

# Addressing the Six Critical Aspects of the Student Experience



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# Outline

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3. Community & Engagement
4. Well-being
5. Communication & Transparency
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# Introduction

Higher education delivery has always been about more than just knowledge. Students want to know that their professors and their institutions **care about them**. They want to learn with, and from, other students in a **supportive learning community**. They want to know that they're not alone during this exciting but also scary phase of life. Student experience is **complex and multifaceted** as it impacts various aspects of a student's life. Providing a beneficial total student experience is yet no longer a 'nice-to-have' element of education delivery.

**This guide lists six critical areas institutions must address to deliver a valuable student experience.**



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# 1. Enrolment

Enrolment is the process of applying, registering, and paying for courses at a university or college. It is the first step in the student journey and it sets the tone for the rest of the academic year.

**In the last twenty years, the higher education gross enrolment rate worldwide almost doubled, going from 19% to 38% between 2000 and 2018. 38% of students are currently (2020) enrolled in tertiary education.<sup>1</sup>**

As the first step in the student journey, the enrolment process sets the tone for the rest of the academic year and beyond. It can be stressful and confusing. **Difficulties in enrolment can contribute to higher attrition rates.**

## **To make it smoother and easier, institutions must:**

- **Provide clear and timely information** about admission requirements, deadlines, fees and any assistance a student may be entitled to.
- **Simplify and streamline** the online application and registration systems ensuring they are user-friendly and accessible.
- **Offer orientation and induction programmes** to help students familiarise themselves with the campus, the academic expectations, and the available resources.
- **Assign academic advisors or mentors** to guide students through the enrolment process and answer their questions and concerns.



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### Tech that can help:

- Create prospective and pre-enrolled welcome dashboards.
- Provide easy access to frequently requested resources all in one place to improve application numbers and create a seamless experience for enrolled students. Host your entire enrolment process for new students via a pre-enrolled dashboard, so students know exactly what they need to do before starting university.
- Utilise gentle 'nudge notification' technology to guide your prospects through all enrolment steps.
- Share a directory of staff members and important contact information so prospects know who to contact for additional support.

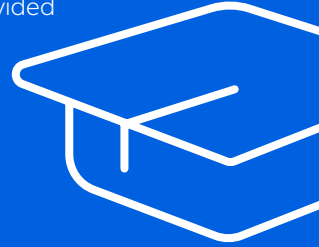
Read more on:

[How Can Institutions Better Support Prospective and 1st Year Students?](#) ↗

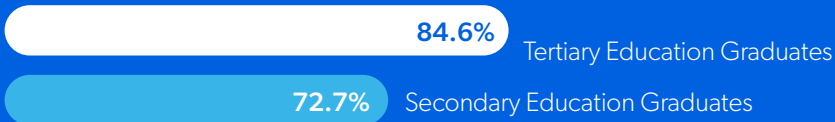


## 2. Academia

Academia is the aspect of the student experience that relates to the teaching and learning activities, such as lectures, tutorials, labs, assignments, exams, feedback, and grades. This aspect focuses on the **quality of education** provided by the institution. It includes factors such as effective teaching methods, knowledgeable faculty, rigorous curriculum, opportunities for research and experiential learning, and access to resources that support academic success.



### 2020 Employment rate



A study by Eurostat<sup>2</sup> found that in the EU, the employment rate for tertiary education graduates was 84.6% in 2020, compared to 72.7% for secondary education graduates. **Academic excellence is often linked to improved employability and career prospects.**

### To ensure the best academic outcome:

- Design and deliver courses that are coherent, diverse, inclusive and **aligned with the learning outcomes and standards.**
- Use **active and interactive teaching methods** that foster student participation, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity.
- Provide **timely and constructive feedback** that helps students improve their learning and skills.
- Support students' academic development and success by offering **tutoring, mentoring, counselling, workshops, and other academic support services.**
- Help **prepare your students** for the world of work by guiding them through steps such as CV creation.

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### Tech that can help:

- Implement survey tools to provide timely, relevant and personalised feedback.
- Create online community groups to help your alumni community offer advice and assistance.
- Offer online or hybrid mentoring programmes to support students.
- Allow easy access to courses, tasks, grades and much more through seamless integration.
- Share reading lists and any other resources that support academic success.
- Enable students to easily book study space on campus with an online room reservation tool.

