

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Key Information Sets: timetable and further information

Date: 22 February 2012
Reference: W12/07HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education institutions in Wales
Principals of further education institutions with franchise HE in FE provision
Response by: 10 March 2012 to HEFCE
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This circular provides an update on the development of Key Information Sets (KIS). This includes the development of the website that will host the KIS, information on the KIS 'widget' and its incorporation into websites, and an updated timetable.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please telephone us on (029) 2068 2225 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.



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Introduction

1. This circular provides the latest information on the development of Key Information Sets (KIS).
2. It includes:
 - an update on the development of the new web-site that will deliver the KIS in September 2012;
 - further detail about the KIS 'widget' and incorporating it into your course web-sites;
 - the timetable for uploading KIS data to the HEFCE extranet in order for it to be published on the KIS and the new official web-site.
3. It also provides a reminder:
 - of where the KIS technical guidance is published;
 - how the KIS links to quality assurance;
 - that higher education institutions (HEIs) and directly funded further education institutions (FEIs) should provide HEFCE with contact details for a link person in connection with the KIS by 10 March 2012.
4. This circular will be of particular interest to those with responsibility for quality assurance, quality enhancement, learning and teaching, website management and student data.

Background

5. Circular [W11/27HE: Key Information Sets: Outcomes of consultation and next steps](#), provided information on the policy context underpinning the introduction of the KIS in Wales, the outcomes of the consultation in Circular, [W11/15HE: Key Information Sets](#) and information on next steps for institutions. In addition it requested views on equality and diversity implications, to inform the ongoing development of the KIS, technical guidance and user guidance.
6. Circular W11/27HE reported that a KIS would need to be produced for all undergraduate courses which would be offered in 2013/14 by HEIs, FEIs, and private providers of higher education (HE) programmes that subscribe to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Any exceptions to this general rule are noted in the technical guidance. Further information on how the KIS might apply to a wider group of institutions and organisations will be made available as and when any new arrangements are clarified.
7. Circular [W11/33HE: Key Information Sets: further information and request for feedback on technical guidance](#) provided notification that HESA has published the technical guidance on the production of the KIS to enable HEIs and directly funded FEIs to make progress towards meeting the publication deadline for KIS of September 2012. It also provided an

update on the further preparatory work undertaken on the development of the KIS.

8. The Higher Education Public Information Steering Group (HEPISG) is UK-wide and advises on issues relating to teaching quality information and public information, including the KIS. It includes Welsh representation and HEFCW, together with the other funders, UUK and GuildHE, is an observer to this group.

Development of the new official web-site

9. The [Unistats website](#) has been available since 2007, providing the opportunity to search and compare subject-based course information at different institutions. Unistats is now being used as the basis of a new website that incorporates both the KIS data and Unistats data. The current Unistats site will close in September 2012, when the new website will be launched. We will refer to it as 'the new official website' in the remainder of this circular. The development of this new website is a UK-wide project which is managed by HEFCE on behalf of HEFCW, the Scottish Funding Council and the Department for Education and Learning in Northern Ireland.
10. HEPISG is overseeing the KIS development work and will approve the final site design and wording. Further details will be published during August, including details of how all institutions will be able to review the site prior to launch.
11. It is vital that the explanations and definitions of the data presented on the site:
 - are not misleading;
 - do not unwittingly result in any legal issues;
 - accurately explain the data in a way that potential students and their advisers understand.
12. Therefore HEPISG has established a sub-group to draft the wording and explanations that will be on the site.
13. The new official website is being developed by Eduserv, a not-for-profit web development and hosting company. Eduserv has undertaken a programme of user testing in partnership with Fluent Interaction (a user experience and web design agency), to ensure the site meets the needs of its key audience (potential students and their advisers), including Welsh speakers.

Responsibility for publishing the KIS

14. The principle is that each student is recorded against the institution in which they study in their first year, regardless of funding arrangements.

Therefore FEIs with franchise HE provision will need to take action to incorporate the KIS 'widget' within their websites, as detailed below. Registering institutions should make their partners aware of their responsibilities in relation to the KIS¹.

