

## Student Information

### Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

RPC rating: **validated**

#### Description of proposal

HEFCE has recently reviewed the information it collects from higher education providers and presents to stakeholders – most importantly, students who are selecting courses. As a result of the review, it has decided:

- To maintain and improve the Unistats site (which presents key information, in a comparable format, about undergraduate courses in a comparable format);
- To remove some of the information currently collected and published centrally by HEFCE and to develop guidance on the course information provided through institutions' own websites from 2017;
- To update the National Student Survey (NSS), so that student decision-making is better informed, to improve learning and teaching, and to support quality assessment from 2017.

Thus, higher education institutions (HEIs), further education colleges (FECs), and alternative providers (APs) offering higher education, will be expected to present, on their own websites, detailed, nuanced, and comparable information about course structure, delivery, and costs. They will also be asked to submit a reduced data return for publication on the Unistats website.

#### Impacts of proposal

The proposal affects three distinct types of organisations.

- 133 higher education institutions in receipt of HEFCE funding
- 207 further education colleges offering HE, which are directly funded by HEFCE
- 93 alternative providers (APs) with designation for student support (and who submitted an AP student return in 2015-16).

#### Impacts on HEIs and FECs

As a result of the need to alter their websites to present the required, information, HEIs and FECs will incur initial costs and ongoing costs of updating the

information. They will gain some benefit from the reduced scope of HEFCE's data-gathering exercise.

Total one-off costs to HEIs and FECs are estimated of £385,000 and total ongoing costs at £144,000 - £157,000 per annum; these are based on an assessment of IT and sign-off requirements by HEFCE's own IT contractors and on administrative data about staff salaries at these institutions.

### **Impacts on APs**

APs will incur website costs similar to those estimated for HEIs and FECs, and have been estimated on the same basis. The requirement to submit information to HEFCE for publication via Unistats had, however, not previously been placed on APs, so they will incur costs, but will not gain benefits. They will also be required to respond to HEFCE's Destinations of Leavers from the Higher Education survey (DLHE) and the National Student Survey (NSS).

One-off costs of collecting data for the two surveys are estimated, based on data from existing respondents, at a total of £1.05M.

The costs to APs of providing data for publication on the Unistats site are estimated at £206K in the first year, increasing in line with salary growth for HE staff in subsequent years

The RPC verifies the estimated equivalent annual net direct cost to business (EANDCB) of £1.8 million; this will be a qualifying regulatory provision that will score under the business impact target.

### **Quality of submission**

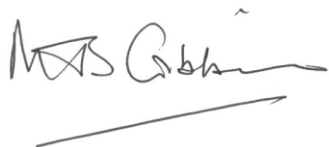
The proposal is clearly and concisely written and HEFCE has given a detailed breakdown of the proposal's impacts. The costings are quite clear and it is easy to follow the different sections. HEFCE notes that this is an entirely new process on which HEIs, APs and others do not yet have sufficient information to make informed estimates of the burden; as a result, its assumptions are somewhat speculative. It plans to review actual costs and update its assessment in 2018, when the scheme will have been in place for a year.

### Departmental assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision (IN)
Equivalent annual net cost to business (EANDCB)	£1.8 million
Business net present value	-£16.35 million

### RPC assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision (IN)
EANDCB – RPC validated <sup>1</sup>	£1.8 million
Business Impact Target (BIT) Score <sup>1</sup>	£9 million
Small and micro business assessment	Not required



**Michael Gibbons CBE**, Chairman

<sup>1</sup> For reporting purposes, the RPC validates EANDCB and BIT score figures to the nearest £100,000.