

News release

Date: 15 July 2020

Title: Student satisfaction in Wales in 2020

Student satisfaction among undergraduates at universities and colleges in Wales remains high, with 84% of final year students saying they were satisfied with their course this year.

The figure is slightly ahead of the UK as a whole, and down one percentage point from 2019.

The National Student Survey is open to final year undergraduate students at higher education providers in the UK.

The survey was open from 6 January to 30 April 2020, and the results were analysed to determine if the pandemic had a bearing on their reliability.

It was concluded that the statistics could be published without including exceptional caveats or adjustments.

Dr David Blaney, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: "It is more important than ever that students have an opportunity to feed back to their providers about their courses. The outcomes help universities to improve the offer for future students, and the robustness of the data means the survey is a valuable tool that students can trust when making decisions about where and what to study.

"We are pleased to see that overall student satisfaction levels in Welsh higher education remain high.

“We know that a lot of responses were provided before the Covid-19 crisis shut down face-to-face teaching. Changes, and institutions’ own responses to these changes, can always throw up additional concerns. We know that providers have broadly responded well, not just in showing innovation in teaching and learning, but also in extracurricular support for students and pastoral care. This emphasis on the wider student experience will need to continue as the new academic year starts for the majority of students in just a couple of months’ time.

“What I will say is that the survey has always shown that the student experience is a particular strength of the higher education sector in Wales, and long may that continue.”

Amy Matthews from Rhymney, who graduated this year with a First Class honours degree in Mathematics, Operational Research and Statistics with a Professional Placement from a Welsh university, said: “My four years at university have been outstanding. Being a mathematics undergraduate has exceeded my expectations; it has been made by the friends I’ve met, lifelong memories and the exceptional academic experience.

“The opportunity to take a year in industry with HEFCW not only enabled me to apply my degree in the working world, but helped decide which career I will take after graduating. This final semester has been clouded by the Coronavirus pandemic, but my university allowed the transition to online learning to be smooth and easy while upholding their high academic standards. Reflecting on my university experience, I’d recommend this path to everyone.”

Overall student satisfaction at Welsh higher education providers has held steady between 82% and 86% for the duration of the National Student Survey, with figures in recent years in particular edging ahead of overall satisfaction for the UK.

2020 National Student Survey results: Comparative data for each category covered by the survey (HE and FE institutions combined)

Questions		2019	2019	2020	2020
		UK	Wales	UK	Wales
		% Satisfied	% Satisfied	% Satisfied	% Satisfied
1-4	The teaching on my course	84	85	84	85
5-7	Learning opportunities	83	84	83	84
8-11	Assessment and feedback	73	75	73	75
12-14	Academic support	80	82	79	81
15-17	Organisation and management	75	76	74	75
18-20	Learning resources	86	86	86	86
21-22	Learning community	76	79	76	78
23-25	Student voice	74	77	74	76
26	Students' union	56	59	56	60
27	Overall satisfaction	84	85	83	84
28-33	NHS Practice Placements	87	87	85	84

The percentage satisfied is calculated by combining 'strongly agree' and 'mostly agree'.

Ends

Notes:

1. NSS covers the majority of final-year undergraduates studying for higher education qualifications at UK higher education institutions, and at further education colleges in Wales, England and Northern Ireland. The survey, carried

- out by IPSOS Mori, is funded by the four UK higher education funding/regulatory bodies (HEFCW, the Office for Students, the Scottish Funding Council, and the Department for Economy Northern Ireland), and Health Education England.
2. Full results are available on the [Office for Students website](#). The data will be published on the Discover Uni website at a later date, providing information to inform potential students' choices about where and what to study.
 3. The threshold for publication at institution level is that at least 10 students must have responded, and that these should represent at least half the students eligible to participate.
 4. Institution level responses for all 27 questions have been benchmarked. Benchmarked data is published for both 2019 and 2020 results.
 5. Student satisfaction data for the Open University in Wales is included in the figures for the Open University (though UK-wide, listed as 'England HEI').
 6. The Office for Students review of the data led them to conclude that the results could be published in full, and without any adjustment. They did not find evidence that the reliability of the statistics had been affected by the pandemic. Neither did they find evidence that the results had been strongly impacted by the pandemic, to the extent that exceptional caveats or adjustments were needed. While their analysis uncovered some potential issues with the results, such as the mode of response effect and the variable response rates across student groups, these were all variations on themes present in previous years. They will continue to assess these and to explore possible mitigations as part of the OfS's routine work to maintain and develop the NSS.

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About HEFCW

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales – HEFCW – is the public body operating between Welsh Government and higher education providers. We regulate fee

levels at higher education providers, ensure a framework is in place for assessing the quality of higher education and scrutinise the performance of universities and other designated providers. We also provide funding for higher education teaching and research, and apply our influence and expertise to help deliver Welsh Government priorities for higher education that also have wider societal and economic benefits.