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The National Student Survey 2021: Publication of data

Date:	07 June 2021
Reference:	W21/14HE
To:	Heads of regulated and/or directly funded institutions in Wales, and governing bodies
Response by:	No response required
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This circular provides information on the plans for the publication of the National Student Survey 2021 results.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please email info@hefcw.ac.uk.

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Introduction

1.   This circular provides information on the plans for the publication of the National Student Survey 2021 results.

2.   The National Student Survey (NSS) 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 the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. The survey provides information for prospective students and for stakeholders to support a high quality learning experience.

3.   The survey is delivered on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies by:
   - Ipsos MORI, who are administering the survey
   - Texuna Technologies, who will deliver the NSS Results Portal for providers.

4.   In May 2021 we published circular W21/12HE: Timetable and arrangements for the submission and publication of data which outlined the arrangements for the 2021 Unistats data collection and subsequent publication arrangements.

5.   The Unistats data collection process and Discover Uni website are managed by OfS on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies. The Discover Uni website provides information for prospective students about higher education courses delivered by providers in the UK.

The Covid-19 pandemic

6.   The UK funders and regulators have committed to analyse the data to assess any impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on the results and make professional judgements about its statistical reliability. Having completed an initial assessment, we are assured that the quality of the data is suitable for publication. Information about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, together with any implications for the onward use of the data, will be published alongside the results. We are considering what further contextualisation may be helpful in the presentation of the 2021 survey result.

Publication of 2021 NSS data

7.   NSS data will be published on the OfS website at **09.30** on **Thursday 15 July 2021**. This will include data on the new set of Covid-19 questions added to the survey asking students about their experience during the pandemic. These results will not be published at provider level, but we will present the findings by several broader sector splits such as subject and mode.

8.   The UK funding and regulatory bodies continue to make some decisions around the publication of data. We will inform the sector of any substantial changes in advance of data publication. Providers will be able to access their own, detailed NSS results including subject level question responses, open text comments and Covid-19 question results via the NSS Results Portal from **09.30** on **Thursday 15 July 2021**.

9.   The OfS applies the Code of Practice for Statistics to the publication of NSS results data. More information about the Code of Practice can be found on the OfS website.

NSS data dissemination portal

10.   Further technical information on the NSS Results Portal release will be made available in the NSS Results Portal newsletter. This will be issued by Texuna to all active NSS contacts on the Portal in June 2021.

11.   Texuna will be in touch with existing provider contacts to request that contact details are confirmed or updated as appropriate from June 2021, ahead of the publication of the NSS data on the NSS Results Portal. Ensuring that these details are up to date will help providers access the NSS Results Portal for the NSS 2021 data quickly and easily.

12.   From time to time, the underlying dataset for the NSS Results Portal may be subject to minor changes and amended during the year. However, the static reports available via the Results Portal will not be updated for minor changes. Static reports should therefore be understood as capturing a snapshot of the data, correct at the time of publication.

13.   The NSS results are no longer presented by historical NSS subject groupings, i.e. using Joint Academic Coding System (JACS). The OfS will present the public data and providers' data on the NSS Results portal by Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) subject groupings only for 2021 results onwards.

14.   Following feedback from users, and to align with recent advice, some changes have been made to the ethnicity groupings and labels on the NSS data dissemination portal:
   - The ethnicity four-way split has been changed to a five-way split. This separates the 'mixed' and 'other' ethnicity groups.
   - The labels for the two-way ethnicity split have been changed to 'white' and 'all other ethnic groups combined'.

15.   These changes have been backdated to 2017 in order to allow comparisons across the five-year period.

Further information

16.   For queries relating to providers' detailed results on the NSS Results Portal, contact Texuna Technologies Limited, email nss@texunatech.com.

17.   For queries about the release and publication of NSS results, contact the NSS team at the OfS, email nss@officeforstudents.org.uk.

18.   For queries about publication of the NSS within the Unistats dataset, contact the Discover Uni team at the OfS, email discoveruni@officeforstudents.org.uk.

19.   For any other queries, contact Nicola Hunt (029 2085 9735; nicola.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk).