

Data Futures Update for UCAS Data Group DG.18.005

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Since the last Data group meeting, those taking part in the alpha pilot have attended a joint HEI/Supplier day so that a 3-way conversation could be facilitated. The feedback to HESA from both providers and suppliers was that these were extremely useful in terms of conversations and gaining others' perspectives and it is likely that future workshops will follow the same format.

HESA have released their Data Collection tool so alpha pilot providers are using HESA supplied test files that have been set up purposely for troubleshooting to get used to the look-and-feel of the collection system, trying to break the system and error/issue reporting. In addition, some providers are submitting their own files of anonymised data which HESA welcomes.

A core design principle of the new collection system is that it must be intuitive, so providers are also testing this principle. The aim is that in future the transmission stages will combine feedback in a single loop. There will be further iterations between June and October which will look at 'tolerances' and how communications between HESA and statutory customers work.

Providers taking part in the alpha pilot are all at slightly different stages – some have struggled to get the right level of support from, for example, colleagues in IT. Others are rolling out the engagement from a core team to other staff members so they can input more widely in terms of the collection tool, which has the benefit of improving familiarisation with the future product.

Other projected stages for the alpha pilot include:

- Data Specification Change Management pilot – end of June
- Data Dissemination – August

HESA are providing monthly coding manual updates, the release of new scenarios and webinars on emerging concepts such as a Quality strategy, during the remainder of the alpha pilot and are currently holding a series of training sessions on the data model which are available to all providers.

There is also a comprehensive resources web page available :

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/data-futures/data-futures-resources> which includes details of the Data Futures JISC Mail group through which updates and announcements are made as well as the recently released Data Futures preparation assessment, which is an updated version of the data capability tool published in an earlier phase of the programme.

A reminder that HESA have published the plan for academic year 2019/20 which they are now viewing as a 'transition year'. All providers 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.

There are still question marks about the data requirements for Alternative Providers, who currently return a reduced data set to HESA. The outcomes of registration with the Office for Students will have a bearing on this, but at the moment there is a lot of uncertainty in this part of the sector which is not helpful to those providers trying to garner interest and support for Data Futures within their organisation.

111 providers have expressed an interest in joining the Beta pilot phase of the project which will begin in November 2018. Details of those who have expressed an interest can be found at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/data-futures/development-phases/beta>

Tribal is holding a User group event on Data Futures on Monday 16 July at York St John University which will include both presentations from a number of providers as well as Tribal staff but will also provide a wider forum for Data Futures-related discussion.

SROC hopes to hold a Data Futures day session later in the autumn