An Assessment of International Student Orientation at Ohio University

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International Student and Faculty Service (ISFS) has been working to revamp international student orientation (ISO). While the work is far from complete, some changes were implemented for the Fall 2021 session. Having an assessment of ISO would be helpful as ISFS determines which additional proposed changes will be implemented. Understanding the incoming international student perspective on the sessions is the most viable place to begin.

Background

Mission

Ohio University

Ohio University holds as its central purpose the intellectual and personal development of its students. Distinguished by its rich history, diverse campus, the international community, and beautiful Appalachian setting, Ohio University is known as well for its outstanding faculty of accomplished teachers whose research and creative activity advance knowledge across many disciplines (Ohio University, 2007).

"Ohio University will be the nation's best transformative learning community where students realize their promise, faculty advance knowledge, staff achieve excellence, and alumni become global leaders" (Ohio University, 2007).

International Student and Faculty Services

The Office of International Student and Faculty Services (ISFS) at Ohio University contributes to the global mission of Ohio University by providing services and support for the international community and by furthering their personal and

intellectual development. In addition, they collaborate with the greater university community to advance global diversity on campus, foster transformative intercultural experiences and promote the development of global leaders (International Student and Faculty Services, n.d.).

Overview of ISO

International Student Orientation (ISO) strives to provide incoming international students with the tools and support necessary for a smooth start to their lives as Bobcats. The objectives of ISO are: (1) support new international student preparation for arrival to Ohio University; (2) facilitate new international student transition to Ohio University's campuses ; (3) appraise new international students of immigration requirements and provide a firm understanding of how to remain in status while completing their academic program; (4) prepare new international students for campus, city, and student life responsibilities; (5) introduce new international students to campus, city, and student life opportunities; and (6) guide and facilitate foundational logistics for new international students.

ISO begins with email communications from iso@ohio.edu prior to Fall semester. ISFS communicates weekly with students beginning in late May and for approximately two months. Students can send queries regarding logistics to iso@ohio.edu. A housing coordinator is available to students prior to arrival if they need Athens housing guidance. Once on campus, students take part in welcome/check-in; 10 Tools for International Student Success; Living in Athens; employment paperwork; virtual mandatory sessions; and social activities.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide a comprehensive assessment of ISO to learn what worked and what did not and gather guidance for future changes. Specifically, it will assess students' knowledge and understanding of the content delivered during ISO; assess students' experience and satisfaction with ISO events and programming; and assess students' readiness following ISO.

Literature Review

The United States has been a beacon for higher education for the last half century with international student enrollment growing each year since 1949 with minimal exceptions (Israel & Batalova, 2021; IIE Open Doors / Enrollment Trends, n.d.). The ability to hone English skills, have access to work experiences following graduation, and live in another culture are pull factors for international students (Johnson, 2018; Zong & Batalova, 2018). With the continuous growth in international student numbers, institutions recognized the need for additional support for these students. Today, there is an understanding that orientation programs have a place in supporting student transition to the university environment (Mayhew et al., 2010) and many institutions provide international student focused orientations.

Several studies highlighted by Chen and Zhou (2019) noted that stress reduction, campus engagement and general belonging for international students are impacted when institutions provide campus-wide information. Additionally, they underscored the value in first year arrival programs at two institutions. While the programs had different focuses, each of them "deepened their understandings of host and other cultures, facilitated friendship establishment and development, and improved English-speaking skills" (Chen & Zhou, 2019, p. 58).

Orientation Assessment and Evaluation

International student orientation assessment and evaluation has changed through the years. In a 1990 article, casual observance was promoted as the model for orientation evaluation, guiding staff to notice attendance levels, attention levels of students, and questions that are asked to learn how improvements could be made (Althen, 1990). Today, formal assessment and evaluation is essential for political and program improvement purposes (Ward-Roof, 2010). Schwartz and Wiese highlighted the difference between assessment and understanding program outcomes, versus evaluation and discerning the value of the program (Ward-Roof, 2010). Through assessment, institutions should be able to answer four essential concerns: program alignment with department goals, outcome achievement, program effectiveness and efficiency, and grounded decision making (Ward-Roof, 2010). While a plethora of orientation evaluations exist, it is hard to find many articles citing formal evaluation of international students focused orientation. The authors reached out to other schools in the State of Ohio and found only one that had done a written evaluation and it was specifically focused on a few parts of that school's orientation program.

