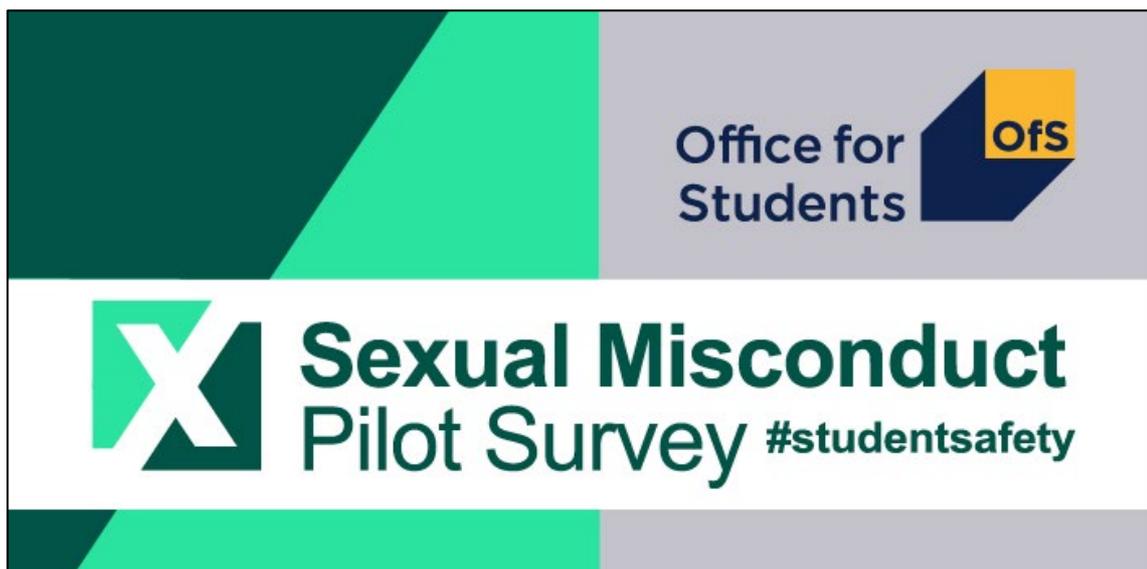# Office for Students Sexual Misconduct Prevalence Survey Pilot:
Technical report to the Office for Students

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Executive summary

Introduction and methodology

IFF Research were commissioned in 2023 by the Office for Students (OfS) to conduct a sexual misconduct prevalence pilot exercise with English higher education (HE) providers. The overarching aim was to explore the feasibility of running a national prevalence survey via an online questionnaire[1]. This was part of the second phase of an OfS pilot project to implement a sector-wide sexual misconduct prevalence survey. OfS carried out a separate cognitive-testing exercise[2] which focused on questionnaire wording and a polling exercise to help refine the questionnaire that was later used in the main prevalence survey pilot[3]. The IFF pilot focused almost exclusively on the operational elements of the pilot survey.

Participating providers were asked to share course and demographic information alongside contact details for eligible participants with IFF, via a pre-agreed template for the contact details database. They were also asked to raise the profile of the pilot among relevant students before and during fieldwork, with a range of materials supplied to them for this purpose. Most of this activity took place in the summer months, with the survey itself launching mid-September 2023.

The online survey was sent to 130,200 students across the 12 participating providers. Alongside this, IFF conducted qualitative interviews with representatives from participating providers and students. These were aimed at understanding how well the operational elements of the survey worked.

Pilot preparation

The original launch date for the survey was May 2023. This was later revised to September 2023. This was in part to avoid launching the survey at the end of term – with students likely busy with exams or winding down for the summer – but also to allow more time for the collation of contact details and also survey design. There was also some concern that students would not be able to access necessary student support services at this time of year. This was important given the potentially triggering nature of the research. The move to September came with other concerns, however, principally the risk of over-saturating students at the start of the academic year, and concerns around a lack of staff resource to support the research.

Providers participating in the qualitative interviews explained that the contact details template was straightforward and easy to use. Nevertheless, it often required more time than anticipated. Many felt this was especially difficult to balance against the summer holidays.

Survey materials

IFF produced promotional material for providers to share with eligible participants. These included dynamic adverts, a survey logo and social media tiles. Providers were also asked by IFF to

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[1] Pilot questionnaire
[2] Shift report
[3] Savanta report

distribute a 'pre-notification' email to students. The purpose of this was to both improve engagement and prepare students about the content of the survey, with a content warning.

Some providers noted that they distributed the promotional material. However, some did not feel they had enough lead in time to do this effectively before the survey was launched, particularly given that September was a busy time of year for them and students were already receiving a large number of communications. Indeed, none of the students that took part in the qualitative interviews recalled seeing any promotional material but indicated that it would have been welcomed, with many describing it as a vital means of promoting the survey.

Achieved sample and response rates

Given this pilot was the first of its kind in England, it was difficult to predict likely levels of response.[4] Despite this, the number of responses received feels relatively low. At the overall level, 5.5% of those invited to take part engaged with the survey in some form. This consisted of 3.6% who responded to the core survey questions[5] with the remainder either opting out or starting the survey, but subsequently dropping out. This left 94.5% who did not engage with the survey at all.

Possible reasons for the relatively low response rate include the aforementioned concerns around survey timing. The reminder campaign was also limited by design, in recognition of the sensitive nature of the research.[6] Another element to consider is the gendered nature of sexual misconduct, with reports of such incidents much more common among women and those identifying as LGBTQ+[7]. Those identifying differently may not have believed the survey was relevant to them as a result. Steps were of course taken to mitigate this, however, with survey communications clear that participation was open to everyone who received an invite irrespective of whether they had personal experience of sexual misconduct or not.

To improve response rates there is scope to increase the number of reminders sent to students, particularly given the low number of queries and opt-outs received. Responses to SMS texts were lower than email communications, but there would still be merit in deploying SMS communications with hard-to-reach groups, for example.

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[4] Other prevalence surveys have been undertaken by individual HE institutions, but this was the first centralised survey run by the OfS, focused on prevalence at a national level.

[5] The core survey questions include all mandatory questions relating to experiences of sexual misconduct at university. Excluded are survey questions relating to staff-student relationships that students could opt to answer at the end of the survey in addition to the core questions.

[6] A maximum of two reminders were sent out to students. This included reminder emails that were sent to either their personal or institutional email address, or both, and/or a reminder text message.

[7] https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9438/CBP-9438.pdf

1   Introduction and methodology

1.1   In April 2021 the Office for Students (OfS) issued a statement of expectations[8] 'for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education'. This included a range of recommendations aimed at supporting higher education (HE) providers to address these issues, such as a drive to clearly communicate behavioural expectations to students, staff and visitors. Other suggestions included ensuring the existence of adequate policies, processes and training, and easily accessible means of reporting sexual misconduct. OfS subsequently commissioned an independent evaluation[9] of this guidance in the following year. Among other recommendations, the findings from this advocated for a sector-wide prevalence survey. The OfS then initiated a project in three phases to implement a sexual misconduct prevalence survey pilot.

1.2   The first phase included the development of the pilot survey questions. OfS took advice from their external advisory group (comprising sector experts on harassment and misconduct) and by drawing on international examples of existing surveys looking at sexual misconduct in higher education. The questions were then cognitively tested with students by Shift Insight to ensure they were understood and appropriately worded.

1.3   In the second phase, two separate surveys were conducted using the questionnaire designed in the first phase. Initially a poll was conducted by Savanta in August 2023 to which 3,017 students from their standing panel responded[10]. The purpose of this was to test the questionnaire with a student audience and gain an early insight into the responses we might receive.

1.4   In 2023, OfS commissioned IFF Research to conduct the second survey as part of phase two, a pilot exercise exploring the feasibility of running a prevalence survey in this space IFF tested the process of delivering the survey, the appetite of students to respond to it and the feasibility of collecting provider-level data. A similar questionnaire was used, with minor amendments made, such as the inclusion of HE specific sources of support. Additional information regarding the survey design can be found in Annex A.

1.5   The aim was to establish a robust set of questions designed to unpick the prevalence of sexual misconduct in HE in England. It would also explore the best methodological approach to (1) provider liaison and contact detail collation, (2) survey communications and (3) response rate maximisation. The various stages of the IFF pilot are summarised in Figure 1.1 below.

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[8] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-wellbeing-and-protection/prevent-and-address-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct/statement-of-expectations/
[9] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/evaluation-of-statement-of-expectations-final-report/
[10] Savanta report

Figure 1.1 Sexual Misconduct Prevalence Pilot Research Methodology

Quantitative online survey
- Survey disseminated to **130,200 students** across **12 participating providers.**
- Fieldwork ran between the **25th September** and **3rd November 2023**.
- **Soft launch** with **1,000 students on the 20th September** to test the survey functionality.

Qualitative interviews with providers
- **5 interviews** with providers about the **sampling process, guidance documents** and **engagement materials** between the **9th October** and **2nd November.**
- **5 interviews** which covered the **survey launch and response rate data** between the **6th** and **23rd November.**

Qualitative interviews with students
- **10 interviews with students** who had completed the survey which covered **how they found out about it, why they took part and the quality of the survey and communications received**. These interviews took place between **21st November and 13th December.**

1.6   As OfS had already carried out a separate cognitive-testing exercise that focused on survey wording, the IFF pilot focused almost exclusively on the operational elements. That being said, IFF recommended a handful of additions, such as signposting to various support options available to students (both from national charities but also provider-specific options) as well as adding reassurances throughout regarding the voluntary nature of the survey and respondent anonymity.

1.7   The third phase of the project has involved analysis of data collected throughout the course of the pilot, an evaluation of the pilot process and publication of the results. Separate documents produced by OfS describe project design and process, and offer an evaluation against each of its aims[11].

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[11] Evaluation report

2   Pilot preparation

2.1   In this chapter we provide a brief overview of OfS's initial engagement with the sector regarding the pilot. We then consider the process of collating contact information for the student database, which was used to disseminate survey invites.

Engaging the sector

2.2   OfS included information about the pilot survey in an email to all Accountable Officers at HE providers in England at the end of January 2023, inviting expressions of interest to participate. In these communications they explained the aims of the survey and that students would be invited to participate later in the year.

2.3   31 providers originally expressed an interest in taking part. These providers then received further communication outlining the requirement to provide IFF with necessary contact details for eligible participants. They would also be asked to promote the pilot among relevant students before and during fieldwork, with a range of materials supplied to them for this purpose (see chapter 3 for more details).

