

National Student Survey 2026

Date: 23 October 2025

Reference: Medr/2025/26

To: Governing bodies and heads of regulated and / or funded higher education institutions in Wales
Student representative bodies for higher education in Wales

Respond by: 28 November to Ipsos via the [NSS extranet](#)

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Summary

This publication contains arrangements for the National Student Survey 2026 and the actions required from providers. The NSS extranet contains full details on data submission.

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1. This publication contains arrangements for the National Student Survey 2026 (Table 1), and the actions required from providers (Table 2). The [NSS extranet](#) contains full details on data submission.

Table 1: Survey timetable

Date	Action
22 October 2025	Ipsos to issue NSS 2026 set-up guide and good practice guide to providers
07 January 2026	NSS will launch
08 January 2026	NSS fieldwork opens
30 April 2026	NSS fieldwork closes
08 July 2026	Provisional date for publication of results

Table 2: Summary of actions required from providers

Date	Action
28 November 2025	Review and update NSS contact details
28 November 2025	Complete 'my survey options' form
28 November 2025	Submit NSS 2026 sample templates with contact details of eligible students

National Student Survey 2026

2. This publication sets out the arrangements for the National Student Survey (NSS) 2026 and the actions required from participating providers. The [full publication](#) and supporting documentation is available through the [NSS extranet](#).
3. The NSS is a UK-wide survey undertaken by final year higher education students to give feedback on their courses. The survey is managed by the Office for Students (OfS) on behalf of the four UK funding and regulatory bodies.
4. The survey also provides information for prospective students to help them find the right course and provides data that supports universities and colleges to improve the student experience.
5. The survey will be delivered on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies by:
 - Ipsos, which will administer the survey
 - CACI Limited, which will deliver the data dissemination portal for providers
6. The survey is a key component of the quality assurance and wider regulatory landscape in Wales. Participation is compulsory for higher education providers that are regulated or funded by Medr. This is to ensure that the views of diverse student populations are represented and that providers have regard to their [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) duties to advance equality of opportunities, eliminate unlawful discrimination, foster good relations and promote equality.

The 2026 Survey

7. For 2026, the NSS questionnaire will be the same as the NSS 2025. The survey will be delivered across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The freedom of expression question will be asked to students who study in England only and the overall satisfaction question will be asked to students in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland only. The UK funding and regulatory bodies ran a shorter fieldwork pilot in NSS 2025 alongside the standard fieldwork schedule to test an approach to mitigate the risk of any drop in NSS response rates. The OfS are considering the findings from the pilot and how to handle a shorter survey fieldwork period going forward. The shorter survey period is anticipated to start in the 2027-28 academic year for all providers, to accommodate a later sign-off date for the student return. However, for NSS 2026 we are continuing with the normal fieldwork schedule.
8. The OfS also ran the sexual misconduct survey, in England only, using the NSS 2025 platform. An analysis of the survey results and sector-level data were [published](#) in September 2025.
9. The full list of NSS 2026 questions and response scales can be found in an Appendix of the [OfS publication](#).
10. Ipsos administers the survey on behalf of the OfS and Medr. It is responsible for contacting students, contributing towards promoting the survey and providing cleansed data to the OfS and funding bodies.
11. As part of its role, Ipsos will liaise directly with providers regarding survey administration and will support the running of the survey by:
 - offering guidance on the specifics of the survey programme, such as start week, selecting optional questions and provider-specific questions
 - for providers promoting the survey:
 - supplying NSS-branded marketing materials and advising providers on the production of their own materials.
 - facilitating provider incentive schemes to encourage students to take part in the survey.
12. Further information about marketing and promoting the survey is provided in the [good practice guide](#) from Ipsos.
13. Providers will be invited to select one of five weeks when Ipsos can launch the survey to their students. There will be no communication from Ipsos with students outside of the times agreed with individual providers.

Survey promotion and response monitoring

14. Providers in Wales are required to promote the survey to students. We expect providers promoting the survey to ensure they avoid any [inappropriate influence](#) and adhere to the [guidance](#) on marketing and promoting of the NSS.

15. During survey fieldwork, responses will be monitored, and targeted follow-up is carried out to ensure that publication thresholds are met. In early March, in addition to the targeted follow-up, all providers that are at risk of not meeting the publication threshold will be put into the booster phase, which results in additional email reminders and an additional SMS to their non-responding students. The booster phase will start automatically if a provider's response rate is below 43 per cent by mid-March and will continue for some until mid-April. The fieldwork timetable is set out in the Ipsos set-up guide for providers which is available on the Ipsos [NSS extranet](#).

Survey costs

16. Medr will cover the costs of the survey for eligible providers in Wales.

Survey timetable

17. The survey will run as noted in Table 3.

Table 3: Survey timetable

Date	Action
22 October 2025	Ipsos to issue NSS 2026 set-up guide and good practice guide to providers
07 January 2026	NSS will launch
08 January 2026	NSS fieldwork opens
30 April 2026	NSS fieldwork closes
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18. Results will be published on the OfS website on **08 July 2026** at **0930**. Detailed results will be disseminated to individual providers through the NSS data dissemination portal provided by CACI Limited on **08 July 2026** at **0930**. The publication and dissemination of the NSS 2026 results depends on final agreement from the UK funding and regulatory bodies following the quality review of the data.
19. NSS results at course level will be published on the [Discover Uni](#) website.

Actions for providers for NSS 2026

20. All participating providers are asked to carry out the actions outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Actions required from providers

Date	Action
28 November 2025	All eligible providers to review and update contact details for the nominated primary and secondary contacts for NSS liaison. The information should be supplied using the 'My details' form on the Ipsos NSS extranet .
28 November 2025	All eligible providers to complete the 'my survey options' form which asks providers to confirm; • their preferred NSS launch week • optional question sets • their involvement in any prize draws
28 November 2025	All eligible providers to submit their NSS 2026 sample templates with contact details of eligible students This is a list of all students eligible for NSS 2026, based on the 2024-25 student data. Details should be supplied via the 'Upload sample data' section of the Ipsos NSS extranet . Any proposed additions to or removals from the target list should follow the process set out by Ipsos.

21. All participating providers are asked to complete the above actions by 28 November 2025. Instructions on how to supply this information are included in the NSS 2026 set-up guide, which will be issued to provider contacts by Ipsos and is also available on the [Ipsos NSS extranet](#). The guidance includes information regarding survey administration, key responsibilities and dates.
22. Detailed guidance relating to NSS 2026 and the actions requested from all providers in Wales returning student data to the HESA can be found on in Appendix B of the [OfS publication](#).

Further support and contacts

Table 5: NSS contacts

Organisation	Email address	First point of contact for queries relating to
Ipsos	NSS@ipsos.com	The running of the survey, including: • Setting up and promoting the survey • Student target lists • Optional questions • Incentive schemes

Organisation	Email address	First point of contact for queries relating to
CACI Limited	NSS support team can be contacted via the Contact Support form on the NSS data portal	Providers' detailed results on the NSS data dissemination portal
Office for Students	NSS@officeforstudents.org.uk NSSAllegations@officeforstudents.org.uk	Areas such as: • NSS policy and development • Onward use of results • Allegations of inappropriate influence
Medr	LearnerEngagement@medr.cymru	Any other queries relating to the operation of the NSS in Wales

Medr

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