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# Planning to use Insight surveys

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## What you need to know

This guide will help you to prepare for successful use of the Insights surveys. It covers topics such as:

- » Being clear about your rationale for using the Insights surveys
- » Subscribing to the digital experience insights service
- » Establishing a working group to guide and support the implementation process, engagement activities with users and the data analysis and dissemination stages
- » The resources you will need in terms of time and people
- » Deciding who you want to survey and identifying how many respondents you need to ensure you achieve a representative sample

This is an introductory guide which covers the initial planning stages. Visit our advice and guidance section on the digital experience insights website ([digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance](https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance)) to view our full set of guides designed to help you successfully use the digital experience insights service.

## Rationale: why use our Insight surveys

Jisc **digital experience insight surveys** address the needs of further and higher education (FE and HE) as well as skills providers by providing validated survey tools for students and staff along with support, advice and guidance. The Insights surveys enable colleges, universities and providers to:

- » Gather evidence from learners and staff about their digital experience and compare data over time
- » Make better informed decisions about the digital environment
- » Target resources for improving digital provision
- » Plan other research, data gathering and student engagement around digital issues
- » Deliver targeted continuous professional development (CPD) for staff

- » Demonstrate quality enhancement and student engagement to external bodies and to students themselves

The findings from the surveys are invaluable in helping organisations to drive change.

## Subscribing to the digital experience insights service

To use the Insight survey(s) at your institution, you need to submit an expression of interest via our website at [digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/subscribe/request-quote](https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/subscribe/request-quote)

If you choose to subscribe to the service you will receive an online 'getting started' form which will ask you to provide some additional details as well as asking you to select the Insight surveys question set(s) you wish to use. The organisational data requested at this stage will help you to contextualise your findings.

You also need to nominate one person from your organisation to act as the key contact with Jisc.

## Establish your working group

Experience shows that the survey(s) are most successful when responsibility for implementation is shared with other key stakeholders. Establishing a working group with representation from other stakeholders will also help you to secure wider buy-in and will mean that all stakeholders will be better able to communicate the rationale and aims of taking part in the survey(s) to their audiences – increasing the likelihood of a strong response rate.

Other benefits of using the Insights surveys reported by users include building partnerships and developing a shared language to discuss the staff and student digital experience. These are benefits that you can realise before you begin to collect any data and that last beyond the survey period.

Ideally your working group will meet at least twice – once to plan the Insight surveys project and once to review and respond to the findings. You will need to consider who the working group reports to (an individual or a higher committee) and who will be responsible for leading on the dissemination of the findings and leading any response to the findings.

The person nominated as your key contact with Jisc will be a part of the working group and depending on your organisation, other stakeholders you may wish to involve include:

- » Student representative(s)
- » A senior member of staff responsible for the digital environment
- » A senior member of staff responsible for e-learning or technology-enhanced learning (TEL)

- » A senior member of staff responsible for the student experience
- » Academic staff representative(s)
- » Trade union representatives
- » Organisational human resources (HR) staff
- » Student services such as the library, learning resources, learning support, accessibility, employability etc

The active support of a senior management sponsor on the working group will help to signify the importance of the survey(s) and ensure alignment to wider organisational strategies. It also helps to champions among staff and students; people who will help you to achieve a high response rate by promoting the Insight surveys within their peer groups Our guide to **Engaging respondents in your Insights surveys** (<http://bit.ly/DEIengage>) will give you more ideas. This is also available at [digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance](http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance).

## Getting started

There are a several questions you need to consider when you are completing the online 'getting started'.

### Why are you running the Insight surveys?

Running the Insight surveys is simple, but it does require some time and effort (see our planning sheet below).

You are also asking staff and students to invest time in answering the questions. Think about why this is worth doing from their perspective as well as the organisational benefits you expect to realise. You could perhaps start by considering the rationale at the start of this document and discussing this with your stakeholders (who may give different answers). You may also find it interesting to read some of our **case studies** ([digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/case-study-listing](http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/case-study-listing)) to see the rationale behind others use of the Insights surveys.

### What kinds of relevant data or evidence do you already have?

The Insight surveys provide you with more detail about the staff and student digital experience than you are likely to get from other sources. But before you start you should look at any data you have already, such as:

- » Findings from national surveys (look for relevant themes in free text comments)

- » One-off surveys and consultations about the digital environment
- » Feedback on specific courses or curriculum initiatives
- » Surveys on staff and student satisfaction and general wellbeing
- » Data from learning systems eg on patterns of use

We suggest that you review your existing data before you start as this may help you to identify where you can get the most value from the customisable questions – perhaps to explore issues that have already been highlighted, or to fill in gaps in your knowledge. Our guide to **Analysing and understanding your Insights data** (<http://bit.ly/DEIanalyse> and also available from <https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance>) includes some ideas for combining different sources of data to build a rich picture.

