



# How Has the On-Campus Housing Experience Changed Over Time?

Skyfactor Research Note

## How Has the On-Campus Housing Experience Changed Over Time?

On-campus housing programs strive to provide a quality living environment that not only fosters strong social connections and comfortable living, but also provides programs, services, and initiatives that support broader student learning and success. Every campus collects information about students' experiences in residence halls that not only demonstrates how residence life supports student success, but also shows how much our students have changed over time. But, we often do not take the time to explore just how their experiences, perceptions, and expectations have either changed or remained consistent over the years. Exploring data longitudinally can be incredibly powerful for showing not only the impact of on-campus living—but the impact of the work we do with our residents.

To that end, this note highlights results from an analysis of ten years of survey data on the experiences of on-campus residents to highlight key trends over the last decade in on-campus housing.

### About the Data

The data used in this research note is from the ACUHO-I/ Benchworks Resident Assessment. The survey was jointly designed by ACUHO-I and the survey development team at Skyfactor. This survey enables institutions to evaluate the experiences of on-campus residents, focusing on satisfaction with the housing experience, facilities, staff, dining and roommates; as well as learning related to community interactions, programs, diverse interactions, sustainability, and healthy habits.



The analyses in this note represent data from ten years of administration of the Resident Assessment, beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year and running through the 2017-2018 academic year. The data summarized in this note are from survey responses from 2,537,511 on-campus residents from 571 unique institutions in the United States.

### Topics of Focus

This note focuses on five high-level trends identified when exploring ten years of data on the college student resident experience:

- Facilities and privacy
- Technology
- Safety
- Student Staff
- Value of residence hall experience

## Increases in Privacy

There have been significant changes in student expectations with facilities in the past ten years, in particular with expectations of privacy in living areas. National data shows a shift towards more private residence hall living spaces. And, when paired with data on increases in satisfaction with facilities, tells a story of the impact of campus responsiveness to student needs.

### Configuration of Living Area

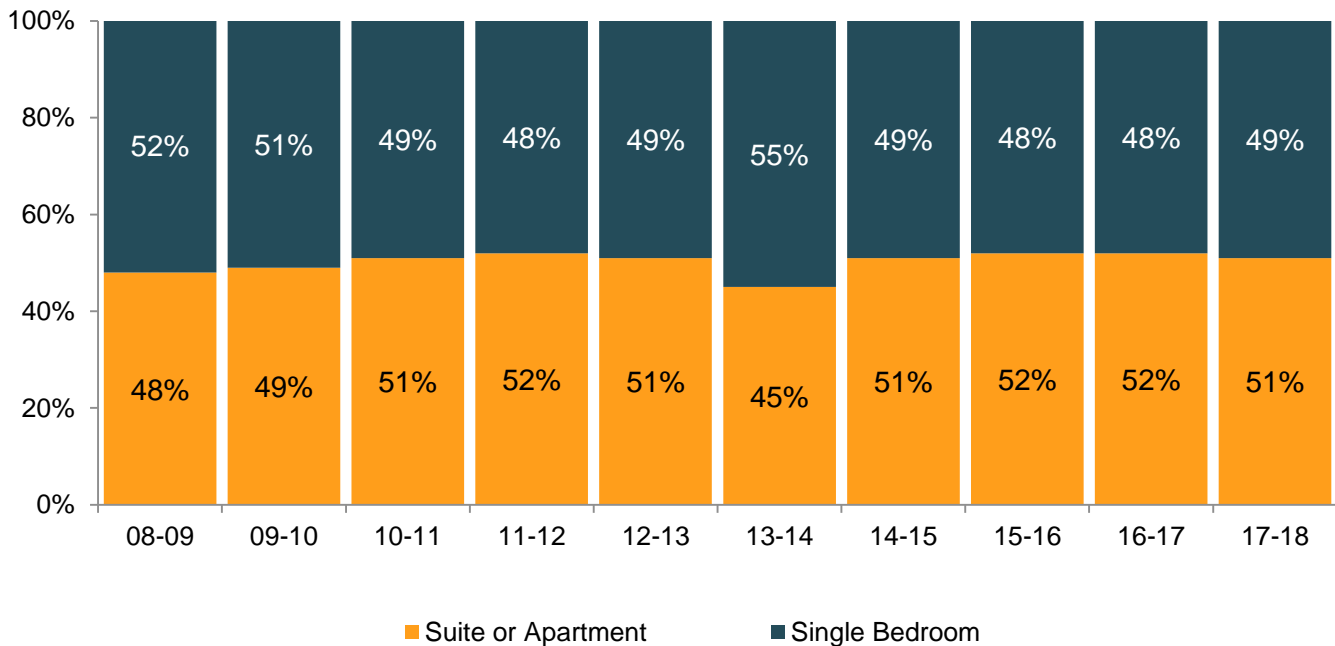
Figure 1 displays the percentage of on-campus residents who indicated that the configuration of their living area was a suite or apartment. The percentage displayed combines response options for suite (bedroom(s), bathroom(s), no living room, no kitchen), deluxe suite (bedroom(s), bathroom(s), living room, no kitchen), and apartment (bedroom(s), bathroom(s), living room, kitchen).

