USG eCore's Digital Learning Support Model

Executive Summary

USG eCore, administered by USG eCampus, delivers a scalable, data-informed, and student-centered approach to digital learning support across the University System of Georgia. Designed to serve students completing some or all their general education coursework fully online, eCore combines academic rigor with a comprehensive infrastructure of support services that actively promote equity, persistence, and learning success.

In FY 2024 alone, eCore supported over 58,000 course enrollments with a 92.22% course completion rate and a 75.23% student success rate (A/B/C grades). These outcomes are driven by targeted, high-touch interventions such as the Student Engagement and Advancement Data System (SEADS), a real-time early alert system that triggers more than 55,000 personalized outreach calls annually. Embedded academic support - including writing specialists and STEM-focused tutors - ensures that help is available when and where students need it. Additionally, all eCore courses use free, embedded Open Educational Resources, and students in science courses receive free lab kits, removing common financial barriers.

This innovative model is fully centralized, easily scalable, and replicable across institutions. By integrating data, technology, and human support into every stage of the learner journey, USG eCore exemplifies excellence in digital learning support.

Detailed Description

USG eCore represents a high-impact model of centralized digital learning support that advances equitable, scalable, and data-informed success for online learners across the University System of Georgia (USG). Designed to allow students to complete general education requirements fully online, eCore pairs academic rigor with a student support infrastructure that enables proactive intervention, embedded academic help, and holistic student engagement—all delivered across 21 partner institutions without duplication of effort or cost.

Centralized, High-Touch Student Support Ecosystem

eCore's student support services are built around the principle of proactive engagement. At the core of this model is the **Student Engagement and Advancement Data System (SEADS)**, which allows faculty to identify students showing signs of

disengagement or risk. Once a SEADS alert is submitted, it is integrated into **Salesforce CRM** and immediately routed to the **Student Success Team (SST)**. Outreach begins with a personalized phone call as the primary point of contact, allowing staff to have a real-time, supportive conversation with the student. Follow-up communications, including email and text messages, are then used to reinforce the guidance provided and ensure the student has ongoing access to resources. This closed-loop process ensures that instructors are kept informed of the outcome of each outreach effort, reinforcing collaboration between academic and support teams.

In FY 2024 alone, the SST made **over 47,000+ outreach calls** to students, including:

- 14,566 “No Login” calls during week one of classes
- 11,639 calls for students who had not scheduled or missed proctored exams
- 10,262 calls responding to faculty-submitted at-risk referrals
- 5,843 calls regarding major missing assignments
- 2,245 preemptive calls made before the start of the term

This real-time, high-frequency outreach helps students stay on track and feel connected—even in asynchronous online environments.

Embedded Academic and Technical Support

eCore removes the need for students to seek help externally by embedding academic support directly into the learning environment. These services include:

- **eCampus STEM Tutors** who are enrolled in courses and engage students through live chat, email, discussion boards, and Blackboard Collaborate during peak activity times.
- **eCampus Librarians and English Tutors are embedded in every course**, providing support with research strategies, citation formatting, academic writing skills, and Microsoft Office tools. English Tutors also offer a **Writing Drop-Off Review service**, where students can submit drafts and receive personalized feedback within **two business days**, helping them strengthen their writing through timely, constructive guidance.
- **Tutor.com Online Tutoring**, available to all students, facilitated **7,711 tutoring sessions** and **4,330 hours** of learning assistance in FY 2024. The **Essay Drop-Off Review** accounted for 30% of sessions and 40% of total usage time.

Together, these services ensure timely academic support across disciplines and modalities, reducing barriers to engagement and performance.

Data-Driven Intervention and Seamless Onboarding

From the point of registration, students enter a structured, supportive environment designed to build confidence and promote persistence:

- A **gated registration process** requires students to complete a tutorial that sets expectations for online learning.
- The **eConnection tutorial course**, available before and throughout the term, orients students to course navigation, time management, and help-seeking strategies.
- Automated messages, personalized reminders, and phone calls and texts are deployed at strategic intervals during the term to increase accountability and engagement.

This comprehensive onboarding ensures that students begin with a clear understanding of expectations and where to find help, which in turn supports the program's exceptionally high **course completion rate of 92.22% in FY 2024**.

Scalability and Institutional Collaboration

eCore's model is highly scalable and has been carefully designed to reduce the burden on individual institutions. All core support services—course design, exam scheduling, instructional design, tutoring, data analytics, and marketing—are centrally managed by eCampus, allowing partner institutions to offer high-quality online courses without duplicating infrastructure.

As of FY 2024:

- eCore supports **39 general education courses**, up from 24 in 2010.
- Course sections are actively managed to maintain optimal class sizes (average of 32) and ensure progression through the curriculum.
- All instructors complete a **two-week certification program** focused on online pedagogy, student support, and digital tools.
- Faculty serve on review teams and benefit from ongoing development and mentorship.

This infrastructure supports consistent student experiences across campuses and enables system-wide quality improvement and knowledge transfer.

Affordability and Equity Through Access-Driven Design

eCore eliminates many of the financial and logistical barriers that commonly prevent students from succeeding in online courses:

- **100% of courses use Open Educational Resources (OER)**, resulting in over **$44 million in textbook cost savings** since 2013.
- In Spring 2024, eCore began offering **free lab kits for science courses**, saving students an additional **$288,775**.
- Tuition is kept below system averages at **$159 per credit hour**, with no additional technology or textbook fees.

In addition to reducing financial barriers, eCore ensures that students have timely and equitable access to support services throughout their academic journey. Live support is available during extended business hours—Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM and Fridays from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM—through phone, email, and live chat. Outside of these hours, students can receive after-hours assistance through eVA, the eCampus chatbot, which is available 24/7 to answer common questions and connect learners with key resources.

In FY 2024, the USG eCampus Helpdesk supported students through **8,185 phone calls, 1,138 live chat sessions, and 4,223 chatbot conversations**. This layered help ecosystem is intentionally designed to meet the needs of diverse learners across geographic, socioeconomic, and technological boundaries, ensuring that all students—regardless of schedule, location, or circumstances—have access to the guidance and support they need to succeed.

