# Student digital experience tracker

## Guide: Planning to use the tracker

### What you need to know

**This guide helps you plan to use the tracker through the following steps:**

- gather together a working party with representation from staff and students (if possible)
- sign up for the tracker at this link: **https://jisc-beta.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/tracker-signup-2017-18**
- confirm your use of the tracker on the form provided, by (a) selecting the surveys you require, and (b) providing 4-10 pieces of organizational data to help contextualize your findings

### About the tracker

The Jisc **student digital experience tracker** (the tracker) enables colleges, skills providers and universities to:

- gather evidence from learners and respond to their feedback
- make better decisions about the digital environment
- benchmark provision against sector norms and monitor changes over time
- evaluate the impact of interventions and initiatives around digital learning
- target further research on the student digital experience
- demonstrate all of the above to students, quality bodies and internal stakeholders

To use the tracker at your institution, you will first need to **submit an expression of interest at this link:** **https://jisc-beta.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/tracker-signup-2017-18.** You will then receive a second form to confirm your interest, select your tracker question set(s) and benchmarking group(s), and provide additional details. This Guide helps you to complete both forms and prepare for successful use of the tracker.

## Gathering your team

One person at your institution will be the key contact with Jisc (probably yourself), but the tracker is more successfully implemented if responsibility is shared to some extent. Users have told us that benefits of running the tracker include building partnerships, and developing a shared language to discuss the student digital experience. You can realise those benefits before you collect any data!

Ideally you will put together a working group that will meet at least twice – once to plan the tracker project and once to review and respond to the findings. Depending on your organization, people to involve might include:

- Student representative(s)
- A senior member of staff responsible for the digital environment
- A senior member of staff responsible for e-learning/TEL
- A senior member of staff responsible for the student experience
- Academic staff representative(s)
- Student services such as the Library, learning resources, learning support, accessibility, employability…

It helps to have number of champions among staff and students to promote the tracker and ensure a high response rate. The ***Guide to engaging learners*** will give you more ideas.

# Completing the sign-up form

There are a number of questions you need to consider when you are signing up.

**Why are you running the tracker?**
Running the tracker is simple but it does involve some time and effort (see the planning sheet below). You are also asking students to invest in answering the questions. Think about why this is worth doing. You could consider the rationale at the start of this document, ask your stakeholders (who may give different answers), or read some of our case studies: **https://digitalstudent.jiscinvolve.org/wp/data-service/tracker-case-studies/**.

**Your notes:**

**What kinds of data / evidence about the digital experience do you already have?**
The tracker provides you with more detail about the 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
- Data from learning systems e.g. on patterns of use

It makes sense to review existing data before you start, as you can use the customizable questions to explore issues that have already been highlighted, or to fill in gaps in your knowledge. The ***Guide to analyzing your data*** includes some ideas for combining different sources of data to build a rich picture.

**Your notes:**

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

You can use this table to plan how much time is needed and who will do what. We have given a rough guide to the time required for some technical tasks, depending on familiarity with BOS. Other tasks can be carried out more or less thoroughly depending on the resources available. If you are using more than one version of the tracker, some tasks will need to be carried out more than once. You can copy and use this table for planning.

| Stage | Actions required | Time allocated & people responsible (your notes) |
|---|---|---|
| **Plan** | Convene working group (if applicable)<br>Engage other stakeholders with clear communication about the purpose & process of the tracker<br>Go through this planning Guide:<br>- Clarify your rationale (above)<br>- Decide on survey population & sampling strategy (below)<br>- Decide how the tracker will be promoted to learners (see ***Guide to engaging your learners***)<br>- Set out timetable, allocate time & responsibilities (this table) | |
| **Sign up** | Complete the sign-up form if not already done (10 minutes)<br>Complete the confirmation form with at least four items of organizational data (20-60 minutes) | |
| **Set up** | Decide on customisation options (see ***Guide to customizing your survey***)<br>Copy the master survey(s) required: name and save them in BOS<br>Customise your survey(s) in BOS (1-2 hours per survey) | |
| **Launch & promote** | Send out tracker URL(s) to target learners (5 mins to generate)<br>Put promotion plans in place | |
| **Close and access data** | Download the summative report and raw data (available immediately you close the survey(s))<br>Download benchmarking data (available after the close of surveys in April 2018)<br>If relevant, import into analysis software e.g. excel, nVivo, SPSS | |
| **Analyse** | Review statistical data/charts for key messages (see ***Guide to analyzing your data***) (2 hours to a full day)<br>Analyse free text data (10 minutes to 2 days depending on method used and volume of data) | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Further quantitative analysis as required (e.g. compare factors, segment different groups of learners)<br>Further qualitative analysis (e.g. focus groups, consultation events) | |
| **Report and respond** | Convene working group (if applicable)<br>Present and discuss draft analysis<br>Work through the ***Guide to responding to your findings***<br>Create an action plan for responding to key issues | |
| **Communicate** | Produce report(s) of the results for learners and other stakeholders (e.g. infographics, slides, posters, quotes, video clips, formal report…)<br>Disseminate widely | |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluate the tracker process and outcomes against original aims<br>Produce internal report(s) about the process and recommendations | |

## Who do you want to survey?

Most institutions choose to target the survey at *all* their learners. This gives you a picture across the board and the biggest possible data set to play with. However, there may be reasons for excluding one group e.g. incoming students, postgraduate students. And there may be reasons for surveying one group in particular, e.g. learners studying on a particular campus or involved in a particular initiative. Pragmatically you may only have access to one group of students. If you restrict the population 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 learners at your institution.

