



Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

The Scottish HE Data Landscape

An overview of: International Student Barometer (ISB)

Type and scope of the data

The ISB is an online survey conducted by iGraduate that measures the student experience of all international students across the university. The ISB measures student perceptions and satisfaction in the following areas: the decision-making and application process, enquiry to acceptance process, arrival and orientation, the learning experience, the living experience, support services, and recommendation. The data is presented via an online platform and can be filtered by study area, department, demographics, study level, study mode and study type (for example, student exchange, study abroad). Students can also supply free-text comments in response to each section.

Time period of data renewal

The ISB is conducted twice a year, and universities can choose whether to participate in the autumn, with data available in December/January, or in summer, with data available in June/July.

Questions that the data can help to explore or answer

The ISB is a global survey so institutions can benchmark against UK institutions and worldwide, as well as a custom comparator group. The data can be used to evaluate and enhance the international student experience (for example: Do certain faculties have higher satisfaction scores than others? Is there a difference in satisfaction between undergraduates and postgraduates? Were first-year students satisfied with the arrival and orientation process?). The data can be used to inform recruitment and retention strategies as well as develop targeted communications to prospective students.

Important caveats, exclusions etc.

Currently only seven Scottish universities participate so Scottish benchmarking is limited. Universities can choose to start later in the wave and only have their survey open for a certain period of time, but the end date will be fixed. As an external provider conducts the survey, there is a cost involved with participating. Universities should allow an adequate budget for this. Universities should also consider how they wish to deal with students at overseas campuses/franchise arrangements and so on, as this may affect how results are reported.

Publications/analyses which use the data

Positive results typically inform marketing messages, with individual universities issuing press releases. The iGraduate website also publishes university press releases.

Where to find the data and any further published analysis

The institutional contact can provide analyses of results. iGraduate also offer to come to your institution and provide a presentation to staff members on the findings.