

Introduction

StudentSurvey.ie, whose full name is the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (“our”, “we”), aims to ask students at different stages of their time in higher education about their experience there. Responses from students within each institution are used to inform improvement activities within that institution. National datasets are also made to inform national policy discussions.

StudentSurvey.ie values your privacy and recognises the need to process your personal data in a fair and lawful manner in accordance with the legal rules laid out in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Irish Data Protection Act 2018. Student confidentiality is a central principle of StudentSurvey.ie. This Privacy Statement, and the Information Notice linked below, set out how your personal data will be shared and processed, and by whom. Note that we, StudentSurvey.ie, will not process any of your personal data as part of your participation in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement. Nonetheless, as StudentSurvey.ie is responsible for managing the running of the survey we have prepared and made available this Privacy Statement in order to ensure that you are fully informed as to how your personal data are processed when participating in the survey and what data are actually available to StudentSurvey.ie.

For further general information on how the StudentSurvey.ie operates, please refer to the Information Notice [HERE](#).

What data do we collect?

As a student, you provide personal data to the institution which you are enrolled with. The institution which you are enrolled with will share some of your personal data with the survey company to enable you to undertake the survey.

Your institution will securely transfer the following information about every student invited to take the survey directly to the survey company:

- Student first name (optional) [removed before the data are released by the survey company]
- Academic Unit 1 (school, college or equivalent; optional)
- Academic Unit 2 (department, faculty or equivalent; optional)
- Academic Unit 3 (department, faculty or equivalent; optional)
- Academic Unit 4 (department, faculty or equivalent; optional)
- Student email address [removed before the data are released by the survey company]
- Student ID [removed before the data are released by the survey company]
- Institute code
- Course code
- Student date of birth
- Student gender – categorised as male, female, undeclared (includes both gender non-binary and prefer not to say)
- Student code – categorised as new entrant, re-enrolled, repeat or transferred from another course/ institution
- Mode of study – categorised as full-time, part-time, distance learning, E-learning, or in-service education
- Programme type – categorised as Undergraduate General Degree, Undergraduate Honours Degree, Undergraduate Diploma, Undergraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate, or Masters Taught (Postgraduate)
- NQAI classification of programme/ level of study – categorised as Higher Certificate HETAC and DIT/Advanced Certificate (FETAC), Ordinary Bachelor Degree, Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma, or Masters Degree/Postgraduate Diploma
- Non Standard attendance – categorised as Exam-only, Postgraduate Qualifier, Visiting/Occasional/JYA 1 Term, Visiting/Occasional/JYA 2 Terms, or Visiting/Occasional/JYA Full Year
- Exchange – categorised as Erasmus/Life Long Learning Programme outgoing, or Other Exchange outgoing
- Course title
- Field of Study – the course is categorised into one of the ISCED

(International Standard Classification of Education) categories

- Student year of study
- Student domiciliary of origin – country of birth/ where student came from before studying in Ireland
- Student county – current address by county if domiciliary of origin is Ireland
- Student postal code – if county is Dublin, further refined by postal code
- Entry basis – categorised as 2nd level school leaving exams, Further Education Award or equivalent (e.g. BTEC), Previous higher education participation/award (e.g. for progression to higher NFQ levels or postgraduate courses), Advanced Entry (e.g. to 2nd year), Access/Foundation course, DARE, HEAR, Other Access Routes, Direct Entry Route, Mature Years, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Portfolio/Audition + academic entry requirement, Apprenticeship (apprenticeship qualification as basis for entry to the course for which they are registering)

When you take the survey, your responses are saved regularly. This allows you to complete part of the survey at one time and complete it at another time. It also facilitates collection of data even if you do not finish the survey.

The survey company removes identifiable information (name, student number and the date of birth is limited to year only) and assigns each student with a unique ID. The survey company then sends this data to the StudentSurvey.ie project management for further quality checks. These data are anonymised as the StudentSurvey.ie project management does not have access to any other data to combine the results with to identify an individual. Anonymised data are not 'personal data'.

However!

When the data are sent to your higher education institution, the data are legally regarded as **pseudonymised**. Pseudonymised means that the results are anonymous but, if they were combined with some other

data that your institution has, there is a slight chance an individual could be identified.

Purpose and legal basis

Although we do not process any personal data at StudentSurvey.ie, we will always obtain your consent to participating in the survey.

