2012 Research Report

National Online Learners Priorities Report

- **Online students' priorities for their learning experience**

- **Institutional strengths and challenges from the online learner perspective**

- **Separate results for students enrolled primarily online and those enrolled primarily on campus**

- **Separate results for online undergraduate and graduate students**

- **Review of the demographics of online learners**

- **Influences on the decision to enroll**

- **Data from more than 123,000 students at 109 institutions**

Noel-Levitz®

The 2012 National Online Learners Priorities Report
Introduction and Overview

The importance of student satisfaction assessment

Online learners are a growing population on campuses across the country. An increasing number of institutions are adding distance learning as an alternative to classroom-based programs. Students are seeking online options as a flexible way to meet their program requirements while balancing work and home commitments. Some institutions are operating in a cyber-only environment, offering no bricks-and-mortar classrooms.

Serving the needs of online learners in this environment becomes a greater priority for colleges and universities. Student satisfaction is considered a core element for higher education institutions serving traditional-age, on-campus students, and now more colleges and universities are expanding this assessment activity to online learners as well. As this group becomes a larger segment of the overall student population, it is important to include online learners in systematic assessment activities.

Satisfaction assessment enables institutions to strategically and tactically target areas most in need of immediate improvement. It facilitates the development of planning and intervention priorities specific to online learners, and it helps institutions examine student transactions with all major aspects of their experience, including academic, registration, and customer service.

College and university leaders must understand how satisfied online learners are with their educational experience—both "inside" and "outside" of the classroom setting—in order to best serve those students. By collecting satisfaction data from online learners on a regular basis, campuses are able to determine where they are best serving these students and where there are areas for improvement.

Satisfied students are more likely to be successful students. Research indicates that institutions with more satisfied students have higher graduation rates, lower loan default rates, and higher alumni giving. Satisfaction with an institution includes a combination of academic factors as well as areas related to campus services. An institution needs to identify all of the issues that are relevant to students. These include their interaction with faculty, as well as the service they receive from staff and administrators; the resources provided to students; policies that are in place; and students' overall feelings about the value of the experience.

Satisfaction assessment can be further refined by capturing students' levels of importance (or expectations). Importance ratings provide institutions with valuable data on the areas that matter most to students. With this view, institutions can celebrate their strengths—those areas that have high satisfaction AND high importance. Institutions can also focus their improvement efforts on areas where satisfaction is low AND importance is high, and not be distracted by low satisfaction areas that may not matter to online learners.

The importance of fit

Campus leaders realize the importance of congruence or "fit" between what online learners expect from their educational experience and their satisfaction with what they perceive as the reality of that experience. Research indicates that the greater the fit between expectations and reality, the greater the likelihood for persistence, student success, and stability. The opposite effect also applies: with greater incongruence or lack of fit comes higher attrition, poor performance, and fluctuation.

Understanding this fit between what online learners expect and what they experience is a primary benefit of satisfaction assessment. Importance indicators add another layer of understanding. The level of importance students place on a particular item indicates the level of expectation they assign to this area, and it also indicates the amount of value they associate with this item. Often, an institution communicates value or the expectations that students should place on an area by the way they market or position themselves in a particular area. An institution can then better identify the fit between the student body and the institution when performance gaps are captured through the combination of satisfaction and importance data. A smaller performance gap indicates a better fit; a larger gap indicates more incongruence and an area of concern.

Responding is the key

Conducting satisfaction assessment is a way to show online learners that the institution cares about their perceptions and their educational experience, but an even more significant way that an institution can show that it cares is by actively responding to student-identified issues. Once data have been collected, actively reviewed, and shared throughout the campus, then initiatives can be identified to respond to online learner concerns. Data on the shelf have no power; data actively used to drive decision making can have the power to improve the success of the institution.

In the complex environment of today's higher education world, conducting satisfaction assessment is a way to ensure the vitality of the institution. Regular satisfaction assessment and active response to the issues shows the institutional stakeholders good stewardship of scarce resources in an optimal way. This practice inspires trust among stakeholders, including online learners, boards of trustees, and even state legislatures.

It is also appropriate to note that satisfaction assessment should be a systematic process, not a one-time event. Shifts in satisfaction and expectations that are tracked over time can identify where institutions are responding appropriately and what new issues are current priorities. Data that are timely and relevant will have the highest impact. Online learner characteristics and perceptions can change, and campus leaders will want to understand these changes in order to meet the transforming needs and circumstances of the student body.

A note about reviewing the data

While reviewing national results is vital for understanding the higher education marketplace, identification of individual institutional strengths and challenges is best done through data collected for those institutions. Campus leaders can identify their institution's unique strengths and challenges from the perceptions of their own online learners.

