

## **Data Futures Update for UCAS Data Group March 2018**

Institutions taking part in the alpha pilot have attended a number of workshops and webinars with HESA since the launch of the pilot in 2017 and are now engaged in testing the data model using a data input tool and scenarios provided by HESA.

The data input tool provides a rather long-winded mechanism for the data collection but does have the advantage of allowing us to see how the xml file is built up and to become more familiar with the data model itself. We are feeding back inconsistencies, missing codes in the data set and other general observations and are having monthly checkpoint conference calls to report back. HESA are also using us as a 'sounding board' for various questions as they arise.

Software suppliers have, to date, been having separate workshops with HESA who have also brought together HEIs who have in-house systems.

The next workshop day, at the beginning of April, is a joint HEI/Supplier day which was requested by HEIs so that a 3-way conversation could be facilitated.

The next phase of testing will involve more non-standard scenarios and specific types of students/courses and the opportunity for us to input our own data into the model.

Other projected stages for the alpha pilot include:

- Desktop pilot – continues through March and April
- Data Collection pilot – April/May
- Data Specification Change Management pilot – end of June
- Data Dissemination – August

HESA will also be providing monthly coding manual updates, the release of new scenarios and webinars on emerging concepts such as a Quality strategy, during this period.

HESA have published the plan for academic year 2019/20 which they are now viewing as a 'transition year'. All HEIs will be required to provide a high quality mandatory test submission of reference periods 1 and 2 data between January and March 2020 which will be passed to statutory customers, not for us in publications, but for assurance purposes. The transition year will then see a Reference period 3 full data return i.e. end of year, before the move to full Data Futures reporting in 2020/21.

HESA recently put out a call for expressions of interest for the Beta pilot phase of the project which will begin in November 2018. Emails were sent out on 14 March to those HEIs accepted for the beta phase.

Dan Norton from Loughborough University recently wrote a blog on participation in the alpha pilot which includes hints on how to prepare for Data Futures and the likely benefits of joining the Beta Pilot. This can be accessed on the HESA website or via [sroc.ac.uk](http://sroc.ac.uk).

The upcoming SROC Conference (26 – 28 March) will have a number of breakout sessions focusing on different aspects of the Data Futures project.

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