Outcome Highlights

The eCore model is validated by its results:

- **Course Completion Rate**: Increased to 92.22% in FY 2024 (up from 68% in 2005)
- **Student Success Rate (%ABC)**: Reached 75.23% in FY 2024 (up from 61.26% in 2013)
- **Student Satisfaction**:
    - 94.5% of students said they received sufficient support

    - Over 91% rated their course liaison as “Good” or “Excellent”. Liaisons are responsible for serving as a single point of contact for students in eCore courses and collaborating with eCampus Support Services to ensure the highest level of student success.
- **Tutoring Usage**: 1,601 students participated in over 7,700 tutoring sessions

These metrics reflect not only the academic impact of eCore’s support services, but also the program’s success in fostering student confidence, motivation, and long-term persistence.

Through a centralized, student-first approach that unites technology, data, and human connection, USG eCore delivers on its mission to support learning equity, drive academic success, and scale quality digital learning across the state of Georgia. Its model offers a blueprint for how digital support services can transform online learning into a truly inclusive, empowering experience.

Criteria-Based Narrative

1. Learning Effectiveness

USG eCore ensures learning effectiveness by aligning all course content and support services with clearly defined student learning outcomes, rigorous academic standards, and institutional goals across the University System of Georgia (USG). All courses meet or exceed **Quality Matters or 5-Star Online Course** standards, and each is reviewed by faculty-led teams every three years, with interim updates based on student and faculty feedback.

The **Student Engagement and Advancement Data System (SEADS)** enhances learning effectiveness by allowing instructors to identify students in need of intervention early in the term. Through integration with Salesforce CRM, SEADS enables the Student Success Team (SST) to follow up within 1–2 business days, offering timely academic assistance and referring students to tutoring, course navigation resources, or instructor support.

As a result of this coordinated support:

- **Course completion rates** reached 92.22% in FY 2024.
- **Student success rates (%ABC grades)** rose to 75.23%, up from 61.26% in FY 2013.
- Students gain not only course-specific knowledge but also cross-disciplinary digital literacy and time management skills that contribute to lifelong learning.

These results reflect a highly effective, student-centered learning environment where instructional design, proactive intervention, and academic support work in concert to support learner outcomes.

2. Learner Experience

The eCore learner experience is shaped by holistic, personalized support that fosters student engagement, reduces barriers, and reinforces confidence in the learning process. The SST's **proactive communication strategy**, which included **47,011 personalized calls in FY 2024**, ensures students are never left to navigate challenges alone. Key outreach campaigns include:

- Preemptive welcome calls before the term starts
- Calls to students who haven't logged in during the first week
- Outreach tied to major assignments, proctored exams, and faculty-submitted at-risk alerts
- Re-engagement calls to students who may not be captured by other outreach types but demonstrate lower course activity or declining engagement compared to their peers

Students also benefit from:

- A **gated registration system** and **eConnection onboarding course** to establish digital learning readiness
- On-demand academic support via **Tutor.com**, **eCampus STEM tutors**, and **writing and research librarians**
- A persistent **"Free Tutoring" link** in every course to streamline access

Student survey results validate this approach:

- **94.5% of students reported receiving enough support**
- **91% rated their liaison as "Good" or "Excellent"**
- Students cited flexibility, affordability, and convenience as the top reasons for choosing eCore

These elements combine to create a learning experience that is supportive, empowering, and deeply responsive to students' academic and personal needs.

3. Instructor Experience

USG eCore supports faculty through comprehensive onboarding, mentoring, and engagement opportunities that foster both instructional excellence and professional satisfaction. All eCore instructors complete a **mandatory two-week certification course** that simulates the online student experience and covers key areas such as:

- Building course community
- Providing timely, high-quality feedback
- Using LMS tools effectively (e.g., Intelligent Agents, discussion analytics)
- Supporting at-risk students and participating in SEADS referrals

Instructors are not only trained but also included in the ongoing development and quality assurance of eCore courses. They benefit from:

- Mentorship programs and instructional coaching
- An online faculty learning community
- Access to webinars, data dashboards, and an annual faculty summit
- Participation in course revision teams and support design decisions

Many instructors report that the practices and tools they adopt in eCore enrich their teaching at their home institutions, and they often become mentors for peers transitioning to online instruction.

4. Scale

eCore is a **mature, system-wide model** for scaling access to quality general education through digital learning. As of FY 2024:

- eCore supports **39 general education courses**
- **58,423 enrollments** were recorded across 1,802 course sections
- Average course size was maintained at 32, ensuring faculty-student interaction and manageable grading loads

Scalability is achieved through:

- A **centralized support structure** (eCampus) that handles course design, faculty training, tutoring services, marketing, and student success outreach
- Scalable technology platforms including **Salesforce, D2L Brightspace, Tutor.com, and Credly**

This structure empowers institutions of varying sizes to participate equitably and offer full online general education pathways without investing in duplicate infrastructure. Growth has been strategic and quality-focused, ensuring students receive consistent, effective digital learning experiences at scale.