In general, the data reflect a trend of students increasingly living in spaces with more privacy. For instance:

- The percentage of students indicating their living area configuration was a suite or apartment-style increased from 48% to 51%.
- The percentage living in apartments increased from 16% to 21%.
- In contrast, the percentage of residents indicating they lived in a single bedroom either by themselves or with roommates from 52% to 49%.

### Figure 1: Living Space Configuration

Percentage of students indicating the configuration of their room is suite or apartment-style, displayed over the past ten academic years.



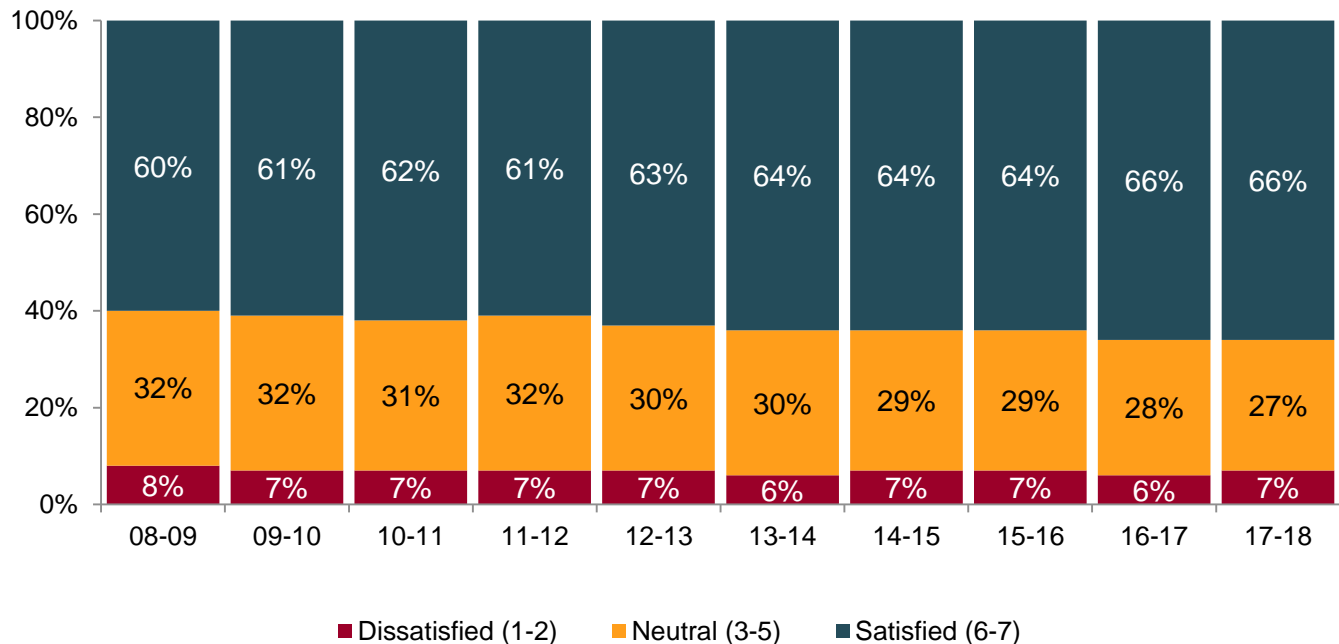
## Facilities Satisfaction

As the types of residence halls students live in continue to evolve, so do perceptions of satisfaction related to not just privacy but also more broadly with facilities and residence hall environments.

Figure 2 displays the percentage of on-campus residents who responded 1 or 2 (dissatisfied); 3, 4, or 5 (neutral); or 6 or 7 (satisfied) with their degree of privacy over the past ten academic years. Overall, on-campus residents are more likely to report high satisfaction with the privacy of their residence hall than ten years ago.

### Figure 2: Satisfaction with Privacy

Percentage of students responding dissatisfied (1-2), neutral (3-5), or satisfied (6-7) to question on satisfaction with their degree of privacy in their residence hall over the past ten academic years.

