

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



GATEWAY 2020 REPORT

BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS

Compiled by Quatemna

May 2020

Executive Summary

The 2020 Gateway Orientation sessions presented to the students on the Bloemfontein campus of the University of the Free State were, by and large, successful. Five sessions were presented to students, namely a Faculty Specific Orientation session, an Academic Advising session, a Support Services session, a Wellness and Safety session, and a Student Life session. Responses to the sessions were first analysed in aggregate form across all five sessions, whereafter each session was analysed individually as well.

Session aspects that respondents were asked to evaluate included session content, session impact, session relevance, session engagement, session logistics, the sense of community brought about by the sessions, the developmental impact of the sessions, and the venue where the sessions were held. The aggregate analysis showed that most students rated all aspects related to session content, impact, relevance, engagement, logistics, and sense of community favourably. In addition, students were satisfied with both the developmental impact of the sessions, and the venue where the sessions were held. The only aspect receiving consistently lower ratings was whether students engaged with new peers during the Gateway sessions.

The analysis for each session separately revealed that the majority of students assigned positive ratings to all aspects measured within each of the Faculty Specific, Academic Advising, Support Services, Wellness and Safety and Student Life sessions. Ratings for the Student Life session were somewhat higher than for the other sessions, while the Wellness and Safety session ratings were higher than those for the Faculty Specific, Academic Advising and Support Services sessions. For the Faculty Specific, Academic Advising and Support Services sessions, students were noticeably less positive about the content keeping them engaged and interested in the topic during the sessions, even though the majority of students still rated this aspect favourably. It is noteworthy that a low percentage of students in all five sessions indicated that they engaged with new peers during the sessions, although the vast majority indicated that the sessions helped them to feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture.

The session ratings were further analysed according to whether the students lived on- or off-campus. The majority of students indicated that they lived on-campus. Both on- and off-campus students positively rated all session aspects and were satisfied with the developmental impact of the sessions and the venue where the sessions took place. Overall, on-campus students were slightly more satisfied than off-campus students with most aspects related to the sessions. One notable exception however, was that off-campus students were more likely to interact with new peers during the sessions than on-campus students.

A comparison between Faculties showed very similar ratings across all faculties for all aspects related to the five sessions, with the vast majority of participants within each faculty being satisfied with the session content, session impact, session relevance, session engagement and sense of community, and session logistics, as well as with the venue for and the developmental impact of the sessions.

One aspect that does deserve attention, however, is the low proportion of male students who participated across the sessions. This trend was especially pronounced for the Academic Advising, Support Services, Wellness and Safety, and Student Life sessions, where more than three-quarters of participants were female. Furthermore, an evaluation of declining participation rates overall over the years showed that the communication sent out to students regarding the programme is still not

optimal, with nearly a quarter of participants citing a lack of knowledge of the programme as their reason for non-attendance.

AREAS OF CONCERN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Engaging with new peers

Across all faculties, less than half of the students indicated that they engaged with new peers during the sessions. Approximately only a third of the students from the Faculty of Health Sciences engaged with new peers during the sessions.

Recommendation: Since this has been a trend throughout the years that the Gateway Orientation Programme has been presented, reforms to the programme are recommended should this be seen as a priority area.

Unequal gender participation rates

It is concerning that the vast majority of participants across all the sessions were female.

Recommendation: Conduct an evaluation to determine the sharp decline in male participation rates. Reforms might need to be made to the programme to regain male interest.

Programme logistics

A quarter of participants who were asked why they did not attend Gateway noted that they did not know about the programme, or found out too late about the programme.

Recommendation: Improve logistical arrangements especially around informing students about the programme timeously in order for them to attend, and making sure that such communications reach all students.

Introduction

This report aims to evaluate the 2020 Gateway Orientation sessions presented to the students on the Bloemfontein campus of the University of the Free State (UFS). The annual Gateway Orientation for First-Year Students is a programme on student life, packed with a series of events that introduce students to campus and Faculty life. The aim of the programme is to help first year students to adjust to the university environment, introduce students to the new environment, and to teach and transfer skills that will enable students to achieve academic success.

Students on the Bloemfontein campus participated in five Gateway sessions:

- **Faculty Specific Orientation:** This session was presented separately to students from each Faculty. The purpose of the session was to inform students about progression rules, how credits work, examination regulations, and assistance provided by each of the faculties.
- **Academic Advising:** The purpose of this session was to introduce students to Academic Advising and its importance.
- **Support Services:** The purpose of this session was to inform students about the support services that are provided by the UFS, including the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support and Student Counselling and Development.
- **Wellness and Safety:** The purpose of this session was to inform students about the support services that are provided by the UFS.
- **Student Life:** The purpose of this session was to introduce students to the programmes available at Student Affairs.

After each session, students on the Bloemfontein campus were asked to provide immediate feedback via a paper-and-pencil survey, related to the following specific areas:

- **Session Content:** Students were asked about the importance, usefulness, and relevance of the content, whether the content was clear and easy to understand, and whether the content kept them engaged and interested in the topic.
- **Session Impact:** Students were asked whether their expectations of each session were satisfied, whether they will make use of the services/resources that they have been made aware of, whether the sessions inspired them to participate and get involved in the activities presented, whether the sessions developed their ability to be more successful in their studies, and whether the sessions were a good use of their time.
- **Session Relevance:** Students were asked whether the sessions were relevant to prepare them for their studies at the UFS and whether the sessions stayed focused and relevant to the topic of discussion.
- **Session Engagement:** Students were asked whether the questions regarding the subject were satisfactorily answered during the sessions and whether the sessions were interactive and interesting.
- **Sense of Community:** Students were asked whether they engaged with new peers during the sessions and whether the sessions made them feel welcomed and assisted with their integration into the university culture.
- **Session Logistics:** Students were asked whether the sessions were at a suitable time for them to attend, whether the Gateway staff members were present, friendly, and helpful during the sessions, and whether they were informed in time about the sessions in order to attend.

- **Developmental Impact:** Students were asked to rate their experience of the developmental impact of the sessions.
- **Satisfaction with Venue:** Students were asked to rate how satisfied they were with the venue where the sessions were held.

Overview of All Sessions

A total of 2901 students on the Bloemfontein campus completed evaluation forms after the five Gateway sessions. This section details their responses in aggregate form across the five sessions. It should be noted that a number of questionnaires (N=268) were not completed in full, resulting in missing data for both the demographic questions, including the question asking the name of the session, as well as for some of the rating questions. It was therefore decided to use valid percent instead of percent for this section where an overview of all the sessions is given, to limit the skewing of the results brought about by the vast amounts of missing data. A profile of students who attended the sessions and completed the evaluation forms are first provided, followed by an overview of their overall satisfaction with the sessions. It should be noted that this aggregated summary does not represent unique individuals, as any individual could have attended more than one session.

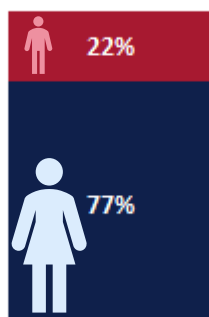
Participant Profile

This section details the profile of the respondents for the five sessions combined.

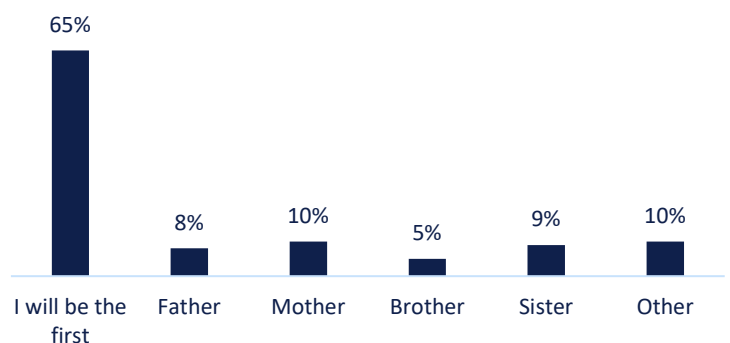
Biographical profile

Most of the participants in the 2020 Gateway Programme on the Bloemfontein campus were female (77%), and the majority were black African (84%). Approximately two-thirds of participants were first-generation students.

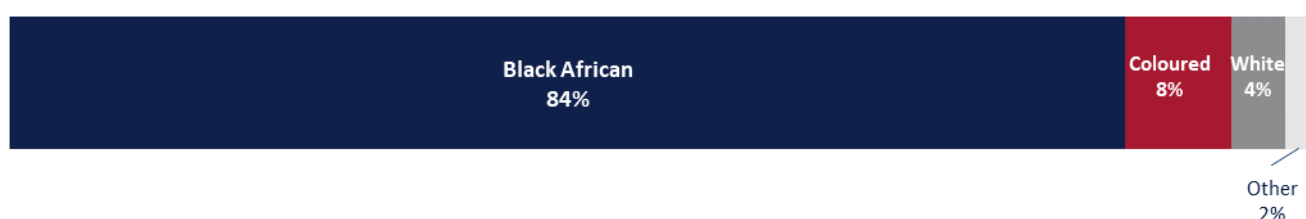
All Sessions: Gender Distribution



All Sessions: First Generation Students



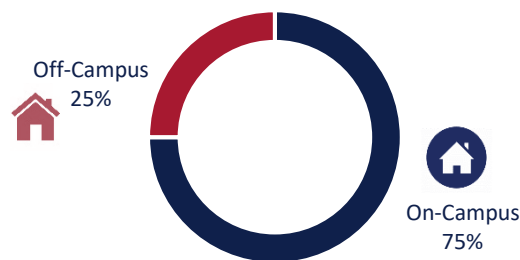
All sessions: Race Distribution



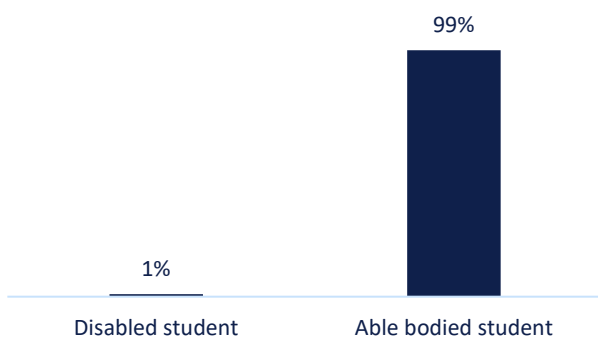
Residential status, students with a disability, and year of first registration

The majority of participants on the Bloemfontein campus who completed evaluation forms for the Gateway sessions lived on-campus (75%), while 25% lived off-campus. Only 1% of the students who completed the evaluation forms and answered the question on disability, indicated that they were disabled. Nine out of ten students registered for the first time in 2020.

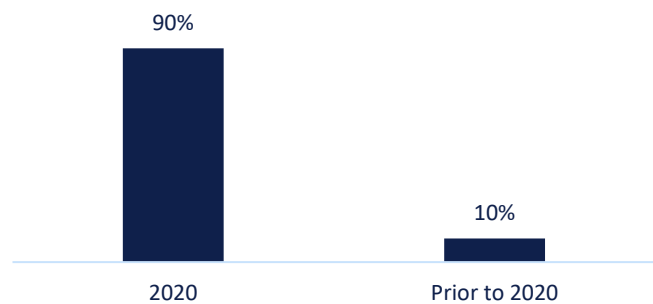
All Sessions: Residence Distribution



All Sessions: Disability Distribution

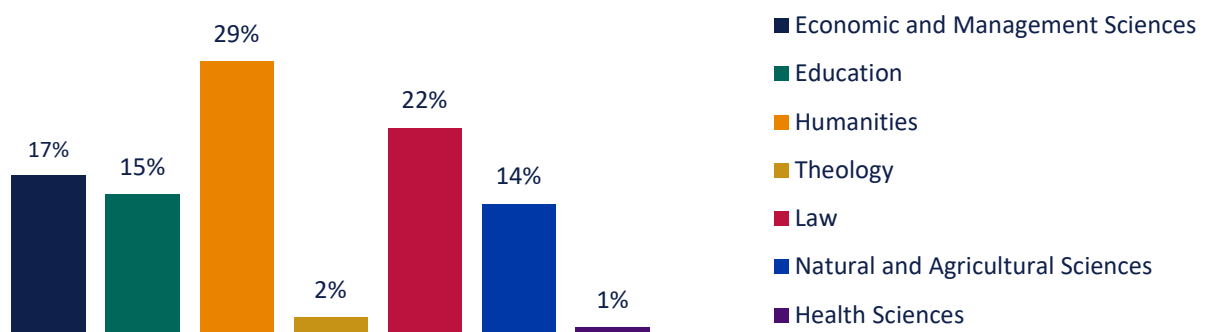


All Sessions: Year of First Registration



Student distribution among faculties

All Sessions: Faculty Distribution

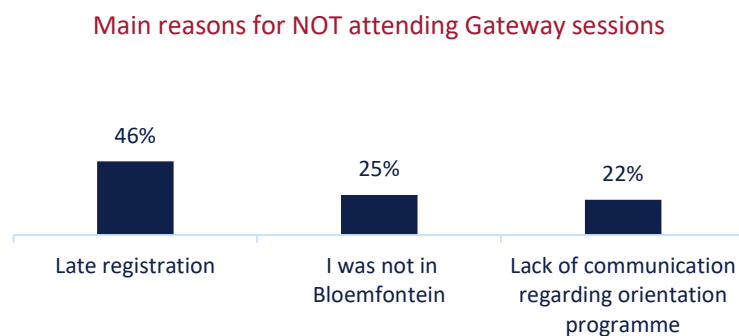


The distribution of students participating in the Gateway sessions by faculty indicated that most participants were from the Faculty of Humanities (29%), followed by the Faculties of Law (22%) and

Economic and Management Sciences (17%). A very small proportion were from the Faculties of Health Sciences (1%) and Theology (2%).

