

# HE-BCI Consultation Response

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## THE HE-BCI RECORD

5. Please indicate if you have any feedback on 'The HE-BCI record'. We have included this question to help with analysis. (Required)

Feedback given

### 6. What do you use the HE-BCI data for?

- Currently we use the record for top-level views of the sector, particularly with regards to how the dataset influences the development of the HEIF allocation system.
- The survey helps our members inform their future policy positioning in relation to the developing KEF, and in influencing potential funding allocation, including a more favourable revision of the HEIF formula (by removing the lower threshold) and application to KE-related funding schemes.
- The review offers a greater chance for HE-BCI's use, especially when taken in the context of the KEF. At present, HE-BCI is focussed on capturing data on firm financial metrics, especially around IP. This in turn leads to commercialisation KE activity being rewarded at the expense of other valuable interventions.
- We echo Universities UK argument that it is increasingly important that the sector can demonstrate the full scale of its impact. Currently, the data on providers' activities outside of their mainstream education and research missions is restricted and this limits the sector's ability to present a strong, cohesive message to the government.
- The HE-BCI survey provides an opportunity to gather and present this data in a way that gives confidence to politicians on the returns providers' deliver from public and students' money.
- The review therefore offers the chance to address the interrelationship between economic, social and cultural KE and to view each as important as the other. Greater consideration of social and cultural KE initiatives is needed. There is significant spillover economic value (which is harder to capture than paid for services) from such activities, as well as broader non-economic value. For example, free or subsidised clinics/advice centres, especially in areas of law and subjects allied to medicine, provide clear value to users and also reduce stress on health and social care services, resulting in financial savings (GuildHE and The Physiological Society's joint report on the Economic Impact of Sport and Exercise Science provides some evidence).

- Data often determines narrative and, therefore, we are supportive of approaches taken to consult broadly to identify gaps, consider the implications for their absence, and explore data or alternative options for capturing any type of impact not currently systematically collected. Views from potential stakeholders should be sought, even where their use of the data is currently limited.
- We encourage greater reflection of student engagement in KE as part of the review because this is an underexplored area nationally in policy terms. This could best be done through engaging with providers working in this area: only group discussion would be able to cover the full range of activity that ought to be in scope and work through some of the details about ways of defining what data should be captured.
- HESA must consider the upfront and ongoing cost to providers in gathering and auditing data for submission. The revised survey must provide demonstrable value for institutions that exceeds cost and avoid placing undue burden on small and specialist providers that do not currently have the same capacity.
- With this point in mind, HESA should consider where it can draw on existing data that is already collected that could be used to contextualise HE-BCI from within the higher education sector and beyond so that data collection is not duplicated through HE-BCI.

## RESEARCH RELATED ACTIVITIES

7. Please indicate if you have any feedback on 'Research related activities'. We have included this question to help with analysis. (Required)

Feedback given

8. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

- Pro-bono or low-bono research should be included in this area. This will pick up valuable work that academics and researchers carry out with partners that is not paid-for contract research or research that is funded by a research council. Eg an academic may carry out a piece of research looking at the need for a community centre - fulfilling a social need - without this being charged for.
- There is a case for collaborative/contract research with other HEPs to be included. For example, if an HEP is carrying out practical research in a specialist area for another HEP that is not part of a wider funded project. Data collection policies should permit income for research projects lead by consortia of institutions to be captured in a way that recognises the involvement of each member institution, and therefore does not disincentivise such cross-sector collaboration.
- We note that SIPF is currently not recorded in HE-BCI and that the 2018/19 guidance draws out that it should not be. When the SIPF awards are announced, a more logical place to record any income would be under "regional and economical development" given the fund's aims.

9. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value,

and which should be considered for removal?