The study

The *2012 National Online Learners Priorities Report* presents the responses to the Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners™ (PSOL) from 123,594 students at 109 institutions. The results include online learner responses over a three-year time period, from the fall of 2009 through the spring of 2012. Students enrolled primarily online comprise almost 112,000 of these students, while students enrolled primarily on campus include approximately 10,000 students. The remaining students did not indicate an enrollment status. There are a little over 79,000 undergraduate students in the dataset and around 38,500 graduate level students, with the remaining students indicating "other" as their class level. (For further description of the survey tool and the list of participating institutions, please see the appendix.)

Importance—Satisfaction—Performance Gap

On the PSOL, students respond to statements of expectation with an importance rating and a satisfaction rating. These ratings are on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being high. The student responses are averaged to produce an importance score and a satisfaction score for each item. A performance gap is calculated by subtracting the satisfaction score from the importance score. A larger performance gap indicates that the institution is not meeting student expectations; a smaller performance gap indicates that the institution is doing a relatively good job of meeting expectations. Negative performance gaps indicate the institution is exceeding student expectations; negative gaps are rare and are more likely to be found on items of low importance to students.

Reviewing the 2012 data

The 2012 *National Online Learners Priorities Report* includes the following data analyses:

- **A demographic overview to identify who online learners are.**

- **The scales in order of importance.** The scales represent the individual items on the survey which have been clustered together conceptually and statistically. (For a complete description of each scale, please see the appendix.) The scales are presented for the overall online learner responses, as well as separately for students enrolled primarily online and those enrolled primarily on campus. In addition, scale results are shared for undergraduate and graduate online learners.

- **Strengths and challenges.** Strengths are identified as areas of high importance and high satisfaction. Challenges are defined as areas of high importance and low satisfaction and/or a large performance gap. This section identifies online learners' key priorities for improvement as well as the top areas for celebration.

- **A comparison of students enrolled primarily online with those enrolled primarily on campus as well as a comparison of undergraduate and graduate students.** This section highlights where each group of students are significantly more or less satisfied.

- **A review of enrollment factors in order of importance.** This section helps institutions consider the top influencers in students' decisions to enroll in an online program.

- **Summary scores.** This section reveals the percentage responses to three summary items on the survey.
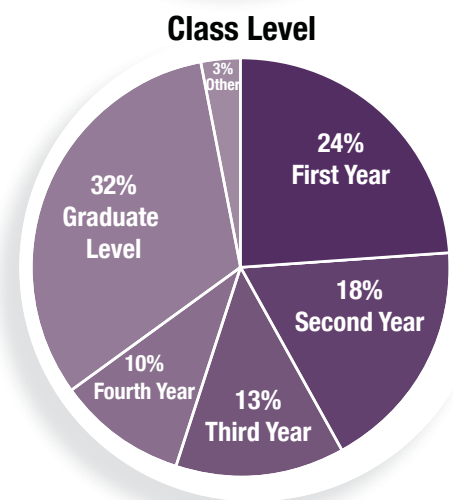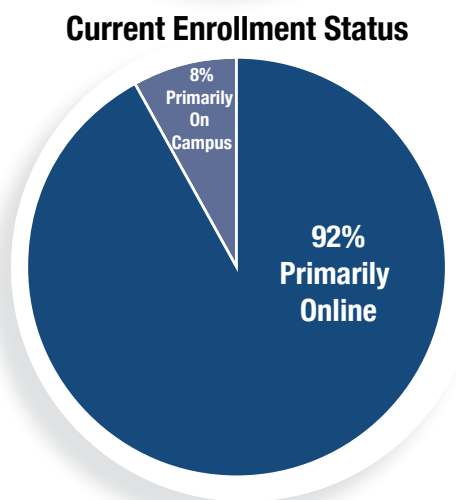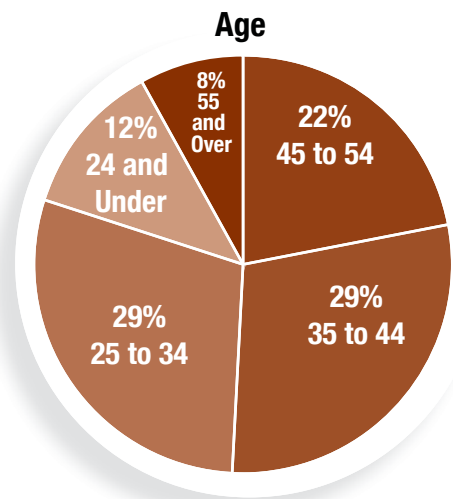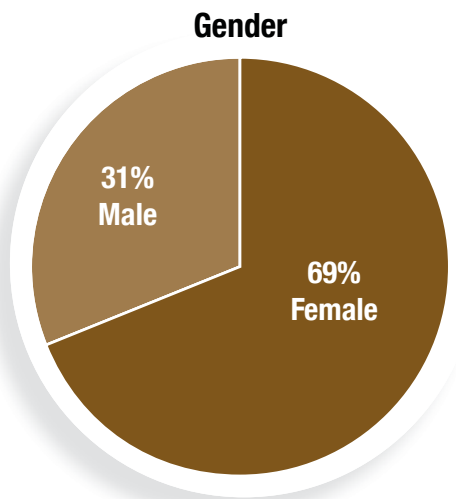
The Results