For information, the purpose of the survey is:

- Enable institutions to make use of the survey results to explore the experiences of different groups of students (for example, studying different subjects/ full-time or part-time students) to inform actions to improve the experience of their students.
- Enable institutions and students' unions will use the results to help them to identify what is working effectively and, also, how they can make improvements.
- Enable the central project management team to produce a report of the findings of StudentSurvey.ie on an annual basis.
- Provide, occasionally, access to a third party, e.g., a researcher, to anonymised data collected through StudentSurvey.ie for research purposes. A high-level group called the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group considers each of these requests. Any requests to use the data will be considered by this group, and they always consider the goals of the national survey project when they do so. In the case of an application being accepted, only anonymised data will be released to that third party. This means that they will not be able to know which institution a specific person was studying in and will not be able to match the answers to any one person.
- Allow anonymised data sets of StudentSurvey.ie to be archived in the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA). Access is only granted following a written application to ISSDA.

The survey data WILL NOT:

- identify any one individual student or small group of students
- be used for marketing
- be sold
- be passed on to any third party without the consent of the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group.

Who do we share data with?

As noted above, the StudentSurvey.ie project management team receives anonymised data from the survey company. StudentSurvey.ie reviews this data for quality control purposes and uses the data for analysis.

Your higher education institution receives pseudonymised personal data from the survey company (the difference is explained above) for all the students in that higher education institution who took the survey.

In some instances, StudentSurvey.ie may provide the survey results (i.e., the anonymous data) to a third party (e.g., a researcher). In the case of an application for access to the data by a third party being accepted, only anonymised data will be released to that third party.

In circumstances where StudentSurvey.ie shares anonymised data, it will enter into a relevant data protection agreement to ensure that the any and all data are shared in accordance with the data protection legislation.

Who do we transfer data to?

As we do not process any personal data, we also do not transfer any personal data abroad.

The survey is conducted by an external survey company ("survey company") that has been contracted by the HEA in order to conduct the survey. The company currently contracted to conduct the survey is a company called ETIO, which is based in the United Kingdom. The survey company operates under contract (as a Data Processor). It receives personal data directly from the institution you are enrolled with.

Since Brexit, the StudentSurvey.ie project management has taken appropriate steps to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to ensure that the transfer of your personal data is in accordance with data protection legislation. This may require the transfer of your data outside of the European Economic Area (EEA), but only when it complies with Standard Contractual Clauses and the Confidentiality Agreement between the Higher Education Authority and the survey company.

How long do we store your data for?

StudentSurvey.ie holds the anonymised survey results indefinitely for the purposes of longitudinal analysis and for archiving purposes in the public interest and for statistical purposes.

How do we keep your data secure?

StudentSurvey.ie employs reasonable appropriate administrative and technical measures to safeguard data against loss, theft and unauthorised uses access, uses or modifications.

Your rights:

Your rights as regards personal data depend on the applicable laws in your country of residence.

If you reside in the European Economic Area (“EEA”), you have the right to request that a data controller:

- provide you with information as to whether it processes your data and details relating to the processing, and with a copy of your data;

- rectify any inaccurate data it might have about you without undue delay;
- complete any incomplete information about you;
- under certain circumstances, erase your personal data without undue delay;
- under certain circumstances, be restricted from processing your data; and
- under certain circumstances, furnish you with the personal data which you provided us within a structured, commonly used and machine readable format.

Where your personal data is processed solely on the basis of your consent you have the right to withdraw consent in respect of processing personal data. After taking the survey, if you want to withdraw your consent you must contact info@studentsurvey.ie by the 1st of May of the same year you undertake the survey.

You also have the right to lodge a complaint with your data protection supervisory authority.

The exercise of the above rights might be subject to certain conditions, and a data controller might require further information from you before it can respond to your request.

If you would like to exercise your rights in relation to your participation in the survey, please let us know by getting in touch with us at info@studentsurvey.ie. We will assist you by advising as to how to exercise your rights.

Queries, contacts, right of complaint

You can contact the StudentSurvey.ie project manager at info@studentsurvey.ie or by writing to StudentSurvey.ie Project Manager, An tUdaras um Ard-Oideachas/The Higher Education Authority, 3 Shelbourne Buildings, Crampton Avenue, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4. You can also contact your local student union or your local

institution representative (please see www.studentsurvey.ie to find out who that is).

You have a right to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Data Protection Commission. While we recommend that you raise any concerns or queries with us first, you may contact that Office – contact information is available [HERE](#). If you reside in the EEA, you can find out more information about your rights at <https://www.dataprotection.ie>.