2.4   12 providers[12] went on to participate in the research. Participating providers ranged from those with only 600 students to larger institutions with around 30,000 students. They were also spread geographically across England with providers based in the East of England, the North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and Greater London.

2.5   Providers that did not go on to participate in the research were asked to outline their reasons for this at the point of withdrawal. These ranged from concerns about available resource, to the sensitive nature of the survey content. Some also cited difficulties identifying a legal basis for sharing student data.[13]

2.6   In the qualitative interviews with providers who ultimately did take part, all explained that they did so in order to collect information about sexual misconduct that they had not previously had access to. For most, this was to understand the scale of the issue and for some it was also to inform their policies around sexual harassment.

Provider liaison

2.7   The key touchpoints between IFF and participating providers are outlined in Table 2.1 overleaf. As shown, IFF Research first contacted the named contacts at each provider in April 2023 to outline key dates and expectations in relation to the research. Contact information for this purpose was supplied by OfS and typically included those working in roles related to student experience/success, academic registry or those with a responsibility for harassment or misconduct. The named contact at each provider acted as the day-to-day contact for all generic queries. IFF also had contact with colleagues from other departments in relation to specific queries. For

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[12] The University of Essex, Northumbria University, De Montfort University, The University of Westminster, Buckinghamshire New University, SAE Institute, University for the Creative Arts, Richmond American University London, St Mary's University, Hartpury University and College.
[13] As per GDPR, providers were responsible for identifying their own legal basis for data sharing. The OfS were not able to advise on this but, instead, provided a link to guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office website.

example, throughout the contact detail collation period we often liaised with colleagues from data, systems and compliance departments whilst colleagues in communications and marketing were contacted regarding promotion of the survey.

Table 2.1 Contact detail collation – communication timelines

Dates	Contact detail collation communications
W/c 24th April	Initial contact with providers who had opted in
W/c 8th May	Contact detail template provided
W/c 15th May	Update regarding timelines – survey launch date pushed back to September 2023*
W/c 22nd May	Questionnaire shared with participating providers
W/c 26th June	Student promotional materials shared with providers
21st August	Deadline for returning contact details to IFF Research
20th September	Soft launch of survey to c. 1,000 students
25th September	Official survey launch

(W/c: week commencing)

Initially, the pilot survey was due to launch in May 2023. This was later pushed back to give providers more time to consider taking part and to mitigate concerns relating to distributing the survey close to the end of term. This was with a view to maximising the number of participating providers. It also allowed more time for contact detail collation and questionnaire design.

Eligibility criteria

2.8   OfS considered a range of options regarding the most appropriate survey population, deciding on those who had been actively studying in April 2023. This was because the launch of the survey was scheduled for September 2023, with a focus on the prevalence of sexual misconduct for the 2022-23 academic year. This meant recent graduates received an invite to participate in the survey but new students starting after April 2023 did not. Table 2.2 outlines the final eligibility criteria.

2.9   In addition, HE providers were given the option to opt students out of the survey who they identified as not being willing or able to participate. This included students who were seriously ill, in prison or who had previously expressed a reason not to be contacted for research of this kind.

Table 2.2 Survey eligibility criteria

Criteria	Logic
Students on an HE level course that had started on or before 1st January 2023 and were actively studying on 1 April 2023	The student was studying at the institution during the period of interest to the survey e.g. 1st September 2022 – 1st September 2023
Students aged 18 or over on the start date of their course	The student was a legal adult at the time of their studies
Was not an incoming exchange student nor studying mainly overseas	Any experiences of sexual misconduct took place whilst the student was studying at an English institution as per the remit of the OfS

Contacts database

2.10 OfS had meetings with a selection of participating providers to get feedback on the draft template contacts database to streamline the process of returning student data. For ease, HE providers were given the option of returning the data in Legacy Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) or Data Futures formats. [14] A summary of the information requested in these templates is outlined in Table 2.3 below, with the full template provided in Annex B.

Table 2.3 Student information requested from providers

Legacy HESA variable name	Data Futures variable name	Legacy HESA variable name
Unique student identifier	SID	HUSID
Student instance identifier	NUMHUS	NUMHUS
General qualification aim of course	QUALCAT	COURSEAIM
Subject of course 1	QUALSUBJECT	SBJCA
Subject 5 percentage	QUALPROPORTION	SBJPCNT
Mode of study	SCSMODE	MODE
Location of study	DISTANCE	LOCSDY
Start date of instance	ENGSTARTDATE	COMDATE
Date of birth	BIRTHDTE	BIRTHDTE
Domicile	PERMADDCOUNTRY	DOMICILE
Sex	SEXID	SEXID
Ethnicity	ETHNIC	ETHNIC
Disability	DISABILITY	DISABLE
Gender identity	GENDERID	GENDERID
Sexual orientation	SEXORT	SEXORT
Religious belief	RELIGION	RELBLF
Preferred name 1	[N/A]	[N/A]
First name	FNAMES	FNAMES
Surname	SURNAME	SURNAME
UK mobile phone number	UKMOB	UKMOB
Main email	[N/A]	[N/A]
Opt out status	[N/A]	[N/A]

2.11 HE providers were also asked for information about their process and procedures for handling incidences and reports of sexual misconduct (Table 2.4). This allowed for details of report and support services to be shared on the survey platform itself.

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[14] This included HESA Student Return 2021/22 and HESA Student (22056) Return 2022/23.

Table 2.4 Additional guidance and information requested from providers

Additional information requested
Provider name
UKPRN
Whether they have a policy or process for dealing with sexual misconduct, harassment or abuse
Whether the policy or process is publicly available for students
Hyperlinks to relevant policies and processes on their website or intranet
A brief description of the process students can use to report sexual misconduct
Any other information or services we should signpost students to

Quality control

2.12   Once HE providers had returned their student contact details, initial checks were undertaken to ensure the file included the expected number of records, did not contain duplicate records and that all variables appeared to be appended correctly and in line with Data Futures or Legacy HESA guidelines. A full list of the checks conducted is included below in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Checks conducted on returned student contact details

Check	Details of how check was conducted
Does the file contain the expected number of records?	Used the OfS Data Dashboard to compare the total records to the number of students in 2021-22.
Does the number of opt outs look reasonable?	Used the 'opt out status' variable to calculate what percentage of the total contact database had been opted out and flagged if proportion was higher than 5%.
Checks for duplicates	Checked for duplicate values in the 'Unique student identifier', 'mobile number' and 'email' variables.
Is the right information in each column / is there any information missing?	Used Data Futures and Legacy HESA guidance to ensure all returned records fit the expected values.
Is there an email address provided for all records?	Checked the 'email' variable for blanks or error values e.g. N/A or #####
Do email addresses correspond to names?	Checked the 'email' variable broadly corresponded to the name variables.
Do names look correct?	Checked the 'name' variables for blanks or error values e.g. N/A or ##### and checked that first name and surname were split into separate variables.
Do the mobile numbers contain enough digits?	Checked that the 'mobile number' variable had a minimum of 10 digits and was not missing leading zeros.

Key reflections and learnings

2.13   Providers participating in the qualitative interviews explained that the contact detail template was straightforward and easy to use. Nevertheless, it often required considerable time from data, systems and compliance colleagues to process the information request, more so than originally anticipated at project inception. As a result, many expressed that they would have preferred more clarity around the time and resource required in advance. While we provided a great deal of information upfront via a dedicated liaison team, a detailed conversation about each stage of the process may well have highlighted the resource required more quickly in some instances.

"I think it was more difficult than it might have been, because there was a lot of work involved for us which I guess I hadn't appreciated. I'm sure if I read the notes more carefully it would have said that, but I hadn't internalised that."

HE Provider

2.14   The survey was initially due to launch in May 2023, however the launch was delayed due to concerns from some HE providers that they would not be able to provide student contact details in time. Some were also concerned that students would be less likely to engage with the survey at that time of year as they may be busy with exams or winding down for summer. There was also some worry that students would not be able to access necessary student support services at this time of year which was of concern due to the potentially triggering nature of the research.

2.15   The fieldwork timings were then moved to start in September 2023. This presented its own challenges, however. All providers highlighted that launching in September meant that contact detail collation happened over the summer holidays when resource was limited, and students were already receiving a lot of communication about the start of the new academic year.

"Doing it in September, the challenge isn't just internal resource, it's that student touchpoints are saturated, so the competition your survey is having from everything else is massive."

HE Provider

2.16   This was further exacerbated by the fact that it was a particularly turbulent time for many HE providers as the first Data Futures specification return for the 2022/23 academic year[15] was due to be submitted to HESA in October 2023. This meant many were in the process of updating their data collection specifications at the point of the student contact submission deadline and therefore could not be 100% confident in the accuracy of the data provided. In fact, some were unable to return their full dataset to IFF Research until after the October 2023 HESA deadline, and instead provided student contact details in August and appended course and demographic information at a later date.

2.17   Despite this, some students felt that September was a good opportunity to reflect on their experiences of the previous academic year and disclose what they were comfortable sharing. Others also noted that students are often checking their emails at this time of year and had time to complete 'administrative' tasks.

"I think it was perfect because it was the first week of freshers week… so there was time to do it, I guess."

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[15] HESA Student (22056) Return 2022/23

<div align="right">**Student**</div>

2.18 In contrast, others echoed concerns raised by providers, explaining that September was a busy time of the year with many overloaded with emails and start-of-term information. There were also those who reported that they found it difficult to recall their experiences in the previous academic year. Some students suggested that delivering the survey at quieter periods between exams could be more effective, or at the end of the academic year, to give students a chance to reflect on their experiences.

"You still have a little bit of mental space left and you're coming towards the end of the academic year, so you can take that time to reflect back on your experience that year."

<div align="right">**Student**</div>

2.19 Survey timings aside, concerns were also expressed about data security and the justification for sharing such a large amount of student data with a third party for the purposes of research. These were raised by different providers throughout the period of contact detail collation and also retrospectively, during the qualitative interviews. While many were reassured that this request had come from OfS, others expressed regret that they had not been more involved with the other HE providers taking part to discuss these matters and allay fears.

"It would have been helpful to know who else was involved in the pilot at the very early stages so that we could have potentially had a conversation with them to allay any fears, to think about what we were doing, how we were doing it. So, I think that was a recurring theme."

<div align="right">**HE Provider**</div>

3   Survey materials

3.1   In this chapter we consider the survey engagement materials disseminated via providers both before and during fieldwork, as well as the invitation materials disseminated directly to students via IFF.

