



YOUR VOICE IS BEING HEARD!

In an effort to provide an excellent student experience to Ashford University students, Ashford University continues to administer the [Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey of Online Learners \(PSOL\)](#). The latest survey was administered to undergraduate and graduate students at Ashford University in the spring of 2014.

The survey measured student satisfaction with Ashford University services and identified areas of excellence and areas with opportunity for improvement.

The survey serves as a vehicle to evaluate how Ashford University is supporting its students in achieving their educational goals. In addition to measuring strengths and opportunities for improvement, the student satisfaction survey also reports areas in which Ashford University students report higher (and lower) satisfaction with University services than their peers at similar institutions. Ashford University students' satisfaction was significantly higher than the national student comparison group on every scale. Further, results indicate that Ashford students are more likely to recommend Ashford programs to other adult learners than students at other universities are to recommend their programs.

Survey results indicated the following areas as strengths regarding your experience at Ashford University:

- Academic Services: Adequate online library resources are provided
- Enrollment Services:
 - Registration for online courses is convenient.
 - Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me
- Student Services: I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.
- Additional Academic Results:
 - My coursework encourages critical thinking.
 - The digital resources in the classroom contribute to my learning.

Recognizing that an institution is only as strong as its weakest link, it is of paramount importance that we receive and respond to your input regarding ways that Ashford University can improve upon the overall student experience. The following areas were identified by Ashford students as areas of high importance, low satisfaction on the PSOL survey:

- Instructional Services
 - Faculty are responsive to student needs
 - Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress



- The quality of online instruction is excellent.
- Institutional Perceptions: Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment

How does your voice matter? Here's how!!

Several of the concerns that students have voiced are regarding faculty responsiveness and the value of your investment. It is important that everyone is aware of how Ashford University is taking action to respond to your concerns. Please see examples for how your feedback has been heard.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

In 2014 Faculty Affairs, Executive Deans, and Faculty developed the Faculty Student Engagement (FSE) Report, which is currently available to all full-time faculty across all colleges. The FSE provides faculty with aggregated course activity data, which has been designed to allow faculty to observe their previous interactions and current engagement behaviors with students in their courses.

Data on this report includes both faculty student interaction metrics in addition to indicators of instructor behaviors, which allows for faculty self-reflection. These behaviors include the number of responses an instructor has made across discussion forums in that class, the number of times assignment feedback was given to students, and the number of times a student has received a reply in the Ask Your Instructor Forum. This report is not evaluative, but rather seeks to provide faculty with an in-depth view of their course through an easy-to-read Excel report. It is also helpful for interacting with students who may not be as engaged as others and may need extra support. Faculty have visibility to the amount of time students have spent in the various areas within each course. This information allows faculty to reach out and encourage those students who may be logging in at a bare minimum, and point them toward valuable resources which they may have not explored.

2014 PSOL results have also supported faculty development efforts. Throughout 2014 focus has been placed on improving instructive feedback across the university. Through the Instructional Quality Review process and just-in-time classroom support by Instructional Specialists, faculty are receiving information on best practices in instructive feedback. Additionally, more robust rubrics with embedded feedback are being developed for written assignments and discussion activity, which provide more consistent and rigorous feedback to students. Additionally, faculty can access the results from the 2014 PSOL on the Center for Excellent in Teaching and Learning, which is a web based resource library and information center for all instructors.

CAREER SERVICES

Ashford University continues to expand its services and programs to enhance the student experience. Highlights of these changes include the focused improvements in Career Services. Complimentary career services are available to active degree-seeking students and alumni through a variety of options, including delivery by telephone, email, and virtual appointments, as well as



through online and in-person workshops, hiring events, and networking opportunities. Through one-on-one coaching, Career Services Specialists provide assistance in alignment with the various stages of the career development process. Serving a diverse population, coaching is tailored to meet the unique needs, experiences, and goals of individuals.

In order to meet the needs of students located in geographically diverse areas and with unique scheduling constraints, the department provides a variety of options for students to access services including asynchronous self-directed resources, online programming such as webinars and teleconferences, and email, phone, and virtual coaching appointments. In addition to resources and services designed for general career development, the department designs programming to meet the needs of specific populations (e.g., college and program specific, military and veteran, disabled, multigenerational, stay-at-home parents, career transition, criminal background).

To further expand the Career Services resources provided to Ashford students and alumni, Ashford University entered into a formal partnering with Monster.com to develop an expanded online suite of career and professional development self-directed resources that launched in January 2014. The online My Career: Career and Professional Development Center is available 24/7 through the Ashford University Student Portal, providing a robust center of self-directed resources and tools. In My Career, students may utilize an individualized career planner, a resume builder, Optimal Interview, TypeFocus self-assessment, and a job postings board. Students and alumni may also engage with each other, as well as with staff, faculty, and employers using Groupsites blogs, discussion boards, and live chat for professional networking and advice.

WRITING CENTER

As an open enrollment institution, Ashford University recognizes that it may have been a while since many of our new students needed to create a college level writing assignment. The Ashford Writing Center (AWC) provides targeted efforts specific to our entry point students with resources to improve their writing skills.

In 2014, the AWC launched tutoring to student enrolled in the 18 General Education courses within the Division of General Education. These students have the opportunity to submit their papers for review by e-mail to an Online Writing Consultant for feedback and instruction. These students also are eligible to engage in a 20-minute live chat with a Writing Consultant during weekly chat hours.

All continuing students have access to several other services provided through the AWC, including:

- Downloadable resources on the AWC website, featuring grammar usage, avoiding plagiarism, APA style, and more.
- Webinars on writing-related topics, as well as video and tutorials.
- Email questions about writing-related topics.



