



Department
for Education

Designation of a body for English higher education information

Government consultation response

January 2018

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Introduction

In order to meet the relevant consultation requirements set out in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA), the Department for Education, on behalf of the new Office for Students (OfS), sought views from respondents across the HE sector, including providers and students on the role of the Designated Data Body (DDB) and the functions that it must carry out. It followed an invitation for expressions of interest in the role which closed on 19 September, and to which one body, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) provided a submission.

The consultation, published 19 October 2017, therefore explored the views of respondents on the suitability of HESA to fulfil the role of the DDB, and on the suitability of any other organisation which consultees wished to suggest, but which had not expressed an interest.

The responses to this consultation received both digitally and informal written responses are now informing the OfS's recommendation to the Secretary of State on designating a data body and decision-making and design in relation to its regulatory framework, which will be published by the end of March 2018.

Summary of responses received

Overall there was overwhelming support for the HESA as a body that is credible and suitable to fulfil the role of the DDB. Where concerns were expressed, they concerned the need for the DDB to take full advantage of opportunities to reduce the burden on providers through maximising data co-ordination with other agencies and bodies and concerned ensuring the DDB increases its understanding and representation for alternative providers and further education colleges.

No organisations were proposed as an alternative to HESA.

Main findings from the consultation

There was overwhelming support for the y HESA to be designated the new Data Body and that HESA are capable of meeting the designation conditions. No organisations were proposed as an alternative to HESA.

Positive comments from sector bodies were submitted and are generally along the following themes:

- HESA has the technical capacity, extensive experience in data collection, analysis and assessment to meet the needs of multiple agencies and stakeholders as well as higher education providers.
- HESA has the confidence of the sector, as it is independent whilst at the same time epitomising the principles of co-regulation to face the future higher education data, information and choice challenges with confidence.

Some concerns and issues were expressed regarding the future design and shape of the DDB. These comments were wide ranging and related to:

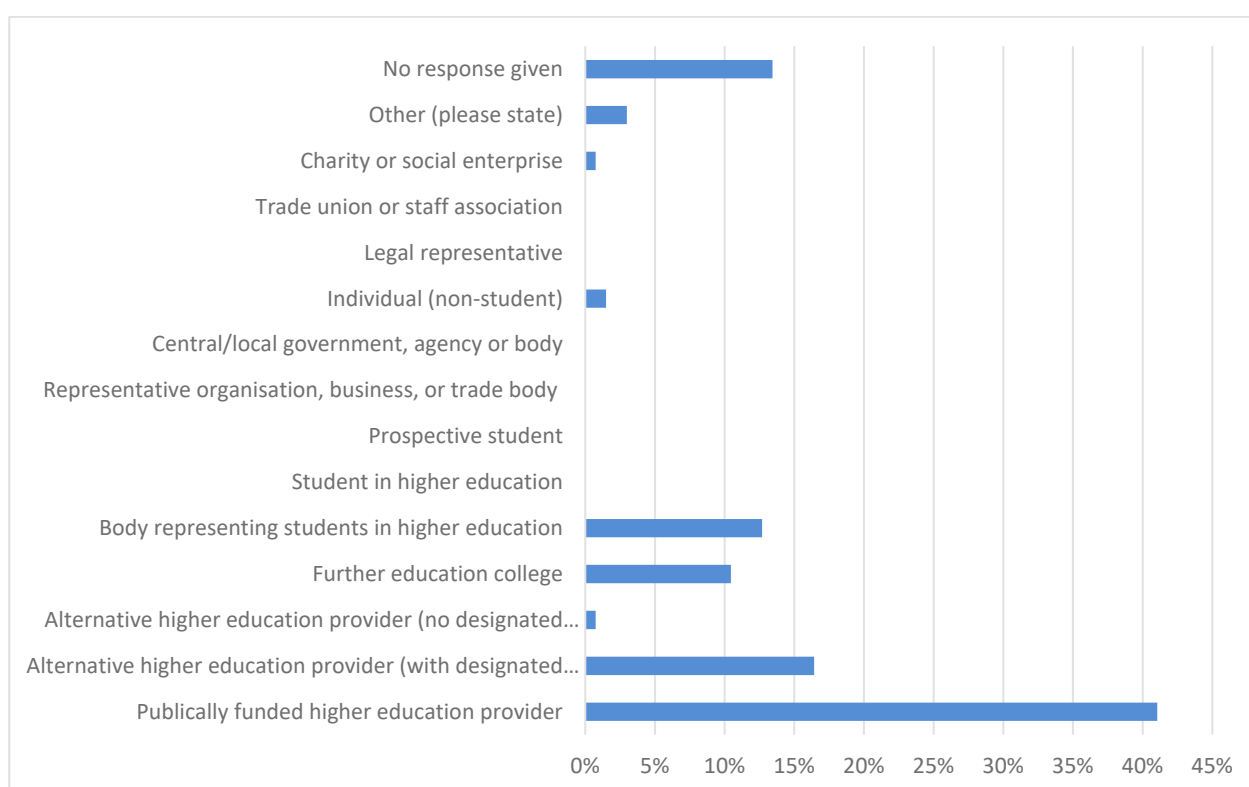
- The potential reporting burdens on providers as information reporting is expected to be in as near to real time as possible.
- A need for the DDB to support providers through the transition to more real time information.
- The need for the DDB to better understand the diversity of alternative providers and further education colleges and ensure they are represented throughout it's governance, groups and committees.
- Any fees charged by the DDB are proportionate, provide value for money for students and providers and reflect the differences in the scale and funding of providers.

