



## Information Sheet – Promoting the NSS 2013

The 2013 National Student Survey (for final year undergraduates) launches at The University of Manchester on **Monday 28 January 2013 and runs until 30 April**.

Final year undergraduates will be approached by an external agency, Ipsos MORI, from the end of January onwards to complete the online survey.

There is an internal University website which contains links to lots of further information about the National Student Survey at [www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/student-experience/nss](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/student-experience/nss)

**PLEASE NOTE: This website is for information and promotional materials and does not provide access to the survey.**

**The url for final year students to access the NSS is [www.thestudentsurvey.com](http://www.thestudentsurvey.com).**

It is important that as many students as possible provide their feedback for the survey to generate reliable information. We need to achieve;

- a response rate of at least 50% at institution level and in our subjects of study (and a minimum of 23 respondents) in order for our data to be made publicly available on Unistats.com.

Last year we achieved an overall institutional response rate of 71%, and all subject areas also reached the threshold (unless they had a cohort of under 23 students).

We aim to match or even exceed last year's excellent participation rate in 2013 – and we need your help to do it.

### **Launching the survey**

On **28th or 29th January**, IPSOS Mori will send an initial email to students with a link to the online survey.

*However, good practice guidelines suggest that it may be advantageous for a School/local contact to communicate with students in advance of the launch, to let them know to expect the email and also the purpose of the survey.*

You can see a good example used for the PTES Survey 2013, but easily adaptable, at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=15022>

## **Key Messages**

The Communication strategy and plan for the NSS is being overseen by the Student Communication and Marketing Team, working with colleagues from the DSE Project Office, Students' Union and Internal Communications.

The main communications campaign and activity will run from **w/c 21 January** until the Easter break (**22<sup>nd</sup> March**).

A number of key messages for students have been defined – you can use these in any written or oral communications with students

- NSS opens on Monday 28 January
- For final year undergraduate students
- If eligible you will receive an email and other communications from Ipsos MORI.
- Take the survey online at [www.thestudentsurvey.com](http://www.thestudentsurvey.com)
- Your chance to give your opinion on your experience, including teaching, assessment and feedback and academic support.
- Take the survey early to avoid reminders
- Responses remain anonymous – an opportunity to express honest opinions
- NSS is supported and run in partnership with the Students' Union
- NSS is part of our commitment to listening to our students and improving the student experience
- Your responses will be used to make improvements and extend existing good practice
- Your feedback can make a real difference – the Alan Gilbert Learning Commons was built following student feedback on available study space [**Local examples of enhancements would be more appropriate here**]

## **Specific guidance for academic and student support staff**

For staff that regularly meet with students face to face, we have put together a separate information sheet on how you can support the survey, important points to make when talking to student about NSS, and important things to bear in mind. You can find this document here

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=15020>

## **Publicity and Promotional Material**

Below is a list of the available materials, together with suggestions as to how they can be used to promote the NSS to final year undergraduates.

Publicity material will also be distributed by the Student Communications and Marketing Team to central locations that have high student footfall, such as the Ask Me desk in University Place, the Students' Union, Sports Centres, Libraries and Student Services Centre.

Arrangements have also been made for eligible students to see a NSS box in the My Manchester student portal when they log in. Central IT computer clusters will also display the NSS slide on their screensavers.

## **Hard copy materials:**

**Posters** – please display these from **w/c 21 January** in prominent locations e.g. near entrances/in areas frequented by final year undergraduates/in any computer clusters or cafes located in your building. If you have specific social or study areas for students, these would be ideal.

The number of posters provided by Ipsos MORI is very limited, so you may feel that you have insufficient for your needs. If you would like to print additional posters you will find the artwork available for download on the website detailed in 'Online materials' below.

**Flyers** – We are working with the SU to involve Student Reps in promoting the NSS, but it is also worth engaging with them and encouraging them to support the campaign. They can help by handing out flyers at final year lectures (this would be more effective than simply leaving them on counters or around buildings) and through lecture shout outs – and may well have other creative suggestions.

**Online materials:** (download from <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/student-experience/nss/promoting/>)

**Banners** - Please add to School intranets/websites as appropriate. These can also be added to email signatures – but please remember to remove them once the NSS finishes.

**Screensavers** - These could be loaded onto machines in School managed computer clusters.

**Plasma Screen Display-** A slide suitable for display on plasma screens will be available for those who have access to such a screen in their School/Building.

**Logo** - You are welcome to create additional publicity material of your own devising (**although please read the section below on neutral promotion**), and a logo is included for you to use for this purpose – the only stipulation is you should not manipulate or change the logo.

**Powerpoint presentation** - Directed at students the presentation gives additional information about the survey, its purpose, who is eligible and how they can access it. It has been used in the past to e.g. make presentations to students in lectures or in meetings such as staff-student liaison meetings.

<p><b>NB:</b> space has been left in one of the slides for you to add examples of activities taking place in your School in response to the results of the NSS in 2012.</p>
---

### **Use of email to communicate with students**

Data acquired from promotion of the Student Barometer Survey in 2011 showed that sending an all-student email from 'The University' had limited impact.

There is also clear student feedback regarding the negative effect and low impact of sending multiple mass emails, and therefore the central University will not send a mass email to students eligible to participate in the NSS.

Schools are encouraged to use email channels to communicate with relevant students, but;

- target messages as precisely as possible (eg send messages to a final year group Listserv rather than one for the whole School)
- use this method sparingly to avoid 'bombarding'.

