

The National Student Survey 2025

Date: 23 October 2024

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To: **Governing bodies and heads of regulated and/or funded
higher education providers in Wales**
Student representative bodies in Wales

Respond by: 29 November 2024 to Ipsos via the NSS extranet

More information:

Taz Jones | LearnerEngagement@medr.cymru

This publication sets out the arrangements for the National Student Survey (NSS) 2025 and the action required from all participating universities, colleges and other higher education providers by **29 November 2024**.

Providers are asked to:

- provide up-to-date contact details
- complete the 'my survey options' form
- submit NSS 2025 sample templates with contact details of eligible students.

This publication also provides an overview of the administration of the survey, provider support contact details, survey timetable and dissemination of results.



Introduction

1. This publication sets out the arrangements for the National Student Survey (NSS) 2025 and the action required from all participating universities, colleges and other higher education providers by **29 November 2024**. Providers are asked to:
 - provide up-to-date contact details
 - complete the 'my survey options' form
 - submit NSS 2025 sample templates with contact details of eligible students.

Note that the six new Welsh subscribers to HESA, that have specifically designated higher education course provision and are submitting student record data for the first time for 2023/24, are not required to participate in the NSS 2025. We will be in contact with these six providers about future implementation of the NSS for them.

2. This publication also provides an overview of the administration of the survey, provider support contact details, survey timetable and dissemination of results.

Background

3. The NSS is a UK-wide survey undertaken by final year, undergraduate higher education students to give feedback on their course. It is managed by the Office for Students (OfS) on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies – the Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland), the Scottish Funding Council and Medr (the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research in Wales). The survey provides information for prospective students to help them find the right course for them. It also provides valuable information for institutions, stakeholders and policymakers.
4. The survey will be delivered on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies by:
 - Ipsos, which will administer the survey.
 - CACI Limited, which will deliver the data dissemination portal for providers.
5. The survey is a key component of the quality assurance and wider regulatory landscape in UK higher education. Participation is compulsory for higher education providers as follows:
 - In Wales, providers that are regulated or funded by Medr for higher education provision are expected to participate in the NSS to ensure that the views of their diverse student populations are represented, in line with their duties to advance equality of opportunities, eliminate unlawful discrimination, foster good relations and promote equality. NSS outcomes will provide information to Medr, the regulator for tertiary education in Wales.
 - In England, all providers registered with and regulated by the OfS will be expected to participate in the NSS as an ongoing condition of registration.
 - In Northern Ireland, NSS participation is a condition of funding as set out in the financial memoranda between universities and the Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland). Further education colleges in Northern Ireland take part in the NSS to meet quality assurance requirements.

- In Scotland, participation is a condition of the Scottish Funding Council's funding for higher education providers.
6. The OfS has confirmed that providers in England are not required to promote the 2025 survey to their students. **Providers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are still required to promote the survey.** We expect providers to review any internal campaigns, to ensure that they meet the guidance on marketing and promoting of the NSS and avoiding inappropriate influence (see the [2025 good practice guide](#)).
 7. During survey fieldwork responses will be monitored, and targeted follow-up will be carried out to ensure that publication thresholds are met. In early March, in addition to the targeted follow-up, all providers that are at risk of not meeting the publication threshold will be put into the booster phase to send additional email reminders and an additional SMS to their non-responding students. The booster phase will start automatically if a provider's response rate is below 43 per cent by mid-March, and will continue for some until mid-April. The fieldwork timetable is set out in the Ipsos setup guide for providers which is available on the Ipsos NSS extranet.

The 2025 survey

8. For 2025, the NSS questionnaire will be the same as the NSS 2024. The survey will be delivered across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The freedom of expression question will be asked to students who study in England only and the overall satisfaction question will be asked to students in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland only.
9. The full list of NSS 2025 questions and response scales can be found on the [OfS website](#).
10. The optional bank questions and their response scales will remain the same in 2025 using the Likert response scale.
11. Ipsos administers the survey on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies. It is responsible for contacting students, promoting the survey and providing cleaned data to the UK funding and regulatory bodies.
12. As part of its role, Ipsos will liaise directly with providers regarding survey administration and will support the running of the survey by:
 - offering guidance on the specifics of the survey programme, such as start week, selecting optional questions and provider-specific questions
 - for providers promoting the survey
 - supplying NSS-branded marketing materials and advising providers on the production of their own materials.
 - facilitating provider incentive schemes to encourage students to take part in the survey.
13. Further information about marketing and promoting the survey will be provided in the [good practice guide](#) from Ipsos on 23 October 2024.

