
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Neil McIvor
Chief Data Officer and Chief Statistician
Department for Education

4 November 2019

Dear Neil,

Thank you for the help your team has provided as we have been looking into a query we received about the Department's [Participation Rates in Higher Education](#) release. The enquiry raised concerns about the presentation of the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) and what this means for how the media and individuals – including this [blog](#) published by DfE – interpret the figure.

Having reviewed the release I shared the concerns raised with us about the lack of clarity on what the HEIPR represents and the ease with which it could therefore be misinterpreted.

We have spoken to your team about these concerns and we welcome the improvements they have made to this release to give more clarity about what the statistics do, and do not, represent. We also note that the referenced media blog has now been amended and is worded more appropriately.

Ahead of the next release, we would encourage the team to further consider how they can ensure these statistics are not misinterpreted by users. They may wish to contact the GSS Good Practice Team who may be able to offer some expertise in this area.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation