

GRADUATE OUTCOMES COHORT C REVIEW

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HESA



Graduate Outcomes

HESA

95 Promenade

Cheltenham

GL50 1HZ

E liaison@hesa.ac.uk

T +44 (0) 1242 388 531

W www.hesa.ac.uk

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SECTION 1 – THANK YOU AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This update provides an overview of the third cohort of the year two Graduate Outcomes survey which launched on Monday 1 June 2020 and closed on Monday 31 August 2020.

To start, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of everyone involved in the delivery of Graduate Outcomes, both within HESA and across the sector, over what has been undoubtedly, a challenging period. Thank you. To date, we have not seen a significant impact in the response rates of the survey; however, we are keeping this under review. We are mindful of the ongoing impact Covid-19 may be having on graduate wellbeing, and have included signposts to support services within the survey, both online and as part of the telephone interviews

We remain committed to the continuous improvement of the survey and have introduced a postcode validator and a further SMS quality check during cohort C – please find more detail on this in section 4.

We have also seen the sector begin to successfully utilise the data from year one. We would like to hear how institutions have been using the data, and how you intend to use future releases to shape your work and to communicate with students. See section 5 for how to get in touch if you would be happy to share your early user stories.

Finally, we released an [Update on Graduate Outcomes and league tables](#), explaining our approach on engaging with the publishers of the main league tables in the UK ahead of their release.

We are now in week five of cohort D, and our next review will reflect upon the second year in its entirety.

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

Rob Phillpotts
Managing Director, Statutory Services

SECTION 2 - OUR COHORT C COLLECTION FINDINGS

RESPONSE RATES

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

Main target group	Target	Cohort C year two response rate	Cohort C year one response rate
UK domiciled, full-time	60%	54.4%	54.3%
UK domiciled, part-time	60%	56.1%	54.4%
Research funded	65%	60.8%	64.0%
EU domiciled	45%	50.2%	51.3%
Non-EU domiciled	25%	40.0%	41.9%

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

In comparison with year one, responses rates for UK domiciled graduates increased slightly this year. While response rates were a little lower for the other groups, they were above target for both sets of overseas graduates.

Emails

Email delivery rate continues to be high at 97%. Of the ones that were not delivered, most email addresses belong to institutions' own accounts as denoted by the 'ac.uk' domain. Online response rates were slightly lower than last year which is likely to be caused by a delayed CATI start in year one, for this cohort. On average, respondents who completed the survey online required just over 2.5 email notifications to do so, with overseas respondents requiring more reminders than UK domiciled.

We conducted a set of experiments to determine the best day of the week for engaging with graduates via email, as determined by open and click rates. We also tested the impact of changing subject lines on response rates. Findings from these experiments have informed our engagement strategy for cohort D.

Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI)

CATI response rates were higher than this time last year with over 60% of responses collected through this mode. As previously noted, CATI was delayed in year one (starting in week three instead of week two). For 6.4% of graduates, all telephone numbers provided were invalid and nearly 40% of these were UK domiciled graduates. On average, graduates who did not respond to the survey received 11 calls over the three-month period.

While the pandemic has had a significant impact on individuals and livelihoods, we have not seen a noticeable impact on survey performance thus far. We are keeping this situation under review.

SECTION 3 - COHORT C RESPONSE RATES AND ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS

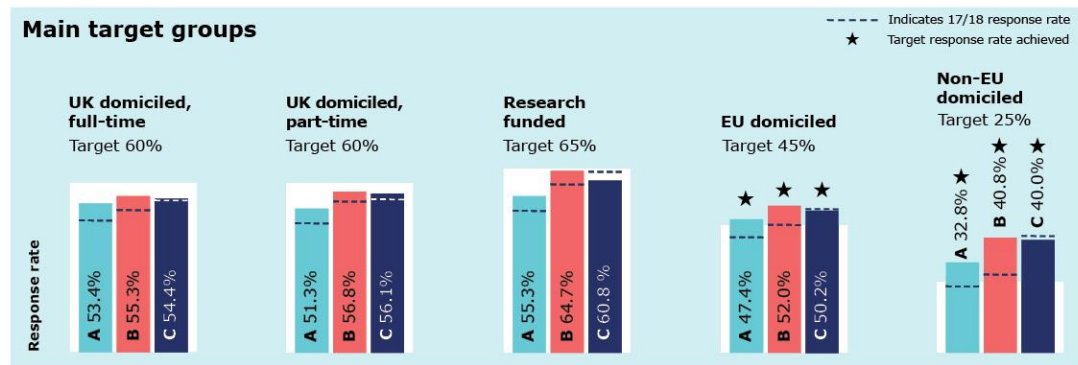
Cohort C



Opened on **Monday 1 June 2020** and closed on **Monday 31 August 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 C response rate



17,451 completed responses



Partial responses 1,178

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 is the name of the company/organisation that you were working for?



Providers in cohort C
300

Mode of completion:



Phone
62%



Online
38%



Desktop
40%
Mobile
60%

Engagement statistics



7 rounds of email invitations sent



8 rounds of SMS messages sent



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 August 2020)

graduateoutcomes.ac.uk

English website: **316,981**

Welsh website: **1,631**

@grad_outcomes followers: **1,129**

Best time of day for completions



Phone



Desktop



Mobile

Best day for completion



Tue

Average time taken to complete

Phone **14** minutes, **1** second

Online **9** minutes, **55** 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 C

Postcode validation

In the final month of cohort C we introduced a new postcode validator. It checks the prefix (first part/postcode area) of the postcode when it is typed in to ensure it is a legitimate prefix of that postcode. This is validated against a national list of postcode prefixes.

This validator was included to improve the reliability and validity of postcode data returned by graduates. It maximises the amount of useable data available in data analysis and outputs. The impact of this intervention will be assessed at the end of cohort D, once we have collected a sufficiently large amount of data necessary for evaluation.

SMS delivery performance statistics

At the end of cohort C we introduced a new functionality that allows us to monitor the quality of UK mobile numbers for the purpose of sending SMSs. We already check the validity of numbers when they are entered into the portal by providers; however, this new functionality provides an additional and more robust check of the contact detail quality and their suitability in our SMS operation. The mechanism works like email delivery statistics, both of which are collected by Mailjet.

As the functionality was only introduced at the end of cohort C, we are unable to provide a comprehensive report at this stage. However, based on the last SMS that was sent to all non-responding graduates, it is evident that 6% were rejected or undelivered by the mobile operator or deemed invalid as the number was incorrect.

SECTION 5 - MODIFICATIONS FOR COHORT D

There were no modifications for cohort D in addition to the new postcode validator and the new functionality to monitor SMS quality introduced in cohort C.

SECTION 6 - NEXT STEPS

C19071 COHORT A

Providers are reminded that the [provider portal](#) will open at the end of September for submission of contact details for cohort A. The deadline for approval is 13 November 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.

As previously communicated, please note, the auto approval function will no longer run for English further education colleges (FECs).

CALL FOR USER STORIES AND CASE STUDIES

Following the release of the year one Experimental Statistical Bulletin and open data, we have seen the sector begin to successfully utilise this information. We would really like to hear how your institution has been using the data, and how you intend to use future releases to shape your work and to communicate the value of higher education with students. With this information, we would like to develop a series of updated case studies to share best practice among providers and to spread awareness about the significance of this survey among graduates.

For example, how has the year one data been used so far at your institution? Examples may include: to inform strategy and policy; for monitoring purposes; to support prospective student research; to inform course development; to underpin careers advice and information for graduates and current students, or has it been used in another way?

If you are happy to share your early user case study, please email communications@hesa.ac.uk.



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>

If you have any queries regarding this update, please email liaison@hesa.ac.uk
or call +44 (0) 1242 388 531.

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