

HESA consultation on principles and future requirements for the UK's public interest data about graduates

Respondent information

1. *Name of Organisation (short text)*

Imperial College London

2. *Is this response on behalf of? (please choose the category that fits best) (options: A Higher Education provider / A Further Education provider delivering HE-level courses / A HE sector body / A professional, statutory or regulatory body / A government body / A student representative organisation / An employer or employer organisation / A private individual)*

A higher education provider.

3. *Name of contact person for queries (short text)*

Dr Malcolm Edwards, Director of Strategic Planning

4. *Email address of contact person for queries (email address)*

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5. *Telephone number of contact person for queries (telephone no.)*

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Section A – principles and aims

Data linking: its benefits and limitations

6. *Do you agree that linked data can provide a critical part of the data product? (Y/N)*

Yes.

7. *Do we need a survey? (Y/N)*

Yes.

8. *Does a survey need to be universal (a census of graduates)? (Y/N)*

Yes.

9. *Further comments (Text)*

A mixed approach should be taken, with both linked data and survey data used. Taking a census of all graduates is essential, as otherwise it is unlikely that enough data would be gathered to enable analysis by subject and institution. This is important both for institutions' internal evaluative purposes and because of the Government's proposal that data on graduate outcomes will form part of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

Which data should be collected?

10. *Do you agree with the high-level scope of topics? (Y/N)*

Yes.

11. *Do you agree with the principle that it is desirable to find appropriate additional ways of measuring graduate outcomes (Y/N)*

Yes.

12. *Is there anything we have missed? (Text)*

The consultation document seems to focus mainly on undergraduate destinations. However, the changes proposed will also have an impact on what is being collected for postgraduate destinations, and this should be also be considered.

13. *Further comments (Text)*

Although we are broadly supportive of the principle of finding additional ways of measuring graduate outcomes, it is important that any analysis takes into account the subjective nature of some of the possible measures. For example:

- a subjective well-being framework might be more appropriately used for sector-level as opposed to institution-level analysis;
- a skills framework would need to account for the extent to which skills were acquired at university, acquired in the workplace but building on foundations acquired at university, or were totally independent from the university experience, and the later the survey is conducted, the more difficult this becomes to distinguish;
- a measure of loyalty would need to distinguish between the level of satisfaction which a student experienced during their study with the value which they placed upon their time at university in retrospect, with the latter becoming easier to measure the later the survey is conducted.

How should data collection relate to post-graduation pathways?

14. *Do you think a single survey point can work? (Y/N)*

Yes.

15. *If a single survey were to be used, when should this take place? (options: 6 months; 12 months; 18 months; 24 months; 36 months; 48 months; Other (permit a value in months to be entered in a 2-digit integer field))*

10 months.

16. *If multiple surveys, which points would be most appropriate? (options: 6 months; 12 months; 18 months; 24 months; 36 months; 48 months; Other (1) (permit a value in months to be entered in a 2-digit integer field); Other (2) (permit a value in months to be entered in a 2-digit integer field) ; Other (3) (permit a value in months to be entered in a 2-digit integer field))*

10 months. 24 months.

17. *Further comments and explanations for your answers (text)*

We strongly support a single survey taking place at 10 months, with linked data being sourced over a longer period in order to give a more longitudinal view (e.g. at 2, 5 and 10 years). We consider that 10 months is normally sufficient time for a graduate to have made a transition to a relatively stable pathway, while also ensuring that graduates who undertake a one-year postgraduate course following their undergraduate degrees are captured as being in further study (if the survey were to be undertaken at 12 months then these graduates might have completed their further study and progressed to employment, meaning that their further study might not be recorded).

We consider that delaying the initial survey beyond 12 months would lead to an unacceptable drop in the return rate.

We see some value in a second survey at 2 years.

Presentation and financing

18. Do you currently outsource your DLHE data collection process? (radio buttons: Yes / No / No, but we used to / No, but we plan to)

No.

19. Do you think a central survey would provide more demonstrably robust results? (Y/N)

No.

20. What concerns would there be about a central survey? (text)

There is a risk that centralising the survey might result in a lower response rate, as graduates may be more likely to respond to a survey when contacted by their own institution rather than by a more anonymous central body.

