

Student Opinion Survey

Overview and Sample Report

Purpose

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) conducts surveys of student opinion to inform peer review teams visiting institutions as part of comprehensive evaluations. The results are intended to help the peer review team identify possible questions for its meetings with faculty, staff and students during the visit.

The student opinion survey supports HLC's efforts to make the accreditation process more open and transparent. It allows all students, rather than just students who happen to be on campus at the time of a visit, to voice opinions on questions important to them.

HLC will aggregate the data and make the data and all direct responses provided by the students available to the team and the institution prior to the visit.

Please note: The survey and its results are meant to provide students with an opportunity to participate

in the accreditation process and to inform the peer review team. HLC will not use the results for ranking or comparison and will not publish them.

Policy

Routine Monitoring and Data Collection—Surveying of Students (INST.F.10.010)

HLC may survey students of an institution to gather information about their experience at the institution prior to a comprehensive evaluation at the institution scheduled by HLC. HLC will provide aggregate data resulting from the survey to the institution under review and the evaluation team prior to the comprehensive evaluation. The institution will have an opportunity to provide additional information or other data in response to the student survey data to the evaluation team and HLC prior to the comprehensive evaluation.

Survey Timeline

Three months prior to the month of the scheduled visit:

HLC will email the institution to notify them of the required survey. The email will include procedural information, as well as a link to the student survey with specific dates for when the link should be shared with the students (the open date) and when the survey will close. If the institution will not be in session during the survey window, HLC will work with the institution to modify the survey dates accordingly.

Two months prior to the month of the scheduled visit:

On the date that HLC has specified for distribution, institutions share the survey with all students via email and any additional methods of distribution. A reminder email must be sent at least four days later. The survey will remain open for 10 days.

One month prior to the month of the scheduled visit:

HLC will provide the survey results to the institution via email. Peer review team members will access the survey results in the Assurance System as part of the Evidence File.

Exceptions for institutions with visits in September, October and February:

Institutions with visits in September or October will be asked to conduct their survey in April. Institutions with visits scheduled in February will be asked to conduct their survey in November. This ensures that surveys are conducted at a time when students are likely to be in session. These institutions will still receive the survey report at least one month prior to the scheduled visit.

Survey Design

The survey questions were based on HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and seek students' opinions on the academic and administrative services offered by their institution. The survey is brief and should take most students no more than five minutes to complete. Students have the option to take the survey in either English or Spanish. All responses are voluntary and anonymous.

The survey begins with the following statement:

The Higher Learning Commission is the institutional accrediting association that comprehensively evaluates your school. [Institution Name Here] is going through the process this year. Your comments about your experiences are very important to us. A report of aggregated responses will be provided to your school and the team of representatives from the Higher Learning Commission who will be visiting your school.

The answers you give on this survey are anonymous. Unless you include identifying information in your comments, the visiting team and your school will not have access to your identity. Your participation is completely voluntary. Thank you for taking five minutes to complete this short survey.

The survey questions are provided in the sample results report on page 4.

Distribution to Students

Institutions are required to share the survey to their student body via email as the primary method of distribution. HLC will provide the institution with the survey link and the dates the survey will be open, as well as a sample email message the institution may send to their students.

The institution may choose to distribute the survey via other methods in addition to email. If the institution needs a printable or alternative version of the survey to distribute to students who do not have internet access (e.g. incarcerated students), please contact HLC at studentsurvey@hlcommission.org.

Prior to administering the survey, the institution must notify HLC of all methods of distribution it intends to use and the approximate number of students who will receive the communication. Institutions should not offer any incentives for students to complete the survey, such as raffles or other promotions.

Sample Email Message

Dear Student:

The Higher Learning Commission is the institutional accrediting association that comprehensively evaluates our school.

[Institution Name Here] is going through the process this year. Your comments about your experiences are very important. A summary of your input will be provided to the team of representatives from the Higher Learning Commission who will be visiting our school. The answers you give on this survey are anonymous. Unless you include identifying information in your comments, the Higher Learning Commission and the institution will not have access to your identity. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Thank you for taking five minutes to complete this short survey. The survey will be open through [Survey end date].

