

# Cylchlythyr | Circular

## The National Student Survey 2018

**Date:** 26 October 2017  
**Reference:** W17/30HE  
**To:** Governing bodies and heads of regulated and/or funded institutions in Wales  
Other parties with an interest in public information  
**Response by:** 27 November 2017  
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This circular announces arrangements for the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS), and the action required from all institutions by **Monday 27 November 2017**. This includes:

- providing up to date institutional contact details
- checking the sample list of students to be included in the survey (the “target list”) and providing students’ contact details.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please email [info@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:info@hefcw.ac.uk).



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## Introduction

1. This circular announces arrangements for the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS), and the action required from all institutions by **Monday 27 November 2017**. This includes:
  - providing up to date institutional contact details
  - checking the sample list of students to be included in the survey (the “target list”) and providing students’ contact details.
2. The 2018 survey will utilise the same questionnaire design as 2017, which included revised wording for some questions and introduced new student engagement questions. It will also include revised optional bank questions, offered in addition to existing optional banks. The main questionnaire is attached as **Annex A**.
3. Ipsos MORI will continue to run the survey on behalf of the funding bodies, and offer support to providers in managing and promoting the survey.
4. HEFCE will continue to manage the NSS on behalf of the four UK funding bodies until April 2018, when responsibility will transfer to the Office for Students. We will work with HEFCE to ensure that the transition will have no adverse impact on the successful operation of the NSS in Wales in 2018.
5. Detailed guidance relating to the 2018 NSS and the action requested is attached.

## Actions for all institutions

6. All institutions are asked to review and update, if necessary, their relevant NSS institutional contact details. The information should be supplied to Ipsos MORI no later than **Monday 27 November 2017** using the ‘My Details’ form, available on the Ipsos MORI NSS extranet ([www.ipsos-mori.com/nss/extranet](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/nss/extranet)). This is a password-protected site, and Ipsos MORI will send login details to the nominated main and secondary NSS contacts.
7. All providers should populate their 2018 NSS sample templates, provided by Ipsos MORI, with the requested contact details for students on their target list (this is a list of all students eligible for 2018 NSS based on the 2016-17 HESA student data submitted). Details should be supplied to Ipsos MORI by **Monday 27 November 2017** via the ‘Upload Sample Data’ section of the Ipsos MORI NSS extranet.
8. Instructions on how to supply this information are included in the NSS 2018 ‘Guidance for institutions and students’ unions’, available on the Ipsos Mori extranet. The guidance includes information regarding survey administration, appropriate promotion of the survey and key responsibilities and dates.

## **NSS 2018**

9. The 2018 survey questionnaire remains the same as that used in 2017. It will be administered across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. It will run to a similar timetable to the 2017 survey, with fieldwork taking place between January and April 2018 and results expected to be published in August 2018. Data will be supplied at a detailed level to providers through a dissemination site. Results will also be published on the website of the Office for Students and on the Unistats website in September 2018. We expect to provide a detailed timetable for publication in April 2018.
10. Ipsos Mori is responsible for administering the survey, returning data to the funding bodies and offering support to providers, including resources to help promote the survey. This includes facilitating a centrally managed incentive scheme on behalf of providers to encourage students to take part in the survey.
11. Ipsos MORI will liaise directly with NSS contacts at providers on how the 2018 NSS will be administered. This will include the selection of optional questions, incentive schemes and marketing materials. Providers will also be able to select one of five starting weeks for their survey. There will be no communication with students outside of the timing agreed with individual providers.
12. All providers in Wales pay for the administration of the survey. In 2018 this will be done via the sector agency agreement 2017/18. HEFCW also contributes to the costs of administering the survey.
13. While the survey is managed by Ipsos MORI and the funding bodies, the active support of providers is vital in ensuring the data is high quality, particularly in delivering high response rates.
14. We will continue to work in partnership with the National Union of Students Wales (NUSW) to ensure that the NSS appropriately reflects the student experience in Wales.
15. We encourage all providers and students' unions to draw on the resources available and to contact Ipsos MORI or HEFCE if they require additional support.
16. Further information for institutions can be found in **Annexes B and C**.

## **Optional banks**

17. For the 2018 survey, the existing optional banks will be supplemented with new banks of questions. These include redeveloped questions on personal development, as well as questions about employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship, and wellbeing.

18. Providers are expected to agree their choice of optional bank questions with their student representative body (Student Union, Association or Guild). Further information about this will be provided by Ipsos MORI in November 2017.

### **Intentions after Graduation Survey (IAGS)**

19. We have reviewed and updated the Intentions after Graduation Survey, which we will continue to run as a follow-on survey to the NSS. The IAGS provides valuable information to providers and to policymakers about student progression, including to postgraduate study. The costs of the IAGS will be covered by the funding bodies. On completing the NSS, students completing first degree programmes will be invited to take part in a separate 'click-through' survey asking them about their intentions after graduation. This will be offered to online respondents only.

### **Evaluation of NSS 2018**

20. We are currently in the process of evaluating NSS 2017 to ascertain how the new survey has worked in practice and to pick up on any emergent issues, either with the survey itself or the implementation process.
21. The outputs of this piece of work will help inform whether any revisions to the survey are required in the future, including whether any additional support and guidance is required for students or HE providers.

### **Student Information Advisory Group (SIAG)**

22. The work of the NSS is overseen by the Student Information Advisory Group (SIAG) chaired by Sir David Bell, Vice Chancellor of the University of Reading. This group, which includes UK-wide representation, was set up in 2017 and held its first meeting in June. Its remit includes both the NSS and wider issues around the provision of student information. Further details are available on the [HEFCE website](#).

### **Further information**

23. For further information, contact Nicola Hunt (tel 029 2085 9735; email [nicola.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk)).