OPEN DATA STRATEGY
2017-2021

HESA

FOREWORD

"Open data is data that anyone can access, use and share." (Open Data Institute)

Data that is open promotes transparency for UK citizens, generates economic benefit through commercial re-use, and stimulates innovation in the creation of new tools and services which benefit users and consumers.

HESA has long operated on principles of transparency and accessibility in data handling. We publish widely from the data we collect; we provide extensive online access routes to data for higher education providers and not-for-profit bodies; and we provide bespoke information to over 1,200 users annually, including staff, students, academic researchers, private companies, professional bodies, government bodies, the press and media, international governments and organisations around the world.

As the next major step in the evolution of HESA as the preeminent official source of higher education data in the UK, we have launched this strategy aimed at developing dissemination of data which is formally open. The overriding principle is to migrate as much of HESA's non-personal and non-commercially-sensitive data as possible to open data publication over the next five years, reaching a point at which the ongoing business-as-usual assumption for such data is that it will be open by default.

The benefits to users of open data are clear – improving accessibility and removing barriers to re-use. There are also benefits for HESA, in that dissemination of more open data supports our charitable objective to advance UK higher education. It ensures that our data attracts maximal usage, reinforcing the value of the data we collect, and it encourages innovative uses of data. This will result in the development of new applications and services to meet public interest in higher education.

HESA's Open Data Strategy has been developed following a public consultation undertaken during summer 2016[1]. The consultation results strongly endorsed our aim to publish as much of our data as possible as open data by 2021. This document details the key actions and timescales that will ensure we achieve that aim. Further consultation with HESA's data providers, users and interested parties will be needed to refine the details of our open data delivery as we progress through the implementation period. We look forward to working collaboratively with a wide range of colleagues across the UK higher education sector and beyond to meet our open data aspirations.

1 Full consultation report available at https://www.hesa.ac.uk/files/Open-data-consultation-summary.pdf

STRATEGIC AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

We will pursue the following aims and activities in support of our open data strategy. These aims were established following a public consultation. As we implement the strategy and develop more detailed plans to address the key aspects of open data, we will share these plans more widely and seek further feedback from our stakeholders.

a. Build expertise in open data publication, linked data structuring and licensing processes

We will achieve this primarily by working with the Open Data Institute, utilising their training and consultancy services. We will also work with other organisations and experts who offered their support during our public consultation.

b. Establish a HESA open data champion

We will assign a lead role to a HESA staff member to provide a focus for the development of expertise, to be responsible for the implementation of our open data strategy and to act as a champion for open data within the organisation.

c. Migrate HESA's current range of data publications to open data, free of charge to users, within the next five years

In doing so we shall adopt a rolling review process to consult with users on the content to be migrated for each publication, ensuring this meets user needs.

d. Publish a number of HESA data sets in entirety as open data according to the list and schedule shown in annexes A and B

We shall consult with users and data providers, taking into consideration their views and preferences.

HESA: Open Data Strategy 2017 - 2021

e. Publish a range of HE meta-data as open and linked data, according to the list and timeline in annexes A and B

Accurate and comprehensive meta-data is crucial to maximising the utility of open data resources, minimising the risks of misunderstanding and supporting greater interoperability between different data resources.

f. Ensure all HESA open data is available through the two main open data portals relevant to higher education data – data.ac.uk and data.gov.uk

We will also explore other portals and communication channels highlighted by respondents from the public consultation.

g. Establish a user-community and communications plan for HESA open data

This will ensure that we can engage effectively with data providers, users and other interested parties, enabling stakeholders to feed in their views as the open data strategy is implemented. It will also be a mechanism through which HESA can provide user support.

