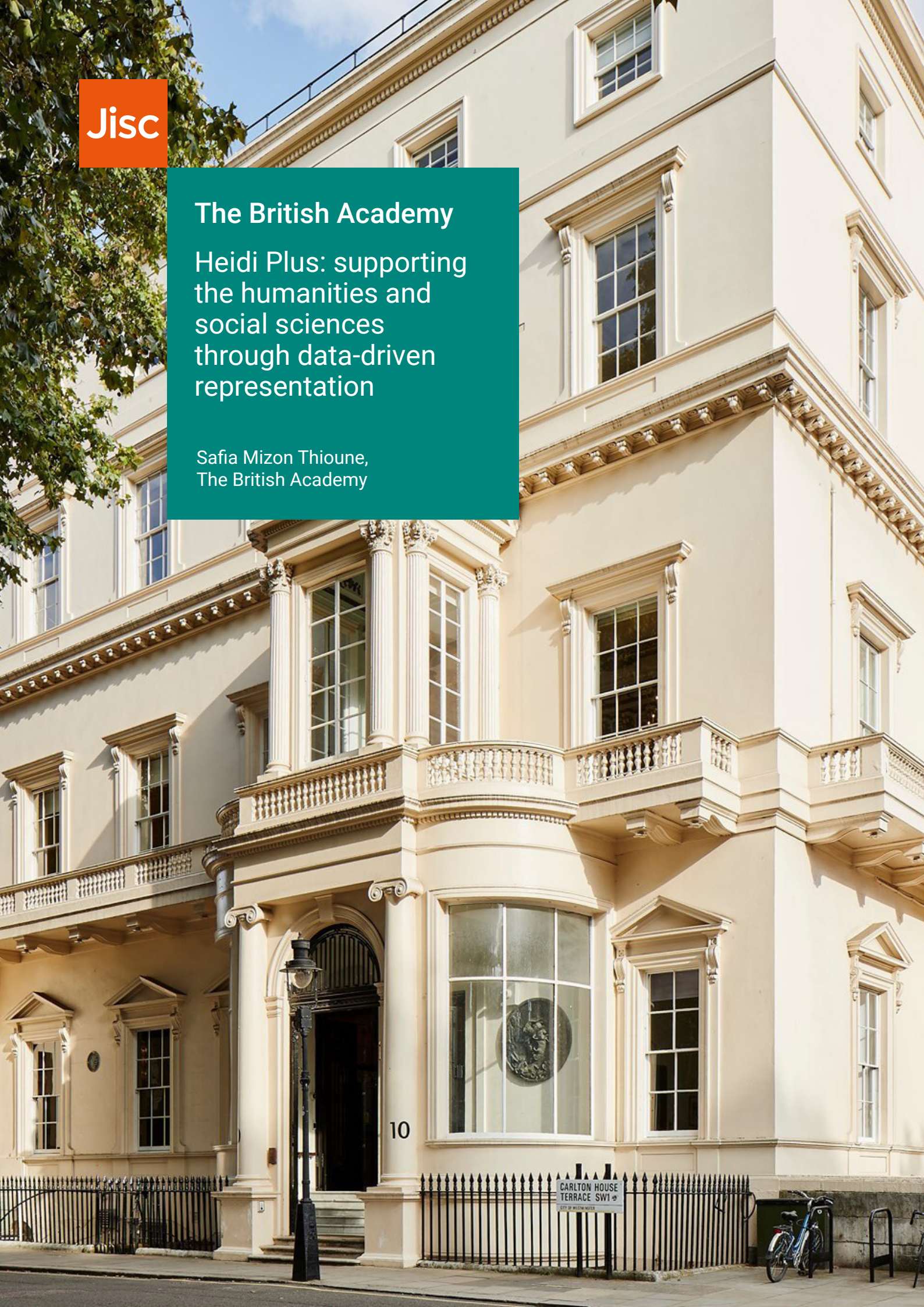


The Jisc logo is an orange square with the word "Jisc" in white, sans-serif font.

The British Academy

Heidi Plus: supporting
the humanities and
social sciences
through data-driven
representation

Safia Mizon Thioune,
The British Academy



“Having on-demand access to higher education datasets within Heidi Plus means that we can carry out activities more comprehensively, quickly and effectively. Just as importantly, it means that our work is underpinned by a solid evidence-base.”

Introducing The British Academy

The British Academy is the UK’s national body and the voice for the humanities and social sciences. We exist in order to inspire, support and promote outstanding achievement and global advances in these subjects. We use insights from the past and the present to help shape the future, by influencing policy and affecting change in the UK and overseas. We take a three-pronged approach to our role and serve as:

1. A fellowship of over 1000 outstanding academics and an international community of leading experts focused on people, culture and societies
2. A funding body that supports the best ideas, individuals and intellectual resources in the humanities and social sciences – both nationally and internationally
3. A forum for debate and engagement that stimulates public interest and enhances global leadership and policymaking

A requirement for high-quality, robust higher education data

The Higher Education (HE) and Skills Policy team leads the Academy’s work championing the humanities and social sciences throughout the education and research ecosystem. This means that we spend a lot of our time seeking to influence national policies in order to support and protect the health and vibrancy of our disciplines, and you’ll often see us out and about promoting their importance and value.