Promotional materials and pre-notification email

3.2   Building a survey brand is important for enhancing the legitimacy of the exercise as well as awareness/engagement levels among the target population. This ultimately helps to maximise survey response and often relies heavily on engagement with (and from) associated institutions, in this case the HE providers. IFF devised a range of promotional materials with this in mind. Participating providers were encouraged by both IFF and OfS to disseminate these in the weeks leading up to the launch of the survey and also throughout fieldwork. They were also provided with a link to their own bespoke response rate platform and encouraged to access these regularly. The platform showed the number of responses received overall and broken down by date and time. With the ability to monitor response at this level, providers were in theory encouraged to undertake further awareness raising activities where required.

Survey logo

3.3   Core to any brand is the use of a distinguishable logo. Figure 3.1 shows the version agreed and designed by the marketing team at IFF. It was important to ensure a gender-neutral colour scheme, to avoid any implication that the survey was more or less relevant to certain groups.

Figure 3.1 Survey logo

Promotional material content

3.4   The promotional materials often accompanied by this logo can be found in Annex C. By way of a summary, they included an email hero image, three types of dynamic adverts, and social media titles that could be used across four different types of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok).

3.5   Amongst the providers that were interviewed regarding fieldwork, thoughts towards the promotional materials were mixed. Some providers felt that they were striking and to the point, while others felt that they were too corporate and could be made more 'student-friendly'. However, all agreed that the materials should be sensitive given the nature of the topic.

3.6   In terms of action taken, some of the providers noted that they ensured the promotional materials were distributed, including in libraries, via leaflets and posters on students' union boards, over social media, and on Google Classroom. Other providers felt that they did not have enough lead-in time to promote the survey effectively, particularly given the busy time of year, nor did they want to

overload students at the start of term. One provider also noted that they had concerns sharing the materials via social media given the sensitive nature of the topic.

"It came down to the timing, I think if it had come at a different time, we would have probably promoted it more, but because of start of term information overload, we didn't."

HE Provider

3.7 A small number of providers shared that they would have tried to create their own branded promotional materials if they had more time or if the survey was to continue in future years.

"If it [the survey] became a regular feature of receiving student feedback and student views then we'd probably look at creating something [promotional materials] a bit more significant."

HE Provider

3.8 Despite some providers recalling sharing the promotional materials, none of the students who participated in the qualitative interviews saw any promotional materials on campus or on social media. However, students did see the value in doing so and felt that it was important to promote the survey to raise awareness about sexual misconduct. Some students would have liked to have seen the survey promoted widely, such as in student bars, the students' union, and the library.

"It's important to highlight it [research about sexual misconduct] around the uni. Not just for research purposes but also to make people feel as though they can speak about this stuff."

Student

3.9 We also shared pre-notification email text for HE providers to disseminate among relevant students in advance of the survey launching, with the subject line "Upcoming chance to take part in OfS research: Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey". This email can be found in Annex D. Most providers interviewed noted that they did share this email, one noted that they added their institution's reasoning for taking part and made the support services' availability more prominent.

3.10 A minority of students interviewed recalled receiving the pre-notification email. All students thought it was an important communication to send out, however. This was so it could prime students to start thinking about any incidents that may have happened to them, and prewarn them that a survey, which could be potentially triggering, was due to be emailed.

"I would have liked to receive this [pre-notification email] before. I think it would give me some chance to prepare […] I would have been calmer, less in the trauma."

Student

Invitation emails and text messages

3.11 The initial contact strategy saw IFF share survey communications across a maximum of three contact windows. This was in recognition of the sensitive nature of the research and a desire to ensure students did not feel undue pressure to take part. It was agreed that these would be disseminated via institutional email addresses in the first instance, with the use of personal email addresses reviewed ahead of the first reminder. It was subsequently agreed that personal email addresses could be deployed in the reminder strategy, following relatively few opt outs and/or concerns raised via the survey mailbox following the initial invite.

3.12 Text messages were also sent to a small selection of students in order to test the likely response rate to this medium. Recipients were selected based on their available contact information, with those who only had personal email addresses prioritised. This was because they will have been approached across a maximum of two contact points prior to the text message campaign.

3.13 The final contact strategy is summarised in Table 3.1 below. This table shows when each of the invites and reminders were sent to students, and whether this was the first, second or third time that they were contacted. The associated response rates are explored in the next chapter.

Table 3.1 Contact strategy

Survey communications	Institutional email addresses	Personal email addresses only
Soft launch: 20th September	1st communications received	N/A
Main launch: 25th September		
Reminder email (1): 19th October	2nd communications received	1st communications received
Reminder email (2): 30th October	3rd communications received	2nd communications received
Reminder text: 1st November	N/A	3rd communications received

3.14 The initial invite, shown on page 16, included a content warning, an overview of the survey, a unique link to the survey, instructions on how to opt out and a link to the survey's information page for more information and FAQs. The website can be viewed here: https://sexualmisconductsurvey.com/. This was also shared with providers during the contact detail collation phase, to help inform their decisions around taking part.

Survey invite text

Subject line: Have your say in the Office for Students' Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey

ID: <add IFF ID>

Content warning: This email includes mentions of sexual misconduct.

Dear <Name>

We'd like to invite you to take part in the Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey. This research study is carried out by IFF Research on behalf of the Office for Students (OfS), the English higher education regulator.

This study is key to **understand students' experiences of sexual misconduct and use this information to help inform the OfS' approach to tackling sexual misconduct in higher education.**

We know your time is precious, so we have only included questions that we really need the answer to. The survey will take you up to **15 minutes** to complete. You will be able to return to the survey at any time and don't need to complete it in one sitting.

COMPLETE SURVEY NOW

<survey link>

Enter your unique access code <access code>

Alternatively please go here: [webpage link] and enter the ID at the top of this email.

What do I do if I no longer want to be contact about this survey?
If you would prefer not to be contacted again about this research, please email OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com or call us free on 0800 0147 350.

Where can I go if I have more questions?
For more information about the survey and how your data will be used, please visit https://sexualmisconductsurvey.com/.

If you would like to contact the Office for Students about this research, please e-mail smsurvey@officeforstudents.org.uk. If you would like to contact IFF about this research, please email OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com or call us free on 0800 0147 350.

Thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to the survey.

3.15   The students interviewed were positive about the survey invite; they thought it was professional and eye-catching, encouraging them to take part. They acknowledged that the communications received were detailed, but that they needed to relay the relevant information. Students were pleased that the content warning was obvious across all communications and could recognise that the email came from a trusted source.

All the students interviewed received the invitation email via their institutional email address, which they felt was more appropriate than if they have received the invite via their personal email

address. This does not necessarily tally with the fact that response rates were much higher on personal emails, however (see Chapter 4). As such, it is important to maintain a balance of both.

"For this sort of survey, it was definitely appropriate that it was just the university email."

Student

3.16   None of the students interviewed received a reminder via text message. A minority noted that this could be deemed less appropriate given the subject matter.

3.17   The majority of students interviewed did not access the survey information website, the FAQs, or the OfS Sexual Misconduct Survey website. When students were shown these sites during the interview, they were received positively, and students felt that they contained the relevant information. A couple of students noted that they would have appreciated some information on how best to complete the survey (e.g. in a place where they feel comfortable and calm, to tell a friend they are completing the survey so they can provide support if it is triggering).

3.18   The information included in both reminder emails broadly replicated the text shown in the initial invite and can be found in Annex E. The wording for the text messages was subject to a character limit of 160, per the limit for a single SMS message:

"Content warning: measuring the prevalence of sexual misconduct in HE – Help OfS by completing their survey this week: [LINK TO SURVEY]"

Key reflections and learnings

3.19   Among the students that were interviewed, in general, the survey was well received. Students were very interested in taking part, in particular, because they understood the value of collecting data on the prevalence of sexual misconduct within HE institutions. Among the students who have experienced sexual misconduct, they were interested in completing the survey as a way of detailing what had happened to them and to have their experiences heard. These students felt that their participation was cathartic and that once they had completed the survey, they were relieved.

"When I saw it, I saw it as an opportunity to sort of, even though I wasn't… really going to report it, I was however able to in some way get it off my chest… so it was a welcome email."

Student

"I've had things happened that I haven't bothered reporting so it's nice to put it out there so at least it's counting towards something rather than just not saying anything at all."

Student

3.20   A small number of students had concerns about whether the details shared would remain confidential. However, they were reassured by the information provided in the emails received.

"I was more worried it would go back to the university and then to the course... then it would be easily identifiable because people already know [what happened]."

Student

3.21   Overall, students were pleased that the survey was being conducted, and that their university was involved. One point noted by several students was that they were not entirely clear who was responsible for the survey. Some students believed that it was their university that was running the

survey as opposed to OfS. The students who were clear about who was distributing the survey were glad that it was being run by a third party as it provided a separation from their university.

"It's good that the university was doing something that wasn't directly linked to them in terms of it wasn't an in-house survey, it was a third-party coming in."

Student

4 Achieved sample and response rates

4.1 This chapter details the achieved sample and response rates from the survey, as well as non-response numbers and reasons given for not taking part in the survey.

Overall levels of response

4.2 At the data reduction phase respondents were categorised into one of four groups, depending on their level of engagement with the survey:

1. A '**core complete**': those who completed all of the core questions, up to and including the penultimate section, section L "Understanding of processes".

2. A '**full complete'**: those who completed all of the core survey questions as well as the optional questions relating to student/staff relationships (so up to and including section M "Student/staff relationships").

3. A '**dropout'**: those who opened the survey link but did not complete all of the core survey questions.

4. An **'opt-out'**: those who responded to our survey communications asking to be opted-out of any further communications about the survey.

5. A '**non-complete'**: anyone who did not respond to the survey invitation at all.

4.3 As shown in Table 4.1 below, a total of 4,700 students completed the survey, equivalent to 3.6% of the starting population (1.4% core responses and 2.2% full responses). A further 0.1% opted out and 1.8% provided a partial response. In total therefore, 5.4% engaged with the survey in some form and 94.6% did not engage at all.

Table 4.1 Count of survey responses by different stages of completion

	Count	% of population
Population	**130,200**	-
Core complete	1,880	1.4%
Full complete	2,820	2.2%
SUM: any complete	**4,700**	**3.6%**
Opt-out	85	0.1%
Dropouts	2,305	1.8%
SUM: any engagement	**7,085**	**5.4%**
No engagement	123,110	94.6%

4.4 With the survey the first of its kind in England[16], it was difficult to predict the response rate. Nevertheless, those outlined above do feel relatively low. Possible reasons for this include:

- Survey timing: During the qualitative interviews, many providers pointed out that students were already receiving a lot of communication about the start of the new academic year, limiting their capacity to engage. Relatedly, many providers explained a reluctance to make extensive use of the promotional materials due to fear of over-saturating students with communications in their first weeks back after the summer holiday.