- N/A

10. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

- The current data set is good at collecting a range of information.
- Innovate UK should have its own line, most likely as a subset from BEIS Research Councils which should be renamed as UKRI

## BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

11. Please indicate if you have any feedback on 'Business and community services'. We have included this question to help with analysis. (Required)  
Feedback given

12. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

- We note that degree apprenticeships are being considered under this category. We believe that information on them should be collected here given the close collaboration required between businesses/sectors and HEPs to establish them and their direct links back into individual sectors.
- Whilst there are categories for non-commercial business, greater account of social enterprise should be considered. Social enterprise is a new and growing form of business. Having a distinct data set will allow greater understanding of how the HE sector works with this part of the economy and society that is different from traditional SMEs or charities. Social enterprise spinouts are already captured in HE-BCI - it makes sense to also explicitly capture work that takes place with existing SMEs.
- Data gathering could consider the recording of repeat business. This is fairly readily accessed, and a dimension that reflects well the nature and sustainability of BCI relationship building.
- There is also a range of activities that result in KE but come from a teaching perspective. The exchange is two way, with employers/ businesses getting as much out of the process as the learner. For example:
  - Student placements and wider staff/student volunteering with local businesses can lead to employers gaining practical outputs from projects that are implemented - ie the impact on the employer at present because it is perceived that only students take something out of the relationship.

13. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

- n/a

14. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

- It is good that SME data and non-commercial companies data is separated out of the data sets in this area. This data helps to capture the work carried out by smaller and specialist HEPs with a range of different organisations.

- There should be an acknowledgement in this section that work carried out with nonprofit organisations often results in lower income even when the eventual outcomes (eg through a bespoke CPD programme) are at least the same as a commercial version.
- It is important that data collected here is seen within the local socioeconomic context of the HEP - some parts of the country have lower levels of activity and others have higher - data should not be read without this context.
- As with all changes to the data collection requirements, it must also strike a balance between providing valuable information about the institution's business and minimising large-scale, burdensome changes to the current processes carried out by the sector.

## REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

15. Please indicate if you have any feedback on 'Regeneration and development programmes'. We have included this question to help with analysis. (Required)  
Feedback given

16. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

- The numbers of staff engaged with LEP/local council (e.g. chair of committee) could also be gathered here.
- The make up of institutions' governing bodies and whether there is representation from the local area could be included as an indicator of involvement in local agendas. However, it is important to remember that governing bodies need to have the right combined skill set to be able to meet the demands of OfS regulation and so are unlikely to recruit entirely from the local area.
- Universities often spend money in to support their regions, which could be a better indicator of impact rather than income. For example, the University of Worcester co-invested with the local council in the public library which has seen a huge increase in use (see the Civil Universities report for further examples).
- Data on procurement from local businesses and social enterprises on the basis of social and environmental value could be included here (eg a figure for the "% of procurement spend which is influenced by social value").
- Data on locally focused research initiatives aimed at solving local problems, or national/global problems at a local level, could be captured here, especially if the output is not a 4\* journal article.
- As with our other recommendations, these data would need to be tested with all sizes of providers to ensure that the process does not add undue burden.

17. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

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18. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

- It is important that data collected here is seen within the local socioeconomic context of the HEP - some parts of the country have lower levels of activity and others have higher - data should not be read without this context.
- There is an opportunity for HESA to explore data for this section can be found in other areas, such as the UK government's information collected as part of ERDF etc. These sources give more information on the projects, including types of activities, development/regeneration area, the institutions' role in the project, and collaborating organisations.
- Future versions of HE-BCI will need to consider how to capture work funded through the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

19. Please indicate if you have any feedback on 'Intellectual property'. We have included this question to help with analysis. (Required)

Feedback given

20. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

- Spinouts from Professional Service staff could be included in this area. Such staff are engaged in the KE work of an institution and may deliver consultancy services. Only measuring academic spinout restricts the potential impact of an HEP and could lead to creating divisions between academic and professional. Including professional staff in this metric could be one way to help live out best practice suggested in the KE Concordat.
- The current survey takes too narrow a view of IP, being focussed on patents etc and does not take account of the very valuable IP that is created in the creative sector, which is the basis of both commercial value and soft power for the UK around the world. In this way, the current survey does not reflect the Industrial Strategy, which identifies this sector very clearly. This is one of the ways in which the metrics of the survey underpin a structural bias that prefers STEM based institutions in HEIF allocation.
- HESA should engage directly with creative institutions to determine the best and most cost-effective ways to capture this valuable data without adding unnecessary burden.

21. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

- Some of the categories on IP could be combined. At present, the section on IP has more questions and categories than the whole section on social, community and cultural engagement. From a top-level overview of HE-BCI, this suggests that IP is a superior form of KE, which it is not. Combining some of these metrics, where sensible, may help address this imbalance.

22. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would

### not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

- The reference to social enterprise is appreciated and useful here. However, we'd recommend that another definition of social enterprise is used (rather than the Wikipedia article). We recommend that Social Enterprise UK is contacted to confirm the most up-to-date definition.
- Social enterprises are often concerned about generating income and social impact on a nearly equal basis. There may need to be an acknowledgement that these enterprises incomes will be relatively lower.
- As we have mentioned previously, costs to institutions of all sizes should be carefully considered. This is particularly relevant for IP data, where tracking long-term outcomes at institutions may require significant and expensive changes to internal processes. Therefore, we recommend that maximising value through existing institutional processes in terms of standardisation and supplementing data from elsewhere should be prioritised.

## SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

23. Please indicate if you have any feedback on 'Social, community and cultural engagement'. We have included this question to help with analysis. (Required)  
Feedback given

### 24. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

- We appreciate that capturing metrics within this HE-BCI area that meet the “robust” status can be hard. However, we believe that this does not mean that efforts should be made across the sector to develop indicators for outcomes other than “event attendance”.
- A lot of data seems to be captured in the ‘Other’ category under Table 5. This seems to suggest that there are key types of activity which could be included under their own sub-headings that currently aren’t – might be useful for HESA to give other categories.
- Would it be useful to ask HEPs to provide a figure for the actual number of events that take place? Without this data, attendance figures and staff time figures don't mean as much.
- Some other imperfect measures that could be used are:
  - Data (such as hours spent) for staff and students volunteering for charitable organisations, often using knowledge gained or developed at the institution (e.g. as trustees)
  - University investment in brokerage should be included. The Civic Universities report highlights this core benefit.
  - Public involvement in research – advisory groups; other investment could be included.
  - Metrics, often collected by marketing/PR departments could also be used:
    - The number of academics/professional staff blogging on external sites (eg The Conversation) (and associated website hits)
    - Social media interactions (eg interactions with institutional Research or KE channels - not just followers or the main institutional account)

- Media appearances by academics, coverage of research/KE (this of course could crossover with REF impact case studies; however, the focus would be on the institution more generally rather than specific pieces of research).

25. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

- We have reservations about how academic staff time is captured - it seems rather restrictive to only include academic time for the event itself rather than the preparation. Often preparation can include essential informal exchanges of knowledge that could lead to other independent projects, particularly with community partners. At present, this metric underestimates contributions.
- These types of activities represent just a subset of the many types of public and community engagement which we would want to see reflected. For many HEIs these kinds of dissemination activities are just the 'tip of the iceberg', and don't capture more interactive and collaborative types of activity
- The inclusion of events in museums (which need to be 'owned by the HEP') could unfairly bias the framework in favour of the relatively small number of HEIs who own their own museums. This should be expanded.
- The trouble with only needing to give attendance figures and staff time as data is that this tells us nothing about the impact of the event in terms of attracting attendees. For instance, one event may make up 50% of all overall attendance for free events. This does not reflect impact and also creates an imbalance in the data and may make the institution appear to be doing better than it is. If impact were to be measured differently in the future, the difficulty would of course be in determining what constitutes impact here.
- Lectures, exhibitions and performances are all treated equally, but some awareness should be provided of the fact that, for instance, staff time and attendance are likely to be higher for exhibitions.

26. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

- We recommend that HESA engages with the NCCPE to further develop appropriate measures for this section in order to capture the full range of valuable activity across the diversity of the higher education sector.
- It would be beneficial if it was clearer how the Table 5 data is relevant to the overall HE-BCI return. What benefit is derived from institutions providing this data? Perhaps the benefit is felt more by the institution than by HESA, as it provides them with an overview of staff activities?