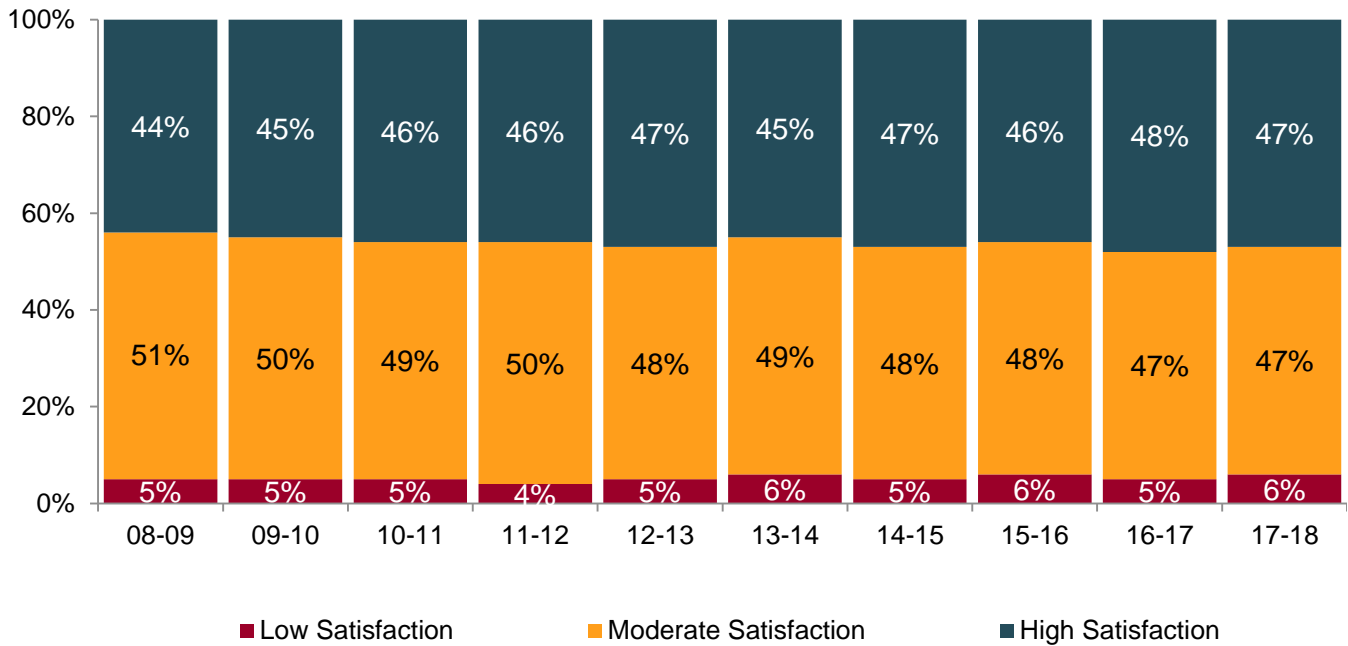


The increases in student satisfaction with facilities and residence halls can be seen broadly in the distribution of scores on two of the survey factors: facilities (figure 3) and residence hall environment (figure 4). Both figures display the percentage of on-campus residents who scored low (1-2.99), moderate (3-5.99), and high (6-7) on both factors over the ten-year period.

Overall, on-campus residents are more likely to report high levels of satisfaction related to residence hall environment and facilities now than they were ten years ago. The percentage of students scoring high on the facilities factor increased from 44% to 47%. And, the percentage of students scoring high on the hall environment factor increased from 40% to 48%.

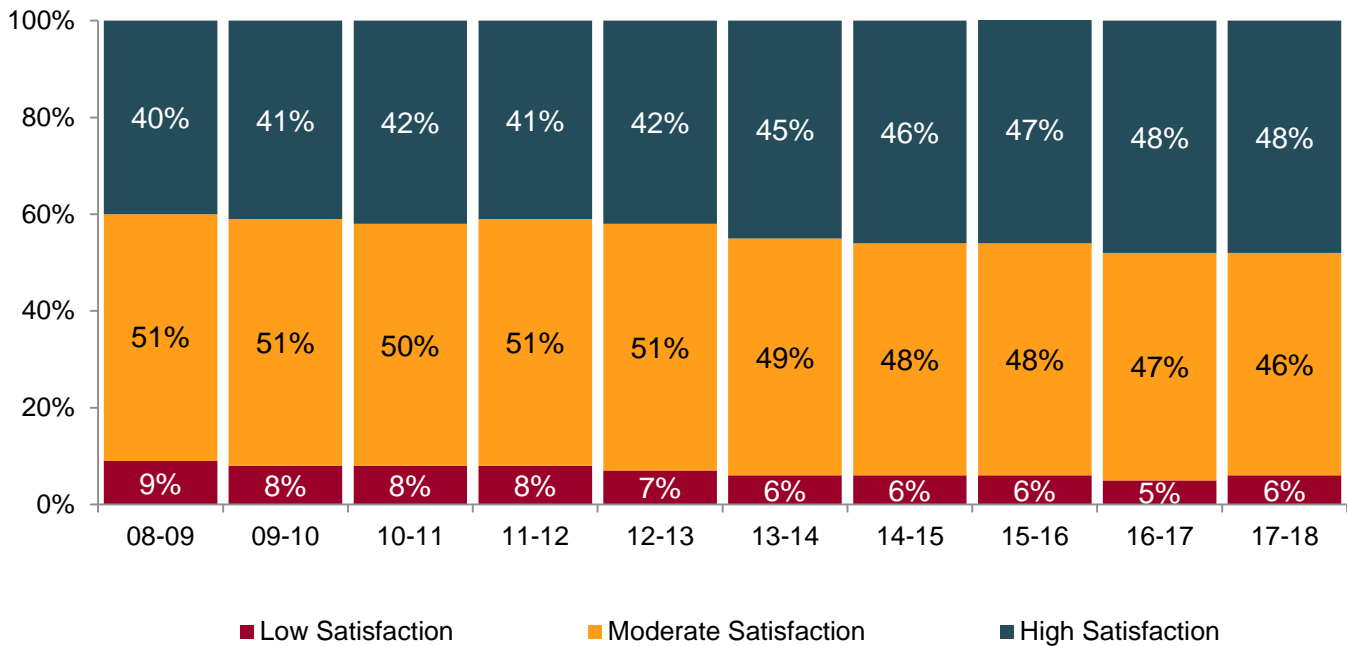
### Figure 3: Facilities Factor Satisfaction

Percentage of students averaging low (1-2.99), moderate (3-5.99), and high (6-7) on questions related to satisfaction with residence hall facilities, displayed over the past ten academic years.



