



# COHORT B MIDPOINT REVIEW

C18071 2018/19

MAY 2020

HESA



**Graduate Outcomes**

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## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Graduate Outcomes survey and welcome to our cohort B 2018/19 midpoint review. We are now in week ten of cohort B.

## SECTION 2 - OUR MIDPOINT COHORT B FINDINGS

As at 17 April 2020 (based on the previous day's surveying), the overall cohort B response rate is **33.3%** which is broken down into target groups in the table below:

Main target group	Response rate target	Current response rate
UK domiciled, full-time	60%	35.1%
UK domiciled, part-time	60%	36.7%
Research funded	65%	44.8%
EU domiciled	45%	34.9%
Non-EU domiciled	25%	25.7%

Please note, all response rates and results published prior to the final release of data in 2021 are provisional.

Current response rates can be located in the [provider portal](#) in the 'Sector response rate report'. As per all of the data in the portal, it is a continual feed, updated on a regular basis. This includes after a cohort is closed.

In terms of response rates, we are currently seeing strong performance on both online and telephone modes. The current situation with the pandemic does not appear to be having an adverse impact on response rates. We are keeping our data collection methods and feedback from interviewers and graduates under constant review.

## SECTION 2 - COHORT B UPDATES

### COVID-19 AND GRADUATE OUTCOMES

Whilst remaining focused on the delivery of the Graduate Outcomes survey, HESA is acutely aware of the evolving situation around COVID-19 and the impact this may be having on our target audience of graduates.

As we continue to implement the engagement strategy for cohort B graduates, we have been exploring ways to adapt our approach and messaging to acknowledge the wider context. We want to support the delivery of the wider NHS / GOV.UK messaging to this key audience, explain why we are contacting them given the current situation and demonstrate our commitment to safety in the delivery of the survey. As you will know, the survey is a census survey at a fixed-point following graduation, and therefore HESA has little scope to differ the survey timetable. With this in mind, HESA has sought to continue the survey of graduates as planned.

At present we will not be changing the engagement strategy itself i.e. the number of contacts we make. Instead, we have added supportive messages to email templates, SMS messages, the Graduate Outcomes website and twitter account.

The staff that operate Graduate Outcomes, including our suppliers and HESA, are well equipped to operate from home and have carried on surveying graduates ever since the new Government

advice on homeworking was issued. So far, we have not seen a drop in response rates, the short-term trend this week in fact shows a slight increase.

### **Cohort B**

We are mindful of the sensitivities surrounding this situation and the fact that our telephone interviewers are currently engaging with individuals across the world, some of whom may be experiencing significant challenges in their professional and personal lives. We have developed a set of guidance notes to help interviewers handle such conversations appropriately. In particular, we have identified leading national and international organisations that offer help to individuals experiencing emotional distress. All respondents will be signposted to these organisations.

We have also added supportive guidance to the online survey page containing the subjective wellbeing questions. This is particularly important in the current situation as we are unable to offer any active support to respondents completing the survey by themselves via the online mode.

### **Surveying on cohort C and beyond**

We are also considering the impact on cohort C (opening in June 2020) as well as subsequent cohorts and collections. We are preparing some options for how we may reflect the current situation in the survey and / or outputs and will provide an update in the coming weeks.

We will keep our engagement strategy with graduates under review as this situation evolves.

## **SECTION 3 - NEXT STEPS**

### **C18071 COHORT C**

Providers are reminded that the provider portal is open for submission of contact details for cohort C and approval has been enabled.

English FECs do not need to submit contact details, but they should use the provider portal to review the contact details imported from their ILR record and amend / approve them if necessary. English FECs should also note the change in the approval process for C19071 – using cohort C and D to prepare for this change is advised.

The deadline for approval / amending cohort C contact details is **22 May 2020**. Full details of the deadlines can be found in the [data collection schedule](#). For guidance on the submission of accurate contact data, please visit the [C18071 coding manual](#).

### **APPROACH TO SOC CODING FOR 18/19**

On Friday 14 February, the ONS launched SOC 2020 which is now the current Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for the UK. HESA has been aware of the imminent launch of this new iteration of the framework and its role in SOC coding for Graduate Outcomes. We are currently exploring the use of SOC 2020 in the coding of responses from year two. The decision is pending approval from the Steering Group.

