

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL SURVEYS 2019

COVER SHEET

Action is required of the Committee as indicated below.

The Committee is asked to note the 2019 response rates for the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.

**A) NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2019 – RESPONSE RATES****1** Introduction

The National Student Survey was live for Ulster University students from 28 January - 30 April 2019. The University's sample for 2019 consisted of 4,109 students.

**2** Survey operation

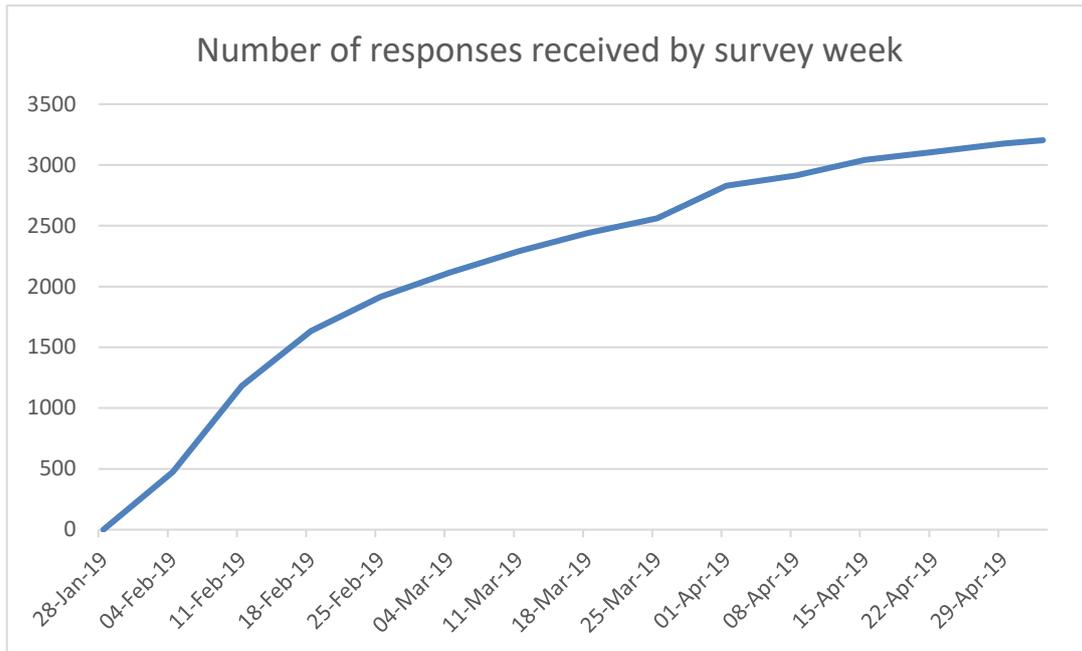
The NSS is a multi-method survey using online and telephone methods and is administered by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Office for Students (OfS). Students were sent an email on 28 January 2019 requesting them to complete the survey online. Reminder emails and SMS messages were sent out each week and on 15 February 2019 the telephone survey commenced.

The University raised student awareness of the survey through the following initiatives:

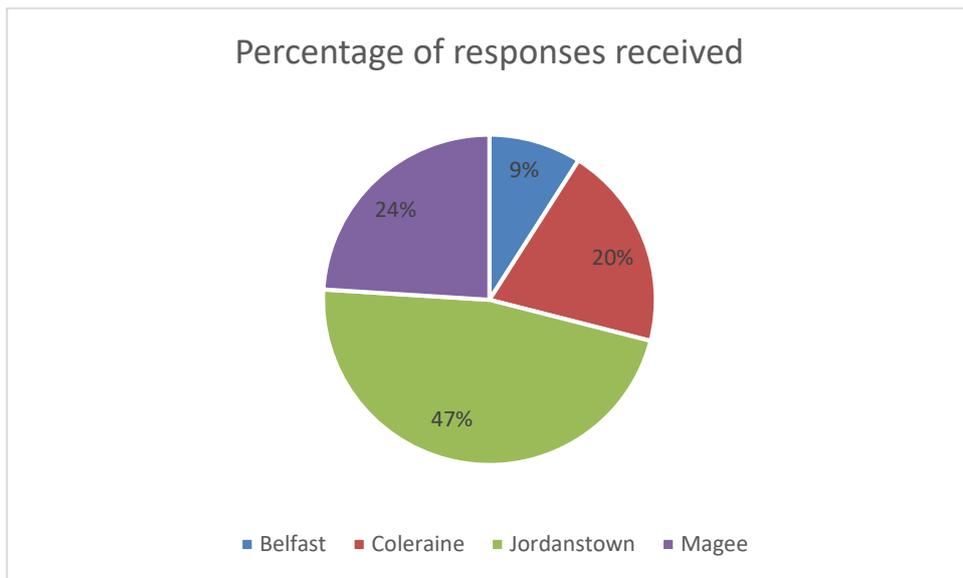
- Each student in the University's survey population received a joint email from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Students' Union President requesting them to complete the survey.
- Posters were displayed on each campus.
- Adverts were placed on all student workstations in the libraries, on Blackboard and on campus plasmas. Regular tweets were also sent out by the University and the Students' Union throughout the survey period.
- During the survey period Quality Enhancement made the survey more accessible to students by providing iPads at central locations on each campus to enable students to complete the survey online.
- Course Directors raised awareness of the survey with students and encouraged participation.
- Response rates were monitored and weekly progress reports were disseminated through the Quality Enhancement Data sharepoint folder for the NSS.
- A number of Course Directors took up the offer to make iPads available to students in class to complete the online survey.

