



# HE-BCI MAJOR REVIEW CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

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HESA  
95 Promenade  
Cheltenham  
GL50 1HZ  
E [liaison@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:liaison@hesa.ac.uk)  
T +44 (0) 1242 211 144  
W [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)

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# CONTENTS

Executive summary of emerging themes .....	4
HE-BCI consultation phase one – summary of responses and methodology.....	7
Use of the HE-BCI record overall .....	9
Question 6. What do you use the HE-BCI data for? .....	9
Research related activities – Table 1 .....	10
Question 8. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?.....	10
Question 9. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal? .....	14
Question 10. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI? .....	15
Business and Community Services – Table 2.....	17
Question 12. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?.....	17
Question 13. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal? .....	20
Question 14. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI? .....	22
Regeneration and Development Programmes – Table 3 .....	25
Question 16. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?.....	25
Question 17. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal? .....	28
Question 18. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI? .....	29
Intellectual Property – Table 4 .....	31
Question 20. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?.....	31
Question 21. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal? .....	34
Question 22. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI? .....	35
Social, Community and Cultural Engagement – Table 5.....	38
Question 24. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?.....	38
Question 25. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal? .....	42
Question 26. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI? .....	44
HE-BCI part A.....	45
Question 28. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?.....	45
Question 29. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal? .....	46

Question 30. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI? .....	47
Additional Comments and Feedback .....	48
Question 31. What data about HE interactions with business and the community is currently compiled (in HE providers and elsewhere) which could be made available, either to reduce duplication or enhance value for users? .....	48
Question 32. Do you have any other comments or feedback? .....	51
Conclusion and next steps .....	53
Glossary .....	54

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF EMERGING THEMES

In the remit for reviewing the HE-BCI survey, HESA identified a number of possible areas where there was an apparent appetite for change. In order to consult on and check user needs, and to identify any new needs, we undertook a consultation at the end of 2019. This report outlines the results of that consultation and begins to synthesise some of the central themes that emerge from the data.

What are those themes? The first is that the HE-BCI is a valued dataset, used to support funding and public information. The advent of HE-BCI Open Data was seen as a particularly positive step. For HE providers, production of HE-BCI returns can act as a catalyst for annual appraisal of interaction activity, and renewal of strategy. It is also considered vital to a range of benchmarking activities. However, there was a strong counterpoint to this: most respondents indicated there were areas of HE-BCI where improvement would be timely, and the wealth of enhancement ideas the consultation garnered, attest to this. Strongest among the responses was a requirement to increase the precision of the guidance for suppliers of data, across the return. There were many examples where the maturing of practice in the sector has uncovered areas where guidance needs to improve to keep pace with the operating environment, and increasingly sophisticated and differentiated user needs. As sophistication grows, the need to explain the reasons why data is needed must be redoubled – a call to improve the information about the return overall, and a more full explanation of the reasons why specific data items are required, was heard throughout the feedback we received.

One of the strongest themes to emerge was of the role of students in a variety of business and community interactions. From apprenticeships to volunteering, and from placements and projects to start-ups and spin-offs, students are often the instruments of successful interactions with external stakeholders. Such interactions create value for HE providers, businesses, and communities, but also lead to enriching educational and personal development for students themselves. Exploring new ways to record and understand the role of students in both innovation systems and civic participation appears as a central concern of respondents.

This leads on to a related commonly expressed view: that the money measures, which feature heavily in HE-BCI, possess only a limited capacity to express the value created by interactions. Respondents frequently offered ideas for new process measures and counts, which they believe would lend new or enhanced explanatory power to the dataset. Allied to this, some suggestions for

ratio measures were also put forward, as potentially offering insight into the intensity, range, prevalence, or pervasiveness of specific aspects of interaction. Another strand within this theme was the potential for re-use of data collected elsewhere, either by HESA or by Government, to increase the value of analysis, and in some cases, to modestly reduce the burden of data collection.

Another strong theme is that of place and geography. Many responses indicated a desire to understand or present impact of HE on businesses and communities in ways that are bounded by or responsive to, a variety of geographies. This resonates with the influential work of the UPP Civic Universities' Commission, and the draft Concordat for the advancement of knowledge exchange in England, which both refer to the importance of regional contexts, and universities' roles in economic development within them.

The consultation responses we received were predominantly from HE providers, and they reveal a sector-wide desire to use the HE-BCI data to convey consistent and respected public information about the variety, scope and effectiveness of HE interactions with businesses and communities, beyond their roles in teaching and research. HE providers have, collectively, an important story they wish to tell about their role in the social, cultural, and economic fabric of their communities, and HE-BCI is widely perceived as the appropriate vehicle for achieving this. The corollary of this desire is a need to develop outputs that offer information of value to target audiences. Work to establish the output objectives, which will necessarily include investigating the current and future needs of currently under-served audiences, as well as identifying potential new categories of user, is an obvious direction of travel, which respondents have indicated they wish the review of HE-BCI to take.

In summary, the results of this consultation indicate that Knowledge Exchange (KE) practice has developed considerably in the twenty years since HE-BCI was first run, and the following analysis presents evidence of a sector keen to contribute to and exploit an enhanced dataset that reflects the deep embedding of KE and an entrepreneurial culture, across much of HE, and to make this visible to wider audiences. We thank all those respondents who took part in this essential fact-finding exercise, and we hope you will enjoy reading this summary of opinions. We will take account of the views expressed here, in developing the next stage of the review's work programme.



## HE-BCI CONSULTATION PHASE ONE – SUMMARY OF RESPONSES AND METHODOLOGY

The initial consultation of the HE-BCI major review opened on 22 October 2019 and closed on 11 December 2019. It was advertised openly on our website and promoted to stakeholders through a variety of channels.

In total we received 84 responses to the consultation: 74 from providers and 10 from other organisations. This paper summarises the responses we received and where relevant indicates HESA's initial thinking based on the results.

The table below shows a breakdown of the total responses received; with provider responses totalling 88% of those received, split by country; and other organisations in a separate category.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Responses (%)</b>
England	74%
Northern Ireland	1%
Scotland	5%
Wales	8%
Other organisations	12%

HESA's analysts read every response individually, and as a team, collaborate to develop a set of codes and notes that together help us develop our understanding of the themes and important issues that emerge from multiple responses. The synthesis of a summary is also undertaken collaboratively, with members of the team discussing findings, and cross-checking each other's work.

We offer a detailed summary of findings in each part of the consultation, beginning with overall usage of the data, then moving through each table of HE-BCI Part B in turn, finally turning to Part A (the survey itself). For each section, we asked three questions, designed to elicit the elements that respondents believe are helpful and should be retained; those that are unhelpful and which should be reformed or removed, and; ideas for improvement or development to enhance that part of the data.



From the responses in each part of the consultation, we then attempt to draw together consistent messages that appear throughout the consultation responses, and we offer these in the short executive summary. Although you will read what seem to be echoes of the executive summary's themes throughout the document, in fact it is the other way around – the overarching themes represent the boosting of fainter signals into stronger ones.

## USE OF THE HE-BCI RECORD OVERALL

Responses	% of total responses
Feedback given	89%
No feedback	11%

### Question 6. What do you use the HE-BCI data for?

Of the 78 responses to the questions, there were several strong themes identified on the uses of the HE-BCI data. As expected with this type of question, extra information has also been given which, although not directly related to ‘uses’ of the data, is important to focus on.

First, it is clear from the responses given that a significant number of providers use the data for benchmarking. Not only is benchmarking, as expected, done at a sector level, but it is also used in specific groups such as:

- Similar institutions – e.g. subject, provision, geographical neighbours
- Location – local, regional, national and international
- Public and small companies.

One provider mentioned that benchmarking is of significant importance for tables 2, 4 and 5 (Business and Community Services, Intellectual Property and Social, Community and Cultural Engagement respectively) as this data is not available elsewhere.

Data from both parts of the existing data are used by providers in their strategic planning, resourcing structures, key performance indicators (KPIs) and internal reporting. This was an apparent theme within the majority of the responses to this question.

18 responses to the question had some reference to the importance of HE-BCI data as a metric for funding. Not just as an application for funding, but also to examine uses and effective funded projects. Notable examples included:

- Research Wales Innovation Funding (RWIF) (see their [consultation outcomes](#))
- The [Knowledge Exchange Framework \(KEF\)](#)
- [Impact Acceleration Funding](#)
- [Higher Education Innovation Fund \(HEIF\)](#)

One might assume that the reporting process to HESA can, often, be an isolating experience whereby departments send their data to a central unit that sorts and submits the data to HESA. However, an interesting remark was made on how the HE-BCI collection itself has brought collaboration within their institution to think and talk about business and community interactions, *‘the HE-BCI data compiling process (rather than the data itself) is a vital landmark in the year which helps staff in multiple departments reflect on their activities, and which helps the main data collecting department get an institutional view of KE activities across the year’*.

Some providers or users of the data mentioned that, although they use the data for various functions as mentioned above, it should be used with caution. The main reason stated was that there are variations in data collection methods between institutions. To illustrate this, one provider stated *‘a key question is that of consistency and that should be addressed going forward. A big part of that is the guidance and how that can be and is widely interpreted. We would welcome moves to make guidance more definitive which will in turn lead to more robust data’*.

As mentioned above, there were some suggestions about the future direction of the HE-BCI return, which are important to recognise here. One provider said that the current primary focus is on the economic impacts whereas more should be done on cultural and social impacts. It was also noted that providers would welcome a widening of the geographical scope of the HE-BCI collection, as some institutions specialise in international business and community interactions.