5. Access

Access is at the core of eCore's mission. The program is intentionally designed to serve **nontraditional, underserved, and remote learners** across Georgia by eliminating common barriers to participation and success in digital education. Key access strategies include:

- **Open Educational Resources (OER)** in 100% of courses, saving students **over $44 million** in textbook costs since 2013
- **Free science lab kits** introduced in Spring 2024, saving students an additional **$288,775**
- **Affordable tuition** of $159 per credit hour—well below average rates—with no added textbook or platform fees

In terms of support access:

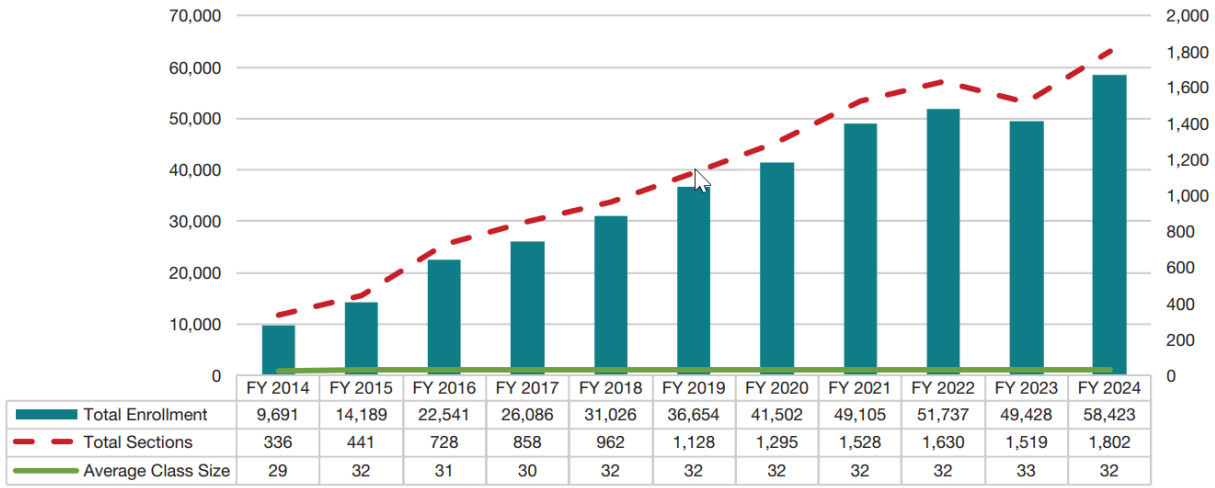
- The **USG eCampus Helpdesk** provided **8,185 phone calls, 1,138 live chats, and 4,223 chatbot interactions** in FY 2024, with the chatbot (eVA) available 24/7
- Help is accessible via multiple modalities (chat, phone, email, discussion boards) and during high-traffic evening hours, informed by LMS usage patterns

Additionally, embedded tutors and advisors help meet the differentiated needs of diverse learners, ensuring that access is not only available but meaningful. By dismantling cost, time, and location-based barriers, eCore empowers students to begin—and complete—their academic journeys with confidence.

Supporting Data

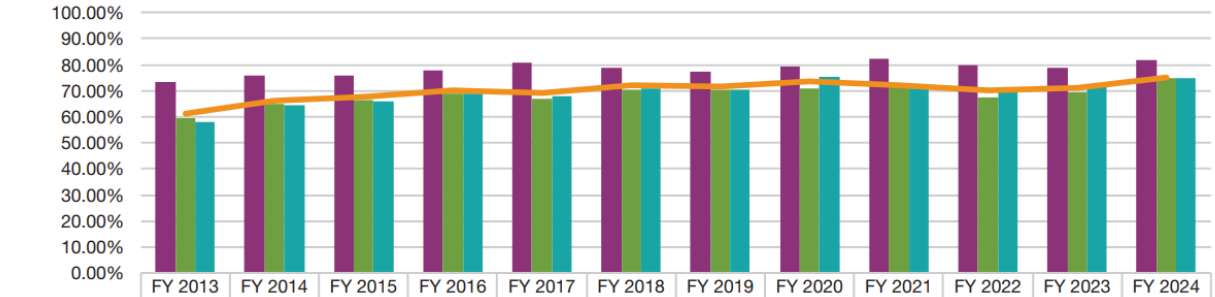
Total Enrollment by Fiscal Year

The following chart shows the total enrollment and number of sections offered by eCore for FY 2014 to 2024.



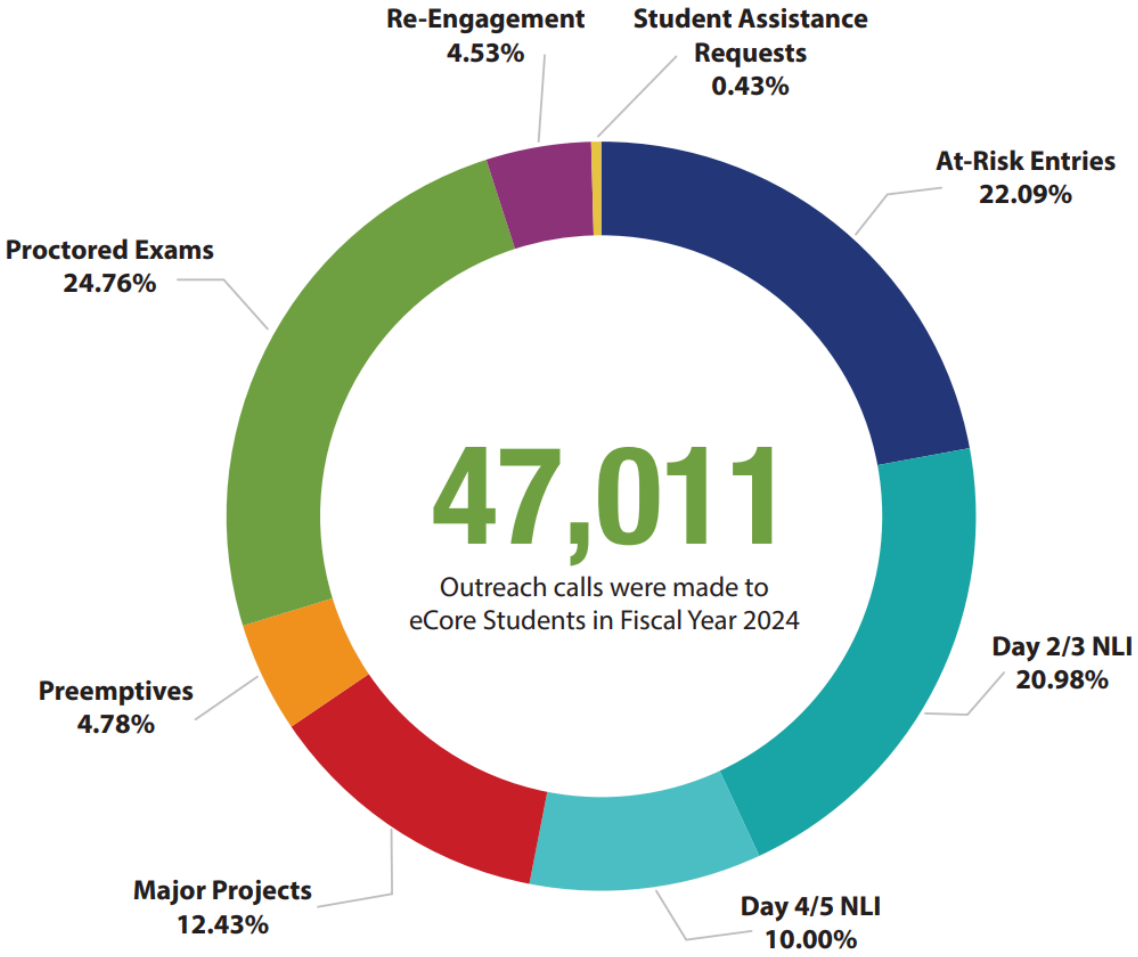
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Total Enrollment	9,691	14,189	22,541	26,086	31,026	36,654	41,502	49,105	51,737	49,428	58,423
Total Sections	336	441	728	858	962	1,128	1,295	1,528	1,630	1,519	1,802
Average Class Size	29	32	31	30	32	32	32	32	32	33	32

