Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education

Good practice manual

Contents page

Overview 5
Introduction to DLHE 7

Part 1 – Getting your population right 9
DLHE and the Student Record (POPDLHE) 11
Coverage 14
April survey 16
Match Report 19
Case study 20

Part 2 – Preparing for DLHE 22
Ordering surveys 25
Supporting DLHE 28
Promoting DLHE 30
Organising DLHE 32
Case study 34

Part 3 – Contacting leavers 37
Following the methodology 39
Contact details 40
Contacting leavers using the postal questionnaire 41
Contacting leavers using DLHE Online System 42
Contacting leavers using the telephone 44
Completing the telephone script 46
Completing information from a third party 50
Other methods 51
Trouble shooting 52
Case study 54

Part 4 - Recording and returning data 57
Data inputting 59
DLHE Online System as a data inputting tool 60
Cascot 62
Submitting data to HESA 65
Case study 66

Part 5 - The value of DLHE 67
The value of DLHE 69
Destinations 71
Statutory uses of DLHE 76
Case study 77

Overview

This 'Good Practice Manual' provides DLHE coordinators with a practical guide on how to undertake the survey achieving accurate responses from graduates. The manual is based on the findings from work HESA has undertaken with institutions and the wider DLHE community to identify good practice suggestions on how to achieve the target response rates, as well as highlighting difficulties faced in order to gain an understanding of how to overcome them.

The manual complements the operational documentation on the HESA website and highlights the importance of DLHE, how to carry it out, and introduces ideas designed to improve the process for your institution. Throughout the manual good practice tips are highlighted using a light bulb icon, whilst a warning sign icon denotes issues to be aware of.

The manual identifies a plethora of good practice examples to facilitate institutions in meeting the target response rates for DLHE, however through our experience and findings we have identified the following five as being most significant:

- A committed, experienced and well staffed team responsible for undertaking the work
- A robust process to capture, update and maintain accurate contact details
- Extensive promotion of the DLHE survey internally within the institution
- Strong working relationships with other departments, particularly those responsible for student data
- Institutional and senior management buy-in into the DLHE process, survey and results

In addition to using this manual, please also refer to the operational documentation available from the HESA website for up to date (i.e. collection-specific) information.

Introduction to DLHE

What is HESA?

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is the official agency for the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative information about higher education.

What is DLHE?

The Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) record collects information about what those completing their HE experience go on to do six months after graduation. DLHE is undertaken on an annual basis through surveys and a data collection process.

How is DLHE undertaken?

DLHE consists of two survey periods relating to different census dates – one in April and one in January – and this is to allow for the fact that students often finish their courses at different times. The dates chosen are nominal and provide a picture of what graduates are doing approximately six months after completion.

There are many different ways the surveys are undertaken, all of which will be addressed in detail within this manual, however the primary mechanism for institutions contacting their leavers are questionnaires being completed via post, telephone or online.

What timeframe does DLHE relate to?

Like most HESA records, the DLHE refers to a reporting period starting on 1 August and finishing on 31 July. The record collects destination information about students who completed their studies within this timeframe. The reporting period is split into two surveys – April census collecting information from those who completed between 1 August and 31 December, and January census collecting information on those who completed between 1 January and 31 July. This is shown through the diagram below:

Whilst DLHE does refer to a reporting period, the actual surveying and data submission takes place over two reporting periods, which can often lead to confusion. For example a given DLHE collection relates to students completing in a specific reporting period, however the two separate census dates means the surveys take place in different reporting periods. This can be demonstrated by adding a DLHE timeframe (running from March in year one to May in year two) to the diagram.

The DLHE timeframe appears to be fairly long running from March until May of the following year, however the majority of activity takes place in two separate times as denoted by the green square (for April survey) and orange circle (for January survey).

What are the methods of contact?

In order to ensure the highest possible response rates, HESA provide institutions with a wide range of methods to contact graduates. The multiple methods of contact are offered so that the DLHE process can be adapted to different types of institutions with student bodies who might interact differently with the methods on offer; namely:

- Postal mailing questionnaire
- Centrally-hosted online questionnaire
- HTML version (an HTML version of the questionnaire is available for institutions to host on their own websites). NB. This method will not be available after the January 2011 survey.
- PDF version (a PDF version of the questionnaire is available in both English and Welsh)
- Telephone scripts

Contacts

Each institution is able to nominate a member of staff as their DLHE contact. The DLHE contact is the central point of communication with HESA, and is responsible for all correspondence with HESA, which includes consultation, specifying collection criteria, and data quality queries.

What are the target response rates?

In order to provide the sector with the best possible statistics, institutions are required to meet specific target response rates for the DLHE survey, namely:

80% for UK-domiciled (i.e. home) leavers who previously studied full-time;
70% for UK-domiciled leavers who studied part-time;
50% for all other EU students;
80% for Research Council funded students.

All institutions are expected to meet, or exceed, these thresholds and HESA carryout extensive data quality checks to monitor both short and long term success with this regard.

Part 1

Getting your population right

DLHE and the Student Record (POPDLHE)

Even before the first student has been contacted for the DLHE survey, there are significant challenges faced by the institution – not least, surveying the correct students in the first place. The population surveyed for the DLHE survey is comprised of all those students who leave the institution within a certain timeframe achieving a qualification listed in the DLHE coverage. Failure to accurately establish the population can lead to falling response rates and wasted resource within institutions.

The Student Record is collected in respect of all students registered in the reporting institution who follow programmes of study leading to the award of a qualification or institutional credit.

The DLHE record supplements the Student Record in so far as it is linked to it and collects information about what those completing their HE experience go on to do.

Ensure that you are in regular communication with the department that submits your institution's HESA Student Record. Consider holding meetings to discuss and understand each others needs, workflows, and timescales so that you will be prepared.

What is POPDLHE?

The 'DLHE Target Population' (POPDLHE) is a file containing those students who should be surveyed as part of DLHE. The population file is derived using the data submitted within the institution's HESA Student Record and is done so using mainly leaving/award information returned for each student.

For example, when a student is reported to HESA as having left the institution and been awarded a qualification, they will likely be included in the POPDLHE to be surveyed.

Be aware that the POPDLHE file contains both students who will be surveyed in January and those who have already been surveyed in April of the current year – more on this later!

When is the POPDLHE available?

A POPDLHE is available after each successful commit of the Student Record. The Student Record collection normally opens on 1 August and closes at the end of October so you can expect to be able to download the POPDLHE within this time period.

It will usually be the case that your institution processes multiple successful commits whilst the student collection remains open, and a POPDLHE file will be produced after each of these. The early commits your institution makes are unlikely to be the finalised population you will use for DLHE – for example results data might be missing for students who are subject to resits or late exam boards – and it might therefore be the case that you use the early POPDLHE files to get a feel for and monitor what the final population will look like.

Make sure that the POPDLHE you will use to undertake the DLHE is taken from the final submission of data made by your institution and that it is confirmed as such by those responsible for submitting the Student Record.

How do I access the POPDLHE?

All DLHE contacts at an institution are given read-only access to the Student Record collection when the system opens in August. The read only access codes are emailed to the DLHE contact alongside a posted PIN letter – users will not be able to perform transactions on the system other than to download the POPDLHE file.

Where do I get the POPDLHE from?

You can download the POPDLHE file from the same system that you will submit your data to a few months later – namely the HESA data collection system called 'Aardvark'.

After setting up a user account or adding permissions to an existing one, the user will be able to see a row of icons in the report column of the collection page. The only icon the user will have access to is the POPDLHE one which will need to be downloaded.

If upon logging into the system there are no report icons along the commit row, it is likely that your institution has subsequently deleted the submission in order to send a new one. If this has happened you will need to wait until the new file has been committed.

Understanding the POPDLHE

The POPDLHE file contains records from both the April and January census dates. The overview of the file contains three separate tables designed to give more information about the breakdown of the population. For example table 1 provides a breakdown by census and level, table 2 by Home and other EU, with table 3 highlighting how many within the population are Research Council students.

DLHE Exercise - DLHE target population (POPDLHE)

1. POPDLHE

Students in the POPDLHE are those that meet the criteria for inclusion as defined by the specification.
Students with Instance.ENDDATE between 1 August 2008 and 31 December 2008 inclusive will have been surveyed in April 2009 and these records are identified by CENSUS=APR.
Students with Instance.ENDDATE between 1 January 2009 and 31 July 2009 inclusive will be surveyed in January 2010 and these records are identified by CENSUS=JAN.

Table 1 - Totals of records in the POPDLHE by Census date and level (PG/UG)

APRIL CENSUS		JANUARY CENSUS	
Total Postgraduate	549	Total Postgraduate	593
Total Undergraduate	0	Total Undergraduate	0
Total for April Census	549	Total January Census	593
Total Number of Records: 1142			

Table 2 - Totals of records in the POPDLHE by level (PG/UG), mode (FT/PT) and domicile (Home/Other EU). These totals will be used in standard publications and in the Statistical First Release.

POSTGRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE TOTALS			
HOME		OTHER EU	
Total Postgraduate (FT):	360	Total Postgraduate (FT):	490
Total Postgraduate (PT):	267	Total Postgraduate (PT):	25
Total Undergraduate (FT):	0	Total Undergraduate (FT):	0
Total Undergraduate (PT):	0	Total Undergraduate (PT):	0
Total Home:	627	Total EU:	515
Total Number of Records: 1142			

Table 3 - Totals of records in the POPDLHE where Instance.RCSTDNT is in (01 - 09).

RESEARCH COUNCIL STUDENTS	
01 Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)	0
02 Medical Research Council (MRC)	0
03 Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC)	5
04 Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)	34
05 Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC)	3
07 Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC)	0
08 Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC)	0
09 Research Council - not specified	0
99 Not a Research Council student	1100
Total Number of Records: 1142	

Downloading and using POPDLHE

Users can download the file in either a fixed length or XML format for use with internal systems and processes from the same page as specified above. For every student in the file the following fields are included:

HESA Unique student identifier
Family name
Forenames
Institution's own identifier for student
Course title
Course identifier
Qualification mode of study
Qualification awarded
Qualification awarded
DLHE Highest qualification obtained
Level of qualification obtained (PG/UG)
Home/ Other EU flag
Teacher training course
Research Council student
Student Instance identifier
Census (APR/JAN)

The file contains 16 data fields for each student in the population – each field should be reviewed to ensure you have the fullest picture possible of each student. For example, was the student on a teacher training course, were they studying part-time?

Coverage

Having established that the DLHE population is derived from the Student Record your institution submits, it is therefore vitally important that you ensure that the population is right. Often this can be a case of establishing who is not included in the population as opposed to who is.

Coverage statement*

A student is counted within the POPDLHE population when they are awarded one of the following qualifications…

D00	M16	H11	H71	J20
D01	M22	H16	H80	J26
E00	M26	H18	H88	J30
L00	M41	H22	I00	C20
L80	M50	H23	I11	C30
M00	M71	H41	I16	
M01	M80	H42	I60	
M02	M86	H50	I61	
M10	M88	H60	J10	
M11	H00	H61	J16	

PG **UG**

…and they are recorded with a 'reason for leaving' (RSNEND) as anything other than '05 Death'...

Why are students who left with a 'reason for leaving' as anything other than successful completion included in the DLHE?

Students who leave due to financial reasons, due to transferring to another institution, or even academic failure, may still be awarded an interim qualification that is included within DLHE.

…and a mode of study as active (i.e. not 63 Dormant - previously full-time or 64 Dormant - previously part-time), had a Home/EU domicile on entry to their course, and an end date in the HESA reporting period.

The coverage statement can be applied to four different students to determine whether or not they would be included in the POPDLHE:

	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D
Qualification awarded	H00	E40	M11	C20
Reason for leaving	01	01	01	02
Mode of study	01	31	64	01
Domicile	XF	BE	XG	XF
Included in POPDLHE?	Yes	No	No	Yes

Some students might be surveyed twice in the DLHE as their course might lead to two separate qualifications. Ensure you identify such students to ensure the details are accurate and you survey the student for the right qualification.

*coverage statement as at May 2010

The following flow diagram is a useful tool in identifying why a student is included/not included in the POPDLHE file.

April Survey

One of the most significant problems that institutions face with regards to the POPDLHE is ensuring the April survey population is accurate. This problem is largely due to the timing of the April survey in relation to the DLHE year.