Currently, universities are able to use the survey to identify and contact alumni in need of further careers support. Any centralisation of the survey would be likely to give rise to a delay in universities learning of difficulties which individual graduates were experiencing, and so reduce our ability to support them.

If the survey were centralised, it would be essential for universities to be given full access to the data collected. It is essential that we have sufficient data to allow us to link back to individual records so that we can analyse employment outcomes by widening participation criteria, for example, or to track whether particular types of targeted support are more or less successful in promoting positive outcomes.

Individualised employer data is also important in enabling careers services to understand the destinations of their graduates in detail and in informing their work with particular employers and/or sectors.

21. What drawbacks might there be in centralising and/or automating SOC-coding and what weight should they be given? (text box)

SOC-coding inevitably requires a certain amount of human judgement in understanding individuals' responses and, for example, understanding more ambiguous responses by contextualising them against job title, job description, and employer. This means that automating the SOC-coding system through using tools such as word-matching software

could actually result in less accurate results. Concerns about manipulation of SOC data could be addressed by using fewer, higher-level categories, which should have the effect of reducing the number of instances where it is possible to classify an individual in more than one SOC-code category.

22. *Please tell us here about any other comments you wish to make in response to this section (text box)*

We propose that the mechanisms whereby the survey is quality-assured should be strengthened, as an alternative to seeking to improve data quality through centralisation. A more rigorous audit system would help to ensure that the data is of high quality and comparable.

Section B – discussion and detail

Chapter 1: General data requirements

What activities are graduates engaging in, and which are the most important to them?

23. *Do you support the proposal for continued collection of data on activities and main activity? (Y/N)*

Yes.

24. *Do you agree with adding examples of additional types of work here? (Y/N)*

Yes.

25. *Please indicate your level of support for the following additions:*

- a. *Working more than one job*
- b. *Starting my own business*
- c. *Volunteering*
- d. *On an internship*
- e. *Other (please specify) (Short text box)*
(On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

- a. Working more than one job – Low.
- b. Starting my own business – High.
- c. Volunteering – High.
- d. On an internship – Low.
- e. Other (please specify) – High.

26. *Please offer any general comments or observations (text)*

“Starting my own business” and “volunteering” will be helpful for understanding more about graduate destinations post-study, though it may be necessary to reword the options slightly to avoid confusion with “working full time” and “working part time”. “Working more than one job” and “on an internship” are probably of less importance as these are already covered to some extent under the other parts of this question.

Further study, training and research

27. *Please indicate your level of support for the outline proposal to derive basic further study information from linked education data sources (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Low.

- a. *Please explain your answer (text)*

Gathering information on further study is very important, as this is a positive graduate outcome and also has strategic importance in terms of understanding, for example, the future pipeline for the research base. However, it is unlikely that linked data sets will provide all the information needed on further study. In particular, they will presumably only include information on graduates who have gone on to further study at a UK institution, not graduates who have gone on to further study overseas. This means that it will be essential to continue asking the existing questions about further study in the survey. The wording of questions on further study should be considered in the context of when the survey will be run. For example, if it is run a year or more after graduation then some graduates may have had the time to undertake a postgraduate course and move into employment by the time of the survey; if they respond stating that they are in employment then their further study may be missed.

28. *Please indicate your level of support for the collection of data about graduate motivations for further study (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Moderate.

- a. *Please explain your answer. We would be especially grateful for suggestions for 'categories' of motivation.*

Questions on motivation for postgraduate study would be helpful in providing institutions with more information on the reasons why their graduates undertake further study and in informing future Government policy in this area. However, this question will not explore motivations for those who wished to progress to postgraduate study but were unable to, e.g. for financial reasons. If these questions are asked, motivation categories could be aligned with those used in existing research. For example, a report for BIS in May 2016 on deciding to undertake postgraduate study asked about motivations in the following categories: course essential for future career; access to better career opportunities; to develop more specialist knowledge and expertise; to develop a broader range of knowledge and expertise; to change direction; to continue studying subject(s) to a higher level; interested in the course(s); and to defer getting a job. It might also be helpful to include a category around access to finance now that the Government is introducing loans for postgraduate study (this could be particularly helpful when considered in conjunction with the existing question on how graduates are mainly funding their further study).