Question analysis

We asked respondents a series of questions on the DDB. Respondents could answer the questions digitally via the online survey or through written responses sent through to us via email or post. The following report is a factual summary of the responses received, which numbered 134 in total.

Questions 1-2

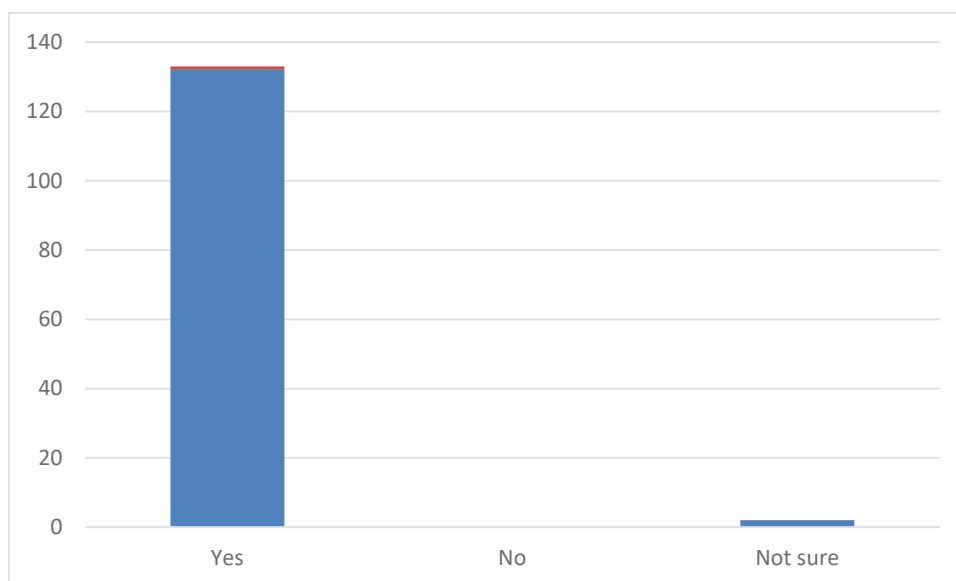
These questions invited the respondents to provide their names, organisation and location in order for us to explore the results by strata. The breakdown of respondents is contained in the chart and table, below.



Option	Total	Percent
Publically funded higher education provider	55	41%
Alternative higher education provider (with designated courses)	22	16%
Alternative higher education provider (no designated courses)	1	1%
Further education college	14	10%
Body representing students in higher education	17	13%
Student in higher education	0	0%
Prospective student	0	0%
Representative organisation, business, or trade body	0	0%
Central/local government, agency or body	0	0%
Individual (non-student)	2	1%
Legal representative	0	0%
Trade union or staff association	0	0%
Charity or social enterprise	1	1%
Other (please state)	4	3%
No response given	18	13%

Question 3

Please state whether, in your opinion, HESA is capable of meeting all of the designation conditions



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	132	99%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	2	1%

All except 2 respondents felt that HESA is capable of meeting all the designation conditions. Both respondents who were 'not sure' expressed concerns in their further information comments related to:

- Ensuring the views of the full spectrum of independent providers are represented through established networks and forums, given the diversity of these providers.
- That reporting requirements on providers are not too onerous and ensuring the data captured is seen in context.
- Concerns that data provided will be used for commercial purposes by the DDB and that these concerns are reflected in the role.