Click on the link to begin the survey: [LINK]

Sincerely,

[Institutional Representative Name, etc. here]

Survey Results Report

After the survey has closed, HLC will compile a report with the results. HLC staff will redact the responses to remove personally identifiable information (with the exception of the institution's chief executive officer) or information not essential to the evaluation team's work.

At least one month prior to the visit, HLC will send the results report to the institution's chief executive officer and Accreditation Liaison Officer. HLC will also upload the results report into the Assurance System in the HLC Documents folder of the Evidence File for the peer reviewers to access. (If the review is not being conducted using the Assurance System, HLC will email the report to the team.) The peer review team is trained to use the results to identify possible questions to ask during the visit. The institution may provide the peer review team and HLC additional information or other data in response to the survey report prior to the visit. In some circumstances, HLC may also provide unredacted information to the institution separately for further review.

Sample Results Report

See the following pages for a sample results report.



Higher Learning Commission Student Survey Results

ABC University
(N=Number of Responses)

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements. If the statement does not apply to you, please mark the "Not Applicable" button.

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Total
The communication I received from the school about the overall enrollment process was clear	32	64	86	214	165	3.74	561
I received clear information as to how much my education would cost	49	65	76	188	176	3.68	554
A school financial aid officer provided financial aid counseling to help me understand the responsibilities of borrowing money to finance my education	58	85	85	154	126	3.40	508
The school worked with me to identify an academic program that met my goals	34	56	107	193	156	3.70	546
An academic advisor provided me with accurate information about the requirements necessary to fulfill my course of study	37	35	63	193	238	3.99	566
An academic advisor was available to help me with questions about my course of study	21	25	56	206	257	4.16	565
I was placed at the appropriate course level that matched my academic preparation	16	31	59	233	231	4.11	570
I am satisfied with the progress I am making toward completing my degree	18	27	49	239	238	4.14	571
Course content is appropriately challenging for my program of study	17	22	66	259	211	4.09	575
Courses required to complete my degree are available when I need to take them	48	71	94	204	147	3.59	564
Faculty who teach provide helpful instruction	14	22	52	264	223	4.15	575
Faculty are available when I need help	13	25	63	238	234	4.14	573
Faculty who teach are knowledgeable about their subject areas	6	10	46	221	292	4.36	575
When I have non-academic questions, I can reach someone who can help me in a timely way	41	38	131	172	148	148	530
Overall, I am satisfied with my experience at the school	28	36	68	243	197	3.95	572

Please use the space below to provide your comments. Be sure not to include identifying information for yourself or individuals at your school.

Would like to see more graduate programs available at ABC University, especially the medical field.

Overall my experience has been positive, however whenever I needed to be helped by an advisor it has always been difficult and painful process.

Financial Aid Office and Business Offices are almost impossible to deal with and make money matters very hard to deal with.

Program really encourages critical thinking.

Scholarship rules are very vague and basically left open to opinions and non athletes seem to be lower in priority than athletes

ABC University is a great school but the students have a negative stereotype and attitude about the school. ABC University could be so much better if university morale were more positive.

I am currently an international masters student I did complete my undergrad here as well. Unfortunately as far as academic advising or my ungraded work it was poor however with my masters it has been exceptional! The administrative side of my time here at ABC University has also been disappointing every semester I have had a problem of some sort it has been a huge inconvenience. I cannot overlook what I have gained from ABC University but from a student's perspective the business end of the school has been an ongoing struggle to get anything resolved fast and efficiently.

No Internet or air conditioning. Very controlling rules. Food is terrible and unhealthy. Campus is crowded making parking and getting lunch very difficult. Faculty at times is extremely lazy and only assigns busy work for the students instead of teaching them something valuable. Pretty much like a second high school

I was promised a scholarship I never received, which made my experience here stressful here at ABC University.

I believe that all of my professors at ABC University have been great! They are all friendly and knowledgeable. Unfortunately, Financial Aid gave me the wrong category of assistance they made me a quarterly student instead of a MBA student. They eventually got it worked out though it just took longer than I had hoped. I also feel that if you do not play a sport some of the employees at ABC University do not treat you as fair. It's almost as if you have to be an athlete to be able to get what you ask for.

The ABC University has afforded me the ability to advance my education and juggle a fulltime job and family. The work is challenging, the professors are engaging, and I feel prepared to enter into a new career.

