

Frequently asked questions about the HEAR

1. What does 'HEAR' stand for?

'Higher Education Achievement Report'.

2. In what format will the HEAR be produced?

The HEAR is primarily an **electronic** document. As the HEAR will serve both a **formative** and **summative** function, it will be delivered in a number of ways at different points during students' university career:

- From the end of the academic year 2014/15 an 'exit' HEAR will be issued to all undergraduates on completion of their academic programme, to provide a comprehensive record of their curricular and extra-curricular university achievements as an accompaniment to their degree certificate. From July 2016, it will be a static electronic document that will be issued from a secure online education verification system, for which you will be invited to register with, and will be able to share with third parties of choice, e.g. employers.
- While students are studying at Brunel they will have access to an enhanced transcript via e-Vision. This will allow them to see their HEAR grow as they progress through their course, enabling it to serve a formative function that will complement personal development planning and review. Staff will also have electronic access to students' HEAR. This will provide tutors with more comprehensive information about their tutees' achievements and can also be used to assist with reference writing. For the start of 2012-13, we are aiming to enable first-year undergraduates to view their enhanced transcript from the end of Term 2 onwards, when their first set of exam results is released.
- Official snapshots of the enhanced transcript will also be issued at key points prior to graduation, to enable students to share achievements to date with chosen third parties as they begin to apply for jobs/internships/further study. These enhanced transcripts will take the same form as 'exit' HEARs (static PDFs issued via a secure online system), but will only contain information that has been verified to date, and will be preceded by a cover page that explains their provisional and incomplete status.

3. Do students need to 'opt-in' to receive a HEAR?

No, HEARs will be issued to all undergraduate students as a matter of course, starting with the cohort of undergraduates who arrive at Brunel in September 2012. However, students are encouraged to consider how they can make the most of their HEAR, e.g. by thinking about engaging in extra-curricular activities that the University or the UBS can verify, to help them demonstrate wider experience and skills.

4. What is 'Section 6.1'?

'Section 6.1' is the section in the HEAR that contains information about extra-curricular student achievements. Brunel University is committed to verifying a wide range of extra-curricular activities, to allow as many students as possible to showcase and evidence the breadth of their skills, experience and knowledge. Go to the [Activities](#) page to find out more.

5. Will the HEAR replace the degree certificate?

No! However, it will replace the Academic Transcript (list of modules and grades) which the University currently produces, since the HEAR will be given to all completing students and incorporates both the above documents, plus further information.

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6. Are other universities giving HEARs to their students?

Yes. Approximately 100 institutions have expressed interest in the HEAR, and around 90 of these have a timetable for implementation. Brunel University London issued its first in July 2015.

7. What's the difference between the HEAR and the Degree certificate?

The HEAR is an achievement report, not an award. It will therefore be issued to all completing undergraduates and will give details of their university activities - not only activities that are part of students' academic programme, but also extra-curricular activities that are institutionally verifiable and represent learning and/or achievement. The Degree certificate is the official Brunel document that confirms academic achievement; but the HEAR will recognise other forms of non-academic learning and achievement as well.

8. What's the difference between a HEAR and a CV?

The HEAR is not a replacement for a CV or job application statement. Instead it will sit alongside these as a complementary document, providing evidence of the range of knowledge, skills and experience students have developed at university, where such information can be verified.

9. How will the HEAR support student employability?

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) has produced a short video clip that explains how the HEAR will support student employability. To see this, click [here](#).

10. If the HEAR includes so much extra information, won't it be impossible to digest?

The HEAR follows the same structure as the [European Diploma Supplement](#), so its format is already familiar. However, the national HEAR Implementation Steering Group has acknowledged the need to develop a guide to using the HEAR, and to circulate this widely both within HEIs, and also to schools, further education colleges, careers services, students and employers. A national Guide for Students has already been developed, and a national Employers' Guide is also nearly complete.

11. How does the University decide what extra-curricular activities and awards can be included?

We have developed an [Institutional Protocol](#) to define the general set of criteria to which activities included in Section 6.1 should adhere. This will provide an overarching framework for developing activity verification protocols.

12. What extra-curricular activities will be verified at Brunel?

A full list of extra-curricular activities and awards that the University and the UBS are working towards verifying can be downloaded from the [Activities](#) page. More specific information about the individual activities we are verifying is available from the [Verifiable Activities](#) page.

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13. How do I get an extra-curricular activity in my HEAR?

1. Do the activity!
2. Find out from the person organising the activity what criteria you need to fulfil to qualify for recognition. You can also go to the [Verifiable Activities](#) page to search for more details about the individual activities we are verifying.
3. Make sure you meet these requirements! If you do, the person organising your activity will confirm this to the University and a standard statement describing your achievement will be added to your HEAR.

14. What happens if students don't have any extra-curricular activities to include Section 6.1?

A standard text will be included at the top of Section 6.1, to explain that the list of activities and awards included in this section is not exhaustive, and that students may very well have other achievements that the University has not been in a position to verify. Students will be encouraged to include details of such additional achievements in other documentation such as their CV or job application statements.

15. Can students who started at Brunel before September 2012 get a HEAR?

No, unfortunately not. This is because the HEAR requires us to collect additional student information that is not recorded at the moment. We will be in a position to start collecting a more comprehensive set of student information in 2012-13. If we were to try and produce the HEAR for students who are already here, there would be blanks in the document that we would be unable to fill - especially regarding extra-curricular activities.

16. Will postgraduate students who start in September 2012 be able to get a HEAR?

No, the HEAR is currently only available for undergraduate students.

18. Will the HEAR be issued for integrated Masters programmes?

Yes, provided you are a student who first registered from September 2012.