14. Providers will be invited to select one of five weeks when Ipsos can launch the survey to their students. There will be no communication from Ipsos with students outside of the times agreed with individual providers.
15. The survey timetable will run as follows:
 - i. The NSS will launch on **8 January 2025**;
 - ii. The survey fieldwork will take place between **9 January and 30 April 2025** and will be run by Ipsos;
 - iii. The UK funding and regulatory bodies will issue a publication in **spring 2025** detailing the plans for NSS 2025 results publication;
 - iv. A provisional date for publication of the NSS results on the OfS website is **9 July 2025 at 09:30am**;
 - v. Detailed results will be supplied to individual providers through the new dissemination portal provided by CACI Limited on the same date and time.
 - vi. NSS results at course level will be published on the [Discover Uni](#) website.
16. Ipsos has issued a comprehensive guidance document, 'Setting up and preparing for the National Student Survey 2025', for all participating providers on 23 October 2024. The guidance should be read in conjunction with this publication.
17. For NSS 2025, CACI Limited will provide the survey results on a newly developed data dissemination portal on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies. The results portal allows providers to access additional, unpublished elements of their data, including open text comments, data from the additional bank of questions and provider-specific questions, and data below the publication threshold.
18. The new NSS data dissemination portal will launch in December 2024. However, Texuna Technologies will continue to provide a dedicated NSS service desk support providers in accessing their data and responding to queries while the new portal is being developed. Guidance for providers about downloading historical data from the current NSS data dissemination portal will follow in due course.
19. For NSS 2025, CACI Limited will provide the survey results on the newly developed data dissemination portal on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies. In preparation for dissemination of NSS 2025 results, CACI Limited will contact providers in spring 2025 to confirm user login details and confirm the details of publication of NSS 2025 results on the portal.

Discover Uni website

20. The [Discover Uni](#) website is a resource for prospective undergraduate students looking for information about undergraduate courses in the UK. It is managed by OfS on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies. The NSS outcomes are published on the Discover Uni website annually. The current publication threshold for NSS results is a 50 per cent response rate and with at least 10 students responding.

21. The website also contains data taken from the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey, and the HESA Discover Uni return (formerly known as the Unistats return), which collects data about courses. More information about the HESA Discover Uni return is provided below.

HESA Discover Uni return 2024

22. All providers in Wales that subscribe to HESA make a Discover Uni data return to HESA to enable data about their courses to be included on the Discover Uni website. All providers regulated or directly funded by Medr for HE provision and providers with specifically designated HE course provision in Wales are required to submit this information to HESA for their provision.

Actions for providers

23. All higher education institutions and further education colleges in Wales that are regulated and/or funded for higher education provision should:
 - a. review and (where necessary) update their relevant NSS provider contact details by **29 November 2024**. The information should be supplied using the 'My details' form on the [NSS extranet](#). Ipsos issued login details for the NSS extranet to the nominated main and secondary NSS provider contacts in the week commencing 30 September 2024.
 - b. submit their completed 'My survey options' form by **29 November 2024** through the NSS extranet. This form asks for providers' preferences on their survey start week, optional questions and details of any prize draws.
 - c. populate their NSS 2025 sample templates with the requested contact details for all students on their target list; this is a list of all students eligible for NSS 2025, based on the student data submitted to the 2023/24 HESA student record. Details should be supplied by **29 November 2024** via the 'Upload sample data' section of the NSS extranet. Any proposed additions to or removals from the target list should follow the process set out by Ipsos.
24. Instructions on how to supply this information are included in the NSS 2025 setup guide, which will be issued to provider contacts by Ipsos on **23 October 2024** and is also available on the NSS extranet. The guidance includes information regarding survey administration, key responsibilities and dates.
25. All providers are reminded to ensure that the course mapping to the relevant [Common Aggregation Hierarchy](#) (CAH) is correct. Providers should consider the resultant mapping to the CAH3 code in terms of the information that prospective students can access to inform decisions about studying higher education. Subject areas such as Nursing, Economics, and Finance may be areas that providers should review to confirm they are coded in the appropriate CAH3 subject.
26. Detailed guidance relating to NSS 2025 and the actions requested from higher education institutions and further education colleges in Wales who are returning student data to HESA and are participating in the NSS can be found at **Annex A**.

27. A summary of required action to be taken by participating providers is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Provider actions and key milestones

Date	Actions
23 October 2024	Ipsos to issue NSS 2025 setup guide and good practice guide to providers.
29 November 2024	Review and update NSS contact details.
29 November 2024	Complete 'my survey options' form.
29 November 2024	Submit NSS 2025 sample templates with contact details of eligible students.
9 July 2025	Provisional date for publishing the NSS 2025 results on the OfS website and for dissemination of detailed results to individual providers through the NSS data dissemination portal

Inappropriate influence on the survey

28. To maintain the integrity of the NSS data, it is important to ensure that students who complete the survey have not been influenced by their provider, or any other parties, to respond in a way that does not reflect their true opinion. The OfS is responsible for managing the process, on behalf of all the UK funding and regulatory bodies, to address any concerns that students have been inappropriately influenced in their completion of the NSS.
29. The [procedures](#) for investigating allegations of inappropriate influence on survey results are intended to be read in conjunction with the good practice guide issued by Ipsos, which explains what constitutes inappropriate influence and how to avoid it when encouraging student participation. We urge providers to ensure that all staff who are responsible for the running of the survey are familiar with Ipsos's good practice guide, and seek advice where needed from Ipsos or the OfS on their approach to avoiding inappropriate influence. A representative from Medr will be involved in any review of a concern of inappropriate influence involving a Welsh higher education provider.
30. A student guide on inappropriate influence is available to help raise awareness among students of the value of their honest views, what to expect from NSS promotion, what is and is not allowed, and where they should go for help and support if they are concerned about being influenced. Providers are asked to inform students about this guide as part of their pre-launch survey plans. More details on this are provided in the NSS 2025 set-up guide issued by Ipsos.

Costs

31. Medr will cover the costs of the 2025 NSS for higher education providers which it regulates and funds.

Further information

32. The active support of participating providers is crucial to ensuring the survey data is of high quality. We encourage all providers and students' unions to draw on the resources available and to get in touch if they require additional support:

Ipsos: nns@ipsos.com	The running of the survey, including: preparing for and marketing the survey; student target lists; optional questions; incentive schemes.
Texuna Technologies: nss@texunatech.com	Providers' detailed results on the NSS data dissemination portal until 3 January 2025, after which CACI Limited will be taking over queries. The contact information for CACI Limited will be shared with providers in due course.
Office for Students nssallegations@officeforstudents.org.uk	Areas such as NSS policy and development; onward use of results; allegations of inappropriate influence.
Medr LearnerEngagement@medr.cymru	Any other queries relating to the operation of the NSS in Wales.

Assessing the impact of our policies

33. OfS has conducted a risk assessment screening. As partners in the OfS managed survey, we work with OfS to ensure that the survey and materials aimed at students are available in both Welsh and English in Wales. We will continue to assess the impact of the NSS on the Welsh language to ensure that students are able to fully participate in the NSS in their language of choice.

