

2024 UBIT Student Experience Survey: Executive Summary



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UBIT Communication and Engagement

Office of the VPCIO

UB Information Technology

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Introduction

The 2024 UBIT Student Experience Survey provides a look at how UB students are grappling with increased computing standards, the use of AI in education, and all the multiple ways of receiving information.

This year, 35% of students said their laptop/tablet/iPad wasn't working well enough to meet the needs of their coursework. That number is up from 2023, when 21%, asked solely about their laptops, said it wasn't working well enough to meet the needs of their coursework.

Now in its 28th year, the UBIT Student Experience Survey heard from a wide range of UB students, with 38% of respondents enrolled in the school of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Other well-represented areas include the College of Arts and Sciences (17%), School of Management (12%), and the School of Public Health and Health Professions (7%).

About the Survey

3,682 UB students responded to the 2024 survey, representing undergraduates at all levels, as well as graduate students and non-degree seeking students. About 74% of the students who responded to the survey live off-campus.

The 2024 UBIT Student Experience Survey was open from October 21 through November 4, 2024, and contained 35 questions designed in conjunction with UBIT instructional and support staff, as well as UB's offices of Student Life, Campus Living, Undergraduate Education, University Libraries, and other campus stakeholders.

Responses were collected using Qualtrics. Students were encouraged to participate through social media, UBIT's student e-newsletter and the UBIT website.

Where possible, this report compares data from 2024 with previous UBIT student surveys.

While some key questions were required, many were not; where applicable, percentages reflect the number of students who answered that specific question.

The full survey results can be found in a companion document, "2024 Raw Frequencies and comments" on the [UBIT website](#).

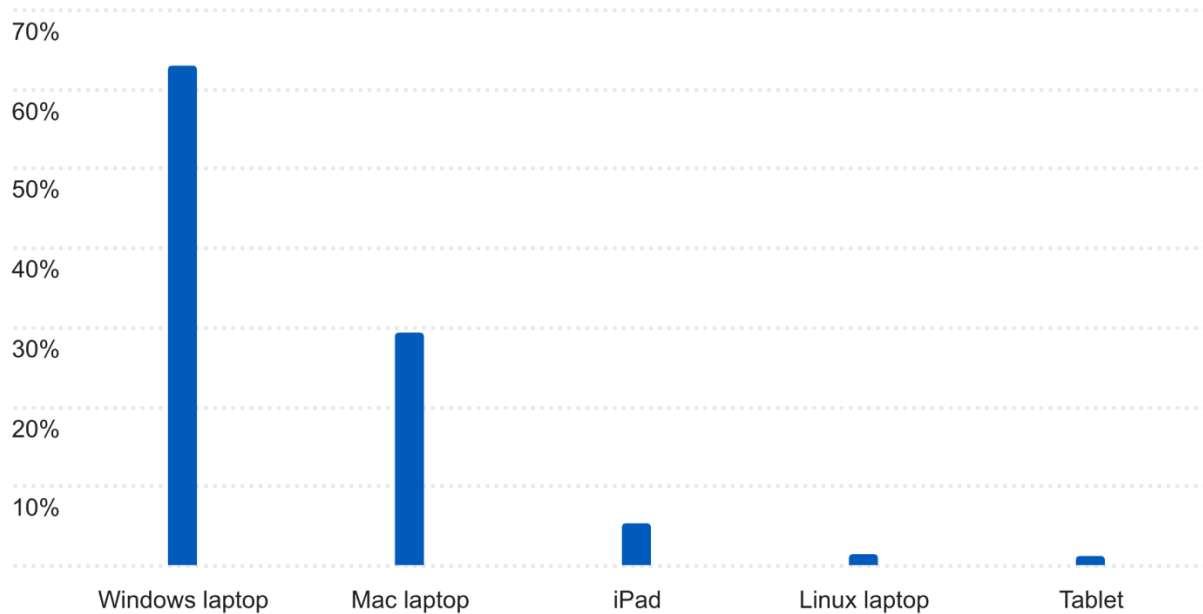
Survey Results: Highlights and Trends

Part 1. Students and the Technology they Use

Q5 - Do you use a laptop or tablet/iPad as your primary computer?

3441 Responses

■ Percentage



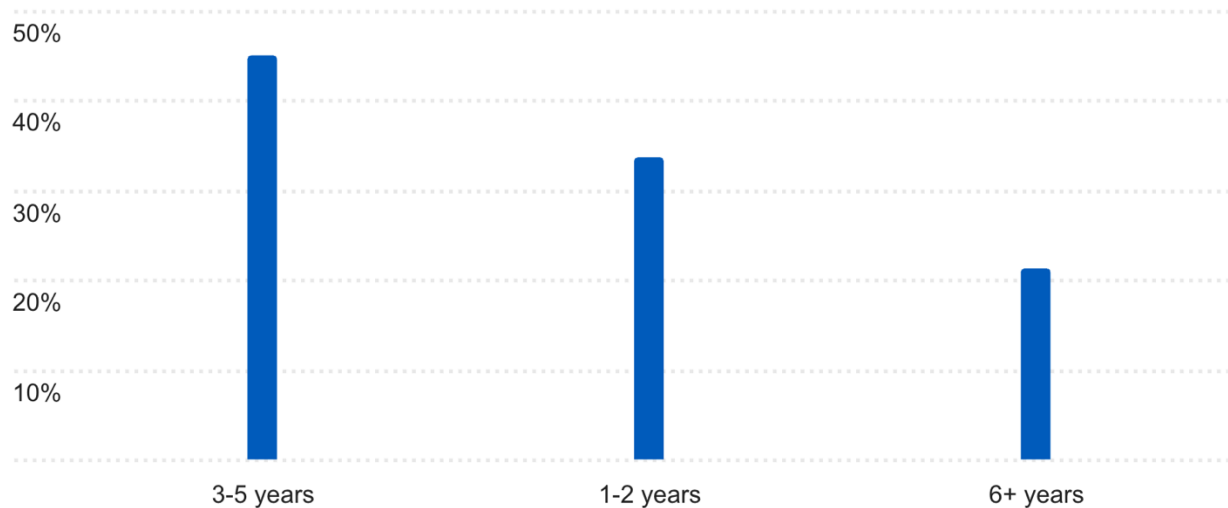
In the 2024 Student IT Experience survey, the primary computing devices used by students were analyzed. The results indicate a clear preference for Windows laptops, followed by Mac laptops, with minimal usage of Linux laptops and tablets.

