

Summary of Consultation Responses

Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers

15 September to 13 October 2023

Background to the consultation

The Department of Education publishes annual Accredited Official Statistics (National Statistics) on the qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers ([Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers](#)). Related statistics are also available on the [NISRA Data Portal](#).

One of the principles under the Code of Practice for Statistics is that users of statistics and data should be at the centre of statistical production, their needs should be understood, their views sought and acted on and their use of statistics supported.

The purpose of the [consultation](#) was to identify the users of these statistics, assess whether the statistics meet their needs, and identify possible areas for improvement.

Summary of responses

- There were 9 respondents in total to the user consultation which was carried out through Citizen Space.
- Over half of the respondents (56%) were from the Department of Education (Northern Ireland), while the main purpose for using the school leavers statistics was for Policy development and monitoring (67%).
- The School Leavers Survey outputs were mainly used 1 to 4 times per year. For the Statistical bulletin, Tables (spreadsheets) and Infographic this was the case for 67% of respondents, and for Data on NINIS/ NISRA Data Portal it was the case for 78%.
- Respondents were asked how useful they found the different School Leavers Survey outputs. The results were as follows:

	Percentage of respondents that found the <u>output</u> to be useful, very useful, or essential
Statistical bulletin	89%
Tables (spreadsheets)	89%
Infographic	89%
Data on NINIS/ NISRA Data Portal	78%

- Respondents were asked how useful they found the different School Leavers Survey sections. The results were as follows:

	Percentage of respondents that found the <u>section</u> to be useful, very useful, or essential
Key Points	89%
Introduction	89%
Commentary on Qualifications	78%
Commentary on Destinations	89%
Notes to Readers	78%

- All respondents reported using the statistical tables, either in the bulletin or in the separate Excel/ ODS files.
- When asked which specific tables the respondents used, it was found that all tables are used by at least 22% of respondents. However, the most used tables related to pupils on free school meals, i.e. Tables 5, 7, 8, and 17, which 78% of respondents reported using.
- All respondents reported that the information was clearly presented and easy to access (one respondent did not answer the “easy to access question”), while 67% were satisfied with the timing of the publication.
- Overall, 67% of respondents stated that the statistical bulletin and related outputs mostly or completely meet their needs or those of their organisation.

Suggestions

1. Monitor the ultimate destination of the school leaver. Track how many students start but then leave or change course. Does the achieved level of qualification match the job requirement. How effective is school careers advice and guidance?
 - a. This would not be something that could be recorded by this data collection.
2. Provide analyses disaggregated by SEN need.
 - a. Such analyses could be provided on request (statistics@education-ni.gov.uk) although would potentially be subject to suppression due to small numbers.
3. Provide corresponding data for Special Schools.
 - a. The specification of the analyses from Special Schools would be different to that for mainstream schools. Development of this work will be taken forward, in consultation with DE policy colleagues, as resources permit.