### Figure 4: Hall Environment Factor Satisfaction

Percentage of students averaging low (1-2.99), moderate (3-5.99), and high (6-7) on questions related to satisfaction with their residence hall environment, displayed over the past ten academic years.



## Technology

One area related to facilities and services, however, that did not see increases over the past ten years were services related to technology, namely cable television and internet connectivity.

Figure 5 displays the percentage of on-campus residents who responded 1 or 2 (dissatisfied); 3, 4, or 5 (neutral); or 6 or 7 (satisfied) with their degree of privacy over the past ten academic years. Overall, on-campus residents are more likely to report being dissatisfied with the cable TV service than they were ten years ago. Furthermore, the percentage of residents who were highly satisfied with their cable TV service steadily decreased—from 63% in the 2008-2009 academic year to 52% in the 2017-2018 academic year.

### Figure 5: Satisfaction with Cable TV

Percentage of students responding dissatisfied (1-2), neutral (3-5), or satisfied (6-7) to question on satisfaction with cable TV services in their residence hall, displayed over the past ten academic years.

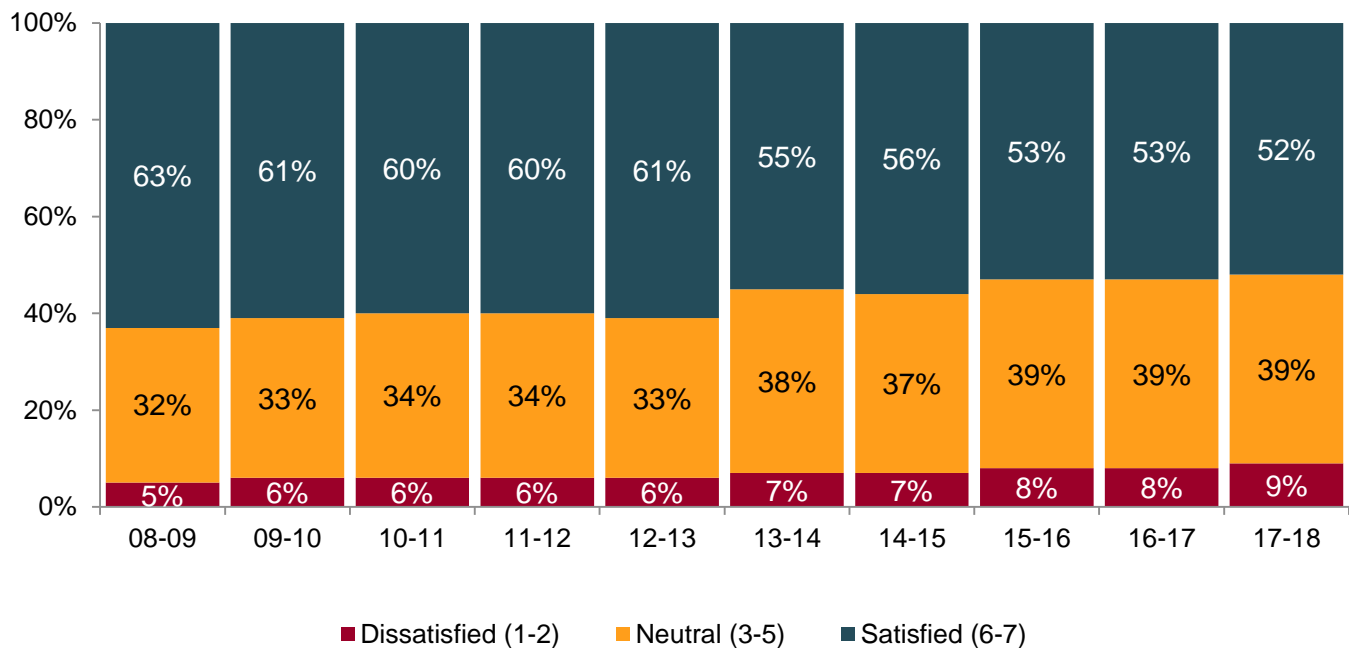
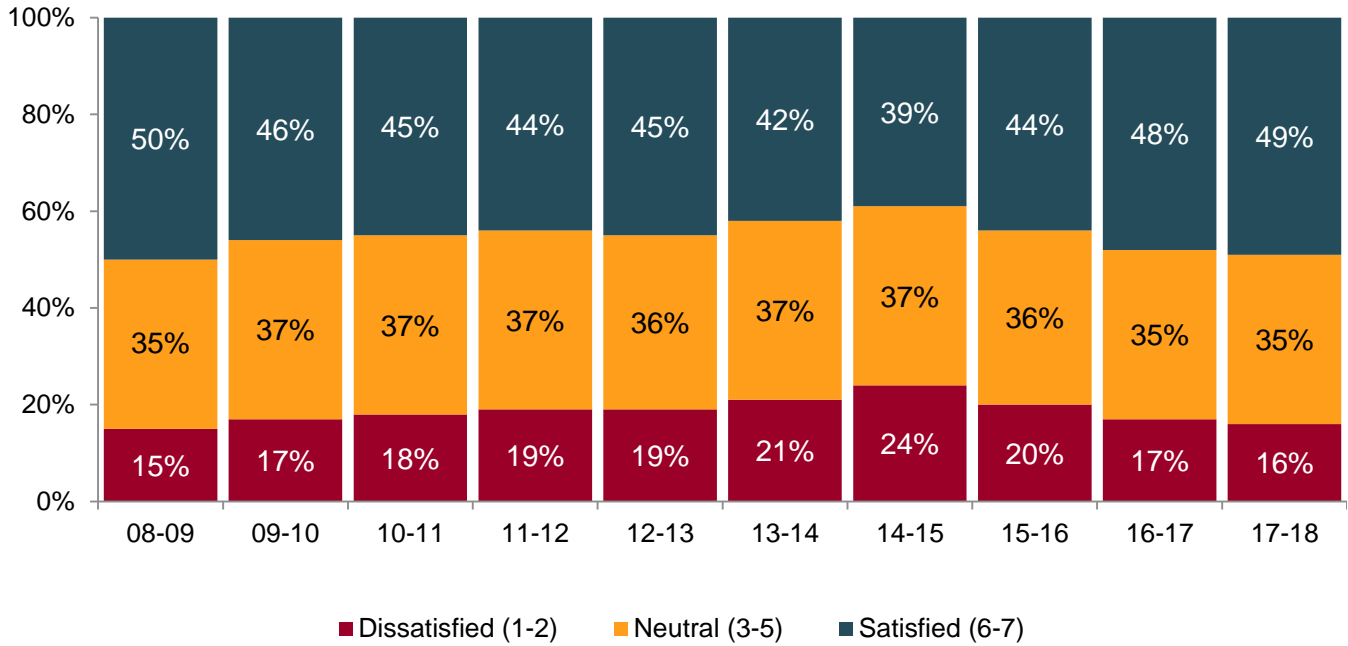


