

HESA publications customer survey: results



HESA undertook a publications customer survey during November 2009. The purpose of this survey was to obtain feedback on the views and experiences of our users to help shape our publications strategy over the next five years.

We would like to thank all who took part.

The results of the survey are displayed below. Comments have been summarised and appear beneath the relevant question.

Survey Overview
Number of respondents: 132
Expected number of respondents: 1159
Response rate: 11.4%
Launch date: 04 Nov 2009
Close date: 20 Nov 2009

1. Which HESA publications have you used during the past year?	
Students in Higher Education Institutions:	
Resources of Higher Education Institutions:	
Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions:	
Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions Longitudinal Survey:	
Higher Education Statistics for the United Kingdom:	
HE Finance Plus:	
HE Planning Plus:	

2. Thinking about HESA publications, please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:		
2.a. The ordering process for HESA publications is straightforward and efficient		
Agree:		66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree:		28.1%
Disagree:		5.3%




If you disagree, please specify a reason (summary of responses)

- Make it possible to order HE Planning Plus online
- The ability to track previous orders would be useful

2.b. HESA publications contain the data required by users		
Agree:		67.8%
Neither agree nor disagree:		20.3%
Disagree:		11.9%




If you disagree, please specify a reason (summary of responses)

- Data should be presented in a way that allows for greater manipulation
- Require more detailed breakdown of data
- Time series would be useful
- Would like assurance that data is accurate
- CDs contain the required data but printed volumes are limited

2.c. Tables/charts are presented in a suitable format for users		
Agree:		71.4%
Neither agree nor disagree:		16.8%
Disagree:		11.8%




If you disagree, please specify a reason (summary of responses)

- Would prefer data to be presented in Pivot tables rather than Excel tables
- Would prefer data to be presented in Excel tables rather than Pivot tables
- Should include an identifying code for each institution
- Electronic format is easier to work with




2.d. The Introductions are written and presented clearly		
Agree:		75.4%
Neither agree nor disagree:		23.7%
Disagree:		0.8%

If you disagree, please specify a reason (summary of responses)

- Additional formatting of sub-sections would be useful
- Text could be written more clearly




2.e. The Notes to tables are written and presented clearly		
Agree:		76.5%
Neither agree nor disagree:		21.8%
Disagree:		1.7%

The comments supplied for this question do not relate to Notes to tables, but refer to other sections of the publications. These responses have therefore been incorporated into the relevant questions.

2.f. The Definitions are written clearly and contain the detail required by users		
Agree:		75.4%
Neither agree nor disagree:		17.8%
Disagree:		6.8%




If you disagree, please specify a reason (summary of responses)

- There is not always enough detail or clarity
- Can be difficult to penetrate and locate specific definitions
- When contacted, HESA staff have provided clarification of unclear definitions

2.g. HESA publications are released in a timely fashion		
Agree:		60.5%
Neither agree nor disagree:		29.4%
Disagree:		10.1%




If you disagree, please specify a reason (summary of responses)

- Would like publications to be available as early as possible
- It would be useful to have a precise publication date in advance of release

2.h. HESA publications are reasonably priced		
Agree:		46.1%
Neither agree nor disagree:		47.0%
Disagree:		7.0%





If you disagree, please specify a reason (summary of responses)

- Data can be expensive

2.i. HESA should move away from printed editions of publications to electronic formats only		
Agree:		63.0%
Neither agree nor disagree:		15.1%
Disagree:		21.8%

Summary of comments

- Electronic versions provide more detailed data and can be manipulated
- More environmentally friendly to have them in electronic format
- Electronic versions can be printed if required
- Web-based management information service, such as **heidi**, would be preferable
- Printed volumes are not useful
- Printed volumes are useful for quick reference and for making notes in
- CDs are not a useable format for libraries
- A combination of electronic for analysis and printed for quick reference is ideal
- Tables in electronic format and slimmed-down printed volume containing notes and definitions would be good
- Whichever format is cheaper

3. If you answered Agree to question 2i, which electronic format would you prefer?		
CD:		n/a
Electronic download / download from website:		n/a
Online resource:		n/a
Other (please specify):		n/a








Summary of comments

- Must be downloadable for manipulation
- Web-based management information service, such as **heidi**, would be preferable
- Not on CD

4. If you would favour an online resource, what functionality would you expect to see?

Summary of comments

- Pivot tables
- Search function
- Archiving function
- Ability to build reports
- Ability to manipulate data
- Downloadable
- Time series
- Data mining
- Printable list of tables
- Data profiling
- Cross-tabulations
- Web-based management information service, such as **heidi**

5. Are there any HESA publications which are no longer useful, perhaps due to the data being available through alternative channels?		
Students in Higher Education Institutions:		
Resources of Higher Education Institutions:		
Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions:		
Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions Longitudinal Survey:		
Higher Education Statistics for the United Kingdom:		
HE Finance Plus:		
HE Planning Plus:		

Section 2: Improvements to HESA publications

6, 7 & 8. If you were able to make three improvements to HESA publications, what would they be?

Summary of comments

- Provide more detailed breakdown of data
- All data should be available online – will enable multiple users to access it
- Drop rounding policy
- Greater flexibility to allow for manipulation of data
- Provide more pivot tables
- Provide assurance of data accuracy
- Include a search functionality
- Provide more analysis for non-data specialists
- Increase the number of tables
- Include time series analysis
- Include identifying code for each institution / ensure consistency of institution name and order in all publications
- Introductions, Notes to tables and Definitions should be more user-friendly and easier to understand
- Provide a choice of formats for visually impaired
- Produce all publications on CD
- Produce all tables in printed form
- Move away from printed publications to electronic only
- Introduce colour coding to help identify certain data
- Release data as soon as possible
- Reduce cost of data (and provide free of charge anything that has been made publicly available)
- Publicise specific publication dates prior to release of products
- Offer an online subscription service

Section 3: Have you used any of the following HESA services?

9. heidi subscription service (www.heidi.ac.uk), the higher education information database for institutions

Yes:		56.4%
No:		43.6%
9.a. If yes, how has this changed your usage of HESA publications?		
Reduced usage:		34.3%
No change:		59.7%
Increased usage:		6.0%

10. Information Provision Service for ad hoc data enquiries

Yes:		46.8%
No:		53.2%

11. Analytical Services for in-depth analysis of HESA data

Yes:		18.3%
No:		81.7%

Section 4: Final comments and contact

12. Do you have any further comments about HESA publications?

Summary of comments

- Many positive comments, recommending no changes to the current publications
- A combination of electronic for analysis and printed for quick reference is ideal
- Produce all products on CD
- Web-based management information service, such as **heidi**, would be preferable
- Don't switch to **heidi** format
- Reduce cost of publications
- Provide more detailed breakdown of data
- Time series analysis would be useful
- Dense text can be off-putting – make more user-friendly