

2018 (or up to two weeks after the prize draw closing date if an earlier date is selected). Those who enter the prize draw are asked to give consent that their contact details can be passed on to their institution should they win a prize.

4. Social Media

This section outlines some **social media strategies** that institutions can use to encourage participation in the National Student Survey. It aims to provide an overview of social media and to present ideas that may be of use. It is not intended to replace any social media plans that institutions may already have in place. The ideas outlined here would work better as part of a larger promotional campaign to encourage participation.

4.1. Creating a buzz through social media

Social media sites or apps are an effective way to ‘spread the word’ about an activity, event or project. The most popular social media platforms used by students and institutions alike include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube. In fact, all these sites and apps can be linked together, allowing institutions to share the same post across different social media platforms. Social media applications are already utilised by institutions in a range of ways and some ideas for ‘creating a buzz’ about the NSS are included below.

The [marketing guidelines](#) and rules on [inappropriate influence](#) also apply to social media posts, so please ensure that all involved in promoting the survey on social media are aware of what they can and cannot do, as well as the consequences of inappropriate posts.



Some institutions have dedicated **YouTube** channels and they may wish to create their own NSS videos to inform students of the purpose of the NSS and how to complete it. **YouTube** videos and links can be embedded into other social networking sites, such as **Twitter** and **Facebook**, as well as on institutional websites/portals and shared amongst eligible students. You could try to develop a “fun” video that students would be encouraged to share. Remember to share your videos with the official [NSS YouTube Channel](#) by sending the link to nss@ipsos.com.



Facebook is a useful way to ‘spread the word’ about the NSS among final year students. Some institutions host their own internal campaigns or use the theme of the Ipsos MORI campaign to raise awareness and engage students with the NSS. You could create a **Facebook** photo album to post pictures or video clips of activities that are happening on your campus. You could also create posts based on how NSS results have been used to make improvements at your institution.

A recent feature added to **Facebook** allows users to post live videos across the site. Institutions can make use of this by broadcasting live streams of NSS-themed events or sessions; students can watch these streams online and comment/react to the feed.

Departments, SUs and NSS champions with their own **Facebook** page can also promote general NSS activity, such as announcing the launch of the survey, offering details about dedicated completion sessions, sharing response rate updates, and publicising giveaways. In particular, institutions can create awareness of the survey through competitions on Facebook, encouraging students to use the different functionalities of the site in order to win a particular prize. For example, if you embed an 'enter the survey' button as a post, which will take students to www.thestudentsurvey.com, students who share it will be entered into a prize draw. You can also make use of the Facebook reaction feature where students can use one of the reaction faces (Like, Love, Wow, Angry and Sad) to engage with your posts. You could donate money to charity for every 'like' and 'love' received, or award prizes to students under each reaction. Please find more information in the [competition and prize draws section](#) below.



Twitter is another popular Social Media website that allows users to post their thoughts in the form of 'tweets' in a maximum of 140 characters. They are specifically short and therefore present a challenge in ensuring that the right information is relayed effectively.

In 2017, Ipsos MORI monitored the public tweets relating to the NSS. Tweets about the NSS regularly included direct links to the survey or served as 'calls to action' to encourage students to complete the survey. Tweets are also used by students or union reps to promote their completion of the survey or to publicise previous results and subsequent changes made at institutions.

Institutions can post photo cards on their Twitter accounts in the form of images, which when clicked by students, open to more detailed information about the survey. This can be used to spread the word about [response rates](#), dedicated sessions, how long students have left to complete the survey, when they will be contacted by Ipsos MORI, incentives, the nature of the survey, why it's important, details of any NSS related events, the impact of results and results more widely.

A key aspect of **Twitter** communication is ensuring that you are sending a succinct message and encouraging the message to trend. Try making use of the hashtag functionality - using

the “#” symbol followed by a key word. This can be your NSS campaign title, the survey or just a word that summarises the message, for example #HaveYourSay.

Remember that **Twitter** is a social dialogue – so respond to students and remember to retweet messages that others make. When doing so:

- **Use the 80/20 principle.**
80% of your Tweets should focus on driving interactions with your followers, such as Retweets, replies, and favourites. Once you've built some rapport, you can mix in tweets that get followers to take actions, such as participating in the NSS.

Remember to use as many visual elements as possible to provide an uplift in engagements:

- **Photos** average a 35% boost in Retweets
 - You can include animations as well which can tell a story
 - YouTube videos (and SlideShares) show natively within the app
- Other **videos** get a 28% boost in Retweets
- **Quotes** get a 19% boost in Retweets³

To further boost the presence of the NSS on Twitter, Ipsos MORI has an official NSS Twitter account to retweet your social media postings and create some unique social media content to interact with eligible students.

Smartphone apps. Making use of some of the most popular smartphone apps to promote the



NSS would ensure that messages are reaching them through as many means as possible.

Instagram is a social networking app that allows users to share pictures and videos with others, and to other social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Institutions can link their Instagram accounts with their Twitter and Facebook pages so any pictures or videos posted on the app are shared across other social media websites as well, ensuring a wide spread of the message.

Institutions can post pictures or videos of their NSS campaigns in action alongside their custom hashtag campaigns, e.g. #NSS2018, etc. They can also implement NSS Instagram booths across campuses where students can take photos for their institutions' **Instagram** accounts – these can then be shared across the linked social media accounts to spread the word or added to their **Instagram** 'stories', a function similar to the Snapchat story feature detailed below.

³ https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/a/2014/what-fuels-a-tweets-engagement.html



Snapchat is also a popular smartphone app that institutions can use to 'spread the word' about the NSS. The app allows users to post pictures and videos for a temporary amount of time. When this time is up, they are removed.

