

2021 UC Graduate Student Experience Survey administration report

The UC Graduate Student Experience Survey (UCGSES) was administered for the first time during the 2021 Spring term. The survey administration was unprecedented given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, the survey was successfully launched to over 55,000 graduate and professional students at all 10 UC campuses (professional graduate students at UCSF were not included) and received over 12,000 completed responses. This report provides summaries on survey duration, completion and response rates, representativeness, and items related to COVID-19.

COVID-19 and remote learning items

To address COVID-19 related issues, UC created a module that was added to the UCGSES instrument. All survey participants were invited to respond to the questions in this module. The module included questions related to students' access to technology and learning resources, impacts on degree completion, and satisfaction with coursework, research or creative work, and support received during the 2020-21 academic year.

A dashboard was created using recorded data on these questions and has been updated regularly and shared with UC leadership to inform them of students' experiences and concerns. For further information, please refer to the graduate student UCGSES COVID-19 and remote learning dashboard at <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/UCGSES-COVID-19-survey>.

Survey duration

UCGSES was launched earliest on April 5, 2021 for UC Merced and latest for UC San Francisco on May 18, 2021. The survey was closed for all campuses by July 12, 2021 with an average of 70 active days for each campus. On average, 8 email reminder messages were sent for each campus (Table 1).

Table 1. Administration days for UCGSES 2021

Campus	Launch date	Close date	Active days	# Reminders
Berkeley	4/13/2021	6/28/2021	77	6
Davis	4/8/2021	6/30/2021	84	7
Irvine	5/10/2021	7/12/2021	54	6
Los Angeles	4/14/2021	7/1/2021	79	9
Merced	4/5/2021	6/30/2021	87	13
Riverside	4/12/2021	5/31/2021	50	13
San Diego	4/20/2021	6/29/2021	71	6
San Francisco	5/18/2021	6/30/2021	44	3
Santa Barbara	4/19/2021	7/12/2021	75	3
Santa Cruz	4/15/2021	7/12/2021	79	9
Average			70	8

Completion rates, response rates, and representativeness

Tables 2-3 provide information on completion and response rates by campus and representativeness by gender and race/ethnicity.

Completion rate refers to the percentage of students in the survey population who responded to at least one survey item (students are allowed to skip questions) after the consent form and clicked the “submit” button at the end of the survey. The overall completion rate is 23% (Table 2).

Response rate refers to the percentage of students surveyed who answered at least one survey question after the consent form, regardless of submitting the survey or not. The overall response rate is 27% and campus response rates vary from 15% to 53% (Table 2).

Representativeness is a measure to indicate the degree to which survey respondents represent the population. We determined representativeness by comparing respondents and the population by key characteristics, such as gender, race/ethnicity, residency, discipline, etc. In general, the respondents are representative of the population by most demographics. However, female respondents are overrepresented by about seven percentage points and male respondents are underrepresented by about six percentage points (Table 3).

Completion and response rates and a representativeness analysis by campus and student demographics will be published in UC’s Information Center at <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/student-survey-completion-and-response-rates>.

Table 2. Completion and response rates by campus and systemwide

Campus	Student population	Completers	Respondents	Completion rate	Response rate
Berkeley	11,361	3,066	3,605	27%	32%
Davis	7,806	1,667	2,025	21%	26%
Irvine	6,270	1,429	1,757	23%	28%
Los Angeles	12,621	2,534	3,092	20%	24%
Merced	759	362	400	48%	53%
Riverside	3,536	1,188	1,423	34%	40%
San Diego	7,103	903	1,047	13%	15%
San Francisco	1,388	317	375	23%	27%
Santa Barbara	3,058	530	636	17%	21%
Santa Cruz	1,937	632	761	33%	39%
Systemwide	55,839	12,628	15,121	23%	27%

Table 3. Representativeness of survey respondents by gender and race/ethnicity

Characteristics	Population		Respondents	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Gender				
Male	27,419	49%	6,479	43%
Female	26,368	47%	8,131	54%
Other/Unknown	2,052	4%	511	3%
Race/ethnicity				
African American	2,493	4%	624	4%
American Indian	421	1%	136	1%
Hispanic/Latinx	6,214	11%	1,757	12%
Asian/Pacific Islander	10,464	19%	2,695	18%
White	17,730	32%	5,079	34%
International	14,156	25%	3,751	25%
Unknown	4,361	8%	1,079	7%
Total	55,839	100%	15,121	100%