Student Success (%ABC) Across Time



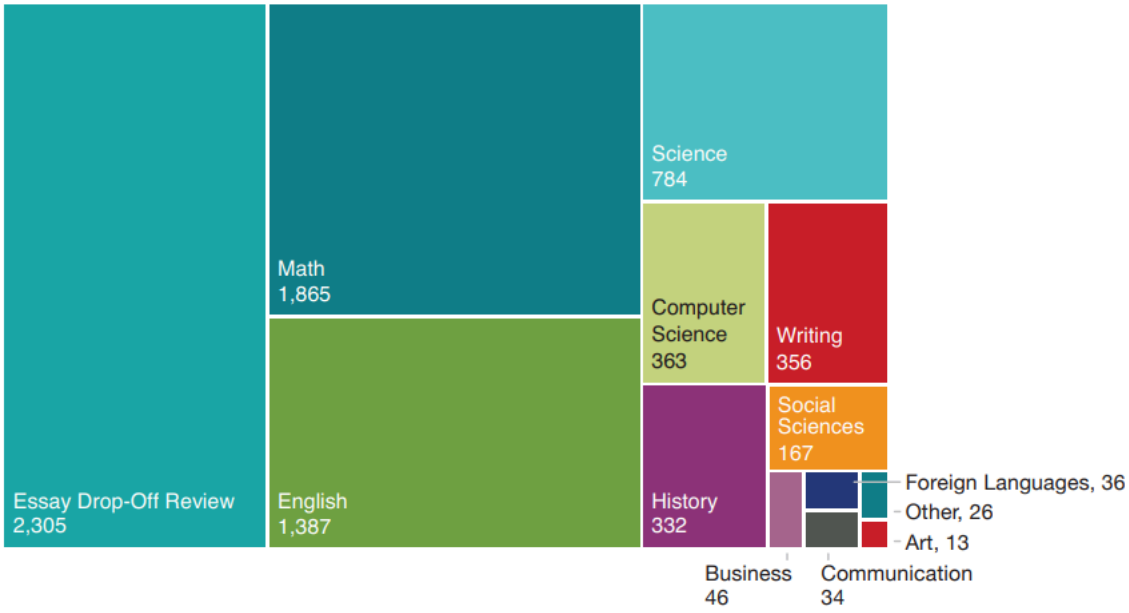
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Summer	73.53%	75.86%	75.92%	77.60%	80.79%	78.98%	77.31%	79.33%	82.45%	79.81%	78.63%	81.69%
Fall	59.29%	65.18%	66.39%	68.70%	66.79%	70.43%	70.30%	70.78%	71.42%	67.39%	69.57%	74.61%
Spring	58.04%	64.36%	65.98%	69.12%	67.74%	70.79%	70.39%	75.20%	70.94%	70.52%	71.30%	74.61%
Total FY	61.26%	66.39%	67.65%	70.15%	69.40%	71.91%	71.41%	73.81%	72.37%	70.01%	71.27%	75.23%

FY 2024 Number of Outreach Calls Made by SST Members (Unduplicated)

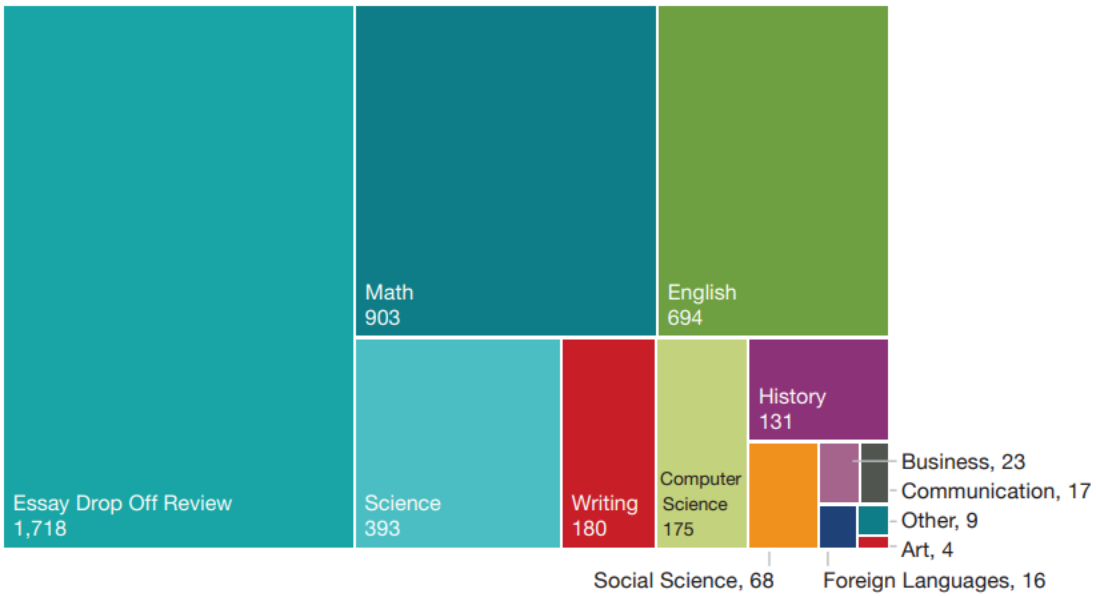

Re-Engagement
4.53%
Student Assistance
Requests
0.43%
At-Risk Entries
22.09%
Proctored Exams
24.76%
47,011
Outreach calls were made to
eCore Students in Fiscal Year 2024
Day 2/3 NLI
20.98%
Preemptives
4.78%
Major Projects
12.43%
Day 4/5 NLI
10.00%