Some professors don't like and are not meant to be advisors

Every education teacher I have had has been very helpful to me they have been some of my most enjoyable classes.

Courses are not challenging enough for a university. Both general required courses as well as upper division major courses fail to provide the necessary challenges which will facilitate the growth of each student's intellect. Also, ABC University fails to provide adequate support or a welcoming environment for both transfer and commuter

students, despite the large commuter base. Beyond the atmospheric and technical issues, the lack of financial aid offered to commuter students is heartily discouraging.

My major courses and upper-level electives have always been engaging, challenging, and enjoyable, but my general education courses have, at times, been quite the opposite. The math and science departments are very weak; I have always felt like they are fishing for major students but they ignore everyone else, or they simply do not care about teaching the classes.

As an English major, I usually feel either completely ostracized or as though my opinions in class are irrelevant; I have never been told what is right, but I am always told that I am wrong with no reason as to why (and I do always ask).

Being a transfer student and a commuting student, I feel that options for me outside of academics are limited. It is difficult to get involved because I never get notifications to anything happening on campus as resident students would know from living in dorms or going into the campus centers that I have no need to go into. Sports are completely unavailable and even intramural sports are made impossible by the popularity contest of a system that is currently used. I wish I knew of more opportunities on campus I could get involved in; I know they exist, but they are barely made public to students in my situation or a similar one. I wouldn't even know where to go or who to ask to get such information. ABC University and students like myself are both missing opportunities because of a lack of communication.

athletes are over glorified at the school they need to spend less time and money on them

I really enjoy the atmosphere of this university. The great nature is a very calm and great environment to study. Though there are lack of fun and adventure in this university, a real dedicated individual seeking to solely educate themselves would find this university the best.

Moreover, for international students, if you are afraid of feeling like you're homesick, dont worry. ABC University is one of the most international based university in the state.

I don't want to be a complainer, I love this school but the meal program and food options are horrible and most of the student body would agree. It needs to be fixed.

My program was billed to be one thing and then changed during the process. I feel lied to and cheated for money. Many of the people who started the program have dropped out and now have to pay money for the degree they never got. Inaccurate information was given and the staff changed so many times, no one knew what was going on. My first dissertation chair did not return one email or phone call for an entire semester. I had to notify the program director to get her to respond. I still was charged for that semester though.

While I do not mind, many of the general education courses are near pointless, as their difficulty is non-existent.

The classes and course content are about the only thing keeping me going. I have moved off campus and cannot wait to complete my degree and move on to a completely different university. Outside of the classroom and my relationship with my advisor, my experience here has been relatively, if not extremely, poor. Respectfully, student graduating early to get out

I have been beyond satisfied with the teachers I have had thus far in the Education department for my early childhood education courses.

Communication between students, other faculty, and other administrators is very, very poor. Also, the administration does NOT listen to their student's complaints about issues around campus. Overall, this administration is the POOREST I have ever encountered. My high school did better than this college. I love my

classes and the students here, but my voice, and others, are not being heard and that is wrong. Also, they have helped me out very little in terms of my Work and Learn and Housing. It would be nice if the administration and other faculty actually took our opinions seriously for once.

Classes required to graduate aren't offered enough. Several classes for my major are only offered certain semesters or even certain years, which make graduating quickly very hard.

As soon as I showed an interest in ABC University, a graduate admissions representative contacted me within 12 hours. The admissions representative was professional and asked if I had any questions about the program. He met with me the next day and answered my questions and helped me with the next steps of the application process. Everyone was prompt and professional throughout the whole enrollment process. I felt appreciated and wanted as a future student. No other university that I was interested in could compare, which was one of the many reasons why I chose ABC University for my graduate degree!

I am a freshman, and I do not enjoy how strict the rules are. I also do not appreciate the time restraints for the meals. I am working to pay off my school, and my work restricts me to get a meal. I brought this up to a business advisor, and she told me to get food early, however, getting food early restricts me from eating the meal that I'm supposed to eat. I do not understand what I am paying for if I can't get a meal because of my job that I'm working to pay off tuition. Also, losing scholarship for moving off campus. That is REDICULOUS.

The biggest thing you'll get complaints about is the cafeteria food. All things considered, that's a compliment.

