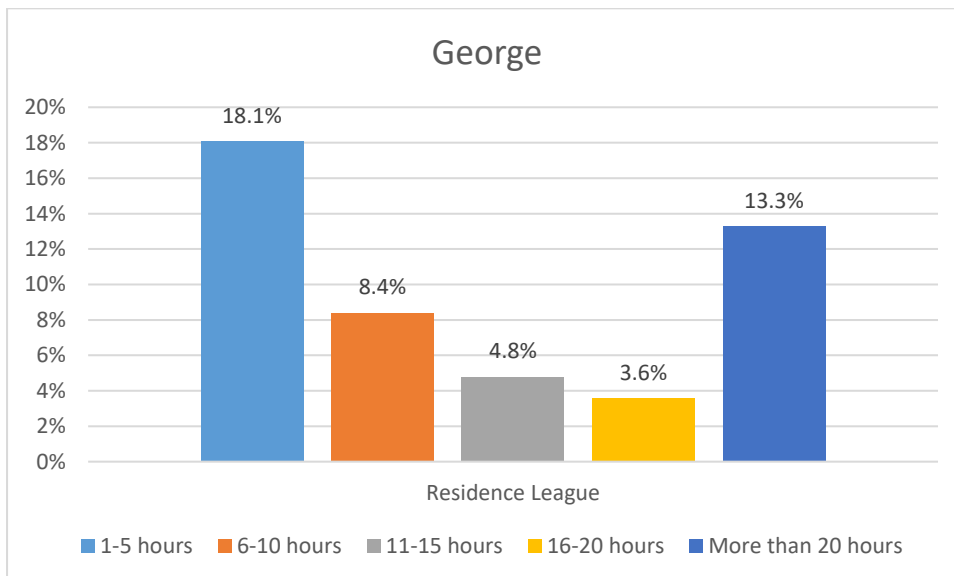


Graph 35: Time spent on Residence League activities – George

14% of participants spend between 1 to 5 hours on Residence League activities in Port Elizabeth. In George, 18% of participants spend 1 to 5 hours per week on Residence League activities.

### 5.1.5. Residence Events

Residence Events participation

Many respondents reported spending time on residence related events. 15.4% of respondents partook in residence events in Port Elizabeth. In George, 30.1% of respondents participated in residence events.

Time spent on Residence Events activities
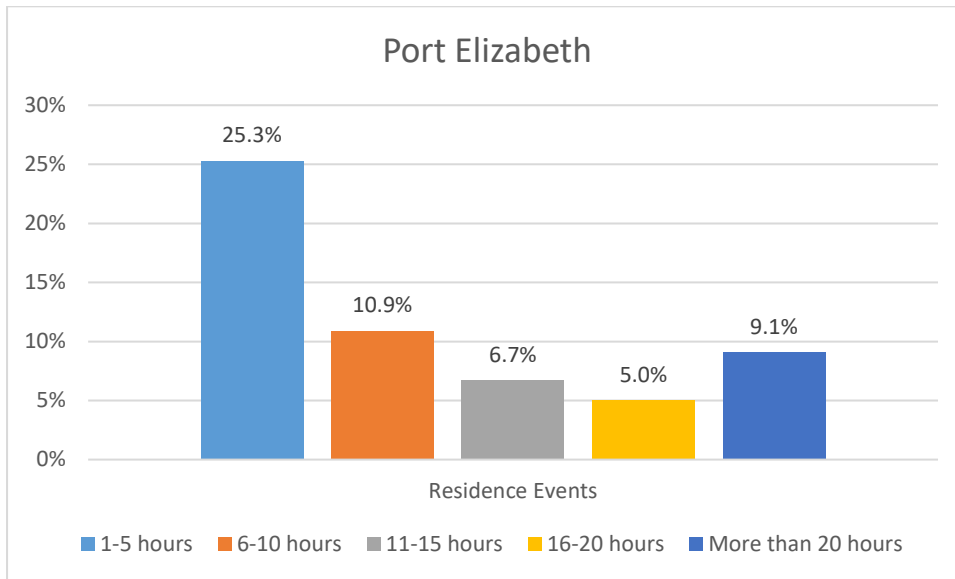


