

SFC Consultation

Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey: data use and use of unique identifiers

Issue date: 16 February 2016

Deadline: 29 March 2016

Reference: SFC/CN/01/2016

Summary: To elicit views on the ownership, use and publication of data deriving from the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey and also to invite views on any issues which may arise from a proposal to use unique student identifiers in the survey.

FAO: Chairs and Principals of Scotland's colleges and Regional Chairs
Presidents of College Students' Associations

Further information:

Contact: Seamus Spencer
Job title: Outcome Agreement Manager
Department: Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements
Tel: 0131 313 6673
Email: sspencer@sfc.ac.uk



Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

Scottish Funding Council
Apex 2
97 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD
T 0131 313 6500
F 0131 313 6501
www.sfc.ac.uk

Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey: data use and use of unique identifiers

Background

1. We are developing the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) as a means to evaluate and enhance college provision in Scotland.
2. A pre-pilot survey with a group of sixteen volunteer colleges was run in spring 2015. We facilitated a sector-wide evaluation event in September 2015 to share learning from this pilot and to plan for a sector-wide pilot which will take place in March 2016 involving all colleges. We will roll out the first full survey in Spring 2017.
3. A working group comprising sector and key stakeholder representation has, since August 2014, overseen the development of the survey and will continue to do so as we move through the remainder of the development stage.

We published [Guidance for colleges](#) on the 2016 pilot phase in December 2015 and this can be found on our website at the link below. This will provide further background and detail on the project.

4. For ease of reference, the question set used in the survey is attached as Annex 1. The questions, originally derived from those currently used in colleges, have been extensively tested both informally within volunteer colleges and formally through cognitive testing by Ipsos-MORI.

Data use

5. The SSES will gather a substantial body of data both in-year and longitudinally. We are seeking views on a range of issues connected to that data which might best be summarised as follows:
 - Who owns the data?
 - At what level of granularity should it be made available within the sector and in the public domain?
 - Who has access to use the data and how?
 - How can institutions best facilitate sharing with Students' Associations?
 - How can we best put this data in the public domain offering contextualisation and assistance in the interpretation of the data?
6. One of the consequences of data publication is that it is possible that league tables will be formed by a range of interested parties. The construction of these and the interpretation of the data is liable to be of variable reliability. Our view is that it is preferable that we (SFC / institutions / NUS / others) manage the

discourse and present and contextualise the data.

Unique identifiers

7. Two colleges have volunteered to use unique identifiers as part of the pilot survey this spring. A unique identifier in a college context would be a unique number that would be assigned to an individual student whilst studying at an institution and would normally be the student college ID or matriculation number. This number is an integral part of the annual FES return to SFC and it would enable data linkage from an individual survey response to other personal data such as; equality and diversity characteristics that are returned separately to SFC by the college. This would allow for a deeper analysis of the survey results, without the requirement of requesting additional equality and diversity data from the student as part of the survey.
8. Before introducing the use of unique identifiers as part of the survey when it is launched in 2017, we would like to hear from institutions whether this proposal would present either technical or other issues for institutions. In addition, it would be helpful to have perspectives on data protection / usage issues either from the perspective of the institution or learners.
9. We believe that the use of unique identifiers will bring a range of benefits to institutions, Students' Associations and learners by enabling richer ways to interrogate the data both in-year and longitudinally. However, it will help to have a clear picture of any perceived issues across the sector in order to frame the proposal to use unique identifiers and to set out the benefits. We are aware of the need to reinforce – for learners and institutions – the need to have in place appropriate data protection safeguards.

Further information

10. Please use the proforma at Annex 2 to respond to this consultation. The space available in the annex is not intended as a constraint on responses which can be as long as necessary. Please comment on any other areas which you think are relevant whether or not covered by the questions.
11. We welcome responses from any interested parties both within the college sector and amongst stakeholders. We intend to publish responses to the consultation on our website as part of our approach to openness and transparency.

12. Please contact Seamus Spencer, Outcome Agreement Manager: Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements for further information, tel: 0131 313 6673, email: sspencer@sfc.ac.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Kemp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Kemp

Director: Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements

Annex 1
Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I am able to influence learning on my course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	The way I'm taught helps me learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
10	The College Students' Association influences change for the better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Data use

1. Should we develop a protocol or memorandum of understanding to cover data ownership?
2. How should the data be shared within the sector?
3. How should it be made available in the public domain?
4. At what level of granularity should data be made available within the sector and in the public domain?
5. Who has access to use the data and how?
6. How can institutions best facilitate sharing data with Students' Associations?
7. How can we best put this data in the public domain offering contextualisation and assistance in the interpretation of the data?

Unique identifiers

1. What survey management tool / provider does your college currently use for administering the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey?
2. Does your college's current survey management tool /provider have the flexibility to allow the survey to be distributed and responses attributed through a unique identifier (college student ID number) to individual students?
3. Do you intend changing the survey tool or provider you currently use? If yes, in what academic year do you see this change taking place and if you know what tool / provider you intend moving to, please state this.
4. We intend using the unique identifier to link to other student equality and diversity characteristics that we currently collect through FES to enable enhanced analysis both in-year and longitudinally. Do you foresee any particular issues with the SSES collection if unique identifiers are used? If there are issues, how might these be overcome?
5. Do you think that the current student data sharing declaration your college uses at application/enrolment provides adequate information and reassurance to students about how their personal data will be used?

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Date:

Please send completed responses to spencer@sfc.ac.uk by the 29 March 2016.