My advisor is the best and I stand by her. I love her. BUT my department was never on one accord and I was misled to when my completion date was. Often getting many different stories and run arounds

Make tutoring schedule better known to the public. I asked a professor a week ago for a tutor schedule and I have not received confirmation. Also, make it known if you are entering a class in which there are no tutors.

The school can be very strict at times compared to other colleges

ABC University made my transition back to school easy and I love it!!!

I think the online courses I have taken have required too much work and are far less convenient than taking a class in person. I don't understand why an online course has to have exponentially more work than a course you attend in person. I think the amount of work should be even. In addition, I feel that mostly what I have done in my masters courses so far is read and review journal articles, which is not helping me learn to be a better teacher.

I feel ABC University provided me with practical knowledge, and prepared me for my job search. I recently accepted a position with an excellent school district. The classes I took at ABC University addressed the current trends in teaching, and prepared me for the grueling process of looking for a job. I landed my dream job, and feel I would not be in this position if not for the education I received. The staff is dedicated to providing students with the skills and tools needed to be successful in today's world.

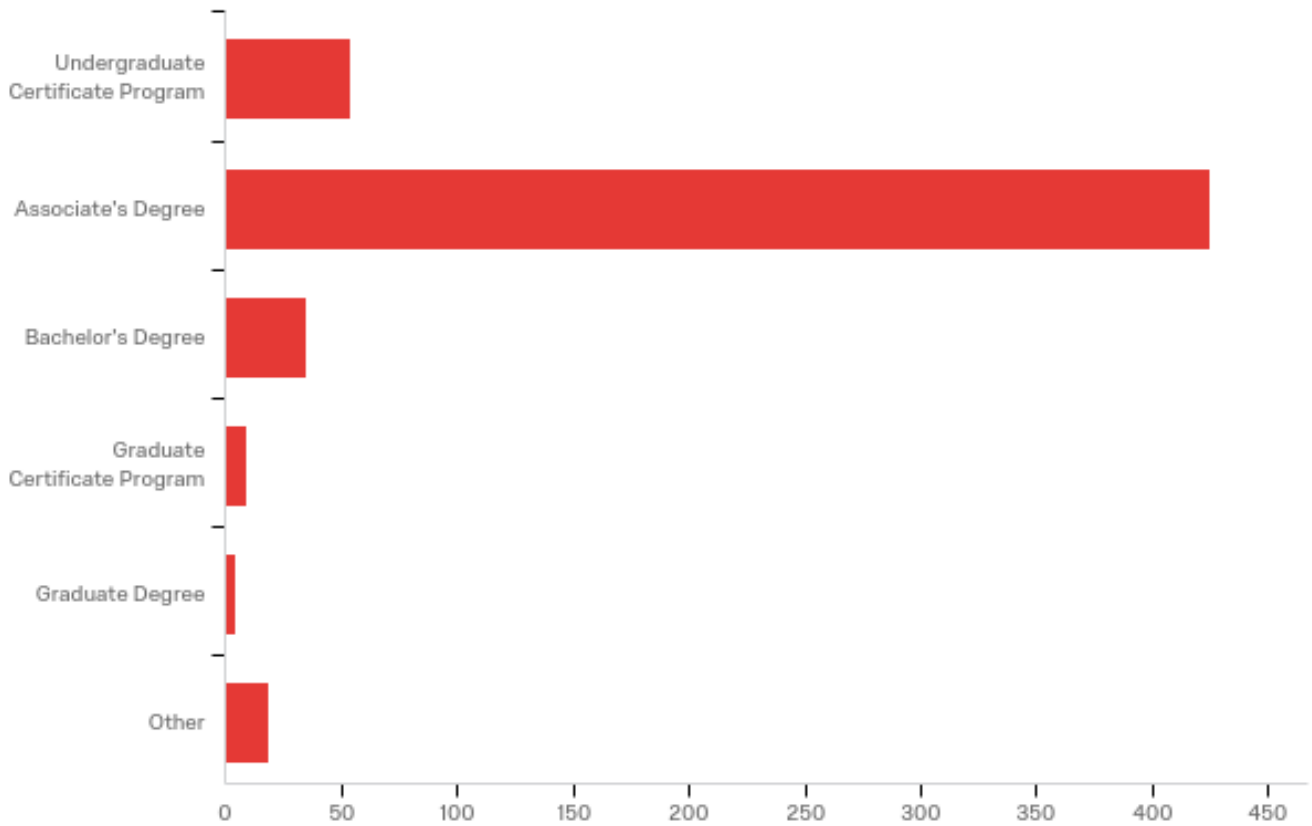
I find the full time/part time faculty to be great. However, I find the teaching quality of many of the adjunct instructors in the school extremely poor. Many of them do not demonstrate teaching skills. They have knowledge in the subject but aren't capable of teaching in a cohesive manor. A good idea might be to sit in on their classes and get feedback from the students.

