

Online survey: who did it and what they had to say about student voice

Survey demographic questions

Who were the people who did the survey?

- 329 people completed the survey. 230 people indicated they were tertiary students (69.91%). 117 indicated they were staff working in the education sector (35.56%). 38 indicated they were members of the general public (11.55%). 23 indicated they were international students (6.99%). 21 indicated they were disabled and/or require additional support (6.38%). 7 indicated they cared for a disabled person and/or someone with additional learning support needs (2.13%). 4 indicated they were apprentices or trainees (1.22%).
- Note that people could select multiple categories or choose not to select any. For example, 40 people who indicated that they were a tertiary student also indicated that they work in the education sector.

What type of tertiary education organisation were students enrolled at?

- Most students were enrolled at university (134, or 40.73%). The rest were enrolled at institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITP) (58, or 17.63%), private training establishments (PTE) (20, or 6.08%), industry training organisations (ITO) (3, or 0.91%), and wānanga (1, or 0.30%).

What type of tertiary education organisation did they work at?

- Most people worked at a university (43, or 13.07%). The rest worked at ITPs (30, or 9.12%), secondary school or below (19, or 5.78%), PTEs (17, or 5.17%), ITOs (2, or 0.61%), and wānanga (2, or 0.61%).

Where did they live?

- We heard from people all across Aotearoa. However, the bulk of people were living in Auckland (112, or 37.08%), Wellington (55, or 16.72%), Christchurch (26, or 7.90%), Waikato (23, or 6.99%), Dunedin (21, or 6.38%), Manawatu (16, or 4.86%), and Northland (10, or 3.04%).

How old were they?

- We heard from a range of age groups, including: under 18 year olds (4, or 1.22%), 18-19 year olds (42, or 12.77%), 20-24 years (94, or 28.57%), 25-39 year olds (96, or 29.18%), and 40 years and over (87, or 26.44%).

What were their ethnicities?

- Majority of the people who did the survey identified as Pākehā (212, or 64.44%). People also identified as 'other' (56, or 17.02%), Māori (46, or 13.98%), Chinese (26, or 7.90%), Indian (23, or 6.99%), Samoan (21, or 6.38%), Cook Island Māori (11, or 3.34%), Tongan (11, or 3.34%), Niuean (6, or 1.82%), Filipino (3, or 0.91%), and Tokelauan (2, or 0.61%).

Detailed survey results

Below are the responses to the survey questions. For questions with Likert-scale responses (e.g. agree vs. disagree), we provide figures around the proportion of people who selected a specific response. For questions with open-ended responses, we summarise key points raised.

General questions on the current state of student voice

How well do you think student voice is considered by your education organisation?

- The most common response was 'Average' (34.65% of responses), with 'Well' and 'Not very well' being the next most common response (24.92% and 19.15%, respectively). Table 1 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff.
- There were 40 people who identified as both a student and staff member. These people have been included in both the student and staff columns. This also applies to all other tables showing student and staff responses.

Table 1. Responses to 'How well do you think student voice is considered by your education organisation?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Very well	47	14.29%	27	11.74%	20	17.09%
Well	82	24.92%	53	23.04%	38	32.48%
Average	114	34.65%	84	36.52%	36	30.77%
Not very well	63	19.15%	54	23.48%	17	14.53%
Very poorly	19	5.78%	10	4.35%	6	5.13%
Not answered	4	1.22%	2	0.87%	0	0.00%

How satisfied are you that the voices of Māori, Pacific, and disabled students are being listened to and engaged in decision making?

- The most common response was 'Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied' (32.22%), with 'Satisfied' and 'Not satisfied' being the next most common response (24.92% and 21.88%, respectively). Table 2 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff.

Table 2. Responses to 'How satisfied are you that the voices of Māori, Pacific, and disabled students are being listened to and engaged in decision making?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Very satisfied	38	11.55%	23	10.00%	16	13.68%
Satisfied	82	24.92%	56	24.35%	31	26.50%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	106	32.22%	78	33.91%	38	32.48%
Not satisfied	72	21.88%	53	23.04%	22	18.80%
Very unsatisfied	23	6.99%	15	6.52%	8	6.84%
Not answered	8	2.43%	5	2.17%	2	1.71%

- Of the 230 students who completed the survey, 30 identified as Māori, 30 as Pacific, and 18 as disabled. Table 3 shows responses to the question above split by whether students identified as Māori, Pacific, and/or disabled.