Guidance on NSS 2025 for higher education institutions, and for further education colleges in Wales returning student data to HESA

1. The National Student Survey (NSS) will be carried out in 2025 across higher education providers in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland by the Office for Students (OfS), working on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies.
2. The timetable for the NSS 2025 will run as follows:
 - a. The NSS will launch on **8 January 2025**.
 - b. The survey fieldwork will take place between **9 January and 30 April 2025**.
 - c. UK funding and regulatory bodies will issue a publication in **spring 2025** detailing the plans for NSS 2025 results publication.
 - d. A provisional date for publication of the NSS results on the OfS website is **9 July 2025**.
 - e. At 09:30 detailed results will be disseminated to individual providers through the new NSS dissemination portal provided by CACI Limited on the same date and time. The NSS 2025 results publication is subject to decisions and final agreement from the UK funding and regulatory bodies following the quality review of the data.
 - f. NSS results at course level will be published on the [Discover Uni](#) website.
3. This annex provides guidance specifically for UK higher education institutions and for further education colleges in Wales that return student data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and are funded by Medr for higher education provision.
4. The responsibilities of providers in the successful management of the NSS are as follows:
 - a. Timely submission of the HESA Student record. The final submission date is 25 October 2024 for the C23056 Student record with a sign off date of 1 November.
 - b. Ensuring good data quality by checking the NSS report (the target list) generated by HESA. Requests for any necessary changes that cannot be resolved by correcting the student data may be directed to Ipsos, for approval by the relevant funding body.
 - c. Timely issuing of NSS pre-notification email to eligible students. Further details can be found in the NSS 2025 set-up guidance, sent to provider contacts by Ipsos. The guidance document is also available on the [NSS extranet](#).
 - d. Timely submission of student contact details (email addresses and telephone numbers) when requested by Ipsos (by **29 November 2024**).
 - e. Engagement with all guidance and requests issued by the OfS, UK funding and regulatory bodies, HESA, Ipsos and CACI Limited, and attending training and events run by them as necessary.

- f. Submitting survey preferences to Ipsos by **29 November 2024**. This includes the timing of the survey and the choice of optional bank questions. Optional bank choices should be made in conjunction with the relevant students' union.
 - g. Providers in England are not required to promote the survey to students but can do so if they wish; this follows the same process as in NSS 2024. Providers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are required to promote the survey. Providers that promote the survey to their students must ensure that all activities meet the guidelines on marketing and promoting the survey and on avoiding inappropriate influence. Guidance on this is provided by Ipsos in the good practice guide which is available on the NSS intranet.
5. Providers can access their target lists for the 2025 NSS via the HESA student data collection system. They should provide the requested contact details for students on these lists to Ipsos by **29 November 2024**. Further details can be found in the NSS 2025 set-up guide for providers, sent to contacts by Ipsos. The guidance document is also available on the [Ipsos NSS extranet](#).
6. If the provider feels that the target population does not accurately reflect the students currently in the final year of eligible courses, then it should engage with the additions and removals process as outlined in paragraphs 14-16. Any such requests for additions or removals must be submitted to Ipsos and agreed by the relevant funding body prior to their inclusion in, or removal from, the final target list. If approved, the OfS will inform the provider and make the amendment to the target list.
7. Eligible students may opt out of the survey at any stage during the field work process.
8. Providers may choose up to six banks of optional questions and may include up to two additional questions specific to the provider. Providers are asked to agree with students' unions their choice of optional banks of questions for inclusion. Providers should submit their choice of optional banks and additional questions to Ipsos.
9. For NSS 2025, in addition to targeted follow-up, all providers that are at risk of not meeting the publication threshold will be automatically put into the booster phase to send additional reminders to their non-responding students. This is additional promotional activity to encourage students to complete the survey. Providers are not required to take any action in relation to the booster phase.
10. Providers may access their detailed responses and results of the survey via the NSS data dissemination portal provided by CACI Limited, from the OfS website, and from the Discover Uni website (for students).

Scope and coverage of the survey

11. The following providers are covered by the NSS 2025:
 - a. In Wales, providers that are regulated or funded by Medr for higher education provision are expected to participate in the NSS to ensure that

the views of their diverse student populations are represented, in line with their duties to advance equality of opportunities, eliminate unlawful discrimination, foster good relations and promote equality. NSS outcomes will provide information to Medr, the regulator for tertiary education in Wales.