## What resources will you commit (time and people)?

You can use the table below to plan how much time is needed and to assign responsibilities so that everyone is clear about who is to do what. We have given a rough guide to the time required for some technical tasks, depending on familiarity with Jisc online surveys. You can find more information in our guide on **using Insights surveys in Jisc online surveys** (<http://bit.ly/usingDEI-JOS> and also available at [digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance](https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance)).

The amount of time you allocate to other tasks depends on the resources you have available. If you are using more than one version of the Insight surveys, some tasks will need to be carried out more than once. You can copy the table overleaf to help in planning.

Stage	Actions required	Time allocated and people responsible (your notes)
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Establish a working group (recommended)</li> <li>» Engage other stakeholders and develop a clear communication strategy that conveys the purpose and processes involved for your use of the Insight survey(s)</li> <li>» Work through this planning guide to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Clarify your rationale (above)</li> <li>› Decide on survey population and sampling strategy (below)</li> <li>› Decide how the Insight survey will be promoted to staff and students (see our guide to <b>Engaging respondents in your Insights surveys</b> at <a href="http://bit.ly/DEIengage">http://bit.ly/DEIengage</a> and also available from our website at <a href="http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance">digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance</a>)</li> <li>› Set out a timetable for each stage, allocating time and responsibilities (this table)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Getting started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Complete the online 'getting started' form if not already done (this is sent out to you once you have signed-up to Insight surveys and contains questions on main contacts, the survey(s) you wish to sign-up to and a range of organisational questions)</li> </ul>	
Set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Decide whether you want to include customised questions and set these options up in Jisc online surveys (see our guides on <b>Customising your Insight survey</b> (<a href="http://bit.ly/DEIcustomise">http://bit.ly/DEIcustomise</a>) and <b>Using Insight surveys in Jisc online surveys</b> (<a href="http://bit.ly/usingDEI-JOS">http://bit.ly/usingDEI-JOS</a>) also available from our website at <a href="http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance">digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance</a>)</li> <li>» Copy the master survey(s) required: name and save them in Jisc online surveys</li> </ul>	
Launch and promote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Send out Insight survey URL(s) to target staff and students</li> </ul>	

Stage	Actions required	Time allocated and people responsible (your notes)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Put promotions plans in place (see our guide on <b>Engaging respondents in your Insights surveys</b> (<a href="http://bit.ly/DEIengage">http://bit.ly/DEIengage</a>) available from our website at <a href="http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance">digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance</a>)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Close and access data</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Download the summative report and raw data (available immediately after you close the survey(s))</li> <li>» Download benchmarking data (available after the close of surveys)</li> <li>» If you are using data analysis software such as excel, nVivo or SPSS you will need to import your data into your chosen software (see our guide <b>Using Insight surveys in Jisc online surveys</b> (<a href="http://bit.ly/usingDEI-JOS">http://bit.ly/usingDEI-JOS</a>) available from our website at <a href="http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance">digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance</a>)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Analyse</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Review statistical data and charts for key messages (see our guide on <b>Analysing and understanding your Insights data</b> (<a href="http://bit.ly/DEIanalyse">http://bit.ly/DEIanalyse</a>) available from our website at <a href="http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance">digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance</a>)</li> <li>» Analyse free text data</li> <li>» Conduct further quantitative analysis as required (eg compare factors, segment different groups of staff and students)</li> <li>» Conduct further qualitative analysis (eg focus groups, consultation events)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Report and respond</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Arrange a meeting of your working group</li> <li>» Present and discuss draft analysis</li> <li>» Work through our guide on <b>Responding to your Insights findings</b> (available from our website at <a href="http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance">digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance</a>)</li> </ul>	

Stage	Actions required	Time allocated and people responsible (your notes)
	<p><a href="https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance">digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Create an action plan for responding to key issues</li> <li>» Report to the appropriate higher group or committee with your refined data analysis and suggested action plan</li> </ul>	
Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Produce report(s) of the results for staff and students and other stakeholders (eg infographics, slides, posters, quotes, video clips, formal report...)</li> <li>» Disseminate widely, highlighting any actions already taken in response and a summary of future action points and how you plan to respond to the findings</li> </ul>	
Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Evaluate the survey process and outcomes against original aims</li> <li>» Produce internal report(s) about the process with recommendations</li> </ul>	

## Who do you want to survey?

Most institutions running the survey choose to target **all** their staff and students. This will give you a picture across the board and the biggest possible data set to work with. However, there may be reasons why you might choose to exclude one group eg incoming students or postgraduate students. And there may be reasons for surveying one group in particular, eg staff and students studying on a particular campus or involved in a particular initiative. Pragmatically you may only have access to one group of staff and students. It is important to note that if you restrict the population that you survey, your findings may be accurate to that population, but you won't be able to say that they are representative of any other staff and students at your institution.

