

Sexual misconduct survey 2027

**Information guide for Higher
Education Providers in
England**

October 2026



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Introduction

Following the successful sexual misconduct survey in 2025, the survey will be again delivered nationally in 2027. The survey aims to provide robust evidence on the prevalence of sexual misconduct in higher education, improve understanding of students' experiences, support policy development and inform sector-wide improvement activity. The survey will be conducted online with students at higher education providers in England.

To minimise burden on both providers and students, the sexual misconduct survey will be administered by Ipsos through the same survey platform used for the National Student Survey (NSS). Students will be invited to opt-in to the sexual misconduct survey after completing the NSS 2027. The questionnaire builds on the survey used in 2025 and has been refined through further development and testing with students.

Key dates

Activity	Date
Sexual misconduct survey provider support links due	4 December 2026
Survey opens	6 January 2027
Survey closes	30 April 2027
Contact data deletion	31 May 2027

The sexual misconduct survey aims to:

- Estimate the prevalence of students' experiences of sexual misconduct and harassment at a national level.
- Explore how experiences vary across different groups of students.

The survey asks students about experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault or violence, awareness of provider policies and support services, and experiences of reporting sexual misconduct to their provider. Some of the language used in the questionnaire is necessarily explicit and may be distressing or uncomfortable for some participants. This wording has been carefully designed to ensure clarity and consistency of interpretation, helping to produce the most accurate possible measure of prevalence and student experiences.

The Office for Students (OfS) recognises that some questions may prompt participants to recall difficult or traumatic experiences. To support informed participation, content warnings will be provided at the beginning of the questionnaire and before relevant sections, enabling students to make informed choices about whether to take part and whether to continue. Students are also able to skip questions.

The questionnaire includes links to national support services for individuals affected by sexual misconduct. Providers will also be able to include links to relevant local support services for their students. Further information is provided in the Actions for providers section of this guide.

The questionnaire has been extensively tested and refined with students. The final questionnaire is included in the Questionnaire section of this guide.

For further information about the survey, please send enquiries to smsurvey@officeforstudents.org.uk.

How will the survey be conducted?

The sexual misconduct survey will be administered alongside the NSS 2027 using the same online survey platform. This approach minimises burden on providers and students while enabling eligible students to participate in the sexual misconduct survey immediately after completing the NSS.

Survey process

1. Students will be invited to take part in the sexual misconduct survey after they have completed the NSS 2027.
2. Students who choose not to complete the sexual misconduct survey immediately may return to it later using their original NSS invitation link, provided the survey remains open and they have not opted out of the sexual misconduct survey. Their link will return them to the point at which they left off so that they can continue to complete the survey. Any NSS responses already submitted will have been saved.
3. The sexual misconduct survey will be open from 6 January to 30 April, alongside the NSS fieldwork period.
4. The sexual misconduct survey can be conducted online only. Telephone interviews will not be offered.
5. Information about the sexual misconduct survey will be available on the [NSS website](#), and through provider communications. Ipsos will not issue separate sexual misconduct survey invitations or reminder communications. Students will only be offered the opportunity to participate once they have completed the NSS on the survey platform.

Eligibility

6. Students will be eligible to participate in the sexual misconduct survey if they:
 - were aged 18 or over when they started their course;
 - are studying at a higher education provider in England; and
 - have been identified as eligible by the OfS through the survey target list provided to Ipsos.

Participation and opting out

7. Participation in the sexual misconduct survey is voluntary.
8. After completing the NSS, eligible students will be invited to choose whether they wish to take part in the sexual misconduct survey. Students who opt out at this stage will not be asked to complete the survey. Students who choose to participate may either complete the survey immediately or return to it later using their original NSS invitation link.
9. Students who have opted out of the NSS entirely will not be offered the opportunity to participate in the sexual misconduct survey.

10. Students who do not wish to be presented with the opportunity to take part in the sexual misconduct survey can contact the Ipsos student helpline at thestudentsurvey@ipsos.com to request that they are excluded from the survey.
11. Further information about participation and opting out is provided in the sexual misconduct privacy notice, available from [other privacy notices - Office for Students](#).

Survey promotion and response rate reporting

12. Providers are not formally required to promote the sexual misconduct survey (except through the pre-notification email described at paragraph 16 below). However, providers may wish to raise awareness of the survey among eligible students and are encouraged to signpost students to relevant wellbeing, safeguarding and support services. The OfS will make a range of student facing communications materials available on its website in January 2027.
13. Response rate reporting will not be available for the sexual misconduct survey. This does not affect the response rate reporting provided for the NSS during the fieldwork period.

Data publication

14. We expect to publish the results of the sexual misconduct survey soon after publication of the NSS 2027 results.

Actions for providers

To support the successful delivery of the sexual misconduct survey, providers are required to complete the following actions:

15. ☐ Send a student pre-notification email

Inform eligible students about the sexual misconduct survey using the approved pre-notification email template provided in this guide. The sexual misconduct survey pre-notification email should be issued **at the same time as** the NSS pre-notification General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) email.

16. ☐ Submit provider support links

Providers are required to submit links to their relevant local support services so they can be included within the survey. These links will be made available to students throughout the questionnaire alongside national support resources.

Providers should review and update their support resources from 2025 using the provider support links form, available here: <https://forms.gle/ELVQwWhk9gXnu1Cw5>. **The form must be completed by 4 December 2026.**

Provider action checklist

- ☐ Send sexual misconduct survey pre-notification email
- ☐ Submit provider support links
- ☐ Brief student support teams
- ☐ Brief safeguarding and reporting teams
- ☐ Prepare student-facing communications
- ☐ Ensure that appropriate student support and signposting arrangements are available during fieldwork.

For more information, providers can refer to: [Sexual misconduct survey – Office for Students](#)

For more information, students can refer to: [Harassment and sexual misconduct – a guide for students – Office for Students](#).

Annexes

Pre-notification email to students

The email below is provided as a template. Providers may amend the email subject line and add supplementary information relevant to their students, such as details of support services, but should not remove or materially alter the core survey information.

Dear [**Eligible Student**],

We are writing to let you know about the sexual misconduct survey 2027, which will be available to eligible students from 6 January to 30 April 2027.

The survey has been commissioned by the Office for Students (OfS) and aims to improve understanding of students' experiences of sexual misconduct in higher education. Findings from the survey will help build a national picture of these experiences and support ongoing efforts to improve student safety and wellbeing.

We can assure you that your responses to the sexual misconduct survey will **not** be identifiable to us.

Who is running the sexual misconduct survey?

The survey will be conducted by [Ipsos](#), an independent research agency, on behalf of the OfS, the independent regulator of higher education in England.

The OfS works with higher education providers to help ensure that students have a high-quality educational experience and can study in a safe and supportive environment. Further information is available on the OfS website: [Student guide to harassment and sexual misconduct – Office for Students](#).

The OfS also manages the National Student Survey (NSS). We recently wrote to you on **XXX** to tell you all about the NSS and why your voice is so important to us. For more information about the NSS please see: [National Student Survey: National Student Survey](#).

How to take part

To make taking part in the sexual misconduct survey simpler, the survey will be offered to you by Ipsos after you have completed the NSS.

This survey is entirely optional and you do not have to take part or answer any questions you don't want to.

In January, Ipsos will invite you to complete the NSS and provide you with a unique link to the survey. Once you have completed the NSS, you will be invited to opt-in to complete the sexual misconduct survey immediately afterwards. You will not be contacted about the sexual misconduct survey separately.

Students cannot complete the sexual misconduct survey if they have not completed the NSS. Both surveys will be live from 6th January until 30th April 2027.

Confidentiality and your data

Your responses will be treated in strict confidence and will **not** be used to identify you.

The survey is carried out in the public interest and personal data will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Any results published from the survey will be aggregated and presented in a way that protects the anonymity of participants. Personally identifiable information will **not** be shared with higher education providers or included in published findings.

Further information about how your data will be used, your rights, and how to opt out of the survey is available in the [sexual misconduct survey privacy notice](#).

The data used for inviting students to take part in the sexual misconduct survey is drawn from the data collected to invite students to participate in the NSS. If you wish to know more about NSS data and processes, please see [Privacy Policy – National Student Survey](#).

Why your participation matters

Whether or not you have personally experienced sexual misconduct, your participation is extremely valuable. Hearing from a wide range of students helps ensure that the survey provides an accurate picture of student experiences across higher education in England.

The findings will help improve understanding of sexual misconduct and support future action across the higher education sector, and help universities and colleges develop tools to tackle this serious issue. We recognise that sexual misconduct is a sensitive subject and really appreciate your input.

If you have any questions, please contact thestudentsurvey@ipsos.com.

Best wishes

[**Provider**]

Privacy notice

The sexual misconduct survey privacy notice can be found on the OfS website: [Other privacy notices - Office for Students](#).

Questionnaire

A copy of the 2027 sexual misconduct survey questionnaire can be found on the OfS website: [2027 sexual misconduct survey - Office for Students](#).

