

## **The Northern Ireland School Omnibus Survey, Background Quality Report.**

### **Introduction**

This report relates to the Northern Ireland School Omnibus Survey statistical report and provides information on the quality of the data used to produce this report. The statistical report is produced by the Department of Education, Analytical Services Unit (ASU).

The objective of this quality report is to allow users to be informed about the quality of the information upon which they may be making inferences, conclusions and business decisions.

There are two frameworks in place that govern statistical quality:

- UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics<sup>1</sup>; and
- European Statistics Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>.

The UK Statistics Authority requires official statistics producers to inform users about the quality of statistical outputs using the European Statistical System's Dimensions of Quality<sup>3</sup>. This is a requirement as stipulated in the UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics and this quality report meets this requirement for the Northern Ireland School Omnibus survey.

Publication Name:	The Northern Ireland School Omnibus Survey
Department Responsible:	Department of Education (DE)

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics available at <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/osr/code-of-practice/>

<sup>2</sup> The European Statistics Code of Practice available at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/KS-32-11-955>

<sup>3</sup> The European Statistical System's Dimensions of Quality available at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4392716/ESS-QAF-V1-2final.pdf/bbf5970c-1adf-46c8-afc3-58ce177a0646>

Release Date:

Biannual<sup>4</sup>

Web Link to Publications:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/survey-reports>

## The Dimensions of Quality

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	<p>This dimension covers the degree to which the statistical product meets user need in both coverage and content.</p> <p>The School Omnibus survey aims to collect information from all grant-aided schools across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The main users are education policy officials primarily in the Department of Education but also from officials in the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI). The report of the survey is made publically available on the Department's website.</p> <p>The information contained in the report is disaggregated by school phase (primary and post-primary) where applicable.</p> <p>The survey reflects the contemporaneous needs of policy officials as the questions included in each Omnibus survey are proposed by policy officials. This process is undertaken by ASU; ASU canvass the information needs of policy officials both through written, including electronic exchanges and face-to-face meetings.</p>
<b>Accuracy and reliability</b>	<p>This dimension of quality relates to the proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value.</p> <p>The School Omnibus survey is issued to all grant-aided schools across Northern Ireland; it is not based on a sample.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Prior to the 2016 omnibus the survey was on an annual basis. The Department of education Board in June 2016 moved the survey to a biannual basis.

*Coverage errors.*

The Omnibus survey is issued to all grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools across Northern Ireland. However not all schools to which the Omnibus is issued reply, typically response rates are approximately 40 per cent.

As the response rate is not 100 per cent those schools that do respond are assessed in relation to school phase and school management types. The outcome of such assessments indicates the representativeness of responding schools in relation to school phase and management type. If the profile of responding schools indicates that the survey is not representative of the school estate users are notified of any significant differences in representation and the impact on the utility of the information to the needs of users by means of a section entitled 'Methodology and Respondent Profile'.

*Processing errors.*

Processing errors happen when mistakes occur in the implementation of the administrative and statistical methods used to produce the results. If revision(s) arise due to human error(s) such revisions will be identified as such in a revised report.

*Measurement errors*

The survey is delivered primarily by an electronic response mode. The use of an electronic mode reduces the possibility of measurement errors. The software used has a range of electronic checking for example to ensure the internal consistency of the information provided and to ensure responses are within a viable range. The software also ensures that responding schools are routed to the questions that are applicable to them based on for example a previous response in the survey.

ASU also undertake validation checks to ensure as far as possible that the incidence of measurement error is minimised.

	<p><i>Provision of revised data.</i></p> <p>When a significant revision(s) of the results of the Omnibus survey is / are required an updated and revised report will be published on the Department’s website with the revision(s) highlighted. The relevant policy official(s) will be informed directly by ASU and advice provided on the impact of the revision(s) on their use(s) of information from the Omnibus.</p>
<p><b>Timeliness and punctuality.</b></p>	<p>Timeliness refers to the time gap between the publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.</p> <p>The biannual Omnibus survey collects information in September<sup>5</sup> relating to the academic year ending the previous June. Following the September data collection the report of the survey is published in January<sup>6</sup>.</p> <p>All statistical bulletins published by the Department’s ASU are included, with planned publication dates in the publication schedule<sup>7</sup>.</p> <p>In the event of a change to the pre-announced release schedule, public attention will be drawn to the change and the reasons for the change explained fully at the same time, as set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility and clarity</b></p>	<p>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.</p>

<sup>5</sup> The September timing of data collection was introduced in 2016.