Qualitative evaluation of the decline in student participation rates

A survey was sent out to students in order to determine possible reasons for not attending the Gateway sessions. Results from the survey indicated that late registration was the main reason for students not attending the Gateway sessions (46%). A quarter of the students indicated that they were unable to attend the sessions as they were not in Bloemfontein at the time, more specifically because they had no accommodation in Bloemfontein and because they had to return home to fetch their belongings (4% respectively). In addition, there appeared to be a lack of communication regarding the orientation programme (22%), more specifically that students were not aware of the orientation programme (14%) or that students were only informed about the programme once it had already started/ nearly ended (5%).

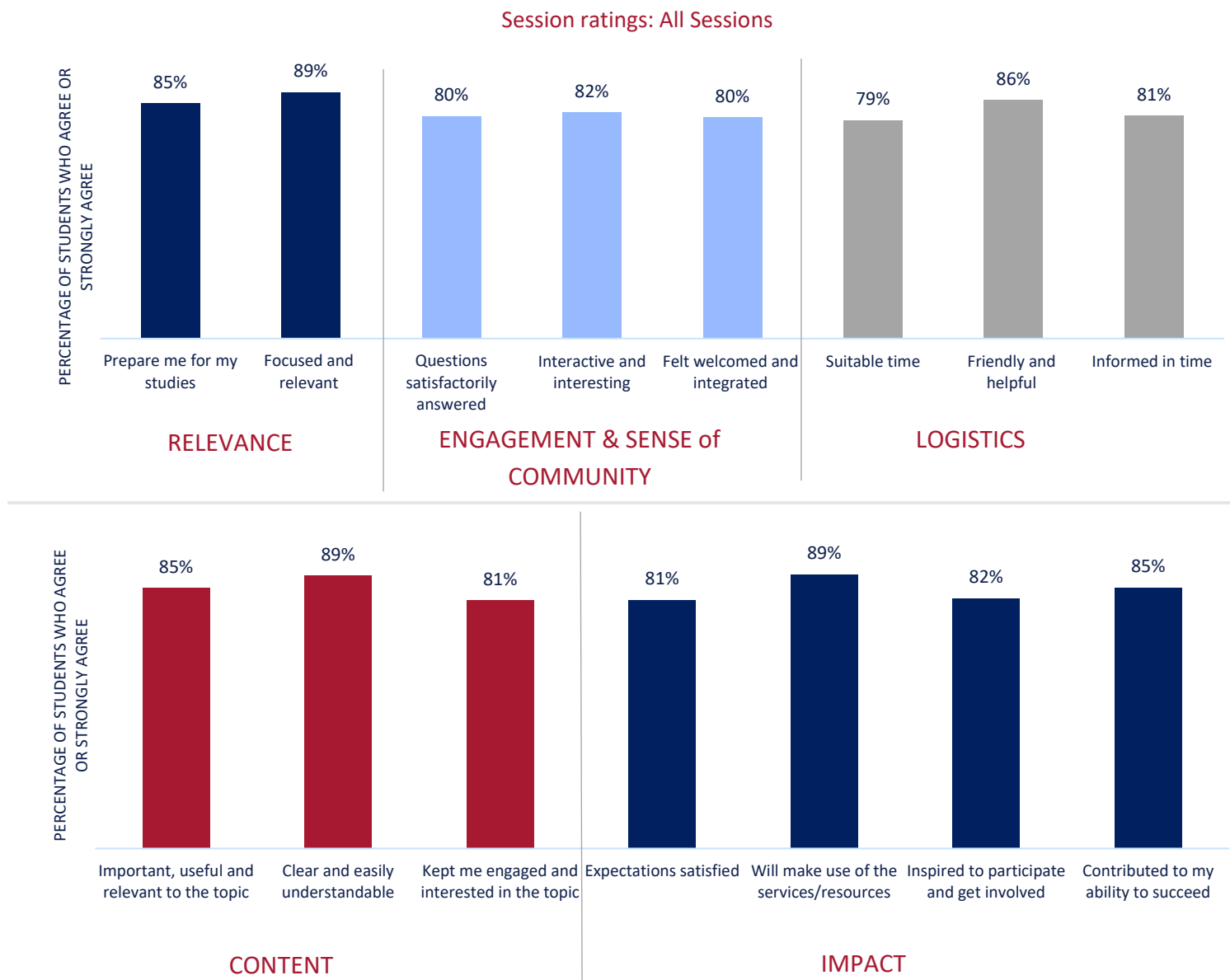


Session Feedback: All Sessions

This section examines the experiences of the respondents for all the sessions combined.

Ratings and satisfaction

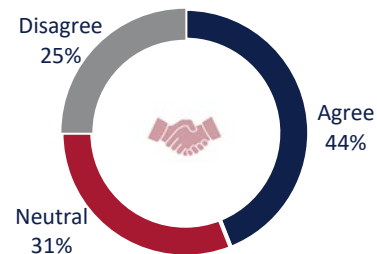
The responses of the students to each specific question across all the sessions are detailed in the graphs below. Looking at the graphs overall, it can be seen that the students were positive about the sessions, with a clear majority, for the most part, rating the sessions favourably (responding agree or strongly agree to the questions).



When the graphs are considered in more detail, the following trends are noted:

- **More than three-quarters of the participants assigned positive ratings** to all aspects relating to **session relevance, session engagement and sense of community, and session logistics**. Especially high ratings were assigned to the **sessions being focused and relevant** to the topic, that the **sessions helped prepare students** for their studies at the UFS, and that the **staff members were friendly and helpful**, with **at least 85% of participants assigning positive ratings** to each of these aspects. Although the vast majority of students indicated that the sessions helped them to feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture (80%), less than half (44%) said that they engaged with new peers during the sessions (pie chart to the right).
- **Session content and session impact** were also rated favourably by the vast majority of students. Approximately **nine out of ten** students indicated that the contents of the **sessions were clear and easy to understand**, and that they **will make use of the services and resources** that they were made aware of during the sessions

Engaged with New Peers: All Sessions



In addition to the above, from the graphs below, it can be seen that students were also satisfied with both the developmental impact of and the venue for the sessions. Approximately nine out of ten students rated the developmental impact of the sessions, as well as the venue where the sessions were held, positively.

Satisfaction with Developmental Impact: All sessions



Satisfaction with Venue: All sessions



Ratings and satisfaction according to residence status

Both on- and off-campus students were positive about the sessions, and assigned very similar ratings to all aspects measured. That said, **on-campus students** were slightly more positive about most aspects related to the Gateway sessions than off-campus students. However, **off-campus students** were more likely to **engage with new peers** during the sessions and were slightly more positive about the sessions being held at a time which was suitable for them to attend. In addition, **on-campus students** were slightly **more satisfied** with the **developmental impact of the sessions**, and **off-campus students** were slightly **more satisfied** with the **venue where the sessions were held**.

Session aspects		On- or off-campus students more positive
Session content	Important, useful and relevant to the topic	On-campus
	Clear and easily understandable	On-campus
	Kept me engaged and interested in the topic	On-campus
Session impact	My expectations of the sessions were satisfied	On-campus
	I will make use of the services/ resources that I have been made aware of	Equal
	I am inspired to participate and get involved in activities that have been presented	On-campus
	This session contributed to my ability to be more successful in my studies at UFS	On campus
Session relevance	Relevant to prepare me for my studies at the UFS	Equal
	Stayed focused and relevant to the topic of discussion	On-campus
Session engagement & sense of community	Questions regarding the subject was satisfactorily answered	Equal
	This session was interactive and interesting	On-campus
	I engaged with new peers during this session	Off-campus
Session logistics	Felt welcomed and assisted with my integration into the university	On-campus
	This session was at a suitable time for me to attend	Off-campus
	Staff members were present, friendly and helpful	On-campus
	Informed in time about this session in order to attend	On-campus
	Developmental impact of the sessions	On-campus
	Venue of the sessions	Off-campus

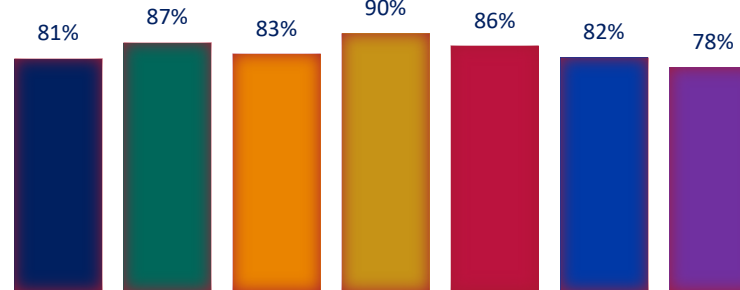
FACULTY COMPARISON

- On average across all aspects of the sessions, students in the **Faculty of Theology** were **more positive** than other students, whilst students in the Faculty of Health Sciences were least positive.
- When each aspect is considered individually, ratings followed a **similar trend across Faculties regarding each of session content, session impact, session relevance, session engagement and sense of community, and session logistics.**
- A **large percentage** of the students in the **Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences** (97%) indicated that the **session content was clear and understandable**, while only 60% of students in the Faculty of Health Sciences agreed that the content kept them engaged and interested.
- Similar to session relevance, 98% of students from the **Faculty of Theology and Religion** agreed that the **session was interactive and interesting**, which was in contrast to 68% of the Faculty of Health Sciences. In addition, **only 35%** of students from the **Faculty of Health Sciences** engaged with new peers during the Gateway session.
- Students in the **Faculties of Theology and Religion** showed the **highest rates of satisfaction with the venue** where the sessions were held, while students in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences were least satisfied.

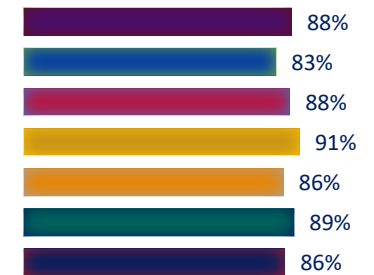


Note: Faculties of Theology and Health Sciences had a considerably lower number of participants compared to other faculties

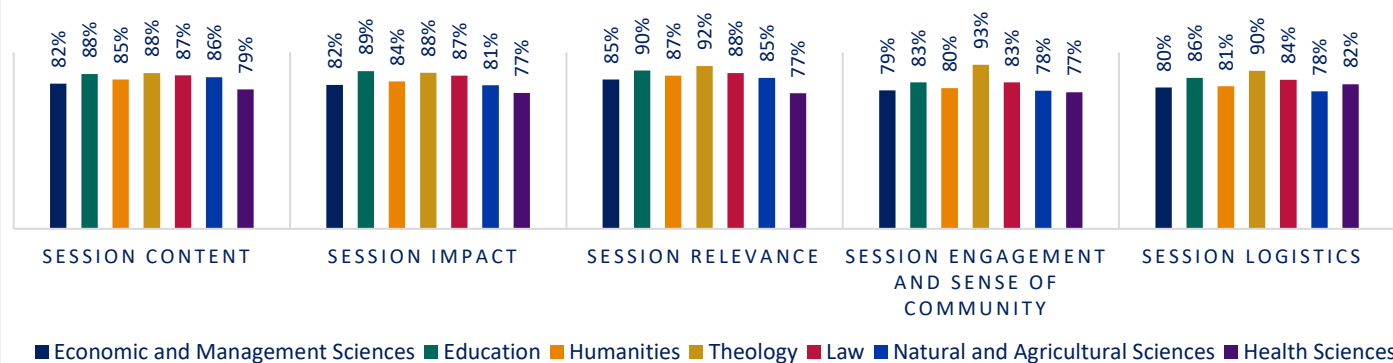
ALL SESSIONS: OVERALL POSITIVITY IN EACH FACULTY



SATISFACTION WITH VENUE



ALL SESSIONS: AVERAGE POSITIVE RATINGS IN EACH FACULTY



FACULTY SPECIFIC ORIENTATION

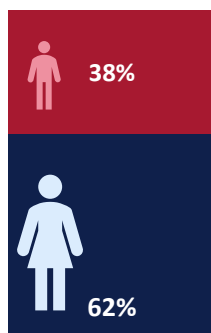
Participant Profile

This section details the profile of the respondents for the Faculty Specific Orientation session. A total of 29 participants completed evaluation forms for this session.¹

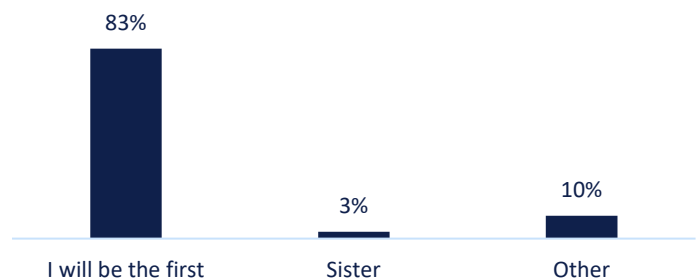
Biographical profile

The majority of the respondents in the Faculty Specific Orientation session were female (62%), and 91% were black African. Approximately eight out of 10 respondents indicated that they were first-generation students.

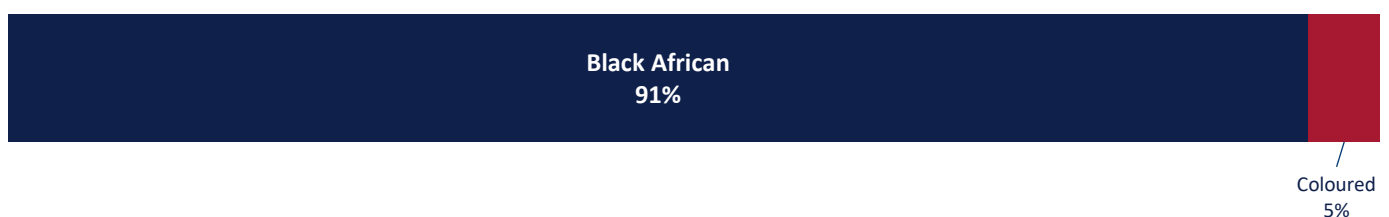
Faculty Specific Orientation:
Gender Distribution



Faculty Specific Orientation: First-generation
Students Proportion



Faculty Specific Orientation: Race Distribution

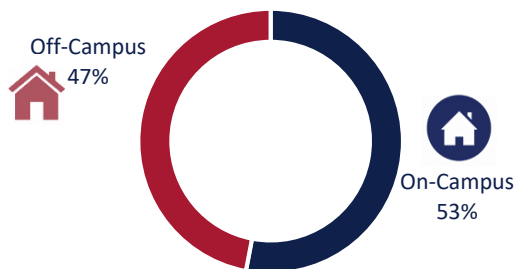


¹ Although a total of 2901 evaluation forms were completed, on 268 evaluation forms the session was not specified. This resulted in the total number of evaluation forms for which the sessions were known not adding up to the total number of evaluation forms completed.

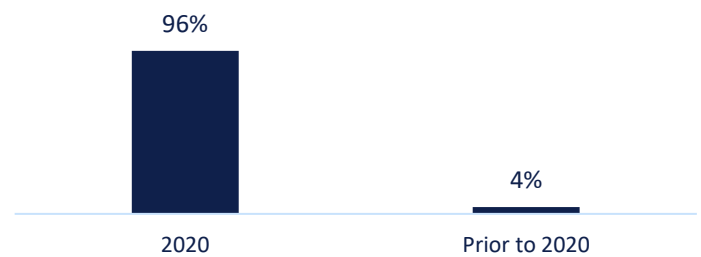
Residential status, students with a disability, and year of first registration

Slightly more than half of the participants on the Bloemfontein campus who evaluated the Faculty Specific Orientation session indicated that they lived on-campus. However, there was not a large difference between those who indicated that they lived on-campus (53%) and those who lived off-campus (47%). The vast majority (96%) of the students who evaluated the session indicated that they registered for the first time in 2020, and all of the students indicated that they were able bodied.

Faculty Specific Orientation:
Residence Distribution



Faculty Specific Orientation: Year of First
Registration



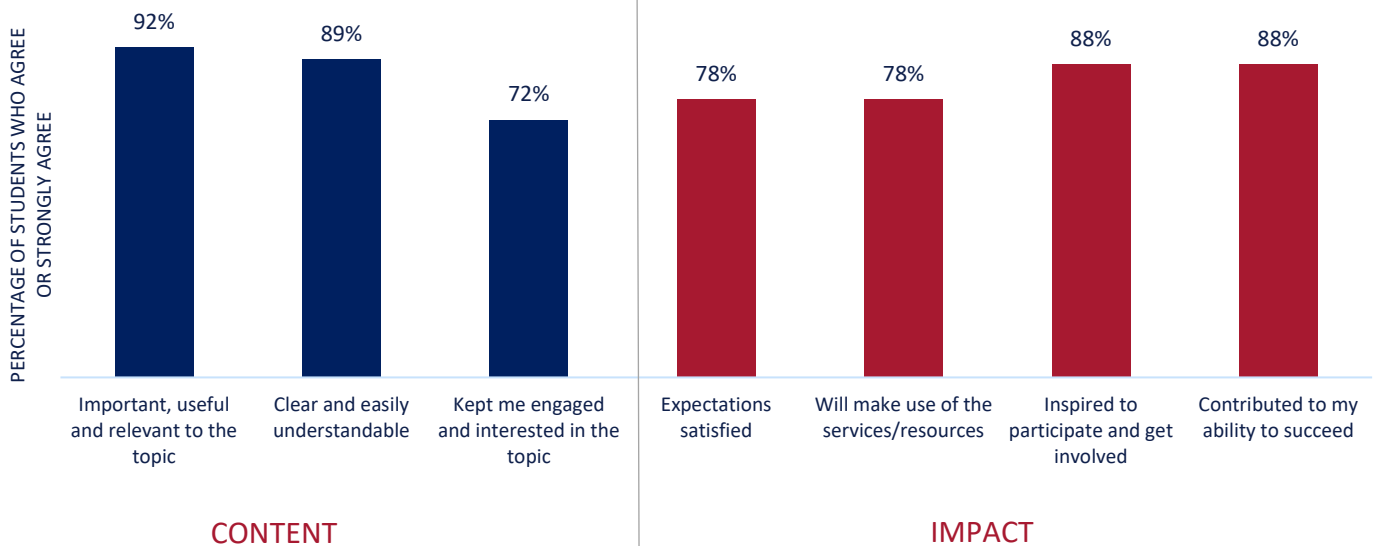
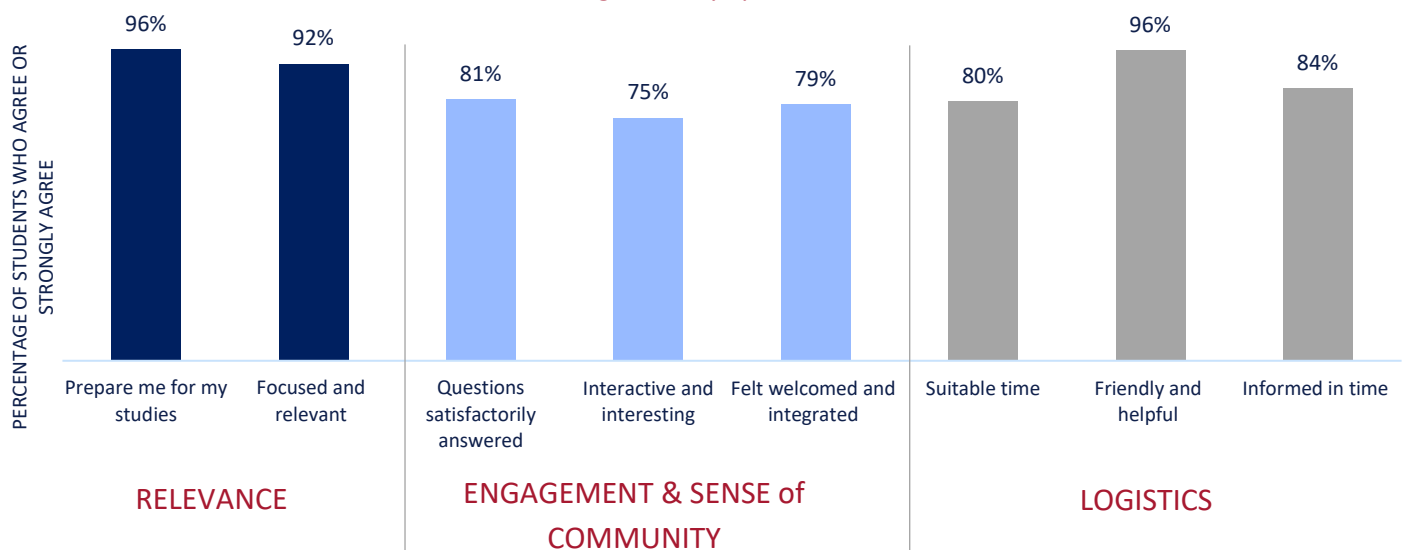
Session Feedback: Faculty Specific Orientation Session

This section examines the experiences of the respondents for the Faculty Specific Orientation session.

Ratings and satisfaction

The responses of the students to each specific question related to the Faculty Specific Orientation session are detailed in the graphs below. Looking at the graphs overall, it can be seen that the students were positive about the session, with a clear majority, for the most part, rating the session favourably (responding agree or strongly agree to the questions).

Session Ratings: Faculty Specific Orientation



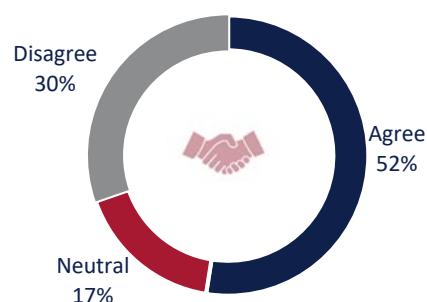
When the graphs are considered in more detail, the following trends are noted:

- **More than three-quarters of the participants assigned positive ratings** to all aspects related to **session relevance, session engagement and sense of community, and session logistics**. An especially large proportion of the respondents assigned positive ratings to the session **being**

focused and relevant (92%) and **preparing them for their studies (96%)**. In addition, a very large proportion of students indicated that the **staff members were friendly and helpful (96%)**.

- In contrast to the large proportion of students who indicated that the session content was **important, useful and relevant to the topic (92%)**, a comparatively lower proportion, indicated that the content **kept them engaged and interested in the topic (72%)**.
- From the pie chart it can be seen that only approximately half of the respondents indicated that they **engaged with new peers during this Gateway session**. That said, slightly more than three-quarters of participants indicated that the Gateway session helped them **to feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture**.

Engaged with New Peers: Faculty Specific Orientation



In addition to the positive findings highlighted above, from the graphs below, it can be seen that the majority of respondents were satisfied with both the developmental impact of the session (87%) and the venue where the session was held (92%).

Satisfaction with Developmental Impact: Faculty Specific Orientation



Satisfaction with Venue: Faculty Specific Orientation



Ratings and satisfaction according to residence status

Both on- and off-campus students were positive about the session, with only slight differences in their ratings. **Off-campus** students were slightly **more positive** about the **session content** and **session impact**, and **more positive** about **session relevance**. **Off-campus** students were also **more positive** about **session logistics** in terms of the session being held at a suitable time to attend, and being informed in time about the session in order to attend. Both **off-** and **on-campus** students were **equally positive** about the **staff members being present, friendly and helpful** during the session. **On-campus** students were slightly **more satisfied** with the **developmental impact** of the session and with the **venue** where the session was held.

Session aspects		On- or off-campus students more positive
Session content	Important, useful and relevant to the topic	On-campus
	Clear and easily understandable	Off-campus
	Kept me engaged and interested in the topic	Off-campus
Session impact	My expectations of the sessions were satisfied	Off-campus
	I will make use of the services/ resources that I have been made aware of	On-campus
	I am inspired to participate and get involved in activities that have been presented	Off-campus
	This session contributed to my ability to be more successful in my studies at UFS	Off-campus
Session relevance	Relevant to prepare me for my studies at the UFS	Off-campus
	Stayed focused and relevant to the topic of discussion	Off-campus
Session engagement & sense of community	Questions regarding the subject was satisfactorily answered	Off-campus
	This session was interactive and interesting	Equal
	I engaged with new peers during this session	On-campus
Session logistics	Felt welcomed and assisted with my integration into the university	Off-campus
	This session was at a suitable time for me to attend	Off-campus
	Staff members were present, friendly and helpful	Equal
	Informed in time about this session in order to attend	Off-campus
	Developmental impact of the sessions	On-campus
	Venue of the sessions	On-campus

No faculty comparisons were conducted for this session as there were too few participants to make valid comparisons.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

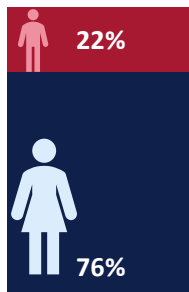
Participant Profile

This section details the profile of the respondents for the Academic Advising session. A total of 713 participants completed evaluation forms for this session.²

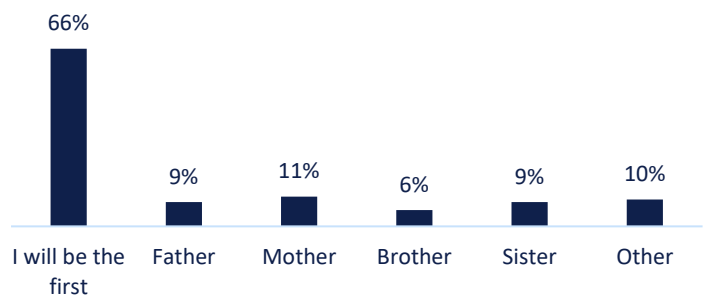
Biographical profile

The majority of the respondents in the Academic Advising session were female (76%), and eight out of ten were black African. Two thirds of respondents indicated that they were first-generation students, while a third indicated that they have family members who have graduated from university.

