# Review of HE student destinations and outcomes data

Second working group meeting

## Tuesday 08 December 2015, 11.00am

## Etc. venues, Maple House, 150 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6TB

### Paper 3

# Planning our work

In the revised Remit document, we have been asked to address a set of questions. Our business case will need to address these directly, so we now need to give consideration to how we will answer them, and to assemble the information and views we will require.

This is a discussion paper to provoke debate around each of those questions. I present some possible actions we might take based on our discussions so far. It is a ‘straw man’ to be knocked down – a personal take on the possible direction we might take. Through discussion we can arrive at a plan of action, and each take away at least one action.

# Questions we must address

The following are the questions posed in the revised remit document. They are a little tentative as we have not signed them off with the Strategic Group yet, but we have confidence that no more than tweaks will be required, as they reflect the discussions had there and the notes of the meeting.

I have taken aspects of the question apart in each section, and proposed how we might tackle addressing it. The aim is to agree a work plan, that can be written-up and shared after the meeting.

## How can we better understand the career paths taken by students? Special focus should be given to better understanding the volatility that attends early stages of a career in some industry sectors, and to the impacts of part-time study on careers.

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| Volatility – is the job part of a plan? | Ask the student | Survey design issue |
| Changing jobs – how common/patterns | HMRC data will indicate patterns | Feasibility dataset study |
| Industry sectors | HMRC data will classify – quality uncertain for large multi-sector employers | Feasibility dataset study |
| Working patterns and hours | Mixture of HMRC and surveying students | Feasibility dataset study to inform survey design |
| Part-time students – changing roles/changing employers – what was the impact of HE? | Ask the student. Ask the employer? | Survey design issue |

## How can we incorporate more self-assessment by students about value or satisfaction with HE? We should move to a basket of outcomes indicators, rather than a single definition of success.

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| Use of skills | Investigate our options in this area | Literature review – see next question. |
| Wellbeing or quality of life indicators | Plymouth have done some work in this area with additional DLHE questions. We should ask them to present | Dan to contact Plymouth |
| What would students ask? | Ask them. Also, is there any previous work in this area that we can utilise – e.g. HEFCE’s review of KIS/Unistats? | Decide how to involve students.  Discuss available research with HEFCE. |
| What objective measures should subjective measures be complemented with? Retain SOC coding of jobs? Are there other measures? | Working group to discuss how to progress this. | ? |

## What can be done to enhance our understanding of the skills that students are developing during their HE study, and transferring to use in the workplace?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| What framework for understanding skills development and use should be used? | Literature review. Synthesis necessary before consultation. | Who wants to do a review of the literature and synthesise the most relevant work? |
| Longitudinal issue – do we need to track skills use back to study? | What information do we need about skills development during study? | Follows on from lit. review |

## How can be better understand students’ motivations for their job/career and study choices?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| We currently only collect motivation for taking a job – do we need to think about other motivational questions – for study? | Start by reviewing current DLHE data ([JOBRSNALL](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&task=show_file&mnl=14018&href=a%5e_%5eJOBRSNALL.html)/[JOBRSNMAIN](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&task=show_file&mnl=14018&href=a%5e_%5eJOBRSNMAIN.html))  Working group to discuss and identify any useful literature (e.g. [FutureTrack](http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/current_projects_futuretrack.htm)) | Does this work require a small sub-group? |
| Do we need to also consider the student’s general sense of optimism about their career (rather than just why they took this one job?) | Discuss at the working group | Does this work require a small sub-group? |
| What questions would we ask about further study? | Discuss at the working group | Does this work require a small sub-group? |
| Do we need to differentiate between different ‘types’ of student – PT/FT; UG/PG; young/mature, and if so – how? | Discuss at the working group | Does this work require a small sub-group? |
| Do we need to differentiate by HE provider ‘type’ attended, and if so, how? What are the categories we would use – FECs/HEIs/APs/tariff score/mission group…? | Discuss at the working group | Does this work require a small sub-group? |

