

An update on HESA Data Futures at Oxford

HESA have confirmed that they will not be expecting a Data Futures-style return until after the 20/21 HESA return is complete. As a result, the Oxford student data project has decided to stop work on areas where HESA have not yet provided enough clarity about their likely requirements but to continue work in areas that benefit the University now and are relevant to the existing HESA data return as well as the Data Futures requirements.

Next steps

This development has significant implications for our student data project at Oxford, and the Project Board discussed a number of options at its meeting recently. It was agreed that:

- The Project Team would continue to deliver the outputs agreed at the last Executive Board meeting as detailed below
- Replacement of the existing Access database used for the HESA return should be brought forward, removing risk and so making the data submission more reliable

What does that mean for our workstream activity?

Looking at the project workstream structure, this means that while we intend to complete work in some areas, we will cease activity in others – see below:

- **W1: Student journey**
 - Activity on suspended assessment will begin again in Michaelmas term
 - Work will continue to improve exemption reporting around mode / change to mode
 - Improvements to the registration screens will be progressed following a student survey which will be circulated in October
- **W2: Course and modular data**
 - Work will stop on the academic model changes and the annual programme data exercise until we are clear on what HESA's requirements are
 - Work will continue to deliver a number of small but necessary changes to improve the current HESA return
- **W3: Qualifications**
 - Changes delivering improvements to the qualification verification procedure are well advanced and will continue
- **W4: Off-venue activity**
 - The implementation of the SITS:Vision Placement module will be put on hold while we wait for HESA to confirm their requirements
- **W5: Fees and funding**
 - Changes will be made to the fee schedule and will incorporate those resulting from the Office for Students (OfS) audit

Delivering positive outcomes

This revised approach will deliver the following positive outcomes for the University:

- We will improve the quality and operational impact of our existing HESA return, which will continue until at least 2021
- We will guarantee compliance with OfS audit requirements on fee invoicing

- We will maximise the benefits the Project has worked on to date, delivering value for Oxford whilst still ensuring that our processes are Data Futures-ready, should that ultimately be necessary

Summary

The HESA Data Futures project has presented opportunities and challenge in equal measure, and following the HESA announcement, we can now provide clarity around the scope of work at Oxford. The focus for us, however, continues to be one that delivers benefits along key points in our student data process, and that we wring as much value as possible from the investment we've already made in HESA Data Futures.