

Through the Eyes of Students

International Student Experience
University of New South Wales, Semester 2, 2009

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1. Methodology

International Student Project Semester 2, 2009

‘Through the Eyes of Students: The International Student Experience’ was a project developed by

UNSW Student Development with an aim to collect and analyse information from new and current international students in order to understand and evaluate their experiences at UNSW and in the wider community.

The following focus areas for the project were determined by collaboration between UNSW Student Development, UNSW International Student Services and the UNSW Counselling Services. Also taken into account were the reference areas outlined by the Australian Government Senate Inquiry into the Welfare of International Students. The areas of interest include:

- Settling into Australian social and academic life
- Discerning beneficial activities and programs which gave a sense of inclusion
- Establishing a hierarchy of pressing issues for international students
- Unearthing safety concerns on and off campus
- Clarifying the international student experience at UNSW

Information was collect via three streams:

- Mass international student invite to participate in online survey (majority quantitative questions)
- Student peer to peer interviews (included additional qualitative questions to the online survey)
- Five focus groups held with current Undergraduate, Postgraduate Research and Coursework and AusAid students studying at UNSW

Project Statistics:

- **2,201** international students participate via online survey
- **279** peer to peer interviews conducted across Kensington and COFA campuses
- **36** students attended focus groups
- **25.8%** of UNSW's international student body participated in the project

2. Focus Groups

2.1 Focus Group Breakdown

- **36** students from Postgraduate, Undergraduate and AusAid cohorts
- **18** countries of origin represented
- **28%** of focus group students attended pre-departure talks, seminars or briefings on

- Australian social and student culture
- **23%** of focus group students hold part-time employment (% excludes AusAid student)
- **71%** of focus group students were looking for employment (% excludes AusAid students)
- **58%** of focus group students want permanent residency in Australia

2.2 Focus Group One

Undergraduate International Students

Countries represented: *Hong Kong (SAR), Malaysia, China, Singapore, Pakistan, Sri Lanka*

Focus Group Overview: Students from the undergraduate focus group were vocal about their need for support settling into Australian social and academic life, as well as reducing the financial burden of international students through easier avenues for employment and lifting the restrictions for travel concessions in NSW.

1 in 7 students attended a pre-departure seminar or similar in preparation to study in Australia. The lone student was from Singapore and commented that the pre-departure talk he attended was *'Not fully useful, not a full description of what is going to happen. Mental preparation for what happens next week or week after but not for the whole time'* The majority of the group found information about settling into academic and student life from online forums, family and/or friends.

When asked what else could have been included in a pre-departure talk, seminar or similar, or what would have been useful to know prior to arrival, the group indicated issues relating to: Accommodation, Language and communication and legal aspects to accommodation and housing (renters rights, bond etc).

6 in 7 students were looking for part-time work; all six have so far been unsuccessful citing employers wanting *'Australian experience. That's why they wont give us the job, but if they don't hire us, how do we get it? [the experience]. Have a job back home [within the relevant industry] but it is not valued here.'* – Undergraduate, Pakistan.

They also cite issues such as requiring permanent residency status and the restrictive 20-hour work allowance for international students as major hurdles to finding employment. For further details refer to 3.3.

5 in 7 students in this focus group want permanent residency in Australia. For further details refer to 3.4.

When the undergraduate focus group was asked about their best experiences in Australia (or UNSW) their answers included the International Student Services at UNSW, getting to know other students from around the world, independence, embracing the cultural change in Australia, participating in activities that they couldn't in their home country (skydiving, diving) and travelling.

Worst experiences from the undergraduate focus group included no local friends, being assaulted by drunken locals, finding accommodation on arrival and the cost of living in Sydney.

2.3 Focus Group Two

Postgraduate Coursework International Students

Countries represented: *China, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Hungary, Brazil, and Belgium*

Focus group overview: Students from the first postgraduate focus group were vocal about financial issues concerning employment, accommodation and the value for money of their education. All attendees were also passionate about student equality with travel concession in NSW:

- *'When I go to Melbourne or Brisbane you can get this price! [concession]'* – Postgraduate, India
- *'It's not just the money - you start to get a bit resentful, I mean, we are paying for everything here.'* Postgraduate, China.

- *'Talking about equity with local students – we are also students – it's not like we have extra money' – Postgraduate, Bangladesh*
- *'And especially we are full time students we are paying a lot for God's sake!' – Postgraduate, Belgium*
- *'And it really hurts when you are paying international fees – you are paying more, and you pay full price transport.' - Postgraduate, India*
- *'When you put it together at the end of the year it adds up. I think you will feel less discriminated, because well, we are paying a lot for fees' - Postgraduate, Hungary*

2 in 11 students attended a pre-departure seminar or similar in preparation to study in Australia. A student from China who attended one complimented her program *'They had a representative from this university [UNSW], and I could ask as many questions as I wanted to. Everything went fine.'*

The majority of students in this focus group used the UNSW website, family and/or friends to obtain information about Australia.

2 in 11 students had secured part time jobs, eight are still looking. Issues finding employment included no recognition of overseas experience and the 20-hour work allowance. For further details refer to 3.3.

9 in 11 students in this focus group want permanent residency in Australia. For further details refer to 3.4.

When the postgraduate focus group was asked about their best experiences in Australia (or at UNSW) responses included getting to know Sydney and Australia, the campus at UNSW, independence, Unigames, International Student Services at UNSW, their faculty and making friends from other countries.

Worst experiences include finding employment, feeling lonely, questioning the decision to study in Australia, finding accommodation, drunken people and the Australian drinking culture.

2.4 Focus Group Three

Postgraduate Coursework International Students

Countries represented: *Pakistan, China, Iran, Colombia, Singapore, and India*

Focus group overview: Students from the second postgraduate coursework focus group were vocal about employment rights and how it ties into their financial issues and affording appropriate accommodation. This group was also vocal about travel concession being available to all other students except themselves in NSW:

- *'We don't get travel concessions like other local students. I stay in Ashfield, I spend about 10 to 12 dollars every time I come to the university, which I think is a very stupid law – how can they treat us so different from all the local students?' - Postgraduate, Pakistan*

4 in 8 students attended a pre-departure seminar or similar in preparation to study in Australia. Their feelings on the information received was mixed and included:

- *'Slightly misleading at this point of time, as we are on recession now, and they were on assumption made 2 years back' – Postgraduate, India*
- *'Frankly I found it not that useful. Could be better if the speaker did more research. It was kind of, "let's hold some lecture" and that's it, without any useful result.' – Postgraduate, Iran*
- *'Mine was pretty good, because it was represented by the country's SSA - Singapore Students Association. So from the student's point of view it gave us a very objective view about how things are in Australia, for instance the expenditure, accommodation, tips, stuff like that. So it's really very customised to our needs; I thought it was very helpful.' – Postgraduate, Singapore*
- *'The information which they gave from the center was very different to what we come here and see. With relation to job prospects, as well as permanent residency was very different at that point of time, and they keep changing every year so we were not informed about all of that. And regarding the course extension, we were told that it was easy to extend from 1 and a half to 2 years, but after coming here we find out that it is pretty difficult to get through that, I mean you need to have very*

Other members of the group cited the internet and family and/or friends as their way of obtaining information on Australia.

When asked what else could have been included in a pre-departure talk, seminar or similar, or what would have been useful to know prior to arrival, the group indicated: knowing more about job prospects, clearly outlining living expenditure, university accommodation and information regarding the difficulties UNSW graduates have in finding a job after graduation.

3 in 8 had secured part-time employment, the rest of the group were looking. Unemployed students cited difficulties such as unrealistic experience required for basic employment and felt employers were more likely to hire locals than internationals as major hurdles. For further details refer to 3.3.

5 in 8 students in this focus group want permanent residency in Australia. For further details refer to 3.4.

When the postgraduate focus group was asked about their best experiences in Australia (or at UNSW) responses included: academic results, university classes, interaction within the faculty and MyStart/ReStart programs during orientation week.

Worst experiences included acts of racism by locals, mix of students in postgraduate level (straight from undergraduate to postgraduate studies), culture shock, muggings, lack of job prospects and visa issues.

2.5 Focus Group Four

Postgraduate AusAid International Students

Countries represented: *Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, and China*

Focus group overview: This particular group of international students expressed unique challenges and a different outlook on their education experience compared to their other international counterparts. AusAid students main concern was 'Academic Issues' which was not a reference area outlined by the Senate Inquiry. Their concerns included coming from developing countries and adjusting to a different education system. One student describes his experience *'...we are coming from developing country and we are very passive learners, it seems in our country it is teacher oriented not student oriented. [Back home] We just sit to listen in class, sometimes we have question but only a small time to question but here I think maybe 80% of the lecture time is for discussion'* AusAid student, Vietnam

Other challenging areas included academic language barriers, written communication barriers and adjusting to other students 'confrontational' manner in class during group discussions with staff and students.

AusAid students were also concerned with financial management and the day to day costs of living in Australia.

When the AusAid focus group was asked about their best experiences in Australia (or at UNSW) included the Academic Preparation Program, organisational help from scholarship programs, kindness of supervisors, support networks, making friends inside Academic Preparation Program and mentor programs.

The only worst experience expressed from the group regarded an Australian embassy in Vietnam, but otherwise all AusAid students felt very fortunate to have the opportunity to study in Australia.

2.6 Focus Group Five

Postgraduate Research International Students

Countries represented: *Philippines, China, Iran, and Indonesia*

Focus group overview: Students from the postgraduate research focus group concentrated discussions on financial issues, student safety and accommodation issues. Like the other focus groups, this group also raised the point of NSW not offering student travel concession to international students; *'I am paying for myself everything, tuition fees, then next one is rent, accommodation and transport. No concession for international students in Sydney, just in NSW, strange.'* – Postgraduate, Iran

3 in 5 students attended a pre-departure seminar or similar in preparation to study in Australia. All students in this group felt they received enough information to settle in and prepare for social and academic life in Australia.

2 in 5 students have a part-time job while the other three students are looking for employment. The students looking for employment cited reasons such as age and the 20-hour work restrictions for international students as major issues in finding part time work. For further details refer to 3.3.

2 in 5 students want permanent residency in Australia. For further details refer to 3.4.

When the postgraduate research focus group was asked about their best experiences in Australia (or at UNSW) responses included: standard of health in Australia, graduation, academic related achievements and playing sport with students from other countries.

The worst experiences included looking for employment and overall accommodation issues.

3. Issues and Concerns

Each focus group was presented with the following issues and asked to allocated three points to the issues they felt the most pressing to International students (also taking into account their own experiences). Issues ranked in order of the most pressing:

- Financial worries
- Adequate and affordable accommodation
- Employment rights
- Permanent residency
- Student safety
- Social inclusion
- International student support

When combining all scores from the five focus groups, *Financial Worries* and *Adequate and Affordable Accommodation* were selected equally as the most pressing issue for international students. Through discussion, certain issues were found to be common between *Employment Rights*, *Adequate and Affordable Accommodation* and *Financial Worries*. One such issue was stress caused

by the inability to secure both a stable income and affordable accommodation.

Note: The AusAid focus group was the only students who added another issue to the presented list, *Academic Issues*. AusAid students felt *Academic Issues* coupled with a student's ability to manage their finances was the most pressing issues. *Academic Issues* included communication and language barriers and adjusting to new styles of teaching and learning.

