

## **Privacy Statement**

### **Who carries out the National Student Survey and why?**

The National Student Survey (NSS) is being carried out by Ipsos MORI, an independent research agency. Ipsos MORI is registered under the terms of the Data Protection Act and has a legal obligation to ensure that confidentiality of your personal information is maintained.

The NSS is carried out by Ipsos MORI but is commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). HEFCE is a non-departmental government body, which exercises certain statutory functions under the Further & Higher Education Act 1992 (FHE Act 1992). The NSS forms part of HEFCE's legal requirement under this Act to ensure the quality of higher education in the universities and colleges it funds.

HEFCE has also commissioned the survey on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DEL), the Teaching and Development Agency (TDA) for Schools and Skills for Health (SfH). These bodies will also use the survey results in the exercise of their statutory functions and HEFCE may share student information, or parts of it, with them.

HEFCE, HEFCW and DEL have a statutory role in ensuring the quality of teaching in higher education is assessed, and HEFCE and its partners believe that students' views should form an important part of the assessment. In addition, the National Union of Students (NUS) is a partner in the survey.

### **What is the purpose of the NSS?**

The NSS aims to assist future generations of higher education students in their key choices of what and where to study, by allowing them to see anonymous feedback on subjects and institutions. It surveys students at higher education institutions in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and some institutions in Scotland and students studying higher education courses in further education colleges. The higher education bodies, students' unions and the government have agreed that there should be a regular national survey of students to obtain their views on the quality of the teaching, assessment, and support experienced.

### **Student contact details**

HEFCE may, from time to time, engage other non-statutory bodies or agents to carry out functions on their behalf. HEFCE has appointed Ipsos MORI to carry out this survey. HEFCE has requested student contact details from higher education institutions and further education colleges to be passed to Ipsos MORI in order to be able to conduct this survey. HEFCE, the statutory authority, will retain control of any personal data transferred under contract with Ipsos MORI. For the purposes of the NSS Ipsos MORI is acting as survey agents on behalf of HEFCE. HEFCE has a data protection agreement in place with Ipsos MORI, which provides the necessary protection

under the law to protect students' information. For example, they are forbidden under contract with HEFCE from using the NSS data they have for any other purpose.

Student contact details and the results of the survey supplied in hardcopy form directly to HEFCE or any of its agents will be kept for a maximum of twelve months for audit purposes and will be destroyed at the end of that period.

Your personal data will be used only for the purposes of the NSS. When the survey is completed, all student contact details will be destroyed, and Ipsos MORI will remove all other student data from their computer systems and transfer it to HEFCE. HEFCE will retain this data for the purposes stated above.

### **Opting out of the survey**

A student can opt out of the survey at anytime, *but Ipsos MORI does ask that they provide verification of their identity (by confirming their date of birth) to ensure that the correct details are removed from the database.* It is important that students provide their date of birth to verify their identity so that the NSS provides robust data for potential students and their advisers to make informed choices. If a student opts out at any stage all personal information (contact details, date of birth etc) will be securely and permanently deleted and they will not be contacted by Ipsos MORI again.

### **Results of the survey**

HEFCE and the above bodies will use the results of the survey for the following purposes:

- To publish aggregated and anonymised results of the survey on the Unistats website ([www.unistats.com](http://www.unistats.com)). HEFCE will provide data to Hotcourses who work on behalf of UCAS Enterprises Ltd for this purpose.
- For statistical analysis. This may result in the release of data to other approved users, which may include academic researchers. HEFCE will retain control of the data under contract with such users or if that user is subcontracting, we will require they have the same controls. Reports will only present anonymised and aggregated data.
- To provide summary feedback to individual institutions and students' unions. This data will be provided to institutions and students' unions to help them identify how they can make improvements. This summary feedback will be aggregated and anonymised, ensuring no individual student can be identified. These results may include the text of any comments that students provide at the end of the questionnaire. This text will not be attributed to individuals and students are advised to avoid making comments that could enable them to be individually identified.

HEFCE or any of the above bodies will not use student records in a way that would affect individual students. HEFCE, the statutory authority, will retain control of any personal data transferred under contract with Ipsos MORI.

### **Additional Questions and Institution Specific Questions**

In 2010 some institutions will be asking their students additional institution-specific questions. This will be via the online methodology only. This will provide additional confidential feedback to institutions. HEFCE and the above bodies will use the information for the following purposes:

- To provide summary feedback to individual institutions and students' unions. This data will be provided to institutions to help them identify how they can make improvements.
- For statistical analysis. This may result in the release of data to other approved users, which may include academic researchers. HEFCE will retain control of the data under contract with such users or if that user is subcontracting, we will require they have the same controls. Reports will only present anonymised and aggregated data.
- This data will not be published via the Unistats site.

### **Making comments/complaints about the NSS**

Ipsos MORI, HEFCE and the above bodies are committed to continuously improving the NSS. Should you have a comment and/or complaint please contact Ipsos MORI at [thestudentsurvey@ipsos.com](mailto:thestudentsurvey@ipsos.com).

### **Your rights under the Data Protection Act 1998**

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 you have the right to a copy of the data held about you by HEFCE, for a small fee. If you have any concerns about the use of data for these purposes or would like a copy of the data supplied directly to us, please contact HEFCE by emailing [nss@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:nss@hefce.ac.uk), or by writing to the Data protection Officer, HEFCE, Northavon House, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QD.