*Graph 36: Time spent on Residence Events activities – Port Elizabeth*
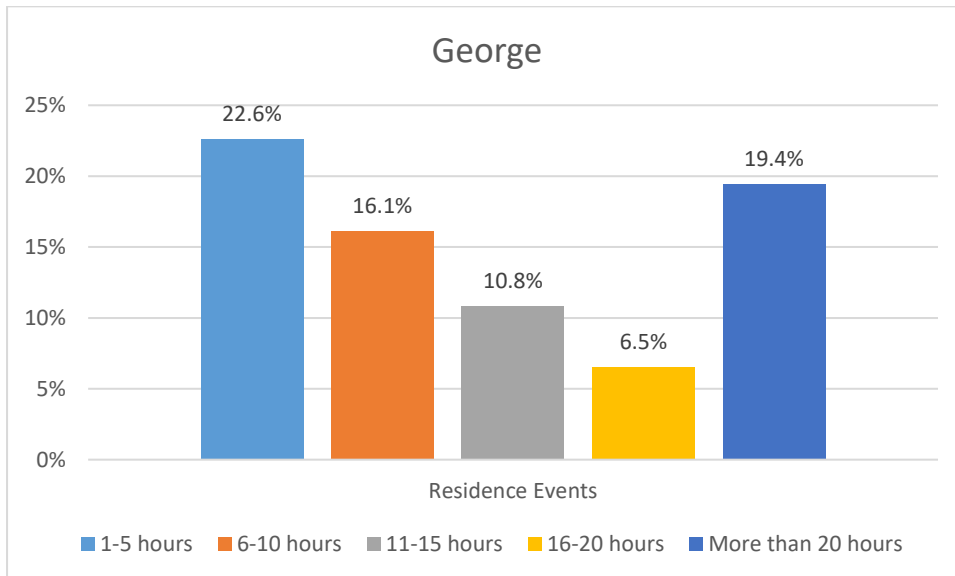


*Graph 37: Time spent on Residence Events activities – George*

In Port Elizabeth, 25% of participants spent between 1 to 5 hours per week on Residence Events. In George, 23% of participants spent 1 to 5 hours per week on Residence Events.

## 5.2. Participants in leadership positions

30.1% of Port Elizabeth and 32.1% of George respondents reported being in leadership positions. Graphs 38 and 39 highlight the types of leadership positions respondents hold.
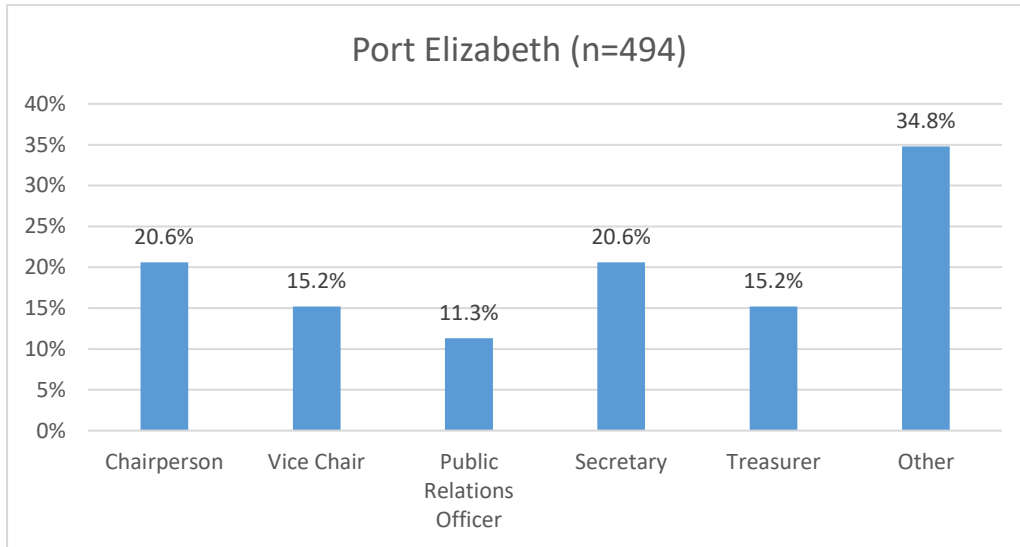


*Graph 38: Leadership positions held by participants - Port Elizabeth*
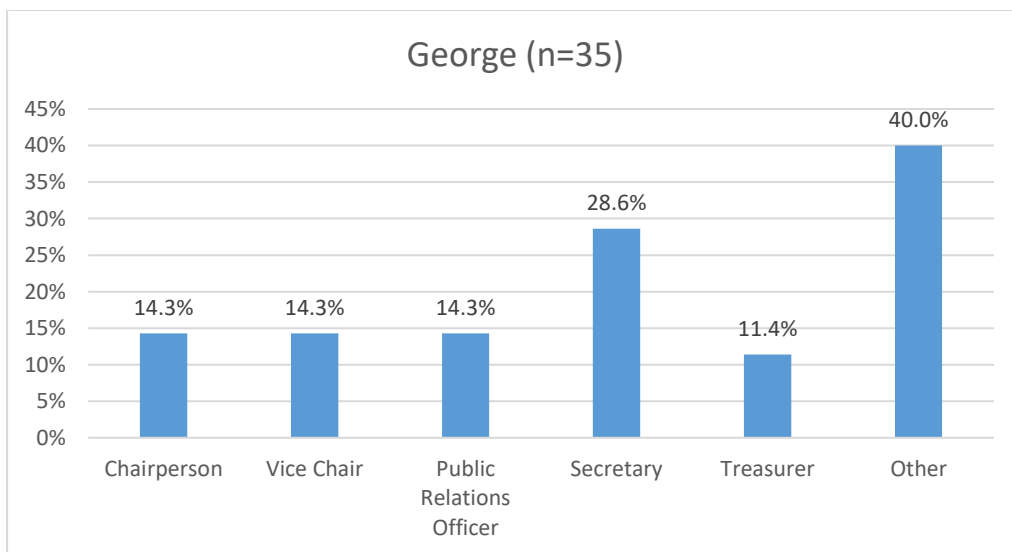


*Graph 39: Leadership positions held by participants George*

In Port Elizabeth, most respondents in leadership positions held the position of chairperson and secretary. Most respondents with leadership positions also filled the role of secretary in George. Other common positions respondents reported as "other" in the overall survey included captain, subcommittee member, or event organizer.

## 5.3. Co-curricular participation

Co-curricular activities refer to the following: Beyond the Classroom, Supplementary Instruction (SI) Leader, How2Buddy, Residence Mentor, Madibaz Radio Station, Madibaznews Student Newspaper, and 67 Hours. Participation in these activities results in a co-curricular record (CCR) (an official record recognising involvement in Nelson Mandela University co-curricular activities) that enables students to record their learning and involvement and allows them to plan their growth and development.

Overall, between 30% to 40% of all respondents participate in co-curricular activities (31.9% of Port Elizabeth and 38% of George respondents).

Graphs 40 and 41 demonstrate a breakdown of respondents according to co-curricular participation in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.
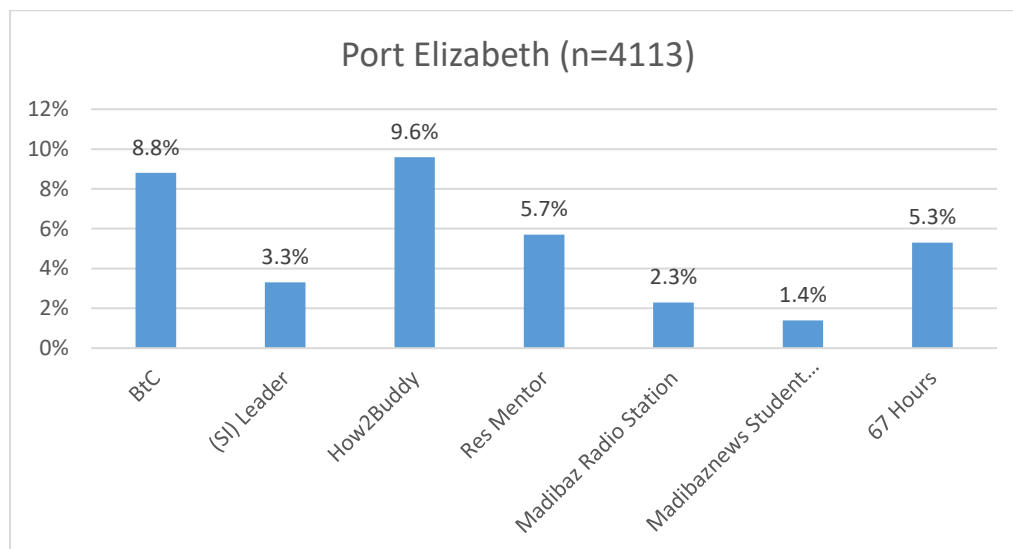


