National Student Survey 2019 - FAQs for Staff

When does the NSS start and how long does it run for?
The NSS opens on 7 January and closes on 30 April 2019.

Who is eligible?
All final year undergraduates will be invited to respond to the survey, unless they have taken it previously or have been at UCL for less than two years.

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. The questions can be found here, 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.

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. Ipsos begin by emailing students with an invitation on 10 January, and on 25 January will commence reminder phone calls to students who have not completed their survey by this point. Staff are welcome to mention this to students in order to provide an impetus for students to complete their questionnaire.

Is there a minimum response rate we should achieve?
The threshold for publication of results is a 50% response rate, with over 10 responses. This applies at university-wide, department and programme level. Ipsos MORI will keep contacting the students who have not responded until a 50% response rate has been achieved.

Are there any incentives for the students this year?
The Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) has agreed to fund a reward scheme for departments in this year’s NSS. The incentive is intended to benefit the students taking part and encourage them to complete the survey. All departments achieving at least a 70% response rate and a minimum of 10 students, will receive a reward for their students between £250 and £1,500, depending on the size of the department’s NSS-eligible cohort.

The money could be spent on a party or other social occasion for the students, a donation to the student society, or other ideas. How the money is spent must be decided on in collaboration with your students. Prizes will be awarded quickly in order to ensure that the students taking part in this year’s survey benefit. Please note that students are not able to donate this money to charity, due to UCL’s own charitable status.

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. The NSS Liaison Officers organise various promotional activities:

✓ Drop-in sessions for students to complete the survey
✓ The hanging of posters and promotional material
Departmental social media campaigns
Promotional emails around the department, for instance focussing on progress towards the 70% response rate threshold for the NSS incentive
Engaging the student society to promote the survey to their peers

It has previously been noted that students are most likely to take a survey if asked by someone they know personally, such as a peer (perhaps a Student Academic Representative) or lecturer.

**Are there any restrictions on how we can promote the survey?**

Yes. The Office for Students is active in guarding against Inappropriate Influence, whereby universities explicitly or implicitly influence students to give responses that are not genuine. As such, staff should focus on promoting the survey as an opportunity for students to give open and honest feedback on UCL and their course.

It is fine to say that students’ responses can inform changes and improvements at UCL, and staff are welcome to give examples of previous improvements inspired by student feedback. Staff are also encouraged to remind students of the incentive scheme.

_Staff must not_, however:
- Link student responses to job prospects or the perceived value of their degree
- Make links between the NSS and league tables
- Advise students on how to interpret survey questions or scales of response

If an allegation of Inappropriate Influence is upheld, the consequences can include the suppression of results data at programme or university-wide level.

NSS Liaison Officers have been fully briefed on Inappropriate Influence rules, and staff can find more details on the regulation in the Office for Students' [Good Practice Guide](#).

**When will we get the results?**

The UCL results are released in late July. 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 Annual Student Experience Review (ASER) package in early September.

**How are the results used?**

The results are used within UCL to drive change and inform decision-making at university and departmental level. They are reviewed at the UCL Student Experience Committee (StEC) and form part of the Annual Student Experience Review (ASER) data package. The ASER process, helps departments to target areas for improvement, with support from the Office of the Vice-Provost (Education) and the UCL Arena Centre.

You can find examples of university-wide improvements on the You Shaped UCL landing page. Staff are encouraged to share these examples alongside department or programme-level changes when promoting the survey to eligible students.

The results are published externally on the Unistats website so prospective university students can make informed decisions on what and where to study.

**How can I find out what students said last year?** On our website – there are reports for every department available with a staff login. There is also information on feedback from surveys and how we are using the survey results to drive change on our student engagement webpages, You Shape UCL. If there’s anything you can’t locate, please contact the Student Engagement team.
What about other students?

There is a similar survey for all postgraduate taught students, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, which runs between April and June each year, and one for research students called the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) which runs biennially. The next round of PRES will be in 2019. New students at all levels are eligible to complete New to UCL.

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

The NSS questions which feed into the TEF framework are:

- Teaching on my course (questions 1-4)
- Assessment & Feedback (NSS questions 5-9)
- Academic Support (NSS questions 10-12)
- Learning resources (NSS questions 18-20)
- Student Voice (NSS questions 24-25)

UCL Student Reviewers, working in partnership with staff, will draw on the NSS results to inform the student contribution to TEF submissions at both institutional-level and subject-level.

The TEF outcome is not linked to tuition fees.

If you require further details about the TEF, please contact: student.engagement@ucl.ac.uk