The survey results show that approximately 63% of students use Windows laptops as their primary computing device. Mac laptops are the second most popular choice, with an estimated 29% of students using them.

Linux laptops and tablets account for a very small percentage of usage, approximately 3% of UB students combined. The limited adoption of Linux suggests that it remains a niche option, likely favored by tech enthusiasts or students with specialized needs. Similarly, the low percentage of tablet users implies that tablets are not widely regarded as a primary computing solution for academic purposes.

Q6 – How old is your laptop or tablet/iPad?

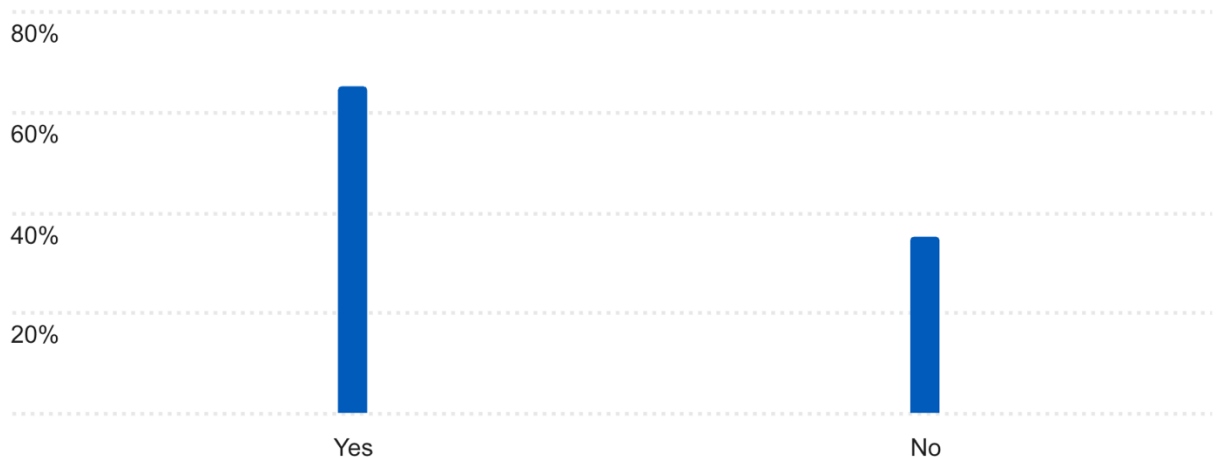
3391 Responses



The survey also examined the age of students' primary computing devices. The findings indicate that the majority (45%) of UB student-owned devices are 3–5 years old. 35% of UB students reported their devices to be one to two years old. However, a notable percentage, over 20% of UB students, reported using devices that are six or more years old. This could indicate potential challenges in performance and software compatibility for these students. These findings are similar to our 2023 survey results.

Q7 – Is your laptop/tablet/iPad working well enough to meet the needs of your coursework at UB?

3383 Responses

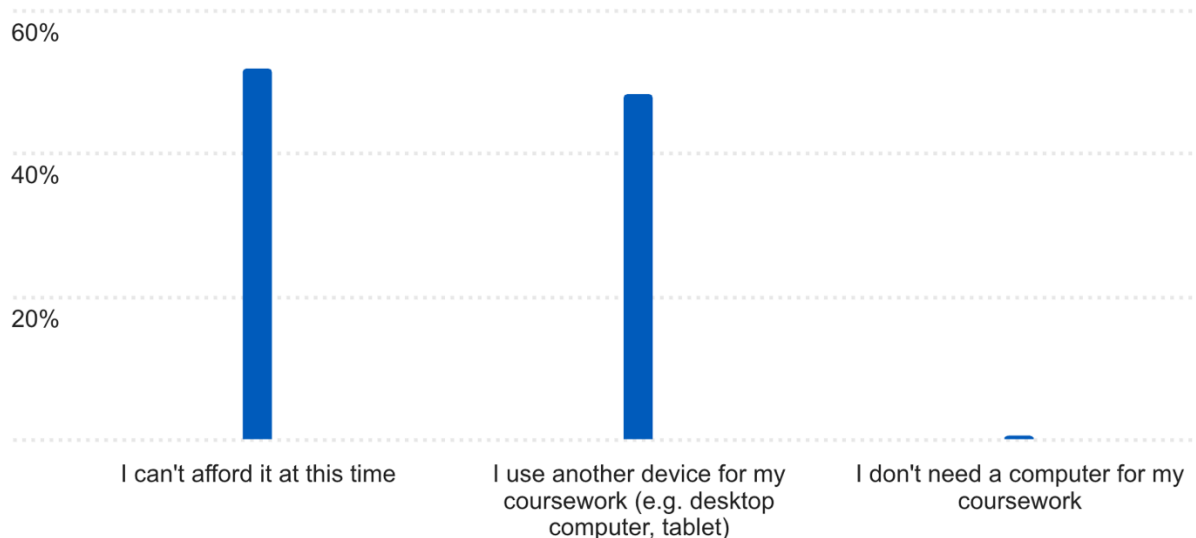


As in years past, the survey assessed whether students' devices adequately meet the demands of their coursework at UB. Approximately 65% of UB students report that their devices perform well enough to support their academic needs. However, around 35% of students reported experiencing performance issues that could impact their coursework.

In 2023, 79% of students reported their laptop worked well enough to meet the requirements of their coursework at UB, with 21% saying it did not. While a significant change, in 2024, the question was changed to ask about laptops, tablets or iPads vs. just laptops in 2023.

Q8 – Most UB students use a personal laptop for their coursework. What is the reason you haven't purchased one?

