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**Feedback Questionnaire on Methodology: Higher Education Initial Participation Measures**

**26th November 2020**

# Context

The Higher Education Initial Participation (HEIP) measure[[1]](#footnote-1) was introduced to build a timely estimate of participation in Higher Education by age.

The main limitations of the HEIP methodology are the difficulty in disaggregating progression rates by geography, ethnicity and other personal characteristics due to the lack of reliable and comparable population estimates for detailed groupings.

Another important limitation is its susceptibility to overstate participation by age 30 if there is growth in the number of higher education entrants in younger age groups.

The HEIP measure is an estimate of the actual entry rate in the current year of people who had not previously entered higher education between ages 17 to 30. For each age from 17 to 30, the initial participation rate is calculated as the fraction of the academic year population that are initial entrants. These rates are added to create the total HEIP measure. It is **not** a measure of participation by particular entry cohorts.

When there is steady growth in entry rates for younger age groups (as has been observed over many years for English 18 year-olds), the HEIP method of summing current participation rates will show a higher participation rate than the participation rate for a particular entry cohort. For example, today’s 30 year-olds, will have had a lower initial participation rate when they were aged 18 compared to today’s 18 year-olds.

In order to inform debate over the future direction of this National Statistics series, we have included a supporting discussion paper *Progression to Higher Education by age - a cohort measure* covering comparisons to measuring initial participation using a cohort approach.

The cohort measure benefits from having a reliable estimate of the population across a wide range of personal characteristics and geographic breakdowns that is less susceptible to inward and regional migration in the population than HEIP. This enables analysis of progression rates by ethnic group, free school meal status, region and other personal characteristics.

However, the cohort measure is less timely than the HEIP in providing an estimate of participation by age 30. This is because a cohort method measures progression of a historical cohort rather the estimated progression of the current cohort under the HEIP measure. The cohort measure is therefore less able to account for recent changes in HE entry by mature students.

More detailed comparisons can be found in the supporting discussion paper.

**We have included this questionnaire as opportunity to provide feedback on whether this National Statistic should continue to be published.**

Respondents to the questionnaire will be updated about any decisions taken about the future of this National Statistics series if they confirm they are happy to be recontacted by DfE.

# Questions on current measures and future requirements

Please email [he.statistics@education.gov.uk](mailto:he.statistics@education.gov.uk) with your responses by 21st January 2021.

1. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?
2. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is your organisation?
3. If you would like to be contacted directly regarding future changes to this National Statistics series, please include your email address explicitly here.
4. Should publication of the HEIP measure continue? If so, why is the HEIP important to you, and if not, why not?

*Please fill out your comments here (if any) for this question.*

1. How would you be impacted if the HEIP measure was replaced by a measure of participation that followed actual cohorts of school leavers?

*Please fill out your comments here (if any) for these questions.*

1. What other measures of participation in higher education do you make use of/do you think the department should explore?

*Please fill out your comments here (if any) for these questions.*

1. Which personal characteristics (or other breakdowns) of participants are most important to you and in which combinations?

*Please fill out your comments here (if any) for these questions.*

1. Which age ranges are of most importance to you?

*Please fill out your comments here (if any) for these questions.*



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1. Formerly the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)