One study by several authors reviewed intervention programs, including orientation, and their impact on stress associated with acculturation and adjustment for international students (Aljaberi et al., 2021). This review found that orientation programs were able to support the adjustment of international students to their new environment but had no impact on their acculturative stress. The authors noted that adjustment is the biggest challenge for international students and lack of it can cause emotional and mental health struggles such as acculturative stress. The "…lack of social support, communication problems, and homesickness" can lead to "feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, and physical illness" (Aljaberi et al, 2021, p. 13).

Another study by Fan and Wanous (2008) also addressed the impact of stress on new international students. The focus was on use of the Realistic Orientation Programs for new Employee Stress (ROPES) orientation framework to orient new Asian graduate students and comparing that to the use of a traditional Cross-Cultural Training (CCT) orientation framework (Fan & Wanous, 2008). This study focused on three value points of ROPES versus CCT: lower expectations pre-entry, lower stress levels, and increased retention, academic and interaction adjustment. The authors confirmed their hypotheses of the value of the ROPES orientation. Interestingly they noted that the benefits from the ROPES program were realized over time and that even participants were unable to discern the value they received until they had been at the university for some time. One other value point is that two years out, retention rates for ROPES participants were slightly higher than those with traditional CCT orientation (Fan & Wanous, 2008).

Orientations for international students can have differing elements such as, minimizing stress, providing tools for managing transition, or facilitating logistics prior to the start of classes but the overarching goal would be to support new students upon their entry to the university.

Theoretical Background and Framework

This section outlined theories and a framework to guide the formal assessment of Ohio University's ISO including theory of identity development and transition theory and the input-environment-output model as a framework.

Theory of Identity Development

Chickering's theory of identity development addressed the impact of environmental conditions on student development and put forward seven vectors of

identity development— developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Chickering, 1969, as cited in Ward-Roof, 2010). Interaction of the seven vectors contributes to the students' identity development.

This theory provided a comprehensive basis from which to examine the efficiency of orientation programming through aspects of students' identity development. ISO aims to prepare new international students for a smooth start to life at Ohio University by assisting students to identify and begin to develop their academic, social, and interpersonal abilities through different activities and making cultural adjustment through educating them about self-protection, life in Athens, and providing campus resources.

Transition Theory

Transitions are the events or non-events that alter personal life through relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles (Anderson, et.al., 2012). Anderson et al. (2012) identified the four S system that influences individual transition—situation, self, support, and strategies. Situation includes "trigger, timing, control, role change, duration, previous experience with a similar transition, concurrent stress, and assessment factors" (p.67-68); self is comprised of "socioeconomic status, gender and sexual orientation, age and stage of life, state of health, ethnicity/culture, psychological resources, ego development, outlook (optimism and self-efficacy), commitment and values, and spirituality and resilience" (p.73); support refers to intimate relationships, family unit, the network of friends, and organizations and communities; and strategies cover different types of coping mechanisms.

Participating in a well-thought-out ISO program can help new international students transition to the university and can help facilitate positive outcomes for them throughout their Bobcat career. New students may respond differently to ISO, however, that is part of the transition process. The ISO team provided support and shared resources to help to improve students' self-efficacy and increase their coping skills. Moreover, several strategies, such as opportunities to be familiar with the local environment, connection with other students, and student organizations provides additional support for student transition.

Another challenge for international students in American colleges is the cultural transition from their own culture to American culture. Upon coming to the U.S., they experience cultural shock due to the vastly different values and norms of U.S. culture, the lack of their own cultural artifacts and foods, as well as the changed connection to their own family and friends (e.g., phone or video calls instead of direct connection). While cultural transition is a long process, ISO can be the first step to a successful transition to life in the U.S.