KIS widget

15. The KIS 'widget' is a presentation of a small portion of the KIS data. It will appear 'in context' on university and college websites, on the relevant course web page. **Annex A** provides a mock-up to aid planning for its incorporation.
16. HEIs, directly funded FEIs, and FEIs with franchise provision will need to note the following:
 - a. The widget will have a fixed width of 200px and will be of variable height according to the length of the course name;
 - b. The widget can be embedded on course pages in a similar way to embedding a YouTube video or Google map - ie by adding a short piece of HTML code which automatically imports the data. Details of this will be published in March 2012. Two small changes will need to be made to the code to identify the course and institution. Since the code that identifies the institution will be the same on all of an institution's course pages, in practice this will only need to be changed once; but the code that identifies the course will need to be changed for every course page to ensure the appropriate data are displayed;
 - c. The design of the widget is fixed and universal, so it will not be possible to include any additional, tailored information such as additional links.
17. The widgets will be able to be included on websites in September 2012 when the new official website is launched. We expect all relevant course pages to have embedded widgets by the end of October 2012.

KIS technical guidance

18. Some of the KIS information items are sourced from national data sets, such as the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey.
19. However, data on learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, course accreditation, student financial support and accommodation costs, and the information that allows linking to the HESA and individualised

¹See paragraphs 76-78 in Circular [W11/27HE: Key Information Sets: Outcomes of consultation and next steps](#)

learner records and UCAS course data will be collected from HEIs and directly funded FEIs by HEFCE² for the first year (ie for KIS published in September 2012). From the second year onwards (ie for KIS published from September 2013), HESA will collect these data from HEIs. We are working with HEFCE and HESA to determine the best route for continuing collection of these data from directly funded FEIs.

20. HESA has published technical guidance to enable consistent collation of the data for publication in the KIS. This was first published by HESA in September 2011 and, following feedback from the sector, was revised in December.
21. A final update will be published in March 2012, and this is the version that should be used by HEIs and directly funded FEIs when uploading their data to the HEFCE extranet: it will constitute the final guidance for the collection of data for the September 2012 KIS.

Uploading data to the HEFCE extranet

22. HEIs and directly funded FEIs will need to collect the data outlined in the KIS technical guidance and upload it to the HEFCE extranet. The data can be uploaded from 29 March to 22 August.
23. We encourage institutions to upload their data as early as possible during this period so that any issues of data quality can be resolved as soon as possible.
24. Further details on how to access the extranet will be sent to institutions during the week commencing 12 March.

Internal and external quality assurance and the KIS

25. HEIs and directly funded FEIs will be responsible for quality assurance of their KIS data³. Due to the volume of the data, they will not undergo the same scrutiny that is commonplace with other HESA data streams; rather, HEFCE or HESA will supply institutions with summary reports of the data they have uploaded, and they will have the opportunity to preview the data that will appear on the KIS before sign-off and thus assure themselves of its accuracy.
26. The Institutional Review: Wales method will include a judgement on the public information provided by institutions from 2012/13, which will replace the comment currently made on this area.

² On behalf of all the funding bodies

³ HEIs will be responsible for the accuracy of data for any franchise provision they offer

27. The focus of the judgement will be on the completeness, currency, reliability and accessibility of the information provided by institutions and on the usefulness of the information to potential students, employers and the wider public. Importantly, the information considered by QAA reviewers will be wider than the KIS. Reviewers will not be expected to make a judgement on the accuracy of the detailed information in the KIS, much of which is subject to its own data audit methods (see paras 30 and 31 below).
28. The revised QAA Institutional Review handbook will clarify how each of the judgement grades will be determined. It is anticipated that a judgement on public information on the same basis will be included in the review process for directly funded HE in FE from 2012/13.
29. Expectations will be defined in a new section of the [UK Quality Code for higher education](#) relating to public information (Part C). The Code will also refer to specific national requirements, eg the KIS. It will also go beyond these, taking a 'student lifecycle' approach to the provision of information. QAA is consulting on Part C of the Quality Code before publishing it in Spring 2012.
30. HEFCW reserves the right to audit any of the information and data contributing to the KIS.
31. Following the first publication of the KIS, we will participate in arrangements made by HEFCE, on behalf of all the funding bodies, to carry out an audit of the data and supporting information at selected institutions to assess the accuracy of the information included in the KIS.

