

## What is PTES? – Information for HEIs

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The UK-wide Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is for all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with postgraduate taught students and is made available by the Higher Education Academy. PTES is designed to help institutions enhance the quality of taught postgraduate degree provision by collecting feedback from current postgraduate taught students in a systematic and user-friendly way. PTES is based on the same methodology as our highly successful Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and comprises a core set of questions to which institutions are also able to add their own questions.

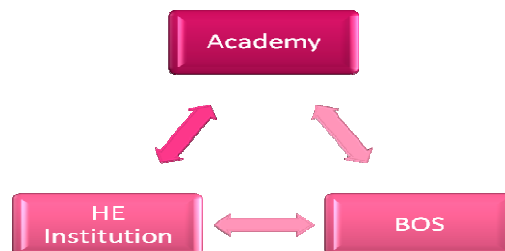
PTES takes the form of an online questionnaire for students and has proved to be a very useful way of finding out what postgraduate taught students think about their experience. A growing number of HEIs have elected to use it because it provides them with valuable evidence to inform decisions about enhancing the experience of their taught postgraduate students. The facility for HEIs to benchmark their results against those for the sector aggregate and against benchmarking clubs of similar institutions has been particularly welcomed, as has the focus on enhancement, the lack of league tables and the ability to share effective practice between HEIs. The survey is also made available in Welsh.

2011 saw the third full administration of PTES with responses from a total of 38,756 students from 80 HEIs (compared with 32,638 students from 76 UK HEIs in 2010 and 14,421 students from 30 HEIs in 2009).

The national aggregated results from PTES 2011 are available at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/postgraduate/PTES-Reports>

### How does it work?

Conducting PTES is each HEI's responsibility, but substantial support is provided by the Academy and the Bristol Online Surveys (BOS) team. Each HEI must nominate a PTES officer to be the main point of contact.



### What is a BOS licence and how much does it cost?

Bristol Online Surveys (BOS) is a web based tool for conducting surveys. The software was developed by the Institute for Learning & Research Technology (ILRT) at the University of Bristol. It is widely used in the HE sector for surveys (e.g. CROS, PRES, and other institutional surveys) and it is a very simple and user-friendly tool. BOS not only allows you to publish your survey and see results instantly but also has an in-built reporting tool that makes data analysis very easy.

The cost of a BOS licence is minimal, and is the only direct cost of participation in PTES for Academy Subscribers. (Prices for non-subscribers are available on request). The minimum cost of running PTES is £400 if your institution does not already have a BOS licence. This covers £250 for a PTES-only licence (or £500 for a standard BOS licence for unlimited surveys), and an additional £150 for survey access control which helps ensure robustness and credibility. There is an optional £50 for the ability to generate a unique URL for each student by passing data from your own student data systems, saving on the need to manage usernames and passwords (this is known as the 'passing external parameters' option).

If your institution does not already have a BOS licence and/or survey access control, these can be purchased directly from ILRT at Bristol. For more details please go to:

[www.survey.bris.ac.uk](http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk) or email: [survey-help@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:survey-help@bristol.ac.uk)

### **When will PTES take place?**

The PTES flexible survey will be open for a maximum of 4 months, from Wednesday 15 February 2012 to Thursday 14 June 2012, with the last permitted launch date being Thursday 19 April 2012 (8 weeks before the survey end date). The deadline for institutions to express their interest is 5 December 2011, allowing time to set up and publicise the survey in early 2012. The survey period is flexible and can be chosen by the institution as long as it is within the 4-month survey window, is open for at least three weeks and opens at least eight weeks before the survey window closing date.

### **What happens to my institutional PTES results?**

Your institutional results are easily accessible through your BOS account all the time, any time. No one else has access to your PTES data (the Academy cannot see your data during the survey unless you authorise us to login to your account; we will be able to see your data when the survey ends). Once all surveys have opened you will be able to compare your results with the national aggregated results. Moreover, if you opt in, you will be able to compare your results with one or more benchmarking clubs of aggregated results from similar institutions (e.g. Post-92, 1994 Group, Russell Group).

Once the survey is closed, all individual datasets will be merged into one excel spreadsheet by the BOS team and passed on to the Academy for sector-wide analysis. You will be responsible for analysing your own institutional data but you will receive support from the Academy. There will be a guide on how to analyse PTES data and we hold a PTES officers' workshop shortly after the survey closes as well as providing other support in analysing the data and using it for enhancement purposes.

HEIs will be bound by a Collaborative Agreement (a legal document ensuring data protection), meaning that no results data will be shared with third parties without participants' consent and PTES results will not form any league tables.

### **How do I register for PTES 2012?**

In order to express your interest, please email [surveys@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:surveys@heacademy.ac.uk) to register your institution's interest **by 5 December 2011**. We will then send out the starter pack and registration documents in December.

### **For more information**

Website <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/student-experience-surveys>

Email [surveys@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:surveys@heacademy.ac.uk)

Or telephone 01904 717 500 (main switchboard)