



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoinachaidh na h-Alba

# SFC GUIDANCE

**College Student Satisfaction Survey Guidance 2019-20**  
**Issue Date: 13 February 2020**  
**Reference: SFC/GD/02/2020**

## College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey Guidance 2019-20

Issue date: 13 February 2020

Deadline: 29 May 2020

Reference: SFC/GD/02/2020

Summary: Guidance notes for the completion of the College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey: Academic year 2019-20

FAO: Principals / Chairs / Finance Directors / Board Secretaries of Scotland's colleges

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## College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) Guidance

### Revisions to the SSES data collection guidance

1. Clauses 11 through 13 cover the introduction of three alternative survey formats, provided at Annex B, that colleges can use with student groups with assessed additional support needs and/or SCQF level 1-3 literacy.
2. Clause 24 added to provide additional guidance on the acceptability of a 'single survey response' for those students on multiple and inter-linked courses, e.g. 'apprenticeship programmes'.
3. The 'Survey Timings' section has been updated to reflect the outcomes from the November 2019 sector SSES consultation on survey timing and agreed at the Statistical Advisory Group for Further Education (SAGE).

### Survey purpose

4. The Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) provide a means to evaluate and enhance college provision in Scotland.
5. The SSES is a national approach to monitoring student satisfaction and engagement that, over time, will provide a consistent basis for college regions to provide evidence of impact and improvement within their outcome agreements. Outcome agreements were introduced in AY 2012-13. They are intended to enable SFC and colleges to demonstrate the impact of the sector and its contribution to meeting Scottish Government priorities. When running as an annual cross-sector survey, it will provide opportunities to monitor changes across the sector in a range of ways, for example by subject area or mode of attendance. Similarly the intention would be for regions to utilise data to promote sharing of good practice both within and between regions and to contribute to continuous improvement. It will help to strengthen the role of Students' Associations in representation and advocacy and will contribute to public accountability.

### Use of data

6. SFC will publish a summary report of SSES data and provide colleges with full sector-level satisfaction and response data.
7. We continue to consult with the sector and key stakeholders on the ownership, use and publication of disaggregated data from the survey.
8. Question 1 from the SSES has been incorporated as Outcome Agreement national measure number 9 for Outcome Agreements – see the 2020-21 Outcome Agreements - [Annex B Technical Guidance](#).

## Survey questions

9. The survey questions are attached in Annex A. The ten survey questions have been developed in light of existing college practice, the pilot phases and consultation feedback and have undergone cognitive testing by Ipsos Mori. The ten questions will not be made mandatory which will provide flexibility for students who do not have an opinion on some questions. We ask that the question wording, order and the ratings are used exactly as presented in Annex A.
10. We provide a Gaelic translation of the whole survey and this can be seen as **blue** text in Annex A.
11. This year, at the request of the sector, we have developed, through an SSES Accessibility Working Group, an additional three survey formats. These are specifically for students with assessed additional support needs and/or SCQF level 1-3 literacy.
12. We provide at Annex B three alternate survey formats that colleges can use, as appropriate, with student groups at SCQF levels 1-3:
  - B1 - has the standard survey statements with additional responses symbols.
  - B2 - has survey statements written at SCQF level 3 literacy and with additional response symbols.
  - B3 - has survey statements written at SCQF level 3 literacy combined with recognisable supporting symbols to aid student understanding.
13. The three survey formats at Annex B have been tested with students however, we will evaluate the appropriateness of the alternative format surveys in this introductory year and make adjustments, where necessary, for next year.
14. A comment box has been provided for students to add any relevant written comments on learning and teaching at the college. This was included based on feedback from the Working Group suggesting that more valuable data from surveys often came through open text boxes. The expectation is that colleges will retain this open text data and use it for their own analysis. As part of the dissemination of findings we will seek feedback from colleges on the effectiveness of the open text box.
15. The explanatory text for the survey should be kept together with the survey questions.

## Survey returns

16. We are asking all colleges to survey students across all levels and modes of attendance within a set period in the academic year (March-April) and return summary data from their surveys.
17. Include students with a "current" and appropriate group mode status at your college, at the point of survey, and use this figure to populate the Survey Sample Number box in each mode grouping proforma.
18. We will collect data by level and student mode of attendance and will issue six separate templates that will cover summary data based on the following two levels and three modes of attendance groupings:
  - FE level - courses at SCQF or 'broadly comparable' level 6 and below.
  - HE level - courses at SCQF or 'broadly comparable' level 7 and above.
  
  - Group A – Full-time (include mode codes - 17 & 18).
  - Group B – Part-time (include mode codes - 05, 06, 07, 08, 09).
  - Group C – Distance/Flexible (include mode codes - 11, 12, 16).
19. An example template is attached (Annex C). We will issue electronic templates to your college SSES contact(s) in March 2020.