Timetable

32. The table below provides the timetable of action required for the creation of KIS for courses that will recruit students to start their studies 2013/14. The publication deadline for the new official website to go live is the week commencing 24 September 2012.

Date	Action
29 March 2012	Final technical guidance published
29 March 2012	Start of period to upload data to HEFCE extranet
22 August 2012	End of period to upload data to HEFCE extranet
Week commencing 17 September 2012	Site preview for all institutions
Week commencing 24 September 2012	KIS widgets on course sites and new official website go live
31 October 2012	KIS widgets must be available on all institutions' web-sites by this date.

Next steps

33. All HEIs and directly funded FEIs will need to put arrangements in place to provide the required information within the timescales indicated above.
34. FEIs with franchise HE provision will need to liaise with their partner HEIs, and will need to prepare to integrate the widget into their websites.
35. Any institution needing further guidance should seek this as soon as possible.
36. All HEIs and directly funded FEIs should provide a contact with whom HEFCE can liaise with on the provision of KIS data and communication, as requested in Circular W11/33HE. If you have not already done so, please e-mail these details to kis@hefce.ac.uk by 10 March 2012. Please note that these contact details will be passed to the organisation that administers the KIS collection for 2013.

Further information / responses to

37. For further information, contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2068 2283; email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk).

Assessing the impact of our policies

38. We have carried out an equality impact assessment (EIA) screening on the introduction of the KIS in Wales to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We also considered the impact of the KIS on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales. Contact equality@hefcw.ac.uk for more information about EIAs.
39. A similar responsibility rests on HEI partners to assess the impact of your proposals to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality.

Annex A Mock-up of how the KIS widget might appear on an institution's course web-page

The mock-up shows a university website for Newtown University. The main navigation bar includes links for Visitors, Courses, About Newtown University, Research, Services for Business, Faculties, and Jobs. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for Undergraduate Study, Postgraduate Study, International Students, and Alumni. The main content area is titled "Health Studies BSc(Hons)".

On the left side, there is a sidebar with links for Undergraduate home page, View all undergraduate entry 2011 courses, Cell and Molecular Biology, Entry requirements, What our students say, Course features, Facilities, Learning support, After you graduate, Postgraduate opportunities, Fees and funding, Living costs, and Applying for funding. Below this is a section for "Ask a question about this course" with contact information for Science Admissions.

The main content area includes a "Facts" section with details on Year of entry (2011), Qualification (BSc(Hons)), and Application route (3 years full-time, 4 years sandwich, 4 years full-time including foundation year, 6 years part-time). It also lists "Modules" and a "Module Listing" link.

Below the facts is an "About this course" section with a "Why choose this course?" subsection, explaining that cell and molecular biology has formed the basis of many advances in subjects like agriculture, animal and plant development, ecology, genetics, medicine, and drug development. It also includes a "What will you study?" subsection, mentioning a firm foundation in molecular biology, biochemistry, genetics, and physiology in Year 1.

On the right side, there are links to "Apply for this course" and "Favourite this course". Below that is a "Visit us online and in person" section with a photo of students and a link to "Find out more about our online and on-campus open days". A "Related courses" section lists Biology BSc(Hons), Forensic Biology BSc(Hons), Human Biology BSc(Hons), and Science foundation year.

The KIS widget is positioned in the middle of the page, below the "About this course" section. It displays the following data:

- KIS** (Knowledge Information System) logo
- BSc Health Studies (b900)** by Newtown University
- 69%** Student Satisfaction
- 99%** In work or study after 6 months
- £21k** Average Graduate Salary
- More course stats >
- Independent data collected by HEPCE

An arrow points from the text "widget" to the KIS widget box.

At the bottom left, the word "DRAFT" is written in orange. At the bottom right, there is a "VIRTUAL TOUR" button with the text "Take a tour of our campus" and a right-pointing arrow.