

Results of the Public Consultation on the proposed changes to the methodology used to allocate counts for Open University in enrolments and qualification statistics in Northern Ireland

On 7th September 2015 the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) initiated an eight week public consultation for users of Higher Education (HE) publications.

The aim of the public consultation was to engage with users on a proposed change to the methodology relating to the allocation of Open University (OU). In line with the change introduced by HESA in 2013/14 data, the Department proposed to change to the new HESA methodology, where enrolments and qualifications at any of the OU's national centres would be attributed to the country in which the campus is located, such as NI, rather than all OU enrolments and qualifications being attributed to England, where it has its administrative centre. Views were also sought on any further issues that the Department should consider in relation to the proposed change.

A link to the public consultation was added to the DEL website on 7th September 2015 so that the views of all users of the publications could be captured. The public consultation was also sent to 134 stakeholders (including DEL policy officials, staff in NI universities and statutory customers). The public consultation was live for eight weeks with a reminder sent out before the consultation period closed. Only five responses were received in total.

Results of the Consultation

There were 5 responses to the eight week public consultation. All the responses were positive, supporting the change in methodology, with no issues or concerns raised about the proposed change.

The small number of responses may reflect the perceived benefit of the proposed change, as it will maintain a consistent approach across the UK and will more accurately reflect OU activity at NI Higher Education Institutions.



100%
of respondents were
either content or in
support of the
**change in
methodology.**



Our Response

Based on the positive responses, and in the absence of any objection, we plan to proceed with this change to the methodology when we next publish enrolment and qualification figures for the 2014/15 academic year in January 2016.

The change in methodology will affect the Enrolments, Qualifications and Destinations of leaver's bulletins produced by the Department, as well as other outputs provided throughout the year.

Notes will be provided where necessary to inform customers of the change and the effect it has on the figures provided.