



Guidance

August 2016/13

Specific course designation

Technical information on HEFCE processes

The purpose of this technical information is to support alternative providers of higher education in completing the processes related to specific course designation that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) manages on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).



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Specific course designation: Technical information on HEFCE processes

To	Heads of alternative providers of higher education
Of interest to those responsible for	Specific course designation
Reference	2016/13
Publication date	August 2016
Enquiries to	Gateways team, tel 0117 931 7317 (select option 2), email coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk , and see paragraph 6

Executive summary

Purpose

1. The purpose of this technical information is to support alternative providers of higher education in completing the processes related to specific course designation that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) manages on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

Key points

2. This technical information covers the following HEFCE managed processes:
- **New providers** – Application process for alternative providers requesting designation to enable their students to access undergraduate (UG) student support, postgraduate (PG) masters loans or for their PG students to access the disabled students' allowances (DSA).
 - **Annual returns** – Annual returns process for alternative providers with existing specific course designation.
 - **New locations and courses** – Application process for alternative providers to apply for additional locations or register additional courses.
 - **Notification of changes** – Change of circumstance and change of control notification procedure for alternative providers, who have existing designation.

Action required

3. Providers with course designation are required to complete an annual return between 1 August 2016 and noon on 15 September 2016.
4. Providers who wish to apply for any other form of course designation for the first time, or apply for new locations or courses may do so at any time after 16 September 2016.
5. Before submitting an annual return or application to HEFCE, providers must read the relevant sections of this document along with the guidance provided by the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-higher-education-providers-designation-guidance>.

Contact information

6. If you have any queries or would like to discuss a process or any the responses you are providing, please contact the Gateways team at HEFCE, tel 0117 931 7317 (select option 2) or email:

- general course designation queries: coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk
- financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) queries: FSMGcoursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk
- HEFCE Extranet user support: CDShelpdesk@hefce.ac.uk
- Data queries, such as student number controls, returns to the Higher Education Statistics Agency: apdata@hefce.ac.uk.

How to use this guidance

Since the publication of the government guidance for undertaking the processes in this publication, responsibility for higher education, previously undertaken by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has moved to the Department for Education (DfE). All information in the BIS guidance remains applicable to the course designation process. Throughout this document and associated forms, we direct providers to the relevant section of the BIS guidance for policy clarification; all other references to the government department administering the processes refer to DfE.

Processes

7. The sections within this guidance relate to four processes. Each has been identified by a colour coding throughout this guidance:

New providers – Mauve

Annual returns – Blue

New locations and courses – Green

Notification of changes – Orange

Application forms

8. Application forms for the first three processes – new providers, annual return and new location application or course registration – are provided to alternative providers via the HEFCE extranet (see paragraph 10). You can download the 'notification of changes of circumstances form' from the HEFCE website at www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/desig/changecirc/.

Excel workbooks

9. Along with the application forms are Excel workbooks that you are required to complete. All workbooks should be downloaded from the HEFCE extranet. The following table shows which processes each Excel workbook is used for and a description of its purpose.

Financial tables and student number growth

Applicable for:

New providers

Annual returns

This workbook collects information about your student and staff numbers, income and

Course information

Applicable for:

New providers

New locations and courses

This workbook collects information about each course you wish to have designated.

Postgraduate masters loan survey

Applicable for:

Annual returns

This workbook collects information about designation requests for your postgraduate

expenditure, balance sheet and cash flow statement, and to collect requests to:

- opt into a student number control (SNC) (new and existing providers), or
- be considered for SNC growth (existing providers only).

The information provided will be used to provide data to the Student Loans Company and the [HEFCE Register](#).

This workbook also collects information on postgraduate student recruitment forecasts, if postgraduate courses are applied for.

courses that are currently designated for disabled students' allowances (DSA) only, but are eligible for postgraduate (PG) masters loans designation, and postgraduate student recruitment forecasts.

The HEFCE extranet

10. The HEFCE extranet is a secure environment in which HEFCE and providers can communicate with each other online. Each time we want to collect data or receive application forms, we will set up an 'extranet group'. Each extranet group is specific to a particular process. The HEFCE extranet contains all of these extranet groups, supplying a web page of all the specific process requirements.

11. The HEFCE extranet is used for the following processes:

[New providers](#) [Annual returns](#) [New locations and courses](#)

12. Extranet group keys and instructions will be emailed all providers with current designation for the annual returns and the new locations and courses application processes. New providers who want to make an application can request a group key by contacting the Gateways team, tel 0117 931 7317 (select option 2) or email coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk.

New providers

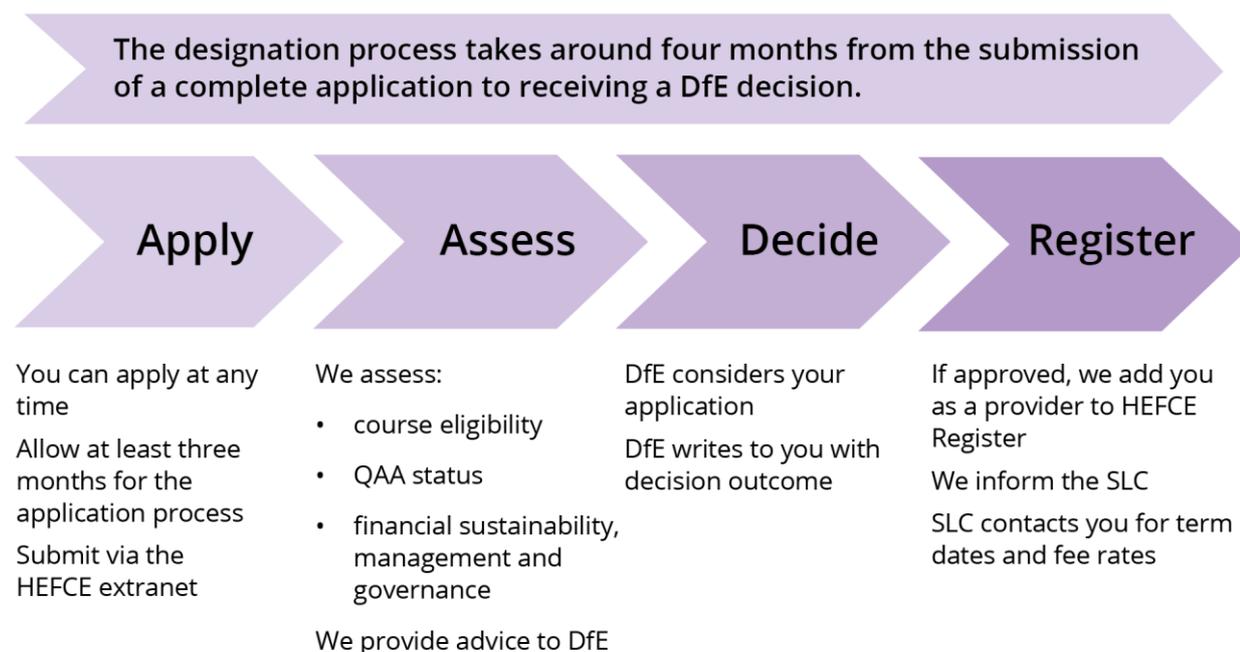
13. This section describes the application process for alternative providers requesting designation to enable one or more of the following:

- a. Undergraduate (UG) students to access student support (full application).
- b. PG masters students to access loans (full application).
- c. PG students to access the disabled students' allowances (DSA) only (reduced application).

14. The [BIS guidance](#) provides information on eligibility and criteria for designation in pages 13 to 16. Please read that guidance in full before submitting an application.

15. **The application process opens on 16 September 2016.** The application form and associated workbooks that you need to complete can be downloaded from the HEFCE extranet. Information about the HEFCE extranet and instructions on how to complete the various workbooks can be found in the '[Technical notes](#)' section of this guidance. The application form contains notes on how to complete each section and describes the additional evidence you need to submit to support your application.

The diagram below shows the stages of the both the full and reduced application processes:



If you wish to have designation for postgraduate masters loans in place for 1 August 2017, you will need to apply by 28 February 2017.

Full applications

16. To apply for designation to enable your students to access undergraduate student support and PG masters loans, complete a 'full' application. The following are the documents that you will be required to submit:

- completed application form, including the declaration with the accountable officer's signature and confirmation that you meet the English language requirements condition

- copies of the signed validation contracts with the relevant UK degree awarding body; these must include reference to the mode, length and delivery location of courses applied for or, as a minimum, a letter of intent from the validating partner. Note that if you do not submit signed validation contracts designation, if granted, will be conditional until you are able to supply these
- Excel workbook for course information, completed with details of the courses you wish to have designated (provided to you in your application pack via the HEFCE extranet)
- memorandum and articles of association
- Excel workbook for financial tables, completed for the past three years and forecasts for the next four years, and Excel workbook for student number growth
- financial statements (see options below):

If trading for more than three years:

Audited full financial statements for the last three years (irrespective of the status of your organisation, and whether it is eligible for exemptions under the Companies Act (2006) or prepares abbreviated accounts for statutory purposes) – these must:

- a. be audited by an auditor listed on the Register of Statutory Auditors (www.auditregister.org.uk/Forms/Default.aspx) AND who is independent of the preparation of the accounts/financial statements (this means the same accounting firm cannot both prepare and audit the accounts)
- b. be signed by the director(s)/trustee(s) in the appropriate place AND by the independent auditor
- c. include ALL of the following:
 - i. Profit and loss account/income and expenditure statement.
 - ii. Balance sheet.
 - iii. Cash flow statement.
 - iv. Full notes to the accounts.