The demographics

A review of the demographics for the online learners gives a better view of who today's online learners are, based on the students who participated in this study. A few variables are highlighted with graphs; a summary description based on the majority responses is also provided.

The majority of online learners in this study are Caucasian females primarily enrolled online with a full-time class load. A majority are at the undergraduate level and employed full-time while working on their degrees. A little over half of the students are married and the majority own their own home. Most of the students plan to complete their degrees online, but currently are taking fewer then six credits. They are also new to online programs with the majority having taken fewer than three classes previously. Forty-five percent of the students have a graduate-level goal of obtaining a doctorate or master's degree.

These national demographics may vary from the demographics of individual institutions.

Gender

- 31% Male
- 69% Female

Age

- 8% 55 and Over
- 22% 45 to 54
- 29% 35 to 44
- 29% 25 to 34
- 12% 24 and Under

Current Enrollment Status

- 8% Primarily On Campus
- 92% Primarily Online

Class Level

- 3% Other
- 24% First Year
- 18% Second Year
- 13% Third Year
- 10% Fourth Year
- 32% Graduate Level

The scales

The best place to begin reviewing the data is by looking at the big picture and understanding the areas that matter most to online learners. The following table summarizes the importance, satisfaction, and performance gaps for five areas (scales) for online learners completing the survey. The scales are listed in order of importance.

As reflected below, all five areas are rated with relatively high importance. There is little variance between the top scale and the bottom scale. Online learners also report relatively high satisfaction across all categories, with small performance gaps. This indicates that institutions are meeting online student expectations in most areas of the educational experience. Satisfaction has increased significantly in all areas over the past year, except institutional perceptions which had a slight drop in satisfaction.

Online learners: National results by scale

Scale	Importance	Satisfaction	Performance Gap
Institutional perceptions	6.54	5.88	0.66
Enrollment services	6.52	6.02	0.50
Instructional services	6.43	5.83	0.60
Academic services	6.43	5.86	0.57
Student services	6.39	5.81	0.58

Students enrolled primarily online have higher overall satisfaction.

The national online learners data can be segmented by those enrolled primarily online and those who are enrolled primarily on campus. The scales in order of importance for primarily online and primarily on campus students are as follows:

Online learners—enrolled primarily online: National results by scale

Scale	Importance	Satisfaction	Performance Gap
Institutional perceptions	6.56	5.90	0.66
Enrollment services	6.54	6.05	0.49
Instructional services	6.45	5.86	0.59
Academic services	6.44	5.89	0.55
Student services	6.41	5.84	0.57

Online learners—enrolled primarily on campus: National results by scale

Scale	Importance	Satisfaction	Performance Gap
Enrollment services	6.40	5.77	0.63
Institutional perceptions	6.33	5.63	0.70
Instructional services	6.27	5.59	0.68
Academic services	6.27	5.55	0.72
Student services	6.18	5.48	0.70

Students enrolled primarily online place a slightly greater emphasis on the perceptions of the institution, but the other priority areas are similar. Students enrolled primarily on campus place the top priority on enrollment services. The performance gaps for students enrolled primarily on campus are larger in all scale areas, even though the importance scores are lower in all areas. Primarily online students had significantly higher satisfaction on all five scales than students enrolled primarily on campus.