## What data will be made accessible by the SBEE Act, and in what ways can they be used?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| Define precisely what data items will be in HMRC/DWP data | We need to hear more from the feasibility studies being undertaken by BIS and other colleagues in government. |  |
| Understand the limitations of the data definitions (e.g. employer may give head office location rather than work location) | Engage with the feasibility studies |  |
| Determine the ways in which these sensitive personal data should be used appropriately. Who gets to see what? Under what circumstances? (timescales?) | Consideration of some likely legitimate uses of the data – consultation issue? How to handle?  HESA also to engage directly with BIS |  |

## How might the availability of HMRC data and other linked data inform our other requirements for information about leavers from higher education?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| What data will be required to contextualise the data that is available from HMRC/DWP | Engage with feasibility study. Do an analysis to inform consultation. | Need to know more about the feasibility study. |
| What data will be required (if any) to fill the gaps in HMRC/DWP data (e.g. overseas domiciled students | Engage with feasibility study, and start thinking about engaging particular groups that can help identify needs (e.g. the International Unit, British Council and BUILA for international students). Who would we need to contact? | Could put out some feelers in advance, but will need to find out more before we can be firm about requirements. |

## What *student* data might be required to contextualise destinations data? For instance, better data on placements or study patterns.

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| No current contextual data considered irrelevant | Identify the current baseline of contextual data in the Student record | HESA information and analysis staff to investigate. |
| Work and placements during study | Identify what would be needed. Share conclusions with the HEDIIP Data Language Project to determine the architecture of this data in the future HESA data model | We need to discuss what we need in more detail first. |
| Non-study information such as that on the HEAR ([Higher Education Achievement Report](http://www.hear.ac.uk/)) | Need to test the appetite for this among a wide range of stakeholders.  Need to understand how amenable HEAR is to implementation as analysable structured data, and consider how these data would be accessed, and what consent issues exist. | Engage with the HE Academy over this.  Plan for this to be an element of consultation. |
| What else? | Discussion. Consultation item? | ? |

## How can we better focus on the experiences of international students, and how should we collect data from or about leavers domiciled overseas following HE?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| How do the data needs relating to international and European students differ from UK students (if at all)? | What are the group’s views? Do we need to make contact with professionals in the international student recruitment and support functions? | Contact relevant professional bodies. |
| How will we handle data collection for UK students who move overseas | Will need to consider how questions that are replaced by linked data in the UK will need enhancement where these data are not expected to be available. | This could wait a little while |
| Do we want to know the same information about UK students who move overseas as for those who remain in the UK? | What are the group’s views? Do we need to make contact with professionals in the international student recruitment and support functions? | Contact relevant professional bodies |

## What are our remaining needs for post-study survey information, if any?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| What is left on our list of requirements once we have identified all the linked data sources we might use? | Identify all the linked data sources we are interested in: HMRC/DWP; HESA  Identify what is covered and what is not. | List all data requirements – we have a summary from last time, but we should be exhaustive. |
| Is all survey information post-study? What about links to other surveys, like the NSS, or surveys at the start of study? | Ask HE providers if they run surveys at the start of study.  Consultation item on links with other surveys – NSS. | Prepare consultation questions. |
| How will we address the longitudinal issue? What data is required and at what points? Are all the data needed at the same time? HMRC data will be available at a more fine-grained level than survey data. | Need to know a little more about the feasibility dataset from HMRC before we can consult. | Engage with the feasibility study. |
| Discipline-specific needs – Trainee Teachers, medics, and others. | Need to identify the main needs (hopefully having NCTL and HEE present will help!) and ask colleagues how this can best be taken forward. | Discussion with HEE and NCTL to determine needs. |
| Extra questions – most HEIs ask them at the moment, following the main survey. Might this practice offer us some clues about how to improve the survey in future? How will we provide this facility in future? Could we enable benchmarking groups to ask similar questions and compare data? | Consult HE providers about the additional questions they currently ask.  Assess appetite for enabling this additional activity – and consider what sort of technology platform would be required. | Prepare consultation questions. |
| How can we ensure student contact details are up to date? | Do we need to provide a platform to assist – allow students to self-manage, or link to a third-party service like one of the HEAR-supporting web services like [Gradintel](https://gradintel.com/index.php). Do we need to consult Alumni relations professionals on this? | Discussion item. |
| *Table continues overleaf* | | |
| What about needs we haven’t identified yet? | How can we build-in the flexibility to accommodate changes, or additional data collection outside the minimum, as opportunities arise? | Methodological issues and technological issues that can be addressed later on. |
| We will require some ‘governance’ to oversee this new data collection when it is operating in a steady state | The data collection should be placed under the governance arrangements envisaged by HEDIIP’s work on governing the new HE data landscape. | Raise this with HEDIIP, and consider how we will consult on this. |

