



NSS Report Calculations

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This document is intended to provide background information for users of the [NSS Results website](#) to aid them in understanding the results of the National Student Survey.

The NSS is a survey of mostly final year undergraduates. The survey is conducted across all publicly funded higher education institutions in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland; privately funded higher education institutions; all further education colleges in England that offer HEFCE-funded provision within the scope of the survey and further education institutions in Wales.

Methodology

The NSS is a multi-mode (online, post and telephone) survey conducted by [Ipsos MORI](#), an independent research company. Fieldwork is carried out between January and April of each year. The survey data collected are analysed by [Texuna](#) using demographic and study information provided by [HEFCE](#) using [HESA](#) and Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data.

Publically available data

These are the formal results that are published by Texuna on behalf of HEFCE. Data is only made publicly available if there is a 50% response rate, together with at least 10 respondents. The initial data published will be based on subject groups.

Joint academic coding system (JACS)

JACS is used for HE Institutions to report to HESA what students are studying. They do not reflect the internal structures of any particular institution.

The JACS complete classification is on [HESA](#) . The JACS subject codes are not necessarily the same as UCAS codes.

Metrics explained

The table below contains explanations of each of the metrics on the NSS Results Website. For an explanation of the term FPE weighted, please see 'Calculation of Student Numbers'.

Metric	Description
% Agree	This is your institution's % Agree for this category. There are two calculations, one for individual questions and one for scaled questions, please see below.
Sector-wide % Agree	This is the % Agree for the Sector for this category.
(5) Definitely Agree Count	This is the number of students who responded Definitely Agree to this question for this category. For example, for Mature category this figure will only be the number of Mature students who responded Definitely Agree. For Scaled Questions, the Definitely Agree count is the total Definitely Agree count for the questions within that section. For Subject categories, this will be FPE weighted.
(4) Mostly Agree Count	This is the number of students who responded Mostly Agree to this question for this category. For example, for Mature category this figure will only be the number of Mature students who responded Mostly Agree. For Scaled Questions, the Mostly Agree count is the total Mostly Agree count for the questions within that section. For Subject categories, this will be FPE weighted.
(3) Neither Count	This is the number of students who responded Neither to this question for this category. For example, for Mature category this figure will only be the number of Mature students who responded Neither. For Scaled Questions, the Neither count is the total Neither count for the questions within that section. For Subject categories, this will be FPE weighted.
(2) Mostly Disagree Count	This is the number of students who responded Mostly Disagree to this question for this category. For example, for Mature category this figure will only be the number of Mature students who responded Mostly Disagree. For Scaled Questions, the Mostly Disagree count is the total Mostly Disagree count for the questions within that section. For Subject categories, this will be FPE weighted.
(1) Definitely Disagree Count	This is the number of students who responded Definitely Disagree to this question for this category. For example, for Mature category this figure will only be the number of Mature students who responded Definitely Disagree. For Scaled Questions, the Definitely Disagree count is the total Definitely Disagree count for the questions within that section. For Subject categories, this will be FPE weighted.
(6) Not Applicable Count	This is the number of students who did not respond to this question for this category. For example, for Mature category this figure will only be the number of Mature students who did not respond. For Scaled Questions, the Not Applicable count is the total Not Applicable count for the questions within that section. For Subject categories, this will be FPE weighted.
Population (headcount)	This is the number of students eligible to complete the survey. This number will vary dependent on the category you are looking at. For example, for Mature category this population figure will only be the number of Mature students.
Number of Respondents (fpe)	This is the FPE number of respondents to the survey for this category. For example, for Mature category this figure will only be the number of Mature students who responded. This figure will only be different to the Number of Respondents (headcount) for subject and course level categories.
Number of Respondents (headcount)	This is the number of respondents to the survey for this category. For example, for Mature category this figure will only be the number of Mature students who responded.
Response Rate	This is the percentage of students who responded to the survey. It is calculated by dividing the number of respondents by the population (headcount) and multiplying by hundred.

Calculation of student numbers

Student numbers are reported as full-person equivalents (**FPEs**). Thus, a student studying a joint honours programme is split evenly across the two subjects of qualification aim. This means each respondent always counts as a total of one FPE across the analysis.

