

# **Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education**

## **Good practice guide**



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## Overview

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This 'Good practice guide' 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 principles 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

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### 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.

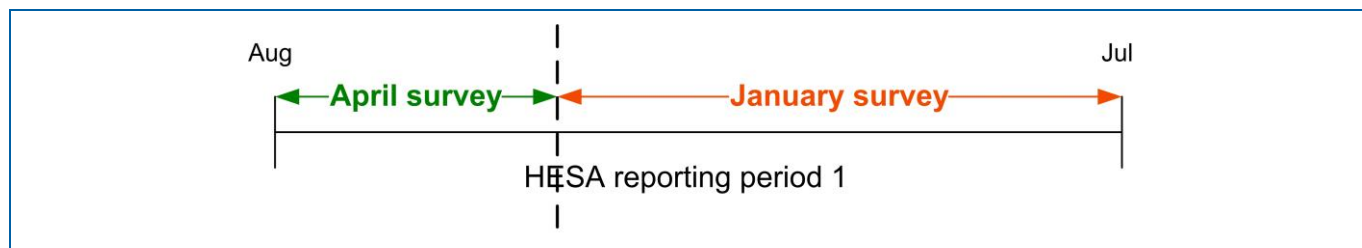
### How is DLHE undertaken?

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.

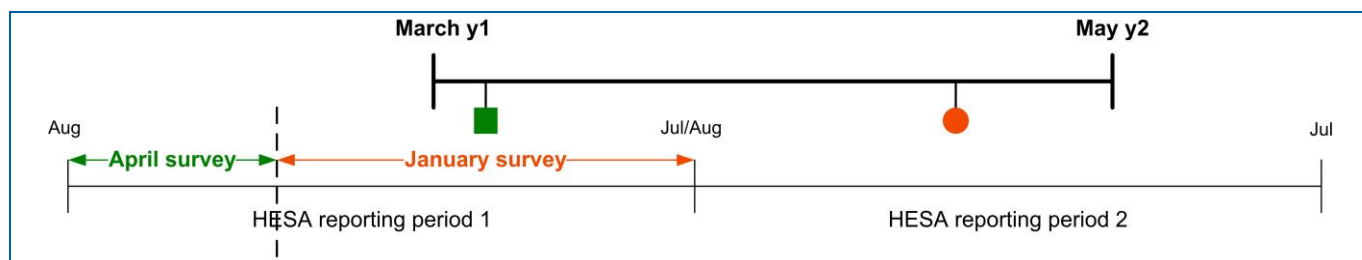
There are many different ways the survey can be undertaken, all of which will be addressed in detail within this manual, however the primary mechanism for institutions contacting their leavers are questionnaires being completed via post, telephone or online.

### 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 / telephone questionnaire
- Centrally-hosted online questionnaire
- PDF version (a PDF version of the questionnaire is available in both English and Welsh)

Institutions can use any of these versions for contact. The methodology rules are not rigid; institutions can choose their own methodology sequence using as many of the contact methods as they like. Each institution can choose the sequence of contact which they consider to be the most effective for achieving a good level of response from their leavers. For example, an institution might wish to start with telephoning and then send postal questionnaires or a link to the centrally-hosted online questionnaire to all those who they have not been able to contact by telephone.

## **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.

No target response rate for non EU domiciled leavers

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

## **Surveying non – EU international leavers**

It is a requirement to survey non-EU international leavers electronically (using the DLHE Online Survey is recommended) although no specific target response has been set. Institutions can use other methods for contacting their leavers if they wish to do so, however it is compulsory to contact all non-EU international leavers electronically. An assessment of surveying these leavers will be undertaken after two years in order to inform a decision on an appropriate target response rate.



## Part 1

### Getting your population right



## DLHE and the Student record (POPDLHE)

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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 at 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.

User: dankidd ; Last Login: 2010-04-30 13:17

<b>Status:</b>	Institution: 0000	0000 Poppleton University	<a href="#">Change</a>	System: C08051	<a href="#">Registration Details</a>	<a href="#">Home</a>
Commit Passed, HIN Failed	Poppleton University	2008-09 Student Collection			<a href="#">Refresh this page</a>	

**What can I do now?**

- [COMMIT \(HESA\)](#)
- [Decommit](#) this submission
- [Reset](#) this submission
- [Exception switches](#) applied to your collection
- [Administration and Reports](#)
- [Reprocess commit](#)

Transaction History						
Date & Time	No.	Transaction & Result	User	Reports	Comment	
2010-04-19 16:02	00339515	COMMIT	<span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">FAIL</span> Janet Earl	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px; font-size: x-small;"> <span>CD</span> <span>V2</span> <span>Σ</span> <span>HIN</span> <span>POP DLHE</span> <span>NSS</span> <span>TOI</span> <span>D</span> </div>		
2010-04-19 15:58	00339512	INSERT Type:51 (3 records)	<span style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px;">PASSED</span> Janet Earl	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px; font-size: x-small;"> <span>V</span> <span>VS</span> <span>Σ</span> <span>POP DLHE</span> </div>		
2010-04-19 15:51	00339511	INSERT Type:51	<span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">FAILED</span> Janet Earl	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px; font-size: x-small;"> <span>V</span> <span>V</span> <span>VS</span> <span>POP DLHE</span> </div>		
2010-04-19 15:48	00339509	INSERT Type:51	<span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">FAILED</span> Janet Earl	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px; font-size: x-small;"> <span>V</span> <span>V</span> <span>VS</span> <span>POP DLHE</span> </div>		
2010-04-19 15:45	00339506	INSERT Type:51	<span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">FAILED</span> Janet Earl	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px; font-size: x-small;"> <span>V</span> <span>V</span> <span>VS</span> <span>POP DLHE</span> </div>		
2010-04-19 15:39	00339503	RESET	<span style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px;">PASSED</span> Janet Earl			
Total valid records = 3						