My advisor signed me up for the wrong classes and made me lose thousands of dollars

The interactions and communication between the different faculties are very disconnected from each other regarding student information. Redirection from office to office is a common occurrence on campus for students.

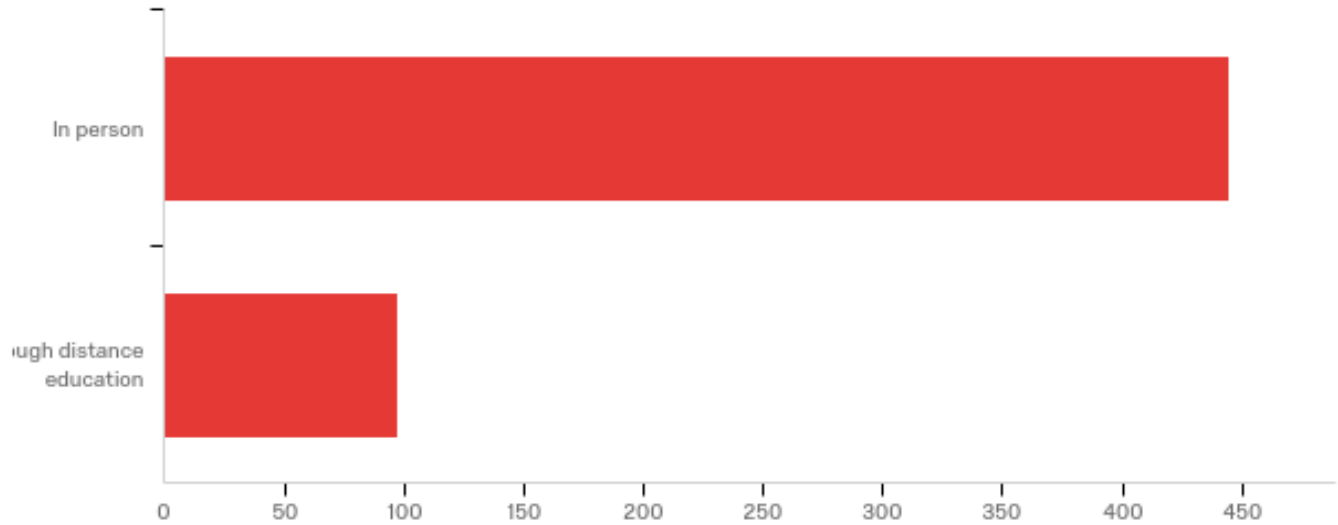
I am starting to really dislike all the rules.

What academic program are you currently enrolled in?