3.1 Financial Worries

The major areas indicated by all groups to contribute to the financial worries of international students were:

- **Accommodation**
 - Refer to 3.2 for further details
- **Materials**
 - Text Books, Food on campus, printing
- **No Travel Concession in NSW**
 - 'No transport discount for students. Only Local and AusAID – these are international students too – so why do they get concession and we don't? What about International students? It's not just 10-20%, but 50% - that's huge! Also, food and things on campus in general are high.' – Undergraduate, Pakistan
 - 'There should be some equality - we are paying for the local students – we are paying about four times what they are paying, there should be some preference given to us. It can't be that you just take all the money and don't give us any rights.' Postgraduate, Bangladesh
- **Finding Employment**
 - Refer to 3.3 for further details
 - 'In terms of jobs, in terms of helping us find work here, in terms of letting us know the pathway to permanent residency, in terms of having employers here to hire international students. So that even if once we graduate and we want to work in another country, we have a pathway.' – Postgraduate, Belgium
 - 'My main concern, really is finding a job, because when you come here you know you have to pay the fees, but if you don't get a good job, you end up working in a restaurant, can only work 20 hours and get crap salary, so you cannot even pay for your expenses, cannot pay for your rent, at the end of the month you have 100 dollars only, so you start to get a little bit worried. And also because you get to the end of your course, and you don't have a good job and you don't have a good contact in a company so you can't really apply for residency. You've got to go back, and you've had no work experience in your area of study, so you end up with only a degree but not many opportunities.' – Postgraduate, China
 - '[We need] job connections with companies' – Postgraduate, China
 - 'Everybody informed us that you would be able to earn your last semester's fees in those three months. When I landed over here, I realised that there aren't any opportunities, even if I am allowed to work for those 3 months full time, which I am allowed by law, but there isn't opportunity for international students. I just want to gain experience – I have certain amount of financial security, I have the amount I need to pay for my fees and everything. But the point is that if I want a permanent residency, I might have to go through another 1 year of studies, because I'm in the 1 and a half year masters. Over there they say "you can extend by 6 months, that's not a problem", which is not possible – if I want to do a research in certain category, or I want to merge it with another subject, it is only possible if you have done it back in India. We want to study at UNSW which is a very reputed university, in India as well as in Australia, but I don't know if we are in any case better off in the market. '–Postgraduate, India
- **University Course Fees**
 - 'The tuition fees, increases every year. We are on the student loan, so what we originally show the banks is the amount at that point of the year. It's not like you put it two years in advance and you get the money. So it is increasing every semester. That's another concern.- Postgraduate, India
 - 'Course fees are too high. I'm from Belgium, there are no links between Belgium and Australia, we have no scholarships, you've got a lot of things available for Asian students for example, you cannot even apply for one if you are not part of the Commonwealth or that [particular] country. Everything is very expensive to study here.' Postgraduate, Belgium
 - General costs of living (food, entertainment etc)
- **Value for Money**
 - 'There is not a link between what the university offers and what they really show. When you come to Australia, you know that you are going to spend more than what you would in your home country, if you come here 2 years you know you are going to spend broadly 10 times or 15 times what you would spend in another place. So what I find with international students is, it's a bit unfair. We pay a lot to come here, we don't have the concessions in New South Wales, I know that is a problem of the government of New South Wales, but the university should inform a little more about the conditions here in Australia, or at least in Sydney. It's a marketing campaign – they can lose students to University of Melbourne or University of Queensland – so they hide this. But university should show five-star working rating, say if you leave from UNSW you are going to get a good job, and that seems good. But when you arrive here, everything is more expensive, and you start looking and the transportation is an issue, there is no

concession, and you can't get a job, and you spend even more money applying for visa, and medical expenses we do through an agent. At the end many people just go back because this is more money and you wonder if it's really worth it.' –Postgraduate, Colombia

- **Recognition of Experience**

- *I am in the architectural profession and one of my seniors apply for the recognition of her degree over here, they have not recognised it. The same degree is recognised in US, in UK and all of the countries in the world. So her 11 hundred dollars which she has spent as a fee is down the drain. She is again going to reapply and figure out what the problem is. The lawyer earns so much money out of you, you know. Why a degree with is recognised in the US and UK, how can it be not recognised in Australia? It's not that Australia has exceptionally high standards than US or UK. – Postgraduate, Pakistan*

3.2 Accommodation

During all focus groups, sourcing accommodation, the process of renting and the expense of rent were discussed as major contributing factors to international student wellbeing. Many described situations of:

- **High Occupancy and Bedroom Sharing**

- *'In my house there is 8 rooms, all of us have some situation. There are around 15 or 16 people, there are 2 floors. We are sharing rooms. I think that maybe some people here will not prefer this sharing because this is not privacy, but in my case it is help me a lot, so I can save a lot of money for other issues' – AusAid, Vietnam*

- **Renting Unconverted Spaces**

- *'The place where I'm living, there are 2 students living in the house and 2 in the garage.'* – Undergraduate, Pakistan

- **Being Taken Advantage of by Private Landlords & Bond Issues**

- *'When I first transferred here, main thing I think International Students should be aware is that there is a legal aspect to accommodation, because sometimes we are so desperate we just go to web advertisement or notice board and get a number and call them, they ask for bonds and things like that, a lot of people get cheated in that way. I really had a problem in my first place here – I'm not a very nasty person I don't know why someone can hate me in that way' - Undergraduate, Singapore*
- *'[Renting from] individual landlords and I face all the problems with that, the owner didn't tell me that he is going to sell the property, it is three month that almost every week we are receiving inspections. And I don't have right to say "no, do not come" [FACILITATOR: Because it's a private rental?] Yes. And I also don't have the right to say to my landlord, because they have access to my bond that I paid. [FACILITATOR: Bond paid with Rental Bond Authority; do you know your rights there?] No, that's the problem, I was going to raise that here, because lots of international students they don't know their exact rights here so they cannot manage themselves what to do in these cases.'* – Postgraduate, Iran
- *'Also if you apply with the private sector, it's not very clear what your rights as a tenant are. It would be useful to include a short seminar on tenancy rights for international students in the orientation program – just to boil it down to maybe 5 or 6 essential points.'* - Postgraduate, China
- *'I checked with housing services in the uni it is compulsory for everyone to get that kind of bond receipt but in many case we cannot get the receipt, the landlord just keep it, they do not want to report to the authority because they don't want to pay tax. For me it is quite suspicious when I pay the bond if I can be able to get back the whole amount. The landlord will give us some receipt with her signature but it is not official stamped by the authority.'* AusAid student, Vietnam

- **Rental Agency Issues**

- *'One thing I found is you have a very nasty experience if you are going to the private sector and to agents as an international student to get accommodation. Once they know you are a student they turn you off. I don't know on what basis they judge students and people. Because financially, we all come on loans so we will be able to pay the rent, but they don't seem satisfied with that.'* – Postgraduate, Hong Kong

- **Subletting**

- *'You end up sub-leasing from a room from a guy who leases the house since you need some kind of income statement to go to a real estate agency, and it ends up more expensive when you sublease' – Postgraduate, China*
- *'I was looking for a house with a friend here. We were just looking through the house, they just said "ok, this is the rent" But they didn't show us the original lease that goes with the landlord; they were not ready to show it, like "this is not done"; they make another lease for the sub-lease' – Postgraduate, Bangladesh*

- **Pushed into the Deep-End**

- *'The Housing Office push you in the deep end... Just a wall [for advertisements], might go there and find out it is not even appropriate. It's just too much at that point. The places should be screened first.'* – Undergraduate, Pakistan
- *'Also it is difficult to find ones that are clean, there are some disgusting places, even those that are advertised by ISS office, I think they should need to be more cautious in what they advertise.'* – Postgraduate, Singapore

3.3 Employment Rights

Students are finding the process of securing a job increasingly difficult. Compounded by the economic crisis, they are experiencing a vicious cycle of not having their previous experience in their home country recognised, not having Permanent Residency status and only being able to work 20 hours per week. Students also express their concerns on volunteer and internship roles requiring local experience. A postgraduate student from China had found a part time position in his field of study and referred to himself on several occasions as 'lucky'.

Areas contributing to *Employment Rights* issues include:

- **Recognition of Experience**
 - *'I applied for a few jobs and they said whatever experience I had in my home country will not be counted here. If you have local experience then they will take you. They say [overseas experience] can be fake or anything, and what do we do about this thing?'* – Postgraduate, Bangladesh
 - Refer to 3.1 for additional details
- **20-hour Work Limit**
 - *'The problem I find – I am doing finance in my masters - I would like to do something related to finance, even part time job. But you know we have 20 hours, I have called many companies, they said your resume is really good but we can't hire you because we need you more than 20 hours; clients need you more than 20 hours. So I think you can get a job, but a job like a waiter. Relating to your career it is almost impossible, just impossible.'* – Postgraduate, Colombia
 - *'I've been to a few interviews, but they are just not that into International students. Probably because of the work restrictions, 20 hrs. Should lift 20-hour limit. Ok, I understand in reality you wouldn't work more than 20 hours but that would give more reasons for employers to employ you.'* Undergraduate, Sri Lanka
 - *'I don't want to exaggerate but there seems to be some discrimination against international students in terms of employment rights. With our student visas we are only allowed to work 20 hours, but Australians and permanent residents they can basically work unlimited hours even though they are enrolled as full time students. I did my undergraduate degree in England, it does not matter whether you are international student or from England. Every full time student can only work a certain number of hours. I applied for a job on campus and it said the applicant must be available as required by the employer. The way the ad was structured and the job description suggests "don't even apply unless you can work unlimited hours". It doesn't make any sense, how is there a distinction between international and full time students, legally.'* – Postgraduate, Hungary
 - *'Most employers are seeking the one who can work unlimited so [the 20hr limit] could be an issue for international students.'* – Postgraduate China
- **Permanent Residency Status**
 - *'I have another concern, we have this 3 month internship this December, but they require PR. What do you expect for international students? Should they pack up their bags and go back home? I think the university need to take some stance in this. There are a lot of companies – all the companies I wanted to apply – and I just can't apply because I'm an international student.'* – Postgraduate, India
 - *'I'm doing petrol engineering. I tried to apply to all those companies here in Australia, they require residency proof. The second most important about finding a part time job is they want reference. Maybe even just supermarket or something – it is much easier to find a job. They don't like to do a test and access the person, they just do a reference.'* – Postgraduate, India
 - *'it's just like you are keeping 2 faces, one for the press and the legal things, that "we do give equal opportunities" – this is the advertisement at the start of the recruitment process, but over these 3-4 months I have been experiencing it, going places for several internships which relates to my field, but it comes back to "do you have local experience?" - no, "do you have confirmed residency?" – no, "do you know somebody here, as in, do you have reference?" - no. So, pack up your bag! Legally if someone was to evaluate it, it's fair enough. For the advertisement there is an "overwhelming response" as they always say, but in the end of the day you don't get it. Our universities at home for every application, the university at times have test conducted for university students to go for the companies. So the companies used to come over for international students – their international students, we were local students – the company would test interview and set up university students for internship or whatever, right there and then. Now that's what I'll call a fair chance, not just advertise it and find it yourself.'* – Postgraduate, Pakistan
- **Locals versus Internationals**
 - *'Any kind of job you apply for, even if you are better than local they still want a local. I mean, I am an architect by profession; even if I apply for a position for a graduate architect they will still want a graduate from Australia. So how can I be sure I will have a good career after I graduate if they are always going to ask for local experience? How will I gain local experience if I don't get the opportunity?'* – Postgraduate, India
- **Economic Crisis**
 - *'I think here Australia is a special moment, we are in the recession – normally for international students in Sydney to get a part time job it wouldn't be as difficult, compared with many other cities in the world'*

– Postgraduate, Colombia

- **Low Wages**

- *'Most jobs require PR. Some job has lower salary, and they will give to you even though you don't have Australian experience.'* – Undergraduate, China

- **Training and Experience**

- *'For basic job like storekeeper and the like, they want 5 years experience, 3 years experience – dude, where are you coming from? Like if I want to work at a library, who is to say I need 5 years experience as a library?'* – Postgraduate, Pakistan
- *'Even for internship they ask you for experience – what kind of internship is that? I attend the internship to get experience, if I had experience I wouldn't need - it's a closed loop. Even for vocational and volunteering they ask you for experience – I can't believe that!'* – Postgraduate, Iran
- *'[UNSW should provide] Employment only workshop how to find the job, not how to do the job. Basic training like cash register.'* – Undergraduate, Pakistan

- **Age**

- *'It is quite hard to get employment especially as I am 41 years old, when I submit the application, they ask the age right away.'* – Postgraduate, Philippines,

Suggestions made by international students to combat employment issues include:

- *'Allow international students to have unrestricted working rights, [or else same restrictions] for local students like they have in England.'* – Postgraduate, Hungary
- *'Teach us some knowledge on superannuation and tax return. When employer asks me to whether I have a superfund etc I had no idea, so I had to find out by myself.'* – Postgraduate, Pakistan
- *'There should be some on campus jobs as well, for basic things they should employ people from around here rather than bringing people from outside, so that there is some help at least from the university side, if there is no jobs outside.'* – Postgraduate, Bangladesh
- *'There are a lot of research work done on uni, we can work there, cause we are all postgrad, so we have enough experience'* – Postgraduate, India