The national online learners data can also be segmented by those enrolled as undergraduate students and those enrolled as graduate students. The scales in order of importance for undergraduates and graduate students are as follows:

Online learners—undergraduate students: National results by scale

Scale	Importance	Satisfaction	Performance Gap
Enrollment services	6.56	6.00	0.56
Institutional perceptions	6.52	5.94	0.58
Academic services	6.46	5.89	0.57
Instructional services	6.43	5.87	0.56
Student services	6.43	5.85	0.58

Online learners—graduate students: National results by scale

Scale	Importance	Satisfaction	Performance Gap
Institutional perceptions	6.59	5.78	0.81
Enrollment services	6.46	6.10	0.36
Instructional services	6.45	5.79	0.66
Academic services	6.38	5.83	0.55
Student services	6.31	5.75	0.56

Graduate students have higher importance scores for institutional perceptions and instructional services, while undergraduate students have higher importance scores in enrollment services, academic services, and student services. Graduate students have a much higher performance gap for institutional perceptions than do undergraduates, but a much lower performance gap for enrollment services. Other performance gaps are comparable. Undergraduates are significantly more satisfied with institutional perceptions, academic services, instructional services, and student services than graduate students, but are significantly less satisfied with enrollment services. Undergraduate students being more satisfied is a different finding from the adult satisfaction report. Undergraduate students being more satisfied is a different finding than the one we see in the adult satisfaction report. In this report, which reflects data from adult students enrolled primarily on campus, graduate students indicate higher satisfaction than undergraduate students in all areas.

Strengths

Individual items on the inventory were analyzed to determine institutional strengths (high importance and high satisfaction). Institutions often incorporate their strengths into their marketing activities, recruiting materials, and internal and external public relations opportunities, as well as providing positive feedback for campus personnel and online students. *Strengths are defined as those items above the mid-point in importance and in the top quartile of satisfaction.*

The following strengths were identified by **online learners as a whole** (in order of importance):

- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
- Adequate online library resources are provided.

Institutions are doing well in serving online learners with registration and billing. Students also feel that instructional materials and library resources are appropriate.

The following strengths were identified by students enrolled **primarily online** (in order of importance):

- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
- Adequate online library resources are provided.

These strengths are the same as those identified by the online learners group as a whole.

The following strengths were identified by students enrolled **primarily on campus** (in order of importance):

- Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.
- Registration for online courses is convenient.

Students taking classes primarily on campus have better perceptions regarding assignments being clearly defined.

A unique strength for graduate students is the perception that institutions respond quickly to requests for information.

- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
- My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.

Three of these strengths are similar to strengths identified by the online learners group as a whole, with the addition of the assignments being clearly defined as the top strength. This item is actually identified as a challenge for students enrolled primarily online. The accessibility of the program advisor is an additional strength for on-campus students.

The following strengths were identified by **online undergraduate students** (in order of importance):

- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.

These same three strengths are consistent with the strengths identified by students enrolled primarily on campus.

The following strengths were identified by **online graduate students** (in order of importance):

- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- Adequate online library resources are provided.
- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- The institution responds quickly when I request information.
- There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.

Two unique strengths that appears on this list are the institution responding quickly to requests for information and sufficient program offerings. These two have not been identified previously in the data set as a whole or within the other subpopulations.

Challenges

Survey items were analyzed to determine key challenges (high importance and low satisfaction). These are crucial areas to address to improve retention (each institution will have its own list of challenges). Nationally, online learners have high expectations in these areas, but institutions failed to meet those expectations. Areas of dissatisfaction were prioritized by their importance score, indicating those areas that mattered most to online learners. Challenges are defined as being above the mid-point in importance and in the bottom quartile of satisfaction or the top quartile of performance gaps.

Following, listed in order of importance, are the top challenges identified by **online learners as a whole**:

· The quality of instruction is excellent.

· Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.

· Faculty are responsive to student needs.

· Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

· Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.

Institutions have opportunities to improve the interaction between online faculty and students with responsiveness, timely feedback, clearly defined assignments, and the perception of the quality of instruction. Additional training and support for online faculty may help respond to these issues. The issue of tuition paid is one identified by traditional students and adult learners in bricks-and-mortar programs. These are universal issues that institutions must face to further communicate the value of the educational experience in exchange for the tuition dollar.

The following challenges were identified by students enrolled **primarily online** (in order of importance):

· The quality of online instruction is excellent.

· Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.

· Faculty are responsive to student needs.

· Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

· Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.

These are the same five challenges identified by the students as a whole.

The following challenges were identified by students enrolled **primarily on campus** (in order of importance):

· Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

· There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.

· Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.

· Adequate financial aid is available.

· The quality of online instruction is excellent.

Three of these challenges overlap with the online learners as a whole. Students enrolled primarily on campus express more concern with sufficient program offerings (which may be why they are enrolled online) and adequate financial aid.

The following challenges were identified by **online undergraduate students** (in order of importance):

· The quality of online instruction is excellent.

· Faculty are responsive to student needs.

· Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

· Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.

· Adequate financial aid is available.

Four of these challenges are also identified by online learners as a whole. The availability of financial aid is also identified by students enrolled on campus.