NB: FPE stands for full-person-equivalent. Where students are studying more than one subject, their responses to the data at subject level are weighted according to the proportion of time they spent studying that subject. Each respondent - regardless of whether full-time or part-time - always counts as a total of one across the analysis, with the exception of by subject, where they are weighted by FPE.

Calculation of thresholds

A threshold of 10 respondents applies to the "My Organisation's Results" and "Students' Comments". This data is therefore not statistically strong, and should be used with due caution. A combined threshold of 10 respondents and 50% response rate applies to "All Organisation's Public Results".

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.

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).

NB: See formula shown in cell C2. This was removed in NSS 2017.

Calculation of percentage score

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

Calculation of percentage agree scores for Q1 – Q27

The combined percentage of students responding "Definitely agree" and "Mostly agree".

NB: See formula displayed in cell C3.

	A	B	C
1		1. Staff are good at explaining things	Calculation
2	Mean score	4.1	$= (B4*5+B5*4+B6*3+B7*2+B8*1)/SUM(B4:B8)$
3	% Agree	96	$= (B4+B5)/SUM(B4:B8)*100$
4	(5) Definitely Agree Count	92	
5	(4) Mostly Agree Count	533	
6	(3) Neither Count	9	
7	(2) Mostly Disagree Count	18	
8	(1) Definitely Disagree Count	0	
9	(6) Not Applicable Count	0	
10	Population (headcount)	1299	
11	Number of Respondents (fpe)	652	
12	Number of Respondents (headcount)	652	
13	Response Rate	50	

Calculation of percentage agree for scaled questions

The '% Agree' for scaled questions is calculated using the NSS 2016 '% Agree (TEF method)'. (scaled questions are the groups of responses listed under the categories of 'The teaching on my course', 'Assessment and feedback', 'Academic support', 'Learning opportunities', 'Organisation and management', 'learning resources', 'Learning community' and 'Student voice')

	Q1 response	Q2 response	Q3 response	Q4 response
Student A	0	4	4	5
Student B	4	1	4	4
Student C	4	0	0	0
Student D	3	3	3	1

A single '% Agree' will be shown in reports. For scaled questions the calculation is the extent to which each student agrees with the statements in a specific scale. "Agree" includes students that **have answered questions with "Definitely Agree" and "Mostly Agree"**. The derivation is explained with the following example:

(Response scores: 5 = Definitely agree, 4 = Mostly Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 2 = Mostly disagree, 1 = Definitely disagree, 0 = Not applicable /did not answer)

This '% Agree ' is based on the **overall proportions that students have answered questions with "Definitely Agree" and "Mostly Agree"**.

For the example above (grouping Q1, Q2, Q3 & Q4 for The teaching on my course):

- Student A has answered:
 - Definitely agree (5) to one question and Mostly agree (4) to two questions. They did not respond to one question (therefore, total question answered is three).
 - Their score calculated from their proportion of question responses is $3 / 3 = 1$
- Student B has answered:
 - Mostly agree (4) to three questions, and Definitely disagree to one question (therefore, total questions answered is four).
 - Their score calculated from their proportion of question responses is $3 / 4 = 0.75$
- Student C has answered:
 - Mostly agree to one question, and has not responded to three questions (therefore the total questions answered is one).
 - Their score calculated from their proportion of question responses is $1 / 1 = 1$
- Student D has not responded Definitely or Mostly agree to any questions, but they have answered all four questions.
 - Their score calculated from their proportion of question responses is $0 / 4 = 0$

The '% Agree' for the grouping of questions 1 to 4 is based on:

= The student proportions that Definitely or Mostly agree ÷ Total number of students answering questions

$$= (1 + 0.75 + 1 + 0)/4$$
$$= 68.75\%$$

Joint honours programmes

The responses from students on joint honours programmes are divided between the two JACS subject areas comprising their programme (i.e. 0.5 FPE each). The student is responding to questions about their programme as a whole so there is no distinction in the scores given by students on joint honours programmes between the two subject areas (for example, a '4' on teaching quality will be a 4 for each area but will count as a 0.5 FPE in calculations).

Joint institutional programmes

Students' responses are assigned to the institution to which the student is assigned at registration (they register with the Joint School and not any particular institution).