



**Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey
Consultation
Response from the Chartered ABS**

Consultation on principles and future requirements for the UK's public interest data about graduates

Response ID	Completion date
191075-191068-15459060	14 Jul 2016, 09:19 (BST)

1	Name of Organisation	Chartered Association of Business Schools
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2	Is this response on behalf of? (please choose the category that fits best)	A HE sector body
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3	Name of contact person for queries	Anne Kiem
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4	Email address of contact person for queries	anne.kiem@charteredabs.org
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5	Telephone number of contact person for queries	0207 236 7678
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6	Do you agree that linked data can provide a critical part of the data product?	Yes
7	Do we need a survey?	Yes
8	Does a survey need to be universal (a census of graduates)?	No
9	Further comments	<p>It would be useful to link data to prevent duplication, however we would caution against using the data in isolation. It would be erroneous to make inferences based on such data alone. For example, if salary level is deemed to represent success, institutions will be encouraged to increase enrolments in courses in medicine for training doctors, but reduce the number of courses in nursing, social care, etc. This cannot be right.</p>
10	Do you agree with the high-level scope of topics?	Yes

11	Do you agree with the principle that it is desirable to find appropriate additional ways of measuring graduate outcomes?	Yes
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13	Further comments	<p>We thoroughly support the inclusion of student self-evaluation of their success, that after all is what should matter most.</p> <p>The skills framework would be difficult to measure as self-evaluation is notoriously unreliable. The timeframe of six months does not help here as many students do not recognise the benefits of their university education until much later in their careers. If it must be measured would it not be more instructive to know what skills they feel they lack and would have expected to develop at university? Knowing what you lack is often easier to determine.</p> <p>Well-being is probably best done at institution level, taking in to account the context of the place and type of institution, rather than undertaking this on a nation-wide level?</p>
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14	Do you think a single survey point can work?	Yes
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15	If a single survey were to be used, when should this take place?	18 months
16	If multiple surveys, which points would be most appropriate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 months • 36 months
17	Further comments and explanations for your answers	<p>There needs to be a compromise between what is feasible and what is the most instructive. The current six months is too soon after completion to capture a clear evaluation for two reasons. First, it takes many students longer than this to find employment and second, if evaluations about skills usage or skills deficit are to be included students need to be in employment for a reasonable period to be able to give informed answers. On the other hand, the further out the time of the survey from the time of completion of the course, the more difficult it is to have up to date contact details of the graduates. It is better to have fewer, but more instructive data points.</p>
19	Do you think a central survey would provide more demonstrably robust results?	No

20	What concerns would there be about a central survey?	Institutions use the surveys as one way of staying in touch with their alumni. They ask questions in the interview process in addition to those on the survey and are able to use the information for their own needs. This would all be lost if the data collection were to be centralised.
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21	What drawbacks might there be in centralising and/or automating SOC-coding, and what weight should they be given?	Response rates would likely decline as many institutions currently engage in face to face and telephone interviews with their alumni. Graduates are more likely to respond to their alma mater than a central agency. There would need to be some other sort of incentive. SOC codes would be unlikely to be very effective because of the multitude of job titles and markets, especially in fast developing and innovative industries.
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23	Do you support the proposal for continued collection of data on activities and main activity?	Yes
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24	Do you agree with adding examples of additional types of work here?	Yes
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25	Please indicate your level of support for the following additions:	
25.1	'Working more than one job'	
25.1.a		High
25.2	'Starting my own business'	
25.2.a		Very high
25.3	'Volunteering'	
25.3.a		Very high
25.4	'On an internship'	
25.4.a		Very high
25.5	Other	
25.5.a		Very low

26	Please offer any general comments or observations	If this data is to be used to create a hierarchy of “successful” versus “unsuccessful” activities then it should not be included. If this is not the purpose then it could be useful to split out the areas currently put together as “other activities”.
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27	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
27.1	Please indicate your level of support for the outline proposal to derive basic further study information from linked education data sources	
27.1.a		Moderate

27.a	Please explain your answer	This seems very sensible and efficient, so long as the data is able to be fed back to each institution in detail.
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28	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
28.1	Please indicate your level of support for the collection of data about graduate motivations for further study	
28.1.a		High
28.a	Please explain your answer. We would be especially grateful for suggestions for ‘categories’ of motivation.	This would be interesting to know. Categories could include: Further progression in subject related to undergraduate degree; To study a subject unrelated to undergraduate degree; To enhance employment prospects; Requirement for employment; To become an academic; To further knowledge of the subject area/pursue interests

29	Please share any comments you wish to make about these basic data.	It should be incumbent on HESA to share with each institution all data they collect from their students, even after the first contact is made.
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30	Please indicate your level of agreement for the following:	
30.1	Please indicate your level of agreement with the working proposal that ‘overall HE experience’ questions should be discontinued	
30.1.a		Very high

