



National Student Survey 2023 – Academic Staff Briefing

Background

The National Student Survey (NSS) is open to final year undergraduate students and is administered by the research agency, Ipsos. The official Edinburgh Napier survey launch date is the **Monday 16th of January** and the survey will remain open until 30 April 2023, but we aim to encourage students to complete it as soon as possible. However, all eligible students can participate in the survey from when it first opens on the 11th of January. They will not receive any centralised promotion prior to the Edinburgh Napier official launch date on the 16th of January. However, if you wish to encourage students to take part between the 11th and 16th of January you are free to do so and you can share the link to the survey website with them www.thestudentsurvey.com. You may wish to do this if you can encourage students as part of any session that is being held prior to the official launch date.

This briefing provides details of the survey to help staff discuss the NSS with final year undergraduate students and highlights action which can be taken at department level to encourage participation. In 2022, overall participation of eligible students at Edinburgh Napier was 75% (76% in 2021).

Please be aware that in 2023 there will be no prize draw element to the survey promotion.

Following on from the 2022 NSS participants were asked how they found out about the survey. Overall, 37% stated they heard about the survey from a lecturer or member of staff (this was slight increase compared with 2021). This continues to highlight how vital the role of academic staff is when encouraging student participation in the NSS.

New for 2023 - NSS Revised Questionnaire

Following on from a review of the NSS, the Office for Students have implemented a new question set for 2023. The key points to be aware of are:

- The survey timings and promotion remain unchanged compared with previous years.
- The questions have been updated and reworded in a way which means they no longer use a common rating scale to answer the question. Each rating scale now offers students 4 options, the 'neither' option is no longer available. The rating scales vary in line with the question which is being asked.
- Most sections remain the same – with additional questions included within some areas.
- A new question relating to mental wellbeing services has been included.
- A freedom of expression question has also been included – however this will **only** be asked to students in English institutions and as such our students will not answer this question.
- The overall satisfaction question has been retained in its current form, along with the 5-point rating scale which is currently used. However, this question will only be asked to students in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. English students will no longer be asked this overall satisfaction question.
- The final verbatim questions previously consisted of two questions where students were asked to comment on positive and negative experiences separately. In the updated questionnaire there will be a single question asking them to comment on negative or positive experiences in the same question.

Promoting the Survey

Please note: The Ipsos NSS 2023 Good Practice Guidance for Institutions has highlighted the need for local promotion of the NSS to be neutral. It is not acceptable for links between the NSS, League Tables and the perceived value of students' degrees to be made in any promotion to students. Ipsos MORI have created a range of help cards to support the running of the survey, including a help card focused on Inappropriate Influence. These can be accessed [here](#).

1. Why is the NSS is Important

The survey has two key purposes:

- It provides feedback from final year students to departments that helps them pinpoint areas for change and the enhancement of teaching and learning – including assessment practices.
- It provides potential students and their advisers with an insight into the learning experience in different universities to help them make the right choice about what and where to study.

Students are encouraged to reflect on their entire experience at Edinburgh Napier when completing the survey, so they are considering their entire course / programme.

2. NSS Sample

Students eligible to take part in the 2023 NSS are contained in the sample list that is generated from 2021/22 HESA data.

Eligibility:

- Final year students and equivalent
 - students expected to be in their final year
 - students on flexible programmes where the final year cannot be predicted, after they have undertaken more than one FTE and not before their third year of study
- Part-time and full-time students
 - all full-time students registered at participating institutions
 - all part-time students registered at participating institutions

Students cannot be removed from the sample list but can be excluded if they fall into one of the following three categories:

- Students who are deceased
 - Students with serious health difficulties (including mental health difficulties), where seeking a response may be distressing for the student.
 - Students who have informed Edinburgh Napier that they wish to opt out of the survey.
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- It will not be possible to add additional students to the population list when the survey has commenced.
 - Undergraduates who are expected to be in their final year are eligible to complete the survey (this includes both full and part time students).
 - Students will only ever be asked to complete the NSS once. If for any reason they are eligible but were included in the sample in a previous year their details will be removed.

3. The Questions

Students are asked the extent to which they agree with a series of 27 questions about their course. The questions asked can be found in Appendix 1. Responses are rated on a four-point scale appropriate to the question, apart from overall satisfaction with the quality of the course which remains consistent with the previous questionnaire and uses the following five-point scale.