- b. In England, all providers registered and regulated by the OfS will be expected to participate in the NSS as an ongoing condition of registration.
 - c. In Northern Ireland, NSS participation is a condition of funding as set out in the financial memoranda between universities and the Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland). Further education colleges in Northern Ireland take part in the NSS to meet the quality assurance requirements.
 - d. In Scotland, participation is a condition of the Scottish Funding Council's funding for higher education providers.
12. All full-time and part-time undergraduate students registered at participating providers are eligible to undertake the NSS during their final year of study (or, for flexible programmes where the final year cannot be predicted, after they are expected to have undertaken more than one year full-time equivalent and not before their third year of study), with the following exceptions:
 - a. students on programmes that do not lead to undergraduate qualifications or credits
 - b. students on a course lasting one year or one full-time equivalent, or less
 - c. any students who were surveyed in the 2024 NSS (whether or not they responded) and who remain at the same provider
 - d. any students who we expect, by the end of the academic year 2024-25, to have completed one full-time equivalent year or less since they were last surveyed.
13. Students are included in the 2025 survey population if they are expected to complete their course between 1 February 2025 and 31 January 2026 inclusive.
14. It is possible to add students to or remove them from the NSS target list if a provider feels that the target population does not accurately reflect the students currently in the final year of eligible courses (for example, if the length of a student's course has decreased after a provider has submitted its HESA Student return) The full criteria are in the NSS 2025 set-up guidance provided by Ipsos.
15. Providers will be able to make requests to add students or remove them from the NSS population once the target list has been finalised by the OfS. The additions and removals process will start approximately one week after OfS receives final student data. Providers will be notified ahead of the process opening. Requests will not be accepted after 1 March 2025.
16. Requests should be submitted as soon as possible to ensure they can be processed prior to, or early in, the survey period. All requests must be made through the [NSS extranet](#) and should be made in a single file, including the required level of detail. The OfS or relevant funding body will review all requests for additions and removals and may request further details from providers where necessary. Submitting requests as early as possible and responding to queries in

a timely manner will help expedite the process. It may be necessary for the OfS to prioritise approvals by survey start week, but we will endeavour to action all requests prior to the survey start date.

17. Except for students on enhanced first degrees, postgraduates are not included in the NSS.

Reasons for excluding individuals from the survey

18. We enable providers to exclude specific groups of students from being contacted by Ipsos. These groups are:
 - a. Students who are deceased.
 - b. Students with serious health difficulties (including mental health difficulties), such that seeking a response may be distressing for them.
 - c. Students who, having been informed that their contact details will be passed on to the survey agency (Ipsos) for the purposes of the NSS, state that they do not wish to be contacted (students will also be able to opt out during the survey process).
19. Students in groups b and c will still be able to complete the survey if they wish, through the [survey website](#).
20. These are the only grounds on which students may be excluded from the target population. Providers should code these students on their sample submission as category 'C', and providers should not provide contact details for these students. More information on the process is in the NSS 2025 set-up guidance provided by Ipsos.
21. If the provider feels that the target population does not accurately reflect the students currently in the final year of eligible courses, then it should engage with the additions and removals process as outlined in paragraphs 14 - 16. Reasons for differences will usually be changes in the student's circumstances, such as taking a year out or retaking a year.
22. Although some students may withdraw in their final year, they will have had significant interaction with the provider, so their opinions are valuable and these students should therefore still be included. If students withdraw without engaging in their final year, it may be possible to remove them through the additions and removals process.
23. In some circumstances, the reason for a change in the target population may be an error in the student data returned to the HESA Student record. In this case:
 - a. English providers may wish to review the data for these students and consider if they would like to [submit](#) a data error summary to OfS for consideration. If on reviewing this summary we believe the errors are widespread and material, we may require the provider to submit a revised return Student record to HESA.

- b. For providers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the details of any potential data errors will be shared with the respective funding bodies for their consideration on any further action.

