

Analysis of secondary quantitative data: consultancy support

November 2021

Introduction

The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) aims to improve lives through evidence-based practice in higher education (HE). Our vision is to eliminate equality gaps for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, allowing all students to have the same chance to enter HE, get a good degree and progress into further study or employment. TASO was set up in 2019, by a consortium of King's College London, Nottingham Trent University and the Behavioural Insights Team.

We are an independent hub for HE professionals to access research, toolkits and evaluation guidance to eliminate equality gaps. We inform practitioners of the best available evidence and produce new evidence on the most effective approaches. TASO is an affiliate 'What Works' centre and is part of the UK Government's What Works Movement. This means that TASO is committed to the generation, synthesis and dissemination of high-quality evidence about effective practice in widening participation and student success.

As part of a project that aims to improve our understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the awarding gap between disadvantaged learners and their peers, we are seeking to commission a supplier or independent consultant to conduct analysis of institutional data.

Background

In response to the rapid shift to online teaching and learning that took place when the pandemic hit in March 2020, TASO is seeking to answer the research question; When pure face-to-face learning is not possible, what is the best way of structuring HE courses to minimise equality gaps?

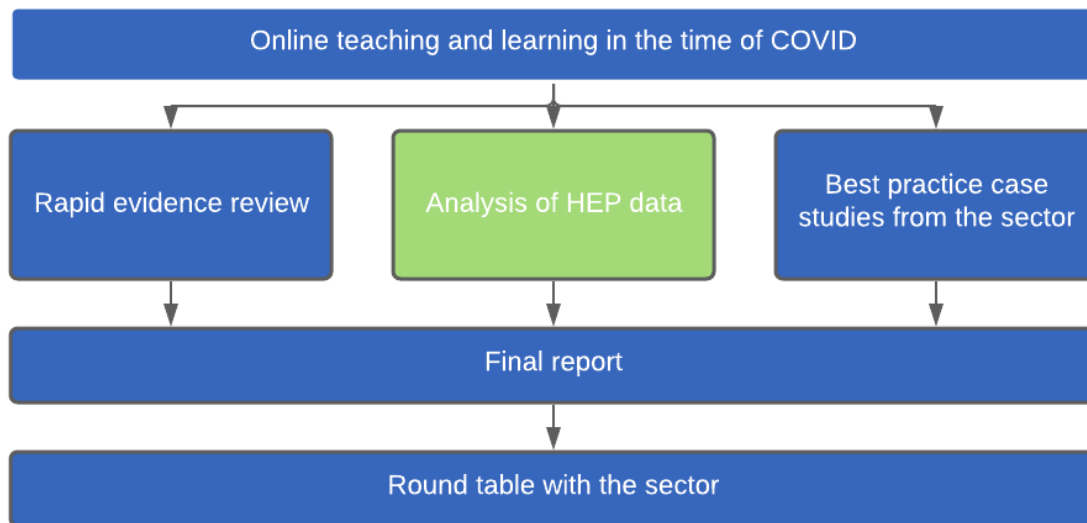
TASO has institutional data from one partner Higher Education Provider (HEP) and would like up to eight days of consultancy from an analyst to deliver the analysis of this data and an analysis report as a final deliverable.

Scope

As shown in the figure below, the analysis of institutional data is one component of a three part project: a rapid evidence review; descriptive statistical analysis of course data provided by HEPs; and examples of evaluation best practice from across the sector. Each of these

components sit side-by-side and will contribute to the final report and a roundtable where we discuss the emerging findings with sector stakeholders.

This invitation to tender is for just one element of the project - the analysis of HEP data, as illustrated in green below. TASO has already developed the rapid evidence review and is currently developing the case studies, using examples of best practice from the sector.



Research aim: The overall project aims to improve our understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the awarding gap between disadvantaged learners and their peers.

Primary research question: When pure face-to-face learning is not possible, what is the best way of structuring HE courses to minimise equality gaps?

This piece of work will use descriptive analysis of secondary data from HEPs to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the awarding gap between disadvantaged learners and their peers. As we are using descriptive analysis, we will not be able to infer generalisable recommendations based on the findings. However, based on the data observed, we will better understand how to structure HE courses in order to minimise equality gaps.

Data

All student data has already been collected. The data is anonymous and will be safely shared with the successful supplier (pending the signing of a Data Sharing Agreement) using [Egress](#). An outline of the data is included in the table below.

