

Office for
Students



Unistats 2021

Timetable and arrangements for the
submission and publication of data

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Enquiries to unistats@officeforstudents.org.uk

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This publication is for:

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

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

Arrangements for Unistats 2021

This publication outlines arrangements for the 2021 Unistats data collection (also referred to by the HESA definition of C21061). In addition it provides an update on the further development of the Discover Uni resource.

Please note: the dates and deadlines set out below may be subject to change in response to the 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.¹

Providers who are expecting to join the OfS Register

For the attention of English providers who expect to register with the OfS: 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.

Providers who register with the OfS **on or after 17 June 2021** are expected to submit only C21061 data. For more information, please contact discoveruni@officeforstudents.org.uk or liaison@hesa.ac.uk.

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 subcontractual 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

¹ See <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21061/coverage>.

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.

From the Unistats 21 (C21061) collection, HEFCW has advised that for providers in Wales the Unistats return should be submitted by the registering provider. This means that for cross border arrangements, the provider submitting the data may differ in the C21061 return compared to previous years. Full guidance can be found in HESA's subcontractual and collaborative provision document for the C21061 collection, which is due to be released shortly.

Please note that from Unistats 22 (C22061), the guidance for all providers will be aligned with that for Welsh providers. This means that for providers in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Unistats return will need to be submitted by the registering provider. Further information on this change will be communicated ahead of the Unistats 2022 collection.

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.²

The timetable for submission of Unistats data for courses running in 2021-22 is shown 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 these updates 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

Since the Unistats 2020 cycle, further education colleges (FECs) in England are required to submit data 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. The HESA website has an e-learning module at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/services/e-learning/unistats-training>.

² See <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c21061>.

Timetable of key dates

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

Date	Activity	Notes
By 31 May 2021	C21061 data collection system opens	
Anticipated by 31 July 2021	NSS and Graduate Outcomes data added	NSS and Graduate Outcomes data will be added to the data collection systems and will be visible in the reports. We will confirm the intended publication date.
20 July 2021	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.
20 July 2021	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.
Noon, 17 August 2021	Sign-off	Providers are required to have signed off as accurate a dataset as possible which has passed system validation and is suitable for publication.
Anticipated by October 2021	Official Statistics publication of 2021 Unistats dataset on the HESA website	We will confirm the intended publication date for the 2021 dataset in July 2021.
Anticipated by 7 October 2021	Update of Discover Uni website with 2021 dataset	We will confirm the intended publication date for the 2021 dataset in July 2021.
End November 2021	Deadline for up-to-date widgets on providers' websites	We will confirm the deadline for up-to-date widgets on providers' websites in July 2021.

Please note: Due to the changes to the application and admissions arrangements for 2021, we may also provide an appropriate and clear message on course results pages on the Discover Uni website.³ These pages signpost applicants and potential applicants to providers' websites and course pages to check for any changes to the course before applying or accepting offers.

³ See: <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>.

Further development of the Discover Uni website

We are continuing to develop the Discover Uni website, following our updates to the home page, course pages and content in 2020. New designs for a course comparison function to present the Unistats data for multiple courses is now in development. We are also making improvements to the search/filter facility on the website in response to user testing and feedback. We anticipate these updates will be released to the website by the end of July 2021.

Unistats widget

In 2020, significant development work was undertaken to the Discover Uni widget to support changes to the Unistats dataset and enhance its design and function. No further changes are planned for the widget in 2021.

The widget will continue to provide a direct link to data about the course from providers' course pages. Providers should update their widgets to reflect their Unistats 2021 data and present them on their course pages by the end of November 2021. We will confirm this deadline in July 2021.



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