3.4 Permanent Residency

58% of all focus group attendees wanted permanent residency in Australia. Issues with obtaining permanent residency included:

- **Changing Regulations**

- *'The PR rules are changing every second. When we come to Australia, we have seen a particular set of rules, and that should apply to that person coming at that particular period of time. But every year it keeps changing.'* – Postgraduate, India

- **Trust in System**

- *'You need to take IS exam to get residency, you need to have 7 as a minimum score. A lot of my friends, or seniors, when they came here they had an overall rating of 7.5 – 8, but after they study here for 2 years, after which they take the test once again – it's become a money-making racket. You have reading, speaking, writing and listening. All the other bands will be 8 or 9, but one of the bands will go below 7. How's that? A person has stayed here for 2 years, the chances of going down are very less.'* – Postgraduate, India
- *'If they are testing our skills in English after two years, the people who talk in Australia, their English is worst than ours after they start studying for two years, that's the only reason they are testing us, they fear that our English has deteriorated down to their people! I don't find any other logic, it's just a money-making business.'* – Postgraduate, India

- **Uncertainty & Cost**

- *'Also it is highly indefinite, "we can't tell you when we'll get back to you", and they may get back to you in 1 -2 years. They gave me the reason "we have to adjust how many people we put from each department".* Undergraduate, Pakistan
- *'Biggest concern is uncertainty. Anyone can apply but don't know how long it will take to get the visa. If you know for sure need 3 months to process, then at least you know and can plan.'* – Undergraduate, Singapore
- *'You may risk 2 or 3 years of your life, applying and investing, thinking and orienting your life for permanent residency. You find yourself very eligible and suitable for PR here, but always you feel this huge risk you may face. After 2, 3 years, you have managed to travel a hemisphere to be here, and you have spent a lot and you manage your life, and after 2 -3 years you may get a big 'no'. It's a big risk'.* – Postgraduate, Iran

- **Employment**

- *'First priority comes to employer sponsorship, but then, it's hard to get a job.'* Undergraduate, Pakistan
- *'Employment is the key. Maybe the college can go to companies to see if they need students. Where I come from, the companies go to uni to pick the students, they value the students there, but over here*

it's like a struggle to get to a nice company and get a good job, good part time job. So maybe a little bit more action from the uni'. –Postgraduate, China

- *'The only reason [to get PR] is to get a job'. – Postgraduate, India*
- *'Especially the risk comes from how to find a job. [It is part of] the process of helping residency as well, because it is pointless for permanent residency if you don't have a job here.' – Postgraduate, Indonesia*

3.5 Student Safety

Although *Student Safety* was not high in the order of priority, once the discussion began on the issue, many stories emerged of first hand experiences with:

- **Muggings**
 - *'I've been mugged here on Alison St, by 2 guys, they asked me for my money, they wanted my watch and my cell phone, and I don't know what happened. I refused to oblige to them and was about to dial 000. In the meantime two people just went by a car. So I just ran across the road, and I just shouted out to them. By the time I turned back, these two guys ran away. Then I came to know of this – I'm not sure if you guys know if this – 000 first goes to a call centre, from there they redirect it to the police or the ambulance. There should be a direct number to the police also.' – Postgraduate, India*
- **Violence**
 - *'After all these attacks on Indian students, even though I have never personally felt any kind of risk, except for a couple of times in the workplace, during the phone calls, there is a certain amount of fear, that I don't go out in the night. I don't feel safe. Even though I have not been personally attacked, but just from whatever I have heard and whatever I have seen, I just don't go out at night. [FACILITATOR: Even around Ashfield, the area that you live?] No. Not alone, never alone. Or very rare occasion I would go out, but only to go to Woolworths or whatever, but I would not go out at night.' – Postgraduate, India*
 - *'I was not very serious with that but In 1 night there were 4 guys and it is very shame that we were chased by 10 young guys, I think like, 17 to 25 years old, like that, I thought that they may be drunk. And we just walked very fast and run to Belmore Street.' –Postgraduate, Iran*
 - *'With housemate on bike, rode past 2 drunk guys, yelled and tell us to "go back to our home town" – I don't think it's a case of racism, more that they are drunk. It's our fault to ride on the footpath but they should not have thrown us off [our bikes].' – Undergraduate, Singapore*
- **Australian Drinking Culture**
 - *'Some rowdy people on the street, I think they don't have any particular issue with anybody, just whoever is walking they just want to [harass]' – Postgraduate, India*
 - *'The Australian crowd is very rowdy, there are so many drug addicts on the roads, and trains are not safe.' – Postgraduate, Bangladesh*
 - *'What I experienced at night, when you are out for a movie or something, or stay late, when you are at the station to catch a train or something, mostly you see the people at the station are drunk, completely out of their conscience. Fortunately I've never been attacked, or intimidated, but whenever such kind of people are not in their senses and completely drunk you don't feel safe. You feel like just getting into the bus or the train. The only thing is that at that time there is nobody around, or there is no security around to make sure – because those people are drunk and they are not in their senses, they can potentially do anything. There are potential risks and threats like that.' – Postgraduate, Pakistan*
- **Racism**
 - *Some rowdy people on the street, I think they don't have any particular issue with anybody, just whoever is walking they just want to [harass] – Postgraduate, India*
 - *I worked as a telephone interviewer from a private company, on some rare occasions I get people say "you bloody Indians don't call me back again!" which actually hurts you know. If they think that most of the call centres have been outsourced in India, it is because it is expensive to run them in Australia. The way that they are inviting university students here is the same way that we are inviting work in India, through call centres or whatever. So they need to understand that it's far beyond time where the whites are superior. If you think of the IQ level or any other things, Indians or Pakistanis, or blacks or anybody, everybody has the equal calibre. It has been a very rare occasion when somebody has done [that]. Mostly I have had supportive people but in some occasions when you say "fuck off, why are you calling from India", that's stupid! ' Postgraduate, Pakistan*
- **Late Night Classes**
 - *'Because the post grad student always take classes at night, I live on the top of the hill, and it is very quiet, there is no bus pass by, and after the class sometimes I catch a security bus but sometimes I should wait for a long time for it, because the timing thing. At night nobody pass by and I don't feel very safe there.' - Postgraduate, China*
 - *'Especially all post grad classes, go to late nights, if we can think of some way if you want to stay after that on campus, you can't find so much places to go there, there is only 1 rectory to go. You can't find any security on campus at that time'. – Postgraduate, Iran*
 - *'I classes go to 9 a lot of times and I feel there should be slightly more coordination between the bus service – the uni express bus – and class timing, because sometimes we have to wait for, like, half an hour something.' – Postgraduate, India*

Students across all focus groups also had third person experiences to share with regard to personal safety issues. These included incidents of muggings, eggs being thrown from cars, safety on public transport and safety after dark on campus and in the community.

- **Third Person Experiences**

- *'My roommate got mugged twice near IGA, 2 girls say they want \$2 and when she says no, they reached in and took the purse. This was 9am, it was really public, with lots of people around.'* – Undergraduate, Pakistan
- *'I had a friend who had an egg thrown at her by local people, from a car. Maybe it was discrimination?'* – Undergraduate, China
- *'One of my friends had a laptop being robbed, he immediately called the help desk, the UniBeat, and the police rounded those people up. And the first thing the police asked these students – they were Pakistani students - was "did you happen to beat the other Australian fellow" because the people who attacked those guys were under 18 and it seems that under Australian law you are not supposed to put a scratch on those under 18 guys, and it's a big thing. It is very appalling - they even know who has perpetrated the crime, and the first thing they ask is did you happen to hit the guy, and you know when such things happen the first thing you do is shove them and defend yourself. The police seem to say when this happens you just put your thing down and walk away – that is ridiculous.'* – Postgraduate, India
- *'Especially trains, if you go around after 5 or 6 there is nobody on the trains, after peak hours. I have a friend who got hit by beer bottles on his head and he was in a coma for 1 month and his family couldn't contact him for a month. The trains there should be more security.'* – Postgraduate, Bangladesh
- *'To me they suggest is some Asian girls, they walk along on the street, there some robbery, some horrible. So I don't dare to go out even after 5 o'clock when it gets dark. [M: on campus?] Maybe just around campus. When I just come a month later, I received an email, they say that during the week there were 9 robberies take place around campus, so I feel that is very unsafe. Just students walking down the street. Even one of my friends has suffered that. So I feel very unsafe.'* – AusAid student, China
- *'Recently there are several incidents which are very disgusting and appalling, Australian local people, especially young people beat up international students, especially Indian students. I think as a group, the international students our safety is not guaranteed by the government. [Facilitator: Do you feel safe on campus?] On campus it is alright, but around campus like Barker Street, Meek Street and Borrodale Street, not so much. Maybe sometimes the local people they will chase you and beat you up for fun, I already heard several incidents'.* – Postgraduate, China
- *'I heard from my friend that the crime rate in Sydney is reasonably higher than other cities so it makes me worry for me, especially when I have to work alone in the night around campus, especially in Anzac Parade, I heard a lot of frightening stories like when students went home alone, and they broke the laptop and there is Robbers. Anzac Parade I think is the most dangerous area in the night [SB: What about other areas in Sydney, do you feel reasonably safe?] not really, because I read some stories and also heard from my friends it's not reasonably safe in Sydney, you know, compared to Melbourne for instance.'* – Postgraduate, Indonesia

Many students brought up the recent attacks on Indian students as cause for concern, fearing that they too may become targets of violence directed to their nationality.

- *In the media they say a lot about Indian students, so sometimes we are very worried as well. At that time Indian students, but Vietnamese students perhaps it might happen.* – AusAid student, Vietnam

3.6 Social Inclusion

International students had both positive and negative views on Social Inclusion at UNSW, and in the wider community. International students tended to create networks with those of the same nationality as themselves, and some found it difficult to move away from that comfort zone and engage local students. Positive experience included receiving help from local students, engaging in social activities and finding employment to breakdown the local/international wall. There was also an acknowledgement of international students needing to be proactive in their approach to social inclusion.

- **Positive Interactions**

- *'Taught me how to write resume for nothing. They are very kind.'* – Undergraduate, China
- *ISS is really good.'* – Undergraduate, Pakistan
- *'Best way is to not exclude yourself. It is very easy and comfortable to go back and hang out with someone from the same culture. The best and easiest way to [meet local friends] is to break away for awhile to get friends from the local, and learn the things they like to do. It's something new to yourself as well. If language is a problem, do an activity that doesn't need talking – like Sports!'* – Undergraduate, Singapore
- *'If you want to step into the society can do by part time job or volunteering, because I joined the*

running festival of Belmore 2008, I think it is a good way to let yourself get in with others, because you can chat with others, share your opinions, and they are interested in you because you are foreigner. Also you are interested in them because they can tell you lot of other things. So I think you can try a lot of things to make yourself included in society.’ – Postgraduate, India

- ‘I think that’s the only aspect I am satisfied as a post graduate student. Because for postgraduate, 80% of my batch is international students, so everybody is coming from different places. Even the teachers, you find a lot of international teachers. There have not been any problems [Facilitator: Have you been able to connect with local students as well?] Yes.’ – Postgraduate, India
- ‘Because I’m a PhD student here, when I came there is a GSA association, so the GSA student member, actually gave me quite a comfortable welcome. They introduced me to places and they took campus tours and also other activities, because I became a member of it, through that I was able to volunteer, for major events that GSA organised, and right now also an executive, after election, so through the student body it was very easy for me to penetrate, and integrate into the system. So social inclusion is not a major area of concern for me at UNSW.’ – Postgraduate, Pakistan
- ‘Yeah I think so, all friendly and ready to help; very helpful. I got two part time jobs, I think the companies I work for is very helpful too and the manager is supportive, it’s nice.’ – Postgraduate, China
- ‘I should add it is very interesting that my country is in conflict with other countries, but I have classmates here that they really help me, and it is really interesting to view that they see that my English is not very good, sometimes he comes and corrects my email. The student community is very good here. They help each other. I think for local students also, if you ask for help of course they will come to give you help for that.’ – Postgraduate, Iran