The diagram above shows how the DLHE collection year (essentially running for over a year from March year 1 to May year 2) dictates the need to predict the population for the April survey. The POPDLHE file is produced at the point of 'Student Record submission', which provides institutions with the population file containing those students who should be surveyed in January, as well as those who should have been surveyed in April. As the April survey occurs before the POPDLHE file can be generated through the submission of the student record, institutions are required to independently calculate which students should be surveyed.

How to calculate the April population

The April population will need to be calculated using your internal student record system to determine which students gained an applicable qualification (as per the coverage statement) between 1 August and 31 December in 'HESA reporting period 1'.

The requirement to use internal reporting within your institution in order to establish the population requires close collaboration with the department responsible for the Student Record and a strict adherence to the coverage statement.

Communication with those responsible for student data is vital as any student surveyed as part of the April survey who is not subsequently returned in the student record will not be counted. For example, you believe 500 students have been awarded a relevant qualification between 1 August and 31 December and all are surveyed; however the Student Record your institution later submits reports only 480 meaning that 20 of the students' responses will not be included in the DLHE output.

To facilitate calculating an accurate April survey population, consider using historical data as a guide. While the number of graduates completing between August and December is likely to vary each year, the number you surveyed in the previous year is likely to give you an approximation of a norm.

Common problems with the April survey

Changes to MODE within the Student Record

Problems around the April survey population often emanate from Student Record reporting and incorrect practices. Take for example a typical post-graduate Masters course that runs for a year from October in one reporting period until October of the next.

The student, despite studying a one year course, will be returned twice on the Student Record – once in HESA reporting period 1 and once in reporting period 2. In both periods the student should be returned with their mode of study as the same ('01 full-time' in our example). The results of this means that the student completes their course on an active study mode in October of reporting period 2 and will therefore be surveyed later in that period for the April survey.

A common reporting error in the Student Record is for the same student to be reported with a mode of full-time in HESA reporting period 1, only for this mode to be changed to '63 dormant' in reporting period 2. The change to mode often occurs as institutions consider the student to have finished the taught part of their course at the end of reporting period 1 before writing-up their dissertation in reporting period 2. It is however the case that the year of study running from October to October is considered to have a writing-up phase incorporated into it, and only where the student overshoots the anniversary of the commencement date should their mode be changed.

The consequence of the above is that while the student completes and is awarded a qualification, they are returned on a dormant mode and will therefore not be included in the April survey or any other DLHE population.

Another common problem relating to Student Record systems and the DLHE population is that some systems only allow for one end date to be recorded for the student. In HESA terms, the definition of the students end date is the point at which the structured course finishes; however institutions often record the date at which they are awarded. This difference can lead to students being surveyed in the wrong census date where there is a delay to the confirmation of the award.

Compare the number of students in the April survey in the POPDLHE with the number of leavers between August and December on your internal student record system. Where there is a significant difference investigate reporting practices.

What do we do if we surveyed leavers for the April survey who were not subsequently on the POPDLHE?

Where leavers are surveyed that should not have been there is no requirement or cost-benefit to returning them to HESA.

What do we do if we failed to survey a cohort of leavers that were included?

If you failed to survey all those leavers who should have been you will need to contact the Institutional Liaison team at HESA. However it is likely that there is little that can be done, emphasising the importance of getting the April population right.

Where the final confirmation of award by exam boards occurs several months after the student completes the course, meaning that the award is not known in time for the student to be included in the April survey, institutions should survey these leavers in January. In doing so institutions must ensure that such students are surveyed using the questionnaire that corresponds to the April census.

When you come to submit your data to HESA in the following March you will need to ensure that you the relevant April data is included in the file.

Match Report

The previous sections have highlighted how difficult it can be to establish an accurate population for the DLHE survey and the potential problems institutions might face. To help review how successful your institution was at determining the population, HESA provide a 'Match Report' through the data collection system. The 'Match report' provides users with real-time feedback on how many of the DLHE records submitted are matched to the records included within the POPDLHE. Only those that match will be counted in the DLHE outputs.

How to use the 'Match report'

The 'Match report' is available on the data collection system within the reports column. It is generated after every successful commit to the system and is therefore likely to change where you are adding or removing records from your submission. Categories B and C give an option to view student details to establish why the students are in those categories.

Understanding the report

The 'Match report' consists of three categories providing a complete picture of the records submitted.

BACK

Match Report

Download the report (which includes all records in categories A-C)

View the file structure of the report

Match to POPDLHE

Category	Description	No.of Records
A	Records in POPDLHE (census date reported in the DLHE record corresponds to the ENDDATE reported in the student record)	1851

No match to POPDLHE

Category	Description	No.of Records
B	Records that are not in the POPDLHE but were submitted in the C08051 student record	138

View Student Details

Category	Description	No.of Records
C	Records that are not in the POPDLHE and were not submitted in the C08051 Student Return	30

View Student Details

HESA 95 Promenade Cheltenham Glos GL50 1HZ Tel 01242 211144 Fax 01242 211122 Email liaison@hesa.ac.uk

© 2010 HESA - Higher Education Statistics Agency

User Guide | Frequently Asked Questions | Help Reference | Contact Institutional Liaison | Conditions of Use | Privacy statement

Category A reports on all records in the submission that were successfully matched to the POPDLHE and surveyed in the correct census date. Only the records in this category will count towards the DLHE Record and the target response rates.

Category B reports on all records in the submission that were also included in the Student Record but not in the POPDLHE. These records will not count towards the DLHE Record. It might be that this category contains those students who should have been in the POPDLHE but were not due to incorrect reporting in the student record.

Category C reports on all records in the submission that were neither in the student record nor the POPDLHE. The students will not count as it is likely that the students should not have been surveyed for DLHE purposes.

The 'Match report' should be used to identify errors and inefficiencies in the DLHE process so that you are able to improve and resolve them for the next year.

Case study

Institution A

Total student population: 9000
POPDLHE: 1700
No. DLHE staff: 15 (3 full-time DLHE)
Response rate: 87%

Institution A is a small-medium sized university with approximately 1100 staff and 9000 students. The institution offers a broad selection of academic disciplines from the arts to sciences, as well as vocational courses. The DLHE collection is undertaken by the Careers department in collaboration with Planning - the DLHE team is small but experienced with both HESA and DLHE. The institution dedicates three persons staff time to DLHE, an additional two members of Registry staff to data input, and around 10 casual staff to undertake the telephoning.

The size and nature of the university is believed to have some significant influence over the success of the DLHE collection with respect to response rates. Institution A attracts students who are largely from the local and surrounding areas and this personal connection with the university may encourage a greater response rate as students identify with and may wish to support their institution.

Data analysts provide the careers service with the final POPDLHE list following the final Student Record commit. This minimises confusion and ensures the most current and accurate POPDLHE is the one which is taken forward. An indication of the population is given to the Careers team prior to this.

The POPDLHE is not checked against the previous year as experience within the team is such that one should be able to notice any anomalies at first glance, however the file will be checked fully with central Registry and Planning. A data analyst from Planning creates the April POPDLHE file, which is done manually based on student records and in conjunction with the Exams Officer, resulting in a strong Match Report. The final POPDLHE list is sent to the careers service as a spreadsheet once the student contact details have been added to the HESA data. The careers department will then supplement the spreadsheet with additional information needed to carryout the survey successfully. The spreadsheet is used in conjunction with the student records system.

The institution routinely reviews the Match Report created from their submission to ensure that they have not surveyed leavers who are not included in the POPDLHE. Where mismatches have occurred the institution will review them and identify which leavers were surveyed and why. Depending on the outcome from this review, procedures are then updated to guard against incorrectly surveying similar types of leavers in the future.

The networks between staff facilitate a strong working relationship and departments such as careers, planning and registry work together and communicate regularly. This level of cooperation is essential in keeping records up to date and everyone informed. There is also a lot of experience and knowledge within the team which makes the collection process smoother. Each team member has a defined role and good communication ensures that the work is completed as efficiently as possible and with consideration of the process as a whole.

There is some cooperation with teaching faculties and it is believed that departments who have a greater knowledge of the DLHE collection tend to yield a better response rate from their graduates. This may be because they have an understanding of the onward use of the data and are keen to improve the rating of their department in league tables and other such publications. However, on the whole teaching staff tend to be relatively uninformed about the survey. This suggests that there may be some benefit in targeting university staff with information about the DLHE.

Institution B

Total student population: 7000
POPDLHE: 1300
No. DLHE staff: 4 (1 full-time DLHE)
Response rate: 65%

Institution B is a small-medium sized institution with a very similar staffing, student and academic profile to that of institution A. The DLHE collection is undertaken by a member of staff who works within the institution's student records department. In addition to the dedicated member of staff, the institution employs two casual staff to help with the telephoning and one member of the student records department to help with data inputting.

The DLHE contact at the institution liaises with the Student Record contact for the POPDLHE file as they both work in the same department. Having obtained the POPDLHE, a brief visual check of numbers will be undertaken by the DLHE contact before creating a mail-merge and posting out to leavers. The DLHE contact does not usually meet with team members or other departments ahead of mailing out the survey. The POPDLHE file itself is not edited to form a usable spreadsheet, and instead the institution uses their student records system in isolation. The POPDLHE file is not checked with their exams office as the data comes from the same system therefore it is perceived that the DLHE contact is capable of checking it themselves.

When creating the April population, institution B derives the population using their student records system. The derived population is then checked against the previous years to look for consistency of numbers. This is a recent development after incorrect populations were used for previous April surveys.

The institution is largely unaware of the Match Report and where to find it. The one occasion when the report was located and viewed the institution was unable to deduce what it was telling them.

Part 2

Preparing for DLHE

Ordering surveys

In preparing for the survey, one of the most important tasks to undertake is the ordering of the correct number of postal questionnaires and telephone scripts from HESA.

How do we order surveys?

Prior to each DLHE survey your institution will be contacted by HESA with a set of questions about the size of the institution's DLHE target population and the mailing/telephone arrangements that you plan to use. The questions can be answered using an online survey that HESA will direct you to.

Failure to provide a response to these questions will have significant impacts on your ability to run the DLHE process within your institution as there may not be enough questionnaires to survey all leavers. Accurate responses are also vital and places further emphasis on ensuring that you have your target population correct.

When are the questions asked?

HESA will usually request the information in January for the April survey order and June for the January survey order. The diagram below illustrates that the questions are asked in advance of the surveys taking place, which therefore requires them to be carefully considered based on previous collections and forecasts of leavers using a student records system.

The diagram also shows that the 'DLHE year' is further extended and activity for the record commences in January and runs through to the following May.

What are the questions?

Typically you will be asked the following:

1. How many questionnaires do you require to complete the initial contact mailshot?

2. Will you be doing a follow-up (second) mailing? How many questionnaires do you require for a second mailing?

3. Questionnaires are printed in A3 format. They can be delivered as flat A3 sheets or pre-folded to A4 or A5. Please indicate which format you would prefer.

4. In addition to postal questionnaires, HESA will provide you with telephone scripts. How many telephone scripts do you require?

5. Is your institution based in Wales?
5a. How many questionnaires in Welsh do you require?
5b. How many telephone scripts in Welsh do you require?

Consider how many telephone scripts you ordered the year before – was that enough, did you end up telephoning more than you expected? Are you planning on using online systems and therefore require fewer scripts this year?

Delivery

Also, as part of this email, the Institutional Liaison team will ask for the name and address of two people at the institution to whom the DLHE questionnaires and telephone scripts should be addressed. This may or may not be the DLHE contact; someone else, e.g. a member of the Careers Service who may actually manage the DLHE survey, and so the consignment should be sent to them. HESA ask the institution to provide the name, job title, exact mail address and the telephone number of two recipients at the institution; one principal and one back up. The distributor will attempt delivery to the first recipient, and if unsuccessful, a second delivery attempt can be made to the back up recipient.

By informing your colleagues, e.g. security staff (or anyone else who may be likely to be in receipt of the delivery) that delivery of questionnaires and telephone scripts is expected, you can avoid them being misplaced.

Our institution's DLHE survey is administered by another institution/organisation, so where do I get the questionnaires and scripts delivered?

The questionnaires and telephone scripts should be delivered at the external institution/organisation undertaking the survey so you will need to provide the full mail address for them.

What if I fail to respond?

Where your institution does not respond, HESA will assume your requirements to be the same as the year before and you will therefore receive the same number of questionnaires and scripts as the previous DLHE.

Where your institution profile has changed significantly from the year before, for example if you have an expected increase in the number of leavers, not responding to the questions will likely mean you will not have enough questionnaires to cover the increase.

What if I respond inaccurately?

If your institution responds with inaccurate answers this will lead to the incorrect number of questionnaires and scripts being delivered and you may not have enough to contact all leavers.

Whilst HESA stock a very small number of questionnaires and telephone scripts as contingency to manage small discrepancies, there would be an insufficient number to cover significant differences between the number ordered and the number of students to be surveyed. It is therefore imperative that institutions check the POPDLHE estimates provided by HESA and either confirm that these are correct, or provide accurate revised estimates.

If your institution has an insufficient number of telephone scripts you are able to photocopy an original and use them. This is not the case for postal questionnaires.

Preparing the DLHE survey packs

Having ordered the questionnaires you will then need to prepare the packs to send out to your leavers. The packs will need to include not just the DLHE questionnaire but also a covering letter and (if used) a reply-paid envelope.

It is vital that institutions include the covering letter (printed on headed paper), the text of which can be located on HESA's website and should not be changed apart from where it is indicated either in italics or where there is an instruction. Institutions should particularly note the instruction to insert their own data protection collection notice.

Include literature about the careers service the institution offers and forthcoming alumni events. Institutional branding and ownership of the envelope contents will help the student to better identify with the process.

It might seem obvious, however ensuring the department who look after your institutions post system is aware that the DLHE will be taking place. Mailing out to a large number of leavers is likely to place pressure on that system and advanced knowledge will help the department with volume control and resource issues.

Supporting DLHE

The DLHE process is an extensive one lasting over a year and demanding a great deal of time and resource to complete it. It is therefore vital that you realistically evaluate the amount of staff and finance resource you require to undertake the task. Supporting the DLHE process appropriately is fundamental to achieving a successful return that accurately represents the institution.

Employing additional staff

Having reviewed the available resource for the DLHE, it might be that your institution decides that there are enough existing members of staff within the relevant departments to undertake the return. However many institutions take the view that in order to meet the target response rates and data input responses accurately, additional staff are required during the pressure points (i.e. the April and January surveys as well as data collection).

Many institutions employ current students to undertake the telephoning. This enables your institution to offer employment opportunities for students, as well as establishing a link between present and former students, thus raising the profile of DLHE with those students who will later graduate. Respondents are perhaps more likely to give the caller time if they are a former peer.

Additional members of staff are often chiefly employed to carryout the telephoning of leavers as this can often occur outside of core hours.

There is a strong correlation between those institutions who have a high staff to leaver ratio making contact and those that meet the target response rates.

Training and supporting staff

If employing additional staff, it is very important that they are given appropriate training on the DLHE Record and process. Knowing why the data is collected, the pitfalls to avoid, and what is best practice, will allow the member of staff to carryout the task in a more efficient and accurate manner.

Consider using mock calls and recordings for employees to gain practice before making live telephone calls. The mock calls might demonstrate how to handle difficult situations or get the most out of a rushed call. Set them questions after hearing recordings asking them to identify errors or good practice. Doing this will ensure new members of staff are comfortable conducting telephone interviews with leavers, and do so in a timely and polite manner.

In order to assist institutions in their training, HESA provide training materials at www.hesa.ac.uk, which can be used to improve delivery of training. HESA also offer training seminars for DLHE and onsite institutional training that can be utilised.

Some institutions operate a peer review system whereby they will check and sign-off questionnaires from temporary staff at the end of the day. This does not need to involve a formal process of review but instead can just be a case of taking a small random sample to identify if methodologies are being followed and if any mistakes are occurring.

Financing DLHE

At the outset of each DLHE year there are likely to be cost implications for undertaking the survey. Such costs might range from postage and IT systems to staff time and telephone bills.

It might be worth determining if you have a budget and if so what that budget is. Accurately planning the finance of the DLHE survey can then help to determine available resource to promote and complete the survey, as well as being able to monitor future efficiency savings.

Promoting DLHE

There is an intrinsic link between those institutions who extensively promote DLHE and those who exceed the target response rates, and therefore it is a vital stage in preparation. Raising the profile of DLHE and ensuring it becomes part of institutional culture at both a student and staff level can be achieved through targeted and comprehensive promotion.

How to promote DLHE

There are many different ways of promoting DLHE within an institution, and which ones are used will depend on the type of institution:

Internal publicity

Displaying promotional material such as eye-catching posters and results charts on notice boards and within the student union will raise the profile of DLHE so future leavers are aware of what it is and why it is important to respond.

You may also wish to consider promoting DLHE within staff areas of the institution as staff buy-in can be an important tool in increasing response rates – due to the information they possess about student destinations and contact details.

There are posters available to download and use from the HESA website.

Graduation ceremonies

Graduation ceremonies are an ideal opportunity to promote DLHE with leavers. It may be the last contact the institution has with the student and therefore should be used as a chance to update contact details and remind them that they will receive a survey soon and why it is important to complete it.

Consider including a poster or flyer in graduation packs which the leavers receive. Including the information in the same packs that guests also receive will raise their awareness of the survey and might help with third party responses.

Depending on the timing of your graduation ceremonies you might also be able to get the graduate to complete the survey there and then.

Graduate contact

Contacting leavers through the career service is a good way of offering leavers support whilst simultaneously updating contact and employment information. Contact can be made through emails promoting the services your careers department offers as well as the DLHE survey. Regular alumni events are also an opportunity promote DLHE.

Offering prizes/rewards

Some institutions offer leavers prizes/rewards to those who respond to the survey via post as a method of promoting DLHE and improving response rates. The offer of a raffle prize (be it money or otherwise) can encourage leavers to respond by post to the survey, increasing response rates and reducing the burden on resource allocated to telephoning non-responders.

Institutions have reported mixed success using rewards/prizes as an incentive for students to reply. Some report significant gains in response rates whereas other institutions have introduced the scheme and seen little improvement. Consider your student body and whether or not it would work – having introduced the scheme ensure you monitor its effectiveness.

Organising DLHE survey

The previous sections of this manual have highlighted how complicated the timescales are and have therefore shown that organisation is key in preparing for the DLHE survey.

How to organise DLHE survey

Proficient organisation of DLHE is vital and will have a direct impact on your target response rates. Seemingly insignificant tasks such as updating calendars with key dates, arranging necessary meetings, and reviewing the timescales in advance of DLHE starting are important steps in ensuring the process runs efficiently.

Consider treating DLHE as a timed project that occurs each year. The project might then need a manager, a team, and a plan outlining the various tasks and when they should be achieved by, thus providing focus. The project management structure will then allow you to track progress against milestones, identify where the project is slipping, and provide recommendations to carry forward to the next year.

When organising the DLHE survey, it might also be helpful to ask a number of questions:

- Do we have the mechanisms for promoting the DLHE survey in place?
- Have we ordered the questionnaires?
- Has the POPDLHE been reviewed and confirmed as accurate?
- What methods are we going to use to contact our leavers?
- Do we need additional staff and if so will they require training to be organised?
- When will the DLHE packs be made up and posted out?
- What times of the day will we contact our leavers via telephone, and will this require authorisation for overtime?
- How do we monitor DLHE to identify how well we are doing in terms of response rates – will this require review meetings?

Using a check-list or progress chart like the one provided on the next page will allow you to monitor task completion and progress through the HESA methodology.

DLHE methodology progress chart

Case study

Institution A

The DLHE team at institution A is relatively small and operates on a limited budget. Primarily there are three members of staff involved in the collection; two members of the careers service and one data analyst. All are sufficiently involved that were one to be absent for any reason the process would not suffer too much. They have an extensive user guide for the DLHE collection which outlines their processes to help with resilience issues – the guide is updated on a regular basis.

The institution does not allocate a separate budget for DLHE activity, and any financial costs are instead subsumed into the general careers department budget. There are however allowances made for where additional expenditure is required to improve the DLHE process, for example to improve IT infrastructure or to print posters for DLHE packs.

The institution employs between 10 and 15 people to act as telephonists. Primarily these are current students as they are able to connect with the graduates as peers. Often students are employed for more than one collection and so become familiar with the process and questionnaires. In the past they have found it beneficial to employ people who are bilingual and therefore may find it easier to communicate with EU students. The students do not all work at the same time and there is a maximum of ten callers present at any one time. Any more than this and the environment becomes too noisy to be effective.

Telephonists are interviewed and given training before they start work. They are required to make a telephone call to the careers service in order to ascertain their telephone manner and ensure their suitability for the role. Often students with prior call centre experience are hired where possible. Following this they are given 2 hours of training involving role play and mock telephone calls and familiarised with the script and system. During the first week the process manager oversees the callers to check there are no problems and to assist and answer questions when necessary. To get the best out of their callers they are made aware of the targets and informed on their progress regularly. There are rewards of confectionary etc for those who are achieving the best.

Institution A promotes DLHE in the run-up to the survey period, with particular emphasis being placed on the graduation ceremony. As DLHE approaches the institution will email students flyers about DLHE, when it will happen, and the importance of it. At the graduation ceremony the careers department will include flyers within the delegate packs. This practice has recently been extended to include the guest packs so that awareness of DLHE is raised amongst potential third party respondents. DLHE is also mentioned in talks given to students by the careers service.

Institution B

Institution B employs two additional casual staff to help the DLHE contact during the telephoning of leavers. The institution used to pay registry staff overtime to undertake a lot of the telephoning and this proved to be successful in obtaining responses. The casual staff – primarily student or agency workers - are now used as it became more and more difficult to convince existing staff to take the overtime as there was disagreement over the number of hours they should be paid for and at what rate. The institution feels that they are at least three members of staff short to ensure DLHE is resourced adequately. Some brief informal training of telephone staff takes place at the start of their first shift, however this takes up valuable time and so it is delivered on a more ad-hoc basis.

The DLHE contact was unaware that HESA email out requesting confirmation of number of questionnaires/scripts required due to the fact that all correspondence goes to the Head of Careers who is the official 'HESA contact'. The institution has in the past photocopied the postal questionnaire when they ran out of them for the mailing.

The institution tries to promote DLHE within each academic department; however obtaining buy-in from lecturers can be difficult so it often relies on the registry and careers department to do so. DLHE is however promoted at each graduation ceremony using flyers left on chairs. The institution previously tried promoting DLHE and encouraging responses by offering a prize draw to leavers responding by post.

Part 3

Contacting leavers

Following the methodology

The DLHE process follows a standard HESA methodology that should be adhered to at all times. For example there is a specific and deliberate order by which phases should occur. This methodology requires institutions to be organised and aware of what needs to happen and when.

In the introduction to DLHE we highlighted that there exists multiple methods of contacting leavers:

- Postal mailing questionnaire
- Centrally-hosted online questionnaire
- HTML version (an HTML version of the questionnaire is available for institutions to host on their own websites). Please note that this method will no longer be available after January 2011 survey.
- PDF version (a PDF version of the questionnaire is available in both English and Welsh)
- Telephone scripts

Each of the methods above can be categorised into different phases of contact, 'initial contact', and 'follow-up contact'. Initial contact must always occur first and within the dates specified through the methodology. It is mandatory to contact all leavers in the POPDLHE within the initial contact phase through a method that uses the standard questionnaire. The following methods use the standard questionnaire:

Postal mailing questionnaire
Centrally-hosted online questionnaire
Institution hosted html version of questionnaire
Downloadable or emailed PDF version

Use as many methods as possible in initial contact phase. Students as individuals will interact and respond differently to different forms of communication. Increasing the lines of communication will increase the likelihood of obtaining a valid response. Consider that providing a PDF version of the questionnaire via email or your website is relatively cheap in terms of resource and effort yet might yield a greater number of responses.

HESA's recommended best practice for initial contact is for institutions to email all leavers with a valid email address a link to the centrally-hosted online questionnaire or their own locally-hosted system. A postal questionnaire should then be sent to all those who did not complete an online version and to those for whom a valid email address did not exist. To reduce postal mailings it is recommended that the postal questionnaires are sent out towards the end of the second week.