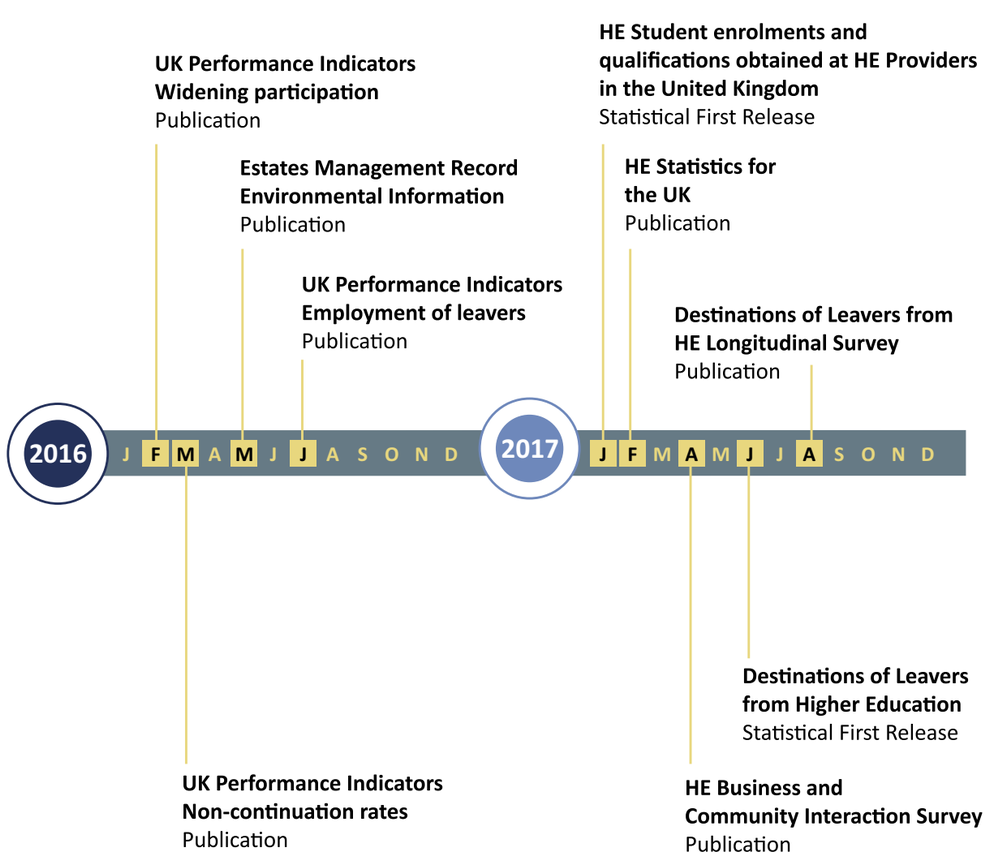
h. Seek Gold-level Open Data Institute certification on at least three open data resources within five years

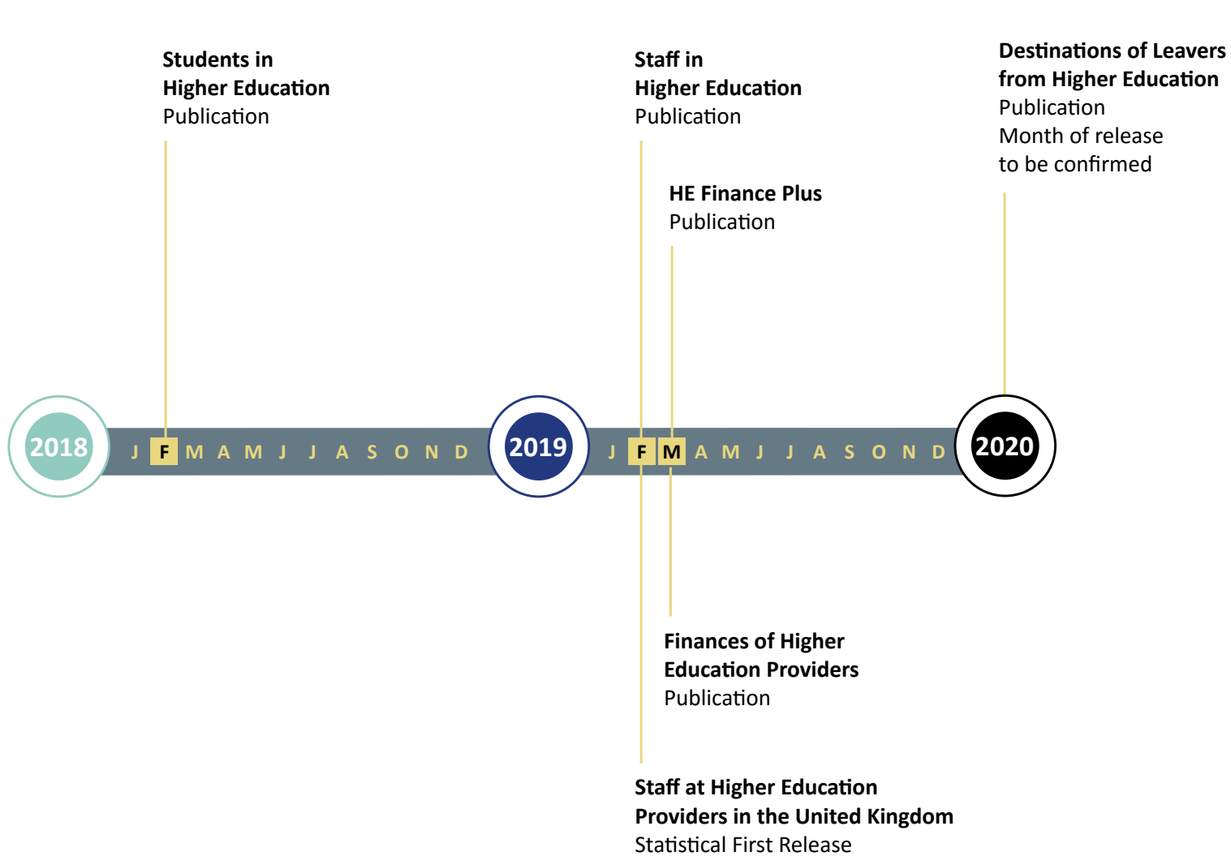
This is our initial level of aspiration. As we progress through the implementation period and learn more about the requirements of certification, we will re-assess this. If we can achieve more in less time, then we will.