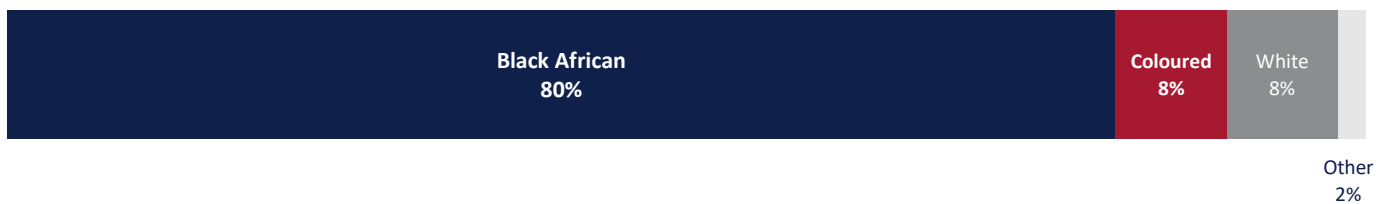
Academic Advising: Gender Distribution



Academic Advising: First-generation Students Proportion



Academic Advising: Race Distribution

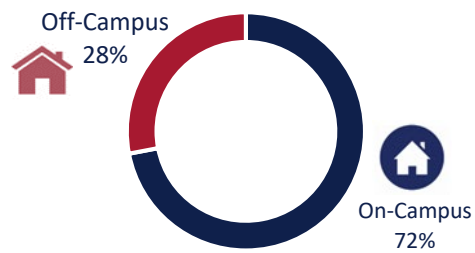


² Although a total of 2901 evaluation forms were completed, on 268 evaluation forms the session was not specified. This resulted in the total number of evaluation forms for which the sessions were known not adding up to the total number of evaluation forms completed.

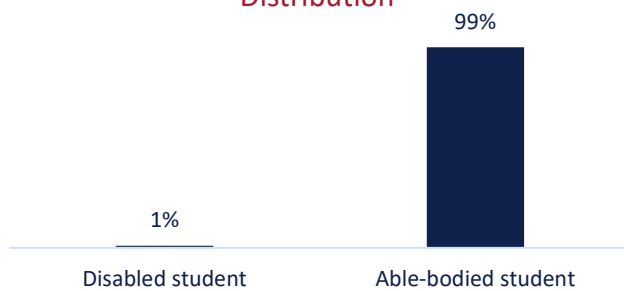
Residential status, students with a disability, and year of first registration

The majority of participants on the Bloemfontein campus who evaluated the Academic Advising session indicated that they lived on-campus (72%), while 28% lived off-campus. Only four students indicated that they have a disability, and nine out of ten of the students who evaluated the Academic Advising session indicated that they registered for the first time in 2020.

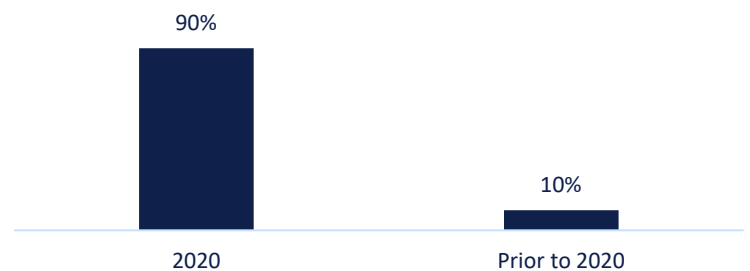
Academic Advising: Residence Distribution



Academic Advising: Student Disability Distribution



Academic Advising: Year of First Registration



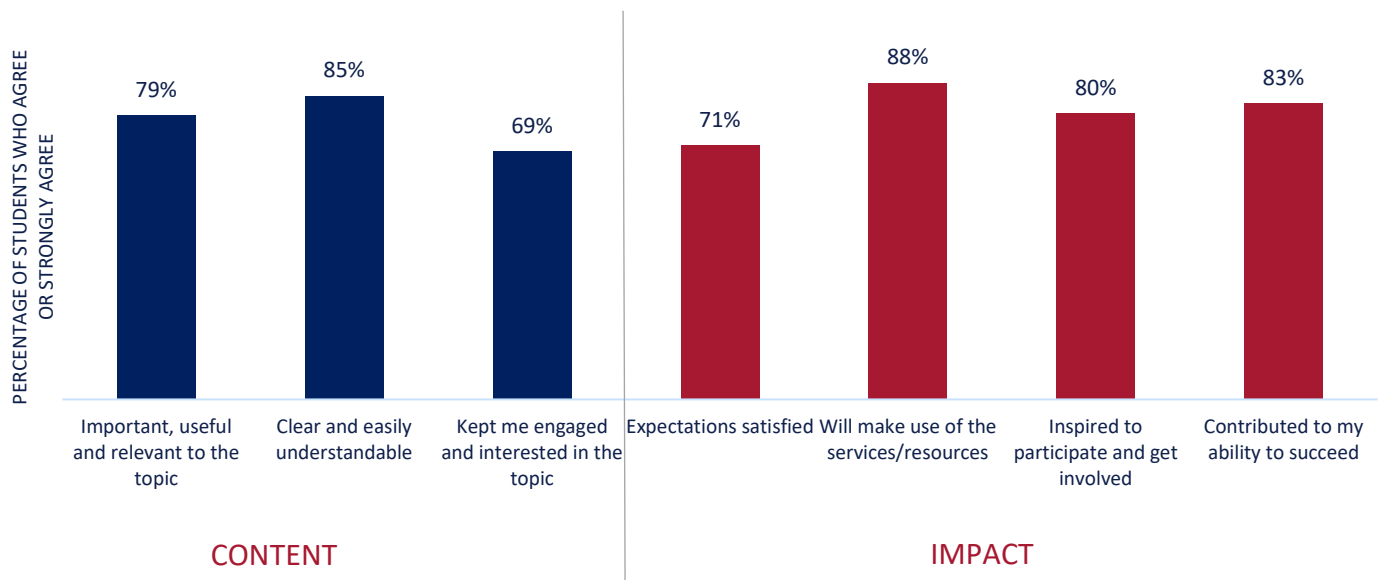
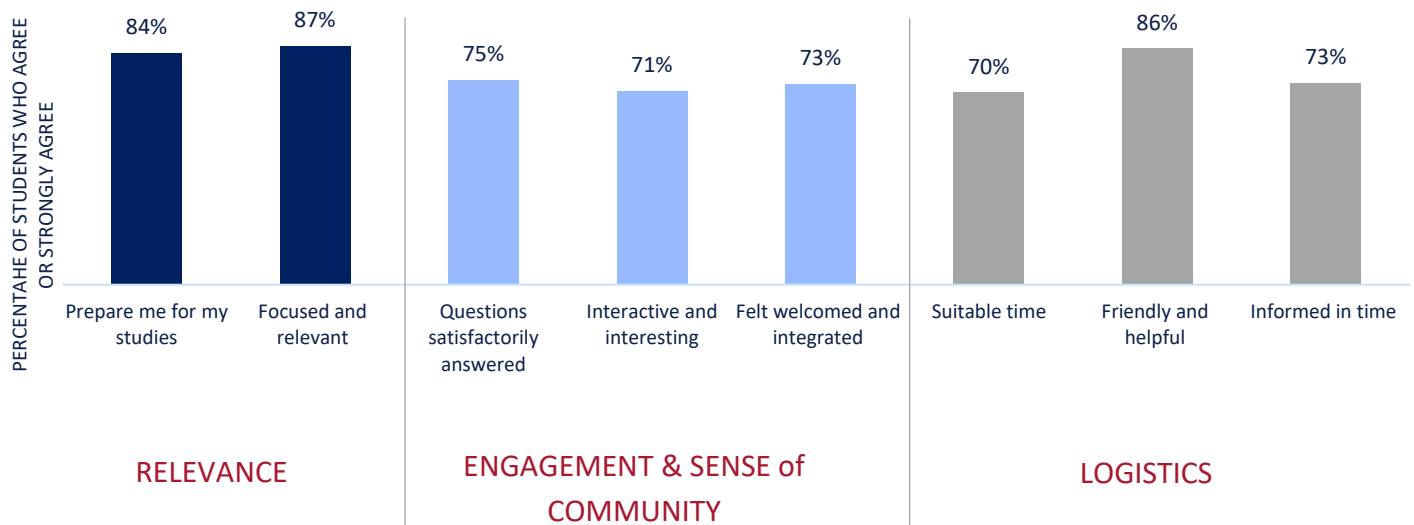
Session Feedback: Academic Advising Session

This section examines the experiences of the respondents for the Academic Advising session.

Ratings and satisfaction

The responses of the students to each specific question related to the Academic Advising session are detailed in the graphs below. Looking at the graphs overall, it can be seen that for the most part, the students were positive about the session. The majority of the students rated the session favourably (responding agree or strongly agree to the questions) for most of the aspects of the session.

Session Ratings: Academic Advising



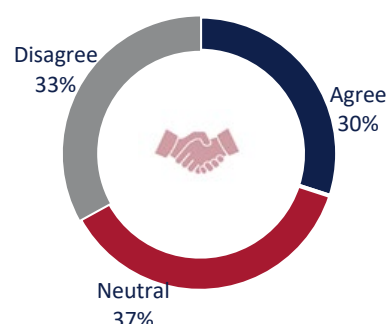
When the graphs are considered in more detail, the following trends are noted:

- **More than two-thirds of the participants assigned positive ratings** to all aspects related to **session relevance**, and **session engagement and sense of community**, and **session logistics**. An especially large proportion of the respondents assigned positive ratings to the session

being focused and relevant (87%) and felt that the session prepared them for their studies at the UFS (84%). In addition, a large proportion of students indicated that the staff members were friendly and helpful (86%) during the session. However, comparatively lower percentage of students agreed that the session was held at a suitable time (70%).

- Although the majority of students were satisfied with aspects related to session content, a comparatively lower proportion indicated that the content kept them engaged and interested in the topic (69%).
- The vast majority of students were satisfied with the aspects related to session content, however, a comparatively lower proportion indicated that their expectations were satisfied (71%).
- From the pie chart it can be seen that only approximately a third of the respondents indicated that they engaged with new peers during this Gateway session. That said, approximately three-quarters of participants indicated that the Gateway session helped them to feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture.

Engaged with New Peers:
Academic Advising

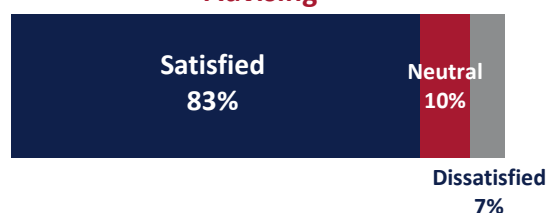


In addition to the positive findings highlighted above, from the graphs below, it can be seen that the majority of respondents were satisfied with both the developmental impact of the session (79%) and the venue where the session was held (83%).

Satisfaction with Developmental Impact:
Academic Advising



Satisfaction with Venue: Academic
Advising



Ratings and satisfaction according to residence status

Both on- and off-campus students were positive about the session, with only slight differences in their ratings. On the whole, **on-campus** students were **more positive** about the **majority** of the **session aspects**, including; the **session content**, **session impact** and **session relevance**. **On-campus** students were also **slightly more positive** about **session engagement and sense of community**, however, **off-campus** students were **slightly more positive** with regards to **engaging with new peers** during the session. **On-campus** students were **more satisfied** with the **developmental impact** of the session, and with the **venue** where the sessions were held.