If trading for less than three years:

If your organisation has not been trading for three years you must submit:

- A. Externally audited financial statements for every year of trading where accounts have been filed at Companies House. These must:
 - a. be audited by an auditor listed on the Register of Statutory Auditors (www.auditregister.org.uk/Forms/Default.aspx) AND who is independent of the preparation of the accounts/financial statements (this means the same accounting firm cannot both prepare and audit the accounts)
 - b. be signed by the director(s)/trustee(s) in the appropriate place AND by the independent auditor
 - c. include ALL of the following:
 - i. Profit and loss account/income and expenditure statement.
 - ii. Balance sheet.
 - iii. Cash flow statement.
 - iv. Full notes to the accounts.
- B. a three year business plan which includes robust and well evidenced forecasts and assumptions, including financial tables; and
- C. a student protection plan that will ensure

that students are able to continue to achieve their academic outcomes in the event that you are not able to fully deliver their course. This must be endorsed by your validating partner or awarding body.

These may need to be supplemented by guarantees of financial backing from directors or other investors, depending on the strength of evidence.

Reduced applications (DSA only)

17. If you only wish to apply for designation to enable postgraduate students' to access to the DSA you will need to submit a 'DSA only' application'.

18. The following list describes the documents that you will be required to submit:

- completed application form, including the declaration with the accountable officer's signature and confirmation that you meet the English language requirements condition
- copies of the signed validation contracts with the relevant UK degree awarding body which include reference to the mode, length and delivery location of courses applied for or, as a minimum, a letter of intent from the validating partner. Note that if you do not submit signed validation contracts designation, if granted, will be conditional until you are able to supply these
- course information workbook, completed with details of the courses you wish to have designated (provided to you in your application pack via the HEFCE extranet).
- memorandum and articles of association
- financial statements (see options below):

If trading for more than three years:

Full financial statements for the last three years (irrespective of the status of your organisation, and whether it is eligible for exemptions under the Companies Act (2006) and/or prepares abbreviated accounts for statutory purposes) – these must:

- a. be signed by the director(s)/trustee(s) in the appropriate place
- b. include ALL of the following:
 - i. Profit and loss account/income and expenditure statement.
 - ii. Balance sheet.

If trading for less than three years:

If your organisation has not been trading for three years you must submit:

- A. financial statements for every year of trading where accounts have been filed at Companies House. These must:
 - a. be signed by the director(s)/trustee(s) in the appropriate place
 - b. include ALL of the following:
 - i. Profit and loss account / income and expenditure statement.
 - ii. Balance sheet.
 - iii. Cash flow statement.

- iii. Cash flow statement.
- iv. Full notes to the accounts.
- iv. Full notes to the accounts.
- B. a three year business plan which includes robust and well evidenced forecasts and assumptions, and
- C. a student protection plan that will ensure that students are able to continue to achieve their academic outcomes in the event that you are not able to fully deliver their course. This must be endorsed by your validating partner or awarding body.

These may need to be supplemented by guarantees of financial backing from directors or other investors, depending on the strength of evidence.

19. If you have any queries regarding the application process or would like to discuss your application please contact the Gateways team, **tel 0117 931 7317 (select option 2) or email coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk**

Annual returns

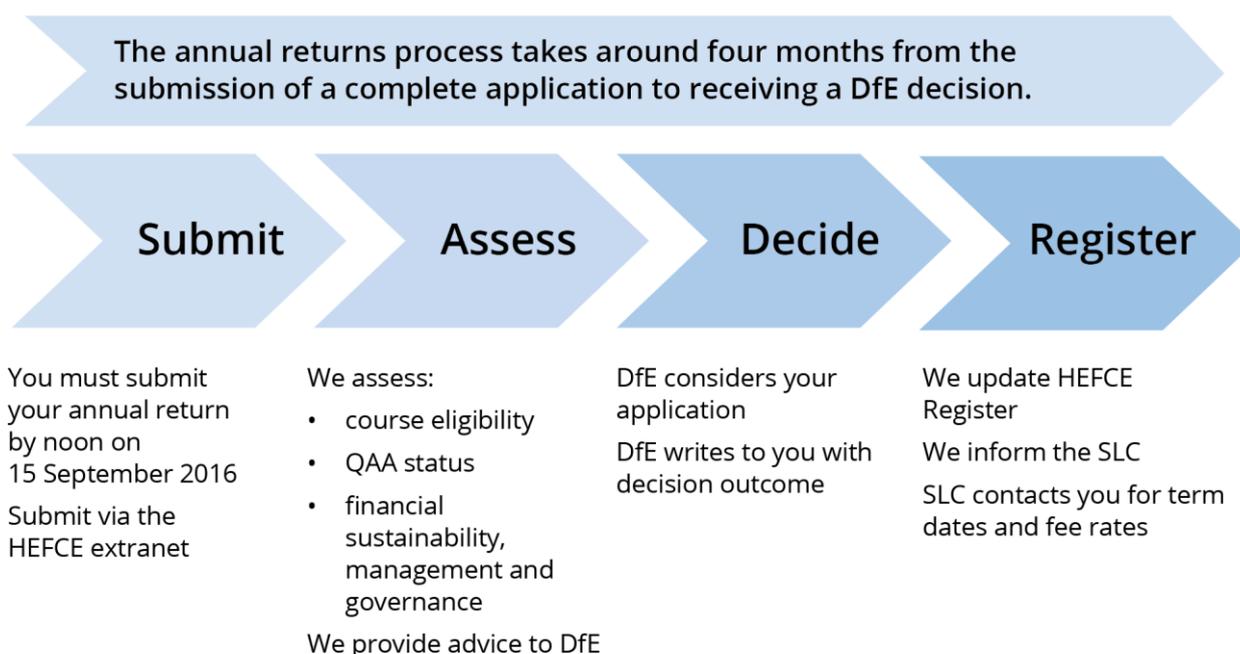
20. This section describes the annual returns process for alternative providers who have current specific course designation. The annual return must be submitted in order to evidence compliance with the conditions of specific course designation. Please see Section 7 of the [BIS guidance](#) for full details on meeting the conditions of designation.

21. The annual returns process opens on 1 August 2016 and the deadline for submitting the return is noon on 15 September 2016. We will prioritise returns made by the deadline. If you do not submit it will result in a delay to the decision on whether designation will continue, and possible sanctions from DfE. The annual return form and associated workbooks that must be completed can be downloaded from the HEFCE extranet. Information about the HEFCE extranet and instructions on how to complete the various workbooks can be found in the '[Technical notes](#)' section of this guidance. The form contains notes on how to complete each section, along with details of any additional evidence you need to submit.

22. All providers who wish to retain designation must complete an annual return. The annual return process and outcome will vary depending on category:

Designation type	Process	Outcome
Providers with designation for undergraduate student support	Full return	Redesignation Allocation of SNCs (if applicable) Confirmation of next monitoring requirements Designation for PG masters loans
Providers with designation and degree awarding powers (DAPs)	Full return	Confirmation that the return was satisfactory
Providers with designation for disabled students' allowances only	Reduced return	Confirmation that the return was satisfactory

The diagram below shows the stages of the annual returns process:



Full returns

23. The following are the documents that you will be required to submit:
- completed annual return form including; the declaration with the accountable officer's signature, confirmation that you meet the English language requirements condition and confirmation of arrangements for identifying and resolving students' concerns and complaints (this final item is only applicable for providers with DAPs)
 - validation documentation (where changes have occurred)
 - change of circumstance form (where midyear changes have occurred and have been reported with the return)
 - latest available independently audited financial statements
 - completed financial tables for the most recently completed financial year (to be consistent with the audited financial statements) including requests for student number control (SNC) opt in or growth.
 - financial forecasts (for the current year and future three years)
 - financial commentary
 - postgraduate Excel worksheet, including requests for courses to be designated for PG masters loans, details of current and forecast recruitment for eligible postgraduate students and supporting commentary (only applicable to providers with existing designated courses that are eligible for postgraduate loans).

Reduced returns (DSA only)

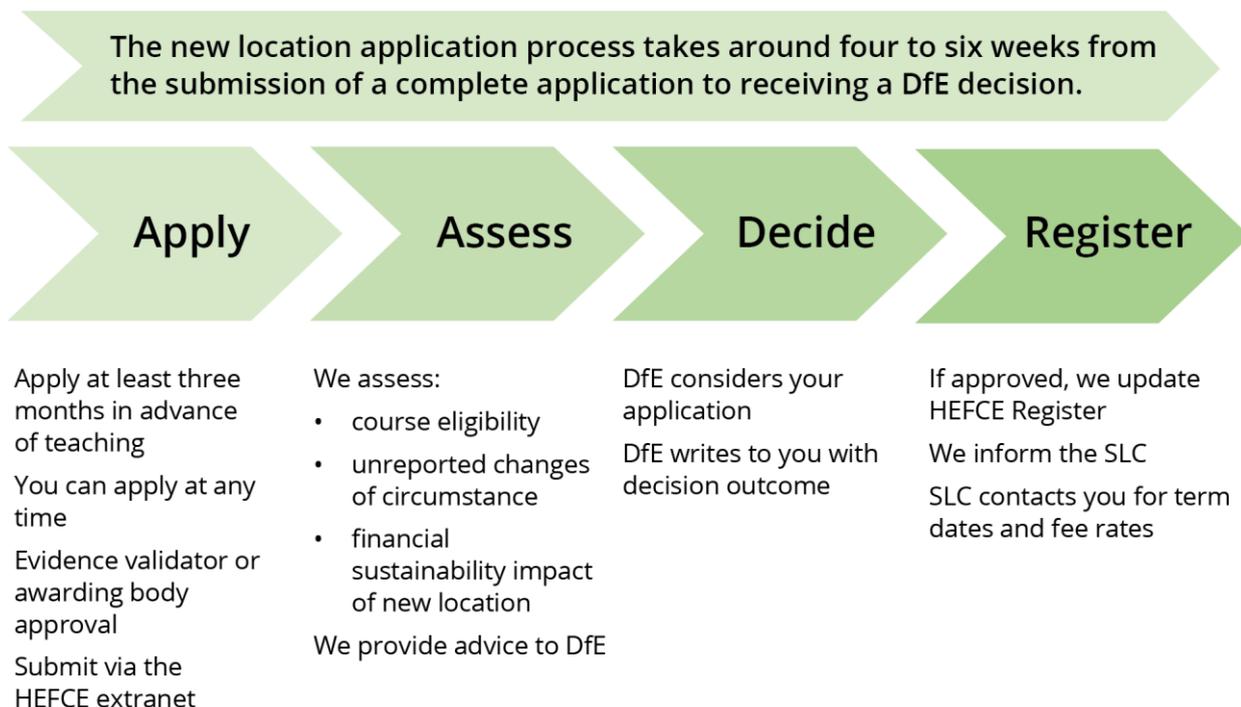
24. If you are designated to enable your postgraduate students to access the DSA only you will need to complete a 'reduced' annual return. The following list describes the documents that you will be required to submit:
- completed annual return form, including the declaration with the accountable officer's signature and confirmation that you meet the English language requirements condition
 - validation documentation (where changes have occurred)
 - change of circumstance form (where midyear changes have occurred and have been reported with the return).
25. If you are currently designated to enable your postgraduate students to access the DSA only and you would like to apply for your eligible courses to be designated for postgraduate student access to PG masters loans, you will need to submit a new 'full' application. For information on the application process see the ['New providers'](#) section of this guidance.
26. If you have any queries regarding the annual return process or would like to discuss your return contact the Gateways team, **tel 0117 931 7317 (select option 2) or email coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk**.

