



SFC Guidance

Unistats 2019: Timetable and arrangements for the submission and publication of

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Summary: This guidance outlines arrangements for the 2019 Unistats data collection. It also provides an update on the development of a new information resource that will replace the Unistats website.

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Unistats 2019: Timetable and arrangements for the submission and publication of

1. This publication outlines arrangements for the 2019 Unistats data collection. It also provides an update on the development of a new information resource that will replace the Unistats website.
2. While we are in the process of replacing the Unistats website, the data collection will continue to be known in 2019 as 'the Unistats collection' and the resulting dataset as 'the Unistats dataset'.

Providers required to return Unistats data

3. The following higher education providers are required to return Unistats data:
 - Publicly funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales.
 - Providers in England that are registered with the Office for Students (OfS).
4. Eligible courses are defined in the coverage of the Unistats record on the [Higher Education Statistics Agency \(HESA\) website](#).

Process for submission and sign-off of data

5. Scottish institutions should return data to HESA. Detailed guidance on the data required is available on the [HESA website](#).
6. The timetable for submission of Unistats data for courses running in 2019-20 is in Table 1. To ensure that data remains accurate, it is possible to resubmit data to reflect changes to course details or website links throughout the year. An updated dataset will be published every Wednesday after the initial publication.
7. Data must pass a series of system validation checks before it can be submitted and signed off as accurate. Unless all stages of the process, including sign-off, have been completed, we will not consider the data to have been received and will be unable to publish it.
8. The dataset should initially be signed off by the institution's accountable officer, but formal responsibility for signing off any subsequent updates may be delegated to another member of the senior management team. If the accountable officer (usually the Principal) is unable to sign off the initial return, this should be done by the individual acting in this capacity at the time, and the accountable officer should notify HESA in advance.

The submission process

9. Access to the HESA data collection system is managed through the [HESA Identity System](#). For assistance with the submission process, please contact liaison@hesa.ac.uk.

DLHE and NSS data

10. We will continue to use data from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey in the 2019 dataset, but will be developing a solution for its replacement from 2020, when we expect to begin publishing data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey. The DLHE data that we use in 2019 will be that used in the 2018 dataset. It will be available in the system and visible in reports from the point when the collection systems open.
11. The Code of Practice for Statistics will be applied to the publication of Unistats data. National Student Survey (NSS) and DLHE data will therefore be limited to the numbers of students and the aggregation level associated with each course. NSS data will be added to collection systems on Wednesday 10 July.

Timetable

Table 1: Key dates

Date	Activity	Notes
24 May 2019	Collection systems open	
10 July 2019	Addition of NSS data	NSS data will be added to the data collection systems and will be visible in reports.
25 July 2019	Deadline for submission of a valid dataset	Institutions are required to have submitted a dataset which passes validation and contains the majority of their courses.
16 August 2019	Sign-off deadline	Institutions are required to have signed off as accurate a dataset which has passed system validation and is suitable for publication.

12. We will confirm the intended publication date for the 2019 dataset in July 2019.

Changes to the collection and data updates

13. We have identified a need for prospective students to have easier access to information, not only about tuition fees, but also about any additional costs that they might incur in connection with their programme. We would prefer to

meet this need by providing direct links to this information on institutions' web pages, as they should already be publishing it to meet their obligations under consumer law. We have therefore added a new URL field (and space for a Welsh-language equivalent (data items CRSECSTURL and CRSECSTURLW) to the return this year, to collect links to information about course costs on institutions' web pages.

Development of a new information resource

Development of a replacement for the Unistats website

14. We have been working on a UK-wide basis to develop a replacement for the Unistats website and now have agreement to progress to the beta stage of the project. We will be carrying out a programme of user research, development and testing with the intention of releasing a beta version of the new website in September 2019, on which the 2019 Unistats data will be published.
15. The new website will have a particular focus for those who are less well supported with information, advice and guidance. By helping prospective students to understand more about higher education and encouraging them to reflect on what is important to them, we can point them to relevant information and support them to make informed decisions about whether to go on to higher education, and what and where to study.
16. We do not plan to make extensive changes to data outputs for 2019, but we will be carrying out user research to develop presentations of our existing datasets that are easily understandable without oversimplifying the data. This research will inform changes to the outputs for 2020, when we may depart more significantly from our current approach. We will inform institutions of any changes we intend to make for 2019 in July.

Changes to the Unistats widget

17. A replacement will be developed for the Unistats widget to coincide with the replacement of the website, and guidance will be issued on its implementation at the beginning of July 2019. Like the current widget, it will provide a direct link to data about the course from institutions' course pages. The deadline for its implementation, and removal of the current widget, will be Friday 27 September 2019.