Our work tends to be a mix of proactive projects and policy work which is responsive to developments within the sector. Some of our thematic priorities include:

- » Monitoring the health and development of humanities and social science disciplines using quantitative and qualitative data
- » Understanding and articulating the skills gained through the study of the arts, humanities and social sciences and their impact on society and the economy
- » Providing leadership on higher education and research policy including promoting healthy research cultures and exploring future approaches to research funding

A comprehensive data solution in one place

I was first introduced to Heidi Plus through my previous work in the sector, although I know that the British Academy had already been using it when I joined – the access to UK HE data that Heidi Plus provides is a significant tool when analysing policy because of how robust and detailed it is.

Enabling improved discipline representation

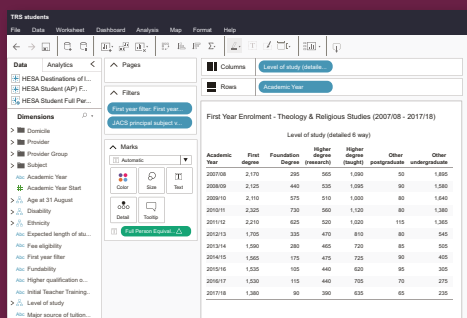
We typically use Heidi Plus to analyse staff and student trends across the humanities and social sciences. There are two reasons we do this – our internal work, such as supporting decision making by the various **Policy Committees** that we convene – but also our external outputs which typically include **policy reports, briefings** and **consultation responses**.

Depending on the focus of these activities, we will have a list of questions to answer. These could be the proportion of researchers on fixed-term contracts, the number of students who take up a year abroad, the gender study gap in a particular discipline – the list goes on.

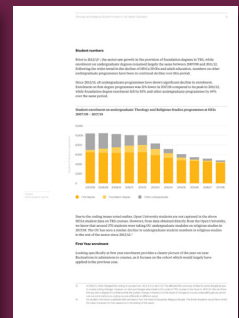
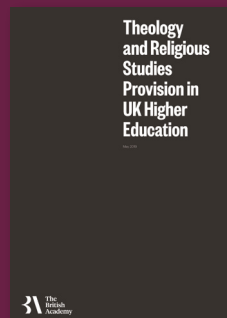
Heidi Plus enables us to access and analyse these sector trends, and to translate them into different visualisations. This is useful as we communicate with a variety of stakeholders, including policymakers and practitioners, and so can easily tailor the data to our audience.

The platform also enables rich time-series across datasets. This is particularly crucial for our monitoring work in the observatory, our growing evidence-based policy function which seeks to better understand – and therefore support – the health and development of our disciplines. We know that data snapshots can be useful but being able to track trends across time is extremely powerful.

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Academic Year	First degree	Foundation Degree (pre-2012)	Higher degree (post-2012)	Other postgraduate	Other undergraduate	
2007/08	2,170	285	585	1,080	50	1,850
2008/09	2,125	440	535	1,095	90	1,890
2009/10	2,110	575	510	1,020	80	1,840
2010/11	2,335	730	580	1,120	80	1,980
2011/12	2,210	625	530	1,020	115	1,960
2012/13	1,705	335	475	810	80	1,445
2013/14	1,950	280	455	720	85	1,650
2014/15	1,985	175	475	725	90	1,615
2015/16	1,830	160	440	620	95	1,515
2016/17	1,530	115	440	595	70	1,270
2017/18	1,380	95	390	625	65	1,115



Heidi Plus analysis showing entrants to theology and religious studies courses at UK HE providers 2007/08 - 2017/18. This data resource is used in our the theology and religious studies report.

Complete flexibility and transparency

Some of our favourite visualisations at The British Academy include heat maps, line and bar charts; but there are lots of options and real flexibility within Heidi Plus to try things to see what works best. One useful tip is that the platform provides visualisation suggestions based on the data being used – this is particularly helpful for newer data users!

It's possible to work across the platform with other gold users. Colleagues can pick up where you've left off and vice-versa, or simply get an update on projects without having to check in directly. Permission and editing rights can be varied, so there's a lot of flexibility and control in how we choose to share information.

Supporting our impact across society

Heidi Plus has helped us to develop and inform our work and, in turn, our impact – not just in the HE sector, but on a broader societal level.

This includes our work to boost language capacity in the UK, to advocate for continued participation in important global study programmes and to understand the picture in a certain discipline – such as our Theology and Religious Studies Report, which gained a lot of media attention and galvanised the disciplinary community.

In all these instances, our aim was not simply to use data. It's about using it to deepen understanding and to evidence meaningful responses to critical questions. Heidi Plus has offered a significant return on investment in allowing us to do this effectively. Having the data on-demand means we can respond quicker to news stories or questions from government, and the tools of the platform make the analysis itself much easier too.

“Heidi Plus has helped us to develop and inform our work and, in turn, our impact – not just in the HE sector, but on a broader societal level.”

Outstanding support when you need it

The staff at Jisc have always been friendly and quick to help with my queries when I've needed support. I also completed the Heidi Plus Essentials training course when I first started using Heidi Plus, which I would highly recommend to anyone who needs some confidence and help navigating the system.



About Heidi Plus

Jisc's Business Intelligence platform **Heidi Plus** hosts a range of valuable higher education datasets across time in one place. These datasets include information on students, staff, finances, graduates, business and community interaction and much more. The data can be visualised easily using the cloud-based Tableau environment and provides outstanding insight.



**Contact Jisc's analysts to
book a Heidi Plus demo**

0333 015 1165

data.analytics@jisc.ac.uk

jisc.ac.uk/heidi-plus

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HESA's data analytics services are now delivered by Jisc.



Safia Mizon Thioune, senior policy adviser

s.mizonthioune@thebritishacademy.ac.uk

www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk

[@BritishAcademy_](https://twitter.com/BritishAcademy_)