Graduate Outcomes Survey

# Guidance for higher education institutions

# Introduction

The annual graduate outcomes survey is in place for the survey of graduates of 2024, taking place in Q2 2025. The survey is collected in respect of graduates of higher education institutions (HEIs) approximately nine months after their completion of study. The data submitted in the record is obtained through a survey instrument, centrally defined by the HEA and locally managed by HEIs.

This document provides guidance on how to undertake the survey. This content is liable to change each year and will take account of feedback from the exercise.

# Survey timeframe

The annual graduate outcomes survey has one census date, 31 March of each year. The date chosen aims to provide a picture of graduate activity approximately nine months after completion of the graduate’s programme of study.

Therefore, completed questionnaires should be stored safely until the data needs to be returned to the HEA.

There is a contact period for each survey which sets out when HEIs should contact graduates. Each HEI should identify the most appropriate time period for contacting graduates.

The data return file is to be uploaded to the HEA **strictly** by **the first Friday of September**.

HEIs should ensure that a closing date for the survey is selected so that the quality assurance processes that are carried out on the data internally are completed well in advance of the submission deadline.

* The compilation of a dataset for return to the HEA might require input, scrutiny and / or sign-off from careers offices, IT / MIS offices, registrars, etc. within the HEI.
* Those responsible for managing the survey should ensure that relevant staff are available (e.g., not on leave) from these areas at key points of the process.
* Data must be submitted on or before **the first Friday of September**. Failure to upload data by this point will be considered a late return.
* The upload facility will be open well in advance of this deadline and submissions can be made during the Summer months.

The final date for sign-off is **the third Friday of September**. These deadlines are included in the data sharing agreements with each HEI.

A further fortnight is given for the HEA auditing and sign-off process. During this process, HEIs will be provided with audit files for scrutiny and sign-off. In some cases, a reload of data might be required.

* Data and coding should be as accurate as possible before submission to the HEA and the upload facility should not be used as a means of returning incomplete data with multiple reloads required.
* Any reloads and subsequent sign-off of data must be completed by the third Friday in September 2024.
* Reloads must require input, scrutiny and/or sign-off from careers offices, IT/MIS offices, registrars, etc. within the HEI. Sign-off will require signature from careers offices and registrars.
* Those responsible for managing the survey should ensure that relevant staff are available (e.g., not on leave) from these areas at key points of the process.
* The final sign-off of data must be completed on or before the third Friday in September 2024. Failure to meet this deadline will be considered a late return.
* The upload facility will be open well in advance of this deadline and submissions can be made during the Summer months. The HEA will facilitate sign-off of the data well in advance of these deadlines.

Consideration should be given well in advance of either deadline of the availability of key staff to successfully provide the HEA with accurate and timely data that can be signed off by the deadlines above.

# Method of survey administration

The survey is undertaken by graduates answering a number of questions by way of a questionnaire. A centralised system using Banner self-service has been developed for institutes of technology and technological universities. However, an institution may use any system it feels most appropriate for administration of the survey.

In relation to the Banner system (IoTs and TUs), the survey should first be sent to all relevant graduates electronically and graduates should be able to log into the system using their login details and fill in the survey from there. The HEI can then follow up with graduates who have not responded after a period of time. The results of the survey will be captured in a file that can be downloaded by the HEI. There will also be a file to be uploaded to the HEA by first Friday in September 2024.

In order to obtain good response rates, HEIs will likely need to make follow-up phone calls to graduates. Therefore, the survey will also be carried out by HEI staff who fill in responses on behalf of the graduate.

It has come to our attention that in a small number of cases/programmes/HEIs a disproportionate number of graduates have been categorised as being in “Other Activity”. On closer inspection of this data, it appears that callers have been logging non-responses (i.e. graduates who do not answer the phone) as responses with “Other Activity”. Please be vigilant to ensure that this miscoding of non-response does not occur.

# Occupation and Sector coding

One of the most detailed parts of the questionnaire relates to the coding of a graduate’s occupation and employment sector.

