

Cylchlythyr | Circular

The National Student Survey 2024

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Reference: W23/28HE
To: Governing bodies and heads of regulated and/or funded institutions in Wales
Student representative bodies in Wales
Response by: **1 December 2023** to Ipsos via the NSS extranet
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This circular sets out the arrangements for the National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 and the action required from all participating universities, colleges and other higher education providers by **1 December 2023**.

Providers are asked to:

- provide up-to-date contact details
- complete the 'my survey options' form
- submit NSS 2024 sample templates with contact details of eligible students.

This circular also provides an overview of the administration of the survey, provider support contact details, survey timetable and dissemination of 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 sets out the arrangements for the National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 and the action required from all participating universities, colleges and other higher education providers by **1 December 2023**. Providers are asked to:
 - provide up-to-date contact details
 - complete the 'my survey options' form
 - submit NSS 2024 sample templates with contact details of eligible students.
2. This circular 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 the Higher Education Funding Council for 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
 - Texuna Technologies, 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, all HEFCW regulated and funded providers are required to participate to meet the requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales, the Financial Management Code, and the Terms and Conditions of Funding. By participating in the NSS, providers can help ensure that the views of the diverse student body are represented, in line with their statutory responsibility to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality.
 - 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 2024 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 [2024 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 providers 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 2024 survey

8. For 2024, the NSS questionnaire will be the same as the NSS 2023. The survey will be delivered across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. As in 2023, 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 2024 questions and response scales can be found in on the [OfS website](#).
10. The optional bank questions and their response scales will remain the same in 2024. These are being explored as part of further work in 2023/24.
11. Ipsos administers the survey on behalf of the OfS and the other funding and regulatory bodies. It is responsible for contacting students, promoting the survey and providing cleaned data to the OfS and funding 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 24 October 2023.
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 **08 January 2024**;
 - ii. Fieldwork will take place between **11 January and 30 April 2024** and will be run by Ipsos;
 - iii. OfS and UK funding bodies will issue a publication in **spring 2024** detailing the plans for NSS 2024 results publication;
 - iv. Results will be published on the OfS website in **summer 2024**;
 - v. Detailed results will be supplied to individual providers through a dissemination portal provided by Texuna Technologies;
 - vi. NSS results at course level will be published on the [Discover Uni](#) website.
16. Ipsos has issued a comprehensive guidance document, 'Preparing for the National Student Survey 2024', for all participating providers on 24 October 2024. The guidance should be read in conjunction with this publication.
17. For NSS 2024, Texuna Technologies will provide the results dissemination portal on behalf of the OfS 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 publication thresholds. Texuna Technologies also provides a dedicated NSS service desk to support providers in accessing their data and responding to queries.
18. Texuna Technologies will contact providers' NSS contacts in spring 2024 to confirm user and login details and to confirm the details of publication of NSS 2024 results on the portal.

Discover Uni website

19. The [Discover Uni](#) website is a resource for prospective undergraduate students looking for information about undergraduate courses in the UK. It is managed by the Office for Students in England on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies. The National Student Survey 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.
20. The website also contains data taken from the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey, and the HESA Unistats return, which collects data about courses. More information about the HESA Unistats return is provided below.

HESA Unistats return 2023

21. All providers in Wales that subscribe to HESA make a Unistats data return to HESA to enable data about their courses to be included on the Discover Uni website. All HEFCW regulated and HEFCW directly funded providers in Wales are required to submit this information to HESA for their provision.

Actions for providers

22. All regulated and/or funded higher education providers and further education colleges in Wales should:
 - a. review and (where necessary) update their relevant NSS provider contact details by **1 December 2023**¹. 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 16 October 2023.
 - b. submit their completed 'My survey options' form by **1 December 2023** 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 2024 sample templates with the requested contact details for all students on their target list; this is a list of all students eligible for NSS 2024, based on the student data submitted to the 2022/23 HESA student record. Details should be supplied by **1 December 2023** 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.
23. Instructions on how to supply this information are included in the NSS 2023 setup guide, which will be issued to provider contacts by Ipsos on **24 October 2023** and is also available on the NSS extranet. The guidance includes information regarding survey administration, key responsibilities and dates.
24. 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.
25. Detailed guidance relating to NSS 2024 and the actions requested from higher education providers and further education colleges in Wales who are returning student data to HESA can be found at **Annex A**.
26. A summary of required action to be taken by participating providers is provided in Table 1 below.

¹ This is an extension to the normal timing, to accommodate the deadline for submission of student data to Data Futures at the end of November.

Table 1: Provider actions and key milestones

Date	Actions
24 October 2023	Ipsos to issue NSS 2024 setup guide and good practice guide to providers.
1 December 2023	Review and update NSS contact details.
1 December 2023	Complete 'my survey options' form.
1 December 2023	Submit NSS 2024 sample templates with contact details of eligible students.

