National Student Survey

Guidance Document for:

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**Overview**

The National Student Survey (NSS) is widely recognised authoritative survey. It is commissioned by the Office for Students[[1]](#footnote-1) and is aimed at final-year undergraduates. It gathers opinions from students by asking them [27 questions](http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/content/NSS2017_Core_Questionnaire.pdf) about their experience of their course. The results are made available to prospective students through the Unistats website and contribute to the institutional result of the [Teaching Excellence Framework](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/tef/) (TEF) exercise.

The Survey opens in January [[2]](#footnote-2) and lasts until 30th April every year. Students should be directed to either <http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/> or [www.rvc.ac.uk/nss](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/nss) to complete the survey online.

**Promotion**

*Staff and Student Union role*

The RVC is dependent on the support of staff and the Student Union (SU) to ensure a good response rate. In addition to publicity and raising awareness around the RVC, the students will periodically receive emails from Ipsos MORI.

The checklist below highlights actions which should be taken in advance of and during the survey. A detailed schedule of activity is available in the Appendix:

1. Raise staff awareness about the NSS, including importance of the survey, the start and end dates, info about incentives and prize. Explain that their role is critically important in promoting the survey to the final year students.
2. Raise awareness with final year students about the NSS, the importance of the survey, any actions taken in response to previous years’ results.
3. Take specific action to draw the Survey to the attention of students off campus, on rotations and placements or who otherwise do not attend lectures around the launch date and during the running of the survey.
4. Encourage students to check email accounts for messages about the survey and to complete it online.
5. Ask students to check their e-mail account for the email from Ipsos MORI.
6. Encourage students to complete the Survey promptly and on-line – this will stop them being contacted later by Ipsos MORI (by phone or post).
7. Promote NSS locally in the social-learning and computer cluster areas, on Facebook, screens, etc.
8. Monitor weekly response rates as they are reported and ask academic staff to give further encouragement if response rates are low.

Final results are published only for courses which reached 50% response rate and a minimum of 10 student responses.

*Incentives & Prize*

In order to encourage the students to take part in the survey and maintain a high response rate, the RVC continues to offer an incentive and an entry to prize draw. Current incentive is a pair of RVC branded socks and a notebook. Once they have completed the online survey, the students can claim their incentive by printing off the confirmation page or email and present it at the Registry counters on either campuses.

**Results**

The results of the NSS are released at the beginning of July. The quantitative and qualitative data are collated and analysed according to course by the Academic Quality office. Qualitative data is organised under key themes. Thresholds are applied to quantitative data, highlighting questions as:

**Blue** status where 90% or more of respondents Strongly Agree/Agree

**Green** status where 80-89% of respondents Strongly Agree/Agree

**Amber** Status where 50-79% of respondents Strongly Agree/Agree

**Red** status where less than 50% of respondents Strongly Agree/Agree

During the Autumn term the results are considered by the External Student Surveys Results Working Group, a subgroup of the Teaching Quality Committee who receives its minutes. The Group provides Course Directors with actions being taken at the RVC level, in advance of the submission of their ‘Annual Quality Improvement Reports’; the Group reports its conclusions and recommendations to the Academic Board via the Teaching Quality Committee. Course Director(s) address low scores through their completion of the ‘Annual Quality Improvement Report’. Their responses to these surveys are approved by the ‘Annual Quality Improvement Group’. The external Student Surveys Results Working Group is tasked with producing an annual RVC statement in response to student feedback received from the National Student Survey.

Members of staff will utilise *‘You Said....We Did…’* to report feedback regarding progress against their actions.

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**Appendix** - Schedule of activity:

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| **Prior to the start of the survey** | | |
| Submit NSS sample to Ipsos-Mori | Student Information and Planning Manager | November |
| Order promotional material form Ipsos MORI | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | November |
| Update the RVC’s contact details on Ipsos Mori website and decide on the start date of the survey | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | November |
| Raise staff awareness: update Course Management Committees with the details of the survey; write to all academic and administrative staff about the timing and significance of the survey; engage Course Directors to inform teaching staff about the survey; | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | November-January |
| Provide teaching staff with NSS promotion slides to be used in the lectures with final year students. Ask staff to allow several minutes at the beginning of the lecture for students to complete the survey on their computers/tablets/phones. | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | November |
| Schedule VPs & Course Directors’ briefings of final year students. These will take place between January and April. | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ & VP Students/ VP LTA /Course Directors | November |
| Plan promotion by using the Ipsos MORI marketing materials; create a leaflet to inform students about the RVC’s incentive and prize draw; | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ & SU | December |
| Confirm the budget, the amount of incentives and details of the prize | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ & VP Students/ VP LTA | December |
| **During the survey** | | |
| Support SU with promotional activity including emails, Facebook posts, distribution of posters and any other promo material provided by Ipsos MORI | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ & SU | January - April |
| Request from LISD to promote the Survey on display screens on both campuses. | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | January - April |
| **After the survey has closed** | | |
| Arrange a prize giving with the prize winner, VP LTA and SU President | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | May |
| Lessons learnt: Collate feedback from students and staff involved on how the survey promotion went and what could be improved. Update this schedule accordingly | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | May |
| **Dissemination of results** | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ |  |
| Carry out the result analysis and distribute the results to the relevant members of staff (Principal, Vice-Principles, Associate Dean UG L&T, Course Directors, Registrar, Learning and Wellbeing, Heads of Departments, Marketing). | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | July/August |
| Collaborate with Marketing team on press release | Senior Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’ | July/August |

1. The NSS is undertaken independently by Ipsos MORI, market research company. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. HEI can choose between three different start days (1st, 2nd or 3rd week in January). For the RVC, this is dependent on the students’ timetable, and whether they are on campus to ensure their optimal engagement with responding to the survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)