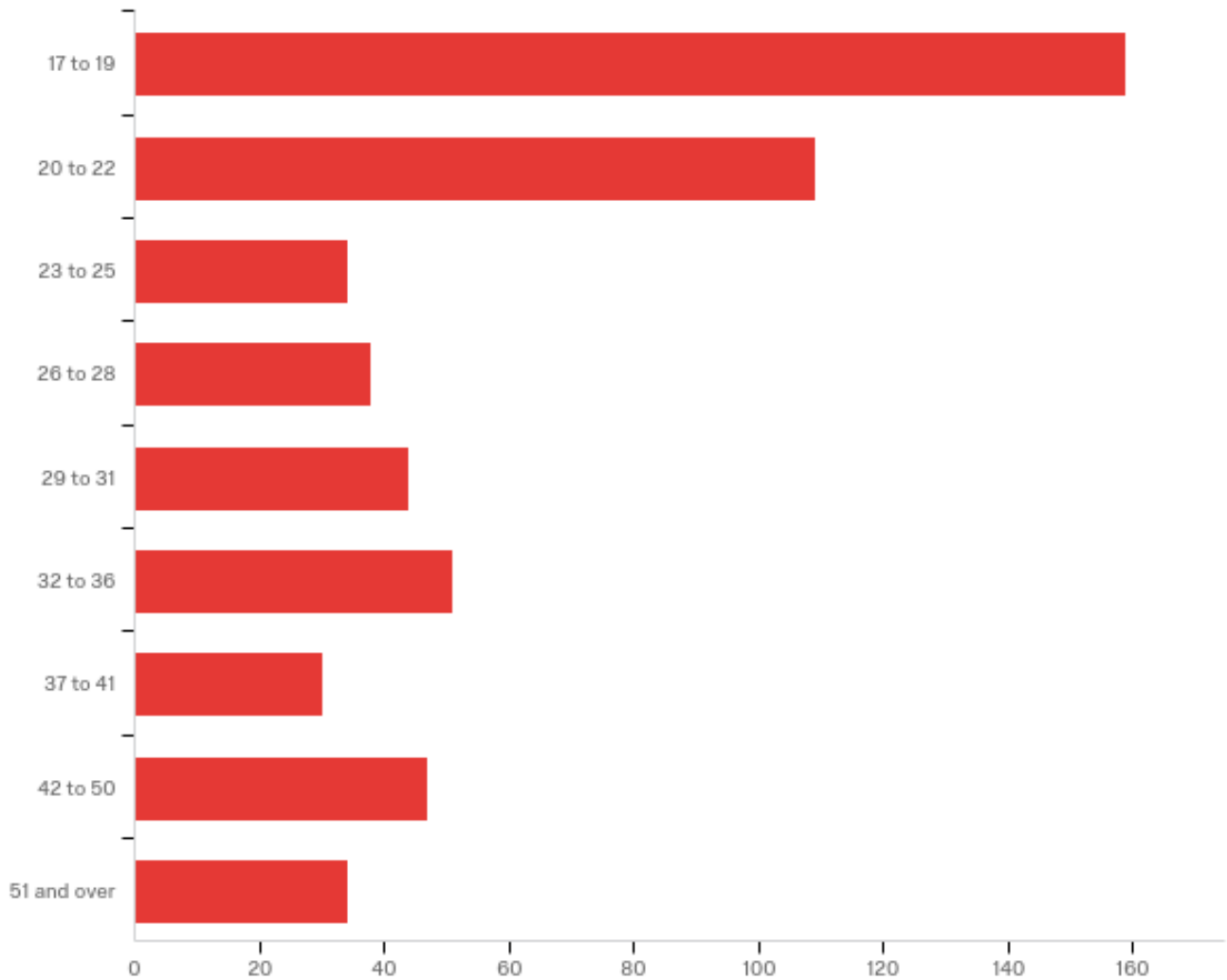
Answer	%	Count
Associate's Degree	75.27	420
Bachelor's Degree	7.17%	40
Graduate Certificate Program	1.79%	10
Graduate Degree	1.43%	8
Other	3.58%	20
Undergraduate Certificate Program	10.75%	60
Total	100%	558

How do you primarily take classes at your school?