In order to support the initial contact made by institutions there is a follow-up phase designed to supplement the methods deployed in the first phase. Follow-up contact must occur after the initial contact phase has been completed and within the dates specified through the methodology. The follow-up phase might include the additional methods below to support those chosen during initial contact:

Second postal mailing
Telephone scripts

Review and analyse previous collection response rates by method used. This will help you to identify which methods your leavers use to respond and allow for a cost-benefit analysis to be undertaken as to whether you pursue those methods in future years e.g. whether or not to persist with a second mailing.

Contact details

Alongside successfully promoting DLHE and providing adequate resource to undertake the survey, maintaining up-to-date contact details for leavers is one of the most important tools in achieving the target response rates. One of the common causes of low response rates is reported as simply being unable to get hold of leavers due to insufficient or out of date contact details.

Keeping contact details up to date

There are many different ways in which your institution can attempt to keep student contact details up to date, all of which may be considered for implementation. It is possible that the key factor in maintaining accurate contact information is to ensure that it is collected/reaffirmed as close to the institution's final interaction with the student. To this end confirming up-to-date contact details of students in their final term will be an effective way of increasing the response to the DLHE. This may not be a task for the DLHE coordinator but for the department responsible for student record administration, however the request should be built into the DLHE schedule/project plan you are working to.

Work with the student records and alumni or careers department to publicise to the student not only the importance of DLHE but also the need to provide up-to-date contact information. You might try to achieve this through displaying posters or literature in student areas of the institution.

In publicising to students the importance of providing up-to-date contact information try and address the question of 'what's in it for them?' by including institutional services they will benefit from by staying in contact.

Where resource permits consider providing students with the ability to update contact information via the institution's website. This will prevent the need for the student to make a trip to central registry and the service could continue to be accessible to them after leaving the institution.

Before both the initial and follow-up contact phases, institutions should ensure that all contact details are updated. As part of this process you may wish to share contact details with individual departments in order to find out if there have been any changes to email addresses and mobile telephone numbers. Consulting individual departments would also be best practice in case they have additional information about the leaver or a reason why they should not be contacted.

Contacting leavers using the postal questionnaire

For those leavers who have not responded using an online version of the questionnaire, you will then need to carryout the process of posting out and receiving the responses.

Track outgoing and incoming questionnaires

Institutions often track the number of packs that have been sent out. This can be done for the January survey by initially cross-checking the created mailshot with the POPDLHE file to ensure all those contained within the file have an address label. Latterly a final check could be carried out by comparing the number of items posted with the total number of January students in the POPDLHE.

As questionnaires are returned by respondents you may wish to record them against the POPDLHE to allow for ongoing analysis as to how many have been returned and how many are outstanding and might therefore need contacting in the follow-up contact. This will allow you to forecast resource requirements for the 'follow-up' phase more accurately.

Postal questionnaire response rates

Institutions have reported varying response rates from postal questionnaires with some obtaining a significant percentage of their responses through the method, whilst others receive a very small percentage. The success or otherwise of the postal questionnaire method might have a correlation with how the institution has historically communicated with the student body. Where some institutions have operated an almost exclusive policy of electronic communication, to suddenly change to postal communication might prove less fruitful than those institutions which often mailed out to students during their time with them.

As a marker, where institutions are obtaining around 15-20% of their response rate through the postal method it should be considered a success. The method can typically capture less than 5% of respondents in extreme cases and this might largely be related to a change in the way the modern world communicates.

Students completing incorrect sections

It might often be the case that the respondent completes sections of the form that are not applicable to them, for example full-time students completing the part-time section. Where this occurs institutions should disregard the sections that were incorrectly completed on the form.

Some institutions cross out the sections that are not applicable to the leaver before posting or emailing the questionnaire.

Clarifying information with respondents

Where postal questionnaires are returned with responses that are either ambiguous or illegible, institutions can and where possible should go back to the leaver to clarify the information. It is vital that institutions clarify with leavers anything that is not clear to prevent incorrect data being returned and having an adverse impact on onward analysis of the data.

Contacting leavers using DLHE Online System

The DLHE Online System (also known as Centrally-hosted online DLHE survey), developed and maintained by HESA, allows leavers to complete the full questionnaire online. The online system can be used as part of the initial contact phase and is both a resource efficient and accessible tool for increasing response rates.

The DLHE Online System can be used free of charge and is an excellent method of capturing responses with relatively modest resource input from the institution. The online system perhaps more accurately reflects the way in which students now interact online with institutions and betters captures spontaneous responses. Use of the system will also reduce the burden of data input later on in the DLHE process.

Consider emailing out to leavers a message containing the important information about DLHE, the fact that they will shortly receive a postal questionnaire, and a link to the DLHE online system. You might also wish to include the link to the DLHE online system on your careers or alumni website.

www.dlhe.ac.uk

The link to the DLHE Online System for leavers to follow should be published no earlier than is permitted by the methodology. Once the online system has been publicised, institution's leavers will be able to go on and complete a full questionnaire that is identical to the one they will receive through the postal mailing. The link will take students through to the DLHE online front screen through which they can select their institution by country.

www.dlhe.ac.uk/?INST=NNNN

Some institutions may not wish for their leavers to have to select the relevant institution via the UK region map and might therefore want to provide a direct link to their institution. In order to provide leavers with a direct link, institutions should replace the 'NNNN' within the above url with their HESA institution identifier. For example The University of Worcester would send leavers www.dlhe.ac.uk/?INST=0046. Having done this leavers will be directed to the screen below to commence the questionnaire.

Completing DLHE using online system

The online questionnaire will follow through the applicable sections based on the responses recieved to questions. The system allows respondents to go back to a previous page or section as well as clearing down the answers on each screen if they have made any mistakes.

The online system has built-in validation (as shown above) to ensure mandatory questions and sections are answered, which will ensure a valid response being provided by the leaver.

Contacting leavers using the telephone

Institutions have often found that contacting leavers using the telephone accounts for the majority of responses to DLHE and it is therefore important to establish how best to utilise the method. Telephone surveys also often account for the most significant amount of resource required in both the 'follow-up' phase and the wider DLHE process.

Preparing a call

Time is often of the essence when you make contact with a leaver as they may well be in a rush or unable to spend a long time on the telephone. Time is also important for the institution as being able to complete a survey in an efficient and thorough manner will optimise resource and increase the number of calls made in a session. For this reason it is vital that you know your leaver before calling. Having to hand information about whether or not the leaver studied part-time, holds an applicable ITT qualification, or if there are personal issues that might impact on the call is vital to ensure the survey is quick and smooth for both parties.

Note down a profile of the leaver prior to telephoning including relevant information about which sections they must complete and whether there are any disability or personal issues that might require consideration within the call. You might also note down the qualification gained for the leaver as well as the one they were aiming for to flag up potential problem calls.

Finally ensure that you have the right telephone script for the right survey period. Failure to have the correct script is likely to result in the leaver being asked questions about an erroneous census date.

Try to ensure where possible that when calling leavers your phone number does not appear as 'blocked' or 'unknown' on their display – often a result of being routed through a switchboard. Leavers are more likely to take the call where they can see the number (and one with a familiar area code) as opposed to when it is blocked as they will assume it to be a cold call.

When to call

There are no steadfast rules as to when the best times of day are to call and make contact with leavers; however experience shows that calling outside of standard working hours offers the highest chance of making contact. Whilst some leavers may be contactable during standard working hours often they are in the minority and it is likely that deploying resource at other times will yield better results. If you consider your own working day and the likelihood of you taking a call from an unknown party, this should form the basis of your telephone scheduling. Institutions have reported that calling between 5.30pm and 8.30pm offers the best opporotunity to make contact.

Assuming that most working days finish by around 5.30pm you may wish to telephone after this time and before it becomes too late in the evening. What constitutes 'too late' should be based on your own judgement and experience/findings from previous DLHE surveys. Calling at lunch times during the week might also provide an opportunity to make contact.

Logging the time of successful calls will allow you to establish peak or optimum times to call leavers in future surveys. This will in turn help to focus resource and improve efficiency.

Many institutions employ staff to work on weekends where the likelihood is that the leaver will not be in work or study and more liable to be contactable.

How to call

When conducting a survey telephonists should be flexible in their approach and ready to be responsive to the calls needs. For example the caller should listen to what is being said by the leaver and how they are saying it and then adapt accordingly – concentrating on getting the core questions answered where the leaver seems in a rush or expand on answers where the leaver is fully engaged.

Consider that the first 30 seconds of the call are likely to be the most important in terms of engaging with the leaver and ensuring they will answer the questions. With this in mind callers should from the outset make clear they are:

- Ringing on behalf of the *institution* to find out whether the *former student* has found employment and/or further study following completion of their course.
- Information is used both to advise current students about opportunities and also to feed into a national statistical survey conducted each year to see what happens to students upon leaving higher education.
- The information on this form will be used by your institution and coded information will be sent to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Further details and contact information are supplied as part of the covering letter.
- They may be contacted again in the future as part of a follow-up survey. This survey will be conducted by a third party and so their details may be passed on to this third party.
- They need to find out what the former student was doing on the census date.

Some institutions have reported using native speakers (for example Greek students to telephone Greek graduates) to help with non-UK calls.

There is a skill set to making efficient and successful DLHE calls that is built up over time. It is therefore important to try to retain experienced staff who have carried out the telephone surveys before – they will know the pitfalls and best practice for getting hold of the information from difficult calls.

Consider calling leavers in batches of type. For example all of those who studied part-time or on an ITT course so that you ensure that the relevant questions are asked.

At the beginning of the process ensure that all staff have the appropriate permissions on the telephone system to call mobile phone numbers as some switchboards might prevent this.

Problem calls

From time to time telephonists might encounter problem calls whereby the leaver is unhappy that they have been contacted or with their current employment situation. Training during the DLHE preparation stage is a key factor in ensuring that staff members are able to deal with such calls. Where the leaver is unhappy due to their employment status callers should provide information about the careers service at the institution and be sympathetic in tone. If the caller is unhappy at being contacted as part of DLHE the issue should not be forced – instead the form should be marked as a refusal with the exclusion from the DLHE Longitudinal Survey box ticked.

Completing the telephone script

Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education 2009/10 — **Telephone Script April 2010**

Telephone no. HUSID

Student name

Email

Course name

Institution attended

Data source Leaver Third Party Deceased

Date(s) of calls (1) / /2010 (2) / /2010 (3) / /2010

Notes/change of address:

1 3

NB: Core questions are indicated with a ring e.g. Q1 Additionally, Question 29 is core when speaking to the graduate. Q29

2

1
When completing the telephone script it is important – for both internal and external audit purposes – to record who you obtained the information from (i.e. the leaver directly or a third party source such as a parent), as well as the dates on which you called.

2
Within the telephone scripts there is a subset of mandatory questions that must be answered for the response to be deemed valid. The mandatory questions are ringed for your reference and it is recommended you ask them first to ensure a valid response.

3
The notes section might be used to note down a change of contact details. It could also be used to record which sections the leaver needs to respond to prior to calling i.e. was the student part-time and/or an ITT graduate?

Section A **What were you doing on 19 April 2010?**

Q1 **Which of the following statements best describes your employment circumstances on 19 April 2010?**

- I was employed full-time in paid work (01)
- I was employed part-time in paid work (02)
- I was self-employed/freelance (03)
- I was doing voluntary work/other unpaid work (15)
- I was permanently unable to work/retired (16)
- I was temporarily sick or unable to work/looking after the home or family (17)
- I was taking time out in order to travel (10)
- I was due to start a job within the next month (11)
- I was unemployed and looking for employment, further study or training (12)
- I was not employed but NOT looking for employment, further study or training (13)
- I was doing something else (14)

4

Q2 **On 19 April 2010 were you involved in either full-time or part-time study or training or registered as a research student?**

Yes - full-time (1) Yes - part-time (2) No (3)

5

4
Where the leaver answers that they were not in employment but were studying, Q1 should be completed using option 13.

5
Where the respondent indicates they were not in employment and not in study, consider explaining what constitutes the latter. For example it might be that they are engaged in private study or preparing a portfolio of work to help in the job market – both of which are classified as being in study.