Figure 6 displays the percentage of on-campus residents who responded 1 or 2 (dissatisfied); 3, 4, or 5 (neutral); or 6 or 7 (satisfied) regarding satisfaction with their internet connectivity in their room. The data related to this question tell a more nuanced story. From the 2008-2009 academic year until the 2014-2015 academic year, the percentage of residents who reported high satisfaction with internet connectivity decreased steadily from 50% to 39%. However, since the 2014-2015 academic year, the percent of residents who reported high satisfaction with internet connectivity increased back to 49%—nearly the same level it was at ten years ago. This trend represents some of the largest decreases and increases of any single question in the resident assessment over this ten-year period and reflects the responsiveness of universities to increases internet reliability and connectivity to keep up with student demands.

### Figure 6: Satisfaction with Internet Connectivity

Percentage of students responding dissatisfied (1-2), neutral (3-5), or satisfied (6-7) to question on satisfaction with internet connectivity in their room, displayed over the past ten academic years.



### Perceptions of Safety

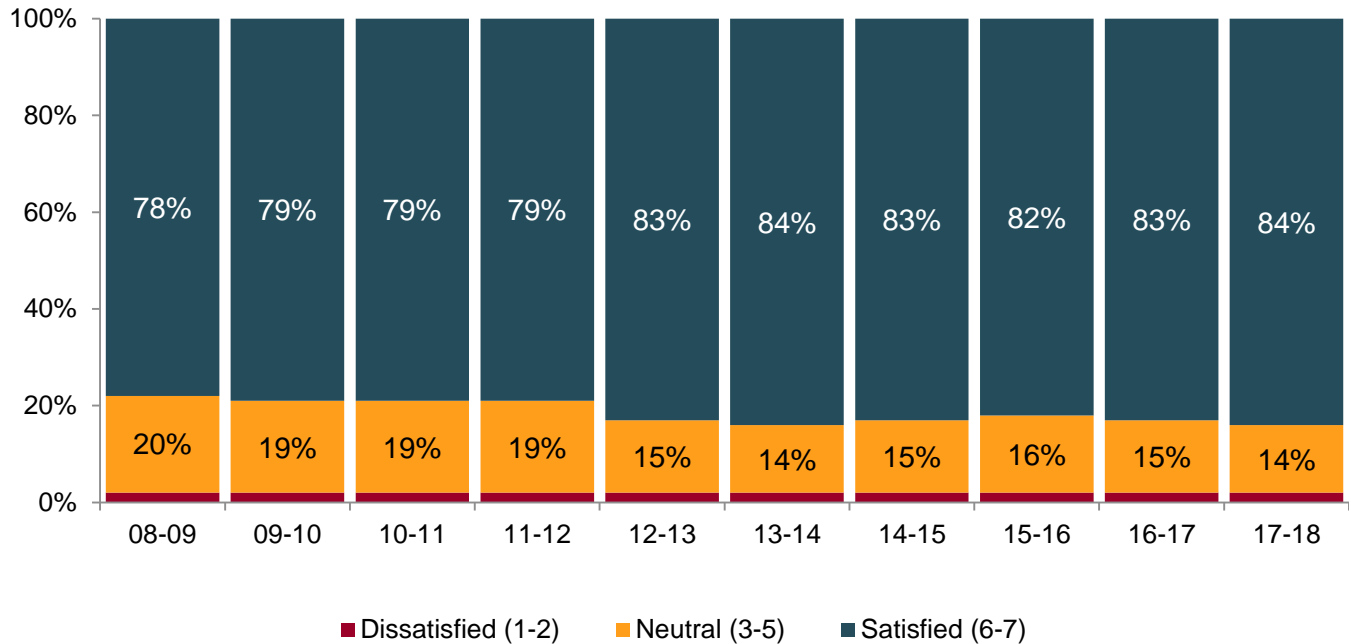