Input-Environment-Outcomes Model

Astin's (1996, as cited in Ward-Roof, 2010) Input, Environment, and Outcome model can be used to assess orientation programs. Inputs are student characteristics and attributes before they enter college. Environment refers to the campus climate and culture that students experience. Outcomes are the results of interactions between input and environment. This model helped in conceptualizing the assessment plan. ISO offers opportunities for new international students to interact with the OHIO environment to facilitate a better transition to life at Ohio University. Using this model as a framework, the assessment plan is to collect input-related information such

as English language level and demographic information, ISO content (as the approach for students to connect to the institutional environment) and ISO's objectives as representative of the outcomes.

International Student and Faculty Services (ISFS) at Ohio University has traditionally followed the NAFSA model of casual observance for evaluating orientation. Preparing and administering a formal evaluation of orientation would offer ISFS confirmation of what is causally known as well as provide enhanced information about what can be done to increase the value of orientation for new students. Moreover, evaluation of internationally focused orientations has been limited in recent years. Research traditionally focuses on first-year students and general university orientation. Our comprehensive evaluation program for international student orientation with all levels of incoming students will also help to fill this research gap.

Methodology

We used mixed methods research for this assessment as we collected and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009). Patton (2002) noted that utilizing mixed methods adds value in that it helps to limit the weaknesses in your research. He highlighted Donald Campbell's triangulation concept noting that all methods have limitations and the combining of methods helps to fill gaps and create strength not provided by the use of a singular method. Our project is triangulated in several ways: multiple researchers (i.e., investigator triangulation), multiple perspectives (i.e., theory triangulation), and multiple methods to gather data (i.e., methodological triangulation). Quantitative data were collected using a Qualtrics survey (see Appendix A). We conducted individual interviews with new international

students who volunteered through a Qualtrics survey question to discuss their experiences with International Student Orientation (ISO).

Data Collection and Analysis

While there is disagreement on whether online or face-to-face surveys are more successful in getting people to respond, convenience, cost effectiveness, and respondent trust in anonymity provide strong support for the use of an online survey (Ward et al., 2012). Online surveys are also effective in promoting students' participation in assessments (Taylor & Doehler, 2014) as its strengths outweigh the weaknesses (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). The growing participation rates in online surveys can be attributed to both design and content (Park et al, 2019). One limitation we see from our survey questions is the general nature of those focused on the content of the virtual sessions. We discussed writing more targeted questions for each of the six content areas and determined that we wanted to keep the survey short. We planned to explore the content areas more fully in the focus group interviews which became individual interviews in the end.

We created a survey that included open-ended responses which served as a means for gathering initial qualitative data. We knew that speaking with students asking clarifying questions in focus group interviews could enhance the qualitative aspect of the study. According to Patton (2002), the goal of the focus group interviews is not to brainstorm, or problem solve but to interview with the added value of participants being able to "consider their own views in the context of the views of others" (p. 386). Banta and Palomba (2015) noted that the focus group should be a thoughtfully crafted discussion with the goal of diving deep into a focused topic. Researchers use this tool to "examine perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and ideas" on a

topic (p. 132). Focus group interviews would have worked well because the international students who participated represent a homogenous group in that they all experienced in-person ISO. While we planned to use focused-group interviews to help interpret our findings after the survey is complete, due to the limited number of participants, we conducted individual interviews to collect qualitative data. See Appendix B for potential interview questions.

Sampling Strategies

Our target population was 150 new international students who took part in the in-person orientation during the Fall of 2021. Since the target population was so small, we did not have a sampling plan and did not sample the population for quantitative phase. We employed a volunteer sampling strategy for the qualitative phase. In the survey, students were asked to provide their email addresses if they volunteered to participate in the follow-up focus group interviews. Ten students offered their email. Once we followed-up, only four of them were available to participate in individual interviews either in-person or online.

Data Collection Procedures

We used a Qualtrics survey and direct email the students who participated in the Fall 2021 in-person orientation. We sent at least 3 reminders through Qualtrics. We also had our peer advising team, who led small groups of in-person students, email, or text their students to encourage participation.