Personal identifiers, contact information, and opt-out data

29. *Please share any comments you wish to make about these basic data. (text)*

The opt-out statement should allow for individualised data sharing with institutions (under suitable data protection requirements) to enable them to evaluate the success of their graduates, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, and to inform the support that they provide to their current students. Any updates on contact information provided by the graduate to HESA should be shared with institutions and vice versa. However, the "appropriate range of further uses" for the data should otherwise not contain provisions that would encourage the graduate to opt out (for example, commercial usages), as this would reduce the representativeness of the survey population. It should be noted that in recent years the College has experienced an increase in the number of graduates refusing to

respond to the survey. Graduates should be given the choice of opting out at the point when they are contacted for the survey.

Overall HE experience

30. *Please indicate your level of agreement with the working proposal that 'overall HE experience' questions should be discontinued (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

High.

31. *Please share any further comments you wish to make about overall HE experience questions (text)*

These questions are highly subjective and unlikely to be helpful in understanding graduate outcomes.

Chapter 2: Alternative measures of graduate outcomes

Student engagement

32. *Please indicate your level of support for the development of an approach to measuring outcomes of graduates based on student engagement data (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Low.

33. *Please share any comments you wish to make about linking to or using student engagement data or survey questions as part of a data product measuring student destinations and outcomes (text)*

As noted under Question 13, while it is helpful to gather information to contextualise the picture of graduate outcomes, additional ways of measuring graduate outcomes should be used only where these are robust and not overly subjective.

Net promoter score

34. *Please indicate your level of support for the inclusion of a Net Promoter question in a survey of graduates (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Moderate.

35. *What precise wording of the question would you favour? (text)*

"On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend your programme or course to a prospective student?"

36. *Please explain your answers (text)*

It is more relevant to ask a graduate about recommending a university to a prospective student than to a friend or colleague, as the question wording used in the consultation document states.

37. *Do you have any further comments to make about the Net Promoter Score? (text)*

Higher education differs considerably from other sectors in that many graduates have only ever experienced one institution and so may not have anything against which to compare their experience. In addition to this, students may enter higher education with different expectations (e.g. a student entering an institution with a global reputation in their area of study might have much higher expectations than a student entering an institution without such a reputation, which would be likely to influence a Net Promoter Score). Depending on the timing of the survey, for respondents who have attended more than one institution (e.g. respondents who studied for an undergraduate degree at one institution and then a postgraduate degree at another institution) it will be important to clarify which institution is being referred to in the question. In addition to this, postgraduate students, particularly those on one-year programmes, often have a very different experience to undergraduate students and it would be helpful to consider how this could be reflected in any such question.

Subjective wellbeing

38. Please indicate your level of support for the development of an approach based around measuring subjective wellbeing in a future survey of graduates (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Very low.

39. Do you have any further comments to make about Subjective Wellbeing? (text)

While information on wellbeing might help to contextualise graduate outcomes, it is to a large extent entirely outside the control of an institution and so it would not be appropriate to use it to measure an institution's success in producing "happy graduates". In particular, it could introduce considerable confusion between the outcome of a degree and a graduate's satisfaction with their institution and with their life, with life satisfaction in particular open to being influenced by a huge range of factors other than having graduated from a particular institution. If this information is collected, it should only be used to provide broad evidence on the wellbeing of graduates from all universities.

Attributes and skills for life

40. Please indicate your level of support for the development of a measure of attribute or skills usage, outside of a direct employment context, in a future survey (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Moderate.

41. Please share any further comments you wish to make about measuring attributes or skills usage (text)

If it is possible to find a reasonable measure of whether a degree has produced particular skills then this could be helpful information, though it is likely to be relatively subjective. In relation to attributes, however, it is likely to be difficult for graduates to make robust judgements about whether any positive attributes that they possess, such as "resilience" and "individual autonomy", developed as a result of their university education. The applicability of this question to graduates from postgraduate programmes should also be considered.

Links back to previous surveys or activities

42. Please indicate your level of support for the development of a synchronised approach between a replacement for DLHE, and earlier surveys or activities (On a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 indicates a high level of support)

1 – Very low.

43. Does your organisation survey students at the start of their courses? (Y/N)

Yes.

