

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Unistats and the Key Information Set: Data collection timetable and changes for 2016

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To: Heads of regulated and/or funded higher and further education institutions in Wales
Response by: No response required
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This circular sets out information on:

- a. The processes and timetable for higher education institutions, further education colleges and alternative providers to submit their 2016 Key Information Set (KIS) data, so it can be published on the Unistats website at the end of August 2016;
- b. The process that the funding bodies have introduced to consider concerns about the quality of data on Unistats;
- c. The introduction of a threshold for responses below which we will not publish Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey data;
- d. Changes to the Key Information Set and Unistats on which we have recently consulted;
- e. Ongoing updates to the Unistats website.

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Introduction

1. This circular sets out information on:
 - a. The processes and timetable for higher education institutions, further education institutions to submit their 2016 Key Information Set (KIS) data, so it can be published on the Unistats website at the end of August 2016;
 - b. The process that the funding bodies have introduced to consider concerns about the quality of data on Unistats;
 - c. The introduction of a threshold for responses below which we will not publish Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey data;
 - d. Changes to the Key Information Set and Unistats on which we have recently consulted;
 - e. Ongoing updates to the Unistats website.
2. As in previous years, we have published a separate circular about the publication of the 2016 NSS results ([W16/11HE: 2016 National Student Survey: Publication of data](#)), as we recognise the information may relate to different areas within institutions.
3. Thank you for your continued support in helping us to provide robust, reliable information to prospective students. Our research with users has shown that the Unistats website is valued by those who use it and we continue to work to promote its use with students, teachers and careers advisers.

Key points

4. The timetable for the collection of 2016 KIS data is shown in Table 1.
5. Changes arising from the funding bodies' recent consultation on the review of information (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/roiconsult/>) do not affect the 2016 KIS return, which should be completed as set out in this circular.
6. We require all institutions to have signed off data for publication by **noon on 4 August 2016** to allow institutions to preview the information on the Unistats site, as this helps ensure data quality. Where institutions identify data errors, or their course details change during preview, they will need to resubmit and sign off updated data by **noon on 25 August 2016** for the updates to be included on the live site when it is updated with the 2016 data. The initial sign-off of the dataset for publication should be carried out by the head of institution, but formal responsibility for signing off any subsequent updates may be delegated to another member of the senior management team.

Table 1: Timetable for the collection of KIS data

Date	Activity	Notes
26 May 2016	Data collection systems open.	
Early July 2016	NSS and DLHE survey data added.	
14 July 2016	Valid data submission required.	By this date, institutions are required to have submitted a dataset which passes validation and contains the majority of their courses.
4 August 2016 (noon)	Deadline for sign-off of data.	Institutions are required to have signed off a valid dataset which is suitable for publication.
10 to 24 August 2016	Data available for preview on Unistats website.	
25 August 2016 (noon)	Final deadline for submission and sign-off of any amendments prior to publication of new dataset on Unistats.	Data does not need to be signed off again if no amendments have been made during the preview period.
31 August 2016	Update of Unistats website with the 2016 dataset.	
Early September	Collection systems reopen for updates.	The KIS dataset is dynamic and it will be possible to make amendments on a weekly basis from September, as it is currently.
30 September	Deadline for update of KIS widgets to reflect new course data.	There are no changes to the coding of the KIS widget this year, but institutions should update these for new courses or changes to KISCOURSEID codes.

7. Circular [W11/27HE](#) noted that the consensus of consultation was that Welsh higher education institutions (HEIs) and directly funded Further Education Institutions (FEIs) should participate in the production of the KIS. For FEIs, the principle is that each student is recorded, for the purposes of Unistats, against the institution at which they studied in their first year. Therefore, registering institutions should make their partners aware of their responsibilities in relation to the KIS.

Internal and external data quality assurance and process for responding to concerns

8. Institutions are responsible for the quality assurance of their KIS data. As KIS data is not static and can be updated weekly, it does not undergo the same additional manual checks as other data streams. We strongly encourage institutions to use the reports made available by HEFCE and HESA to confirm that the data is accurate, and to make use of the institutional preview period.
9. The head of institution must provide the initial sign-off to confirm the accuracy of the data. Any subsequent updates must be signed off either by the head of institution or by an individual they have nominated to act on their behalf.
10. We reserve the right to carry out an external audit on any of the information and data contributing to the KIS for Welsh institutions. The purpose of the audit is to gain assurance of the systems and protocols used in deriving the KIS data, and to check the reliability of data including the reasonableness of any estimates used.
11. The process that the funding bodies will follow where concerns exist about the quality of data on Unistats is available on the HEFCE website (www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Learning,and,teaching/Unistats-data-concerns-process.pdf). This provides further clarification about the process we will follow and the action we may take where we are not satisfied data is fit for purpose.

Threshold for publication of DLHE survey data

12. We have a responsibility to ensure that the information we publish on Unistats is robust, and we apply publication thresholds to student-related data both for this purpose and to ensure responses cannot be attributed to individuals. We currently require a response rate of at least 50 per cent for National Student Survey responses in addition to the headcount publication threshold of 10, but we have not previously applied a formal response rate threshold for DLHE survey data. Our view is that it would be appropriate to apply a response rate threshold consistent with that used for the publication of DLHE data in institutional performance indicators (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/pis/defs#DLHE>). This is 68 per cent for responses from full-time students and 59.5 per cent for part-time students.
13. As we have not advised the sector of this change prior to this year's DLHE survey, our intention is to introduce these thresholds for publication of the 2017 survey data (and apply them in the same way as we apply thresholds for NSS – so that responses from students on the course will need to meet the threshold for data to be published at course level, and responses at subject level will need to meet the threshold for the data to be published at

that level). In the interim, we will publish DHLE data where at least 50 per cent of responses have been received at institutional level.

