

# Intentions After Graduation Survey and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey: Technical document

## Introduction

1. This document provides information on the data and methodology used to obtain findings and produce interactive charts about the Intentions After Graduation Survey. The charts are published on the Office for Students website at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/intentions-after-graduation-survey/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/intentions-after-graduation-survey/). This document also provides guidance about the use of interactive charts to explore data of interest, and answers some frequently asked questions.
2. The Intention After Graduation Survey was offered for the first time in 2013 to all online first degree respondents to the National Student Survey graduating in the academic year 2012-13. The survey aims to capture the intentions of final year undergraduates with respect to future study and employment decisions.

## Data and methodology

3. Data comes from survey's respondents graduated between 2012-13 and 2016-17. Students were then linked to information from the Higher Education Statistics Agency about English higher education institutions, further education colleges and alternative providers of higher education<sup>1</sup>. The analysis provided relates to English higher education institutions only, unless otherwise specified.
4. Each student was also linked, where possible, to results from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, to compare their original intentions with their actual destination. The DLHE survey investigates what students are doing six months after graduation, approximately one year after they answered the Intention After Graduation Survey. This naturally excludes graduates from 2016-17 from the analysis. On average, 73 per cent of the Intention After Graduation Survey respondents answered DLHE too. The first five sections are related to the Intention After Graduation Survey only, while sections 6 to 8 are based on the link between the two surveys.
5. In 2016-17 fewer students answered the Intention After Graduation Survey than in previous years. However, the samples of respondents to the survey over the years are broadly similar with respect to observed characteristics, and this allows for credible comparisons. Moreover, students who are also in DLHE do not seem to differ dramatically from those who are not in the survey. See Annex C for more details on sample's composition.
6. In all charts, 'year' refers to the academic year in which survey's respondents graduated. The year in which they were actually surveyed corresponds to the second half of each academic year, i.e. results from 2016-17 refer to first degree students who graduated in the academic year 2016-17 and were surveyed between January and April 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> For the 2012-13 survey we have no information on students from alternative providers.

7. The core students' characteristics we consider are:
- a. Age group: young (students who were younger than 21 years old when they started their first degree) or mature (21 or older).
  - b. Disability status: the student's self-declared disability status.
  - c. Area of domicile: whether the student's domicile is in the UK, a different EU country or a non-EU country.
  - d. Ethnicity: the student's self-declared ethnicity. This field is considered for UK-domiciled students only.
  - e. Gender.
  - f. Mode of study: full-time or part-time.
  - g. Young POLAR4 participation quintile<sup>2</sup>: the quintile of the young participation rate (according to the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4) classification) to which the student's area of domicile belongs. This field is available for young and UK-domiciled students only. Splits by this characteristic do not exactly add up to 100 per cent because the proportions of young UK-domiciled students with missing POLAR4 quintile are not shown<sup>3</sup>.
8. For charts in sections 1 and 5, respondents were split into groups based on the likelihood they would enter postgraduate study. Since 2013-14, Question 6 has been split into two sections to distinguish between the intention to study immediately after graduation or later. To take this distinction into account in the analysis, we exclude the 2012-13 survey from this analysis. Four groups are created, by splitting the first group into two:
- a. **Certain (within six months)**: Students who intended to go into postgraduate study within the next six months after graduation. These students responded that they intended to go into further study within six months of graduation (Question 1 = 8), that they would like to study at a postgraduate (PG) level (Question 2 = 1) and that they are certain about this (Question 6a = 1).
  - b. **Certain (in the future)**: Students who intended to go into postgraduate study in the future. These students did not intend to undertake PG studies within six months of graduation (Question 1 not = 8), but said they were certain to do so in the future (Question 6b = 1).
  - c. **Likely**: Students who were likely to go into postgraduate study either within the next six months of graduation or in the future. These students responded that they were likely to undertake PG study in the next six months of graduation (Question 6a = 2) or in the future (Question 6b = 3).
  - d. **Unlikely**: Students who were unlikely or definitely not planning to enter PG study, within the next six months of graduation or later (all the others).

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/polar-participation-of-local-areas/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/polar-participation-of-local-areas/) for more details.

<sup>3</sup> They are roughly 1 per cent of the sample.

9. The chart in section 2 is based on the answers to Questions 11 and 12 of the 2016-17 survey. These questions were asked of respondents who intended or were likely to start PG studies either immediately or in the future. Question 11 was asked of those who selected masters' degrees or postgraduate certificates or diplomas as study options. Question 12 was asked to those who selected research degrees or doctorates as study options.
10. The chart in section 3 is based on the answers to Question 6. This question was asked of students who selected 'I Intend to go into further study' when asked about their plan within six months after graduating.
11. The chart in section 4 allows the user to explore all questions of the survey, excluding the ones that were only asked in 2016-17 (see Annex A for more details). All proportions are computed with respect to the total number of students who answered a given question. Most of the survey's questions offer multiple answers. We treat each answer as independent, and the reader should bear this in mind when looking at charts. In other words, while for single response questions all proportions within a certain population add up to 100, this is not necessarily true for multiple response questions. Multiple response questions are: Question 1, 5, 7 (a and b), 8, 9 and 10. A note indicates whether or not the selected question allows for multiple answers.
12. For the charts in sections 6, 7 and 8, students have been divided into four groups according to their activity when answering DLHE: 'Study', 'Work', 'Work and study' and 'Other'. Students have then been divided into different intention groups according to answers to Question 1 of the Intention After graduation Survey, to map DLHE grouping consistently:
  - Study: Students who picked as plans within six months after graduating either 'Further Study' or 'Gap year from academic study' or both
  - Work: Students who picked as plans within six months after graduating one of the following (not necessarily exclusively): 'Look for a job', 'Be in an already offered job', 'Continue current job', 'Set up my own business/freelance work'
  - Work and Study: Students who picked at least one option from a and one option from b
  - Other: Students who picked as plans within six months after graduating one of the following (not necessarily exclusively): 'Graduate scheme or programme', 'Volunteering/unpaid work experience', 'Travel abroad', 'Other (please specify)'
  - Unclear: Students who answered they were unsure as to what to do next.
13. Table 1 provides additional information on the data behind the dataset for charts 6, 7 and 8 by showing the headcounts and relative proportions of students by intention and destination, over years. In bold are all perfect matches. For each year, the largest perfect-match groups are highlighted in yellow, while the largest imperfect-match groups are highlighted in blue.