#### RESEARCH RELATED ACTIVITIES – TABLE 1

Responses	% of total responses
Feedback given	89%
No feedback	11%

#### Question 8. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

The idea that came up most frequently was to add a geographical dimension to Table 1, splitting the reporting up by local, regional, national and international contributions. Many respondents felt that this table is currently very UK-focused, and it would be good to include data that gave a better global perspective. Some respondents also suggested that it would be helpful to contextualise a

provider's performance in their specific local economic circumstances and to give more data around participation in regional growth agendas.

Providers were keen to identify and split out different types of organisations that they are interacting and working with – especially around UK/EU Government, non-UK (and non-EU) companies, international companies, spin-off companies, large businesses, SMEs (Small medium enterprises), public sector and charities / non-profit organisations. One respondent also suggested splitting the SME category into micro and small size businesses and medium size businesses. Another suggested assigning a different weight to SMEs and large company research income, to better reflect the contributions being made.

Suggestions were made for counting the overall number of organisations involved, either supporting or engaging with research. In particular, recognising all the providers who are involved in a consortium, with one provider going further, to suggest that the external costs were apportioned in line with the provider income from those involved in the project.

New counts of contracts and collaborative research were suggested:

- Number of new contracts
- Number of repeat or renewed contracts
- Number of bids submitted (against the number of awards made)
- Number of contracts for collaborative research
- Number of collaborative contracts as a percentage of total projects
- Number of collaborative partners across all projects
- Number of external partnerships for collaborative research
- Duration of research partnerships.

Respondents were particularly interested in dividing contracts up to specify new contracts and repeat contracts.

Some providers had specific suggestions around types of data they would like added to the category splits. For example, more data around student enterprise and entrepreneurship activities and student training; including things like: CASE PhDs, industry-funded studentships, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, entrepreneurs in residence, and the number of collaborative doctoral studentships. A couple of specific projects were also mentioned: SIPP (record under regional and

economic development) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) projects. A desire for more details on knowledge exchanges, their number and value, as well as the split between commercial and non-commercial organisations, was also raised. Data could be collected on professional doctorates and consultancy for individuals as well as organisations.

Two providers raised the idea of including things outside of the HE-BCI coverage currently – having the total research income, and research not captured in current categories such as internally funded research and in-kind collaborations, or including data on the workload of the provider to support the activities.

We identified a preference among respondents, to include research activities that do not necessarily have either any associated income, or any in-kind contributions to research income.

Examples given to illustrate this included:

- Any philanthropic income, which is restricted to research
- Research that a provider may do on behalf of the community
- Funding designed to progress products and services towards societal benefit
- Academic secondments
- Staff exchanges
- Internships
- Unfunded partnerships
- Non-research innovation activities (e.g. art and design work)
- Clinical research.

Additional categories of specific funders were suggested, such as listing UKRI rather than simply “UK Government, Innovate UK and competitively won Research England funded research”.

Respondents were also interested in areas often associated with REF impact statements and case-studies. These included a number of suggestions aimed at recognising contributions to public policy and governance work, including factors like:

- The number of publications co-authored with industry partners, or citations.
- Contributions to policy papers.
- Appearances by university staff at select committees.

- Advice and review support given by UK academics to companies, government and third sector organisations.
- Case studies.
- University research where it is a major contributor to the development of the governance, curriculum and pedagogical activities in schools.

Some respondents also had ideas around other ways to count interactions with businesses and the impact of research related activities, including a mixture of input and output measures related to the business development aspects of KE:

- Jobs created or increased turnover as a result of a research collaboration
- Number of company visits to the provider
- Number of enquires
- Number of meetings with SMEs
- Conversions, when an initial facilities, consultancy, internship or Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) type engagement then leads on to a research or collaborative grant
- Destination of intellectual property in collaborative work
- Indication of internal university spend.

Generally, providers asked for better contextual information and some suggestions as to how this could be achieved are mentioned above. Providers also called for improvements to be made to the guidance in the coding manual – asking for it to be more explicit, generous and based on actual examples. Examples were raised that included guidance on in-kind contributions and another on the type of funders that can be included.

Data is not currently differentiated by internal provider disciplines and one provider suggested this might be helpful. A mechanism such as splitting the return into cost-centres or subjects could aid analysts looking to link impact to disciplines or academic units. This would be helpful for comparative purposes and add benchmarking value to the HE-BCI data set.

A few respondents had no feedback for changes and some explicitly said that they didn't want any changes to be made. It was raised that much of this data is already held by UKRI or its components and that thought should be given to either direct reporting of this easier access to aggregated information, or even reconciliation of this data. The outcomes from the review should

be careful not to advocate replicating data which is available elsewhere, including the HESA Finance record.

Question 9. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

A number of respondents didn't have any feedback or suggestions on what they considered to be of lower value.

The majority of respondents who did answer this question indicated that in-kind contributions was of lower value to them; they don't consider this to be a robust piece of data, because the subjective judgement required to produce the data was perceived to lead to lower data quality. Many providers reported that it is challenging to source information on in-kind and cash contributions, particularly as in-kind support will not be recorded on contract / financial systems, whilst some respondents cannot see the value of this data in the first place. Some providers simply asked for an improvement in the guidance to help them returning in-kind data.

A chorus of respondents suggested that data should only be collected if it is being used by funders in any metrics or calculations associated with funding, such as HEIF. Some of the data items that are repeated in other returns or are available through other routes (such as UKRI grants) are considered to be of less value in Table 1. One provider suggested that the existing records for staff numbers and student numbers were helpful contexts when set against student enterprise.

Having a split between SMEs and non-SMEs was considered to be of lower value to a number of respondents, some couldn't understand the benefit of knowing the size of the organisation. Many other suggestions were given, though this often appeared to reflect the specific circumstances of the respondent, rather than representing more widely held views. These included: the number of organisations generally, the number with non-commercial organisations, collaborations from industry. The distinction between public and grant led collaboration and contract research was also seen to have lower value.

One suggestion was made for HESA to have a list of the official determination for each organisation – e.g. SME, non-SME, non-commercial – which would help with the above problems.

The row of data identifying EU government collaborative research was also highlighted by one respondent, asking whether the sub-head would remain in a situation where the UK leaves the European Union. Preparing the return for post-Brexit compatibility is now a certain requirement, and the approach to this will need to be included in the review's future work.

One provider suggested merging the Contract Research part of Table 1 with Table 2 (Consultancy) as a more straightforward way of representing this data. Another provider highlighted how much of the HE-BCI return was about research, when it is considered to be synonymous with Enterprise activity. They questioned whether research activity should continue to be reported in the HE-BCI return or collected through the HESA Finance record.

Respondents welcomed the idea of the return shifting focus away from the income amount (which is seen of lower value) and instead moving to the impact of it (which is seen as higher value). The partner contributions to a collaborative research project was considered to be of lower value as it currently has to be estimated by providers. The idea that research has to fall with strict definitions of collaborative and contract research was considered to be a little restrictive.

**Question 10. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?**

Respondents to this question indicated a number of reasons as to why they find this table useful, of high value and which they would not like to see lost in any changes as part of the review. These include performance management, establishing trends, benchmarking, comparisons with other providers, time series (including comparison within years), policy analysis, recognising best practice, informing knowledge exchange strategies.

Table 1 in HE-BCI shows a range of information and is good for understanding the scope and value of the work providers do and the engagement with businesses. It helps providers demonstrate the commitment of external partners they work with and the different engagements they have in research. It also helps them show the connection between enterprise and knowledge exchange activities and their research. One respondent even mentioned how it encourages their academics to engage in external collaborations and motivates more effective research collaborations.



This table also helps providers demonstrate how good they are at securing funding with partners and how effective they are at leveraging money with public funding. It demonstrates their commitment to societal impact and their communities.

In terms of the specific data items that respondents didn't want to see change, this primarily was the input into the HEIF income (in England and Northern Ireland) and Innovation & Engagement funding (in Wales). Respondents were also keen to keep the SME and non-SME splits and the breakdown of different funding sources.

Other possible data items that were mentioned included:

- Knowledge exchange partners
- Collaborative research projects (and sources)
- Grant funded income (and sources)
- Contract Research (and sources)
- In-kind contributions.

## BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES – TABLE 2

Responses	% of total responses
Feedback given	85
No feedback	15

## Question 12. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

As with the previous question analysis, providers would like to see a geographical dimension to Table 2. By disaggregating the data reported, into local, regional, national and global (most common variations suggested) then this would indicate the *'reach of a University as well as the financial value'* and allow *'the sector to demonstrate the scale of its export business'*. One provider had particularly strong views about the benefit of regional data in the HE-BCI return:

*'From a data analysis perspective my view would be to return to regions and ask each university on the level of activity with firms from their own region and from the rest of the UK. The point would be to indicate whether universities were actively involved in supporting firms within their own region and hence helping in the rebalancing of activity across the UK.'*

It was noted that quite extensive discussions on the definition of 'region' in this context were had during the KEF consultation so it would be pertinent to explore the findings from that as a part of the review.

Continuing with the topic of disaggregation, a few providers suggested an expansion of 'non-commercial' across all three headings (consultancy – head 1, facilities and equipment related services – head 2 and courses for the business and the community – head 3). This can be split several ways, but in the simplest form, could be:

- Public Sector
- Charitable Sector.

One provider suggested a further split with a greater account and emphasis on social enterprise explaining that *'social enterprise spinouts are already captured in HE-BCI - it makes sense to also explicitly capture work that takes place with existing spun-out SMEs.'* This would arguably give users of the data a greater understanding of the features of working with economic units described

as social enterprises, which are often perceived as different to traditional SMEs or charities. This change would provide better information for the clientele served and provide an opportunity for enhanced benchmarking and the monitoring of microeconomic trends.

