

GRADUATE OUTCOMES COHORT B REVIEW

C18071 2018/19
JULY 2020

HESA



Graduate Outcomes

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SECTION 1 - OUR FIRST FULL CYCLE IS COMPLETE!

This review represents the first fully completed cycle of Graduate Outcomes. We have now reached a huge milestone having collected and disseminated the first year's data.

Each collection cohort helps us to refine our processes and to continually improve. You will know from earlier updates, how HESA has worked to improve our approach to the survey and to develop the portal used by providers. We are currently busy collecting feedback on the first set of statistics to help us to further refine our processes for year two, as well as commencing our engagement with league table providers. There is still much to do!

As we move to the Autumn we focus on the delivery of the all-important UK Performance Indicators. As we've previously communicated, the development of these requires engagement with the sector and the formation of an advisory group, we're looking at the timetable for this now. You can read more about Graduate Outcomes data dissemination in [section 6](#).

We continue to work on our approach to SOC coding, particularly how we switch to the new SOC2020 framework. This has delayed the availability of the raw feed of coding for year two data, for those providers that access this in the Graduate Outcomes provider portal. We appreciate your patience while we work behind the scenes to implement this change with our coding supplier and update our internal systems. We also continue to focus on [data quality](#), response rates and [reviewing how we communicate with you](#) via these reports – we have provided updates on many of these items in this document.

As always, if you have any queries, please do get in touch.

Rob Phillpotts
Managing Director, Statutory Services

SECTION 2 - OUR COHORT B COLLECTION FINDINGS

RESPONSE RATES

As at Sunday 1 June (based on the previous day's surveying), the overall sector response rate for cohort B was 51.9%. The breakdown by target group for the sector can be found in the table below:

Main target group	Target	Cohort B year 2 response rate	Cohort B year 1 response rate
UK domiciled, full-time	60%	55.3%	52.0%
UK domiciled, part-time	60%	56.8%	53.9%
Research funded	65%	64.7%	59.2%
EU domiciled	45%	52.0%	45.3%
Non-EU domiciled	25%	40.8%	27.7%

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

We continue to make improvements in response rates for all of the main target groups. Response rates increased by nearly three percentage points in all groups and were noticeably higher among international students. We believe the pandemic has not had an adverse impact on response rates in this cohort and we continue to monitor this situation.

Emails

Our email delivery rate remained high, at over 96%. We achieved an online response rate that was six percentage points higher than cohort B in 17/18.

While 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. While delivering the engagement strategy for cohort B graduates, we adapted our approach and messaging to acknowledge the wider context. Through relevant messaging in our emails, we supported the delivery of the wider NHS / GOV.UK messages to this key audience, explaining why we are contacting them given the current situation and demonstrating our commitment to safety in the delivery of the survey. Further detail on the changes made to the survey can be found in [section 5](#).

Telephone interviewing (CATI)

Telephone interviewing has been stable over the last few cohorts and we have been achieving a good response rate. In addition to collecting full responses via telephone, our interviewers are also able to convert surveys that have been partially completed online, into fully complete responses. Of all completed surveys, 9% were partially answered online before getting transferred to an interviewer who successfully collected additional information.

Mindful of the sensitivities surrounding the pandemic and the fact that our telephone interviewers are engaging with individuals across the world, we developed a set of guidance notes to help them handle such conversations appropriately. In particular, we identified leading national and international organisations that offer help to individuals experiencing emotional distress. All respondents, regardless of mode of data collection, are signposted to these organisations.

DATA QUALITY

Our work on data quality assurance and the production of statistical outputs from the first year of the survey highlighted a few survey modifications that have the potential to improve data quality. Some of these have been implemented in cohort B.

Up until recently, the question on salary asked respondents to round the values to the nearest thousand. We believe this may be resulting in some responses in single or double digits where the respondent assumes the trailing zeroes will be added automatically. While we cannot prove this theory using the data we have, an easy solution was to remove the requirement to round the data. The salary question now reads “What was your annual pay for your main employment before tax?”. It is too early to say that the change has had an impact on data quality as we need a larger volume of data to enable a meaningful comparison.

Another questionnaire modification was aimed at improving the quality of data collected under ‘job duties’. Previously, the job duties question referred to the census week. It is possible that some respondents interpreted this requirement literally and only described the duties they were carrying out during census week. What we are interested in is the whole range of job duties performed under the given job title. Removing the reference to the census week is likely to yield more detailed responses, from some respondents.

We continue to work with our contact centre to enhance the quality of data returned as free text. We have strengthened the guidance to interviewers on collecting names of employers and post codes and we continue to monitor progress in these areas.