The following challenges were identified by **online graduate students** (in order of importance):

- The quality of online instruction is excellent.
- Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.
- Faculty are responsive to student needs.
- Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

All five of these challenges overlap with the issues defined by online learners as a whole. Graduate students identify student assignments being defined as a challenge, while undergraduate online learners identify it as an area of strength.

Comparing satisfaction levels

When comparing satisfaction levels, students enrolled **primarily online** were significantly more satisfied than students enrolled **primarily on campus** in the following key areas (listed in order of importance to primarily online students):

- The quality of online instruction is excellent.
- Student assignments are clearly defined in syllabus.
- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- Faculty are responsive to student needs.
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.
- Program requirements are clear and reasonable.
- This institution responds quickly when I request information.
- There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.

Students enrolled primarily on campus were not significantly more satisfied on any items.

Online undergraduate students were significantly more satisfied than **online graduate** students in the following key areas (listed in order of importance to undergraduates):

- The quality of online instruction is excellent.
- Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.
- Faculty are responsive to student needs.
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.
- I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.

Online graduate students were significantly more satisfied than **online undergraduate** students in the following important areas (listed in order of importance to graduates):

- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- This institution responds quickly when I request information.
- There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
- Adequate financial aid is available.

While students enrolled primarily online are consistently more satisfied than students enrolled primarily on campus, there is more of a mix of experiences for undergraduate and graduate online students, with campuses serving each population differently in some key areas.

Enrollment factors

Institutions should be aware of the factors which influence their online learners' decisions to enroll in the program. Institutions often use this type of information to shape their recruitment activities. In this study, the enrollment factors indicated in descending order of importance for online learners were as follows:

Enrollment Factors: Online Learners

Rank	Item	Importance
1	Convenience	6.76
2	Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.63
3	Work schedule	6.59
4	Program requirements	6.45
5	Reputation of institution	6.34
6	Financial assistance available	6.32
7	Cost	6.25
8	Future employment opportunities	6.19
9	Ability to transfer credits	6.17
10	Distance from campus	5.27
11	Recommendations from employer	5.01

Convenience was the primary motivating factor for enrollment in the online program, followed closely by flexible pacing and work schedule. Program requirements also played a strong factor in enrollment decision making. Recommendations from an employer were not an important factor in the students' decisions.

The enrollment factors in descending order of importance for students enrolled **primarily online** are listed in next column.

Enrollment Factors: Online Learners— Primarily Online

Rank	Item	Importance
1	Convenience	6.79
2	Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.67
3	Work schedule	6.63
4	Program requirements	6.47
5	Reputation of institution	6.37
6	Financial assistance available	6.34
7	Cost	6.26
8	Future employment opportunities	6.19
9	Ability to transfer credits	6.18
10	Distance from campus	5.20
11	Recommendations from employer	5.01

The enrollment factors in descending order of importance for students enrolled **primarily on campus** were as follows:

Enrollment Factors: Online Learners— Primarily On Campus

Rank	Item	Importance
1	Convenience	6.42
2	Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.21
3 (tie)	Cost	6.19
3 (tie)	Program requirements	6.19
5	Future employment opportunities	6.17
6 (tie)	Financial assistance available	6.11
6 (tie)	Work schedule	6.11
8	Ability to transfer credits	6.05
9	Reputation of institution	6.00
10	Distance from campus	5.82
11	Recommendations from employer	4.94

Convenience was the number one factor for both segments, but cost and future employment factors were more important to students enrolled primarily on campus than those enrolled primarily online. Work schedule and reputation of the institution were more important to students enrolled primarily online.

The enrollment factors for **online undergraduate** students, in descending order of importance, were as follows:

Enrollment Factors: Online Learners— Undergraduate Students

Rank	Item	Importance
1	Convenience	6.75
2	Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.62
3	Work schedule	6.56
4	Program requirements	6.44
5	Financial assistance	6.42
6	Reputation of institution	6.36
7	Ability to transfer credits	6.32
8	Cost	6.31
9	Future employment opportunities	6.25
10	Distance from campus	5.38
11	Recommendations from employer	5.15

The enrollment factors for **online graduate** students in descending order of importance were as follows:

