

# UDE SURVEY: GRADUATE SURVEY

## INFORMATION ON DATA PROTECTION

AS OF: OCTOBER 2025

### 1. Basic information

#### 1.1 Legal basis

The University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) has a legal duty to ensure and enhance quality by evaluating teaching and learning, which is a duty all members and employees of the University are required to contribute to (see Section 7 (2) and (4) of the Higher Education Act (*Hochschulgesetz NRW*; [HG NRW](#)) dated 16 September 2014 in combination with Article 6 (1) (1) (a) and Article 6 (1) (e) of the General Data Protection Regulation ([GDPR](#))). Against this backdrop, UDE's 'Regulation on procedures for quality management and quality assurance in the field of studying and teaching and for evaluation purposes' ([QM-Ordnung](#)) dated 18 April 2017 stipulates, among other things, that members of the University be surveyed.

#### 1.2 Purposes of the data processing

The use of surveys allows UDE to systematically check, assess and continuously develop the quality of teaching and learning. This approach yields evidence-based insights that help fulfil the statutory requirements with regard to quality and diversity management as stipulated in Section 7 (2) in combination with Section 3 of the [HG NRW](#). This enables UDE to perform its duties in the field of higher education in a targeted and effective manner. By means of surveys among the members of the University, individual and institutional factors affecting academic success can be identified, for example, in order to implement targeted measures for enhancing the conditions of teaching and learning. In this context, the findings from the surveys are used, for example, to create sustainable study conditions that enable more students to gain a higher education degree irrespective of their personal circumstances upon entering university and ensure they are prepared for their future professional life in the best possible way. The surveys provide insights regarding the diversity of the University's members that effectively contribute to the fulfilment of the University's duties relating to equal opportunities, inclusion and discrimination-free participation.

#### 1.3 Cooperation

All state-run higher education institutions in NRW have agreed with the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry for Culture and Science (MKW NRW) to participate in a state-wide graduate survey. Therefore, UDE's graduate survey is conducted as part of the Graduate Study Cooperation Project (KOAB). The Institute for Applied Statistics (ISTAT) has been coordinating this cooperation project since January 2017. Further higher education institutions in Germany and Austria participate in the KOAB in addition to all state-run higher education institutions in NRW. The cooperation allows an aligned collection of data, which makes the results comparable.

#### 1.4 Responsibility

UDE's Centre for Quality Enhancement and Teaching Development (ZHQE) is responsible for managing the survey samples, conducting the survey and analysing the datasets relating to the University.

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UDE and the other higher education institutions participating in the KOAB are jointly responsible for agreeing on the purposes and procedures of the graduate survey, which are then established by ISTAT (see above). The ZHQE (see above) is responsible for managing the survey samples, conducting the survey and analysing the datasets specific to the University. ISTAT is solely responsible for the technical implementation of the graduate survey and for compiling and analysing the datasets across universities.

Contact details:

Institut für angewandte Statistik GmbH  
Universitätsplatz 12, 34127 Kassel  
Phone: +49 561 953 796 81  
Email: [nutzen@institut-istat.com](mailto:nutzen@institut-istat.com)

### 1.5 Name and contact details of the Data Protection Officer

UDE's appointed Data Protection Officer is:

Universität Duisburg-Essen  
Dr. Kai-Uwe Loser  
Forsthausweg 2, 47057 Duisburg  
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## 2. Anonymity

The respondents' answers to this survey must be processed as quickly as possible in such a way that no inferences about their identity are possible, i.e. that the answers remain anonymous. To guarantee this, attention must be paid to both technical and organisational matters, as well as the number and content of personal questions posed to the participants.

## 3. Organisation and implementation

### 3.1 Sample management

The Digital Transformation and Academic Controlling Division (DTAC) provides an academic staff member of the ZHQE with data on the target group for sampling and contacting purposes. DTAC provides the file containing the information on the target group necessary for sample management in encrypted form. Only those who belong to the relevant target group and who have not explicitly declined to participate in central surveys via the University's selfcare portal are invited to the survey. The list below contains the information sorted by purpose.

