

The Ross-CASE Survey of Gifts and Costs 2010/11

Data Release Protocol

October 2011

Introduction

This protocol describes the rules governing release of data for the Ross-CASE Survey in 2010/11. They have been developed by NatCen in consultation with the Ross Group and the Ross-CASE Survey Steering Group.

The survey is managed by the Ross-CASE Survey Editorial Board, which comprises representatives of the Ross Group of Development Directors, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Europe. The Editorial Board works in conjunction with the Ross Group to oversee the specification, management and reporting of the study and to act as a custodian of the survey data. Members of the Ross Group have undertaken analysis and reporting of previous surveys' reports and so are well-placed to oversee technical issues for the survey.

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) is the survey contractor appointed to conduct the survey, analyse and publish the results and release data within the constraints of this protocol.

In summary, the protocol states how the data provided in 2010/11 will be reported and the rules governing further access to the data.

Published report

The *main published report* will present an overview of the findings for UK institutions with appropriate comparisons with the time series of previous surveys. This report will comprise aggregated average yearly data based on both data from the most recent survey year and data over the three year period the survey covers. Aggregate groups, such as Mission Groups and UK universities, may be used so long as there are enough institutions in such groups to ensure confidentiality and provide reliable estimates. Data for individual institutions ('disaggregated data') will not be published in the main report.

Customised benchmarking reports

Participating institutions will be entitled to receive a private report of the aggregate income and cost results for similar institutions, for the purpose of benchmarking. So that the confidentiality of costs data for individual institutions will be preserved, these groups of similar institutions will comprise data for at least six participating institutions.

These benchmarking reports would be available after the main report(s) have been published. The precise rules governing them will be formulated by the Steering Group and publicised by the time that the main report is published.

Institutional reports

Some *institutional reports*, showing disaggregated data for individual institutions, will also be released but on a confidential basis.

HEFCE and possibly BIS will receive an institutional report for English institutions that shows their individual income and cost data. HEFCE / BIS may publish income data for individual institutions but will not publish cost data. For Welsh institutions similar arrangements will apply as regards HEFCW and the Welsh Assembly Government.

In addition, nominated members of the Ross-CASE Survey Steering Group will receive on a confidential basis an institutional report showing the disaggregated data for institutions participating in the study. This institutional report will assist that sub-group in monitoring the quality of the study data. It will not be published.

Data sharing between institutions

The survey and the benchmarking service offered to every participant is firmly based on the principle that all published data will be anonymised. However, as last year, this year the questionnaire has a question – 24 – which provides each survey participant with the opportunity to join a data sharing group if they so wish. Participation is entirely voluntary and those choosing this option will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement before any data is shared.

If you say yes, NatCen will include your answers in a spreadsheet, along with those of other institutions who agree, which will be circulated to those agreeing to participate on a confidential basis after the publication of the survey report (expected March 2012). If you answer no or the question is left blank, NatCen will assume you do not wish your answers to be shared with others, and the normal arrangements regarding confidentiality will apply.

Data access for further analysis

The survey data will be held confidentially by NatCen. Access to the data will be restricted to NatCen and nominated representatives of the Ross-CASE Survey Steering Group who have responsibility for overseeing the technical execution of the Survey or carrying out licensed further analyses.

Data may be used for further analysis where this is approved by the Ross-CASE Survey Steering Group. Such analyses may be carried out by NatCen or another licensed agent that would receive the data under a confidentiality agreement managed by NatCen.

All further analyses would need to be consistent with the scope of the published main report in that data should be aggregated, and reporting on groups of at least six institutions. Publication of further analyses would be subject to approval by the Ross-CASE Survey Steering Group so as to ensure that any outputs were consistent with the data release arrangements set out above.