



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

## Unistats 2021: Timetable and arrangements for the submission and publication of data

**SFC Guidance**

Issue Date: 7 May 2021

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Reference: SFC/GD/04/2021

Summary: This publication outlines arrangements for the 2021 Unistats data collection (also referred to by the HESA definition of C21061). In addition it provides an update on the further development of the Discover Uni resource.

This publication is for higher education providers in Scotland.

**Please note:** the dates and deadlines set out below may be subject to change in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

FAO: Principals of Scotland's universities

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## Contents

Arrangements for Unistats 2021 .....	4
Providers required to return Unistats data .....	4
Arrangements for returns for subcontracted provision.....	4
Process for submission and sign-off of data .....	5
Timetable of key dates .....	6
Further development of the Discover Uni website.....	7
Unistats widget.....	7

## Arrangements for Unistats 2021

1. This publication outlines arrangements for the 2021 Unistats data collection (also referred to by the HESA definition of C21061). In addition it provides an update on the further development of the Discover Uni resource.
2. This publication is for higher education providers in Scotland.
3. **Please note:** the dates and deadlines set out below may be subject to change in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

### Providers required to return Unistats data

4. The following higher education providers are required to return Unistats data:
  - Providers in England that are registered with the Office for Students (OfS).
  - Publicly funded providers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
5. Data should be returned for eligible courses delivered by the provider itself or by other providers on its behalf through a sub-contractual agreement. Eligible courses are defined in the [coverage of the Unistats record](#) on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) website.

### Arrangements for returns for sub-contracted provision

6. Registering providers should include in their return any eligible courses delivered by another provider on their behalf through a sub-contractual agreement.
7. The exception to this is where a teaching provider delivers its own regulated provision and provision on behalf of another regulated or funded provider. In this case, the teaching provider should return the data for all of its eligible courses. Registering providers remain responsible for ensuring the return is made for their courses.
8. From the Unistats 21 (C21061) Unistats collection, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) has advised that for providers in Wales the Unistats return should be submitted by the registering provider. This means that for cross border arrangements, the provider submitting the data may differ in the C21061 return compared to previous years. Full guidance can be found in HESA's sub-contractual and collaborative provision document for the C21061 collection, which is due to be released shortly.
9. Please note that from Unistats 22 (C22061), the guidance for all providers will be aligned with that for Welsh providers. This means that for providers in

England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Unistats return will need to be submitted by the registering provider. Further information on this change will be communicated ahead of the Unistats 2022 collection.

### **Process for submission and sign-off of data**

10. All providers should return their Unistats data to HESA. [Detailed guidance on the data required](#) is available on the HESA website.
11. The timetable for submission of Unistats data for courses running in 2021-22 is shown in the table below. To ensure that data remains accurate, it is possible to resubmit data to reflect changes to course details or website links throughout the year. We will incorporate these updates every Wednesday after the initial publication.
12. Data must pass a series of system validation checks before it can be submitted and signed off as accurate. Unless all stages of the process, including sign-off, have been completed, we will not consider the data to have been received and will be unable to publish it.
13. The dataset should initially be signed off by the provider's accountable officer, but formal responsibility for signing off any subsequent updates may be delegated to another member of the senior management team. If the accountable officer (usually the head of provider) is unable to sign off the initial return, this should be done by the individual acting in this capacity at the time, and the accountable officer should notify HESA in advance.

## Timetable of key dates

14. **Please note:** these dates may be subject to change in response to the current coronavirus pandemic.

Date	Activity	Notes
<b>By 31 May 2021</b>	<b>C21061 data collection system opens</b>	
<b>Anticipated by 31 July 2021</b>	<b>NSS and Graduate Outcomes data added</b>	NSS and Graduate Outcomes data will be added to the data collection systems and will be visible in the reports. We will confirm the intended publication date.
<b>20 July 2021</b>	<b>Deadline for submission of valid data set</b>	Providers are required to have submitted a dataset which passes validation and contains the majority of their courses.
<b>20 July 2021</b>	<b>Nil return confirmation</b>	Providers are required to submit a Nil return form to indicate that their provider has no courses which meet the eligibility criteria for the Unistats record, as specified in the coverage of the record.
<b>Noon, 17 August 2021</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>	Providers are required to have signed off as accurate a dataset as possible which has passed system validation and is suitable for publication.
<b>Anticipated by October 2021</b>	<b>Official Statistics publication of 2021 Unistats dataset on the HESA website</b>	We will confirm the intended publication date for the 2021 dataset in July 2021.
<b>Anticipated by 7 October 2021</b>	<b>Update of Discover Uni website with 2021 dataset</b>	We will confirm the intended publication date for the 2021 dataset in July 2021.
<b>End November 2021</b>	<b>Deadline for up-to-date widgets on providers' websites</b>	We will confirm the deadline for up-to-date widgets on providers' websites in July 2021.

15. **Please note:** Due to the changes to the application and admissions arrangements for 2021, we may also provide an appropriate and clear message on course results pages on the [Discover Uni website](#). These pages signpost

applicants and potential applicants to providers' websites and course pages to check for any changes to the course before applying or accepting offers.

### **Further development of the Discover Uni website**

16. We are continuing to develop the Discover Uni website, following our updates to the home page, course pages and content in 2020. New designs for a course comparison function to present the Unistats data for multiple courses is now in development. We are also making improvements to the search/filter facility on the website in response to user testing and feedback. We anticipate these updates will be released to the website by the end of July 2021.

### **Unistats widget**

17. In 2020, significant development work was undertaken to the Discover Uni widget to support changes to the Unistats dataset and enhance its design and function. No further changes are planned for the widget in 2021.
18. The widget will continue to provide a direct link to data about the course from providers' course pages. Providers should update their widgets to reflect their Unistats 2021 data and present them on their course pages by the end of November 2021. We will confirm this deadline in July 2021.