**Invitation to Make a Submission to Public Consultation on Mature Student Participation in Higher Education**

**Background**

Indecon International Consultants have been appointed by the HEA to undertake research on the issues and challenges associated with first-time mature student participation in higher education and to make recommendations for how access to, and participation in, higher education by mature students can be supported in the future. The full terms of reference can be downloaded [here](#).

**Submission Process**

Interested parties are invited to provide written responses on any aspects of the terms of reference, including on the following:

a) The issues, barriers and challenges associated with participation in higher education by current and potential first-time mature students, including specific issues faced by Irish Travellers, students with a disability, lone parents, and students disadvantaged by socio-economic barriers.

b) The supporting structures, guidance systems and community structures that are associated with increased mature student participation.

c) The models of education delivery, teaching and learning approaches and peer support models that support increased mature student participation and student success.

d) The role of other education providers in delivering the National Access Plan mature student targets.

e) The supports are working well and what might be regarded as deficits and to consider the alignment of policies in the areas of education, skills, employment and social protection.

This process represents an opportunity for individuals and organisations to provide additional data and research, or other inputs and perspectives on the above aspects, and submissions received will input to the research and to policy decisions in this area. You are encouraged in your submission to be as specific and detailed as possible when providing information. Interested parties are invited to submit responses by email or post on the above matter to Indecon at the contact details below. **A closing date for submissions of 31st March 2020 will be strictly applied, and submissions received by close of business on this date will be considered as part of the study process.**

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When responding, please indicate whether you are contributing to the consultation process as a representative body, an education or training provider, a mature student learner (either current, former or prospective) or other member of the public.
Publication of Submissions and Freedom of Information

Please note that the information provided in the submission form will represent an input to this independent study, and may also be shared with relevant Government Departments and State organisations. The HEA may also publish submissions received under this consultation. However, if you wish to submit information that you consider sensitive, please identify that information in your submission and give reasons for considering it sensitive. The HEA will consult with you regarding such information before making a decision to disclose it.

GDPR

Indecon fully respects your right to privacy and actively seeks to preserve the privacy rights of those who share information with the Indecon. Any personal information which you volunteer to Indecon will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, in accordance with Irish and European Data Protection legislation. Personal data will be processed shall in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018. A copy of Indecon’s data Privacy Notice can be supplied on request to William H. Batt at Indecon (e-mail: whbatt@indecon.ie).