Institutions might find that the following tools could be of use when undertaking phone calls with graduates.

Occupation: [Occupation Coding tool](https://cascotweb.warwick.ac.uk/#/classification/soc2020)

A graduate’s occupation can be entered into the “Job Title” search box. This will then provide a list of potential matches. The first digit associated with the correct match will give the correct occupation code. This should assist caller staff in identifying the correct occupation heading.

Sector:

[EU NACE Classification](https://showvoc.op.europa.eu/#/datasets/ESTAT_Statistical_Classification_of_Economic_Activities_in_the_European_Community_Rev._2.1._%28NACE_2.1%29/data)

EU wide NACE classifications are to be used from 2025. These are outlined in the above link and also in Appendix 1 to this document.

Details of how-to code Art and Design occupations and sectors are given in Appendix 2 to this document.

# Cohort to be surveyed

The cohort of graduates to be included in the survey is set out in a separate document.

# Items required for response

The code book sets out the fields that require response as part of a valid and complete return to the HEA.

It can been seen from the documentation that not all fields/responses are compulsory for return to the HEA. This means that the HEA will accept empty responses in the case of a number of questions. However, institutions should ensure that all such questions are asked of graduates. The purpose of allowing some empty responses is to maximise the number of graduate records returned to the HEA. In the case where a graduate might skip a question, or leave an answer blank, the HEA would not wish for an otherwise complete record to be invalid for return to the HEA. However, this should not be mistaken as meaning that the question should not be asked of the graduate at all. This approach has been taken following feedback from HEIs on the disposition of graduates to respond to all survey questions, and will be kept under review by the HEA.

If a graduate has indicated that their main activity is employment, and responses have been provided up to Q.2J, this can be considered a complete response and can be returned to the HEA. If a graduate has indicated that their main activity is further study, and responses have been provided up to Q.3F, this can be considered a complete response and can be returned to the HEA. If a graduate has indicated that their main activity is unemployment, and responses have been provided up to Q.4A, this can be considered a complete response and can be returned to the HEA. If a graduate has indicated that their main activity is Other, and responses have been provided up to Q.4B, this can be considered a complete response and can be returned to the HEA.

PPSNs are a required item of response for every graduate in the survey where possible, noting that some graduates will not have a PPSN. This is in accordance with the HEA Act 2022 49(1a).

It is very important to note that the Graduate Outcomes Survey is a national survey and questions should remain consistent between HEIs to ensure comparability at national level.