## How can we usefully present data to students in personalised and interactive ways to help them make study and careers choices?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| How will we identify the audiences? How will we determine their needs? | Use a product roadmap development method like [Lean Canvas](http://leanstack.com/). | Get a small group together to develop a lean product canvas. |
| What kind of technology platform is required? How can we personalise the data? | See above. Heidi+ offers a possibility for an existing platform. Do we need to allow user accounts or similar? | As above. |
| What do we need to do to market this service? Who do we need to partner with? | See above. HECSU? UCAS? | As above. |

## What can be done to ensure that UK-wide comparability and consistency is retained?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| Students cross borders and so must the questions | We have all the right people involved to come to common agreement over questions. | Do we need to find out more about how the different administrations will use the SBEE Act? |
| HE providers can cross borders, too! | We will need some kind of affirmation of this principle through consultation work. | Avoid differences in methodology in different administrations. |
| Are there international standards for graduate destinations information? | Investigation required. | Ask HESA’s Data Management team to investigate any European or International standards. |

## What methodological improvements can we make to reduce costs, and to improve consistency? Consideration should be given to the benefits of centralisation and independence.

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| Determine the current cost-base for operating DLHE | Suggested format of consultation questions in Appendix A | Validate whether the questions work and are likely to generate valid responses – could HE provider colleagues take a view? |
| Determine the role of linked data – how can this be used to reduce surveying? | Where available and practicable, linked data from a trusted third party should be used in preference to survey responses, or burdensome enrichment processes undertaken by HE providers | Once we have determined exactly what data are required, we need to attend to sourcing as many of these items from linked data as possible. |
| Methodological issues – and data quality checking. The end uses of data are the principal determinants for the quality regime surrounding its collection and evaluation. Where justified by the end uses, this may include requiring that data collection is undertaken by an independent body, to assure all parties that the integrity of the data is beyond question. | End users and suppliers must place full trust in the data collection methodology, in the quality assurance of data, and in the robustness of the data where it is used to evaluate performance, inform choice, or support publications, judgements, plans or processes. In such cases, the independence of the methodology must be paramount.  In other cases, HE providers may be collecting data directly, especially where this collection supplements alumni engagement activity, or forms an additional data collection sponsored by HE providers to supplement the principal methodology. | These principles need to be reflected in the consultation. |
| Population – do we want to survey all students the same way – a census? Are there some groups we want to study in greater detail? Which ones? Do we do the same thing every year, or survey in waves, on say, a 3-year cycle? | Need to establish what the minimum required dataset looks like. | Further discussion required. |
| *Table continues overleaf* | | |
| Technology-based improvements – use an established platform to derive benefits | An improved online survey system will be more attractive to leavers and drive-up online response rates. Can also allow additional survey routing, etc. | Already underway with transfer of DLHE to BOS. Will need to assess the success of this replatforming. |
| Telephone contact | The telephone call provides a prompt to complete the survey – the identity of the caller is less important than their professionalism. Impartiality can be an advantage. Costs can be controlled and efficiencies maximised. | How will a call-centre operation run independently of HE providers be funded – need to determine models.  Multiple practical considerations in establishing this, but we have some time as this is a later-stage activity. |
| Target response rates | Will target response rates be required once HMRC data are available? We would need to consider the impact of removing target response rates for data at HEI and subject level, individual course level, and on strategically important and vulnerable subjects (SIVS) | Need to undertake an appraisal – could HESA staff do this?  Government users of the data should be asked to evaluate their position on this. |
| Increased use of self-coding by respondents – could be deploy something like CASCOT inside the online survey. What other data items are amenable to technological assistance? | Discussion and investigation – both technology and cognitive aspects. | Feels like an activity that can wait until we know more. |