HESA 95 Promenade Cheltenham Glos GL50 1HZ Tel 01242 211144 Fax 01242 211122 Email [liaison@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:liaison@hesa.ac.uk)

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technical info: 2010-04-30 13:54:41 ; EXT-WEB-LIVE1 ; 10.128.0.254 ; /aardvark/collections/C08051/Default.asp?InstId=0000 ;



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.

## Downloading the 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.

## Coverage

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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 (coverage statement as at December 2011)

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 Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education record supplements the Student record and collects information about what those completing their higher education experience go on to do. The record has two parts: an early survey and a longitudinal follow-up. However, this manual describes only the part of the record to be collected by institutions in 2011/12, which is the early survey with two reference dates.

The definition of the population to be surveyed as part of the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education record as at each of April 2012 and January 2013 is set out below with reference to the Student record.

### Destinations of leaver from Higher Education population

The HESA Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) target population contains all students reported to HESA for the reporting period 01 August to 31 July as obtaining relevant qualifications and whose study was full-time or part-time (including sandwich students and those writing-up theses). Awards from dormant status are only included in the target population for postgraduate research students. Relevant qualifications exclude intercalated degrees, awards to visiting students, students on post-registration health and social care courses, and professional qualifications for serving school teachers.

Please note that the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education population includes all students from all domiciles, and is no longer restricted to UK and European Union-domiciled leavers.

### Exclusions from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education population

#### 1. The following higher education qualifications (QualificationsAwarded.QUAL).

Intercalated degrees

- H24 - First degree with honours on the intercalated pattern

Awards for visiting students

- L91 - Visiting research students at levels D or L, with formal or informal credit
- M91 - Visiting taught students at levels E or M, with formal or informal credit
- H91 - Visiting students at level H, with formal or informal credit
- I91 - Visiting students at level I, with formal or informal credit

Post-registration health and social care awards

- M76 - Post-registration health and social care qualification at level M
- H76 - Post-registration health and social care qualification at level H other than a first degree with honours
- I76 - Post-registration health and social care qualification at level I other than an ordinary (non-honours) first degree

- J76 - Post-registration health and social care qualification at level J

#### Professional qualifications for serving schoolteachers

- M72 - Post-registration education qualification at level M other than a masters degree for serving schoolteachers
- H72 - Professional qualification at level H for serving schoolteachers other than a first degree with honours
- I72 - Professional qualification at level I for serving schoolteachers

#### Awards of credit

- D90 - Advanced supervised research at level D for institutional credit
- E90 - Advanced taught study at level E for institutional credit
- L90 - Advanced supervised research at level L for institutional credit
- M90 - Taught work at level M for institutional credit
- H90 - Credits at level H
- I90 - Credits at level I
- J90 - Credits at level J
- C90 - Credits at level C

#### **2. Students studying mainly overseas (Instance.LOCSDY).**

- S - Studying abroad and included in the Student record as student has spent or will spend more than 8 weeks in the UK

#### **3. Incoming exchange students (Instance.EXCHANGE).**

- 2 - Incoming TEMPUS student
- 4 - Other incoming exchange or visiting student
- 8 - Incoming LLP ERASMUS student
- 9 - Incoming LLP COMENIUS student
- A - Incoming ERASMUS MUNDUS student
- Z - Student studying mainly overseas as part of a collaborative programme between reporting institution and an overseas institution