**Table 1: Intention versus destination: frequencies and relative proportions of students**

Academic year of graduation	Destination		Study	Work	Work and study	Other	Total
	Intention						
2012-13	Study Work Work and study Other Unclear	Study Work Work and study Other Unclear	<b>4825</b> <b>6.05</b>	2,135 2.68	1,030 1.29	715 0.90	8,705 10.91
2012-13			1,330 1.67	<b>27,245</b> <b>34.14</b>	1,480 1.85	3,430 4.30	33,485 41.96
2012-13			695 0.87	2,085 2.61	<b>410</b> <b>0.51</b>	385 0.48	3,575 4.48
2012-13			2,375 2.98	4,275 5.36	590 0.74	<b>1,345</b> <b>1.68</b>	8,580 10.75
2012-13			2,855 3.58	17,295 21.67	1,475 1.85	3,835 4.80	25,465 31.90
2012-13	<b>Total</b>		12,085 15.14	53,040 66.45	4,980 6.24	9,710 12.17	79,815 100.00
2013-14	Study Work Work and study Other Unclear	Study Work Work and study Other Unclear	<b>5,350</b> <b>6.02</b>	2,460 2.77	1,065 1.20	790 0.89	9,665 10.88
2013-14			1,540 1.74	<b>31,760</b> <b>35.76</b>	1,665 1.88	3,645 4.11	38,615 43.48
2013-14			695 0.78	2,055 2.32	<b>430</b> <b>0.49</b>	375 0.42	3,560 4.01
2013-14			2,765 3.11	5,220 5.88	715 0.81	<b>1,565</b> <b>1.76</b>	10,265 11.56
2013-14			2,915 3.28	18,510 20.85	1,550 1.74	3,725 4.19	26,700 30.07
2013-14	<b>Total</b>		13,265 14.93	60,010 67.58	5,425 6.11	10,105 11.38	88,805 100.00
2014-15	Study Work Work and study Other Unclear	Study Work Work and study Other Unclear	<b>4,030</b> <b>6.25</b>	1,640 2.55	645 1.00	515 0.80	6,835 10.60
2014-15			1,455 2.26	<b>24,500</b> <b>38.01</b>	1,200 1.86	2,505 3.88	29,660 46.01
2014-15			545 0.84	1,475 2.28	<b>265</b> <b>0.41</b>	245 0.38	2,525 3.92
2014-15			1,945 3.02	3,420 5.31	470 0.73	<b>1,005</b> <b>1.56</b>	6,840 10.61
2014-15			2,380 3.70	12,745 19.77	1,085 1.69	2,395 3.71	18,610 28.87
2014-15	<b>Total</b>		10,355 16.06	43,780 67.91	3,670 5.69	6,660 10.33	64,465 100.00
2015-16	Study Work Work and study Other Unclear Total	Study Work Work and study Other Unclear Total	<b>6,445</b> <b>7.56</b>	2,230 2.61	1,145 1.34	775 0.91	10,595 12.42
2015-16			2,115 2.48	<b>31,900</b> <b>37.40</b>	1,460 1.71	3,335 3.91	38,805 45.50
2015-16			895 1.05	1,935 2.27	<b>435</b> <b>0.51</b>	350 0.41	3,615 4.24
2015-16			2,905 3.41	4,310 5.06	630 0.74	<b>1,330</b> <b>1.56</b>	9,180 10.76
2015-16			3,510 4.12	15,130 17.74	1,290 1.51	3,155 3.70	23,085 27.07
2015-16			<b>Total</b>		15,870 18.61	55,505 65.08	4,965 5.82

Note: Frequencies are rounded to the nearest five. Students at English higher education institutions only.

## How to use the charts

14. The charts are shown through drop-down filters. Select items in the filters to explore the data. The charts automatically update once you make your selection.
15. By hovering on the data point you can view a description that should ease interpretation.
16. If you have any problems returning to the original setup, refresh the webpage.
17. To download the data behind the graphs, click on the Excel spreadsheets link at the bottom of the page.

## Frequently asked questions

### Q1. How can I segment the data?

The interactive tables and charts have drop-down boxes at the top. Users can select items in the boxes to break down the data in different ways to look at a population. The tables and charts automatically update when you make your selection.

Other features include the ability to:

- hover over lines, bars or points of a graph, or rows or columns of a table, to see more information
- compare or highlight specific sub-categories of the data
- export underlying data tables for your own analysis
- share the interactive charts with others.

If you have problems with the interactive charts, return to the original setup by refreshing the webpage.

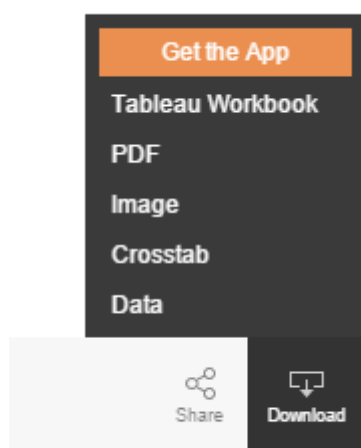
### Q2. Why is no graph showing?

Graphs are not available for every combination in the drop-down menu. It could be, for example, that a question has not been asked in a given year. See Annex A for more details on differences in survey structure over the years.

### Q3. Can I copy or save the charts to use in my own presentations or documents?

Charts may be copied or reproduced provided that the Office for Students is acknowledged and the material is not used, wholly or in part, for commercial gain. Use for commercial gain requires our prior written permission.