For the qualitative aspect, we conducted four semi-structured qualitative interviews. The initial plan to conduct a focus group discussion was not possible due to participants' unavailability. So, we held 30-minute interviews with four

participants, one of which was in-person and the other three were online via Microsoft Teams.

Analysis

For quantitative analysis, we used R for simple descriptive analysis. Independent t-tests and ANOVA were also used to compare experience among various groups (i.e., gender, academic level, level of English proficiency). We calculated the mean scores of each item and compared at the 5% significant level. Statistical analyses were conducted by R 4.1.1.

For the qualitative aspect, we manually analyzed written responses as well as transcripts from the focus group interviews. All the significant statements were combined into a single document and analyzed by coding emerging themes. After analyzing these separately, the results were combined and analyzed to form recommendations and conclusions.

Reliability and Validity

We reviewed our survey focusing on the accuracy of the questions in relation to our goals for the survey. In addition, we discussed each question to try and determine if students would perceive the question similarly and if this was essential for the question at hand. This process helped with reliability in that we considered, as best we could, the clarity of the questions and worked to make them as readable and concise as possible. As noted above, we recognized that specific targeted questions could be more accurate when trying to understand students' engagement with the content, however, considering the length of our survey, we chose to ask broader questions. We provided the survey to an assessment and evaluation faculty member and a Ph.D. in assessment and evaluation who does not actively work in the field to

review our survey to increase reliability and content validity. Moreover, we borrowed some items from previous studies (Lemmens, 2010) and University of Washington Bothell First Year Advising & Orientation Program Assessment (University of Washington Bothell, n.d.) which help to build our criterion validity, such as readiness, open-ended questions to assess orientation program. Lemmens (2010) designed an academic readiness questionnaire based on a strict process, including six phases: "planning, item selections, construct and pilot testing of the questionnaire, item analysis, revising and standardizing of the questionnaire and technical evaluation and establishing norms" (p.137). To assess international students' readiness after attending ISO, we selected items related to academic motivation orientation, integration and reading behavior factors from Lemmens' (2010) study based on the sessions provided by ISO and the content we want to assess. University of Washington Bothell First Year Advising & Orientation Program Assessment (University of Washington Bothell, n.d.) offered open-ended questions to have insights into students' perspectives on the program.

There are external validity concerns. Our focus is on Ohio University's in-person International Student Orientation, and we cannot generalize our research results to other universities' orientation programs.

Findings

Quantitative Findings

We created a Qualtrics survey and sent it to the students who participated in the Fall 2021 in-person orientation. 97 students participated in the Qualtrics survey. Eight students among them did not respond to all the items on assessing ISO, thus, after removing the incomplete responses the final sample had 89 participants. Table 1

summarized demographics of the students who participated in the survey. 53.93% are female, 46.07% are male. 88.76% of participants are graduate students, and 11.24% are undergraduate students. Most participants (more than 70%) reported their English proficiency to be equal to or above-advanced level.

The first measurement to assess ISO was to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of the content delivered during the virtual ISO sessions and ISO Living in Athens sessions. This segment had six statements in Q6 (Cronbach's a = 0.78) and eight statements in Q7 (Cronbach's a = 0.89) separately on a 5-point (1 = "highly disagree" to 5 = "highly agree") Likert-type scale. Q8 assessed students' readiness following ISO with five statements (Cronbach's a = 0.79) on a 5-point (1 = "highly disagree" to 5 = "highly agree") Likert-type scale. Q9 (Cronbach's a = 0.92), Q10 (Cronbach's a = 0.91), and Q11(Cronbach's a = 0.87) examined students' experience and satisfaction of ISO through six statements per question.

Table 1

Participants' Characteristics

Characteristic	Percentage
Gender	
Male	46.07%
Female	53.93%
Academic Level	
Graduate	88.76%
Undergraduate	11.24%
English Level	
Basic	2.25%
Intermediate	25.84%
Advanced	62.92%
Native	8.99%

Table 2 summarized student responses to various items of assessment of ISO. For questions related to "I have a clear understanding of XXX" (named) virtual ISO session, other than student health insurance, the average rating was 4 (4 = Agree).