When you sign up you will choose one or more versions of the Insight survey appropriate to your target group. There is more in the next section on the number of responses you need for the data to be reliable.

## How many responses do you need for the data to be reliable?

It is important to collect enough responses for the survey data to be representative of the target population. As the population gets larger, you can assume a valid and reliable sample with a smaller proportion of the whole. This is a good reason for choosing a relatively large slice of your total staff and student population to survey, and similarly for choosing large sub-groups when it comes to grouping responses. We cover this aspect in greater detail in our guide on [Customising your Insight survey](http://bit.ly/DEIcustomise) (<http://bit.ly/DEIcustomise> and also available at [digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance](http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance)).

You should:

1. Establish the number of staff and students in the total population you are targeting (eg all students studying HE level courses, all students in one year of study/subject area, or all staff in one faculty or one site).
2. Calculate the number of responses you need to ensure you have a representative sample using the table below. This assumes a 5% margin of error. Notice that the larger the population, the smaller a proportion you need in your sample for the data to be reliable. With a target population of more than 5,000 the number of responses you need does not rise very much.

Table for calculating optimum sample size

Number of staff and students in your target population	The number of responses you need for a 5% margin of error
50	44
100	80
150	108
200	132
250	152
300	169
400	196
500	217
700	248
1000	278
1500	306

2000	322
3000	341
5000	357
>5000	384

When deciding how to achieve this number of responses. You can:

1. Promote the survey to everyone in the target population using persuasive tactics to ensure enough of them respond. This is a straightforward approach and entirely valid, but it is not without its problems. For example, you may get more digitally confident staff and students responding, which could skew your results.
2. Select a sub-sample of your target population and ensure that nearly all of them respond. Your sub-sample might be students on selected courses of study or staff in selected departments. Getting the high response rate that you need requires very active methods such as having staff and students complete the Insight survey live at the end of a class or in tutorials; offering incentives to users and engagement activities in areas most frequently used by your target user group. See our **case studies** ([digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk](https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk)) for examples of how others have engaged users. This approach involves slightly more work because you need to think about how to make your sub-sample representative (eg in terms of subject studied, student year groups, staff in a range of departments etc) and how to ensure a high completion rate, but it also has some advantages. You know that your sample is truly representative, and you can stop collecting data when you have achieved the number of responses that you need.

## How will you promote the Insight survey to achieve a high response rate?

Commonly used ways of promoting the surveys include:

- » Email
- » A link on your VLE and intranet home pages
- » Social media channels
- » Posters and postcards that promote the survey link
- » Use of notice screens around your institution

- » Flyers in areas where students meet (eg canteens, library and learning resource centres, social areas)
- » News listings, newsletters and blogs

You may also consider:

- » Working with staff and students to co-design publicity and engagement materials that focus on the benefits to them as respondents.
- » Inviting key influencers such as senior managers or student union/trade union representatives to endorse your campaign.
- » Student course representatives, student voice representatives, digital champions, staff trade unions and the Students Union can all be engaged in the campaign.

An effective tactic is to send regular reminders with updates on findings so far and ask respondents 'do you agree?' or 'what do you think?' Incentives such as vouchers or a chance to win an iPad etc. are also motivating.

For students, particularly if you want them to complete the Insight surveys in class, you will need to engage teaching staff or student facing teams (student support, library and learning resource teams, student engagement teams, careers and employability teams). This will ensure they are aware of the principles of the surveys and may also help to engage these groups in completing the staff Insight survey. Consider how the Insight survey(s) findings will support them in their work and communicate through existing staff structures and initiatives.

Here is an example of a general communication you can share with **students**:

*The student Insight survey is a national survey to find out more about how you use digital technologies and how this affects your experience of learning. We [or institution name] have chosen to use the Insight survey because we know digital issues are important to you. The Insight survey will allow us to:*

- » *Find out how you would like digital technologies to be used in learning and teaching*
- » *Understand how you use our digital environment and services and how we could improve them*
- » *Target resources towards the issues that matter to you*
- » *Better understand how we can support your digital capability and employability needs*
- » *Work collaboratively with you to improve and shape your digital experience*

- » *Help you reflect on your own digital experience and highlight areas you may wish to develop further*

A similar example of a general communication you can share with **staff** is:

*The staff Insight survey is a national survey to find out more about the experiences of teaching staff involved in the delivery of learning, about how they use digital technologies in their teaching and also how they engage with key aspects of the digital environment provided by their institution. We [or institution name] have chosen to use the Insight survey because we know digital issues are important to you. The Insight survey will allow us to:*