32	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
32.1	Please indicate your level of support for the development of an approach to measuring outcomes of graduates based on student engagement data	
32.1.a		Low

33	Please share any comments you wish to make about linking to or using student engagement data or survey questions as part of a data product measuring student destinations and outcomes	This information would be interesting, but there needs to be an understanding that student demographics will also have a large part to play in this. Many students will have responsibilities outside their studies that prevent them from participating in activities around their studies. DLHE is therefore not the right place for this type of question. It could be an interesting piece of one off stand alone research.
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34	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
34.1	Please indicate your level of support for the inclusion of a Net Promoter question in a survey of graduates	
34.1.a		Very low

35	What precise wording of the question would you favour?	None at all
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36	Please explain your answers	This is not the appropriate place for such a question as it has nothing to do with activities of graduates post study.
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37	Do you have any further comments to make about the Net Promoter Score?	This is not the appropriate place for such a question as it has nothing to do with activities of graduates post study.
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38	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
38.1	Please indicate your level of support for the development of an approach based around measuring subjective wellbeing in a future survey of graduates	
38.1.a		Very low

39	Do you have any further comments to make about Subjective Wellbeing?	This type of information will be of interest to institutions about their students while they are still students. Asking this question as part of this survey would serve no useful purpose as there is little the institutions should and could do to help ex-students with subjective wellbeing issues. This type of issue should be addressed while they are still a student. The DLHE is not the right place for such questions.
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40	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
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40.1	Please indicate your level of support for the development of a measure of attribute or skill usage, outside of a direct employment context, in a future survey	
40.1.a		Moderate

41	Please share any further comments you wish to make about measuring attributes or skill usage	As noted earlier, this is notoriously difficult to self-evaluate. Of more interest, and easier to identify, is for students to identify skills they lack that they feel they should have developed while studying.
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46	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
46.1	Please indicate your level of support for the inclusion of questions focussing on graduate entrepreneurship, in a future survey	
46.1.a		Moderate

47	Please share any further comments you wish to make about graduate entrepreneurship	The usefulness of this would be determined by when the survey was taken. If at the current six months interval it is likely far too early for entrepreneurs to have much to report. Details of the businesses are really unnecessary. This is beginning to feel a bit big-brother-ish. This question would not be relevant to all, but it is important to recognise entrepreneurship as a legitimate route.
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48	Please share any comments you wish to make about Job title, main thing done in the job, or the SOC-coding frame or process	It is difficult to understand the purpose of this level of detail. Job titles will be meaningless and different variations will be used to mean similar things.
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49	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
49.1	Please indicate your level of support for continuing to collect employer information	
49.1.a		Very high

50	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
50.1	Please indicate your level of support for removing employer details from the DLHE, if equivalent data were available from linked data	
50.1.a		Moderate

51	Do you believe that the Standard Industrial Classification offers a sufficient level of detail for your purposes?	Yes
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52	Would any additional data about employers (whether collected, linked, or sourced as reference data) add value for you? Please explain	The size of the organisation could be useful to determine the proportion of students entering large corporations as opposed to SMEs. Location is useful and helps institutions understand where their students are and allows for salary differentials to be better understood.
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54	Would you, in principle, support the development of suitable legal arrangements for the sharing of linked data?	Yes
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55	Further comments	Care needs to be taken here that it is only income from employment and distortions from say investments are excluded.
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56	Do you agree in principle that we should cease to seek salary data by consent for UK resident graduates, and that salaries should instead be derived from linked data?	Yes
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57	Do you have any further comments to make about this proposal?	It seems curious to ask this question given that the government has already made it clear this will happen. It would be helpful if it wasn't assumed that success isn't just about financial success and that this measure was not used to rank institutions. There are many reasons to explain salary differentials and these all need to be taken in to account. Experience of the institutions says that this is a question students are most likely to be unhappy about, therefore their express permission should be sought before this information is collected.
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58	Please indicate your level of agreement for the following:	
58.1	Please indicate to what level you agree that a question about employment basis should continue to be collected	
58.1.a		Moderate

59	Do you agree with the proposal that “Starting-up own business” should be removed from this question, to the question about ‘activity’?	Yes
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60	Do you agree with the proposal that “Voluntary work” should be removed from this question, to the question about ‘activity’?	Yes
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61	Do you agree with the proposal that “On an internship/placement” should be removed from this question, to the question about ‘activity’?	Yes
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62	Do you agree with the proposal that “Developing a professional portfolio/creative practice” should be removed from this question, to the question about ‘activity’?	Yes
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63	Do you have any further comments to make about the collection of employment basis data for graduates?	Asking these questions would at least indicate some recognition that there are perfectly acceptable alternatives to paid work and further study. This is important and should not be lost in the eagerness to view society as a marketplace.
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64	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
64.1	Please indicate your level of support for retaining a question that asks: “Approximately how many hours a week will you be working for your main employment?”	
64.1.a		Very low