232 Responses

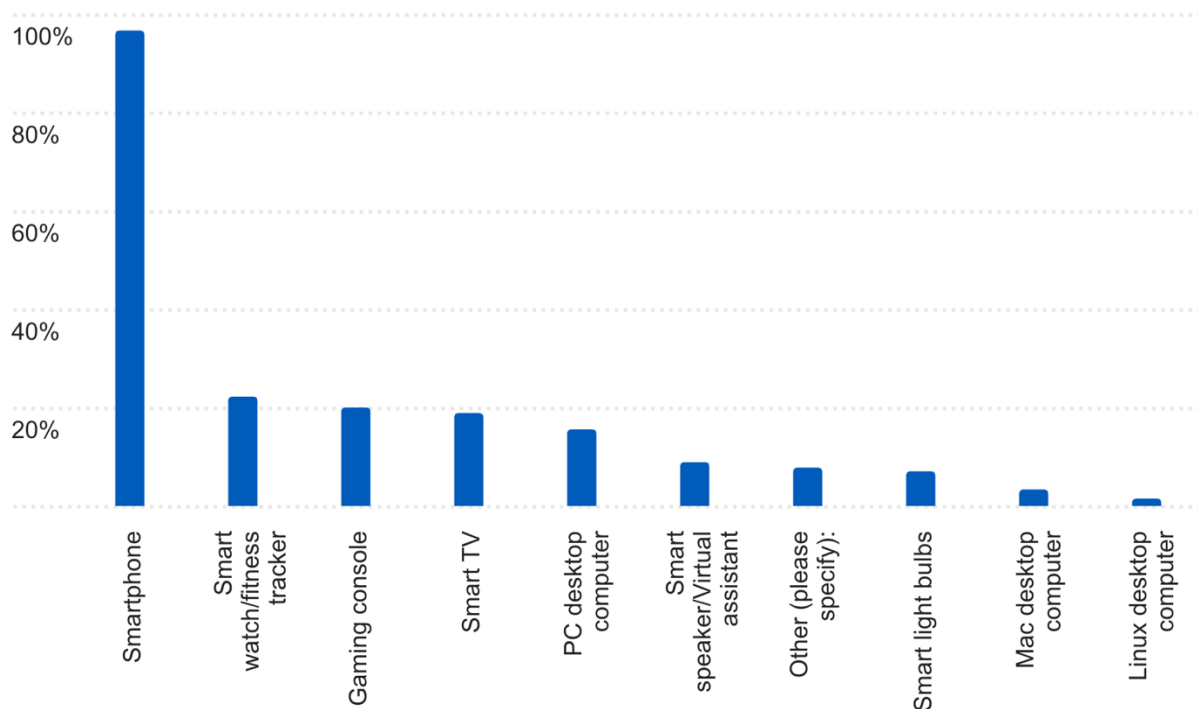


Over half of the respondents (52%) stated that they could not afford a computer at this time. In last year's survey, 70% of students who didn't use a laptop for their coursework said they were unable to afford one.

Nearly half (48%) of students reported using other devices, such as desktop computers or tablets, for their coursework.

Q9 – What other devices do you own? (Select all that apply.)

3595 Responses



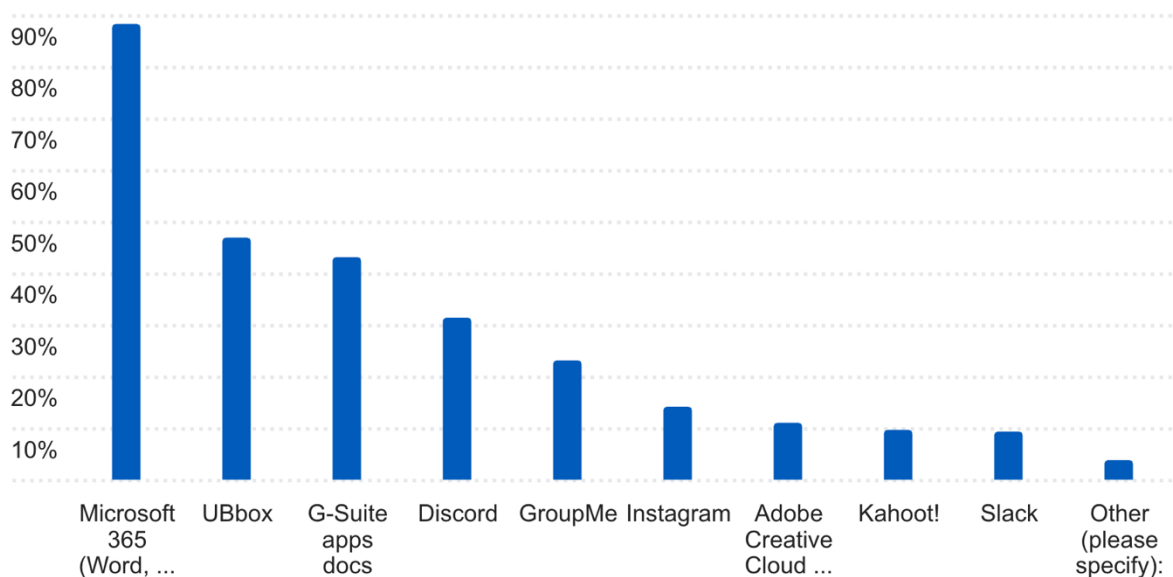
The survey also assessed the ownership of various devices among students. The results indicate that smartphones are the most commonly owned device, with 97% of respondents reporting ownership. Other devices, such as desktop computers (18%) and smart watches (20%), were also represented.

The adoption of smart TVs, speakers, light bulbs, and gaming systems continues to rise at UB, with students increasingly utilizing virtual assistants. UBIT remains committed to providing reliable network access for smart devices while maintaining UB's security standards. Ensuring high-quality Wi-Fi connectivity is a strategic priority for student satisfaction and retention.

In 2024, UBIT continued an ongoing campaign to promote student use of the eduroam Wi-Fi network, as the UB Secure network will be retired at the end of the 2025 spring semester.