Review of Unistats and KIS

14. The UK higher education funding bodies have recently consulted on changes to Unistats and KIS arising from the review of information. In the consultation we proposed to:
 - a. Maintain a UK website of authoritative national data for students, their advisers and other stakeholders (currently Unistats).
 - b. Provide more help for students to consider the questions to ask about course choice and to navigate information during their decision-making journey.
 - c. Redesign Unistats to reflect diverse student information needs.
 - d. Remove learning, teaching and assessment data and some other elements of the KIS from the central data collection, and to transfer to institutions the responsibility for publishing this type of information, to provide the level of detail students want.
 - e. Provide good practice developed with sector experts to support consistent but nuanced presentation of information by institutions.
15. The full consultation proposals arising from the review of information about learning and teaching and the student experience can be found on the HEFCE website (www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/roiconsult/). The outcomes of the consultation will be published in May 2016 and any changes will come into effect for the 2017 data collection. We will confirm changes in August 2016.
16. The consultation will not affect the 2016 KIS collection.

Site updates to Unistats

17. We are making minor enhancements to the Unistats website for the publication of the 2016 KIS. These seek to enhance the usefulness of the information we publish and include:
 - a. Percentage response rates to the National Student Survey and the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey alongside the number of respondents.
 - b. Degree outcomes for integrated Masters courses.
18. We will also recalculate and display UCAS tariff scores for qualifications held on entry based on the new tariff. This will allow this information to be more useful to prospective students, as any offer information institutions publish which uses tariffs will be expressed in terms of the new tariff.

Further information

19. Further information on the data submission process and where to find guidance and support can be found in **Annex A** (for higher education institutions), and **Annex B** (for further education institutions).
20. For further information, contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2068 2283; email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk).

Annex A: Further information for higher education institutions and alternative providers

1. Higher education institutions and alternative providers making a Key Information Set (KIS) data return should submit KIS data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).
2. Detailed guidance on submitting KIS record data is available on the HESA website (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&Itemid=232&menl=16061). Access to the HESA data collection system is managed through the Identity system (<https://identity.hesa.ac.uk>).
3. HESA monitors the data collection system to ensure institutions are progressing well and not encountering difficulties. For assistance with the submission process, contact HESA's institutional liaison, tel 01242 211144, email liaison@hesa.ac.uk, website www.hesa.ac.uk/liaison.
4. Published KIS data is based on the institution at which a course is taught, regardless of funding arrangements. The principle is that each student is recorded, for the purposes of Unistats, against the institution at which they studied in their first year. This means that where institutions receive funding through a variety of routes they must submit a KIS even if they do not directly receive HEFCW funding. Therefore, registering institutions should make their partners aware of their responsibilities in relation to the KIS. For further guidance, see the 'Collaborative provision' document under 'Supporting documentation' on the HESA website (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&Itemid=232&menl=16061).
5. HESA and HEFCE will liaise with institutional KIS contacts about the provision of KIS data, and will direct further communications to them. It is essential that institutions ensure their institutional KIS contact details are up to date. Please note that HEFCE and HESA hold separate lists of KIS contacts as these have slightly different purposes for each organisation. Institutions are responsible for ensuring that their KIS contact details are up to date on both HEFCE's and HESA's records. HESA has an online contact management system through which institutions can update the details of their nominated HESA KIS contact. Institutions should communicate any change in staff to the institutional liaison by email at the address in the paragraph above, and will then be given access to HESA's online system so that they can make the necessary changes. Institutions can amend their KIS contacts by emailing kis@hefce.ac.uk.

Annex B: Further information for further education institutions

1. Further education institutions should return Key Information Set (KIS) data to HEFCE.
2. Further education institutions will need to collect the data outlined in the KIS technical guidance (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&Itemid=232&menu=16061) and upload it to the HEFCE extranet. Details of how to access the extranet will be sent to KIS contacts before data collection opens.
3. Published KIS data is based on the institution at which a course is taught, regardless of funding arrangements. The principle is that each student is recorded, for the purposes of Unistats, against the institution at which they studied in their first year. This means that where institutions receive funding through a variety of routes they must submit a KIS even if they do not directly receive HEFCW funding. Therefore, registering institutions should make their partners aware of their responsibilities in relation to the KIS. For further guidance, see the 'Collaborative provision' document under 'Supporting documentation' on the HESA website (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&Itemid=232&menu=16061).
4. We encourage institutions to upload their data as early as possible after Thursday 26 May, so that any issues of data quality can be resolved as soon as possible. For assistance with the submission process, contact kis@hefce.ac.uk.
5. HEFCE will liaise with KIS contacts in further education institutions about the provision of KIS data and will direct further communications to them. It is essential that institutions ensure their institutional KIS contact is up to date. Email kis@hefce.ac.uk to amend KIS contact details.
6. Please note that the data should not be signed off by the individual compiling and submitting the KIS return, but by the head of the institution.