- Emerging survey: As mentioned in the previous chapter, building a survey brand is often important for maximising response. While awareness-raising activities were encouraged, providers often explained that they were limited in the lead up to the survey due to the need to navigate annual leave within the team over the summer months. Others referenced the fact that the fieldwork period spanned the start of a new academic year, a notoriously busy time in the sector. There is also the novel and sensitive nature of the research, which often led to some hesitation among providers. Indeed, as previously mentioned, many ultimately withdrew from the research whilst citing such concerns.

- Contact strategy: As also mentioned in the previous chapter, efforts to boost response were balanced with the need to ensure students did not feel undue pressure to take part. As such, reminder activities were limited to two interactions in total. Nevertheless – as we go on to discuss – there was perhaps scope to send out further reminders without compromising survey reputation and respondent wellbeing. Indeed, there were relatively few queries raised via the survey mailbox throughout fieldwork. It is also worth reflecting on the fact that the opportunity to disseminate reminders via personal email addresses was more limited, due to a desire to test survey engagement via institutional emails first.

Responses received over time

4.5 Figure 4.1 is an overview of the responses received across the entire fieldwork period alongside key touchpoints in the contact strategy. Table 4.2 breaks this down further, demonstrating the response rates against each communication, split by email type and SMS. As shown, the personal email addresses performed the best at each stage. Following the initial invite the response rate was 1.1% on personal emails vs. 0.8% for institutional emails, for example.[17] Although the SMS messages saw the lowest levels of response, the 0.7% seen is similar to the 0.8% response rate to the initial invite to institutional emails, suggesting some merit in this approach.

4.6 As mentioned previously, these – alongside relatively low levels of opt out and queries raised via the survey mailbox – do suggest that additional reminder emails would likely have been fruitful, without compromising respondent wellbeing. This would particularly be the case for those targeted at personal email addresses. Doing so would not necessarily require a longer fieldwork period. There was a relatively large gap between the initial invite and the first reminder of c4.5 weeks, for example, which could have been condensed.

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[16] Other prevalence surveys have been undertaken by individual HE institutions, but this was the first survey run by the OfS, focused on prevalence at a national level.

[17] Please note, the percentages in table 4.2 do not sum to the overall response rate of 3.6% as each table is based on different samples. The SMS responses account for 0.01% of the starting sample, for example.

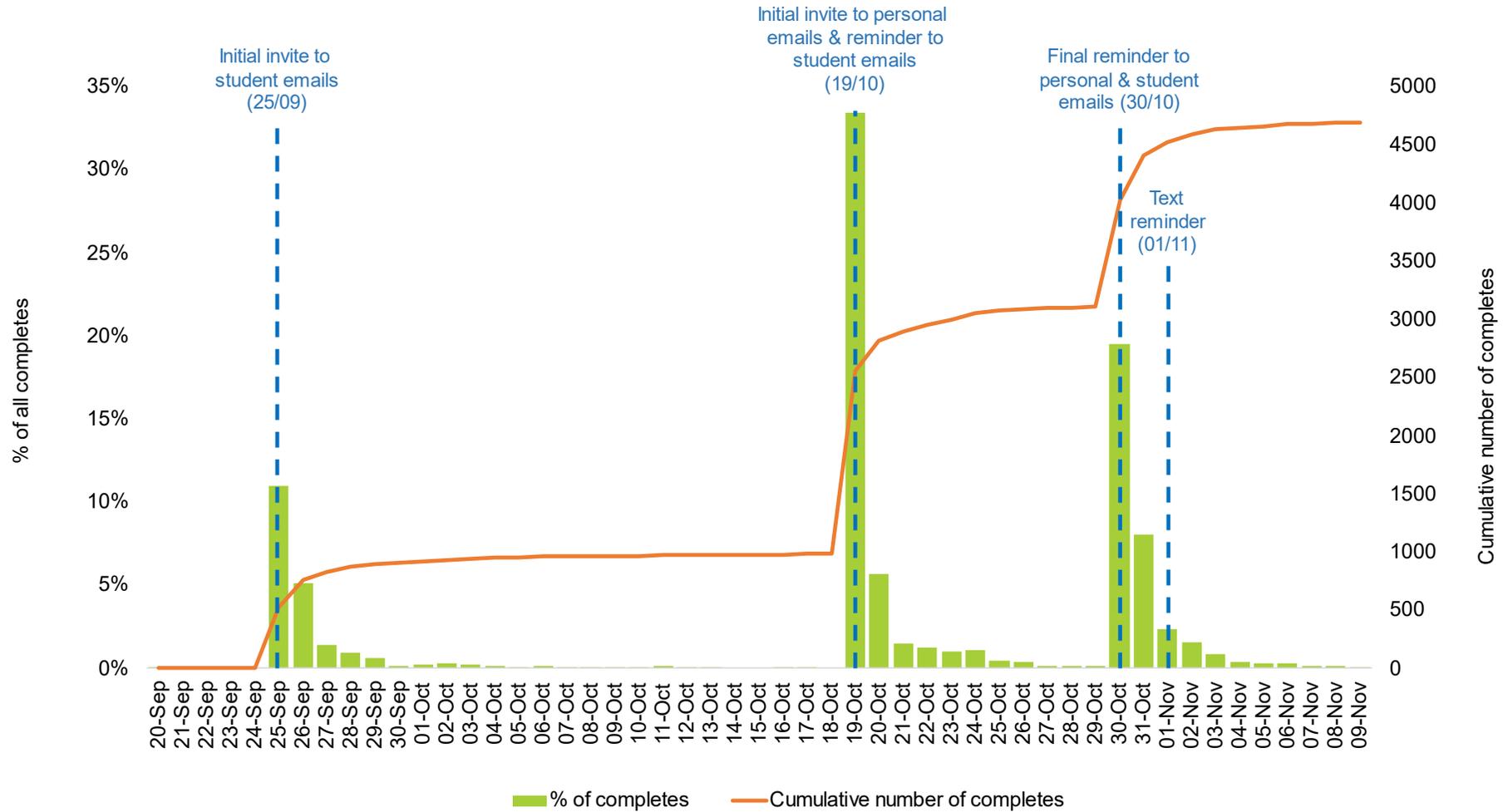**Figure 4.1 Chart to show survey response rates over time**

Table 4.2 Response rates by communication type

Communication		Institutional email	Personal email	SMS
Initial invite (25th September	Number sent	127,070	N/a	N/a
	Response rate	0.8%	N/a	N/a
Reminder 1 (19th October)	Number sent	126,100	127,575	N/a
	Response rate	0.6%	1.1%	N/a
Reminder 2 (30th October)	Number sent	123,975	124,515	2,345
	Response rate	0.4%	0.9%	0.6%
ALL	**Overall response rate**	**1.7%**	**1.9%**	**0.6%**

Response rate by HE provider and demographic group

4.7 Table 4.3 shows the range of response rates seen across providers, varying from 2.9% to 8.5%. Those providers with the higher response rates typically had a smaller starting population. For example, the three providers with the highest response rates had the smallest student populations of between 500-1,000 eligible students invited to take part in the survey.

Table 4.3 Response rates by provider

Provider	Response Rate
1	8.5%
2	7.6%
3	5.7%
4	5.4%
5	4.9%
6	4.2%
7	4.0%
8	3.8%
9	3.5%
10	3.4%
11	3.0%
12	2.9%

Response rates by demographic characteristics

4.8   Comparison of response rates against the student population submitted by participating HE providers highlighted some key differences across a number of demographic characteristics. A key disparity was around sex and sexual orientation:

- Sex: 64% of respondents were female vs. 55% of the population.

- Sexual orientation: 15% of respondents identified as LGBTQ+ vs. 10% of the population.

4.9   This most likely reflects the gendered nature of sexual misconduct and the higher levels of reporting of sexual harassment and abuse among women and those identifying as LGBTQ+.[1]

4.10   There was also some disparity according to year of study with those in their second and third years of higher education more likely to respond to the survey than those in the fourth or fifth years. For example, 46% of responses were from those in their second year (despite these students making up 40% of the population) while those in their fourth year account for 16% of responses (but 21% of the population).

4.11   Table 4.4 shows the full breakdown of responses by key course and demographic characteristics.

Table 4.4 Survey completion, by demographic and course characteristic

		Completes (n)	Completes profile	Population profile	Difference
Mode of study	Full-time	4,255	91%	88%	2%
	Part-time	445	9%	12%	-2%
Year of study	Year 2	2,145	46%	40%	7%
	Year 3	1,510	32%	29%	3%
	Year 4	740	16%	21%	-6%
	Year 5+	310	7%	10%	-4%
Sex	Male	1,625	35%	44%	-10%
	Female	3,025	64%	55%	9%
	Other/unknown	50	1%	1%	<1%
Ethnic group	White	2055	44%	44%	0%
	Mixed	185	4%	4%	0%
	Asian	415	9%	11%	-2%
	Black	475	10%	10%	0%
	Other ethnic group	105	2%	3%	0%
	Not available/refused	50	1%	1%	0%
Disability	Learning difference	215	5%	4%	0%
	Social/communication condition	50	1%	1%	0%
	Physical impairment	80	2%	2%	0%
	Mental health condition, challenge or disorder	260	6%	4%	2%
	A disability, impairment or medical condition not listed or 2+ conditions	295	6%	4%	3%

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[1] https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9438/CBP-9438.pdf

		Completes (n)	Completes profile	Population profile	Difference
Gender identification	Same as sex	4,020	86%	86%	-1%
	Different to sex	165	4%	2%	1%
	Not available/refused	510	11%	12%	-1%
Sexual orientation	Bisexual	340	7%	4%	3%
	Gay or lesbian	180	4%	3%	1%
	Heterosexual or straight	3,100	66%	73%	-7%
	Other sexual orientation	200	4%	3%	2%
	Not available/refused	875	19%	17%	1%
Religion	No religion	1,435	31%	33%	-2%
	Buddhist	65	1%	1%	0%
	Christian	1,630	35%	32%	3%
	Hindu	325	7%	6%	1%
	Muslim	590	13%	15%	-3%
	Sikh	50	1%	1%	0%
	Any other religion or belief	230	5%	4%	1%
Total		**4,700**[2]	-	-	-

Key reflections and learnings

4.12 It is worth considering the contact strategy in more depth, with the pilot data suggesting scope for further reminder activities. While the text messages gathered some response, the rate was lower than seen with the email communications. There may still be merit in deploying SMS communications however, for example with particularly hard-to-reach groups.