Q16- Which of the following productivity software titles do you use for your studies or coursework at UB? (Select all that apply.)

3224 Responses



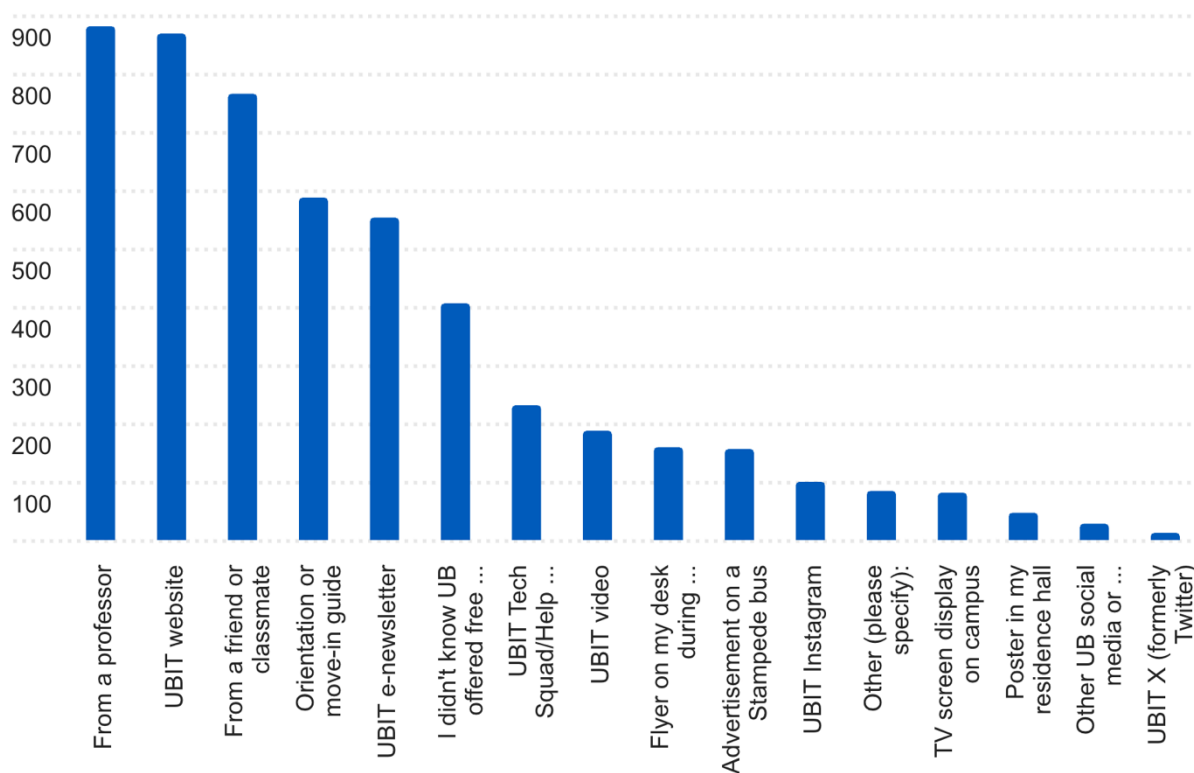
Microsoft 365 (88%) and G-Suite apps (43%) are the most commonly used productivity software among students. The Microsoft 365 suite is available to UB students for free.

Students continue to use third-party messaging and collaboration apps, with Discord usage rising from 12% in 2023 to 31% in 2024, and GroupMe use increasing from 10% to 23%. Other platforms, including Instagram (14%), Adobe Creative Cloud (11%), Kahoot! (10%), and Slack (9%) had reported use at lower levels.

Additionally, about 47% of UB students rely on UB Box file store and sharing for academic work. Other applications mentioned for coursework use include LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Canva, Apple Pages, and Rhinoceros 3D.

Q17 – How did you find out about UB collaboration tools and FREE software, such as Microsoft 365? (Select all that apply.)

3262 Responses



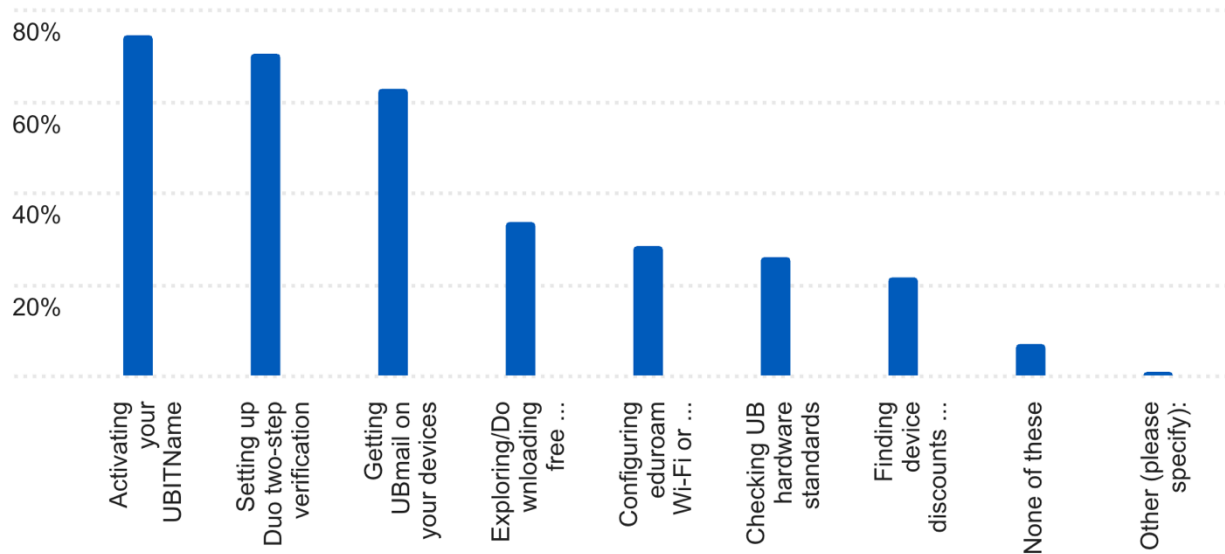
Students learn about UB-provided collaboration tools and free software, including Microsoft Office, through various channels. For the eighth consecutive year, the UBIT website was the most common source, with 27% of students learning about software offerings there, a 7% increase over 2023. Just over 26% learned from a professor, while 23% heard about UB-provided software from a classmate or friend.

