

## **NSS Results Website Frequently Asked Questions**

If your query is not answered here feel free to get in touch with us, the National Student Survey Team at Ipsos MORI, at [nss@ipsos.com](mailto:nss@ipsos.com) or on 020 8861 8110.

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## **1. What is the NSS Results Website?**

The NSS Results Website is where you can view the NSS results for your own University or College, in much greater detail than will be publicly available. Your results are available to compare with other universities and colleges, and analyse your own institution's results by subject, by department, by age, by ethnicity, by gender and much more.

## **2. Who runs the National Student Survey?**

The National Student Survey is commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), on behalf of the funding bodies, and is conducted on their behalf by Ipsos MORI.

## **3. Where can I access a copy of the NSS questions?**

The National Student Survey questions, including the optional banks of questions and NHS practice placement questions, are available for download in English and Welsh, from the NSS Results Website. The links are located under the "Help" tab on the left-hand main menu.

## **4. What does 'HEI' refer to?**

HEI stands for Higher Education Institution.

In the data files, rows headed HEI refer to sector average scores taking into account all Higher Education Institutions.

## **5. What does 'FEC' refer to?**

FEC stands for Further Education College.

In the data files, rows headed FEC refer to sector average scores taking into account all Further Education Colleges.

## **6. What is FPE?**

FPE stands for full-person-equivalent.

Student numbers have been reported as full-person-equivalents i.e. a student studying a joint honours course is split evenly across the two subjects of qualification aim. Thus each respondent (regardless of whether full-time or part-time) always counts as a total of one across the analysis.

## 7. How are the different measures in the data files calculated?

### Calculation of mean scores:

The mean score is the average (weighted by FPE) of all responses excluding those who responded N/A.

The following values are assigned to student responses to calculate the mean score:

Definitely agree (5); Mostly agree (4); Neither (3); Mostly disagree (2); Definitely disagree (1).

See formula shown in cell C2

### Calculation of % agree scores:

The combined percentage of students responding “Definitely Agree” and “Mostly Agree”.

See formula displayed in cell C3

All details regarding the Survey method, can be found under the “Help” tab on the left-hand main menu.

	A	B	C
1		<b>1. Staff are good at explaining things.</b>	<b>Calculation</b>
2	<b>Mean score</b>	4	$= (B4*5+B5*4+B6*3+B7*2+B8*1)/SUM(B4:B8)$
3	<b>% Agree</b>	80	$= (B4+B5)/SUM(B4:B8)*100$
4	<b>(5) Definitely Agree Count</b>	92	
5	<b>(4) Mostly Agree Count</b>	533	
6	<b>(3) Neither Count</b>	9	
7	<b>(2) Mostly Disagree Count</b>	18	
8	<b>(1) Definitely Disagree Count</b>	0	
9	<b>(6) Not Applicable</b>	0	
10	<b>Population (headcount)</b>	1299	
11	<b>Number of Respondents (fpe)</b>	652	
12	<b>Number of Respondents (headcount)</b>	652	
13	<b>Response Rate</b>	56	$=B12/B10*100$

**8. The count of responses shown for ‘Definitely agree’ through to ‘Definitely Disagree’ sometimes exceed the total number of respondents shown. Why is this?**

This occurs when you view results for the groups of questions (e.g. The teaching on my course). Here, the count for example, for “Definitely Agree”, is the total number of responses for ‘Definitely Agree’ across all questions within the group of questions.

The “Number of Respondents” (headcount and fpe), is the total number of respondents to the questionnaire and is constant for each individual cohort. Hence, for a group of questions, the sum of the counts will exceed the “Number of Respondents” shown.

**9. What are the publication thresholds?**

A threshold of 10 respondents applies to the “My Institution Results” and “My Student Comments”. This data is therefore not statistically robust, and should be read with due caution.

A combined threshold of 23 respondents and 50% response rate applies to “Comparator Institutions”. Thresholds are based on absolute student headcounts (not FPEs).

These thresholds are set by HEFCE and the NSS Steering Group for the purpose of ensuring that the survey data published is useful to the user institutions. Data not meeting these thresholds can therefore not be released.

**10. Where can I view overall results for all institutions at whole-institution level?**

This data is located in the “Comparator Institutions” section of the website, which is located on the left-hand main menu.

**11. Why do the headcount and/or response rate figures sometimes differ from those shown on the response rate reports during the fieldwork period of the 2009 NSS?**

- a) A decision was taken in 2008, by HEFCE and the NSS Steering Group, that the default reporting of the data should be against the institution at which a student is taught (rather than registered) in order to correspond with Unistats’ publication of the results.
- b) After the fieldwork period closes, students which are determined to be ineligible for the NSS by HEFCE are removed from the dataset. This may therefore affect cohort sizes and response rates reported in the final data.

## **12. Where can I view data for all students registered at my institution?**

- a) The results are available under the “My Institution Results” tab on the left-hand menu. Select “Download My Institution’s 2009 Registered Results”.
- b) Use the “Conduct Custom Analysis” function in “My Institution Results” and “Comparator Institutions”. Here you can select the variables and institutions that you wish to see data for.

## **13. How are the various JACS subjects grouped, and how are the JACS subject levels related?**

The subjects are grouped according to JACS codes provided by HEFCE/HESA. For more details, please view the [JACS Subject Hierarchy](#) under the “Help” tab on the left-hand main menu.

## **14. Where can I find data disaggregated by all JACS subject level areas?**

These are available within Option 2 for “My Institution Results”, and Option 1 for “Comparator Institutions”.

## **15. Why can I not see data for some of our internal departments?**

- a) Results for departments with less than 10 respondents will not have their data published on the results website.
- b) The department codes are supplied on the sample at the start of the survey. Any students who were not assigned department codes will not have their data reported on the website by department.
- c) From 2008, students registered at English HEIs but taught at FECs are reported against the FEC itself. Click “Download My Institution’s 2009 Registered Results” to view results for such students.

## **16. How is it determined which students are taught elsewhere from the samples initially submitted from HEIs and FECs?**

HEFCE supplies this data to Ipsos MORI based on their algorithm determining which institution each student is taught at.

### **17. How can I grant access to other users of the website in my institution?**

The nominated NSS primary results contact from each institution is issued the super-user username and password. This primary contact is then able to create new users by selecting the “Create New Users” tab on the homepage main menu, and then the “Click here to add a new user” function. Once you have provided an email address for the new user, a unique username and password will then be sent to them.

### **18. How many users can I add?**

The NSS primary results contact may add up to 20 delegate users.

The NSS primary results contact concept is to ensure that one person within the institution is always aware of who has access to the data.

### **19. Is the NSS data made available in the public domain?**

The main purpose of the NSS results is to help prospective students and their advisors make informed choices of what and where to study. The results are made publicly available on Unistats.com at JACS subject levels 1, 2 and 3 for each institution where the publication threshold was met (i.e. 23 respondents per cohort combined with a response rate of 50%).

The following results are not made available on Unistats.com and can only be accessed at [www.ipsos-mori.com/nss/results](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/nss/results) :

- Your students’ responses to the qualitative question at the end of the survey *“Looking back on the experience, are there any particularly positive or negative aspects you would like to highlight?”*
- Your students’ responses to questions from the optional bank of questions
- Your students’ responses to the additional institution-specific question
- Your results reported using internal department codes.