• Negative Interactions

- ‘As far as the university goes everything is fine but when we leave the university it’s not so good. I used to a lot of door to door knocking, many people have treated me badly, very badly for that thing. It’s just a skin colour or something, I’m not sure. Some people have used very abusive language towards me.’ – Postgraduate, India
- ‘Also experience for me as well. When I was speaking in Mandarin on the street, somebody came up to me and asked me “why are you speaking Mandarin, you are in Australia!” I was quite shocked to hear that, because I’m actually speaking to my friend, I’m not talking to the person’ – Postgraduate, Singapore
- ‘ABS is extremely bad, extremely rude. Never smiling. Treat us like we are stupid. (re. pub crawl) I don’t go to pub crawls because don’t drink’ – Undergraduate, Pakistan
- ‘Can’t communicate with them, the things they know, we don’t know. For example with music, they like Hip hop, or drinking.’ – Undergraduate, China
- ‘Just talk in the lecture and discuss assignments and that’s it. Don’t really have a social life like where I’m from. After lecture you go different ways, and you feel very left out. Because you are leaving your whole social circle somewhere else and then you come and want to get adjusted but there’s a lot of gap.’ – Postgraduate, Belgium
- ‘To be honest no. In my school especially I don’t know why they are look like selfish people, they are so introvert, if I want to meet him, I have to make appointment with him, email and if I come a bit earlier, they don’t open the door, something like that; it’s no good.’ – Postgraduate, Indonesia
- ‘It’s the same issues that he mentioned [as above], it is of course cultural issues different, I understand that completely, they are not concern for me. If you salute someone, if you say hello to someone you are expected an answer, but here, you experience you call someone and you don’t receive any answer, and I understand that it is different culture, it is the culture here maybe, but when I was in contact with staff here before coming to Australia, they didn’t give me enough information about their school and the environment here; the situation I will have. And when I came here I did not have enough support. They could be to say that “ok, you are here, I cannot support you in this way” but they are telling you - especially case for me absolutely – that I don’t extend for all staff of here, but it is like talking to a kid, not a person with 7 years of experience in the industry, I expected to have better welcoming.’ – Postgraduate, Iran

• Interaction Issues

- ‘International students don’t try to interact with local students, for instances when there are BBQ and Pub crawls, the international students don’t turn up! I think it’s a more of a matter of international students don’t want to hang out with local students [rather than the other way around]’. – Undergraduate, Malaysia
- ‘Difficult to get more communication with locals, can only talk with them in group work or seminars, after that can only stay with own friends, share culture. Want to make friends with local students.’ – Undergraduate, China
- ‘From what I have seen, the Chinese hang around with the Chinese, the Indians with Indians, Brazilians with Brazilians, I’m here for 2 months now, I got to know 2 Australians and 45 Brazilians!’ – Postgraduate, Brazil
- ‘Also undergrad and postgrad is different, undergrad you are on the same level with each other so you can just meet but postgrad they already have their life and friends, they don’t need you! They don’t want to be your friend, and they don’t expect you to be their friends, because they already have their friends.’ – Postgraduate, Belgium

- *'Especially students from your own country. But not local students. International from my school [of Biological Research] is very few, maybe is only 3 of us. Problem the problem is that we don't always meet each other everyday. It's like someone who doesn't know each other they say hello and that's it. There is no social gathering. More we can talk or something.'* – Postgraduate, Indonesia

3.7 International Student Support

While *International Student Support* ranked the lowest on the list of pressing issues, students indicated a need for support in the top tier areas such as housing, employment, permanent residency and safety concerns. UNSW International Student Services also received praised as playing a pivotal role in the support network for international students and their adjustment to social and academic life.

§ Praise for International Student Services

- *'It's like a place to meet some friends there, they running a tour or something during orientation week or n the other days. I think they have provided a lot of support for international students.'* – Postgraduate, Indonesia
- *'International student support as been very active and done very good on a few things, which I'm very grateful for. If you need help with enrolment or if you enquire about subjects or swap classes or swap subjects' - Postgraduate, Pakistan*
- *'They [AusAID] linked us up with ISS as well they were the ones who ran the orientation, they were very helpful. We made a lot of new friends and we continue to keep in touch with those friends.'* – Postgraduate, Philippines
- *'[Best experience] – Last semester ISS, I became part of ISS and it feels really nice. Australia can place go for different experience that you can never do back home.'* - Undergraduate, Pakistan
- *'[Best experience] – help of ISS. In first week of Sydney I went to the ISS everyday for every kind of problem, and they helped me solve these problems step by step.'* - Postgraduate, India

Other areas discussed included improvement in support offered or additional support required:

§ Priorities

- *'And they [ISS] are also very active for those tours and sightseeing. But I think those tours and sightseeing are a little less on our priority – I can only speak for myself, not for others – and therefore, things which are more important if they could have review and arrange something on that side, that would be really appreciated.'* - Postgraduate, Pakistan

§ Mentor System

- *'For myself I was quite disappointed with the peer buddy. It was organised by International Student Support, because they asked us to send in this form, so we can as for buddy, but I sent it once before I came to Australia, but no one replied me, and I thought "ok, maybe I should send again when I touch down in Australia" so I sent again, but again, there was no response'.* - Postgraduate, Singapore

§ Centralised Help

- *'Need centralised student support. Have contacts, student central, ISS, etc. I had a problem last week and I had to go to 3 separate faculties to talk about it, they kept referring me to someone else. Need a [dedicated] advisor.'* – Undergraduate, Pakistan

§ Financial/Financial Management

- *'Back to financial worries – looking at different ways to get money, if someone will give you a sponsorship. Unless you are the top student, there is no international student support to get financial support.'* – Undergraduate, Singapore
- *'How to buy 2nd hand book etc. need to go to diff place, look at info on board - it takes lots of time. In my hometown, they used a "bbsm" website, where you can exchange info, and connect, it's very convenient. Need to go diff place to find info. Uni need to set up website, where students can pass info on board, to sell something, and get info. So there is no need to go different places.'* - Undergraduate, India
- *'Living standard is very high here, I think everybody has the same worry, when they want to buy something they often change in their own currency and they say "it's expensive" so we have to balance what we can spend money on. I think we are advised we have \$5000 so I think some might use the whole amount. I think it is good the distributed fortnightly. If monthly might spend the majority at the beginning of the month. I can manage but many friends of mine cannot, they don't have financial management skills. I have many friends at the end of the month they approach me to borrow the money*

4. International Student Survey

Surveys were collected from current international students through two streams:

- Direct email invite to online survey
- Peer to peer interviews on Kensington and COFA campuses

The data collected has been divided into eight categories:

- Total Students Survey
- Top Six Countries by Participation
- China
- Malaysia
- Indonesia
- Singapore
- India
- USA

4.1 Total Students Surveyed

2,480 total international students engaged

2,201 online surveys + **279** peer to peer interviews

53% Male (1,300)

47% Female (1,154)

2,454 responses to the question

53% Undergraduate (1,304)

47% Postgraduate (1,165)

2,469 responses to the question

International student age breakdown:

- 36% 19-21yrs (885)
- 33% 22-24yrs (823)
- 14% 25-27yrs (342)
- 8% 31yrs + (208)
- 5% 28-30yrs (131)
- 3% 16-18yrs (79)

2,466 responses to the question

Surveyed International students indicated the following areas they would like to have known more about prior to arriving in Australia (students were invited to select more than one option).

- 65% Accommodation and living arrangements (1,300)
- 62% Public transport information in Sydney (1,232)
- 54% Student life at UNSW (1,085)
- 47% What suburbs to live in Sydney (938)

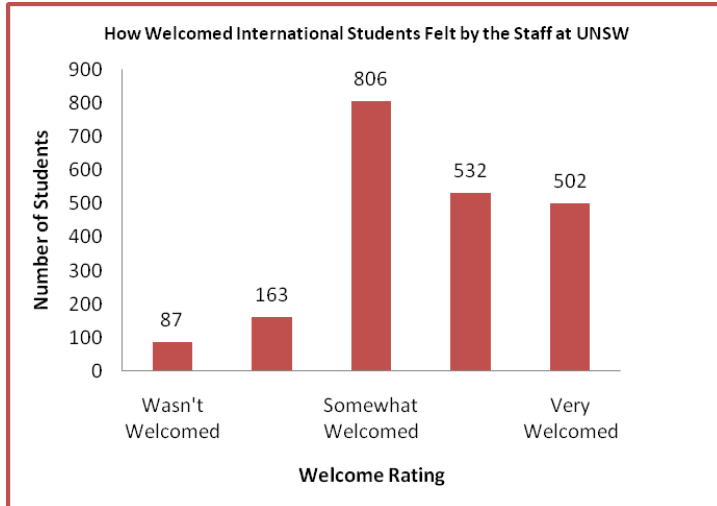
- 47% Personal Safety Issues or Concerns (935)
- 47% General Life in Australia (935)
- 35% International Student Services Department at UNSW (708)

2,001 responses to the question

On a rating scale, 39% of surveyed International students (809) felt '*Somewhat Welcomed*' by the staff community at UNSW. 25% (532) indicated they felt somewhere between '*Somewhat Welcomed*' and '*Very Welcomed*' and 24% (502) indicated they felt '*Very Welcomed*'. Refer to Table A on page 18.

2,090 responses to the question

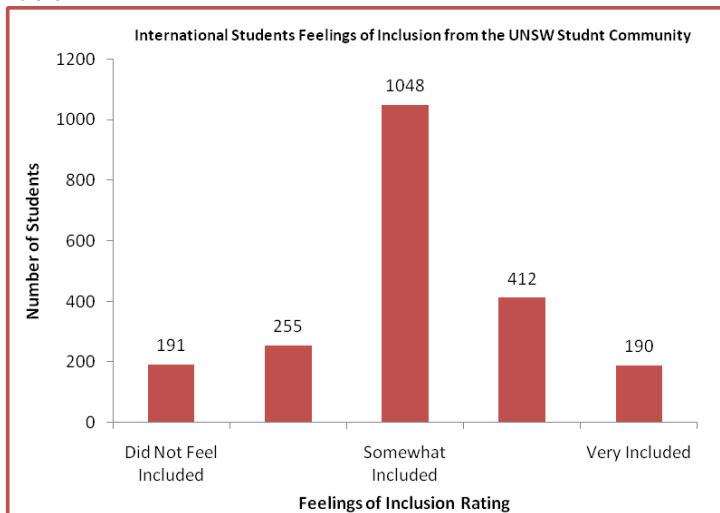
Table A



On a rating scale, 50% of surveyed International students (1,048) felt '*Somewhat Included*' by the student community at UNSW. This was followed by 20% (412) who rated their feelings of inclusion one above '*Somewhat Included*' and one below '*Very Included*' and 12% (255) who rated their feelings of inclusion one above '*Did Not Feel Included*' and one below '*Somewhat Included*'. Refer to Table B below.

2,096 responses to the question

Table B



65% of surveyed International students have felt the need for further academic or social support during their studies (1,259). The anticipated support areas included: (Students were invited to select more than one option)

- Approximately 49% for Career and Employment Support
- Approximately 38% for Language and Communication Support
- Approximately 35% for Accommodation and Housing
- Approximately 33% for Financial Support

1,951 responses to the question

Surveyed International students have encountered the following issue or problems since arriving in Australia. (Students we invited to select more than one option)

- 41% Language and Communication (784)
- 39% Financial issues (cost of living, etc) (747)
- 39% Academic Failure (744)
- 38% Academic/Course Related (725)
- 37% Stress and worry (721)
- 37% Accommodation (718)

1,926 responses to the question

18% of surveyed International students have felt unsafe on campus (345).

1,959 responses to the question

58% of surveyed International students have felt unsafe within wider Sydney (1,040).

1,779 responses to the question

47% of surveyed International students had concerns about adjusting to Australia prior to arrival (924).

1,957 responses to the question

89% of surveyed International students believed '*Learning to communicate and work with people of diverse backgrounds*' is important to an international education experience. (1,723)

1,941 responses to the question

87% of surveyed International students believe they are receiving an international education at UNSW (1,714)

1,965 responses to the question

82% of survey International students indicated the best way they have settled into social and academic life is *by making friends with other international students* (1,593). 54% indicated *making friends with local students* as the best way they have settled into Sydney social and academic life (1,045) and 53% *making friends outside of UNSW* (1,024).