Session aspects		On- or off-campus students more positive
Session content	Important, useful and relevant to the topic	On-campus
	Clear and easily understandable	Equal
	Kept me engaged and interested in the topic	On-campus
Session impact	My expectations of the sessions were satisfied	On-campus
	I will make use of the services/ resources that I have been made aware of	On-campus
	I am inspired to participate and get involved in activities that have been presented	On-campus
	This session contributed to my ability to be more successful in my studies at UFS	On-campus
Session relevance	Relevant to prepare me for my studies at the UFS	On-campus
	Stayed focused and relevant to the topic of discussion	On-campus
Session engagement & sense of community	Questions regarding the subject was satisfactorily answered	On-campus
	This session was interactive and interesting	On-campus
	I engaged with new peers during this session	Off-campus
	Felt welcomed and assisted with my integration into the university	On-campus
Session logistics	This session was at a suitable time for me to attend	Off-campus
	Staff members were present, friendly and helpful	On-campus
	Informed in time about this session in order to attend	On-campus
	Developmental impact of the sessions	On-campus
	Venue of the sessions	On-campus

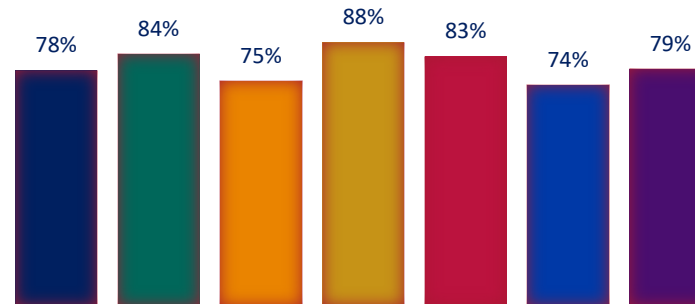
FACULTY COMPARISON

- On average, across most aspects of the **Academic Advising session**, students in the **Faculties of Theology and Religion** were **more positive** than other students.
- Similar to the overall trend, students from the **Faculties of Theology and Religion** and **Education** were **more positive** than other students regarding the **session impact**, while students from the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences were least positive.
- A large proportion of students from the **Faculty of Law** agreed that session content was **clear and easily understandable** (93%), yet only 65% of the students from the **Faculty of Humanities** felt that the content kept them engaged and interested.
- Students from the **Faculty of Theology and Religion** all agreed they will make use of the services/resources they were made aware of. However, only 67% of students from the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences felt that their expectations were satisfied.
- All students from the Faculty of Theology and Religion agreed that their **questions were satisfactorily answered**, compared to 67% of the students from the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences.
- Students from the **Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences** had by far the lowest percentage of students **engaging with new peers** (22%).

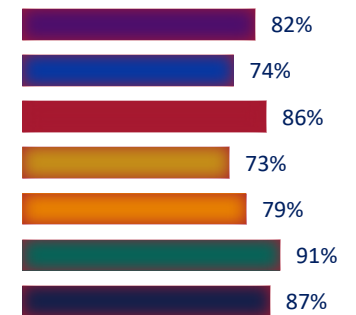


Note: Faculties of Theology and Health Sciences had a considerably lower number of participants compared to other faculties

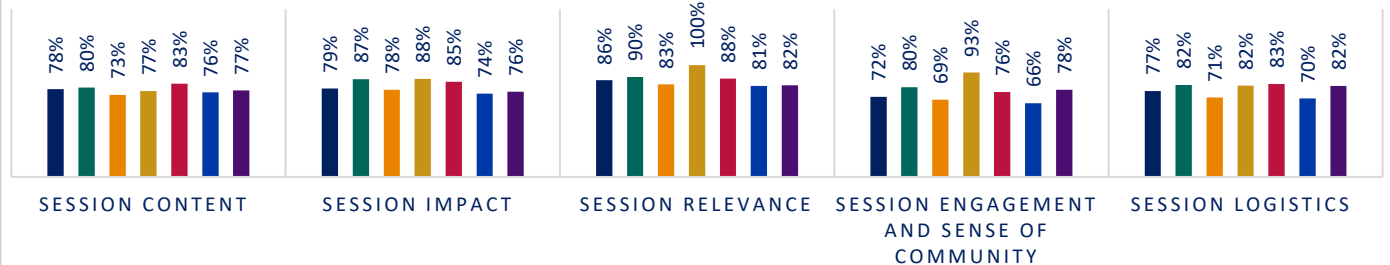
ACADEMIC ADVISING: OVERALL POSITIVITY IN EACH FACULTY



SATISFACTION WITH VENUE



ACADEMIC ADVISING: AVERAGE POSITIVE RATINGS



■ Economic and Management Sciences ■ Education ■ Humanities ■ Theology ■ Law ■ Natural and Agricultural Sciences ■ Health Sciences

Support Services

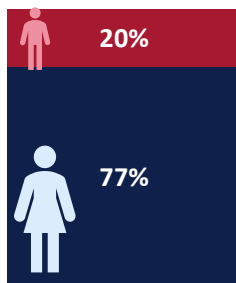
Participant Profile

This section details the profile of the respondents for the Support Services session. A total of 559 participants completed evaluation forms for this session.³

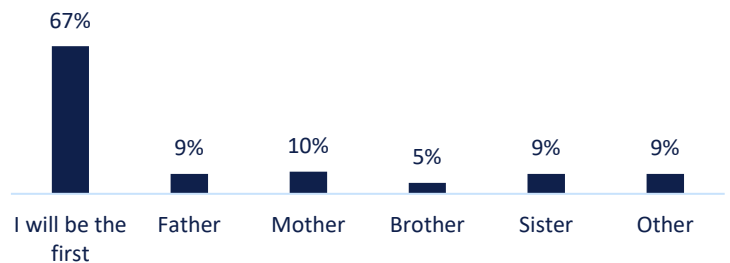
Biographical profile

There were more female (77%) than male (20%) respondents in the Support Services session, and the majority of respondents were black African (82%). Most respondents indicated that they were first-generation students (67%), while a third indicated that they have family members who have graduated from university.

Support Services: Gender Distribution



Support Services: First-Generation Students Proportion



Support Services: Race Distribution

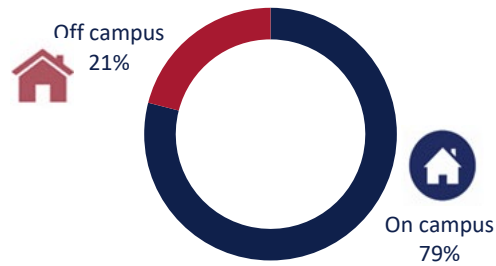


³ Although a total of 2901 evaluation forms were completed, on 268 evaluation forms the session was not specified. This resulted in the total number of evaluation forms for which the sessions were known not adding up to the total number of evaluation forms completed.

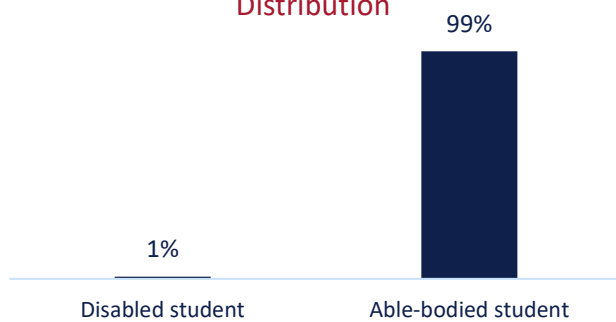
Residential status, students with a disability, and year of first registration

More respondents on the Bloemfontein campus who evaluated the Support Services session lived on-campus (79%) than off-campus (21%). Only four students indicated that they have a disability and close to nine out of ten students indicated that they registered for the first time in 2020.

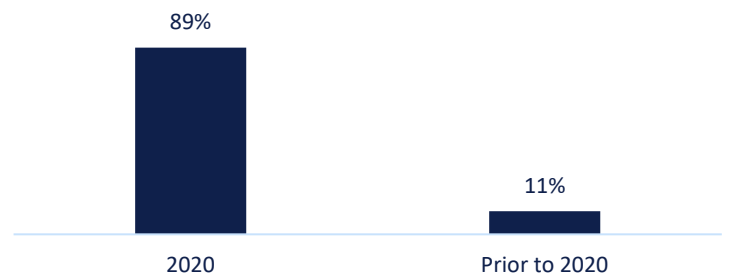
Support Services: Residence Distribution



Support Services: Student Disability Distribution



Support Services: Year of First Registration



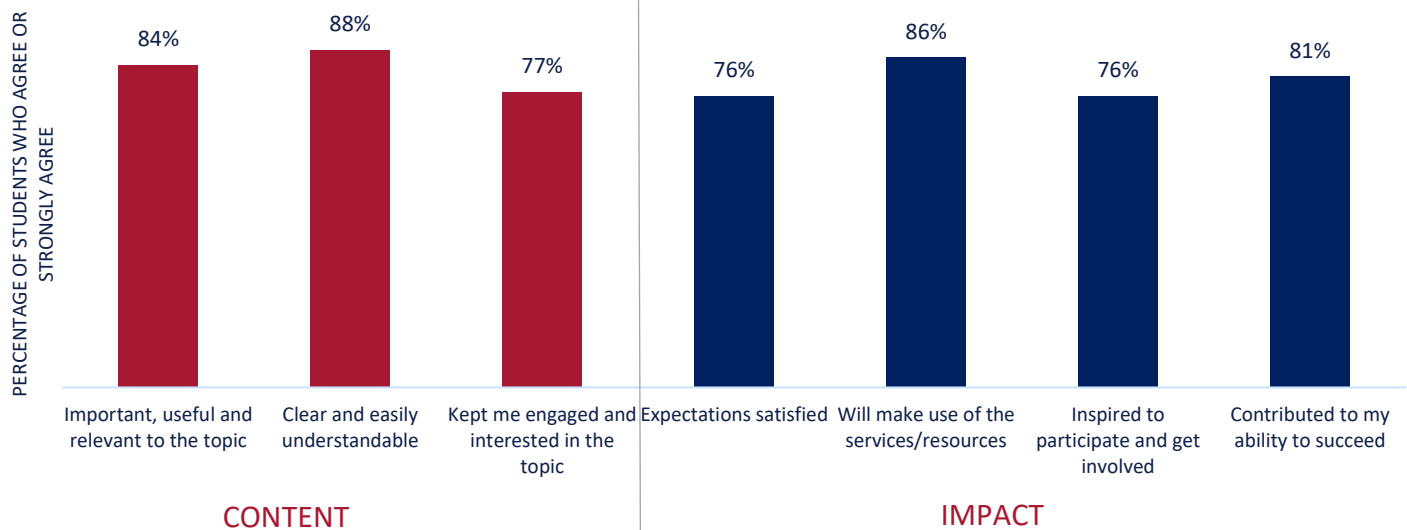
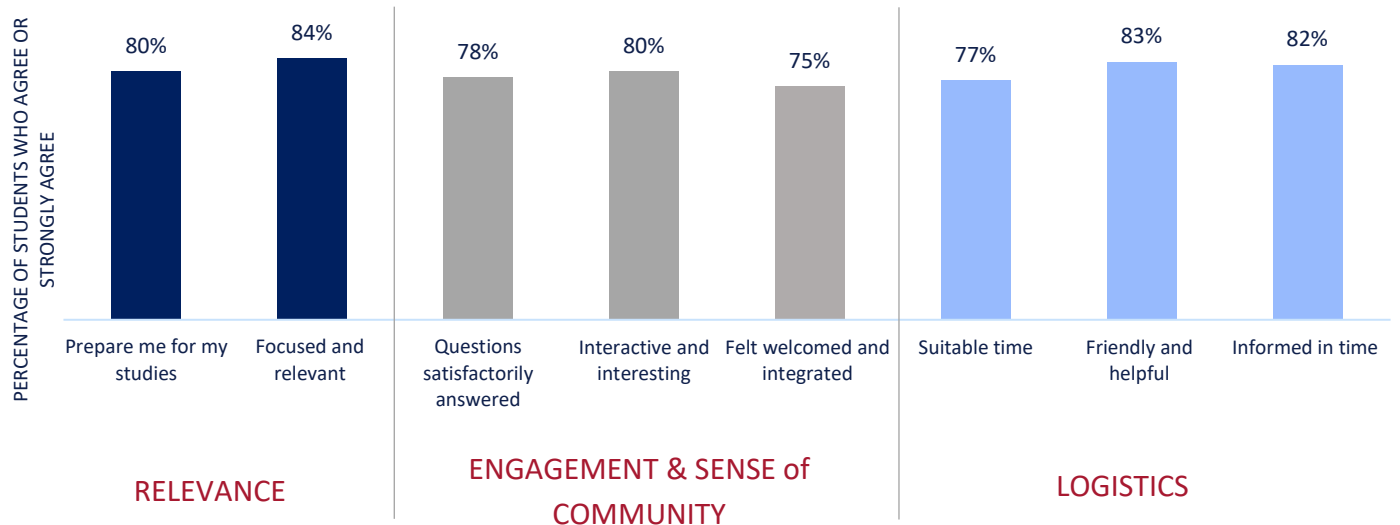
Session Feedback: Support Services Session

This section examines the experiences of the respondents for the Support Services session.

Ratings and satisfaction

The responses of the students to each specific question related to the Support Services session are detailed in the graphs below. Looking at the graphs overall, it can be seen that the students were positive about the session, with a clear majority rating the session favourably on all aspects measured (responding agree or strongly agree to the questions).

