

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
FINAL NSS RESPONSE RATE UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The paper provides an update on the final NSS 2023 response rates (the survey had closed on 30th April 2023).

The analysis gives final response rates at overall institutional level, individual School level and at individual subject level (CAH-subject level). Key findings include:

- The final institutional response rate was 67.38% which is -0.42% below the final response rate for the previous year (67.80%) and meets the institutional publication threshold of 50%.
- In total 47 subjects (CAH3 subject-level) and an 'Other'¹ category submitted responses. We met the publication threshold for 46 subjects, including the 'Other' category. Only two subjects (Chemistry and Counselling, psychotherapy and occupational therapy) did not achieve thresholds for publication of results. It should be noted, these two subjects were unlikely to have met threshold levels as they had with very small cohorts (10 and 11 respectively) and would have required to achieve 10 responses apiece.
- All subjects achieved over 50% response rates, a major achievement.
- Aggregated to School level, ten Schools reached the required number of interviews for the publication of results at subject level. The two Schools where response levels did not meet the threshold for publication at subject level were: NCS (Chemistry) and Psychology (Counselling, Psychotherapy & Occupational Therapy).

Various efforts were undertaken to promote NSS and enhance response rates. Some of these included: promotion of NSS via social media by Marketing, including offer of a free sustainable water bottle for completing the NSS; close liaison between Vice-Principal for Education and Heads of School; provision of regular progress reports being issued to Heads of School highlighting areas where minimum thresholds had not yet been met to enable internal promotion of NSS in key subjects.

At this current time, a date for publication of the NSS 2023 results have not been issued but OfS has intimated they will be published sometime in late summer. Result headlines will be provided shortly after results are known, and these will be followed by a report on the results within a couple of days.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	n/a	
Further consideration/ approval required by	SSEC	7 June 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

UEC is invited to note the analysis of the final 2023 response rates for NSS and note that a date for publication of the NSS 2023 has yet to be announced. Result headlines will be provided shortly after results are known, and these will be followed by a report on the results within a couple of days.

¹ Where the number of students is less than 10 for an individual subject, these are grouped under Other.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 This report is divided into three main parts:

- A brief overview of NSS – publication thresholds, importance of NSS.
- A short analysis of the University's final response rates for NSS 2023.
- Planning and support around NSS.

5. OVERVIEW OF NSS

5.1 The National Student Survey (NSS) is a high-profile annual census of nearly half a million students across the UK. Conducted each year since 2005, the NSS has become renowned for producing robust and reliable data. All students studying on courses leading to undergraduate credits or qualifications which are longer than one-year full-time study or its part-time equivalent (such as bachelor's degrees, foundation degrees, higher education diplomas) will be surveyed in their final year of study.

5.2 In order for results to be made public, a minimum of both 50% response rate and 10 respondents is required. This threshold applies per cohort (at overall provider level and at CAH3-subject level). NSS data is an important tool for helping prospective students make decisions about where and what to study. The higher the response rate, the greater the likelihood of course-level data being made publicly available to these students.

5.3 The OfS supplies Ipsos MORI with the subject codes for each student in the survey target list based on each provider's data return. These are then mapped into the NSS CAH groups (CAH Level 3 subjects – these are Common Aggregation Hierarchy groups which are mapped from HECoS codes²).

5.3 For the NSS to be useful as many eligible students as possible need to take part. This means that it's important to promote the survey. Ipsos MORI run a national publicity campaign. Providers are also encouraged to run their own campaigns with their students and staff in a number of different ways:

- Promoting on social media
- Placing posters around the campus
- Engaging departments and teaching staff to give NSS information through lecture shout-outs

5.4 The response rates are updated three times a week and made available to providers on the NSS Extranet homepage during the fieldwork period. The response rate reports are provided to help providers target awareness and promotion to specific CAH-subject/department areas that are yet to reach threshold levels.

6. FINAL 2022 NSS RESPONSE RATES ANALYSIS

6.1 This section provides an overview of the final NSS response rates (as published on the 3rd May) on the NSS Extranet homepage (www.ipsos-mori.com/nss/extranet).

6.2 Table 1 below gives an institutional overview of our final response rate:

Table 1 2023 Final NSS Institutional Response Rate

	Sample Eligible	Interviews Achieved	Response Rate 2023 (%)	Interviews to Threshold	Final Response Rate 2022 (%)	% Diff Response Rate from Prev Year
10007783 University of Aberdeen	2011	1355	67.38	0	67.80	-0.42

6.3 The final institutional response rate was 67.38% which is 17.38% above the required threshold for publication of results. The final response rate is -0.4% below the final response rate for the previous year and above our set target response rate (65%).

6.4 The table below provides a visual summary of response rates at individual subject level (CAH-subject level). The subjects are sorted with the highest number of interviews required to meet

²More information on the mapping can be found at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/filesHECoS_CAH_Version_1.3.3.xlsx

the threshold highlighted in red at the top. The table further highlights subjects where final response rates are much lower or higher than final response rate for the previous year.