24. It should be noted that HESA may apply a charge to meet the costs of processing such a change.

Process for supplying student contact data

25. Following submission of the Student record to HESA, a target list of students to be included in the NSS will automatically be generated. Providers participating in the NSS 2025 should then supply contact details (email addresses and phone numbers), according to the standard template that will be supplied by Ipsos, for all eligible students on the list.

26. Students should be informed by the provider that their contact details may be passed on. Providers can do this by sending a NSS pre-notification email to all students eligible to take part in NSS informing them that they will be contacted by Ipsos. Guidance and an email template are provided in the NSS 2025 set-up guidance issued to providers by Ipsos. There is also text added to the [HESA student data collection notice](#) to explain this.

27. Providers can define their own structure for receiving their NSS data, through one of two optional fields on the sample file to indicate the internal 'department code' for each student. These codes, where provided, will be used solely for providing feedback to the provider.

28. Providers should submit the requested contact details for students on these lists to Ipsos by **29 November 2024**. Ipsos will provide guidance to its contacts on how to supply these lists as part of the NSS guidance document. The NSS achieves a high response rate, and to ensure this continues it is important that providers submit complete and accurate contact details to Ipsos by this date.

Administration of the survey

29. The 2025 survey fieldwork will be conducted from 9 January until 30 April 2025 during the spring term and the results will be published on the OfS website on **9 July 2025**. To avoid concerns regarding impact on internal surveys, Ipsos will continue to:

- brand the NSS independently, which clearly distinguishes its purpose
- manage the survey's distribution centrally, so that providers are not involved in contacting students to complete the NSS.

30. Providers will be invited to select one of five weeks when Ipsos can launch the survey to their students. This is to ensure that the survey can start at a time that fits with term timetables and does not clash with exams. Providers may select a week between 6 January and 3 February 2025 for the survey to start. There will be no communication with students by Ipsos outside the times agreed with each

provider. However, students will be able to access the survey through the [survey website](#) from 8 January 2025 onwards.

31. It is essential that all providers start their surveys during the five-week 'starting window' to ensure that results can be published in time for prospective students to make informed choices. We will, however, consider individual requests for a start date outside the five-week window where the activities of students make it impractical to conduct the survey during that time. Any provider that wishes to make a case for a different survey start date should contact Ipsos by **29 November 2024**.
32. Ipsos will conduct the survey at each provider using a set sequence of email and telephone surveying. This will take up to eight weeks at each provider, although some targeted follow-up may be needed during and beyond this time to increase response rates. Ipsos will deploy the survey modes tactically, to personalise the survey to students and providers and help increase online responses and reduce survey costs.

Promoting the NSS

33. The OfS has agreed that providers in England are not required to promote the 2025 survey to their students, but they can do so if they wish to.
34. Providers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are required to promote the survey, as agreed by the funding bodies in these nations.
35. Providers that promote the survey are expected to review any internal campaigns to ensure that they meet with the guidance on marketing and promoting of the NSS and avoiding inappropriate influence (please see the [2025 good practice guide](#)).
36. The good practice guidance for NSS 2025 will be available from the Ipsos [NSS extranet](#) and includes comprehensive guidance on the promotion of the survey. It is important that providers adhere to the guidance on avoiding inappropriate influence and raise any queries with Ipsos. The UK funding and regulatory bodies treat seriously any breaches of this guidance and may investigate and act where there is evidence of a breach. We undertake an annual review to ensure that the process we adopt to respond to allegations is fit for purpose and make any improvements to the process and guidance for providers and students before fieldwork takes place. This allegations procedure guidance is intended to be read in conjunction with the [good practice guidance](#) issued by Ipsos. We would urge providers to ensure that all staff who are responsible for the running of the survey are familiar with Ipsos's guidance and seek advice where needed on their approach to avoiding inappropriate influence.
37. A [student guide on inappropriate influence](#) is available to help to raise awareness among students of the value of their honest views, what to expect from NSS promotion, what is and is not allowed, and where they should go for help and support if they are concerned about being influenced. Providers are asked to inform students about this guide as part of their pre-launch survey plans. More details on this are provided in the NSS 2025 set-up guide issued by Ipsos.