44. Please share any further comments you wish to make about linking back to previous surveys (text)

Linking back to previous surveys would be extremely burdensome and pose a number of practical problems, particularly around trying to link the responses given by individual students to different surveys over a number of years. In addition to this, individuals would need to be asked for permission to link their survey responses, and it is not clear which body would be responsible for that. It should also be noted that many surveys are run on the basis of anonymity as this is helpful in increasing response rates and encouraging honest responses. Institutions also need the flexibility to survey their own students at a time and on topics that are suitable for the institution's own context. Any attempt to synchronise student surveys across the lifecycle at different institutions would, therefore, undermine institutions' ability to implement strategic survey frameworks. It is likely to be impracticable in any case (for example, it will not be possible to link back to NSS results for postgraduate students who attended an institution outside the UK as undergraduates and so did not complete the NSS).

Other self-assessment possibilities

45. Please share any suggestions or comments you wish to make about alternative measures of outcomes (text)

Most of the alternative measures suggested suffer from being far too subjective for any robust findings to be produced from the survey results. It would be better to focus on measures of graduate outcomes and destinations that can be robustly and consistently measured and are relevant to the educational experience provided by institutions.

Chapter 3: Data requirements – employment

Graduate enterprise

46. Please indicate your level of support for the inclusion of questions focussing on graduate entrepreneurship, in a future survey (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

High.

47. Please share any further comments you wish to make about data on graduate entrepreneurship (text)

Data on graduate entrepreneurship will be more relevant for some programmes than others. It would also be helpful to understand to what extent the enterprises that graduates are starting are relevant to their degrees (for example, a start-up commercialising a product developed during a research project). In addition to this, it is possible for graduates to be working for an employer but still using entrepreneurial skills, and this should be taken into

account in these questions (graduate entrepreneurship is not just about setting up a business).

Job title, main thing done in job, and SOC code

48. *Please share any comments you wish to make about Job title, main thing done in the job, or the SOC-coding frame or process (text)*

As the consultation document notes, the SOC framework is currently under review and there is some scope for improving the framework to account for changes in the graduate jobs market. However, it is probably the best available data on occupation and should continue to be collected. As noted in Question 21 above, concerns about manipulation of SOC data or issues caused by ambiguous responses could be addressed by using fewer, higher-level categories, which should have the effect of reducing the number of instances where it is possible to classify an individual in more than one SOC-code category.

Employer details and Standard Industrial Classification

49. *Please indicate your level of support for continuing to collect employer information (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Very high.

50. *Please indicate your level of support for removing employer details from the DLHE, if equivalent data were available from linked data, would you support removing employer details from the DLHE (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Low.

51. *Do you believe that the Standard Industrial Classification offers a sufficient level of detail for your purposes? (Y/N)*

Yes.

52. *Would any additional data about employers (whether collected, linked, or sourced as reference data) add value for you? Please explain (text)*

It is essential that employer details continue to be collected through the survey because otherwise this information will not be available for graduates based abroad.

53. *Do you have any other comments or observations to share regarding employer information? (text)*

As noted also in the response to Question 20, it is important for universities to continue to have access to individualised employer data. This is because it enables university careers services to understand the destinations of their graduates in detail and informs their work with particular employers and/or sectors, as well as their work with current students.

Salaries, employment basis and hours of work for graduates in the UK and overseas

Salary

54. *Would you, in principle, support the development of suitable legal arrangements for the sharing of linked data? (Y/N)*

Yes.

55. *Further comments (text)*

It will be important to ensure that universities are able to access individualised salary data for their graduates (under suitable data protection requirements) to enable them to evaluate the success of individuals from different groups (particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds) in the graduate employment market.

56. *Do you agree in principle that we should cease to seek salary data by consent for UK resident graduates, and that salaries should instead be derived from linked data? (Y/N)*

Yes.

57. *Do you have any further comments to make about this proposal? (text)*

As noted in the consultation document, moving over to use HMRC data will result in a loss of comparability with previous years' DLHE data, though set against this is the expectation that HMRC data will be more robust and consistent. It would be helpful to undertake a detailed comparison of HMRC salary data with salary data gathered through DLHE to identify any significant differences and the causes of these. It will also be important for the localised survey to retain the question on salary to ensure collection from those not working in the UK or for non UK graduates.

Employment basis

58. *Please indicate to what level you agree that data on employment basis should continue to be collected (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

High.

59. *Do you agree with the proposal that "Starting-up own business" should be removed from this question, to the question about 'activity'? (Y/N)*

Yes.