SECTION 3 - COHORT B RESPONSE RATES AND ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS

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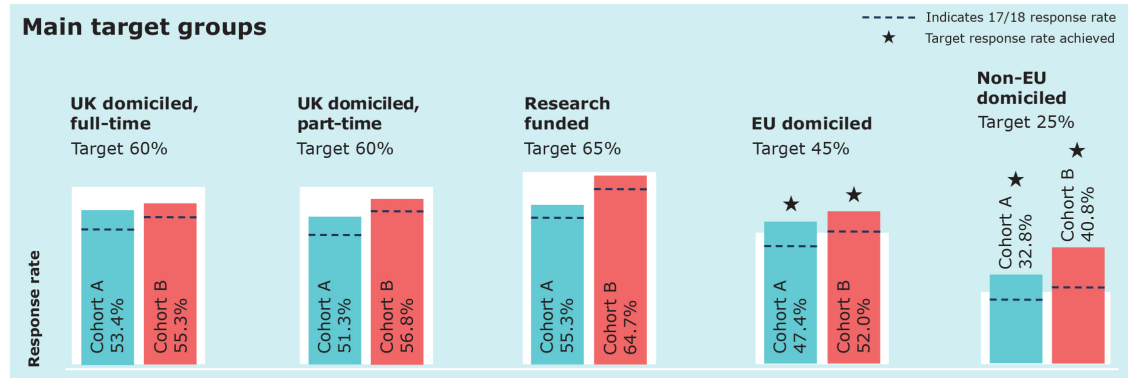


Cohort B

Opened on **Monday 2 March 2020** and closed on **Sunday 31 May 2020**.

Response rates

All response rates and results published prior to the final release of data are provisional due to the nature of the live data feed and the fact we are carrying out continual quality assurance.



51.9%

Overall cohort B response rate

21,309

completed responses

Partial responses 1,507

These are graduates who answered at least the first question but did not complete the survey. Actively encouraging completions forms a key part of the engagement strategy.

The top 3 questions where graduates drop out of the survey are:

- Q. What activities were you doing in the census week?
- Q. What was your job title during the census week?
- Q. What was your annual pay for your main employment before tax?

Providers in cohort B

301

Mode of completion:

- Phone **62%**
- Online **38%**
 - Desktop **35%**
 - Mobile **65%**

Engagement statistics

7 rounds of email invitations sent

8 rounds of SMS messages sent

3 Average number of phone calls needed for a completed survey response. This includes responses started online as well as by phone.

Unique page views of the Graduate Outcomes websites (to 31 May 2020)

graduateoutcomes.ac.uk

- English website: **302,617**
- Welsh website: **1,514**
- @grad_outcomes followers: **1,045**

Best time of day for completions

- Phone: **5-6pm**
- Desktop: **2-3pm**
- Mobile: **4-5pm**

Best day for completion

WED

Average time taken to complete

- Phone: **13** minutes, **54** seconds
- Online: **10** minutes, **13** seconds

Due to changes in the way we calculate duration, plus minor changes to survey questions, we will not be comparing to year one.



SECTION 4 - UPDATES FROM COHORT B

SURVEY CHANGES

Relevant survey changes made for cohort B can be found above in the section 2 under [data quality](#).

SECTION 5 - MODIFICATIONS FOR COHORT C

GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND COVID-19

On 19 May, we updated providers with the current status of Graduate Outcomes during the pandemic and HESA's assessment of the survey in readiness for the opening of cohort C. This has led to some small changes to the survey which can be viewed below.

[View the survey changes that have been made for cohort C](#)

We provided this detail to operational contacts by email and updated HESA's response to [coronavirus news page](#). You can view the current survey on the [survey materials page](#) of the HESA website.

ROUTING ISSUE WITH 'OTHER' PROVIDER OF FURTHER STUDY

An error in survey routing has meant that for a subset of graduates in further study, information on the country of their provider is not available if they selected 'other' in provider name (instead of a named UK provider from the drop-down list) and did not enter the name of the provider when prompted. This is likely to result in a higher number of records with missing country information, where the provider was 'other'.

The routing error was fixed before the start of cohort C (18/19). All other similar instances in survey routing were checked to ensure this was not replicated elsewhere. No additional issues were found.

The Graduate Outcomes [quality report](#) contains the most comprehensive information currently available on the quality of the data, including on uses and users of the data.

SECTION 6 - DATA DISSEMINATION 17/18

On 18 June, after many years of review, implementation and output design, HESA released the first ever Graduate Outcomes Experimental Statistical Bulletin. This includes high level findings and characteristics at a national level, plus an overview of the survey results with information about graduates' activities, employment, salaries and their own assessments of success.

Following this, HESA released two tranches of detailed open data tables. All of this data, detailed contextual and background information, expert blogs, a recording of the statistical release webinar and other reference materials can be found on the [HESA website](#).

Please make reference to the notes and definitions supplied within the Statistical Bulletin and open data tables to help your understanding of the data standards used to produce the statistics. The [dissemination policy](#) also provides important detail on HESA's policy, approaches and standards

for dissemination of data from the new survey. We also provided a [new resource](#) which specifies the data fields used within tables and charts in the releases following feedback from the sector.