#### **4. Deceased students (Instance.RSNEND).**

- 05 - Death

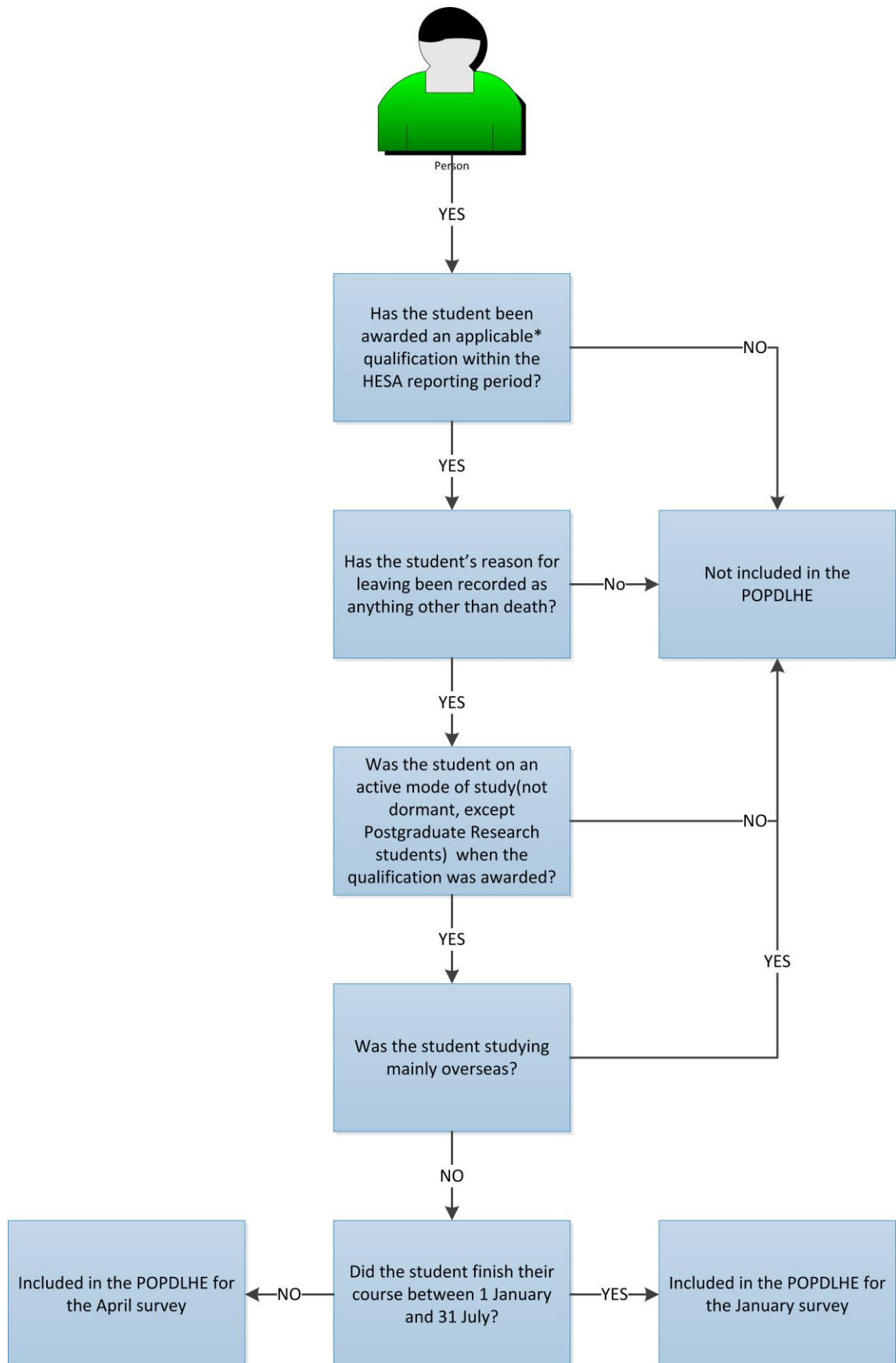
#### **5. Qualifications awarded from dormant status, except Postgraduate Research qualifications (Instance.MODE).**

Unless the first character of the qualification code is either D or L

- 63 - Dormant - previously full-time
- 64 - Dormant - previously part-time

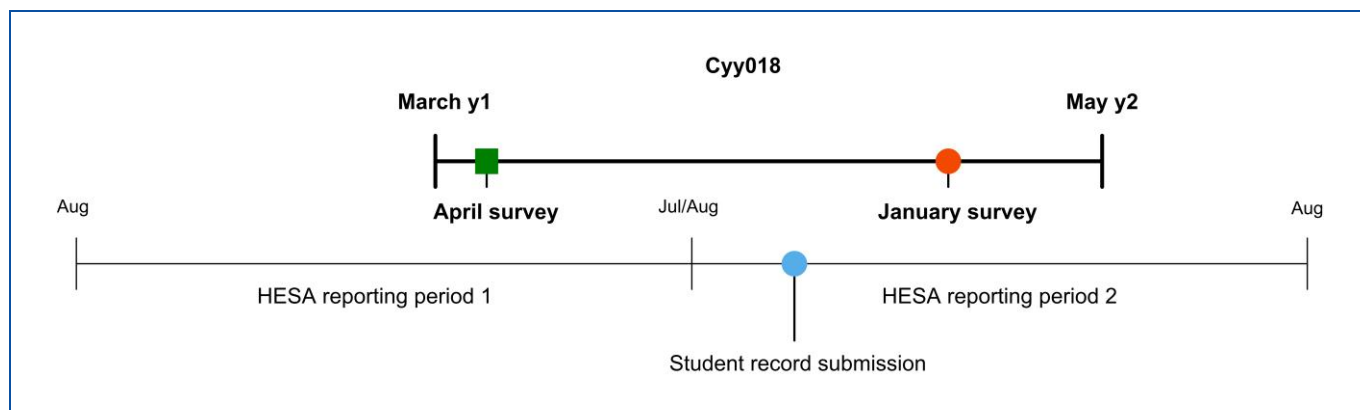


The following flow diagram is a useful tool in identifying why a student is included/not included in the POPDLHE file.



