

Higher Education Achievement Report and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

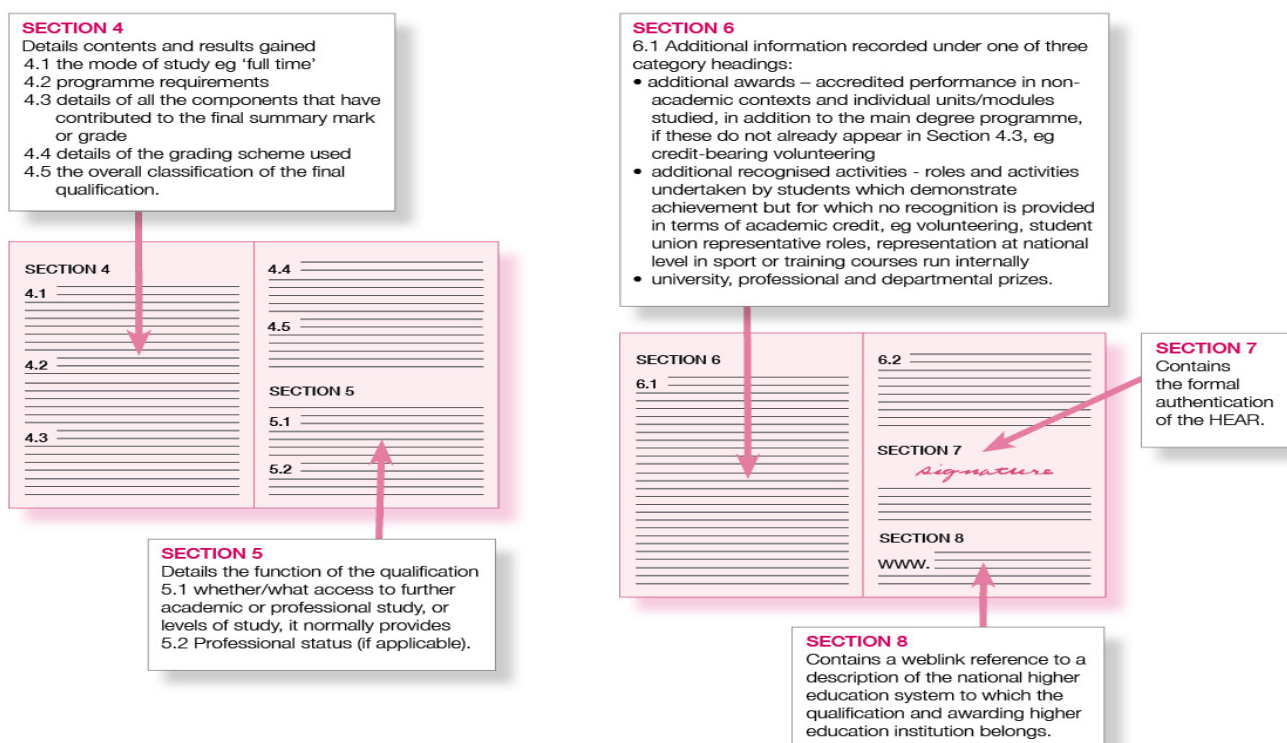
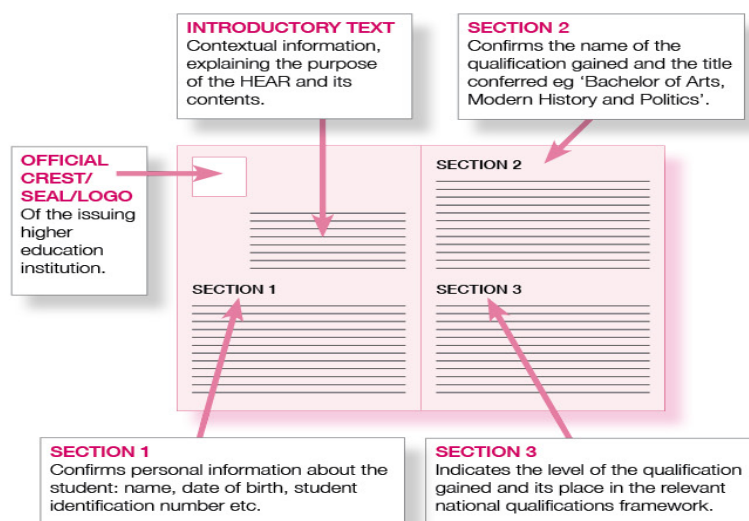
www.hear.ac.uk



“The inclusion of broad learning outcomes in Section 4 of the HEAR will be useful for students, bringing greater clarity about what they were supposed to be learning.” (PSRB interviewee)

The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) is an electronic document, following a clear and standardised template, that details a student’s achievement, represented through a rich picture of their overall higher education experience. The HEAR will be built up and available throughout a student’s career in higher education, and can be used as an aid to selection in graduate recruitment.