i. Undertake an extensive review of the impact, benefits and costs of open data delivery at the end of the current strategy period in 2021, findings of which will be published. Annual interim reviews will feed into implementation planning and prioritisation for the subsequent year

This will inform key stakeholders and provide valuable information on which to base the open data strategy, post 2021. The reviews may involve some independent assessment by the Open Data Institute.

ANNEX A: PUBLICATION TIMELINE





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ANNEX B
OPEN DATA PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

DATA SETS

	Data set or publication title	Type	Open data resources to be created	When	Notes
1.	Students in Higher Education	Publication	Set of content tables published on HESA website guided by user consultation.	February 2018	
2.	Statistical First Release - Higher education student enrolments and qualifications obtained at higher education providers in the UK	Publication	Format to be revised followed by publication under open licence.	January 2017	National Statistics product
3.	Staff in Higher Education	Publication	Set of content tables published on HESA website guided by user consultation.	February 2019	
4.	Statistical First Release – Staff at HE Providers in the UK	Publication	Format to be revised followed by publication under open licence.	February 2019	
5.	Finances of Higher Education providers	Publication	Entire HESA Finance Record to be published as open data.	March 2019	
6.	HE Finance Plus	Publication	Entire HESA Finance Record to be published as open data.	March 2019	
7.	Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education	Publication	Set of content tables published on HESA website guided by user consultation.	2020 - month to be confirmed	This timetable may be subject to change once the implementation schedule for the Review of Destinations and Outcomes is known.
8.	Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Longitudinal Survey	Publication	Set of content tables published on HESA website guided by user consultation.	August 2017	
9.	Statistical First Release – Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education in the UK	Publication	Format to be revised followed by publication under open licence.	June 2017	National Statistics product

	Data set or publication title	Type	Open data resources to be created	When	Notes
10.	HE Business and Community Interaction Survey	Publication	Entire survey data set to be published as open data.	April 2017	
11.	Estates Management Record – Environmental Information	Publication	Table of data as per current publication.	May 2016	Completed – latest publication published as open data via website.
12.	Higher Education Statistics for the UK	Publication	Format to be revised followed by publication under open licence.	Commencing February 2017	Split into sections to be released at different points during the year.

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13.	UK Performance Indicators	Publication	Already published as open data.	February, March, July 2016. Agreed that UKPIs for 2016 published under open data licence.	Format to be revised for publication in 2018.
14.	Unistats data set	Data set	Already published as open data		

META-DATA

	Description	Type	When	Notes
1.	Provider information	Meta-data	Summer 2017	Coding frames, geo information, groups.
2.	HE subject coding frame	Meta-data	Spring 2018	Based on HeCOS with aggregation schemes used for key applications.
3.	HE qualifications coding frame	Meta-data	Summer 2017	Qualifications on entry, course aims, qualifications obtained.
4.	Key Information Set Accreditation information	Meta-data	Autumn 2017	Accreditation body and type of accreditation awarded.
5.	HESA Cost Centres	Meta-data	Spring 2018	Departmental groupings, potential for mappings to subject coding frames in the future.
6.	HESA data models	Meta-data	Winter 2018	Providing access to structure and design of HE data models.

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