Briefing on National Student Survey 2014

Overview

Final year students at the University of Glasgow will again participate in the National Student Survey (NSS) administered by Ipsos MORI. The University, working with the SRC, is dependent on the support of Schools to improve upon the good response rate that we have obtained in previous years.

The Survey for the University’s final year students will launch on 20 January 2014.

Students will be able to complete the survey online. Students should be directed to www.glasgow.ac.uk/nss (this link will go live shortly before the launch date). In addition to publicity and awareness raising around the University, students will receive an email from Ipsos MORI on 20 January 2014 with a link to the survey.

The use of any NSS promotional materials, including the survey web address (www.thestudentsurvey.com) should not be displayed, published or distributed to students before 13 January 2014, the date at which the survey goes live.

Checklist for Heads of Schools

The check list below highlights the action to be taken at School level in advance of and during the Survey

☐ Raise awareness of staff about the NSS, and the 2014 NSS launch on 20 January 2014. Explain that they have a critically important role in communicating with their students about the Survey.

☐ Raise awareness with final year students about the NSS, why it’s important to the University and to the School, and what action was taken in response to last year’s results.

☐ Support the SRC with promotional activity including lecture callouts. An SRC representative will attend classes to speak briefly to final year students and distribute flyers as students enter and leave classes. Contacts have been identified and a proforma has been provided to them to gather information on the date, time and location of final year classes

☐ Take specific action as necessary to communicate with any students on placements or off campus.

☐ Help ensure that students understand the definition of key concepts/terminology in the Survey e.g. ‘feedback on assessment’, ‘General IT resources’ and advise students to use the N/A response with consideration.

☐ Ask students to check their University e-mail account on 20 January for the email from Ipsos MORI. If they do not use this account regularly, encourage them to set up a forwarding arrangement to the email account they do use.

☐ Encourage students to complete the Survey promptly and on-line – this will stop them being contacted later by phone by Ipsos MORI. Consider offering local incentives - Examples of good practice from across the University are available in further information.

☐ Promote NSS locally in computer cluster areas, on Moodle sites, plasma screens, LCD displays, etc.

☐ Monitor weekly response rates as they are reported to you and ask academic staff to give further encouragement if response rates are low. For results to be published, subjects require a 50% response rate and a minimum of 23 students to respond. SRC can assist with this.
Promotion of the NSS – roles and responsibilities

NSS 2014 Guidance for Institutions and Students’ Unions emphasises the need for local promotion of the NSS to be neutral. It is not acceptable to make links between the NSS, League Tables and the perceived value of students’ degrees in any promotional information. The Guidelines state:

“It is crucial that local survey promotion is neutral and that:

- Students are targeted equally so that each eligible student is given a chance to express their views on their student experience;
- Students feel free to give honest feedback about their experiences without their responses being influenced by their institution;
- Students must not be asked to complete the survey while a member of staff is overseeing their responses or made to feel that their responses are being monitored (e.g. if completing the questionnaire online in a dedicated room);
- Students must not be encouraged to reflect in their answers anything other than their genuine perceptions of their experience;
- Any promotional materials that are produced in addition to those provided by Ipsos MORI must be checked for appropriateness. A senior member of staff should sign off all materials before they are used;
- No link between the NSS, league tables and the perceived value of students’ degrees should be made in any promotional materials, targeted emails or lecture “shout outs”.

The role of the SRC

The SRC will organise a major poster and leafleting campaign across campus targeting final year classes. The campaign will include lecture/class call outs where students recruited by the SRC will speak briefly to final year students and distribute leaflets as students enter and leave classes. The SRC representatives should not cause any disruption and Schools are asked to be supportive of this activity.

The role of Academic Staff

The critical importance of academic staff communicating with their students about the Survey is widely recognised. We need you to take the following actions:

- From 13 January, talk to final year students about the purpose of the survey – an NSS template power point will be available from the Senate Office website
- Encourage students to reflect upon their whole experience not just their final year
- Highlight action that has been taken as a result of last year’s NSS Survey
- Ensure students understand the key terms used in the survey such as “feedback” and the use of “N/A” as a response
- Encourage students to check their University email account on 20 January for the email from Ipsos MORI. If any student does not receive the email, but believes they are eligible to complete the Survey, please alert the Head of School and Clare Barnes (clare.barnes@glasgow.ac.uk) as soon as possible.
- Facilitate/permit the distribution of information by the SRC
- Promote the Survey locally for example, in computer cluster areas, on School Moodle sites, on Student Voice, on LCD/plasma display boards, etc
- Encourage students to complete the survey promptly online. This will avoid Ipsos MORI contacting them by telephone
Schools may need to take specific action to draw the Survey to the attention of students who are on placements or who are otherwise not attending classes at the launch date and during the Survey. Encourage them to check student email accounts for messages about the Survey and to complete the Survey online.

The role of the Senate Office and Communications Office

The Senate Office and Communications Office will arrange for the Survey to be promoted on student web pages, central plasma and display screens etc. The Senate Office will also provide Schools with guidelines, powerpoints, logos and other materials via the Senate Office website at:

www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/studentengagement/studentsurveys/nationalstudentsurvey/

Prizes

To encourage a high response rate, we have arranged a University of Glasgow prize draw. The structure of the prizes has changed for 2014, so that the amounts available to win are greater. The prizes will be one of £500 and five of £100. This will be drawn by Ipsos MORI at the end of the Survey on 30 April 2014.

In previous years some subject areas have provided further local incentives to encourage their students to complete the survey.

For example:

- A prize draw of a pair of tickets for the graduation ball if a certain response threshold is reached
- Contribution of £5 for each student who completes to the Graduation Ball

Schools/subject areas might want to consider doing this or something similar. Please refer to the Ipsos Mori NSS Guidelines or seek advice from the Senate Office.

If you have any queries about this - or ideas or advice that you think would be worth sharing more widely in the University - please contact Jane McAllister in the Senate Office (Jane.McAllister@glasgow.ac.uk or x3351).