Enrollment Factors: Online Learners— Graduate Students

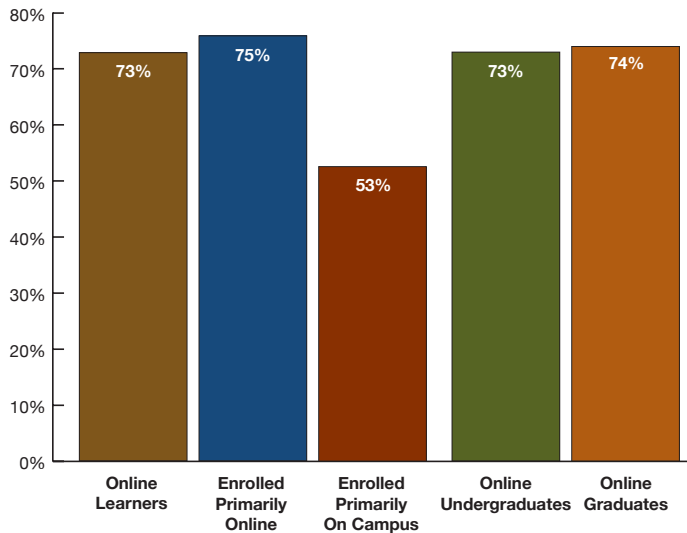| Rank	Item	Importance
1	Convenience	6.79
2	Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.67
3	Work schedule	6.65
4	Program requirements	6.48
5	Reputation of institution	6.33
6 (tie)	Cost	6.14
6 (tie)	Financial assistance	6.14
8	Future employment opportunities	6.07
9	Ability to transfer credits	5.83
10	Distance from campus	5.01
11	Recommendations from employer	4.70

The ability to transfer credits is more important to undergraduate students than they are to graduate students. Cost is slightly more important as a factor to enroll for graduate students.

Additional analysis on enrollment factors for online learners and adult students for 2012 can be found in the report *The Factors Influencing the College Choice Among Nontraditional Students*, available at www.noellevitz.com/Factors2012.
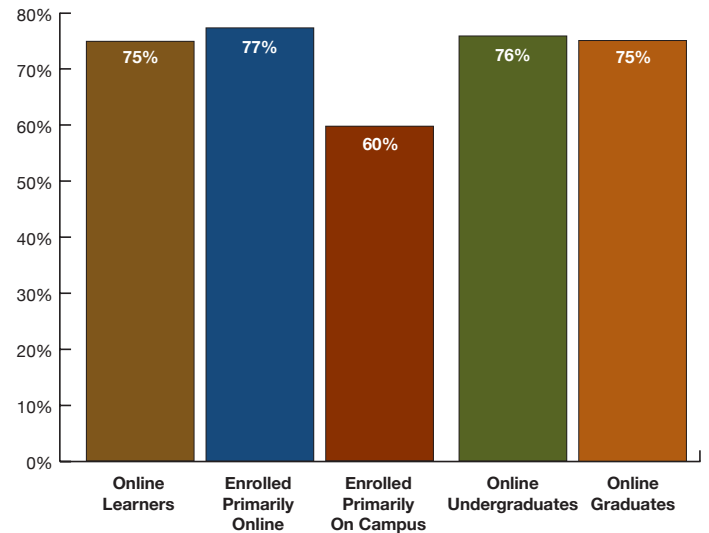
Summary scores

This section of the report presents the percentage responses to three summary items on the survey. Near the end of each survey, students are asked to respond, on a scale of 1 to 7, to three summary items: 1) So far, how has your college experience met your expectations? 2) Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far. 3) All in all, if you had it to do over, would you enroll here again?

Satisfaction: Online Learners

Category	Percentage
Online Learners	73%
Enrolled Primarily Online	75%
Enrolled Primarily On Campus	53%
Online Undergraduates	73%
Online Graduates	74%

Re-Enrollment: Online Learners

Category	Percentage
Online Learners	75%
Enrolled Primarily Online	77%
Enrolled Primarily On Campus	60%
Online Undergraduates	76%
Online Graduates	75%

The *2012 National Online Learners Priorities Report* reveals that 24 percent of online learners feel the experience has met there expectations, and 65 percent feel that it has exceeded their expectations. Seventy-three percent of online learners are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience, and 75 percent indicate that they would probably or definitely re-enroll in the program if they had to do it over again.

Overall, this indicates that students are very pleased with their online experiences and feel that institutions are doing a good job in delivering online learning. As indicated in the list of challenges which appeared earlier in this report, there is still room for improvement in some key areas, but overall, colleges are performing well in online learning.

Students enrolled primarily online have much higher satisfaction and re-enrollment scores than students enrolled primarily on campus. Seventy-five percent of students enrolled primarily online are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience as compared with just 53 percent of students enrolled primarily on campus. Similarly, 77 percent of students enrolled primarily online indicate that they would probably or definitely re-enroll if they had to do it over again, as compared with only 60 percent of students enrolled primarily on campus. Institutions may need to target some additional initiatives for students enrolled simultaneously in online programs and on campus in order to have a positive impact on these overall satisfaction scores.