<sup>6</sup> The publication of the report in January following September data collection will be introduced in the 2018 study and will be the timeframe for the Omnibus survey going forward.

<sup>7</sup> The publication schedule is available at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/statistical-publications-schedule#toc-0>

	<p>The Omnibus survey report contains text, graphs and tables that conform to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The report contains a section titled 'Methodology and Respondent Profile'. This section provides the reader with background information regarding the coverage of the survey, means of survey delivery and the representativeness of responding schools in relation to school phase and management type.</p> <p>The School Omnibus survey report is available on the Department's website at 9.30am on the day of publication.</p> <p>The website provides contact details for users with questions relating to the results of the Omnibus. Schools may also use this feedback channel in addition schools are provided with a contact channel on receipt of an invite to complete the survey. Media enquiries are directed to the Department's press office.</p>
<p><b>Coherence and comparability</b></p>	<p>Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</p> <p>Policy officials within the Department and the ETI<sup>8</sup> propose questions for the Omnibus survey. The questions proposed must relate to information not readily available from another source(s). Given this constraint the level of coherence for Omnibus results is difficult to ascertain.</p> <p>Comparability over time in the Omnibus results is dependent on policy official(s) requiring such comparisons. Historically the Omnibus has been used to compare only some of the results over time. For example the results for Shared Education are required to be comparable overtime and as such</p>

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<sup>8</sup> From the 2018 omnibus officials in the ETI will be required to source a Department sponsor before their proposed questions will be considered by ASU for inclusion in the survey.

	<p>from 2015 policy officials have been made aware of the need to design questions that reflect this requirement.</p> <p>Comparability of the Omnibus results across countries of the UK has not been assessed as the focus of the Omnibus is on policies in the field of education which is a devolved matter.</p>
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The nine quality dimensions set out by the Eurostat have been supplemented with four areas for consideration in quality assessments of statistical outputs.

<p><b>Trade-offs between output quality components</b></p>	<p>Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.</p> <p>Users of the Omnibus survey require information to be available as soon as possible after the reference period to which they refer. Since the 2016 Omnibus survey data collection has taken place in the September after the academic year to which the information collected refers. Collecting data in September represents the first available opportunity to do so allowing for the summer period over which schools are closed.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of user needs and perceptions</b></p>	<p>The processes for finding out about users and uses and their views on the statistical products.</p> <p>The School Omnibus survey was first undertaken in 2013. Prior to this date the Department commissioned questions in the Northern Ireland Social Omnibus Survey. This process was assessed as being inefficient and not meeting the information needs of the Department's policy officials.</p>

	<p>ASU canvas the main users, namely policy officials, to ascertain their information needs. Policy officials propose questions for inclusion in the Omnibus survey therefore ensuring as far as possible that their information needs are met. ASU do not propose questions for inclusion in the Omnibus survey; ASU advise on the suitability of questions proposed by policy officials for inclusion in the Omnibus survey</p>
<p><b>Performance cost and respondent burden</b></p>	<p>The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.</p> <p>The process of producing the School Omnibus survey report is carried out by ASU. Costs associated with this production process relate to staff only and as such are an internal cost.</p> <p>The data collected are for the Omnibus survey, an official purpose, alone. The respondent burden is estimated at 273 hours and the compliance cost estimated at £5,372.</p>
<p><b>Confidentiality transparency and security</b></p>	<p>The data are collected electronically via the online survey software SurveyMonkey. Subsequently the data are downloaded to an internal network only accessible to ASU staff. During the publication process all hard copies of the interim results are locked away and then securely disposed of following publication.</p> <p>Staff involved in the Omnibus survey are cognisant of the protocols for ensuring the data remains confidential. This covers physical security, IT security and data disclosure issues.</p>