Copies of an **individual graph** can be exported to PDF using the Download facility at the bottom of the webpage, as shown:



### Q4. Can I access the data underlying the graphs and charts?

The data behind the charts is available in csv format and can be downloaded using the link below each chart.

**Q5. Can I change the way the graphs and tables are shown, such as to view them side by side, or to increase the size?**

We are not able to offer different views for the graphs. This is because the dimensions of the interactive charts are constrained by both the underlying software and the webpage layout. If you experience difficulties and would like assistance accessing the data, or if you have feedback, contact us at [gapt@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:gapt@officeforstudents.org.uk).

## Annex A: Differences in survey structure across years

1. Overall, to allow credible comparisons, the questionnaire has not changed much over the years. However, some important differences have been taken into account during the analysis and should be borne in mind when looking at the results.
2. Question 6 ('How likely are you to study at postgraduate level?')<sup>4</sup> has been split into Question 6a ('How likely are you to study at postgraduate level in the next six months?') and Question 6b ('How likely are you to study at postgraduate level in the future?') in all years following 2012-13. In some instances, to allow comparisons across all years, we artificially created Question 6 by merging the answers to Question 6a and Question 6b for all years following 2012-13.
3. Question 7a, 'What factors could affect your decision to study at postgraduate level?' has one more possible response in 2016-17: 'Fear of debt'.
4. Question 11 from 2012-13 to 2015-16 ('Do you plan to undertake a full-time or part-time course?') was not asked in 2016-17.
5. One question was asked for the first time in 2015-16 and then replaced by other questions in the following wave: 'If a government loan of up to £10,000 were available for your postgraduate study, how likely would you be to undertake postgraduate studies?'.
6. Two new questions have been asked in the 2016-17 wave: Q11new and Q12new.
7. Question 12 from 2013-14, 'When do you think you might begin your postgraduate study?' was asked of more people than in other years, and caution is needed when comparing the answers over years. In fact, the question was asked in 2013-14 to all those who answered they would go into postgraduate study (Q1=8 and Q3=2). However, in all other years (including 2012-13), it was asked only to those who claimed to be certain or likely to intend to undertake postgraduate study.

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<sup>4</sup> Questions are occasionally rephrased here for simplicity.



## **Annex B: Questionnaire (2016-17 version)**

### **Q1: Which of the following best describes your plans within six months after graduating from your current course?**

MULTIPLE RESPONSES

1. I intend to look for a job
2. I will be in a (full or part-time) job that I have already been offered or accepted
3. I will continue to be employed in my current (full or part-time) job
4. I intend to enrol on/begin a graduate scheme or programme
5. I intend to set up my own business / I will be self-employed or undertake freelance work
6. I will be doing volunteering/unpaid work or work experience
7. I intend to travel abroad
8. I intend to go into further study
9. I intend to take a gap year/break from academic study
10. I am unsure as to what I will do next\*
11. Other (please specify)

\* Exclusive option

ASK Q2 IF Q1 = 10

### **Q2: Would you consider further study within six months after graduating from your current course?**

SINGLE RESPONSE

1. Yes
2. No
3. I am not sure

ASK Q3 IF Q1 = 8 OR Q2 = 1

### **Q3. At what level would you like to study?**

SINGLE RESPONSE

\* [Hyperlink to definition of postgraduate](#)

1. Undergraduate level (Equivalent or lower level to your current course but in a different subject)

2. Postgraduate level (Higher level than a BA or BSc degree and leads to qualifications such as a masters' (e.g. MA/MSc), a doctorate (e.g. PhD), a professional or vocational qualification such as a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) or postgraduate study with a professional body)

