

Office for  
Students



# Unistats 2020

Timetable and arrangements for the  
submission and publication of data

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Department for the

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[www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)

This publication is for:

- registered higher education providers in England
- higher education institutions in Northern Ireland.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Scottish Funding Council will write separately to providers in Wales and Scotland respectively.

## Arrangements for Unistats 2020

This publication outlines arrangements for the 2020 Unistats data collection. It also provides an update on the further development of the Discover Uni resource that replaced the Unistats website in 2019.

While we are in the process of further developing the Discover Uni website, the data collection will continue to be known in 2020 as ‘the Unistats collection’ and the resulting dataset as ‘the Unistats dataset’. The name of the Unistats collections may be changed in the future to give reference to Discover Uni.

**Please note:** the dates and deadlines set out below may be subject to change in response to the current coronavirus pandemic.

### Providers required to return Unistats data

The following higher education providers are required to return Unistats data:

- providers in England that are registered with the Office for Students (OfS)
- publicly funded providers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Data should be returned for eligible courses delivered by the provider itself or by other providers on its behalf through a sub-contractual agreement. Eligible courses are defined in the coverage of the Unistats record on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) website.<sup>1</sup>

### Providers who have recently joined the OfS Register

For the attention of English providers that registered with the OfS **on or after 1 July 2020**: The deadline to have submitted and signed off a valid Unistats return is midday two months after your date of registration, or the next working day if that is a weekend. You do not have to work to the timetable published below. For example, if you registered with the OfS on 18 July 2020, you must submit and sign off your Unistats return by midday on 18 September 2020. For more information please contact [discoveruni@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:discoveruni@officeforstudents.org.uk) or [liaison@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:liaison@hesa.ac.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c18061/coverage>.

## **Arrangements for returns for subcontracted provision**

Registering providers should include in their return any eligible courses delivered by another provider on their behalf through a sub-contractual agreement.

The exception to this is where a teaching provider delivers its own regulated provision (or funded provision in the case of Northern Ireland), and provision on behalf of another regulated or funded provider. In this case, the teaching provider should return the data for all of its eligible courses. Registering providers remain responsible for ensuring the return is made for their courses.

## **Process for submission and sign-off of data**

All providers, including further education colleges in England, should return their Unistats data to HESA. Detailed guidance on the data required is available on the HESA website.

The timetable for submission of Unistats data for courses running in 2021-22 is in the table below. To ensure that data remains accurate, it is possible to resubmit data to reflect changes to course details or website links throughout the year. We will incorporate every Wednesday after the initial publication.

Data must pass a series of system validation checks before it can be submitted and signed off as accurate. Unless all stages of the process, including sign-off, have been completed, we will not consider the data to have been received and will be unable to publish it.

The dataset should initially be signed off by the provider's accountable officer, but formal responsibility for signing off any subsequent updates may be delegated to another member of the senior management team. If the accountable officer (usually the head of provider) is unable to sign off the initial return, this should be done by the individual acting in this capacity at the time, and the accountable officer should notify HESA in advance.

## **Information for further education colleges in England**

In previous years, further education colleges in England (FECs) submitted data through the OfS extranet. For 2020 submissions, all FECs are using the HESA data collection system which is managed through the HESA Identity system. For assistance with the submission process, contact [liaison@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:liaison@hesa.ac.uk). The HESA website has an e-learning module at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/services/e-learning/unistats-training>.

## Timetable of key dates

**Please note:** these dates may be subject to change in response to the current coronavirus pandemic.

Date	Activity	Notes
29 May 2020	<b>C20061 Data Collection system opens</b>	
Mid-July 2020	<b>NSS and Graduate Outcomes data added</b>	NSS and Graduate Outcomes data will be added to the data collection systems and will be visible in the reports.
28 July 2020, noon	<b>Deadline for submission of valid data set</b>	Providers are required to have submitted a dataset which passes validation and contains the majority of their courses.
28 July 2020, noon	<b>Nil return confirmation</b>	Providers are required to submit a Nil return form to indicate that their provider has no courses which meet the eligibility criteria for the Unistats record as specified in the coverage of the record.
18 August 2020, noon	<b>Sign-off</b>	Providers are required to have signed off as accurate a dataset as possible which has passed system validation and is suitable for publication.
September 2020	<b>Official Statistics publication of 2020 Unistats dataset on the HESA website</b>	We will confirm the intended publication date for the 2020 dataset in July 2020.
September 2020	<b>Update of Discover Uni website with 2020 dataset</b>	We will confirm the intended publication date for the 2020 dataset in July 2020.
September 2020	<b>Deadline for up-to-date widgets on providers' websites</b>	We will confirm the deadline for up-to-date widgets on providers' websites in July 2020.

**Please note:** Due to the ongoing changes to the application and admissions arrangements for 2020, we will also provide an appropriate and clear message on course results pages on the Discover Uni website. These pages signpost applicants and potential applicants to check providers' websites and course pages for any changes to the course before applying or accepting offers.

## **Changes to the collection and data updates**

The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey is being replaced by the Graduate Outcomes survey. We are working with the other funders and regulators to develop a solution to replace DLHE data on Discover Uni for 2020 with data from the Graduate Outcomes survey. NSS data will continue to be used as in 2019.

We will also update Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data for those providers for which we publish it, to include data for the 2017-18 tax year. Following input from key stakeholders, and user testing, it has been collectively agreed by UK funders and regulators that from September 2020 the LEO data will include graduate earnings data for three years after graduation and five years after graduation (for the same cohort).

## **Further development of the Discover Uni website**

Following the release of the Discover Uni beta website, including the replacement of Unistats, in November 2019, user research and testing is being used to inform plans for further development and enhancement of the presentation of the Unistats datasets. This is to ensure that they are easily understandable without oversimplifying the data. New designs for webpages and the presentation of the Unistats data will be applied to the website for September 2020 release. This will be followed by the development of an improved course comparison function and search facility on the website in response to user testing and feedback.

## **Unistats widget**

Data presentation and design changes made to the Discover Uni website will also be implemented on the Unistats widget. The widget will continue to provide a direct link to data about the course from providers' course pages. The deadline for its implementation will be confirmed in July 2020.



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