6

Obtaining accurate job title and duties is vital for when the form is data inputted and therefore incomplete information in these two questions will cause problems later in the DLHE process. If you are unsure about what the job title is or duties are, get clarification from the respondent. The same advice applies for question 9 with regards to what the organisation does.

Section B Your employment on 19 April 2010 (including voluntary/other unpaid work).
If you had more than one job on 19 April 2010, please tell us about your main job. If not working tick ◯ and go to **Section C.**

Q3 What was your job title?

Q4 Briefly describe your duties

6

Q5 Which of the following best describes the basis on which you were employed on 19 April 2010?

- On a permanent or open-ended contract (1)
- On a fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer (2)
- On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months (3)
- Self-employed/freelance (tick this if ticked at Q1) (4)
- Temporarily, through an agency (5)
- Temporarily, other than through an agency (6)
- Other (8)

Q6 What was your annual pay to the nearest thousand £, before tax? If you were employed for less than a year, or were part-time, please estimate your pay to the full-time annual equivalent. £ Information declined

7

Q7 What is the name of the organisation you were working for?

Q8 Is this organisation part of the NHS? Yes (1) No (2) Don't know (8)

Q9 What does the organisation you were working for mainly do?

Q10 Where was your place of work and, if in the UK, what is its postcode?

8

Q11 Approximately how many people work in the entire organisation (i.e. all branches, departments etc.)?

1 to 49 (1) 50 to 249 (2) 250 or more (3) Don't know (8)

Q12 Would you have been able to get the job you were doing on 19 April 2010 without the qualification you recently obtained (the actual qualification, not the subject of study)?

- No: the qualification was a formal requirement/expected (5)
- Possibly: but the qualification did give me an advantage (3)
- Yes (4)
- Don't know (8)

9

Q15 How did you find out about this job?

- Own institution's Careers Service (1)
- Employer's website (3)
- Personal contacts, including family and friends, networking (5)
- Already worked there (9)
- Other (8)
- Newspaper/magazine advertisement (2)
- Recruitment agency/website (4)
- Speculative application (6)
- Don't remember (7)

7

You should make it clear to respondents that annual pay is collected on a full-time equivalent basis to avoid low salaries being returned for part-time work.

8

Postcode data is vital for DLHE and missing, incomplete or inaccurate data is likely to cause validation warnings and errors. Where the leaver does not know the exact postcode, ask for the full work address as they are more likely to know that and the data can be used to establish full postcode when the call is complete.

9

Be careful how you phrase this question – for example 'did you need your qualification to get the job?' may lead to an answer of 'Yes', which when ticked gives the opposite result to if the questions had been asked as stated on the script.

Section B continued

Q16 **Thinking still about your employer on 19 April 2010: did you work for this employer before or during the programme of study you recently completed?**

- Yes - before my programme of study (1)
- Yes - during my programme of study (2)
- Yes - both before and during my programme of study (3)
- No (4) GO TO SECTION C

Q17 **In which of the ways listed below did you work for this employer?**

- On a training/sandwich placement (F27)
- On another kind of placement or project work (F28)
- As a holiday job (F29)
- Full-time or part-time work all year round (F30)
- Full-time or part-time work during term time (F31)
- In other ways (F32)

10

10
Where square tick boxes are used in the script or questionnaire, the respondent can choose as many of the options that are applicable to them.

Section C Your further study, training or research on 19 April 2010.

If not tick and go to Section D.

11

Q18 **Which of the following best describes the basis on which you were studying, training or researching on 19 April 2010?**

- Registered as a research student (1)
- Registered on a course (2)
- Preparing a professional portfolio of my work (3)
- Engaged in private, unsupervised study (4)

Q19 **Which of the following best describes the type of qualification you were aiming for?**

- Higher degree, mainly by research (PhD, DPhil, MPhil etc.) (01) GO TO Q21
- Higher degree, mainly by taught course (MA, MSc etc.) (02)
- Postgraduate diploma or certificate (including PGCE) (03)
- First degree (BA, BSc etc.) (04)
- Other diploma or certificate (05)
- Professional qualification e.g. Accountancy (06)
- Other qualification (07)
- Not aiming for a qualification (98)

12

Q20 **What was the name of the course you were registered on?**

Q21 **What subject area were you studying, training or researching?**

Q22 **What is the name of the institution at which you were registered?**

Q24 **How did you mainly fund your study, training or research?**

- Self-funding e.g. savings/loans/employment (1)
- Sponsorship (4)
- Grant or Award e.g. Research Council Studentship/LEA Award for PGCE (2)
- Other (8)
- My employer provided financial support (5)

13

11
Where the respondent has indicated that they are in some form of study in question 2, this section must be completed. Questions 18 and 19 are mandatory so ensure these questions are asked.

12
Consider highlighting the options for study to the graduate even if they have classified themselves as unemployed and not in study. It might well be they are undertaking private study or work on a portfolio but do no think this constitutes study.

13
Ask the respondent to be specific about the institution at which they are registered for study. Specific information will help later in the DLHE process when it comes to data inputting.

Section D Qualified teacher status only.
Those gaining qualified teacher status between 1 August 2009 and 31 December 2009. If not tick ◯ (9) and go to Section E.

Q25 Were you employed as a teacher on 19 April 2010? Yes ◯ (3) No ◯ GO TO Q28

Q26 (Do not ask if teaching in Northern Ireland) Were you employed in a maintained (state) or non-maintained (independent) school or college?

14

- Maintained (state) school or college ◯ (1)
- Non-maintained (independent) school or college ◯ (2)
- Both maintained (state) and non-maintained (independent) school or college ◯ (3)
- Not known ◯ (4)

Q27 Were you teaching at the primary or secondary phase or in a college or other educational establishment?

- Primary ◯ (1)
- Secondary ◯ (2)
- Both primary and secondary ◯ (3)
- College (e.g. FE, 6th Form) or other educational establishment ◯ (4)

Q28 Were you seeking a teaching post on 19 April 2010? Yes ◯ (1) No ◯ (2)

14
Ensure that you have to hand all the relevant details about the leaver (perhaps check the notes section of the script if you have written them in there) prior to calling i.e. whether they were on an ITT course. Be aware that Section D only applies to those leavers who were awarded qualified teacher status (QTS). All questions in this section are mandatory.

Section E Did you gain your qualification in 2009 by studying part-time?
If not tick ◯ and finish the call.

Q29 Thinking back to when you started the course you completed last academic year, which of the following best describes what motivated you to take the course?

15

- I thought it would help me to get on in my career or job ◯ (1)
- I thought it would help me to change careers or jobs ◯ (2)
- I was interested in the subject matter of the course ◯ (3)
- Other reason ◯ (9)

15
Ensure you have to hand all the relevant details about the leaver (perhaps check the notes section of the script if you have written them in there) prior to calling i.e. whether they were part-time.

If the leaver was returned on the Student Record as being either part-time or on a course leading to QTS, HESA will validate to ensure the relevant sections are completed for them in DLHE.

Signature | Date dd/mm/yyyy

16

You may be contacted as part of a follow-up survey planned for three years' time. If you do not want to be included please tick here ☐

17

16
On completion of the telephone call the member of staff carrying out the survey should sign and date the script. This is very important for audit purposes.

17
Once the survey has been completed with the respondent you should make clear that they may be contacted again in three years time as part of a follow-up survey. If the respondent does not wish to participate the box should be ticked.

Completing information from a third party

While the majority of time information should and would be collected directly from the leaver, there might also be occasions where the leaver is unobtainable but a third party is able to answer the questions.

What is a third party?

A third party is any source other than the leaver and routinely includes family members, friends, academic departments and employers.

When can a third party be used?

A third party can only be used as part of the 'follow-up' phase and must not be used as a method of capture during the initial phase. It will therefore be the case that the majority of third party responses will be collected via the telephone surveys or from academic departments.

Using third parties

Third party information is a legitimate method that can help institutions increase response rates, however extra care should be taken when completing the survey this way. Where contact is made with a third party the institution should ensure that they are sufficiently well informed to be able to answer the core questions (on both work and further study), which are indicated by a ring around the number on the telephone script.

In addition to ensuring that the third party is able to answer the questions, the institution should also confirm they are able to provide responses which relate to the specific census date. In using third parties, it is not so much the source of information that is important as the quality of the information itself.

Academic departments can be a fruitful source of information for not only leaver contact details but also for completing the surveys. Departments often have ongoing interactions with leavers (for example for reference requests) and as a consequence may be able to complete the survey with accurate information.

Academic departments are a viable source of information however may not possess complete knowledge about the circumstances of a leaver. Therefore using departments to actually complete a survey as a third party should be a last resort and should only be used where other more direct contact has failed.

When collecting data from a third party the interviewer should be aware that:

They should ask that the third party informs the leaver that data has been collected. The interviewer should also indicate that they can contact the institution for more information or with any concerns they might have.

If the third party gives an interviewer a contact telephone number for the leaver, this may be used, providing the interviewer states where the number has come from and gives the leaver an opportunity to object to the call at the beginning of the conversation. The telephone number may only be recorded for future contact purposes outside of DLHE if the leaver gives their permission.

Other methods

In addition to the standard methodologies outlined in this manual, institutions use many other methods to attract the leaver's attention to DLHE. Such methods vary in their reliance on technology and resources as well as the degree of difficulty by which they can be implemented.

Reminder postcards

Many institutions send reminder postcards out to leavers about DLHE after the start of the initial contact phase. The postcards are often a quick way of reminding those who are yet to complete the survey to do so and negate the need for time consuming expensive use of envelopes. The postcards can display information about DLHE as well as website addresses for your own website and the DLHE Online System.

There are postcard templates that can be downloaded from the HESA website, alternatively you may wish to design your own that reflects the institution's branding.

SMS texts

Using text tools which can send large batches of SMS text messages to leavers' mobile phones is another method that is utilised by some institutions. Buying SMS in bundles in bulk can often be a cost-effective way of reminding leavers about DLHE when compared with designing, printing and posting postcards. The SMS text messages can be fairly brief reminding leavers that the DLHE form needs to be completed and can be done so via post or online. You might also want to inform the leaver they may receive a DLHE telephone call so that they are aware when they are contacted via telephone. Text messages often have a character limit of around 160 therefore you will need to be concise in your communication. Consider the following text as a template:

"Please tell us what you're doing now you've graduated by returning the questionnaire we recently sent to you or by replying online at http://(insert link)"

Success rates when using SMS text varies from institution to institution and is often dependent on the nature of the student body and how they have been communicated with in the past. The individual institution should make the decision as to whether use of texts is appropriate and likely to prove successful.

Social networking

The way in which we communicate as people is constantly evolving and therefore institutions should always try to be ready to take advantage of developments in communication. Students are often at the forefront of social trends and technological advancement, therefore keeping up to speed with these factors will enable institutions to increase response rates through more effective communication. One such area to try and take advantage of is social networking sites on the internet. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace are heavily used by student populations and become a very regular way of communicated amongst peers.

Setting-up profiles for DLHE on Facebook and Twitter might be a bit too specific to attract students and leavers to join, however general institutional profiles are not and are likely to attract a large following/membership. Having setup a profile for you institution you can then update students about DLHE at appropriate times of the year.

Trouble shooting

Whichever method you choose to deploy and however the leaver completes the DLHE survey, there will inevitably be cases where the responses cause issues that require resolving.

What if a leaver responds that they are both working and studying full-time?

There are likely to be occurrences where a leaver responds that they are in both full-time work and study. In such cases the reporting institution should record the full details of both. Whilst data validation will flag a warning for reporting this, it is plausible that a leaver might be undertaking both at a full-time intensity.

What if a leaver has provided a very low salary that in your judgement is incorrect?

A common issue is where leavers complete the DLHE survey giving what appears to be an implausibly low salary. The reasons for this can be one of the following:

they accidentally miss a zero off the figure
they provide actual salary as opposed to a full-time equivalent
they are working on a voluntary basis

If having reviewed the salary given you come to the conclusion that it is likely to be incorrect, efforts should be made to re-contact the leaver to clarify and ascertain the correct salary. In reviewing the low salary you may wish to use the job title and mode of employment given earlier on in the survey to help decide whether to contact the leaver.