An underlying trend which was picked up in the analysis of this table, is that a primary focus is on activity, which is income-related. Several providers felt that they were under-representing their engagement in the community and with businesses as activities as these cannot be reported unless they have financial involvement. A sector body response to this question cut to the core of the issue and challenged the use of income as a measure and commented about revolutionising HE-BCI: *'The metrics selected here drive "business" rather than community engagement, failing to record any social, community or local engagement with anything other than monetary value'*. The members of this organisation would like to put 'the student' at the centre of the reporting and would like to see opportunities to record student co-creation/projects/community involvement being recognised. This would allow, they argue, for inclusivity of engagement to be tracked.

With regards to the consultancy section, one provider argued that *'measures for pro-bono consultancy are not included, nor are the "in kind" ways [in which] a [HE provider] engages with the third-sector'*. The same respondent indicated that even recording interactions such as offering free desk space to researchers or charitable foundations, would be an improvement to the current return. As with in-kind data in the current HE-BCI return, it is difficult to capture as (in the example of Table 1 – Research related activities) it must be 'contractually explicit'. One provider commented that they would welcome direction from Research England on values that could be associated with this work. Nonetheless, this proposed addition of a wider range of data to the record, would appear to be welcomed by several providers and users of the data. The advantages to including it, is that showing that the activity is valuable enough to be measured would have a significant positive impact on both the university and the external partner. Universities might use such data to leverage external funding opportunities, and the potential might also be evaluated of including such measures as additional REF impact metrics. Equally, the partner could benefit from recognition of improved practice, sustainability through leadership, and opening-up new funding opportunities. One provider sums-up a number of responses when writing that, although *'the level of such activities is not always easy to measure we would welcome discussions on how these might be incorporated into future iterations of HE-BCI'*.

Respondents to this question also stated that they would like to see duration or repeat business as a proxy for measuring engagement with the community and businesses. The focus has been primarily on individual interactions so what is not being reported is the longevity and depth of partnerships, or the sustainability of KE activity. It has been suggested that this could be recognised simply by returning the same number split between renewed and new agreements. Provider responses demonstrate a general eagerness to showcase their sustained collaborative partnerships between themselves and external organisations. Providers drew reference to the KEF pilot in which this was also discussed.

As referenced in the current [HE-BCI coding manual](#), under Head 3: Courses for business and the community 'Degree apprenticeships cannot currently be returned. This is under review'. It is very clear from the analysis, that providers have asked for this to be included in the future HE-BCI return. As quoted and supported by several respondents, *'Apprenticeships are important vehicles for close working and knowledge exchange between the university and businesses'*. As this type of delivery and provision has significantly increased over the past few years, and indeed has attracted political favour, providers will find this useful for benchmarking and quantifying performance. It will also provide insight into another aspect of the relationship between the higher education and business sectors. One provider suggested that apprenticeship-focussed metrics could include the number of employer partners or number of apprentices on programme, potentially split out into SME/large business categories.

In addition to the above, there were a number of other valuable suggestions for the future of this section of the HE-BCI return. Certainly not limited to, but including:

- Non-physical resources in facilities section (open data, images, metadata).
- In-kind contributions leveraged for externally funded or non-income generating projects.
- Jobs created/turnover as a result of research.
- Widening participation (WP) – working with charities, ethnic minority groups, volunteering etc.
- Accelerators/working spaces.
- The concept of 'learner days' should be reviewed. Information may be better captured as 'learners' and 'number of learner days' (or hours). Differentiation between smaller and longer courses, should be considered. Methods of learning are also material to the nature of interaction, with e-learning, workshops, etc each offering insights.
- Value of commercial businesses on site and the indirect impact that has.

- Bibliometric contributions to policy papers.
- Students working with businesses and third sector, internship and consultancy.
- Movement of both staff and students between academia and industry would be useful to capture.
- Non-contractual engagement with policy makers / public and third sector organisations.
- Measuring the value of the work done with public / third sector.
- Use of facilities – for individuals.
- Number of consultancy days.
- Credit and non-credit bearing courses for CPD.

Regarding CPD, this is currently covered in the HE-BCI return, so perhaps more explicit guidance is required and/or a split in the table to allow for HE-level and other types of CPD to be covered. In general, providers requested strengthened guidance in this section.

**Question 13. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?**

Of the respondents who replied, over a third of respondents did not consider any areas of Table 2 to be of lower value or requiring removal.

The majority of respondents had several issues with data under Head 3 – ‘Courses for business and the community - Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses and Continuing Education (CE) (excluding pre-registration funded by the NHS or TA)’.

The data item which generated the most feedback was Sub-head 3f: ‘Total learner days of CPD/CE courses delivered’. Collectors of the data commented that this data has *‘little value to others and large disparity between the returns’*. Disparity between each provider’s returns could show the variation in this activity across the sector; however a few providers commented that it is a poor proxy for the value of CPD/CE and *‘is easily gamed, particularly since it says nothing about either attendance at or the quality of those learner days’*.

There is a lack of clarity over how this data is meant to be interpreted: are more or fewer days better for KE? What measures of efficiency or quality are pertinent. A suggestion was also made to report breakdown ‘hours’ as well as or instead of ‘days’. This would be an improvement as it would

line up with how CPD points are calculated by the CPD certification services and other professional bodies. This might therefore reduce the burden for providers if they already collect this data for other reporting purposes.

A handful of respondents found that facilities and equipment section is of lesser importance than the other two headings. One provider even responded that, as with the leave days of CPD/CE, they do not have a mechanism for capturing facilities and equipment data and as such do not include in their HE-BCI return. They commented that *'If return rates for these data items are lower across the sector, this suggests they are either of lower value or more guidance is required'*. This view appears to be supported by another respondent from a provider, who argues that it is not easy to identify, as: *'[i]t is, in conversation with (external) colleagues not that easy to record as F&E [facilities and equipment] in many instances as there is invariably some academic/technical input to many "projects" beyond the example given of stage rental.'*

Related to the difficulties encountered when collecting the data, one provider would like staff time to be removed as they consider it very difficult to calculate. No comment was given on the value of this data item however it signifies a potential imbalance between the benefits accrued by having the data, and the burdens involved in collecting it. This interpretation resonates with the inconsistencies recognised by respondents across many aspects of Table 2.

One provider didn't necessarily answer the question but raised quite a significant point about the future of HE-BCI Table 2. In terms of the information required for Business and Community services included in Table 2 Consultancy, the numbers of projects are collected and reported in addition to the financial values. However only values are collected in tables 1 and 3. In this regard, the provider believes that a more consistent approach would be helpful, and they suggest that in future both values and number of projects should be reported. From this it can be concluded that if there is more consistency across the tables about the metrics collected, it might result in a more valuable dataset.

A few respondents argued that Table 2 is too granular, and some distinctions should be removed. For example, one provider would like to remove the distinction between individuals and companies in CPD courses. Reasons given for this were that all their programmes are aimed at individuals and businesses of all sizes. One provider would even like to see the categories (SME, non-SME

commercial, non-SME non-commercial) merged as it is *'time consuming to identify and can be subjective based on estimated trading levels and nature of the business'*.

Question 14. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

Several providers have highlighted the value of the consultancy section in the HE-BCI return. Setting aside the many suggestions given for the improvement of this field, there is still an apparent majority who consider this data allows for users to *'benchmark their performance in this area against their peers'*. One provider in Scotland has commented that Table 2 data for CPD and Consultancy replicates data which is captured for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Knowledge Exchange (KE) metrics. They would therefore like this kept stable unless the metrics move with the future of the HE-BCI return.

Only a small number of respondents would want to see the Facilities and Equipment section remain in the HE-BCI return, however one provider had a compelling argument for the use of this section for their organisation. They wrote *'we think that the equipment hire data may be helpful to regional organisations in surveying the resources of the knowledge base for a region's R&D [Research and Development] capability'*. They did however caveat that these reasons may not be strong enough to avoid a revision that has been mentioned in previous questions. These have been summarised below:

- Stronger definitions/guidance
- Updating to mirror current realities
- Survey which HE resources external parties' value – these could be both physical and non-physical.

It collects data purely based on volume; the value of such stock is not captured. Based on the above, this section needs some careful attention in the upcoming review. The HE-BCI output is probably not the right source of information about the facilities themselves, so careful consideration needs to be given to what user needs this data is intended to serve. Another provider finds that the current level of clarity and data categorisations are useful *'when considering priorities for facility-based services and about changes in the market demand/uptake for including expert staff and research-informed analyses in the provision of services'*.

Of the answers given, most respondents would like to see the Courses for business and the community retained in the record, however this has also been highlighted above as a section which users would like to see change.

One provider had strong opinions around the usefulness of the CPD element of the record within their institution. It provides them with opportunities for professional services staff to interact closely with other teams within the institution who deliver these services to business and the community. This result being *'better coordination of knowledge exchange activities and improved data collection'*. Other providers use this as an indicator for performance. As with the above, a provider uses the data captured in this heading to support their SFC KE metrics.

Closely related to this, one provider commented that *'3 CPD & CE is a HEFCW Corporate Measure (alongside collaborative research) and is used to benchmark 'the providers'] engagement in the skills agenda regionally'*. This respondent clearly recognised, however, that even minor changes to guidance can *'have a significant impact on the return and create issues with benchmarking from year to year'*.

Further to the three key headings that is captured in Table 2, some providers would want to retain the current separate categories of businesses, in particular, SMEs. This metric is used as a *'clear target group for increasing R&D investment including through universities'*. The provider also suggested that the introduction of some business size granularity might help in understanding where the gap in SME engagement is.