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[2] The total does not equal the column sum because all figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

5   Survey metadata

5.1   This final chapter considers how long the survey took to complete, including the individual sections of the survey, an analysis of the survey dropouts and the device students used to complete the survey.

Overall survey length

5.2   The core survey took 9 minutes to complete on average.[3] The full survey was only slightly longer, at 12 minutes and 45 seconds on average. As shown in Figure 5.1, the majority completed the survey in under 6 minutes. A minority (1%) of students took longer than 45 minutes.[4]

Figure 5.1 Chart to show the variation in time taken to complete the questionnaire in minutes.
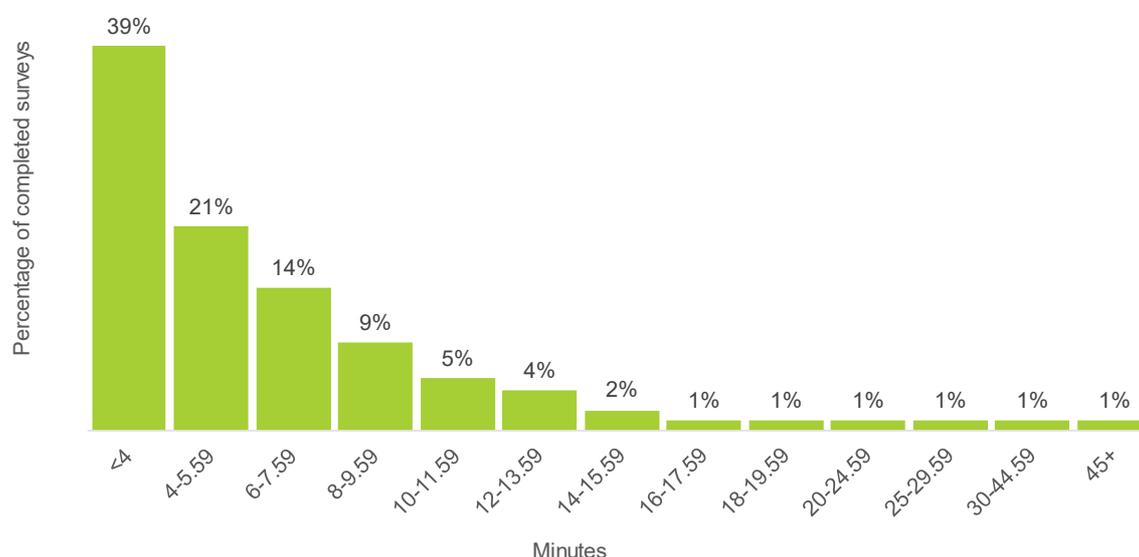
Core section timings

5.3   Table 5.1 shows the average time spent on each section of the survey. As shown, section M which asked questions about student and staff relationships took the longest to respond to (3 minutes and 45 seconds). This was most likely due to the number of questions, as opposed to question complexity (14 questions in this section vs. 1 to 6 questions in the other sections).

5.4   Interestingly, despite having only one question (A1. Since being a student, have you experienced any of the following behaviours?), Section A was the next longest section to complete (1 minute and 32 seconds). This is likely due to the detailed wording used for the response options and the sensitivity of the question.

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[3] As a reminder, the core survey included Sections A-L.
[4] Those who took more than one hour to complete the survey were excluded from the analysis, as this most likely reflects cases where students did not complete the survey in one sitting. It is possible that the remaining longer lengths (e.g., 45+ minutes) are also reflective of this.

Table 5.1 Median time spent on each of the main survey sections

Section	Time (minutes and seconds)	Number of questions
Section A	01:32	1
Section B	01:02	6
Section C	00:41	2
Section D	01:01	6
Section E	00:17	4
Section F	00:56	1
Section G	00:34	5
Section H	00:32	2
Section I	00:38	6
Section J	00:08	4
Section K	00:41	1
Section L	00:32	2
Section M	03:45	14
Section N	00:27	2
Total (excluding section M)	**08:59**	**42**
Total (overall)	**12:44**	**56**

5.5   All students interviewed as part of the research thought that the length of the survey was appropriate and included a good level of detail. More information on students' views on the content of the survey are included in Annex A.

Device used to complete survey

5.6   Among those that completed the survey, three in ten (30%) completed the survey using a computer, 69% did so via their mobile phone and less than 1% used a tablet. This reflects general trends seen in other surveys with similar audiences. Indeed, our standard approach is to adopt a mobile-first principle when designing survey platforms of this nature. This includes auto-rendering to device and screen size, for example.

5.7   All students interviewed completed the survey at home and completed it in one sitting. Students felt positively about being able to pause the survey and come back to it if they needed to.

Analysis of dropouts

5.8   The purpose of understanding dropout rates is to inform which questions in the survey could deter students from completing the survey and therefore where there should be revisions to improve overall response. Dropout rates could also indicate where there might be issues with the survey and how well questions are understood.

5.9 A total of 2,300 students dropped out of the online survey before reaching the final page. Of these, almost three in ten left the survey at the landing page (28.3%). This aligns with other surveys, whereby it is typical for a substantial amount of respondents of online surveys to drop out near the beginning.

5.10 Table 5.2 outlines the drop out proportions at each survey section. As shown, other areas of biggest drop out include:

- Almost four in ten (39.8%) dropped out at Section A which asked students about their experiences of sexual misconduct (excluding those involving physical contact). Again, this is likely due to the fact that this question came at the start of the survey, however, the sensitive nature of the topic and 'wordy' nature of the response options could have also resulted in students dropping out of the survey.

- Almost two in ten (17.2%) dropped out at Section F where they were asked about their experiences of sexual misconduct (including those involving physical contact).

Table 5.2 Drop-outs by section

Section	Percentage of drop outs (%)
Introduction	28.3%
Section A	39.8%
Section B	3.2%
Section C	0.5%
Section D	1.3%
Section E	0.7%
Section F	17.2%
Section G	1.1%
Section H	0.2%
Section I	0.3%
Section J	0%
Section K	1.2%
Section L	6.0%

6 Conclusions and recommendations for future surveys

6.1 The sexual misconduct pilot survey aimed to establish a robust set of questions and the best methodological approach to provider liaison, effective contact detail collation, survey communications and response rate maximization. There were many successes in this context, alongside areas for improvement. In this final chapter we summarise these against key recommendations for future iterations of the survey.

Pilot preparation

Overall, the process of collecting contact details from participating providers went well. However, there are some points to keep in mind in the context of securing as much buy-in as possible in future iterations. These predominantly relate to overall timetabling, both in terms of contact detail collation but also the fieldwork schedule. Other points include building flexibility into the request for contact details and ensuring the requirement and scope of provider involvement is made clear:

- **Reflecting on project timings:** many providers expressed concerns around the overall survey timings, both in terms of the original launch date (May 2023) and the revised launch date (September 2023). In the context of a launch date in May, providers flagged that students were likely busy with exams or winding down for the summer. September also generated concerns around available time, with the start of the academic year flagged as particularly busy for providers and students alike. Additionally, all providers highlighted that launching in September meant that contact detail collation happened over the summer holidays when resource was limited.

- **Flexibility around the contact detail templates is important:** providers were able to return their student contact database in one of two formats (Legacy HESA or Data Futures templates), or a combination of both. This meant that the data could be shared in the format it was already recorded in, ensuring a straightforward process for all.

- **Ensuring the requirement around the contact detail collation is clearly communicated:** IFF provided a great deal of written information upfront via a dedicated liaison team. This was followed up with telephone communication to confirm the requirement had been understood and to run through any concerns or queries providers might have had. It may have been worth talking through each stage in detail even where providers did not have questions, however, as doing so may well have highlighted the resource requirement to this group sooner. It is of course important to strike the right balance between giving providers space to work through the requirement in their own time and prompting them with the detail.

- **Review the nature of provider involvement:** some providers explained that they would have been more inclined to take part had they been more involved in the survey design. This does not necessarily mean inviting providers to comment on the questionnaire itself, although many appeared to welcome this opportunity. The provision of detailed information upfront about the different stages feeding into the design of the questionnaire could equally have allayed some concerns. Of particular interest were considerations around data security and survey ethics given the sensitive nature of the research.

Survey materials

Building a survey brand is important for enhancing the legitimacy of the exercise as well as awareness/engagement levels among the target population. This ultimately helps to maximise survey response and often relies heavily on engagement with (and from) associated institutions, in this case the HE providers. Overall, the survey materials developed were well received. There is perhaps more to be done to ensure more wider spread and systematic use of the materials across providers however.

- **Encourage providers to distribute promotional materials:** it is important to ensure that providers have clear instructions on how best to promote the survey among students. It is also important to ensure there is necessary time for promotion. Indeed, despite some providers recalling sharing the promotional materials, none of the students who participated in the qualitative interviews saw any promotional materials on campus or on social media. Nevertheless, both students and providers were positive about the promotional materials once shown, noting its sensitive nature, as well as the importance of promoting the survey to both boost response rates and make students aware that they would be receiving the survey.

- **Retain the inclusion of clear signposting to relevant support services:** ensuring (potential) participants are given sufficient guidance about where they might seek support is essential, as well as information on how they could go about reporting an incident, alongside clearly communicated options for opting out and/or speaking with the organisations involved in disseminating the research.

- **Content warnings and reassurances is key:** content warnings, reassurances and signposting to support services were viewed as essential for this type of research among both providers and students. It is also worth making the roles of different organisations clear, particularly as those who understood that it was being distributed by a third party were reassured by the fact it was being run by a third party.

Response rate maximisation

The response rate achieved was relatively low. It is worth reflecting on the contact strategy and survey design in this context, with scope for more contact points; in particular:

- **There is a careful balance to be struck when considering the reminder strategy:** while this must pay due consideration to the balance between maximising levels of engagement and ensuring respondent wellbeing, there is perhaps scope to send out further reminders, with relatively few opt outs and/or concerns raised via the survey mailbox. The survey was also generally welcomed, with students participating in the qualitative strand pleased that the survey was being conducted and that their university was involved.