Read more on:

[Help your Students Boost Their Careers ↗](#)



# 3. Community & Engagement

Community and engagement are key drivers of student satisfaction. The 2020 European Student Barometer<sup>3</sup> reported that **84% of students were satisfied with their overall educational experience in European higher education institutions** which certainly leaves room for improvement. Factors such as **feeling part of a community, having supportive relationships with peers and faculty, and participating in extracurricular activities** were positively associated with higher levels of satisfaction.

## To build a sense of community and belonging and improve student satisfaction and engagement:

- Choose intuitive, easy-to-navigate **technology** to gather information and resources.
- Empower student groups, **club and organisation** management tools.
- Use **gamification** to incentivise student engagement in a fun and compelling way.
- Build a **hybrid community** powered by both face-to-face and online tools and events.



Building your campus community is key to your students' success and this happens both **on and off campus**. In addition to the digital tools, physical facilities also play a vital role in providing a conducive learning environment. Having well-maintained classrooms, libraries, laboratories, study spaces, recreational areas, and amenities - like cafeterias, health centres, and housing options - ensures you're **addressing all students' needs**.



### Tech that can help:

- Foster campus wide connections with a central, digital ecosystem
- Create group dashboards and communities to help your alumni stay connected, network with peers and continuously give back to their institutions.
- Create a social directory that displays students within a community to each other, allowing them to connect and interact via 1:1 or group chat messaging.
- Communicate about the latest news and events at your institution to strengthen the sense of belonging.
- Improve campus life by providing access to useful resources such as a campus map, food menus, job openings, accommodation and transport information.

Read more on:

[Finding a Sense of Belonging from Across the Globe: Technology and The International Student Experience](#) ↗

[Creating a Competitive Edge with your Campus Community](#) ↗

[The 5 Best Practices to Engage your Alumni](#) ↗



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# 4. Well-being

Well-being is the aspect of the student experience that relates to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and happiness of students. It is influenced by factors such as stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, isolation, bullying, harassment, discrimination, violence, substance abuse, and other personal or social issues. Well-being can affect students' academic performance, motivation, engagement, and retention.

According to the Inclusive Higher Education project, **40% of students experience emotional and mental health issues, and approximately one in five struggle with mental health disorders**<sup>4</sup>. Attending university can be stressful. It involves significant lifestyle changes, especially for new students who, in most cases, have to adjust to a new environment, interact with various people and live away from home.

## To improve students' well-being, institutions should:

- Conduct continuous **surveys and assessments** to understand the state of well-being amongst the student body.
- Raise **awareness on healthy habits** and address the stigma that has often surrounded mental health issues. Encourage students to adopt healthy lifestyles and habits such as eating well, exercising regularly, sleeping enough, managing stress, and avoiding substance abuse.
- Promote a **culture of respect, diversity, inclusion, and safety** on campus and online that values and supports all students regardless of their background, identity, or situation.
- Provide **digital mental health services** to offer confidential counselling, healthcare, wellness, and crisis intervention services to help students cope with personal or academic challenges or emergencies.



- Build a strong **campus community** to encourage meaningful relationships and mutual support. Organise activities and events that foster social interaction, fun, relaxation, and positive emotions among students.
- Create a **tool kit** for deans, chairs and directors that helps staff identify issues, signposts advice and equips all to hold the right conversations.

### Tech that can help:

- Implement survey tools to provide timely, relevant and personalised feedback.
- Create group dashboards and communities to help your student body stay connected.
- Provide easy access to frequently requested resources all in one place.
- Organise and promote events and workshops to equip students with strategies and tools to improve their well-being.
- Provide a student support directory to signpost students to specialist support should they need it.

Read more on:

[How to Support Student Mental Health and Well-Being in Higher Ed](#) ↗

[Top Tips to Improve Students' Mental Health](#) ↗



# 5. Communication & Transparency

This aspect includes clear and timely dissemination of information about academic policies, campus updates, support services, and opportunities for student input and feedback. Effective communication and transparency between the institution and its students are essential for building trust and ensuring a positive student experience.