This confirms that the ISO virtual sessions helped students to attain information regarding policies, regulations, and resources for those subject areas. However, ISFS or the Student Health Insurance office may need to provide more information on student health insurance. For new students, the U.S (United States) healthcare system can be very confusing while at the same time being a very necessary system with which students must engage.

For the Living in Athens session, all items except knowledge of recreational resources have average scores greater than 4 points. Thus, the ISO Living in Athens sessions helped students to be aware of various on and off-campus resources, other than recreational resources, gave an understanding of the US (United States) classroom, and an understanding of cultural impacts students should be aware of. ISFS and the peer advising team should increase their knowledge of recreational resources and during the sessions may want to engage students in conversations about the resources they are interested in to help increase student satisfaction. All items in readiness have average scores of more than 4 points, which indicates that students felt ready to begin their studies after attending ISO. Average scores for satisfaction related to the Farmers Market trip, OU soccer game, and Walmart trip are lower than 4 points, which means those sessions did not engage the students as was hoped by ISFS. Finally, overall satisfaction of peer advisors is high at 4.63 points.

The Welch independent t-test indicated that gender only made a difference for rating scores of satisfaction level with the social activities (t (85.87) = -2.24, p<.05, Cohen's d = -.48) and relevance rating scores on social activities/events (t (77.27) = -2.58, p<.05, Cohen's d = -.59). Males had statistically higher satisfaction and relevance rating scores on social activities/events. Moreover, the Welch independent t-tests showed that academic level did not impact students' rating scores on all items,

and ANOVA indicated that English proficiency also did not impact students' responses.

Overall, average scores higher than 4 (i.e., agree/relevant/satisfactory) indicated that students valued ISO, had a better understanding of university resources and policies and felt ready to begin their studies after attending ISO. However, there were a few items that have lower average scores (smaller than 4 scores). For instance, the average score of "I have a clear understanding of Ohio University's student health insurance" is 3.67.

In preparation for potential lower scores, we had asked students if they were willing to take part in a focus group following the survey. We had 10 students respond to the call and of those 10, only 4 ended up taking the time. Instead of a focus group, we opted for individual interviews. The interviews were designed to explore participants' perceptions of lower-than-average scored items. Sample interview questions included, "Think back to the health insurance session, what is one takeaway that you have?" or "What do you think about ISO regarding health insurance information shared?"

Since we did not find statistically significant group differences among participants other than satisfaction and relevance level on social activities between males and females, and we only had four interviewees, we did not address group differences in interviews.

Qualitative Findings

The participants expressed satisfaction with Fall 2021 ISO. They showed appreciation of the efforts of ISFS and the peer advisers as they believe they were up to the task and delivered to expectation. They expressed their willingness to

participate in the interview due to their commitment to seeing future international students have a better ISO experience. The following are the main themes under which we are grouping the issues that were most prominent in the interviews:

1. Health and Wellbeing

2. Employment Paperwork

3. Title IX

4. Recreational Resources

5. Social Events

6. Making ISO Better

Health and Wellbeing

On health and wellbeing, the participants expressed their impression of the services Ohio University has for their wellbeing, especially the provision of mental health services when needed. The most prominent issue was health insurance. Generally, students felt the health insurance sessions were helpful and informative. They enabled them to enroll for the health insurance as required. However, they generally expressed a need for more clarity in the messaging as there were aspects that were not clear to them. Ronnie, for example, felt he was compelled to choose the "school's health insurance" (UnitedHealth). He is of the belief that there was not enough information concerning the "pros and cons" of the school or "marketplace" insurance. Granchero reported his experience at Hudson health center, where he was required to pay "co-pay" after a visit, which he could not understand at the time. He too felt the health insurance session should be more informative on that.

GA/RA/TA/GRS and Employment Paperwork

With regards to the employment paperwork and Social Security Number application. All the applicants expressed their satisfaction with the process as it helped them with their graduate appointments. However, they learned most of what they needed to know about their appointments from their departments. ISO just dealt with their hours and how much they can work based on their appointment.