*Graph 40: Co-curricular participation - Port Elizabeth*
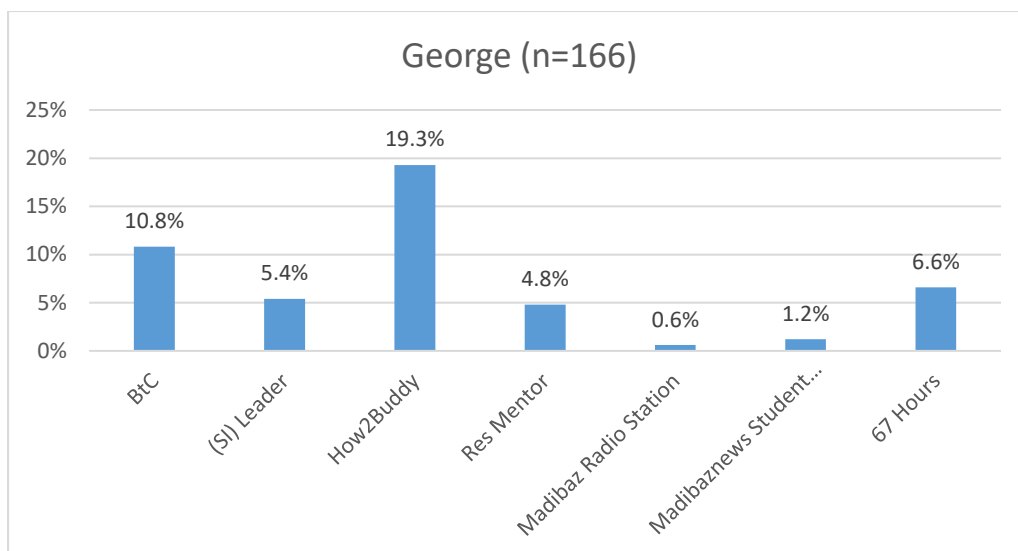
*Graph 41: Co-curricular participation – George*

Of the respondents who participate in co-curricular activities in Port Elizabeth, most participate in How2Budyy (9.6%) then Beyond the Classroom (8.8%), Residence Mentors (5.7%), 67 Hours (5.3%), Supplementary Instruction (SI) Leaders (3.3%), Madibaz Radio Station (2.3%), and Madibaznews Student Newspaper (1.4%).

In George, most respondents were in How2Buddy (19.3%), followed by the BtC programme (10.8%), 67 Hours (6.6%), SI Leaders (5.4%), Residence Mentors (4.8%), Madibaznews Sutdent Newspaper (1.2%), and Madibaz Radio Station (0.6%).

## 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 Nelson Mandela University.[2] Although there are 17 competencies, only those learning outcomes most likely to be identified

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

among most co-curricular activities were included on the survey (the learning outcome from which each competency is derived 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.

| Competency and corresponding learning outcome | Mean (sd) |
|---|---|
| Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth) | 4.4 (0.8) |
| Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity) | 4.4 (0.8) |
| Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Take responsibility for my actions (Independence) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development) | 4.3 (0.7) |
| Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Cooperates with others to achieve a common purpose (Collaboration) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Follow basic protocols (Professionalism) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Able to articulate ideas (Effective communication) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability) | 4.1 (0.9) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development) | 4.1 (0.9) |
| Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development) | 4.1 (0.9) |
| Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility) | 4 (0.9) |
| Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development) | 3.9 (0.9) |
| Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence) | 3.8 (0.9) |
| Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour) | 3.8 (0.9) |
| Manage my time effectively (Independence) | 3.8 (0.9) |

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

| Competency and corresponding learning outcome | Mean (sd) |
|---|---|
| Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility) | 4.6 (0.6) |
| Take responsibility for my actions (Independence) | 4.5 (0.7) |
| Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships) | 4.5 (0.8) |
| Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity) | 4.4 (0.7) |
| Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication) | 4.4 (0.8) |
| Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy) | 4.4 (0.7) |
| Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth) | 4.4 (0.8) |
| Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development) | 4.4 (0.7) |
| Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development) | 4.3 (0.7) |
| Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Follow basic protocols (Professionalism) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Cooperates with others to achieve a common purpose (Collaboration) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development) | 4.2 (0.9) |
| Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development) | 4.1 (0.9) |
| Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility) | 4.1 (0.9) |
| Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability) | 4.1 (0.9) |
| Able to articulate ideas (Effective communication) | 4.1 (0.8) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Manage my time effectively (Independence) | 4 (1) |
| Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development) | 4 (0.9) |
| Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence) | 3.9 (0.9) |
| Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour) | 3.9 (1) |

*Table 8: Perceived competencies of student life activity participants - George*

Tables 7 and 8 show that participants rated all competencies on an acceptable level of learning or higher.