UBIT's monthly student e-newsletter, The Monthly Download, helped inform 17% of responding students about software during the fall and spring semesters, a 7% increase over 2023. The fall 2024 student e-newsletters had an average open rate of 38%.

Meanwhile, 12% of students said they were unaware of UB's collaboration tools and free software, an increase from 7% in 2023. UBIT continues to expand outreach efforts and works to partner with UB schools and departments to ensure students are aware of the software and services available to them.

Q27 – What technology information did you learn about before arriving on campus?

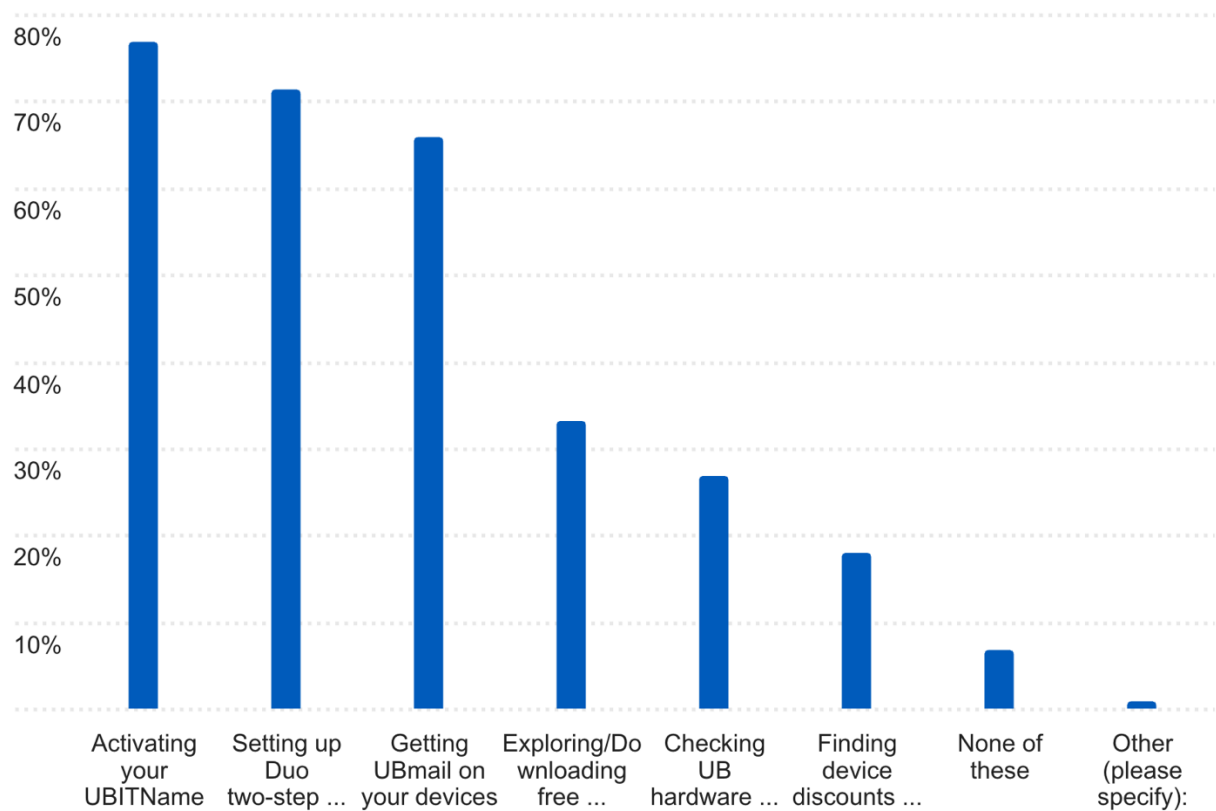
2972 Responses



Some students take the initiative to learn about UB's tech services before arriving on campus. About 74% learned about activating their UBITName in advance, while 70% learned how to set up Duo two-step verification. 63% of responding students learned about configuring UBMail on their devices before arriving.

Q28- What technology steps did you complete before arriving on campus? (Select all that apply.)

2958 Responses

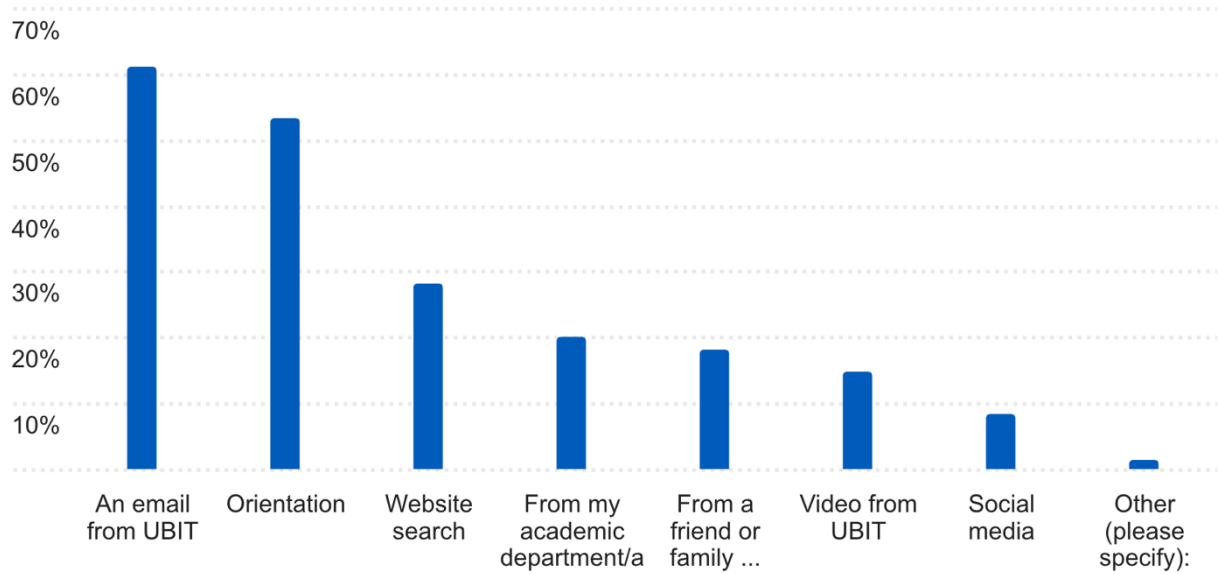


Many students set up UBIT software and tools before arriving on campus, with 77% activating their UBITName, 71% setting up Duo two-step verification, and 66% configuring UBmail on their devices.