# Retention of Data

The GOS data should be retained for a period of 12 months after its submission, provided the HEA have no queries on it.**Appendix 1 – NACE Coding Sheet**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Two Digit Code | Sector Broad Code |
| 01 Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities | **Agriculture, forestry and fishing** |
| 02 Forestry and logging | **Agriculture, forestry and fishing** |
| 03 Fishing and aquaculture | **Agriculture, forestry and fishing** |
| 05 - 09 Mining and Quarrying |  |
| 10 Manufacture of food products | **Industry** |
| 11 Manufacture of beverages | **Industry** |
| 13 Manufacture of textiles | **Industry** |
| 14 Manufacture of wearing apparel | **Industry** |
| 16 Manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials | **Industry** |
| 17 Manufacture of paper and paper products | **Industry** |
| 18 Printing and reproduction of recorded media | **Industry** |
| 20 Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products | **Industry** |
| 21 Manufacture of basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations | **Industry** |
| 22 Manufacture of rubber and plastic products | **Industry** |
| 23 Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products | **Industry** |
| 24 Manufacture of basic metals | **Industry** |
| 25 Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment | **Industry** |
| 26 Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products | **Industry** |
| 27 Manufacture of electrical equipment | **Industry** |
| 28 Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c. | **Industry** |
| 29 Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers | **Industry** |
| 31 Manufacture of furniture | **Industry** |
| 32 Other manufacturing | **Industry** |
| 33 Repair and installation of machinery and equipment | **Industry** |
| 35 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply | **Industry** |
| 36 Water collection, treatment and supply |  |
| 38 Waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery | **Industry** |
| 41 Construction of buildings | **Construction** |
| 42 Civil engineering | **Construction** |
| 43 Specialised construction activities | **Construction** |
| 45 Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles | **Wholesale and retail trade** |
| 46 Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles | **Wholesale and retail trade** |
| 47 Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles | **Wholesale and retail trade** |
| 49 Land transport and transport via pipelines | **Transportation and storage** |
| 50 Water transport | **Transportation and storage** |
| 51 Air transport | **Transportation and storage** |
| 52 Warehousing and support activities for transportation | **Transportation and storage** |
| 53 Postal and courier activities | **Transportation and storage** |
| 55 Accommodation | **Accommodation and food services** |
| 56 Food and beverage service activities | **Accommodation and food services** |
| 58 Publishing activities | **Information and communication** |
| 59 Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities | **Information and communication** |
| 60 Programming and broadcasting activities | **Information and communication** |
| 61 Telecommunications | **Information and communication** |
| 62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities | **Information and communication** |
| 63 Information service activities | **Information and communication** |
| 64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding | **Financial, insurance and real estate** |
| 65 Insurance, reinsurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security | **Financial, insurance and real estate** |
| 66 Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities | **Financial, insurance and real estate** |
| 68 Real estate activities | **Financial, insurance and real estate** |
| 69 Legal and accounting activities | **Financial, insurance and real estate** |
| 70 Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities | **Financial, insurance and real estate** |
| 71 Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 72 Scientific research and development | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 73 Advertising and market research | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 74 Other professional, scientific and technical activities | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 75 Veterinary activities | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 77 Renting and leasing activities | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 78 Employment activities | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 79 Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 80 Security and investigation activities | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 81 Services to buildings and landscape activities | **Professional, scientific and technical** |
| 82 Office administrative, office support and other business support activities | **Administrative and support service** |
| 84 Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | **Public administration and defence** |
| 85 Education | **Education** |
| 86 Human health activities | **Human health and social work** |
| 87 Residential care activities | **Other**  |
| 88 Social work activities without accommodation | **Other**  |
| 90 Creative, arts and entertainment activities | **Other**  |
| 91 Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities | **Other**  |
| 92 Gambling and betting activities | **Other**  |
| 93 Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities | **Other**  |
| 94 Activities of membership organisations | **Other**  |
| 95 Repair of computers and personal and household goods | **Other**  |
| 96 Other personal service activities | **Other**  |
| 97 Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel | **Other**  |

**Appendix 2 – Art and Design Occupations and Sectors**

**Occupations**

**MANAGERS, DIRECTORS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS**

1115 Chief executives

12 Managers and Proprietors in Other Services

1259 Managers and proprietors in other services n.e.c.

**PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS**

2139 Information technology and telecommunications professionals n.e.c.

2212 Psychologists

2424 Business and financial project management professionals

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS**

34 CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORTS OCCUPATIONS

341 Artistic, Literary and Media Occupations

3411 Artists

3412 Authors, writers and translators

3413 Actors, entertainers and presenters

3414 Dancers and choreographers

3415 Musicians

3416 Arts officers, producers and directors

3417 Photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators

342 Design Occupations

3421 Graphic designers

3422 Product, clothing and related designers

**SKILLED TRADES OCCUPATIONS**

5242 Telecommunications engineers

5244 TV, video and audio engineers

541 Textiles and Garments Trades

5411 Weavers and knitters

5412 Upholsterers

5413 Footwear and leather working trades

5414 Tailors and dressmakers

5419 Textiles, garments and related trades n.e.c.

**Sectors**

**Industry**

Textiles

Wearing apparel

Wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture

Paper and paper products

Printing and reproduction of recorded media

Fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment

**Information and communication**

Publishing activities

Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities

Programming and broadcasting activities

**Professional, scientific and technical activities**

Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis

**Education**

Education

**Other**

Residential care activities

Social work activities without accommodation

Creative, arts and entertainment activities