Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) Liaison Officer Guidance Pack and Toolkit 2020

(Updated 5 May 2020)

Contents

Key information

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is a national survey, co-ordinated by Advance HE. It is carried out by UCL on the Jisc survey platform and opens on 18 May 2020, closing 15 June.

The Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) has decided to run the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) despite the exceptional nature of the times that we are living through. With the switch to remote teaching, it is important that we continue to listen to the student voice.

The team will do its very best to ensure that the 2020 PTES campaign will not add to the upheaval you are already experiencing.

To ease the demand on UCL's faculties and departments, PTES 2020 will open at a slightly later date of Monday 18 May.

Each department will have a designated PTES Liaison Officer (PTESLO) whose role is to:

- Encourage student participation in the PTES within departments or other academic units (e.g. divisions, schools, inter-departmental programmes etc.).

- Ensure staff awareness of the survey and involvement in promotional activity.

- Liaise with Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) Student Partnership team in coordinating PTES promotional activity.

- Receive the weekly response rate update from the Student Partnership team and consider the suggested promotional activities.

- Share any examples of promotional good practice for further transmission across UCL.

- Provide feedback at the end of the survey to the team on the PTESLO role and PTES survey.

All postgraduate taught students (all Master's programmes, PGCE, PGDip, PGCert, but **excluding** MRes) will be sent an email on 18 May inviting them to take the survey through their own unique link within the email. Students can also log in to the survey by going to the general link and logging in with their student number and a password which is their date of birth (i.e. 01051990). This means you can forward them a general link to the survey for them to input their own logins.

The survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete and covers all aspects of academic life at UCL. You can see a copy of the survey questions on our student surveys webpage.

The Student Partnership team will be promoting the survey via emails directly to students, an electronic campaign, articles in the staff and student news, and through social media. We will send four reminder emails in the survey window (dates below). Reminder emails only go to PTES-eligible students who have not yet completed the survey.

As in 2019, UCL is running a prize draw for all students who complete the PTES, in which they are automatically entered into a draw for:

- A £500 cash jackpot, or;
- One of 150 £10 Amazon vouchers

UCL's headline results along with benchmarking against other institutions will be available in early-mid August, once published by Advance HE. Detailed scores at faculty, departmental and programme level will be circulated in late August.

In recognition of excellent results and widespread student participation, representatives from UCL's best-performing departments will be invited to a celebratory reception with the Provost and the Vice-Provost for Education and Student Affairs once UCL's campus reopens.

PTES 2020 Key Dates

Date	Activity
6 March	Student lists sent to PTESLOs for checking
20 April	Deadline for changes to student lists
18 May	Survey opens, email invitation sent to students
26 May, 1 June	Reminder emails to eligible students
10 June	Final reminder email
15 June	Survey closes
Early-mid August	UCL overall results circulated
Late August	Department results and comments circulated

Check-list of actions for the PTESLO to undertake for the PTES

☑ Check through the Excel list of eligible students sent by Sarah Grossman on Friday 6 March. This list comes directly from Portico so any changes to the source data need to be communicated directly to Portico Services. The Student Partnership team can <u>only</u> change the list of students going into the survey. If you want to exclude whole cohorts from the survey (such as distance learners) please let us know. This will require written confirmation from the Head of Department and agreement with the Dean.

☑ Arrange for posts on the departmental website, Unitu page or Moodle forum publicising the PTES.

☑ Receive the weekly response rate update and liaise with Student Partnership team to take action to improve it as necessary.

☑ Encourage lecturers/tutors to ask students to participate in the PTES and explain that they have a key role in communicating with their students about the survey. Key points for lecturers are provided below.

☑ Consider adding the PTES and the previous year's reports as items for the Departmental Teaching Committee (DTC) or equivalent and the Staff Student Consultative Committee (SSCC).

☑ Encourage the Student Academic Representatives and student societies to promote the survey (the reward scheme should be useful for this). Consider the use of social media, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook etc. This was highly effective in some departments in the NSS campaign, particularly when student groups took this on.

☑ Remind Heads of Department, programme directors etc. to send an email message to students.

☑ Help ensure student awareness that the PTES is used with other forms of feedback to inform UCL strategy and enhance the student experience.

Other suggestions and good practice

- Introduce the PTES to students in a virtual meeting with the Head of Department or other senior departmental figures (such as a Departmental Tutor or equivalent). This could take place in a pre-existing meeting such as a briefing on essay and revision techniques, careers advice and/or as part of Personal Tutoring meetings.

- Email each student individually with a personal appeal to take the survey. One department achieved an 85% response rate in the second week using this approach. Research shows that students are most likely to take a survey if asked to do so by someone they know, such as a lecturer, personal tutor or programme lead.