Table 3. *Māori, Pacific, and/or disabled students' responses to 'How satisfied are you that the voices of Māori, Pacific, and disabled students are being listened to and engaged in decision making?'*

Response	All Students		Māori		Pacific		Disabled	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
<i>Very satisfied</i>	23	10.00%	5	16.67%	5	16.67%	0	0.00%
<i>Satisfied</i>	56	24.35%	8	26.67%	13	43.33%	3	16.67%
<i>Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied</i>	78	33.91%	8	26.67%	4	13.33%	5	27.78%
<i>Not satisfied</i>	53	23.04%	6	20.00%	7	23.33%	5	27.78%
<i>Very unsatisfied</i>	15	6.52%	3	10.00%	1	3.33%	4	22.22%
<i>Not answered</i>	5	2.17%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	5.56%

What could be done to further support and strengthen the voices of these students?

- Some key ideas and points raised in response to this question included:
 - More opportunities to hear from these specific learner groups (e.g. more leadership positions and/or mechanisms for them to share their voices).
 - Better support these learner groups (e.g. provide funding to these groups to enable them to organise and hold events and meetings to share and gather their voices).
 - Extend the focus on diverse voices to also include international, LGBTQIA+, mature, distance, and industry training learners.

Questions on focus area 1(a): Enhancing the student voice status quo via increasing accountability

How effective are current accountability mechanisms for student voice?

- The most common response was 'Neither effective nor ineffective' (29.79%), with 'Ineffective' and 'Effective' being the next most common response (27.05% and 22.80%, respectively). Table 4 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff.

Table 4. Responses to 'How effective are current accountability mechanisms for student voice?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Very effective	26	7.90%	13	5.65%	13	11.11%
Effective	75	22.80%	53	23.04%	25	21.37%
Neither effective nor ineffective	98	29.79%	69	30.00%	34	29.06%
Ineffective	89	27.05%	69	30.00%	31	26.50%
Very ineffective	35	10.64%	23	10.00%	14	11.97%
Not answered	6	1.82%	3	1.30%	0	0.00%

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not transparent and 5 = very transparent), how transparent are processes and decisions in your organisation that involve student voice?

- The most common response was 'not very transparent' at 24.62%, with 'neither transparent nor not transparent' and 'not transparent' being the next most common answers (24.32% and 20.97%, respectively). Table 5 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff.

Table 5. Responses to 'on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not transparent and 5 = very transparent), how transparent are processes and decisions in your organisation that involve student voice?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
1 (not transparent)	69	20.97%	53	23.04%	21	17.95%
2	81	24.62%	60	26.09%	33	28.21%
3	80	24.32%	51	22.17%	28	23.93%
4	61	18.54%	41	17.83%	24	20.51%
5 (very transparent)	27	8.21%	18	7.83%	9	7.69%
Not answered	11	3.34%	7	3.04%	2	1.71%

Are there other accountability mechanisms we have missed or that you think would work, but don't already exist?

- Key suggestions raised in response to this question included:
 - More communication channels to capture and include student voices (e.g. surveys and regular reports).
 - More student engagement and involvement at all levels of the organisation, including in decision-making processes.
 - Supporting and adopting a co-design or partnership approach where possible, and encouraging relationship building between staff and students.
 - Greater promotion of, and easier access to, information concerning organisational processes and systems.
 - Having independent and well-resourced students' associations and/or student voice mechanisms.

Questions on focus area 1(b): Enhancing the student voice status quo via greater support

How effective are the current support initiatives for student voice?

- The most common response was 'Neither effective nor ineffective' (31.91%), with 'Effective' being the next most common answer (28.57%). Table 6 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff.

Table 6. Responses to 'How effective are the current support initiatives for student voice?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Very effective	25	7.60%	17	7.39%	8	6.84%
Effective	94	28.57%	68	29.57%	31	26.50%
Neither effective nor ineffective	105	31.91%	71	30.87%	40	34.19%
Ineffective	60	18.24%	43	18.70%	25	21.37%
Very ineffective	35	10.64%	25	10.87%	11	9.40%
Not answered	10	3.04%	6	2.61%	2	1.71%

Are there other support initiatives that should be provided to further empower student voice? If so, please tell us more about these and why they would be effective.