A function of the app that makes this useful for promoting the NSS is the 'My Story' area. Institutions can take pictures and videos of their promotional campaigns and compile them into one chronological storyline, their 'NSS Story'. Each snap added to the storyline lasts for 24 hours, allowing institutions to document each day of their campaign from start to finish. The custom geofilter function could be used to create an NSS-themed filter to use over any photos or videos taken after dedicated sessions or specific areas on campus where students complete the survey.

4.2. Competitions and prize draws

This section outlines some of the key messages that institutions could use via social media to promote the survey and boost [response rates](#).

i) Create a challenge

Institutions could use social media as an avenue to create an internal or external competition to boost [response rates](#). This can be done in many ways, including:

- Using **Datawrapper** to post an **interactive chart** to your intranet or Moodle pages to show the current response rate versus your overall targets;
- Post response rates to your **Facebook** or **Twitter** page and challenge other departments, campuses or schools to beat your score;
- Post a link to the online survey and encourage students to 'share' it in order to be in with a chance to win a small prize;
- Create a competitive element **among campuses** and **other departments** for participation to help make sure as many subject areas meet the threshold for publication;
- Regularly tweet updates on response rates using a **custom hashtag** and encourage further participation through the institution **Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat** and **Facebook** accounts while the survey is open;

- Take to **Twitter** and **Instagram** to encourage students to spread the word, for example offering a reward for the best **NSS tweet** or **Instagram** post of the week or for the best method of promotion;
- Run a campaign to boost response rates over fieldwork, for example a member of staff or a rep undertaking a forfeit if internal response rate targets are met. Progress can be posted on **Twitter** and **Facebook**, and final challenges can be filmed/photographed and promoted on social media sources, such as **Instagram** or added to your **Snapchat** story. In 2013, one SU representative had an NSS logo permanently tattooed to his foot!

ii) Promote institutional prize draws and competitions

Many institutions organise prize draws to encourage eligible students to enter the survey. Prizes are a useful thing to communicate via social media sources.

Promote the prize draws that have been identified to the Ipsos MORI team to encourage students to complete the survey online, as well as internal rewards and prizes to help boost response rates. Some ways you can do this include:

- Having a “**complete the NSS survey**” day or week by booking a computer room and providing snacks and sweets so groups of students can complete the survey together. You can promote the session using social media. Please be mindful of student privacy during these sessions. Staff or students running the sessions must not be seen to stand behind students while they complete the survey and cannot complete the survey on anyone else’s behalf.
- Providing extra incentives for people to complete the survey using their **smartphone or tablet**. Maybe have a dedicated stall on campus that has NSS giveaways to students that complete the survey via a mobile device then and there. Again, be mindful of student privacy when they are completing the survey at your stall.
- Encouraging people to tweet when they have completed the survey or received a reward for doing so; custom hashtags such as **#NSSRewards** or **#NSSComplete** can be used for this. You can even take their picture or a video of them completing the survey, with the students’ permission, to upload to your **Instagram** accounts or add to your **Snapchat** stories.
- Encouraging participation through the SU **Twitter, Instagram** and **Facebook** accounts; for example, the Students’ Union (Association or Guild) could arrange a social event for students who complete the survey (using **#NSSReward** to claim a place).
- Post real pictures of incentives with an SU representative or NSS mascot. Perhaps you could post pictures of eligible students claiming prizes as well, with their permission.

Adding a caption such as “Would you like to get your hands on these?” will contribute toward attracting and encouraging completion. These pictures can be shared across all social media platforms via **Instagram** or added to your NSS storyline on **Snapchat**.

You can also communicate the outcome of the prize draws, once fieldwork has closed or the winners have been drawn. Some ideas include:

- Posting on **Facebook** or **Twitter** the number of rewards that have been claimed e.g. how many coffees have been given away. In 2017, several institutions used their response rate reports to monitor the number of students that had responded and made a charitable donation for every completed response. They communicated the total throughout fieldwork via **Facebook** and **Twitter**.
- Posting a picture or video of the winners claiming their prize, as above.

4.3. Top tips for social media

Social media can be a useful tool for promoting the NSS to students as well as making future students aware of the impact of the survey. We advise that any social media strategies are planned in line with wider promotional activities within institutions and adhere to the NSS promotional guidelines set by HEFCE (in partnership with the relevant funding partners) to avoid any attempts of inappropriate influence, whether intentional or not.

Some tips for planning social media activity include:

- Know your audience and the social media they use;
- Involve faculties, staff and the SU where possible. Send out the staff briefing document in [Annex A](#) of this guidance, and ensure they fully understand what they can and cannot say. Encourage them to spread the word throughout the fieldwork period;
- Social media: **Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat** are all popular platforms among student groups and can be used to raise awareness of the NSS, communicate the latest response rates and share results after the survey closes;
- Involve students: Collaborate with supportive Students’ Unions (Associations or Guilds) wherever possible, as well as organisations, clubs and societies to agree a social media communications plan;
- Look at previous years’ response rates – are there any student cohorts that struggled to meet the response rate thresholds; if so, do they have any dedicated social media channels you could make use of?
- Explore how your messages will ‘call students to action’ to take part in the survey. For example, rewarding participation;

- Everywhere you talk about the survey (online, on posters, in meetings), make sure you are reinforcing the same message. Perhaps come up with some custom hashtags and use or refer to them in all your social media conversations;
- Plan your communications so that you have something new and exciting to say throughout the fieldwork period;
- Be responsive – build in resources to respond to students and retweet/repost things that others are saying;
- Build a year-round NSS presence, by posting features on NSS results and documenting ‘real change’ at the institution.