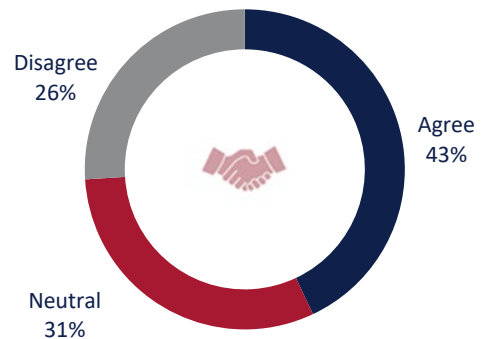
Session Ratings: Support Services



When the graphs are considered in more detail, the following trends are noted:

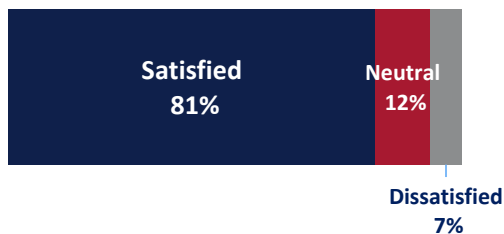
- **More than three quarters** of the students were satisfied with all aspects related to **session relevance, session engagement and sense of community and session logistics**. Especially high ratings were assigned to the **session being focused and relevant to topic (84%)**, the **staff members being friendly and helpful (83%)**, and about being **informed about the session in time (82%)**. Despite 75% of the students indicating that they felt integrated and welcome, **less than half** of the participants **(43%)** indicated that they **engaged with new peers** during this Gateway session.
- All aspects related to session content were rated favourably, with approximately **eight out of ten** students indicating that the session content was **important, useful and relevant** to the topic, and approximately **nine out of ten** students indicating that the session content was **clear and easy to understand**. A slightly lower proportion (77%) noted that the session content kept them engaged and interested.
- **More than three-quarters of the students** assigned positive ratings to **all aspects related to session impact**, with an especially large proportion of respondents (86%) indicating that they will **make use of the services and resources that they were made aware of during the session**.

Engaged with New Peers: Support Services Session

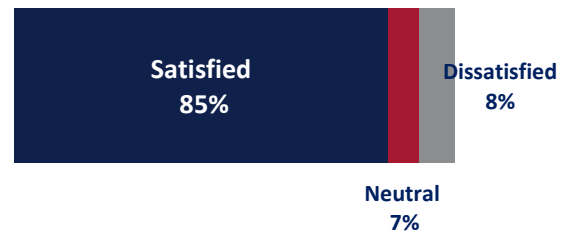


In addition to the positive findings highlighted above, from the graphs below it can be seen that the majority of respondents were satisfied with both the developmental impact of the session (81%) and the venue (85%) where the session was held.

Satisfaction with Developmental Impact: Support Services Session



Satisfaction with Venue: Support Services



Ratings and Satisfaction according to residence status

Both on- and off-campus students assigned positive ratings to all aspects measured, with **off-campus** students being **slightly more positive** than on-campus students about **most** of the **aspects** related to this session. The exceptions were that on-campus students were more positive about (i) the session content being clear and easily understandable and (ii) being informed in time about the session in order to attend. Both **off-** and **on-campus** students were **equally positive** about the session **content being important, useful and relevant to the topic**, and equally positive about **feeling welcomed and that the session assisted with integration into the university**.

Session aspects		On- or off-campus students more positive
Session content	Important, useful and relevant to the topic	Equal
	Clear and easily understandable	On-campus
	Kept me engaged and interested in the topic	Off-campus
Session impact	My expectations of the sessions were satisfied	Off-campus
	I will make use of the services/ resources that I have been made aware of	Off-campus
	I am inspired to participate and get involved in activities that have been presented	Off-campus
	This session contributed to my ability to be more successful in my studies at UFS	Off-campus
Session relevance	Relevant to prepare me for my studies at the UFS	Off-campus
	Stayed focused and relevant to the topic of discussion	Off-campus
Session engagement & sense of community	Questions regarding the subject was satisfactorily answered	Off-campus
	This session was interactive and interesting	Off-campus
	I engaged with new peers during this session	Off-campus
	Felt welcomed and assisted with my integration into the university	Equal
Session logistics	This session was at a suitable time for me to attend	Off-campus
	Staff members were present, friendly and helpful	Off-campus
	Informed in time about this session in order to attend	On-campus
	Developmental impact of the sessions	Off-campus
	Venue of the sessions	Off-campus

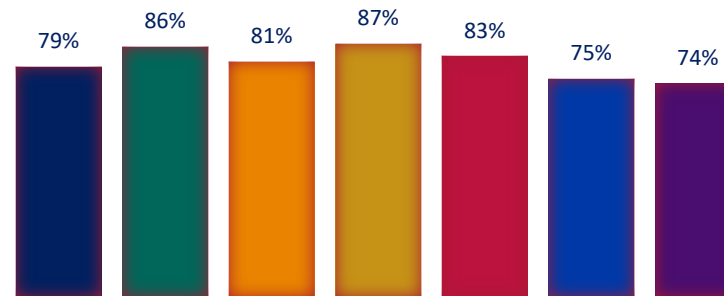
FACULTY COMPARISON

- On average across all aspects of the **Support Services** session, students in the **Faculties of Theology and Religion** and **Education** were more **positive** than other students, while students from the Faculties of Health Sciences and Natural and Agricultural Sciences were the least positive.
- Most of the students from the **Faculty of Education** (95%) agreed that the **session content was clear and understandable**, while fewer students from the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences agreed that the content kept them engaged and interested (71%).
- Students from the **Faculty of Education** again had the highest percentage of agreement (91%) that the **session prepared them for their studies** at the UFS, yet a much lower percentage of Health Sciences students felt the same (50%).
- Engagement with new peers was low across all faculties**, with less than 50% of participants indicating that they engaged with new peers during this session. However, all of the students from the **Faculty of Theology and Religion** felt that the session was interactive and interesting.
- Students from the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences were least satisfied with the venue, which was in contrast to 100% of the students from the **Faculties of Theology and Religion** and **Health Sciences** who were satisfied with the venue.

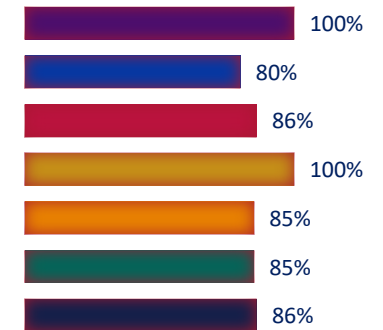


Note: Faculties of Theology and Health Sciences had a considerably lower number of participants compared to other faculties

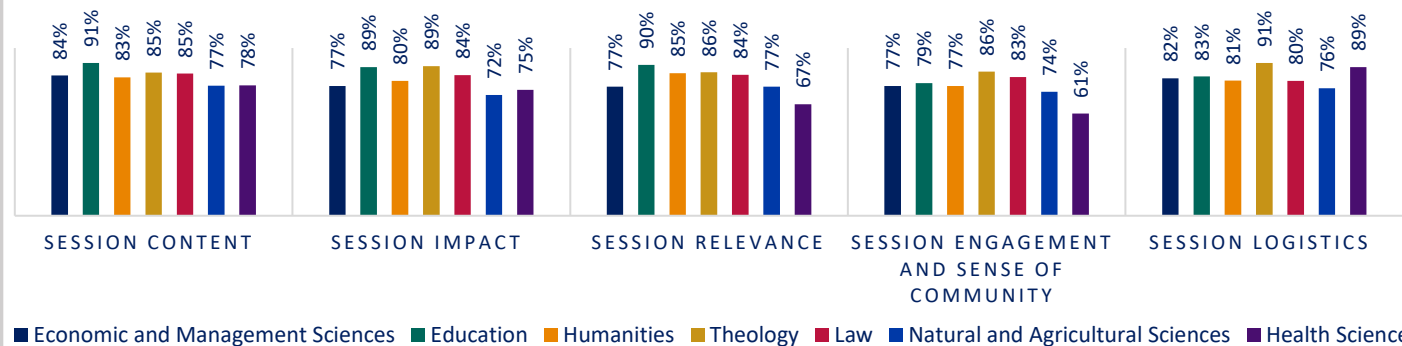
SUPPORT SERVICES: OVERALL POSITIVITY IN EACH FACULTY



SATISFACTION WITH VENUE



SUPPORT SERVICES: AVERAGE POSITIVE RATINGS



Wellness and Safety

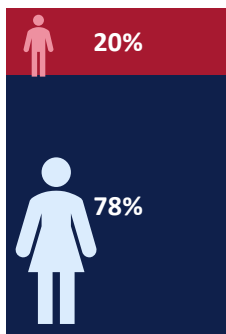
Participant Profile

This section details the profile of the respondents for the Wellness and Safety session. A total of 647 participants completed evaluation forms for this session.⁴

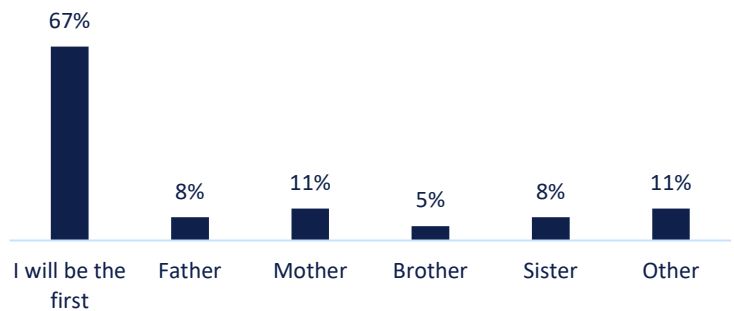
Biographical profile

The majority of the respondents in the Wellness and Safety session were female (78%), and 84% were black African. Two thirds of respondents indicated that they were first-generation students (67%), while approximately a third indicated that they have family members who have graduated from university.

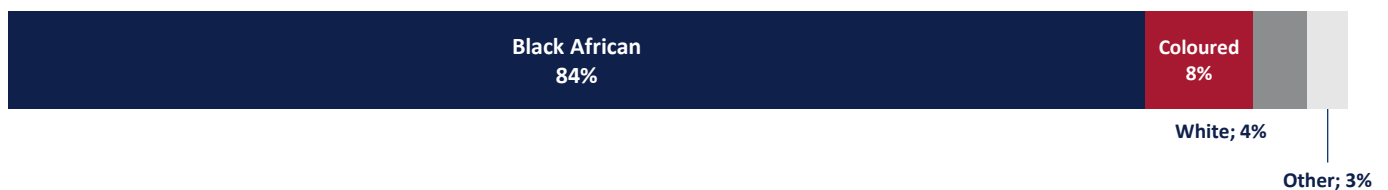
Wellness and Safety: Gender Distribution



Wellness and Safety: First-Generation Students Proportion



Wellness and Safety: Race Distribution

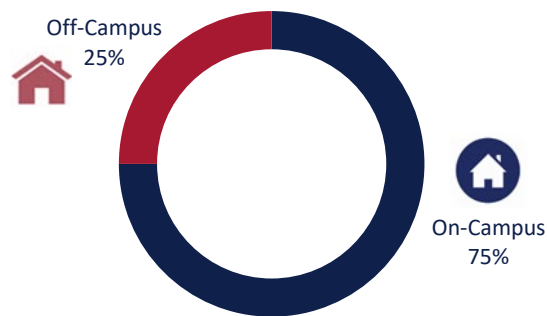


⁴ Although a total of 2901 evaluation forms were completed, on 268 evaluation forms the session was not specified. This resulted in the total number of evaluation forms for which the session was known not adding up to the total number of evaluation forms completed.

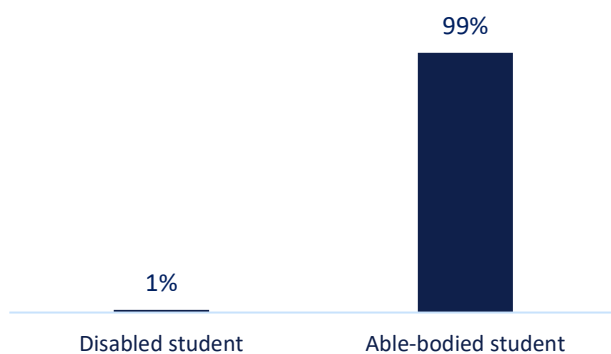
Residential status, students with a disability, and year of first registration

Students on the Bloemfontein campus who evaluated the Wellness and Safety session were more likely to live on-campus (75%) than off-campus (25%). Only four students indicated that they have a disability, and the vast majority (90%) indicated that they registered for the first time in 2020.