- The majority responded 'Yes', at 58.36%. Less than half said 'No' (26.14%) and the remainder did not answer (15.50%).
- Some key ideas around the kind of support that should be provided, and ways to improve existing support included:
 - More training for both students and staff, including cultural competency training.
 - Providing specific and/or specialised supports and services (e.g. support tailored for some learner groups, including for Māori, Pacific, disabled, and international students, and also specific support around mental health and wellbeing).
 - Providing a wider range of options and opportunities for students to share, gather, and feed their voices into decisions (e.g. via hui, fora, and surveys).
 - Better promotion and easier access to information about student voice support.

Who do you think should provide support around student voice?

- The most common responses were 'My education provider' and 'Students' associations' (63.53% and 61.09%, respectively). Table 7 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff.

Table 7. Responses to 'Who do you think should provide support around student voice?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
My education organisation	209	63.53%	151	65.65%	77	65.81%
The Ministry of Education	175	53.19%	138	60.00%	55	47.01%
The Tertiary Education Commission	153	46.50%	113	49.13%	57	48.72%
The New Zealand Qualifications Authority	79	24.01%	54	23.48%	29	24.79%
An independent student governance body	170	51.67%	124	53.91%	60	51.28%
Staff	163	49.54%	114	49.57%	65	55.56%
Students' associations	201	61.09%	146	63.48%	73	62.39%
Not answered	13	3.95%	6	2.61%	0	0.00%

How can we ensure all students have access to systems or processes that empower student voice?

- Key themes raised in response to this question included:
 - Have multiple, innovative, and accessible channels to engage students and convey their voices (e.g. online channels, phone applications, face-to-face meetings, student assemblies, and social media).
 - Better promote and raise awareness of student voice opportunities (e.g. promote it early in a learner's tertiary education journey).
 - Have a national body to provide support for all tertiary students' voices across all subsectors.

Questions on focus area 1(c): Enhancing the student voice status quo via sustainable resourcing

There was no specific question in the survey to capture whether people thought current resourcing was effective or ineffective. However, based on the qualitative data, more submitters seemed dissatisfied, rather than satisfied, with the current resourcing mechanisms, including the CSSF.

How could students be better supported and empowered before, during, and after CSSF decision-making processes within their organisations?

- Key themes raised in response to this question included:
 - Ensuring the process is transparent from start-to-finish.
 - Providing clear information on the process so that students can more easily understand it and get involved.
 - Genuinely trying to engage all students, not just student reps and leaders.
 - Closing feedback loops after decisions are made.
 - Involving students from the very start of the process, not just at the end.

Do you think we should explore options to make it easier for students to pay membership fees (for organisation- and national-level students' associations)?

- The majority of people responded 'Yes' (76.60%). Only a small proportion of people responded 'No' (12.77%), and the rest did not answer (10.64%).

How else could student voice be sustainably resourced?

- Suggestions for how student voice could be sustainably resourced included:
 - Draw upon existing funding streams or pools (e.g. CSSF, PBRF, EEL, and Fees free) and ring-fence a portion for student voice.
 - Fund student voice directly from the government and/or providers.
 - Fund student voice through a national body, and have that body arbitrate the amount per provider based on the student population size and the effectiveness of their student voice mechanisms.
 - Support students' associations to operate independently (i.e. run events, fundraise, and make investments to accrue their own income).

Questions on focus area 2: Making structural changes to enhance student voice

How effective are existing structures for student voice input into governance?

- The most common response was 'Neither effective nor ineffective' (30.70%), with 'Ineffective' being the next most common response (25.23%). Table 8 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff.

Table 8. Responses to 'How effective are existing structures for student voice input into governance?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Very effective	19	5.78%	11	4.78%	8	6.84%
Effective	66	20.06%	43	18.70%	26	22.22%
Neither effective nor ineffective	101	30.70%	70	30.43%	38	32.48%
Ineffective	83	25.23%	64	27.83%	26	22.22%
Very ineffective	37	11.25%	26	11.30%	14	11.97%
Not answered	23	6.99%	16	6.96%	5	4.27%

Which of the two approaches we suggested do you think would be most effective at enhancing student voice?

