# Higher Education Statistics Agency

# Data Futures Programme

## Market Engagement: Background and Questionnaire for Interested Organisations

## Deadline for Return of Responses: 2 March 2016

## Issued: 23 February 2016

# Introduction

HESA is embarking on a programme of change that will help to deliver a new Higher Education (HE) information landscape.

The UK's collection and use of HE data is valued by the sector and respected around the world. To achieve this, HESA has worked with HE providers over the last 22 years, but the context in which we operate is rapidly becoming more complex and the system used to collect data may become unfit for purpose in this changing environment.

## Objectives of the process

* 1. HESA's objectives for this process is to produce a modernised and more efficient approach to collecting student related data that is able to respond to a wide range of data users. We want to create more relevant, reliable and timely information about higher education for the benefit of the sector, and to deliver this in more efficient ways which reduces the burden on providers. For more information on HESA’s Data Futures Programme please see <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/df_procurement>
	2. We therefore wish to invite interested organisations to complete a questionnaire in order to gather views concerning certain aspects of the procurement.

# Market engagement approach

* 1. Stage 1- PIN publication and market engagement documentation
	2. This stage will incorporate the publication of the Prior Information Notice ("PIN"). The PIN serves as an invitation to interested organisations to participate in the market engagement exercise. This stage will also incorporate the publication of a number of market engagement documents (which will consist of this questionnaire, details about the forthcoming Suppliers’ Event and information published on HESA’s website at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/df_procurement>
	3. Stage 2 - Submission of completed questionnaires
	4. We would ask that all questionnaires are returned to us by 2 March 2016. However, we may be able to consider responses received after this deadline, subject to timescales and availability of relevant staff. Whilst we are unable to guarantee we will incorporate all feedback into the subsequent procurement exercise, we would state that there is greater potential for your suggestions to be considered in more depth, if you are able to submit your response in accordance with the deadline above.
	5. Stage 3 – Procurement Scoping and Feedback
	6. We will collate and analyse the responses received. Responses will be used to develop and scope the procurement strategy and process. We will endeavour to provide generalised feedback in respect of the responses received during the Suppliers’ Event (see below).
	7. We have scheduled a Suppliers’ Event to further engage with bidders and discuss feedback from the market engagement questionnaires. This will take place on Friday 26 February 2016 at Pinsent Mason 3 Colmore Circus Queensway, Birmingham B4 6BH.
	8. The Suppliers’ Event will take place between 10.00 am and 12.00 pm and will provide an overview of the opportunity, indicative timetables for the procurement and set out our expectations for the market engagement exercise. Organisations interested in attending the Supplier’s Event should email df-procurement@hesa.ac.uk no later than 12.00 pm on 25 February 2016. Emails should be limited to providing: Attendee Name(s), Company Name, Lead Contact, Job Title, Email address and Telephone Number.

# General guidance

* 1. Please note that the Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited ("HESA") will be conducting the market engagement exercise in accordance with the EU principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination (in respect of suppliers based in other EU member states) and transparency. To that end, it is important to stress that the specification will not be designed to give direct or indirect advantage to any potential supplier, and all information concerning the procurement will be disseminated to all interested parties - it is the intention that no one organisation will be in receipt of information which will not be available to all.
	2. Organisations should request clarification of any issues within the market engagement documentation which are not clear, or any errors, omissions or concerns which they may believe may impact on the success of this exercise. If we consider that a query may have a material effect on the market engagement process, all organisations will be notified.
	3. In submitting a response to this questionnaire participating organisations:
		1. acknowledge that the information provided within their responses could potentially be disclosed to stakeholders and funders of HESA. Organisations are therefore invited to clearly identify any information within its response that it considers is commercially sensitive;
		2. confirm that they have not and they will not:
			1. canvass responses for acceptance with any HESA staff, or discuss responses with the media;
			2. attempt to fix or fix with any other person, the amount (including rates and prices to be quoted) of any prospective tender;
			3. enter into any agreement or arrangement with any other person that a person shall refrain from submitting a response to this questionnaire, or any subsequent pre-qualification questionnaire or tender;
			4. offer, give or agree to give any inducement or reward in respect of this prospective procurement.
	4. For the avoidance of doubt, the above provisions shall not restrict any organisation in respect of discussing responses with their professional advisers or prospective consortium partners. The PIN and any market engagement document issued pursuant to the PIN is not a call for competition. For avoidance of doubt, such documents have been produced solely for the purpose of conducting a market engagement exercise, and will not formally commence any procurement process or constitute any commitment by HESA to undertake any subsequent procurement exercise.
	5. Potential bidders will not be prejudiced by any response or failure to respond to this questionnaire or attend the Suppliers’ Event. Potential bidders must also note that a response to this questionnaire does not guarantee an invitation to participate in this or any future procurement that HESA may conduct, nor that HESA will procure any such supply and/or services or accepts any proposals offered. HESA intends to conduct any subsequent procurement of supplies and/or services by following the procedures laid down in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. In doing so, HESA is not to be taken as acknowledging that it is a contracting authority within the meaning of the Regulations, or as accepting any legal obligation to follow those procedures in the case of this or any other procurement.

