



# RESEARCH BRIEF

## OIR

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

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### Mandatory On-Time Registration – Student Survey Results: Fall 2014

This Research Brief presents an overview of the results of a student survey on mandatory on-time registration. Ahead of the Fall 2014 semester, NOVA revised its previous registration policy. Under the former registration policy, students were allowed to add, drop, and swap classes during the first week of the session, and could add classes in the second week of the session with permission from the faculty. The new on-time registration policy requires students to register by 11:59 p.m. the day before a session begins.<sup>1</sup> After the deadline has passed, the ability to add, change, or swap a class is greatly restricted. There is a limited schedule adjustment period during the first week of classes if students have documented mitigating circumstances that impacted their ability to register on time.

NOVA emailed the survey to 54,216 students and 3,869 responded, resulting in a 7 percent response rate. The number of respondents varies by question as not all participants answered every question in the survey. For several items, respondents were given the opportunity to provide multiple responses. The total number of responses is divided by the number of respondents to calculate the percentage of respondents. Therefore, percentages do not always add up to 100 percent.

Table 1 and present results from the questions, “Are you aware that all students at NOVA are required to register for classes by 11:59 p.m. the day before the session begins (i.e., on time)?” and “Do you agree that students should be required to register on time?” Ninety-five percent of respondents (3,647 respondents) were aware of the on-time registration requirement that students register by 11:59 p.m. the day before the session begins. Fifty-eight percent (2,080 respondents) indicated that students should be required to register on-time.

**Table 1. Awareness of and Agreement with On-Time Registration Requirement**

Responses	Aware of On-Time Registration Policy?		Should On-Time Registration Be Required?	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	3,647	94.8	2,080	58.1
No	202	5.2	1,503	41.9
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>3,849</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,583</b>	<b>100.0</b>

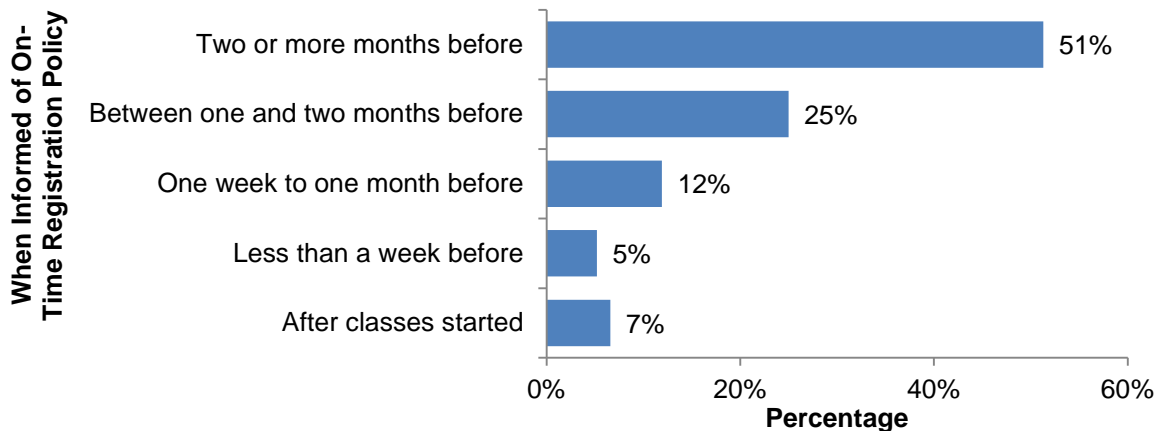
<sup>1</sup> At NOVA a semester refers to an academic term. Each academic year there are three semesters: Fall, Spring, and Summer. A session refers to the number of weeks within a semester during which a course is scheduled to meet. NOVA offers several different sessions each semester to provide a variety of course and scheduling options. For example, in addition to the standard 16- and 8-week sessions, sessions may be taught in 12 or 14 weeks.

Respondents were asked to indicate when they had been informed of the policy (Table 2 and Figure 1). Seventy-six percent of respondents (2,706 respondents) were informed a month or more before the beginning of the Fall 2014 semester. Seven percent (235 respondents) indicated that they were not informed of the policy until after classes started.

**Table 2. When Were You Informed of This Policy?**

When Informed of On-Time Registration Policy	Responses	
	#	%
Two or more months before the start of classes	1,819	51.3
Between one and two months before the start of classes	887	25.0
One week to one month before the start of classes	421	11.9
Less than a week before the start of classes	183	5.2
After classes started	235	6.6
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>3,545</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 1. When Were You Informed of This Policy?**



Students were asked how they learned about the policy. Table 3 and Figure 2 (both next page) show the sources from which respondents received on-time registration policy information. Students were able to choose more than one information source. Fifty-nine percent of respondents (2,080 respondents) received information regarding the on-time registration policy via the NOVA website, 50 percent (1,754 respondents) via email, 39 percent (1,365 respondents) via posters and flyers, and 31 percent (1,111 respondents) were informed by a NOVA faculty or staff member. In addition to these eight options, the question gave respondents the option to choose “Other” and list additional methods by which they received the information.

**Table 3. How Did You Learn About This Policy? Select All That Apply.**

Method of Notification	Responses	
	#	%
NOVA website	2,080	58.7
Email	1,754	49.5
Posters/flyers	1,365	38.5
NOVA faculty/staff	1,111	31.4
Advisor	696	19.6
Student orientation	486	13.7
Friend	448	12.6
Other*	170	4.8
Town hall/campus meeting	45	1.3
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>3,542</b>	

Note: As respondents could choose more than one option, totals will not equal 100 percent.

**Figure 2. How Did You Learn About This Policy? Select All That Apply.**

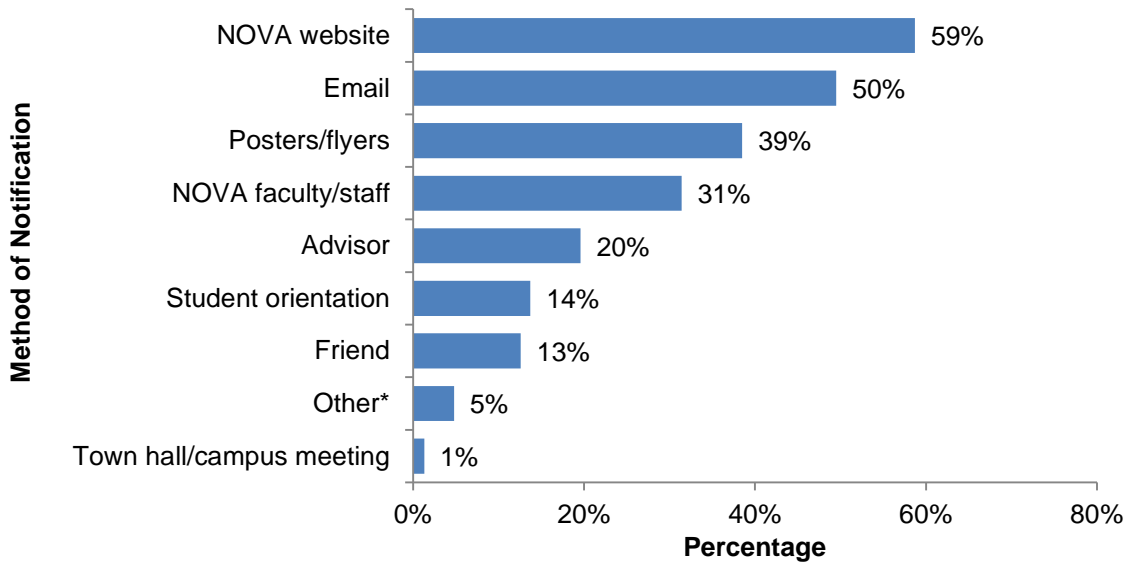


Table 4 and next page) display the answers to a question asking students whether or not they needed to adjust their schedules after classes began. There was almost a 50-50 split of the survey respondents in regard to whether they needed to adjust their schedule. Forty-eight percent (1,805 respondents) indicated that they did need to adjust their schedule while fifty-two percent (1,937 respondents) indicated that they did not need to adjust their schedules after classes began.

**Table 4. Once You Registered for a Course and Classes Began, Did You Need to Adjust Your Schedule?**

Schedule Adjustment	Responses	
	#	%
Yes	1,805	48.2
No	1,937	51.8
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>3,742</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Students who answered “Yes” to needing an adjustment to their schedule after classes began were then asked how difficult it was to make adjustments. Table 5 and Figure 3 present responses regarding the difficulty students had adjusting their schedules after the start of the Fall 2014 session. Seventy-eight percent of respondents (1,395 respondents) indicated that they faced at least some difficulty adjusting their schedule after the start of the session.

**Table 5. How Difficult Was It for You to Adjust Your Schedule?**

Difficulty Adjusting Schedule	Responses	
	#	%
Not difficult	186	10.3
Not very difficult	217	12.1
Somewhat difficult	372	20.7
Difficult	267	14.8
Very difficult	756	42.0
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>1,798</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 3. How Difficult Was It for You to Adjust Your Schedule?**

