

Priorities Survey for Online Learning (PSOL)

(Updated October 2014)

The Priorities Survey of Online Learners (PSOL; Noel-Levitz, 2001) is a survey designed to evaluate what students believe is important about their education experience, as well as how satisfied they are with their experiences. Excelsior College has administered the PSOL to a sample of its enrolled students every two years since 2010, allowing for longitudinal comparisons as well as comparisons with national benchmarks and 10 peer institution groups identified by the Institutional Effectiveness Steering Committee (IESC).

For the year 2014, a total of 847 survey responses were obtained from the students. The primary findings from the PSOL 2014 administration are summarized as follows:

- Overall, the results suggest that students are generally satisfied with their educational experience at Excelsior College. More specifically, 85% of respondents indicated that Excelsior met or exceeded their expectations; 79% are satisfied with their experience at Excelsior, and 75% would enroll at Excelsior again.
- On these items, Master's degree students reported higher satisfaction with their experience than Associate or Bachelor's degree students. Bachelor's degree students scored highest when asked if they would enroll at Excelsior again.
- Upon closer examination of the students with low satisfaction scores on these summary items, the majority of those respondents had not taken an exam or course within the past 12 months.
- In comparison to the National Online Learners and Peer Institutions group as well as the EC 2012 results, Excelsior College received slightly lower satisfaction scores on the summary items described above, but the differences were not considered to be statistically significant.

The 26 standard PSOL items represent five scales: Institutional Perceptions, Academic Services, Instructional Services, Enrollment Services, and Student Services. Average scores on all of these items were higher than 5 on a 7-point Likert scale, indicating satisfaction. On all five scales, Excelsior's performance for the year 2014 is consistent and not statistically different from the year 2012 results. When compared to national benchmarks, Excelsior's performance for the year 2014 is consistent and not statistically different in four out of five areas (scores were significantly lower in the area of Enrollment Services). In comparison with the Peer Institutions group, Excelsior's performance was consistent in three out of five areas (scores were significantly lower in the areas of Instructional Services and Enrollment Services). The survey items in the Enrollment Services area with lower satisfaction scores were related to financial aid information and availability, with the majority of dissatisfied responses from students enrolled in the ADN program that are not eligible for financial aid.