Cylchlythyr | Circular

Unistats 2020: Timetable and arrangements for the submission and publication of data

This circular provides information on 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.

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Introduction

1.   This circular provides information on 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.

2.   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.

3.   Please note, the dates and deadlines set out here may be subject to change in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

4.   The Unistats data collection process and Discover Uni website are managed by the Office for Students (OfS) on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies – the Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland), the Scottish Funding Council and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. The Discover Uni website provides information for prospective students about higher education courses delivered by providers in the UK.

5.   We have published separate information on the publication of the 2020 National Student Survey data, see circular [W20/12HE: National Student Survey 2020: Publication of Data](#).

Arrangements for Unistats 2020

6.   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.

7.   Regulated providers should include in their return any eligible courses delivered by another provider on their 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](#).

8.   The exception to this is where a teaching provider delivers its own regulated provision <u>and</u> 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. Registered providers remain responsible for ensuring the return is made for their courses.

Process for submission and signoff of data

9. All providers should return their Unistats data to HESA. Detailed guidance on the data required is available on the [HESA website](#).

10. The timetable for submission of Unistats data for courses running in 2020/21 is provided 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. An updated dataset will be published every Wednesday after the initial publication.

11. Data must pass a series of system validation checks before they can be submitted and signed off as accurate. Unless all stages of the process, including signoff, have been completed, the data will not be considered to have been received and will be unable to be published.

12. The dataset should initially be signed off by the provider's accountable officer (usually the head of the institution), but formal responsibility for signing off any subsequent updates may be delegated to another member of the senior management team. If the accountable officer 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 the OfS or HESA in advance.

Timetable - Key dates

13. The table below outlines the key dates in relation to the Unistats data collection and publication of data. These dates may be subject to change in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Date	Activity	Notes
29 May 2020	C20061 Data Collection system opens	
mid July 2020	NSS and Graduate Outcomes data added to data collection system	NSS and Graduate Outcomes data will be added to the data collection systems and will be visible in the reports
28 July 2020 (12pm)	Deadline for submission of valid data set	Providers are required to have submitted a dataset which passes validation and contains the majority of their courses
28 July 2020 (12pm)	Nil return confirmation	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 (12pm)	Sign-off	Providers are required to have signed off as accurate a dataset which has passed system validation and is suitable for publication.
September 2020	Official Statistics publication of 2020 Unistats dataset on the HESA website	*We will confirm the intended date for publication of the 2020 dataset on HESA in July 2020.*
September 2020	Update of Discover Uni website with 2020 dataset	*We will confirm the intended date for update of Discover Uni with the 2020 dataset in July 2020.*
30 September 2020	Deadline for up to date widgets on providers' websites	*We will confirm the deadline for provision of up to date widgets on providers' websites in July 2020.*

14. With ongoing changes to the admissions arrangements for 2020, we are working with the other funders to ensure that there are appropriate and clear messages on the Discover Uni website and course results pages which 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

15. DLHE data is being replaced by data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey, (see circular W18/15HE). We are working with the other funders and regulators to develop a solution for providing the data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey on the Discover Uni website.

16. Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data will also be updated for those providers for which this is available, to include data for the 2017-18 tax year. Following input from key stakeholders and user testing, it has been collectively agreed by the UK funders and regulators that from September 2020 the LEO data will include graduate earnings data for 3 years after graduation and 5 years after graduation (for the same cohort).

17. We have agreed that the LEO data can be published for Wales on the basis that work has been undertaken (including user testing) in order to appropriately contextualise the way the earnings data will be presented on the Discover Uni website, which we feel addresses our previous concerns.

Further development of the Discover Uni website

18. Following the release of the Discover Uni beta website (which replaced 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

19. 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.

Further information

20. For further queries about publication of the NSS within the Unistats dataset, contact the Discover Uni team at the OfS, email discoveruni@officeforstudents.org.uk.

21. For any other queries, contact Nicola Hunt (029 2085 9735; nicola.hunt@hefcw.ac.uk).