Online graduate students are slightly more satisfied overall with their experience than online undergraduate students, with 74 percent and 73 percent respectively. The likelihood to re-enroll percentages reflect similar percentages, with 76 percent of undergraduates and 75 percent of graduates indicating that they would probably or definitely re-enroll if they had to do it over again.

What does this mean for your campus?

Survey your online learners. Effective institutions survey their constituencies regularly, compare their data to their past performance, and then actively respond to the challenges. It is important to be aware of national trends for a broader perspective, but the perception of your own online learners is the most meaningful.
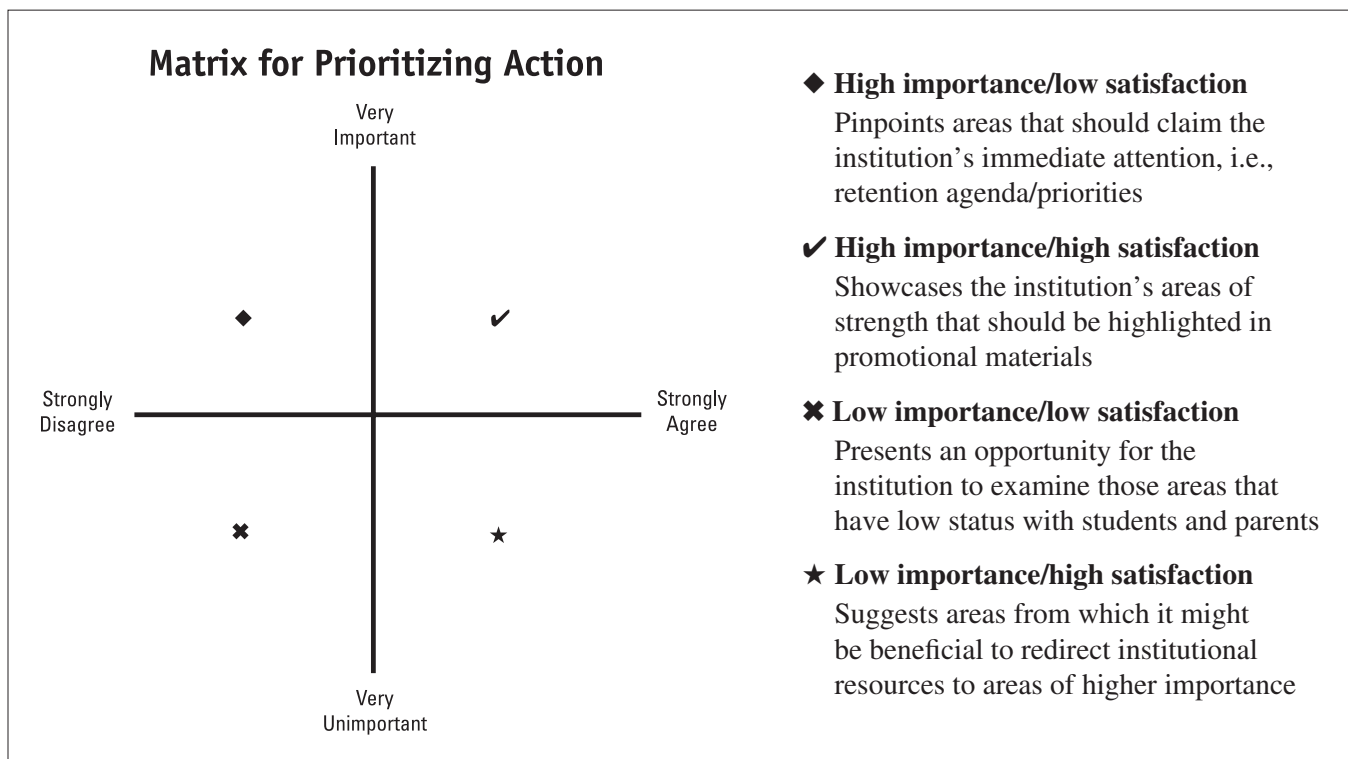
Note: Additional information on the satisfaction levels and priorities of students nationally, as well as the perspective of campus faculty, staff, and administrators, are included in the Noel-Levitz *National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report*. The complete report is available at www.noellevitz.com.

Appendix I. The Scales

The items on the Priorities Survey for Online Learners have been analyzed statistically and conceptually to create scales. The scales provide composite scores that allow for an overview of the data. The scales are as follows:

- **Institutional perceptions** assesses how students perceive your institution.

- **Academic services** assesses the services students utilize to achieve their academic goals. These services include advising, course offerings, technical assistance, online library resources, and tutoring services.

- **Instructional services** measures students' academic experiences, the instructional materials, the faculty/student interactions, evaluation procedures, and the quality of the instruction.