Fewer students (33%) explored free software and apps or checked hardware standards (27%) before arriving at UB. Only 7% reported not completing any tech-related tasks before reaching UB.

Q29 – Where did you learn about UB technology information before arriving on campus? (Select all that apply.)

2775 Responses

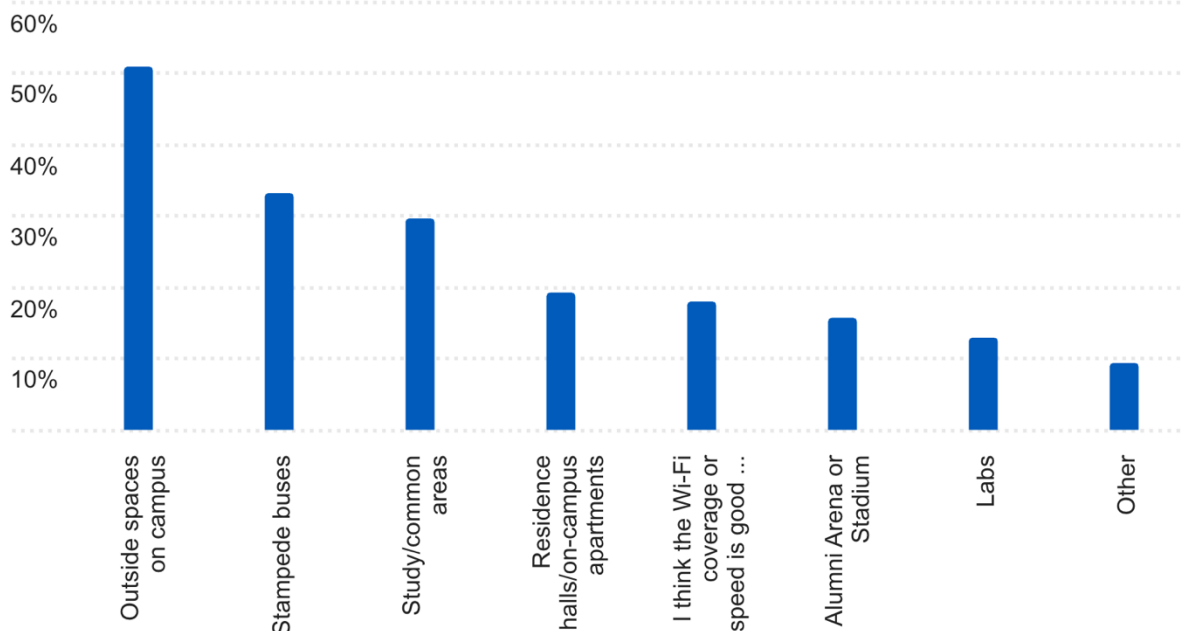


Students learned about UB technology from various sources before arriving on campus. About 61% received information through an email from UBIT (a nearly 30% increase from 2023), while 53% learned about technology at UB during orientation. 28% of UB students searched the web for details on UB technology. 20% of UB students learned from their academic department or admissions with 18% getting information from a friend or family member familiar with UB (18%).

Part 2. Wi-Fi and Technology in the Classroom

Q13 – Where would you like us to improve Wi-Fi coverage or speed, if anywhere? (Select all that apply.)

3353 Responses



In the 2024 survey, students were asked where they'd like to see Wi-Fi coverage or speed improved on campus. Just under 51% reported wanting improved coverage or speed in outdoor spaces, while 33% said on the Stampede buses. About 30% said common/study areas, and 19% said residence halls or on-campus apartments. Just under 16% said Alumni Arena, with 13% saying they'd like Wi-Fi improvements in the labs on campus.

Conversely, 18% of respondents said the Wi-Fi was good everywhere on campus.

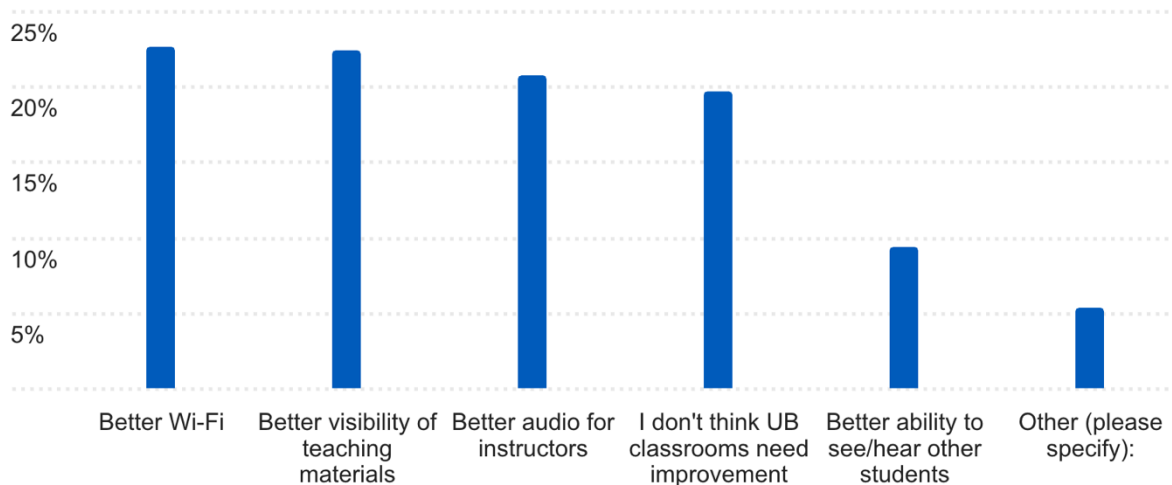
Q13 -a – Please provide the building name(s)/area(s) and room number(s) if applicable where Wi-Fi coverage or speed could be improved:

Students were also asked to provide specific buildings and classrooms where Wi-Fi could be improved. The following locations were mentioned several times: Lockwood Library, Abbott Library, Cooke Hall, Farber Hall, Diefendorf Hall classrooms, parking lots (especially Slee & Jacobs), Ellicott complex, and Governors Complex.

