

Qualitative research project for the expansion of the National Student Survey (NSS) to students on courses of one year in length 2020

1. Introduction

The UK funding and regulatory bodies have developed proposals to extend coverage of the National Student Survey (NSS). In previous years, students on short courses have not been able to take part in the survey. A pilot survey was undertaken in 2020 to understand how best to collect survey data from this group of students. In addition, we will be conducting research with students who completed the pilot survey and agreed to be re contacted to:

- gain insight into the respondents' understanding of each question, the survey as a whole and comparing their interpretation and understanding of the questions with that of final year undergraduates
- understand respondents' thought processes and their reactions as they read and process their survey questions
- understand the options students explored before making a decision on how to respond to the question, as well as why they chose their preferred response option
- gain an understanding of which questions worked well and those that worked less well and why these questions proved difficult for particular groups.

The outcomes of analysis of the pilot data and this piece of qualitative research will inform recommendations on how students on short courses may be included in the survey in future years.

The OfS has appointed Shift Insight Limited to carry out this research on our behalf.

2. Who we are

The Office for Students ('OfS') is the regulator of the higher education sector in England and has certain statutory functions set out in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. You can find more information about the OfS and the work that we do on our website:

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/

The OfS is committed to protecting your personal information and being clear about what information we hold about you and how we use it. This privacy notice tells you what to expect when the OfS collects personal information.

OfS is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Our registration number is ZA309955 and you can check our entry details on the ICO's website: <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/what-we-do/register-of-fee-payers/>

3. Data controller and Data Protection Officer

The OfS is the 'data controller' of any personal information collected within scope of this privacy notice. Our location and contact details are below:

Office for Students

Nicholson House

Lime Kiln Close

Bristol

BS34 8SR

Tel: 0117 931 7317

Email: dp@officeforstudents.org.uk

Our Data Protection Officer (DPO) is the first point of contact for people whose information is processed. You can contact the DPO using the details above.

Shift Insight Ltd is a data processor working on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies to conduct this research. You can find out more at their website <https://shift-insight.co.uk/about-shift-insight/>

4. How we will use your information

We can only use your personal information where we have a specific purpose or purposes for doing so.

We will use your personal data for research purposes to help us understand how best to gather feedback from students on short courses about their experiences of taking part in the NSS. Participation in this research is voluntary.

Your personal information will be used to support our research to understand more about how different types of students, on different types of courses, respond to the survey to ensure the questions are applicable and understandable by all. To do this we may link to other data sources, such as the student returns submitted by your university or college.

To achieve the above aims, the specific uses that will be made of your personal information are listed below:

OfS sharing of data with Supplier

The OfS will provide the Supplier with the following personal data:

- Contact details for undergraduate students who have taken part in the NSS 2020 pilot and provided their informed consent to be re-contacted to participate in this follow-up research. The lawful basis for this processing is consent.
- Pilot data for undergraduate students who have taken part in the NSS 2020 pilot. The lawful basis for this processing is performance of public task.

The OfS will also provide anonymised survey data to the Supplier.

Cognitive interviews

- The Supplier will contact the data subjects to undertake a programme of cognitive interviews with data subjects for each stage of the NSS development.
- The Supplier will collect 'evaluation data' from participants. The lawful basis for this processing is consent, and explicit consent for special category data.

Analysis and results

- The Supplier will analyse the pilot data and evaluation data in order to test the main NSS questionnaire and new or revised questions for the NSS with undergraduate students.
- Anonymised results will be shared with the OfS in order to inform the expansion and development of the NSS.

If we want to use your personal information for a reason other than those purposes set out above, we will tell you before we start that use and provide further information about the new purpose(s).

5. Legal basis for using your personal information

Under data protection legislation, we require a legal basis to be able to process your personal information for the purposes set out above.

In this case, the legal basis is:

- 6(1)(a) the data subject has given **consent** to the processing of his or her personal data for one or more specific purposes;
- 6(1)(e) processing is **necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.**

Withdrawal of consent

Consent must be a clear positive action that you have given your agreement to the use of your personal information, and consent can also be withdrawn at any point if you are no longer happy with the use of your personal information for a specific reason. If you to wish to withdraw consent, please do so in writing to:

Data Protection Officer

Office for Students

Nicholson House

Lime Kiln Close

Bristol

BS34 8SR

Email: dp@officeforstudents.org.uk

Once consent is withdrawn, we will destroy all relevant personal information unless we are relying on a different legal basis to justify keeping your personal information. If that is the case, we will tell you in writing. However, withdrawing your consent does not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before you withdrew consent.

6. What personal information we will collect

The personal information we will collect and use as part of this research project is set out below:

Contact details

- first name
- family name
- date of birth
- contact details – phone and email
- language preferences.

Pilot data

- provider type
- mode of study
- course title
- survey responses to NSS 2020 pilot (anonymised)
- survey responses to NSS evaluation survey (anonymised).

Evaluation data

- nationality
- gender

- domicile (country of your permanent home address prior to starting your course)
- English/Welsh language preference
- comprehension, recall, judgement and response of NSS questions.

Special category data

- disability
- ethnicity.

7. Who we give your personal information to

As part of this research, we will share your personal information to some other organisations for specific reasons, as explained below:

Shift Insight Ltd

Where personal information is disclosed routinely to another organisation, a contractual agreement will be in place with that third party to ensure the protection of your personal information and to ensure it is only used for the reasons described above. We also review the data protection and security measures in place at other organisations before sharing your personal information to ensure it is not put at any undue risk as a result of the sharing.

We will not disclose your information to any other organisation other than those listed except where required to do so as part of our functions or by law.

8. Where your personal information will be stored

Your personal information will be stored securely within the UK and will not be transferred outside that territory unless required by a court order.

9. How do we protect your personal information

The OfS has a number of security measures in place to protect your personal information, listed below:

- accredited to the Cyber Essentials PLUS standard for cyber security
- all staff are required to undertake training in data protection and information security on joining the OfS and then on an annual basis
- formal information security policies that must be read and understood by all staff
- personal information is only available to those members of staff who require access as part of their role.

Shift Insight has a number of security measures in place to protect your personal information listed below:

- Shift Learning are Cyber Essentials certified

- when projects are set up within Shift, project launch forms require project managers to consider any non-standard issues around data protection or privacy. A Data Protection Impact Assessment is completed if so.
- project files are only available to permanent employees on a password protected drive, with freelance staff only given access to data required to exercise their specific job/role.
- data provided by third parties such as clients or data providers is always transferred via FTPS, and password protected with passwords held only within the Operations Directors' secure private drive
- our Operations Director/DPO is responsible for reviewing relevant security legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements. They have received accredited General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) training
- all contractors, employees and third parties sign contracts as a condition of their employment. These include confidentiality agreements and agreements around data security and adherence to GDPR
- all employees are given annual training in data protection and information security
- we are company partners in the Market Research Society, which involves being part of their operations network. This helps to keep us up to date with relevant legislation
- all processes are subject to at least annual review.

10. Your rights over your personal information

Once your personal information has been collected, you have certain rights in relation to that personal information that may be exercised. You have the right to request:

- a copy of your personal information
- inaccurate personal information held about you is corrected
- your personal information to be deleted
- processing of your personal information is restricted
- a copy of your information in a format that allows easy transfer ('data portability')
- that you are not subject to automated decision making or profiling (if these take place).

All these rights have certain limitations depending on the request and the purpose for which we are holding your personal information. Further information can be found about these rights and our processes for handling such requests at:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/privacy/individual-rights-under-the-general-data-protection-regulation/>

11. How long we will hold your personal information

We are only able to retain a copy of your personal information as long as it is still needed for the purpose(s) for which it was collected.

- All contact details will be retained until either one month after the personal data is no longer necessary for the purposes of the research or by 30 November 2020.
- All pilot data and evaluation data processed for the purposes of this contracted activity will be destroyed within one calendar month of completion of the contracted activity and OfS review of report.

After that point, your personal information will be confidentially and securely disposed of.

12. Complaints about the use of your personal information

If you are unhappy with the way in which your personal information has been handled by the OfS, please contact us via our Data Protection Officer (details in section 3) and we will try to resolve your issue informally.

If we have are not able to resolve the issue to your satisfaction, you can also make a complaint to the data protection supervisory authority. In the UK, this is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and they can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

13. Changes to this notice

We keep our privacy notices under regular review and we will inform you of any changes to this notice by placing an update on our website.

This privacy notice was last updated on 3 July 2020.