- Online classroom writing resources, including a link to Grammarly, a free grammar revision software.

In 2014 the Ashford Writing Center expanded its tutoring staff to accommodate more students and provide additional resource material and tutorials. More than 13,000 tutoring sessions were recorded by the AWC staff over the past year.

The AWC aims to help all Ashford students improve their writing skills, gain confidence, and achieve success throughout their college careers—and beyond.

LIBRARY SERVICES

The library launched a new service that allows you to get library and research help 24/7.

QuickAnswers allows you to type a question or topic into a search box and get an answer right away. If you don't see an answer that fits your needs, you can submit the question on a QuickAnswers form and get a response from a librarian via email. You can find the QuickAnswers button on the right side of the library website. Here's a peek at this new service:



Our library website also offers numerous **tutorials** that will teach you how to use the library's resources and do research for your assignments. You can find these, and many more, by clicking the

[View Tutorials](#)

button on the library homepage.

- “Scholarly and Popular Resources (4- minute video)
- “Finding an Article with a Citation” (4-minute video)
- “Keywords Are Critical (3- minute video)
- “Database Search Tips” (4-minute video)

The library now offers live, online courses taught by AU librarians. Called **LibraryU**, these courses are offered on the first and third Tuesdays of every month, and they last about 30-45 minutes. You can attend the live course by clicking on the registration link on the right side of the library homepage in the pink box. Sample topics include:

- “Library Orientation”
- “Changing Assignment Prompts Into Keywords”
- “Saving and Organizing Research”
- “ProQuest and EBSCOHost Basics”



These courses are recorded, so you can watch the recordings if you can't make it to the live sessions. You can access the recordings by clicking on the button that says

[View LibraryU Courses](#)

on the library homepage.

We've been busy adding content to our electronic collection that you can use for your assignments.

- CQ Researcher is a great tool if you need to get an overview of hot topics in today's world, such as the death penalty, gay rights, gun control and immigration.
- ACLS Humanities E-Book collection is a terrific collection of 4,300 eBooks covering the humanities, namely archaeology, history, literature, and music.
- Ebrary, one of the library's largest collections of eBooks, now contains over 116,000 academic titles.
- Other additions to our collection include:

The Handbook of Social Psychology (Health & Medicine)

The Journal of Sport Management (Business & Economics)

E-dition Hospital Program (Health & Medicine)

PMLA – Publications of the Modern Language Association (Literature & Language)

Journal of Facility, Planning, Design, and Management (Business & Economics)

International Journal of Public Administration (Business & Economics)

Governance (Business & Economics)

We want to remind you that it's easy to get in touch with a librarian when you need help using the library's resources. We offer live chat office hours, a library phone number, and email address. Visit the library's website to see when the librarians are available. You'll find our contact information on the right side of every page. Don't be shy about contacting us. We're here to help!

FINANCIAL SERVICES

In 2014 Ashford University partnered with Loanlook to provide students with a free tool to help foster financial literacy and responsibility. Loanlook provides students with easy access to loan information including balances, repayment options, and estimated repayment amounts. Loanlook also provides free budgeting calculators, financial literacy training, and important messages that are pertinent to you. Additionally, the Student Account Authorization Form (SAAF), one of the core financial aid documents, content was reorganized to assist students in making a knowledgeable selection for either granting authorization or not granting authorization for how Ashford University will manage any eligible student financial aid credit balance. The information for each option will now be next to the checkbox where students are providing their selection so they can make an informed decision.



STUDENT SERVICES

Student Services and Operations have been working diligently over the past year to strengthen the base of our advising team, specifically through the implementation of the Individualized Advising Model (IAM). IAM endeavors to better align students with advisers trained to best assist students during specific times in their academic career. Readiness Advisers assist students in their first five courses, when more frequent contact is necessary to help students become more acclimated to the online learning environment. This results in students more aptly prepared to be successful in their academic program. Early study results show that students who have worked with a Readiness Adviser are more likely to persist than students who have not. In 2015, this program will be expanded to support continuing students—beyond class five—as they move into their major coursework. College Advisers are aligned with each college and are well-versed in the coursework and outcomes related to that college. These Advisers are familiar with degree enhancement options such as, specializations or a minor. They are also highly connected with additional resources in Career and Alumni Services.

Digital communication can make students feel disconnected from a personal touch; however, we recognize our students are individuals, with goals specific to them, and should be treated as such. In addition, our students deserve advisers dedicated with the skills necessary to help them make the most of their degree completion options, and to support them on the journey to graduation. We are excited about the continued development of this program and further engaging our students.

In 2014 Student Services expanded Ashford University's CHAMPS peer mentoring program with the development of a full time position. Redesigning this peer to peer mentoring program through technological enhancements, CHAMPS was launched as a 7 week program giving Ashford's high achieving students the opportunity to build upon their leadership experience, while giving back. New to Ashford Students were recruited through automated e-mails pushed to students once they had completed their conditional admission period in the entry point courses EXP 105 and PSY202. At the end of 2014 enrollment into this program was made available to all new students. Marketing and training specific to this program was provided to those individuals who work the closest with new students, specifically in Academic Affairs and Student Advising. In November of 2014, each participant in the CHAMPS program was asked to rate the overall value of their education having been involved in CHAMPS and the results were encouraging. Nearly 60% of mentees reported "very valuable", which was the highest rating possible. Of the CHAMPS mentors that completed the post assessment survey, 78% reported "very valuable" having been given the opportunity to mentor new students.