ASK Q4 IF Q1 = 8

**Q4. Do you intend to study in the UK or abroad?**

SINGLE RESPONSE

1. In the UK
2. Abroad/outside the UK
3. I don't know/I am not sure

ASK Q5 IF Q4 = 2

**Q5. What are your main reasons for choosing to study abroad?**

MULTIPLE RESPONSES

1. The overall cost of studying abroad is cheaper than in the UK
2. The overall cost of living abroad is cheaper than in the UK
3. The level of financial support is better abroad
4. The courses available are more relevant to my future plans
5. The course I wish to study is not available in the UK
6. The quality of the course I want to study is better abroad
7. I am undertaking an international scholarship
8. The institution that I wish to study at is recognised internationally
9. I want to be closer to my family and friends/return to my home country
10. It is easier to get a visa abroad
11. I want to experience a different culture
12. I want to develop another language/gain greater fluency in a foreign language
13. The employment opportunities are better abroad
14. Other (please specify)

ASK Q6a IF Q3 = 2

**Q6a. You said that you intend to undertake postgraduate\* study in the next six months. How likely are you to do so?**

\* [Hyperlink to definition of postgraduate](#)

SINGLE RESPONSE

1. I am certain
2. It is likely
3. I am not sure
4. It is unlikely
5. I will definitely not

ASK Q6b to ALL except Q3 = 2

**Q6b. How likely are you to study at postgraduate\* level in the future?**

\* [Hyperlink to definition of postgraduate](#)

SINGLE RESPONSE

1. I am certain
2. It is likely
3. I am not sure
4. It is unlikely
5. I will definitely not

ASK Q7a IF Q6a = 1 OR Q6a = 2 OR Q6b = 1 OR Q6b = 2

**Q7a. What factors could affect your decision to study at postgraduate level?**

1. Overall cost of living
2. Course fees
3. Fear of debt
4. Being offered a job
5. Family and personal commitments
6. Not knowing what to study
7. Not being able to find an appropriate course to study

8. No longer wish to study
9. Lack of comparable information on postgraduate study
10. Time commitments of postgraduate study
11. Lack of flexibility in the postgraduate study timetable
12. Lack of flexibility in delivery method of postgraduate study (e.g. full-time/part-time)
13. Other (please specify)
14. Not applicable\*

\* Exclusive option

ASK Q7b IF Q6a = 3 OR Q6a = 4 OR Q6a = 5 OR Q6b = 3 OR Q6b = 4 OR Q6b = 5

**Q7b. What factors put you off studying at postgraduate level?**

MULTIPLE RESPONSES

1. Overall cost of living
2. Course fees
3. Fear of debt
4. Being in a job
5. Family and personal commitments
6. Not knowing what to study
7. Lack of comparable information on postgraduate study
8. Postgraduate study is time consuming/the workload associated with postgraduate study
9. Lack of flexibility in the postgraduate study timetable
10. Lack of flexibility in delivery method of postgraduate study (e.g. full-time/part-time)
11. Postgraduate qualifications are not a requirement in my chosen career
12. I do not want to study at postgraduate level
13. Other (please specify)
14. Not applicable\*

\* Exclusive option

ASK Q8 IF Q6a = 3 OR Q6a = 4 OR Q6a = 5 OR Q6b = 3 OR Q6b = 4 OR Q6b = 5

**Q8. What factors might encourage you to study at postgraduate level?**

MULTIPLE RESPONSES

1. If additional financial support was available
2. If postgraduate qualifications were a prerequisite for a job/demanded by employers
3. If postgraduate qualifications were a prerequisite for membership of a professional body
4. If I struggled to find suitable employment
5. If I needed to specialise in a particular area or skill
6. If I decided to change career path
7. If postgraduate study was funded by my employer
8. If better advice was available on postgraduate study options
9. If I was accepted into a highly regarded university or college
10. If I was accepted onto a scholarship
11. Other (please specify)
12. None\*

\* Exclusive option

ASK Q9 IF Q6a = 1 OR Q6a = 2 OR Q6b = 1 OR Q6b = 2

**Q9. What factors make you want to study at postgraduate level?**

MULTIPLE RESPONSES

1. I want to further my knowledge of my undergraduate subject/I have an interest in the subject
2. I want to get a higher level qualification
3. I want to be able to pursue an academic/research career
4. I want to study a different subject
5. I want to gain an edge in the jobs market
6. I want to progress in my current career
7. I have been unable to find a suitable job
8. I want to get a better job/Postgraduate study opens up more career choices

