



Interpreting the Benchmark Comparison Report

Statistical Significance

Benchmarks with mean differences that are larger than would be expected by chance alone are noted with one, two, or three asterisks, referring to three significance levels (* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$).

The smaller the significance level, the smaller the likelihood that the difference is due to chance.

Statistical significance does not guarantee the result is substantive or important. Large sample sizes tend to generate more statistically significant results even though the magnitude of mean differences may be inconsequential. **It is recommended to consult effect sizes to judge the practical meaning of the results.**

South African^c Support for Learners

	Mean	Significance ^a	Effect Size ^b
College X	61.53		0.14
FET Colleges	58.19		

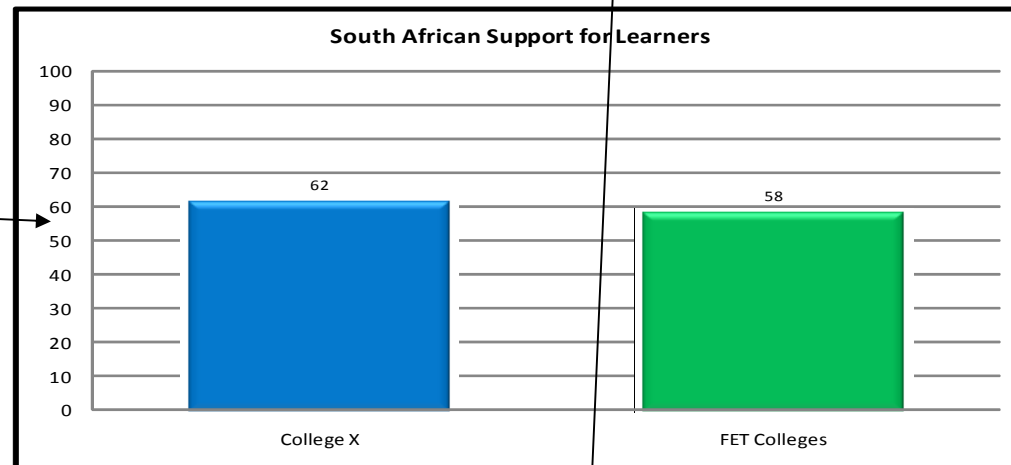
Mean

The mean is the arithmetic average of student responses for a particular benchmark.

Means are provided for your institution and the 2011 sample of participating FET colleges.

Bar Charts

A visual display of the overall means of the 2011 sample and of your institution.



Effect Size

Effect size indicates the “practical significance” of the mean difference between your group and the comparison group (i.e. the CSSE sample). It is calculated by dividing the mean difference by the standard deviation of the group which is being compared.

In practice, an effect size of 0.2 is often considered small, 0.5 moderate, and 0.8 large. A positive sign indicates that your institution's mean was greater, thus showing an affirmative result for the institution. A negative sign indicates your institution lags behind the comparison group.