Another area that showed steady increases in resident satisfaction over the past ten years was perceptions of safety in residence halls.

Figures 7 and 8 displays the percentage of on-campus residents who responded 1 or 2 (dissatisfied); 3, 4, or 5 (neutral); or 6 or 7 (satisfied) with how safe they feel in their room and residence hall, respectively, over the past ten years.

While on-campus residents were overall highly satisfied with how safe they felt in both their room and their residence hall ten years ago, the percent highly satisfied steadily increased since the 2008-2009 academic year. The percentage of residents highly satisfied with how safe they felt in the room increased from 78% in the 2008-2009 academic year to 84% in the 2017-2018 academic year. Similarly, the percentage of residents who reported high satisfaction with how safe they felt in their residence hall or building increased from 76% to 82% in the same period.

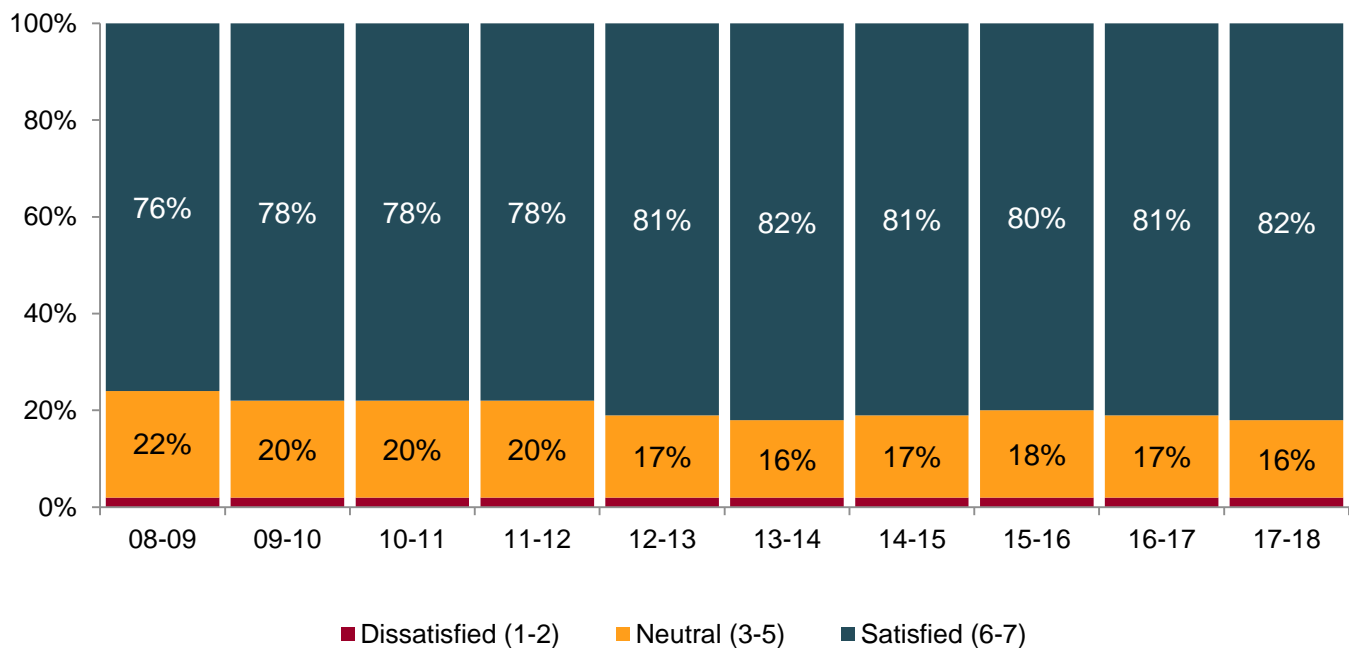
### Figure 7: Perceptions of Safety: Residence Hall Rooms

Percentage of students responding dissatisfied (1-2), neutral (3-5), or satisfied (6-7) to question on satisfaction with how safe they feel in their room, displayed over the past ten academic years.



