## Review of HE student destinations and outcomes data:

## Third working group meeting

**Monday 22 February 2016, 11.00am**

**Finlaison House, London, EC4A 1AB**

Paper No: 3

# Options for SOC-coding in a successor to DLHE

This paper assumes that there will be an ongoing requirement for SOC-based information in DLHE.

## Current situation

Graduate responses to the DLHE questions about job title and what the job mainly entails are manually coded by staff at HEPs. The coding frame is SOCDLHE2010, which is an extended version of the SOC2010 coding frame owned by ONS. SOCDLHE2010 incorporates a fifth digit (on top of SOC2010’s four digits) to incorporate additional detail necessary to understand the roles being undertaken by graduates, which frequently are in ‘new economy’ roles that were not envisaged at the time SOC2010 was put together. We would ideally like to see SOC2010 updated to encompass the areas of graduate employment that SOCDLHE2010 seeks to fix, and hence to have a single national coding frame suitable for graduate destinations information. ONS are currently consulting on changes to the SOC2010 coding frame, and HESA intends to respond. Members of the review are encouraged to consider responding, via:

SOCDLHE2010 was created by Peter Elias (now retired) at Warwick IER that created SOC2010, and is subject to periodic revision to maintain its currency. An update (to either or both coding frames) is currently due and a suitable contractor will need to be found.

The SOCDLHE2010 coding frame is operationalised in a version of the CASCOT coding tool built by Warwick IER, and deployed to all DLHE contacts.

Coding in DLHE is undertaken using a prescribed methodology, and a training programme for all DLHE record coders is fully subscribed each year.

## Matters to be addressed

The SOC2010 coding frame is under review by the ONS and they have consulted about this: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/get-involved/consultations-and-user-surveys/consultations/consultation-on-revising-the-standard-occupational-classification-2010--soc2010-/index.html>. The next iteration of the coding frame is expected to be SOC2020 but plans for commissioning this have not yet been released. In HE, there is a widespread feeling that SOCDLHE2010 is due an update, and this needs to be factored-in to our plans, as HESA normally commissions this work.

Coding is distributed, and this may affect the consistency with which the coding frame is applied, due to differences in training, experience, judgement, *etc*. Mechanisms to improve quality control should be explored.

Coding is a time-consuming and expensive task and rarely forms the whole of a role – there will be efficiency gains to be made by reducing manual coding, and/or by centralising the process.

Technology now allows us to consider self-coding as a part of the process, and subject to cognitive testing we should explore this for the consistency and efficiency gains it offers.

CASCOT will require an update if we continue to use it.

## Options

In all cases, either an update to SOCDLHE2010, or a development of SOC2010 to meet the specification of SOCDLHE2010, will be required.

1. Maintain current distributed approach to coding and update CASCOT.
2. Centralise all coding in a contracted service.
3. Develop self-coding, essentially replacing CASCOT with an in-survey tool.
4. A combination of 3) with sample checks and some areas possibly manually-coded where self-coding proves unreliable.

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