Purpose: calculating the population and checking for representativeness

- degree type
- subjects studied
- faculty
- examination date
- gender

Purpose: sampling

- enrolment date
- consent for data to be used for surveys

Purpose: contacting

- email address
- Name
- address

### 3.2 Procedure

Invitations and reminders to complete the online survey are sent by post and email. The addresses provided by DTAC are used for this purpose. In total, a potential respondent is contacted a maximum of four times (one invitation and up to three reminders). It is possible to object to being further contacted with survey invitations at any time.

The target group will be contacted twice by post (one invitation, one reminder) as it is not guaranteed that they can be reached by email. In order to contact respondents by post, the letters are transmitted to the University Print Shop in password protected form. The printed letters are put in envelopes there and sent with a postal services operator.

With each initial contact, the individuals invited are informed about data protection measures in the context of the survey. At the beginning of the survey, participants must enter an individual personal identification number (PIN) and give consent for their participation by clicking the 'Login' button.

The ZHQE informs ISTAT of the size of the target group and receives a list of access codes (six-character PINs consisting of figures, upper and lower-case letters) from ISTAT, which are allocated to the graduates' personal data. As a result, the ZHQE has a file in which the available personal data of each potential participant is linked to an access code. The ZHQE creates a copy of this file for ISTAT that only contains the following information on the graduates: access code, degree, subjects studied, year of graduation and gender. This file is made available to ISTAT via an encrypted and password-protected https platform.

As part of the survey management process, ISTAT uses this data for quality management purposes for the survey (e.g. checking the representativeness of the sample) and university-specific analyses (e.g. by faculty). Filters in the questionnaire are controlled on the basis of the specified subjects studied and degree types, i.e. questions and response options are displayed or hidden depending on this information. Furthermore, ISTAT uses this file to allocate the correct version of the questionnaire to the respondents. As part of keeping the dataset plausible, the file is also used to correct survey data (see <https://istat.de/en/the-institute/data-protection/change-or-delete> on this).

The survey data is gathered, stored and processed on ISTAT servers. During the survey period, ISTAT only transmits the pseudonyms of those who have already participated in the survey to the ZHQE. Thus, the ZHQE has information on who has participated in the survey. These individuals will not be contacted again.

The course of the field period is documented at least on a weekly basis with the help of a response input mask from ISTAT. The following aspects are entered: dispatch dates, information on the dispatch mode and on the graduates reached. ISTAT uses this documentation to systematically check which criteria influence the response rate for the survey.

### 3.3 Questionnaire design

The questionnaires are already designed in such a way as to prevent the identification of individuals. Efforts are made to avoid combinations of questions that apply only to an individual or a small group of persons. Categories (e.g. age: under 20; 20 to under 30; 30 to under 40, etc.) are used wherever possible. Questions that do not refer to the subject matter of the survey directly but are used for sociodemographic categorisation are only asked to the extent necessary.

- General information: e.g. faculty affiliation, study programme/degree type
- Variables that are relevant to diversity in accordance with the General Act on Equal Treatment (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz*; AGG) and aspects such as socio-economic living conditions, social background
- Pre-university variables: e.g. type, place and grade of the university entrance qualification, school type, prior knowledge/skills
- Attitude towards studies: e.g. confidence about studies, reasons for studying, characteristics of the studies, integration, student satisfaction, study conditions
- Objective academic success: e.g. marks, study progress

- Academic and professional trajectory, including job-related variables: e.g. transition from bachelor's to master's studies, type of job, income

### 3.4 Participation in prize draws

There may be a possibility to participate in a prize draw after completing the survey. For this purpose, an email address is requested once consent has been given to participate in the prize draw. To do so, participants are directed to another survey upon completing the actual questionnaire, where an email address is recorded for the purpose of the prize draw. In order to prevent private email addresses from being transmitted, the respondents are to give preference to email addresses corresponding to the [givenname.surname@stud.uni-due.de](mailto:givenname.surname@stud.uni-due.de) or [givenname.surname@uni-due.de](mailto:givenname.surname@uni-due.de) pattern. This data is collected and stored using the LimeSurvey software hosted at the UDE. The email address data provided cannot be linked to the information given in the survey. After the prize draw has been completed, i.e. after prizes have been handed over, the data is permanently erased.