1,943 responses to the question

4.2 Top Six Countries by Participation

CHINA	962 students	39%
MALAYSIA	205 students	8.2%
INDONESIA	132 students	5.3%
SINGAPORE	127 students	5.1%
INDIA	104 students	4.2%
USA	95 students	3.8%

The top six countries of origin by participation indicated they would like to have known more about the following areas prior to arrival in Australia:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Public transport in Sydney | 6/6 (All top six countries of origin by participation) |
| • Accommodation and Housing | 5/6 (Malaysia/Indonesia/Singapore/India/USA) |
| • Student life at UNSW | 3/6 (China/Indonesia/USA) |
| • Which suburbs to live in Sydney | 2/6 (Malaysia/India) |
| • Safety issues and concerns | 2/6 (China/Singapore) |

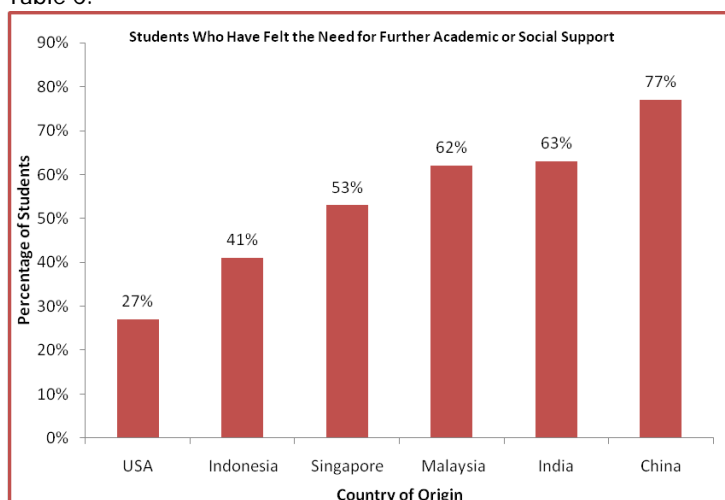
Surveyed Indian students were the only country from the top six countries of origin by participation to indicate they felt *'Very Welcomed'* by the staff community at UNSW. The majority of surveyed Indian students were from the Faculty of Engineering (49%), the Faculty of Science and the Australian School of Business (both 14%).

All top six countries of origin by participation indicated they felt *'Somewhat Included'* by the UNSW student community. Below are percentages of the top six countries of origin by participation who indicated they felt *'Very Included'* by the UNSW student community:

- | | | |
|-------------|-----|---------------|
| • India | 18% | (17 students) |
| • Malaysia | 8% | (15 students) |
| • China | 7% | (55 students) |
| • USA | 6% | (5 students) |
| • Indonesia | 4% | (5 students) |
| • Singapore | 4% | (5 students) |

Only 27% of surveyed students from the USA indicated they have felt the need for further academic or social support during their studies at UNSW compared to 77% of surveyed Chinese students. Table C ranks the top six countries of origin by participation from lowest to highest in need of further academic support.

Table C.



The top three areas for additional support include:

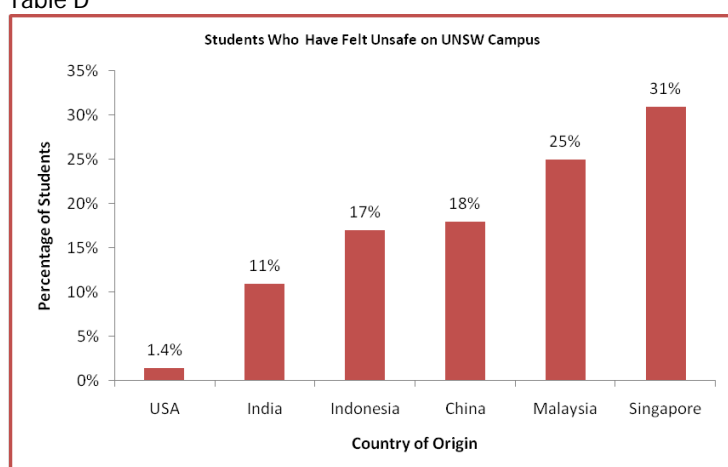
• Career and Employment	6/6 (All top six countries of origin by participation)
• Accommodation and Housing	6/6 (All top six countries of origin by participation)
• Financial Issues	4/6 (USA/Malaysia/Indonesia/Singapore)
• Language and Communication	2/6 (China/India)

The main problems encountered by the top six countries of origin by participation since their arrival has been:

• Fear of academic failure	4/6 (China/Malaysia/Indonesia/Singapore)
• Academic/course related	4/6 (China/Indonesia/Singapore/India)
• Financial issues	4/6 (Malaysia/Singapore/India/USA)
• Stress and worry	3/6 (Malaysia/Indonesia/USA)
• Culture shock/settling in	1/6 (USA)
• Accommodation and housing	1/6 (India)
• Language and communication	1/6 (China)

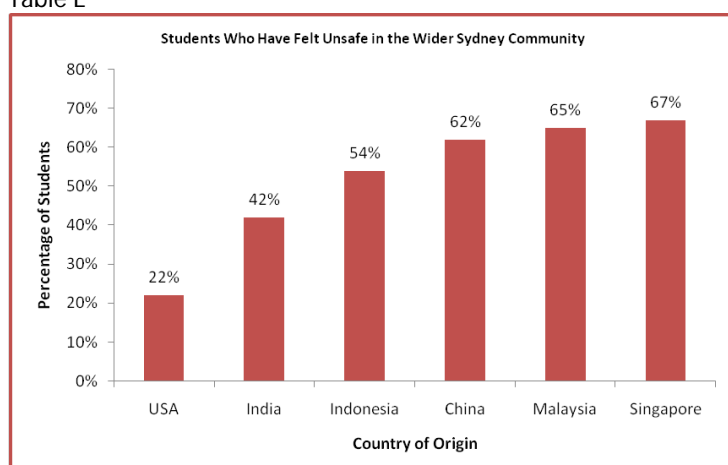
From the top six countries of origin by participation, 1.4% of surveyed students from the USA have felt unsafe on campus at UNSW, followed by 11% of surveyed Indian students, 17% of surveyed Indonesian students, 18% of surveyed Chinese students 25% of surveyed Malaysian students and 31% of surveyed Singaporean students. Refer to Table D (see below)

Table D



From the top six countries of origin by participation, 22% of survey students from the USA have felt unsafe in the wider Sydney community (off campus), 42% of surveyed Indian students, 54% of surveyed Indonesian students, 62% of surveyed Chinese students, 65% of surveyed Malaysian students and 67% of surveyed Singaporean students. Refer to Table E (see below)

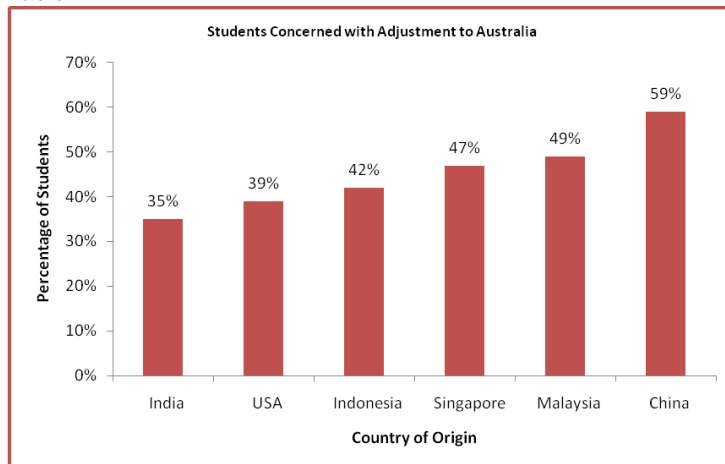
Table E



Note: The ascending order of country of origin for both safety questions remains the same on and off campus

59% of surveyed Chinese students had concerns adjusting to Australia prior to arrival compared with 35% of surveyed Indian students. Refer to Table F (see page 22)

Table F

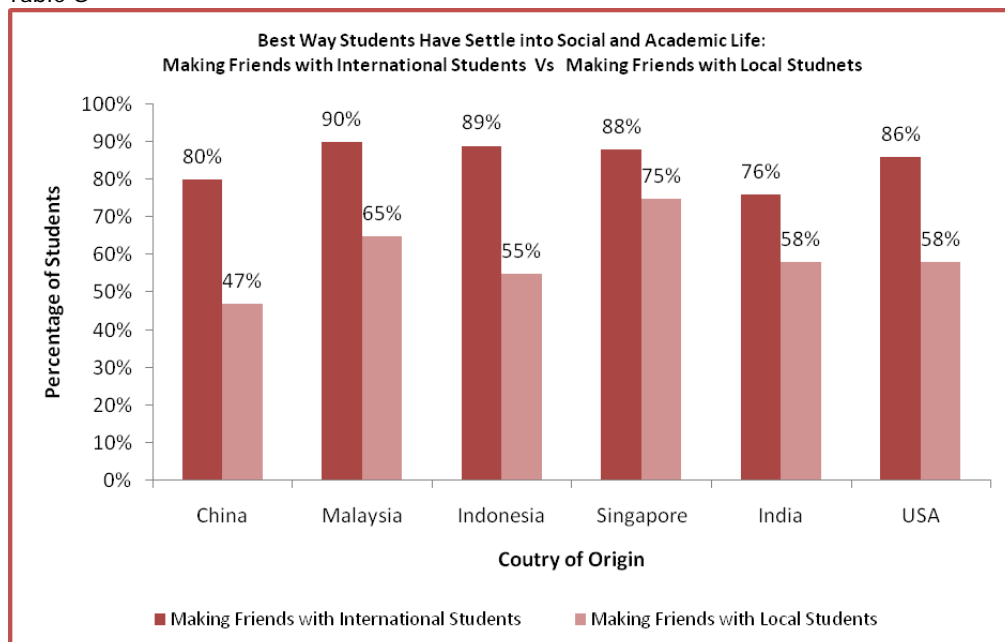


The top six countries of origin by participation all selected '*Learning to communicate and work effectively with people of diverse backgrounds*' as important to an international education except for surveyed students from the USA who selected '*Gaining an understanding of issues of common concern including the global economy, environmental changes, sustainable futures, social harmony and justice*'.

All top six countries of origin by participation believe they are receiving an international education at UNSW. The highest being surveyed students from the USA at 94% and lowest being surveyed Singaporean students at 80%.

All top six countries of origin by participation indicated that the best way they have helped themselves settle into Sydney and student life has been making friends with other international students. Refer to Table G (see below)

Table G



4.3 China

962 Chinese students surveyed
39% of total surveyed

49% Male (468)
51% Female (493)

952 responses to the question

50% Undergraduate (483)
50% Postgraduate (485)

968 responses to the question

Breakdown of ages:

- 45% 22-24yrs (440)
- 39% 19-21yrs (374)
- 11% 25-27yrs (108)
- 2% 16-18yrs (21)
- 1.75% 28-30yrs (17)
- 0.9% 31yrs + (9)

969 responses to the question

Surveyed Chinese students indicated the following areas they would liked to have known more about prior to arriving in Australia (students were invited to select more than one option).