- Provide an incentive beyond UCL's cash prize draw, such as a departmental prize draw of a book voucher or similar alternative when a certain response rate is achieved. A list of who has taken the survey can be obtained from the Student Partnership team at any time.

- Ask lecturers to promote the survey for you. Include examples of the way surveys have changed things for the better across UCL ([see examples here](#)) and in your department in the past. Explain how important the survey is to your department and how the students can find out results once published.

- Involve your department's Student Academic Representatives. Some students may pay particular attention to student feedback opportunities promoted by their peers. Student Reps could use their networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, class group chats or Moodle) to spread awareness of the PTES.

* Please let the Student Partnership team know of any other activities that perform well in encouraging PTES completions, and we will pass it on as an example of good practice.

Publicity tools

1) Electronic publicity material

The following items will be available on the [Teaching & Learning Portal](#) for you to download:
- Email footer – to add to your email signature.
- Web graphics of various sizes – to use on web pages or social media sites. Please [contact us](#) if you'd like to request an image in a specific dimension.

2) Lecturers' PTES notes - List of key points to inform students about the PTES

Key messages to students

- The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey is running this term from 18 May to 15 June.

- Honest feedback is valued by UCL as it helps the university identify what has impressed postgraduate students, as well as what can be improved.

- UCL uses the results, along with other student feedback, to inform strategy and enhance the student experience. You can see examples of changes inspired by feedback on the [You Shaped UCL pages](#).

- Results are fed back to departments (or equivalent) and faculties, and considered by senior management and the main UCL academic committees.

- The PTES has 30 questions covering all aspects of the academic experience at UCL. Most are scale questions, some are multiple choice, and there are opportunities to comment.

- Responses to the survey are anonymised, but students should take care not to identify themselves or anyone else in their comments.

- The PTES should take 10-15 minutes to complete, and students are automatically entered into a prize draw for £500 when they complete their questionnaire.

3) Suggested text for HoDs (or equivalent) email message to send to students

NB: It would be helpful if this email could be sent to the relevant students on a different day than the Student Partnership team's scheduled reminder emails. This will help space out the number of emails received by students and avoid over-contacting them.

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2020

Dear [*student name - it helps to personalise this email where possible*],

UCL is currently conducting a survey for all postgraduate taught students to give feedback on their experiences of their programme and the institution. This survey is now open and you can complete it at https://ucl.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/ptes2020 using your user ID, and your date of birth as your password (all instructions are on the login page).

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is a nationwide survey that provides an excellent opportunity for you to share opinions on the quality of your course and on UCL. Your answers and comments are anonymous, and will be used to drive improvements in at departmental and university-wide level. In response to last year's survey, the [*department / division / school name*] has made the following changes:

- [*Example…*]
- [*Example…*]
- [*Example…*]

This year, UCL will be running a prize draw giving away 150 £10 Amazon vouchers and a £500 cash prize.

I hope you can find 15 minutes to complete the survey, and help us keep continue to build an inspirational student experience.

Yours sincerely,
[*Etc.*]

4) **Social media**

We suggest that you use Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram to reach your students (tweet template below). Keep your posts short and easy to follow, or you can retweet or re-post from the main UCL accounts, which will also be promoting the survey.

Tweet template

"We're asking postgrad taught students to tell us what they think of their @UCL experience now in the PTES survey [link]. Take part & win up to £500"

Response rates

The Student Partnership team will email all PTESLOs and heads of departments weekly with an update on the response rates at department, programme and faculty level. You should monitor these and work on improving them where necessary. **Any cohort (department or programme) that achieves fewer than five responses won't receive results at that level of granularity.** This is to ensure a minimum standard of data reliability.

The student surveys team can provide you with a list of the students in your department or programme who have not yet taken the PTES at any point. You can then contact them with a reminder email asking them to complete the survey, potentially using the template included in this guide.

Results

Results of the survey will be analysed and <u>overall UCL results</u> circulated to the Provost, Vice-Provosts, Deans, Faculty Tutors, Vice-Deans of Education, Heads of Department and colleagues in central and professional services in August.

Individual departments will receive results down to programme-level (provided sufficient responses are received i.e. **at least five responses)**, and these reports along with benchmarking with the Russell Group and sector will be circulated in August.

We encourage departments to share results with your students, discuss them in Staff-Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs) and publish what you will be changing as a result. PTES results also feature in the data set for the [Annual Student Experience Review (ASER)](#) in each UCL department.

Results (without the student comments) will be uploaded to the [Teaching and Learning Portal](#) and to the [You Shape UCL](#) webpages for students to download.

Contact

Any questions? Contact Thomas McMahon t.mcmahon@ucl.ac.uk or the team at student.engagement@ucl.ac.uk