For one provider, the dataset allows them to compare a set of consistent metrics and set targets for KE activities internally. They were concerned that the risk of any change in the metrics is the loss of the ability to report on trends over time. In particular they would not want to see the separation of SME-related data, as this is identified as a key institutional priority, reflecting the business demography of their region. This, as with some of the other comments, shows the impact that a change of any proportion can have to a providers' own internal performance management processes. The review will need to take a suitably conscientious approach to avoid disrupting this kind of embedded good practice.



Aside from the specific items which users would like to see preserved there were several generalised conclusions around this table which provide some detailed insight. Providers find that the data in Table 2 is of significant use and value and would like to still be able to analyse trends over time and benchmark performance. One provider sensibly suggested that, if only small changes were made which compromised the ability to perform these key functions then it may not be worthwhile to change.

One provider uses the outputs in all three headings of Table 2 as active contributing areas for their HEIF projects. They use the data to target engagement with SMEs *'to support them in using facilities and technologies provisioned through the University and in focusing on the development of business opportunities, including support for industry-focused bidding'*. The value of this data for this user is that it captures CPD that is co-developed in SME partnerships to address industry challenges for delivery at both the company and individual level. Another provider would also like to see the retention of all the existing fields but to broaden these to capture more meaningful data, in particular non-cash transactions and outcomes. They commented that KEF will hopefully address part of this but that HE-BCI will be used as a platform to support this analysis.

## REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES – TABLE 3

Responses	% of total responses
Feedback given	75%
No feedback	25%

## Question 16. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

Most respondents to question 16 have made suggestions for new data that the HE-BCI collection could start to collect in relation to the data currently within Table 3. Many of the responses indicated enthusiasm for creating a Table 3 more fit for purpose.

One of the most frequent points of feedback was regarding the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) head 1a and the European Social Fund (ESF) head 1b within the table and the potential removal of them because of Brexit. Providers are expecting these sources of funding to end and alternative sources of funding to become available replacing these and this will need to be reflected in this table.

Further to this, there was substantial feedback that the table needs to capture a wider array of different sources of funding than the ones currently detailed. One provider suggested that HESA ought to monitor the sums *'being submitted within the two "Other" categories; should a particular source become significant within Regeneration and Development, it should be disaggregated as with the other named sources'*. Within the guidance at the moment, HESA states that *'Funding from local leadership organisations including LEPs, and similar economic development agencies across the UK should be returned under the 'Other regeneration grants and income from local and regional bodies'* but the feedback within this consultation shows a wish to capture this data in their own sections and not just within the 'other' section.

Some of the other types of funding that respondents would like to be detailed within Table 3 are as follows:

- Funding made available by the UK government in lieu of the ERDF/ESF removal
- Single Local Growth Fund (maybe not though as this is due to end in 2021),
- Strength in Places Fund

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – (not due to appear until 2021).
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP).

On the subject of Local Enterprise Partnerships, many providers expressed the wish to also capture the matched funding of other organisations to the regeneration and/or development programmes they are investing in. There were quite a few expressions of desire for a format where providers can capture the matched funding and the number of delivery partners dedicated to the programme. This is because often a cluster of delivery partners can help build a regeneration and/or development project and these tend to have a more powerful impact than a provider acting alone. By capturing this full picture of data, the HE-BCI record could make a better attempt to capture the full impact of a regeneration and/or development project, rather than just a provider's impact.

Further to the above points, there was feedback about the type of data contained within the table. As well as recording what sources of funding a higher education provider is receiving there was a clear wish from providers to be able to detail where that funding is going. So, to include outputs as well as inputs. This can only be shown if Table 3 shows the projects/activities/programmes the provider is investing their funding into (and detailing the matched funding going into these projects as well).

Suggestions from providers about the other types of data that could be included in order to capture a picture of those outputs and get a full view of the regeneration and development project a provider was investing in, included:

- Number of type and size of external (matched funding) partners that were engaged in project
- Number of businesses created
- Number of jobs created
- Number of jobs saved
- Number of businesses supported
- Amount of cash contributed by other partners
- Amount of cash invested in from provider
- Amount of public or third sector resources saved, etc.

If Table 3 captured what the money was being spent on, providers also expressed the wish to be able document what the provider is investing into regeneration and development projects from their own core spending. Some providers stated that they are not just spending external sources of funding, like the funds currently within Table 3, on these projects. Providers explained they are currently using their own funds to develop science parks, business support, innovation spaces, acceleration programmes as well as both time and money working with or advising local authorities on regeneration and development related work. All of these activities may be funded by providers' core spending and they wish to be able to document this to show the true impact of how they are making an impact on regeneration and development programmes.

Further to documenting what the money is being spent on, one of the key points of feedback given by providers with regards to Table 3 is the wish to be able to capture how the funding is broken down by geography. There was a lot of feedback from providers stating that they wanted to be able to capture how a provider is contributing to regeneration and development on a local, regional, national and international scale. This feedback is similar to the feedback given for other tables. This reflects the data that providers are capturing in relation to the implementation of suggestions identified by the UPP Civic Universities Commission report. It was suggested that 'regional productivity' contributions by providers could be expressed as the proportion of the total regional economy. It is worth noting that such fiscal information is often produced at a regional level, by a Local Enterprise Partnership or by providers. Providers acknowledge that there is potentially limited standardisation of such data and much of a provider's regional economy contribution is through other means than business community interaction or knowledge exchange however the general consensus seems to be that it is worth exploring whether such a measure could be defined and gathered in a cost-effective manner.

As well as making new additional quantitative fields within Table 3 to capture other aspects of funding and outputs, some providers fed back the wish to be able to capture qualitative data on their regeneration and/or development programmes in order to provide more context to the impact universities have on a local, regional, national and international areas. The reasoning behind this is that simply capturing income from regeneration schemes as a sole measure of a university's contribution to local economic growth is too narrow. This is merely showing how a university benefits from regeneration programmes and doesn't reflect the true extent of how a provider can contribute to a local area. Providers also stated that by capturing qualitative data it would allow subjects like the social sciences, arts and humanities to better show their impact. From this, if you

capture more data on what the money is spent on, as indicated in previous paragraphs, coupled with qualitative data to provide more context, HE-BCI would represent more fully the extent a provider has on regeneration and development in their region.

As well as the above points, there were a few providers who questioned the name of Table 3 and suggested a name change. The reasons for this were some providers thought the term Regeneration could potentially be outdated. Providers stated that the title of the table potentially needed to be revised to show an interest in including diversity and equality beyond a provider as well as to reflect the current emphasis on place and regionality in funding and policy drivers.

Suggestions included:

- Table 3: Local and regional social and economic development
- Table 3: Development and place-based programmes
- Table 3: Regeneration, development and social inclusion.

Further to this, if HESA considers significantly changing the contents of Table 3 then HESA should also consider renaming the table to reflect the new contents.

In summary, there is a clear desire from providers to add a lot of data to this table namely capturing where (both location and outputs) the funding they are receiving is going, what it is doing and any new sources of funding in order to create an accurate picture of their provider's involvement in regeneration and development projects/activities/programmes.

**Question 17. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?**

Responses to question 17 reflected those stated in question 16, with a clear wish for the removal of the ERDF and ESF sections once we know what is happening post-Brexit. Some providers also stated that European regeneration funding is a metric of lower value to them as it is location dependent and therefore its use is limited across the sector and not a metric that can be used for benchmarking.

The majority of providers that answered question 17 stated that none of the data within this table was of lower value and therefore should not be considered for removal, which is a positive sign for Table 3 as it shows that a large proportion of providers consider the table to be valuable.

Only a very small proportion of providers stated that they found Table 3, as a whole, to not be of use to them. Their reasons for this were that they found the purpose of the table unclear because many of a provider's contributions to creating 'economic, physical and socially beneficial projects' are recorded elsewhere. Some providers also stated that they thought it would not be of use to capture data with regards to European funds. Others thought that the dataset merely captures the availability of regional funding in particular regions and doesn't therefore show the strategic intent or impact of higher education activities. Therefore, as a whole, some providers thought that the dataset was not useful for providing meaningful insight into the impact of providers on regeneration and development programmes. It should be stated though that those providers who didn't see Table 3 to be useful did state that they didn't want to see the removal of the table, more that they wanted it to be amended to contain more useful information, particularly if it is going to form a basis for future HEIF allocations.

However, the majority of providers found some value in the table but thought certain sections ought to be removed/changed. Very much in line with what was said in response to question 16, a lot of the responses stated that data shouldn't be removed but the sections ought to change to allow regional analysis, show outputs and contextual information around outputs rather than just inputs, show other sources of funding, etc.

**Question 18. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?**

Only a small proportion of respondents that gave feedback for this particular question thought that none of the data held value for them and a very small number of respondents stated that they had no strong feelings/no comments about the value of the data in this topic area. This is positive as the vast majority of the feedback stated the data to be valuable or will be valuable if certain aspects are changed.

Those that stated the data was valuable said that the current data was useful for establishing internal trends and benchmarking; to compare what development funding providers are receiving in

comparison to others and to allow providers to do year-on year comparisons. It is particularly high value to providers in Wales, as it forms part of HEFCW's national innovation and engagement indicators, which in turn drive the new Research Wales Innovation Fund ([RWIF](#)) funding allocations. Others stated the data is important in generally understanding the extent of university participation in regeneration and place-orientated programmes. It has also been used in some longitudinal studies. Some providers stated that this table is essential and must remain as it is the closest to demonstrating where value other than financial have an impact on regeneration and development programmes, and certainly if changes are made to make Table 3 more fit for purpose, this will be the case.

