

Staff Briefing

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ACADEMIC STAFF TO PROMOTE THE NSS?

Around 40% of online respondents (that responded to the optional marketing question at the end of the online NSS survey) identified that they were told about the survey by a lecturer/member of staff.

Academic staff are often best placed to communicate the benefits and importance of the survey - they can communicate directly with students about how the results will be used by prospective students and how they will be/have been used to improve the student learning experience at the institution more generally. Their objectivity is crucial because of the way the results will be used by prospective students, institutions, SUs and other stakeholders.

INNAPROPRIATE INFLUENCE

Academic staff have a responsibility to ensure that their students are encouraged to give their honest feedback on their student experience in the NSS.

Students should not feel that they are being monitored or encouraged to answer the survey in a particular way.

Staff must not:

- Link responses to the NSS as having an impact on the institution's position in league tables

- Link responses to the NSS as having an impact on the value of students' degrees or their chances of employability
- Inaccurately represent the response scale to students i.e. defining the neither agree nor disagree as a negative response
- Compare the NSS scale to other scales with different purposes i.e. assignment marking schemes
- Explicitly instruct students on how to complete the survey, e.g. 'I recommend that you select agree or mostly agree'
- Look over students shoulders when they complete the survey
- Require students to provide evidence that they have completed the survey

WHICH STUDENTS TO COMMUNICATE WITH

Staff should take care to ensure that they are asking only eligible students to complete the survey. They should work with the relevant departments within their institutions to clearly understand which of their students are included in the NSS target list. They should understand the purpose of the NSS and clearly communicate to students that it is their opportunity to provide feedback.

RUNNING DEDICATED SESSIONS

Staff should be encouraged to run dedicated sessions where time is set aside to allow eligible students to

complete the survey. These sessions can be timed in line with the Ipsos MORI communications to utilise personal email links i.e. on Wednesday-Friday in the first two weeks of the survey.

However, sessions can be held at any time during the survey fieldwork. Students can log onto www.thestudentsurvey.com and select the option to 'Enter the Survey'.

Students should be encouraged to give their honest opinion. Please note that it is not good practice to appear to be 'standing over students'. Staff should make it clear that they are there to provide support on technical issues and not to monitor responses.

SENDING DEDICATED EMAILS

Communication from someone known to the student is an effective method of promotion that encourages students to participate. In sending emails to eligible students, staff should make it clear to students that the NSS provides an opportunity to give their feedback in an anonymous way. Staff should encourage completion online at via www.thestudentsurvey.com and acknowledge that the survey is independent of the institution.

Eligible students should not feel pressured to do the survey or that by not responding or responding in a certain way will in anyway impact on the value of their degree.

Staff should be aware of the impact of survey fatigue and time communications in a way that encourages participation rather than 'harass' students to complete the survey.