## How complete a picture should the data provide?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| Do all data items have to be similarly complete? Or can some be more complete than others – for instance we are unlikely to obtain survey responses as often as new HMRC data is available, nor with as universal coverage. | We will need to build some models for this, and then consult. | Build some possible models, perhaps based on existing practise. We could speak to ONS. |

## When would data be most timely?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| This feels like another aspect of completeness | Same as last question | Same as last question |

## How should data collection activities relate to HE providers’ careers support for graduates?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| What data do careers support professionals need to support their work? | Ask the student services and careers professionals | Consultation question /liaison with AGCAS. |
| What processes do careers support professionals currently co-locate with DLHE data collection? How might a changed methodology disrupt this, and what should we do about it? | Discussion, and then ask the student services and careers professionals. | Consultation question /liaison with AGCAS. |

## What specific measures do we wish to obtain from these data?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| Which measures do we particularly wish to promote as suitable for inclusion in identified government-backed schemes, like TEF? | Open consultation involving governments and HE providers. More than a survey – perhaps an invited conference event with speakers. | Design consultation questions and consultation process to include this. |
| Which measures would HE providers like to obtain for their own educational evaluation purposes? | Ask HEPs – consultation survey and an event | Design consultation questions and consultation process to include this. |

## What level of detail is required in order to make the data useful for analysis?

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| **Aspect of question** | **How can we address it?** | **Next steps for action and consultation** |
| Which data are required at individualised level? | Feels like a supplementary question to others above | Do not need to decide just yet |
| Which data are required at institutional level? | Feels like a supplementary question to others above | Do not need to decide just yet |
| Which data are required at an intermediate level – the course, department or by another characteristic of respondents or their studies? | Feels like a supplementary question to others above | Do not need to decide just yet |

## Appendix 1: Establishing the current cost base of DLHE

We aim to create a process that is widely regarded as being more cost-effective than current arrangements for the DLHE survey. In order to achieve this, we require a reasonable estimate of the costs of running DLHE in its current configuration in a way that allows reasonable comparisons to be made across the sector. Please assist us in this aim by providing a costing for running DLHE at your HE provider. Please also feel free to comment or advise on how we approach this area of work.

If your implementation of the DLHE methodology involves asking additional questions following the main survey, please tell us how many additional questions you ask.

To enable costs to be compared as directly as possible, please follow the guidance below when producing the costing.

Costs should be those associated with the most recently completed 2013/14 DLHE survey (C13018) only. This includes both the A (April 2014) and B (January 2015) presentations of the survey.

If actual costs are obtainable, please apply an inflationary uplift to indicate what the costs would be on 01/01/2016. If actuals are not obtainable, please base your cost assumptions on the prevailing rates on 01/01/2016.

### PLEASE INCLUDE

* The cost of all staff time attributed to collection, preparation and submission of the DLHE survey data.
* The cost of recruiting and employing any additional staff working on DLHE during the contact period.
* Pensions, Tax and National Insurance costs directly associated with the proportion of staff time spent on DLHE activity.
* Any room or equipment hire charges or equivalent internal budget transfers incurred as a direct result of undertaking DLHE activity.
* The costs of third party providers of DLHE collection services.
* The costs of any advertising, prizes or other incentive schemes aimed at boosting DLHE response rates.
* The costs of any training required to support DLHE.

### DO NOT INCLUDE

* Overheads.
* VAT.
* Capital investments in buildings or equipment used for DLHE.