Tutoring Information

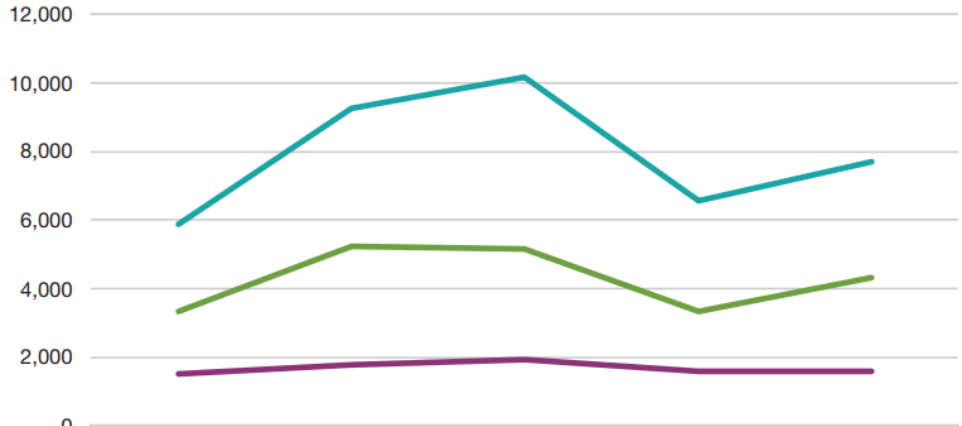
Number of Sessions per Subject



Hours Used/Time Spent per Subject



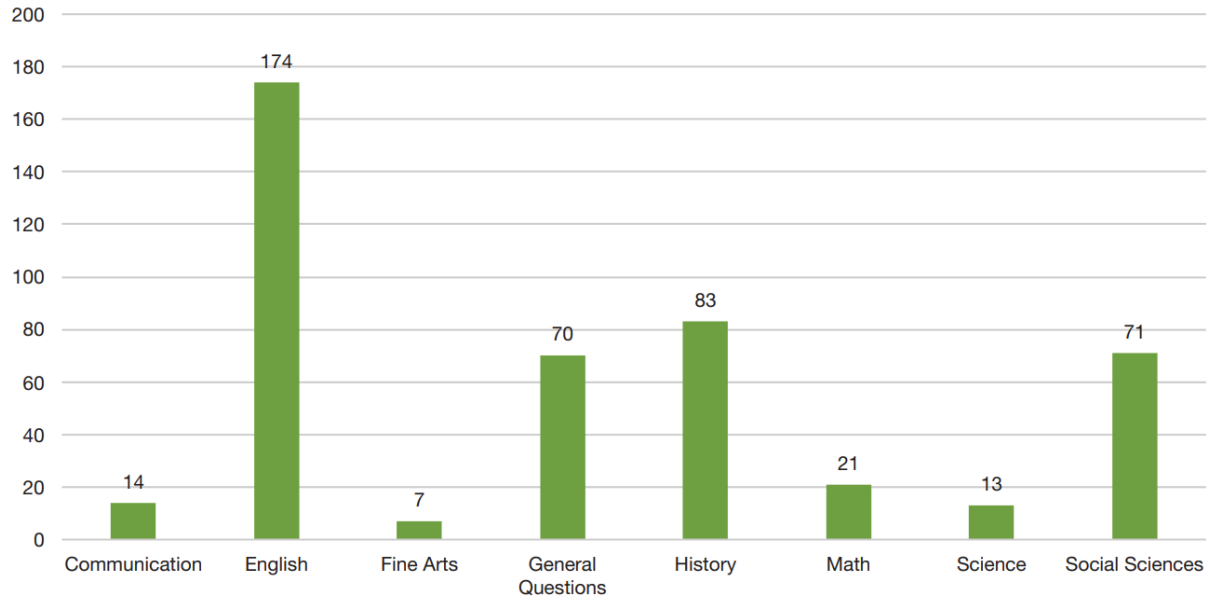
Historical Online Tutoring Usage



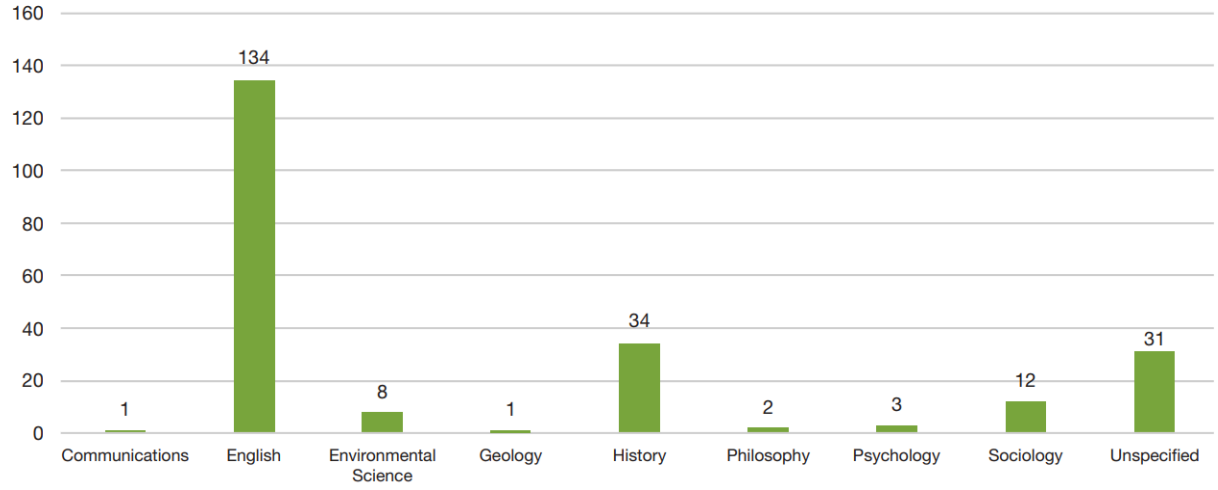
	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Number of Distinct Users	1,490	1,764	1,944	1,579	1,601
Number of Sessions	5,869	9,270	10,180	6,562	7,711
Number of Hours	3,322	5,239	5,173	3,328	4,330

*Data prior to FY 2021 represents all eCampus tutoring usage. FY 2021 and forward represents eCore Tutoring usage only.

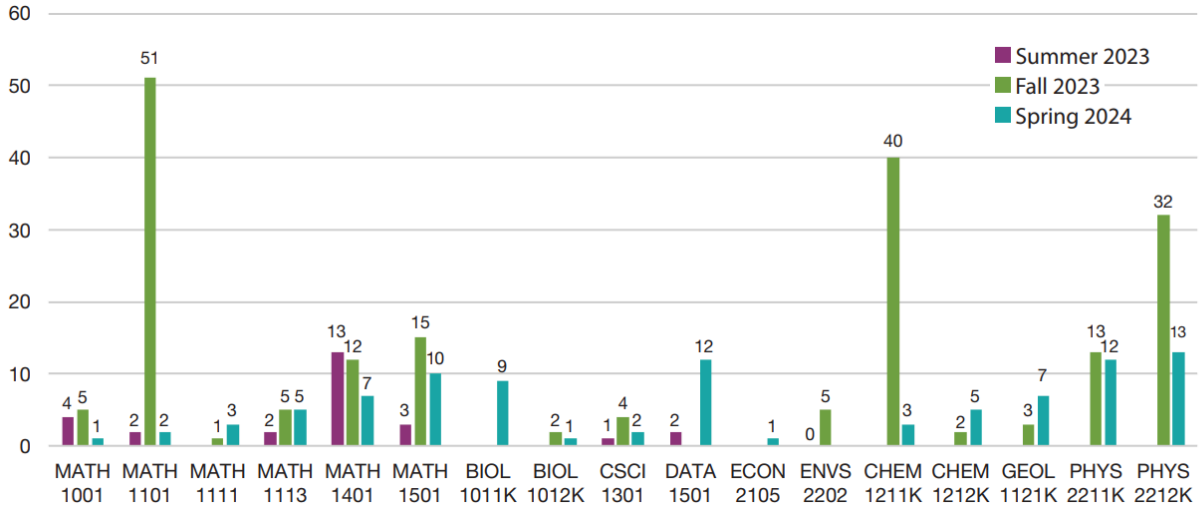
eCampus Library Services – Student Questions by Subject for FY 2024



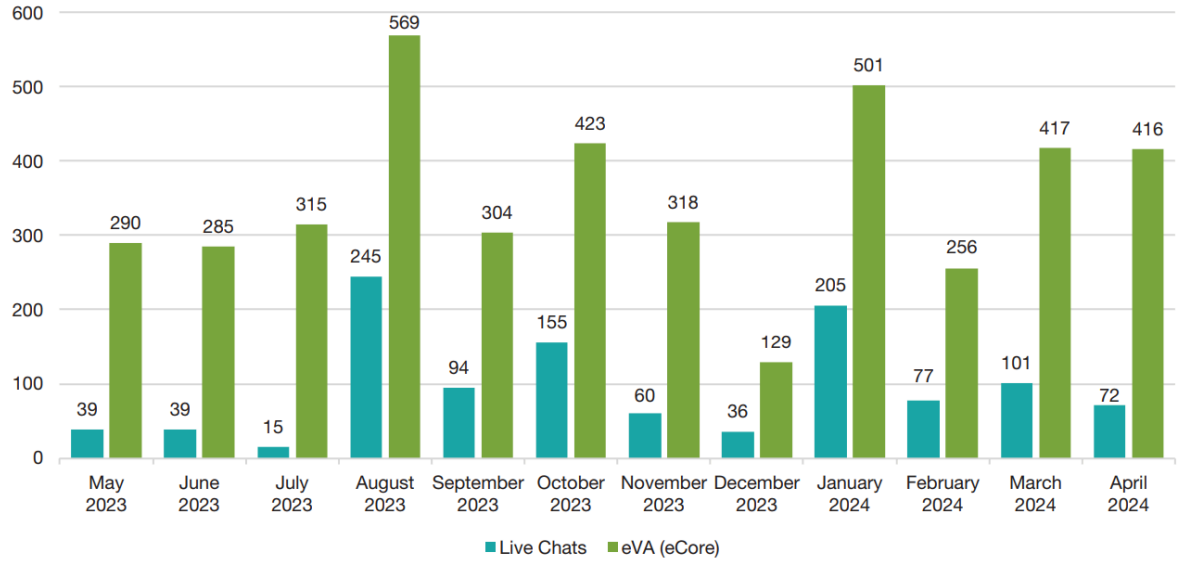
eCampus English Tutoring – Number of Session by Subject