Data item	Use	Collector
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Course details (e.g. subject, level)	Covariates for analysis	Partner higher education providers
Year of study		
Ethnicity		
Gender		
Disability		
POLAR quintile		
IMD decile		
Bursary eligibility		
Mature student status		
Students term-time accommodation (student halls, private rented, living at home)		
The grades qualification the students entered HE with		
The teaching choices made during the pandemic (synchronous vs asynchronous etc.)	Intervention data	Partner higher education providers
The timing of the changes to course delivery		
The assessment methods used (coursework, online exams etc.)		
Attainment data (module and course grades)	Outcome data	Partner higher education providers
Progression data (whether the student progressed to the next year of study)		

Outcome measure	Data	Point of collection
PRIMARY: Attainment	<p>Pre-adjusted module marks and course/year marks as collected by HEPS.</p> <p>To be coded into categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Below 40 = Fail ● 40-49 = Third-Class Honours Third (3rd) ● 50-59 = Lower Second-Class Honours (2:2) ● 60-69 = Upper Second-Class Honours (2:1) ● 70 or above = First-Class Honours (1st) 	HEPs collect this data for the students enrolled on their courses and will be sharing the anonymised data with TASO

SECONDARY: Progression to next year of HE course	Whether a student progressed to the next year of their course (binary: yes/no)	HEPs collect this data for the students enrolled on their courses and will be sharing the anonymised data with TASO
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Requirements

This section outlines the requirements expected from the chosen supplier/consultant.

Project deliverables

- Statistical Analysis Plan (SAP), to be signed off by TASO.
- Analysis report, including:
 - Background: aims and research questions
 - Methods: design, outcome measures, sample selection, analytical strategy
 - Results: description of data, outcome of analysis
 - Discussion
 - To be formatted using Harvard referencing
 - The report will be provided in a format which is ready for external publication. A comprehensive outline of publication requirements will be distributed to the successful supplier. An example of an analysis report can be found on the [TASO website](#).

Other requirements

- The chosen supplier/consultant will be required to sign a Data Sharing Agreement and/or Non-disclosure Agreement with TASO.
- The chosen supplier/consultant will be required to spend up to half a day working with the TASO team to illustrate how the analysis was conducted, ideally using R.
- The code used (ideally in R) will be shared with TASO.
- The chosen supplier/consultant will Quality Assure (QA) the final outputs for this project.

Project timeline

Activity	Week 3 in December 21	Week 2 in January 22	Week 4 in January 22	Week 1 in February 22
Inception meeting & kick-off				
Weekly catch-ups				
SAP signed off				
Draft analysis report due				
Training session with TASO team				
Final analysis report				

Project implementation

The supplier/consultant will be responsible for end-to-end project management, including:

- Risk management.
- Ensuring that the project is effectively managed in a timely way, with advance notice of any challenges in delivering the project to the timeline specified.
- Reporting to, and engaging with, the TASO team.

In addition to financial support, TASO will:

- Provide advice throughout the project where required.
- Meet (virtually for the foreseeable future) with the supplier/consultant as per the project timeline to offer insight and feedback on the project progress.
- Support the supplier/consultant in shaping outputs and framing the final analysis report. Please note, TASO will maintain final editorial control of the content and final outputs.
- Manage the contract.

Funding

This project is funded by the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO).

The budget for the analysis is between £5,000 - £7,000 (inclusive of VAT).

Responses to this invitation to tender should include accurate pricing, inclusive of expenses and VAT. Please note that assessment of responses to this tender invitation will be on perceived quality of service and demonstrable ability to meet the brief, rather than the lowest cost, however, value for money is a selection criterion.

Application and timelines

- We invite you to submit an application using the form below.
- Please save the form using the name of your organisation.
- Submit the completed form to Rain.Sherlock@taso.org.uk by **12:00 on 10 December 2021**.
- We anticipate the project will start **w/c 13 December 2021** with final reporting at the beginning of February 2022.

Call for applications opens	26 November 2021
Deadline for applications	10 December 2021
Project kick off	W/c 13 December 2021

Assessment of applications

Your application will be assessed by the TASO Research and Evaluation team. The strength of applications will be assessed on:

- *Your expertise and experience (40%)*
 - Relevant experience. Familiarity with HE outcome data is desirable but not essential.
 - Evidence of success on similar projects.
 - Your approach to transparency and accountability.
- *The application (40%)*
 - How well the application answers the brief.
 - How well it articulates your to deliver all requirements and deliverables.
 - How well it articulates your ability to be responsive and flexible in delivering the brief.
- *Budget (20%)*
 - Feasibility based on the budget submitted.
 - Value for money.

Expression of Interest Form

Please note that hyperlinks to web-based information will not be accepted, and, if included, will not be evaluated.

Contact name	
Contact email	
Contact telephone	
SECTION A: Relevant experience and approach <i>Please provide details of how your skills and experience are relevant to delivering the work and the approach you would take to each element of the brief.</i> <i>[2 page max]</i>	
SECTION B: Project budget and timeline <i>You may apply for funding to the value of £5,000 - £7,000 to deliver this project. Provide a budget showing how many days you require and a timeline for when you will deliver the work.</i>	