UBIT is working on a daily basis to troubleshoot problem locations and improve the Wi-Fi across campus. Students are asked to contact the UBIT Help Center with their device information and location to report problems for investigation.

Q22 – What technology improvement would you most like to see in UB classrooms?

3183 Responses



Students were asked about what improvements they'd like to see in UB classrooms. The results highlight key areas where students feel enhancements could be made to enhance their classroom experience.

- **Better Wi-Fi:** 23% of students highlighted the need for better Wi-Fi coverage in classrooms to ensure uninterrupted access to online resources and communication tools.
- **Better visibility of teaching materials:** 22% of respondents pointed out that improvements in the visibility of teaching materials, such as slides and whiteboards, would enhance their learning experience.
- **Better audio for instructors:** 21% of students expressed a need for improved audio systems to ensure instructors can be clearly heard during lectures.
- **No improvement needed:** 20% of students felt that UB classrooms are already sufficiently equipped and do not require any improvements.
- **Better ability to see/ hear other students:** 9% of students mentioned that better audio and visual capabilities for student interactions, such as group discussions or Q&A sessions, could improve classroom engagement.

Students also mentioned remote access to all classes, more graphics incorporated into instructors' presentations, and more charging stations.

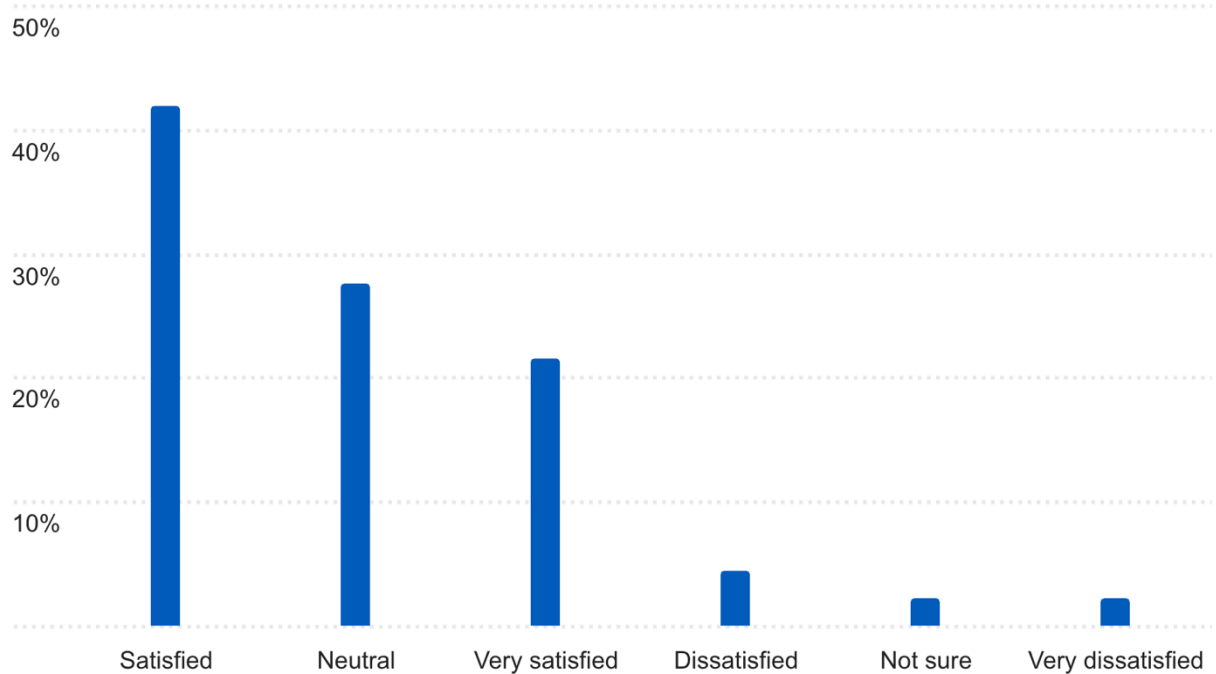
In recent years, UBIT has modernized central classrooms by adding on-demand livestreaming and lecture recording through Zoom and Panopto. Recent technology upgrades in classrooms NSC 201 and 225 include:

- A 30-foot video display capable of showing two inputs at once.
- A dedicated camera to stream chalkboards to the main display or remotely via Zoom or Panopto.

UBIT continues to assess and upgrade classrooms throughout campus.

Q33 – How satisfied are you with how your instructors use technology to engage you in your coursework?

