



Wellness Assessment 2024-2025

**An Examination of First-Year
Student Wellness**

Center for the Study of Student Life

January 2025



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE

INTRODUCTION

The Student Wellness Center in the Office of Student Life at The Ohio State University uses a holistic wellness model that includes ten key dimensions of wellness, which are: career, creative, digital, emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual.

The Wellness Assessment was designed to measure these ten dimensions of wellness to give students a better understanding of their own wellness and provide them with resources that they can utilize at Ohio State to improve their wellness. The Wellness Assessment is open year-round to all students, however, only data collected during the month of October are used for research. A total of 410 first-year students participated in the Wellness Assessment in October 2024. Additionally, 755 other undergraduate students participated in the survey. First-year undergraduate students represent 35.2% of total undergraduate student responses. This report documents differences in each dimension of wellness between first-year undergraduate students ($n = 410$) and all other undergraduate students ($n = 755$) who completed the Wellness Assessment during October 2024.

METHODOLOGY

Each wellness dimension in the survey contains items to assess a range of attitudes and behaviors. The items that comprise each dimension can be found in Appendix B on page 7 of this report. Scores were calculated by adding together the values of all of the survey items within a given dimension, then dividing that sum by the total number of items, which produced an average wellness score for each dimension. The scores for respondents who did not answer all of the items within a dimension were calculated by summing the scores for the answered items and dividing that sum by the total number of items answered. Students who failed to provide several responses within a dimension (i.e., answered less than 50% of the items within a dimension) were not given an average wellness score for that dimension, since creating wellness scores based on too few items would not be an accurate representation of that overall wellness dimension. Respondents needed to have an average wellness score for all ten dimensions to be included in this report.

These wellness attitudes and beliefs were measured using a Likert scale; respondents indicated their level of agreement with various statements on a 5-point scale. When asked about behaviors, respondents reported the frequency of the occurrence, also on a 5-point scale. Wellness scores for each dimension range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes and behaviors. Negative items were reverse coded so that unhealthy responses were associated with a lower score.

Respondents' scores for each of the ten dimensions were also recoded into three categories to illustrate the percentage of students with fair, adequate and exceptional mean wellness dimension scores. Students whose wellness dimension score is 'fair' have a mean score of

3.0 or lower for that dimension. Students whose wellness dimension score is ‘adequate’ have a mean score greater than 3.0 but less than 4.5 for that dimension. Lastly, students whose wellness dimension score is ‘exceptional’ have a mean score of 4.5 or higher for that dimension.

HIGHLIGHTS

- First-year students’ highest wellness scores were in the physical (**4.21**), intellectual (**4.14**) and environmental (**4.04**) dimensions.
- First-year students’ lowest wellness scores were in the emotional (**3.52**), financial (**3.52**), creative (**3.53**) and digital (**3.53**) dimensions.
- Compared to all other undergraduate students who completed the survey, first-year students had significantly higher financial (**3.52** vs. **3.40**) and physical (**4.21** vs. **4.07**) wellness dimension scores.
- First-year students had significantly lower creative (**3.53** vs. **3.62**) wellness dimension scores when compared to all other undergraduate students.
- Further investigations detected a statistically significant difference between the percentages of first-year students and all other undergraduate students within the fair, adequate and exceptional mean wellness dimension score categories regarding the emotional, financial and physical wellness dimensions.

FINDINGS

Wellness Scores Across Dimensions

First-year undergraduate students had generally adequate wellness scores across all ten dimensions of wellness. As shown in Figure 1 below, the highest scores for first-year students were observed for the physical, intellectual and environmental wellness dimensions while the lowest scores were observed on the emotional, financial, creative and digital dimensions.