The salary information provided by the leaver must be returned in the DLHE submission. For example where a leaver returns zero that should be returned as opposed to the default code. This can have an adverse impact on average salary calculations therefore, where resource permits, you are advised to contact the leaver to confirm very low salaries.

What if the leaver does not consider them self to have studied part-time but the POPDLHE suggests otherwise?

There will be some leavers who are recorded as part-time in the population file (POPDLHE) but do not consider themselves to have studied part-time. This often occurs where a student changes mode of study towards the end of their qualification to perhaps complete work or undertake reassessment. This is shown in the example below where the student studied the overwhelming majority of their course as full-time, however due the change of mode towards the end they are required to complete the part-time section of the DLHE form.

Where leavers are asked the part-time question but they do not wish to answer as they do not consider themselves to have studied as such then the institution should leave the section blank. This may be queried with your institution by HESA either through data quality checks or validation, however confirmation that the data is considered to be genuine is all that is required.

What if the leaver does not know the location of employment?

Where possible full location information should be provided in the form of a full postcode (including both the outward and inward part), however it is recognised that some leavers will not know this information. Where this occurs institutions should obtain the location of employment by town or city so that at least outward postcode data can be provided.

Using internet search engines to look-up websites of employers with a view to obtaining full postcode information is a good way of filling in blank information provided by the leaver.

What if the leaver was surveyed in the wrong census period?

Where a leaver has been surveyed as part of the wrong census period, for example where an April leaver was surveyed as part of January, the institution should contact Institutional Liaison to discuss the issue.

What if not all core questions were answered?

For a response to be considered valid all core questions that are applicable should be answered. Where core questions have not been answered the institution should go back to the leaver to obtain the relevant answers.

What if a leaver returns two surveys using different methods?

Where a student completes the survey twice using two different methods, you should return to HESA the first response you receive.

What if the leaver refuses to complete the survey?

An explicit refusal is where a leaver either sends back the questionnaire marking it as a refusal, emails, or writes a letter including a statement that they do not wish to be included in the survey. It can result from a telephone conversation where the leaver verbally states that they do not wish to be included in the survey. A leaver who does not send back the questionnaire and/or does not submit an electronic version and/or is not contactable by telephone should not have a DLHE record returned to HESA, and is not regarded as having explicitly refused. Leavers with DLHE records identified as refusals will be counted towards an institution's response rate.

Be aware that leavers may complete DLHE but wish to not be contacted as part of Longitudinal DLHE. Where a leaver has indicated that they wish to be excluded from Longitudinal DLHE, institutions should ensure they accurately record the information.

In addition to HESA's Institutional Liaison team - the primary source of support and guidance - there are a number of email groups available for institutions to use. For example DLHE@JISCMAIL.AC.UK allows you to ask other institutions how they are handling a particular aspect of the DLHE process. AGCAS also have email groups that can be utilised.

Case study

Institution A

Institution A typically uses a methodology consisting of a 1st mailing alongside use of DLHE Online, followed up with phone calls to graduates.

The institution finds the first mailing effective and usually receives a 20% response from this initial mailing. Students are first emailed with details about DLHE and a questionnaire attached. All those who do not then return the survey or complete an online version are then contacted via post. Owing to budget restrictions and the success of telephone follow-up it is deemed unnecessary to conduct a second postal mailing.

The initial contact phase allows for a two week period in which you may try to contact leavers via electronic methods such as the DLHE online system before posting out to them. This will save valuable time and resource not having to post out to those leavers who responded initially via email or online.

Following this initial contact period, the institution emails out a postcard reminder ahead of the telephone follow-up. The telephone team operate between Monday and Friday, 5.30pm to 7.30pm, and the period usually lasts for approximately 2 weeks. Leavers are phoned up to three times and are worked through alphabetically. Where it has not been possible to contact leavers after the third attempt, the contact details are checked again to ensure that there is not an alternative contact number or address in existence.

To ensure the student contact details are as current as possible, they are taken from the graduation registration forms. This captures the student's details in the final semester and is more likely to be accurate. Contact details are harder to maintain for students at franchised and partner institutions although where possible efforts are made to obtain this information.

Where it has not been possible to obtain a response directly from the graduate third party responses are used. Particularly in the case of teaching and nursing students leaving information held by the faculty is used. Information provided in response to other surveys which contain relevant information may also be used provided the collection notice is acceptable.

The institution has a high proportion of ITT and part-time students but these are not separated out from the rest. They are highlighted but are not allocated to particular callers, and it is therefore largely up to them to decide which questions need to be asked of which graduates.

Callers explain the purpose of the survey when contacting a graduate and if they require any further information they receive a follow-up call from the careers service. Where a respondent is short of time or unavailable it is asked if there is a more convenient time to call and this is marked on the questionnaire. These are then passed on to a supervisor who will ensure that they are called again at the appropriate time.

The team keep a spreadsheet on which they record who has responded and mark whether this was by post, online or telephone. This is sent regularly to the data analyst who reconciles this information with the student record and DLHE online survey system. This way they can keep track of the respondents and response rates. It also serves as a tool for process review.

The institution has experimented with its methodology in the past and acted on suggestions such as SMS reminders. These have not proved effective for the institution and it is also felt that prize draws and incentives for graduates to complete the survey are ineffective.

Institution B

Institution B uses a methodology consisting of a 1st mailing, followed up with telephone surveys.

The institution finds the first mailing largely ineffective with a typical response rate of less than 10%, and therefore would never consider a second mailing as a viable method of contact. The institution currently does not use the HESA DLHE online system as the response rate on the system was low in the years they elected to use it.

Given the fact that only a 1st mailing alongside intermittent use of the online system are offered as methods during initial contact, heavy emphasis is placed on the telephone survey. The follow-up contact phase is often faced with up to 90% of the population left to survey, and with only telephone as a method of contact. The 3 members of staff contacting leavers are then placed under significant pressure to try and capture as many responses as time and resource will allow.

The DLHE contact and casual staff work 4 evenings a week between 6pm and 8pm, with the telephone period lasting up to 8 weeks. Leavers are contacted in batches based on course and mode of study which helps to ensure the right sections are asked. A lack of resource prevents reminder emails/postcards being sent out.

The institution keeps a total number of surveys completed each day which enables rudimentary analysis on how much of the task is complete. Survey completion is not monitored against the POPDLHE file.

Part 4

Recording and returning data

Data inputting

Inputting survey responses into a database or student record system represents one of the more resource intensive processes of DLHE. Every question answered for every respondent must be accurately inputted into a system capable of producing a DLHE file in the correct structure and format. After completing the data input process you are required to keep hold of all paper and electronic copies of the survey for a year for audit purposes.

What is the best method of data inputting?

There is no one method or time that is best to begin the process of data entry; So whether the task is undertaken at the point of contacting leavers or afterwards the decision should be made by the institution based on their working practices. Consider staff work schedules and competencies when deciding whether it would make best use of resource to data input at the same time as contacting leavers.

To facilitate data inputting all DLHE questionnaires and telephone scripts include a column that can be used to code up the responses to questions.

The column can be used to code up responses as per the valid entries outlined in the HESA DLHE coding manual. Each question is included alongside the field number within the DLHE record that it relates to, for example questions 3 and 4 both relate to field 11 and are therefore grouped as such.

The number of boxes available for each question is based on the length of the valid entries within each field, for example the valid entries for field 5 are only two characters long.

Training staff to quickly and efficiently code up the questionnaires in the column will improve time and resource efficiency when data inputting.

Many institutions choose to contact the leaver, obtain the answers to the questions and then put the survey aside to data input later on in the process. The advantages of handling the data input process this way is an ability to work in batches and to identify and resolve common problems across all of the surveys.

There is however a counter method which is for the member of staff to do the data inputting as they are in contact with the leaver. The advantages of this method is dynamic problem solving whilst still in contact with the leaver, removing the need to go back to them to clarify issues later on in the process. It also allows for accurate progress monitoring in terms of percentage of task completed, which helps forecasting and allocating resource. There are however notable disadvantages to this method, including reliance on staff to be both proficient at undertaking telephone calls whilst simultaneously accurately inputting into an IT system.

Data inputting in batches of type is an effective way to increase efficiency. For example inputting data based on individual courses (e.g. Fine Art) will allow for more consistent coding and familiarisation with relevant SOC codes.

Where staff are inputting directly onto an IT system the timestamp and login details of the member of staff can constitute a 'signature' for audit purposes. Staff data inputting directly onto a system should ensure the appropriate questions are asked and be aware of the risk of not recording and saving records correctly causing data loss later on.

DLHE Online System as a data inputting tool

Whether data inputting during or post contact many institutions utilise the HESA online DLHE system as a data inputting tool.

The system, whilst not designed nor maintained for the purpose, lends itself as a data inputting tool. The online system has the same layout and appearance as the full postal questionnaire therefore it feels intuitive and easy to navigate for staff. The built-in validation the system uses also ensures accurate data entry with contradictions and missing data identified at the point of entry.

Some institutions use the online system as a data inputting tool while in contact with the leaver via telephone. In such cases institutions should be aware that the DLHE Online System includes all questions as included in the full questionnaire and therefore using the online survey as a template for a telephone call will mean the leaver answering more questions than required.

Downloading data from DLHE Online System

As questions are answered on the system the coding is automatically undertaken by the system thus reducing the need to recode questionnaires. The data can then be downloaded and imported into an IT system with just a few additional fields requiring completion.

To download data from surveys completed either directly by leavers or through staff using the system as a data inputting tool, you will need to log onto the HESA data collection system.

Select the relevant DLHE online system which will take you through to the survey system front page, from which you will be able to select the 'Download data' option.

The download data screen will give the user the option to select a date period for the download. This option is useful where institutions wish to download the data in stages and not include records previously downloaded. Alternatively users may wish to set the 'Date from' to be the start of the collection period, and the 'Date to' to be the current date to download all records.

The survey state option allows users to include complete, incomplete or both states within the download. Including incomplete surveys is a good way of identifying where leavers have begun completing the questionnaire but got stuck or gave up. There might be enough of the survey completed for a valid return or at least provide an opportunity for you to go back to the leaver and fill in the blanks.

The user should then select the format of the file they wish to download the data in and then click the 'Download data' button.

Cascot

Cascot is a software package designed to assign a code to a piece of text. In the case of the Standard Occupation Classification for DLHE (SOC(DLHE)) this piece of text is typically a job title from the DLHE survey. In the case of the Standard Industrial Classification for DLHE (SIC(DLHE)) this piece of text typically describes the employing organisation from the DLHE survey.

When should Cascot be used?

In order to fully code up a DLHE survey, institutions are required to use SOC and SIC codes to denote occupation and industry information captured from the leaver. The process of assigning code to reflect accurately the duties of the employee and employer is a very important but time consuming one. To help institutions undertake the task in an efficient and accurate manner, and to ensure consistency across the sector, the Cascot coding tool is available to improve the process.

How to use Cascot

Cascot can be downloaded from HESA's data collection system and can be used to code up either individual or large batches of records.

For a quick search simply enter a job title into the text box and click the 'code' box. The search will return results based on the information provided with the most accurately matched code being highlighted first with a score out of 100 for the match.

> Cascot might more usefully be utilised as a tool to code large batches of records by setting up input and output files. This will save staff time when coding up questionnaires.

Batch coding can be done by creating an input file (containing the job title of the leaver) and output file (into which the coding results will be stored). Excel can be used to create the input file by including both a student identifier of the leaver and their job title - the file should then be saved as a text file separated by tabs.

Open the output file by selecting the option from the file menu. Select the options menu and then 'output' in order to specify the data included within the output file. Now open the input file using the file menu within Cascot.

Upon opening the input file you will see the above options screen. Ensure the file is separated using the appropriate delimiter before then selecting the field input text from the drop-down menu. It is important to select the field number which corresponds to the job title text. Click 'Ok' and then begin the coding process by clicking 'Accept' where the suggested code is accurate.

In order to code up SIC as opposed to SOC, you will need to select SIC2007 (4 digit untuned) from the classification menu.

Getting accurate results out of Cascot

The SOC classification is designed to code job titles. Often captured data may amount to job descriptions, industry area, or may be too verbose providing additional information beyond the job title. Good quality input should be a job title, as would be used inside a place of work, on a business card or employment contract. Where this would give a title that would be ambiguous in meaning, the title may be qualified with one or more terms in brackets.

