Higher Education Data and Information Improvement Programme (HEDIIP) – update

DG/A2/004

Date: 1 July 2015

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1.   Issue

This paper provides an update on the HEDIIP programme and UCAS engagement since the last Data Group meeting in February.

2.   Recommendations

The Data Group is invited to note the progress to date.

3.   Report

3.1   Data landscape
The blueprint for the future of the higher education data landscape was published on 21 May. The report establishes a vision for an HE data landscape that has effective governance and leadership, promotes standards and rationalises data flows to improve quality and accessibility for the benefit of higher education providers, sector bodies and ultimately students. The report and an executive summary are on the HEDIIP website at:
http://www.hediip.ac.uk/new-landscape/

As a major collector, aggregator and supplier of data and analysis about progression and admissions to higher education UCAS is keen to play its part in improving the quality of data and the efficiency of its collection and exchange. The main proposals and what they mean for UCAS are outlined below:

1.   Collective data governance and common data principles

HESA will host a data governance body which will provide collective governance and stewardship for higher education data. It will provide a forum for discussion about data collection and standards. It will also help universities, colleges and sector organisations work towards shared goals of streamlining data collection, improving the efficiency of data exchange and data quality. UCAS, along with other sector organisations and representatives from universities and colleges, will be a member of this new data governance body.

2. *Development of a standard dataset with agreed definitions to be used by all key data collectors*

A project to define this "data language" is being initiated by the HEDIIP and UCAS expects to be closely involved in this. We will aim to adopt standard definitions where this aligns with our business objectives. Changes will be made as and when we redevelop our admissions services.

3. *Some organisations will be encouraged to stop collecting data themselves and to source "standard data" from HESA.*

HESA is embarking on a programme to redevelop its core HE data collection service – the CACHED programme (https://cached.hesa.ac.uk/). One of the goals is to enable HESA to collect data more frequently from providers, and to collect data earlier in the year e.g. shortly after student enrolment.

The HEDIIP blueprint envisages that organisations – such as professional bodies – who currently collect their own data from universities and colleges will use the new HESA data supplies instead. This will help to drive efficiency in the collection and use of HE data. This does not affect the admissions process.

4. *Enhancement of HE data maturity and capability*

Universities and colleges are at different stages in understanding their data assets and governing and managing these effectively. The HEDIIP programme is developing a toolkit to enable higher education providers to assess their level of maturity and good practice to help them improve their own data infrastructure and governance and management processes (Data Capability project). This will help providers to better utilise and exploit their own and HE sector data and information resources.

UCAS has trialled the data maturity assessment tool and the insight from this is being fed into digital acceleration activities.

3.2   New Subject Coding Framework (HECoS)
The national consultation on the new subject coding framework closed on 29 May. UCAS responded positively to the proposals, raising points about governance, analytical requirements (including time series) and the need for a coordinated, sector-wide implementation process. The final report is due in September.

3.3   Unique Learner Number (ULN)
The Programme Board has approved the final report from the ULN project which sets out a roadmap for the wider adoption and usage of the ULN. UCAS has endorsed this and is addressing the recommendations via the redevelopment of the core application service.   As highlighted in DG/A2/002, many of the anticipated benefits rely on the Skills Funding Agency being able to develop a rapid, accurate verification service.

4.   Communications

UCAS publishes the monthly programme reports to the Data Group yammer feed. Updates are available from the programme team at http://www.hediip.ac.uk and at @HEDIIP on Twitter.