New location application and course registration

27. This section describes the process for alternative providers with specific course designation to:
- apply for designation of existing courses at a new geographical location, or
 - register new courses at a geographical location that is already designated.
28. Please see section 4 of the [BIS guidance](#) for full details on policy for applications from providers with existing designation.
29. The application and registration process **opens on 16 September 2016**. Application forms and associated workbooks will be supplied via the HEFCE extranet. To make an application please email HEFCE at coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk, including your UKPRN, legal name, the number of new locations to be designated, and the date when teaching is due to being at the new location. Information about the HEFCE extranet and instructions on how to complete the various workbooks can be found in the '[Technical notes](#)' section of this guidance. The form contains notes on how to complete each section, along with details of any additional evidence you need to submit.

Applying for new locations

30. Applications for a new location should be made at least three months in advance of the start of the first cohort of students who will need access to student support.
31. The diagram below describes the stages of the new location application process:



Things to note when applying for new locations:

- applications for new locations can be made from 16 September 2016
- you can apply for a location to be classed as a 'campus' location. This means you will have a single, lead building designated and any other campus buildings within walking distance can be added to that designation by notifying HEFCE.

- if you do not have signed validation documents you will need to have a validator's letter of intent when applying
- you cannot apply if you are subject to a Concerns investigation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
- you cannot normally submit a new location application if you are awaiting an outcome of an existing application or course registration

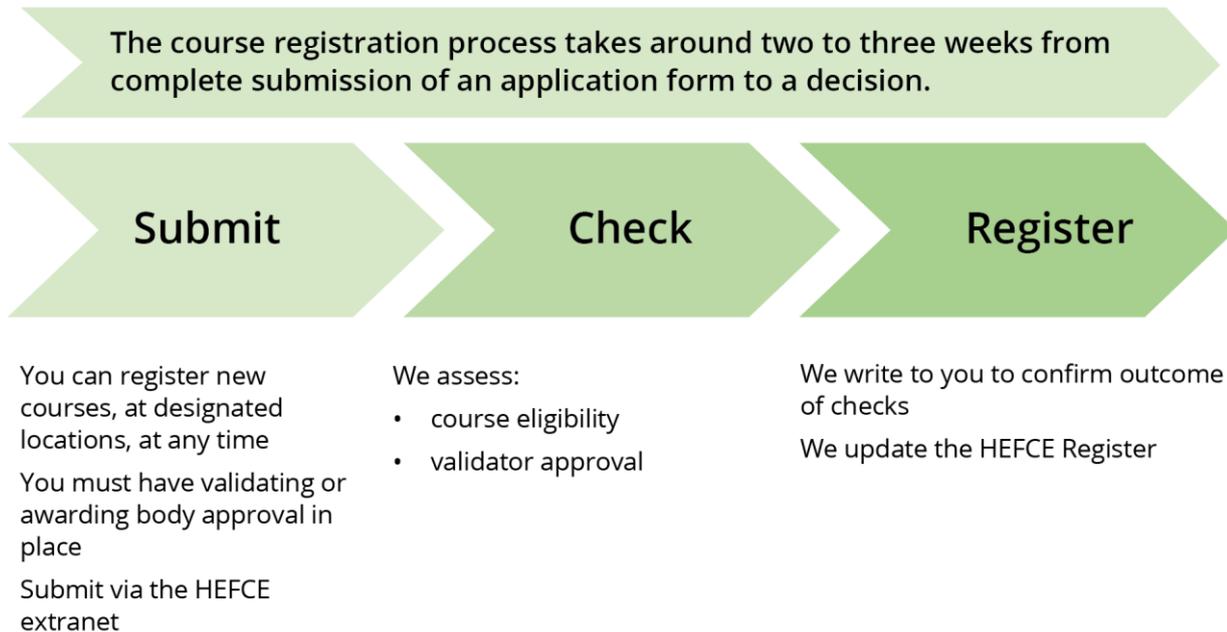
The following list describes the documents that you will be required to submit:

- completed application form, including the declaration with the accountable officer's signature
- completed course information workbook (provided in your application pack via the HEFCE extranet)
- copies of the signed validation contracts with the relevant UK degree awarding body which include reference to the mode, length and delivery location of courses applied for or, as a minimum, a letter of intent from the validating partner (in this instance any designation will be conditional on the provision of full validation documentation).

32. If you have any queries regarding the process for applying for a new location or would like to discuss your application contact the Gateways team, **tel 0117 931 7317 (select option 2) or email coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk**.

Course registration

33. The diagram below describes the stages of the course registration process:



Things to note when registering new courses:

- you must have a signed validation contract covering all courses applied for
- it is your responsibility to ensure that courses are registered in good time for recruitment of students
- HEFCE will monitor the frequency of submissions, and the gap between submission and start date
- repeated incomplete submissions may lead to restrictions on the number and frequency of submissions in the future
- you cannot apply if you are subject to a QAA Concerns investigation
- you cannot submit a new course registration application if you are awaiting an outcome of an existing application for course registration or new location.

The following list describes the documents that you will be required to submit:

- completed application form, including the declaration with the accountable officer's signature
- completed course information workbook
- copies of the signed validation contracts with the relevant UK degree awarding body which include reference to the mode, length and delivery location of courses applied for

Higher National (HN) qualifications – one in, one out policy

34. As part of the course registration and new location application process you will be given the option to register new Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) courses via the 'one in, one out' policy. In the registration form you will be asked to provide details of the course you wish to register and the course you wish to relinquish. HEFCE will then contact you to request full course information as part of its assessment.
35. If you do register an HNC or HND course, designation for an existing HNC or HND course must be relinquished. This means that no new students will be able to access student support for the relinquished course, once the new course applied for is designated. The relinquished course will appear as 'teach out' on the [HEFCE Register](#), which means that existing students will be able to continue to access funding until they complete their course. Once all students have completed, the course will be removed from the HEFCE Register.
36. The replacement course will be considered designated as of the date of HEFCE's confirmation that the course has been registered and will appear as 'current' on the HEFCE Register. New students will be able to access student support from the designation start date.
37. Please refer to Annex A for a full description of 'teach out' and 'current' designation statuses.
38. If you have any queries regarding the process for registering new courses contact the Gateways team, **tel 0117 931 7317 (select option 2) or email coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk**.

Notification of change of circumstance or change of control

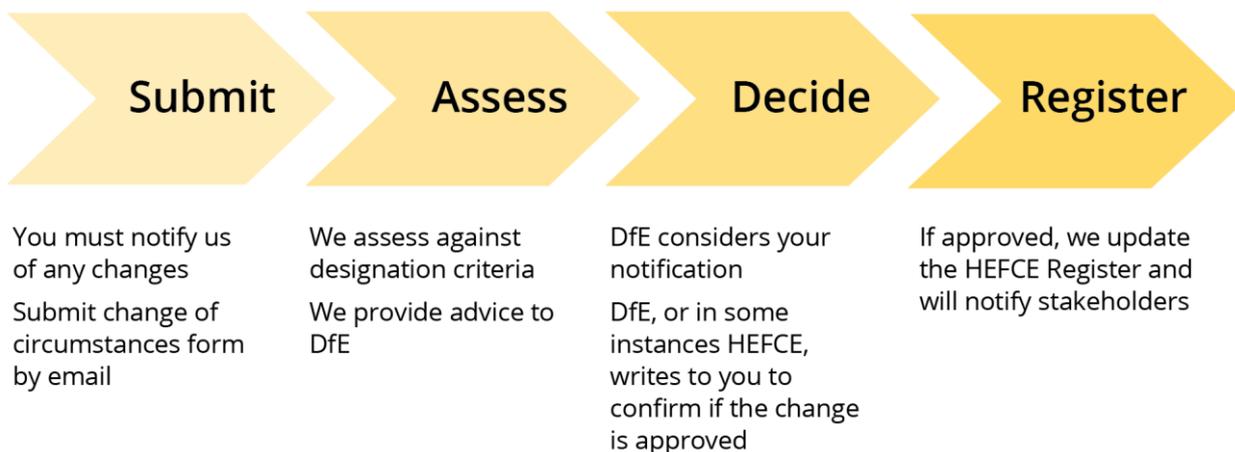
Change of circumstance

39. This section describes the processes through which alternative providers with specific course designation need to notify us of changes of circumstance or change of control.

