

Forum Insights for Students in Higher Education

REPORTS:

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement – Results from 2014

Effective feedback and uses of ISSE data: an emerging picture

- National results from the 2014 Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) - published in November 2014
- Examples of how Irish institutions are providing feedback to staff and to students and how they are beginning to explore potential uses of the data – published in January 2015



What is ISSE?

- Online survey offered to first year undergraduate, final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate students
- ISSE explores student engagement and not simply satisfaction. Student engagement may be defined as students' involvement in activities and environments that are likely to generate high-quality learning. Students are ultimately responsible for their own learning but this depends on institutions and staff creating an environment that encourages and promotes student involvement in educationally-relevant activities.
- The 2014 survey followed a successful national pilot in 2013 which gained responses from over 12,700 students in twenty six higher education institutions
- Almost 20,000 students in thirty higher education institutions participated in the 2014 survey
- The ISSE is the first system-wide survey of its kind in Europe and is based on international best practice as demonstrated by the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE, in use since 2007) and the US National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, in use since 2000).

Why does it exist?

- To listen to students' experiences of higher education and, thereby, develop an additional valuable source of information for institutions and nationally
- To help to 'close the feedback loop' by working to ensure that results are shared with students at institution level and nationally
- As a response to the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* which recommended that a national student survey system should be put in place and that institutions should put in place an anonymous feedback system
- ISSE is NOT DESIGNED to be used to contribute to league tables or other rankings

What about the results?

- The survey is delivered online by an independent company that provides anonymous data to institutions when all national fieldwork has finished each year
- Students have a guarantee of confidentiality. Data files returned to institutions have been 'cleaned' to replace student IDs and to delete any names that may have been included in free text responses
- Percentage responses are provided for each individual question. Some results from 2014 are provided in the graphic overleaf

How are institutions dealing with ISSE?

- A report, *Effective feedback and uses of ISSE data*, has been published to demonstrate to students what institutions are doing and to share effective practice for everyone's benefit
- This report was published less than one year after the 2014 survey took place. In other countries where similar surveys are in use, it took up to nine years to publish similar reports. Although it is not always obvious at institutional level, most institutions are actively analysing the data to explore the most appropriate actions to follow up on the survey
- Feedback has been provided to students' unions officers and wider student groups via meetings, presentations, infographic posters, email and student feedback websites
- Institutions have reviewed the free text responses to two questions about how they address student engagement, identifying issues for immediate action
- Some institutions have begun to explore the data for sub-groups of their student population and identified potential uses of this data when statistical reliability can be confirmed at this level. In straightforward terms, a greater number of student responses increases statistical reliability

Overall messages

- Nationally, results from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement compare favourably with similar surveys internationally
- There is much greater variation within institutions than exists between institutions
- Higher response rates offer greatest potential for analysis of data on the experiences of sub-groups of the student population at institution level
- ISSE needs significant numbers of students (first year and final year undergraduates as well as taught postgraduates) to take part in the survey if it is to deliver on its potential to improve the student experience

ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2014 SURVEY

STUDENT SURVEY.IE
WE'RE LISTENING, WE'RE LEARNING