Table 2 Breakdown of NSS 2023 Response Rates by subject (CAH-subject level).

(Table sorted by largest no interviews required to meet threshold)

Discipline (CAH3-subject level)	Sample Eligible	Intvws Achvd	Response Rate 2023 (%)	Intvws to Threshold	Final Response Rate 2022 (%)	% Diff Response Rate from Prev Year
07-02-01 chemistry	10	6	60.00	4	70.37	-10.37
02-06-07 counselling, psychotherapy and occupational therapy	11	7	63.64	3	40.00	23.64
03-02-01 sport and exercise sciences	27	15	55.56	-	63.16	-7.6
26-01-06 earth sciences	17	13	76.47	-	76.47	0
07-01-01 physics	15	11	73.33	-	72.41	0.92
04-01-01 psychology (non-specific)	185	110	59.46	-	60.66	-1.2
03-01-07 genetics	17	15	88.24	-	57.89	30.35
20-01-01 history	118	71	60.17	-	67.72	-7.55
03-01-06 zoology	77	53	68.83	-	64.06	4.77
16-01-01 law	266	174	65.41	-	66.23	-0.82
Other	71	45	63.38	-	69.33	-5.95
20-02-01 philosophy	39	27	69.23	-	78.38	-9.15
03-01-02 biology (non-specific)	21	15	71.43	-	63.33	8.1
15-01-02 sociology	55	39	70.91	-	66.13	4.78
10-01-08 electrical and electronic engineering	18	12	66.67	-	63.33	3.34
10-01-07 civil engineering	26	15	57.69	-	59.26	-1.57
13-01-02 building	15	10	66.67	-	57.14	9.53
15-01-04 anthropology	33	25	75.76	-	82.76	-7
25-01-04 cinematics and photography	24	17	70.83	-	68.18	2.65
20-02-02 theology and religious studies	16	11	68.75	-	63.16	5.59
17-01-04 management studies	77	51	66.23	-	66.42	-0.19
03-01-08 molecular biology, biophysics and biochemistry	39	25	64.10	-	51.35	12.75
20-01-02 history of art, architecture and design	17	11	64.71	-	66.67	-1.96
17-01-08 accounting	49	33	67.35	-	69.49	-2.14
02-05-03 biomedical sciences (non-specific)	34	21	61.76	-	61.90	-0.14
03-01-10 others in biosciences	34	21	61.76	-	61.90	-0.14
02-05-04 anatomy, physiology and pathology	32	21	65.62	-	64.52	1.1
15-03-01 politics	134	86	64.18	-	66.32	-2.14
10-01-02 mechanical engineering	51	37	72.55	-	56.00	16.55
01-01-02 medicine (non-specific)	140	97	69.29	-	-	-
26-01-02 physical geographical sciences	27	19	70.37	-	74.07	-3.7
17-01-07 finance	148	102	68.92	-	61.64	7.28
26-01-03 human geography	24	17	70.83	-	60.00	10.83
03-01-04 microbiology and cell science	18	12	66.67	-	55.56	11.11
15-02-01 economics	109	77	70.64	-	71.68	-1.04
19-01-01 English studies (non-specific)	78	52	66.67	-	59.78	6.89
25-02-02 music	23	17	73.91	-	67.86	6.05
19-04-04 Iberian studies	17	13	76.47	-	63.64	12.83
19-04-01 French studies	26	18	69.23	-	73.68	-4.45
19-01-05 creative writing	20	12	60.00	-	53.85	6.15
11-01-01 computer science	54	38	70.37	-	70.27	0.1
09-01-01 mathematics	32	23	71.88	-	62.86	9.02
02-02-01 pharmacology	29	20	68.97	-	79.17	-10.2
10-01-09 chemical, process and energy engineering	54	37	68.52	-	67.50	1.02
22-01-01 education	36	31	86.11	-	82.05	4.06
19-01-07 linguistics	16	16	100.00	-	80.00	20
22-01-02 teacher training	104	77	74.04	-	78.32	-4.28

**For data protection, Ipsos MORI is only permitted to report on cohorts of at least 10 students. Where the number of students is less than this for an individual subject, these students are instead grouped under CAH-subject Other.*

- Publication thresholds for 46 subjects (including the 'Other' category) out of a total of 48 subjects (also including the 'Other' category) were achieved. While two subjects (Chemistry

and Counselling, Psychotherapy and Occupational Therapy) with small cohorts (10 and 11 respectively) did not achieve thresholds for publication of results, all subjects have achieved over 50% response rates, a major achievement.

- Appendix 1 provides a visual summary of final response rates at individual subject level (CAH-subject level) within the various Schools. Aggregated to School level, ten Schools reached the required number of interviews for the publication of results at subject level. The two Schools where response levels did not meet the threshold for publication at subject level were: NCS (Chemistry); Psychology (Counselling, Psychotherapy and Occupational Therapy).