This is the key point that has come across in the feedback given for question 18, that this table is very valuable and useful to providers and they do not want to lose it but they do want to see it changed and if anything, to see it go into more depth. The feedback for this question, again, matched what was said in response to question 16. Respondents want to see the outputs of the regeneration and development activities – what projects the money is going into, where (local, regional, national or international?), what is the matched funding for the project and from whom, what types of activities are being funded using this money and being able to clearly detail other sources of funding rather than just putting them into the 'other' sections. This table is important as it *'gives appropriate visibility that incentivises internal and external recognition and investment'*.

In summary, the feedback seems to state that although this table is valuable it needs to be amended using the suggestions made in question 16.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY – TABLE 4

<b>Responses</b>	<b>% of total responses</b>
Feedback given	88
No feedback	12

## Question 20. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

There is overwhelming support for new data to be captured as part of this table. Responses highlight there is considerable interest in this area, but more importantly that it potentially is not entirely fit for purpose.

The most frequent feedback in this section, as with the other sections, was that providers would like to see HE-BCI better capturing data regarding local, regional, national and international impact. Several providers reported that HE-BCI misses out here by not demonstrating the, at times, significant economic value a provider has within these groupings.

A number of respondents particularly drew reference to the 'golden triangle', the points of which relate to Oxford, Cambridge and London and the disparate advantage that those within the triangle and more broadly in the south have over those in the North. In particular, with regards the 'External investment received' data item there is a bias towards those in the golden triangle where investors are more active. This widely perceived bias was a key motivator for a number of respondents expressing an interest in reporting on geographical information.

Providers' responses to this question also highlighted an interest in capturing more detail around Intellectual Property (IP). Examples provided include:

- Ratio of Research Income to IP income
- Ratio of active academics to patents and/or IP income
- Time a provider holds a patent for
- New forms of IP / Open IP (E.g. Open source, creative commons license)
- Types of IP that are licensed or sold by HE providers (i.e. Copyright, design rights, patents, trademarks, etc)
- Location
- Industrial classification



- Number of founders / inventors
- Exported sales
- Number of IP licenses negotiated against those completed.

A common theme in relation to why IP should be expanded on was because it was felt that the current HE-BCI unfairly advantages providers with a significant science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) portfolio. This is often because '*these disciplines have much better-established methods of generating outputs relevant to the metrics included here*'. In response to this, respondents raised whether HE-BCI could be expanded to include data capturing a provider's contribution to enterprise and innovation and also to consider the valuable non-patent IP (copyright, design rights, trade marks etc.) that is created by providers in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, where patentable innovation is less frequent.

A theme running throughout responses to this question was that it could better capture the impact and outcomes of things like patents, licenses, IP as well as Start-ups and spin-offs. In relation to start-ups and spin-offs the following were suggested:

- FTE of staff involved in such activity
- How many jobs they create
- Student start-up and student enterprise activity
- Percentage of spin-off ownership
- Value of HE provider owned spin-offs
- Number of companies, as spin-offs, that have successfully scaled up
- Data that identifies how many and which start-ups are more incisive at driving funds
  - Volume of investment they attract
- Number of spin-offs at each development stage
- Number of successful exits
- Value on exit.

There was interest by several respondents in bringing the value of HE-BCI back to actually what value do the business and community activities that a provider is engaged in do for the teaching and learning at the provider, and ultimately the students. Examples offered included:

- Measuring engagement levels with spin-off and start-up activity.

- Number of businesses incubated/supported by the provider for students, researchers and start-ups.
- Tracing back the affiliation (School / Department) of the founders of the spin-offs.
- Measuring engagement in curricular and extra-curricular enterprise and entrepreneurial learning or activities (e.g. enrolment on enterprise modules, enterprise boot-camp attendance, placements/internships with external organisations).
- Number of students engaged in Knowledge Exchange activities via placements, internships and consultancies.
- Number of visa endorsements.

Some providers raised that the HE-BCI collection could align itself to existing collections of similar data ensuring that definitions used are consistent. There were also some expressions made that HESA should look to ingest the data required from collections elsewhere, instead of within the HE-BCI return, thereby reducing burden on providers.

The HESA Graduate Outcomes survey was mentioned in a couple of responses as a means by which new graduate start-up businesses could be identified. This in turn could be cross-referenced against the return of start-up information in HE-BCI. Providers also reported that HESA should look at obtaining data from Companies House for start-ups, for example. This was on the basis that this data is available publicly and providers have difficulty reporting on this as it is non-public data.

Providers reported wanting to see the definitions of IP revenues aligned between HE-BCI and the HESA Finance return given that the values are required to match.

The guidance and definitions provided within HE-BCI came up in lots of responses and it is clear from these that we need to review this as part of the HE-BCI review. Comments included:

- A very simple definition of graduate start-ups must be provided.
- Guidance on software licenses and when they should be counted, is needed.
- Updated definition of spin-offs is needed.
- Amendment to the license definition to be more closely aligned with the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM) definition ensuring comparisons with the US are more meaningful.
- IP is not particularly well understood, and the term tends to be used to refer only to patents.

Question 21. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

Responses to this question, as with question 20, demonstrate that providers are keen to see elements dropped with several suggesting it could be slimmed down whilst being more focussed on certain elements.

As expressed in question 20 there were responses to this question outlining that currently the whole section is felt to be of low value due to poor definitions and guidance where currently figures returned can be subjective and incomparable due to how each provider has interpreted guidance. Responses from smaller providers supported this view as do responses from specialist providers and those that do not have a STEM portfolio.

The majority of respondents that did answer indicated that having estimated data as part of the Spin-off activity is not a reliable collection of data. Here providers stated that having estimated data opens itself to being calculated in all sorts of ways with varying levels of accuracy across the sector. In addition, providers reported that the collection of some of this information can be quite difficult such as 'Spin-off activity – estimated external investment received'. Ultimately providers seemed to claim that due to the reliability and difficulty in obtaining that the value and usefulness of this data was considered low.

Respondents challenged the value of the head under Spin-off activity 'Number still active which have survived at least 3 years'. This was on the basis that it is difficult to attribute the impact a provider has on companies that are decades-old, for example. Providers also reported that obtaining data on this can be very difficult given that at that point they are removed from the provider.

The data relating to spin-offs and start-ups had a number of providers querying the usefulness of some of the headings. Graduate start-ups and social enterprises were reported by a provider as often not being IP related. Reporting on spin-offs in relation to number of and estimated turnover was reported as not being useful. Generally, the reason stated for this was because spin-offs by providers are essentially long-term proof of concepts working as investment and development pieces where turnover is not necessarily an indicator of success.

On the whole, respondents to the question generally raised the breakdown for the spin-off and start-up section by the 6 categories as not being suitable and should be reviewed as some of them do not apply to things like 'Formal Spin-offs, not provider-owned'.

There was support from several providers for the removal of the software and non-software licenses distinction with providers citing that this is probably not as relevant as well as having a low value compared to when the survey was first devised.

A number of responses from providers queried the usefulness of patent information where currently there is no supporting context: *'Numbers of patents etc is not meaningful unless this translates in to something (commercial, impact, etc). Just having a patent does not mean anything in and of itself. A count of patents does not relate to their use in the community – many providers have large patent portfolios but then do not actively commercialise them'*.

A theme across a number of responses was the time element to some of the data. For example, providers reported issues in reporting on patents granted in the year (Head 1b) due to the nature of patents taking a long time to get something to grant. A provider also acknowledged this citing that the focus on purely the number of patents and income can *'force organisations to focus on short term outcomes, rather than supporting the long-term development of project...which can take years to bear fruit'*. Another example querying the value in data reported for the year relates to head 3e 'Sales of shares in spin-offs'. Here a provider commented that these sales are not annual occurrences for the majority of UK providers, meaning the data has little value if used as a measure of activity or for benchmarking.

Total costs (Head 3g) was felt to be of lower value with providers unsure why it was included drawing reference to the fact that no other costs are reported in HE-BCI.

A few providers raised that the size of Table 4 is disproportionate to some of the other tables, in particular Table 5. The result being that providers felt Table 4 appears to be more important as a form of Knowledge exchange: a view challenged by many.

Question 22. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

Aside from specific data quoted, a large number of responses to this question stated that all existing fields / data captured should be kept. That said, respondents did acknowledge that guidance and better definitions should be provided. Some providers raised that the table name 'Intellectual property' is misleading and encompasses aspects that do not relate to it, e.g. spin-offs and start-ups. There was a lot of support for separating this section out away from IP, perhaps even into a separate table.

It was clear from the responses that there were aspects of the return particularly useful to certain types of providers where others felt it lacked granularity for their type of provision. Value of the data in this section was attributed to several themes:

- Benchmarking.
- Assessing internal progress, e.g. exploitation of university-owned IP.
- Allocation of statutory funding.
- International interest in the data.

The most frequent response can be summarised as providers use the data from it to be able to carry out performance management, identify trends and benchmarking against other providers. As outlined in question 20 (as well as in other tables) providers here want to be able to do this not just at a local level but also regional, national and even international. Regarding the latter a number of providers cited that IP is used in their benchmarking and even have this as a KPI. Providers state that this does not relate just to IP but also patents and spin-offs.

The following were raised as needing to be kept:

- Number of disclosures
- Number of patents filed in the year
- Number of patents granted in the year
- Cumulative patent portfolio
- License numbers
- IP income
- Spin-offs with provider ownership
- Graduate start-ups.

A few responses draw reference to data being used by regulators and would therefore like to see it continue. Contrary to that, some data is captured in HE-BCI that is not a metric captured in a regulators KE metrics and so the inclusion in HE-BCI is useful, e.g. number of disclosures, patents and licenses. From 2020/21 spin-off activity will be used by HEFCW to drive the allocation of the RWIF (Research Wales Innovation Fund). Responses from Welsh providers supported the continuation of this collection of data.

## SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT – TABLE 5

<b>Responses</b>	<b>% of total responses</b>
Feedback given	87
No feedback	13

## Question 24. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

One of the main themes of this section of the consultation is how difficult it is to record the data for Table 5 and how poorly-defined the guidance is. Thinking in this area has evolved significantly over the last 20 years and the guidance has not been updated to reflect this. Themes that emerged in the responses to this question included:

- Weakest section of HE-BCI
- Not fit for purpose
- Time consuming
- Outdated
- Remove until wholly revised
- Onerous
- Poorly defined
- Most difficulty in collecting
- Most problematic.

However, whilst there are negative comments on Table 5 there are lots of positive comments on improvement and what new data ought to be collected. The most prevalent being the inclusion of professional and support services staff who are not academics and students. Suggestions for improvement include the addition of the following:

- Number / percentage of students engaged in volunteering activities and placements in the community.
- Total hours of student volunteering (plus potentially estimated GBP value of these).
- Number / percentage of all staff engaged in volunteering activities, e.g. on school governing bodies, government committees, contributions on advisory boards/groups.
- Total hours of all staff volunteering (plus potentially estimated GBP value of these).

A couple of respondents commented that in some cases it is professional staff (curators, researchers) that perform relevant activities. These professional roles have been developed and refined to perform duties as experts participating just as effectively and efficiently as an academic, but they do not have an academic contract, and therefore they are not able to be returned in table 5. Several providers have made similar statements and have requested that these staff be included in the return. Identifying appropriate roles could be challenging.

Another provider commented *'the opening up of the measure beyond academic staff time would yield a fuller record of external institutional engagement'*. In addition, it is hoped that the inclusion of relevant preparation time for events could be included, not just the time on the day of the event. To further develop this idea, several providers have requested that to make the data more meaningful they should be able to collect and report information about wider participation and outreach activities, as well as museum education and events. They would like to include (auditable) data on:

- Information about outreach programmes, e.g. where students teach in schools to help raise attainment.
- Information about genuine community interventions, e.g. law clinics.
- Information about locally imposed planning restrictions that create barriers to Widening Participation (WP) and access to HE, in its broadest sense.
- On- and off-campus activity.

The theme of WP and outreach activities was frequently mentioned. Providers felt that there should be a widening in the definition for outreach activities explicitly as well as for museums/education at institutions not owned by the provider, but across the local community. One provider also suggested including reporting time invested in museum education hosted elsewhere, whether across the UK or even internationally. Another respondent requested that loans of objects (e.g. paintings, artefacts, archaeological objects) from providers' museums & galleries be included as this often includes academic or professional staff time in describing and contextualising the loaned objects and research-informed liaison with the host exhibition.

Another general theme across responses is that at present there is too much emphasis on cultural engagement as opposed to the wider community. Providers commented that there needs to be better clarification of 'public events'. Several providers suggest that there are more appropriate definitions defined by [National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement \(NCCPE\)](#) and the



recent outcomes of the [Civic University Commission](#) by the UPP Foundation that include a strong reflection of this critical aspect of university knowledge exchange and public engagement. Another suggestion is to build on HEFCW's circular on '[Enhancing Civic Mission and Community Engagement](#)' to give a more standardised approach.

Other suggestions in this area include adding information on:

- Providers providing advice and expertise to local, national and international government and non-government supranational agencies.
- Information on contribution to policy and work with policy makers.
- Engagement with international communities/audiences/stakeholders.
- How public exhibitions and events that have involved staff (or student) contribution but are not owned by or held at the institution might be included.
- Adding sub-categories to the existing categories.
- Recognise the divergent forms of public events offered in the performing arts sector.

Following on from this proposal to increase the scope and range of activities covered by Table 5, was the theme of how this new data should be accurately measured. Several providers mentioned that new metrics need to be devised to give a more meaningful set of performance indicators that are consistent across the sector. Currently, there is no measure of the quality of the interactions between institutions and communities.

One of the approaches to this suggested by a few respondents, is to have an annual compendium of case studies that provides evaluation data. Whilst it is recognised that this is difficult it would provide a good snapshot of the interactions and not just the scale of them. Qualitative evidence from a wide range of perspectives showing observed changes/benefits to specific publics and groups should be included, in-line with the Civic University Commission. Other suggestions include:

- A method to measure strategic/collaborative partnerships.
- Map the number and type of meaningful engagement opportunities developed, potentially with regards to demographics.
- Link data to [UN sustainable development goals](#) (SDG), either by breaking down the events and activities into relevant themes aligned to the SDG.

- Collate information on the accessibility of events as is currently requested by [THE \(Times Higher Education\) impact ranking](#).
- Thematic analysis.
- Metrics on public engagement income. (The data could be gathered through the [NCCPE EDGE](#) analyses of public engagement with research.)
- The issue of [NEETS](#) (Young people not in education, employment or training) and what universities do to tackle this should be considered as part of efforts for WP.
- Accommodate the civic and community engagement activities.
- Consider the wider financial impact of events as they often include costs that ultimately have a financial/economic impact on the local community, e.g. food & beverage supplies, print collateral, etc.

The main discussion point in relation to the topic on metrics and measurement of the quality of data is in relation to new digital methods of public engagement. There is a common theme throughout that Table 5 is not reflective of new digital methods. It has been recommended that HESA look to engage with digital experts to determine a metric which can capture the extent of a university's digital engagement.

Additions/suggestions have included:

- Alt-metrics – on-line attention and citation measuring amplification rate of engagement/reporting, retweet, sharing, blog posting, referencing.
- Ingenuity and novelty of reach-out engineered, and its impact.
- Differentiate between in-person engagement and broadcast engagement.
- Media appearances should be given their own category.
- Digital and social media participation should be considered for more extensive and rigorous inclusion.
- The need to include digital and online interactions:
  - Number of readers of blogs hosted on provider's own platform.
  - Number of downloads of podcasts produced by providers.
  - Number of YouTube views.
  - Number of followers across key social media.
- Metrics, often collected by marketing/PR departments could be used:
  - Number of academics/professional staff blogging on external sites.

- Social media interactions (not just the main institutional account but interactions with institutional research and KE channels).
- Media appearances by academics.
- Standardised guidance on how audience share should be calculated.
- Sub-categories for TV and Radio activity, social media and digital activity, print media.
- Recommend working with NCCPE to develop metrics to capture digital interactions.

Overall the main feedback at present is that Table 5 is not really fit for purpose and is outdated. There needs to be more clarification and guidance confirmed to ensure that it aligns with definitions from other organisations that have recently reviewed (as recent as 2019) the definition and purpose of universities and their interaction with the public and community. The range and scope of suggestions for improvement was impressive, but beyond a desire to tell the many and varied stories of the contributions that HE providers make beyond teaching and research, an obvious locus of convergence eluded us. It was not always clear what end users might use the data for. In summary, work is needed to refine these desires into workable proposals, that are likely to lead to improved usage of the data.

Question 25. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

The main area in Table 5 that providers feel is of least value and should be considered for removal or should be readdressed is the use of academic staff time used as a metric of public engagement. Themes identified here include:

- Reservations about how academic staff time is captured - restrictive to only include academic time for the event itself rather than the preparation.
- Staff input and output are not indicative of quality.
- Crude metric.
- Academic staff time is not a useful indicator and is of lower value purely because it is being collected in isolation.
- Hard to see the rationale behind requesting data relating to the academic staff time involved.

As reflected in question 24, the collection of this data should be improved to include all staff and students engaging in public engagement otherwise there is no value to the data.

The inclusion of the sub-head 2d: Museum education is also a divisive topic that some respondents feel is of lower value and should be considered for review, while others that run their own museums and galleries do not necessarily share. This area is only relevant to a small number of providers and doesn't allow for the inclusion of museum and art exhibitions by providers who do not own a museum, they are defaulted to subhead 2e: Other. Several providers have indicated that this sub-head is too specific and should be expanded to include arts centres, botanical gardens and exhibitions by providers that do not own a museum. One provider has stated *'It seems acceptable to question the presence of 'Museum education' as a category'*. This sub-head is a *'poor cross-sector comparative measure'*.

Another common thread in the responses in this section of the consultation is that the data in table 5 does not feed into or contribute to the [HEIF funding formula](#) in England, and therefore providers view it as low value.

Other topics that have been mentioned in this section include:

- Clarity is needed on why information on free/charging events is currently included.
- Perceived low value in the collection of both the time component and whether an event was free or charged for.
- Event attendance difficult to capture consistently.
- Data cannot be drawn from existing systems.
- Data provided mainly based on estimates.
- Need to relate Table 5 [UK Research and Innovation's strategic public engagement goals](#).

In summary, we gathered the impression that respondents perceived crises of both relevance and exactitude in Table 5. There appears to be a general preference for re-shaping the collection around a more tightly defined measures and permitting the capture of a wider range of valued interactions. This is the area of the survey where radical reform would be most tolerable to respondents.

Question 26. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

The response in this section of the consultation has generated a lot of discussion on how providers find the return useful in showing the wide range of activity and interactions universities have with communities. At the same time there is also a high number of respondents that don't use the data.

Over three-quarters of respondents have commented that they do use the data, although it is of limited value in its current format. They would welcome more appropriate definitions of the sub-categories and have stated that there is a need to have greater guidance to the recording of staff time. Also, metrics need to be updated to reflect the diversity and depth of work in a changing digital world. One provider has stated that they *'would not want any of the data gathered in Table 5 to be removed in the review of HE-BCI. In fact, we would go much further and propose that this activity becomes "credit bearing" in the HEIF formula and in KEF criteria, giving it a higher profile and weight than is currently the case'*.