38. Ipsos will produce NSS 2025 promotional materials and social media materials for providers and students' unions to use locally. Providers will be able access the full suite of marketing materials from the Ipsos [NSS extranet](#). If a provider or students' union wishes to use the NSS branding to develop its own marketing material, it may do so and should discuss this with Ipsos, who will advise on good practice and offer guidelines to ensure a reasonable degree of consistency across the sector. When it contacts providers, Ipsos will discuss who in the provider is best placed to coordinate promotional activity. Further information about marketing materials and promoting the survey will be provided in the [NSS 2025 good practice guide](#) from Ipsos on 23 October 2024.
39. Ipsos will manage incentive schemes in which providers may take part. These enable providers to offer incentives to students to complete the NSS. For example, some providers have offered printer credits for students who complete the survey online.
40. Students on flexible programmes will receive tailored communications that more accurately reflect their participation in higher education.

Questionnaire distribution

41. There are two main methods of data collection: online and telephone. Ipsos operates a live open-access website, where students can log in and complete the survey, in addition to the option to respond by following the link in a personalised email. The aim of the site is to verify the identity of students at the point of logging in; once students have completed the survey and their response is validated, they will be automatically removed from the target list and not contacted again. To enable this, and to enable efficient working of the survey more generally, providers should adhere to the deadline for supplying student contact details.
42. Although there are two methods of data collection, we are committed to reducing the amount of telephone contact. However, telephoning remains an essential element of the survey and will continue, so all providers are expected to provide each student's mobile phone number and any other alternative contact number that is held.
43. To monitor responses and to process data for analysis and reporting, we link all responses to students' numbers in the HESA Student records or known student identifiers. Telephone interviewers will have automatic access to identifiers. Once students have completed the survey, they will be removed from the target list and not contacted again.
44. Throughout the process, Ipsos will send reminders to students who have not responded.
45. Response rates, by provider and by subject area, will be monitored continuously during the process. During the telephone stage, response rates will be reviewed, and some areas may be identified for additional, targeted follow-up activity, to bring responses up to a sufficient level to report results. This additional activity will involve reminders by email and text message.

46. For NSS 2025, in addition to targeted follow-up, all providers that are at risk of not meeting the publication threshold will be automatically put into the booster phase to send additional reminders to their non-responding students during survey fieldwork. This will be started automatically if a provider's response rate is below 43 per cent by mid-March and will continue for some providers until mid-April. An additional text reminder will be included in the schedule of contact to non-responding students during the booster phase.
47. At any stage during the survey process, students may opt out of the survey and will not be contacted again. To do this, students will need to verify their identity by providing some data, such as their date of birth.
48. Provider response rates will be shared by Ipsos during the fieldwork to help providers monitor their survey progress. Providers should not share this data more widely, and guidance on this is provided in the NSS 2025 good practice guide sent to provider contacts by Ipsos. National response rates data will not be made available to providers.
49. The UK funding and regulatory bodies reserve the right to agree changes to the survey period with individual providers that are at risk of not meeting provider-level or subject-level publication thresholds. The OfS will inform providers of any approaches and actions that may be necessary. The completeness and accuracy of students' contact data, as supplied by providers, will be a significant factor in achieving a publishable level of responses.

Publication of 2025 NSS results

50. A major purpose of the NSS is to provide information to help potential students and their advisers make choices about higher education. It also has a key role in improving the student experience, by helping providers to identify areas for action or development.
51. The current publication threshold for NSS results is a 50 per cent response rate, with at least 10 students responding. Results that meet the publication threshold and criteria will be published on the [Discover Uni website](#). Data will also be published on the OfS website.
52. Data will also be available to providers on the NSS data dissemination portal delivered by CACI Limited. The results portal will allow providers to access elements of their data, including optional bank questions, students' open text comments and data below certain publication thresholds.
53. The OfS and UK funding and regulatory bodies may publish their own analysis of the data, including open text comments and optional banks. For data that is not available publicly through the OfS website, this will be at aggregate level and will not allow providers, courses or individuals to be identified.

Medr

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CF10 4BZ

2 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ



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