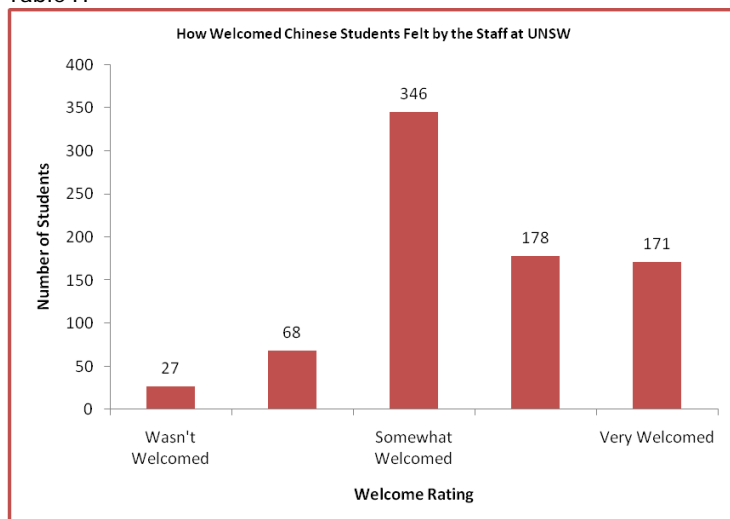
- 64% Student life at UNSW (491)
- 64% Public transport in Sydney (491)
- 61% Personal safety issues or concerns (475)
- 61% Accommodation and living arrangements (468)
- 55% General life in Australia (426)

773 responses to the question

One a rating scale, 44% of surveyed Chinese students (346) felt '*Somewhat Welcomed*' by the staff community at UNSW. This was followed by 23% (178) who felt somewhere between '*Somewhat Welcomed*' and '*Very Welcomed*'. Refer to Table H (see below)

790 responses to the question

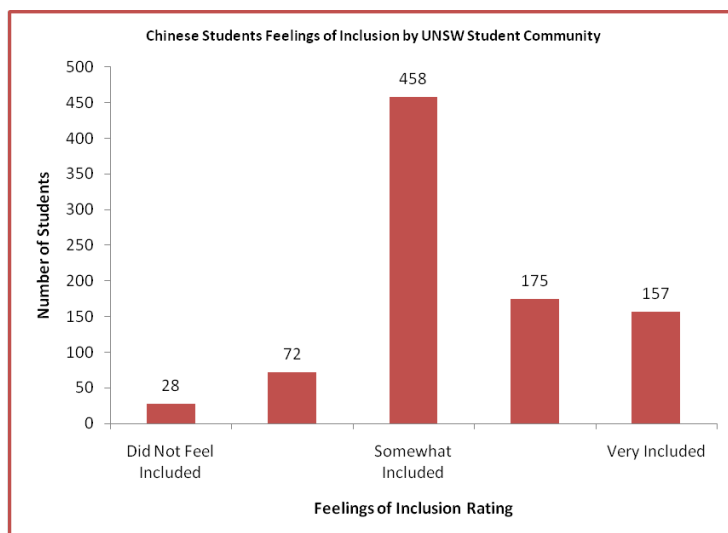
Table H



One a rating scale, 58% of surveyed Chinese students (458) felt '*Somewhat Included*' by the student community at UNSW. This was followed by 16% (127) of surveyed Chinese students who rated their feelings of inclusion one above '*Somewhat Included*' and one below '*Very Included*'. Refer to Table I on page 24.

792 responses to the question

Table I



77% of surveyed Chinese students have felt the need for further academic or social support during their studies (553). The anticipated support areas included: (*Note: students were invited to select more than one option*)

- Approximately 61% for Career and Employment Support
- Approximately 50% language and Communication Support
- Approximately 34% for Accommodation and Housing

714 responses to the question

Surveyed Chinese students have encountered the following issue or problems since arriving in Australia. (Students we invited to select more than one option)

- 64% Language and communication (457)
- 43% Academic/Course related (306)
- 39% Fear of academic failure (279)

719 responses to the question

18% of surveyed Chinese students have felt unsafe on campus (131).

730 responses to the question

Comments

- *one of my friends got robbed on campus*
- *Walking at night feels unsafe*
- *I feel intimidate by other student when speaking Chinese language*
- *people hanging around my bus stop at night*
- *lack of lights at night*

62% of surveyed Chinese students have felt unsafe within wider Sydney (454).

728 responses to the question

Comments

- *drunkards at night*
- *Robbing in the street & outside or near the campus are always reported*
- *I got robbed, in Day Ave, opposite UNSW*
- *No street lights in lot of places with not many people on the streets.*
- *I feel scared walking alone in the street at night*
- *I have night classes. Starting at 9pm. It's very late and Sydney is too empty in the streets. It's very different to my home country where the streets were crowded, noisy and full of people at 9pm.*
- *I feel unsafe at night when I'm walking outside the campus by myself. There are drunk people around and no lighting.*

59% of surveyed Chinese students had concerns about adjusting to Australia prior to arrival (426)

718 responses to the question

88% of surveyed Chinese students believed 'Learning to communicate and work with people of diverse backgrounds' is important to an international education experience

717 responses to the question

89% of surveyed Chinese students believe they are receiving an international education at UNSW (646)

725 responses to the question

80% of surveyed Chinese students indicated that the best way they have settled into social and academic life is by making friends with other international students (576), followed by 48% making friends outside of UNSW (342), and 47% making friends with local students (335).

720 responses to the question

When asked if there was anything else they wish they knew prior to arrival to help them settle in, surveyed Chinese students indicated the following:

COMMENTS

- *I would love to go back home as soon as possible , Sydney is an unsafe place*
- *The housing website is very useful. However, I wish UNSW could provide more on-campus apartments with international students, because finding a secure place to live is really a great concern for us.*
- *I think the biggest issue of mine is the language. I guess I've learned more of English before starting to Sydney. But when I arrived, I found it's not enough and at present I have little chance to improve it. Sometimes I feel depressed. I think I'll try harder to overcome the problem. Hope I can get some help from my uni.*
- *I would like to make some friends with local students and western students because so far my friends are generally from Asian. So I would like to know how to get along and make friends with people from outside Asia.*

4.4 Malaysia

205 Malaysian students surveyed
8.2% of total surveyed

49% Male (100)
51% Female (104)

204 responses to the question

72% Undergraduate (148)
 28% Postgraduate (57)
205 responses to the question

Breakdown of Ages:

- 36% 19-21yrs (100)
- 30% 22-24yrs (60)
- 13% 31yrs + (26)
- 5% 25-27yrs (10)
- 3% 28-30yrs (6)
- 0.5% 16-18yrs (1)

203 responses to the question

Surveyed Malaysian students indicated the following areas they would like to have known more about prior to arriving in Australia (students were invited to select more than one option).

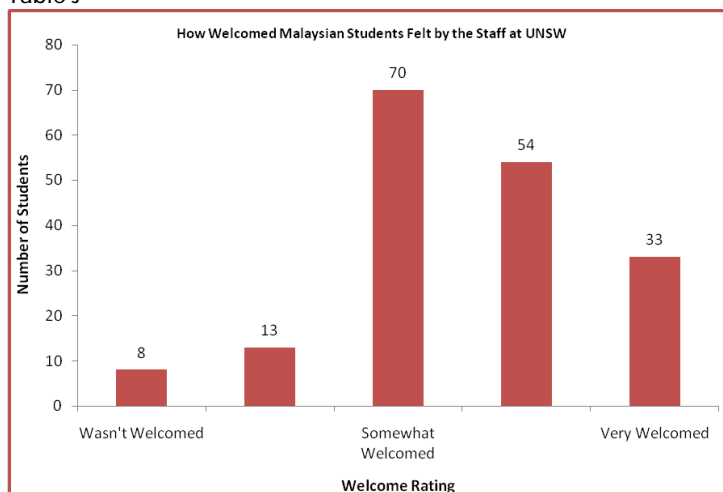
- 77% Accommodation and living arrangements (134)
- 75% Public transport in Sydney (130)
- 58% What suburb to live in Sydney (101)
- 58% Student life at UNSW (100)

173 responses to the question

On a rating scale, 39 % of surveyed Malaysian students (70) felt '*Somewhat Welcomed*' by the staff community at UNSW. This was followed by 30% who felt between '*Somewhat Welcomed*' and '*Very Welcomed*' by the staff community (54). Refer to Table J below.

178 responses to the question

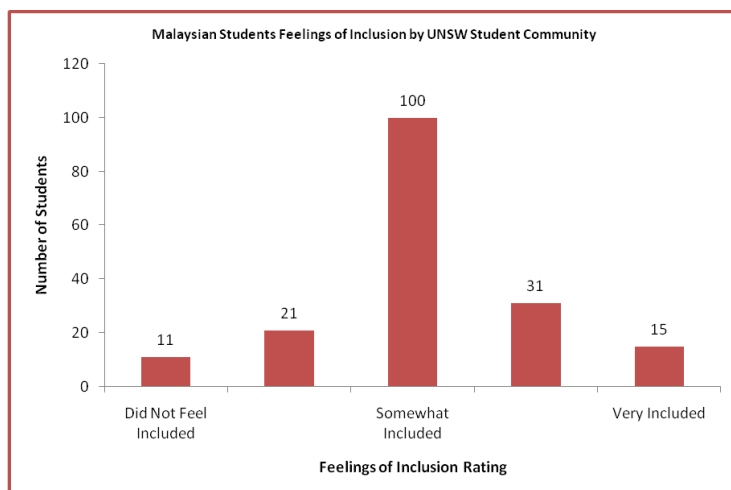
Table J



On a rating scale, 56% of surveyed Malaysian students (100) felt '*Somewhat Included*' by the student community at UNSW. This was followed by 17% (31) who rated their feelings of inclusion one above '*Somewhat Included*' and one below '*Very Included*'. Refer to Table K (see page 27)

178 responses to the question

Table K



62% of surveyed Malaysian students (110) have felt the need for further academic or social support during their studies. The anticipated support areas included: (Students were invited to select more than one option)

- Approximately 40% for Career and Employment Support
- Approximately 42% for Accommodation and Housing
- Approximately 33% for Financial Support

168 responses to the question

Surveyed Malaysian students have encountered the following issue or problems since arriving in Australia. (Students were invited to select more than one option)

- 49% Fear of academic failure (82)
- 48% Financial (cost of living etc) (81)
- 42% Stress and worry (70)

168 responses to the question

25% of surveyed Malaysian students have felt unsafe on campus (43).

170 responses to the question

COMMENTS

- *Walking during the night*
- *At night it is too dark within the campus compound*

65% of surveyed Malaysian students have felt unsafe within wider Sydney (111).

171 responses to the question

COMMENTS

- *walking alone at night near COFA campus and there was no campus security.*
- *just not enough police around*
- *Usually in the city at night. City life does not appear as safe as from where I am from & differences in society*
- *Everyone is drunk in the city at night - and that makes me feel scared sometimes*
- *I feel unsafe in the city, where there are alcoholic areas - full of drunk people*

49% of surveyed Malaysian students had concerns about adjusting to Australia prior to arrival (81)

167 responses to the question

90% of surveyed Malaysian students (150) believe 'Learning to communicate and work effectively with people of diverse background' is important to an international education experience

167 responses to the question

86% of surveyed Malaysian students believe they are receiving an international education at UNSW (144)

168 responses to the question

90% of surveyed Malaysian students indicated that the best way they have settled into social and academic life is by making friends with other international students (150), followed by 65% making friends with local students (109).

168 responses to the question

When asked if there was anything else they wish they knew prior to arrival to help them settle in, surveyed Malaysian students indicated the following:

COMMENTS

- *I would have like to have been told that I would not be guaranteed an internship position after 6 years and \$200,000.*
- *About Local Perception and Acceptance for Muslim Community in NSW and Australia generally*
- *More help in finding accommodation suitable for students. More information about how to go about Sydney and the surrounding suburbs especially about bus tickets.*
- *Accurate and reliable information related to courses that are to be undertaken.*
- *Difficulty in getting accommodation (extreme) 2. No concessions for foreigners 3. Cost of school fees for kids 4. General cost of living*
- *I wish that UNSW would provide beneficial and free English courses for International postgraduate students especially ESL students. As compared to other excellent institutions such as University of Melbourne and University of Queensland, students experience big improvement in their communication skills because the universities provide free English courses to all postgraduate students. Actually, this is what I really hoped for when I first arrived in UNSW - gain experience studying in UNSW as well as enhancing my communication in English. But, dream is only a dream. We can't afford to pay for English class here.*
- *I would prefer to understand more about the cost of living in Sydney compared to other states. I only realise about that when I arrived there. The rent and public transport cost are a big burden to all the international students. We have no concession for public transport. Furthermore we need to compete with local people and other students to get a unit or room.*
- *Future career employment and pathways to gain residency including the features of a temporary resident visa.*
- *Wished the University was a more active advocate for international students' welfare.*

4.5 Indonesia

132 Indonesian students surveyed
5.3% of total students surveyed

44% Male (58)
56% Female (74)

132 Responses to the question

61% Undergraduate (80)
 39% Postgraduate (51)
131 Responses to the question

Breakdown of ages

- 36% 19-21yrs (48)
- 24% 22-24yrs (31)
- 18% 16-18yrs (24)
- 10% 25-27yrs (13)
- 8% 31yrs + (11)
- 4% 28-30yrs (5)

132 Responses to the question

Surveyed Indonesian students indicated the following areas they would liked to have known more about prior to arriving in Australia (students were invited to select more than one option).