For participants in Port Elizabeth, the top competencies are

- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)

For participants in George, the top competencies are

- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)

## 6.2. Perceived competencies by non-participants

Tables 9 and 10 show the perceived learning outcomes of student life participation by non-participants.

| Competency and corresponding learning outcome | Mean (sd) |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth) | 4.1 (0.9) |
| Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility) | 4.1 (0.9) |
| Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development) | 4.1 (0.9) |
| Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Cooperates with others to achieve a common purpose (Collaboration) | 4 (0.8) |
| Follow basic protocols (Professionalism) | 4 (0.8) |
| Take responsibility for my actions (Independence) | 4 (0.9) |
| Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration) | 4 (0.8) |
| Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity) | 4 (0.9) |
| Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships) | 4 (0.8) |
| Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development) | 4 (0.8) |
| Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development) | 4 (0.8) |
| Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development) | 4 (0.8) |
| Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration) | 4 (0.8) |
| Able to articulate ideas (Effective communication) | 4 (0.8) |
| Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy) | 4 (0.9) |
| Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability) | 4 (0.9) |
| Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development) | 3.9 (0.9) |
| Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth) | 3.9 (0.8) |
| Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development) | 3.9 (0.9) |
| Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility) | 3.9 (0.9) |
| Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration) | 3.9 (0.8) |
| Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability) | 3.9 (1) |
| Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour) | 3.8 (0.9) |
| Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence) | 3.8 (0.9) |
| Manage my time effectively (Independence) | 3.7 (0.9) |

*Table 9: Perceived competencies by non- participants - Port Elizabeth*

| Competency and corresponding learning outcome | Mean (sd) |
|---|---|
| Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility) | 4.5 (0.6) |
| Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth) | 4.4 (1) |
| Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication) | 4.4 (0.6) |
| Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development) | 4.4 (0.7) |
| Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships) | 4.4 (0.7) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development) | 4.3 (0.9) |
| Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity) | 4.3 (0.7) |
| Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration) | 4.3 (0.7) |
| Take responsibility for my actions (Independence) | 4.3 (0.8) |
| Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity) | 4.2 (0.9) |
| Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development) | 4.2 (0.9) |
| Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development) | 4.2 (1) |
| Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development) | 4.2 (0.9) |
| Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration) | 4.2 (0.6) |
| Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships) | 4.2 (0.8) |
| Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability) | 4.2 (0.7) |
| Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy) | 4.1 (0.7) |
| Cooperates with others to achieve a common purpose (Collaboration) | 4.1 (0.6) |
| Able to articulate ideas (Effective communication) | 4.1 (0.7) |
| Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability) | 4.1 (0.8) |
| Follow basic protocols (Professionalism) | 4 (0.9) |
| Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility) | 4 (0.7) |
| Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development) | 3.9 (0.7) |
| Manage my time effectively (Independence) | 3.9 (0.8) |
| Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth) | 3.9 (0.8) |
| Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence) | 3.6 (1.1) |

*Table 10: Perceived competencies by non-participants – George*

For non-participants, the perceived potential competencies gained from involvement are also ranked at an acceptable level of belongingness or identified learning and higher, indicating non-participants understand the potential benefits of co-curricular involvement but are not involved. Working with these students to identify the barriers to involvement could encourage further growth.

The top perceived potential competencies for Port Elizabeth non-participants are
- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)

- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)

The top perceived potential competencies for George non-participants are
- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)
- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)

## 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:

- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)

- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)
- Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)

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

- Effectively communicate through speaking, writing, and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)
- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)

Port Elizabeth and George respondents identified different competencies that they feel they receive from being part of the BtC programme. Table 11 identifies the learning outcomes identified by BtC participants in Port Elizabeth and in George.

| Port Elizabeth | George |
|---|---|
| Intellectual growth | Effective communciation |
| Meaningful interpersonal relationships | Intellectual growth |
| Appreciating diversity | Self-awareness and development |
| Self-awareness and development | Social responsibility |
| Values exploration | Independence |

*Table 11: Top learning outcomes as identified by BtC participants - Port Elizabeth vs. George*

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.

| BtC learning outcomes | Top reported learning outcomes according to BtC participants |
|---|---|
| Intellectual growth | Intellectual growth |

| Appreciating diversity | Self-awareness and development |
|---|---|
| Meaningful interpersonal relationships | Meaningful interpersonal relationships |

*Table 12: BtC learning outcomes, vs. learning outcomes according to participants*

Overall, the BtC programme meets all of the three learning outcomes set out by the programme according to BtC participants on both campuses, though respondents reported higher gains in self-awareness and development than appreciating diversity.