## 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.



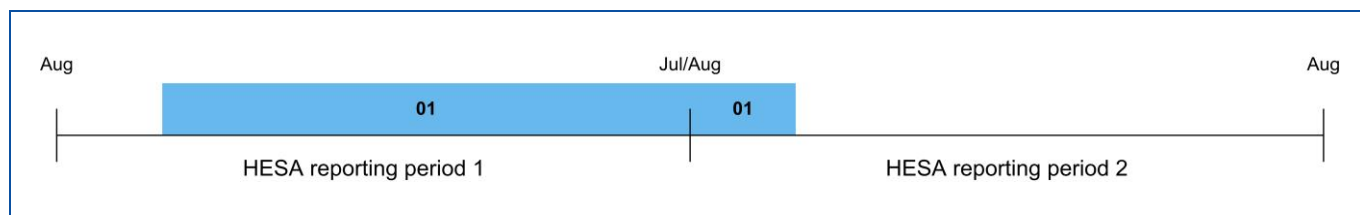
To facilitate calculating an accurate April survey population, consider using historical data as a guide. While the number of graduates completing between August and December is likely to vary each year, the number you surveyed in the previous year is likely to give you an approximation of a norm.



## Common problems with the April survey

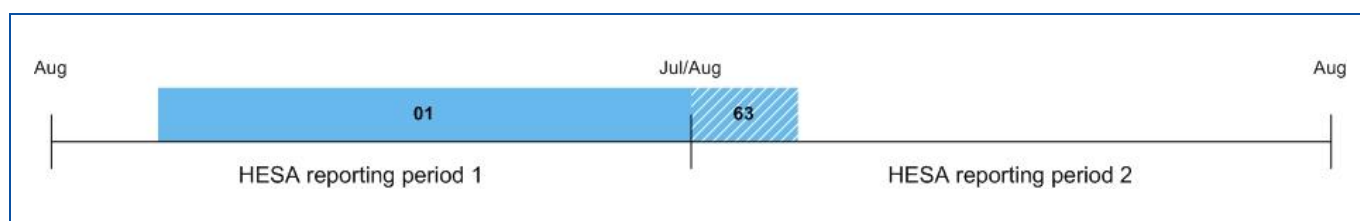
### Changes to MODE within the Student record

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

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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.



## 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 questionnaires.

### How do we order surveys?

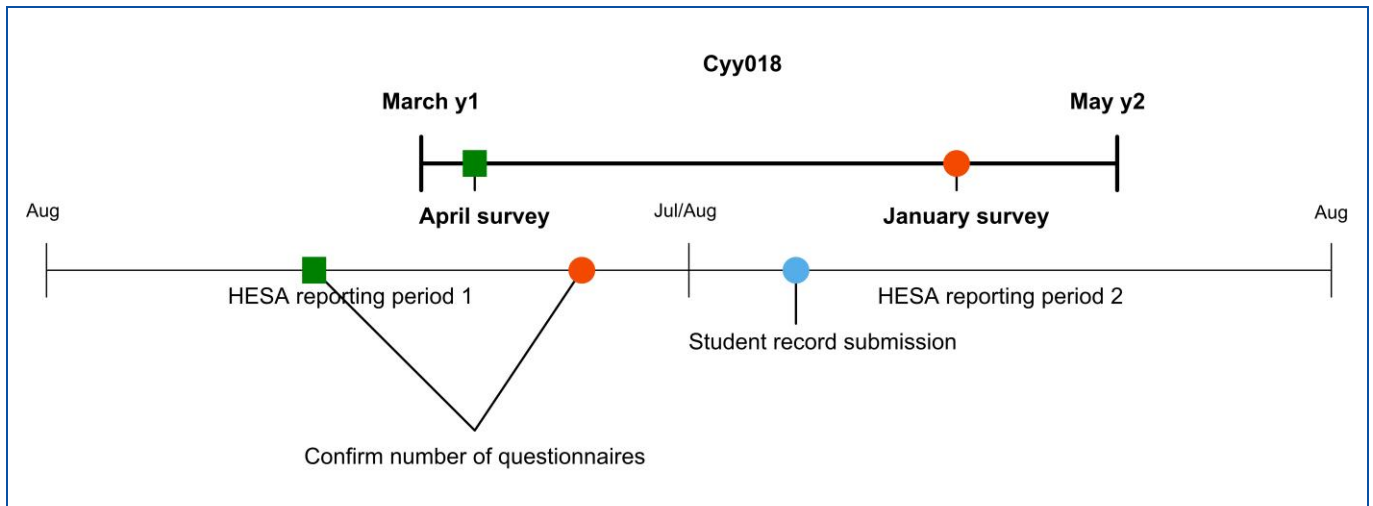
Prior to each DLHE survey your institution will be contacted by HESA with a set of questions about the size of the institution's DLHE target population and the surveying arrangements that you plan to use. The questions can be answered using an online survey that HESA will direct you to.



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 February 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?
2. Is your institution based in Wales?
3. How many questionnaires in Welsh do you require?



Consider how many questionnaires you ordered the year before – was that enough? Are you planning on using online systems and therefore require fewer questionnaires 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 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 asks 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 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 delivered?

The questionnaires 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 estimate your institution's target population. The figure will be multiplied by two to ensure you receive sufficient questionnaires to do at least one mailing and one telephone survey.



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 being delivered and you may not have enough to contact all leavers.

Whilst HESA stock a very small number of questionnaires 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 questionnaires you are able to photocopy an original and use them for telephoning but not for posting to leavers.

## Preparing the DLHE postal 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.

## Supporting DLHE

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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 financial 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 carry out 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 carry out 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](http://www.hesa.ac.uk), which can be used to improve delivery of training. HESA also offers bespoke training on this record which can be provided at HESA or at your institution.