**3** Response rates and publication thresholds

At the close of the survey the University achieved a response rate of 77.95%, 1.55% above the national average of 76.4%. Approximately 85% of Ulster respondents completed the survey online, whilst the remainder completed it by telephone interview.



60% of responses were received during the first four weeks of the survey period.



47% of the total responses received were from students studying on the Jordanstown campus, 20% from Coleraine, 24% from Magee, and 9% from Belfast.

38 students studying at the QAHE London and Birmingham campuses were included in the 2019 sample and 61% of these students responded to the survey.

Ipsos MORI will be undertaking a cleaning process of the data and the final published response rates may vary marginally as a result.

The survey results feed into two datasets - the public dataset and the internal dataset and a publication threshold criteria must be met before the data can be released. The public dataset is published on the Unistats website and this information also feeds into national league tables. The publication threshold for the public dataset and its anticipated composition is outlined in section 3.1 below. The internal dataset, which

includes the students' qualitative comments, is returned to the University to be used in internal quality enhancement processes. The publication threshold for this dataset and its anticipated composition is outlined in section 3.2 below.

### 3.1 Response rates: public dataset

Survey results are published on the Unistats website and are subject to a strict threshold criteria, ie: 50% of the subject/course sample must respond, and the number of responses received must consist of a minimum of 10. The criteria is applied to course level and subject level data.

This year 126 courses were eligible for publication as 2019 data and 103 of these courses met the threshold. The responses from students on courses that did not meet the threshold will contribute to the relevant JACS subject level result.

The sample for the 2019 survey is represented across 56 JACS subjects. From the outset of the survey the following 4 subjects do not meet the publication threshold due to their sample size:

Complementary Medicine  
Food and Beverage Studies  
Other in Social Studies  
Planning (urban, rural and regional)

Of the remaining 52 subjects, 48 have met the threshold for publication.

Response rate reports for course and JACS Subjects are accessible through the Institutional QE Data link on the Quality Enhancement Data site at <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/data>

### 3.2 Response rates: internal dataset

The University receives a second set of data, intended for use in internal quality enhancement processes, which is disaggregated to a lower level than the publicly available information. The criteria set for this data is a minimum of 10 responses must be received for each course group to ensure return of results. It is not necessary to achieve responses from 50% of the cohort for this dataset. Where the final year cohort was deemed large enough, courses have been coded individually but for those courses with small cohorts, courses of similar subject matter have been grouped together. It is by these course groupings that the student qualitative comments are received. This year's sample consisted of 128 groupings with cohorts of 10 or more students and 114 have met the criteria for the return of data. The response rate for each course grouping is accessible through the Institutional QE Data link on the Quality Enhancement Data site at <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/data>

In addition to this the University will receive quantitative data for courses and JACS Level 3 subjects that did not meet the publication threshold for Unistats but received 10 or more responses.

#### 4 Dissemination of results

The Office for Students have issued the following timetable of publication of NSS 2019 results:

3 July 2019	Results released to institutions and the national press
10 July 2019	Results published on the Unistats website

Results will be disseminated to Faculties as soon as possible after receipt and a full report on results will be received at the October meeting of Senate.

#### **B) POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2019**

1 The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey was available online for Ulster University students from 8 April – 3 May 2019. The purpose of the survey, which is run in association with Advance HE, is to provide institutions with useful quality enhancement information to identify, both at local and national level, areas where improvements could be made to further enhance taught postgraduate programmes. Results from the survey are not published and do not inform national league tables, although some aggregated results are compiled for benchmarking purposes. The survey covers all aspects of the student experience under the nine broad subject headings below:

- Quality of Teaching and Learning
- Engagement
- Assessment and Feedback
- Dissertation or Major Project
- Organisation and Management
- Resources and Services
- Skills Development
- Overall Satisfaction
- Motivations

#### 2 SURVEY PROMOTION AND RESPONSE RATES

At the commencement of the survey period students received a joint email from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the President of the Students' Union informing them of the survey and encouraging them to participate. Deans, Heads of School and Heads of Faculty Administration and Course Directors were also informed of the commencement of the survey. A response rate report was updated weekly to enable monitoring of progress and was accessible through the Institutional QE Data link on the Quality Enhancement Data site at <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/data>

The survey promotion timeline was as follows:

8 April	Survey launch – students and staff received emails
16 April	183 responses received (5.3% response rate)
18 April	Reminder emails to non-respondents
1 May	270 responses received (7.8% response rate)
1 May	Final email reminder to non-respondents
3 May	Survey closed – 393 responses received = 11.4% response rate

The table below sets out the sample size and final percentage response rates for the University and Faculties:

	Sample Size	Respondents as % of Sample Size
Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	1047	13.4%
Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment	234	18.8%
Faculty of Life and Health Sciences	1482	9.6%
Ulster University Business School	647	9.7%
Access, Digital and Distributed Learning	43	9.3%
Total for University	3,453	11.4%

### 3 Distribution of Results

Results have been provided to Faculties as follows:

- Course Directors received results for their course for consideration by the Course Committee where at least 10 responses had been received for the course. The threshold of 10 responses was set to ensure student anonymity. A total of five courses met the threshold.
- Aggregated School data, and student qualitative comments for courses which met the threshold of 10 responses, were provided to 13 Heads of Schools/Departments.
- Associate Deans (Education) received School and Faculty level results.

A full report on results will be provided to the October 2019 meeting of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee. This report will include national benchmark data which will be released to institutions in July.