eCampus STEM Tutoring – Student Interactions by Course



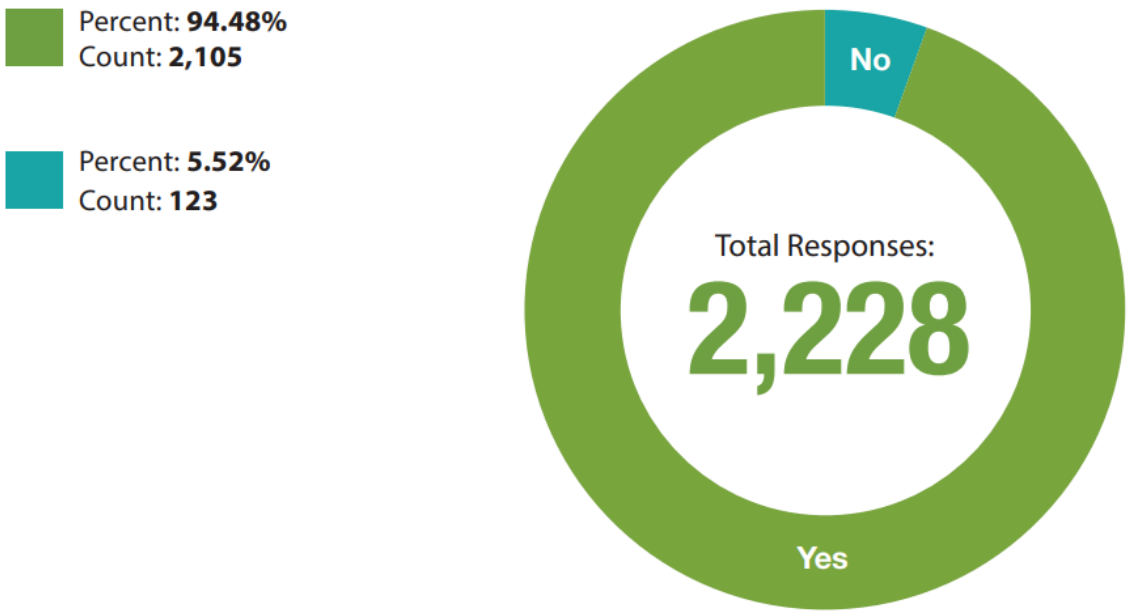
USG eCampus Helpdesk Live Chat and eVA Conversations by Month



Student Services Survey

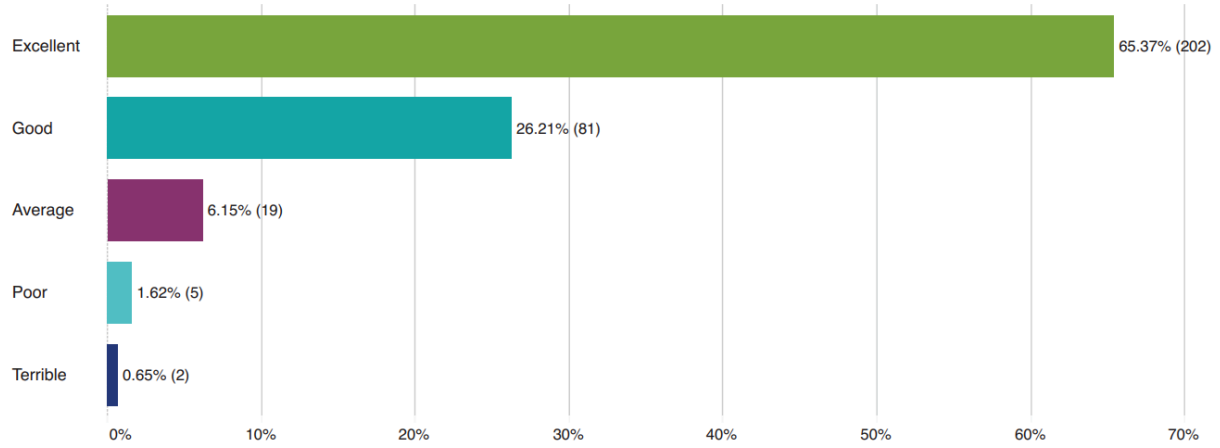
Students complete the Student Services Survey annually. This survey captures student feedback regarding eCore services in order to assess and improve student support. The following visuals display results from the Spring 2024 eCore Student Services Survey

Did you receive enough support as an eCore student?

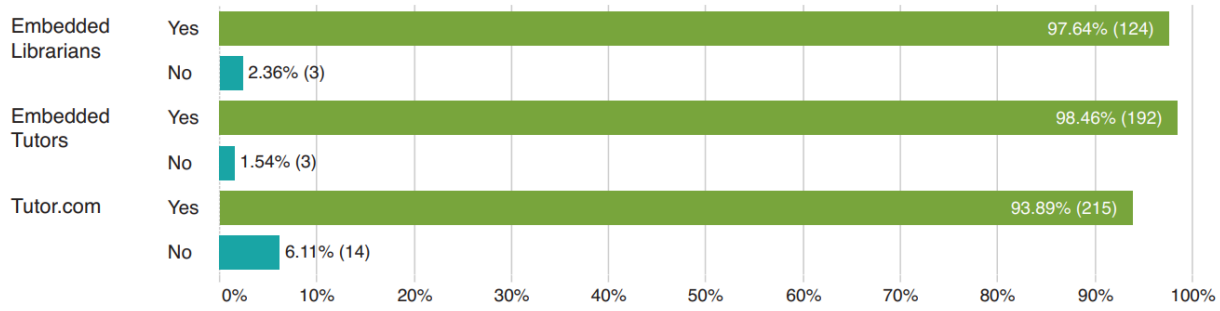


How would you describe the help that you received from your eCore liaison?

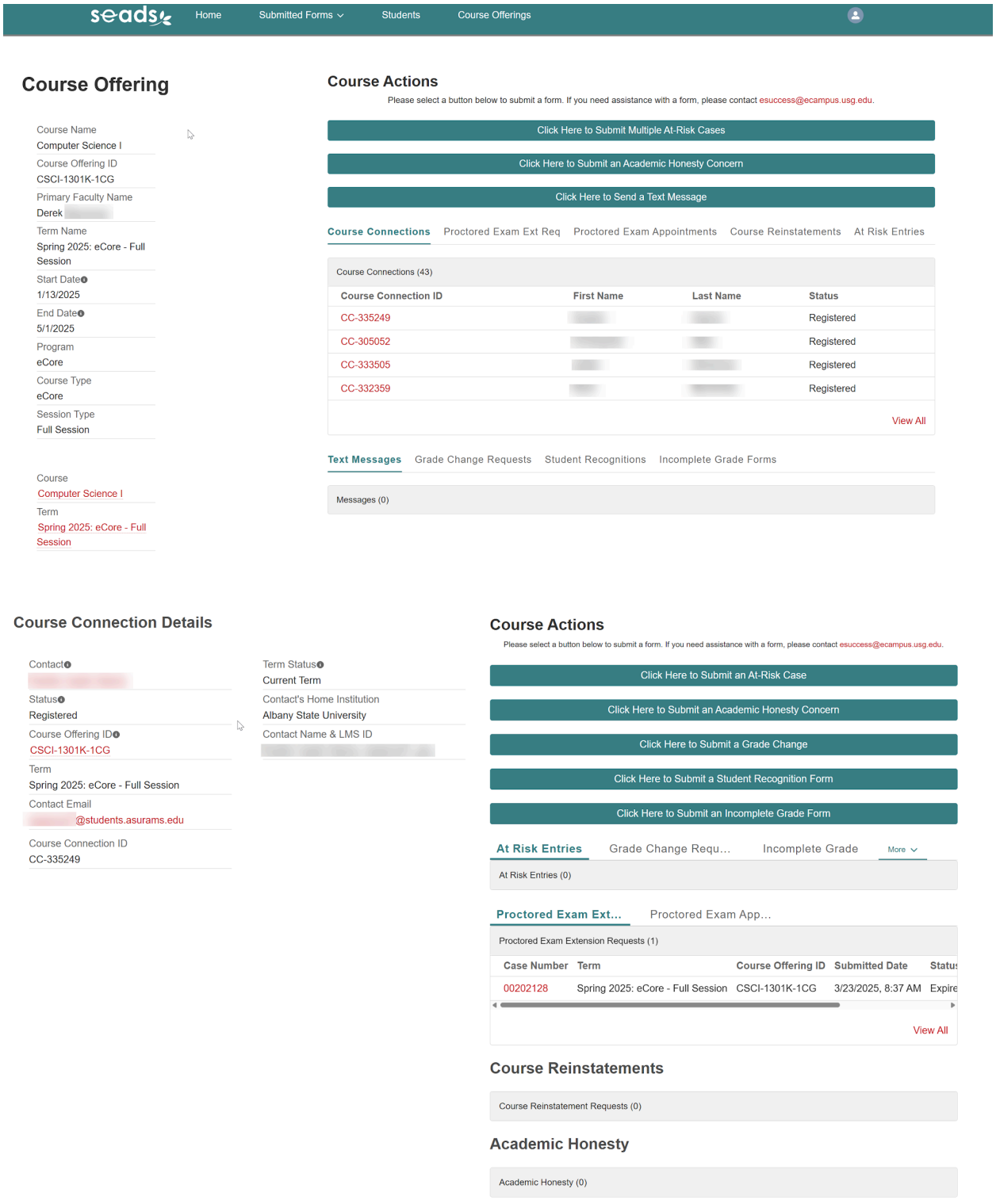
Liaisons are responsible for serving as a single point of contact for students in eCore courses and collaborating with eCampus Support Services to ensure the highest level of student success.



Did the tutoring service(s) that you utilized meet your needs?



Screenshots of the SEADS platform, course actions for instructor



Student Testimonials

"*I fully support USG eCampus— and this was one of the best years I've had, primarily because they really worked with me while I was doing this overseas! I want all of my junior sailors to know that it's never too late to finish your education. I was a full-time student while on deployment, on shore duty, and while stationed in Japan; everyone at USG eCampus and the University of West Georgia has been true champions to the military! Obtaining my degree was one of my goals that I definitely wanted to accomplish while serving in the military.*" - Naval Officer LaTresha W.

"*It works perfectly with my lifestyle, and the degree program I wanted to study was only available online through (eCampus*)" - Arianna S.

"*I cannot express what the (eCampus) program means to me. I am SO glad I made this decision to return to school. As an older and wiser adult, I have always regretted not finishing my college degree, so I finally decided it was now or never even though I work full-time in a demanding job. I am looking at the end game and planning the biggest graduation party EVER once that diploma is in my possession. The instructors (and my wonderful student advisor) have all been amazing! If I ever start to doubt my ability to see it through, they are right there to cheer me on. I also appreciate that the classes contain updated material, so the knowledge I'm gaining benefits all areas of my life!*" - Lari L.

"*The closest university is an hour away from where I live, and I had given up on completing my education until I discovered (eCampus). (eCampus) has made my education possible by making college accessible, providing resources like tutoring, and partnering with high quality programs like (Georgia Southwestern State University's College of Business and Computing).*" - Malena W.

"eCampus has allowed me the flexibility of not having to worry about limited seating capacity. Not having to get to a class right after work. It has allowed me the freedom of knowing that the classes I need to take will be available when I need them. It allows me to focus on my job full time while afterwords i can go home and get on my classwork or i can do my classwork on the weekends. It really and truly allowed me to make the goal of earning my Bachelor's degree attainable and realistic. It is so flexible." - Saucony H.

"I began taking classes through dual enrollment at East Georgia State College as a ninth grader, allowing me to graduate from high school one year early while simultaneously earning an associate degree. I wanted to continue my education at

EGSC, and eCampus gave me that opportunity. Not only is the tuition affordable, but this program has also allowed me to work full-time while obtaining my degree. I will be attending law school after graduation, so financial sustainability was a top priority for me. Online learning has been incredibly helpful in allowing me to balance work and school. The flexibility it provides has helped me to continue my education without sacrificing employment opportunities or financial stability." - Mary Grace W.