2958 Responses

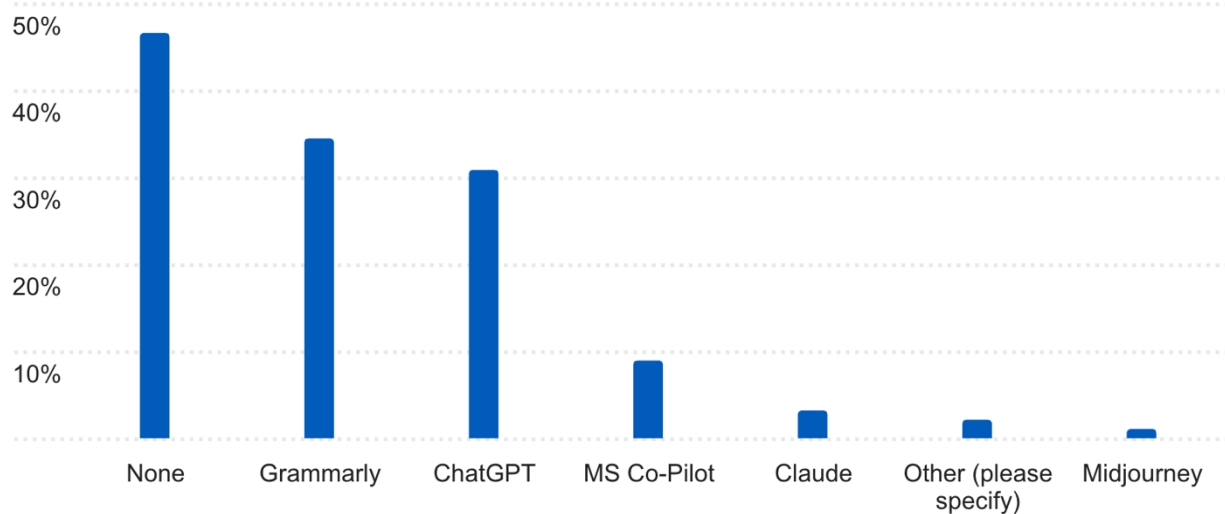


UB students' satisfaction with their instructors' use of technology in the classroom is generally positive: only 6% of responding students are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 28% reported feeling neutral, while 64% are satisfied or very satisfied with how their instructors are using technology in the classroom.

Part 3. Artificial Intelligence

Q31 – What AI tools are you using in your coursework? (Select all that apply.)

2955 Responses



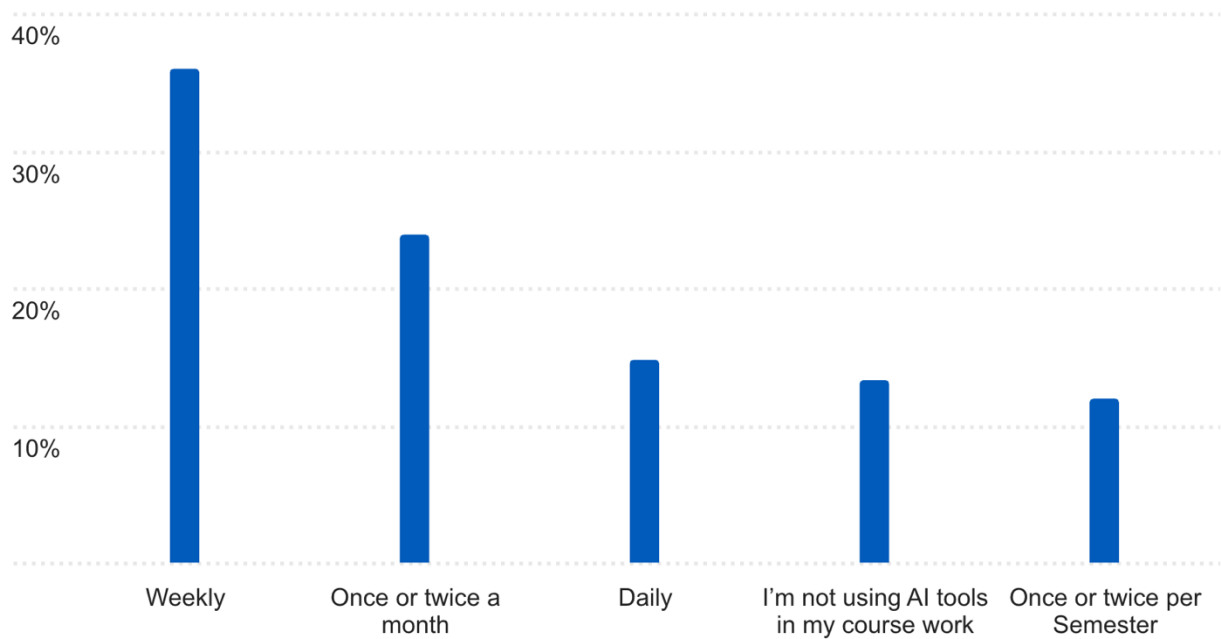
Students were asked which AI tools they are using in their coursework:

- 47% of students reported not using any AI tools, highlighting a significant portion of students who are either unfamiliar with or uninterested in these technologies.
- Grammarly is the most widely used AI tool, with 35% of students reporting its use for writing assistance and grammar checking.
- ChatGPT follows as the second most popular tool, with 31% of students using it for various purposes, including research, writing help, or general queries.
- MS Copilot, an AI productivity tool available to students, is used by 9% of students.
- Claude, an alternative AI language model, is used by 3% of students.
- Midjourney, an AI image-generation tool, is utilized by 1% of students, suggesting limited use for creative purposes.

Other AI tools mentioned by students include Google Gemini and Perplexity.

Q32 – How frequently are you using AI tools in your course work?

1599 Responses



Based on the data, UB students' usage of AI tools can be summarized as follows:

- **Weekly:** 36%
- **Once or twice a month:** 24%
- **Daily:** 15%
- **Once or twice per semester:** 12%
- **Not using AI tools in coursework:** 13%

In total, a significant portion of students (51%) use AI tools at least once a month, with the majority using AI tools on a weekly basis.

Conclusion

The 2024 UBIT Student Experience Survey helps technical staff assess students' technology use and needs on campus. A number of students are using AI daily or weekly in their coursework, and that number will continue to grow. UBIT will continue to monitor this trend and offer the tools students need for success in the classroom.

Students continue to make the most of the technology available in their classrooms and across campus. UBIT remains committed to supporting their success by offering laptop discounts, software like Zoom and Microsoft 365, and other essential tools. Student feedback and support play a crucial role in refining and improving these tech systems, helping to build a strong foundation for their future success.

As always, UBIT wishes to thank the students who responded to this survey and participate in our Student Advisory Group for their contribution to our work.

Visit the [UBIT website](#) to see full results and analysis from previous years' surveys.