Data protection information for schools, young people and parents

We take the collection and use of personal data very seriously. On this page, you will find an explanation of why we collect individual data as part of our WP initiatives, how we process it and the steps we take to ensure data security at all stages.

All data collected through WP initiatives is processed and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Queen Mary’s Data Collection Policy.

Why we collect individual data

We collect data on individuals for two main reasons:

- **For the purposes of monitoring** which allows us to fulfil compulsory external reporting requirements to regulatory bodies such as the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), as well as giving us a clear picture of the activities we deliver and the young people we work with to help us make sure we’re reaching those who could benefit most from outreach activities.

- **For the purposes of evaluation** which helps us to assess the effectiveness of different initiatives on widening participation to HE. This includes the long-term tracking of participants’ education journeys, which lets us see how many of the students who participate in our activities go on to university.

How data is processed

Stage one

- In initiatives that involve QMUL working directly with a school, a form and explanatory letter is sent home to parents of participating children asking for some pieces of information about the student and consent to use this for the purposes outlined above. This form is then returned to QMUL via the school, and the data is typed-up into a secure spreadsheet.

- In initiatives that involve students applying directly to QMUL, data is supplied in an online application form over a secure URL. This data can only be accessed and downloaded by one of our central WP team members.

Stage two

- Password protected spreadsheets containing individual student information are stored in the WP department file area. Access to these spreadsheets is restricted to members of the WP team and, on occasion, designated student ambassadors doing administration work for the department.

- Student information is visually checked and imported to our secure online database, the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) by a member of the WP team.

Information in the database can only be accessed by designated members of the WP team and the central team that manages the HEAT service. For the purposes of monitoring and research only, data is shared with specific external bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This allows us to see the Higher Education destination of students who have taken part in our activities. Any internal or external reporting that utilises collected data does so in an aggregate fashion, meaning that only totals are shown – data on individuals is never disclosed.
Data security

To summarise, the specific measures that we take to ensure data is collected, processed and stored securely are as follows:

- Paper forms containing individual data are stored in a locked drawer until they are transferred into a spreadsheet, then securely destroyed;
- Electronic files containing individual data are password protected and stored on a secure file area accessible only to designated members of staff;
- Access to files containing individual data is restricted to members of the WP team and, on occasion, designated student ambassadors doing administration work for the department;
- Data is stored on a secure online database accessible only to members of the Queen Mary WP team and the central HEAT team;
- Data is never published in a way that would allow an individual to be identified.

What kind of data do we collect?

We collect the following pieces of information as standard for students over the age of 12 who participate in our activities:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Home postcode

Where possible we also collect the following pieces of information to help us confirm that our activities are reaching young people from backgrounds that are currently under-represented in Higher Education:

- Free school meals eligibility
- Whether the student’s parent(s) went to university
- Whether the student is living in care or has in the past
- Ethnicity
- Disability

For children aged 13 or under, we collect this data via a parent/carer. For those aged 14 or older, we collect directly from the individual.

We do not collect individual level data for very ‘light touch’ activities such as information talks at HE fairs.

Further questions?

If you have further questions about how we process individual monitoring data, please feel free to get in touch with Jessica Benson-Egglenton, WP Officer (Evaluation and Monitoring) at j.benson-egglenton@qmul.ac.uk or 0207 882 5525.
Appendix 1: Privacy notice used in the collection of individual monitoring data

Using your personal information: The information provided above will be stored on a database in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and used to administer participation in the project. For research and monitoring purposes only, this data may also be shared with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Department for Education, Higher Education Statistics Agency or the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and our partners including Higher Education Access Tracker service subscribers and the National Data Service to help evaluate the effectiveness of this activity. The data collected will not be used in a way that would affect you individually. We will not release data to anyone who is unauthorised.

You have the right to opt out of sharing your data at any time, please contact j.benson-eggleton@qmul.ac.uk to do this. Under the Data Protection Act you have the right to a copy of the data held about you by us, for a small fee. If you have any concerns about the use of data for these purposes or would like a copy of the data we hold about you, requests should be made in writing to Paul Smallcombe, Records and Information Compliance Manager, Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS or data-protection@qmul.ac.uk.