## HE-BCI PART A

27. Please indicate if you have any feedback on 'HE-BCI Part A'. We have included this question to help with analysis. (Required)

Feedback given

28. What new data ought to be collected in this topic area, and why?

- There should be a section to note what level of internal capacity an HEP has - eg how many KE&PE professional staff and how such units may be supported if the HEP does not receive HEIF. This contextual information is important as such capacity is crucial, especially for IP exploitation. Having an understanding of KE offices within HE-BCI would give a clearer indication of capacity across the sector and how policymakers and funders to see gaps that may exist.
  - Some of the information may already be collected through HESA returns and in existing HEIF strategies, although not all HEPs produce a strategy given not all HEPs currently receive HEIF.
- Given the focus elsewhere in HE-BCI, there could be a section on interaction with Social Enterprise. E.g. in Q11.

29. What data in this topic area is currently collected that you consider to be of lower value, and which should be considered for removal?

- There needs to be careful consideration in how the data collected in this section is also collected by the KEF and the KEC. There is the potential for duplication if this is not considered
  - For example, the information collected on an “enquiry point for SMEs” is repeated several of the KEC indicators which are wider - eg they cover “an enquiry point.”
- At the same, some areas in Part A closely reflect Part B and some of the data could be combined into the same section.

30. What value does the data in this topic area currently hold for you, and which you would not want to see lost in any change to HE-BCI?

- Q11, Q19 & Q20 are all useful at providing information that is not covered elsewhere in HE-BCI. Ways could be considered to move this information into Part B.



## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

31. What data about HE interactions with business and the community is currently compiled (in HE providers and elsewhere) which could be made available, either to reduce duplication or enhance value for users?

- n/a - see comments throughout response.

32. Do you have any other comments or feedback?

- We would like to convene a workshop for small and specialist institutions with HESA to be able to explore and provide direct insight from this part of the sector. We believe it is crucial that the revised survey captures the full diversity of beneficial socioeconomic activity within the UK in a way that minimises burden for providers and HESA staff.
- We note that this review is taking place at the same time as the review of HEIF, the introduction of the KEF and the KEC. Within this light, it is important that the review of HE-BCI interrelates with these other programmes so that institutions are not overburdened with requests for very similar information at the same point in the year. It is essential that the development of the Survey makes reference to, harmonises with and facilitates these strategic and significant policy developments:
  - KEF
  - HEIF
  - Civic University partnerships
  - REF public impact
- There is an overreliance on financial income as a proxy for impact throughout HE-BCI. This results in strong focus on areas such as IP income and large-scale business collaborations where there is more money involved. It automatically disadvantages work done with smaller organisations, especially within the creative industries outside of London. To an extent, the SME double-weighting in HEIF accounts for part of this; however, we must task ourselves with moving towards a better understanding of outputs, outcomes and impact and acknowledge that financial figures will never capture the full range of positive benefits felt by communities and users.
- Ideas such as social value should be considered as a way of showing what users of particular services most value and how such value translates into socioeconomic benefit locally, nationally and internationally. We would be keen to work with HESA to convene a working group to develop how this could work for the HE sector.
- Many small and specialists undertake high-quality, practice-leading activities (eg CDPs/consultancy) that are based upon translational research and/or practitioner/teacher crossover but do not come out of a traditional research base yet are clearly examples of knowledge exchange. They operate in the space between research and teaching, with teachers often taking ideas developed in class back into

their practice. Please examples in GuildHE's Practice-Informed Learning Report (2018).

- As mentioned already, HESA should explore whether this could be captured in HE-BCI, potentially under Business and Community Services, without adding significant burden to providers.
- The rationale behind the survey, could recognise more fully how the development of business community interaction relates more strongly to practice-based and teaching and learning activities than traditional research. This is a feature that is typical among small and specialist HEIs.
- We recommend that HESA links in to the OfS/RE team(s) who are leading on the recent funding call, as that should attract a variety of ideas from institutions around the country.
- We would like to help HESA convene a group of providers to explore the teaching/KE arena.
- We believe that interactions between higher education providers working with each other in the KE (eg through networks to develop best practice) are important. Developing such collaborations and partnerships makes a critical contribution to the overall impact of the sector's KE performance, and the vitality of the KE system.
  - This could include an HEI working with another non-eligible education institution (eg FE College and also APs)
  - Partnerships with other educators should also be captured, such as where institutions support and/or sponsor schools. We refer to the Civic Universities report which provides examples of how smaller providers are making positive contributions in this space.
- It would be useful therefore if the HE-BCI were able to capture and foreground this.