

## **HEA Student Data Collection Notice 2024**

### **Who we are (data controllers)**

The HEA has a statutory responsibility for the effective governance and regulation of the higher education system pursuant to the Higher Education Authority Act 2022 and subsequent amending legislation which has extended its remit to encompass Institutes of Technology and more recently Technological Universities. In order to discharge its functions effectively it must process certain categories of personal information. The relevant legislation in relation to the data processing that involves the work of the HEA are the following:

- Higher Education Authority Act 2022
- Social Welfare Act 2005
- Universities Act 1997
- Institutes of Technology Act 2006
- Technological Universities Act 2018

This notice sets out the basis on which any personal data collected from you, or from others, will be processed by the HEA. Please read the following carefully to understand HEA practices regarding your personal data and how the HEA will treat these data.

The HEA Data Protection Officer (“DPO”) may be contacted at [dataprotection@hea.ie](mailto:dataprotection@hea.ie)

### **What personal information does the HEA collect from you or obtain from others?**

The HEA does not, except in limited circumstances, collect data directly from individuals. It is collected by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and passed to the HEA so as that the HEA can process the data so as to perform its statutory functions under the Higher Education Authority Act 2022. The HEA processes the following personal data:

#### **The Student Records System (SRS)**

At registration for the HEI you will be attending, you will give data to your Institution. That data forms the basis of the SRS dataset. The data collected for the SRS is set out in Schedule 1 of this notice.

### **Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS)**

In respect of this survey, you will be contacted approximately 9 months post-graduation by your Institution to fill out the survey. It is conducted on a voluntary basis, although not on the basis of

consent; that is to say that while it is voluntary to partake in the Survey, the HEA does not rely upon Article 6(1)(a), but relies upon the fact the processing is necessary for the performance of a statutory function or Article 6(1)(e). The data collected are set out in Schedule 1 of this notice.

### **The Equal Access Survey (EAS)**

The EAS is conducted by the individual HEI on a voluntary basis. The objective of the EAS is to ask higher education new entrants to answer a set of access related questions as part of the normal registration procedure. Registration in the main occurs in institutions between August and late October each new academic year. The questions relate to students facing social and/or financial barriers to higher education. Like the Graduate Outcomes Survey, the HEA does not rely upon consent as the basis for operating the survey, but upon the necessity to carry out the survey for the performance of its statutory functions and reasons of substantial public interest. The details collected are set out in Schedule 1 of this notice.

### **What other information does the HEA collect from you or obtain from others?**

During your studies, you will be invited to participate in StudentSurvey.ie (Irish Survey of Student Engagement) or PGR StudentSurvey.ie (Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research Students). Some of your information will be sent by your higher education institution directly to the survey company to ensure that the survey is offered only to relevant target groups. Your information will be used to collect your responses to the survey and make further anonymous analysis of results possible, for example, by gender or full-time/ part-time. This anonymised information will be shared with the HEA; your responses will be treated confidentially, and no individual student will be identifiable in any reports or results generated as a result of this survey (and so the information is not 'personal data' for the purposes of the GDPR).

### **Why does the HEA collect this information?**

To fulfil its legislative obligations the Higher Education Authority (HEA) requires an evidence base. This evidence base is provided by gathering individual student level data from the Higher Education Institutions. The primary database maintained in this respect is the Student Records System (SRS). Other datasets maintained by the HEA include the Equal Access Survey (EAS) and the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS).

Currently data is required for the following purposes:

- Trend analysis for annual publications on enrolments and graduates, by student and institute characteristics
- Annual progression analysis of new entrants, by student and institute characteristics
- Tracking of graduate outcomes, by student and institute characteristics
- To inform funding allocation to HEA-funded higher education institutions
- Annual analysis of equity of access metrics of our Higher Education cohort
- Reporting higher education data to international agencies such as the OECD, UNESCO and Eurostat
- Providing data to the Department of Education and DFHERIS to inform their decision-making processes and forecasting analysis
- Provide SUSI with data to inform grant application decisions
- To provide data to the CSO under the Statistics Act 1993
- To track students for completion rate analysis

### **Who the HEA shares your data with:**

The primary purpose the HEA has for collecting data is for statistical analysis in furtherance of its statutory obligations and to inform funding and other decisions made by the HEA. The HEA via its portal system shares personal data relevant to a HEI, with that HEI. The HEA also shares personal data with the following Government departments and public bodies. The HEA ensures that there are data sharing agreements in place with organisation with which data is shared. The table below provides more information regarding what is shared and the reasons for sharing.