Title IX

The participants were generally satisfied with the title IX presentation, they thought it was informative and relevant. The presentation helped define some cultural differences in courtship that they felt they needed to know and abide by. Ronnie suggested that the issue of the LGBTQ community be included to help new international students understand better and be equipped with the requisite cultural competence to adequately interact with the LGBTQ community. Granchero suggested that the presentations be made more interactive with the inclusion of more quizzes and other forms of student-centered learning as opposed to a one-directional presentation.

Recreational Resources

The Ping center featured the most on participants' discussion about recreation. Ronnie attributed this to the fact that they were told about the Ping center in a presentation and visited it. Meaning that the visit helped them to know more about it. He went on to state his interest in knowing more about the Aquatic Center, a facility he learned about but is yet to visit. Ronnie believes that ISFS should not only tell international students about these facilities, but they should encourage them to take advantage of them too. Granchero on the other hand believes there should be periodic updates on what is available.

Social Events

The participants we happy with the social events they attended, though only two of them attended all the events. Granchero, who is one of the two that attended all the events, described them as memorable and went on to say they helped him socialize with people and navigate his way around. They all saw the events as a way of meeting new people which they all placed significant value on.

Making ISO Better

Where there was a general expression of satisfaction with ISO from the participants, there are still areas that they believe needed adjustment to make the orientation better and more relevant to the needs of the new international students. These include:

- Some presentations, like the law and safety, could have been better shared in the form of videos that they can watch at their own pace and refer to whenever the need arises.

- The participants thought the days were too long and it was hard to follow. The day's activities should be two to three hours maximum.

- If possible, there should be more in-person classes and events as opposed to the hybrid.

- The orientation packages should be available to all. Some of the late arrival students were not happy about the fact that they were not given orientation folders.

- Funding, appointments, and fees to be paid need to be addressed more as some of the students did not know what was expected of them with regards to fees. When they were told they had full funding, they thought this covered

everything. They later learned the payment expected of them and they were surprised about it.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Program Improvement

Based upon the results of the survey and the valuable follow-up from the qualitative interviews, we recommend the following for future ISO sessions:

- Reassess social event options considering the value perceptions of male and female voices since gender had the only impact on those results

- Implement more robust follow up sessions for the mandatory online events to help solidify understanding for students and answer any further questions

- Collaborate with academic departments on graduate appointments so that students feel a continuity between what ISO provides and what their department provides

- Encourage presenters to provide more interactive components in their presentations

- Incorporate more recreational facilities in the campus tour so students have a better grasp of the on-campus options

- Continue to assess components of orientation that could be moved to online modules

- Assess other options for daily timing and scheduling

Recommendations for Future Assessment

Since this is the first time a formal assessment has been conducted for ISO, ISFS should continue this assessment to create longitudinal data. ISFS should conduct

an assessment following each international student orientation to collect information, evaluate the objectives, and garner further guidance on how to make future orientations more valuable for incoming students.

Second, during interviews, some students mentioned that it had been too long to remember details of ISO. Thus, timing is an important factor to consider for future assessment. A recommendation is to employ the assessment directly following orientation. ISO can send a link to students who participant the orientation or put a link on their website for students to complete. This also shows that the information does not stay with students and is something ISFS should consider.

Third, other than focusing on students, ISO also collaborates with other departments at Ohio University. Due to time and energy limitation, this assessment project did not collect information from other departments which cooperate with ISFS. Those departments are also stakeholders for assessment. For future assessment, ISFS can conduct interviews with staff at those departments and ask for their feedback.

