

## Cylchlythyr | Circular

# Review of information about learning and teaching and the student experience: consultation on changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and information provided by institutions

**Date:** 1 October 2015  
**Reference:** W15/22HE  
**To:** Governing bodies and Heads of regulated institutions in Wales  
Other parties with an interest in public information about higher education  
**Response by:** 4 December 2015 to HEFCE  
**HEFCW Contact:** Name: Dr Cliona O'Neill  
Telephone: 029 2068 2283  
Email: [cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk)  
**HEFCE contact:** Name: Sarbani Banerjee / Ruth Tucker  
Telephone: 0117 931 7056 / 0117 931 7367,  
Email: [s.banerjee@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:s.banerjee@hefce.ac.uk)  
[r.tucker@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:r.tucker@hefce.ac.uk)

This circular provides a link to the consultation being run by the four higher education (HE) funding bodies in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on changes to the National Student Survey and to the Unistats website. The consultation reflects the findings of stage one of a two-stage review of information about learning and teaching and the student experience. Responses are required by 4 December 2015 to HEFCE.

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



Noddir gan  
Lywodraeth Cymru  
Sponsored by  
Welsh Government

## Introduction

1. This circular provides a link to the consultation being run by the four higher education (HE) funding bodies in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on changes to the National Student Survey and to the Unistats website. The consultation reflects the findings of stage one of a two-stage review of information about learning and teaching and the student experience.
2. HEFCW is consulting under its powers under section 23 of the Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015 to issue or approve guidance about any matter they think relevant to improving or maintaining the quality of education provided by or on behalf of regulated institutions’.
3. Responses are required by 4 December 2015 to HEFCE.

## The consultation

4. The consultation covers proposals for
  - Changes to the Unistats website and the Key Information Set for 2017
  - Information published by institutions about their courses for 2017
  - Changes to the National Student Survey for 2017
  - Potential changes to information after 2017.
5. The summary of the proposals is as follows:

<b>Changes for 2017</b>	
Unistats and the Key Information Set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain UK website of authoritative national data for students, their advisers and other stakeholders</li><li>• Redesign Unistats to reflect diverse student information needs</li><li>• Transfer publication of learning, teaching and assessment information to institutions</li><li>• More help for students to navigate information during their decision making journey</li></ul>
Information published by institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask institutions to publish detailed course information in line with Competitions and Markets Authority guidance</li><li>• Provide good practice developed with sector experts to support consistent but nuanced presentation of information.</li></ul>
National Student Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply criteria for questions in main survey</li><li>• Include new questions on student engagement</li><li>• Amend Learning Resources and Assessment</li></ul>

	<p>and Feedback questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merge duplicative questions</li> <li>• Transfer personal development and student union questions to optional banks</li> <li>• Bring optional questions up to date.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Changes after 2017</b>	
Methods for capturing qualitative data from students for publication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options for publishing qualitative information including NSS comments</li> </ul>
Feedback survey from undergraduate students not covered by the NSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of priority groups for whom we should collect data</li> <li>• Options for capturing and publishing feedback</li> </ul>
Information for taught postgraduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approaches to capturing and publishing feedback from taught postgraduates</li> </ul>

6. The full consultation is available at [www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/roiconsult/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/roiconsult/). The link for responses will sit along this on the consultation page<sup>1</sup>. Supporting material for the consultation, including research reports, is available from the HEFCE website.
7. Three consultation events will be held in November 2015 as follows:
- |             |           |   |
|-------------|-----------|---|
| 9 November  | Edinburgh | <a href="http://edinburghpi.eventbrite.co.uk">http://edinburghpi.eventbrite.co.uk</a> |
| 12 November | Cardiff   | <a href="http://cardiffpi.eventbrite.co.uk">http://cardiffpi.eventbrite.co.uk</a>     |
| 17 November | London    | <a href="http://londonpi.eventbrite.co.uk">http://londonpi.eventbrite.co.uk</a>       |
- Further information is available on the HEFCE website.

### Consultation outcomes

8. The UK-wide Higher Education Public Information Steering Group (HEPISG)<sup>2</sup> will consider the responses to this consultation in February 2016 and advise the funding bodies on next steps.
9. The outcomes of the consultation and the next steps, agreed by the Boards or Councils of the funding bodies, will be published in spring 2016. This will enable preparatory work to begin changes to institutions' websites in 2016 and changes to Unistats and the National Student Survey from 2017.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.surveymonkey.net/r/?sm=m4UTM8pf9iZdHftMNhupwEwQZg5tSliOXXY%2fImi4wrB%2fxYmj6x%2fhi1G%2foh1wa4UPO1hNntVoPhAthkpLrjxCfvaDRJjGve7ToHdin85ZJc%3d>

<sup>2</sup> HEPISG advises the UK funding bodies on the management and development of information on higher education. HEPISG's membership and terms of reference can be viewed at [www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/review/Governance/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/review/Governance/)

10. The funders will publish a summary and analysis of consultation responses as part of the outcomes document in spring 2016.

### **Timetable**

11. Responses to this consultation should be made online by **noon Friday 4 December 2015** using the response form which can be accessed alongside this document at [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under Publications.

### **Further information / responses to**

12. For further information, on the consultation events contact [h.crabb-wyke@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:h.crabb-wyke@hefce.ac.uk).
13. For further information on the consultation contact [s.banerjee@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:s.banerjee@hefce.ac.uk) or [r.tucker@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:r.tucker@hefce.ac.uk).