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk) and Linda Murdoch, Planning Analyst (linda.murdoch@abdn.ac.uk).

4 May 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

APPENDIX 1:

School breakdown of NSS 2022 Final Response Rates by subject (CAH-subject level).

Discipline (CAH-subject level)	School	Sample Eligible	Intwvs Achvd	Response Rate 2023 (%)	Final Response Rate 2022 (%)	% Diff Resp Rate from prev year	Intwvs to Threshold
10007783 University of Aberdeen		2011	1355	67.38	67.8	-0.42	0
17-01-08 accounting	Bus	49	33	67.35	69.49	-2.14	0
15-02-01 economics	Bus	109	77	70.64	71.68	-1.04	0
17-01-07 finance	Bus	148	102	68.92	61.64	7.28	0
17-01-04 management studies	Bus	77	51	66.23	66.42	-0.19	0
17-01-02 business studies	Bus	18	15	83.33	37.5	45.83	0
13-01-02 building	Bus	15	10	66.67	57.14	9.53	0
20-01-01 history	DHPA	118	71	60.17	67.72	-7.55	0
20-01-02 history of art, architecture and design	DHPA	17	11	64.71	66.67	-1.96	0
20-02-01 philosophy	DHPA	39	27	69.23	78.38	-9.15	0
20-02-02 theology and religious studies	DHPA	16	11	68.75	63.16	5.59	0
22-01-01 education	EDU	36	31	86.11	82.05	4.06	0
22-01-02 teacher training	EDU	104	77	74.04	78.32	-4.28	0
10-01-09 chemical, process and energy engineering	ENG	54	37	68.52	67.5	1.02	0
10-01-07 civil engineering	ENG	26	15	57.69	59.26	-1.57	0
10-01-08 electrical and electronic engineering	ENG	18	12	66.67	63.33	3.34	0
10-01-02 mechanical engineering	ENG	51	37	72.55	56	16.55	0
26-01-06 earth sciences	GEO	17	13	76.47	76.47	0	0
26-01-03 human geography	GEO	24	17	70.83	60	10.83	0
26-01-02 physical geographical sciences	GEO	27	19	70.37	74.07	-3.7	0
16-01-01 law	LAW	266	174	65.41	66.23	-0.82	0
25-01-04 cinematography and photography	LLMVC	24	17	70.83	68.18	2.65	0
19-01-05 creative writing	LLMVC	20	12	60.00	53.85	6.15	0
19-01-01 English studies (non-specific)	LLMVC	78	52	66.67	59.78	6.89	0
19-04-01 French studies	LLMVC	26	18	69.23	73.68	-4.45	0
19-04-04 Iberian studies	LLMVC	17	13	76.47	63.64	12.83	0
19-01-07 linguistics	LLMVC	16	16	100.00	80	20	0
25-02-02 music	LLMVC	23	17	73.91	67.86	6.05	0
02-05-04 anatomy, physiology and pathology	MMSN	32	21	65.62	64.52	1.1	0
02-05-03 biomedical sciences (non-specific)	MMSN	34	21	61.76	61.9	-0.14	0
03-01-07 genetics	MMSN	17	15	88.24	57.89	30.35	0
01-01-02 medicine (non-specific)	MMSN	140	97	69.29	-	-	0
03-01-04 microbiology and cell science	MMSN	18	12	66.67	55.56	11.11	0
03-01-08 molecular biology, biophysics and biochemistry	MMSN	39	25	64.10	51.35	12.75	0
03-01-10 others in biosciences	MMSN	34	21	61.76	61.9	-0.14	0
02-02-01 pharmacology	MMSN	29	20	68.97	79.17	-10.2	0
03-02-01 sport and exercise sciences	MMSN	27	15	55.56	63.16	-7.6	0
07-02-01 chemistry	NCS	10	6	60.00	70.37	-10.37	4
11-01-01 computer science	NCS	54	38	70.37	70.27	0.1	0
09-01-01 mathematics	NCS	32	23	71.88	62.86	9.02	0
07-01-01 physics	NCS	15	11	73.33	72.41	0.92	0
02-06-07 counselling, psychotherapy and occupational therapy	PSY	11	7	63.64	40	23.64	3
04-01-01 psychology (non-specific)	PSY	185	110	59.46	60.66	-1.2	0
03-01-02 biology (non-specific)	SBS	21	15	71.43	63.33	8.1	0
03-01-06 zoology	SBS	77	53	68.83	64.06	4.77	0
15-01-04 anthropology	SOCSCI	33	25	75.76	82.76	-7	0
15-03-01 politics	SOCSCI	134	86	64.18	66.32	-2.14	0
15-01-02 sociology	SOCSCI	55	39	70.91	66.13	4.78	0
Other		71	45	63.38	69.33	-5.95	0