



THE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS)

THE SURVEY

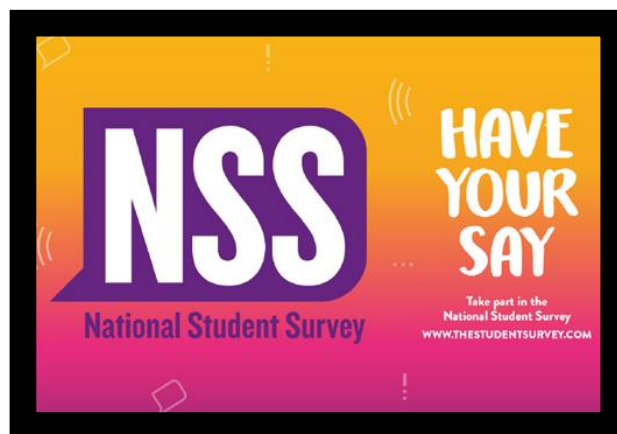
The National Student Survey is a UK-Wide, official survey of Undergraduate students commissioned by the Office for Students (OfS), independently managed by Ipsos and is a nationally recognised indicator of student satisfaction.

Privacy

The survey is anonymous and completely **voluntary** – we must never pressurise students in to taking the survey. The UoB respect the privacy of students taking part, and as such, individual responses are always confidential. For more information on how this is achieved and assured visit the NSS FAQ page: [FAQs – National Student Survey : National Student Survey \(thestudentsurvey.com\)](https://www.thestudentsurvey.com/faq)

NSS results are publicly available on the Discover Uni UG course search so that prospective students considering higher education in the UK can find out what students currently studying that course thought about it, to help them decide what to study and where.

It is an opportunity for final year students to comment on their student experience covering 9 core categories, with an additional ‘open text’ question. Since the NSS started, 4.5 million students have had their say over 400 institutions. In 2021 7/10 final year students completed the survey.



The Core Categories are:

1. Teaching On My Course
2. Learning Opportunities
3. Assessment and Feedback
4. Academic Support
5. Organisation and Management
6. Learning Resources
7. Student Voice
8. Mental Wellbeing Services
9. Freedom of Speech

Not all students take part – only those on a target list issued by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) are surveyed. These lists are checked and verified by the respective Faculties.

The survey runs from the beginning of February until the end of April each year. Those on the target list will receive an email in the launch week inviting them to complete an online questionnaire or they can log on directly to [National Student Survey : National Student Survey \(thestudentsurvey.com\)](http://thestudentsurvey.com) to take the survey

Why is it important for the University?

As part of the University of Buckingham's ongoing commitment to quality and standards, the results from the survey enables us to benchmark ourselves against other universities and develop Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) to drive continuous improvement in our services to drive excellence for our student's experiences each year.

PROMOTING THE SURVEY

How do we work out who can take part?

- The survey is open to undergraduate students only. Most students on the list are in their final year, but there are some first years on the list too because of how it is populated.
- A 'Target List' is generated for all students eligible to take part. Students on this list are contacted by Ipsos to inform them they can take part in the survey.
- The number of students on the list varies each year dependent on our student numbers, but it is normally several hundred. The University needs to achieve a 50% and 10 respondents per course response rates results to be published.
- If less than 10 students respond on a programme, the results will be bundled in to a 'Other' section.

How do students get contacted?

Once the survey starts, Ipsos will send an email to the student's university email account inviting them to take part with a link to Check their university email inbox to see if they have received an invitation to take part. If they have, they can fill in the online questionnaire immediately!

Over the course of the survey window, for those students who have not completed and not opted out, Ipsos will attempt to contact non-responders in a more targeted way e.g. where a threshold is not being reached (more than 10 students). Once the threshold is achieved, booster emails will stop.

What Incentives and Prizes are on offer?

Incentives are a proven way to engage students in the survey and increase the response rate. Each year UoB offer the following prizes and incentives:

- £150 graduation package (gown hire, photographs etc)
- £100 Amazon voucher
- £100 University Bookshop voucher
- Each Faculty can spend up to £150 on local incentives to promote the survey as they see fit

How you can help promote the survey

- The Academic Compliance team centrally coordinate the event with the Schools/Faculties responsible for local promotion.
- Academic Compliance provide a list of the target students so that each school can remind them to take part.
- Academic Compliance will provide posters for schools to put up in the areas of your offices where students frequent.
- Schools provide approx. 15 minutes 'protected time' in at least 2 tutorials/lectures across the survey window for students to complete the survey. A PPT slide is available to use.
- Assistant Registrar (Academic Compliance) carries out an online presentation to all UG final year faculty staff (academic and administrative) as well as to all Student Reps explaining the NSS to help them inform and support their student peers.