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

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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.



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 the DLHE survey

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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 the 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.

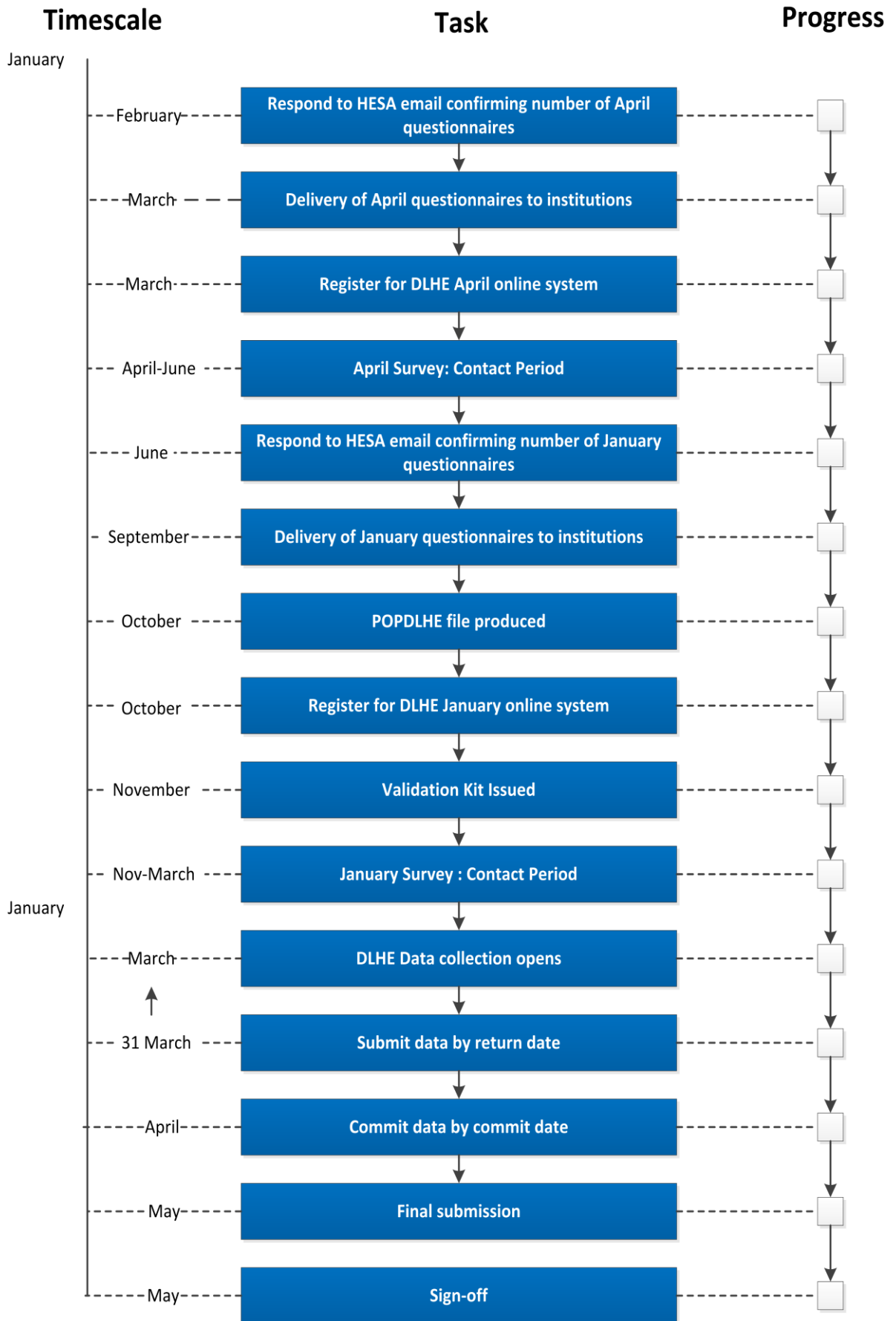
When organising the DLHE survey, it might also be helpful to ask a number of questions:

- What methods are we going to use to contact our leavers?
- Do we have the mechanisms for promoting the DLHE survey in place?
- Has the POPDLHE been reviewed and confirmed as accurate?
- Have we ordered the right number of questionnaires?
- 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.



# DLHE methodology progress chart







## **Part 3**

### **Contacting leavers**



## Methodology

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The methodology rules are not rigid; institutions can choose their own methodology sequence using as many of the contact methods as they like. Each institution can choose the sequence of contact which they consider to be the most effective for achieving a good level of response from their leavers. For example, an institution might wish to start with telephoning and then send postal questionnaires or a link to the online version to all those who they have not been able to contact by telephone.

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

- Postal mailing / telephone questionnaire
- Centrally-hosted online questionnaire
- PDF version (a PDF version of the questionnaire is available in both English and Welsh)

Institutions can use as many of these methods of contact as they wish to achieve the highest response possible. Institutions are required to make contact with all graduates in the POPDLHE within the relevant contact period (April or January).



Use as many methods as possible in the contact period. 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.



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.

## Contact details

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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 the contact period, 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

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For those leavers who have not responded using an online version of the questionnaire, you may want to contact these leavers by post.

### 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. Those that are outstanding might therefore need to be contacted by other methods.