Table 2

Assess students' knowledge and understanding of the content delivered during ISO

Items	Mean	SD
Virtual ISO sessions		
I have a clear understanding of Ohio University's student health insurance	3.67	1.00
I have a clear idea of Ohio University student behavior expectations	4.51	0.57
I have a clear understanding of what safety supports are available at Ohio University and in Athens, Ohio	4.27	0.65
I understand what my rights are related to sex-based discrimination at Ohio University	4.37	0.61
I have a clear idea of what is expected of me academically	4.55	0.52
I am aware of the immigration regulations that are relevant to my visa status (e.g. F-1 or J-1)	4.42	0.58
Living in Athens session		
I am aware of transportation options in Athens, Ohio	4.48	0.52
I clearly understand the classroom culture in the United States	4.38	0.61
I understand the process of culture shock that I may experience as I settle at Ohio University	4.31	0.68
I am aware of campus resources that can support my transition to Ohio University	4.25	0.64
I am aware of campus resources that can support my health and well-being at Ohio University	4.07	0.81

I am aware of ways to get involved on campus at Ohio University	4.13	0.69
I am more aware of the recreational resources to enjoy outside of Ohio University	3.73	1.00
I am aware of campus resources that can help me succeed academically at Ohio University	4.21	0.68
Assessing readiness following ISO		
I feel ready to start my academic studies this year	4.38	0.59
I have the confidence to seek out the services and resources available if I feel challenged in my first semester	4.24	0.73
I have acquired sufficient information to work as TA/RA/GA/GRS	4.03	0.94
I am comfortable living in Athens and at Ohio University	4.39	0.65
I am comfortable interacting with people from other races and cultures	4.47	0.66
Assess relevance of and satisfaction with ISO sessions, events, programming, and peer advisor		
Relevance of virtual ISO session to living adjustment		
10 Tools for International Student Success (Immigration Session)	4.17	0.99
Title IX	4.02	0.82
Health Insurance	4.23	0.89
Living in Athens	4.18	0.92
Community Standards	4.11	0.89

Law and Safety	4.27	0.80
Satisfaction with ISO events and programming		
Campus Selfie Tour	4.05	0.97
Ice-cream social @ Wits	4.40	0.84
Farmers Market trip	3.71	1.04
Soccer game	3.82	1.02
Walmart trip	3.94	0.94
Employment Paperwork	4.38	1.01
Relevance of ISO events and programming		
Campus Selfie Tour	4.15	0.93
Ice-cream social @ Wits	4.02	0.98
Farmers Market trip	3.87	0.90
Soccer game	3.74	0.94
Walmart trip	4.01	0.95
Employment Paperwork	4.57	0.71
Satisfaction with peer advisor	4.63	0.71

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Appendix A – Qualtrics Survey

Assessing ISO Fall 2021

Q0
Hello student!
Thank you for being willing to complete the International Student Orientation (ISO) survey. The purpose of this survey is to provide a comprehensive assessment of ISO to learn what worked and what did not and provide guidance to International Student and Faculty Services (ISFS) for future changes. The survey should take 10 minutes to complete.

Your survey information will be kept confidential. Any data will be reported in the aggregate and raw data will be password protected.

Q1 To which gender do you most identify?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Transgender Male (3)

○ Transgender Female (4)

○ Gender Variant/Non-Conforming (5)

○ Not Listed (6) _____

○ Prefer Not to Answer (7)

Q2 What is your academic level?

○ Undergraduate (1)

○ Graduate (2)

○ English Language Training (3)

X→

Q3 Please use the dropdown to choose your country of origin (i.e. the country which issued the passport you used to enter the US for your academic program).

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

JS

Q4 Please click in the text box to indicate the date you entered the US for this academic program.

_____

Q5 Please check the box that you feel most represents your level of English proficiency

○ Basic (1)

○ Intermediate (2)

○ Advanced (3)

○ Native (4)

Q6 Please review the statements about the ISO virtual sessions and respond by clicking the circle that most accurately represents your feelings.

	Highly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Highly Agree (5)
After attending ISO's virtual sessions, I have a clear understanding of Ohio University's student health insurance. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's virtual sessions, I have a clear idea of Ohio University student behavior expectations. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's virtual sessions, I have a clear understanding of what safety supports are available at Ohio University and in Athens, Ohio. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's virtual sessions, I understand what my rights are related to sex-based discrimination at Ohio University. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's virtual sessions, I have a clear idea of what is expected of me academically. (5)	○	○	○	○	○

After attending ISO's virtual sessions, I am aware of the immigration regulations that are relevant to my visa status (e.g. F-1 or J-1). (6)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Q7 Please review the statements about the ISO Living in Athens (LIA) session and respond by clicking the circle that most accurately represents your feelings.