## Survey placement

20. The SSES questions should be standalone and sit separately from existing college surveys. This is to protect the methodological integrity and consistency of the national survey across institutions. This does not prevent colleges from grouping the SSES together in a separate section at the beginning of an existing internal survey.
21. Some colleges have already expressed a preference to combine the national survey questions as a grouping within one of their existing student surveys. This is acceptable and we hope this option will provide flexibility and reduce the potential for survey fatigue resulting from conducting two separate surveys.

## Student target group

22. The survey should **only** be targeted at students on courses of 4 credits or more, i.e. of nominal learning hours of 160 or greater.
23. The SSES should include coverage of DYW groups – including Senior Phase provision – focusing on learners involved in programmes over 160 hours and primarily based on College campus.

24. If students are on multiple inter-linked courses that are subject-related for example, 'apprenticeship programmes' then it is acceptable to have them complete a 'single survey response'.

### **Online survey**

25. We would encourage online completion of the survey by students. However, where difficulties exist in fully understanding the questions, for example ESOL students or those students with additional learning needs, staff can provide additional support and guidance. The survey can be completed on paper and thereafter the college would have to organise data entry of the survey. We have not specified what approach colleges use to capture survey data for the pilot and therefore colleges can tailor their own approach whether that is QDP Services, Survey Monkey or other resources.

### **Response rates**

26. In 2018-19 for some colleges the survey response rates were below expectations. It is essential that colleges comply with this guidance in full with the aim of improving response rates, where low, so that meaningful conclusions and comparisons can be made from the SSES results.
27. Students should be encouraged to participate in the survey. We expect Students' Associations will have a significant part to play both in promoting engagement with the survey and working with the college to consider the resulting data. Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) will be able to support Students' Associations in this process. In the survey for Group A - full-time and Group B - part-time colleges should aim to achieve a target response rate of at least 50%.

### **Survey timing**

28. Further to a sector consultation in November 2019 and on agreement with SAGE, we have extended the survey operating period by 2 weeks (from 4 to 6) and with some flexibility of the window to accommodate 'block release' student attendance.
29. The survey this year will operate within an 8 week window between 2 March and 24 April 2020. During this period colleges will be able to operate their survey for a period of 6 weeks (most likely on both sides of the Spring break). **Note:** this window can be flexed further on either side to accommodate the timetabling of 'block release' student groups in college.
30. It is felt this provides the most flexibility and should help promote response rates as there would not be an overlap with exam leave and other events such as student president elections.

## Results reporting

31. Electronic summary result templates will be sent out to colleges in February 2020. An example template is attached (Annex C). Summary survey results should be returned to Michelle McNeill at SFC, email: [mmcneill@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:mmcneill@sfc.ac.uk) by Friday 29 May 2020.

## 2019-20 SSES milestones

32. SSES Milestones are as follows:
  - Survey of current students by colleges **March - April 2020**.
  - Colleges return summary survey results to SFC by **29 May 2020**.
  - SSES publication **October 2020**.
  - Guidance for the SSES in March - April 2021 by **December 2020**.

## Further information

33. Please contact Kenny Wilson, Senior Policy/Analysis Officer, Funding Policy (Data Collections) for further information, tel: 0131 313 6509, email: [kwilson@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:kwilson@sfc.ac.uk).



### **Martin Smith**

Chief Funding and Information Officer

## Annex A: Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey questions

### Leas-phàipear A: Ceistean Suirbhidh mu Thoileachadh is Com-pàirteachadh nan Oileanach

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey</b> <b>Suirbhidh Toileachadh is Com-pàirteachadh nan Oileanach</b></p>
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Colleges are committed to constantly improving the student experience and especially the quality of the learning and teaching. This survey aims to assess student opinion and the answers you give will help improve the learning and teaching provided. Summary information collected from the survey will be forwarded to the Scottish Funding Council who will provide an evaluation of student satisfaction and engagement across the college sector.

Tha colaistean dealasach mu bhith a’ sìor leasachadh saoghal nan oileanach agus gu h-àraidh mathas ionnsachaidh is teagaisg. Tha an t-suirbhidh seo ag amas air beachdan oileanaich a mheasadh agus bidh na freagairtean agad nan cuideachadh airson leasachadh a thoirt air an ionnsachadh is teagasg a thèid a libhrigeadh. Thèid geàrr-fhiosrachadh a fhuaras bhon t-suirbhidh a shìneadh gu Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba agus bheir iadsan luachadh air Thoileachadh is Com-pàirteachadh nan Oileanach air feadh roinn nan colaistean.

Please place ONE cross on each line in the box that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

Cuir AON chrois anns gach loidhne sa bhogsa as fheàrr a tha a’ mìneachadh dè cho mòr 's a tha thu ag aontachadh no nach eil ag aontachadh ris gach aithris.