### 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.

### 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 at any time in the contact period and is a valuable resource efficient 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 better 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. Include where applicable that they will shortly receive a 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](http://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 or region.

### Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education 2011/12

April 2012

Please select country or region of institution



[London](#) | [South East](#) | [South West](#) | [East of England](#) | [East Midlands](#)  
[West Midlands](#) | [North East](#) | [North West](#) | [Yorkshire and The Humber](#)  
[SCOTLAND](#) | [NORTHERN IRELAND](#) | [WALES](#)

[www.dlhe.ac.uk/?INST=NNNN](http://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](http://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 received 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 questions and sections are answered, which will ensure a valid response being provided by the leaver.

## Contacting leavers using the telephone

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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 the contact period it is therefore important to establish how best to utilise this method.

### 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 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/personal issues/language 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 questionnaire for the survey period. Failure to have the correct questionnaire 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 opportunity 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 all the 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 groups, for example leavers who qualified at teacher status. This should ensure you complete the relevant sections.



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 leaver is unhappy at being contacted as part of DLHE the issue should not be forced.

## Completing information from a third party

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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?

Where a telephone call is made, obtaining the response directly from the leaver is desirable. If contact is made with someone other than the leaver, this is acceptable, provided that the contact is sufficiently well informed to be able to answer questions about the leaver's employment and further study circumstances. It is not so much the source of information that is important as the quality of the information itself.

### 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 questions (on both work and further study). 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

### Questions to be asked of third party

Below is a table with the questions to be asked of third parties.

Q1	On [the census date] were you . . .? Please tick ALL the activities you were doing and then indicate which one of them is most important to you (it might be the one which is helping you to progress towards the career that you want).
Q2	If you had more than one job on [the census date], how many jobs did you have in total?
Q3	What was your job title?
Q4	Briefly describe your duties (e.g. maintaining and updating company intranet).
Q5	Which of the following best describes the basis on which you were employed on [the census date]?
Q9	What is the name of the company/organisation you were working for? (If you got the job that you were doing through an agency, please provide the name of your place of work [on the census date] and not the name of the agency).
Q10	What does the company/organisation you were working for mainly do? (e.g. software design, primary school education).
Q11	Where was your place of work and, if in the UK, what is the postcode?
Q18	Were you employed as a teacher on [the census date]?
Q22	If you were not employed as a teacher on [the census date] or were on a temporary teaching contract (including on a probation year in Scotland) were you seeking a teaching post on [the census date]?
Q23	If you were undertaking more than one course on [the census date], how many courses in total were you registered on?
Q24	Which of the following best describes the type of qualification you were aiming for?
Q25	What is the name of the course you were registered on? (e.g. MSc in Interactive Media).
Q27	What is the name of the university or college at which you were registered?
Q28	How did you mainly fund your study, training or research?



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

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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. 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 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://\(insert link\)](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.

## Data Protection

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### What to do before and during the DLHE surveys

Before the survey institutions should:

- Update each student's contact details
- Let all students know that the DLHE will be happening and give them an opportunity to withdraw from it, for example by providing the HESA student collection notice.

During the survey institutions should:

- Use accurate contact details
- Use only the contact details provided by the leaver (except where given by a third party, when the details should be used as described below)
- Take notice of any objections the leaver has to being contacted
- Either not collect, or delete, information from any leaver who does not wish their destinations data to be held by the institution.

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

- They should ask that the third party informs the data subject 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.

Objections to being contacted or providing data can be given at any time before the data is returned to HESA. Such objections must always be recorded.

### Standard text, collection notices and informing students

In order for processing to be fair, data subjects should be informed about the uses made of data. A collection notice is a piece of text which fulfils these criteria.

#### Student collection notice

The HESA Student collection notice should be made available to all students at each institution. This tells the students that:

- They may be contacted for first stage DLHE
- There is the possibility of follow up to the first stage DLHE
- They have the opportunity to object to further contact.

#### DLHE questionnaire

There is a general statement on the questionnaire, referring to the covering letter for more information.

## **DLHE covering letter and email**

The covering letter and email for the DLHE survey

- Tells the leaver that they will be contacted again if they don't reply
- Informs the leaver that data may be collected from a third party if they can't be contacted themselves
- Gives the leaver an opportunity to refuse to give data or be contacted again
- Tells them that they may be contacted for the longitudinal survey and gives them the opportunity to object.

## **DLHE collection notice provided by HESA**

This is included at the bottom of the covering letter and email, and describes the uses made of the data by HESA and its Statutory Customers.

## **DLHE collection notice to be written by institutions**

Space has been allowed within the covering letter for each institution to include their own collection notice text about the use they make of the data. HESA strongly recommends that each institution composes suitable wording for, and includes its own collection notice in the covering letter, in order to protect the institution's legal position.

## **Further information about informing students**

Institutions cannot guarantee leavers read the covering letter and collection notices, but this does not necessarily cause a problem. The Data Protection Act 1998 says that information concerning what happens to personal data must be made available to the individuals concerned. Organisations must make every reasonable effort to provide this, but not so that it is disproportionate to the purposes for which the data is collected. Therefore, if institutions follow the above procedures, there should be no further need for concern.