### 3.5 Follow-up survey

In accordance with the project description, ISTAT reserves the right to conduct another survey among the graduates who participated in the KOAB survey four to five years after their graduation as part of the research project. ISTAT is solely responsible for organising and conducting the follow-up survey. ISTAT carries out the follow-up survey among all graduates who have given their consent during the initial survey to participate in another survey four to four-and-a-half years after their graduation. The follow-up survey provides the opportunity to learn more about the graduates' professional career several years after they have finished their studies.

### 3.6 Voluntary participation

Participation in the survey is voluntary and can be abandoned at any time without giving any reasons. Individual questions may be skipped without giving an answer, provided that answering the question is not essential for the further completion of the survey (filtering). There will not be any adverse effects if individuals do not participate, leave out individual questions or abandon the survey entirely.

### 3.7 Consequences of not participating

Respondents have the option to abandon their completion of the questionnaire at any time or not to answer the questionnaire or individual questions without any negative consequences.

## 4. Processing personal data

The processing of personal data is regulated by branch-specific regulations (e.g. the HG NRW) or at UDE through its *QM-Ordnung*. The generally applicable data protection regulations (e.g. the North Rhine-Westphalian Data Protection Act) that contain stipulations on the technical and organisational measures used to protect data, on the rights of data subjects to information and rectification and on formal requirements also apply.

The ZHQE, ISTAT and the contracted service providers including their subcontractors implement technical and organisational security measures in order to protect the data provided to them by the ZHQE against accidental or intentional manipulation, loss, destruction or to prevent unauthorised persons gaining access.

### 4.1 Recipients and publication of survey results

The results of the survey are processed by the ZHQE for predominantly internal use. In order to ensure the anonymity of the participants, analysis of groups of less than ten individuals is not included in the presentation of the results. Sub-analysis, for example at the degree programme level, is only possible if there are cases of more than ten individuals per degree programme available.

Qualitative data (free text entries) is to be anonymised as early as possible through categorisation. Original quotations may only be published if inferences about the individual's identity are effectively prevented by prior anonymisation. It is possible to analyse the effectively anonymised data across universities and publish the anonymised results in response to certain research questions.

The survey data collected is anonymised and included in an anonymised overall dataset in the context of the RuhrFutur collaboration project, which is analysed by the participating universities. Raw data that has not been anonymised is not passed on to third parties.

Furthermore, ISTAT compiles an overall dataset across all universities containing the information provided by all respondents from the universities participating in the project once the survey is completed. ISTAT analyses the data with a view to answering the underlying research questions of the project. Inferences about individuals are not possible in any of the ways the findings are presented. In addition, the ZHQE receives analyses in the form of tables and diagrams that illustrate the findings across universities and by suitable criteria (degree type, subject studied/discipline, gender, etc.). Findings are not presented for analyses of fewer than 25 cases.

#### 4.2 Data collection, processing and storage

In the context of the KOAB, the graduates' survey data is collected by ISTAT. After ISTAT has prepared the data, a University-specific dataset is created and transmitted to the ZHQE via an encrypted and password-protected platform. The ZHQE receives the survey data of UDE graduates only. The dataset does not contain any access codes, names, addresses or email addresses. Besides the ISTAT staff, only authorised ZHQE staff members can access the data stored on this platform using a personal password. The password is changed on a quarterly basis.

Survey data is exported out of the survey software into statistics or calculation programs. The data is then analysed in descriptive and inductive processes.

#### 4.3 Protection and erasure of stored data

Data is only stored after collection for as long as it is necessary to fulfil the purposes stated above. It is erased as soon as it is no longer necessary for fulfilling the purpose of its collection or if consent is revoked. Proof of consent and of the revocation of consent are stored for as long as these are necessary for evidence purposes.

#### 4.4 Rights of the data subject

Respondents can revoke previously given consent for their personal data to be collected, processed, retained and used at any time with future effect. In doing so, they can state that they no longer wish to receive invitations to surveys via the email address they gave and/or request that all currently existing datasets relating to their person be erased.

In this case, all data that can be clearly linked with the person will be erased. Data that is only still available to UDE in pseudonymised or anonymised form and from which a personal link can no longer be established beyond any doubt is excluded from this. Respondents have the right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority.

Upon a respondent's request, ZHQE staff will inform them in writing, in accordance with the applicable regulations, whether and what personal data of theirs is stored by the ZHQE.