What is considered a change of circumstance?

40. A change of circumstance is a change to any aspect of your organisation or course delivery which may affect your ability to continue to meet the criteria for designation. A number of these must be reported as soon as possible as they are described as 'in-year changes'. Full definitions of the changes that you are required to report are provided in Annex D of the [BIS guidance](#).

41. The following diagram shows the stages of the change of circumstance notification process:



In-year changes

42. The following list describes the changes that must be reported as soon as possible after they occur:

- change of accountable officer and key personnel
- change resulting in increased compliance risk
- change resulting in increased reputational risk
- change of legal name
- changes which may affect the fit and proper person requirement
- materially increased gearing
- adverse variance in financial position
- fraud, serious weakness or accounting breakdown
- changes to courses
- change of location of teaching
- addition of locations to a campus designation.

Some changes only need to be reported annually via your annual return (see box below).

Changes that must be reported within your annual return

In the application pack for providers required to do an annual return, there is a section to report changes of circumstance that have occurred during the past year.

Such changes are:

- change of registered office
- change of directors, trustees, shareholders (where less than 50 per cent change over one year, if over 50 per cent then you should follow the change of control process)
- changes in governance arrangements
- changes to trading address(es).

How to report a change of circumstance in-year

43. Providers should complete the change of circumstance notification form, available on the HEFCE website at: www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/desig/changecirc/.

44. Some changes require additional evidence or commentary to be provided; for example a new location will require evidence of validator approval. The form will detail what information is required.

45. Submit the form and any accompanying documents by email to the course designation team at SCDChanges@hefce.ac.uk.

Change of control

What is a change of control?

46. Designation is granted to an organisation based on the criteria set out by DfE. A change of control or ownership can change the ability of an organisation to continue to meet those criteria. This means that if a change of control or ownership of a designated provider takes place designation does not automatically continue. The [BIS guidance](#) provides examples of what may constitute a change of control on page 31. If you are in any doubt contact the Gateways team, **tel 0117 931 7317 (select option 2) or email coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk**.

How do I report a change of control?

47. DfE recognises that a change of control or ownership process will vary depending on the nature of the change. DfE has therefore outlined a flexible process, depending on an individual provider's particular circumstance. This is outlined in full on page 30 of the [BIS guidance](#), but the process will generally follow the pathway outlined below.

48. The diagram below shows the stages of the change of control notification process:



You must notify us of a change of control

Email description of the plans and timeline to HEFCE

We assess the information provided and share details with DfE

DfE consider assessment and may request further information

DfE considers your change of control notification
DfE, or in some cases HEFCE, writes to you to confirm if designation may continue

Where applicable we will update the HEFCE Register and notify stakeholders

If you wish to report a change of control, please read the [BIS guidance](#) (pages 30 to 32) and email the Gateways team on coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk with details of the change.

Completing the Excel workbooks

Introduction to the workbooks

49. Completion of an Excel workbook is required as part of the application or annual return processes. We expect that data you submit to be prepared with honesty, impartiality and rigour, and should not intentionally mislead.

50. The table below describes the three workbooks and the processes they are required for:

Workbook name:	Workbook description	Applicable to:
Financial tables and student number growth	<p>Collects information about your student and staff numbers, income and expenditure, balance sheet and cash flow statement, and to collect requests to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opt into an SNC (new and existing providers), or be considered for SNC growth (existing providers only). 	<p>New providers</p> <p>Annual returns</p>
Course information	<p>This workbook collects information about each course you wish to have designated. The information provided will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Be used by the Student Loans Company to determine the grants and loans which are available to eligible students on designated courses. Be used to present information on the HEFCE Register of HE Providers (www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/reg/register/). <p>The workbook also collects information on postgraduate student recruitment forecasts, if postgraduate courses are applied for.</p>	<p>New providers</p> <p>New locations and courses</p>
Postgraduate masters loan survey	<p>This workbook collects information about designation requests for your postgraduate courses that are currently designated for DSA only, but are eligible for PG masters loans designation, and postgraduate student recruitment forecasts.</p>	<p>Annual returns</p>

Completing the financial tables and student number growth workbook

51. The following table describes the information collected in the financial tables and student number growth workbook:

Worksheet name	Worksheet description	Applicable to
FinTab	The FinTab worksheet collects information about your student and staff numbers, income and expenditure, balance sheet and cash flow statement.	New providers Annual returns
FinVal	The FinVal worksheet highlights where there are possible errors in the FinTab worksheet.	New providers Annual returns
SNGrowth	The SNGrowth worksheet collect requests to opt into an SNC or to be considered for SNC growth including the performance pool. There is no guarantee that any SNC growth or opt in request will be granted.	Annual returns
PerPool	The PerPool worksheet collects commentary relating to a request for the performance pool SNC uplift.	Annual returns
SNCoptin	The SNGrowth worksheet collects requests to opt into an SNC. There is no guarantee that any SNC opt in request will be granted.	New providers

52. The financial tables and student number growth workbook should be downloaded from the HEFCE Extranet ([see paragraph 10](#)). When completing the tables you should ensure the information you provide is consistent with the audited financial statements. Forecast information that is provided must be formally approved by your Board, or equivalent entity, and this approval minuted.

53. For the financial tables, enter the figures in pounds sterling (not in thousands of pounds). If you do not complete the financial tables correctly, you will be asked to re-submit the tables in the correct format.

54. The forecast figures for the current and future financial years should be based on an assessment of the most realistic assumptions over the forecast period and should be consistent with your strategic plan.

55. Guidance on how to complete the financial tables is provided in the [next section](#). Definitions of common terms can be found in Annex A. For detailed guidance on the accounting definitions and treatments for the income and expenditure statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement you should refer to relevant accounting standards. Note that cash flow information is required even for those providers who have an exemption as they report under Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium Enterprises (FRSSME).

56. If you have any queries on how to complete the financial tables or would like to discuss your individual circumstance email FSMGcoursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk or call 0117 931 7317 and select option 2.

Completing the financial tables and student number growth workbook: FinTab worksheet

Annual returns

New providers

	Action	Notes
Date of most recent financial year end	Enter the year end for the most recent set of audited financial statements.	Accounting year end dates for the whole 7 year period (3 years audited plus 4 years forecast) will automatically be filled in the table, although a manual override is available where accounting periods have changed.
Financial indicators Automatically generated table (annual returns only)	Review the summary of data that you provided in a previous application or annual return.	Applicable to annual returns only This table will not appear if you are completing the financial tables as part of a full application, this is calculated from the information in tables 1 to 4 and is for your own information.
Table 1 Key contextual data	Enter a value for all rows and all years (shown in column headings).	This table asks for details of your current and forecast student and staff population.
1. Student numbers	Enter number of students enrolled (or are forecast to be enrolled) during each financial year expressed as full time equivalent (FTE).	Students should be split between the given categories and 'current' and 'future designated' or 'undesigned' courses. Both 'Home and EU' and 'Non-EU' student numbers must include students on all of your courses, not just those subject to course designation. Please see the glossary in Annex A for definitions of full-time students and how to calculate an FTE for part-time students.

1.a. Home and EU students

This is the total number of students from the UK and the EU expressed as FTE that are studying or will study with you during the financial year.

i
ii
iii

Enter home and EU students studying on current and future designated courses.

For designated courses include both courses with current designation and anticipated recruitment levels on courses that you anticipate being designated in the future. This information should take into account SNC policy.

iv
v

Enter home and EU students studying on undesignated courses in each financial year.

Include students studying on courses at any level on all courses that are not subject to course designation.

This data will be used to provide context to the financial tables and more generally to understand your student numbers.

1.b. Non-EU students

This is the total number of students whose permanent or home address prior to entry is outside the UK and the EU, expressed as FTE, that are or will study with you during the financial year.

i
ii
iii

Enter non-EU students studying on current and future designated courses in each financial year.

For designated courses include both courses with current designation and anticipated recruitment levels on courses that you anticipate being designated in the future.

iv
v

Enter non-EU students studying on undesignated courses.

Include students studying on courses at any level on all courses that are not subject to course designation.

This data will be used to provide context to the financial tables and more generally to understand your student numbers.

2. Total staff numbers

2.a. Academic staff Enter your academic

This includes any staff contracted on an hourly

	staff numbers (FTE)	basis (but expressed as full-time equivalent).
2.b. Administrative and management staff	Enter the total number of non-teaching staff (FTE)	This includes any staff contracted on an hourly basis (but expressed as full-time equivalent) and have not been included in 2.a.
Table 2 Income and expenditure	For all items, enter income in £s (not £000s)	This table asks for details of income and expenditure, balance sheet and cash flow. Use the separate commentary to explain key forecasting assumptions, significant movements on income and expenditure, or material changes on the balance sheet.
1.a. Public funders – Skills Funding Agency	Enter income received from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA)	
1.b. Public funders – other	Include all public funding from any source other than the SFA and fee income from the Student Loans Company.	
1.c. Fee income from Home and EU students	Include HE course-fee income from those students whose permanent or home address prior to entry is inside the UK or EU.	
1.d. Fee income from non-EU students	Include HE course-fee income from those students whose permanent or home address prior to entry is outside the UK and the EU.	
1.e. Other income	Include all other	

	operating income not covered by other headings.	
1.f. Interest and endowment income	Include: income from specific endowment asset investment; general endowment asset investments; other investment income; and other interest receivable.	
Staff costs	Include all staff costs such as national insurance, pensions and salaries, excluding director and trustee remuneration.	
Director/trustees remuneration	Include all costs relating to director and trustee remuneration such as national insurance, pensions and salaries.	
Other operating costs	Include all other operating costs not covered by other headings.	
Maintenance costs	Include all maintenance costs	This should include all expenditure incurred in the year on the maintenance of premises (excluding the pay of staff involved). It should cover expenditure to keep premises in good repair, and to replace or maintain existing systems.

Table 3 Balance sheet	Please complete in £s (not £000s) using data from your	If you need assistance contact a member of the HEFCE Assurance Team via FMSGcoursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk or call
---------------------------------	--	--

	financial statements.	0117 931 7317 (select option 2)
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Table 4	Please complete in	This data must match your financial statements.
Cash flow statement	£s (not £000s) using data from your financial statements.	

Completing the financial tables and student number growth workbook: FinVal worksheet

Annual returns

New providers

	Action	Notes
Validation worksheet	Review and amend, or provide an explanation for any items that are marked as 'Validation failed'	<p>The validation worksheet automatically highlights where there are possible errors in the workbook.</p> <p>Please review any potential errors highlighted and either correct or provide an explanation in the box provided.</p> <p>A common validation error includes financial information being expressed in thousands rather than in pounds.</p> <p>While you can confirm that some validation warnings are not errors, if we find there is an error the tables will be returned to you for correction.</p>

Financial commentary

Annual returns

New providers

The commentary should be supplied as a text document and uploaded through the extranet. In the commentary you will need to explain the following points:

- a. The key assumptions made in developing the financial forecasts. This includes assumptions around student numbers, fee income and access to student-support funding, capital investment plans, proposed borrowings and leases and assumptions in any other key areas. Where the provider has existing borrowings, including loans from directors, provide 'summary terms' of borrowing.
- b. How you are ensuring financial sustainability, including the identification and management of key risks such as cash-flow management, along with details of any scenario planning or sensitivity analysis that has been undertaken on the forecasts submitted.
- c. Significant movements (for example ± 10 per cent in any one year) on the income and expenditure account, and material changes on the balance sheet (including the detail on any material exceptional items).
- d. Any additional information that would be helpful in assessing the financial information provided in the financial tables.

The financial tables and commentary responses must be formally approved by your Board or equivalent body, and the approval minuted. Note that an up-to-date business plan (where available) can be submitted as part of the commentary to cover those questions that are addressed in the plan.

Completing the financial tables and student number growth workbook: SNGrowth worksheet

Annual returns

57. Before completing the student number growth table please read the page 36 of the [BIS guidance](#) that details the policy around SNC mechanisms and eligibility for growth. You should only complete these tables if you are eligible. There is no guarantee that any SNC growth or opt in request will be granted.

58. If you have any queries about student number control mechanisms or would like to discuss your eligibility contact coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk or call 0117 931 7317 and select option 2.

	Actions	Notes
Full-time SNC growth	Enter the requested increase to SNC as percentage, or leave blank if you do not wish to request growth.	To be eligible for growth providers must already have an SNC and offer predominately validated provision in that mode of study.
Distance learning/part time (DLPT) SNC growth		Requested growth should be entered as a percentage increase to your existing SNC not the actual figure you wish to increase by. The maximum growth allowed is 20%. If you currently have a student number allowance (SNA) please refer to the 'SNC Opt in' questions. Please refer to the glossary in Annex A for a full definition of SNC and SNA.
Opt-in to the performance pool	Indicate if you wish to be considered for the full-time or DLPT performance pool.	Information regarding the performance pool can be found on page 38 of the BIS guidance . If you indicate that you wish to be considered for the performance pool you will also need to complete the PerPool worksheet (see next section). You cannot opt-in to the performance pool unless you have requested growth to your SNC.
Full-time SNC opt-in	Enter the requested SNC, if you wish to opt in.	Providers must have an SNA and offer predominately validated provision in that mode of study in order to be eligible to opt into an SNC. The requested SNC should be entered as the figure you would like your SNC to be set at, to a maximum of 100.
DLPT SNC opt-in		

Completing the financial tables and student number growth workbook: PerPool worksheet

Annual returns

59. This worksheet only to be completed if you have indicated that you wish to opt into the performance on the SNGrowth worksheet

	Actions	Notes
Performance pool commentary	If you have indicated that you wish to opt in to either the full-time or DLPT performance pool you must provide a commentary.	You are required to demonstrate, in no more than 250 words, how you meet the criteria as detailed on page 38 of the BIS guidance .

Completing the financial tables and student number growth workbook: SNCOptin worksheet

New providers

60. Before completing the student number control opt in worksheet please read the page 36 of the [BIS guidance](#) that details the policy around student number control mechanisms and eligibility to opt in. You should only complete these tables if you are eligible. There is no guarantee that any SNC opt in request will be granted.

	Actions	Notes
Full-time SNC opt-in	Enter the requested SNC, if you wish to opt in.	To be eligible to opt into an SNC providers must have an SNA and offer predominately validated provision in that mode of study. The requested SNC should be entered as the number you would like your SNC to be set at, to a maximum of 100.
DLPT SNC opt-in		

61. If you have any queries about student number control mechanisms or would like to discuss your eligibility contact coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk or call 0117 931 7317 and select option 2.

Completing the course information workbook

62. The course information workbook collects information about each course you wish to have designated. The information provided will:

- be used by the Students Loans Company to determine the loans which are available to eligible students on designated courses
- be used to present information on the HEFCE Register of HE Providers (www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/reg/register/).

63. The workbook also collects information on postgraduate student recruitment forecasts, if postgraduate courses are applied for.

64. The course information workbook should be downloaded from the HEFCE Extranet (see [paragraph 10](#)).

65. The course information workbook is used for the following processes:

New providers

New locations and courses

66. The table below describes the individual worksheets that make up the workbook:

Worksheet name	Worksheet description
Courses	The 'Courses' worksheet provides the course characteristic information for each course requiring course designation.
Loc	The 'Loc' worksheet provides the information required for each location where your courses will be delivered.
CourseLoc	The 'CourseLoc' worksheet is used to link the courses to the locations in which they will be taught.
PG_1	The 'PG_1' worksheet requests information about the forecasted number of students studying on postgraduate masters courses in 2016-17. This worksheet will be available only if you have entered a course that is eligible for PG masters loans, on the Courses worksheet.
PG_2	The 'PG_2' worksheet requests information about the forecasted number of students studying on postgraduate masters courses in 2017-18. This worksheet will be available only if you have entered a course that is eligible for PG masters loans, on the Courses worksheet.
ApprovedCourses	For reference only. Existing providers – this worksheet will display the courses that have previously been designated. New providers – this worksheet will be blank.

ApprovedLoc	For reference only. Existing providers – this worksheet will display the locations or campus locations that have previously been designated. New providers – this worksheet will be blank.
ApprovedCourseLoc	For reference only. Existing providers – this worksheet will display the locations or campus locations that have previously been designated. New applicants – this worksheet will be blank
AwardingBodies	For reference only. Shows the validating/awarding bodies that have been approved by DfE as authorised to validate courses for the purposes of course designation.
AimTypes	For reference only. Shows the aim codes that represent the level of qualification provided by each course.
JACS	For reference only. Shows the Joint Academic Coding system (JACS). JACS is owned by UCAS and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The codes help to provide management information about designated courses.

Completing the course information workbook: courses worksheet

The ‘Courses’ worksheet provides the course characteristic information for each course requiring course designation.

New providers

New locations and courses

	Actions	Notes
Column A: Course identifier	Enter a unique identification code for each course. For courses with different subject pathways, list each pathway separately with its own code.	Course codes use the letters A-Z or a-z, and the numbers 1-9 up to a maximum of 30 characters. You can use existing course codes from your management information system. Otherwise we suggest using a combination of the course aim, title and mode of study. For example a full time BA (Hons) in Marketing could be BAMarketFT If a particular code is not unique and needs to be changed, the cell will turn red and there will be an error message in column T.

	Actions	Notes
<p>Column B: Course title</p>	<p>Enter the title of each course. Do not include the award title, mode of study or location.</p>	<p>The award title, mode of study and location should not be included because these fields are populated on the HEFCE Register using data from other parts of the workbook.</p> <p>For example, the course title for a full-time three-year Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree in Business Management would be 'Business Management'.</p>
<p>Column C: Course aims</p>	<p>Enter the course aim code representing the level of qualification provided by each course.</p> <p>Check that each course aim code matches the title of the qualification as it is listed in your validation agreement or awarding body information.</p>	<p>For a complete list of course aim codes, go to the 'AimTypes' worksheet.</p> <p>If your course does not have a dedicated course aim code (eg for graduate diplomas) you will need to use the codes 901 (other undergraduate certificate) or 916 (other postgraduate certificate). In this scenario include the course aim in the course title, eg Graduate Diploma in Accounting. Do not include the mode of study or location in the course title.</p>
<p>Column D: Full award title (automated)</p>	<p>This column is prepopulated from the 'AimTypes' worksheet. Do not enter any information.</p>	
<p>Column E: Mode of study</p>	<p>Select either FT (full time) or PT (part time).</p> <p>If a course can be delivered on both a full-time and part-time basis, list each mode of study option as a separate course.</p>	<p>For definitions of what constitutes full-time and part-time modes of study, refer to page 53 of the BIS guidance.</p>
<p>Column F: Distance learning?</p>	<p>Select either YES or NO to confirm whether the course meets the distance learning criteria.</p> <p>If a course can be delivered on both a distance learning or attendance basis, list each attendance option as a separate course.</p>	<p>A distance learning course is a programme of study where students are not required to attend on campus sessions, although there may be occasional and short periods of attendance. Distance learning courses can be classed as full time or part time.</p> <p>A distance learning course may be treated as full time if the students are expected to undertake the course for periods equivalent to the full time definition.</p>