*Third party name*

*Purposes for Sharing the data*

*Lawful Basis for Sharing*

The Department of Education	The HEA shares identifiable microdata with the Department of Education to allow for transitions rate analysis from 2nd level to 3rd level and to produce 3rd level demand projections. Data are also shared to allow for detailed geographic participation rate analysis and monitor access and outcomes for disadvantaged students.	Data is shared with other Government Departments and agencies to allow them to carry out their statutory functions. The sharing is allowed under Section 51 of the HEA Act.
The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science	The HEA shares disaggregated course level data with DFHERIS to inform policy and allow analysis of the third level education sector.	Data is shared with other Government Departments and agencies to allow them to carry out their statutory functions. The sharing is allowed under Section 51 of the HEA Act 2022
The Central Statistics Office	The HEA shares identifiable microdata with the CSO to analyse graduate outcomes and to measure the effectiveness of the higher education system. HEA data is linked to other Government administrative datasets in the CSO.	Statistics Act 1993 and a memorandum of understanding dated 4th February 2015.
SUSI – part of the CDET B (City of Dublin Education and Training Board)	The HEA matches SUSI grant application data to HEA student record data using PPSN to verify previous attendance at HEA-funded institutions. SUSI data may be used in the HEA to allow for analysis of outcomes for disadvantaged students, including grant code, PPSN and year of study.	The SUSI data sharing agreement has its lawful basis under section 28 of the Student Support Act 2011 and Section 51 of the HEA Act 2022.
QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland)	The HEA shares disaggregated course level data with QQI to allow them to conduct analysis of third-level graduates, including grades analysis, by year, institute, gender, age, course name, and field of study.	The QQI data sharing agreement has its lawful basis under Section 51 of the Higher Education Authority Act 2022 which allows for the sharing of personal data between the HEA and a public body as is necessary and proportionate, which come to its attention in the course of performing its

functions, and which relate to one or more of the functions of that body.

CAO (Central Applications Office)	The HEA shares microdata including CAO number with CAO to conduct research examining the factors which effect progression between academic years in higher education institutions, including the effect of preference level on progression.	Section 51 of the HEA Act 2022  Article 89 of GDPR provides that processing of personal data for scientific research or statistical purposes shall be, subject to appropriate safeguards, in accordance with GDPR.
SOLAS	The HEA shares identifiable microdata with SOLAS to allow for transitions rate analysis from further education to higher education and to track progress and outcomes for FE entrants into HE.	Data is shared with other Government Departments and agencies to allow them to carry out their statutory functions. The sharing is allowed under Section 51 of the HEA Act 2022.
External Contractors	The HEA, on occasion, contract external bodies to process microdata in order to fulfil statutory functions, e.g., geocoding of student address data.	Contracts are organised through the OGP and data processing agreements are in place where necessary.

### **Data processors**

The HEA shares certain personal data with other organisations acting as processors, subject to appropriate data processing agreements and due diligence.

### **Anonymised sharing**

The HEA also shares statistical data with other Government departments and researchers who may benefit from same. This data is not personal data within the definition of Regulation 2016/679. Such aggregated data is shared in a form where the data subject is not identifiable and is shared from the

SRS, EAS and GOS databases. The HEA Statistics Unit has a process in place to govern this non-personal sharing.

### **How long does the HEA keep hold of your information?**

The time periods for which the HEA retain your information depends on the type of information and the purposes for which it is used. The HEA will keep your information for no longer than is required or permitted.

Student level data collected in the Student Records System and via the Graduate Outcomes Survey and the Equal Access Survey are required to fulfil the statutory functions of the HEA. Student level data, including PPSN, is required to verify eligibility under the free fees scheme and for SUSI grant eligibility. PPSN is also required to link HEA data to other administrative Government datasets both within the HEA and in the CSO. Longitudinal analysis of these linked datasets allows the HEA and the Department of Education to formulate more effective education policy, measure the societal value and impact of the education system, measure outcomes <sup>2</sup> including for disadvantaged cohorts, and direct investment appropriately. For these purposes, student level data will be retained by the HEA from return year 2004 data currently in the system for a period of forty years <sup>2</sup> the majority of the active labour market years for students/graduates. Please note that student level data is stored securely in the HEA and is only shared with authorised bodies specified in legislation and/or the student data collection notice presented to students at registration. The identity of students is never disclosed to unauthorised third parties.

For further details on the applicable retention periods, please contact the HEA Data Protection Officer at [dataprotection@hea.ie](mailto:dataprotection@hea.ie)

### **Does the HEA transfer your information outside The European Union or European Economic Area?**

Not at present. Any processing which may take place outside the EU or EEA will only be carried out with all necessary safeguards and in accordance with the GDPR.