- try to ensure emails comes from a named person, preferably someone students will recognise, such as a student support officer, course leader or Head of School.

Please remember that on **28th or 29th January**, IPSOS Mori sends initial emails to students with a link to the online survey.

On **6th or 7th February 2013** they send a reminder email to those who have not yet responded.

**Good practice guidelines suggest that it may be advantageous for a School/local contact to communicate with students in advance of the survey launch, to let them know to expect the email and also the purpose of the survey.**

However, **between 28 January and 7 February**, we recommend your students don't get more than one additional email from their School / programme about the NSS, or this may begin to feel like bombarding.

Generally, one email a week from a School/programme during the NSS period would be proportionate – but to vary the content slightly, perhaps giving students an update on response rates, any local initiatives around NSS, examples of improvements that have been made previously from NSS, or asking for a final effort in the final days.

The full timetable of the communications that will be sent from Ipsos MORI can be found here: <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/student-experience/nss/timetable/>

You can find a suggested e-mail template at:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=15021>

Further advice may be obtained from the Student Communications Team – in the first instance please contact Alex Waddington, Student Communications Manager, on x 67998, or by email: [alex.waddington@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alex.waddington@manchester.ac.uk)

### **Incentives & Prize Draws**

There will not be a University-wide incentive scheme or prize draw for the NSS and we don't have any way for students to verify to us that they have completed the survey in order, for example, to enter a local prize draw.

There is also evidence that prize draws can be ineffective as a way of increasing response rates, although offering something for everyone who participates can be more effective (see example below).

If you want to offer a prize draw as an incentive, you will have to think creatively about how to link it with the NSS. For example, the School of Computer Science offers free pizza in return for attending a PC cluster and completing the survey - this approach could be extended to offering students who come to an event and complete the survey the opportunity to enter a prize draw. You – and your student reps – may have other ideas

***Please ensure that any incentive you offer a) does not compromise the neutrality of the survey and b) is equally available to all eligible students. (If you're not sure, please contact [Jenny Wragge](#) for advice).***

## **Working with Your Student Reps**

It has been shown that enlisting the support of student reps and students' unions to promote the NSS is one of the best ways to promote the survey.

Centrally we are working closely with SU to ensure reps are made aware of the NSS. But why not hold a meeting with your reps to tell them about your actions following 2012, and to involve them in planning and promotion for 2013?

In 2012, one school increased response rate from 73% to 86% through a successful partnership with reps, which saw the reps using their student-led Facebook groups and Twitter accounts to engage with students and promote the survey.

## **Other ways you can help**

The support and encouragement of the student's school/programme team and individual lecturers/tutors has been shown to be highly influential in achieving a high level of response to the National Student Survey.

**Please ensure that academic colleagues in your School are aware of the survey and encourage them to promote it to final year undergraduates.**

We have developed a short guidance note to academic colleagues indicating how they can help to promote the NSS which you may find useful. Feel free to adapt it to your local circumstances as appropriate. You can download it from

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=15020>

The following strategies have also been found to be effective

- announcements in final year lectures
- giving final year undergraduates time in class to complete the survey (if they are working at computers connected to the internet);
- sending final year undergraduates personalised emails from known, named people (eg Course Leaders or Heads of School) asking for student support and help in filling out the survey.

## **How you discuss the NSS with students**

When you discuss the NSS with students, ***remind them that responses are anonymous, and they should feel free to express their honest opinions.***

**CAUTION - it is crucial that local survey promotion is neutral and that:**

- Students are targeted equally so that each eligible student is given a chance to express their views on their student experience
- Students feel free to give honest feedback about their experiences without their responses being influenced by their institution
- Students must not be asked to complete the survey while a member of staff is overseeing their responses, or made to feel that their responses are being monitored (eg of completing the questionnaire online in a dedicated room).
- Students must not be encouraged to reflect in their answers anything other than their genuine perceptions of their experience

- Any promotional materials that are produced locally **in addition** to those provided by Ipsos MORI should be checked for appropriateness by a senior member of staff – please contact [Jenny Wragge](#) for guidance, if in any doubt.
- No link between the NSS, league tables and the perceived value of students' degrees should be made in any promotional materials, targeted emails or lecture 'shout outs'

**You may wish to explain that:**

- The results are usually presented in headlines which state the percentage of students who are satisfied – e.g. 70% of students are satisfied with their overall student experience at University X
- It would be reasonable to infer from this headline that 30% of students are dissatisfied with their overall student experience at University X, but the remaining 30% also includes those students who answered with a neutral '3'
- So, in effect, answers of 1, 2 **and** 3 equate to dissatisfied, and answers of 4 and 5 equate to satisfied.

**Remember to keep your information factual and avoid attempting, or appearing to attempt, to influence the way that students answer the questions.**

**Weekly Response Updates:** Once the survey is underway, Ipsos MORI will provide weekly reports to the DSE Project Office, which is co-ordinating the University's participation in the NSS, about how the responses are progressing in each subject area.

This will be distributed to key School contacts by email so that you can see if any further publicity is required in your area – please feel free to contact the Student Communications Team on x67998 or email [alex.waddington@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alex.waddington@manchester.ac.uk) if you want further advice, help and guidance on doing this.

Jenny Wragge  
**Directorate for the Student Experience**  
jenny.wragge@manchester.ac.uk, x52088  
[www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students)