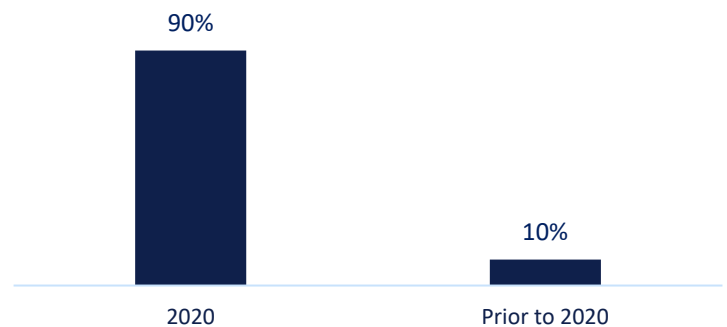
Wellness and Safety: Residence
Distribution



Wellness and Safety: Student Disability
Distribution



Wellness and Safety: Year of First Registration



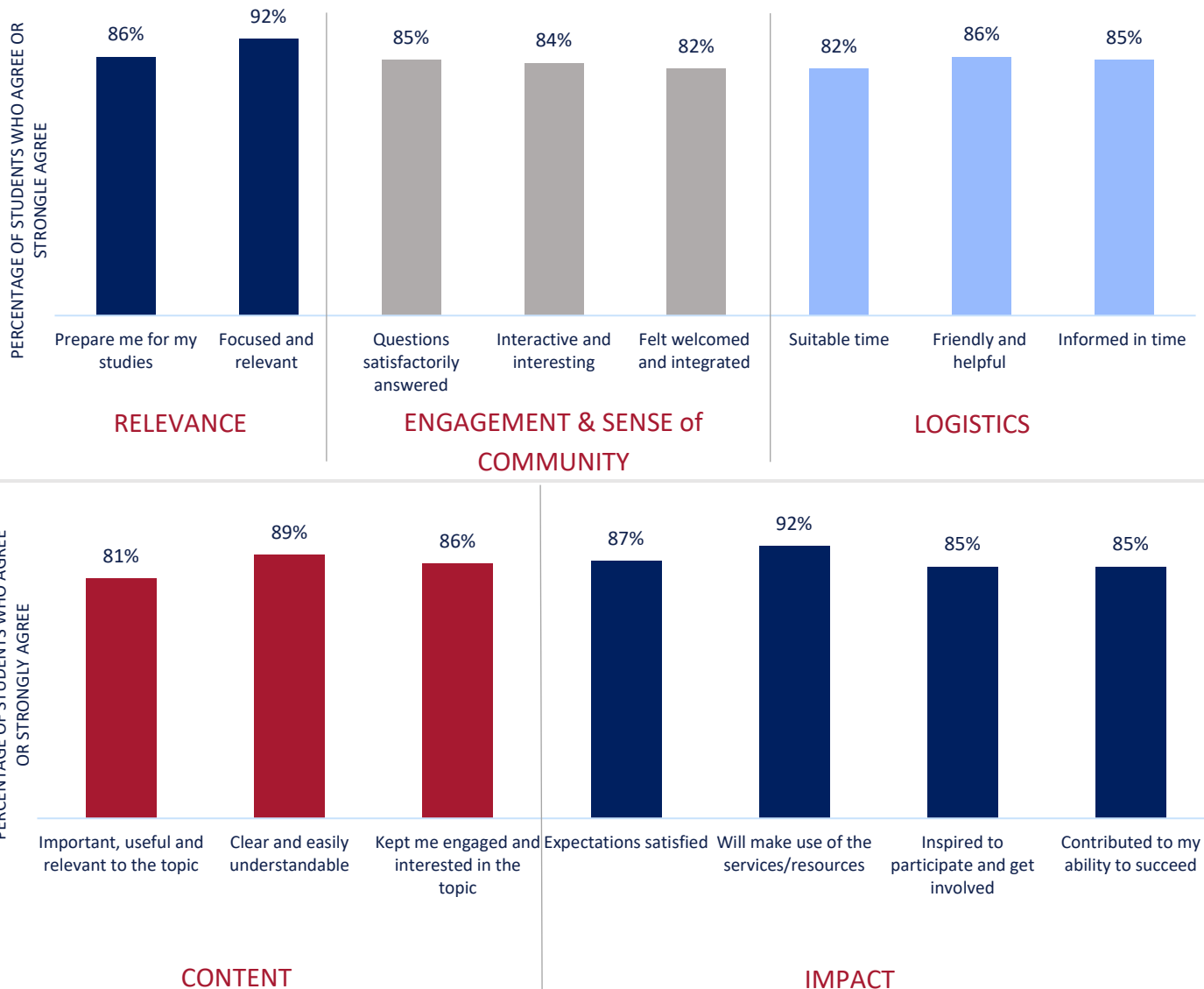
Session Feedback: Wellness and Safety Session

This section examines the experiences of the respondents for the Wellness and Safety session.

Ratings and satisfaction

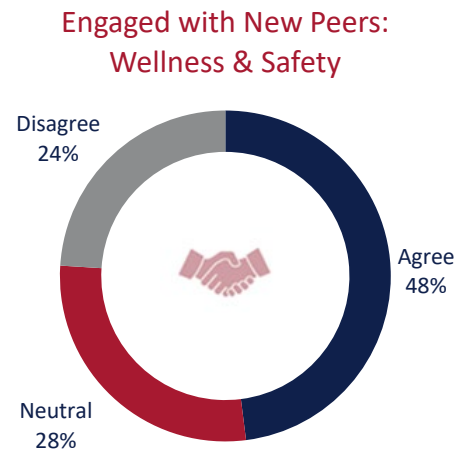
The responses of the students to each specific question related to the Wellness and Safety session are detailed in the graphs below. A clear majority, for all aspects measured, rated the sessions positively (responding agree or strongly agree to the questions).

Session Ratings: Wellness and Safety



When the graphs are considered in more detail, the following trends are noted:

- **More than 80%** of the students assigned positive ratings to all aspects related to **session relevance, session engagement and sense of community, and session logistics**, with an especially high proportion of respondents rating the session as **focused and relevant (92%)** and the **staff members as being friendly and helpful (86%)**. Although the majority of respondents (82%) indicated that the session helped them to feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture, **slightly less than half (48%)** said that they **engaged with new peers** during this Gateway session.



- **More than 80% of participants assigned positive ratings** to all aspects related to **session content and session impact**, with an especially large proportion of students indicating that they found the content to be **clear and easily understandable (89%)** and that they **will make use of the services and resources (92%)**.

In addition to the findings highlighted above, from the graphs below can be seen that respondents were satisfied with both the developmental impact (87%) of the Wellness and Safety session and the venue (88%) where the session was held.

**Satisfaction with Developmental Impact:
Wellness & Safety Session**



Satisfaction with Venue: Wellness & Safety



Ratings and satisfaction according to residence status

Both on- and off-campus students were satisfied with all the session aspects measured and assigned very similar ratings to most aspects. **On-campus** students were **slightly more positive** than off-campus students about **most** of the **aspects** related to this session. The exceptions were that on- and off-campus students were equally positive about (i) the session content being clear and understandable, (ii) the session questions regarding the subject being satisfactorily answered, and (iii) the venue of the sessions. The **only aspect** in which **off-campus** students were **more positive** than on-campus students, was that they **more frequently engaged with new peers** during the Gateway session.

Session aspects		On- or off-campus students more positive
Session content	Important, useful and relevant to the topic	On-campus
	Clear and easily understandable	Equal
	Kept me engaged and interested in the topic	On-campus
Session impact	My expectations of the sessions were satisfied	On-campus
	I will make use of the services/ resources that I have been made aware of	On-campus
	I am inspired to participate and get involved in activities that have been presented	On-campus
	This session contributed to my ability to be more successful in my studies at UFS	On-campus
Session relevance	Relevant to prepare me for my studies at the UFS	On-campus
	Stayed focused and relevant to the topic of discussion	On-campus
Session engagement & sense of community	Questions regarding the subject was satisfactorily answered	Equal
	This session was interactive and interesting	On-campus
	I engaged with new peers during this session	Off-campus
Session logistics	Felt welcomed and assisted with my integration into the university	On-campus
	This session was at a suitable time for me to attend	On-campus
	Staff members were present, friendly and helpful	On-campus
	Informed in time about this session in order to attend	On-campus
	Developmental impact of the sessions	On-campus
	Venue of the sessions	Equal

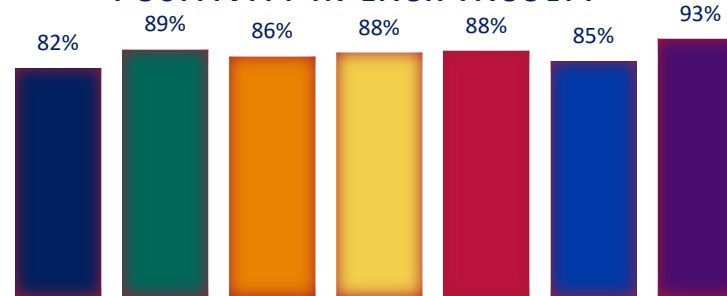
FACULTY COMPARISON

- On average across all aspects of the **Wellness and Safety** session, students from **all faculties** were **positive**, with students in the **Faculty of Health Sciences** slightly more positive than other students.
- Corresponding to the overall trend, students in the **Faculty of Health Sciences** assigned very high ratings to session content, session impact, session engagement and sense of community, and session relevance.
- Almost all students (98%) in the **Faculty of Education** agreed that they will make use of the services/resources they were made aware of, yet only 57% of Theology students indicated that they were inspired to participate and get involved in the activities that were presented.
- A very high proportion of students from the **Faculties of Education and Natural and Agricultural Sciences** (94% respectively) agreed that the session was focused and relevant.
- Students in the Faculty of Theology and Religion had the **highest percentage** of students (70%) **engaging with new peers** during this Gateway session, whilst less than 50% of all other participants from the other Faculties indicated that they engaged with new peers.

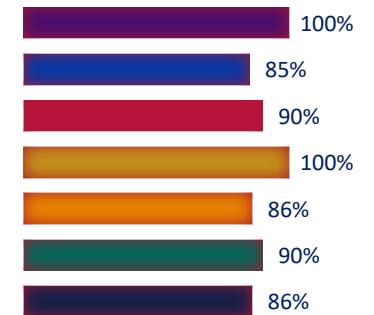


Note: Faculties of Theology and Health Sciences had a considerably lower number of participants compared to other faculties

WELLNESS & SAFETY: OVERALL POSITIVITY IN EACH FACULTY



SATISFACTION WITH VENUE



WELLNESS & SAFETY: AVERAGE POSITIVE RATINGS



Student Life

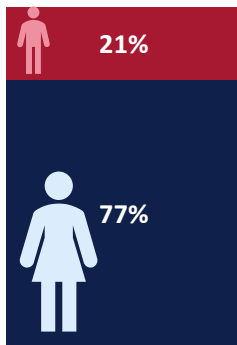
Participant Profile

This section details the profile of the respondents for the Student Life session. A total of 685 participants completed evaluation forms for this session.⁵

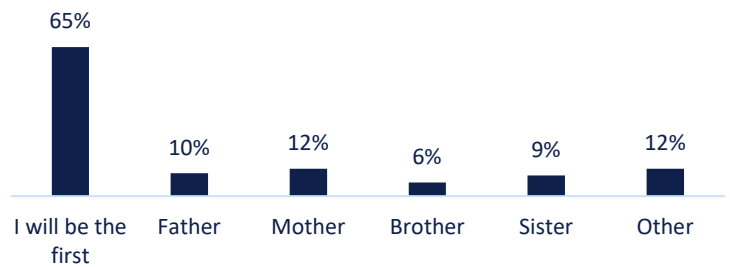
Biographical profile

The majority of the respondents in the Student Life session were female (77%), and 86% were black African. Most respondents indicated that they were first-generation students (65%), while approximately a third indicated that they have family members who have graduated from university.

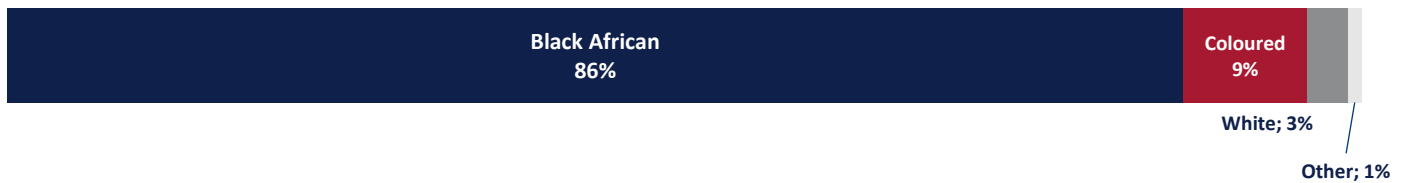
Student Life: Gender Distribution



Student Life: First-Generation Students Proportion



Student Life: Race Distribution

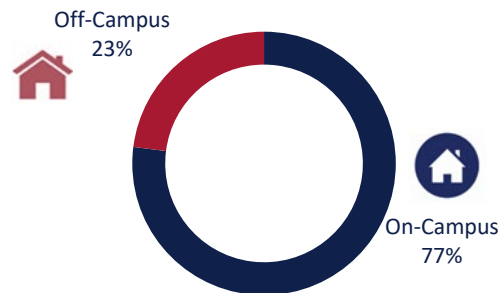


⁵ Although a total of 2901 evaluation forms were completed, on 268 evaluation forms the session was not specified. This resulted in the total number of evaluation forms for which the session was known not adding up to the total number of evaluation forms completed.

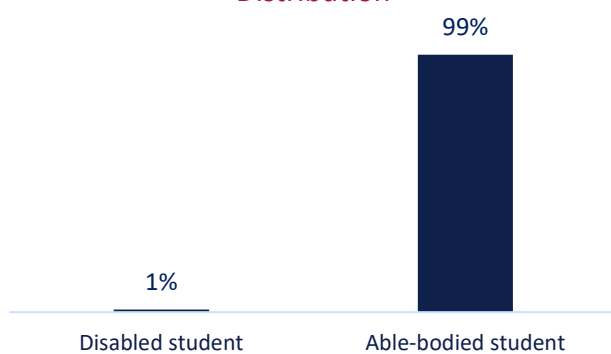
Residential status, students with a disability, and year of first registration

Students on the Bloemfontein campus who evaluated the Student Life session were more likely to live on-campus (77%) than off-campus (23%). Only one student indicated that they had a disability, and the vast majority (91%) indicated that they registered for the first time in 2020.