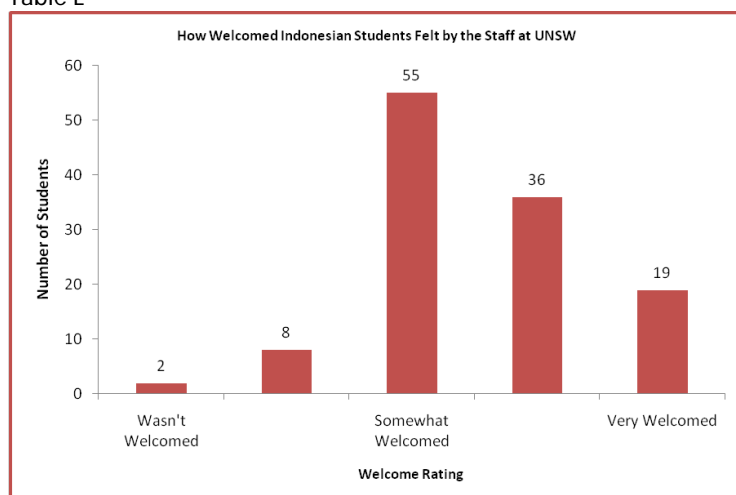
- 71% Accommodation and living arrangements (82)
- 66% Public transport in Sydney (76)
- 55% Student life at UNSW (64)

116 responses to the question

One a rating scale, 46% of surveyed Indonesian students (55) felt *'Somewhat Welcomed'* by the staff community at UNSW. This was followed by 22% who felt between *'Somewhat Welcomed'* and *'Very Welcomed'* by the staff community (26). Refer to Table L (see below)

120 responses to the question

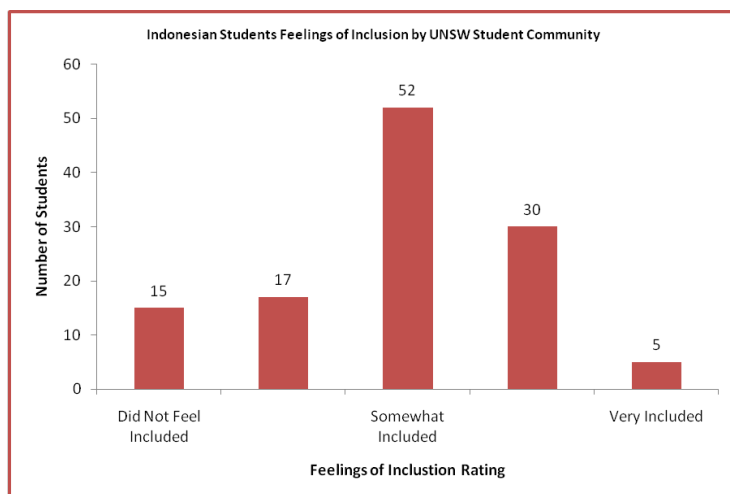
Table L



One a rating scale, 44% of surveyed Indonesian students (52) felt *'Somewhat Included'* by the student community at UNSW. This was followed by 25% (30) who rated their feelings of inclusion one above *'Somewhat Included'* and one below *'Very Included'*. Refer to Table M (see page 30)

119 responses to the question

Table M



66% of surveyed Indonesian students (75) have felt the need for further academic or social support during their studies. The anticipated support areas included: (Students were invited to select more than one option)

- Approximately 41% for Career and Employment Support
- Approximately 26% for Financial Support
- Approximately 22% for Accommodation and Housing

114 responses to the question

Surveyed Indonesian students have encountered the following issue or problems since arriving in Australia. (Students we invited to select more than one option)

- 74% Fear of academic failure (55)
- 43% Stress and worry (50)
- 42% Academic/course related (49)
- 41% Financial (cost of living etc) (48)
- 38% Interacting with Australians (43)
- 38% Language and communication (43)
- 35% Social challenges/making friends/socialising (41)

117 responses to the question

17% of surveyed Indonesian students have felt unsafe on campus (20).

119 responses to the question

COMMENTS

- *Aussies are weird when drunk and there is a bar right inside the uni.*
- *There is no ID check for people entering UNSW. Anyone can enter the premises from outside.*
- *I feel bullied by locals some times.*

54% of surveyed Indonesians students have felt unsafe within wider Sydney (64).

119 responses to the question

42% of surveyed Indonesian students had concerns about adjusting to Australia prior to arrival (49)

118 responses to the question

93% of surveyed Indonesian students (107) believe 'Learning to communicate and work effectively with people of diverse background' is important to an international education experience

115 responses to the question

89% of surveyed Indonesian students believe they are receiving an international education at UNSW (104)

117 responses to the question

89% of surveyed Indonesian students indicated that the best way they have settled into social and academic life is by making friends with other international students (105), followed by 60% making friends outside of UNSW (71), and 55% making friends with local students (65).

118 responses to the question

When asked if there was anything else they wish they knew prior to arrival to help them settle in, surveyed Indonesian students indicated the following:

COMMENTS

- *there is no travel concession for international students.*
- *help with accommodation*
- *Academically, should have a workshop to explain grading and education system.*
- *be more aware of safety issues and expenses.*
- *More about orientation week.*
- *all has been fantastic.*

4.6 Singapore

127 Singaporean students surveyed
5.1% of total surveyed

58% Male (73)

42% Female (52)
125 responses to the question

84% Undergraduate (107)
 16% Postgraduate (20)
127 responses to the question

Breakdown of Ages:

- 40% 22-24yrs (51)
- 33% 19-21yrs (42)
- 2% 25-27yrs (22)
- 5% 31yrs + (6)
- 3% 16-18yrs (4)
- 2% 28-30yrs (2)

125 responses to the question

Surveyed Singaporean students indicated the following areas they would like to have known more about prior to arriving in Australia (students were invited to select more than one option).

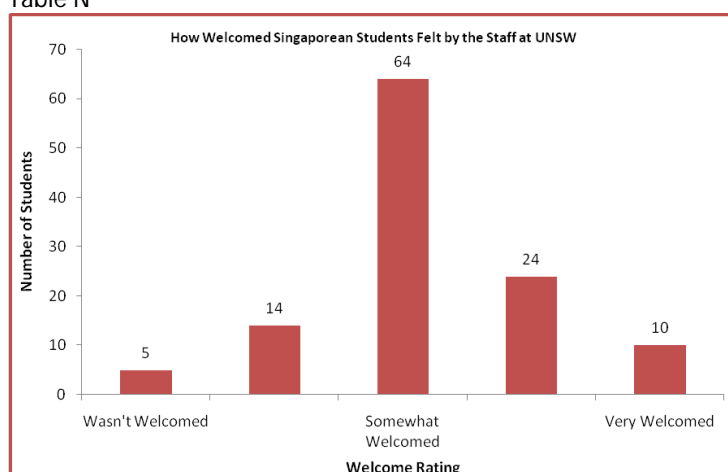
- 75% Accommodation and living arrangements (85)
- 62% Public transport in Sydney (71)
- 59% Safety issues or concerns (67)
- 54% Student life at UNSW (62)

114 responses to the question

On a rating scale, 55% of surveyed Singaporean students (64) felt *'Somewhat Welcomed'* by the staff community at UNSW. This was followed by 21% who felt between *'Somewhat Welcomed'* and *'Very Welcomed'* by the staff community (24). Refer to Table N (see below)

117 responses to the question

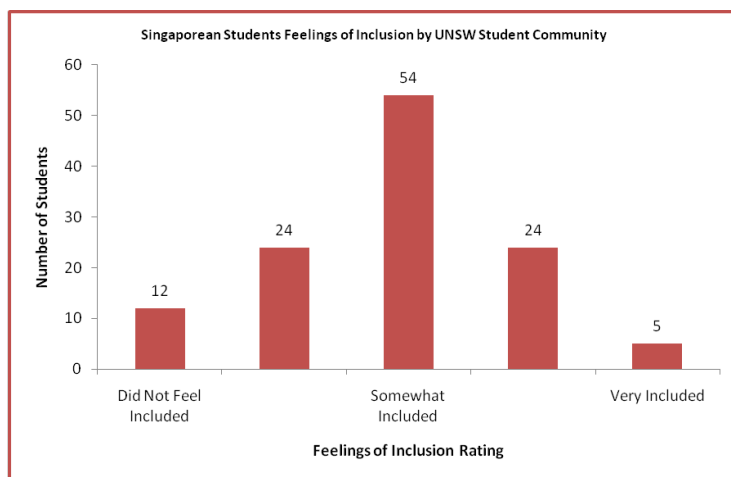
Table N



On a rating scale, 45% of surveyed Singaporean students (54) felt *'Somewhat Included'* by the student community at UNSW. This was followed by 20% (24) of surveyed Singaporean students who rated their feelings of inclusion between *'Did Not Feel Included'* and *'Somewhat Included'* and 20% (24) who rated their feelings of inclusion one above *'Somewhat Included'* and one below *'Very Included'*. Refer to Table O (see page 33)

119 responses to the question

Table O



53% of surveyed Singaporean students (60) have felt the need for further academic or social support during their studies. The anticipated support areas included: (Students were invited to select more than one option)

- Approximately 31% for Accommodation and Housing
- Approximately 28% for Career and Employment Support
- Approximately 25% for Financial Support

114 responses to the question

Surveyed Singaporean students have encountered the following issue or problems since arriving in Australia. (Students we invited to select more than one option)

- 45% Financial (cost of living etc) (50)
- 45% Fear of academic failure (50)
- 42% Academic/Course related (48)
- 41% Stress and worry (46)

112 responses to the question

31% of surveyed Singaporean students have felt unsafe on campus (37).

118 responses to the question

COMMENTS

- *the low lighting around the campus*
- *I was mugged ON campus! Along the university walkway at 8pm on a Saturday*
- *Walking alone at night*

67% of surveyed Singaporean students have felt unsafe within wider Sydney (77).

117 responses to the question

COMMENTS

- *generally everywhere especially at night*
- *I started feeling unsafe in general after I got mugged.*
- *Being mugged at night*

47% of surveyed Singaporean students had concerns about adjusting to Australia prior to arrival (54)

116 responses to the question

90% of surveyed Singaporean students (104) believe '*Learning to communicate and work effectively with people of diverse background*' is important to an international education experience.

116 responses to the question

80% of surveyed Singaporean students believe they are receiving an international education at UNSW (93)

116 responses to the question

88% of surveyed Singapore students indicated that the best way they have settled into social and academic life is by making friends with other international students (104), followed by 75% making friends with local students (89), 53% making friends outside of UNSW (63) and 52% having contact with family members or friends from their home country (not UNSW students) (61).

118 responses to the question

When asked if there was anything else they wish they knew prior to arrival to help them settle in, surveyed Singaporean students indicated the following:

COMMENTS

- *I think NSW should treat international students as local students. It does not make sense to me that international students who are paying much higher school fees than local students but are not able to enjoy the benefits of being a student as international students do not have travel concessions.*
- *A bit more description about how people lived and communicate in Sydney as well as knowing the amount of responsibility that was required in self study which is very much the focus.*
- *Perhaps knowing more about the sports associations or other clubs and societies would have helped. However, most of these require an administrative fee, which is quite a turn off for me. Also, most of the activities end when it is dark and it's kind of dangerous going home at that time*
- *They should check on us a week later on arrival to see if there is any help that we need*
- *Other international students from your home country may be more familiar and welcoming to you, but if you only spend time with them then eventually you will prevent yourself from ever properly interacting and mixing with local Sydney culture and people.*
- *I wish I was told or warned about the dangers in the city as I was pickpocket in the city, as I did not expect the city to be as unsafe as it was.*
- *Most international students do not interact with local Australians, and the reason for this is not language. Instead, most of us hang out with students of the same cultural background, likewise the local students mostly socialise among themselves. It would be ideal if UNSW could help improve the social interaction between local students and international students, without the international students having to assimilate into Australian culture completely or share the same interests as the locals (e.g. social activities involving local students always seem to involve some degree of alcohol drinking, but many international students do not drink at all).*
- *the institutionalised discrimination against international students obtaining their degree from Australian medical schools (Medicare provider no. 10 year moratorium, down the bottom of the priority list for internship allocations, etc).*

4.7 India

104 Indian students surveyed
4.2% of total students surveyed

64% Male (66)

36% Female (37)
103 responses to the question

30% Undergraduate (31)
70% Postgraduate (73)
104 responses to the question

Breakdown of ages

- 38% 22-24yrs (39)
- 24% 19-21yrs (25)
- 13% 31yrs + (14)
- 12% 25-27yrs (13)
- 8% 16-18yrs (8)
- 5% 28-30yrs (5)

104 responses to the question

Surveyed Indian students indicated the following areas they would like to have known more about prior to arriving in Australia (students were invited to select more than one option).