60. *Do you agree with the proposal that "Voluntary work" should be removed from this question, to the question about 'activity'? (Y/N)*

Yes.

61. *Do you agree with the proposal that "On an internship/placement" should be removed from this question, to the question about 'activity'? (Y/N)*

Yes.

62. *Do you agree with the proposal that "Developing a professional portfolio/creative practice" should be removed from this question, to the question about 'activity'? (Y/N)*

Yes.

63. Do you have any further comments to make about the collection of employment basis data for graduates? (text)

[No answer].

Hours of work

64. Please indicate your level of support for retaining a question that asks: "Approximately how many hours a week will you be working for your main employment?" (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Moderate.

65. Please indicate your level of support for removing any questions about hours of work (and relying only on part-time/full-time splits gathered elsewhere) (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Low.

66. Please share any further comments you wish to make about the collection of hours of work data for graduates (Text box)

As the consultation notes, feedback on these questions suggests that it is unlikely that an accurate hourly wage can be derived from the way in which the questions are currently asked. The College would suggest that the question is rephrased to ask how many hours a graduate works in a typical working week, as this would help to avoid confusion between contracted hours and actual hours worked.

Graduates employed overseas

67. Do you agree that we should continue to seek salary data by consent for graduates resident overseas? (Y/N)

Yes.

68. If we were to continue collecting salary data by consent for graduates working overseas, would you prefer to see actual salary and currency of payment collected through an enhanced survey tool? (Y/N)

Yes.

69. If we were to continue collecting salary data by consent for graduates working overseas, would you favour continuing to collect details of hours worked and payment periods? (Y/N)

Yes.

70. Do you have any further comments to make about the collection of salary data for graduates resident overseas? (text)

As with graduates resident in the UK, the College would suggest that the question is rephrased to ask how many hours a graduate works in a typical working week, as this would help to avoid confusion between contracted hours and actual hours worked.

Location

71. Please indicate your level of support for the support the continued collection of employment location information (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

High.

72. Please indicate your level of support for the additional collection of domicile location information (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

High.

73. Do you have any further comments to make about the collection of location information?
(text)

Employment location information is important for contextualising salaries. Domicile location linked to employment information could be helpful in understanding work patterns, for example in cases where graduates are domiciled in the UK but spend periods working abroad.

Skills

74. Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposal to develop a skills-based approach in a future survey of graduates (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Very low.

75. What advice would you give us to help maximise the value and minimise the costs of our approach? (text)

[No answer].

76. Further comments (text)

It is unlikely that a skills-based survey will add much to the sector's understanding of graduate destinations and outcomes. The skills proposed for measurement in the consultation document (such as "making speeches and presentations" and "reading and writing short reports, letters and memos") appear to be far too vague to create the data products suggested in the consultation document, such as regional heat-maps of skills development and usage. Further issues are: skills-based questions are likely to be highly subjective and require a level of accurate self-awareness that not everyone will have; graduates may have developed some of these skills before entering higher education; and that a skill being important for a job doesn't necessarily mean that the graduate employed in that job has that skill.

How a job opportunity was located

77. Please indicate your level of support for the continued collection of information about how a job was located (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Low.

78. Please indicate your level of support for the addition of new categories (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Low.

79. Please explain and add any clarification you deem necessary (text)

[No answer].

80. Do you have any further comments to make about the collection of information about how a job was located? (text)

In the College's experience, graduates tend to answer this question very inaccurately. For example, graduates who had to apply for a job through an employer's website will often state that they found the job through the employer's website even if they originally heard about the job opportunities available at that employer through, for example, a careers fair. Also, although the consultation document states that "there is interest in increasing our understanding of how graduates use social capital when finding jobs, and the role that universities play in this", it should be noted that there is a difference between finding out that a job exists and obtaining that job (for example, a graduate might see a job being advertised on an employer's website but then obtain that job through the influence of personal contacts). It may, therefore, be worth dropping this question.

Reasons for taking a job

81. Please indicate your level of support for retaining a question about the reasons for taking a job, in the current format (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Moderate.

82. Would you recommend any changes to the question about reasons for taking a job? Please explain (text)

[No answer].

83. Please indicate your level of support for a separate question that asks the graduate to self-assess whether their work plans are "on-track" (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Moderate.

84. What wording would you suggest for this question? (short text)

[No answer].

85. Please explain your reasoning (text)

[No answer].

