



Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

The Scottish HE Data Landscape

An overview of: National Student Survey (NSS)

Type and scope of the data

The National Student Survey (NSS) is an annual survey which gives final-year higher education students the opportunity to provide feedback about their experience on their course. Students are asked to respond to 27 questions covering eight different aspects of the student experience.

Time period of data renewal

The NSS is run annually between January and April with results typically being publicly available in early August.

Questions that the data can help to explore or answer

The National Student Survey (NSS) gathers students' opinions on the quality of their courses. The purpose of this is to contribute to public accountability and to help inform the choices of prospective students by allowing them to compare satisfaction rates at universities in any of the student experience aspects which are important to them.

Within universities, the results are used by senior management teams, academics, students' unions and others to drive improvements in curriculum, teaching and learning quality, learning resources and academic support.

Important caveats, exclusions etc.

The NSS questionnaire was changed in 2017 after a two-year review, meaning there are issues with comparing results from this point onwards with those published previously.

There are publication thresholds which can lead to no data being displayed in results even though students have been surveyed (there has to be at least 10 student responses and a 50 per cent overall response rate).

Publications/analyses which use the data

UK league tables, the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), Scottish Outcome Agreements and the Unistats website.

Where to find the data and any further published analysis

Office for Students website: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/get-the-nss-data/>