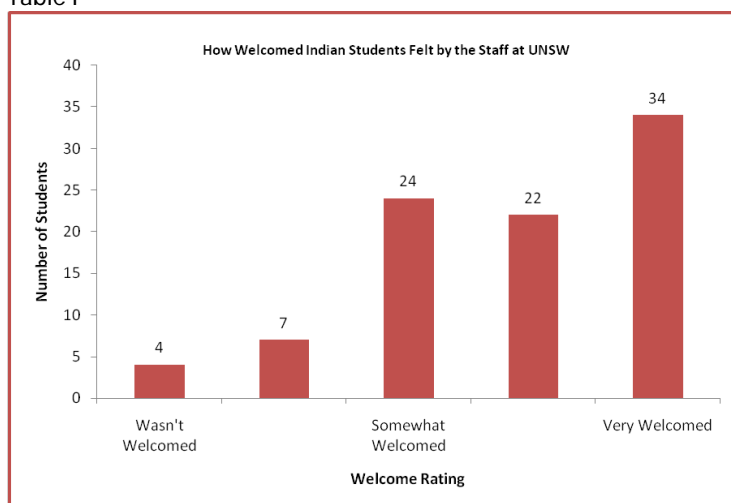
- 63% Accommodation and living arrangements (57)
- 51% What suburbs to live in Sydney (46)
- 47% Public transport information in Sydney (43)
- 42% Student life at UNSW (38)

91 responses to the question

On a rating scale, 37% of surveyed Indian students (34) felt *'Very Welcomed'* by the staff community at UNSW. This was followed by 29% (26) who felt *'Somewhat Welcomed'* and 24% (22) who indicated they felt somewhere between *'Somewhat Welcomed'* and *'Very Welcomed'*. Refer to Table P (see below)

91 responses to the question

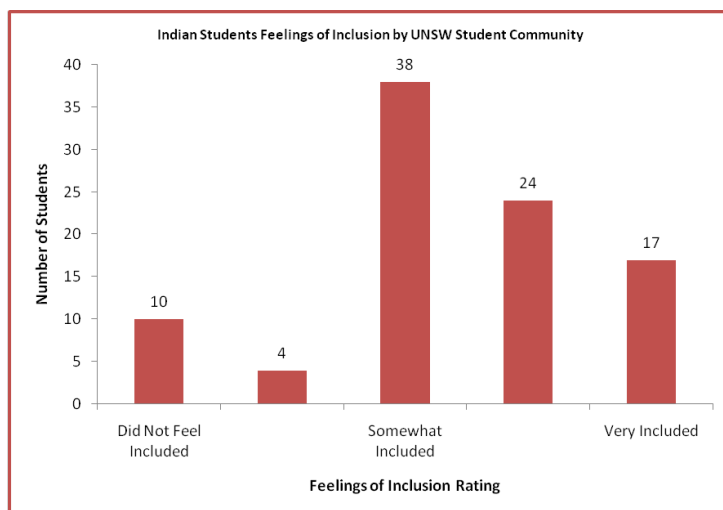
Table P



On a rating scale, 44% of surveyed Indian students (41) felt *'Somewhat Included'* by the student community at UNSW. This followed by 26% (24) who rated their feelings of inclusion one above *'Somewhat Included'* and one below *'Very Included'*. Refer to Table Q (see page 36)

93 responses to the question

Table Q



63% of surveyed Indian students have felt the need for further academic or social support during their studies (57). The anticipated support areas included: (Students were invited to select more than one option)

- Approximately 39% for Accommodation and Housing
- Approximately 39% for Financial Support
- Approximately 39% for Career and Employment Support
- Approximately 21% for On Campus Safety Issues

90 responses to the question

Surveyed Indian students have encountered the following issue or problems since arriving in Australia. (Students we invited to select more than one option)

- 48% Financial issues (cost of living, etc) (41)
- 40% Accommodation (34)
- 26% Academic/Course Related (22)
- 25% Stress and Worry (21)

85 responses to the question

11% of surveyed Indian students have felt unsafe on campus (10).

90 responses to the question

Comments

- *'COFA has no Unibeat services after 7. Even after repeated requests, there has been no arrangement. Being post grads we have classes till late and sometimes stay overnight to work, there are no facilities like at the main campus for escorts.'*

42% of surveyed Indian students have felt unsafe within wider Sydney (37).

89 responses to the question

Comments

- *'Concerned about the reports of thefts and mugging incidents at night.'*
- *'The suburbs are mostly scantily populated and are hardly accessible via public transport at ease. also, late night crowds have a tendency to get rowdy and rough'*
- *'Heard racist comments at the train station'*

35% had concerns about adjusting to Australia prior to arrival (32)

91 responses to the question

88% of surveyed Indian students believed *'Learning to communicate and work with people of diverse backgrounds'* is important to an international education experience.

88 responses to the question

86% of surveyed Indian students believe they are receiving an international education at UNSW (77)

90 responses to the question

76% of survey Indian students indicated the best way they have settled into social and academic life is by making friends with other international students (67). Opposed to 58% indicating making friends with local students as the best way they have settled into Sydney social and academic life (51).

88 responses to the question

When asked if there was anything else they wish they knew prior to arrival to help them settle in, surveyed Indian students indicated the following:

Comments

- *There is no proper information regarding accommodation & part time jobs are available in my country (India). IDP or UNSW India office should be trained and made aware of current situations in Australia. Till we arrive in Australia it's like walking in the dark.....*
- *more information about all the legal issues, like work rights, taxation and visa conditions*
- *I believe being given too much information about anything takes away the excitement and joy of discovering it oneself. Hence, I was happy with the little (but necessary) information I was given and did not take a step to ask more questions, until I got here.*
- *Part Time jobs(Its not easy to find) and Some staff at IDP(Bangalore) India office have been advising students that Part Time jobs are easy to find and it pays well*
- *1.The method of teaching 2.Initial expenditure for settling in Sydney 3.More clear information about the accommodations*
- *Work rights. Accommodation issues.*

4.8 United States of America

95 USA students surveyed
3.8% of total surveyed

42% Male (39)
58% Female (54)

93 responses to the question

80% Undergraduate (76)

20% Postgraduate (19)

95 responses to the question

Breakdown of Ages:

- 39% 19-21yrs (71)
- 45% 22-24yrs (8)
- 11% 25-27yrs (7)
- 1.75% 28-30yrs (4)
- 0.9% 31yrs + (4)
- 2% 16-18yrs (0)

94 responses to the question

Surveyed USA students indicated the following areas they would like to have known more about prior to arriving in Australia (students were invited to select more than one option).

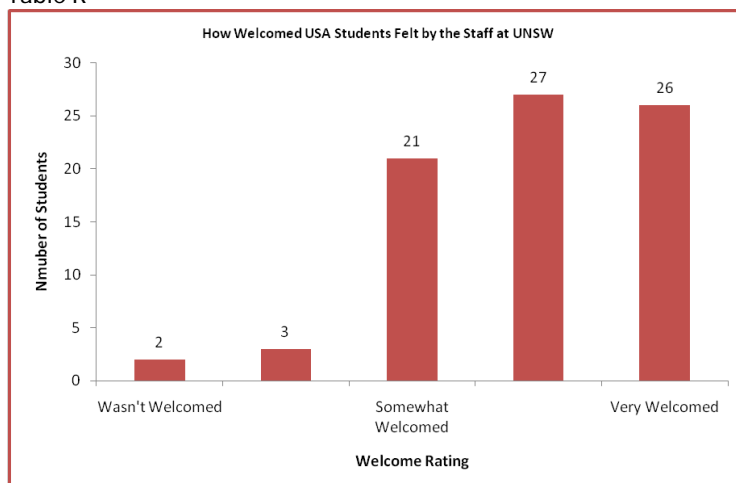
- 68% Accommodation and living arrangements (51)
- 60% Public transport in Sydney (45)
- 48% Student life at UNSW (36)

75 responses to the question

On a rating scale, 34% of surveyed USA students (27) felt between 'Somewhat Welcomed' and 'Very Welcomed' by the staff community at UNSW. This was followed by 33% who felt 'Very Welcomed' by the staff community (27). Refer to Table R (see below)

79 responses to the question

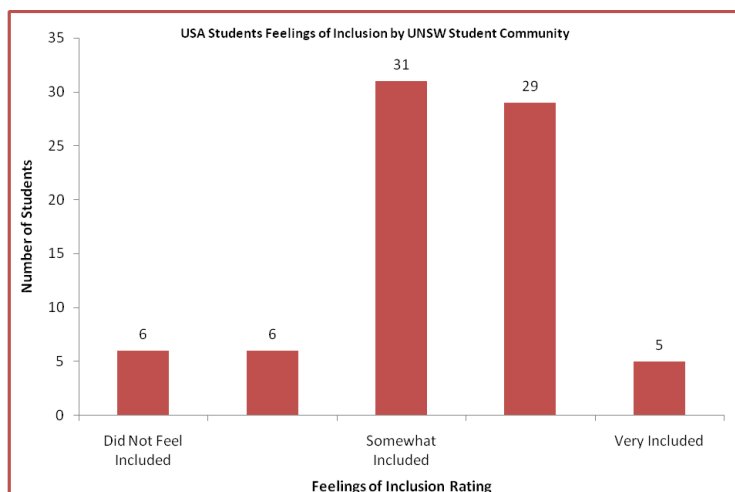
Table R



On a rating scale, 39% of surveyed USA students (31) felt 'Somewhat Included' by the student community at UNSW. This was followed by 37% (29) who rated their feelings of inclusion one above 'Somewhat Included' and one below 'Very Included'. Refer to Table S (see page 39)

79 responses to the question

Table S



27% of surveyed USA students (19) have felt the need for further academic or social support during their studies (19). The anticipated support areas included: (Students were invited to select more than one option)

- Approximately 41% for Career and Employment Support
- Approximately 26% for Financial Support
- Approximately 26% for Accommodation and Housing

72 responses to the question

Surveyed USA students have encountered the following issue or problems since arriving in Australia. (Students we invited to select more than one option)

- 48% Financial Issues (cost of living etc) (31)
- 30% Accommodation (19)
- 27% Culture Shock/Settling In (18)
- 27% Stress and worry (18)

64 responses to the question

1.4% of surveyed USA students have felt unsafe on campus (1).

70 responses to the question

22% of surveyed USA students have felt unsafe within wider Sydney (16).

71 responses to the question

39% of surveyed USA students had concerns about adjusting to Australia prior to arrival (28)

71 responses to the question

87% of surveyed USA students believed '*Gaining an understanding of issues of common concern including the global economy, environmental changes, sustainable futures, social harmony and justice*' is important to an international education experience

59 responses to the question

94% of surveyed USA students believe they are receiving an international education at UNSW (65)

69 responses to the question

86% of surveyed USA students indicated that the best way they have settled into social and academic life is by making friends with other international students (59), followed by 67% attending social events outside of UNSW (46), and 61% making friends with local students (42).

69 responses to the question

When asked if there was anything else they wish they knew prior to arrival to help them settle in, surveyed USA students indicated the following:

COMMENTS

- *I wish I'd known how expensive living in Australia is - I would have bought more from home. I was constantly told to pack light.*