86. Do you have any further comments to make about the collection of information about the reasons for taking a job? (text)

These questions are very subjective. In particular, consideration should be given as to how comparable graduates' answers to a question on whether their work plans are "on track" are likely to be. In most cases, having any job at all is better than being unemployed, and graduates may state that they are "on track" purely for this reason. However, this would be a very different situation to a graduate taking a low-paid job temporarily in order to progress with their planned career (e.g. working as a healthcare assistant before entering a graduate medicine programme).

Placements and other work-based learning

87. How would you define work-based learning? How would you delineate the difference between work-based and work-related learning, if at all? (text)

Work-based learning should include only those work placements that are part of a degree programme and are recorded as such in the HESA student return.

Information on work-related learning should not be collected. The types of activity suggested (e.g. guest industry lectures and live projects set by employers) are far more relevant to some programmes of study than others. In addition to this, the link between such activities and future employability is very tenuous. It is also very unlikely that such activities would be recorded in a comparable way across institutions even if all institutions used the HEAR.

88. Please indicate your level of support for collecting data about placements and other work-based learning in a future data product (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high') a. Please explain your answer (text)

Moderate.

89. Work-based learning in the forms of placements, apprenticeships, sandwich placements and internships would need clear definitions. What definitions would you offer? (text)

Work-based learning should include only those work-based activities that are defined in the HESA student return.

90. Is there anything else that should be included in data on work-based learning? (text)

No.

91. Is there anything that should be excluded from data on work-based learning? (text)

Data on work-based learning should exclude anything not recorded in the HESA student return.

92. Please indicate your level of support for collecting data about work-related learning in a future data product (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

Very low.

a. Please explain your answer (text)

As stated also in the response to Question 87, information on work-related learning should not be collected. The types of activity suggested (e.g. guest industry lectures and live projects set by employers) are far more relevant to some programmes of study than others.

In addition to this, the link between such activities and future employability is very tenuous. It is also very unlikely that such activities would be recorded in a comparable way across institutions even if all institutions used the HEAR.

93. *Examples of types of work-related learning, if collected, would need clear definitions. What examples would you give, and what definitions would you offer? (text)*

This information should not be collected at all.

94. *Is there anything else that should be included in data on work-related learning? (text)*

This information should not be collected at all.

95. *Is there anything that should be excluded from data on work-related learning? (text)*

This information should not be collected at all.

96. *Do you currently hold information about either students' work-based or work-related learning as structured data? (Y/N)*

Yes.

97. *Would you be prepared to share details of how you structure these data, and if so, please let us know more about your system(s) (text)*

As recommended above under Questions 87 and 89, data on work-based learning should include only those activities about which data is collected for the HESA student return.

98. *Does your HE provider currently produce the HEAR? (Y/N)*

No.

99. *Please indicate your level of support for an approach to capturing placement data based around the HEAR (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Very low.

100. *Do you agree that, in principle, placement data would be better captured during study, rather than after a graduate has left? (Y/N)*

Yes.

101. *Further comments (text)*

[No answer].

Non-placement work alongside study

102. *Please indicate the level to which you agree that collecting data about non-course-related employment would add value to national HE datasets (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Low.

103. *Further comments (text)*

The statement in the consultation document that “these data would complete the ability of data collectors to understand links between work activity during study and later employment” is questionable. Almost all graduates will have undertaken some form of paid work during their studies, whether during term time or the vacations, making it difficult to draw comparisons between different groups. In addition to this, it will be difficult to prove any robust link between work activity during study and later employment given all the other factors that may influence this.

104. *When do you think it would be best to collect these data (options: During active study / Around graduation / After leaving study) Employment in particular professions (including teachers and NHS employees)*

[No answer].

105. *We welcome exploratory comments on any of the above, particularly from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. (text)*

[No answer].

Chapter 4: Efficiency and value for money

Lower costs vs higher value

106. *Where should we strike the balance between lowering costs and increasing value of data (On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 indicates that minimising costs is the main imperative and 10 indicates that maximising the value of data obtained from the current cost base ought to be the approach)*

5.

107. *Further comments (text)*

Reducing costs should not be prioritised over ensuring that the data collected fulfils the standards of robustness and coverage required to meet stakeholders’ needs. Note that the Government is also proposing to use data on graduate outcomes in the TEF, and it is essential that any data used for the TEF metrics is robust and credible.

