# UCL Student Surveys policy

**Context**

UCL uses a variety of institution-wide and local surveys to obtain feedback from its students. Whilst some feed into the governance structure, others do not and are used to identify issues within a specific area e.g. IT provision. Although surveys are a tried and tested method of obtaining student feedback, response rates can be low.

UCL would like to avoid/eliminate the situation faced by it and other universities where:

* Students suffer ‘survey fatigue’ i.e. a lack of proportionality and an excess of surveys, and the possibility that the same or similar questions are being asked of the same students more than once, leading to falling response rates;
* Questionnaires are poorly designed, with poorly worded questions, unlikely to produce good quality information;
* Surveys produce results which are invisible to anyone except the initiators of the survey;
* It is not always clear that a survey is the best method of capturing student opinion;
* Any evidence of feedback to the students about what was found and what actions will follow, is patchy.

**Current centrally administered institution-wide surveys at UCL**

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| **Month** | **Survey** | **Frequency** | **Eligible students** | **Administered by** |
| November to December | New to UCL Survey | Annual | All new students | Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) |
| January to April | National Student Survey | Annual | All final year undergraduates | Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) |
| March to April | UCL Student Experience Survey | Annual (\*Pilot 2017) | Penultimate year undergraduates | Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) |
| March to June | Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey | Annual | All postgraduate taught students | Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) |
| March to June | Postgraduate Research Experience Survey | Biennial | All postgraduate research students | Doctoral School |
| Six months post graduation (April: postgrads; January: undergrads) | Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey | Annual | All recently graduated students (UG; PGT; PGR) | UCL Careers |

**The policy**

1. The content and timings of the above surveys are to be reviewed on an annual basis by the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs);
2. No institution-wide surveys should take place at the same time as the NSS, New to UCL Survey, UCL Student Experience Survey, the PTES or the PRES (with the exception of the PTES and PRES which will run concurrently every other year);
3. Any additional surveys above Faculty level (e.g. School level, or institution-wide) may only be run if the following can be demonstrated:
   * There are no alternative ways of obtaining feedback such as focus groups, exit polls from specific events, surveying students as they wait in line for a particular service, online polls via Moodle of <= 5 choices;
   * Any new survey is not duplicating questions from other surveys, unless unavoidable or asking for information which could be gained from other sources e.g. analytics of library borrowing habits;
   * Any information being sought could not be obtained by the addition of questions to existing UCL-wide surveys. Information on how to request this can be found at [www.ucl.ac.uk/studentsurveys](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studentsurveys);
   * Where duplication of questions is identified, those proposing to initiate the surveys aim to consolidate their work, reducing the overall number of surveys and increasing response rates;
   * Any survey must consider who it is going to, what questions will be asked and how the results will be used, and if asked, the onus on the surveyor to demonstrate a clear plan for feedback of the results to the student community.
4. In addition, all such surveys must be registered with the Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) via [student.surveys@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:student.surveys@ucl.ac.uk).
5. Ownership of the policy will sit with the Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).