Inappropriate influence on the survey

27. The OfS is responsible for managing the process, on behalf of all the funders and regulators, to address any concerns that students have been inappropriately influenced in their completion of the NSS. 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.
28. 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 HEFCW will be involved in any review of a concern of inappropriate influence involving a Welsh higher education provider.
29. 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 2024 set-up guide issued by Ipsos.

Costs

30. HEFCW will cover the costs of the 2024 NSS for HEFCW regulated and funded providers.
31. Costs of the NSS 2024 for universities and colleges in England and Northern Ireland will be covered by the OfS and the Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland). Providers in Scotland are required to contribute to the costs of their

students' participation. The Scottish Funding Council will also contribute to the costs of the survey.

Further information

32. The active support of participating providers is crucial to ensuring the survey data is of high quality, particularly in delivering high response rates. We encourage all providers and students' unions to draw on the resources available and to contact the OfS, Ipsos or Texuna Technologies if they require additional support, using the information below:

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.
Office for Students nssallegations@officeforstudents.org.uk	Areas such as NSS policy and development; use of results; allegations of inappropriate influence.
HEFCW taz.jones@hefcw.ac.uk	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.

Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

34. On 8 September 2022, the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill became an Act. The Act outlines arrangements to establish the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER), which will replace HEFCW, and will be responsible for regulating and funding most post-16 provision in Wales currently within the Welsh Government.

35. From 1 April 2024, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) will be dissolved and a new Welsh government sponsored body called the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research will become operational and responsible for the strategy, funding and oversight of post-16 provision, including higher education, in Wales. This will include coordination of the NSS in Wales, which may result in different requirements for participation in the NSS in future years.

Guidance on the NSS 2024 for higher education providers, and for further education institutions in Wales returning student data to HESA

1. The National Student Survey (NSS) will be carried out in 2024 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. Ipsos will manage the survey process and Texuna Technologies will provide the data dissemination portal services.
2. The timetable for the NSS 2024 will run as follows:
 - a. The NSS will launch on the **8 January 2024**.
 - b. Survey fieldwork will take place between **11 January and 30 April 2024**.
 - c. OfS and UK Funding bodies will issue a publication in **spring 2024** detailing the plans for NSS 2024 results publication.
 - d. Results will be published on the OfS website in **summer 2024**.
 - e. Detailed results will be supplied to individual providers through the NSS results portal provided by Texuna Technologies.
 - f. NSS results at course level will be published on the [Discover Uni](#) website.
3. This annex provides guidance specifically for UK higher education providers and for HEFCW-funded further education institutions in Wales that return student data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).²
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 in late November 2023 for the C22056 Student record.
 - 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 OfS or the relevant funding body.
 - c. Timely issuing of NSS pre-notification email to eligible students. Further details can be found in the NSS 2024 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 **1 December 2023**).

² Jisc and HESA have merged, and HESA is now part of Jisc. For the foreseeable future, HESA's brand will continue and its website will remain as a data-hosting platform. For more information see [Jisc and HESA confirm merger](#).

- e. Engagement with all guidance and requests issued by the OfS, UK funding and regulatory bodies, HESA, Ipsos and Texuna Technologies, and attending training and events run by them as necessary.
 - f. Submitting survey preferences to Ipsos by **1 December 2023**. 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 2023. 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, as provided by Ipsos in the good practice guide.
5. Providers can access their target lists for the 2024 NSS via the HESA data collection system. They should provide the requested contact details for students on these lists to Ipsos by **1 December 2023**. Further details can be found in the NSS 2024 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 OfS or 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 2024, 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 Texuna Technologies, 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 2024
 - a. In Wales, all HEFCW regulated and funded providers are required to participate to meet the requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales, the Financial Management Code, and the Terms and Conditions of Funding. By participating in the NSS, providers can help ensure that the views of the diverse student body are represented, in line with their statutory responsibility to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality.
 - 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 requirements of the Revised Operating Model for Quality Assurance.
 - 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 2023 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 2023-24, to have completed one full-time equivalent year or less since they were last surveyed.
13. Students are included in the 2024 survey population if they are expected to complete their course between 1 February 2024 and 31 January 2025 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 2024 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 2024.

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 2024 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.
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 records to HESA, a target list of students to be included in the NSS will automatically be generated. The provider 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 2024 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 **1 December 2023**. 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 2024 survey fieldwork will be conducted from 11 January until 30 April 2024 during the spring term so that the results can be published in summer 2024. 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 8 January and 5 February 2024 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 2024 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 **1 December 2023**.
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 2024 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 [2024 good practice guide](#)).
36. The good practice guidance for NSS 2024 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 2024 set-up guide issued by Ipsos.
38. Ipsos will produce NSS 2024 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 2024 good practice guide](#) from Ipsos on 24 October 2023.
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 2024, 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 2024 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 2024 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 Texuna Technologies. 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 provider.