- **It is worth keeping in mind that the type of email addresses engaged can lead to different levels of response:** Although some students suggested that survey invites to institutional emails were perhaps the most appropriate, the wider evidence suggested that it is important to incorporate both institutional and personal contact details into the contact strategy, with the latter generating more responses in practice. Reflecting the qualitative feedback, perhaps the pre-notification email and the initial invite could be used to pre-warn students that an email to their personal email address or a text message could be sent them in due course.

- **Use of SMS invites may not form the core contact strategy but could have some value as an additional option:** the response rate generated by the SMS route was similar to that seen among the use of institutional emails. This suggests some merit in taking this route but – especially as this is a more expensive option – perhaps in select cases only, such as those proving harder to reach over email.

- **Carefully consider survey design:** the importance of a mobile-first approach is highlighted by the fact that 69% of those completing the survey did so via a mobile device. Catering to this fact will help to ensure students remain engaged with the survey as they take part.

7 Annex A: Survey design and provider feedback

Survey design and content

7.1 The survey itself was adapted from existing sexual misconduct prevalence/climate student survey instruments used in higher education, drawing on international best practice, including: the ARC3 survey widely used in the United States; the Republic of Ireland's Student Experience of Sexual Violence and Harassment Survey; and the National Student Safety Survey in Australia (NSSS). The surveys from Ireland and Australia are national surveys, with strong participation from all publicly funded universities. Additionally, the OfS worked with an external advisory group in the development of the survey questions and also when considering the research ethics. This group consists of academics and practitioners with expertise in research into sexual misconduct, many of whom have conducted smaller-scale prevalence surveys.

7.2 Prior to the survey launch, the questionnaire was tested via cognitive interviews with a range of students studying higher education courses in England. The aim of the cognitive interviews was to test question wording comprehension, readability and suitability for the intended audience.

7.3 The quantitative survey was split into three sections. The core survey focused on behaviours related to sexual harassment (excluding those involving physical contact) and behaviours related to unwanted sexual contact (including those involving physical contact). At the end of the core survey students were also given the opportunity to answer some questions on relationships between students and university staff members. A breakdown of the survey contents is shown below in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Breakdown of survey contents

Survey sections	Section headings	
Sexual harassment questions	Section A	Unwanted experiences since becoming a student
	Section B	Experiences of sexual harassment between 1 September 2022 and 1 September 2023
	Section C	Person(s) involved
	Section D	Seeking support
	Section E	Reporting
Unwanted sexual contact questions	Section F	Unwanted sexual contact
	Section G	Experiences of unwanted sexual contact between 1 September 2022 and 1 September 2023
	Section H	Person(s) involved
	Section I	Seeking support
	Section J	Reporting
	Section K	Impact
	Section L	Understanding of process
Student/staff relationship questions	Section M	Student/staff relationships (Optional)

7.4   Generally, the students interviewed felt that the survey wording was direct, detailed, respectful and clear. There was wording in the survey that students felt could be triggering, such as the terminology used at question F1 which asked students if they had experiences of sexual misconduct that included physical contact. However, these students also felt that it was important to be explicit to avoid confusion.

"I got the discussion was really explicit, but it needed to be explicit to make sense."

Student

7.5   Some students reported that they were pleased to see that they survey included questions on student-staff relationships given that they felt this topic is often overlooked.

7.6   Broadly, several students noted that they would have wanted the survey to include open text boxes or 'other, specify' options to be able to recount their experiences more accurately. These students felt that their experiences were more nuanced compared to the response options they were offered.

7.7   A few students also noted that the survey seemed repetitive. After probing this further, it was apparent that they were not able to distinguish between A1 (whether they had experiences of sexual misconduct <u>excluding</u> physical contact) and F1 (whether they had experiences of sexual misconduct which also <u>included</u> physical contact). Students suggested that further detail was required to make it clear that the survey would refer to these separately.

"It was like I've already told you, I don't want to go through this again, I just want to get it over with, you know."

Student

7.8   In contrast, other students would have preferred looped questions, so that they were able to accurately detail each of their experiences individually. These students felt that some of the questions which asked about the details of their experiences were difficult to answer given that they had experienced multiple incidents.

7.9   There was also some confusion about the timeframe used throughout the survey (September 2022 – September 2023). Students felt that whilst the timeframe itself was clear, they were not clear why events before or after this time frame were excluded. A minority found this upsetting as it felt as those experiences 'did not count'. Students suggested that more information on why this timeframe was used would have been helpful.

7.10   Students were also asked to provide feedback on specific questions. A few of the key points raised are noted below:

*   A couple of students flagged that 'stalking' should have been included at A1 (whether they had experiences of sexual misconduct, excluding physical contact).

*   One student suggested adding a neutral option for the scale at question M1 (how uncomfortable / comfortable they were with various exchanges between staff and students) e.g. 'Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable'.

- There was some confusion about the difference between being 'emotionally intimate' and 'romantic' at question M1 (how uncomfortable / comfortable they were with various exchanges between staff and students).

7.11 Due to the sensitive nature of the survey topic, throughout the survey we included various reassurances and links to support. These included:

- Reassurances that the research was entirely voluntary and that if a respondent did not want to answer a particular question they could select 'prefer not to say'.

- Reassurances that responses would remain completely confidential.

- Signposting to more information about OfS's and IFF's data protection and security procedures, and privacy policies.

- Information on what the survey would cover. In particular, for questions that included potentially triggering wording, there was prior warning to respondents that this would be the case.

- Signposting to charities and organisations that are able to offer support, as shown in Figure 7.1.

- Signposting to their HE provider's support procedures, which were agreed in advance with HE providers.

Figure 7.1 Support signposted to survey respondents

- **Rape Crisis:** rapecrisis.org.uk or 0808 500 2222
- **The Survivors Trust:** https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/ or 0808 801 0818
- **Women's Aid Federation:** https://www.womensaid.org.uk/or National Domestic Violence Helpline (24hrs): 0808 2000 247
- **Survivors UK – Male Rape and Sexual Abuse Support:** SurvivorsUK.org or 02035983898
- **Victim support:** https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/ or 0808 168 9111
- **Safeline:** https://www.safeline.org.uk/ or 0808 800 5008
- **Galop** (the LGBT+ anti-violence charity): http://www.galop.org.uk/ or London: 020 7704 2040/ National: 0800 999 5428
- **NHS Mental Health support:** https://www.nhs.uk/mentalhealth
- **Student Minds (the UK's student mental health charity):** www.studentminds.org.uk
- **Mind (mental health charity):** you can call '0300 123 3393' or you can find support at www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/

7.12 The students interviewed were pleased to see the various reassurances and support service information provided throughout the survey. Students felt that this was of key importance, and a few said that they could have been made more obvious throughout, or emailed to students after the survey so that they were able to access them at a later stage.

7.13 A couple of students raised the point that they would have wanted to be signposted, in information at the end of the survey, to where they could go if they needed to report an incident to their university or the police.

"What I would have really liked to be really honest is like at the end of the survey to have an option if you want to share the answers with someone.... It takes a lot of strength to come forward and talk about it."

Student

8   Annex B: Contact detail collation template

1	**OfS Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey Data Template Cover Sheet**
2	**The purpose of this template**
3	This template should be used to attach data for the Office for Students Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey.
4	You should attach the data of ALL students who meet the following criteria to the relevant tab:
5	- age 18 or over on the start date of their course
6	- student started their course on or before 1st January 2023
7	- student is on a HE level course
8	- student is not an incoming exchange student nor studying mainly overseas
9	- student is actively studying on 1 April 2023. See tabs 3 or 5 for further information.
10	You may, exceptionally, identify students who should not be contacted. These include students who are seriously ill, students in prison (who therefore cannot be contacted by email), and students who have expressed a reason not to be contacted, such as a mental health issue. When populating the template, please do not leave out students in this category. Instead, include them in the spreadsheet and code them as '1' in the 'Opt out status' column of the template. This code should not be used where it has not been possible to gain a telephone number or email. We require all data items except contact details to be returned for opted out students.
11	**How to use this template**
12	**Tab 2** should be used to record details of any student policies and processes your instution has for dealing with sexual misconduct/ harassment/ abuse.
13	You should then use **tab 3 AND/OR 5** to upload student data using the Legacy HESA or Data Futures templates.
14	Please attach the data in the tab that matches your current data collection methods best. You may return some students in the Legacy HESA template and the remaining students in the Data Futures template if you wish, but please do not return the same students on both tabs.
15	Please do not delete, insert or re-order any columns in the worksheet.
16	**Returning the completed template**
17	Please return this template to us via our secure data transfer service FileX at https://filex.iffresearch.com/
18	You will have been sent instructions for how to use this service by email.
19	**Please return this data to us by 24th May 2023.**
20	**Contact us**
21	If you have any queries, please respond to the email from your IFF research liason contact or contact us at OfS_SMSurvey_Providers@iffresearch.com
22	

| 1. Cover sheet | 2. Provider SM processes | 3. Legacy HESA | 4. Legacy HESA Guidance | 5. Data Futures | 6. Data Futures Guidance | ⊕ |

Ready   Accessibility: Good to go

SMS Pilot Data Template

Provider: Name of provider

UKPRN: UKPRN

Please use this tab to answer our questions and record any internal policies and processes for dealing with sexual misconduct, harassment or abuse.

This information will be shared with your students at the end of the survey so they can follow the process to report any experiences if they wish.

If you are not able to share a link to your policy/process, do let us know by email and we can discuss the best way to share information with your students.

Do you have a policy/ process for dealing with sexual misconduct/ harassment or abuse?	Yes/ no [Delete as required]
Is the policy/ process publicly available for students?	Yes/ no [Delete as required]
Hyperlink to policy/ process on website/ intranet:	Enter hyperlink

Please note: this link will be shown to your students who complete the survey and does not need to be accessible to us e.g. if it links to the intranet.

Provide a brief description of the process students can use to report sexual misconduct:	Enter description…(max 200 words)
Provide any other information or services we should signpost students to:	Enter description…(max 200 words)

1. Cover sheet | **2. Provider SM processes** | 3. Legacy HESA | 4. Legacy HESA Guidance | 5. Data Futures | 6. Data Futures Guidance

SMS Pilot Data Template

Provider: Name of provider

UKPRN: UKPRN

To submit your sample:
- Populate this worksheet template
- Save, zip and upload file to IFF's secure data transfer site at https://filex.iffresearch.com/

General guidance on completing this template:

This guidance is intended for providers using the Student or Student Alternative data models. For Student Alternative data, data should be returned relating to the current instance period.