### Figure 8: Perceptions of Safety: Residence Hall/Building

Percentage of students responding dissatisfied (1-2), neutral (3-5), or satisfied (6-7) to question on satisfaction with how safe they feel in their residence hall, displayed over the past ten academic years.





## Student Staff

Over the past ten years, on-campus residents' satisfaction with the student staff member in their living area has continued to increase, both overall and regarding various aspects of the student staff job.

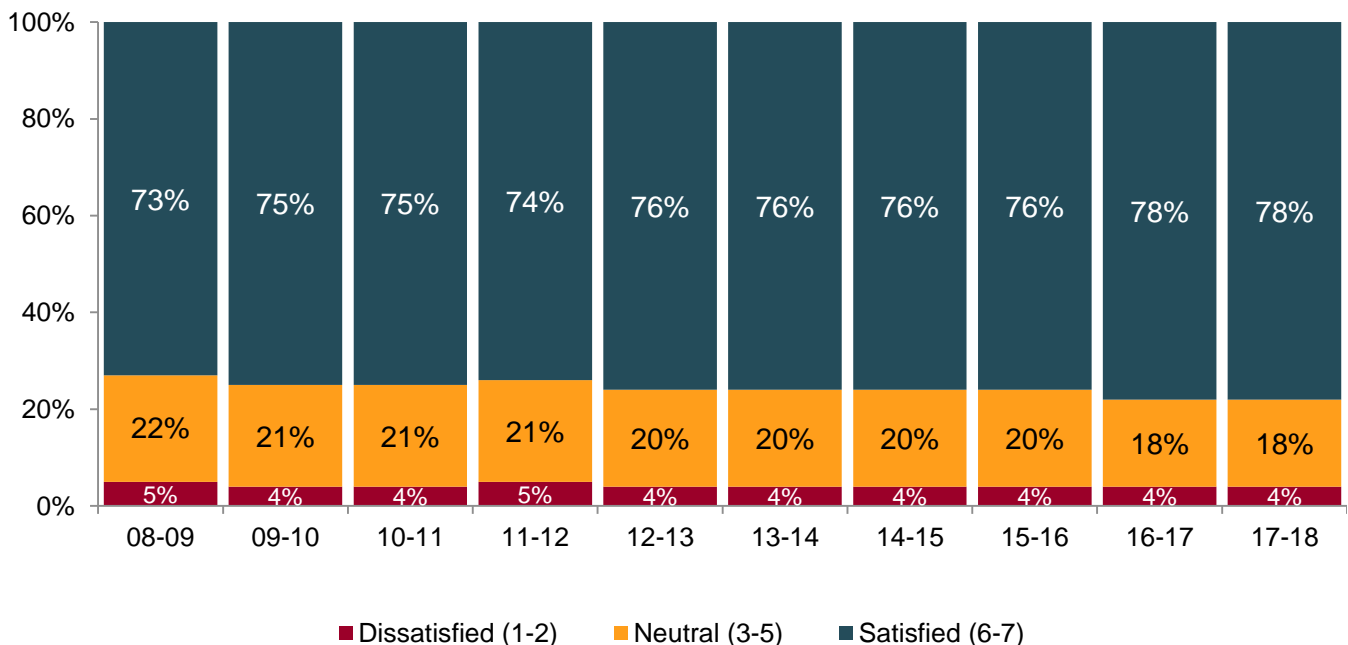
For instance, the percent of residents who indicated they were highly satisfied with various aspects of their student staff member has increased steadily over the last decade:

- Satisfaction with student staff member availability increased from 68% in the 2008-2009 academic year to 72% in the 2017-2018 academic year
- Satisfaction with effort from student staff to get to know their residents increased from 62% in the 2008-2009 academic year to 66% in the 2017-2018 academic year
- Satisfaction with programs and activities organized by student staff increased from 63% in the 2008-2009 academic year to 68% in the 2017-2018 academic year
- Satisfaction regarding student staff helping with problems increased from 65% in the 2008-2009 academic year to 69% in the 2017-2018 academic year
- Satisfaction with student staff members' promoting tolerance of others increased from 68% in the 2008-2009 academic year to 74% in the 2017-2018 academic year

Figure 9 displays the distribution of responses of residents when asked the degree to which they were satisfied with the overall performance of their student staff member. The percentage of residents highly satisfied (selecting 6 or 7 on a seven-point scale) increased from 73% to 78% over the past ten years.

### Figure 9: Overall Satisfaction with Student Staff

Percentage of students responding dissatisfied (1-2), neutral (3-5), or satisfied (6-7) to question on overall satisfaction with their student staff member, displayed over the past ten academic years.