The quality of coding performed by Cascot depends on the quality of the input text.

Ideally the text should contain sufficient information to distinguish it from alternative text descriptions that may be coded to other categories within the classification, but it should not contain superfluous words. This ideal will not always be met but Cascot has been designed to perform a complicated analysis of the words in the text, comparing them to the words in the classification, in order to provide a list of recommendations. If the input text is not sufficiently distinctive it may not be the first recommendation that is the correct code.

The performance of Cascot has been compared to a selection of manually coded data. The overall results show that 80% of records receive a score greater than 40 and of these, 80% are matched to manually coded data. When using Cascot you can expect this level of performance with similar data, but be aware that the performance is dependent on the quality of input data.

Examples of problematic occupational text:

Example: "advertising & marketing"
Comment: These are the area of work. Are they an advertising executive, an advert designer or an advertising salesman? Try to find out what someone does in preference to where or what type of industry and if possible their actual job title.

Example: "analyst, meeting corporate clients"
Comment: Be brief and concise.
Alternative: "business analyst"

Example: "answering phone enquiries"
Comment: This is a job description, not a title. There could be enquiries in all sorts of different jobs. If you know more about the nature of the job, use this information.
Alternative: "call centre operative"

Example: "application developer - developing lotus notes databases for clients"
Comment: This has too much detail. Again be brief and concise. Try to get the job title and qualify if ambiguous.
Alternative: "application developer (software)"

Using Cascot can reduce the time spent coding up SOC and SIC codes and therefore release resource for other areas of the DLHE process. The Cascot coding tool also ensures consistency across the sector so that for a given job title institution A is using the same code as institution B.

Submitting data to HESA

How do I submit data to HESA?

Data is submitted through HESA's 'Aardvark' data collection system. The system is located at https://submit.hesa.ac.uk/

How do I set-up a user account?

In order to set-up a user account on the Aardvark system, and thus submit data, you will require two pieces of information – an ACCESS code and PIN code. The ACCESS code is sent via email to the record contact when the system opens for live data submissions. The PIN code is also sent to the record contact, however is done via a hardcopy in the post.

Remember that the ACCESS and PIN codes are linked, and therefore if either one is lost then both will require resetting and this will delay your data submission.

By clicking on the 'Register' link on the home page of Aardvark, you will be able to set-up your user account by inputting **both** the ACCESS and PIN codes and then entering your personal details and a username.

Once complete the system will then generate a password and email it to the address specified. The password may subsequently be changed on the system to something more memorable.

Store your institution's access and pin codes in a secure place that is accessible to the relevant members of your DLHE team thus mitigating against staff absences during data submission.

How do I send the files?

Having created a file in a fixed length or comma separated format, you will then need to submit it to HESA by selecting the 'Send' option within the 'What can I do now?' section.

Depending on the outcome of validation for the file, users will either be able to view validation reports (using the V icons) where the file has failed or process a 'Commit' where the file has passed. It will be apparent which you are able to do as the status will be updated as failed or your options within the 'What can I do now?' section will increase.

Locally run the validation kit HESA provide to identify and resolve errors and inconsistencies before submitting your files on the data collection system.

Where the user selects to commit the file they will go through a second stage of validation (often referred to as exception checks). The outcome of the validation will either result in being able to view errors within the V icons where the file fails or view data quality checking reports where it passes.

Data quality reports, particularly check documentation, should be used extensively by the institution to ensure the return is as expected and a true reflection of the survey results. The reports will allow the institution to identify miscoding and issues with output such as key performance indicators.

Case study

Institution A

During collection there are usually 4-5 volunteers from the student registry team who assist with data entry.

Telephonists input the data directly into the DLHE online survey system in order to be more efficient. This is a new process and has not been without difficulties. Problems in using the site as a data input tool include the need to input a significant amount of personal information before a response is guaranteed. Paper copies of the telephone script with the signature are kept as part of the audit trail.

The staff involved with data entry for postal responses input directly into the student record system. Where unnecessary/irrelevant sections of the questionnaire are returned the information is kept and recorded in a separate file in case it is needed in the future. Validation checks are run on the data on a regular basis – up to three or four times a week – and reports distributed to relevant staff.

SIC and SOC coding is done by the careers service staff. CASCOT is used by the institution to ensure consistent and efficient coding, however it can sometimes feel more time consuming as it requires careful monitoring. A large proportion of institution A leavers go on to work in the public sector and therefore the same occupational codes are returned year on year which improves efficiency. Cascot is ultimately used as a supporting tool as it is easier for the institution to refer to an internal list of relevant codes and use their own judgement in allocating SIC and SOC.

Institution B

Institution B has 2 members of staff dedicated to data inputting and do so around their existing duties. The staff data input both postal questionnaires and telephone scripts directly onto the institution's student record system. The institution considers the student record system to be intuitive enough to not require an external package such as DLHE online system as a data inputting tool.

Data inputting is carried out on an irregular basis with staff carrying out the work when an opportunity presents itself. Often the inputting takes place early morning or towards the end of the day when the office is quieter. Having inputted the data, there is no formal review or method of sharing common problems or best practice, however much of this is shared informally through conversations.

In most years, institution B use the Cascot tool almost exclusively for the SIC and SOC coding. The institution usually set up input and output files to make the process quicker as time is usually short. Whilst using the Cascot tool, the institution will only occasionally check the recommended code and will often therefore remove the concept of interpretation from the coding. It has long been thought that all institutions code in the same way to ensure consistency and that whatever is recommended by Cascot must be used.

Part 5

The value of DLHE

The value of DLHE

Having established throughout this manual the significant amount of time and resource required for a successful DLHE return, it is vital to identify why the data is so important. Showing the importance of DLHE - what the data is used for, and how far-reaching the implications of getting it wrong are – is paramount to improving transparency of process to all those involved.

Onwards use of DLHE

The DLHE survey results are used extensively by HESA, statutory bodies, and the wider sector and public.

Having collected the data HESA then uses it to produce both the 'Destinations' publication and a performance indicator. The Destinations publication contains data at an institutional level across the entire UK and provides interested parties with a comprehensive information resource. HESA also use the data for the DLHE Statistical First Release.

Through HESA's ad-hoc information provision service, the data is also provided to media and the public, which is then often used to inform league tables and articles/research on the health and value of the higher education sector. If the data returned is not an accurate reflection of the survey results then this can lead to incorrect conclusions being made by media and analysts. Such conclusions might then impact upon league tables, articles and information provided to prospective students and their parents/guardians. For high profile releases of DLHE data, there is the Data Dissemination System (DDS) to which institutional representatives can subscribe and see a preview of their data ahead of releases.

When compiling league tables, media outlets are now considering deducting points from those institutions with low response rates. This is due to a perceived correlation between low-response rates and high employability of leavers.

Making use of DLHE internally

An important aspect in meeting the target response rates is obtaining institutional buy-in into the DLHE process and its results. Obtaining the required resource and focus requires the value of the process to be transparent to senior management and the wider institution. This can be achieved by extensively using the DLHE data internally within the institution to inform strategic planning and raise awareness of alumni success. In particular institutions should consider making examples of leavers with great jobs and include them in both internal and external literature.

DLHE data is not only important for planning the future of the institution and identifying where its strengths and weaknesses lie, but it is also an excellent marketing tool. Graduate achievement and employability is vital information in attracting prospective students to the institution. Prospective students will often carryout a cost-benefit analysis when deciding what and where to study, therefore providing them employability data and/or examples of graduate achievement for courses through your marketing will encourage them to apply. Integrating DLHE data with the results from the National Student Survey will also help with this aim.

Integrate your institution's DLHE results into planning and performance reviews. You may also consider providing individual faculties with results of their leavers – this will encourage future buy-in from the department and will provide them with useful information about their courses. Depending on the faculty, you may consider providing their results using a more visual method, for example graphs, charts and graduate location maps.

Many Career Advisors also use the results from the DLHE collection in their guidance work and sessions with students. Having trusted and extensive data on graduate employment makes the results of the survey an important tool for helping students plot their future careers.

heidi

heidi is a web-based management information service that provides easy access to a rich source of quantitative data about higher education. The service is run by HESA and provides institutions with a management information tool that allows for sector-wide reports to be created. The service includes data from all HESA records, including DLHE, and can be used to create reports and charts comparing your institution with competitors. Use of heidi to review DLHE data will enable strengths and weaknesses to be identified and propagate the value of DLHE within your institution.

For further information about heidi visit www.heidi.ac.uk.

Destinations

Employment categories

In the DLHE survey leavers are able to report separately what they are doing in relation to both employment and study and a matrix of possible outcomes is constructed. This matrix is used to define the key categories of outcomes such as employed and unemployed.

Matrix of standard categories for publication from DLHE

Employment circumstances	Full-time study	Part-time study	Not in study
Employed full-time in paid work (01)	D	D	A
Employed part-time in paid work (02)	D	D	B
Self-employed/freelance (03)	D	D	A
Voluntary work/other unpaid work (15)	D	D	C
Permanently unable to work/retired (16)	G	G	G
Temporarily sick or unable to work/looking after the home or family (17)	E	E	G
Taking time out in order to travel (10)	G	G	G
Due to start a job within the next month (11)	E	F	F
Unemployed and looking for employment, further study or training (12)	E	F	F
Not employed but NOT looking for employment, further study or training (13)	E	E	O
Something else (14)	E	E	O
Question not answered (XX)	X	X	X

The values in brackets refer to valid values recorded for Employment Circumstances (field 5) and Study Circumstances (field 6) in the DLHE record.

Publication categories

Full-time paid work	A
Part-time paid work	B
Voluntary/unpaid work only	C
Work & further study	D
Further study only	E
Assumed to be unemployed	F
Not available for employment	G
Other	O
Explicit refusal	X

Employment

Employment only includes those graduates who reported that they were in full-time paid work (including self-employed/freelance), part-time paid work, voluntary or unpaid work, and who were not also in study, training or research.
Full-time employment only includes those who reported that they were in full-time paid work (including self-employed/freelance) and who were not also in study, training or research.

Combination of work and further study includes those who reported that they were in full-time paid work (including self-employed/freelance), part-time paid work, voluntary or unpaid work, and who were also in full-time or part-time study, training or research.

Unemployment

Assumed to be unemployed includes those students who gave their employment circumstances as unemployed and looking for employment, further study or training, and who were also either in part-time study, training or research or not studying, plus those who were due to start a job within the next month and who were also either in part-time study, training or research or not studying.

Further study

Further study only includes those who gave their employment circumstances as temporarily sick or unable to work/looking after the home or family, not employed but not looking for employment, further study or training, or something else and who were also either in full-time or part-time study, training or research, plus those who were due to start a job within the next month or unemployed and looking for employment, further study or training and who were also in full-time study, training or research.

Graduate employment marker

Having established the various employment categories derived out of DLHE data, it is also important to recognise a split of the employment category into 'graduate' and 'non-graduate' employment. This split is often undertaken by analysts to establish the number of leavers going into what is perceived as graduate employment and is used as a measure of the value of the qualification.

This split of SOC 2000 codes was derived from Elias & Purcell's report 'SOC (HE) A Classification of occupations for studying the graduate labour market' (Institute for Employment Research, Warwick).

