Procedures for Implementing Student Evaluation of Teaching:

National Surveys

Purpose

1. These procedures provide guidance to staff at Newcastle University (the University) in relation to participation in national-level student surveys. They should be read in conjunction with the Policy on Student Evaluation of Teaching (the Policy).

Scope

2. These procedures apply to all national surveys in which the University participates. This includes the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), and International Student Barometer (ISB).

Surveys Timetable

3. National surveys work to a fixed timetable which the University is unable to control. However, some discretion is offered to the University around exact start and close dates for each survey within a specified time period. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) sets these fieldwork dates, in consultation with the relevant Academic Deans.

4. Fieldwork dates for the national surveys are as follows:

   NSS: Early February to end of April (annually)
   PTES: Mid-April to mid-June (annually)
   PRES: March to May (biennially)
   ISB: Mid-October to December (biennially)

   Specific dates for national surveys will be made available on the LTDS website at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/student/opinion/.

International Student Barometer (ISB)

5. The ISB is conducted by i-graduate. The ISB normally runs from October to December and asks European Union and international students in universities across the world about their course and learning experiences.

6. Eligible students include full-time and part-time EU and international students studying an undergraduate, taught or research postgraduate programme. The survey includes all students at the University’s main campus and Newcastle University London. It also includes study abroad and exchange students.

7. The survey does not include NU Medicine Malaysia (NUMed) or NU International Singapore (NUIS) students, or INTO Newcastle University or NU London pre-sessional English course participants. Regardless of where they are based, eLearning students are also not eligible to participate.

8. Students are contacted by i-Graduate and invited by email to take part in the survey.
National Student Survey (NSS)

9. The NSS is conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Office for Students (OfS) and is intended as a survey of final year undergraduates in the UK. It runs from early February to the end of April each year.

10. Eligible students include all those in their expected final year of study on courses leading to undergraduate credits or qualifications. The survey also includes students who have withdrawn from study during their final year as their feedback is considered equally valuable.

11. Students are contacted by Ipsos MORI and invited to take part in the survey. Ipsos MORI use a range of methods for contacting students including email, phone and post.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

12. The PRES is managed by Advance HE with fieldwork being carried out by LTDS. The University participates in the survey every other year, with the survey running from March to May. The PRES is a national survey which asks postgraduate research students in universities across the UK about their course and their learning experiences.

13. Eligible students include any research student on a doctoral or research master’s course.

14. Students receive an email from Student Surveys (studentsurveys@ncl.ac.uk) with a personalised link to complete the survey.

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

15. The PTES is managed by Advance HE with fieldwork being carried out by LTDS. The University participates in the survey every year, with the survey running from mid-April to mid-June. The PTES is a national survey which asks postgraduate taught students in universities across the UK about their course and their learning experiences.

16. Eligible students include full-time and part-time UK, EU, and international PGT students studying a programme of at least 60 credits, the greater part of which is at M level. Students at all campuses can participate, including those based at NUMed, NUIS and NU London. Study abroad and exchange students can take part, but eLearning students are not eligible. The University excludes all first year part-time students from the PTES, except when they are on a programme that is one year part-time only (e.g. PG Certificates). It also excludes students who are studying a single module only (e.g. CPD and occasional students).

17. Students will receive an email from Student Surveys (studentsurveys@ncl.ac.uk) with a personalised link to complete the survey.

Elements of Survey Activity

18. Running the surveys requires the following activities to take place:
   
   • Setting of target lists/identifying eligible cohort
   • Set up of survey and logistics
   • Promotion of survey
   • Evaluation of results
   • Closing the feedback loop
**Setting of target lists**

19. It is essential that the correct students are identified before the survey is set up and launched. Target lists are created by LTDS in collaboration with the Planning Office and confirmation of the eligible cohort is the responsibility of the Head of School and School Manager.

**Set up of survey and logistics**

20. Set up of the survey is carried out by external agencies for both NSS and ISB. LTDS set up and run the survey for PTES and PRES, with support from Advance HE. Any optional aspects (start dates, incentives etc) will be decided by the PVC (Education) with support from LTDS.

**Promotion of surveys**

21. Survey promotion is carried out at institutional level as well as locally. Central promotional activity will be carried out by LTDS; this will include information shared on Blackboard, the student homepage and campus messaging. LTDS will also liaise with Newcastle University Students’ Union (NUSU) to promote the surveys to students directly and via student representatives.

22. Academic units are expected to promote the surveys among their own students, using whichever methods they deem appropriate for communicating with their student cohorts. National surveys have response rate thresholds at the programme level as well as at subject level, and academic units should seek to engage their students and achieve as high a response rate as possible in order to ensure results are made available at each level. The LTDS website offers some guidance on boosting response rates in order to obtain valid results for student surveys.

23. Terms and conditions must accompany any survey where an incentive or other prize is offered for participating in the survey.

24. The NSS in particular has strict guidelines around promotion of the survey, relating to inappropriate influence and the need for students to be encouraged to participate honestly in the survey. All members of staff who are promoting the survey should be made aware of these guidelines, which are available on the LTDS website.

**Evaluation of results**

25. Results will be analysed by the Planning Office and presented either as spreadsheets at subject and programme level, or in Power BI. LTDS will carry out an overall analysis of institutional level results and prepare a report to be considered by University Education Committee (UEC) and Executive Board (EB). Academic units are responsible for evaluating their own survey results and identifying actions in response to student feedback. Survey results should be considered at Board of Studies (BoS) and Student Staff Committees (SSCs).

**Inappropriate Free Text Comments**

26. If a member of staff identifies feedback on an evaluation in the form of an anonymous open comment that they believe breaches the Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice, they are to inform their Director of Excellence in Learning and Teaching/Head of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (DELT/HELT). Should the member of staff prefer to approach a different person, the Head of School or
Faculty Dean could be informed. The DELT/HELT is responsible for establishing whether the anonymous open comment is inappropriate and is to make the decision for it to be removed.

27. Where a comment is deemed by the DELT/HELT to be inappropriate, they must communicate this to LTDS who will remove the comment from the master copies of free text comments where possible. LTDS retains an action log of removed anonymous open comments and will occasionally organise a central meeting to share approaches to cases. It is not possible to match responses to an individual student.

Closing the Feedback Loop

28. It is extremely important that the results of national surveys are shared with students, and that the student cohort is made aware of what is being done in response to their feedback. The timing and nature of this is at the discretion of each academic unit but all Schools are required to provide students with feedback on the results of national surveys and of any key actions being taken in response to the survey outcomes.

29. Table 2 below shows the different elements of survey activity and who is responsible for supporting each area.

Table 2: Timetable of national survey fieldwork

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<th>School Manager</th>
<th>DPD/PGR Director*</th>
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<th>LTDS</th>
<th>External provider (Ipsos MORI; i-Graduate; Advance HE)</th>
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<td>Setting of target lists</td>
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