# Instructions for submission of responses

4.1 Please consider this document in detail and if you feel that your organisation is able to contribute to this market engagement exercise, please complete the questionnaire attached and return via email to df-procurement@hesa.ac.uk by 2 March 2016. Unfortunately, we may not be able to consider any responses received after this date (see paragraph 2.4 above).

4.3 Organisations should communicate all queries in respect of the market engagement exercise to
df-procurement@hesa.ac.uk

Enquiries forwarded via any other route may not be answered.

4.4 The Project Officer for this market engagement exercise is:

**Mr Tim Rigby**

**Email:** **df-procurement@hesa.ac.uk**

**Telephone: 01242 211470**

# Questionnaire

HESA invites your organisation to consider the questions below. There is no maximum word count imposed, however we would ask that you do not submit brochures or marketing material as an answer to any question.

1. What recommendations (if any) would you make:
* to reduce the overall proposed programme timescale?
* regarding the programme approach?

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1. HESA has programmed in a 6 month period to undertake the detailed design phase, but its preference (if possible) is for a shorter timeframe. Do you think this 6 month period is realistic or is a shorter timeframe possible? If so, please provide details of the timeframe you believe is achievable, together with an explanation of your reasoning.

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1. Do you think HESA needs to wait until the end of the detailed design phase to begin development? Please explain your view.

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1. Do you anticipate any issues in terms of HESA's wish for the solution to be suitable to be rolled out for use in other HESA data collections? Please explain your response.

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1. What issues or concerns do you have in terms of HESA's requirement for the solution to interface with other HE providers’ systems to enable them to submit data?

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1. HESA wishes to be able, following handover of the solution, to maintain, support and develop the solution itself. What issues or concerns would you have with this proposed approach?

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1. Following on from question 6 above, in principle, HESA does not wish to prevent the successful provider from owning or re-utilising parts of the solution, however HESA does want to be able to use the solution for its own purposes e.g. additional data collections. What is your view as to how HESA might best achieve this (in terms of ownership of intellectual property rights or otherwise)? Would you seek to impose any restrictions on HESA for such a use? If so what?

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1. What other information would it be useful for you to have sight of to assist you in responding to this process particularly to enable you to submit a fixed price bid for all or part of the project?

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1. Are there any key challenges concerning this project which you think should be considered in more detail? If so, please explain here.

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1. To what extent (if any) have you engaged in other similar procurement exercises? In your view, what lessons were learned from those procurements that could benefit this project?

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1. As alluded to above, HESA's belief is that this solution will fundamentally redesign its data collection and dissemination processes. HESA appreciates that this will involve real challenges, both for HESA and its subscribing HE providers. Based on the information provided to date, what issues do you anticipate as part of this fundamental change to business processes? Do you have any further comments that you wish to make?

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1. HESA’s current systems are built on Microsoft .Net technology and that is where our skillset is. HESA’s technology strategy is for our operation to be cloud based and some of our technology platform already resides in Microsoft’s Azure cloud platform. What issues or concerns would you have with these points?

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## Information about the Organisation completing this questionnaire

## Full name, address and website

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| Organisation name |  |
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| Address |  |
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| Town/city |  |
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| Postcode |  |
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| Country |  |
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| Website |  |
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## Main contact for correspondence about this questionnaire:

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| Name |  |
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| Position |  |
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| Telephone |  |
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| Mobile |  |
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