Establishing the current cost base of DLHE

108. *Overall cost for C13018 (£)*

£15,000.

109. *Notes on production of the figures (optional) (text)*

This is a rough estimate based on staff time only. It does not include overheads or the cost of the survey telephone calls (which is particularly substantial for graduates based outside the UK).

110. *How many additional questions did you ask graduates in this presentation of the survey? (whole number)*

0.

111. *Please share any comments you wish to make regarding how we should approach understanding the cost base, or producing a financial case to replace it. (text)*

[No answer].

Chapter 5: Methods and mechanisms

Dates and timings

112. *Further comments on survey timing (text)*

It should be noted that the longer after graduation the survey takes place, the more likely it is that graduates' contact details will not be up to date. Earlier surveys are likely to result in higher response rates and better coverage. Earlier surveys will also help to reduce the number of other factors that may have affected graduates' career progression since they left their institutions.

Survey structure

113. *Comments (text)*

The most important questions, which are those requesting factual information, should be asked first to help ensure that attrition rates are lowest for these questions. It should be recognised that the longer the survey, the less likely it is that graduates will complete all or part of it. The survey should, therefore, be as short as possible and focused on key, robust measures of graduate outcomes and destinations.

Third-party methodology

114. *Please indicate your level of support for the adoption of an appropriate externally-recognised standard for a future survey of graduates (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')*

Low.

115. *Further comments (text)*

The consultation document suggests that "third-party methodologies can restrict the ability to obtain the necessary data to produce statistically significant results". For the current DLHE survey, high levels of coverage are essential for the results to be robust and helpful. Lower response rates might render the survey almost useless and third-party methodologies should not be used if this is likely. In addition to this, the use of third-party methodologies could hinder the sharing of data with institutions, which is also vital to ensuring that institutions are able to evaluate the success of their activities to support their students to progress to employment or further study.

Added value

116. Please indicate the level of value the DLHE contact process holds for your HE provider (separate to the collection of data) (On a scale showing 'Very low' / 'Low' / 'Moderate' / 'High' / 'Very high')

High.

117. a. Please explain (text)

As noted above under Questions 20 and 22, careers services use the contact process for DLHE to identify graduates who are unemployed and offer them support to help them find employment. In addition to this, the contact process for DLHE can form part of institutions' continuing relationships with their alumni. If alumni are also being contacted centrally by another organisation with questions about their graduate outcomes or contact data, this could result in confusion and in fewer alumni engaging with their institutions.

118. Do you ask any additional questions supplementary to the main DLHE survey? (Y/N)

No.

119. How many extra questions? (number)

0.

120. Please share details of the additional questions you ask (text)

[No answer].

121. Would you anticipate continuing to ask these questions (or similar ones) under a centralised process? (yes/no)

[No answer].

122. What functionality or other added value would you like to see from a replacement for DLHE? (text)

The replacement should at the least retain all the current functionality of DLHE, particularly around the availability of individualised data.

Implementation

123. Comments on implementation (text)

It will be important to ensure that no cohort of graduates "slips through the net" in relation to data collection. It will also be important to inform universities well in advance so that they can plan for any new timescales for data collection and if necessary communicate these with their students and/or graduates.

Chapter 6: Onward uses of data

Legal matters: sharing data

124. Would you, in principle, support the development of suitable legal arrangements for the sharing of some individualised linked data? (Y/N)

Yes.

125. *Further comments (text)*

As discussed also in various responses above, it is essential that universities are able to access individual-level data on their own graduates so that they can evaluate the success of their activities in supporting their students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to progress to employment or further study.

Current uses of salary data and future uses for linked HMRC earning data

126. *How do you currently use destinations and outcomes data? Which specific data? What is the analysis? Which processes are influenced? What is the outcome? Who benefits and how?*

- a. *Case study 1 (text)*
- b. *Case study 2 (text)*
- c. *Case study 3 (text)*

127. *How could linked data on graduate destinations and outcomes offer new benefits in future? What new analyses or processes could benefit? What would be the outcome? Who would benefit and how?*

- a. *User story 1 (text)*
- b. *User story 2 (text)*
- c. *User story 3 (text)*

[No answer].

128. *Further comments*

[No answer].

Novel data products

129. *Suggestions (text)*

[No answer].