



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

2019 Staff Engagement Survey

executive summary

introduction

Over March and April 2019, the University of Sydney conducted their third engagement survey with Voice Project. The survey provided staff with the opportunity to provide feedback about the quality of current work practices at the University of Sydney. The survey also enabled the outcomes of passion (employee engagement) and organisation progress to be measured. Passion/Engagement is measured by averaging scores on the following three categories: staff's commitment to the organisation; staff's overall job satisfaction; and staff's Intention to Stay. Progress is measured by averaging scores on: staff's perceptions on if the University is meeting its organisational objectives; how change and innovation is managed and, staff's perceptions of student satisfaction. Research shows that more positive results on these outcome measures are associated with tangible outcomes such as reduced turnover, absenteeism, safety incidents and higher performance.

This report summarises the key findings from the survey data and provides recommendations about actions that can be taken to maximise passion and organisation progress. This report also offers additional insight into your organisation by comparing performance against the University of Sydney's previous survey results from 2016. More detailed information is available in your survey results pack.

key findings

The 2019 University of Sydney Staff Engagement Survey achieved a good participation rate, with 63% of staff completing the online survey. This is higher than the 2016 survey (56%), which means the organisation results are reliable (accurate within plus or minus 0.8%).

passion and progress results

Overall, the results indicate that staff have moderate levels of passion/employee engagement (76% favourable), with this result being on par with the 2016 survey.

Many staff report that they are proud to be working at the University (82%), though this has dropped 4% since the previous survey. Most staff feel a sense of accomplishment within their job (77%).

The majority of staff can see a future working at the University of Sydney (68%), a result which is 4% higher than the 2016 survey.

Staff perceptions of organisation progress are low (46%), a result on par with the previous survey. Fewer staff feel satisfied with how change is managed at the University (26% favourable).

Relatively few staff perceive that students are satisfied with the services provided by the University (47%). However, the majority of staff believe the future for the University is positive (66%).

passion
76%

progress
46%

higher performing practices

Staff report a strong understanding of the importance of their role in the broader success of the University (role clarity, 85%). Furthermore, they feel the University supports gender equity, reporting that their managers support equality between genders (89%), that there are effective policies to prevent gender discrimination (81%), and that the University is committed to achieving a gender diverse workforce (81%). This emerged as a text theme, with staff commenting that a strength of the University was its commitment to inclusion and diversity. Staff perceive the University as expecting respectful behaviours, and not tolerating gender-based harassment (86%) or sexual harassment (90%). Finally, staff report that their co-workers are productive (79%) and team-orientated (83%), and that their supervisors are consultative (83%) and supportive (80%). This was reflected within the text comments, with staff commenting that their colleagues are talented, knowledgeable and experienced.

changes since 2016

Since 2016, the two largest improvements have been in staff perceptions that the University is committed to their professional development (+7% since 2016) and staff feeling that their workload is manageable (+6%). Furthermore, staff report greater satisfaction with the level of knowledge sharing throughout the University (+5%), as well as the opportunities available for them to develop the skills required for their career development (+5%). Finally, more staff report that the University will not tolerate sexual harassment (+6%), however this must be interpreted with some caution as the wording is slightly different from the equivalent 2016 question.

Some of the areas where perceptions were less positive than 2016 include access to information to effectively perform one's role (-9%), ability to manage job stress levels (-9%), perceptions that the University is ethical (-8%), belief in the values of the University (-8%), and clarity around where responsibilities lie at the University (-8%). Staff were also less satisfied with the efficiency of processes (-13%), however this must be interpreted with some caution as the wording is slightly different from the equivalent 2016 question.

lower performing practices

Processes was the lowest performing work practice (25%), with only a minority of staff rating processes as efficient (18%) and clear in terms of where responsibilities lie (32%). This was reflected in the text responses, with many staff expressing a desire for clearer, streamlined processes. Approximately one-third of staff reported satisfaction with the level of information sharing throughout the University (34%), with many expressing in the open-ended questions a desire for greater collaboration and communication across different work units. Few staff reported satisfaction with the level of consultation for decisions that affect their day-to-day role (38%), the way in which the University uses technology (40%), and the extent to which current recruitment and selection procedures successfully select individuals appropriately aligned to their roles (42%).