65	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
65.1	Please indicate your level of support for removing any questions about hours of work (and relying only on part-time/full-time splits gathered elsewhere)	
65.1.a		Very High

66	Please share any further comments you wish to make about the collection of hours of work data for graduates	Not only does there seem to be little value in such a question it perpetuates the long hours work culture. It should be about what you do, not how many hours you spend doing it.
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67	Do you agree that we should continue to seek salary data by consent for graduates resident overseas?	No
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68	If we were to continue collecting salary data by consent for graduates working overseas, would you prefer to see actual salary and currency of payment collected through an enhanced survey tool?	No
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69	If we were to continue collecting salary data by consent for graduates working overseas, would you favour continuing to collect details of hours worked and payment periods?	No
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70	<p>Do you have any further comments to make about the collection of salary data for graduates resident overseas?</p>	<p>There is no comparison between countries. In one country a salary of £20,000 may be considered to be high, whereas in the UK it is below average for graduates. Far more information, such as average salary for the role, etc would need to be collected for this to tell us anything useful. Currency fluctuations would also render it difficult to compare with UK student data. Just as hours worked should not be collected for UK graduates it should not be collected for those working overseas.</p>
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71	<p>Please indicate your level of support for the following:</p>	
71.1	<p>Please indicate your level of support for the continued collection of employment location information</p>	
71.1.a		Very High

72	<p>Please indicate your level of support for the following:</p>	
72.1	<p>Please indicate your level of support for the additional collection of domicile location information</p>	
72.1.a		Very High

74	<p>Please indicate your level of agreement for the following:</p>	
74.1	<p>Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposal to develop a skills-based approach in a future survey of graduates</p>	

74.1.a		Very low
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75	What advice would you give us to help maximise the value and minimise the costs of our approach?	Miss out this question for a start. These skills apply equally to non-graduates and there is almost an implication that if very few people need to use basic arithmetic for their roles then it should not be taught. It is rarely taught in universities anyway.
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77	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
77.1	Please indicate your level of support for the continued collection of information about how a job was located	
77.1.a		Very low

78	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
78.1	Please indicate your level of support for the addition of new categories	
78.1.a		Moderate

79	Please explain and add any clarification you deem necessary	These questions can be valuable in informing universities what they can do to help students looking for employment, but the whole questionnaire needs to be simplified, not added to.
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81	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
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81.1	Please indicate your level of support for retaining a question about the reasons for taking a job, in the current format	
81.1.a		Moderate

83	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
83.1	Please indicate your level of support for a separate question that asks the graduate to self-assess whether their work plans are "on-track"	
83.1.a		Moderate

86	Do you have any further comments to make about the collection of information about the reasons for taking a job?	<p>These types of questions are far more important than the one on salary level as it helps understand motivations of students and indications of their own assessment of their success. It also indicates where universities may be able to do more to help. It is also quite possible that after studying a subject for three or four years they have chosen a completely different direction to the one they had on entering university. This should not be seen as failure in any way. The downside is that this type of question is often viewed as very personal, or even condescending.</p>
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87	How would you define work-based learning? How would you delineate the difference between work-based and work-related learning, if at all?	We would suggest the ASET definition would be the most widely understood.
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88	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
88.1	Please indicate your level of support for collecting data about placements and other work-based learning in a future data product	
88.1.a		High
88.a	Please explain your answer	We appreciate this may be difficult to collect, but it would be very useful.

89	Work-based learning in the forms of placements, apprenticeships, sandwich placements and internships would need clear definitions. What definitions would you offer?	We would suggest using the ASET definitions
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92	Please indicate your level of support for the following:	
92.1	Please indicate your level of support for collecting data about work-related learning in a future data product	

92.1.a		High
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102	Please indicate your level of agreement for the following:	
102.1	Please indicate the level to which you agree that collecting data about non-course-related employment would add value to national HE datasets	
102.1.a		Very low

103	Further comments	It would be more appropriate for this to be undertaken as a separate one-off research project rather than an ongoing piece.
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106	Where should we aim (On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 indicates that minimising costs is the main imperative and 10 indicates that maximising the value of data obtained from the current cost base ought to be the approach)	
106.1	Where should we aim?	
106.1.a		5

107	Further comments	Only data that will really help universities offer a better experience to their students should be collected. There is a tendency to measure everything and that is becoming very pervasive. Costs inevitably increase and focus can be distracted away from doing what we should be doing in favour of measuring everything. We should avoid adding to this.
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113	Comments	This seems very sensible.
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115	Further comments	There is a difference between a standard and a third-party taking on the work. The current DLHE survey is already standardised and it should remain so. However, we do not support the use of a third party to collect all of the data.
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123	Would you, in principle, support the development of suitable legal arrangements for the sharing of some individualised linked data?	Yes
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