Please return ALL students who meet ALL of the following criteria:

- age 18 or over on the start date of their course ((BIRTHDTE + 18 years) <= COMDATE))

- student started their course on or before 1st January 2023 (COMDATE <= 2023-01-01)

- student is on a HE level course (COURSEAIM in 'Dxx', 'Exx', 'Lxx', 'Mxx', 'Hxx', 'Ixx', 'Jxx', 'Cxx', where xx is any valid two-digit code)

- student is not an incoming exchange student nor studying mainly overseas (Student record: (EXCHANGE in 'N', 'Y' AND LOCSDY not in 'S', 'T'), OR Student Alternative record: (EXCHIND = '3' AND LOCSDY not in 'S', 'T'))

- student has not left their course by 1st April 2023 (ENDDATE = [blank] OR ENDDATE > 2023-04-01)

- student is not currently dormant, writing up or intercalating:
(Student record: (REDUCEDI not '04' AND MODE not in '43', '44', '51', '63', '64', '73', '74' AND NOTACT not in '1', '2' AND INTERCALATE not '01'), OR Student Alternative record: (MODE not in '43', '44' AND NOTACT not in '1', '2').

Please do not delete, insert or re-order any columns in the worksheet.

Table 1: Legacy HESA

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Unique student identifier	Student instance identifier	General qualification aim of course	Subject of course 1	Subject of course 2	Subject of course 3	Subject of course 4	Subject of course 5	Subject 1 percentage	Subject 2 percentage	Subject 3 percentage	Subject 4 percentage	Subject 5 percentage	Mode of study	Location of study	Start date of instance	Date of birth	Domicile
HUSID	NUMHUS	COURSEAIM	SBJCA	SBJCA	SBJCA	SBJCA	SBJCA	SBJPCNT	SBJPCNT	SBJPCNT	SBJPCNT	SBJPCNT	MODE	LOCSDY	COMDATE	BIRTHDTE	DOMICILE

1. Cover sheet | 2. Provider SM processes | **3. Legacy HESA** | 4. Legacy HESA Guidance | 5. Data Futures | 6. Data Futures Guidance

Table 2: Legacy HESA Guidance

Item #	Item	HESA variable name	Data example	Notes	Link to HESA coding manual
1	Unique student identifier	HUSID	1234567891011	Please enter 13-digit HUSID.	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/HUSID
2	Student instance identifier	NUMHUS	1	Please enter student's NUMHUS (as submitted in your provider's data return).	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/NUMHUS
3	General qualification aim of course	COURSEAIM	D00	This field describes the general qualification aim of the course and is intended to record the qualification that will be attained as a result of successful	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/COURSEAIM
4	Subject of course 1	SBJCA	100270	The first subject or subjects associated with the current course.	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJCA
5	Subject of course 2	SBJCA	100267	The second subject or subjects associated with the current course (if applicable).	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJCA
6	Subject of course 3	SBJCA	101339	The third subject or subjects associated with the current course (if applicable).	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJCA
7	Subject of course 4	SBJCA		The fourth subject or subjects associated with the current course (if applicable).	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJCA
8	Subject of course 5	SBJCA		The fifth subject or subjects associated with the current course (if applicable).	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJCA
9	Subject 1 percentage	SBJPCNT	50	The proportion of the student's study assigned to the first subject. This must add to 100% across all subjects, regardless of mode of study.	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJPCNT
10	Subject 2 percentage	SBJPCNT	40	The proportion of the student's study assigned to the second subject. This must add to 100% across all subjects, regardless of mode of study.	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJPCNT
11	Subject 3 percentage	SBJPCNT	10	The proportion of the student's study assigned to the third subject. This must add to 100% across all subjects, regardless of mode of study.	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJPCNT
12	Subject 4 percentage	SBJPCNT	0	The proportion of the student's study assigned to the fourth subject. This must add to 100% across all	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21051/a/SBJPCNT

Sheet tabs: 1. Cover sheet | 2. Provider SM processes | 3. Legacy HESA | **4. Legacy HESA Guidance** | 5. Data Futures | 6. Data Futures Guidance

SMS Pilot Data Template

Provider: Name of provider

UKPRN: UKPRN

To submit your data:
- Populate this worksheet template
- Save, zip and upload file to IFF's secure data transfer site at https://filex.iffresearch.com/

General guidance on completing this template:

Where applicable, data should be returned relating to the **current student course session**.

Please return ALL records which meet ALL of the following criteria:

- age 18 or over on the start date of their course ((BIRTHDTE + 18 years) <= ENGSTARTDATE))

- student started their course on or before 1st January 2023 (ENGSTARTDATE <= 2023-01-01)

- student is on a HE level course (QUALCAT not in 'Pxxxx', where xxxx is any valid four-digit code)

- student is not an incoming exchange student nor studying mainly overseas (INCOMINGEXCHANGE = [blank] AND PRINONUK = [blank])

- student is on an active student course session as of the 1st April 2023 - i.e. is not dormant, writing-up or intercalating:
(SCSSTARTDATE < 2023-04-01 AND (SCSENDDATE = [blank] OR SCSENDDATE >= 2023-04-01) AND (STATUSCHANGEDTO = [blank] OR STATUSCHANGEDTO = '01'))

Please do not delete, insert or re-order any columns in the worksheet.

Table 3: Data Futures

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Unique student identifier	Student instance identifier	Qualification category	Subject of course 1	Subject of course 2	Subject of course 3	Subject of course 4	Subject of course 5	Subject 1 percentage	Subject 2 percentage	Subject 3 percentage	Subject 4 percentage	Subject 5 percentage	Mode of study	Distance learner	Start date of engagement
SID	NUMHUS	QUALCAT	QUALSUBJECT	QUALSUBJECT	QUALSUBJECT	QUALSUBJECT	QUALSUBJECT	QUALPROPORTION	QUALPROPORTION	QUALPROPORTION	QUALPROPORTION	QUALPROPORTION	SCSMODE	DISTANCE	ENGSTARTDATE

Tabs: 1. Cover sheet | 2. Provider SM processes | 3. Legacy HESA | 4. Legacy HESA Guidance | **5. Data Futures** | 6. Data Futures Guidance

Table 4: Data Futures Guidance

Item #	Item	HESA variable name	Data example	Notes	Link to HESA coding manual
1	Unique student identifier	SID	1234567891011	Please enter 13-digit student identifier.	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/Student/field/SID
2	Student instance identifier	NUMHUS	1	Please enter students' NUMHUS (as submitted in your provider's data return).	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/Engagement/field/NUMHUS
3	Qualification category	QUALCAT	D00	This field describes the general qualification aim of the course and is intended to record the qualification that will be attained as a result of successful completion of studies. Alphanumeric 3 digits.	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/Qualification/field/QUALCAT
4	Subject of course 1	QUALSUBJECT	100270	The first subject or subjects associated with the current course.	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALSUBJECT
5	Subject of course 2	QUALSUBJECT	100267	The second subject or subjects associated with the current course (if applicable).	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALSUBJECT
6	Subject of course 3	QUALSUBJECT	101339	The third subject or subjects associated with the current course (if applicable).	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALSUBJECT
7	Subject of course 4	QUALSUBJECT		The fourth subject or subjects associated with the current course (if applicable).	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALSUBJECT
8	Subject of course 5	QUALSUBJECT		The fifth subject or subjects associated with the current course (if applicable).	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALSUBJECT
9	Subject 1 percentage	QUALPROPORTION	50	The proportion of the student's study assigned to the first subject. This must add to 100% across all subjects, regardless of mode of study.	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALPROPORTION
10	Subject 2 percentage	QUALPROPORTION	40	The proportion of the student's study assigned to the second subject. This must add to 100% across all subjects, regardless of mode of study.	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALPROPORTION
11	Subject 3 percentage	QUALPROPORTION	10	The proportion of the student's study assigned to the third subject. This must add to 100% across all subjects, regardless of mode of study.	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALPROPORTION
12	Subject 4 percentage	QUALPROPORTION	0	The proportion of the student's study assigned to the fourth subject. This must add to 100%	https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/QualificationSubject/field/QUALPROPORTION

Sheet tabs: 1. Cover sheet | 2. Provider SM processes | 3. Legacy HESA | 4. Legacy HESA Guidance | 5. Data Futures | **6. Data Futures Guidance**

9 Annex C: Examples of promotional materials
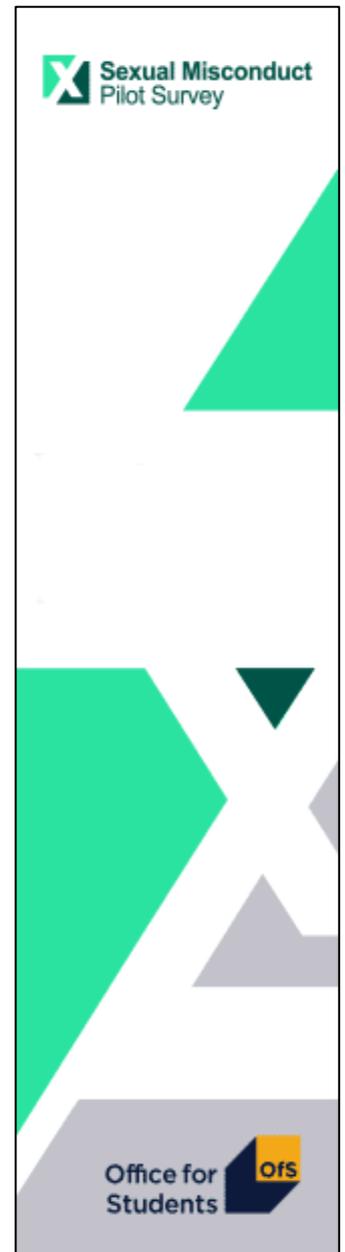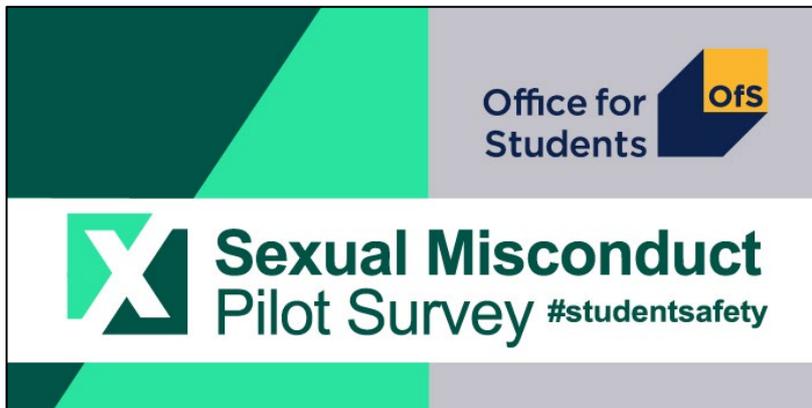
10 Annex D – Pre-notification email

Subject: Upcoming chance to take part in OfS research: Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey

Dear <Name>,

Content warning: This email includes mentions of sexual misconduct.