Common themes/statements include:

- The data collected in Table 5 is not available elsewhere at sector level.
- Data retains the measures of engagement but requires enhancements.
- There is a need to update the sub-terms as well as reassessing the definitions – particularly in light of a more focused place agenda, e.g. the funding of community engagement.
- Retain indicators of the type of activity but remove the need for detail which doesn't add any value, e.g. number of attendees, number of days, etc.
- Has limited value and is an administrative burden.
- Holds little value in its current form.

## HE-BCI PART A

In this section we covered respondent attitudes to the survey of strategic information, that sits alongside the collection of tabular data in Part B, covered in the previous section.

Responses	% of total responses
Feedback given	69%
No feedback	31%

### Question 28. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

The main theme that stands out in this section is the observation (mainly from respondents at HE providers in England) that the HEIF five-year institutional strategies, KEF plans and the introduction of the KE concordat could be more co-ordinated or linked together in an annual reporting mechanism, rather than being disconnected.

Several providers have commented that Part A is sufficient and comprehensive, and no change is required. However, a similar number have commented that it would be useful to add narrative relating to specific case studies to illustrate some of the areas of greater importance to the institution. One provider has been more specific and suggested that content *'might include information on more current KE priorities such as contribution to Industrial Strategy, to policy development, to local regeneration and civic leadership, public engagement and to international development and delivery on the UN Sustainable Development Goals'*. Another has commented, *'the format might be more narrative based but requesting evidence for each example of work. This narrative might link to HEIF strategies'*.

This sort of comment reflects a sense in the responses that the policy goals embodied in Part A as it is currently collected, have developed somewhat. This is the case in industrial strategy, regional economic development, and the environment and sustainability. That there is room to adapt Part A to reflect this, seems to be common wisdom.

Suggested additions to the data, that reflect this attitude, include:

- More about regional economic development, which areas do you see your provider as a whole making the greatest contribution to economic development.

- More about entrepreneurship activities.
- Capturing core KE structure and staff resource.
- Be more explicit about degree apprenticeships, also the number of apprenticeships delivered would be an impactful new data point to collect.
- Measurement of engagement with strategic partners.
- Inclusion of data relating to equality and diversity of KE professionals.
- How many days of paid leave all staff take for volunteering or 'other' service activities.
- Interaction with social enterprise.
- In question 3. and question 11 environmental/conservation organisations should be included here with non-commercial organisations.

Question 29. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

The main theme in the responses for this section focusses on the policy context in England: that the KEF plans and the introduction of the KE Concordat will duplicate Part A and therefore question if there is still a need for Part A. If they were incorporated the data could be collected in a more robust manner with narrative. (It is noted that the KE Concordat is an England-only remit, but we understand that appetite for involvement in some form in all UK nations has potential and is/will be being explored.)

Many respondents have commented that Part A is of little or no value to them and it has been suggested that the data could be collected every few years instead of annually as there is very little change between years of reporting.

Other items that have been regarded as lower value and should be considered for removal include:

- Distribution of governors by background (commercial business, public sector organisations etc.) - What value does this hold?
- The governor data is a duplication of data collection with the Staff Return. The number of governors differs. This data should be removed from HE-BCI or made clearer.
- Infrastructure section data could be organised into the other sections.

- The 'tick box' approach is too superficial, although easy to complete there is not enough detail.
- Question 18 (Number of days academic staff permitted to carry out private activities of engagement with business & the community) - Is flawed and believed by respondents to be interpreted differently in just about every university.
- Question 19 (What other business & community activities are carried out in your provider and are not covered in this survey) – Is too open-ended and unstructured.
- Venture capital provides a weak indicator of successful start-up and business support.

Question 30. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

Again, the main theme that is reiterated in this section is that the providers see Section A being superseded by the KE Concordat, as this will provide a richer explanation of an individual institution's approach to Knowledge Exchange.

Part A prompts reflection and gives providers the opportunity to annually reflect on the HE-BCI narrative. A few providers have commented that they do not find Part A valuable and that the level of information and 'tick box' approach is too superficial to be useful in any business planning or for comparison.

Other themes identified include:

- Crystallises perspective on IP investment and return across the organisation.
- Useful for understanding and monitoring evolution of university strategies.
- Valuable in terms of benchmarking sector engagement and approach.
- Strategic choices, KE support, infrastructure and so on should be given more visibility.
- Useful at a national level for drawing comparisons between providers.

Overall, we did not perceive a clear sense of direction. The tenor of responses indicates that it is desirable for the review to include more intensive discussions between policymakers and funders and the sector, to determine an appropriate pattern of data collection on strategic engagement with the KE agenda, which speaks to UK-wide priorities where aligned, and seeks to minimise burden



on providers. There is an argument for the review convening discussions on these matters, to develop a proposal that meets with general approbation.

#### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

Question 31. What data about HE interactions with business and the community is currently compiled (in HE providers and elsewhere) which could be made available, either to reduce duplication or enhance value for users?

Several respondents asked that data which is collected by government departments on funding or grant data, should be sourced directly from them. For example, UKRI, Research Council projects and Innovate UK funding. There were also many suggestions of tying up the HE-BCI return with items in the REF (in particular the impact returns, research active academic staff and case studies which involved collaboration) and KEF returns (information on social, community and cultural engagement).

It was suggested that a number of Patent databases could be explored to look at intellectual property data for Table 4, including: UK Intellectual Property Office (UKIPO), European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey was suggested by some respondents, to look at data on the student's exposure to business, any knowledge exchange in the student's activities, or any PhD student's placements in industry. This has now been replaced with the Graduate Outcomes survey, which it was suggested we could collect data on graduate start-ups.

The HESA Staff return was also mentioned by many respondents, as somewhere to obtain information on: Staff mobility and engagement, such as the number of inwards and outward secondments per academic FTE, or the proportion of staff involved in expert, advisory or governance groups for external bodies. It was also suggested that governing body members could help with Part A in the survey.

The HESA Finance return could be considered as the main source of data about income by relevant category, in particular one respondent specified the research income from various sources including industry.

Various other existing returns were suggested by respondents, to look at similarities with different aspects of the HE-BCI returns. These include:

- UK Innovation survey – to understand some of the business interaction dynamics and data.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) – for Table 3 data.
- Civic Universities Commission charter – information on social, community and cultural engagement.
- Times Higher Education Impact Rankings – information and evidence on specific knowledge exchange projects which have influenced policy and delivered on Sustainable Development Goals.
- Wellcome Intellectual Property report.
- Researchfish data – data on project outcomes.
- U-Multirank – includes papers co-authored with industry.
- SciVal – academic publications including citations on those written in collaboration with non-academic authors.
- Beauhurst – information on spin-offs.
- Royal Society and Wellcome Trust – surveys of staff participation in external/public engagement for Table 5.
- Provider’s Widening Participation and Access plans.
- Scottish Funding Council’s Knowledge Exchange Metric Income Data – in particular the narrative statements.
- Government returns on knowledge exchange – the number of hours of assisted or investment provided to companies or the resulting numbers of new products and services created.
- ONS data – in particularly around the economic geography.
- ERDF type outputs – relating to SMEs supports and HDAs and placements.
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – ESF / ERDF projects.
- LondonHigher – stories and cases and other narratives on such activity.
- National Portfolio Organisations survey for the Arts Council England – data on cultural impact and public engagement for Table 5, including the number of museum objects/artefacts sent on loan to other exhibitions/collections in England, the rest of the UK, and internationally or data on attendees i.e. education visitors, and exhibition visitors.

Respondents suggested a number of other areas that could be explored, but no specific data return was suggested. These included adding data on:

- Commercially funded research data into HE-BCI (the three current lines should be aggregated to give one figure for the overall value of, or numbers of contracts for, this research).
- Volunteering hours for staff and students.
- The number of businesses / community organisations involved in development of curriculum.
- The number of graduates and students on placements / internships in local businesses / organisations, including those placed with subject matter experts (SME).
- If a business has taken a student internship or a Knowledge Transfer Partnership.
- The number and duration of formal partnerships with business and community organisations, which could be a count of transactional partnerships and transformational, mission driven partnerships.
- Access to and use of outputs in institutional repositories and the number of items uploaded.
- Graduate pathways.
- Links to datasets dealing with spin off companies.
- Degree apprenticeship information.
- Partnership PhDs.
- Repeat clients.
- Link to other established modes of knowledge exchange data recording and reporting.

There were suggestions around general themes to explore in the HE-BCI review, such as exploring a model to measure the social impact of these interactions or exploring a structure which would link parts A and B more closely together. Many responses centred around only having items in the return that were being used directly by the different funders, including HEIF reporting, REF or KEF returns. Any data outside of these requirements was considered to be unnecessary, particularly where comparisons were unreliable.

A few suggestions were made of business systems that could be integrated better with HE-BCI data, such as Pure (for Table 5), Konfer, InPart or Yet2.

Earlier feedback for Table 1 was repeated in this question where providers suggested that an official determination for each organisation (SME, non-SME non-commercial) could be compiled by HESA from relevant government sources (e.g. BEIS, Companies House, HMRC) to help with identifying different categories that are submitted in the HE-BCI return.

#### Question 32. Do you have any other comments or feedback?

Respondents were keen to impress upon HESA the importance of the HE-BCI data collected (some giving examples of their specific uses of the data) and the longitudinal nature of keeping the data as consistent as possible. However, others were keen to point out that the burden of data collection should be considered carefully and shouldn't be disproportionately time-consuming and burdensome. One provider noted this review of HE-BCI was very timely given other considerations happening in the sector.