		Strongly Agree Aonta mòr	Agree Aonta	Disagree Eas-aonta	Strongly Disagree Eas-aonta mòr
1	Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience. San fharsaingeachd, tha mi riaraichte leis an t-saoghal colaiste agam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Staff regularly discuss my progress with me. Bidh luchd-obrach a' bruidhinn rium gu riaghailteach mun adhartas agam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. Bidh luchd-obrach a' misneachadh oileanaich gus uallach ionnsachaidh a ghabhail orra fhèin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I am able to influence learning on my course. Is urrainn dhomh buaidh a thoirt air ionnsachadh air a' chùrsa agam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning. Gheibh mi comhairlean feumail a bheir fios don ionnsachadh agam san àm ri teachd.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	The way I'm taught helps me learn. Tha an dòigh-teagaisg na cuideachadh dhomh a bhith ag ionnsachadh.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace. Chuidich an ùine agam aig a' cholaiste le bhith a' leasachadh eòlas is sgilean don àite-obrach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I believe student suggestions are taken seriously. Saoilidh mi gu bheilear a' gabhail ri molaidhean nan oileanach an da-rìribh.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Strongly Agree Aonta mòr	Agree Aonta	Disagree Eas-aonta	Strongly Disagree Eas-aonta mòr	Don't know Chan eil fios agam
9	I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff. Saoilidh mi gu bheil an luchd-obrach a' dèiligeadh ris a h-uile oileanach sa cholaiste air dòigh cho-ionann, chothromach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	The College Students' Association influences change for the better. Tha Comann Oileanaich nan Colaistean a' toirt deagh bhuaidh air atharrachadh.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have any other comments about learning and teaching at the college, please write them in the box below.

Ma tha beachd sam bith eile agad mu ionnsachadh is teagasg aig a' cholaiste, sgrìobh iad sa bhogsa gu h-ìosal.

**Thank you for completing this survey**  
**Tapadh leat airson an t-suirbhidh seo a lìonadh**

**Note:** student mode of attendance (m.o.a) data is required to be captured to allow summary results reporting by level and the m.o.a groupings as detailed in Clause 12 of this guidance.

**B1: standard survey statements with additional response symbols**

	<b>Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES)</b>  <b>2019-20</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> 	<b>Agree</b> 	<b>Disagree</b> 	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> 	
1.	Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	I am able to influence learning on my course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	The way I'm taught helps me learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

		Strongly Agree 	Agree 	Disagree 	Strongly Disagree 	Don't know 
10	The College Students' Association influences change for the better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

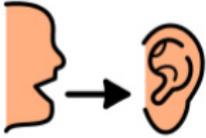
**B2: survey statements written at SCQF level 3 literacy and with additional response symbols**

	<b>Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES)</b>  <b>2019-20</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> 	<b>Agree</b> 	<b>Disagree</b> 	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> 	
1.	Overall, I am satisfied with my time at college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Staff speak to me about how I am doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	I am encouraged to work independently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Staff listen to my opinion about my course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Lecturers tell me how I am getting on, so I can improve my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	The way I am taught helps me learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	At college, I am taught life and work skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	If students have ideas, the college staff listen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	All students are treated equally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

		<b>Strongly Agree</b> 	<b>Agree</b> 	<b>Disagree</b> 	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> 	<b>Don't know</b> 
10	The college Students' Association helps make the college a better place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B3: survey statements written at SCQF level 3 literacy combined with recognisable supporting symbols to aid student understanding

<b>Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES)</b>  <b>2019-20</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>  	<b>Agree</b>  	<b>Disagree</b>  	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>  	
Overall, I am satisfied with my time at college. 					
Staff speak to me about how I am doing. 					
I am encouraged to work independently. 					

<b>Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES)</b>  <b>2019-20</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>  	<b>Agree</b>  	<b>Disagree</b>  	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>  	
Staff listen to my opinion about my course.  					
Lecturers tell me how I am getting on, so I can improve my work.  					
The way I am taught helps me learn.  					
At college, I am taught life and work skills.  					

<b>Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES)</b>  <b>2019-20</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> 	<b>Agree</b> 	<b>Disagree</b> 	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> 	<b>Don't Know</b> 
If students have ideas, the college staff listen. 					
All students are treated equally. 					
The college Students' Association helps make the college a better place. 					

## Annex C: Summary Survey Results

**Scottish Funding Council**  
**Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES)**  
**Summary Return for 2019-20**

**Notes:**

1. Please complete all fields highlighted white.
2. Include students with a "current" and appropriate group mode status at your college, at the point of survey, in the Sample Number box.
3. The Survey Response % is calculated from Question 1 Total Responses divided by Survey Sample Number.
4. The completed template should be returned, as an Excel attachment, to mmcneill@sfc.ac.uk, no later that **Friday 29 May 2020**.

Institution	
Contact Name	
Telephone	
E-mail	

Mode of Attendance	HE Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Total Question Response
Mode Grouping	Group A - Full-Time						
Survey Sample Number							
Survey Response %							
<b>SSES summary questions results</b>		<b>19-20</b>	<b>19-20</b>	<b>19-20</b>	<b>19-20</b>	<b>19-20</b>	<b>19-20</b>
1. Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.							0
2. Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.							0
3. Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.							0
4. I am able to influence learning on my course.							0
5. I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.							0
6. The way I'm taught helps me learn.							0
7. My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.							0
8. I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.							0
9. I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.							0
10. The college Students' Association influences change for the better.							0