The lower performing work practices were analysed to identify those with a greater impact on engagement (organisational commitment, job satisfaction, intention to stay) and progress (organisational objectives, change and innovation, and student satisfaction). An improvement in these practices is likely to contribute to maximising employee engagement and improving organisational performance.

group differences

- Academic staff report higher levels of job satisfaction than professional staff. However, they report lower satisfaction with their workload, wellness and work/life balance
- Females report higher levels of satisfaction with the majority of work practices assessed in the survey. However, they report lower levels of satisfaction with gender equity practices and the level of respect demonstrated in the workplace
- Staff who identify with a non-binary gender report lower levels of engagement and progress compared to those who identify as female or male
- Individuals requiring a work-related adjustment for a disability are less engaged, and report lower levels of organisation progress
- Individuals identifying as “straight” report the highest levels of engagement and perceptions of organisation progress, compared to other sexual orientations
- Staff with greater than 10 years length of service are generally less satisfied with the majority of work practices assessed in this survey compared to those who have worked at the University for less time
- Fixed-term part-time staff are generally more satisfied with the majority of work practices assessed in this survey compared to other employment types



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

2019 Staff Engagement Survey

High Level Preliminary Results

**voice
project**

improving organisations
by giving people a voice

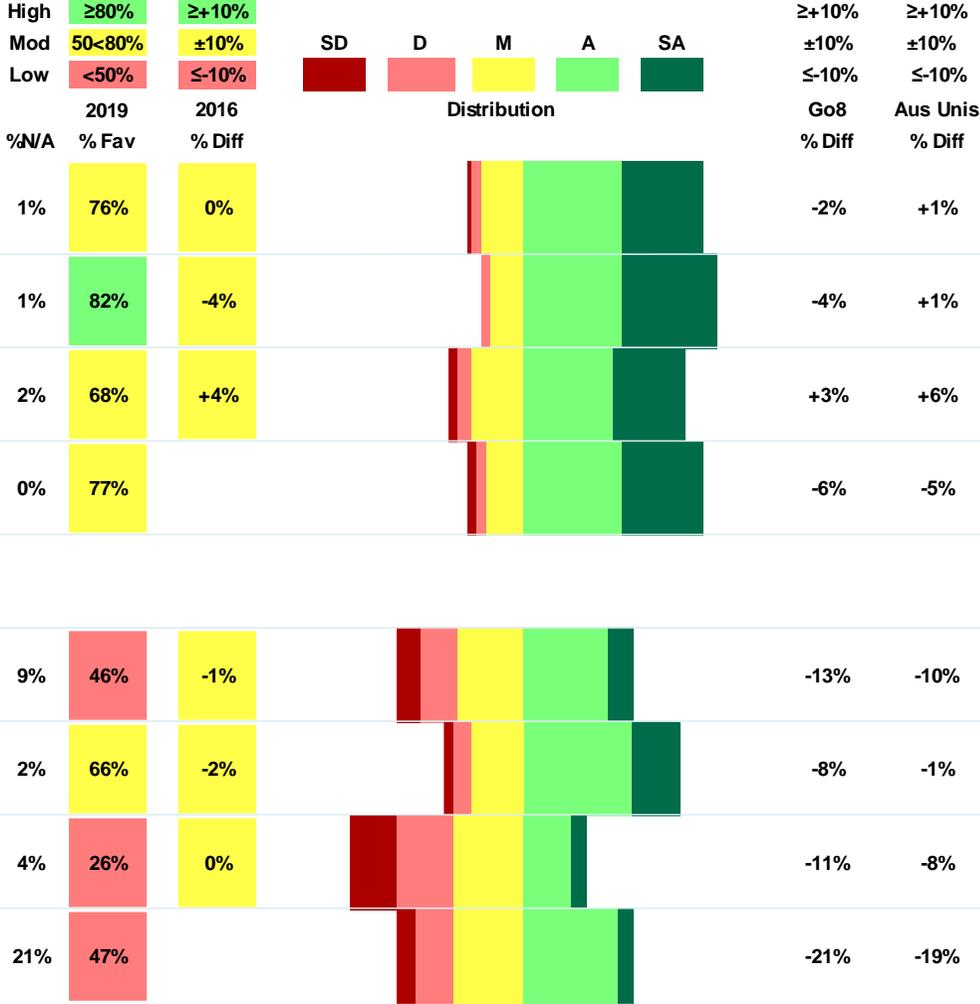
www.voiceproject.com

methodology

The 2019 University of Sydney Staff Engagement Survey :

- Was based on a core set of questions drawn from the Voice Engagement Survey, **streamlined to reduce completion time** and to align with typical question set used by other **Go8 Universities**
- Comprised a total of:
 - 61 rating scale questions
 - 4 open-ended questions
 - 10 demographic questions
- Was “live” for 3 weeks:
 - Officially open Monday 25th March to Friday 5th April
 - Follow-up period Monday 8th April to Sunday 14th April
- Achieved a **response rate of 63%** (compared to 56% in 2016, 63% Go8 average) based on completions of 5103 online surveys from a targeted population of 8163
- Had a **margin of error** for the overall sample of **0.8%**

category results



category results