There were many comments asking HESA to find ways to link with other data users or collections of similar datasets, such as HEIF, KEF, Civic University partnerships and REF and includes data referenced within the HESA Finance and Staff returns. This review should also consider the timing of the submission. Many wanted clarification of how the HE-BCI survey would join up with each of these data activities. Respondents wanted a consistent approach across funders and government bodies, which they hoped would bring a reduction of effort and increase efficiency.

Many comments emphasised the gaps and inconsistencies with the current guidance and stressed the importance of having clear and consistent guidance and documentation. Many suggested that different working groups could be set up to help identify best practices or case studies around each table, that could then be shared with all providers. One provider asked if a pdf copy of all the guidance and associated documents could be produced. Others asked for more clarity on the principles or spirit of the data to be collected in each table, as well as more detailed definitions.

The quality checks which compare provider's data with the total sector averages were questioned by a couple of providers, who were asking whether these are actually fulfilling a useful function.

A couple of providers asked for information on how they should record activity on their overseas campuses. Another provider asked for more HESA-run training opportunities on HE-BCI.

There was support for the current practice of making the survey data openly available on the HESA website under an open license, though it was suggested that the accessibility on the website could be improved for potential users outside the sector.

Providers asked for clarity and transparency on where and how the data is used for HE funding, KEF and other uses. Some suggestions were made as to how aspects of these metrics could be improved or amendments that could be made to the funding formulas. In particular, Welsh providers advocated for a better joined up approach across the UK, and they wished to see HE-BCI data collected and used for comparative purposes on a consistent basis across the UK.

There were many other recommendations for ways of improving the HE-BCI data at an overall level, such as:

- Adding more geographical information about activities and collaborators' locations and recording the international reach of knowledge exchange.
- Adding data on student engagements and student enterprises.
- Reducing the emphasis given to financial income as a proxy for impact when it should be on the quality of engagement.
- Including non-monetised value of knowledge exchange activities, in particular work with non-commercial bodies such as hospitals, schools and third sector organisations.
- Increasing the focus on assessing the impact and value-add for the business/community partner, perhaps also considering the cultural and social interactions more generally.
- Striking a balance between the breadth of relationships and the depth of relationships which lead onto strategic relationships.
- Adding more on the policy interactions and public engagements.
- Including more data on Equality and Protected characteristics.
- Considering whether Part A still fits with Part B.

In summary, answers to this question pulled-together strands found across the consultation, with an added focus on the presentation and end uses of the data. Since there is strongly emerging theme in the consultation responses that the HE sector wishes to 'tell the story' of KE, the concomitant desire to design improved outputs that are suitable for a wider range of audiences, was evinced most clearly here. Specification of output requirements that achieve this goal will be a test of the success of this review.

## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

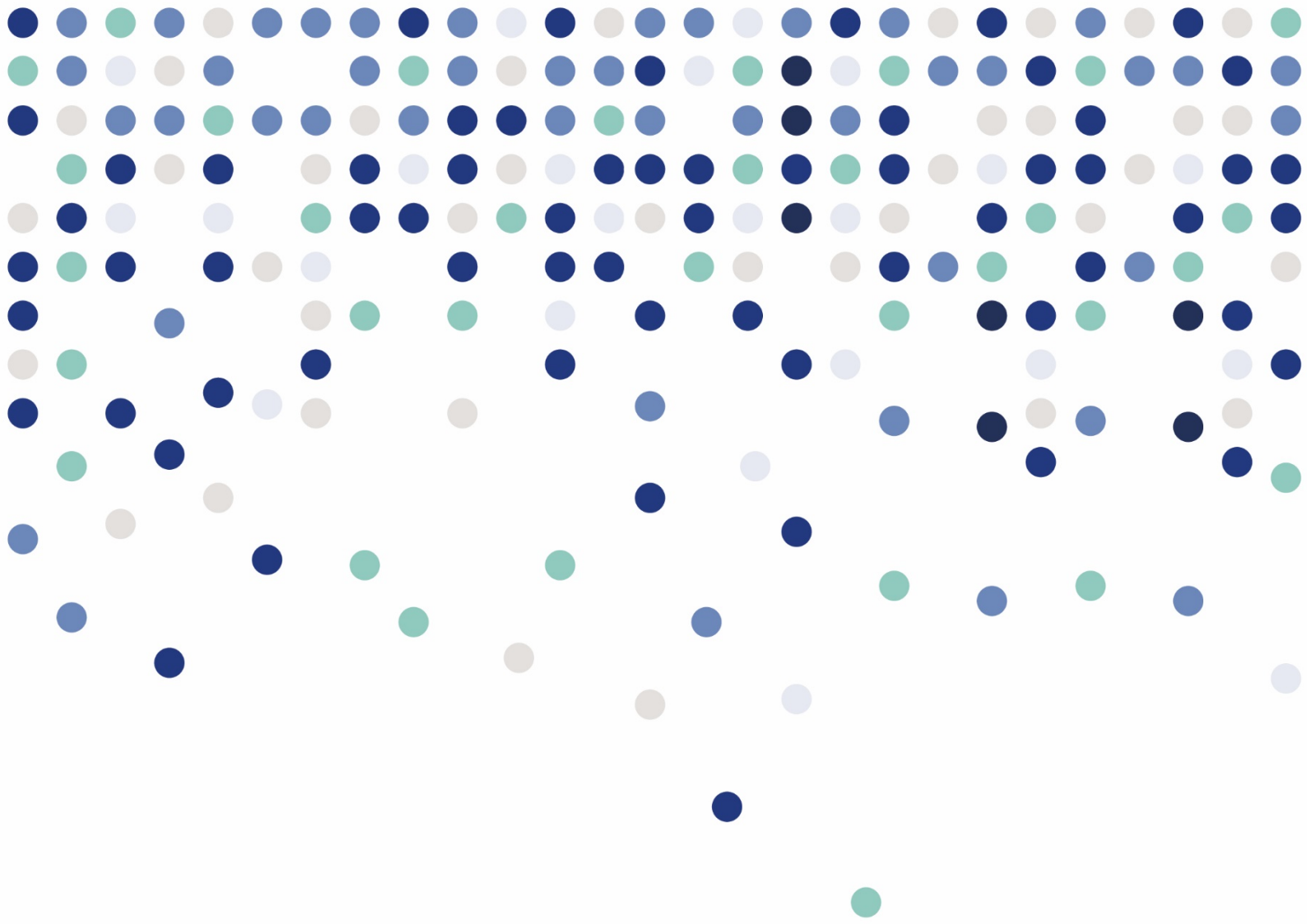
This document represents a summary and synthesis of many responses. It does not attempt to convey every line of argument and idea in detail – however, we are confident that respondents will recognise their perspectives echoed within the document. By reading and coding responses, we have been able to pick out the key themes; covered in the executive summary and explored in more detail throughout.

The impact of this document is two-fold: first, we hope that readers will be interested to see the state of the debate around HE business and community interactions data summarised in this way, and that it will provoke further discussion and thought within sector organisations, about the direction of travel and the scope of the sector's ambition. Second, HESA will use this document to plan the programme of research that will now commence, in order to meet the terms of reference for the review.

Finally, HESA would like to thank respondents for their time and insights; it is clear considerable effort was involved in responding to this consultation, and the needs you have expressed will, collectively, shape the development of what is manifestly a highly-valued information resource.

## GLOSSARY

<b>AUTM</b>	<i>Association of University Technology Managers</i>
<b>BEIS</b>	<i>Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy</i>
<b>CASE (PhDs)</b>	<i>Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering</i>
<b>CE</b>	<i>Continuing Education</i>
<b>CPD</b>	<i>Continuing professional development</i>
<b>DfE(NI)</b>	<i>Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland)</i>
<b>ERDF</b>	<i>European Regional Development Fund</i>
<b>ESF</b>	<i>European Social Fund</i>
<b>EUIPO</b>	<i>European Union Intellectual Property Office</i>
<b>FTE</b>	<i>Full-time equivalent</i>
<b>GBP</b>	<i>Great British Pound</i>
<b>HEFCW</b>	<i>Higher Education Funding Council for Wales</i>
<b>HEIF</b>	<i>Higher Education Innovation Fund</i>
<b>HMRC</b>	<i>HM Revenue and Customs</i>
<b>IP</b>	<i>Intellectual Property</i>
<b>KE</b>	<i>Knowledge Exchange</i>
<b>KEF</b>	<i>Knowledge Exchange Framework</i>
<b>KPI</b>	<i>Key Performance Indicator</i>
<b>KTP</b>	<i>Knowledge Transfer Partnerships</i>
<b>LEP</b>	<i>Local Enterprise Partnerships</i>
<b>MHCLG</b>	<i>Ministry of Housing, Communities &amp; Local Government</i>
<b>NEET</b>	<i>Not in education, employment or training</i>
<b>NCCPE</b>	<i>National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement</i>
<b>ONS</b>	<i>Office for National Statistics</i>
<b>OfS</b>	<i>Office for Students</i>
<b>REF</b>	<i>Research Excellence Framework</i>
<b>RWIF</b>	<i>Research Wales Innovation Funding</i>
<b>SDG</b>	<i>Sustainable development goals</i>
<b>SFC</b>	<i>Scottish Funding Council</i>
<b>SIPF</b>	<i>Strengths in Places Fund</i>
<b>SME</b>	<i>Small medium enterprises</i>
<b>STEM</b>	<i>Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics</i>
<b>THE</b>	<i>Times Higher Education</i>
<b>UKRI</b>	<i>UK Research Institute</i>
<b>UKIPO</b>	<i>UK Intellectual Property Office</i>
<b>WP</b>	<i>Widening Participation</i>



HESA  
95 Promenade  
Cheltenham  
GL50 1HZ  
E [liaison@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:liaison@hesa.ac.uk)  
T +44 (0) 1242 211 144  
W [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)