The average **open rate of emails in education is currently just over 30%**



One of Ready Education's mobile solutions reported a **90.5% open rate for push notifications**

The average **open rate of emails in education is currently just over 30%** but students spend on average **8-10 hours a day on their smartphones**<sup>5</sup>. Utilising different methods helps to ensure students read the messages they need. For example, one of Ready Education's mobile solutions reported a **90.5% open rate for push notifications** (2022).

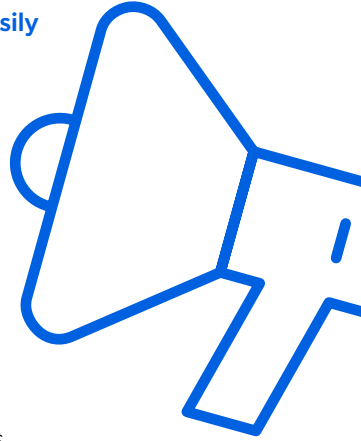
5. [Times Higher Education](#)



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## To build a sense of community and belonging and improve student satisfaction and engagement:

- Achieve reliable communication with the right tools to **easily communicate with targeted groups of students**.
- Build a communication strategy that delivers the **right information, to the right student, at the right time, directly to their phone**.
- Enable access to timetable, grades, student card and an electronic directory all in one place, with a **transparent overview** of any administrative procedures such as payments, credits and registration.
- The more you **align communication** across your campus, the easier it is to avoid silos and make sure your students are informed.



### Tech that can help:

- Centralise all student information and resources.
- Utilise in-app alerts, push notifications, banners and other communication tools to deliver information in an easy format that will engage students.
- Send targeted messaging, announcements, and updates that are tailored to specific groups or segments of students.
- Highlight your latest communications on news feeds and social networks, with the ability to showcase your social accounts all within one app.

Read more on:

[A Better Communication Strategy To Improve Student Success In Higher Ed](#) ↗

# 6. Administration

Administration is the aspect of the student experience that relates to the non-academic services and functions that facilitate students' academic progress and well-being. It includes services such as enrolment management, library services, information technology, student records, academic regulations, complaints and appeals, and graduation. Administration can be frustrating and time-consuming for students if they encounter problems or delays in accessing or using these services.

According to a Eurostat article, **22% of students drop out of University due to their needs not being met**<sup>6</sup>. Making **investments in infrastructure, including modern classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and recreational spaces** creates conducive learning environments, fosters collaboration, and enhances student engagement.

## To improve student experience:

- Ensure that administrative services are **efficient, effective, transparent, and responsive to students' needs and expectations**.
- Communicate clearly and regularly with students about **administrative policies and procedures** and any changes or updates that affect them.
- Solicit **feedback** from students about their satisfaction and experiences with administrative services and use it to improve service quality and delivery.
- **Recognise and reward staff** who provide excellent administrative service to students.



### Tech that can help:

- Help students find the **information they need**, stay informed and connect with their community whether they're commuting, living on-campus, or remote.
- Utilise workflows and approval processes to streamline administration efforts and improve the student experience.
- Provide students with a transparent overview of any administrative procedures that impact them, such as payments, credits and registration.
- Easily create and send **in-app surveys** to gain critical insights into student satisfaction.

Read more on:

[Top Reasons Your Campus Needs a Digital Transformation ↗](#)



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# A Final Word

Students require various support services to navigate their academic journey.

It's important to note that these critical aspects can intersect and influence each other. Institutions should strive to address these aspects holistically to create a comprehensive and student-centred experience.

Technology and Infrastructure are more important now than ever before. In today's digital age, institutions need to provide reliable and up-to-date technological infrastructure to support student learning and engagement. This includes access to robust Wi-Fi, online learning platforms, digital resources, computer labs, and other technological tools that enhance the full educational experience.

**To understand how technology can help your institution, visit our website: [www.readyeducation.com](http://www.readyeducation.com) ↗**







Ready Education empowers institutions worldwide to build and engage their campus community, improving communications and experiences that increase retention and drive student success.

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