

# Coverage of student characteristics in the National Student Survey 2023 results

## Overview

1. This document summarises the coverage of the 2023 National Student Survey (NSS) student characteristic data. The data covers a number of different student characteristics (split additionally by subject, mode and level) and are presented in an interactive [data dashboard](#) and as [data downloads](#).
2. We have consulted with data users both through formal consultation<sup>1</sup> and by gathering informal feedback, and determined that there would be a benefit from publishing the NSS results split by additional personal characteristics. The publication of this sector-level data, with a wide range of personal student characteristics, will add value for a range of users, including students, providers, and the organisations responsible for the funding and regulation of providers. It also provides an opportunity to understand more about the experience different types of students have in higher education.
3. A list of the 19 different student characteristics used to construct these statistics can be found at Annex A, together with a summary of their coverage and completeness. Definitions for the characteristics can be found in the 'Student characteristics data: technical document' on the OfS webpages.<sup>2</sup> Further information about the National Student Survey, together with results at provider and subject level, can be found on the NSS data webpages.<sup>3</sup>
4. The data is provided at both UK and national country-level splits. There are some instances where data is available for providers in some UK nations but not all. This is due to either:
  - a. the coverage of the specific student characteristics. Requirements sometimes differ between countries in what data is collected, and sometimes we link to other data sources which are not applicable for students across the whole UK. Or,
  - b. the coverage of the questions. Question 27<sup>4</sup> is only asked to students registered at English providers and question 28<sup>5</sup> only to those at Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish providers.
5. In addition, no data is shown at UK level for characteristics which are not collected across the whole UK and questions which are not asked in all UK nations.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/consultation-on-the-approach-to-publication-of-the-nss-analysis-of-responses-and-decisions/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/consultation-on-the-approach-to-publication-of-the-nss-analysis-of-responses-and-decisions/) for a summary of the responses to our consultation and our decisions.

<sup>2</sup> See: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-characteristics-data-2010-11-to-2021-22/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-characteristics-data-2010-11-to-2021-22/). Local students are not in that publication. Students are defined as local if their home address is in the same travel-to-work area as the location where they are taught.

<sup>3</sup> See: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/national-student-survey-data/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/national-student-survey-data/).

<sup>4</sup> Question 27: During your studies, how free did you feel to express your ideas, opinions, and beliefs?

<sup>5</sup> Question 28: Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course

## Annex A: Rate of missing student characteristic data in the NSS23 target list

Split	Sub-group	Population restriction	Number of students in the restricted population	Number of students in the restricted population where data was not collected	% of data unavailable
Subject			474,972	0	0.0%
Level of study			474,972	0	0.0%
Mode of study			474,972	0	0.0%
Age			474,972	0	0.0%
Care experienced students (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)	Not applicable†	Non-Scottish students and providers	433,960	78,316	18.0%
	Unknown			65,144	15.0%
Care experienced students (Scotland only)	Not applicable	Scottish students and providers	24,852	32	0.1%
	Unknown			4,629	18.6%
Disability status			474,972	0	0.0%
Disability type			474,972	0	0.0%
Domicile	Unknown		474,972	< 10	0.0%
Eligibility for free school meals <sup>††</sup>	Not applicable	English students and providers	323,795	132,561	40.9%

Split	Sub-group	Population restriction	Number of students in the restricted population	Number of students in the restricted population where data was not collected	% of data unavailable
Estrangement (based on link to Student Loans Company for students taking loans)	Not applicable*	Non-Scottish students and providers	433,960	174,066	40.1%
Ethnicity	Unknown	UK Domiciles only	398,206	4,532	1.1%
Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019): England	Not applicable	English students and providers	323,795	54	0.0%
	Unknown			300	0.1%
Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020): Scotland	Unknown	Scottish students and providers	24,852	139	0.6%
Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019): Wales	Unknown	Welsh students and providers	9,404	< 10	0.0%
Index of Multiple Deprivation Measure (2017): Northern Ireland	Not applicable	Northern Irish students and providers	8,999	1,229	13.7%
	Unknown			67	0.7%
Local students	Missing*		474,972	1,266	0.3%
	Unknown			860	0.2%
Parental higher education status	Not applicable†	UK Domiciles only	398,206	7,266	1.8%
	Unknown			78,551	19.7%

Split	Sub-group	Population restriction	Number of students in the restricted population	Number of students in the restricted population where data was not collected	% of data unavailable
Service Child Status (at key stage 4) ††	Not applicable	English students and providers	323,795	106,592	32.9%
	Unknown			30,951	9.6%
Sex			474,972	0	0.0%
Sexual orientation	Not applicable**		474,972	4,313	0.9%
	Unknown			67,079	14.1%
TUNDRA (Tracking underrepresentation by area)	Not applicable	English students and Under 21	238,158	32	0.0%
	Unknown			1,037	0.4%

\* This not applicable/missing subgroup includes the number of students where this characteristic is not currently collected for colleges in Northern Ireland.

\*\* This not applicable/missing subgroup includes the number of students where this characteristic is not currently collected for colleges in Northern Ireland and colleges in England.

† This not applicable subgroup includes the number of students where this characteristic is not currently collected for colleges in England, colleges in Northern Ireland, and providers that reported to the Student Alternative return in 2021-22.

†† This data is linked from the National Pupil Database (NPD) – see: <https://www.find-npd-data.education.gov.uk/categories>. It should be noted that the Department for Education (DfE) does not accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the NPD data by third parties.