	Actions	Notes
Column G: Length in years	<p>Enter the length of each course in full years.</p> <p>For courses which run for part years, round up to the nearest whole year.</p>	<p>All courses must run for at least one academic year to be eligible for student support.</p> <p>For part-time courses where the length of course is optional for students, please put the normal course duration for your students.</p> <p>For details of all eligible course lengths for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, please refer to pages 49 and 50 of the BIS guidance.</p>
Column H: Sandwich year?	<p>Confirm 'yes or no' whether the course includes a sandwich year out.</p>	<p>A course is defined as having a sandwich year out if it includes a period of work-based experience and falls within the definition of 'sandwich' in Regulation 2 (10) of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 2011/1986), see www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1986/contents/made</p> <p>This does not apply for courses eligible for postgraduate loan support.</p>
Column I: Foundation year	<p>Confirm 'yes or no' whether the course includes a foundation year.</p>	<p>A foundation year and other provision commonly referred to as 'Level 0', will be classed as part of a 'recognised HE course' only if they are an integrated part of a recognised HE qualification, such that both of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students are already registered for the recognised higher education qualification at the same institution; and • progression to the recognised higher education qualification is guaranteed, subject to satisfactory completion of the foundation year. <p>This does not apply for courses eligible for postgraduate masters loans support.</p>
Column J: Year abroad?	<p>Confirm 'yes or no' whether the course includes a year of study abroad.</p>	<p>For example, through the Study Abroad or Erasmus+ programme.</p>
Column K	<p>Enter the start date of teaching</p>	<p>This is the start date of teaching for the first cohort of students that you plan to be able to access student support.</p>

	Actions	Notes
Column L: Awarding body code	Enter the code for the awarding body for each course.	For a complete list of awarding body codes, go to the 'AwardingBodies' worksheet.
Column M: Awarding body name (automated)	This column is prepopulated from the 'AwardingBodies' worksheet. Do not enter any information.	
Column N: Start date	Enter the start date for the validation agreement of each course.	Check that this matches the start date shown in the validation agreement that you provided to the course designation team.
Column O: Review date	Enter the review date for the validation agreement of each course.	<p>Check that this matches the date shown in the validation agreement that you provided to the course designation team in previous applications or annual returns.</p> <p>If the review date falls before the end date of the designation period you are applying for, you need to provide a letter of intent, or similar, from your validating partner to indicate that it is willing in principle to revalidate the course for the duration of the designation period, and the timetable for doing so.</p>
Column P: JACS Code 1	Enter the JACS codes which best describe the main subject areas of the course.	A list of JACS codes is provided in the 'JACS' worksheet for reference.
Column Q: JACS Code 2	If required, enter the JACS codes which best describes the main subject areas of the course.	Where courses cover a number of subject areas within one broad code, use the single broad code only. For example code a BSc in Mathematics covering both pure (G110) and applied maths (G120) using the single mathematics code (G100).
Column R: JACS Code 3	If required, enter the JACS codes which best describes the main subject areas of the course.	
Column S: Loan type	Enter the type of designation you are applying for	<p>This will be UG, PG, or DSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UG - undergraduate and DSA

Actions	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG - postgraduate masters loans and DSA • DSA - DSA only
<p>Column T: Validation errors/warnings</p>	<p>Review any text appearing in this column, which describes validation error messages, for example duplicate course identifiers.</p> <p>Do not 'Hide' rows as all subsequent information will be lost.</p> <p>If the column is blank no action is needed.</p> <p>If you cannot fix an error contact us by emailing CDShelpdesk@hefce.ac.uk or call 0117 931 7317 and select option 2.</p>

Completing the course information workbook: Loc worksheet

New providers

New locations and courses

The 'Loc' worksheet provides the information required for each location where your courses will be delivered.

	Action	Notes
<p>Column A: Location identifier</p>	<p>Enter a unique identification code for each location.</p>	<p>The location identifier you choose must only contain the characters A-Z, a-z, or the digits 1 to 9 to a maximum of 30 characters.</p> <p>The location identifier will allow the location to be matched to particular courses. There must be a separate unique location identifier for each location or campus location.</p> <p>If you have multiple locations in the same town or city that are not close enough to be a single campus you will need to distinguish between them using numbers or more specific locations. For examples, using BRISTOL1 and BRISTOL2 for two locations in Bristol or CAMDEN and KENSINGTON for two locations in London.</p>
<p>Column B: Location name</p>	<p>The location name should be the town, city or other geographical area, where the course is delivered.</p> <p>If a location is a campus location this should be clear in the location title, eg Bristol Campus</p>	<p>For designation purposes, teaching sites that are within walking distance may be designated as a campus. Teaching sites within a campus location must be reported to HEFCE in advance of teaching commencing on site but do not need individual designation.</p> <p>Note that the acquisition or rental of new premises may constitute a significant change in your financial position that should be reported as a change of circumstance to HEFCE. Refer to Annex D of the BIS guidance.</p> <p>If you are adding a new teaching location you will need to submit an application for a new location designation. Refer to page 19 of the BIS guidance.</p>
<p>Columns C-G: Address lines 1-5</p>	<p>Enter the full address of the location or campus location, with one line of address in each column.</p>	<p>For a campus location, please use the postal address of the teaching site used by the majority of students.</p>

Action	Notes
Column H: Enter the postcode of the location or campus location. Postcode	For a campus location, please use the postal address of the teaching site used by the majority of students.
Column I: This column describes any validation error messages, for example duplicate location identifiers. Validation errors	If you cannot fix an error contact us by emailing CDShelpdesk@hefce.ac.uk or call 0117 931 7317 and select option 2.

Completing the course information workbook: CourseLoc worksheet

New providers

New locations and courses

67. The 'CourseLoc' worksheet is used to link the courses to the locations in which they will be taught.

	Actions	Notes
Column A: Course identifier	For each course at each location enter the course identifier that you have used in Column A of the 'Courses' worksheet.	The table in this worksheet contains two columns and is used to link the courses to the locations in which they will be taught. For every location or campus location in which a course is taught, you should provide a separate row with the course and location identifier combinations.
Column B: Location identifier	For each course at each location enter the location identifier that you have given in Column A of the 'Loc' worksheet.	For example, if one course is taught in three locations it will have three entries in this table, one for each location. Similarly, if three courses are taught in three locations, there will be nine entries in this table.
Column C: Validation errors	This column describes any validation error messages, for example if a course identifier is not present on the 'Courses' worksheet identifiers.	If you cannot fix an error contact us by emailing CDShelpdesk@hefce.ac.uk or call 0117 931 7317 and select option 2.

Completing the course information workbook: PG_1 and PG_2 worksheets

New providers

New locations and courses

The PG_1 and PG_2 worksheets request information about the forecasted number of students studying on postgraduate masters courses in 2016-17. This worksheet will be available only if you have entered a course that is eligible for PG masters loans on the Courses worksheet.

	Information/Actions	Notes
Purpose of the table	The Department for Education (DfE) has asked us to collect information about the number of students studying on postgraduate masters courses in 2016-17 and 2017-18.	<p>These numbers will be used by DfE for planning purposes and for policy analysis. DfE does not intend to use these numbers directly to set SNCs for 2017-18, although they may be used to decide whether any form of number control is necessary, or to inform the level at which they are set in the future</p> <p>DfE wants to know the number of students who are, or would be, eligible for postgraduate masters loans as determined by The Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) Regulations 2016. Given the complexity of these regulations we have not attempted to replicate them but are instead using simplified conditions. Therefore, the population collected in these tables will roughly correspond to the population of students eligible for student support, but will not be an exact match.</p> <p>It should not be assumed that the population defined for these purposes will be used in future data collections.</p>
Definition of the population	<p>For the purpose of these tables, the academic year runs from 1 August to 31 July.</p> <p>A student should be counted in these tables for a given academic year, if – and only if – in that academic year they meet all of conditions A to E in the Notes column. For example, a</p>	<p>Conditions for counting a student in the tables</p> <p>A. They are studying with the provider on a course:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. that leads to a masters qualification awarded by a body with UK Degree Awarding Powers. ii. of which at least half of the teaching and supervision which comprise the

Information/Actions	Notes
<p>student meeting these conditions during the 2016-17 academic year should be counted in Table 1.</p>	<p>course is provided in the UK</p> <p>iii. that is a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •full-time course of one or two academic years' duration •a part-time course which it is ordinarily possible to complete in no more than twice the period ordinarily required to complete its full-time equivalent •a part-time course that does not have a full-time equivalent and which it is ordinarily possible to complete in up to three academic years. <p>B. They are under 60 on 1 August in the academic year in which the course starts.</p> <p>C. When the course starts they do not hold a masters or a doctoral qualification:</p> <p>i. Students are excluded regardless of when the qualification was obtained and by which organisation it was awarded.</p> <p>ii. Students who hold a postgraduate qualification that is lower than masters (eg, PGCert or PGDip) are not excluded by this condition.</p> <p>D. They hold UK or other EU nationality at any point during the academic year.</p> <p>i. EEA countries, Switzerland, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and EU Overseas territories should not be treated as EU countries. Students from Gibraltar should be treated as if they came from an EU country.</p> <p>E. Their contractual relationship is with the provider; the student is not on a course that has been franchised in from another provider. Definition of franchise can be found in Annex B of the BIS guidance.</p>

Column A: Categorise your students by course type to reflect the

All courses must be at least one year. If a course runs for part years (for example 1.2 or 2.5 years),

	Information/Actions	Notes
Course type	category of designation applied for.	<p>providers should round up the nearest whole year.</p> <p>Courses that exceed the mode/length combinations given in the worksheet are not eligible for postgraduate masters loans.</p>
Column B: All students	Enter the total number of students at the provider for each category of course type in the population.	A definition of the population is given above.
Column C: New entrants	Enter the number of students in the population that meet the definition of a new entrant for each category of course.	<p>New entrant – a new entrant is a student who in the last two years has not studied with the provider on a masters course.</p> <p>The students recorded in this column are a subset of the students recorded in the ‘All students’ column.</p>
Validation checks	<p>The tables include a number of validation checks.</p> <p>The validation checks are for data that is clearly incorrect. Workbooks which contain validation errors will not be accepted.</p>	<p>Checks are in place for the following potential errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cells contain values that are not whole numbers • Cells contain negative numbers • The numbers recorded in column 2 are higher than those in column 1. <p>If an error is detected in a completed worksheet, a message reading ‘Validation: Failure’ will appear above the column in the table which contains the error, and the figures in the cells which are causing it will turn red. The error will be described in more detail under the description of each validation check.</p> <p>Validation errors must be corrected before submitting the completed workbook: we will not accept workbooks containing validation failures. If the source of the error cannot be identified, providers should email us for advice at coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk.</p>