- **Enrollment services** assesses the processes and services related to enrolling students in the online program, including financial aid, registration, and payment procedures.

- **Student services** measures the quality of student programs and services, including responses to student requests, online career services, and the bookstore.

Appendix II. Matrix for Prioritizing Action

Matrix for Prioritizing Action

- ◆ **High importance/low satisfaction**
  Pinpoints areas that should claim the institution's immediate attention, i.e., retention agenda/priorities

- ✔ **High importance/high satisfaction**
  Showcases the institution's areas of strength that should be highlighted in promotional materials

- ✖ **Low importance/low satisfaction**
  Presents an opportunity for the institution to examine those areas that have low status with students and parents

- ★ **Low importance/high satisfaction**
  Suggests areas from which it might be beneficial to redirect institutional resources to areas of higher importance

Appendix III. Sample Items

Priorities Survey for Online Learners
Sample Items

Importance	Item	Satisfaction
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Student-to-student collaborations are valuable to me.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Appropriate technical assistance is readily available.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Online career services are available.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

Appendix IV. Institutional Participants

Alexandria Technical and Community College, MN
Allen Community College, KS
American Intercontinental University-Online, IL
American Sentinel University, CO
Anoka-Ramsey Community College, MN
Anthem College-Online, AZ
Argosy University Online, PA
Art Institute Online, PA
Ashford University, IA
AIEC, Brazil
Baker College Online, MI
Bellevue University, NE
Bemidji State University, MN
Bismarck State College, ND
Bon Secours Memorial College, VA
Bryant & Stratton-Orchard Park, NY
Capella University, MN
Cardinal Stritch University, WI
Carlow University, PA
Central Lakes College, MN
Central Washington University, WA
Century College, MN
Champlain College, VT
Chancellor University, OH
Cloud County Community College, KS
College of the Ouachitas, AR
Colorado State University-Global, CO
Dakota City Technical College, MN
Dakota College at Bottineau, ND
Dakota State University, SD

Dallas TeleCollege, TX
Daymar College-Online, KY
Dickinson State University, ND
Eastern Iowa Community College District, IA
Everglades University, FL
Excelsior College, NY
Fort Hays State University, KS
Georgia Northwestern Technical, GA
Grantham University, MO
Gwinnett Technical College, GA
Hutchinson Community College, KS
Illinois Central College, IL
Indiana Wesleyan University, IN
Inver Hills Community College, MN
Kettering College of Medical Arts, OH
Lake Region State College, ND
Lancaster Bible College, PA
Liberty University, VA
Linfield College, OR
Master's College & Seminary, ON
Mayville State University, ND
Mesabi Range Community College, MN
Metropolitan State University, MN
Minneapolis Community & Technical College, MN
Minnesota State College, MN
Minnesota State Community & Technical College, MN
Minnesota State University-Mankato, MN

Minnesota State University-Moorhead, MN
Minot State University, ND
Missouri Baptist University, MO
Moberly Area Community College, MO
Moody Bible Institute, IL
Mountain View College, TX
Nebraska Methodist College, NE
New England College of Business, MA
New Mexico Junior College, NM
New Mexico State University-Alamogordo, NM
Normandale Community College, MN
North Dakota State College of Science, ND
North Dakota State University, ND
North Hennepin Community College, MN
Northcentral University, AZ
Northland Community and Technical College, MN
Northwest Technical College, MN
Northwood University, MI
Odessa College, TX
Patrick Henry College, VA
Pulaski Technical College, AR
Regis University, CO
RETS College Online, FL
Ridgewater College, MN
Rio Salado College, AZ

Riverland Community College, MN
Rochester Community & Technical College, MN
Savannah College of Art & Design, GA
Schoolcraft College, MI
South Central College, MN
South University Online, PA
Southwest Minnesota State University, MN
Southwestern Assemblies of God, TX
Southwestern College, KS
St. Cloud Technical and Community College, MN
Strayer University, DC
Sullivan University, KY
The Art Institute of Washington, VA
Trident University International, CA
Troy University, AL
University of New England, ME
University of North Dakota-Main, ND
University of the Rockies, CO
University of Wisconsin-Superior, WI
Utica College, NY
Valley City State University, ND
Vermilion Community College, MN
Virginia College-Birmingham, VA
Western International University, AZ
Westwood College Online, CO
Williston State College, ND
Wilmington University, DE

Questions about this report?

We hope you found this report to be helpful and informative. If you have questions or would like more information about these findings, please contact Noel-Levitz at 1-800-876-1117 or e-mail ContactUs@noellevitz.com.

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