## 7. MOTIVATIONS AND INTERFERENCE

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

Motivations

| Port Elizabeth (n=4113) | George (n=166) |
|---|---|
| To learn skills (30.4%) | To learn skills (48.8%) |
| Desire to help others/community outreach (21.1%) | Desire to help others/community outreach (36.7%) |
| Need to add something to my CV (20.2%) | Need to add something to my CV (32.5%) |
| For recreation or enjoyment (17.6%) | Encouragement from an Academic Staff member/lecturer (30.1%) |
| Interest in making friends (14.6%) | For recreation or enjoyment (28.3%) |

*Table 13: Top motivations for student life activities – Port Elizabeth vs. George*

| Port Elizabeth (n=4113) | George (n=166) |
|---|---|
| Day/time the activity is held (48.6%) | Day/time the activity is held (56%) |
| Lectures/class (47.6%) | Time (involvement in other activities) (43.4%) |
| Transport (difficulty getting to activities) (42.2%) | Lectures/class (42.8%) |
| Finances, lack of money (39.9%) | Finances, lack of money (41%) |
| Time (involvement in other activities) (34%) | Transport (difficulty getting to activities) (36.7%) |

*Table 14: Top interferences in student life activities - Port Elizabeth vs. George*

As indicated by Tables 13 and 14, the top motivation for participation was to learn skills, and 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 2019, the survey attracted a comparable number of respondents than past years.

Overall the biographical characteristics of respondents are similar to the general Nelson Mandela University population. The survey also attracted comparatively more black students and more on-campus students. Most respondents were between the ages of 18 to 25 (92% in Port Elizabeth and 88.6% in George).

With regards to faculty information, slightly more respondents were registered full-time in Port Elizabeth (97.1%) as compared to the general student population (86.9%). In George, almost all respondents were full-time registered students (98.6%). In Port Elizabeth, most respondents were in their first academic year of study (33.8%) followed by second year students (31.1%). Most George participants were in their first academic year (51.1%) followed by second and third year students (19.4% each). In George, half of respondents were from the science faculty (52.9%) and roughly a third from the business and economic sciences faculty (34.1%) which is representative of the overall student population. In Port Elizabeth, respondents were generally representative of the general Nelson Mandela University 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 and George, most students are either living in a university accredited accommodation, at home, or in a private accommodation. The Nelson Mandela University shuttle is the primary commute to campus for respondents followed by driving their own cars on both campuses. On both campuses, NSFAS loans were the main method that students used to finance their studies.

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 Nelson Mandela University" and "I feel like Nelson Mandela University is a community." Perceptions differed across sex only minimally with several statistically significant differences in Port Elizabeth and George, but the sizes of the differences were practically small. There were also statistically significant, though practically small, differences by race for all perceptions in Port Elizabeth. White students generally scored lower than Black and Coloured students. In George, the only difference was in "I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University," but the effect size was medium.

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. Most participants devote approximately 1-5 hours per week on each type of society.

With regards to leadership positions, 30.1% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 32.1% of George respondents reported being in leadership positions.

Overall, approximately a third of respondents reported being in co-curricular activities (31.9% in Port Elizabeth and 38% in George). In Port Elizabeth, most were BtC participants or How2Buddies, and most How2Buddies 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 for participants on both campuses are
- Appreciating diversity
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships
- Independence
- Social responsibility

The top-rated perceived potential competencies for non-participants are

- Intellectual growth
- Social responsibility
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships
- Effective communication

Port Elizabeth and George respondents identified similar 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 generally aligned with the intended learning outcomes, indicating the BtC programme is largely achieving its stated educational goals.

| BtC learning outcomes | Top reported learning outcomes according to BtC participants |
|---|---|
| Intellectual growth | Intellectual growth |
| Appreciating diversity | Self-awareness and development |
| Meaningful interpersonal relationships | Meaningful interpersonal relationships |

The top motivation for involvement in co-curricular and student life activities was to learn new skills. The major interference in participating in student life activities overall were the day or time the activity is held. The top 5 interferences differ only in rank 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, time, lectures/class, finances, and transport (difficulty getting to activities).

## 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: appreciating diversity, intellectual growth and social responsibility. 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 Nelson Mandela University students

## 10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank
- Professor Matthew Wawrzynski, Michigan State University for his continued support, motivation and expertise in the design, collation and interpretation of the data.

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