## **Keeping DLHE data**

The data should be kept only as long as is necessary. If the purpose is research then data may be kept for a long time. The completed questionnaires need not be kept beyond the time that the possibility of an audit might be carried out. Institutions should therefore keep either a hard copy or electronic version of the questionnaire or telephone script for each individual leaver for three years after the data is returned to HESA. There is no need to anonymise the data. However, the data should not be used in a way that will affect the individual concerned

## **Further information about data protection issues**

Students can obtain further information on data protection issues from the HESA website at [www.hesa.ac.uk/dataprot](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/dataprot). The document 'Data Protection Guidance for the HESA records' can be obtained from this page. For further information please contact the Data Protection Officer at [data.protection@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@hesa.ac.uk).

## Trouble shooting

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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 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 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. Note that if you are not able to contact the leaver to clarify, you are required to return the salary as reported.

### 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. If a postcode is not returned validation requires that the country of employment is included.



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 questions were answered?

For a response to be considered valid all required questions that are applicable should be answered. Where these 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 the first response you receive to HESA.

### 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 [HESA-DLHE@JISCMAIL.AC.UK](mailto:HESA-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.



## 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 three years 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 assist in data inputting there is an official use box at the top of the questionnaire which can be used to record the date the leaver was attempted to be contacted and to record the status of the response.

**Official use only**

(1)   /   /201

(2)   /   /201

(3)   /   /201

(02)  (03)  (05)  (06)  (07)

This section can be used to record the date an attempt to contact the leaver was made.

This section can be used to record the method of the response for the STATUS field:

- 02 Telephone Survey: HE leaver
- 03 Telephone Survey: third party
- 05 Own institution's student record
- 06 Institutional third party
- 07 Deceased

There are also brackets next to the answers which show the valid entry code for the answer to the questionnaire.

**Q5 Which of the following best describes the basis on which you were employed on 16 April 2012?**

Self-employed/freelance	<input type="radio"/> (01)	Voluntary work	<input type="radio"/> (06)
Starting up own business	<input type="radio"/> (02)	On an internship	<input type="radio"/> (07)
On a permanent or open-ended contract	<input type="radio"/> (03)	Developing a professional portfolio/creative practice	<input type="radio"/> (08)
On a fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer	<input type="radio"/> (04)	Temping (including supply teaching)	<input type="radio"/> (09)
On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months	<input type="radio"/> (05)	Other	<input type="radio"/> (10)

For example (05) is the valid entry for the response 'On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months' for the field EMPBASIS.

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 screenshot shows the DLHE Online System interface for the survey 'Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education 2011/12' at Poppleton, dated April 2012. The user is currently on 'SECTION B Your employment on 16 April 2012', which is 'Section 3 of 7'. The interface includes navigation buttons for '<< Previous', 'Clear Answers', and 'Next >>'. A note states 'Fields marked \* are mandatory.' The questions are as follows:

- Q2** If you had more than one job on 16 April 2012, how many jobs did you have in total? (Dropdown menu)
- Q3** \* What was your job title? (Text input: Training Manager, Maximum 60 characters)
- Q4** \* Briefly describe your duties (e.g. maintaining and updating company intranet) (Text input: To devise and, Maximum 200 characters)
- Q5** \* Which of the following best describes the basis on which you were employed on 16 April 2012?
  - Self-employed/freelance
  - Starting up own business
  - On a permanent or open-ended contract
  - On a fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer
  - On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months
  - Voluntary work
  - On an internship
  - Developing a professional portfolio/creative practice
  - Temping (including supply teaching)
  - Other
- Q6** What was your annual pay for your main employment to the nearest thousand (£) before tax? (£) [Text input] Unpaid work

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 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.

### 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.

## DLHE Survey System

### Completed Questionnaires

Date	Count
2010-05-25	4
2010-05-19	5
2010-05-18	8
2010-05-17	9
2010-05-14	1
2010-05-13	7
2010-05-10	1
2010-04-28	1
2010-04-22	1
2010-04-19	1
Total	38

[File Layout](#)

[Response Rates](#)

[Control Panel](#)

[Download History](#)

[Download data](#)

[Importing CSV formatted data into Microsoft Excel \(help guide\)](#)

[HESA website - DLHE collection](#)

[Progress Monitor \(HESA users only\)](#)

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.

## Download Survey Data

Please enter a date range and select the format of file to download.

Date From:  (dd/mm/yyyy)

Date To:  (dd/mm/yyyy)

Survey state:  Complete  Incomplete  All

File Format:  Comma Separated Value (CSV)  Fixed Length Format  XML Format

[Back to home page](#)



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.