Figure 1. Average wellness dimension scores: First-year undergraduate students ($n = 410$)

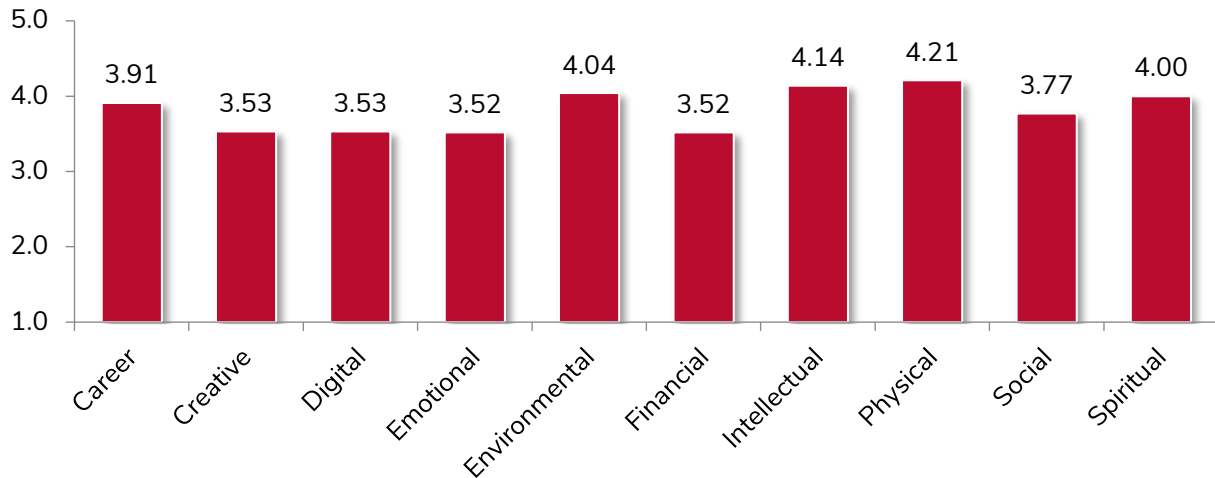
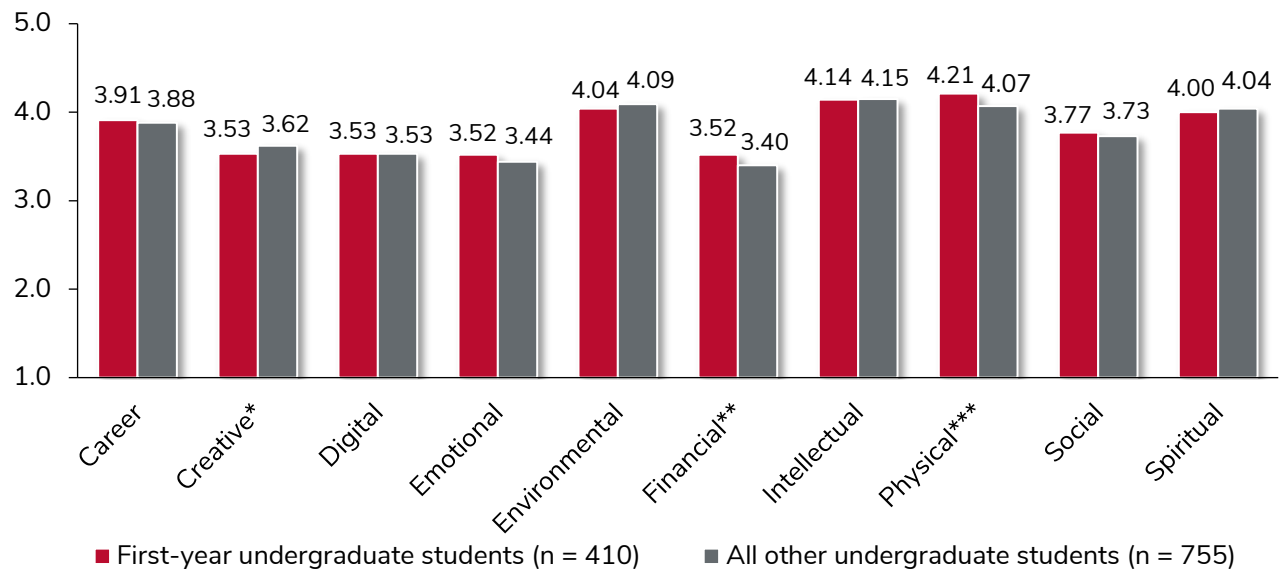


Figure 2 below compares the mean scores for each of the ten dimensions of wellness for first-year undergraduate students and all other undergraduate students who completed the survey during October 2024. Again, a higher mean score (i.e., closer to 5.0) indicates more positive attitudes and behaviors regarding each dimension. To investigate whether differences between these two groups of students were statistically significant, independent samples t-tests were conducted. Asterisks in the chart denote statistically significant differences between the two groups' average scores. Overall, statistically significant differences were detected between first-year students and all other undergraduate students on the creative, financial and physical wellness dimensions.

Figure 2. Average wellness dimension scores: First-year undergraduate students vs. all other undergraduate students



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Students' mean scores for the ten dimensions were then recoded into three categories. Figure 3 on page 5 illustrates the percentage of students with fair, adequate and exceptional mean wellness dimension scores.

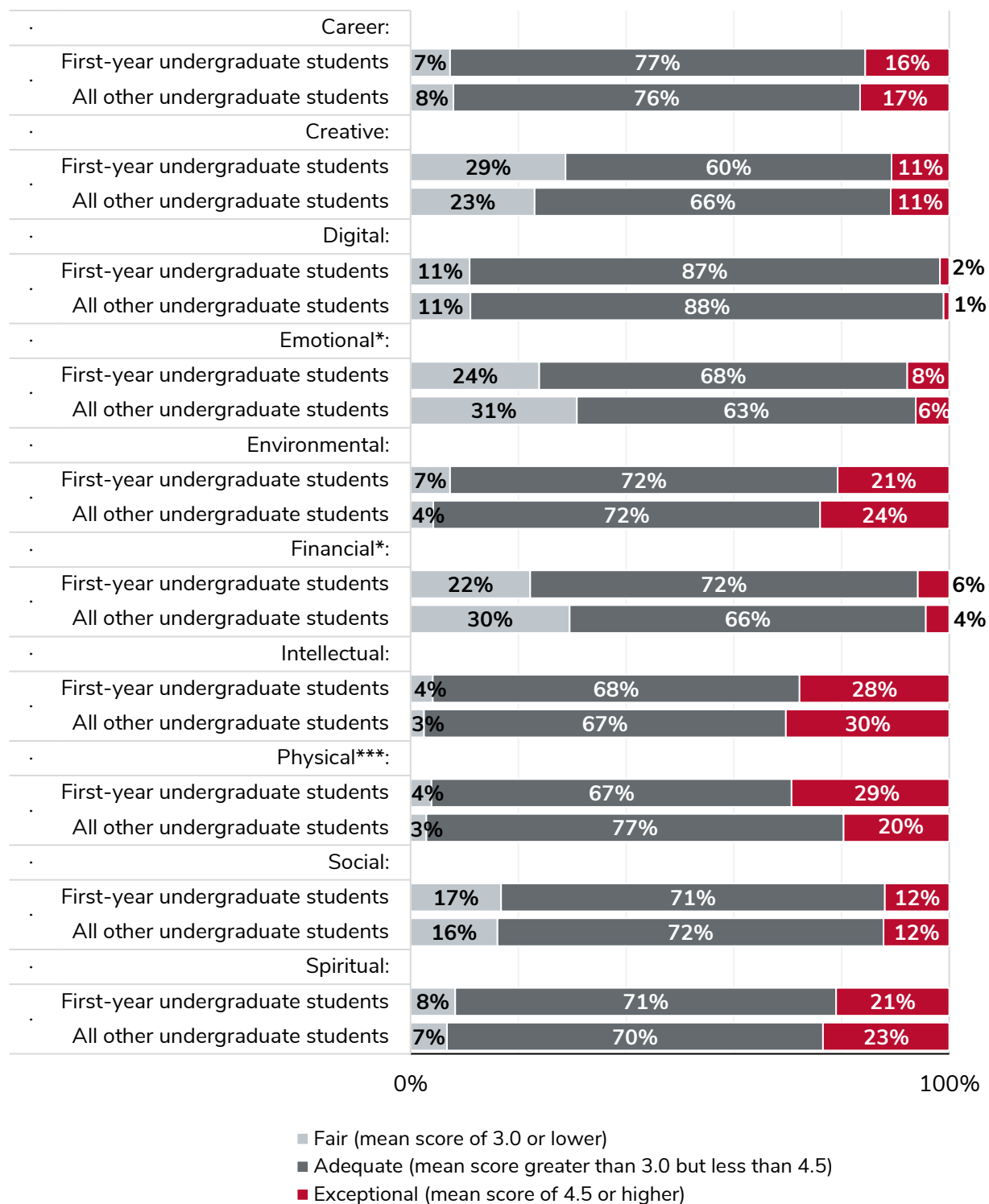
Students whose wellness dimension score is categorized as 'fair' have a mean score of 3.0 or lower for that dimension. Students who fall within the 'fair' category have room to grow and improve their wellness within that dimension since they reported more negative or neutral attitudes and behaviors regarding that wellness dimension.