When you sign up you will choose one or more versions of the tracker survey. There is more about this in the next section.

**Your notes:**

## How many responses do you need for the data to be reliable and how will you achieve this?

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 student population to survey, and similarly for choosing large sub-groups when it comes to grouping responses (more about this in the ***Guide to customizing your survey***). You should:

(1) Establish the number of students in the total population you are targeting (e.g. all learners studying HE level courses, all learners in one year of study, all learners in one subject area).

(2) Calculate the number of responses you need to be sure you have a representative sample using the table below – which for statisticians among you 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 5000 the number of responses you need does not rise very much.

(3) Decide how to achieve this number of responses. You can:

a. Promote the survey to everyone in the target population and use 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 students responding, which could skew your results.
b. 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. Getting the high response rate that you need requires very active methods such as having students complete the tracker live at the end of a class, or very strong incentives. This approach is slightly more work because you need to think about how to make your sub-sample representative (e.g. in terms of subject studied, student year groups etc) and how to ensure a high completion rate, but it has some advantages. You know that your sample is truly representative, and you can stop collecting data when you have achieved the number that you need.

### Table for calculating optimum sample size

| Number of 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 |

**Your notes:**

### How will you promote the tracker to learners and ensure a high number of completions?

Consider emails, a link within the VLE, social media, posters and postcards to promote the survey link. Design publicity/engagement materials that focus on the benefits to learners, ideally with learners as (co)designers. Have your messages endorsed by influencers such as senior managers or student union representatives. Student course reps, student voice reps, digital champions 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 learners 'do you agree?' or 'what do you think?' Incentives such as vouchers or a chance to win an iPad etc. are also motivating: there are details about how to offer prizes without compromising anonymity in the How-To Guide.

Particularly if you want students to complete the tracker in class, you will need to engage teaching staff. Consider how the tracker 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 digital experience tracker 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 tracker because we know digital issues are important to you. The Tracker 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*
- *Get you thinking about your digital experience*

**Your notes:**

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

Make sure you have put aside enough time to do the analysis, and that you timetable in any meetings to discuss the findings with stakeholders. BOS provides you with all the information you need to present your findings including a summary pdf of your data question by question. You may want to carry out further analyses such as:

» Benchmark your data against other learners in the same sector

» Download 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

» Analyse 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 questions 11 and 12 ('What should we DO…?' and 'What should we NOT DO..?) and on questions 13 and 18 (overall ratings of the digital environment, and digital learning and teaching).
You will want to develop your analysis into an action plan. You will also want to report back to students on the findings and the follow-up e.g. using infographics, brief snapshots or video clips.

**Your notes:**

### How will you evaluate the process?

The tracker 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 tracker process itself against your original aims (as recorded in this planning docment). 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.

**Your notes:**

## Completing the confirmation form

### Choosing your surveys

The confirmation form asks you to choose the surveys you plan to use: HE, FE, skills 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 tracker with more than one group of students if, for example, your organization works with both FE and skills learners, or with both HE and online learners. We recommend for data quality that you run each survey once only and use the grouping question(s) to partition your learners into different groups if necessary (see ***Guide to Customising your Survey***).

The questions are very similar across tracker versions so you can easily compare findings across two or more different surveys, e.g HE and FE learners at your organization. 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 BOS. See ***Guide to Analysing your Data*** if you need more information.

### Providing additional organizational data

From 2017/18 we are asking lead contacts to provide a range of organizational data to help contextualize your findings from the tracker survey(s). We will also use this data to explore whether different organizational approaches and investments correspond with different outcomes in terms of the 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 do have to make an informed estimate, other organizations will be doing the same. 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 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 organizational profile that you can use to discuss issues of strategy and resourcing – even before you collect any data from students.

- In responding to **question 5** about full-time equivalent TEL staff, please count staff employed in central units AND staff employed in peripheral locations such as colleges, faculties or separate campuses. If staff have hybrid roles (such as library/information literacy) please count the part of their role that you consider to be TEL related.
- In responding to **question 11** about 'effective use of the functions available in your VLE' please refer to any local baseline or quality standard you use (e.g. 'bronze, silver, gold' etc) to evaluate courses. If you don't normally assess courses in this way, please consider that in most cases simply uploading course content to a VLE site should not count as using its functions effectively.
- In responding to **questions 12 and 13**, please try to assess from the perspective of *learners* whether course software/systems and learning spaces are up to date and fit for purpose. Bear in mind that these are questions we are now asking learners too.

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

There is no restriction on you publishing or presenting the findings of your tracker 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 tracker findings, please refer to the survey itself as: Beetham H. and Newman T. (2016-17) *Digital Student Experience Tracker* [Survey instrument]. Jisc.
Do let us know about any publications based on the tracker so that we can share and promote them.