



National Survey of Student Engagement 2026 Selected Items Related to Critical Thinking and Reasoning

Demographics and Response Rates:

	First Years	Seniors
Overall Response Rate	34% (78/237)	22% (50/234)
% Female	53%	58%
% Am. Indian or AK Native	0%	0%
% Asian	26%	16%
% Black or African American	0%	4%
% Hispanic or Latino	9%	30%
% White	36%	26%
% International/foreign born	17%	8%
% Two or more races	9%	14%
% Unknown	4%	2%

Background:

HMC participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) on a cycle¹ with other institutional level surveys. NSSE surveys are sent in the spring to all first years and seniors asking them about the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate experience. It includes 10 Engagement Indicators (Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, Quantitative Reasoning, Collaborative Learning, Discussions with Diverse Others, Student-Faculty Interaction, Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interactions, and Supportive Environment) and High Impact Practices (Learning Communities, Service-Learning, Research with Faculty, Internships, Study Abroad, and Capstones). Additionally, NSSE allows campuses to add additional topical modules to their survey.

Since the inception of the survey, nearly 1,700 bachelor's-granting colleges and universities in the United States and Canada have used it to measure the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices. Starting in 2026, NSSE updated the peer groups available for comparison to reflect the new Carnegie Classification System. HMC's peer group is now "Special Focus: Technology, Engineering and Sciences". This new peer group means that comparing the differences between peers in this report with differences in peers seen in previous reports should be done with caution, as they are not the same group of institutions. The national average response rate for NSSE 2026 was 25% for first years and 23% for seniors respectively. For the "Tech" peer group, 27% of first years and 20% of seniors completed the survey.

¹ Assessment and Accreditation Committee has worked with OIRE to develop a [cycle for the modules](#) that are relevant to HMC.

Highlights:

- Challenging intellectual work is crucial at Mudd, and HMC first year students indicated that their courses have challenged them to do their best work (5.8 for first years and 5.6 for seniors) on a scale where 1 corresponds to “not all” and 7 corresponds to “very much”. The first year HMC students reported significantly higher than peers at other institutions (5.8 vs 5.4, $p < .01$)
HMC first years are also significantly higher on thinking critically and analytically (3.4 vs 3.1, $p < .01$).
- First years and seniors rated themselves similarly to peers with respect to: “examining the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue”, “learning something that changed the way they understood an issue or concept”, evaluating what others have concluded from numerical information”, “reviewing their notes after class”, and “summarizing what they learned in class or from course material”.
- HMC first year means were significantly higher than their peers for “using numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issues” (2.7 vs 2.4, $p < 0.01$), “Identified key information from reading assignments” (3.2 vs 2.9, $p < 0.05$), “applying facts, theories or methods to practical problems or in new situations” (3.5 vs 3.2, $p < .001$), “analyzing an idea, experience or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts” (3.3 vs 3.0, $p < .01$), “evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source” (3.0 vs 2.7, $p < .01$), and “forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information” (3.2 vs 2.9, $p < .01$)
- HMC seniors mean were significantly higher than their peers for “evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source” (3.0 vs 2.7, $p < .01$).

FIRST YEARS				
	HMC	Peer	Comp	Sig
	n = 78	n = 3,274		
During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?				
<i>1 = never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = often; 4 = very often</i>				
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	2.9	2.7		
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	3.0	2.9		
Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics)	2.9	2.9		
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue	2.7	2.4	△	p < .01
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	2.8	2.5		
Identified key information from reading assignments	3.2	2.9	▲	p < .05
Reviewed your notes after class	2.8	2.9		
Summarized what you learned in class or from course material	2.9	2.9		
<i>1 = not at all; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 = very much</i>				
During the current school year, to what extent have your courses challenged you to do your best work	5.8	5.4	△	p < .01
During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following				
<i>1 = very little; 2 = some; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = very much</i>				
Applying facts, theories or methods to practical problems or in new situations	3.5	3.2	▲	p < .001
Analyzing an idea, experience or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	3.3	3.0	△	p < .01
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	3.0	2.7	△	p < .01
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	3.2	2.9	△	p < .01
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?				
<i>1 = very little; 2 = some; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = very much</i>				
Thinking critically and analytically	3.4	3.1	△	p < .01
Analyzing numerical and statistical information	3.1	3.1		

SENIORS				
	HMC	Peer	Comp	Sig
	n = 50	n = 2,870		
During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?				
<i>1 = never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = often; 4 = very often</i>				
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	2.8	2.7		
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	3.2	3.0		
Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics)	3.3	3.0	△	p < .01
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue	2.9	2.5	△	p < .01
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	2.8	2.7		
Identified key information from reading assignments	3.5	2.9	▲	p < .001
Reviewed your notes after class	2.8	2.8		
Summarized what you learned in class or from course material	3.0	2.8		
<i>1 = not at all; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 = very much</i>				
During the current school year, to what extent have your courses challenged you to do your best work	5.6	5.4		
During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following				
<i>1 = very little; 2 = some; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = very much</i>				
Applying facts, theories or methods to practical problems or in new situations	3.2	3.2		
Analyzing an idea, experience or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	3.3	3.1		
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	3.0	2.7	△	p < .01
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	3.0	2.9		
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?				
<i>1 = very little; 2 = some; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = very much</i>				
Thinking critically and analytically	3.6	3.4		
Analyzing numerical and statistical information	3.5	3.4		

- ▲ HMC students' average was significantly higher (p<.001)
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- ▼ HMC students' average was significantly lower (p<.001)
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