REMEMBER: The survey is not compulsory – it is very important that we do not force students to complete it or pressurise students into answering in a certain way. We can only remind students that their feedback is important to us and helps to improve the student experience at Buckingham.

THE RESULTS

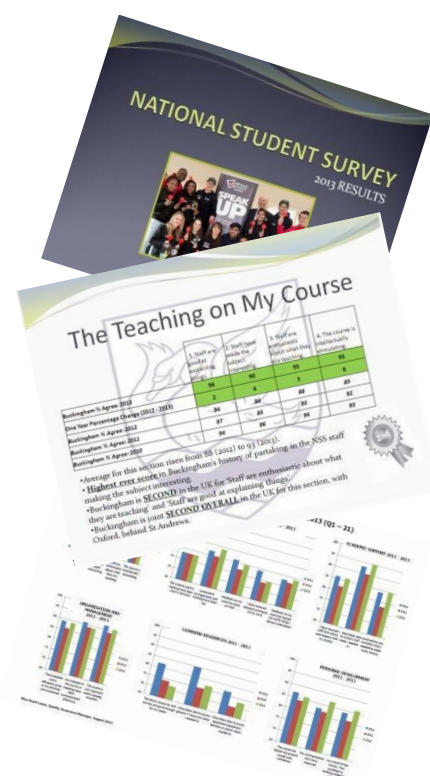
When are the results published?

Results are published by OfS/Ipsos in phases over a 5-day window - normally between the beginning to middle of July. This is to coincide with clearing and the release of the Key Information Sets on the Unistats website.

What results are published?

The Academic Compliance office publishes the following suite of results as standard each year. All NSS published reports from 2018 on are available via the Professional Services SharePoint site: [Surveys and League Tables \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

1. Institutional Level results and rankings (showing results of Buckingham and HEI Sector, with analysis of year-on-year changes and emerging themes)
2. School/ Subject Level Overview Table
3. School/Subject Level Detailed Tables (showing year on year comparison changes, and analysis of subject sector averages)
4. Full results Table – Buckingham; HEI Sector; Buckingham V HEI Sector (with one year percentage changes)
5. Commentary to Full results Table
6. Overall Satisfaction Rankings Table (whole HE sector, including commentary)
7. HEI Sector V UoB Graph
8. 3 Year Scores by Question
9. 3 Year Averages by Question Section



How are the results considered and used to improve the student experience?

The results of the National Student Survey are considered widely across the University – at the Executive Committee, the University Assessment, Learning and Teaching Committee (ULATC), Faculty Boards and Senate. These committees discuss the results, decide on actions to be taken and complete a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

Actions from the QIP are then updated and progress monitored via termly committee updates. The Faculty Quality Manager (FQM) is responsible for the oversight of the QIP with the Faculty and Associate Deans responsible for ensuring actions are taken and completed as agreed.

Student representatives on these committees will have the opportunity to be part of these discussions with the Autumn Term Student Assembly dedicating a NSS outcome session, where the results are fed back to students with Schools reporting their response and QIP results.

Action taken can also be reported back to students through emails, or even a dedicated 'You Said, We Did' notice board in your department. When the promotional activities for the NSS begin the following year, this focuses on reminding students how their feedback last year help to change things.

However, the results aren't just useful for addressing issues. The University Assessment, Learning and Teaching Committee (UALTC) has responsibility for ensuring that they are used to share good practice. The Academic Compliance team alongside the Faculty Quality Managers (FQM) works closely with Schools to find out where practices have contributed to increased satisfaction in the NSS results and establish how this can be shared across the University.

Questions or Suggestions?

If you have any further queries or any suggestions on the National Student Survey or any other practices at the University of Buckingham, please contact the Assistant Registrar (Academic Compliance) anita.wise@buckingham.ac.uk.

NSS FAQs: *FAQs – National Student Survey : National Student Survey (thestudentsurvey.com)*