Students whose wellness dimension score is categorized as 'adequate' have a mean score greater than 3.0 but less than 4.5 for that dimension. In general, these students have reported mostly positive attitudes and behaviors within that dimension and are effectively practicing that dimension of wellness. However, these students could still benefit from wellness programming and education that continues to support and encourage them to take active steps towards improving their overall well-being.

Finally, students whose wellness dimension score is 'exceptional' have a mean score of 4.5 or higher for that dimension. Students who fall within the 'exceptional' category are successfully embodying what it means to be well within that dimension as they are reporting the strongest positive attitudes and behaviors within that dimension.

To investigate whether differences between the percentage of first-year undergraduate students versus all other undergraduate students within each of the three categories were statistically significant, chi-square tests of independence were conducted. Statistically significant differences were detected between the two groups of students within each of the three categories for the emotional, financial and physical wellness dimensions.

Figure 3. Percentage of students with fair, adequate and exceptional mean wellness dimension scores



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

APPENDIX A. DEMOGRAPHICS

	First-year undergraduate		All other undergraduate		Total undergraduate	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Total	410	35.2%	755	64.8%	1,165	100.0%
Gender Identity						
Woman	259	63.2%	489	64.8%	748	64.2%
Man	131	32.0%	200	26.5%	331	28.4%
Nonbinary	8	2.0%	16	2.1%	24	2.1%
Questioning or unsure	1	0.2%	6	0.8%	7	0.6%
Another gender identity not listed or more than one identity	9	2.2%	32	4.2%	41	3.5%
Prefer not to answer	2	0.5%	12	1.6%	14	1.2%
Transgender Status						
Transgender	16	3.9%	27	3.6%	43	3.7%
Cisgender	388	94.6%	709	94.2%	1,097	94.3%
Prefer not to answer	6	1.5%	17	2.3%	23	2.0%
Race/Ethnicity						
Asian, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) and/or Native Hawai'ian	59	14.4%	88	11.7%	147	12.6%
Black or African American	28	6.8%	74	9.8%	102	8.8%
Latine or Hispanic	21	5.1%	32	4.2%	53	4.6%
Middle Eastern North African or Arab Origin (MENA)	6	1.5%	11	1.5%	17	1.5%
White or European American	242	59.0%	452	59.9%	694	59.6%
Biracial or Multiracial	49	12.0%	80	10.6%	129	11.1%
Another racial/ethnic identity not listed	1	0.2%	2	0.3%	3	0.3%
Prefer not to answer	4	1.0%	16	2.1%	20	1.7%
Residence						
On-campus	312	76.5%	196	26.2%	508	43.9%
Off-campus	94	23.0%	536	71.7%	630	54.5%
Sorority or fraternity housing	2	0.5%	16	2.1%	18	1.6%
Disability Status						
Has a disability	82	20.2%	190	25.3%	272	23.5%
Does not have a disability	314	77.2%	531	70.6%	845	72.9%
Prefer not to answer	11	2.7%	31	4.1%	42	3.6%
Generational Status						
First-generation student	105	25.6%	216	28.6%	321	27.6%
Continuing-generation student	305	74.4%	539	71.4%	844	72.5%

Note. 'Another gender identity not listed or more than one identity' includes: Agender, Bigender, Gender fluid, Genderqueer or Two-spirit in addition to self-describe responses that do not align with available responses. 'Another racial/ethnic identity not listed' includes: American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, Native American and/or First Nations in addition to self-describe responses that do not align with available responses. Not all respondents completed each item. Total percentages may be slightly less than or greater than 100% due to rounding.