- Definitely Agree, Mostly Agree, Neither, Mostly Disagree, Definitely Disagree

The questions cover six main categories of learning and teaching. These are:

- Teaching on the Course (4 questions)
- Learning Opportunities (5 questions)
- Marking and Assessment (5 questions)
- Academic Support (2 questions)
- Organisation and Management (2 questions)
- Learning Resources (3 questions)
- Student Voice (4 questions)
- Mental Wellbeing Services (1 question)
- Overall Satisfaction (1 question)

After answering the 27 questions which they are given the opportunity to respond to an open-ended question highlighting any particular positive or negative aspects of their teaching and learning experience.

4. Publication Thresholds

Two thresholds must be achieved for results to be published – a 50% response rate, and a minimum of 10 students responding. Results are available at the following levels –

- School Level
- Subject Level
- Course Level (where a minimum of 10 students have completed the survey)

The NSS results are published on the government's DiscoverUni website at <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>. It allows potential students and their advisors to compare subjects at universities and colleges in the UK to help applicants make choices about what and where to study. It also provides information to help potential students decide if University is right for them. The results are also used when league table positions are being calculated.

5. Results from the 2022 NSS

Please click [here](#) to see the analysis and results from the 2022 survey.

The 2023 NSS

1. Arrangements for the NSS 2023

The arrangements for the NSS 2023 are as follows:

- Final year students have been given the opportunity to opt out and the remaining 2,498 students will be invited to participate in NSS 2023.
- The survey for the University's final year students will launch on the **16th of January 2023**. Students who are eligible to take part will receive an email from Ipsos about the survey with a direct web link to the questionnaire. They will receive this initial agency email contact on 19th of January 2023. An Edinburgh Napier generated communication to encourage participation will be emailed to the eligible student population on the 18th of January 2023.
- Students are given three weeks to complete the survey online. Non-completion during the first three weeks means an SMS message will be sent to students.
- Non-completion within a further two-week period means telephone contact by Ipsos begins (again, the option of completing online remains). Telephoning will commence on the 31st of January 2023.
- The survey will close on 30 April 2023.
- The University expects to receive the results in July 2023 in line with the result timetable from previous years.

The survey contact timetable for institutions opting to begin the NSS on 16th of January 2023 is as follows:

Contact	Date
University wide promotional campaign begins (using Ipsos marketing materials)	16 January 2023
Internal Edinburgh Napier email invitation to eligible students	18 January 2023
Ipsos promotional activity begins Email 1 – Initial Invitation <i>Please note email invitations are sent to eligible students directly from Ipsos.</i>	19 January 2023
Email 2 – first reminder	23 January 2023
SMS	26 January 2023
Email 3 – second reminder	31 January 2023
Telephone phase commences (beginning with those who have no email addresses)	31 January 2023
Email and telephone follow ups	1 March – 30 April

2. Central University-wide promotion

Several activities will be undertaken to promote the 2023 NSS. This year we will be using the UK wide Ipsos MORI produced marketing materials for promotional purposes and the promotion materials remain unchanged from those used in 2022.

Promotional activities within Edinburgh Napier include:

- A social media campaign to include input from student social media ambassadors.
- Emails to students and staff.

- Staff intranet hub containing information and resources including slides, email templates and design campaign collateral.

3. Your role: Key Points

It is critically important that academic staff communicate to their students regarding the survey and encourage them to take part. There is flexibility when promoting the survey to students, this can be done in the first week of the survey (beginning on the 16th of January) or in the following weeks, depending on how it fits into each programme.

Colleagues who are teaching students are asked to:

- Talk to their students about the purpose of the Survey (a PowerPoint slide will be made available which can be included at the end of lecture slides).
- Encourage students to reflect on their entire experience at Edinburgh Napier and not necessarily what has happened in the past few weeks.
- Draw attention to action that has been taken because of the feedback received from previous years of the NSS to illustrate how it is making a difference.
- Ask them to check their student email account for an email from Ipsos.
- Encourage students to complete promptly if they want to avoid a telephone call from Ipsos.
- Where possible, set aside 5 – 10 minutes at the end of relevant classes to allow students to complete the survey during that time.

Other successful ideas in the past have included:

- Discussing last year's feedback with current students.
- Providing the opportunity to cohorts of students to complete the survey during induction sessions.
- Email contact from the Deans of School encouraging students to participate (sample lists of the students eligible to take part on a school-by-school basis have been made available).
- Deans or senior staff members attending classes of final year undergraduate students to encourage participation and highlight the importance of feedback gained through the NSS.
- Asking all dissertation supervisors to encourage their students to complete the survey.

Following the survey launch response rates will regularly be monitored and reported to Deans of School and the Heads of Learning & Teaching within each school. If response rates are low in a particular area you may have to give further encouragement to students to complete the survey. Remember a **50% response rate and a minimum of 10 students** responding must be achieved for results to be published.

4. Promotion of the NSS

If you have any questions about this information or have any ideas or advice that you think would be worth sharing more widely in the University, please contact Nicola Kivlichan – Head of Market & Student Intelligence (n.kivlichan@napier.ac.uk or Ext 5007).

Appendix 1 – National Student Survey Questions 2023

Section	Question	Answer Scale
Teaching on my Course	How good are teaching staff at explaining things?	Answer Scale: Very good; Good; Not very good; Not at all good; This does not apply to me
	How often do teaching staff make the subject engaging?	Answer Scale: Very often; Fairly often; Not very often; Rarely; This does not apply to me
	How often is the course intellectually stimulating?	
	How often does your course challenge you to achieve your best work?	
Learning Opportunities	To what extent have you had the chance to explore ideas and concepts in depth?	Answer Scale: To a large extent; To some extent; To a small extent; Not at all; This does not apply to me
	How well does your course introduce subjects and skills in a way that builds on what you have already learned?	Answer Scale: Very well; Well; Not very well; Not at all well; This does not apply to me
	To what extent have you had the chance to bring together information and ideas from different topics	Answer Scale: To a large extent; To some extent; To a small extent; Not at all; This does not apply to me
	To what extent does your course have the right balance of directed and independent study?	
	How well has your course developed your knowledge and skills that you think you will need for your future?	Answer Scale: Very well; Well; Not very well; Not at all well; This does not apply to me
Marking & Assessment	How clear were the marking criteria used to assess your work'?	Answer Scale: Very clear; Clear; Not very clear; Not at all clear; This does not apply to me
	How fair has the marking and assessment been on your course?	Answer Scale: Very fair; Fair; Not very fair; Not at all fair; This does not apply to me
	How well have assessments allowed you to demonstrate what you have learned?	Answer Scale: Very well; Well; Not very well; Not at all well; This does not apply to me
	How often have you received assessment feedback on time?	Answer Scale: Very often; Fairly often; Not very often; Rarely; This does not apply to me
	How often does feedback help you to improve your work?	
Academic Support	How easy was it to contact teaching staff when you needed to?	Answer Scale: Very easy; Easy; Not very easy; Not at all easy; This does not apply to me
	How well have teaching staff supported your learning?	Answer Scale: Very well; Well; Not very well; Not at all well; This does not apply to me
Organisation & Management	How well organised is your course?	Answer Scale: Very well organised; Well organised; Not very well organised; Not at all well organised; This does not apply to me
	How well were any changes to teaching on your course communicated?	

Learning Resources	How well have the IT resources and facilities supported your learning?	Answer Scale: Very well; Well; Not very well; Not at all well; This does not apply to me
	How well have the library resources (e.g., books, online services and learning spaces) supported your learning?	
	How easy is it to access subject specific resources (e.g., equipment, facilities, software) when you need them?	Answer Scale: Very easy; Easy; Not very easy; Not at all easy; This does not apply to me
Student Voice	To what extent do you get the right opportunities to give feedback on your course?	Answer Scale: To a large extent; To some extent; To a small extent; Not at all; This does not apply to me
	To what extent are students' opinions about the course valued by staff?	
	How clear is it that students' feedback on the course is acted on?	Answer Scale: Very clear; Clear; Not very clear; Not at all clear; This does not apply to me
	How well does the students' union (association or guild) represent students' academic interests?	Answer Scale: Very well; Well; Not very well; Not at all well; This does not apply to me
Mental Wellbeing Services	How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services?	Answer Scale: Very well; Well; Not very well; Not at all well; This does not apply to me
Overall Satisfaction	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.	Answer Scale Definitely agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Mostly disagree; Definitely disagree; Not applicable