We continue to receive feedback from the sector on SOC coding. To make sure we are listening to the views of a wide range of representatives, we recently conducted a workshop with the sector, to gather insight into the various coding practices utilised by providers while they were coding DLHE responses, with a view to inform our approach with Graduate Outcomes. The primary objective of

this exercise was to listen to provider feedback and identify areas of practice that might have applicability to improving the current centralised methodology.

Following the workshop and exploratory work in liaison with our coding supplier, we will provide an overview of the approach to coding for year two. This will include an updated timeline for when the raw data will be available in the provider portal.

There are many challenges in ensuring HESA maintains the integrity, quality and consistency of the data and its associated SOC coding, in accordance with the NewDLHE findings and the needs of our data customers, while at the same time seeking to take advantage of some of the good practice in coding at a local level under DLHE. HESA needs to work to ensure provider-level confidence in the data, given its importance and applicability to sector KPIs and other performance measures.

On the surface, many of the practices adopted by providers in their approach to SOC coding, that were specifically used by providers to increase their confidence in their coding of DLHE responses, do not easily translate to the centralised model without potentially disproportionately impacting on time, cost or a potentially adverse impact on data quality (i.e. in ensuring consistency of approach). For example:

- the ability to engage the academic and careers staff community in row-level coding of responses.
- the economics/cost involved in attempting, via a centralised model, to undertake the same level of ad-hoc follow up contact with graduates, that may have been undertaken in various ways by individual providers, for their respective graduates, under DLHE.

There are areas where SOC coding can be improved, for example, in seeking to improve survey source data, better routes for capturing and managing provider feedback and reviewing the fields (and also any linked data) used as part of the coding process.

These and other issues are currently being explored with our Steering Group. We will report back with a final plan of action on our approach to SOC coding and assurance.

## GRADUATE OUTCOMES METHODOLOGY STATEMENT PUBLISHED

In the lead up to the statistical releases, HESA will be sharing lots of information about Graduate Outcomes in order to build understanding and awareness of the distinctive characteristics of the survey and the methodology that has been employed. Content includes blogs and news items from key HESA experts and clear guidance on the releases themselves.

All of this content is available on the dedicated Open Data page for '[graduates](#)' and we've listed a few of the pieces here:

- The first piece of introductory work was a blog post from our Official Statistics Manager explaining that the statistics will be marked as 'Experimental' and what this means: "[The true method of knowledge is experiment" - why Graduate Outcomes statistics are experimental](#)
- HESA has also published a [two-part methodology statement](#) on Graduate Outcomes which provides a comprehensive overview of the survey's history and operations. This was accompanied by a blog from our Head of Research and Insight, Neha Agarwal, which sets the scene and directs you to the statement.

- More recently, we have shared an [overview of an informal consultation](#) carried out to refine the design of the forthcoming Graduate Outcomes Open Data release.

## 17/18 DATA DISSEMINATION

### **Final provider survey data**

On 31 March, HESA delivered final year one (17/18) Graduate Outcomes data for each provider into the provider portal. The final data is available in the provider portal to the Survey Results user in the new 'Collection results' tab.

We have provided some [essential guidance to providers](#) including the final data guidance note, a new set of FAQs on the delivery and much more.

We have also advised that due to a number of issues with the delivery, we expect to release a new iteration of the collection survey results into the provider portal during week commencing 18 May.

### **Statistical releases**

On 29 April, we provided a further update to the Graduate Outcomes statistical releases as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 situation. For Graduate Outcomes, we advised delays to the following publications:

- Higher Education Graduate Outcomes Statistics: UK 2017/18 - Thursday 18 June
- Higher Education Graduate Outcomes Data - Tuesday 23 June
- UK Performance Indicators: Graduate outcomes, 2017/18 - as previously communicated, we are expecting release during autumn 2020.

View the [schedule of upcoming releases](#) – dates will be added here four weeks before they are published.





## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT GRADUATE OUTCOMES

Website: [www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/outcomes](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/outcomes)  
Graduate website: [www.graduateoutcomes.ac.uk](http://www.graduateoutcomes.ac.uk)  
Twitter: [https://twitter.com/grad\\_outcomes](https://twitter.com/grad_outcomes)  
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/graduate-outcomes>

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