Office for Students (OfS) Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey

[Insert provider name] have volunteered to work in partnership with the English higher education regulator, the Office for Students (OfS) to support their research aiming to understand students' experiences of sexual misconduct in higher education.

The findings of the research will help to inform how they regulate universities to protect students against this issue. You can find out more about their work in this area on their website: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/StudentSafety

You will shortly be invited to take part in the OfS Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey. This research study is being carried out by IFF Research on behalf of the OfS.

This study is vital to **understand students' experiences of sexual misconduct and this information will be used to help inform the OfS's approach to tackling sexual misconduct in higher education**.

The survey will ask about any sexual experiences you may have had that were unwanted. IFF Research are interested in all experiences – whether they have happened in connection with your university or at other times and places in your life since you became a student.

The invitation email will come from OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch-dm.com and will have the subject line 'Have your say in the Office for Student's Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey' or 'Student's experiences of sexual misconduct: take part in the survey'. This email will be sent out at the end of September, and you will have until the start of November to complete the survey. It will also include a website link and your unique access code which you will need to complete the survey online. Reminder emails will also be sent to those who have not completed the survey during the fieldwork period.

The survey is entirely optional, and you do not have to share anything you don't want to.

What do I do if I don't want to be contacted about this survey?
If you would prefer not to be contacted about this research, please email OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com or call IFF Research free on 0800 0147 350.

How will my data be stored and used?
IFF Research will store all of your data securely and will confidentially and securely dispose of your personal information and survey responses after the close of the research project. Survey responses sent to the OfS will have any details that could be used to identify you removed and your contact details will not be shared with the OfS or any third parties.

The results of the pilot survey will be primarily used for internal analysis. IFF Research and the OfS may publish a summary of their findings aggregated at a high level. The results for each university will be shared in a way that takes steps to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents.

If you would like to see IFF Research's full privacy notice you can find it on their website: [Privacy policy | IFF Research](). You can also access the OfS' privacy notice here: [Privacy notice for the sexual misconduct pilot survey (officeforstudents.org.uk)]()

Where can I go if I have more questions?
More information, including details about how your data will be used, is available at
[https://sexualmisconductsurvey.com/]()

If you would like to contact the Office for Students about this research, please e-mail
[smsurvey@officeforstudents.org.uk]().

Thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to the survey.

Yours sincerely,

<Provider contact and signature>

11 Annex E: Reminder emails

1st Reminder Email

Subject line v1: Reminder - have your say in the Office for Student's Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey

Subject line v2: Reminder – help us measure the prevalence of Sexual Misconduct in HE

Student ID: <add student ID>

Content warning: This email includes mentions of sexual misconduct.

Dear <Name>

We contacted you recently to invite you to take part in the Office for Students (OfS) Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey via your university email address.

This study is key to **understand student's experiences of sexual misconduct and use this to inform the OfS's approach to tackling sexual misconduct in higher education.** We are interested in hearing from you, even if you do not have experiences of sexual misconduct.

All of your answers will remain completely confidential in accordance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

[IF PARTIAL COMPLETE]: We can see that you have started the latest survey but have not finished it yet. As a reminder, the survey should take up to **15 minutes** to complete. Please click the link below to finish completing the survey.

[IF NOT A PARTIAL COMPLETE]: We would be grateful if you could take up to **15 minutes** to complete this survey. Please click the link below to complete the survey.

COMPLETE THE SURVEY NOW
<survey link>

Alternatively please go here: [webpage link] and enter the ID at the top of this email. Please note, you will be able to return to the survey at any time, therefore you do not need to complete it in one sitting.

What do I do if I no longer want to be contacted about this survey?
If you would prefer not to be contacted again about this research, please email
OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com or call us free on 0800 0147 350.

Where can I go if I have more questions?

For more information about the survey and how your data will be used, please visit https://sexualmisconductsurvey.com/.

If you would like to contact the Office for Students about this research, you can email smsurvey@officeforstudents.org.uk.

If you would like to contact IFF about this research, please email OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com or call us free on 0800 0147 350.

Thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to the survey.

2nd Reminder Email

Subject line v1: Reminder – last chance to have your say in the Office for Student's Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey

Subject line v2: Reminder – last chance to help us measure the prevalence of Sexual Misconduct in HE

Student ID: <add student ID>

Content warning: This email includes mentions of sexual misconduct.

Dear <Name>

We contacted you recently to invite you to take part in the Office for Students (OfS) Sexual Misconduct Pilot Survey via your university email address. The survey will be closing at the end of this week, on **3rd November**.

This study is key to **understand student's experiences of sexual misconduct and use this to inform the OfS's approach to tackling sexual misconduct in higher education.** We are interested in hearing from you, even if you do not have experiences of sexual misconduct.

All of your answers will remain completely confidential in accordance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

[IF PARTIAL COMPLETE]: We can see that you have started the latest survey but have not finished it yet, so we wanted to let you know that the deadline is **3rd November**. As a reminder, the survey should take up to **15 minutes** to complete. Please click the link below to finish completing the survey.

[IF NOT A PARTIAL COMPLETE]: We would be grateful if you could take up to **15 minutes** to complete this survey, the deadline for which is **3rd November**. Please click the link below to complete the survey.

COMPLETE THE SURVEY NOW
<survey link>

Alternatively please go here: [webpage link] and enter the ID at the top of this email. Please note, you will be able to return to the survey at any time, therefore you do not need to complete it in one sitting.

What do I do if I no longer want to be contacted about this survey?
If you would prefer not to be contacted again about this research, please email OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com or call us free on 0800 0147 350.

Where can I go if I have more questions?
For more information about the survey and how your data will be used, please visit https://sexualmisconductsurvey.com/.

If you would like to contact the Office for Students about this research, you can email smsurvey@officeforstudents.org.uk.

If you would like to contact IFF about this research, please email OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com or call us free on 0800 0147 350.

Thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to the survey.

12 Annex F: Approach to managing the safety and welfare of respondents

Our philosophy is always 'first, do no harm'. The active protection of respondents is always at the forefront of our approach. All of our research is conducted in accordance with the Government Social Research (GSR) unit, the Social Research Association's Ethical Guidelines and the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct. We also have a team of internal ethics advisors who review proposed methods for sensitive topics. Active measures specific to the Sexual Misconduct Survey include:

Informed consent and right to change their mind

In both the online survey and in-depth interviews we will ensure that students give their explicit and informed consent to participate in the research in accordance with both MRS Code of Conduct and the GSR Code of Ethics. All survey materials will explain the research purpose, sponsor and what is involved in taking part. They will also stress that findings will be reported anonymously, that participation is voluntary and that individuals are free not to answer questions, can revoke answers and can withdraw from the research at any time. Instructions for doing so will be clearly signposted in all invitation materials, website and accompanying documentation. We will also explain how the data will be stored, when it will be destroyed and how long participation will take. OfS have also engaged with their expert panel on questions of ethics.

Appropriate interview manner and online survey design

For qualitative interviews, our interviews will adhere to trauma-informed guidelines (e.g. ensuring topic guides minimise triggers, provision of a clear aftercare plan) and researchers will be carefully briefed on how to respond appropriately to students who become upset during an interview. Whilst generally this is achieved by simply checking that the student is comfortable in continuing with the interview and drawing the interview to a close if they are not, our training will also cover other fundamental principles along the lines of ensuring that they stay calm, are non-judgemental and give appropriate reassurances to the student (we have developed training in this area based on numerous other projects with vulnerable audiences). For the online survey, we will preface the most sensitive questions with an explanation of why we are asking the question. We want open and full reporting of sexual misconduct incidence figures, and we will aim to support students in answering these questions through methods such as keeping the collection of personal data to a minimum and providing reassurance or support services via 'more information' buttons and as hover text. In terms of fieldwork communications, all optouts will be run through contact database before all scheduled communications, to mitigate the risk of opt outs being contacted again. We will also work closely with OfS to agree the appropriate number/sequencing of communications.

Signposting

All survey materials will list appropriate support services offered by the university and more widely e.g., via national and local charities. For ease, we suggest including a tab on the sample template for providers to list out relevant support options. We can then create provider specific routing to display these in the survey materials, relatively easily.

Escalation process

If a student discloses at any point that they or someone else is at risk of harm, we will follow an agreed safeguarding and escalation policy. This will include the policy for the breaking of student confidentiality if we feel there is a serious risk. In cases where there is an immediate risk this could include calling the emergency services. We will keep a written record of ethical issues arising/decisions made and store it securely.

Protecting anonymity

All students will be reassured that their responses will remain confidential, and their identity will not be disclosed. All personal data/responses will be stored on our secure drive and/or encrypted Dictaphones at all times. Any analysis frameworks for the qualitative interviews will be pseudonymised, with the ability to connect results back to named people via a restricted password protected file. In reporting, we will ensure we do not attribute quotes or include information which would make people identifiable. Embracing all of this, we take the issue of data security extremely seriously and take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and confidentiality of respondents' records and of management/administrative data provided by our clients and of survey data collected. We hold ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certification (the international standard for information security) and UK Cyber Essentials. All our storage, handling and processing of personal and sensitive data is conducted within the UK, and we fully comply with all GDPR requirements.

"

IFF Research illuminates the world for organisations businesses and individuals helping them to make better-informed decisions."

Our Values:

1. Being human first:

Whether employer or employee, client or collaborator, we are all humans first and foremost. Recognising this essential humanity is central to how we conduct our business, and how we lead our lives. We respect and accommodate each individual's way of thinking, working and communicating, mindful of the fact that each has their own story and means of telling it.

2. Impartiality and independence:

IFF is a research-led organisation which believes in letting the evidence do the talking. We don't undertake projects with a preconception of what "the answer" is, and we don't hide from the truths that research reveals. We are independent, in the research we conduct, of political flavour or dogma. We are open-minded, imaginative and intellectually rigorous.

3. Making a difference:

At IFF, we want to make a difference to the clients we work with, and we work with clients who share our ambition for positive change. We expect all IFF staff to take personal responsibility for everything they do at work, which should always be the best they can deliver.

IFF Research