

Higher Education Funding Council for England

Title	HESA AP funding and monitoring data (FAMD) 2014-15: Comparative outputs
To	Accountable officers of alternative providers subject to the 2014-15 student number control
Of interest to those responsible for	Student data, Planning, Finance, Audit
Reference	Circular letter 24/2015
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Dear Accountable Officer

HESA AP funding and monitoring data (FAMD) 2014-15: Comparative outputs

1. This circular letter notifies alternative providers (APs) of the process for quality assuring their Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data using two comparative outputs generated by HEFCE.
2. These outputs begin to become available from today. They allow providers to verify, and where appropriate correct, their 2014-15 HESA student data before signing off this data with HESA.
3. HESA and HEFCE strongly encourage engagement with these comparative outputs, which we regard as an essential element of all providers' data quality processes. It will help providers to:
 - return accurate data to HESA
 - verify the accuracy of the derived fields that may inform and monitor student number control (SNC) allocations
 - respond to data verification queries raised by HEFCE staff
 - identify errors in the Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics survey for 2014-15 (HEAPES14).
4. Each time a provider submits their data to HESA's 2014-15 AP student data collection system, the comparative outputs will automatically be made available (via the HESA collection system).

Action required

5. HEFCE staff may contact your organisation (via HESA's Minerva Data Quality System) to query potential errors in the HESA data which could affect the monitoring of the SNC allocations. Failure to respond to these queries may delay the signing-off of your HESA data. Further details of this process are described in the 'Data verification' section of our website (www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/da/Data,verification/). We expect all providers to respond to data

verification queries before the HESA sign-off deadline which can be found on the HESA website (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&Itemid=232&menu=14054).

6. Where the outputs reveal discrepancies between your HESA data and other data returns (your original HEAPES14 return and Student Loans Company (SLC) records), we expect providers to take full account of this when preparing any future data returns. We therefore strongly encourage providers to analyse the outputs as part of their data quality, planning and audit processes.

Outputs

7. The release timetable for the outputs is as follows.

By Thursday 3 September 2015

a. HEAPES14 re-creation. This is a re-creation of your HEAPES14 return using the student data you have submitted to HESA. Any discrepancies between the re-creation and your original HEAPES14 return will be identified.

By Friday 23 October 2015

b. 2014-15 Student Loans Company comparison. This output compares your HESA data with your SLC records to establish where there are inconsistencies between the two, with regard to students receiving student support.

8. We will email providers' HEAPES contacts to announce when the outputs are available.

Final HEAPES14 re-creation

9. The comparative HEAPES14 re-creation output will include an illustrative calculation of your recruitment against the 2014-15 SNC. Once the data has been signed off by yourself, we will produce a final re-creation of your HEAPES14 return using this data. This will be used to determine whether you have recruited above your 2014-15 SNC allocation. Subject to the links to other data sources that are described in paragraph 10, the algorithms used to generate the outputs are generally expected to be the same as the final HEAPES14 re-creation; however we may make changes where we believe these will improve the algorithms.

10. As part of this final re-creation, we will link HESA data with other data sources (further education colleges' Individualised Learner Record data and schools' National Pupil Database data) to enhance data on students' qualifications on entry. We will also link to 2014-15 SLC data as part of this process. Links to these data sources are not included in the outputs; the information presented in the re-creation may therefore change when finally monitoring SNC allocations.

Data confidentiality

11. HEFCE staff will access data submitted to HESA before sign-off in order to raise queries about this data with a view to improving the quality of provider's returns or to investigate algorithmic issues.

12. The comparative output generated for the provider's SLC return should be kept in confidence. In viewing this output, through HESA's Minerva Data Quality System, you accept this commitment of confidentiality.

Further information

13. Technical information (such as algorithms) is listed under 'Technical Documentation - Alternative Providers' (www.hefce.ac.uk/data/famd/altprovider/).

14. If you require any further information or guidance please contact Rosie Thomas, tel 0117 931 7473, email apdata@hefce.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Atkins

Chief Executive