APPENDIX B. WELLNESS DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS

The Wellness Assessment dimensions and the items that comprise each dimension are presented below.

Career

- I am confident in my career decisions.
- I feel that my current studies will be helpful to my future career.
- I envision my future career as a means to contribute to society.
- I feel that my major/program/career decision is an appropriate expression of my abilities and personal strengths.
- I feel that my major/program/career decision is an appropriate expression of what I find meaningful and important in life.
- I am able to balance my current job with the rest of my life.
- I feel that my current job interferes with other aspects of my life.
- I feel that I work in a positive environment.
- I feel that I work in a stressful environment.
- I set achievable goals in my current job.

Creative

- I express myself through creative activities.
- I attend arts-related events or programs.
- I think of myself as a creative person.
- I value multiple perspectives when thinking about complex topics.
- The arts help me appreciate other perspectives and cultures.

Digital

- I have strategies for limiting my screen time each week.
- I feel anxiety if I do not have my cell phone with me.
- I spend more time than I think I should on social media platforms.
- I interact with others online in a polite, respectful manner.
- I use digital resources to support my personal goals.
- I use digital resources to support my professional goals.
- I understand the impact of my digital footprint on my future goals.
- I am confident in my ability to maintain my privacy using digital resources.
- Online interactions have made it difficult to socialize face-to-face with my peers.

Emotional

- I am able to appropriately manage my feelings.
- I am able to appropriately express my feelings.
- I would be willing to seek help from others when I am having a difficult time.
- I feel that I am able to cope with my daily stress.
- I have a positive image of my body.

Environmental

- I engage in environmentally friendly behaviors (e.g., turn off lights/faucets, walk or bike).
- I take time to appreciate my surroundings.
- I take time to appreciate nature.
- I think it is important to conserve natural resources.
- If given the opportunity, I recycle.

Financial

- I think it is important to spend less than I earn.
- I am confident that I can plan a financial budget.
- I have enough money saved to handle financial emergencies.
- I track my spending to stay within my budget.
- I feel stressed by the amount of money I owe (credit cards, student loans, car payments, etc.).
- I feel stressed about my personal finances in general.
- I am confident in my ability to use credit cards responsibly.

Intellectual

- I am confident in my ability to find solutions to my problems.
- I am confident that I can learn new skills.
- I am interested in learning new things.
- I engage in intellectually engaging activities.
- I feel that my education is a priority.
- I was able to manage my academic workload during my most recent academic term.

Physical

- I am confident that I can maintain a nutritious diet.
- I eat a nutritious diet.
- I engage in exercise.
- I get at least 7 hours of sleep per night.
- I use alcohol/nicotine/other substances to manage stress.
- I use illicit drugs (e.g., cocaine, ecstasy, LSD, mushrooms, molly).
- I use nicotine products (e.g., cigarettes, vaping, smokeless tobacco).
- I use pain medications, sedatives, sleeping medications or tranquilizers (e.g., OxyContin, Vicodin, Percodan; Valium, Xanax, Ambien) for non-medical reasons without a prescription.
- I use stimulants (e.g., Ritalin, Adderall, Dexedrine) for non-medical reasons without a prescription.
- I use cannabis for non-medical reasons without a prescription.
- If you are sexually active, do you practice safer sex?
- How often do you binge drink?

Social

- I feel a sense of belonging in a community.
- I feel supported by my family.
- I feel that I am a person who other people like to be around.
- I have a strong social network.
- I have at least one close friend whom I trust and can confide in.
- I feel comfortable communicating face-to-face with others.
- I rarely feel lonely.

Spiritual

- I engage in self-reflection.
- I feel a connection to something larger than myself.
- I seek out meaning in my life.
- I have values, morals, and/or a belief system that helps me make decisions and guides my life.
- Harmony and balance within humanity is important to me.