

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Summary of the outcomes of the consultation on detailed changes to the Key Information Set data collection for 2017 and approaches to presenting data on the successor to the Unistats website

Date: 08 September 2016
Reference: W16/31HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in Wales
Response by: No response required
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This circular provides information on the analysis of responses to the technical consultation on work the UK higher education funding bodies and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) are carrying out to implement the outcomes of the review of the Unistats and the Key Information Set (KIS). It also provides information on how these will be taken forward, together with next steps.

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Introduction

1. This circular provides information on the analysis of responses to the technical consultation on work the UK higher education funding bodies and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) are carrying out to implement the outcomes of the review of the Unistats and the Key Information Set (KIS). It also provides information on how these will be taken forward, together with next steps.

Background

2. Circular [W16/22HE](#), *Consultation on detailed changes to the Key Information Set data collection for 2017 and approaches to presenting data on the successor to the Unistats website* was published in June 2016. It was carried out jointly by the higher education funding bodies in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), as we work in partnership on the UK-wide Key Information Set (KIS) data collection.¹
3. The consultation consisted of three sections:
 - Section 1** Proposals for a revised data collection to replace the current KIS collection.
 - Section 2** Proposals for aggregation of student-related data on the successor to the Unistats website.
 - Section 3** Update on the investigation of possible approaches to presenting survey data on the successor to the Unistats website.

Consultation outcomes

4. We received 131 valid responses to the consultation. These were broadly supportive of the proposed changes to the data collection, and the majority were supportive of retaining the current approach to aggregation of data on Unistats.
5. We suggested a number of options for approaching the aggregation of National Student Survey (NSS) data in the first year of the new survey, and a comparable number of respondents favoured the following options:
 - a. Not aggregating any NSS response data over two years where aggregation is necessary to meet thresholds, and only aggregating across subjects.
 - b. Aggregating questions over two years, where questions are suitable for aggregation and we have last year's data, but not to attempt to aggregate responses to other questions across subjects.

¹www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Learning,and,teaching/Unistats,and,the,Key,Information,Set/Consultation/Consultation_on_detailed_changes_to_the_KIS.pdf

6. We also invited comments on our investigation of different approaches to presenting survey data, and there was significant support for the introduction of benchmarking.
7. We will therefore make the changes to the data collection proposed in the consultation. Key changes are the removal of data fields associated with the discontinuation of:
 - proportion of time spent in scheduled learning and teaching and independent study;
 - proportion of assessment by method;
 - tuition fee information;
 - accommodation costs.
8. We will also relax the validation of course titles and add the ability to reflect where a course is optionally available by distance learning.
9. HESA will issue a notification of changes to the current KIS data collection, which will reflect the outcomes of this consultation, at the beginning of September, and will work with software suppliers to advise them of the systems implications of these.
10. The funding bodies will take forward further work on aggregation of NSS responses and data presentation. When we complete this work we will seek advice from the UK Higher Education Public Information Steering Group, which advises the funding bodies on student information. We will also carry out further work on processes around accreditation information, as outlined in the consultation document, prior to release of the manual for the 2017 data collection.
11. The full summary of responses and more detailed actions in response to each element of the consultation is available at www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/unikis/consultations/.

Further information

12. For further information, contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk).