# **National Student Survey 2018 - FAQs for Staff**

**When does the NSS start and how long does it run for?**

The NSS opens on 8 January and closes on 30 April 2018.

**Who is eligible?**

All final year undergraduates will be invited to respond to the survey, unless they have taken it previously or been at UCL for less than half of their academic career.

**What does the NSS measure?**

The NSS is a survey of student experience that presents respondents with a series of 27 statements to respond to on a scale (definitely agree, mostly agree, neither agree nor disagree, mostly disagree, definitely disagree, not applicable). The questions can be found [on the HEFCE website](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/2016/CL,302016/CL2016_30ab.pdf), and cover the areas of Teaching, Learning Opportunities, Assessment and Feedback, Academic Support, Organisation and Management, Learning Resources, Learning Community and Student Voice, as well as a question on overall satisfaction with the course.

**Can the students opt out of the survey if they want to?**

Yes they can. We will write to them in November to let them know about the survey and give them a chance to opt out if they want to. They can also opt out themselves on [the NSS website](http://www.thestudentsurvey.com).

**How will the students be surveyed?**

The fieldwork begins in January, and is carried out across all UK universities by the polling company, Ipsos MORI. They begin by emailing students with an invitation, and in late February will start the telephone stage of the survey if 50% has not yet been reached. The students can be telephoned up to 10 times if they don’t respond, so an early response is always best!

**Is there a minimum response rate we should achieve?**

Ipsos MORI will keep contacting the students until 50% response rate has been achieved. This is both at the institution level and within each department and programme. If 50% and 10 responses are not reached, data will not be provided at that level.

**Are there any incentives for the students this year?**

The Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) has kindly agreed to fund a reward scheme for departments in this year’s NSS which is intended to benefit the students taking part and encourage them to complete the survey. All departments achieving at least a 65% response rate will receive a reward for their students between £250 and £1,500, depending on department size. The money could be spent on a party or other social occasion for the students, a donation to the student society, or other ideas (departments are encouraged to meet with the students to decide what to spend the money on). Please note that students are not able to donate this money to charity. Prizes will be awarded quickly in order to ensure that the students taking part in this year’s survey benefit.

**How can I get my students to take the survey?**

There are a number of things you can do. Each department has an NSS Liaison Officer to promote the survey to students and to liaise with the Student Engagement team on important survey communications. If you’re unsure who your NSSLO is [you can find out here](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/student-engagement/survey-liaison-officers). The NSS liaison officers organise various activities and events for the students, put up posters, speak to them directly, send emails, engage the student society and organise lecture shouts. Research by HEFCE has found that students are most likely to take a survey if asked by someone they know personally, such as a peer or lecturer.

**One of my students has left UCL, can I remove them from the survey?**

Unfortunately not. HEFCE deem the following to be acceptable reasons for removing a student from the sample:

* The student is deceased
* Student has chosen to opt out of the survey themselves\*
* Student is suffering from serious health problems such that taking the survey would be distressing to them
* Student has deferred their studies and now finishes next year;
* Student has repeated a year and now finishes next year.

**When will we get the results?**

The UCL results come out on 1 August, and other institutions reports and the student comments are released in stages during August. UCL headlines will be circulated immediately, and department and programme level data, along with the student comments, will be sent to departments as part of their ASER package in early September.

**How are the results used?**

The results are used within UCL to drive change in the student experience through local initiatives within departments, through the Annual Student Experience Review (ASER) process, and institution-wide changes including (in recent years) *more study space, longer library opening hours, scrapping graduation ticket fees and longer appointments in the careers service.* [to be updated]

[The ASER process](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c6/aser/purpose), which includes looking at average attainment and graduate destinations data, helps departments to target areas for improvement with support from the Office of the Vice-Provost (Education) and the [UCL Arena Centre.](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/about-us/arena-centre)

The results are also used externally in the Key Information Set and some league tables. This means that the results can influence the decisions of prospective students about what and where to study.

**How can I find out what students said last year?**

[On our website](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/student-engagement/student-surveys-results/nss) – there are reports for every department available with a staff login. There is also lots of information on feedback from surveys and how we are using the survey results to drive change on our student engagement webpages, [You Shape UCL.](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/you-shape-ucl/surveys-results-and-info) If there’s anything you can’t locate please contact the [Student Engagement team](mailto:c.lantos@ucl.ac.uk).

**What about other students?**

There is a similar survey for all postgraduate taught students, the [Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/student-engagement/student-surveys-results/ptes), which runs between April and June each year, and one for research students called the [Postgraduate Research Experience Survey](http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/survey/) (PRES) which runs biennially. The next round of PRES will be in 2019. We also run a survey for all new students, [New to UCL.](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/student-engagement/student-surveys-results/new-to-ucl)

**How does the NSS link to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)?**

From 2017, average NSS scores for the Teaching, Assessment and Feedback, and Academic Support sections of the survey have been used alongside other institutional data to inform our TEF rating (UCL was awarded a silver TEF rating in 2017). In future years, the TEF will also be used at subject level. ***The TEF outcomes will NOT be linked to any change in tuition fees.***

**Why weren’t UCL’s results included in the National League tables and Unistats in 2017?**

UCL did not meet the required minimum threshold for inclusion in the league tables in 2017, except for certain subject areas which were included in subject level league tables. Please contact us if you are unsure whether your subject results were published this year.

**What is a JACS subject?**

JACS means Joint Academic Coding System. It is a way of grouping programmes together by subject area (i.e. Medicine) and comparing like with like when comparing to other institutions. Results in leagues tables are published in this JACS subject categories. For a list of the JACS subjects at UCL and how our programmes are grouped, please contact the [Student Engagement team](mailto:r.allen@ucl.ac.uk).