# review of graduate destinations and outcomes data – working group 4

## 24October 11:00 – 25 october 14:30

## HESA OFFICES, 95 the promenade, cheltenham, gl50 1hz

# paper no: 6

# Timescales and additional surveys

## Strategic Group steer

The Strategic Group advised us to push the main survey point out to a period between 12 and 18 months. We were also advised to pursue the creation of a platform approach that would enable other survey activity to occur before and after the census, for samples or cohorts of students from small numbers up to additional census-type activity.

## Timescales

The consultation asked respondents to identify their preferences for the timing of the survey.

*Figure 1 Responses to question 15*

Figure Responses to question 16

Respondents set out their arguments for the different timings as summarised below:

* For those whose preference was maintaining **six-month** survey timing, the majority of respondents focused on the response rates that can be achieved at this stage, and that these are unlikely to be maintained at a later period. The majority of respondents also highlighted that the six-month timing allows prospective students or final year students access to recent information about graduate employment. Some HE providers emphasised that outcomes at six months are more likely to be related to a graduate’s university experience than subsequent life experience. Other arguments posed were that it allows for understanding of how quickly graduates get into graduate level jobs or further study, and that this timing avoids confusion if graduates have gone onto further study.
* Reasons posed by those who would prefer a survey around **nine to ten months** postgraduation, were that it maintains the relationship between graduates and their HE provider, and that it allows for rapid evaluation of outcomes.
* The clear theme of those whose preference was a **12 months** survey timing was the balance that this offers between maintaining high response rates and allowing graduates time to settle into a career path. Many respondents stated that they believed graduates would be in more settled employment than at six months. One practical concern with twelve months was that this would mean the survey would fall in the summer period, which may add difficulties to data collection.
* Respondents who would prefer a survey at around **18 months** post-graduation believe this would allow graduates to enter more genuine career destinations, rather than short-term employment. Similarly, it was expressed that this would allow graduates more time to enter the labour market.
* At **24 months**, the main benefit stated was the richer data possible at this stage. It was also highlighted that this timeframe would allow for more information about start-ups, which may not be captured at an earlier stage.
* Benefits of a survey at **36 months** were focused on the time this would allow graduates to establish their career paths and that it would demonstrate a wider employment picture than an earlier survey date.
* One of the key arguments for moving to a **48 months** survey timing was that this allows for graduates to evaluate the impact of higher education dispassionately, which they may not be so able to do at an earlier stage

## Additional survey points

The consultation asked respondents whether we should have a single survey point, or multiple survey points.

Figure Responses to question 14

Figure Responses to question 14, by question two

While the majority of respondents are in favour of a single survey point, the free-text answers did

not provide many reasons for choosing a single survey point. However, respondents did express

concerns about multiple survey points, particularly that graduates may become oversurveyed,

causing survey fatigue and drop-outs. Concerns were raised that if multiple surveys were used,

there was potential to survey graduates more than once in short succession if they had gone on to further study.

However, respondents in favour of multiple survey points noted a number of benefits, including that careers develop at different paces in different sectors, and multiple survey points could allow

tracking different cohorts at different times. Another benefit is it would allow for tracking career

trajectories over time and better capture portfolio careers. Similarly, one HE provider expressed the benefit of having evidence of how quickly students of different subjects move into long term

careers.

Respondents also expressed some practical benefits of using multiple survey points. One of these was that it would allow for graduate contact details to be updated, potentially leading to higher response rates over time. Respondents also highlighted that multiple surveys may help cope with smaller sample sizes.

## Questions for the working group

* What are the pros and cons of a 12 months survey point?
* What are the pros and cons of a 18 months survey point?
* What are the pros and cons of a survey point between 12 and 18 months?
* What are the key factors we need to take into account with regards to other surveys on the platform, besides a single census?