Expiry of embargo

We can also confirm that, as per the [guidance note on use of final provider survey data](#), the embargo on sharing data from the 17/18 collection outside of your provider has now expired. Please refer to the note (above) and our [FAQs](#) for further guidance on how the data can now be used.

Graduate Outcomes: a guide to using and interpreting the data

We'd also like to highlight a new guide, produced by the Higher Education Strategic Planners Association (HESPA), with support from HESA, which offers a [comprehensive summary](#) of the survey and how its findings will be used and by whom.

SECTION 7 - NEXT STEPS

C18071 COHORT D

Providers are reminded that the [provider portal](#) is open for submission of contact details for cohort D. The approval functionality has been switched on and the deadline for approval is 21 August 2020. Full details of the deadlines can be found in the [data collection schedule](#). The provider portal [user guide](#) is also available to support you with the submission of contact details. You can also take our new free [Introduction to the Graduate Outcomes provider portal \(C18071/C18072\)](#) e-learning course.

English FECs will only be required to approve contact details in the provider portal if you have made changes to your contact details data (to improve their accuracy) or where your contact details fail our validation. However, **from the C19071 collection, the auto approval function will no longer run for English FECs.** English FECs should use cohort D to ensure the contact details approval process is understood and can be actioned from C19071. This is particularly important as this is the largest cohort of records to approve and over the summer period when you may have reduced resource.

APPROACH TO SOC CODING FOR YEAR TWO

As we outlined in our email on 1 June, HESA has been exploring the potential use of the newly released SOC2020 coding framework and, working with the Steering Group, has taken the decision to use this framework for the coding of year two (18/19) survey data. To enable this, we are currently undertaking the planning and implementation activity required to make this change. This means that we have delayed the provision of the raw feed of SIC / SOC data until this work is complete.

We're keen to share the lessons learned from year one and how this has helped to inform what will be our finalised approach to the coding of year two data. In the coming month, we will provide a full overview, to include our approach to quality assurance and how we intend to engage with the sector.

We would like to thank providers for their patience while we develop this approach and to those who've engaged with HESA regarding occupation coding and other aspects of the survey during this unprecedented time for the sector.

UPCOMING CHANGES TO HESA'S GRADUATE OUTCOMES COMMUNICATIONS

HESA is continually reviewing its approach to communications with providers to ensure we share relevant and timely updates with you. We are making some changes to the frequency and format of our communication within the Graduate Outcomes programme.

We can advise the following immediate changes to our formal 'cohort review' communications:

1. Midpoint reviews will cease at cohort C (C18071)

Providers can locate response rates by target group in the provider portal in the 'sector survey response rates' report (updated daily). Any relevant operational updates will be incorporated into other communications unless the need demands a dedicated communication.

2. End of cohort reviews in their current format will cease at the end of year two (C18071)

We are looking to cease these reviews (and accompanying infographic) in their current format however, as this is an important milestone, we may replace it with an email which can be produced in a timelier manner.

We may look to do an annual review (at the end of each collection) instead, including an annual infographic ([view year one infographic](#)). This will all be supplemented by operational communications as required, in-cohort.

Ongoing review of communications

We are also looking to incorporate many of the operational communications about the Graduate Outcomes records into the [HESA weekly update](#) from the start of year three (C19071).

The weekly update condenses all appropriate operational emails sent to HESA Identity System contacts into a weekly digest spanning all collections, every Thursday. It is only be sent to you when it relates to collection updates that you are an operational contact for. So, if you don't receive an email, there is no news or updates relevant for your role that week. However, you can also [opt in to receive the newsletter](#) in those weeks it is not applicable to your IDS role

Currently, we use the weekly update as a summary of the previous week's direct communications about Graduate Outcomes. While we review its use moving forward, we recommend that you familiarise yourself with it as it will be important channel for future collections.

We will share these further changes with you in the coming months and we always welcome your feedback on the level and frequency of communications you receive from HESA.

LAUNCH OF INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE OUTCOMES PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY E-LEARNING MODULE

We're pleased to announce the launch of our latest e-learning module which provides an introduction to what to consider when creating a comprehensive Graduate Outcomes promotional strategy. It is ideal for colleagues who have a good understanding of the Graduate Outcomes records and want to learn how to use communications to help increase their response rates.

During the course we will explore the supplied Graduate Outcomes brand materials and other ready-made communications resources available to providers, the minimum amount of promotional activity advised and then suggest ideas to consider in the creation of a more comprehensive or

holistic promotional strategy, depending on the resources you have available. We will also signpost you to case studies from other providers who are putting good practice into place with their own strategies.

Visit the [Introduction to the Graduate Outcomes promotional strategy training](#).



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT GRADUATE OUTCOMES

Website: www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/outcomes
Graduate website: www.graduateoutcomes.ac.uk
Twitter: https://twitter.com/grad_outcomes
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/graduate-outcomes>

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