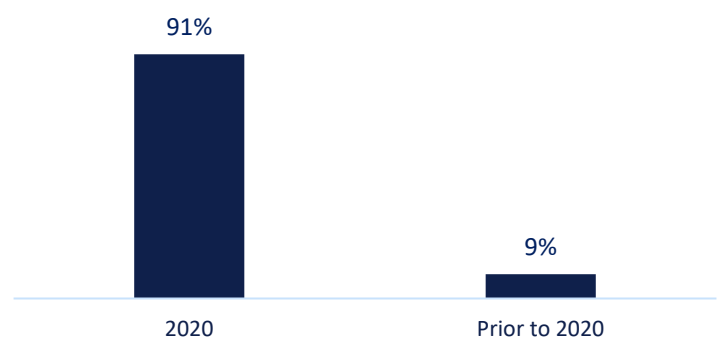
Student Life: Residence Distribution



Student Life: Student Disability Distribution



Student Life: Year of First Registration



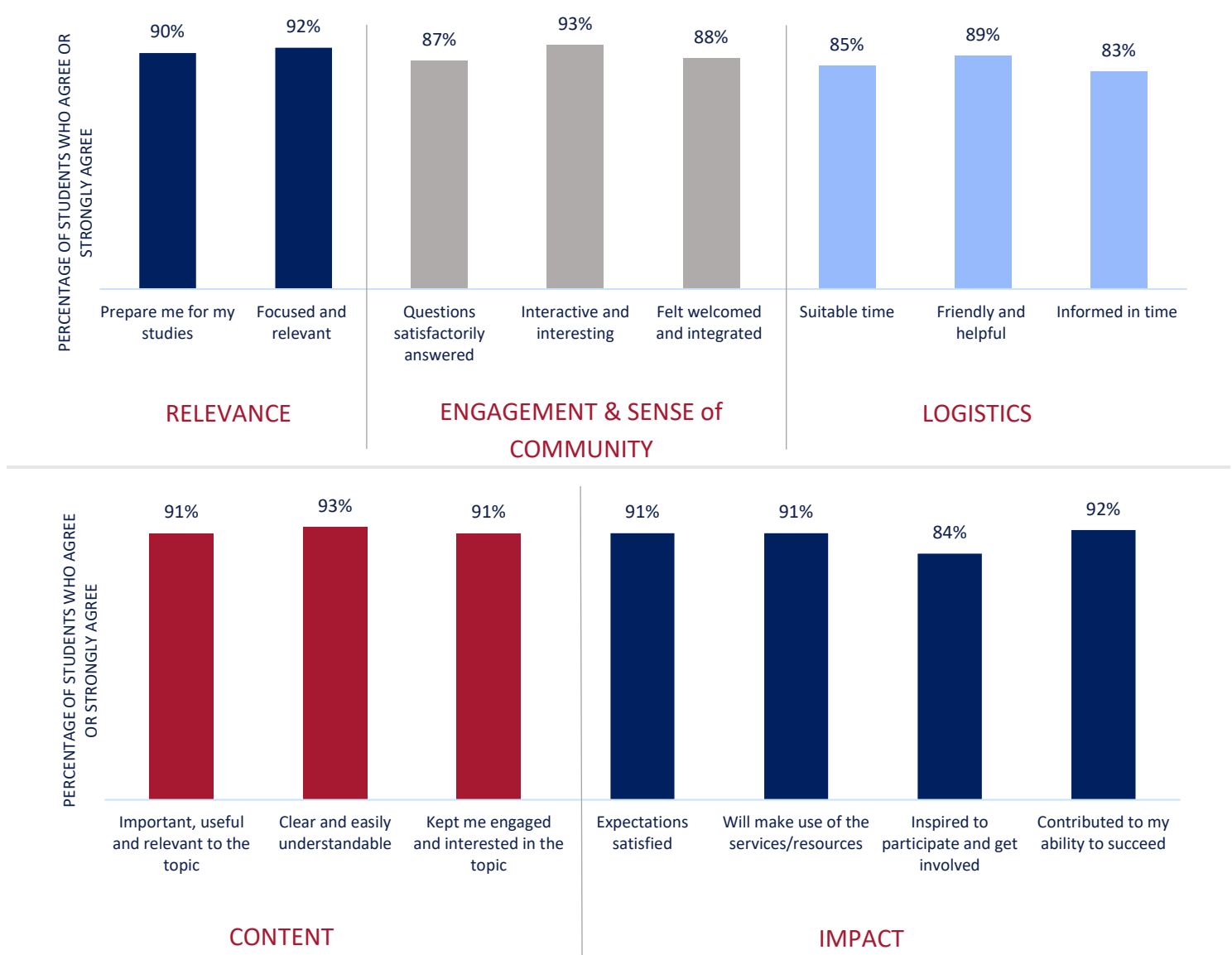
Session Feedback: Student Life Session

This section examines the experiences of the respondents for the Student Life session.

Ratings and satisfaction

The responses of the students to each specific question related to the Student Life session are detailed in the graphs below. In general, it can be seen that students were somewhat more positive about the Student Life session than they were about the other sessions, assigning higher ratings to most of the aspects measured. A clear majority, for all aspects measured, rated the sessions positively (responding agree or strongly agree to the questions).

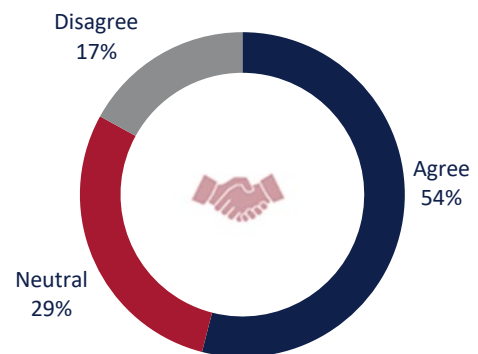
Session Ratings: Student Life



When the graphs are considered in more detail, the following trends are noted:

- **More than 80%** of the students assigned positive ratings to all aspects related to **session relevance**, **session engagement and sense of community**, and **session logistics**, with an especially high proportion of respondents rating the session as **interactive and interesting (93%)** and **focused and relevant (92%)**. A high proportion of students also indicated that **staff members were friendly and helpful (89%)**. Although the vast majority of respondents (88%) indicated that the session helped them to feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture, **only slightly more than half (54%)** said that they engaged with new peers during this Gateway session.
- **More than 90% of participants assigned positive ratings** to all aspects related to **session content**, and most aspects related to **session impact**.

Engaged with New Peers: Student Life



In addition to the findings highlighted above, from the graphs below it can be seen that respondents were satisfied with both the developmental impact (92%) of the Student Life session and the venue (91%) where the session was held.

Satisfaction with Developmental Impact: Student Life Session



Satisfaction with Venue: Student Life Session



Ratings and satisfaction according to residence status

Both on- and off-campus students were satisfied with all the session aspects measured and assigned very similar ratings to most aspects. In comparison to the other sessions, there is a more even distribution between on- and off-campus students with regards to the various aspects measured. **On-campus** students were **more positive** with all aspects related to **session content**. **Off-campus** students were slightly more positive about the session impact, however, **on- and off-campus** students were **equally positive** regarding feeling **inspired to participate and get involved in the activities** that were presented. **Off-campus** students were **slightly more positive** about the session **engagement and sense of community**, although both **on- and off-campus** students were **equally positive** about **engaging with new peers** during the session. **On- and off-campus** students were equally positive about most aspects related to **session logistics**, although on-campus students were more positive regarding being informed in time about the session. **Off-campus** students were **more positive** about the **venue** where the session was held.

Session aspects		On- or off-campus students more positive
Session content	Important, useful and relevant to the topic	On-campus
	Clear and easily understandable	On-campus
	Kept me engaged and interested in the topic	On-campus
Session impact	My expectations of the sessions were satisfied	On-campus
	I will make use of the services/ resources that I have been made aware of	Off-campus
	I am inspired to participate and get involved in activities that have been presented	Equal
	This session contributed to my ability to be more successful in my studies at UFS	Off-campus
Session relevance	Relevant to prepare me for my studies at the UFS	Off-campus
	Stayed focused and relevant to the topic of discussion	On-campus
Session engagement & sense of community	Questions regarding the subject was satisfactorily answered	Off-campus
	This session was interactive and interesting	Off-campus
	I engaged with new peers during this session	Equal
	Felt welcomed and assisted with my integration into the university	On-campus
Session logistics	This session was at a suitable time for me to attend	Equal
	Staff members were present, friendly and helpful	Equal
	Informed in time about this session in order to attend	On-campus
	Developmental impact of the sessions	Equal
	Venue of the sessions	Off-campus

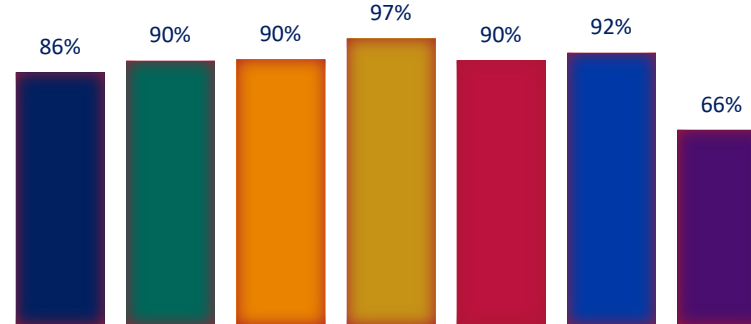
FACULTY COMPARISON

- On average across all aspects of the **Student Life** session, students from the **Faculty of Theology and Religion** were **very positive (97%)**, in contrast to students from the Faculty of Health Sciences, who were noticeably less positive (66%)
- Corresponding to the overall trend, students in the **Faculty of Health Sciences** assigned **lower ratings to session content, session impact, session relevance, session engagement and sense of community, and session logistics** than students in the other faculties.
- Nearly all students (97%) in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences indicated that their expectations of the session were satisfied. A lower proportion of the Economic and Management Sciences (78%) agreed that they were inspired to participate and get involved in activities that were presented.
- More than 80%** of the students in each faculty indicated that the session helped them **feel welcomed and integrated** into the university culture, yet a considerably smaller percentage engaged with new peers during the Gateway session.
- The majority of students in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (93%) indicated that staff members were present, friendly and helpful during the session.
- Following the general trend, students in the **Faculty of Health Sciences** were the **least satisfied with the venue**.

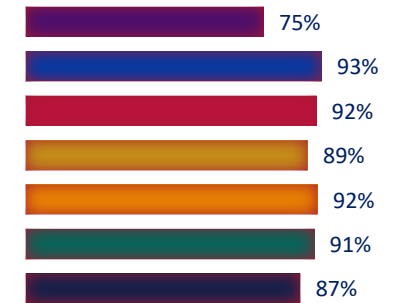


Note: Faculties of Theology and Health Sciences had a considerably lower number of participants compared to other faculties

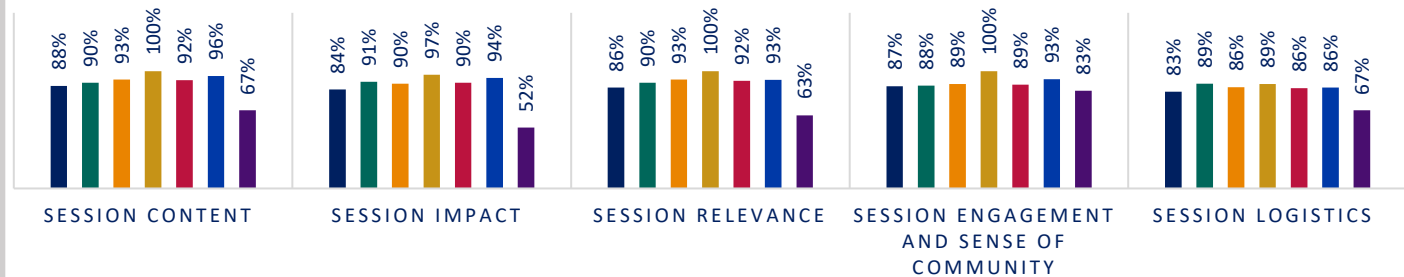
STUDENT LIFE: OVERALL POSITIVITY IN EACH FACULTY



SATISFACTION WITH VENUE



STUDENT LIFE: AVERAGE POSITIVE RATINGS



■ Economic and Management Sciences ■ Education ■ Humanities ■ Theology ■ Law ■ Natural and Agricultural Sciences ■ Health Sciences

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 2020 Faculty Specific, Academic Advising, Support Services, Wellness and Safety, and Student Life Gateway Orientation sessions presented to the students on the Bloemfontein campus were, by and large, received well and can be deemed to have been successfully implemented. For all five sessions, the majority of the students were positive about the session content, session impact, session relevance, session engagement and sense of community, as well as the session logistics. In addition, the majority of students were satisfied to some extent with the developmental impact of all five sessions, as well as with the venue where the sessions were held. Ratings across faculties and residential status (on-campus versus off-campus) were very similar, with students within all faculties, as well as on- and off-campus, mostly assigning positive ratings to all aspects measured.