- The majority responded that they prefer the organisation-designed and led processes approach (53.19%). A smaller proportion preferred the legislated subcommittees to the council approach (32.52%), and the remainder did not answer the question (14.29%).
- A key reason noted for preferring the organisation-designed and led processes approach was that it would better factor in organisational and student population diversity. We also heard it would enable providers with effective student voice structures already in place to continue with and further refine them. In contrast, the key reason for preferring the subcommittee option was that it would help ensure a basic level of consistency across the sector.
- Some people suggested that both approaches have value, and that a middle-ground option may be best (e.g. an option that is flexible, but still has some requirements and/or legislation underpinning it to ensure student voice is taken seriously).
- Some people suggested that providers could have the choice to do either approach, but if they do not adequately demonstrate the organisation-designed and -led process, then must at least have the legislated subcommittee.

Are there any other structural changes we should consider?

- Slightly more people considered that no other structural changes should be made than vice versa (36.78% and 33.74%). This response pattern was similar across students and staff.

Questions on focus area 3: Establishing a national centre for student voice

How effective would a national centre for student voice be in enhancing student voice in New Zealand?

- The most common response was 'Effective' (34.04%), closely followed by 'Very effective' (33.43%). Table 9 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff. The most common response for students was 'Very effective' (38.26%), while the most common response for staff was 'Effective' (39.32%).

Table 9. Responses to 'How effective would a national centre for student voice be in enhancing student voice in New Zealand?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Very effective	110	33.43%	88	38.26%	34	29.06%
Effective	112	34.04%	77	33.48%	46	39.32%
Neither effective nor ineffective	56	17.02%	33	14.35%	19	16.24%
Ineffective	20	6.08%	12	5.22%	10	8.55%
Very ineffective	11	3.34%	5	2.17%	5	4.27%
Not answered	20	6.08%	15	6.52%	3	2.56%

What do you think should be the role and functions of such a centre? & what particular services should it provide (to students and organisations)?

- Suggestions put forward in response to these two questions included:
 - Capability and Capacity - Providing support, guidance, and training for staff/organisations and students' associations and leaders, including
 - leadership training (such as training to become a good advocate),
 - development opportunities,
 - guidance around good practice,
 - support for underrepresented students,
 - wellbeing and health support and services,
 - financial services, and
 - support around resourcing for student voice
 - Operating as an accountability mechanism, to help ensure that student voice is seriously considered.
 - Resource support and development - Providing and managing an information resource (i.e. a one-stop-shop for student voice).
 - Monitoring and development - Ensuring a level of consistency across the sector. For instance, via audits, reviews, and regulation of student voice with organisations.
 - Third party role between students and staff. Including complaints processes, dispute resolution, and mediation.
 - Connecting role - Coordinate communication and action around student voice, and help link up student voice across New Zealand. This could include capturing and conveying a national student voice via surveys, fora, summits, networking events, and general meetings.
 - Activism, advocacy, campaign, and a lobbying role.
- For those who suggested that we do not need a national centre for student voice, the key points raised here were that such a centre would be too bureaucratic and could eventuate as a "tick-box" for student voice consultation. Others suggested that we do not need a national centre as we already have NZUSA and should just resource it instead.

Closing question on the three focus areas

Which focus areas for enhancing student voice would make a positive difference for you?

- For this question, people could select as many or few options as they wanted. The most common response was 'Making structural changes to enhance student voice' (59.27%). The next most common response was 'Establishing a national centre for student voice' (54.71%). Table 10 shows a breakdown of the data, split by students and staff.

Table 10. Responses to 'Which focus areas for enhancing student voice would make a positive difference for you?'

Response	All		Students		Staff	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
<i>Enhancing the status quo via increasing accountability</i>	165	50.15%	121	52.61%	65	55.56%
<i>Enhancing the status quo via greater support</i>	174	52.89%	116	50.43%	75	64.10%
<i>Enhancing the status quo via sustainable resourcing</i>	136	41.34%	98	42.61%	50	42.74%
<i>Making structural changes to enhance student voice</i>	195	59.27%	114	62.61%	67	57.26%
<i>Establishing a national centre for student voice</i>	180	54.71%	134	58.26%	61	52.14%
<i>Not answered</i>	25	7.60%	17	7.39%	6	5.13%