	Information/Actions	Notes
Credibility warnings	<p>The credibility checks are for data which might be correct, but which appears surprising or implausible.</p> <p>Although providers may submit workbooks which generate a credibility warning, they should accompany their submission with an explanation of why the data is in fact correct. The explanation should be emailed to coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk.</p>	<p>Credibility warnings apply if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for full-time courses lasting for one year column 2 is less than 90 per cent of column 1 • between 2016-17 and 2017-18 the figures in column 1 have increased by as much as 500 per cent and 100 students • column 1 in 2017-18 is higher than the sum of column 1 in 2016-17 and column 2 in 2017-18 • students on part-time courses lasting for four years have been returned, but no students have been returned on full-time courses lasting for two years <p>If the data entered generates a credibility warning, a message reading 'First stage credibility: Warnings' will appear above the column in the table which contains the issue. The issue will be described in more detail under the description of each credibility check.</p> <p>When a credibility warning appears, providers should check that the data they have entered is correct and meets the guidance and definitions. If the provider is satisfied that the data is correct, they may submit it but should accompany the submission with an email explaining why it is correct.to:coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk.</p> <p>Our credibility checks are not exhaustive, and passing them should not be taken as confirmation that the data is accurate. We expect providers to carry out checks specific to their own circumstances.</p>

Other worksheets in the course information workbook

New providers

New locations and courses

Worksheet	Actions	Notes
ApprovedCourses	No action – reference only	Existing providers – this worksheet will display the courses that have previously been designated. New providers – this worksheet will be blank.
ApprovedLoc	No action – reference only	Existing providers – this worksheet will display the locations or campus locations that have previously been designated. New providers – this worksheet will be blank.
ApprovedCourseLoc	No action – reference only	Existing providers – this worksheet will display the courses and location combinations that have previously been designated. New providers – this worksheet will be blank.
AwardingBodies	No action – reference only	Reference worksheet showing the awarding bodies that have been approved by DfE as authorised to validate courses for the purposes of course designation.
AimTypes	No action – reference only	Reference worksheet showing the aim codes that represent the level of qualification provided by each course.
JACS	No action – reference only	Reference worksheet showing the JACS codes.

Completing the postgraduate masters loan survey workbook

68. This workbook applies to

Annual returns

69. This workbook collects information about designation requests for your postgraduate courses that are currently designated for DSA only, but are eligible for PG masters loans designation, and postgraduate student recruitment forecasts.

70. This workbook will be available only to providers who have eligible postgraduate courses that are currently designated for DSA only and are fully designated for UG student support. If you are currently designated to enable your postgraduate students to access the DSA only and you would like to apply for your eligible courses to be designated for postgraduate student access to PG masters loans, you will need to submit a new 'full' application. For information on the application process please see the 'New providers' section of this guidance.

71. The workbook should be downloaded from the HEFCE extranet.

72. The table below describes the individual worksheets that make up the workbook:

Worksheet name	Worksheet description
CoursesLocations	The CoursesLocations worksheet enables you to indicate which postgraduate courses you would like to be designated for the postgraduate masters loan in 2017-18.
PG_1	The PG_1 worksheet requests information about the forecasted number of students studying on postgraduate masters courses in 2016-17 . This worksheet will be available only if you have entered a course that is eligible for PG masters loans on the Courses worksheet.
PG_2	The PG_2 worksheet requests information about the forecasted number of students studying on postgraduate masters courses in 2017-18 . This worksheet will be available only if you have entered a course that is eligible for PG masters loans on the Courses worksheet.

Completing the postgraduate masters loan survey workbook: CoursesLocations worksheet

Annual returns

73. The 'CoursesLocations' worksheet enables you to indicate which postgraduate courses you would like to be designated for the postgraduate masters loan in 2017-18.

	Information/Action	Notes
Pre-populated information	Review courses that are currently designated for DSA and select PG in column M if you would like a course to be designated for the postgraduate masters loan.	The worksheet is pre-populated with all postgraduate courses that you have currently designated for DSA. These courses may not be eligible for the postgraduate masters loan. You can find eligibility information on page 50 of the BIS guidance . HEFCE will undertake full eligibility checks after you have indicated which courses you would like to be considered.
Column A: Course identifier	This displays the unique identification code for each course.	Providers supplied their own identification codes as part of their original application.
Column B: Course title	This displays the title of each course as it appears on the HEFCE Register.	The award title, mode of study and location will be displayed automatically on the HEFCE Register so should not appear in the course title.
Column C: Course aims	This displays the course aim code representing the level of qualification provided by each course.	If your course does not have a dedicated course aim code (eg, for graduate diplomas) the generic codes 901 (other undergraduate certificate) or 916 (other postgraduate certificate) are used.
Column D: Full award title (automated)	This displays the award title of the course aim code shown in column C.	

	Information/Action	Notes
Column E: Mode of study	This displays mode of study as either FT (full time) or PT (part time).	<p>If a course can be delivered on both a full-time and part-time basis, each mode of study option is shown as a separate course.</p> <p>For definitions of what constitutes full-time or part-time modes of study, refer to page 53 of the BIS guidance.</p>
Column F: Distance learning?	This displays either YES or NO to show whether the course meets the distance learning criteria.	<p>If a course can be delivered on both a distance learning or attendance basis, each attendance option is listed as a separate course.</p> <p>A distance learning course is a programme of study where students are not required to attend on-campus sessions, although there may be occasional and short periods of attendance. Distance learning courses can be classed as full time or part time.</p> <p>A distance learning course may be treated as full time if the students are expected to undertake the course for periods equivalent to the definition of full time for courses requiring attendance.</p>
Column G: Length in years	<p>This displays the length of each course in full years.</p> <p>Courses which run for part years should be rounded up to the nearest whole year.</p>	<p>All courses must run for at least one academic year to be eligible for a postgraduate masters loan.</p> <p>For details of all eligible course lengths for postgraduate courses, please refer to page 50 of the BIS guidance.</p>
Column H: Sandwich year?	This displays whether the course includes a sandwich year out.	<p>Courses with a sandwich year out are not eligible for postgraduate loan support.</p> <p>A course is defined as having a sandwich year out if it includes a period of work-based experience and falls within the definition of 'sandwich' in Regulation 2 (10) of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 2011/1986), see www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1986/contents/made.</p>
Column I: Foundation year	This displays whether the course includes a foundation year.	Courses with a foundation year are not eligible for postgraduate masters loan support.

	Information/Action	Notes
Column J: Year abroad?	This displays whether the course includes a year of study abroad.	For example, through the Study Abroad or Erasmus programme.
Column K: Location ID	This displays the unique identification code for each location.	<p>Providers supplied their own location IDs as part of their original application.</p> <p>Designation is location-specific; this table will display a separate row for each course/location combination.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Masters 1 at Location 1</p> <p>Masters 1 at Location 2</p> <p>To add more course/location combinations you need to submit a new course application.</p>
Column L: Location name	This displays the location name of the course delivery site.	
Column M: What type of loans are available?	Select DSA or PG to indicate whether you would like each course / location combination to be designated for postgraduate masters loans.	<p>DSA to retain designation for DSA only.</p> <p>PG to request designation for postgraduate masters loan and DSA.</p> <p>Designation for postgraduate masters loans will only be granted for courses which match the eligibility criteria outlined in page 50 of the BIS guidance.</p>

Completing the postgraduate masters loan survey workbook: PG_1 and PG_2 worksheets

Annual returns

74. The PG_1 and PG_2 worksheets request information about the number of students studying on postgraduate masters courses in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

	Information/Actions	Notes
Purpose of the table	The Department for Education (DfE) has asked us to collect information about the number of students studying on postgraduate masters courses in	These numbers will be used by DfE for planning purposes and for policy analysis. DfE does not intend to use these numbers directly to set student number controls (SNCs) for 2017-18, although they may be used to decide whether

Information/Actions	Notes
<p>2016-17 and 2017-18.</p>	<p>any form of number control is necessary, or to inform the level at which they are set.</p> <p>DfE wants to know the number of students who are, or would be, eligible for postgraduate masters loans as determined by The Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) Regulations 2016. Given the complexity of these regulations we have not attempted to replicate them but are instead using simplified conditions. Therefore, the population collected in these tables will roughly correspond to the population of students eligible for student support, but will not be an exact match.</p> <p>It should not be assumed that the population defined for these purposes will be used in future data collections.</p>
<p>Definition of the population</p> <p>For the purpose of these tables, the academic year runs from 1 August to 31 July.</p> <p>A student should be counted in these tables for a given academic year, if and only if, in that academic year they meet all of conditions A to E in the Notes column. For example, a student meeting these conditions during the 2016-17 academic year should be counted in Table 1.</p>	<p>A. They are studying with the provider on a course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. that leads to a masters qualification awarded by a body with UK Degree Awarding Powers ii. of which at least half of the teaching and supervision which comprise the course is provided in the UK iii. that is a full-time course of one or two academic years' duration; or a part-time course which it is ordinarily possible to complete in no more than twice the period ordinarily required to complete its full-time equivalent; or a part-time course that does not have a full-time equivalent and which it is ordinarily possible to complete in up to three academic years. <p>B. They are under 60 on 1 August in the academic year in which the course starts.</p> <p>C. When the course starts they do not hold a masters or a doctoral qualification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Students are excluded regardless of when the qualification was obtained and

Information/Actions	Notes
	<p>by which organisation it was awarded.</p> <p>ii. Students who hold a postgraduate qualification that is lower than masters (eg PGCert or PGDip) are not excluded by this condition.</p> <p>D. They hold UK or other EU nationality at any point during the academic year.</p> <p>i. EEA countries, Switzerland, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and EU Overseas territories should not be treated as EU countries. Students from Gibraltar should be treated as if they came from an EU country.</p> <p>E. Their contractual relationship is with the provider; the student is not on a course that has been franchised in from another provider. Definition of franchise can be found in Annex B of the BIS guidance.</p>
<p>Column A: Course type</p> <p>Categorise your students by course type to reflect the category of designation applied for.</p>	<p>All courses must be at least one year. If a course runs for part years (i.e. 1.5 or 2.5 years) providers should round up the nearest whole year.</p> <p>Courses that exceed the mode / length combinations given in the worksheet are not eligible for postgraduate masters loans.</p>
<p>Column B: All students</p> <p>Enter the total number of students at the provider for each category of course in the population.</p>	<p>A definition of the population is given above.</p>
<p>Column C: New entrants</p> <p>Enter the number of students in the population that meet the definition of a new entrant for each category of course.</p>	<p>New entrant – a new entrant is a student who in the last two years has not studied with the provider on a masters course.</p> <p>The students recorded in this column are a subset of the students recorded in the ‘All students’ column.</p>

Information/Actions	Notes
<p>Validation checks</p> <p>The tables include a number of validation checks.</p> <p>The validation checks are for data that is clearly incorrect. Workbooks which contain validation errors will not be accepted.</p>	<p>Checks are in place for the following potential errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cells contain values that are not whole numbers • cells contain negative numbers • the numbers recorded in column 2 are higher than those in column 1. <p>If an error is detected in a completed worksheet, a message reading 'Validation: Failure' will appear above the column in the table which contains the error, and the figures in the cells which are causing it will turn red. The error will be described in more detail under the description of each validation check.</p> <p>Validation errors must be corrected before submitting the completed workbook: we will not accept workbooks containing validation failures. If the source of the error cannot be identified, providers should email us for advice by sending an email to coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk.</p>

	Information/Actions	Notes
Credibility warnings	<p>The credibility checks are for data which might be correct, but which appears surprising or implausible.</p> <p>Although providers may submit workbooks which generate a credibility warning, they should accompany their submission with an explanation of why the data is in fact correct. The explanation should be emailed to coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk.</p>	<p>Credibility warnings apply if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for full-time courses lasting for one year column 2 is less than 90 per cent of column 1 • between 2016-17 and 2017-18 the figures in column 1 have increased by as much as 500 per cent and 100 students • column 1 in 2017-18 is higher than the sum of column 1 in 2016-17 and column 2 in 2017-18 • students on part-time courses lasting for four years have been returned but no students have been returned on full-time courses lasting for two years <p>If the data entered generates a credibility warning, a message reading 'First stage credibility: Warnings' will appear above the column in the table which contains the issue. The issue will be described in more detail under the description of each credibility check.</p> <p>When a credibility warning appears, providers should check that the data they have entered is correct and meets the guidance and definitions. If the provider is satisfied that the data is correct, they may submit it but should accompany the submission with an email explaining why it is correct to: coursedesignation@hefce.ac.uk.</p> <p>Our credibility checks are not exhaustive, and passing them should not be taken as confirmation that the data is accurate. We expect providers to carry out checks specific to their own circumstances.</p>

Other information

Freedom of information

75. Information provided in response to a request from HEFCE may be made public, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act or of an appropriate licence, or through another arrangement.

76. Such information includes text, data and datasets. The Freedom of Information Act gives a public right of access to any information held by a public authority defined within the Act, in this case HEFCE. It applies to information provided by individuals and organisations, for example universities and colleges. HEFCE can refuse to make such information available only in exceptional circumstances. This means that data and information are unlikely to be treated as confidential except in very particular circumstances. Further information about the Act is available from the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/what-we-do/freedom-of-information-act/>.

Data protection

Our data protection commitments mean that we will only routinely hold data that we require to perform our administrative responsibilities for the Specific Course Designation processes.

Data supplied via the HEFCE Extranet are covered by the Data Protection Act. This data is only accessible to someone holding the HEFCE extranet key, which we will provide to accountable officers, and providers should ensure that the extranet key is not passed to anyone without a legitimate reason for access.

Please do not provide individual student details to HEFCE unless specifically asked to do so, as the transfer of this information raises data security issues.

Personal information supplied about the accountable officer, head of HE provision, directors or trustees and shareholders will be used to inform our assessment of the management and governance of the provider and to ensure that the provider is owned, managed and run by 'fit and proper' persons. We will check some of the information with other sources, such as Companies House. Providing a date of birth for individuals allows us to more easily identify people named in multiple applications and involved in the management of other organisations. If this information is not provided we may need to ask the provider to submit proof of identification for each individual.

Personal information will be treated in confidence and only shared with organisations involved in the assessment of the specific course designation application.

Further information on rights to access information that we hold about providers can be found at www.hefce.ac.uk/contact/inforequest/dpa/.

How to complain

We are committed to providing a high-quality service, and to working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. If you are unhappy with the service you have received from us, please let us know. We want to put right mistakes where we can, and learn how to do better in future. For details of our complaints procedure please visit:

www.hefce.ac.uk/contact/Make_a_complaint/Complaints_against_HEFCE/

Annex A: Glossary of terms and abbreviations

Glossary of terms

Academic year	For HEFCE purposes, we define this as the period between 1 August of one year to 31 July of the next.
Accountable officer	This individual must be the head of the legal entity in receipt of designation. Within a charity or public organisation this individual would be expected to be the chief executive (or equivalent). Within a private company the individual would be expected to be a director of the company and hold a position equivalent to the chief executive.
Awarding body	A body which may grant academic awards. Degree awarding bodies are a type of awarding body, but there are many others. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates a number of the UK awarding bodies which cannot grant degrees, although registering with Ofqual is voluntary. If an organisation acts as an awarding body, then it is responsible for the award it grants. This is a lesser commitment than acting as a validating body.
Degree awarding body	A degree awarding body has the right to issue UK degrees. In the past, degree awarding bodies gained their powers in a variety of ways – through Royal Charter or Act of Parliament, for example. Today, degree awarding powers are all granted by Privy Council, and can be at three levels – foundation degree, taught, and research.
Designation	The process of course designation allows eligible students on a course to access student support loans from the Student Loans Company.
Designated course	In the context of student funding, this is a course that is designated for student support purposes under the student support regulations, allowing eligible students on such courses to access loans and grants from the Student Loans Company.
Extranet	Secure environment for downloading and uploading applications, annual returns and other data.
Extranet group	Specific areas within the HEFCE extranet supplying documents or data collection forms relevant to individual processes. Each time we want to collect data or receive application forms, we set up an ‘extranet group’.
Full-time equivalent	The definition of full-time is where the student is normally required to attend the institution, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year and, during that time, they are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work-placement that does not meet the criteria to be sandwich year-out, which amount to an average of 21 weeks. The FTE for a part-time course should be calculated by comparison with an equivalent full-time course, where such a course exists. If an equivalent full-time course does not exist, a reasonable academic judgement should be made of the FTE relative to a full-time student.

Calculation of the FTE can be based on either:

- a. Duration of the course.
- b. Credit points studied.

In both cases, when viewed as a whole, the total FTE for a part-time course should equal the total FTE of the equivalent full-time course.

Group key	Unique code allocated to providers to access specific extranet groups.
HEFCE Register of HE Providers (the HEFCE Register)	The HEFCE Register is a searchable tool showing information about higher education providers which have particular relationships to Government in England. It shows how the Government regulates these providers and where to find more information about each one. See www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/register/ .
Materially increased gearing	Additional loans, overdrafts or mortgages that are of a significant size relative to the organisation.
New provider	A provider who does not currently have specific course designation.
Teach out	Courses which are not continuing or have had designation revoked, where DfE has allowed existing students only to continue to receive student support until they complete their course (unless otherwise stipulated by DfE).
Student number allowance (SNA)	A student number control mechanism that restricts the total number of students who claim student support at an individual provider to 50 across all courses and all years. It does not place a restriction on the number of students that can be recruited in a given year. It also allows providers to recruit students who do not wish to access student support as these do not count towards the allowance. Only English and (for providers located in England) EU students count against the SNA.
Student number control (SNC)	A student number control mechanism that places a limit on the number of students who are eligible for student support that a provider admits each year. This is a control on the number of students who are eligible to receive support and not the number who actually claim support. This means that students who pay their own fees, but who may be eligible for student support, are counted towards the SNC. Details of the students that count towards the SNC are issued to providers by HEFCE alongside their SNC each year.
Validation	<p>In the higher education context, a validation relationship occurs when a degree-awarding provider assesses a course delivered by another provider and approves it as being of an appropriate standard and quality to contribute, or lead, to one of the degree awarding provider's awards. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the provider delivering the course, not the institution that validated it.</p> <p>'Validation checks' referred to throughout this document refer to automated processes within Excel worksheets that flag up potential errors.</p>

Abbreviations

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
DAPs	Degree awarding powers
DfE	Department for Education
DLPT	Distance learning/part time
DSA	Disabled students' allowances
EEA	European Economic Area
FRSSME	Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium Enterprises
FSMG	Financial sustainability management and governance
FT	Full time
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
JACS	Joint Academic Coding System
PG	Postgraduate
PT	Part time
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
SLC	Student Loans Company
SNA	Student number allowance
SNC	Student number control
UCAS	Formerly the University and Colleges Admissions Service
UG	Undergraduate