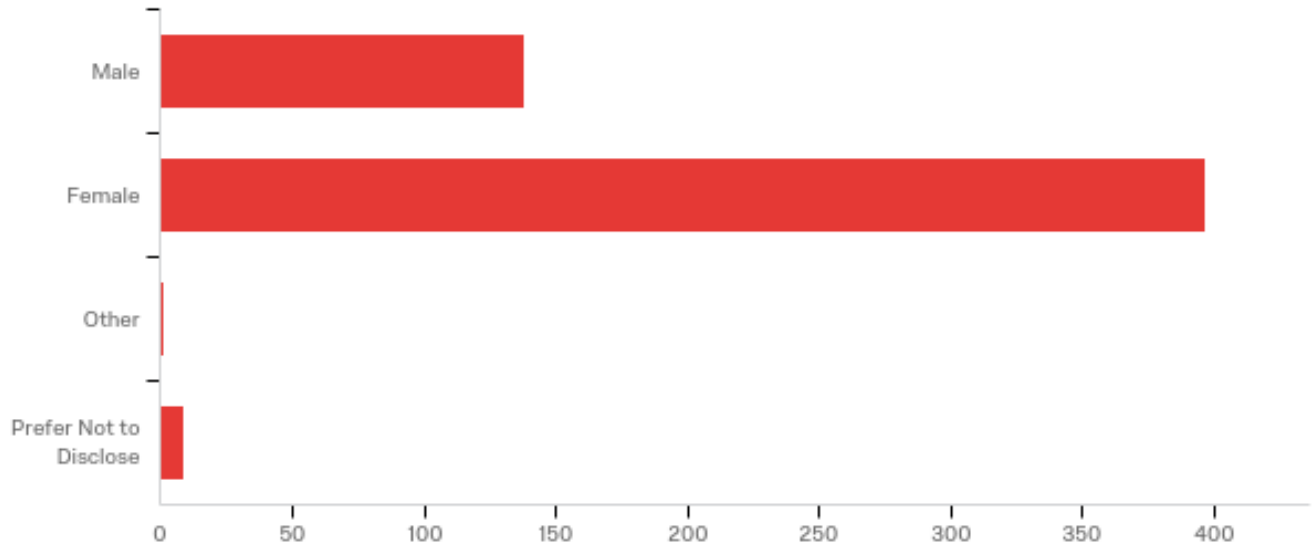
Answer	%	Count
In person	81.81%	450
Through distance education	18.18%	100
Total	100%	550

What is your current age?



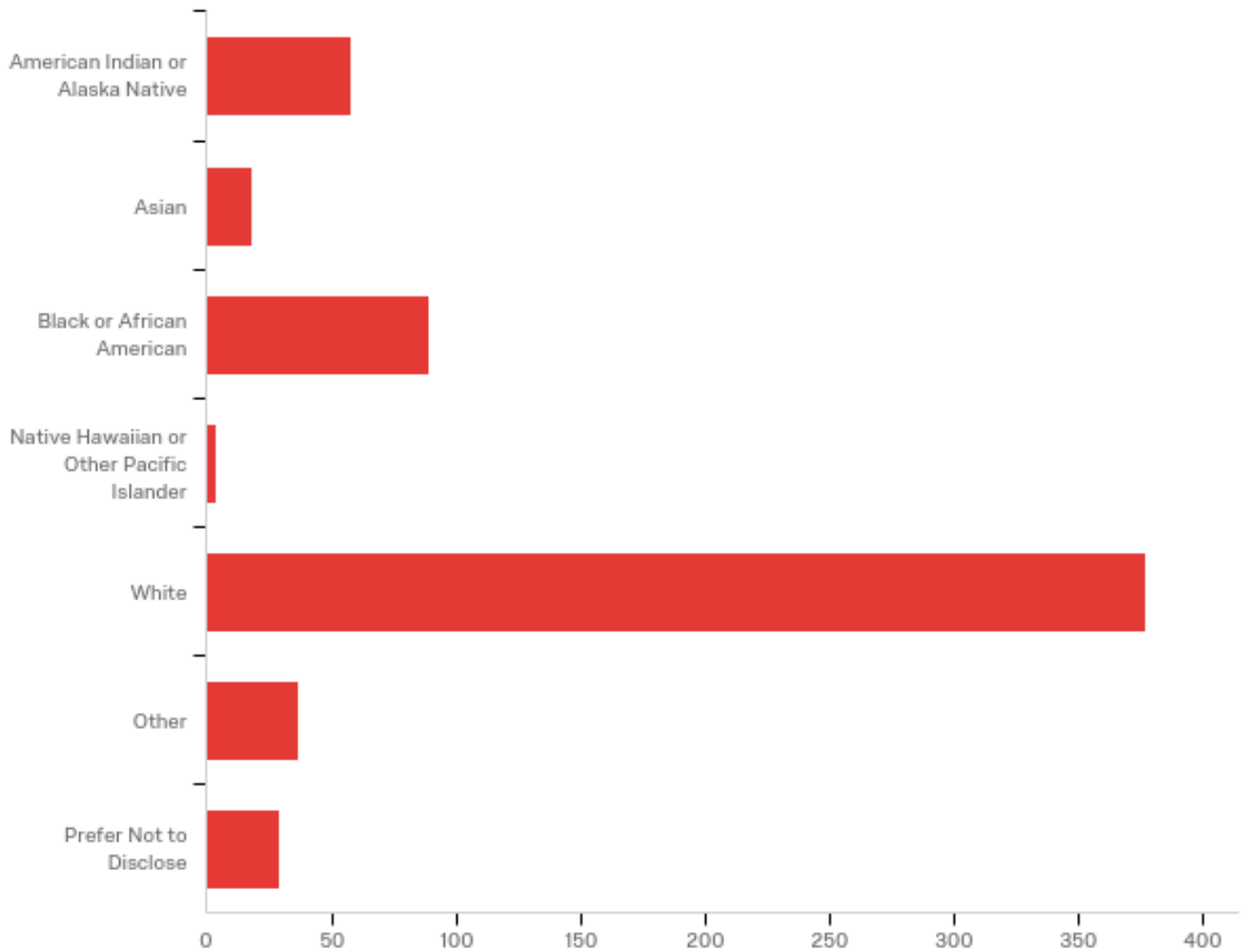
Answer	%	Count
17 to 19	28.10%	163
20 to 22	19.83%	115
23 to 25	6.55%	38
26 to 28	7.07%	41
29 to 31	8.97%	52
32 to 36	10.00%	58
37 to 41	5.52%	32
42 to 50	7.59%	44
51 and over	6.38%	37
Total	100%	580

