



Students, Alcohol and Drugs Survey

Guidance for survey promotion

SOS!UK

A big thank you for signing up to take part in the Students, Alcohol and Drugs Survey!

We are so excited that you are committed to improving student wellbeing on campus, and we have put together this guide to support you in making the most of the survey.

Any questions should be answered in this guide, but if not please feel free to reach out to us.

The SOS UK Wellbeing & Research Teams

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Survey overview

The survey will run between **16th November – 6th December**.

Organisations who sign up to take part are responsible for promoting the survey to students at their institution, and will receive resources and communication form SOS UK to support this. If your institution receives 100 responses, we are able to share your local data, if requested.

If you would like to view previous reports from the survey, you can find these [on the SOS UK website](#).

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the research and impact team at SOS UK who deliver the research for Drug and Alcohol Impact at research@sos-uk.org.

Survey link

The survey will be available at:

<https://bit.ly/StudentsDrugsAlcoholSurvey>

You can use this link in any promotions you're creating and sending out; however, no respondents will be able to complete the survey until the communicated start date of the fieldwork when our research team make it live.

How many responses should we aim for?

- A good target is at least 95% confidence level, with a 5% margin of error.
- This means that 95 times out of 100, if the survey was repeated, the true value would lie within a 5% range of the value seen in our research.
- You can calculate how many responses are required at 95% confidence level by using [this online tool](#). To calculate your response target, input the number of students currently at your institution in the part of the form highlighted by the blue box below.

The image shows a 'Sample Size Calculator' web form. At the top, there are two tabs: 'Forward (Required Sample Size)' (highlighted in pink) and 'Reverse (Achieved Margin of Error)'. Below the tabs, there are four input fields: 'Population Size' (with a blue box around it and a tooltip that says 'Total number of individuals in your target group. Leave blank or 0 for very large/unknown population (infinite-population assumption).'), 'Margin of Error (%)', 'Confidence Level' (set to 95%), and 'Response Distribution (%)' (set to 50%). The 'Population Size' field contains the text 'e.g., 10000'.

- Your responses should still be reflective of the overall make-up of the student population at your university. For example, if 60% of your students are female, ideally 60% of your respondents would be too.

During the survey

We will email all contacts who have signed up to take part in the survey weekly to give an overview of how many responses each institution has had. In the final week, this email will fall a little earlier to give you an update before the survey closes.

We will also ask those with the most responses to let us know what activity they have done to promote the survey, and we will share these ideas with you all while the survey is open.

Following the survey

We will send an email when the survey has closed, giving final numbers for responses and a reminder about requesting your data. We will also request feedback and examples of activity to be used to help shape future work.

Requesting your data

Following the close of the survey, if your institution has received over 100 responses, please send requests for data to research@sos-uk.org, and provide the e-mail address(es) you would like the data to be sent to.

If no request is made, we will not be able to share your data with you.

Receiving and analysing your data

We will be working through requests for data as quickly as possible, please be mindful that this will fall over the festive shut down period due to when the survey takes place.

If you have requested your data, you will receive this from our research team. The data will have been cleaned, and any opt outs will have been removed so the total number of participants may change slightly from the close of survey email.

You will receive the raw anonymised data and simple tables, and we encourage you to work with academics or data teams on campus to do further analysis to understand student behaviours. You could consider looking closer at specific demographics, or specific behaviours, and then analyse the data to support you in identifying messages to educate your students, or groups where you may want to conduct further research. The national data will be published later in the academic year, which you are welcome to use for benchmarking purposes if helpful.

Tips and tools for promoting the survey

Promoting the survey using a combination of approaches is the best way to get 100 responses, and make sure you receive your institutions data.

The key messages to keep in mind when thinking about promotion:

- There are incentives for taking part from SOS UK - £100 first prize and 2x £50 prizes
- The survey is organised by an external team not the university, and is completely confidential
- Students do not have to drink alcohol or use drugs to take part – we want to capture a wide range of views.

We also encourage you to consider:

- How does this tie into your work on campus? Use this work to remind students of your policy or support available.
- How can you involve students, student leaders and officers in this work?
- If you are taking part in Student Drug & Alcohol Awareness Week, how can you combine the survey with your other activity?
- What has worked well on campus for other similar work? Are there incentives on campus you can use to encourage participation in the survey?

All student emails

Often, the campuses that get the most responses in the survey say they have done all student emails. We encourage this from either the university or the students' union, and it can be a great way to let students know that this is an area you can provide support on also!

1. Email directly - send the survey directly to students' inboxes where possible.
2. Personalise your survey invitation emails – use individual's names to invite them to complete the survey and sign the invitation off with a name (someone well known such as the SU president or welfare officer can help).
3. Set a deadline for students to respond – you can set your own deadline within the fieldwork period or use the final closing date.
4. Don't be afraid of reminders - but try not to bombard students.

Draft initial email template

Subject: Win £100 by completing a short survey!

Dear [Insert name]

Your union, university and SOS-UK are conducting a short and confidential survey with students to find out your views and experiences related to alcohol and drugs. You don't have to use drugs or drink alcohol to take part.

To thank you for taking part in this survey you are in with a chance of winning a top cash prize of £100 or one of five £50 runner up prizes!

[Click here to complete the survey!](#)

The survey should take around 15 minutes to complete. The deadline for taking part is **6th December** so make sure you have your say.

Thanks for your time,

[Insert name]

Draft reminder email template

Subject: Last chance to share your thoughts

Dear [insert name],

Just a reminder, if you haven't already completed the survey, to tell us what you think and you could win £100 in cash!

Just click the link below to take part in our confidential online survey and enter our prize draw that will take place in December 2026.

[Click here to take the survey!](#)

Want to know more?

This survey will take no more than 15 minutes. In it, we ask about views and experiences of drinking alcohol and using drugs. All responses are strictly confidential, and you do not need to use drugs or alcohol to take part.

The deadline for taking part is **6th December** so make sure you have your say.

Thanks for your time,

[Insert name]

Social media

Social media is a helpful tool for sharing the survey, and on the resource page you will find several graphics you can use for this purpose. We encourage you to think about the range of accounts this could come from, across both the university and the students' union. We have previously seen posts from central accounts, but also from individual sabbatical officers, campus venues, support team pages and residences.

In person activity

Hosting pop ups, stalls and other activity on campus can be a great way to engage students and encourage them to complete the survey. If you are also taking part in Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week, we would encourage you to link the survey in with other in person activity that you already have planned.

This could be led by student services in main areas, sabbatical officers in the students union or venue, residence staff in accommodation or anyone else you can think of. You could also consider how other organisations could support in person activity – your local drug and alcohol treatment service may be willing to host a stall alongside yours!

Involving students & student networks

In everything we do, we encourage getting students directly involved. What this could look like on your campus will vary, but some ideas from us:

- Recruit teams of student researchers – using tablets to gather responses from students around campus.
- Consider which students may have an interest in wellbeing, or drug and alcohol related issues – are there any academic courses where students may want to be involved in promoting the survey (or analysing the data).
- If you have previously done research or work on drugs or alcohol, reach out to students and ask how they would like to be involved.
- Use existing networks and mailing lists to get students to promote it to their peers – such as course rep networks, and clubs and societies lists. You could even encourage them to host an alcohol-free event or activity while promoting the survey.