	Highly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Highly Agree (5)
After attending ISO's LIA session, I am aware of transportation options in Athens, Ohio. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's LIA session, I clearly understand the classroom culture in the United States. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's LIA session, I understand the process of culture shock that I may experience as I settle at Ohio University (3)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's LIA session, I am aware of campus resources that can support my transition to Ohio University. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's LIA session, I am aware of campus resources that can support my health and well-being at Ohio University. (5)	○	○	○	○	○

After attending ISO's LIA session, I am aware of ways to get involved on campus at Ohio University. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's LIA session, I am more aware of the recreational resources to enjoy outside of Ohio University. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO's LIA session, I am aware of campus resources that can help me succeed academically at Ohio University. (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Q8 Please review the statements below and respond by clicking the circle that most accurately represents your feelings.

	Highly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Highly Agree (5)
After attending ISO, I feel ready to start my academic studies this year. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO, I have the confidence to seek out the services and resources available if I feel challenged in my first semester. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO, I have acquired sufficient information to work as TA/RA/GA/GRS (3)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO, I am comfortable living in Athens and at Ohio University (4)	○	○	○	○	○
After attending ISO, I am comfortable interacting with people from other races and cultures. (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Q9 Please rate the relevance of the following sessions to your adjustment to life at Ohio University (OU) and in Athens?

	Highly Irrelevant (1)	Irrelevant (2)	Neutral (3)	Relevant (4)	Highly Relevant (5)
10 Tools for International Student Success (Immigration Session) (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Title IX (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Health Insurance (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Living in Athens (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Community Standards (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Law and Safety (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Q10 Please rate your satisfaction with the following events.

	Highly Unsatisfactory (1)	Unsatisfactory (2)	Neutral (3)	Satisfactory (4)	Highly Satisfactory (5)	Not Applicable (6)
Campus Selfie Tour (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ice-cream social @ Wits (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Farmers Market trip (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Soccer game (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Walmart trip (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employment Paperwork (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q11 Please rate the relevance of the following events to your adjustment to life at OU and in Athens?

	Highly Irrelevant (1)	Irrelevant (2)	Neutral (3)	Relevant (4)	Highly Relevant (5)	Not Applicable (6)
Campus Selfie Tour (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ice-cream social @ Wits (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Farmers Market trip (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Soccer game (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Walmart trip (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employment Paperwork (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q12 What did you like most about your ISO experience?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q13 What would you recommend that ISFS add to ISO for future incoming students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q14 How satisfied were you with your peer advisor?

○ Extremely dissatisfied (1)

○ Somewhat dissatisfied (2)

○ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)

○ Somewhat satisfied (4)

○ Extremely satisfied (5)

Q15 What would you recommend that peer advisors do differently to be more supportive to future incoming students?

_____

Q16 If you would be willing to engage in a focus group discussion regarding your experience with ISO, please provide your OU email address (e.g. ab123456@ohio.edu).

Appendix B – Draft Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Can you share an aspect of your ISO experience that influenced your decision to speak with us today?

2. Health insurance

    o   How helpful has ISO been regarding health insurance?

    o   What do you think about ISO regarding health insurance information shared?

    o   Think back to the health insurance session; what is one take-away that you have?

3. Health and well-being

    o   What health and well-being information would have been important for you to have received during ISO?

    o   What do you think of when you hear the term well-being?

4. Recreational resources

    o   What recreational resources did you learn about during ISO?

    o   What recreational resources are you interested in learning more about?

5. Information to work as TA/RA/GA/GRS

    o   What information would have been helpful to learn during ISO related to working as a TA/GA/RA/GRS?

6. Title IX

    o   How can we make Title IX information more relatable to future international students?

    o   What did you take away from the Title IX session during ISO?

7. Social activities

    o   Can you talk about your experience with the ISO social events?

8. Would any of the sessions be better as an online module? Why or why not?

9. If you could easily change one aspect of orientation, what would it be?