What is your gender?



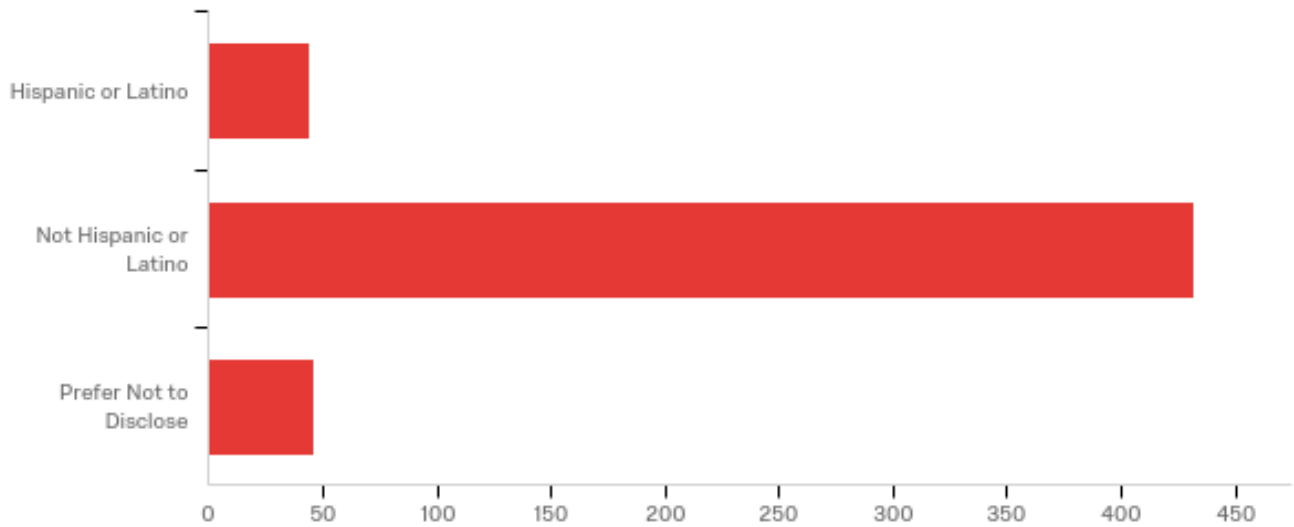
Answer	%	Count
Male	25.80%	145
Female	71.17%	400
Other	0.36%	2
Prefer Not to Disclose	2.67%	15
Total	100%	562

What is your race? (choose all that apply)



Answer	%	Count
American Indian or Alaska Native	9.52%	60
Asian	3.02%	19
Black or African American	14.76%	93
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.10%	6
White	60.32%	380
Other	6.67%	42
Prefer Not to Disclose	4.76%	30
Total	100%	630

What is your ethnicity?



Answer	%	Count
Hispanic or Latino	9.16%	49
Not Hispanic or Latino	81.87%	438
Prefer Not to Disclose	8.97%	48
Total	100%	535