At-a-glance guide to the HEAR (click on the image or visit www.hear.ac.uk/about)



How will PSRBs engage with the HEAR?

As organisations that work closely with employers, PSRBs have a keen interest in the HEAR - both as recipients of HEAR information and as potential contributors to its content. PSRBs we have spoken to consider that:

The HEAR is a welcome development

PSRBs welcome the HEAR's introduction and the additional information it will provide about potential employees. Section 5.2 explicitly enables the professional status of undergraduate awards to be acknowledged, drawing upon nationally applicable statements for inclusion developed by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in collaboration with PSRBs¹.

The HEAR will clarify learning outcomes for students and others

PSRBs consider that the inclusion of broad learning outcomes in Section 4 will be useful both for students, who will potentially be clearer about what they are learning, and for the accrediting body, which may be looking at learning outcomes within the accreditation process. While learning outcomes are dictated and common across programmes there may be differences in how these are delivered, Section 4 should be able to reflect the different structures of programmes and how learning outcomes are delivered and achieved.

The HEAR may support individual applications for membership

In terms of progression to professional recognition, the detailed module information in Section 4 could be used to support individual applications for membership of a professional association.

For some, the degree classification remains important...

In the context of teaching, for example, a redesigned bursary regime - with bursaries allocated differentially on the basis of subject and degree class - ensures that degree class remains a key yardstick.

...but the HEAR can provide valuable additional information

Many professional programmes require learners to develop portfolios of assessment evidence to support their claims for professional competence. Clearly, further consideration of the relationship of such assessment-based institutional portfolios to the HEAR will be important, eg by acknowledging such records in the HEAR, and signposting from such records to the student's HEAR, where both are held electronically.

Postgraduate teacher education, in England and Wales, for example, is accessed via the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) where an application form and personal statement form part of the process. Institutions look for evidence of relevant experience in the personal statement – eg youth work, voluntary work, school experience, etc. Much of this might have been organised by the student themselves, rather than through their university, but where the university has had a hand in arrangements this experience could be included in Section 6.1 and therefore be conveniently verifiable by the admitting institution.

The HEAR could form the basis for further professional development

PSRBs see the HEAR as providing a useful context within which employers can discuss initial continuing professional development needs with new graduate recruits. This will be particularly useful if the HEAR has already been used routinely for formative purposes within higher education, and graduates are used to such an approach. A challenge here, with which the HEAR may help, will be to support practitioners and supervisors in selecting areas for development that represent challenges, as opposed to concentrating upon strengths.

The HEAR's digital format will support cost-effective verification of achievement, including professional status where appropriate

PSRBs will find electronic verification useful, especially for people returning to the professional area who may not be able to locate their degree/diploma certificates. When the HEAR is widely adopted, one body may make '*being provided with access to the electronic HEAR*' a preferred way of receiving information from

applicants. In addition, if the portfolio record, mentioned above, is maintained electronically by the university after graduation, a link from the HEAR to this may also be appropriate.

The HEAR will be useful to employers

PSRBs are supportive of the HEAR's potential from an employer viewpoint, emphasising that access to academic information prior to graduation will be very helpful in confirming job offers. Firms often recruit trainees two or three years before they finish their education so the development of the HEAR throughout a student's academic career, and the fact that potential employers could have access to it, will be useful. In particular, the cumulative availability of module information will be helpful for predicting a final grade because it will indicate if the student is 'on track'. PSRBs find that the current situation, with institutions issuing transcripts to graduates upon graduation, means they are kept 'hanging on' until that point, especially where offers of employment are conditional upon applicants meeting professional requirements.

ⁱ Additional explanatory text might be necessary in some contexts, such as for more inter-disciplinary degrees which meet requirements for individual membership, but not for chartered status, for example. It is also anticipated that institutions will be able to include indication of multiple accreditations in the data they return to HESA which will then be displayed on the Unistats website as a list.

This briefing has been prepared from the findings of a small-scale research project, commissioned by the Higher Education Academy, to consider the ways in which a range of different types of employers and other organisations may use the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) in their circumstances. It is based on in-depth interviews with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and aims to provide those who will use the information contained in the HEAR with key messages from emerging practice.