Graduate:

('2216','2212','2314','2113','2311','2214','2322','2432','2112','2444','2411','2329','2213','2321','1182','2211','2111','2215','2431','1137','3551','2451','2313','2423','2312','2315','3215','3223','2125','2452','1114','2419','1212','1113','3431','3412','2316','3432','3411','2126','2319','1134','2121','3229','2131','3564','1181','1112','2132','2442','3416','1184','1136','1111','3221','3214','3222','3552','3433','2434','3568','2124','2443','3543','2422','3415','2433','2129','1171','1135','3539','1222','1123','3422','2122','3512','2421','3561','1131','3414','3232','3121','3567','2127','3111','3449','1235','1132','2317','1141','2441','3535','5414','1172','3212','3565','4114','1231','3562','2128','3421','3534','2123','3231','3566','1133','3520','4137','3123','3537','3563','3413','3115','3132','3532','1225','4111','1151','1183','3319','3541','3114','3119','1121','1185','1142','1122','3442','3434','3536','3544','1173','1152','3542','1239','3533','3531','3218','5245','3211','3312','1221','1226','1162','1163','3113','1224','1211')

Non-graduate:

('4215','8138','4135','3131','3511','6219','3122','3216','4136','4131','3443','6214','6212','4112','4122','1174','5112','7211','5499','4213','4113','4150','5496','9259','7129','4214','6124','9249','5411','6211','7212','5242','5244','9226','1219','4132','7113','3441','4123','9224','6215','4142','1161','9225','4134','5494','1234','6123','6114','9112','4212','9221','4217','1223','4141','4216','9229','3112','4211','3313','5419','7121','7125','7112','4133','5249','4121','6291','5433','7111','5111','5421','8218','7123','6139','9241','3213','6213','8133','9219','9251','5491','8143','5119','6131','6115','9133','6111','6112','9111','5492','6231','7124','6122','5113','8139','9119','8119','6232','8124','8114','3314','9121','5495','9211','5319','5311','9223','5432','3513','8215','9141','8149','5224','9139','6222','9132','9222','5241','3311','7122','5434','5412','8214','5422','9149','9234','8219','8111','5413','9233','8131','8136','8212','5423','1232','6121','5315','5223','5216','5316','9134','3217','8216','8141','8123','8129','8137','5243','5231','5323','8125','9244','5431','5312','8222','6221','6113','5314','5213','5321','9129','8213','5322','8132','8211','5221','1233','3514','5211','5212','5214','5215','5222','5232','5233','5234','5313','5424','5493','6292','8112','8113','8115','8116','8117','8118','8121','8122','8126','8134','8135','8142','8217','8221','8223','8229','9131','9231','9232','9235','9239','9242','9243','9245')

The groupings of SOC codes above are liable to change between years and therefore should only be used as a guide.

Given the importance of graduate/non-graduate employment categories and the onwards use made of this information, it is vital to check the SOC coding returned for leavers. Many institutions choose to centralise the SOC coding process and the DLHE contact often undertakes it independently from the rest of the data input process. Institutions occasionally encounter situations whereby the recommended coding through Cascot defines the job as non-graduate, however they know it to be the reverse.

Average salary calculations

Average salary calculations are regularly included in onwards use of DLHE data and they can have a significant impact on an institution's standing within outputs. As previously mentioned, failing to check low salaries with leavers can result in the overall average salary of your leavers being lowered.

Data is restricted to Full-time, First Degree Leavers who entered full time employment (including those studying at the same time) for the average salary tables. Unknown salary and zeros are also excluded from the calculation.

Salary is not a core field and it is not compulsory for institutions to ask this question when conducting the survey over the telephone and therefore some institutions show a low return of this data. However there is growing interest in graduate salaries and the data will only become more relevant in the future and it is therefore recommended that as an institution you routinely ask this information of the leaver.

Performance indicators

The DLHE data is used to determine a performance indicator for the sector which is widely used to establish how successful higher education is at placing leavers into employment. Institutions are given a preview of the indicator 'Table E1' within the check documentation produced after each successful commit on the data collection system.

Performance Indicator

Table E1 - Employment indicator: UK domiciled students obtaining undergraduate qualifications (Derived from fields EMPCIR, MODSTUDY, MODE)

	Total population			Employment indicator (including further study)			Context statistics of respondents	
	Eligible population	Number of respondents	Response rate (%)	Base population	Number employed or studying	Indicator (%)	Not available for work	Refused to take part in survey (%)
Full-time first degree 2008/09	3,836	3,023	78.8	2,754	2,432	88.3	5.6	3.3
Full-time first degree 2007/08 (for information)	3,925	2,975	75.8	2,768	2,534	91.5	4.7	2.2
Part-time first degree 2008/09	523	388	74.2	348	316	90.8	4.9	5.4
Part-time first degree 2007/08 (for information)	539	358	66.4	333	302	90.7	3.9	3.1
Full-time other undergraduate 2008/09	653	421	64.5	390	369	94.6	3.1	4.3
Full-time other undergraduate degree 2007/08 (for information)	569	331	58.2	310	291	93.9	2.7	3.6
Part-time other undergraduate 2008/09	365	214	58.6	198	190	96.0	2.8	4.7
Part-time other undergraduate degree 2007/08 (for information)	429	241	56.2	232	225	97.0	1.2	2.5

Table E1 is based on those leavers who are in either employment or study, irrespective of whether it is a graduate job or graduate-level study.

Positive destinations

In addition to employment categories and the graduate employment marker, there is also a concept of 'positive destination' which covers both employment and further study. The concept centres on the idea that whilst all leavers have a destination, and indeed many of them will be in the labour market, there is a need to differentiate those who might have reached that destination without their qualification.

Positive destinations are extracted from the HESA Destination of Leavers from HE (DLHE) Record, using fields 5 Employment circumstances (EMPCIR), 6 Study (MODSTUDY), 11 Standard Occupational Classification (SOCDLHE) and 36 Type of qualification (TYPEQUAL).

An example of how The Times have previously determined positive destinations can be viewed in the matrix below:

		Study circumstances (TYPEQUAL grouping)		
Employment circumstances (EMPCIR)	Type of job (SOC 2000)	Graduate study	Non-graduate study	Not in study
Employed full-time in paid work	Graduate	P	P	P
	Non-graduate	P	N	N
	Unknown	P	E	E
Employed part-time in paid work	Graduate	P	P	P
	Non-graduate	P	N	N
	Unknown	P	E	E
Self-employed/Freelance	Graduate	P	P	P
	Non-graduate	P	N	N
	Unknown	P	E	E
Voluntary work	Graduate	P	P	P
	Non-graduate	P	N	N
	Unknown	P	E	E
Other unpaid work	Graduate	P	P	P
	Non-graduate	P	N	N
	Unknown	P	E	E
Permanently unable to work		E	E	E
Temporarily sick or unable to work		E	E	E
Retired		E	E	E
Looking after the home or family		E	E	E
Taking time out in order to travel		E	E	E
Due to start a job within the next month		E	E	E
Unemployed and looking for employment, further study or training		P	N	N
Not employed but NOT looking for employment, further study or training		P	E	E
Something else		P	E	E

Key: P – Positive destination
N – Negative destination
E – Excluded from the percentage positive calculation.

You will note that whilst leavers might appear in an employed category within publications and performance indicator, this does not then mean they will be classified as having a positive destination. Positive destination is the process used to identify those students who have gone onto either graduate employment (as defined by the graduate employment marker) or graduate level study, as defined by:

Graduate level study:

01 Higher degree (research)
02 Higher degree (taught)
03 Postgraduate diploma or certificate
04 First degree
06 Professional qualification

Non-graduate level study:

05 Other diploma or certificate
07 Other qualification
98 Not aiming for a qualification

Some institutions will use the above specification and apply it to their DLHE results to establish an idea of the number of graduates with positive destinations. This will in turn help prepare the institution for future press releases and league tables.

Statutory uses of DLHE

In addition to informing outputs such as publications, heidi and performance indicators, DLHE data is also used extensively by statutory bodies to inform and monitor policy and is vital to the public interest.

Unistats

Unistats: from Universities and Colleges in the UK, is a website which brings together authoritative, official information in one place. The website is an accessible tool for prospective students to make an informed decision about which institutions they wish to apply to. The website contains DLHE data at course level showing the percentage of graduates who are employed with a graduate job. As prospective students consider more the value of their study in the labour market, it places extra emphasis on institutions capturing full and accurate DLHE data for all of its provision to facilitate student recruitment.

Projects and research

The use of DLHE data in Unistats and performance indicators represents relatively high profile usage; however the data is also used widely in research projects undertaken by the various funding councils.

An example of a recent project undertaken by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is using DLHE data to gain a further understanding on employment outcomes for particular provisions within the sector. Specifically the project identified leavers from ERASMUS and placement programmes, strategically important and vulnerable subjects, and foundation degrees. Institutions who offer such provision would therefore want the fullest possible picture of their leavers' employment status to be used within the findings.

HEFCE are also currently using DLHE to explore how best to categorise the early employment characteristics of HE qualifiers. This work is revealing some interesting differences in employment for different equality groups, on which poor and variable response rates have a real impact. HEFCE also use DLHE data in the regional profiles document which shows flows of graduates around the country.

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) carried out a study using DLHE data entitled 'Welsh Graduates and their Jobs: Employment and Employability in Wales'. The study's aim was to inform Higher Education institutions (HEIs) and other key policy-makers in Wales about the Welsh graduate labour market. The findings included identifying that the demand and returns for graduates remain strong and that outward migration was in line with other regions in the UK.

HEFCW are also currently developing sector targets relating to the Welsh Assembly's 'For our Future' strategy. One of the key themes of the strategy is 'Skills – Ensure that all graduates are equipped for the world of work and for their role as citizens' and HEFCW are proposing to use DLHE data to measure progress towards targets within this area.

The Scottish Government publish an annual National Statistics Bulletin on the results of the DLHE survey. This is used by stakeholders and other interested parties to monitor what happens to recent qualifiers of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland. The DLHE survey is also used to up-date the National Indicator on positive destinations for graduates. This is part of the Scotland Performs website, which measures and reports on the Scottish Government's progress towards its 'Purpose of creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth'.

Case study

Institution A

Institution A arranges a meeting shortly after undertaking what they believe will be final submission of data files to HESA. The project team, together with head of planning, marketing and student records, meet to go through the check documentation and confirm that the submission is final and accurate. The submission will then be taken to the chief officer along with a copy of the check documentation for it to be signed off. Institution A will then divide the DLHE results by faculty. The reports that are sent to faculty and course leaders include student name, their job title, and the location of their employment. Faculties also receive pie charts and graphs displaying visually their results, and how they compared with the rest of the institution. The results are included in departmental reviews and can be downloaded from the institution website.

Destination Of Leavers In Higher Education (DLHE) Survey

Employment Results 2008/2009 Graduates

BAAEP

ame	Employment Code	Job Title	Company Name	Company Activities	Town	PostCode
	2	Support Youth Worker	Bournemouth Youth Service	Public Sector	Bournemouth	BH1 4HN
	2	Sales assistant	sales	Next Retail	Norwich	NR1 1WR
						XXXXXXXX
	1	Project Manager	Thinking Juice	Advertising agency	Bournemouth	BH1 2HZ
	1	Packer	Hawkins Bazaar	Toys	Norwich	NR1 3DD
						XXXXXXXX
	2	SalesAssistant	Whitestuff	clothing	Tnubridge wells	TN1 2TT
	1	Sales Assistant	Joy	retail	London	SW9 8LG
	2	assistant to Marketing Coordinator	Salisbury International Arts Festival	Connells estate agents	Salisbury	SP1 2PU
	2	Project Coordinator	Bournemouth Screen Academy	entertainment	Bournemouth	BH12 5HH
	1	Event Manager	Cable	Nightclub	London	SE1 3JW

Institution A then provide a copy of the results to the planning and marketing departments, which is integrated with additional survey data (such as NSS) to inform strategic planning. The institutional contact will then schedule a meeting with the project team to review the results and extract conclusions or trends that might facilitate future DLHE surveys.

Institution B

After submitting final data files, institution B's DLHE contact will spot check the submission using check documentation. Once the contact is content the submission is accurate, they will then pass the sign-off slip to the Head of Careers to sign-off the data. The DLHE data itself is put into an institutional report which is available to download from the staff intranet. The data is not broken down by faculty nor is it proactively sent to staff.

How to contact HESA

For advice and guidance on data submissions to HESA, or for enquiries about training:
Institutional Liaison:
+44 (0) 1242 211144
liaison@hesa.ac.uk

For publication orders and sales enquiries:
Sales & Customer Services:
+44 (0) 1242 211155
customer.services@hesa.ac.uk

For enquiries regarding HE data and for customised HESA data requests:
Information Provision:
+44 (0) 1242 211133
information.provision@hesa.ac.uk

For assistance with more in-depth analysis of HESA data:
Analytical Services:
+44 (0) 1242 211115
analytical.services@hesa.ac.uk

For other general enquiries:
Tel: +44 (0) 1242 255577
Fax: +44 (0) 1242 211122

Address:
95 Promenade
Cheltenham
GL50 1HZ