## Value of Housing Experience

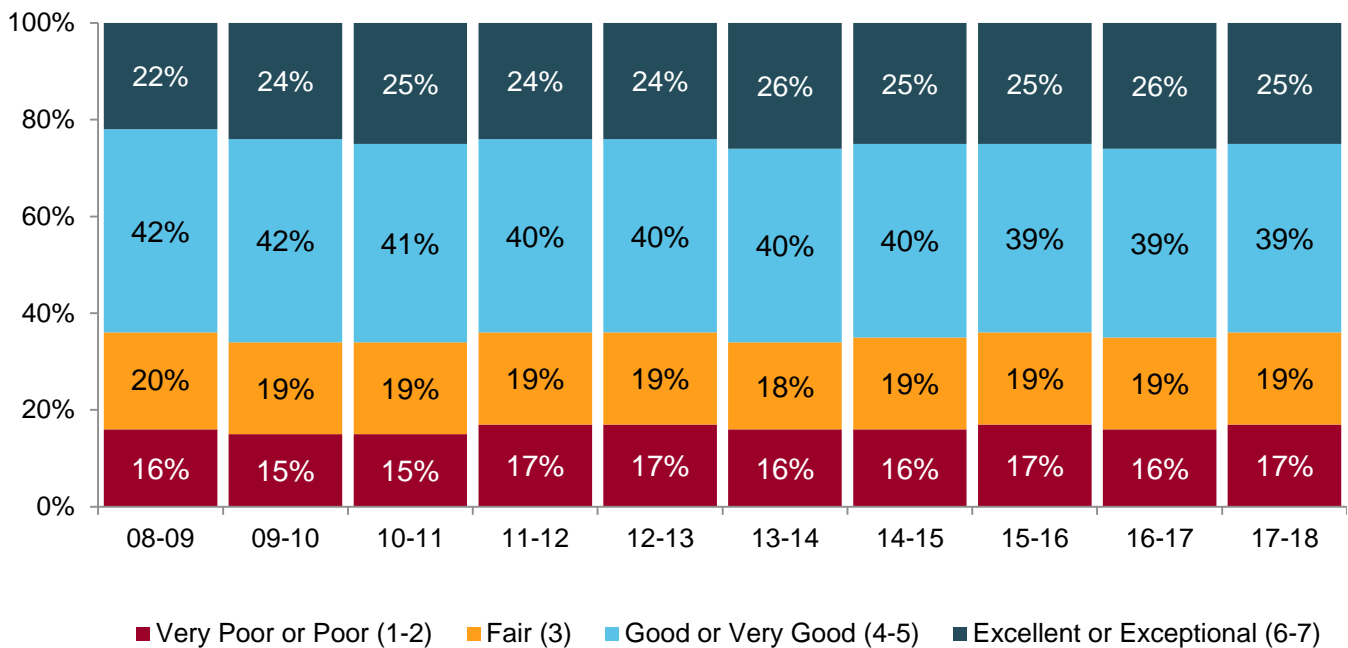
A final finding from exploring the past ten years of data from on-campus residents relates to the value residents see in their on-campus housing experience. Figure 10 displays the breakdown of resident responses to the following question: “Comparing cost to quality, rate the overall value of your residence hall experience.” Given the wording, we collapsed the seven-point scale into four buckets: Very poor or poor (those responding 1 or 2), fair (those responding 3), good or very good (those responding 4 or 5) and those responding excellent or exceptional (6 or 7). Hence, the responses in the two shades of blue in figure 10 (the top two sections of the bars) represent those who rated the value of their experience as at least “good.”

Generally, student perceptions of the value of their residence hall experience have stayed relatively stable over a ten-year period. In the 2008-2009 academic year, 64% of on-campus residents rated the value of their experience as “good” or better. In the 2017-2018 academic year, that figure remained at 64%.

While the distribution remained stable, it shows that on-campus residents consistently see the value of their residence life experience.

**Figure 10: Value of Residence Hall Experience**

Percentage of students responding very poor or poor (1-2), fair (3), good or very good (4-5), or excellent or exceptional (6-7) to question on the value of their residence hall experience when comparing cost to quality, displayed over the past ten academic years.



## About Skyfactor

Since 1994, Skyfactor, a Macmillan Learning company, has been dedicated to improving retention, student success, and the quality of the college student experience. Our products and services have empowered over 1,500 college and universities to positively impact student development, learning, retention and satisfaction.

## About Benchworks

Benchworks (formerly EBI) includes over 50 easy-to-use nationally-benchmarked program assessments across a portfolio of over a dozen disciplines, including academic programs, housing and residence life, college union, student activities, orientation, new student transition, and student services. These market-leading assessments empower programs across an institution to identify areas of improvement for maximum impact on student outcomes. The national assessments are statistically validated, cover important content areas, mapped to key professional and accreditation standards, and allow for campus-level customization. Robust analytics and easy-to-understand reports deliver high-level trends, identify concepts statistically predictive of outcomes, allow for peer and longitudinal benchmarking, and support a culture of continuous program improvement.



For more information about Benchworks,  
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