9. I want to specialise in a particular area or skill
10. I want to enter a profession which requires a specific post-graduate qualification
11. I am expected to undertake a postgraduate qualification as part of my employment
12. I am not ready to leave academic study
13. Other (please specify)

ASK Q10 IF Q6a = 1 or 2 OR Q6b = 1 or 2

### **Q10. Which of the following postgraduate study options are you considering?**

MULTIPLE RESPONSES

#### **Further academic study at a higher level – taught programmes**

1. A stand-alone, taught masters' degree (e.g. MSc, MA)
2. Postgraduate certificate or diploma

#### **Further academic study at a higher level – research programmes**

3. A stand-alone, research masters' degree (MPhil)
4. A masters' degree as a first step to a doctorate
5. Research degree/doctorate (e.g. PhD)

#### **Professional courses**

6. PGCE/teaching qualification
7. A professional postgraduate course e.g. in business (e.g. MBA), law (e.g. LPC), architecture (RIBA qualification), etc.
8. Other (please specify)
9. I do not know yet

ASK Q11new IF Q10 = 1, 3, 4 OR 9

### **Many students resident in the UK are now eligible to apply for a loan to help with the cost of their masters' studies from the 2017-18 academic year.**

Hover over text:

- In 2016-17, postgraduate masters' loans of up to £10,000 were introduced to help with the cost of study for eligible students ordinarily resident in England.

- From the 2017-18 academic year similar loans will be available to students domiciled in Wales (subject to the appropriate regulations) and tuition fee loans of up to £5,500 will be available for students domiciled in Northern Ireland.
- Postgraduate masters' loans are also under consideration in Scotland.

**Q11new. Please state to what extent the availability of a loan would support your decision to study a postgraduate masters' course?**

1. Greatly
2. Somewhat
3. A little
4. Very little
5. Not at all

ASK Q12new IF Q10 = 4, 5 OR 9

**The Westminster government has proposed to introduce loans to support students with the cost of studying a doctoral level degree such as a PhD.**

Hover over text:

- The Government has proposed to introduce loans of up to £25,000 per doctoral degree course to support eligible students ordinarily resident in England from 2018-19.
- A tuition fee loan of up to £5,500 per research degree course will be available for students domiciled in Northern Ireland from 2017-18.
- There are currently no similar announcements in other parts of the UK.

**Q12new. Please state to what extent the availability of a loan of up to £25,000 would support your decision to study a doctoral level degree?**

1. Greatly
2. Somewhat
3. A little
4. Very little
5. Not at all

ASK Q13 IF Q6a = 1 or 2 OR Q6b =1 or 2

**Q13. When do you think you might begin your postgraduate study?**

SINGLE RESPONSE

1. Immediately after graduating (within the next six months after graduating)
2. Within three years of graduating
3. Sometime in the future (more than three years after graduating)
4. I do not know yet/I am not sure

END AND CLOSE

Thank you for completing this survey.



## Annex C: Sample composition

1. While there might be self-selection in the survey based on some unobservable characteristics or observable ones we are not considering, the respondents seem to be broadly similar over the years in terms of basic characteristics.
2. Almost 90 per cent are UK-domiciled, 85 per cent are younger than 21, three out of five respondents are female, and more than 95 per cent are studying full time.
3. There is an interesting increase, over years, in the representation of people with declared disabilities (from 10 per cent of respondents in the first wave of the survey to roughly 14 per cent of respondents in 2016-17).
4. However, there are some differences between students who also appear in the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey and students who do not. Students who are reachable after graduation and answer DLHE are, unsurprisingly and consistently over the years, younger and UK-domiciled. Interestingly, the proportion of students who appear in DLHE is much larger in top quintiles of the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4) measure.

**Figure 1: Proportion of respondents to the Intentions After Graduation Survey by POLAR4 quintile**