- » *Find out how you would like digital technologies to be used in learning and teaching*
- » *Understand how you use our digital environment and services and how we could improve them*
- » *Target resources towards the issues that matter to you*
- » *Better understand how we can support your professional development requirements*
- » *Work collaboratively with you to improve and shape your digital experience*
- » *Help you reflect on your own digital experience and highlight areas you may wish to develop further*

*Running the staff Insights survey in addition to the student Insights survey provides us with additional data and allows us to triangulate the findings. Exploring your views on digital teaching, learning and assessment helps us to build a richer picture.*

You may find other ideas for promotional campaigns from our case studies at [digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/case-study-listing](https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/case-study-listing)

## How will you analyse, share and respond to the Insight survey findings?

Allow time to work through the data analysis, scheduling in meetings to discuss the findings with stakeholders. Jisc online surveys provides you with all the information you need to present your findings including a summary in .pdf format of your data question by question. You may want to carry out further analyses such as:

- » Benchmarking your data against other staff and students in the same sector
- » Downloading your numerical data into a suitable software platform such as excel or SPSS to run further statistical tests and/or generate further reports and charts

- » Analysing free text data e.g. by coding, using a qualitative data analysis package such as nVivo, or using a simple word count service such as wordsift.

If time is short we suggest you focus any further analysis on responses to question 13 ('What should we do?') in the student survey or question 18 ('What one thing should your organisation do - or do better?') in the staff survey, as well as questions 14 and 19 (overall ratings of the digital provision, and digital learning and teaching) for the student survey and questions 11 and 17 (overall ratings of the digital provision, and support received from organisation to develop digital aspects of role) for the staff survey.

You will want to develop your analysis into an action plan. You will also want to report back to stakeholders, sponsors, staff and students on the findings and how the findings are being followed up, any actions already taken and those plans for the future. For staff and students you may consider using infographics, posters, newsletters, brief snapshots or video clips.

## How will you evaluate the process?

Our Insight surveys can be used over time to evaluate the impact of other digital strategies and projects. You may also want to do an assessment of the Insight survey process itself against your original aims. This might be as simple as organising a final meeting to ask 'how did it go?' after your findings have been reported and have had a chance to make an impact. In addition to showing how you are acting on the findings and planning for the future, a meeting of this nature also gives you an opportunity to involve and engage respondents in the drive to improve the digital experience and environment and potentially secures buy-in for future iterations of the surveys.

## Completing the 'getting started' form

### Choosing your surveys

The 'getting started' form asks you to choose the staff and student surveys you plan to use: higher education (HE), further education (FE) or online, and whether you need a Welsh version. Your data will be placed in the appropriate benchmarking group(s). So, for example, if you are a UK FE college, your FE students' responses will be returned to you alongside responses from all other UK FE students, so that you can compare your quantitative data with a relevant norm. Please be reassured that no one will be able to identify your students from this aggregated data.

You can choose to run the Insight survey with more than one group of students if, for example, your organisation works with both HE and FE students. We recommend for data quality that you run each survey once only and use the grouping question(s) to partition your staff and students into different

groups if necessary. This is covered in more detail in our guide on **Customising your Insights surveys** (<http://bit.ly/DEIcustomise> available at [digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance](http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance)).

The questions are very similar across Insight survey versions, so you can easily compare findings across two or more different surveys, eg HE and FE students at your organisation. Please be aware that you will have to do this yourself by downloading and comparing the two data sets, and that this not part of the benchmarking service within Jisc online surveys. Further information on this aspect is available in our guide on **Analysing and understanding your data** (<http://bit.ly/DEIanalyse> available at [digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance](http://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/advice-and-guidance)).

### Providing additional organisational data

We ask you to provide a range of organisational data to help contextualise your findings from the Insight survey(s). We will also use this data to explore whether different organisational approaches and investments correspond with different outcomes in terms of the staff and student digital experience.

Some of these questions may be difficult to answer without looking at other sources of data, or consulting with colleagues. In an ideal world you will have the time to do that – for example by sharing the exercise with a small working group. However, if you really don't have access to the relevant information, please leave that question and move on to others. **We don't need you to complete every organisational question on this form.** We hope that a lack of data in one or more areas will lead you to ask whether this information would be useful, and if so how it might be collected in future.

The questions we've included have been carefully researched and consulted on. We hope they will provide a valuable organisational profile that you can use to discuss issues of strategy and resourcing – even before you collect any data from staff and students.

### Note: if you plan to publish your findings

There is no restriction on you publishing or presenting the findings of your Insight survey outside of your own institution. However, we do ask that Jisc is acknowledged as having supported the work by providing the survey instrument and support for its use. If you are producing an academic paper that draws on your Insight survey(s) findings, please refer to the survey itself as: Beetham H. and Newman T. (2018) *Digital [Student/Staff] Insight survey [Survey instrument]*. Jisc.

Do let us know about any publications based on the Insight survey so that we can share and promote them.