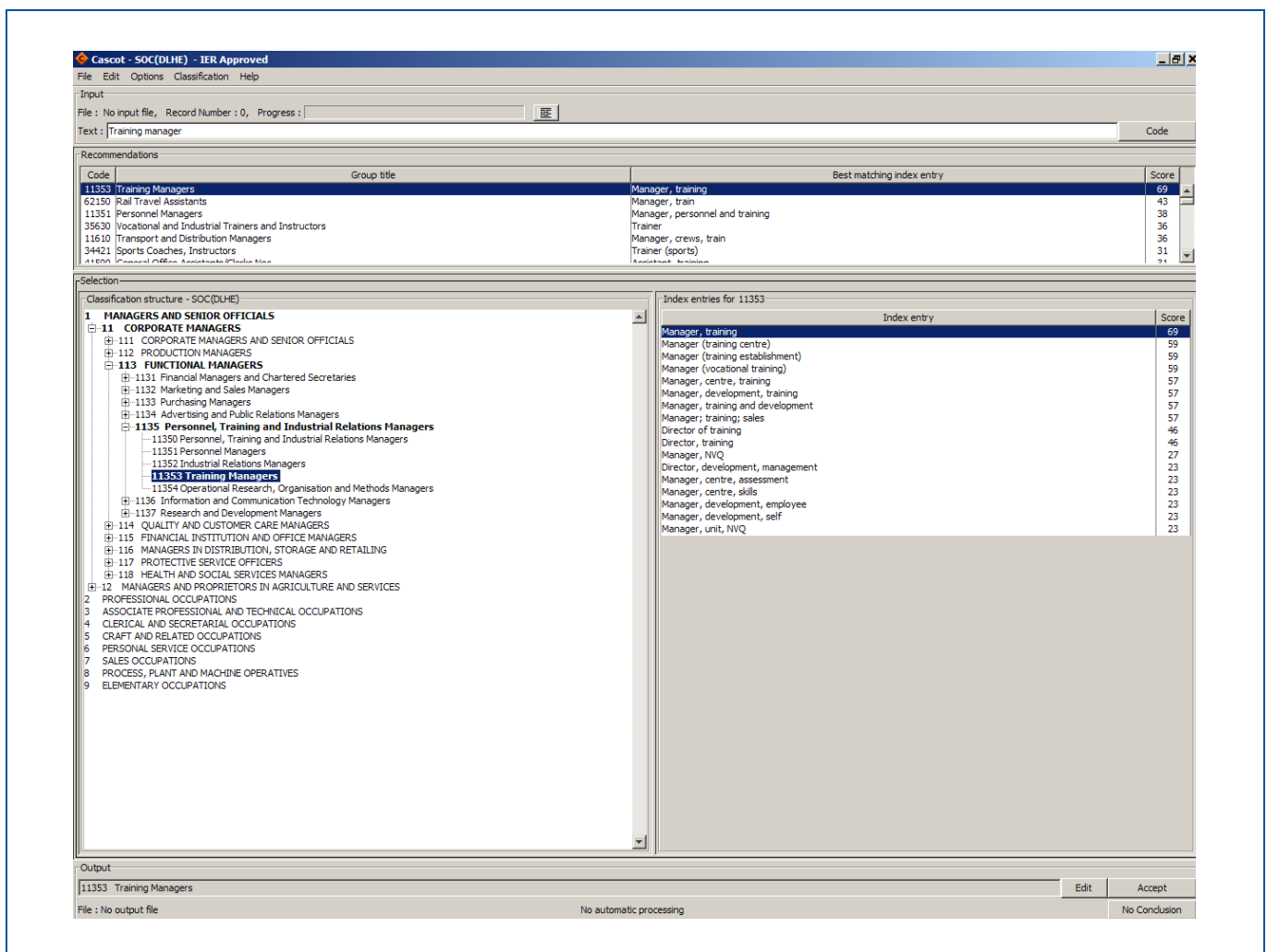
Cascot is a software package designed to assign a code to a piece of text. In the case of the Standard Occupation Classification for DLHE (SOC2010) this piece of text is typically a job title from the DLHE survey. In the case of the Standard Industrial Classification for DLHE (SIC(DLHE)) this coding will be undertaken centrally by HESA.

## When should Cascot be used?

In order to fully code up a DLHE survey, institutions are required to use SOC codes to denote occupation and 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.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	03145125124154	Training Manager			
2	03145125124748	Teacher			
3	07845405415447	Doctor			
4	09045405484847	Policeman			
5	09367489451725	Sales assistant			
6	06487157445548	Lawyer			
7					
8					

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.

The dialog box 'Input File - inout.txt' contains the following sections:

- Field separation options:**
  - No field separators used
  - Fields separated by:
    - Tab
    - Comma
    - Colon
    - Semicolon
    - Space
    - Other
- Text delimiter: [dropdown menu]

- Preview (start of file):**

Field_1	Field_2
03145125124154	Training Manager
03145125124748	Teacher
07845405415447	Doctor
09045405484847	Policeman
09367489451725	Sales assistant
- Selection:**
- First line of file contains field headings.
- Select input text field: [dropdown menu showing Field\_1 and Field\_2]
- Start from record (line): [input field with '1']
- First input text will be: [input field with '03145125124154']

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.



## 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 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

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## 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?

Data must be returned to HESA as an XML file. XML is the Extensible Markup Language and is a W3C recommendation. There are many XML training resources on the web, including the W3C Tutorial on XML and the resources of W3Schools. Having created a file in XML, 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.

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## How to contact HESA

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For advice and guidance on data submissions to HESA:

**Institutional Liaison:**

+44 (0) 1242 211144

[liaison@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:liaison@hesa.ac.uk)

For enquiries regarding training seminars or bespoke training visits:

**Training:**

+44 (0) 1242 211155

[training@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:training@hesa.ac.uk)

For publication orders and sales enquiries:

**Sales & Customer Services:**

+44 (0) 1242 211155

[customer.services@hesa.ac.uk](mailto:customer.services@hesa.ac.uk)

For enquiries regarding HE data and for bespoke HESA data requests:

**Bespoke Data Service:**

+44 (0) 1242 211133

[information.provision@hesa.ac.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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