### **What are your rights with respect to your personal data?**

You have the following rights:

- The right to access the personal data the HEA holds about you.
- The right to require the HEA to rectify any inaccurate personal data about you without undue delay.
- The right to object to processing in the context of Article 21 GDPR

You may exercise any of the above rights by contacting the HEA Data Protection Officer at [dataprotection@hea.ie](mailto:dataprotection@hea.ie)

You may lodge a complaint with the Office of the Data Protection Commission in respect to our processing of your personal data. The website is [www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie)

To ensure your privacy and to protect the integrity of your data, the HEA will require you to verify your identity with a photographic ID before releasing or correcting your information, should we have a reasonable doubt as to your identity.

### **What will happen if the HEA change the data collection notice?**

This notice may change each year. This notice is applicable to the 2024/2025 academic year. A revised notice will issue in the event of any future changes.

### **How can you contact the HEA?**

The HEA Data Protection Officer can be contacted by email at [dataprotection@hea.ie](mailto:dataprotection@hea.ie)

By phone: 01 231 7100

Address: 3 Shelbourne Buildings, Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

More detail on the HEA's data processing activities can be found via the Data Privacy Notice- [https://hea.ie/about-us/data\\_protection/](https://hea.ie/about-us/data_protection/)

## **Data Collection Notice: Schedule 1**

### **List of data items the HEA collect or obtain from higher education institutions, 2024/2025 Academic Year**

The data higher education institutions send to the HEA include, student records:

Return year

Institute code

Academic year

Programme name

Programme code

Programme type

Anticipated length of programme in years

Faculty title & code

NFQ level

Course name

Subject indicator

CAO code

Co-ordinating institutions

Outreach, off campus marker

Awarding body

Funding indicator

Add-on indicator to mark add-on courses recognising previous credit for entry



Course completion credits

Full time credits per year

Course class indicator

Teacher training marker

Student ID

CAO number

PPS number

Enrol status, student or graduate

Course code

Course year

Mode of study

ISCED code – field of study

Subject 1

Subject 2

Subject 3

Subject 4

Non-Standard award code

Grade for award

PhD structure indicator

Student code to indicate type of student, e.g., new entrant

Non-Standard attendance tag

Exchange indicator

Gender

Date of birth

First name

Surname

Domiciliary of origin

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Address 4

Address 5

County

Eircode

Postal code for Dublin students

Nationality

Non-EU fee indicator

Residence type during term-time

Fees – free fees indicator

Post-Primary school number

Leaving Cert points

Leaving Cert year

Leaving Cert exam results

Last Institution attended

Year left last institution

Highest qualification

Accumulated credits

Current year credits

Up-skilling initiative indicator, e.g. Springboard

Fund indicator for students funded through the Fund for Students with a Disability Basis of entry to course

Student Grant/DES Grant <sup>1</sup>

These data form part of the HEA Student Record System (SRS) database.

<sup>1</sup> Note: this does not relate to SUSI grant data. This field collects data on the PATH2 scheme.

**Equal Access Survey:**

Data collected as part of the Equal Access Survey is also returned to the HEA. Data sent to the HEA as part of this process include:

Return year

Institution code

Academic year

Student ID

Course code

Blind or deaf indicator

Physical disability indicator

Learning disability indicator

Psychological, emotional, or mental health indicator

Other condition indicator

Support requirement

Parental status

One parent allowance status

Ethnic culture

Home or term accommodation

Commuting time

**Graduate Outcomes Survey:**

The following Graduate Outcomes Survey data will be sent to the HEA:

PPS number

Student ID

Date of birth

County code

Domiciliary of origin code

Gender

Mode of study

Grade of award

Institute name

Course code

Course name

ISCED field of study information

NFQ Level

Programme type code

Year of graduation

Return year

Response – yes, no or continuing graduate

Principal economic status – main

Principal economic status – all

Job title

Occupation (broad)

Organisation

Employment (where)

Employment Ireland

Employment overseas

Sector (broad)

Employment type

Contract type

Salary

Placement/work experience/internship

Placement/work experience/internship (time)

Relevance of course

Need for qualification indicator

Find out about job indicator

Institution (where)

Institution Ireland

Institution overseas

Further institution indicator

Further course name

Further ISCED field of study

Award sought in further study

Further mode of study

Why do further study indicator

Other activity A – unemployment status

Other activity B – other activities

Barriers to employment/further study

Same course again indicator

Follow up willingness indicator

HEA SRS data, Equal Access Survey data and Graduate Outcomes Survey data are linked in the HEA for analysis purposes via Student ID and/or PPSN.

If there are any amendments to the data collection described above, the HEA engages in a process involving updating of Data Privacy Impact Assessments (DPIAs) where necessary,

and communication with HEI Data Protection Officers.