

Cylchlythyr | Circular

2015 National Student Survey: Publication of data

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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education institutions
in Wales
Response by: No response required
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This circular provides information on the next steps in the 2015 National Student Survey (NSS) process, including an update on the thresholds for publication and a timetable for when institutions will be able to access their results via the NSS results and Unistats websites.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please telephone us on (029) 2068 2225 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.



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Introduction

1. This circular provides information on the next steps in the 2015 National Student Survey (NSS) process, including an update on the thresholds for publication and a timetable for when institutions will be able to access their results via the NSS results and Unistats websites. No action is required in response.
2. Associated information about the Unistats data collection and timetable can be found in circular [W15/07HE](#).
3. HEFCW would like to take this opportunity to thank all participating institutions for their commitment and contribution to the 2015 NSS.

Changes to publication thresholds

4. In response to feedback from the sector, between 15 December 2014 and 13 February 2015 the funding bodies consulted on proposals to:
 - a. Lower the headcount or full-person equivalent (FPE¹) threshold for publication of student-level data on Unistats and for publicly-available NSS data from 23 to 10.
 - b. Revise the subject hierarchy used in the aggregation of data in recognition of feedback that the current hierarchy does not always reflect institutional structures well.
5. HEFCW would like to thank those who responded to the consultation. Following the analysis of responses, the funding bodies will be adopting a headcount or FPE threshold of 10 for publication of student-related data on Unistats and for publicly-available NSS data from 2015. For NSS data the 50% threshold will still apply.
6. There will not, however, be changes to the subject hierarchy at this time. This is because the majority of respondents thought it preferable to defer to 2016 to preserve data continuity for NSS results in what is viewed as an important year and to allow further time to explore and agree potential changes. The funding bodies will review whether it would be desirable to implement changes to the subject hierarchy for 2016 in January 2016, at which point we will know more about the future direction of Unistats and the timescales for implementation of the replacement for JACS currently being developed by the HE Data and Information improvement Programme (HEDIIP). This approach has been endorsed by the UK Higher Education Public Information Steering Group.

¹ FPE is a measure of headcount used where students are studying more than one subject as part of an award. For example, a student studying Engineering and French would typically count as half an FPE in Engineering and half an FPE in French. When considered over all subjects, every student will amount to one FPE. This measure is used for data drawn from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey, the HESA student record, the Individualised Learner Record or the Lifelong Learning Wales record.

7. The consultation documents are available on HEFCE's website (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/unikis/aggregation/>) and HEFCE will publish a full report of the analysis of responses on this page later in the spring on behalf of all the funders.

Publication of the 2015 NSS results

8. The impact of the reduction in publication thresholds for NSS data means that:
- a. A publication threshold of 50 per cent response rate and 10 responses will be applied to all publically-available NSS data
 - b. A publication threshold of 10 responses will be applied to institutions' own NSS data
9. As in previous years the NSS results will be made available in a three stage phased release. A summary table and further description of the schedule can be found below.

Summary timetable

Note: All NSS data is subject to strict embargo until 12 August.

2015	2015 NSS results
31 July	<p>Stage 1</p> <p>NSS data available on the Texunatech NSS results site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutions' own data (at the publication threshold of 50 per cent response rate and 10 responses), at overall institution level and JACS subject levels • institutions' own detailed data at the lower publication threshold of 10 responses (for internal use) • custom analysis functionality will also be available.
7 August	<p>Stage 2</p> <p>NSS data available on the Texunatech NSS results site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 HEFCE NSS benchmark data across institutions • all institutions public dataset at the new publication threshold • custom analysis functionality will also be available.
12 August	HEFCE website to publish 2015 NSS results on behalf of all the funders.
20 August	<p>Stage 3</p> <p>Texunatech to make institutions' own students' open comments available to them by this date.</p>
2 September	Update of Unistats with 2015 dataset.

8. On 31 July, Texuna Technologies Ltd (Texunatech) will launch **stage 1 of the NSS results release**. Stage 1 will present institutions' own detailed NSS data and can only be viewed by the institution concerned. This release will also include custom analysis functionality allowing institutions to interrogate their own data through the site. The agreed NSS contact at each institution will be sent further details of how to access the data closer to the time. Institutions are responsible for ensuring that they keep their contact details up to date. If your institution's details need to be updated please contact Texunatech (email nss@texunatech.com).
9. On 7 August, Texunatech will launch **stage 2 of the NSS results release**, which will include:
 - a preview of provisional 2015 HEFCE NSS institutional benchmark data
 - all institutions' public data reports and custom analysis, at the higher publication threshold of 10 response and 50 per cent.
10. On 20 August, Texunatech will launch **stage 3 of the NSS results release** on the NSS results site. This will include institutions' detailed students' comments for 2015.
11. All NSS data is **subject to strict embargo until 12 August**.

Publication of the 2015 NSS results on the HEFCE website

12. HEFCE will publish the 2015 NSS results on 12 August. The information will include sector summary data as well as complete subject-level data for all institutions with publishable data.

Publication of the 2015 NSS results on Unistats website

13. In September 2015, Unistats will undergo its annual update to display course data for the following academic year. As part of this, 2015 NSS data which meets the publication threshold of 10 respondents and 50 per cent will be displayed on the Unistats website together with the updated Key information Set (KIS) data. The data on the Unistats website will be available for public access from 2 September 2015.
14. As part of the KIS submission process, from mid-July institutions will be able to access a report showing the Unistats data to be published for all of the courses for which they have submitted a KIS record. This will include the NSS public results, which are **under embargo until 12 August**. However, as stated above, complete NSS quantitative results will not be available through the dissemination site until 31 July.

Further information

15. If you have any queries regarding the NSS results site 2015, please contact Texunatech (email nss@texunatech.com). For KIS queries, directly funded higher education institutions and participating private providers should contact the Higher Education Statistics Agency (email liaison@hesa.ac.uk, tel 01242 211144) and directly funded further education colleges should contact HEFCE (email KIS@hefce.ac.uk), who are dealing with this on behalf of all the funders.

NSS review

16. You may also be aware that the funders of the NSS have been undertaking a review of the survey. In October 2014, the funding bodies responded to the review research after consulting with organisations involved in the NSS. Further development work is now under way, including cognitive and quantitative testing of potential new questions with current students.
17. For further information about next steps, please see the funding bodies' response on the HEFCE website at www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/nss/future/#d.en.99035. It is expected that any developments to the survey will be implemented from 2017.
18. Thank you for your continued participation and active engagement with the National Student Survey.

Further information / responses to

19. For further information, contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2068 2283; email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk).