



Highest ever satisfaction ratings for UK universities since records began

Description

An annual poll has found that students studying at UK universities are more satisfied with their universities than at any time over the past eight years.

The National Student Survey (NSS), carried out every year since 2005, measures the responses of students at 154 higher education institutions, as well as a slightly smaller number of further education colleges.

The survey asks final year undergraduate students how satisfied they are with various aspects of their university experience, with 30 questions asked in total. Teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, organization and management, learning resources, personal development, overall satisfaction and access to health facilities are covered by the questions, and this year students were also asked how satisfied they were with their students' union for the first time.

Improvements were recorded across every category, with overall satisfaction standing at 85%. Satisfaction with students' union was the lowest at 66%. Liam Burns, President of the UK's National Union of Students commented in an official statement: "It is clear that these initial results pose challenges and identify scope for continuous improvement. We are committed to continuing our work with our member unions to both develop their work and better communicate it to their students."

An improvement in the levels of satisfaction with assessment and feedback was particularly welcomed by the UK higher education establishment, as scores have traditionally been low in this regard.

It is widely accepted that, in face of rising higher education costs, that students will demand more for their money. The rise in costs has been particularly pronounced in the UK, where the maximum annual fee for UK and EU students has been tripled this year to £9,000 (US\$14,600).

There is no cap on fees for students from outside the EU, who as well as requiring specific support, pay higher fees. In this light, these results will please students considering studying the UK.

Pat Killingley, British Council director of Higher Education, commented, "The British Council welcomes today's findings from the National Student Survey that student satisfaction has improved.

The UK is the second most popular destination in the world for international students, because of the quality of our teaching and the quality of the student experience. These findings reinforce that and will help us in our role of promoting UK education around the world.â•

...oh, and in case you wondering, the most satisfied students were at St Mary's University College Belfast, at which 98% of students reported being satisfied.

New consumer website for students

The release of survey results came alongside the launch of a new website called [Unistat](#), on which the results can be viewed on a course-by-course or an institution-by-institution basis.

In addition to the satisfaction levels, the website also contains a range of other statistics. These include employment statistics, average salaries, the fees you can expect to pay, expected accommodation costs, the time spent in lectures and year-by-year percentages of how the course is assessed. Like the satisfaction levels, these can be viewed for each course at each university.

The site is intended to help students make a more informed choice as university becomes a bigger and bigger investment. Together with the recent opening of a new elite Â£18,000 a year (US\$29,200) private college in London (the New College of the Humanities), fee rises have led some in the UK to worry that the country's universities are moving towards privatization.

Perhaps fittingly, it was the UK's minister in charge of business, Vince Cable, who commented on the launch of the website: â??Applying to university is a big decision and we want to ensure that all students, whatever their background, have the key facts at their fingertips to help them make the right choice for them.â•

Student satisfaction levels

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