These concerns are not unique to HESA and reflect broader concerns on any body taking on the role. They will be picked up in the detailed discussions following any designation.

Question 4

If you believe that an organisation that did not submit an expression of interest would be more suitable for the role you can provide their details below, if you wish.

No suggestions were provided for an alternative organisation that would be more suitable for the DDB role.

Next steps

The OfS will consider the responses to this consultation and provide a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will then make the decision. The OfS assessment will be based upon evidence from this consultation as well as any other relevant information. The OfS may request further information from HESA in order to assess their suitability.

Annex A: List of organisations that responded to the consultation

- Arts University Bournemouth
- Association of Colleges
- Aston Students' Union
- Beds SU
- Birmingham Metropolitan College
- Bournemouth University
- BPP University
- Brunel University London
- Burnley College
- Charity offering courses at Level 5, 6 and 7
- Christ Church Students' Union
- City, University of London
- De Montfort University
- Dexter Claw Ltd
- Durham University
- Edge Hill Students' Union
- Foundation for International Education
- GuildHE
- Harper Adams University
- Hartpury College
- Hartpury Students' Union
- Hereford College of Arts
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- Huddersfield Students' Union
- ICMP
- Imperial College London
- Independent Higher Education
- INTO University Partnerships
- Kensington Education Foundation Ltd T/A Kensington College of Business

- KLC School of Design
- LAMDA
- Lancaster University
- Lancaster University Students' Union
- London Higher
- London Metropolitan University
- London South Bank University
- London Studio Centre
- Loughborough University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Middlesex University
- MillionPlus
- Milton Keynes College
- Mixed Economy Group of Colleges
- Myerscough College
- National Union of Students
- Navitas Holdings UK
- NCG
- Nelson and Colne College
- Newbold College of Higher Education
- North Hertfordshire College
- Norwich University of the Arts
- Nottingham Trent Students' Union
- Nottingham Trent University
- Pearson College Limited trading as Pearson College London
- Pearson Education
- Ravensbourne
- Reading University Students' Union (RUSU)
- Regent's University London
- Richmond, the American International University in London
- Roehampton University

- SAE Education Limited
- Sheffield Hallam University
- South Devon College
- Southampton Solent University
- Spurgeon's College
- St George's, University of London
- Study Group
- Sunderland College
- The Academy of Contemporary Music
- The Arts Educational Schools
- The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS)
- The Institute of Cancer Research
- The London Institute of Banking & Finance
- The Open University
- The Russell Group
- The salvation Army (William Booth College)
- The SU University of Bath
- The Union Manchester Metropolitan University
- The University of Law
- The university of Manchester
- Truro & Penwith College
- UEL Students' Union
- Union of Brunel Students
- Universities UK
- University Alliance
- University Centre Weston, part of Weston College Group
- University for the Creative Arts
- University of Brighton
- University of Cambridge
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Cumbria

- University of Cumbria Students' Union
- University of East Anglia (UEA)
- University of East London
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Essex
- University of Exeter
- University of Kent
- University of Leeds
- University of Leicester Students' Union
- University of Lincoln
- University of Nottingham
- University of Portsmouth
- University of Reading
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University of St Andrews
- University of St Mark and St John
- University of Suffolk
- University of Sussex
- University of Warwick
- University of Westminster
- University of Winchester
- University of Wolverhampton
- University of York
- University of York (but I am responding in a personal capacity)
- Waverley Abbey College
- Yeovil College University Centre
- York St John University

A number of individuals/organisations requested their responses were kept confidential.

Annex B: HESA Expression of interest for the role of the DDB

A copy of HESA's expression of interest is available at

https://consult.education.gov.uk/higher-education/designated-data-body-for-higher-education-in-engla/supporting_documents/HESA_Expression_of_Interest.pdf



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